

Three

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. CITY SCAPE - MORNING

The city, awash in the golden light of another day.

SUPER: "NEW YORK: THE NEAR FUTURE"

NARRATOR (V.O.)

For ten-thousand years our fellow creatures have sought their ideal mates. And while there have been moments of bliss and extended periods of harmony, the quest has been, in the end, as fruitless and in vain as was ever any medieval knight's quest for the Holy Grail.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

JEFFREY LORNER, 35, walks down a sidewalk.

A pleasant-looking, well-dressed, unassuming mensch.

A car is parked alongside the curb, its trunk open, emergency parking lights blinking.

Jeffrey stops near the car and looks at a nearby brownstone.

He sees a WOMAN coming down its front steps cradling a box of her belongings.

A MAN stands outside the entryway.

The woman places the box in the trunk of the car. She returns to the foot of the steps.

WOMAN

You never cared what I wanted.

MAN

You know that's not true.

The woman goes up the steps, brushes by the man.

She quickly returns with another box in her arms.

WOMAN

My going to grad school was something to be indulged. Like a hobby.

She descends the steps.

MAN

I thought we had something special.

She places the box in the trunk of the car.

She turns toward the man.

WOMAN

You did. Your job at N.Y.U. Me? I fixed your meals and ironed your ego.

MAN

We can work something out.

She gives him the finger.

WOMAN

Work on this!

The woman goes up the steps again.

She returns with another box.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

My brother's truck'll get the books and the armoire.

She puts the box into the trunk and slams it shut.

She notices Jeffrey.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

What are you looking at, dip shit?

Gets in the car, FIRES UP the ENGINE, and ROARS off.

Jeffrey stands in shock.

The man looks at Jeffrey.

Lifts his arms in exasperation and goes inside.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Jeffrey walks absorbed with what he's just seen.

He comes upon a homeless man in a blanket sleeping on the sidewalk.

By his side lies a cardboard sign that reads: "HUNGRY AND ALONE."

Jeffrey regards the man.

The man looks to be Jeffrey's age and height.

Jeffrey pulls a wallet from his jacket pocket, extracts two twenties and carefully tucks them into a fold in the blanket.

He pulls a flap of blanket up to the man's chin.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - LATER

Jeffrey sits at a table by the front window, still disturbed by the couple's argument.

He pours cream unsteadily into his coffee.

Tears open a packet of sugar, spilling half as he puts it into the cup.

Stirs mechanically.

Surveys the coffee shop.

It's full of couples engaged in various degrees of intimacy or corrosion.

Jeffrey focuses his attention on three couples.

COUPLE #1:

Both are African-American.

ENAMORED WOMAN

When did you know for sure?

ENAMORED MAN

That night down by the water.

ENAMORED WOMAN

I knew for sure then, too.

ENAMORED MAN

Your kiss tasted of Sauvignon Blanc and the scampi. I realized we were forever.

She puts a hand on his arm.

ENAMORED WOMAN

And I could taste your Coq au Vin.

ENAMORED MAN
Remember that song by Popsicle?

She sings a few bars.

ENAMORED WOMAN
"IT'S OUR LOVE, BABY, FOREVER OUR
LOVE."

ENAMORED MAN
That's our song from now on.

Jeffrey stares into the room and blinks.

COUPLE #2:

JEALOUS HUSBAND
You flirted with him the whole
evening.

WIFE
He's my supervisor.

JEALOUS HUSBAND
You see me making eyes at Diane?
She's my boss, for Christ's sake.

WIFE
He expects that. It comes with the
job.

JEALOUS HUSBAND
Jesus, Amanda, whadda you do when
you want a promotion? Massage his
prostate?

WIFE
Maybe you should skip the company's
next social.

JEALOUS HUSBAND
Or request a transfer to the Boston
office.

Jeffrey takes a sip of coffee, his ears alert.

COUPLE #3:

ANGRY WIFE
You spend more eating out each
month than I do on clothes in a
year.

HUSBAND

Can we change that subject? It's getting old.

ANGRY WIFE

You know how long since we've gone to a show?

HUSBAND

We will, after I tuck away the new account with Barker Industries.

ANGRY WIFE

(raising voice)

And don't think you fool me with that working late at the office routine. New account. Ha! I'm on to you, bub.

Several customers look in her direction.

HUSBAND

Louder, someone must have not heard you.

ANGRY WIFE

I'm calling a lawyer.

HUSBAND

(yelling)

That's the best news I've heard in years!

Man gets up and stomps out.

Everyone momentarily stops talking and watches him leave.

Then they resume their conversations.

The woman wipes an angry tear from her eye and sips her coffee.

Jeffrey looks even more stricken than after witnessing the couple's argument in the street.

He looks down at his coffee, then out the large window of the coffee shop.

He sees a billboard across the street for a match-making company called MatchTec.

INSERT - BILLBOARD

A large silhouette of a man and a woman holding hands stands beside two intertwined trees.

The sign reads:

"WE WILL SEARCH FROM ONE END OF THE
WORLD TO THE OTHER TO FIND YOUR
IDEAL MATE."

There's a phone number at the bottom of the sign.

BACK TO SCENE

Jeffrey writes it onto a paper napkin.

CUT TO:

EXT. JEFFREY'S MOTHER'S HOUSE - MORNING

A sprawling country house with attractive landscaping and a lawn starting to brown.

Several maples near the house are tinged with fall color.

Jeffrey's car winds up a drive and stops in front of double entry doors.

He gets out, a small package in his hand.

He goes into the house.

INT. FOYER OF HOUSE

Jeffrey cups his hands around his mouth like a megaphone.

JEFFREY
(holding back)
Oh, mother!

A 60-ish WOMAN in a tweed outfit comes into the foyer.

WOMAN
Mr. Jeffrey! What a surprise!

MOTHER (O.S.)
I'm in the sunroom.

WOMAN
I'll bring tea. It's chilly today.

JEFFREY

Thank you, Emma. I could use some warmth.

INT. SUNROOM

The room is bright with morning sun and filled with expensive wicker furniture and coddled house plants.

Jeffrey's MOTHER reclines on a chaise longue with a blanket across her lap.

She is 65 with expertly styled white hair. Still very much a beauty.

She smokes a cigarette.

JEFFREY

Smoking will permanent-press your wrinkles, mother.

MOTHER

(mock surprise)

I have wrinkles?

(blows smoke)

Sheffields are one-hundred percent tobacco and the best tobacco.

Twelve dollars a pack.

Jeffrey kisses his mother.

JEFFREY

Here's your saffron. Pennsylvania. Better than Spanish, they say.

Places the package on a nearby table.

MOTHER

Such a dear boy. Matilda's son wouldn't know a saffron pistil from a six-gun pistol.

JEFFREY

Should he care? Early forties and already three years into a cushy retirement.

MOTHER

You can retire too. If you put your mind to it. Come live with your white-haired mother.

JEFFREY

Yesterday I saw something that upset me very much.

MOTHER

Oh?

JEFFREY

A couple having a horrible argument on a street. They were breaking up.

MOTHER

Couples break up all the time.

JEFFREY

Afterward, I went to a coffee shop. Couples were arguing there as well.

MOTHER

That's what couples do. Argue.

JEFFREY

But why must they? I don't recall you and father arguing.

MOTHER

Why would we? We had this.

She takes in the house with her eyes and hands.

JEFFREY

I would wager even most wealthy couples argue.

MOTHER

Do you argue with... what was the name of that girl you had over to the house last week?

JEFFREY

Elaine? Oh, no, mother. We would never argue. Elaine never does anything that could provoke an argument.

MOTHER

I like that young woman. Maybe you've found your match. You've never had a serious girlfriend. And you're at an age when you should be settling down.

JEFFREY

To a series of arguments?

MOTHER

You said Elaine doesn't argue.

JEFFREY

I'm looking into one of those match-making companies.

MOTHER

Jeffrey, don't be ridiculous.

(beat)

Remember how I met your father?

JEFFREY

At a country club party.

MOTHER

I didn't need a matchmaker. I knew if I frequented circles at my societal level for long enough I would meet the right person.

JEFFREY

I don't go to country clubs any more. I live in the city.

MOTHER

Don't dismiss the old fashioned ways of finding a spouse.

JEFFREY

Times have changed, mother.

MOTHER

Times haven't changed. That match-making company wants you to believe times have changed. My God, do you remember when the Gordon's daughter went through a matchmaker? Brian said it cost him three-quarters of a million dollars.

JEFFREY

But she eventually found someone.

MOTHER

She's probably arguing somewhere in New Jersey as we speak.

JEFFREY

Not to bring up a painful subject, but father wasn't always the perfect mate.

MOTHER

(wistful)

The affair hurt me terribly. Other than that your father was a saint.

MOTHER'S FACE

wreathed in smoke, as she stares back into the past.

INT. JEFFREY'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

Jeffrey comes into his apartment.

A male British voice says: "Jeffrey, while you were out Elaine called."

Jeffrey waves a hand over his phone.

ELAINE BENNETT appears on a large wall screen.

She is 30, neatly dressed in a conservative skirt and blouse.

The good-looking, complete-package woman.

ELAINE (V.O.)

Hi, Jeffrey. A movie or a museum this weekend? The Odeon has the Tarentino retrospective. That campy Inglourious Basterds. Did you ever see it? The Met still has the Picasso. All the paintings from his Blue Period.

She looks at Jeffrey as if she can see him.

How is your back? Are you feeling better?

She blows him a kiss.

Bye, honey. Call me.

Jeffrey stands for a moment and then walks over to a small bar and pours scotch into a large crystal glass.

He takes a long sip.

He punches a button on the phone.

Video of Elaine jogging along a park path appears on the screen.

ELAINE (V.O.)
(huffing)
Can't come to the phone right now.
Leave a message please.

Jeffrey takes a deep breath to compose himself.

JEFFREY
Hi, Elaine. Sorry I missed you. Uh,
let's do the museum Saturday. Meet
you at the fountain in front at
four o'clock, okay?
(mustering enthusiasm)
Love you.

Jeffrey walks over to a sofa and sits.

He puts his face in his hands and begins to cry softly.

INT. JEFFREY'S APARTMENT - TWO DAYS LATER

CHIME of DOORBELL.

Jeffrey answers the door.

He sees an attractive, smartly dressed SALES WOMAN holding a briefcase.

She extends her hand.

SALES WOMAN
Good morning. I'm Debbie Rice from
MatchTec.

BACK TO SCENE

JEFFREY
Come in. I've been expecting you.

INT. JEFFREY'S APARTMENT

The sales woman sits stiffly on the sofa.

Jeffrey sits opposite her in a matching arm chair.

Through a large window we see the buildings of New York.

DEBBIE (SALES WOMAN)
You wanted information about our
services at MatchTec.

JEFFREY

This is a big step for me.

DEBBIE

A big step for anyone.
Congratulations on taking charge of
your life.

JEFFREY

It's all about the technology,
isn't it?

DEBBIE

MatchTec creates happy couples
because we make maximum use of
compatibility technology.

JEFFREY

Test me inside out, find me a
companion you've tested inside out.

DEBBIE

Exactly.

JEFFREY

Find out I'm an extrovert who likes
golf so you pair me up with an
extrovert who likes golf.

DEBBIE

MatchTec won't define you so
simply. Nor classify you as a
Determined Pragmatist and pair you
with another Determined Pragmatist.
Some companies do that, but no
lasting relationships come from it.
And they'll charge you five-
thousand dollars. MatchTec goes
deeper.

