

FACE TIME

Everything has its price

Written by

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EXT. GAS STATION - DAY

A gas station on the edge of a small town, with a city limit sign reading:

"Welcome to Manville, Iowa, population 2500"

JACK SPENCE, middle-aged, pulls up to a gas pump. He gets out and inserts his ATM card into the pump's card reader but gets an error message advising him to see the cashier. Sighing, he walks toward the cashier's booth.

INT. CASHIER'S BOOTH - DAY

JULISSA, the cashier, stands behind the counter and smiles.

JACK
(smiles)
Hi, Julissa.

JULISSA
Hi, Jack.
(giggles)
It always sounds like I'm trying to
force a plane to take me to Cuba.

JACK
(chuckling)
I know, I know.

JULISSA
Let me guess...

JACK
Pump number three. Card reader's
busted again.

JULISSA
Okay, I'll have someone look at it.
Again.

She turns the countertop card reader toward him. He swipes his ATM card and punches in his code. The television is on and he glances at it.

JACK
Hey, can you turn it up?

Julissa grabs the remote control and increases the volume.

NEWSCASTER

-- grown nearly one hundred million dollars in the last week alone, based mostly on non-Canadian ticket sales, bringing this Saturday's expected jackpot to a record \$450 million. If the lottery isn't won this weekend, the jackpot may surpass the half billion dollar mark. The size of the current jackpot and the fact that the national lottery in Canada is tax free has led to growing international participation, especially from the United States but also from Europe, Japan and even Latin America where tickets began to be sold just ten days ago, contributing to huge increase.

Jack turns away from the set, shaking his head. Julissa lowers the volume.

JULISSA

Can you imagine, half a billion dollars?

JACK

Well, someone'll probably win it this weekend and I guarantee it won't be me. But just in case, can you get me ten -- no fifty tickets?

JULISSA

Sure.

Jack places two twenties and a ten on the counter. Julissa prints the tickets. She takes his money and hands him tickets.

JULISSA (CONT'D)

Good luck.

JACK

Someone's got to win it, why not me?

JULISSA

Exactly.

Jack nods and walks out.

INT. MARIE AND PAUL'S HOUSE - DAY

Marie, 28, very pregnant, 30-year old Paul, and 5-year-old Anna frantically getting ready to leave.

MARIE

Come on, guys, we're late.

INT. KEVIN'S CAR - DAY

Kevin, a large man, 30s, face hidden by a hoodie, pulls up in front of a house on a nondescript Midwestern street.

JACKIE

Don't take too long.

Kevin forces a smile and glances at Jackie in the front passenger seat. She's wearing a knit cap and we can't see her face clearly.

FRANK

(voice distorted)

Yeah, don't take too long.

Kevin casts a glance back at a rail-thin 30-ish man, FRANK, sitting in the back seat, crushed down by MS.

KEVIN

Yes, mommy and daddy.

Kevin leaves the engine running, grabs something on the floor next to Jackie's feet and opens the car door.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

Kevin steps onto the porch and places the object in front of the door which suddenly swings open and Kevin, bent over, is face-to-face with the pregnant Marie who SCREAMS and we see Kevin's face -- it's grotesquely disfigured.

Someone pulls Marie back into the house, then Paul steps out, smashing Kevin in the head with a GOLF CLUB.

Kevin staggers backward. Paul continues striking him on the head and shoulders, following him onto the porch, Kevin not even raising his hands to defend himself.

KEVIN

(yells)

I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry.

PAUL
(shouts)
Marie, call 911!

Kevin raises his hands so that the golf club is now striking his forearms. The passenger side door of Kevin's car swings open and Jackie launches herself out of the vehicle, wearing a long coat and knit cap. She sprints to the porch where Kevin is now sitting with his back against a small swing, arms still overhead as Paul continues raining blows on him.

KEVIN
I'm sorry!

Jackie leaps onto Paul's back, wrapping her legs around his waist and raining punches down on his head. Paul, surprised, drops the golf club and twirls around.

JACKIE
Stop it, stop it, stop it, stop it!

PAUL
I'm stopping, I'm stopping!

Paul flails ineffectually at her. Kevin sits, stunned, his hood having come off, revealing his deformed face.

KEVIN
I'm sorry, I'm sorry!

MARIE
Kevin!

Marie stands in the doorway, holding a cell phone, staring at Kevin whose grotesque face is bleeding profusely.

Police SIRENS sound in the distance.

Paul stops twirling and flailing, even though Jackie continues to pummel him. Jackie's knit cap has come off and we see a horribly scarred, burn victim's face, including a bald, earless head.

MARIE (CONT'D)
Jackie!

Jackie pauses, glancing at Marie. Jackie hesitates, then slides down Paul's back to the ground. Paul, horrified, glances at Kevin who is lying stunned.

PAUL
Kevin?

Someone starts SHOUTING incoherently and everyone turns to see Frank, upper body on the sidewalk, legs inside the car.

JACKIE

Frank!

Jackie runs toward the car. Marie waddles over to Kevin.

MARIE

Oh my God!

PAUL

What the hell are you doing here,
Kevin? I could have killed you!

KEVIN

(mumbles)

A book.

Kevin points at the object in front of the door. Marie turns and looks down to see the object on the porch. She walks back to it and with great difficulty bends over to pick it up.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

It's a library book,
(lowers his arms)
Marie came into the library for it.
It was returned last night, so --

MARIE

Oh my God, he was bringing me the
book I wanted for Anna!

PAUL

What?

Kevin sits straighter, wincing. Marie stares at the book.

MARIE

I came into the library and asked
for it but all the copies were
already signed out.

KEVIN

It came back last night. I didn't
want Marie to have to come all the
way to the library in her
condition.

Paul hangs his head. Marie begins to cry.

MARIE

Oh I'm so sorry, Kevin.

KEVIN

No, it's my fault, I'm so sorry.

Jackie struggles to help Frank either back into or out of the car. Frank lies there, exhausted.

JACKIE

What were you thinking?

FRANK

I just wanted to help.

Frank's speech is impaired by MS. A CRUISER SCREECHES to a halt. The SIREN stops as two officers, JOHN ZAJAC and GEORGE MOSCARO emerge from the vehicle and run up to the porch.

ZAJAC

What's going on here?

Kevin, struggling to get back up onto the porch swing, falls back down onto the porch, just as five-year-old Anna runs up.

ANNA

Hi, Kevin.

OFFICER MOSCARO

(recognizing Kevin)

Kevin?

Kevin turns to Anna, wincing as he realizes she's seeing his face full-on, not just his deformity but the blood and bruises. He smiles, wincing even more because of the pain.

KEVIN

Hi, Anna.

The cops kneel by Kevin's side.

OFFICER ZAJAC

Jesus Kevin.

OFFICER MOSCARO

What happened to you?

Kevin maintains the smile for Anna.

KEVIN

I was impersonating a UPS guy. I guess they were expecting FedEx.

PAUL

Christ, I'm sorry, Kevin.

OFFICER MOSCARO
Here, let's get you up.

KEVIN
Okay.

Kevin is still smiling for Anna. The officers lift the heavysset Kevin up onto the porch swing, just as an AMBULANCE pulls up and PARAMEDICS rush onto the porch with a gurney.

OFFICER ZAJAC
You have to go to the hospital.

Zajac and Moscaro step aside for the Paramedics.

KEVIN
No, no. No hospital.

Paramedic Alan Grant shakes his head.

ALAN GRANT
Kevin, John's right. You need stitches -- a lot of them. And you might have a concussion.

KEVIN
(exasperated)
Okay, okay.

Kevin continues to smile for Anna, who looks up at him wide-eyed. Grant tries to stop the bleeding and clean Kevin up.

ANNA
Are you going to die, Kevin?

Anna begins to cry. The child runs to her mother.

ANNA (CONT'D)
(to her mother)
I don't want Kevin to die!

KEVIN
I'm okay, darlin'. I'm okay. You go with your mommy now, and tell her not to forget to read the new book to you, okay?

Anna, crying, nods. Marie takes her daughter's hand.

MARIE
See, Anna, Kevin's okay, so let's go in the house and finish getting you ready for school, okay?

Marie glances at the battered Kevin slumped on the porch swing, then leads Anna into the house. Anna glances back at Kevin who waves at her in a childlike manner, still smiling. As soon as the little girl is in the house, Kevin stops smiling and GROANS.

ALAN GRANT

Okay, let's get you on the gurney.

Kevin nods and the two paramedics help him onto the gurney.

TOM

We'll have you to the hospital in no time, Kevin.

JACKIE

Can I get some help here?

The paramedics see Jackie struggling with Frank's limp body.

ALAN GRANT

Be right there, ma'am, we'll just get Kevin into the vehicle first.

Jackie sits down on the sidewalk, panting.

JACKIE

Jesus, Frank, don't try to help anymore, okay?

Frank looks hurt. Jackie notices and sighs.

JACKIE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, Frank.

Frank stares at her like a puppy, making Jackie uncomfortable. The paramedics load Kevin into the ambulance.

JACKIE (CONT'D)

(yells at Kevin)

I'll see you at the hospital!

PAUL

I'm sorry!

KEVIN

I'm sorry too!

JACKIE

If you say you're sorry one more time, I'm going to kick your ass!

KEVIN

Sorry!

Jackie closes her eyes.

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING AREA - DAY

Jackie and Frank sit in the hospital waiting area. Her coat is off, and she's wearing a revealing dress and an amazing body, contrasting with her deformed face.

JACKIE

I should have beaten Paul with his own golf club, but the little girl was there and... I don't know how the fuck he gets into these situations.

FRANK

Because he tries to help people.

JACKIE

Because he's an idiot.

FRANK

You really care about him.

JACKIE

He's our friend for Christ's sake. Of course I care about him.

Jackie notices a middle aged man sitting nearby ogling her body. She smiles. The guy's looks up to her face and recoils. Jackie reacts. She stands, walking slowly, sensuously toward the man whose gaze drifts downward again to her body. She stops in front of the man, who stares at her cleavage.

JACKIE (CONT'D)

Do you like what you see?

The man blushes and looks away.

MAN

I don't know what you mean.

She leans forward so that her breasts are nearly falling out. The man tries to see her breasts without turning his head.

JACKIE

You like them.

MAN

What the hell you talking about?. I'm waiting for my wife.

JACKIE

Does your wife know you like
looking at other women?

MAN

Yeah, like anyone would be looking
at a freak like you.

Jackie straighten. Frank's eyes widen. He starts clumsily fumbling with something in his lap. Jackie opens her purse and pulls out a switchblade. The knife registers on the man's face. Jackie presses a button and the blade springs out. The man pushes himself back into the chair.

MAN (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

JACKIE

How about I give you a lesson on
what it's like to be like me? I can
carve off your ears to start with...

FRANK

I like looking at you!

Jackie and the man glance at Frank, who is holding his penis, making stroking motions with gnarled hands. The man leaps to his feet, causing Jackie, surprised and distracted by Frank, to take several steps backward.

MAN

Jesus Christ, what the hell is the
matter with you people?

The Man bolts past Jackie.

MAN (CONT'D)

Fucking freaks!

Jackie turns to Frank who is still miming masturbation with his flaccid penis. Jackie starts LAUGHING and Frank joins in.

JACKIE

You can put it away now, Frank.

FRANK

You sure? I mean, since I have it
out and all.

Jackie shows him the knife.

JACKIE

Frank --

Frank looks down.

FRANK

Now look what you did. It went away.

She looks sad, but forces a LAUGH.

JACKIE

You keep that huge honkin' penis away from me, Frank, I got enough problems in my life without being mugged by a baseball bat.

Frank sneers lasciviously and makes a show of putting his limp penis away, but fumbles badly because of his disease.

FRANK

Hey, I'm having trouble here, do you think you could help me?

JACKIE

You pulled that snake out, you can put it back in its cage.

Kevin somehow manages to put his penis away and zips his pants while Jackie watches, smiling sadly. She sits down.

FRANK

(beat)

He really needs us, doesn't he?

JACKIE

He sure does.

Frank nods, staring vaguely off into space. Jackie hesitates, then touches his face, causing him to turn around and give her that stare. She gives him a smile to tide him over.

INT. HOSPITAL EXAMINING AREA - DAY

Kevin on an examination table, Doctor Jarrett sewing a stitch in his face. Kevin has several stitches and bandages on his face. His arms are loosely wrapped with ice packs on them..

JACKIE

You're lucky. Not a single broken bone.

KEVIN

Yeah, I should buy a lottery ticket.

DOCTOR JARRETT

You know, Kevin, no-one in their right mind gets stitches done without anesthetic.

KEVIN

It's too expensive.

DOCTOR JARRETT

You have health insurance through the library.

KEVIN

I don't want them to pay for it if they don't have to.

JACKIE

Maybe you should be more worried about yourself than your employer.

KEVIN

I worry about everybody. That's my job.

DOCTOR JARRETT

And who hired you for that job?

KEVIN

I volunteered.

DOCTOR JARRETT

Okay, last stitch. They're self-dissolving. When you get home, ice your arms.

KEVIN

Thanks Doctor Jarrett.

DOCTOR JARRETT

Jesus, Kevin, we went to school together, why do you keep calling me Doctor Jarrett? I'm Sam, okay? I only got the doctor thing so I could perform physicals on dates.

Kevin laughs and immediately winces.

DOCTOR JARRETT (CONT'D)

Are you going to bring charges against the guy who did this?

KEVIN

It was my fault.

DOCTOR JARRETT

It was your fault someone took a golf club to your head?

KEVIN

I scared a pregnant woman, Doctor Jarrett. If someone scared my pregnant wife I'd hit them too.

DOCTOR JARRETT

You wouldn't hit anyone, and you know it. Besides, I told you, Kevin, my friends call me Sam.

KEVIN

Doctor Jarrett, no offense, but... we were never friends.

DOCTOR JARRETT

What?

KEVIN

You were the star quarterback, and I was the big dummy on the line. We never went to a single party together or sat at the same table in the cafeteria or hung out, or did anything else together. Ever.

Jarrett frowns, trying to remember if Kevin is right.

DOCTOR JARRETT

Kevin, you kept me from getting my head busted every game and the reason we didn't hang out was because you didn't want to.

Kevin says nothing.

DOCTOR JARRETT (CONT'D)

Okay, whatever, I was a kid and kid is Latin for stupid. When are you going to let me off the hook for whatever I did to you in high school?

KEVIN

(hesitates)
Okay... Sam.

DOCTOR JARRETT

(smiles)
You know, they have a lot of new surgeries now, bro.

KEVIN

You already stitched me up. Is there something else wrong?

DOCTOR JARRETT

No, no, I'm talking about your... deformity.

Kevin sighs.

DOCTOR JARRETT (CONT'D)

Look, you're one of the nicest guys I know. If you don't deserve something better, then who does? Don't you want...

Kevin waits while Jarrett searches for the right word.

