He's just not that into you...

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Based on the book
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EXT. PARK - DAY

We float down through a serene, leafy park to the children's play area. There, in the sandbox, a BEAUTIFUL FIVE YEAR OLD GIRL plays among a group of kids.

GIGI (V.O.)
I have a theory about how this all started...

A SIX YEAR OLD BOY approaches. He watches the little girl for a moment as she gently shapes her sand castle.

And then - out of nowhere - THE LITTLE BOY PUSHES THE LITTLE GIRL DOWN.

LITTLE GIRL
Why did you do that?

LITTLE BOY
Because you smell like dog poo.

Some of the other kids SNICKER at this brilliant one-liner. Our little girl's face turns red.

LITTLE BOY (CONT'D)
You're so stupid just like dog poo!
You're made of poo!

And then, just to punctuate, he JUMPS ON THE SANDCASTLE, smashing it. Finally, our little girl starts to CRY.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Our beautiful girl sits at a kitchen table with her MOM. She can only get out one syllable between big, wet sobs.

LITTLE GIRL
Made. (SOB) Of. (SOB) Dog. (SOB) Poo.

MOM
Honey, do you know why that little boy did those things? And said those things?

The little girl shakes her head no.

MOM (CONT'D)
Because he LIKES YOU.

FREEZE FRAME ON OUR LITTLE GIRL'S FACE - TRYING TO PROCESS THIS.

GIGI (V.O.)
Uh - excuse me -- but what - the - HELL? Where did that rumor start? Because moms have been spreading it for years.

BACK TO THE SCENE - THE MOM CONTINUES...

MOM
That little boy is doing those terrible things because he HAS A CRUSH ON YOU.

We see our little girl take this in, like she is just now beginning to understand the ways of the world.

GIGI (V.O.)
Do you understand what this means? We are all encouraged to believe that *if a guy acts like a total jerk* -- ***that means he likes you***. Sure, that's a lesson that might serve us as five year olds, but many of us keep believing this advice well into adulthood.

INT. DORM ROOM - NIGHT

A CUTE COLLEGE GIRL sits CRYING in front of her ANSWERING MACHINE, as her ROOMMATE looks on.

GIGI (V.O.)
Then, as we get older, we carry on this tradition of misreading the signals men send by encouraging our friends to do the same...

The machine evilly flashes 0 in the NEW MESSAGES window.

ROOMMATE #1
That Phi Delt so *obviously* liked you. I'm sure he just lost your number.

INT. HIGH RISE OFFICE - DAY

A HOT EXECUTIVE WOMAN stands in the office hallway, watching a SEXY MALE COLLEAGUE walk by. He does not give her a second glance. Her FEMALE SECRETARY looks on.

SECRETARY
He's not asking you out because he's intimidated by your professional success and emotional maturity.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

A BUNCH OF TWENTY-SOMETHINGS sipping cocktails. One of them is CRYING - smeared mascara, puffy eyes, etc.

CUTE TWENTYSOMETHING #1
Here's the problem. He likes you TOO much. You're TOO pretty and awesome. He can't handle it.

INT. BURGER KING - DAY

TWO FEMALE CASHIERS WORK SIDE BY SIDE.

CASHIER #1
Trust me. It's because he's just getting out of a serious relationship.

INT. GYM - DAY

TWO MIDDLE AGED WOMEN work out on ellipticals.

MIDDLE AGED WOMAN #1
Trust me. It's because he's never had a serious relationship.

INT. JAPANESE DEPARTMENT STORE - DAY

TWO HIPSTER JAPANESE GIRLS making their way through a crowded Tokyo department store.

TOKYO GIRL #1 (SUBTITLE)
Shigeru's inability to commit clearly stems from his failure to properly imprint on his mother during breast feeding.

EXT. FRENCH POLYNESIA - DAY

A PRETTY YOUNG WOMAN weaves BANANA LEAVES with a FRIEND.

FRIEND (SUBTITLE)
I'm sure he forgot your hut number. Or didn't get enough approval from his father. Or was eaten by a giraffe.

This last part seems to cheer up the pretty woman.

GIGI (V.O.)
Why do we say this stuff to each other? Why do we tell each other these lies?
(MORE)

GIGI (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Is it possible that it's because we're too scared, and it's too hard, to say the one obvious truth that's staring everyone in the face?

THE SCREEN GOES BLACK. AND THEN THE TITLE FADES UP:

HE'S JUST NOT THAT INTO YOU...

INT. BREWER'S ART - NIGHT

GIGI, pretty and approachable, sits in a booth at a hip Mt. Vernon date spot with CONOR, cute but holding onto his frat boy roots. They sip their near empty cocktails.

GIGI
So, Janine told me you're a real estate agent.

CONOR
Yeah. But don't worry - not one of the cheesy ones who puts his headshot on bus benches and grocery carts.

GIGI
So just like on frisbees and notepads?

Conor laughs. Gigi smiles -- she's doing well.

CONOR
You got it.

GIGI
Much classier.

CONOR
My thoughts exactly.

Gigi sips her drink, and looks at Conor.

GIGI
I wonder why Janine never thought of introducing us before?

CONOR
Yeah, I don't know, I ummm -

Their WAITRESS appears, cutting him off.

WAITRESS
You guys ready for another round?

Conor looks to Gigi.

CONOR
You want one more?

GIGI
Only if you do. But I mean, if you have to get going I totally ...

Gigi trails off. Conor considers this for a LONG MOMENT. We can see on Gigi's face that she knows that the outcome of this date hangs in the balance. It's an eternity.

CONOR
Umm. OK. Sure. One more.

Gigi breathes a SIGH of relief.

CONOR (CONT'D)
You had Ketel and soda, right?

Gigi NODS and SMILES, clearly flattered that Conor remembered her order. She scoots a little closer to him.

EXT. BREWER'S ART - NIGHT

Gigi and Conor HUG outside the restaurant.

GIGI
Well, Conor, I had a really nice time.

CONOR
Yeah. It was really nice meeting you.

GIGI
B-bye.

Gigi waves flirtatiously and walks away, smiling.

She turns around to look, and sees Conor TAKE HIS CELL PHONE OUT OF HIS POCKET.

Gigi TAKES HER CELL OUT OF HER PURSE and dials.

GIGI (CONT'D)
Hey, it's me. He's cute. I think it went well.

She sneaks another look over her shoulder to see Conor.

GIGI (CONT'D)
And I think he might me leaving me a message at home as - we - speak.

We FREEZE FRAME ON GIGI, mid-step. Then, THE IMAGE SLIDES OVER TO FIND:

CONOR - also in FREEZE FRAME. The image UNFREEZES and we continue with Conor as he DIALS HIS CELL PHONE.

CONOR
Hey, it's me...I just wanted you to know that I was thinking about you.

INT. EDDIE'S OF ROLAND PARK GROCERY - SAME

ANNA, hot in an earthy sort of way, heads down the aisle. She holds her cell phone in one hand - a BOTTLED WATER and a BAG OF SOY NUTS in the other.

ANNA
Conor, that's so nice. Thank you.

As Anna gets to the checkout, there's one person ahead of her. He looks back to see her - he's BEN, good looking and supremely likeable. They share a smile.

BEN
Do you want to go ahead?

ANNA
Hmm?

BEN
Go ahead? You've only got two things.

ANNA
(into phone)
Hold on.

She looks at what he's got - a SIX PACK OF SIERRA NEVADA.

ANNA (CONT'D)
You've only got one thing.

BEN
Well, technically it's six. And I'm still mulling over a gum purchase. So...

He steps aside to let her go. She smiles.

ANNA
(into phone)
Hey, let me call you right back.

She hangs up the phone and moves past Ben, hands her things to the EMOTIONLESS CASHIER. As he rings them up - she looks back at Ben - they SHARE ANOTHER LOOK.

She hands the cashier her ATM card - he swipes it.

EMOTIONLESS CASHIER
Oh my word.

ANNA
Come on. Seriously. I just deposited money today. There's no way -

EMOTIONLESS CASHIER
It's not that. Let me check something.

He turns and rifles through a stack of papers, finally finding what he was looking for.

EMOTIONLESS CASHIER
(CONT'D)
Congratulations. You won.

ANNA
What?

EMOTIONLESS CASHIER
Our "Sizzlin' Summer" promotion. You're our 1000th customer in June.

The cashier reaches under the register and pulls out an IGLOO COOLER and hands it to Anna. She BEAMS.

ANNA
Are you kidding?

EMOTIONLESS CASHIER
Do I have that kind of manner? A joking manner?

Anna looks to Ben. She looks like she's about to burst.

ANNA
I swear to god, this is the most exciting thing that's ever happened to me.

Ben can't tell if she's kidding.

BEN
Really?

ANNA
Is that sad?

BEN
No, it's - charming. Congratulations.

Anna smiles wide, admiring her cooler. Then -

ANNA
Wait, no. I can't accept this. You were here first. I didn't win at all.

BEN
Yes, you did. Trust me - it's fate. You were meant to have that cooler.

Anna throws her arms around him and hugs him.

ANNA
Thank you SO MUCH.

Ben can't help but laugh.

INT. NATIONAL BREWERY LOFTS - NIGHT

Conor enters his apartment. ALEX sits on the couch watching TV.

ALEX
Hey. How was the date?

CONOR
Fine. You know.

Conor heads for the kitchen, and turns back.

CONOR (CONT'D)
Why are you here?

ALEX
My cable's out.

Conor returns from the kitchen with a beer.

CONOR
You didn't hear the phone ring, did you?

ALEX
Nope.

CONOR
Shit. Anna gave me the "I'll call you right back."

ALEX
How long ago?

CONOR
22 minutes.

Alex winces.

ALEX
Sorry, dude.

CONOR
Do I call back?

Alex shrugs.

CONOR (CONT'D)
I know. I'll call back and say that I'm going to bed.

ALEX
At 9:30 PM? Genius.

CONOR
It is genius. Because then I can say: "In case you were going to call me back - don't - 'cause I'll be sleeping."

ALEX
Sounds foolproof.

Conor pulls off his jacket and tosses it next to a box - which contains about 50 FRISBEES. On each frisbee:

A LARGE PICTURE OF CONOR, WITH HIS PHONE NUMBER AND THE TITLE: CONOR BARRY REAL ESTATE AGENT

Conor dials his cell phone as he heads back to his room.

CUT TO:

CLOSE ON: A CELL PHONE. IT READS "CONOR CALLING"

EXT. EDDIE'S OF ROLAND PARK - SAME

We TILT up to find Anna and Ben. Anna looks at her phone, presses IGNORE and stashes it in her purse.

ANNA
Sorry. What was I saying?

BEN
I think you were telling me how you don't want to be like your mom and wake up and realize you didn't pursue your dreams.

Ben opens his GUM and offers Anna a piece. She takes one and laughs, a bit embarrassed.

ANNA
Was I? Little intense for grocery store chatter. Sorry.

BEN
It's OK. I might even be able to help you out. There's a guy at my firm who has exclusively music clients.

ANNA
That would be - amazing. What are you - like my savior?

Anna digs through her purse to find a piece of paper. She writes down her number, and holds it out to him. He looks at it, contemplating. He doesn't take it.

BEN
OK. Look. I'm married. I don't do this.

ANNA
Don't do what? Help struggling singers?

BEN
Help hot Pilates instructing singers who happen to be very charming.

Anna takes the slip of paper and puts it away.

ANNA
Do you want to give me your card? That's legit. I bet you're allowed to do that.

Ben considers this.

BEN
Right. OK. I guess that would be OK.

FROM INSIDE A CAR PARKED AT THE STORE:

We see Anna and Ben talking. They shake hands awkwardly and Ben HEADS TOWARDS US.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Ben gets in the car, bag in hand, and joins NEIL, 40, arty and kind looking, who's behind the wheel.

NEIL
So, who was that?

BEN
A prospective client.

NEIL
Yeah right.

BEN
I can talk to a woman Neil. It doesn't have to be like that.

Neil looks at him, smirk growing.

BEN (CONT'D)
Just drive.

Neil starts the car and they pull away.

INT. WESTSIDE LOFT - NIGHT

Neil walks into a vast space. Nice art, a cozy yet architectural look - a cool place to live.

NEIL
Hey, babe. You here?

We PAN over to a couch - where BETH is wrapped in a throw blanket, watching TV. She's got her hair in a messy bun.

BETH
Hey honey.

He joins her on the couch. And sees that the TV is off.

NEIL
Everything OK?

BETH
Yeah. Just got off the phone.

Neil gets up again.

NEIL
You want some tea or something?

BETH
It was my baby sister. She's getting married.

NEIL
That's great. I've always liked that Devon guy. That's really great.

Beth looks at him. She doesn't look that happy.

BETH
Do you think it's great?

NEIL
Yeah.

BETH
So, you think it's great that they're getting married, but you never feel like we're going against nature or something by *not* getting married?

NEIL
No, babe.

He sits back down, puts his arms around her.

NEIL (CONT'D)
Going against nature is like that cat who started nursing that monkey. We're just two people who aren't married.

Beth manages a weak smile.

BETH
Right.

NEIL
I actually think the odds of having a successful relationship increase by *not* getting married. Look at my parents - all marriage got them was thirty two years of misery and joint checking.

BETH
Yeah, I know. I get that.

NEIL
Like I've always told you - I love you - and we don't need a marriage certificate to legitimize our relationship.

BETH
Yeah.

NEIL
Lemme get you some tea.

He exits. Beth starts to CRY, but quickly dries her tears, and forces herself to pull it together.

EXT. HIGHLANDTOWN HOUSE - MORNING

A brick row house in an up and coming neighborhood - clearly under massive renovation.

INT. HIGHLANDTOWN HOUSE - SAME

We make our way through rooms with plastic covering the doorways - until we find JANINE stepping into the hallway. She checks herself in a vintage mirror, straightens it a tad, then heads down the stairs to find GIGI, on her cell phone. Gigi slams it closed.

JANINE
OK, so clearly he hasn't called.

Gigi shakes her head.

JANINE (CONT'D)
Maybe he's away on business.

GIGI
He sells real estate. In Baltimore. Staying in town is his business.

JANINE
Right.

Janine ponders this.

JANINE (CONT'D)
Look, let me tell you - after the first time I went out with Ben, he didn't call me for eleven days. ELEVEN DAYS. And now he's like the world's best husband. That happens all the time.

GIGI
Really?

JANINE
Yes, really.

Gigi manages a small smile.

GIGI
This is all your fault.

JANINE
What? Why?

GIGI
You set me up with him.

JANINE
No - you asked if I knew any guys and I gave Conor your number. That's not a set up. When I do a set up - I weigh pros and cons. I do my due diligence. All I know about Conor is he sold us this house.

Gigi peers out the window.

GIGI
He sold you a house in the ghetto.

JANINE
It's a neighborhood "in transition."

Gigi makes a move for the phone, Janine stops her.

JANINE (CONT'D)
Seriously, stop.

GIGI
He said he always hangs at Red Maple after work. Maybe I should do a little drive-by?

JANINE
Please, don't. He'll call.

Off Gigi - panic seeping in.

FADE TO CHAPTER CARD: **...IF HE'S NOT CALLING YOU**

AMBER, pretty if a little thick in the middle, sits in the courtyard of an office park in her work clothes.

AMBER
Caller ID was the worst thing that's ever happened to me. Total invasion of my personal freedom. When a guy doesn't call me, it is my right - my duty even - to call him and hang up several thousand times. Or at least until his mother shouts at me in Albanian and blows a police whistle into the phone. I mean, calling and hanging up is an age old expression of love and frustration and too many wine coolers - and who is AT& f'ing T to take that away from me?
(MORE)

AMBER (CONT'D)
Next thing you know, someone is going to ban me from sitting in my car in front of a guy's house, blaring "Where Is Your Heart" by Kelly Clarkson until his new stupid girlfriend comes outside and threatens to scratch my eyes out with her acrylics. I mean, a girl deserves freedom of expression, right?

INT. GYM - DAY

Pilates class. We pan down the row of mats, STUDENTS obediently doing The Mermaid. We finally land on Gigi's mat: Gigi manages to twist herself into a passable Mermaid - as her CELL PHONE lies in full view on her mat.

