



likely story

TOO

by

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1

INT. A DINING ROOM - THE FRENCH QUARTER, NEW ORLEANS - LATE 1
MORNING

An Underwood typewriter circa 1973 with an empty page in
it...

EDGAR ECKMANN, mid-30s, sleepless eyes, some version of a
literary rock-star, sits at the head of a dining room table
and looks just above the page into some thought.

ALICE, a young woman clad in a black tank-top and not much
else walks in...

ALICE
How's it coming?

No answer as he grimaces at the empty page in front of him.

ALICE (CONT'D)
That well?

EDGAR
Do I have anything today?

ALICE
I'm covering your class. Again.

EDGAR
Isn't there something else?

ALICE
You've got a reading next week at
Beckham's Bookshop, and the
Louisiana Writer Award thing on the
riverboat.

EDGAR
(half-attentive)
Are you writing my speech?

ALICE
Wasn't planning on it.

EDGAR
Can you write it?

ALICE
Nope.

EDGAR
Please? My mind's gone to shit. My
writing's gone to shit. I'm not
even sure what story I'm in
anymore.

ALICE
 (suggestive)
 What'll you do for me?

EDGAR
 Grade your dissertation.

ALICE
 (again suggestive)
 Wanna take a break?

EDGAR
 Not really.

ALICE
 I'll be in the bedroom when you
 want to.

He remains at the table, faintly shakes his head.

He looks to a business card on the table next to the typewriter. The Roman numeral II is printed on it. He looks up to a photo of a woman on a nearby shelf then back down at the empty sheet of paper in front of him.

Title card: TOO

2 INT. A BEDROOM, THE TUTTLE RESIDENCE - DENVER, COLORADO - 2
 MORNING

FRED TUTTLE, mid-30s, eerily resembling Edgar Eckmann, sits up on the side of his bed with his bed-head.

The clock reads seven a.m.

BONNIE, his wife, lies way on the other side of the bed, her back to him.

He peers back at her a beat...then stands up into his day.

3 EXT. TUTTLE RESIDENCE - A LITTLE LATER THAT MORNING 3

Fred, the type of guy who could disappear and you might not notice, emerges from the modest house in his yellow oxford, tie, and Dockers.

He walks over to his Honda Civic and gets in, a Scent-Sations car freshener hangs from the rearview.

4 INT. A CLASSROOM, ARAPAHOE HIGH SCHOOL - DENVER, COLORADO - 4
MID-DAY

Fred stands next to the chalkboard in front of a class of
DIVERSE SOPHOMORES...

He writes, "WHAT DID THIS MAN WANT?" on the board alongside a
quotation: "SO WE BEAT ON, BOATS AGAINST THE CURRENT, BORNE
BACK CEASELESSLY INTO THE PAST." He turns and looks out at
them...

FRED

So what significance do these lines
have for our understanding of the
book as a whole?

A FEW STUDENTS look to their copies of "The Great Gatsby,"
but there's no response.

FRED (CONT'D)

What did we say the main theme of
the book was last week?

A NERDY, FRIZZY HAIRED STUDENT, Kimberly, raises her hand.

Fred looks around at the rest of his class, hoping for
interest from someone else.

FRED (CONT'D)

Kimberly?

KIMBERLY

Dreams.

FRED

Okay. Sure...We discussed the
achievement of dreams and what
effect that has on the characters,
right?

KIMBERLY

Right.

FRED

All the characters in Gatsby have a
dream. Some have achieved their
dream and accepted this, some have
achieved their dream and "like
boats against the current" try to
recapture their dream.

(MORE)

FRED (CONT'D)
 However, according to Fitzgerald
 this is unrealistic because once
 dreams are achieved, they're
 corrupted and can never be achieved
 again.

He stands there at the mercy of the class. No response.

FRED (CONT'D)
 (defeated)
 So...um...

A KID WITH AN IPOD, BRYAN, chimes in...

BRYAN
 Fitzgerald sucks my balls.

Some of the class laughs.

FRED
 Bryan...that's um, that's...

The bell rings. THE CLASS bursts from their seats.

FRED (CONT'D)
 Please finish the book for
 Friday...please.

Kimberly gathers her things and steps toward the door.

KIMBERLY
 Have a nice day, Mr. Tuttle.

FRED
 You too.

BRYAN
 Later, Tuttle.

FRED
 (muffled)
 Mr. Tuttle, Bryan.

Bryan points at him mockingly, and walks out.

Fred is left standing in the empty classroom...he snuffles,
 stuck in a thought for a moment.

5 INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

5

Fred trudges out of the classroom through the SWARMS OF
 BUSTLING STUDENTS unnoticed...

A FORTY-SOMETHING WOMAN, dressed in a nice suit off the rack from Neimans, discreetly observes Fred walk away, next to a water fountain...

As he walks by, she nods to TWO MEN, dressed like janitors carrying shoulder bags, who hurry down the hall and enter into the empty classroom. She waits outside the door as they go through Fred's desk, take photos, and poke around.

TWO TEENAGED GIRLS, pass by and give her a weird look.

GILDA

Get to class, slackers.

6

EXT. CHERRY HILLS VILLAGE, LITTLETON - A BIT LATER

6

Fred emerges from Rite Aid lugging his shoulder bag, a plastic Rite Aid bag, a bouquet of daisies.

He's followed by a champagne Chrysler Sebring driven by the woman from the school hallway, who now sips a Frappuccino.

Fred reaches the crosswalk and notices A MAN, dragging off a cigarette, waiting on the opposite curb from him...

The woman sits in her car idling at the light parallel to and just behind him...

The light turns green...

Fred begins to cross the street and the man begins to cross toward him...

The woman in the Chrysler passes them...

As they get closer, Fred looks up at the man...

It's Edgar Eckmann...

Fred double takes, stops a moment, thunderstruck.

His lips part as if he wants to say something, his eyes narrow...It's uncanny...Aside from his style, the man is in every respect what would be called Fred's double...

As Edgar passes, he stares back for a moment with subtle fascination and gives Fred a brief, indifferent look. He takes a pull off his cigarette, and continues on, leaving Fred in the middle of the crosswalk...

A car horn honks.

Fred snaps out of it. The light has changed again and he's blocking the oncoming traffic. He quickly crosses to get out of the way and stops at the curb to look back.

Edgar has disappeared.

7 EXT. TUTTLE RESIDENCE - LATER THAT EVENING 7

Fred walks up to the house. He pauses a moment before walking in...

After he does, an unmarked van pulls up across the street and parks.

8 INT. TUTTLE RESIDENCE - CONTINUOUS 8

He enters the foyer, some dying daisies in a vase on a table in the modest room.

He sets his bag down and takes a folder of papers out of it...He walks into the adjacent kitchen.

9 INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS 9

BONNIE TUTTLE, mid-30s, vanilla in her chinos, blouse, and cheap Keds, sits in front of an aging PC surrounded by note pads, and a Diet RC Cola, while typing something on her Scent-Sations sales web-site.

Fred looks at her, standing there with the flowers...

FRED
(weakly)
Hi.

BONNIE
Good...How was yours?

Fred squints...

FRED
Fine...I think I might have seen my
evil twin...or something.

BONNIE
That's nice.

10 INT. VAN - SAME TIME 10

The two janitors and the woman from earlier, sit in the back with a bunch of sound equipment, Chex Mix, and coffee, listening to Fred and Bonnie.

11 INT - TUTTLE RESIDENCE - SAME TIME 11

FRED

I picked up your Prilosec.

He puts the Rite Aid bag and the flowers on the counter then takes some small bills out of his pocket and puts them in a Donald Duck cookie jar on the kitchen counter as Bonnie continues to type on the computer.

BONNIE

Umm...he's in the tub.

Fred stares at the back of her head a moment, then walks out of the kitchen leaving Bonnie there.

12 INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS 12

BONNIE (O.S.)

Oh, we're having dinner with everyone tomorrow night.

Fred grimaces, and continues down the hall...

13 INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS 13

Fred enters to see his son, ERNIE, 8 and sharp as a tack, emerge from his bubble bath wearing a snorkel and diving mask.

Fred takes a seat on the toilet with his folder.

FRED

Whatcha looking for?

ERNIE

Whale migrations.

FRED

How ya doing, Ern?

ERNIE

Not well.

FRED
What's going on?

ERNIE
Well, this whole Pluto thing's
still messing with my head.

FRED
How's that?

ERNIE
Imagine you're a planet for seventy-
six years and one day you're
floating in the solar system
minding your business, and out of
nowhere, a bunch of people decide
you're not a planet anymore.

FRED
Yep, that's tough stuff.

ERNIE
Pluto got the shaft.

FRED
Yeah..., but Pluto's still Pluto.

ERNIE
No, he isn't. He's lost his
identity...

FRED
Okay then.

ERNIE
Dad?

FRED
Yeah?

ERNIE
If I got the chance to go to outer
space, would you let me go?

FRED
How do you mean?

ERNIE
Like if we were taking a field trip
to Pluto at school, and Mrs.
Jenkins wouldn't let any of us go
without a permission slip.

FRED
I don't know. I'd miss you a lot.

ERNIE
Pluto, dad.

Fred thinks a beat...

FRED
Would you let me go?

ERNIE
Of course.

Fred pulls a piece of notebook paper out of his folder and the pen from his shirt pocket, and writes: "Ernie may go to Pluto. Best, Fred Tuttle." He shows it to Ernie, who gives him a grin.

ERNIE (CONT'D)
Thanks, dad.

Fred winks at him, and they sit there a moment...

ERNIE (CONT'D)
Can we go to Colorado Ocean Journey
this weekend?

FRED
It's up to your mother.

ERNIE
(skeptical)
I'm going back under.

He puts on his mask, snorkel, and submerges.

14 INT. TGI FRIDAY'S - THE NEXT EVENING

14

Boz Scaggs or something adult contemporary plays in the background.

ETHAN
All it takes is a turn of the head
on some Thursday afternoon at
exactly the wrong time...

Fred looks down into a grilled cheese and fries. He takes a bite and realizes it's too hot. He stops chewing, opens his mouth, and breaths in and out to cool it off...

MAILE

Oh Christ, Ethan.

ETHAN SMILEY, late 30s, hefty, in a Tiger Woods Nike golf polo, sits next to Bonnie - his utensils, the fork with a bite on it.

JAN

Robin Cavell ran off with her
Starbuck's barista.

MAILE

Oh...seriously?

His wife, MAILE, also late 30s, a girl next door gone Martha Stewart, sits to his right, next to her is TOM GARCIA, late 30s, half-Mexican, a Ford salesman's name badge on his shirt alongside his wife, JAN, mid-30s, Native American features.

TOM

She went to get a latte and never
came back. Left Jim with the kids.

MAILE

Jesus.

BONNIE

Didn't she just get her tubes tied?

JAN

That was the rumor.

BONNIE

Or wasn't it him?

Fred looks around at the table, nothing about this is enjoyable to him. He takes a sip of lemonade, and notices - THE WOMAN who's been following him at an adjacent table, looking at him. They meet eyes...She winks.

Fred, puzzled, turns around to see if she's looking at someone behind him. Then he turns back and she's still looking at him. Fred looks down into his food for a moment...He eventually looks back up to take another peek...

She's walking away. His brow furrows...

Bonnie looks over to Ethan's plate...

BONNIE (CONT'D)

(to Ethan)

Can I have one of your fries?

ETHAN

Go for it.

Bonnie, a few drinks in, reaches for one of Ethan's French fries...

Fred notices and looks to the perfectly good fries on his plate.

MAILE

How the hell do you hear these things?

JAN

Showed him a house today in Highlands Ranch...Downsizing. He said he feels "emotionally hijacked" whatever that means.

MAILE

There's something to be said for complacency.

FRED

Not really.

Everyone pauses, surprised that Fred said something...Bonnie looks to him, disconcerted by his remark, but smothers it...

ETHAN

(slightly condescending)
Thanks for contributing, Tuttle.

FRED

It was more of a comment.

An awkward beat, as Fred shares a look with Ethan, but says nothing else...Ethan looks back to Bonnie...

ETHAN

(to Bonnie)
You got some ketchup on your chin.

Bonnie tries to wipe it away, but misses...so Ethan reaches with his napkin to get it, smirking.

Fred watches the interaction as Bonnie gets embarrassed.

FRED

Excuse me for a moment.

Fred gets up and heads to the rest-room. Bonnie watches him go.

TOM
 So...who are the Broncos playing
 this weekend?

15 INT. TGI FRIDAY'S BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

15

Fred stands at a urinal...

When the WOMAN from the adjacent table walks into the men's room behind him.

Fred tightens uncomfortably as he realizes it's her and that she's standing there looking at him.

FRED
 You realize this is the men's room?

She studies him as he looks over to her then averts his eyes.

GILDA
 Yep.

FRED
 So...?

She reaches into her purse to procure what looks like a business card.

GILDA
 You recall seeing a familiar looking man on the street the other day, looks like you, not exactly, a tad scruffier, but close enough?

FRED
 (confused)
 Yeah.

GILDA
 You ever wish you could've lived some other life?

FRED
 Um...

GILDA
 You seemed thrilled to be at that dinner table, but if you're even the slightest bit interested, come see me.

She slips the card into Fred's shirt-pocket and walks out.

