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FADE IN:

EXT. EAST VILLAGE BAR - NIGHT

We pull down the facade of a down and dirty black-box bar on a busy east village street. In the window, a group of late 20s FRIENDS raise their shot glasses to HANNAH, intellectual and dressed a bit too well for this bar.

HANNAH (V.O.)

They say that in a different language you become a different person, but in Hindi I'd barely gotten a handle on the subjunctive and already I wasn't myself.

Shots go back.

INT. BAR - CONTINUOUS

Hannah winces as she swallows the shot.

HANNAH

Well bon voyage to me.

GIRL FRIEND

(re:drink)

Do they have shots in India?

MALE FRIEND

Just for malaria.

GIRL FRIEND

Shit, Hannah. Please don't get malaria.

HANNAH

If I get malaria it will probably be from the bathrooms in this place.

HANNAH (V.O.)

I had decided to go off to India, on a lark, to learn Hindi. The idea seemed exotic at first. Now it seemed deranged.

Hannah looks over at the bar where a HOT GUY is staring at her. He smiles a half-smile. She smiles back. A SECOND GIRL FRIEND notices.

SECOND GIRL FRIEND

That guy is totally checking you out.

GAY FRIEND  
Not her type.

HANNAH  
I'm leaving in three days. Do I  
have to have a type?

He smiles again at her. She smiles and waves a small "hi" to him...he nods his head to her. She coyly flips her hair and nods back. And then...in slow motion, the guy leans over and just keeps leaning over...

GAY FRIEND  
Whoa...

GIRL FRIEND  
Whoa!

And collapses onto the floor.

GAY FRIEND  
Totally not her type.

Hannah rushes over.

HANNAH  
What's wrong with him?

A fresh-faced, burly guy, MIKE, pushes through the group and starts to unbutton the guy's shirt, finding in his pocket a prescription bottle of--

MIKE  
Oxy.

Mike slaps his face to revive the passed out addict.

HANNAH  
Do you know what you're doing?

MIKE  
I'm a fireman.

The Addict starts to come to. Mike helps him up on his feet.

MIKE  
Okay Buddy, walk it off.

The Addict walks slowly out of the bar.

HANNAH  
I thought he was flirting with  
me...

MIKE

(laughing)

That guy can't see an inch in front  
of his face.

(off her look)

But if he could, he'd ask you the  
hell out.

A look between the two...chemistry. She smiles.

INT. NEW YORK TIMES BULLPEN - DAY

TIGHT on a story on a computer screen. HEADLINE: **Dark Energy  
Responsible For Expanding Universe.**

SIMON (O.C.)

We can't do this.

PULL OUT to find SIMON MCELVANE, 37 years old, science editor, staring at his computer screen. Simon is smart, if not a little shut down. A guy trying to make the best of things in a complicated world. Because of that, he puts all his pain into his stomach. He takes a swig of old coffee, grimaces, gets up with his mug and walks to an office on the edge of the busy news room where a deputy editor, BETH, 40s, attractive, no bullshit, sits.

SIMON

If we say some "dark energy" is  
controlling the world, every nut  
job on the planet is gonna jump on  
it. We're scaring people.

BETH

It's what the scientists call it,  
right?

SIMON

It's gratuitous, Beth. Besides,  
we've run at least three expanding-  
universe stories this year.

BETH

People love expanding universe  
stories. It makes readers anxious  
and titillated at the same time.  
It's like vampires.

SIMON

We're the New York Times. Our job  
shouldn't be titillation. It should  
be fact. The universe will expand  
over billions of years. Mangosteen  
is not a "wonder fruit".

(MORE)

SIMON (cont'd)

And contrary to what 13 year old girls want to believe, vampires are fiction.

NICK CHAPIN, 43, Styles editor, an Upper East Side boy raised with everything--St. Paul's, Harvard, a bruising wit and a passing heroin addiction, walks by.

NICK

And yet Beth is still able to suck out my soul.

BETH

Oh, Nick. So funny.

Simon shakes his head and walks away, Nick follows. They weave through the bull pen.

NICK

So, slacker, what's with getting here on time? You're usually so pathetically early to work.

SIMON

They're doing construction on 79th street. It took 10 minutes to get to the subway.

NICK

So maybe don't walk across 79th.

SIMON

(shrugging)

I like 79th.

(then)

We're going out to Sag Harbor to see my Dad for Thanksgiving if you want to join. It promises both turkey and infantilizing shame.

NICK

I'm anti-holiday.

SIMON

You shouldn't be alone, Nick. You should call your family.

NICK

You're cute. You know they haven't talked to me in ten years. Serves me right I guess, getting strung out and punching my Dad at Christmas Eve services.

SIMON  
You are, oddly, kind-of my hero.

NICK  
Besides, I've already made plans to  
have days of dirty, dirty sex with  
this girl I met in NA.

SIMON  
Nice to see you're working on that  
addiction stuff.

NICK  
(reminding him)  
Nine months no smack.

SIMON  
Well, good for you.

They pass by RAIMY, 20-something, multi pierced copy  
assistant.

SIMON  
Raimy, what do I get my 15 year old  
for Christmas?

RAIMY  
Is she pierced?

SIMON  
No, no. God no.

RAIMY  
Then I got nothin'.

She hands Simon a stack of letters.

RAIMY  
Hate mail for your anti-echinacea  
piece.  
(handing Nick papers)  
Proofed Modern Love column.

