

**LIKE A DRUG**

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FADE IN:

**INT. ONE BEDROOM LOFT - DAY**

BEDROOM: MEGAN (early 20s) petite, round body, attractive, stands in front of a full length mirror sizing up her outfit. She twists, gives her butt a look. Turns back, places hands on her hips, cocks her head. Gives herself the thumbs up.

LIVING ROOM: She struts to the front door. Reaching for the knob, she stops. Turning around, scans the silent loft: small kitchen, table for one; small living area with futon, simple chair adjacent; open door to the bedroom shows a neatly made full size bed.

Her sad eyes stare off into the distance. She shuts them, draws a deep breath. Turns and leaves.

**INT. STUDIO LOFT - SAME TIME**

The front door bursts open. RUSSELL (mid 20s) strides in. Door shuts behind him. Casts a light jacket in his hand onto the back of a sofa mid room. He wears a white polo shirt with a company logo over the heart. Striping it off exposes his average build. Casts it onto the bed adjacent a closet shoehorned into the studio loft.

Leans inside. DRAWER OPENING/CLOSING. Stepping back he dons the black tee shirt, proceeding back to the door. Shoots inside the small bathroom adjacent the front door.

BATHROOM: Faces the mirror, grooming his hair. Done, he squirts cologne into his hands, slapping it onto each cheek with a 'shave and a haircut' drum beat.

THE LOFT: He heads to the sofa and lifts his jacket. He pauses. Sets it back down.

Walks into the small kitchen behind a low wall adjacent the bed. Opens a cabinet above a small stove and pulls out a bottle of bourbon. Next to the sink, lifts up a glass. Pours two fingers. Drinks it in one pull. Done, he takes a deep breath.

THE LOFT: Putting on the jacket, he heads for and out the front door without slowing.

**INT. STOREROOM, THE PUB - SAME TIME**

RENEE (early 20s) slender, pretty, wearing a crop top exposing her mid section, stares at herself in a mirror.

It hangs on the wall over small, worn wooden table. Stacks of boxes labeled pint glasses flank each side. The mirror is old, faded around the edges and corners.

She prunes her hair, correcting errant strands, then stares blankly into the mirror. Reaching behind, pulls a cell phone from a back pocket.

CELL PHONE: Opens the message app. There are a dozen or so. Thumbs down the lists, but doesn't open any. Reaching the end, she pauses.

Her disappointed eyes peer into the mirror.

Shoves the phone back into a back pocket and leaves.

SMALL HALLWAY: She heads towards the main area. NUMEROUS CONVERSATIONS, MUSIC from an ELECTRONIC JUKEBOX and CLKINKING GLASSES fill the air.

**EXT. DOWNTOWN SPRINGFIELD, MO - EVENING**

Sidewalk full of people coming and going. Vehicles move up and down the street.

**INT. THE PUB FRIDAY HAPPY HOUR - LATER**

THE PUB bristles with patrons. Renovated, the original brick and mortar make up the walls. Behind the bar, dozens of taps stretch its length. The chairs and tables are wood. Unpretentious atmosphere.

Russell and Megan sit at a table with OLIVIA and MARTIN. CONVERSTATIONS, LOW MUSIC from an electronic jukebox. Russell tilts back his chair, a mixed drink in one hand. Other arm rests on an empty one between Megan and he, his jacket slung over the top. Relays the idiot of the week story.

RUSSELL

So this guy's sitting in his car,  
right, probably staring at the  
ticket spitter...

Megan sits holding a half empty pint, listening.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)

It's an older building so the  
underground garage has those  
dinosaur ticket machines where you  
got a--

Reaches forward with the arm draping the empty seat.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)  
 (exaggerating effort)  
Leeeeeean out the window and push a  
 button.

Goes back to his relaxed position and arm on the chair. As he goes on, Megan glances at the front door. She stares as it fully opens.

RUSSELL (O.S.)  
 But he must a had the strength to  
 reach out and pushed the call  
 button...

A knot of college kids amble in.

RUSSELL (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
 He saying 'There's no ticket coming  
 out.' I say back...

The wooden door closes behind them. She returns to Russell.

RUSSELL  
 Did you press the green button?  
 Then I could hear him press it and  
 the chi-clunk of ticket come out.

Megan again catches the door opening.

RUSSELL (O.S)  
 What I wanted to say was 'Did you  
 press the green button...

An older man enters.

RUSSELL (O.S)  
 ...with the words *Press Button for  
 a Ticket* above it, dumbass?

Once the door closes, she goes back to Russell.

Everyone laughs. Megan too, but her eyes dart to the front door as it opens.

RICHARD (early 30s) enters. 5'9", good looking, fashionable, well fit, two-piece suit. He stops, places hands on hips, scans the room.

MARTIN (O.S)  
 Was he drunk?

Megan's eyes flare up. Her grip on the glass tightens.

RUSSELL (O.S)  
Downtown here? Was about 11 am. You  
never know!

COLEEN (late 20s) slender, now stands beside Richard. She's dressed like Ally McBeal. Dark-rimmed glasses gives her a sophisticated look. Laughter from the table doesn't distract Megan's focus.

She rises, waving her arm.

MEGAN  
Hey guys!

Russell straightens up, turns to look.

The duo approach. Coleen glides like a runway model, a step or two ahead of Richard.

Russell gets up. Megan set down her glass. Once there, Coleen smiles at Megan.

COLEEN  
Hey there girl!

MEGAN  
(looking at Richard)  
Hey.

Steps up to him. Her smile grows wider. They hug. She savors the embrace.

OLIVIA  
You guys were any later, might a  
forgot about ya.

Megan releases the hug, but keeps an arm around his waist.

MEGAN  
(looking at Richard)  
How'd your week end up?

Richard draws a breath to speak.

COLEEN  
(sighing)  
I'll let Rick fill you in.

RICHARD  
The Jamison account.

As Richard starts in on his week, Russell steps back, glass in hand. Reaches for his jacket.

RUSSELL

Hey. I need a talk some shop with some others. You guys can have my seat.

COLEEN

You sure?

RUSSELL

(backing away)  
Yeah, yeah. Go ahead.

RICHARD

Thanks Russ.

Richard and Coleen get situated, greeting Olivia and Martin.

Russell and Megan eye each other.

He gives her a wink.

She gives him one in return.

He meanders towards the bar, weaving around crowded tables.

Eyes an empty seat at the end, adjacent the server's station.

He looks surprised, normally those seats are always full.

Steeping up, he turns to the middle-aged man sitting adjacent.

RUSSELL

This taken?

The man turns. He's much older, balding, globe shaped paunch all but bursting from this tight tee shirt. Gruff but polite voice.

MAN

Nah. Had a take off.

Russell slings his jacket over the back, then gets comfortable in the bar stool.

Swiveling, he scans the room. Through the crowd he stops on Renee. She leans over a table, picking up glasses. His eyes zero in on her butt.

His left brow cocks up. Ever so subtle smile of pleasure.

Another view of her backside.

His eyes now relent. Shamefaced, turns back towards the bar.

Comfortable in the bar stool, sips his drink, people watching. He turns, strains to find Renee. When he sees her coming, he swings back around.

He slouches in the bar stool, propping his knee against the ledge of the bar, assuming a nonchalant pose.

Renee approaches from behind. He remains facing the bar, but his eyes veer to the right to catch her as she arrives.

RENEE

Hey you!

Russell turns, acts surprised.

RUSSELL

And hey you back.

Renee sets her tray on the server's station, begins unloading empty glasses.

RENEE

Megan sent you up for refills?

RUSSELL

Ah... no.  
 (a thumb back at the  
 table)  
 Talking shop. I'm here to relax.

RENEE

Ha ha!  
 (patting his arm)  
 You keep doing that!

She goes back to unloading glasses.

RUSSELL

You're busier than a one legged  
 waitress during Oktoberfest.

She stops. Gives him a thankful look. Steps behind him. Places her hands on his shoulders.

RENEE

Least you're being funny, instead a  
 asking a dumbass question like  
 (mocking tone)  
 'Busy night?'

She leans forward, whispering into his ear.

RENEE (CONT'D)  
Mind if I lean on you and rest my  
feet for a bit?

Russell smiles, patting her hand, offering no resistance. He savors her touch and warm breath hitting his neck.

MAN (O.S)  
Hey.

Russell and Renee turn to him.

He's got on a cheesy smile.

MAN  
Got me some strong shoulders  
myself.

Russell hides his annoyance. Renee cocks a smile.

RENEE  
(to Russell)  
Scuse me.

She moves behind the man. Wraps her arms around him.

RENEE (CONT'D)  
For you I got a great big hug!

Russell looks on, painted smile. The man enjoys her hug way too much.

Turns back to the bar and works on his drink, annoyance on his face.

JACK (20ish), slender, wearing a concert tee walks up behind them.

JACK  
Hey.

Renee releases her hug, straightens up, props one arm on the man's shoulder.

RENEE  
Sup there Jack.

Russell turns to look, but remains silent.

JACK  
You seen Jason?

RENEE  
Nope. But hoping he stops by. Why?

JACK  
Said he was gonna help fix up my  
bike 'tamorrow.

RENEE  
Good luck getting that piece of  
shit running.

JACK  
Also somethin bout an after-hours  
party. Won't answer my texts.

Renee's eyes narrow as she hides her surprise, maintaining a  
smile.

RENEE  
Oh? Sure he's just busy. He's got a  
job you know. Working for his dad's  
auto dealership and all.

Jack doesn't catch her veiled insult about employment.

JACK  
Yeah. Well, if you see im, tell im  
I better see im tamorra and be like  
ready to work.

He moves off.

RENEE  
(to Jack)  
I'll be sure not to wear him out  
tonight.

She gives Jack a wink.

Hearing her plans for later, Russell turns back to the bar.  
Slams what's left of his drink.

BILL (mid 50s), owner of The Pub, burly looking man, behind  
the bar, steps up in front of Russell.

BILL  
Renee, your tray's ready.  
(to Russell)  
You ready for a refill?

He nods. Renee trudges to the wait station. Runs her hand  
along Russell's back, pats his shoulder.

He catches the man's wide grin and eyes fixed on Renee as  
she goes back to work.

MAN

She's quite the gal. I'll 'member  
that hug all night.

Russell says nothing. Look of disgust on his face on what  
the man might be doing when he remembers *that hug*.

**INT. THE PUB, MEGAN'S TABLE - CONTINUOUS**

Glasses of varying size and volume litter the table. Richard  
sits between Megan and Coleen, finishing his story.

RICHARD

...and when it was all said and  
done, sent that file to their  
accountant! Now they can deal with  
it!

Mild laughter from everyone. Turns to Megan. Lays an arm  
across the back of her chair.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

And I want to thank you especially.  
Those financial analysis you worked  
on reeeeally helped us out.

Megan draws a breath, leaning back, wanting to feel his arm  
on her back. Her smile's a mild wide.

MEGAN

I'm... always there to help!

COLEEN

(to Megan)

My thanks too. You're such a great  
little helper.

Megan glares at her, maintaining a diminished smile. Little  
helper sounds demeaning.

MEGAN

Thanks.

COLEEN

(to everyone)

You all've been a great help. Wish  
you all could come to Florida with  
Rick and I next week.

Megan's eyes flare. She tenses up.

OLIVIA

Can I come to!

MARTIN

When do we leave!

COLEEN (CONT'D)

The firm's graciously allowed us some time off, and Rick here told me he's never been. Soooo....

(eyeing Richard)

Thought it best make the upcoming three day weekend into a four day vacation.

RICHARD

Yes ma'am!

He removes his arm from around Megan. She watches it pull away. He puts his other arm around Coleen.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

She's told me so much about it...

Megan picks up her beer, taking gulps as Richard goes on about sandy beaches, clear skies and sipping highly alcoholic strawberry daiquiris.

She watches Coleen's hand land on Richard's leg. Coleen begins caressing it.

COLEEN (O.S)

And I'm like so unprepared!

Richard puts his hand on hers. They playfully fondle each other's fingers.

RICHARD (O.S)

We'll hit the mall tomorrow.

He turns to Megan.

RICHARD

Why don't you come with.

Wide eyed, Megan snaps out of her inappropriate staring. A mouthful of beer halfway down her throat.

She sets the glass down and covers her mouth. The beer almost came back up. It takes a few seconds for her to regain composure.

Richard and Colleen look on waiting for an answer.

MEGAN

(clearing throat)

To Florida?

RICHARD

No. The mall.

COLEEN

Yes! And she can help me pick out a new bikini!

Megan stares at her, draws a deep breath.

MEGAN

Well... I think... Oh!

(feigns embarrassment)

Told Russ I'd go with him to the Farmers Market. Not sure what time he'd want a go so gotta keep things open.

RICHARD

Okay.

(to Coleen)

Besides you, Megs the only other persons fashion sense I trust.

They smack a kiss on the lips.

MEGAN

You know, there are a lot of things to do around town. There's that winery just south of here.

MARTIN

Wouldn't bet a beach!

Richard leans back.

RICHARD

Oh Megs, this town will get along without me for a few days.

COLEEN

Without us!

He smiles at her and clutches her hand again.

Megan stares at them for a moment. Returns to her beer.

**INT. THE PUB, BAR - LATER**

Russell sits quietly, sipping his drink. The crowd has thinned out and there are more empty seats at the bar.

Megan approaches from behind holding a 1/4 full pint. Plops into the bars tool next to him. Startled, he twists around. Eyes her first, then twists to see her table. It's empty save for empty glasses.

Turns back to Megan. She looks dower. Eyes blank.

RUSSELL  
Early night for the business crowd?

Megan stares into her pint.

MEGAN  
Not early enough.

She puts down whats left in one pull.

Russell's eyes widen.

RUSSELL  
We okay?

MEGAN  
Yeah. Yeah. Might a overdone it a bit.

She looks at him with a feeble smile.

MEGAN (CONT'D)  
This was my third.

Her attention goes back to the glass.

Russell straightens up in his bar stool. Mouth half open, about to say something.

MEGAN (CONT'D)  
They're going to Florida next weekend. You know.

Russell traps shut his lips. Stares at her for a moment. Next words are not a question.

RUSSELL  
Rick and that Coleen girl.

Megan nods but doesn't look at him. Russell watches her for a moment. He turns to the bar.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)  
Hey Bill. Could you tab me out?

Bill stands near the register. Nods and moves towards it.

Renee strides up to the wait station with a tray full of empty glasses. Starts unloading them. Sees Bill put Russell's tab in front of him.

RENEE  
You guys aren't leaving me already?

Megan watches Russell turn to Renee, then eyes his tab.

Russell zeros in on Renee's disappointed face.

RUSSELL

Ah... long week. And we got the  
rest of the weekend!

Megan figures out what he's doing.

MEGAN

(half-hearted)

No Russ. You stay. Someone's got a  
keep Renee out of trouble.

RENEE

(mocking laugh)

Good luck with that.

Russell swivels back to Megan. Renee puts the last empty  
glass on the counter.

RUSSELL

Nah. She's a big girl. Can handle  
herself.

Renee takes up her tray and walks up behind Russell.

RENEE

You bet!

(rubs his arm)

You take it easy till I see you  
again. Kay?

She moves to Megan, pats her shoulder.

RENEE (CONT'D)

You too girl.

**EXT. DOWNTOWN SIDEWALK - NIGHT**

Megan and Russell drift away from the Pub in the background.  
Others walk by to and fro. Cars glide up and down the  
adjacent street.

Megan eyes the sidewalk as she walks. She looks up at  
Russell. He's staring straight ahead, hands in his jacket  
pockets. Back to eyeing the sidewalk. Looks at him again.

MEGAN

Can I ask you something?

RUSSELL

Shoot.

MEGAN

You're... you're crushing on Renee  
aren't you?

He comes to a dead stop, then Megan.

He turns to her. Chuckles, thinking its a joke and waits for her to start giggling. She doesn't. Her face is serious, but eyes are glazed.

His smile relents. Struggles for an answer. Mouth half opening then closing. He's evasive.

RUSSELL

Me. Nah. I mean...  
(looks at her)  
Why do you ask?

MEGAN

(shrugging)  
Just... you know... I'm dealing  
with... you seem to want her  
attention. Is it... working?

RUSSELL

Doesn't mean I'm... Yeah, she's a  
really nice girl. Fun to talk to.  
Like you. I'm sure there's a lot of  
guys crushing her without adding me  
to the list. I'm not like that.  
And... I know she got a... a  
nice...

Pulls a hand out of its pocket. Rolls it as if trying to find the right words.

MEGAN

Body!

She starts chuckling. Russell reels back. Mildly offended.

RUSSELL

Wasn't gonna say that!

Shamefaced, he turns and starts walking away. Megan follows beside him.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)

Was gonna say demeanor! She's  
making that guy a great girlfriend.

MEGAN

I'd show off my mid section more  
too if I looked like her...

Her voice trails off more than stops. Russell gives her a sympathetic look.

RUSSELL

Don't knock yourself. I've seen you fight off guys before.