Fred pulls out the card - The Roman numeral II is printed on the top side just like the one Edgar Eckmann had. Fred flips the card over...there's an address hand-written on it in black ink: Hyatt Regency, 200 West 48th Avenue, Room 202. Anytime tomorrow.

16 EXT. TGI FRIDAY'S PARKING LOT - AFTER DINNER

16

Fred and Bonnie walk up to their Civic.

The unmarked van from earlier is parked nearby, but Fred doesn't notice it...

They both get into the Civic...buckle their seat belts...

BONNIE

You used to open the door for me.

FRED

I used to do a lot of things.

She shakes her head faintly as Fred looks ahead quietly, never looks to her...

BONNIE

Don't take your unhappiness out on me.

FRED

You should talk.

BONNIE

What should I say, Fred?

FRED

Huh?

BONNIE

What should I say? That you could be more of a man.

FRED

If you weren't so cold...

BONNIE

If you weren't so pathetic (regretting)...I'm not cold.

FRED

What are you doing?

BONNIE
I'm resenting you.

FRED
(incredulous)
You're resenting me?

BONNIE
Yes...Why do you even show up? I
might as well be sitting next to an
empty chair.

FRED
You want an empty chair? Drive
yourself home.

Fred gets out of the car and shuts the door leaving her
sitting with the silence...

17 EXT. HYATT REGENCY, CENTRAL DENVER - THE NEXT DAY 17

Fred holds the business card in his hand, and stands looking
skeptically at the hotel.

18 INT. HYATT REGENCY - MOMENTS LATER 18

Fred walks down a stale hallway counting the numbers on the
hotel room doors...

He notices TWO AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN, 40s, sitting on two
fold out chairs up ahead, adjacent to the door of room 202.

Fred surveys them curiously: They fill out what looks like
paper work. They also happen to resemble each other, although
they have different hair and clothing styles: one dressed
like Condoleezza Rice, the other in a sweat-suit.

Fred hears a voice from inside the room, but stands there a
moment, puzzled...

FRED
(a bit sheepish)
Is this a line?

The woman in the sweat-suit looks up to him.

WOMAN
Nope. We're finished. Just trading
some information...She's in there.

FRED
 (confused, but going with
 it)
 ...Thanks.

He cautiously raises his hand to knock...

GILDA'S VOICE (O.S.)
 Uhuh, uhuh...yeah...uhuh...

He knocks...

GILDA'S VOICE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 (a bit loud)
 It's open.

He opens the door, kept open by the latch, and reluctantly steps into the haze of cigarette smoke that hangs in the large room...

The woman who gave him the card, GILDA MUNRO, sits at a round table near the window...

She looks at Fred, but continues her Skype conversation. She speaks into a Bluetooth headset while leaning back in a chair in front of a laptop talking to a woman who looks a whole lot like her. On the table rests a folder, some note-pads, a portable printer, a few eight by ten photos of Fred, Edgar, Bonnie, the two women outside the room...

The two men who were dressed as janitors, now in plain clothes, sit typing on two lap-tops trolling through what look like photos of people's faces at a desk across the room. One looks up at Fred then back to his computer. Fred notices they look exactly alike.

GILDA
 (a bit hard)
 If he's getting cold feet, tell him that he's exercising his right to waste his life...No, no, don't say that, I'm kidding...It's just Lansing, Michigan to Corpus Christi is a pretty decent swap. It could be Nome, Alaska or West Buttcrack, Arkansas so tell him to contemplate that...The Texas coast is probably nice this time of year...Yeah, yeah...Listen, one of mine just walked in...Uhuh, to be continued...Well, people change when they have to, not when you tell them to...Yeah, right...

She looks up at Fred again, who's a little frightened...She ends the call, takes the headset off her ear, puts out her cigarette in one of the Starbucks cups...

GILDA (CONT'D)

You showed.

FRED

Um...

He pulls the card with the "II" on it out of his pocket and shows it to her.

GILDA

So how long do you want to do this?

FRED

Do what?

GILDA

We have a one week minimum at fifteen thousand dollars per week, although the claimant has volunteered to cover all costs, airfare and a generous advance of three thousand cash and another three on completion.

She puts an envelope full of cash on the table in front of him. Fred eyes it.

GILDA (CONT'D)

As this is somewhat of a special case due to the somewhat high profile of your double, other, or whatever you want to call him, he's also been generous enough to offer use of his American Express card.

She grabs a document from the table...

FRED

Um...

GILDA

Listen, cause this is sort of important...(reading quickly) In consideration of the rights granted hereunder, Edgar Eckmann hereby irrevocably grants to you exclusively and throughout the universe during the exchange period (one week or as it may be extended) under the Agreement and, in perpetuity if the exchange thereunder is exercised, the right to use Edgar Eckmann's name, likeness and biography, and the right to add to, modify, and fictionalize his Life in exchange for the same rights to your,...

She looks up at him a moment...

GILDA (CONT'D)

Fred Tuttle's Life, with the understanding that you may need to alter such portions of his Life, individual incidences, or certain conversations for the purpose of personal interest in your day to day Life and any ancillary and allied rights therein and thereto, subject to the terms and conditions of the Agreement; Notwithstanding the foregoing, you will use good faith efforts to portray Edgar Eckmann and he to portray you in a manner that is consistent with the information you provide each other with, provided that any failure to do so will not be deemed a breach of your obligations hereunder.

FRED

Mam?

GILDA

Also, you waive any and all liability and/or accountability from I, Gilda Munro and Too, Inc., in the case of any sickness, injury, contraction of STDs, etcetera during the forthcoming exchange.

FRED
What the hell are you talking
about?

GILDA
Are you happy with your life?

They interrupt each other...

FRED
What is this?

GILDA
Are you pleased with the way
things have turned out?

And again...

FRED
Sorry.

GILDA
Sorry.

FRED
You go ahead...

GILDA
Right. Are you pleased with the way
things turned out?

FRED
How do you mean?

GILDA
(as if she's said this
before)
When you turn off the light at
night and everything gets quiet,
when you shut it all off, the noise
of the city drowns out, etcetera,
and you're in that dead spot before
falling asleep, staring up at the
ceiling...are you happy with the
way things turned out, and by
things, I mean your life?

He processes...

FRED
I don't know.

The woman breaths a hint of impatience then gives him a once
over.

GILDA
You're kind of vanilla, huh?

FRED

No.

After a beat...

FRED (CONT'D)

I like vanilla.

GILDA

(rhetorical)

Do you?

Gilda picks up her cellphone and dials a number. It rings.

GILDA (CONT'D)

(into the phone)

Where are you...? Meet me at his house in twenty.

She hangs up.

GILDA (CONT'D)

Let's go.

She grabs her things, gets up and walks to the door.

FRED

Where?

19

EXT. THE TUTTLE RESIDENCE - TWENTY MINUTES LATER

19

EDGAR ECKMANN, Fred's doppelganger with sad eyes, sits, waiting on the curb in front of Fred's house eating a pack of M&M's.

The Chrysler Sebring rolls up into the driveway followed by Fred's Civic.

Gilda steps out of her car as Fred steps out of his.

Edgar walks toward them. He looks at Fred, who uncomfortably looks back at him again thunderstruck at the apparition of himself.

GILDA

Fred Tuttle meet Edgar Eckmann.

EDGAR

Pleasure.

Edgar puts out his hand for a shake, but Fred stammers, staring at him, dumbfounded...eventually he reaches out for Edgar's hand, gives a weak shake, and they all stand there awkwardly as Fred continues to stare.

EDGAR (CONT'D)

Thanks for agreeing to do this.

Fred's brow furrows...

FRED

I didn't agree to do anything.

EDGAR

Then why are you here?

FRED

(deadpan)

This is my house.

Gilda looks at her watch, steps toward Fred, and takes the keys from his hand...

FRED (CONT'D)

Excuse me?

GILDA

(moving along)

Why don't we go inside, get Edgar familiarized with the place?

Gilda goes for the door followed by Edgar...

GILDA (CONT'D)

Freddy, let's get a move on before your wife gets home.

Fred remains there, paralyzed a moment...

20

INT. TUTTLE RESIDENCE - MOMENTS LATER

20

Gilda walks into the foyer, sniffs at the air, grimaces.

GILDA

(dry)

Well, this is...quaint.

Edgar follows, grins at what he sees as the simplicity of the home.

GILDA (CONT'D)

A lot of beige.

Gilda peers into the living room...

GILDA (CONT'D)
Living room over here...Someone
likes Pottery Barn.

Fred walks in.

FRED
Excuse me?

GILDA
What's up, Freddy?

FRED
Stop calling me, Freddy...What the
hell is going on here?

They both look to him...

GILDA
(gesturing to Edgar)
Mr. Eckmann here found me to find
you in the interest of swapping
with him, for what we call, and
what my prior clients who've done
this quite successfully, have
called a week long trial period.
Just a trial, taste another life
for a little bit, maybe even gain a
little perspective. Some people are
happy swapping, some people never
come back, but we also have an
emergency clause if you were both
in agreement to want out, you would
call me and end it. No harm, no
foul. It's kind of like a vacation,
but no one realizes you're gone.

Fred, dumbfounded, can't speak.

GILDA (CONT'D)
(looking at her watch)
Let's take a look at the kitchen.

21

INT. THE TUTTLE'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

21

Gilda walks in followed by Fred and Edgar.

GILDA
Yikes. Yellow...Do you have any
Food allergies, Fred?
(MORE)

GILDA (CONT'D)

Do you suffer from depression?
Heartburn? Sleep apnea? Chronic
diarrhea? Things that Edgar should
be aware of in case your wife
notices some disparity in behavior.

FRED

Hold on a second.

GILDA

We don't have time for
deliberation, Fred, cause in about
five minutes your wife is gonna
pull into that driveway and this
moment will have been sucked off
into the netherworld of missed
opportunities and what ifs.

Fred lets the comment resonate...He's listening now.

She pulls out contracts from her bag.

FRED

How does it work though?

GILDA

You trade all the pertinent
information about each other, write
it down, roll the dice, and
improvise the rest. I'm gonna keep
the Denver field office open for a
week then I have to head up to
Minneapolis for clients up there.
There's no direct contact permitted
between you during the specified
period, but if by some chance
there's a hitch, you'll have my
number.

She hands him another card with the Roman numeral II on it, a
number on the bottom - her name Gilda and cell number
scribbled on the back.

Fred looks to Edgar, who nods reassuringly.

EDGAR

You only get one life to do
something completely irrational.

GILDA

Come on, Fred? Where's your sense
of spontaneity? A week away from
the same old routine.

FRED
How did you find me? I mean...

GILDA
Have you heard of facial
recognition software? Social
networking sites, Facebook,
MySpace? I can open a laptop and
pretty much find pictures of ten
guys you might get mistaken for.

FRED
(to Edgar)
Why do you want to do this?

A thoughtful beat...

EDGAR
(evasive)
Why do you?

Fred doesn't answer. Edgar gives him a faint smile...

GILDA
(interrupting)
You both teach English.

Fred perks up slightly.

FRED
Where do you teach?

EDGAR
Tulane University in New Orleans.

Fred's impressed, but tries not to show it.

FRED
Tenure?

Gilda twirls her finger, signaling to move things along.

EDGAR
Yep...Creative writing.

Fred nods, perhaps a bit jealous.

EDGAR (CONT'D)
You?

FRED
 (slightly embarrassed)
 Arapahoe High School...Brand name
 American Lit, Fitzgerald, um...you
 know the rest.

EDGAR
 (being kind)
 Nice.

FRED
 You don't have an accent.

EDGAR
 I'm from New York. Moved when I got
 the job at Tulane.

Gilda looks at one of the documents in her hand...

GILDA
 Edgar also happens to be something
 of a literary badass. He won the...
 Pen/Faulker Award, whatever that
 is, and was nominated for the
 National Book Award before he was
 stricken with a debilitating case
 of writer's block.

Fred again perks up, surprised.

FRED
 You're a writer?

EDGAR
 (self-deprecating)
 Not recently.

GILDA
 He's kind of a deal down in New
 Orleans. You'd get to prance around
 like a rock star.

Fred thinks about this, perhaps the trace of a smile.

Gilda attempts to foster things along...

GILDA (CONT'D)
 How long have you been married,
 Fred?

Fred glances to her.

FRED
Nine years, eight months.

GILDA
When's the last time you got laid?

FRED
(taken aback)
Is that relevant?

GILDA
No...maybe...I'm curious.

FRED
That's none of your business.

EDGAR
(seeing Fred's discomfort)
Well, I live alone...pretty
anonymously.

FRED
No significant other?

EDGAR
(a glint of sadness)
I dabble.

A beat.

FRED
I have a son...He's eight...

GILDA
(interrupting)
And, I know these are just words,
but if I thought there was the hint
of a risk with that, we wouldn't be
here...Edgar's trusting you with
his life, too.

Edgar procures a tattered Moleskine notebook from his coat pocket and shows it to Fred.

EDGAR
This is pretty much everything
you'd need to know, people, places,
numbers, schedules, directions.

Fred doesn't take the notebook.

GILDA

Come on, Fred. Don't make this another what if? Take a break and get a little perspective. You resent the hell out of your wife, you never get laid, you barely communicate, "I got you your Prilosec" "Um, he's in the tub"? It's a cocktail for calamity. If you continue like this, your marriage is gonna disintegrate and your poor kid will be the collateral damage. He'll hate your guts, and your wife will start bagging some guy you called a friend. I know what I'm talking about.