INT. GIGI'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Shower is on, curtain pulled. A CELL PHONE RINGS. An ARM SHOOTS out of the shower and grabs it from the sink.

GIGI
Mom, I gotta call you back.

INT. GIGI'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Gigi lays in bed, her CELL PHONE right next to her head. One eye POPS OPEN, checks the phone, and closes again.

INT. MCCORMICK SPICES CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS - DAY

A typical, corporate style office. Walled off cubicles for the junior execs, outer offices for management.

Gigi is in her cubicle. Janine, her friend and, we now learn, co-worker, sits on Gigi's desk.

JANINE
So, this was at the end of the date, or at the beginning?

GIGI
End. Why - does it matter?

JANINE
Yeah. "Nice meeting you" at the beginning of the date is normal. "Nice meeting you" at the end could be a blow off.

GIGI
Maybe it was at the beginning.

JANINE
Then that's fine. He's gonna call.

GIGI
Or maybe it was at the end. Or maybe it *was* nice to meet me.

JANINE
Wait - was it "nice meeting you" or "nice *to* meet you"?

GIGI
Shit. I can't remember.

JANINE
"Nice *to* meet you" is OK. "Nice meeting you" is like "Do you want your receipt in the bag?"

The girls look up to find BETH standing there, listening.

BETH
Remember the days when you guys at least pretended to be working when I came in?

Beth heads to her office. Janine and Gigi follow.

BETH (CONT'D)
Janine, how's the press release?

Janine, clearly organized, flips open her notebook:

JANINE
Beckon the baking to begin! McCormick, the flavor expert, introduces five fun filled flavors that will definitely delight dessert divas!

Gigi stifles a laugh.

BETH
Maybe a shade heavy on the alliteration - but otherwise good.
(to Gigi)
Where are we with the company newsletter?

GIGI
I am so almost done with that. It's just been a little hard to focus on my article about the two sets of twins in market research, when the guy - who may or may not be the guy of my dreams - refuses to call me.

Beth looks at Gigi, more sympathetic friend than boss.

BETH
Look, after my first date with Neil, *I* called *him*. There are no rules anymore. Why should you have to wait for him to get off his ass?

INT. MCCORMICK SPICES CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS - DAY

Gigi sits at her desk, Janine standing by her side. She's got a few sheets of paper on her desk.

Gigi takes a deep breath, picks up the office phone and dials. Janine gives her a thumbs up.

GIGI
It's ringing.

JANINE
Pretty standard.

GIGI
(listening to receiver)
Yes! Voicemail.

JANINE
Your notes.

Gigi nods - it's all under control.

GIGI
(reading off her paper)
Hey, Conor. It's Gigi. I just thought, I hadn't heard from you and, I mean how stupid is it that a gal has got to wait for a guy's call anyway, right?

Gigi laughs, but as she looks back to the notes, she seems confused. She turns to Janine, panicked, mouthing - "What does this say?". Janine looks - she's no help.

GIGI (CONT'D)
(clearly ad-libbing)
I mean, we're all equal, right? More than equal -- more women are accepted into law school now than men, and we do better in those police simulations where you can mistakenly shoot innocent people -
(rifles through the pages)
- I mean I don't know if you saw that *Dateline* - but women practically have penises now, right?
(looks to Janine, helpless)
Well, call me. This is Gigi. Call me.

Gigi hangs up, unsure. She looks to Janine.

JANINE
Don't worry. He's totally gonna call.

INT. GIGI'S APARTMENT - LATER

Gigi stares at the PHONE. Then she feigns disinterest in the phone. It still doesn't ring. Finally, she picks up the receiver to listen for a dial tone. And PANICS.

GIGI
WHAT? How can there be no dial tone?

She frantically jiggles the cord, then hears something.

GIGI (CONT'D)
Mom? Is that you? I can't talk now. I'll call you back.

She hangs up, stares at the phone again. A look of DETERMINATION crosses her face. She dials.

GIGI (CONT'D)
Janine. It's me. Conor never called, so I'm on the precipice of staging a casual run-in at Red Maple. Pick up if you want to stop me.
(beat, then really fast)
Alright-I'm-interpreting-your-silence-as tacit-compliance-bye.

Gigi hurriedly hangs up, and heads out the door.

INT. RED MAPLE - NIGHT

A CROWDED, SCENEY restaurant/bar - with a giant red Japanese maple growing behind the bar (thus the name).

We follow a THIN, BLACK CLAD HOSTESS as we wind through the throng of stylish twentysomethings at the bar to:

INT. RED MAPLE - KITCHEN - SAME

A busy kitchen. Off the kitchen a door leads to:

INT. RED MAPLE - OFFICE - SAME

ALEX sits at a small, cluttered desk, rifling through some papers. Then, from the doorway:

KELLI ANN
Knock knock.

Alex looks up to see KELLI ANN - Red Maple's hot hostess, standing in the doorway. She makes her way in.

ALEX
Hey.

KELLI ANN
So. Here we are. Same shift again.

ALEX
I know. I make the schedule.

KELLI ANN
(flirting)
I figured it was no coincidence.

She leans against the desk. Alex keeps working.

KELLI ANN (CONT'D)
I had fun the other night.

ALEX
Yeah. It's amazing where 10 shots of Patron will get you.

Kelli Ann laughs, then thinks - wait, was that nice?

KELLI ANN
Anyway - I was thinking, maybe tonight after work...we could, you know...

Alex stops what he's doing, looks up at her.

ALEX
Look, Kelli Ann - what happened between us the other night was - fun. But we're way understaffed tonight - I even have to man the bar - and <u>that's</u> why I scheduled you. To work. So...

He goes back to work. Kelli Ann stands there, frozen. Alex can feel her eyes on him.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Are we good here?

Kelli Ann's face goes flush. She tries to hide it. She backs up, puts on a smile.

KELLI ANN
No. We're good.

She leaves. Alex exhales, goes back to work.

INT. RED MAPLE - LATER

In the back doorway leading to the alley, Alex stands chatting with TYRONE, 18, a busboy, who smokes a cigarette he holds just outside the doorway.

Kelli Ann approaches, trying to squeeze through, and ACCIDENTALLY (ON PURPOSE) SHOULDER BLOCKS ALEX. HARD. He has to take a step to catch his balance.

He turns around to see what happened, but Kelli Ann keeps walking eyes front. He and Tyrone share a look.

TYRONE
Dude.

ALEX
I know.

Tyrone laughs as Alex shakes his head, not happy.

INT. RED MAPLE - HOSTESS STAND

Gigi enters slowly, looking around, searching for Conor.

She tries to move toward the bar as she's met by Kelli Ann, who grabs a few menus and slaps on a smile.

KELLI ANN
Are you joining us for dinner or -

GIGI
I'm meeting someone. A guy.

KELLI ANN
Ugh. Why?

GIGI
Hmmmm?

KELLI ANN
Nothing. Sorry. For dinner?

Gigi continues to scan the place, not paying attention.

GIGI
I'm meeting someone.

KELLI ANN
I believe you mentioned that.

Gigi finishes her visual tour of the room - no Conor.

GIGI
I'm gonna wait at the bar.

KELLI ANN
That's a great idea.

Gigi walks off. Kelli Ann takes her place behind the hostess stand.

AT THE BAR

Gigi grabs a stool with a good view of the door. Alex, now behind the bar, approaches.

ALEX
What can I get you?

GIGI
Oh, that's OK. I'm meeting someone.

Alex takes her in. She's clearly nervous.

ALEX
Oh, yeah? Got a hot date?

GIGI
I don't know if you'd call it hot -- I mean this guy Conor and I have only been out the one time so --

ALEX
Wait - Conor Barry?

Gigi is busted.

GIGI
Oh, uhh, yeah --

ALEX
Conor's not coming in tonight. Did he forget he was supposed to meet you?

GIGI
See when I said "meeting someone" I guess that was kind of a broad term, kind of a wide interpretation of the word "meeting"-

ALEX
Because I could just call him --

Alex reaches for the phone.

GIGI
NO! I mean, totally unnecessary. I mean, I actually was just - in the area - so I figured I'd just swing by and see if he was around - because - uhhh ---

Alex waits, looking at Gigi, amused. She is panicking.

GIGI (CONT'D)
I uhh, had to return his --

Gigi frantically searches her coat pockets - searching for something, anything - and finally fishes out A PEN. She looks at it - and decides to go with it.

GIGI (CONT'D)
Pen. I had to return this - pen. He left this. So, I thought I should really return it before he - you know -
(conspiratorially to Alex)
-- freaks out.

Alex looks at her skeptically. And then takes the PEN, and inspects it.

ALEX
Dr. Frankel - Adult, Child and Geriatric Dentistry.

GIGI
Look, I'm not gonna judge about what may or may not be important to someone.

ALEX
That's not even his dentist.

GIGI
Oh, really? Then who's his dentist?

ALEX
My dad.

Gigi looks at Alex for a long moment, and finally folds.

GIGI
I'm Gigi. Conor and I went out last week. And I just...I thought if I ran into him...I don't know. I'm gonna go.

Gigi struggles to get out quickly. Alex looks at her - holding her pen, looking quite frazzled - and softens.

ALEX
Hey. Just - hang out for a second. Lemme buy you a drink.

Gigi SMILES and sits back down.

INT. RED MAPLE - NIGHT

It's late. The bar is nearly empty. Alex is totaling receipts - and Gigi is still nursing a drink.

ALEX
Look, you seem like a cool girl, so I'm just gonna be honest - Conor is never going to call you.

GIGI
Oh really? How do you know?

ALEX
Because I'm a guy. It's how we do it.

GIGI
(hopeful)
He said it was nice meeting me.

ALEX
I don't care if he said you were his favorite female since his mommy and Joanie Cunningham. Over a week went by - and he didn't call.

GIGI
But maybe he called me and I didn't get the message. Or maybe he lost my number, or was out of town, or was hit by a cab, or his grandma died.

ALEX
Or maybe he just didn't call because he has no interest in seeing you again.

GIGI
Yeah but my friend Terri once went out with this guy who never called and she totally wrote him off - then like a year later she ran into him --

ALEX
Your friend Terri's an idiot. And she's the exception.

GIGI
OK. But what if I'm the exception?

ALEX
You're not. You're the rule. And the rule is - if a guy doesn't call you, he doesn't want to call you.

GIGI
Really? Always?

ALEX
Yeah. Always. I know what blowing off a woman looks like. I do it early and I do it often. Trust me - if a guy is treating you like he doesn't give a shit - - he doesn't. No exceptions.

Gigi thinks this over.

GIGI
Why are you telling me all of this? Aren't these man-secrets - like why men need to watch televised golf?

Alex LAUGHS.

ALEX
I don't know. You looked like you could really use the help.

GIGI
Thank you. You've given me a lot to think about.

Gigi smiles at him.

INT. MCCORMICK SPICES CORP. HQ - DAY

Gigi comes in - carrying a MESSY HANDFUL OF PAPERS, with crazy hair and wearing the last outfit we saw her in.

JANINE
Everything OK?

GIGI
I was up all night.

JANINE
Please say you were working on the newsletter.

GIGI
Sure. It's basically done. But this is important.

JANINE
What's happening with your hair?

Beth comes out of her office and looks at Gigi.

BETH
Please come in my office before the others see that you have mini muffin stuck in your hair.

INT. MCCORMICK SPICES CORP. HQ - BETH'S OFFICE - DAY

Gigi paces in front of Beth's desk.

GIGI
I think I figured it out. Remember when I went out with that notary public? And he cheated on me? And then Anastasia from upstairs told us that story about how her boyfriend cheated on her at the beginning - but then he totally changed and they're married and crazy in love.

BETH
I thought that guy was a process server.

GIGI
No, notary. Anyway, the point is - Anastasia is the exception. Not the rule. We have to stop listening to these stories - because the rule is that most guys who cheat on you up front don't really care about you very much.

BETH
Okay...

Gigi consults her crumpled pieces of paper.

GIGI
Exhibit A: Chad, the drummer who lived in his storage space. He only used me for rides, yet I continued to stalk him for most of 1998. Then there was Don, who broke up with me every Friday so he could have his weekends free. I was so delusional about our relationship that I referred to him as my husband to random people like my dental hygenist.
(MORE)

GIGI (CONT'D)
And all my friends would tell me stories about how things might work out with these dipshits because they knew someone who knew someone who dated a dipshit just like mine, and that girl ended up getting married and living happily ever after. But that's the exception. And we're not the exception - we're the rule.

Gigi sits down, spent. But Beth has been listening.

BETH
OK. So let me see if I understand. What you're saying is that when people tell me about some girl they know who dated a guy for thirteen years, and then he finally married her -- that's the exception. And the rule is that guys - like Neil - who are with girls - like me - for seven years without getting married - are never getting married.

Beth is serious. Gigi freezes, tries to backtrack.

GIGI
No. No, no, no. That's not what I'm saying. This has absolutely nothing to do with you. I was just talking, you know, about me. Specifically.

Off Beth, knowing it's about her, too.

INT. SASSY NAILS - EVENING

Anna and MARY, beautiful but doesn't know it, sit in side by side pedicure chairs. Anna holds a BUSINESS CARD.

ANNA
It is impossible not to like this guy. I'm pretty sure he was heavily flirting with me outside Eddie's, and then he tells me he's married. You'd think I'd be pissed, but I literally could not stop myself from liking him.

MARY
But he's married.

ANNA
I realize that. I keep trying to force myself to picture him in some church saying vows to some woman, and even that doesn't cool it off. What is my problem?

MARY
OK. There was this guy who worked in my dad's printing business. Married for fifteen years to a nice lady. And then he meets this woman at some church event. And he told my dad he just had never felt anything like it before. I mean, he had finally met the love of his life. So, he divorced his wife, and he's been with this other woman for 22 years and they are blissfully happy. I mean, what if you meet the love of your life - but you already married someone else? Are you supposed to pass them by?

ANNA
You're right. I'm calling him.

Anna pulls her feet out of the pedicure bath, goes in a private corner, and dials her cell phone.

ANNA (CONT'D)
Hey, Ben. This is Anna Marks.

BEN (O.S.)
Hey, Anna. What's up?

ANNA
Well, I was just taking you up on your offer. You said you might know someone who could help me out and I thought we could discuss it -- over coffee?

Anna waits for a response. On the other end she hears some rustling, some silence, definitely awkwardness.

BEN (O.S.)
Look, I just...I can’t Anna. You seem great. It’s just - I don’t know. I should go. Take care.

Anna takes this in - STUNNED. She hangs up. Her eyes sting. She can't face Mary so she just stares at weird, bleached out photos of nails and HOLDS BACK THE TEARS.

Finally, she looks at her cell phone and dials again.

INT. NATIONAL BREWERY LOFTS - NIGHT

Conor opens the door to find Anna standing there.

CONOR
I am so psyched that you called.

ANNA
Cool.

CONOR
I had sort of given up on you when you didn't call me back the other night.

ANNA
Well, you know. I was just thinking about you.

Conor buys it, and ushers her inside.

INT. NATIONAL BREWERY LOFTS - NIGHT

Anna is stretched out with a wine glass in hand, feet in Conor's lap. He rubs her feet as they talk.

ANNA
Your turn.

CONOR
OK. Give me the categories again.

ANNA
There are four. Sexy, smart, funny or cute. And each person can only be two. Like Sarah Jessica Parker is funny and sexy. Or Bill Clinton is sexy and smart.

CONOR
I love that you are hot for Clinton.

ANNA
So, which am I?

CONOR
What was I again?

ANNA
Smart and cute.

Conor smiles, happy for any compliment.

CONOR
OK. You're sexy. Very sexy. And cute.

She bangs him on the head with a pillow.

ANNA
No. Cute and sexy are in the looks column. No one wants to be in all one column.

CONOR
Well, I sound like a jackass if I say you're all four. But you're so obviously all four. Especially sexy.

ANNA
You're the best.

Anna sits up, and moves to Conor. She looks at him, pulls him in for a nice, long HUG.

ANNA (CONT'D)
I better go.

CONOR
Oh. OK. I mean, you could just stay here tonight.

Anna gives him a knowing look.

CONOR (CONT'D)
What? It's been a while.

