

WHAT IT'S LIKE TO DIE—by Gregor Southard

INT. COFFEEHOUSE—MORNING.

Mark, a forty- something man is sitting in a booth at a local coffeehouse working on his laptop.

MARK (V.O.)

What's it like to die? Maybe the question should be 'how many times do we die in our lives before we actually, you know, die for real?

Mark looks briefly around the room and takes a sip of coffee. He looks at the mug and takes another sip before beginning to type again.

MARK (V.O.)

It's the process more than the actual result that bothers me the most. I'm not even really concerned about the when. After all, when you're done you're done. Right?

He looks up and sees a couple aggressively making out in a booth. He frowns.

MARK (V.O.)

Nice. I didn't realize I was at a drive- in.

A female server (Valli) approaches the table.

VALLI

Would you like to order anything to eat?

MARK

What do you think?

She stops moving while Mark continues.

MARK (V.O.)

Meet Valli. She is the manager of this coffeehouse and doubles as my best friend. Yeah, I know, what are the odds of a guy's best friend being a woman 10 years younger?

VALLI

Of course not.

MARK

Actually. (nods toward couple) I'd like to order a cold shower for Romeo and Juliet over there.

VALLI

You're just jealous.

MARK

Am not.

VALLI

You need to get a girlfriend.

He picks up a menu and looks it over.

MARK

What's the special of the day, blondes or redheads?

Valli grabs the menu from him.

VALLI

Cynic.

She walks away. He holds his mug up.

MARK

I'll take a refill!

He takes a sip and looks over at the couple still going at it.

MARK (CONT'D)

You guys are killing me.

Valli returns with a fresh mug.

VALLI

Why don't you rent a romantic movie? That way you can see what couples do in private.

MARK

Maybe in their case, I should get a porno?

VALLI

You're hopeless. Enjoy your misery, I mean coffee.

MARK

Oh, come on. I was just joking. Hey, speaking of porno, is your boyfriend coming over?

VALLI

You know he's in the seminary.

He picks up the new coffee mug.

MARK

Like I said, joking.

Valli picks up the old coffee mug.

VALLI

Uh- huh. Maybe I'll get him to pray over you.

MARK

Got that covered.

Valli leaves the table. Mark returns to his laptop.

MARK

Where was I?

He looks up and the Grim Reaper appears briefly.

MARK

Oh yeah.

He looks down at his laptop and then back up. The Grim Reaper is gone.

MARK (V.O.)

Figuratively speaking. There are other ways to die like finding out via email that your soul mate has been cheating on you.

INT. MARK'S LIBRARY—MORNING

Mark walks into his library with a robe on and a coffee mug in his hand. He sits down in front of his computer to check email. He smiles.

MARK

An email from the girlfriend. Nice way to start the day.

He clicks on the email and frowns.

GIRLFRIEND (V.O.)

I just wanted to let you know that my best friend, Matt, and I are moving to Pennsylvania next week and we're getting married. Have a great life!

Mark leans back in his chair and takes a long drink from his mug.

MARK

Intercourse, Pennsylvania, no doubt.

INT. BACK IN COFFEE HOUSE.

MARK (V.O.)

There are other gems out there, like the time

Mark's friend Darius enters the coffee house through the door on the far side.

DARIUS

Mark! What's up dude?!

Mark gives him the peace sign as Darius walks toward him. He stops at the table where the couple is still making out.

DARIUS (CONT'D)

Hey, you two. Break it up.

The couple stops and looks nervously up at him.

MARK (V.O.)

As you can see, my friend Darius is a rather large man. He is also the lead guitar player for local rock legends Rocktify.

INT. CONCERT HALL.

Darius is on stage at a concert playing a guitar solo.

INT. BACK IN COFFEE HOUSE.

MARK (V.O.)

As you can imagine, he's quite popular with the ladies.

DARIUS

People are trying to eat.

COUPLE

We're sorry.

Darius continues to Mark's table and sits down.

MARK

For that, I'm buying your coffee. Sometimes, I wish I had your bravado.

DARIUS

I'm a rock star, it's expected of me. You're the writer, which makes you the cynic.

MARK

(frustrated) I'm not a cynic! I just call it like I see it.

DARIUS

(laughs) Yeah, you see the world through rose colored glasses.

MARK

I'm not a giddy school girl, either.

