

# ORBITING EZMERELDA

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FADE IN:

INT. WINTERSET FINE ART - DAY

Looking a hot 27, EZMERELDA GOTTWALD is a highly regarded art curator of 37. She now holds court at a preview for an imminent auction.

Collectors survey the work on auction.

The situation is absurd as all the collectors react to one particular piece with biting and scornful humor, almost contempt.

Previously a very respected etcher, this is EGON PANTOVICZ's first work in oil.

SIR CLIVE personifies the British 'Upper Class Twit'.

BARON von DEUTSCHE, the extreme caricature of a fascist German, is tall with a blond Hitler mustache and hair to match.

SIR CLIVE  
Really! Like vomit on canvas!

BARON VON DEUTSCHE  
Scheise!!  
(German 'shit')

FADE TO BLACK.

DREAM. A HOSPITAL MATERNITY WARD - DAY

EZMERERLDA is having a nightmare.

Frantically, she reads the clipboard on each bed for the name of the child.

With each failed clipboard perusal to find the desired name, her agitation crests.

She begins to sonorously slam the clipboards against the bed frames.

The resulting noise wakes the sleeping babies whose cries contribute to the aural chaos.

CUT TO:

INT. THE MASTER BEDROOM IN THE HUDSON LOFT - NIGHT

EZMERELDA and her husband MATT HUDSON are together asleep.

Having the nightmare of the previous scene, EZMERELDA wakes and screams.

MATT is harshly stirred awake.

EZMERELDA speaks with a noticeable remnant of an Eastern European accent.

EZMERELDA  
None were mine!

MATT  
What?!

She looks at MATT with a hint of animus.

EZMERELDA  
Nothing. Lets go back to sleep. A  
big day for Egon tomorrow.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. THE MASTER BEDROOM IN THE HUDSON LOFT - DAY

On her computer, EZMERELDA searches for artificial-insemination businesses. Surveying the results, she clicks on 'Isle Reproductive Services'.

In the moment that the web site comes up, a pair of man's hands falls upon her shoulders and spins her around on the swiveling chair. It is MATT.

A little older and shorter, he is a successful residential real estate developer and prolific modern art collector.

Much of their collection adorns the room.

MATT  
...Egon's auction.

He turns and steps away.

EZMERELDA  
A moment.

Giving no attention to what she reads, MATT swivels her back around to view the computer screen and slowly steps away.

MATT  
What are you looking at?

EZMERELDA  
...Girl Stuff.

MATT  
(While exiting)  
Don't be long.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. WINTERSET FINE ART, THE AUCTION HALL - DAY

EZMERELDA and MATT are making their way to their seats in the hall. With them is PETER SCRUTTON, a handsome young artist of 24.

He is one for whom EZMERELDA has great respect as an artist. She also has a little of a crush on him.

They encounter OLGA, a young woman holding an infant. This rivets EZMERELDA.

EZMERELDA  
Your child is beautiful!

OLGA speaks with a heavy, but understandable Russian accent.

OLGA  
Oh Thank you. But she is not mine. I am the Au Pair.

EXMERELDA  
I was too once. You must love children.

MATT gently takes her arm.

MATT  
C'mon.  
(EZMERELDA is resistent)  
C'mon Ezzie!

They walk off and PETER follows.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE ENTRANCE FACADE TO WINTERSET - DAY

Below the word Winterset, it reads 'Fine Art Since 1862'.

EGON PANTOVICZ, the late 30's Slavic artist referred to at the earlier auction preview, enters Winterset wearing a disguise.

CUT TO:

INT. WINTERSET FINE ART, THE AUCTION HALL - CONTINUOUS

The auction hall is a large, cacophonous space. It teems with collectors and a variety of work on auction.

EGON comes in and stands in the rear.

EZMERELDA, MATT and PETER are seated near the front.

THE AUCTIONEER addresses the bidders.

AUCTIONEER

Egon Pantovicz, that radical Slavic etching master, brings his unique slant on European landscape to oil on canvas.

A painting is revealed to which the audience of collectors reacts scornfully.

MATT

I'm not Pantovicz's only critic.

EZMERELDA

He should've stayed with etching. A modern Durer!

AUCTIONEER

Bidding is open at \$10,000.

(The vocal sneers and laughter get louder)

...bidding open at \$10,000!

(The voiced disapproval continues to crescendo)

Gentlemen, that is no way to behave. Is there an opening bid?

(SIR CLIVE nods)

Yes, Sir Clive.

SIR CLIVE

A buck.

AUCTIONEER

What?!

SIR CLIVE

A buck...for the moron's new masterpiece in oil.

AUCTIONEER

Sir Clive, an absurd bid.

EZMERELDA

A very absurd bid!

PETER

Damn, They better not make bids like this when my works's on auction!

EZMERELDA

They won't.

MATT gestures to the auctioneer. He is acknowledged.

MATT

Two bucks.

EZMERELDA

Don't be ridiculous!

AUCTIONEER

Mr. Hudson, gentlemen, please. If you keep this up I'll have to ask you to leave.

BARON von DEUTSCHE gestures.

BARON VON DEUTSCHE

I'll leave too. We buy art, not its pretentious surrogate. I bid three bucks.

EGON

Fools, idiots! You call yourselves collectors!?

(EGON removes his disguise)

None of you understand. I'm very expensive!

EGON runs up to his painting on auction while withdrawing a pistol.

Standing over his painting, he commits suicide.

It is splattered with his blood.

In the commotion that follows, all art auction protocol is abandoned. The furor of the activity mimics the pit of the Chicago Board of Trade.

Matt's voice is heard over the din.

MATT  
I bid \$10,000.

SIR CLIVE  
My boy, You're in way over your  
head. \$15,000.

BARON VON DEUTSCHE  
\$20,000!

Higher and higher bids are made as EZMERELDA runs out, PETER following.

MATT, rapt by current circumstance, does not initially notice EZMERELDA's hasty departure. Shortly, he does and exits.

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE WINTERSET - CONTINUOUS

EZMERELDA exits. She is shook up, but soon gathers herself together.

EZMERELDA  
My god Egon, the lesson you've just  
taught us!

PETER exits Winterset and joins EZMERELDA.

Sensing her state, he massages her upper arms and shoulders. This soothes and arouses her.

MATT joins them.

MATT  
OK, you win.

EZMERELDA  
What?

MATT  
Egon Pantovicz's a great artist.

PETER  
Wrong. He's a dead artist.

An ambulance arrives and two EMT's run into Winterset with a gurney.

EZMERELDA  
This perversion of an auction and we have a dead artist.

MATT initially mimics EZMERELDA.

MATT  
'This perversion of an auction and we have a dead artist'...and a valuable artist!

PETER  
What?!

EZMERELDA  
I had to get out of there!

MATT  
You think I hate his work! I kept up with that twit Sir Clive and that Nazi Baron bidding on the piece. I love his work. Had to own it, but...

EZMERELDA  
'But' what?

MATT  
I think his work is great...but my pockets just aren't deep enough. Love to see what's gonna happen to that Pantovicz piece we own.

The ambulance attendants exit Winterset with the bloodied body of EGON on the gurney.

EZMERELDA  
He's a suicidal maniac and you wouldn't know great art if it sucked your dick!

MATT  
What the hell is that supposed to mean?!

EZMERELDA takes control of the situation.



EZMERELDA

That we disagree about art!! You have to be a little of a madman to be a great artist. Like Egon.

PETER

So he kills himself.

EZMERELDA

Egon was a nut. But he had something special. Alas, it made him kill himself.

(Continuing to PETER)

You do too.

PETER

I have something special that will make me kill myself?

EZMERELDA

You have something special. I knew it when you showed me your portfolio at that Art Market seminar. But you won't kill yourself.

PETER

But I'm still a little bit of a madman.

EZMERELDA

You have to be. And I love it! Egon was nuts...always had to do something in oil on canvas. It was laughable! He was an etcher. The modern Albrecht Durer.

(Continues to MATT)

And you never liked his work.

MATT

Opinions can change. Wonder what somebody'll pay for that Pantovicz piece we own now? A little of..the Pantovicz effect and his work is very valuable!

PETER

God Matt, you should listen to yourself.

EZMERELDA

What is 'value'?

MATT  
What somebody'll pay.

EZMERELDA  
As spoken by the Knight of  
Pentacles.

MATT  
Oh,  
(Mispronounced)  
The Tarot.

EZMERELDA  
(Emphasizing the correct  
pronunciation)  
In the Tarot...the Knight of  
Pentacles wants the best money can  
buy and to fit in. Just like you.  
Fitting in as an art world big-shot  
with lots of money.

MATT  
That didn't sound very nice.

EZMERELDA  
Sorry.

MATT  
...But I do like being a big-shot  
in the art world with lots of  
money. This Knight of Pentacles  
knows value...what somebody'll pay!

EZMERELDA  
Like at the Vartanken auction?

MATT  
Don't bring that up.

EZMERELDA  
A lot of people were paying a lot  
of money for all those forgeries.  
Tell me Matt. Was there any value?

PETER  
(To EZMERELDA)  
Did you know him?

EZMERELDA  
Vartanken?  
(PETER nods 'yes' and she  
continues to him)  
Very well. I discovered him.  
(MORE)

EZMERELDA (CONT'D)

(To MATT)

And they never found the originals.  
I think its still in court.

MATT

But you knew something was up.

MATT moves to take her in his arms to which she tentatively responds.

EZMERELDA

I had just met you  
(Right now, she is not so  
pleased about it)  
and something didn't feel  
right...about the auction I mean.  
Not very much value there.

MATT

The Knight of Pentacles would say  
that value is...value is perception  
...and how it affects the price  
tag.

EZMERELDA

Value and truth. Both  
insignificant.  
(She continues  
instructively)  
'There is no truth, only  
perception. That's the reality.'  
There is no value, only perception.  
That's the reality. No value or  
truth, only perception.  
(Continues directly to  
MATT)  
Van Gogh had not value. That was  
his reality...as perceived.

MATT

He does now.

EZMERELDA

(with absolute conviction)  
He had value then too. Van Gogh is  
great and great art is timeless.  
Just not always realized.

MATT

So he cuts his ear off.

MATT puts his arm around EZMERELDA.

EZMERELDA steps away.

EZMERELDA

Pork bellies...are bought and sold.  
Art...expands our world! That  
Pantovicz piece we own isn't a pork  
belly.

MATT

I paid 500 bucks for it. Probably  
worth something like ten grand now!  
Never made any money in pork  
bellies.

EZMERELDA

God, is there anything else you  
think about?! You don't care about  
art. That's why you're a collector.

MATT

That's ridiculous. What do you  
think a collector cares about?!

PETER

Don't know Matt. Why don't you  
tell us.

MATT

A collector traverses territory  
between art and commerce.

EZMERELDA

Pantovicz kills himself and we get  
a great lesson in art, commerce and  
economics.

MATT

I don't need to learn about  
economics from a nut case like  
Pantovicz.

EZMERELDA

Of course not! You have it all  
figured out!

MATT

I've built the best Residential  
Real Estate development firm in  
town. What can this wacko artist  
teach me about economics?

EZMERELDA

Probably a lot.

MATT

Can't talk about this now. I have to get back to the office and tie up things for the Budapest trip.

