

# **Luna**

by

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&

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INT. LUNA - DAY

Nestled in a quiet corner of Venice, California is Luna. Luna is an Italian restaurant. But not the red-check tablecloth, Lady and the Tramp variety. Hip (not retro-hip), stylish and romantic -- this place looks great even with no one yet dining.

A handsome Maitre D' sits down at a long table and helps himself to pasta from a large bowl. Also at the table are a WAITER (30's) and a WAITRESS (20's) as well as TWO BUSBOYS wearing hairnets.

They all eat the staff dinner family style, laughing and smoking as they eat. It's very casual, but looks delicious.

The CHEF comes out of the kitchen and places a large chicken on the table. He swings a chair around backwards and pours himself a glass of wine.

RAP-TAP-TAP!

The Maitre D' turns to see a FORM knocking on the curtained window. The puzzled Maitre D' yells towards the window.

MAITRE D'  
We're closed until dinner!

FORM  
I have an 8:00 reservation!

MAITRE D'  
It's 3:45!

FORM  
Can I just come in please!

The Maitre D' opens the door to see MAX (20's), a bespectacled painter with an endearing nervousness.

MAX  
I just wanted to pick out a table for tonight.

Max walks past the Maitre D' and into the restaurant where he begins clinically examining various tables.

The waitstaff all look on casually, but continue to eat their dinners.

MAITRE D'  
Our policy is to work out seating as people arrive.

MAX  
Which is your best table?

MAITRE D'  
When you come at eight, I promise we'll  
take good care of you.

The Maitre D' smiles, thinking the matter settled, but Max continues to case the room.

MAX  
Are there any tables that the females  
seem to respond to? Where they feel more  
at ease?

MAITRE D'  
We've had good response on all our  
tables. From both genders.

Max sits down at one table under a Rothko print. He runs his hand over the table, almost sensually

MAX  
Oh, yes. This is the one. I'd like to  
reserve this table.

MAITRE D'  
We'll see what we can do.

Max slowly gets up from the table, still rubbing the table-cloth.

MAX  
This is going to be great.

Max gives the Maitre D' a double-fisted shake and leaves.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Sitting on a park bench eating soup from a thermos is JENNA (27), an optimistic office worker. She stares intently at an empty softball field.

She scans the field and after a few moments, walks back towards an office building at the edge of the park.

INT. DAVE'S ROOM - DAY

The levelor blinds are closed shut, doing their best to suppress the relentless California sunshine.

PAN around Dave's room:

A menagerie of kids' sporting equipment -- bats, red rubber balls, hippity-hoppity's etc. On one wall is a framed PHOTO of Dave with a group of children. A caption reads "DAVE'S SPORTS GROUP '02".

DAVE (26) lies in his bed, wearing boxers and a sweatshirt. He has the build of a guy who must have played linebacker at some level, but also the kind of warm, sweet eyes not normally associated with linebackers.

RALPHY (27), Dave's lanky roommate, bursts in.

RALPHY  
What the fuck?

Dave casually looks up.

DAVE  
What? I'm sick.

RALPHY  
I can't believe you're going to bail.

DAVE  
I'm in no position to go. I may have scurvy.

RALPHY  
This chick had balls to ask you out. You owe it to her to show up.

DAVE  
I'm just... I don't think I'm ready.  
That's it.

Dave pulls his blanket up over his head.

Ralphy considers this for a moment.

RALPHY  
No it's not.

Then he starts tugging Dave out of the bed by the ankle.

DAVE  
What the fuck?!

RALPHY  
You have ten minutes, to shit, shower and shave. You are going on this date if I have to buggly-whip you down there myself.

DAVE

I pay rent here. I have rights. What's a buggy-whip and why do you even care?

RALPHY

I care because I care about you. You're living in a dreamland. Dating is scary and it sucks, but this is how people meet.

DAVE

It's not how I met Lisa.

Ralphy physically pushes Dave into the bathroom.

INT. DAVE'S BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ralphy hands Dave his toothbrush. Dave puts some toothpaste on it and begins brushing his teeth.

RALPHY

In college you can get loaded on grain punch, wander down the hall into a girl's room, blabber about Camille Paglia, and land in a relationship. But this is real life. Do you know who lives down the hall?

DAVE

(still brushing his teeth)  
The guy with the chipmunks?

RALPHY

That's right, the guy with the chipmunks. Not too appetizing. It's been almost a year, dude. I really think you need to just suck it up and go.

Dave spits in the sink.

DAVE

It's too painful.

RALPHY

You know what's painful? Watching you sulk in bed every weekend. You don't bathe, you don't shave. This is starting to bring me down. If you don't go, we're both sunk.

Ralphy opens the shower curtain and gestures for Dave to get in.

RALPHY  
Hit the showers.

Dave stands there for a beat.

RALPHY  
Now.

DAVE  
How about a little privacy?

RALPHY  
I'll be outside if you need me.

Ralphy steps out of the bathroom.

INT. OFFICE BATHROOM - DAY

Jenna sits in a bathroom stall. Muzak pipes in from above. Fluorescent lights add a corporate glow.

After a few moments, a piece of paper is slipped under the stall door. Jenna looks at it incredulously.

CLOSE ON - THE PAPER

It is an office memo addressed to Jenna.

JENNA  
What is this?

A MALE VOICE responds.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)  
It's an urgent inter-office memo.

JENNA  
And who are you?

MALE VOICE (O.S.)  
I'm Bob from the memo department.

JENNA  
Bob, could I ask you a question?

BOB (O.S.)  
Shoot.

JENNA  
Do you know that you're in the women's bathroom?

BOB (O.S.)

I was told to get this memo to you ASAP.  
That means total office access  
privileges. It's in the handbook.

JENNA

I see. But on a strictly human level,  
does the fact that I'm sitting on the  
toilet right now factor in for you?

BOB (O.S.)

I'm sorry, the memo department needs face-  
to-face confirmation.

Jenna angrily kicks her door open.

JENNA

Face-to-face?

Bob averts his eyes, extremely uncomfortable.

BOB

I'm sorry. Mr. Radulski needs you for  
the "twilight" progress evaluation  
presentation.

JENNA

Tonight twilight?

BOB

It's very important.

JENNA

I'd just be changing slides.

BOB

He requested you, via memo.

JENNA

Listen, Bob, I can't. I have a very  
important date tonight. I asked the guy,  
so I have to go.

BOB

Unfortunately, I need to do my job, and  
that means getting you to the meeting.

Jenna picks up her purse and rifles through the contents --  
it's a disorganized mess: coupons, magazine articles, a  
Curious George keychain.

She pulls out a wad of crumpled bills.

JENNA

Shit. Look, I only have fourteen dollars here, but I'll give it to you to leave me alone.

BOB

Are you offering me a bribe?

JENNA

Yeah. I'm trying to.

Bob continues to stand in front of her, emboldened by his sense of duty.

JENNA

You're not leaving, are you?

BOB

No, I don't believe I am.

Jenna opens her mouth as if to respond, but then realizes there is no response to this kind of crap.

INT. GALLERY OFFICE - DAY

Behind a large desk sits CHRISTIE (30). Stylish and cute, Christie will be carded well into her thirties.

Christie's well-appointed office is filled with an assortment of black and white photographs which neatly cover the walls, the floor and every available inch of space.

Christie eats a piece of birthday cake from a paper plate.

A KNOCK is heard at the door and Christie hurriedly places the cake in the top drawer of her desk and slams it shut.

LEONA, Christie's assistant, enters. She's a little older than Christie but who's counting?

LEONA

What are you doing?

CHRISTIE

(mouth full of cake)  
Nothing.

LEONA

You're not wearing your tiara.

CHRISTIE

I feel silly.

LEONA

That's the point. It's part of owning your birthday. It says, "who cares if I look silly, I'm the princess and I don't care that I'm turning--"

CHRISTIE

I'll wear it.

Christie SIGHS and picks up a plastic tiara from her desk. She places it on her head. Leona looks satisfied.

Leona reads from a clipboard.

LEONA

You have a conference call at four, you have another meeting with your realtor at six-thirty and I really wish you'd do something for yourself on your birthday.

CHRISTIE

I am, Leona.

LEONA

A blind date is not something for yourself. It's an invitation to be judged.

CHRISTIE

I'm excited. This guy looks great on paper. Literally. Laurie faxed me a bio.

Christie holds up a folder.

LEONA

I just want you to be happy.

CHRISTIE

I am. It's my birthday. See the tiara?

Christie points to her tiara.

LEONA

I also see the birthday cake on your mouth.

Christie feels her lip and wipes off the crumb.

CHRISTIE

See, that's nice. That's all I'm looking for -- a guy who says what he means and makes me feel like a princess and wipes crumbs off my face if I have any.

LEONA

This is getting into a weird area for me.

Leona grabs a file and heads out the door.

Christie feels her head and removes the tiara.

She momentarily shuffles some papers but then stares at the tiara sitting on her desk.

CHRISTIE

(to the tiara)

Alright, already.

Christie puts the tiara back on her head.

INT. BEACH FRONT HOUSE - DAY

CLOSE ON - A PAINT BRUSH

It paints a very precise line on the trim of a door frame.

The brush belongs to Max. His work station is immaculately arranged, paints lined in rows. An old-school lunchbox sits to the side.

He's working in a airy beach house under heavy restoration. Behind him we can see Ocean Front Walk, the beach and the Pacific beyond. He turns to his friend NINA (32), an interior decorator.

MAX

Do you have a second?

NINA

What's the matter?

MAX

Nothing. I was just looking for the female perspective on a prickly issue. I have this date tonight.

NINA

Dinner with your ex-girlfriend.

MAX

I'm trying to look at it as a "second first date". Now if you had a "second first date" with an ex...

VOICE (O.S.)

Max!

At this moment, a BURLY FLOOR REFURBISHER (30) walks into the room, leading a small Beagle by the collar.

FLOOR REFURBISHER

He peed again! Why do you have to bring him to work?

MAX

The vet just started him on a new antidepressant, and I wanted to be available to him.

FLOOR REFURBISHER

I restore floors. That's what I do. And contrary to what you might have heard, dog piss doesn't help Western White Pine.

MAX

Sorry.

FLOOR REFURBISHER

I'm trying to do quality work here.

MAX

I promise I won't bring him in again.

Max turns back to Nina, thinking the matter resolved.

FLOOR REFURBISHER

I mean, how would you feel if I got up on that ladder and pissed all over the door frame?

MAX

Alright! I got it.

The refurbisher storms off.

MAX

So what were you saying?

NINA

No, you were asking me something.

MAX

Right. So, if you were out on a "second first date", how would you feel if things got to a certain level, and it was revealed that the guy had brought along a condom?

Max pulls a condom from his wallet.

NINA

Just bring it.

MAX

Right, but by having one, am I sort of giving off a dick-ish mojo? Like I'm just getting back together to get laid?

NINA

That's not your style, Max.

MAX

I've changed a lot, Nina. That's what tonight is about.

NINA

Why don't you just play it by ear?

Max considers this.

MAX

I don't think that's possible.

A GRUFF CARPENTER (40) leans out of a closet where he's been working.

CARPENTER

I'll tell you what you should bring.

MAX

What's that, Tuggle?

CARPENTER

I can give you something that will guarantee you a "Blockbuster Night".

The carpenter walks over and hands Max a small pill.

CARPENTER

Two words. Rufies.

NINA

Those are illegal and immoral.

CARPENTER

Just slip it in her drink and the edge comes right off. Most girls will thank you for loosening them up.

MAX

I'm trying to get this girl back, not anesthetize her.

CARPENTER

Why not do both?

MAX

This is insane. I could see myself marrying this girl.

The carpenter hands Max a second pill.

CARPENTER

Then you should double down. Look, they put this blue dye in them now - who knows why. So make sure she orders something blue. Like a Blue Hawaiian or a Raspberry Slurpee.

MAX

We're not going to 7-11.

CARPENTER

You don't have to use them. But it's like a shotgun in the trunk -- you'll feel more comfortable knowing it's there.

MAX

I'm going to pass.

Max emphatically puts the pills back in the carpenter's hand.

The carpenter begins to walk off but stops by Max's toolkit. He holds the rufies up demonstratively and then places them on the top of the toolkit.

CARPENTER

They'll be right here when you come around and see the light.

Max rolls his eyes and returns to his house painting.

INT. DAVE AND RALPHY'S LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Dave walks into the living room, showered, shaved and wearing khakis and a polo shirt with the San Diego Padres logo emblazoned on the right breast.

Ralphie sits on the couch, playing X-Box on a giant TV, which appears to be the only impressive item in the apartment. He looks up at Dave and winces at the sight of his shirt.

DAVE

What?

RALPHY

The shirt.

DAVE

Padres baseball. They're having a good year. It has a collar.

RALPHY

It's rather jackassy.

DAVE

This is who I am. She can like me or not.

RALPHY

Schmuck, don't cut off your balls to spite your dick. You're going on a date. The idea is to get this girl to like you, no matter who you really are.

DAVE

Well how the fuck am I supposed to know! I've never had a date like this!