DARIUS

Maybe that's what you need, a giddy school girl.

MARK

What is this, get Mark a babe day?

DARIUS

I wasn't thinking that young.

Valli brings Darius an espresso and sets it down in front of him.

VALLI

Here you go.

DARIUS

Hey, I didn't even

VALLI

You're just as predictable as lover boy over here.

DARIUS
Loverboy! Classic Canadian band.
(yells/sings)
Turn me loose! Turn me loose!

Valli shakes her head and leaves the table.

MARK
Hey! I'll take a refill.

VALLI (V.O.)
I know.

A young woman walks up to their table.

YOUNG WOMAN
Do you know who you look like?

Mark frowns and takes a sip of his coffee.

MARK
Who?

YOUNG WOMAN
Dierks Bentley!

DARIUS
How do you know he's not Dierks Bentley?

YOUNG WOMAN
He's too old.

Darius laughs as she leaves to go back to her table.

DARIUS
She's right, you know.

MARK
Thanks.

Micah enters as Valli returns with another mug for Mark. Micah and Valli kiss. Scene freezes.

MARK (V.O.)

That's Micah, Valli's boyfriend and seminary student.

Quick shot of Micah wearing a priest's outfit, hands together as he looks reverently upward. "Heavenly" choir music plays.

MARK (V.O., CONT'D)

And no, he's not a pedophile.

DARIUS

Hey, you two. No PDA's. God's watching.

VALLI

How would you know?

Darius pretends his feelings are hurt.

DARIUS

That's hurtful, Valli.

VALLI

Whatever.

(to Micah)

We still on for tonight?

MICAH

Of course. About 8?

Valli gives him a quick kiss.

VALLI

I'll see you later. Bye, boys.

She leaves to tend to other customers. Micah sits down.

DARIUS

Tell us, what did you learn today, Father?

Micah shakes his head.

MICAH

D, you know I'm not going to be a Father, I'm

DARIUS

Valli will be relieved to hear that.

MICAH

Do you have any idea how old that joke is getting?

MARK

He's right.

DARIUS

OK, how old is it?

Mark pretends to adjust an imaginary tie ala Rodney Dangerfield.

MARK

It's so old it's getting gray hair. It's so old, it's eligible for Medicare. It's... so... old...

DARIUS

OK! OK! Point taken. Hey, I've written a new song. Do you guys want to hear it?

MICAH & MARK

No!

Silence.

MICAH

Well, what do you know? We silenced Mighty Mouth.

Darius looks at his watch. I've got to get to work. He gets up to leave. Micah calls out to him as he is leaving.

MICAH (CONT'D)

Hey, D! How do you get a guitar player off of your front porch?

A server brings Micah a glass of water.

DARIUS

That one's old, too.

Micah turns back to Mark.

MARK

He's right, you know.

Micah smiles and shrugs.

MICAH

I know. Just trying to keep our rock star friend grounded.

A young woman (Yvette) sneaks up behind Micah as he takes a drink.

YVETTE

Look out, it's Satan!

Micah spits out his drink as Mark dives out of its path. Yvette gives him a hug from behind. Yvette and Micah freeze.

MARK (V.O.)

Yvette Collingwood. She moved from Melbourne, Australia to New York City to study art, met a musician and moved to Nashville five years ago. They broke up, of course. We met at a Rocktify concert three years ago.

Yvette lets Micah go and sits down in a chair next to him. Valli arrives on the scene with an ice coffee for Yvette.

YVETTE

Hey, Valli girl! How goes stuff?

VALLI

'Bout the same as always. Just serving the circus monkeys. You?

YVETTE

Still teaching five year olds to paint.

Valli looks around the table.

VALLI

You got off easy. Talk to you later.

Valli begins to walk away from the table.

MARK

Hey, Valli, I'll

VALLI

I know.

Yvette stands up.

YVETTE

I have to wee- wee.

Yvette walks toward the bathroom.

MICAH

(shakes head)

I wish she wouldn't say things like that.

MARK

Oh, come on. You've got to admit it, its cute when she says things like that.

MICAH

Sort of like Olivia Newton- John in Grease.

MARK

Oh, Sandy.

They click mug and glass together. Micah points toward Mark's laptop.

MICAH

What are you working on?

MARK

I'm not sure yet. It's either going to be a sitcom or an autobiography.