EZMERELDA

OK...see you at home.

MATT walks off.

PETER

Does he give a rat's ass about Pantovicz killing himself? He doesn't understand art.

In MATT's absence and spurred by EZMERELDA, the body language between she and PETER becomes more intimate.

PETER more shuns than embraces the contact.

EZMERELDA

No. He doesn't understand art. And the only thing about the artist killing himself that matters is how much money he thinks he'll make.

PETER

A collector should understand art...right??

EZMERELDA

The best ones do. Matt doesn't ...care about it or understand it. Money he understands.

PETER

Oh to find collectors who understand art...my art and pay lots of money for it!

EZMERELDA

You will. But when your work is on auction, try to avoid leaving it by ambulance.

PETER and EZMERELDA embrace.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. THE LIVING AREA OF THE HUDSON LOFT - EVENING

EZMERELDA has laid out a Celtic-Cross spread of Tarot cards.

MATT enters quietly, unobserved by EZMERELDA.

EZMERELDA  
Oh god, how could it be any other  
way with my husband?

MATT  
What with your husband?

EZMERELDA makes startled eye contact with MATT.

EZMERELDA  
Oh, you're home.

MATT  
Just walked in. You OK? What with  
your husband?

EZMERELDA  
...A reversed Empress card. Makes  
perfect sense.

MATT  
Will you shut up about The Tarot!  
There, I pronounced it right.

EZMERELDA  
Congratulations, How can the  
Empress card be right side up in my  
'final outcome', Tarot speak for  
the future? You're my husband?  
The Empress means motherhood. She's  
in my 'final outcome' and reversed.  
How could it be any other way  
married to you.

MATT  
Enough! Put away the card game.

EZMERELDA  
Someday you'll see wisdom in the  
Tarot.

MATT  
What if Egon Pantovicz showed up in  
your reading? He'd probably be  
reversed.

EZMERELDA  
Probably.

MATT  
And...?

EZMERELDA  
He killed himself!

MATT  
OK. So is the Empress gonna kill herself? Who is she to you?

EZMERELDA  
Don't know Matt. The Empress is defined by creation...fertility ...motherhood, not death. Fertility and motherhood. Two things you just don't know anything about.

MATT  
...I'm a man. Can't know too much about motherhood.

EZMERELDA  
You're also human, aren't you? The Empress is reversed.

MATT  
Maybe the universe it trying to tell you something.

EZMERELDA  
It is and I'm ovulating.

MATT  
Congratulations!

EZMERELDA  
(Expressing despair)  
An ovulating woman with the Empress card upside down in her final outcome.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. PETER & TRUDY'S APARTMENT - DAY

PETER is having a man-to-man talk with BARTON FISKE. BARTON is father of his cohabitant girlfriend TRUDY.

In his mid-fifties, BARTON carries a dignified air and is revered as the world's greatest investor.

The residence is a classy, yet bohemian one bedroom apartment.

There is enough space to accommodate a small living area abutting a work space for PETER.

A few books are strewn on the floor and across a futon in the living area.

The walls are adorned with art, movie posters and flyers of PETER's past exhibitions.

BARTON

Peter, I'm interested in what's going on with you and Trudy, not the artist's suicide.

PETER

...I love Trudy!

BARTON

And she loves you. But you haven't been a good boy all the time, have you?

PETER

Mr. Fiske...Its been a while since I've been a bad boy. Your daughter, sir, through all this time, she's the only one I loved.

BARTON

Young people now and how they demonstrate their love. I don't get it.

TRUDY runs in. She is mid-twenties, adorable and spirited. Currently however, she is a little shook up.

TRUDY

Sheer madness! He just blew himself away! At his own auction.

BARTON takes TRUDY in his arms and strokes her head.

BARTON

Modulate dear Trudy.  
(He kisses her cheek, then steps back)  
Peter told me about it. He was there.

TRUDY

You were there?



PETER

With Ezzie and her husband.

TRUDY

You're with her all the time! Gotta wonder about that Peter. Daddy Fiske, can you shed any light on what happened?

BARTON

(While shaking his head)  
Civilized man and the auction economy!

(His mobile telephone rings, he answers, listens then speaks)  
I'll be there in a minute.

(To the others)  
Trudy, my car's downstairs. Have to go.

TRUDY

I know I was late getting back.  
(BARTON shakes his head)  
I'm sorry daddy. There was a private office party at the shop. And these people love wine. What's a dedicated sommellier to do?

BARTON

You weren't hired as a sommellier.  
(TRUDY impishly shakes her head 'no')  
Come here dedicated sommellier.  
(TRUDY races to BARTON and they embrace. BARTON then steps to PETER and they shake hands)  
Peter, it's all about demonstration.

BARTON exits.

TRUDY

What's 'all about demonstration'?

PETER

Your dad doesn't get how modern young people demonstrate their love for each other.

TRUDY  
How do you demonstrate your love  
for me?

PETER  
I think about you when I paint!

TRUDY  
That can't be the only way you  
demonstrate it!

She seductively saunters to PETER, his attention distracted  
by his ringing mobile telephone.

PETER  
(PETER spies the caller  
ID, then answers)  
Hi Ezzie.

TRUDY retreats.

TRUDY  
What does she want?!

PETER  
(Ignoring TRUDY)  
Ezzie, you sound terrible.

EZMERELDA (O.S.)  
I'm so shook up about Pantovicz's  
suicide.

TRUDY  
(Intrusively)  
What does she want!?

PETER  
Hold on Ezzie.  
(To TRUDY)  
She was Pantovicz's mentor...a  
little disturbed by today's events.  
(To EZMERELDA)  
Do artists usually go to auctions  
of their work?

EZMERELDA (O.S.)  
Sometimes, but they usually don't  
kill themselves. He did wear a  
disguise.

TRUDY  
Peter, will you tell her its not a  
good time!

PETER  
Ezzie, can I call you later?

EZMERELDA (O.S.)  
One thing. I'm meeting Matt for a late dinner and have some amazing news for you! Meet us and bring some proofs.

TRUDY  
Peter--!

PETER  
Trudy, we've just been invited to dinner.  
(To EZMERELDA)  
Ezzie...When? What news? Why do you need proofs?

CUT TO:

INT. THE LIVING AREA OF THE HUDSON LOFT - CONTINUOUS

EZMERELDA talks to PETER.

EZMERELDA  
Like nine or ten. I'll call you later. Tell you more when I see you. Don't forget the proofs.

PETER (O.S.)  
OK. Later..with proofs.

He clicks off.

EZMERELDA  
(With a shake of the head)  
Why does his girlfriend hate me so much?

CUT TO:

INT. PETER & TRUDY'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

PETER returns his mobile device to its place.

TRUDY is pissed!

TRUDY  
What did she want?

PETER  
She invited us to dinner.

TRUDY  
That's so nice of her.

PETER  
What's the matter?

TRUDY  
I don't know. You spend so much  
time with her, don't you?  
(With sarcasm)  
But its me you think about when you  
paint, right?

PETER  
...I have to spend time with her.

TRUDY  
Do you think about her when you  
paint?

PETER  
I think about you when I paint.

TRUDY  
I bet you think about her too. She  
is very attractive.

PETER  
Right. Very sexy. So what?

TRUDY  
Uh-oh.

PETER  
Can't you see how important my  
relationship is with her?

TRUDY  
No. Why don't you tell me?

PETER  
So important that I have to fuck  
her brains out! God Trudy, my  
relationship with Ezzie is totally  
professional. I like her. I think  
she's a good person and I need her  
to like me. Its that simple. Why  
the hell don't you ask me how  
attractive and sexy I think you  
are?

TRUDY  
OK. How attractive and sexy am I?

PETER  
Do we have to have this  
conversation?

TRUDY  
Yes. How do I compare to  
Genevieve?

PETER  
God, that thing with Genevieve.  
It's ancient history!

TRUDY  
...history repeats.

PETER  
Not any more. You...my muse.  
Ezmerelda, my mentor.

TRUDY  
Is that all she is?

PETER  
No. She can make or break my  
career! OK?

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. BISTRO ROYALE - EVENING

MATT and EZMERELDA occupy a table.

CLAUDE, the young and handsome European Maitre'd., brings  
PETER and TRUDY over.

PETER and TRUDY are clad in bohemian attire, not so de  
rigueur for this ornate culinary shrine. PETER carries a  
MANILA envelope.

MATT and EZMERELDA rise.

MATT  
Thank you Claude.

CLAUDE  
Of course.

CLAUDE steps away.

PETER gives the envelope to EZMERELDA and speaks.

EZMERELDA looks through the proofs as the others talk.

PETER

Matt, do you know Trudy?

MATT

By name and reputation.

TRUDY

Really? What's my reputation?

MATT's mobile telephone rings.

MATT

Just a minute.

(He takes the call)

Matt Hudson. What did he say?  
That's ridiculous. No, don't sell  
anything. There'll be a sell-off  
and we'll buy more on weakness.

(He clicks off his mobile  
and continues to the  
others with a light tinge  
of sarcasm)

Any of you ever heard of Barton  
Fiske? God to investors  
everywhere...Thinks we're in a  
ridiculously inflated investment  
bubble that's gonna burst.

TRUDY

I've heard of 'daddy Fiske'. If I  
were you I'd follow his advice.

MATT

...'daddy Fiske'!?

TRUDY

He's my father.

MATT

(He is in awe)

Your father is Barton Fiske!?

TRUDY

Do you know him?

MATT

Of course!

TRUDY  
You know my father?

MATT  
Well, I mean, I don't know  
him...personally...but have heard  
of him!...know about him. Does he  
do anything in residential Real  
Estate?

TRUDY  
He's got his hand in everything.

MATT  
Is he ever in New York?

TRUDY  
You ever in Seattle?

MATT  
No.

TRUDY  
Daddy Fiske's here a lot. He's here  
now.

MATT  
I'd love to meet him!

TRUDY  
That might be a lot of fun.

MATT  
Yes. Very much!

EZMERELDA had finished surveying the proofs PETER gave her.

EZMERELDA  
Peter, proofs are great.

PETER  
Thanks. So what's the big news?

EZMERELDA  
Motjoy, Peter. You're looking at  
the biennial curator!

MATT  
This amazing woman is gonna curate  
the biggest thing there is in  
modern art!

PETER

My god! Ezzie, that's amazing.  
Looks like I gotta to go to work.

MATT

And I should load up on some of it.

EZMERELDA

It'll be very valuable.

MATT

Especially when he dies.

TRUDY

What!!?

PETER

When I die?! What the fuck is your  
problem?!

EZMERELDA

Exactly! What the hell is the  
matter with you?!

MATT

Oh god! That sounded so fucking  
bad! Peter, I am so sorry. I don't  
want you dead.

PETER

Thanks.

MATT

I just had this Pantovicz thing in  
my head.

PETER

And you probably own some of his  
work.

MATT

One...interesting little piece.

EZMERELDA

Really. Why does the piece hold  
your interest now? Because it's  
twenty times more expensive today  
than yesterday? The piece itself  
isn't any different, just more  
expensive. You better get on your  
knees right now and beg forgiveness  
from Peter.



MATT  
In the restaurant?

EZMERELDA  
Yes my dear. In the restaurant.

