

HOW TO BE A
GENTLEMAN

"Pilot"

by
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Based on, "How to be a Gentleman," by John Bridges

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FADE IN:

We see IMAGES OF A BUSTLING CITY: Swelling traffic, a crowded downtown sidewalk, fast food restaurants, etc.

ALAN (V.O.)

In this ever-changing world where convenience has replaced courtesy, it has become increasingly important to remind the readers of my column of one thing and one thing only...

INT. ALAN'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - MORNING

We're looking down from the ceiling onto a MAN LYING AWAKE in bed. This is ALAN, a fastidious-looking thirty something.

ALAN (V.O.)

How to be a gentleman. After all, it isn't rocket science. It's common sense.

INT. ALAN'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN

Alan, in pajamas and slippers, retrieves a carton of milk from his organized fridge.

ALAN (V.O.)

A gentleman never drinks milk directly from the container.

INT. ALAN'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM

ANGLE ON a GLASS of milk on a table.

ALAN (V.O.)

Even if he lives alone.

Alan drinks as we REVEAL a HISTORICAL MODEL WARSHIP that he puts finishing touches on in his clean, restrained apartment. He's clearly an enthusiast. And clearly lives alone.

INT. ALAN'S APARTMENT BUILDING - MORNING

Alan holds the door open for his ATTRACTIVE NEIGHBOR, LYDIA.

ALAN (V.O.)

A gentleman holds the door open for others. Especially for neighbors.

LYDIA

Thanks, Andy.

ALAN
 (under his breath)
 It's Alan.

INT. ALAN'S CAR - DAY

Alan is in his CAR. He looks over to see a MAN SLOPPILY EATING A BURGER behind the wheel in the car next to him.

ALAN (V.O.)
 A gentleman does not mistake rush
 hour for meal time.

INT. PUBLIC RESTROOM - DAY

Alan's in a public restroom washing his hands. Behind him, a MAN WITH A BLUETOOTH EAR PIECE walks out of the stall, talking.

ALAN (V.O.)
 ...Nor a public bathroom for a
 phone booth.

INT. ELEVATOR - DAY

DING! Alan waits as an elevator arrives. The doors open to reveal a lone COUPLE mid-argument. They stop arguing.

ALAN (V.O.)
 A gentleman knows how to make
 others feel comfortable.

Alan refrains from stepping in and gracefully covers.

ALAN
 I'll take the next one.

ALAN (V.O.)
 Even when he is not.

Alan is now wedged into a PACKED ELEVATOR. A MAN breathes in his face.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Alan walks down the street carrying a bag of GROCERIES. He approaches a HOMELESS MAN.

ALAN (V.O.)
 While a gentleman finds great
 pleasure in helping the less
 fortunate...

Alan stops and gives an APPLE from his bag to the homeless man. As Alan walks off he is PEGGED in the back of the head with the apple.

ALAN (V.O.)
... he never expects praise in
return.

INT. NICE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Alan is now in a restaurant. SLOW-MO: A birthday dessert with a candle glows in front of him. We see SMILING FACES surrounding him, singing "Happy Birthday." Alan beams.

ALAN (V.O.)
A gentleman's life is filled with the
joys of etiquette and the quality of
life that comes from surrounding
yourself with those who share your
same beliefs and passions.

Just as they finish singing, Alan blows out the candle, and everyone applauds. This is a moment amongst friends.

WIDEN TO REVEAL the friendly faces belong to THE WAIT STAFF at the restaurant. They all walk off, leaving Alan sitting alone. Friendless. Alan's face falls slowly.

ALAN
Of course, higher standards come at
a price.

END OF COLD OPEN

ACT ONE

INT. EDITOR'S OFFICE - DAY

ANGLE ON a wall of framed covers of "MEN'S STYLE", a GQ-esque MEN'S MAGAZINE.

JERRY (50s), Alan's rumpled magazine editor/friend, sits behind his desk. He's old-school with the air of desperation of Jack Lemmon in "Glengarry Glenn Ross."

JERRY

I suck.

ALAN

It's okay, Jerry.

JERRY

It was your birthday. I'm your editor. I shoulda come. Did you have a blast? Friends? Drinking? You spear any ladies?

ALAN

Spear? No. I had a lovely night though.

Jerry takes a swig of a Red Bull.

ALAN (CONT'D)

Since when do you drink Red Bull?

JERRY

What are you talking about? I love to pull the bull. Revs the engine.

ALAN

Was there something you wanted to talk to me about?

JERRY

Huh? Oh yeah. The magazine's been sold.