MICAH

What's it called, this autobiographical sitcom?

MARK

"What's It's Like To Die."

MICAH

Sounds depressing.

MARK

I envision it as a black comedy based not so loosely on my life.

MICAH

Oh.

Micah looks down at his glass for a moment.

MICAH (CONT'D)

You think your life is a black comedy?

Mark tries to act surprised.

MARK

Don't you?

MICAH

(thoughtful)

Well, you do tend to be a cynic.

Mark shakes his head and puts his face in one hand.

MICAH (CONT'D)

I guess if you channel your inner

Mark looks up at him.

MARK

You can say it. The jawbone of an

MICAH

(reluctantly)

Ass. Why that title? Is there something I should know about?

MARK

Don't worry. Not dying right now.

MICAH

That's good to know.

Valli returns. She immediately recognizes the uncharacteristic silence.

VALLI
Something wrong?

Mark and Micah shake their heads.

MICAH
Can I get an espresso?

VALLI
(surprised)
An espresso? Something IS wrong. Tell me.

She stares at Micah, who does not answer immediately.

VALLI (CONT'D)
Fine. We'll talk tonight.
(to Mark)
And you, quit making my boyfriend depressed.

MARK
Me? I was just telling him about my latest project.

VALLI
She got a name? Never mind.

Valli begins to walk away. She stops and turns around to look at Mark.

VALLI (CONT'D)
Hmm.

She continues back to behind the counter.

MICAH
We were actually talking about death in class today.

MARK
Yeah? Anything I can use?

MICAH
I doubt it. You studied mythology and sometimes
I think you know more about theology and philosophy
than I do.

MARK
(smiles)

You're too kind.

Valli returns and sets the mug of espresso down in front of Micah.

VALLI
(to Micah)

I'm going on break now. Want to join me?

MICAH

Usual spot?

VALLI

Yes.

She leans over and kisses him on the cheek. Neither Mark or Micah say anything at first.

MICAH

You and I are going to finish this conversation later.

Micah stands up and watches Valli exit out the back door.

MICAH (CONT'D)

She really is awesome.

Micah heads for the back door.

MARK
(somber)

I know.

ACT TWO

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD PARK—AFTERNOON

Yvette and Mark are walking together on a sunny afternoon. The Kinks “Sunny Afternoon” plays in the background.

YVETTE

You didn’t really explain your new book the other day.

MARK

I’m thinking more along the line of TV series.

YVETTE

A TV series about death? Sounds kinky.

MARK

It isn’t about death. Well, not exactly.

YVETTE

What is it about, exactly?

MARK

Me, but not exactly.

YVETTE

(laughs)

Who would watch a television series about a poet?

MARK

It’s not about a poet.

YVETTE

But you’re a poet, right.

MARK

Not exactly.

INT. LOBBY OF A PUBLISHING HOUSE.

Mark is talking to the Administrative Assistant sitting behind the desk. She is an older, mean- spirited looking woman.

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT (AA)

What can I do for you?

MARK

I was hoping to get a meeting with someone to talk about publishing my book.

AA

Do you know any of our executives?

MARK

Well, no.

AA

Have you ever been published by a major publisher?

MARK

No.

AA

A small one?

MARK

(hesitant)

I self- published my last book.

The Administrative Assistant begins to look impatient.

AA

That doesn't count. So, if you don't know anyone important in the publishing business and you've never been published, why should we even consider you?

MARK

(smiles)

Because my book is good.

AA

(sighs)

I'm sure it is.

(under her breath)

Why won't the phone ring? Pretending we were to actually look at your book, what kind of book is it? Fiction?

Mark shakes his head.

AA
Non- fiction?

Shakes his heard.

AA
Biography?

Shakes his head.

AA
Self- help?

Shakes his head.

AA
What then?

MARK
(smiles)
Poetry!

The Administrative Assistant's eyes get big. She picks up the phone and makes a call.

AA
Security? We have a breach.

Mark looks around, confused.

AA (CONT'D)
G-15 classified. Send up the Specialist.

She hangs up.

AA
Someone is coming to meet you.

Mark looks hopeful.

MARK
Great!

A large man dressed like the Pope appears. Mark takes a step back. The Specialist looks over at the Administrative Assistant. She points at Mark.

AA

This is the problem. I mean man.

