

PULLING

"Moving On"

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PULLING

"MOVING ON"

FADE IN:

SPLIT SCREEN - THREE WAYS - MORNING

CLOSE ON the faces of DONNA, LOUISE, AND KAREN, our three leads, each featured in their own vertical strip on the screen. Donna has a far-away look, Louise a gaze of loving adoration, and Karen one of confident determination.

After a moment, we WIPE Louise and Karen away, leaving us:

INT. DONNA AND KARL'S BEDROOM

DONNA DANIELLO, beautiful, a little neurotic, sighs heavily. She is bored.

KARL (O.S.)

Donna. Donna? You can stop now.

REVEAL **KARL LOCHART**, mid-30's, balding, paunchy, in bed next to her. He's not bad-looking, just not the guy Donna ever dreamed about when she was a girl flipping through "Modern Bride."

KARL (CONT'D)

I'm finished. I, uh, y'know--

DONNA

Oh. Yeah. Of course.

She looks down, stops moving her hand under the covers, and gives Karl a perfunctory kiss on the forehead. As she gets up--

SPLIT SCREEN back to the three ladies for a beat, then WIPE Donna off the left of the screen and Karen off the right, leaving us

INT. KAREN AND LOUISE'S APARTMENT

REVEAL **LOUISE MILLER** holding a camera, taking photos of someone off-screen. The girl-next-door type, Louise is sweet, somewhat naive, and relentlessly positive about everything.

LOUISE

(takes pictures)

You are so cute! Ooh, I think I'll have to put that one in a frame. Y'know, I've never had a boyfriend who's frame-worthy before... How about one of us together?

Louise goes over to the subject of her photos-- **JIMMY**, mid-30's, nice looking, smiling slightly... and fast asleep on the couch. Louise gazes lovingly at him, then sits down next to him and puts his limp arm around her shoulder.

Just as she holds out the camera to take a picture of them, he starts to stir. Louise freezes-- but Jimmy just gives a little sleepy snuffle and falls back asleep, his mouth wide open.

LOUISE (CONT'D)
Who knows, maybe this will be our
holiday card?

As Louise smiles brightly and the camera flashes--

SPLIT SCREEN back to the three of them: Donna brushes her teeth, while in the bathroom mirror, we can see Karl scrubbing his ass with a loofah sponge in the shower; and Karen strides down the street, up to a nondescript storefront and enters. We WIPE Donna and Louise off the screen, leaving us

INT. RENTAL OFFICE

KAREN DENUDO walks in. Attractive with a real South Philly edge-- tight clothes, loose lips-- she goes over to an older man, TOM. His face lights up when he sees her.

TOM
Well, look who's here to brighten
my morning. How are you, Karen?

KAREN
Good, Tommy, yourself? Hey, how's
Sheila? She ever get her tricycle?

TOM
Good memory. It came in last week--
just in time for her birthday.
(takes envelope from her)
Thanks, dear. You remembered about
the increase this month, right?

KAREN
Yeah... I was hoping you could give
us a break on that. Y'know, a few
months grace period or something.

TOM
Sorry, Karen, I can't really do that.

KAREN
No, obviously, not forever, just a
few more months at the old rent...
For me? Pleasepleaseplease?

TOM
I just work here, dear. That's really
not something I can do. I am sorry.

KAREN
(beat, then)
You're sorry? How you think I feel?

TOM

Excuse me?

KAREN

Standing here each month, smiling,
while you blab on about your
granddaughter-- Sheila this, Sheila
that, Sheila and her stupid freakin'
tricycle! What was I pretending to
be interested in all that for if you
won't even help me? You think I care
about your miserable old life?

(off his stunned look)

Gimme that. We're moving out.

She grabs the rent money back from him and storms off.

INT. CHICKIE & PETE'S - AFTERNOON

A working class diner/bar that is lined with a mixture of Eagles,
Phillies and Flyers paraphernalia and various "pub mirrors."
Karen combs the classifieds while Louise, wearing a waitress
apron, shows Donna pictures on her digital camera.

DONNA

(off pictures)

Look at you two. He looks so relaxed
around you, that's so... is he asleep?

LOUISE

Out cold. We were up all night
talking. Just talking! I've never
dated a man like him.

KAREN

Y'mean, with the sex drive of my 89-
year-old grandmother?

DONNA

Leave her alone. I think it's sweet
he wants to take things slow.

LOUISE

Jimmy actually likes me. It's not
about, "Let's see how quickly I can
get in Louise's pants" or "Louise, can
I borrow a thousand dollars?" or
"Let's go on 'vacation' to Chile and
use Louise as a drug mule."

DONNA

Yeah, that guy was... bad.

KAREN

At least all his parts worked.

(then, off paper)

Here's one: modern two-bedroom, cheap...

