

Cruel To Be Kind

by
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FADE IN

EXT. BEDFORD COLLEGE CAMPUS QUAD - DAY

SUPER: FIRST WEEK OF FALL SEMESTER, 1995

A Bedford senior, SETH, walks across the quad of the small, Georgia college. He's neither too hard on the eyes, nor in danger of winning any modeling competitions. He waves hello to a few friends as he enters an administrative building.

INT. LOBBY OF ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

He walks to a hall door, but doesn't see the ATTRACTIVE GIRL walking closely behind him. He starts to enter the hall door before her, but then notices that she's right behind him.

SETH

Oh, I'm sorry, I didn't see you there. Please, go on ahead.

ATTRACTIVE GIRL

(astonished)

Well, okay. I guess I'm definitely in the South now. Thank you.

She smiles and Seth now notices her sun-kissed saffron hair, aristocratic cheekbones, and kind, Audrey Hepburn eyes.

He follows her into the hall where she stops to ask someone for directions. He walks past her a ways and stops, pretending to look at a poster. But he's looking at her.

She finishes getting directions and walks past him, detecting his rather indiscreet stare and glancing back at him with a tilt of her head and a small, apprehensive smile.

He turns his attention back to the poster, but, as she looks away, he looks again, cautiously. As she walks down the hall, he gives it up and heads to a water fountain for a drink.

She suddenly turns around as though she has forgotten something, and walks back in his direction.

Seth bends over the fountain for a drink. When he pushes the button, a sharp spray of water goes up his nose and mouth and all over him, leaving him drenched and catching his breath with a series of LOUD AND OBNOXIOUS SNORTS.

He immediately inspects the fountain and sees that a prankster has put a wad of paper in the fountain hole.

Frantically trying to get the paper out, he looks up and sees her. She's standing next to him, witnessing his spectacle.

ATTRACTIVE GIRL

(laughing)

Having some trouble, skipper?

He's somewhat thrown by her only barely amusing reference to his aquatic debacle, but sighs as he gets her small joke.

SETH

No, you see some jerk-off rigged the fountain and I'm trying to --

ATTRACTIVE GIRL

Why don't we just leave it alone for now? I don't think that anyone else noticed, so it'll be our little secret.

SETH

Sure, that's right, no need to make a big stink about it, you know --

He temporarily loses his power of speech and begins LOUDLY SNORTING and GASPING as he is choked by a remaining shrapnel of the water that had inundated his nose and throat.

ATTRACTIVE GIRL

Are you okay?

He stands with his hands on his knees and head bent over as he is finally able to draw a few deep breaths.

SETH

Yeah, I just got a little down the wrong way.

ATTRACTIVE GIRL

Why don't we take a break on that bench for a while. We'll watch the next person try the fountain; it'll be fun.

(beat)

By the way, my name's ALLISON.

SETH

I'm, uh ... Seth.

ALLISON

(jokingly)

You sure about that?

She gives a reassuring smile and takes his hand, leading him to the bench. He follows, enchanted, as if walking on air.

INT. COFFEE HOUSE - DAY

Seth and ELLIE sit at a corner table preparing their coffees. Ellie sports a jet black, Betty Page haircut, and is wearing a man's tweed coat. She's not unattractive, but obviously not interested in turning heads.

SETH

No, really Ellie, I'm not kidding. I actually felt an electric type shock in my hand when she touched me. I definitely felt something.

Seth picks up his cup of coffee and makes a quivering motion with it for emphasis, spilling a little on the table.

ELLIE

What's the thing with the coffee? Is that supposed to make the electricity thing easier for me to understand?

SETH

I didn't say electricity, just an electric type feeling. Her name's Allison, she transferred from Penn State, and there was a distinct sensory charge thing going on.

ELLIE

A sensory what? And your point here is ...?

SETH

My point here is that this is really unusual, don't you think?

ELLIE

What I think is that you, Mr. Thomas Edison with the electric charge, have a girlfriend in Atlanta named BRENDA, in case you forgot.

SETH

That has nothing to do with this. I'm just saying that it's unusual, that's all.

Ellie stirs her coffee and casts Seth a sideward glance, with one eye squinting in an accusatory manner.

ELLIE

I'm going to make a wild-ass guess that this girl's about a size three, has perfect skin, and her hair color ... well, I'd bet she'd have a good shot at getting in the Future Aryans of America club.

Seth looks like a deer caught in the headlights, dumbfounded by her prediction, as a slow smile of recognition that her statement was 'dead on' crosses Ellie's face.

SETH

You totally don't get what I'm talking about here, do you?

ELLIE

Totally.

They each turn slightly away from each other and mind the stirring of their respective cups of coffee.

INT. BRENDA'S BEDROOM - LATER

Brenda's bedroom has numerous pictures of the happy couple. A loud BEEPING NOISE comes from the answering machine on her bedside table, which is next to an eight by ten of the two in a frame that says 'Seth and Brenda Forever'.

SETH'S VOICE ON MACHINE

Hey, it's Seth. I'm back at Bedford. I guess you didn't get my message yesterday since you didn't call. So, give me a ring, bye. I love you, bye.

EXT. OUTSIDE COFFEE HOUSE - DAY

Ellie stands outside, smoking a cigarette and waiting. She looks at her watch and takes a drag. Seth arrives and she puts out the cigarette with her boot on the ground.

ELLIE

Hey slick, you lose your watch or just playing hard to get?

SETH
Oh, yeah, sorry. Let's just go in
and order, I've got to ask you
about something.

INT. COFFEE HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Seth and Ellie order their coffees at the counter and take them to a corner table to sit down.

ELLIE
So, what's your question? And to go
ahead and get this out of the way;
we college women still don't have
pillow fights in just our panties
and bras.

He manages a small smile at her remark.

SETH
I think something's wrong with
Brenda and me.

ELLIE
What?

SETH
She's not returning my calls.

ELLIE
Well, that doesn't necessarily mean
anything. She could be busy with
school or something.

SETH
It's not just that. She was getting
really irritable right before I
left for school. I just want to
know what's going on with her.

ELLIE
You could send her an email.

SETH
I've sent her two already, both
unanswered. Damn it, I've got to go
up to see her tonight.

ELLIE
You don't even know when she'll be
home.

(MORE)

ELLIE (cont'd)
 Are ya gonna camp outside her
 place, alone, like some pathetic
 stalker?

He stares at her with a look of plaintive desperation.

ELLIE (CONT'D)
 Oh come on Seth, I don't want to go
 to Atlanta tonight. Besides, we're
 working on our law school
 applications tonight, remember?

Seth's eyes continue to plead his case like a sad puppy as
 Ellie lets out a small sigh of resignation.

ELLIE (CONT'D)
 All right, we'll go. But we're
 filling out those applications
 first thing tomorrow, right?

SETH
 Absolutely! First thing tomorrow.

EXT. ELLIE'S CAR PARKED ON STREET - NIGHT

INTERIOR OF THE CAR

Ellie and Seth sit in her car across from Brenda's apartment.
 Their equipment's on the console: binoculars, two coffees,
 and a buffet of snack cakes. Seth slouches low in his seat.

ELLIE
 What are you doing?

SETH
 I'm staying out of view. You know,
 keeping a low cover.

ELLIE
 This isn't 'Murder She Wrote,"
 doofus, there isn't even anybody
 around.

Ellie's cell phone RINGS and she flips it open to answer.

ELLIE
 Hello? ... Oh, hey Honey. ... Yeah,
 we just got to Atlanta. ... Well,
 after we get finished stalking
 Brenda, we might go out for a beer,
 but I'll be back in time to watch
 CSI. ... Okay, bye.

SETH
What was that?

ELLIE
What?

SETH
Why'd you tell PAUL that we're
stalking Brenda?

ELLIE
Well, what would you call it?

SETH
(frustrated)
We're not ... we're just ... it's
not stalking if it comes from a
good place.

ELLIE
All right, O.J., whatever you say.

A car pulls up across the street and they cut their chatter
and slump down in unison. A moment later they both carefully
inch their way up enough to barely peek over the dashboard.

ELLIE
Is it her?

SETH
I don't know, hand me the
binoculars.

She hands him the binoculars as he inches up a bit more in
his seat. However, he doesn't seem able to focus his gaze.

SETH
It's too dark!

ELLIE
Take the caps off, dipstick.

SETH
Oh, yeah.

He sheepishly removes the caps from the lenses.

ELLIE
Smooooooth operator.

SETH
Don't get snippy.

ELLIE

Fine. So, what can you see?

SETH

Uh, yeah it's Brenda. Who is that?
Is that what's his face?

He leans up and forward a bit in his seat.

SETH (CONT'D)

It is him. I can't believe this!

He falls back into his seat, exasperated, and hands the binoculars to Ellie who takes a look.

ELLIE

Isn't that the bartender from the
karaoke bar that you two go to -
LARRY? What's she doing with him?

SETH

Take a wild-ass guess, dipstick.

Seth crumples forward in his seat, pulling his own hair.

ELLIE

Well, he may have just gotten a
ride home or something.

SETH

Are they both going into the
apartment?

She looks through the binoculars again.

ELLIE

Uh, yeah. I guess he's not just
getting a ride home.

She puts down the binoculars and faces Seth.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

Hey, let's not jump to any
conclusions just yet. Besides, we
still have snack cakes to finish.

INT. ELLIE'S CAR - LATER

The wrinkled wrappers of their junk food clutter the floor of Ellie's car. They are half asleep, but Seth perks up as he spies Brenda and Larry emerging from her apartment.

SETH

Finally. It's been over two hours.

ELLIE

Actually, only about forty-five minutes.

Seth glares at her and then motions with his head toward the ignition. Ellie meekly puts the keys in the ignition.

ELLIE

Okay, I admit. It definitely felt like it was two hours.

Seth grabs the keys.

SETH

No, wait. Don't start it yet. We have to give them some lead time or they'll spot us.

ELLIE

Okay, Columbo, that's cool, you just say when.

EXT. ELLIE'S CAR IN MEXICAN RESTAURANT PARKING LOT - LATER

INTERIOR OF CAR

Seth and Ellie are sitting in the car, both looking straight ahead. Ellie looks restless and finally turns to Seth.

ELLIE

Well, they're inside. Are we going to wait here or what?

SETH

I don't know. Just let me think for a minute.

They sit silently with Ellie not attempting to hide her boredom. She sings along with the radio, softly, but horribly out of tune, startling Seth from his deep thoughts.

SETH

All right, all right! Let's go on in. We'll pretend that we're just there getting something to eat.

ELLIE
She's not going to buy that.

SETH
At this point, I don't really care
if she fucking buys it.

Ellie gives a devilish smile at his remark as they exit the car and head to the restaurant. They enter:

THE RESTAURANT

and are met by a HOSTESS.

HOSTESS
Two for dinner?

They nod their heads and she leads them to a table. They both try to spot Brenda, but can't and sit down.

Seth's back is against a planter and Ellie has the better view of the rest of the restaurant. He tries to peek around the planter, but can't see much.

SETH
Can you see her?

Ellie looks cautiously over her menu.

ELLIE
Yeah, over at the far side of the
bar, next to Larry.

SETH
Can she see us?

ELLIE
No, I don't think so. She's a
little ... preoccupied.

Seth starts to get out of his seat.

SETH
What in the hell is that supposed
to mean!?

Ellie motions for him to sit down and smacks his hand with the novelty mini sombrero salt and pepper shaker.

ELLIE
No! Don't get up! She'll see you.
Just keep your pants on a minute.
(MORE)

ELLIE (cont'd)
They're doing tequila shots with
those friends of hers.

SETH
Okay, okay.

Brenda and Larry stand at the bar with her girlfriends. Her hand is on Larry's shoulder as they laugh and carry on. He does a shot, slurping the salt off of her neck. Her friends cheer them on, then she does one, slurping salt off his neck.

A perky SERVER approaches Seth and Ellie's table, placing a bowl of tortilla chips on the table.

SERVER
Buenos tardes, I'm ERIN, your
server today. Would you like to
hear the specials or can I go ahead
and take your orders?

ELLIE
(To Seth)
Why don't we just order? I'm still
hungry anyway.

Seth nods his approval.

ELLIE
I'll have the chicken chimichanga.

SETH
I suppose I'll try the sizzling
steak fajitas.

Erin writes the orders down and walks away.

INT. THE RESTAURANT - LATER

The tortilla chips are now all gone as Seth fidgets about, checking his watch, and Ellie plays with the salt shaker.

SETH
What's taking our food so long?
Are they still there at the bar?
What are they doing?

ELLIE
Whoa Curious George, one question
at a time. I'm sure the food's
coming, and they're still standing
at the bar.

SETH

Well, how do they look? I mean, how are they standing?

ELLIE

(perplexed and annoyed)
How are they standing? Um, I don't know. Like upright mammals, maybe?

Seth gives an exasperated sigh.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

Look, calm down, I'm not a lip reader. I'll let you know if something important happ--

She cuts herself off and suddenly looks as though someone has poured a cup of ice water in her lap.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

Oh shit...

SETH

What!? What is it?

ELLIE

Okay, but don't look; things are getting, uh, friendly.

Seth stands up, spins around, and then kneels down, realizing that he might be spotted by Brenda. From Seth's POV we see them holding hands and kissing. He stands up, just as Erin places the sizzling hot skillet of fajitas on the table.

ERIN

Your fajitas, sir.

Seth spins around to face her.

SETH

What?

As he frantically spins around, he bumps his wrist on the searing hot skillet.

SETH

Aaaagh! Fucking shit almighty!

He holds his burned wrist and continues to scream awkward obscenities until he realizes that everyone in the place is staring at him, including Brenda.

He looks around desperately and then back to Brenda and their eyes meet.

She's looks shocked, but then petrified, as it's evident what he's likely seen. He storms off to the bathroom, leaving Ellie and the confused server at the table.

ELLIE

I believe the chicken chimichanga
is mine.

INT. RESTAURANT BATHROOM - LATER

Seth rinses off his wrist and ducks into a stall. He sits on the unsanitary floor, with his back resting on the toilet.

SETH

(softly, to himself)
This is totally not how this was
supposed to go down.