MEGAN

Huh! After every, size zero girl's shot them down.

RUSSELL

You know, one day your gonna have to explain what the hell size zero means. Who the hell thought of that!

They continue on. Passing by a small bar, she speaks.

MEGAN

You know... don't know if I ever thank you for... you know... what you do for me... with Rick.

They share a comforting glance, then her eyes go back to the sidewalk, his straight ahead.

RUSSELL

You don't have to.

Walk for a bit.

MEGAN

Hey! Almost forgot. Wanna check out the Farmer's Market tomorrow?

RUSSELL

Didn't know they had one.

MEGAN

Yeah. Been meaning to. Don't wanna do it solo. Plus a... I'll spring for lunch at the Sub Hub.

RUSSELL

(shrugging)

Sure. I'm game.

They continue moving. View expands out, showing them and all the activity downtown.

**INT. THE PUB - LATER**

The crowd in the Pub has picked up again after happy hour. Megan and TAMMY (20s) unload empty glasses onto the server's station.

TAMMY

No rests between storms tonight.

Renee raises her brows in agreement.

TAMMY (CONT'D)

How you making out so far?

They speak as both set empty glasses on the counter. Renee scoots some back from the ledge so they don't fall off.

RENEE

Meh. Typical. But my regulars took the edge off.

TAMMY

Did see you chatting it up with that one guy.

Renee gives her a sarcastic glance.

RENEE

Can you be more specific?

Tammy points at the bar stool adjacent.

RENEE (CONT'D)

Oh. Know him?

TAMMY

Nah. Keeps to himself mainly.

RENEE

Yeah. A tad on the shy side, but have to put up with those catty, clingy people waaaay too often.

Both laugh.

TAMMY

Speaking of guys, how's things with Jason? Been what... six months?

Tammy puts on a naughty smile.

Renee paints on a smile, but is hesitant.

RENEE

A... bout that. Yeah.  
 (back to the glasses)  
 And what about you and Danny?

TAMMY

He's great. But we only hung out a few times, then went out that once. And... no clicking, ya know. But thanks for introducing us.

Renee gives her a disappointed glance.

RENEE

Oh. Sure. Sorry it didn't pan out.

TAMMY

Better than some guys. Like that one asshat tonight. Tries acting all smooth...

Renee catches the sight of JASON (mid 20s) entering through the front door. He's good looking. Dress is casual but fashionable. Hair held in place just so. Bracelets adorn each wrist.

TAMMY (O.S.)

(mocking tone)

*I'm new in town. Sure would like someone to show me around.*

Renee's fixed on Jason. He walks by a table where some of the occupants say hello. He waves and nods back.

RENEE

Yeah. Same to me when he move to my section. What a loser. Scuse me.

Renee grabs her tray, heads off. Tammy turns and sees Jason.

TAMMY

Yeah. Could use me a piece of that too.

Jason heads through the Pub, looking around. Doesn't see Renee until she steps in front of him. He stands a whole head taller.

RENEE

Hey good looking.

He comes to a stop. Places a hand on each of her arms. Leans down. She stretches up and they kiss.

Done, he steps back, keeps his hands on her.

JASON  
How we doing tonight?

Renee looks up with a beaming smile.

RENEE  
Now that you're here... looking up!  
What's on the agenda for tonight?

JASON  
Gonna grab some wings, brews. Wait  
for Jack.

RENEE  
Already here. Said a...

She steps back. Jason releases her. Brings her tray to her chest like a shield, crossing her arms around it.

RENEE (CONT'D)  
You called him about some... party  
and... helping with that shitty  
bike of his. Ha ha!

JASON  
Oh. Some shindig I heard about.  
Forgot to get back to him.

RENEE  
Told him you were busy. Job and  
all. But a...  
(tightens hold on tray)  
If you aren't really planning  
anything, thought maybe we could  
a... make an evening of it?

She puts on a mischievous smirk. He smiles.

JASON  
I'd like that.

Renee lowers the tray, moves back as if a great weight just  
lifted from her.

RENEE  
Great!

Jason's eyes shoot off behind her.

JASON  
I see Jack. Gonna to catch up on a  
few things.

RENEE

You do that, babe. I'll stop by  
when I can.

Another short kiss, then they part. Renee half-prances back to her section.

Jason heads to the other end of the bar where it bends towards another wall. Jack stands more than sits there. Face buried into his cell. Half full pint in front of him.

He doesn't see Jason till he sits in the bar stool adjacent.

JACK

Been waitin. Sup?

Sets his cell down. Jason picks up a laminated menu from off the bar. Scans it. Doesn't look at Jack.

JASON

Not going to Elsie's party tonight  
thank you very much.

Jack's confused.

JACK

Why not?

Jason turns and glares at Jack.

JASON

Next time I give you some info,  
keep it to yourself. That includes  
the GF.

(back to the menu)

Since she already knows there's no  
sense going. We're gonna hook up  
later.

JACK

Sorry dude. It's not like you where  
lookin to spend time with her.

Jack hunches over his beer. Jason says nothing.

JACK (CONT'D)

Why don't you just... you know.  
Break up with her.

Jason's face shows a mix of sadness and confusion.

JASON

Heading that way. But...

JACK  
But... dude? She's a hottie.

JASON  
Hard to explain. She's great and  
all but... looking for... something  
different. Maybe.

He twists to give Jack a stern look. Piercing eyes.

JASON (CONT'D)  
And that info stays between us.

Goes back to the menu. Scolded, Jack slouches over the bar.  
A few moments of silence.

JACK  
Mind if I still hit that party?

JASON  
(staring at menu)  
Whatever. Have fun.

He waves over one of the bartenders. Goes about ordering a  
beer and plate of wings. Doesn't see Jack straighten up,  
look around, then begins staring off to their right.

Done ordering, Jack leans down near Jason's head.

JACK  
Someone's checking us out.

Jason looks up at Jack with confusion. Turns around to what  
Jack's been eyeing.

In a booth about 20 feet away he sees a woman eyeing him. An  
older man sits opposite her, back against the wall. Her eyes  
remained fixed on Jason. The growing crowd pass or linger  
through his view.

He smiles, nods, then turns away. Jack remains fixed on the  
booth.

JACK (CONT'D)  
Think I've seen that chick before.

JASON  
Good for you but try not drooling.

Jack goes back to his cell. The bartender sets a tall can of  
beer and glass down. Jason pours it. Done, he turns to eye  
the booth again.

JAMIE (late 20s), the woman from the booth heads towards them, cocktail in one hand. Stands about 5'7". Ruby red lips and black eyeliner. Skin tight clothes.

Jack sees her. Straightens up. Face full of awe. Jason starts sipping his beer.

JAMIE (O.S.)  
What's that your drinking?

Jason looks her in the face. In the background, Jack checks her out from head to toe.

JASON  
It's an English beer I took a liking too.

He grabs the can and shakes it. The nitrogen widget makes a hollow rattling sound.

JASON (CONT'D)  
Even comes with a little ball.

Jamie smiles, extends a hand.

JAMIE  
Jamie.

JASON  
(shaking her hand)  
Jason.

JACK  
And I'm Jack.

He stands, extending his hand behind Jason. She gives it a light shake then back to Jason.

JAMIE  
Imported beer. No doubt a man of taste.

Jason tries scanning the room without making it obvious.

Through the crowd sees Renee at a table in her section on the other side of the Pub. Back to Jamie.

JASON  
A bit overdressed for the Pub.

Holding the thin drink straw with one hand, she draws out a sip, eyes fixed on his. Puckering lips around the straw punctuates her allure. Done, she licks the cold from her lips.

JAMIE

No such thing as overdressing.  
 Plus...  
 (half twist around)  
 Me and Dwight...  
 (twist back)  
 Are gonna to visit a few clubs.  
 This is our first stop. And you?

JACK

Got a after hours party to hit.

Jason becomes annoyed. Gives Jack a quick glance.

JASON

Yeah. The Bellows Lofts.

He again scans the Pub looking for Renee.

JACK (O.S)

Could tell ya which room--

Jason strains to see Renee through the growing crowd.

JAMIE (O.S)

No need. We'll find it. Me and Dee  
 may have to crash it. Catch you  
 there?

Jason goes back to her, smiling.

JASON

Sorry. Other plans.

Jamie takes another seductive sip. The older, shorter, well  
 dress man from the same booth comes up behind her. Placing a  
 hand on her shoulder he gently pulls her down.

Jason and Jack look on.

The man whispers into her ear. She listen while sipping  
 through the straw. She nods. The man moves off.

JAMIE

Hate to flirt and run but gotta go.  
 Hope to see you out and about  
 sometime.

Sets her glass on the bar, turns and strides off.

Jason watches her as she weaves through the crowd just  
 behind the older man.

JACK

Love to hook up with that.

Jason shuts his eyes and shakes his head, lowering it in exasperation.

RENEE (O.S.)

Hey!

Her hand's on his shoulder. Startled, Jason straightens up and turns, wide eyed and in shock.

Her beaming smile morphs away.

RENEE (CONT'D)

You okay.

Jason blinks, recovers. Paints on a smile.

JASON

Ah... yeah babe. Just startled me.

Renee's face brightens up.

RENEE

Guess what? Bill's cutting me loose early. An extra girl came in.

She step in closer. Eyes glued to his.

RENEE (CONT'D)

If your up to it... we can hit the Blue Room, then O'Kelly's, then... my place?

Jason stares down at her seductive smile.

JASON

Sounds like a plan.

**INT. RENEE'S BEDROOM - MORNING**

Jason and Renee lay in bed. He on the left on his back: torso and lower legs exposed. She on the right facing away in a fetal position: bare back and legs exposed. Discarded clothes lay on the floor in various places. Light from the blind covered window shines through.

LOW CHIME of a cell phone and VIBRATION. On the small table adjacent Jason, a small light blinks.

The CHIME and VIBRATION grow louder. Jason stirs. His right arm stretches out and gropes for the phone. Finding it, his heavy eyes open as he brings it to his face.

CALLER ID: JACK. Above that: 3 MISSED CALLS.

He answers but doesn't get up. Voice is slow and groggy.

JASON  
Man this better be good.

JACK (V.O.)  
Thank God! Been tryin ta call all  
mornin.

The sound of Jack's voice makes him wince. His free hand caresses his head.

He moves the phone away to look at the time on the screen:  
11:05 am.

Moves the phone back to speak.

JASON  
Yeah. Yeah. Overslept and... got a  
killer hangover. Might have to re--

JACK (V.O.)  
(excited but soft voice)  
Ran into that chick Jamie from last  
night. At the party.

JASON  
Whatta you talking about?

JACK (V.O.)  
At the party, she comes right up ta  
me askin bout you.

JASON  
And?

JACK (V.O.)  
Told her you wanted ta... crash  
early. Was gonna help with my bike  
today. Didn't say anything bout...  
ya know...

Jason twists his head to see Renee's bear back. Her chest rises and falls but doesn't stir.

Turns back.

JASON  
And?

JACK (V.O.)  
I could tell all the other dudes  
were gettin jealous because I'm  
there talkin with a hot chick and--

JASON  
(sarcastic)  
Yeah. You're so awesome. And?

JACK (V.O.)  
So I told her you'd be here. This  
morning.

Jason draws a deep breath, almost coughing.

JASON  
Dude. That's the most dicked up  
excuse to get me over--

JAMIE (V.O.)  
Hello sleepy head.

Jason bolts upright and twists. Both feet land flat on the  
hardwood floor.

JAMIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
Burning daylight here.

He gives Renee a quick look. She still doesn't move. Twists  
back.

JAMIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
And if you could, pick up some of  
that English beer on your way over.  
Me and Jack here are getting  
thirsty.

Stunned, he remains silent, waiting for more. A few moments  
pass.

JACK (V.O.)  
You still there.

Renee begins stirring. He twists around. She stretches.

JASON  
A... yeah. Overslept. Gimme  
about... an hour okay.

Twists back.

JASON (CONT'D)  
And make sure everything's there  
when I get there. Got it?

SHUFFLING comes through the phone.

JAMIE (V.O.)

And peppermint schnapps too. Not a  
big bottle. A pint'll do. Still  
early.

His eyes widen. Behind him, Renee scooches towards him face  
down. Wraps an arm around his waist. He gives her a glance,  
puts a hand on her arm. Back to the phone, waiting for more  
from either Jack or Jamie. She snuggles up against him.

He looks at the phone: the call has ended.

RENEE

(groggy voice)

Who was that this early?

Sets the phone down.

JASON

Jack ass. Of course. And it's not  
so early anymore. After 11.

Renee's head shots up. Rolls on her back.

RENEE

Shit. Eleven. We did have quite a  
night. After we shut down  
O'Kelly's, surprised we made it  
back here.

She goes back to cuddling his waist. He's trying to rub away  
the headache.

RENEE (CONT'D)

Call him back and tell him you're  
not coming. Tell him... Something  
came up. Again.

Jason leans back and over, gives her a kiss.

JASON

Promised babe.

He gets up with her clinging to him. She falls back into  
bed, watches him look around the floor.

RENEE

Yeah. I... I remember. Just...  
le'me know when you're done. Kay?  
We can chill before work.

He's done putting on boxers.

JASON  
 Sure thing babe. Gonna gab a  
 shower.

Renee doesn't move or speak as he leaves. Hungover, she can't put up much of a fight. Looks tired and sad.

**INT. MONDAY MORNING DOWNTOWN OFFICE, MONDAY - DAY**

Megan sits at her sparse desk within an over sized cubical with two other workstations. She wears office attire. MOLLY (early 20s) sits across from her, buried into her computer.

BRANDON (early 20s) white collard shirt, tie, slacks, walks in. Holds a styrofoam cup in one hand, doughnut in the other.

BRANDON  
 Break time folks.

He plops into the office chair at his desk.

BRANDON (CONT'D)  
 By the way... how was everyone's  
 weekend.

Megan turns, thankful for the distraction.

MEGAN  
 Visited that Farmer's Market on the  
 Square they have on Saturdays.

BRANDON  
 Didn't know they had one.

MEGAN  
 You're not alone.

They wait for Molly to join. She doesn't.

He swings towards his desk. Stops, and swings back around.

BRANDON  
 Oh. FYI. Saw Danielle heading this  
 way.

This catches Molly's attention. She begins closing out apps on her computer.

DANIELLE (early 40s) enters. The office busybody. Her simile reminds one of the Cheshire Cat.

DANIELLE  
 Morning all.

Megan and Brandon respond with half hearted, monosyllable greetings. Molly stands, smiles at Danielle, and flees.

Danielle props herself against Megan's desk, boxing her in. Megan wants to be nice, but doesn't look at her.

MEGAN

And how was your weekend there  
Danielle?

Danielle crosses her arms, gets comfortable.

DANIELLE

Harry and I decided to take a day  
trip to that vineyard south of  
town. Hump. Not like a trip to  
Florida, I suspect. But our office  
love birds will be finding that out  
soon enough.

Megan stops typing, draws a breath, then continues.

DANIELLE (CONT'D)

Probably wants to pop the question.  
I hear her parents live there.

Megan swings towards her, shots her a hard stare. Clamps  
down her real feelings.

MEGAN

Well, you can't believe everything  
you hear.

Turns back to the computer.

DANIELLE

Maybe. But if true... I can imagine  
how he might propose. At sunset, he  
would get down on one knee, there  
on the beach...

Megan tries hiding her scowl. Takes deep breaths in and out  
of her nose.

DANIELLE (CONT'D)

Bout time someone snatched him up.  
But Coleen's the type of woman who  
gets what she wants. She made the  
first move, I hear. Didn't want to  
see a prize like Richard go to  
waste...

Megan's scowl and breathing intensify. She's now typing  
gibberish into the financial spreadsheet on the screen.

DANIELLE (CONT'D)  
 Coleen's got that alpha female  
 personality. Bet she's got a libido  
 that would test the stamina of a  
 man like Richard...

Megan clinches her fists, fighting the urge to pop Danielle.

The PHONE on her desk RINGS. Danielle goes on.

Megan's eyes narrow, eyeing the caller ID. Her eyes then  
 spring open. She reaches for and lifts the receiver.

Pausing, she closes her eyes, takes a deep breath, then  
 answers.

MEGAN  
 (cheery voice)  
 Megan here.

RICHARD (V.O.)  
 Hey. Rick here.

Megan twist away from Danielle who finally stops talking.

MEGAN  
 Hey! And how are we today?

RICHARD (V.O.)  
 Great. Hey. Hate to cut you short  
 but I need your help.

MEGAN  
 Oh.

She plays with the phone cord. Anticipation in her eyes.

RICHARD (V.O.)  
 Yeah. A few loose ends popped up on  
 the Jamison report. Got to get 'em  
 tied up pronto. Need some quicky  
 numbers run and you know the 411 on  
 that account.

Megan hides her excitement.

MEGAN  
 Of... of course. Le'me get with  
 Phil and ask if he'll let me--

RICHARD  
 I'll call him. That way he'll say  
 yes without all the office  
 rigmarole. See you in a few.