(MORE)

KAREN (CONT'D)
 Hey, there's an open house right now.
 Can you swing it, Lou?

LOUISE
 I guess... if we do it quick.

KAREN
 Want to come, Donna? It's not far.

DONNA
 Just for a little. I've got to meet
 Karl and interview florists.

As they get up, and Louise removes her waitress apron...

LOUISE
 We've really got to hurry. I'm
 already cutting my shift short to
 have dinner with Jimmy.

KAREN
 What's more important, finding a
 place to live, or going out with
 some guy you're not really dating?

LOUISE
 Jimmy and I are dating. Just
 because he's a gentleman who--

KAREN
 Gentleman? Does he shave his balls?

LOUISE
 What?

KAREN
 His sac-- does he shave it?

LOUISE
 I don't know.

KAREN
 Then you're not dating.

They exit, and we find ourselves...

EXT. STREET

Donna, Karen, and Louise walk down the narrow, cobbled, decidedly unglamorous streets of South Philly. The tiny lawns of 200-year-old row homes are adorned with plastic ornaments.

LOUISE
 So, getting excited about the big day?

DONNA
 I guess...

Karen and Louise share a look of concern.

DONNA (CONT'D)

It's just that it's only a few months away, and there's still so much to do.

KAREN

Well don't worry about the bachelorette party. We've taken care of everything.

DONNA

Remember, Karl said no strippers.

KAREN

Donna, you're signing up for a life of boring sex-- you gotta go out with a bang.

DONNA

No strippers. And what makes you think Karl and I have boring sex?

KAREN

Maybe 'cause you said it was about as exciting as watching Sportscenter?

LOUISE

No, she said sometimes they did it *while* he was watching Sportscenter.

DONNA

All right, that was a phase, okay? Everybody goes through a phase like that when they've been together as long as me'n'Karl. But now, it's great. Trust me, things are really steamy, I mean, really x-rated. That other phase was a long time ago, when I said that, it was--

LOUISE

It was last Wednesday.

DONNA

No. Was it?

Off Donna's concerned look...

INT. RENTAL APARTMENT

A small two-bedroom apartment with nice wood floors. Karen, Louise, and Donna look around.

LOUISE

It is nice.

KAREN

It's freakin' perfect! It's cheap, close to both our jobs, there's two big bedrooms--

The LANDLADY, a pinched woman in her 50's, wanders by.

KAREN (CONT'D)

Excuse me, could we get an application?

LANDLADY

(looks them over, then)

Y'know, I'd really prefer a couple.

She moves off.

KAREN

Screw that-- this place is a steal. I'm not giving up that easily.

MICHAEL, 30's, an attractive man also checking out the apartment, smiles at her. The girls notice.

DONNA

He's cute.

Karen goes up to him.

KAREN

Hi... I know you, don't I?

MICHAEL

Yes, we...

KAREN

Don't tell me-- the Ballroom, right?
(flirtatious)

Yeah, I remember now. We hit it off pretty well that night, didn't we?

MICHAEL

Um, I think--

KAREN

What, you're shy? You didn't seem so shy in the bathroom when I stuck my tongue in your mouth and grabbed your--

JOSH (O.S.)

Miss Denudo?

JOSH, a six-year-old, walks up, accompanied by his MOTHER.

KAREN

Oh, Josh. Hi. Funny seeing you outside of school.

(to Michael, realizing)

Wait, you're--

MICHAEL
I'm Josh's Dad. We met Parents Night?

On Karen's horror...

INT. KARL'S PLACE - KITCHEN

Karl and Donna have dinner with **PEG LOCHART**, Karl's mother, mid-50's, way too much make-up. Karl slurps his spaghetti, completely focused on the evening's Sportscenter.

DONNA
...I'm not saying I don't like Beefsteak Charlie's-- I do-- I just wish you had run it by us before booking it for the rehearsal dinner. Right, Karl? Karl?

He turns his head slowly towards Donna, keeping his eyes on the TV until the last possible moment before finally looking at her.

KARL
What? Yeah.

PEG
I'm sorry, Donna. I ran it by Karl.

DONNA
You--? Oh. Well, he never told... Karl, you never told me that-- Karl?

But Karl's gone back to the TV.

KARL
Yeah, baby, go-- GO-- YEAH!!

PEG
(smiles)
He loves his sports.

DONNA
Peg, c'mon. It's a chain. The food--

PEG
Oh, the food's great, isn't it? You don't open as many restaurants as Mr. Charlie without knowing a thing or two about food. And buffets. You know how much Karl loves buffets.

DONNA
But it's my *rehearsal dinner*--

PEG
Donna dear, you're getting married. It's not about you anymore-- you have someone else's happiness to worry about now.

Peg looks lovingly over at Karl, who spills spaghetti all over his shirt as he eats. Off Donna, the panic welling up inside...