KEVIN

Sex?

DOCTOR JARRETT

Yes, sex. Don't you want to have sex?

KEVIN

(dry)

Not now, doc, I've got a headache.

DOCTOR JARRETT

Very funny. But what about a family? A career somewhere other than the back room of the friggin' library?

Kevin shakes his head, and Jarrett grabs Kevin's huge shoulders, hard. Kevin stares, surprised.

DOCTOR JARRETT (CONT'D)

If I needed something that would me, would you help me get it?

KEVIN

Of course.

DOCTOR JARRETT

Then why won't you let me help you? Are you saying you're better than me, that you have more compassion than I have?

KEVIN

Of course not.

DOCTOR JARRETT
Because if you are, as these
friggin' injuries heal I'm going to
give you a bunch of new ones.

KEVIN
(stares)
Fine. What kind of surgery?

DOCTOR JARRETT
(smiles)
Awright!

EXT. JOHNNY'S BOOKS - DAY

A small bookstore on Manville's main street. Kevin, carrying a cup of coffee, smiles, wincing, then tugs on his hood and enters the shop.

INT. JOHNNY'S BOOKS - DAY

Johnny, in his 70s, sits behind a counter, doing paperwork. He smiles as Kevin enters.

JOHNNY
You're late. Where've you --
(notices Kevin's bruises)
What the hell?

KEVIN
I walked into a door.

JOHNNY
How many times?

Kevin hands him the coffee.

KEVIN
Six times; three on the way in,
three on the way out.

Johnny studies Kevin's face.

JOHNNY
Didn't anyone ever tell you some
doors swing both ways?

KEVIN
No one ever tells me anything.

Johnny sips the coffee.

JOHNNY

Perfect. Jackie always puts something extra in it for me.

KEVIN

(laughs)

Johnny, Jackie owns a coffee shop. She's going to make that same cup of coffee for a hundred other customers today.

JOHNNY

Yeah, yeah, go ahead and laugh at an old man. But I know she puts an extra bit of love into it when she knows you're bringing it to me.

KEVIN

Right, 'cuz that's what Jackie's known for -- love.

JOHNNY

You might be surprised by how much love that girl is capable of.

Kevin, uncomfortable, looks at the rows of books.

KEVIN

This is heaven.

JOHNNY

Yeah, it is. So, when you going to take this place over?

KEVIN

(smiles wistfully)

Johnny --

JOHNNY

Look, you're the only person I'd sell this store to. I know you'll keep it a bookstore and that you'll treat my customers right.

Johnny suddenly begins searching behind the counter.

KEVIN

What are you doing?

JOHNNY

Ha!

Johnny holds aloft a single book.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)
Someone ordered it last week.

KEVIN
Okay, that makes three this year.
(winces)
Sorry. I know I write the world's
most non-commercial books.

JOHNNY
You're an award-winning novelist,
Kevin, you love books, everybody
likes you -- except whoever beat
the crap out of you with that
swinging door.

KEVIN
Actually, that guy likes me too.

JOHNNY
Whatever. Don't you think it's time
to make a change in your life?

KEVIN
Johnny, no one wants someone like
me dealing with the public.

Johnny sighs. Kevin turns and walks away.

INT. MANVILLE PUBLIC LIBRARY - DAY

Kevin sits at his cubicle in the library's open back area,
still wearing his hood. He's gluing a book spine back on.

STAN
Hey, Tom, Bruce, come on!

An employee, STAN stands by the door to the library's main
area, calling to BRUCE and TOM, employees in cubicles.

STAN (CONT'D)
Reservations are for six.

BRUCE
We have to finish inputting the new
titles for the weekend audit.

TOM
Yeah, just go on without us.

KEVIN
Hey, guys, why don't you go ahead?
I'll finish up for you.

BRUCE
Seriously?

KEVIN
Sure. I don't mind.

The two men stand, grabbing their jackets.

BRUCE
I'll leave my screen the way it is
so you'll know where I left off.
The book list is on my desk.

TOM
Me too.

BRUCE
We owe you, Kev.

KEVIN
Don't worry about it.

Both men hurry toward the door, then Bruce turns to Kevin.

BRUCE
Listen, if you finish in time, why
don't you join us?

KEVIN
Maybe next time.

BRUCE
(hesitates)
Yeah. Sure. Maybe next time.

The three men leave. Kevin finishes the book repair and goes to Bruce's cubicle and begins entering data.

CUT TO INT. LIBRARY BACK AREA - NIGHT

The wall clock indicates two hours have passed.

STEVE
What are you still doing here?

Kevin, at Tom's desk, turns to see his boss, Steve, standing in the doorway. Kevin glances at the wall clock.

KEVIN
Just finishing some stuff up.

STEVE
Why are you at Tom's desk?

KEVIN

I'm finishing off the cataloging of the new titles and Tom's going to help me with something next week.

STEVE

You're not getting overtime for this. And don't forget those reports you're writing for me.

KEVIN

No problem. I'll lock up.

Steve frowns, suspicious.

STEVE

Okay, but I'm serious about the overtime.

Kevin turns back to the computer screen. He hears the door shut and glances behind him, relieved. He resumes typing.

INT. KEVIN'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Kevin happily watches Jackie inserting a disk into the player just as Frank comes wheeling around the corner, a bowl of popcorn sitting on his lap, a trail of popcorn behind him.

FRANK

I got popcorn!

KEVIN

(encouraging)
Great.

Frank parks his wheelchair beside the end of the couch on which Jackie sits, fiddling with remotes. Kevin studies her burned face and suddenly looks as if he is going to cry.

JACKIE

Kevin, you okay?

KEVIN

(smiles)
Tired.

JACKIE

You want a neck rub baby?

Kevin sees Frank glaring at him. He also sees Jackie bent over in the act of standing up from the couch, her flimsy low-cut top hanging low enough to reveal her breasts, nipples and all. Kevin tears his eyes from her breasts.

KEVIN
No, it's okay.

Jackie looks despondent and plops back on the couch.

KEVIN (CONT'D)
What'd you get?

JACKIE
(irritated)
Never mind. Just watch it.

She turns the television on.

NEWS ANCHOR
And the big news of the day is the tax-free Canadian lottery prize reaching a new high of seven hundred million dollars after going unclaimed last night. Some experts are predicting it might actually reach the billion dollar mark by next week, creating a feeding frenzy even among those who don't usually buy lottery tickets.

FRANK
I bought a ticket today!

Jackie mutes the television.

JACKIE
Why'd you do that?

KEVIN
I'm thinking about buying one too.

JACKIE
Lotteries are for suckers.

FRANK
What, you don't want to be a billionaire?

KEVIN
You could build a music studio, produce your own records.

JACKIE
That's why I don't want to win the lottery!

(MORE)

JACKIE (CONT'D)

If you won the lottery you'd never know whether your book was a best-seller because it was good or because people want to read the billion dollar novelist.

KEVIN

I might not care.

JACKIE

You'd care.

FRANK

He doesn't care now. He writes the most brilliant books in the world, then makes them so boring no-one will ever read them.

Kevin sighs.

JACKIE

He's right. You write better than those jerk-off writers on the best-seller list. It's like you want to fail. What the fuck is the matter with you anyway?

KEVIN

Jerk-off writers? Can we just watch the chick flick?

JACKIE

I knew you'd want to see it.

She presses buttons on several remotes.

FRANK

It's not steel magnolias, is it?

JACKIE

Of course not.

Frank looks hurt by her tone.

JACKIE (CONT'D)

It's Postcards from the Edge.

Kevin and Frank GROAN.

INT. DINER - DAY

Jackie and Frank are at a table against the far wall. Kevin enters and walks quickly to them.

JACKIE
You're late!

FRANK
Yeah, you're late.

Kevin, irritated, glances at Frank.

KEVIN
I'm sorry.

FRANK
Is that it?

Kevin stares at Frank a moment, but remains calm.

KEVIN
They had a problem at work. I had to fix it.

FRANK
Why?

Kevin holds Frank's gaze.

KEVIN
Why what?

JACKIE
Why did you have to fix the problem instead of getting here on time?

KEVIN
One of the computers was on the fritz and --

FRANK
Don't they have an IT department at the library?

JACKIE
Leave him alone.

Frank frowns, looking hurt.

KEVIN
Can we just order?

JACKIE
We already ordered for you.

Kevin stares directly at her.

KEVIN
You didn't get me --

JACKIE
(defiantly)
I got you the club sandwich.

KEVIN
I hate club sandwiches.

JACKIE
Too bad.

FRANK
This is what you do. You go out of
your way to please others, and you
pay for it in the end.

KEVIN
(he's had enough)
Frank --

FRANK
How about a spy thriller?

KEVIN
What?

JACKIE
Or a Harry Potter kinda' thing.

KEVIN
Why do you guys care what I write?

JACKIE
Because you're writing yourself
into the ground like you were
drilling a friggin' well.

FRANK
Yeah. What she said.

Kevin forces a smile and speaks as if to a child,

KEVIN
I write for me, not for you or for
some imaginary 'market' or for
Twilight of Harry Potter fans
looking for an excuse to fantasize
about having sex with a bad boy
vampire or nice boy sorcerer.

JACKIE

I think it's because you're lonely.
And depressed.

FRANK

(looks uncomfortable)
We're all lonely, Jackie. That
doesn't mean that...

KEVIN

Look, Jackie, I'm not lonely or
depressed. In fact, I've got a lot
to be grateful for.

JACKIE

But?

KEVIN

But life is hard, and I don't want
some bullshit hero who magically
beats the odds and rides off into
the sunset. I want to write about
what happens after the guy rides
into the sunset, or never even gets
to ride into the sunset because
they don't own a fucking horse.

FRANK

Jesus. No wonder no-one buys your
books.

Kevin stares at Frank. Jackie starts laughing too.

FRANK (CONT'D)

I love you, bro, but let's face it:
you've dug a hole halfway to China
and crawled in, pulling the dirt
and your readers in after you.

Kevin reacts.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Listen, I have as much reason as
anyone to be depressed, so why
would I want to read even more
depressing shit in my spare time?
You're a writer, not a torturer,
can't you make your readers happy
for a change? They already know
about all the shit in their lives,
they don't need you to remind them
about it.

A waitress delivers the food.

WAITRESS

Here we go. One for you, this is for you, and this is yours. Is there anything else?

KEVIN

(forces a smile)
No, thanks Steffie.

WAITRESS

Okay, enjoy.

The Waitress leaves. Jackie puts her hand on Kevin's which startles Kevin and angers Frank.

JACKIE

(exaggeratedly feminine)
It's okay. Write whatever you want, baby, I know it's always going to be brilliant.

FRANK

(quoting)
"The most brilliant boredom ever written."

JACKIE

Frank. That's enough.

FRANK

What? I didn't say it, one of Kevin's reviewers did. "If Kevin Hogan wrote this brilliantly about anything remotely interesting, he'd be one of the most successful and critically acclaimed writers of his generation."

JACKIE

See, I told you.
(squeezing Kevin's hand)
You're brilliant.

FRANK

(quoting more loudly)
"Unfortunately, Mr. Hogan wastes his talent on the most mundane non-stories conceivable, as if in a deliberate attempt to keep fame and fortune at bay, and yet continues to tantalize us, a snow-white virgin dressed like lady gaga, promising everything and delivering nothing.

(MORE)

FRANK (CONT'D)

And we poor saps keep going back, but at some point Mr. Hogan will lose what audience he has as they tire of waiting for him to get his pompous head out of his own you-know-what."

JACKIE

(giggles)

"A snow white virgin dressed like Lady Gaga." That's great.

KEVIN

Gee thanks. You know, Frank, I'm always impressed by that photographic memory of yours. It must have come in so handy as an engineer. Hold it, you're not an engineer anymore, because they fired you and you sued them for a lifetime pension, which means you don't have to work, worry, dream or write books that get published.

Frank glares at him.

JACKIE

Oh, well, you have to admit, you are kinda' pompous.

FRANK

And you definitely have your head up your you-know-what.

Frank LAUGHS. He touches Jackie's forearm, and Kevin stares at that contact, then suddenly starts LAUGHING along with Frank and Jackie. They're surprised and stop laughing.

KEVIN

Hey, who cares what they say as long as they spell my name right.

FRANK

Actually, they didn't.

KEVIN

What?

FRANK

Two g's.

KEVIN

Hogan. H-o-g-a-fucking-n. How the hell do you misspell Hogan?

(MORE)

KEVIN (CONT'D)
(glances at his watch)
Damn, I have to get back to work.

JACKIE
You haven't eaten a thing.

Kevin stands and drops some bills onto the table.

KEVIN
Can you get mine to go, maybe put
it in the fridge at the cafe until
you can bring it home?

JACKIE
Of course, baby.

Frank starts fumbling for his wallet.

FRANK
I got it.

KEVIN
It's okay, Frank.

FRANK
I got it!

Kevin and Jackie stare, surprised.

KEVIN
Sorry, Frank.

FRANK
I -- I got it.

Frank is still fumbling for his wallet and having a hard time
of it with his gnarled hands.

KEVIN
Thanks, Frank.

Kevin hesitates, then turns and leaves. Jackie stares after
Kevin. Frank notices.

FRANK
I got it.

Jackie's not listening. Frank keeps fumbling for his wallet.

EXT. NIGHT CLUB -- NIGHT

Kevin opens the passenger side back door of his SUV, reaches
in and easily lifts the sickly thin Frank out of the car.

KEVIN
 (fakes a groan)
 Damn, are you gaining weight?

FRANK
 Ha ha.

Kevin gently places Frank in his motorized wheelchair. Kevin glances at the nightclub they're parked behind, then turns to Jackie, who's wearing a belly-and-cleavage exposing top.

JACKIE
 I think this top covers too much.
 Maybe I should have worn pasties.

FRANK
 (loudly)
 Pastries.
 (giggles)
 Pastries!

KEVIN
 He likes your buns.

FRANK
 (giggling)
 And your muffin too!

JACKIE
 Jesus, how old are you guys?

KEVIN
 Oh, don't be cross...sant.

Kevin and Frank do a high five, Frank missing.

JACKIE
 You know I don't make jokes about
 you being a librarian.

Jackie pouts while adjusting her stylish, wide brimmed hat.

KEVIN
 (shrugs)
 Go ahead. Librarians are better
 under the covers. And between the
 sheets.

FRANK
 And they have better climaxes.

JACKIE
 And they usually wear panties.

KEVIN
(straight faced)
I could do that.

JACKIE
Really? You can try mine any time
you like, big boy.

Kevin suddenly looks nervous.

FRANK
(very loud)
Hey, what about me? I can wear
women's underwear.

A middle aged man walks by toward the nightclub entrance. The man stares at Frank, then walks on.

JACKIE
(shouts)
Hey!

KEVIN
No, Jackie.

JACKIE
Don't tell me you never wore a
thong, faggot!