JEFFREY

They must go really deep, for a
million dollars.

DEBBIE

Believe me we do.

JEFFREY

Into the center of my brain?

DEBBIE

You undergo a barrage of tests.

JEFFREY

Long as someone doesn't stick my fingertip with a lancet.

DEBBIE

Nothing physically painful.
Thirty-six days of written tests.
Twenty-four days of interviews. And
so on.

JEFFREY

I can handle that.

DEBBIE

The psychiatric interviews are
daunting. You're asked some tough
questions.

JEFFREY

Sounds like you're trying not to
sell me the package.

DEBBIE

You should know what to expect.

JEFFREY

Medical exams?

DEBBIE

Many. Clients have had their lives
saved by them. The cherry? Your
complete genome and microbiome work
up.

JEFFREY

Microbiome?

DEBBIE

You have one-hundred trillion
bacteria of ten-thousand types in
your body.

JEFFREY

I think I'm going to be ill.

DEBBIE

Six pounds of bacteria.

JEFFREY

Maybe even die.

DEBBIE

Our doctors identify bacterial imbalances that could cause infection, mood disorders, you name it.

JEFFREY

Do you have a MatchTec mate?

DEBBIE

Even with my ten percent discount I can't afford to look for a mate. I go to church socials.

JEFFREY

Church socials?

DEBBIE

Riff raff don't go to church socials. People from the good end of society do.

JEFFREY

Any luck?

DEBBIE

(ignores question)

Did you know the chance of getting along with a blind date is only seventeen percent?

JEFFREY

What're the odds on church socials?

DEBBIE

We don't have statistics on that sort of thing. I do know there are one-hundred fifty million single adults in the U.S., and seventy-five percent of them are looking for a lasting relationship.

JEFFREY

So I got a lot of competition.

DEBBIE

Chances are good we'll find you a match.

JEFFREY

Meaning?

DEBBIE

Matches are on a scale of one to ten.

JEFFREY

Ten is the lowest?

DEBBIE

You match at Level Ten, you're pretty much guaranteed happiness or, as we say at MatchTec, conformance.

JEFFREY

A Level Five match?

DEBBIE

Very rare. A super pairing.

JEFFREY

A Level One match?

DEBBIE

A Level One match is a headline on the front page of The New York Times.

JEFFREY

I've never seen one.

DEBBIE

That's how rare it is.

JEFFREY

Now I know what my friends Bob and Carol meant when they said they're a Level Eight couple.

DEBBIE

Level Eight? I bet they're in clover.

JEFFREY

Now that you mention it... Guess I should be more observant.

DEBBIE

Now you know they're a Level Eight I'm sure you will.

She flashes a MatchTec smile.

INT. BOB AND CAROL'S KITCHEN - MORNING

Jeffrey sits at a table with a mug of fresh coffee.

Sunlight streams in through the windows of the breakfast nook.

BOB WRIGHT, 49, and CAROL WRIGHT, somewhat younger, also sit with mugs of coffee.

Bob still has all his hair and looks like a man who stays fit.

Carol, attractive, has long, slightly graying hair gathered in a bun.

CAROL

So you're going with MatchTec?

JEFFREY

Yeah. You two a Level Eight. I guess I was too engrossed in my own problems.

BOB

You won't be disappointed. Unless they discover you're a psychopath.

JEFFREY

Mother thinks I'm crazy.

CAROL

Our parents did too.

JEFFREY

So, what's life like on the eighth floor?

BOB

How does it feel to have been born in Des Moines? We're who we are. Neither of us has a former relationship to compare to.

CAROL

Eight is great, Bob. Have we had ten fights in ten years?

JEFFREY

(country)

Ain't a Level Eleven or Twelve, is there?

CAROL
Ten's the cutoff. That's where most people get matched. I guess we're really lucky. Being an Eight.

JEFFREY
Take my first test Monday.

BOB
You still seeing Elaine?

JEFFREY
That could be a problem. God, I don't want to hurt her.

CAROL
Could be a problem?

BOB
Tell her. Tell her the next time you see her.

CAROL
Tell her she isn't measuring up to a person you're not sure even exists.

BOB
You'll come off as a prick.

CAROL
No weak characters allowed here, Jeffrey. This is grown-up stuff.

JEFFREY
(almost to self)
First time in my life I'm having to face the mettle of my character.

BOB
You said it, friend.
(puts hand on Jeffrey's arm)
Carol and I'll be there through the whole thing.

INT. MAIN OFFICES OF MATCHTEC - MORNING

DR. MARION WORTHEIMER, president of MatchTec, sits at a large desk.

He is distinguished, genuine, in his 60s.

Jeffrey sits opposite him in a comfortable chair.

Dr. Wortheimer's office is spacious and well-appointed with art work and greenery.

DR. WORTHEIMER

You'll relish your experience with MatchTec.

JEFFREY

I'm lucky I can afford it.

DR. WORTHEIMER

Most people can't. Could they we'd have a very different, much better world out there. But, all things considered, it's a bargain. After all, what's your peace of mind worth?

JEFFREY

Exactly.

DR. WORTHEIMER

Monday we start you on your way.

JEFFREY

World-wide, what's the size of the pool I'm in?

DR. WORTHEIMER

Twenty million. Specifically, ten million women. There are now eight-hundred forty-five match-making companies in the world that share their information.

JEFFREY

With ten million in the pot, so to speak, the chances of a match would seem good.

DR. WORTHEIMER

They are.

JEFFREY

Wait. Twenty million people in the world can afford this?

DR. WORTHEIMER

Some are peripherals. Persons who take a certain number of tests at no charge in exchange for our getting to use their data.

(MORE)

DR. WORTHEIMER (CONT'D)
They get a free chance for a match,
although the odds are long.

JEFFREY
I don't understand.

DR. WORTHEIMER
Let's say one of your potential
matches is a peripheral. We have
her finish up the tests, for a
nominal fee, in the hope she's the
one for you.

JEFFREY
What if I get matched with a man?

DR. WORTHEIMER
Don't laugh. It's happened.

JEFFREY
The look on my mother's face...

DR. WORTHEIMER
A favorite anecdote I tell clients:
the Norwegian alpinist who was
expecting, I think, a match with a
Swedish hiker or something akin.
Ended up with a Korean water skier.

Jeffrey laughs.

JEFFREY
How many people enrolled with
MatchTec last year?

Dr. Wortheimer picks up a remote and a large pie chart
appears on the wall that conforms to the statistics he
rattles off.

DR. WORTHEIMER
Twelve thousand five-hundred and
eighty-two.

JEFFREY
The results?

DR. WORTHEIMER
(reading from chart)
Seven-hundred fifty dropped out.
Six-hundred sixty-seven were deemed
non-recommendable. Thirty-eight
died. Seven-hundred thirty not
matchable.

JEFFREY

Why would someone drop out?

DR. WORTHEIMER

Some can't tolerate the testing. They feel denuded by it, left with nothing of themselves. Remember, Jeffrey, if you decide to bow out before the half way mark, you only forfeit fifty-thousand dollars.

JEFFREY

I stick to something once I've started it.

DR. WORTHEIMER

Good boy.

JEFFREY

What about the six-hundred sixty-seven deemed non-recommendable?

DR. WORTHEIMER

A delicate subject. Our testing sometimes uncovers pathological fissures in clients. We don't want to be in the business of pairing up sociopaths. When we tell them what we've discovered they usually begin therapy immediately.

JEFFREY

What eventually happens to them?

DR. WORTHEIMER

That is something we don't follow up on.

(leans forward)

Off the record? I imagine the hard-core sociopaths quickly drop out of therapy. After all, they're sociopaths. They think they're pretty perfect to begin with.

JEFFREY

Doesn't that gnaw at you?

Dr. Wortheimer looks Jeffrey in the eye.

DR. WORTHEIMER

Frankly, yes.

JEFFREY

What about the seven-hundred thirty who turn out to be not matchable?

DR. WORTHEIMER

Test results too disparate for a match-up, for any number of reasons. They get most of their money back.

JEFFREY

How many found ideal mates or, as you say, conformance?

DR. WORTHEIMER

Ten thousand four-hundred forty-two were matched at Levels Eight, Nine, and Ten. An overwhelming majority at Level Ten, around ninety-four percent.

JEFFREY

Not even one Seven?

DR. WORTHEIMER

Not even one Seven.

JEFFREY

What about a Five or a Three?

DR. WORTHEIMER

They happen. But exceedingly rare.

JEFFREY

A One?

DR. WORTHEIMER

Come now, Jeffrey. Here you're talking fairy tale conformance. I can't imagine what a Level One relationship would be like. Although I know of a few world-wide during the last ten years.

JEFFREY

Those couples must still be skipping through meadows thick with flowers.

DR. WORTHEIMER

All I can say is I know they are.

JEFFREY

Are?

DR. WORTHEIMER
 Skipping through meadows thick with
 flowers.

EXT. FOUNTAIN OUTSIDE MUSEUM - DAY

Jeffrey sits on the edge of a fountain waiting for Elaine.

Couples walk about in the plaza; children run to and fro.

A vendor sells popcorn from his cart.

Jeffrey checks his watch. He looks up.

He sees Elaine approach with a jaunty step.

She smiles radiantly.

She wears a red suit.

BACK TO SCENE

ELAINE
 Even when I'm early you always
 precede me.

JEFFREY
 (taking in her dress)
 Impossible to lose you in all that
 blue.

Elaine kisses Jeffrey lightly on the lips and then locks his
 arm into hers.

ELAINE
 You'll never lose me, Jeffrey.

They head toward the museum.

INT. MUSEUM GALLERY - LATER

People stand about looking at paintings.

In the b.g. hang Picasso's The Old Guitarist, The Frugal
 Repast, and The Blind Man's Meal.

Jeffrey and Elaine stand before The Blind Man's Meal.

ELAINE (O.S.)
 His fingers are elongated like
 those of an El Greco figure.
 (MORE)

ELAINE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 Ask me anything about the Blue
 Period. I'm up on it.

JEFFREY (O.S.)
 Picasso's first period. That's all
 I know.

ELAINE
 Four years, 1900 to 1904.

JEFFREY
 Blue like in sad?

ELAINE
 Picasso's friend Carlos Casagemas
 shot himself in a Paris café in
 1901. Unrequited love. He said
 that's when he went blue. But never
 mind. He was already into blue when
 Casagemas died.

JEFFREY
 Did Picasso ever paint Casa --
 (stumbles over name)

ELAINE
 -- gemas.

JEFFREY
 Casagemas?

Elaine points.

ELAINE
 There he is over there.

Jeffrey sees La Vie.

ELAINE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 Voilà Carlos Casagemas.

JEFFREY (O.S.)
 At least in the painting he gets
 the girl.

ELAINE (O.S.)
 Look at this one.

Jeffrey and Elaine see The Celestina.

JEFFREY (O.S.)
 First place in the ugly contest.

ELAINE (O.S.)

The Celestina. A procuress in a Fifteenth Century Spanish play who links up the tragic lovers Calixto and Melibea.

CELESTINA

and her blind eye.

JEFFREY (O.S.)

Partially blind matchmaker. Not a good sign.

ELAINE

What would the Celestina say about us? Think she'd give us her seal of approval?

EXT. MATCHTEC BUILDING - MORNING

STEPS

Jeffrey, smartly attired, ascends the steps.

