

# **HIM AND US**

**“Farewell Seems to Be The Hardest Word”**

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**THE EDELSTEIN COMPANY**

in association with  
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HIM AND US

"Farewell Seems to Be the Hardest Word"

COLD OPEN

SFX: A cell phone vibrates and rings.

FADE IN:

1 INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - MORNING (DAY 1) 1 \*

The ringing continues from the breast pocket of FREDDIE LAZARETH, late 40s, razor-sharp wit, dry delivery, amiable and unflappable. He wears a Dodgers cap and jeans. His shirt is unbuttoned because he's getting examined by a 35-ish Beverly Hills cardiologist, DR. PENSON, who first heard the phone through his stethoscope and is a little annoyed. \*

DR. PENSON  
You want to turn that off?

FREDDIE  
I would love to turn it off.

Freddie flips open the phone and answers it.

FREDDIE (CONT'D)  
Yes... It's in the bureau... Well, look again... No, I shredded that... Because you said you said you didn't want it lying around. I'm in the mid-- hello?

He flips the phone closed.

DR. PENSON  
Wife?

FREDDIE  
No, a wife you can divorce. That was the artiste.

DR. PENSON  
Really? That was Max Flash?

FREDDIE  
Yes. Never says goodbye. Just hangs up when he's done with you.

DR. PENSON  
You probably hear this all the time, but I own all his albums, grew up listening to him.

Freddie nods politely; he does hear this all the time.

DR. PENSON (CONT'D)

In fact, when I got married...

(points to a photo of HIS  
WIFE and TODDLER)

That's my wife there -- our first dance  
was the duet he did with Cher. I can't  
believe he wants to stop touring. He's  
still a genius guitar player...

FREDDIE

Yes, he's very gifted. Meanwhile, I was  
hoping to find out if I was going to live  
through the weekend.

DR. PENSON

Right. Sorry.

(looks at Freddie's chart)

I think you're experiencing palpitations--

SFX: Freddie's cell vibrates and rings. He picks up.

FREDDIE

No, we haven't heard from Mick yet...

I've left several words. Could you--

(flips the phone closed)

Sorry. So... palpitations?

DR. PENSON

That's the racing feeling you described.

FREDDIE

Yes, last night it woke me up. I  
thought, "This is it, then. I'm dying."

DR. PENSON

Are you exercising?

FREDDIE

You know, that could be it. I'm working  
out five days a week, and I'm fairly  
certain my trainer is trying to kill me.

DR. PENSON

Exercise is generally good.

FREDDIE

I was afraid you'd say that.

DR. PENSON

Drugs and alcohol?

FREDDIE

No, thanks. I'm on the clock.

DR. PENSON

This is serious; I need you to be honest.

FREDDIE

I might have partaken a little in the  
past.

\*

2 INT. THE TUNNEL, NEW YORK - LATE NIGHT, 1983 (FLASHBACK) 2 \*

80s MUSIC PULSES. Pan through a CROWDED DANCE FLOOR until we reach the bar, on TOP OF WHICH is a 25-year-old Freddie, drenched in sweat, dirty dancing with TWO HOT, YOUNG WOMEN. He pours the a bottle of Jack Daniels over his head to cool off, shakes his hair out, HOWLS, then does a dive into the crowd like a rock star. Unfortunately, the crowd was not paying attention, and Freddie lands face down on the floor.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

3 INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - BACK TO PRESENT (DAY 1) 3 \*

FREDDIE

But that's all behind me now. I've given up everything bad -- meat, drugs, the alcohol, the wife... so why do I keep feeling like I can't breathe, like--

SFX: Freddie's cell phone vibrates and rings again.

FREDDIE (CONT'D)

Sorry, have to take that.

DR. PENSON

Him again?

FREDDIE

Who else?

4 INT. MAX'S BUNGALOW, BEVERLY HILLS HOTEL - INTERCUT (DAY 1) 4 \*

MAX FLASH, late 40s, British, sexy, quick-witted, a charismatic gay rock star, is in a white terry cloth robe drinking beet and carrot juice and getting his shoulder-length hair blown out by LOUIS WELLS (a.k.a. Lulu, American, gay, boyishly charming, in his 30s).

MAX

Aging icon!

FREDDIE

Excuse me?

MAX

The Vanity Fair piece came out. I'm not on the cover -- apparently we haven't seen enough of Gwen Stefani this month -- and that pompous reporter had the nerve to describe me as "an aging icon."

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

FREDDIE

Icon is overstating it, don't you think?

MAX

Okay, that's funny.

(immediately)

We never should have given them the exclusive. I want to sue. I want to buy the magazine and fire the editors. I want to send feces to their office. Dog feces.

\*  
\*

FREDDIE

Gift wrapped or just boxed?

MAX

I'm not kidding, Freddie.

(holding the phone up)

Am I kidding, Lulu?

LOUIS

(into the phone, re: Max)

She's not happy.

FREDDIE

So what else is new?

