

Character Flaws
Jenny Jiweon Seo

CHARACTERS

Eddy – The group leader who facilitates the CC meetings. A charismatic leader, but a bit jaded by life. Blind.

Lock – A cynical, antisocial man. The smartest of the group. Bored to death of these meetings.

Anne – A mildly depressed woman. Most judgmental person of the group.

John – A man with a good heart but intimidating looks. Kind of paranoid. Quiet.

Vi – The upbeat newcomer. Probably second-smartest of the group.

SETTING

Non-descript indoor area.

Scene begins with all characters seated in a half-circle, in standard support group fashion. EDDY sits in the middle. He wears sunglasses and comfortable clothes. LOCK and ANNE are dressed nicely. JOHN's clothes look old and he looks shifty. VI is dressed like a high school girl. She seems to be the only person who looks happy right now.

EDDY: Well. It's this time of the week again. As we all know, life is hard. We make mistakes, we make wrong choices, and we end up with secrets and regrets. Some are worse than others. We all have our character flaws. Hamartias. Achilles' heels. Whatever. This is a neutral, no-judgment zone where we discuss our character flaws, support each other, and perhaps heal from past wounds. Welcome to Character Club.

VI claps.

LOCK: (*snorts*) Character Club. Was it really that difficult to find something alliterative? The name reeks of desperation.

EDDY: (*unfazed*) Good to see you're just as cheerful as ever, Lock. Everybody, say "Hi, Lock."

ANNE, VI, JOHN: Hi, Lock.

LOCK: I didn't even introduce myself.

EDDY: You never do. I do it for you. In case anybody needs a reminder. Hi, I'm Eddy.

ANNE, JOHN, VI: Hi, Eddy.

LOCK: Why am I here again?

EDDY: Because you have unresolved issues.

LOCK: No I don't.

EDDY: Yes you do.

LOCK: Look, my drugs are not an issue.

EDDY: They kind of are.

LOCK: It's not a big deal. I don't hurt anybody else. I can afford it. No issues. See?

EDDY: I don't see. I'm blind.

LOCK: It's called figurative speech.

EDDY: Drugs are harmful. Literally.

LOCK: Well, what can I say? Once a junkie, always a junkie.

VI: That's terribly pessimistic.

LOCK: No, it's terribly obvious. I didn't stop even when I almost got arrested for it.

JOHN jolts at LOCK's words as if electrified

LOCK: Oh, for heaven's sake, nobody's coming to arrest you!

EDDY: Now, now. John, you're perfectly safe here. Lock, be nice. Drugs aren't your only unresolved issue, and we'll talk about this later.

LOCK: Oh, I have *more* unresolved issues?

ANNE: More like unresolved sexual tension.

LOCK: Shut. Up.

ANNE: So you're still stuck with the "just friends" routine? Poor thing.

EDDY: Both of you, stop. Be supportive.

LOCK: Why don't you support my drug habit?

EDDY: (*ignores LOCK*) Anne, why don't you introduce yourself?

ANNE: I'm Anne.

EDDY, VI, JOHN: Hi, Anne.

EDDY: How are you today? Feeling any better than last week?

ANNE: Well, I think my anti-depressants are working for once. Morphine helps, too. I feel less like I'm going to hurl myself in front of a train.

EDDY: That's good.

ANNE: And it's nice to know that my love life is more fulfilling than *his*. (*sends dirty look at LOCK*)

LOCK: Excuse me, who was the lady who cheated on her husband?

ANNE: *EXCUSE YOU?*

EDDY: Both of you, STOP. (*LOCK and ANNE shut up*) This is a space to admit to our faults and not be blamed for them. Anne, please stop reminding Lock that his dating life is the dictionary definition of nonexistent.

ANNE: I'll try.

EDDY: Lock, stop judging people.

LOCK: I was not judging, I was observing. There is a difference.

VI: It's like Isaac and Augustus. Blind guy at a support group and his friend who speaks poetically on paper but sounds like an utter douchebag in reality. (*EVERYBODY stares*

blankly at VI) What, did nobody read *The Fault in Our Stars*? John Green? Really, nobody? (*more staring from EVERYBODY*) Okay, shutting up now. Sorry.

JOHN: Please don't make modern pop culture references. We can't follow those.

EDDY: I'll look it up later tonight.

ANNE: You can't read. I mean, you can't see letters.

EDDY: They have these things called audiobooks, in case you didn't hear about them.

LOCK: See, I'm not the only offensive person here!

ANNE: I'm not the one in the friend zone!

EDDY: (*ignores them*) John, how is parole going?

JOHN: It's good, I suppose.

EDDY: (*after a long pause*) So no problems with adapting to civilian life? It's perfectly fine if it's not going smoothly.

JOHN: Nothing goes smoothly in my life.

EDDY: It's okay. It's worse if everything goes smoothly and it's too good to be true before everything suddenly completely falls apart. Trust me, rough is good.

JOHN: Should I find that encouraging?

VI: I find it a bit worrying.

EDDY: You can't escape fate. Especially the bad kind.