ANNA
I know. It's just - I'm fried. Is that alright?

CONOR
Sure. Of course.

Anna smiles and gets up. Conor reluctantly follows her to the door. She KISSES HIM ON THE LIPS, smiles, and leaves.

INT. WESTSIDE LOFT - NIGHT

Beth opens the door to find NEIL, standing on the couch in his socks, hanging a PAINTING.

NEIL
Hey babe, is this straight?

BETH
Why are you hanging that?

NEIL
I told you I'd do it weeks ago. You don't like it there?

BETH
I love it there. But just - stop.

NEIL
It's the image, isn't it? I didn't see it before, but - you're right - it totally looks like a sagging boob.

Beth is silent.

NEIL (CONT'D)
You want me to take it down?

BETH
No. I want you stop doing anything nice.

NEIL
Is this a trick?

BETH
No. I need you to stop being nice to me - unless you're gonna marry me after.

Neil laughs.

BETH (CONT'D)
Is that funny?

NEIL
No. It was just - I was just--

BETH
See, you can't keep being nice to me and I can't keep pretending like this is something that it's not. We've been together over seven years. You know me. You either want to marry me or you don't.

NEIL
Or there is the possibility that I just don't really believe in the concept of -

BETH
BULLSHIT! BULLSHIT! Bullshit for every woman who's been told by some guy that he doesn't believe in marriage just to see him turn around eight months later and marry some twenty four year old girl he met at the gym. Bullshit.

Beth tries to hold back her tears. Neil looks stunned. He hops down off the couch and goes to her.

NEIL
Honey, where is all this coming from?

BETH
From the place that I have been hiding from you for the last five years because I didn't want to seem demanding, or clingy or psycho or whatever. So I never ask. But now I'm going to ---

Neil looks at her. She looks at him.

BETH (CONT'D)
Are you ever going to marry me?

Beth looks at Neil. There is a long, painful SILENCE.

BETH (CONT'D)
I can't do this anymore.

She walks out of the room.

FADE TO CHAPTER CARD: **... IF HE'S NOT MARRYING YOU**

AMY sits with a sleeping baby in her arms.

AMY
I was with Damon for six years. He asked me to marry him on the phone, because he's just so different and cool like that. Said he'd eventually get me a ring, which he didn't, but he did buy himself a ring because isn't that so hilarious and cool that the guy is wearing the ring? Then, my favorite part is, I stayed with him even after he took back his proposal, and introduced the idea of a "relation vacation." Isn't that a cute name? Let me explain the concept: it involves dating a girl from the time she's thirty two to the time she's thirty nine, possibly robbing her of the ability to bear children, and then, after all that, wanting to take a year off. And giving it a fun name that you can put on t-shirts.
(looks at the baby, smiles)
I left him.

INT. HIGHLANDTOWN HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

Ben, our married guy from the grocery store, sits on the floor in a barely furnished room, and dials his cell.

BEN
Hey, Anna. This is Ben. Look, I know it's been a little while since you called. I just - it took me by surprise. But I offered to help you with your career, and I don't see why I can't do that, right? So, give me a call. Maybe you can come by the office this week or something. Okay, take care. Bye.

Ben hangs up. And STARES INTO SPACE until THE DOOR OPENS TO REVEAL: JANINE. Gigi's co-worker. And Ben's WIFE.

JANINE
Hey, how --

Ben is CLEARLY STARTLED.

BEN
Shit - you scared me.

Janine looks at him.

JANINE
Is everything OK?

BEN
Yeah. Everything's fine. Why?

She sits down next to him, looks at him intently.

JANINE
Are you smoking again?

BEN
No, sweetie. Why?

JANINE
Well - you get jumpy when you smoke.

Ben puts his arm around Janine, and pulls her close.

BEN
I'm not smoking. So, why don't we worry about what color we're gonna paint this room, instead of worrying about things that aren't happening?

Janine contentedly curls up to Ben.

JANINE
I don't know - I was thinking maybe - pink?

BEN
Pink? Seriously?

JANINE
Well, I mean, at some point.

Janine gives Ben a knowing look. He gets it.

BEN
You sure we're ready for this now?

JANINE
No. But I mean, we could paint one room pink and one blue just in case.

Ben looks at her and LAUGHS.

BEN
You've already created the perfect family in this house, and we don't even have drywall.

JANINE
I'm sorry. I know I promised we'd wait to talk about it -

Ben looks at her, snuggled against him.

BEN
I think we're almost ready to start talking about it.

Janine smiles CONTENTEDLY.

JANINE
I've always liked the name Gisele.

Ben LAUGHS. She lets him.

INT. PORTER'S - EVENING

Packed, Federal Hill happy hour bar scene. Gigi and Janine stand, squeezed in among the after work crowd.

JARRAD, early thirties, chats amiably with Gigi.

JARRAD
Well, ladies, I guess I have to get back to the office.

GIGI
You go back to the office after happy hour? What's happy about that?

JARRAD
I met you.

Janine and Gigi melt.

JARRAD (CONT'D)
So, I'd love to call you sometime. Do you have a card?

GIGI
Of course.

Gigi hands him her card with lightning speed.

JARRAD
And here's my info.

Jarrad hands Gigi HIS CARD as well.

JARRAD (CONT'D)
Look forward to hearing from you, Gigi.

He starts to head over to his BUDDIES. Gigi is confused.

GIGI
So, wait -- how are we doing this? Are you hearing from me or am I getting a call?

Jarrad turns back.

JARRAD
What?

GIGI
You said you'd love to call me, but then you said "look forward to hearing from you." See how that's kinda confusing?

JARRAD
Look - we'll talk. We'll get in touch.

He tries to take off again.

GIGI
Ooopsie - you did it again. Very vague. You know what? Why don't we just say that you'll call me, and then we can skip all the nonsense.

Jarrad just gives her a blank stare.

GIGI (CONT'D)
Or I guess I *could* just call you --

JARRAD
Goodbye, Gigi.

He takes off. The girls watch him.

GIGI
He was cute.

JANINE
Please don't cyber-stalk him.

Gigi looks at the name on the card - JARRAD MONTROSE - and then - TEARS HIS BUSINESS CARD IN TWO.

JANINE (CONT'D)
Wait - what are you doing?

GIGI
I'm not calling him. If he wants to see me - he'll call.

JANINE
Wow, that guy Alex really made an impression on you. Was he hot?

GIGI
No. He was just -- right.

Off Gigi, sipping her drink, full of optimism.

INT. BALTIMORE BLADE - DAY

The offices of Baltimore's gay weekly paper. The elevator opens - and in walks Mary, cheerful as always.

We follow her down the hall as she ad-libs hellos to her co-workers. One thing becomes glaringly clear - SHE IS THE ONLY WOMAN WHO WORKS HERE.

She gets to her desk and is descended upon by - BRUCE, NATHAN, and JOSHUA. All mid-20's. All gay.

BRUCE
So?

Mary looks at them, smiling, enjoying their impatience.

MARY
He asked me out.

NATHAN
Oh my god! He called?

MARY
Well -

JOSHUA
He emailed?

MARY
Umm -

BRUCE
What? Did he travel by carriage and leave his calling card with your lady in waiting?

MARY
He MySpaced me.

The guys all look skeptical.

NATHAN
Ouch.

JOSHUA
I don't know. My slutty sister says MySpace is the new booty call.

MARY
Well, what am I supposed to do? Things have changed. People don't just meet organically anymore. If I want to make myself more attractive to the opposite sex, I don't go get a new haircut - I update my profile. That's just how it is.

The guys look at her, starting to understand. Mary's PHONE RINGS.

MARY (CONT'D)
Back to work.

She smiles at the guys - they disperse as she picks up.

MARY (CONT'D)
Ad sales - this is Mary.

INTERCUT WITH EXT. LIGHT ST. - DAY

Conor sits on a bench, NEWSPAPER folded open on his lap.

CONOR
Hey, it's Conor. Anna's - uh - friend. Or whatever.

MARY
Hey. So, did you see it?

CONOR
I'm not sure about this.

MARY
You gotta trust me. It's a burgeoning market. You're gonna make a fortune.

Conor looks at the paper.

CONOR
Yeah. I hope so. But, like - did you have to put me on the page with the massage ads?

MARY
It was either that or on the page with the personals. I made a call.

CONOR
OK. You're right. Hey, have you talked to Anna lately?

Conor leaves the paper and gets up. He walks away, still on the phone, we STAY WITH THE NEWSPAPER AND WE PUSH IN.

UNDER VARIOUS 1 INCH ADS FOR MASSEUSES, S&M and LEATHER TYPE SERVICES - THERE'S A HALF PAGE AD UNDER THE TITLE:

THE HOME FOR YOUR LIFESTYLE - CONOR BARRY - REAL ESTATE

Under which is a picture of Conor, standing in front of a brick Tudor, a SOLD SIGN proudly displayed. In the background - TWO MEN look lovingly at their new home.

INT. POTOMAC HOUSE - DINING ROOM - DAY

PAIGE, blonde and angelic, looks on as LAURA, CATHERINE, and Beth pull on matching coral dresses.

CATHERINE
I do not understand how you got mom to sew all of these in two weeks.

PAIGE
She wanted to do it.

LAURA
Mom told me she felt like an old Indonesian lady in a sweatshop.

PAIGE
No, she didn't.

BETH
Why again do you need to get married so fast?

CATHERINE
You're so pregnant.

PAIGE
I'm not pregnant.

CATHERINE
Chug a beer, then. I want to see you chug a beer.

PAIGE
We're in love, you assholes. That's what people do when they're in love - they get married.

Everyone FREEZES. And looks at BETH. Big silence.

PAIGE (CONT'D)
Bethie, you know I didn't mean --

BETH
It's OK. Neil and I are actually - done - anyway.

This is clearly news.

CATHERINE
Why didn't you tell us? You should have told us.

LAURA
You have to come over and have dinner with me and Steven and the kids tonight, OK? You can even stay over if you want.

CATHERINE
Why would she want to hang out with us and our husbands? Seriously, Beth, isn't that exactly what you want to avoid right now?

But before Beth can even answer --

PAIGE
You know what - if being in the wedding is too painful-

BETH
You guys, it's cool. I'm fine. So I lost a little time. Big deal.

Beth grabs her purse and starts for the door.

CATHERINE
So not a big deal. You're still really young.

PAIGE
So young.

LAURA
Everything you learned in that relationship is just gonna make the next one so much stronger.

BETH
Exactly.

Beth exits, still wearing a half-sewn bridesmaid's dress.

LAURA
She wasted so much time.

CATHERINE
I knew he was never gonna propose.

PAIGE
Shit.

The girls nod in agreement.

INT. LAW OFFICE - DAY

Ben sits behind his desk, sifting through a pile of papers. We PAN around to Anna sitting across from him.

BEN
I know it's here somewhere. I spoke to George Lane in music, and he gave me this whole list of references for you.

ANNA
It's cool. You can call me when you find it.

BEN
I swear I didn't lure you here under false pretenses.

ANNA
I know. But a girl can dream.

He looks up at her and smiles.

ANNA (CONT'D)
You're obviously too good of a guy.

They share a LONG LOOK.

ANNA (CONT'D)
Why are you married, again?

Ben LAUGHS.

ANNA (CONT'D)
Seriously. Why? It'll be good for me. Tell me how you decided that you could not be without this other woman.

BEN
We'd been together since college. She gave me an ultimatum: we get married or we break up. So, we got married.

ANNA
Seriously? You just caved?

BEN
It's complicated.

ANNA
Really?

BEN
You're a dick if you date a girl for too long, and don't marry her. But you marry her, and then you're an asshole for marrying her before you're ready. Shit - I don't know.

He looks at her.

BEN (CONT'D)
You're really hot and I'm obviously attracted to you, but I guess the best I can do is eventually find this piece of paper, and call you, and hope I help in some small way with your career, and be happy about that.

Anna takes this in.

INT. HIGHLANDTOWN HOUSE - DAY

Janine walks in from work to her construction site home. She peeks into the dining room, where she sees her CHERRY WOOD DINING TABLE covered in a THICK LAYER OF DUST.

JANINE
JAVIER!

She waits for a response. Nothing. She starts to brush the dust off with her hands.

JANINE (CONT'D)
JAVIER. I THOUGHT WE TALKED ABOUT TARPING THE FURNITURE.

Still nothing. So Janine drops her work things, and heads out the side door of the house to a STORAGE AREA.

EXT. STORAGE AREA - DAY

There are cans of paint, bags of cement, some tarps. Janine grabs a TARP, when she sees, on a window ledge, next to a folding chair - AN ALUMINUM FOIL ASHTRAY. CIGARETTE BUTTS. AN EMPTY PACK OF AMERICAN SPIRITS.

She stares at them for a moment, then heads back inside.

INT. GIGI'S APARTMENT - DAY

CLOSE ON: A TORN BUSINESS CARD, TAPED BACK TOGETHER. The name on the card is JARRAD MONTROSE. Gigi sits, staring at the card. She reaches for the phone, and then thinks the better of it. And again.

Finally, she grabs the receiver, picks it up, and dials.

GIGI
Hi, this is Gigi.

INTERCUT WITH: INT. RED MAPLE - OFFICE - DAY

Alex sits in his office. He talks into his CELL.

ALEX
Gigi?

GIGI
Gigi Phillips. I had the - umm - dentist pen.

ALEX
Right.

GIGI
I'm really sorry to bug you. I just - I thought you had some really good insights the other night and -- I had a question.

ALEX
Okay, maybe I need to be harsh -- Conor is never going to be interested in you.

GIGI
No, I know. This is about -
(she looks at the card)
- Jarrad. You have a sec?

ALEX
Okay...

GIGI
So I meet him at happy hour and he was completely charming --

ALEX
Lemme guess - he said the only thing happy about this hour is you.

GIGI
He may have used some derivative of that. So, he says he's going to call, but then gave me his card and --

ALEX
He's not interested.

GIGI
You don't even know if he called --

ALEX
Did he?

GIGI
No. But the thing is, I honestly think he's expecting my call.
(MORE)

GIGI (CONT'D)
He said "Look forward to hearing from you" and not "Look forward to talking to you." I mean, do you hear the connotations?

ALEX
He. Is. Not. Interested.

Tyrone appears in Alex's doorway.

TYRONE
Alex - this is jacked. The hostess is giving me shit for not wearing a white shirt -- this shirt is WHITE!

Tyrone points to a VERY SMALL WHITE INSIGNIA on an otherwise BLACK SHIRT. Alex shuts the door on him.

TYRONE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
This shit is white.

ALEX
If a guy gives you his phone number, instead of taking yours, he's not interested.

GIGI
He took mine first, but then he --

ALEX
And, if a guy wants to see you, he will see you. I once called 55 Lauren Bell's until I got the right one.

GIGI
That's cute. What happened?

ALEX
As it turned out, her ass looked really huge in daylight.

GIGI
Is it your sensitivity that makes you so popular with women?

ALEX
Don't call him. He doesn't like you.

GIGI
Again with the sensitivity.

ALEX
Just trying to help.

GIGI
I know. Thanks.

Gigi hangs up, re-tears up Jarrad's card.

EXT. DUNDALK HOME - BACKYARD - DAY

CLOSE ON: HAPPY BIRTHDAY MOM written across a CAKE.

As the candles are blown out, we widen to reveal: Anna and Conor siting at a cheap picnic table in a tiny backyard, across from MAYA - Anna's mom.

As Maya refills her glass from a BOTTLE OF WINE, Anna grabs a GIFT from her bag - hands it to her mom.

MAYA
Oh sweetie - you didn't have to get me anything.

ANNA
Mom - you always say that and I always get you something.

Maya takes a BIG SIP OF WINE (not her first) as she tears open the gift, which is clearly a RECORD ALBUM.

MAYA
You didn't.

ANNA
It's no big deal.

CONOR
What is it?

Maya shows him the album - TIM BUCKLEY'S *STARSAILOR*.

CONOR (CONT'D)
Tim Buckley. Nice.

MAYA
Here - put on my favorite.

Anna takes the album and heads through the screen door.

MAYA (CONT'D)
Did Anna ever tell you I knew Tim Buckley?

CONOR
No. She did not.