Louis smiles and continues styling. (NOTE: "She" is the preferred pronoun for the gay men in this group.)

MAX

And speaking of dog feces, the Countess has been missing all morning.

\*

FREDDIE

Alright. A) The Countess is not missing.

5 EXT. RODEO DRIVE - SAME TIME (DAY 1)

5

\*

We see THE COUNTESS (Max's beloved little dog, Countess Fanny B.) in a diamond-studded collar, happily trotting down Rodeo Drive with SAL, the driver, a big guy of few words who would rather be seen with a much bigger dog.

FREDDIE (O.S.)

Sal is walking her around Beverly Hills  
because you said you wanted her to get  
out more, which, by the way, is a luxury  
nobody else in the organization has.

\*

6 INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE/MAX'S BUNGALOW - CONTINUOUS (DAY 1) 6 \*

Freddie continues as Dr. Penson listens, amazed...

FREDDIE

And B) I can't arrange a hostile takeover  
of Vanity Fair just now because I'm  
seeing a doctor about my--

MAX

In Beverly Hills?

\*

FREDDIE

Yes.

MAX

Perfect. Stop by Rolex. There's a  
limited edition watch I need for my final  
concert called The Essential. And it is.

Max has hung up.

FREDDIE

(dialing)

Be with you in a moment, Dr. Penson. I  
just have to put out a few fires--

DR. PENSON

(taking Freddie's phone)

No, no, wait a minute, wait a minute! Is  
it always like this?

FREDDIE

Like what?

DR. PENSON

So much stress, everything needing to be  
done now? Who can live like that?

FREDDIE

Me. I've been living like that for 25  
years, since I was just Max's driver.

DR. PENSON

You need to take some time off.

FREDDIE

I took the morning off, and look how well that's going.

SFX: Freddie's phone vibrates and rings in the doctor's hand.

DR. PENSON

(re: phone)

Okay, this has to stop. Doctor's orders.

Freddie starts to protest, but relents and turns it off.

DR. PENSON (CONT'D)

I'm not going to sugarcoat this, Freddie. Your cholesterol is high. Your heart is straining. You've got to take better care of yourself. Set some limits. Get a massage now and then. Get some rest.

\*  
\*

FREDDIE

No, see, I will get rest, more than I know what to do with, very soon, because we are on the final leg of Max's final farewell tour, so you just have to help me get through the final concert tomorrow night, then I'll finally have time to--

A young NURSE leans in.

NURSE

(trying to contain herself)

Max Flash is on line two.

DR. PENSON

For me?

FREDDIE

No, for me!

Freddie presses the flashing line and picks up the phone.

DR. PENSON

You think he could get me two tickets to the final concert?

Off Freddie's look...

FADE OUT.

END OF COLD OPEN

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

7

EXT. BEVERLY HILLS HOTEL POOL - LATER (DAY 1)

7

\*

Freddie returns with the Countess and is greeted warmly by the "family" which includes Louis (the hair stylist we saw earlier), Max's hunky, straight bodyguards who are also L.A.P.D. S.W.A.T. team members: TIM and PETE, and Freddie's assistant JADA, American, late 20s, very efficient and cute.

They are all sitting nearby as Max (now dressed in his signature leather pants and boa) is interviewed poolside by a handsome, young NEWSPAPER REPORTER.

JADA  
(to the Countess)  
Hey, cutie!

FREDDIE  
Hello, Jada! Oh, you meant the dog.  
(to Louis, re: Max)  
How's the aging icon?

LOUIS  
Much better since the beautiful boy from  
the L.A. Times arrived.

ANGLE ON Max talking to the handsome reporter. He's happy now, animated, enjoying his interview/flirtation.

JADA  
(to Freddie)  
I thought they were sending a female  
reporter.

FREDDIE  
After the Vanity Fair incident I called  
to see what else they had in stock.

JADA  
Okay, that's brilliant. I never would  
have thought of that.

FREDDIE  
Because you still have your dignity,  
Jada. No need to rub it in.

LOUIS  
(to Freddie)  
Where did we run off to this morning?

FREDDIE

"We" had to take care of something in  
Beverly Hills.

(to Jada)

And that's what we agreed to tell people  
if they asked.

JADA

He said it was urgent. And he scares me.

TIM

(quietly)

Did you get the stuff?

FREDDIE

(covert)

Yes, Tim, as a matter of fact I did, but  
it's not cheap. \*

PETE

Hey, you guys got us hooked on it. \*

TIM

Yeah, I never used to use anything.

FREDDIE

Alright, but go easy. Your supply ends  
when the tour ends. \*

Freddie opens his shoulder bag and hands Pete and Tim each a  
box of La Mer face cream.

PETE/TIM

Thanks, buddy./Excellent.

Tim rubs some on his face.

FREDDIE

(frustrated)

You have to activate it first.

TIM

What?

PETE

Activate it, dumbass.

Pete scoops out some cream with the little shovel, puts it  
between his fingertips, taps them together, then puts it on  
his face. Tim does the same. The others watch, amused.

