

LDR

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FADE IN:

INT. APARTMENT BEDROOM - NIGHT

DALIN CAFFEY, a handsome, broad-shouldered, athletic man around thirty, folds a Texas Longhorn sweatshirt, placing it inside a duffle bag resting on the middle of a queen-sized bed. He ZIPS the bag, takes it in hand, and makes an exit. On his way out the door he kicks over a golden statuette that looks oddly like an Oscar.

I/E PICKUP - NIGHT

Dalin opens the cab of his pickup, tossing his luggage haplessly into the back seat before climbing aboard.

He WHISTLES out into the night. A gold and white Collie responds to the call by leaping clean over his lap straight into the passenger seat. EMILY, the dog, sits at attention, PANTING as she stares out the window.

DALIN
Are you ready?

The dog turns to look at her master, BARKING a reply.

DALIN (CONT'D)
You think I should try again?

No response. Shrugging, Dalin connects the hands-free attachment on his digital phone with one hand while firing the ignition with the other.

DALIN (CONT'D)
(Into Phone)
Kiran.

The number DIALS automatically. As the phone RINGS twice Dalin backs his vehicle out of the parking space.

KIRAN
(Off Camera)
Hello?

DALIN
Hey. I'm on my way.

Nada.

DALIN (CONT'D)
I don't care what you say at this point.
I'm coming to see you.

Dalin's truck enters a major thoroughfare, but traffic is virtually nonexistent.

KIRAN
Are you insane?

DALIN
Depends on who you talk to.

Emily remains vigilant, watching the city fly by her window. An eerie silence befalls their conversation.

DALIN (CONT'D)
You can spare me this nineteen-hour odyssey by cluein' me in.

Nothing.

DALIN (CONT'D)
Kiran?

KIRAN
Are you bringing Emily with you?

DALIN
Of course. I wouldn't go anywhere without the little bitch, but don't change the subject. What's going on?

KIRAN
I just... I just... I miss Emily is all.

DALIN
Bullshit.

KIRAN
Look it. Just get here in one piece, okay?

DALIN
Don't worry. I'm crashing at Teague's.

KIRAN
Good. Tell them I said hi.

DALIN
I will. Hey. I love you.

An excruciatingly long moment of silence.

KIRAN
I love you, too. Doofus.

Dalin disconnects the call. He pulls out his earpiece and starts looking for something on the radio. He hits a whole SERIES OF SAD LOVE SONGS, each more heart-wrenching than the last. Eventually, he gives up.

DALIN
Well, Emily. It's gonna be a long haul. What should we talk about?

Emily stares at him blankly.

DALIN (CONT'D)
Oh, don't give me that look. You don't
even know the whole story. You see...

Dalin gives the dog a strange look.

DALIN (CONT'D)
I gotta tell ya', Em. Right about now
I'm feelin' like I'm trapped inside an
episode of Lassie.

Emily turns her head to look out the window.

DALIN (CONT'D)
I'll be Lassie and you can play Timmy.

Absolutely no rejoinder from the other side of the cab.

DALIN (CONT'D)
Well fine! Have it your way. You can be
Lassie. See if I care.

The dog rushes over the bench, licking his face. Dalin
smiles with a LAUGH before pushing her away. She settles
back down quickly.

DALIN (CONT'D)
The first thing you need to understand is
this: if I hadn't been such a cocky
little shit, we'd have never met.

INT. COLLEGE AUDITORIUM - DAY

A YOUNGER DALIN, clean shaven in his college years, sits
in the middle of an 800-seat lecture hall. To his left
is TEAGUE who looks and dresses like an old-school beat
poet. On his right is Kenneth who, with his wavy blonde
locks and loud attire, looks like he's desperately
seeking a gnarly wave.

DALIN
Did you get the kegs, Teague?

TEAGUE
Got 'em.

DALIN
Promise me something fellas.

TEAGUE
What's that?

DALIN
Make sure this one doesn't turn into
another sausage party.

TEAGUE
Hey, that was Kenneth's fault.

KENNETH
It was not my fault.

TEAGUE
Alls I'm saying is that our last party
looked a little too much like the Gay Day
Parade. And you did the inviting.

DALIN
Damn it man! It was worse than workin' at
Der Wienerschnitzel.

KENNETH
Don't worry. There will be tacos.

DALIN
Are you sure?

KENNETH
I haven't told one guy, not a single
solitary male, about our party.

TEAGUE
And I've invited every available taco in
the tri-county area.

KENNETH
I assure you, this will be an all-you-can-
eat taco buffet.

DALIN
Good. Because tonight's our last chance
to make a run for the border.

Kenneth and Teague offer a courtesy LAUGH. Dalin is
mildly amused for a moment but his attention soon wanes.

KIRAN, sleek, sexy, and scintillating, enters Dalin's
view. He's enchanted and elbows Teague to attention.

DALIN (CONT'D)
Now that, my friends, is a taco supreme.

Kiran continues through the auditorium, working her way
up the stairs towards their group. Teague looks her way
then rolls his eyes back at his pal.

TEAGUE
Kiran Zelig.

Dalin zips a quizzical look back at his pal who shrugs.

TEAGUE (CONT'D)
She's in the RTF program with me.

DALIN
With looks like that? She oughta be in
film.

Kiran finds her friends a few rows in front of the guys.

DALIN (CONT'D)
That girl was made for the camera.

KENNETH
Yeah. I'd cast her.

TEAGUE
I'm sure you would if you could.

DALIN
For her, no couch is required. Wow.

Kiran stares directly at Dalin.

TEAGUE
(Off Camera)
I think she's got a boyfriend.

Kiran smiles. Dalin responds in kind before she turns to
take her seat. This does not escape Teague's notice.

TEAGUE (CONT'D)
But apparently I'm just talking because I
like to hear the sound of my voice.

DALIN
Did you say something?

TEAGUE
No. Nothing the least bit relevant or
seemingly audible in any way.

DALIN
That walking, talking, breathing wet
dream is about to become my next ex-
girlfriend.

TEAGUE
Well... boyfriend or no, she just doesn't
fit your modus operandi. One, she ain't
easy. Two, she certainly ain't sleazy.
And three, come next week, I'm sure
she'll be outa here with the rest of us.

KENNETH
Time is definitely not on your side here.

DALIN
Time? Screw time! I don't need no
stinkin' time! I just need to find a way
to meet her.

Dalin gazes forlornly at the back of Kiran's long black hair. Eventually she turns nervously about, as if she knows she is being watched, and her eyes find Dalin's again. She tries to hold the stare as long as she can but she is no match for Dalin. Blushing, she backs down.

EXT. GAS STATION - NIGHT

Older Dalin's pickup pulls into a gas station. He parks the vehicle next to the pump and gets out to fill it up.

INT. GAS STATION - MOMENTS LATER

Dalin enters the convenience store. A CLERK sits behind the counter reading a magazine. He looks up at his latest customer and nods. Dalin simply waves in reply, forcing a smile as he crosses in front of the cashier, looking down each row. He picks one, eyeing the shelves until he finds what he is looking for. Kneeling, he retrieves A CAN OF DOG FOOD from the bottom shelf. He stands, examines the can closely, and SIGHS.

INT. SUPERMARKET - DAY

Young Dalin turns the buggy onto the beer aisle with Teague leading the way.

DALIN

I still say we have enough hootch.

TEAGUE

Beer, yes, but what we really need is some taco sauce.

DALIN

Taco sauce?

TEAGUE

Yeah. Taco sauce. A little moral lubricant. The spice of life that opens the taco wide so the beef can slip easily inside.

Dalin seems almost disgusted.

TEAGUE (CONT'D)

Let's face it. Some tacos simply won't imbibe cerveza and without the sauce, you'll never get them to open up.

DALIN

You're a sick man, Teague. A very sick man indeed.

Kenneth comes flying around the corner, his tennis shoes SCREECHING to a halt as he CRASHES into a LADY's buggy.

LADY
Watch it, young man.

KENNETH
Sorry ma'am.

But he's off and running again until he SLAMS into Dalin's buggy, out of breath.

DALIN
What's up Flash?

KENNETH
She's... She's...

TEAGUE
She who? She what?

DALIN
C'mon. In through the nose, big guy.

KENNETH
She's... She's... here.

Kenneth points down to the other end of the aisle. As if by magic, Kiran appears, seeking a bottle of wine.

The three boys stand mesmerized. Dalin zeroes in on Kiran while Teague and Kenneth slowly turn their heads back toward Dalin in disbelief.

DALIN
I've got to meet this girl.

TEAGUE
Yeah. Okay. I'm a believer. But let's face it. You suck at the cold greet.

DALIN
Suggestions men.

All three pairs of eyes watch her shop in silence. She turns to look their way. Teague and Kenneth sheepishly divert their gaze but Dalin maintains eye contact. Kiran offers a sly grin, unwilling to lose the latest round.

Teague looks at Dalin, then Kiran, and then Dalin again.

TEAGUE
How do you do that?

Dalin accepts defeat by spinning in response to Teague.

DALIN
 (Shrugging)
 C'mon guys! A lil' help here?

TEAGUE
 Hi? Hi works.

DALIN
 Too bland. Simple. But dull.

KENNETH
 Just tell her you wanna take her ankles
 and turn 'em into a pair of earrings.

DALIN
 Too crude. True. But tacky.

Kiran makes her selection, places it in the basket,
 glances back at Dalin momentarily, then walks away.

DALIN (CONT'D)
 C'mon! You call yourselves friends?
 Look! The woman of my dreams is getting
 away and the best you bastards can come
 up with is a pair of slut-studs and an
 Emily Post how-do-you-fuckin'-do?

Kenneth grabs Dalin by the shoulder, jumping up and down.

KENNETH
 Ooh! Ooh! I got it. I got it.

DALIN
 Well? Let's hear it.

The three boys form a mini-huddle around the cart.

EXT. SUPERMARKET - DAY

Kiran pushes her buggy through the automatic doors.
 She's about to hit the parking lot when Kenneth moves in,
 taking a knee directly in front of her. Kiran has no
 choice but to stop in her tracks as this wannabe surfer
 holds up a single red rose.

KENNETH
 A rose for the lady.

After overcoming a brief moment of fright she seems
 willing and eager to play along.

KIRAN
 And just why are you giving me a rose?

KENNETH

As a tribute to your unsurpassed beauty
and in testimony of my undying devotion
to you.

KIRAN

And what do you expect in return, my
dearest little flower child?

KENNETH

All I would ask of thee is that if I have
found favor in muh lady's eyes that she
honor me with her presence at the
festival tonight.

Kiran plucks the rose free from his hands and smells it.

KIRAN

So where is this festival?

KENNETH

2708 Salado.

KIRAN

Well, I'll have to think about it, okay?
No promises.

KENNETH

Very good, muh lady.

Kenneth rises and departs as quickly as he came.

Kiran continues on her way, still LAUGHING to herself
when Teague makes his bid. He falls down on both knees
right in front of her, refusing to look at her; instead,
he extends a box of chocolates up toward her.

KIRAN

And just what are you doing?

TEAGUE

I bring the sweetest gift to thee, my
sweet. Some sweets for my sweet to
satisfy her... uh... thee... sweetly?

KIRAN

Is that you, Teague? Get up off the
ground you silly hippie.

Teague refuses her demand holding his ground.

TEAGUE

Please, take the box. I dare not care to
live knowing thou hast spurned my
advances.

KIRAN

Advances? Are ya'll sniffin' glue?

TEAGUE
Take the box.

KIRAN
No.

TEAGUE
Take the box.

KIRAN
No.

TEAGUE
Take the fuckin' box!

Kiran yanks the box free from his hands.

KIRAN
Okay! Fine! I'll play along. What do you ask in return?

TEAGUE
I ask only that if my gift has been acceptable to thee that ye might join us at the festival tonight.

KIRAN
Let me guess. 2708 Salado?

Teague leaps to his feet.

TEAGUE
Good. See ya' there!

And he's off. Kiran calls after him.

KIRAN
What if I have plans?

Teague turns back and shrugs.

TEAGUE
Plans change.

She shakes her head with wonder, watching him run back into the supermarket before continuing her trek.

At last she locates her car, unlocking the trunk to load the groceries. She spins to grab a sack from the buggy, and when she does, Dalin is standing there. Kiran jumps with surprise.

KIRAN
(Laughing)
Shit! Now what do you want?

DALIN
I've got something for you.

KIRAN
Why am I not surprised?

Dalin produces a CAN OF DOG FOOD from behind his back and offers it to her. She accepts with some apprehension.

KIRAN (CONT'D)
Why in the world would you give me this?

DALIN
Because you know you're my bitch.

Dalin ambles away without looking back. Kiran looks at the can of dog food, then at Dalin, then the can, and then Dalin again. She can't help but smile.

EXT. ROAD SIDE PARK - NIGHT

Kneeling, Older Dalin opens the CAN OF DOG FOOD he just purchased with a can opener, dropping it into a bowl. Emily quickly noses her way into the meal.

DALIN
That's a good girl.

Dalin stands. He spies an elderly couple from a distance. They go hand-in-hand on the sidewalk, moving in his direction, guiding a dog of their own on a leash.

Dalin continues watching them as he makes his way to the nearest picnic table. Sitting on the table top, he rests his feet on the bench below placing his elbows on his knees and resting his chin in the palms of his hands.

EXT. 2708 SALADO BALCONY - NIGHT

Young Dalin carries a plastic cup of beer, bobbing and weaving through a heavy crowd of college-aged party mongers. He reaches the railing at last, plants his buttocks on the steel landing, and drapes his arms over the cross-beam. He sits alone, staring out through the courtyard to the darkened street below. Waiting.

Teague looks up from the courtyard, a petite blonde hanging on his hip. He lifts a glass to his pal with his free hand. Dalin gives him a token response before he catches sight of a two-door sports car passing slowly by.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

The vehicle pulls up a side street out of Dalin's line of sight where the yet-unseen driver finds a place to park. The driver, REESE, steps out first, every bit the college hottie on the prowl. Kiran exits curbside, dressed to thrill.

REESE
You sure this is the place?

KIRAN
How could I forget? 2708 Salado.

REESE
Then this is it.

They look at the party raging in the distance. There are hundreds of kids standing in the street, leaning on the railing, sprawling across the balcony, and lining the courtyard below. They fill both apartments and stream into the adjoining building. Out of this massive throng Reese still manages to spot Dalin, feet dangling from the platform. She nudges her friend to point out Dalin.

KIRAN
Oh, my. That boy is so fine.

Reese steps boldly toward the party. It takes her a moment to realize that her friend has yet to move.