Nick takes the pages and they keep walking.

SIMON  
What's modern about love?

NICK  
That anyone still believes in it.  
This one's about a well-bred lass  
and a hunky fireman.

SIMON  
Harlequin romance.

NICK  
Less bodice ripping, more  
uncomfortable personal revelation.

SIMON  
Just what the world needs. More  
over-sharing narcissism.

NICK  
Not everyone can spend their days  
debunking diet pills.

SIMON  
Call me old fashioned but if I'm  
going to share my pain, It's not  
going to be with strangers in the  
pages of a newspaper.

NICK  
Have you even read the column? Or  
are you just being contrary.

SIMON  
Not my cup of tea.

Simon takes another swig of his coffee. It burns his stomach.  
He winces again.

SIMON  
I have to go to the doctor.

INT. A SHRINK'S OFFICE - DAY

TIGHT ON DR. SCHUMACKER, a Dr. Drew-type shrink in his  
Greenwich Village office.

DR. SCHUMACKER  
So, how are you feeling?

REVERSE ON Simon and his wife ALEXA. Alexa wears a Pucci head  
scarf that clearly hides a chemo-bald head. Alexa is a tough  
ass and was once very beautiful.

ALEXA  
Like shit.

DR. SCHUMACKER  
Understandable.

ALEXA

If this is what they do for stage 2, then fucking kill me if I ever get stage 4.

SIMON

You're on a highly proven chemo regimen. You're not getting sick again.

ALEXA

True. I could die.

SIMON

Don't say that.

ALEXA

Okay, I'll just think it.

An uncomfortable silence.

DR. SCHUMACKER

So where we left off, we were talking about communication.

ALEXA

Ironic.

SIMON

Hold on. I think we're making progress.

DR. SCHUMACKER

Alexa?

ALEXA

We haven't had sex in six months, so that should tell you something.

SIMON

You're sick.

ALEXA

He won't say how he feels.

SIMON

This isn't about me. It's about you, getting better. We're gonna fight this.

ALEXA

(exploding)

Jesus! Stop it! Stop saying "we"!

(MORE)

ALEXA (cont'd)  
This isn't happening to us. This is  
happening to me!

Simon sighs, sits back on the couch.

DR. SCHUMACKER  
Simon, how are you feeling?

SIMON  
Tired.

INT. A CAB - MINUTES LATER

The cab weaves through midtown as Simon and Alexa ride in  
silence. Alexa stares out the window.

ALEXA  
I want a divorce.

SIMON  
Are you joking?

ALEXA  
I've talked to a lawyer. I'm moving  
out.

SIMON  
Because I don't think you're gonna  
die?!

ALEXA  
No, because I might. I might die,  
Simon. That's just a fact. And if I  
only have six months left, I'm not  
living it with someone who can't  
express basic emotions. I need more  
than that. I need to live, Simon.

SIMON  
Stop the cab. Stop the damn cab!

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

The cab swerves to a stop. Simon gets out, slams the door. He  
sticks his head back through the window.

SIMON  
I'm pissed! That's how I feel!  
Pissed!

He turns and walks away.

OVER THIS we HEAR a couple LAUGHING.

INT. A SMALL ITALIAN BISTRO - NIGHT

Hannah and Mike sit at a small table, their heads close together. Mike wears an ill-fitting suit. Hannah finishes drawing something on a napkin.

HANNAH  
It's your name in devangari.

MIKE  
That's messed up.

Hannah reacts--not the response she expected.

MIKE  
(laughing)  
It looks like a girl's name. All those circles.

HANNAH  
Yeah, I guess it does.

An awkward beat. There's chemistry here, but no intellectual connection...

MIKE  
So, India huh. With elephants?

HANNAH  
Yeah. I'm trying something new.

MIKE  
Long way to go.  
(then)  
I've never been out of the country.

HANNAH  
My Mom died last year. This is my first holidays without her, so y'know, I'm changing it up. I'm going to try and write a book about it.

MIKE  
I don't trust reporters.

HANNAH  
Oh, I'm not a reporter--

MIKE  
A coupla months ago, we respond to this fire in Washington Heights.  
(MORE)

MIKE (cont'd)

I go up five flights, rescue this baby, I get downstairs and there's this guy there. From the Post. I try and hand him the baby, but he won't take it. He just wants a quote.

Mike shakes his head, swigs his beer.

HANNAH

You rescue babies.

Hannah is turned on. She smiles, looks down at her highball glass, self-consciously swirls the ice around in it.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. THE MONKEY BAR - NIGHT

TIGHT ON another highball glass, and two Alka Seltzers landing in it's water. They fizz.

Simon and Nick sit at a banquette. Simon swirls the Alka Seltzer in his glass. He downs it, winces.

NICK

She fucking someone else?

Simon looks to Nick, wtf?

SIMON

She has cancer.

NICK

So? I once fucked a girl in a wheelchair.

SIMON

Because you'd already fucked all the ambulatory girls?

NICK

I was the one in the chair. Skiing accident.

SIMON

(getting angry now)

I have feelings. But how is it possibly helping to lie there at night with her and say, "yeah, y'know, I'm scared shitless."

NICK

Are you?

SIMON

It doesn't help to say it.

NICK

Might help you with that nasty stomach ulcer.

SIMON

The guy she dated before me in college? He wrote her poetry and cried when he'd read it to her. She hated that. She told me she loved me because I was "stalwart".

