

LIKE THE MOVIES

Written by

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INT. STUDIO

Fade up on lights, an audio mixer, studio monitors all powering on. A boom pole extends, cables are plugged in, a camera turns on. Caricatures of the main cast are shown with their names. A slate is shown and clicks as...

INT. BEDROOM - A SUNNY MORNING

MARK (30) opens his eyes. The sun is shining through the blinds onto him. *Everything's normal.* He rubs his face - he needs to shave. He rolls over - there's a woman next to him. *Who is she?* Mark jumps out of bed, watching the woman in his bed, JULIE (25), wake up.

JULIE

Don't tell me you're a morning person.

He looks down - *he's fully clothed.*

MARK

I'm not.

She notices his anxiousness.

JULIE

Have you had coffee already?  
(BEAT)  
What are you doing, baby?

MARK

What are you doing in my bed?

Julie smiles, still half asleep.

JULIE

Beautiful? Me? You're too sweet.

MARK

I didn't call you beautiful.

JULIE

You should have.

MARK

Before we get to that, I could use a few things explained to me.

Mark crosses his arms.

MARK

So go ahead. Explain.

JULIE

I don't think I understand the game  
you're playing, but...

She throws the covers off - *she's fully clothed too*. She  
crawls across the bed towards him.

JULIE

If you come here, I'll answer all  
of your questions.

He pushes her away - *playing hard to get, huh?*

MARK

I don't think you're getting the  
right idea.

She crawls towards him again and he sidesteps her.

JULIE

That's not what you usually say.

MARK

What I usually say?

JULIE

Well, maybe not say, but your lips  
are involved.

She attempts a seductive look and can't help but laugh at her  
miserable attempt.

MARK

Who are you?

JULIE

Yours, just a little messier than  
usual.

MARK

Mine?

Julie sighs.

JULIE

I've never seen you like this  
before.

She lays on her stomach - his rigid stance relaxes. Then she  
stands up on the bed and runs towards him. *What the hell is  
she doing?* He dodges her lunge towards him. She laughs; he  
looks scared. She chases him into the living room.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MORNING

MARK

I'm not trying to be an ass...

He strategically places the couch between them. He looks her up and down - *wow*.

MARK (CONT'D)

But...

He shrugs.

MARK (CONT'D)

I just don't recognize you.

Her eyes widen.

JULIE

You little...

She throws a pillow from the couch at him, barely missing his head.

JULIE

I'm not putting my makeup on until after breakfast.

She folds her arms, he relaxes again.

MARK

Makeup? What?

(BEAT)

No, that's not what I mean. If we could just sit down for a (second)...

She runs across the couch and jumps on him, wrapping her legs around his torso. His first instinct is to hold her, but then realizes the absurdity and drops her onto the couch. He runs into the adjacent kitchen, hiding behind the cupboard.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

The lighting has taken a turn from pleasant sunshine to horror-film-like shadows and patches of light. Julie's footsteps creak on the floorboards. Mark attempts to control his breathing.

JULIE

Come out, I'm not going to hurt you.

He doesn't respond verbally, but his face says it all. *I'm going to die.*

JULIE  
Stop hiding, dear.

Julie slowly approaches Mark's hiding spot. As she's about to grab him, he darts out.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

The lighting switches back to pleasant as Julie sighs.

JULIE  
(calling after him)  
I hope catching you is worth this.

Mark runs back into his room and notices a stack of rented DVDs by his TV. He picks them up - Notting Hill, Pride and Prejudice, Terms of Endearment.

MARK  
I didn't rent these.

Julie stops. Mark notices a half empty bag of chips and a 2-liter of pop.

JULIE  
I did.

MARK  
Oh, well don't forget to take them when you go. Late fees.

JULIE  
Not anymore. They just make you buy it for a ridiculously high price if you keep it too long.

MARK  
Really? I hadn't...

He stops himself. *Why are we talking about movies at a time like this?*

MARK  
Don't change the subject.

She shrugs.

JULIE  
I'm getting tired of your games.

MARK

Okay, one more question than.

MARK

For the love of everything holy,  
who are you?

Mark runs back into the living room.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MORNING

She chases him through the living room. He circles back to the bedroom.

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

He grabs clothes, pulling them on over his pajamas.

MARK

Come to think of it, just forget  
it. I better be going to work. I  
imagine you know the way out.  
Just try the same way you got in.  
I'm guessing through a window?

INT. LIVING ROOM - MORNING

He opens the door with a wave.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

It's dark. He checks his phone - it reads 3 a.m.

MARK

What the...

He closes the door halfway. Sunlight is still pouring through his windows. He checks his phone again inside the door - 7 a.m. He looks outside.

MARK

What is...

He closes the door again. *I'm crazy*. He tries to shake it off and peeks out the door once more. Then he turns around and...

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

It's night inside too. He opens the blinds - it's night everywhere. He cautiously checks the house for Julie. The back door is locked.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

MARK

Hello?

He ducks behind the cabinet from earlier, expecting her response.

MARK

Hello?

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

He walks back to the bedroom and sits down on the bed. The chips, pop, and DVDs are gone.

MARK

At least she cleaned.

Suddenly, she walks in from the bathroom behind him, wearing a pink nightgown and brushing her teeth. She climbs on the bed behind him and puts her arms around him.

JULIE

Did you say something, babe?

Mark's eyes widen.

MARK

No...

(BEAT)

Just talking to myself.

JULIE

Shut up and listen instead. There's nothing impressive about the way they meet. They could've seen each other 100 times before, but this time, something's different.

She nuzzles his neck.

JULIE

Something we'll never understand  
and can't seem to explain brings  
them together. But that's only in  
the movies.

She gets back up and goes to the bathroom.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

He walks to the kitchen and gets a glass of water. He sighs  
then throws the water on his face.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

He walks back into the bedroom, where she's standing in a wet  
outfit, laughing.

JULIE

Admit it, I won.

MARK

How did you win?

JULIE

It was easy with you being so  
willing to lose.

MARK

I don't think I knew we were  
competing at anything.

Julie rings her shirt out.

JULIE

That doesn't make the fact that you  
lost to a girl any less  
embarrassing.

Mark sits down on the edge of the bed and puts his head in  
his hands.

JULIE

Are you feeling alright?

She climbs on the bed behind him and puts her arms around  
him, kissing his neck. He shrugs her off.

MARK

Not even close.

JULIE  
What does that mean?

She leans away from him.

MARK  
I guess...  
(BEAT)  
Enjoy my bed.

He grabs his pillow.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

He walks out to the living room. After laying down, he starts shivering - *I forgot a blanket.*

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

He walks back into the bedroom. She's gone.

MARK  
Hello?

He looks around but doesn't see her, then lays down on his side of the bed.

FADE TO BLACK AS  
HIS EYES CLOSE:

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

Mark opens one eye then closes it again. He opens both eyes and rolls over slowly. No one's there. He sighs.

MARK  
Alone.  
(BEAT)  
Who am I talking to?

Mark looks at the window and sees the sunlight coming in.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MORNING

He walks to his front door and opens it cautiously - *it's morning.* He shakes his head and closes the door. He turns on music, puts on a pot of coffee, and takes a shower. He gets dressed, gets his coffee, and opens the door.

EXT. HOUSE - MORNING

Mark walks up to his car, parked on the street. He looks in the windows suspiciously, then gets in his car.

INT. CAR - MORNING

He starts the engine and begins to drive.

RADIO ANNOUNCER 1 (O.S.)

In local news, two firefighters narrowly escaped a house on the corner of 8th and Sunrise before it collapsed. Police are investigating a tie to wanted arsonist Kyle Larsten.

RADIO ANNOUNCER 2 (O.S.)

That's terrible. On a more positive note, production began yesterday on a yet to be titled independent film.

RADIO ANNOUNCER 1 (O.S.)

Expect delays all across the city as they stop traffic and close city parks and restaurants.

RADIO ANNOUNCER 2 (O.S.)

I guess everything comes at a price. And speaking of price, oil costs continue to rise meaning only...

Mark changes the station to upbeat music that overscores after his line.

MARK

Just what I needed to hear.

Montage: Mark driving, city landscapes, traffic.

FADE TO:

EXT. OFFICE - MORNING

Mark parks his car in the lot and enters the building. The voluptuous receptionist, SHERRY, who is earnest in her attempt to seduce him, smiles at him as he walks by.

SHERRY

When are you going to take me out  
to dinner?

Mark stops and leans over her desk.

MARK

Well, I can't...

SHERRY

Yeah, I know, you can't tonight,  
but maybe soon.