Her joy filled eyes stare into the distance.

MEGAN  
You bet Rick.

RICHARD (V.O.)  
Hey. And if we get caught up, I'll  
order lunch and have it sent up.

A click ends the call. Megan puts the receiver back and  
looks up at Danielle. Smile on her face.

MEGAN  
Scuse me. Need to head upstairs for  
a quicky.

**INT. BATHROOM RENEE'S LOFT - LATER**

Renee finishes applying blush. She looks at each cheek in  
turn. CHLOE, same age, taller, slender, clad in skintight  
boy shorts and tank top, strides in and jostles up next to  
her.

CHLOE  
Lookin good girl.

She pulls a tissue from an unseen box, begins wiping her  
eyes.

RENEE  
Thanks.

CHLOE  
Meant to tell ya... there's an  
opening for a server at work. If  
you still want to make some extra  
cash.

Renee smiles, set down the blush brush.

RENEE  
Thanks again but... pass.

CHLOE  
Still don't like the uniforms?

RENEE  
(chuckling)  
Don't think walking around dressed  
like a Vegas showgirl works for me.  
Least you got the figure.

CHLOE  
Works great for tips. And don't  
knock yourself.

She tosses the tissue into an unseen trash can then leaves.  
In the mirror, part of the living room, TV and sofa are  
visible. Renee gives herself another look in the mirror.

RENEE  
Any plans for today?

In the mirror Chloe plops onto the sofa.

CHLOE  
Catch up on my shows on-demand. Veg  
out. Jason back yet from looking  
for that part?

Renee eyes show confusion.

RENEE  
Ah... yeah. Him and Jack got back  
last night... I think. Must a found  
it. Talked for a bit yesterday  
evening. Spending the whole weekend  
riding around the county double  
with Jack on his bike must a been  
fun.

She lifts up some lipstick, stares at it.

RENEE (CONT'D)  
Freaks me out hanging onto him from  
behind. Specially when he speeds  
up...

She set the lipstick back down, turns and leaves.

RENEE (CONT'D)  
The way he talks about Jack  
sometimes makes me wonder why he'd  
do all that for him.

LIVING ROOM: She approaches the couch.

RENEE (CONT'D)  
Thanks again for last Friday.  
Really needed some alone time. You  
know. I'll return the favor if you  
need me too.

Chloe's stretched out on the sofa, reaches for a remote.

CHLOE

No problemo. If I'm gonna rock some  
guys world, I'll do it at his pad.

On demand selections appear on the TV.

Renee strides to her bedroom. There, she picks up her cell  
laying on a dresser.

CELL PHONE: she thumbs through a dozen messages. None from  
Jason.

Her face shows disappointment. Then mild anger.

CELL PHONE: Closes out message app. Brings up phone and  
Jason's number. Thumb hovers over the call button.

She takes a few breaths. Calms down. Fiddles with cell  
phone.

CELL PHONE: Back to the message app. Jason's name. Types out

*cu tonight at Pub?*

LIVING ROOM: Renee walks towards the front door.

RENEE

Take care. See you tonight.

Chloe doesn't take her eyes off the TV.

CHLOE

Leaving already?

RENEE

Yeah. Pulling a double today. No  
sense waiting.

CHLOE

Makes some good tips.

Renee pauses, eyes the ceiling.

RENEE

Rents coming up. Shit!

She turns to one of the bedrooms. The open door shows the  
room is empty. Turns to Chloe.

RENEE (CONT'D)

Any prospects to replace Marisa?

Chloe remains fixed on the TV.

CHLOE

Other than college girls.  
 (shakes her head)  
 Not looking ta turn this place into  
 a dorm. Them fellas down the hall  
 are enough.

Renee sighs, nods.

RENEE

Reminds me. Need a get back with  
 Whitney. Seemed really interested.

**INT. JAMIE'S LARGE BEDROOM - LATER**

Jason lays propped up in a large bed, bare torso and legs exposed from under silken sheets. Hands clasped behind his head. Jamie finishes pulling up a pair of lace trimmed, light green briefs. She wears a matching bra. He watches her every move.

She turns to him, snapping the elastic waistband of the shorts once over her hips.

JAMIE

Enjoy the show?

She glides towards a large, well lit vanity covered in a myriad of cosmetics, perfumes and body sprays.

JASON

As much as you enjoyed giving it.

Watches her sit. Twists to face her. Gets comfortable on the large pillows.

JASON (CONT'D)

Not every girl I know would do that.

She begins brushing her hair.

JAMIE

I'm not every other girl.

Jason smiles.

JASON

Hope Dwight didn't mind all the noise we made last night coming in. Or this morning.

Jamie goes about putting on eye lashes.

JAMIE

I can assure you he doesn't.

JASON

Oh?

JAMIE

I know what you're thinking. Me and Dee do have an interesting relationship.

Turns to him, serious look on her face.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

But he's no sugar daddy.

(back to the mirror)

So rest easy. Won't be hopping over to his bed when your gone.

He's not entirely satisfied with the answer. But lets it go.

JASON

Well, I'm a live and let live type of guy. To each their own.

JAMIE

And you like to live, no doubt. Zooming down the highway at 90 is the thrill of living I enjoy too.

Jason looks over at the bedside nightstand. Reaches for his cell.

CELL PHONE: opens the message app. Scrolls through. Sees a few from Jack, then the one from Renee.

His face starts showing remorse. Looks at the time: almost 1 pm. Sets it back down.

JASON

Hey. Gotta meet up with some friends tonight. How bout we get together tomorrow night. Dinner then... Netflix and chill?

Jamie gets up and glides towards him. There she straddles him as he rolls onto his back. They clasp hands. She leans over him. Her face hovers above his.

JAMIE

Sounds like a plan.

They kiss.

**INT. PENTHOUSE LOFT - MOMENTS LATER**

Jamie now wears a thin, black, untied satin robe. She strides from her bedroom to the good sized kitchen. Fetches a glass then tap water. Takes a long drink. Turns around to the stand alone counter.

A MANILA ENVELOPE sit thereon.

She picks it up. The HANDWRITTEN NOTE on it reads:

J, Your friend Aaron dropped this  
off for your trip this weekend. D.

Sets the glass down and opens up the envelope. Pulls out a plane ticket. It's to Las Vegas. 1st class.

Cocks a smile.

JAMIE

Can't wait.

**INT. RICHARD'S OFFICE - LATER**

Megan sits on a small pleather couch. Eyes looked onto Richard. The coffee table in front of her hold the remnants of lunch.

He sits reclined behind a modest desk, red power tie, starched white shirt, looking over a report in his hands. After a few moments, he stands, beams her a smile.

RICHARD

You saved my bacon. Again!

Megan's smile widens. She watches him glide by, papers in hand.

MEGAN

I'm always... here to help!

RICHARD

This illustrious accounting firm  
might fall apart without you.

Megan laughs.

MEGAN

Without us!

Richard stops at a table near the office door. Sets the papers atop others there. She notices his smile disappear.

RICHARD  
Can I ask you something. Or should  
I say... your opinion.

Megan twists to face him.

MEGAN  
If it's about those figures--

RICHARD  
(waving)  
No no. Not about work. A personal  
matter.

Megan eyes his expressionless face.

RICHARD (CONT'D)  
Been wanting to ask for a while.  
But...

Megan's cautious and confused, as if never seeing him like  
this.

MEGAN  
Ah... sure. Anything.

He smiles, walks back to his desk. Megan watches him the  
whole time. He leans against the desk, crosses his arms.

RICHARD  
I know you'll keep this between us.

She stands, steps towards him. Anticipation in her eyes.

MEGAN  
You know I will.

He hangs his head.

RICHARD  
Embarrassed to even ask--

MEGAN  
You don't ever, ever have to feel  
that way with me. You know that!

His head comes back up.

RICHARD  
I know. That's why I enjoy your  
company.

Their eyes lock onto the others. She awaits his next words  
with bated breath. He speaks with hesitation.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

I want our time... Coleen and I...  
on this trip to be the best it  
can... Soooo... as a woman, what  
would you consider a romantic  
evening? I mean...

(lowers his head)

Something nice. Special.

Shocked, slack jawed, Megan steps back.

He looks up at her. She fumbles for words.

MEGAN

Ah... I don't think...

(tries acting normal)

Not a expert or anything!

RICHARD

Not looking for a professional  
opinion Megs. Just a woman's gut  
feeling.

Megan focuses on his begging eyes. Unable to disappoint him,  
she relents. She avoids eye contact and begins.

MEGAN

Well. She'd be waiting for you, in  
her... little black dress. You'd  
come to her door, dressed for the  
evening...

She looks at him and steps closer.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

You'd be holding a single red rose.  
Not a whole bouquet. Just... one.

Richard raises his brows.

RICHARD

And?

MEGAN

You'd walk, hand in hand, to  
someplace quiet. Nice but simple. A  
place that serves authentic pizza,  
good wine, an open-hearth oven to  
boot.

RICHARD

There's a place like that near the  
square.

MEGAN

Yes.

She remains quite for a moment. Her gaze at his eyes doesn't relent.

RICHARD

Go on. I'm spellbound.

MEGAN

Afterwards, you'd take a walk. On the beach, being in Florida and all.

RICHARD

Visiting her folks. Live just south of Tampa. Gulf Coast. So a sunset walk.

Her eyes widen upon the confirmation. She goes on.

MEGAN

Her parents... right. Well, I think you can... take it from there.

RICHARD

Well, if that's not an expert opinion, it's damn close. Sounds like some lucky guy's treated you to such a night.

Megan grins, all she can do at the moment.

Seconds pass. She can't take her eyes off him. She steps closer. Part of her wants to say something. Do something. Right there. Right now. As if the moment will never come again.

SCHRUNCHING STEPS UPON CARPET and HEAVY BREATHING. They look at the office door.

Coleen just darted into the office. She holds an oversize briefcase in one hand.

Megan backs away from Richard as he stands and moves off. She turns the other way. Arms across her chest.

RICHARD (O.S.)

Hey honey. How was your errand?

Megan retreats to the couch. BRIEFCASE FLOPPED onto a table sound shoots through the room. Her face show a mix of anger and shame.

COLEEN (O.S.)  
 Typical tidying up loose ends.

She glances down at the empty sandwich wrappers, empty bags of chips and soda cans. SMACKING LIPS fill the air.

Coleen and Richard finish. She notices Megan.

COLEEN  
 Hey there. Came to our rescue again!

Megan paints on a smile and turns, looks at them. She give her a small wave.

COLEEN (CONT'D)  
 Oh!  
 (to Richard)  
 Guess what? Mom and dad called and said their neighbor will take all of us on his boat!

RICHARD  
 (to Megan)  
 This trips getting better by the minute!

Megan stands mute. Dumb smile on her face.

MEGAN  
 That does sound real great.  
 (looks at her watch)  
 Need to get back to my desk. It's almost four and there's... things waiting for me to do.

RICHARD  
 (facing Coleen)  
 And I need to run and let Mr. Styles know we got the updated report done.

He leaves the room.

Megan gravitates to the table adjacent the door. Coleen pulls out her cell and head to Richard's desk.

At the desk, Megan collects up some paperwork and folders.

COLEEN (O.S.)  
 You know, Rick thinks very highly of you.

Megan doesn't look at her.

MEGAN

I'm always here... to help.

Coleen's comfortable in Richard's chair, checking messages.

COLEEN

Soooo glad my parents were able to get a boat for the day. Renting those things can be expensive.

Megan says nothing. Still doesn't look at her.

COLEEN (CONT'D)

Rick and I are gonna lounge around alllll day. Too bad mom and dad will be there. Know what I mean?  
(giggles)  
That's on my bucket list you know. When no ones around.

She stretches out her arms and glances at the ceiling.

COLEEN (CONT'D)

Right there under the sun--

MEGAN

Just let me know if there's anything else I can help with.

She lifts up some folders and heads to the door.

COLEEN

Hey! Why don't we all head over to The Pub later? Been a long day!

Megan stops and half turns back.

MEGAN

Thanks. But, gonna hit the gym.

COLEEN

Know the feeling. Gotta look good for the men in our lives.

MEGAN

Yes. Yes we do.

**INT. THE PUB - EVENING**

Russell walks up to the front door. Pulls it open.

INSIDE THE PUB: He walks in and stops, wide eyed. The sounds of a good size crowd greets him. Didn't expect this.

He scans the room. Nearly every seat at the bar's full. Most of the tables nearby too. Looks up at one of the TVs above the bar. A BALLGAME.

He moves forward. Another TV shows the same game.

RENEE (O.S)

Hey Russ!

Russell moves out of the way of some customers. Looks towards the bar and sees Renee working behind it. He steps towards her, but the chairs there are full. Has to raise his voice for Renee to hear him.

RUSSELL

What's up!

She points to the far end.

RENEE

There's a couple of seats opening up. Grab em, can you?

He nods, heads that way.

At the corner where the bar bends towards the wall, two people are leaving, their empty pints still on the counter. Soon as they move off, Russell takes one of the seats.

Moments later Renee appears behind the bar.

He watches her set two mixed drinks down: one in front of him, the other in front the empty chair. Confused, he sits quiet as she clears off the empty pints.

RUSSELL

Planning on joining me?

Renee wipes down the area.

RENEE

Pfft! I wish. Didn't expect this crowd. Guess nobody wanted to stay home and watch their favorite team.

RUSSELL

Looks like it. Was figuring--

RENEE

Listen...

She leans towards him over the bar. Her face a mix of fatigue and longing.

RENEE (CONT'D)

Need a mega favor from you.

He leans forward. She looks as though the fate of the world rests on her request. Speaks without hesitation.

RUSSELL

Anything.

RENEE

Jason's planning on stopping by,  
and I wanna make sure there's a  
seat for him. Busy as it is I'm not  
gonna be able to break away.

Shocked, Russell hides it well as his anticipation sinks. He then stares at the other drink in front of the empty chair, marking Jason's territory.

RUSSELL

Ah...

Going back to her he puts on a smile.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)

Sure. I'll make sure no one  
Shanghais it.

Renee's face lights up. She pats his hand.

RENEE

You're the man Russ!  
(point at the glass)  
The spare drinks on me.

She turns and leaves.

He leans back, stares at his drink, then the other. Looks over at Renee, her arms stretched between two taps filling two pints at the same time. He sighs.

**INT. THE PUB - LATER**

Still busy, Renee packs a serving tray with pints at the wait station. Tammy helps her.

TAMMY

So much for a typical evening.  
Least the tips are decent.

RENEE

Tell be bout it. Jason's supposta  
stop by too.

She goes about checking the small slips of paper stuck to a few pints before peeling them off.

TAMMY

Wondered why you were serving  
invisible customers.

Renee doesn't react. Done with the slips, she squints at Tammy.

RENEE

What? Invisible?

Tammy motions her head towards Russell. Renee turns.

An attractive woman stands behind the empty chair. The drink once there replaced by ice water and conspicuous lemon. She's speaking to Russell, then puts her hand on the back of the empty chair.

Russell smiles then waves his hand over the chair. The woman smiles, nods, mouths something, then pats Russell's shoulder. She moves off.

TAMMY

Well, if he doesn't score tonight,  
he might blame you.

RENEE

(sneering )

Ha ha.

She turns to Russell as Tammy hefts the tray and leaves.

Russell notices her. Pats the empty chair. Gives her a thumbs up.

Ashamed, she puts on a feeble smile. Another waitress rolls up to the station behind her.

JASON (O.S)

Hey girl.

Renee spins around, anger on her face. It relents. Her eyes go wide.

He stands next to the waitress.

RENEE

Hey!

(points down the bar)

Empty seat at the end. Be there in  
a bit.

Jason moves that way.

Russell doesn't see him until he's at the chair. Jason gets comfortable in it. All the while Russell watches him: his clean shaven, chiseled face, perfect hair, form-fitting shirt.

He looks down at his loose shirt. Rubs a hand over his hair.

He looks at Jason, who doesn't notice him. Russell mouths something, then stops. Composes himself.

RUSSELL

Hey. Renee asked me to hold this seat for you.

(gets up)

Need to take off. You all have fun tonight.

JASON

Thanks friend. Appreciate it.

Russell nods and heads away.

WAIT STATION: Russell steps up. Renee's fixing drinks.

RUSSELL

Hey there. Gonna tab out.

She looks up surprised. Turns to the other end to see Jason sipping the water. Back to Russell.

RENEE

Ah...

She waves him closer. He obeys, pulls some cash from his pants pocket. She comes around.

RENEE (CONT'D)

Thanks for doing that. Drinks on me. You deserve it.

Her tired smile speaks volumes. He peels off a ten and places it on the counter.

RUSSELL

And you deserve this tip. Take care tonight.

They smile at each other. He turns and heads out. She watches him for a bit, then turns back to work.

Opening the front door, Russell turns for one last look at her before leaving.