RALPHY

What are you talking about?

DAVE

All through High School I was getting on Sandra Copabianco. And then I met Lisa in college and that went until last year. But... I've never really been on a structured "first date".

RALPHY

Are you serious?

DAVE

I've barely talked to a woman in six months. So I'm a little nervous here.

Ralphie pulls off the French blue button down that he's wearing. He hands it to Dave.

RALPHY

OK. Put this on.

Dave switches shirts.

DAVE  
How's that?

RALPHY  
That's sharp. Now just remember, as Jim Palmer said: "Work fast and throw strikes".

Dave thinks about this.

DAVE  
I don't think that advice can be applied to anything but baseball.

RALPHY  
First establish the ground game, then you can air it out.

DAVE  
Enough with the sports. Speak English.

RALPHY  
Right. Compliment the shiniest thing she's wearing and do your best to listen.

DAVE  
Shiny and listen.

RALPHY  
That's all you need to know. You're doing great.

DAVE  
I haven't even left yet.

INT. FLORIST - EVENING

Max, holding two very different bouquets, approaches a FLORIST.

MAX  
Which one of these says, "I'm sorry, I want to forge a new future with you, because I've changed and because our love is what matters."

FLORIST  
If that's what you want to say, I think you should just say that.

Max considers this.

MAX  
I'll take both of these.

INT. VENICE HOUSE - EVENING

Christie is led by a realtor, JANE ADAMS (30), through a gorgeous Craftsman-style home. The realtor carries a large and overstuffed manila folder.

Christie still wears her tiara.

JANE ADAMS  
So, what do you think?

Christie silently looks around. The realtor reads from a page in her folder.

JANE ADAMS  
It has everything you've wanted.

We glide through the house. It's gorgeous.

CHRISTIE  
I know.

JANE ADAMS  
A block away from Abbott Kinney Boulevard  
and all those great stores.

CHRISTIE  
I know.

JANE ADAMS  
Squarely in your price range.

CHRISTIE  
I know.

JANE ADAMS  
So, let's move. This is the house.

CHRISTIE  
I don't know.

Jane Adams goes to speak then holds her tongue. She taps her foot on the hardwood floor for a moment.

She then calmly re-organizes her manila folder, folds it up neatly and throws it to the floor, papers scattering everywhere.

JANE ADAMS

I, Jane Adams, hereby terminate our working relationship.

CHRISTIE

What?

JANE ADAMS

I can't keep doing this. Three years we've been looking and whenever I find you the perfect house, you think of something new that you simply must have. French doors, two parking spaces, column radiators.

Jane Adams points to a old-fashioned column radiator.

JANE ADAMS

Do you know how hard it is to find column radiators in L.A.? It's not that cold here.

CHRISTIE

I know you've done a lot of work and I appreciate that.

JANE ADAMS

You'll appreciate it more once I'm gone.

CHRISTIE

Please don't leave.

JANE ADAMS

I'm leaving. My advice: buy a piece of land and build.

CHRISTIE

I can change.

JANE ADAMS

Goodnight, princess.

Jane Adams storms out of the house.

Christie works to contain herself and starts picking up the papers.

Christie feels the top of her head and realizes she is still wearing the tiara. She SIGHS and removes the crown.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - TWI-NIGHT

CLOSE ON - A LINE GRAPH.

The projection doesn't look rosy. The graph line descends all the way to the X-axis.

The room is darkened for the slide presentation, but we can still make out the frustration in Jenna's face. MR. RADULSKI (48), a senior vice-president, drones on to a group of business-looking BUSINESSFOLK.

RADULSKI

So as we can see, productivity within the entire health-care sector has fallen off by 4.3%. Next slide.

Jenna presses the slide change button, almost savagely.

RADULSKI

What makes this regression fascinating is the corollary 5.8% rise in co-payment managed-care. Next slide.

Jenna presses the button. She glances at the clock. Fed up, she presses the button twice more.

Radulski scrambles to keep up.

RADULSKI

...uh, those charts showed the dichotomy between...

But now Jenna's determined. She presses the button over and over. The slides fly by.

RADULSKI

...this is going quite fast, but the trend is towards de-centralization and... Jenna, if you could just hold... slow down, please!

Slowing down is not an option. Jenna scrolls through the entire carousel. After the last slide, a harsh white light bathes the room.

Jenna drops the clicker and walks out of the room past the stunned executives.

Radulski desperately attempts damage control.

RADULSKI

OK, questions

EXT. SANTA MONICA BOULEVARD - EVENING

Jenna's car, a beat-up Toyota hatchback, swerves dangerously through the heavy traffic.

INT. JENNA'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Jenna drives and applies foundation to her face at the same time -- It is not very safe and largely contributes to her swerving.

Checking her look in the rear view mirror, she smiles broadly.

Jenna looks forward and suddenly slams on the brakes-- traffic is stopped by construction.

JENNA

Not today, not today, not today.

INT. LUNA - NIGHT

The restaurant looks great. Softly lit, perfectly dressed-- we can see why so many people come here for first dates.

Max enters the restaurant looking immaculate, toting both of his bouquets.

He is shocked to see a COUPLE sitting at his hand-picked table under the Rothko print. The rest of the restaurant is empty.

Max approaches the Maitre D'.

MAITRE D'

Hello again.

MAX

What's going on here?

MAITRE D'

What do you mean?

MAX

Those people. They're sitting at my table.

Max points to "his" table. The couple CLINKS their wine glasses.

MAX

You promised I could sit there.

MAITRE D'

I'm sorry. They got here first, and picked that table. Pick any other table. Even if it's for more than two people.

MAX

But I chose that table for a reason -- look.

Max gestures towards his table: the couple now spoon feed one another shrimp cocktail. They couldn't be more lovey-dovey.

MAITRE D'

I'm sorry, sir. Any other table is yours.

MAX

OK. I see how this works.

Max removes a twenty dollar bill from his billfold and places it in the Maitre D's shirt pocket.

MAITRE D'

Thank you, sir.

Max gestures over to the table.

MAX

So... can you move them?

MAITRE D'

No. They are already eating. And the rest of the room is empty.

MAX

Oh. I see.

The Maitre D' graciously hands Max back his twenty. He leads Max over to another table.

Max sits down and looks at the couple under the Rothko. They kiss passionately. Max rolls his eyes.

He focuses his attention on some index cards which he pulls out of his pocket.

CLOSE ON - THE CARDS

Max has written a conversation topic on each card -- "THE NEW MAX", "OPRAH", "GOOD MEMORIES: ACAPULCO?".

Max looks up and sees Christie entering the restaurant. She smiles at him. He smiles back. She walks over.

CHRISTIE  
Hi.

MAX  
Hello.

She sits down.

CHRISTIE  
Have you been here long?

MAX  
I just got here.

CHRISTIE  
This place looks great.

MAX  
It is. The food is great. There's a lot  
of history here.

There is a pause. Max bobs his head.

CHRISTIE  
So it's nice to finally meet you. Laurie  
speaks very highly of you.

MAX  
Aha... Who's Laurie?

Christie thinks for a moment.

CHRISTIE  
You're not Ron, are you?

MAX  
No, I'm Max. Sorry about that.

CHRISTIE  
I was told he looked young. Sorry.

She gets up and walks away.

MAX  
Don't be sorry.

ANGLE ON - THE FRONT DOOR

PUSH IN ON Dave as he enters the restaurant. He looks good  
but nervous in Ralphy's shirt. The Maitre D' greets him  
warmly.

MAITRE D'  
Good evening.

DAVE  
Yes, good evening. I'd like a Ketel One  
on the rocks. A double.

MAITRE D'  
Let's get you seated, and then I'll send  
your waiter over.

The Maitre D' takes Dave gently by the arm and leads him  
towards a table, walking past...

CHRISTIE

Who turns to the Maitre D', pointing to an empty table.

CHRISTIE  
Can I sit here?

MAITRE D'  
If it's empty, it's fine.

Christie sits down.

INT. LUNA - A LITTLE LATER

The restaurant is filling up now.

Dave sits alone. Waiting.

Max sits alone. Waiting.

Christie sits alone. Waiting.

All three glance around at one another. The HUM of the  
restaurant brings an expectation to the air. What will this  
evening bring?

CHRISTIE'S TABLE

The question is answered in a big way for Christie, when in  
walks RON (32), her date. Ron has dramatic, chiseled good  
looks and an ass that could crack a coconut.

Ron talks on a cellphone, but manages to mouth Christie a  
"hello" as well as kiss her hand.

RON  
...I'm really jazzed about the focus  
group. Menthol sticks are back, I  
think...

Ron sits down, pulls out a pen and scrawls on the back of a business card. He hands it to Christie.

CLOSE ON - THE BUSINESS CARD

It reads, "You look terriff. Off in five."

Christie smiles. She's both taken by Ron's looks and a little thrown by his unorthodox entrance.

INT. JENNA'S CAR - NIGHT

Jenna drives around the Venice streets in search of parking. There are "No Parking" signs everywhere.

JENNA  
Not tonight, not tonight, not tonight.  
(finally)  
Fuck it.

Jenna parks her car in front of a fire hydrant.

EXT. LUNA - NIGHT

Jenna, running late, is literally running. We TRACK along with her for the entire block. She stops suddenly before the restaurant door.

She takes a few deep breaths and fixes her hair.

JENNA  
(a mantra)  
I am a creature unlike any other.

She applies a new coat of lip gloss.

JENNA  
I am a creature unlike any other and I  
will not apologize for being late.

INT. LUNA - MOMENTS LATER

Jenna says hello to Dave.

JENNA  
I am so, so sorry for being late.

DAVE  
It's OK, I just got here.

Jenna plops down in her seat.

JENNA

I think I'm going to sue my boss for human rights violations.

DAVE

I'm sorry to hear that.

JENNA

Yeah. I actually may have just quit my job. I'm not sure.

There is a pause.

It's pretty long.

DAVE

I like your earrings. They're very shiny.

JENNA

Thank you.

There is another pause.

DAVE

Would you like a drink?

JENNA

(quickly)  
Love one.

MAX'S TABLE

Max anxiously shuffles his conversation cards and glances at his watch. He scans the room, almost filled now. The tables next to him are filled, highlighting the vacant seat in front of him.

So where's his date?

CHRISTIE & RON'S TABLE

RON

(still on cellphone)  
...Alright. Over and out.

Ron flips his Star-tac™ closed and stares at Christie. He smiles, knowing he has a gorgeous smile.

RON

I am so rude. These things should be outlawed. I promise, I will not answer it again.

CHRISTIE  
It's fine, really.

Ron tucks his phone away in a jacket pocket.

RON  
Forgotten. I'm here.

Ron takes a moment, then...

RON  
Christie, hello, I'm Ron.

CHRISTIE  
Laurie told me so much about you.

RON  
You are a spectacular looking person.

CHRISTIE  
Thank you.

Christie blushes despite herself.

RON  
This is going to be great.

JENNA & DAVE'S TABLE

Jenna and Dave study their menus. Neither speaks.

The soft TINKLING of glasses and the vague rise and fall of conversations around them can be heard.

Subtly, Jenna glances over her menu at Dave.

She continues to look at him as he obliviously studies his menu.

CHRISTIE & RON'S TABLE

Christie and Ron read over their menus.

RON  
See anything you like?

CHRISTIE  
This menu looks great.

RON  
When I found out you hadn't been to Luna,  
I knew we had to come here.

CHRISTIE

How often do you come here?

RON

Fairly often.

(catching himself)

But not always on dates.

Christie looks at Ron for a moment. She averts her eyes and smiles to herself.

RON

What is it?

CHRISTIE

I don't know. You seem different than I expected.

RON

Did you think I would be taller?  
Blonder?

CHRISTIE

I can't put my finger on it.

RON

Of course not. You don't really know me.

CHRISTIE

BBDO advertising; house on the canals;  
Stanford class of '93; born and raised in  
Carmel; on the board of an adult literacy  
foundation--

RON

You left out that bachelor number one  
likes volleyball, skiing and long walks  
on the beach.

CHRISTIE

Sorry. Laurie faxed me this whole thing  
about you. I'd hate to think what she  
faxed you about me.

RON

Nothing. I asked her not to fax  
anything.

CHRISTIE

Oh, God. You must think I'm so shallow.

RON

Don't get me wrong, I'm shallow. I demanded to know two things about you: is she beautiful and is she interesting? Only after I was assured it was yes on both counts did I agree to come.

CHRISTIE

That was nice of Laurie.

Ron smiles.

RON

So far she's been right.

Ron gazes into Christie's eyes. A less confident man might look away after a few beats, but Ron just keeps gazing.

Finally, Christie breaks the stare and takes a sip of her drink.

JENNA & DAVE'S TABLE

Dave and Jenna peruse their menus. Dave looks perplexed.

JENNA

They do a really nice mussels in a garlic cream sauce.

DAVE

Hmm.

JENNA

And the four cheese pizza is great, too.

DAVE

I don't really eat milk products.

JENNA

Are you lactose intolerant?