Fred's frozen by this.

FRED

What are you...? How do you...?

Gilda puts the envelope of cash on the counter next to Fred.

GILDA

(looks at her watch)
Look, we'll be at Denver International at nine a.m. tomorrow morning. I'll be holding a plane ticket to Louis Armstrong International Airport for either you or him.

Fred just stares.

GILDA (CONT'D)

Sleep on it, and if in the morning you comprehend that this could be a very good thing for you, meet us at United departures. We'll trade keys, clothes, etcetera, and bring a notebook of your people, places, names, etcetera for Edgar, 'kay?

Fred nods, as Edgar puts the notebook back in his pocket,

Gilda grabs Edgar, her things...

GILDA (CONT'D)

Nine a.m., Fred.

Then they run out and slam the front door behind them.

Fred hears their cars turn on...then sees Bonnie's car pull in the driveway. Gilda's car peels off...

Fred takes the envelope and puts it in the cookie jar on the counter. He hears Bonnie walk in the door.

BONNIE (O.S.)
Who the heck was that?

A beat...

FRED
Mormons.

22 INT. TUTTLE RESIDENCE, FRED AND BONNIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 22

Slight moaning...

Fred stares at the ceiling in the dark...

Bonnie's asleep on her side of the bed. She's dreaming what sounds like a sexy dream, a slight moan here then a louder one then a softer one...

Fred peers uncomfortably over at her as she stirs. She continues in mumbles but doesn't wake...so he taps her...

FRED
Bon...?

She doesn't stop, doesn't wake...

Finally, Fred sneaks out of bed and steps out into the hallway...

23 INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS 23

Fred walks quietly down the hall up to Ernie's bedroom door and peeks in...

Soft light illuminates the room from a night-light, Ernie sleeps tangled in the comforter. He's sideways with his feet hanging off the edge of the bed.

Fred watches him a moment, walks in and delicately picks Ernie up, places his head on the pillow and straightens him.

He glances up to look around the room and notices the permission slip he'd written for Ernie to go to Pluto.

Ernie has tacked it onto a bulletin board...Fred looks at it a moment then he looks down at his son...He kisses him on the head and steps out of the room.

He heads down the hall to a doorway, opens it. It leads down to the basement...

24

INT. BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

24

Fred turns on a light exposing piles of boxes and other stored, unused crap...

He walks up to a desk next to which there is a framed certificate on the wall that reads: Fred Tuttle - Arapahoe County Teacher of the Year, 2003.

Some books: Joyce's "The Dead", Dickens, and THE DOUBLE line the desk along with an old sappy photo of Fred and Bonnie in their twenties, she wears a Denver University sweatshirt, their faces nestled close.

Fred plops himself down at the desk and remains there a moment, thinking.

Then the basement door opens...

And Bonnie walks down the creaky wood steps. Her hair's a bit ruffled from bed. Fred turns to see her - she looks beautiful in that sleepy, disheveled way. She walks around him then sits on his lap facing him.

Fred reacts with a grunt to her weight on his legs.

BONNIE
Am I that heavy?

Fred grins warmly up at her, and shakes his head "no".

They observe each other lovingly. Bonnie smooths his brow, and brushes her hands through his hair.

Fred closes his eyes as she does this, relishing it, then opens them to look at her again.

BONNIE (CONT'D)
I love you.

A sad smile emerges on Fred's face as if he hadn't heard that in a while.

BONNIE (CONT'D)
(gently)
I know you're in there somewhere...
(MORE)

BONNIE (CONT'D)

So I was wondering if you could let me know where I can find the Fred I fell so ridiculously in love with?

Fred looks at her, still somber, thinking about it himself.

And then she's gone...Fred imagined it.

After a few seconds, he reaches for a pen and a black notebook...He opens the notebook and decidedly begins to write things down.

25 INT. DENVER INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT BATHROOM - THE NEXT MORNING

Fred's notebook sits near Edgar's along with the contract, cell-phones, wallets, house and car keys on the bathroom sink between them. They stand in front of adjacent sinks and mirrors...Fred reaches into his wallet and pulls out a badly posed portrait photo of him, Bonnie, and Ernie to take with him.

FRED

Have you ever felt like you've lost some crucial part of yourself, you're not sure what part, but if you don't somehow get it back, you won't really be living your life, you'll be living off to the side of it...or something?

Edgar surveys him. Fred gets uncomfortable.

FRED (CONT'D)

Did that sound as stupid as I think it did?

EDGAR

No.

A SERIES OF CUTS:

Fred puts on Edgar's rumpled Oxford.

Edgar pulls on Fred's Dockers.

Fred takes the Timex off his wrist. Edgar puts the Timex on his.

Fred puts on Edgar's socks and Converse All Stars.

A pair of hair clippers turns on...and runs through Edgar's disheveled hair.

They size each other up, Fred in Edgar's clothes, and Edgar in Fred's. They're both clean shaven and sport a similar close cropped haircut.

EDGAR (CONT'D)
(indicating)
Unbutton the second button.

Fred unbuttons it revealing more chest, looks to Edgar for approval. Edgar nods. Fred looks over Edgar, fixes the collar on the jacket, steps back, and seems impressed.

26 INT. DENVER INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - MINUTES LATER 26

Gilda waits for them as they emerge from the bathroom.

GILDA
That'll do the trick.

Gilda holds out a plane ticket for Fred, who takes it.

Fred hands her the contract then holds out his notebook, his keys, cell-phone, and hands them to Edgar.

Edgar passes Fred his notebook, keys, cell-phone, and American Express card.

EDGAR
(to Fred)
Thank you.

FRED
For what?

Edgar shrugs, withholding.

Fred turns to walk toward security. He stops...

FRED (CONT'D)
Please don't sleep with my wife.

Edgar winks at him, waves.

27 EXT. INTERSTATE 10 EAST, JUST OUTSIDE NEW ORLEANS - THAT AFTERNOON 27

Fred sits in the back of a cab looking out at abandoned, boarded up, hurricane ravaged buildings followed by a brand new Walmart and some just built strip malls on his way into New Orleans. He sees the city and a mild smile sneaks into his expression.

28 EXT. MARAIS STREET, FRENCH QUARTER, NEW ORLEANS - A LITTLE 28
LATER

Fred, holding a plastic bag, stares up from the sidewalk at the facade of Edgar's beautiful 19th Century Masonry House. He procures a set of keys from his pocket, including the key to a BMW, and walks up to the front door.

29 INT. EDGAR ECKMANN'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER 29

Fred opens Edgar's front door. The place is gorgeous, but feels as if it's never been fully moved into. Lots of boxes and barely any furniture. There's a library off to the right with stacks of books on the floor.

30 INT. EDGAR ECKMANN'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS 30

Fred walks into the living room. An empty bottle of Booker's on the floor near an old record player. A large framed "Last Tango in Paris" poster leans against the wall.

31 INT. EDGAR ECKMANN'S DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS 31

Fred walks through to the dining room - the table scattered with books and papers. Fred notices what looks like a balance sheet. He reaches for it, and his eyes pop at the \$833,120 balance. He puts it down and notices an invitation to A Night On The Delta Presenting the Louisiana Writer Award to Edgar, and then the typewriter at the head of the table. Fred looks at the typewriter and the empty sheet in it.

He surveys the table then notices the photo of the woman looking off on a nearby shelf.

He reaches into the plastic bag, pulls out one of Bonnie's Scent-Sations candles and places it on the table. Then he hears a knock at the door...

He turns, startled, peers at the door.

Another hard knock, almost an angry knock.

He walks toward it.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
I hear you, asshole!

Fred's taken aback by this.

She bangs the door again, then kicks it.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Open the god damned door!

Fred recedes from the door, worried...

She kicks it again.

FRED
(weakly)
Who is it?

WOMAN'S VOICE
You know God damn well who it is!

He looks panicked then opens Edgar's notebook. He opens it to a scribble of names, no indication of who this would be.

FRED
Um...no. I don't.

She kicks it again...then it's quiet for a second...

Until she busts her way through the door, loses her balance and crumbles to the floor.

ALICE ASHBERY, whom we glimpsed in the first scene with Edgar, 25, a dark, emotional wreck of a beautiful young woman, not the woman in the photo, Julie Christie meets Patti Smith, looks up at Fred from the floor...She pushes herself up and walks over to him in the living room...

FRED (CONT'D)
Hi?

She decks him across the face.

He falls backwards onto the floor.

ALICE
Where the hell have you been the past couple days?!

She moves quickly, kneels down, and straddles him as he lays there and lets out a groan...

He reaches for his face in pain...

She grabs him by the lapels angrily, and pulls him up into a fierce kiss...

Then pushes him back against the base of a couch, looks at him, slaps him, looks at him another moment then kisses him some more.

Fred has no clue what's hit him as she attacks him on the ground. He can barely breath...

She pulls away from him again and looks him in the eye, shakes her head.

ALICE (CONT'D)

You cock...

FRED

(trying to breath)

Hold on a second...

ALICE

I put up with all your baggage, grade your half-baked seminar's pretentious papers on sexual politics in...*Sound and the Fury* or some shit, I ghostwrite your criticism, I've become a bit more than your "Teacher's Assistant," you still haven't read a draft of my dissertation, and the cherry on top, you go and get lost on me, you fff...

She doesn't finish the sentence.

ALICE (CONT'D)

(resigned)

Another bender with some slut barfly...?

EDGAR

No. What are you talking about?

ALICE

Liar...I suppose you can't take the spots off the leopard.

She shakes her head, notices something. She gives him a funny look...

ALICE (CONT'D)

What the hell happened to you...?
Did you get a haircut?

FRED
 (still in pain, covering)
 Um...yeah.

ALICE
 It looks stupid.

A beat.

ALICE (CONT'D)
 I adore you, asshole...Where'd you
 go this time?

FRED
 (improvising)
 I uh, needed some time alone...to
 think about...things.

ALICE
 (dry)
 Things...? Well, that's specific.
 About me? About her? Life in
 general...?

Fred tilts his head, curious at the mention of "her".

FRED
 Which her?

ALICE
 Oh please.

She stands up abruptly, procures some weed and a bowl from
 her shirt pocket, and walks to the kitchen...

Fred, still overwhelmed, in pain, looks to Edgar's notebook
 and opens it. He glances down the list of names, notices "My
 Teacher's Assistant, etc. - Alice Ashbery (proceed with
 caution)." He gathers himself, hopes he's got the right
 name...

FRED
 (off)
 Alice?

ALICE (O.S.)
 Yeah?

Relieved he got it right, he tries to think of something else
 to say...

FRED
 I'm sorry.

Silence...until she walks back up and into the doorway with a furrowed brow. She's lit the bowl and surveys him. She's never heard him say, "I'm sorry."

ALICE (O.S.)
You're being weird.

She passes the lit bowl to him.

ALICE (CONT'D)
Hit this.

He looks blankly at the little glass pipe in her hand.

FRED
I um...

ALICE
Hit it!

He takes it...and then sucks in a measly hit...Coughs.

ALICE (CONT'D)
Now get off your ass. We've gotta go.

FRED
(confused)
Where?

32 EXT. TUTTLE RESIDENCE, DENVER - THAT EVENING 32

A cigarette glows on an inhale in the darkness...

Edgar exhales, looking at the house. He puts out the cigarette, fans himself, steps away from Fred's Civic and walks up to the front door.

33 INT. TUTTLE RESIDENCE - CONTINUOUS 33

He steps into the small foyer. He hears a woman's voice, Bonnie's, talking on the phone in the kitchen... He looks around...then he sniffs the air. He faintly scowls...

He peeks into the living room and sees the Scent-Sations scented candle lit, realizes that's the source of the bizarre smell then turns and walks toward the voice...

34

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

34

BONNIE (O.S.)
 (into the phone)
 So, just to recap, that's three
 sixteen ounce Chili Vanilli jar
 candles and three tubes of the
 Peppermint Truffle body balm...

He walks in and sees Bonnie at her computer, her back to him.

BONNIE (CONT'D)
 Yeah, I'm a big fan of the Chili
 Vanilli. I'm actually burning some
 right now...Uhuh...so that'll be on
 the Mastercard, right...? I think I
 have it...ending in 5764...? Yup...
 No, no, you're all set,
 Pat...Should be five to seven
 business days...Okay then. Thanks
 for calling Scent-Sations...Bye
 now.

She hangs up. The enthusiasm falls from her expression, and she types something into her computer.

EDGAR
 (light)
 Hi, honey.

BONNIE
 (not paying attention)
 Umm...Good. How was yours?

EDGAR
 (puzzled)
 Good.

He remains there, awkwardly...looks into the notebook for some piece of information.

EDGAR (CONT'D)
 How's the old direct sales world
 treating you...?

She turns and gives him a look.

BONNIE
 (dry)
 Great.

She stands and walks toward Edgar...

He looks at her face, pretty features hidden underneath indifference. He expects a hug or a kiss, but she doesn't even register him, and brushes right by to the fridge. She grabs a Diet RC Cola and heads back to the computer.

Edgar observes her sitting there another moment, then moves on with his tour of the house and walks out of the kitchen.

After a second, Bonnie turns, glancing over her shoulder...

35 INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS 35

He walks down the hallway looking at the walls covered by framed family photos, the accumulation of Fred and Bonnie's life together. He takes a left and heads through a doorway into Fred and Bonnie's bedroom.