MARK

Have we done this that many times?

He walks away uncomfortably, clearly not seduced at all.

SHERRY

Yeah, we have.

Mark sits down at his desk and turns on his computer. He  
checks his E-mail - nothing, then begins rifling through some  
papers. DAVE (35) enters from behind him, eating yogurt.

DAVE

Hey man.

Mark jumps, his papers flying in the air.

MARK

I think you officially scared the  
hell out of me.

Mark spins in his chair to face Dave.

DAVE

(Televangelist)

Then fill that emptiness with some  
heaven.

Mark glares at him. Dave shrugs.

DAVE

There's nothing else on at 2 a.m.

(BEAT)

Why so jumpy?

MARK

(mumbles)

I woke up with a girl in my bed.

Dave's eyes widen.

DAVE  
I'm sorry, I don't believe I caught that.

Mark glares at him.

MARK  
I said, there was a girl in my bed this morning.

Dave sets his yogurt down meticulously. *I don't believe this.* He falls back, feigning a faint.

DAVE  
(from the ground)  
Ow.

MARK  
You deserved that.

DAVE  
Come on, help me up.

Mark doesn't move. Dave stands up, brushing himself off. He picks his yogurt back up.

DAVE  
A girl in your bed... Don't tell Sherry.

Mark - *I don't know what you mean.*

DAVE  
She's wanted you since you started working here.

MARK  
She's friendly to everyone.

DAVE  
Oh?

He walks over to Sherry and leans over the counter. Mark stands up to watch them. Dave leans over the counter, then - *Slap.* Dave walks back.

MARK  
What'd you say?

DAVE  
"Hello."

Dave rubs his jaw.

DAVE  
Point proven?

MARK  
I don't think you've proven  
anything.

Mark sits back down. Dave pulls him back to his feet. Another  
guy - *Slap*.

MARK  
Okay, you might have something.

Mark sits in his chair, Dave on the desk next to him.

DAVE  
So what about this girl in your  
bed?

Dave grins.

MARK  
It's not like that.

DAVE  
How?

MARK  
I didn't go to bed with her.

DAVE  
Statistically, 98% of guys who wake  
up with a girl also went to bed  
with the same girl.

MARK  
98%?

DAVE  
Well, yeah, you have to have a real  
gift to wake up with a completely  
different girl.

MARK  
That is completely...

Mark tries to move past that, disgusted.

MARK  
But when I fell asleep, she wasn't  
there.

Dave thinks for a moment.

DAVE  
So she snuck in while you were  
sleeping. Maybe she misread your  
"for sale" sign.

MARK  
I don't have a "for sale" sign.

DAVE  
(smirk)  
You don't need one when you give it  
away for free.

Mark spins his chair to face his computer.

MARK  
I've got to get back to work.

Dave spins Mark's chair so they're facing each other again.

DAVE  
Do you like this girl?

MARK  
I don't even know her name.

DAVE  
I wouldn't tell her that.  
(BEAT)  
Before I forget, worth a roll in  
the hay?

MARK  
Gorgeous.

DAVE  
Can I get her number then? She  
sounds like my type.

Dave walks away, then pokes his head back in.

DAVE  
By the way, you weren't the only  
one with a lady last night. I  
practically had to beg this one to  
stay out of my bed.

Dave smiles broadly.

MARK  
How did you meet "this one"?

DAVE  
Art supply store.

MARK

What were you looking for there?

DAVE

Her.

MARK

How'd you know she was going to be there?

DAVE

I say "her" in a much more general way.

MARK

You're incredible.

Dave opens his mouth to speak. Mark interrupts him.

MARK

Don't bother. I was insulting you.

DAVE

A couple of paintbrushes, some canvas, a little paint if you're looking for the real hot ones. But look who I'm talking to.

Mark ignores his comment.

MARK

What do you do with it?

DAVE

If I need to tell you that...

MARK

The art supplies.

DAVE

Donate it to the local high school.

(BEAT)

Single moms.

MARK

I could lose everything I have, but I'd still have one little hope to hang onto.

DAVE

What?

MARK

I still wouldn't be you.

Dave strolls off, whistling.

FADE TO:

INT. RESTAURANT - EVENING

Mark sits alone in a booth, watching other people laughing and talking. DAN (50) approaches. Mark doesn't look up.

MARK

Hey Dan.

DAN

The American dream.

He gestures to a cheeseburger, french fries, and a Coke sitting in front of Mark. Mark gives him a half-hearted smile.

DAN

Not too hungry tonight?

MARK

It's been quite a day.

DAN

Really? Routine day here.

INT. RESTAURANT - MORNING

Flashback - Quick shots of the grill on fire and employees putting it out. An employee drops food, picks it up, brushes it off and hands it to an impolite customer.

INT. RESTAURANT - EVENING

DAN

So what happened?

MARK

I can't really explain it.

DAN

It's easiest if you just say what happened.

MARK

It didn't make sense.

DAN

Try.

MARK  
It's this girl...

Dan sits down across from Mark.

DAN  
There's a girl? Since when was  
there a girl?

MARK  
There isn't  
(BEAT)  
Wasn't.

DAN  
Until when?

MARK  
This morning.

DAN  
This morning. Where?

MARK  
My bedroom.

DAN  
I'm sorry, what?

MARK  
My bedroom.

DAN  
I don't get it.

MARK  
I warned you.

DAN  
You never seemed like the type to  
go to bed with just anyone.

Mark rubs his hands over his face. *No one will ever get this.*

MARK  
I didn't go to bed with her.

DAN  
You just said that...

MARK  
I woke up with her. She wasn't  
there when I went to bed.

DAN  
Was your door unlocked?

MARK  
No.

DAN  
Was it a dream?

Mark rubs his neck.

MARK  
Definitely not.

DAN  
A mind can play tricks on someone  
who's alone so often.

MARK  
I'm not alone that often.

Dan looks at him - *Do you really think that?* Mark sighs.

MARK  
I guess it could have been a dream.

DAN  
Tell me about her.

MARK  
Don't you think she isn't real?

DAN  
Then tell me as if she was.

MARK  
I don't know what to say.

DAN  
Her name?

MARK  
I don't know her name.

Dan steals a few french fries from Mark, tries one, then puts  
the rest back.

DAN  
Well, if she's real, that would've  
been a good place to start, but go  
on.

MARK

I guess

(BEAT)

In a normal situation, I wouldn't  
have minded waking up next to her.

Dan looks curiously at him - *Really?*

MARK

You know what I mean.

DAN

If that's all that happened, I  
guess that's not so bad.

MARK

If I knew her, *then* it wouldn't be  
so bad. Like this, it is.

FADE TO:

INT. OFFICE - MORNING

Mark is sitting at his desk, very tired. He stands up and  
walks over to Dave's cubicle.

DAVE

(not turning around)

Wake up with anybody this morning?

MARK

(monotone)

I appreciate your humor. It's  
really helping.

DAVE

Consider it a gift.

Dave turns around to face Mark.

DAVE

What's the problem now?

MARK

Who was she?

DAVE

You haven't heard from her again?

MARK

No, thank God.

DAVE

Thank God a gorgeous girl didn't call you.

MARK

A gorgeous girl who I randomly found in my bed.

DAVE

Thank God a gorgeous girl who was randomly in your bed didn't call you.

Dave starts to smile.

MARK

You like that in a girl, don't you?

DAVE

What kind of man would I be if I denied someone something they wanted to badly?

MARK

You never stop giving, do you?

Dave grins.

DAVE

Not if I can help it.

MARK

That's... Wow. Just wow.

Mark walks back to his cubicle.

DAVE

(calling after him)

Seriously, if you hear from her again, give her my number.

Mark shakes his head and smiles slightly.

FADE TO:

INT. RESTAURANT - EVENING

Mark is back in the same booth at the restaurant. Dan approaches him, rag in hand from wiping tables.

DAN

Do you have nowhere else to go?

MARK  
I wouldn't be here if I did.

DAN  
I'm here all the time.

MARK  
To actually eat? What is it, 12  
nights in a row?

DAN  
That can't be healthy.

MARK  
I'll exercise.

DAN  
Not really what I meant.

MARK  
I know what you meant.  
(BEAT)  
But I'm fine. Really.

DAN  
Everyone's fine.  
(BEAT)  
Scary as hell just how fine  
everyone seems to be.

Dan stands up and walks off.

MARK  
Yeah.

FADE TO:

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Mark is sitting on his couch watching TV, mindlessly flipping  
through the channels.