The man glances back, disgusted, as he walks into the club.

FRANK
Fuck. Now he thinks I'm weird.

JACKIE AND KEVIN
You are weird, Frank.

Frank frowns. Jackie takes one more look at her outfit.

JACKIE
Fuck, Lady Gaga makes it impossible
to look slutty.

FRANK
Yeah, she's created a slut gap.

JACKIE
Fuck you, Kevin.

Jackie walks toward the club. Kevin and Frank follow.

INT. NIGHT CLUB - NIGHT

The trio enter the dimly lit club. Two men and a woman, 30s, stand in front of a small stage and a table of sound equipment. The three turn to stare at them. Kevin recognizes the man Jackie insulted in the parking lot.

KEVIN

Oh shit.

JACKIE

Fuck it.

FRANK

(very loudly)

Yeah, fuck the asshole!

JACKIE

They're either going to like me or not. If they don't, I tear their arms off. Or suck their dicks.

FRANK

Nice.

KEVIN

(dry)

Yeah, real nice.

Jackie glances at Kevin.

JACKIE

Pussy.

Jackie strides toward the stage, sex pouring out of her with each swing of her hips. As she nears the trio, they look shocked as they see her face. Jackie stops for a second, then whips off her hat, and completes her oh-so-sexy walk up to them, the club lights shining off her scarred, bald head.

KEVIN

(mutters)

You go girl.

FRANK

(shouts)

Yeah, you go girl!

Kevin winces. Jackie speaks quietly to the people by the stage, then waves a dismissive hand and hands them a CD. One of men inserts the CD into a player. Jackie climbs onto the stage and turns to face the trio.

JACKIE

You going to start that music,
slick, or do I have to do
everything around here?

Kevin grins. The MUSIC starts, a bluesy pop song. Jackie starts SINGING and she hits the notes, moves well, puts everything she has into it, but she's not the Whitney or Gaga she'd need to be to make up for her appearance.

She finishes the song beautifully and stands, panting slightly, waiting. The club people glance at each other.

JACKIE (CONT'D)

(snaps)

Well, yes or no?

CLUB PERSON #1

You know, you would be a great
studio singer.

JACKIE

Where no one can see me, you mean.

CLUB PERSON #1

Well, it's just that--

JACKIE

It's just that I'm grotesque,
right?

The club guy stares.

JACKIE (CONT'D)

You son of a bitch, I've done
studio work on some of the biggest
hits in the last ten years!

SECOND CLUB GUY

Oh shit. You're Jackie Delancy!

JACKIE

You're fucking right I am!

SECOND CLUB GUY

I worked with you on a Jessie
Collins album. You were just a kid.
You were one of the best studio
singers around. Jesus, what the
hell happened?

KEVIN

Oh shit.

The guy realizes what he said.

SECOND CLUB GUY
I'm sorry, I didn't mean--

KEVIN
Too late.

But Jackie just hangs her head.

FRANK
Why isn't she going crazy?

FIRST CLUB GUY
Look, I'm sure you can still get studio work, and it's not like you were a big star anyway, you were a studio backup singer. You hit the right notes, sweetie, but you just don't have... star quality.

Jackie raises her head, eyes wide.

KEVIN AND FRANK
Oh-oh.

FRANK
Jackie!

KEVIN
No!

JACKIE
You slimy, cocksucking son a fucking bitch. You spineless, motherfucking assbite.

FIRST CLUB GUY
Hey, I don't have to take that!

JACKIE
Yes you do, because you don't have the balls to do anything about it.

Kevin hurries toward the stage.

JACKIE (CONT'D)
If you did have any balls, you closet faggot --

FIRST CLUB GUY
I'm not gay.

JACKIE

You'd be peddling them in the male
prostitution district for five
bucks a blowjob.

Kevin pulls Jackie off the stage into his arms. She starts SCREAMING and beating the crap out of him. Kevin throws her over his shoulder.

KEVIN

(to Club People)

I'm sorry!

Kevin jogs toward the nightclub exit, Jackie pounding on his huge back with her fists and swinging her legs wildly.

FIRST CLUB GUY

I'm not gay!

KEVIN

(unconvincing)

Of course you're not.

FIRST CLUB GUY

You'll never work in this city
again!

Kevin waves.

FIRST CLUB GUY (CONT'D)

You ugly fucking freaks!

Kevin stops. Jackie SCREAMS even louder. The Club Guy shuts up. Kevin slowly turns, Jackie still kicking and screaming, and sees the club guy standing, eyes wide.

JACKIE

Kill him!. Tear his fat little head
off!

FIRST CLUB GUY

No, don't tear my fat little head
off!. I'm sorry. Just... go. Please.

Kevin stares. The club guy steps back and raises his hands in surrender. Kevin nods, then turns and walks out, taking the kicking, SCREAMING Jackie with him. He reaches the exit.

KEVIN

Did you ever think about singing in
the choir?

JACKIE
 (screams)
 Fuck you!

FRANK
 Yeah, fuck you, Kevin.

Kevin stops and glances back at Frank.

FRANK (CONT'D)
 You can't hit me. I'm handicapped.

KEVIN
 Yeah, and you have MS too.

Kevin turns and leaves the club, Frank following.

EXT. NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

Kevin and Frank reach Kevin's SUV, Jackie SCREAMING a blue streak and kicking and punching Kevin.

JACKIE
 You have no more balls than that faggot in the club does!

KEVIN
 (dry)
 Not that there's anything wrong with being gay.

JACKIE
 I didn't say he was gay, I said he was a faggot! And that fucker in the club, is a cock sucking, motherfucking son of a bitch, shithead *faggot*!

KEVIN
 So how do you really feel, Jackie?

Jackie continues her RANT as Kevin continues to hold her captive. Finally she stops to take a breath.

KEVIN (CONT'D)
 Jackie?

JACKIE
 What?

KEVIN
 Ready for a break?

JACKIE
(hesitates)
Okay.

Kevin gently puts her down, then grabs her arm as she swings at him. They face each other.

JACKIE (CONT'D)
Fuck!

Kevin releases her arm and she turns her back to him.

KEVIN
Are you done?. Or do you want to
call me a faggot a few more times?

JACKIE
(exhausted)
You already know what you are.

KEVIN
Yeah, well maybe if you worked your
craft instead of finding ways to
insult the people you audition for..

JACKIE
I only called him a faggot after --

KEVIN
What was he supposed to tell you?
That you're a superstar, the
greatest singer of your generation?

JACKIE
Yes! That's what he should have
told me.

KEVIN
Even if he was lying?

JACKIE
Yes, even if he was lying. Why is
it that men get to choose when they
lie? Yes, I'll stay with you
forever, baby. No, it has nothing
to do with the way you look. No,
your scars don't bother me, I just
need some space.

(begins crying)
Why can't they lie to me when I
want them to lie to me, like during
a fucking audition instead of while
they're holding my fucking heart in
their Goddamned hands.

Kevin steps forward.

KEVIN

It doesn't have to be like this.

Jackie puts her hands up to ward him off and he pulls her into a hug. Kevin notices Frank watching, angry.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

Listen, I don't know how, but there are surgeries you can have to --

She shoves against him and he lets her go.

JACKIE

To what? To 'fix' me?

KEVIN

(laughs)

It would take more than just surgery to fix you, kiddo, it would take industrial strength medication and a lifetime of therapy.

She punches him repeatedly in the chest, until she's exhausted, holding her aching hands bent over, panting.

FRANK

You don't need to be fixed.

Kevin, irritated, glances at Frank.

JACKIE

Thank you, Frank.

(to Kevin)

I like who I am. Not like you. You need everyone else to like you because you don't like yourself.

FRANK

She's right, Kevin. You spend your whole life trying to please others so they'll tell you you're okay. Jackie and I already know we're okay.

JACKIE

You think you can buy your way into their world with kindness. You're like a fucking puppy dog, taking crumbs and wagging that big motherfucking tail of yours.

Frank, pouting, stares at his own crotch.

FRANK
His tail isn't that big.

JACKIE
And by the way, how's your head?
Does it still have the imprint of a
golf club in it? Did they ever
thank you for bringing that book?

Kevin stares. He tosses his car keys onto the hood of his SUV
and walks away into the night.

JACKIE (CONT'D)
Kevin! Please, don't go!

But he's gone.

FRANK
It's okay.

JACKIE
Shut up, Frank.

She stares at the darkness.

INT. KEVIN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Kevin at his computer. A KNOCK at his door.

JACKIE (O.S.)
Kevin.

He freezes, waiting for Jackie to leave.

JACKIE (CONT'D)
Kevin.

He waits.

JACKIE (CONT'D)
Let me in.

He waits.

JACKIE (CONT'D)
Like I don't know you're in there.

She tries the door.

KEVIN
I'm masturbating!

Kevin looks mortified at what he's said.

JACKIE (O.S.)
Great, let me watch.

KEVIN
It's not a spectator sport.

JACKIE (O.S.)
You're kidding, right? Let me in!

KEVIN
No, go away.

Jackie's voice softens.

JACKIE (O.S.)
Kevin...

He hesitates. Jackie starts SHOUTING OBSCENITIES. He LAUGHS.

JACKIE (CONT'D)
Don't you laugh at me! Open this
fucking door!

KEVIN
No!

JACKIE (O.S.)
Fine, damn it, I'm going away now.

He waits.

KEVIN
Okay, it's open, Jackie.

Jackie tries the door and yells in frustration.

JACKIE (O.S.)
I hate you!

She storms off. Kevin stares at his computer.

KEVIN
One million dollars.

He pulls out his cell phone and dials. A pleasant sounding woman answers.

CHERYL (O.S.)
Fairbanks Agency, may I help you?

KEVIN
Hi, Cheryl, this is Kevin Hogan. Is
Nancy around?

CHERYL (O.S.)
Sure, just a moment, Mr. Hogan.

Jackie suddenly starts BANGING on the bedroom door again.

JACKIE
Let me in, you son of a bitch, I
want to talk to you!

Kevin glances at the door.

NANCY (O.S.)
Kevin, how are you?

KEVIN
Hi, Nancy, how are you?

NANCY (O.S.)
Fine, thanks. How's the latest book
coming?

KEVIN
I'm halfway through the first
draft, but... Nancy, I have a novel I
wrote last year.

NANCY (O.S.)
Is it about a bipolar dentist
married with ten children who's
going through a sexual identity
crisis?

KEVIN
What?

NANCY (O.S.)
I'm sorry, Kevin, that was cruel, I
suppose but, well...

KEVIN
No, you're right. It can't be easy
repping me.

NANCY (O.S.)
No, it isn't, dear. So... is it about
a priest going through a crisis in
faith. A university professor
deciding to join a North African
circumcision club, a --

KEVIN
Nancy?

NANCY (O.S.)
Yes, dear?

KEVIN
It's a commercial novel.

NANCY (O.S.)
(beat)
Define commercial.

KEVIN
Stephen King meets JK Rowling with
sex thrown in.

(beat)
It's an urban fantasy.
(beat)

A disfigured Iraq war vet is
changed into a handsome wizard who
battles an army of evil sorcerers
from a parallel universe to save
the world, his love and his soul.

NANCY (O.S.)
Okay, this is all bullshit and you
know it, Kevin. You writing an
urban fantasy? Right.

KEVIN
Nancy, I wrote a 75,000 word urban
fantasy novel, with all those
things in there, including humor.

NANCY (O.S.)
What's it called?

KEVIN
Face Time.

NANCY (O.S.)
(beat)
I like the title, but... is this --

KEVIN
The tragic story of a disfigured
writer? No, Nancy, it's about
magic, love, sex, adventure and
happiness. It's not about me.

NANCY (O.S.)
Is it any good? Never mind, you of
course it's good. E-mail me a copy
right now. I'll read it all the way
through right here at my desk.

(MORE)

NANCY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Kevin, you're the most brilliant
writer I've ever represented. If
you've written a commercially
viable novel, we're talking big
time. Big, huge, humongous time.

KEVIN
Good, because I need money, Nancy.

NANCY (O.S.)
(beat)
How much money?

KEVIN
A million dollars. After taxes.

NANCY (O.S.)
Kevin, no publisher is going to pay
a million dollar advance to the
"brilliant boredom guy."

KEVIN
I've won a dozen awards --

NANCY (O.S.)
Brilliant. And boring.

KEVIN
Okay... I'm a freaky, mysterious,
monstrous, phantom of the opera
kind of guy, writing brilliant,
award-winning novels in the middle
of nowhere and now suddenly,
mysteriously, I've written the next
great commercial novel. Was it even
me who wrote it? Maybe I killed
another writer and stole his work,
because I'm *that* freaky and that
mysterious.

NANCY (O.S.)
You'd need to do a book tour, let
the yokels see the freaky monster.

KEVIN
Okay, then start circulating rumors
I'm Stephenie Meyer's lovechild. No
one knows who I am, where I live,
what I look like. Christ, I publish
under K Hogan, no-one even knows
whether I'm male or female.

NANCY
Kevin --

KEVIN

No!. Wait, wait. Spread a rumor that I'm Robert Pattinson writing his first novel!

She doesn't respond.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

Or Kristen Steward -- no, both of them! Spread a rumor that Robert Pattinson and Kristen Steward wrote this book while on a romantic getaway in Greece -- no, Romania -- no, that's stupid. Tahiti! Tahiti!

NANCY

(slowly, interested)
Tahiti.

KEVIN

They wrote this book between Twilight installments and now the book's ready for market. It's the greatest love story ever written.

NANCY

And they're going to star in the film.

KEVIN

Yes!

NANCY

That's... brilliant. But it's bullshit, Kevin. Brilliant bullshit, but still bullshit.

KEVIN

(laughs)

Nancy, that's what I do for a living, I bullshit, put it between two covers and call it a novel. Now I'm letting all that bullshit come out from between the covers and I'm handing it all to you to let loose on the world, so that it creates even more bullshit, more and more of it until it all joins together into one huge steaming pile of motherfucking bullshit that makes us a fortune and gets me my million dollar advance.

NANCY

I didn't know you could adapt so easily to the dark side. Jesus, Kevin, you're like... the Einstein of bullshit.

KEVIN

(laughs)
And you're like... an agent.

NANCY

Gee, thanks. But I can't lie that big and not end up in prison, fending off advances from women with nicknames like Bike Dyke.

KEVIN

So get someone else to lie for you, then deny it in a way that convinces everyone it's true.

NANCY

Did I mention you're a genius?

KEVIN

I'm serious, Nancy. If you don't think you can pull off a million dollar advance after taxes, then I'll take the book somewhere else. No hard feelings, but...

NANCY

Okay! Send me the fucking book. If it's half as good as I expect it to be, I'll get you your million bucks after taxes and commission.

He presses a key on his laptop.

KEVIN

It's sent.

NANCY

Nothing yet. Wait. Got it! Kevin, I can't believe you did this.