36 INT. FRED AND BONNIE'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS 36

To Edgar it's almost perfect, simple, serene. He sits on the quilted bed...then falls back onto the mattress and stares up at the ceiling for a moment, taking the comfort in.

Then he hears footsteps in the hallway, little ones.

Ernie, in pajamas, shuffles into the room, props himself up onto the bed and copies Edgar, falling back into the quilt next to him and staring up at the ceiling.

Edgar remains there, unsure how to behave...he shoots a glance over toward Ernie...

ERNIE
(still staring up)
What are we doing?

EDGAR
Staring at the ceiling.

ERNIE
Thanks for stating the obvious.

Edgar grins, impressed at the eight year old's word choice.

EDGAR
That's what I'm here for.

Ernie keeps staring up, his hands behind his head...

EDGAR (CONT'D)
How was your day?

ERNIE
(disenchanted)
You know.

EDGAR
No...I don't.

ERNIE
Same stuff, different day. Went to school. We read a chapter of "The Phantom Tollbooth," got assigned a report on panda bears, ate graham crackers, Mrs. Jenkins treated me like an eight year old.

EDGAR
You are an eight year old...aren't you?

ERNIE
I guess so...Was I adopted?

EDGAR
Not that I know of. Why do you ask?

ERNIE
Sometimes I feel that way.

Edgar glances at him, enjoying his first father son talk.

EDGAR
Yeah...Me too.

ERNIE
Like maybe I'm the lost son of Cousteau and he left me on some nun's doorstep.

EDGAR
(indulging him)
It's quite possible.

Ernie sits up and looks at Edgar.

ERNIE
You smell like smoke.

EDGAR
(covering)
One of my colleagues...total and utter chain smoker.

Ernie studies him, something's off, but he moves on...

ERNIE

Since mom negged Colorado Ocean
Journey, I was thinking we could
look at constellations this
week...Pegasus is riding high.

EDGAR

Sounds good to me.

Ernie pops off the bed and walks to the door...

Edgar sits up.

As Ernie reaches the door, he turns and gives Edgar a good
look. He wears a suspicious expression then shuffles off down
the hall.

Edgar watches him, warmly.

37

INT. EDGAR ECKMANN'S BMW - A BIT LATER

37

Alice speeds through the French Quarter blasting something
like David Bowie. The car's hot-boxed with weed as she takes
a hit off the bowl.

Fred sits in the passenger seat with the window open. He
looks over at her, her hair gusting.

ALICE

Hi handsome.

FRED

(shy, flattered)

Hi.

She pulls into the New Orleans Original Daiquiris drive thru
and looks up to THE ATTENDANT.

ALICE

One 190 Octane, please.

DRIVE THRU ATTENDANT

One sec.

She passes THE ATTENDANT some cash...and a few seconds later
gets a big gulpish daiquiri to go.

ALICE

Thanks.

She pops the lid off and takes a sip.

ALICE (CONT'D)

Sip?

FRED

What is it?

She furrows her brow at him, confused. He notices, grabs it and takes a sip...his face squinches from the taste.

FRED (CONT'D)

Jesus Christ!

She takes it back and sips another sip.

FRED (CONT'D)

So, you can just drink and drive here?

She glances back at him, takes another sip.

ALICE

What the hell is going on with you?

FRED

Nothing. I love drinking and driving. It's fun.

A beat.

ALICE

Time?

FRED

What?

ALICE

What's the time?

Fred looks to his watch, realizes he gave it to Edgar.

FRED

I don't know.

She pulls out her cell-phone, looks at it.

ALICE

Shit.

38 EXT. BECKHAM'S BOOKSHOP, FRENCH QUARTER - MINUTES LATER 38

Alice screeches to a halt in front of the book store. Fred notices the CROWD outside then A HORSE DRAWN CARRIAGE trotting by.

ALICE
Let's go in the back.

39 INT. BECKHAM'S BOOKSHOP - CONTINUOUS 39

Fred's blazed by now as Alice, with her Daiquiri, leads him through the back of the store. MOST OF THE WOMEN, whom make up most of the crowd, stare longingly at Fred. There's a murmur as he walks through.

Fred's startled as Elmore Leonard, holding a cocktail, pats him on the ass.

ELMORE LEONARD
Hey buddy. I like the clean cut look.

FRED
(awkward)
Hey. Thanks...How are you?

Fred uncomfortable, keeps walking. He's never felt so many eyes on him, as EVERYONE glances or looks at him as he walks by.

A GAMINE, TWENTY-SOMETHING GIRL reaches for his arm...

GAMINE GIRL
(southern accent)
I just...I know this is gonna sound retarded, but I just think you're so amazing, and...your writing destroys me.

Fred's never had someone say that to him before...

FRED
Thanks.

Alice pulls him away up to a sixtyish woman, EDITH, in a cardigan and Buddy Holly glasses. She stands impatiently by a podium next to a table smothered by Edgar's books.

ALICE
Sorry Edith.

EDITH

(southern accent)

We were bracing for a riot to break out.

Fred, red-eyed, has no clue what's going on...then he notices a poster of Edgar next to the cover of his book, "How You Will Know Me," under the quotation "Combustible" from the New York Times. He sports a stubble and wears a suggestive expression.

Edith shuffles to the podium...

EDITH (CONT'D)

(to the crowd)

Thank you all for your patience, everyone. Apologies for the delay...(She looks down at a piece of paper) On the occasion that this week he will be honored with the Louisiana Writer Award by the Governor, Beckham's Bookshop is exceedingly pleased to welcome back the writer whom the New York Times described as "America's literary enfant terrible." He has written two collections of short stories, a book of essays, and his last novel, published ten years ago today, was described as "Combustible, lustful, a shiny, tumbling diamond of a book." I give you Edgar Eckmann.

Thick applause.

Fred stands nearby the podium not realizing he's supposed to step up.

Alice pushes him toward the podium...

He awkwardly stumbles to the podium and looks down at one of Edgar's books resting in front of him. He stands there then eventually looks up and out at EVERYONE, fully attentive for once, looking back at him, waiting for him to read. It's packed...

There's a hoot from SOME GIRL in the audience...

He's dumbfounded, but grins, surprised to enjoy the sudden attention...

FRED
 (fumbling, awkward)
 Hi...Thanks for coming out to um...
 listen to me...If I don't seem
 as...combustible as usual, I hope
 you'll forgive me...I'm gonna stop
 talking now and read.

Then Fred looks down at the book, opens to a chapter
 arbitrarily...then begins to read...

FRED (CONT'D)
 The kiss had breathed the life back
 into him. For the moment, he ceased
 to fear death, or so to say,
 perceive it. He was hoping...(Fred
 stops a moment, prudish, worried
 about the page he's chosen). He was
 hoping she was eighteen...(Fred
 can't go back now, unsure what's
 going to unfold). And now she lay
 there on the bed, stripped, barely
 registering his drunken touch as
 his hand traversed...up the
 geography of her inner
 thigh...(Fred uncomfortably clears
 his throat) into the stubbly
 scratch of her pubic hair (Fred
 lets out an uncomfortable breath,
 pauses at seeing what's next, but
 reads onward)...Her pussy tasted
 like papaya...

40

INT. THE TUTTLE'S LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME

40

"The Biggest Loser" plays on the television. A FAT MIDDLE
 AGED COUPLE in tears after an exercise session.

Edgar sits a few feet from Bonnie on the couch in front of
 dinner - two half-eaten microwaved Lean Cuisine meals on the
 coffee table.

Bonnie holds a glass of some cheap red wine, sips. After a
 beat...

EDGAR
 Do we really have to watch this
 crap?

BONNIE
 (surprised)
 You love this show.

A beat.

EDGAR
Do we have any scotch?

Bonnie looks to Edgar.

BONNIE
No...Since when do you drink
scotch?

EDGAR
(covering)
Since never. Just had a hankering
for a drink.

BONNIE
A hankering?

Another beat.

BONNIE (CONT'D)
Are you mad at me?

EDGAR
(unsure)
Not that I know of.

BONNIE
(after a breath)
I'm sorry about the other night in
the car.

EDGAR
What about it?

She looks at him a moment then back to the television.

41 INT. BECKHAM'S BOOKSHOP - LATER THAT EVENING

41

Fred sits at a table, signing books.

Alice drinks wine with A GROUP OF WANNABE WRITERS, Elmore Leonard, and SOME PSEUDO-INTELLECTUALS.

A NERDY HIPSTER stands at the head of the LONG LINE. He passes his book to Fred...

NERDY HIPSTER
Can you make it out to Noah?

FRED

Noah?

The guys nods. Fred writes an inscription in the inside flap...

NERDY HIPSTER

You working on anything new right now?

FRED

Not that I know of.

The guy snickers, thinking the comment was funny.

Fred isn't sure why he's laughing, but laughs along with him...and passes the book back to him.

NERDY HIPSTER

Well, we're all waiting for a masterpiece...whenever.

FRED

Me too.

The guy phonily laughs again.

Fred looks up, smiles at him. The guy remains there awkwardly...

NERDY HIPSTER

I was sorry to hear about your wife.

Fred's brow furrows, questioningly...

FRED

How do you mean?

NERDY HIPSTER

(uncomfortable)

I just..., I know it was a while ago, but I wanted to...

The hipster, self-conscious, turns and hurries off.

Fred's curious what he meant.

AN ATTRACTIVE GIRL at the front of the line walks up with her book, grinning...

42

INT. BECKHAM'S BOOKSHOP BATHROOM - A BIT LATER

42

Fred walks into the bathroom and splashes some water on his face...As he does, a dark-haired twenty-something bohemian NYMPHETTE walks into the bathroom.

NYMPHETTE
(southern accent)
Hi there.

She walks up behind him and looks at his reflection over his shoulder. She reaches her arms around him.

FRED
Do I know you?

NYMPHETTE
What you read out there, the fire
in your words, threw me straight
across the room.

He turns around.

FRED
Listen...

NYMPHETTE
Debase me.

She kisses him and goes for his belt buckle.

FRED
Um...What?

There's a knock at the door...

FRED (CONT'D)
(flustered)
Just a second!

The woman kneels down to undo his pants...

Then Alice opens the door to the men's room.

ALICE
Eckmann?

She peers in...

ALICE (CONT'D)
Oh for Christ's sake!

Fred panics, throwing his hands up as if he's under arrest.
 Alice storms in the men's room and grabs him.

FRED
 (defensive)
 She just came in here.

ALICE
 Shut up.

NYMPHETTE
 Hey?

ALICE
 Suck my dick, you whore.

She pulls Fred out of there.

43

INT. FRED AND BONNIE'S BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

43

Edgar washes his hands and face in the bathroom...

He notices a framed, scribbled Crayola portrait by Ernie of Fred, Bonnie, and him on the adjacent wall hanging crookedly. He sees Bonnie enter the bedroom behind him in the mirror. She says nothing as she heads to the bureau and pulls out some pajamas...

She takes off her clothes...Edgar watches, but tries not to. She's a little soft, curvy, has beautiful skin...

She puts on her pajamas and comes to the bathroom...She reaches across the sink and grabs her toothbrush, some toothpaste, and starts brushing without so much as a look toward Edgar. She slides down her pajama bottoms and sits on the toilet for a pee as she brushes.

Edgar glances over at her, half curious, half in discomfort.

She finishes, flushes, pulls up her pajama bottoms, spits, rinses, and heads out to the bed leaving Edgar in there.

Edgar steps out of the bathroom and heads to the bureau...

Bonnie turns off the lamp on her bedside table, pulls down the covers on Fred's side of the bed for him, and rests her head on her pillow...

Edgar opens one drawer to find a bunch of women's undergarments then another to find more of Bonnie's things...A bit panicked that he doesn't know where Fred's things are, he decides to just take off his clothes and go to bed in his boxers...He leaves everything in a pile on the floor with the notebook and heads to the bed...

He gets under the covers, flips off his lamp, and lies there in the dark for a moment...He looks hesitantly over at Bonnie...

He moves over toward her and nuzzles up next to her, puts his arm around her and holds her...

They remain there a moment in the embrace. Edgar savors this. He lets out a sigh.

BONNIE

What are you doing?

EDGAR

Um...

BONNIE

I won't be able to sleep with you hanging on me like that.

EDGAR

Right...Right.

Edgar picks his arm off of her, thrown by this then rolls over to his side of the bed. He frowns, puzzled, and stares at her a moment as Bonnie remains turned away with her back to him.

After a moment, she turns back toward him. She shares a soft look with him, reaches for his hand...

BONNIE

Good night.

EDGAR

Night.

44

EXT. THE GOLD MINE SALOON, FRENCH QUARTER, NEW ORLEANS - 44
LATER THAT EVENING

The BMW is parked in front of the converted horse stable, now a bar.

45 INT. THE GOLD MINE - MOMENTS LATER

45

Fred, on edge from earlier, sits at a table by himself in front of...a beer, which he takes a big sip of.

He looks out into the vintage establishment flooded by the VARIOUS HIPSTERS and LOCALS. The Dead Weather plays on the sound system.

Alice stands by the bar, getting hit on as she orders drinks. She looks back to see if Fred's noticing, attempting to make him jealous.

Then a cute CHINESE-AMERICAN GIRL, MARIANNE, somewhere in her early twenties and her form-fitting jeans, slides into the table across from him with a motorcycle helmet in hand...