INT. PAT'S STEAKS

Louise and Jimmy eat at the counter in the packed Philly Cheesesteak joint. Jimmy takes Louise's hand. She likes it.

LOUISE
I really like you, Jimmy. You're not like other guys I've... I feel safe with you.

JIMMY
I like you too, Louise... In fact, I like you so much, that I need to tell you something. Something about me, my past that, well... I'm not proud of. But I feel like if we're going to keep seeing each other, I owe it to you to, to be honest about...

Jimmy trails off, this is difficult for him. Louise just smiles at him, then takes a bite of her cheesesteak.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
Anyway, I'm not sure how to... I'm a flasher, Louise. An ex-flasher.

LOUISE
What?

JIMMY
I used to expose parts of my naked body, specifically my... penis, to young women.

LOUISE
(taken aback)
Oh.

JIMMY
I'm in recovery now. But I'll understand if you don't want to--

LOUISE
How young?

JIMMY
Not *really* young. You can't always tell, but mostly eighteen and up.

LOUISE
Which is the age of consent, so...

Louise takes another bite of her cheesesteak, then:

LOUISE (CONT'D)
 (cheerful)
 So where should we go for desert?

As Jimmy stares at her, not sure what to make of it all...

EXT. FLORIST - NEXT DAY

Donna talks with Louise and Karen, who picks through the bouquets in the "\$5 and under" section.

DONNA
 I was sitting there looking at him and all of a sudden I just felt... trapped.

KAREN
 Lou, what kind of flowers should we get that landlady?

LOUISE
 Carnations?

DONNA
 I love Karl, I do. But sometimes I just wonder if he's really... the one.

LOUISE
 Nobody's perfect, Donna. You have to look for the good in people-- and Karl's a good man. He's dependable.

DONNA
 Yeah, but is that enough reason to--

LOUISE
 He's predictable, God knows. You don't have to worry about surprises, you always know exactly what he's thinking.

DONNA
 Is... that a good thing?

KAREN
 Look, Don, it doesn't matter what we think. You're the one doing this. Why are you marrying him?

DONNA
 I guess, we were together so long, then he asked me to marry him, and I said yes because, well, that's what you do after six years, and--

KAREN
 No, that's what you do-- 'cause you're afraid to say no to anybody, about anything. *Ever.*
 (MORE)

KAREN (CONT'D)
 Now will you stop trying to please
 everyone else for one second and worry
 about what you want?

As Donna considers this...

LOUISE
 He likes animals.

DONNA
 Would you marry him, Louise?

LOUISE
 Hell no. Aren't we talking about you?

DONNA
 (rising agitation)
 Oh, I don't know-- what if I'm just
 having cold feet? They say everyone goes
 through this. What if... oh my God,
 what if I break it off and then I never
 find anyone else? What if--

KAREN
 Okay, just calm down.
 (beat, as she does)
 Now. Imagine he's dead.

DONNA
 What? That's horrible, I can't--

KAREN
 Just for a second. Heart attack, eaten
 by sharks, whatever-- just do it. Do it!

DONNA
 Fine... Okay, he's dead. He's... dead.

After a moment, Donna lets out a long, calm sigh of relief.

KAREN
 Better?

DONNA
 Wow, that's... Yeah.
 (realizes)
 Oh my God. I can't go through with this.

As a look of determination settles on Donna's face...

LOUISE
 Another nice thing about Karl is
 that he would never hit you.

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. KARL'S PLACE - THAT EVENING

Donna enters, looking grim. Karl jumps up, excited to see her.

KARL
At last! I've been waiting for you.

DONNA
Really? Oh, I was just out with the girls and, um... Karl, look, I have something to talk to you about.

KARL
Oh, no, me first. I have news too.

DONNA
No, Karl, listen...

KARL
Ready? Ready for the best surprise of your life? Ready to find out what kind of man you're marrying? Ready to be the owner of-- a house?!

DONNA
What?

KARL
The one in East Falls. I bought it-- the paperwork went through today! You didn't think we were gonna live with my Mom forever, did you?

DONNA
Karl-- you didn't even like that place.

KARL
But you loved it. And nothing's too good for my wife!

Donna stands there, stunned, horrified.

KARL (CONT'D)
Look at you-- this is great! Okay, what's your news? C'mon, top that.

DONNA
Okay. Uh, well...

INT. SCHOOL - KAREN'S CLASSROOM

Early next morning. Karen is in her empty classroom, setting out crafts and such for the upcoming day. MICHAEL (the dad she mistook for a former conquest) pokes his head in.

KAREN
Oh! Hi. *Michael*. What are you...?

MICHAEL
Just had a conference with the head
of the school-- y'know, Mr. Serious.

KAREN
(laughs)
Mr. Davidson.