There's a large sign that reads "MatchTec" and on it the logo of two intertwined trees.

Jeffrey enters the revolving door of the building.

INT. LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Jeffrey walks up to a small information kiosk dwarfed by the spacious lobby.

A handsome male RECEPTIONIST sits ramrod straight in a cream-colored suit behind a counter.

RECEPTIONIST

Good morning and welcome to MatchTec. How may I help you this morning?

JEFFREY

I have an appointment.

RECEPTIONIST

Of course. Mr. Lorner. We've been expecting you.

The Receptionist picks up a phone and says something into it.

A beautiful HOSTESS, African-American, quickly appears, also dressed in a cream-colored suit.

She CLIPS up to Jeffrey.

HOSTESS (JANET)
Hello, Jeffrey. I'm Janet, your
hostess. Welcome to your first day
of testing. Please follow me.

INT. TESTING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The room is small but well-appointed.

A fire burns in a fireplace.

There are plants and flowers and on the walls several paintings of couples.

And a colorful mosaic of the MatchTec logo of two intertwined trees.

JANET
There are snacks and soft drinks in
the little fridge. Or I can bring
you a cup of fresh coffee.

JEFFREY
Already had coffee, thanks.

Jeffrey takes in the room.

JEFFREY (CONT'D)
Not like my high school study hall.

JANET
We're a bit more upscale at
MatchTec.

Jeffrey gestures to the mosaic.

JEFFREY
What do the trees represent?

JANET
The legend of Baucis and Philemon.

JEFFREY
Never heard of them.

MOSAIC

JANET (O.S.)

Baucis and her husband Philemon opened their humble cottage to Jupiter and his son Mercury, who were in human form, on a night when no one else would. When the couple realized their guests were gods, they fell on their knees asking forgiveness for the meager repast they had served them. The two gods were so appreciative, they granted the couple any wish. The couple asked to be priests in a temple until their deaths and to die at the same time. One day, after many years had passed, each saw that the other was beginning to put forth leaves, and saying farewell to each other, they became entwined linden and oak trees.

JEFFREY

Eat your hearts out Romeo and Juliet.

Jeffrey sits at the desk, extends his arms and places his palms flat on its surface.

JANET

Tests are in the binder, Number Two pencils in the cup. Plan on three hours. We're creating your initial profile. When you're finished, or if you need anything, push the red button.

She pushes the button in a quick tutorial.

JANET (CONT'D)

Good luck, Jeffrey.

She exits the room.

Jeffrey takes in the room again and then opens the test binder.

He turns to the first page of the test and reaches for a pencil.

LATER

Jeffrey is deep into the test.

A plate of cheese and crackers sits half-eaten on the desk.

With a pencil he fills in the answer bubbles with dark lead.

INSERT - TEST PAGE

"122. How many intimate friends have you had over your lifetime?

- A. None
- B. Five or fewer.
- C. More than five."

Jeffrey's pencil marks B.

"123. If you answered B. or C. from the previous question, do you still have an intimate friend from your childhood?

- A. Yes
- B. No"

Jeffrey's pencil marks A.

"124. If you answered A. Yes from the previous question, how often do you see this friend?

- A. Rarely
- B. Up to three times a year
- C. More frequently"

Jeffrey's pencil marks B.

"125. If you answered question 124 A. Yes, how would the death of this friend affect you.

- A. Considerably
- B. Greatly
- C. The friend's death would be catastrophic."

Jeffrey's pencil marks B.

LATER

Jeffrey continues absorbed with the test.

The plate of cheese and crackers now sits empty.

INSERT - TEST PAGE, which reads,

"221. What is your reaction to things made of leather or leather in general?

- A. No reaction
- B. Generally positive
- C. Generally negative"

Jeffrey's pencil marks B.

"222. Do you own articles made of leather or partly of leather?

- A. None
- B. Some
- C. Many (more than ten)"

Jeffrey's pencil marks B.

"223. Do you have friends who are averse to leather or goods made with leather?

- A. None
- B. Three or less
- C. More than three"

Jeffrey's pencil marks C.

LATER

Jeffrey is slumped in his chair and obviously tiring of the test.

A cup of hot coffee sits on the desk.

INSERT - TEST PAGE, which reads:

"511. Do you buy fresh flowers?

- A. Never

B. Sometimes

C. Frequently"

Jeffrey's pencil marks B.

"512. What is your favorite flower?"

Jeffrey's pencil writes 'yellow roses'

"513. Are you allergic to any flowers?"

A. Yes

Which? _____

B. No"

Jeffrey's pencil marks B."

LATER

Jeffrey marks his last answer.

With a sigh of relief he closes the test binder and takes a last sip of coffee.

He makes an exaggerated show of pushing the red button on the desk.

Shortly the escort enters.

JANET

Finished?

JEFFREY

All bloody 800 questions.

The escort picks up the test binder and holds it tightly against her chest.

JANET

In an hour we'll have your profile.
We'll begin testing in more detail
the day after tomorrow.

JEFFREY

More detail?

EXT. STEPS - MOMENTS LATER

Jeffrey descends the steps, one hand rubbing the back of his neck, the other holding a cellphone to his ear.

JEFFREY

Fine, mother, fine. Just lots of questions. They're building my "profile".

(listens)

See you tomorrow.

He continues down the steps.

INT. JEFFREY'S MOTHER'S KITCHEN - MORNING

Jeffrey arranges a pot of coffee, cups and saucers, and some pastries on a silver tray.

He picks it up carefully.

Opens a swing door with his back.

Enters a dining room.

Crosses the dining room.

INT. SUNROOM

Jeffrey sets the tray on a table by the chaise longue, where his mother reclines wearing a thick sweater.

A small FIRE CRACKLES in the fireplace.

MOTHER

Down right chilly in here.

JEFFREY

Emma would have put a flower from the hot house on your tray.

MOTHER

Emma plays bridge every Thursday morning. Bridge in the morning! Can't balance my check book until after lunch.

Jeffrey pours a cup of coffee, hands it to her.

She takes a careful sip.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

So they'll test you and test you
until they know every damn thing
about you. Feed your data into some
computer that'll hum and buzz and
finally spit out a little card like
those old fortune teller machines.
And on that card will be the name
of your Dulcinea.

JEFFREY

Not so impersonal I hope.

MOTHER

Saw an article in New York Country
Living about how America is
splitting into those who spend all
their money on finding a mate and
those buying a home.

JEFFREY

Live in a house; get a divorce.
Find an ideal mate; live in a
studio apartment. Fortunately, I
may be able to have a mate and a
house.

MOTHER

Buy a house down the lane and marry
that lovely Elaine woman.

JEFFREY

I don't know, mother.

MOTHER

Don't know what?

JEFFREY

If I want to buy a house down a
lane and marry Elaine.

MOTHER

You can rhyme. Sign of a stable
mind.

JEFFREY

Dr. Wortheimer came up with a
wonderful metaphor.

MOTHER

He probably charged you a thousand
dollars for it.

JEFFREY

Be serious a minute.

MOTHER

Sorry. I want only your happiness.

JEFFREY

"Jeffrey. Imagine a football field packed cheek by jowl with young women. How long would it take to get to know just ten of them? At MatchTec we sort through thousands of football fields with the click of a mouse."

MOTHER

And poor Elaine?

JEFFREY

I'd rather die than hurt Elaine.

MOTHER

But you've decided to get that one woman out of those football fields. You still have to figure out what to do with Elaine.

JEFFREY

We're driving out to Bob and Carol's tomorrow night. Maybe I can tell her about MatchTec when I take her home.

MOTHER

Why not just put your head in a noose.

INT. FOYER OF HOUSE - NIGHT

Carol opens the front door.

Jeffrey and Elaine stand at the threshold.

Jeffrey holds a bottle of wine.

Elaine cradles a small torte box in her hands.

CAROL

Hello!

(to Elaine)

Told you no cakes. Bob's concerned about his weight.

Jeffrey and Elaine come in.

JEFFREY

He should be concerned about
the fifty years he's got around his
neck.

Carol takes their coats and hands them to a young woman in a
frilly apron.

ELAINE

Don't worry, Carol. Jeffrey and I
can dispatch this caloric delicacy
in a dozen bites.

CAROL

I'll take a couple myself.

Bob comes into the foyer.

He hugs Elaine.

BOB

No turning fifty jokes, you two.

ELAINE

Our lips are sealed.

Bob sees Jeffrey and Elaine into the living room.

BOB

Fred and Frida just got here. We'll
have a round of drinks or three
before dinner.

The two couples walk down into a large, sunken living room.

We see a slice of illuminated pool and patio through sliding
glass doors.

FRED and FRIDA sit next to a fire in an elongated fireplace.

They stand and come to greet Jeffrey and Elaine.

Everyone kisses and shakes hands.

FRED is 40, stout and bald, FRIDA slightly younger, small and
thin with an earnest face.

FRED

Told Bob no more heavy lifting
after fifty.

CAROL

Bob stopped all lifting after age thirty.

FRIDA

Fred still thinks he can lift like when we were first married.

FRED

Least I didn't go into the funeral business like your brother Earl. Poor man's hernias got hernias.

CAROL

Drinks.

FRIDA

Our usual. Blanton bourbon on the rocks.

CAROL

Jeffrey? Elaine?

ELAINE

White wine.

JEFFREY

An IPA, if you got one, and a glass.

BOB

Just got three cases of that IPA we had up in Vermont last month. I'll have one too.

MOMENTS LATER

The maid distributes drinks among the couples.

BOB

Four words. Carol's standing rib roast.

FRIDA

She's a hard act to follow.

FRED

Find out how she does it, for Christ's sake.

FRIDA

It's not that simple, Fred.

Fred takes a healthy sip of bourbon.

FRED
Jeesh, women!

CAROL
Twist of the wrist thing.

BOB
Tried to show me so I could make it
for some golf buddies when she was
out of town. Like teaching someone
to force a card.

FRIDA
Force a card?

ELAINE
Move a playing card anywhere within
a deck without being noticed.

JEFFREY
I have trouble shuffling.

ELAINE
Honey, you shuffle perfectly well.
I love how you arch the cards
before they all flutter into place.

FRIDA
Better keep this girl, Jeffrey. She
knows how to flutter, I mean,
flatter.

Carol gets up.

CAROL
Need to check the you-know-what.

FRED
Go with her, Frida. See if you can
pick up a few pointers.

FRIDA
Let it go, Fred.

ELAINE
Jeffrey and I went to the Picasso
exhibit.

JEFFREY
All the Blue Period paintings.

FRED

I tried to get Frida to go.

FRIDA

We can still go. Never said I wouldn't. Sorry I'm not into abstract art.

FRED

The blue paintings were done before there was ever anything called abstract art.

FRIDA

So I'm a philistine. We'll go Thursday. We could use a day on the town.

Carol comes back into the room.

CAROL

Betty's bringing another round.

Bob lights his pipe.

BOB

I've always smoked around you guys, right?

ELAINE

Of course.

(to the others)

Remember ten years ago tobacco was the social scourge? Now it's almost respectable again.

BOB

Everything in moderation.

FRED

Who's the entrepreneurial homemaker died a few years ago?

FRIDA

Martha Stewart?

FRED

Said eat anything you want... just go easy.

FRIDA

No one's batting an eye at Carol's rib roast.

BOB
 (to Fred and Frida)
 And you two on the hard stuff.

JEFFREY
 America's coming to her senses.