INT. THE RESTAURANT BAR - DREAM SEQUENCE

In Seth's daydream he saunters over to the bar where Brenda and Larry are kissing. He's wearing a leather jacket and Ray Bans and is the mock epitome of cool. He casually grabs a shot from the bartender and turns toward them with a grin.

SETH

Oh, don't stop on my account, I'm
just here to listen to the Mariachi
band.

Brenda is horrified and embarrassed and Larry appears frightened. Seth confidently walks over to them.

LARRY

Hey ... my bad. Please don't kick
my ass. I didn't know she had a
boyfriend, honest.

BRENDA

Oh Seth, I'm so sorry ... I'm a
slut, and don't deserve you. He
tricked me. Please take me back,
I'll do anything.

SETH

Oh Brenda, don't beg, it's really
not very attractive.
(turning to Larry)
Yo, spaz boy, why don't you make
yourself scarce?

Larry runs away, scared.

BRENDA

Oh Seth, please take me back.

Seth gently slaps her on the back and turns back to the bar.

SETH

Sorry, kid. I don't think so.

INT. RESTAURANT BATHROOM - BACK TO SCENE

His daydream ended, we see the stall door graffiti from Seth's POV. 'Brenda gives good head' is scrawled below a crude drawing of a penis and some lips. Seth looks at it for a moment and then shakes his head. He gets up and leaves.

INT. BATHROOM VESTIBULE AREA - LATER

Brenda and Ellie are waiting for Seth outside the bathroom. They stand silently next to each other, both with their arms crossed. They both start to speak, but Ellie is quicker.

ELLIE

Are you all right?

SETH

Yeah, I'm fine. Just a little burnt and out of four letter words.

Ellie starts to back out of the vestibule area as she speaks.

ELLIE

Well, I'm going to let you two talk. I'm outta here, uh, amscray, if you know what I mean, I mean.

She gives a nervous little laugh and walks away, turning once, briefly, to make sure that no one wants her to stay.

BRENDA

I was going to ask how you are, but she cut me off. What are you doing here anyway?

SETH

What am I doing here!? I saw you and him, the bartender. I saw you all over each other.

BRENDA

It ... it isn't what it looks like.

SETH

Well, maybe you should fill me in, because it looks like you were making out with the karaoke king.

BRENDA

Oh, Larry doesn't work at the karaoke place anymore, he works somewhere else now.

Seth shoots her an icy stare and raises his palms upward as if to say "what the fuck do I care?"

BRENDA (CONT'D)

We're not sleeping together. It's not like that.

SETH

So if you're just slurping shots of tequila off each other in public, I should be more accommodating?

BRENDA

No, it's just that, you know, Larry's a lot of fun and everybody likes him.

SETH

You mean that I'm no fun; nobody likes me?

BRENDA

No, not at all. It's just ... it's not so hard as it is with ...

SETH

Hard as it is with what? Me?

BRENDA

Everything is so significant with you, but with him it's just fun, and I need that.

(beat)

I still care about you. I really don't know what to do.

SETH

Well, do you know when you will know what you want to do?

BRENDA

I don't know, I need some time.

SETH
So, that's where we are?

BRENDA
Yeah, for now, I guess. I'm sorry,
I was going to tell you. I just
didn't know how.

SETH
All right, fine. You can call me
when you're ready to decide.

He turns to leave, but she won't let him out that easy. She hugs him and he stands with his arms hanging awkwardly in the air, unwilling to join them around her back.

Finally, he pats her gently on the back and she breaks the embrace. She leans in for a kiss, but he turns and begins walking away as his eyes begin to well up with tears.

Ellie heads him off halfway to the table, handing him a to-go bag of his fajitas and turning him around.

ELLIE
I paid the bill, let's go.

They exit the place quickly without saying bye to Brenda.

INT. SETH'S BEDROOM - THE NEXT MORNING

Seth lies in bed gazing at the clock. It reads 11:30 AM.

SETH
Spanish ... shit. It's 11:30 and
I've missed Spanish.

He GROANS and rolls back under the covers to sleep.

INT. THE HALLWAY - LATER

Down the hall, a pair of pudgy legs, clad in sandals and calf high white socks, walk toward Seth's open door. The pudgy legs approach the bed and one hikes up and pounds on it, waking Seth. Owning the legs is KENNY. He's short, unkept, poorly dressed, and definitely overweight.

KENNY
Hey roomie, I'm going to lunch, are
you coming?

SETH

Yeah, I'll be up in a sec, just quit hiking up your leg like that. Please, I beg you.

Kenny plops down on the end of the bed.

KENNY

Hey, it's your world, boss. Didn't you have class at ten?

SETH

Yeah, I guess I missed it. Is it just me and you for lunch?

KENNY

No, CHET's just getting out of the shower; he'll be ready in a few. You and Ellie got back pretty early. Were all the bars dead?

SETH

Uh, no, we were just getting something to eat, we didn't hit any of the bars.

KENNY

Did Brenda go?

SETH

No.

KENNY

Just you two? Nobody drives all the way to Atlanta just to eat. You two got something going on?

SETH

No, of course not. We're just friends, you moron. We ...
(now whispering)
were kind of spying on Brenda.

KENNY

(loudly)
What for?

SETH

Keep it down. She hasn't been returning my calls so I wanted to see what was up. She was sort of, uh, hanging out with another guy.

KENNY

Hanging out? What do you mean?

SETH

She was making out with that
karaoke bartender, Larry.

KENNY

Oh man, that's rude. What are you
gonna do?

SETH

Nothing for now, she's figuring out
what she wants to do. I should have
broken up with her on the spot.

(beat)

But, I like having a girlfriend. I
like Brenda being my girlfriend.

KENNY

And she is pretty damned hot.

Seth looks at Kenny disapprovingly and he backpedals.

KENNY (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, I never know what to say
when crap like this happens.

(beat, then grinning)

But she is pretty damned hot.

Seth can't help but laugh as he grabs Kenny in a headlock and
they mock grapple in their best WWF fake wrestling form.

Their roommate, Chet, enters the room unannounced. He's
athletically built and has chiseled good looks.

CHET

Sounds like you got dogged, buddy!
Your girl was swapping spit with
some guy and you did nothing?

Seth immediately quits grappling and lets Kenny go. Kenny
loses his balance and falls to the floor with a THUD.

SETH

Do you have bionic hearing? I
wasn't even talking to you.

CHET

Hey, I just call them like I see
them, and you, my man, got dogged.
Don't worry, I won't tell anybody.

Seth and Kenny give Chet a scornful look.

INT. COLLEGE CAFETERIA - LATER

The cafeteria is beginning to fill up with the lunch crowd as the guys find a table and sit down to eat. They are soon joined by Ellie who's holding hands with Paul. Paul is tall and heavy, but his disposition is that of a gentle giant.

KENNY

So, Seth, what are we putting in the keg for the party?

SETH

I was thinking maybe Natural Light. How does that sound?

KENNY

That sounds like the worst idea ever. It's beer flavored water. We'll get something imported.

Seth is distracted as he notices Chet leaning over to Paul and whispering. The surprise and anguish in Paul's face leads Seth to jab Chet, who promptly quits whispering.

SETH

What's all the whispering about?

CHET

What? Oh, it's just Paul, chill out. I'm sure that Ellie already told him the whole pathetic story.

Seth looks at Ellie, but she shakes her head.

PAUL

Hey, don't worry about it. She'll come back to you ... probably.

Chet loves Paul's unintentional barb and goes up for a high-five. However, Paul sees Ellie's glare and waves him off.

PAUL (CONT'D)

I didn't mean it like that. I meant it might work out or it might not, but you can't force it. Ya know?

SETH

Yeah, whatever.

Ellie holds up her butter knife and begins gesturing with it.

ELLIE

I've got a novel idea. Why don't we drop this whole stupid topic and leave Seth the hell alone?

Seth stands up and puts his trash on his tray.

SETH

I've got to go anyway. I'll see you guys later today.

Seth leaves and Ellie turns to Chet and throws a wadded up napkin at him.

ELLIE

Well, are you happy now?

Chet just grins and shakes his head in disbelief. Kenny and Paul avoid eye contact with her and resume eating their food.

INT. COLLEGE MAIL ROOM - LATER

Seth gets his mail and sits down on a nearby bench. Ellie walks toward Seth and flicks the back of the letter he's reading, startling him, and sits next to him on the bench.

ELLIE

Hey, you'll ruin your eyes reading that close. How are you holding up?

SETH

I'm all right I suppose.

ELLIE

I'm sorry about lunch and Paul is too. He was just trying to say something helpful, but I guess it wasn't.

SETH

Don't worry about it. I really just wanted to resolve this thing kinda quietly, ya know?

ELLIE

Yeah. What really sucks is now you don't get the opportunity for the mutual break up claim.

SETH

The what?

ELLIE

Well, truly mutual breakups are pretty rare. I mean, what are the chances of two people deciding to break up at the exact same time?

SETH

Pretty low, I guess.

ELLIE

Exactly. One person usually wants to break up before the other, so they just tell them. What's the other person supposed to say, 'no, we can't do that'?

SETH

Well...

ELLIE

I don't think so. But, since the breaker upper doesn't want to look like an ass-hole and the breaker uppee doesn't want to lose face, they just agree that to tell other people it was a mutual breakup.

SETH

Breaker upper? Breaker uppee? Where do you get this stuff?

ELLIE

I've been on both sides of this agreement. Trust me, it's the best thing for everyone.

(beat)

Let's go outside, I need a cigarette.

EXT. JUST OUTSIDE THE MAIL ROOM - LATER

Ellie starts to light up as Seth gathers his thoughts.

SETH

But what if she doesn't really want to break up with me? Maybe I can change her mind.

Ellie is still trying to light her cigarette, but is having some trouble. Seth continues without waiting for an answer.

SETH (CONT'D)

Maybe I could fix whatever's wrong
or change what she didn't like.

Ellie finally gets her cigarette lit, takes a long drag,
exhales, and then turns to answer Seth.

ELLIE

I don't know Seth. When my parents
divorced, I don't think my mom did
anything wrong or could've changed
anything to save the marriage.

She takes a thoughtful drag on her cigarette and exhales.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

Basically, my dad just fell out of
love with her and he didn't want it
anymore, it's as simple as that.
But I don't want to bring you down.
Have you heard anything from her?

SETH

No, nothing. If I don't hear
anything by Friday, I think I'll
call her.

ELLIE

That's a good idea. You don't want
to be in limbo during the party
this weekend, right?

Seth does not respond and is distracted. Ellie waves her hand
in front of him and tries again.

ELLIE

Hello? Are you listening?

Seth grabs her arm and starts back toward the mail room.

SETH

Walk with me.

ELLIE

Why are we going back in? You've
got your mail.

SETH

Just walk with me and act like
we're talking.

ELLIE

All right, whatever. What are we
talking about?

SETH

It doesn't matter, but I'm being
incredibly funny. So laugh like
you're thoroughly entertained.

They stroll across the mail room floor with Ellie forcing an unconvincing giggle every other step. He steers them toward Allison, who has just closed her box.

SETH

Oh hey, it's you. What are you
doing here?

Allison looks at her just closed mail box and then to the letters in her hand.

ALLISON

I'm, um, checking my mail.

ELLIE

Yeah, it's kinda funny that way
Seth, people tend to check their
mail - here in the mail room.

(beat)

Hi, I'm Ellie. I help Seth identify
the obvious.

ALLISON

I'm Allison. Oh yeah, I remember
Seth mentioning you before.

ELLIE

Well, don't believe anything you
hear, it can't be verified. Listen,
I need to check my box real quick.
I'll be back in a minute.

Ellie walks across the room to her mail box, wearing a small smile and shaking her head slightly.

ELLIE

(softly, to herself)
Such a Barbie doll. He's so
predictable.

BACK TO SCENE

SETH

Ellie's a bit of a smart-ass, but
she's a good friend. Oh hey, we're
having a party, if you're not busy.
It's nothing big, just some people
we know.

ALLISON

Oh yeah, I already heard. That pudgy guy with the funny shirts invited me.

SETH

Sounds like Kenny. So, you're coming?

ALLISON

Sure, but from what he said it's going to be a big party, are we talking about the same thing?

SETH

Well, we usually just invite a whole bunch of people. Sometimes a lot come and sometimes not very many. It's not an exact science.

ALLISON

Hmmm, partying as an inexact science. I like that. Well, I've got to go. See you then.

SETH

Yeah, great. Bye.

Seth's voice trails off on the 'bye' and he stands there a few seconds watching her walk away. He then snaps back to reality and walks over to Ellie who's been waiting.

INT. SETH AND ROOMMATES' HOUSE - THAT NIGHT

Kenny and Chet are on the couch watching 'Scarface' with a half empty bottle of Jim Beam. Seth enters the room wearing his work smock, which bears the logo 'BEDFORD RECREATION'.

SETH

You guys playing the game?

Kenny and Chet nod in unison and each take a shot of Beam as Al Pacino lets fly a flurry of obscenities on the TV. Seth sits down on the couch next to Kenny.

SETH (CONT'D)

You're already toward the end. I'm lucky there's any Beam left.

Kenny unsteadily stands up and hands a shot glass to Seth, motioning both he and Chet to stand up. Kenny holds up his shot glass of whiskey.

KENNY

Now we can start the ceremonial drinking. Here's to temporarily forgetting all about women.

They all CLINK their shot glasses and drink, and then refill.

CHET

Let's drink to not forgetting everything about women, like how they can screw you over. Just like Seth got screwed.

Seth and Kenny don't appear to think much of Chet's toast, but they CLINK their shots and drink anyway.

SETH

You know what really burns my ass?

Kenny opens his mouth to answer, but Seth cuts him off.

SETH

That's a rhetorical question Kenny, don't answer.

Kenny looks confused for a moment, but then nods his head.

SETH

It's that you know that this guy was undercutting me with Brenda. You know like, 'Oh, is he your boyfriend, I thought he was your little brother' or whatever.

CHET

Yeah, you ask innocent questions to insult him. Like, 'That's his real voice? I thought he was doing a cartoon character.' It's got to be pretty subtle to work, though.