Jason people watches as Renee comes up. She leans over the bar, stretches out her hands. He leans in and holds them.

RENEE

Think the world's working against us. Was hoping ta catch up on things.

JASON

Don't let it bother you. You're doing great.

They caress each others hands. Renee looks pooped.

RENEE

Gotta pull a double tomorrow too. Rents coming up. Think Whitney's gonna move in, but not in time.

JASON

Listen. You get the next day off and I'll stop by your place. We can... catch up then. Sound good?

This perks her up.

RENEE

Yeah. Yeah that'll work. Plus... Chloe's working that evening.

Jason's smile is more forced than real.

**EXT. SIDEWALK OUTSIDE THE PUB- CONTINUOUS**

Russell walks down the sidewalk. Feels his cell vibrate. Takes it out.

MEGAN (TEXT)

*Late night din? I'm @ the deli.*

He smiles.

RUSSELL (TEXT)

*brt*

**INT. THE DELI AT DOWNTOWN - MOMENTS LATER**

Russell walks by the all you can eat salad bar. Next, the hot buffet. Beyond that a small bar and dining area. Spots Megan at a table next to the large windows facing the sidewalk outside.

Megan sits eating a salad. She wears gym close and glasses.

RUSSELL

Hey.

MEGAN

(looking up)

Hey.

Russell sits in the chair opposite.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

Thanks for coming. Hungry? Up for your usual burger and waffle fries?

RUSSELL

Honestly... no. Was at The Pub for a bit.

MEGAN

Renee there? Hope I didn't interrupt--

RUSSELL

Nah. She's busy as hell. Some ballgame on. Was out the door when you texted.

MEGAN

Oh. I figured... why eat alone.

Russell noticed her dower look.

RUSSELL

So how was your day?

Megan eats. Seems preoccupied. He leans in.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)

How was your day?

MEGAN

Oh.

(wipes her mouth)

Sorry. Just trying to enjoy this.

He doesn't believe her.

RUSSELL

It's this trip thing, isn't it?

Embarrassed, she gives him a quick glance, then back to her salad.

MEGAN  
 (shrugging)  
 I shouldn't let it get to me.

RUSSELL  
 Then don't let it.  
 (leaning back)  
 I know. Easier said than done.

MEGAN  
 I just keep thinking...

She flops her food around more than eats it. Russell motions his hands as if to say 'And?'

MEGAN (CONT'D)  
 What I could a done. You know.  
 Differently. I keep thinking...  
 just once, one time.  
 (spears a cherry tomato)  
 One bold step. Make the first move.  
 Follow my...

RUSSELL  
 What would've done, thrown yourself  
 at him?

MEGAN  
 No. God no, nothing like that.  
 Maybe I should have asked him out.  
 Girls do that now days.

RUSSELL  
 Us cavemen might object. Uga uga!

Megan smiles. He's glad she is. Her smile then fades. Back to the salad.

MEGAN  
 It's like... history's repeating  
 itself.

RUSSELL  
 What history?

MEGAN  
 (shaking head)  
 Never mind. Maybe some one on one  
 time with him. Before she or... any  
 came in. I regret it now.

Russell props himself against the window.

RUSSELL

Might not a changed a thing. And regret is one of those four letter words.

She doesn't look at him.

MEGAN

How would you fell if it were Renee. Going off. Dropping hints about what she planned doing with him? Knowing that guy wasn't you? And you had to sit here thinking about it.

RUSSELL

Come on. With Renee. I'm not really--

MEGAN

(glaring at him)

Not really what?

Russell feels her stare.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

What if once you did something different. Maybe you wouldn't be going home alone tonight--

He turns away in shame. She relents. Wipes her mouth, avoids looking at him.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

I'm... I'm sorry Russ. I'm... projecting.

Russell stares at the small bar nearby. He sees an old man, hunched over, sitting alone, nursing a beer. The female bartender ignores him.

RUSSELL

I'd feel just as crappy.

A few moments of awkward silence. They then look at the other. Both break out in a comforting smile.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)

So? What are your plans for this long weekend? Suspect the firm will be closed come Monday?

MEGAN  
 (nodding)  
 Yeah. Gonna visit my folks. A  
 little get-a-way of my own. You?

RUSSELL  
 Right now... naaaat much. Get this  
 week over and rest up, forget about  
 work. We start managing a new  
 building here downtown next week.  
 And... think I might... abstain  
 from The Pub... for a while. Mix it  
 up. You know.

More awkward silence. Megan goes back to eating.

MEGAN  
 I didn't bring her up to be cruel.

RUSSELL  
 I know. Don't let it get to you.

**EXT. OUTSIDE A LARGE AUTO DEALERSHIP - DAY**

Jason mounts his crotch rocket motorcycle. Pulls out his  
 cell and makes a call. THREE RINGS before it pics up.

JAMIE (V.O.)  
 Hello.

JASON  
 Hey. It's me.

JAMIE (V.O.)  
 Oh. Hi.

Her tone causes him confusion.

JASON  
 Just got off work. Really enjoyed  
 last night. Again. Got visit a  
 friend tonight but, you up for  
 another evening tomorrow?

JAMIE (V.O.)  
 Ah. Can't. Got a big day.

Silence.

JASON  
 Okay. By the way, any plans for  
 this weekend?

JAMIE (V.O.)  
Not yet. But that may change.

JASON  
Well, if your interested--

JAMIE (V.O.)  
Sorry hun. Gotta run. Give me a  
ring tomorrow if you want. Kay?

His eyes narrow.

JASON  
Ah. Okay. Take care.

JAMIE (V.O.)  
You too. Stay safe.

SMALL CHIME means the calls ended. He stares at the phone, then tucks it away.

**INT. RENEE'S LOFT - LATER**

Renee sits alone on the sofa. Arms, legs crossed. Top leg bobbing up and down. Looks at her watch.

She gets up and to the kitchen. Gets a bottle of beer from the fridge. Twists off cap. Takes a swallow. Moves back towards the sofa.

Mid drink, a KNOCK AT THE DOOR. Pulls the bottle away so fast it fizzes over the top. She speeds back to the kitchen and places it on the counter.

ANOTHER KNOCK. She finds a dishcloth and dries her hands. Strides to the door.

Opening the door reveals Jason.

**INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE RENEE'S LOFT - LATER**

The outside door to Renee's loft from about 20 feet away. Doors to other lofts on the right. A railing on the left. View moves in. Renee's voice comes through, then Jason's. Hers grows louder as the verbal exchange becomes more intense. She's all but shouting.

Door flies open. Jason strides out. Renee stops in the doorway pointing at him.

RENEE  
(shouting)  
*Screw you, your friends and  
whatever whore your banging!*

Jason continues without looking back.

RENEE (CONT'D)  
 That's right! Looking for a part my  
ass! Don't think I know! HUH! One  
 of those girls you use to hang with  
HUH! Not stupid you know!

He heads down a set of stairs. Renee steps up to the rails.  
 Leans over watching Jason stomp away.

RENEE (CONT'D)  
 (shouting)  
*Want a clingy bimbo who'll jump  
 into bed with any Tom, Dickless and  
 Harry after a few shots we'll you  
 go right ahead!*

Renee's red with anger, trying to catch her breath. Fists  
 clinch the railing.

RENEE (CONT'D)  
 (shouting)  
*And if you show your face at the  
 Pub I'll have Bill throw your  
 worthless ass out!*

The buildings door below OPENING and CLOSING while her face  
 morphs to one of sadness. Her eyes gloss over.

She turns, hunched over, moves slowly back into the loft.  
 SOBBING fills the air. The door closes.

#### **MONTAGE - VARIOUS**

##### **INT. AIRPLANE IN FLIGHT - DAY**

Coleen and Richard sip away at mixed drinks. She's holding a  
 magazine dedicated to the Tampa area. Points at the inside,  
 looks excited. Richard leans in, looking at the magazine,  
 excited as well. They give each other a kiss.

##### **EXT. CAR ON THE ROAD - DAY**

Megan sits behind the wheel of a simple sedan as it cruises  
 down the road. A chain of shiny green beads and Mardi Gras  
 necklaces hang from the rear view mirror.

The car heads off into the distance among a throng of others  
 away from the city.

**INT. RUSSELL'S LOFT - DAY**

Russell pours bourbon into ice filled glass of coke. Wanders to his bed. Sits. Takes a sip. Looks as though contemplating, deep in thought.

Takes down half the drink. Rubs his eyes. Sets glass on the nightstand, then lays on the bed, still dressed save for shoes.

His heavy eyes open and close until they stay shut.

**INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE JAMIE'S LOFT -DAY**

Jason stands with a box wrapped with a pretty purple bow. Dwight stands in the doorway wearing a bathrobe. Jason listens as Dwight speaks.

Jason hands the box to Dwight, who smiles and nods. He then closes the door.

Jason walks away, dejected.

**END MONTAGE****INT. RENEE'S BEDROOM - DAY**

Renee lays in bed. Eyes red. Face blank. Hair frazzled. Stares aimlessly into the distance.

Chloe walks in holding a can of soda. Sets it on the nightstand next to Renee. Steps back, sits on the edge of the bed near the bottom. Gives Renee a sympathetic look. Wants to say something, but doesn't.

RENEE

I'll be fine. Not my first breakup.  
(rolls over to face the  
soda)

The worst. Just not the first.

Chloe remains quiet. Sadness on her face.

RENEE (CONT'D)

Got a give him one thing. When he wanted to break up. No text. Post It notes. He could a left out the 'how great a girl' I am shit. But had the balls to do it in person.

She lets out a sigh.

RENEE (CONT'D)

What time is it?

CHLOE

(looking at her watch)

Almost 3.

(looks at Renee)

Why don't you just call in?

Renee shakes her head with little speed.

RENEE

Word'll get around. We need the cash. So... I'll paint on a smile when someone asks if the pale ales on tap are any good. Like their some type of beer connoisseur. Alcohol's alcohol. Most can't tell the difference if they tried.

(rolls onto her back)

All they want to do is get drunk.

Forget about whatever unfulfilling... pathetic... miserable life they got.

(looks at Chloe and smiles)

Thanks for being here.

Chloe smiles back.

**EXT. SIDEWALK OUTSIDE THE PUB - DAY**

Renee stomps down the sidewalk towards the Pub. Approaching, the tables lining the sidewalk outside are near full.

Her face shows trepidation. She doesn't slow down.

Passes by the tables. A 'Hey there Renee!' and 'Sup there girl' spring from the crowd. She ignores both. Darts through the front door.

The bar's almost full, so too the tables nearest it. Almost every every eye is on her. She feels it.

Not stopping, she shoots past the wait station down the narrow hall. Kitchen's to the right. The bartender and other servers watch her.

She enters the storeroom. Tammy's waiting there.

TAMMY

Didn't expect to see you so soon!

She hands Renee a cell phone.

TAMMY (CONT'D)

But thought you'd be back for this.

Renee eagerly takes it.

RENEE  
Thank God!

TAMMY  
Found it by a stack of napkins when  
we opened.

CELL PHONE: Scanning through messages. SUP girl... How r  
u... Call me... Jasons a big...

RENEE  
(thumbing through  
messages)  
Just when I needed a slow weekend,  
half the city decides to come here.

CELL PHONE: Renee opens the text from Whitney.

WHITNEY (TEXT)  
*Will start moving in Tuesday.  
Thanks for everything!*

TAMMY (O.S.)  
No shit! Friday and Saturday were  
just as bad as any other!

She goes to voice mail: 12 missed calls. Begins scanning the  
numbers.

TAMMY (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
So. How ya holding up.

Tammy puts a hand on her arm, as if consoling. Renee backs  
away and pockets the phone.

RENEE  
I'm fine--

TAMMY  
If you need any--

RENEE  
Thanks. I'll... thanks for holding  
on to this.

She turns and flees. Keeps her eyes on the floor.

Going back the way she came, passes by the wait station. All  
eyes are on her.

Heading to the front door, she stops. Looks up. It's Jack.

JACK

Hey.

She gives him a blank stare.

RENEE

Hey.

She steps to the side to continue but Jack blocks her.

JACK

Heard bout what Jason did. He can  
be a douche, you know.

She draws a restrained breath, but stays quiet.

JACK (CONT'D)

If it means anythin, what he did  
was pretty crappy. You deserve  
better.

She looks at him with contempt.

RENEE

Thanks.

Moves towards the door. Jack doesn't stop her this time,  
just follows a step behind.

JACK

Hey. Got my bike up and runnin,  
thinking about a ride. Your welcome  
ta come. Maybe it will help get  
all this off your mind, you know.

Renee keeps moving, hiding anger as she passes through the  
front door.

JACK (CONT'D)

A... cool. Le'me know if you change  
your mind.

She storms down the sidewalk away from the Pub. She hits her  
palm with her fist several times. Angry eyes glaring  
forward.

Reaches the corner. Waits for traffic to stop. There, her  
eyes gloss over, tearing up. Raising her head she draws a  
long breath, fights back the tears.

RUSSELL (O.S.)

Hey there Re--

RENEE  
 (turning in anger)  
 Oh why don't you go fu--

Her eyes grow wide.

So do Russell's as he steps back, shocked.

RENEE (CONT'D)  
 Russ. I'm...  
 (composing herself)  
 Sorry bout that. What's... what's  
 up.

Russell's shock relents. Puts on a smile.

RUSSELL  
 Oh. Just pubing around. Megan's  
 visiting her folks and I've got  
 tomorrow off. You?

RENEE  
 I've... I'm off today... and...  
 tomorrow. Left my cell at work.  
 Silly me. Ha, ha.

RUSSELL  
 Sorry I didn't stop by. Decided  
 to... mix it up! Right now heading  
 to Little England.

RENEE  
 I've a... heard of it.

RUSSELL  
 Boy I tell ya, didn't expect to see  
 good crowds here this weekend.  
 Reminds me that night I held a  
 chair...

RENEE  
 (turning away)  
 Yeah.

She stares at the sidewalk, disinterested.

He watches her for a few moments. His face blank. Longing  
 eyes. Moves to his right, takes a step away, then stops.  
 Turns back and draws a breath.

RUSSELL  
 Ah... if you aren't busy, you're  
 welcome to... tag along.

Her head pops up, eyes widen, but she doesn't look at him.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)  
And if Jason wants to come too  
well... the more the merrier.  
Right?

She spins her head around.

RENEE  
Jason? Thanks. That's... that's  
nice, but...

Russell steps back in fear. Tries hiding it.

RUSSELL  
Yeah. I'm... I'm sure you two got  
plans.  
(nonchalant)  
Hell, if I was seeing someone, so  
would I!

Lets out a forced laugh. Renee watches him inch more and  
more away from her.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)  
You guys take care and... enjoy  
your weekend!

He turns, tries not running away in shame.

Renee watches him with sadden eyes.

RENEE  
Hey!

He stops dead, turns back.

RENEE (CONT'D)  
Why don't we start at Juanita's.  
Grab some tacos and tequila first.

Russell gasps for air, then his face lightens up. Moves back  
towards her.

RUSSELL  
Ah... *yeah!* About taco time anyway!  
My treat for you guys.

Renee smiles. Once traffic stops, she leads off as they head  
across the street.

Now on the other side.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)  
 Think you and Jason's gonna love  
 Little England too. Quaint little  
 place.

Renee gives him a glance, then back to staring ahead.

RENEE  
 Yeah. Bout that. He won't be  
 coming.

RUSSELL  
 (confused)  
 Oh! He a... a out a town?

RENEE  
 Nope. Out of mind. We broke up. And  
 I don't want to talk about it.

Russell stares wide eyed at Renee, but keeps moving.

**INT. RUSSELL'S LOFT - NIGHT**

The front door. Shuffling sounds come from the other side.  
 Giggling. The door opens. Russell and Renee stumble in.

RENEE  
 Then... they used some... some  
 coupon for some free wings.

RUSSELL  
 Ah huh.

He closed the door behind them.

RENEE  
 And ask them what... they want to  
 drink. They say  
 (mocking)  
*A pitcher of water!*

RUSSELL  
 (disgusted)  
 Water! What's the point? Real men  
 have beer with their wings!

RENEE  
 Real women too!

They laugh. She steps up to him, almost leaning on him.

RENEE (CONT'D)  
 Then... then... I bring it all  
 them. These... assholes say  
 'Thanks.' No tip!

RUSSELL  
 Cheap bastards!

They laugh some more.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)  
 Oh!

He points at the bathroom door.

RENEE  
 (pats his chest)  
 Thanks.

As she heads in Russell ambles to the couch. TOILET SEAT  
 CRASHING DOWN springs from the bathroom. Not drunk, he's not  
 sober either. Looks at his half made bed, then an  
 overflowing laundry basket between it and the closet.

RUSSELL  
 Holly shit.

Gives a look back towards the bathroom while moving towards  
 the laundry. Using the bed to prop him up, he cast those  
 items littering the floor around the basket into it. Done,  
 he lifts it up, almost falls over, takes it to the closet  
 and heaves it inside. Closes the door behind it.

