How To Lose A Guy In 10 Days

By

Kristen Buckley and Brian Regan

Based on the book
How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days
By Michele Alexander and Jeannie Long

Revisions by
Ellen Simon

Revisions by
Burr Steers

Current Revisions by
Audrey Wells
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FADE UP

INT. JOE'S PUB NIGHT

OPENING CREDIT SEQUENCE BEGINS

We are in a popular Manhattan pick-up bar. A young woman sits alone at the bar, an empty stool beside her. This is ANDIE ANDERSON, 24, beautiful, modern, lit from within. She seductively sips her drink, subtly signalling that she would welcome some company.

It doesn't take long. A YOUNG MAN saunters over. *

MAN #1
Hi.

ANDIE
Hi.

MAN #1
Mind if I sit down?

ANDIE
Please do. I'm Andie.

MAN #1
I'm Ted.

ANDIE *
I have a multiple personality disorder. *
I'm off my medication. Will you have sex *
with us? *

The man stares at her for a beat. Then: *

MAN #1 *
(enthusiastic) *
Sure. *

CUT TO: *

INT. UPSCALE BAR NIGHT *

Andie sits in a club chair at an upscale bar. An OLDER * BUSINESSMAN settles in next to Andie: *

ANDIE
(introducing herself)
Andie.

MAN #2
John. *

ANDIE
I keep a dead rat in my purse. Will you * have sex with me?

MAN #2
Sure.

CUT TO:

INT. POOL HALL NIGHT

Andie leans against the bar in a pool hall. A BLUE-COLLAR GUY is trying to pick her up.

ANDIE
My husband is a professional sniper. Will you have sex with me?

MAN #3
Sure.

CUT TO:

INT. SPORTS BAR NIGHT

Andie is increasingly incredulous. PREPPY MAN #4 is sitting next to her.

ANDIE
(exasperated)
I said, I once killed a man with an ice pick. Are you *sure* you want to have sex with me?

MAN #4
Uh-huh.

CUT TO:

INT. EMPIRE DINER NIGHT

It's four in the morning. Exhausted Andie reviews her notes from the evening's "investigative journalism." We SEE what she's looking at: a GRID with check boxes as to whether men said "Yes" or "No" to her proposal. There are no checks in the "no" box.

ON THE TV BEHIND THE COUNTER: a Sportscaster delivers the good news that the Knicks will be in the play-offs. Andie smiles to herself, delighted for her team.

The Sportscaster moves on to the next story. Andie looks back down at her work. That's when she hears a voice:

MAN #5
Want some company?

Andie sighs and looks up to see MAN #5 - an artsy type with a cute smile. What the hell - she puts her notes away and gives it one more shot.

ANDIE
Sure. Sit down. I'm Andie.

MAN #5
Matt.

ANDIE
(straight faced)
Oobla-kooma-abanoo?

The man recoils a little.

MAN #5
Excuse me?

ANDIE
(straight faced)
I was speaking in the tongue of my native planet, Zalmaria.

She doesn't seem to be joking. The man smiles thinly and starts to get up.

MAN #5
Oh.

ANDIE
Translation: "Will you have sex with me?"

MAN #5
Absolutely.

Andie lays her head down on the bar in defeat.

CUT TO:

INT. ANDIE'S CUBICLE/COMPOSURE MAGAZINE DAY

OPENING CREDITS CONTINUE

ANDIE (V.O.)
(as she types)
Getting a guy to say "no thanks" to sex proved to be a thankless job.

Andie sits in her office cubicle, writing at the computer. We are in the sleek offices of COMPOSURE, a trendy, successful women's fashion and style magazine.

As Andie types, we HEAR what she's writing in VO:

ANDIE (V.O.)
(as she types)
It made no difference whether I was a murderess, adulteress, freak, psycho or Babe-From-Outer-Space - there was no cross-out too great and no danger too large to discourage a man from his primal "raison d'etre".

A voice interrupts Andie's train of thought.

JEANNIE (O.S.)
Guess who's still not here? And the staff meeting is in half an hour.

Andie looks up to find her friend and co-worker, JEANNIE, 27, a quirky girl with a dead-pan sense of humor.

ANDIE
Damn. Ten to one she's wallowing.

JEANNIE
Who goes? You or me?

Andie grabs her things.

ANDIE
I'll get her - you get the coffee. Meet us on the corner in twenty?

JEANNIE
(nods)
Go.
(shakes her head to herself)
Drama drama drama.

EXT. STREET/MICHELLE'S BUILDING DAY

Andie jumps out of a taxi, carrying a small shopping bag. She runs up to the front of an apartment building and pushes the door buzzer.

MICHELLE'S VOICE
(over intercom)
What?

ANDIE
Let me in. Now.

She gets buzzed in.

INT. MICHELLE'S APARTMENT DAY

As Andie enters, miserable-looking MICHELLE, 25, turns around and starts shuffling back to bed.

ANDIE
Get dressed, the staff meeting is in fifteen minutes.

Andie turns the radio on to a pop music station and snaps the curtains open.

MICHELLE
I'm going back to bed. I have no reason to live.

ANDIE
You do now.

Andie tosses Michelle the shopping bag. Michelle peaks inside and pulls out a sweater.

MICHELLE
Cashmere?

ANDIE
Put it on. It'll make your eyes look fiercely green.
(commands)
Up.

Michelle obediently raises her arms over her head. Andie sprays Michelle's armpits with perfume. Then she drops her cosmetics bag in Michelle's lap. Michelle glances at herself in the hand mirror. It's not good.

MICHELLE
God.

Andie searches Michelle's closet.

ANDIE
(into her closet)
Where are the pants that you bought at that place where we went that time?

MICHELLE
They don't fit. I've gained eleven pounds since he dumped me.

ANDIE
He dumped you yesterday.

MICHELLE
I eat fast when I'm upset.

Andie throws the pants at her.

ANDIE
Hurry. I'm not going to let you lose your job on top of everything else.

EXT. CONDE NASTE TOWER - DAY

The Conde Naste tower looms over its New York city block. Andie hurries Michelle, who's wearing her new sweater, towards the building.

MICHELLE
I don't want to talk about it, alright?

ANDIE
Alright.

MICHELLE
Why does this always happen to me? Things are going great for a week and a half - and then bam - suddenly it's over. And I'm just mystified - seriously, mystified - because it always starts out so well.

Now Jeannie intercepts them on the street, handing Michelle the promised cup of coffee.

JEANNIE
(handing Michelle coffee)
Poor baby.

MICHELLE
(to Jeannie)
I don't want to talk about it.

JEANNIE
Okay.

MICHELLE
Mike and I had such a connection. The first time we had sex, it was so beautiful, I cried.

Andie and Jeannie exchange alarmed looks.

JEANNIE
You cried?

ANDIE
You mean like one little glistening tear on your cheek, right?

MICHELLE
No, I was really emotional. I even told him I loved him.

ANDIE
After how many days?

MICHELLE
Five... or two. It was how I felt and I wanted to express myself.

ANDIE
What did he say?

MICHELLE
He didn't have to say anything. I know he felt the same.

Andie and Jeannie exchange dubious glances.

MICHELLE
But then he got really busy, and I didn't know where he was. I kept calling and he was never home...

ANDIE
You kept calling?

MICHELLE
I never left a message. He didn't know it was me.

JEANNIE
No, he thought it was his racketball partner. Because men always call each other's answering machines twenty times and hang up.

MICHELLE
Well he could have called back, alright? I got worried. I thought maybe something had happened to him. So I drove by his place a couple times...

ANDIE
Oh honey.

JEANNIE
A couple, a couple hundred, what's the difference?

MICHELLE
Anyway, I know why he dumped me.
(beat)
I'm too fat.

ANDIE AND JEANNIE TOGETHER
(for the hundredth time)
You're not too fat.

ANDIE
It's got nothing to do with your weight. You don't realize what you're doing wrong, do you? You did all the "don'ts" of dating!

MICHELLE
I did?

ANDIE
Michelle, there isn't a man on Earth who could withstand that kind of onslaught. The most beautiful woman in the world could act like that, and a guy would run screaming in the other direction.

MICHELLE
No. You are the most beautiful woman on Earth, and there's nothing you could do to make a guy run screaming. You could barf all over him and he would say "do it again".

ANDIE
You're so wrong.

Andie sighs as they enter the building.

INT. LILLY'S OFFICE/COMPOSURE - DAY *

LILLY JONG, editor of Composure Magazine, sits like a queen in the throne of her overstuffed chair. She is surrounded by her "subjects" - the young contributing editors - who she treats with a superficial warmth that doesn't fool anybody. * Underneath the coziness, Lilly is willing to exploit everything and everyone for her child: Composure Magazine.

Lilly kicks her shoes off and curls up in her comfy chair. She calls the meeting to order.

LILLY
Okay family - shoes off - let's check in.

Andie, Jeannie, Michelle and LORI, 26 and insufferably perky, obediently kick off their shoes. Andie and her friends secretly roll their eyes over the stupid, required ritual.

OUTSIDE LILLY'S WINDOW -

A sports ticker announces YOUR KNICKS IN THE N.B.A FINALS: GAME ONE TONIGHT. Andie tries to pay attention to the meeting instead of reading the ticker.

ON LILLY

LILLY
Lori - let's start with you.

LORI
I'm in good shape. The "Botox for Beginners" piece is done. It's a little scary, but mostly upbeat. Now I'm on "What your Gyno Won't Tell You". Its also pretty scary but, you know, upbeat. I finished my research on "Deadly Pedicures" - about the woman who contracted that fungus from the unsterilized tools and died.

LORI (cont'd)
It's a terrible story.
(pause)
Although surprisingly upbeat.

Andie mouths the word "upbeat" along with Lori and suppresses a giggle. Lilly turns her attention to Jeannie.

LILLY
Jeannie: "Seventy Five Ways to Drive Your Man Wild in Bed." How's it going?

JEANNIE
I'm on number 33.

LILLY
You were on number 29. Last week.

JEANNIE
Lilly, I told you I'm not good for this assignment. How do I know what men like in bed? I haven't slept with one since last spring, and I don't think I knew the answer then. This is a research job for me. I've asked everyone I know. I even called my grandmother. She said she couldn't remember. Now I'm making them up on the subway.

LILLY
So? What is number 33?

Jeannie checks her notes.

JEANNIE
"When your man is about to reach his peak, pinch his nostrils shut and cover his mouth with your other hand. His orgasm combined with his fight for survival is sure to deliver a thrill he won't forget."

LILLY
Keep trying.
(turning to Andie)
Your turn. What's next for "First Hand with Andie"?

ANDIE
(excited)
I want to write about "Finding Your Inner Sports Fan". Women are always faking an interest in sports to make guys like them. I don't get that. Why not actually allow yourself to develope a genuine interest in...

LILLY
No.

ANDIE
Well, for example, I love the Knicks, and...

LILLY
No.

Andie stares at her boss.

LILLY
Andie - when I gave you the column three months ago, I put a big responsibility on your shoulders. I liked it when you wrote "How to Have a Dazzling, Dysfunctional Holiday;" I liked it when you tried out the top ten pick-up lines. I don't like women and sports. That's not this magazine.

Andie nods.

ANDIE
Okay, Lilly.

LILLY
The column is a big deal. Is it in the right hands?

ANDIE
Yes, Lilly - yes.

LILLY
So you must have other ideas.

ANDIE
Of course. Tons.

LILLY
What are they?

ANDIE
Well...

Andie is drawing a blank. The girls exchange uncomfortable glances at Andie's predicament.

LILLY
Just tell me one.

Silence. Andie is frozen under Lilly's harsh gaze.

LILLY
I'll come back to you in sixty seconds.

Lilly turns her formidable focus on Michelle.

LILLY
Michelle? What are your ideas for May?

MICHELLE
(spaced out)
What? I'm sorry Lilly, I haven't been feeling too well.

LORI
She was dumped.

LILLY
(sympathetic)
Oh honey.
(all business)
Write about that.

MICHELLE
(horrified)
I can't use my personal life for a story.

LILLY
I understand. Who will use Michelle's personal life for a story?

LORI
(hastily)
I will.

LILLY
Done.

MICHELLE
What? I'm not going to let Lori write about me!

LILLY
(to Lori, ignoring Michelle)
Five hundred words.

LORI
Don't worry, Michelle, it'll be upbeat.

MICHELLE
No no no no! Lilly - with all due respect - I don't think Lori has any business mucking around in my personal life and I will not let...

ANDIE
I'll do it.

Everyone stares at Andie.

MICHELLE
(betrayed)
What?

ANDIE
I mean, I'll sort of do it. You'll just be the inspiration for a story, Michelle. What I mean is...is...is...

Andie gathers herself and dives into the pitch:

ANDIE
Well, look at Michelle. She's a totally great girl, right? An amazing woman. But she sort of has a bit of a problem...

JEANNIE
(interrupting)
...keeping a guy from running down the street screaming for mercy.
(on Michelle's look)
Well, you do.

ANDIE
And she's completely unaware of what she's doing wrong. Which is just like a lot of our readers.

LILLY
(getting interested)
Uh-huh...

ANDIE
So I was thinking that it might be funny if I started dating a guy, and then I drove him away - intentionally - just by making the same classic mistakes that thousands of girls - like Michelle- tend to make. I'd keep a diary of what happens and it would be sort of a "How to" in reverse.

LILLY
(thoughtful)
What not to do.

ANDIE
Right.
(beat)
Michelle, is it okay with you? If not, I have lots of...

Michelle shrugs her assent.

LILLY
(beaming)
"How to Lose a Guy in Ten Days." We'll advance promo it in this month's column.

ANDIE
Okay.

LILLY
All you have to do now is find the guy.

Andie nods and smiles, but inside she's alarmed. What has she gotten herself into?

CUT TO:

EXT. NEWSSTAND/72 & BROADWAY DAY

CLOSE ON: a BUNDLE of the new issue of Composure Magazine hits the pavement. A vendor slices the rope.

A WOMAN buys herself a copy, and eagerly flips through it as she crosses Broadway. She finds Andie's column, and we zero in on the PROMO for the following month: "Next month: How to Lose a Guy in Ten Days".

As the woman walks and reads, she narrowly escapes being hit by a MOTORCYCLE which veers around her.

It's a classic silver Triumph, the kind Steve McQueen would ride. The RIDER'S face is hidden behind a visor. No r.u.b. (rich urban biker), he fits the bike's "old school cool" to a 'T'. He drives fearlessly if not skillfully in and out of the mad morning rush hour traffic.

EXT. MADISON AVENUE - DAY

In sharp contrast to the swarming suits, we see our motorcyclist, visor still down, intermittently bobbing in and out of their midst pushing his hog as he goes.

INT. ELEVATOR DAY

A 30 year old PARALEGAL is checking her lipstick as the Rider enters the elevator. He pulls off his helmet and we get a load of BENJAMIN BARRY, scruffily handsome, 28.

He gives the Paralegal a great smile.

BEN
Good morning.

PARALEGAL
Good morning.

He's a handsome devil, alright. The woman suppresses a nervous smile under Ben's appraising gaze.

BEN
(as if disappointed)
Ahh. I see you're taken.

For a moment the woman is confused - then she realizes that Ben has noticed the DIAMOND RING on her finger.

PARALEGAL
Oh...*this*? No.
(showing him that the ring is on her right hand)
Right finger, wrong hand.

BEN
(interested)
A man didn't give you that diamond?

PARALEGAL
(shakes head)
My Mom. Last Christmas.
(conspiratorial whisper)
Cubic Zirconia.

Ben shares her smile. Now the woman is blushing, amazed that this cute guy is trying to pick her up.

BEN
(flirting)
Can I ask you something?

PARALEGAL
(flirting)
Maybe.

BEN
Has a man <u>ever</u> given you a diamond?

She looks at him.

PARALEGAL
(flustered)
Um...no. Not yet, anyway.

BEN
So why not just go buy one for yourself?

PARALEGAL
(taken aback)
Excuse me?

BEN
Think about it. Why wait around forever for a guy who might never show when you could just go pick up a nice rock for yourself for less than a month's salary?

She's speechless.

BEN
(like a big brother)
Don't wait for the bastard. *Take control.*

Ben gives the woman's arm a supportive squeeze. The elevator stops at his floor and he steps off, leaving the stricken-looking woman behind.

INT. WARREN ADVERTISING AGENCY - DAY

Ben enters the reception area of the swank offices of THE WARREN ADVERTISING AGENCY.

The young, big haired RECEPTIONIST smiles winningly at him.

RECEPTIONIST
Good morning, Mr. Barry.
(on his flirtatious smile)
I mean, hi Benjamin.

BEN
Hi Candi with an i.

He breezes down the hall.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

JONATHAN MERRILL and THAYER BEEKMAN, eternal adolescents in their late twenties, are tossing a football around in the office they share with Ben.

Ben enters, full of fire.

BEN
Did you know that diamonds aren't rare?

Jonathan and Thayer exchange amused glances. Ben is good fun when he's worked up about something, and this is clearly going to be one of those times.

THAYER
(pretend "shock")
No! Pray tell us more.

BEN
They were rare - for a thousand years. Then they found huge diamond deposits in riverbeds in South Africa at the end of the 19th century. And now with new mines in Canada and Russia, they're about as rare as taxis on 5th avenue. Their value is entirely sentimental; artificially maintained through supply and demand and...advertising.

THAYER
You're a fount of information!
(confused)
Just why are we supposed to give a shit?

BEN
I know how to win over the Diamond Inc. account.

JONATHAN
You're too late. Warren's letting Spears and Green handle the pitch.

BEN
No!

JONATHAN
They strike again. Warren worships them. Wonder why.