The Specialist looks sternly at Mark.

SPECIALIST

Why are you here?

MARK

I have a book.

SPECIALIST

(growls)

A book?

Mark takes a step back.

MARK

(meekly)

Of poetry.

SPECIALIST

Poetry?

(shouts)

You shalt not write poetry!

Mark jumps back a step.

MARK

What's?

SPECIALIST

(shouts louder)

You shalt not write... poetry!

The Specialist thrusts his right hand at Mark on the word "poetry." Mark immediately flies back and through the front doors, landing on his back on the sidewalk.

EXT. BACK IN THE PARK

YVETTE

You really expect me to believe that?

MARK

I guess not.

Mark rubs his neck.

YVETTE

Would make for great TV, though.

MARK

Hope so.

YVETTE

I still don't get what dying has to do with it.

MARK

(offers)

Well, you could say that poetry is dead to me now.

YVETTE

How does the death of poetry make for a funny TV series?

MARK

It's just one piece, or bit, in the larger story. The point isn't just that people die. Parts of our lives die, as well.

They stop walking.

YVETTE

And that's funny?

MARK

That's why it's called a black comedy. So we can laugh at things that normally scare or hurt us.

She stares at him for a moment then smiles.

YVETTE

Are you going to kill me off?

MARK

First rule of filmmaking, never kill off the hot chick.

They begin to walk again.

YVETTE

(smiles)

Thanks. There isn't going to be any nudity is there?

MARK

We're talking network television. If there is going to be a naked butt, it's going to be mine or some other guy's.

YVETTE

What about Darius' anus?

MARK

Careful, that's awfully close to end rhyme.

YVETTE

(sarcastic)

I'm sure I have no idea what you're talking about. Hey, let's go grab dinner. I'm hungry.

Mark stops suddenly.

MARK

How did we get from Darius' butt to dinner?

Yvette grins at him.

MARK (CONT'D)

Never mind. What are you thinking?

YVETTE

Pastaaaah. I'll text the gang.

She begins to text as the scene ends.

ACT 3

INT. ITALIAN RESTAURANT—EVENING.

Valli and Micah are sitting at a table waiting for their friends to arrive.

VALLI

So, what were you and Mark talking about this afternoon? Looked serious.

MICAH

His latest writing project.

VALLI

He's writing again. That's good, right?

A female server brings them their drinks.

SERVER

Here you go. Can I get you two anything else?

MICAH

Not right now. Thanks.

SERVER

I'll check back later.

She leaves to check on other customers.

VALLI

Tell me about Mark's new project.

MICAH

(distracted)

What project?

VALLI

Mark's. Are you all right? You seem a bit distracted tonight.

MICAH

Sorry. It's a television series based on his life.

Valli stifles a laugh.

VALLI

He really thinks that'll sell? What's he going to call it?

Micah takes a drink before answering the question.

MICAH

Ummm. "What It's Like To Be Die."

Valli makes a face.

VALLI

What? That's just morbid.

She takes a drink, then suddenly looks afraid.

VALLI (CONT'D)

He's not sick is he?

MICAH

Define "sick."

VALLI

Look, smart a—

MICAH

Hey!

VALLI

(adamant)

I'm being serious.

MICAH

He's fine. He's calling it a "black comedy." He'll have to explain it to you. I'm not sure I get it myself.

Darius joins them at the table.

DARIUS

Sorry, I'm late.

Darius kisses Valli on the cheek and sits down between her and Micah.

MICAH

How about that? The musician gets here before the wonder twins.

VALLI

I wonder what's keeping them?

DARIUS

Are they coming together? I only heard from Yvette.

VALLI

Of course, they're coming together. They spend more time with each other than Micah and I do.

MICAH

It's true. They may as well be dating.

DARIUS

Not likely.

VALLI

Why not?

DARIUS

Mark's my friend, and I love him as much as you guys do, but Yvette's a smokin' hot blonde with an Australian accent. She's out of his league.

VALLI

Hey!

DARIUS

(laughs)

You're smokin' hot too, sweetie.

YVETTE

That's not.

(smiles)

Thanks! But you're wrong. She's not out of his league.

MICAH

I have to agree with Darius. He lives in Nashville and doesn't play any instruments.

Cutaway of Mark trying to play “Mary Had A Little Lamb” on guitar.