The phone RINGS and Kenny answers it.

KENNY

Alcoholics Anonymous, Bedford chapter. ... Oh. ... Yeah, I'll see if I can find him.

Kenny covers the phone and mouths 'it's Brenda' to Seth. Seth takes the phone, turning away from the boys.

SETH

It's good to hear from you. I was beginning to think that you weren't going to call.

BRENDA (O.S.)

I know, I'm sorry. I've been busy. It's just been confusing for me lately. So, how are classes going?

SETH

Classes are fine. I don't understand what you mean by confusing. What's wrong?

BRENDA (O.S.)

Oh, nothing. Well, sort of ... I mean, I'm just torn. I don't want anyone to get hurt. Ya know?

SETH

Yeah, I guess. I don't know what your torn over though. We just have to talk, to work this out.

There is some GIGGLING and CUTTING UP coming from Brenda's end of the line. Seth looks at the phone curiously.

SETH (CONT'D)

What was that?

BRENDA (O.S.)

(nervously)

It's nothing. Maybe now isn't a good time. Maybe this weekend.

There is more muffled GIGGLING, from Brenda's end of the line, and then some distinctly male LAUGHTER.

SETH

No, it's a guy's voice back there. I'm sure I heard a guy. Is he there with you now?

BRENDA (O.S.)

No, he's not here, not exactly. I mean, yes, but he's in the kitchen with Gina. I shouldn't have called, we need to talk face to face.

SETH

You're calling me to talk about our relationship and he's there with you in the next fucking room!?

BRENDA (O.S.)

Seth, please don't get mad, I don't want to fight right now.

SETH

I ... I've got to go.

Seth hangs up, looks at the phone, and then lays it down. He heads toward his room, but then turns around and takes the bottle of whiskey from Kenny and holds it to his chest.

SETH

I need this more than you guys do right now.

He walks to his room as Kenny and Chet look on, dumbfounded.

INT. SETH'S BEDROOM - NEXT MORNING

Seth is asleep in bed. The empty whiskey bottle lays next to his hand that dangles from the bed. The clock reads 9:30 AM and BUZZES. He BANGS it with his fist and it shuts off.

He unsteadily gets out of bed and walks over to his desk. He picks up his portable CD player and staggers back to bed. He puts on his earphones, and pulls the covers over his head.

INT. SETH'S BEDROOM - LATER

A female hand picks up Seth's clock which reads 2:30 PM. The hand turns the clock radio up to BLARING MUSIC and then turns it off abruptly and yanks the covers off of him.

The hand is Ellie's and she stands before him, the sun streaming in behind her. She casts quite an imposing figure with her leather jacket, cigarette, and wayfarer shades.

ELLIE

Seth, what are you doing?

SETH

Well, I would say that I'm just kind of lying here, taking it easy.

ELLIE

And may I ask why?

SETH

Well, it's kind of comfortable to just lie here, taking it easy.

ELLIE

Kenny told me about last night and I'm sympathetic, really. But he told me this at lunch. Some of us have already been to morning classes and gone to lunch - it's past 2 o'clock.

SETH

Oh, I was just listening to some CDs and stuff.

ELLIE

What are you listening to anyway?

Ellie grabs the CDs laying on the bed next to Seth and holds them up like playing cards in front of her.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

Let's see here ... oh, give me a fucking break. The soundtrack to Endless Love? Wham? And I'll bet you were listening to Careless Whisper too, weren't you?

Seth gives a guilty nod.

ELLIE

I didn't even think that you could find this crap on CD. I'm going to do you a favor and put these in a dumpster. You'll thank me later.

Seth makes a pitiful attempt to grab the CDs as Ellie places them in her purse. Foiled, he slumps back into bed.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

Is this what you want your life to be? You'd better get a grip, before you're confessing in internet chat rooms and crying over boy band lyrics. Now get out of bed!

INT. COFFEE HOUSE - DAY

Paul gets his cafe latte from the counter and joins Ellie and Seth who are already seated and drinking their coffees.

PAUL

So, who's coming to this party tonight anyway?

SETH

The usual people, I suppose. Along with some selected freshmen.

ELLIE

I think you mean selected freshmen. I don't recall you inviting a lot of freshman guys.

SETH

Well, yeah, but sometimes we have somebody's freshman kid brother or some freshmen geek just to goof on.

ELLIE

Well, as long as you put it that way, it sounds much, much better.

Ellie gives Paul a little wink and smiles at her own remark as she sips her coffee.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

Oh, I invited some people from the communications department, so maybe they'll add some spice to the mix.

PAUL

Do you mean drama people?

ELLIE

It's a communications department, so they're all communications people, really. Most will be drama people, but some are speech majors.

SETH

Oh, well, if you put it that way, it sounds much, much better.

Seth and Paul break up laughing, but Ellie kicks Paul under the table and he straightens up.

ELLIE

Excuse, me, what exactly is so wrong with drama people?

Paul looks to Seth who, with a nod of his head, appears to yield back to Paul the right to reply to her.

PAUL

Does the term pompous ass mean anything to you?

SETH

I think you're way off base there
Paul, you're wrong about that.

Paul looks puzzled, but Seth continues.

SETH (CONT'D)

The term should be pompous asses
due to the fact that there are so
many of them; it should be plural,
really. And, you know, they do tend
to travel in pairs.

He keeps a straight face for a bit, but then laughs at his
own joke, with Paul joining in. Ellie is not amused.

ELLIE

Number one, you can both bite me,
and number two, they're all coming
whether you like it or not.

(now looking at Paul)

And you sir, better watch your ass.

Seth motions with his head toward the coffee house door.

SETH

Well, speak of the devil, the
communications devil that is.

DEBBIE, an attractive, big chested, co-ed with a curious and
seemingly permanent facial expression, enters the coffee
house and places her order at the counter.

ELLIE

You know, I guess she's kind of
attractive in her own way, don't
you think Paul?

Ellie looks at Paul rather intensely. Paul is nervous and
uncomfortable with the situation.

PAUL

Ellie, let's not get into this
again. It was a year and a half
ago, and you and I weren't even
dating back then.

ELLIE

But, you know, she always seems to
have that attitude in her face.
Sort of a dissatisfied expression -
like she's smelled something bad.

SETH

You know what it is? I think it's a smirk - like she's the one who actually caused the bad smell and is secretly enjoying the fact that everyone else is suffering.

ELLIE

No, it's not a smirk. It's more of a sneer. Like she, in fact, made the bad smell and is trying to play like someone else did it by showing her annoyance.

PAUL

You guys shut up, here she comes.

Debbie has picked up her cup of coffee and is making her way over to their table.

DEBBIE

Hey guys, I can't stay, but I thought I'd say hi. So, Seth, tough break on getting dumped.

SETH

Well, we're not officially broken up yet. We're - hey, wait a minute, where did you hear that?

Seth has gotten worked up and strains to compose himself.

SETH (CONT'D)

You know what, I don't care. Yeah, let's not even talk about it. So, are you coming to the party?

DEBBIE

Yeah, sure. Well, like I said, I just stopped by to say hi. See you guys tonight. See you later Paul.

She pats Paul on the shoulder and smiles at him as she walks away. The three watch her walk out the door.

ELLIE

Hey! What's up with the special 'see you later' and the pat on the shoulder thing?

Paul is befuddled and begins stammering out INCOMPREHENSIBLE GIBBERISH before Seth cuts him off.

SETH

You know, I didn't get a special
'see you' or a special pat on the
shoulder.

Paul squirms in his seat nervously and again only manages to
HEM and HAW. Ellie musses his hair and smiles as she puts a
finger on his jittery lips.

ELLIE

I'm just busting your chops
sweetie, don't have a cow. No more
espresso drinks for you.

INT. THE GUYS' HOUSE - NIGHT

The guys' party is under way. In the:

FOYER

Kenny and Paul are helping a girl funnel beer. In the:

KITCHEN

Seth is behind the bar mixing drinks for people. In the:

LIVING ROOM

Ellie is at a table with a small group of people who are
drinking and laughing as she tells a story.

ELLIE

So, Dr. Stephens is checking roll
in lit class and says, 'War and
Peace?' and we're thinking maybe
he's having a meltdown. Then, he
says 'does anyone know War and
Peace?' Finally, he says, 'Well,
Mr. Peace better be here Friday.'

Some of the story listeners look confused.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

You get it? The guy's name is
WARREN PEACE. Can you believe that?
I almost peed my pants!

She knocks back the shot of whiskey that has been sitting on
the table in front of her.

ELLIE (CONT'D)
Anywho, the guy finally made it to class, so I invited him. He's over there at the bar, by Seth.

Ellie points to a nerdy looking guy at the bar and everyone turns around to stare at him.

ELLIE (CONT'D)
Yo, Tolstoy, what's shakin?

The nerdy Warren Peace nervously waves at the group and then goes back to drinking his beer.

Allison winds her way through the crowd in the living room to the:

KITCHEN

and approaches Seth at the bar. He looks up from sipping his bottle of Jim Beam, sees her, and breaks into a dopey grin.

SETH
Hey, it's you! I was wondering if you were gonna come.

ALLISON
Of course, I said I would.

SETH
Well, what can I get you? Do you want a beer?

ALLISON
No, no thank you.

SETH
You want a Coke?

ALLISON
No, thanks. Got any bottled water?

SETH
Are you Mormon or something?

Allison points to the bottle of whiskey in his hand.

ALLISON
No, are you Irish or something?

They both laugh and Seth hands her a bottle of water and comes out from behind the bar to join her.

Nearby, a slightly drunk Chet is in Warren Peace's face and pokes him in the chest with his index finger.

CHET

Who the hell did you say you were?

WARREN

Uh, my name's Warren.

CHET

Well, Warren, I don't know you. Who invited you anyway?

He pokes Warren again, but harder.

WARREN

Um, that girl, I can't remember ...

Chet gets chest to chest with Warren, who is petrified. Seth approaches and steps in between the two.

SETH

Hey, what's the problem? I invited Warren. He's Tad's little brother.

CHET

What? Oh, yeah, whatever.

SETH

You know, Chet, I think Debbie was asking about you. She's outside.

CHET

Really? Cool.
(to Warren)
Watch yourself!

Chet walks away, his knuckles almost dragging the ground. Warren lets out a sigh of relief and sits down in a nearby chair to compose himself as Seth hands him a cold beer.

WARREN

Who's Tad?

SETH

No one you know, don't worry about it. Have fun, he won't be back.

Seth turns his attention from Warren to Allison, who's been watching the entire incident.

SETH (CONT'D)

Sorry about, that. Chet seems to do this at every party, but he'll pass out in an hour or so anyway.

ALLISON

From the liquor or the overdose of testosterone?

They both laugh. Nearby in the:

LIVING ROOM

Ellie and some others are dancing next to the BLARING STEREO. The party's grown and the living room dance area is crowded.

Kenny wanders into the dance area and tries to start dancing with some girls, but they ignore him and move away. He brushes it off and hits some 'robot' moves.

Ellie spots Seth at the bar and waves him over to dance with the group. He takes Allison by the hand; she resists at first, but then agrees and they join in. Their dancing gets closer and closer as they try to speak over the music.

ALLISON

Are your parties always this crowded?

SETH

What?

ALLISON

(louder)

Are your parties always crowded?

SETH

Are my panties always cloudy? I'm sorry, but that's really none of your business.

She laughs and briefly puts her head on his shoulder. They continue to dance, talking in each others' ear and laughing.

Ellie is dancing nearby and spies a newcomer to the room, DEEP ARTSY GUY. He's wearing a cowboy hat and a vest with no shirt. He's oddly dressed, but attractive. He catches her gaze and smiles. She smiles back, and returns to dancing.

Allison holds up her hands indicating that she's had enough dancing and takes Seth's hand, leading him away. He picks up his bottle of Beam and they walk into his:

BEDROOM

However, there's a dorky guy and homely girl kissing awkwardly on his bed. Seth glares, but they are oblivious.

SETH

I know where we can go.

He opens the door to his walk-in closet. It has one, rather dim, bulb. He moves some stuff on the floor to make room.

ALLISON

We're gonna sit in here?

SETH

Hey, it's got a little light, comfortable seating, and no people.

ALLISON

Fair enough.

They close the door behind them. The dim bulb provides just enough light to see the outline of their bodies.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

Kenny is on his knees ready to funnel beer. Chet, who's holding up the end of the beer bong, is distracted by an attractive co-ed who's making flirtatious eye contact, and he's dropping the end of it too low.

KENNY

Chet, come on, hold it up.

CHET

Uh, yeah, just a minute.

Chet taps a nearby stoner guy and hands him the beer bong.

CHET

Here man, handle this.

Chet heads down the hall after the attractive co-ed.

KENNY

Ah, shit!

(to the stoner guy)

Do you know what you're doing?

Stoner guy nods his head and Kenny takes his thumb off of the end of the bong tube and puts it in his mouth, giving the thumbs up sign to the stoner guy.

The stoner guy lifts the bong up in spastic motion, so that the end comes out of Kenny's mouth and he is covered in a stream of beer. Kenny wipes his face off and takes an embarrassed bow before the laughing crowd.

INT. SETH'S WALK-IN CLOSET - LATER

Seth and Allison are lying side by side in the walk-in closet as he recaps his recent misfortunes.

SETH

So, I'm screaming obscenities and clutching my burned wrist while Brenda is slurping this guy's neck.

He takes a sip of Beam.

SETH (CONT'D)

I guess the people watching must have thought it was really bad dinner theater or something.

Allison cracks a little laugh at his depiction of the scene.

SETH (CONT'D)

(playfully)

This is funny to you?

ALLISON

I'm not laughing at you Seth, I'm laughing with you. So, then what happened?

SETH

Well, she called me later, to make amends. But, get this, he was with her when she called.

ALLISON

Oh, Seth, that's horrible.

SETH

I hung up on her, so that's that. It's just all sucked since I got back to school.

ALLISON

Yeah, sounds like it.

SETH

Sometimes, I think maybe God is punishing me for something I did when I was a kid, or maybe in a past life or something.

Allison leans into Seth until their faces are inches apart.