REESE
What's the prob?

KIRAN
I'm not too sure I wanna go through with this, Reese.

Kiran turns back, reaching for the car door only to discover it has already been locked down by her pal.

KIRAN (CONT'D)
Let's go home.

REESE
Uh, uh.

Reese closes the distance between them quickly, taking her friend by the arm.

KIRAN
I mean, really, what's the point?

REESE
Don't make me hurt you, bitch.

Kiran jerks away, still reluctant to move.

REESE (CONT'D)
Give me one reason you shouldn't.

KIRAN
Well, for one thing, the guy did insinuate that I was a female dog.

REESE
Yeah, but he did it with panache.

Kiran looks at Dalin again.

KIRAN
He's such an arrogant little cuss.

REESE
Maybe so, but you've been creamin' over him for five years and I'm sick of hearing about it, so let's go!

Reese yanks Kiran by the arm with enough force to jolt her body into forward motion.

EXT. 2708 SALADO BALCONY - MOMENTS LATER

Dalin sits on his perch until he notices Kiran and Reese working their way through the crowd below. Kiran pauses long enough to hug Teague, kissing him on the cheek before making for the stairs.

Dalin rises in response, fighting his way toward the stairwell. By the time he reaches the apartment entrance, but a handful of people separate them.

DALIN
Glad you could make it!

Kiran turns as if unaware of his presence.

KIRAN
Oh. It's you.

Dalin splits the remaining human barriers, worming through the crowd to be at her side.

KIRAN (CONT'D)
You're so pathetic, you know that?

DALIN
Pathetic? How's that?

KIRAN
You were waiting on me, weren't you?

A drunk guy tries to squeeze between them. He bumps into Dalin spilling beer all over his shirt. Dalin looks down at the damage, then over at the drunk as if he'd like to do something, but he shakes it off quickly. Kiran and Reese try hard not to laugh.

DALIN
No. As a matter of fact, I wasn't waiting on you at all.

KIRAN

In point of fact, you were. You were sitting right over there, moping over your beer, and all the while I'll bet you were worried I wouldn't even show.

DALIN

No. I wasn't.

KIRAN

Yes. You were.

Kiran grabs Reese by the hand, slipping inside the apartment, while Dalin stands frozen on the patio.

INT. 2802 SALADO - NIGHT

Kiran and Reese have managed to procure their own plastic cups of beer. The music is BUMPING and the ROAR of the party is deafening. Donned in a new shirt, Dalin emerges from the mob seemingly from nowhere.

DALIN

Okay. So what if I was waiting on you?

KIRAN

No if, buddy. You were!

DALIN

Okay. So what if I told you I'm the reason you landed the invite to this little party?

Kiran turns to offer a quick playful smile to her friend, flicking her teeth with her tongue. Then she's back on Dalin and the smile is gone.

KIRAN

Little? You call this little? I'd hate to see what you call big.

Kiran takes a drink of beer from her cup.

DALIN

My penis.

Kiran spews the beer out of her mouth all over Dalin's second shirt.

DALIN (CONT'D)

Thanks. Thanks a lot.

Dalin finds a paper towel and starts to dry his shirt, but Kiran intercepts it and takes over.

KIRAN
I'm sorry, ya' big doofus. You just shouldn't say things like that.

DALIN
So far, wooing you has cost me two shirts.

REESE
And one can of dog food.

DALIN
Ah. Well. I was just trying to be creative.

KIRAN
Oh, it was creative alright. Still. I have to wonder just what kind of boy tries to woo a girl with a can of dog food and, more importantly, is that kind of boy suitable for a girl like me?

DALIN
Suitable? I think you already know I'm not suitable.

KIRAN
Oh, I think you'd suit a girl just fine. That's not the point.

She finishes drying him off, handing him the wet towel.

KIRAN (CONT'D)
I'm afraid that's as good as it gets.

DALIN
Thanks.

Dalin looks to get rid of his trash as a girl walks by wearing a hooded shirt. Dalin casually drops it inside the hood. Reese and Kiran GIGGLE.

KIRAN
The point is that I should be pissed off at you. For all intents and purposes you called me a bitch.

DALIN
Correction. I said you were my bitch.

Reese rolls her eyes, slapping her friend softly on her belly. She points at Dalin with a manicured thumb.

REESE
Awfully possessive, don't you think?

KIRAN
Possessive. Presumptuous. Pompous.
Pretentious.

DALIN
That's a whole bunch of P-words.

KIRAN
And none of them will get you the P-word
you're really after, so you might wanna
adopt a new approach.

Dalin and Kiran are all smiles. Reese sticks her finger
down her throat, feigning regurgitation.

REESE
Well, obviously that's my cue. *Adios.*

Reese squeezes Kiran's elbow, kissing her on the cheek.
She looks over at Dalin, sizing him up one last time.

REESE (CONT'D)
Nice to meet you. Alpo-boy.

Dalin and Kiran LAUGH before an awkward silence ensues.

DALIN
You wanna get out of here?

KIRAN
Hell yes.

Dalin leads her by the hand towards the exit.

KIRAN (CONT'D)
Shouldn't you change?

DALIN
Got it covered.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

A live blues band plays on the stage. Kiran and Dalin
share an intimate table for two. Dalin looks ridiculous
wearing a tacky sweatshirt with a picture of dogs playing
poker on the front.

DALIN
You know, Timmy had a bitch and she saved
his ass more than once.

KIRAN
Well, ya' see Timmy, flowers and candy,
those are the keys to a woman's heart,
not comparisons to Lassie.

DALIN

Then why weren't you looking for Kenneth or Teague at the party, huh? Why me?

KIRAN

Well... Wait. Who's Kenneth? Oh, Flower Child. Right.

DALIN

Yeah. I didn't see you looking for anybody but me at the party.

KIRAN

Because I knew you put them up to it.

DALIN

No. There's more to it than that.

She looks away at the band.

KIRAN

Aren't they great?

DALIN

Don't change the subject.

KIRAN

You think you're being all cute, clever, and oh-so cabalistic by not introducing yourself, but I already know who you are.

DALIN

That's three C-words, but we'll leave that one alone for now. Okay. I give up. Who am I?

KIRAN

Dalin Caffey. First round. LA. Two years ago.

DALIN

Baseball fan?

KIRAN

The ballpark is my study hall... each and every spring.

The waiter arrives with two longnecks. Kiran grabs hers and takes a long pull before SLAMMING back down.

KIRAN (CONT'D)

So why'd you quit?

DALIN

I don't really wanna talk about it.

KIRAN

There are all sorts of rumors, you know.

DALIN
Yeah? Tell me one.

KIRAN
I heard you knocked up Tommy Lasorda's
granddaughter.

Dalin LAUGHS uncontrollably but soon settles down.

DALIN
No. My favorite is that they found me in
the dugout, lying under the bench,
completely nude, chewing on baseballs.

KIRAN
I'll have that image stuck in my brain
for weeks to come. What really happened?

DALIN
The truth lies somewhere in between.

KIRAN
Could the suitor be any more vague?

DALIN
I'm just goin' for a little mystery
tonight.

KIRAN
Oh, you're goin' for something alright,
that's obvious.

Kiran smiles, fondling the longneck delicately with her
finger tips. She tilts it slowly up to her lips as her
head pivots back toward the stage.

EXT. MANSION - NIGHT

Older Dalin steers the pickup slowly up the circular
drive. He climbs out of the cab, taking his duffle bag
in tow. Emily bounces out with him. He reaches for the
doorbell bell, which CHIMES his arrival with class.

I/E. MANSION - NIGHT

The door swings open to reveal MICHELLE, a busty blonde
southern belle with a thick drawl and a broad grin.

MICHELLE
Glad ya'll made it here in one piece.

DALIN
Hey, sweetheart.

Dalin leans in so she can give him a bear hug. Emily
trots inside as if she knows the place by heart.

Michelle releases her grip on Dalin to bend down and lavish the dog with her affections.

MICHELLE

Hello, puppy. Have ya' been a good girl?

She rises, motioning Dalin inside.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

Well? Don't just stand there. Make ya' self at home.

Dalin enters with Michelle closing the door behind him.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

Ya'll must be exauhsted.

DALIN

Yep.

She points up the stairs.

MICHELLE

Well, ya'll know the way.

DALIN

Where's Teague?

MICHELLE

Editin'. He'll be along by mahnin'.

Dalin nods and heads up the stairs.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

You oughta to be down there with them.

DALIN

(Curt)

Good night, Michelle.

MICHELLE

G'night, Dalin.

Michelle watches Dalin and Emily make their way up the stairs until they disappear from sight. She reaches into her robe pocket and pulls out a cellular phone.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

They made it... No. He looks good... So does she. They just need some sleep.

Long Pause.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

I think you should have told him sooner. That's all I'm sayin'.

Another pause.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

Well, he doesn't have a clue. Get some sleep. You need it more than he does... Okay... We love you, Kiran... BYE.

She hangs up the phone with a SIGH.

INT. MANSION GUEST ROOM - NIGHT

Dalin spends a few fitful moments before turning on a lamp. A digital clock reads 2:45. Next to the clock is a picture of Dalin and Kiran in Zilker Park. He stares at it blankly before eventually taking it in hand.

DALIN

I knew I shouldn't have kissed her.

Emily opens one eye with a WHINE.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Young Dalin walks along the gutter beside Kiran who goes barefoot on the sidewalk, pumps in hand. Whenever they meet a parked car, Dalin walks street side, keeping the cars between them.

KIRAN

You're not going to tell me why you quit, are you?

DALIN

The truth always pales when compared to fiction.

KIRAN

That's true.

Dalin LAUGHS.

KIRAN (CONT'D)

I mean...

She LAUGHS at herself.

KIRAN (CONT'D)

You know what I mean.

DALIN

Tell you what, if we see each other again after tonight, maybe I'll tell you.

KIRAN

Well that's a long shot.

DALIN
 What is? A full confession? Or a second date?

KIRAN
 Stop fishing, Dalin. It doesn't suit you. You know I'm into you.

DALIN
 Then what are we talking about here?

KIRAN
 I'm off to Denver tomorrow afternoon.

Dalin stops dead in his tracks. Kiran walks on a few steps before she realizes she's alone. She looks back.

KIRAN (CONT'D)
 I start a job there next Tuesday.

DALIN
 Doing what?

KIRAN
 Reporter.

Dalin begins walking again and catches up to her.

DALIN
 Broncos, snow, and shitty beer. Fair and balanced to be sure.

KIRAN
 Well, just what are you planning to do now that you're all graduated?

DALIN
 I've got a guy that wants me to do some stuff for him.

KIRAN
 Stuff?

DALIN
 You know. Business stuff.

KIRAN
 And you think watching snow fall is dull?

DALIN
 Well, I'm supposed to get a job and it's supposed to be a good one and I'm supposed to make a lot of money doing it. Since that's what I'm supposed to do, that's what I'll do.

Dalin steps up out of the street, joining her on the sidewalk. He takes her by the hand.

DALIN (CONT'D)

But I wanna ask you something really important.

KIRAN

Ask.

DALIN

Did you know I was checking you out at the seminar?

KIRAN

Sure.

DALIN

Why didn't you say something?

KIRAN

That's your job, doofus. Not mine. Besides, I'm just shocked you finally noticed me.

DALIN

Finally?

KIRAN

Yeah. Finally.

DALIN

Meaning?

KIRAN

Meaning? After all this time.

DALIN

I'm afraid I'm not following here.

KIRAN

No you wouldn't be, would you? I've had a crush on you since my freshman year.

DALIN

No shit?

KIRAN

I used to follow you to your classes.

Dalin reflects on her comments for moment.

DALIN

All this time. All this time I had a bona fide stalker and didn't even know it. That really sucks.

KIRAN

No. What sucks is that you didn't notice me until this morning.

She releases his hand to PELT him on the shoulder with her fist. Dalin WINCES.

KIRAN (CONT'D)
You stupid shit! Why didn't you notice me sooner? I'm cuter than all get-out!

DALIN
I'm sorry.

Dalin points at an old four door sedan.

DALIN (CONT'D)
We're here.

KIRAN
Then I guess it's time to go home.

Kiran reaches for the passenger door but it is locked.

KIRAN (CONT'D)
You mean you actually lock this hunk-a-junk?

DALIN
An unlocked lock is not a lock unless you lock it.

KIRAN
You're such the pop-philosopher.

Dalin smiles and opens the car door to let her in before circling around the back of the vehicle to hop in. He fires the ENGINE and they pull out into the street.

EXT. SORORITY HOUSE - NIGHT

Dalin walks Kiran up the long sidewalk to the front door. Once they reach the porch, she turns to face him. She looks like she's expecting a kiss but when she doesn't get one right away she just starts talking.

KIRAN
Look it. The thing of it is. I really want to be with you. I've always wanted to be with you.

DALIN
Then let's go to my place.

Dalin spins and tries to tug her along with him back towards the car but she won't budge.

DALIN (CONT'D)
What's the problem?

KIRAN
Three little letters.

DALIN
And they are?

KIRAN
L. D. R.

DALIN
LDR?

KIRAN
Yeah. Long Distance Relationships. L.
D. R. And... they never work.

DALIN
Never?

KIRAN
Never.

Kiran reaches up to rub his shoulder, gently messaging the spot where she hammered him.

KIRAN (CONT'D)
Did I hurt you?

DALIN
You've been hurting me little by little ever since I saw you this morning.

KIRAN
See. You do know how to talk to a girl after all.

Dalin gently interjects by taking her hand into his.

DALIN
I'm gonna kiss you now.

KIRAN
Oh, you think so.

DALIN
No. I don't think so. I know so.

KIRAN
And what if I don't want you to kiss me?

DALIN
C'mon. You know you wanna kiss me.

KIRAN
No. I don't.

DALIN
Yes. You do.

Each statement of denial draws her lips closer to his.

KIRAN
No. I really, really don't.

DALIN
Why not?

KIRAN
It's complicated.

DALIN
Sure it is. It's always complicated.

KIRAN
How's that?

DALIN
Should I bend my head to the right or to the left? Should I open my mouth?

KIRAN
Yes. That can get complicated, but...

DALIN
Should I use my tongue? Should I keep my eyes open or should I just keep them shut? First kisses are always complicated.

KIRAN
That's not what I meant.

DALIN
I don't think I really care what you meant. I'm still gonna kiss you.

KIRAN
Don't. I really don't want you to kiss me. Honest.

DALIN
I'm definitely going to kiss you. Right here. Right now. And you know something?

KIRAN
(Whispered)
What?