CAROL
 Amen.
 (gets up)
 How 'bout some red meat?

INT. TESTING ROOM - MORNING

Jeffrey sits at the desk, deep into his second day of written tests.

INSERT - TEST PAGE, which reads:

"94. Write, from your perspective, a positive sentence about hands."

Jeffrey's pencil writes: 'The hands of young women are shiny.'

"95. Write, from your perspective, a negative sentence about hands."

Jeffrey's pencil writes: 'My mother has brown spots on her hands.'

"96. Do you pay attention to the hands of a person you have just met?"

Jeffrey's pencil writes the final four words of: 'Not men's hands. If I meet a woman I consider attractive I do look at her hands. To see if they are also attractive. If they aren't, I immediately find the person less attractive than at first.'

"97. For you, what are attractive hands?"

Jeffrey's pencil writes the final four words of: 'Hands without blemishes. Hands with nails that are not chewed. Hands with nails that are well kept or even painted. Long fingers are more attractive to me than short fingers. Isn't it the same for everyone?'

"98. Have you ever been sexually aroused by another person's hands?"

Jeffrey's pencil writes the final two words of: 'To be honest, no. My girlfriend has attractive hands though.'

"99. Do you recall hands in any works of art?"

Jeffrey's pencil writes the final four words of: 'The blind man in Picasso's The Blind Man's Meal has elongated fingers like El Greco used to paint.'

Jeffrey sits back in chair and rubs his face and shakes his head.

JEFFREY

Hands?

INT. MATCHTEC MEDICAL FACILITIES - BLOOD LAB - DAY

Jeffrey sits in a chair preparing to have his blood drawn.

A PHLEBOTOMIST secures a rubber tourniquet on his upper arm and then taps his vein.

PHLEBOTOMIST

Make a fist, please.

(beat)

You'll feel a tiny prick. One, two
three.

NEEDLE

enters Jeffrey's vein.

The vial quickly fills with dark blood.

The Phlebotomist removes it and attaches another vial that fills with blood.

Then a third vial.

A fourth.

JEFFREY

Leave some for the cab ride home!

PHLEBOTOMIST

We need four vials because the
blood analyses are extensive.

JEFFREY

Like?

PHLEBOTOMIST

More than you get in a routine
physical. AIDS, traces of drugs,
vitamin deficiencies...

JEFFREY
Sorry I asked.

INT. EXAMINING ROOM - LATER

Jeffrey, in a hospital gown, lies on his back on an examination table.

A DOCTOR palpitates his liver and feels for other signs of disease.

DOCTOR
Any blood in your stool?

JEFFREY
No.

DOCTOR
Do you urinate during the night?

JEFFREY
Sometimes.

DOCTOR
Any difficulty when urinating?

JEFFREY
You mean do I have an enlarged prostate?

DOCTOR
Maybe.

JEFFREY
I pee fine.

DOCTOR
Roll onto your side, please.

JEFFREY
Don't think I don't know what you're about to do.

Doctor squeezes lubricant onto the middle finger of his rubber-gloved hand.

DOCTOR
Just relax around my finger. I'm going to press firmly against your prostate gland.

He inserts his finger into Jeffrey's rectum.

JEFFREY
Christ, all this for ideal love?

DOCTOR
Your prostate is supple. Good news,
ideal love or not.

INT. EKG ROOM - LATER

An attractive NURSE #1, Hispanic, attaches electrodes to Jeffrey's chest.

NURSE #1
You may lose some chest hair when I
remove these.

JEFFREY
I had this test during my last
physical.

NURSE #1
That was six months ago. Things can
change in that length of time.

JEFFREY
How many electrodes?

NURSE #1
Ten. Six on the chest and one on
each arm and leg.
(beat)
Lie still and breathe normally.

She starts the EKG. It makes a CLACKING SOUND.

She repeats the procedure.

NURSE #1 (CONT'D)
All done. Our cardiologist will
look at this.

JEFFREY
Look for what?

NURSE #1
(from memory)
Ischemia, pericarditis, ventricular
fibrillation, Long Q-T Syndrome --

JEFFREY
Oh, yeah. Those.

NURSE #1
I'm sure you'll be fine.

INT. EXAMINATION ROOM - DAY

Jeffrey lies on an x-ray table his hands folded over his stomach.

TECHNICIAN
We're going to measure your fatness.

JEFFREY
How much of my fat you can pinch between your fingers?

TECHNICIAN
A little more sophisticated than that.

The Tech sets a dial on the overhead scanner.

TECHNICIAN (CONT'D)
We're doing a DXA scan on you.

JEFFREY
Jesus, another anagram.

TECHNICIAN
Dual-energy x-ray absorptiometry.

JEFFREY
I feel better already.

TECHNICIAN
We now know at what level body fatness contributes to illnesses like Type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease and certain cancers. Then we'll see how your DXA results jibe with your leptin levels.

JEFFREY
Dear God, I may be cured.

INT. RORSCHACH TESTING ROOM - LATER

Jeffrey sits at a table on which stands a small easel holding a tablet of ink blots.

A woman PSYCHIATRIST #1 sits across from him.

She looks very old and very wise.

JEFFREY

I thought Rorschach ink blot tests were a bunch of hooley.

PSYCHIATRIST #1

They had a legion of detractors. But they've been highly improved during the last twenty years.

JEFFREY

So I see a bird in a blot, I'm sound minded? I don't see diddley squat in a blot, I'm a crackbrain?

PSYCHIATRIST #1

What you see in the blots is not as important as your interaction with the blots. Your interaction is interpreted through complex algorithms. The basic idea is that an individual will classify external stimuli based on person-specific perceptual sets.

JEFFREY

Ah, so that's how it works.

PSYCHIATRIST #1

It's a very complex test.

JEFFREY

(mock amazement)

My potential sweetheart is out there somewhere looking at the same inkblots?

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Jeffrey sits at a table with Bob and Carol.

Old hunting lodge decor. Flowers everywhere.

Each holds an elongated menu.

BOB

You made good time.

JEFFREY

Just over an hour from my apartment.

CAROL

You see? We even have restaurants
out here in the country.

JEFFREY

Not country prices.

BOB

Watching your pennies now you've
signed with MatchTec?

JEFFREY

I can't believe the questions they
ask.

CAROL

Bob, didn't you have the grouse our
last time here?

BOB

Did and gonna have it again.

CAROL

I'm doing the venison with wild
cherry sauce.

JEFFREY

Think just one poussin coquelet
will be enough for a hunk like me?

CAROL

They're tiny. But you can fill up
on the mashed potatoes.

INT. RESTAURANT - LATER

Bob finishes refilling everyone's glass.

BOB

Red wine, wild game. Heavenly
match.

CAROL

So some of the questions appall
you?

JEFFREY

More flabbergasted than appalled.
Question after question about
hands, feet, scars, disabilities...

CAROL
I remember being titillated by some
of the questions.

BOB
Neither of us remembers much about
the tests now.

CAROL
But we'll never forget one
question.

BOB
How did it go, Carol?

CAROL
When you fart, does its smell
sometimes remind you of someone?

JEFFREY
Haven't had that one yet. What'd
you say?

CAROL
I said it did not.

BOB
It reminded me of our fish monger
Ed. Why I said this I don't know,
but it was true. Ed never let one
slide at the market, as far as I
remember. Some arcane connection...

CAROL
We couldn't go back to Ed's place
for two years.

BOB
And when we did Ed had just died.
Unexpectedly.

JEFFREY
Not from a fart, I hope.

CAROL
Remember, all the questions about
all the weird topics will help them
find you a match.

Carol raises her glass to Jeffrey.

CAROL (CONT'D)
Here's looking at you, kid.

INT. TESTING ROOM - MORNING

Jeffrey sits at a table.

PSYCHIATRIST #2 sits opposite him.

She's in her 60s, has a shoulder length shock of gray hair, and wears a lab coat.

PSYCHIATRIST #2

I'll show you a series of colored drawings. You make up a narrative that explains them. Your narrative should have a beginning and an end.

Jeffrey nods.

JEFFREY

Is there a time limit?

PSYCHIATRIST #2

Take as long as you want. I'll be taking notes as you speak. Don't let this distract you.

JEFFREY

Fine.

Psychiatrist #2 places the first drawing onto a small easel.

INSERT - DRAWING

Three people stand in a hospital waiting room. A surgeon in blue scrubs is talking with a young man and an old man who has his head in hands. The young man has a pained expression on his face.

BACK TO SCENE

Jeffrey thinks for a moment.

JEFFREY (CONT'D)

The young man is Tom Smith. The man crying is his father. Tom's mother had gone into surgery earlier for an emergency operation on her, uh, gall bladder. The surgeon has just told the two men that she died in surgery. The father has broken down because he had a long, happy life with his wife. The son hasn't broken down because he is trying to get the details of his mother's death from the surgeon.

PSYCHIATRIST #2
Here is the second drawing.

Psychiatrist #2 places the second drawing onto the easel.

INSERT - DRAWING

A woman and a man sit in the front seat of a car. The man is behind the wheel. The woman has her arms crossed and is looking away from the man. The man talks to the woman with a concerned look on his face.

BACK TO SCENE

Jeffrey stares hard at the drawing.

JEFFREY
(meaningfully)
That's Elaine and Jeffrey. Jeffrey thinks that Elaine is just about the nicest woman in the world. And he loves her. But he doesn't know if he is in love with her. He has just told her that he hired one of those match-making companies to see if they can find an ideal mate for him. He already regrets terribly that he has told her this. The last thing in the world he would want to do is hurt Elaine. But the last thing he wants to do, too, is marry Elaine and find out that the two of them are ill-suited to each other. But what really is killing him is that he knows Elaine thinks he walks on water and...

Jeffrey begins to cry.

JEFFREY (CONT'D)
... she loves him as much as any woman could ever love a man. And, in the end, Jeffrey will lose her.

INT. TESTING ROOM - MORNING

Jeffrey sits at his desk.

Janet places a tray with coffee, sugar, cream, and plate of croissants beside him.

JANET

This morning you are taking the
Meyer-Badhoff Multiphasic
Personality Inventory test.

JEFFREY

And?

JANET

It will educe your attitudes on
religion and sex, your perceptions
of health, political ideas,
information about family,
education, occupations and so on.

She slides the test booklet in front of Jeffrey.

JANET (CONT'D)

Buzz me if you need anything.

She leaves.

Jeffrey opens the test booklet and, a bit wearily, takes a
pencil from the cup.

INT. TESTING ROOM - ONE HOUR LATER

Jeffrey is working thoughtfully but quickly.

INSERT - TEST PAGE, which reads:

"322. I have had very peculiar and strange experiences.

TRUE

FALSE

CANNOT SAY"

Jeffrey's pencil circles FALSE.

"323. I have a cough most of the time.

TRUE

FALSE

CANNOT SAY"

Jeffrey's pencil circles FALSE.

"324. My soul sometimes leaves my body.

TRUE

FALSE

CANNOT SAY"

Jeffrey's pencil circles FALSE.

"325. I used to like drop-the-handkerchief.

TRUE

FALSE

CANNOT SAY"

Jeffrey pencil circles CANNOT SAY.

"326. My judgment is better than it ever was.

TRUE

FALSE

CANNOT SAY"

Jeffrey's pencil circles CANNOT SAY.

INT. MATCHTEC BUILDING - OFFICE - MORNING

Jeffrey and Dr. Wortheimer sit in comfortable chairs in front of a fireplace in which burns a small fire.