BATHROOM: Renee washes her hands. Clumsily dries them with a  
 hand towel. Wipes her mouth with the back of her hand. Turns  
 to the mirror, looks at her reflection: glazed eyes, ruffled  
 strands of hair, missing makeup on and around her mouth from  
 when she wiped. Props herself up on the sink, her angry eyes  
 stare back. She takes several deep breaths.

IN THE LOFT: Russell's about to straighten out the bed when  
 he hears Renee emerge from the bathroom. He steps back  
 towards the couch.

RENEE  
 Oh boy there Russ. Feel... a...  
 gazzilon times better. Thanks.

RUSSELL  
 No problem.

She meanders towards the couch.

RENEE  
Should a done that while we... were  
at... a...

RUSSELL  
Island Liquors.

She points at him, nodding her head.

RENEE  
Yep. Lost track of... all the  
places after... after a bit of  
England.

Russell wants to correct her but refrains. She plops down at one end of the sofa. Starts rubbing her head. He moves towards the other end.

RENEE (CONT'D)  
You got... any thing to drink...  
here.

RUSSELL  
Ah...  
(turns to kitchen)  
Le'me look.

Wanders there, rummages though a cabinet or two. Finds an empty bottle of bourbon. Casts her a glance then puts the bottle back.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)  
(apologetic)  
A geez. Don't think so.

RENEE  
(rubbing her head)  
That's... cool, Russ.

He acts uncertain on what to do next. Heads back to the couch. Watches Renee rub her head. She's mumbling.

RUSSELL  
You a... okay?

Renee mumbles.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)  
What's that?

She stops, looks at him, head falls lifelessly backwards.

RENEE  
Ah... just... just...  
(MORE)

RENEE (CONT'D)  
 (head falls forward)  
 Wish people... weren't dicks. Wish  
 they... were like... you.

Russell stops at the other end of the couch.

RUSSELL  
 Ah. Thanks.

RENEE  
 I mean... you ain't tried... actin  
 like some... self help guru...  
 fishes in the sea... *it's not*  
*you... It's him bullshit.*

Confused, Russell shrugs.

RUSSELL  
 Ah...  
 (cheery)  
 Hey! Why don't we...

Looks at his watch.

RENEE  
 You just wanted to hang... not  
 like... and never once asked  
 about...

RUSSELL  
 Order some pizza. Chill. Still  
 early we can--

RENEE  
 And that's good because...  
 (points aimlessly)  
 The worst... wasn't single for a  
 single day when... nearly every guy  
 I know started... hitting on me.  
 Trying to be cooooooool about it  
 with... their... their... text and  
 messages.  
 (mocking tone)  
*Let me know if you need anything...  
 I'm here for you... Let's get  
 together... That asshat Jack.*

Russell stands in silence. Wants to say something but can't  
 think of any.

RENEE (CONT'D)  
 An the girls... Oh boy!  
 (MORE)

RENEE (CONT'D)  
 (waving her finger)  
 Won't be long before... before they  
 start playin Cupid. They all know  
 some... some nice guy--

She rest her head back in her hand.

RENEE (CONT'D)  
 Like I couldn't find a... a guy  
 myself. I'm not... that big a...  
 loser.

Russell's shocked. He comes around to her side of the couch.

RUSSELL  
 You're not--

RENEE  
 And you...

She lifts her head, talks as though he's not there.

RENEE (CONT'D)  
 You know what's it like to... want  
 to make it work. Tired of... of  
 drifting... one... to the... the  
 next. Think ya find the... the one.  
 Try and... make it work. Not sound  
 so... needy. Then... then they...  
 say... thanks for the ride!  
 (looks at him)  
 Don't you?

Russell draws a blank. Mouth open, gropes for words. Turns  
 the other way. He's evasive.

RUSSELL  
 A... yeah. It... sucks.

RENEE  
 You fuckin a right! I figured it  
 out. Bet he's bangin... bangin  
 some... else... now...

Shocked, Russell moves closer to her.

RUSSELL  
 Why don't we--

RENEE  
 Maybe that's...

RUSSELL  
Maybe what?

RENEE  
Maybe that's all... anybody  
wants... from me...

He stops, not sure what to say next. He stares at the floor.  
Renee turns to him.

RENEE (CONT'D)  
Just... want me... you know.

She starts banging the couch with her fist. Anger grows in  
her voice.

RENEE (CONT'D)  
Even... my *friends* can't... keep  
out of my life. Tammy thinks  
she's... she's fooling me. Lives  
her pathetic sex life vi..  
vicarius... vicariously through me.

RUSSELL  
I'm... I'm sorry people are like--

RENEE  
She's like them... thinks...

She kicks of her shoes.

RENEE (CONT'D)  
This's what...  
(stands unbuttons her  
jeans)  
You they want... right.

She starts pulling off her pants.

Russell moves around to the back of the couch watching Renee  
peel off her jeans, sitting on the sofa arm to do so.

RUSSELL  
Renee... come on. You don't have  
to--

RENEE  
Half ta what!  
(stands and turns to him)  
I'm a big... girl you know...

She start pulling off her shirt, trying not to fall over doing so. Done, she casts it towards the bed. Takes a few steps towards him.

RENEE (CONT'D)  
 (undoing bra)  
 All they want... think I am...  
 Is...

RUSSELL  
 (mild anger)  
 Renee... please. Your just...  
 Pissed. Drunk. Stop--

RENEE  
 You right I'm... *pissed*.

Bra off, she drops it. Creeps towards him. Her underwear doesn't cover much.

He can't take his eyes off her. He struggles not to give in.

RENEE (CONT'D)  
 So... so tell me. Honest. Would you  
 give up... this... me? Ha? Or would  
 ya...

He shuts his eyes and draws a deep breath.

RENEE (O.S.)  
 Just... fuck me then--

RUSSELL  
 (shouting and pointing)  
 In the name of God Renee! Put your  
 clothes back on. I thought you were  
 better than that! Show some self  
 respect--

Shocked he spoke such words, his eyes go wide.

Renee stops. Her eyes go just as wide. She gasps. Stumbles back a step. Looks down at herself.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)  
 (remorseful)  
 Renee... I'm...

She looks back at him. He mouth begins quivering. Looks at herself again. Brings her arms up to cover her chest. Looking back up, shame fills her eyes. She starts backing up. Head starts moving aimlessly side to side.

RENEE  
 Oh God. Ah... ah...  
 I'm...

Her eyes fill with tears.

RUSSELL  
 Renee. No...

He rushes to her as she backs into the wall. Russell gets there as she starts sliding down, crying, trying to cover herself.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)  
 Your gonna be... be--

RENEE  
 (seated on floor sobbing)  
*I'm... I'm so screwed up right  
 now... I... Don't know what the...*

RUSSELL  
 You're gonna be okay.

RENEE  
*All I do is... work... drink... get  
 fucked over...*

RUSSELL  
 No. No. You're gonna be fine. All  
 you need is...

He has no idea what to say. Her sobbing goes on, brings her knees to her chest, wraps her arms around them.

RENEE  
 Karma. It's... karma.

She lifts her head exposing her reddened eyes. She takes in deep breaths as she speaks, half crying.

RENEE (CONT'D)  
 I....I cheated on a BF. He... found  
 out and I'm like... so what! It's  
 not like... we're... we're married  
 or anything.  
 (rubs her eyes)  
 I wanted something... different...  
 Back then. I could see the... hate  
 he had... For me. It's... *all  
 coming... coming back.*

Russell's shocked by the confession. Watches her slump over, buries her head into her knees, crying. He wants to put his arms around her, but afraid she might misinterpret.

RUSSELL  
 You just need... rest. Okay. Rest.  
 Everything will look better...  
 tomorrow.

Shakes her head back and forth.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)  
 You just... forget about Jason. And  
 the others. I'll be... things will  
 get better... tomorrow.

She looks at him, tears fill her cheeks.

RENEE  
 Promise?

RUSSELL  
 Yeah. Yeah. Why don't...

He looks around. Reaches around her. Picks up her shirt. Begins straightening it out.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)  
 Let's get this on.

Helps her as she fumbles her way into it and over her head.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)  
 Then, get in bed-- Ah! You, into  
 bed. Okay?

RENEE  
 (nodding)  
 Yeah. Yeah. Just need ta... ta  
 sleep... maybe.

He helps her up. She almost falls over. They both go around to the other side of the bed. There, she falls into it.

He helps her get situated. She offers no resistance.

RUSSELL  
 You just... just rest here. Okay?

She nods. Done, she rolls over, curls up like a baby. Face half buried into a pillow.

RENEE

I'm... sorry Russ. I... I'm...  
 didn't want ta... ta... Remember  
 what he did but..

RUSSELL

Sleep now. Okay. Everything will  
 be... okay... tomorrow.

He backs away, watching her twist and turn under the thin blanket. Turns towards the couch and half stumbles there. Tired, he braces himself on the back of it.

A small pillow and blanket cast onto the couch. Russell plops down between them. Hasn't undressed save for his shoes. He looks tired. Only the light over the stove in the kitchen and street lights from the windows illuminate the loft. He situates himself to sleep.

Renee stirs, bringing the blanket over her shoulder. Head still half burred into a pillow. She begins mumbling incoherently. After a few moments, she begins sobbing.

Russell's awake and can hear her quiet sobbing. Facing her, he put a hand on the back pillow, as if consoling her, but stays where he is.

**INT. RUSSELL'S LOFT - MORNING**

Russell's eyes slowly open. Lets out a cough. Rubs his eyes.

He sits up. Daylight covers the room through the large windows. Yaws and stretches. Stands.

Twisting around he looks surprised.

The bed's empty and unmade.

He looks around.

RUSSELL

Renee?

Lumbers towards kitchen. Scans the counters, then the nightstand next to the bed.

Moves towards the bathroom. Once there, the door's wide open. He goes in.

Looking around, he stops at the mirror, stares at his reflection. His hair's a mess. Bags under his eyes.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)

Way to go Russ. You screwed up again.

**INT. RENEE'S LOFT - MORNING**

The door to Renee's bedroom opens. She's clad in a tank top and shorts. Frazzled hair. No make up.

In the living room stands Chloe. Boxes of different sizes stacked in various places surround her. She puts on a mischievous smile.

CHLOE

Well well. Look what the cat dragged up.

Renee takes a deep breath.

RENEE

Shit. Whitney's moving in today. I must a been out...

CHLOE

Heard you rush back in yesterday morning. Didn't have the heart ta wake you.

Renee moves into the living room.

RENEE

I totally forgot.

CHLOE

Girl, you didn't go to Pound Town or got some freaky revenge sex. Cause if you did--

RENEE

No. No. Just... one of those days. nights. Days. What... what time is it?

She moves next to a stack of boxes.

CHLOE

Bout one. Listen. I need ta do a few things before work this evening. And Whitney's gonna be back soon with the last of her things. The big things: bed, dresser, ya know.

RENEE

Long as I move slow, we'll manage.

Chloe moves towards the front door.

CHLOE

Oh. You don't have ta worry about that, girl. Those college fellas down the hall in the corner loft. When they saw Whitney this morning, one nearly got trampled in the rush ta volunteer.

Renee tries laughing. Stops. Rubs her forehead.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

You gonna be okay?

RENEE

(bobbing head)

Yeah. Yeah. I'll be fine. Go.

Chloe heads out. Renee goes to the fridge. Rummages around and pulls out a can of energy drink. Opens it and takes a swallow. Swings around and props herself on the kitchen counter.

Takes another long drink. A KNOCK at the door startles her. She turns.

A young man emerges through the door holding one end of a bed frame. Moving in, another young man appears holding up the other end. They stop.

1ST YOUNG MAN

Sup. Got us Whitney's bed here. Which one's hers?

Renee points at an open door.

He nods and both move that way.

She turns back to the counter. Props herself up again. She sighs.

RENEE

Russ. Why didn't you just... keep walking. Shit. Why didn't I just keep walking.

Glances up into the air.

RENEE (CONT'D)  
 Acting like a damn slut in front of  
 him. The hell else did I tell him.  
 (looks at the counter)  
 He's never gonna forget what I...

She takes a drink. From the bedroom she can hear the men.

2ND YOUNG MAN (O.S.)  
 Ya think this bed sleeps two?

1ST YOUNG MAN (O.S.)  
 I'll let you know.

Mild laughter from the two.

Renee draws a deep breath and sighs.

RENEE  
 This is gonna be grrrrreat!

Takes another drink. Done her face lights up as though an  
 idea just hit her.

**INT. MEGAN'S LOFT - EVENING**

Megan sits on the futon. Russell paces back and forth in  
 front of her like a stalking tiger.

MEGAN  
 She just... left?

RUSSELL  
 (keeps pacing)  
 Yeah. No note. No goodbye. Nothing!  
 All day yesterday. Today. Tearing  
 me up thinking... I must have  
SAID... DONE something. But WHAT!

MEGAN  
 Maybe she was just... embarrassed.

He stops.

RUSSELL  
 What? Why? She hadn't done anything  
 wrong. Probably didn't mean to  
 drink that much. Just wanted to  
 forget about Jason. Nothing wrong  
 with that.  
 (stabbing a finger)  
 And I made sure she got somewhere  
safe!

He goes back to pacing. Megan watches as though at a tennis match.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)  
Probably never wants to... to look... see... TALK to me again. Damn it! I should a just stayed with my normal routine. Mixing things up. *Pffft!* The hell was I thinking!

He stops. Points at Megan.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)  
Did everything like a nice guy. A... a... gentleman. That's what Renee would have wanted. That's what all girls want, right?

MEGAN  
(hesitant)  
Well. Yeah. But--

RUSSELL  
BUT! What a mean... But? It's either yes or no!

She puts on a stern look. Voice firm but controlled.

MEGAN  
Listen. It may be some macho male fantasy to wake up with an attractive girl in their bed, but the same isn't true the other way around.

Russell's faces morphs from anger to confusion.

MEGAN (CONT'D)  
Was probably ashamed of herself, and scared. Before your binge you two really didn't know each other. Other than The Pub, you're nearly a complete stranger. She wakes up, hungover, doesn't remember a whole lot from the night before. Gets up, realizes she half dressed. Come on! Was she gonna wake you up and ask if you like the panties she has on?

Russell now looks ashamed. Megan relents.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

You might have been her guardian angel, but think about it from her point of view.

Russell moves to the chair adjacent the futon. He sits, stares at the floor.

RUSSELL

Maybe... you're right. I just... don't know what to do next.

She sees how dejected he looks. Scoots closer to him.

MEGAN

Listen, I don't know what to do next either. Maybe we... you should just see what happens.

Russell puts on a feeble smile.

RUSSELL

Forgot to ask how your trip was. Sorry.

She leans back, becomes nostalgic.

MEGAN

Was great. My old room. Home cooked meals. Hanging with the folks. Helped keep my mind off...  
(eyes narrow)  
Other things.

The two sit in silence.

**INT. SMALL DRAB OFFICE - DAY**

Russell strides in. Sits behind an old metal desk. Flat screen computer sits amid folders and phone. JUAN (late 30s), appears in the doorway.

JUAN

Got that busted pipe fixed. You wanna us to start on that office on the fifth floor?

RUSSELL

Yeah.

Eyes the phone. The message button's lit up.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)

I'll meet you there in a bit.  
(MORE)

RUSSELL (CONT'D)  
 (shaking head)  
 My God, that place hasn't been  
 touched in decades. There's still a  
 picture of Reagan on the wall!

Juan leaves. Russell listens to the messages over speaker  
 phone.

VOICE MESSAGE 1  
 This is Midwest Prime Cellular  
 calling to remind you your  
 companies monthly bill remains  
 unpaid--

He goes to the next message.

VOICE MESSAGE 2  
 This is a special offer especially  
 for--

He deletes the message. Goes to the next. There's nothing  
 but static. After a few seconds he reaches to delete it when  
 a voice comes through.

RENEE (V.O.)  
 Ah. Hey Russ. It's me... Renee.

Shocked, he and chair reel back, stopped by the wall behind  
 him.

RENEE (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 Didn't get your cell so I figured  
 out where you worked. The logo on  
 your work shirt and all. Guess I'm  
 not as dumb as I look. Ha, ha.  
 Ah... sorry bout... bolting Monday.  
 Just a little freaked out you  
 know. Wasn't anything you did. You  
 know. Just... freaked out.

He leans in, ears glued to the phone.

RENEE (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 Anyway, was wondering if you are up  
 to maybe... dinner with me and  
 Whitney. She's mine and Chloe's new  
 roommate. She's new to downtown and  
 I... you know... want her to feel  
 comfortable. *Anywho*. We'll be at  
 the Deli about sixish tonight. If  
 you can't make it... I understand.  
 Ah... hope to see you there. Kay?  
 Bye.

He ends the voice messages. Eyes and face blank, leans back. Slowly breaks out into a smile, then utter joy.

RUSSELL  
Megan was right! She was just  
freaked out.  
(slaps the desk)  
Still a chance!