ALAN

What?! How? When did this happen?

JERRY

(shrugs)

Publishing world's in the toilet. The whole magazine is getting a makeover. No more urbane and upscale. We're going younger and sexier.

ALAN

What does that mean exactly?

JERRY

You know, women in lingerie, sex tips for men, that sorta thing. Cody thinks that'll get us more uploads--crap, or is it downloads?

ALAN

Who is Cody?

JERRY

My new boss. He was born in the mid-eighties. Wears those skinny jeans. What happened to pleats, huh? No one wears pleats anymore.

ALAN

I wear pleats.

JERRY

Everything's changing, Alan. We're goddamn dinosaurs.

Jerry chugs Red Bull and winces as it burns its way down.

JERRY (CONT'D)

Ugh, this drink is the worst.

He starts spitting in a trash can.

ALAN

We are not dinosaurs, Jerry. And you don't have to change who you are just to compete.

JERRY

Sure I do. And you do too, kiddo. Your "How to Be a Gentleman" column, it's too tame. Doesn't fit the new format. Cody wants you to come up with a hipper angle. Something sexier.

ALAN

What? How do I make a manners column 'sexier'?

JERRY

(shrugs)

Beats me. Ooh, maybe some sexy tips. Like how a gentleman can tastefully make his package look bigger when he's on a date.

ALAN
There's nothing tasteful about that.

JERRY
You'll figure it out. Just give me something with an ass to it.

ALAN
An ass?

JERRY
Cody's expression. I can't understand what he's saying half the time. Just do it by next week or the kid's gonna make me give you the boot.

Alan, dismayed, gets up to go.

JERRY (CONT'D)
(sympathetically)
Alan. Hey.

Alan stops and turns back.

JERRY (CONT'D)
I'm on Facebook now. Poke me.

INT. ALAN'S MOTHER'S TOWNHOUSE - NIGHT

Alan sits at the dinner table with his family. His attractive, absolutely no-bullshit sister JANET (30s), her earnest, brow-beaten husband MIKE (30s), and his quaffed, WASPy mother DIANE (50s).

DIANE
Aww, you spent your birthday alone?

ALAN
Mom, it's fine.

JANET
No it's not, he has no friends.

MIKE
I'll be your friend, Alan.

JANET
Mike, shut it.
(motioning to her glass)
Wine me.

Mike obliges and pours her more wine. He clearly does not wear the pants in this relationship.

JANET (CONT'D)

Why didn't you just remind me it was your birthday?

ALAN

Because you're my sister. I shouldn't have to remind you. Besides, soliciting birthday wishes is uncouth.

JANET

"Uncouth"? You sound like an asshole.

DIANE

Language, Janet.

JANET

See, this is why you have no friends. It's just you and your hermetically-sealed apartment and your lame boat collection.

ALAN

Historically accurate hand-crafted war ships.

JANET

You have the hobby of a seventy-five year old man. Look, I love you, you're my little brother. I want you to have friends. I want you to be normal and get laid.

DIANE

Language.

JANET

But you're too particular. No one can live up to your crazy standards. You drive people away. Like Lauren.

Hot button. Alan bristles.

ALAN

Lauren has nothing to do with this. I take umbrage at that.

JANET

Take all the umbrage you want but she has everything to do with this. One minute you're engaged to be married, the next you're all alone. And all you're left with is carrying around her ankle sock.

DIANE
Ankle sock? What is that? Is that
some kind of sick fetish, Alan?

JANET
He carries around her one sock that
she left behind in his dresser.

DIANE
Aww, honey.

ALAN
I don't carry around her sock
anymore, Mom!
(to Janet)
I confided in you in a moment of
vulnerability and you use it
against me?

MIKE
She does that to me all the time.

JANET
I'm a lawyer. It's what I do.

DIANE
Just ignore her, Alan. Janet's the
last person to take relationship
advice from. Look at the way she
treats her husband. No offense, Mike.

MIKE
None taken, Diane.

ALAN
I'm opening my presents now.

Alan goes to open an envelope.

JANET
It's a gift certificate for a
training session at a gym.

Alan tosses the unopened envelope back on the table.

ALAN
Well that was fun.

DIANE
Oh that's a good gift. You should
work out more, honey. You're thin.

MIKE
(motioning to his neck)
Here-ish.

INT. STRIP MALL GYM - DAY

Alan, in workout clothes (collared shirt, sweatpants), walks into the strip mall gym and looks around. The gym is small, underpopulated, and filled with outdated equipment. As he looks around we hear:

ALAN (V.O.)