NICK

Yeah. "Stalwart" isn't in anymore. It's the era of sharing, my friend. People break up on reality TV now.

SIMON

It's all bullshit! Putting a "sad face" in an e-mail when your life is falling apart is not real!

NICK

But it's comforting.  
(then)  
So, what now?

SIMON

She's moving out. Where is she gonna go? We can't work this out at home together?

NICK

You wanna work it out?

Two HOT GIRLS IN VERY SHORT DRESSES make their way towards the men. Nick waves them over.

SIMON

What is this?

NICK

This is sex, my friend. Something every man needs when their wife leaves them.

SIMON

Jesus. They're hookers. I'm not having sex with a hooker.

NICK

More for me.

Simon stands up.

SIMON  
Going to the john.

INT. MONKEY BAR BATHROOM - NIGHT

Simon stares at his aging face in the mirror. He leans down out of frame to splash his face.

INT. ITALIAN BISTRO BATHROOM - NIGHT

Hannah lifts her head up from the sink, having drunk some water. She stares at herself in the mirror.

HANNAH  
What am I doing?

EXT. BISTRO BATHROOM - NIGHT

Hannah emerges from the bathroom to find Mike waiting in the small, dark hallway. She holds the door open.

HANNAH  
All yours--

And he grabs her up into a passionate kiss. He pushes her against the wall. It's hot. His hand goes up her thigh.

EXT. THE LIE - DAY

Simon's old Saab revs up as he enters the expressway. The leaves are changing.

INT. THE SAAB - DAY

Simon drives with his daughter MOLLY, 15, in the passenger seat. Molly is Chinese, smart, well-adjusted. A good girl.

MOLLY  
So you're separating.

SIMON  
I wouldn't call it that--

MOLLY  
Are you moving out?

SIMON  
No, no. No one's going anywhere.

MOLLY  
So maybe you won't get a divorce?

SIMON  
I hope not.

MOLLY  
Me neither.  
(beat)  
But I think you might.

SIMON  
Um, I think I would know that  
better than you.

MOLLY  
I live with both of you. Honestly,  
your marriage is pretty  
hideosyncratic.

Simon looks to Molly, raises his eyebrows, "tell me more".

MOLLY  
Hideous and idiosyncratic.

SIMON  
Nice. Don't use that on your PSATs.

They drive for a beat in silence.

SIMON  
Let's not mention this to Gampy,  
okay?

MOLLY  
Okay.

SIMON  
I'm feeling very holidayzical.

Molly smiles at her Dad, nods approval.

MOLLY  
Holidayzical. Nice.

EXT. SIMON'S FAMILY HOME - SAG HARBOR - DAY

The Saab pulls up in front of a small clapboard house on the working side of this swanky summer town. Molly and Simon get out of the car and are greeted by Simon's younger sister, JULIE.

JULIE  
You made it!

Julie is early 30s, spacey, happy. She hugs Molly.

JULIE  
Hey, baby girl!

Julie whispers to Simon.

JULIE  
Dad's got a new lady friend.

INT. MACELVANE HOME - DAY

Simon's Dad MITCH introduces DEANA to Simon and Molly. Both Mitch and Deana are in their mid-60s and aging hippies.

MITCH  
This is Deana. She blows the shit  
out of glass.

SIMON  
(re: Molly)  
Dad, come on, language.

MITCH  
My adopted son, Simon. His adopted  
daughter Molly--

SIMON  
You don't always have to introduce  
us that way.

MITCH  
You two are the best things that  
came out of this family. People  
should know I had nothing to do  
with it.

JULIE  
Thanks, Dad.

MITCH  
You got your Mom's looks. Be happy.

DEANA  
I hope you all like quinoa. I  
wanted to honor the Indians today  
since no one else will.

MITCH  
Where's Alexa?

SIMON  
She ah, wanted to visit her folks.

INT. SCREENED-IN PORCH - DAY

Simon and Mitch stare out at Mitch's small back yard.

SIMON  
How's business?

MITCH  
No one's building houses anymore.  
This year I barely got by putting  
shelves up in summer people's  
crappers. How 'bout by you?

SIMON  
They haven't folded the paper yet,  
that's a plus. I'm science editor,  
so that's, y'know--prestigious I  
guess--

MITCH  
How long you gonna stay there?

SIMON  
I guess 'til they kick me out.

MITCH  
You don't get bored of the same  
four walls?

SIMON  
We don't have walls. We have  
cubicles.

MITCH  
See? No one pays for walls anymore.  
(then)  
I just thought you'd do more.

SIMON  
Thanks.

MITCH  
You wanted to travel, write about  
everything. See shit.

Simon is saved from the moment when his cell phone rings. He looks at the number, picks up, walks away from his Dad.

SIMON  
Hey.

INT. A MIDTOWN BAR - DAY - INTERCUT

Nick sits at the nearly empty bar nursing a scotch. He is drunk and slurring.

NICK  
Happy fucking Thanksgiving.

SIMON  
It's tomorrow. You okay?

NICK  
I'm perfect. Alone and perfect.

SIMON  
What happened to the girl from NA?

NICK  
She canceled on me to go to a meeting. Addicts don't take holidays off?

SIMON  
Maybe you want to go to a meeting too?

Nick signals the bartender for another scotch.

NICK  
Et tu, Brutal?

SIMON  
Or come out here. Get on a train, I'll pick you up.