**INT. BREAK ROOM DOWNTOWN OFFICE BUILDING - LATER**

Megan shoves change into a soda machine. Stepping back she eyes the selection. In the background Richard comes in.

She turns, watches him pull the top off a leftover container in front of the microwave.

She smiles. Steps towards him. He doesn't turn as he places the tray into the microwave, sets the timer and presses start.

MEGAN  
Hey! How was the trip?

He half turns, gives her a cursory glance, turns back. His voice holds no emotion.

RICHARD  
Oh. Hi. It was... okay.

Megan's shocked. HUMMING MICROWAVE the only sound. She draws a reluctant breath.

MEGAN  
So. How's your day going. Bet you  
got a lot to catch up--

RICHARD  
Everything's fine. Megan. Thank  
you.

She reels back. Sadness fills her eyes. Richard stays mute, eyeing the microwave. She steps closer to him.

MEGAN  
Rick. Is everything--

RICHARD  
Fine thank you.

The microwave chimes. Without a word he swings the door open, pulls out the container, picks up the top and leaves.

Megan watches. Her eyes tear up. She steps over, as if to go after him, then stops.

Danielle strides in. Megan turns away from her. Danielle eyes her, then back to the soda machine.

DANIELLE  
I see you noticed Rick.  
(eyeing the selections)  
Hear there's trouble in paradise.

Megan turns back to the doorway, face a mixture of anger and longing. She doesn't look at Danielle.

MEGAN  
You should try shutting the hell up  
sometimes.

She walks out, leaving Danielle shocked.

**INT. THE DELI AT DOWNTOWN - NIGHT**

Russell walks by the salad and hot bar. He wears an perfectly ironed white shirt under his light jacket. At end he eyes the bar and tables: a couple, group of men, a blond buried into her cell. The group of men are focused on her.

He goes to the bar.

BARTENDER  
Evening. What can I get you?

RUSSELL  
Ah... not sure.  
(scanning the room)  
Supposed to be meeting some  
friends.

BARTENDER  
Oh?

Russell turns back. Looks at himself in the mirrored wall behind the bar. Smooths back an errant hair.

RUSSELL  
Yeah. A friend. And her new  
roommate.

WHITNEY (O.S.)  
Russell?

He turns. WHITNEY, the blond (mid 20s), stares at him.

Russell glances left and right, as if someone with the same name stood nearby.

WHITNEY

Think you're looking for me.

Dumbfounded, Russell notices everyone's looking at him. He turns to Whitney.

She stands. A thin, snug, sleeveless turtleneck fits her to a tee. Her chest sticks out of proportion with her slender frame. Snow white teeth show through a wide smile.

Russell turns to the bartender as if to ask for his option. The bartender smiles and cocks an eyebrow. Turning back, he moves towards Whitney.

At the table she extends a hand. Russell takes it and shakes. He's tense. Done, they sit.

RUSSELL

A... where's Renee?

WHITNEY

Guess she got caught up at The Pub.

He's uncomfortable, but tries not showing it.

RUSSELL

Oh. Okay. Guess we can wait a few.

Awkward silence. All eyes on them.

WHITNEY

So. How was your day. Renee tells me you manage a building downtown here.

He talks while scanning the sidewalks outside the large window.

RUSSELL

Yeah. Noting exciting but... it's a start. You know.

WHITNEY

She's told me so much about you.

Russell loosens up.

RUSSELL

Well, all the good stuff is true and the bad stuff is mostly true.

She laughs. He forces a small laugh out.

WHITNEY

Well. Just got a job as a graphic designer. Small start up her downtown.

He's impressed, but distracted.

RUSSELL

Wow.

He again strains to look out the large windows.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)

Must take a... a lot of artistic talent. More than I'll ever have.

He lets out a small laugh.

WHITNEY

Ha ha. Well, truth be told, imagination's what counts. And how to use a good graphic program.

She laughs. Again, he forces a small laugh out.

A small chime comes from Whitney's cell. She glances at it then pics it up.

WHITNEY (CONT'D)

It's Renee.

Russell watches in anticipation as she answers.

WHITNEY (CONT'D)

Hey... Great... He's great...

RUSSELL

Tell her I said hi.

She smiles at him.

WHITNEY

He says hi... Ah hu... Ah hu. Sorry to hear that.

Russell becomes suspicious.

WHITNEY (CONT'D)

I'm sure we will be fine. Besides, Russ is looking hungrier by the moment. Take care. Bye.

His eyes narrow.

WHITNEY (CONT'D)

Renee can't make it.

She reaches for the plastic menu stuck in the condiment holder.

WHITNEY (CONT'D)

Got held up at The Pub. Said to go ahead without her. Besides, I am soooo looking forward to trying the food here.

Russell says nothing. His face goes from disappointment to mild anger.

Under the table his fist clench.

He watches Whitney look over the menu.

WHITNEY (CONT'D)

Are the Buffalo burgers here any good? The meat I mean, not the sauce.

He takes a few deep breaths. His mild scowl relents, becomes a forced smile.

RUSSELL

Yes. They are good. The waffle fries too.

**EXT. DOWNTOWN SIDEWALK - NIGHT**

Russell and Whitney walk silently down an unevenly lit sidewalk. He stares at the ground, hands in the jacket pocket. She alternates her glance between the sidewalk and him.

WHITNEY

I really enjoyed myself tonight.

He looks at her.

RUSSELL

Dido. Hope this is a good start to your new life downtown.

WHITNEY

It was. Have people like you and Renee to thank for that. And... have to say, best evening I've had in a while.

RUSSELL  
Really? Well. Thanks.

WHITNEY  
Just kicking back. Good old  
fashion burgers. Not so tense.

He's surprised. Thought it was just him.

RUSSELL  
You were... tense?

WHITNEY  
After a while, no. See, other  
times, dates, people spend more  
time trying to impress me or  
everyone else for that matter  
than... you know... just talk. And  
you told me a lot about the  
downtown here. Think I'll enjoy it.

He's not sure how to take the compliment.

RUSSELL  
Well... thanks again.

WHITNEY  
And... don't be angry at Renee.  
She's a good person.

RUSSELL  
(shrugging)  
Sorry I was a bit of a bump on the  
log. And I could never be angry at  
her. I know she was just being nice  
setting us up like this.

WHITNEY  
Bet you figured that out bout an  
hour ago.

RUSSELL  
(smiling)  
Right after the bail out call.

The two laugh.

WHITNEY  
Was a bit hesitant bout all this.

RUSSELL  
Understandable.

WHITNEY

But after what Renee told me about her weekend, I was less so. What you did and... didn't do.

He says nothing.

WHITNEY (CONT'D)

She kind a keeps things bottled up.

The revelation surprises him.

RUSSELL

Oh?

WHITNEY

Yeah. Ever since we became friends in high school.

(chuckling)

Boy. Still remember that fight. She doesn't fight like a girl. Can hit pretty hard.

He comes to a stop. Shock on his face. Whitney stops.

RUSSELL

Wait? No. Not you and...

WHITNEY

Yeah. After I... blossomed... I got a lot of attention. This one guy, Xander, and me started dating. Turns out he was still seeing Renee. She thought I was stealing her boyfriend. I wasn't. Didn't even know till she cornered me in the hall. She was suspended for a week.

Russell walks speechless.

WHITNEY (CONT'D)

Don't get me wrong. She's mellow. She might get mad, but not really physical.

RUSSELL

I'll keep that in mind!

WHITNEY

We found out Xander had a few girlfriends after that. She was super sorry.

They move on to the end of the block. There sits a blue 2-door sedan.

WHITNEY (CONT'D)

Well. Here's the Whitney-mobile.

They face each other.

WHITNEY (CONT'D)

Thanks again.

They give each other a gentle hug. He then pulls out his wallet, fishes out a business card. Hands it to her.

RUSSELL

You've probably heard this before,  
but if there is anything you do  
need...

WHITNEY

Thanks.

**EXT. DOWNTOWN SIDEWALK - MOMENTS LATER**

Russell stands on the sidewalk watching her car drive off.

The smile on his face slowly disappears. He looks off to his right.

Down the street he sees part of The Pubs' neon sign which hangs above their front door. Fishes out his cell.

CELL PHONE: Brings up Megan's number. Thumb hangs over the call button.

He sighs. Puts the phone away. He turns and walks away.

**INT. DOWNTOWN OFFICE BUILDING - MORNING**

Megan stands in a hallway. Stares at Rick's office at the other end. The door's open. She moves towards it. A woman and man emerge from an office to the right.

She turns back as they walk by. Once past they pass, she goes back the other way.

The open door moves closer.

Her eyes show fear but she keeps moving.

At the door she hesitates. She closes her eyes and takes a few deep breaths.

INSIDE RICK'S OFFICE: Megan steps in.

MEGAN  
Morning Rick.

He looks up from his desk. Eyes blank. Lifeless.

RICHARD  
Megan. Everything okay?

She takes a few hesitant steps forward.

MEGAN  
I was... in the area. Wanted to say  
hi!

RICHARD  
Thanks but... I got some things to  
get caught up on.

Returns his attention back to the desk.

Megan looks sad. Slowly turns around and heads for the door.

RICHARD (O.S.)  
Wait!

She swings around, wide eyed.

MEGAN  
Yes?

He gets up from behind his desk.

RICHARD  
I'm... I'm sorry. Please, sit.

She heads to the small couch. Richard leans against the  
desk, head hangs in shame.

RICHARD (CONT'D)  
I'm so sorry. Of all the people to  
act like an ass too--

She walks right up next to him.

MEGAN  
No Rick, you don't have to  
apologize, for anything. I... I  
figured you had a lot on your mind.  
You know... work, your trip.

RICHARD  
Yeah. The trip.  
(looks at her smiling)  
Thanks for understanding.  
(MORE)

RICHARD (CONT'D)  
 (straightens up)  
 Listen. I may need some more of  
 your... advice. Things didn't go  
 like I hoped... between Coleen and  
 me since--

MEGAN  
 Of course, anytime.

RICHARD  
 But not now. Got a meeting with  
 some potential clients and the  
 partners in a few.

MEGAN  
 Okay. Ah...

Her face lights up.

MEGAN (CONT'D)  
 Why don't you come over to my  
 place, we can talk then. You  
 remember where it's at? Right?

RICHARD  
 Across the street from Russ'...  
 right? That night you threw that  
 dinner party in his roomier place.  
 And I helped you bring back all the  
 plates and stuff afterwards.

MEGAN  
 Yes!

RICHARD  
 I remember that night. Enjoyed it.  
 And I'd like that.

Megan tried hiding her joy.

MEGAN  
 I'll be there after work. We can  
 talk then, about whatever you want.

He smiles.

RICHARD  
 Thanks.

They hug. She holds him tight, not wanting to let go.

MEGAN  
 Everything's going to be alright.

**INT. RUSSELL'S LOFT - NIGHT**

Russell stands in the kitchen, finishes making a sandwich. About to open a small bag of chips. A KNOCK on the front door. He's puzzled.

RUSSELL  
(whispering)  
Megan?

He heads to the door. Opens it.

VIEW FROM THE OUTSIDE: He breaks into a wide smile.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)  
Renee!

She jets past him. He shuts the door.

INSIDE THE LOFT: She walks towards the couch.

RENEE  
On my way to work but wanted to  
stop by and ask...  
(turns to face him)  
The hell's your problem?

Dumbfounded, Russell's smile disappears.

RUSSELL  
What... I... didn't know I had one.

RENEE  
(pointing at him)  
Bet your ass you do. Treating  
Whitney like that.

He steps towards her.

RUSSELL  
What! The hell you mean how I... I  
was a perfect gentleman--

RENEE  
Bullshit! Ignoring her all night--

RUSSELL  
Is that what she told you. I  
ignored her!

RENEE  
Said you spent most of the time  
talking and asking about me!

RUSSELL  
And she said I ignored her!

She becomes less angry.

RENEE  
She... she didn't use those exact words--

RUSSELL  
Well what exact words did she use?

Renee steps back, fumbles for an answer.

RENEE  
Well...  
(shrugging then face goes stern)  
I've known her a lot longer than you have. I could tell.

RUSSELL  
Then fill me in! Apparently I missed all the signals.

The two glare at the other.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)  
And I'll have you know... we didn't spend all our time talking about you. In fact, I know more about her than... than you.

She steps back towards him, pointing at the floor.

RENEE  
When you're with a girl you're supposed to focus on her. Not thinking... talking about another woman, like that dick Jason. I didn't set you guys up--

RUSSELL  
I appreciate you thinking about me. Really I do. But I recall you not wanting people to set you up. Saying you could find a guy if you wanted to and that you're not that pathetic. Well... makes two of us. And might I add... is this about me or Jason?

RENEE  
He has nothing---

RUSSELL  
Then why bring him up? Compare me.  
To him!

RENEE  
I didn't... didn't. This isn't  
about him!

RUSSELL  
Beginning to wonder.

She relents, but not entirely.

RENEE  
Here I was thinking you were  
different. But in the end--

RUSSELL  
I am! Thought I made that  
abundantly clear to her and you!  
And truth be told. I didn't Go  
there for her. Part of me wanted  
to...  
(relenting)  
To leave.

Her eyes widen. Shock on her face. All but charges at him.

RENEE  
You... What? Are you insane!

RUSSELL  
She's a nice girl but--

RENEE  
We've got guys down the hall from  
where we live bragging bout who's  
gonna bang her first and you wanted  
to leave?

RUSSELL  
Yeah. That's right. Because I  
wanted...

He can't understand why she's not getting it.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)  
Never mind!

He turns away.

RENEE  
Wanted what Russ? She's got a  
college degree. Great career and--

He wants to say something.

RENEE (CONT'D)  
 What's the matter? Only a dumbass  
 would turn down someone like  
 Whitney--

Her face goes back to shock, then relents.

RENEE (CONT'D)  
 Me.

She holds up her hands as if blocking something. Russell wanders past her on the other side of the couch, heading to the kitchen.

RENEE (CONT'D)  
 Wow. Russ. If this is about... I  
 didn't mean to give the  
 impression...

RUSSELL  
 It's not about... our binge. Or  
 yesterday or last week or...  
 It's... it's been a while.

He stops halfway to the kitchen and faces her.

RENEE  
 Russ, I don't...

RUSSELL  
 I know being a regular doesn't  
 qualify as friendship or... more  
 but... I'm a great guy too. I  
 showed you that. Didn't I?

RENEE  
 Yes Russ. You don't know how  
 thankful I am. I don't know of  
 another guy who would a...

Awkward silence.

RUSSELL  
 I know I'm not six foot something,  
 chiseled face--

RENEE  
 (charging at him)  
 You hold it right there. You got  
 one thing right. Being a regular  
 qualifies you for shit.  
 (MORE)

RENEE (CONT'D)

That includes judging me. How dare you think--

RUSSELL

I'm sorry I didn't mean...

RENEE

I am not shallow! I've fucked up. Oh yeah. A lot. I am not shallow. And I...

Renee chokes up, clenches a fits.

RENEE (CONT'D)

I'm not some helpless girl who can't take care of herself or needs a savior.

RUSSELL

No one said you were.  
(points at sofa)  
Even sitting there, spilling your guts out. I made sure you were safe. And I don't do things like that to get laid. I wanted to show you... I'm different. A real man. Not one of those who...

Her anger abates.

RENEE

You are. And that's why...

RUSSELL

Why what!

She tries impressing him.

RENEE

I don't know a girl who wouldn't want to--

RUSSELL

(angry)

Please! If you're going to give me the you're a nice... great... whatever the hell guy but speech then spit it out. I think you owe me that much.

Renee stares speechless at him. Her eyes narrow. Draws several deep breaths through her nose. Wants to rip into him.

His eyes burn with hate. She's seen that look before.

Her scowl relents. She takes a last deep breath then tries spitting it out, not looking at him.

RENEE

You're... a nice... guy--

RUSSELL

Thank you.

He turns and goes to the low wall. There props his arms onto it. Doesn't look at her. HEAVY BREATHING. His anger dies down.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)

You're a good person, Renee. An honest person. I admire that. That's why people like you.

RENEE

Russ, please--

RUSSELL

I... respect your decision. If you'll excuse me... I got... got work to do.

She want so say something. Instead, she turns, takes a step, then twists back around.

RENEE

Are... are you gonna be okay?

Doesn't look at her.

RUSSELL

Goodbye Renee.

She stretches out a hand, takes a few steps towards him. Stops, reels in her hand, turns and shuffles towards the door. Her eyes are glossy, tear filled.

Russell's clenches his fists open and closed. Behind him, Renee leaves. DOOR SHUTTING rings through the loft. He flinches.

**INT. MEGAN'S LOFT - SAME NIGHT**

BEDROOM: Megan stands in front of the mirror. Wears a nice outfit but not too formal. She grimaces, heads to the closet.

VIEW FROM INSIDE THE CLOSET: She moves back some garments. Pulls out one still in a thin plastic bag. Steps back, holding it up. Not all of it's visible. It's black. Slim.