ALLISON

I don't know about that. Maybe God sent me to be here to be with you.

She leans in further and they kiss, gently and slowly. She leans away slightly, and smiles. Seth looks ridiculously smitten. She leans back in and they continue kissing.

INT. LIVING ROOM - EARLY MORNING

Party people are asleep all over the floor. Kenny sleeps sitting up in a chair. He wakes up and looks around for a more comfortable sleeping place.

He goes back to his bedroom door and opens it, but sees Debbie and a guy in his bed already (even asleep, she has the sneer).

He closes the door and walks back past the couch where another guy with two girls are lying together.

He wrestles a throw pillow out from under a girl who's lying on the floor. She doesn't even wake up, and he walks with the pillow toward the bathroom door.

INT. SETH'S ROOM - A LITTLE LATER

Seth emerges from the walk-in closet as Allison lies behind him, sleeping on the closet floor. Both of them are now in their underwear. He walks to the:

LIVING ROOM

And spies the bodies on the floor. He then enters the:

BATHROOM

and turns on the light. He walks to the toilet, but sees a sock-sandal combination peeking out from the shower/tub curtain. He pulls it back and sees Kenny, who's all scrunched up, so that he can just barely fit in the tub.

SETH

Kenny?

KENNY

Don't even fucking ask!

Kenny puts his face in the pillow and pulls back the curtain. Seth shakes his head and lifts up the toilet lid.

INT. ALLISON'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Seth and Allison sit on the couch watching TV. The room is dark, and they cuddle close.

SETH

You're lucky to not have roommates.

ALLISON

Why? What's wrong?

SETH

Well, Chet, he's just a pain in the ass. And now Kenny is all hunched over and irritable from the neck spasm he got sleeping in the tub. It's like living with a cranky little Quasimodo.

ALLISON

Maybe he just needs an Esmerelda.

SETH

That or a damned chiropractor.

They resume watching the movie. He puts his arm around her shoulder and she casually takes his thumb and places it in her mouth, moving over it sensually with her lips.

Seth, absorbed in the movie, doesn't notice at first, but in time the sensation takes hold and he starts to enjoy it.

SETH

(in a weak whisper)

Me ... me likey that a lot!

Allison giggles around his thumb and they begin making out.

EXT. OUTSIDE OF THE COFFEE HOUSE - DAY

Ellie and Seth are drinking coffee at an outside table.

ELLIE

I'm sorry, I just don't get the whole thumb thing. No judgment here, I'm as freaky as the next girl, but I don't see the turn on. How'd she do it again?

Seth tries to mimic Allison's maneuver on his own thumb, but does a pathetic job - it looks stupid and childish.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

Oh yeah, now I get it. I'm totally hot now.

SETH

I guess you had to be there.

ELLIE

I'll take a pass on that, thanks. So, are you guys going out tonight?

SETH

(dejected)

Nah, she's got plans with some guy from her biology class.

ELLIE

So, obviously, she doesn't want to be exclusive. You okay with that?

SETH

Yeah, it's no big deal.

ELLIE

Really? Is that the story you're going with?

SETH

Okay, it sucks. But, it's probably for the best. I just broke up and she just got here.

ELLIE

Well, be careful young man, we don't want to have to have another CD intervention.

(beat)

Now, conversation on me. I met the coolest guy at your party - IAN, he's an art major.

SETH

Isn't that the vest only guy, with the cowboy hat?

ELLIE

He has his own style, all right?

SETH

What did Paul think of him?

ELLIE

Oh, Paul didn't meet him. He left the party early.

SETH

What? What's going on here?

ELLIE

Nothing, we were just talking. He is incredibly handsome though.

SETH

Paul or Ian?

ELLIE

Ian, of course. Paul's just Paul.

SETH

What's that supposed to mean?

ELLIE

Nothing, I guess. Paul's nice, and low maintenance, and he's ... large, definitely, large.

SETH

So?

ELLIE

So, maybe I'm bored with being content. Sometimes it just seems like I'm shopping at the Sam's Wholesale Boyfriend Club.

Seth starts laughing and she soon joins him.

SETH

Great prices at that place, I hear.

ELLIE

Yeah, but refunds are a bitch.

INT. SETH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Seth's in bed asleep. There's a TAPPING on the window next to his bed, but the curtains hide what's making the noise.

He sits up and cautiously pulls back the curtains. He's startled when he sees Allison on the other side, TAPPING the glass with a flask. He opens the window.

ALLISON
Surprise! The whiskey troll's here!

SETH
What? What time is it?

ALLISON
I don't know, two or three. I didn't want to wake anyone else, so I tried the window.

SETH
What are you doing up?

ALLISON
I couldn't sleep. I've been a real insomniac lately. You want a shot?

She pours a capful of whiskey and holds it toward him. Seth shakes his head and so she downs it.

SETH
I thought you didn't drink.

ALLISON
I never said I don't drink. I just save it for special occasions.

She pours and swigs another capful of whiskey.

SETH
Do you want to come in?

ALLISON
No, let's go for a walk!

SETH
Okay, hold on a minute. Let me get some jeans and shoes on.

EXT. A NEIGHBORHOOD SIDEWALK - LATER

Seth and Allison walk along in the moonlight. Across the street is a children's park. He walks at a slow pace while she skips in front, teasing him with faux boxing jabs.

ALLISON
Come on! You're slow.

SETH

Imagine that, at three in the morning.

She spies the children's playground and gets even more hyper.

ALLISON

Seth, look, a jungle gym! Come on, let's go.

She breaks into a run toward the jungle gym and Seth follows, jogging, behind her. She climbs up to the top and hangs upside down by her legs as Seth slowly makes his way up.

ALLISON

We could do upside down shots. Look!

She tries to take a swig from the flask while hanging by her legs and only manages to get a little in her mouth as most of it dribbles down her face.

They both laugh as Seth dries her off with his shirt tail. He helps her get right ended and they sit on the top.

SETH

What do you say that we put a moratorium on the upside down shots, okay?

Allison playfully swats at him with her too long shirt sleeve and turns to look at the night sky.

ALLISON

Isn't it great?

SETH

What?

ALLISON

The night sky, silly. The sun goes down and you get, like a time out, from the day ... and reality. When I can't sleep I just sit up and look at the night sky for hours, not wanting the time out to stop.

SETH

Yeah, I guess. I never really thought about it.

ALLISON

Ooh, look Seth, over there.

SETH

Where?

ALLISON

Over there.

She points and he sees, peeking out from between some trees, the McDonald's arches, a couple blocks away.

ALLISON (CONT'D)

Let's go!

She jumps off the jungle gym and runs. He shakes his head in disbelief, but then jumps off and runs to catch up with her.

EXT. OUTSIDE OF CLOSED MCDONALD'S - LATER

Allison begins climbing the fence to the play area. Seth is petrified and glances around to see if anyone is watching. She clears the fence and faces him on the other side.

ALLISON

Come on Seth, it's easy.

He's still apprehensive. She sighs and, with a flourish, takes off her shirt, leaving only her bra.

ALLISON (CONT'D)

Race you to the ball bin!

His trepidation broken, Seth climbs over the fence and runs to meet her in the:

BALL BIN

He tackles her as they fall into the vast sea of brightly colored balls. She gets on top of him and they gaze at each other. She undoes her bra and they kiss passionately.

INT. THE BALL BIN - MONTAGE SEQUENCE

Seth and Allison are seen in the ball bin from a birds-eye view. They make love while navigating their way among the colorful balls.

Interspersing shots show some of the nearby McDonald's statues (Ronald, Grimace, and the Hamburglar) as if they are watching a peep show.

As the action becomes more intense, Seth squeezes balls in his hands and makes uncool sex faces as Allison, very excited, flips the balls up into the air with her hands.

THE BALL BIN - AFTER

Seth and Allison lie next to each other on their backs, passing the flask of bourbon back and forth.

SETH

Geez, Let's hope Mayor McCheese doesn't find out about this.

They laugh as Allison leans over and gives him a kiss.

EXT. OUTSIDE ALLISON'S APARTMENT - DAY

Seth RINGS the doorbell and the door is answered by Allison's mother, MRS. SUTHERLAND, a pretty older woman.

SETH

Hi, I'm Seth. You must be Mrs. Sutherland.

MRS. SUTHERLAND

Hello, Seth, please come in.

INT. ALLISON'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

MRS. SUTHERLAND

Thanks so much for offering to help us put this entertainment thing together.

Allison enters the living room to join her mother and Seth.

SETH

It's great that you came all the way from Pennsylvania to spend the weekend with Allison. My parents never visit me.

ALLISON

I imagine that your having roommates might have something to do with that.

SETH

Yeah, I suppose your right.

MRS. SUTHERLAND

Well, I don't mind the trip. This seems like a nice school. I'm glad to have Allison getting a fresh start here after Penn State.

Allison is agitated at her comment and glares at her.

ALLISON

(to Seth)

I did a little too much partying at State College last year. So, how do we put this thing together?

SETH

Well, why don't you all take it out of the box, and, do you have a Phillips head screwdriver?

ALLISON

Yeah, it's in the kitchen, middle drawer. You get that and we'll start on the box.

Seth walks into the:

KITCHEN

He looks at the drawers and, mistakenly, goes to the drawer on the far right and opens it.

It's full of an arsenal of psychoactive drugs, all prescribed in Allison's name. He is bewildered and concerned.

ALLISON (O.S.)

Seth? Did you find it?

He immediately closes the drawer and opens the one in the middle. He finds the screwdriver and starts to walk back.

SETH

Yeah, I got it, no problem.

EXT. OUTSIDE OF SETH'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Seth walks up the house driveway. He's wearing his work smock and looks tired. PARTY SOUNDS emanate from the house.

Ellie and Paul sit on the porch in rocking chairs, drinking with some other students. Paul greets Seth with a long and loud BELCH as Ellie rolls her eyes.

PAUL

Hey Seth, we didn't think that you were going to make it home tonight.

SETH

Yeah, well I got off work at eleven, but I had to drive somebody home ... and pick up this!

Seth proudly holds up a bottle of Ouzo liquor.

PAUL

Ouzo! You are the man, Seth. I'll get the shot glasses!

Paul dashes into the house and Seth sits next to Ellie.

SETH

So, are you doing Ouzo shots?

ELLIE

Word to the wise, licorice and booze don't mix. By the way, Kenny is already pretty stewed.

SETH

He'll be okay. Is Allison here?

ELLIE

I saw her with Chet. They were about half way through his only partially true repertoire of road stories and athletic achievements.

SETH

Uh oh. I guess I'd better save her from being bored to death.

Seth heads into the house as Ellie starts to try to stop him, but then resists the urge.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

On the way to the kitchen Seth is intercepted by Paul, who holds up two shot glasses of Ouzo.

PAUL

Where are you going? Here ya go.

Paul hands him a shot downs his. Seth looks around Paul to the kitchen and sees Allison and Chet drinking and laughing.

Paul motions for Seth to drink up. Seth downs the shot and Paul starts to pour two more.

SETH

Hold on a minute, I've got to do something. I'll meet you back on the porch in a minute, all right?

PAUL

Okay, see you out there.

Seth starts to make his way toward the kitchen, but Kenny steps directly into his path. He's drunk and upset.

KENNY

Hey, I need to talk with you.

SETH

Yeah, sure what's the matter?

KENNY

I don't want to talk here.

Seth furtively looks around Kenny to see Allison and Chet still drinking and laughing. Her hand is on his forearm. Seth is annoyed, but dutifully turns his attention back to Kenny.

SETH

What? Not here? Why not?

KENNY

No, man, not here in front of everybody - behind the house.

SETH

Whatever, let's go.

The boys turn to go outside, but Seth gives one last annoyed glance in Allison and Chet's direction.

EXT. BEHIND THE HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The boys stand alone behind the house. Kenny is more upset at this point and is wiping tears from the corners of his eyes.

SETH

What are you doing? Are you crying?

KENNY

I don't know Seth. I mean, what's it all mean, you know? What's real?

SETH

What? What kind of question is that? Have you been reading Sartre on acid again?

KENNY

No, no man. I'm sorry, that was stupid. I mean even if things go well and I'm happy, it's like I'm still alone regardless, ya know?

SETH

Uh, no. I'm sorry Kenny, you're gonna have to spell it out for me.

KENNY

I've got nothing, or at least nobody. I mean, what's the point? Nobody needs me or even cares if I fall off the face of the planet.

SETH

That's not true. I care.

KENNY

You're a guy - that's not what I'm talking about. I may get lucky with a girl once in a while, if they're bottom surfing, but they don't want to stick around or get serious.

SETH

Okay, I think I see --

KENNY

You remember when I got with Debbie that night? Remember what happened?

SETH

Yeah, I remember.

INT. KENNY'S BEDROOM - FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

Kenny and Debbie are both naked and making out passionately in his bed. They take a break and she picks up a beer from the night stand. Kenny gazes at her admiringly.

KENNY

So, I was thinking. Valentine's day is in a couple of weeks. Maybe we could go out for a romantic dinner at a nice place or something.

DEBBIE

Um, I dunno. There's this guy I kinda like and I was hoping he might ask me out for Valentine's. I'd better not.

Kenny is stunned. She finishes the beer and puts it back.

KENNY

Well, uh ... hmm. That's okay, I understand, I guess. Um, would you, maybe like to make out some more?

Debbie picks up the nearby remote control.

DEBBIE

Uh, I don't know. What kind of cable do you have on this TV?

EXT. BEHIND HOUSE - BACK TO SCENE

Kenny has his head down sniffing and Seth has his hand on Kenny's shoulder.

SETH

Listen, you're gonna meet someone who needs you, just like you need them, and who does care if you drop off the face of the planet.

KENNY

You're probably right. Sometimes it's just hard, ya know?

SETH

I know buddy.

Kenny forces a smile and they give each other a little bouncer hug. As they break apart, a nerdy guy comes racing around the house holding both hands over his mouth.

He drops to his knees in front of them and vomits on Kenny's feet. Kenny and Seth look down at his vomit-ridden socks and sandals, and then look at each other, dumbstruck.

KENNY

I guess we're about finished here.