MICHAEL
Yeah, him. It's like, Dude,
lighten up, they're five!

KAREN
Listen... About the other day--

MICHAEL
Please. Forget it.

KAREN
No, you have entrusted me to teach
your precious little Joey--

MICHAEL
Josh.

KAREN
Right, Josh, and I don't want you
or your wife to think--

MICHAEL
Ex-wife.

KAREN
Think that I'm the kind of person--

Michael kisses her.

KAREN (CONT'D)
--kind of person who would just--

She kisses back, pulling him to her. Their hands are all
over each other. They speak in gasps, between kisses:

KAREN (CONT'D)
We can't... Davidson won't be happy
if he catches me... again...

MICHAEL
Let's go somewhere...

KAREN
Kids get here soon... Gotta be close...

INT. RENTAL APARTMENT

The landlady leads an elderly couple up to the apartment.

LANDLADY

Thanks for meeting me so early.

(off the locked door)

Hm, I was sure I left it open.

She unlocks the door with her keys... and there's Karen, skirt hiked up, and Michael behind her, his pants at his ankles.

KAREN

So, did you, uh, get the carnations?

INT. CHICKIE AND PETE'S - THAT AFTERNOON

Donna sits with Karen while Louise hovers shirking her waitressing duties. Donna is agitated, absently ripping up napkins. There is a growing pile of mangled paper in front of her.

LOUISE

I can't believe you actually did it!

DONNA

Me neither. But I'm pretty sure I did the right thing.

KAREN

Definitely. You definitely did. Oh thank God I didn't buy my dress yet.

Donna starts calmly ripping up another napkin. As Karen watches, concerned...

LOUISE

Well, I'm proud of you, Donna. That takes real guts. I mean, you had something most women would die for-- a guy who loved you, who worshipped you-- and you just threw it all-- ow!

KAREN

(kicks Louise, then)

So, uh, how did it go? The breakup?

DONNA

Um... you ever kick a puppy?

KAREN

Really? Was it that--

DONNA

Wearing, like, steel-toed boots?

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. KARL'S PLACE - LAST NIGHT

Karl is on his knees.

KARL
Please don't do this, Donna. Don't
leave me. Please, please please
don't leave me. Please, please--

DONNA
Karl, don't, don't beg, it's not--

KARL
Is it something I did?

DONNA
Karl, it's not you, it's us. We don't
even talk anymore.

KARL
We could talk now.

DONNA
No, that's not the-- we've just,
we've become boring.

KARL
Okay... do you want to do a threesome?

DONNA
What?

KARL
No, I mean with a man, if that's what
you want--

DONNA
Karl, that's not--

KARL
I'm willing to try it, I just don't
want to touch his-- okay, look, I'll
touch it but I won't put it in my--

DONNA
Karl! I just don't want to marry you!

KARL
Oh God. I think... I think I'm gonna...

DONNA
What, Karl? Spit it out.

Karl turns his head away and vomits.

BACK TO:

The girls in the diner. The pile of shredded napkins in front of Donna is considerably larger.

LOUISE
You okay, Don?

KAREN
Course she is, right Donna? You're free now, you've got your life back.

DONNA
Sure, I'm glad to be free, that's great, that's... but the look on his face when... I mean, I ruined a man's life yesterday, smashed it to pieces. Do you have any idea what that feels like?

LOUISE
I can't even imagine. To have that kind of power over someone, to just crush them like a bug... that's gotta feel cool.

DONNA
No, Louise, it doesn't feel *cool*. It feels horrible!

KAREN
He'll get over it. They all do.
(then, to Louise)
How much you think we can get for those ugly-ass bridesmaid shoes on ebay?

DONNA
You don't understand. He was a broken man, like he'd fallen from a great-- no, not fallen, been pushed-- and then stabbed over and over... and over...

LOUISE
C'mon, that musta felt a *little* cool.

DONNA
NO!

KAREN
So is it too soon to ask him for a favor?

DONNA
A... what?

KAREN
Okay, remember that really great two-bedroom we saw? Well, that landlady's kind of... down on me right now.

(MORE)

KAREN (CONT'D)

But since she said she wanted a couple to live there, I thought maybe you and Karl could rent the place together, then you could sublet it to me and Louise.

DONNA

I'm sorry, were you listening? I shattered this man's life yesterday, literally sickened him. He's probably curled up on the floor right now, banging his head against the wall-- all because of me-- and you want me to...

KAREN

Fine, forget it. How about you Louise? Feel like putting that pretend boyfriend of yours to some actual use?

LOUISE

I don't know, it could get complicated. Technically, Jimmy has to register any new address with the authorities.
(off their looks, shrugs)
He used to be sort of a sex offender.

A beat, as Donna and Karen look at each other, flabbergasted.

KAREN

Christ almighty, Louise. You're dating a sex offender?!