NICK  
Gonna pass. Even drunks don't do the Hamptons in the off season.

Nick clicks his phone off. Simon looks at his phone, concerned.

INT. MCELVANE KITCHEN - DAY

Simon walks in to find Julie and her Nigerian husband, UDO, cooking. Molly is peeling potatoes. Udo is easygoing, happy to be in America and be with his wife.

SIMON  
Hey, Udo.

They embrace.

UDO  
My favorite brother in law.

SIMON  
How's the bookstore?

JULIE  
Shitty.

SIMON  
Language.

MOLLY  
It's okay, Dad--

UDO  
We're getting killed by Kindle.

MOLLY  
I love my kindle.

UDO  
And now I will have to kill you.

Simon opens a cabinet, looking around, as Mitch enters.

SIMON  
Is there any Pepto around?

MITCH  
You wanna get high?

SIMON  
Jesus, Dad. No. You're still  
smoking that stuff?

UDO  
And selling.

MITCH  
How do you think I afford my heart  
medicine?

Simon shakes his head, grabs his keys and heads out.

INT. SAG HARBOR GENERAL STORE - EVENING

Simon scans the shelves. Finds a small bottle of Pepto  
Bismol. An ATTRACTIVE BLOND eyes him from the next aisle.

BLOND  
Simon?

Simon turns and is surprised.

SIMON

Kat?

This is KATRINKA DOWELL, mid-30s, effortlessly beautiful in that sexy, timeless way. We can feel their chemical attraction. Kat comes around to his aisle and touches his arm.

KAT

God I haven't seen you in ages. I mean, I see your byline in the Times, but how long has it been?

SIMON

I don't know. Twenty years?

KAT

At least.

SIMON

You still come out for the summers?

KAT

A week here and there. Turns out they don't give you summer vacay in your 30s. I hate growing up. Anyway, I'm just out for Thanksgiving. Staying in my parent's carriage house apartment. Just like Augusts past.

She flips her hair, laughs.

KAT

Except you and I will not be listening to Zeppelin and making out.

Simon laughs awkwardly.

KAT

Well look, good to see you. And feel better.

SIMON

I'm fine--

Kat looks down at the Pepto in his hand. She leans in, touches his arm and whispers in his ear.

KAT

If you want to chat, you know where to find me--

Kat brushes past him. The electricity of her is still there...Simon watches her go.

MIKE (O.S.)  
You're really hot.

EXT. HANNAH'S STOOP - NIGHT

Mike and Hannah are making out in the shadows of her building.

HANNAH  
(laughing)  
I'm not letting you up.

They make out a little more. It gets hotter.

MIKE  
Come on--

HANNAH  
Where's the fire?

MIKE  
Huh?

HANNAH  
Just a joke--

MIKE  
What d'you got to lose? You're leaving town tomorrow--

HANNAH  
I have to go--

She turns and starts to walk up the stairs.

MIKE  
Wait! Wait.

She stops.

MIKE  
If I can get us on that roof up there, will you stay out with me?

He indicates a tall art-deco brick building across the street.

HANNAH  
And how are you going to do that?

Mike flashes his charming smile. Hannah is intrigued.

EXT. GEORGE WASHINGTON BRIDGE - NIGHT

It's raining lightly. Cars whizz by. We find Nick, very drunk, weaving between the cars as they honk and put on their brakes. A car almost hits him. He hits the car's hood.

NICK

Happy fucking thanksgiving!

Nick almost falls, but then rights himself enough to continue weaving through the traffic, oblivious. It's scary.

EXT. SAG HARBOR BEACH - NIGHT

It's raining a little here now, too. Simon's Saab pulls into the empty parking lot by the dunes.

INT. SIMON'S SAAB - CONTINUOUS

Simon opens the Pepto, takes a big swig, grimaces as it goes down.

EXT. THE BEACH - NIGHT

Simon gets out of the car, pulls his jacket collar up against the cold mist. He breathes deep. Pulls out his cell phone and hits a button.

SIMON

(into phone)

Hey, it's me. Seeing how you're feeling. I mean, not about us, I mean, I know you had more chemo today--anyway. So, yeah. That's pretty much it. Happy Thanksgiving.

He pauses, out of anything to say. He clicks off.

EXT. SAG HARBOR STREET - NIGHT

The Saab passes through town--the houses small, simple, clapboard, close together, and makes a left...

EXT. SAG HARBOR STREET - NIGHT

Now the road opens up. This is where the rich folks live. Big summer shingled cottages, hedges to block out the world. The Saab pauses in front of a large house. The engine turns off.

A beat, and then Simon steps out of the car, warily looking up at the house.

TIGHT ON a small door with a plaque that reads "beware of quarter horse". It opens to reveal a happily surprised Kat.

KAT

Hey.

REVERSE ONTO Simon. She smiles and ushers him in. The door SHUTS.

INT. THE ART DECO BUILDING LOBBY - NIGHT

The front door OPENS. Hannah and Mike slide through, past a sleeping doorman. Hannah giggles.

Mike pushes the elevator button and the door opens. They get in the elevator.

INT. ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

The door shuts. Hannah turns to Mike.

HANNAH

Okay, so how are you getting us up on the roof?

Mike pulls out his key chain, brandishes one key.

MIKE

I got the fire key. I can take you anywhere.

Hannah smiles.

HANNAH

Key to the city.