On either side of Jeffrey sit psychiatrists GISELLE MESMER and CYRIL SIDNEY.

Outside the elongated, paned windows the first snow of winter falls.

Dr. Mesmer, a tall, fading French beauty on the cusp of old age, has long, white hair and wears a designer pant suit.

She has had extensive and very expert cosmetic surgery.

Dr. Sidney, an Oxonian, is short and heavy set.

He wears an expensive dark suit, and his dyed Van Dyke gives him a Mephistophelean air.

DR. WORTHEIMER

Jeffrey, I knew you would see this through to the end.

Jeffrey places his coffee cup on a saucer that sits on a small table before the fire.

JEFFREY

I'm nervous about the outcome.

DR. SIDNEY

Nonsense. All your test results up until now show you to possess any number of solid, admirable qualities. You'll get a good match.

DR. WORTHEIMER

Next week we do your genetic and microbiome maps. The field interviews with people who knew you five years back and before are almost done.

JEFFREY

Like background checks for future CIA agents?

DR. SIDNEY

Information-seeking interviews that "polish" your written and oral test results.

DR. MESMER

And, of course, the H.S.P.I.'s begin soon.

(explains)

The Habitude and Sentiment Projections Indicators tests.

DR. WORTHEIMER

The really big tests and one of the reasons MatchTec is so expensive.

JEFFREY

Habitude I take it has to do with my habitual behavior?

DR. MESMER

Exactly. Of course, at MatchTec we prefer the fifty-cent word 'habitude' to the five-cent word 'habit'.

DR. SIDNEY

The H.S.P.I. predicts how your behavior patterns change over time.

JEFFREY

How's that possible?

DR. WORTHEIMER

We already have a lot of information about your habitude from your tests. The H.S.P.I.'s will give us even more. Algorithms will crunch your statistics against other habitude databases we've collected over twenty years.

JEFFREY

So you'll know if I'll still be using public transportation when I'm sixty?

DR. MESMER

Well, yes, that, but there's something more important. A person's habitudes combine to form abstract geometric patterns. There are over seven-hundred of these patterns. Some patterns mesh more readily than others. See where I'm going?

JEFFREY

I do.

Dr. Wortheimer clicks a remote and on the wall appear cartoon drawings of a man and a woman.

DR. WORTHEIMER

I give you Bob and Bev.

(beat)

Now, as Bob and Bev go about their daily routines, over months and years these routines form geometric habitudinal patterns.

He clicks the remote and two patterns, somewhat like mspirial quilts, appear.

He superimposes THEM and they clash with a HONK, indicating a mismatch.

DR. WORTHEIMER (CONT'D)

Bob and Bev may be alliteratively congenial, but they won't last long as a couple.

He clicks the remote and a new pattern appears.

DR. WORTHEIMER (CONT'D)
This is Jim. Let's see how Bev and
Jim get on.

He superimposes the two PATTERNS and they bind with a
satisfying CLINK, indicating a match.

DR. WORTHEIMER (CONT'D)
There's your conformance, Jeffrey.

DR. SIDNEY
We do something similar regarding
sentiment.

DR. MESMER
For example, how will your
political sentiments change over
time?

JEFFREY
So I may not always be a center
right democrat?

DR. MESMER
Exactly. If you are now a twenty-
nine or an eighty-one on our
political reference scale, the
lower the number the more
conservative, where will you be
ten, twenty, thirty years from now?
The H.S.P.I. data predict, with a
degree of certainty, any changes.

JEFFREY
What if I become involved with a
political group that doesn't even
exist now, and it turns me into a
reactionary?

DR. WORTHEIMER
Such a possibility is factored in
when your H.S.P.I. results are
added to your other test results.

JEFFREY
I drink alcohol. I love red meat.
What if I read a series of future
articles that convince me to become
a teetotaler and a vegan?

DR. WORTHEIMER
This is why our program is so
expensive.

(MORE)

DR. WORTHEIMER (CONT'D)

We have an idea of the chances of such a series of future articles, and we have concise ideas of how you would react to such new information.

DR. MESMER

If you're, say, a stamp collector now, what are the chances you'll be a stamp collector twenty years from now? And if you are, will you be a more avid or a less avid one?

DR. SIDNEY

The H.S.P.I. tests require two-hundred hours. They're tedious, so you should approach them each day rested and clear-headed.

DR. WORTHEIMER

Look at these sentiment configurations.

He clicks the remote and there appears on the wall a series of geometric patterns.

DR. WORTHEIMER (CONT'D)

We've codified about eight-hundred of them. Some really don't like each other. For example, here is Henry X of Sioux Falls, Iowa and Sandra Y of Parsons, Kansas.

He aligns two of the geometric patterns.

When he tries to superimpose THEM, there is a GRATING SOUND.

DR. WORTHEIMER (CONT'D)

Had Henry and Sandra eventually married you can be sure it wouldn't be for long.

DR. SIDNEY

Oil and water.

DR. WORTHEIMER

I give you Robert X of Denver and Susan Y of Peoria, Illinois.

He aligns two more of the geometric patterns.

Dr. Wortheimer slides one onto the other, and there is an ETHEREAL ARPEGGIO of HARP STRINGS.

DR. SIDNEY
Bay rum and the barber shop.

JEFFREY
A personal question.

DR. SIDNEY
Of course.

DR. MESMER
Have either of us been matched?

JEFFREY
If it's too personal --

DR. MESMER
Not at all.
(beat)
Fresh out of medical school, I entered into a marriage that soured for any number of reasons. Years after my divorce, I began working with Dr. Wortheimer. I was one of the first persons to go through the gauntlet of tests at MatchTec. At the age of fifty-four I was paired with Stephen. We were a Level Seven couple and our happiness was exemplary until Stephen died in a freak climbing accident in the French alps when I was sixty-five. He was sixty-seven.

JEFFREY
I'm sorry. About the accident, I mean.

DR. MESMER
He died doing what he loved. A cliché, but true.

Dr. Sidney pours himself another cup of coffee from a silver pot of Baroque swirls.

DR. SIDNEY
I remain a selfish, crusty bachelor. Although there are days I regret not putting myself through the matching process, I know I'm happier going to the club every evening for dinner after a day of reading and research. Then home for a nightcap and to a bed over which hovers a host of angels.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Jeffrey and Elaine sit at a round table in a very modern, minimalist restaurant.

A waiter brings their drinks.

WAITER

A Glenfiddich for the gentleman and
a Hendrick's for the lady.

He slips silently away.

Elaine raises her glass high and Jeffrey, with some reluctance, touches hers with his.

She takes an exploratory sip.

ELAINE

Two of these you can have your way
with me.

Jeffrey's face darkens with guilt.

ELAINE (CONT'D)

You told me the botanicals in
Hendrick's.

JEFFREY

Cucumbers and rose petals.

ELAINE

I pick up the cucumber. The rose
petals...

JEFFREY

Proportions of the four botanicals
in Gordon's gin have been a secret
for two-hundred fifty years.

ELAINE

Your scotches with the odd sounding
names must go back centuries.

JEFFREY

A scotch called Pinch has been
around three-hundred years.

ELAINE

What is Glenfiddich?

JEFFREY

'Valley of the Deer' in Gaelic. The distillery is in the valley of the River Fiddich.

ELAINE

You're so cute. Full of information about everything in your life.

JEFFREY

Cute? Curious. I like research.

ELAINE

Would you research me, if you could?

(beat)

Or maybe you already have?

JEFFREY

Honest, after we first met I looked for stuff about you.

(beat)

Know what I found?

ELAINE

Not too much, I hope.

JEFFREY

Nothing really. You got a great fire wall.

ELAINE

After we met I looked you up. You're all over the net. Business events, galas, what not. But nothing really about you.

JEFFREY

My fire wall is pretty good too, I guess.

ELAINE

You're subdued tonight. Anything bothering you?

JEFFREY

Just a little weary. This drink is bringing me back to life.

ELAINE

Say. Let's drive upstate next weekend. Find a nice inn. Hike. Couple of nice dinners.

JEFFREY

Remember that hideaway in the
Blackhead Mountains?

ELAINE

We hiked up to the Kaaterskill
Falls the next day.

JEFFREY

That was some weekend. Kept me
going for a month.

ELAINE

We should do something like that
again.

JEFFREY

Yeah, that would be nice.

INT. TESTING ROOM AT MATCHTEC - MORNING

Jeffrey sits at his desk.

He has slipped comfortably into the testing routine at
MatchTec.

He puts cream in his coffee.

A silver tray of pastries sits nearby.

Janet arranges three folders containing H.S.P.I. tests.

JEFFREY

Only two-hundred hours to go.

JANET

They'll be over before you know it.
Good luck, Jeffrey.

She leaves room.

Jeffrey reaches for a pencil and opens the first folder.

With an enthusiastic sigh, he begins reading the first
question.

INT. TESTING ROOM - ONE HOUR LATER

Jeffrey is absorbed by the H.S.P.I. test.

INSERT - TEST PAGE, which reads:

"SITUATION #22: You are going to Central Park. You'll be there from 1:00 until 6:00. It's late October. The days are chilly, the nights quite cold.

1. What items will you bring? Be specific."

Jeffrey's pencil writes the final four words of the list:

"Wallet, \$100 cash, spare car key, cellphone, jacket. Backpack with sweater, flashlight, water, apple, sandwich, candy bar, Central Park guide book, paper back novel."

"2. The third item on your list. What would you do if you forgot it?"

Jeffrey's pencil writes the last two words:

"Check, every five minutes, that I had my car key."

"3. Four things you'd do in Central Park?"

Jeffrey's pencil writes the last words of 4.:

"1. Get coffee and read two chapters in my novel. (Murder on the Moon by Christopher Black).

2. Explore the Ramble. Never really done that. Try to identify some trees.

3. Rent a boat and row around the Lake.

4. Watch kids sail model boats on the Conservancy Water."

"5. Would you try to make the acquaintance of someone in the park?"

Jeffrey's pencil writes the last two words:

"If opportunity arises and person seems interesting. But I rarely meet people in public places."

INT. MATCHTEC BUILDING - OFFICE - MORNING

Dr. Mesmer sits behind a large desk.

She wears a navy blue pant suit with a white blouse, her hair in a bun.

There's nothing on her desk except Jeffrey's client folder.

Jeffrey sits opposite her in a comfortable chair.

DR. MESMER

I enjoyed meeting you and talking with you the other morning.

JEFFREY

The same.

DR. MESMER

Today you begin your last series of tests. How do you feel?

JEFFREY

Almost tested out. I see why some find them intrusive.

DR. MESMER

Some are going to make you uncomfortable.

JEFFREY

Dr. Wortheimer forewarned me about them.

(beat)

You're giving me sodium pentathol?

DR. MESMER

A newer version of it. It makes answering the questions less embarrassing.

JEFFREY

Embarrassing questions?

DR. MESMER

They fill holes left by the other tests.

INT. INTERVIEW ROOM - LATER

Jeffrey lies on a psychiatrist's couch.

Attractive NURSE #2 sits in a chair by his side.

She removes a sterile cloth on a tray to reveal a small syringe, which she preps.

NURSE #2

Make a fist, Jeffrey. You'll hardly feel this.

Jeffrey makes a fist; she inserts needle into his vein.

The injection takes only seconds.

A YOUNG MAN in slacks and sweater enters room.