VI: Okay. Very worrying.

LOCK: Just like you can't escape the police.

JOHN flinches and looks around in paranoia. LOCK cackles.

ANNE: (*to LOCK*) See, this is why nobody likes you.

EDDY: John, don't worry. The police are not coming here.

ANNE: To be honest, all of us would be arrested.

LOCK: Not if you can pick your way out of handcuffs.

EDDY: You see, when I said "unresolved issues," this was what I meant.

VI: John, the police won't arrest you as long as you obey the terms of your parole. You really shouldn't worry so much.

LOCK: (*very slowly*) Actually—

EDDY: No judgment. None.

ANNE: You're an outlaw! Join the club. Oh wait, you're already in it.

JOHN: (*to LOCK*) I do not want to know how you knew that.

LOCK: Because I am a genius.

ANNE: There goes his egomania.

LOCK: There goes your jealous streak.

EDDY: Children, stop pulling each other's pigtails. Now. (*to VI*) We have a newcomer today. Welcome to CC, Character Club. Your name is?

VI: I go by Vi. Hi, everyone!

ANNE, EDDY, JOHN: Hi, Vi.

EDDY: It's very nice to see a new face around here. (*pause*) It's nice to hear a new voice.

LOCK: Smooth. Real smooth.

JOHN nods in agreement. ANNE sighs.

EDDY: So, Vi. Is there anything you'd like to share today?

VI: Um, yeah. I know this is kind of weird, and there's actually a really good reason behind this. But well, I'm sometimes a boy.

JOHN: Transgender?

ANNE: No, she said "sometimes." That's called gender fluidity or something.

VI: No, I mean, I have to dress as a boy.

LOCK: Crossdressing, then.

JOHN: Does this mean that you're gay?

VI: I'm not. I have a boyfriend.

ANNE: If anybody's gay here, it's probably that guy (*indicates LOCK*).

EDDY: This is a no judgment zone.

LOCK: Why do people keep insinuating these kinds of things about me?

EDDY: I don't judge you.

LOCK: Stop making me repeat myself. *We're just friends.*

JOHN: (*to VI*) Does this make your boyfriend gay?

VI: Sorry? Oh! No, I don't dress as a boy anymore.

ANNE: Johnny, is this about the policeman you talked about last time?

JOHN: No, and stop calling me that, please.

ANNE: Why not? John. Johnny. Johnny boy. It has a nice ring to it.

JOHN: My name is Jean.

ANNE: Is there a difference?

EDDY: Anne, please don't antagonize John.

JOHN: My name is Jean. It's *French*.

LOCK: If you weren't French, you actually wouldn't have been jailed for larceny and wouldn't have such strict parole terms.

VI: What did he steal? Was it something very important?

JOHN hesitates

EDDY: It's all right, John. We won't judge you.

LOCK: Nothing beats how Eddy became blind.

ANNE: Come to think of it, I never heard that story.

EDDY: It was a long time ago. It was a bad time.

ANNE: Worse than cheating on your husband and then getting kicked out of high Russian society?

EDDY: Well, long story short, I killed my father and slept with my mother. I may or may not have gouged out my eyes after that.

Utter silence. JOHN, VI, and ANNE stare at EDDY.

LOCK: I'll put my money on that you did end up gouging your eyes then, shall I?

EDDY: Excellent deduction.

LOCK: Very funny.

ANNE: Now I really want to know what made John start down the path of crime.

JOHN: It was just a piece of bread.

VI: Talk about disproportionate retribution.

LOCK: What I would like to know is why Viola is a high school student.

VI: How did you—never mind. What's wrong with being a high school student?

ANNE: Everything.

EDDY: No judgment, guys.

ANNE: Look me in the eye and tell me that you believe there is nothing wrong with high school students.

EDDY: Touché.

VI: It's because of the modern adaptation. It was updated into a high school setting. *She's the Man*? Ring any bells?

LOCK: That's American, isn't it. You betrayed the Queen.

ANNE: Since when were you patriotic?

EDDY: I'm sorry, but I'm from Ancient Greece. Kind of.

VI: But my story's set in Illyria. Not the UK.

LOCK: Shakespeare would weep.

EDDY: And Arthur Conan Doyle would what, roll in his grave?

LOCK: The old man hated me. Apparently, according to him, I'm an asshole.

ANNE: No shit, Sherlock.

VI: (*nicely, to LOCK*) You kind of are.

JOHN: I sometimes feel like I should spontaneously burst into song.

LOCK: Go ahead. I would like to hear the people sing.

ANNE: Your wit astounds me.

LOCK: Such a delightful ball of sunshine you are. Is that why it's not going well with Vronsky?

ANNE: We're getting better, actually. Is your sparkling personality the reason or the result of you not being able to get any?

EDDY: I have daughters who are more mature than this.

JOHN: I know that feeling.

LOCK: Are they your daughters or your sisters?

EDDY: ...Right. Did I mention that one of my character flaws is anger management issues?

VI: I support you wholeheartedly.

EDDY: Thank you.

The lights go out just as EDDY lunges for LOCK.