"Song to the Siren" plays as Anna returns to the table.

MAYA
We met at a coffee shop in 1971. Hell's Kitchen. I had no idea who he was. But he had this big mop of hair and these eyes that just looked past you and through you and into you all at the same time. Complete interest and disinterest. It was amazing.

Maya pulls out a cigarette and lights it.

MAYA (CONT'D)
Of course, I was with Anna's father at the time, so, you know...another opportunity missed.

ANNA
Mom, please -

MAYA
It's the truth. I knew them all. Robert Plant, Harry Nilsson, Graham Parsons...
(to Conor)
Have you seen the pictures of me from when I was Anna's age?

CONOR
Umm - I don't think so -

MAYA
Sweetie go get that picture - you know the one -

Anna just looks at her - pleadingly.

MAYA (CONT'D)
Go. Your mother's asking you to do something for her on her birthday.

Anna goes inside. Maya looks to Conor, takes a sip.

MAYA (CONT'D)
You'll see - we look strikingly similar. My lips may be a bit fuller, but...

She leans back, puts out her cigarette as Anna returns with A PICTURE. She hands it to Conor.

INSERT: MAYA, in her early twenties. Black and white - somewhere in New York. The resemblance to Anna is scary.

CONOR
Wow. That's - unbelievable.

MAYA
So that's what we're dealing with here, for reference. Imagine meeting someone who looks like that in a coffee shop.

Conor looks down at the picture, then back up to Anna.

CONOR
That's funny, because, I mean, I guess I kinda did. Anna and I met at a restaurant. That serves coffee. So, not a coffee shop, but...still -

He looks from Maya to Anna. Maya stands up.

MAYA
That's sweet. But if we're comparing stories -
(indicating with her glass)
She's no me - and you're no Tim Buckley.

With that, Maya heads inside.

MAYA (CONT'D)
Anyone need a refill?

Anna looks to Conor apologetically. He just smiles.

EXT. ANNA'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Anna and Conor walk to the front door of her apartment.

ANNA
Thanks again for coming with me. You make it so much easier.

CONOR
Are you kidding? I like your mom. She's cool.

ANNA
Yeah, well - cool's not always what you're looking for in a mom.

Conor smiles, understanding.

CONOR
So, you want another -- foot rub?

He's trying. But it's awkward.

ANNA
Ugh. I'm just beat. I wanna put on sweats and get in bed.

CONOR
I'd be into that.

Anna gives him a smile, opens her front door.

ANNA
I'll call you tomorrow, OK?

She gives him a KISS, and goes inside.

FADE TO CHAPTER CARD:**...IF HE/SHE'S NOT SLEEPING WITH YOU**

TRENT, early 30s, talks to the camera as he drives his Ford Explorer. He's cute - but trying a smidge too hard - - goatee, leather cord necklace he bought in Cancun, etc.

TRENT
If a girl is into you, she's sleeping with you. And if after a month - two months at the very outside - she's not sleeping with you, she does not like you. I guess the trick is, how to spot this girl early - so you don't waste the one to seven weeks waiting to find out that it's never gonna happen. So, I've got some signs about how to spot this girl - gleaned from my own experience, of course. A girl will never sleep with you if: she calls you cuddly or dependable, she pops a zit in front of you, her name is Amber or Christine, she takes a dump in your bathroom or she takes home leftovers in dates 1-3. I know it's not scientific - but I'm just saying - you were warned.

INT. NATIONAL BREWERY LOFTS - NIGHT

Alex knocks and opens the door in one motion.

ALEX
Hey dude - you here?

CONOR (O.S.)
Yep.

Alex heads to the fridge, opens it and looks in.

ALEX
Wanna beer?

He pulls TWO BEERS out, shuts the fridge and turns to find Conor standing there. He's wearing a REALLY TIGHT, SHINY SHIRT and EVEN TIGHTER, VERY BLUE JEANS.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Or an apple martini?

CONOR
Funny.

Conor grabs the beer and opens it.

ALEX
Need I ask?

CONOR
It's for work. I'm trying to expand my client base.

ALEX
By pretending you're gay?

CONOR
No. By being more gay friendly.

ALEX
Or, in real estate terms, by becoming "gay adjacent".

CONOR
Nice. I may have to use that.

Conor heads back toward his room.

CONOR (CONT'D)
I'm gonna try something else. This may be too much.

ALEX
I don't know. You dress like that - and you're already seeing a girl who won't sleep with you - I think maybe you can pull it off.

CONOR (O.S.)
It's not that she won't sleep with me douchebag...I <u>have</u> slept with her. It's just, you know, she...um...

ALEX
Won’t sleep with you anymore.

Conor reappears, now wearing A FRENCH CONNECTION TYPE TIGHT T-SHIRT AND BLACK JEANS.

CONOR
Pretty much, yeah.
(re: his new outfit)
So, what do you think?

Alex gives him the once over.

ALEX
I think you're gonna have to beat 'em away with a stick - you hot, sexy man.

Conor rolls his eyes and heads back into his room. Alex laughs to himself and takes another sip of beer.

INT. FELL'S POINT CONDO - NIGHT

Leather couch, framed Orioles jersey - typical bachelor pad. Gigi is making out with GREGORY, 30s.

GIGI
Who would have thought that a random girl from Pilates would fix me up with such a good kisser?

GREGORY
Back at you sister.

Gigi beams. They make out some more.

GIGI
I can't wait to kiss you again.

GREGORY
Umm. We're kissing right now.

GIGI
I know. But next time. The second date kiss is way more intimate.

As they start kissing again -

GREGORY
Well, I'm going out of town tomorrow - so I'll be out of touch for a bit.

Gregory starts pulling off Gigi's top. Gigi pulls away deftly.

GIGI
Would you excuse me a quick second? Too many diet cokes...

Gigi makes a beeline down the hall.

INT. FELLS POINT CONDO - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Gigi dials her CELL as she goes through Gregory's bathroom cabinets.

INTERCUT WITH: INT. ALEX'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Alex is also mid-makeout on his leather couch with a HOT WOMAN. The PHONE RINGS. Alex grabs it.

ALEX
Yup.

GIGI
Hey, sorry to bug you again. Quick question.

ALEX
(to his hot lady)
Would you excuse me a second, babe?

Alex walks into the hallway.

GIGI
I'm making out with a guy - PG stuff - and then he mentions he's going out of town, so he's gonna be out of touch.

ALEX
Run.

GIGI
But maybe he is going out of town.

ALEX
To where? The Arab Emirates? Where is he going that he has to be out of touch?

Gigi opens the bathroom door and SHOUTS down the hall.

GIGI
Where are you going out of town to again?

GREGORY (O.S.)
Pittsburgh.

GIGI
Pittsburgh.

ALEX
Run.

GIGI
So, now what? I'm just supposed to run from every guy who doesn't like me?

ALEX
Uhh - yeah.

GIGI
There's not going to be anyone left.

Alex LAUGHS.

ALEX
OK, I don't know why I'm saying this - but I actually think I know a nice guy who you might like.

GIGI
Yeah?

ALEX
Yeah. He's a friend of my brother's. Bill. We'll all meet for a drink - it'll be good.

Gigi smiles.

GIGI
So, I'm in his bathroom right now. What do I now?

ALEX
You gotta come out eventually. But I'd really take my time. Let him sweat.

He hangs up. Gigi finds some Crest Whitestrips and - with determination - decides to APPLY THEM.

INT. GYM - EVENING

Anna's rolling up mats, etc. as a sweaty Ben approaches.

BEN
So, we ran into each other.

ANNA
You came to my class.

BEN
I didn't know it was your class.

ANNA
You called and asked me.

BEN
But you didn't call me back.

ANNA
Because you said not to call back if it was my class. Which it was.

Ben recommits.

BEN
We ran into each other.

Anna LAUGHS.

ANNA
Totally. A couple of innocent folks - by happenstance - doing their daily workout near one another.

BEN
Exactly. Thank you.

As Anna picks up her bag and walks past him -

ANNA
Wanna swim?

Ben watches her go, not sure she's serious.

INT. GYM POOL - NIGHT

Big indoor pool. Clearly closed, lights off. Anna opens the door with a KEY, Ben follows.

BEN
I was just thinking - why can't we be friends? Am I not allowed to make friends anymore? Am I not allowed to be friends with hot people? What kind of reverse prejudice is that?

ANNA
I hear you. Am I supposed to not be friends with a guy just because he's married, and happens to have this insane smile and this ass that makes me want to dry hump?

BEN
I think I just fell in love. A girl who talks about a dry hump.

ANNA
Classy, right?

BEN
Classy is lame.

Anna sits at the edge of the pool.

ANNA
So, friends, right?

BEN
Totally.

And with that, Anna pulls off her top. And then her sweats. And, totally naked, slides into the pool.

ANNA
You wanna come in?

BEN
I'm sorry. I don't trust myself.

ANNA
OK. You can just watch.

He does.

BEN
You may be the best friend I've ever had.

Anna LAUGHS, and then dunks her head under the water.

INT. HIGHLANDTOWN HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Ben comes in the front door, drops his gym bag. Janine sits on the couch flipping through a magazine. He leans in to kiss her on the cheek. She does not look happy.

JANINE
Honey - you smell different.

Ben pulls back smoothly.

BEN
Different how?

JANINE
I don't know.

BEN
Well that's an odd thing to say.

She looks at him. He tries to coolly meet her gaze.

JANINE
Maybe it's the ashtray and cigarettes I found. In the side yard. What part of "my dad died of lung cancer" is hard for you to wrap your brain around?

BEN
What?

JANINE
Do not lie to me, Ben. Please.

BEN
Are you serious? We have like eight thousand undocumented workers in this house daily. You find cigarettes, and you automatically assume they're mine?

JANINE
Well, yes.

BEN
Honey, I'm not lying. And you are really freaking out. I think the renovation is getting to you because nothing is going on. Just please - relax.

Ben walks away. Off Janine, wanting to believe him.

EXT. BALTIMORE YACHT CLUB - DOCK - DAY

Ben walks to a boat at the end of the dock. He stands, unsure, before deciding to KNOCK on the side of the boat. NEIL emerges - unshaven, possibly unshowered.

NEIL
Ah. My first visitor.

BEN
This boat is sick. How come you never invited me out before?

NEIL
Well, this was supposed to be just for Beth and I - for our retirement. Leave our jobs. Sell the house. Take off.

Neil is clearly having a tough time. Ben doesn't know what to say. They're silent for a second.

NEIL (CONT'D)
Sorry. Where are my manners? Permission to board granted. I'll show you around.

Ben smiles, steps on to the boat.

EXT. INNER HARBOR - DAY

CLOSE ON: A cigarette being lit. WIDEN to reveal Neil smoking on the upper deck of his boat, steering it out into the bay. Ben stands across from him, looking on.

NEIL
(re: cigarette)
Sorry.

BEN
It's OK.

Neil switches to his left hand, away from Ben.

NEIL
So Janine sent you to check on me?

BEN
Yeah. Pretty much.

NEIL
Any message from Beth?

Ben shakes his head no. Neil seems disappointed.

BEN
I think she's been busy getting ready for her sister's funeral though, so...

NEIL
Her sister's *what*?

BEN
Wedding. Her sister's wedding. What did I say?

Neil is now LAUGHING HARD.

NEIL
You said funeral.

BEN
No, I didn't. Shit, did I?

Neil LAUGHS HARDER. Even Ben sees the humor.

NEIL
The marriage thing is weird, man. I never thought Beth would give me an ultimatum.

BEN
Really? Why not? That's what women do.

NEIL
Right. I forgot. That's how Janine got you to bite the bullet.

BEN
Yup.

Neil looks at Ben, curious.

NEIL
Do you regret it?

BEN
No.

NEIL
So you're happy? You'd say you're happily married?

Ben looks at Neil as if he's crazy.

BEN
I love Janine.

Neil takes a drag and looks out over the harbor.

INT. BO BROOKS CRAB HOUSE - NIGHT

We PAN down one of the long tables to find Beth, SMACKING a crab with a mallet. HARD. AND LOUD. The others at the table turn to look at her, annoyed. And that's when we see - there seems to be a party and SPEECH underway.

COUSIN
Now, I know when my cousin Paige says those vows tomorrow, there are going to be hearts breaking all over the world.

Beth's sister, Paige, smiles.

COUSIN (CONT'D)
So, keep in mind, her sister Beth is still on the market.

The cousin WINKS at Beth. Beth goes white.

COUSIN (CONT'D)
Sure, she's an older model, but she's still got a lot of miles left in her. But don't stay on the lot too long, Bethie, or next year's models will --

KEN MURPHY, 60s, nearly tramples guests to grab the mic.

KEN
OK - that's enough of the speeches. Time to eat. So enjoy the crab. And the yellow stuff is not hot mustard, it's the crab's hepatopancreas.

Mixed reaction from the crowd as Ken puts the mic down. He starts to return to his table - when he sees Beth trying to make a sneaky exit. He catches up to her.

KEN (CONT'D)
Bethie, your cousin Jay has always been a jackass.

BETH
I know. And even he's married.

KEN
So, you'll get married a little bit later than some people. Big deal. You never did anything the way every one else did it, and that's what I've always thought was so great about you.

BETH
I'm your oldest daughter, and I'm the only one not married. If this was Fiddler on the Roof you'd have to sacrifice me or something.

Ken laughs and puts his arm around Beth.

KEN
Honey, look. When everyone else was just going to camp at the Y, you borrowed my New York Times, found some arts camp in the Berkshires, wrote away for information, then got accepted on your own. You were nine. You never did things the way everyone else did.

BETH
Why not?

KEN
Because that's you. That's why you're my favorite daughter.

Beth's eyes go WIDE.

BETH
I don't think you're supposed to say that.

KEN
Well, I don't give a shit. I'm retired, and I'll say what I want. I'll say it into the mic if you want --

BETH
That's OK.

KEN
It's true, though.

BETH
I know.

They HUG.

INT. FRAZIER'S ON THE AVENUE - NIGHT

Gigi sits sipping a drink, alone, when Alex comes in the door and goes directly to her table.

ALEX
Sorry I'm late.

GIGI
That's OK. I like a little time before a blind date - prepare myself mentally, remind myself not to tell the story about my molars --

ALEX
He's not coming.

Alex motions to the WAITRESS to bring them another round.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Can't wait to hear that story about the molars, though.

GIGI
How can he already not like me?

ALEX
I screwed up. I told Bill it was Thursday, but I meant Tuesday.

Gigi is disappointed. The waitress drops off their drinks. They toast - then observe the SCENE AT THE BAR.

GIGI
Awesome. I'm stuck here with a guy who can't distinguish Tuesday from Thursday - and meanwhile this girl -
(motions to GIRL at the bar)
- she's probably meeting her soul mate as we speak.

The GIRL is standing between TWO GUYS.

ALEX
Nope.

GIGI
How do you know?

ALEX
See the guy trying to work the Tom Cruise thing. She's interested. He's not.

GIGI
You cannot tell from a cursory glance that he's not interested.

ALEX
Actually, I can. I manage a restaurant. I see this stuff go down every night. Watch --

As if on cue, Tom Cruise Guy BANGS his elbow into the GIRL, hard, causing her to spill her drink. Tom Cruise Guy sees, but doesn't acknowledge. Alex looks smug.

GIGI
Man, you have a gift.

ALEX
And check out droopy dawg on her other side. He can buy her drinks all night, and she'll insist there's no "spark."

GIGI
Maybe there isn't. You need a spark.

ALEX
The "spark" thing is bullshit.

GIGI
Really? Enlighten me.

ALEX
Guys invented the "spark" so they could not call and treat you kind of bad and keep you guessing, and then convince you that the anxiety and fear that it creates in you is actually a "spark." And you all buy it. You love it. You all thrive on it because you all love drama.

GIGI
I don't.

ALEX
Really? So you don't wait until the last minute on deadlines, or on phone bills, because you love the drama of not knowing whether you'll make it?

She's busted.

GIGI
Maybe.

ALEX
And let me guess - when you were stalking Conor that night - were you obsessing about him calling for days, even though the date was just kind of mediocre?

GIGI
OK. Yeah.