DAVE

Something like that.

A WAITER comes up and hovers over their table.

WAITER

Are you ready to order?

Jenna and Dave look at each other -- decision time. Dave gestures to Jenna to go ahead.

JENNA

I'll have the tomato salad to start with.  
And the linguine alla carbonara.

WAITER

Very good. And for signor?

Signor is still studying the menu. Intently.

DAVE

It just seems as if everything has  
cheese.

WAITER

The fusili with tomatoes and basil is  
delicious. And no cheese.

DAVE

I'm actually not a big tomato person.

WAITER

This is an Italian restaurant, signor.  
You're running out of options.

DAVE

Is it possible to get the pizza  
margherita, but with no tomatoes and no  
cheese?

The waiter looks a little baffled.

WAITER

So you basically want bread with oil and  
garlic.

DAVE

That's right.

The waiter hovers skeptically. Jenna jumps to Dave's  
defense.

JENNA

Actually, I think that's a Southern  
Italian delicacy. They call it *pane  
senza senzo*.

WAITER

(skeptical)  
I'm sure they do.

We FOLLOW the waiter into the...

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

The waiter puts Dave and Jenna's order on the counter. An ITALIAN LINE COOK picks it up and reads it.

LINE COOK  
(waxing nostalgic)  
Ah, *sensa senzo*.

The line cook jauntily picks up a ball of dough and begins kneading it into a crust.

CHRISTIE & RON'S TABLE

Christie looks on as Ron gives their order to the waitress.

RON  
She will have the penne arrabiatta and I was hoping to have the seared salmon.

Ron doesn't give the waitress a chance to speak.

RON  
I know it's not on the menu, but the chef's done it for me before. And we'll have a bottle of the '96 Barbaresco.

WAITRESS  
Very well.

The waitress walks off with the order.

RON  
I always get the salmon. The chef just nails it here.

Ron gets into conversation.

RON  
So Laurie tells me you've been looking for a house?

We continue to hear the conversation as we see...

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

The chef is not happy with the waitress for accepting Ron's order. He relents, but throws up his hands.

CHRISTIE (V.O.)  
About three years.

RON (V.O.)  
Three years? Like on and off?

The chef barks an order to his line cook, who looks around, then goes out the side door into...

EXT. ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

The line cook yells at one of the busboys who quickly stubs out his cigarette.

CHRISTIE (V.O.)  
No, I usually spend all day Saturday and then a few other evenings a week.

The busboy takes off sprinting down the alley.

EXT. LUNA - CONTINUOUS

The busboy comes barrelling out from the alley. He runs right past Luna's front window and down the sidewalk.

RON (V.O.)  
And in three years you haven't found anything you've liked?

EXT. PASTA PLUS - NIGHT

The busboy sprints up to this pasta joint with a "\$3.99 ALL-U-CAN-EAT" banner in the window. He takes a sharp turn and heads down an adjacent alley.

CHRISTIE (V.O.)  
I've seen some great houses, but none of them have been perfect. It's buying a house, it's a big deal.

EXT. ADJACENT ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

The busboy bangs on the restaurant's back door. Another BUSBOY opens the door. The Luna busboy gives his buddy a friendly handshake, then pleads his case. The Pasta Plus busboy nods and goes back inside.

RON (V.O.)  
Of course, but do you think it's possible you're blocking? Holding back? Maybe even subconsciously?

CHRISTIE (V.O.)  
What, you think I'm waiting to buy a house until I find a man?

RON (V.O.)  
I didn't say that.

The Luna busboy lights up a cigarette as he waits patiently.

- He sits and waits.
- He paces and waits.
- He lights another cigarette and waits.

The Pasta Plus busboy finally returns and hands the Luna busboy a styrofoam container. The busboy takes the container, hands the Pasta Plus busboy his unfinished cigarette, then takes off.

CHRISTIE (V.O.)  
How long did it take you to find a house?

QUICK SHOTS

- The busboy sprints Pasta Plus, down the sidewalk, past Luna's front window, down the alley and into Luna's side door...

RON (V.O.)  
One day.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

The busboy barrels into the kitchen, catches some flak from the line cook for taking so long.

CHRISTIE (V.O.)  
But you're a guy. You probably just needed a place.

RON (V.O.)  
Are you kidding? I'm the pickiest person I know. But when I see something I want, I take action. I go for it, seize it.

He hands the container to the line cook who hands it to the chef, who looks at the contents of the container.

The chef takes a spatula and removes a fillet of salmon and plates it with a side of spinach and wild rice.

He hands the plate as well as a penne dish through the window to the waitress who brings them to...

CHRISTIE & RON'S TABLE

RON  
I had a great realtor, too. Jane Adams.  
You should call her.

The waitress sets the dishes down in front of the diners.

RON  
Just the way I remembered it. Thank you.

#### MAX'S TABLE

Still alone, still waiting. Max looks around at all the other dates, now in full swing. He nervously signals to the Maitre D'.

MAX  
Hi. Has a Pam or Pamela called at all?

MAITRE D'  
No, sir.

MAX  
Have any women called at all who didn't give their names?

MAITRE D'  
No, sir. I'm sorry.

MAX  
So no females have called to say they were running late? Or to get directions?

MAITRE D'  
Not tonight, I'm sorry. Did you want to get an appetizer?

MAX  
No, it's cool. I'll wait.

#### CHRISTIE & RON'S TABLE

Christie and Ron enjoy their meals with a bottle of '96 Barbaresco.

CHRISTIE  
Cigarettes?

RON  
Before you rush to judgement, you should know that I don't smoke and I recognize anyone else's choice not to smoke as valid.

CHRISTIE

I don't smoke.

RON

Good. That's valid. But from an advertising perspective, some of the most ground-breaking campaigns are for tobacco products.

CHRISTIE

Like the penis camel?

RON

No. Admittedly there are exceptions. But take for instance... a Benson & Hedges ad. Where the cigarettes themselves are resting in a hammock or playing the piano. On the surface, it may seem ridiculous, but it's actually an ingenious way of working around the codes.

CHRISTIE

Do you ever think those codes might be in place for a reason?

RON

I think they're a blessing. I think they force "Creative" to push the form. It's like 1930's Hollywood, where filmmakers couldn't so much as mention anything sexual. But as a result, the veiled romantic moments they created were even sexier.

Ron pulls a laminated photo out of his briefcase.

CLOSE ON - THE PHOTO

Two handsome men ride a ski chair lift while smoking cigarettes. Inexplicably, they have their shirts off. At the bottom, a caption reads, "YOU'VE COME A LONG WAY, BABY!"

CHRISTIE

What's this?

RON

It's a pet project of mine. An idea to market Virginia Slims to gay men. A buddy and I are talking about opening our own agency, so we're always brainstorming new ideas.

Christie studies the photo and considers.

CHRISTIE

Well. I guess they have come a long way... baby.

JENNA & DAVE'S TABLE

Jenna and Dave are now deep into their meal.

JENNA

How's your bread?

DAVE

Really good, actually.

JENNA

That's good. So... I...

Jenna pauses as if she's going to broach a difficult subject.

JENNA

So I hope you didn't think it was weird, me asking you out-

DAVE

-Oh, no-

JENNA

-'cause, I'm not really the type to ask a guy out.

DAVE

Well, I get asked out a lot, but it's usually by the ten year old girls in my sports group.

JENNA

That's so cute.

DAVE

That's what I say and they get all upset.

Jenna laughs.

JENNA

Anyway, I hope you didn't think it was weird.

DAVE

No. I mean, you didn't seem like one of those cat-type women. I already went down that road with my ex-girlfriend.

JENNA

What is that, a cat-type woman?

DAVE

You know, one of those intense Venice women who are really into yoga and have multiple cats. And they all have human names.

JENNA

Oh. Oh, no. That is so not me.

Jenna takes a tremendous gulp of wine.

MAX'S TABLE

Max takes a hard look at his watch. He makes a decision and stands up. He strides purposefully to the...

RESTAURANT PAY PHONE

Max drops a quarter in the phone and dials.

We hear the RINGING. Max looks around nervously. He catches sight of the chef, standing outside the kitchen, taking a breather. Max nods an awkward "hello".

VOICE (O.S.)

Hello.

MAX

Hello, Pam? It's Max.

There is a pause. It's not a short one.

PAM (O.S.)

Hi.

MAX

I'm surprised you're there. I figured you were on your way over. To the restaurant. Which is where I am.

PAM (O.S.)

Oh, Max.

MAX

So we have our thing now. I'm at the restaurant.

PAM (O.S.)

I'm sorry.

Max turns away from the absent gaze of the chef.

MAX  
Are you running late?

PAM (O.S.)  
No, I'm sorry.

MAX  
Are you going to be able to make it?

PAM (O.S.)  
No, I'm sorry.

Max looks stunned. He turns back towards the chef who has disappeared into the kitchen.

MAX  
Is everything alright? Are you sick?  
Has there been some kind of emergency?

PAM (O.S.)  
I'm sorry.

MAX  
You can stop saying that. What's the  
problem?

Another pause.

MAX  
Any excuse will do. Make something up.  
Give me something to work with.

Yet another pause.

MAX  
I had so many things to say. Is it me?  
Did you not come because I'm me?

Pam has her biggest pause yet.

PAM (O.S.)  
Yes.

MAX  
Oh.

Max lets the receiver slide down his cheek and drops it. He numbly walks away from the phone and back to...

## MAX'S TABLE

Max sits down and takes a deep breath. He might even cry. He rubs his eyes vigorously then looks up.

## MAX'S POV:

Couples everywhere.

Max exhales. He takes a sip of water and a personal moment.

Finally, he sits up straight. He assertively flags down a waiter.

WAITER

Yes, signor.

MAX

Here's the situation -- For rather painful reasons, my date will not be joining me this evening.

WAITER

I'm sorry, signor.

MAX

Yes, everyone seems sorry. However, I have budgeted this evening both fiscally and emotionally for a large and splendid night. So I'm going to stay and order. And I'm going to order a lot.

WAITER

Very good. Would you like to hear our specials?

MAX

No. I've had plenty of time to peruse the menu. I'll have the carpaccio and the mussels in cream sauce.

WAITER

Yes, signor.

MAX

And I'll have the penne arrabiatta and the veal shank. Very rare.

WAITER

Very rare, of course.

MAX

And of course I'll need bruschetta and some sides of spinach and parmesan roasted potatoes.

WAITER

Very good.

MAX

And which wine would you recommend, the Chianti Riserva or the Montepulciano D'Abruzzo?

WAITER

Both are excellent.

MAX

Great. I'll have a bottle of each.

WAITER

Very good.

The waiter turns to leave.

MAX

And a diet coke.

JENNA & DAVE'S TABLE

JENNA

Oh, you know what? We forgot to have a toast.

Jenna holds up her wine glass.

JENNA

Here's to... you know... us?

Dave holds up his glass and smiles.

DAVE

Cheers.

JENNA

Cheers.

They CLINK glasses.

CHRISTIE & RON'S TABLE

Ron and Christie hold up their glasses for a toast.

RON

"May the dewey rays of this moon dappled night fill our souls with the spark of possibility." Dante Alighieri.

CHRISTIE

A quote toast. Cheers.

They CLINK their glasses and take sips. Ron ponders the wine.

RON

Do you drink much red wine?

CHRISTIE

No, actually I prefer crack cocaine.

Ron CHUCKLES, maybe a little too hard.

CHRISTIE

Actually, we usually work late, so we end up ordering in and that's unfortunately alcohol free.

RON

That's right. Laurie said you eat a lot of dinners at your desk.

CHRISTIE

(embarrassed)

Great, she told you everything, didn't she?

RON

It's alright. I respect a hard working lady.

Christie SIGHS almost imperceptibly.

MAX'S TABLE

Max holds up a glass of wine in each hand.

MAX

Cheers.

Max CLINKS the glasses together and takes hearty gulps from each.

JENNA & DAVE'S TABLE

BEEP! BEEP! BEEP! BEEP!

Dave realizes that it is his Blackberry pager.

DAVE  
Oh, excuse me.

Dave unclips his pager and checks the LCD message. He laughs and smiles proudly.

JENNA  
Is everything cool?

DAVE  
Yeah. That was just a message from one of my former kids. He's playing JV hoops now. He scored twelve points.

JENNA  
That's amazing.

DAVE  
For JV it's pretty good.

JENNA  
No, it's amazing that you have that kind of connection with your job. That you've touched people, and they're still reaching out to you.

DAVE  
The kids are great.

JENNA  
My job has nothing like that.

DAVE  
You told me, but what do you do again?

JENNA  
See. Exactly. It's utterly forgettable. I'm an analyst in the Managed Care Strategic Group for an HMO. I mean -- what is that?

DAVE  
Aren't you helping people get better health care?

JENNA  
To hide behind that is like Jefferson Davis hiding behind States Rights. If I really cared about people's wellness, I'd be working in a hospice.

DAVE

There's nothing wrong with making money.