KEVIN

(grimly)
Let me know what you think. But only if you like it.

She laughs.

KEVIN (CONT'D)
I'm serious. If you don't like it,
just stop returning my calls--
like all the other agents.

She stops laughing.

NANCY
I know you won't believe me, but I
have faith in you, Kevin.

KEVIN
(nods, tired)
Sure. Bye.

NANCY
Bye, Kevin.

He hangs up. He opens up Google and starts typing.

KEVIN
Facial reconstruction surgery.

INT. KEVIN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Darkness. A phone rings. Kevin turns a light on and reaches
for his cell phone on his nightstand.

KEVIN
(groggy)
Hello?

NANCY
I want to go out with it. Now. Not
a fucking word changed.

Kevin slowly smiles.

KEVIN
(into phone)
Yeah, but did you like it?

NANCY
I'll find it a home and get you the
most money I can for it.

KEVIN
Thanks.

NANCY
Kevin... It broke my heart. It was
that good.

KEVIN
I'd better get some sleep, I have
to work in the morning.

NANCY
Okay. Good night, Kevin.

KEVIN
Good night.

He presses "end" on his phone and then lies staring at it.

EXT. GAS STATION - DAY

Kevin swipes his card on the gas station card reader and gets
an error message. He heads for the cashier kiosk.

INT. GAS STATION KIOSK - DAY

Kevin enters. Julissa, behind the counter, smiles.

KEVIN
Hi, Julissa.

JULISSA
How are you, Mister Kevin?

KEVIN
I'm good. How about you?

JULISSA
Bueno.

KEVIN
The card reader on pump #3 isn't
working.

JULISSA
Stupid thing. They keep fixing it,
but... I'll let them know, just
slide your card here.

KEVIN
No problem.

He swipes his card on the counter card reader and glances at
the television which is showing news about the Canadian
lottery. Julissa sees the direction of his stare and GASPS.

JULISSA

Did you hear, Kevin, they think it's going to be a billion dollar jackpot tonight! Are you going to buy a ticket?

KEVIN

Jackie says it's a sucker's game.

JULISSA

Maybe, but for one dollar you get to be hopeful for a few hours. That's a pretty cheap price for hope, no?

Kevin stares at her.

KEVIN

What are you doing working in a gas station? You are so amazingly wise.

She laughs, blushing.

JULISSA

Wiseness and five dollars will get you a soy chai latte at Starbucks.

KEVIN

You talked me into it. I'll buy a ticket.

NANCY

But just one. Because if you're meant to win, you'll win.

KEVIN

I'm going to put you in one of my books.

JULISSA

(laughs)

Promises, promises.

She hands him a ticket, which he stuffs carelessly in his pocket while handing her a dollar.

KEVIN

Thanks.

Kevin smiles and turns to leave.

JULISSA

(laughs)

Don't forget to put me in your next book.

He glances back at her. He stares a bit too long and Julissa looks uncomfortable.

KEVIN

Oh, yeah, sure.

He turns away again, and darts out of the kiosk.

EXT. GAS STATION - DAY

Kevin quickly emerges from the gas station and stops. Three teen PUNKS are pimp rolling toward him. He steps aside but too late -- one of the punks, the largest, though not as large as Kevin, puts his hand on Kevin's chest, stopping him.

KEVIN

(mumbles)

Sorry.

Kevin keeps his head down, hunched over.

PUNK #1

Hey, freak! Where you going?

KEVIN

Just... to my car.

Punk #1 spits on the ground.

PUNK #1

They won't let me drive while drunk but they let you drive while ugly?

The other Teens LAUGH.

PUNK #2

Jesus, you're like the fucking hunchback of Notre Dame, only uglier.

Punk #1 flips Kevin's hood off, exposing his disfigured face. Kevin staggers back, trying to cover his face. Julissa emerges from the kiosk.

JULISSA

Leave him alone!

The lead punk starts toward julissa.

Kevin takes a step toward the lead punk when suddenly, out of nowhere, someone punches the punk, knocking him down. Four large high school boys wearing football jackets have run across the parking lot. GREG, who decked the Punk #1, stands over him. The other two Punks step toward the football players. Greg turns toward them.

GREG

Go head.

The Punks stare with a mixture of hatred and fear. Punk #1, lips bleeding, tries to get up but the biggest player, ROSS, puts a huge foot on Punk #1's chest, holding him down. Kevin pulls his hood back up to hide his face again.

GREG (CONT'D)

What's wrong? Brave enough to take
on a girl but not us?

The Punks glare. Greg spits on one of the punks' shoes. The punk leaps backward, balling his fist.

PUNK #2

What the fuck you doing?

Greg steps forward.

GREG

Come on. I'll take you both on,
just me.

The punks consider it, then shake their heads.

PUNK #3

It's cool.

GREG

If I ever see you bothering anyone
I know, I'm going to beat the shit
out of you. Do you understand me?

Kevin stares in amazement and shame.

GREG (CONT'D)

I said do you understand me?

Ross, with his foot on Punk #1's chest, presses down a bit.

PUNK #1

(panics)

Yeah, yeah, we understand you! We
were only fooling around!

Greg walks up to Punk #1, glaring down at him.

GREG

I know who you are, fuckhead. If I hear anything, I'll come looking for you -- the whole fucking team will. Do you understand me?

PUNK #1

(nods quickly)
Yeah. I understand you.

GREG

And don't think about coming after me with a knife or gun, fuckface, because I got guns too, and the cops aren't going to care about a piece of shit like you.

PUNK #1

(nods even more quickly)
I got it. Leave you alone, leave everyone else alone, I got it.

Greg glances at Ross who presses his foot down one more time, causing the lead punk to GRUNT, then reluctantly removes his foot and steps back.

GREG

Get the fuck out of here.

Punk #1 scrambles to his feet and all three punks hurry away. Greg turns to Kevin.

KEVIN

Thank you.

JULISSA

Yeah, thanks, a lot.

Greg frowns, staring Kevin up and down.

GREG

Kevin, you're even bigger than Ross here. How could you let those fuckbrains push you around like that? You could have crushed all three of them.

Kevin shakes his head.

KEVIN

I've seen how that movie ends; the monster finally fights back and the peasants burn him at the stake.

Greg glances at the other football players.

GREG
I got drunk one time.

KEVIN
Don't.

GREG
I passed out in a ditch. Kevin found me, covered in my own puke. He took me to his place, let me clean up and then drove me home. He even helped me sneak back into my house so my parents wouldn't know what a fucking idiot I was.

KEVIN
Greg--

GREG
You let me know if those assholes ever bother you again, okay?
(turns to Julissa)
Same for you. And if I were you I'd call the cops. I'll be a witness, and so will my bros, right?

The other players nod and MURMUR their ascent. Julissa nods, still afraid. Kevin lowers his head, ashamed.

Gregg casts one last glance at Kevin, his facial expression a mixture of affection and disappointment, then he and his friends turn and walk away.

Kevin is left standing with Julissa in the parking lot, both of them looking embarrassed.

KEVIN
(to Julissa)
Thank you, for... saving me.

JULISSA
(embarrassed)
I'd better go back inside.

KEVIN
(nods)
Right. Right. Well, thanks again.

She nods, smiles at him, tightly, then goes back inside.

INT. KEVIN'S KITCHEN - DAY

Kevin is making his lunch. His CELL PHONE RINGS and he pulls it out, glancing at the number. He presses the speaker and answer buttons, then lays the phone on the counter.

KEVIN

Hey.

JACKIE (O.S.)

(irritated)

Do you have me on speaker phone?

KEVIN

Yup, I'm making my lunch, so deal with it or hang up.

JACKIE (O.S.)

What's up your butt?

KEVIN

Right now? You. Whatcha' want?

JACKIE (O.S.)

You know sometimes you're an asshole.

KEVIN

Sometimes.

JACKIE (O.S.)

Jesus Christ, Kevin, what do you think about the lottery?

KEVIN

I think that a dollar is an awful cheap price for hope.

JACKIE (O.S.)

Fuck, Kevin, have you been talking to Julissa again?

Kevin laughs.

JACKIE (CONT'D) (O.S.)

You don't know, do you?

KEVIN

Don't know a lot of things. What specific ignorance are you referring to?

JACKIE (O.S.)

Someone won the lottery last night!

KEVIN

It had to happen eventually.

JACKIE (O.S.)

No, you idiot! Someone *here* won it!

He slips a sandwich into a bag, then glances at the phone.

KEVIN

What do you mean?

JACKIE (O.S.)

Here! The winning ticket was bought at the gas station. In fucking Manville, Kevin.

He stops, still staring at his phone.

KEVIN

Really? At the gas station.

JACKIE (O.S.)

Aren't you excited? The ticket was bought right here. *Here!* I left the morning paper on the table for you, there's a big story about it.

KEVIN

Well it wasn't me, so no, I'm not excited. Maybe you won it.

JACKIE (O.S.)

Yeah, right, like I haven't already checked my tickets,.

KEVIN

Ha! You did buy a ticket!

JACKIE (O.S.)

Oh fuck you.

KEVIN

(laughs)

How many did you buy?

JACKIE (O.S.)

None of your fucking business.

KEVIN

Whatever, I have to go to work.

JACKIE (O.S.)

Damn it, Kevin --

Kevin's already pressed the end call button. He pockets his cell phone and turns to go, but stops as he sees the newspaper on the table. He picks up the paper, hesitates, then pulls the ticket out of his pocket and compares the numbers on the ticket to those in the newspaper. He refolds the paper, grabs a remote control and turns on the small kitchen television. It opens on a local channel playing video of downtown Manville while a REPORTER speaks VOICE OVER.

REPORTER

Never in the history of mankind has there ever been a prize this large, and tax free to boot. And now we know the winning ticket was bought in the little town of Manville, where according to its own residents, nothing of significance has happened since a local farmer named Bullhorn Bob accidentally burned down the local Methodist church when he fell asleep on one of the pews while intoxicated and dropped his cigarette on one of the bibles. Don't worry, Bullhorn Bob survived without injury and is not only still alive, he actually bought a ticket in yesterday's lottery, though he claims he is not the as yet unknown winner. In fact Bob claims he is quite happy to finally be eclipsed as the leading figure in Manville history by America's newest billionaire. We can only hope that the winner of the lottery is named Bob as well, so that there can be a passing of the baton of local fame from Bullhorn Bob to Billionaire Bob. This is Jake Collier, reporting live from the billion dollar town of Manville, Oregon.

Kevin turns the small flat-screen television off and exits the kitchen.

EXT. MANVILLE - NIGHT - NIGHT

Kevin walks down the main street, hood over his face. He stops by a bar, tables inside and out. Everyone is chatting about the lottery. Two pretty young women stand outside the bar. Kevin stares at them until one of them notices and he quickly turns his head and walks away, looking afraid.

He doesn't slow down until he is a block away, then glances behind him, seeing no commotion at the bar. He realizes he's in front of another bar. He enters, taking a corner table.

SUSIE, a pretty waitress, walks up, smiling.

SUSIE
Hey, Kevin.

KEVIN
Susie.

He is afraid of looking up at her as she places a bottle of beer on his table.

JAYNIE
The usual.

KEVIN
Thanks Susie.

He waits for her to remove her hand from the beer bottle before he reaches for it.

JAYNIE
Anytime, honey.

She walks away. Kevin glances at her miniskirt-wrapped butt then immediately back down at his drink. He sips his beer, then glances surreptitiously at the couples and beautiful women in the bar before quickly returning his gaze to his bottle, alone and afraid.

INT. KEVIN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A wall clock reads 1:00. Kevin opens the door, drunk. He trips on the front door jamb before recovering, enters, then shuts the door loudly.

JACKIE
(wary)
Hello?

KEVIN
(slurs)
I -- I'm sorry.

Jackie steps into view, in an ultra-short nightie exposing killer legs, nipples outlined beneath the filmy cloth. Kevin is both excited and horrified. Jackie steps forward and places a gentle hand on his arm.

JACKIE
(whispers, yawning)
Come on.

KEVIN
Leper, unclean.

He tries to pull his arm away.

JACKIE
What?

KEVIN
(slurring)
How many lepers does it take to
change a light bulb?

JACKIE
Lepers?

KEVIN
Five. One to replace the light
bulb, four to pick up the rotting
flesh falling off their bodies.

JACKIE
(affectionate)
You're an idiot.

Kevin lets her lead him by the hand.

INT. KEVIN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jackie leads Kevin in. She reaches to turn on the light but he stops her. She starts undoing the top button on his shirt. He puts his hand out to stop her and it lands on her breast.

JACKIE
It's okay.

He jerks his hand away.

KEVIN
I'm sorry.

JACKIE
(testy)
I said it's okay.

He crawls into bed and lies down facing away from her. She climbs in behind him and spoons his huge back. He begins to snore. Jackie closes her eyes as tears roll down her cheeks.

INT. LIBRARY - DAY

Kevin at his computer having a short break. His browser is on MSN and the screen is filled with news about the lottery.

STEVE
Amazing, isn't it?

Kevin turns to see Steve standing behind him.

KEVIN
I guess so.

STEVE
I don't know what I'd do with a billion dollars. I mean, just the interest alone would be...

KEVIN
(dryly)
Fifty four thousand dollars a day.

STEVE
Listen, I've got a date tonight, so I want you to take care of a couple of things I'm supposed to get done by tomorrow.

KEVIN
(dry)
It's Monday, Steve.

A silence follows and Kevin glances around to see everyone staring expectantly at him and Steve.

STEVE
Yeah, so?

KEVIN
So you don't have a date. You just want to get out of here early.

STEVE
What the hell's wrong with you?

KEVIN
Nothing, what's wrong with you?

Steve glances around at the other employees staring.

STEVE
Listen, if you cover for me tonight I'll cover for you some other time.

KEVIN
When?

STEVE
What?

KEVIN
When will you cover for me?

STEVE
I don't know.

KEVIN
Then neither do I.
(turns to face Steve)
Listen, Steve, I don't have time to
cover for you anymore, okay? I've
got my own life to live.

Steve stares, face red, hands clenched.

STEVE
That's not team work.

Kevin stares at Steve from beneath his hood.

STEVE (CONT'D)
Neither is talking back to your
boss.

Kevin stares. Steve raises his clenched hand, holding his
fist in front of Kevin's face, his scrawny arm half cocked.
Kevin slowly stares Steve up and down.

KEVIN
You really want to do that, Steve?

Steve is taken aback. He lowers his fist and steps back.

KEVIN (CONT'D)
Go away, and be grateful I'm a nice
guy.

Steve takes another step back, then turns and hurries off.
Everyone stares at Kevin, shocked.

GILBERT
Kevin.

Kevin turns to Gilbert, a short, stocky man.

GILBERT (CONT'D)
You won the lottery didn't you?

Excitement sweeps the room.

STAN

That's the only reason you'd talk
to Steve like that!

