

LIKE A DRUG (1ST 14 PGS)

Written by

David C. Velasco

Based on the novel of the same name by the same author.

**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. 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. Turns 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. Wears a white polo shirt with a company logo over the heart. Stripping it off exposes his average build. Casts it onto the bed adjacent a closet.

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

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 front door. Pauses.

Walks into the small kitchen. Opens a cabinet above a small stove and pulls out a bottle of bourbon.

Next to the sink, lifts a glass. Pours two fingers. Drinks it in one pull. Done, he takes a deep breath.

THE LOFT: Heads 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.

Prunes her hair 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.

She heads towards the main area. NUMEROUS CONVERSATIONS, MUSIC from an ELECTRONIC JUKEBOX, CLINKING GLASSES fill the air.

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

THE PUB bristles with patrons. Renovated, the original brick and mortar make up the walls. Unpretentious atmosphere.

Russell and Megan sit at a table with OLIVIA and MARTIN. CONVERSATIONS, LOW MUSIC from an electronic jukebox fill the air. Russell tilts back his chair, a mixed drink in one hand. Other arm rests on an empty one between Megan and he. 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

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

(exaggerating effort)  
*Leeeeean* 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 as it 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.)  
He saying 'There's no ticket coming  
out.' I say back...

The 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. Six-footish, good looking, well  
fit, two-piece suit. He stops, places hands on hips, scans  
the room.

MARTIN (O.S.)  
Was he drunk?

Megan's eyes flare open. 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.

Megan rises, waving her arm.

MEGAN  
Hey guys!

Russell straightens up, turns to look.

The duo approach. Coleen glides like a runway model.

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 wait station.

He looks surprised.

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

RUSSELL

This taken?

The man turns. Older, balding, globe shaped paunch all but bursting from this tight tee shirt. Gruff but police 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 spots Renee. She leans over a table, picking up glasses. His eyes zero in on her butt.

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

Comfortable in the bar stool, sips his drink, people watching. He turns, strains to find Renee.

Sees her coming and swings back around.

He slouches in the bar stool, assuming a nonchalant pose.

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

RENEE

Hey you!

He acts surprised.

RUSSELL

And hey you back.

Sets her tray on the wait station. Unloads empty glasses.

RENEE

Megan sent you up for refills?

RUSSELL  
 Ah... no. They're talking shop. I'm  
 here to relax.

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

She goes back to unloading glasses.

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

She stops. Steps behind him. Places her hands on his  
 shoulders.

RENEE  
 Least you're being funny, instead a  
 asking a dumbass question like  
*Busy night?*

She leans forward, whispering into his ear.

RENEE  
 Mind if I lean on you and rest my  
 feet for a bit?

He smiles, patting her hand. 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  
 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, annoyed.

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

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 tomorrow.

RENEE

Good luck getting that piece of shit running.

JACK

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

Renee's eyes narrow. Maintains 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

Yeah. Well, if you see him, tell him I better see him tomorrow 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.

Russell turns back to the bar. Slams what's left of his drink.

BILL (mid 50s), behind the bar, steps up.

BILL  
Renee, your tray's ready.  
Ready for a refill there Russ?

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 remember  
that hug all night.

Russell turns away. Disgust on his face.

**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  
And 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. 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. Diminished smile.

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.

COLEEN

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

She turns to Richard.

COLEEN

Thought it best make the upcoming three day weekend into a mini vaykay.

RICHARD

Yes ma'am!

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

RICHARD

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 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 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  
(feigns embarrassment)  
Well... I think... Oh! 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.

Turns to Coleen.

RICHARD  
Besides you, Megs the only other person's 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's smile disappears. She 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. 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 what's 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

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

They're going to Florida next weekend. You know.

RUSSELL

Rick and that Coleen girl.

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

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

Renee lets out a mocking laugh then...

RENEE  
Good luck with that.

Russell swivels back to Megan.

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

Renee takes up her tray and walks up behind Russell.

RENEE  
(rubs his arm)  
You bet! You take it easy till I see you again. Kay?

She moves to Megan, pats her shoulder.

RENEE  
You too girl.

**EXT. DOWNTOWN SIDEWALK - NIGHT**

Megan and Russell drift away from the Pub. 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 eying 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 chuckles, thinking it's a joke. Awaits her laugh.

She doesn't. Her face is serious. Eyes are glazed.

His smile relents. Struggles for an answer. Mouth half opening then closing.

RUSSELL

Me. Nah. I mean... 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 on her without adding me to the list. I'm not like that. And... I know she got a... a nice...

Rolls a hand as if trying to find the right words.

MEGAN

Body!

She starts chuckling.

RUSSELL

Wasn't gonna say that!

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

RUSSELL

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!

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.