JENNA

Yeah. But it doesn't mean anything. I was reading the L.A. Times obituaries a few weeks ago and I realized that if I kept going on this track, my life will not make a very interesting obituary. Even I don't know what I'd write about myself. Isn't that sad?

Dave considers this.

DAVE

Yeah. That is sad.

Dave sees that Jenna has upset herself.

DAVE

I'll turn off my beeper.

He turns off his beeper.

MAX'S TABLE

Max looks over towards the open kitchen to see...

The Maitre D' chatting with the Chef. They intermittently look over in Max's direction.

Max self-consciously straightens his appearance.

CHRISTIE & RON'S TABLE

As they eat, Christie looks at her watch. She tries to do it subtly, but Ron catches her.

RON

I'm losing you, aren't I.

CHRISTIE

No. I always look at my watch. It's a nervous thing.

RON

I'm losing you.

Ron gently hits the table with his palm.

RON

Dammit. I always do this. It's beginning to get annoying.

CHRISTIE

What?

RON

I come into these situations with a bravado or bravura or whatever. It's a wall I put up. I don't even notice when I do it.

CHRISTIE

Don't even worry about it.

RON

No. See this thing happened and since then, I find myself pushing women away. The cooler they are, the harder I push.

CHRISTIE

What was the thing that happened?

RON

OK, yeah. Divorce. I actually was married, for two years.

Christie wasn't expecting this.

CHRISTIE

That wasn't in the bio.

RON

I don't imagine it would be. I was married and divorced by the time I was twenty-four, before any of my friends were even engaged.

CHRISTIE

I'm sorry to hear that.

Slowly PUSH IN on Ron.

RON

She was my high school sweetheart. We loved each other, even though we were totally different people with totally different views on life. It was fun for a while, pretending it didn't matter. Opposites attract, that sort of thing. But that's bullshit.

CHRISTIE

You think so?

RON

We didn't share anything. Our lives didn't mesh. It got to the point where we were taking separate vacations. One spring she went to her parents house in Massachusetts and I went trekking in the Andes. And as I was reaching the peak, I stupidly slipped and fell and broke my leg. My tibia actually came through my skin.

CHRISTIE

Oh my God.

RON

It was unbelievably painful. And the worst part about it was, my guide had to go down for the helivac, leaving me alone on the cold mountaintop.

CHRISTIE

Were you scared?

RON

Not really scared so much as lonely. Right before the copter arrived, the sun went down. And it was the most gorgeous sunset I've ever seen. This beautiful red sun behind the mist. And yet my leg hurt so badly. It was a tranquil moment and a painful one all at once and I had this... Flash. I realized: I want someone to share all these moments with. The good as well as the bad.

CHRISTIE

So it sounds like all you need is a fun, adventurous girl in your life.

RON

There aren't many out there.

CHRISTIE

All you need is one.

MAX'S TABLE

The Maitre D' personally brings a dish over to Max's table.

MAX

What's this?

MAITRE D'  
Burrata caprese with white truffle oil.  
Chef's special.

MAX  
It's not what I ordered.

MAITRE D'  
Your carpaccio will be out momentarily.  
The chef wanted you to try this.

Max nods, still a little unsure. He takes a bite.

MAX  
Wow. Thanks.

MAITRE D'  
We thought you'd like it.

The Maitre D' walks on over to...

CHRISTIE & RON'S TABLE

The Maitre D' refills Christie's wine glass, without disturbing their conversation.

Christie seems looser. She finishes her wine as she talks.

CHRISTIE  
You should be commended for giving it a try. I've been in five serious relationships, God it's weird to say that, but none of them worked out. My mom called them practice relationships but none of them were easy or fun, and so far they haven't been practice for anything.

RON  
Relationships can be hard.

CHRISTIE  
I always found myself wondering, is this it? Is this love? And the fact that I had to even ask meant that the answer was no. Always no.

RON  
Does that bother you?

CHRISTIE  
It used to. It still does.

RON  
This might sound sexist, but my  
perception is that most women fall in  
love really easily.

CHRISTIE  
I think men as well as women can delude  
themselves into thinking they're in love.

RON  
But you've never deluded yourself.

CHRISTIE  
My last boyfriend loved me. He told me  
so. I wanted to love him back. I would  
have loved to delude myself. But I  
couldn't. So where does that put me?

RON  
In a place of honesty and clarity that  
most people never experience.

At this moment, Ron casually wipes at his lip, indicating  
that Christie should do the same.

RON  
You have a little crumb action going.

CHRISTIE  
Oh.

Christie wipes a breadcrumb off her lip.

RON  
Got it.

Christie smiles.

CHRISTIE  
Thank you.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

A WOMAN bearing a huge basket of roses walks along the  
street.

INT. RESTAURANT FRONT DOOR - CONTINUOUS

The Rose Lady enters the restaurant and begins winding her  
way from table to table, peddling her flowers.

A few tables politely decline and she makes her way to...

## JENNA &amp; DAVE'S TABLE

ROSE LADY  
Rose for the lady?

DAVE  
No thanks. We're fine.

The Rose Lady holds up a rose next to Jenna's face. Jenna shines - the flower brings out her beauty.

ROSE LADY  
Very pretty girl.

DAVE  
(getting testy)  
Yes, thank you. We're really fine here.  
If you could just go.

Dave gestures for the woman to leave and she does so.

DAVE  
See. I hate that. It's such a scam.  
Now I feel like a jerk for not buying you  
a rose.

JENNA  
Don't. It is a scam.

DAVE  
It's just that I don't like buying things  
out of guilt. They play on this whole  
restaurant atmosphere and make you feel  
like a schmuck if you pass.

JENNA  
It's OK.

DAVE  
I'm sorry. Would you have wanted one?

JENNA  
No. I mean, I love getting flowers...  
but not from a scam artist like that.

DAVE  
Oh.

## CHRISTIE &amp; RON'S TABLE

The Rose Lady moves on to Christie and Ron.

ROSE LADY  
Rose for the lady?

CHRISTIE  
We're fine.

The woman moves on to another table.

RON  
Now if she had hyacinths, I would have bought you one.

CHRISTIE  
That's my favorite flower.

RON  
I love them too. I love all flowers, always have. But only recently have I let myself admit that.

CHRISTIE  
Why is that, do you think?

RON  
I guess when I was younger I kept certain things in check. I suppose I was worried about how I would be perceived. But when I reached my thirties, I just sort of said, "fuck it." Now I can enjoy my flowers or "The Lion King" and not even care what people think.

CHRISTIE  
That is so cool.

RON  
It took me a while to really get comfortable with myself.

CHRISTIE  
So you're happy to be in your thirties?

RON  
I'm happy and I happen to be in my thirties. I don't place a big premium on age.

CHRISTIE  
Well, I do, I guess. I think women are naturally cyclical and time-oriented beings. Even our bodies are shaped like hour-glasses. If we're lucky.

RON  
Don't worry, you're lucky.

CHRISTIE  
There's that bravado/bravura again.

RON  
Sorry, it only comes out when I'm either uncomfortable or very comfortable.

CHRISTIE  
I hope it's the latter.

RON  
It is.

CHRISTIE  
Good. Same here.

ROSE LADY

The Rose Lady, having cased the joint and made her rounds, is heading for the door. We MOVE with her, then HOLD ON...

MAX'S TABLE

MAX  
(loudly)  
That's not going to work.

The Rose Lady turns. Max waves her over.

MAX  
Hi, did you see me sitting here?

ROSE LADY  
Yes, *monsieur*.

MAX  
So why didn't you try to sell me a flower?

ROSE LADY  
Because you have flowers.

She points to the two bouquets sitting on his table.

MAX  
That only proves I'm a buyer. Why not sell me some more? Give me the real answer.

ROSE LADY

Because *monsieur* is sitting alone.

MAX

Now we're getting somewhere. I'm sick of this couple-oriented society where everyone is supposed to fall in line and pair up. Tables for two. Tandem chairlifts. Prices based on double occupancy. What happened to the individual? What happened to me?

The woman is dumbstruck. Other diners have begun to stare.

MAX

How much?

ROSE LADY

Seven dollars a stem.

MAX

How much for your whole basket?

JENNA & DAVE'S TABLE

DAVE

Excuse me a second. I need to use the bathroom.

Dave gets up and we follow him towards the bathroom. We MOVE with Dave, then HOLD on...

MAX'S TABLE

Max busily places the full basket of newly purchased roses in the seat across from him (not unlike a memorial wreath). His table now resembles a botanical garden.

The Maitre D' arrives with another plate.

MAITRE D'

Osso Bucco. Another Chef's special. The little fork is for the marrow.

MAX

Oh. Excellent.

The Maitre D' puts the plate down on the table and picks up Max's soup bowl. He follows Dave, just before he mistakenly enters the kitchen...

MAITRE D'

Bathroom?

DAVE

Yeah.

MAITRE D'

It's back that way.

DAVE

Thanks.

MAITRE D'

Of course. Have a great evening.

The Maitre D' smiles calmly. After seeing Dave off, he loses the smile and ducks into...

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Bedlam. A pipe has burst and water spews everywhere. A busboy struggles to fix the pipe with a wrench while the line cook struggles to keep pieces of meat from getting wet.

The second busboy climbs up on a box of apples to open a ventilator shaft.

The chef cooks on obliviously as if nothing is happening.

Finally, the busboy is able to jerry-rig a towel around the pipe, stopping the leak. The Maitre D' nods and heads back out of the noisy kitchen.

INT. RESTAURANT - CONTINUOUS

Quiet. Romantic. The Maitre D' adjusts his tie and proceeds over to...

JENNA & DAVE'S TABLE

The Maitre D' puts a kind hand on Jenna's shoulder.

MAITRE D'

Everything going okay tonight?

JENNA

I hope so. How about for you?

MAITRE D'

Thank you for asking. Quiet night, quiet night.

INT. MEN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Dave pees in front of a urinal. We hear the sound of PEEING. As we begin to wonder why this is important to the story...

Ralphy jumps out from one of the stalls! He is now wearing Dave's Padres polo shirt.

RALPHY  
Alright! The kid has got it. You, my friend, are kicking a lot of ass.

Dave jumps and zips up his fly.

DAVE  
What the fuck are you doing here?

RALPHY  
I'm here for support, man. You're doing great.

DAVE  
You've been spying on me?

RALPHY  
You seemed a little shakey when you left, so I figured I'd make myself available.

DAVE  
Shouldn't you be at work?

Ralphy just LAUGHS hysterically.

DAVE  
I wish you'd let me do this on my own.

RALPHY  
You are. I'm here only in an advisory capacity. A *consigliere*. Now how do you feel? You look tremendous. Why didn't you tell me she was such a hotty?

DAVE  
I don't know what I'm doing out there.

RALPHY  
Are you shitting me? She is loving your ass.

DAVE  
I had some ordering issues. She thinks I'm picky.

RALPHY  
No -- selective. That's a good thing.

Ralphy pulls some newspaper clippings out of his pocket.

RALPHY

I brought along some of your old clippings. Just to give you a boost.

DAVE

Where did you get these?

RALPHY

From your scrapbook. Check this out. Two dingers against Lehigh. Five for five at Colgate. Fucking hot.

DAVE

This has nothing to do with anything.

RALPHY

It has everything to do with everything. I need you to realize what a potent and powerful fuck you are.

DAVE

My potency isn't the issue here.

RALPHY

So what's the problem?

DAVE

It's hard for me to relax in situations like this.

RALPHY

I hear you.

Ralphy pulls out a joint which he lights.

DAVE

What are you doing?

RALPHY

Getting you loose.

DAVE

I'm not going to smoke a joint in the middle of my date.

RALPHY

Suit yourself.

Ralphy takes another huge toke.

RALPHY

I'm starting to feel quite a bit looser.

DAVE  
Get out of here.

RALPHY  
Get back out there or she's going to  
think you're going number two.

DAVE  
That's because you scared the shit out of  
me.

Ralphy points at Dave's chest.

RALPHY  
Yes. That's it. That's the humor. Now  
take that sharpness back out there.

Dave turns to leave.

RALPHY  
Last thing: Just look at her napkin.  
She's just as nervous as you are.

DAVE  
Alright. Take off.

RALPHY  
I was never here. I'm proud of you.

Dave smiles and leaves the bathroom.

INT. LUNA - NIGHT

Dave walks out of the bathroom and back to his table. A  
cellphone CHIRPS somewhere in the dining room.

We PUSH PAST Dave and move in on...

CHRISTIE & RON'S TABLE

RON  
I don't have to answer it.

CHRISTIE  
Go ahead.

Ron reaches deep into his pocket and pulls out his Star-tac™.

RON  
(into phone)  
Speaking.

We hear the MALE voice on the other end -- Christie cannot.

VOICE (O.S.)  
This is your 9:30 ripcord call. Need an  
excuse to get out of there?

RON  
(all business)  
No. I'm pretty sure I faxed you that.

Ron mouths "I'm sorry" to Christie.

VOICE (O.S.)  
She's a honey, huh?

RON  
Yeah. The report is looking good. Look,  
I'm at dinner, I'm being rude. I've got  
to go.