BEN
I'm not going to let Lips and Hips keep me out of this.

SPEARS (O.S.)
Out of what?

Ben turns around to find SPEARS and GREEN standing in the doorway. They are two unflappable, incredibly cool, great looking women who are so good at their jobs that they can afford to be nice to everyone. Visually, they are stunning - they have the same body type and the same chic style and form an awe-inspiring team.

BEN
Why, speak of the Devil's concubines!

Green and Spears smile.

GREEN
What's the matter, Benny-boy? You seem cranky.

SPEARS
Not jealous about the Diamond Inc. account, are you? Because we'd be happy to let you work with us.

GREEN
We'll let you fetch.
(patting his head)
Ruff ruff! Good boy!

Spears scratches Ben affectionately behind the ear, as if he were a dog.

SPEARS
Cute, cute, cute! Ooo!

GREEN
Adorable! I could just eat you!

They walk away chuckling.

Ben turns to his friends.

BEN
I'm not going to let them ace me on this.

He turns and walks off to:

INT. WARREN'S ASSISTANT'S DESK MOMENTS LATER

Guarding the door to Warren's office is his Kewpie-Doll assistant, TERRY. Ben leans across her desk, all charm.

BEN
Hey Terry.

TERRY
(without looking up)
What do you want, Ben?

BEN
Another night out with you.

TERRY
(onto him)
I said what do you want, Ben?

BEN
I want to know when Warren is meeting with The Girl/Girl Action Team on the Diamond pitch.

TERRY
Yeah? Well I want to know why men don't call when they say they will.

She skewers him with her eyes.

BEN
Terry...I'm sorry, I, uh...

TERRY
No Ben. I don't just want to know why <u>you</u> didn't call. I want to know why you and <u>every other guy I've ever known</u> didn't call. I want the answer to the larger, existential question. I want the overriding truth.

BEN
Are you sure?

TERRY
(sincere)
Brutal honesty. Set me free.

Ben sighs. And gives it his best.

BEN
(gently)
Okay. When a guy doesn't call after he says he will, it's because he didn't think the date went very well.

BEN (cont'd)
But when it comes time to part ways, instead of being brutally harsh and saying "see ya!" right to her face, he chooses a graceful way to deliver the message - easier for both parties. He says "I'll call you." And then he doesn't call. And that's the message.

TERRY
(stunned)
Oh. Wow.
(recovering)
Well...what can I say? Thanks for your honesty.

BEN
You're welcome. So when's the meeting?

TERRY
(scoffs)
Blow me.

Ben grabs the back of Terry's rolling chair and pulls it away, sending her half way across the room. Before she can recover, Ben pulls up the boss' appointment calendar.

BEN
(reads)
Mullen's. Eight o'clock.
(pleased)
Got it.

EXT. CHELSEA NIGHT *

Andie, Jeannie and Michelle walk down the street on their way to Mullen's bar. Andie looks amazing, dressed for adventure.

MICHELLE
Are you really going to go through with this, Andie?

JEANNIE
(to Michelle)
She's doing it for you.

ANDIE
(to Michelle)
You and all the other hapless girls who are driving men away in droves.

MICHELLE
This is just going to end up humiliating me. You won't be able to get rid of the guy no matter what you do, and then I'm going to have to kill myself.

JEANNIE
Here we go again.

MICHELLE
How exactly do you plan to make this work, anyway?

ANDIE
Tonight I'll hook somebody. I'll give myself exactly 24 hours from the time I meet him to make him fall head over heals. Then I'll pull the switch - and before ten days are up, I'll have him running for his life.

JEANNIE
And you plan to do this without the use of cattle prods or Dobermans?

ANDIE
I will limit myself to using only the typical things girls like us do wrong. I'll do all the things we know men hate. I'll be clingy... needy...

JEANNIE
Be touchy-feely. Touch him all the time, even if it's just an elbow.

JEANNIE
Act psycho. Terrifying mood swings.

MICHELLE
Hang up on his machine eighteen times... Then leave a long rambling message about what you ate that day.
(beat)
Well that's how I did it.

They reach the door to the bar.

JEANNIE
Well, here we are.

Andie opens the door...but before they can pass through, a young man rushes in ahead of them.

It's Ben.

ANDIE
(to her friends)
Jerk.

But Ben doesn't hear - he's already inside. The girls shakes their heads and enter.

INT. MULLEN'S BAR NIGHT

STEPHEN WARREN, president of the Warren Advertising Group, is seated in a booth with Spears and Green. At 58, he still fancies himself to be a highly attractive man.

The three are ordering drinks when Ben sits down beside them.

WARREN
Ben - what are you doing here?

BEN
I'm here for the meeting.
(sitting)
Sorry I'm late.

GREEN
(friendly)
You're not late. You weren't invited.

BEN
But I should have been.

WARREN
Ben - we're meeting about...

BEN
The Diamonds Inc. account. I want to handle the pitch.

SPEARS
(lifts her glass)
Benny-boy! Love your nerve.

WARREN
Ben - I've given it to Spears and Green. They'll know what to do with this.

BEN
I know what to do with this.

WARREN
You know what to do with consumer items. You sell to Joe Blow better than anyone else in my shop. But these girls sell luxury. Better than anyone else in the business.

BEN
Just hear my ideas.

GREEN
(friendly antagonism)
Why are you so hot on this, Benny? You want a promotion?

BEN
Damn right I do. And if I bring in a client worth 150 million a year, I'll expect a big one.

WARREN
And you'd deserve it. If you were handling the pitch. But you're not.

Ben perseveres.

BEN
Diamond sales have dropped thirty percent in the last five years. The industry is desperate for new ideas, or they wouldn't be looking to switch agencies. And I have a new idea.

Spears and Green raise their carefully plucked brows.

BEN
To date, the sales strategy has always targeted men. The ads link female power and sexuality to diamonds, but send the message that the woman needs the man to buy her the rock. I say, why wait for the guy? *Women - buy yourself a diamond.*

GREEN
(cool competitor)
It's called *self-purchasing* in the diamond trade. It's part of our plan, too.

Ben charges ahead.

BEN
You don't have to be rich to buy a diamond. They're selling them at Costco. Every secretary can afford a rock. They say *"A Diamond is Forever?"* We say, *"A Diamond is For Everyone."*

Warren looks suddenly interested.

WARREN
I like that.

SPEARS
We don't.

BEN
We? When did you two have time to confer?
(to Warren)
Honestly, they don't scare you?

SPEARS
"A Diamond is for Everyone" sends the message that diamonds are everywhere - which means they're not rare. If they're not rare, they lose status. Status is the reason to buy them in the first place, which you would know if you understood anything about women, which you don't.

WARREN
Can't feel bad about that Ben. No man does.

GREEN
Buying a diamond for yourself should feel like self-pleasuring. Something, admittedly, we would know more about.

Warren looks enthralled with the girls.

BEN
They're playing the girl/girl card. Unfair.

WARREN
(smitten by the girls)
An unfair advantage is still an advantage.

GREEN
Benny, to sell to women you have to understand what they crave. And how to fulfill those cravings.

BEN
Hey. When it comes to fulfilling cravings, I've never had a complaint.

SPEARS
Typical male response. You think we're talking about sex. But we're not. We're talking about love.

Ben rolls his eyes. To his chagrin, Warren looks mesmerized. *

CLOSE ON: a brilliant DIAMOND PENDANT hanging between Green's breasts. *

GREEN (V.O.)
(fingering the diamond)
Take a good look at this, Ben.

Green sexily fingers the diamond as she talks, making Warren go red in the face. *

GREEN
Selling a diamond to a woman is a lot like making her fall in love. She has to feel giddy. Desirous. Adventurous. And desperate. Do you know how to make a woman fall in love?

BEN
What, are you kidding? Ten times a day.

SPEARS
That's lust, Ben. A woman in lust will buy herself chocolate. A woman in love will buy a diamond.

GREEN
It takes love to purchase something that you'll be paying off on your credit card for the next five years. A diamond is nc one night stand, Ben. It's a commitment. Now - what do you know about that?

BEN
I can sell commitment.

SPEARS
You can sell running shoes. Disposable items. Not something you hold onto forever.
(winking at Warren)
A diamond is no quickie. It's a long term affair.

Bug-eyed Warren is practically drooling.

BEN
(to himself)
I can't believe this.
(to Warren)
Warren? Warren? WARREN!

Warren drags his eyes off the girls.

WARREN
Yes, Ben?

BEN
Are you actually agreeing that I can't pitch this account because I don't know enough about "love" and "commitment" and drying my ass with his and hers towels? I understand women, okay? I love women. And women love me.

Warren's eyes return to the girls. He's smitten.

WARREN
(mooning over the girls)
But can you make a woman fall in love?

BEN
Yes, god damn it, yes! I can make a woman fall in love! Any woman, any where, any time!

GREEN
"Any woman, any where, any time?"

SPEARS
I'd like to see you prove that.

BEN
Happy to.

Green smiles at her partner. What is Spears up to?

SPEARS
We're doing a little "woo-the-client" soiree for the Diamond account at Warren's place. Something to warm them up before the official pitch. The party's ten days away. Do you think you could get a woman to fall in love with you by then?

BEN
(scoffs)
Of course.

GREEN
A woman of our choosing?

BEN
Sure.

GREEN
That we pick out right here, right now, in this bar?

BEN
Any woman, any where, any time.
(to Warren)
But here are the stakes: if I prove this stupid bet, then the pitch is mine.

Spears and Green trade glances.

WARREN
But how do you prove a bet like this? How will we know she's in love?

BEN
She'll tell you to your face.

WARREN
How will I know she's not lying?

SPEARS
We'll know.

Green looks at Spears. Warren's enjoying the challenge.

WARREN
(to Ben)
You're on.
(lifts his glass)
Nothing wrong with a little healthy competition. May the best man win.

BEN
Good. So.
(looks nervously around the bar)
Who's the girl?

BEN'S POV: the bar contains a RANGE OF WOMEN, from dull tc delectable. His eyes find ANDIE, sitting at the bar with Michelle and Jeannie.

She is animated, gorgeous, alive. Ben's regard lingers on her with longing - and then moves on to a much less attractive woman nearby. He braces himself for the worst.

SPEARS
Okay...let me see...there's the big babe in the leopard print, she looks fun...or the blond with the dental work, she has possibilities...

GREEN
(firm)
Her.

Green points across the room, directly at ...

ANDIE.

Ben, Spears and Warren are all surprised, for different reasons.

BEN, SPEARS AND WARREN
Her?

GREEN
(with finality)
Her.

BEN
Her.

WARREN
Done.
(looking at his watch)
And this meeting is over.

Ben and Warren rise.

Ben looks again at Andie. Then he moves off to the other end of the bar from her, to start his stake-out. *

ON WARREN

As he buttons his coat, Warren turns back to the girls.

WARREN
I suppose you know what you're doing?

GREEN
Of course.

Warren walks away. Spears turns to Green, intrigued.

SPEARS
So? Why her?

GREEN
Because...
(she pulls a magazine out of her purse)
...of this.

CLOSE ON: Composure Magazine, opened to Andie's article, which features a thumb-nail head shot. CLOSE ON THE SUB-HEADING: *"Next month': How to lose a guy in ten days!"*

SPEARS
(coos with delight)
Brilliant.

They grin. Meanwhile...

WITH ANDIE AND FRIENDS AT THE BAR CONTINUING

Andie is nursing her drink, looking around for her mark. Jeannie, tired of waiting, starts singing the theme from "Jeopardy".

JEANNIE
(singing the Jeopardy theme)
Dum dum dum dum, dum dum dum...

MICHELLE
Don't pressure her, she's perusing.

ANDIE
Okay, see the guy next to the horrible guy with the green shirt that I would never even consider?

MICHELLE
Very cute.

ANDIE
Here I go.

Andie glides across the room toward her unsuspecting prey, MARK, a handsome man in his early thirties. Andie sits in the empty stool next to him.

ANDIE
(Harvey's Bristol Cream voice)
Andie.

MARK
Mark. Mark Sawyer. I just moved here from Chicago.

ANDIE
(nodding)
Transplant?

MARK
Excuse me?

ANDIE
Exciting?

MARK
(irritated)
What?

ANDIE
New York.

He looks at her like she's crazy.

ANDIE
(finally explaining)
I was wondering if you find New York exciting being a gorgeous transplant from Chicago and all.

MARK
Well why didn't you just say that? Yes, the wife and I love New York this time of year.

Andie looks over her shoulder to see a huge stoned wedding ring on the fist of a woman standing behind her.

ANDIE
(cringes)
Nice to meet you.

Andie takes her leave of the married couple and continues pressing her way through the dense crowd of singles. That's when she literally bumps into Ben.

BEN
Hi.

Andie just looks at Ben dismissively and keeps going...but she doesn't get very far. People coming the other way push Andie back towards him.

BEN
Hi again.

They are momentarily wedged into each other, unable to move from the heavy press in the bar area.

ANDIE
I can't move.

BEN
Neither can I. But I wouldn't call that a bad thing.

ANDIE
Andie.

BEN
Benjamin Barry.

ANDIE
Cute.

BEN
Thanks.

ANDIE
Unattached?

BEN
Currently.

ANDIE
Likewise.

BEN
Surprising.

ANDIE
Psycho?

BEN
Rarely.

A beat.

BEN
Breath-taking.

ANDIE
Thanks.

BEN
Interested?

ANDIE
Perhaps.

BEN
Successful.

ANDIE
So?

BEN
Fun.

ANDIE
Better.

BEN
Leaving?

ANDIE
Now?

BEN
Yeah.

ANDIE
Okay.

Holds up her finger to Ben. She pushes her way back to Michelle and Jeannie.

WITH ANDIE, Michelle and Jeannie. *

ANDIE
I think I've got one. I'm going to go check him out and see if he's the keeper. What time is it? * * *

MICHELLE
10 o'clock, straight up.

ANDIE
First 24 hours: sex pot who quotes sports statistics. *

MICHELLE
And then?

ANDIE
Every guy's living nightmare.

MICHELLE
Good luck, honey. Be safe.

JEANNIE
(downing her drink)
Drama drama drama.

ON ANDIE

Pushing her way to the exit, where Ben is already waiting for her. When she joins Ben, he guides her out the door like a gentleman, then sends a wave to the corner booth, where...

SPEARS AND GREEN acknowledge that Ben has made his conquest. They blow him a congratulatory kiss.

And laugh.

EXT. MULLEN'S - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Andie and Ben come out of the bar. Ben heads over to his beloved bike. He unfastens his helmet and his spare chick helmet, which is of the ping pong ball white variety.

Andie checks out his bike appreciatively.

ANDIE
(appreciative)
Bad.

BEN
Surprised?

ANDIE
Delighted.

BEN
Here.
(hands her the helmet)
You gotta wear the stupid looking helmet.

ANDIE
It won't look stupid on me.

BEN
It looks stupid on everybody...

She puts it on. Straddles the bike. Looks amazing.

BEN
...but you. Wow.

She gives him an adorable smile.

ANDIE
I have that certain "je ne sais quoi".

BEN
Whatever that is. In spades.

She hops on. WE SEE that they both roll their eyes, feeling like they're already snowing the other one.

He revs the bike. Andie wraps her arms around his waist. *

ANDIE
Set.

BEN
Ready to go for a ride, Andie?

ANDIE
Are *you* ready to go for a ride, Ben?

24 They take off. 24 *

*

EXT. CARMINE'S NIGHT

The entrance of a famous old mafia-owned Italian clam house, across the street from the fish market. A long line stretches out over one of New York's last cobble-stoned streets. Ben parks his bike right out front. * * * *

ANDIE
It looks like at least an hour wait. Maybe we should go some place else.

BEN
There is no place else.

Ben just smiles at her and walks to the front of the line where a burly DOORMAN is dealing with an irritated customer.

DOORMAN
I'm sorry buddy, what can I tell ya....no tables, no tables, no tables.

Andie gives Ben an "I told you so" look.

DOORMAN
(sees Ben)
Hey, Mr. Barry. Go on in.
(calls inside)
Table for my friend Benny here.

Ben looks at Andie and shrugs.

INT. CARMINE'S NIGHT

Andie puts on a paper bib.

BEN
You look good in a bib.

ANDIE
So I've been told.

BEN
Really?

ANDIE
No.

The waiter delivers a huge bucket of clams to their table.

ANDIE
Don't eat too much.

BEN
Why?

ANDIE
Because I might need you to perform later.

Ben is thrown for a moment.

BEN
You might, huh?

ANDIE
Still trying to figure it out.

BEN
Anything I can do to help?

ANDIE
You could answer some questions.

BEN
"Some" is too indefinite. I'll let you ask three.

ANDIE
Okay - in order of importance: who's your favorite sports team ever in the history of the world?

BEN
The Knicks.
(on her surprised look)
How am I doing?

ANDIE
Uncannily well.

BEN
Question number two?

ANDIE
What do you do for a living?

BEN
A boring question, but I'll answer it: I'm in advertising.

ANDIE
Why is it boring?

BEN
Is that question number 3?

ANDIE
2a.

BEN
Because my job is not me - it's just a means to an end.

ANDIE
Which is?
(hastily)
That's 2b.

BEN
To be really good at something and put as great a distance between me and... whatever.

ANDIE
Ooc. You're complicated.
(sips her beer)
2c: have I seen your work?

BEN
You have if you care about athletic shoes and beer.

ANDIE
(delighted)
I care deeply about athletic shoes and beer! Two of my favorite subjects.

BEN
How about that.
(sips his beer)
So what about you? Have I seen your work?

ANDIE
Probably not. I'm a journalist.

BEN
Really? Where?