ALEX
See, you thrive on drama. You gotta be more like me - if a girl likes me great, if not, there are plenty more like her - probably with smaller pores and bigger implants.

GIGI
That's beautiful.

ALEX
Thanks.

They continue drinking and observing the scene.

GIGI
Why are you sharing all this inside dating information with me again?

ALEX
I dunno. I like you.

GIGI
You do?

ALEX
Don't start doodling my name on your binder. I just mean, I like you, like I like basset hounds. They're kinda pathetic - so you want to cheer them up.

GIGI
Again with the sensitivity.

Alex smiles at her. Gigi can't help but smile back.

INT. HIGHLANDTOWN HOUSE - MORNING

Janine walks down the hallway, with JAVIER (40, stocky), her contractor. She's inspecting the crown molding.

JANINE
It looks good.

JAVIER
Yes.

JANINE
He does good work.

JAVIER
He's very good.

Janine stops and looks at Javier. He looks back at her.

JANINE
Javier.

JAVIER
Yes.

JANINE
Javier, if I asked you an honest question, do you think you could give me an honest answer?

JAVIER
I think so.

JANINE
Good. Because I think some of your guys have been - smoking.

Janine looks at Javier. It's awkwardly silent.

JANINE (CONT'D)
Javier?

JAVIER
Is that the question?

JANINE
Yes.

JAVIER
Oh. It seemed like a statement.

JANINE
The question part was implied -

JAVIER
I didn't really hear it in the inflection-

JANINE
Javier - have your guys been smoking or not?

JAVIER
No, ma'am. My guys don't smoke on the job site. They're all good guys.

JANINE
Are you sure your guys aren't sneaking around here? And smoking? And lying to me? And -- smoking?

She's starting to freak Javier out.

JAVIER
I'm pretty sure.

JANINE
I need you to be honest with me, Javier. Because I can't have someone lying to me. To my face. Under my roof. On my time.

JAVIER
(very softly)
That's a lot of prepositions...

Janine does not hear him, and barrels on -

JANINE
I mean, there is no reason for that kind of dishonesty, is there? IS THERE? I mean, we made promises to one another --

Javier looks at her - what the hell is she talking about?

JANINE (CONT'D)
What I mean is, we had a contract. Which is like making promises to each other, right?

JAVIER
Maybe I should just get back to work.

JANINE
Yes. Fine. Good idea.

Javier starts to leave.

JANINE (CONT'D)
But, we're good here, right? Me and you?

Blank stare from Javier. Janine slaps on a smile.

JANINE (CONT'D)
Okay, great. The molding really does look great.

Javier gives a forced smile, and heads back to work.

INT. MT. VERNON ROW HOUSE - DAY

TWO WELL BUILT MEN (SKIP and LARRY) sip from bottles of Volvic water as they wander through a kitchen, inspecting the cabinetry. Conor comes into to frame, wearing a toned down version of his "gay friendly" clothes.

CONOR
Hello, my name is Conor. Please sign in whenever you get a chance.

He gestures to a guest book on the kitchen island - next to which Anna stands. Conor joins her.

ANNA
This is insane. You're like the Liza Minelli of real estate.

CONOR
I know. Your friend Mary's a genius.

The house is TEEMING WITH GAY COUPLES - opening closets, admiring floors, munching on complimentary cookies.

ANNA
Alright. Gotta run.

CONOR
You got a class?

ANNA
Uh, no. Just some stuff. See you later?

CONOR
Sure.

Conor goes in for a HUG, but Anna's not ready for it - so he just ends up grabbing her. It's awkward. She leaves, Conor tries to play it off, looks around the room.

Skip and Larry look at him sympathetically.

CONOR (CONT'D)
What?

SKIP
She's holding out on you, isn't she?

CONOR
I'm not sure I get your meaning.

LARRY
It's obvious. She won't sleep with you. It's written all over your puppy dog face.

Conor looks at them, decides not to fight it.

CONOR
It's killing me. Literally. I'm dying.

Skip and Larry move closer, Larry grabs a plate.

LARRY
Here, have a cookie.

CONOR
I just - I have no idea what she's doing. I cannot read her signals - at all. We used to sleep together - all the time. Well, that's not true, I don't know why I said that, it wasn't all the time. But it did happen - I know I'm not making this up. And then, out of nowhere, it stops. But she still calls, she stops by, she sleeps on my couch, she wants a massage, she leaves cute messages - but it never goes ANYWHERE. I mean, what is she doing?

LARRY
Honestly - we may not have the best insight. Gay signals have nothing to do with straight signals.

SKIP
He's right. Like - here's "I want to sleep with you".

He looks at Larry. Larry looks back at him. They don't break their gaze.

LARRY
One, two, three - that's it. Three seconds or more - it's on.

SKIP
Here's "I don't want to sleep with you."

Skip look at Larry again. Larry meets his gaze.

LARRY
One, two -
(he looks away)
No. Thanks for playing. Move along.

SKIP
It's that simple.

CONOR
You're right. That's no help at all.

LARRY
But listen - I can tell you this. Gay or straight, you're not going to get anywhere by being inactive. She clearly likes you - maybe she just wants you to be a man and do something. So the next time you're in the position - don't take no for an answer.

Skip looks at Larry, concerned.

SKIP
That sounds like felonious advice.

LARRY
You're right. Let me rephrase. Don't take maybe for an answer.

Conor takes this in - that's not a bad idea.

INT. ANNA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Cute studio apartment. And Ben is in the bed. Anna walks in from the bathroom, in a robe. Ben watches her.

BEN
Wait. Stop.

ANNA
What?

BEN
Shit. This is bad.

ANNA
What?

BEN
I am so into you.

Anna BEAMS. She joins him in bed.

BEN (CONT'D)
I'm lying here watching you and I seriously have never felt this way before. I have to forcibly make my brain stop thinking about you. I mean, all the time.

ANNA
Why stop?

She looks at Ben. He's not smiling.

BEN
Because I don't do stuff like this.

ANNA
Stuff like what?

BEN
Like having sex with women who are not my wife.

ANNA
First of all, I'm not women. I'm just one.

He waits.

BEN
What's second of all?

ANNA
I didn't have a second of all.

BEN
I thought second of all was going to make me feel better.

Anna thinks.

ANNA
Second of all - I can't stop thinking about you, either.

They look at each other for a LONG MOMENT.

BEN
I have to tell her.

ANNA
What?

BEN
I have to tell her.

Anna's eyes light up, but she tries to cover.

ANNA
I don't want to push you to --

BEN
I want to be with you. And I can't do that if I'm lying to her.

ANNA
You know what's best.

As Ben pulls her to him, she lets a smile take hold.

FADE TO CHAPTER CARD: **...IF HE'S MARRIED**

LOUIS, 60's, with a kind but very wise face, talks to the camera in his FORMAL DOORMAN attire, standing in front of a posh Upper East Side building.

LOUIS
Here's the thing - my daughter is happily married with kids and running a tanning salon on Staten Island. But if she wasn't, I'd tell her the same thing I'd like to tell a lot of the girls that come in and out of this building on the arm of a married guy.
(MORE)

LOUIS (CONT'D)
And here is that advice --- get stocks, cash, annuities, a deed in your name. Don’t settle for flowers and a shopping spree at Bendel’s. Think to the future. We all know that none of these guys is gonna leave his society wife and let her keep half the money and the classic eight on Park Avenue. So, I wanna tell these young ladies, as long as you only have the guy for a finite period of time -- get something that can last. Because I guarantee you - he won’t. And that’s the best fatherly advice I can give.

INT. RITE AID - DAY

Mary and Anna, in sweats and Ugg boots and dirty hair, both load their carts with cheap beauty products.

ANNA
I'm not picking out china patterns or anything - but I've never felt anything like this before.

MARY
This is crazy. I can't believe he's gonna leave his wife for you.

ANNA
No, he's not leaving his wife for me. He's just - he's a good guy. And he can't really explore what we could be if he's lying to her.

Mary looks at her.

ANNA (CONT'D)
He's kind of leaving his wife for me. Is this crazy? This is totally crazy. We barely know each other.

MARY
I don't know. Remember Becca, my sister's friend. Some guy waits on her at Bennigan's - by the end of the night they both knew they had found the one.

ANNA
You're totally right. It can happen.

MARY
Not for me.

ANNA
Well, what about texter?

MARY
Texter has yet to make any verbal contact. I mean, this guy could have had surgery that left him without a voice box, breathing through a stoma, and I'd never know because I never actually hear his voice.

ANNA
I doubt he has a stoma -

MARY
That's not the point. The point is - I can't text. I'm not charming via text. My sarcasm doesn't come through, I can't type fast enough on the little phone keyboard --

ANNA
So don't text.

MARY
It's not just texting. It's email and voicemail and snail mail -

ANNA
That's just mail -

MARY
Whatever. None of it's working. I've had a guy leave a voicemail for me at work, and then I call him back at home, and he emails me to my Blackberry, and then I text him to his cell and then he emails me to my home account from the plane phone -- and it just totally gets out of hand. I miss the days where you had one phone number with one answering machine that housed one cassette tape and either the cassette tape had a message from the guy or it didn't. That's it. Now you have to go around checking all your portals and get rejected by seven different technologies. It's exhausting.

Anna, who is trying a different shade of nail polish on each finger, calmly looks up at Mary.

ANNA
So what about the singer guy?

MARY
Jude. Yeah, I like him.

ANNA
That's great.

MARY
Totally. I felt like we connected.

INT. GIGI'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Gigi sits on the couch, wrapped in a blanket, eating graham crackers and watching SOME KIND OF WONDERFUL on TV. The phone RINGS.

GIGI
Hello.

INTERCUT WITH: INT. RED MAPLE - OFFICE - NIGHT

Even in the office we can hear the din of the bar scene.

ALEX
Oh, hey. You're home.

GIGI
Where am I supposed to be?

ALEX
Out. It's Saturday night.

GIGI
You won't let me go out with guys who don't like me. It's kind of limiting.

ALEX
I was just calling to let you know - I'm having a party at my place next weekend. You should come.

Gigi considers this.

GIGI
I don't know. Won't Conor be there? Might be kinda awkward.

ALEX
He's in DC for the weekend at some real estate conference. But there's gonna be a bunch of single guys.

GIGI
So I *will* have plenty of chances to be awkward. Thank god.

ALEX
Don't worry. I'll be there. I'll talk you through it.

Gigi smiles.

GIGI
So, the party - is it like a big party, more of a mellow hang or --

A CRASH outside Alex's office.

ALEX
Yeah, OK. Gotta go - I think someone just dropped 84 wine glasses.

Gigi hangs up, and goes back to watching her movie.

CLOSE ON: The TV screen as Mary Stuart Masterson (as WATTS) and Eric Stoltz (as KEITH) hang out in a garage.

WATTS
Amanda Jones is no minor leaguer who'll be swept off her feet at the touch of your amateur lips.

KEITH
I think I can handle it.

WATTS
It's cool. I was just gonna work on it with you but - if you're comfortable...great.

KEITH
Wait. How do you work on it?

WATTS
Pretend I'm a girl, OK? I mean, pretend I'm her...Amanda.

Gigi sits up. A light bulb has gone off. As she watches Keith and Watts kiss on screen, a smile crosses her face.

INT. MCCORMICK SPICES CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS - DAY

Gigi blows in, dumps her things and turns to Janine:

GIGI
He's into me.

JANINE
Awesome. I knew it.
(she hugs Gigi)
Who's this now?

GIGI
Alex. It's totally clear to me now.
He's Watts.

JANINE
What?

GIGI
From *Some Kind of Wonderful*.

JANINE
Wait, isn't Mary Stuart Masterson Watts?

GIGI
Yes.

JANINE
So, why aren't *you* Watts?

GIGI
I'm Eric Stoltz.

JANINE
What?

GIGI
Alex is Watts because Watts helps Eric Stoltz go on a date with Amanda Jones, but really she's in love with Eric Stoltz herself.

JANINE
Wait - so who's Amanda Jones?

GIGI
I guess Conor at first. Now men in general. But that's not the point. The point is -- he's into me.

JANINE
You know, I knew there had to be a reason he was spending all that time with you.

GIGI
I know! It's so obvious now -- there are so many signs.

JANINE
Oooh, gimme the signs. I love to hear about the signs.

Janine rolls her chair closer to Gigi's desk.

GIGI
At first they were small - like when I first called he said "Good to hear from you" -

JANINE
Totally good sign.

GIGI
Right? And then the next time I called he was with a woman - but he still took the call. And talked to me for a while.

JANINE
You know it was a woman?

GIGI
He called her "babe."

JANINE
A guy does not leave a woman - to talk to another woman - unless there's something going on.

GIGI
I know! And it gets more obvious. I mean, please - there was no guy he was going to fix me up with. The fix up was him.

JANINE
Wait - really?

GIGI
He shows up - without this fictitious Bill character - and the two of us basically have a date. And then he calls me to invite me to a party at his place.

JANINE
You're right. He so likes you.

Janine rolls her chair up to Gigi's computer screen.

JANINE (CONT'D)
Let's look up places for your destination wedding. Would you guys wanna do Napa Valley - I've always wanted to go there.

Gigi laughs but doesn't fight as Janine starts searching.

INT. BALTIMORE BLADE OFFICES - DAY

Mary sits at her desk, surrounded by her gays. They are all looking at her computer screen.

CLOSE ON: A MYSPACE PAGE. NAME:"YOUR SOUL-UTION" SEX: MALE AGE: 29 FROM: FUNKYTOWN FRIENDS : 1282

MARY
There's no way he's already called - we only met for coffee last night. I mean we video iChatted. While holding coffee. Kinda like having coffee.

Nathan hands her the phone.

NATHAN
Just call your voice mail.

MARY
And he told me he had a gig last night, so he probably got in real late. Did I tell you he was singer?

BRUCE
Just call.

Mary cradles the receiver with her shoulder and dials.

JOSHUA
On speaker.

Mary hits the SPEAKERPHONE button.

YOUR SOUL-UTION (O.S.)
(SINGING, in a sexy voice)
Maaaary. Mary, Mary, Mary, Maaaary. Oh my Maaary.

Mary is clearly charmed. The gays all SWOON.

NATHAN
I just got hard.

The other guys shush him.

YOUR SOUL-UTION (O.S.)
Hey Mary, it's Jude. Just wanted to tell you again how special it was to meet you. So, call me back. Bye.

BEEP. Mary BEAMS.

BRUCE
Amazing. He'll sing to your babies.

Mary basks in the attention. Then, ANOTHER BEEP.

YOUR SOUL-UTION (O.S.)
(SINGING, from speakerphone)
Jeeeeny. Jenny, Jenny, Jenny, Jeeeeny.

All heads whip around at stare at the SPEAKER PHONE.

YOUR SOUL-UTION (CONT'D)
Hey Jenny, it's Jude. Just wanted to -- oh shit, - what number did I call?

SOME RUSTLING NOISES, and a HANG UP, followed by a dial tone. Mary stares at the phone - then pushes a BUTTON.

AUTOMATED VOICE
ALL MESSAGES DELETED.

They all head wordlessly back to work.

INT. HOME DEPOT - DAY

CLOSE ON: TWO SEEMINGLY IDENTICAL PLANKS OF WOOD. We pull back to reveal Ben and Janine, in the wide aisle of Home Depot, as Janine really studies the two pieces of wood. Finally, she POINTS to one of them.

JANINE
That one.

BEN
No. That's the laminate.

JANINE
That one isn't real hardwood floor?

BEN
No. But it looks exactly the same - at like one one hundredth of the cost.

Janine considers this.

JANINE
I still wanna go with the real wood.

BEN
But you can't even tell the difference.

JANINE
That's not the point.

BEN
Then what's the point?

JANINE
I just don't like the way it's pretending to be wood. If you're not wood, then don't try to look like wood.

BEN
I don't think it's pretending --

Ben is making light. But Janine is all business.

JANINE
It's a lie. Just be up front - tell people what you really are.

Ben takes this in. His cheeks start to burn.

BEN
You're right. I'm sorry. You're totally right.

JANINE
It's OK. Maybe we should look at the grills and come back.

As she starts to steer their giant cart away, Ben just stands there, fused to the ground. Finally:

BEN
I slept with someone.