VOICE (O.S.)  
Hold on dude, have you told her yet?

RON  
Not yet.

VOICE (O.S.)  
You haven't told her?!

RON  
Not yet.

VOICE (O.S.)  
Man, you are something else.

RON  
(rushing off the phone)  
Alright. I'm going to have to go here.  
We'll pow-wow soon. Bye.

Ron snaps his phone closed. He smiles at Christie  
apologetically.

RON  
Business.

BEHIND RON

Ralphy, looking like a guy trying to look stealthy, slinks  
his way behind them and out of the restaurant.

MAX'S TABLE

Max looks ill -- he's finished virtually every one of the  
numerous dishes in front of him.

The waiter approaches with the Maitre D' close behind.

WAITER  
Dessert?

The thought turns Max's stomach, but he fights through.

MAX  
Yeah. I'll have the chocolate cake.

WAITER  
The creme brulee is excellent as well.

Max looks to the Maitre D' for some guidance. The Maitre D' nods assuringly.

MAX  
That too, then.

WAITER  
Coffee? A bit of grappa? To complete the evening.

The Maitre D' nods again.

MAX  
Yeah. I guess so.

Max gears up for another round.

CHRISTIE & RON'S TABLE

Christie's eyes go wide with fear when she hears...

VOICES (O.S.)  
Happy birthday to you, happy birthday...

Christie turns to see a group of WAITERS walking in the direction of her table, carrying a slice of cake with one candle in it.

CHRISTIE  
I can't believe Laurie told you.

RON  
Pardon?

WAITERS  
...Happy birthday, dear Joh-ohn...

Christie breathes a sigh of relief at the sound of someone else's name. She watches as the waiters deliver the cake to another table.

RON  
I'm sorry, I couldn't hear you.

CHRISTIE  
I was just saying that cake looked really good.

Christie returns to her pasta.

JENNA & DAVE'S TABLE

Dave glances at Jenna's napkin. It's scrunched tightly between her hands.

DAVE  
Everything OK?

JENNA  
Yeah, why?

DAVE  
If you scrunched that napkin any tighter it would fuse into a ball.

Jenna puts down the napkin.

JENNA  
I'm just a little nervous.

DAVE  
I know. Me too.

JENNA  
Ah, right. But my nervousness actually has a level of complexity that... I should probably tell you about.

DAVE  
OK.

JENNA  
Remember all that stuff I was saying about hating my job?

DAVE  
Sure.

JENNA  
About a month ago, I was having my eighth horrible day in a row. But the feeling I had on this particular day was just so heavy. So I walked out to the park to clear my head. To the softball fields.

DAVE

The fields where I have my group?

JENNA

Yeah. Yes. So I sat on a bench and I watched you with those kids. And it all made so much sense.

DAVE

What did?

JENNA

You. The passion you have for your job. The happiness those kids have. The purity. Every day I see it in you.

DAVE

Every day?

JENNA

Yeah. I sort of made a habit of coming out and watching you on my lunchbreaks. It helped me. And then I began skipping meetings.

DAVE

To watch me-

At this inopportune moment, the waiter arrives.

WAITER

Who wants dessert?

Dave and Jenna react uneasily, still needing to finish their conversation.

JENNA

Oh. No thank you.

DAVE

No thank you.

Dave waves the waiter off dismissively. He turns to Jenna to finish his point.

DAVE

You skipped-

WAITER

Coffee, then? Cheese tray?

JENNA

Not for me. Unless...

Jenna looks at Dave. Dave just sits impatiently, wishing the waiter would leave. Jenna turns back to the waiter.

JENNA

Nothing at the moment, thank you.

The waiter leaves. Dave makes sure he's gone, then turns to Jenna.

DAVE

You were skipping meetings to watch me?

JENNA

No. Not to, not... yes. You and the kids. But here's something I need to say -- I'm being upfront about this. I'm not a stalker and you've helped me.

DAVE

But how could I... but you don't even know me.

JENNA

I don't. I know. It's crazy.

DAVE

You've built a myth around someone you don't even know. I'm not that great a guy. I'm in no position to help you.

JENNA

You're this amazing guy. Watching you is so fascinating.

DAVE

I'm not an amazing guy.

JENNA

Yes, you are. You love what you do. You love it with all your heart.

DAVE

OK. I love it. But so what?

JENNA

So, that's everything. What you have and what you are means so much to me right now.

Dave literally pushes himself away from the table.

DAVE

Jesus. I'm coming from a place where I'm not even ready to date and you drop this heavy, heavy shit on me.

JENNA

I'm just trying to be honest.

DAVE

I had a feeling some fucked up thing like this was going to happen.

JENNA

(quavering)

I'm sorry.

Jenna stares at her water glass, unable to say anything else. Dave sees how much he's upset her.

DAVE

No. I apologize. I appreciate your honesty. I didn't want you to get upset.

Jenna continues to stare at her water glass, her eyes beginning to mist.

DAVE

I probably should just leave. I'm just not ready for this.

Dave reaches for his wallet and is prepared to settle up the check and end the evening.

JENNA

Wait, stop.

Jenna puts her hand on Dave's arm.

JENNA

If you're not ready to be dating now, then let's try and make this not a date.

DAVE

Right, I'm going to get the check.

JENNA

No. I mean, let's do something together but non-structured and low-key. Like what would you be doing if you weren't here?

DAVE

Probably sleeping.

JENNA

Alright, let's suppose that for some strange reason, you weren't asleep at 9:45 on a Friday night, what else?

DAVE

I don't know. Laundry. Or maybe the batting cages.

JENNA

I'll drive.

CHRISTIE & RON'S TABLE

WAITER

Is everyone ready for tiramisu?

The waiter places dessert menus in front of Christie and Ron.

Christie and Ron look at each other -- "What do you think?"

RON

Did you want some cake?

CHRISTIE

Oh. Well, I did say it looked good but I'm pretty full.

RON

How about some coffee?

CHRISTIE

Sure.

RON

I was going to say, I have a steam espresso maker back at my place.

CHRISTIE

Really.

RON

It's very close. Walking distance.

Ron smiles.

Christie considers this. She knows what "coffee" means.

Christie decisively hands her dessert menu to the waiter.

CHRISTIE

Sounds like a plan.

## MAX'S TABLE

Max sits back in his chair, dessert plates spread out before him. He is stuffed to the gills, even queasier than before.

The Maitre D' has turned a neighboring chair around and sits with Max. He pours himself a glass of wine, finishing off Max's second bottle.

MAX

I think I ate too much.

MAITRE D'

When I got out of the army, I went straight to a local butcher and spent my entire bus fare on Parma prosciutto. Three pounds, I ate it all and got extremely sick. Then I had to hitchhike home.

MAX

Why on Earth did you do that?

MAITRE D'

I wanted to. I could. It was great.

Max thinks about this.

MAX

Yeah. That's a good reason. Thanks.

The Maitre D' gets up.

MAITRE D'

Thank you.

The Maitre D' pulls out a leather check holder and puts it on the table.

Max cringes. He takes a deep breath.

MAX

My night, my money, right?

Max peers inside the check holder with trepidation -- he's eaten a lot tonight and now it's time for reckoning.

Max smiles, pleasantly surprised. He looks back at the Maitre D' who smiles back.

MAITRE D'

Creative accounting.

EXT. LUNA - NIGHT

Dave and Jenna exit the restaurant and walk towards the spot where Jenna parked her car.

Jenna stifles a GASP when she sees...

Her car being towed away from in front of the fire hydrant.

She considers running after the towtruck, but instead turns to Dave.

JENNA

Did you want to drive?

DAVE

Sure. Then we should walk the other way.

They turn and walk in the other direction, past Christie and Ron who now exit the restaurant.

They are almost barrelled over by the busboy who sprints down the sidewalk with another container of food.

INT. LUNA - NIGHT

Max holds out the check.

MAX

Hello. Can someone take this?

Max continues to hold out the check... his arm a few inches above the candle on the table.

Suddenly Max's sleeve catches on fire.

MAX

Fire!

Max gets up and flails around, but it only serves to fuel the fire on his poly/cotton blend french blue button down.

MAX

Fucking Banana Republic!

Max pats himself with his napkin which also catches on fire. He tosses a glass of water on himself, but it does no good.

MAX

(miserable)

This fire is so hot!

The expert Luna waitstaff quickly descend with several varieties of fire extinguishers. They SPRAY Max with white foam, extinguishing fire and dignity in one fell swoop.

Max's face, hair, shirt and everything else are covered in foam.

MAX  
I'm out. Thank you.

The trigger-happy waiter resumes spraying, thinking he sees more flames.

INT. DAVE'S MINIVAN - NIGHT

Dave and Jenna drive down Windward Avenue in silence. Finally...

JENNA  
I really like this Windstar. It's roomy.

DAVE  
I know minivans aren't sexy, but I can haul my whole sports group in it.

JENNA  
It has a certain sex appeal.

Dave drives around the traffic circle by the post office.

DAVE  
This all used to be water.

JENNA  
What did?

DAVE  
This. Grand Avenue. It was the Grand Canal. There used to be a lot more canals here. The guy, Abbott Kinney, who designed them had an Italian bride and he built them all for her. But then when he died, they paved it all over. Needed more parking spaces.

JENNA  
That's... depressing.

DAVE  
It didn't last, but at least his heart was in the right place.

EXT. CANALS - NIGHT

Christie and Ron walk along the beautiful Venice Canals.

CHRISTIE  
It's beautiful here.

RON  
They've actually started doing gondola rides again.

CHRISTIE  
That sounds fun.

RON  
We'll put it on the list.

EXT. CANALS - NIGHT

Max walks along the canals, carrying his large bouquet of roses as well as his other two bouquets. He sees various COUPLES being poled around in gondolas by stripe-shirted GONDOLIERS.

Max walks up to a GONDOLIER standing beside a sign that reads "Gondola Rides".

MAX  
Excuse me? Is this where they do the gondola rides?

GONDOLIER  
All my boats are out.

MAX  
What about that one?

Max points to a pathetic looking rowboat.

GONDOLIER  
That's the maintenance boat.

MAX  
I'll pay. Full price.

The gondolier shrugs but then escorts Max into the boat.

MAX  
Your most romantic route please.

The gondolier nods but doesn't move otherwise.

MAX

There's no one joining me. *Vamos.*

The gondolier looks at Max perplexed. He shrugs his shoulders and starts rowing. Off they go.

INT. LINCOLN BAY BATTING CAGES - NIGHT

A mechanical pitching machine whirs. A ball slowly drops down between the spinning wheels and is launched out.

Dave and Jenna stand parallel to one another, awaiting pitches.

Dave, with sleeves rolled up, takes fluid cuts at the medium-fast pitches -- the activity seems to soothe him.

Jenna looks fashionably out of place wearing in her date outfit and a batting helmet. She has taken off her heels and stands in her stockings, inexplicably in the squared bunting position. As pitch after pitch comes in, Jenna lays down one soft bunt after another.

DAVE

What are you doing?

JENNA

I'm bunting.

DAVE

I know, but why?

JENNA

It's a lost art.

DAVE

Who comes to the batting cages and just bunts?

JENNA

Me. It's my favorite part of the game. And it's fun. Try one.

DAVE

I'm not going to bunt.

JENNA

Bunt.

Dave, to humor her, squares around into the bunting position. Ultra-serious, he lays down a beauty. He can't help but smile. It is fun.

JENNA

See. It's fun.

DAVE

It's OK. It's pretty good.

Dave attempts to suppress a smile as he continues to bunt.

EXT. CANALS - NIGHT

Max sits imperiously in the back of his rowboat, swigging from a flask. Max finishes the contents of the flask and hands it back to the gondolier.

MAX

Thanks. I needed that.

The rowboat glides easily around the canals. Max gazes out at the houses that line the banks, warm light emanating from within. He passes other gondolas.

OTHER GONDOLAS

They all have couples in them, madly in love couples, making googly eyes at each other and COOING.

Max rolls his eyes at the display.

Max's rowboat pulls up alongside another gondola.

The couple in the gondola is kissing with wild, fevered passion. They may, in fact, be having sex.

Disgusted, Max looks off towards the banks of the canal. Two DUCKS nuzzle amorously on the grassy shore.

Disheartened, Max looks at his gondolier, who now stares lovingly into the eyes of the other boat's gondolier.

They begin soulfully kissing and groping across the boats.

Max is overwhelmed and disgusted by all the love in the world, not directed at him.

MAX

Well at least somebody's happy!

Max angrily throws all his roses and other flowers at the gondoliers. He jumps out of the boat into the knee deep water and wades to shore.

INT. RON'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

A gorgeous modern two-bedroom overlooking the canals.

We pan around the large, empty apartment. Every muted tone matches. There is no clutter -- definitely female friendly.

Christie and Ron enter the apartment. Christie is very impressed.

CHRISTIE  
This place is amazing.

RON  
Have a seat.

Ron gestures to a large couch. The whole place looks as if it were inspired by an article on decorating as seen in Esquire. Masculine tasteful.