LOUISE

Not the bad kind. Just a flasher. And he's reformed. Anyway, what's it matter? We're not *really* dating, right?

KAREN

Please tell me you are not that stupid.

DONNA

Louise, look, I think it's great you're willing to forgive people for... well, just about anything, it turns out.

KAREN

I think it's moronic.

DONNA

It's just, Karen and I, we care about you, and we're not sure you should get involved with, well...

KAREN

A freak!

LOUISE

Who are we to judge a man by his past?

KAREN

We're people who don't go around
flashing our sex organs to strangers.
(off their looks)
Okay, that was *once* at a Penn State
game. You can't compare me to some--
(then, notices)
Great. Fat Tanya just walked in.

LOUISE

I am *not* in the mood for Fat Tanya
right now.

DONNA

Guys, c'mon, don't call her that.

KAREN

Why not? We've been calling her that
since third grade. 'Cept that stretch
when she was Fat Pizza-Face Tanya.

TANYA OLSON, overweight, appears at their table and, uninvited,
sits down with them at their booth.

TANYA

Hey, girls. What's going on?

Louise just glares at her. Karen nods in acknowledgement.

KAREN

(mumbles)
Hey F.T.

Donna quickly gets up and takes Tanya aside.

DONNA

Tanya, hey! Look, um, we're kind of in
the middle of a *thing* over here. If
you could just give us a few...

TANYA

No biggee. Just wanted to tell you
I ran into Karl this morning.
Small world, huh?

DONNA

(expecting the worst)
Ooh. How was he?

TANYA

Fine-- he was coming back from the gym.

Donna's expression changes from concern to utter shock.

DONNA

The gym? Really? That's-- the *gym*?

TANYA
Yeah. Why?

DONNA
And he wasn't... he seemed... fine?

TANYA
Fine, y'know. Good. Donna, did something happen between you two that--?

DONNA
No, no, it's just, well... you sure this was today?

TANYA
You should be happy. Most guys only take care of themselves when they're on the market, y'know, out there.
(then)
Anyway, maybe one night the four of us girls could go out and hang, just like--

DONNA
Yeah, that'd be-- excuse me.

Donna walks away from Tanya and back to the booth where things between Louise and Karen are getting heated.

LOUISE
What's wrong with this world? Why can't we give people a second chance?!

KAREN
I'm not saying don't give people a second chance. I'm saying don't give *perverts* a second chance!

DONNA
Look, there's no point fighting about it-- I'll just go and ask Karl to do the favor, okay?

LOUISE
But that's not what we're--

DONNA
Yeah, I should probably check in on him anyway, see how he's doing...

Off Donna, her mind racing about Karl...

EXT. KARL'S PLACE

Donna knocks at the door. It opens, revealing Peg.

PEG
You have some nerve coming here.

DONNA
Peg, uh, hi. So, you're probably upset
with me--

PEG
What do you want, Donna?

DONNA
Right. I came to ask Karl a, uh, fav--
(off her look, quickly)
Just wanted to see how he's doing.

PEG
How's he doing? You really want to
know? He's happy. Happier than I've
seen him in a long time.

DONNA
Happy? Peg, c'mon--

PEG
What's wrong? Thought he'd be sitting
around, crying his eyes out over you?
Well, he's not. Fact, he's moving
into his new house as we speak.

DONNA
The house he bought for me-- for us?

PEG
That's right. And he was whistling
as he packed up.

DONNA
That's a big house for one... did you
say *whistling*?

PEG
Trust me, he won't be alone for long.

DONNA
Karl can't whistle. I've never
heard him whistle, not once.

PEG
He's quite a catch. Single man
with a house like that.

DONNA
What song?

PEG
What?

DONNA
What song was he whistling?

PEG

Deal with it, Donna. He's moving on.

Peg slams the door in her face. Off Donna, reeling...

INT. LOUISE'S BEDROOM

Louise and Jimmy sit on the bed together, both fully clothed.

LOUISE

How about if I close my eyes?

Jimmy shakes his head "no."

LOUISE (CONT'D)

We could turn the lights off. Just your shirt?

JIMMY

I'm sorry. I know you must be frustrated with me.

LOUISE

No, it's just-- well, taking your clothes off, that's kind of your bread and butter. I mean, you are a flasher.

JIMMY

Was. That's in the past. But it's left me with some shame issues about, y'know, revealing myself... even to you.

LOUISE

(sighs)

I understand. Come here.

(hugs him lovingly)

We'll take this slowly, okay? The last thing I'd ever want to do is make you uncomfortable.

JIMMY

You are an angel, you know that? You are the most compassionate, gentle, caring person I have ever met.

LOUISE

(beat, then)

What if we go to the park, and pretended I was a stranger?

(off his horrified look)

Just an idea.