ANDIE
Composure magazine.

BEN
I'm sorry, where?

ANDIE
Composure...it's a...a...woman's fashion magazine. What are you smirking at?

BEN
(covering)
I'm not smirking. I'm slurping. Clams.

ANDIE
Look here, Sparky - I majored in journalism at Columbia. My boss loves me, and if I do it her way for a year, I'll make junior editor and then I can write any story I want. Some serious writing.

BEN
Such as?

ANDIE
I'm going to travel across America, do an old fashioned, first person "on the road" piece, just as soon as I...
(catching herself)
Never mind.

BEN
Just as soon as you what?

ANDIE
(admits)
Learn to drive.

BEN
Chauffeurs and towncars. A princess! I knew it.

ANDIE
(annoyed)
Think you've got me all summed up?

BEN
Getting there. How about you? Got me all summed up yet?

ANDIE
Almost. Still haven't asked my third question.

BEN
Shoot.

ANDIE
True or false: "All's fair in love and war".

She watches him closely.

BEN
True.

They look at each other, a challenge in their eyes.

ANDIE
I've got you all summed up.

BEN
And?

She smiles her beautiful smile at him.

ANDIE
Let's go.

INT. BEN'S LOFT - NIGHT

Andie puts her purse down on a crate/table and peruses the sparsely furnished loft space. It's primarily filled with sports stuff. It's exactly the kind of a place that the tomboy in Andie fantasizes about.

ANDIE
Nice place.
(catching herself)
For a wealthy eleven-year-old.

Nina Simone comes up on the stereo. Ben approaches the bed and stands barefoot in front of Andie.

BEN
Would you like a drink?
(she shakes her head)
Can I get you anything?

Andie shakes her head no. She stands there in front of him, dead sexy, ready for him to make his move.

But Ben just stands there.

BEN
You're beautiful but...

ANDIE
But?

BEN
Well, normally I would just...but with you...I don't think I should just...

ANDIE
(exasperated)
Take off your clothes.

Ben takes a big swallow. He doesn't move.

ANDIE
Hiding something?

BEN
No.

ANDIE
Uptight?

BEN
No.

ANDIE
Ashamed?

BEN
Please.

She gives him a questioning look. He smiles and begins to unbutton his shirt, stiffly at first, but by the last buttons he lingers like a seasoned stripper. He tosses the shirt over Andie's head. She eyes his pants. He unbuckles his belt and slowly pulls it out through the loops, dropping it on the floor at her feet.

He looks directly into Andie's eyes, remembering that he's supposed to make this woman fall in love with him.

BEN
Let's not go too fast.

ANDIE
What do you mean?

BEN
I'm not your typical guy. I love foreplay.

ANDIE
Well I'm not your typical girl. I hate it.

BEN
(delighted)
Really?
(controlling himself)
I mean, really?

Ben lifts Andie's shirt over her head. He kisses her shoulders.

BEN
(between kisses)
You know what I love? Cuddling after sex and chatting.

ANDIE
(between kisses)
Oh god, not me. Promise me - no talking after sex. Let's just sleep.

Andie drops down below frame. Ben looks up and silently thanks God.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BEDROOM - ALMOST DAWN

Ben is passed out on the futon, his arm draped over Andie's chest. Gently she extricates herself from under his limb. She stands and stealthily starts hunting down her garments.

Fully dressed, she stands at the foot of the futon for a moment. Ben is curled up in the fetal position, hugging his pillow like a little boy.

Andie catches herself smiling as she realizes that she really likes him. It wasn't necessarily part of the deal, but truth be told - she had a really good time.

Abruptly she turns and tiptoes toward the door. Ben's eyes open and he watches her go, a quizzical look on his face.

INT. BEN'S APARTMENT - MORNING

An automatic coffee brewer begins to drip dark black coffee into a glass carafe. Ben shuffles over to it, a junkie needing his caffeine fix. In a motion surprisingly fluid for somebody whose eyes don't appear to be open, he switches a large tin mug with the carafe under the coffee drip. His eyes open a bit and focus. There, sitting on the crate, is a silver clasp sparkling in the morning sun. It's Andie's bag.

Ben goes over to pick it up but whiffs, knocking it to the ground. Its contents spill out onto the floor. Stiffly he bends to scoop them up and notices, amidst the chick stuff

A PAIR OF KNICKS TICKETS. A huge smile comes over his face.

BEN
There is a God.

EXT. MADISON AVENUE DAY

Ben is walking back from lunch with Jonathan and Thayer.

JONATHAN
(shudders)
You went into her purse?

BEN
She left it. Most likely on purpose. Why, you have an ethical problem with that?

JONATHAN
You violated her secret center of power. A woman's purse is dark and dangerous and full of things men aren't supposed to know about.

BEN
Like courtside tickets to the Knicks? She even had a Swiss Army Knife in there!

THAYER
A woman who carries her own bottle opener. You are indeed blessed.

BEN
I am! Of all the chicks that Spears and Green could have thrown at me...this one is genuinely amazing. She's got spark, you know? And a way with words that slays me. Hanging with her for ten days will be no problem.

JONATHAN
Right, it's only nine days longer than you've ever hung with anyone before.

THAYER
But you're not just supposed to hang out with her. You're supposed to make her fall in love with you.

BEN
Well, she has courtside tickets to the Knicks, which makes me in love with her. And that's a start.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Andie, Michelle and Jeannie are eating lunch and debriefing Andie on her adventures from the previous night.

Andie is tearing into a juicy bacon cheddar burger and nursing a chocolate shake. Michelle picks at a salad.

ANDIE
I love it that I'm not trying to turn this into a relationship. It's just incredibly liberating...and the sex is so much better. It's like fantasy sex. Like Arabian Nights sex but with me as the sheik. No cuddling, no meaningful conversation. No tenderness. Just uninhibited sex...well, I can't tell you how much I recommend it...
(shakes her head in disbelief)
The sex!

MICHELLE
All right, we get it! If you mention the word sex again, I'm going to deck you.

JEANNIE
And please explain to me how you're going to "lose a guy" by having great sex with him on the first night.

ANDIE
This is stage one, remember? I'm still in the first 24 hours. I have to hook him before I can test my theories.

MICHELLE
(far away)
I miss Mike. I used to spray my perfume on his pillow.

Andie and Jeannie ignore her.

ANDIE
By now he will have found the Knicks tickets. I expect a call any minute.

JEANNIE
Why didn't you just invite him to the game?

ANDIE
Too eager. This way, he'll go through my purse and see the tickets. If he's half as smart as I think he is, he'll realize I left my purse there on purpose. Which of course I'll deny. Which will make him feel stupid and at a disadvantage. Which of course, he'll love, because it will be a challenge.

MICHELLE
Huh?

ANDIE
Men like to work for everything. Makes them feel good.

JEANNIE
(to Michelle)
Are you following this?

Andie's cell phone rings.

ANDIE
(to the girls)
Just watch.
(on phone)
Hello?
(pause)
Well hello Ben From Last Night.

CUT TO:

INT. BEN'S OFFICE/WARREN ADVERTISING THAT MOMENT

Ben has her on the speaker phone so that Jonathan and Thayer can hear him work his magic. INTERCUT AS NECESSARY:

BEN
I have your bag.

ANDIE
I know. Can't believe I left it. I guess my night with you left me a little light headed.

BEN
You must need it back, what with all your credit cards...and those Knicks tickets for tonight...

ANDIE
You found my Knicks tickets?

BEN
I knocked over your bag.

ANDIE
Oh - that happens to me all the time.

BEN
And I realized we have more in common than great sex.

ANDIE
You love the Knicks?

BEN
I love the Knicks! My middle name is Walt!

ANDIE
As in Frasier?

BEN
I was born a fan.

ANDIE
That's so cool. I wish I wasn't going to the game with somebody else.

Jeannie and Michelle look at Andie in surprise.

WITH BEN AND HIS FRIENDS

Ben looks alarmed to hear this.

BEN
Somebody else? Dump him. Take me.

ANDIE
I can't. They're his tickets.

BEN
Not any more. Possession's nine tenths of the law.

ANDIE
Well, I don't know...

BEN
You may not know but your subconscious knows. You think you left your purse at my place by accident? Subconsciously you are dying to take me to that game, and denying your subconscious desires is very dangerous to your health. It leads to repression and all kinds of nasty things and before long you're in therapy, you're taking drugs, you're gaining weight - all of which could have been avoided by taking me to the game in the first place.

Andie stifles laughter.

ANDIE
Does that psycho-babble ever really work on anybody?

BEN
I don't know, did it work on you?

ANDIE
Meet me in front of the Penn station entrance at a quarter to eight.

They both hang up.

Andie winks at the girls.

ANDIE
And that's how it's done.

Ben hangs up. He turns to his friends.

BEN
(boasting)
Smooth.

INT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - NIGHT *

The game is in the last seconds of overtime. Andie and Ben are screaming their lungs out along with everyone else.

They've forgotten about the game they're playing with each other and are purely focused on the one in front of them. This is about the Knicks, pure and simple. *

ANDIE AND BEN
De-fense! De-fense! De-fense!

BEN
(screaming)
No way! That was an offensive foul!

ANDIE
(yelling at the ref)
Ever heard of charging?

A ball of nerves, they simultaneously slug their beers and belch.

ANDIE
I can't look.
(she does)
Brick! Brick!

There's a collective groan from the crowd as the free-throw is made, putting the other team ahead. Ben sees the BEER VENDOR and shouts to him:

BEN
(to Vendor)
Two more!

The Vendor doesn't hear him. Andie stands up and WHISTLES like she were hailing a cab, and motions for two. The Vendor brings the beers over. Ben is impressed.

BEN
Inbound to Sprewell...

ANDIE
Over to Duncan...

BEN
Back out to Spre...

As the crowd erupts...

ANDIE AND BEN
Nothing but net.

They high five and hug each other...and then their neighbors...and then the guys behind them...and then each other again.

INT. CAB NIGHT

The ride home. Andie is leaning forward, describing the game to the TAXI DRIVER.

ANDIE
Completely bogus call - shoulda been a charge.

BEN
Six seconds left, Duncan to Sprewell...

ANDIE
...from way downtown, at the buzzer, three pointer, win by one.

The Taxi Driver looks at Andie's glowing face in the rear view mirror.

TAXI DRIVER
That's a vintage Knicks cap, ain't it?

ANDIE
'73.

BEN
Very nice...

Ben reaches for it. She knocks his hand away.

ANDIE
Ah... Don't touch.

Ben looks at Andie in the passing street light. Nights don't get better than this.

The cab pulls up in front of her building.

BEN
(softly)
Am I coming in?

Andie looks at him.

ANDIE
What time is it?

BEN
Ten oclock.

ANDIE
Ten o'clock.
(beat)
I met you 24 hours ago.

BEN
That's right.

For a second, Andie feels melancholy, realizing what this means.

ANDIE
I'm going to have to call it a night.
(quickly)
Bye, it was fun.

She jumps out of the cab before she can change her mind.

INT. ANDIE'S BUILDING-FOYER THAT MOMENT

Andie enters her apartment building. She pushes the button for the elevator. As she waits, she counts to herself...

ANDIE
(to herself)
Ten...nine...eight..seven...

INT. CAB THAT MOMENT

BEN
(to cab driver)
Wait a second, will you?

He gets out of the cab.

INT. ANDIE'S APARTMENT BUILDING THAT MOMENT

ANDIE
(to herself)
...three...two...

BEN (O.S.)
(calling out)
Andie!

Ben comes running into the building just as the elevator arrives. Andie turns around, as if "surprised" to see him.

BEN
When can I see you again?

Andie looks at Ben's hopeful face. He seems like such a charming guy. Her conscience pulls at her.

She walks into the elevator and presses the button for her floor.

ANDIE
(softly)
Ben - are you really as nice as you seem?

A moment's hesitation.

BEN
No.

ANDIE
(coy)
Neither am I.

The doors start closing. Ben calls through them.

BEN
I'll call you tomorrow!

The doors close. Ben smiles to himself.

BEN
(to himself)
Score.

INSIDE THE ELEVATOR - THAT MOMENT

Andie rides up to her apartment.

ANDIE
(to herself)
Score.

FADE OUT

INT. COMPOSURE MAGAZINE OFFICES DAY

FADE UP

THREE GIANT BOUQUETS OF WHITE ROSES are carried by THREE struggling INTERNS, like ducks in a row. Their faces are hidden by the enormity of the bouquets.

INT. ANDIE'S CUBICLE - THAT MOMENT

The interns enter with the flowers. Andie doesn't even look up from her work. Michelle plucks the card from each successive bouquet.

MICHELLE
(reads from first bouquet)
One hundred times...
(reads from second bouquet)
...more beautiful...
(reads from third bouquet)
...than one hundred roses.

The shot widens to reveal that Andie's cubicle is filled with bouquets.

MICHELLE
Alright already, I think we get the message.

ANDIE
He's in advertising, he can't help himself.

Another intern comes in with a massive gourmet bakery basket. Jeannie breathes a sigh of relief.

JEANNIE
Hurrah! The stalker sent food!
(looks in basket)
No nuts. Bastard.

MICHELLE
He's smitten. What exactly did you do to this guy?

ANDIE
Just what I said I'd do for the first 24 hours.

JEANNIE
Are you sure you want to write the article about him? He might be a keeper.

ANDIE
Jeannie... the only reason he's showering me with gifts is because I'm not responding. As soon as I do reciprocate, he'll run away.

MICHELLE
No he won't. It's just like I said. Nothing you could ever do would make a guy run. You're too beautiful - just like your mother.

ANDIE
(ironic)
And we all know how well things worked out for her.

Michelle looks down - probably shouldn't have raised the topic. Andie pushes on.

ANDIE
The point is, all men run when you get interested in them. They're men... They want what they can't have -- as soon as they've got it -- pffft -- it's on to the next. They can't help it -- it's their nature... Like Jane Goodall knows monkeys, I know the homo erectus.
(rises)
And I am about to send this erectus running for his life.

Andie reaches for the phone.

JEANNIE
Drum roll, please. How to Lose a Guy in Ten days. Day one.

Michelle and Jeannie eagerly sit on the desks, ready to watch the master.

ANDIE
Observe the Art of the Phone Call: from now on, it's never "Hi, it's Andie". From now on, *"It's MEEEE!"*

Andie starts dialing.

ANDIE
Give me thirty seconds, and I'll never hear from him again.

INT. WARREN AD GROUP THAT MOMENT

Ben is talking to Thayer and Jonathan when the phone rings. INTERCUT AS NECESSARY

BEN
Hello?

ANDIE
(stewardess perky)
It's Meee!

All the girls start to laugh. Andie covers the phone with her hand and shushes them.

BEN
(to Thayer and Jonathan)
It's her.

BEN (cont'd)
(to Andie)
Did you get the flowers?

ANDIE
I did. They're beautiful, but...
(a big pout face)
I miss you.

Ben is caught off guard by her unfamiliar attitude.

BEN
(stumbling)
Er, I... miss you too.

ANDIE
(dripping sincerity)
You know, when we first started going out, I think I was scared. But now I realize we have so much in common, it's almost like I'm looking at myself in a mirror when I look at you.

She sticks her finger in her mouth and pretends to gag. The girls giggle.

BEN
Uh-huh.

ANDIE
You busy tonight? I thought that I could come over and we could talk about our childhoods... And then just cuddle.

BEN
(blurting out)
No! I mean... tonight's bad for me.

ANDIE
I thought so. You'll call me later in the week? Promise?

Andie hangs up.

ANDIE
(triumphantly)
I will never hear from that man again.

INT. WARREN ADVERTISING AGENCY DAY

Jonathan and Thayer stare at Ben in a amazement.

BEN
I couldn't help it. It was an involuntary reflex.

Jonathan grabs the cell phone away from Ben... Pushes re-dial and hands it back to him.

BEN
I don't want to cuddle.

INT. ANDIE'S CUBICLE THAT MOMENT

The phone rings and Michelle picks it up.

MICHELLE
Hello?
(hands the phone to Andie)
So much for your theories, Dr. Margaret Meade.

ANDIE
Oh, hi...A movie? Uh - sure. As long as I get to pick. See you then, Peaches.

She hangs up.

ANDIE
Okay. So he's a tougher nut than I thought, but I'll frighten this guy off. Mark my words.

CUT TO:

ANGLE ON the marque above the Bleeker St. Cinema. It reads

CHICK FLICK MARATHON.

INT. BLEEKER ST. CINEMA - CONTINUOUS

A shot of the opening title credit, WHEN HARRY MET SALLY. Ben checks his watch.

ANDIE
(whispers)
Thanks for sitting through this a second time... It's one of my favorite movies...

BEN
Me too...

Not the reaction she had hoped for.

GUY BEHIND THEM
Sshhh...

As Ben watches the screen he becomes aware that Andie is staring at him.

BEN
(mouthful)
What?

ANDIE
What are you thinking?

BEN
I'm watching the movie.

ANDIE
But what's on your mind?

BEN
I'm not thinking anything. I'm watching the movie.

GUY BEHIND THEM
Can't hear.

ANDIE
(loud whispering)
Oh, I suppose your mind's a complete blank... Who is she?

BEN
Who?

ANDIE
The girl that you're thinking about?

GUY BEHIND THEM
Can't see.

BEN
I'm not thinking about another girl.

She stews in her chair.

BEN (CONT'D)
(continuing)
I'm thinking... I'm thinking how God damn beautiful you look right this second... is what I'm thinking... If you must know.

ANDIE
(lovey voice)
Oh you...

Andie sighs wistfully and looks up lovingly over at Ben. He forces a smile. A wisp of hair falls in his face.