LOUIS  
(to Jada)  
I'm finding this mildly sexy.

JADA  
Me, too.

TIM  
(still patting)  
My wife still uses Noxema.

PETE  
That'll totally dry out her skin.

TIM  
I know. I've been telling her that.

FREDDIE  
Okay, it's embarrassing enough for me,  
but you two... you must be the only  
members of the L.A.P.D. S.W.A.T. team who  
are La Mer junkies. \*

LOUIS  
They're L.A.P.Divas.

They all laugh, Tim and Pete too, which gets Max's attention.

MAX  
Freddie, I thought you'd left us.

FREDDIE  
I was gone one hour.

Freddie approaches Max, bringing the Countess along. The dog jumps into Max's arms.

MAX  
Longest hour of my life, unless you count  
that Manilow show in Vegas. \*

Max and Freddie laugh, recalling, then:

FREDDIE  
(to the reporter)  
Don't print that.

REPORTER  
You must be Freddie Lazareth...  
(consulting his notes)  
Max's best friend and manager, the man  
who is the reason he's alive today?

FREDDIE

Oh, I can't be blamed for that.

Max laughs. There is a brief moment where Freddie is touched to publicly be called Max's best friend. He knows he always has been, but being a behind-the-scenes guy he doesn't always get the acknowledgement.

FREDDIE (CONT'D)

(to Max)

You really said those things? Out loud?

MAX

You know these entertainment reporters, always making things up.

(to the reporter)

We'll just be a moment. Order yourself something with an umbrella in it.

The reporter is charmed. Max takes Freddie aside.

MAX (CONT'D)

Did you get the watch?

FREDDIE

They didn't have one in the Beverly Hills store.

MAX

Well, find out who does! If I wear it at this concert that's better than a national ad campaign. That's HUGE for Rolex. See if you can get it for free.

FREDDIE

Is that all?

MAX

No. I heard Oscar de la Rente might be selling his place on that island where everyone has a place. Can you find out what he wants for it?

FREDDIE

No.

MAX

No?

FREDDIE

My plate's a bit full preparing for the final concert.

MAX

Oh, are you performing? Are 18,000 people coming to see you?

FREDDIE

(ignoring him)

You need another home like you need another watch. We're still in the process of redecorating the "hut" in Hawaii, and when was the last time you visited the 85,000-acre ranch in Montana you had to buy after seeing "A River Runs Through It?"

MAX

I didn't care for fly fishing.

FREDDIE

You never fished! You had someone fishing for you.

MAX

And you, my friend, were fantastic at it. But those places have too much baggage. I'm selling them. And speaking of baggage...

\*  
\*  
\*

Max nods in the direction of a handsome young stud, SHANE, floating in the pool, sipping a fruity drink.

MAX (CONT'D)

I don't want Shane around for the end of the tour. In fact, why is she here in the first place?

8

INT. DOLCE & GABBANA, MIAMI BEACH - DAY (FLASHBACK)

8

\*

Max and Freddie are shopping, which means Max points to things he likes, Freddie buys them, and bodyguards Pete and Tim (always nearby) end up carrying them. Pete currently holds a stack of shirts.

MAX

I want one of these, two of these, one of these, four of these, and one of those.

He points to Shane, the adorable shop boy behind the counter.

FREDDIE

You can't afford another of those.

\*

MAX

C'mon, I've been very good.

9 INT. PRIVATE JET - NIGHT (FLASHBACK CONTINUED) 9 \*

Pete and Tim, surrounded by D&G shopping bags, are flipping through magazines as Freddie talks on the jet's airphone.

FREDDIE

Hola. Freddie Lazareth here. Turns out Max will be in Buenos Aires for the night. Do you have his usual table? \*

Freddie looks at Max and Shane, who, along with the Countess, are having quite a feast on the jet.

FREDDIE (CONT'D)

Save your appetite, Max. You have dinner reservations. \*

Max raises a lobster tail as if to say, "Cheers" to Freddie.

MAX

I just have six more cities on my farewell tour. You should come along.

SHANE

That'd be awesome, but I have to work.

MAX

What's work? This is the opportunity of a lifetime! \*

10 EXT. BEVERLY HILLS HOTEL POOL - BACK TO PRESENT (DAY 1) 10 \*

Freddie has just reminded Max of all this.

MAX

Oh, right. Well, I'm done with her.  
(pats Freddie on the back)  
Try to let her down gently.

Max starts off, but Freddie stops him, trying to finally draw the line as his doctor told him to.

FREDDIE

Max, you've given me nothing but impossible demands all morning, and I was at the doctor, not that it matters, not that anyone cares.

MAX

Botox?

FREDDIE

I don't do that.

MAX

Very often.

Max enjoys his joke.

FREDDIE

I know you're emotional about the end of all this. I am too, and I want to make it as nice as possible for all of us, but I can't cater to your every whim. I'm aging, too.

Max takes this in.

MAX

You're right. Get yourself a Rolex also, as a thank you.