EXT. KARL'S NEW HOUSE

A modest but nice-looking home with a small front yard. Donna rings the doorbell. No answer. She walks over to look into the bay window facing the street. Her eyes go wide with alarm.

INT. KARL'S NEW HOUSE

Donna comes through the front door and goes over to Karl, lying on the floor, passed out in a pile of empty beer cans. There are a few yet-to-be unpacked boxes around. She shakes him awake.

DONNA

Karl, what are you--? For God's sake, one moment you're throwing up on me, next thing you're at the gym, you're moving into this house by your-- and can you whistle?

KARL

(groggy)
I thought if I kept really busy then...

DONNA

Then what? You could just... move on? We spent six years together, Karl, doesn't that mean anything to--

Donna notices something in his hand -- it's an aspirin bottle. Donna takes the bottle, finds...

DONNA (CONT'D)

It's empty. Karl did you-- did you try to kill yourself?

KARL

Wha...? No. There were only two left. I was trying to prevent a hangover.
(lies back down)
Unghhh... didn't work.

DONNA

Oh my God, you did, didn't you? You tried to kill yourself!

KARL

No, really, I just took two--

DONNA

You tried to kill yourself because I broke up with you! How could you be so crazy?!

Off Donna's manic expression of barely-contained joy, we:

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. KARL'S NEW HOUSE - TWO DAYS LATER

Karl sits on a still-packed moving box, sporting a few days growth, watching Sportscenter. He takes the fast food wrapper off a giant burger and tries to take a bite, but it's too big, and ketchup leaks out all over the floor. He walks over to the kitchen drawer, trailing ketchup, only to find it empty. He starts going through a nearby box, finds a huge kitchen knife. As he puts the burger down on the counter and starts to cut it in half...

Donna walks in, carrying a duffel bag. She sees the trail of ketchup on the floor, Karl holding the huge knife, and screams.

KARL
(startled)
Don't do that! I almost cut myself.

Karen and Michael come running in from the other room.

KAREN
What happened? What--

DONNA
Nothing, I thought he was trying to...
(then, off Michael)
What's he doing here? You said you would watch Karl while I went to work.

KAREN
I was watching him. I got bored of that, cause he wasn't doing anything.

DONNA
Karen! You said you'd help me! You know I can't just call in sick. The department store's been laying people off, and I can't afford to--

KAREN
Can I talk to you?
(pulls Donna aside)
Okay, you've had us on this suicide watch for two days now-- and far as I can tell, the guy is completely fine.

DONNA
How can you say that? Look at him. He's a shell of a person.

KAREN
I dunno. Seems to me that's pretty much how he was before you dumped him.

Karl's back watching Sportscenter, completely absorbed. He looks exactly like he did at the dinner in ACT I, except instead of spilling spaghetti on his shirt, he's dripping ketchup.

KAREN (CONT'D)

Okay, maybe he's depressed. But you broke up with him, remember? You're not responsible for him anymore.

DONNA

I can't just ignore him. He's like this *because* I broke up with him. What if he makes another attempt?

KAREN

Are we even sure it *was* an attempt? He said there were only two aspirin in the bottle.

DONNA

That's my point. We might not be so lucky next time.

In the background, Karl takes a big bite of his burger-- and starts choking on it.

KAREN

Donna, you said you were excited to have your life back-- well, that starts now. Louise and I are going dancing tonight and you're coming with us. No excuses.

DONNA

But I can't. *Someone's* gotta watch him.

Karl, still choking, tries in vain to get their attention.

KAREN

Well it's not gonna be you.

DONNA

I... I guess I could ask Tanya.

KAREN

Great idea. What else does Fat Tanya have to do anyway?

Louise comes in, walks right past the choking Karl.

LOUISE

Hey Karl. I'm here for my shift.

(to Donna)

He seems okay. How's it going here?

KAREN

Great. Donna's coming out with us tonight and Fat Tanya'll watch Karl.

LOUISE

Perfect. For Fat Tanya too-- she'll have a captive audience for once.

DONNA

Don't call her that! She's a good person.

KAREN

Will you stop being so nice all the time? It's not high school, you're not running for freakin' student council anymore!

Michael notices Karl choking, starts giving him the Heimlich.

KAREN (CONT'D)

Oh, Louise, they called about the rent again today-- we gotta get outta that place. Can you and your wack-job, make-believe boyfriend go see that landlady and pretend to be a normal, happy couple?

LOUISE

(angry)

We are a normal happy couple! Not everyone has to have sex to be happy!

KAREN

Um, I can see that.

Karl finally coughs up the burger. He gasps for air, then:

KARL

Please don't leave me with Fat Tanya.

INT. RENTAL APARTMENT

A flushing sound, then Louise comes out of the bathroom.

LOUISE

Sorry about that. Good water pressure.