DALIN
It's gonna hurt.

KIRAN
(Breathless)
Who? You? Me?

The wind couldn't slip between their lips.

DALIN

I'm afraid it's gonna hurt both of us.

Mutually, tenderly, and softly they kiss; a lengthy kiss, the kind seldom shared between people on the very first kiss. But like all kisses, this one must come to an end.

DALIN (CONT'D)

Did that hurt?

KIRAN

No. In fact, it's the best kiss I've ever had in my life.

DALIN

Me, too. And you wanna know something?

KIRAN

What's that?

DALIN

It hurt like hell.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Kiran loads the last of her bags into the trunk of her car. Reese stands next to her in tears.

KIRAN

Don't look at me like that. You'll just make me cry again.

Reese swipes at her eyes, then they share a tight hug.

REESE

I'm gonna miss you.

KIRAN

I'll miss you, too.

The sound of SCREECHING tires breaks them apart. They turn to discover Dalin pulling up in his car. He SKIDS to a stop in a nearby spot, stepping blithely in their direction. Reese starts to LAUGH.

REESE

Well. Call me when you get there.

KIRAN

Of course I will.

Reese spins to walk away.

REESE

I'll leave you be, what, now that the Purina Chuckwagon's arrived.

She passes a smile attached to a wave Dalin's way. He waves back at her while approaching Kiran.

DALIN

I'm never gonna live that down, am I?

KIRAN

Not with her you're not. Nor with me. So? To what do I owe the honor of your presence?

DALIN

I brought you something.

KIRAN

Great. What did you bring me this time? A leash? A collar?

DALIN

I didn't know you were into that sort of thing, but I know this place...

KIRAN

Just hand it over, doofus.

Dalin reaches into the front pocket of his shorts and pulls out a piece of paper and gives it to her.

KIRAN (CONT'D)

This looks like a piece of paper. A can of dog food and a scrap of paper? You certainly know how to spoil a girl.

DALIN

It's my phone number. And my address.

She eyes it carefully, then him circumspectly.

KIRAN

I thought we decided LDR's never work.

DALIN

I thought about that and decided that's what you had decided. I, in turn, decided that you were full of shit.

KIRAN

I'm full of shit?

DALIN

You are full of shit.

KIRAN

You know this will never work out.

DALIN

If you can stand here, look me straight in the eye, and tell me you don't feel something special going on between us, then you can just toss that piece of paper out the window on your way out of town.

She folds it carefully and puts in her front pocket.

KIRAN

No promises except one. I won't throw it away. How's that?

Dalin takes her in his arms, hugs her briefly, kisses her on the forehead, then walks away.

KIRAN (CONT'D)

That's it?

DALIN

Always leave 'em wanting more!

KIRAN

Look it. Why should we bother?

He stops and looks back at her.

DALIN

Does it hurt yet?

KIRAN

Does what hurt yet?

Continuing now, he waves goodbye, opens his car door, and climbs inside.

KIRAN (CONT'D)

Hey, Dalin!

He hesitates, looking back at her from his car seat.

KIRAN (CONT'D)

I really am glad I finally met you.

Dalin smiles as he closes the door. She watches him fire the engine and speed away as quickly as he came.

INT. MANSION GUEST ROOM - NIGHT

Older Dalin throws off the covers in a huff. He walks over to the window and stares out at the massive estate. Emily awakens to join him; he kneels, rubbing her neck.

DALIN

Lucky for you she finally called.

Emily licks his face.

INT. APARTMENT BATHROOM - DAY

Younger Dalin stands before a mirror shaving. The telephone begins to RING. With half his face still covered in foam, he rushes out of the room.

INT. APARTMENT BEDROOM/ INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Dalin reaches the phone at his bedside and answers.

DALIN

I swear you're worse than a damn woman!
I'll be there in fifteen minutes, okay?

KIRAN

Okay.

DALIN

Who is this?

KIRAN

Who do you think it is?

DALIN

Kiran?

KIRAN

Good answer. How are you, Dalin?

Dalin wipes the rest of the shaving cream off his face with a towel before flopping down on the bed in shock.

Kiran is sitting on the edge of her own bed. The silence on the other end seems to disturb her. She's nervous.

KIRAN (CONT'D)

That was a question, doofus.

DALIN

Well, the first week after you left I was disgruntled. The second week I was disillusioned. And the third...

KIRAN

Okay. I know its been three months. I don't need a recap.

DALIN

The third week I was just plain disappointed, so I picked up the phone and called your buddy Reese. That's when I knew you were okay.

KIRAN
Well, I'm glad...

DALIN
So by the fifth week I was merely
dismayed...

KIRAN
That's a whole lot of D-words.

DALIN
And none of them will get you the D-word
you're really after so you might wanna
adopt a new approach.

Silence.

KIRAN
I'm sorry.

DALIN
What could you possibly have to be sorry
for?

KIRAN
You know what.

DALIN
Oh. That. Well, what can I say? I knew
that kiss was going to hurt. But I'm a
big boy. I can take it.

KIRAN
I'm sorry, Dalin. How many ways can I
say it? How many times?

DALIN
Ten times. And at least twenty ways.
But nineteen of them would require your
body to be in close proximity to mine, so
I'll take what I can get.

KIRAN
What if I told you I'm here in town?

Dalin begins pacing around his bedroom.

DALIN
That's proximity alright.

KIRAN
And what if I asked you to come see me?

DALIN
Then I'd say that's two down and eighteen
to go.

KIRAN

I'm in room 517 at The Driskell. Be here at eight.

Kiran hangs up the phone without saying goodbye. She rubs her hands together, reaches for her suitcase, and begins to unpack.

Dalin hangs up the phone, staring blankly into space. Suddenly and deliberately, he dashes back into the bathroom and vigorously reapplies the shaving cream.

INT. DRISKELL ROOM 512 - EVENING

Kiran sits on the corner of the king-sized bed. Clearly she's anxious, but she looks fabulous. A KNOCK at the door gets her moving in all due haste.

She opens the door to find an equally apprehensive Dalin. They greet one another with a peck on the lips. It looks for a split second like the peck might become something more but they pull away simultaneously and silence falls.

KIRAN

Why don't you just come on in?

Dalin takes the chair by the window; Kiran takes the edge of the bed facing him.

KIRAN (CONT'D)

Okay. Let me have it.

DALIN

Why didn't you call?

KIRAN

I told you. My situation was... complicated.

DALIN

What's with the new hair do?

KIRAN

Reporters aren't supposed to have hair down to their ass.

DALIN

More's the pity.

KIRAN

Tell me about it.

DALIN

Define complicated.

KIRAN
I tried to warn you. But, well, you just wouldn't be deterred.

DALIN
I seem to remember you kissing me back.

KIRAN
I know. Look it. When we met that day there was someone else in the picture.

Dalin leans back in the chair, props his arm up on the table next to him, and rests his cheek in his palm.

DALIN
Do tell.

KIRAN
I had to end it with him before I could really start something with you.

DALIN
And it took you all this time?

KIRAN
No. It's been over for a while.

DALIN
Okay, so why the wait?

Kiran stands up and begins pacing about the room.

KIRAN
Well, that is the big question, isn't it?

Dalin nods.

KIRAN (CONT'D)
The thing is, that kiss really did hurt. You just don't have a clue, do you?

DALIN
Oh, it hurt me plenty. But I wanna hear your side of this.

KIRAN
It hurt because I'd pined over you for so long. It hurt because it was like I'd finally won the lottery but the ticket was out of date. I finally get to meet you and I have to leave the next day? How messed-up is that? And it hurt even more because I just couldn't see a future with you. Not LDR. Not with me there and you here.

DALIN
Thanks for clearing up the logistics.

KIRAN

I've been hurting ever since that night and it hurts a little more each and every day.

DALIN

So if it hurts so much why didn't you do something about it?

KIRAN

I was scared. I was scared because if a kiss can hurt that much, imagine how vulnerable I'd be if we had a real relationship.

DALIN

So what you're saying is, you're scared.

She kneels down in front of him. From her knees, she places both arms in his lap and looks at him lovingly.

KIRAN

Yeah. I'm terrified. But I'm here. I'm here now. I'm here because I'd rather hurt and have you than hurt because I never had you at all.

A tear streams down her cheek.

KIRAN (CONT'D)

I'm asking for a second chance.

Dalin strokes her hair. She closes her eyes reverently and he looks upon her with all compassion. He reaches down, lifting her tiny body until he kisses her tenderly. He wipes away her tears and kisses her again. He breaks, holding her face in his hands, gazing deeply into her eyes for a moment before they kiss again, this time with so much passion they are swept away.

INT. DRISKELL ROOM 517 - THE NEXT MORNING

The sun pierces through the window, stirring Kiran from her sleep. She props herself up on her elbow to watch Dalin sleeping beside her. She spins around, finds a package of mints on the night stand and takes one. She nudges him once, but he pushes her hand away. Kiran giggles. She nudges again. Then a third time. Finally he wakes.

KIRAN

Good morning.

DALIN

That it is.

Dalin rubs the sleep from his eyes. Kiran offers a mint to Dalin. He accepts, CHOMPING it down quickly.

DALIN (CONT'D)
So we're really going to try this?

KIRAN
Yep. LDR, baby.

DALIN
How exactly does that work?

KIRAN
You call; I call. You write; I write. I come see you; you come see me. That sort of thing.

DALIN
I guess you're worth a shot.

KIRAN
You better believe it, doofus.

The couple kiss passionately but Kiran brings it to a sudden halt.

KIRAN (CONT'D)
Hey. I have an idea. We've got this hotel room. We might as well put it good use.

She slaps him on the shoulder.

KIRAN (CONT'D)
Tag! You're it!

She throws off the covers, sprinting for the bathroom with Dalin hot on her heels.

THE LONG DISTANCE RELATIONSHIP MUSICAL MONTAGE

Here appears the inevitable albeit clichéd sequence of shots and scenes that show the couple navigating the distance between them via phone calls, letters, and such.

INT. DALIN'S APARTMENT/ INT. KIRAN'S APARTMENT - DAY

The unfortunate montage concludes with Kiran and Dalin speaking to one another over the phone.

KIRAN
(Glib)
So when ya' coming to see me?

DALIN
How's Thursday?

KIRAN
I was kidding.

Dalin holds a ticket in his hand checking the time and date.

DALIN
I'm not. My flight arrives at 3:30. And I expect you to greet me with legs wide open.

KIRAN
Would you settle for arms? I'd hate for us to spend your vacation in jail.

Dalin laughs.

DALIN
Sure. Arms will suffice.

INT. AIRPORT - DAY

Dalin walks through the terminal with a familiar duffle bag draped over his shoulder. Going down the ramp, he finds Kiran waiting below. The moment he passes through the secured area, she leaps into his arms. And yes, she wraps her legs around his waist, knocking the duffle bag to the ground. The couple kiss as if their lives depended on it.

When they break, Dalin looks down at her legs.

DALIN
I thought we agreed; arms, not legs.

Kiran smiles gleefully as she kisses him. Finally, she slumps back to the floor, leading him away by the hand.

KIRAN
We gotta go.

DALIN
What's the hurry?

KIRAN
I have a live remote.

DALIN
You mean I get to watch you work?

Kiran nods. Dalin reaches for the bag and follows.

DALIN (CONT'D)
What's the story?

KIRAN
School shooting.

DALIN
You're kidding. Where?

KIRAN
Columbine. Don't you watch the news?

DALIN
Not unless you're on it.

KIRAN
I've been national since Tuesday. You really need to turn on the television every once in a while.

DALIN
Why should I? All I ever hear about are school shootings.

They race through the airport in haste.

EXT. COLUMBINE HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Dalin leans against a television van, watching his girlfriend in action from a distance.

She presses down on her earpiece.

KIRAN
To be honest with you, Bob, I don't think we can separate fact from fiction at this point. Was religion a factor in these shootings? We just don't know. Was this horrific act a vendetta against the so-called jocks? Again, just not enough information.

Kiran pauses again, pressing down on her earpiece.

KIRAN (CONT'D)
I've heard somebody say that, Bob, but no. We don't have anything concrete.

Kiran looks towards Dalin. She rolls her eyes.

KIRAN (CONT'D)
Well, what I think people need to understand is that we may never know why this happened. I know that's not what you want to hear. I know that's not what people want to hear. But we'll just have to wait and see what this investigation turns up. It's possible that a lot of what we're hearing at this time are nothing more than unsubstantiated rumors.

Another pause.

KIRAN (CONT'D)

Sure.

She yanks out her earpiece, throwing it at her camera man.

KIRAN (CONT'D)

What an ignorant... ARGH!

She storms right past Dalin to the back of the van. He pursues.

DALIN

What's wrong?

Kiran heaves her body against the van with a SIGH. Dalin patiently awaits her response.

KIRAN

This whole thing is so screwed-up! I mean, these kids just went in there and indiscriminately started executing their fellow students. And everybody is looking for answers, Dalin. Well guess what? There are no answers!

Dalin reaches out to caress her cheek.

DALIN

Then just keep giving them the facts.

Kiran nods.

KIRAN

Look it. It's just that this my first shot at a national story. They're gonna take me off it, I just know it.

DALIN

Stop.

Dalin approaches her, taking her in his arms.

DALIN (CONT'D)

Don't worry about something until you have something to worry about.

Kiran feigns a smile.

KIRAN

You know, I really need to get you in my bed ASAP.

INT. KIRAN'S DENVER APARTMENT - NIGHT

Kiran rides Dalin to a mutual climax in bed. She falls over; sweaty, exhausted, and spent.

KIRAN
And it just keeps getting better every
single time we do it.

Dalin LAUGHS as he sits up in bed and Kiran follows suit.

KIRAN (CONT'D)
I hate it here, Dalin.

DALIN
Thought as much.

KIRAN
No. I mean it. I really hate it here.
I damn near froze my right tit off last
winter.

Dalin sneaks a peak of her breasts under the covers.

DALIN
Everything seems to be in working order.

Kiran smiles, brushing him away.

KIRAN
I just wanna go back to Texas and be
with...

She stops, looks him in the eye, then quickly lies down,
facing away from him. Dalin waits for more, but when it
is clear she's not about to offer, he spoons up to her.

KIRAN (CONT'D)
Aren't you even the least bit selfish
when it comes to me?

DALIN
As much as I'd like to violate you on a
regular basis, I have to admit you're
really good at this. Or, don't you know?

KIRAN
I guess. But maybe I just want to be
with you.

DALIN
Fine. Come back to Texas. But don't do
it just for me. Get a job.

KIRAN
What if they don't want me down there?