FREDDIE

That's too kind of me.

Shane looks up and smiles at Max. Max blows him a kiss, then looks to Freddie pleadingly. Freddie loses his resolve.

FREDDIE (CONT'D)

Shane, why don't you stop by the bungalow later and say hello?

MAX

(sotto to Freddie)  
Or better yet: goodbye!

Max happily heads back to his interview.

11 INT. MAX'S BEDROOM/WARDROBE - THAT AFTERNOON (DAY 1) 11 \*

Max's valet in charge of wardrobe, SYDNEY WILKINSON (a.k.a. Norma Desmond to the "family," British, late 50s, gay, friends with Max and Freddie from their early days in London, very dramatic, thus his nickname) is in Max's gigantic overcrowded closet hanging some new purchases when Freddie enters.

SYDNEY

She went out for a shop again yesterday.

FREDDIE

Thank God. I'm tired of seeing the same twelve thousand pairs of leather pants.

Freddie starts going through Max's jewelry.

SYDNEY  
(horrified)  
Nooooo!

FREDDIE  
What? What is it?

SYDNEY  
I just organized all that! They have to  
be in a certain order.

FREDDIE  
Alright, sorry.  
(tries not to move  
anything else)  
I just want to count how many watches Max  
has so when he throws a tantrum because  
someone bought the last damn limited  
edition Rolex I have some ammunition. I  
wouldn't be surprised if he already has  
that very watch. Who can keep track of  
all this?

SYDNEY  
I can and do.

Sydney sits on the bed and crosses his arms.

SYDNEY (CONT'D)  
Freddie, I need to talk to you about  
Something Very Important.

FREDDIE  
It's always Something Very Important with  
you.

SYDNEY  
I've given this a lot of thought, and I  
want to change my title from Sydney  
Wilkinson, valet, which sounds very  
subservient, to Sydney Wilkinson,  
factotum, which I think more accurately  
reflects what I do, which is a little of  
everything.

FREDDIE  
I don't care if you call yourself Sydney  
Wilkinson, the Queen Mother. We only  
have one more concert together.

SYDNEY  
That's why I'm concerned, for my next  
job, what do I put on my vitae?

FREDDIE

Your "vitae"? What did you put on your vitae when you were a gangster's moll?

SYDNEY

(indignant)

I was never a gangster's moll.

12 EXT. DESERTED ALLEY - NIGHT, EARLY 70S (FLASHBACK) 12 \*

A YOUNGER SYDNEY, 18, demurely files his nails and waits in the passenger seat of a car as SHOTS RING OUT. He continues filing as a BRITISH MOB GUY runs out of a nearby fire door, jumps into the car, kisses Sydney on the mouth, throws down a briefcase and speeds off.

13 INT. MAX'S BEDROOM/WARDROBE - BACK TO PRESENT (DAY 1) 13 \*

SYDNEY

I was a personal assistant to a very powerful businessman...

SFX: Freddie's cell phone vibrates and rings.

FREDDIE

...who killed some people.  
(into the phone)  
Hello?

14 INT. FREDDIE'S BUNGALOW - INTERCUT (DAY 1) 14 \*

Jada sits in front of a computer at the desk in Freddie's bungalow.

JADA

It's Jada. I have the latest R.S.V.I.P's for tomorrow. Cher's people said she'll show as long as she doesn't have to do press; Rod's people said only if he could do press; Elton's people said only if Rod isn't coming -- but I think they were joking; still no word from Mick's people; and someone else's "person" is waiting for you here.

REVEAL Shane sitting on the couch, hair still wet from the pool, in a Beverly Hills hotel robe, flipping through a magazine, eating a mango from a huge tropical fruit basket.

FREDDIE

Shane?

JADA  
That's the one.

FREDDIE  
I'm on my way. Don't let him eat all the mangos.  
(off her silence)  
Really?

JADA  
I can ask for more.

FREDDIE  
But they'll bring another mountain of fruit. How do we get just mangos?

JADA  
Um... the grocery store?

FREDDIE  
Right. Which extension is that again?

Jada smiles. Freddie hangs up and picks up one fancy watch.

FREDDIE (CONT'D)  
(to Sydney)  
When was the last time he wore this one?

SYDNEY  
1982.

Freddie takes the watch and starts to leave.

SYDNEY (CONT'D)  
Freddie!!!

FREDDIE  
(re: the watch)  
The tour paid for these.

SYDNEY  
Take them all. I don't care. I just need to know what we're going to call me!

FREDDIE  
What we've always called you: Norma Desmond.

SYDNEY  
I mean professionally.

FREDDIE  
Fine, you're a factotum.

SYDNEY

(bowing)

Thank you.

FREDDIE

And since that means you do a little of everything, how would you like to go to the grocery store and get some mangos?

SYDNEY

(appalled)

I'm not your factotum.

FREDDIE

Sorry, my mistake.

Sydney tries to restore order to the watches as Freddie leaves, amused.