FADE TO:

INT. OFFICE - MORNING

Mark looks even more tired than the day before. He's staring  
at the computer screen even though it's blank.

DAVE  
Rough night?

MARK  
I couldn't sleep.

DAVE  
(suggestively)  
So then, rough night?

MARK  
It's not her.

Dave smiles. *I don't believe you.*

MARK  
It's just that ever since she...

Dave nods. Mark pauses.

MARK  
Everything in my life made sense  
before her. Nothing out of the  
ordinary would happen. I was okay  
with that.

DAVE  
It sounds like she's doing you a  
favor.

FADE TO:

INT. RESTAURANT - EVENING

Mark is in his usual spot. Dan collapses on the booth across  
from him.

DAN  
Maybe you shouldn't let this bother  
you so much.

MARK  
Everything was under control before  
her.

DAN  
Control isn't everything you think  
it is.

MARK  
What do you mean?

DAN  
Before all of this, I had  
something.

Mark sets his cheeseburger down, interested.

DAN  
I didn't have any control over  
anything, but I didn't need it.

MARK  
What was it you had?

DAVE  
A reason to wake up every morning.

MARK  
You have a job...

DAN  
There's more to life than just  
making a living. I'm grateful for  
what I have, just as long as I  
don't think about what I could  
have. What I should have.

MARK  
There's nothing stopping you from  
starting now.

DAN  
If you silence your heart long  
enough, it tends to stop talking.

Dan gets up and continues cleaning tables.

FADE TO:

INT. OFFICE - MORNING

Mark is sitting at his desk looking refreshed and awake. Dave enters from behind him.

DAVE  
Morning sunshine.

MARK  
Hello.

Mark turns around to face him.

DAVE  
You look quite chipper today.

MARK  
I slept.

DAVE

Did she hold you until the fear in  
you subsided?

MARK

Sleeping pill.

DAVE

Ah, facing the problem head on.

MARK

Why is everyone acting like I  
should be handling this well? A  
stranger is in my bed, and suddenly  
I'm crazy.

DAVE

It really has to make you wonder if  
you were crazy before, doesn't it?

Mark glares at him.

MARK

Maybe it was a freak thing. I  
probably won't hear from her again.

Mark's cell phone rings. The caller ID says Julie Allen. Mark  
looks at Dave.

DAVE

Is that...?

MARK

I don't know who else it would be.

Dave exits as Mark answers it hesitantly.

MARK

Um, hello?

JULIE

You didn't call me.

*I didn't know I was supposed to.*

MARK

You're absolutely right.

JULIE

(rambling)

I mean, I thought you would. When  
you didn't call, I started to think  
I scared you off.

(MORE)

JULIE (cont'd)  
I realized I might have come on a  
(little strong).

MARK  
(talking over her)  
That really could be it....

JULIE  
I thought they were good dates. I  
mean, it was...

MARK  
(talking over her)  
A lot has just come up lately....

JULIE  
Like what?

MARK  
Nothing to worry about.

JULIE  
Why wouldn't I worry about it?

MARK  
It's a little hard to explain.

JULIE  
If something's too personal, you  
can just tell me.

MARK  
I don't think I could tell you  
about this even if I had any idea  
what was going on.

Mark sighs.

MARK  
I'm sorry. I need to go.

He hangs up the phone and sets it on his desk. Dave enters  
behind him again. Mark jumps again.

DAVE  
You get really jumpy after you talk  
to her.

Mark grimaces.

MARK  
She has that quality.

DAVE

So we now know that when she snuck in and held you the other night, she was also adding herself to your phone.

MARK

Apparently.

Mark leans back in his chair.

DAVE

Maybe you gave her some kind of signal.

MARK

What signal? "I'm sleeping, hold me"?

DAVE

You don't think there's a signal for that?

(BEAT)

So what did she want?

MARK

I'm not sure exactly. To yell at me, I think.

DAVE

Well good.

MARK

I should learn not to ask, but good? How?

DAVE

You haven't been serious enough with a girl to give her a chance to yell at you since I've known you.

MARK

I met her when I woke up with her on me. That's serious?

Dave smiles.

DAVE

There are worse ways to meet a girl.

MARK

Like?

DAVE  
Emergency room. She hit me with her  
car.

Mark slowly realizes what's being said.

MARK  
Or you jumped out in front of her  
car!

DAVE  
She looked cute.

He grimaces, rubbing his head.

DAVE  
She wasn't.

Dave shakes his head.

MARK  
You'll do anything to get a date,  
won't you?

DAVE  
I will.  
(BEAT)  
Do you?

Dave leans on Mark's desk.

DAVE  
I know this sounds crazy, but maybe  
this could be good for you.

MARK  
You're right.  
(BEAT)  
It does sound crazy.

DAVE  
Think it through.

Dave exits.

MARK  
Why do people say stuff like that  
and then leave?

Mark drops his head to his desk.

FADE TO:

EXT. OFFICE - NOON

Mark walks out of his office, sighing hopefully. He runs into Julie, who looks like she just exercised. She turns away and covers her face.

JULIE  
Uh, don't look at me please.

MARK  
Why?

JULIE  
You're still looking at me.

MARK  
Okay...

Mark turns around.

MARK  
Now why can't I look?

JULIE  
You know how a groom can't see his bride on the wedding day?

MARK  
Oh, god. We're getting married?

JULIE  
I don't like to commit to marriage until at least the third date.

Mark sighs.

MARK  
So we've been on a date...

JULIE  
Of course. It was sweet.

Mark starts to turn back.

JULIE  
Don't you dare turn back around.

Mark stops and turns back.

MARK  
So the point of your question about a bride and a groom...

JULIE

Right.

(BEAT)

Well, I figure if a groom seeing the bride on a wedding day is a lot of bad luck, then a guy seeing a girl before their date might be just a little bad luck.

MARK

I guess that makes sense.

Mark shakes his head and turns around.

JULIE

What do you mean?

MARK

All I know is that ever since I met...

Mark stops himself.

MARK

My life recently got significantly more confusing.

Julie drops her hand.

JULIE

I'm sorry to confuse you. I always screw things up like this.

She picks up her stuff and walks off.

MARK

(calling after her)

Wait, did you say we have a date tonight?

She doesn't respond. He shakes his head and continues walking.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - NOON

As Mark enters the coffee shop, his phone rings - it's Julie again. He sighs and answers the phone.

MARK

What I said earlier wasn't right.

JULIE

You don't want to take me out tonight?

Mark stops.

MARK

When did I say I wanted to take you out?

JULIE

When you asked me out, I thought it meant you wanted to take me out.

MARK

Not what I meant. When did I ask you out?

JULIE

Earlier today. At the park.

MARK

I was at work all morning.

JULIE

I don't get it.

(BEAT)

Earlier you wanted to take me out. You wanted to "take a chance with me," whatever that means.

MARK

I don't take chances.

The whole coffee shop turns to look at him.

MARK

That's not what I meant.

JULIE

Okay. Well, I'm sorry for...

Mark stiffens as if preparing to do something he doesn't want to do.

MARK

(interrupting)

No. I'll pick you up.

JULIE

Okay.

Julie hangs up the phone.

MARK

So where do you live?

Mark realizes she's not there anymore and hangs up the phone. He tries to call her, but her phone is off. He walks to the counter, making eye contact with ALLIE on his way. He quickly looks away.

MARK

I'll have a coffee.

BARISTA

Can I interest you in a chocolate chip muffin?

MARK

No, thanks.

BARISTA

They're fresh.

MARK

Really, I'm fine.

BARISTA

I made them.

Mark thinks for a second, then caves.

MARK

Alright, a chocolate chip muffin too.

BARISTA

That will be \$5.49 sir.

Mark grimaces.

MARK

Another paycheck down the drain.

The barista smiles and walks away to prepare his order. Allie approaches him from behind.

ALLIE

Hard to believe we'll pay so much money for something that doesn't taste that great, isn't it?

Mark turns his head.

MARK

Not a coffee person?

ALLIE  
No, I am, but just because I think  
I should be.

She extends her hand.

ALLIE  
I'm Allie.

Mark turns around and shakes her extended hand.

MARK  
Mark.

The barista calls out Mark's order.

MARK  
Well, that's me. It was nice  
talking to you.

He gets his food from the counter and walks to a table in the corner.

ALLIE  
We're done talking?

She follows him and sits across from him.

MARK  
I guess not.

She smiles.

ALLIE  
I've got nowhere to go, but I can  
find somewhere if you want me to.

MARK  
No, it's not that. I just have a  
lot to think through.

ALLIE  
Like what?