MARIANNE

You haven't been in class...D'you drop off the planet or something?

Fred looks around, then smiles uncomfortably...

FRED

No.

MARIANNE

(dry)
You're talkative.

He doesn't respond.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

Well, can I come over tonight?

Fred looks to her then to Alice at the bar.

FRED

I'm not sure that's a good idea.

He looks down into his beer...

Marianne looks a bit stung and turns to see BRAD, a twenty-something student, who comes over...

BRAD

(southern accent)
You ready for this, player?

FRED

(confused)
For what?

Marianne straightens up as Brad sits down next to her, and puts his arm around her. She stares suggestively at Fred as she leans into Brad's shoulder...

BRAD

Where's Alice and the others?

Fred, uneasy with Marianne staring, nods toward the bar...

Alice walks up to the table with TWO PSEUDO-BOHEMIAN GUYS, LUCAS and CAMERON carrying backpacks, both mid-twenties, holding some flaming shots...She notices Marianne looking at Fred, and after she puts the shots down on the table, she throws Fred's beer in his face...

Everyone stands there, a bit shocked as Fred sits there, dripping.

She grabs a flaming Dr. Pepper shot. She downs it.

ALICE

Let's go do something retarded.

46

EXT. THE INTERSECTION FRENCH STREET AND BOURBON - A LITTLE 46
LATER THAT NIGHT

FRED (O.S.)

What exactly are we doing?

Fred, fuzzy from the weed, wet from the beer, steps from the passenger seat of the BMW parked next to Marianne's beat up motorcycle as PEDESTRIANS walk by, and notices them looking at a line of horse drawn carriages.

ALICE

Poor God damned horses. They look so depressed.

FRED

What?

ALICE

We're setting them free.

Brad and Lucas both pull bandanas over their faces, followed by Alice who puts on one over her face. Cameron and Marianne walk up next to them.

FRED

(to himself)

Why?

ALICE
Show us how it's done.

FRED
No, I'm fine, thank you.

LUCAS
Can't put your money where your
mouth is, professor?

ALICE
When did you become such a pussy?
You egged us on. What was all that
animal liberation, PETA crap you
preached?

Fred doesn't know what to say, then...

FRED
I...Was I drinking?

ALICE
Probably...let's go.

FRED
(tentative)
Yeah. I don't know.

ALICE
Pull your skirt up and let's go...
Marianne.

Marianne goes to distract the first CARRIAGE DRIVER as Alice goes around the first carriage, releases the horse, and gives it a slap on the ass. It starts to wander down French Street.

Some PEDESTRIANS notice, puzzled.

Then the CARRIAGE DRIVERS notice and, panicked, run after it leaving the other three parked carriages abandoned.

ALICE (CONT'D)
Your turn.

She grabs Fred and pulls him toward the next horse.

ALICE (CONT'D)
You take the this one. Hop on and
I'll release him.

FRED
No, wait...What?

ALICE
Get on.

FRED
Get on?

ALICE
Yes.

FRED
What about you?

ALICE
I'll be right behind you.

She pushes him up to the horse and gives him a boost as Fred climbs clumsily onto it.

FRED
This is...this is not a good idea.

She slides the blinders off the horses eyes and goes to release the horse from the carriage.

Fred looks down at the horse.

FRED (CONT'D)
Hello.

The horse snorts, oblivious.

Fred looks out at the surrounding street, tentative, but kind of pleased with himself and not sure what to do next.

FRED (CONT'D)
What now?

The carriage drivers have wrangled the other horse down the street and notice Fred on the horse.

CARRIAGE DRIVER
(noticing from off)
Hey?!? What the hell are you doing?!

As Alice and the others try to mount the horses behind, Fred's horse spooks, whinnies and goes up on it's hind legs then takes off like a shot down Bourbon Street.

Fred gets thrown back off the saddle and tossed around like a rag doll, but manages to hold on for dear life to the reigns as the freaked out horse hurdles down the street past CONFUSED PEDESTRIANS and TWO STREET COPS, who watch him go by.

FRED

Shiiit.

White knuckling, a little drunk and still high, he pulls his way up onto the saddle as the horse continues to run for its life. He slides down to the side of the saddle and tries to correct himself then finally gets upright, although still at the mercy of the terrified horse.

FRED (CONT'D)

Hey...slow...woah...

The horse ignores him and keeps running through an intersection, a red-light camera flares.

Fred turns to look back - Alice and the rest are nowhere in sight.

And that's when sirens can be heard. He looks to the left and notices cop cars with lights flashing driving on a parallel street to Bourbon.

SOME JAZZ MUSICIANS watch and smirk at Fred flailing on the horse and, for a moment, Fred shares a look with them as he rides through the BEWILDERED, SCATTERED PEDESTRIANS, PATRONS and TOURISTS.

But then Fred's horse decides to turn down a side street away from A CROWD OF PEOPLE GATHERED AHEAD in the middle of Bourbon. The horse runs onto Rampart Street and ahead into St. Louis Cemetery No. 1 - It gallops through the aisles of above ground graves and Fred watches it all pass by. Fred takes the reigns of the rogue horse and actually recovers his equilibrium to ride with the it through the rest of the cemetery until they emerge out onto a busy street along side some cars, whose DRIVERS notice him with puzzled expressions.

Two police cruisers race into an intersection ahead of him, skid to a halt, blocking his path...

The horse startles and stops short, hurling Fred from the saddle off and onto the ground with a loud thud...

Fred lies there, stunned and in pain as the horse walks around confused as to what the hell just happened.

FRED (CONT'D)
 (delayed)
 Ow.

TWO OF NEW ORLEANS FINEST walk up and look down at Fred, splayed there...

POLICE OFFICER
 What the hell are you doing?

FRED
 (half-heartedly, pained)
 Liberating the horses.

47 INT. THE TUTTLE RESIDENCE - THE NEXT MORNING

47

Edgar steps groggily into the kitchen with Fred's notebook in hand as Bonnie scurries to get her day together...

She doesn't acknowledge him as she throws her jacket on, takes a hit of coffee...

Edgar watches her...then proceeds to the Mr. Coffee on the counter, grabs a mug from a rack by the sink, pours himself a cup, sips, scowls at the taste, then continues to study her...

She grabs her keys and heads toward the front door...

EDGAR
 (seemingly annoyed)
 Hey?!

She stops and turns.

BONNIE
 What?

EDGAR
 How about a good morning?

BONNIE
 (confused)
 Good morning.

She contemplates him a moment then heads for the door...

He watches her out the window running to her car and pulling out of the driveway.

He pours the coffee out in the sink, looks to Fred's notebook and finds the number for Arapahoe High School. He dials the number into Fred's cell phone...it rings.

EDGAR

Hi, yeah, this is Fred Tuttle calling...Happy Tuesday to you too...um fine, thanks, actually no, sorry, I'm not fine, I'm a bit under the weather and I was calling in sick...Yes...Flu or something...I will...Yes, lots of fluids, OJ...Uhuh...Okay...thanks. Bye.

He hangs up, heads over to Bonnie's computer and looks at her Scent-Sations materials on the desk.

48

INT. NEW ORLEANS JAIL - THE NEXT MORNING

48

Fred sits uncomfortably in the corner of a holding cell, scruffy and disheveled.

A DRUNKEN HOMELESS GUY lies fetal next to him, his head resting on Fred's knee along with A CROSS-DRESSER across the cell who stares at Fred making him more than uncomfortable, and A GUY who looks like THREE HUNDRED POUND OFFENSIVE LINEMAN.

GUARD'S VOICE (O.S.)

(southern accent)

Edgar Eckmann?

No response...

GUARD'S VOICE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Eckmann?

FRED

(remembering)

Yes?

GUARD'S VOICE (O.S.)

Morning sunshine.

FRED

Is this the part when you tell me I posted bail?

A GUARD unlocks the door to the cell.

GUARD
Let's go, smart ass.

Fred wears a mild grin on his face.

49 INT. EDGAR ECKMANN'S BMW - MINUTES LATER

49

Alice, hung-over, in a pair of dark sunglasses and a beret, drives in silence next to Fred in the passenger seat...

ALICE
You hungry?

FRED
Excuse me?

ALICE
You've got class in an hour, so if you want to grab a donut at Du Monde or something...

FRED
Are you demented?

ALICE
(nonchalant)
Depends on the day.

FRED
You launched me on Seabiscuit through the French Quarter last night.

ALICE
You deserved it.

FRED
(fumbling)
Well, that wasn't very...

Alice interrupts by flipping on the stereo and Joy Division blasts out of it.

Fred reaches for it and turns it off. Alice turns it back on. Fred turns it off.

FRED (CONT'D)
You want to explain what the hell's going on here?!

ALICE
Blow me!

FRED
No, you blow me!

She looks ahead, an incredulous grin in her expression...

ALICE
How about you commit to something,
you prick...? It doesn't even have
to be to me. How about writing?
Actually moving into that house? Or
the rest of your life?

She screeches up to a curb in front of the Tulane campus...

ALICE (CONT'D)
I'm so tired of orbiting around
your self-pitying, retrograde,
nostalgic bullshit. It's
exhausting...Do you want a donut or
what?

FRED
If you're so exhausted, why don't
you walk away?

She's stung. They sit there for a beat.

ALICE
Get out.

FRED
Isn't this my car?

She realizes it is.

ALICE
You can teach your class yourself
today.

She gets out and huffs off. Fred watches her walk away.

50

EXT. THE CAMPUS, TULANE UNIVERSITY - A BIT LATER

50

Fred's on Edgar's cell-phone making a call as he walks
through campus, he looks at Gilda's card in his hands.

INT. TOO, INC. OFFICES - SAME TIME

RECEPTIONIST
Good morning, Too, Inc. How can I
direct your call?

It looks like a production office, nice, but not too sleek. VARIOUS EMPLOYEES shuffle about with photos and paper. A huge bulletin board with photo matches of PEOPLE'S FACES is in the background. A projector's on in a conference room in the background - the pictures of two similar looking women projected next to each other on a screen as A FEW OPERATIVES seem to be looking at them and discussing.

INTERCUT WITH FRED

FRED

(a bit confused)

Hi, yes, may I speak with Gilda please?

RECEPTIONIST (V.O.)

She's out of town on assignment, but I can give you her voicemail.

FRED

Um...no, that's okay.

He hangs up, looks curiously at the phone then turns the card over to see Gilda's cell number. He dials, it rings, then...

GILDA (O.S.)

You've reached Gilda Munro at Too, Inc. Please leave a detailed message and I'll return your call promptly.

FRED

Hi Gilda, this is Fred...Tuttle.
Um...This was all very helpful, but I'm ready to go home now. So if you could call me back as soon as possible that would be good.
Thanks.

He hangs up, grimacing, then he looks at Edgar's notebook and glances up at the expanse of the Norman Mayer building and walks up and in.

51 EXT. CHERRY HILLS VILLAGE, LITTLETON - THE SAME MORNING 51

It's chilly. Edgar, freshly showered and shaved, walks down the main drag in Cherry Hills enjoying the small town charm, he holds a cup of coffee, a shopping bag, a newspaper and heads toward Fred's car...

A sixty-something man, GERRY, silver haired, sits on the hood of Fred's Camry. He looks up at Edgar and smiles.

GERRY

Fredly.

Edgar glances to him with a "who the hell is this?" type expression, then out of caution moves toward friendliness.

EDGAR

Heya.

GERRY

It's been a bit.

EDGAR

Yeah, it has...since, since...

GERRY

Bonnie's birthday, I think.

EDGAR

Yep...that was fun.

It probably wasn't as Gerry gives him a dry grin.

GERRY

Well, since we're here, you got time for a coffee?

Fred looks to the coffee in his hands.

EDGAR

(unsure)

Sure.

52 INT. NORMAN MAYER BUILDING, TULANE UNIVERSITY - CONTINUOUS 52

Fred looks into Edgar's notebook trying to find his way around.

LEE (O.S.)

Edgar.

Fred doesn't respond, still not used to being Edgar.

LEE (CONT'D)

(harder)

Edgar?

Fred turns to see an elegant fifty-something man in a suit and tie, LEE MELLON, the President of the University. He wears a rather concerned expression...

LEE (CONT'D)
Can I speak with you in my office?

Fred furrows his brow.

53 INT. STARBUCKS - MINUTES LATER

53

Edgar sits with Gerry, on the verge of a lecture, at a table in front of their grande drips.

GERRY
Nancy was on the phone with Bonnie the other day...Bonnie had a good cry...Any idea what that's about?

Edgar wears a blank expression as the cashier calls out an order in the background.

EDGAR
To be honest, no.

GERRY
Look, I have no interest in prying. I know you think I'm a putz and to be fair I always took you for one too...

Edgar squints at this.

GERRY (CONT'D)
Aside from the whole holiday song and dance we don't get a lot of face time so I'm not sure what's going on over there.

EDGAR
That makes two of us.

GERRY
Don't get cute.

Gerry studies Edgar...

GERRY (CONT'D)
You've changed.

EDGAR
Isn't that inevitable?

GERRY

Sure, but you got quiet. Real quiet...You're disappearing, Fred...She used to wear you like a badge. Wouldn't shut up about how smart you were, how you were gonna help change the public school system, save the world and all that crap. It was annoying, but I'd rather have that than hear she's crying instead.