When attending his local fitness center, a gentleman walks the line between comfort and style. Whenever possible, he brings his own beverage for hydration and his own towel for perspiration.

We see that Alan carries both water and his own towel. We see the towel is monogrammed with his initials.

ALAN (V.O.)

Towel monogramming is optional.

SNAP! Alan gets tagged by a towel WHIPPED at him.

ALAN

Ahhh!! What the--?!

Alan turns to find BERT LANSING, thirties, sloppy, doesn't know boundaries, retains the optimism of a teenager.

BERT

Alan Carlson? Bert Lansing!
(off Alan's confused look)
From high school.
(still nothing)
I got expelled senior year.

ALAN

(slowly recognizing him)
... For credit card fraud?

BERT

That's the one!

ALAN

Wow. Nice to see you, Bert.

BERT

Right back at you, bro.
(then, fondly)
Man, I couldn't stand you in high school.

ALAN

I'm sorry?

BERT

You were so self-righteous with all those letters to the editor in the school paper. Complaining that the dress code wasn't strict enough. You tried to get rid of jeans, dude.

ALAN

School uniforms bolster grade point average. There are studies.

BERT

(laughing)

There it is. You haven't changed, bro. Good for you.

Alan is stung by this.

ALAN

(politely)

Yes, well, I have a private training session so I should go find my trainer.

BERT

Look no further, my friend.

ALAN

I'm sorry?

BERT

This is my gym! I own the place. I took this place over from my old man when he got sick. Cancer of the penis.

ALAN

Oh my God. I'm so--

BERT

I'm messing with you. That would suck though. My dad retired. Still works full time at being a pain in my ass.

Just then A SHIRTLESS INDIAN MAN IN HIS FIFTIES, jogs by shadowboxing. Bert turns to him.

BERT (CONT'D)

Take it to the limit, J.J.! Eye of the tiger.

Alan refers to his gift certificate.

ALAN

So... you're the "body diagnostics specialist"?

BERT

I be he.

(then)

Alright, let's start by getting you signed up for a new membership.

ALAN

Well I'm not ready to sign up.
I'll just work out and then maybe look at the pricing.

BERT

Can you really put a dollar amount on feeling fantastic about your body, Alan?

ALAN

I believe I can.

BERT

With our packages, you can't afford not to sign up. Am I right?

(motioning to his neck)

I'm looking at the neck situation.

ALAN

I'm sorry, Bert but I find aggressive sales techniques rather off-putting.

BERT

Alright. Let's pull back the reins for a second. What's it gonna take for me to get your social security number and credit card information?

ALAN

I think I'm going to go ahead and pass on the training session. Good seeing you again, Bert.

Alan begins to head off. Bert relents.

BERT

Wait! Check it: I know I'm not the greatest salesman. And I may not have the fanciest equipment.

Bert hands Alan his BUSINESS CARD.

BERT (CONT'D)

But I don't need a buncha digital crap to know that "Bert's Body Shop" is the gym for you, Alan. And that's a fact.

Just then J.J., the Indian man from before, crosses again shadowboxing.

BERT (CONT'D)
(to J.J.)
Ride the wind, buddy.

Alan watches this and heads off.

INT. ALAN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Alan talks with his sister Janet over VIDEO CHAT on his computer.

JANET
You should call him.

ALAN
Who?

JANET
The guy from the gym. Ask him out.
See if there's a spark.

ALAN
How many times do I have to tell
you, Janet? I am not gay.

JANET
Relax. I'm talking about a platonic
friendship. Ask him to lunch. Go make
a friend. One who's not an old bag of
bones. Be normal for Christ's sake.

ALAN
I am normal! Bert Lansing is an
annoying slacker from high school.
And an identity thief, by the way.

Janet's husband Mike steps into the BACKGROUND of the video chat, staring solemnly at the camera. He's got a BLACK-EYE.

ALAN (CONT'D)
... Hey, Mike. You okay?

MIKE
Did my wife tell you she sucker-
punched me in my sleep, Alan?

JANET
Well, maybe he shouldn't have
called his wife a slut.

MIKE
 (losing it)
 Maybe my wife shouldn't BE a slut!

Mike marches off into a room and SLAMS the door.

JANET
 Ignore him. He's just jealous
 because I went to see a vampire
 movie with Brett from work.

ALAN
 Janet, I've told you. Stop
 spending time with this Brett guy.

JANET
 What's the problem? We just hang
 out. I complain about my life, he
 listens and pays for dinner. It
 works out very well for me.