MARK  
It's not really a story I like to  
tell people.

ALLIE  
Well, I'm a perfect stranger. What  
could be the harm in telling me?

Mark tilts his head to the side and smiles.

MARK

Well, I woke up the other morning,  
or night...

(BEAT)

at some point, with a girl next to  
me.

Allie shifts uncomfortably.

ALLIE

Should I congratulate you? I could  
clap a little if you want me to.

MARK

You asked.

ALLIE

Right, sorry.

MARK

I didn't go to bed with this girl.  
I know I didn't. She was just there  
when I woke up.

Allie sips her coffee.

ALLIE

You may be the only guy alive to  
complain about this.

MARK

I just don't know who she is. Well,  
I know her name.

ALLIE

Always a good start before you take  
a girl to bed.

MARK

I didn't take her to bed.

ALLIE

Right, you just woke up with her.

MARK

Not much better?

Mark bites his muffin.

ALLIE

No, not really.

MARK

Never hurts to try.

ALLIE

It can. That's why people don't.

She smiles.

MARK

What?

ALLIE

People have come to the conclusion that it does hurt to try. That's why no one bothers to try anymore.

Mark sips his coffee.

ALLIE

Some people have been not trying for so long that they don't even know they've stopped. They've found ways to excuse it by now.

Mark looks at her.

ALLIE

Sorry, I tend to ramble when I'm nervous.

MARK

Nervous?

ALLIE

I don't try to meet people very often.

She smiles, then her phone rings. She checks the caller ID.

ALLIE

I've got to go. Here's my advice...

MARK

For the girl?

ALLIE

For life in general. Things are generally like the coffee: you just have to decide if it's worth what it costs.

Allie writes down her phone number on a napkin for him and leaves. Mark looks at it and considers throwing it away, but decides to keep it instead.

FADE TO:

INT. OFFICE - NOON

Mark walks back into his office building after lunch.

SHERRY  
Bring me anything?

MARK  
Just me, I guess.

Mark continues to walk past her.

SHERRY  
(calling after him)  
I'll take it.

Mark smiles as he sits down at his desk. Dave tries to sneak up on him again, but doesn't scare him.

MARK  
(not turning around)  
How was lunch?

Dave stops sneaking, dejected.

DAVE  
A bit more sexual than yours.

MARK  
You didn't see my chocolate chip  
muffin.

Dave is silent for a second, then shakes it off.

DAVE  
I got a date.

Mark spins around in his chair.

MARK  
You got a date in...

Mark checks his watch.

MARK  
45 minutes?

DAVE  
I've gotten pretty good at what I  
do.

MARK  
And what is it that you do,  
exactly?

DAVE  
Whatever it takes.

Dave smirks.

MARK  
I'll have you know I got a date and  
a phone number during lunch. Two  
different people.

DAVE  
Girls?

MARK  
Yes, girls.  
(BEAT)  
One was a girl named Allie. She  
just came up to me at the coffee  
shop. She had a lot to say.

DAVE  
Too much?

MARK  
No. Interesting things.

DAVE  
Hold on.

Dave exits, then returns holding a yogurt. He opens it and  
begins eating it.

DAVE  
So what about the other girl?

MARK  
That would be Julie.

DAVE  
Like that was any kind of  
challenge.

MARK  
She's more challenging than you  
think. I ran into her on the  
sidewalk and made her mad.

DAVE  
What did you do?

MARK  
Told her that my life got more  
confusing with her less than subtle  
entrance.

DAVE  
That's the last you'll hear from  
her.

Mark leans back and puts his hands behind his head.

MARK  
Then I got into the coffee shop and  
she called me to confirm a date.

DAVE  
So she's forgiving.

MARK  
It gets more confusing. I don't  
remember making a date with her.  
Just having her confirm it. Twice.

DAVE  
So she's crazy.

MARK  
Probably, but I agreed to take her  
out.

Dave's mouth drops.

DAVE  
You... what... why? She's crazy,  
man.

Mark tries to look cool.

MARK  
Apparently, I'm crazy too.

Dave laughs.

MARK  
I can be crazy.

Dave laughs harder. Mark drops his cool attempt.

MARK  
Do you ever work?

DAVE  
(laughing)  
This is so much more entertaining.

Mark pushes him out of his cubicle and goes back to his work.

FADE TO:

EXT. OFFICE - EVENING

Mark exits his office and walks to his car.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

He turns the car on, shifts into park, and looks at the passenger seat. Julie is there. He jumps.

JULIE  
You're jumpy today.

MARK  
I've heard that a lot lately.

JULIE  
Did you get what you needed?

MARK  
Needed?

JULIE  
You said you had something to pick up.

Mark looks in the back seat of his car. There's a folder there. He picks it up and looks through it.

MARK  
Yeah, it looks like I got it.

JULIE  
Then take me home. I have an early morning tomorrow.

Julie fakes a sad look.

JULIE  
I hope you don't mind me skipping out on tonight.

MARK  
I don't...

JULIE  
(interrupting)  
We have a party tomorrow and everyone has to be in early to get ready.

MARK

I understand.

(BEAT)

Things come up unexpectedly.

They both sit in silence, still not driving.

JULIE

Would you take me home already?

She kisses him on the cheek.

MARK

Right. And you live...

Julie laughs.

JULIE

Shut up and drive.

Mark gives a *here goes* look and starts to drive.

FADE TO:

INT. CAR - LATER

They have been driving for almost an hour. They finally pull up to Julie's house.

MARK

We're here.

JULIE

That was probably the most

(BEAT)

creative way to get to my house. 45 minutes in the wrong direction.

Mark smiles nervously.

MARK

At least we only had to stop to get gas once.

INT. GAS STATION - EVENING

Flashback - Quick shots of Mark flipping through a phone book to find Julie's address. He tears out the page and takes it to the attendant for directions.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

JULIE  
Thanks for the  
(BEAT)  
Experience, I guess is the best  
word.

Mark smiles.

MARK  
Good night.

Julie kisses him on the cheek again, gets out the car and smiles at him.

JULIE  
Good night.

Mark puts his hand on the gear shift.

INT. CAR - EVENING

Suddenly, Julie opens the car door again. She's wearing a cocktail dress and it is earlier in the day.

JULIE  
Sorry about not waiting for you to  
come to the door to get me. I was  
waiting for you by the window  
and...

Julie climbs in the car and buckles her seat belt. Mark opens his mouth to talk, but nothing comes out.

JULIE  
When you pulled up I got so excited  
that I just ran out here. That was  
rude of me, wasn't it? What a  
terrible first impression...

MARK  
I've been working on not judging by  
first impressions lately.

JULIE  
I could go back in if you want.  
Pretend like I wasn't waiting.

MARK  
I don't think that's necessary. But  
thanks.

Julie smiles at him.

JULIE  
You're sweet.

Mark shifts the car into drive.

MARK  
(hesitatingly)  
So, this is our first date?

JULIE  
Unless you've taken me out before  
and I didn't know it.

MARK  
(to himself)  
Stranger things have happened.

JULIE  
What?

MARK  
Sorry, talking to myself.

They begin driving.

JULIE  
I never know what to say in  
situations like this. I'm not in  
situations like this often.

MARK  
Tell me about it.

JULIE  
You don't date much?

MARK  
It normally doesn't happen quite  
like this.

JULIE  
How does it usually happen for you?

MARK  
It usually doesn't.

They pull into a restaurant.

MARK  
Wait here.

Mark gets out of the car and enters the restaurant.

INT. RESTAURANT - EVENING

Mark approaches the HOSTESS.

MARK

Do you have any tables?

The hostess checks the list - tables are available.

HOSTESS

It does appear that...

She looks him up and down. Her demeanor changes negatively.

HOSTESS

We have absolutely no tables.

MARK

How long will the wait be?

HOSTESS

Longer than you can afford.

Mark glares at her.

MARK

Listen to me, I have a girl in the car, and apparently I'm taking her on a date.

HOSTESS

Then I suggest you find somewhere to take her.

She gestures for him to leave. He scowls at her and turns around. He walks towards the door.

HOSTESS

(in the background)

How many?

(BEAT)

We'll have a table ready in two minutes.

Mark shakes his head and walks out.

EXT. RESTAURANT - EVENING

Mark approaches the car and looks through the window. Julie isn't inside. He looks over the roof of the car and sees her back.

MARK

They don't seem to have our reservation.

JULIE

It's fine. We can always reschedule.

MARK

We might not have to.

JULIE

Why?

MARK

I have an idea. Do you trust me?