DR. WHITE (YOUNG MAN)
Hello, Jeffrey. I'm Dr. White. We
met a couple of weeks ago.

JEFFREY
Hi, doctor. Will I soon be blabbing
my innermost secrets?

The nurse leaves the room.

Dr. White sits in a chair opposite the couch.

DR. WHITE
The "truth juice" we call it. It'll
make your answers come out easier.
You should be experiencing a mild
euphoria.

JEFFREY
I am. Ask away.

DR. WHITE
There are no correct or incorrect
answers.

JEFFREY
By now, I know everything about
answering questions.

INT. INTERVIEW ROOM - LATER

Jeffrey answers Dr. White's questions in a casual, slightly
inebriated tone.

JEFFREY
Don't all adolescents masturbate?

DR. WHITE
Did your parents ever discover you
masturbating?

JEFFREY
Are you kidding? I took great
precautions.

DR. WHITE
Do you think your mother fondled
herself when she was a teenager?

JEFFREY

I imagine so.

DR. WHITE

If your mother ever asked you to watch her while she fondled herself, what would you have said?

JEFFREY

Jesus, what a question. "No, mother. I will not watch you fondle yourself."

DR. WHITE

What if she asked if she could fondle you?

JEFFREY

Tell her she'd been reading too many Greek tragedies.

DR. WHITE

Don't be flippant, Jeffrey.

JEFFREY

Sorry. I would have been revolted, would have said no way.

DR. WHITE

Is your girlfriend Elaine willing to try new things when you two are having foreplay?

JEFFREY

She is.

DR. WHITE

For insistence.

JEFFREY

She likes to experiment with vibrators and dildos. She's interested in exploring variations of oral sex.

DR. WHITE

Do you like that?

JEFFREY

It's all very nice. Variety, as we know, is the spice of life.

DR. WHITE

Do you ever ask herself if she learned these activities from someone she had gone out with before she met you?

JEFFREY

I have asked myself that question. Frankly, I find it very titillating.

DR. WHITE

What would you say if Elaine asked you to watch while another man fondled her?

JEFFREY

First of all, I don't think Elaine would ever ask that of me. If she did, I think I might end up doing it. I've never done anything sexual like that before.

INT. INTERVIEW ROOM - MORNING

DR. WHITE

I'm going to hypnotize you, Jeffrey.

JEFFREY

Years ago I was an analysand for a brief time. My therapist hypnotized me. It was weird because it turned out to be no experience at all.

DR. WHITE

You'll remember little of what transpires.

(beat)

Lie back on the couch.

Jeffrey lies back.

DR. WHITE (CONT'D)

Completely relax your legs, your arms, your torso. Picture a waterfall. Hear the waterfall.

Dr. White takes a gold-plated pen from his shirt pocket and holds it in his left hand above Jeffrey's forehead.

DR. WHITE (CONT'D)
Fix your eyes on the pen. Don't
move your head.

Jeffrey fixes his eyes on the pen. Several seconds elapse.

DR. WHITE (CONT'D)
Your pupils are contracted.
(beat)
Now they are dilating.
(beat)
Now they are becoming wavy.

Dr. White moves the two forefingers of his right hand past
the pen and toward Jeffrey's eyes.

Jeffrey's eyelids close involuntarily with a vibratory
motion.

DR. WHITE (CONT'D)
Are you okay, Jeffrey?

JEFFREY
I'm fine.

DR. WHITE
Can I run some things by you?

JEFFREY
Of course.

DR. WHITE
It seems we have a problem.

JEFFREY
Oh?

DR. WHITE
You were recently at the home of
your friends John and Mary. You've
known them for ten years.

JEFFREY
And?

DR. WHITE
You went to their house to see
their new kitchen.

JEFFREY
Was it nice?

DR. WHITE
You tell me. You were there.

JEFFREY

I don't remember.

DR. WHITE

John and Mary have a ten year old daughter. Christie. Christie has always adored you.

(beat)

John and Mary suddenly get a phone call about Mary's father.

Apparently, he fell and has been taken to a hospital. They have to leave. They ask you to stay with Christie until they return.

JEFFREY

Logical so far.

DR. WHITE

After her parents leave, Christie comes into the living room. She has a locket in her hand. She asks you to fasten it around her neck.

JEFFREY

Do I?

DR. WHITE

Yes. But when her parents return, she tells them that when you put the locket around her neck you ran your hand up her leg and under her panties and you inserted a finger into her vagina.

JEFFREY

She's lying. I would never sexually come on to a ten-year old girl. She asked me to put the locket on because she couldn't fasten it herself.

DR. WHITE

But you did put it around her neck while her parents were gone?

JEFFREY

Was I supposed to tell her "wait until your parents came back so they can watch."?

DR. WHITE

The Berman's family doctor examined Christie and said her vagina showed signs of mild trauma.

JEFFREY

The kid was a tease just like her mother was a tease. I wouldn't put it past her to have inflicted the trauma with her own fingers.

INT. TESTING ROOM - DAY

Jeffrey sits at the desk.

A club sandwich sits on a plate beside a glass of milk.

JANET

This is the K.I.S.B. The Kellerman Incomplete Sentence Blank. You simply complete sentences. "On a warm day... I like to go swimming."

JEFFREY

Piece of cake.

JANET

Don't try to sound logical or normal. Don't be hyperbolic, or cute. Write what naturally comes to mind.

Janet turns to leave the room.

Jeffrey looks at her ass and legs.

She leaves the room.

JEFFREY

At least a three, maybe a two?

INT. TESTING ROOM - LATER

Jeffrey is enjoying the test.

He reads aloud the initial phrase, and then says aloud his answer as he it down.

JEFFREY

Forty-four. 'My mother... is more fun the older she gets.' Forty-five. 'A hairy woman...'

(MORE)

JEFFREY (CONT'D)
will have a hard time of it in New
York.' Forty-six. 'If only I
could... not hurt Elaine.' Forty-
seven. 'A shaved female pubic
area... would set me trembling.'
Forty-eight. 'I would strike a
woman... if she were trying to
physically harm me.' Forty-nine.
'Football players... get head
injuries.'

EXT. PARK - RIVER - DAY

The park is full of fall color.

In the distance, across the river, rises a segment of the New
York skyline.

People stroll about bundled up against the cold.

Jeffrey and Elaine lean on a railing near the water and take
in the skyline.

ELAINE

Ten times we've been here and each
time the skyline looks different.

JEFFREY

Different month, different time of
day. Different skyline.

Elaine turns to Jeffrey.

ELAINE

Several times in the last two weeks
when I call your office they say
you're out.

JEFFREY

I'm closing old accounts that've
dried to a trickle. Delicate
matters best done face to face.

ELAINE

Is there something you're not
telling me?

JEFFREY

I'm thinking of retiring in a year.
There are other things I want to
do.

ELAINE

You told me that a year ago.

JEFFREY

I did? I must be under more strain than I realize.

ELAINE

I know men hate women who pry. But I sense something isn't right between us.

JEFFREY

The female intuition.

ELAINE

It's not intuition, Jeffrey. Something's become wedged between us.

Jeffrey looks squarely at Elaine.

JEFFREY

Wedged?

ELAINE

We agreed long ago not to keep anything to ourselves if it affected the other.

JEFFREY

I remember.

(beat)

I told mother we'd be there at six. Let's not get our tail caught in Friday traffic.

Jeffrey and Elaine leave the railing.

They walk away.

Elaine briefly turns her head to look at Jeffrey who, unaware, continues looking straight ahead.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Jeffrey, Elaine, Jeffrey's mother, and JOHN BANISTER, a neighbor of Jeffrey's mother, sit at the dining room table.

Banister is a professional water colorist who has become crustily philosophical in his old age.

He dresses like an artist and enjoys his role as one.

On the table a platter of cheese, dried fruit, assorted nuts.

Emma pours from a bottle.

EMMA

This is not just any port in a storm.

John takes a sip.

JOHN

Absolutely divine.

EMMA

A vintage Colheita.

MOTHER

Thank you, Emma. Now go home. Or do you want to sleep over?

EMMA

Home. My sister's in for a visit.

JEFFREY

(to Emma)

A French restaurant is judged by its baked chicken. Tonight you've earned this house three stars.

EMMA

Mr. Jeffrey, you honor me.

Emma leaves the dining room.

ELAINE

What a delightful woman.

MOTHER

She was an English teacher. Lives with her teetering, ancient mother a mile down the road.

JOHN

(to Jeffrey)

She adores your mother. Wouldn't come around otherwise. Saved her pennies, you know.

MOTHER

John?

(beat)

Tell them what you've been working on lately.

JOHN

Really, Alice, I don't want to inflict myself on the three of you.

MOTHER

Inflict yourself? Your paintings of stone fences will ultimately define this region of Connecticut.

JOHN

(comically profound)

I do impressionistic watercolors of stone fences.

MOTHER

I can't take my eyes off John's paintings. I'm sure they lower my blood pressure.

JOHN

I have ten of them in the Gorman Gallery in the Tribeca.

ELAINE

Oh, my God! I was just in the Gorman Gallery. I've seen your paintings! They're wonderful. In fact, my friend Gianna Bianchi bought one the other day.

JOHN

Gianna, yes. I've only spoken to her on the phone. Said she's done some oils.

ELAINE

She has. Not advanced stuff. A Chianti bottle with a pear beside it... you know.

JEFFREY

Remember, mother, when you painted? I must have been thirteen or so.

MOTHER

My acrylic period. Wine bottles with bananas on the side.

JEFFREY

They weren't half bad.

MOTHER

They were dreadful. I threw them all away including the paints and the brushes. Smartest thing I ever did.

JOHN

Oliver Wendell Holmes once said that nothing feels better than to stop doing something one should not have been doing in the first place. For you, Alice, it was acrylics. For me tennis. Haven't missed it for a minute since I gave it up twenty-five years ago.

Jeffrey's mother turns to Jeffrey.

MOTHER

Buy a selection of John's paintings.

(to Elaine)

They'll only become more valuable over time.

ELAINE

(uncomfortable)

I think Jeffrey would love John's work.

INT. LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Bob accompanies Jeffrey into the living room.

Jeffrey greets Carol with a hug.

CAROL

A scotch?

JEFFREY

Large, no ice.

Carol pours Jeffrey's drink at a bar cart.

BOB

So, interviews are over...

JEFFREY

Yeah. Computers crunch away at my data. Dr. Wortheimer says I'll get someone at Level Ten.

Carol hands Jeffrey his drink.

CAROL
Relieved?

JEFFREY
Jesus am I ever.

BOB
I never thought those bloody tests
would end.

CAROL
Elaine still doesn't know, does
she?

Jeffrey looks down for a moment and then at Carol and Bob.

JEFFREY
I'm scared shitless, you guys. I
simply cannot hurt that woman. I
care deeply for her.

CAROL
You have no choice. Soon you'll
have an ideal, quote unquote, mate.
It'll be a nasty scene for you and
for Elaine. But you must tell her.

JEFFREY
What if there's no match?

BOB
Marry Elaine and never tell her
about MatchTec.

Jeffrey takes a large swallow of scotch.

JEFFREY
How about I move to someplace like
Elko, Nevada. Live in a single-wide
trailer. Cut and polish rocks I
find in the desert.

CAROL
And meet an overweight woman named
Ray Ann who believes in UFOs. You'd
be really happy.

Jeffrey finishes off his scotch and stares into space.