ANDIE (CONT'D)
(continuing)
Come here, silly. You have a wisp.

She reaches for it.

GUY BEHIND THEM
CAN'T HEAR AND CAN'T SEE!

ANDIE
If you don't shut up, my boyfriend is going to come back there and pummel your dumb ass.

Ben's eyes widen. He turns around, ever so slowly only to have his worst fears confirmed. For there, sitting behind him, grinning maliciously, is THE MISSING LINK.

THE MISSING LINK
Put a muzzle on your old lady the next time you go out in public.

BEN
Now why would you have to and say something like that?

EXT: ALLEY WAY

Ben and THE MISSING LINK face each other as Andie desperately tries to defuse the situation.

ANDIE
(to Ben)
Ben he's huge. You don't have to fight him.

BEN
Hey I don't want to fight. I just want him to apologize for the incredibly rude remark he made about you in the theatre.

ANDIE
Could we just run away please?

BEN
(chuckles)
I don't run away. Hey you don't need to protect me... I can take care of myself.
(to the Link)
And now my friend I'm going to give you until the count of three to apologize for what you...

Before Ben can get to one THE MISSING LINK decks him with a short right hand cross that sends him sprawling to the ground. He appears to be out cold.

THE MISSING LINK
Now, I'm gonna go back inside and watch SLEEPLESS IN SEATTLE so nobody fuck with me.

Andie is horrified kneels beside him.

ANDIE
Oh my god Ben... Ben. I can't believe he hit you. Are you all right? Can you speak?

Ben opens his eyes to find that his face is nestled between Andie's breast.

BEN
Andie?

ANDIE
I'm so sorry.

She instinctively wipes the blood from a cut on his lip with her Jill Sander scarf. Ben can't help but enjoy the attention.

BEN
(milks it)
Andie is that you?

ANDIE
Oh God we should get you to a hospital. You may have a concussion.

BEN
I don't think I should move... I'm all sort of... just hold me.

He nuzzles into her breasts.

BEN (CONT'D)
(continuing)
You're so warm.

Ben looks up at her and smiles.

ANDIE
You're all right.

Ben gently reaches up and kisses her sweetly on the mouth. Andie gets lost in it for a moment then catching herself pulls away and abruptly stands up. Ben's head hits the pavement.

BEN
Ow!

Andie already walking away.

ANDIE
Come on, Rocky. Let's hit the road.

INT. COMPOSURE DAY

Jeannie, Michelle and Andie talk at Andie's desk.

JEANNIE
You made him sit through WHEN HARRY MET SALLY twice in a row.

ANDIE
And he would have been up for a third showing.

MICHELLE
That's obscene.

Andie's FAX MACHINE starts receiving a message.

ANDIE
I picked a fight for him.

MICHELLE
Really?

ANDIE
Yeah - I've never had my honor defended before.

JEANNIE
Was he hurt?

ANDIE
Yeah, it was a real guy thing. Pow! He was out cold. I've never seen anyone unconscious look so adorable.

MICHELLE
Are you dating him or contemplating adoption? Because you sound like you're into this guy.

ANDIE
(shaking herself out of it)
Oh God no - this is for the article. I could not ditch him quickly enough.

JEANNIE
But he's still heavily into you.

Andie grabs the FAX off the machine and reads it. She sighs.

ANDIE
Utterly and completely.
(hands them the FAX)
Look.

The girls read the FAX.

MICHELLE
"Dinner at my place - 8:00" Of course. I knew this would never work.

ANDIE
It's going to work. It's got to work.

JEANNIE
You're just not going deep enough, Andie. It's time to take off the gloves. Start analyzing everything he says, no matter how banal...

Pushing in on Andie's face as she listens to the litany...

MICHELLE (V.O.)
Constantly ask him if you look fat...

JEANNIE (V.O.)
Douse his house with your perfume...

MICHELLE (V.O.)
Answer his phone...

JEANNIE (V.O.)
Call his mother and introduce yourself.

EXT. BEN'S APARTMENT BLDG. - NIGHT

An ominous billowing fog fills the street. Andie (in super model evening wear that would make any man out of a tuxedo feel under-dressed) stands before the old brownstone like Max Von Sydow in the Exorcist. Andie is carrying a large cardboard box.

ANDIE (V.O.)
And tonight ... I'll infringe upon his space with the planting of few specific female relationship items...

INT. BEN'S HALLWAY - NIGHT

Andie walks up to Ben's door. A nosy middle-aged Lithuanian woman named Maya peeks out of her apartment. She eyes Andie's box.

MAYA
You moving in?

ANDIE
No... First date.

Maya reluctantly withdraws. Andie knocks on Ben's door. It comes open a crack.

ANDIE (CONT'D)
(continuing)
Hello?

BEN (O.S.)
Come in its open.

INT. BEN'S LOFT - CONTINUOUS

Andie enters with the box.

BEN (O.S.)
I'll be right there.

To Andie's surprise, in the middle of the loft, as if it had been lifted from a fancy french cafe, sits a white tablecloth round table, perfectly set for two with a red rose in the center.

Ben pokes his head out of the kitchen.

BEN (CONT'D)
I'm at a very critical moment in the ah... Pour yourself a glass of wine. Make yourself at home.

ANDIE
(smiles sweetly)
I will.

He disappears again. She puts the box down and begins to remove the heinous tools of her mission. A housewarming fern in a way-fey pink pot and a giant glass container of potpourri.

INT: KITCHEN

A harried Ben, phone clenched between his neck and shoulder, opens up his oven to reveal a rack of lamb. He pokes it with a fork.

BEN
C'mon Jonathan help me out. It's been in for an hour... Yeah, yeah I know it's done when it's pink. Define pink.

INT: BEN'S LOFT

In fact pink is defined by the feminine quilt that now covers Ben's futon.

Andie is at the bookshelf setting more of her props. A framed photo of her smiling face and a coffee table copy of Martha Stewart's book WEDDINGS. She notices an old snapshot of a smiling gap-toothed eight-year-old Ben in his pee-wee hockey gear. He's holding up a silver tournament cup with the help of his beaming father who's standing behind him. She can't help but smile.

BEN (O.S.)
Just be a second.

INT: KITCHEN

Ben arranges potatoes on the platter surrounding the lamb. He delicately spoons out some mint jelly.

INT: BEN'S LOFT

Andie arranges a menagerie of stuffed animals on Ben's bed.

Ben reenters carrying the platter. He's baffled to find a giant Lilith Fair poster hanging on his wall. Suddenly Jewel comes up on the stereo. Andie appears sifting through her box.

ANDIE
Jewel, Tori, Sinead, Sheryl, Fiona, Carly, Natalie... Oh God tell me I didn't forget you...

A sigh of relief as she finds the cd she's looking for. She kisses the cover and shows it to him. It's a copy of Carol King's sacred TAPESTRY. She smiles at Ben waiting for him to react. He swallows hard and forces a smile.

BEN
Great... Dinner is served. The dish I'm famous for: rack of lamb with a cherry mint glaze and roast potatoes. I thought we could have dinner, watch the game.

He places the platter down on a side table. He clicks his remote and his big screen TV flickers on.

MARV ALBERT (O.S.)
Welcome to Madison Square Garden for the second game of the NBA championship series! Between the...

Meat and Basketball, this is Andie's perfect night. She stares at the lamb. For a carnivore like her the whole scene it's incredibly enticing. She catches herself and sighs sadly.

BEN
Are you okay?

ANDIE
(quivering voice)
Fine.

BEN
Are you crying?

ANDIE
It's just so beautiful...

BEN
(baffled)
Thank you.

ANDIE
I wish I ate meat.

INT. VEGETARIAN RESTAURANT - LATER - NIGHT

Ben balances the salt shaker on it's side in a pile of salt. Using his knife like a scalpel he scrapes away the excess salt.

Then ever so gently leans in and blows the remainder away. Ta da! The shaker stands there on it's own, perfectly balanced on it's edge. Andie plops down next to him in the booth and sends the shaker crashing down.

ANDIE
Miss me?

BEN
Yup.

She takes Ben's arm and wraps it around her shoulder and then burrows into his side. As a multi-pierced and tattooed, punk WAITRESS with day-glo green hair approaches with the food.

WAITRESS
A soy shake... tofu burger and sprouts for the gentleman and for the lady a bowl of squash mash.

ANDIE
Mmmmm... Dig in.

Ben takes a bite of his tasteless tofu burger. He chews bravely.

BEN
Delicious.

Andie brings a spoonful of the brown mush to her face. Makes a sour face and returns it to the bowl.

ANDIE
I'm actually not that hungry...

WAITRESS
I could bring you something else.

She catches Ben smirking.

ANDIE
(indicates Ben)
My boyfriend thinks I'm fat.

BEN
(mouthful)
What?

ANDIE
(sniffling)
Anyway... I can't eat in front of him.

BEN
I don't think she's fat. How could anyone think she's fat?

Andie looking hurt turns away. The waitress gives Ben a deadly look and leaves.

EXT. BLEEKER STREET - NIGHT

Close on Ben's face running the emotional gamut from intense rage to sheer joy. His face is pressed up against the glass window of a bar watching the game.

ANDIE
Come on silly. Let's go back to your place and snuggle.

Andie offers him her hand.

ANDIE
If you don't want to hold my hand just say so.

BEN
I do, I do. I really do. God I want to hold your hand. Give it to me, please.

Andie and Ben walking along hand in hand through the bustling Bleeker St. night time crowd. Ben drops her hand to avoid a collision.

ANDIE
Bread and...

She drops his hand.

BEN
(defeated)
Butter.

INT. BEN'S - LATER THAT NIGHT

Ben tosses fitfully in his sleep. He rolls over and comes awake. A beam of moonlight shines on Andie's exposed midriff. Ben leans down and gently kisses her belly. He begins stroking her thigh with his forefinger. He starts nuzzling the nape of her neck.

Andie awakens and realizes she's aroused. She breathes softly, sincerely enjoying the nearness of Ben. She's about to lose control. We see her fighting her emotions, wanting to give in...and not letting herself.

She reaches back to touch his crotch.

ANDIE
(whispers)
Does Mary Chantal want to come out and play?

Ben continues nuzzling...

BEN
(beat)
What?

ANDIE
Does Mary Chantal want to come out and play?

Ben rolls over and flicks on the light.

BEN
Who the hell is Mary Chantal?

Andie eyes his crotch.

BEN
My... You named my penis Mary Chantal? You've got to be kidding me. Why don't you just douse me with ice cold water?

ANDIE
(tearing up)
Mary Chantal is such a pretty name.

BEN
If anyone's naming "mine", it's going to be me... Besides you've totally missed the point. It's supposed to be a hyper-masculine name like Spike or Butch or...
(he mumbles)
Krull the Warrior King.

ANDIE
What?

BEN
Nothing.

ANDIE
What did you just say?

BEN
Spike.

ANDIE
After that.

BEN
(sheepishly)
Krull the Warrior King.

Ben rolls over to hide the fact that he's blushing.

ANDIE
(baby voice)
Does Krull the Warrior King want to come out and play?

BEN
No...

ANDIE
C'mon, Krully Wally...

BEN
Due to intense humiliation, the King has abdicated his throne. For a good half hour at least.

INT. PUPPY PALACE - NEXT DAY

Michelle, Jeannie and Andie are being led through the small dog section of the kennels by a store employee. He lifts each dog up for the girls to peruse.

JEANNIE
He witnessed penis naming?

ANDIE
At about four A.M. Mary Chantal came back from field hockey practice and well... I had my first lesbian experience.

The keeper holds up a Pekingese. The girls shake their heads "no".

MICHELLE
Wait a minute. You named his penis after a French courtesan, and *still had sex?*

ANDIE
(amazed)
Great sex.

MICHELLE
This proves it. Andie can get away with anything, but I can't because I'm too fat.

ANDIE AND JEANNIE
(for the millionth time)
You're not too fat.

A Pomeranian? "No".

MICHELLE
Then how do you explain this? All I did was spray a little of my perfume on Mike's pillow and he was gone with the wind. Andie used cruel and unusual punishment...

JEANNIE
And yet he begs for more.

MICHELLE
Exactly.

JEANNIE
Very strange.

ANDIE
(in agreement)
Astounding.

A Shih Tzu? "No".

JEANNIE
Perhaps Andie isn't really trying to lose the guy...perhaps she's starting to think about keeping him?

ANDIE
What, are you crazy? I have an article to write. I'm doing my very best to shake him, and it's just not working. Come on, girls, I need help.

The keeper holds up the most pathetic little pooch that we have ever seen.

MICHELLE
Time to roll out the heavy artillery.

The girls nod in agreement.

INT. WARREN AD GROUP - DAY

Ben, Jonathan and Thayer are walking through the office.

THAYER
I don't get it. After the Knicks game, you thought she was a goddess.

BEN
That was good Andie. The intelligent, amazing woman who blew me away. I'm talking about evil Andie now. Evil Andie vacillates maniacally between two different personas: A crack- enhanced Kathie Lee Gifford and a Pamprin-deprived Courtney Love...

JONATHAN
Maybe she's bipolar?

BEN
If she is the south pole is prevailing.

IN ANOTHER PART OF THE OFFICE

Andie walks down the hallway carrying a wicker basket, looking into people's offices, trying to find Ben. She sees some women working in an office and pops her head in.

The women are Spears and Green.

ANDIE
(brightly)
Excuse me. Could you please tell me where to find Benjamin Barry?

Spears and Green stare at Andie, momentarily too stunned to speak.

ANDIE
I'm Andie. Ben's fiancée.

Spears and Green almost choke.

SPEARS
That's not poss...I mean, congratulations.

GREEN
When's the big day?

ANDIE
Well - we haven't picked one yet. As a matter of fact, he hasn't even proposed yet. At this point it's more of a female intuition thing, know what I mean? My little secret plan. Let's just keep it between us girls.

SPEARS
No problem.

Spears and Green exchange glances.

ANDIE
(opens her basket a crack)
Look what I brought him.

The little DOG sticks his head out of the basket and YAPS.

ANDIE
Don't you think he'll love it?

Green looks at Andie and suddenly realizes that this must be part of Andie's original plan of "How to Lose a Guy".

GREEN
I think he'll be in seventh heaven.

She smiles at Andie and then at Spears. Spears has caught on as well, and regained her composure.

SPEARS
(rising)
Come this way, Andie. We'll take you to Ben. I'm sure he'll be dying to see you.

WITH BEN, THAYER AND JONATHAN

Thayer and Jonathan are still commiserating with Ben at his desk.

THAYER
Anyway, you just have to hold onto her for another eight days...

Spears and Green walk around the corner with Andie in tow.

SPEARS
Ben! Look who's here!

ANDIE
Muffin!

Andie rushes up to the guys. Thayer and Jonathan are struck by how great-looking Andie is.

JONATHAN
(mesmerized by Andie's looks)
...which shouldn't be too difficult.

BEN
(confused)
Andie - what are you doing here?
(for the benefit of Spears and Green)
You look gorgeous.
(the guys step forward)
This is Jonathan and Thayer.

ANDIE
Of course. Ben has told me so much about you.

Andie reaches into the wicker basket and removes the tiny rat of a dog she picked out with Michelle. It immediately starts yapping.

ANDIE
(earnestly)
Look what I found for us, Sweetie.

BEN
What is it?

ANDIE
Why it's a toy Dandie Dinmont Terrier, of course.

BEN
No shit! I've always wanted a toy Dandie Dinmont Terrier... So it's like a dog, right?

ANDIE
You're hurting Marv's feelings.

JONATHAN
Marv?

ANDIE
Marv Albert.

Ben tries to touch the dog which snaps ferociously at his hand.

ANDIE
He bites... But he's our baby, Ben. And now we're like a little family... The three of us.

Ben doesn't know whether to recoil in horror, or act like he's loving it for the benefit of Spears and Green.

GREEN
Isn't that sweet.

There is a pause in the conversation as all six watch Marv piddle on the desk.

ANDIE
Thing is, I don't believe he's house broken.

THAYER
Congratulations. I actually have some work to get to. It was fantastic meeting you, Andie. And meeting Marv.

SPEARS
Nice meeting you, Andie.
(whispers to Ben)
Attaboy, Bennie.

Spears and Green walk off chuckling, which makes Ben extremely uncomfortable.

ANDIE
Buh-Bye...Do you love Marv? Do you?

Jonathan reappears in the window of the office door holds up seven fingers then mouths, "Only seven days."

BEN
With all my heart and every fiber of my body.

Score one for Benjamin Barry. Andie covers with a smile and plots her next move.

ANDIE
I knew you'd love him.
(gets an idea)
Hey - we've got a lunch break - let's take Marv shopping!

EXT. TIFFANY'S DAY

CLOSE ON: the contents on a window at Tiffany's. Among the silver spoons and money clips there is a diamond-studded DOG COLLAR.

BEN
Does Marv really need a diamond collar? Don't you think it might be a little... effeminate? I mean, he might have a complex about his masculinity as it is.

ANDIE
Maybe you're right.
(coy)
Anyway, the truth is, we're not really here to shop for Marv.

Andie pulls Ben to the next display window, where the really good stuff is: diamond jewelry.

ANDIE
Come over here. Ben.
(swooning)
Look at all that frosting.

BEN
"Frosting?"

ANDIE
(wiggles her fingers, as if showing off rings)
You know.
(coy)
Ben - I know we've only been dating a few days - but I have a premonition about us - and I want you to see something really pretty.

Andie points to a large engagement ring. Ben gulps.

BEN
Big.

ANDIE
I've always wanted one just like it.

BEN
How much is that, do you think?

ANDIE
Oh, probably about fifteen thousand dollars.

BEN
Not that bad, really.