ALAN
 Emotional intimacy is just as
 adulterous as physical. It's
 called an emotional affair.

JANET
 It's not an affair. Now stop
 judging me and go ask out that guy.

She CLICKS off her screen. Alan is left alone. On the
 screen, a blank word document with the word "sexier
 angle...?" stares back at him.

Something catches Alan's eye off-screen. Alan picks up
 Bert's card. "BERT'S BODY SHOP. IT'S TIME FOR A TUNE-UP!"
 Alan sighs and picks up the phone...

CUT TO:

INT. STRIP CLUB - DAY

CLOSE ON Bert and Alan:

BERT
 This is great, man! Look at us:
 grabbing lunch and reconnecting
 like adults.

REVEAL Alan and Bert sit in a STRIP CLUB. Music thumps.
 Strippers dance. Alan is clearly uncomfortable.

ALAN
 I was thinking more of a
 restaurant. Not a strip club.

BERT

It's a gentleman's club. Right up
your alley. They've got a buffet.
(then)
Let's toss these shots back.

Bert picks up two whiskey shots in front of them.

ALAN

No thank you. I try not to drink
alcohol in the daytime.

BERT

It's Wednesday. It's a hump day.

ALAN

It's ten-thirty in the morning.

BERT

(sighs)
You know what, man, maybe we should
just call it a day.

Bert starts to get up. Alan stops him.

ALAN

No, wait. Okay. I'll have a shot.
Just one.

JUMP CUT TO:

INT. STRIP CLUB - LATER

Alan is now hammered. And depressed.

ALAN

...I'm going to be out of a job. I
have no friends. I haven't been on
a date in two years.

BERT

How are you so drunk off two shots?

ALAN

You wanna know something lame? I
still carry around my ex-fiancee's
sock. Look...

He pulls out his EX-FIANCEE'S SOCK. Surprisingly, Bert
doesn't laugh. He smacks Alan on the back, feeling his pain.

BERT

You're carrying around a lot of
hurt, chief. I know that game.
(then)

(MORE)

BERT (CONT'D)

I was engaged to a girl too. She broke my heart. Stole my kidney too. I mean, I gave it to her. She needed a transplant. Once she got a new kidney, she got a new lease on life. One that didn't involve 'ole Bert Lansing.

ALAN

That's horrible. I'm so sorry.
(reflecting)
We have more in common than I thought. Except for the organ theft thing.

BERT

But I got over it and now I'm back, having anonymous sex with women I meet on the world wide web.

ALAN

Sounds depressing.

BERT

It was for a bit. And now it's fantastic. That's how you move on. All it takes is a little motivation.
(then, pointing to head)
Wait... Uh oh. Here it comes.

ALAN

What's happening?

BERT

Idea. Taking shape. Growing wings. You should be my client, dude!

ALAN

Bert, I'm not giving you my credit card information.

BERT

I'm not talking about training you in the gym. I'm talking about training you in life!

ALAN

As in a life coach? Bert, all due respect, we are very different.

BERT

Exactly! I don't know shit about manners. I'm rude, I'm loud and the only thing I've been good at my whole life is screwing up.

(MORE)

BERT (CONT'D)
And that's exactly what you need!
(then)
Do me a favor. Look in the mirror.
I do this with all my clients.

He turns Alan towards the mirrored wall of the club.

BERT (CONT'D)
Tell me what you see.

ALAN
I see a dancing woman with gigantic
bare breasts.

BERT
Right, try to ignore that. What do
you see staring back at you?

ALAN
(shrugs)
I just see me.

BERT
You know what I see? I see a saaad
man. He's uptight, he's got no
friends, and the last time he was
intimate was with a sock.

ALAN
I just carry the sock around, I'm
not having sex with it.

BERT
Maybe you are and maybe you aren't.

ALAN
I am not having sex with a sock!

BERT
Okay, relax. Point is you want to
make a change. I see a good man in
that mirror, Alan. A man who wants
a better life.

This catches Alan a bit off-guard.

ALAN
I... am a good man. I do want a
better life.

Alan's face begins to TWITCH. It's weird.

BERT
What's going on with your face?

ALAN
Nothing. It twitches when I get emotional.

BERT
That's freaky. It's like your cheek's crying. Just let it out.

ALAN
No-- a gentleman does not make a scene in public.

BERT
Making a scene's exactly what you need to do, man! I know I can help you, Alan! Hell, I already got you a new friend.

ALAN
You did? Who?

BERT
Me.

Alan is surprisingly touched by this. His cheek TWITCHES again.