Two thin straps hold it on the hanger. She looks it over top to bottom. Then shakes her head. Puts it back.

LIVING ROOM: Megan scans the room as if to see everything's in place. Looks at her watch. She paces back and forth. A knock comes from the door.

Her face lights up in anticipation.

The door opens. Richard stands there with a half smile, blazer slung over one shoulder. No tie. White shirt looks frumpy.

MEGAN

Hey! Come on in.

He shuffles past her. She closes the door.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

How we holding up?

He throws his blazer on the chair. Turns to her.

RICHARD

Been better.

MEGAN

Got some wine. If you want some.

He seems hesitant, then

RICHARD

That would be great.

Megan goes to the kitchen. Richard gets comfortable at one end of the futon. FRIDGE OPENING AND CLOSING. CLINKING GLASSES. She then appears and sets the bottle and glasses on the coffee table. He eyes the bottle.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

Merlot. You remembered.

She sits at the other end and opens up the bottle.

MEGAN

Yes. The Sip and Shop Tour here downtown last year.

A smile comes to him as he gets relaxed.

RICHARD

Yes. That was a nice night. I think I was seeing...

MEGAN  
 (pouring wine)  
 Hanna. And Olivia and Martin tagged  
 along too.

RICHARD  
 Yes. Nice of you all to make a  
 great evening of it.

Done pouring, she hands one to him, then leans back. She  
 takes a sip, watching him do the same. When done

RICHARD (CONT'D)  
 Hope you're not getting tired of me  
 asking for advise.

MEGAN  
 I never do. And I'm cheaper than a  
 shrink.

Both chuckle. Both take a sip. He then turns serious.

RICHARD  
 Like I was saying this afternoon...  
 things didn't go like I planned  
 on... with Coleen.

MEGAN  
 Oh.

RICHARD  
 It started well. Her parents were  
 great. And that bikini... wow.

MEGAN  
 I'm... I'm sure it was.

She takes a sip.

RICHARD  
 And I even got a single red rose.  
 Sunset walk. Then...

MEGAN  
 Then...

RICHARD  
 We started talking about the  
 future. That I wasn't ready for.  
 And I...

MEGAN  
 You...

RICHARD

I'm a grown man. There with an amazing woman and I... drew a blank. Tried changing the subject. We haven't spoken a word since I dropped her back at her place.

MEGAN

Listen--

RICHARD

She won't return my calls. Avoids me. Won't give a chance to...

She scoots closer to him.

MEGAN

You're a good man. And if she can't see that well, that's her fault. Don't blame yourself.

RICHARD

But I do. And now... it's over with Coleen. If only I had...

Megan's eyes flare, then relent. Sets down her glass.

MEGAN

Some things maybe... aren't meant to be.

RICHARD

There's a part of me that does want something else. Part of me... fights it the other...

She gets right up next to him on the futon.

MEGAN

Sometimes it's best to follow your heart. Even though it may sound crazy. Impossible. And where ever that goes... you know I'll be there for you.

She clenches his free hand. He sets down his glass.

RICHARD

Your right Megs. I do want something else. Even if it means... been so focused on my career. Becoming a partner some day. I just keep hiding it.

MEGAN  
Don't hide it. We don't have to  
hide anything!

RICHARD  
I keep running through girlfriends  
and--

MEGAN  
You don't have too--

RICHARD  
And what I need to do is... like  
you said, follow... what I want.

He stands.

RICHARD (CONT'D)  
And I know you're there for me all  
the way--

She stands

MEGAN  
Yes!

She awaits his next words with barley concealed excitement.

RICHARD  
It's crazy and I'm going to do it.

He turns as if leaving.

Megan grabs his arms and twists him back. She then reaches behind his head with both hands, pulling him down. She kisses him, all but holding him against her lips.

Stunned, he pulls away and steps back.

Megan resists, tries hanging onto him.

RICHARD (CONT'D)  
Megan! What? What are you doing?

He backs away but she gasps his hands with her's.

MEGAN  
You're right. I've always been here  
for you. Through Gabbie, Sophia,  
Hanna, Colleen...

He's awestruck, remembering each of his past GFs. She looks so happy.

Meg-- RICHARD MEGAN  
 You don't have to worry about--

I-- I-- I-- RICHARD MEGAN  
 You don't have to explain. I understand. Who cares what people think about us.

He's even more shocked.

RICHARD  
 I'm not trying to take advantage of you. I'm not... not you... what I meant was...

Her eyes widen. Face moves from happiness to shock. She looks at their clasped hands, then back to his face. Stepping back, her mouth gasps for words.

RICHARD (CONT'D)  
 I... better go.

She lets him go. He grabs up his blazer.

RICHARD  
 You've given me a lot. To think about. And I need to set things right. Like you said. Just, don't hate me for doing it.

She stands speechless. He heads for the door.

RICHARD  
 I'll see you... tell you everything tomorrow. Everything's going to work out.

He opens the door and leaves. As the door closes, Megan lurches forward, one hand stretched out.

MEGAN  
 I love you Rick--

The CLOSING DOOR shoots through the loft.

Dead silence. She stands staring at the door.

**THE NEXT DAY- MONTAGE- VARIOUS**

Megan walks robot like down the downtown sidewalk to work.

Russell sits at his desk listening on speakerphone as a client goes on about the lack of air conditioning in their office.

Renee sits looking at a bowl of cereal on the breakfast bar. Spoon in one hand. Head rests in the other.

Megan sits in front of her computer, staring at the screen. Coworkers come and go. LAUGHTER in the background.

Russell mops up spilled coffee in the foyer of an office building. Muzak comes from an opening elevator.

Renee squats behind the bar at The Pub, counting the number of liquor bottles there.

Megan sits at an office table with others as a coworker presents a PowerPoint presentation. Stares at the table.

Russell stands in a half finished office, clipboard in hand, next to a wide open window, staring onto downtown several stories below.

Renee counts twenties before putting them in the register.

Megan sits alone in the small cafeteria eating a salad. Muffled conversations surround her.

Russell's at his desk, eating a bag of Doritos, one chip at a time, stares blankly into the distance.

Renee sits in a old wooden chair in the storage room, elbows on her knees, head buried into her hands.

#### **END MONTAGE**

#### **INT. DOWNTOWN OFFICE BUILDING - LATER**

Megan stands in front of a high volume copier. Various office supplies fill the shelves within the room. Watches aimlessly as it shoots out papers full of graphs and figures.

Once the last page spits out, waits for a moment, then takes them up. Without enthusiasm, she thumbs through them.

She turns, eyes on the papers. She walks, looks up. Comes to a stop. Eyes grow wide in fear.

Coleen stands in the door way. Hand on each sill. Face reveals nothing. Voice monotone. Can't tell if asking or accusing.

COLEEN

Rick was at your place last night,  
wasn't he.

Megan steps back. Brings the copies to her chest like a shield. Her mouth gapes open, then closed. Backs away.

MEGAN

I... can... I can... explain. We  
just... talked... I swear... that's  
all... I...

Coleen walks towards her.

COLEEN

I knew it.

Back against the large copier, Megan's frozen in fear. Coleen comes right up to her. Puts a hand on each of Megan's shoulders.

Coleen's face slides from blank to joy.

COLEEN (CONT'D)

I knew it was you! Thank you!

Megan's not sure what to make of her.

COLEEN (CONT'D)

We've barely spoken a word to each  
other since getting back, but  
now... said he should have done it  
in Florida.

Megan remains silent, wide eyed. Coleen places her left hand in front of her face. For a moment, Megan acts as though she will hit her.

The RING on Coleen's hand comes into view.

Megan gasps.

Coleen steps back, fingering the ring.

COLEEN (CONT'D)

It's not much. But it's only an  
engagement ring. He'll get  
something better later. Isn't it  
wonderful?

Megan can't take her eyes off the ring.

MEGAN

Ah... Coleen... I...

COLEEN

He said a friend told him to follow his heart, now matter how crazy it was. It's all thanks to you!

She steps back towards her.

COLEEN (CONT'D)

I was so mad at him when he didn't want to talk about where our relationship was going. But he told me he was just wasn't ready. But last night he... gushed about how much he wanted this. And me!

Megan tries mustering words.

MEGAN

Ah... I...

Coleen becomes giddy, grabs her arms.

COLEEN

And then we made up. OH GOD did we make up!

Megan says nothing. Coleen composes herself. Takes off the ring and pockets it.

COLEEN (CONT'D)

But a... don't tell anyone okay? We're going to send out an e-vite to the Pub. I just, wanted you to know before anyone else!

Still in shock, Megan says nothing.

COLEEN (CONT'D)

I can't thank you enough, Megan. See you tonight, okay?

She turns to leave. Stops midway to the door and turns.

COLEEN (CONT'D)

You're going to make a beautiful bride's maid.

Megan watches her strut out.

Megan's stunned. Her eyes begin showing sadness, then tears.

**EXT. ROOFTOP DOWNTOWN - NIGHT**

The open door to the roof bears a AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL ONLY sign. HVAC units, vents pipes of varying height and size poke up here and there. Other rooftops visible in the background. Streetlights glow up from below. CAR ENGINES and PEOPLE LAUGHING echo through the night air.

Renee sits on a low HVAC unit, wrapped in a thin blanket. Faces the edge. Face blank.

In the background, Whitney emerges onto the roof through the door. She cautiously walks up to Renee who doesn't hear her.

WHITNEY

Hey!

Renee give her a glance and meager smile. Whitney sits carefully next to her.

WHITNEY (CONT'D)

Still bumming about Jason?

Renee stares into the distance.

RENEE

Yes... and no.

Silence.

RENEE (CONT'D)

Best I tell you now. I stopped by Russ' place before I went to work.

Whitney looks with surprise at her.

RENEE (CONT'D)

I was mad at him. Thought he... treated you like crap.

WHITNEY

He never--

RENEE

I know. I know and... we went back and forth, saying things we both ended up regretting. Apologizing for.

(giggles)

When I was really mad at... you know who. And me.

WHITNEY

Don't knock yourself. Your heart was in the right place setting us up.

RENEE

I wonder. Thinking if you and him hit it off he'd... forget about me.

Silence.

RENEE (CONT'D)

Then he...

WHITNEY

He what?

RENEE

He went there for me. Not you. Wanted to be more than...

Whitney hangs her head.

RENEE (CONT'D)

And I had to... tell him...

WHITNEY

All us girls had to do that. More often than we want.

Renee nods.

WHITNEY (CONT'D)

And to those we really don't want to.

Renee shuts her eyes tight, draws the blanket tighter.

WHITNEY (CONT'D)

Gonna go out on a limb here but... you do like him. Not that way but... you do.

Renee shows confusion.

RENEE

That's the tough part. He's not... better... or worse than others.

WHITNEY

Different?

Renee's eyes narrow, then fall flat.

RENEE

Don't know if I ever can face him again. Or him me. That's how I've dealt with it before. You know. Ignore and they go away. But this time...

Lowers and shakes her head.

WHITNEY

Maybe... just see what happens. People surprise us all the time. You know? Give him a chance. Look at us?

They look at each other. Break into wide smiles.

**EXT. SIDEWALK TWO BLOCKS FROM THE PUB - DAY**

Russell half hides behind the corner of a building staring at The Pub. Customers occupy some of the outside tables. He watches for a few. Turns as though to leave, but stops. Stares back at the Pub.

Longing fills his eyes.

**INT. THE PUB - MOMENTS LATER**

He walks through the wide open door. Moves cautiously towards the bar, looking around. It's not too crowded.

BILL

What's up, Russ?

He stops, sees Bill behind the bar. Walks up and takes a seat.

RUSSELL

Not much. You?

BILL

As you can see, slow day. The usual?

Russell smiles.

RUSSELL

Yes. Please.

KITCHEN: Renee finishes off an order of quesadillas. One of the cooks takes up her empty plate. She thanks him, then leaves.

THE BAR: Russell takes a long drink from his bourbon and coke. Done, he looks relaxed.

Renee heads out of the hallway straight to her section. Stops at each of the three occupied tables.

Russell gets settled in. Takes another drink. Wiping his mouth he see's Renee stride behind the bar. Watches silently as she takes up a pint and fills it from one of the taps.

His eyes fill with apprehension.

Done pouring, she turns around. Seeing Russell, she stops.

Awkward staring.

Russell cracks a small smile.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)

Hey.

Mouth agape, she doesn't react until the overflowing foam from the pint reaches her hand. She sets it down and picks up a cloth. Wipes her hands but doesn't look at him.

RENEE

Hey.

Awkward silence.

RUSSELL

How you been?

RENEE

Ga... Good. You?

Russell leans over his drink, staring at it.

RUSSELL

Doing okay. Wanted to get back to my normal drinking routine.

(small laugh)

Felt bad about saying away. Just wanted you to know--

He looks up. Renee's exiting from behind the bar and striding back to her section. Sets the pint down in front of a customer at a table then bolts away. Heads back down the hallway to the back area.

Russell shows confusion. Looks as though he wants to say something but can't find the words. Like he wants to go after her but can't move.

His hand on the bar clenches into a fist.

Twisting towards the bar, takes down the rest of the drink in one pull. Done, he leans over, one elbow on the counter, buries his head in his hand.

His head moves slowly from side to side. He looks up, covering his mouth. Anger fills his narrowing eyes. DEEP BREATHS. Cast a glance back towards the hallway.

BILL (O.S.)  
Ready for another?

Russell doesn't look at him. His angry eyes remain fixed towards the hallway. Shakes his head back and forth.

BILL (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Surprised I didn't see you or Megan  
at that little party we had here.

Russell looks at him. Straightens up.

RUSSELL  
Wha--  
(clears his throat)  
What party?

BILL  
Those two I see you all with  
sometimes. Didn't really know their  
names till last Friday. Richard  
and... Coleen. Right?

Russell becomes puzzled.

RUSSELL  
Yeah. What about em?

BILL  
Had an engagement party.  
(points to the center of  
the room)  
Right here. Must a been... fifty,  
sixty people from their work here.  
That Coleen lady was showing  
everyone her ring. Even me. And I  
didn't even know her!

Moving off he lets out a chuckle. Russell's face falls flat in shock.

BILL (O.S.)  
 Was able to unload some of that  
 leftover champagne I had sitting in  
 the back too.

Russell stares straight ahead, mouth hanging open.

RUSSELL  
 Megan...

Fishes out his cell phone.

**INT. STOREROOM, THE PUB - SAME TIME**

Renee leans against the old table under the mirror. Arms  
 crossed. One hand over her mouth. Shame on her face. Tammy  
 enters.

TAMMY  
 Sup girl. How's business...

Notices Renee's demeanor.

TAMMY (CONT'D)  
 We okay?

She doesn't answer.

TAMMY (CONT'D)  
 Hey. If you need some alone time, I  
 can handle things here. You've been  
 though enough. Get away for a  
 while.

Renee twists on the table, catches sight of herself in the  
 mirror.

Staring at herself, her hand drops away. Her eyes grow  
 glossy. A few moments of silence. Her reflection in the  
 mirror.

RENEE  
 Get away? Hump. I can handle shitty  
 customers. Yell at bastard  
 boyfriends. But what do I do when  
 he shows up... I can't get away.  
 And no. We're not fine.

She stands, composes herself.

RENEE (CONT'D)  
 But I'm gonna try and change that.  
 And not screw things up this time.  
 Thanks but, I'll stay. Need to.

She heads out down the hall.

**INT. THE PUB - CONTINUOUS**

Russell awaits anxiously, listening to the RINGING through the cell. TWO CLICKS.

MEGAN (V.O.)  
Hey! Megs here. Can't come--

He ends the call. Stows phone, fishes out some cash and throws it on the bar. Turns to leave.

Renee emerges from the hallway, passes by the wait station. Sees Russell heading her way. Puts on a smile. As he nears

RENEE  
Hey Russ! Didn't mean ta--

He bolts by.

She steps back, startled, watches him race out the front door.

A customer at the end of the bar saw the whole thing.

CUSTOMER  
Geeze. What a dick.

Renee doesn't look at him. Resignation on her face.

RENEE  
No. I kind a deserved that.

**EXT. PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS**

Russell weaves around the cars, looking left and right. Stops.

A FRONT WINDSHEILD: A chain of shiny green beads and Mardi Gras necklaces hang from the rear view mirror.

**INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE MEGAN'S LOFT - MOMENTS LATER**

He races to her front door. Out of breath bangs three times.

RUSSELL  
Megan!

Three more bangs.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)  
Megan! It's me. If you're in there listen... I... I just found out...

Two lighter bangs.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)

Megan.

He's about to bang again when the DEADBOLT CLICKS. Steps back. The door inches open.

He sees the dimly lit interior. A figure stands half behind the door. He walks in.

**INT. MEGAN'S LOFT - CONTINUOUS**

Russell walks in. Door closes behind. The only light a small lamp on a small table adjacent the futon. He turns.