Dalin turns her around to face him.

DALIN
I want you.

KIRAN
Then take me, doofus.

And so, he does.

INT. AIRPORT - DAY

Kiran and Dalin hug and kiss.

DALIN
We've got to see each other more often.

KIRAN
My agent's workin' on it. Promise.

Dalin nods as he picks up his bag to head up the ramp.

KIRAN (CONT'D)
Hey.

He stops.

DALIN
Yeah?

KIRAN
I love you, doofus.

DALIN
I love you, too.

He walks on but gives a quick glance back.

DALIN (CONT'D)
See. I told you you were my bitch.

Kiran LAUGHS as she watches him disappear up the ramp.

INT. MANSION GUEST ROOM - MORNING

Older Teague, shaved bald sporting a goatee-in-training for ZZTop, hovers over Dalin sleeping in bed. Teague nudges him awake with a steaming hot cappuccino mug.

TEAGUE
Wake up Sleeping Beauty.

DALIN
What time is it?

TEAGUE
If you wanna make it to Kiran's by nightfall, you better get movin'.

Dalin accepts. His eyebrow perks up with a sip.

DALIN
Damn. That's good.

TEAGUE
What can I say? Unlike you, I know how
to spend my money. You awake now?

Dalin manages a nod so Teague leaves him to it.

INT. MANSION SHOWER

Older Dalin steps into the shower, ducking his head
underneath the nozzle. He leans his shoulder against the
tile, closing his eyes.

INT. ANOTHER SHOWER

Young Dalin wipes the shampoo from his eyes so that he
can look into Kiran's. They pivot under the shower head
so that the water falls over her head. He begins to run
his hands through her hair, rinsing out the shampoo.

KIRAN
I think I got the job.

DALIN
You sure?

Kiran gives him an affirmative. He wraps his arms around
her, lifting her up into the air, twirling her around in
the shower. After a few turns he slips, losing his
balance. There's nothing to grab hold of and the two of
them go flailing. Afterward, once they realize they are
both okay, they LAUGH.

INT. MANSION SCREENING ROOM

Teague sits reading a sports page with one hand while
balancing a cup of coffee in the other. Dalin enters,
examining the golden statues in the trophy case nearby.

TEAGUE
Where's yours?

DALIN
I shoved the globe in a box, but the
little bald dude makes a nice door stop.

TEAGUE
(Groaning)
Producers.

DALIN
(Sarcastic)
Directors.

Dalin turns away from the case and moves about the room.

DALIN (CONT'D)
Michelle the Belle?

TEAGUE
Out spending our small fortune.

Dalin looks around the study and notices a picture of himself flanked by Teague and Kenneth.

DALIN
Kenneth?

TEAGUE
Still my bitch. He wanted to pop in last night but it was too late.

DALIN
Next time.

TEAGUE
You're welcome to join the team again whenever you want.

Dalin shrugs.

TEAGUE (CONT'D)
So? What the hell is going on with you and Kiran?

DALIN
Truth is, I don't know.

TEAGUE
For crying out loud, Dalin. I thought ya'll were ancient history.

DALIN
We are. We aren't. See. I was dating this girl...

TEAGUE
This girl? She's a Victoria's Secret model; not a girl. Okay. Go on.

DALIN
And Kiran was dating this guy.

TEAGUE
Yeah. I met him.

Dalin gives him a peculiar look.

TEAGUE (CONT'D)
Michelle and I went up for a visit a here while back.

DALIN
And?

TEAGUE
The guy's a dildo.

DALIN
Figures.

TEAGUE
Yeah. But you're a prick.

DALIN
Don't I know it.

TEAGUE
So?

DALIN
So. I hadn't heard from her in months
and then suddenly, badah-bip badah-boom
badah-bing! She calls.

TEAGUE
And. So. You're driving.

They both sip their coffee in silence for a moment.

TEAGUE (CONT'D)
You know. I made a drive to see a girl
like this once myself.

DALIN
Oh, yeah? How'd that turn out?

TEAGUE
Now I call her wife.

EXT. MANSION - DAY

Dalin shoves his duffle bag into the back seat of the pickup and hops in the cab. Teague is barefoot on the pavement of the long circular driveway.

TEAGUE
Whatever happens we're here for you.

DALIN
Take care.

Dalin closes the door, fires the engine, and waves goodbye as he puts the truck into gear.

He exits the driveway as Michelle pulls up in her Escalade. She waves at Dalin passing by, then stops the vehicle in front of her husband, and hops out.

MICHELLE
Did ya' tell him?

TEAGUE
No. I just played dumb.

She nods, putting her arms around her husband as they watch Dalin's pickup drive out the front gate.

I/E. PICKUP - DAY

Dalin drives down the highway with Emily at his side. She seems really interested in the passing world outside.

DALIN
You know something, Em?

The dog turns to face him.

DALIN (CONT'D)
I never really understood how she felt about me until the day she moved in.

INT. APARTMENT BEDROOM - DAY

Young Dalin discovers the CAN OF DOG FOOD he once bought for Kiran as he unpacks her belongings.

DALIN
(Shouting)
You saved this?

Kiran ducks around the corner.

KIRAN
What did you expect?

DALIN
I don't know. It was just a joke. It hardly seems worth keeping.

She yanks the can away from his hands.

KIRAN
Don't you dare say that. Don't you ever say that. This can brought us together.

Dalin smiles and kisses her sweetly.

KIRAN (CONT'D)
And I'm going to keep it forever.

INT. AMY'S ICE CREAM - NIGHT

Dalin and Kiran stand in line waiting for their orders to be filled, watching one of the employees sculpt Kiran's cone. Another hands Dalin a milk shake and the two exit the crowded establishment.

EXT. ARBORETUM - NIGHT

Kiran licks at the ice cream on her cone as they walk together. Dalin MOANS.

KIRAN

What?

DALIN

I never wanted to be an ice cream cone more in all my life.

Kiran seductively takes the next bite. Dalin MOANS again. Kiran GIGGLES.

KIRAN

What do you want to be when you grow up?

DALIN

Well, if I must grow up...

KIRAN

You must. We all must.

DALIN

I honestly don't know.

KIRAN

Sure you do, you're just afraid to share.

DALIN

How could you possibly know that?

KIRAN

The same way I know you'd like watching me lick this cone clean.

She oversells it again, which is met by another MOAN.

DALIN

You're killing me here.

KIRAN

C'mon, doofus. Share.

DALIN

I'd like to make a movie with Teague.

She takes her boyfriend's elbow, spinning him around.

KIRAN
Really?

DALIN
Not exactly the kind of thing a grown up
would do, I know, but...

KIRAN
No. Actually, it's kind of comforting.

DALIN
How's that?

KIRAN
I was beginning to wonder if you had any
dreams at all.

Kiran smiles as they resume walking in the night.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Here sits Young Dalin, a man of importance in this place, wearing dress slacks, a white shirt, a red power-tie, and suspenders, working on an antiquated PC. Teague enters, looking different than in any scene before. He's even dressed like a business man.

DALIN
Hey, buddy.

TEAGUE
That's right. I am your buddy. Where
the hell have you been?

DALIN
Ah, well...

TEAGUE
Spare it. Please. Kiran rolls into
town, bats her eyes, spreads her legs,
and my pal is no more.

DALIN
Don't be like that.

TEAGUE
Let's go out this weekend.

DALIN
You wanna double?

TEAGUE
Sure.

DALIN
So? You and Kenneth finally realized you
were destined for one another.

TEAGUE
That bitch? He left me weeks ago.

DALIN
(Laughing)
Really?

TEAGUE
Yep. Joined a cult and moved to
Arkansas, but that's not really
important. I met this girl...

DALIN
You're right. That's much more important
than our friend's sanity. So? What's
she like?

TEAGUE
You'll see. You should invite that
girl... what's her name? The one that
always refers to you as some kind of dog
food.

DALIN
Reese?

TEAGUE
That's the one.

Teague heads for the door.

DALIN
Hey! Where's my script?

Teague opens the door and continues his exit without
looking back.

TEAGUE
It's in development.

Dalin LAUGHS as the DOOR CLOSES.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Young Dalin, Teague, Kiran, Michelle, Reese, and her BOY
TOY are seated in a very elegant setting, sipping after-
diner drinks. Reese is draped all over Boy Toy, who
looks like he belongs on the cover of *GQ*.

MICHELLE
(Yawning)
I'm so tired.

KIRAN
Didn't sleep much last night?

Michelle nods.

REESE
Teague? You naughty boy.

TEAGUE
It wasn't me! I wasn't even there.

KIRAN
So what kept you up?

MICHELLE
I was watching this whore movie.

DALIN
On Skinemax?

Michelle looks puzzled.

MICHELLE
Excuse me?

TEAGUE
She doesn't have cable.

MICHELLE
No. I rented it.

DALIN
My kind of girl.

MICHELLE
What are you babblin' about? It was just this whore movie, but it was in Japanese so I had to read the subtitles.

DALIN
What's to read?

MICHELLE
(Baffled)
Huh?

KIRAN
You said you were watching a 'whore' movie.

MICHELLE
(Embarrassed)
No. Ya'll know what I mean. You watch a video tape and a week later this girl comes climbin' out of the tee vee to kill ya'.

REESE
(Laughing)
Oh. You mean "horror" movie.

Everybody but Michelle is laughing now.

MICHELLE

What did ya'll think I was talkin' about?

TEAGUE

Never mind.

KIRAN

Teague? How's your "whore" movie comin' along.

TEAGUE

It's not a "whore" movie. It's not a horror movie, either, for that matter.

DALIN

Actually, he hasn't written dick, so you'd be hard pressed to even call it a movie.

TEAGUE

Now that's just not exactly true. I've written a treatment.

DALIN

(Laughing)

Oh. I didn't realize I was sitting next to Willaim-fuckin'-Goldman.

Everybody LAUGHS heartily except Boy Toy. After the laughter subsides, a quiet falls over the dinner party.

BOY TOY

Who's William Goldman?

Now they LAUGH even more.

INT. POOL HALL - NIGHT

Kiran and Dalin are pitted in an eight-ball battle against Teague and Michelle. Meanwhile, Reese snuggles up to Boy Toy as she lights a cigarette.

DALIN

Eight-ball, corner-pocket, three rails.

REESE

No way, no day.

Dalin grins before leaning over the table. He wiggles his ass as he lines up the shot. Michelle leans over to Reese.

MICHELLE

How come he wiggles his butt every time he shoots?

Reese shrugs. Kiran walks up with a pool cue in hand. Swiping the cig from Reese with her free hand she takes a quick drag before handing it back to her.

KIRAN

He used to do that with a baseball bat...
right before he'd hit a dinger.

REESE

Does he wiggle his ass like that when
he's rounding third and heading for home
with you?

Kiran raises an eyebrow, grins, then shrugs as Dalin drains the shot.

TEAGUE

Bastard!

DALIN

Rack 'em.

MICHELLE

That's it for me.

BOY TOY

I'll take him on.

REESE

Go for it.

Boy Toy leaves Reese and starts to rack-up. Teague joins the three girls.

TEAGUE

So. Kiran. Query?

KIRAN

Answer.

TEAGUE

Has our boy popped the question yet?

KIRAN

Our boy hasn't popped anything but me.

REESE

Now why do you think that is, Teague?

TEAGUE

Any number of things, I suppose.

Teague turns to face his pal as he breaks.

TEAGUE (CONT'D)

When you gonna make an honest woman of
her, Dalin?

DALIN
Mind your own lawn.

Teague turns back to the girls.

TEAGUE
Personally? I think he's terrified of
marriage.

Dalin begins his run over the table.

DALIN
That's not true.

TEAGUE
Oh, but it is. Go ahead. Say the word.

DALIN
What word?

TEAGUE
THE word.

DALIN
The M-word?

TEAGUE
The prosecution rests.

DALIN
You best give it a rest.

TEAGUE
I thought for sure it would find its way
into his vocabulary with you around.

Reese grabs Kiran's hand and gives her ring finger a
close inspection.

REESE
Nope. Not that I can see.

She offers the hand to Teague for further inspection.

TEAGUE
No doubt. That finger's as naked as
Elizabeth Berkley in a Peter Verhouvern
film.

Kiran yanks her hand away.

MICHELLE
How long have ya'll been dating?

KIRAN
Well, we've been living together a year.

DALIN
But we were seeing each other LDR for
another prior to that.

MICHELLE
LDR?

REESE, KIRAN, & TEAGUE
(Unison)
Long Distance Relationship.

MICHELLE
You mean those actually work?

REESE
(Shrugging)
So far, so good.

KIRAN
Of course, that's before I knew about
this M-word bullshit.

Meanwhile, Dalin has worked the entire table and the
eight ball falls. He's victorious before Boy Toy even
gets a shot. Dalin tosses the cue onto the table and
Kiran snuggles up to her man.

Boy Toy stares bewildered at the sight of a table covered
exclusively by striped balls. Reese shows him some
affection, too.

REESE
It's okay, baby. You'll still get a shot
with me.

Boy Toy grins.

DALIN
That's the difference between you and me,
Reese. With you, everybody gets a shot.

Reese fetches a pool cue and wields at Dalin.

REESE
Alright. That's it, Snausage boy! I'm
gonna turn you into table scraps.

She begins to chase him playfully in the bar.

REESE (CONT'D)
When I'm done with you, they'll have to
carry you out in a friggin' doggie-bag.

Everybody LAUGHS as they watch her pursue him with the
stick throughout the bar.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Kiran is busy cleaning the kitchen. She finishes the dishes and starts scrubbing the counters.

Moving to the living room, she reaches the lamp stand next to the recliner where she finds Dalin's financial portfolio. Upon closer examination, her jaw drops when she notices a a total worth of \$5,457,201.47.

She hears a KEY AT THE DOOR and quickly returns the statement to its proper place. When Dalin enters she defrays her nervousness by jumping into his arms, planting a lengthy kiss on his lips.

DALIN
What's all this for?

KIRAN
I missed you today.

DALIN
Obviously.

They kiss again before Dalin sweeps her up and carries her into the bedroom.

EXT. DISCH FAULK FIELD - DAY

Dalin CRACKS a peanut in his hands while sitting in the bleachers. Once he frees the nuts, he pops them into his mouth before discarding remnants of the shell on ground below. Kiran is with him on a sunny day and both of them are wearing shades and Longhorn baseball caps.

KIRAN
You know, we don't have to sit out here if you don't want to.

DALIN
Nah. I love it out here.

KIRAN
I need to ask you something. Promise you won't get mad?

Dalin LAUGHS.