Edgar absorbs this, thinks about it a second.

EDGAR

Well..., what do you prescribe?

GERRY

Huh?

EDGAR

(improvising)

I just...I'm not sure I know what to do or...or how exactly to handle this.

GERRY

Nobody knows how to handle this...Life. It's a weird word.

EDGAR

I guess.

After a few seconds.

GERRY

Every once in a while Nancy and I inch away into our separate spaces. Happened after we were first married and things weren't quite what we expected, and again after Bonnie left for D.U...We were stuck in that house, unable to look at or touch each other.

A thoughtful moment, the hubbub of Starbucks around them...

GERRY (CONT'D)

How's Bonnie in the sack?

EDGAR

(surprised)

Excuse me?

GERRY

I bet she's an ice queen like her mother.

Edgar, confused, doesn't know what to say.

GERRY (CONT'D)

You ever think about screwing around?

EDGAR

(not sure what to say)

No?

GERRY

Why not? I cheat on Nancy every now and again to keep things interesting.

Edgar squints questionably at him.

EDGAR

How's that working out for you?

GERRY

Fine. Maybe it's time you screw around a little?

Edgar remains squinting, not getting his logic...

EDGAR

Does um...Nancy know you screw around?

GERRY

She's never mentioned anything to me...All a man has is his sense of self, Fred. We pummel ourselves with expectations and wind up lost for words...Sometimes it takes an act of idiocy to remember who you were and realize what you wanted was just across the room from you.

Edgar looks down into his coffee.

EDGAR

A bit preachy, no?

GERRY

Don't be a schmuck. I'm not one for being earnest, but she loves you.

(MORE)

GERRY (CONT'D)

Behind whatever static snuck in
between you two, that girl loves
you.

Edgar begins to see what marriage he's walked into...Then he double takes as he notices Gilda sitting at a nearby table with a Denver Post, sipping a coffee. She meets his eyes, gives him a wink, goes back to her paper.

54

INT. PRESIDENT MELLON'S OFFICE - A BIT LATER

54

Close on a photograph of Fred on the horse in an intersection caught by a Red-light camera. It's definitely him, except he wears a surprised expression...he looks ridiculous.

Fred, horrified, looks at the photo as he sits in front of President Mellon's desk...He leans forward, places the photo on the desk and sits back.

President Mellon leans on his desk chair.

FRED

Sir, listen...

LEE

(interrupting)

Call me Lee for Christ's sake.

Lee looks at the photo again...

LEE (CONT'D)

What the hell were you thinking,
Eckmann?

FRED

I don't think I was...thinking...I
just...

LEE

This is no small...I mean, for a
professor to go to jail is no small
thing for this university. It's a
deal, a big deal.

FRED

Yeah, I get that.

Lee studies him.

LEE

Since we're being frank, I have to say I've had some concern...I want to be lenient here...But you're not writing, you haven't published in years, I'm not sure you're even teaching or what you're teaching for that matter...You were the bright young thing in the English department, Edgar, tenure at your age, the Awards stuff, the kids love you...On paper, you look pretty stellar.

Fred searches for a way out of this.

FRED

Well, I don't live on paper.

LEE

I know it hasn't been an easy year.

Fred looks up at him, wondering what that means for Edgar.

FRED

I suppose so.

LEE

My brother lost his wife, and it threw him out of the stratosphere.

Fred's surprised at the information.

LEE (CONT'D)

Look, I don't want to get historical on you...

Lee grabs the photo from the Red-light camera, looks at it.

LEE (CONT'D)

But have you lost your mind?

And Fred, his back against the wall, starts talking as Fred.

FRED

(a bit heated)

No. Yes. No...Look, I decided to have a little fun. Is that a crime? I mean, when did fun become a crime?

LEE

Um, when you do stupid shit like this...again. I can't have the Times-Picayune getting a hold of this.

Fred sees his point, takes a breath, then...

FRED

Listen, I...I haven't been myself lately, and as you said, it's been a shit year. I'm tired of myself, I'm tired of my shit...I just decided to do something stupid.

LEE

Stupid is the right word, but do me a favor, and go jump out a plane or do the thing with the cord off the bridge, take a pill, take a sabbatical, just don't get caught like some nut-job pseudo-radical who flew off the left wing so the trustees come down on my ass!

Fred sits with that for a moment, realizing he can't change who he is, then...

FRED

Lee...You can't take the spots off the leopard. You hired me cause I'm me, so...take it or leave it.

A beat.

LEE

You'll have to do some community service.

FRED

Fine.

55

INT. TUTTLE RESIDENCE - EVENING

55

Edgar enters the front door carrying the shopping bag, wipes snow flurries from his shoulders, notices the now wilting daisies. He hears Bonnie on the phone in the kitchen.

He pulls out a pack of M&Ms from his pocket and steps toward the kitchen.

56

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

56

BONNIE (O.S.)
...I think you'll be pleased with them...yes...well, I'm not sure it'll solve that problem (laughs gratuitously)...yeah...

Bonnie sits in her spot, typing away on her orders page with the phone nestled between her ear and her shoulder.

BONNIE (CONT'D)
Uhuh...Well, that's not necessarily happiness, luv...Let's not go there (laughs again)...Okay...you have yourself a good one...Bye now.

She hangs up. Her face falls. She types the order into the computer.

Edgar walks up behind her.

EDGAR
Hi.

She doesn't turn, still focused on typing in the order.

Edgar waits a second, shakes his head, and pulls a new coffee maker out of the shopping bag.

BONNIE
Um...Principal Kessler called to see how you were feeling? Did something happen at school today?

Edgar takes the coffee maker out of the box and replaces the old one on the counter. Bonnie doesn't notice.

EDGAR
(grimacing)
No, no. It's fine. Just a headache. I'm fine.

BONNIE
We've got dinner with everyone at six-thirty if the brain-dead sitter ever shows up.

Edgar wonders who "everyone" is?

EDGAR
Okay...where's Ernie?

BONNIE
 (again not listening)
 Um...it's at the um...Cheesecake
 Factory.

Edgar, again confused by her response or attention deficit,
 looks at her...

EDGAR
 Bonnie...?

BONNIE
 (after a couple seconds)
 Yeah?

Edgar reaches to the inside of his coat and pulls out a
 single burgundy rose, places it next to her keyboard then
 retreats out of the kitchen.

Bonnie continues typing for a few seconds then stops, notices
 it, and turns, looking for Fred, sees he's gone.

BONNIE (CONT'D)
 Fred...? Freddy?

He's already down the hall and doesn't respond. Her
 expression goes blank.

57 INT. ERNIE'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

57

Edgar walks into the room and peers around at Ernie's
 cornucopia of toys, books, crayons..., but no Ernie in sight.

EDGAR
 Ernie?

The window's open - cold air and a few snow flurries draught
 in and Edgar goes over to close it...After he does, he looks
 back at the room, still clutching the M&Ms in his hand...

EDGAR (CONT'D)
 Ernie?

He thinks a moment, then realizes...He turns back and re-
 opens the window. He peers out and notices a ladder just
 outside, leading from the back lawn up to the roof just above
 the bedroom.

Edgar eases his way out the window and then climbs up the
 ladder to the roof, and looks around.

EDGAR (CONT'D)
Ernie?

ERNIE (O.S.)
Yup.

Edgar follows the voice up the slick roof, which isn't very steep, and finds Ernie in a puffy parka, moon boots over his pajamas. He's lying on his back in between the eaves staring up into the snow flurries. He has a flashlight, a note-pad, a red crayon, and a juice box.

ERNIE (CONT'D)
First snowfall.

Edgar carefully makes his way over and lies down next to him.

EDGAR
(slightly out of breath)
Yeah...Love when that happens.

Ernie shines the flashlight upwards, the flakes descending from the darkness above onto them.

Something's bothering Ernie, but he says nothing.

EDGAR (CONT'D)
How was your Monday?

ERNIE
(matter of fact)
It was a Monday...Can you look over my panda report? It's rough.

EDGAR
Sure.

Ernie passes Edgar a piece of paper with red crayon scribbles on it.

EDGAR (CONT'D)
Now?

ERNIE
Whenever.

Edgar puts it in his pocket.

EDGAR
You been doing your homework in the dark?

Ernie waves his flashlight at him, giving him his answer.

They both quietly look up at the sky for a moment.

ERNIE
Mom's been crying.

Edgar looks over at Ernie.

EDGAR
What do you mean?

ERNIE
I mean she's been crying.

EDGAR
Did she say why?

Ernie looks to him, a weight in his expression...

ERNIE
Well...I heard her on the phone
with Granny the other day. When she
saw that I saw her, she said she
caught a cold, but she didn't...
I don't think I'll ever get
married.

EDGAR
Why's that?

ERNIE
Too much pressure...too
complicated.

Edgar can't disagree.

EDGAR
Yeah, it's complicated...Sometimes
people don't realize how good
they've got it.

ERNIE
Were you supposed to do better than
this?

After a thoughtful beat.

EDGAR
I was supposed to do a lot of
things.

ERNIE
Did you want more than this?

EDGAR

Sure.

ERNIE

Yeah...mom did too.

They both stare up into the snowflakes for another moment, then attempting to move on and cheer Ernie up, he holds up the pack of M&Ms, somewhat proudly, as if he'd done a good deed.

EDGAR

I brought you these.

Ernie glances at it then at Edgar, turns off the flashlight...He takes the bag of M&Ms and puts it on his lap.

ERNIE

(a little confused)

Thanks.

After a moment...

ERNIE (CONT'D)

Don't worry. I won't tell.

EDGAR

Won't tell what?

ERNIE

You're not my dad.

Edgar turns surprised, but catches himself and pretends not to be.

EDGAR

What, uh...what are you talking about?

ERNIE

Give it up.

EDGAR

I'm your father.

Ernie smiles, amused.

ERNIE

You sound like Darth Vader.

EDGAR

Seriously...

Edgar looks over at him, worried, surprised...

ERNIE

(continuing)

It's really not that big a deal...My parents both seem to be living on a different planet anyway...I just happen to be paying attention and a citizen of planet Earth...

He looks at Edgar...

ERNIE (CONT'D)

No way you're my dad.

Edgar bunches his expression up in a mix of frustration, irritation, and confusion...

EDGAR

I um...I'm confused.

ERNIE

I'm the one who's supposed to be confused...So, is he coming back?

EDGAR

What?

ERNIE

Just tell me he's coming back.

Edgar has no clue what to say to any of this, except...

EDGAR

(under his breath)

God damn it.

ERNIE

(a bit harder, worried)

Tell me.

Again nothing...

ERNIE (CONT'D)

(more emotional)

Please tell me he's coming back...?

I won't ask any questions. Promise.

Edgar sighs, looks to him. They stare at each other, Ernie now bordering on tears. Edgar looks up into the sky.

ERNIE (CONT'D)
Please...?

Then Ernie passes the M&Ms back to him.

ERNIE (CONT'D)
I'm allergic to chocolate..., but
you knew that, right Dad?

Edgar has nothing to say, busted.

58

INT. EDGAR ECKMANN'S DINING ROOM - LATER

58

Fred's on the phone sitting at the dining room table in front of Edgar's typewriter.

FRED
Hi Gilda, this is Fred Tuttle
calling again. Um...This isn't...

AUTOMATED VOICEMAIL VOICE (O.S.)
(interrupting him)
If you're satisfied with your
message, press one. If you'd like
to rerecord your message press
three.

Fred, annoyed, presses three.

FRED
(quickly)
Hi Gilda, I think I'm finished with
all this, so if you could please
call me back on my mobile, I'd
appreciate it...This is Fred
Tuttle.

Fred hangs up. He scans the scattered papers, the invitation on the table...He reaches for Edgar's book and looks at the cover, "How You Will Know Me" by Edgar Eckmann, National Book Award Finalist, 2001. He opens it and notices the dedication: *For Sophie*.

He turns and looks around, curious, then gets up and walks over to peer in the kitchen, scattered dishes, Pop Tarts and Folgers on the counter-top. He continues down the hall, notices a bathroom ahead, and then a doorway to the right. He opens the door and peers in...

59 INT. STORAGE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

59

Fred flips on the light...It's musty as if it hadn't been opened in a while, and it's filled with a clothing rack of women's clothing hanging like ghosts. There's a box of shoes, storage boxes, his and her bicycles, a pile of documents and clippings. Fred steps in and peruses them. He notices some photos - one of Edgar with Bill Clinton. He picks it up, studies it, amused...then pockets it.

60 INT. THE CHEESECAKE FACTORY - A BIT LATER THAT EVENING

60

ETHAN (O.S.)

...I can see your point, but I
still think you're full of shit.

Edgar sits over a grilled cheese, still disturbed by Ernie's discovery, and dazed by the divergent conversations from Maile, Ethan, Jan, Tom and Bonnie sitting around him, none of whom seem to have noticed any difference between him and Fred.

TOM (O.S.)

I didn't think you needed that much
horsepower.

ETHAN (O.S.)

I don't know a contractor in town
who has less than three hundred
under his hood...

Jan, Maile, and Bonnie have their separate conversation...

JAN

...and she tells Oprah it's leading
a comfortable life in your
community, your neighborhood,
whatever, and believing in the same
things as the people you're
surrounded by...

MAILE

(interrupting)
Or, at least pretending you do.

She and Jan share a snicker at this...