BERT (CONT'D)
When you're ready to make a scene, you lemme know.
(calling off)
I'll take a lap dance please.

Bert begins to walk off with A STRIPPER. Alan considers, then:

ALAN
You're hired.

Bert stops and turns back.

BERT
Seriously?

ALAN
I wear pants with pleats. I need help.

BERT
I'm your man! Let's go get rude, bro!

Alan goes to head out. Bert stops him.

BERT (CONT'D)
Lap dance first. Then we'll get rude.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. ALAN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Alan and Bert now stand in Alan's apartment. Alan paces nervously, gripping the sock like a baby blanket. Bert stands admiring a HAND-CRAFTED MODEL SHIP on display.

ALAN

I don't want to do this.

BERT

You said you want to make a change.

ALAN

Well, I was drunk when I said that.
Now I'm not.

BERT

Gotta step outside the comfort zone, chief. No better way to do that than a funeral for your past relationship. That's a fact.

ALAN

I don't wanna burn the sock.

BERT

Gotta burn the sock.
(re: the ship)
Is this boat remote control?

ALAN

It is a replica of seventeenth century Swedish Regalskeppet war ship that took me a year to put together so please stop touching it.

BERT

Alright, let's do this. Lighter.

Bert hands Alan a LIGHTER.

BERT (CONT'D)

You do the honors. Take your time, my man.

Alan stares at the lighter and the sock before him.

ALAN

Should I... say something?

BERT

I think that would be nice.

Alan takes a moment.

ALAN
 Maybe you're right. Maybe it is
 time to bury the past. I've
 carried this sock around, much like
 I've carried Lauren around--

BERT
 (singing Clapton's "Tears
 in Heaven")
 "Would you know my name,
 If I saw you in Heaven?"

ALAN
 What is that? What are you doing?

BERT
 (shrugs)
 I felt moved to sing. Go with it.

Alan takes a moment and begins again.

ALAN
 I light this sock on fire to
 remember but also to forget--

BERT
 (singing again)
 "Would you feel the same,
 If I saw you in Heaven?"

ALAN
 Okay, ya know what, I'm good.

Alan LIGHTS the sock on fire and, as it begins to swell:

ALAN (CONT'D)
 It's burning! Where do I put it?

BERT
 I got it.

Bert grabs the sock and quickly tosses it in a TRASH CAN.

ALAN
 Bert, that trash can is wicker!

BERT
 What the hell's wicker?

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Alan and Bert fling open the door and throw the now FLAMING TRASH CAN in the hall. Alan stomps on it frantically. Bert runs out with one of Alan's pillows.

BERT
Roll on it!

ALAN
I'm not going to roll on it!

BERT
(taking charge)
I got this!

Bert begins hitting the fire with a decorative couch pillow.

ALAN
Not the suede throw pillow! C'mon.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)
You guys okay?

They turn to find Alan's hot female neighbor, LYDIA, who we saw in the opening of the show. Alan turns bright red.

ALAN
Oh. Yes. Thank you, Lydia. No biggie. Just a little trash can fire.

LYDIA
Always putting out fires, huh Andy?

Alan giggles, flirtatiously.

ALAN
(under his breath)
It's Alan.

She goes back into her apartment. Bert's wheels begin spinning as he gets excited.

BERT
(pointing to his head)
Uhp, here it comes again.

Bert smiles as we...

CUT TO:

INT. ALAN'S APARTMENT - BALCONY - MOMENTS LATER

Alan paces on the balcony as Bert drinks Alan's milk from the carton.

ALAN
I'm not asking her out!

BERT
Why not? You said you find her attractive.

ALAN
Yes, but Lydia's my neighbor. There are boundaries.

BERT
Boundaries may protect our lives, but they limit our pleasures. And that's a fact, Alan.

ALAN
Well here's another fact: I'm not asking out my neighbor. And for God's sake, that's my milk. At least use a glass.

BERT
What? There's only a little bit left.

ALAN
No there isn't.

BERT
Oh really?

Bert defiantly drinks down the rest of the milk. At least, he TRIES to. There's A LOT left. Way too much. He gulps and gulps the milk, it's thick and runs down his chin. He stops. Gasps. And drinks again. Finally, he polishes it off.

A beat. Alan is horrified. Bert tosses the carton off the balcony.

BERT (CONT'D)
Alright. Time to step it up.

Bert charges inside and picks up the model ship. Alan panics.

ALAN
What are you doing?

BERT
This boat's about to sail right into the wall if you don't ask Lydia out.