She sits down on a large couch and notices a framed picture of Ron holding an infant in his arms.

CHRISTIE  
Who is this?

RON  
That's my niece. Maya.

CHRISTIE  
She's adorable.

Ron sits down next to Christie. Closer than he has to.

He stares into her eyes for a beat.

RON  
Hi.

CHRISTIE  
Hi.

Ron leans in as if to kiss her, then inexplicably stops. And even more inexplicably SIGHS.

CHRISTIE  
Is everything alright?

RON  
Uh, yeah, I think so.

An uncomfortable beat -- neither here nor there.

RON  
So, did you want to have some coffee?

CHRISTIE  
Oh, right, coffee. That'd be great.

Ron gets up and walks to the kitchen.

INT. BATTING CAGES - NIGHT

Jenna now watches Dave take cuts on the highest speed cage. He seems much calmer, doing what he loves. Having gotten more comfortable with the concept of bunting, he shows off, laying down some crafty drag bunts. He lays down a beauty.

DAVE  
I'd beat that one out any day.

He resumes with fluid, full swings.

DAVE  
Hey, I'm sorry if I was a little tense before.

JENNA  
No, I dumped a lot on you.

DAVE  
No, but I mean, I have some issues. Some baggage.

JENNA  
Oh?

DAVE  
Right.

Dave takes another cut and continues to do so throughout most of the conversation.

DAVE  
Tell me what you think of this. I went out with the same girl for six years.

JENNA  
I think that's admirable.

DAVE  
I even bought her a ring, but I sat on it for two weeks, waiting for the right moment.

JENNA  
When was this?

Dave reacts late to a pitch and fouls it off.

DAVE  
Last February. So one day, she came by my place after meeting a friend. I had just made myself a glass of chocolate milk. I had always loved chocolate milk. But she seemed really bummed out. I asked her what was wrong, but she wouldn't answer.

Dave tosses the bat away and faces Jenna. Balls continue to fly in at regular intervals through the rest of the scene.

DAVE  
So I decide I was going to make her day. I pulled out the ring and proposed right there. And she started crying. But they weren't tears of joy. She admitted she had been seeing some other guy for three months, but he had just broken up with her that day. That was the friend she was seeing.

JENNA  
Oh my God.

DAVE  
I couldn't believe she would betray me like that, but she seemed most upset that this other guy had just dumped her.

JENNA  
What did you do?

DAVE  
I pocketed the ring and went for a long walk. Threw up my chocolate milk on the street. Bought myself a new baseball glove to cheer myself up. But it didn't work. Lisa was gone and I haven't talked to her since.

JENNA  
I'm so sorry.

DAVE

I thought I knew Lisa so well that I was willing to spend the rest of my life with her, but it turns out I didn't know the first thing about her.

Dave kicks at some of the balls that have accumulated at the back of the cage.

DAVE

And that's why I don't have milk products. The thought of milk still turns my stomach.

JENNA

You poor thing.

DAVE

And also I haven't been on any dates since then. So I don't know what the moral to all this is.

JENNA

I think some things in life just suck, and there is no moral.

Dave lightens a little.

DAVE

Yeah. Nobody's quite put it that way.

JENNA

But I really don't think you should deprive yourself of milk. It's crucial for bones and stuff.

Dave LAUGHS.

DAVE

That's your angle on this?

JENNA

If it makes you laugh, then yeah. You've got a nice laugh.

EXT. COURTYARD APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Max runs up to the building and rings the intercom call-box. A female voice answers.

PAM (O.S.)

Yeah.

MAX  
Pam, it's Max.

PAM (O.S.)  
Hold on.

Max goes to open the gate but it doesn't buzz open.

After a few moments, a large tan man in a robe comes across the courtyard and stops at the gate. He does not open it. This would be THOM (28).

MAX  
Thom? What are you doing here?

THOM  
Pam wanted to get back together.

MAX  
What? With you? Where is she?

THOM  
She's busy. We were-- what do you need?

MAX  
I need to talk to her. This isn't right.

THOM  
This isn't a good time, Max.

MAX  
I have important things to say. I need to tell her I've changed.

THOM  
She doesn't want to see you.

MAX  
I know this is an awkward situation for you, but seeing as you're here, I need you to go tell her I've changed. Tell her I'm looking into new jobs, I've raised a dog for six months, I ate alone tonight. I'm different, she needs to know that.

THOM  
Dude, go on home and sleep it off.

MAX

No. Go tell her this: If she cares about me at all, if she has even one positive feeling for me left, if she ever loved me, ask her to come down.

Thom hesitates.

MAX

Go tell her.

Thom retreats back into the building.

Max closes his eyes and leans his head against the building.

The door opens...

Max looks up to see...

Again, just Thom, not Pam.

THOM

She's not coming down. She says the very fact that you showed up here tonight means you haven't changed one iota. I took out the cuss words.

Max considers this, and nods his head.

MAX

Twenty-eight steps.

THOM

What?

MAX

It's twenty-eight steps to her apartment. I used to count them when I came over, I was so excited. And now she won't even walk twenty-eight steps for me.

THOM

Sorry, bro. To be honest, I'm not sure I want her back either. She can be kind of a pill.

Max stares at Thom, incredulous.

MAX

You know, I don't need this crap. I'm sick of it.

(MORE)

MAX (cont'd)

Tell her I'm still a house painter and that's better than being a screwed up freak like her or a pumped up gigolo like you.

THOM

Easy, Max.

Max takes a step back and yells up to Pam's window.

MAX

I'm a house painter, Pam! That's me, Max, that's who I am. Good night!

INT. MAX'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Max bursts into his apartment, burnt, wet, yet still energetic.

Max's dog, Mr. Smooches, watches TV from the couch.

MAX

Come on buddy, we're going to work.

INT. RON'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Ron and Christie sit on the couch together, sipping coffee.

Christie takes one more sip from her coffee, then gently places the cup and saucer on the coffee table.

She then turns to Ron, straddles him and begins making out with him. Ron, a little surprised, returns the kisses.

Completely unprompted, Christie unbuttons her shirt.

Ron seems almost shocked at Christie's forwardness and the sight of her bra. The bra has a tiny bow in the center on the connective material where the two cups meet.

RON

A little bow.

CHRISTIE

What? Oh.

Ron looks a little nervous. His eyes dart around.

Then he leans forward and kisses the top of Christie's breast, pulling back quickly. The kiss is almost clinical, like he was kissing the top of a baby's head.

Taking the situation to the next level, Christie unstraddles herself off of Ron and stands up from the couch.

Christie boldly removes her blouse, her bra, then her skirt and panties.

Ron does not move.

RON

Oh.

Christie just stands there, naked in front of Ron, growing more vulnerable by the second.

Ron still doesn't make a move. Finally, Christie speaks up.

CHRISTIE

What is it, Ron?

RON

I have something I need to tell you before this goes any further. And before I say it, I want you to realize that I think you are totally amazing.

Christie thinks a moment.

CHRISTIE

Oh God, you're gay.

RON

I'm not gay.

CHRISTIE

You're still married?

RON

I'm not married and I'm not gay... but I'm not Ron.

CHRISTIE

What?

RON?

I'm not Ron, I'm Tad. Ron's best friend.

CHRISTIE

Tad.

RON/TAD

Ron and I work together. He had something come up at the last minute and he felt it was too late to bail. So I said I'd go in his place.

CHRISTIE  
And pretend to be Ron?

RON/TAD  
I just wanted to have a fun evening with you, and I felt if I came in with Ron's lame excuse, it would ruin everything.

CHRISTIE  
What lame excuse?

RON/TAD  
The guy loves hoops.

CHRISTIE  
Where is he?

RON/TAD  
He got tickets to the Clippers game.

CHRISTIE  
The Clippers?

RON/TAD  
Floor seats.

CHRISTIE  
Jesus Christ. The Lakers would be one thing, but I got bailed on for a bunch of second tier scrubs.

RON/TAD  
Your confusion is so valid. But let's try to focus on the positives here.

CHRISTIE  
Like what?

RON/TAD  
Everything about tonight was real. It's all the same. Only the names have changed.

CHRISTIE  
Only your name has changed. Why didn't you just tell me when you walked in?

RON/TAD  
I should have.

CHRISTIE  
Why did you tell me at all?

RON/TAD  
Christie, I think we have a real connection here.

CHRISTIE  
Who, Ron and I?

RON/TAD  
Look, Christie, I'm Tad. The man you were with tonight was Tad, me. The guy who wants to share a sunset with you.

CHRISTIE  
So the whole marriage stuff was you?

RON/TAD  
OK. Yeah. Large aspects of that story were true.

CHRISTIE  
Which aspects?

RON/TAD  
I have been to the Andes.

CHRISTIE  
Oh, God. You totally lied.

RON/TAD  
OK, I haven't been married, and I never broke my leg, but the emotional underpinnings of that story were real for me.

CHRISTIE  
Emotional underpinnings? You can't even admit you were lying, can you?

Ron/Tad pauses and looks intently at Christie, who is still naked.

RON/TAD  
Yes, I can. I lied to you Christie. I screwed up. But I want to make it right.

Christie runs her fingers through her hair, then starts to collect her clothes and put them on.

CHRISTIE  
I'm so confused. A minute ago I took off my clothes. And now I feel like running out of here.

RON/TAD  
I'd pick one or the other.

CHRISTIE  
You're not allowed to make jokes right now.

Christie stands up and starts to gather her things to leave.

RON/TAD  
Sorry. You're right. Just don't leave.

CHRISTIE  
No. I think I should go. For now. I need to think this one through.

RON/TAD  
Do you want to stay here and think?

CHRISTIE  
I need some time. I'm going to leave now, but we'll talk at some point.

Ron/Tad sadly acquiesces.

RON/TAD  
I'll get your coat.

EXT. CANALS - NIGHT

Christie exits Ron/Tad's building. She looks bummed out, but tries to be strong.

She glances at the brightly lit homes on both sides of the waterway.

Christie stops walking.

INT. BEACH FRONT HOUSE - NIGHT

Max and Mr. Smooches enter the gutted house we saw earlier in the day.

Max clamps up a hanging work-lamp, cracks open a beer and stares up at the unpainted trim above a door.

MAX  
Let's do it to it.

INT. TAD'S FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

Tad hears a KNOCKING. He opens the door and is surprised to see...

Christie, who seizes the moment and aggressively kisses Tad on the lips. He attempts to prolong the kiss, but Christie pulls away and strides into the room, almost business-like.

TAD

I didn't expect to see you so soon.

CHRISTIE

Here's the deal: I'm going to stay here, and we're going to have sex.

Tad is flabbergasted, stunned, but also excited.

TAD

Oh. Great. Great choice.

CHRISTIE

But I need one thing from you.

TAD

Anything.

CHRISTIE

I need you to answer a question. And I need the truth. As long as you tell the truth, we'll still have sex.

TAD

I am so about the truth right now.

CHRISTIE

Here's the question: When you go on a date like tonight, what are you looking for? What do you expect?

Tad thinks for a moment. How to answer this?

TAD

Truthfully, normally, my agenda is basically geared towards getting the girl in bed. Whether it's that night or a few dates down the road.

Tad takes Christie's hand.

TAD

But it's totally different with you. You've tapped into these feelings I'm having. I want something real with you. Something that will transcend whatever we, hopefully still, will do in my bed -- or wherever else in this apartment.

Christie thinks about this for a long moment, studying Tad.

CHRISTIE

Well, I have no idea whether what you are saying is genuine or not. But you might as well take your shirt off.

Christie starts unbuttoning Tad's shirt.

TAD

I'm so happy that you see my feelings are real.

CHRISTIE

Stop talking and take off your pants.

INT. DAVE'S MINIVAN - NIGHT

Jenna and Dave drive down Lincoln.

JENNA

I can't quit my job.

DAVE

Why would you just automatically say that?

JENNA

I don't have a plan. I don't even have a clue what I would do.

DAVE

Nothing forces action like unemployment and impending debt.

JENNA

Already the thought is making my palms sweat and stomach churn.

DAVE

At least that's an emotional reaction. To me that's more interesting than sitting bored in an office.

JENNA

I guess I'm just not as brave as you.

They drive in silence for a beat.

JENNA

What do you want to do now?

DAVE

We already did what I want. What do you like to do?

JENNA

Sometimes I like to just see what happens. See what interests me.

They round a corner and come upon the Furama Airport hotel. A sign reads: ARONOFF/SHER WEDDING, DOWNSTAIRS.

Jenna smiles, seized with an idea.

JENNA

Yeah. I know what we're going to do. Let's go in.

DAVE

In where? In here? It's a wedding. A private wedding.

JENNA

I know it's cliché to crash a wedding, but I've never done it.

DAVE

But I'm not dressed for this.

JENNA

I'll buy you a tie at the giftshop. And a lame excuse like that means you're out of excuses.

Dave takes a moment to consider this.

DAVE

Let's crash this bad boy.

INT. HOTEL BANQUET HALL - NIGHT

Dave and Jenna enter the reception which is in high gear. A SCORE of drunken relatives slide around to the Macarena. The CHEESY BANDLEADER croons "Heeey Bill & Emma."