(looks around)

Guys? Where'd you go?

LANDLADY (O.S.)

Here's the application, just-- OH MY GOD!

Louise rushes around the corner, only to find the landlady staring down at Jimmy (whose back is toward Louise), disgusted.

LOUISE

Oh, you'll show it to her but not to me? I'm not good enough for you, is that it!? Karen was right about you, you're just a sick, perverted--

Jimmy turns around, hurt-- and fully zipped up.

JIMMY

Louise, is that really what you think?

LOUISE

What? But she was--

Louise whirls around, and sees what the landlady was staring at-- a dead rat, curled up in the corner behind Jimmy. As the landlady takes the application back from Jimmy...

INT. CLUB - LATER

The girls are in a packed club, standing at the bar. As Donna gets them drinks, Louise and Karen shout over the music.

LOUISE

Sorry about messing up our chance at that apartment.

KAREN

That's okay. It was worth it to get that sick bastard out of your life.

(then, gently)

Louise... you're a pretty, nice, relatively normal girl who deserves-- well, you just might want to think about setting the bar a little higher.

LOUISE

I will. Thanks, Kar.

(then, off guy in crowd)

Hey, he's cute. Should I go talk to him?

KAREN

What, him? Christ, Lou, the guy's only got one leg! Didn't you hear a word I--?

Donna interrupts, back from the bar with a beer for each of them.

DONNA

Well, I got elbowed, groped and I had to bite a girl on the arm-- but I made it to the front just in time for dollar beers.

KAREN

Whaddaya know, kitty got claws!

(raises bottle)

To Donna-- and cheap beer!

As the three laugh and clink beers, a great song comes on, and they all start dancing together. Donna is genuinely enjoying herself-- the first time we've seen this. Fun looks good on her.

Suddenly Karen jumps up on the bar. After a moment, Donna joins her, and the crowd cheers them on as Karen leads them in a wild dance routine. After a few moments, when Donna goes to hop off the bar, a tall guy with a killer smile, PATRICK, helps her down.

PATRICK

Hello.

She gives him a big smile. If Donna's forgotten how to flirt, it's coming back to her pretty fast.

DONNA

Hi...

PATRICK

Patrick. I liked your dancing.

DONNA

Thanks. I like your, uh... chin?

Crap, my phone's-- excuse me--

(into phone)

Hello? Speak up, Tanya-- he's what?

Elsewhere in the crowd, Karen catches her breath after her bar-top performance. Donna comes over.

DONNA (CONT'D)

We gotta go. Tanya called, she bored Karl right into the bathroom-- and he's locked himself in. He's very unstable, Karen. God, if anything happens...

KAREN

Okay, look, you're not gonna want to hear this, but I'm going to say it anyway, cause I'm your friend. You have to stop clinging to him.

DONNA

What? I'm not, I'm just worried that--

KAREN

You're not worried. You're looking for an excuse to stay in his life.

DONNA

Oh my God. You are so wrong.

KAREN

Am I? I've been there, Donna. I know. Now, I'm not leaving and neither are you. For your own sanity, and for Karl's-- and for mine-- you have to let go.

DONNA

(just stares at her, then)

Fine, stay here. I'll get a cab.

INT. KARL'S NEW HOUSE

Donna walks in-- to find Karl and Tanya curled up together, post-coital. They scramble to cover themselves.

DONNA

What the--? I can't believe you, Tanya!
He's mentally unbalanced, he obviously
needs to be handled with kid gloves--

KARL

Donna, that's not really--

DONNA

--shut up, Karl-- and you come in here
like some, some *skeev* and--

TANYA

At least I'm not the selfish bitch
who dumped him in the first place!

DONNA

How dare you! You have no idea
what-- what really--
(flustered, blurts out)
You're fat!

KARL

STOP! Both of you!
(then, to Donna)
I know you've been trying to, well...
to do something. But Tanya is the
first person who gets what I really
need right now-- which is to stop
thinking about you all the time.

TANYA

That's right!
(then, to Karl)
Wait, was that all it was to you?
A distraction?

Karl looks between Donna and Tanya, knowing he'll cause a
shitstorm no matter what he says.

DONNA

I hope you're happy together.

As Donna leaves, stung...

TANYA

You were thinking about her when we
were doing it, weren't you?

KARL

Um...

END ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

EXT. KARL'S NEW HOUSE

Donna knocks on the door. Karl opens it, humming to himself. He's clearly been painting the place-- wears sweat pants and a t-shirt streaked with white paint and holds a large brush.

KARL
Donna... hi, um...

DONNA
Don't worry, I'm not gonna come in.
Just came to get my duffel bag.

KARL
And to see if Tanya's still here.
Which she's not. She left last
night right after you did.

DONNA
(clearly relieved)
Whatever. I don't really--
(then)
Maybe I'll come in, just for a little.