JULIE

I have no reason not to. Yet.

MARK

Good, close your eyes.

Mark leads her across the street to another restaurant.

MARK

Wait here. And don't open your eyes.

JULIE

Okay...

Mark runs inside, leaving Julie leaning against the wall outside. Mark finally comes back for her.

MARK

Alright, come on.

He takes her hand and walks her inside.

INT. RESTAURANT - EVENING

Mark walks her to the table and sits her down. She opens her eyes and sees candles. She looks around the restaurant. She laughs.

JULIE

This is certainly unique.

MARK

Not many people know about this place.

JULIE  
I can imagine. It looks a little  
expensive.

He chuckles.

MARK  
Sometimes you have to go a little  
crazy.

They are both silent.

MARK  
So I feel like I don't know  
anything about you.

JULIE  
You don't.

MARK  
That makes sense then.

They laugh, then it's silent again.

MARK  
This would be a great place to tell  
me about yourself.

JULIE  
I don't like to brag about  
myself...

MARK  
(interrupting)  
That's understandable.

Julie glares at him playfully.

JULIE  
But I'm practically perfect.

MARK  
You certainly look the part.

He looks proud at his wit. She laughs.

JULIE  
You're very flattering.

MARK  
It's easy when it's true.

Julie laughs again.

JULIE

Do all the girls fall for your  
lines?

MARK

None. Never. Well, one time...

INT. STORE

Flashback - Mark nervously approaches a GIRL, who is looking through CDs. Dan and Dave are in the background, waving him on.

MARK

I just wanted to say that I think  
you're really beautiful.

She doesn't turn towards him.

GIRL

I appreciate you telling me that.

Mark relaxes a little.

MARK

It's not problem. I actually wasn't  
going to do it, but...

She turns towards him and he sees she's holding a phone to her other ear. She tilts it to the side.

GIRL

I'm sorry, did you say something?

INT. RESTAURANT - EVENING

MARK

But it didn't exactly work out the  
way I hoped.

He laughs at himself.

MARK

It's funny. We think we're so  
untouchable...

(BEAT)

We try to be so untouchable.

(BEAT)

Then something always comes along  
and shows us we're not even close.

She smiles. They are both silent for a moment.

JULIE

Isn't that a good thing? Knowing  
you can still be touched?

MARK

If there's no pain involved, then  
yeah

(BEAT)

I guess it is a good thing.

He smiles. They are both silent again.

JULIE

So what do you do?

MARK

I work for the city.

(BEAT)

I answer phone calls and E-mails  
from people in the city. Try to  
help them.

Mark lowers his head a little, embarrassed.

MARK

Not exactly the highest paying job.

JULIE

And you have money to take a girl  
like me on a fancy date like this?

MARK

Well, I'd hardly call it fancy.

Dan approaches, placing orange trays with cheeseburgers,  
french fries, and Cokes in front of them. The camera pulls  
out to reveal they are in Dan's restaurant.

JULIE

Fancy doesn't always mean the money  
it costs.

MARK

Well, when I couldn't get us in  
anywhere else...

JULIE

You found something better than  
anywhere else.

MARK

A little trying can't hurt.

JULIE  
It can, actually.

He laughs.

MARK  
That's a very good point.

Julie smiles and eats a few fries. Mark takes a big bite of his hamburger.

MARK  
What about you? What do you do?

JULIE  
I'm a cook.

MARK  
I guess I picked the right restaurant to impress you then.

JULIE  
I think you're doing a little better than you think.

He looks surprised.

JULIE  
So what keeps a guy like you single?

MARK  
Poor date choices?

She glares at him.

MARK  
A guy like me keeps a guy like me single.

JULIE  
What do you mean?

Julie takes a drink from her straw. Mark eats a fry.

MARK  
I don't meet girls by chance. I've never just walked into a Wal-mart and met the love of my life by the creamed corn.

Julie eats some more fries, this time off of his tray.

MARK

All of the girls I date are people  
I've known, got to be friends with,  
and then fell for. Even then, I  
waited until I knew she liked me.

Julie takes another sip of her drink - it's empty.

JULIE

Then why me?

MARK

The way we met. It was different.  
(BEAT)  
Very unique.

Mark smiles.

MARK

What about you? I haven't seen  
anything wrong with you yet.

JULIE

It's not midnight quite yet. I'll  
turn back into a pumpkin yet.

MARK

I think the carriage was the  
pumpkin.

JULIE

Then a rat or something.

Mark smiles again.

MARK

I guess I'll have to get you home  
before then.

JULIE

What makes you think you can keep  
me that late to begin with?

MARK

Just a hunch.

JULIE

What if you're wrong?

MARK

It wouldn't be the first time.

JULIE

And it certainly won't be the last.

Julie winks at him.

MARK  
Need a refill?

JULIE  
Love one. While you do that, I'll  
go powder my nose.

JULIE  
Okay, so I'm going to the bathroom.  
I was being proper.

MARK  
If you say so.

Julie gets up and walks to the bathroom. Mark gets up after her and walks to the drink refill station. He sits back down with her drink, smiling.

INT. RESTAURANT - AFTERNOON

She comes back with a different dress on. He sighs.

MARK  
Welcome back.

He looks apprehensive.

MARK  
Something's different though.

JULIE  
Shut up. Tonight's perfect, don't  
ruin it by being stupid.

She laughs.

JULIE  
I guess I can't say you don't  
listen though.

Mark doesn't reply.

JULIE  
It wasn't that long ago that we  
were here on our first date.

MARK  
I doubt it was even as long as you  
think.

It's Julie's turn to remain silent.

MARK  
What I mean is  
(BEAT)  
I don't know what I mean.

JULIE  
I know commitment is hard for you.

MARK  
I'm not sure it's so much about  
commitment.

JULIE  
What do you mean?

She takes a bite of her cheeseburger.

MARK  
This week has just been confusing.  
I'd say that more has happened this  
week than I was prepared for.

JULIE  
Work?

Mark is silent again.

JULIE  
Babe?

MARK  
I don't want to ruin this night  
with talk of my problems. I'm  
(BEAT)  
Okay with what happened today.  
Let's leave it at that.

JULIE  
I have no complaints about today  
either.

They both smile.

MARK  
That's good, because this meal  
wasn't cheap.

JULIE  
I'm worth it.

MARK  
I think I agree.

She smiles.

FADE TO:

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mark falls back on his bed, smiling. He turns on the TV and quickly falls asleep.

FADE TO:

INT. BEDROOM - LATER

On TV, two filmmakers are discussing the filmmaking process.

FILMMAKER 1

It's a complicated process really.

FILMMAKER 2

What he means is that we still have no idea what we're doing.

They both laugh. Mark's eyes open a little.

FILMMAKER 1

If you've never been on a set before, you'd probably think it's chaos.

FILMMAKER 2

It is chaos, really. Just chaos with a purpose. You can't close down a city block any time you need to, so you get the romantic kiss under the streetlight and the car chase back to back.

FILMMAKER 1

It's challenging for the actors, to be so seemingly bipolar.

The show cuts back to an attractive TV Personality standing in an Entertainment Tonight-esque set.

TV PERSONALITY

The Bernowski's newest film will tell the story of the days in Germany before the fall of the Berlin Wall. It is set for release...

Mark turns off the TV and falls back to sleep.

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

Mark wakes up to the sun. He rolls over and looks at his alarm clock, which hasn't yet gone off, and considers going back to bed. Instead, he drags himself out of bed and changes into exercise clothes. He puts headphones on as he walks out his front door.

EXT. PARK - MORNING

Mark is running through the park, his headphones in his ears. Julie, setting up for a picnic, sees Mark and waves, but he doesn't see her until he doubles back to head home.

MARK

What are you doing out here so early?

He takes the headphones out of his ears.

JULIE

I'm early? I told you to be here at 8.

Mark checks his watch - 7:45.

MARK

When?

JULIE

Eight.

MARK

No, when did you tell me?

He crosses the grass between them.

JULIE

On the phone.

MARK

Oh.

JULIE

Anyway, I guess the picnic isn't going to be a surprise.

MARK

A picnic at 8 am?

JULIE

Have we ever played by the rules?

MARK  
Not to my knowledge.

They both laugh.

JULIE  
Care to join me?

MARK  
I would be honored.

Mark bows cordially, then quickly drops his act.

MARK  
Maybe I should change and shower  
though.

JULIE  
Why?

MARK  
I'm not really dressed for this.

JULIE  
Well, that's your fault. You're not  
going to leave me waiting after  
ruining my surprise, are you?