15 INT. FREDDIE'S BUNGALOW - A SHORT TIME LATER (DAY 1) 15 \*

A despondent Shane is being comforted by Freddie, who has clearly done this before. Freddie hands him a tissue.

FREDDIE

Buck up, Shane. This isn't goodbye. Max just needs to concentrate on the last show. It's a crazy time for all of us, but we'll see you when this is all over.

SHANE

Really?

FREDDIE

(No.)

Of course.

Freddie hands Shane the watch.

SHANE

What's this?

FREDDIE

A watch.

(then)

Max wanted you to have it. It's one of his favorites.

(hands him an envelope)

And this you should open later.

SHANE

Is that the "Dear John" letter?

\*  
\*  
\*

FREDDIE

Shane, you meant the world to him. This is just a little something to tide you over until he sees you again.

SHANE

(heartbroken)

Okay. Thanks, Freddie. Bye, Jada.

Jada, who watched the whole sordid scene, waves sweetly. Shane takes his gifts -- and the last mango -- and leaves.

FREDDIE

(to Jada)

We'll need to replenish the petty cash.

\*  
\*  
\*

JADA

I can't believe Max has you breaking up for him.

FREDDIE

Are you new here?

JADA

I also can't believe that when my three-year relationship ended I got nada. Not a card. Not a watch. Not a cash prize. Where is my parting gift?

\*

FREDDIE

You need to get over him.

JADA

I am. Completely over him.

FREDDIE

Then why is he on the comp list for the final concert?

JADA

(busted, but comes back:)

Why do I still send your ex-wife lilacs on her birthday?

FREDDIE

Because she's allergic.

Jada shakes her head. Freddie smiles.

16

INT. FREDDIE'S BEDROOM - LATER THAT AFTERNOON (DAY 1)

16

\*

Following doctor's orders, Freddie is face down on a portable massage table.

\*  
\*

Curtains are pulled, lights are dimmed, calming MUSIC plays. \*  
A female MASSEUSE works on his back. He sighs, eyes closed, \*  
finally able to relax, until: \*

MAX

Did you do it?

Freddie, startled, opens his eyes and gasps for air. Through \*  
the hole where his face was resting he sees Max's face. Max \*  
is lying on the floor and thinks this is hysterical. \*

FREDDIE

I'm getting a massage! Do I have any \*  
privacy at all? Any at all? \*

MAX

I'm not staying. I just had a question. \*

FREDDIE

Then, I don't know... call? \*

MAX

You weren't answering your phone.

FREDDIE

Yes, an indication, perhaps...

MAX

I would simply like to know if I should  
expect anyone in my bungalow when I  
return.

FREDDIE

I would like to know if I should expect \*  
anyone under my massage table, but \*  
apparently you can't always get what you  
want.

MAX

Hey, is Mick coming or not?

FREDDIE

Out.

MAX

(getting up) \*  
Alright, alright. Just tell me if Shane--

FREDDIE

OUT!!!

MAX

A little late to out me, don't you think?  
(sees that Freddie is not  
amused)  
You're going to miss me when this ends.

FREDDIE

I would love the opportunity to miss you.  
I dream of missing you.

MAX

Fine.

Max heads out. \*

FREDDIE

And yes, Shane is gone.

MAX

That's all I wanted to know.

FREDDIE

(putting his head back in  
the face rest) \*  
The lucky bastard. \*

MAX

I heard that! And don't forget the  
watch. I'm not going on stage without  
it! \*

As Freddie sighs... \*

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

17 INT. FREDDIE'S BUNGALOW - MORNING (DAY 2)

17 \*

Freddie is on the phone at his desk.

FREDDIE

Can you at least tell me who bought the last one, or any of them for that matter... Well who is at liberty to say?

All the gang but Max (Jada, Sydney, Louis, Pete and Tim) are gathered for an elaborate BUTLER-served breakfast as they do every day on tour. These meals should feel like family meals, very fun and casual, despite the formal service, especially when Dad (or Mom as it were: the artiste) is not there yet. Shorts or sweats are the normal attire. Freddie hangs up and comes to the table.

FREDDIE (CONT'D)

The watch is on its way.

JADA

You found one?

FREDDIE

No, but that's our story: it's on its way.

SYDNEY

I heard something interesting.

FREDDIE

Could you pass the eggs, Tim?

PETE

And the salt, please?

A platter of eggs Benedict and the salt is passed.

SYDNEY

Nobody cares.

LOUIS

(tapping his glass)  
Norma Desmond has something to say.

FREDDIE

Something Very Important, I imagine.

All but Sydney stifle a laugh.

SYDNEY

Guess how much tickets are going for on the street?

FREDDIE

Welcome to "Fun Facts from the Factotum."

TIM

What's a factotum?

LOUIS

We're not sure, but it's Norma Desmond's fancy new title.

JADA

(teasing Freddie)

I'd like a fancy new title.

FREDDIE

(to Sydney)

See what you've started?

SYDNEY

May I please finish my story?

PETE

What are tickets going for?