She starts to head in, but Karl stops her.

KARL
Donna...

DONNA
(re paint)
Don't worry, I'm not gonna touch
anything. If you want me to wear
those little booties--

KARL
I need some time. Away from you.
You understand.

DONNA
Oh. Yeah. Yeah, of course.
(then)
Karl... I'm sorry. I know I've been...
It's just been a lot harder for me to
let go than I thought it would. But
I'll be better now. You sleeping with
Tanya... I guess that was, in a way,
just what I needed.

KARL
Yeah. Me too.

Karl chuckles uneasily. Donna doesn't.

DONNA

I just hope we can... I mean, after
all the time we've had together...
just to have lunch sometimes, or...

KARL

Don't worry. We'll always be friends.

Without warning, she whacks him on the side of the head.

DONNA

Not if you screw any more of my
girlfriends we won't! I can't
believe you did that to me!

KARL

Wha-- Me? You're the one who broke
up with me, remember?

DONNA

Yeah, but that doesn't mean I want
you to... to just...

KARL

What? What do you want, Donna?

The question just hangs there for a moment, and Donna realizes she doesn't have an answer.

DONNA

I don't know. I just know that I
don't want to be married to you.
Not... right now, anyway.
(then, sweetly)
You've got paint on your nose.

As she walks away, realizing just how many questions she's facing now that she doesn't know the answer to...

KARL

(calls after her)
So I'll just... hold onto your bag?

INT. KAREN AND LOUISE'S APARTMENT - LATER

Karen and Louise help Donna carry in some boxes.

DONNA

...just saw him this morning. I
think the real danger's passed--
but he's still a wreck, poor guy.

KAREN

(going along with it)
Poor guy.
(then, off apartment)
(MORE)

KAREN (CONT'D)
 Anyway-- welcome back. Just like
 the good old days, eh?

Donna looks around.

DONNA
 Yeah... Except you're living in my old
 room. And Louise is living in your old
 room. And I'm sleeping in the closet.

KAREN
 And it takes three of us to afford
 the rent.

LOUISE
 And we're all six years older.

DONNA
 (just hitting her)
 Oh my God. I've just wasted six
 years of my life.

KAREN
 C'mon, that's not true. Right Louise?

LOUISE
 Actually, I can see why she'd--

DONNA
 I'm almost thirty, and what do I
 have to show for it? No career, no
 kids, I don't even have a boyfriend.

LOUISE
 You have us Donna. You'll always have us.

Donna, touched, pulls both of them into a hug.

DONNA
 Come here. I love you guys. You're
 the best friends I could ever ask
 for. I mean that.

KAREN
 (still in the hug)
 You're not getting your old room back.

LOUISE
 Hey, what's that on your hand?

DONNA
 Oh... the guy from the club last night,
 he wanted my number, and when I wouldn't
 give it to him, he wrote down his.

LOUISE
 So? Call him.

DONNA

I will.
 (off their eager looks)
 Now?

KAREN

Why not? You said it yourself,
 you're six years behind schedule.

DONNA

Well... he did seem nice. And he
 was very into me. All right.

Donna takes a deep breath, takes out her phone. As she dials...

DONNA (CONT'D)

God, I'm nervous. I haven't done
 this in forever.

KAREN

It still works the same way.

DONNA

What if I don't know what to say?

KAREN

Ask him what he's doing tonight.

LOUISE

Ask him if he has any friends.

DONNA

Shhhh...
 (then, into phone)
 Hello?

FEMALE VOICE

(over phone)
 Hello? Who's this?

DONNA

Oh, it's... is this Patrick's cell?

FEMALE VOICE

(over phone, pissed)
 Did he go to another club last
 night? That son of a bitch. He
 told me he was working! You better
 lose this number, you little--

Donna hangs up quickly. She looks at Karen and Louise. The
 three women burst out laughing.

KAREN

See? Nothing's changed.

DONNA
I guess not.

LOUISE
And don't worry, you're not behind
schedule. Look at me-- you're no
better or worse off than I am.

Behind Louise's back, Karen shakes her head reassuringly --
that's not true. The doorbell rings and Karen goes to answer.

LOUISE (CONT'D)
Anyway, you're back out there with
the rest of us, that's the main--

KAREN (O.S.)
Louise, I think it's for you.

Donna and Louise turn to see Jimmy standing there, a wild,
almost feral look in his eye.

LOUISE
Jimmy, what are you--

JIMMY whips open his coat, exposing himself to Louise.

JIMMY
Is *this* what you wanted? Is it?

Louise slams the door on him.

LOUISE
That's it, we're moving.

KAREN
I don't know, Louise. On closer look,
maybe you gave up on Jimmy a little
too quickly...

As they all laugh...

END OF SHOW