He puts the key in the elevator panel and hits the top button. He turns back to her and grabs her again, pushing her up against the elevator wall. As it gets hotter, he turns the key and the elevator STOPS. They continue kissing...

INT. CARRIAGE HOUSE APARTMENT - NIGHT

Simon paces around the small space. Kat watches him, amused. He fingers some old horse trophies, a shot gun case. He laughs.

SIMON

It's like a time capsule in here.

KAT

That's why I like it. Makes you feel like you're 15 again. Like it's all so easy.

(beat)

My mom has Alzheimers.

SIMON

Oh man, I'm sorry.

KAT

I thought she was just spacey from all the Vicodin she popped like mints. Then today she asked me how I was doing in college.

(then)

Truth is, she never knew me anyway. She never asked, I never told.

It's like you.

(off his look)

You're like this enigma. Like there are all these layers of you hiding.

SIMON

You give me far too much credit.

Kat approaches him.

KAT

Do I?

(then)

You seem sad.

She reaches up and touches his hair. A beat, and then he pulls her into a passionate kiss. They fall onto the musty 70s sofa. We PAN DOWN their entwined legs...

INT. ELEVATOR - NIGHT

...and PAN UP Mike's legs...Hannah is now perched on the railing of the elevator, her legs around his waist. It is very heated. Her skirt is pushed up around her waist, he kisses her neck...

HANNAH

We're not on the roof--

MIKE

Fuck the roof.

And he rips off her panties, enters her. She moans.

INT. CARRIAGE HOUSE APARTMENT - NIGHT

Kat and Simon are both naked now. It's hot. Kat gets on top of him...Simon lets her...then stops her with his hands at her waist.

SIMON

I can't do this.

Kat reaches down to his crotch and smiles.

KAT  
Oh I think you can--

SIMON  
No, I'm--I'm married--

Conflicted, he sits up when...The DOOR OPENS. They both look up. There stands HENRY, Kat's preppy, 40-something HUSBAND.

KAT  
Shit.

HENRY  
What the hell?!

SIMON  
(recognizing)  
Henry Rockwell?

Kat scrambles to cover herself with her clothes--

KAT  
I thought you were taking the  
jitney tomorrow--

HENRY  
I thought I would surprise my wife--

Simon scrambles to find his pants--

SIMON  
You're married?!

Henry grabs a SHOT GUN from the case, points it at Simon.

PIERCE  
Get the fuck out.

KAT  
Jesus, Henry!

Simon, naked, backs towards the door, his pants in his hand.

SIMON  
Take it easy, Rocky--

KAT  
He doesn't like--

HENRY  
Don't call me that!

He SHOOTS the gun into the rafters. Dust comes down.

SIMON

Shit!

Simon runs out of the apartment.

EXT. SAG HARBOR STREET - NIGHT

Simon emerges from the hedges, still naked and holding his pants in front of him like a fig leaf. He starts running. Henry chases, with the old gun.

They turn a corner onto MAIN STREET. Simon runs down the middle of the street, barefoot, naked...

HENRY

Get your townie ass back to your side of town!

Henry, winded, stops after a few blocks. Simon keeps running. CLOSE on his face. He is sweating...breathing heavily...

INT. MCELVANE KITCHEN - NIGHT

Simon slips in through the back door, still naked. He shuts the door and locks it, quietly to not wake anyone. He leans against the door, takes a deep breath. He is surprisingly exhilarated.

INT. ELEVATOR - NIGHT

CLOSE ON Mike's face, sweating and exhilarated. He now has Hannah turned around against the elevator wall and is fucking her from behind. Her arms are up against the wall of the elevator. She moans. He pumps against Hannah one last time...and comes. He collapses into her. They both breathe heavily, enjoying the moment. She smiles and starts to laugh.

MIKE

Hey. What?

HANNAH

There was this piece yesterday in the Times about the universe expanding. I think I just expanded my universe.

Mike laughs, reaches down to the elevator floor and hands her her panties.

MIKE

Yeah, you don't gotta go to India to have an adventure, huh?

HANNAH  
 (correcting him)  
 "have to".

MIKE  
 Have to what?

Hannah laughs, pulling herself back up against him.

HANNAH  
 Never mind.

INT. LOBBY - NIGHT

TIGHT ON the elevator doors opening, revealing Hannah and Mike kissing. They turn to exit and on their faces we can see they are surprised by what they see...

REVERSE ANGLE the lobby is FILLED with angry tenants all waiting for them. An OLD LADY in her bathrobe holding her dog, An INVESTMENT BANKER holding a briefcase...

INVESTMENT BANKER  
 Who do you think you are, stopping  
 our elevators for half an hour?!

HANNAH  
 (sotto to Mike)  
 Elevators? Plural?

MIKE  
 Whaddya mean?

OLD LADY  
 You don't even live here!

INVESTMENT BANKER  
 That fire key stopped all the  
 elevators in the system!

OLD LADY  
 Mr. Mandel was stuck in the south  
 elevator so long he urinated  
 himself!

A mortified, old MR MANDEL waves her concern away.

HANNAH  
 How do you know he had a fire key?

DOORMAN  
 We watched you on the cameras.

He indicates a row of elevator cameras above him. Hannah blanches.

HANNAH  
You were watching?!

MID 50S MATRON  
We were all watching.

OLD LADY  
You should put your underwear back on, young lady.

Hannah hides her panties behind her back, mortified.

INVESTMENT BANKER  
I'm gonna call the police.