JAN

Exactly.

Bonnie gives a gratuitous smile to Maile and Jan...

Jan's snicker fades into something more serious, she takes a bite of her Chicken Caesar salad...

TOM

(being the Ford salesman)
...I liked the F150 for you. I didn't think it'd be a lemon.

ETHAN

Well, life shouldn't be giving me lemons, it should be asking what kind of fruit I want.

Edgar sits there in his own private Idaho. He reaches for THE WAITRESS as she scurries by.

WAITRESS

Whatcha need, hon?

EDGAR

A Jameson and rocks would be a decent start.

WAITRESS

Back in a sec.

Bonnie peers over at him. Fred never drinks.

Restless, Edgar looks down, reaches into his coat pocket. He brought Ernie's panda report with him and starts to read it on his lap.

Ethan notices him looking down at Ernie's report.

ETHAN

(still chewing food)
Hey, Mr. Congeniality, whatcha doing over yonder?

EDGAR

Huh?

Ethan uses fake sign language...

ETHAN

What are you looking at?

EDGAR

It's uh...Ernie's panda report. He asked me to proof it for him.

ETHAN
(slightly admonishing)
At the dinner table?

Edgar squints at him, but let's it go.

MAILE
Oh please read it.

JAN
Cute. Read it.

Bonnie shoots a look to Edgar.

EDGAR
(shrugs)
Okay.

Ethan shakes his head.

EDGAR (CONT'D)
(reading)
Uhh...Panda bears are solitary animals. They mate once in a year. Only once. There is no such thing as a lasting male-female bond in their world. A male panda and a female panda meet by accident somewhere in their big, huge bamboo forest, and they mate. Then when they finish, the male runs away from the female as if he is scared to death and never looks back. The rest of the year he lives alone somewhere deep in the forest. Mutual communication does not exist for them. And that is the story of panda bears.

Edgar, almost moved, then looks up at Bonnie, who seems a bit self-conscious.

ETHAN
(snide)
Well...that was mind-blowing.

MAILE
Quiet.

The waitress returns with Edgar's scotch. Edgar takes a good sip.

With that, Ethan reaches his fork into Bonnie's Penne with Marinara sauce.

Edgar glances up and notices this.

Bonnie notices him notice.

EDGAR
What are you doing?

Ethan stops, about to put the bite in his mouth...

EDGAR (CONT'D)
Did you ask if you could have a bite of that?

ETHAN
Um...

EDGAR
Bonnie, is it okay with you if this asshole takes a bite off your plate?

Everyone looks to Bonnie, uncomfortable.

BONNIE
Um...No..., actually.

EDGAR
(to Ethan)
So put it down.

ETHAN
Are you kidding me?

EDGAR
Put the god damned penne down.

He puts it down on his plate.

Edgar takes another sip as the rest of the table sits there frozen.

Bonnie looks into her food.

ETHAN
Who brought the tough guy?

JAN
Apparently Bonnie did.

EDGAR

I'm not sure what your problem is,
but I'll bet it's hard to
pronounce.

Bonnie looks surprised to Edgar.

ETHAN

What my problem is?

MAILE

(trying to settle him)
Ethan.

Ethan hardens, used to running the show here.

ETHAN

When'd you decide to grow a
personality?

MAILE

Don't be rude.

ETHAN

I'm not being rude. He's just
insignificant.

BONNIE

(upset by the comment)
Knock it off.

ETHAN

(dry)
Sorry, just having trouble seeing
your husband with an actual
presence.

EDGAR

Maybe if you paid less attention to
jerking off your ego, your eyesight
might improve.

Bonnie lets out a snicker, then smothers it...

Ethan stands up.

EDGAR (CONT'D)

Sit down.

MAILE

(worried)
Ethan.

ETHAN
Get up you pansy.

EDGAR
Really?

Ethan awkwardly pushes Edgar in the head with his hand.

Edgar looks up at him for a good couple seconds...then springs up and pummels him into the adjacent table, knocking it, whatever was on it, and a few of the people at it to the floor in a loud clatter of plates and glasses...

Bonnie stares dumbfounded at her supposed husband.

61 INT. EDGAR ECKMANN'S HOUSE - AROUND THE SAME TIME 61

Fred sits on the floor, looking through Edgar's various clippings.

He notices some newspaper clippings - an obituary for Sophie Eckmann: Associate Professor of English and Comparative Literature, Tulane University, wife of Edgar Eckmann, dated a year and a half ago with a photo on the upper left hand corner, the same woman in the photo on Edgar's table.

Fred stares at the photo, a stern expression on his face.

62 EXT. PARKING LOT - MINUTES LATER 62

Edgar, covered in food stains, and Bonnie trudge up to the Civic in the snowfall. Bonnie goes for the passenger door.

EDGAR
Can you drive, please?

Bonnie looks at him.

He forgets to open the car door for her and hops in the passenger side.

She walks around to the driver's side, annoyed that again he neglected to open the door for her. She wipes the snow off the windshield then gets in the car.

They sit there for a moment.

BONNIE
What the hell was that?

EDGAR
What was what?

BONNIE
(pointing toward the
restaurant)
That?!

EDGAR
(changing the subject)
Ernie said you were crying the
other day.

BONNIE
What...? No. Don't change the
subject. What's going on with you?

EDGAR
Why were you crying?

BONNIE
(defensive)
I wasn't.

Edgar looks to her, calling her out.

BONNIE (CONT'D)
(folding)
So?

EDGAR
And?

BONNIE
And what?

EDGAR
Why were you crying?

BONNIE
Isn't a person allowed to feel
something?

The windows start to fog from their heat against the outside
cold.

EDGAR
Sure. Feel all you want...just make
sure what you're feeling's right.

She glares at him, something's different, something's off.

BONNIE

What the hell's that supposed to mean?

EDGAR

It means I don't think you're as happy as you should be.

BONNIE

What's going on with you?

A quiet couple seconds.

EDGAR

(changing the subject)
What exactly happened to us?

BONNIE

(deferring)
Fred.

EDGAR

You shouldn't dust this stuff under the rug?

BONNIE

(harder)
Fred.

EDGAR

I'm not saying we have to discuss it right now, but at some point you should probably get around to it.

BONNIE

What the hell is there to say?

EDGAR

We...This marriage is stale. Time does this awful thing of moving on.

Bonnie looks hard at him.

EDGAR (CONT'D)

(trying another tack)
What's our song?

BONNIE

Huh?

EDGAR

Our song?

She's confused for a second until a faint smile from some memory creeps its way into her expression.

BONNIE
Hootie and the Blowfish...

Edgar smothers a scowl.

BONNIE (CONT'D)
"I only wanna be with you".

EDGAR
Was that a smile?

BONNIE
No.

EDGAR
Do you have any idea how good this
life is, that kid, that house...?
You haven't the faintest, do you?

BONNIE
(hurt)
What about you, Fred? I haven't
seen you hosting any parades
lately.

A thoughtful beat.

EDGAR
You're right...Same goes for me.

They sit there in a long, uncomfortable silence. Bonnie stares out the windshield, Edgar turns and looks over at her...

BONNIE
(ruffled)
What?!

He leans in and kisses her, the perfect kiss, the tension breaker of all tension breakers...

Edgar squeezes her close and breathes the life back into her, her guard dropping off like a silk slip.

He moves across the parking break, and things escalate as he clumsily adjusts her seat back. She straddles him, they kiss harder, clothes start to come off, and they push further toward sex...

But then Bonnie comes back to Earth. She opens her eyes mid-kiss, has some sort of realization, something is different about this kiss, something is off with this guy whom she thinks is Fred...She breaks the kiss, and pushes Edgar off of her, backs away from him...

EDGAR

What?

She stares at him, shocked, as if he were a stranger...then catches her breath, composes herself.

After a few seconds, Edgar moves back into the driver's seat, unsure. The moment broken.

She squints at him, something sad behind her expression, then looks out the windshield again...

BONNIE

Let's go home.

63

INT. EDGAR'S HOUSE - THE NEXT MORNING

63

Fred wakes having slept slumped on the couch, neck stiff, hungover, stubble longer, Edgar's book nestled between him and the couch arm, an empty bottle of Booker's on the floor.

He notices the window's open, French Quarter street noise seeping in, curtains taken by a breeze, which hits him. He faintly smiles. Slowly, he realizes that Alice rests on his chest...then sits up with a start...

FRED

What are you doing here?

ALICE

Morning.

FRED

How did you get in here?

ALICE

The window.

Fred notices his pants are at his ankles.

FRED

Wait...Did we...? Did you...? What happened last night?

ALICE

(toying)

What do you remember happening last night?

Fred, with his bedraggled hair, thinks hard about it as Alice sits up.

He can't help but look at her, her black tank top has bundled up revealing a life-sized Colt .45 tattoo on her right hip looking like it's holstered in her panties' waste-line.

She positions herself on Fred's lap, straddling him. She runs her hand through his hair, smiles softly.

ALICE (CONT'D)

Where are you, Eckmann?

Fred clenches.

FRED

What happened last night?

A beat.

ALICE

(dry)

I raped you.

FRED

(not following)

You what?

She kisses him on the forehead, gets up and walks off down the hallway.

ALICE (O.S.)

I'm gonna take a shower.

The shower turns on.

FRED

(to himself)

Oh my God.

ALICE (O.S.)

Don't forget, we've gotta be ready at five for the presentation dinner.

FRED

(to himself)

Presentation dinner?

He peers down the hall, making sure Alice doesn't see him, then takes out Edgar's phone, dials his own number...it goes straight to voice-mail.

FRED (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 You've reached Fred Tuttle and I'm currently unavailable. Please leave a message.

It's weird to hear his own voice on the other end of the line. He hangs up, annoyed, tries again...and it goes straight to voice-mail.

FRED (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 You've reached Fred Tuttle and I'm currently unavailable. Please leave a message.

FRED (CONT'D)
 God damn it!

Then the beep.

FRED (CONT'D)
 (hushed, but desperate)
 Edgar, this is not working for me. I can't make it to the end of the week. I left a few messages for Gilda, but she hasn't returned my calls so please call me back on your number as soon as possible...This is Fred by the way...Fred Tuttle. Please call me back.

Fred hangs up, sits there, brimming with anxiety, thinking of what the hell to do, how to get out of this. He looks at his phone, makes a decision, takes a breath and dials...

64 INT. FRED AND BONNIE'S BEDROOM - SAME TIME

64

The phone in the bedroom rings.

Someone's in the shower in the background.

And Bonnie picks up...

BONNIE
 Hello?

INTERCUT BETWEEN EDGAR'S HOUSE AND FRED AND BONNIE'S HOUSE

Fred freezes a moment, hearing the familiar warmth of Bonnie's voice.

FRED
(into the phone)
Hello.

Bonnie looks confused, a strange sense of recognition.

BONNIE
Who's this?

FRED
(cupping the phone,
altering his voice)
Um...this is...is Fred there?

Bonnie looks to the bathroom.

BONNIE
(confused)
Uh...he's in the shower...Who is
this?

FRED
It's uh...it's uh...

He panics again and hangs up abruptly.

FRED (CONT'D)
Shit!

ALICE
(from off)
What?

FRED
Nothing...nothing.

65

INT. FRED AND BONNIE'S BEDROOM - SECONDS LATER

65

Bonnie, puzzled, puts the phone down. She looks toward the bathroom as Edgar scrubs behind the shower curtain.

She looks toward his pile of clothes on the ground, and notices a lighter sticking out of his pocket. She squints suspiciously and walks over to the pile of clothes, kneels down to examine the lighter then goes through Edgar's pockets.

She finds Fred's keys, some crumpled cash and change. She smells something, she sniffs his shirt, grimaces at the smoky smell.

ERNIE (O.S.)
Bus's here! Bye mom!

She's startled.

BONNIE
(off)
Okay! Bye sweetie!

EDGAR
(from the shower)
What?

BONNIE
Nothing. Just...

She quickly turns back to the task at hand and hits the jacket pockets. She finds a pen, some receipts, and then Gilda's business card with the roman numeral II on it and the Hyatt address written on the back.

Bonnie surveys it suspiciously as the shower turns off. She pockets the card and walks out of the room.

66 INT. EDGAR'S LIVING ROOM - A COUPLE MINUTES LATER 66

Fred stares, freaked out, into nothing.

Alice steps down the hallway in a towel.

ALICE
Who were you talking to?

FRED
Nobody.

ALICE
I heard you talking to someone.

FRED
(flustered)
To myself. I was talking to myself...my inner monologue slipped out.

ALICE
Another god damn groupie?

FRED
(fed up)
Alice.

ALICE
You pussy...Every minute of this is
a minute out of my life.

FRED
Mine too.

ALICE
You'll miss me, asshole. You'll
really miss me.

FRED
(losing his grip)
How the hell can you miss somebody
if they won't leave you alone?

ALICE
(hurt)
It was a mistake to label this
love. It was more like empathy.

She tries to smother any emotion.

ALICE (CONT'D)
I came over here to be with you
last night cause the loneliness
knocked the wind out of me. That
was the deal when we started all
this. You were alone. I was alone.
It was like Last Tango in Paris
without the butter, but apparently
you're a walking, living, breathing
contradiction.

FRED
Maybe.

ALICE
Fuck maybe.