KIRAN (CONT'D)
What?

DALIN
If you have to preface it, it probably means there's a very good reason for me to be mad at you.

KIRAN

Maybe.

DALIN

I doubt it, but go ahead. Ask.

Kiran straightens up on the bench next to him, removing her sunglasses. She takes off his as well so she can look into his eyes.

KIRAN

Where in the hell did you get five million dollars?

Dalin simply smiles, reclaiming his shades.

KIRAN (CONT'D)

I just wanna make sure you're not doing something illegal.

DALIN

You know me better than that.

KIRAN

Well. I'd like to think I do.

DALIN

Part of that was my signing bonus.

KIRAN

That was years ago, Dalin.

DALIN

What can I say? I've made some really good investments.

KIRAN

So you're not, oh, I don't know, running guns for terrorists or selling drugs to elementary school children?

DALIN

Of course not.

KIRAN

Good.

The Longhorn batter swings and CLINKS one over the left field wall. Kiran and Dalin both stand and CHEER as the batter rounds the basepath in his homerun trot. When he crosses home, they both sit back down.

KIRAN (CONT'D)

So what do you plan on doing with all that money?

DALIN

I'm sure you can think of something.

Kiran hits him on the shoulder before crossing her arms into full pout formation.

DALIN (CONT'D)
What? What did I say?

KIRAN
I don't want your money, doofus.

DALIN
We are together, aren't we?

KIRAN
Yeah, but I don't want to spend your money. That's not why I brought this up.

Dalin looks out at the field, then back at Kiran.

DALIN
Then why bring it up?

KIRAN
I think you should make a movie, Dalin.

DALIN
You do?

KIRAN
For five million dollars, you can make a helluva movie around these parts.

DALIN
Ya' think?

She nods. He looks away again, but then shakes his head as he turns back to face her.

DALIN (CONT'D)
Teague's never going to finish a story.

KIRAN
Maybe he just needs time to find a story. Besides, I'm not saying it has to happen today. I'm just trying to say...

She leans over and plants a kiss on him.

KIRAN (CONT'D)
That I believe in you.

Dalin forges a smile.

DALIN
I just wish I believed in myself.

KIRAN
You will. Stick with me, doofus, and you surely will.

She smiles, puts on her shades, shifts back into her tanning position, and returns her attention to the game.

I/E. PICKUP - DAY

Emily stares out the window at the passing scenery while her master drives down the highway listening to some conservative talk show host on the radio.

DALIN
You know what, Emily?

The dog turns to face him.

DALIN (CONT'D)
I honestly don't know what I was so afraid of. I mean, how many guys wind up married to women that just flat out make them miserable because they're always fighting against them. She believed in me. You get that?

The dog just looks back out the window.

DALIN (CONT'D)
Eh! What do I expect from a dog? Besides, it's not like everything about us was Peaches and Herb.

INT. APARTMENT BEDROOM - NIGHT

The credits roll on the television and Kiran is lying next to Dalin in tears. He takes her into his arms lovingly.

DALIN
What's wrong?

Kiran turns to face him, her eyes are red and puffy. Dalin reaches for her cheek wiping one side dry, then the other. The theme song from "Ice Castles" PLAYS in the background from the television.

KIRAN
Look it. There are a few things you don't know about me.

DALIN
Well, I'm sure you're a better actress than Lynn Holy Johnson, so what's to know?

KIRAN
I used to be an ice skater. A great one.

DALIN
So what happened?

Kiran sits up on the bed, grabbing Dalin by the face.

KIRAN
Why don't you start by telling me what happened to you?

He hesitates.

KIRAN (CONT'D)
Quid pro quo.

DALIN
The truth is... My arm... No. Not that. Here's the real truth. I quit.

KIRAN
Just quit?

DALIN
Yeah, I used to love playing baseball. I mean, when we were kids we'd play from sun-up to sundown in my backyard. But one day I woke up and playing baseball seemed like work and I just didn't want to do it anymore.

KIRAN
So you just quit?

Dalin can only manage a nod.

DALIN
Now you.

KIRAN
My knees started hurting, my ankles started hurting, and soon it all started hurting.

DALIN
Sounds a bit like our first kiss.

Kiran truly smiles.

KIRAN
More than anything else I just wanted to have a normal life. I didn't like getting up at 5 AM and I didn't like the fact that I didn't have any friends, either. So I used my ankles and knees as an excuse to get out.

Dalin squeezes her tight.

DALIN
I guess that makes us both quitters.

KIRAN
Let's make a deal.

DALIN
Okay Monty. I'll take what's behind door
number 1.

Kiran manages a laugh, swatting him playfully.

KIRAN
Such a doofus. No. I'm serious. Let's
agree not to quit on anything ever again.

DALIN
You've got a deal.

I/E. PICKUP - DAY

The scenery has changed a little and now a different
conservative talk show host spouts his views on the air.

DALIN
I know what you're thinking. You're
thinking I welched on the deal.

Emily BARKS.

DALIN (CONT'D)
Yeah, well let's get real. Okay? That
girl could drive me absolutely nuts!

EXT. MALL PARKING LOT - DAY

Dalin and Kiran exit the store carrying bags. When they
reach the pavement, a green SUV cuts them off in the
middle of the crosswalk. The DRIVER of the vehicle is a
thirty-something woman with a cell phone tagged to her
ear and a soccer sticker visible in the rear window.

DALIN
Figures.

KIRAN
What figures?

DALIN
SUVs, women, and cell phones. That's a
helluva deadly combination.

They continue walking through the parking lot.

KIRAN

Let me get this straight. SUVs, women, and cell phones. That's the deadly combination?

DALIN

None deadlier.

KIRAN

What about SUVs, men, and cell phones.

DALIN

Never seen such a thing.

KIRAN

Oh, c'mon! You've never seen a man driving an SUV while talking on a cell phone?

DALIN

Not once. Always a woman.

KIRAN

So men don't talk on cell phones?

DALIN

I didn't say that. Of course they do.

KIRAN

So men don't drive SUVs?

DALIN

Now you're just being silly.

KIRAN

I'm just trying to understand what it is you think you're trying to say.

DALIN

I'm saying that a disproportionate amount of women drive SUVs while engaging in conversations on their cell phones, and that *they* represent a clear and present danger to the rest of us.

KIRAN

It sounds like a generalization to me.

DALIN

Of course it's a generalization. That's why it sounds like one.

KIRAN

So men driving SUV's while talking on cell phones aren't a deadly combination?

DALIN

Nope. Not a bona fide problem. Even if a man driving an SUV chose to talk on a cell phone, which a real man wouldn't do in the first place, it still wouldn't be as big a problem.

KIRAN

Oh, really. Why's that?

DALIN

Men are better at multi-tasking.

KIRAN

Now I know you're full of shit.

Kiran is clearly angered by his remarks.

DALIN

Oh, I'm just trying to be funny. Why don't you just shutup?

Kiran freezes as they near the car. Dalin continues walking and opens the trunk before he notices his girlfriend is near tears.

DALIN(CONT'D)

Oh, shit. I'm sorry, hon. I didn't mean to say 'shutup.' Well, I guess I did, but I didn't mean it literally.

Kiran starts walking again but now she is in tears. She helps him transfer the bags to the trunk.

KIRAN

Not literally? What other way could you have possibly meant? Categorically? Metaphorically? Hypothetically?

DALIN

I'm sorry. How many times do I have to say it. I was wrong. I know I'm wrong and I'm apologizing.

KIRAN

Look it. I'm still trying to wrap my mind around the fact that the man I love is just a misogynistic chauvinist. Once I'm done with that, I'm sure I'll move on to the fact that you're a total dick!

Kiran SLAMS the trunk shut. She walks around and unlocks the passenger door with her own key, letting herself in. Dalin shrugs, unlocks his own door, and climbs aboard.

I/E. CAR - DAY

Dalin puts the key in the ignition. The engine SPINS AND SPINS AND SPINS, but it never fires and after three attempts he POUNDS the steering wheel in disgust.

KIRAN

See? Even your car knows you're a dick.

Dalin gets out of the car SLAMMING the door behind him while Kiran begins to SNICKER.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Kiran diligently cleans the kitchen, scrubbing everything in an obsessively compulsive manner. She doesn't even bother to look up when she hears the DOOR OPEN, nor does she acknowledge Dalin's presence when he enters the kitchen holding something behind his back. He stands there watching her work but she refuses to look at him.

KIRAN

I'm still pissed off at you.

DALIN

I know. I'm really sorry.

KIRAN

Yeah. Sorry for what?

DALIN

Being a dick.

He puts one hand on her shoulder to get her attention.

DALIN (CONT'D)

I love you.

KIRAN

I know.

She tries to return to her chores but Dalin reaches out to touch her yet again. When she looks back he produces a small collie puppy from behind his back.

The anger melts from her face, replaced by the classic isn't-that-the-cutest-most-precious-thing-you-ever-did-see look. She takes the puppy into her hands, squeezing her tightly.

KIRAN (CONT'D)

What should we call him?

Dalin turns the puppy in her arms so that Kiran can see it is a female.

KIRAN (CONT'D)
Her, then. What do we call her?

DALIN
I kinda figured that was your territory.

Kiran hugs the puppy with all her might as she leans up to kiss her man.

KIRAN
See. You do know how to treat a woman after all.

I/E. PICKUP - DAY

Emily BARKS.

DALIN
So that's when you came on the scene.

Another BARK.

DALIN (CONT'D)
What can I say? I knew I was in the dog house, so the only way to get me out of there was to get a real dog to replace me. When something's wrong with the person you love you want to do whatever it takes to make it right.

She BARKS again.

DALIN (CONT'D)
That's right. Whatever it takes. Even if it is outrageous.

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Kiran lounges on the sofa curled up under a blanket reading a book.

Dalin is kicked-back in a recliner with a remote control glued to his hand surfing channels. With each push of a button, he becomes more frustrated until finally he turns off the television, BANGING the remote control down on the lamp stand next to him.

KIRAN
Problem with your droids?

DALIN
There's nothing on.

KIRAN
It's a Monday night. What do you expect?

Dalin stares at the blank screen.

KIRAN (CONT'D)
Hey. Here's a novel idea.

She leans back and picks up a book off the night stand next to her, tossing it accurately over to him.

KIRAN (CONT'D)
Read a book.

Dalin GRUNTS but starts flipping through the pages anyway, only, it doesn't take long for him to repeat the process by SLAPPING the book down in disgust.

KIRAN (CONT'D)
What?

DALIN
I'm bored.

Kiran throws off her blanket in a HUFF. Traipsing across the living in a tiny T-shirt and even tinier panties, she disappears into the hallway. She returns fastening her shorts, carrying a pair of shoes in her hands.

DALIN (CONT'D)
What are you doing?

KIRAN
Let's go.

Dalin gets up out of his chair.

DALIN
Where are we going?

KIRAN
I've got an idea.

Dalin shrugs and follows her out the door.

EXT. ADULT XXX BOOKSTORE - NIGHT

Kiran steers the pickup into the lot and gets out immediately, moving swiftly toward the entrance. Dalin follows, wearing a befuddled expression.

KIRAN
Well? Don't just stand there gawking.

Kiran waits, holding the open door.

KIRAN (CONT'D)
In ya' go.

Shaking his head in disbelief, he closes the distance between them and enters the establishment. Kiran SNICKERS playfully as she follows him inside.

INT. ADULT XXX BOOKSTORE - MOMENTS LATER

Dalin and Kiran walk through a corridor of smut.

DALIN
I can't believe we're doing this.

KIRAN
Hey. You said you were bored.

DALIN
And this is your cure? Why this?

KIRAN
I've got two very good reasons. For one thing, it'll stop you from bitchin' about there being nothing on tee vee.

DALIN
And the second?

KIRAN
I'm practically guaranteed of getting laid tonight.

DALIN
Indeed. But I had no idea you were into this.

KIRAN
Who says I'm into porn?

DALIN
Well this was your idea?

KIRAN
Maybe so, but that doesn't mean I'm into porn. Hell, I've never ever been to a place like this before in my life. I don't know the first thing about porn...

Her head jerks to attention on her right.

KIRAN (CONT'D)
Ooh! Jenna Jameson.

Kiran picks up a video featuring the starlet.

EXT. ADULT XXX BOOKSTORE - NIGHT

Dalin and Kiran exit the store playfully flirting.

DALIN
 Okay. Jameson I get, but 'Girls Who Eat...'

KIRAN
 Hey. I know what I like.

Kiran reaches into her pocket searching for her keys. She checks another pocket. Then another. Dalin peers across the hood of the vehicle at his girlfriend's panicked expression. He searches for his own keys in hopeless desperation. Nothing.

Kiran peers inside the cab at her keys dangling from the ignition.

KIRAN (CONT'D)
 You gotta be kiddin' me?

DALIN
 Sonuvabitch!

KIRAN
 Ho-ly-shit!

DALIN
 Okay. Okay. Let's not panic here. Your dad has a spare set of keys.

KIRAN
 I'm not about to call my dad.

Dalin looks back up at the huge sign of the establishment behind him.

KIRAN (CONT'D)
 I know he'd kill you. He might just leave me seriously maimed.

DALIN
 Don't worry. I know who we can all.

EXT. ADULT XXX BOOKSTORE - LATER

Teague and Michelle pull in next to Dalin's pickup to find Kiran and Dalin sitting on the tailgate. Teague and Michelle climb out of the vehicle already LAUGHING.

DALIN
 Don't start.

TEAGUE
 I wouldn't even know where to begin, my friend.

Teague reaches into his pocket and pulls out a spare set of keys, handing them over to his pal. Dalin snatches the keys away. Meanwhile, Kiran seems quite amused.

TEAGUE (CONT'D)
So? What'd you rent?

MICHELLE
Did ya'll rent a "whore" movie?

Kiran, Teague, and Michelle LAUGH. Dalin fights it at first, but eventually joins in.

INT. WEDDING RECEPTION - DAY

Michelle, the beautiful and blushing bride, is surrounded at a table by her gal-pals, Kiran and Reese, who are adorned in some very ugly bridesmaid dresses.

Across the room are the boys; the dapper groom, Teague, along with the tuxedoed Boy Toy, and Dalin.

BOY TOY
Congratulations, Teague. I didn't know you had it in you.

TEAGUE
I just wish Kenneth were here.

DALIN
They don't worship comets, do they?

TEAGUE
You're not funny.

Teague scarcely acknowledges his friend. His focus is elsewhere.

TEAGUE (CONT'D)
Look at her, Dalin.

Across the way, Michelle LAUGHS with the girls.