MICAH (CONT'D)

It's a wonder he gets any dates at all.

DARIUS

It's true. Once you've had musician, you never go back.

Valli looks a little disgusted.

VALLI

Wow, really? If he ever gets suicidal, I hope doesn't call one of you two.

WOMAN (V.O.)

Bob, Bob! Isn't that Dierks Bentley?

Micah, Darius, and Valli all smile.

MICAH

Mark's here.

They all turn around as he approaches the table along with Yvette. Darius jumps out of his chair and gives Mark a vigorous hug.

DARIUS

Dierks, my man! How was rehearsal?

An annoyed Mark pushes him away.

MARK

Why you gotta be that way? I know because you're a rock star.

Darius smiles at him as they all sit down.

MICAH

So, what did you two kids do this afternoon?

MARK

We went for a walk in the park. Perfect day for it.

VALLI

Sounds like fun. What did you two talk about?

YVETTE

About the tv series he's writing. Sounds like it's going to be awesome.

She smiles at Mark. Valli gives Darius "see what I mean?" look.

VALLI

I hear it's about you. I'd like to hear about it sometime.

YVETTE

(to Mark)

Why don't you tell everyone about your run in with the Pope?

DARIUS

The Pope is in town?

(looks at his clothes)

If I'd have known, I would have dressed better.

YVETTE

He wasn't. Mark was just regaling me with one of the many strange stories lurking around in his head.

A fifty- something woman nervously approaches the table.

WOMAN FAN

(to Mark)

Hi, I don't mean to bother you, but can I get your autograph?

She holds a pen and napkin out to him.

MARK

Sure.

He takes the pen and napkin from her. He signs the napkin and gives it back to her while his friends try not to laugh.

MARK (CONT'D)

You have a good day, ma'am.

She smiles and returns to her table.

VALLI
(laughs)

Ma'am?

MARK
Isn't that what country people say?

VALLI
Yeah, back in the Old West!

His friends laugh.

MARK
OK, whatever. It is "Dierks" plural, right?

YVETTE
You got that one right.

MARK
Good.

The server returns to the table.

SERVER
What can I get you to drink?

MARK
White wine.

YVETTE
Same.

DARIUS
Bottle of Bud.

SERVER
Got it. I'll be right back.

She leaves.

DARIUS
Hey, Mark

MARK
(deadpan)

Yeeeeess.

DARIUS
The server's pretty cute. You should ask her out.

MARK
You say that about every girl you meet.

MICAH
Not true. Darius thinks Yvette and Valli are "smokin'
hot babes."

Mark smiles and nods his head in agreement. The server returns with their drinks. Darius takes a quick drink.

DARIUS
I stand by my statement.

MICAH
Or in this case, sit by it.

SERVER
Are you all ready to order?

They all stare blankly at each other.

MICAH
Apparently not yet.

SERVER
OK, I'll come back

DARIUS
Hey, miss. Sorry, what's your name?

SERVER
Courtney.

DARIUS
Courtney? Pretty name.

Mark rolls his eyes.

COURTNEY

Thanks.

Darius points at Mark.

DARIUS

Our friend, Mark, here, is a writer.

MARK

(under his breath)

Here we go.

SERVER

(smiles widely)

Wow, that's awesome! I love country music!

MARK

I've co-written a couple of songs, but that's not my focus.

VALLI

He's a poet.

The server looks visibly disappointed.

SERVER

Oh.

MARK

Actually, right now, I'm writing a pilot for a television series.

SERVER

Cool.

DARIUS

Courtney, did I mention that he's available?

SERVER

That's nice.

The server leaves. Mark's friends laugh.

MARK

That was a confidence builder.

YVETTE

You're too good for her, anyway.

Mark looks back at the server.

MARK

Apparently not.

The night flashes forward from the food being served, through dinner, to after dinner drinks. *audio: fast "tracking sound" during this segment.

MICAH

I'm still not following you.

VALLI

Don't feel bad. Mark and I met five years ago, and I still have a hard time following his thought process.

MARK

But at least you find me interesting.

He smiles and takes a drink. Valli pretends to ignore what he just said.

MARK (CONT'D)

Good thing I don't have self-esteem issues.

Darius laughs and accidentally drops his bottle of beer on the table. Everyone watches as it spins around. It stops, pointing at Darius.