ALAN
 (very calmly)
 Put the Regalskeppet down, Bert.
 Bert. I will not be bullied into--

Bert goes to throw the ship.

ALAN (CONT'D)
 Alright!! I'll do it. Give me the boat!

Alan takes the boat from Bert.

BERT
 That was actually easier than I
 thought.

INT. ALAN'S APARTMENT HALLWAY - LATER

Alan nervously approaches Lydia's door. Bert coaches him.

BERT
 Okay, hombre. Remember: "Eye of
 the tiger." The tiger is the most
 confident primate in the world
 which is why they call him the king
 of the jungle. And that's a fact.

ALAN
 I don't think that is a fact, Bert.
 Actually several of things you just
 said are incorrect.

BERT
 Let's not argue. Just go, go.

Alan approaches the door and knocks. Lydia answers.

ALAN
 Hey, Lydia. How are you?

LYDIA
 I'm great.

ALAN
 Good to hear you. That. Is
 good... to hear.

An awkward beat.

LYDIA
 So... what's up?

ALAN
(instantly)
I need sugar. Need to borrow some
sugar.

LYDIA
Oh. Sure. One sec.

Lydia goes into her apartment and Bert runs up. They both
whisper intensely.

BERT
What's with the sugar, bro?!

ALAN
I don't know. I panicked! I am
low on sugar though.

BERT
Just be cool. Grab the sugar and
then go in for the pounce. Eye of
the tiger. King of the Jungle.

ALAN
He's definitely not king.

Bert leaves. Lydia returns to the door with sugar.

LYDIA
Here you go. Keep it. So what are
you whipping up?

ALAN
Huh? Oh, I'm... baking a cookie.

LYDIA
... Just one cookie?

ALAN
Uh, yep. A big cookie. Gonna
make it look like a celebrity. Maybe
Obama. Not sure if I have enough
chocolate chips though.

Alan instantly regrets saying that.

LYDIA
Huh. Sounds interesting. Good luck.

Lydia begins to close the door. Alan looks to Bert who mimes
a tiger pounce. Alan turns and stops the door.

ALAN

Wait! I'm being an idiot. I don't need sugar. That's not why I came over.

LYDIA

... Why did you come over then?

A beat. Alan summons up the courage. Then:

ALAN

I need flour.

LYDIA

Oh. I don't think I have flour.

ALAN

(quickly)

No biggie. Would you like to have dinner with me?

INT. ALAN'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Alan and Bert run into the apartment, adrenaline-fueled.

ALAN

I can't believe she said yes!

BERT

I can't believe it either, bro. That was the most awkward interaction I've ever seen.

ALAN

I just pounced like a tiger.

BERT

Well, not really but it's a start.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. ALAN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

There's a KNOCK on the door. Alan, in a suit and tie, answers it to find Bert.

BERT

Yo! You ready for your big date?

ALAN

What does it look like?

Alan models his nice suit and tie.

BERT

Dude. You can't wear that.

ALAN

Why not?

BERT

This is a first date. You're completely overdressed. You look like a nerd.

ALAN

Excuse me. Dressing up shows respect for the lady.

BERT

Now you sound like a nerd.

ALAN

I am not taking advice from someone who dresses like he lives in Margaritaville. The suit stays.

BERT

Fine. Wear the suit. Baby steps. Now, let's talk about the elephant in the room: prophylactics.

Bert holds up a leathery condom.

BERT (CONT'D)

Personally, I'm a fan of the sheepskin. Yes they're extremely porous but there's something about the feel of the intestinal lining of a sheep wrapped around your junk that, I'm sorry, just cannot be matched by latex.

ALAN
I'm not bringing condoms.

BERT
You won't be able to tell where your
penis ends and the sheep skin begins.

ALAN
Please leave now. She'll be over
here any minute.

Alan pushes Bert out the door. Bert stops and turns.

BERT
Yo, Alan. I'm proud of you.

ALAN
Thank you, Bert.

Bert holds up the condom.

BERT
Sheepskin?

ALAN
Absolutely not.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Alan and Lydia sit at a nice restaurant. He is dressed up
way more than her. Alan pulls out her chair for her to sit.

ALAN (V.O.)
It's important to understand that a
date can be an awkward situation.
A gentleman always takes the time
to make the lady feel comfortable.

ALAN
This restaurant seems very nice.
Thank you for selecting it.

ALAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
And in turn, she will reciprocate
the feeling of goodwill.

LYDIA
This is weird.

ALAN
It is? Why? Is it the suit? I
look like a nerd, don't I?