He sits down on the blanket. She sits down next to him, then  
scoots away.

JULIE  
Then again...

MARK  
Hey now.

JULIE  
I'm kidding!

They're both silent.

MARK  
Is there something you wanted to  
talk to me about?

JULIE  
Should there be?

MARK  
Well, you had this look.

JULIE  
What kind of look?

MARK

The "I want to talk to you" look.

JULIE

What's it look like?

MARK

Like this.

Mark tries to do an impression, but ends up looking more than a little silly.

JULIE

I look like that?

MARK

More or less.

JULIE

And you haven't ran off screaming?

MARK

Not yet, but I don't really have a choice. You won't leave me alone.

JULIE

Hey now.

MARK

I can't make jokes?

JULIE

Not very well.

Mark pretends to take offense.

JULIE

I think I'm scared that you can tell what I'm thinking by the look I make.

MARK

Me too. But you wanted to talk about...

JULIE

It's nothing. It's probably just me.

MARK

What is?

JULIE

What I'm thinking.

MARK

It'll always be just you unless you try it on someone else.

Julie looks down at the picnic basket.

JULIE

Maybe we should just eat.

She opens the picnic basket.

MARK

Okay.

She closes the picnic basket.

JULIE

Where do you see this going?

MARK

Where do I what?

JULIE

How are we going to survive everything we do to each other?

MARK

What do you mean? What do we do to each other?

JULIE

The same thing every couple does. We fight, we make up. I confuse you, you annoy me.

They are both silent again.

JULIE

Do you think it's worth it?

MARK

We don't have a chance if we look at it like that. It's not about what we do to each other, but what we do for each other. We don't get to pick how the person we love thinks or acts, we just choose how we think or act in response.

JULIE

But

MARK

(interrupting)

This is real, what I feel for you  
and what I think you feel for me.  
It's going to hurt like hell  
sometimes, so it might be easier to  
just get out now.

JULIE

Try to get rid of me, I dare you.

Julie leans over Mark, kissing him softly.

MARK

Maybe later.

(BEAT)

For now, stop talking and let me  
eat this food.

He scoots to the side, letting her fall to the blanket. She  
crosses her arms unhappily as he opens the picnic basket,  
pulling out fruit, sandwiches and juice.

JULIE

Scrambled eggs and pancakes don't  
translate very well for a picnic.

She laughs, embarrassed. Mark eats some fruit.

MARK

It's not the picnic that attracted  
me.

JULIE

No?

MARK

Not that I forgot.

JULIE

No, of course not. What exactly did  
you come for then?

MARK

It's a little sad that you need to  
ask.

JULIE

Humor me.

She smiles sweetly.

MARK

The real reason I came here is because...

She leans closer to him anxiously.

MARK

They're shooting a movie in town. I thought maybe I could meet someone famous.

She pushes him on his back. He laughs and sits back up.

MARK

Were you expecting something else?

JULIE

Not expecting, necessarily. Just hoping.

MARK

Did you want me to say you?

JULIE

Yes.

MARK

Did you think I'd say you?

JULIE

Yes.

MARK

Do you see why I didn't say you, then?

JULIE

No.

She pouts for a second, then he gets up and runs towards the swing set nearby. She chases him and they play for a while on the swing set and jungle gym.

EXT. PARK - AFTERNOON

They are both laying on the blanket, exhausted.

JULIE

Shut up, you did not beat me.

MARK

I didn't? Okay, well you just came in second.

(MORE)

MARK (cont'd)

(BEAT)

And there's two of us. You do the math.

She laughs.

JULIE

You think you're funny, huh?

MARK

I think you think I'm funny.

JULIE

I do remember laughing at you, yeah.

MARK

Whoa, whoa. Flag on the play there. Unnecessary roughness.

He nudges her shoulder with his.

JULIE

The refs reviewed the play. They seem to think it was an appropriate response.

MARK

Oh, so this is my fault?

JULIE

I wouldn't say it's your fault. Just that it's not my mine.

(BEAT)

And there's two of us. You do the math.

MARK

Oh, I see how it's going to be.

He rolls over to face her in fake anger. She rolls over to face him.

JULIE

What are you going to do about it?

MARK

The only really thing I can do.

She smiles, expecting a kiss.

MARK

Bask in the fact that you still lost to me.

Julie fakes the anger this time, which Mark uses as an opportunity to lean in and kiss her. Julie takes a moment after they kiss to soak it in.

JULIE

You think you're so smooth, don't you?

MARK

I think you think I'm smooth.

JULIE

We are not doing this again.

MARK

Doing what again?

JULIE

You're impossible.

MARK

And, if I remember correctly, undefeated.

She pulls him in and kisses him deeply, then she pushes him back.

JULIE

There, your prize.

(BEAT)

Now shut up.

She smiles. He doesn't say anything for a few seconds, seemingly stuck on this kiss, but he goes right back to his win.

MARK

So you admit I won.

JULIE

Fine, you won.

Mark grins.

JULIE

But you aren't going to be rewarded anymore if you keep this up.

He quickly drops his grin.

JULIE

That's better.

They both lay back and look at the sky again.

MARK

What do you think a clouds made of?

JULIE

I think it's just water or ice hanging up there.

MARK

What keeps it hanging though?

JULIE

Tiny little strings.

Mark turns his head.

MARK

Tiny little strings?

JULIE

Tiny little strings.

MARK

How do you figure?

JULIE

Well, we know it's not us.

MARK

Right, because we're looking at them.

JULIE

No, not us specifically, but humans. It can't be humans. We explain things, but that's about it.

MARK

Okay, so not humans. But tiny little strings?

JULIE

Well, if it's not humans, it must be something different than humans. Obviously something less intelligent can't do it if we can't do it.

Mark tries to process that, still looking at her.

MARK

Right, I think.

JULIE

So it must be something more  
intelligent than humans.

MARK

Go on.

JULIE

It's love.

MARK

Be serious.

JULIE

I am. It's because of love.

MARK

How do you figure?

JULIE

Clouds didn't have to be beautiful.  
All of them could be dark, like  
rain clouds. But these are little  
pieces of heaven for us to see.

He looks at her again.

MARK

So why the tiny little strings?

JULIE

Well, love made the clouds and put  
them there, but love has so much  
else to do. It's love, it has to  
heal and fight the bad.

She looks back at him.

JULIE

And it has to bring people  
together.

They look at each other silently.

MARK

And I was making jokes.

JULIE

Yes, you were.

MARK

I have the tendency to ruin a  
moment.

JULIE

You're doing better than you think.

She kisses him gently. She looks at her watch and sighs.

JULIE

And now the moment's over.

MARK

What? That fast?

(BEAT)

Give me a chance. I can try again.

He looks back up at the sky.

MARK

I've always wanted to touch a cloud, just to see what one feels like.

She kisses him on the cheek.

JULIE

It's not you. I have to work.

MARK

You could call in.

JULIE

Or I could quit.

She sits up.

MARK

Even better.

Mark sits up.

JULIE

Wrong answer. I can't quit.  
Living's not cheap.

She starts packing up the picnic basket.

MARK

Sorry we didn't eat much of your picnic.

JULIE

It's not going anywhere. We can have another.

INT. RESTAURANT - EVENING

Flashback - Julie walking into the bathroom in one dress and walking out in another.

EXT. PARK - AFTERNOON

MARK  
Not here though.

JULIE  
Why not?

MARK  
I just...

He stops to think of a reasonable excuse.

MARK  
I want this to be the place where  
we had this picnic, not just one of  
our picnics.

JULIE  
Okay...  
(BEAT)  
Not here.

They pack up the picnic basket and get up to leave. Mark looks out across the park and sees people playing and laughing. He smiles.

JULIE  
You ready?

MARK  
I think so.

They walk out of the park. Mark waves a taxi down for them. The taxi stops and pulls to the curb. He opens her door, then walks around to the other side and gets in.

INT. CAB - AFTERNOON

He sits down and smiles before turning to her.

INT. CAB - EVENING

She's in a different dress again. He sighs. Her voice fades in.

JULIE  
...that we really have a future.  
That there's really something going  
on between us.

MARK  
There is.

JULIE  
I don't know if I can believe that.

MARK  
Why can't you?

Julie scowls.

JULIE  
What reasons do I have to believe  
it?

MARK  
Time.

JULIE  
You can't say we'll stay together  
because we've been together. Time  
doesn't heal everything.

MARK  
Time doesn't.  
(BEAT)  
But love does. You told me love  
does.

Her face softens. He takes it as a sign they've worked things  
out and leans in to kiss her. She pushes him away.