SYDNEY

(to Pete, since he asked)

A thousand dollars. Tickets are being scalped for a thousand dollars and up.

LOUIS

Wow. I wonder what you could get for an all-access pass.

FREDDIE

Thirty-six hundred. See you at the wrap party, suckers!

They all laugh.

JADA

I can't believe this is our last tour breakfast.

FREDDIE

Don't start, Jada. Max said no tears.

JADA

I know, it's just... you guys have become  
like family to me. Better than family.  
I actually like all of you.

They all nod and start to get choked up. Pete puts his  
thick, muscular arm around Jada to comfort her. Sydney, on  
the other side of Pete, tries for the same:

SYDNEY

I love all of you.  
(to Pete)  
What? Nothing?

Pete pats Sydney on the shoulder.

LOUIS

And soon we'll be out on the street,  
fending for ourselves...  
(takes some toast from the  
butler)  
Making our own toast...

PETE

...eating frozen Hungry Man dinners. \*

JADA

...trying to avoid the ex.

TIM

...using Noxema. \*

FREDDIE

...flying commercial. \*

LOUIS

...facing the fact that some of us forgot  
to have a personal life.

FREDDIE

I knew I was forgetting something.  
(the reality of how much  
he loves this job hits)  
Oh, for God's sake, pass the Kleenex.

They all take a tissue and pass it on.

LOUIS

How can she do this to us?

SYDNEY

I would like to go on record--

LOUIS  
(pretending to take notes)  
Norma Desmond is going on record!

SYDNEY  
--as saying I don't think she'll go  
through with it. I think it's just  
another desperate cry for attention.

FREDDIE  
Banish the thought.

SYDNEY  
I remember other farewells that didn't  
fare so well.

FREDDIE  
This is different. This is pay-per-view.

LOUIS  
And she's done press all over the world  
saying how she's ready for a life change,  
wants to go out on top...

FREDDIE  
Well, that ship has sailed. But still,  
it would be too embarrassing, even for  
Max, to take it all back. Plus, I made a  
down payment on a boat, so he damn well  
better--

\*

Suddenly Max arrives in his robe with the Countess.

FREDDIE (CONT'D)  
(upbeat)  
Morning, Max. You look well.

MAX  
I feel fantastic. It was heaven to be  
free of Shane for a night.

He takes some bacon off Freddie's plate and feeds it to the  
Countess. Jada, still a bit intimidated by Max, speaks up.

JADA  
Yeah, sometimes when a relationship ends,  
you remember how nice it can be to wake  
up alone.

MAX  
Who said I was alone? I woke up to the  
L.A. Times.

LOUIS  
You slept with the handsome reporter?

MAX  
Who said I slept?  
(to the butler)  
Breakfast in bed, please. For two.

He smiles devilishly and leaves with the Countess.

FREDDIE  
Terrific. Now I'm a pimp.

SYDNEY  
Fancy new title.

As they all laugh...

18

EXT. HOLLYWOOD BOWL - EARLY EVENING (NIGHT 2)

18

\*

MUSIC: Pre-concert music swells.

EXCITED FANS settle into the front boxes, many in Max Flash t-shirts from over the years, some with "East to West: The Farewell Tour." Some gay fans wear boas.

Reveal the P.O.V. is Jada's. She wears an all-access pass and surveys the crowd from the wings. She looks hot. Intentionally hot. Hair straightened, smoky makeup, short skirt. Pete, carrying a walkie talkie, approaches her from behind.

PETE  
Jada?

JADA  
(turning)  
Oh, hey, Pete.

PETE  
I almost didn't recognize you. You look... wow.

JADA  
Really?

PETE  
Uh, yeah.

JADA  
My ex is coming, so I was hoping he'd see me. You know, see what he's missing.

PETE

If you really want to make him jealous,  
you should let him see you kissing some  
big... police-type guy.

JADA

(amused)  
For example.

She thinks he's joking; looks out at the crowd again.

PETE

No interest at all?

Pete looks suddenly vulnerable.

JADA

What? Were you serious?

PETE

(summoning his nerve)  
Jada, I think you're amazing. I've had a  
thing for you since Day One, but you're  
so preoccupied with this loser, I can't  
even get an opening.

JADA

But... we work together.

PETE

Worked together. Tomorrow's a new day.

JADA

I don't think it's a good--  
(spotting her ex)  
Oh my God, there he is.

ANGLE on Jada's ex, BRENDAN, in the front row. He sees her  
and waves. Jada tries to appear casual and waves back. He's  
very good-looking, and so is the HOT CHICK behind him whose  
hand he's holding.

JADA (CONT'D)

(still waving and smiling)  
He brought a date. I got him those seats  
and he...

She grabs Pete and kisses him, at first just to make Brendan  
jealous, but suddenly she realizes it's a crazy good, deep,  
soulful kiss. Pete and Jada look at each other.

PETE

Too much?

JADA

Not enough.

She pulls him into the wings for another kiss.