Megan turns on the overhead light. Clad in a bathrobe she wears no make up. Puffy eyes.

Shock by her appearance, he speaks softly as she shuffles by.

RUSSELL

I... Bill just told me.

MEGAN

Engagement party? Say how it went?

She plops down on the futon.

RUSSELL

I should a come by sooner.

MEGAN

You don't have to apologize.

She tries a meager smile.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

Something I have to deal with.

Russell sits in the chair next to the futon.

RUSSELL

I could a... could a... been there for you. But I've... been so...

Hangs head in shame.

MEGAN

Could a what? Invent a time machine, so I could go back before she came along.

He gives her a glance. She begins rubbing her forehead.

MEGAN (CONT'D)  
It's my fault. I should a--

RUSSELL  
Would it help if I said you don't  
have to blame yourself.

She doesn't react.

MEGAN  
Keep thinking... if I had... when  
we brought back all the stuff from  
the dinner party.

Stares off into the distance. Russell says nothing.

MEGAN (CONT'D)  
I had him right here. Alone. Un...  
unattached. But I... didn't.

Silence. Megan puts her head back in her hand. Starts giggling.

Russell's confused.

MEGAN (CONT'D)  
You know... I should a went with  
them to the mall. Helped her pick  
out a bikini. Could have said-  
Here's one. It adds twenty pounds  
and ten years. This would be  
perfect!

He's surprised.

RUSSELL  
Come on. Don't say that--

MEGAN  
(burst of anger)  
Why! Because I a good little  
helper, a good little girl!

Russell reals back.

MEGAN (CONT'D)  
Maybe that's my problem! Maybe...  
Maybe if I had paraded around in a  
short skirt, dressed like a hooker,  
came on to him sooner maybe--

Russell stares in disbelief.

MEGAN (CONT'D)  
 (banging her hand against  
 the futon with each me)  
 Would have been Me! Me on that  
 beach! Me meeting his parents. Me  
 wearing the--

She stops. Eyes swell with tears. Starts shaking. Sobbing.

Russell bolts to her. Kneeling, he wraps arms around her.  
 She does the same to him.

MEGAN (CONT'D)  
 (weeping)  
 I did... I did... everything wrong!  
 I've... always done... everything  
wrong! I... I... came on to him...  
 too... too late... made a fool..  
fool of... of myself...

Russell tightens his hold. Rest his head on hers.

MEGAN (CONT'D)  
 He didn't... need me... Anymore!

Russell fights back tears.

Her sobbing abates. Grips him tighter.

MEGAN (CONT'D)  
 Thank you... for coming.

Russell twist his head towards the small table next to the  
 futon.

A SMALL WHITE TOWEL lays next to the lamp. Reaches for it.

About to give it to her. His eyes dart back to the table.

He stands. Megan releases him. Rubs her puffy eyes.

RUSSELL (O.S.)  
 What's this!

She looks up. He holds a pill bottle next to her face.

Her eyes widen. Turns to the table.

Now uncovered, a BOTTLE OF WINE lay on its side.

Back to Russell.

MEGAN  
 Ah... for my headaches.

She tries taking the bottle from his hand. He pulls it away.

MEGAN (CONT'D)  
I get these... headaches...

Glaring down at her in anger, he's not convinced.

MEGAN (CONT'D)  
(pleading)  
It's not what you think...

His face swells with anger. He turns and leaves.

He strides down a small hallway. Megan gets up. Follows him.

MEGAN (CONT'D)  
Whatta you doing?

He enters the small bathroom. Lifts the toilet seat. Begins opening the bottle.

Megan steps in behind him. Sees what he's doing.

MEGAN (CONT'D)  
No!

Tries reaching around to stop him. His free arm holds her at bay.

MEGAN (CONT'D)  
Give those back! I said it's... *not*  
*what you think!*

He pours the pills into the toilet.

Megan steps back. Anger on her face. Slams both fists onto his back. Russell turns and faces her.

MEGAN (CONT'D)  
(roaring)  
Get out! Get out! *You*... *I'm not*  
*some helpless little girl who can't*  
*take care of herself!*

RUSSELL  
Damn right. You're just acting  
helpless.

Her eyes flare wider.

MEGAN  
Get out! You had no right to do  
*that!*

RUSSELL  
But you have rights. A right to  
stay here all alone--

MEGAN  
Yes--

RUSSELL  
A right to blame yourself for  
everything--

MEGAN  
Yes--

RUSSELL  
A right to kill yourself--

MEGAN  
Yes-- NO... I--

Face full of shock, covers her mouth with both hands. She  
backs away, then turns, stumbles back towards the futon.

At Russell's feet, the empty bottle hits the floor. Goes  
after her.

In the living room, Russell stops her, turns her around.  
Embraces her. Her head buried into his shoulder, she  
embraces him, sobbing.

MEGAN (CONT'D)  
It hurts... it hurts so bad...

He tries fighting back his own tears.

RUSSELL  
I know. I know.

They stand holding each other.

**INT. MEGAN'S LOFT - LATER**

She lays in bed. Russell gives her a look before closing the  
bedroom door.

He ambles into the living room. Eyeing the wine, he walks  
over and grabs it. Strides into the kitchen.

Over the sink he twist open the bottle. About to pour it  
down, he stops. Takes a few deep breaths. Takes a drink from  
the bottle. Pulls it way. Some of the wine runs out of his  
mouth. Not really liking the taste, he wipes it off with his  
hand. Takes a drink.

He meanders to the chair in the living room. Plops down. Exhausted, he leans back. Gulps down a drink.

Leans forward. Takes a drink. Rubs his forehead, then buries his face into his hand. HEAVY BREATHING. His head shakes back and forth. Takes a drink. Head back into his hand.

RUSSELL  
Everything's... gone. Why did we...

He starts shaking. Sobbing.

**INT. MEGAN'S LOFT - MORNING**

Russell lays on the futon. SHOWER RUNNING coming from the bathroom fills the air. His eyes blink open. Takes a deep breath. Rubs his eyes.

Sits up. Sees the open bedroom door. Stands. Peers inside at her unmade bed. Glances towards the bathroom. Door is closed. Shaking off the sleep, goes into the kitchen.

He sees the empty wine bottle on it side next to the sink. Looks at the small table. An empty yogurt cup and spoon. Takes them up.

Throws the spoon in the sink. Takes up the bottle. Open up a cabinet below the sink. Pauses, peering inside. Puzzled look. Head cocks to one side. Reaches inside to dump the bottle and yogurt into an unseen trash can.

Megan emerges from the bathroom. COFFEE BREWING fills the air. Drying her hair she stops in the living room.

Russell sees her. Draws a breath.

RUSSELL  
Made some coffee. Cream and sugar?

MEGAN  
(smiling)  
Yes. And thanks.

She sits on the futon. He appears with a cup. She eagerly takes it. He sits in the chair.

Silence as she sips.

MEGAN (CONT'D)  
I looked at those for nearly two days.

Russell says nothing. Eyes narrow, staring at the floor.

MEGAN (CONT'D)  
 Trying to decide whether to... go  
 on, or... end the misery. Too  
 scared to do either.

She sips, then looks at him.

MEGAN (CONT'D)  
 Thank you for coming. I know you  
 must think--

RUSSELL  
 I don't think.  
 (leans back)  
 In fact, I'm tired of thinking.  
 Maybe... I do too much of that.  
 Thinking. Hoping. Trying.

Megan remains silent.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)  
 Funny how... things felt better  
 before all this. The pining. You  
 know. The...  
 (sighs)  
 Wanting. Almost like a... a drug.  
 You wanted it. Looked forward to  
 it. And you get so...  
 (makes a fist)  
Pissed when it doesn't work. But  
 you need that... that fix. The only  
 thing keeping you going. Wondering  
 what it be like when they finally  
 came around to seeing things your  
 way. That... that last dose. And  
 you won't need it anymore  
 because... they'll always be there  
 now. The way you want them.

Megan sees he's holding back tears.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)  
 (clearing his throat)  
 It's all gone now. Gone. And we  
 wanted it gone. And now we gotta  
 live with it.

He leans forward, eyes on the floor.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)  
 I don't think any different of you  
 today than yesterday. No one has a  
 right to judge you. Not me.  
 Richard. Coleen. Yourself.  
 (MORE)

RUSSELL (CONT'D)  
So she told you she didn't feel the  
same way about you. Doesn't mean  
it's all over.

MEGAN  
You mean he.

He looks up at her.

MEGAN (CONT'D)  
You said she.

Ashamed, he goes back to staring at the floor.

MEGAN (CONT'D)  
Been so... focused on... I forgot  
to ask about...

RUSSELL  
She gave me the 'nice guy but'  
speech.

MEGAN  
I'm sorry.

RUSSELL  
Don't be. Heard it before.

Silence.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)  
Single. Attached. Whatever. The  
world's a lot better place with  
both of us it.

Surprise comes to her face, but says nothing.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)  
I a... called my boss. Told him  
something personal came up.  
(looks at her)  
Why don't we just... chill today.  
Give ourselves a... reset. I know  
it's not gonna make everything  
better, but...

Megan smiles.

MEGAN  
I'd like that. And... thanks. For  
everything.

He smiles. Sits up and slaps his knees.

RUSSELL

Well...

(standing)

If we're gonna spend the day  
vegging out, we'll need to eat.

(walking to the front  
door)

I'll head to the Deli. Pick up a  
few things.

MEGAN

Didn't know you can cook.

RUSSELL

I can't.

(turns to her)

But I can whip up a mean roast beef  
sandwich. And watch what I do with  
a can of ravioli!

Megan's smile's a mile wide.

He turns to the door. Stops, turns back.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)

Oh. When I was cleaning up the  
kitchen, saw a... black dress next  
to the trash can under the sink.

Megan takes a sip, turns her head towards the window next to  
the futon.

MEGAN

Leave it. Doesn't fit anymore.

**INT. THE PUB - DAY**

Renee stands slumped over the wait station, staring at all  
the taps. Hardly anyone's there. She's bored. A mute  
bartender's buried into his cell.

A figure walks in through the open door. Comes up to the bar  
next to Renee. She notices the person as they sit.  
Straightens up.

RENEE

Hey there. What can...

Her face moves from a cheery smile to confusion.

RENEE (CONT'D)

Megan?

Megan smiles. She wears glasses. Little makeup.

MEGAN  
Sup girl. Been a while.

RENEE  
A couple of weeks yeah. How a...  
how you guys been?

Megan gets comfortable in a bar stool.

MEGAN  
Okay. Busy. Work. Life. Yada yada.

Renee draws a deep breath. Searches for words. Hesitant.

RENEE  
And... Russ?

MEGAN  
He's doing okay. Considering.

RENEE  
Guess he told you bout...

MEGAN  
(nodding)  
Not much, but figures there's not  
much more to say.

Renee turns away. Stars fiddling with a pen.

RENEE  
When he kind a stormed out of  
here... after I... blew him off.  
Figured...

MEGAN  
He came to me. I... needed some  
help that day. And, got focused on  
that.

RENEE  
Good 'ol Russ. Sticking by us even  
if we...

She sighs. Rest her chin in a hand.

RENEE (CONT'D)  
I wish he didn't avoid me. He  
doesn't have to, you know.

MEGAN  
Nor you him.

Renee cast her a glance.

MEGAN (CONT'D)  
 Besides, he's been busy planning my  
 going away party.

Renee straightens up, shocked.

MEGAN (CONT'D)  
Temporary going away. The firm's  
 opening a new office in Chicago.  
 Asked for volunteers. Should take  
 about two... three months. Thought  
 some time away might do me some  
 good.

RENEE  
 Is... everything okay?

MEGAN  
 Got the 'I'm a nice girl but'  
 speech. Not in so many words but  
 the speech all the same.

Renee's eyes widen, like a revelation hit her.

RENEE  
 Russ... he didn't give you--

MEGAN  
 Oh no! No. He's great but a he's  
 been firmly in your camp for a  
 while.

RENEE  
 Sorry, girl. Taking it's just as  
 bad as... giving it.

Give each other a comforting smile.

RENEE (CONT'D)  
 Hey!

She reaches for a bar napkin. Begins writing on it.

RENEE (CONT'D)  
 Why don't you give Russ my number  
 and he can--

MEGAN  
 No.

Renee comes to a stop. Looks in shock at her.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

Not to be rude but it a mean a lot more if you gave it to him.

Renee crumbles up the napkin.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

Besides, need to head out and invite a few others to my party.

She gets up. The two hug.

RENEE

Hang in there. Kay? And thanks for coming by.

MEGAN

Sure thing. You hang in there too. Everything's gonna work out.

She heads to the door. Halfway there, Renee turns to her.

RENEE

Hey? When's the party?

Megan turns, walks backwards.

MEGAN

Ask Russ.

Renee's face goes from a smile to sadness.

**INT. RUSSELL'S LOFT - DAY**

Russell slouched on the couch. Feet on a coffee table. Writing tablet and pen in hand. Jotting down notes.

A knock at the door. He doesn't look up.

RUSSELL

It's open Meg.

Continues making notes. DOOR OPENING then CLOSING. He still doesn't look up.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)

You know, I should a been a party planner.

(faces door)

A lot to do for a--

He bolts up.

Renee stands a few steps from the door. Arms behind back.

RENEE  
I'm probably the last person you  
wanted to see.

He wavers between joy and trepidation.

RUSSELL  
You're... always... welcome.

She walks towards the couch looking around.

RENEE  
Wow. This place looks a lot  
different when I'm sober or not  
pissed off.

He sets the pad and pen down. Watches her.

RENEE (CONT'D)  
You... you haven't been by in a  
while. Because of me?

He gropes for words.

RUSSELL  
Been... busy. Work. Planning Meg's-

RENEE  
Good God Russ! Be honest with me. I  
think you owe me that much.

Stare at each other.

He moves towards the kitchen.

RUSSELL  
A little. Maybe a lot. Funny thing  
is... we aren't even dating and...  
we needed time apart.

Renee hangs her head. Shuffles around.

RENEE  
I know I acted like I didn't want  
you around. But...  
(looks at him)  
I don't want you to treat me any  
different now than before. Despite  
my... show... I'm still the same  
person. Ya know.

He stops. Faces her.

RUSSELL

Things are different. Things were  
said... done. We can't change that.

She looks embarrassed.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)

Not talking about all that.  
Everything I... we... wanted.  
Didn't want. Found out. I mean...  
you and Jason. Me and you... Megan  
and-- Normal's gone.

RENEE

I know I made mistakes. Bout us.

RUSSELL

Makes two of us. I looked at you  
like...

She stares at him awaiting his answer.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)

All I had to do was prance around,  
show you how great I was, how  
different and you'd just fall into  
my arms. Say 'He's the one!'

(wondering into the  
kitchen)

Never stopped for a second to  
ask...

(turns back)

What do you want, Renee?

She stands dumbfounded.

RENEE

I really... don't know... anymore.

RUSSELL

(nodding)

Fair answer. Makes two of us.

She steps towards him.

RENEE

But I know what I don't want. I'm  
not crushing on you or anything  
like that. So don't get the wrong  
idea but... I don't want you out of  
my life.

His eyes widen.

RENEE (CONT'D)  
May not have much of one but, it's  
better with you in it. If that  
means anything. You know.

He cracks a smile.

RUSSELL  
It does. More than you know.

She walks right up in front of him.

RENEE  
I got this wondrous, stupid idea.

He gets cautious.

RUSSELL  
Oh?

RENEE  
Well. I show up, arms full a  
Chinese take out. We laugh. Eat.  
Chill. Check out cheesy movies.  
Make fun of them.

He's impressed and awaits more.

RENEE (CONT'D)  
(joking tone)  
Then when it's all over I get up,  
leave with my pants on and  
virginity intact!

He cocks a brow.

RENEE (CONT'D)  
Okay. That's long gone but...  
(gets serious)  
Square one. Let's start there. And  
we'll all try not to screw things  
up this time.

He breaks into a smile.

RUSSELL  
Square one's fine with me.

RENEE  
Warts and all?

RUSSELL  
Warts and all.

RENEE

And you're not just trying to get into my pants?

RUSSELL

If you thought I wanted that, you wouldn't be here.

RENEE

You know. Sometime you're just a little too damn smart for your own good.

RUSSELL

Reckon you'll be the judge of that.

She cocks a smile.

RENEE

You fuckin a right.

**INT. RUSSELL'S LOFT - DAY**

The lofts' full of people. Megan walks around greeting them. Chatting it up. A table near the window is full of food. Bottles of alcohol and beer sit in the kitchen.

In the kitchen she stops by Richard and Coleen. They laugh. She gives each a hug.

She looks back over her shoulder.

Renee and Russell sit on the couch talking and laughing.

THE COUCH: Renee and Russell face each other, taking, smiling, happy. Megan shows up and plops down between them. Renee and Russell reel back. Act as though shocked. All three begin laughing. Each one having a good time. View freezes.

The end of their new beginning.

FADE OUT.