MIKE  
Whaddya mean?

INVESTMENT BANKER  
You broke the law.

MIKE  
Whaddya mean?

The TENANTS starts getting agitated, mumbling to each other.

OLD LADY  
Why does he keep saying that!

MR. MANDEL  
Henrietta, calm down.

OLD LADY  
I will not calm down!

A BABY in a sling starts crying. His HIPSTER MOM, with shaved head, is pissed.

HIPSTER MOM  
You fucking woke the baby.

MR. MANDEL  
Young man, language!

The three tenants start fighting. OTHERS join in. Hannah and Mike are momentarily forgotten. Mike turns to Hannah.

MIKE  
Run.

He grabs her hand and they run out the door.

EXT. BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

As Mike and Hannah run down the street, hand-in-hand, they laugh. Hannah looks free, exhilarated.

INT. SIMON'S OLD BEDROOM - MORNING

CLOSE ON Simon's face, hit by morning sun. He winces. Opens one eye, then the next. Sits up.

His old bedroom is a time capsule. Two twin beds, a poster from a Marx Brothers movie, a Led Zeppelin poster, a small, neat desk. He looks over to the other twin bed, where Molly's belongings are strewn. Molly is not there. He looks at the clock: it's 11:46. Jesus. He gets out of bed.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Simon rattles in, looking for coffee. Julie is making something in a blender.

JULIE  
Want a margarita?

Simon just looks at her--really?

JULIE  
Don't judge. It's organic.

He goes past her to the coffee pot and pours a cup of coffee.

JULIE  
Mom called.

SIMON  
Yeah? How is she?

JULIE  
She and Roy bought a new boat.  
Guess what it's called.

SIMON  
"I moved to Florida and became a  
Jew and all I got was this lousy  
speed boat"?

JULIE  
"The Mrs. Moskowitz 3".

SIMON  
He's had two other boats named  
"Mrs. Moskowitz"?

JULIE  
And two other wives.  
(then)  
She asked how you were.

SIMON  
Nice of her.

JULIE  
How are you?

SIMON  
I'm good.

Simon drinks the coffee, winces. Julie doesn't believe him but doesn't push it.

JULIE  
How's Alexa doing?

SIMON  
I guess as well as can be expected  
when you're having poison pumped  
into what remains of your chest  
every week.

JULIE  
I used to fantasize about being  
sick so that Mom and Dad would pay  
attention to me.

SIMON  
That's fucked up.

JULIE  
That's the difference between us,  
Simon. You were the kid who just  
wanted to blend in, not cause a  
fuss. Me, I was like, "bring on the  
fuss"! I'm still waiting.

SIMON  
Don't worry, Jules. Someday you'll  
have a boat named after you, too.

Simon hears voices on the back porch and follows them.

INT. SCREENED-IN PORCH - MORNING

Molly and Mitch have their backs to us and are laughing.  
Molly is lounged on an old wicker couch with a blanket around  
her. Simon walks up.

SIMON

Hey--

They both turn to him. Molly has a joint in her hand.

SIMON

Whoa--what the fuck?!

She quickly stubs out the joint.

MITCH

Simon. Language.

Mitch cracks up.

SIMON

(To Mitch)

Getting a kid high? What is wrong with you?!

MOLLY

I asked. And I've been getting high since I was thirteen, Dad.

SIMON

What?!

MOLLY

It's Manhattan.

MITCH

That's one crazy-ass place.

Simon's cell phone rings. He looks at it.

SIMON

No one move. Seriously.  
(picking up phone)  
Hey Beth--

Simon crosses through the screen door to outside.

EXT. BACK YARD/BETH'S TRIBECA LOFT - CROSS-CUT

Beth is preparing thanksgiving in her expensive, white kitchen. Her 7-year-old DAUGHTER stands on a step stool, stirring soup.

BETH

Happy Thanksgiving.

SIMON

Not really. What's up?

Beth walks to other side of kitchen, to avoid her daughter hearing...

BETH  
Nick's in rehab.

SIMON  
Again?

BETH  
Two homeless guys found him passed out on the GW Bridge. They found enough heroin on him to kill a horse.

SIMON  
Jesus.

BETH  
So look, you have to finish editing this Modern Love piece. Closes next Friday.

SIMON  
I can't. I haven't even read the column, it's not my--

BETH  
You're the only one Nick trusts, apparently. I'm e-mailing the story.

Beth HEARS the front door open. She looks up.

BETH  
Gotta go. The ex and the new wife are here.

Beth puts on a fake smile and waves to TWO FASHIONABLE WOMEN who have entered with a pie.

BETH  
Make it happen, Simon.

She hangs up the phone. He looks around, shakes his head. How did his life become like this? Deana yells through the screen door:

DEANA  
We're about to start the Thanksgiving reading!

INT. MCELVANE DINING ROOM - DAY

The guests listen as Molly reads from a paper. Deana mouths the words along with her. Simon and Julie share looks across the table.

MOLLY

And so we enjoy this feast for the  
Wampanoag Indians who provided the  
first Thanksgiving only to be  
brutally slaughtered by our  
ancestors as a thank you.

Molly puts the paper down.

MOLLY

Rough.

DEANA

Thank you for reading, Molly.

Mitch raises an ugly, misshapen colored glass.

MITCH

To the Redskins.

DEANA

Mitchell.

They all raise clearly home-made, very ugly, wine glasses.