LYDIA

No, you look nice. I'm just not used to guys opening the door for me or pulling out my chair. The last guy I dated was a total jerk. I mean, it's sweet. You're sweet.

ALAN

(relieved)

Oh. Thank you.

ALAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Avoid subjects that may be too personal. Instead employ a casual conversation-starter to find common ground.

ALAN (CONT'D)

So, Lydia, what do you do for a living?

LYDIA

I market cigarettes for a major tobacco company.

Alan is taken off-guard by this.

ALAN (V.O.)

Common ground may not necessarily come easy. Regardless of your views, always makes your date feel accepted.

ALAN

That sounds like an interesting job.

LYDIA

(pleasantly surprised)

Thanks. It is. Usually people react all weird. I'm tired of feeling bad when I tell people my job. I love what I do. I like cigarettes. I like to smoke.

ALAN

You smoke?

LYDIA

(on a roll)

I *enjoy* finding creative ways to market our product so we can entice new smokers. That's challenging. That gets me up in the morning.

ALAN
I think that's great. Besides,
it's not like you market to
children.

LYDIA
No.
(overly deliberate wink)
We don't market to children.

DONNY (O.S.)
Lydia.

WE REVEAL the THICK-NECKED, MANAGER DONNY standing by the
table. There's a history. It's polite but slightly tense.

LYDIA
Oh. Hello, Donny.

DONNY
Who's this?

ALAN
I'm Andy, hi.

Alan stands politely. Donny sizes him up.

DONNY
Why are you standing?

ALAN
That's... what you do when you meet
a friend's acquaintance.

DONNY
Acquaintance. Right. Don't let me
interrupt.
(then, to Lydia)
FYI, your body looks bangin' tonight.

LYDIA
Whatever.

With that, Donny walks off.

ALAN
Friend of yours?

LYDIA
Just my ex-boyfriend. This is his
restaurant.

ALAN
You brought me to your ex's
restaurant?

LYDIA

I love this place and I'm not going to let him prevent me from eating here. He doesn't have that power over me.

ALAN

Right. I just... I feel like he could do something to my food.

LYDIA

Why would he do that? You're not the one who broke up with him.

ALAN

... I think that makes sense.

Just then Alan notices something across the restaurant. It's his sister Janet with an AVERAGE-LOOKING DUDE. This is BRETT. She laughs and touches his arm flirtatiously. Alan is livid.

ALAN (CONT'D)

Lydia, I just saw someone I know. Would you excuse me for one second?

LYDIA

Sure.

Alan charges over to his sister's table.

ALAN (V.O.)

When a gentleman recognizes an acquaintance at a restaurant, he feels free to greet them but only in the least intrusive way possible.

ALAN

Hope I'm not interrupting.

JANET

Alan! What are you doing here? Why are you so dressed up?

ALAN

Much like you I'm on a date.

JANET

That's great! With a girl right?

ALAN

May I talk to you in private please?

JANET

Eh. Brett and I are sorta getting our buzz on. Just talk to me here.

ALAN

I'd feel more comfortable
discussing it alone.

(pointed)

It's a private *affair*.

JANET

(pointed back)

I'm not aware of any *affair* so I
guess there's nothing to discuss.

It's tense. Brett feels uncomfortable.

BRETT

I can step away.

JANET

Don't you move a goddamn muscle,
Brett. Drink your wine.

Brett drinks his wine. Alan pulls out the remnants of his
fiancee's now CHARRED SOCK in a plastic bag.

ALAN

See this? This is Lauren's sock.

JANET

What the hell happened to it?

ALAN

I burned it. I'm making changes in my
life, Janet. Changes for the better.
This sock represents the old me. And
I'm done with that guy.

JANET

So why are you still carrying it
around?

ALAN

... It's a multi-step process--
that's not the point. The point is
I'm growing and I'm changing. And I
hope you do too, Janet. If not for
your sake, for your husband's.

JANET

Relax, I'm not dating Brett! I
mean, come on, look at him.

BRETT

What does that mean?

ALAN

Good luck, Brett. Now if you'll excuse me, I'm going to return to my date.

Alan turns to indeed find LYDIA MAKING OUT WITH DONNY at their table.

ALAN (CONT'D)

Son of a --

Alan rushes off. Janet turns back to Brett.

JANET

Sorry, he's super lame. I'm definitely gonna need another bottle of wine now.

BRETT

I don't think I like you.

JANET

Huh?

BRETT

Good night, Janet.

Brett, fed up, gets up and storms off.

ON ALAN who rushes up to Lydia and Donny.