MATT obeys and is soon on his knees.

MATT  
Peter, I humble myself before you  
for my horrible remarks.

PETER  
Make it up to me and buy a lot of  
art. You may rise.

MATT rises from his knees and sits.

MATT  
(To MATT, its a big joke)  
I will...and then have you killed.

PETER  
Will you shut up already?!

MATT puts his arm around PETER.

MATT  
C'mon Peter. I certainly don't want  
you dead!

EZMERALDA  
God dammit Matt, enough!

EZMERELDA's remark is followed by an uncomfortable silence,  
broken by TRUDY.

TRUDY  
You expect me to introduce you to  
'daddy Fiske'?!

CUT TO:

INT. PETER & TRUDY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The sound of a key opening the door is heard. PETER and  
TRUDY enter and turn on the lights.

TRUDY  
How's their marriage?

PETER

They've been together for like ten years.

TRUDY

Any children?

PETER

No. That drives her nuts. She's dying to have a kid and Matt's...not very paternal.

TRUDY

Why is she with him?

PETER

I don't know. For Ezzie, having a baby is the greatest creation of them all. Not for her husband.

TRUDY

Right now I don't care about Ezmerelda's...fertility problem. Why do people get married Peter.

PETER

...When I figure it out I'll let you know.

TRUDY

You're not getting off that easy.

PETER

Do we have to go into this now?

TRUDY

What do you want Peter?

PETER

I want my art and I want you. I've told you a million times!

TRUDY

I like that. Art comes before me.

PETER

You never listen! I don't mention you and art in descending order of importance. At the very least you're as important as my painting.

TRUDY

And at the very most?

PETER

Give me a break Trudy. This biennial thing has to be my priority right now.

TRUDY

Yeah, pretty amazing. I can't believe some of the things her husband was saying!

PETER

But he insists he doesn't want me dead.

TRUDY

That's so nice of him. He's so...everything's about money.

PETER

(PETER takes out his wallet and withdraws some cash)

Makes the world go round. What do you think your dad would say?

TRUDY

'Daddy Fiske' has dealt with a million guys like him.

PETER

And?

TRUDY

Holds his own with the sharks.

PETER

...Swimming with the sharks.

TRUDY

Out-swims! You remember 'Daddy Fiske' was All-American in the pool.

PETER

Yeah...and missed the Olympics by half a second.

TRUDY

Horrible cramps the day of the trials!

PETER

Many trials for 'daddy Fiske'.

TRUDY  
Always coming out ahead!

PETER  
Yeah. He usually does.

TRUDY  
Usually?

PETER  
Always!

TRUDY first stares with a look of approval, then speaks.

TRUDY  
Time for bed.

PETER  
Ladies first.

TRUDY begins unbuttoning her blouse as she exits. PETER follows.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. MATT'S OFFICE - DAY

MATT stands by a planning table surveying schematics for one of his developments.

The walls are filled with glossy posters of past lower-income, suburban housing communities that MATT has developed.

Behind his desk is a banner which reads 'No credit, no down-payment funds, no problem!'.

The radio is on, playing the business news. The voice of STU MARKT heard.

STU (O.S.)  
Stu Markt for NFN. The S & P, the Dow, the NASDAQ close at all time highs! Hope you're all fully invested and joining the party!

MATT  
Amen Stu!  
(The land line telephone rings and he answers)  
Matt Hudson. Hey Warren.  
(He listens)  
Will you give it a rest.  
(MORE)

MATT (CONT'D)

(He listens)

That's not my problem. The bank finances the mortgages and they'll make the decisions about the borrower's credit worthiness. I don't care. I make money. You make money. Those deadbeat slobs get a house. All the debt gets securitized anyway! Glissman, Haas earns huge fees on the deal. Everybody wins.

FADE TO:

INT. THE LIVING AREA OF THE HUDSON LOFT - EVENING

Before a seated EZMERELDA is a pile of artists portfolios.

Some have been processed by her discriminating eye.

She has taken a break and is watching a PBS documentary about a link between a congenital madness or mental instability and artistic genius.

TELEVISION ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Egon Pantovicz's recent suicide reminds us of the frequent link between madness and artistic genius. Is it the left side or right side of the brain that rules? On this episode of 'Curious Connections', some findings that may surprise you. Made possible by a grant from The Philtec Group, blazing new innovations in health care.

The land-line telephone rings.

EZMERELDA lowers the television's volume, then answers the telephone.

EZMERELDA

Hello.

(The caller promptly hangs up. EZMERELDA looks into the monitor and reacts to the caller ID)

Umberto?!

She presses a button to call UMBERTO back. The outgoing message is heard.

UMBERTO (O.S.)

Hi. Its Umberto but I'm not here.  
Away taking care of the art. You  
know what to do.

A beep is heard.

EZMERELDA

Strange. You're not there. You  
just called. It's on caller ID.

(MATT enters)

The return of the husband.  
(She clicks the phone off)

MATT

Who are you talking to?

EZMERELDA

Nobody. Umberto...well he just  
called here, then hung up right  
away and won't answer when I call  
him back!

(MATT is mute and  
noticeably nervous)

What? You look like you just bit  
into the sourest lemon of all time.

MATT

Nothing.

EZMERELDA

If its Umberto it's not nothing.

MATT

I don't want him to talk to you.

EZMERELDA

Why not?! I introduced you to him.

MATT

I'm selling the Pantovicz piece.

EZMEREDLDA

No you're not!

MATT

I bought it. Now I'll sell what's  
mine.

EZMERELDA

Wrong Matt. Marriage was always  
about property...not love.

(MORE)

EZMERELDA (CONT'D)

And we're married. What's yours is mine. You're not selling the piece.

MATT

Okay. I won't sell it and miss out on making something like ten grand!

EZMERELDA

The brilliant and volatile artist kills himself and the only thing you can think about is the money you're gonna make!

MATT

That's right.

EZMERELDA

We don't need the money!

MATT

No? Then what do we need?

EZMERELDA

(Her manner begins to drip with sexual innuendo)

You don't want me to answer that. But it is nice to have you home. What to do now?

MATT

I have to work on my Budapest deal.

EZMERELDA

...now?! Wrong. Its the perfect time for something else...to make love.

MATT

Not the perfect time.

EZMERELDA

It is! Why do you think people make love?

MATT

Gee, that's a very hard question. Maybe because they love each other.

EZMERELDA

Maybe to have children. God dammit Matt, I'm ovulating!

MATT

Congratulations! Please don't start that again.

EZMERELDA

I'm 37 Matt. It never stops! You just can't give me the one thing I want, can you!?

MATT

I'm older than you and it never started. You think our lives are gonna work when this little crying machine shows up and all it can do is dirty its diapers?

EZMERELDA

Do our lives work now?

MATT

It looks like they work pretty good to me.

EZMERELDA

I can't see how changing diapers will ruin our lives.

MATT

How are you, the Grand-Dame of modern art gonna find the time and place to change the kid's diapers?

EZMERELDA

People have been changing diapers for centuries. The men too! Life's about overcoming challenges.

MATT

Life's about taking risks and a payoff. I have some loose ends to tie up about the trip, then I'm going to sleep.

EZMERELDA

No you're not...

EZMERELDA begins trying to seduce MATT. He is not game.

MATT

Shit Ezzie, I'm wiped out.

EZMERELDA turns off the heat.



EZMERELDA  
 You just can't do this one little  
 thing to make me happy, can you?

MATT  
 I don't think it's a little thing.

EZMERELDA  
 No, it a huge thing! Its what  
 life's all about!

MATT  
 OK. So come with me to Budapest.  
 We'll do it there.

EZMERELDA  
 What?

MATT  
 The Hungarian Capital.

EZMERELDA  
 Yes. I know that.

MATT  
 We'll leave in a month.

EZMERELDA  
 For Budapest.

MATT  
 It'll be great for us!

EZMERELDA  
 We've been there before.

MATT  
 Never to make a baby.

EZMERELDA  
 (Dismissive)  
 So that's your plan. We go to  
 Budapest and make a baby.  
 (More sincere)  
 Be great to see Miksa.

MATT  
 Who?

EZMERELDA  
 (With much savor)  
 Miksa Szabó.  
 (MATT shrugs)  
 (MORE)

EZMERELDA (CONT'D)

Don't you remember? He drew that portrait of me while we were eating dinner. You bought it on the spot.

MATT

Right! I forgot what I paid for it. Wonder what it would be worth if he died?

EZMERELDA

In dollars or Euros? What the hell is the matter with you?

MATT

Wonder if its worth anything now. Do you know?

EZMERELDA

Do you like it?

MATT

(Accompanied by an enthusiastic nod of 'yes')

Oh yes!

EZMERELDA

Then it must be worth something.

MATT

...Of course its worth something. A portrait of my gorgeous amazing super sexy wife!

EZMERELDA

Wonder what Egon Pantovicz would say about it?

MATT

Why do you keep obsessing about the wacko artist's suicide?

EZMERELDA

Because...

(EZMERELDA mimes pointing a gun to her head, pulling the trigger and makes the corresponding 'bang' sound)

'I bid ten thousand dollars!'

MATT

OK. So he killed himself. Big deal.

EZMERELDA

Now you'll make a profit of like ten grand on the little piece you hate!!

MATT

I love the piece. That's why I'm selling it. Its the capital gains tax I'll have to pay I hate.

EZMERELDA

You're not selling the piece...you don't get it. This guy just blew his brains out.

MATT

Exactly. Whose fault was that?

EZMERELDA

Everybody's. Don't sell the Pantovicz piece.

(Continues dismissive)

Maybe we'll go to Budapest and make a baby.

(She embraces him)

And you'll let me read your Tarot.

MATT

(Breaking the embrace)

How many times do I have to tell you I'm not interested in what your New Age card games tell me about how I should live my life. I've got some important things to do now. Then I'm hitting the hay...

MATT exits to the bedroom.

EZMERELDA

Fine.

(EZMERELDA goes to a drawer in a cabinet and gets a Tarot deck. She sits on the floor in front of the bedroom door and begins to lay a Celtic Cross while speaking)

Live without the wisdom of the universe. I'll read mine and share it with you while you work. Omigod! It's almost all major Arcana! This reading is so powerful!

(MORE)

EZMERELDA (CONT'D)

You have to see this. The magician, reversed in my past...you think something like my alcoholic father! No magician. A...warlock!...And here! The Empress, in my 'outcome' again. No surprise she's reversed again...My husband ignores me, makes me barren! How could the Empress be right side up? The universe knows.

MATT enters. He is fuming.

MATT

That's it!

(He savagely disturbs the cards.)

Do you want to go to Budapest and get knocked up? Then shut up! Just leave me alone! I have to work a little and sleep. This doesn't help.

EZMERELDA

Sleep alone. You're not knocking me up.

MATT

Not here. Not now.

EZMERELDA

In Budapest then. I'll believe it when I see it.

MATT returns to the bedroom with a violent close of the door.

EZMERELDA glares at the now closed door.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. EZMERELDA AND MATT'S BEDROOM - DAY

The clock reads 1:05 PM. Alone in the bed, EZMERELDA stirs.

EZMERELDA

(She sings)

'Alone again, naturally'

(There is a firm knock at the door)

She rises and exits the bedroom.