Janine stops, doesn't say anything.

BEN (CONT'D)
I --

JANINE
I heard you.

She doesn't turn to face him. Total silence.

JANINE (CONT'D)
You tell me this in Home Depot because you know how I hate a public scene.

BEN
That is not why I -

JANINE
I knew it. I KNEW IT. You asshole.

BEN
I'm sorry. I'm so sorry.

JANINE
And it's you that's been smoking, too, isn't it?

BEN
What? Why does that matter?

Janine turns to Ben. She is IRATE.

JANINE
HAVE - YOU - BEEN - SMOKING?

BEN
No. No. I haven't.

Janine just STARES AT HIM, FUMING.

BEN (CONT'D)
Look, I talked to Neil, and he said I could stay on his boat for a while if --

Now Janine's eyes go wide with disbelief.

JANINE
EXCUSE ME? And now you want to move out? You're like - what - leaving me?

Ben looks confused, but is trying to roll with it.

BEN
No. NO. I just assumed that you wouldn't want me to --

JANINE
We're not going to deal with this? We're not going to figure out a way to work through this?

BEN
I just assumed that once I told you, you would want me -- out.

JANINE
Is that what you want?

BEN
(almost a whisper)
No.

JANINE
OK.

She heads down the aisle with the cart. Ben follows, confused - that didn't go how he thought it would.

EXT. GRAMERCY MANSION - DAY

The lush grounds surrounding a beautiful turn-of-the-century mansion. The procession of a wedding has just begun. TWO ADORABLE FLOWER GIRLS start things off.

Then Beth's sister, Laura, processes down the aisle with her husband, STEVEN. Beth's sister Catherine and her husband GEORGE are next. Big smiles all around.

Then Beth appears at the end of the aisle with her escort - BUDDY, a 12 year old CHOCOLATE LAB, wearing a coral bow tie. Beth forces a smile as she processes with Buddy - who stops to piss on a chair leg. Beth is not happy.

INT. GRAMERCY MANSION - DAY

A lavish reception. Beth takes her seat next to DAN, 40s. Dan looks over at Beth's place card.

DAN
You must be Beth.

BETH
Yep.

DAN
I've heard a lot about you from Paige. I'd been lobbying for weeks to be seated next to her single sister.

BETH
Oh, yeah? So you are -
(looks at his placecard)
Dan.

DAN
Uh, sort of.

BETH
Hmmm?

DAN
Well, I'm actually a wiccan. So I have a magickal name.

BETH
Really?

DAN
It's Brother Phoenix East-Horse. But I didn't know if that would fit on a card.

Beth slaps on a fake smile, and grabs for the wine.

INT. ALEX'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

A PARTY is in full swing. Typical affair for someone in their late 20's - mediocre food but decent alcohol.

Gigi stands, somewhat uncomfortably, near the Chex Mix. She tries smiling at a TALL GIRL, who ignores her. So Gigi continues absently and compulsively shoving handfuls of Chex Mix into her mouth.

NATHAN
It makes your breath stink.

GIGI
Pardon?

Gigi looks up to see Nathan and Bruce - Mary's gay coworkers who are now decked out in full-on Saturday night gay mode - standing next to her.

NATHAN
Chex Mix. I learned the hard way. I made out with a guy after eating like a bag of the stuff. He said my breath smelled like trout.

Gigi puts her handful of Chex Mix back.

GIGI
Thanks for the tip.

NATHAN
I'm sorry. That was rude. And that guy I made out with was a total asshole.

BRUCE
You want me to smell you? I'm sure you don't smell like trout.

Gigi LAUGHS.

GIGI
Thanks. I'm good.

She cups her hand and surreptitiously checks her breath.

NATHAN
I'm Nathan. This is Bruce.

GIGI
Gigi. How do you guys know Alex?

BRUCE
We don't. Our friend Mary heard about it from some guy named Conor.

Gigi smiles in recognition.

NATHAN
How do you know Alex?

GIGI
I hope - I mean I'm pretty sure - something is about to happen between us.

NATHAN
So, you're here as like a guest, or like his date?

BRUCE
I hate that - when you don't know if you're a date - so you don't know if you should bring a friend, or if you're like co-hosting or if you should stay til the end to have alone time --

Suddenly, a look of DOUBT sweeps across Gigi's face.

GIGI
He didn't really say.

She reflexively GRABS FOR THE CHEX MIX and starts gorging on it again. Nathan stops her.

GIGI (CONT'D)
But I'm sure I'm more than just a guest. I mean - there have been signs.

NATHAN
Cool.

BRUCE
I did get a slight waft of trout, though. Take a mint.

He reaches in his pocket. Gigi looks at him gratefully.

GIGI
Thank you.

INT. GRAMERCY MANSION - NIGHT

Dinner is over. The dance floor is crowded. The bride, Paige, is out there. Beth's dad is dancing with her mom.

Beth's dad gives Beth a wink as she heads onto to the dance floor with DOMINIC, 50s and fat.

DOMINIC
So, where's Neil?

BETH
We actually broke up.

DOMINIC
No way. You guys were together for like ten years.

BETH
Seven. But yes, a long time.

They continue to dance.

DOMINIC
Too bad cousins can't marry, huh? Cuz then we could maybe --

BETH
Eeew Dominic, gross.

Beth swats Dominic on the arm, and he laughs. And then they are distracted by a COMMOTION ON THE DANCE FLOOR.

Everyone has stopped dancing. They are looking to the floor, near the band. Beth pushes her way through to see-

HER DAD. HE HAS FALLEN TO HIS KNEES. HE'S CLUTCHING HIS CHEST. AND HIS FACE IS TURNING AN ASHY, TERRIFYING GRAY.

INT. ALEX'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The place is packed. Gigi is smashed into a hallway, trying to look relaxed. Alex comes up behind her.

ALEX
I had no idea it would be such a madhouse.

Gigi turns to him and smiles.

GIGI
Hey. Great party.

ALEX
Are any guys hitting on you? Do you need me to evaluate their level of interest?

GIGI
They were gay. Even I know that their level of interest was probably low.

ALEX
Well - too bad Bill couldn't make it. I still think you guys would hit it off.

Gigi smiles knowingly - on to Alex's scam.

GIGI
Oh OK. Right.
(air quotes)
"Bill".

Alex doesn't know how to take that.

ALEX
Anyway - I'm on my way to put out some more liquor. But it looks like the food could use some refreshing --

He looks at the FOOD TABLE. Everything is empty.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Would you mind helping? I mean, just refill the chips and stuff?

GIGI
You mean, kind of like --- co-hosting?

Gigi LOOKS ELATED. Alex looks CONFUSED.

ALEX
Uhh, OK. The chips are on top of the fridge.

He walks away. Gigi smiles BIG.

INT. ALEX'S APARTMENT - A LITTLE LATER

The party is now even more crowded. Gigi weaves her way through the crowd. She's deftly holding SIX DRINKS, passing them off to various people as she walks.

She stops at the food table, rearranges a few bowls.

She CATCHES ALEX'S EYE across the room, he's talking to friends. She smiles and gives a THUMBS UP. He gives an awkward thumbs up back and returns to his conversation.

INT. ALEX'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - A LITTLE LATER

Gigi is in the kitchen, mixing up some DIP. She chats with a couple of PARTY-GOERS, very much at home.

PARTY-GOER #1
Really great party.

GIGI
Thanks. When Alex said he wanted to have a party, I was like "Let's do it."

PARTY-GOER #2
Thanks so much for having us.

GIGI
No problem. Anytime.

An attractive TALL GIRL enters the kitchen, and starts LOOKING IN THE CUPBOARDS. Gigi watches with interest.

GIGI (CONT'D)
Can I help you find something?

The Tall Girl finds a BOWL in the cabinet, and grabs it.

TALL GIRL
No, that's OK. I got it.

She brings the bowl over to the counter, and starts emptying Gigi's dip into the bowl. Gigi is THROWN.

TALL GIRL (CONT'D)
Thanks for mixing that up.

GIGI
What?

TALL GIRL
Alex asked me to get the dip together. Thanks for getting it started.

Gigi's face grows red. The Tall Girl tastes the dip.

TALL GIRL (CONT'D)
Hmmm - could use a little more dill.

Then the Tall Girl deftly grabs the dip, and chips, and heads back out to the party. Gigi looks to the confused party-goers, not pleased.

INT. ALEX'S APARTMENT - LATER

Bruce and Nathan wave to Gigi as they leave. People are getting coats - the crowd is definitely thinning.

Gigi spots Alex in the kitchen and makes a beeline.

GIGI
When someone's underwear ends up in your toaster oven - it's been a good party.

Alex looks at the toaster oven and laughs.

ALEX
I guess people had fun.

Then, the TALL GIRL emerges.

TALL GIRL
Alex, you want me to start cleaning up?

Gigi STARES DAGGERS AT HER.

GIGI
That's sweet of you. But I thought I'd stick around, so I'll take care of it.

TALL GIRL
No. I got it.

The tall girl shoots Gigi a dirty look as she grabs a trash bag. Gigi grabs one, too. Alex looks mystified.

ALEX
Knock yourselves out.

INT. ALEX'S APARTMENT - STILL LATER

It is really late. Everyone's gone - except the TALL GIRL and ALEX, who sit on the couch playing a NBA LIVE on the XBOX. Gigi enters from the kitchen.

GIGI
I think I've rounded up the last of the beer bottles.

The tall girl and Alex do not look up from the game. Gigi stands there awkwardly.

GIGI (CONT'D)
So, umm - what game is this?

They ignore her. She looks around. It's awkward.

GIGI (CONT'D)
Well, maybe I should just -- you know -- I mean it's past three and --

TALL GIRL
YES!! Suck it!

Alex tosses down his controller.

ALEX
You are sensational.

The tall girl beams. Gigi flinches.

TALL GIRL
Did you say it's past three? Man, I gotta go.

Gigi suppresses a SMILE. The Tall Girl gives Alex a hug, and heads out. Gigi, finally alone with Alex, sits next to him on the couch. They're silent for a moment.

ALEX
Thanks for staying and helping clean up - but I really gotta get to bed.

GIGI
Is that an invitation?

ALEX
What?

GIGI
I'm sorry. That was cheesy. I'm not good at this.

But then -- before Alex knows what's happening, Gigi is LUNGING at him. She puts his face in her hands, and starts to KISS HIM. REALLY KISS HIM. Finally, Gigi pulls away. She looks breathless.

GIGI (CONT'D)
Yes!

Alex looks a little afraid.

GIGI (CONT'D)
I knew it. I knew it. The best relationships grow out of friendships.

She goes in to kiss him again. This time he stops her.

ALEX
Wait - what?

GIGI
Ummmm....

ALEX
Now you and I are in a relationship?

GIGI
Well, I'd say if we're not at relationship station--ship, we're at least on the track.

Alex gets up off the couch.

ALEX
And why would you think that, exactly?

GIGI
Because there were - you know - signs.

ALEX
Really? Like what?

GIGI
Ummm - it was good to hear from me. You talked to me even when you were with a girl. I felt something...

She trails off. Alex is not pleased.

ALEX
What are you talking about? What have I been saying since I met you? If a guy wants to date you HE WILL MAKE IT HAPPEN. HE WILL ASK YOU OUT. DID I ASK YOU OUT?

GIGI
(softly)
No.

ALEX
Why would you do this?

GIGI
I thought you were Watts.

Alex doesn't even hear her.

ALEX
Why do women do this? Why do they build this stuff up in their minds, take each little thing a guy does and twist it into something else --

Gigi stands there, embarrassed, taking Alex's berating.

GIGI
I'd rather be like that - than like you.

ALEX
Excuse me?

GIGI
Maybe I dissect each little thing, and put myself out there too much, and maybe I even thrive on the drama of it all-- but at least that means I still care. You think you've won because women are expendable to you? Sure, you don't get hurt or make an ass of yourself that way, but you don't fall in love that way, either. You haven't won, Alex. You're alone.

Gigi grabs her bag.

GIGI (CONT'D)
I may do a lot of stupid shit - but I know I'm a lot closer to finding someone than you are.

Gigi turns and heads out the door.

INT. GIGI'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Gigi looks at the phone, and then finally DIALS.

GIGI
Hey Janine, I'm sorry it's so late, but I just - don't start picking out your bridesmaid dress, OK? I know this isn't the first time this has happened, it's just - this one wasn't about whether he liked me. I just really liked him.

Gigi hangs up, lays on the bed, snaps off the light.

INT. POTOMAC HOUSE - DAY

Ken Murphy, Beth's dad, lies in bed, in a Notre Dame sweatshirt, with papers, and books surrounding him. Beth clears his breakfast dishes off of the bed.

BETH
You want anything else?

KEN
Yeah. Less of that cardboardy brown stuff. More regular people food.

BETH
The cardboardy brown stuff is called whole grain bread.

KEN
Maybe you could just fry me up a couple sausage links?

BETH
People who have just had heart attacks generally are not advised to eat animal fat, stuffed in synthetic casings.

Ken looks at her, with a wry smile.

KEN
Did I tell you that you're not only my favorite daughter, but you're also the prettiest? So much better looking than those other dogs. Seriously.

BETH
It's not gonna work this time. But I appreciate the effort.

Beth takes his dirty dishes and heads for the door.

INT. POTOMAC HOUSE - DEN - SAME

Beth hauls the dishes downstairs and through the den where Steven, Laura's husband, is on the couch, intently watching the golf channel.

STEVEN
Hey, Beth. Grab me a beer if you're going that way?

Beth rolls her eyes.

STEVEN (CONT'D)
And a little plate of cold cuts if there are any left?

Beth just keeps on walking.

INT. POTOMAC HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - SAME

Beth walks by Paige, on the couch, and DEVON, Paige's new husband, on the floor, surrounded by a mess of VINYL RECORDS. He has an old BOBBY DARIN tune BLARING.

BETH
You might wanna kill the volume just a smidge. My mom is finally taking a nap.

DEVON
You think your dad really wants to hang on to all this vinyl? My collection could use a bunch of these.

BETH
Turn it the fuck down.

Both Devon and Paige look at her, stunned.

INT. POTOMAC HOUSE - KITCHEN - SAME

The kitchen is a total MESS. Beth sets the dishes down in a precarious pile of other dishes, and sees her sisters Laura and Catherine at the kitchen table.

BETH
I finally got mom to lay down in the spare room. All we have left to eat is some old jelly and ramen noodles, so after I tackle some of these dishes, maybe we can go to the store. Our new brother is trying to co-opt dad's property before he's even dead.
(MORE)

BETH (CONT'D)
And Laura, your husband would really like a beer to go with his fifth consecutive hour of the golf channel.

Beth looks up. Laura is pointing to Catherine, who has her head in her hands. She's CRYING SOFTLY.

BETH (CONT'D)
It's OK. It's all gonna be OK.

CATHERINE
What am I gonna do without dad?

BETH
First of all, he's upstairs watching 'Oprah After The Show'.

LAURA
And second of all - you have us.

CATHERINE
But he's always been - the one who's there for me.

BETH
What about your husband? Where the hell is he?

CATHERINE
Playing ultimate frisbee. His team may make the quarterfinals.

Beth rolls her eyes. The DISHES crash in the sink.

INT. MCCORMICK SPICES CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS - DAY

Janine sits at Beth's desk, across from Gigi, who stares at her in disbelief. Janine fiddles with a TILE SAMPLE.

GIGI
Do you know who it is?

JANINE
(shaking her head "no")
It doesn't matter.

GIGI
So are you going to - leave - him?

JANINE
Gigi, he's my husband. He's not just some guy that didn't call me back. And he did admit it to me. He didn't wait to get caught. That takes courage.

Gigi is clearly STUNG.

JANINE (CONT'D)
I'm sorry. I didn't mean that. I know Alex was not just some guy.

GIGI
It's OK.

JANINE
It's my fault, you know.

GIGI
What?

JANINE
I'm willing to accept my responsibility in this. I forced him into getting married. He wasn't ready.

GIGI
Janine - this is not your fault.

JANINE
It is. I've - changed. I used to be fun. I was fun when we met.

GIGI
You're still fun.

A BEAT. Janine looks at Gigi, the tears come.