TEAGUE (CONT'D)
Ain't she beautiful?

BOY TOY
You're a lucky man.

TEAGUE
Don't I know it. When you gonna join me?

There's a pause before Dalin finally realizes his friend is addressing him, not Boy Toy.

DALIN
Oh. Well. Why mess up a good thing?

TEAGUE

Listen up, bud, because this will probably be the best advice I've ever given you.

DALIN

Oh, yeah. What's that?

TEAGUE

If you're waiting around to get all your ducks in a row remember this-sometimes they fly away for winter.

Dalin doesn't seem to know what to say. Boy Toy shrugs.

BOY TOY

I'm gonna get another beer.

He shuffles off. Teague looks up at his friend, SLAPS him on the shoulder and walks over towards his bride. She greets him with a huge kiss.

Dalin spies Kiran across the room. She lifts a champagne glass in his direction and he raises his beer bottle in reply.

EXT. TRUCK STOP - DAY

Older Dalin's pickup pulls into a busy truck stop. He climbs out of the cab. Emily obediently hops into the bed, then watches her master enter the diner.

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

Older Dalin settles into a booth next to a window, turning over his coffee cup. A slim middle-aged WAITRESS hustles over with a pot in hand.

WAITRESS

You sure you want this, love?

DALIN

Positive.

She starts to pour, but stops short.

WAITRESS

Last chance. This stuff is thick as syrup and nasty as a rig floor.

DALIN

Thick and nasty, huh?

WAITRESS

While I might dig that in my bed, I don't much like it in my coffee.

DALIN
Go ahead and pour. I could use a shot of
truck stop tar.

She pours the cup, lingering until her customer takes a sip. When he does, his lips pucker up pretty good but he forces it down. He holds up the cup in homage.

DALIN (CONT'D)
Now that's a cup of coffee!

WAITRESS
Well, our coffee might not be a star, but
it sure as shit bucks. Anything else,
love? Menu?

Dalin nods and she scurries away. Dalin stares out the window at Emily, still sitting at attention.

EXT. THE BALLPARK AT ARLINGTON PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Dalin and Kiran walk through the heavy traffic and parked cars, the stadium looming in the background. Suddenly and deliberately, Kiran stops. She tugs on her boyfriend's hand, jerking him backward.

KIRAN
I need to tell you something.

DALIN
You're pregnant?

KIRAN
No, doofus. I'm not pregnant.

DALIN
Then what?

KIRAN
I've been offered a job working as a
correspondent for a cable network.

DALIN
You're kidding. That's fabulous!

KIRAN
Yes. Yes, it is, but they want me to
move to Kansas City.

DALIN
Kansas City?

Kiran nods. Dalin releases her hand and starts walking again. She follows him to the pickup where he climbs aboard without another word. She shakes her head in disbelief before joining him.

I/E. PICKUP - NIGHT

Dalin drives along with Kiran staring him down.

DALIN
(Annoyed)
What?

KIRAN
That's it?

DALIN
Well. It sounds like a helluva
opportunity. Take the gig.

KIRAN
So? Does that mean you're going with me?

DALIN
Oh, Kiran. You know I can't do that
right now. We've got too much going on.

KIRAN
Doing a job you could care less about.

Kiran redirects her attention to the darkness outside.

Dalin gives her an odd look but she never looks back at him so he just keeps driving.

INT. TRUCK STOP - DAY

Older Dalin is zoning-out when the waitress returns with his food. She places her hands on her hips.

WAITRESS
Food's ready.

He snaps to.

DALIN
Thanks.

WAITRESS
Where were you just now?

DALIN
Kansas City.

WAITRESS
Honey, you ain't there just yet. You
still got miles and miles to go.

DALIN
I know. But I think I should have gone
to Kansas City a long time ago.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Dalin enters with Kiran close behind. Dalin heads directly to his recliner. He takes one of five remote controls and turns on a news channel.

Kiran stares at the screen for a moment, then turns her attention to Dalin. She stamps her foot on the ground but when that fails to illicit a response, she becomes irritated.

KIRAN

Damnit, Dalin! You've had three hours on the road to think about this. This is a decision we ought to make together.

Dalin ignores her and Kiran grows more irate until she finally makes a move for a remote control. She grabs the first one, striking the power button--nothing. She SLAMS it back down on the table and takes another--the stereo comes alive. She turns it back off and tosses that one over her shoulder where it lands on the couch. Moving on to a third remote and the DVD player starts to play. She switches it off and takes hold of a fourth but nothing happens at all when she pushes the power button. She's on to a fifth but when it fails, she hurls it at Dalin. He moves just enough for it to miss him.

Dalin calmly reaches for the last remote and hits the power button, killing the image on the television.

DALIN

Is that better?

Kiran might laugh, cry, or yell. It's a tough call.

DALIN (CONT'D)

If you want to go, then go. If you want to stay, then stay. It's strictly up to you and I'm not going to hold it against you either way.

KIRAN

How can you be so arrogant, aloof, and apathetic all at the same time?

DALIN

That's a whole bunch of A-words.

KIRAN

Yeah. Well, here's another for you... *asshole*. Use it in a sentence like this: Dalin Caffey is a fuckin' asshole!

She storms out of the living room and into the bedroom where she tries to calm herself. Dalin soon joins her.

DALIN

I thought I was being supportive.

KIRAN

You act like you could care less about us! And you think somehow that's being supportive?

DALIN

You've been offered the job of your dreams and I say go for it. Yeah. I think that's being supportive!

KIRAN

What about supporting us, Dalin? Huh? What about you and I being successful, together, in this relationship?

DALIN

I thought we were doing pretty good.

KIRAN

Yeah. Pretty good. But where exactly do we go from here? What's next? Are you going to come with me or am I going to stay here with you? We can't just shack-up forever! Why won't you just grow yourself a sack and ask me to marry you?

DALIN

I'm sorry, sweetheart, but I don't have all the answers.

KIRAN

You better have some answers and you better get them quick, doofus.

Dalin turns quickly, storming out of the bedroom. Now Kiran follows him into the kitchen.

KIRAN (CONT'D)

I want you to fight for me. I want you to say, 'Yeah, baby. I'll go to Kansas City with you.' Or, 'No, baby. Turn down the job, stay here, and marry me.'

DALIN

This is getting way too intense.

KIRAN

I think our relationship could use a little intensity right about now, don't you?

Dalin HAMMERS his fist on the counter, exits the kitchen, and opens the front door.

DALIN
I can't do this right now.

KIRAN
Where the hell are you going?

DALIN
What do you care? You're leavin' anyway.

Dalin leaves, SLAMMING the door behind him. Kiran pulls her hair and SCREAMS out in anger.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Dalin sits on a bar stool glaring down at a shot of whiskey and longneck. He downs the shot, then takes a pull on from the bottle before asking for another.

The BARTENDER pours and the process repeats before Teague appears behind him. Teague motions for a similar setup and takes the next available stool, patiently waiting for the Bartender to return. The Bartender pours them both a shot and without a word, Dalin and Teague slam it back, chasing it with the beer.

TEAGUE
Kiran's worried about you, bud.

DALIN
I know. How'd you find me?

TEAGUE
It wasn't easy. I've been looking for you all day.

DALIN
I've just been sitting right here ever since the place opened.

The bartender pours two more shots. They do it again.

TEAGUE
Go home.

DALIN
She's driving me nuts.

Teague points to the shot glasses again. They give it one more go.

TEAGUE
You're an idiot. You know that?

DALIN
Me? How am I the idiot?

The Bartender starts to pour them another round but this time Teague's hand springs over the shot glasses to keep him at bay. Teague waives him off.

TEAGUE

You're an idiot because you're sitting here trading shots with me rather than trading rings with her.

DALIN

Why the hell does it always have to come back to that?

TEAGUE

Because it's time, Dalin.

DALIN

I just want to see her achieve her goals.

TEAGUE

That's bullshit.

DALIN

I do! I want her to be the best reporter in the whole country.

TEAGUE

So do I, but that's not what's really going on here, now is it?

Dalin picks up his shot glass and leans over the bar.

DALIN

Can I get another drink here?

TEAGUE

Think about it, Dalin. You've never finished a anything in your life.

Dalin leaps off the bar-stool, getting right in his friends face.

DALIN

What the hell is that supposed to mean?

TEAGUE

You know exactly what I mean.

Teague hops off his stool, pays, then makes for the door. A drunken Dalin staggers in pursuit.

DALIN

Don't you walk away from me, you two-faced bastard.

Teague spins to deal with his friend.

TEAGUE

Okay. Is this it? Are we really going to do this here?

DALIN

Right here. Right now.

The bartender and patrons stares are all ears, too.

TEAGUE

Fine! You make me sick! God has made you the most talented person I've ever known. Everything you touch just turns to gold, Dalin! And yet, you're so damned apathetic it makes me wanna puke. You were the best player in the league and you just quit. You're the best business man I've ever seen and you couldn't give a shit. And you have the best woman in the world and you're just gonna let her fly away.

DALIN

She's not a fuckin' duck, Teague. Besides. You're one to talk. Where's my script? Huh? When you gonna put all that God-given talent to work in your life?

Teague turns away in disgust and storms out the door.

EXT. BAR - NIGHT

Teague walks briskly along the sidewalk away from the entrance. Dalin tries to follow but he's too drunk to keep a straight pursuit.

DALIN

Come back here! We ain't finished yet.

Teague turns to face him one more time. The drunk stops in his tracks, leaning on a lamppost for balance.

TEAGUE

Tonight? We are finished. Go home, Dalin.

He turns to leave again.

TEAGUE (CONT'D)

And if you have a lick of sense you'll ask her to marry you.

Dalin leans on the pole before heading back to the bar.

INT. APARTMENT - DAWN

Kiran sits on the couch with a box of Kleenex watching an old black and white movie on television when a hung-over and dirty Dalin enters. She sizes him up but decides not to say a word. He struggles to take a seat in the recliner, then looks over at her.

DALIN

Are you giving me an ultimatum?

Kiran blows her nose into a tissue..

KIRAN

No. Not exactly.

DALIN

Because it sounds like you did. Option A, move to Kansas City with you. Option B, ask you to marry me. That sounds like an ultimatum.

Kiran is silent.

DALIN (CONT'D)

I mean, it is what it is, isn't it?

KIRAN

I guess it is, Dalin. It's time to fish or cut bait.

DALIN

You know, my grandmother always preferred 'It's time to shit or get off the pot.'

KIRAN

A smart woman, no doubt.

She SIGHS, rising from the sofa.

KIRAN (CONT'D)

Are we ever going to grow up enough to make this work?

DALIN

What's being grown up got to do with it?

KIRAN

Only everything.

She heads on into the other room, leaving him alone.

INT. ICE RINK - DAY

Kiran sits in the stands watching a young girl twirl around the ice with a coach barking orders in her direction.

Kiran's eyes are still puffy from too many tears. Reese soon arrives carrying two smoothies. Kiran accepts one as her friend joins her in the stands.

REESE
It's about time you and Beggin' Strips had it out.

KIRAN
I hate it when you call him those names.

Reese offers a smirk. She seems to get a kick out of watching Kiran watch this skater.

REESE
You miss it?

KIRAN
Nah. Dad wanted it more than I did.

REESE
Well you sure showed him, didn't you?

Kiran turns to face her friend.

KIRAN
What's that supposed to mean?

REESE
You're a stubborn bitch. Always have been; always will be.

KIRAN
So what if I am stubborn? I deserve to have it all, don't I?

REESE
Not really. No. None of us do.

Kiran tries to shoo Reese away with her hand.

REESE (CONT'D)
But I will tell you what you do deserve.

KIRAN
(Sarcastic)
Oh, really. What's that?

REESE
You deserve all of him. And if he's not ready to give you that, then maybe you do need to make some tough decisions. Just don't make any stupid ones.

They watch the skater pull a triple-axel.

KIRAN
She's pretty good.

Reese merely nods her agreement.

KIRAN (CONT'D)
What's the difference between a tough
decision and a stupid one?

REESE
You should know. You've been here
before.

Kiran nods, still concentrating on the girl's routine.

KIRAN
I guess I have.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Dalin loads the trunk of Kiran's car, stuffing the last
suitcase inside, cramming everything in as tightly as he
can. He SLAMS the trunk shut to reveal Kiran.

KIRAN
You truly are a doofus, you know that?
Whatever will you do without me?

DALIN
I'll manage.

KIRAN
I'm sure. Last chance to stop me. I
won't ask again.

Dalin looks at her lovingly. He pulls her to him, hugs
her tightly, then kisses her sweetly on the lips.

DALIN
I love you, but I'm not going to ask you
to give up your life for me.

KIRAN
That's not the love talking; that's
apathy.

Dalin shrugs.

DALIN
Are you sure you don't want to take
Emily?

KIRAN
No. She'll just remind me of you, and I
don't need that right now. Maybe you can
just bring her up to see her mama
sometime soon?

DALIN
I will.

KIRAN
We'll see. So. What's next?

DALIN
I assume we do what we did before.

KIRAN
LDR: Return of the Jet-lag?

DALIN
Why not? Our first go was a blockbuster.

KIRAN
Yeah, well... unfortunately...

Kiran breaks the embrace and opens her car door, hopping inside.

KIRAN (CONT'D)
Our relationship didn't have legs.

Kiran closes the door, waves, fires the engine, then waves again as she pulls away leave Dalin all alone.

INT. TRUCK STOP - DAY

Older Dalin pays his check to the Waitress who took care of his meal.

WAITRESS
You look like you could use some sleep.

DALIN
I'm fine. Thanks.

WAITRESS
You a trucker?

DALIN
No.

She hands him his change.

DALIN (CONT'D)
Keep it.

She smiles. Dalin starts to walk away.

WAITRESS
Then what's her name?

He stops dead in his tracks, turning to offer the woman a curious look.

WAITRESS (CONT'D)

(Shrugging)

Hey. If it ain't job related then it's gotta be woman.

DALIN

It's always a woman, isn't it?

WAITRESS

Yeah. I imagine so.

DALIN

You know. They say pride can kill a man, but they're full of shit.

WAITRESS

How's that?

DALIN

Pride can kill anything. It has no gender bias.

WAITRESS

You got that right. Be careful out there, love.

Dalin waves while the waitress watches him exit, stride over to his pickup, and open the cab. Emily hops from the truck bed and joins him in the front seat.

INT. DALIN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Dalin sits watching Kiran give a report for her new channel when he hears a KNOCK at his door. He is shocked to find Kenneth dressed in very odd manner.

DALIN

Well Hare, Hare, to you bud.