INT. JEFFREY'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Jeffrey, in striped bathrobe and slippers, pads across the
living room with a cup of coffee.

The PHONE RINGS.

Slightly irritated, he passes his hand over the phone, and Dr. Wortheimer appears on his wall screen.

Dr. Wortheimer sits at his desk.

DR. WORTHEIMER
(without expression)
Your results are in, Jeffrey.
Please be here at nine sharp
tomorrow morning. Call to confirm.

He rings off.

A momentary look of concern passes over Jeffrey's face.

He shrugs and leaves the living room.

EXT. MATCHTEC BUILDING - EXTERIOR STEPS - MORNING

Jeffrey climbs the steps confidently, pausing for a moment to pat the MatchTec sign with its logo of two entwined trees.

He enters the MatchTec lobby.

The male Receptionist in the ice-cream colored suit stands near the door in anticipation of Jeffrey's arrival.

RECEPTIONIST
Good morning, Mr. Lorner. If you
will just follow me.

JEFFREY
I thought I was going to Dr.
Wortheimer's office?

RECEPTIONIST
They're waiting for you in the
conference room.

JEFFREY
They? Conference room?

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Jeffrey follows the Receptionist down a wide hallway to the double doors of the conference room.

The Receptionist opens a door and Jeffrey goes in.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jeffrey enters.

He sees Dr. Wortheimer at the end of a conference table, and to his left and right, Doctors Mesmer and Sidney.

Six other high-ranking employees of MatchTec also sit at the table.

A stenographer sits at a shorthand machine off to one side and records everything that is said.

DR. WORTHEIMER
Good morning, Jeffrey. Please take
the chair at the end of the table.

Dr. Wortheimer looks around at the others, who sit in their chairs without expression.

DR. WORTHEIMER (CONT'D)
Jeffrey, we're happy to tell you
your match has come in. We are,
however, dumbfounded about what
kind of match it is.

WOMAN EMPLOYEE

dabs at a tear with a handkerchief.

There is an awkward silence.

JEFFREY
It's a man?

The Woman dabbing at her eyes lets out a sound that is half laugh and half sob.

DR. WORTHEIMER
Not a man.

JEFFREY
No?

DR. WORTHEIMER
No. Not a man.

JEFFREY
Who then?

Dr. Wortheimer rests his eyes on Jeffrey for a long moment.

DR. WORTHEIMER
It's three women.

JEFFREY

Three women?

DR. WORTHEIMER

That isn't the half of it.

JEFFREY

What's the other half?

DR. WORTHEIMER

The matches are all Level Ones.

Though they know this, everyone around the table lets out soft interjections as if witnessing a miracle.

JEFFREY

(squeaks)

What are the odds of that?

DR. WORTHEIMER

One in ten-million -- God, I have no idea. The odds are incalculable. But these results will have very calculable consequences for you and for MatchTec.

Dr. Mesmer whispers something to Dr. Wortheimer, who nods.

DR. MESMER

As you know, Jeffrey, a Level One match is exceedingly rare. This would have been wonderful for you, for obvious reasons. And it would have been wonderful publicity for MatchTec.

Dr. Mesmer takes a quick drink of water.

DR. MESMER (CONT'D)

Three Level One matches, however, could strain the credibility of the entire matching system. Clients might come to see the very common yet excellent matching at Level Ten as a mediocre match. For another --

DR. SIDNEY

As for you, young man, you are now faced with choosing which absolutely ideal mate you want from three absolutely ideal mates. Or not choosing any of the three.

(MORE)

DR. SIDNEY (CONT'D)

And if you choose one of the women, you will probably ask yourself for the rest of your life, "What if I had chosen Woman Number Two or Number Three?"

DR. MESMER

Cyril, you're going over the top. Jeffrey has been handed a pudding that is one part miracle and two parts curse. He'll deal with it over time.

DR. WORTHEIMER

I'm sure as we speak this story is being leaked to the Times. MatchTec is already preparing a list of talking points to counter public reaction. The press will be on you, Jeffrey, like flies on watermelon at a park picnic in Kansas. I suggest you hire a publicist S.A.P.

The Woman who has been dabbing her eyes, raises a hand holding her handkerchief.

WOMAN EMPLOYEE

Mavis Johnson heads our client support services. If you need to work through any issues, she's available night and day. Here's her card.

She passes the card down to Jeffrey, who takes it and mechanically puts it into his shirt pocket.

JEFFREY

Thank you, Dr. Cranor. Right now I need time to digest what I've just learned.

DR. WORTHEIMER

We all need time to deal with this bombshell. Meeting adjourned.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

After gathering their things, the staff members shake Jeffrey's hand as they leave.

The sentiment is more "good luck" than "congratulations".

Dr. Wortheimer walks up to Jeffrey.

DR. WORTHEIMER

The sooner we wind this up the better. Come to my office tomorrow at two o'clock. I'll give you what information I legally can on the three women. I need your final decision no later than Wednesday.

INT. JEFFREY'S APARTMENT - LATER

Jeffrey enters his apartment.

He removes his coat and drapes it over the arm rest of the sofa.

He is still in a state of shock.

He checks his watch as he walks to the liquor cart.

He pours a scotch.

He goes to the sliding glass doors that look out on the city.

He knocks back his drink in two swallows and sets the glass on a small table.

JEFFREY

What will you tell Elaine?

(louder)

What will you tell Elaine?

(louder still)

What will you tell Elaine?

There is the BUZZ of the DOORBELL.

Annoyed, Jeffrey walks over and answers the door.

ELAINE stands in the doorway holding an aluminum pie pan.

ELAINE

I hope I'm not interrupting anything. I brought us a quiche from that Swiss bistro.

She kisses Jeffrey carelessly on the mouth as she walks into the living room.

ELAINE (CONT'D)

Scotch? You must be celebrating something or you had a bad day.

Jeffrey is stunned by Elaine's arrival.

JEFFREY

A little of both actually.

Elaine sets the quiche on the coffee table and plops onto the sofa.

ELAINE

I've been going back and forth all day long.

(beat)

So tell me, Jeffrey. The good and the bad... and the ugly, if you've had some of that too.

Jeffrey sits in the matching chair.

JEFFREY

You want something to drink?

ELAINE

Brandy. It's cold out.

Jeffrey gets up and quickly pours brandy into a snifter.

JEFFREY

I can heat it.

ELAINE

Room temperature is fine.

Jeffrey hands her the snifter.

JEFFREY

I'll get some plates.

Elaine fixes her eyes on Jeffrey.

ELAINE

Are you going to tell me what happened today?

JEFFREY

(scotch has steadied him)

Well, the good is... I'm finished with all those onerous tasks at the office.

ELAINE

The accounts?

JEFFREY

Yes. The bad is... I have three left and can go with only one.

ELAINE
How difficult can that be?

JEFFREY
You have no idea how difficult it
is.

ELAINE
Why so cryptic?

JEFFREY
I don't mean to be.

ELAINE
But that's the way you are. More
and more.

Jeffrey gets up and walks to the sliding glass doors.

He looks out at the city.

ELAINE (CONT'D)
There's something you need to tell
me. Just say it. We'll both feel
better.

Jeffrey turns to Elaine. He takes a big swallow of his drink.

JEFFREY
I do have something to say.

Elaine senses from Jeffrey's suddenly serious tone that he's
about to drop a bombshell on their relationship.

ELAINE
It's another woman, isn't it?

JEFFREY
Not another woman.

ELAINE
What then?

Jeffrey looks at Elaine for a long moment.

JEFFREY
Three other women.

Elaine's eyes quickly fill with tears.

ELAINE
(hoarse whisper)
Three other women?

JEFFREY
It's a long story.

ELAINE
It must be. For three women. And I
don't want to hear about it right
now because I...

She stands, takes her coat, and slings her purse over her
shoulder.

ELAINE (CONT'D)
... I don't think I can stand to
lose you.

She sweeps out of the apartment.

Jeffrey stands frozen in place.

Tears run down his cheeks.

JEFFREY
Oh, my God, Elaine. What have I
done?

INT. JEFFREY'S BEDROOM - FOLLOWING MORNING

The DOORBELL BUZZES repeatedly.

Jeffrey slowly stirs from a drunken sleep.

He gets up, puts on his robe.

He walks unsteadily toward the bedroom doorway.

INT. JEFFREY'S LIVING ROOM

Jeffrey holds his head as he makes his way toward the door.

JEFFREY
I'm coming, for God's sake, I'm
coming.

Jeffrey opens the door.

BOB

stands, holding a folded copy of the New York Times.

He walks quickly in.

BOB
You're a train wreck.

JEFFREY
I would prefer to have died in my
sleep.

BOB
You'll need to open another bottle
when you see today's paper.

JEFFREY
Don't tell me. Three women.

BOB
Why didn't you call when you first
learned about this? I thought you
were my friend.

JEFFREY
Just after MatchTec told me, Elaine
came by. I told her about it, more
or less. She was devastated. I was
devastated. I got drunk. Sorry.

BOB
You learned of the test results
only yesterday?

JEFFREY
Dr. Wortheimer warned us about the
whole thing leaking out. I didn't
think it would happen this fast.

Bob opens the paper and holds it up so Jeffrey can see the
headline.

BOB
At least it's a sidebar.

INSERT - HEADLINE

"MAN MATCHED LEVEL ONE TO THREE WOMEN"

BACK TO SCENE

JEFFREY
What a heel Elaine will think I am
when she sees this.

INT. JEFFREY'S LIVING ROOM - MINUTES LATER.

Jeffrey sits on the sofa. Bob sits in the arm chair.

Both have coffees.

BOB

You should've told Elaine about MatchTec. You didn't. She's crushed. There's nothing you can do now. Except pass on the ideal mate of your life and hope Elaine will eventually forgive you. Otherwise, you're stuck.

JEFFREY

I'm going to feel like a heel for a long time.

BOB

Knowing you, Jeffrey, a long time.

JEFFREY

My million dollar match doesn't work out, then what?

BOB

Move in with your mother and take up golf.

JEFFREY

I have to talk to Elaine.

BOB

There's no talking your way out of this.

INT. JEFFREY'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Jeffrey sits on the sofa.

He looks at the telephone several times.

He picks up the receiver and hits a button.

INSERT - SCREEN

"THE PERSON YOU HAVE DIALED IS NO LONGER AVAILABLE"

BACK TO SCENE

Jeffrey hits another button.

JEFFREY

Carol?... Listen, Elaine won't take any calls from me... I know I did...

(MORE)

JEFFREY (CONT'D)

But I at least owe her an explanation... Terrible... If I could just talk to Elaine... You would?... I can never thank you enough... I know, I know she probably never wants to set eyes on me again... Okay... Bye then.

Jeffrey hangs up the phone.

He walks over to his big window.

INT. JEFFREY'S APARTMENT

His PHONE RINGS.

JEFFREY

Hello... She did?... Where?... I'll be there... Carol, I can't tell you how much -- Okay, until then.

Jeffrey puts on his coat.

He takes a quick look at himself in a mirror by the door.

He leaves.

EXT. SIDEWALK CAFE - DAY

Elaine smiles at the waitress as she sets a cup of coffee in front of her.

Jeffrey approaches her table.

ELAINE

looks up at him.

ELAINE

Hello, Jeffrey.

Jeffrey sits opposite her.

JEFFREY

Thank you for agreeing to meet with me.

ELAINE

I only came to tell you good-bye.

Jeffrey shakes his head.