DEANA

Maybe don't clink.

MITCH

Deana blew them special for today.

ALL

(lying)

Oh they're lovely/beautiful, etc.

Molly can't help it. She cracks up. Julie and Udo follow suit. Mitch can't hold it in, either...

SIMON

Are you all high?

JULIE

No. Udo and I are just a little  
drunk.

MITCH

I'm high as a kite.

SIMON  
What kind of family is this?

UDO  
A messed up one.

MITCH  
(raising his glass)  
To Udo.

DEANA  
Don't clink!

SIMON  
You know what would be great? If we  
could have one normal meal  
together. Someday. One.

JULIE  
We're not normal.

SIMON  
I am. I am savagely normal.

MITCH  
Like that's something to be proud  
of.

DEANA  
Please don't say "savage" on  
Thanksgiving.

A beat, and then Simon starts to crack up. He puts his glass down too hard on the table and it SHATTERS INTO PIECES. The sight of the ugly glass in pieces makes him laugh even harder. Molly, Udo and Julie join in. As does Mitch, much to Deana's chagrin.

INT. SIMON'S SAAB - HEADING BACK TO THE CITY - NIGHT

Simon and Molly ride back in silence.

SIMON  
Just so you know, pot is just a hop  
skip to meth.

MOLLY  
No it's not.

SIMON  
Well just don't do it, okay?

MOLLY

Don't worry. I don't even like it that much.

SIMON

Okay, good. Because seriously, Mol, you're the best thing I got going.

MOLLY

Don't think that way. I'll just disappoint you.

SIMON

You know if you're scared about your Mom and me, you can tell me.

MOLLY

I'm not scared.

Molly looks out the window. Takes in the changing leaves.

MOLLY

I guess I'm just sad for all of us, a little.

SIMON

Yeah, me too.

They drive in silence.

MOLLY

Gamp's not gonna marry that woman, right?

SIMON

God no. Gampy thinks he's a free spirit like her, but really, he's just an angry, judgy Republican. Who grows and sells pot.

MOLLY

So he's a hippiecrate.

Simon laughs.

SIMON

Totally.

REHAB FACILITY - DAY

Nick and Simon sit on a pastel couch in a sunny room of this fancy rehab overlooking the hudson river. It could be a hotel, if it weren't for the heavy doors and nurses passing silently through.

NICK  
Spiffy, right? It's like the  
Mandarin Oriental.

SIMON  
Except I had to leave my Advil  
downstairs with security.  
(taking in the view)  
Though I suppose if you're gonna  
hit rock bottom, best to do it with  
a view of the river.

NICK  
Sorry to disappoint, but this is  
not my rock bottom.

SIMON  
You were passed out on the GW  
Bridge.

NICK  
Upper road way, not lower. No  
trucks allowed.

SIMON  
You know I can't do this Modern  
Love piece--

NICK  
Consider it your own personal  
rehab. You spend your days  
debunking the world. But you can't  
debunk love.  
(then, musing)  
That would make an awesome song  
title.

SIMON  
So you passed out on a bridge just  
so that I could learn a lesson. How  
giving of you.

NICK  
I'm a selfish asshole.  
(then)  
You know, the term "modern"--they  
used it to describe the time after  
the middle ages.

SIMON  
Because nothing says "modern" like  
the plague and chastity belts.

NICK  
 So this is your modern time. The  
 time after your middle age. Your  
 marriage is over--

SIMON  
 No one said that--

Nick raises his eyebrows, "get serious".

NICK  
 You can keep walking 79th street  
 with all that construction, or you  
 can take another route. This is  
 your future. Take some chances.

Simon takes this in, doesn't answer. A NURSE comes up.

NURSE  
 Mister Chapin, time for group.

NICK  
 (rolling his eyes)  
 Time for group.

Nick walks away. Simon looks out on the river...

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. SOHO HOUSE RESTAURANT - DAY

The river out the window.

REVERSE ON Simon and Hannah having lunch. Simon has Hannah's  
 essay out on the table, a red pen open and resting on the  
 papers.

SIMON  
 I just want to go over this ending.

Hannah sneaks a peek at the papers.

HANNAH  
 (insecure)  
 That's a lot of red marks, there.

SIMON  
 (putting it aside,  
 insecure himself)  
 Just commas, you know, grammar  
 stuff. So nine months later you  
 came back and looked him up--

HANNAH

Yeah, I called the fire house. And they told me he was on vacation in Europe.

SIMON

Really.

HANNAH

Yeah. First trip ever abroad. He booked it right after I left.

(then)

And turned out, the week he was away, there was a huge fire in Brooklyn. Six guys from his house died. He would have been there.

SIMON

You saved his life.

HANNAH

In a way, he saved mine.  
Metaphorically--

A WAITER puts a drink in front of Simon.

WAITER

Stoli, rocks.

SIMON

Thanks.

(then, to Hannah)

So why didn't you see him again?

HANNAH

(shrugging)

Things had changed. I had changed, he had changed.

(then)

You should probably change his name.

SIMON

Y'know, they've done studies on Prairie Voles--they're like these little mice--anyway, once they mate, hormones are released. Oxytoxin and vasopressin. It's like...sexual imprinting. It helps them mate for life. They think the same thing happens with humans.

HANNAH

Yeah well, if there were a science to love I think a lot more people would be successful at it, don't you?

Simon takes this in. Changes the subject.