As Jenna predicted, nobody cares that she and Dave have come in. Dave now sports the kind of tie you might find in a hotel gift shop.

JENNA

How good is this?

DAVE

What if somebody asks who we are?

JENNA

Just be whoever they think you are. I've got to pee.

Dave looks panicky as Jenna walks away.

LEONARD (55) the groom's drunken uncle comes up and slaps Dave on the back.

LEONARD

Buddy! How ya doin'?

DAVE

Buddy's doin' alright.

LEONARD

You look fantastic. Fanfuckingtastic.

DAVE

Thanks.

LEONARD

This place have a pool?

DAVE

It's a hotel. It probably does.

Leonard rips open his shirt, buttons flying everywhere.

LEONARD

Everybody in the pool! Follow me!

Leonard runs off, disrobing all the way. Nobody follows.

INT. LADIES ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Jenna applies lipstick in the mirror. An OLDER WOMAN approaches her.

WOMAN

May I have a little?

JENNA

Of my lipstick?

WOMAN

Thanks.

The woman takes the lipstick and begins liberally applying it to what might be called her "lips area".

WOMAN

Wasn't it a beautiful ceremony?

JENNA

Oooh - beautiful. When the bride said, "I'm going to love you forever", I was just balling.

WOMAN

Tears. Copious tears.

JENNA

Even the cake made me cry.

WOMAN

Waterworks. It was just such a beautiful cake.

In thinking about the cake, the woman begins to cry again. Jenna moves to console her.

WOMAN

I wish I was young.

The woman hands the lipstick back.

JENNA

Keep it. It looks great on you.

WOMAN

You're a beautiful China doll.

INT. BANQUET HALL - MOMENTS LATER

Dave watches amusedly as a TEN YEAR OLD COUPLE lose themselves in a slow dance.

VOICE (O.S.)

Ricky! Ricky Mahler!

Unconcerned, Dave keeps watching the dancing kids.

VOICE (O.S.)

Ricky!

The kids stop dancing and stare at Dave. Dave realizes that someone thinks he's Ricky. Dave turns to see...

The blushing BRIDE (26). She waves animatedly at Dave and then scurries over, trying not to trip on her dress.

BRIDE

Ricky Mahler, how are you?

DAVE

Hey... you.

BRIDE  
I didn't think you were going to make it.

DAVE  
Well, I did.

BRIDE  
It's been so long.

DAVE  
I know, not since...

BRIDE  
Pen-

DAVE  
-sylvania.

BRIDE  
-sacola.

DAVE  
That's right, Pensacola.

BRIDE  
Space camp. You look amazing.

Dave smiles, hoping he's dodged a bullet.

INT. BEACH FRONT HOUSE - NIGHT

Max paints along the door frame with an unsteady hand. He steps back and tries to shake out his nerves.

MAX  
I've got to settle down.

Suddenly Max notices something. He sees the rufies that the carpenter set on his toolkit so many hours earlier.

He picks up one of the pills and examines it closely.

MAX  
Maybe just one, to take the edge off.

Max tosses the pill in his mouth and washes it down with a huge gulp of beer. He WINCES, like it was a shot of bourbon.

Max inhales deeply. Max looks around the room. He sees Mr. Smooches sitting patiently next to some paint cans. Max's heart falls.

MAX  
Such a good dog.

Max gets down on his knees and looks his dog in the eye.

MAX  
Oh buddy. Buddy, there's something I've  
been meaning to tell you for a while.

He pats Mr. Smooches on the head.

MAX  
When I adopted you, I did it to meet  
girls. There. I said it.

Mr. Smooches licks Max's hand.

MAX  
And that first day, you were still a  
puppy. And I put on a nice shirt and  
went to the park and not one girl talked  
to us. I felt ashamed. I should have  
been happy. I had a new dog. But all I  
could do was feel lonely.

Mr. Smooches keeps licking Max's hand.

MAX  
I guess for me, being alone means being  
lonely.

Max stands up and steps up on his ladder.

MAX  
But I want you to know that you're my  
buddy and I love you.

Max reaches for his paintbrush.

CLOSE ON - THE BRUSH

Very carefully and meticulously, Max paints the inside of a  
doorframe a shade of dark green.

But then from fatigue and everything else, Max slips and he  
gets a bit of paint on the wall next to the frame.

MAX  
Shit.

Annoyed, Max flays the brush against the wall again.

Max continues to smack the brush against the wall, more out of release than any concerted creativity.

Finally Max picks up a bucket of paint and flings it against a wall. It feels good.

He picks up another bucket of red paint, pops the top and throws it up against the wall as well. It CLATTERS loudly.

Max takes his hands and begins smearing them all over the wall.

Max next takes a bucket and throws it up to the ceiling, dripping paint back down on the floor and on him and his dog.

Max picks up other paint cans and hurls them around. One paint can makes a dent in a wall.

Max examines the wall and goes with it.

Max searches through a pile of tools until he finds a huge sledge hammer.

He picks up the hammer and SLAMS it into the wall. Bits of plaster fly everywhere.

Again and again, Max wails into the wall.

Max, exhausted now has created a kind of doorway. Gasping for breath, Max squeezes through the rough-hewn hole to...

EXT. YARD - CONTINUOUS

Max steps out into the grassy backyard. He looks up at the stars in awe.

MAX

Look at the stars.

Max, exhausted, passes out. He drops like a rock to the ground with a THUD. Out cold, he sleeps in the dewey grass.

INT. BANQUET HALL - NIGHT

Dave is still cornered by the bride. She looks at him in a way that makes Dave uncomfortable.

BRIDE

Wow. Ricky Mahler. Who knew?

DAVE

Certainly not me.

Jenna arrives from the bathroom.

JENNA  
Hello.

DAVE  
Hey! You're back. How are things going?

BRIDE  
(to Jenna)  
Hello.

DAVE  
Oh, excuse me. This is Jenna.

BRIDE  
Are you Ricky's girlfriend?

Jenna and Dave share a look - what's the proper response here?

JENNA  
Um, no.

DAVE  
Yes.

JENNA  
Sort of.

At this moment, the band launches into a fairly standard rendition of Bill Medley and Jennifer Warnes' "I Had the Time of My Life". The bride gets excited.

BRIDE  
I love this song. Dance with me, Ricky.

The bride turns to Jenna.

BRIDE  
You don't mind, do you?

JENNA  
Dance.

The bride leads Dave out onto the dance floor.

Jenna watches Dave go. Her stare is interrupted when a MARINE (26), in full formal dress greys, steps up to her.

MARINE  
Miss, permission to have this dance, miss.

Jenna smiles, nods acceptingly and takes the Marine's hand.

Jenna and the Marine begin dancing. He is very formal, as if they were waltzing.

JENNA

Is this real or is it a costume?

MARINE

Lieutenant Chris Wade, U.S. Marines  
second division, out of Camp Lejeune,  
N.C.

JENNA

Oh. Congratulations.

DAVE & THE BRIDE

BRIDE

You've taken good care of yourself. Of  
your body.

DAVE

You too.

The bride pulls Dave close.

BRIDE

Ah, space camp.

DAVE

It was so long ago.

BRIDE

Ruthie and I thought you were so cute.  
We just knew you'd become an astronaut.

DAVE

It's tough, but somebody's got to go up  
there.

Dave's voice trails off as he sees Jenna dancing with the Marine. His brow furrows with something close to jealousy.

BRIDE

Oh, God, why couldn't we have had this  
moment six months ago?

DAVE

Excuse me?

BRIDE

It would have been so much easier. You and I could have just run off together.

DAVE

Run off?

BRIDE

I would have no problems raising our children in Florida.

Dave signals for Jenna to help him. She smiles and lets him twist a little bit.

BRIDE

Oh, God, I'm marrying the wrong guy.

The bride buries her face in Dave's shoulder. Dave searches the dance floor for Jenna, but he can't find her. She's danced out of sight.

The bride gets into the song.

BRIDE

(singing sadly to Dave)

I... had... the time of my life, no I never felt this way before... and I swear... that it's true.. and I owe it all to you!

The bride slowly rubs Dave's back and then grabs his buns and gives a squeeze. It would be a subtle move if she weren't wearing a wedding dress, but she is -- and everyone is beginning to stare.

Finally...

JENNA (O.S.)

May I cut in?

DAVE

Yes, fine, sure.

Dismayed, the bride starts to leave, but not before whispering in Dave's ear.

BRIDE

Wait for me, Ricky.

The bride leaves. Dave and Jenna continue to dance.

DAVE

That was insane. She was totally digging me.

JENNA

Yeah, the ladies love an astronaut.

They dance easily to the soft rock.

They glance over at the sidelines where the Marine and the Woman from the bathroom talk with Leonard, soaking wet and holding his pants. The trio glance suspiciously over at Dave and Jenna.

DAVE

We better get out of here before they start comparing notes.

JENNA

After this dance. You're a pretty good dancer.

DAVE

Did you think I wouldn't be?

JENNA

No, it's just nice, though.

They dance a little closer. They look happy together, smiling and feeling the moment.

Dave looks deeply into Jenna's eyes.

JENNA

What?

Dave kisses her.

The kiss is deep, passionate, unavoidable and then over.

Jenna closes her eyes and rests her head on Dave's shoulder. The party continues to swirl around them.

INT. TAD'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Christie and Tad lie naked in Tad's bed. Tad looks placid and contented. Christie looks at the bedside clock.

TAD

What are you thinking?

CHRISTIE

Nothing.

TAD

Did you want to go another round? I can do it.

CHRISTIE

I think... not. Unless you'd really like to.

TAD

I'm fine either way. We don't have to.

Christie rolls away from Tad and stares at the column radiator in the corner of the room

Tad snuggles in behind and spoons Christie, caressing her shoulders. Christie doesn't react at all.

TAD

So what's on tap for tomorrow? LACMA?

Christie just stares at the radiator. We can hear it PINGING.

CHRISTIE

I think I have to go.

Tad sits up, surprised.

TAD

Why?

CHRISTIE

I just think I need to go.

TAD

Was everything alright? My technique and everything?

CHRISTIE

It was amazing.

TAD

And that thing with my finger? That was cool?

CHRISTIE

Oh, very. But I really need to go.

TAD

I was hoping we could have breakfast in the morning. I make a great Spanish fritatta.

CHRISTIE  
Thanks, but I'm not big on breakfast.

TAD  
You're not still upset about the Ron  
thing, are you?

Christie studies Tad.

CHRISTIE  
Jesus, it's not that. This is about me.  
The dinner was great, the sex was great.  
Thank you.

Christie has gotten most of her clothes on.

TAD  
So, can I call you?

CHRISTIE  
I don't know.

TAD  
Such enthusiasm.

CHRISTIE  
I'm going to leave now, Tad.

TAD  
I really wanted this to work between us.

CHRISTIE  
I know you did.

Christie kisses Tad on the forehead.

CHRISTIE  
This is the cleanest man's apartment I've  
ever been in. Thank you.

And with that, she's gone.

EXT. BEACH HOUSE - NIGHT

Max still sleeps in the grass outside the house.

Mr. Smooches licks him back to consciousness.

Max tries to sit up, feeling the massive effects of his  
alcohol and rufie hangover. He CRIES out in brain pain.

Max groggily stands up and looks at the hole he put in the  
wall.

MAX

Oh, my.

INT. DAVE'S MINIVAN - NIGHT

Jenna looks at Dave, but he stares intently at the road.

JENNA

Stop.

Dave stops the car.

DAVE

What is it?

JENNA

This is where I live.

DAVE

Right here?

JENNA

Inside and upstairs, yeah.

DAVE

Do you want me to drive you back to your car?

JENNA

Um, I can actually get it tomorrow.

Dave looks up at the building. He tries to think of something to say.

DAVE

So...

JENNA

So this is always an odd moment.

DAVE

Yes it is.

JENNA

Do you need to pee or anything? That way you could come up to my apartment without, you know, "coming up to my apartment".

DAVE

I could pee.

INT. JENNA'S HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Jenna starts to unlock her door, then realizes something.

JENNA  
Could you just wait out here for one second?

DAVE  
Out here?

JENNA  
Yeah. That would be great.

Jenna ducks into her apartment, leaving Dave in the hall.

INT. JENNA'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

A fairly standard Venice efficiency. Old hand-me-down furniture mixed with Ikea... And the accoutrements of multiple cats.

Jenna quickly scoops up a scratch post and a litter box and throws them into a coat closet. She then goes after the two felines.

JENNA  
Sonny! Fredo, come here.

She manages to scoop up the cats and she tosses them into the closet as well.

One of the cats MEOWS a plaintive meow.

JENNA  
Please try to understand!

The cat shuts up.

Jenna rushes over to the front door and yanks it open.

Dave comes into the apartment and looks around.

DAVE  
Nice place.

JENNA  
Would you like to take your jacket off?

Dave nods and Jenna helps him with his jacket -- it's as close as they've been since their kiss and they feel it.