CUT TO:

INT. THE LIVING AREA OF THE HUDSON LOFT - CONTINUOUS

EZMERELDA, clad in revealing sleeping garb enters from her bedroom. There is another knock as she approaches the door.

EZMERELDA  
Who is it?

PETER (O.S.)  
Peter.

EZMERELDA opens the door.

Carrying a large envelope, PETER enters.

He hands her the envelope and surveys the scene.

EZMERELDA  
Can't believe some of the riffraff  
my doorman lets up.

PETER  
You just wake up?

EZMERELDA  
Half an hour ago.

PETER  
...great pajamas.

EZMERELDA  
Yeah. The Fabric is so soft. Feel  
it.

She brushes her sleeve up against his face.

The physical contact affects him a little, followed by a slow retreat.

PETER  
I have more of the proofs you  
wanted to see. Am I getting you at  
a good time?

EZMERELDA shakes her head 'yes' while leafing through the material, then comments.

EZMERELDA  
This is great stuff!

PETER  
Thanks.

EZMERELDA

Do you remember the last time I  
read your Tarot? You have a lot to  
look forward to!

PETER

But the Tarot doesn't tell the  
future.

While speaking, EZMERELDA imperiously strides about the room  
and periodically makes fleeting physical contact with PETER.

EZMERELDA

Just gives guidance. You know that.  
And you follow it! Your last  
reading, you remember how  
important the Queen of Wands was?  
I'm the Queen of Wands. Always  
there for...your talent and career!

PETER

Good to have you as my second  
biggest fan.

EZMERELDA

Second biggest?

PETER

After Trudy.

EZMERELDA

I am your biggest fan...who's art  
world wired. You want me very close  
to you.

PETER

Yes.

She begins to exude a muted sultry vibe.

EZMERELDA

...I need your help.

PETER

With what?

EZMERELDA

Something Matt can't help me with.

PETER

What's that?

EZMERELDA  
I'm very fertile.

PETER  
What are you talking about?

EZMERELDA  
I'm so fertile...but Matt isn't  
creative. You are.

PETER  
I keep asking myself why you're  
with that guy.

EZMERELDA  
(Reflectively)  
Time passes and things change.  
Back in the day we were both  
struggling to make it. Made a  
great team!

PETER  
I think I've heard this story.

EZMERELDA  
What does it mean to 'make it'?  
Matt hasn't, because he never has  
enough. Always has to get more.

PETER  
Sounds like Matt.

EZMERELDA  
Yeah. We made it. So I get to work  
with all you crazy artists!

The sultriness multiplies.

PETER  
Where is Matt?

EZMERELDA  
Playing the game he plays during  
business hours.

PETER  
Which means he won't be home for a  
while.

EZMERELDA  
That's right.

PETER

I have an idea where this is going.  
Not sure that's someplace I want to  
go.

EZMERELDA

...What do you mean?

PETER

Oh...um...nothing. I gotta go.

PETER exits, EZMERELDA desirously watching after him.

EZMERELDA

No Peter. Its not what you think.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. MATT'S OFFICE - DAY

MATT is on the telephone.

MATT

...I know Umberto. She just doesn't  
get it. My god, we've owned it for  
less than a year and will get a  
return of like 2000%. Could you  
imagine if the S&P rose that much  
in a year? Everybody'd be rich and  
buy art! Just sell the Pantovicz  
piece! I'll deal with Ezmerelda.

(Another of MATT's phone  
lines rings)

Hold on. My other line.

(He puts UMBERTO on hold  
and takes the other call)

Matt Hudson.

(He listens)

What?! That's impossible!  
Glissman, Haas securitized all of  
it. You can't be serious. The  
Glissman, Haas hedge funds lost a  
total greater than the value of  
everything they securitized and  
their net worth combined?!  
Glissman, Haas insolvent?! OMIGOD!  
OMIGOD! Hold on.

(He puts the current call  
on hold and picks up  
UMBERTO)

(MORE)



MATT (CONT'D)

Umberto, sell the Pantovicz piece as fast as you can. I have a funny feeling I'm gonna need a lot of cash ...very soon! There'll be more.

CUT TO:

MONTAGE - STOCK EXCHANGE TRADING FLOORS AROUND THE WORLD

In rapid succession are seen securities trading floors in New York, London, Paris, Amsterdam, Zurich, Milan, Frankfurt, Moscow, Hong Kong, Tokyo, Singapore and Sydney.

The traders are frantic, equity markets in free fall across the world.

Prices on ticker tapes cut across the visuals representing market prices in free fall.

The crazed sound of trading ceases as the visual continues through the end of the scene.

Off screen an interview of BARTON FISKE, conducted by STU MARKT, is heard.

STU (O.S.)

I have with me in the studio Barton Fiske. Perhaps he can give us some insight into recent events.

BARTON (O.S.)

You know Stu, its like in Holland during the early 17th century...the granddaddy of all investment bubbles was the Dutch Tulip craze. The Dutch sold everything they owned to speculate in Tulips. Most got in at the top of the market and were slaughtered. Behavior doesn't change, just the asset. Tulips...residential real estate...dot coms...the stock market. After the huge run up we've had, what was S&P up until last Friday, 70% in the previous nine months? Any market run up now is an economic misindicator. My god, during the tulip craze, the flower's price rose a hundred percent a week. Now Glissman Haas is insolvent.

(MORE)

BARTON (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
 Like IBM declaring chapter 11!  
 This is a very troubling investment  
 environment. Now we ride the tidal  
 wave of overreaction on the down  
 side.

STU (O.S.)  
 All the rules of investing seem  
 broken. What do you recommend?

BARTON (O.S.)  
 I don't know. Gold? US Treasury  
 Bonds? Maybe own Swiss Francs.  
 Even a collapse like this won't  
 topple the 'gnomes of Zurich'.  
 Most important...Be patient. There  
 will be buying opportunities.

STU (O.S.)  
 When?

BARTON (O.S.)  
 That I couldn't tell you.

STU (O.S.)  
 Bulls make money. Bears make money.  
 Pigs get slaughtered. This is Stu  
 Markt for NFN.

END MONTAGE

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. A PRIVATE ROOM IN THE FINANCIERS CLUB - DAY

The Financier's Club, both urbane and urban, is where the  
 financial elite gather. Barton is a member. He and TRUDY  
 occupy one of the private club rooms.

TRUDY  
 Daddy, there's a string trio  
 performing in the shop tonight.  
 Peter can't make it. He's busy with  
 biennial things. Will you be my  
 escort?

BARTON  
 No can do. I have a dinner meeting  
 with one our wealth managers. This  
 Glissman, Haas insolvency is very  
 troubling.

TRUDY  
What's going to happen?

BARTON  
...I really don't know.

TRUDY  
Daddy, omigod!  
(BARTON shakes his head  
'no' once during a  
lengthy beat)  
Can we talk about something nice?

BARTON  
I'm all ears.

TRUDY  
Its about Peter.

BARTON  
Something nice about Peter. Go on!

TRUDY  
This very important art person will  
get him into the Motjoy biennial!

BARTON  
That's great!

TRUDY  
Well...yes and no.

BARTON  
What isn't 'great' about Peter in--

TRUDY  
Peter wants to sleep with her!!

BARTON  
Who is this he wants to sleep with?

TRUDY  
Ezmerelda.

BARTON  
Ezmerelda?

TRUDY  
The important art person.

BARTON

I talked to Peter last week. I think the person he wants to sleep with is you.

TRUDY

He talked about sleeping with me?

BARTON

Not in those terms. But, you're the only one on his radar.

TRUDY

OK. You have to meet Ezmerelda! A gorgeous vixen!

(With a tinge of suspicion.)

Haven't caught Peter lately.

BARTON

Invite her to the club. Peter'll join us.

TRUDY

She's married to this horrible guy. When he heard that you were my father all he could think about was me introducing you to him! Then he said the most disgusting thing about how much more valuable Peter will become.

BARTON

You're not making any sense. After Motjoy, Peter's work will become much more valuable. What's wrong with that?

TRUDY

He wasn't talking about Motjoy. About when Peter dies!

BARTON

My god! He said that. He must work in banking.

TRUDY

Something like that. With people's houses.

BARTON

I bet he's one of those idiots who inflated the bubble that just burst. I'd love to meet him. Invite them all to meet us here at the club.

TRUDY

That's a great idea!

There is a gentle knock at the door.

BARTON

Yes.

CLUB EMPLOYEE (O.S.)

Mr. Fiske, the 6:30 booking has arrived. We need the Baruch Room.

BARTON

Of course.

CUT TO:

CLOSE UP

In 'The Agony and the Ecstasy' Charlton Heston, portraying Michelangelo, lies on his back painting the Sistine Ceiling.

CUT TO:

INT. THE LIVING AREA OF THE HUDSON LOFT - NIGHT

EZMERELDA sits at the sofa and watches 'The Agony and the Ecstasy' on television.

A large pile of portfolio's that she surveyed are by her side.

MATT enters, approaching EZMERELDA and kissing her on the back of the head.

EZMERELDA

He wasn't nuts but a little intense.

MATT

Who?

EZMERELDA  
Michelangelo.  
(MATT turns off the  
television)  
What are you doing!?

MATT  
I'm hungry. What's for dinner?

EZMERELDA  
You say that like you expect me to  
cook something.

MATT  
I do.

EZMERELDA  
Are you serious?

MATT  
I think you better learn how to  
cook.

EZMERELDA  
Are you all right? You're the one  
who always has to eat out. Lets go  
to Bistro Royale.

MATT  
Restaurant pricing is a lagging  
economic indicator, The whole  
world is going to hell and dinner  
for two at Bistro Royale is still  
\$500.

EZMERELDA  
Not with wine. The world going to  
hell. What are you talking about?

MATT  
You been living under a rock?

EZMERELDA picks up a hefty load of portfolios.

EZMERELDA  
Something else.

MATT  
It doesn't matter. Nobody'll have  
money to buy art anymore.  
Glissman, Haas is insolvent!

EZMERELDA  
 ...Well, people will buy art.  
 It'll just be less expensive.

MATT  
 And the allure is gone.

EZMERELDA  
 No. Just costs less.

MATT  
 Let me know when you see Fine-Art  
 in Wal-Mart. It is unbelievable.  
 Glissman, Haas insolvent.

EZMERELDA  
 My god, the Haas Foundation!

Matt shakes his head 'yes'.

MATT  
 A lot people are going to lose a  
 lot of money tomorrow.

EZMERELDA  
 Tomorrow and tomorrow and  
 tomorrow...

MATT  
 Right. A collapse of Shakespearean  
 proportions. Best thing to do now  
 is liquidate illiquid assets, like  
 art.

The telephone rings, Ezmerelda the quicker picker upper.

EZMERELDA  
 Hello.  
 (The caller hangs up.  
 EZMERELDA views the  
 caller ID and exclaims)  
 Why is Umberto is still hanging up  
 on me?

MATT retrieves his smart phone and makes a call.

MATT  
 Hi Umberto. You just called.  
 (MATT listens for a  
 moment)  
 My god! That's 25% less than  
 yesterday! At least I'm in the  
 black. Can't talk now.

He clicks UMBERTO off.