KENNETH

(Laughing)

I was never a Krishna.

DALIN

What's the difference? Come on in.

He escorts his guest to the couch and sits in the recliner across from him.

DALIN (CONT'D)

Where in the hell have you been all this time?

KENNETH

Well, see, I met this girl...

DALIN
There's always a girl, isn't there?

Kenneth shrugs.

DALIN (CONT'D)
Honestly. Who joins a cult anymore?
That's like so seventies. You act like
you were raised on a compound near Waco,
or somethin'.

KENNETH
Yeah. Well. You never met this girl.

DALIN
No need. Women are inherently evil and
wicked in every way.

Beat.

DALIN (CONT'D)
Can I get you anything?

KENNETH
Naw. I'm good.

DALIN
Want some Kool-Aid?

KENNETH
Very funny.

Kenneth glances at the TV screen and points at Kiran's
visage.

KENNETH (CONT'D)
I take it she's not living here anymore.

DALIN
You got that right. You need a place to
crash?

KENNETH
A place. Some clothes. A job.

DALIN
We'll get you taken care of.

Dalin picks up the phone to make a call.

INT. KIRAN'S HOUSE - DAY

A REALTOR shows off a nice upper-middle class dwelling to
Kiran and her friend Reese.

REALTOR
It's probably more than a single girl
like you would want...

KIRAN
No. I'll take it. It's perfect. Don't
you think?

REESE
It's something alright.

REALTOR
Well, let's the get the paper work
started, shall we?

The Realtor leaves the two of them in the living room.

REESE
You remember that little talk we had
about tough decisions and stupid
decisions?

KIRAN
I'm just trying to get on with my life.

REESE
This is an awful lot of house for just
one person.

KIRAN
I need the extra space so you can come
visit me.

Reese moves about, inspecting everything.

REESE
Still. This is too weird. Girls like
you don't buy houses, Kiran. Unless...

KIRAN
Unless what?

REESE
Are you preggers?

KIRAN
Oh, that'd be great. Then I'd never be
able to get away from whats-his-name.

REESE
Dalín.

Kiran looks at her in disbelief.

REESE (CONT'D)
What?

KIRAN
That's the first time I've ever heard you
call him by his real name.

Beat.

REESE
For all his flaws, Kiran, he'd make a
great husband and father.

KIRAN
Well, you cain't become a husband if you
ain't willin' to walk down the aisle.

Reese continues her inspection.

REESE
Sure is a big place. Hate to think of
what it will feel like living here all
alone.

KIRAN
It might be creepy for a while, but I'll
get used to it.

REESE
Maybe you should just pick up the phone
and call Dalin.

Kiran walks away in a huff, heading for the door.

REESE (CONT'D)
You're one stubborn bitch, you know that?

Kiran gives her the finger without looking back.

REESE (CONT'D)
A place this big oughta have a family in
it, don't ya' think?

Reese spins around the house one last time before finding
her way out.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Teague hugs Kenneth like they haven't seen one another in
ages before joining Dalin at a table in the country bar.

TEAGUE
Damn good to see you.

KENNETH
You too.

DALIN
He needs a place to crash and a job.

TEAGUE

Mi casa esu casa. And as for the job...

Teague SLAPS a screenplay on the table.

TEAGUE (CONT'D)

Let's make a movie.

Dalin stares at it for a moment.

DALIN

Bastard. You did this just so I'd have to make the call.

Dalin looks up just long enough to see Teague's sly grin.

TEAGUE

Believe what you want to believe.

DALIN

I suppose this is just coincidence?

KENNETH

Life is filled with bittersweet irony and wonderful serendipity.

DALIN

Brainwashing my ass. Your head is still full of shit.

TEAGUE

I can't deny her departure hastened the completion of this little project. What can I say? She inspired me. The real question is why can't she inspire you?

Dalin begins thumbing through the pages of the script.

TEAGUE (CONT'D)

Besides, look at this poor sap.

Teague hugs Kenneth, pointing a finger in his face.

TEAGUE (CONT'D)

The man needs a job.

Dalin sets the script aside with a nod.

DALIN

Well, I guess that leaves me no choice.

Teague SLAPS his palm on the table.

TEAGUE

Not only that, the man's suffering from a serious case of bad taco.

DALIN

And, as we all know, even a taco supreme
can leave a bad taste in your mouth.

KENNETH

I thought mine was a nice little soft
taco, but it turns out most of that cult
was stuffing her, too. In the end I'd
have to say she was just plain-ol' double-
stuffed burrito.

A cute, but heavy-set waitress comes to take their order.

HEAVY WAITRESS

What can I get you guys.

DALIN

Pitcher of Shiner Bock and three glasses.

She nods and leaves.

KENNETH

Taco Grande.

TEAGUE

Nothing wrong with a two-handed taco
action every now and again.

Another girl passes by. She's dressed provocatively, but
she's a little flat-chested and is very young.

DALIN

Taco verde.

TEAGUE

Yeah, she looks a little green.

Teague points out a large-breasted woman spilling out of
her top.

DALIN, TEAGUE, & KENNETH

(Unison)

Double Decker.

They share a LAUGH.

TEAGUE

Don't you think we're a little old for
this game?

Kenneth and Dalin's heads swivel as two very lovely
ladies pass their table heading towards the dance floor.

DALIN & KENNETH

Nah.

Dalin swats Kenneth on the shoulder, giving him the
signal to move, and they rise in pursuit.

DALIN
 You're never too old to make a run for
 the border.

Teague sits there as if realizing he's going to be left
 behind, then calls after them.

TEAGUE
 Hey, Dalin!

Dalin turns to face him.

TEAGUE (CONT'D)
 Now you have to make that call.

Dalin shakes his head to the negative, continuing out to
 the dance floor.

INT. DALIN'S APARTMENT/INT. KIRAN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

One of the girls from the bar has her arm draped over
 Dalin. She's asleep when Dalin slips carefully out of
 the room, opening and closing the door without a sound,
 emerging into the living room to sit in his recliner.
 The wall clock reads 3:00 AM. He picks the phone off the
 cradle and dials a long distance number. It RINGS five
 times.

KIRAN
 (Groggy)
 Hello?

Dalin says nothing.

KIRAN (CONT'D)
 (Irritated)
 Hello?

DALIN
 Hey.

Kiran rises in bed with the phone in hand as she moves to
 the bathroom. She is careful with the door, too,
 continuing the conversation in a near whisper.

KIRAN
 Hey. It's you. It's really you.

DALIN
 How are you?

KIRAN
 Been better. Been worse.

DALIN
 What are you up to?

KIRAN
Well, I wasn't up that's for sure.

DALIN
I know. I'm sorry.

KIRAN
I'll say you are.

DALIN
How many times can I say it? How many ways?

KIRAN
Ten times. Twenty ways. Are you drunk?

DALIN
Actually, I think it's about to officially become a hangover. I'm coming down pretty hard.

KIRAN
What's your problem, anyway? How could you go this long without even calling me?

DALIN
You didn't call me either.

KIRAN
Honey, the way I see it, ongoing communication was up to you.

DALIN
Don't you see the problem with that?

KIRAN
Yeah. You. You're the problem.

DALIN
Don't be a smart-ass.

KIRAN
I'm sorry. It's late and I have to get up in an hour for a live remote.

DALIN
I didn't call to fight.

KIRAN
Then what did you call for?

DALIN
I called to get your agent's number.

Pause.

DALIN (CONT'D)
Are you still there?

KIRAN
I'm just trying to decide whether or not
I should hang up on your ass.

DALIN
Teague finished his screenplay and he
wants to meet your agent.

KIRAN
Fine. I'll set it up. Don't you have
anything more important to say?

DALIN
I miss you.

Another pause.

KIRAN
You are such a doofus!

DALIN
Did you think that anything could come
along to change that fact?

KIRAN
Yeah. Me.

DALIN
You're a grown woman. You should know
better than to think you can change a
man.

Drew's phone BEEPS.

KIRAN
What's that?

DALIN
My phone. The battery is low.

KIRAN
See? Even your phone knows your a dick.

Dalin tries to LAUGH but when Kiran doesn't join him he
stops.

DALIN
I've never stopped loving you, Kiran.

KIRAN
Nor I you.

DALIN
So we'll talk again soon, yeah?

KIRAN
It's up to you. If you'll just stop
being such a...

And the phone goes dead.

INT. KIRAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Kiran wipes her tears away before going back to bed where a man awaits her.

MAN
Who was that?

KIRAN
Old boyfriend.

MAN
The ball player?

Kiran nods, sliding into the bed next to him.

MAN (CONT'D)
You better tell that asshole to never
call here again.

He rolls over, completely ignoring her. Kiran stares at the ceiling fighting back the tears.

EXT. MOVIE SET - DAY

It's a very busy location shoot. A familiar face chats with Teague near the playback monitor. He's a big star of some note. The actor pleads his case.

Dalin watches the drama unfold from a distance sitting in a director's chair with his name on the back.

The big name actor finally seems pleased with Teague's explanation. The two shake hands and Teague heads towards his pal.

TEAGUE
Actors!

DALIN
You should try working with directors.
They're the real assholes.

TEAGUE
Oh yeah, tough guy. Try working for a
tight-assed producer.

Dalin grins. Kenneth approaches and hands him a cappuccino, taking the chair next to them.

DALIN
Thanks, buddy. Alls I'm sayin' is don't
sweat the small stuff. That's my job.

KENNETH

Yeah. Relax.

Teague nods but looks somewhat distressed.

DALIN

What's the problem?

TEAGUE

What if I'm not the genius you think I am?

DALIN

But you are the genius I think you are.

KENNETH

Have a little faith in yourself.

TEAGUE

Yeah, but what if this picture bombs? You'll lose all your money, Dalin.

Dalin sternly looks his friend in the eye.

DALIN

It's just money. Besides, I already have everything I want.

TEAGUE

Do you?

Beat.

DALIN

I never claimed to be a genius in my love life.

Dalin packs-up his laptop as he readies to leave.

DALIN (CONT'D)

Just get this in the can today so I can keep a buck or two for a rainy day.

Teague and Kenneth watch him walk away.

KENNETH

He's totally' miserable.

TEAGUE

And the sad part is that he doesn't even know it yet.

INT. BALLROOM - NIGHT

All the finest clothes and the latest fashions adorn the party-goers, many of whom are recognizable as big-name stars.

It is a party of great affluence, but Dalin stands alone at the bar, watching everybody else have a good time. A beautiful young woman approaches him.

HARLEY

Hi. I'm Harley.

DALIN

You make good motorcycles.

HARLEY

I've been told I'm a good ride.

DALIN

I'm sure. Dalin.

HARLEY

Yes. You are. Where's your little trophy?

DALIN

The bald dude? I gave him to one of my people who set up a meeting with one of his people and tomorrow I imagine they'll do lunch. If I'm lucky, they'll forget to invite me.

HARLEY

Clever little boy.

Harley is sending out all the signals.

DALIN

I've seen you somewhere before.

HARLEY

Sans clothing, I suppose.

DALIN

Come again?

HARLEY

With you? I'm sure I will.

DALIN

Okay.

HARLEY

Victoria's Secret.

DALIN

Ah, yes. Married man's porn. Got it. You were the one in the purple thong.

HARLEY

That's me.

Harley moves in for the kill.

HARLEY (CONT'D)

(Laughs)

What I don't get is why you're just lurking around here.

DALIN

I'm not lurking.

HARLEY

You are definitely lurking.

DALIN

I thought I was schlepping.

HARLEY

There are plenty of men schlepping about this town, but I don't think that applies in your case.

DALIN

You seem to be an expert on this.

HARLEY

Yes, as a matter of fact, I am. If it looks like a lurk and acts like a lurk it's definitely a lurk. And you are lurking, my friend. Lurking here... lurking there...

DALIN

Lurking to get laid.

HARLEY

Exactly.

Dalin smiles.

INT. DALIN'S APARTMENT/INT. KIRAN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Dalin's huge new plasma television displays Kiran seated across from another guy discussing the daily news. The guy she is talking to is the very same one from her bed earlier. The show on mute, and the whiskey does nothing to help eliminate his somber expression. Eventually, he turns his attention to the phone. He reaches down, grabs the telephone, and dials a long distance number.

KIRAN

(Off Camera)

Hello?

DALIN

Hey.

Kiran is seated in her living room with her television tuned in to her own news channel.

KIRAN
Hey.

DALIN
How are you?

KIRAN
Not as good as you. Congratulations.

DALIN
Oh. It's just a stupid little statue.

KIRAN
Only you would call an Oscar stupid. So to what do I owe the honor of this rare call?

DALIN
I'm watching you on late night reruns.

KIRAN
Well? What do you think?

DALIN
Your hair is too poofy, your makeup is too glossy, and your demeanor is much, much, too much frivolous.

KIRAN
Well, thanks for the call, but...

DALIN
How exactly do you smile while saying, 'fifteen people were killed by a car bomb in Iraq today?'

KIRAN
Give me a break, will ya?

DALIN
You don't belong in a studio.

KIRAN
I agree. But it is a step up. And you were the one who pushed me to pursue this career.

DALIN
I was wrong. How many times can I say it? How many ways can I show it?

Silence for a moment. Then...

KIRAN
I'm thinking it's just way too late for all of that.

DALIN
Do you miss me?

KIRAN
Sometimes.

DALIN
That's a great answer.

KIRAN
Well, at least it's honest.

Kiran reaches onto her coffee table and pulls out a tabloid newspaper. On the cover we see a picture of Harley with Dalin. Caption reads: Supermodel and Super-producer Step Out.

KIRAN (CONT'D)
Unlike a lot of things about us these days.

DALIN
What's that supposed to mean?

KIRAN
How's Harley?

Dalin looks like somebody just wrecked his life.

DALIN
How do you know about her?

KIRAN
I'm a reporter, dipshit.

DALIN
Dipshit? What happened to doofus?

KIRAN
Doofus is far more kind a term than you deserve these days.

DALIN
I'm sorry, Kiran. I really wanted to be the one to tell you about it.

KIRAN
Well, that's just too bad because this picture of you two is only available at like every checkout counter in America.

DALIN
Crap.

KIRAN
It's okay Dalin. Really. It's not like I haven't been seeing somebody myself.

DALIN
Who?

KIRAN
Does it matter?

DALIN
I think it's only fair. You know who I'm seeing.

KIRAN
Thanks only to the paparazzi.

DALIN
So are you going to tell me?

KIRAN
It's Steve Simmons.

DALIN
The anchor? Well that explains why you've been spending so much time at the studio.