ANDIE
No, really quite affordable.

BEN
Well, it would look great on you. You have my complete support.

ANDIE
Excuse me?

BEN
To buy it. I think you should.

ANDIE
For myself?

BEN
Why not? Why do women wait for guys to get them diamonds? Why not go ahead and buy them for themselves?

Andie stares at Ben, mouth agape - and then bursts into tears.

ANDIE
(bawling)
If you don't want this relationship to go anywhere, then just go ahead and say so...

BEN
What? No - don't take it like that, please. Don't cry. I only said that stuff because of this pitch I'm working on.

ANDIE
(sniffling)
What pitch?

BEN
I'm trying to come up with a campaign to get women to buy themselves diamonds.
(on her look)
Why, you don't think that will work?

ANDIE
Well not for engagement rings, silly.
(drying her eyes)
Otherwise, sure. Why shouldn't a girl frost herself?

Andie smiles through her tears at Ben.

INT. WARREN'S OFFICE DAY *

BEN
Frost Yourself.

WARREN
Excuse me?

Warren turns to look at Ben. Spears and Greer are seated on his sofa. There is a REPLICA DIAMOND TIARA on the coffee table in front of them.

BEN
The slogan. For the party. What do you think?

Ben plops down next to Spears and Green. He reaches for the tiara which Spears playfully withholds.

WARREN
(trying it out)
Frost yourself. It's happy sounding. Fun. How'd you come up with it?

BEN
(pointed, to Spears and Green)
I got it off the girl who's fallen madly in love with me.

He sticks his tongue out at Spears and Green.

BEN
She calls diamond rings "frosting", as in "check out her frosting".

WARREN
I like it. It's sexy -fresh - simple. It goes well with those crowns you girls put together.

SPEARS
(correcting him)
Tiaras.

Warren puts the tiara on his head. He goes to his window and looks out.

WARREN
Frost yourself! That should be the theme of the party. Everything frosted. Martini glasses. Chandeliers. The whole party a glittering diamond.
(calls out to the city)
Women of New York! Frost yourselves!

Spears, Green and Ben watch their Boss waltz a bit in the diamond tiara.

BEN
(whispers)
What's up with Warren?

GREEN
(whispers)
I think he wants to be Queen for a Day.

SPEARS
(whispers)
Or possibly longer.

They get up and exit.

INT. JUST OUTSIDE WARREN'S OFFICE CONTINUOUS

GREEN
So Benny-boy - you sure she's fallen in love with you? You engaged yet?

BEN
All I can say is, I hope you two aren't sore losers.

SPEARS
We wouldn't know. We've never lost.

The girls move off down the hall.

Just then, Jonathan sticks his head out of their office -

JONATHAN
Ben - she's on the phone.

Ben walks to the office.

CUT TO:

INT: ANDIE'S CUBICLE THAT MOMENT

Outside her window the ticker announces SERIES KNOTTED AT ONE. VAN GUNDY PROMISES VICTORY IN GAME THREE.

ANDIE
Benny Bear, I've got a surprise for you tonight.

INT: BEN'S OFFICE

Intercut as necessary. Ben cradles the phone between his cheek and shoulder.

BEN
Oh yeah? That's too bad. What can I tell ya I'm stuck here tonight.

JONATHAN
What!?!

BEN
One second, Andie.
(whispers to Jonathan)
I'm not missing every game of the championship series. I'm sorry, she'll live.

Ben removes his hand from the mouthpiece.

BEN
So anyway, there's just no way I can get out of here.

ANDIE
That's too bad because I've got tickets for tonight.

Ben just about falls out of his chair.

BEN
Tickets? How did you get tickets? It's completely sold out. Scalpers are getting ten grand a pop...

ANDIE
I work for a magazine, silly billy. I've got connections. And if I want to get tickets for my boyfriend I just have to make a few phone calls.

BEN
Oh my God...

ANDIE
It's a once in a lifetime experience and I want to share it with you. Front row seats right up close to the action. You'll smell the sweat. Boy, I wish you didn't have to work.

BEN
I don't... I can't... this is too important... Jonathan can cover for me. This means too much to me. To us.

ANDIE
That's how I feel.

EXT: SHEA STADIUM

The marquee reads in huge letters CELINE DION'S WORLD WIDE TOUR.

TILT DOWN: A weeping Andie leads a traumatized Ben out of the stadium with the rest of the crowd. We see they are both wearing Celine Dion t-shirts and "I love you" Celine buttons.

INT: ANDIE'S APARTMENT - LATER THAT NIGHT

As they enter Andie's apartment she whispers sexily to him.

ANDIE
Make yourself comfortable... I've got another surprise for you...

She gives him a peck on the cheek and goes off to her bedroom. Ben still shaken from the Celine experience forces a weak smile. He wanders over to the in front of the TV. He eyes the blank screen longingly. Ben notices a leather-bound tome placed in the center of the table coffee table in front of him. Curious he flips it open. Ben's eyes widen he starts frantically flipping through the pages.

ANGLE ON: The moment out of THE SHINING but instead of "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy," He sees that Andie has filled the book practicing her signature as Mrs. Benjamin Barry, Mrs. Benjamin Barry, Mrs. Benjamin Barry. His eyes widen.

ANDIE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
I did something kind of wacky.

Ben slams the book closed.

BEN
Oh?

ANDIE
Yeah. I used photo-shop at work to make a composite of our faces to see...to see what our kids would look like.

Andie is sitting on the couch with a photo album in her lap. She indicates for Ben to sit down next to her.

BEN
Could I possibly watch Knick's highlights for just like two minutes... maybe... please?

ANDIE
(haltingly)
You don't want to see our children.

BEN
(snaps)
We don't have children!

Andie starts to sob.

BEN (CONT'D)
(continuing)
I'm sorry... I'm sorry... I didn't mean to...
(he sits next to her)
Show me the pictures.

ANDIE
(her lip quivering)
You don't want see them.

BEN
Yes... Yes I do... Please?

ANDIE
Really?

BEN
Really.

She wipes away the tears. And shows Ben a composite photograph.

ANDIE
This is Benjamin Jr...
(she turns the page)
And here's little Andie, at her high school graduation. Frankly, little Andie is mostly me.

BEN
Wow our kids are really attractive.

ANDIE
Aren't they?

As if humoring a psycho, Ben nods in agreement.

BEN
Would you excuse me for a second? I just want to freshen up.

ANDIE
Hurry back... I get lonely without my little Benny bear.

INT: BATHROOM DOOR

Ben appraises himself for a moment in the mirror. Something catches his eye in the reflection. He notices a box conspicuously displayed: HOME PREGNANCY TEST. Ben begins to hyperventilate, he splashes cold water on his face, begins to feel nauseated.

ANDIE (O.S.)
Are you all right in there?

INT: LIVING ROOM

Ben staggers into the room.

BEN
Andie? Is there something you want to tell me?

Andie is on the floor, practising splits in front of the television.

ANDIE
Look, Ben. Did you know I was this limber?

The phone starts ringing.

ANDIE
(distracted by the T.V.)
Honey bear could you get that. Lifetime is profiling Valerie Bertinelli.

Ben picks up the phone still staring at Andie.

BEN (ON PHONE)
Yeah... Oh hi mom... I'm fine...
(suddenly occurs to) him)
Mom. Why are you calling me at Andie's house?
(to Andie)
Why is my mother calling me here?

ANDIE
Are you sure it's for you?

Andie reaches out and Ben hands her the phone.

ANDIE
(chirpily picks up the phone)
Hi Glenda. I know I am. Yes Eddie really was a handsome groom. Yes I believe Van Halen is a Dutch name. Uhuh. Buh-bye.

BEN
My mother calls you at home?

ANDIE
Only when there's really something juicy on.

INT: ANDIE'S BEDROOM

Ben, his eyes wide open. Andie slumbering peacefully has managed to spoon him to the edge of the bed. Ben gently extricates himself from her clutches, grabs his clothes and shoes, and tip toes out of the bedroom.

After a moment, we HEAR the front door close.

Andie's eyes pop open.

ANDIE
(smiles to herself)
Victory!

INT: THAYER'S BEDROOM NIGHT

Thayer, on the phone, sits up in his bed rubbing his eyes. His wife, ROWAN, is asleep beside him.

THAYER (ON PHONE)
Jeezus, Ben. It's four in the morning. Where are you?

INT. BEN'S APARTMENT THAT MOMENT

INTERCUT AS NECESSARY

BEN (ON PHONE)
Home. I just snuck out of her place. I can't take it any more.

THAYER (ON PHONE)
Of course you can. Five more days, you're half way home. You've survived a Celine Dion concert. It can't get worse than that. Worse than that doesn't exist.

BEN (ON PHONE)
She and my mother talk on the phone, Jonathan. They chat about Valerie Bertinelli.

THAYER (ON PHONE)
One day at a time. We're all in this together. Saturday's my birthday party. Bring her here. It'll be easy. Jonathan will be here, Rowan will be here, I'll be here. We'll take shifts.

BEN (ON PHONE)
What if she won't come? I mean, I just ditched her at four a.m. What if I can't get her back?

THAYER
You better think of something.

EXT. ZABAR'S DAY *

Andie walks down the street with Jeannie and Michelle, after their usual breakfast. * *

ANDIE
(jubilant)
He slipped out the back, Jack. Four in the morning. Gone. All that's left of him is a sock.

JEANNIE
And it only took you five days. Congratulations.

MICHELLE
On nothing.

Andie looks where Michelle is looking:

JUST UP AHEAD, Ben waits for Andie on his motorcycle.

ANDIE
Shit! This isn't possible!

MICHELLE
(depressed)
Tell me about it.

Andie walks up to Ben.

ANDIE
(huffy)
What are you doing here?

BEN
I was thinking - how are you going to write your "On the Road Across America" piece unless you learn how to drive?

ANDIE
(stunned)
What?

BEN
(grins)
Hop on.

This is too good. Andie is thrilled in spite of herself. She hops on the back of Ben's motorcycle and they take off.

Jeannie and Michelle watch them go.

JEANNIE
Drama drama...

MICHELLE
Oh shut up.

EXT. BEACH AT CONY ISLAND DAY *

MONTAGE - THE MOTORCYCLE RIDING LESSON

The motorcycle riding lesson has begun. Ben and Andie have the wind-swept beach mostly to themselves. We see the lesson in a series of cuts, with MUSIC:

-Andie is in front. Ben sits astride behind her. The scene is full of the sexual energy that such proximity brings.

BEN
Okay - let the clutch out slowly...

Andie POPS the clutch and lurches forward, sending Ben FLYING OFF THE BACK onto the sand.

- Andie stands on the bike, listening to Ben's instructions. The bike starts to tip and Andie can't stop it, falling over in slow motion until she does a face plant.

-Moving at last. Andie increases her speed. They're flying along the beach.

She screams with delight - but panics when it appears they are headed straight towards some beach combers. Andie over-steers, and sends the bike towards the water. Ben struggles for control of the bike, but of course, in they go. A wave knocks them over. They stand up, soaking wet.

CUT TO:

INT. GARAGE DAY

79 The bike is up on the blocks, dripping wet and trailing seaweed. Ben tries not to look too upset. 79

ANDIE
I'm really sorry, Ben. You have a right to be furious. If you don't want to see me anymore...

BEN
No, no, no. It's okay. They're built to withstand...
(pulling something out of the tail pipe)
...jellyfish.

Andie looks at Ben in amazement. Will *nothing* shake this guy?

ANDIE
You know what we need after a day like today? Some serenity.

CUT TO:

INT: DANCE STUDIO *

Bo-bo Buddhism... Ben and Andie sit on the floor lotus style surrounded by a group of affluent young uptowners... The rotund REGGIE, who bears a striking resemblance to Jabba the Hut and sounds like Stuart Smalley, leads them all through a chant of...

CLASS
Namio rhenga kyoh... Namio rhenga kyoh... Namio rhenga kyoh...

Ben completely uncomfortable in the lotus position sneaks a peek at Andie, her eyes are clenched shut and she has the joyful beatific expression of a true believer. Reggie opens his eyes as though he's come back from some distant astral plane and is surprised to find all these people sitting in front of him.

REGGIE
Hello!

CLASS
(puss 'n' boots)
Hello, Reggie...

REGGIE
Before we close... any testimonials?
(A lithe man raises) his hand)
Yes, Chad.

LITHE MAN
People in this class know that I have been diligently chanting for my break through role in legitimate theatre. People doubt us, Reggie.

REGGIE
People do.

LITHE MAN
Well the call came today... I'm understudying Mr. Tony Danze in Bull Durham the musical.

The class applauds.

REGGIE
(he gestures toward Ben)
Now you are?

BEN
Ben.

CLASS
Hello Ben.

REGGIE
Benjamin?

BEN
Yes, Reggie?

REGGIE
I don't like you.

BEN
I'm sorry to hear that.

REGGIE
(beat)
I love you.

Andie gives Ben a "isn't that sweet look."

REGGIE (CONT'D)
(continuing)
Sit with that. Live with it for a while. Wear it like a frock. See where it takes you.

BEN
Will do, Reggie.

REGGIE
I'd like to end today's session by having everybody turn to the person next to you, look deep into their eyes and say, "You are the extension of all my love in the universe..."

Ben and Andie simultaneously turn away from each other.

Angle on Ben as he turns away desperately trying not to crack up.

Angle on Andie as she turns away also fighting back the giggles.

BEN/ANDIE
You are the extension of all my love in the universe...

REGGIE
Now turn to your partners and simply say, "I love you."

Ben and Andie nervously look into each others eyes.

REGGIE (CONT'D)
(continuing)
Come on. Open yourselves up people.

BEN/ANDIE
I love you.

They both immediately turn away as soon as they've finished the phrase.

EXT: STUDIO - LATER THAT DAY

Ben and Andie exit. They're both feeling a bit vulnerable and exposed after their session.

BEN
I can walk with you if you want...

ANDIE
I'm going... ah... uptown actually...

BEN
Right well I'll... ah... Bye.

ANDIE
Bye...

They stiffly touch cheeks and then walk off in opposite directions.

INT: ANDIE'S CUBICLE

On the ticker out the window: DEFENSIVE LAPSE SINKS NEW YORK:

KNICKS TRAIL 2-1.

Andie anxiously hovers over Jeannie as she reads from the computer.

ANDIE
It's just a beginning. It's not very funny yet and it's a little long.

Jeannie finishes reading.

JEANNIE
(breaking it to her)
It's War and Peace without the Russians.

ANDIE
(groans)
I knew it. This piece is going to be a disaster. He's not doing what he's supposed to do! It's messing everything up!

They look up to see Lilly standing at the doorway to Andie's cubicle.

LILLY
How's your article coming along Sweetie?

ANDIE
Oh fabulously Lilly.

LILLY
That's good because we're closing this week.

ANDIE
I'm going to end it tonight. He's invited me to a party with all of his friends.

LILLY
I like it. A grand finale.

INT. ANDIE'S BEDROOM NIGHT

Andie rushes about putting the final touches on her outfit. She calls out to Ben, who is O.S. in the living room.

ANDIE
(calling out)
I'll be just another minute, okay Ben?

Still no answer. Andie hops around the corner pulling on her high heel.

ANDIE
(calling out)
If you'd like to listen to Celine while you wait, the CDs are...

Andie sees Ben in the living room and stops short.

He's reading Composure Magazine. The issue with the advance blurb in it. Andie pales.

BEN
Oh my god.

Ben puts the magazine down. He faces Andie, shaken.

BEN
I can't believe what I just read in here. Jesus, Andie, is this true?

Andie pales.

BEN
Do women really put hemorrhoid cream on their faces to hide their wrinkles?

Andie exhales. Then gets back with the plan.

ANDIE
I do. I've got some on now. Why? Does that turn you off?

BEN
(quickly)
No - I think that's great.

ANDIE
Okay then - I'll be just a minute.

She grabs the magazine and walks off, flushed from her close call.

INT. JONATHAN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

A banner hangs from the door that reads "A Fete Worse than Death."

Ben and Andie walk in to a party that's in full swing crammed with boisterous drunks.

ANDIE
I hope your friends like me.

Ben looks over at her and swallows hard.

BEN
Just be yourself.

Rowan is tying a kids' birthday hat on Jonathan's head. He's a bit drunk.

JONATHAN
Benjamin!

BEN
(hugging his friend)
Hey, happy birthday, man! Hi, Rowan.

Andie grabs a Kleenex from her purse. Holds it to Ben's nose.

ANDIE
Blow.

BEN
(protesting)
Andie-

ANDIE
(as if to a child)
Nobody likes a Mr. Sniffles. Now come on and blow stuffyhead... I can always tell when he's coming down with something. It's a sixth sense I have...

She's obviously not going to remove the tissue from his face until he blows. So he does.

ANDIE
Good boy.

BEN
Let's find the bar I need a drink.

ANDIE
You "need a drink" or you want a drink?

BEN
What's the difference?

ANDIE
If you don't know then we're in big trouble.

BEN
What?

ANDIE
If you need to medicate yourself with booze go ahead. Get loaded!

BEN
Who's loaded? I haven't even had a drink yet.

ANDIE
Do what you want. But mister, I am not marrying an alcoholic. I don't need that hell.

Ben is starting to simmer. Thayer comes to the rescue, taking Andie's arm.

THAYER
Andie, I'm dying to show you Jonathan's new kitchen. Rowan's wild for it, right Rowan? It's all New York blue stone, imported from...New York.

Andie walks off with Thayer.

JONATHAN
(soothingly, to Ben)
Take a deep breath.

Jonathan leads Ben toward the bar when he overhears...

ANDIE
Do you guys think Ben will ever make partner?