EZMERELDA  
What was that about?

BARTON  
The Pantovicz piece.

EZMERELDA  
You didn't.

MATT  
I did. Still made a nice--

EZMERELDA  
Congratulations. You made money!

She tries to slap him but he catches her hand before impact.

MATT  
I've got a lot more selling to do  
and we are gonna get slammed.

EZMERELDA  
Let go of me!  
(She pulls free from his  
grasp and exits)  
I'm going out.

MATT  
Pick up some groceries.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE STREET OUTSIDE THE HUDSON APARTMENT - NIGHT

EZMERELDA is walking. Her stride and manner of being express  
total disgust.

She withdraws her mobile telephone and makes a call.

CUT TO:

INT. PETER & TRUDY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Peter is in the abode's studio space. He is sketching and  
the mobile telephone rings. He answers.

PETER  
Hello.



EZMERELDA (O.S.)  
Hi Peter.

PETER  
Hi. Ezzie?

EZMERELDA (O.S.)  
None other. I have to see you.

PETER  
When?

EZMERELDA (O.S.)  
Now.

PETER  
(He is suspicious)  
Sounds pretty important. About the  
biennial?

EZMERELDA (O.S.)  
Yes.

PETER  
Really.

EZMERELDA (O.S.)  
Yes Peter.

PETER  
Ok. I'm working. You're not  
staying too long though.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. PETER & TRUDY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

PETER is sketching and the door buzzer rings. He goes to the  
intercom.

PETER  
Ezzie?

EZMERELDA (O.S.)  
None other.

PETER buzzes her in. He waits a moment with some  
anticipation.

There is a knock at the door and PETER admits EZMERELDA.

Holding a plastic bag, her appearance defines sexy.

PETER  
Meeting Matt later?

EZMERELDA  
I Hope not.  
(She takes a bottle of red  
wine out of the plastic  
bag)  
Get two glasses!

PETER  
Yes ma'am.

PETER exits. In his absence EZMERELDA strolls around the room and comes upon the sketchbook. She leafs through a few pages. PETER returns with wine and glasses

EZMERELDA  
This is great stuff. A vivid take  
on the contemporary with...like a  
classic, almost renaissance  
sensibility.

PETER  
Like an avant-garde Sistine  
ceiling?

EZMERELDA  
So you're comparing yourself to  
Michelangelo.

PETER  
Good to have ambition. Why don't  
you sit down?

EZMERELDA sits on the futon.

PETER places the glasses on the table and fills them.

He picks up his and sits at the other edge of the futon.

EZMERELDA pats the futon with her hand indicating for Peter to sit close.

EZMERELDA  
Will you get over here! We toast  
your genius.

PETER  
OK.

PETER slides across the futon, close but certainly not touching.

When he is next to EZMERELDA they pick up their glasses and toast.

EZMERELDA practically downs the whole glass in one gulp.

EZMERELDA  
May I have another?

PETER  
Its your wine.

EZMERELDA  
So drink up!

PETER  
I will.  
(PETER continues to take  
moderate sips)  
Where's Matt?

EZMERELDA  
I don't know and I don't care.

PETER  
Can we talk?

EZMERELDA  
About what?

PETER  
You and Matt.

EZMERELDA is disappointed, hoping PETER had something else in mind.

EZMERELDA  
I'm not here to talk, especially  
about Matt. Are you going to  
refill my glass?

PETER  
Why are you here, to drink? You  
said it was something about the  
biennial.

EZMERELDA  
(With absolutely  
compelling authority)  
I can't drink if there's nothing in  
the glass!

She nods her head toward the glass. PETER hesitantly refills it.

PETER

Do you want to get drunk?

EZMERELDA

Why not? Do you like this dress on me?

PETER

...looks good.

EZMERELDA takes another hefty swig of wine.

EZMERELDA

So you like this dress on me. How would you like it off me?

PETER

God dammit Ezzie. Please stop it.

EZMERELDA

I am a hot woman, aren't I?

EZMERELDA stands and removes her dress, now clad in a bra and thong.

PETER

Put your fucking dress on!

EZMERELDA

Bad boy! I should wash your mouth out with soap. You're a man aren't you? Come over here and help me.

PETER

That's not something I'm gonna do.

EZMERELDA

If you want to do something right, you have to do it yourself!

EZMERELDA removes her bra, fully revealing a pair of large, healthy breasts.

PETER

Cover yourself up!

EZMERELDA

Don't you think I'm attractive?

PETER

...very.

EZMERELDA

Then do something about it.

EZMERELDA moves in very close to kiss and embrace PETER. He initially succumbs, then fights her.

The sound of a key is heard opening the door.

TRUDY enters, mistakenly perceiving the scantily clad EZMERELDA al flagrante delicto with PETER.

TRUDY emits a scream unlike anything heard in human history.

All the windows shatter.

PETER

Omingod Trudy! Its not what you think!

TRUDY

I don't think, I see!

EZMERELDA

It was--

TRUDY

Not a fucking word out of your disgusting mouth!

PETER

Trudy, it not what it looks like. You have to believe me! I thought there was music at the--

TRUDY

There was no music. They had an accident on the Turnpike...and how convenient for you.

(Best efforts mimicry of PETER)

'Trudy'll be out. I'll tell her that I have to work and invite the vixen over.' Bullshit you had to work.

EZMERELDA gets the sketchbook and approaches TRUDY.

EZMERELDA

(EZMERELDA approaches TRUDY with PETER's sketchbook in hand)

He was working. These are--

TRUDY violently knocks the sketchbook out of EZMERELDA's hands.

TRUDY

Who the hell do you think you are,  
some goddess of modern art?!! Get  
outta here. Get out now!

(To PETER)

You'll never change! It's all...

(EZMERELDA lingers)

Will you get out of here...NOW!

EZMERELDA

Are you about finished? Your man is  
going to be a very important artist  
because of me. I think you should  
treat me with a little respect.

PETER

Just dress and leave...please.

(EZMERELDA begins to  
dress)

She'll be gone soon.

TRUDY

She better.

Finished dressing, EZMERELDA haughtily exits.

TRUDY begins to sob and sits on the futon.

PETER sits beside her and attempts to soothe her with a deep  
shoulder caress.

TRUDY (CONT'D)

Get your hands off of me!

PETER

Trudy, please. Something happened  
we have to talk about.

TRUDY

Really.

PETER

Yes. Its not what it seemed.

TRUDY

Bullshit! There you were all over  
the practically naked slut.

PETER

She was all over me! I was trying...

(TRUDY totally ignores him)

Dammit Trudy, please listen to me!

TRUDY

Why?

PETER

What am I supposed to say to that?

TRUDY

You'll think of something. You always do. How about 'I love you'. Heard that one before.

PETER

And you'll keep hearing it.

TRUDY

...I am so confused.

PETER

Something happened we have to talk about!

TRUDY

I don't think so.

PETER

Then we disagree. Fuck Trudy. She was coming on to me. I didn't---

TRUDY

All I hear out of your mouth for the last week....Ezzie, Ezzie, Ezzie. I invite you to hear some great music but you have to work! Bullshit. I walk in and she's all over you and almost naked. What do you expect me to think?

PETER

I wasn't almost naked, she was!! Can't you understand?

TRUDY

Of course. You can only think with your dick...you always have.

PETER

She is a very special friend who holds my career in her hands.

TRUDY

Just like Genevieve.

PETER

Stop bringing up Genevieve.

TRUDY

You must've really cared about her as a special friend too.

PETER

How long ago did that happen?

TRUDY

Doesn't matter. You'll never change.

PETER

My career wasn't in Genevieve's hands.

TRUDY

No. Your dick was. What would've happened if she controlled your career?

PETER

Will you put yourself in my position!

TRUDY

I'm not a lesbian.

PETER

What?

TRUDY

I'm not having sex with Ezmerelda or Genevieve.

PETER

You just can't understand why Ezmerelda is so important to me, can you?

TRUDY

Gee. I wonder why.



PETER

Use your head god dammit! I like Ezmerelda.

TRUDY

Of course you do!

PETER

And I have to have Ezmerelda like me. But you...you're my muse. My inspiration. You're what I think about when I paint. You're the one. Can't you get it? I love you.

TRUDY

There he goes again.

PETER

OK. Here goes.  
(He gets down on one knee)  
Will you marry me?

TRUDY

What! Marry you? You can't be serious! Marriage is all about trust. You're the last person in the world I can trust.

PETER

You are so wrong about what happened with Ezmerelda. I'll say it again, I love...I need to be with you...forever.

TRUDY

Nothing is forever. You love me and you love her and her and her and her and--

PETER

Can't you forget about before.

TRUDY

Why?

PETER

Because that was then and this is now.

TRUDY

Then and now aren't any different.

PETER

Trudy, how can I make you understand how special you are?

TRUDY

I am so confused!

PETER

Wrong. You're the one. Ezmerelda I like. You I love. God, there's nothing else I can say. Its getting late. Why don't we go to bed.

TRUDY

Not a chance buster. You're sleeping here.

She indicates the futon, then walks into the bedroom.

PETER sits on the futon, his head in his hands.

CUT TO:

INT. ORBIT, A BAR - NIGHT

Dark and mysterious, Orbit is a classy and exclusive hipster lounge. The walls are adorned by vivid artistic representations of a variety of planetary orbits. This late Wednesday evening there are five patrons, all at the bar.

MELVIN PANZER and VANESSA CHRISTADOPOLOUS are a married passionate pair, They both approach middle age while trying to look and think younger. He, a dissatisfied, soon to be disgraced, Wall-Street Baron. The next morning he goes before a Grand Jury, to face a securities fraud indictment. She, a wild Greek stallion from Santorini. They have been nursing drinks at the bar for a few hours.

HUGH DEEBLES and JAMIE GEM, are a mixed race couple. They define young and assertive up-and-comers. He, a tall, svelte African-American Metrosexual. She, a widely know porn goddess who controls the worlds largest internet porn business.

ANTONIO is a sexy, dark painter from Colombia. His English is not fluent, but conversational.

EZMERELDA enters, seen only by Vanessa who reacts.

VANESSA

Welcome Athena!

EZMERELDA  
I'm Ezmerelda.

The others all turn their heads.

VANESSA  
Named Ezmerelda, but Athena.  
Radiant and bold.

EZMERELDA  
You are very preceptive. Thank  
you. Radiant and bold is good.

ANTONIO  
...Very good.

EZMERELDA and ANTONIO share a strong stare through the  
ensuing dialogue.

JAMIE  
The only way to be. And then you  
sell it!

HUGH  
In which you are so skilled.

MELVIN  
What you sell is legitimate? This  
fucking world we live in.

JAMIE  
Exactly. We live in a 'fucking  
world'! In your world you fuck  
people, but not in a good way like  
in mine.

HUGH  
(To MELVIN, with  
condescension  
You have your skills.

MELVIN  
I didn't intend to fuck people.  
The market went against me.  
Everybody who invested with me was  
a sophisticated investor.

Breaks the eye contact with Antonio.

EZMERELDA  
How were they sophisticated? Did  
they buy a lot of art?  
(A beat)  
(MORE)

EZMERELDA (CONT'D)  
 Everybody has something to sell.  
 (She returns attention to  
 ANTONIO and joins him)  
 I'm Ezmerelda, not Athena. I do  
 like being called radiant and bold.