19

INT. BACKSTAGE HALLWAY - SAME TIME (NIGHT 2)

19

\*

Meanwhile, Tim escorts Max (dressed to perform), Freddie and the Countess to the green room.

MAX

Who's here?

FREDDIE

You want the names of all 18,000?

MAX

You know what I mean. Who showed up?

FREDDIE

Elton--

MAX

Wearing Yohji, no doubt.

FREDDIE

And Cher--

MAX

Where else is she going to go?

FREDDIE

And Rod--

MAX

Yeah, yeah, what about Mick?

Freddie shakes his head: sorry.

MAX (CONT'D)

I never should have named myself after a Stones song. Jumping Jack I get from him! Tomorrow I'm changing it.

FREDDIE

You're retiring. What would be the point?

MAX

I don't want "Max Flash" on my gravestone. I don't want to give Mick the satisfaction.

FREDDIE

Poor word choice. "Can't get no..."

MAX

I got it! What's he busy doing anyhow?

FREDDIE

(stops)

Max, let it go. Nothing should get in the way of you enjoying this night. It doesn't matter who's here, or what watch you're wearing...

MAX

You couldn't get the Rolex?!

FREDDIE

I tried! I'm not your beast of burden.

MAX

Now that was on purpose.

Freddie smiles and continues walking.

20

INT. GREEN ROOM - SAME TIME (NIGHT 2)

20

\*

ROD STEWART, ELTON JOHN and CHER are bantering in the green room, which is set up with champagne, a beautiful buffet and a television monitor. They are doing what they do best, sending each other up. Sydney and Louis sit on the couch, the appreciative audience the celebs are playing to. Louis has a comb, spray and a mirror. Sydney has Max's boa.

CHER

You know, this is where I did my farewell concert.

ELTON JOHN

Which one, love?

CHER

Hey, at least I'm not doing Vegas.

ELTON JOHN

You've been doing Vegas all your life. It would be redundant.

ROD STEWART

You think Max'll really stop touring?

ELTON JOHN

He should. He hasn't written a new song  
in years. What's he going to do? Sing  
standards?

ROD STEWART

(laughs, then)

Now, now. I heard your last album came  
out with an anchor. \*

(then)

It's been out weeks. Must have sold  
dozens, dear. \*

They all laugh. Max enters grandly, like a conquering hero,  
with Freddie, Tim and the Countess close behind.

CHER

Max! Baby, give me a hug.

MAX

How are you, darling?

Max hugs Cher.

ROD STEWART

You look amazing.

ELTON JOHN

Love your shirt. Who is that? Cavalli?

Sydney, who is putting the boa around Max, nods "yes," but  
Max is sidetracked by Elton's wrist.

MAX

Freddie, look at Elton's watch.

ELTON JOHN

Isn't it gorgeous? It's a limited  
edition Rolex. The last one apparently.  
I just got it Friday. It was a gift.

MAX

From who?

ELTON JOHN

From Rolex. You know how they do that.

Max looks to Freddie. This is somehow his fault. Pete and  
Jada arrive in the doorway.

PETE

(to Freddie)

Five minutes.

Jada spots some lipstick on Pete and wipes it off before anyone notices. Louis touches up Max's hair.

ROD STEWART

Max, if you want us to do a song with you, just say the word.

CHER

Whoa, Maxy, should we do our duet? \*

MAX

(to all of them) \*

That would be fantastic. Brilliant. And thank you for coming. It means the world to me.

(sotto to Freddie)

Those press whores better not show up on stage. This is *my* farewell.

Freddie nods. PRELAP MAX'S MUSIC as Tim, Pete and Freddie take out their pen lights to lead Max to the stage.

21 EXT. HOLLYWOOD BOWL STAGE - A LITTLE LATER (NIGHT 2) 21 \*

Max and HIS BAND perform his soulful 70s hits, "No One Said It Would Be Easy." Max sings and plays guitar. He is sexy and electric.

MAX

SOME TAKE THE CHANCE TO CHALLENGE  
SOME BACK DOWN FROM A FIGHT  
NO ONE SAID IT WOULD BE EASY  
WHOSE TO SAY WHAT'S WRONG OR RIGHT

The crowd SCREAMS, loving him.

22 EXT. BACKSTAGE - INTERCUT (NIGHT 2) 22 \*

Freddie, Tim and Pete watch Max from the wings. Despite everything, Freddie is proud of his friend.

DISSOLVE TO:

23 EXT. HOLLYWOOD BOWL - TWO HOURS LATER (NIGHT 2) 23 \*

The final song. Max sings "Without a Fight," his big hit from the 80s. Behind him is a La Chapelle-like video tribute chronicling his amazing career, including album covers from over the years with names like: Boy Meets Guitar, Flashback, Back in a Flash, Flash in the Flesh, and To the Max.