SETH

Yeah, I guess so. You know where
the hose is.

Seth walks back toward the house. Kenny looks down at the
nerdy guy who's still on his knees dry heaving at his feet.

KENNY

Get yourself together man.

INT. THE KITCHEN - LATER

Seth enters the kitchen and spots Debbie at the table playing
quarters and taps her on the shoulder.

SETH

(whispering in her ear)
Hey, have you seen Allison?

DEBBIE

Oh yeah! She's with Chet in his
bedroom. I think you know what I'm
talking about.

SETH

Oh, shut up.

Seth turns and walks to the:

HALLWAY

stopping at Chet's bedroom door. He tries to resist, but
can't help but put his ear to the door.

SEX NOISES come from the room along with the faint sound of a
LED ZEPPELIN TUNE. Seth's disappointment is etched in his
face. He walks, like a zombie, through all the people in the:

LIVING ROOM

and continues outside to the:

PORCH

where he sits down in an empty rocking chair next to Ellie,
whose concerned expression suggests that she knows what's
transpired. Paul pours the shots and they all drink a toast.

INT. HOUSE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

SUPER: FALL SEMESTER FINAL EXAMS PERIOD

Seth sits, reading a book, while Kenny folds clothes on the couch. There's KNOCKING on the door and the boys stare at each other, neither wanting to bother to get up to answer.

Finally, Seth gets it. It's Allison, and as he opens the door she is just finishing a swig of bourbon from her flask.

She laughs as he catches her in mid-swig and she spills some down her chin. It looks like she's had a few.

ALLISON

Hey, I didn't think anybody was gonna answer.

SETH

Come on in.

She enters the room and trips a little, laughing.

SETH (CONT'D)

You okay there?

ALLISON

I'm fine. You wanna go for a walk?

SETH

Ah, I've got to study for finals. Chet will be home later, maybe you'd rather go with him anyway.

ALLISON

Chet? Why would you say - what's that supposed to mean?

SETH

I'm just saying it seems that maybe you'd prefer to spend time with him. It's nothing, forget about it.

ALLISON

No! Let's discuss this! How do you even know about Chet and me anyway?

SETH

Come on, it's not as though he's the most discreet guy in the world. A lot of people know.

ALLISON

Fine! I don't care! What do you care who I'm with anyway?

SETH

Yeah, I know, we're not exclusive.
But come on, you did it with Chet?
I mean --

ALLISON

You mean what!? He's an asshole?
Well maybe you're the asshole.
Where do you get off judging me!?

SETH

Hey, listen, let's just drop this,
This isn't a good time or place.

Seth motions with his head toward Kenny to make clear that they're not alone. Allison shoves Seth aside and takes a step toward Kenny, pointing her finger at him.

ALLISON

What? Kenny might hear? He doesn't
even fucking count anyway! And you
can go straight to hell Seth! You
are a fucking asshole!

Allison storms out the door, slamming it closed.

Seth is devastated. He turns to the door to go after her, but then turns around. He holds his hair with both hands and almost hyperventilates. Kenny walks over to lend support.

SETH

Man, I have never been told off
like that before. She is so angry.
I've really fucked it up this time.

KENNY

Hey, don't be so hard on yourself.
At least you count.

EXT. OUTSIDE ELLIE'S TOWNHOUSE - DAY

SUPER: WINTER BREAK

Seth walks up to Ellie's townhouse. She has the yard and townhouse decorated in a rather warped Christmas theme with a maniacal looking Santa statue, reindeer carrying a PETA sign, and black and purple lights strung on the door.

He has two coffees in a carry tray and KNOCKS on the door. No one answers, but LOUD MUSIC comes from within.

SETH

Ellie? Paul? Anybody home?

He tries the door and it's unlocked. Cautiously, he enters:

THE TOWNHOUSE FOYER

He looks around to the living room, which is also decorated in the twisted Christmas theme. The MUSIC is now louder and recognizable as Wham's "Wake Me Up Before You Go-Go".

He grows angry as he realizes Ellie's betrayal. He puts the coffee down and races back to the:

BEDROOM

and throws open the door. Ellie doesn't even notice him, as her back is turned and she is dancing. Finally, she turns around and sees him. He turns off the CD player.

SETH

You! I knew you didn't throw those CDs away like you said!

ELLIE

Seth, let's keep this in perspective. Everyone, deep down, likes Wham, just a little bit. This incident doesn't define me.

SETH

Ellie, why the deceit? I'd have let you borrow the CDs if you'd asked.

ELLIE

But then I would've had to admit that I liked it.

SETH

I want them back, right now.

ELLIE

All right, but one condition.

SETH

What?

ELLIE

No one, and I mean no one, finds out about this.

SETH

Fine.

ELLIE

Pinky swear on Robert Smith's pain.

SETH

(familiar with the
practice)

Okay, pinky swear on Robert Smith's
pain.

They lock pinkies, holding their faces close to one another, each providing a pathetically anguished facial expression.

INT. ELLIE'S KITCHEN - LATER

The two sit at Ellie's kitchen table drinking their coffees.

SETH

El, I think I really screwed things
up with Allison the other night.

ELLIE

Yeah, Kenny told me about her
rampage. I think he's going to have
to go through therapy over the
'doesn't count' comment.

SETH

I'm going to talk with her and
apologize as soon as she gets back
from the break.

ELLIE

I wouldn't, but suit yourself. Now -
shift focus to moi. I had coffee
with Ian yesterday. He's so
awesome. He's working on this
performance art thing that --

SETH

Hold on. Am I to understand that
you and Ian are still just friends?

ELLIE

Yes, just friends. Just like we're
just friends. It can happen.

SETH

So then you wouldn't mind if I
introduced Ian to Paul and we all
went out for beers?

Seth smirks as he sips his coffee.

ELLIE
You totally don't get what I'm
talking about here, do you?

SETH
Totally.

They each turn slightly away from each other and mind the stirring of their respective cups of coffee.

INT. BEDFORD TEXTBOOK STORE - DAY

Allison waits at the end of a line of students buying books. Seth trudges up to the back of the line with his books and recognizes Allison as the person in front of him. He puts the books down and taps her on the shoulder.

SETH
(warmly)
Hey you.

Allison turns around and a big smile crosses her face.

ALLISON
Seth! Oh my gosh, I missed you.

She gives him a hug. He's startled, but hugs her back.

SETH
Listen, I'm really sorry about the
way things --

ALLISON
Oh please, stop! I'm the one who's
sorry. I was going to apologize for
the whole thing after finals, but I
got so busy with packing and all.

She gives Seth another little hug.

ALLISON (CONT'D)
I don't want you to be mad at me.

SETH
Oh, I'm not.

ALLISON
I do have something important to
tell you, though.

She touches his forearm with her hand.

SETH

What?

ALLISON

I've met somebody!

Seth almost grimaces at the news.

ALLISON (CONT'D)

His name's Joe Felton and we met on the flight back home. We went to rival high schools, can you believe it? He's a junior. Do you know him?

SETH

No, I don't think I do.

Allison recognizes his disappointment, and tries to assuage him, gently stroking the hair along his temple.

ALLISON

Oh Seth, I know this stinks. Please be happy for me. This is really good for me. Please?

SETH

Of course I'm happy for you. We'll have to all get together sometime.

ALLISON

I'd like that.

She leans over and gives him a quick kiss on the cheek. He stands there, still trying to process the information.

EXT. THE GUYS' HOUSE - DUSK

INT. SETH'S KITCHEN

Seth and Ellie have a bottle of champagne and are toasting each other. Kenny enters the kitchen.

KENNY

Hey, what's going on?

SETH

We both got our acceptances to Emory law school today!

ELLIE

And we're giving ourselves a well deserved celebration.

KENNY

Does this mean there's a party?

ELLIE

Well, it means we're finishing this bottle of champagne tonight.

KENNY

So it's all right if I invite a few people over?

SETH

Yeah sure, invite away.

EXT. SETH'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Some party people are sitting on the porch drinking, as LOUD MUSIC emanates from the house.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The house is very crowded and it's evident that Kenny invited more than just a few guests.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Seth and Ellie sit next to each other at the kitchen table, drinking slammers with some other party people, including Warren Peace. They are all blitzed, especially Seth.

WARREN

So, have you two ever dated?

Ellie drunkenly strokes Seth's hair.

ELLIE

Oh no, we couldn't. He's a nice boy and I only like very, very bad men.

Seth mock claws at her hair.

SETH

That may be true, but I do like it rough, baby, grrrr!

ELLIE

Oh Seth, please. You know you're a bottom. Now drink your slammer.

Seth downs his slammer in a gulp and puts his glass out for another. Warren fills it quickly and Seth downs it. He then starts to gag, and, holding his mouth, runs for the bathroom.

ELLIE

I told you he was a bottom.

As Seth races to the bathroom, he almost runs into Ian, who saunters into the kitchen.

IAN

I'll have what he's having - Not!

ELLIE

Ian! Here, sit next to me. Don't worry, Seth just had too many.

IAN

Okay, I'm game.

Ian sits down and Warren fixes a slammer for him. He gulps it down and they all cheer.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Seth kneels at the toilet, throwing up and then dry heaving.

SETH

Shit, I'm never gonna drink again.

He vomits again and then lays back against the tub. He pulls a small trash can to his chest, waiting for the next heave.

INT. KITCHEN - LATER

There are fewer people in the kitchen, but the drinking continues. Warren fixes 'dueling' slammers for Ellie and Ian.

They down them in a gulp and both start laughing as Ellie leans on Ian's shoulder for support.

INT. BATHROOM - LATER

Seth now lies flat on the floor, his face wedged into the small trash can. He awakens with a start and whips his head back and forth, trying to shake off the trash can.

Finally, he simply grabs it with his hands and pries it off. He stands unsteadily, looks in the mirror, and rubs his eyes.

He takes a contact lens case out of the medicine cabinet and takes out his lenses. He looks for his eyeglasses, but they're not in their case. He stumbles, groping, to the door.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

From Seth's blurry POV we follow his walk to the kitchen. As he rounds the corner, a lone couple is making out in the kitchen. Seth's POV (interspersed squinting - fuzzy, then clear, and fuzzy) suggests the couple may be Ellie and Ian.

They are oblivious to his presence and keep making out. Seth turns and walks to his bedroom, shaking his head.

INT. CAMPUS MAILROOM - DAY

SUPER: SPRING SEMESTER FINAL EXAMS PERIOD

Allison walks up to Seth from behind and taps him on the shoulder. He closes his box and turns around.

SETH

Hey, it's the birthday girl! Do you feel old yet?

ALLISON

I'm fine and only twenty, mind you. Thanks for the necklace, you shouldn't have. It's too expensive.

She takes her necklace out from her shirt to show it off.

SETH

I'm glad you like it.

ALLISON

Joe got really ticked off when I told him you bought it for me.

SETH

I didn't think about that. I hope I didn't cause a problem.

ALLISON

Don't worry about it. It's just one of many arguments we've had lately.

SETH

Oh, I'm sure you guys will be fine.

ALLISON

Let's hope. We've got a twelve hour drive home together next week - I'm not looking forward to that. Well, I've got to run, take care.

She gives him a hug and a peck on the cheek and walks away. Seth stands there, savoring the interaction. As he walks away he clutches his fist in a little victory gesture.

INT. COFFEE HOUSE - DAY

Seth and Ellie sit at a table, preparing their coffees.

ELLIE

I can't believe I have to move back in with my parents this summer.

SETH

It's only for a few months El, and you're only a couple hours away if you want to visit. Chet's old room will be available.

ELLIE

Yeah, I know. But, I'll definitely be looking forward to starting at Emory next fall though.

There's a pause as they sip their coffees and search for conversation. Seth looks a bit anxious, and shifts about in his seat. He finally brings himself to break the silence.

SETH

El, I've been meaning to ask you something. I may or may not have seen you and Ian making out at our last party. Was I hallucinating?

ELLIE

What? That's impossible. There wasn't anyone else in the kitchen.

SETH

I didn't announce my presence. How could you do that to Paul?

ELLIE

How could I? This from a guy who strategically buys expensive jewelry for girls with boyfriends?

SETH

I knew I never should've told you about that.

There's an abrupt break in the conversation. Ellie lights a cigarette. Seth is distraught and leans down on the table with his head in his hands, clutching his hair.

SETH

Geez El, are we awful people?

ELLIE

No, Seth. We're not awful. We're basically decent human beings.

She takes a thoughtful drag on her cigarette and exhales.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

We're just doing really awful things.

INT. SETH AND KENNY'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

SUPER: SUMMER

Kenny is in the recliner watching TV. Seth enters the room flipping closed a cell phone and grinning from ear to ear.

KENNY

Who was that?

SETH

That, my friend, was Allison.

KENNY

Did you find out if I still don't count?

SETH

She told you she was sorry about that, when are you going to get over it?

KENNY

Well, a more substantive gesture might have been nice - perhaps a lap dance.

SETH

Okay, if that's what you want.

Seth jumps on Kenny in the recliner, straddles him, and begins writhing about.

KENNY

Not you, you moron!

They both laugh and Kenny shoves him onto the floor.

KENNY (CONT'D)

All right, all right, I'm over it, what'd she say?

SETH

She's vacationing in Myrtle Beach with some friends and asked me to come over tomorrow.

(beat)

So, I'm gonna take off work early and drive over.

KENNY

Tomorrow? But we're going to the Braves' game tomorrow. Besides, what about her boyfriend?

SETH

That's the best part. They broke up a week ago.

KENNY

Well, I guess it's your big chance. You'd better go.

SETH

I don't want you to go by yourself. Maybe we could sell the tickets.

KENNY

Nah, there's a girl at work who's been bugging me to ask her out. I'm sure she'll go on short notice.

SETH

Well, great then!

INT. SETH'S CAR - DAY

Seth drives on the highway toward Myrtle Beach. A roadside sign reads "MYRTLE BEACH ONLY 20 MILES!"

EXT. ATLANTA BRAVES' TURNER FIELD BLEACHERS - DAY

Kenny watches the game while purchasing a beer. He sits next to his 'date,' Warren Peace, who's wearing an oversized Braves hat and has a large foam '#1' finger. Warren does 'the wave' all by himself. Kenny just looks annoyed.