YVETTE

I didn't realize we were playing "Spin The Bottle."

There is some laughter. Darius stands up. His friends stop laughing and look up at him.

DARIUS

The sign out front said "no shirt, no shoes, no service," so

Darius reaches for his belt buckle.

MICAH

Whoah!

Micah and Valli grab him by the shoulders and push him back down into his seat.

MICAH (CONT'D)

(to Valli)

Are you ready to go?

VALLI

Yeah, I've got to open tomorrow.

They get up from the table.

VALLI (CONT'D)

Bye, guys.

Everyone says their "goodbyes." Micah and Valli exit. Darius slams both hands down on the table.

DARIUS

Who wants to go dancing?

YVETTE

(excited)

I do!

Darius and Yvette rise from their chairs. Mark does not.

DARIUS

Come on, let's go.

MARK

You kids go on ahead.

Yvette grabs him by the arm and pulls him out of the chair.

YVETTE

You're coming with us.

Darius grabs him by the other arm and they begin to escort him out of the restaurant.

MARK

No, you can't make me. Courtney, help!

She looks up at them as they pass by.

SERVER

Have a nice evening!

Darius yells back in Courtney's direction.

DARIUS

Let's go to Sliders.

(to Courtney)

Sliders!

She laughs and shakes her head as they exit.

INT. SLIDERS DANCE CLUB—LATER THAT EVENING.

Darius and Yvette are dancing with the crowd on the dance floor. They are trying hard to get Mark to join them, but he resists. Darius walks over to the table where he is sitting, grabs him by the arm and launches him out onto the dance floor toward Yvette. Mark's stumbling and flailing as he tries to regain balance becomes a sort of dance itself. Courtney enters the club in time to see "the dance." She laughs and waves at him.

INT. COFFEE HOUSE—NEXT MORNING.

Mark is sitting in a booth typing on his laptop. He stops when Valli arrives with his coffee. Valli notices that he is experiencing some pain.

VALLI

You, OK?

MARK

Darius and Yvette insisted on going out dancing last night.

Valli sits down across from him and Mark closes his laptop. He proceeds to rub his left arm.

VALLI

They actually got you to dance?

MARK
Compelled is more like it. Oww.

VALLI
You look really sore.

MARK
(grimaces)
I am.

VALLI
Ah, you poor thing. Maybe I can help.

Valli walks around behind Mark and begins to rub his shoulders.

VALLI (CONT'D)
Feeling any better?

MARK
Yes, thank you.

She looks up.

VALLI
Some more customers just showed up. I'll be back by
later.

Mark watches her walk back behind the counter then reopens his laptop.

MARK (V.O.)
Valli.
(sighs)
It was five years ago

He stops and watches her working behind the counter. Scene fades out.

ACT 4

INT. KITCHEN IN A BEACH HOUSE. 5 YEARS AGO—MORNING.

Darius is grinding coffee beans as a very haggard looking Mark enters from the next room.

DARIUS

(laughs)

What in the world is wrong with you?

Mark half mumbles/ half grumbles an answer. He pulls out a chair from the kitchen table, sits down and slumps over the table. Darius puts the grounds in the coffee maker then takes the carafe over to the sink and fills it with water. Next, he pours the water into the coffee maker and flips the “On” switch. He looks over at Mark, who has not moved.

DARIUS (CONT'D)

Are you hungover?

Mark replies but does not raise his head during this sequence.

MARK

(drones)

Nooo.

DARIUS

Were you up all night?

MARK

Nooo.

DARIUS

Didn't you sleep well?

MARK

Yessss.

DARIUS

Then what's the matter?

MARK

I own't know.

Mark continues to mumble unintelligibly.

The water in the coffee maker begins to percolate. Mark looks up suddenly and stares at the coffee maker.

DARIUS

(smiles)

So, that's it. Gas tank is empty.

Mark ignores him, continuing to stare at the coffee maker. Darius laughs and shakes his head. The coffee finishes brewing.

DARIUS (CONT'D)

I'm getting a cup. You want one?

Mark nods his head vigorously. Darius walks over to the coffee maker and pours two mugs. He sets one down on the counter and takes a drink from the other. Mark manages to raise himself to a sitting position.

DARIUS (CONT'D)

God, this is good coffee! I thought you said you wanted some?