MAX  
(singing)  
I'VE BEEN ALONE, I'VE FELT THE STING  
HEARD THE SNAP OF A BROKEN WING  
AND FOR EVERY HARD KNOCK EARNED  
I LEARNED ONE THING  
THEY CAN DIG A HOLE AND BUILD A CROSS  
REFUSE TO FIND YOU WHEN YOU'RE LOST  
AND FOR EVERY ANGRY WORD  
I'VE PAID THE COST

The fans go crazy, throwing roses on the stage, and as Max sings the following he turns and watches the SCREEN, then the CROWD, then the SCREEN. And then it happens...

MAX (CONT'D)  
AND SURE ENOUGH  
YOU DON'T KNOW ME  
EXITS ARE FOR LOSERS ONLY  
START MY ENGINES, WET MY APPETITE  
THE BEST YOU'VE GOT'S A FIGHTING CHANCE  
BRING IT ON I CAME TO DANCE  
'CAUSE THIS KID DON'T GO DOWN  
WITHOUT A FIGHT

Max actually gets moved by his own tribute...

24 EXT. BACKSTAGE - INTERCUT (NIGHT 2) 24 \*  
...and Freddie, backstage, sees where this is going...

FREDDIE  
Oh, no.

25 INT. GREEN ROOM - INTERCUT (NIGHT 2) 25 \*  
...and Louis, Jada, Sydney and the VIPs see this happening on the green room screen.

ELTON JOHN  
(holding a tiger shrimp)  
She wouldn't.

ROD STEWART  
She might.

SYDNEY  
Oh, she is.

MAX  
(to the crowd)  
I will not go down without a fight,  
people. The tour will continue!

CHEERS from the audience! GROANS and "I told you so's" from Elton, Rod, Cher and the green room as bets are paid off and Sydney is vindicated. \*

In the wings, Freddie feels short of breath, wonders if he's having a heart attack. Tim and Pete catch him as he is about to faint. \*

26 EXT. BENTLEY - LATE NIGHT (NIGHT 2) 26 \*

Max happily eats a piece of cake in the back of the Bentley. He sits across from Freddie; the Countess between them. Tim is in the passenger seat. Sal is driving them to the hotel.

SAL  
(in the rearview)  
Didn't stay long at the wrap party, huh?

FREDDIE  
(pointedly)  
No, Max Flash would not want to be accused of staying too long at the party.

MAX  
(gives Freddie a look)  
Sally, you should have seen the concert.

SAL  
Tim said it was amazing. Your best ever.

MAX  
It was crazy. The fans were out of control. They covered the stage in roses.

FREDDIE  
(to Max)  
We gave them the roses. Remember, you insisted the thorns be--

MAX  
The point is, they need me.

FREDDIE  
No, you need them. You're the boy who cried final concert.

MAX  
We'll just add a few more cities.

FREDDIE  
We can't add cities. The tour was "East to West," and this is the West Coast. \*

MAX

West is a direction. What about one more  
blow-out concert in Sydney?

FREDDIE

We kicked off in Sydney. That's where  
you announced this would be your last  
tour... three and a half years ago.

MAX

We could call it "The Second Coming."

FREDDIE

That's humble.

MAX

You design the tour, then. Anywhere you  
want to go... Fiji, Venice. It's the--

MAX/FREDDIE

--opportunity of a lifetime.

They laugh.

FREDDIE

I know. That's how you got me involved  
in the first place. I just didn't  
realize it would literally be a *lifetime*.

Max, enjoying the word play, takes another bite of cake.

MAX

Sure you don't want some? It's from  
Sweet Lady Jane.

FREDDIE

I know. I ordered it.  
(getting up his nerve)  
Max, I can't do this anymore.

MAX

Here we go.

FREDDIE

What do you mean, "Here we go?"

MAX

You've threatened to quit more than me.  
You're the boy who cried quit.

FREDDIE

Well, if I had quit, I might not have a  
heart problem.

MAX

What do you mean? What's the problem?

FREDDIE

You! Apparently you're killing me.

MAX

I... take great care of you. Look where we are. Look where we've been. I'm your longest relationship.

FREDDIE

Yeah, I'm not particularly proud of that.

MAX

(a little hurt)

I am.

FREDDIE

Max, this has been a great ride. I wouldn't have traded it for the world. But this is it for me. I have to stay close to my doctor.

On Max, as he takes this in...

27

INT. PRIVATE JET - DAY (DAY 3)

27

\*

Max, on a front couch, pets the Countess and reads his press.

PAN BACK to see the rest of the gang eating and laughing as always: Tim and Pete, Louis and Jada (although Jada and Pete are avoiding each other's gaze and feeling awkward since they have to continue working together), then Sydney... and then Freddie, looking miserable, trying to read a boating magazine while the person across from him talks to Sydney.

Reveal it's Dr. Penson, wearing an all-access pass and eating sushi.

DR. PENSON

I feel bad about leaving my wife at home with a two-year-old, but she gets it. When Max Flash calls you personally to be the doctor on tour... I mean, c'mon, it's the opportunity of a lifetime!

Freddie looks at Max. Max doesn't look up, but smiles.

FADE OUT.

END OF SHOW