ANTONIO  
 Very Radiant. Very Bold.  
 (He extends his hand,  
 taken by EZMERELDA)  
 Antonio.

EZMERELDA wraps her arm with ANTONIO's and leads him to the bar.

VANESSA  
 (To MELVIN)  
 What you sold was bold. Not very  
 radiant.

MELVIN  
 ...for bold investors who could  
 take risk!

VANESSA  
 And you got caught!

EZMERELDA and ANTONIO are together at the bar.

EZMERELDA  
 What are you drinking?

ANTONIO  
 Red wine.

EZMERELDA  
 (EZMERELDA is pleased with  
 his drink choice and  
 turns to the bartender)  
 Two glasses of red wine please.  
 The house red is fine.

The bartender sets off to perform his task. He will serve them during the ensuing dialogue with EZMERELDA paying.

JAMIE and HUGH are having a private conversation, unheard by the others.

MELVIN stands.

MELVIN  
 I'm in court tomorrow morning.  
 Think its time to call it a night.  
 (VANESSA remains seated.)  
 (MORE)

MELVIN (CONT'D)  
MELVIN continues to  
VANESSA)  
Are you coming?

VANESSA  
I'll see you at home later, OK?

MELVIN  
Whatever.

MELVIN exits.

EZMERELDA  
To dark handsome gentlemen  
EZMERELDA and ANTONIO click their glasses.

HUGH  
So dark and handsome that Jamie has  
to make him an offer.

JAMIE  
I'm Jamie. This is Hugh.

VANESSA  
I'm Vanessa

EZMERELDA  
I'm Ezmerelda.  
(To JAMIE and HUGH)  
What kind of offer?

JAMIE  
To be in one of my movies.

EZMERELDA  
(To JAMIE)  
What kind of movies?

VANESSA  
My husband and I rent them. Best  
I've ever seen.

EZMERELDA  
(To JAMIE)  
What are some of your movies?

JAMIE  
Our biggest hit was 'Going Public'.

EZMERELDA  
Your biggest hit. I never heard of  
it.

VANESSA

It's so good. A Porn Film Company  
is having its IPO.

EZMERELDA

Is it porn?

JAMIE

One person's porn is another  
person's art.

EZMERELDA

My god. You want him to be in  
porn?!

(To ANTONIO)

What do you do?

ANTONIO

I...paint.

EZMERELDA

You don't want to work in porn.

JAMIE responds immediately.

JAMIE

I'm the one recruiting here?!

EZMERELDA

So am I! If you're any good as a  
painter fortune smiles on you.

JAMIE

If he looks any good with his  
clothes off fortune smiles on him!  
You'd have to be Picasso to make  
more money painting than you would  
working for me.

EZMERELDA

Picasso's dead. Like Egon  
Pantovicz.

JAMIE

Who?

HUGH

The artist who killed himself at  
his auction.

VANESSA

What happened to the art?

EZMERELDA  
 Take a wild guess.  
 (EZMERELDA first nods,  
 then speaks)  
 I discovered him.  
 (She takes ANTONIO by the  
 hand and they exit)  
 Now I'm discovering you!

CUT TO:

EXT. CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

EZMERELDA and ANTONIO exit holding hands.

ANTONIO  
 ...are we going?

EZMERELDA  
 Do you mean 'where are we going?'

ANTONIO  
 Si...yes. Me to Ecuador in three  
 days.

EZMERELDA  
 Perfect! You're coming with me.  
 Show me how good an artist you are.

ANTONIO  
 Do you...I don't know in English.

EZMERELDA  
 Maybe in French. 'Voulez-vous  
 couchez avec moi ce soir.'

With a slowing gait, ANTONIO begins to frown.

ANTONIO  
 ...Yes. French. Je compre  
 Francais.

EZMERELDA  
 Are you all right.

ANTONIO's mien becomes much happier in an instant and he  
 takes her by the hand.

ANTONIO  
 Take me...where to buy condoms.

EZMERELDA  
What!!? No condoms.

ANTONIO  
I...no have sexo. Without condom.  
I...AIDS.

EZMERELDA  
For me the Empress is always upside  
down!  
(She continues while  
embracing ANTONIO)  
Isle Reproductive, here I come.  
(To ANTONIO)  
Can I bring you to your hotel.

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE HOTEL CHELSEA - DAWN

EZMERELDA and ANTONIO emerge from a taxi and embrace.

ANTONIO  
Buena suerte.  
(Spanish 'good luck')

ANTONIO then enters the hotel.

EZMERELDA taps on the driver's window which descends.

EZMERELDA  
How much?

DRIVER  
\$12.25.

EZMERELDA pays, then begins to walk home. The sun is rising.

CUT TO:

INT. THE HUDSON APARTMENT. - DAY

EZMERELDA enters.

EZMERELDA  
(Calling out, with almost  
a wish that he was there)  
Matt!  
(A moment passes)  
Of course you're not here.



EZMERELDA goes into the bedroom and collapses on the bed, leaving the door open.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. PETER & TRUDY'S APARTMENT - DAY

It is the next morning with PETER asleep on the futon.

TRUDY enters. She is dressed and carries a large suitcase. She struggles with it which creates some disturbance. This wakes PETER.

PETER  
...good morning. Where are you  
going?

He rises. She pushes him back onto the futon while speaking.

TRUDY  
Goodbye.

PETER  
Where are you going?

TRUDY  
Daddy Fiske's club.

PETERS  
When you see your dad why don't you  
say something to him about the  
broken windows.

CUT TO:

INT. A BEDROOM IN THE FINANCIERS CLUB - DAY

BARTON is alone, smoking a pipe. There is a gentle knock at the door.

BARTON  
Yes.

TRUDY (O.S.)  
Its Trudy.

BARTON  
Come in.

TRUDY enters, a porter behind her carrying the luggage. The porter puts the bags down exits.

Trudy sits.

TRUDY  
Oh for clean air.

BARTON  
Oh for less than critical daughters.

TRUDY  
Oh for less than critical fathers.

BARTON  
I haven't criticized.

TRUDY  
You will.

BARTON  
Deserved.

TRUDY  
You're the one who deserves to be criticized. Fouling your lungs and everybody else's air.

BARTON  
Let me enjoy my vice.

TRUDY  
Oh, I see. Being a man is to have vices.

BARTON  
No. Being a human being is to have vices.

TRUDY  
You and Peter should get together and talk about vices.

BARTON  
What happened with Peter?

TRUDY  
Oh daddy. I'm so confused, He wants to marry me.

BARTON

Why should that be confusing?  
Don't you love him? Doesn't he  
love you?

TRUDY

I don't know. I do. I don't. He  
does. He doesn't. I'm so  
confused.

BARTON

Maybe I'll be privileged to know  
what happened.

TRUDY

He wants to play with woman who  
have large breasts...and he wants  
to make paintings...he says he  
loves me...what is important to  
him!? I come home and that  
disgusting woman is half-naked and  
all over him.

BARTON

What "disgusting woman"?

TRUDY

Ezmerelda! The important art  
person...with the biennial.  
He's with her all the time. He's  
always on the phone with her. All  
the time. I know he wants to sleep  
with her.

BARTON

I see. How long has it been?  
(TRUDY shrugs)  
You know what I mean.

TRUDY

No I don't.

BARTON

When was the last time you caught  
him with another woman?

TRUDY

You know, I haven't caught him in  
the act since...  
(A gentle sob))  
today.

BARTON  
How about before today?

She ponders for a moment.

TRUDY  
I don't remember? A few years  
after college...last year.

BARTON  
(With gentle sarcasm)  
I suppose Peter has gotten better  
at hiding it from you. And the  
woman was Ezmerelda?

TRUDY  
Yes.

BARTON  
I see.

TRUDY  
You keep saying that. What do you  
see?

BARTON  
I have a feeling its not what you  
think.

TRUDY  
I saw what I saw. That's enough.

BARTON  
Ezmerelda is very important to  
Peter.

TRUDY  
Obviously.

BARTON  
Not in the way you think.

TRUDY  
Both ways.

BARTON  
I have to keep applauding Peter's  
ability to hide it from you 'til  
now. Do you remember Thurston  
Beavers?

TRUDY

What does Thurston Beavers have to do with me and Peter?

BARTON

One of my Venture Capital partnerships has given him seed money.

(Continuing with relish)

He has such a great business model! Might be a little ahead of its time though.

TRUDY

Okay daddy. You and your partners are very important to him, but you're not trying to seduce him.

BARTON

No, but if I did--

TRUDY

(laughs)

Now you're being ridiculous! Why would you try to seduce Thurston Beavers?

BARTON

I am not going to try to seduce him. But he might like it if I did. You know, he's gay.

TRUDY

I'm not surprised.

BARTON

Imagine I were gay, found him attractive and had a sexual agenda. Just imagine it.

TRUDY

'Daddy Fiske' gay? Don't be ridiculous!

BARTON

Thurston has to make sure I like him. Imagine the pressure it would put on him to respond if I seduced him. You see, he has a boyfriend but he has to have me like him. Just like Peter and Ezmerelda.

(MORE)

BARTON (CONT'D)

I talked to Peter the other day and he never seemed so sincere. Did use that L word a lot.

TRUDY

Yes he so loves me. He uses that word all the time. But you're a man with a man's bias!

BARTON

You're a woman with a woman's bias. You remember we talked about inviting Peter, Ezmerelda and her husband to join you and me as my guests here at the club? I think its something we have to do now. You are wrong about Peter. Let's have them all here.

TRUDY

Daddy Fiske, I also have a little problem with broken glass.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. THE BEDROOM IN THE HUDSON LOFT - DAY

EZMERELDA is on the telephone talking to a friend.

EZMERELDA

What can I do? The man I married...he doesn't want what I want. All he wants is money.

(The front door is heard opening and slamming shut)

Oh shit, he's home. I have to go.

She hangs up and exits the bedroom.

CUT TO:

INT. THE LIVING AREA IN THE HUDSON LOFT - CONTINUOUS

MATT is hanging his coat up as EZMERELDA enters. With newspaper in hand, he turns and sees her, then quips.

MATT

The Queen of Tribeca is home now. Thank you for blessing us with your presence. Where the hell have you been all night!?

EZMERELDA

I'm the one who's home. You're the one walking in.

MATT

Don't be a smart ass with me. You were out all night.

EZMERELDA

I know.

MATT

Must've had a great time. Where the fuck were you?

(EZMERELDA shrugs)

I told you to bring back groceries god dammit. You got no idea what's happening. The world is coming to an end.

EZMERELDA

Its not coming to an end. Just be less expensive.

MATT

Because none of us will have any money to buy anything. Where the hell where you all night?

EZMERELDA

Do you care?

MATT

What do you think?

EZMERELDA

Probably not.

MATT

That's why things are so fucked up. Because I do care. I really do! I wish you called.

EZMERELDA

Funny thing about communication. It goes two ways.

MATT

Right. Two ways. I ask a question and you answer it. Where the hell where you all fuckin' night?!

EZMERELDA  
...with Peter.

MATT  
All night?

EZMERELDA  
I wish.

MATT  
What the hell is that supposed to mean?