JEFFREY

Why did I ever go to MatchTec?

ELAINE

Come now. You must have had your reasons.

JEFFREY

How could I have hoped to find someone as nice as you?

ELAINE

As nice as me... You were willing to spend a million dollars to find someone as nice as me?

JEFFREY

I tried to tell you on several occasions, but I, I was afraid of hurting you and --

ELAINE

(angry tears)

Oh, for God's sake, stop it, Jeffrey.

Jeffrey puts his face in his hands.

JEFFREY

I'm so confused.

Elaine stands.

She begins to cry softly.

She bends over and kisses Jeffrey's cheek.

ELAINE

Good-bye, Jeffrey.

She walks away, her shoulders heaving.

INT. DR. WORTHIMER'S OFFICE - DAY

Jeffrey sits sober-faced close to Dr. Wortheimer's desk.

DR. WORTHEIMER

The Enpairment Act of 2017 puts strict limits on what information we can give you about a match. No photographs or current addresses for example.

(MORE)

DR. WORTHEIMER (CONT'D)
Virtually all our clients get only one match so this info is really irrelevant. In your case it may make it harder for you to chose which woman out of the three you want, if you still want one. I guess, in the end, you have to put your trust in MatchTec.

Dr. Wortheimer slides an elaborately sealed envelope toward Jeffrey.

JEFFREY
So what's in here?

DR. WORTHEIMER
Names, place of birth, birthday, and profession.

JEFFREY
Not much information for choosing a life's mate.

DR. WORTHEIMER
Put your trust in Matchtec.

JEFFREY
I guess you know about Elaine by now.

DR. WORTHEIMER
A foolish and painful error on your part, Jeffrey. Start putting it behind you.

JEFFREY
Why no photos?

DR. WORTHEIMER
Congress could pass the Enpairment Act only by agreeing to the arcane restrictions of a powerful conservative bloc. The result? People are denied information that affects their private lives.

Jeffrey takes the envelope and stands.

DR. WORTHEIMER (CONT'D)
I need your decision by Wednesday.

Jeffrey nods and walks slowly to the door.

INT. JEFFREY'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Jeffrey sits at his dining table, chin in hands, a large scotch nearby.

Before him lie the thumbnail resumés of the three women.

He picks up each one, reads it aloud.

JEFFREY

"Brenda Warren. Born: Waco, Texas,
August 31, 1992. Profession:
Certified Public Accountant."

He takes a sip of scotch.

JEFFREY (CONT'D)

"Monique Malpasse. Born: Bordeaux,
France, November 10, 1991.
Profession: None."

He takes a sip of scotch.

JEFFREY (CONT'D)

"Jeane Johns. Born: Calgary,
Canada, September 13, 1989.
Profession: Professor of Physics,
Chicago University."

He thoughtfully takes a sip of scotch.

JEFFREY (CONT'D)

Talk to me ladies. Help me choose.
For God's sake, help me choose.

Slightly drunk, he again reads.

JEFFREY (CONT'D)

"Brenda Warren. Born: Waco, Texas,
August 31, 1992. Profession:
Certified Public Accountant."

(improvising)

Another glass of wine, Brenda,
darling? Brenda. Be totally honest
with me. Have you ever fudged the
numbers, even just a wee bit? Waco,
huh? So you must know the front end
of a horse from the other.

"Monique Malpasse. Born: Bordeaux,
France, November 10, 1991.
Profession: None."

Autre cigarette, Monique? Je
t'aime, Monique. Je t'aime. Why do
they talk so much in French films?

(MORE)

JEFFREY (CONT'D)

Will we talk endlessly as well?
"Jeane Johns. Born: Calgary,
Canada, September 13, 1989.
Profession: Professor of Physics,
Chicago University."
Put that big physics book down,
Jeane, and let me look into your
eyes. Ah, they're the color of the
Canadian sky in spring. And your
leg is as smooth as a baby's.

Holds his glass up.

JEFFREY (CONT'D)

And let's not forget you, Elaine.
Elaine Bennett. Born: New York, New
York, March 15, 1991. Profession:
Benefactor of Hearts.

Jeffrey quickly writes the three names on 3 x 5 cards, folds them and puts them into a decorative bowl that sits on the table.

Then he reaches for another 3 x 5 card.

HIS HAND

as he writes Elaine's name on card.

BACK TO SCENE

He folds Elaine's card and drops it into the bowl.

He whirls the bowl around.

Sets it on the table.

He stands, walks to the window and looks at the skyline for a moment.

He returns to the table, closes his eyes, and takes out a card.

He opens it up and reads the name.

He carefully puts it in his shirt pocket.

He hangs his head and weeps.

EXT. MATCHTEC BUILDING - EXTERIOR STAIRS - DAY

Jeffrey slowly climbs the steps as if his feet were caked with mud.

He pauses by the logo of the entwined trees.

JEFFREY
Entwined oak and linden trees, my
ass.

He continues up the stairs.

He pushes the big revolving door and enters.

INT. MATCHTEC LOBBY

Dr. Wortheimer and Doctors Mesmer and Sidney stand waiting
for Jeffrey.

DR. MESMER
How are you?

JEFFREY
Numb.

DR. SIDNEY
Giselle and I are here as
witnesses.

DR. WORTHEIMER
Have you decided?

JEFFREY
I have.

INT. OFFICE

Doctors Mesmer and Sidney sit off to one side of Dr.
Wortheimer's desk.

Jeffrey hands a folded 3 x 5 card to Dr. Wortheimer, who
reads it and then hands it to Mesmer and Sidney, who also
read it.

Dr. Wortheimer writes the name of the woman onto a document.

He slides it toward Jeffrey.

DR. WORTHEIMER
Sign at the X.

Jeffrey signs the document.

Then Dr. Wortheimer slides it to the two doctors who sign it
and push it back to him.

Dr. Wortheimer slides a manila envelope toward Jeffrey.

DR. WORTHEIMER (CONT'D)

We have three rendezvous centers in the U.S. The eastern one is on Hunter Mountain about two hours from here. Take Thruway I-87 to Exit 20... The directions are in the envelope. A guard at the gate will let you in. Friday at 11:00. She'll be there.

The three doctors look at Jeffrey.

Jeffrey looks at the three doctors.

JEFFREY

I guess it's on with life?

INT. HOUSE - SUN ROOM - MORNING

Jeffrey's mother reclines on her chaise longue.

Jeffrey sits near her, a cup of coffee on his lap.

His mother lights a cigarette.

JEFFREY

Smoking before noon.

MOTHER

Almost forty and unmarried. Yet you drove away a woman totally devoted to you.

JEFFREY

I'm sorry, mother. I criticize you for a silly cigarette when, with a roll of the dice, I lose Elaine, someone I know, and win a woman I know nothing about.

MOTHER

Maybe this new woman could talk to Elaine.

JEFFREY

Don't be ridiculous.
(twitches)
Elaine's gone.

MOTHER

Get her back.

JEFFREY

I spent a million dollars getting a woman I've never kissed.

MOTHER

Remember the watch in the park?

JEFFREY

Now is not the time for the watch in the park.

MOTHER

A man wanted to sell you a beautiful watch. You were, what, ten? You ran home and took all the money out of your piggy bank. Thirty-seven dollars.

JEFFREY

(going along)
Took the bait.

MOTHER

There was nothing in the watch. It was just the casing of a watch.

JEFFREY

You think I bought a casing of a woman?

MOTHER

I don't know what I think.

JEFFREY

MatchTec wouldn't pair me with a casing of a woman.

MOTHER

MatchTec SmatchTec. She's probably an adventuress after your money.

JEFFREY

She ponied up a million too.

MOTHER

Also a million?
(sits up)
I didn't realize that.

JEFFREY

Yeah, bought a man she knows nothing about.

Emma comes in to refresh Jeffrey's coffee.

Jeffrey's mother becomes lost in thought.

JEFFREY (CONT'D)

Thank you, Emma.

His mother comes back to reality.

MOTHER

Emma, in a week or two I'm having a welcome party for a friend of Jeffrey's. A small affair. Not more than twenty people. I want your tournedos Rossini, the Julia Child carrots, lots of flowers, and maybe that guitar player the Gordon's use so much.

EMMA

(to Jeffrey)

I'll make your chocolaty thing with the crushed vanilla wafers. Your friend might like it too.

Jeffrey takes a sip of his coffee.

JEFFREY

Oh, she will, Emma. I know her like the palm of my hand.

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD - DAY

Jeffrey's car winds its way up the side of Hunter Mountain en route to the MatchTec rendezvous site.

Jeffrey comes to a crossroads.

He looks for a street sign.

INSERT - ROAD SIGN

"NEW ROAD"

BACK TO SCENE

Jeffrey turns onto the road.

Almost immediately he comes to an unmarked dirt road on his right.

He turns onto it.

It is uneven, and he must ease his way up it.

He comes to a large stone archway with a guard booth.

A GUARD, African-American, slides open a glass window.

GUARD

Good morning, Mr. Lorner. Follow
the road to the parking area. Walk
down to the garden.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Jeffrey gets out of his car.

His apprehensiveness is palpable.

He looks around.

The only car in the small lot is a new, fire engine red sports car with dealer's plates.

Jeffrey approaches it respectfully and looks through a window.

He sees a book on the passenger seat.

The book cover reads: "THE HEART IS A LONELY HUNTER BY CARSON McCULLERS."

BACK TO SCENE

Jeffrey walks to the edge of lot where a path descends a hillside.

Below stands a small, modern lodge in gray stone, its windows aglow with yellow light.

Adjacent to the lodge are two carefully laid-out acres of geometric cinder walkways and gardens and trees.

The flower beds now lie dormant and the maple trees stand leafless in the chill of the gray winter day.

In the distance, the smooth, gray-green rises of the Catskills.

Using his hand as an eye shade, Jeffrey looks out over the garden.

He sees a lone figure sitting on a bench at the far end of the park.

BACK TO SCENE

He starts down the short path.

He walks out onto a cinder walkway.

He moves steadily along the path toward the figure, his FEET CRUNCHING softly in the coarse CINDERS.

As he approaches, the figure, a WOMAN, slowly stands.

She is tall, beautiful, with long hair falling from underneath a stocking cap.

She wears a scarf and a down vest, tight jeans and soft skin boots that reach her legs mid-calf.

She is nervous, but her smile quick and reassuring.

She extends a glove-less hand.

WOMAN

(French accent)

Monique Malpasse.

(flicks her eyes)

And you must be Jeffrey.

Jeffrey takes her hand in both of his.

The two stand for some seconds looking into each other's eyes.

MONIQUE

touches Jeffrey's cheek.

JEFFREY

embraces Monique.

Monique regards Jeffrey, her hands on his shoulders.

MONIQUE (WOMAN)

Oh-là-là, a Level One and they bring me an American.

JEFFREY

(country)

Yep. Don't fence or make souffles. Don't smoke and the only French I remember is "Où est la plume de ma tante?"

MONIQUE

I teach you all that.

JEFFREY

Will I wear a beret and learn to
play a squeeze box concertina?

MONIQUE

(disregards question)
And now...

Monique holds her arm out for Jeffrey.

MONIQUE (CONT'D)

... allons-y, Jeffrey. They've
prepared a smart lunch for us at
the lodge.

Jeffrey takes her arm, and they begin walking toward the
lodge.

PULL BACK until Jeffrey and Monique, the lodge and the
distant mountains are all in the frame.

FADE OUT.

THE END