ALAN

Pardon me. I don't mean to interrupt but I'm on a date with the woman you're open-mouth kissing.

Lydia pulls Alan aside.

LYDIA

Oh, I'm so sorry. I didn't mean for this to happen. But I'm still in love with Donny.

ALAN

I thought you said the guy was a jerk.

LYDIA

He is. He treats me like trash but I can't say I find it unattractive.

(then)

I hope this won't be weird for us back at the apartment.

ALAN
 (sarcastic)
 I don't see why it would be.

Alan looks defeated. We hear Alan's voice-over.

ALAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 A gentleman is not defined simply
 by holding open a door for someone
 or using the proper fork.

Donny walks up to Alan.

DONNY
 Sorry, bro. No hard feelings I hope.

Donny extends his hand to shake. Alan considers this as we hear...

ALAN (V.O.)
 But rather, he's defined by his
 principles. And when those principles
 are tested, a gentleman responds with
 both grace and kindness.

Alan suddenly BITCH SLAPS Donny hard.

ALAN (V.O.)
 But sometimes he just can't resist
 a good bitch slap.
 (then)
 After which, a gentleman always runs.

Alan BOLTS out of the restaurant without looking back.

INT. EDITOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Jerry reads Alan's work. Alan watches him tensely.

ALAN (V.O.)
 A gentleman understands that the
 road of life can be a bumpy one.
 Sometimes though the bumps can
 force you to take an unexpected
 path.

JERRY
 (reading)
 "How to Bitch Slap like a
 Gentleman." "A Gentleman Pounces."
 "The Relationship Funeral."

ALAN

Those would be topics each week for the column. I'm taking a more... personal approach.

JERRY

Personal's good! Private details. Sex stuff. Could be smutty.

ALAN

It won't be smutty, Jerry.

JERRY

We'll table that for now. Cody's gonna love this. It's fun, it's young, it's--

ALAN

Got an ass to it?

JERRY

(smiles)
Bingo.

INT. BERT'S GYM - NEXT DAY

Alan walks into Bert's gym to find Bert training J.J.

BERT

C'mon, J.J.! It's the magic hour!
(seeing Alan)
Alan, hey buddy! So? How'd it go last night? Any nippage?

ALAN

No. Dating my neighbor was a mistake, Bert.

BERT

In retrospect, it does seem like a bad idea.

Alan glares back at him.

ALAN

I'm glad we agree.
(forging on)
Here. This is for you.

Alan hands Bert a GREETING CARD. Bert opens it.

BERT

(reading card slowly)
"For Bert. Thanks for your fried shit?"

ALAN
 "Friendship." The word is
 "friendship."

BERT
 That makes more sense. You have
 the handwriting of a pirate.

ALAN
 It's calligraphy.

Bert holds up a PIECE OF PAPER from inside the card.

BERT
 What's this?

ALAN
 My credit card info. I'd like to
 become a member of Bert's Body shop.

BERT
 No shit?

ALAN
 No shit.

Bert is touched.

BERT
 Ya know, when I took over this
 place, my pops told me I'd probably
 screw it up like I have everything
 else. But this right here... this
 says I'm not a screw up. It says you
 trust me. It says 'eff you, pops!
 Look at me now, you son of a bitch!'
 (sincerely)
 Thanks, Alan, for helping me rub it
 my old man's face.

ALAN
 ... You're welcome?

BERT
 Alright, enough with the gab. Let's
 sweat.

ALAN (V.O.)
 Because he is a gentleman, he is
 open to a new adventure.

MUSIC KICKS IN underneath the following MONTAGE:

INT. BERT'S GYM - DAY

Alan, mid-exercise, stands holding a medicine ball as Bert cheers him on.

BERT
Push it, bro! Twist and shout.

Alan twists his body and hands the ball off to a SHIRTLESS J.J.

ALAN (V.O.)
Even if it is out of his comfort zone.

INT. DIANE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Alan, sits at the dinner table again with his mother Diane, sister Janet and Mike. Janet and Mike are back to arguing.

DIANE
Janet! Language!

ALAN (V.O.)
He does not see life's bumpy road
as a burden.

INT. ALAN'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN

It's morning and Alan, in pajamas again, stands at the refrigerator eyeing the MILK CONTAINER IN HIS HAND-- daring himself to drink from it. He slowly brings it toward his mouth as we hear...

ALAN (V.O.)
But rather, a challenge he faces
eagerly every day.

Right before the container touches his mouth, Alan gives up.

ALAN
Gross.

He puts the milk up and walks off.

FADE OUT.

END OF SHOW