EXT. DECK OF MYRTLE BEACH COTTAGE - EVENING

Standing in the distance, Seth engages in an unheard conversation with Allison's friend who's sunning on the deck. She points to the beach, where Allison sits in the sand near the breaking waves, reading a book.

EXT. THE BEACH - CONTINUOUS

Seth runs from the deck to the beach. As he gets closer to her he slows down to a walk. She's absorbed in her book and doesn't notice him. He kneels down behind her in the sand.

SETH

Excuse me, Madam. May I bring you another daiquiri?

Allison is startled at first, but recognizes him and smiles.

ALLISON

Seth! I didn't know you were our cabana boy.

SETH

That's cabana man, thank you. I now have a college degree.

They laugh as they stand up. They hug, but Seth is wearing a tank top and Allison a bikini, and the sweat and suntan lotion cause their bodies to make a SMALL FARTING NOISE as their chests come together.

They're both very embarrassed and pull apart quickly. After an initial moment of chagrin, they both laugh. They give a chest apart, "A-Frame" hug.

ALLISON

I'm so glad to see you Seth.

SETH

Likewise.

EXT. BEACH SIDE RESTAURANT PATIO - NIGHT

Seth and Allison eat blue crabs and drink beer. The waves lap up at the nearby shore, and there's a slight breeze.

ALLISON

So, what are you guys up to in Bedford this summer?

SETH

Not much. We're mainly just working at the outlet mall.

ALLISON

Oh really, what store?

SETH

(embarrassed)

The 'Sock It To Me,' outlet.

ALLISON

Is that --

SETH

Yes. We sell socks, lots of socks ... and occasionally underwear.

ALLISON

So I guess I should scrap the sock puppet show I had planned, huh?

He laughs.

SETH

I have nothing against the sock, per se. Only in mass quantities do they annoy me.

She laughs.

SETH (CONT'D)

It's been lame, actually. I watch TV and Kenny stays in his room working on some secret invention.

ALLISON

Hmmm. A new and improved beer bong, maybe? How about Ellie?

SETH

She's with her parents in Marietta. We're both moving near Emory in a month though. We got apartments in the same building.

ALLISON

Well, that'll be convenient. Oh, I told my friends we might meet them for drinks later, but I wanted to do something else first.

SETH

Sure, what?

ALLISON

Well, at the risk of sounding like a cheesy personal ad, I thought we could go for a walk on the beach.

Seth considers this for a moment and then grins like a Cheshire cat. He unbuttons his shirt, fixes his hair, and smooths his eyebrows with his tongue moistened fingertips.

SETH

(disco guy impression)

Well, I think this groovy single white male might dig the vibe that classy foxy lady is sending out.

Allison breaks up laughing, swatting him with her hand.

ALLISON

After that, you're lucky if I walk anywhere with you.

EXT. BEACH AT SHORELINE - LATER

Seth and Allison walk hand in hand on the shoreline. He carries a blanket and six pack in his free hand. They laugh and play around as if it were their honeymoon.

EXT. BETWEEN THE SAND DUNES - LATER

They lay down on the blanket. It's very secluded.

SETH

You know, I don't think we're supposed to be in the dunes area, there was a sign that said --

ALLISON

Seth, please.

SETH

Yeah, sorry. That was lame.

ALLISON

Not lame. Just not the mood we're going for.

They cuddle on the blanket and look at the night sky.

ALLISON (CONT'D)

Wow, the sky's so dark tonight, I love it.

SETH

Like a small time out from reality.

ALLISON

You remember.

She turns to face Seth and pulls him close.

ALLISON (CONT'D)

Seth, let's not meet my friends. Let's spend the night here.

They lie back together on the blanket and kiss passionately.

INT. ELLIE'S NEW APARTMENT KITCHEN - DAY

Ellie sits at the kitchen table surrounded by full cardboard boxes. Seth enters the kitchen with yet another box, lays it down on the table, and takes the seat next to her.

SETH

Well, that's it. We're done with both apartments.

ELLIE

Now I get to spend the rest of the weekend unpacking.

SETH

Suit yourself, I unpack on an as needed basis.

ELLIE

That's how we know you're of the male species, my dear.

Seth feigns surprise at her comment. Ellie reaches into a box and pulls out a coffee maker.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

How about I make us the first pot of coffee of our law school years?

SETH
Sounds good, I'll find some cups in
these boxes.

She begins making the coffee as Seth looks through boxes.

ELLIE
Speaking of fun, what's happening
with your little beach blanket
bingo situation?

SETH
Well, notwithstanding the sand I
still can't get out of certain
orifices, I'd have to say it's
going well.

ELLIE
Meaning what?

SETH
Meaning we had a very romantic
night together and I'm looking
forward to fall semester.

Ellie looks puzzled.

SETH (CONT'D)
Look, we had breakfast the next
morning and talked, but I didn't
want to scare her off with a
discussion about relationships.

The coffee begins brewing and Ellie helps Seth look for cups.
She finds them quickly and they sit down.

ELLIE
You seem pretty nonchalant about
the whole thing.

SETH
If I learned anything this year,
it's that you have to take it slow.
But, she did call yesterday and ask
me to pick her up at the airport.

ELLIE
Sounds promising.

SETH
Yes, very promising. I think I'll
ask her out for dinner next week.

ELLIE

Listen, I was going to tell you this earlier, but ... well, I broke up with Paul a couple days ago.

SETH

Did you guys have a fight?

ELLIE

No, I just felt I had to end it.

SETH

But why?

ELLIE

Because, I've been calling and emailing with Ian over the summer, and ...

Seth gives her a very disapproving look.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

I know, I know, it's bad. And so, I had to break up with Paul. It just wasn't fair to him, you know.

SETH

Yeah, definitely. How'd he take it?

ELLIE

Actually, he was pretty calm. Maybe he was numb from the shock.

The coffee maker BEEPS and Ellie pours the coffee.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

Anyway, I'm going over to Paul and Kenny's place tomorrow to give him back his stuff.

SETH

Ah yes, the giving back of the stuff - always a bad scene.

ELLIE

Oh, he's planned not to be there, Kenny will let me in.

SETH

Well then, I have just one more thing to ask. You planned the time and place of the break up, correct?

ELLIE

Yeah, so?

SETH

So, why couldn't you have waited until after we moved, so Paul could help us with all this crap?

Seth grins and then so does Ellie. She smacks her own forehead with her palm.

ELLIE

Am I Lord of the Idiots, or what?

SETH

I think you just may be.

Ellie giggles and then smiles into her coffee.

EXT. BEDFORD, PAUL AND KENNY'S HOUSE - DAY

Ellie KNOCKS on the door while a box of stuff sits at her feet. Kenny answers the door, wearing baggy shorts, t-shirt, and his ever present sock and sandal combination.

KENNY

Hey Ellie, good to see you.

ELLIE

You too. Is Paul gone?

KENNY

Yeah, is that his stuff?

She reaches down and picks up the box.

ELLIE

Yep, it's all here.

She tries to enter, but he politely stands in her way.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

What?

KENNY

You can't come in right now.

ELLIE

And why would that be?

KENNY

I'm uh, working on something in the living room.

ELLIE
Working on what?

KENNY
It's my prototype.

ELLIE
Oh yeah, Seth told me about that.

KENNY
He did what? What'd he say?

ELLIE
Just that you were working on something. This is getting heavy, are you gonna take it or what?

KENNY
Oh, yeah, sorry about that.

He takes the box from her and places it inside.

ELLIE
Well, thanks, I've got to head back. By the way, do you know if Ian lives in the Gables Apartments?

KENNY
I think he does, why?

ELLIE
Oh, nothing. Gotta run, come see us in Atlanta when you can. Bye.

She walks back to her car as Kenny looks puzzled.

EXT. THE GABLES APARTMENT COMPLEX - LATER

Ellie gets out of her car and walks up to the complex. She inspects the names on the clustered mailboxes and then walks to one of the ground floor apartments.

She KNOCKS several times and the door is answered by a tall, tough looking, but very hot, ROCK GROUPIE GIRL. She's wearing a skimpy skirt, ripped concert t-shirt, and has big hair.

GROUPIE GIRL
Yeah?

ELLIE
Uh, does Ian live here?

GROUPIE GIRL

Yeah, but he's not here right now.
whaddya want?

ELLIE

Oh, you can just tell him I was in
town and dropped by. Are you his
roommate?

GROUPIE GIRL

I'm his girlfriend. Who are you?

She looks Ellie up and down with an expression of
superiority. Ellie is pretty nervous.

ELLIE

Oh, I'm just a friend.

Ellie makes 'air quotes' with her fingers.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

I'm 'Ellie'.

She gives a nervous little laugh as the Groupie Girl
continues to look at her scornfully.

GROUPIE GIRL

Whatever!

She slams the door in Ellie's face. Ellie stands frozen.

ELLIE

(meekly, facing the door)
Well, be sure to tell Ian that I
said hi. It was nice meeting you. I
guess I'll be going now.

She finally manages to move away from the door and walks to
her car, holding her hand over her face in mortification.

INT. SETH'S APARTMENT - THAT NIGHT

Seth sits at the table reading his law books. There's a KNOCK
and he answers the door. It's Ellie, and he lets her in as he
walks back to his table and sits down.

SETH

So, what's up?

Ellie walks in purposefully, slams her purse down on the
couch, and takes the chair next to Seth at the table.

ELLIE

There are two universal truths.
This I know.

SETH

What?

ELLIE

Number one: Men are fucking slime.
Number two: I am, indeed, Lord of
the Idiots.

SETH

Whoa, wait a minute. Did you and
Paul have some kind of blowout?

ELLIE

Hardly. I dropped by Ian's place
while I was in Bedford.

SETH

Ooh, the drop by. That never leads
to happy endings.

ELLIE

Hello? My story, okay? Anyway, this
Metallica bimbo answers the door
and - he has a girlfriend.

SETH

Ouch!

ELLIE

Yes, ouch! I thought she was going
to give me an involuntary piercing.

SETH

So, what'd you do?

ELLIE

I left. So, he emails saying he's
sorry he forgot to tell me about
her, but they have an open
relationship, so we can still hook
up occasionally.

SETH

And you don't find this arrangement
satisfactory?

ELLIE

No, doofus, I do not.

Ellie bangs her head on the table a couple of times and then gestures toward Seth with both hands.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

How could I be so stupid? Guys who look like Ian always have a girlfriend.

SETH

Somehow, I'm insulted by your remark, but I don't know why.

ELLIE

Paul wasn't much to look at, true, but he was a decent, nice guy. Drunk or stoned most of the time, yes, but still a decent guy.

SETH

No argument here.

ELLIE

I've got to get him back.

SETH

Who?

ELLIE

Paul! Today was a moment of clarity - we're meant to be together. I've just got to convince him of that.

SETH

Do you think you can?

ELLIE

I'm sure he's very hurt and hates me right now. But if I play my cards right, I can fix this.

SETH

So, what are you gonna do?

ELLIE

Well, no grand gestures right off. I'll start with just a consoling email or phone call, then, slowly --

SETH

Hold on. Maybe some reconnaissance first. Kenny's coming next week, so we'll pump him for info on Paul.

ELLIE

Now that sounds like a serious plan. I knew there was a reason I keep you around.

INT. AIRPORT TERMINAL - DAY

Seth waits for Allison just outside the passenger departure tunnel. He looks around as people file out of the tunnel.

Allison finally emerges. She's wearing a sun dress, and is very well tanned. She runs to him and they hug.

SETH

Hey! How's my favorite up and coming junior?

ALLISON

Great! It's so good to see you.

SETH

Well, you look great. And so tan, are you trying out for Miss Hawaiian Tropic?

ALLISON

Hard hours on the beach, mind you. You like?

She twirls around and then makes several display gestures with her left hand showing off the tan on her legs and arms.

SETH

Is this charades? What?

ALLISON

Seth! Don't you notice anything different?

She strikes a vogue pose with her left hand against her face - she's wearing a diamond engagement ring. Seth looks like he's been shot. He tries to compose himself.

SETH

(feigning enthusiasm)
Oh my gosh, look at that!

ALLISON

A couple weeks ago, Joe showed up on my parents' doorstep with roses and tickets to Cancun. It was so romantic!

SETH
Yeah, sounds like it.

ALLISON
So, in Cancun we're walking on the beach and, suddenly, he gets down on one knee and proposes. I could have died! Of course I said yes.

SETH
Wow, that's awesome.

ALLISON
Isn't it? Everything has just gone so well. I'm so happy, I can hardly believe it.

She hugs him again.

ALLISON (CONT'D)
Joe's coming in next week. Hey, you'll have to come to Bedford to meet him.

SETH
Yeah, definitely.

He reaches for the carry-on bag at her feet.

SETH (CONT'D)
Here, let me get that for you. You want to go get your other stuff at the baggage claim?

ALLISON
Yeah, let's go. I want to tell you all about Cancun! Have you ever been there?

They walk down the terminal corridor as Allison excitedly chats away and Seth just looks numb, wearing a forced smile.

EXT. ATLANTA BAR PATIO - NIGHT

Seth and Ellie sit at a patio table with a pitcher of beer. Kenny walks into the patio area and they wave him over.

ELLIE
Hey, the man from Bedford has arrived, the party can begin.

KENNY

Yeah, I thought I'd see how the elderly alumni have fun.

ELLIE

We're all the same age, you just didn't graduate on time.

KENNY

Fair enough. I like to think I'm savoring my college years.

A waitress comes by to check on their new table member.

KENNY

Can I get a glass and another pitcher for us?

The waitress nods and walks away.

KENNY (CONT'D)

(to Seth)

So, how are you holding up, pal?

SETH

I'm all right, I guess.

ELLIE

We've been busy outlining for our classes. It's helped keep him from dwelling on it.

KENNY

Outlining? What's outlining?

ELLIE

It's an ongoing summary of our notes and case readings.

Kenny looks confused.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

You see Kenny, in law school you study all semester, not just the night before a test.

KENNY

Now that's just crazy talk.