LINDA

(pointing at her computer)
Look, they have a list of people
who bought tickets from the gas
station, and Kevin's name is on it!

Now the excitement is swept away by near hysteria.

KEVIN

Half the people in town buy tickets
there. Do you think I'd be sitting
here if I'd won the lottery?

That stops the excitement for a moment.

PATRICIA

Maybe you don't want anyone to know
until you've cashed the ticket.

Kevin turns away from them, back to his computer.

KEVIN

Yeah, I won the lottery. In fact
I've already bought the library so
you're all working for me now.

CHARLIE

Really?

Kevin glances at Charlie, who laughs self-consciously.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

I knew you were kidding.

KEVIN

Can I have my lunch now? The one I
brought in a brown paper bag
because I haven't cashed in my
billion dollar lottery ticket yet?

The onlookers chuckle, embarrassed. Kevin stares at his
computer. The other employees keep glancing at him.

EXT. MANVILLE - DAY

Kevin stands across the street from where media people jostle
for position on the city hall steps.

Dozens of residents stand at the foot of the stairs, waiting expectantly. A single microphone stands on the top landing and a middle-aged man, MAYOR JOHN STANFORD, steps up to it.

MAYOR STANFORD

Good morning.

Stanford grins and waits for the crowd to pay attention.

MAYOR STANFORD (CONT'D)

I'm Mayor John Stanford. You all know about the rumors that the winning Canadian lottery ticket was purchased in Manville.

The crowd MURMURS excitedly.

MAYOR STANFORD (CONT'D)

Here to address those rumors is the American representative for Lotto Canada, Mr. Jack Vukovich.

VUKOVICH, mid 30s, steps forward. He pauses dramatically.

VUKOVICH

There was a winner of the Canadian 6/49 lottery last night and the ticket was purchased in Manville at Ralph's gas station on highway 45.

Excitement.

VUKOVICH (CONT'D)

We do not yet know who purchased that ticket.

Silence.

ONLOOKER #1

Isn't there a short list?

VUKOVICH

There is a list, which has been narrowed down to ten people, six from Manville, four who were passing through.

The crowd is quieter now.

VUKOVICH (CONT'D)

We know who the locals are, but we won't know who the others are unless they claim the prize.

ONLOOKER #2

So you don't know who the hell
bought the damned ticket!

Everyone LAUGHS, including Vukovich.

VUKOVICH

That's true, but I'm sure the
winner will step forward. Unless
the winner has lost the ticket.

A collective GROAN.

VUKOVICH (CONT'D)

I know, but more than half a
billion dollars a year in lottery
prizes go unclaimed. We can only
hope that's not the case this time.
Thank you for attending and we
promise to keep you informed.

Vukovich turns away, ignoring a storm of QUESTIONS.

FEMALE REPORTER

So, Ann...

Kevin turns to see a female reporter standing nearby,
speaking into a microphone and staring at a camera.

FEMALE REPORTER (CONT'D)

It's been confirmed that the
winning billion dollar ticket was
sold here in Manville, but it is
not yet known who the winning
ticket holder is, so the drama
continues and excitement continue
in this tiny Iowa town. Media from
around the world continue to pour
in, waiting to meet the mystery
billionaire. That's it for now from
Manville, the home of America's
newest billionaire, whoever he or
she may be.

REPORTER #2

Kevin! Kevin Hogan!

Kevin sees another reporter shouting to the assembled crowd.

REPORTER #2 (CONT'D)

Does anyone know Kevin Hogan?

Kevin turns and slowly walks away.

ONLOOKER #4

He was just here a second ago! Did he win it? Is Kevin the winner?

ONLOOKER #5

Is he Kevin billionaire?

Kevin stops and turns back toward the news conference.

REPORTER #2

Nancy Soderberg! Does anyone know Nancy Soderberg?

NANCY SODERBERG

I'm Nancy Soderberg.
(laughs)
But it wasn't me.

Reporters surround the woman.

NANCY SODERBERG (CONT'D)

(jovial)
It wasn't me. I already checked my ticket. I didn't win.

REPORTER #2

How do you feel about buying a ticket just minutes before or after the winning ticket was sold.

NANCY SODERBERG

Like jumping off a building, Nancy says, laughing

Kevin walks off.

INT. PUB - NIGHT

Kevin, hooded, drinking beer alone but surrounded by people glancing constantly at him.

PUB CUSTOMER #1

Do you have any idea of the logistics of handling a billion dollars?

PUB CUSTOMER #2

Where the hell do you keep that kind of money?

PUB CUSTOMER #3

There aren't enough banks in the country to deposit it in and have FDIC insurance cover it, so what do you do -- deposit it anyway and hope the banks don't fail and take your money with them?

PUB CUSTOMER #1

Well, if you don't have it you can't lose it, but if you don't have it you can't pay your bar tab.

Everyone laughs.

PUB CUSTOMER #3

You need a billion dollars to pay your bar tab, Sean?

The laughter redoubles.

SUSIE

Another beer, Kevin?

Kevin looks up and sees the waitress, Susie.

KEVIN

Sure.

She studies him.

JAYNIE

Are you the winner, Kevin?

He looks up, then away.

KEVIN

It's probably an out of townner.

JAYNIE

It wouldn't make a difference, you know.

He glances at her again, staring a moment longer this time.

JAYNIE (CONT'D)

I mean, you're a nice guy. What difference does it make how much money you have?

KEVIN

And looks are only skin deep, right?

JAYNIE
(laughs, blushing)
Okay, maybe it would make a
difference, but if you're not the
winner, who cares?

KEVIN
Yeah, who cares?

INT. LIBRARY - DAY

Kevin at his computer. The other employees keep glancing at him. A group of REPORTERS burst in, followed by Steve.

STEVE
This is a private area, you can't
be back here!

REPORTER
(shouts)
Which one of you is Kevin Hogan?

STAN
He is, right there!

Kevin stands as reporters surge toward him.

REPORTER
Mr. Hogan, are you the billion
dollar winner?

REPORTER #2
Did you win the lottery?

REPORTER #3
Where's the ticket?

REPORTER #2
When do you plan to cash it in?

Kevin ducks his head inside his hood.

STEVE
You can't be in here!

REPORTER
What's wrong with him?

STEVE
He's a freak! He's deformed!

A cameraman flips Kevin's hood off. Everyone backs off, stunned. Kevin stares at the media people.

KEVIN
 (quietly)
 Do I look like a lottery winner?

Kevin walks past the stunned crowd. He notices CRYSTAL, a beautiful 30ish woman staring at him.

INT. LIBRARY PUBLIC AREA - DAY

As Kevin emerges into the library's public area, the media people explode with QUESTIONS and EXCLAMATIONS about Kevin. Kevin ducks into a small storage room.

INT. STORAGE ROOM - DAY

Kevin is sitting on a box of copy paper, head in his hands. There is a KNOCK.

CRYSTAL
 (softly)
 The reporters have left, Mr. Hogan.

He hesitates, gets up and opens the door. Crystal stands there alone.

CRYSTAL (CONT'D)
 I'm Crystal Mageau. I'm..

KEVIN
 A reporter. Apparently not one of the ones who left.

CRYSTAL
 (smiles)
 Yes, I'm sorry.

He realizes his face is fully exposed.

KEVIN
 What do you want?

She winces and crinkles her nose, captivating him.

CRYSTAL
 I guess we pissed you off, eh?

KEVIN
 You're Canadian.

CRYSTAL
 Yeah, eh? I'm leaving the hoose to go oot and aboot. Soooory.
 (MORE)

CRYSTAL (CONT'D)
(stops laughing)
Actually... I really *am* sorry.

He stares. She studies him, unaffected by his appearance.

CRYSTAL (CONT'D)
I'm covering the story for a
Canadian newspaper. We're pissed
that a Yankee won "our" lottery.

KEVIN
Canadian or an American, I don't
think they want it to be me.

CRYSTAL
Do you? Want it to be you?

KEVIN
It's a billion dollars.

CRYSTAL
There was this old couple in Canada
who won 11 million. They gave it
all away. Said they already had
everything they needed.

KEVIN
Maybe they did.

CRYSTAL
Are you ever coming out of the, uh...
(makes a really cute face)
... closet?

KEVIN
(gruffly)
Okay, you've established that
you're cute. I get it.

CRYSTAL
Really? Usually when people think
I'm cute they treat me nice. But
maybe that's just a Canadian thing.

She smiles exaggeratedly, even cuter now.

KEVIN
It would piss them off if it was
me, if I was the one who won the
billion dollars and they'd have to
cover me and interview me and act
as if they weren't revolted by me.

She shrugs, still smiling.

CRYSTAL

(amiable)

You're right. They're probably hoping it's a photogenic young couple struggling to buy their first house or an attractive single mom trying to raise her kids by herself. But freaks are good too.

KEVIN

Freaks?

CRYSTAL

(shrugs)

Lady Gaga, rappers, most pro athletes -- a sea of freak flags. Shit, they fly their freak flags, roll them up and smoke them, rub the freak ashes all over themselves and then run down the street naked, screaming with every ounce of their being "look at me!" and the press loves it.

Kevin can't figure her out.

CRYSTAL (CONT'D)

Now... you might not be the *kind* of freak they're looking for. Freak is good, monster doesn't play as well.

He stares.

CRYSTAL (CONT'D)

What, I'm not cute anymore? Or am I just too honest for you?

He brushes by her.

INT. LIBRARY BACK ROOM - DAY

He enters the back room and approaches his cubicle.

CRYSTAL

You won the fucking lottery, didn't you?

Kevin turns. Crystal's standing a few feet inside the doorway. Against his will he LAUGHS.

STEVE

I told you this is a private area!

Steve sweeps past Crystal and stops between her and Kevin.

CRYSTAL
(sweetly)
Are you always this big an asshole?

Kevin does a spit-take. Steve begins to reply but she holds up a hand, actually silencing him with the elegant gesture.

CRYSTAL (CONT'D)
No no, you don't have to answer.
Unless of course you *want* to be
quoted on tomorrow's news.

Crystal waits for an answer then turns and leaves. Steve turns to Kevin.

STEVE
What the hell is the matter with
you? I told you not to talk to the
Goddamned reporters!

Kevin steps toward Steve who backpedals and holds up his hands as if to ward off an attack.

KEVIN
You know, it's too bad you hate
your job so much.

STEVE
Don't talk to me like that!

Steve backs up another step as Kevin moves forward.

KEVIN
Because I love *my* job. I love being
back here fixing books without
anyone bothering me or telling me
to cover up and calling me names or
trying to beat me up, but you've
pretty much ruined all that for me.

He takes another step toward Steve. Steve is paralyzed by fear now, allowing Kevin to tower over him.

KEVIN (CONT'D)
So fuck you, Steve.

STEVE
You're fired!

Steve cowers.

KEVIN
You can't fire me. I quit.

STEVE
No, you're fired.

Kevin walks out.

STEVE (CONT'D)
You're fired! Fired, fired, fired!

INT. BOOKSTORE - DAY

Kevin walks into the bookstore. Johnny looks up from behind the counter, where he was reading a newspaper.

JOHNNY
Hey, where's my coffee?

KEVIN
I don't know. Where's my bookstore?

Johnny's face lights up.

JOHNNY
Yes! You're going to do it! You're going to adopt my baby!

KEVIN
I'm going to need your help.

JOHNNY
You got it!

KEVIN
Shit. What the hell am I doing?

JOHNNY
Getting on with your life. Okay, you need to know how to order from the publishers -- and returns! Returns are a bitch.

INT. KEVIN'S HOUSE.

Kevin enters the front door, smiling tiredly. Jackie and Frank are in the living room watching the news. Kevin stops in the living room doorway. A newscaster is speaking.

NEWSCASTER

Local police in the 'billion dollar town' of Manville have finally admitted that a spate of robberies and muggings there are probably the result of hoodlums trying to find the winning lottery ticket that still hasn't been turned in.

KEVIN

Hi.

They turn to stare at him. He smiles and heads for the kitchen. Jackie follows him, stopping in the kitchen doorway while Kevin gets something to eat from the fridge.

JACKIE

So did you or didn't you?

KEVIN

People like me don't win the lottery.

JACKIE

There's no lottery "type." It's about odds.

He pops a grape into his mouth.

KEVIN

Well what are the odds that a freak like me suddenly gets a billion dollars dropped in his lap?

JACKIE

You're not going to answer me are you?

KEVIN

Maybe I like screwing with you.

JACKIE

I wish.

Kevin glances at her, uncomfortable.

JACKIE (CONT'D)

What, freaks don't fuck?

KEVIN

Would it be so bad if I won?

JACKIE

Yeah. It would.

KEVIN

Why, because you think I'd leave?

She laughs bitterly.

JACKIE

Leave? When the fuck did you arrive? It would change who you are. And you don't even know who you are to begin with.

KEVIN

And you do?

JACKIE

I know exactly who I am, and I'm fine with it.

She rips his hood off, exposing his grotesque features.

JACKIE (CONT'D)

This is who you are! You think you're some mister nice guy, but you're just trying to make up for your deformity. Everything you do, everything you are is a reaction to your deformity. Take that deformity away and who the fuck are you?

Kevin walks past her, through the living room to his room on the far side of the house.

FRANK

Kevin, if you did win you'd better cash in the ticket. You don't want to be mugged or robbed.

Kevin closes his bedroom door behind him.

INT. KEVIN'S BEDROOM - DAY

Kevin locks the door then leans his back against it. His room's been ransacked.

JACKIE (O.S.)

(shouts)

Where did you put the fucking ticket?

Jackie tries the doorknob. Kevin closes his eyes as she pounds on the door.

INT. BOOKSTORE - DAY

Kevin and Johnny study sheets of paper on the counter.

JOHNNY

Okay, this is an inventory of the books I ordered last month. This is a list of the books I planned to order this month. This last one is a list of returns.

KEVIN

So when do you do a return?

Johnny glances at him.

JOHNNY

When you realize you're trying to sell something no-one wants to buy.

CRYSTAL

Hi.

Both men look up to see Crystal in the store doorway.

JOHNNY

(extra attentive)

Yes ma'am, how can I help you?

Kevin smiles tightly.

KEVIN

I, uh... think she's mine.

JOHNNY

You buy the store and now the good looking customers are yours too?

Kevin shrugs. Crystal LAUGHS.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)

Fine. I'm going to Jackie's for coffee and a bagel. If I can't be around one good looking broad, I can be around another.

He walks past Crystal.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)

Nice gams.

CRYSTAL

(laughs)

"Gams?"

She walks into the store, glancing around.

CRYSTAL (CONT'D)
Do you sell your own books here
too?

KEVIN
Can I help you with something?

She studies him.

CRYSTAL
Do you ever take off that hood?

KEVIN
When I go to bed.

CRYSTAL
It might be a bit soon for that,
but how about dinner?