JULIE  
I don't think kissing me is going  
to answer any of my questions.

MARK  
It might not, but I it makes you  
feel better.

Julie sighs.

JULIE  
Not this time.

She turns to the window and doesn't talk to Mark for the rest  
of the cab ride. Mark looks at her for any sign of her  
softening, but she shows none.

INT. OFFICE - MORNING

Mark enters the office looking tired. Sherry flags him down. He walks over to her desk.

MARK  
What can I do for you?

She smiles.

SHERRY  
Nothing, anymore.

MARK  
I'm sorry?

SHERRY  
I spent all of my time trying to get you to ask me out.

MARK  
Oh. Um.

SHERRY  
No, it's okay.

MARK  
I'm sorry

SHERRY  
I just told you it was okay.

MARK  
But you told me that before I apologized.

SHERRY  
It meant you didn't need to.

MARK  
Well, I thought that...

She clears her throat.

SHERRY  
Now that I've moved on, I can focus on my other options.

MARK  
Your other options?

She gestures behind him. He follows her point, right to Dave, standing there waving. Mark turns back around.

MARK

Dave?

SHERRY

The sweetheart donated art supplies  
to my son's school.

MARK

I don't think sweetheart begins to  
cover it.

His eyes widen and he mouths "wow" as he turns around and  
walks to his desk. Dave's sitting in his chair, waiting for  
him. He's eating a yogurt.

MARK

(hushed)

Sherry? Really?

DAVE

It's not like that.

MARK

Of course it's not. Your every move  
isn't focused on meeting women.

Mark let's that soak in for a minute. Dave focuses on his  
yogurt.

MARK

You work with her.

DAVE

I didn't do anything this time.

MARK

You dropped art supplies off at a  
school...

DAVE

On a Saturday. In my sweatpants.  
That's not how I get a date.

MARK

No, you jump in front of cars. Much  
different.

DAVE

She smiled, man.

MARK

She smiles all the time.

DAVE

Not at me.

MARK

It's good to hear everything's working out.

(BEAT)

Get out of my chair.

Dave gets up. Mark sits down.

DAVE

What about with you? I haven't heard anything about your girl in a while.

MARK

I like her.

Dave chokes on his yogurt.

DAVE

You what?

MARK

I like her.

DAVE

You like the girl that was stalking you. What's that? Stockholm Syndrome?

MARK

Yeah. Stockholm Syndrome. You nailed it.

DAVE

And you thought I was dumb.

MARK

I guess I was wrong then, wasn't I? It wasn't like that though.

DAVE

What's more shocking though, you liking her or you liking someone in general?

MARK

I just can't ever figure out where she's coming from.

DAVE

What do you mean?

Dave throws his empty yogurt cup away. He pulls another out of his pocket.

MARK

We're getting along great one minute. The next, she's telling me she needs to know if we're going somewhere.

Dave laughs.

MARK

What?

DAVE

You think that's not normal.

MARK

What do you mean?

DAVE

How long have you been out of the whole dating scene?

MARK

A couple years. A few months.

(BEAT)

And a day.

Dave laughs at him again.

DAVE

People are insecure now. Things got more complicated.

He takes a bite of his yogurt.

DAVE

You'll be asked "are we okay" more times in your life than you'll be asked if you want fries with that.

Dave smiles.

DAVE

And we both know how much fast food you eat.

Dave throws away his yogurt.

DAVE

I've got to go.

MARK  
Going to finally work?

DAVE  
No, I've got a receptionist to  
romance.

MARK  
Good luck.

DAVE  
I think I might need it this time.

He exits. Mark laughs and looks at his computer, sighs, and starts to work.

FADE TO:

INT. JULIE'S RESTAURANT - EVENING

Mark enters holding flowers behind his back. He looks around for Julie. She's in the back, covered in sweat and feeling rather unappealing. He walks to the counter.

MARK  
Julie...

CASHIER  
(interrupting)  
Can I help you?

He turns to her.

MARK  
No.

He turns back towards Julie, who still hasn't noticed him.

CASHIER  
You can't stand here unless you're  
ordering.

He takes a step to the side.

MARK  
Then I'll stand here.

CASHIER  
Sir, I'm going to need to ask you  
to move out of the way.

Julie hears the commotion and walks up.

JULIE  
It's okay. He's here for me.

CASHIER  
They always are.

Mark wonders what that means as she walks off. Mark presents the flowers to Julie.

MARK  
About last night...

Julie takes the flowers.

JULIE  
I know...

She smiles.

JULIE  
I had a great time too.

Mark tries to shake it off, but can't quite seem to. Julie looks up from the flowers.

JULIE  
Something wrong?

MARK  
(stammering)  
No. Um. Nothing.

He regains composure.

MARK  
Do you like the flowers?

JULIE  
I love them.

She leans over the counter and motions for him to come near. He leans in, expecting a secret. She kisses him on the cheek.

JULIE  
Find a place to sit. I'll make you something to eat.

MARK  
I'm really not that...

JULIE  
(interrupting)  
Sit.

He turns around and finds a table to sit at. He sits down and looks over at her. She's gone, but quickly comes into the dining room.

JULIE

Now I don't normally do this,

(BEAT)

But some customers just need a little extra attention.

She assumes a stereotypical waitress stance with a pen in one hand and a napkin in another.

MARK

Is that a napkin?

JULIE

They don't give the cooks notepads.

Mark looks down at the table.

MARK

Is that my napkin?

JULIE

Yes. Get over it.

She smiles.

JULIE

Now what can I get you?

Mark looks over the inside of the menu. She takes the menu from him and flips it to the back.

JULIE

To drink.

MARK

Oh. Water.

JULIE

Really? You get a free meal because you're dating the cook, and you want a water?

MARK

A man wants what he wants.

He smiles, but she doesn't seem quite as amused by his comment as he is. She goes to the drink station to get his drink.

MARK  
(to himself)  
I just can't pull stuff like that  
off.

Mark sits and waits for a few moments, looking around the restaurant. He smiles courteously at a few people then looks down at the table. Julie returns with his drink.

JULIE  
(mock angry tone)  
Your water.

She puts the water on the table. Mark takes a drink obnoxiously.

MARK  
I'm healthy, get over it.

Julie smiles. Mark picks the menu back up, trying to pick out his meal. She takes it out of his hands.

MARK  
Excuse me?

JULIE  
Your drink choice is making me take  
your meal into my hands.

MARK  
You're not going to let me decide  
what I want to eat?

JULIE  
What you want to eat is exactly  
what I'll bring you to eat.

MARK  
Oh.  
(BEAT)  
I can live with that.

She goes to the kitchen. Mark sips his water and looks around the restaurant again. Julie enters, wearing a different shirt and her hair differently. She sets an appetizer in front of him.

JULIE  
Sorry it took so long.

She sits across from him. Mark checks his watch.

MARK  
It was a minute. Maybe less.

JULIE

You're sweet.

(BEAT)

We're just crowded today.

Mark looks across the restaurant again. More tables are filled and different people are in the restaurant. He takes a bite from his appetizer plate.

MARK

It's okay.

(BEAT)

This is really good.

JULIE

I made it.

MARK

Then it's even better.

He reaches across the table to squeeze her hand. She squeezes his back.

JULIE

I'm sorry things have been so rough lately.

MARK

It has been a little overwhelming.

JULIE

Once we hire a few more waiters, things should calm down.

MARK

I'm not sure what I'll do if things are calm again.

Julie forces a smile.

JULIE

You'll figure something out.

She stands up.

JULIE

Now I have to get back to work.

She picks up his water.

JULIE

I'll get you a refill and check on your meal.

MARK

Thanks, but I don't...

She walks off before he can finish his sentence. He plays with his silverware on the table. Julie comes back with his water, once again in a different outfit. Mark turns when he hears her.

MARK

Hey again.

He sees her new outfit.

MARK

Oh.

She walks up to him, looks him straight in the eye, and throws the drink in his face. She then drops the cup beside him. He wipes it off of his face and glares at her.

MARK

What was that for?

JULIE

You know what you did!

MARK

I do?

JULIE

Of course you do!

She starts to storm off and stops to pick up the cup. She whispers into his ear.

JULIE

You just made me 20 dollars.

MARK

How do you figure?

JULIE

The kitchen staff bet me I wouldn't make a scene.

MARK

Well, you sure showed them.

She kisses him on the cheek, picks up the cup, and walks out. He wipes off his face and clothes more, shaking his head in disbelief. She comes back holding his main course, once again in a different outfit. She drops it on the table in front of him. Her tone is much less friendly.