EZMERELDA  
Think about it.

MATT  
You were out all night for fuck's sake! You know, your priorities are...so fucked up.

EZMERELDA  
Wrong! You're the one with the fucked up priorities!

MATT  
I don't think so. Kept calling you last night...all night...voice mail, voice mail, voice mail. Left a million messages. I get a call back? Nothing. I was worried.

EZMERELDA  
How nice of you. But I was fine.

MATT  
What the hell am I supposed to think?

EZMERELDA  
Whatever you want.

MATT  
Oh no!

EZMERELDA  
I found a great bar.

MATT  
I bet you were a big hit.

EZMERELDA  
Ask Antonio



MATT

Antonio?

EZMERELDA

Have to say I really enjoyed getting Antonio's attention. Have to get it somewhere.

MATT

The way you behave...you don't want my attention.

EZMERELDA

Wish I could have had some of it lately.

MATT

You're the one what was out all night. All you ever want is a man's attention!

EZMERELDA

All you ever want is money!

MATT

So maybe this man gave you what you want.

EZMERELDA

(Tenderly)

No. The poor soul has aids.

MATT

You fucked a guy with AIDS?

EZMERELDA

No. I wouldn't do that.

MATT

Very wise.

Matt begins to devote full attention to his newspaper.

EZMERELDA

What are you giving your attention to now?

MATT

Not you.

EZMERELDA

I should go back.

MATT

Where?

EZMERELDA

The bar I was at. Maybe the next  
'Antonio' won't have aids.

MATT remains with his nose in the newspaper while speaking  
with EZMERELDA.

MATT

Sounds like a good idea. You'll  
get what you want.

EZMERELDA

You are unbelievable!.

MATT

No. I'm reading.

She rips the newspaper from his hands.

EZMERELDA

Not anymore.

MATT

Will you give me the goddam  
newspaper.

The land line telephone rings. MATT is the quicker picker  
upper.

EZMERELDA

Not Umberto again, is it?

MATT

Hello.

PETER (O.S.)

Hey Matt.

MATT

Who's this?

PETER (O.S.)

Peter. How would you like to meet  
Barton Fiske?

MATT

Could you please say that again?

PETER (O.S.)

You wanna meet Barton Fiske?

MATT  
Yes please?! When?

PETER (O.S.)  
His schedule eases up tomorrow and he leaves town Monday. How is Saturday afternoon, 2 at his private club? Do you know the Financier's Club?

MATT  
Off course!! Thank you Peter! 2 on Saturday!  
(He listens)  
Great. See you then.

EZMERELDA  
I have to talk to him.

MATT  
What Ezzie?

EZMERELDA  
Give me the phone. I have to talk to Peter!

MATT hands EZMERELDA the telephone.

CUT TO:

INT. PETER AND TRUDY'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

In the apartment are secure boxes, each with a warning printed on it that reads 'Caution. Broken Glass.'

EZMERELDA (O.S.)  
Peter...I--

PETER  
God Ezzie, Trudy thinks--

EZMERELDA (O.S.)  
I'm so ashamed. I should talk to her.

PETER  
Don't think that would be a great idea right now. But you will. I have to go.

EZMERELDA (O.S.)  
So do I.

PETER hangs up the telephone.

PETER  
How will it be for you to see her  
again?

TRUDY  
No biggie. I'll be in a safe  
place.

CUT TO:

INT. THE LIVING AREA IN THE HUDSON LOFT - CONTINUOUS  
EZMERELDA is hanging up the telephone.

MATT  
Why are you ashamed?

EZMERELDA  
I don't know. Unmet expectations?

MATT  
Drop the goddam expectations!

EZMERELDA  
And I'll never be disappointed,  
right dad?

MATT  
Don't compare me to your father.

EZMERELDA  
He loved alcohol. You love money.  
Neither one of you could love me.

MATT  
Whatever you say. Give me the  
newspaper please.

EZMERELDA  
No. Lets talk.

MATT  
About what?

EZMERELDA  
Why I'm ashamed.

MATT  
You should be.

EZMERELDA  
Not without your help.

MATT  
How can you blame me?

EZMERELDA  
What happened to us Matt? We were  
so good together. Then your  
business took off.  
(She pauses, then  
continues with relish)  
Do you remember when we shared the  
loft above the art studio?

MATT  
You started wanting things I  
couldn't give.

EZMERELDA  
Not couldn't. Wouldn't.

MATT  
Whatever. Haven't we talked about  
this already? You're coming with  
me to Budapest.

EZMERELDA  
(With an edge)  
To make a baby right?  
(MATT nods 'yes')  
I'll believe it when I see it.  
You're a control freak, just like  
my father. At least you're not an  
abusive alcoholic.

MATT  
Can't you give me a break? From  
the way you behave I'm not  
surprised your father--

EZMERELDA  
So you're going to start beating  
me.

MATT  
Ezzie, please. Lets find some  
common ground here.

EZMERELDA  
OK. Lets. Why the trip to  
Budapest?

MATT

I've been invited to bid on the largest suburban residential real-estate development in Hungary. At least they still want to build somewhere.

EZMERELDA

Very nice. What did Peter tell you!?

MATT

About meeting Barton Fiske on Saturday.

EZMERELDA

Really. That all?

MATT

Yep.

(Manna from heaven for  
MATT)

2 on Saturday we are meeting him at his private club!

EZMERELDA

Congratulations!

MATT

For what.

EZMERELDA

Getting what you want.

MATT

Won't be a bad thing for you to meet him, don't you think?

EZMERELDA

There are other things I want more!

EZMERELDA storms out to the bedroom.

CUT TO:

INT. THE BEDROOM IN THE HUDSON LOFT - CONTINUOUS

An overwrought EZMERELDA enters and slams the door shut. She begins to sing.

EZMERELDA

'You can't always get what you want. You can't always what you want. You can't always get what you want. But if you try sometime you just might find you get what you need.'

(spoken)

Like it has to happen that Matt meets Barton Fiske. I just want to have a child! But that's not something we can do.

(She retrieves a Tarot deck, sits on the bed and begins to lay a Celtic Cross while speaking)

All the time, you probably ask your self 'Do I have enough money?' That's what you seek to know from the universe, right Matt Hudson, Knight of Pentacles?

(She has finished laying the spread and reacts to what she sees)

Oh my god Matt. Wouldn't you like to know what the universe has in store for you!

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. A PRIVATE ROOM IN THE FINANCIERS CLUB - DAY

PETER, TRUDY and BARTON FISKE inhabit the space, waiting for their companions.

TRUDY

Especially when he dies'. I'll never forget Matt saying that.

BARTON

Not a nice thing to say but I don't think he wants Peter dead.

TRUDY

I certainly hope not!

BARTON

We're here to celebrate Pater making great art. I can get my art collecting toe wet by buying some of your work, can't I?

PETER  
You could do worse.

There is a knock at the door. BARTON looks at his watch.

BARTON  
I like that. They're early. Come  
in Mr. And Mrs. Hudson.

EZMERELDA and MATT enter.

EZMERELDA  
Hi. I'm Ezmerelda Gottwald...but  
call me Ezzie. This is my husband  
Matt.

MATT  
Yes. Mr. & Mrs. Matt Hudson.

Despite being a little miffed by EZMERELDA's self-introduction as GOTTWALD, MATT rapturously takes BARTON's hand when BARTON rises and they shake.

BARTON has to gently pry his hand from the grasping MATT so as to greet EZMERELDA.

BARTON  
Hello. I'm Barton.

All then sit. TRUDY seeks distance from EZMERELDA and averts eye contact with her as well. MATT is in the presence of god.

MATT  
Mr. Fiske, there's so much I gotta  
ask.

BARTON  
Please call me Barton.

MATT  
Barton, is the world coming to an  
end?

BARTON  
You'll need more than a global  
financial collapse to end the  
world.

MATT  
I feel better already.



BARTON

Matt, the markets always come back.  
Be patient and in it for the long  
term. There may be pain but you  
have to deal with it.

MATT

Pain?! Its torture! I look at  
everything I own now and all I see  
is red...everywhere!

BARTON

Not a good thing. Let's talk about  
good things.

MATT

Like what?

BARTON

Peter's art.

EZMERELDA

A special talent.

TRUDY

(With muted scorn)  
You oughta know.

EZMERELDA

So they say.

BARTON

Ezzie, for me, Peter and Trudy--

TRUDY

Don't speak for me!!

BARTON

(To TRUDY)  
But I will.  
(To EZZIE)  
We all thank you.  
(BARTON reaches into the  
cooler and withdraws a  
bottle of champagne.  
While speaking, he gets  
glasses and puts them on  
the table. The bottle is  
opened and the glasses  
filled, Trudy's first)  
Peter, to your talent and its  
discovery by Ezzie.

The group clicks their glasses and drinks.

TRUDY

Yes, to Peter!...discovered by  
Ezzie.

EZMERELDA

A good discovery.

TRUDY

Agreed, but...

EZMERELDA

'But' what?

TRUDY

You've really enjoyed discovering  
him, haven't you?

EZMERELDA

There is nothing I enjoy more.

TRUDY

Obviously.

EZMERELDA

To discover talent.

BARTON

Ezzie, do I detect traces of an  
Eastern European accent?

EZMERELDA

Why yes! My mother and father were  
from Prague. Sometimes people  
notice.

BARTON

You said you are a Gottwald.

EZMERELDA

Yes.

BARTON

(Offhandedly)

Of course you are related to Milan.

EZMERELDA

My grandfather.

BARTON

My god! You're his granddaughter.

EZMERELDA

You know my grandfather?

BARTON

Of him. It was tragic.

EZMERELDA

Yes. Before I was born.

TRUDY

What daddy?

BARTON

Ezzie's grandfather was a Czech radical during the Prague Spring...killed by a Soviet sniper as he spoke to the mobs during the unrest. An inspired Czech patriot.

(Continuing to EZMERELDA)

Good genes.

EZMERELDA

Not as good as you think. Milan was a hero! His son was a philanderer and alcoholic. At least he got my mother out of Eastern Europe. So I was born in America and am a citizen of this great country! How do you know of my grandfather?

BARTON

I studied some International Affairs.

TRUDY

At Harvard!

BARTON

Yes, the Kennedy School of Government. Peter I think you could probably do worse with art mentors.

(Continuing to MATT)

Can you believe Glissman, Haas insolvent?

MATT

Never thought securitization would--

TRUDY

I thought we were going to talk about good things!

MATT  
Securitization isn't a very good  
thing these days.

TRUDY  
(With sarcasm)  
But it makes us secure!

BARTON  
Sometimes.

TRUDY  
And the other times?

MATT  
Speculative bullshit.

BARTON  
Imagine things without speculation.

MATT  
Without speculation--

TRUDY  
'Without speculation'...wouldn't we  
be a lot better off?

MATT  
Not the speculators.

BARTON  
Not the successful speculators.

TRUDY  
How many successful speculators are  
there?

BARTON  
Enough to make speculation worth  
it.

TRUDY  
Daddy Fiake, do you...speculate?

BARTON  
My dear, it comes with the  
territory. But I seek...

MATT  
What do you seek?

BARTON  
To minimise risk.

MATT

And?

BARTON

I do the best I can.

