Night One

#Valeria is at her desk in her apartment.

"The sun dips below the skyline as I drum my fingers against my desk, contemplating the psychology textbook next to my laptop."

"It's been a few hours since I met with my advisor, and I still can't believe it. I breezed through high school easily enough; how did I fail so miserably in college?"

"I don't even want to think about what my parents will say."

"My phone lights up with a new text message. Relieved by the interruption, I pick it up."

The phone pops up with a message, so the following dialogue is through text (format pasted from the premade messaging system found in the design document. The rest of that system will have to be pasted into The Death Contract game.)

call phone_start

call message_start("Darren", "V, don't forget the psychology reading tonight.")
call message("Darren", "Just a reminder because you forgot last time!")

call phone_end

"I roll my eyes. Of course."

"A twinge of guilt twists my stomach."

"I really shouldn't think like that. Darren means well. He's concerned and wants to help out in any way he can."

"I just wish he wasn't… like *that* sometimes."

"The moment my phone screen goes dark, it lights up again with another text."

v "Seriously, Darren? Aren't you supposed to be busy studying?"

"My grumbling falters as I read the new message."

call phone_start

call message_start("Unknown", "Hello.")

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call message("Unknown", "Many college students are in your situation, you
know. It's easy to fall when you're alone and away from home. It feels a bit
like the world's against you, doesn't it?")

call reply_message("Who is this?")
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 # Label names here are placeholders

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call screen phone_reply("I think you've got the wrong number.","label1","What
do you mean by interested?","label2")

label label1:
    call phone_after_menu
    call message_start("me", "I think you've got the wrong number.")
    call message("Unknown", "Do I, Valeria?")

    jump aftermenu

label label2:
    call phone_after_menu
    call message("me", "What do you mean by interested?")
    call message("Unknown", "I'm glad you asked, Valeria.")

    jump aftermenu

label aftermenu:
    call reply_message("How do you know my name??")
   call message ("Unknown", "You're not asking the right questions. But if you
really want to know… why don't you find out?")

call phone_end
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"An unfamiliar number pops up, bolded and underlined. Just waiting to be
called."

"I don't get it — how do they know my name? Is it someone from school?"

- **Call the number**
- **Block the number**

 # Choice: Block the number

"If it's someone from school, they're probably pranking me. I don't know how
they found out about my situation but… well, I'm not gonna play along."

"I block the number and put it out of my mind."

"Where was I? Oh yeah, worrying about my scholarship. I could call my parents and tell them, but that might make things worse.

"Whatever. I'll deal with this somehow."

 # The game abruptly ends here and goes back to the start. The Entity would presumably move on as they never made a contract with her in this case.

 # Choice: Call the number

"Might as well see what's going on. And I can't help it; I'm curious. Who is this person, and what do they want from me?"

"The phone rings for a second, then a second more. I'm in the middle of wondering if I'm being pranked when the call finally picks up."

"The other person remains silent, like they're waiting for me to speak first."

v "Hello? This is Valeria Jimenez."

v "You're not just messing with me, right?"

 # The Entity appears in person. Valeria has a shocked expression. We could also consider adding in animations, like a screen shake to indicate shock.

e "Hello, Valeria."

v "What the — "
e "Don't be scared. I was the one texting you."

v "How the hell did you get in here?"

e "I'm here to offer you a solution, Valeria."

v "A solution to what? You just came out of my *phone*! You expect me to just calmly hear you out?"

e "Then let me explain. You need help, don't you?"

v "I don't need your help!"

e "You're on the verge of losing your scholarship. If you tell your parents, you'll lose all their support, won't you?"

e "You can't even vent to your best friend. It's not like he would understand. His professors love him, and he's able to afford this school. Unlike you."

v "Leave Darren out of this. And I could afford it if I took out a loan!"

e "Don't kid yourself. You're trapped, and I'm your only way out."

e "I'm clearly capable of more than even you can imagine. Helping you would be so simple. But beggars can't be choosers, and I don't work for free. If you want my help, I'd like something in return."

v "Which is?"

e "Your best friend, Darren Romero. His future seems bright. Don't you deserve the same future?"

e "You were the star pupil in high school; now you can barely reach the top. Doesn't it hurt to see Darren succeed while you fail? You could… extinguish some of that brightness."

v "Why?"

e "There's no need to know *why*, my dear Valeria. All *you* need to know is that I can help."

v "What am I supposed to do?"

e "I'll contact you, and you'll know."

v "What about if I can't do what you ask?"

e "Then I get your soul."

v "My *soul*? What is that supposed to mean?"

e "You're a smart person; I'm sure you know exactly what that entails. I'll own your soul, your life. But that's only if you fail."

e "If you hold up your end of the bargain, I will solve all of your problems and you'll never see me again."

v "What else do you get out of this deal?"

"It laughs, the sound every bit as shrill and raking as an unoiled iron gate swinging in the wind."

e "I am an agent of mischief, dear Valeria. I thrive off the humiliation and suffering of human beings."

e "When I have a chance, I appear to those who may help me. It's a mutually beneficial relationship, of course, since I offer something in return."

e "So, what will it be? Do we have a deal?"
- **Accept**
- **Refuse**

Choice: Refuse
v "No."

"This entire situation is a mess, but I got myself into it. I'm the only one who can get myself out of it, too."

"Not to mention the way this thing is talking about Darren… "

"Despite the perfectly comfortable room temperature, I shiver."

e "With no one else to rely on, aren't you desperate?"

v "I don't know what it is you want from me… but you mentioned my friend. I won't do anything to hurt him."

v "I don't care what you're promising. I refuse."

e "Very well. Goodbye, Valeria."

"I blink. The entity has vanished, replaced by empty air."

"I stand there for a few minutes, wondering what in the world I'd just talked to, and whether or not it was telling the truth."

"In the end, I guess it doesn't matter."

The game ends here as Valeria refused the contract.

Choice: Accept

"I'm desperate. What else can I do? I dug myself into this hole, and now there's a rope being lowered just for me.

"All I have to do is avoid failure. Simple enough."

v "Alright then, I accept."

e "Wonderful. I knew you'd make the right decision."

e "Grasp my hand and repeat after me: I, Valeria Jimenez, formally accept the terms of the Death Contract."

v "I, Valeria Jimenez, formally accept the terms of the Death Contract."

Everything goes dark. End scene.

Day Two

Classroom

"The next morning, I join Darren at our usual seats near the middle of the class."

"With finals coming up, the room is packed today with students scrambling to cram as much psychology knowledge into their brains as possible."

"The image of frantic students flipping through scattered notes is so jarringly normal, I almost forget the bizarre events of last night."

d "Morning!"

"Almost."

v "Who gave you the right to be *such* a morning person?"

d "Well, you're awfully chipper."

"Professor" "Now, we've gone over the psychodynamic and biological theories on personality. If you've read the assigned pages, you'd know that today we will be discussing behaviorist theories."

"Oh no."

v "I forgot to read it since I was so worried last night… "

d "What were you so worried about?"

v "… "

"Professor" "According to behavioral psychology, personality is determined by the environment, which reinforces your personality in an eternal cycle. Can someone tell me what the issue with this theory is?"

"As expected, Darren is the first to raise his hand."

"I sigh a little. He really doesn't have to; someone else is bound to know the answer. Unfortunately, he likes showing off a bit too much to resist."

d "Well, this theory considers environment as the only factor in determining someone's personality. But what about cognition?"