JANINE
We never have sex anymore.

GIGI
Lots of couples got through lulls.

JANINE
No. We never have sex. Realistically, what did I expect him to do?

GIGI
I don't think that's really --

She looks down at the TILE in her hand.

JANINE
This is too small. I gotta tell Javier.

GIGI
What?

JANINE
This tile. I gotta go. Tell Beth I took a personal day.

Janine grabs her purse, heads out as Gigi looks on.

FADE TO CARD: **...IF HE'S SLEEPING WITH SOMEONE ELSE**

MARIEL (50's, highly manicured, upper class type) sits on a yacht in what looks to be the French Riviera.

MARIEL
My first husband was unimpressive. I found him in bed with his big breasted secretary when I came home early from the Maldives. So unoriginal, it made me feel sorry for him. My second husband was a pinch more creative. Cheated on me with my sister - but made me believe that I was insane for being suspicious. At last - some intrigue, some mind games - though my sister's two year old eventually gave them up. But my last husband -- he was a gem. A veritable master at covering his tracks. I poured over his phone records, intercepted his credit card bills, had him followed on countless occasions - and never found a single shred of evidence. It wasn't until he died that I found out about the property he owned with his Austrian mistress. But the real master, I have to say -- is me. Three husbands -- countless boyfriends, and I haven't been caught yet.

INT. LAW OFFICES - HALLWAY - EVENING

Anna SQUEEZES Ben's hand as they stride down the hallway to his office. Anna is trying to suppress a smile.

ANNA
Oh my god, oh my god, oh my god...

Ben smoothly EXTRICATES his hand from Anna's. He nods to COWORKERS as they pass.

BEN
It was all you, babe.

ANNA
Oh my god, oh my god, oh my god.

Ben smiles at Anna, as they round the corner of the corridor to his office. He goes in, and she follows.

INT. BEN'S OFFICE - EVENING

Ben deftly shuts and locks the door behind them.

ANNA
OH. MY. GOD.

BEN
This is really good news.

ANNA
I cannot believe this. He liked my demo. Did you hear what he said? When he said it was hauntingly beautiful? Did you hear that part?

BEN
Yep. I was sitting right there.

Ben smiles, and pulls Anna to him.

ANNA
Thank you. Thank you so much.

With that, they start to KISS. It gets heated. CLOTHES START TO COME OFF. MOSTLY ANNA'S. They make their way over to the LEATHER SOFA.

BEN
How is it that every time I see your body, I'm shocked at how beautiful it is?

Anna smiles at the compliment. She starts to work on his shirt when: SOMEONE TRIES TO OPEN THE LOCKED DOOR.

BEN (CONT'D)
Dana, I need to go over the offering statement. Can I get a few minutes?

Ben continues to remove his shirt as he talks.

JANINE (O.S.)
It's not Dana.

BEN FREEZES. Literally freezes on top of Anna.

ANNA
Is -

Ben FRANTICALLY puts his hands over Anna's mouth. Then, working with speed and precision, he GATHERS ALL OF ANNA'S THINGS and shoves her - NAKED - into the CLOSET. There isn't enough room to stand, so she has to sit. She looks up at Ben, he closes the closet door.

He goes to the door of the office.

BEN
Shit. I told Dana to get this lock fixed. One sec.

JANINE
Why do you even lock it?

Ben re-buttons his shirt, gives the office a once over.

BEN
I'd never get anything done if I didn't.

Finally, Ben opens the door, and Janine is standing there, smiling.

JANINE
Can I come in?

BEN
Of course.

She makes a show of CLOSING AND LOCKING THE DOOR.

BEN (CONT'D)
What are you doing?

JANINE
Sit down.

Ben goes to sit behind his desk, confused.

BEN
OK.

Janine, clearly a little nervous, goes to straddle Ben at his desk chair. Her skirt is way too long to do this, so she has to regroup, and hike up the skirt. Ben glances over at the closet.

BEN (CONT'D)
Janine, what are you doing?

JANINE
I don’t know. I just thought - maybe we could, you know, relight the fire.

BEN
Honey, did you hear what I just said? I gotta get this offering statement out.

Ben picks up some papers, but Janine is not giving up.

JANINE
Look, I am trying here. Do you want to save our marriage or don't you?

Janine looks at Ben. Ben is SILENT.

INT. BEN'S OFFICE - CLOSET - SAME

Anna sits, holding back tears, as she listens closely.

BEN (O.S.)
Of course I do.

JANINE (O.S.)
Then you'll let me do this.

Then a ZIPPER OPENING, a chair CREAKING -

JANINE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Yeah, just like that, yeah...

We HOLD ON Anna as she sits there, stonefaced.

INT. RED MAPLE - BAR - EARLY EVENING

Alex has the staff (of about 10) assembled for the pre-shift meeting. He consults a clipboard as he talks.

ALEX
OK - Tyrone you bus 4 through 6 - and pitch in with the servers when you -

TYRONE
No...I'm on 8 thru 10. I'm always on 8 through 10. Been working here 18 months doing 8 through 10.

ALEX
Right. Luis you take 4 through 6.

The staff looks at each other - perplexed.

TYRONE
Dude. Luis quit like 10 months ago.

Alex rifles through his papers, not sure what he's looking for. He slams his clipboard on the bar.

ALEX
Do we even need to have this meeting? Seriously? Does this serve any purpose?

The group voice their opinions - a resounding "NO".

ALEX (CONT'D)
Good. Great. Get to work.

The group disperses, Alex heads around the bar. He sees Kelli Ann walking away and calls after her.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Hey, Kelli Ann - any calls for me?

KELLI ANN
Since you asked me 11 minutes ago? No, not a lot of phone traffic.

Kelli Ann starts to turn away as she sees Alex grab his cell phone, look at it, then put it down. He grabs a beer, takes a swig - then grabs his cell phone again - staring at it, willing it to ring. He puts it down again. A HUGE SMILE grows on Kelli Ann's face.

KELLI ANN (CONT'D)
Oh my god.

ALEX
What?

KELLI ANN
It's happened to you.

ALEX
What has happened to me?

KELLI ANN
What's her name?

ALEX
Who?

KELLI ANN
The girl, Alex.

ALEX
There's no girl.

Alex takes his beer and heads down the bar.

KELLI ANN
You can't hide it man. I know strung out and you are strung - out.

ALEX
Please -

KELLI ANN
This is amazing. Can't focus, right? Jumping every time your phone rings, checking your email 100 times a day. Wishing you could write songs. Feeling the need to bring up her name in random conversations...

Alex stops at the office door.

KELLI ANN (CONT'D)
It's always the same. And it has happened to you, my friend. Trust me.

Alex looks at Kelli Ann, her words settling in.

ALEX
Shit.

Kelli Ann smiles, and as she walks away -

KELLI ANN
Welcome to my world asshole.

Alex takes this in, KNOWING SHE'S RIGHT.

INT. BEN'S OFFICE - EVENING

Janine, now fully dressed, hovers by the door. Ben is back at his desk, eyes on his computer.

JANINE
You sure I can't interest you in a little beef and broccoli? I'm treating.

BEN
I really gotta get this stuff done.

Janine is clearly flailing. She starts to go.

JANINE
OK. I'll see you at home. I love you.

She looks at Ben. He has no choice.

BEN
(covering his anger)
I love you too.

Janine leaves. As soon as she's gone, Ben gets up, shuts the office door - and goes to the closet - when the door FLIES OPEN IN HIS FACE - NEARLY SMASHING HIM.

BEN (CONT'D)
I had no choice. What was I supposed to do when she -

ANNA
You make me sick to my stomach. You are a disgusting excuse for a man -

Anna pulls her clothes back on in a FURY.

BEN
I didn't want to do it, Anna. You know that it's you I want to be with -

He puts out a hand to try to touch her. She RECOILS.

ANNA
Are you kidding me? You will never lay a hand on me again. I may just be a piss poor girl from Dundalk who works at a gym - but I am so too good for you.

Anna storms out.

INT. GIGI'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Gigi sits on her couch, a pile of BILLS in her lap - most of which say LATE, OVERDUE, etc. She's on the PHONE.

GIGI
Dino, thank you again for letting me pay over the phone. I assure you this late payment thing will never happen again. Yep -- just trying to trim some of the drama out of my life.

A CALL WAITING BEEP.

GIGI (CONT'D)
That's my other line. OK. B-bye.

Gigi CLICKS OVER.

GIGI (CONT'D)
Hello?

MANS' VOICE
Hi, Gigi. This is Bill.

GIGI
Ummm -

BILL
Alex's friend. We were supposed to meet up - but Alex told me the wrong day.

Gigi lets this sink in.

GIGI
Bill. So you do exist.

BILL
I do. And I'd love to buy you dinner sometime if you're game.

GIGI
Yes. Sure. Why not?

She puts on a smile.

INT. DUNDALK HOUSE - DAY

Anna stands in the cluttered kitchen of her mom's house. She writes out a CHECK, leaves it on the counter. She looks to the living room, where Maya sleeps on the couch. She watches her for a second, struggling with a blanket, before heading over to her. She crouches next to the couch, helps her adjust the blanket.

ANNA
I'm gonna go. I left the check on the counter. It should at least get you through this month.

Maya opens her eyes and looks up at her, smiling.

MAYA
Thanks sweetie. I don't know what I would do without you.

Maya closes her eyes again. Anna sits there, watching her. Anna's eyes start to fill with tears - quietly, she begins crying. Maya finally notices.

MAYA (CONT'D)
Baby - what's the matter?

Maya struggles to sit up and hug her. Anna sits next to her on the couch, still trying to get it together.

MAYA (CONT'D)
Is it money? Because you can take back the check if -

ANNA
No, it's not that. I mean - yes, I'm broke - but it's not that. It's just -
(tearing up again)
I'm just so lost mom. I've been seeing this guy - who is exciting and amazing and thoroughly unavailable. I thought he was - the one - but he turned out to be such an asshole.

Maya nods, almost smiling.

ANNA (CONT'D)
And then there's -

MAYA
Conor -

ANNA
Yeah. Who I'm so horrible to. But he takes it. And he's - there. Waiting. But I just don't want to - I don't know -

MAYA
Settle? Like you think I did?

Anna looks at her mother, guilty.

MAYA (CONT'D)
Well, your father and I had a glorious life together.

ANNA
Are you kidding? All you talk about are the things you didn't do, the people you wish you could have been with, the Tim Buckleys - anything but the life you actually had.

Maya looks at her daughter.

MAYA
Those are just dreams Anna.

Anna tries to process this.

MAYA (CONT'D)
Now true - I did not like your father at all when we met.
(MORE)

MAYA (CONT'D)
Or after we got married for that matter. But let me tell you this - life with him was a hell of a lot better than life is without him.

Maya stands, walks slowly toward the kitchen.

MAYA (CONT'D)
There are worse things in life than settling.

ANNA
Like what?

MAYA
Like wishing you had.

Anna considers this.

INT. ANNA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Anna lays on her bed, staring at the ceiling.

The doorbell RINGS, Anna gets up to answer it. Almost as soon as she turns the knob, Conor is standing in the middle of her studio apartment. He is all amped up.

ANNA
Hey, sweetie.

She reaches up to give him a hug, he doesn't go for it.

CONOR
See, why did you call me sweetie?

Anna looks confused.

ANNA
Because we always call each other that.

CONOR
Why?

Anna doesn't have an answer for that.

CONOR (CONT'D)
I want to say something, OK? I mean, we call each other sweetie, and we fall asleep on the phone after talking for hours and I washed your hair for you after you had that shoulder surgery and everything - it's like we're together.

ANNA
I know that I -

CONOR
Let me finish. Maybe it's my fault. Maybe I haven't been clear about what I want. So let me be clear. I love hanging out, but I am so attracted to you, and I just - I want both. I want to make love to you. I know that sounds kind of embarrassing coming out of my mouth - I just freaked myself out, too - but it's true. And I'm not sure what happened, or why we stopped - but I don't really care. I just --

ANNA
OK.

Conor is STUNNED.

CONOR
What?

ANNA
OK.

CONOR
I'm talking about really doing this. Like a full-on relationship.

ANNA
Right.

CONOR
With me.

She LAUGHS.

ANNA
Yes.

CONOR
Did a bunch of gay people put you up to this?

ANNA
Please stop talking.

He does. They KISS.

INT. ANNA'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - LATER

Conor sleeps peacefully with his limbs wrapped around Anna. Anna lays on her back, eyes wide open, STARING AT THE CEILING. She's clearly not at peace.

INT. POTOMAC HOUSE - DEN - DAY

All of Beth's sister's spouses - Steven, Devon and George - sit on the couch watching basketball.

DEVON
Shit! Take him out. He's done.

GEORGE
Jesus. This isn't some exhibition game.

Beth comes downstairs, with another set of dirty dishes, and walks past them to the kitchen. The guys are annoyed that she blocks their view.

STEVEN
Could you --

BETH
Did anyone have time to run to the store?

GEORGE
Nah, we're good. We just got drive through.

BETH
I didn't mean for you.

Beth, annoyed, goes into the kitchen. She puts down the dishes in shock. The kitchen is SPOTLESS.

She looks to the sink and sees the back of a man, doing the last of the dishes. He turns around. It's NEIL.

NEIL
The dishes are all put away. There's a load of laundry still drying, but the other one is folded on top of the washer.

He goes to the fridge, and OPENS it. It's STOCKED.

NEIL (CONT'D)
I remembered what your dad likes, but I tried to get healthy stuff, too.

Beth just looks at Neil, stunned.

NEIL (CONT'D)
Ben told me. I just - I wanted to help.

With that, TEARS start to roll out of Beth's eyes. Neil goes to her, and puts his arms around her.

NEIL (CONT'D)
I know how much you love him. But it's gonna be OK.

EXT. HIGHLANDTOWN HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

Janine pulls up in her Land Rover and gets out. As she approaches the house, she stops in her tracks. ALL THE SCAFFOLDING IS GONE. THE HOUSE LOOKS BEAUTIFUL. She whips out her cell phone and dials.

JANINE
Javier - does this mean what I think it means? So when you say “done” - you don’t mean “we still need plumbing in the upstairs bathrooms done” - you mean “done done”?...Wow - you’re amazing...OK...I’ll call when I see it...Bye.

She hangs up the phone, steels herself, and walks inside.

INT. HIGHLANDTOWN HOUSE - SAME

As Janine enters - she can’t believe her eyes.

VARIOUS SHOTS as Janine walks from room to room - amazed. Where there once were plastic sheets there are now walls with vintage wall paper. All the floors are immaculate, the chandeliers sparkle - it’s all perfect.

She walks down halls and up staircases, past end tables and mantles - ALL COVERED WITH PICTURES OF HER AND BEN. Nice and tasteful.

She ends her tour in the master suite - it’s HUGE. And though full of furniture, the longer she stands there, the more empty it begins to seem. Her face transitions, from delight to loneliness, within a matter of seconds.

She takes out her cell phone, hesitates, then dials...

EXT. MEADOW MILL ATHLETIC CLUB - SAME

CLOSE ON: A LIT CIGARETTE. A LONG DRAG IS TAKEN.

CUT WIDE TO REVEAL: Ben sitting on a ledge in front of the gym, smoking a cigarette, watching the passersby. He's clearly waiting for Anna to arrive.

His PHONE RINGS. He looks at it - JANINE CALLING. He IGNORES the call, takes another drag of his cigarette.

INT. HIGHLANDTOWN HOUSE - BEDROOM - SAME

With Janine as the call goes to voice mail. She hangs up, confused. She sits on the edge of the bed, looking around the room, not sure what to do with herself.

She notices a pair of pants and jacket thrown over a chair - goes to tidy it up. She picks up the jacket, checks the pockets, they're empty. She grabs the pants, takes them both to the walk-in closet. She hangs up the jacket. And as she folds the pants over - she HEARS SOMETHING HIT THE GROUND. She looks down to find -

A PACK OF CIGARETTES. Her face pales. She stares at it - immobile. Her face tightens, her eyes well up.

JANINE
YOU LYING SACK OF SHIT!

- as she grabs two armfuls of his clothes off the racks and flies out of the closet.