The waitress brings Kenny's glass and the pitcher. He pours himself a beer as Ellie pokes Seth's shoulder repeatedly. He looks confused, but she points toward Kenny and he remembers.

SETH
Oh, Kenny, how is Paul doing?

KENNY
He's doing all right, why?

Seth looks over to Ellie who nods her head.

SETH
Well, do you think he might be up
for making amends with our Ellie? I
mean, is he still upset?

KENNY
Oh, he's not upset at all.

Ellie's face lights up. Kenny takes a sip of beer.

KENNY (CONT'D)
Yeah, he's actually pretty happy.
He's with Debbie now.

ELLIE
What!?

KENNY
Yeah, they're an item now.

ELLIE
We haven't even been broken up for
two weeks yet.

KENNY
Actually, they've been together for
about a week and a half.

ELLIE
What!?

Ellie waves down the waitress who walks over.

ELLIE (CONT'D)
A double shot of Maker's Mark here,
please.

SETH
One here too, please.

KENNY
Oh what the hell, let's make it
three.

The waitress nods her head and walks away. As Ellie rhythmically bangs her head on the table, Seth stares like a zombie, and Kenny contentedly pours himself another beer.

EXT. STREET IN FRONT OF ELLIE AND SETH'S APARTMENTS - LATER

Seth and Kenny step out of the backseat of a cab. They've had a few, but are still sober. Ellie is not.

Seth pulls her out of the cab as Kenny pays the driver. Seth tries to get Ellie on her feet, but ends up putting her over his shoulder, as she laughs and makes GIBBERISH SOUNDS.

KENNY

(to Seth)

It's gonna be really funny when she pukes down your back.

SETH

Actually, not so much. We should have cut her off earlier.

ELLIE

(slurred)

Where's Kenny?

Seth turns around so that she can see Kenny.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

Hi Kenny!

Kenny gives her a patronizing little wave with his hand.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

Kenny, you're a ... you're a ... dumbass!

She laughs and then conks out on Seth's back.

KENNY

Thanks, I appreciate the insight.

SETH

(to Kenny)

You're coming up next weekend, right?

KENNY

No man, next weekend's me and Paul's party. I'm coming here the weekend after next.

SETH
Oh yeah, right.

Seth takes out his keys and hands them to Kenny.

SETH (CONT'D)
Here, let yourself in to my
apartment, and I'll drop Miss
Intoxiality off at her place.

KENNY
All right.

They both head into:

THE APARTMENT COMPLEX HALLWAY

where Seth fishes Ellie's keys out of her purse and opens her door as Kenny walks past and lets himself into Seth's apartment, a few doors down. Seth and Ellie enter:

ELLIE'S STUDIO APARTMENT

and he walks to the couch where he gently lays her down. He puts a pillow under her head and covers her with a blanket.

She looks up at him admiringly, albeit drunkenly, as he kneels over her to tuck her in.

ELLIE
(slurred)
Seth ... you're ... you're so
wonderful. ... And you'll always be
there for me, right?

SETH
Yeah, I suppose I will.
(under his breath)
Maybe we should keep you drunk all
the time.

ELLIE
Whah...?

SETH
Nothing. Go to sleep. I'll be back
in the morning to check on you.

ELLIE
Wait! Hold on.

SETH

What?

ELLIE

You've got to put me on my stomach.

SETH

Why?

ELLIE

Cause I don't want to die like John
Bonham!

SETH

(amused)

All right.

He turns her over onto her stomach, covers her again with the blanket, and walks toward the door.

When he gets to the door, he looks back at her. She has already rolled over to her back and is sound asleep.

He looks at the door and then back over to her. He sighs, takes out the keys, and locks the door from the inside. He walks over to the couch, grabs a spare pillow, and lies down on the floor next to the couch.

INT. SETH'S STUDIO APARTMENT - NIGHT

Seth and Ellie sit on his couch, intensely reviewing papers and marking them up. While Ellie is fresh and focused, Seth is sleepy and barely able to read or keep his head up.

SETH

Geez, what time is it?

ELLIE

It's just a little after midnight.
We can finish up these legal memos
and still catch Conan O'Brien.

Seth wearily hands the paper he was reading to Ellie.

SETH

Here's yours. It better be enough
because I can't stay awake for
another proofread.

She puts the paper to one side, makes a couple of pen marks on his, and hands it to him. He looks at it and GROANS.

SETH

I can't believe I didn't catch all these mistakes. I'm gonna fail.

ELLIE

That's why we proof each other's work. You can make those changes in the morning in just a few minutes.

She picks up her paper and begins reading it studiously. He tries to read his, but has trouble keeping his eyes open. He nods off and slides over onto her.

She quits reading for a moment and looks at him quizzically, then gets back to her paper. He then fully drops his head to rest on her shoulder, sound asleep.

She puts her paper down and looks at him. She snuggles closer into his chest and turns on the TV with the remote. O'Brien's monologue comes on, as a gratified smile crosses her face.

INT. OUTSIDE OF LAW SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY

The classroom door opens and law students stream into the hall, talking excitedly. Seth emerges and heads down the hall, but Ellie catches up with him and hooks his arm.

ELLIE

Hey, where are you off to so fast, Mister Man?

SETH

Oh, hey. I'm going to the bookstore to get the supplements on civil procedure. The textbook just isn't making sense.

ELLIE

Yeah, tell me about it. Hey, KELLY said some people from our section are going out for beers tonight.

SETH

So?

ELLIE

So? So let's go, grumpy. It'll be fun.

SETH

I'm going to Kenny's party tonight.

ELLIE

Seth, we need to start socializing here, with law school people.

SETH

And ditch our old friends?

ELLIE

No, making new ones. But you have to be here to do it.

SETH

It's just this one party to hang out with Kenny and Paul.

ELLIE

And to stalk Allison?

SETH

Yeah, you've got me pegged.

Seth turns to leave.

ELLIE

Seth, I didn't mean anything.

He turns briefly, as he walks away.

SETH

Ah, don't worry about it. I'll see you when I get back.

Ellie's friend, Kelly, catches up to her as he leaves.

KELLY

So, is he coming?

ELLIE

No, he's ... he's got somewhere else to be.

INT. KENNY AND PAUL'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Seth enters through the crowded kitchen with a six pack in hand. Kenny spots him and comes over.

KENNY

Hey, Seth! It's almost midnight, we didn't think you were gonna come.

SETH

Sorry, I was trying to do some studying before I came and time kinda got away from me.

KENNY

You law students with your studying - that's just insane.

Kenny reaches for Seth's six pack.

KENNY

Let me put that in the fridge and I'll show you around.

As Seth hands it over, his attention is drawn to the kitchen table, on which sits Warren Peace, drunk and cross-legged, while girls lick, and stick, Fruit Loops all over his face. He looks like he has a bizarre form of Fruit Loops measles.

SETH

I see things haven't changed much around here.

KENNY

Yeah, Warren's become quite the party icon. Goofy, drunk, and stupid must be in style this year.

SETH

I notice it hasn't helped you much.

KENNY

Ooh, nicely played.

They walk into the:

LIVING ROOM

and come to the couch where Paul and Debbie make out passionately, with Paul lying on top of her.

SETH

Hey Paul, hey Debbie.

They both wave hello to Seth, not bothering to stop or come up for air. If anything, their carnal groping intensifies.

KENNY

They're like this constantly. He has his own room ten feet away, but they love the PDA.

He takes a sip of beer.

KENNY (CONT'D)

It's been kinda like having your own novice Cinemax porn, whether you want it or not.

ANGRY SHOUTING and SCREAMING comes from the front porch. One of the voices is distinctly Allison's. Seth walks to the open front door to see what's going on and Kenny follows.

EXT. FRONT PORCH - CONTINUOUS

JOE

This is bullshit! I'm leaving!

ALLISON

I'm coming with you whether you want me to or not!

Joe walks away as Allison steps off the porch, but sees Seth in the doorway watching. She steps back onto the porch and gives him a quick hug. She's very upset.

ALLISON (CONT'D)

Oh Seth, it's good to see you. I've got to go. Sorry we can't catch up.

JOE (O.S)

Hey are you coming or what!?

She steps off the porch and scurries toward Joe. Seth starts to speak, but sees that he doesn't have her attention. The couple walks away on the sidewalk, still arguing.

KENNY

Forget about it Seth. Besides, I've got something to show you.

INT. KENNY'S ROOM - LATER

Kenny and Seth sit on his bed. Seth is still a bit shaken.

KENNY

She's got to work that stuff out on her own, Seth. You don't want to get in the middle of that.

SETH

Yeah, I know. It's hard to watch and do nothing though, you know?

KENNY

Of course. You care about her.

SETH

So, anyway, what do you have to show me? Do I finally get to see your prototype?

KENNY

Actually, no, that's not it.

Seth looks disappointed.

KENNY (CONT'D)

But, since you brought that up, I'll give you a hint.

He reaches under the bed and pulls out a shoe box.

KENNY (CONT'D)

It's in here.

SETH

That's it?

KENNY

Hey, that's more information than anyone else's gotten. At least you know how big it is.

SETH

Okay, whatever. So, what were you planning to show me?

KENNY

You're gonna like this.

He reaches back under the bed and gets two decorative glass bottles, handing one to Seth. They are matching, commemorative flasks full of Jim Beam whiskey.

SETH

Oh Kenny, you really do care. People will say we're in love.

KENNY

Yeah, right. Speaking of love, let's make a toast.

Kenny cracks the seal of his bottle and Seth does likewise.

KENNY (CONT'D)

Here's to love and our love lives.

SETH
... Or the lack thereof.

They CLINK their flasks and take a swig.

INT. ATLANTA BAR - NIGHT

Ellie and Seth sit at the bar. Seth has a pitcher of beer and Ellie just a glass of water.

SETH
I'm so ready to have this first semester over with.

ELLIE
Tell me about it. So, you know Kelly's dad is a lawyer, right?

SETH
No, really?

ELLIE
Yeah. She's under a ton of pressure. You know, the whole family tradition thing.

SETH
I'll bet.

ELLIE
Anyway, she got so stressed out yesterday she said, 'if I could just get hit by a car, then I wouldn't have to take finals.'

SETH
Are you serious?

ELLIE
Yeah, can you believe it?

SETH
Wow, and I thought we were stressed.

Kenny sneaks up and sits down next to them, startling them.

KENNY
So, a round of Makers Mark for everybody?

ELLIE

Very funny. I'm on water with a lime - I have to study tomorrow morning. Besides, I never want to relive the Makers Mark incident.

SETH

What's up in the world of Kenny?

KENNY

Not much, same old shit. Pretty big incident in the cafeteria this week though.

ELLIE

Mass food poisoning?

KENNY

Nah, Joe broke up with Allison at lunch and it got ugly. They were both screaming and she threw the ring at him - hit him in the head.

Kenny laughs a little.

SETH

Any idea why?

KENNY

Well, the trajectory of the ring's flight coincided with his head.

Seth gives Kenny an annoyed look.

KENNY

I know, sorry. I heard she was getting drunk a lot and you know how they would fight all the time.

The bartender brings Kenny a glass and he pours a beer.

KENNY (CONT'D)

I saw her yesterday and she looked like crap - like a bag lady. She was talking about Joe and started crying on me. It was terrible.

SETH

I'll call her tomorrow and see if she wants me to come over.

ELLIE

But we have work with our study group tomorrow.

SETH

I'll get my part done tonight and you can hand it in for me.

ELLIE

Seth, this thing with Allison has caused you nothing but heartache and trouble.

SETH

And you're point is what? I'll be fine, don't worry.

ELLIE

Well, somebody has to worry. We're near the end of the semester, and your wasting your time with this.

SETH

Who are you? My mom?

ELLIE

Fine! You do whatever you want! Heaven forbid that you pour your attentions into something healthy.

She angrily gets up to leave the bar.

SETH

Where are you going?

KENNY

El, come on, don't leave.

She doesn't listen to them and walks out.

SETH

What was that all about?

KENNY

Who knows, but she's pissed. I could be wrong, but I think she might like you.

SETH

Of course she likes me. She's probably just stressed out over classes.

KENNY

No, I mean I think she likes likes you.

SETH

What? No way!

KENNY

I don't know. Why else would she be so emotional? I didn't even know she had emotions.

SETH

No, it's not like that. It's never been like that. At least I don't think so.

INT. ALLISON'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Allison lies on her couch in an oversized sweatshirt and sweatpants. The lights are all off and the curtains closed. Only the TV lights the room. She's on the telephone.

ALLISON

Come on, Joe ... I know you're home. ... Damn it!

She hangs up angrily. The doorbell RINGS and she excitedly gets up to answer it. She opens the door and sunlight streams into the room as Seth stands before her. She's crestfallen.

SETH

Hey, I'm here, just like I promised. ... What's wrong?

ALLISON

Oh nothing. I'm sorry, it's good to see you again.

She gives him a long hug and starts crying. He sees that she's upset and hugs her close, patting her back.

SETH

Hey, it's gonna be all right.

ALLISON

No, Seth, he's really mad. He won't even return my calls. I did some stupid things. I'm such an idiot.

Seth breaks the embrace and gently holds her shoulders.

SETH

Allison, look at me.

She timidly looks up, but then back down, sniffing. He gently lifts her chin up with his finger.

SETH (CONT'D)

Allison, you're not an idiot and we all make mistakes, right?

She tearfully nods her head.

SETH (CONT'D)

And if he doesn't appreciate someone as wonderful as you, then he doesn't deserve you, okay?

ALLISON

Oh, I don't know.

SETH

No, he doesn't. Now come on, let's get out of here and do something fun - get your mind off things.

ALLISON

I can't, he might call. He's my soulmate; we understand each other.

Seth lets go of her shoulders and looks completely deflated. She walks over to the couch and plops down in front of the TV, picking up the remote.

ALLISON (CONT'D)

Besides, it's time for my soaps.

He follows her and sits on the other end of the couch.

SETH

Soaps? But it's Saturday.

ALLISON

I have SoapNet now. They have weekend marathons.

SETH

Oh. Are you sure you don't want to go out?