MARK

I do.

Darius gestures toward the mug on the counter.

DARIUS

Well, there it is, come and get it.

MARK

(frustrated)

Oh come on, man.

DARIUS

It's right here.

MARK

Can't you bring it to me?

DARIUS

Why?

Mark tries to get up from his chair.

MARK
I think I'm paralyzed.

DARIUS
(laughs)
Give me a break.

Mark tries to move again.

MARK
Seriously, dude, I can't feel my legs.

Darius grins and shakes his head.

DARIUS
You are a piece of work.

Darius grabs the mug from off of the counter and walks over to Mark. He holds the mug out to him then yanks it away as Mark reaches for it, causing him to fall onto the floor face first.

Mark moans as Darius walks over to the other side of the kitchen and sets the mug on the floor. Mark looks up.

MARK
What are you doing?

DARIUS
You want it, you're going to have to earn it. I'm getting a refill.

Darius walks over to the counter and refills his mug.

MARK
I hate you.

DARIUS
Tough love, my friend. Tough love.

MARK
Revenge is inevitable.

Mark looks over at the mug with a determined look on his face. The opening guitar lick from Survivor's "The Eye Of The Tiger (Rocky 3)" begins. Mark begins to

crawl toward the mug. With much effort, he finally makes it to the mug. He sniffs the coffee and smiles.

EXT. BEACHSIDE PATIO OF DARIUS AND MARK'S CONDO—AFTERNOON.

Darius and Mark have shifted their morning coffee to outside. There are several people on the beach milling and lying around. They take in the sights, ie the women on the beach. Darius looks over at his friend.

DARIUS

You look better.

Mark gives his friend a suspicious look.

MARK

How so?

DARIUS

You've got color back in your skin. Coffee must tan from the inside out.

Three very attractive young women wearing tank tops and shorts walk by. One (Yvette) notices Mark and waves. Mark smiles and waves back.

MARK

God, I love tank top season.

They both take a sip of coffee as they watch the three young women walk down the beach.

DARIUS

Me, too.

They continue to take in the sights.

MARK

We should take a walk on the beach after coffee.

DARIUS

I'm down with that.

Darius looks thoughtfully up and down the beach. Mark notices.

MARK

What's going through that rock star mind of yours?
Nothing that can happen while the sun is still up, I
imagine.

DARIUS

(smiles)

There'll be time to think about that later.

MARK

OK, 'asks the writer friend,' a little afraid of the
answer.

DARIUS

I think today is the day.

MARK

You mean the first day you don't try to pick up a girl?

DARIUS

(surprised)

What?! No. Maybe when I get my VNLW card.

MARK

Do I really have to ask?

DARIUS

My "Viagra No Longer Works" card.

MARK

Do you need one? Is there something I, or the girls
on the beach should know?

DARIUS

No, I don't need 'male enhancement.'

MARK

(sarcastic)

Of course not, you're a rock star.

They both take a drink from their mugs.

DARIUS

But I do keep a bottle handy.

Mark looks at him.

DARIUS (CONT'D)
(smiles wryly)
Just in case.

Mark shakes his head, turning his attention back to the beach.

MARK
Ever prepared.

Darius hits Mark on the shoulder.

DARIUS
They're coming back.

MARK
(rubs arm)
Who?

DARIUS
Your girlfriend and her two friends.

The three tank top girls stop midway between them and the ocean and talk with each other.

DARIUS (CONT'D)
You gotta hook me up, man. Be my wingman.

Mark cracks up.

MARK
The rock star needs me to be his wingman? Shouldn't it be the other way around?

Darius grabs both of his arms and looks at him serious as can be.

DARIUS
This is your moment. Transcend!

Mark stares at him in disbelief.

MARK
I haven't even met them yet. You know I stink at introducing

MARK (CONT'D)

Myself to people I don't know.

DARIUS

Now is the time. This is your time! Would it help if I sang the theme from Rocky?

MARK

Not really.

DARIUS

(serious)

Go talk to tank top girl. It's your destiny.

MARK

Nice alliteration.

DARIUS

What? Man, this is serious. She's hot and she's been checking you out.

Mark starts to turn to look at her.

DARIUS (CONT'D)

Don't look!

MARK

What?

DARIUS

You gotta play it cool.

(pauses)

OK, look over slowly and smile.