STAIRCASE - She hurtles down the stairs, throwing armfuls of clothes into the foyer. Then, she surveys the scene and, not satisfied, rushes back up the stairs.

HALLWAY - As she flies back into the bedroom, she sees herself in the ANTIQUE MIRROR hanging in the hallway.

Without even thinking she grabs it from the wall and SMASHES IT on the ground. She stands over it, breathing heavily, looking at the shattered glass.

She EXITS FRAME and we hear her walk down the stairs, the camera HOLDING ON THE EMPTY WALL.

After a beat we hear her walking back up the stairs - she ENTERS FRAME AGAIN holding a DUSTPAN AND BROOM. She kneels over and begins sweeping up her mess.

INT. BOAT - DAY

Neil lies on the bed, reading. The room is pretty messy - a lot of clothes strewn around. There is a KNOCK at the door. Neil gets up to answer it. It's Beth.

NEIL
Hey.

BETH
It's been a while since I've been here. Turns out - that boat in the next mooring, looks like yours -- not yours.

NEIL
Oh no.

BETH
No, it's no problem. Nice guy. Invited me in for a white wine spritzer. Not sure he gets a lot of visitors.

Neil laughs.

BETH (CONT'D)
Can I come in?

Neil ushers her in, shuts the door. Beth looks around.

BETH (CONT'D)
I wanted to thank you. For coming by my folks' house.

NEIL
Of course. I really care about your dad. And I really love you. Even if I can't give you what you want.

BETH
You're what I want.

Neil looks at her - unsure of her meaning.

BETH (CONT'D)
Our life together is what I want. Your love is what I want. Did you see those guys my sisters are married to? You are a better husband to me - without being married - than any of those real husbands will ever be. And that's enough for me.

NEIL
And you'd really be OK if we take the marriage thing off the table?

BETH
If you promise to love me and be committed to me -

NEIL
I always have -

BETH
Wait, I'm not done. And snake the shower drain when my hair clogs it, and let me eat Wheat Thins in bed.

NEIL
I do.

Beth smiles. They KISS.

NEIL (CONT'D)
So, I get to move back in?

BETH
I guess. But, you cannot bring those.

She points to his pants - a RAGGEDY pair of CARGO PANTS.

NEIL
What? You're just mad at me, and you're taking it out on the pants.

BETH
Look, I gotta win something. I let you win the big battle, so throw me a bone.

NEIL
OK. We're not getting married, but I'm chucking the pants.

BETH
Great. We both win.

They kiss AGAIN.

INT. GIGI'S APARTMENT - LATE AFTERNOON

Gigi sits on her bed, head flung upside down, blow drying her hair. The phone RINGS but Gigi doesn't hear it.

INT. RED MAPLE - OFFICE - SAME

Alex, in his office, paces as he talks into the phone.

ALEX
Hey, Gigi. It's Alex. I was just wondering how you were doing. It’s been a little while since we’ve talked -- and I was wondering how you were doing.

Alex looks up. Tyrone is watching him, shaking his head. Alex motions for Tyrone to leave. He doesn't.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Anyway, I was hoping to talk to you. Obviously. But you're out. So, call me. Sometime. Or tonight. I'm around. OK. That's enough now. It's Alex.

He hangs up. Tyrone is unimpressed.

TYRONE
Dude.

ALEX
I know. I know.

INT. GIGI'S APARTMENT - SAME

Gigi flips her head back - oblivious to the phone call - and checks her hair. She heads out of the bedroom.

EXT. ROWHOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

Conor and Anna climb the stairs of a three story row house. A "FOR SALE" sign is outside.

ANNA
You seriously get a ton of people bidding on this?

CONOR
I know it's crazy. But it's a neighborhood "in transition."

ANNA
So that means what - that hip gay people want to live out here?

CONOR
Yeah. Hip gay people, young couples, young families.

Conor smiles as Anna heads into the house.

INT. ROWHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

ANNA
Weird - it totally reminds me of the house I grew up in. I bet there is a -

Anna goes into a little nook off of the kitchen. And pulls down a BUILT IN IRONING BOARD.

ANNA (CONT'D)
We totally had this same thing. My mom would use this as her 'desk'. Isn't that bizarre? It was always covered with her little coupons and stuff.

Anna looks up to Conor, who is just watching her.

ANNA (CONT'D)
So, when do all the fabulous homosexual couples start arriving?

CONOR
Well, the open house is tomorrow. But I have this one buyer. I mean, I want to see if his girlfriend likes it first -

ANNA
His girlfriend?

CONOR
I mean, I had this idea -

Conor looks - all of a sudden - to be sweating.

ANNA
An idea for the open house?

CONOR
No, an idea. For this house. For - me. To buy. And hopefully, if you like it and things continue to - you know...

Anna turns to face Conor, trying to put this together.

CONOR (CONT'D)
Anna, look. I have a plan. I know where my life is going. And I want you to go with me. I mean - I'm not saying you have to move in now or anything - I just - I don't want to buy a place that you couldn't - at some point - see yourself moving into.

Conor takes her hands in his. Anna starts to PANIC.

CONOR (CONT'D)
So what do you think? I mean gut reaction. I always go with my gut when it comes to real estate or ---

Anna looks at him. And at the PULL DOWN IRONING BOARD. She looks at the ironing board a long time, before turning back to Conor, holding back tears.

ANNA
I can't do this Conor.

CONOR
OK. If it's too fast -

ANNA
No. I mean *this*. Any of this. What you're saying - what you're offering - is what every girl wants. It's what I've always wanted. It's just -

Anna looks at him for a long time, not knowing how to say this. Conor looks at her, struggling, and suddenly sees it in her face. The answer he's been looking for. It all dawns on him in an instant.

CONOR
You don't want it with me.

Anna NODS sadly. Conor takes this in. A LONG BEAT.

CONOR (CONT'D)
So, I have a question.

ANNA
Okay.

CONOR
Is it too late to dial it back to before - and just keep sleeping together?

Anna LAUGHS, and it breaks the tension. Conor smiles.

CONOR (CONT'D)
Because I thought that really - you know - gelled.

Anna goes to Conor and HUGS him.

EXT. PHILLIPS - NIGHT

Your standard waterfront seafood restaurant. Gigi sits across from BILL, nice looking, if a bit conservative.

GIGI
So, Alex told me you work in finance.

BILL
Yes. Yes, I do. Finance.

A LONG PAUSE.

GIGI
This is nice.

BILL
It is.

GIGI
A nice evening. And you planned it. And called me when you said you would. And showed up on time. Thank you, Bill.

BILL
You're very welcome.

ANOTHER AWKWARD LONG SILENCE. Gigi smiles.

INT. ALEX'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Alex now seems pretty agitated. He's shirtless, his hair's a disaster. He's holding his phone handset. Staring at it. He can't stop himself. He dials.

GIGI (V.O.)
Hey it's Gigi. You've reached my cell. I'm either having a very good time or in a meeting - either way just leave a message and --

Alex hangs up. He stands there for a second, thinking. Then he runs into his bedroom like a madman.

INT. GIGI'S APARTMENT HALLWAY - NIGHT

Gigi and Bill stand awkwardly outside her door.

GIGI
It was nice meeting you.

BILL
Thank you for a lovely evening.

GIGI
You, too.

Bill reaches out for an ill timed hug. It's awkward.

GIGI (CONT'D)
Goodnight.

INT. GIGI'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

She comes inside, drops her stuff and sits on the couch. Then, A KNOCK on the door. Gigi reluctantly gets up.

GIGI
Did you forget something?

She opens the DOOR. It's not Bill. It's ALEX.

ALEX
Yeah. I did.

GIGI
Really? What did you forget?

ALEX
This.

Alex reaches into his pocket and pulls out a PEN. THE SAME PEN THAT GIGI PRETENDED TO BE RETURNING TO CONOR. Gigi tries, without success, to suppress a SMILE.

FADE OUT.

INT. THE OWL BAR - NIGHT

A speakeasy from the 1900s that hasn't changed much. A PIANO starts to play on a tiny stage - empty. And then - a terrified but determined Anna takes her place in front of the mic. And begins to SING.

It's a "THE LAST GOODBYE" by JEFF BUCKLEY - barely recognizable - more of a torch song. As she sings, she begins to gain confidence. We hear the song over:

INT. WESTSIDE LOFT - DAY

Beth and Neil's place. Neil comes in holding a few MESSILY PACKED BOXES. He is clearly moving back in.

NEIL
How did all this stuff fit in here fine before?

Beth comes in after him, holding some of his clothes.

BETH
I don't know. It expanded.

Neil collapses on the couch. Beth sits next to him, a pile of clothes on her lap. She looks down and laughs.

BETH (CONT'D)
No you are not trying to bring these back in here -

Beth holds the CARGO PANTS that she protested before.

NEIL
What? I have no idea what you're -

BETH
We had a deal. These are not staying.

NEIL
That's really gonna free up a lot of space.

BETH
They're going. I have a bag I'm taking to the Goodwill.

Neil watches her, smiling, as she walks across the room.

NEIL
Okay, okay. You win. Just check to make sure there's nothing in the pockets before we give them away.

Beth dutifully puts her hands in the pockets. And then she FEELS SOMETHING. Her face registers curiosity as she pulls out - A BLACK VELVET RING BOX. Beth looks at it, and when she looks up - Neil's down ON ONE KNEE.

NEIL (CONT'D)
I love you so much. So much. I want to make you happy. I need to make you happy for me to even have a shot at being happy, too.

Tears stream down Beth's face. Neil pops open the box, revealing an ENGAGEMENT RING.

NEIL (CONT'D)
Will you marry me?

Neil gets up and KISSES HER. They kiss, passionately, for a long moment. And then:

BETH
Yes. Of course, yes.

INT. GIGI'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Gigi and Alex stand in her entry. She holds the PEN.

GIGI
You came all the way here - at 11 at night - to give me back a promotional pen?

ALEX
I thought I better come up with some excuse to get over here. Isn't that how it's done?

GIGI
Sometimes.

Alex looks at Gigi for a long moment. He looks nervous.

ALEX
Look, I can't stop thinking about you. I drive by your place. I call and hang up. I'm turning into -

GIGI
Me.

He LAUGHS.

ALEX
Yeah.

GIGI
Well, a wise person once told me that if a guy wants to be with a girl, he will make it happen. No matter what.

ALEX
True.

GIGI
Hmmm. Because when I was hurling my body onto yours - you did not seem to want to "make it happen."

ALEX
Here's the thing about that. You were right. I've gotten so used to keeping myself at a safe distance from these women, having the power - that I didn't know what it felt like when I actually - fell - for one of them.

Gigi considers this.

GIGI
Look, I've just been out with your friend Bill. And it just might be exactly what I need. No drama. He calls. He does what he says.

ALEX
I could do that stuff too.

GIGI
But you didn't. And that same wise person told me that I am the rule. That I have to stop thinking that every guy will change - stop thinking that I will be the --

But before she can finish her sentence, Alex KISSES HER. A LONG, SLOW, PASSIONATE KISS.

GIGI (CONT'D)
- that I will be the exception.

Alex looks at her.

ALEX
You are my exception.

They continue to KISS.

EXT. GAY PRIDE PARADE - NIGHT

A staple of summer in Baltimore.

The rickety Baltimore Blade float comes by. It's a very phallic "blade" with a A BUNCH OF YOUNG SHIRTLESS MEN dancing and waving. Mary rides the float, too, waving to the crowd with Nathan, Joshua and Bruce.

Conor, with a NATTILY DRESSED GAY COUPLE, stands on the street watching. Nathan calls down from the float.

NATHAN
Jonathan?

NATTILY DRESSED GAY
What are you guys doing up there?

NATHAN
Dancing. Get your asses up here.

With that, the two Nattily Dressed Gays grab Conor, and climb up onto the float. They SHOUT over the music.

NATTILY DRESSED GAY
This is Conor. He just sold us on the most amazing duplex in Mt. Vernon.

MARY
Hey, Conor. I'm Mary.

Conor looks at Mary and SMILES. All of the gay men around them start to DANCE. LIKE REALLY, REALLY DANCE.

MARY (CONT'D)
It's so great to finally meet you in person.

CONOR
You, too.

They look at each other. Is there a connection?

CONOR (CONT'D)
Would you like to dance?

MARY
I'd love to.

Conor takes her hand - and the two of them do an old fashioned slow dance on the float. As everyone freaks around them, they smile and dance in each others' arms.

EXT. HIGHLANDTOWN HOUSE - NIGHT

Ben walks into the house and looks around - no Janine.

As he heads to the stairs, he stops in his tracks. At the bottom of the stairs - ALL OF HIS CLOTHES are stacked, neatly folded into piles. He approaches, then sees a CARTON OF CIGARETTES on top of one pile -

BEN
Shit...

- and a NOTE taped onto the carton: *BEN - KNOCK YOURSELF OUT. - JANINE P.S. I WANT A DIVORCE.*

Ben slumps down, devastated.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HARBOR - DAY

A beautiful sunny day on the harbor. Anna's song fades out, and the sound of Gigi's voice fades up.

GIGI (V.O.)
Girls are taught a lot of stuff growing up. If a guy punches you, he likes you. Never try to trim your own bangs.

EXT. BOAT - DAY

Out on the sparkling water, Neil's boat. As we get closer, we see garlands on the rails, on the bough. Even closer and we see - Beth on the arm of her father. He escorts her down a mini aisle. On the bough of the boat - is a TINY WEDDING. About six guests. And Neil, waiting for Beth at the altar.

GIGI (V.O.)
And someday you will meet a wonderful guy and get your very own happy ending.

INT. MARY'S APARTMENT - DAY

Mary sits at her desk, typing on her laptop. ON THE SCREEN: MARY'S MYSPACE PROFILE.

GIGI (V.O.)
Every movie we see, every story we're told, implores us to wait for it. The third act twist...the man who couldn't get it together finally figuring it out...the unexpected declaration of love...

Mary hits a button and a box comes up, which reads: ARE YOU SURE YOU WANT TO DELETE THIS MYSPACE PROFILE? Mary clicks "YES". MYSPACE PROFILE DELETED appears.

Then, a KNOCK ON THE DOOR. Mary gets up, grabs her little purse, and opens the door. IT'S CONOR. Mary smiles, her face barely able to contain her happiness.

INT. GIGI'S APARTMENT - DAY

Gigi and Alex sit close on her couch, watching a movie.

GIGI (V.O.)
...the exception to the rule.

We PAN over to the TV to find that they are watching: SOME KIND OF WONDERFUL. Watts and Keith finally KISS. Gigi can't suppress her smile as Alex pulls her close.

GIGI (V.O.) (CONT'D)
What we're not taught is how to read the signs.

INT. EDDIE'S OF ROLAND PARK - DAY

Ben heads to the checkout line - holding a six pack of beer and a bag of chips. As he's about to put his stuff down, a PRETTY GIRL gets in line behind him.

GIGI (V.O.)
How to tell the ones who want us from the ones who don't. The one's who'll stay from the one's who'll leave.

He lets her go ahead of him. She smiles, takes him up on it. The cashier rings her up, she pays for her stuff, without giving Ben so much as a look. Ben gives his stuff to the cashier, along with a weak smile.

EXT. BUTCHER'S HILL BROWNSTONE - EVENING

From the outside looking in a ground floor window - we can see the living room of the lower apartment. Boxes fill the room - clearly a new tenant moving in.

Janine enters, carrying two boxes. She opens one, and pulls out the ANTIQUE MIRROR (now with new glass).

GIGI (V.O.)
And ultimately, we're not taught the one thing that could save ourselves, our friends, our families countless hours of confusion, despair, and speculation.

She hangs the mirror, straightening it slightly. She steps back, seems pleased. Then, IN FRONT OF CAMERA walk two people - the CAMERA FOLLOWS THEM down the sidewalk.

We see it's Anna, walking with a NEW GUY - it's clear it's a first date. They stop at the corner, exchange an awkward hug. As they turn to go their separate ways -

NEW GUY
It was nice meeting you.

Anna smiles - the New Guy turns and heads off. Anna watches him go, and then turns and walks away from us.

GIGI (V.O.)
That sometimes the happy ending...is just moving on.

Anna walks down the hill, the skyline of Baltimore in front of her.

...END...