KEVIN
Don't do that. Don't speak to me as
if there would ever, in this
lifetime, be any chance for someone
like me to ever be with someone
like you. It's cruel.

CRYSTAL
(frowns)
Fuck you.

He stares, surprised.

CRYSTAL (CONT'D)
Now, about dinner.

KEVIN
No.

CRYSTAL
Why? You do occasionally go to
dinner, I've asked. So why not with
me? Are you discriminating against
me because of my appearance?

KEVIN
Yeah, I am. Because I don't want to
sit there staring at you, wondering
what it would be like to be with
someone as beautiful as you, and
knowing I never can.

(MORE)

KEVIN (CONT'D)

The same reason I wouldn't sit in front of a restaurant window staring at food I can't afford.

CRYSTAL

Ah, but you can afford it now, can't you? You can afford just about anything, right?

He stares at her.

CRYSTAL (CONT'D)

Come on, you can't turn down a woman who asks you out to dinner, it would be rude.

KEVIN

You just said fuck you.

CRYSTAL

And I'll say it again if I have to.

KEVIN

(hesitates)
You're buying.

CRYSTAL

Why? You're the billionaire.

KEVIN

I'm the bookstore owner.

CRYSTAL

You could buy a chain of bookstores.

KEVIN

I'd better stick with this one until I know what I'm doing.

CRYSTAL

Pick me up at 7, at the Montage hotel. I'll be in the lobby.

She turns and walks out.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Kevin sits at a table in an upscale restaurant. He's dressed in a suit, with a hoodie underneath it, the hood hiding his face. He is aware of people glancing at him.

CRYSTAL
Sorry I'm late.

He looks up as Crystal sits down across from him.

CRYSTAL (CONT'D)
I had to powder my nose.

Now the stares redouble -- the freak and the hottie.

KEVIN
I didn't think you'd be a 'powder
your nose' type.

CRYSTAL
(laughs)
Okay, I had to go for a pee. No,
that's not true, I had to go for a
crap. Now you know.

KEVIN
Gee, he says, thanks for sharing,
especially since our food should be
arriving any second now.

CRYSTAL
(smiling sweetly)
Fuck you.

KEVIN
You were right, you said it again.

CRYSTAL
(still sweet)
Tell you what, I'll stop saying
fuck you if you stop being an
asshole.

KEVIN
Maybe that's who I am.

CRYSTAL
(still pleasant)
Bullshit.

She studies his hooded face. He narrows his eyes.

KEVIN
Are you speaking that way because
you think that's what a monster
expects to hear at dinner --
profanity?

CRYSTAL

Actually, I imagine a monster expects to hear burps and crunching bones, maybe some slobbering and a wolf howl, while the villagers hold torches and march around the burning stake.

KEVIN

Golf clubs.

CRYSTAL

What.

He rubs his head.

KEVIN

The villagers carry golf clubs around here.

CRYSTAL

Actually, they tend to carry praises for you. They say you're the nicest guy they know. You shovel old people's sidewalks and driveways in the winter and mow their lawns in the summer, donate to charities...

He stares down at the table, uncomfortable.

CRYSTAL (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. You don't like to be seen in public with your face the way it is, and it's probably even worse now that people think you've won the lottery. And it was cruel of me to drag you out against your will just because I wanted to pry a story out of you.

The waiter arrives with their food.

WAITER

A perfect choice, Mr. Hogan. You know your cuisine.

CRYSTAL

And wine.

WAITER

It's our best vintage. Please enjoy your meal, and let me know if you need anything else.

KEVIN

Thank you.

The waiter nods and leaves.

CRYSTAL

You know food, wine and literature.
You're an award-winning novelist,
who most critics call brilliant if..

KEVIN

Misdirected.

CRYSTAL

(smiles)

Yes, those are the two words that
keep popping up in reviews of your
work -- brilliant and misdirected.

KEVIN

Depressing, dark, moody, brooding..

CRYSTAL

You use words like weapons, but
mostly against yourself. Do you
think that if you beat yourself
first no-one else will bother to?

He stares, about to reply, but doesn't.

CRYSTAL (CONT'D)

Thank you for not putting another
bon mot brick in that psychic wall
of yours.

KEVIN

(laughs)

Bon mot brick in my psychic wall?

CRYSTAL

I wasn't trying to be clever. I'd
rather just be who we are.

KEVIN

(smiling sadly)

That easy, huh?

CRYSTAL

I'm sorry. I'm being insensitive
again. I can't imagine what it's
like for you, to be this amazing,
brilliant, talented, caring human
being trapped ... like that.

He stares at her and she realizes what she's said.

CRYSTAL (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, I --

KEVIN

It's okay. It's just the way it is. Some things scare people, and my face is one of them. You -- *people* aren't being mean, they're just... trying to protect themselves against ugliness.

CRYSTAL

It doesn't have to be that way.

He stands.

KEVIN

I'll pay the bill on the way out, so please, enjoy your meal. They really do have great food here.

He walks away. Crystal shuts here eyes.

EXT. KEVIN'S CAR - NIGHT

Kevin pulls up to his house and gets out. Suddenly he's grabbed by several men wearing ski masks.

KEVIN

What are you doing?

ASSAILANT #1

Get him!

Kevin swings wildly, connecting while himself absorbing several frantic, amateurish punches.

ASSAILANT #2

Give us that ticket, you motherfucker!

Kevin's hood comes off, startling his attackers. Kevin, seeing their reaction, ROARS and swinging his fists, knocking two of the men down. The men suddenly flee, leaving him standing by his car, panting, hands still clenched. The attackers leap into a nearby van and squeal off.

Panting, Kevin pulls out his Smartphone and speaks into it.

KEVIN

Manville Register.

He touches the screen and puts the phone to his ear.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

Editorial.

(pause)

Hi. I was just mugged by some morons looking for the lottery ticket. I know who actually has the ticket and he's already signed it, so even if someone steals the ticket, they can't cash it. So tell your readers, okay.

(pause)

No, I won't identify myself.

(pause)

No, I'm not the one who has the winning ticket. I --

He hangs up.

INT. KEVIN'S HOUSE - DAY

Morning. Kevin emerges from his bedroom sporting cuts and bruises on his face and hands. He walks into the kitchen. Frank sits at the table, eating.

FRANK

(without looking up)

Was it you?

KEVIN

(frowns)

Was it me what?

FRANK

Was it you who called the newspaper last night about the ticket?

KEVIN

How -- ?

FRANK

It's all over the news.

Frank looks up. He points at Kevin's hands.

FRANK (CONT'D)

How do you get those kinds of wounds working in a bookstore?

KEVIN

Paper cuts.

FRANK
Some paper.

KEVIN
(laughs)
I was attacked last night.

FRANK
(alarmed)
Why?

KEVIN
Because I'm on the short list of
possible lottery winners. Remember?

FRANK
But... did they think you were
carrying the ticket?

KEVIN
Maybe.. Or they were trying to
kidnap me and hold me for ransom.

FRANK
How did you escape?

KEVIN
(laughs)
I beat the crap out of them. I beat
the motherfucking crap out of them!

He grabs his bagged lunch from the fridge.

FRANK
Sorry it was so upsetting.

Kevin stops, considering Frank's sarcasm, then shrugs.

KEVIN
It was time for me to start
fighting back. See you later.

Kevin walks down the hallway to the front door which he pulls
open. Crystal stands on the front stoop, wearing a hoodie
pulled over her head. They stare at each other.

KEVIN (CONT'D)
Are you making fun of me?

CRYSTAL
Yes.

KEVIN
(nods slowly)
How long have you been standing
there?

She glances at her watch.

CRYSTAL
Twenty eight minutes. My feet are
killing me. Did you call the paper?

Kevin takes out his Smartphone and dials.

KEVIN
Johnny, this is Kevin, can you
cover for me at the store this
morning? If you can't, give me a
call. Thanks, I owe you.
(hangs up)
You wanna' go somewhere with me?

CRYSTAL
Sure.

EXT. KEVIN'S HOUSE - DAY

He shuts the front door behind him and she follows him to the
car. He stops and gently pushes the hood off her head.

CRYSTAL
What are you doing?

KEVIN
If I'm going to be with a beautiful
woman I can't ever really "be"
with, I should at least get to look
at her.

She smiles sadly. He turns away but she grabs his hand. He
immediately pulls his hand away, startling her.

CRYSTAL
I -- I'm sorry.

KEVIN
(sighs)
I spent my childhood craving touch
and never got it. My father left as
soon as he saw what I was. My
mother started drinking and... I grew
up in foster homes and learned I
had no right to touch... or be
touched.

She reaches out to take his hood off. He grabs her hands and they stand there. He releases her and steps back.

CRYSTAL
You make it hard on us.

KEVIN
I make it hard on you. Gee, sorry.

He walks to the driver's door which he opens.

KEVIN (CONT'D)
You still coming?

CRYSTAL
Yes.

She gets in the car.

INT. KEVIN'S SUV

Kevin stops in a clearing by a lake.

CRYSTAL
It's pretty.

KEVIN
Yeah, it is.

EXT. LAKE - DAY

They stand at the water's edge. A breeze in the trees, birdsong. He glances at Crystal and she catches him. She looks flustered, and he is about to look away but doesn't.

CRYSTAL
You're smart, caring,
sophisticated...

KEVIN
I've been an irritable asshole
since we met.

CRYSTAL
(laughs)
Yeah you have.

KEVIN
Well, I guess I won't ever have to
guess what you're thinking.

CRYSTAL

You might, sometimes even I don't know.

He turns back to the lake.

KEVIN

I come here with my laptop to write.

He breathes deeply and closes his eyes.

CRYSTAL

You look happy.

He smiles, eyes still closed.

CRYSTAL (CONT'D)

Please take your hood off.

He opens his eyes, turning to stare at her.

KEVIN

I don't do that on a first date.

She stares. He hesitates, then takes his hood off. She studies him. Kevin stares out at the lake.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

When I was in college --.

CRYSTAL

You went to college? Oh Jesus I'm sorry, of course you went to college. That was really stupid, I'm sorry.

KEVIN

I made a friend, an Israeli, Aaron. Back then there were no Jews in Manville. I'd only ever heard the word used as an insult, and I thought I'd be insulting Aaron if I called him a "Jew."

(laughs)

One day I said something about him being Jewish, and the world didn't crumble. Then I met some African Americans and I was afraid to mention they were black, in case they didn't know. It must have been funny as hell to them that someone who looks like Quasimodo was afraid of mentioning that they were black.

CRYSTAL
So I can talk about your face
without the world crumbling?

KEVIN
Probably.

CRYSTAL
Okay. How was it in college? Other
than the Jewish and black thing?

KEVIN
Horrible. But I had friends, even
some girls, though of course we
didn't...-

She frowns, seeing the hurt on his face.

KEVIN (CONT'D)
None of them were as... beautiful
as you.

CRYSTAL
So, is my being beautiful like
Aaron being Jewish -- you're afraid
of saying it in case I didn't
already know?

KEVIN
How could you not know?

CRYSTAL
Shit, I don't even know what it
means. *Beautiful*. It's an
accusation as often as a
compliment. "She can't possibly
understand, she's too beautiful."
"She's too beautiful to be
approachable." "She's too beautiful
to be credible." "She's too
beautiful to be smart." "She's too
beautiful to be strong." "You can't
take someone that beautiful
seriously." "She must really think
she's beautiful."

He considers that.

KEVIN
That's good. "It's an accusation as
often as a compliment." Do you mind
if I use it?

CRYSTAL
 Why do you write books no-one
 reads?

He studies her and she studies him back.

KEVIN
 I don't know.

CRYSTAL
 Tell me anyway.

KEVIN
 Only if you tell me what you meant
 when you said I make it hard on
 you.

CRYSTAL
 Deal.

He looks out onto the lake.

KEVIN
 God gave me this face, and this
 talent. Like... some kind of test --
 or joke.. and I refuse to play
 along.

CRYSTAL
 What do you mean?

KEVIN
 I mean fuck God. She doesn't get to
 dictate what I do with my talent,
 or this horrible fucking face She
 gave me.
 (pauses)
 Fuck God.
 (laughs, then shouts)
 Fuck God! Fuck God! Fuck God!

Crystal LAUGHS. Finally he stops, panting, bent over, hands
 on his knees, emotionally spent.

KEVIN (CONT'D)
 (panting)
 Shit. I never knew.

CRYSTAL
 So what're you going to do about
 it?

He considers that.

KEVIN

Just live my life, I guess. Run the bookstore and --.

CRYSTAL

And keep on writing brilliantly unsellable novels to spite God?

KEVIN

(laughs)

Wow. You're so good at that.

CRYSTAL

At what?

KEVIN

Telling people they're stupid without ever using the word stupid.

She stares.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

Okay, okay. I live my life, run the bookstore and... write differently.

CRYSTAL

How about *living* differently?

He considers that.

KEVIN

Not sure there is another way to live, not while looking like this.

She frowns.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

Okay, what did you mean when you said I'm making it hard on you?

CRYSTAL

I meant that you're forcing me to face the way I relate to people.

KEVIN

Through appearances.

CRYSTAL

Yes.

KEVIN

Don't feel too special there, Sparky. I do that too. We all do.

CRYSTAL
(laughs)
"Sparky?"

She smiles, then looks anguished.

CRYSTAL (CONT'D)
I've known you all of a few hours,
and if you didn't...

She stops, horrified by her own thoughts.

KEVIN
If I didn't look like this.

She nods, looking mortified.

CRYSTAL
If you didn't look like you do... I...
I would want to date you. And more.

KEVIN
And you feel like a terrible
person.

CRYSTAL
Don't you... *feel* anything about what
I just said?

KEVIN
You really have to get your pretty
little head out of your pert little
ass.

She laughs, taken aback.

CRYSTAL
What did you just say to me about
my pert little ass?

KEVIN
(raises voice)
Kinda' hard to hear with your head
jammed way up there, isn't it?

CRYSTAL
(stares)
You really want to hurt me, don't
you?

He laughs, derisively.

KEVIN

You tell me you feel bad because you're attracted to everything about me except my horribly disfigured face, and instead of being profoundly ashamed of yourself, you're irritated that I'm not destroyed by that.

She blushes.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

As if it's not something I've been living with and thinking about my whole life. Or as if I should be grateful that you do like me despite my face.

She stares, mortified.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

What do you want me to feel, Crystal? Sorry for you? Sorry that you're so conflicted by all this? What the fuck do you want from me?

She stares.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

Sorry, can't help you with your shit, too caught up in mine. It's been a slice, but I'd better get to work, if that's okay with you.

He walks to his car as she stands, stripped bare.

CRYSTAL

Fuck you!

KEVIN

Good one.

He gets in the car, starting the engine and waiting for her. She turns in a slow circle, fuming, guilty, angry, and embarrassed. She finally storms over to the car and gets in.