Mark complies. She smiles and turns away.

MARK

(shakes his head)

You're making something out of nothing.

DARIUS

Am I? Then why the big grin on your face?

Mark tries not to smile.

MARK
Grin? Dogs grin, I don't. I

DARIUS
Smile like an idiot? Mark!

Mark nearly spills his coffee.

DARIUS (CONT'D)
She's checking you out again.

MARK
I

He starts to look over at her.

DARIUS
No, don't look!

Mark becomes more frustrated with his friend.

MARK
What? Why not?

Darius leans in close to him.

DARIUS
I need to know you're serious. I need to hear you
say the words.

MARK
(confused)
What words?

DARIUS
Put me in, coach. I'm ready to play.

In the background, clapping ala John Fogerty's song of the same name. * check title
Mark and Darius look around for the source of the sound for a moment.

MARK
You know what? Forget it. You've blown my mojo.

DARIUS

(laughs)

Mojo? You?! George Clooney you're not.

Mark gets defensive.

MARK

Hey, just because I don't do one night stands, it doesn't mean that

The conversation becomes more animated.

DARIUS

Fine, but what about tank top girl?

(gestures toward her)

She could be your soul mate.

Mark pulls his hand down.

MARK

Don't do that.

DARIUS

Do what?

MARK

That!

Mark gestures his hand toward the girls.

MARK (CONT'D)

They're only ten feet away, you know.

DARIUS

Yeah, but she'll be a lifetime away if you miss this opportunity. Go talk to her.

MARK

No! You're just being melodramatic.

DARIUS

Seriously, man, she could be your future wife.

MARK
(shocked)

Wife?!

Darius senses a chance to really get under Mark's skin.

DARIUS
Just look at her hands. I'll bet she gives great back rubs.

MARK
Back rubs? What's gotten into you?

DARIUS
I'm serious. She could be the one who brings you
chicken soup when you're sick.

MARK
Stop it.

Mark begins to walk away. Darius follows.

DARIUS
She could be the mother of your children.

Mark stops and turns back toward him.

MARK
Children? Seriously, D, that's about enough.

DARIUS
I'm just trying to encourage you. Come on, we're
talking potential white picket fences and Wednesday
night bingo, here.

MARK
I'm serious, give it a rest.

Darius starts to protest.

MARK (CONT'D)
One more word from you and I tell the tank top girls that
you once played in a Country music cover band.

Darius' eyes grow big.

DARIUS

You wouldn't!

Mark glares at him. Darius finds himself on the other side of the banter now.

DARIUS (CONT'D)

Oh my god, you would.

(offers)

Look, you know, she might like poetry.

Mark looks thoughtful. He looks over at Yvette. Their eyes meet briefly. He takes a drink of his coffee.

MARK

OK. I'm going in.

Mark hands his mug to Darius.

DARIUS

Mark, wait.

Mark looks frustrated as he turns around.

MARK

I don't need a con-

Darius holds out his hand.

DARIUS

Breath mint. She may not like coffee.

Mark takes the mint and puts it in his mouth.

MARK

If that's the case, then the wedding is off.

He smiles at Darius before turning to go meet Yvette. As he is walking toward her, a rather large and muscular man walks up to her and they kiss. Mark turns quickly around and rejoins his friend.

MARK (CONT'D)

You could've got me killed!

Darius shrugs apologetically. A young woman, Valli, approaches them.

VALLI

Excuse me?

They turn around to meet her. Valli and Mark obviously make an initial connection. Darius notices and sneaks off.

VALLI (CONT'D)

Do you know if there is a good coffee shop around here? They're so hard to find on a beach.

Mark notices that Darius has left.

MARK

I know what you mean. My name is Mark.

Valli extends her hand out.

VALLI

Valli. Nice to meet you.

They shake hands.

MARK

There's a little Italian restaurant just down the beach that has surprisingly good coffee. Want me to show you?

VALLI

(smiles)

I'd like that.

They walk down the beach talking together.

INT. COFFEE HOUSE. AFTERNOON—PRESENT DAY.

Mark is in his familiar spot in the coffee house, staring at his laptop.

MARK

What's it like to die?

He looks over at Valli. She is wiping off the counter. She notices him and smiles.

Mark looks back at his laptop and momentarily begins to type.

MARK (CONT'D)

To be continued...