Emboldened by the way the night is going, Jenna leans in and gives Dave a kiss on the lips.

Jenna points to a door.

JENNA  
Bathroom is over there.

Dave starts to walk over towards the coat closet.

JENNA  
No! The other door.

Dave heads into the bathroom.

Jenna begins running around, fiddling with the lights and fluffing the pillows.

Jenna checks her look in the mirror. She unbuttons only one button of her blouse, then thinks better of it and re-buttons it. She runs back to the couch and takes a seat.

INT. JENNA'S BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Dave flushes the toilet after his pee. He heads over to the sink to wash his hands and check his look in the mirror.

He looks around at the sink area. He stops suddenly when he sees...

A toothbrush with a Curious George design on it and a matching cup with bright orange letters that spell out the name JENNA.

Dave looks at himself in the mirror. He closes his eyes and SIGHS.

INT. JENNA'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Dave comes out of the bathroom. Jenna sees that he has a grim look on his face.

JENNA  
What's the matter?

DAVE  
I think I might have to go.

JENNA  
Oh. Why? Is everything OK?

Dave pauses uncomfortably a moment before replying.

DAVE

I was just in the bathroom and I saw all your Curious George stuff.

JENNA

Oh, God. It's such a mess.

DAVE

No, it's not. I just got this wave of realization. Seeing all the little things that make you a person. I understood that within you lies a whole life of experiences that I would become a part of. I'm just worried that I'm not ready for that.

JENNA

Maybe I'm not either. How do you know what I want out of this?

DAVE

I know that you and I are pretty similar people, and I'm sure we go about relationships in the same way. I'm not interested in a fling and I don't think you are either.

JENNA

I know you haven't been on many dates, but this was a good one.

DAVE

I know.

JENNA

I won't hurt you. I'm a good person. I'm honest. Look, I'll admit it, I have cats.

Jenna flings open the closet door dramatically, expecting the cats to run out. They do not.

JENNA

They're in their somewhere.

DAVE

Jenna please, it all just sucks, that the timing is so bad. It's not you, it's just stuff I've got to deal with.

Jenna picks up a pillow, and slams it into Dave's shoulder. She then throws it across the room, knocking a picture off the wall.

JENNA

Fuck you! That is so fucking stock. Do all you boys have a little textbook that you pull excuses from? Get creative. Say what you mean for a change.

DAVE

I do mean this Jenna. I did have a good time, but I simply don't think I'm ready. I'm trying to be honest here.

JENNA

Then maybe it would be better if you lied, because I feel like shit.

Jenna crosses her arms and stares vacantly down at the floor.

DAVE

What do you want me to do? Let's keep talking about this.

JENNA

Talking about what? It would just go in circles. The sad truth is, there's no way to argue a boy into liking you.

DAVE

I do like you, Jenna.

JENNA

Just leave.

DAVE

I will. But I want to say that I really did have a good time.

She gestures to the door.

DAVE

I'm leaving. Are you going to be alright?

JENNA

No. I'm going to cry. I'm just waiting for you to leave.

DAVE

I don't want you to cry.

Jenna can't hold back. She starts to cry.

JENNA

Too late.

Dave sighs. He goes over, awkwardly leans in and kisses the top of her head. She lets him and closes her eyes.

DAVE

I'm so sorry. Goodnight.

She doesn't respond, so he lets himself out. He closes the door behind himself.

JENNA

Goodbye.

She throws her head into the couch and lets it all out. She SOBS uncontrollably.

EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE - NIGHT

A weary, hungover, paint smeared and burnt Max and his stoic dog Mr. Smooches walk up to a convenience store. Max ties his dog up to a parking meter.

Max checks his wallet for cash and out drops the much discussed condom. Max picks up the condom and stares at it for a moment before tossing it in a nearby trash can.

Max stumbles into the convenience store.

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - NIGHT

Max heads straight for the medicine section. A female CLERK watches him curiously.

He examines a box of Zantac and turns to the clerk.

MAX

This Zantac, is it any good? I hear Dennehy is behind it.

CLERK

Alka-Seltzer is better for a hangover.

Max pulls the Alka-Seltzer off the shelf as well. He pops open both boxes before even paying. He places an Alka-Seltzer tablet and a Zantac in his mouth and begins chewing.

MAX

A little gamey.

At this moment, Jenna walks in. She and Max share a look -- two sad souls in the wee hours of the morning.

Jenna heads to the beef-jerky and then the ice cream.

Max brings the boxes up and pays. As he leaves he turns back to the clerk.

MAX

Hey, how did you know I was hungover?

The clerk simply shrugs. Max walks out.

EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE - CONTINUOUS

Max emerges from the market to find...

Christie, kneeling on the sidewalk, and petting Mr. Smooches.

MAX

You found a friend, didn't you, boy.

CHRISTIE

Is this your dog?

Max nods. Christie holds up Mr. Smooches' tags.

CHRISTIE

What kind of name is Mr. Smooches?

MAX

A silly one. He came with it. He was put up for adoption by a family who couldn't handle his loud, sad barking. I let him keep the name.

CHRISTIE

He's not barking now.

MAX

He's tired.

Christie stands up and looks at Max.

CHRISTIE

You were at Luna tonight. I thought you were Ron.

MAX

Right. Tell Laurie I say "hi".

CHRISTIE

I noticed you ate alone.

MAX

Oh, God.

CHRISTIE

I thought it was cool how you could enjoy yourself and be comfortable on your own. Not many people can do that.

This makes Max chuckle.

MAX

You don't know the half of it.

CHRISTIE

Rough night?

MAX

Maybe the roughest.

CHRISTIE

I had a bit of a rough one myself.

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - CONTINUOUS

Jenna brings up two fistfuls of Beef Jerky and a pint of Haagen Dazs. She dumps them on the counter.

CLERK

No charge.

JENNA

What?

CLERK

Free food for a broken heart.

JENNA

How did you know?

CLERK

1 AM, comfort food, sad heart.

JENNA

I thought he was a pretty good guy.

CLERK

Thus the ice cream and the beef jerky.

The clerk puts the items in a grocery bag.

CLERK

No man is worth this much jerky. You're a pretty girl. You have beautiful warm eyes. Any man who can't see that is a fool.

Jenna, in her delicate state, is deeply moved by the clerk's words. She leans over the counter and hugs the clerk.

JENNA

That is so nice. You are so nice.

The clerk fills up Jenna's bag with more free stuff. Cadbury eggs, a pack of gum and even a lighter.

CLERK

Go. Life is short. Make it interesting.

JENNA

OK.

INT. DAVE & RALPHY'S APARTMENT - LATE

Ralphy lies crashed out in front of the TV as if he had been trying to wait up for Dave.

Dave enters, looking bummed out and tired. Ralphy stirs.

RALPHY

What's up? It's late, man. How did it go?

DAVE

Can we talk about this in the morning?

RALPHY

That bad?

DAVE

Shat the beverage cart.

RALPHY

Oh, no.

Ralphy gets up and pours a glass of scotch.

DAVE

I made her cry. I made this sweet girl cry. She was kind and she rolled with my bullshit and didn't judge me. And I made her cry.

RALPHY

Man, that sucks.

Ralphy offers the scotch to Dave.

RALPHY

But you went, and I'm proud of you. You did good.

DAVE

No, I didn't.

Dave waves off the drink and walks off towards his room.

INT. TAD'S APARTMENT - LATE

Tad can't sleep. He paces around his bedroom, clad in only boxer shorts and riddled with angst.

He drops to the floor and begins pumping out fifty marine-issue push-ups.

EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE - EARLY MORNING

Mr. Smooches now sleeps on the sidewalk. Max and Christie sit on the bumper of a parked car, engrossed in conversation. Christie nibbles on a Suzy Q, Max on some Funyons.

MAX

Sounds like a nice house. When are you going to put in an offer?

CHRISTIE

Right away. It needs some work, but it's great.

MAX

Yeah. All new houses need some work. It's human nature to want to imprint your vision on a place.

CHRISTIE

You're an artist, right?

MAX

House painter. Did I say that?

CHRISTIE

No. But you have paint on your clothes and on your dog's back.

Max looks at the canine rainbow that is Mr. Smooches.

CHRISTIE

It's quite a spectacular color palette for a house painter.

MAX  
I'm branching out.

CHRISTIE  
Well I'm going to need a painter for this place-

Max takes his thumb and wipes a piece of Suzy Q off Christie's chin. Christie looks at Max with disbelief.

MAX  
Go on... What?

CHRISTIE  
Nothing. I'm just a messy eater.

Christie smiles.

CHRISTIE  
Would you want to grab some breakfast?

MAX  
Now?

CHRISTIE  
Unless you're busy.

MAX  
I love breakfast. It's delicious.

He smiles at her. She smiles back.

Max leans over and picks up Mr. Smooches. Max and Christie walk off down the sidewalk...

They pass in front of Luna.

Inside, we see the waitstaff and the cooks enjoying a late night drink and smoke.

We see the Maitre D' flip the OPEN sign to CLOSED.

The night is over.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Dave is on the mound, looking miserable. He hasn't shaved and seems distracted. He turns and delivers a pitch.

The pitch comes in high and inside on the batter, KATIA (10). She catches the pitch before it hits her.

KATIA  
Ball four!

Katia takes her base. The batting team begins a familiar chant...

TEAM  
We want a pitcher, not a belly itcher!  
We want a pitcher, not a belly itcher!

Dave glances forlornly over towards the park bench under the tree where Jenna used to watch him. The bench is now empty.

DAVE  
Everybody quiet! Now!

The kids sense an atypical aggravation in Dave's voice and they stop their chant immediately.

Dave's catcher, BRETT (10), pulls up his mask.

BRETT  
Time!

Brett walks up to Dave on the mound.

BRETT  
What's up?

DAVE  
Nothing. It's cool. Go back.

BRETT  
What's the matter with you? You haven't hit the plate all day.

DAVE  
I'll settle down.

BRETT  
Try, because softball's really boring if there's no pitches to hit.

DAVE  
Let me say this. If you ever meet a girl, and you get scared-- the whole situation scares you, that's not necessarily a bad thing.

BRETT  
A lot of girls scare me.

DAVE

I was on this great date with this great girl and I just panicked. I screwed up.

BRETT

Can't you just say you're sorry?

DAVE

Maybe that works in the fourth grade. But this one's done.

BRETT

Alright. Let's play some softball.

Brett slaps Dave on the butt and starts back towards home plate.

DAVE

But maybe you're right.

Dave looks out across the park. He turns back and calls after Brett.

DAVE

Maybe I'm making this too complicated. And every time I think about her, I get happy and sad at the same time, which is complicated but also really good, right?

The kids start up their chant again.

TEAM

We want a pitcher, not a belly itcher...

BRETT

Hurry up, Dave. The natives are getting restless.

Brett pulls down his mask and prepares to play ball.

DAVE

Hold up! Everybody in on me.

The kids gather around Dave with confused looks on their faces.

DAVE

Gather up the bases. I'm calling this game on account of darkness.

KATIA

It's not even noon yet.

DAVE  
Katia, please pick up second base.  
Everyone get ready, we're taking a field  
trip.

INT. DAVE'S MINIVAN - DAY

Dave drives his entire sports group in the minivan. The van is packed to the gills with kids.

EXT. JENNA'S BUILDING - DAY

Dave calls up to Jenna's apartment, the kids waiting by his side. As the call-box RINGS, a PASSERBY comes out the front door.

DAVE  
Hold that door!

Dave grabs the door and herds all the kids inside.

INT. ELEVATOR - DAY

Dave is smashed in tightly with all the kids in the elevator car. The PINGS of the elevator can be heard as it whirs its way up.

No one speaks.

DAVE  
Let's cut the chit-chat once we get  
there. This is important.

The kids remain silent.

INT. JENNA'S HALLWAY - DAY

Dave KNOCKS on Jenna's door. No answer, just the hungry MEOWS of a couple of cats.

Dave leans his head against the door.

DAVE  
Please tell me she's not a work.

INT. DAVE'S MINIVAN - DAY

Dave is back driving with the kids packed inside. No one speaks.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Dave parks the car back at the softball fields and herds the kids out the door.

KATIA  
We were just here.

DAVE  
Let's go, let's go.

Dave herds the kids quickly across the softball fields towards the office building where Jenna works.

EXT. JENNA'S OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

Jenna comes walking out of her office building, carrying a box of her belongings.

Jenna stops in her tracks, frozen with surprise, when she sees...

Dave running up to her, the kids struggling to keep up.

JENNA  
What are you doing here?

DAVE  
I found you.

Dave takes his hand very slowly and touches Jenna's face, but just barely.

DAVE  
Please.

Jenna waits for more, but also considers this.

JENNA  
Please what?

DAVE  
(softly)  
Please.

Jenna nods and smiles sadly. They stare into one another's eyes.

The kids look at Dave and Jenna, waiting for something more to happen, waiting for some sign of cosmic love or volcanic anger or anything in between....

But Dave and Jenna remain frozen in the nebulous moment, still staring into one another's eyes, full of hope and unsure wonder.

the end