Ben turns to see Andie in a clutch of partygoers that includes Spears and Green.

BEN
Jesus Andie!

ANDIE
What? I'm just asking because it costs a bloody fortune to live well in this city especially if you want a summer house in the Hamptons. And I do.

SPEARS
Absolutely.

Green weighs in.

GREEN
Here, here...

All the girls clink their glasses. Big smiles all around. Ben can't wait to get Andie away from Spears and Green. He looks desperately around the room.

BEN
Hey! There's Clifford! Andie - let me introduce you to Clifford *over there*.

He tries to drag her away but she resists.

ANDIE
You just want to get me away from the hors d'oevres. Ben thinks I'm fat.

BEN
What?

SPEARS
(giving Ben a dirty look)
You're a stick.

ANDIE
Ben thinks I'm a big fat pig!

BEN
What is wrong with you?

ANDIE
What's wrong with me is that from the moment we walked in here you've been staring at that woman's breasts.

She indicates Green. Ben goes crimson.

BEN
No I haven't.

SPEARS AND GREEN
Yes you have.

ANDIE
See? And you want to make me think I'm just imagining it. You want to make me think I'm just a paranoid psychotic with an overactive imagination.

JONATHAN
You're not saying that. Are you Ben?

THAYER
He's not saying that.

ANDIE
He is! Look Ben if you want to sleep with this pretty girl just say so. Just say, Andie I want to nail this chick and I'll understand.

She takes a deep breath, her eyes fill with crocodile tears.

ANDIE
I should go.

She does. Spears and Green are grinning. Ben looks over at Jonathan and Thayer. They both have accusatory expressions on their faces.

BEN
I didn't do anything.

Ben takes off in pursuit of Andie. As he gets close she whirls around on him.

ANDIE
(she shrieks)
Get your hands off of me! I said get your hands off of me!

Everybody at the party turns to look at Ben who smiles weakly holding up his hands. Andie storms off.

BEN
Didn't touch her. Didn't touch her.

He goes after her.

Spears and Green chuckle to themselves.

INT. FOYER - CONTINUOUS

Ben catches the elevator door just as it's about to close.

BEN
I can't take this anymore, I just can't.

ANDIE
(innocently)
Can't take what Ben?

BEN
What have I ever done to you?

Behind Ben, Spears and Green enter the hallway to eavesdrop.

ANDIE
Look, you told me to be myself tonight, so I was. I guess maybe you just don't like me the way I am, after all.

BEN
The way you are? Do you have any idea how you are?
(ranting)
You're up, you're down, you're here, you're there...you're like a freaking one woman circus. You're exhausting me. I haven't had a night's sleep since I met you. You've got your shit all over my apartment and now you tell my friends I should make partner because you want a house in the Hamptons? You're a hurricane. You're a tornado. You're Armageddon!!!

ANDIE
So I guess this means we're over?

BEN
We are so over.

ANDIE
Fine.

As the doors close...

INT: ELEVATOR

Andie has a big smile on her face.

ANDIE
Finally.

It's over. We watch as that fact settles in, and the smile starts to fade from Andie's face.

INT: CORRIDOR

BEN
Done.

Jonathan and Thayer have followed Ben out.

JONATHAN
No! Four more days Ben. You are so close... You can do it.

THAYER
Couples therapy.

BEN
What!?!

THAYER
Whenever Rowan wants to divorce me I suggest couples therapy. That'll buy you at least four days.

BEN
No, don't make me...

JONATHAN
Ben - look at Spears and Green.

Ben turns to find Spears and Green celebrating in the hallway, high-fiving each other. He can't stand it.

BEN
Couples therapy!

Ben pounds his head into the wall and then takes off for the stairs.

INT. JONATHAN'S LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

The elevator doors open.

BEN
Forgive me, Muffin?

Andie is shocked to see Ben standing there out of breath. She vamps.

ANDIE
There's a term for people like you Benjamin Barry... Rageaholic.

BEN
Yes I know. I need help... I do. Please give me another chance.

ANDIE
I just don't think we have much of a future together.

BEN
Just one more shot.
(searching)
Maybe couples therapy?

ANDIE
(stunned)
What? Wake up! When are you going to realize this relationship is doomed!

Desperate to sway her, Ben breaks into song, making a medley out of Andie's favorite "chick songs". He impersonates the artists...

BEN
(singing "India", impersonating Alanis Morisette's)
Please Andie, listen to me...give me another chance...(etc.)

Andie watches this stunning display of abject desperation until she can't take it any more.

ANDIE
Okay! Stop! You win! Couples therapy.

BEN
Thank you, thank you.

ANDIE
We'll probably have to go five times a week to begin with...

BEN
Whatever it takes.

EXT. APT. DOOR - NEXT AFTERNOON *

Andie and Ben stand out in front of the door. Ben smiles like an idiot as Andie holds his hand reassuringly.

ANDIE
(reassuring)
Composure did an article on this therapist... She's supposed to work wonders with couples like us...

She rings the doorbell.

Jeannie opens the door in a white kaftan. Andie rolls her eyes....

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jeannie has done her best to make the place look like an office. The couch and chairs have been arranged in a semicircle.

JEANNIE
Well, let's get started.

Ben sits down on the couch and Andie joins him.

JEANNIE
So tell me what's going on? How long have you two been seeing each other?

ANDIE
Seven days.

JEANNIE
Seven days...Interesting.

BEN
(to Andie)
Maybe it's too soon for a therapist.

ANDIE
I know seven days isn't like a lifetime or anything-

BEN
It's like a week.

ANDIE
Did you hear that tone? How could we not have a gulf with a tone like that?

JEANNIE
Do you feel you have a gulf, Ben?

BEN
Well, I've been under a lot of pressure at work.

ANDIE
(huffing)
It's always the pressure at work.

JEANNIE
Andie, don't interrupt Ben, please.

ANDIE
(glaring at Jeannie)
Sorry.

BEN
But I don't want my stress to effect our relationship. I'm willing to change. I want to make this relationship work at any cost.

Jeannie nods in that sympathetic way shrinks have.

JEANNIE
(turning to Andie)
Andie, are you hearing Ben?

ANDIE
I'm sitting here, aren't I?

JEANNIE
It sounds like he's really willing to make an effort here.

ANDIE
You are totally taking his side!

JEANNIE
I feel your anger, Andie. You think I'm taking Ben's side.

ANDIE
Isn't that what I just said?

BEN
(to Jeannie)
She can get a little over-excited sometimes.

JEANNIE
A little? She's a bitch on wheels.
(quickly)
I mean, yes, I understand.

ANDIE
Why are we here? We don't belong together. We fight constantly.

BEN
I want to resolve that. I know everything is my fault. It's the stress.

JEANNIE
Ben - the stress - do you think it has anything to do with your father?

BEN
Wow, am I really that transparent?

JEANNIE
I've seen this before. Many times.

Andie rolls her eyes.

ANDIE
I can't believe this! He's flirting with you! Right now! And you're totally falling for it! You are a terrible shrink!
(to Ben)
And you are a pathological flirt...

BEN
Flirt? You've got more than enough personalities to keep me completely occupied.

ANDIE
I try desperately to please him and he goes ballistic. Like when I bought him a dog.

BEN
I like Marv Albert..

ANDIE
Or even something as trivial as talking to his mother.

BEN
You did it behind my back.

JEANNIE
Are you ashamed of Andi, Ben?

BEN
Of course not.

ANDIE
(jumping on this)
Obviously he is. He's ashamed of me. How do you think that makes me feel?

Andie starts to tear up.

BEN
I'm not ashamed of you. You want to talk to my mother, great, talk to my mother. Talk to my father. Talk to my whole family. Let's go out to Staten Island... spend the weekend with them.

JEANNIE
Now that's a positive idea, Ben.

ANDIE
It is?

BEN
Okay fine. Let's do it.

JEANNIE
Okay! Andie?

On Andie's anxious face.

INT: ANDIE'S APARTMENT

Andie's packing a weekend bag. While Jeannie lounges on the couch.

JEANNIE
He's sexy.

ANDIE
Shut up! I can't believe how bogus you were. "That's a positive idea Ben."I'm trying to lose him and there you are egging the relationship on!

JEANNIE
You know, I'm not actually a therapist... therefore I'd be committing no ethical breach by asking Ben out after you dump him.

Andie gives her a withering look.

ANDIE
Where is Staten Island anyway?

Jeannie just shrugs.

EXT. STATEN ISLAND FERRY PORT - NEXT DAY

Ben waits in front of the dingy grey ferry station checking his watch. He's in jeans and his old motorcycle jacket.

ANDIE (O.S.)
There you are.

Andie daintily enters frame dressed to the nines in "It Girl" drag.

ANDIE (CONT'D)
I'm sorry I'm late. Am I dressed appropriately?

BEN
You should be a big, big hit in the hood.

ANDIE
Where do we get tickets?

BEN
The ferry is free... Who'd pay to go to Staten Island?

EXT. WEST BRIGHTON STREET - DAY

American flags dot the front yards of this working class street lined with old Cape Coddish houses.

Ben gallantly walks along side Andie as she takes the short steps that her high stiletto heels permit. The neighborhood kids stop their games and curiously come to watch her make her way down the street. Some of them on scooters roll up to take a closer look. Holly Golightly has come to town.

BEN
Mom, Dad I'm here...

INT: BARRY HOUSE

They enter the front room.

JACK (O.S.)
Bullshit!

BEN
Oh God!

All of sudden his mother comes out from the kitchen carrying a tray laden with full beer mugs and one formula-filled baby bottle. The baby is strapped to her back, papoose style, screaming as loud as he can.

BEN (CONT'D)
(continuing)
Mom this is...

GLENDA
Andie. Hi Andie. Nice to meet you in the flesh.
(to Ben)
See if she needs a change, would you?

Ben gladly undoes the baby and expertly lifts her to his chest.

JACK (O.S.)
Glenda!

GLENDA
(gruffly)
Coming...

Glenda stalks off. Ben takes the baby's foot and starts to "devour" it, making hungry wolf sounds. The baby starts laughing.

BEN
(to Andie)
This is my niece, Katie. She likes being devoured by wolves.

Andie takes the other foot and devours it.

ANDIE
Hi Katie. Grrrr. Yum yum yum.

JACK (O.S.)
Bullshit!

BEN
The whole family suffers from Tourettes.
I hope that's not a problem.
(sniffs baby's butt, suppresses a gag reaction)
Oooo, Katie, you smell just like a rose.
A big, stinky rose.
(to Andie)
We're going to freshen up. Go on in and join the fun.

He gives Andie a "you're on your own," smile and carries his niece away, just as two neighborhood kids go tearing past her squirting water pistols at one another.

Andie looks around and tentatively enters the house. A squirt gun kid briefly uses her as a human shield.

JACK (O.S.)
Bullshit!

Her curiosity piqued, Andie goes off to investigate through the living room. It sounds like a raucous party is going on in back of the house. Andie follows the sounds.

INT. GAME ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jack, Glenda, and a wizened old Slavic man are sitting around a round card table in the midst of a heated game. The old man has just discarded some cards.

JACK
Three kings Uncle Arnold?
(Arnold nods)
Three kings??

The old man tries to stare Jack down.

JACK
Dare I say it? Bullshit!

Arnold turns the cards over, revealing one king and two threes. Glenda gives Jack a whack, indicating Andie's presence.

GLENDA
This is Ben's father Jack.
(He waves)
And this is our Uncle Arnold.

JACK
Farts like a howitzer... But he's family, what are ya gonna do?

Arnold flashes his stained dentures.

UNCLE ARNOLD
Intestinal complications.

Arnold stands and gallantly offers Andie his seat and a hand of cards.

JACK
Take a seat young lady. The game is Bullshit. You're just in time for the lightening round...

ANDIE
I don't know if I know how to play.

JACK
You'll figure it out.

Jack discards two cards.

JACK (CONT'D)
(continuing)
Two aces.

Andie looks at her hand. She has three aces.

ANDIE
(timidly)
Bullshit?

JACK
I'm sorry I didn't quite catch...

ANDIE
(a bit louder)
Bullshit!

JACK
(grinning)
What?

Ben enters the game room just as a beaming Andie shouts.

ANDIE
Bullshit!

JACK
You see?

Jack turns over his cards. He was bluffing. Ben hands the baby to Arnold and sits down at the table. His father gives him half of Andie's hand.

JACK (CONT'D)
(continuing)
Two Queens.

Ben stares at his Father's face. Jack puts on his best stone poker face.

BEN
(evenly)
Bullshit.

Jack turns his cards over to reveal a nine and a three. He sheepishly gathers up the cards on the table.

BEN (CONT'D)
(continuing; discards)
Three kings...

ANDIE
Please... Bullshit.

BEN
Take a look at the scoreboard behind you...

Andie does and sees Ben's name at the top with some astronomical number next to it. Then Ben turns over his cards: three kings.

BEN (CONT'D)
Princess, I am the Michael Jordan of Bullshit.

ANDIE
You must be very proud.

BEN
(very cocky)
You see it's all about being able to read people.

GLENDA
One ace...

Without even looking at his mother...

BEN
Bullshit.

Glenda turns over her card and, of course, he was right it's not an ace.

INT. GAME ROOM - LATER - DAY

There is a competitive tension to the game now. Ben discards two cards.

BEN
Two threes...

Andie looks at her own hand and sees one three. Furtively, she glances over at Jack who rubs his eye under his spectacles bringing his forefinger and thumb together to form a zero.

She then glances over at Glenda who clutches her hand in such a way that her top two fingers are separated to form a two.

ANDIE
(sweetly)
Bullshit.

Peeved beyond belief Ben turns his cards over. She got him.

ANDIE
Gosh Sparky, that's seven in a row.

BEN
Even the best have losing streaks.

GLENDA
I think that somebody has met their match.

ANDIE
It's all about reading people...

Ben fumes. Then he notices complicit little smiles forming on the mouths of his parents.

BEN
You cheated!

GLENDA
Like I said - you met your match.

BEN
Betrayed by my own parents!

Everybody starts cracking up. Glenda gives her son a big smooch. Andie watches, a wistful look on her face. Glenda goes to the wall and adds Andie's name to the ancient family scoreboard.

GLENDA
You know, we're expecting you back, Andie. This is his lowest score since his tonsillectomy and we're all thrilled.

ANDIE
Why? Were all the rest of his girls bullshit losers?

GLENDA
What girlfriends? You're the first girl he's ever brought home.

Glenda laughs and gives Andie a warm hug.

EXT: BACKYARD

Andie wanders out into the backyard. We can still here the raucous laughing of the Barry clan from inside the house.

At the back of the yard Andie spies an old silver motorcycle from the fifties leaning up against the door of a garage that was converted from a carriage house. Curious she wanders over to it.

INT: GARAGE

Shafts of light illuminate the dusty air of the garage. Andie tentatively enters. All around and hanging from above are vintage motorcycles in various stages of repair.

BEN (O.S.)
You discovered the family secret.

ANDIE
These are really beautiful.

BEN
When I was fourteen, I was rummaging through the garage... I found this old battered '64 Triumph. My Dad bought it cheap right when he got out of the service. The carburetor was busted or rusted out, the ignition system... It was a mess. But Dad told me that if I could get the parts he'd fix it up for me. No problem. I'll hit a couple junkyards, strip some old Triumphs and be good to go in a week.

He shakes his head as he remembers.

ANDIE
No?

BEN
I might as well have been looking for spare parts to a Delorean from Mars. I was ready to give up but my Dad... he wouldn't let me. He gave me the "Nothing worth having in life ever came easy speech," and he meant it. There was no doubt in his mind that I could do it. So I spent the next two years scouring classifieds, writing to dealers in England, saving up money to make long distance phone calls to the company that made 'em.

ANDIE
And you did it.

BEN
By the time I was sixteen I had the sweetest ride in the neighborhood.

ANDIE
Your Dad's a great guy.

BEN
Yeah he is...he may not be rich but what he gave me is worth more than any trust fund.

INT. BATHROOM LATER

Ben shows Andie inside the bathroom. Both of them are grimy from the shed. It's a cramped space. Andie sits on the toilet seat while Ben turns the shower on for her.

BEN
Shower's a bit tricky. Ya gotta crank it all the way up at first.
(he turns it on)
And if someone flushed their toilet in Bayonne, you get scalded. Here we go.
(glances at her)
I'm really sorry about this Andie...

ANDIE
(softly)
What?

BEN
The house...not exactly first class...I know it's not what you're used to.

Her eyes well with tears.

ANDIE
It's not that. I love everything about this house. The smells...the noise.

BEN
That's Uncle Arnold.
(beat)
What's wrong?

ANDIE
You know, from graduating from college with honors, my mother just gave me a peck on the cheek. And on the first day I met her, your mother hugged me - really hugged me - for winning a game of bullshit.

BEN
So smile...hey...hey..don't cry. No crying.
(kisses her forehead)
C'mon gimme a smile, gimme a smile...

She forces a lockjawed smile.

BEN
Oh my God stop smiling that's hideous. You're frightening me.

Andie laughs. Ben leans in and tenderly kisses her on the lips. Ever so gently he starts to help her out of her clothes as he disrobes as well. Like two little kids skinny dipping they both climb into the shower and into each other.

EXT: FERRY - NIGHT

Ben and Andie stand on the bow of the ferry facing Manhattan.

Ben wraps his arms around Andie from behind, protecting her from the chill. The day has done something to them. No words need be spoken - these two are in deep.

EXT. PORT NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Andie and Ben walk away from the ferry. They are full of the magic between them.

ANDIE
Ben - do you realize we've been going out for...

BEN
(interrupting)
Nine days.