SIMON

Look, what I'm getting at is, if you weren't going to stay together at the end, I think this piece needs a bigger wrap up--

HANNAH

But there was no wrap up. That's kinda the point. It was one awesome night. I had never let myself go like that. Let myself feel the possibilities.

SIMON

He wasn't husband material.

Simon sips his drink. It goes down surprisingly smooth.

HANNAH

Who said anything about wanting a husband?

SIMON

Sorry. You're right.

HANNAH

Mike wasn't there to be a relationship, he was there to show me how I could attack my future. With no fear.

Simon takes this in.

HANNAH

What. You think I'm a crazy single girl, right?

SIMON

What d'you mean?

HANNAH

I mean, you're married, you look at me and wonder when is she gonna settle down, stop searching, when is she gonna "wrap it up"?

SIMON  
How do you know I'm married?

HANNAH  
You mean, besides the wedding ring?

Simon looks down at his wedding ring. Touches it. For the first time he doesn't feel like lying. He looks up at Hannah.

SIMON  
Actually, I'm separated.

HANNAH  
Oh Geez, I'm sorry--

SIMON  
No, no. It's okay.

An awkward beat. Simon pulls the pages back in front of him and picks up the pen, makes a note.

SIMON  
So okay, no wrap-up.

Hannah smiles.

INT. SOHO HOUSE - SIXTH FLOOR

Simon and Hannah get into the elevator.

INT. ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

Simon pushes L. The doors shut. An awkward beat when they both realize where they are. They ride down in silence.

EXT. SUBWAY ENTRANCE - DAY

Simon gets out of the Broadway local subway station. He starts walking down Broadway. He looks up to see he is about to turn onto 79th street. He stops, and then starts walking north.

Seconds later, A TAXI RUNS THE RED LIGHT ON THE CORNER, HURTLES BY HIM ONTO 79TH STREET AND PLOWS THROUGH THE WINDOW OF A STARBUCKS.

The next few moments are surreal. Ambient sound goes away. As people run and converge on the accident, Simon stands on the corner and watches, removed. He is drawn by something and looks down at his arm. There is a little shard of glass stuck in his forearm. He pulls it out. A tiny drop of blood emerges. He wipes the blood away with his thumb, rubbing the blood between his thumb and forefinger, as though just now realizing he is alive.

INT. SIMON'S LIVINGROOM - SUNDAY MORNING

CLOSE ON Simon's arm, a band aid now covering where the glass had been. WIDEN TO find Simon waking on the couch. He rolls over, uncomfortable. He sits up slowly, rubs his eyes. He walks out of frame.

INT. HALLWAY - SIMON'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

He walks past his bedroom, where, the door ajar, he sees Alexa sleeping. Her exposed, bald head makes her look surprisingly small and vulnerable. He shuts the door and continues into the bathroom.

EXT. SIMON'S APARTMENT BUILDING - MORNING

An Upper West Side pre-war doorman building. Simon walks out in casual Sunday-morning clothes.

HANNAH (V.O.)  
Mike and I never saw each other  
again. And that was okay.

INT. LOCAL COFFEE SHOP - MORNING

Simon enters. As he does, he passes by an OLDER WOMAN at the counter, reading the New York Times. He is oblivious, but we see, looking over her shoulder, that she is reading the MODERN LOVE column with the headline "**Passage to India, by Way of an Elevator.**"

Without speaking, the DELI GUY hands Simon his usual to-go coffee. Simon smiles, and hands him his money. Behind him, an OLD MAN and his BLACK CARE GIVER share a booth and read the Times in silence. The OLD MAN reads the column as well.

HANNAH (V.O.)  
It was apparent to me only sometime  
after what that night had been: a  
moment of pure, shining glee.

As Simon walks out he passes a HIPSTER sitting on a bench, also reading the paper. Simon remains in his own world.

INT. AN APARTMENT HALLWAY - SUNDAY MORNING

New York Times lay in front of apartment doors. A door opens, revealing Hannah in her bathrobe. She reaches down for her paper.

HANNAH (V.O.)  
The kind that can happen only right  
before everything changes...

The door across the way OPENS revealing a MID 30S GUY in boxers, also getting his paper. They smile at each other, both caught in their private moment...

INT. NEW YORK TIMES BULLPEN - SUNDAY MORNING

Simon enters the nearly-empty office, crosses to his desk and logs on to his computer.

He opens his E-MAIL IN-BOX and is startled by what he sees on screen...e-mail after e-mail of submissions for Modern Love columns. We see QUICK CUTS of words from the e-mails' subject lines: *I couldn't let go...grief...fatherhood... sadness... gave him up at 16...divorce...dizzy love...I hated her...loved him...felt...feel.* He pushes back in his chair and just stares at the sheer amount of emotion in his in-box.

SIMON

Holy shit.

INT. SIMON'S BEDROOM - EVENING

Simon packs some clothes up into a duffle.

HANNAH (V.O.)

It could only take full shape then.  
Because such distilled purity can  
be obtained only in retrospect...

He zips up the bag and exits, turning off the light. OVER BLACK We HEAR the front door slam.

EXT. SIMON'S APARTMENT BUILDING - EVENING

Simon exits, his duffle over his shoulder.

HANNAH (V.O.)

...with time.

He pauses for a moment, perhaps unsure which direction to go. He turns and walks east. We watch him go away from us.

HANNAH (V.O.)

In an aftermath.

END OF SHOW