KIRAN
Are you insinuating I didn't earn my shot?

DALIN
Are you moving to New York?

KIRAN
Answer the question and I'll answer yours.

DALIN
No. Not insinuating. Just fishing.

KIRAN
Typical. Look it. I was just filling in for the regular girl.

DALIN
So what you have in him is yet another long distance relationship.

KIRAN
It would seem so, yes, but at least there's something to this relationship. What do you have in Harley besides your dick?

DALIN
That's cold. Come see me.

KIRAN
What would Harley think?

DALIN
I could give a shit what Harley thinks.

KIRAN
I don't think that's a good idea. I'm not ready.

DALIN
What's the matter? Won't Steve let you off the leash?

KIRAN
This is pointless.

DALIN
I know how you love bondage.

KIRAN
Okay. You know what? Just call me when you decide to act like a grown-up about all of this.

DALIN
Fine.

KIRAN
Fine.

Both of them HANG-UP simultaneously. Dalin hurls the phone across the room and Kiran KICKS over her end table in anger.

INT. KIRAN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Kiran is throwing a party. The guests are all dressed up for the occasion, as is Reese, who weaves her way in and out of the crowd to the safety of the kitchen. There she finds Teague, raiding the refrigerator.

REESE
What are you doing in here?

TEAGUE
I'm so sick of finger-food! I'm just looking for something decent to eat.

He closes the door as they hug. She smiles.

REESE
Did you bring Michelle the belle?

TEAGUE
She's here some place.

Reese laughs. She looks over the at the fridge, then back at Teague.

REESE
So did you find anything decent?

Both of them bolt for the fridge door.

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Kiran enters to find Reese and Teague, sitting on the counter, LAUGHING together, eating leftover fried chicken straight from the bucket.

KIRAN
I spend all this money on a big-time party and you two raid my fridge. Nice.

Reese and Teague LAUGH. Kiran walks over, reaches into the bucket, plucking out a leg of her own, joining them on the counter.

KIRAN (CONT'D)
Damn that's good.

The three of them eat in silence.

KIRAN (CONT'D)
How's Dalin?

Reese nudges Teague. Teague checks his watch.

TEAGUE
One minute, fifteen seconds. You win.

Teague reaches into his back pocket, producing a dollar bill from his wallet. He hands it over. Kiran looks confused as Reese accepts with a grin.

KIRAN
What?

REESE
I bet him a buck you couldn't go five minutes away from Steve without asking about Dalin.

Kiran sighs.

KIRAN
Does he love her, Teague?

Teague shrugs, hopping off the counter. He finds a trash-can and throws away a chicken bone.

REESE
Probably about as much as you love Steve.

Teague wipes his hands.

TEAGUE
I'm not much of a fan.

He hops back up on the counter.

REESE
Neither am I.

TEAGUE
Harley and Dalin, that I get. The lust
factor, ya' know. But you and Steve?
Well, that just don't make no sense.

KIRAN
I suppose it doesn't.

STEVE
(Off Camera)
There you are!

The three of them turn to find Steve standing in the doorway.

STEVE (CONT'D)
Everybody was looking for you, hun.

KIRAN
Guess I better get back to playing the
hostest with the mostest.

She hops off the counter, joining Steve at the door.
Reese and Teague look at each other.

REESE
(Whispered)
You think he heard all of that?

Teague simply shrugs and takes another bite. Steve reaches out to take her by the hand, but Kiran staggers when she reaches for it, and collapses unconscious on the floor. Steve stares down, unsure what to do. Teague springs to life and the first by her side with Reese followed close behind.

INT. VISITOR'S CENTER - DAY

Older Dalin exits the public restroom. He poruses the maps and brochures on the racks until he finds a map of the Kansas City area. He takes it, leaving the building.

I/E. PICKUP - DAY

Unfolding the map, he searches the index for a street, finding the right spot on the map. He backtracks to his current position outside the Kansas City area and then traces his finger up towards the street in question.

Task complete, he tosses the map loosely on the seat next to him, FIRING THE ENGINE, and shifting it into gear.

INT. DALIN'S BEDROOM/INT. KIRAN'S APARTMENT

Dalin stares at the ceiling. His face contorts with pleasure as his body writhes in ecstasy. There's a head concealed under the covers bobbing up and down around his midsection.

The phone RINGS beside them, but the head doesn't stop. Dalin reaches out for the telephone and answers in a struggled tone.

NOTE: *Kiran does not appear on camera during this scene.*

DALIN
Hello.

KIRAN
Hey.

Dalin's expression changes instantly. He pushes the person under the sheets trying to get her to stop, but she just keeps going.

DALIN
Hey.

KIRAN
What are you doing?

DALIN
Nothing.

Harley ducks out from under the sheets. She's LAUGHING. Dalin puts a finger to his lips but she GIGGLES anyway.

KIRAN
Who's there?

Dalin mouths the word: "FUCK"

DALIN
Nobody.

Now Harley's expression changes. She's pissed. She throws off the sheet and starts searching for her clothing.

HARLEY
I'm nobody, huh? Is that the news-bitch?

KIRAN
I'm sorry. I caught you at a bad time.

DALIN
No. You haven't. It's just...

Harley already has her dress on when she grabs a set of keys off the night-stand.

HARLEY
Have a nice life, Dalin.

Harley storms out of the bedroom. After a few seconds pass, a door OPENS and then BANGS shut. Then, SILENCE.

KIRAN
Is she gone?

DALIN
It would seem.

KIRAN
I'm sorry, Dalin.

DALIN
No you're not.

Dalin gets out of the bed, pulling on a pair of shorts. He stands and walks into the living room.

KIRAN
I just needed to talk.

DALIN
So talk.

KIRAN
Actually, I just wanted to hear your voice.

DALIN
So? You finally miss me.

He can hear Kiran CRYING on the other end of the telephone. Dalin is shocked speechless.

KIRAN
Why didn't you just ask me to stay? Was it something I did? Something I didn't do?

DALIN
Oh, Kiran. I was just young and arrogant. What else can I say?

He listens to her SOBS for a moment.

DALIN (CONT'D)
Are you okay?

KIRAN
Do I sound okay to you?

DALIN
No.

KIRAN
Then I'm not okay. Nothing's okay.
Nothing has been okay since the day I
left you. There! I said it.

Dalin sits down on his couch.

DALIN
Tell me what's wrong, Kiran.

KIRAN
I would've loved you forever, Dalin.
Don't you see that? Can't you see I'm
loving you even now. I never wanted to
be Connie fuckin' Chung? I didn't want
this! I didn't want any of this shit! I
just wanted you, you dumb, stupid,
ignorant doofus.

DALIN
I'm sorry. I just didn't get it.

KIRAN
Well. You should have.

DALIN
I can't help you if you don't tell me
what's going on.

KIRAN
You can't help me anyway, so what's the
point? What's done is done.

DALIN
Kiran? Please tell me what's going on.

Kiran SNIFFLES over the phone. We hear her BLOW her nose
and when she speaks again it's with more composure.

KIRAN
You wanna know something?

DALIN
What's that?

KIRAN
You are a prophet.

DALIN
How do you figure?

KIRAN
 That damn kiss. Kissing you hurt me more
 than anything has ever hurt me in my
 entire life. I wish I'd never kissed
 you, Dalin.

With that, the DIAL TONE commences and Dalin realizes she
 has hung up on him. He hits *69 on the phone.

KIRAN (CONT'D)
 (Voice Mail)
 Hi. This is Kiran...

He hangs up the phone and tries again. Then a third time
 with the same result.

INT. APARTMENT BEDROOM - NIGHT

Dalin jerks a duffle bag from the closet, throwing it
 onto the center of his bed. He packs until the Longhorn
 Sweatshirt is added. He ZIPS the bag, takes it in hand,
 and makes his exit, kicking over his Best Picture Oscar
 on the way out the door.

EXT. KIRAN'S HOME - DUSK

The pickup pulls up a circular driveway. Dalin kills the
 engine, getting out of the car with Emily in hot pursuit.

I/E. KIRAN'S HOME - DUSK

Dalin RINGS and waits anxiously for an answer with Emily
 panting by his side. To his surprise, Reese answers.

REESE
 Well. If it isn't the Great IAMS?

DALIN
 What are you doing here?

REESE
 I'd ask the same of you, but she just
 insisted I let you in.

Reese escorts him inside while Emily takes off up the
 staircase.

REESE (CONT'D)
 Well, I guess she knows right where she's
 going, huh?

Dalin nods and Reese motions with her hand.

REESE (CONT'D)
 Let's go in here.

INT. KIRAN'S LIVING ROOM - DUSK

Reese guides him inside.

REESE

Have a seat. She'll be down in a minute.

Dalin refuses, walking impatiently around the room.

DALIN

Why didn't she meet me at the door?

REESE

I'm sure she'll fill you in.

Reese turns to leave the room but stops short of the exit. She faces Dalin again.

REESE (CONT'D)

For the record, Dalin. I'm glad you're here.

Reese leaves Dalin to his incessant pacing. A bit of time passes, then...

KIRAN

(Off Camera)

Hi, Dalin.

Dalin spins to face her but he is not prepared for what he sees. Kiran's skin is pale, her lips chapped, and her body frail and weak. Her hair, what little there is left, is unkempt and she has a visible six-inch scar across her skull. She is wearing warm-ups, a T-shirt, and a pair of socks. Emily stands dutifully beside her. Kiran walks over and grabs on to him before he can find his voice, hugging him tightly.

KIRAN (CONT'D)

It's so good to see you.

She grips his shirt in her fists as she quakes in painful tears. Eventually she breaks the embrace to take a seat on the sofa. Emily hops into her lap. Dalin just keeps pacing, looking at her pictures, paintings, and awards.

DALIN

What happened to you?

KIRAN

Cancer. I had a brain tumor.

He stops everything when he sees the CAN OF DOG FOOD sitting inside the display case. Surrounded by several news awards, it looks out of place. Tears form in his hardened eyes for the very first time.

KIRAN (CONT'D)
If you can't handle this, then you still
haven't grown up enough to handle us.

DALIN
I'm here to make sure there is an "us".

KIRAN
Then look at me.

He does; she PATS the cushion next to her.

KIRAN (CONT'D) (cont'd)
Come have a seat.

Dalin reluctantly agrees, but he's very uncomfortable.

DALIN
You said 'had'. Does that mean you're
okay now?

KIRAN
They removed 98% of the tumor. I'm going
through chemo to try and knockout the
rest. The doctors like my chances. For
now, anyway.

DALIN
Why didn't you tell me about this?

KIRAN
I should have, I know.

DALIN
Stop treating me like a child.

KIRAN
Then start acting like a man because I'm
running out of time. One way or another,
I'm running out of time and I can't keep
waiting around on you anymore.

DALIN
What about that anchor guy?

KIRAN
He just couldn't handle this. Harley?

DALIN
That was just...

Pause.

DALIN (CONT'D)
I wanna make this right, Kiran.

KIRAN
Being here is a great start.

Dalin nods.

KIRAN (CONT'D)
I'm tired of hurting you. I'm tired of hating you. Mostly, I'm just plain tired. And I can't afford to feel that way. Not if I'm going to beat this.

She leans her head on his shoulder.

DALIN
I'm so sorry, Kiran. When I think of all the time we've wasted...

Kiran puts her finger up to his lips.

KIRAN
Then don't waste any more. I don't know how much time I have left so I'm making every second count from now on. With or without you. Now you need to decide...

She kisses him lightly on the lips.

KIRAN (CONT'D)
Hold me, Dalin. Tell me you love me. Tell me we'll forget all about this. Tell me you'll marry me and we'll make beautiful babies...

DALIN
I don't want to lose you, Kiran.

KIRAN
Well. That's not entirely in your hands anymore, is it? But we did make a deal, right? Don't you dare quit on me.

They continue holding one another as they shed more tears.

FADE OUT

FADE IN ON: KIRAN KISSING ANOTHER MAN

On a beautiful spring day. She looks fabulous again—just the way she did in college. He's a very handsome man and there is little doubt about how she feels about him. These two clearly share a passionate love.

TEAGUE
(Off Camera)
Cut! Print!

EXT. MOVIE SET - DAY

THREE YEARS LATER. Kiran indifferently strides away from the man she was kissing. Teague greets her before she can even reach the camera.

TEAGUE

Hot. Very hot. You are incredible.

KIRAN

Thanks.

TEAGUE

I'll never know why you just wanted to settle for just reading the news.

She smiles and makes her way past several people.

TEAGUE (CONT'D)

Okay, let's get cracking. Next setup.

She finds Dalin sitting there smiling up at her.

KIRAN

What are you grinning at? Your woman was just smoochin' on another man. You oughta be pissed.

Dalin LAUGHS as Kiran takes the seat next to him.

KIRAN (CONT'D)

You weren't even watching, were you?

DALIN

Naw. He's no match for me.

KIRAN

Really? How's that?

DALIN

Did it hurt?

KIRAN

Well, the sonuvabitch could really use a breath mint, but otherwise...

She leans in and pecks him on the cheek.

KIRAN (CONT'D)

It didn't hurt at all.

DALIN

Not even a little bit?

KIRAN

Not a bit.

KENNETH

You should have said something about his breath earlier. I could have taken care of it.

KIRAN

It's okay, Flower Child. Not to worry.

She takes another drink before planting a fat one on Dalin. Now this is a real kiss! It blows the fake kiss away.

TEAGUE

Shit. I thought you were good on camera.

They break.

KIRAN

You are such doofus.

DALIN

Hey! I'm the only doofus around here.

KIRAN

Of course you are, dear.

Teague joins them now and they watch the crew hustle for the next setup. Kiran stretches out her hand toward Dalin's.

DALIN

Uh, uh. Put your ring back on before you touch me, woman.

Kiran reaches into her jeans pocket and produces her wedding ring, sliding it on the appropriate finger.

KIRAN

Don't worry. I'll always be your bitch.

KENNETH

Oh shit! That reminds me. Shelly.

KIRAN

Why didn't she come out here with you?

Kenneth shrugs, then shuffles off. Teague LAUGHS.

DALIN

What's so funny?

TEAGUE

LDR's.

DALIN

What about 'em?

TEAGUE

They say long distance relationships
never work out.

Teague gets up and starts help set up the next shot.

Kiran's cell phone RINGS. The caller ID reads: DR.
BARTLETT. Kiran takes Dalin's hand and a DEEP BREATH
before answering the phone.

KIRAN

Hey doc, what's the news?

Their fingers interlock on the arm of the chair.

Her ring is beautiful.

FADE TO BLACK.