ANDIE
Right. Nine days. Longer than I've ever gone out with anyone in my life.

BEN
You're kidding.

ANDIE
I write about relationships in a women's magazine and I've never even had a serious one myself.

Ben takes this in. Andie looks at his face. She can't take it anymore.

ANDIE
Ben. I've got to tell you something.

He stops and looks at her.

ANDIE
I'm guilty of some... game playing.

Ben's own conscience immediately kicks in.

BEN
Who isn't?

ANDIE
I mean with you.

BEN
We all play games. I've been known to play games. Now and then.

The air is thick.

ANDIE
Should we talk about this?

BEN
I don't know. Would we have to go back to that therapist?

ANDIE
(uncomfortable laugh)
No. Let's let it go.

They keep walking in an uncomfortable silence, each one afraid to go further.

BEN
Listen - I want to ask you something. Tomorrow night there's a party at my boss' place. It's for that Diamond account I was telling you about. It's a long story, but it would help me - make a good impression - if you came with me. As my girlfriend.

Andie looks at him.

ANDIE
Are you calling me your girlfriend?

BEN
Are you my girlfriend?

ANDIE
Tomorrow will be the tenth day we've been going out.
(beat)
Maybe...after that...we'll know.

Ben nods.

ANDIE
I think..I'll just go home tonight.

They look at each other, madly, madly in love. Unable to say so. Too afraid to kiss.

BEN
Okay. Tomorrow, then.

ANDIE
Tomorrow.

They part ways.

INT. MICHELLE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

CLOSE ON: a glittering little "diamond" rhinestone.

PULL BACK TO FIND: that Michelle is gluing the paste gem to her toenail. She's on the phone to Andie.

MICHELLE (ON PHONE)
So. The guy you've set out to lose in ten days is madly in love with you on day nine. I should be keeling over from this blow to my ego, but oddly, I'm feeling rather fabulous today. I don't even remember Mike's name.
(studies her toe work)
And how are you?

CUT TO:

INT. ANDIE'S APARTMENT THAT MOMENT

Andie is on the phone to Michelle. She is eating pizza and watching the Knicks game on TV.

ANDIE (ON PHONE)
Terrible. I'm a despicable, lying, low-down...

CUT TO:

INT: BEN'S - LATER THAT NIGHT

BEN (ON PHONE)
....no-good, manipulative dick. What am I doing?

Ben is on the phone to Jonathan. Like Andie, he is watching the Knicks game and eating pizza.

BEN (ON PHONE)
You should have seen the look on her face when we left each other tonight. It was heart-breaking. Underneath that tiara, she is such a sweet girl.

CUT TO:

INT. JONATHAN'S APARTMENT THAT MOMENT

Jonathan talks to Ben on the phone.

JONATHAN (ON PHONE)
You know, if you like her, Ben, you're not legally obligated to dump her after tomorrow.

CUT TO:

INT. ANDIE'S APARTMENT THAT MOMENT

ANDIE (ON PHONE)
I know. But what about the article? Maybe I shouldn't write it.

CUT TO:

INT MICHELLE'S APARTMENT THAT MOMENT

MICHELLE (ON PHONE)
You could back out. But at this point, Lilly would be furious.

CUT TO:

INT. BEN'S THAT MOMENT

Ben reacts to a play in the game.

BEN
Call the charge on Duncan!

CUT TO:

INT. ANDIE'S APARTMENT THAT MOMENT

Andie reacts to the same play.

ANDIE
God, that chaps my ass!
(continuing, to Michelle on phone)
Anyway, I'm meeting him at a party tomorrow night at his boss' house. He's trying to get some big account. Something about getting women to go out and buy themselves diamonds.

Michelle examines her rhinestone studded toes.

MICHELLE (ON PHONE)
(intrigued)
Now there's a thought.

ANDIE (ON PHONE)
I think I helped him a little with the wording.

CUT TO:

INT. BEN'S APARTMENT THAT MOMENT

BEN (ON PHONE)
She's smart, you know? She helped me with the wording on the diamond thing. And when she's not totally out of her mind, she's almost...unbearably great.

JONATHAN (O.S., ON PHONE)
You're in deep, my friend. But don't get distracted.

CUT TO:

INT. ANDIE'S APARTMENT THAT MOMENT

MICHELLE (O.S., ON PHONE)
Keep your eye on the prize. Get some sleep, okay?

ANDIE (ON PHONE)
Okay.

CUT TO:

INT. BEN'S APARTMENT THAT MOMENT

BEN (ON PHONE)
Okay. Thanks. Good night.

CUT TO:

INT. ANDIE'S APARTMENT/BEN'S APARTMENT THAT MOMENT

SPLIT-SCREEN

ANDIE (ON PHONE)
Good night.

We watch Andie and Ben hang up simultaneously in their separate apartments. Simultaneously, they wipe pizza crust from their faces. Something happens in the game that makes them groan in unison.

They hunker down with their pillows, fending off their loneliness with the game they both love. *

FADE OUT. *

FADE UP *

EXT. ANDIE'S APARTMENT NIGHT *

CLOSE ON: the shiny black door of a town car opening. *

Ben steps out, wearing a tux as naturally as if he were born in one. He checks his watch, anxious about the time, and is about to go inside and get Andie... * * *

When she steps out of the elevator and walks out onto the street. * *

She takes his breath away. She couldn't be more spectacular. *

BEN
They'd have to make up a new word to describe how beautiful you are tonight.

Andie smiles.

ANDIE
Nervous?

BEN
No.

ANDIE
Really?

BEN
No.

ANDIE
You look great, Sparky. It's going to be a good night for you.

BEN
We better get going...

Just then Andie's cell phone rings. She checks the number and realizes she better answer.

ANDIE
(into cell phone)
Hello? Yes. I understand. I'll get there as soon as I can.

BEN
Everything alright?

ANDIE
(uncomfortable)
I have to make a detour. Why don't you go on without me? I'll meet you there.

BEN
Wait - what is it?

ANDIE
It's nothing. I mean, it's no one.
(on his look)
It's my mother.

BEN
I'm coming with you.

INT. BAR AT THE CARLYSLE HOTEL NIGHT

A beautiful fifty year old woman of obvious class is slumped at the bar. She is obviously very drunk.

A gentle hand touches her shoulder.

ANDIE
Mom.
(gentle shake)
Mom.

COLETTE, Andie's Mom, comes to. She looks up at Andie, recognizing her after a beat.

COLETTE
Oh hi, honey. You look so beautiful. Jimmy, don't I have a beautiful daughter?

JIMMY THE BARTENDER
You certainly do, Colette.

AT A DISTANCE, Ben watches Andie with her mother, compassion in his eyes.

ANDIE
(tenderly)
Let's go up, Mom. I'll make you a bath.

COLETTE
Why? I'm happy here. Why don't you sit down and...

ANDIE
I'll use those lavender bubbles you like. It'll be nice.

Colette allows Andie to coax her up.

ANDIE
(nodding to the bartenders)
Thanks, Jimmy. Tony.

TONY
Not at all, Andie.

Ben follows them out.

INT. COLETTE'S BATHROOM NIGHT

CLOSE ON: Andie pours bubble bath into the hot stream of water.

INT. COLETTE'S APARTMENT THAT MOMENT

Colette's apartment at the Carlyle is expensively furnished in exquisite taste.

Ben studies the oil paintings, runs his hand along the antique mahogany buffet, takes in the stunning view of Manhattan through the velvet-framed windows.

Andie enters. Ben turns around.

BEN
How is she?

ANDIE
Taking a bath. Getting clean. And sober.
(on his look)
Don't worry, she'll be fine.

Ben nods. An awkward moment.

BEN
This is a nice place. Do you mind if I ask - what does your father do?

ANDIE
Daddy? He flies around the world. Finances new technologies. Pays alimony.

BEN
Ah. When did they...?

ANDIE
I was fifteen. Ever since then my Mom's life has been one long party. Party, party, party.

BEN
What about for you?

ANDIE
I clean up after the party.

Andie grabs her purse. She smiles at him, brushing aside the pain.

ANDIE
We're late, right? Let's go.

INT. WARREN'S PENTHOUSE/TRUMP TOWER NIGHT

FADE UP: A plethora of sparkling DIAMONDS fill the frame.

PULL BACK TO FIND: That the diamonds are sugar crystals encrusting an enormous, fabulous CAKE.

We're at Warren's Penthouse, and THE PARTY is in full swing. No expense has been spared to dazzle the client: cocktails come in crystal glasses with "diamond" topped swizzle sticks; "diamond" boutonnieres adorn the lapels of the snazzy JAZZ COMBO; chandeliers drip with extra shine; and the outdoor terrace sparkles with myriads of tiny lights, backed by the additional glitter provided by the city skyline.

And then there's the WOMEN. Every female attendee, born gorgeous or not, looks stunning tonight. There is a large CRYSTAL BOWL filled with RHINESTONE JEWELRY.

Giddy party guests plunge their hands into it, pulling out "diamond" jewelry to dangle on dainty wrists, kiss earlobes, and circle throats...and every woman is crowned with the party favor, the IMITATION"DIAMOND"-STUDDED TIARA we've seen before.

CAMERA FOLLOWS one wearer of the imitation tiara through the festive crowd until we find some people we know: Warren, Spears and Green. They are talking to the guests of honor, PETER and ANNE DELAUER, two smashing septuagenarians from South Africa. Mrs. DeLauer looks regal in her authentic diamond tiara, the one after which the others are modeled.

MRS. DELAUER
(to her husband)
Isn't it flattering, dear? I had no idea when they asked me to wear my tiara that they were having it copied for all the ladies. It's a lovely surprise.

MR. DELAUER
Indeed it is.

SPEARS
It's a beautiful design. And it's fascinating to see what it does to a woman when she wears it -- even just a replica -- it's transforming.

GREEN
And that's what we want our campaign to communicate -- that a woman can transform herself with a diamond.

MR. DELAUER
I couldn't agree more. Look at all the women in this room. It's an embarrassment of beauties.

WARREN
(to the Delauers)
If you'll allow me, I'd like to introduce you around.

Warren walks off with the clients.

That's when Green turns and notices:

BEN AND ANDIE entering the room. Surprised, she nudges Spears. Spears is equally shocked to see them together.

SPEARS
But I thought...

GREEN
Chalk one up for couple's therapy.

They walk up to Ben and Andie, full of curiosity.

GREEN
Benny-boy. You look dashing.
(to Andie)
And you look ravishing. Nice to see you again, Andie.

ANDIE
And you.

SPEARS
Where's your tiara, doll?

ANDIE
What tiara?

BEN
They're fitting them on the ladies out on the terrace. Go frost yourself.

Andie smiles at Ben.

ANDIE
I think I will.

She walks off. Green turns to Ben.

GREEN
Well, you got her here. But the question remains...

SPEARS
Does she or doesn't she?

BEN
(uncomfortable)
I don't know.

Ben turns and walks away, leaving Spears and Green with raised eyebrows.

EXT. ON THE TERRACE NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Andie allows a butler to fit her with a fake tiara, laughing at the silliness of it all. She finds herself a quiet spot against the railing and looks back through the door into the living room, trying to spot Ben.

He is by the buffet, helping a WAITRESS who has spilled her tray. His manner is gentle and reassuring -- he even gets a smile out of the embarrassed server.

Andie's eyes go soft at the sight of this. She stands motionless, barely breathing, as a realization takes hold of her.

IN THE LIVING ROOM --

Warren walks up to Spears and Green.

WARREN
Ladies? Do you see what I see?

Spears and Green turn to see what Warren is looking at.

PUSH IN ON ANDIE -- Her eyes fixed on Ben, beautiful, breathing, and clearly in love.

Spears scoffs before she can stop herself.

SPEARS
That's ridiculous. She couldn't possibly...

Green silences Spears with a look. Warren looks amused.

WARREN
Don't be so sure. She "might possibly". I think I'll go find out.

Warren walks out onto the terrace to join Andie. Spears and Green exchange uncomfortable glances.

WITH ANDIE AND WARREN ON THE TERRACE

WARREN
You're Andie, yes? I'm Stephen Warren.

ANDIE
Ben's boss. Thank you for having me in your beautiful home.

FROM INSIDE THE ROOM -- Spears and Green watch Andie and Warren like hawks.

BACK TO ANDIE AND WARREN

WARREN
I understand you've been an inspiration to Ben. In more ways than one. And I must say, you look rather inspired yourself.

ANDIE
Do I?

WARREN
Oh yes. There's not a diamond in the room that sparkles like a woman in love.

ANDIE
(choking on her drink)
In love? I'm not in love.

WARREN
No?

ANDIE
No. Are you kidding? I've only known Ben for ten days and I'm certainly not...

Andie's voice trails off. Warren looks at her closely.

ANDIE
(barely whispers)
I'm certainly not...
(in soft amazement)
...*wait a minute.*

Andie looks at Warren. No more need be said. Warren smiles.

WARREN
Ben is a very lucky man. Excuse me.

Warren walks off towards Ben. Andie, still stunned by her realization, calls after Warren:

ANDIE
You're not going to tell him?

But Warren is already out of earshot. Andie nervously belts her drink.

IN THE LIVING ROOM, Warren walks past Spears and Green...

WARREN
Sorry ladies, you lose.

The girls look astonished - but one glance at Andie confirms the truth. Warren proceeds over to Ben. Green turns to Spears:

GREEN
We haven't lost yet.

WITH WARREN AND BEN --

Warren walks up to Ben and pulls him away from a conversation.

WARREN
Come with me, Ben. I'd like to introduce you to the DeLauers. You should get to know each other before you make the pitch.

BEN
Before I make the pitch?

WARREN
That's right. You won the bet.

BEN
Excuse me?

WARREN
She loves you.

Ben stops in his tracks.

BEN
What?

Across the crowded room, Ben meets eyes with Andie, who still stands vulnerable and alone by the balcony. For a moment, it's as if the entire room stands still as the truth of their feelings passes between them. They hold each other's eyes as long as possible, a secret smile growing between them...

Then Warren breaks the moment, pulling Ben into a conversation with the DeLauers.

WARREN
(to the DeLauers)
Let me introduce you to the man who would be leading our campaign...

ON THE TERRACE

Andie turns to find Green suddenly by her side.

GREEN
I was right. You do look perfect in a tiara.
(Andie smiles)
Mind if we have a little chat? Woman to woman?

They sit down on a bench to talk.

INSIDE THE LIVING ROOM

Poor Ben can see Green talking to Andie, but he can't do anything to stop her. FROM BEN'S POV we watch the damage as it's done: Green talking to Andie; the color leaving Andie's face as she learns about the bet; Green departing, once her work is done. Ben looks anguished.

ON ANDIE, crestfallen after Green's departure. She throws back the rest of her drink.

ANDIE
(bitterly, to herself)
Party party party.

ANGLE ON: Green walking up to Spears, giving her a delicate high-five. Ben catches the exchange and his worst fears are confirmed.

SUDDENLY, in total incongruity to the sad predicament of Andie and Ben, the BAND STRIKES UP, sparklers blaze, and five DANCING GIRLS sashay into the room to the tune of <u>Diamonds Are A Girl's Best Friend</u>. *

The dancers are dressed like secretaries, and as they sing the bawdy song, they strip their jackets off, revealing tight T-shirts that sport the slogan "Frost yourself." The crowd applauds as the dancing girls do their thing.

Andie grabs another drink and belts it back as her foot starts tapping to the tune. Within moments, she is singing along.

ANDIE
(singing to herself)
There may be a time when a lass needs a lawyer, but diamonds are a girl's best friend....

Ben watches Andie as she comes in from the terrace, singing to herself. He is tortured by their predicament, and increasingly alarmed at her behavior.

Andie becomes bolder and joins the line up of dancing girls.

ANDIE
(singing louder)
There may come a time when a hard boiled employer thinks your awful nice.... But get that ice or else no dice...

Now Andie walks up to Ben, performing right in front of him. She takes off her imitation diamond bracelet and hangs it on his ear. Humiliated, Ben plays the good sport and lets her do it.

ANDIE
(singing)
He's your guy when stocks are high but beware when they start to descend....

Andie starts stripping the fake jewels off the other guests and hanging them on Ben. She's putting on such a show that most people are enjoying it and playing along, supplying Andie with their bracelets, necklaces, etc. Even the other dancers have take a cue from Andie and are draping jewelry on Ben. Mr. and Mrs. DeLauer are loving it, thinking the whole thing is a good joke. Warren, Spears and Green go with the flow.

Andie slides a necklace around Ben's neck...

ANDIE
(singing)
Cause that's when those louses go back to their spouses... Diamonds are a girl's best friend.

Andie is now in high gear. She's belting out the song and dancing around like a Busby Berkley screen star. Ben is the only one in the room not enjoying himself.

Andie now dances up to Mrs. DeLauer and lifts the REAL DIAMOND TIARA off her head. The crowd "ooos" and applauds the stately woman's willingness to participate in the fun.

Andie approaches Ben, holding the real diamond tiara for the grand finale.

ANDIE
(belting it out)
Diamonds, diamonds... I don't mean rhinestones. Diamonds are a girl's best friend.
(whispers so only Ben can hear)
And I thought you were mine.

The crowd applauds wildly. Andie is still standing in front of Ben holding the real diamond tiara. Andie turns to address the crowd.

ANDIE
(taking her bow)
Thank you, thank you. You're so kind.
(making a speech)
Ladies and gentlemen, will you join me in a toast?

Everyone willingly grabs a glass. Ben, dripping in diamonds, is about to sink through the floor.