TRUDY

All this talk about risk. Doesn't sound very nice. We're not going to talk about something unpleasant, right daddy? This is Peter's night.

PETER stands.

PETER

Thank you. I don't speculate. Hope I do make great art.

EZMERELDA

You absolutely do.

BARTON

(To MATT)

Do you own any of Peter's work?

MATT

You know, I really should start loading up on it.

TRUDY

Better hurry up and do it before he dies, right Matt!?

MATT

God, you'll never let me live that down, will you? It was a stupid thing to say. I have to buy some of his work because I'm led to believe its very good.

EZMERELDA

The biennial will give him the recognition he deserves.

TRUDY

(To MATT)

I don't think you should have him killed before the biennial.

BARTON

Enough Trudy!

(Continuing to MATT)

Its a good investment.

(MORE)

BARTON (CONT'D)  
I'll get some too. We just have to  
do it before the biennial.

TRUDY  
And before he dies.

BARTON  
Trudy, I said 'enough'!

MATT  
God dammit Trudy, I don't want the  
kid dead! I'm not taking a contract  
out on him.

TRUDY & PETER  
Thanks.

MATT  
How many times do I have to tell  
you that?

BARTON  
Matt, why do they say you want  
Peter dead?

MATT  
Because I like to sell into  
strength. Hasn't been much  
strength to sell anything into  
lately...but I don't own any of his  
work.

BARTON  
Peter's not dying for a while. I  
don't think the market will be  
affected by his death for some  
time.

TRUDY  
Daddy!

BARTON  
Everything's all right Trudy.  
Nothing is happening to Peter.

EZMERELDA  
Wrong.

TRUDY  
What's happening to Peter?

EZMERELDA  
He's becoming appreciated.

TRUDY

By you!

EZMERELDA

...and other important people in the art world.

MATT

Selling into strength is a good thing. Art investing can be so risky but there's always an upside with good work.

BARTON

Especially if you own it for centuries.

MATT

But 'in the long run we'll all be dead.'

BARTON

Thank you John Maynard Keynes. Spoken as a true and optimistic investor. Remember this Matt, immediacy isn't the only measure of time.

PETER

Its the waiting that's the hardest part.

TRUDY

(Preceded by a chuckle)

Thank you Tom Petty.

MATT

What really sucks is I don't have a lot of capital gains. Won't get any tax benefit from all the losses.

BARTON

You've taken the losses?

MATT

Had to. I was on margin and was hit with a margin call.

BARTON

Before the collapse the market was up 70% in the previous nine months. You didn't take any capital gains?

MATT

No. All the capital gains were unrealized. Just on paper and in the last five days I lost more than everything I made during the whole year. And had to take losses to raise cash for margin calls.

BARTON

On margin. You speculate. Is that your business?

MATT

I do speculate. Not my core business. I...develop residential real estate.

BARTON

In this market?

MATT

Not in the US. Not much residential real estate activity in the US these days.

BARTON

Boom or bust. Without it, capitalism couldn't exist.

MATT

That wouldn't be a very good thing.

BARTON

Capitalism...Communism...If I lived in a communist state I'd be a successful communist. But I live in a capitalist state.

PETER

So you're a successful capitalist. Buy some art!

BARTON

I will.

(Continuing to MATT)

You are developing Real-Estate but not in the US now. What market are you focusing on?

MATT

They're still building homes in Hungary, thank god!

(MORE)



MATT (CONT'D)

Ezmerelda and I go to Budapest for business...and pleasure. I'm bidding on the largest residential real-estate development in Hungary ...ever! They should call it Hudsonstown!

EZMERELDA

Maybe?

MATT

Huh?

(EZMERELDA shrugs)

Whadya mean?

EZMERELDA

The wisdom of the universe.

MATT

So the universe doubts that I'm bidding on this huge project in Budapest. Why do you think I have no interest in your new age card games?

EZMERELDA

Ignore the wisdom of the universe.

TRUDY

Matt, did Ezzie read your Tarot?

MATT

No.

EZMERELDA

Yes.

MATT

When?

EZMERELDA

You weren't there.

MATT

How could you--

EZMERELDA

You never wanted me to.

MATT

I don't need--

EZMERELDA

Yes you do.

MATT

Why?

EZMERELDA

Because somebody had to ask the universe whether you have enough money. Do you?

MATT

That's my business.

BARTON

I wonder if it's a violation of Tarot protocol to do somebody's reading when they're not there and they don't even know you're doing it.

MATT

What's done is done.  
(Continuing with sarcasm)  
Does anybody?

TRUDY

'Does anybody' what?

MATT

Have enough money.

PETER

Do you?

MATT

Nobody does. Does the universe think I have enough money?

EZMERELDA

What do you think?

MATT

I am interested in what the universe thinks.

EZMERELDA

That you have enough money.  
Actually, too much.

MATT

What's wrong with having too much money? I have money and am materialistic. So what? Who isn't?

EZMERELDA  
It rules you!

MATT  
I rule the goddamn money!

EZMERELDA  
Whatever you say. God I wish you could've seen your reading. It was unbelievable. All the Major Arcana...those are the important cards. They were upside down.

MATT  
Right. Upside down...like something's wrong.

EZMERELDA  
Distorted.

MATT  
Gimme a break!

EZMERELDA  
Your Tarot is...distorted, like your life.

MATT  
Oh. So now I have a distorted life.

BARTON steps in, ever one attempting to mollify.

BARTON  
I've never had my Tarot read. Could you do mine?

EZMERELDA  
Not now. I don't have the deck here. Matt's reading was enough. The important cards all reversed. His life will be a mess.

PETER & TRUDY  
But the Tarot doesn't tell the future, right Ezzie?

PETER and TRUDY look at each other in recognition of the shared thought.

EZMERELDA  
Not exactly. But it gives guidance that Matt just ignores.

MATT

Watch it Ezzie.

EZMERELDA

Matt, you think you have it all figured out, don't you? The Tarot does. In your reading the Queen of Pentacles was reversed in your...in Tarot speak its called the 'final outcome'. That's as close as it gets to the 'future'.

MATT

So what does it mean?

EZMERELDA

The Queen of Pentacles is the Queen of Success, determined and sensible with a love for beautiful things. But yours is reversed in your 'future'. Whadya think that means? Think about all those beautiful things that you love in your life becoming distorted...in your future. How will it happen?

(She shrugs, expressing her ignorance)

Your life is going to be a mess and I'm not sure I want to be a part of it.

MATT

What are you talking about?

EZMERELDA

The wisdom of the universe tells me that I shouldn't be with you.

MATT

What?

EZMERELDA

The Tarot gives clues.

MATT

To what?

EZMERELDA

Your 'final outcome'. In your 'possible outcome'...the Queen of Wands is reversed and I'm the Queen of Wands. Maybe I'm a little overbearing but nurturing...

(MORE)

EZMERELDA (CONT'D)

creative...loving children...these are things I cherish...things you don't know anything about. The only thing you understand is this garbage.

She withdraws some cash and throws it at MATT.

MATT

Thank you.

EZMERELDA

Family...it just gets in the way. I have to take matters into my own hands.

MATT

OK, you do that. Let's see how far you get.

(MATT gets on his knees to pick up the cash thrown by EZMERELDA and snaps at her)

You're not going anywhere.

(His mobile telephone rings. Espying the caller ID, he ceases money collection and rises)

Oh god. I have to take this call.

(Into the phone)

Matt Hudson.

(MATT walks a reasonable distance from the others.

BARTON joins him)

Oh my god! Please tell me you're kidding!!

MATT's volume attracts the attention of the others.

EZMERELDA

Matt...? Matt, the universe can't be denied.

A grimacing MATT rapidly shakes his head in denial.

MATT

I know how bad the market is now!

How far down the road?

(He listens)

Whatd'ya mean you don't know?!

This is ridiculous!. I've booked the trip and am almost out the door! We talk soon. OK? Goodbye.

(MORE)

MATT (CONT'D)

(MATT clicks off his  
phone)

The financing for... 'Hudsontown'  
collapsed. We're not going to  
Budapest. God, I can't believe it!

EZMERELDA

The reversed Queen of Pentacles in  
your final outcome. But you have  
it all figured out, don't you? Go  
ahead, ignore the wisdom of the  
universe! No trip to Budapest.  
You can't 'knock me up there'.  
You're not going to 'knock me up'  
anywhere. Oh god, Matt. Do I  
really want you as my child's  
father. I'll raise it myself.

MATT

Raise what?

EZMERELDA

The child I'm having.

MATT

What child?

EZMERELDA withdraws a brochure for Isle Reproductive Services  
from her purse and throws it at MATT while speaking. He  
catches it.

EZMERELDA

The one I am going to get made.

MATT reads, then comments.

MATT

You really are out of your mind,  
aren't you?

EZMERELDA

I'm the sanest I've ever been.

PETER

Nice job Ezzie!

MATT

(To PETER)

Shut up punk.

TRUDY

Don't talk to him like that.

MATT

I'll talk to him anyway I damn well please.

BARTON

You've been dealt some heavy blows. But you must try to remain civil in the face of adversity.

MATT

That's easy for you to say. I've lost--

BARTON

So have millions of others... including me.

MATT

It couldn't happen to a nicer guy.  
(To EZMERELDA)  
You keep asking me what I've become? What about you?  
Consulting some lesbian-sperm donor...reproductive service!  
Jesus!

EZMERELDA

That's right. I can't depend on you to help me make it happen. Isle Reproductive Services can! All of this was in the cards. I'm leaving you. I'll soon have a child to raise.

MATT

Ezzie, what I loved about you from day one was how you always make things happen. OK you win. Both of us'll have a child to raise.

EZMERELDA

Are you nuts.

MATT

Not at all. We'll just pass it off as mine.

EZMERELDA

Not a chance. I can't imagine someone worse for my baby's father.

MATT

Wonder who the father will be.  
Probably some drug addict scum  
who's selling his sperm to pay for  
his next fix!

EZMERELDA

God, you're disgusting! He's  
fathering my child, not you.  
Everything you live for is tumbling  
down. I'm not going there with you.

(She steps to PETER and  
addresses him)

In a way I hoped you could have  
given me reproductive---

TRUDY

What?!

EZMERELDA

This way works better for everybody  
Trudy. Peter, I'll call you soon.

(She embraces PETER, then  
steps to TRUDY)

You're loved by a great talent. I'm  
sorry if I caused you pain. The  
time has come for me to live my  
life for me.

(She steps to BARTON and  
extends her hand)

So nice to meet you sir.

(She confronts MATT)

Goodbye Matt.

EZMERELDA dashes out.

BARTON

A determined woman.

PETER

Good to have one like that  
representing my art.

MATT

Determined?! She's not going  
anywhere.

MATT runs out in pursuit of EZMERELDA.

TRUDY

He's not very good at taking a  
hint, is he?



BARTON

Understanding a hint demands a  
subtle creative mind. Don't think  
Matt is very creative.

TRUDY

Or subtle.

PETER

Absolutely not subtle. Creative?  
Won't even have a child, the  
greatest creativity of them all.

TRUDY

I hope you're not like that.

PETER

What do you think?

PETER and TRUDY embrace under the watchful eye of BARTON.

THE END