INT. KEVIN'S SUV - DAY

Kevin calmly drives off. There's a long silence.

CRYSTAL

So, you expect me to --

KEVIN
Are you still thinking this is
about you?

CRYSTAL
(beat)
Asshole.

KEVIN
Sometimes, how about you?

CRYSTAL
(beat)
Sometimes.

INT. JACKIE'S COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Crystal sits at a table, finishing a bagel and coffee. Jackie stands behind the counter, wiping up and looking unhappy. Crystal glances at Jackie and forces a smile.

CRYSTAL
May I please have the check?

JACKIE
(gruffly)
Already paid for.

CRYSTAL
By whom?

Jackie stops wiping and stares at Crystal.

JACKIE
Kevin.

CRYSTAL
(surprised)
I didn't ask him to pay.

Jackie stares.

CRYSTAL (CONT'D)
Did I... say something wrong?
Because... you don't seem too happy
with my being here -- or anywhere.

JACKIE
(sighs)
You don't have to ask Kevin to do
something nice. He just... does it.

CRYSTAL

Yeah, that's what everyone tells me. He hasn't... really shown that particular face to me much.

JACKIE

What 'face' is that?

CRYSTAL

The one behind the ugly one.

Jackie stares, then starts laughing.

JACKIE

"The one behind the ugly one."
That's good.

Jackie waves a hand at Crystal, still laughing.

JACKIE (CONT'D)

Just... go.

Crystal hesitates, then stands to leave.

JACKIE (CONT'D)

If you don't let Kevin do his nice
guy schtick he feels bad all day.

Crystal nods, confused, and leaves. As soon as Crystal is gone, Jackie's LAUGHTER becomes SOBBING.

EXT. MANVILLE - DAY

A REPORTER at city hall, speaking into a mic and camera.

REPORTER

Despite reports several days ago that the world-famous Manville billion dollar lottery ticket was still in the possession of the winner, excitement about the ticket has waned and most media people have left town. Some experts believe the ticket may simply have been thrown away when the owner misread the winning numbers, or left in a pocket to disintegrate in the laundry, and that it will go unclaimed until after the one-year redemption deadline.

(MORE)

REPORTER (CONT'D)

Whatever the case may be, this is our last day in Manville as well, so live for the last time from Manville, Iowa, I'm Jerome Fastbinder. Back to you, Sandi.

INT. KEVIN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Frank, Kevin and Jackie on the living room couch, facing Crystal, who stands, waiting.

JACKIE

You want to do a story on us.

Kevin winces.

CRYSTAL

Yes! Forget the lottery, this could be a great human interest story.

JACKIE

Why? Because we're all freaks?"Big brother" but "Big Freak" instead?

Crystal's grin slowly fades.

KEVIN

(chuckles)

Actually... not bad, Jackie. "Big Freak." Could be a hit. You gather a bunch of freaks, lock them in a house and the survivor gets a date with Lady Gaga or... Marilyn Manson.

CRYSTAL

(glaring at Kevin)

Of course it's bad!

(turns to Jackie)

There's no way I can avoid insulting you is there? I mean, I open my mouth and --

KEVIN

Did I mention this is not always about you?

CRYSTAL

(winces)

Right. Not about me. Okay, so no, it's not that you're all freaks, although if that's the way you want to define yourself that's your right.

(MORE)

CRYSTAL (CONT'D)

It's that you're a family and I think it's a great chance to show that families come in all shapes, sizes and --

JACKIE

Species?

Kevin and Frank GUFFAW. Crystal sighs and turns to Kevin.

KEVIN

Hey, it was your idea. You sell it.

CRYSTAL

Okay.

Crystal stands straighter.

FRANK

I think it's a great idea.

Jackie and Kevin look at him, surprised. Jackie is furious.

FRANK (CONT'D)

No, really Kevin, I think you and Crystal should get together and --

JACKIE

Okay, I get it.

FRANK

What?. Look, you want to make it as a singer, right?

JACKIE

Not as a freak singer.

FRANK

Well, you are a freak, and you are a singer. So if you want to be a singer you'll have to be a freak singer, and if Crystal's idea gets you publicity...

(turns to Crystal)

Any chance of including some footage of Jackie singing?

CRYSTAL

Sure, it'll add to the uniqueness of the story. We can show Jackie singing, Kevin writing and Frank...

FRANK
(straight face)
Break dancing.

Kevin does a spit take.

JACKIE
Good one.

CRYSTAL
Sure, break dancing, why not? So,
Jackie, do you want some free
publicity and a chance to say
something you always wanted to say?

FRANK AND KEVIN
Ooh...

Jackie slaps Kevin's chest and glares at Frank.

JACKIE
Shut up!
(to Crystal)
Fine. Do the fucking story.

Crystal stares at the seething Jackie.

CRYSTAL
Gee, this ought to be fun.

FRANK AND KEVIN
Ooh...

Jackie casts them another murderous glance.

INT. KEVIN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Kevin enters. Frank is in the living room watching TV. Kevin hangs up his jacket and stops in the living-room doorway.

KEVIN
You're doing this because of
Jackie, aren't you?

Frank, startled by Kevin, turns.

FRANK
Absolutely not.

Kevin stares.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Okay, maybe.

KEVIN

I'm not trying to cut your grass here, Frank.

FRANK

You'd better not, damn it, because I... What the fuck does that *mean*?

Kevin restrains a smile.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Do I have grass? Do you mean I have to mow the lawn, because that's going to be hard for me in this fucking wheelchair, you know.

KEVIN

Jackie is wonderful, even if she does her best not to show it.

FRANK

Damned right she's wonderful!

KEVIN

It's not my fault, Frank. I never encouraged her, I --

FRANK

I know!
(calmer)
I know.

He stares down at his hands, lying on his emaciated legs.

FRANK (CONT'D)

I -- I can't do anything. You know -
- I can't do *that* anymore.
(yells)
I can't get it up! I'm not a man anymore!

Kevin stares, mortified. Frank glances around, looking for an escape. Finally he looks at Kevin.

FRANK (CONT'D)

She could never be happy with me. She would cheat on me, even if she loved me and she doesn't love me, she loves you.

KEVIN

(lame)
It's not my fault.

FRANK

No, it's not, it's... nobody's fault,
it's God's fucking fault!

Frank wheels away.

EXT. MANVILLE - DAY

Jackie strolls downtown, looking thoughtful and angry. It slowly dawns on her that it's warm and sunny. She looks up at the sky and the trees lining the street and slowly smiles. Then she sees Kevin, sitting across from Crystal at an outdoor cafe. They're laughing.

Jackie stares.

INT. KEVIN'S BEDROOM

Kevin in bed, staring at the ceiling. The bedroom door opens and he turns to see Jackie enter, in sexy lingerie.

KEVIN

What are you doing?

She closes the door and walks to the bed. He props himself up, worried. She climbs into bed. He moves away.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

Jackie, this isn't a good idea.

She pulls her top down to reveal her perfect breasts.

JACKIE

I think it's a great idea.

She reaches for him.

KEVIN

No!

She stops, shocked.

JACKIE

You're choosing her because she's
not damaged!

KEVIN

I'm tired of saying I'm sorry for
something I haven't done!

He tries not to stare at her breasts.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

I know I can't have Crystal but
yeah, I want her.

Jackie grabs a lamp off a side table and smashes him with it repeatedly. She stops after the sixth blow, throws the lamp against a wall, and breaks down sobbing. He speaks from between swollen and bleeding lips.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

Jackie...

INT. KEVIN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Jackie staggers out of Kevin's room, blood spattered over her breasts and lingerie. She sees Frank in his wheelchair at the end of the hall, staring at her in shock. Jackie covers her breasts and runs to her bedroom, slamming the door.

Kevin staggers out of his room, bleeding profusely, one eye shut, the other nearly shut. He sees Frank then runs to Jackie's room, grabbing the doorknob but it's locked.

KEVIN

Jackie!

JACKIE

Go away you motherfucker!

KEVIN

It doesn't have to be this way!

JACKIE

Go away you faggot, go have sex
with Frank, that's probably what
you want anyway, you fucking queer!

KEVIN

There's an operation, I can pay for
it, it'll make you look...

JACKIE

Normal? Fuck you! Leave me alone!

Kevin staggers into his room, glancing at Frank. Jackie bursts out of her room, dressed provocatively and storms down the hallway, past Frank and out of the house. Kevin staggers out of his room in time to hear the front door slam.

KEVIN

Shit.

He passes out.

FRANK

Kevin!

Frank wheels desperately toward Kevin.

INT. NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

Jackie enters and glances around as PEOPLE stare rudely at her deformity or turn away. She spots a loser standing with two loser buddies and she struts over to them. The three men turn, captivated by her provocative dress and killer body, then noticing her face and recoiling. She stops in front of them, seeing their expressions. She hesitates, then bares one of her breasts. The three men stare with a stupid hunger.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Jackie and the three men pile through the door, the men groping and kissing her, violent, frantic, and desperate. One of the guys picks her up and carries her into the bedroom.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Loser #1 drops Jackie onto the bed. He and Loser #2 start undoing their pants. Loser #3 enters, with a paper bag.

JACKIE

What's that for?

LOSER #3

To put over your face, bitch.

Jackie looks as if she is going to vomit.

LOSER #2

Come on, Ted, that's not cool.

LOSER #3

(to Jackie)

You wanna' get laid, bitch?

Jackie stares as if going into shock.

LOSER #1

(laughs)

Yeah, come on, put it on!

Loser #1 and Loser #3 start chanting.

LOSER #1 AND LOSER #3

Put it on, put it on!

Loser #3 jumps on the bed and pins Jackie to the bed while she SCREAMS. Loser #1 puts the bag over her head and her SCREAM becomes uncontrollable SOBBING. He holds the bag over her head as Loser #3 gets on the bed beside her and starts tearing her clothes off and she SCREAMS louder.

JACKIE
No, please!

LOSER #2
I'm out of here!

Loser #2 runs out as Loser #3 rams into her, as her SCREAM goes on and on...

INT. HOSPITAL EXAMINATION ROOM - NIGHT

Kevin sits on the hospital gurney, being treated by Doctor Grinkovski. The doctor finishes a stitch, then stands back.

DR. GRINKOVSKI
Okay, time for the nose. You're sure you don't want an anesthetic?

Kevin nods. The doctor places his fingers on either side of Kevin's broken nose and just as he jerks, we cut to:

INT. HOSPITAL FOYER - NIGHT

Frank in his wheelchair, upset.

CRYSTAL
Hi.

He looks up to see Crystal approaching.

FRANK
Crystal.

CRYSTAL
What happened?

FRANK
Jackie happened. She beat Kevin with a lamp, cut him up pretty bad.

CRYSTAL
Oh my God, where is he?

FRANK
Getting stitched up -- again.

CRYSTAL
Where's Jackie?

FRANK
Who knows?

CRYSTAL
Can we see him?

FRANK
After they're done. If I know
Kevin, he'll insist on being
released.

CRYSTAL
Yeah.
(fights back tears)
He's pretty tough, isn't he?

FRANK
(studies her)
Not as tough as people think. What
do you want with him?

CRYSTAL
What is this, the third degree?

FRANK
Yeah, it is. So what do you want
with him?

CRYSTAL
I'm doing a story on you. I'm a
reporter, that's what I do.

FRANK
Reporters don't usually woo their
subjects, do they?

CRYSTAL
Woo?

FRANK
Or is it the money? Maybe you still
think he won the damned lottery and
you're hoping for... what? Another
even bigger story? Or maybe to have
a billionaire wrapped around your
little finger.

She slaps him, almost knocking him out of the chair, then
recoils. Frank, at first shocked, LAUGHS.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Damn, you women are dangerous.

CRYSTAL

I'm sorry.

FRANK

Don't be, you would have slapped a normal man who asked you that.

She squares her shoulders.

CRYSTAL

You are normal and I'll slap you again if I have to. You think your disease gives you the right to insult people?

KEVIN

You're mistaking me for Jackie.

CRYSTAL

No I'm not, and maybe that's the real story here. Three people who think they're owed something because of a series of accidents that were no-one's fault.

FRANK

What... do... you... want with him?

CRYSTAL

I want to be around his wit, his humor, his kindness and --

FRANK

But not his face.

CRYSTAL

Actually I'm getting used to it, especially since it's connected to all those other things.

FRANK

Getting used to it. Enough to want to be his girlfriend?

CRYSTAL

Girlfriend? I'm not twelve.

FRANK

Neither is he, but he can be hurt like a twelve year old, because he's never had the chance to build defenses against women like you. What do you want from him?

CRYSTAL

Okay!. I want to be with who he is but not with what he looks like. There, I guess I'm the real monster here, right?

FRANK

Maybe.

She flinches.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Maybe we all are, none of us knowing what the fuck we're doing or what we really want or feel, and hurting all sorts of people while we fumble around trying to figure things out.

Frank's cell phone rings and he fumbles awkwardly for it.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Hello.

He listens then looks alarmed.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Okay, I'll be right there.

He hangs up and dials a number as Crystal watches.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Yeah, hi, can you please send a taxi to the Manville Hospital ER? I'll be outside. I'm in a wheelchair.

(pause)

Yeah, okay thank you.

(hangs up. To Crystal)

It's Jackie.

CRYSTAL

Is she okay?

FRANK

No. I don't know.

CRYSTAL
You know that she's --

FRANK
In love with Kevin? Yeah, I know.
But thanks for reminding me.

CRYSTAL
Sorry.

Frank turns to go, then turns back.

FRANK
What part does the lottery play in
all of this?

CRYSTAL
I love my job and they pay me well.
What more would a billion dollars
buy me except worries about having
my kids kidnapped?

FRANK
Then it doesn't matter whether he
won or not, right?

CRYSTAL
You can't make her want you.

FRANK
I know, but it gives me something
to do with my spare time.

He wheels away.

CRYSTAL
Hey, thanks for calling me about
Kevin!

Frank waves and disappears through the sliding glass doors.

KEVIN
Hi.

Crystal turns to see Kevin walking out, head unhooded, and she puts a hand to her mouth in horror as she sees the stitches and bandages on his face.

CRYSTAL
Oh my God, Kevin.

She starts CRYING. Kevin goes to her, but stops.

CRYSTAL (CONT'D)
Oh for God's sake!

She throws herself into his arms. He stands there awkwardly patting her back, and finally she backs away.

CRYSTAL (CONT'D)
Is that how you hug a girl? Damn that's lame.

She starts to LAUGH while she is still crying. He starts LAUGHING too, but then immediately winces in pain.

CRYSTAL (CONT'D)
Oh.

She reaches to touch his face but stops.

CRYSTAL (CONT'D)
No hood.

KEVIN
I don't think I was fooling anyone.

CRYSTAL
I thought you didn't want to make people uncomfortable.

KEVIN
Fuck 'em.

They LAUGH. He winces again.

CRYSTAL
I like you.