JULIE

Is there anything else I can do for you, sir?

MARK

(whispering)

How much are they paying you this time?

JULIE

I'm sorry, sir, I have no idea what you're talking about.

MARK

Apparently neither do I.

JULIE

Now is there anything else I can get you, sir?

MARK

A kiss?

JULIE

You're ridiculous.

She storms out. He slams his hands on the table and stands up. He walks to the counter and leans over it. He doesn't notice that her outfit, again, changed.

MARK

This is ridiculous.

JULIE

What do you mean?

She walks towards him.

MARK

Trying to keep up with you. With this. With us.

JULIE

Please don't talk to me that way when I'm at work.

MARK

I just can't do this anymore. I can't keep trying to figure out what's going on.

JULIE

With what?

MARK

With any of this. I can't deal with  
this anymore.

He throws down some money for his meal and exits. She's left  
standing, clearly upset.

INT. OFFICE - MORNING

Mark enters, not stopping to talk to anyone. Dave is standing  
at the receptionists desk, flirting with her. She laughs.  
Mark sits down at his desk. Dave walks up behind him.

DAVE

Something bothering you?

Mark doesn't turn around.

MARK

Don't want to talk about it.

DAVE

I thought things had changed.

MARK

Change isn't always a good thing.

DAVE

You were happy.

MARK

Happiness isn't everything.

Dave spins his chair around.

DAVE

You're right. It isn't.

(BEAT)

But it is something.

MARK

Something people can live without.

DAVE

You can, yeah. But you shouldn't.

Mark doesn't respond.

DAVE

As weird as it was...

Dave looks straight at him.

DAVE  
You were happy. Don't give that up.

MARK  
I think it's a little too late for that.

Mark sighs and turns back around.

DAVE  
Then go back and get it again.

MARK  
It's not that easy.

DAVE  
Things that are worth it generally aren't.

MARK  
I embarrassed her in front of a lot of people.

DAVE  
Remember how I told you that your relationship isn't unique?

Mark smiles, then quickly forces it away.

MARK  
I still think it's crazy.

DAVE  
It still isn't.

Dave stops to gather his thoughts.

DAVE  
Look. At some point, you might accidentally call her a bitch, because that's how you think she's acting.

Mark shakes his head.

DAVE  
Stay with me. Five minutes later, you're going to realize that you think she's being a bitch for the same reason she thinks you're being an ass.

MARK  
What's that?

DAVE  
Love makes people absolutely  
stupid.

Mark smiles.

DAVE  
You don't have to be smart to be in  
love. You really just need a pulse.  
(BEAT)  
In fact, for the most part, the  
more you think it through, the  
better the chances you'll ruin it.  
Love isn't as rational as we'd like  
it to be.

Mark nods slowly.

MARK  
You've been in a real relationship  
(BEAT)  
Two days?

DAVE  
Cool, isn't it?

EXT. OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Mark pushes the office door open, headed for lunch. He walks the same path where he ran into Julie a few days before. He picks up his pace a little, trying to shake it off.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - AFTERNOON

Mark enters, looking at his phone to see if it will ring again. It doesn't. He walks up to the counter.

MARK  
Just a coffee and a chocolate chip  
muffin.

Allie walks up behind him.

ALLIE  
Decided it was worth what it costs,  
huh?

MARK  
What?

He turns around.

ALLIE  
The coffee.

MARK  
Oh, yeah. I guess I did.

Mark gets his food and takes it to the same table they sat at before. Allie follows him.

ALLIE  
You didn't call me.

MARK  
I didn't.

ALLIE  
Why not?

Mark searches for an explanation and doesn't come up with one.

MARK  
I'm sorry.

ALLIE  
What happened?

MARK  
I guess I decided that it was worth what it costs.

Allie gives him a confused look.

ALLIE  
The coffee?

MARK  
Her.

ALLIE  
Who?

Mark blushes, slightly embarrassed.

ALLIE  
No. Not the girl from your bed.  
There's no way you would...

MARK  
Why not?

ALLIE  
You were terrified the last time we talked. Now you're...

Mark grins, still a little embarrassed.

MARK

I am.

ALLIE

Well, I guess congratulations are in order then. You'll have a good story to tell the grandkids. They'll write it off as you being senile, but...

MARK

I don't think that will be happening.

Mark sips his coffee.

MARK

I might have screwed it up already.

Allie looks surprised.

ALLIE

That's impressive.

(BEAT)

A girl sneaks into your bed...

MARK

(interrupting)

Yeah, I definitely get the humor in the whole situation.

Allie's phone rings. She looks at it.

ALLIE

Well, that's me again.

MARK

You leave like this often?

ALLIE

I like to make an exit.

MARK

How dramatic.

ALLIE

Work is just a little demanding.

MARK

Find a new job.

ALLIE

Can't. Love what I do too much.

MARK

What do you do?

Allie stands up and starts to walk out, pointing to the TV in the corner of the room. Mark's eyes follow her point. Allie's picture is on the TV. Mark walks across the room and turns it up.

TV PERSONALITY

Director Allie Carlson has this to say about her new film.

ALLIE

It's a romantic comedy, with a twist. This time though, their relationship is the twist. It's twisted and jumbled and out of order.

TV PERSONALITY

Shooting is reported to finish this weekend. Expect it in theaters early next spring.

Mark sits down in the chair next to him, shocked.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - AFTERNOON

Mark's eyes are wide, not willing to believe what he's hearing.

MARK

That's me. That's about me.

He points to the TV.

TV PERSONALITY

Miss Lohan checked into rehab once again last night.

The other customers of the coffee shop look curiously at him.

MARK

Well, clearly not that. The other thing. The thing before.

They still stare blankly at him.

MARK

That's about me.

He runs out of the coffee shop.

EXT. COFFEE SHOP - AFTERNOON

Mark picks up the phone and dials Julie's number. There's no answer.

MARK

Why do people have cell phones if they're not going to answer them?

He starts running down the sidewalk.

FADE TO:

INT. RESTAURANT - AFTERNOON

Mark looks around the restaurant for her. She's not there.

CASHIER

Can I help you?

MARK

Is Julie here?

CASHIER

No. How do you know Julie?

He runs back out the door without answering her.

FADE TO:

INT. HOUSE - AFTERNOON

He runs into his own house, looking in every room for her. Once again, she's nowhere to be found. He runs back out.

FADE TO:

EXT. DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE CITY - AFTERNOON

Mark is running around, looking everywhere for her. He can't find her anywhere.

EXT. PARK - AFTERNOON

Mark runs to the park to check to see if she was where they had their picnic, but she isn't there. He checks the swing set and the jungle gym too, but she's nowhere to be found.

INT. SANDWICH SHOP - CONTINUOUS

Mark enters, breathless, and walks to the counter.

MARK

She's gone. She's nowhere in this city. Trust me, I checked.

SANDWICH SHOP WORKER

Who?

MARK

Who? Her. She's it. She's my shot, and I think I blew it.

SANDWICH SHOP WORKER

I'm sorry, is there something I can do for you?

Mark calms down a little and looks over the menu.

MARK

Can I just get a water?

SANDWICH SHOP WORKER

You don't want anything to eat?

MARK

Just the water, please.

SANDWICH SHOP WORKER

We have a lot of really good...

MARK

Do I appear out of breath to you?

SANDWICH SHOP WORKER

Well, yeah, I guess.

MARK

Maybe a little dehydrated?

SANDWICH SHOP WORKER

I mean, I can't make that judgment just by looking at you.

MARK

Can I get a water?

SANDWICH SHOP WORKER

You don't have to be so mean about it.

MARK

I'm not. I just know exactly what I want.

The worker hands him a bottle of water. Mark takes a big drink.

SANDWICH SHOP WORKER

That'll be two dollars please.

Mark almost spits the water back up.

MARK

Two dollars? For water?

SANDWICH SHOP WORKER

That's purified water, man.

Mark grudgingly gets out his wallet and hands him the money and heads for the door.

MARK

You know it's just water, right?

SANDWICH SHOP WORKER

That's purified water.

Mark shakes his head.

EXT. SANDWICH SHOP - CONTINUOUS

Mark exits the sandwich shop and finds a nearby bench to sit on. He takes a big drink of water and lays his head back, looking up at the clouds. A PERSON sits next to him.

PERSON

Mind if I sit here?

Mark doesn't look up. He keeps staring at the clouds.

PERSON

You've really got to wonder what makes those clouds stay up there.

*Wait, Mark knows that voice.*

FADE TO BLACK.