ALLISON

That's the last thing I want to do right now.

She lies down, curled up, on the other end of the couch, and clicks the remote.

ALLISON (CONT'D)

Do you watch All My Children?

SETH

I do today.

At least one episode of AMC has likely run, as Allison lies sound asleep on the couch, SNORING softly. Seth sits on the other end of the couch, looking bored out of his skull.

He checks his watch and gets up. He walks over to Allison and gently jostles her shoulder, waking her up.

ALLISON

Was I asleep? What time is it?

SETH

It's five o'clock. You've been asleep for about an hour.

ALLISON

I'm sorry, I was so tired.

SETH

I don't mind. It's just that I need to get back to Atlanta.

ALLISON

You should get back if you need to.

SETH

Are you gonna be all right?

ALLISON

Yeah, I'll be fine, don't worry.

SETH

Well, I'm going to take off then.
You take care.

Seth kisses her on the forehead and starts to leave.

ALLISON

Seth?

SETH

Yeah?

ALLISON

Are you gonna come see me next weekend?

SETH

Yeah. I'll be here.

INT. ATLANTA COFFEE HOUSE - DAY

SUPER: LAW SCHOOL FALL FINAL EXAMS PERIOD

Seth, Ellie, and Kelly sit at a table, reviewing for an exam. The place is full of students studying and talking.

KELLY

There's no way I'm gonna be able to digest all this civil procedure material by Monday.

ELLIE

Quit worrying. We have the rest of today and all day Sunday to get through it.

KELLY

But we also have finals on Wednesday and Friday, and we haven't even started on those.

ELLIE

Kelly, we have a day and a half to study for each. We'll get it done.

Seth keeps checking his watch and soon gets up from the table, collecting his things. Ellie and Kelly look dismayed.

SETH

I've gotta take off.

KELLY

Seth, we're not even half way through reviewing our outline.

SETH

I'll go over the rest tonight by myself.

KELLY

But, where are you going?

SETH

Well, if you must know, I promised a friend I would visit them today.

Kelly is a bit stunned. Ellie says nothing, but tilts her head and raises an eyebrow. It doesn't go unnoticed by Seth.

SETH

(to Ellie)

Is that a look?

ELLIE

Not at all. You're an adult and make your own decisions.

SETH

I'm glad you feel that way.
(softening)
Look, I'll see you guys tomorrow at two o'clock, okay?

The girls nod and Seth walks out of the coffee house.

KELLY

What's his deal?

ELLIE

You remember the situation with the girl at Bedford I told you about?

KELLY

Oh ... right.

ELLIE

Yeah. ... Now, where were we?

INT. SETH'S STUDIO APARTMENT - NIGHT

Seth and Ellie are wearily studying for an exam. They sit on the couch reading their tort law books as a nearby clock reveals that it is 1:00 AM.

SETH

I don't know if we'd be better off finishing this tonight or just getting more sleep for the exam.

ELLIE

Hang in there, we can probably finish this up by two and still get some decent sleep before the exam.

SETH

I'll make it, don't worry. Where's that outline for intentional torts?

The telephone RINGS and Seth gets up and answers it, while Ellie continues to read.

SETH

Hello? ... What's wrong? ... It'll be okay, we'll talk Saturday. ...

(MORE)

SETH (cont'd)
 That's not funny, don't even say
 that. ... Don't do anything, okay?
 ... I'll be there as soon as I can.

Ellie perks up from her book on hearing Seth's last comment.

SETH (CONT'D)
 Yes, I promise. ... I'm gonna hang
 up now, but I'm on my way, all
 right? ... Bye.

Ellie, flabbergasted, gets up to confront Seth who is now
 putting on his jacket.

ELLIE
 What in the hell was that all
 about? Where are you going?

SETH
 I can't explain everything right
 now, I've got to go to Bedford to
 help Allison. I'll be back when I
 can. Lock up for me, will ya?

ELLIE
 What? Are you kidding?

He doesn't answer and runs out the door. Ellie, frustrated,
 vacillates for a moment, and then chases after him.

EXT. JUST OUTSIDE OF APARTMENT COMPLEX - CONTINUOUS

It's pouring rain. Seth stands under the awning, then picks
 up a newspaper for an umbrella, and walks toward his car.

Ellie, running flat out, catches up to him and grabs his arm.
 The newspaper falls and now they're both getting drenched.

ELLIE
 Are you insane?

SETH
 Damn it, I've got to go! Joe's
 found someone else and Allison is
 talking about killing herself!

ELLIE
 So, call 911! You can't get there
 as fast as they can.

SETH

Well, she hasn't actually done anything yet. But I have to stop her before she does.

He turns to leave, but Ellie steps in front of him.

ELLIE

Seth, you can't. You have an eight o'clock exam! If you go, you'll fail the class.

SETH

El, she's suicidal! It's my life, why do you care so much what I do!?

ELLIE

(voice weak and quivering)
Why do I care?

She slowly starts crying, fighting it all the way. Seth is completely taken aback by her breakdown.

SETH

What? Why are you crying?

ELLIE

Because ... because I do care about you, and what happens to you. She doesn't even love you ... not like I love you. Can't you see that?

SETH

El, where is this coming from? I mean ... I don't know what to say.

ELLIE

Why do you want to throw it all away for nothing? You don't need her. We have everything we need right here.

SETH

El, I care about you a lot, I do. But right now I have to handle this. She needs me. I'm sorry El. It'll all work out, don't worry.

He walks around her as she puts up no fight and stands alone, crying in the rain. With her mascara running, and her hair wet and matted around her face, she looks like a terribly sad little drenched racoon.

EXT. STREET IN FRONT OF ALLISON'S APARTMENT - LATER

It's still raining hard. Seth gets out of his car, walks to her door, and KNOCKS. The lights are on, but no answer. He KNOCKS harder several times. Still, no answer.

SETH

Allison! Allison! Are you able to come to the door?!

Still, no answer. He takes a step back and throws his shoulder into the door with a THUD. He only succeeds in falling down. He gets up and looks around frantically.

INT. ALLISON'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Allison is on the phone and looks awful. Her eyes are swollen from crying. There are pill bottles on the coffee table.

ALLISON

(weak and sluggish)

... yes, that's the address. Thank you. Bye.

She walks over to the front door.

EXT. OUTSIDE ALLISON'S DOOR - CONTINUOUS

Seth brushes himself off and takes several steps back. He bends his knees and pats his own shoulder to get ready.

INT. ALLISON'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Allison unlocks the door, pulls it slightly ajar, and then walks to the couch where she plops down.

A moment later there's a LOUD THUD as Seth comes barreling in, hitting the now partially open door with his shoulder, and another LOUD THUD as he falls hard to ground.

He slowly gets up, clutching his already bruised shoulder.

ALLISON

Are you all right?

Seth forgets about his shoulder and runs over to Allison.

SETH

I'm fine. Are you okay?

ALLISON
Well, no, not really.

SETH
Have you taken anything?

ALLISON
Uh, two.

SETH
You only took two pills?

ALLISON
No, two kinds of pills.

She points to the two half empty pill bottles on the coffee table. He seizes them and holds them up to inspect.

SETH
These don't have labels! What are they?!

ALLISON
I don't know, who cares?

SETH
We've got to call an ambulance!

He picks up the nearby phone and punches 911. Allison lazily knocks it out of his hand. He looks at her incredulously.

SETH (CONT'D)
What are you doing?

ALLISON
I already called, they're on their way.

SETH
Oh. Maybe we should do something in the meantime. How do you feel?

ALLISON
What does it matter? I'd rather be dead, anyway.

SETH
No! No you wouldn't! You're gonna do this over one guy? He's not worth it.

ALLISON

It's not just Joe, it's a permanent thing. Guys like me for a while, but they always leave.

SETH

Well, those guys are all stupid. It doesn't have to be like that.

ALLISON

Seth, no one can really love me. I'm no good for anybody.

SETH

Of course you are, you --

ALLISON

Do you even know why I left Penn State to come here?

SETH

You said you wanted a small college.

ALLISON

No. I had to leave. I couldn't stand to stay anymore ... not after what I did. I needed to start over.

SETH

What?

ALLISON

I had a boyfriend, Brian. I was mad at him over something stupid, and I started drinking at a party while I was on my meds. Anyway, I started getting crazy and went off on him, like I did on you, remember?

SETH

Yeah, I remember.

ALLISON

But it was way worse. I said horrible things about him in front of all our friends, most of it wasn't even true. He was really upset, and he got drunk and drove his car into a tree.

SETH

That's horrible, I'm so sorry.

ALLISON

Sorry? Seth, I as good as killed him. He died because of me. I always ruin things ... I can't be loved ... not for long anyway.

SETH

That's not true. It isn't. It would be very easy to love you, Allison.

ALLISON

Who could possibly love me knowing all this ... knowing what I'm really like?

SETH

I could.

ALLISON

Oh Seth, you're just saying that so I won't try to hurt myself again.

SETH

No, Allison, I mean it. I've always been in love with you - since the first night we kissed.

Allison is stunned by his declaration and starts tearing up as she moves closer to him.

ALLISON

But Seth, you never said anything about this before. Are you sure?

SETH

I should've said it before. But I'm saying it now, and I've never been more sure of anything in my life.

ALLISON

Really? You really feel that way?

SETH

Of course I do. I love you, Allison - more than you'll ever know. Do you love me?

She throws her arms around him and hugs him with all her might. She's crying tears of joy now. He starts getting teary as well.

ALLISON

Oh, Seth! Oh, Seth!

SETH

Can I take that as a yes?

She kisses him passionately and then hugs him tightly again.

ALLISON

Yes, Seth, yes. I love you so much.
More than you'll ever know.

They continue hugging, and crying, as the sound of an ambulance's siren can be heard in the distance.

EXT. PARK PLAYGROUND - DAY

SUPER: THREE YEARS LATER

Seth plays with a LITTLE BLOND GIRL (about 2 years old) on the playground next to a jungle gym. He points to an UNSEEN WOMAN's outstretched arms.

SETH

Run to mommy, SOPHIE, run to mommy.

The child toddles to the Unseen Woman's outstretched arms. The arms pick the child up, and it is Ellie, not Allison, who is her mother. Ellie stands up, holding her little girl close to her face, and whispers in the child's ear.

ELLIE

Yes, sweetheart, we're gonna dye
that hair jet black when you get a
little older. Yes we are.

Seth joins them and takes the child as Ellie packs up their blanket and cooler.

SETH

(to child in baby voice)
Are you ready to go see Aunt
Allison, sweetie, huh, are you?

He tickles her and she giggles and nods her head. They walk toward their car, parked nearby.

SETH

(somber)
Do you know how to get to the new
place?

ELLIE

(somber)
Yeah, it shouldn't be hard to find.

SETH

I just hope it's not too far out of town this time.

ELLIE

No, only about an hour or so.

(beat)

After all she's been through in the past few years, we should try to visit as often as we can.

They get into the car and drive off.

EXT. OUTSIDE OF GATED DRIVEWAY - LATER

Seth and Ellie's car is stopped just outside of a gated driveway. The fencing is imposing, as is the iron gate and other security accouterments.

Seth's arm reaches out of the driver's window and he pushes a button on the security box. The gate opens, and they drive through on a long driveway.

They come to the end of the driveway, in front of a formidable dwelling that could pass as an institutional facility or a luxury mansion. They get out of the car and walk toward the impressive set of steps to the door.

As they reach the base of the steps, the front door BURSTS open and Kenny comes out, wearing baggy shorts and a Hawaiian shirt. He gestures toward the mansion.

KENNY

You guys like the new place?

Ellie and Seth look at each other and smile.

KENNY (CONT'D)

And it's all Sandal-Sock money, baby!

Kenny poses his footwear for them and a CLOSE-UP of his feet reveals his, now successful, Sandal-Sock invention.

The CLOSE-UP of his Sandal-Sock reveals that it is composed of cotton blend socks sewn together with micro-suede sandal material along with a thin rubber sole.

Seth and Ellie remain at the base of the steps as Kenny continues to dance around displaying his footwear.

SETH
 (to Ellie, under his
 breath)
 Whoever thought the Sandal-Sock
 would be such a hit?

ELLIE
 (to Seth, under her
 breath)
 Whoever thought you could make a
 washable Sandal-Sock?

They join Kenny at the top of the stairs and enter:

THE FOYER

From the living room comes Allison. She's about thirty pounds heavier and has a tired, yet cheerful, appearance. It's apparent that she's been through a lot. She takes Kenny's hand and they kiss.

KENNY
 Hey sweetie, is everything ready?

ALLISON
 Yeah, we're all out on the
 patio. It's good to see you guys!

Allison and Ellie hug, and then Allison and Seth hug. Allison tickles Sophie's bare feet.

ALLISON (CONT'D)
 And how are you, little Miss
 Sophie?

Sophie giggles and they all walk through the house toward the back patio. They pass an elaborate display case and a CLOSE-UP shows that it holds Kenny's original, hand-sewn, prototype of the Sandal-Sock.

ALLISON (CONT'D)
 (to Ellie)
 I'll give you the grand tour after
 we eat, okay?

ELLIE
 That would be great! I'm starving.

They exit the back of the house through french doors and step onto the:

BACKYARD PATIO

where Paul is tending the grill, flipping hamburgers. He's being helped by Kelly, who is quite pregnant. Paul and Seth shake hands as Kelly and Ellie hug.

Kelly pats Paul on the shoulder, while looking at Ellie.

KELLY

El, can you believe I let this big lug knock me up?

ELLIE

Well, it was your decision to marry him in the first place. So you can't blame a guy for trying.

They both laugh and Kelly and Seth hug as Paul laughs along while tending the burgers.

KELLY

(to Seth, under her breath)

Can you believe the size of this place?

SETH

I really don't know if I can believe any of this - but, I'm pretty sure that I like it.

Nick Lowe's 'Cruel To Be Kind' plays as the CREDITS ROLL and the scene continues. Ellie helps Paul put the burgers on a plate. Kenny plays hide and seek with little Sophie.

Seth and Allison help Kelly sit down at the patio table and then gently touch her big tummy, feeling a kick, as she laughs.

THE END