KEVIN
I have that effect on women.

She stares at him.

KEVIN (CONT'D)
You know, I love that look.

CRYSTAL
What look?

KEVIN
That "what the fuck do we do now" look.

CRYSTAL
Oh. That look.

He looks around and notices the receptionist staring at them in amazement and revulsion. Then he sees her shift her gaze and he follows it, to see Crystal standing there with her hands 10 inches apart and her eyes unnaturally large.

KEVIN
(restraining a laugh)
Okay, you can't make me laugh, my nose hurts too much.

CRYSTAL
As long as it's just your nose, you sexpot.

Kevin glances back at the receptionist.

KEVIN
She's right. Not that you'll ever get the chance to find out.

He turns, takes Crystal's arm and walks off.

RECEPTIONIST
Mr. Hogan!

Kevin and Crystal stops.

KEVIN
She wants to see it for herself.

He turns to face the receptionist, smirking.

RECEPTIONIST
Your co-pay.

KEVIN
Oh. Right.

CRYSTAL
Oh shit.

He glances at Crystal.

CRYSTAL (CONT'D)
Jackie.

INT. KEVIN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Kevin enters and walks to the living room. Frank sits, staring out the front window. He turns to face Kevin.

KEVIN
What happened?

FRANK

Not much. She just got raped by two guys holding a paper bag over her head so they didn't have to look at her face while they fucked her.

Kevin stares, horrified.

FRANK (CONT'D)

How could you do that to her?

KEVIN

What are you talking about? I didn't rape her, for Christ's sake.

FRANK

No, you just rejected her and because of that she went out looking for anyone who would care about her in the only way she understands, and that's to have sex with her in spite of the way she looks. And this is what happened.

Frank turns his wheelchair completely around to face Kevin.

FRANK (CONT'D)

What, you couldn't just pretend to be interested, or are you as revolted by her as everyone else is? Wouldn't that be ironic, someone as fucking hideous as you not wanting to be with someone who looks like her?

KEVIN

It has nothing to do with her looks!

FRANK

Then why are you so fucking hot over Crystal? Because of her mind? It's obviously not because of her looks, right?

Kevin reacts.

FRANK (CONT'D)

What the fuck did you do to make her go out and get raped? What did you say to her?

KEVIN

(hesitates)

It's what I didn't say to her. I didn't say I was in love with her.

FRANK

Wow, Mr. Nice Guy, you couldn't find a way to tell her that without totally destroying her? Maybe you should check your motives, bro.

KEVIN

I'm not Mister Nice Guy! I'm just me. And I don't know what my motives are except just to get by one day at a time. I don't even know who the fuck I am, okay? Maybe you're right and everything about me really is a lie. I don't know that either.

FRANK

Well I'll tell you what I know. She's in love with you. But I'd still take her if she would have me, because I'm in love with her.

KEVIN

Well maybe you should examine your motives too, Frank. Are you really in love with her or is she just the only person in town who might have you?

Frank stares with open hatred.

FRANK

Are you even capable of love?

KEVIN

I don't know that either.

FRANK

Well then maybe that ugliness of yours goes deeper than just your face. Maybe it goes all the way through that empty fucking space where your heart should be.

Kevin turns to leave.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Maybe it's time for you to get on with your life!

Kevin turns back to Frank.

KEVIN

It's my house! Maybe it's time for
you to get on with *your* life.

Kevin storms off.

EXT. KEVIN'S HOME - NIGHT

Kevin emerges from the house and sees Crystal's car. He walks
up to her open passenger window and leans down.

CRYSTAL

Come to my hotel room.

KEVIN

I don't think that's a good idea.

CRYSTAL

I'm not talking about having an
orgy for Christ's sake.

KEVIN

There goes that fantasy.

CRYSTAL

Just come over. Stay on the couch,
we can have a little wine, talk,
whatever.

KEVIN

They need me.

CRYSTAL

Do they?

He stares at her.

KEVIN

You know, other than a great rack,
incredible legs and the most
beautiful face I've ever seen, the
only thing you got going for you is
that you never let me get away with
shit.

CRYSTAL

Oh, you're going to get so tired of
that last part. Get the fuck in the
car, will you?

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Kevin and Crystal are drunk, sitting on a couch, wine glasses in hand, LAUGHING.

KEVIN

So Mr. Burgerhoff walks by and for some reason I yell out "fuck Burgerhoff."

CRYSTAL

Oh shit. What did he do?

KEVIN

He storms up to me, eyes wider than the gap in his front teeth and I'm thinking he's going to kill me so I yell out "I've got Tourettes!"

CRYSTAL

No!

KEVIN

Suddenly I'm calling Mr. Burgerhoff every name in the book -- fuck this, cocksucker that, motherfucking son of a bitch, and he's standing there, the veins in his forehead about to explode and then he turns and walks away.

CRYSTAL

He *believed* you?

KEVIN

Tourettes must have seemed mild compared to my face so yeah, he bought it and for the rest of the year I just swore at him anytime I felt like it, screaming out obscenities in class, saying things about his wife and mother and the size of his penis.

CRYSTAL

(laughs)

Shit, that is a great story. You should put it in your next book.

KEVIN

(stares)

I will, right alongside this story.

CRYSTAL
What story?

KEVIN
Sitting in a hotel room at three
o'clock in the morning getting
drunk with the most beautiful woman
I've ever met.

She stops laughing.

KEVIN (CONT'D)
I'm sorry, I shouldn't have said
that.

CRYSTAL
No, it's okay.

She hesitates, then leans forward to kiss him and he leans
forward to meet her, but at the last moment she stops. He
pulls back, mortified. She sees his reaction.

CRYSTAL (CONT'D)
No, I'm sorry. I --

He stands.

KEVIN
My fault, I'm sorry.

He walks toward the front door.

CRYSTAL
Where are you going?

KEVIN
Home. My home. Not theirs.
(sadly)
Not yours either.

He turns and walks out.

INT. BOOKSTORE - DAY

Kevin sits at the counter, reading, no hoodie. He scratches
his beard, indicating it's been a while since the last scene.

CRYSTAL
Hi.

He turns. Crystal stands in the doorway.

CRYSTAL (CONT'D)
Can I come in?

KEVIN
Unless you're a shoplifter.

She smiles, and walks up to the counter. He stands.

CRYSTAL
(smiles)
A beard. It looks good on you.

KEVIN
Just another camouflage. It works better than the hood but not as well as a mask. Why are you here?

CRYSTAL
You haven't heard? The media are pouring in to cover the last two days before the ticket expires.

He nods. She studies him.

CRYSTAL (CONT'D)
I'm sorry. I wanted to kiss you, I did, and I would have if you hadn't run away.

KEVIN
Whatever.

CRYSTAL
(frowns, hurt)
So what ever happened with Frank and Jackie?

KEVIN
They're living together -- in their own place, with sex and all that. Sort of.

CRYSTAL
I wouldn't have bet on that one.

He smiles but only slightly.

CRYSTAL (CONT'D)
I read your new novel.

KEVIN
It's not released yet.

CRYSTAL
I got a review copy. It's
brilliant.

KEVIN
That's what they said about my
other books.

CRYSTAL
Yeah, but this one is --

KEVIN
Commercial. I know.

CRYSTAL
I was going to say it's got heart.
And hope.

He reacts but says nothing.

CRYSTAL (CONT'D)
How could someone so good with
words not have any left over for
me?

He shakes his head. She looks even sadder.

CRYSTAL (CONT'D)
Well, all the reviewers say it's
going to be the book of the year.
The next bestseller.

KEVIN
That's what I hear.

CRYSTAL
I've missed you.

He nods. She hesitates, then turns to leave, but then stops
and looks back.

CRYSTAL (CONT'D)
I miss Mr. nice guy too.

She turns around and leaves.

INT. JACKIE'S COFFEE SHOP - NIGHT

Kevin enters. Jackie is behind the counter, doing cleaning
and prep. She looks up and smiles.

JACKIE
Hey, Kev.

KEVIN
(grim)
Jackie.

She studies him as he approaches. He glances at the customers.

JACKIE
It's okay, they can't hear us.

KEVIN
I won.

She looks at him in shock.

JACKIE
You bastard.

KEVIN
I'm going to turn the ticket in tomorrow -- in Iowa City.

JACKIE
Why are you telling me this?

KEVIN
I'm going to have surgery.

JACKIE
When did you decide this? When she walked into your store today?

KEVIN
How did you --

JACKIE
Like I'm not going to notice her coming back into town.

KEVIN
Why are you angry? You're with Frank now.

JACKIE
(pauses)
You're only doing this because she won't accept you the way you are.

KEVIN
I'm not my deformity. Neither are you.

JACKIE

I accepted you exactly the way you are.

KEVIN

(hesitates, then nods)

I didn't appreciate that. I'm sorry. I was an asshole.

That surprises her.

JACKIE

I'm going to miss that face.

(laughs)

It has... character.

KEVIN

I'll pay for you to have surgery too.

JACKIE

(angry)

And Frank? Are you going to pay for him too?

KEVIN

There's no surgery that can fix his illness, Jackie.

She stares, defiant.

JACKIE

I know. I'm the only one who can fix his fucking illness. Or at least make it livable. He needs me.

Kevin hesitates, then nods.

KEVIN

I don't know if I'm coming back. I don't know anything anymore.

JACKIE

You never did.

KEVIN

Maybe not.

JACKIE

Goodbye, Kevin.

Jackie starts silently crying. Kevin pulls her halfway across the counter and gives her a huge kiss on her scarred lips.

He releases her and she staggers backward, stunned. He walks away.

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

An upscale New York restaurant. Crystal enters and glances around.

KEVIN

Hi.

She turns, startled, to see a man standing a few feet away, big, but otherwise average looking. She stares, then her eyes widen.

CRYSTAL

Kevin.

He smiles.

CRYSTAL (CONT'D)

Oh my God,. You're...

KEVIN

(laughs)

Average. I know. I could have gone the movie star route, but all I ever really wanted was to be able to walk into a room and not draw a single glance.

CRYSTAL

No, it suits you. It's a kind face, but I guess that comes from inside, not a scalpel.

He winces.

CRYSTAL (CONT'D)

What?

KEVIN

You said "scalpel."

(winces again)

The surgery hurt. A lot. Still does a bit.

She reaches out to touch his face, then stops.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

It's okay.

She places her hand gently on his face.

CRYSTAL
I'm with someone.

She removes her hand.

KEVIN
I know. I checked before asking you
to meet me. It's okay.

CRYSTAL
I'd like to do a story on you.

KEVIN
Sure.

She's surprised by that.

CRYSTAL
Really?

KEVIN
How about right now? I'll buy you
lunch, you can ask me anything you
want and then... we go on with our
lives.

She looks sad, but nods.

CRYSTAL
Sure.

KEVIN
I'm over here.

He leads her to a table and they sit. A waiter appears.

WAITER
Hello, my name's John.
(hands her a menu)
Would you like to start with
something to drink?

She smiles and the waiter pauses, taken by her beauty. Kevin
watches the waiter's reaction, and smiles wistfully.

KEVIN
Yes, a glass of Riesling. Do you
have Chateau St. Michelle?

WAITER
We do.

KEVIN
You might want to try Eroica.

WAITER

It's our finest Riesling.

Crystal smiles, studying his new face.

CRYSTAL

That would be fine.

The waiter nods and leaves.

CRYSTAL (CONT'D)

I'm angry with you.

KEVIN

Why?

CRYSTAL

Because we could have been together.

His smile widens but becomes sadder too.

KEVIN

It wouldn't have worked.

CRYSTAL

You think so little of me.

KEVIN

(laughs)

It wouldn't have worked because of me, not you. You're still thinking everything is about you.

CRYSTAL

(surprised)

You're happy. Did the surgery do that?

KEVIN

In a way.

CRYSTAL

Are... are you with someone too,?

KEVIN

No. It's too early for that.

CRYSTAL

What do you mean? Is it the pain from the surgery?

KEVIN

No, the pain was bad, very bad, but what's left is so small compared to...

CRYSTAL

Compared to what?

KEVIN

(hesitates)

I never told anyone but... I was always in pain. Before the surgery I mean. The... deformity... it pressed on several cranial and facial nerves. I was in constant pain. I tried medication but that dulled me and made it impossible for me to write, so... I just handled it. I was the nice guy because I thought that's what I needed to be, to be accepted. I was pain and hurt and sorrow because I experienced pain and hurt and sorrow 24 hours a day. But in the end I didn't know who I really was and I'm still not sure. I guess it's a process, sifting through the bullshit to get to the true person underneath.

(laughs)

I guess I am with someone after all. I'm with Kevin Hogan and I'm trying to figure out if he's the kind of guy I want to spend a lifetime with.

CRYSTAL

He is.

A tear rolls down her cheek. She wipes it away.

CRYSTAL (CONT'D)

Damn.

He reaches out and touches her cheek, wiping away another tear. She traps his hand against her face and shoulder and he caresses her a moment before gently pulling away.

CRYSTAL (CONT'D)

You couldn't have done that a year ago.

KEVIN

(smiles)

God knows what I'll be able to do a year from now.

CRYSTAL

I can leave him.

She looks ashamed. He places his hand on hers.

KEVIN

It would hurt him, whoever he is. We're not that kind of people, are we?

She looks down, blushing.

CRYSTAL

No. We're not.

KEVIN

Why don't we do the interview?

She nods, fishing in her purse for a digital recorder which she places on the table. The waiter returns, and places a glass of wine at her elbow.

CRYSTAL

Just a house salad.

She smiles. The waiter nods, again taken by her beauty, then leaves, looking wistful. She turns on the recorder.

KEVIN

I'm sitting at New York City's lovely Bel Air Bistro, sharing a light lunch with bestselling novelist and world-famous lottery winner Kevin Hogan.

She studies his face.

CRYSTAL

Kevin, it's so nice to meet you.

Kevin smiles.

KEVIN

It's nice to meet me too. I'm looking forward to getting to know me.

She smiles through her own pain.

CRYSTAL

Kevin is of course is the winner of last year's billion dollar Canadian lottery, as well as the author of the global bestseller "Face Time," which has made him nearly as famous and rich as the lottery did. In fact, and you can confirm this for me if you don't mind, Kevin, you gave most of your lottery winnings to charity, didn't you?

Kevin nods.

KEVIN

I gave ten million dollars each to my two closest friends, 100 million to my home town, kept 10 million for myself and gave the remaining 870 million to charity.

(laughs)

Since the publication of "Face Time" I've already earned another 75 million, but this time it is definitely not tax free.

(laughs again)

I guess everything has its price, even money.

She nods, tears streaming down her face now.

CRYSTAL

Yes.

(beat)

Everything has its price.

She wipes angrily at her face but keeps her voice professionally calm.

CRYSTAL (CONT'D)

So, let's talk about the events that led up to you writing "Face Time"...