ANDIE
Earlier this evening, Catwoman over there... *
(everyone looks at Green) *
...informed me that Benjamin Barry, this smarmy bastard right here, was pretending to be in love with me so he could trick me into saying I was in love with him... all for his own crass purposes. Well Sparky, I hope that tonight's been a great success for you, and I would like to crown you... *King of Crap*!

Andie is about to place the diamond tiara on Ben's head...

ANDIE
Except that you don't deserve to be king of anything.

And with that, Andie HURLS THE TIARA OUT THE PENTHOUSE WINDOW and OVER THE BALCONY RAILING.

GASP! Screams of shock fill the Penthouse.

Andie turns and rushes out.

Warren, Mr. Delauer and others rush to the balcony and look over.

ANGLE ON: THE TIARA SHATTERING INTO PIECES ON THE STREET BELOW.

ON BEN: frozen in the middle of the room, not knowing which way to turn....then running out the door after Andie.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE WARREN'S PENTHOUSE CONTINUOUS

Andie rushes out onto the street and starts trying to hail a cab. Ben rushes out after her.

BEN
Andie! Wait!

ANDIE
Leave me alone, you monster! You immoral, reprehensible, revolting...how could you?

BEN
How could I? You just threw a three million dollar tiara out the window!

ANDIE
What? That room was full of rhinestones, they were all...

Suddenly a DOZEN PARTY GUESTS rush out of the building and into the street, looking for diamonds.

ANDIE
(weakly)
...fake.

The SOUND of screeching brakes reaches their ears.

ANDIE
(anguished)
Oh shit. Shit! What a night, what a...how did this happen? How did any of this happen?

BEN
Andie, please, let me try and explain...

ANDIE
Explain how you lied, how you misled me, how you humiliated me...

BEN
I wish I knew what to say...

GREEN (O.S.)
(friendly)
Let me help.

Green walks up. Spears watches from a few feet away.

GREEN
(friendly, to Andie)
Need a hand down off your high horse, honey? Or can you hop off by yourself?

ANDIE
(edgy)
I don't know what you're talking about.

GREEN
Oh, give it up, sister.
(to Ben)
Benny-boy...it was a two way street. She was using you, too.

BEN
What?

Green hands him Andie's column from the previous month. The blurb for next month's topic is circled in red..."*how to lose a guy*"...

Andie, Green and Spears watch as Ben reads.

BEN
(reads)
How to lose a guy in ten days.
(confused, to Andie)
Help me understand.

ANDIE
It's an article Ben. It's just... something I was working on...it's not serious...

BEN
You mean...you're writing an article about how to get rid of me?

ANDIE
No..no..I mean yes, sort of, but...

BEN
You mean you've been deliberately tormenting me ...this whole time...I've just been a joke?

ANDIE
(pleading)
Ben...no, I...I...

Andie falters. Green turns to Spears.

GREEN
(to Spears)
Help her out.

Spears goes to Andie's side.

SPEARS
(to Andie)
Get off the ropes, doll. Remember, he lied to you, too.

ANDIE
(to Ben)
That's right! What am I feeling sorry for? You lied to me!

BEN
I know, and I'm so ashamed...

GREEN
(counseling Ben)
No you're not. She used you for an article.

BEN
(to Andie)
And I can't believe you did that!

ANDIE
(to Spears and Green)
Who are you two? Leave us alone and go fuck yourselves! *

Spears and Green look at each other like that might be a good idea. They shrug and walk off together.

Andie and Ben face each other alone. When they continue, their tone is calmer, and sadder.

BEN
Andie - what have we done?

ANDIE
I tried to tell you.

BEN
So did I.

Silence.

BEN
Well, at least you got the job done.
(holds the article up)
You wanted to lose a guy in ten days? Congratulations. You just lost him.

Andie succeeds in hailing her cab.

ANDIE
No I didn't. You can't lose someone you never had. There was nothing here to lose.

She gets in the cab. It drives away.

Hold on Ben, watching her disappear.

FADE OUT.

FADE UP

INT. COMPOSURE MAGAZINE - LILLY'S OFFICE DAY

Jeannie, Michelle, Lori and other staff members are gathered around in Lilly's office as before.

LORI
And I was lying there awake and it just hit me, like a thunderbolt: *hair is dead.* No like literally, hair is totally dead. People are afraid to talk about it. They're ashamed of what's in their brushes. But I'd like to bring it out of the dark. Do an expose.

JEANNIE
Something upbeat.

LORI
Right.

Lilly squints at Lori like she's contemplating firing her. Then she turns her attention to Jeannie.

LILLY
Jeannie: "75 Ways to Please a Man in Bed." How's it going?

JEANNIE
I'm almost done. I'm on number 70.
(checks her notes)
"Surprise him with a third hand."

The women look at her.

LILLY
How does one do that?

JEANNIE
It's not too hard, actually. You fill a glove with water; freeze it; attach it to your hair band; put that around your knee. Give a little kick at the appropriate moment...

Lilly is getting a headache. She turns to Michelle.

LILLY
Michelle?

MICHELLE
I want to write about <u>this</u>.

Michelle shows what's around her neck: a beautiful DIAMOND PENDANT. All the women "ooo" and "ahhh".

LILLY
Fabulous. Who's the fella?

MICHELLE
I am.

LILLY
What do you mean?

MICHELLE
I got it for myself. Why wait around for a guy to give you a diamond? *Take control.*

LILLY
Now <u>that's</u> a cover story. Speaking of which, where is Andie?

Jeannie and Michelle trade glances.

MICHELLE
(covering)
Well, she's...

JEANNIE
...writing!

Lilly looks at Jeannie with hawk eyes.

JEANNIE
("sincere")
She stayed home to write because she's on a roll.

CUT TO:

INT. COLETTE'S APARTMENT THAT MOMENT *

Andie sobs into a ball of Kleenex at her mother's kitchen table. A giant spread from the deli is on the table before them.

ANDIE
There was a person there, a real person with feelings right in front of me, but I couldn't stop myself. The column felt so important to me. I couldn't let go of it. Why?

COLETTE
(without self pity)
Maybe because you don't want to end up without a career and all alone, like me.

ANDIE
Mom...

COLETTE
Andie, darling. You can love me without following in my footsteps. I gave you my blond hair, my passion for egg salad and a few other things, but the legacy stops there.

Andie looks at her.

COLETTE
You're not doomed to repeat anything, honey. It's your life.

Andie looks thoughtfully out the window at Central Park.. CRANE DOWN TO FIND:

EXT. CENTRAL PARK THAT MOMENT

Ben, sitting on a rock in Central Park. He looks to be in about the same emotional state as Andie.

BEN
I'm not proud of myself. Obviously, I'd do it differently if I could start over again.
(beat)
It's good to talk to you. You're really the only one who knows us both.

PULL BACK TO FIND:

That Ben is talking to Marv Albert, the dog. The dog looks at him quizzically.

BEN
And you're so impartial.

As Ben continues to pour his heart out to the mutt, who should come running by but:

SPEARS AND GREEN - in chic jogging outfits. Ben doesn't see them, but they see Ben - talking to a dog. They look at each other with raised eyebrows.

EXT. PARK AVENUE DAY

Andie gets into a cab. Suddenly, the doors open on either side and:

Spears and Green slide in beside her. Andie is aghast.

SPEARS
Hi, Doll. We like your sweater.

ANDIE
(shocked)
What are you two doing?

GREEN
We wanted to talk to you. On behalf of the boy.

SPEARS
He's been very sad lately. And we're concerned.

ANDIE
You're concerned? That's a laugh.

GREEN
We love Ben. We're going to miss him.

ANDIE
What do you mean, "miss him"? Did he get fired?
(wracked with guilt)
It was the diamonds, right? The tiara I threw out the window...

GREEN
(dismissive)
Poo poo. Diamonds aren't even rare.

SPEARS
Anyway, he didn't get fired. He quit.

ANDIE
What? Why?

GREEN
Because he felt terrible.

SPEARS
Because he loves you.

ANDIE
How do you know?

GREEN
We caught him pouring his heart out to that little dog you gave him in the park.

ANDIE
(moved)
Marv Albert? He was talking to Marv Albert in the park?

SPEARS
(nods)
And Marv looked very moved.

GREEN
Anyway - we feel somewhat responsible for what happened between you two, and being big fans of the Benny-boy's, we'd like you to forgive and forget.

Spears knocks on the window.

SPEARS
(to taxi driver)
Stop here.

Green drops an envelope in Andie's lap.

GREEN
Take this. Use it.

The girls get out. Spears leans back in to Andie for parting advice:

SPEARS
Don't be hard hearted about it, doll.
Give a boy a second chance.

And they're gone. Andie looks down at the envelope in her lap. She opens it.

CLOSE ON: A KNICKS TICKET.

We HEAR the sound of the CROWD in pre-game EXCITEMENT and

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN NIGHT

A WALKING POV SHOT, weaving through the excited crowd, down the stairs to the courtside seats, where from the back we discover:

BEN. The back of his head. Sitting in the companion seat. The POV SHOT hesitates, then moves around to confront him head on.

Ben looks up to find:

Jeannie. He's stunned.

BEN
Hi.

JEANNIE
I know what you're thinking. You're thinking, why is my couple's therapist here at the Knicks game? Well, prepare for a shock. I'm not really a couple's therapist.

BEN
And you were so good at it, too.

JEANNIE
Nevertheless, who I truly am is one of Andie's two best friends in the entire world. You're a bastard, by the way. And I'm a messenger. With a message. Actually, a two part message.
(beat)
I took notes.

Jeannie pulls out a scrap of paper with notes on it and reads.

JEANNIE
(reading her notes)
The first part is that she's sorry about everything. She wants you to know that she doesn't really like Celine Dion, Valerie Bertinelli bio-pics, meatless hotdogs or pot-pourri. She doesn't really think you're a rage-aholic, and she's sorry she didn't eat your lamb dinner that night, which looked delicious.
(an aside)
I'd be interested in the recipe.
(back to the notes)
Furthermore, she wants you to know that one thing she never lied to you about was the Knicks.
(folds paper)
That's part one.

BEN
And the second part?

JEANNIE
She's going ahead with the article.

Ben looks stunned.

JEANNIE
She thought you should know.
(sympathetic)
Enjoy the game. Carry on.

Jeannie turns around and leaves.

HOLD ON: Ben, looking stricken.

CUT TO:

INT. MICHELLE'S APARTMENT THAT MOMENT

ON TV: we see Ben, sitting in the crowd at the basketball game, digesting the conversation with Jeannie.

PULL BACK TO FIND: that the TV is on in Michelle's apartment. Michelle and Andie are watching Ben's face. It's hard for Andie to look at him.

ANDIE
God I hope I'm doing the right thing.

MICHELLE
You're doing the right thing. It's the only way.

Just then, the doorbell rings. Michelle reaches for her wallet.

MICHELLE
There's the Chinese.

She walks to the door, prepared for the delivery boy...

But when she opens it she comes face to face with an anguished looking young man holding some roses. It's MIKE.

MIKE
(imploring)
Michelle, I...

Michelle slams the door in his face. She runs back into the living room to face Andie.

MICHELLE
(trying to remain calm)
Andie - it's not the Chinese. It's Mike.

ANDIE
Who's Mike?
(realizing)
Mike? It's Mike?

MICHELLE
What do I do?

ANDIE
Talk to him!

Michelle rushes back to the door and opens it. Mike looks hopeful.

MICHELLE
(trying to be cool)
What are you doing here?

MIKE
I don't know exactly. It was last night, I was just lying there, trying to sleep.

Andie peaks around the wall so she can watch what's happening between Michelle and Mike.

MIKE
This is going to sound stupid, but...that perfume you sprayed on my pillow? The smell is gone now and...Michelle, I want it back.

Michelle inhales. She looks at Mike, struggles for balance.

MICHELLE
I don't know if you can have it back.

MIKE
Right.

MICHELLE
But I'm willing to consider it.

MIKE
Okay.

Another moment apart - and then suddenly they are in each other's arms, kissing furiously.

From the other room, Andie watches, and smiles tenderly at her friend's happiness.

INT. COMPOSURE MAGAZINE-ANDIE'S CUBICLE NIGHT

Alone in the office late at night, Andie works on her article. She looks melancholy.

124 On the ticker out the window : KNICKS ON THE BRINK OF VICTORY. ONE GAME AWAY FROM CLINCHING A TITLE. LEAD 3-2. 124

INT. COMPOSURE MAGAZINE - LILLY'S OFFICE DAY

Andie stands nervously in front of Lilly's desk as Lilly reads her finished article.

Lilly's face is inscrutable, full of concentration. Andie stands nervously. Finally, Lilly looks up.

LILLY
It's not what I expected.
(Andie braces for the worst)
It's better. Congratulations. You've made the cover.

Andie swallows with mixed emotion.

INT. STATEN ISLAND GARAGE DAY *

Ben is silently working on his bike. Glenda enters.

GLENDA
Brought you coffee.

BEN
Thanks.

GLENDA
How's it going?

BEN
(referring to the bike)
Almost finished.

GLENDA
I'm not talking about the bike.

Ben looks at his Mom. We can see he's trying to hide the fact that he's still heart-broken.

BEN
That's finished, too.

Glenda just nods to herself.

GLENDA
Do me a favor - don't get your grease all over the floor. Put your tools down on this.

Glenda lays some magazines and newspapers on the floor and exits. Ben agreeably starts moving his tools onto them, but double-takes when he sees what his mother has set down on the garage floor:

It's COMPOSURE MAGAZINE. The new issue. Ben zeroes in on one of the cover stories:

How to Lose a Guy in Ten Days.

Ben picks up the magazine. He braces himself, opens the magazine, finds the article.

There's Andie's thumb-nail photo. Ben starts to read. As he reads, we HEAR Andie's VOICE in V.O.:

ANDIE/ANDIE'S COLUMN (V.O.)
Dear girls: "I've lost a guy and I don't know why. What went wrong?" That's the lament I always hear. When I started writing this month's column, my intention was to try and answer that question, offering my own dating experience as your object lesson.

CUT TO:

INT. WARREN ADVERTISING AGENCY DAY

Andie's V.O. continues as Terry, Warren's secretary, reads the article at her desk.

ANDIE/ANDIE'S COLUMN (V.O.)
I would do the universal don'ts of dating, and demonstrate how easy it is to drive a guy away if you commit those certain silly dating faux-pas. What I didn't realize was that I was making the biggest mistake of all.

CUT TO:

INT. COLETTE'S APARTMENT DAY

Colette reads the article at her kitchen table. Andie's V.O. continues.

ANDIE/ANDIE'S COLUMN (V.O.)
You see, while I was writing this article, I lost a guy. Not just any guy - a great guy.

CUT TO:

INT. WARREN ADVERTISING AGENCY DAY

Jonathan reads the article out loud Thayer.

JONATHAN
(reading Andie's column)
"A guy who knew as much about the Knicks as I do; a guy who had the guts to try and teach me how to drive a motorcycle; a guy who loves his family, and even knows how to change a baby. "

Thayer looks up at Jonathan.

THAYER
He does?

CUT TO:

INT. STEAM ROOM DAY *

Spears reads the article to Green as they take a steam bath together. *

SPEARS
(reading Andie's column)
I thought he was too good to be true, and it turned out I was right; but that doesn't change the fact that the ten days I spent with him were the best ten days I've ever spent with anyone in my life. * * *

CUT TO:

EXT. STREETS OF MANHATTAN DAY

Ben zooms down the street on his motorcycle. Andie's V.O. continues.

ANDIE/ANDIE'S COLUMN (V.O.)
Sure, there are all kinds of silly things a girl can do to lose a guy - but nothing does the trick like good old dishonesty. I played a game and I played too well. When I won, I lost - the only guy I've ever fallen for in my life.

INT. COMPOSURE MAGAZINE DAY *

Carrying his motorcycle helmet, Ben runs into the Composure offices. He spots Jeannie and Michelle and rushes up to them.

BEN
(intense)
Where's Andie?

Jeannie and Michelle look at each other, wondering how much to say. *

JEANNIE
She's not here.

BEN
When will she be back?

MICHELLE
She won't. She left. I mean she's leaving. Today.

BEN
Today? Where's she going?

MICHELLE
"On the road."

Stunned, Ben turns around and rushes out. Jeannie shakes her head.

JEANNIE
Drama drama drama.

CUT TO:

EXT. ANDIE'S APARTMENT DAY *

Ben is talking to Andie's DOORMAN.

DOORMAN
You just missed her.

BEN
Please - where did she go?

CUT TO:

INT. BUS STATION DAY

CLOSE ON: the destination placard on the front of a Grey Hound Bus. It says CALIFORNIA.

Andie is about to climb aboard. She hears a voice behind her.

VOICE (O.S.)
Ticket?

Andie fishes in her purse.

ANDIE
Yes...

She finds her ticket, looks up and sees Ben.

BEN
Hi.

ANDIE
Hi.

BEN
Leaving?

ANDIE
Yup.

BEN
Writing?

ANDIE
Trying.

Ben nods.

BEN
(disdainful)
Bus?

ANDIE
(defensive)
So?

Ben nods to his motorcycle, parked a short distance away.

BEN
(indicating his bike)
Better.

Andie smiles at the proposal.

ANDIE
Maybe.

BEN
Definitely.

ANDIE
(leading)
If...

BEN
What?

ANDIE
(gestures with her hand)
Gimme.

BEN
Keys?

ANDIE
Yes!

BEN
No.

ANDIE
Yes.

Ben thinks about it.

BEN
First...

ANDIE
What?

BEN
This.

He takes her in his arms and they kiss passionately.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SOMEWHERE IN AMERICA DAY

Andie and Ben ride down a country road somewhere in America.

Guess who's driving.

END CREDITS ROLL

FADE OUT.

THE END