FRED
(harder)
No, don't fuck maybe. Life is based
on maybe...You say your wedding
vows and you think maybe, you...you
commit to anything, but you think
maybe. We're all floating on maybe
in a big fat ocean of
contradictions, so...

ALICE

First of all, you sound retarded, secondly, you're mixing metaphors and thirdly, that's bullshit...You can think "maybe" all you want, but at the end of the day, we're all living in the real world. We all know everything's bullshit, but we also all have some sort of clue what we're doing and what we should be doing, so suck it up!

FRED

You know nothing about me...Nothing. Maybe I'm going through some shit right now. Maybe I'm having a moment. You have no idea who I am just like I can't begin to assume who you are underneath all your...shit.

A beat.

FRED (CONT'D)

How old are you?

ALICE

(a bit confused)

You know I'm twenty-five.

He studies her.

FRED

Age will turn you into someone you don't know yet. It will turn the person you love into someone you don't know yet.

ALICE

What are you talking about?

FRED

I knew this girl. She was erratic, pathologically spontaneous, smart, gorgeous. Like you. She had this idea of what her life would be. She was gonna get her pilot's license, ride the Orient Express, write one of those travel columns for the paper.

(MORE)

FRED (CONT'D)

Bit by bit, she had to make other choices, her dreams became more modest, fizzled into compromises, etcetera, etcetera. All for some putz. Don't do that.

ALICE

So where does that leave us?

FRED

I don't know...I just miss my wife.

ALICE

I know you do.

67 EXT. HYATT REGENCY, DENVER - A BIT LATER 67

Bonnie holds the card with the Roman numeral II on it. She walks through the melting snow up to the Best Western hotel.

68 INT. HYATT REGENCY - MOMENTS LATER 68

Bonnie steps down the hall looking for room 202...When she reaches it, she hesitates a moment then knocks on the door.

BONNIE

Hello...?

Nothing.

She knocks again...then tries the door knob, the door's actually open, the latch keeping it so. She peers in then flips the light switch revealing the room, the Starbuck's cups, folders, note-pads, a laptop and printer/fax on the table by the window.

She shakes her head at her seemingly trivial investigation of all this, wondering what the hell she's doing there.

She's about to turn away when she notices something on the desk - a picture of Fred peeking out of one of the note-pads.

She picks it up, pulls out the photo, then opens the note-pad. On the front page it reads: In case of loss, please return to: Gilda Munro 917-226-0669. She turns the pages and sees some names, numbers, and then she comes across Fred's name and the address for Arapahoe High School, their home address then her name...

BONNIE (CONT'D)

(confused, to herself)

What the...?

She hears someone coming down the hall.

GILDA (O.S.)

Yeah, I'll tell you exactly when that happened, nineteen eighty never...Oh, bullshit, that was a one time thing and how the hell was I supposed to know he was under investigation...

Gilda walks into the room while having an animated conversation into her Bluetooth head-set. She carries another Starbuck's frappuccino, doesn't notice Bonnie and goes straight into the bathroom leaving the door open.

Bonnie freezes listening to her go to the bathroom.

GILDA (O.S.) (CONT'D)

You tried to swap a plastic surgeon with a Mennonite dairy farmer, that doesn't even qualify to be retarded. It's too stupid to be retarded...Well, I'm not the one pretending this is an exact science...No, I've grown out of talking like I know something when I don't...

She flushes the toilet, comes out of the bathroom, sees Bonnie, thinks nothing of it...then double takes, notices the note-pad in Bonnie's hand. She stares at her in shock.

GILDA (CONT'D)

Ho-ly shitbombs.

She goes back to her call.

GILDA (CONT'D)

(into the earpiece)

What...? No, no, I uh, something just happened. Gotta call you back.

She ends the call, gives Bonnie a gratuitous smile.

Bonnie gives her a once over then holds up the note-pad.

BONNIE

(no nonsense)

Gilda?

GILDA

Yes.

They stare each other down.

BONNIE
What the hell is going on?

GILDA
(improvising)
Pleasure's all mine.

BONNIE
(harder)
What is this?

Gilda says nothing, trying to figure out how to deal with this.

BONNIE (CONT'D)
Why is my husband's name, our
address...? Why is my family in
your little folder here?

Gilda still doesn't respond.

BONNIE (CONT'D)
(pushing)
I asked you a question.

GILDA
Yeah, I got that.

BONNIE
(a bit thrown by her
reaction)
Okay...so...? Are you sleeping with
my husband?

GILDA
(snickering)
No...but neither are you.

She snickers again then stops abruptly.

GILDA (CONT'D)
Sorry.

Bonnie stares daggers at her.

GILDA (CONT'D)
(gesturing for it)
Can I have my note-pad?

BONNIE
 (hardening)
 Not until you tell me what the
 hell's going on.

A beat.

GILDA
 Shit.

BONNIE
 What?

Gilda opens up her cell-phone and dials a number.

GILDA
 Hold on.

BONNIE
 (baffled)
 Excuse me?

Gilda ignores her, waits for someone to answer.

GILDA
 Hi, it's me again...Turn on your
 computer...Turn on your
 computer...We've got a code pink.

Gilda walks over to her laptop at the table and opens it up
 then clicks into Skype.

GILDA (CONT'D)
 Come here. (then into the phone)
 Not you, the wife.

Bonnie walks over cautiously and stands behind Gilda.

Gilda clicks open a window and A WOMAN who looks a whole lot
 like Gilda appears, except she's fair haired, more make-up.

GILDA (CONT'D)
 This is my associate, Gerty.

Bonnie looks at the woman on the screen.

GERTY
 Can you see me?

GILDA
 Yes, she can see you.

Gilda looks to Bonnie as if this explains everything.

BONNIE
 (shrugs)
 And?

GILDA
 I don't have a twin.

Again, Gilda believes this will explain everything.

Bonnie thinks about it.

GILDA (CONT'D)
 I was born in San Francisco,
 California. Gerty was born in
 Cincinnati, Ohio...Fred Tuttle was
 born in Littleton, Colorado,
 resides in Denver.

Gilda picks and holds up a photograph of Fred then she picks
 up a photograph of Edgar.

GILDA (CONT'D)
 Edgar Eckmann was born in Rye, New
 York, resides in New Orleans,
 Louisiana.

Bonnie looks at the photographs, notes the similarities, the
 differences...then squints at Gilda.

GILDA (CONT'D)
 (canned)
 I give people the chance to try on
 another life so they can get some
 perspective on their own.

69 EXT. TUTTLE RESIDENCE - FIFTEEN MINUTES LATER 69

The Subaru peels down the street and into the driveway.
 Bonnie drives, Gilda's in the passenger seat now.

Bonnie hurdles out the driver's side to the front door and
 into the house. She disappears through the doorway and we
 hear...

BONNIE (O.S.)
 Ernie!

70 INT. ERNIE'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER 70

Bonnie blasts into Ernie's room then stops short...

Ernie sits on the floor with Edgar watching and helping him draw a panda bear with his crayon set.

EDGAR
Maybe a little bit more bamboo over there?

ERNIE
You think?

EDGAR
Where've you been?

Edgar sees something's off.

BONNIE
(glaring)
I'll tell you where I've been...

She doesn't finish the sentence. She goes to Ernie and takes him by the hand, pulls him up, practically dragging him towards the hallway.

ERNIE
Ow...Mom, what are you doing?

BONNIE
Go to the kitchen, Ern, and stay put.

Ernie remains confused, looks at Edgar then heads toward the kitchen.

Bonnie stares daggers at Edgar.

Edgar stands up, says nothing.

She walks over to him, grabs him by the chin, gives him a long, hard look right in the eyes, searching for something then she looks behind his ears, his neck. She grabs his hands, examining, still not convinced, then stands back and gives him another hard sizing up for a few seconds.

BONNIE (CONT'D)
Take your pants off.

EDGAR
Excuse me?

BONNIE
Take your damn pants off.

EDGAR
You're joking.

BONNIE
Do it!

Edgar takes a second then obliges, but leaves his boxers on.

BONNIE (CONT'D)
And the rest.

He gives her an "are you kidding me?" look.

BONNIE (CONT'D)
Now.

He does, and stands there with his boxers around his ankles.

Bonnie looks down at his crotch. After a few seconds...

BONNIE (CONT'D)
Oh my God.

Bonnie heads to Ernie's dresser and arbitrarily grabs some clothes in a jumble, while keeping an eye on Edgar, who hasn't moved. She stops, looks at him...

BONNIE (CONT'D)
Get in the car.

EDGAR
And if I say no?

BONNIE
I'll have Gilda come in and
ask...Now, get in the god damned
car.

Edgar absorbs that.

71 EXT. EDGAR ECKMANN'S BATHROOM - THAT AFTERNOON

71

Fred looks at his cellphone to see if anyone called back, even though he knows they haven't, and puts it back in his pocket. He's freshly showered, and proceeds to put a tie onto a white dress shirt in front of the mirror.

ALICE (O.S.)
You ready to be honored?

Alice saunters into the bathroom in a bra, panties, and heels. She steps into a devastating dress next to him...

ALICE (CONT'D)
Can you zip me?

Fred can't help but be blown away by her.

ALICE (CONT'D)
After tonight, I think I should
stop being your T.A...and whatever
else it is that's been going on
with us.

FRED
Alice, there's something else I
have to tell you.

ALICE
(her finger to his lips)
Shut up. I get it...Let's just
pretend to enjoy the evening.

She helps tie his tie.

FRED
Seriously, there's something you
should know, which might explain a
few things.

She turns and waits for him to zip her, which he does.

ALICE
Tell me later.

She walks out, leaving him there.

72 INT. AIRPORT SHUTTLE, NEW ORLEANS AIRPORT - SAME TIME 72

Bonnie sits sandwiched between Ernie, slumped asleep on her,
and Gilda, who sits across from Edgar.

GILDA
(breaking the silence)
That's a lovely scent you're
wearing. What is that? Vanilla?

BONNIE
(gruffly)
Mystical melon.

Gilda furrows her brow, not really getting the melon on her.

GILDA
You like doing...what you do?

BONNIE

Better than whatever the hell it is
you call you do...You enjoy home-
wrecking?

Gilda smothers a response, looks away.

BONNIE (CONT'D)

(answering the question,
hard)

No. I don't particularly take
pleasure in hawking Peppermint
Truffle candles, or Chilli Vanilli
votives or whatever flavored body
balm. Not exactly what I signed on
for, but it helps pay the mortgage.

GILDA

You think I signed on for this?

Bonnie shrugs.

GILDA (CONT'D)

I majored in religion at Berkeley
then blew it to broker twenty years
worth of real estate for Prudential
before I got to this.

BONNIE

(dry)

Congratulations. I have a degree in
Comparative Literature. What's your
point?

GILDA

My point is...Well...My point is
we're all just different versions
of each other.

Bonnie thinks about that then peers across the shuttle at
Edgar...Eventually, he catches her eyes. She gives him a
scolding glare.

BONNIE

What's your excuse?

EDGAR

It's complicated.

BONNIE

I don't give a shit.

EDGAR

You want me to help you find this
guy or what?

73

EXT. THE DECK OF A RIVERBOAT - SAME TIME

73

Alice, looking stunning with a drink, stands with Fred, looking dapper, on the deck of an old steamboat surrounded by VARIOUS MINGLING GUESTS at the Louisiana Writer Award party honoring Edgar, feeling the wind, overlooking the view of the Mississippi and the New Orleans skyline.

FRED

(trying to explain)
I'm not Edgar Eckmann.

ALICE

Of course you are, you're just...in
a rut. Everyone's pretty sure
there's another great book in you.
They wouldn't be doing this if they
weren't.

FRED

(frank)
I'm Fred Tuttle.

ALICE

(puzzled)
Is that like a metaphor?

FRED

(annoyed)
No.

A beat.

ALICE

(sympathetic)
Tell me who you love, and I'll tell
you who you are.

FRED

(unsure what she's talking
about)
What's that?

ALICE

You wrote it, moron.

He thinks about the line as AN OVERWEIGHT OFFICIOUS type
walks up to them, interrupts.

OFFICIOUS GUY
 (southern accent)
 Mr. Eckmann, we're going to start
 things up.

FRED
 Oh...okay.

ALICE
 You have your speech ready?

FRED
 What speech?

74 EXT. RIVERBOAT DINING AREA - MINUTES LATER

74

Fred sits uncomfortably in a chair next to a podium frantically scribbling notes for a speech on a piece of paper. He sits in front of a dining room packed with VARIOUS NEW ORLEANS CULTURAL ELITISTS, around TWO HUNDRED OR SO GUESTS in their suits and cocktail dresses...

GOVERNOR DALY (O.S.)
 (southern accent)
 ...One of my privileges as governor is that I get to bestow this award on a sometimes unsuspecting, but well deserved Louisiana based writer, and although Kate, my wife, was rather adamant in her lobby for me to sway the committee in their choice for this year's recipient, I had to agree with her...

75 EXT. DECATUR STREET PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

75

Bonnie pulls a rented Ford Focus into a spot and pops out of the car followed by the others. She looks around frantically.

BONNIE
 Where is it?

Edgar points off at the ATTENDANTS by the CHECK-IN DESK unmooring the Riverboat for departure.

EDGAR
 That should be it.

Bonnie grabs Ernie by the hand and heads for the pier, blustered by the wind off the river.

BONNIE

Come on.

EDGAR

I'm not going.

BONNIE

(stopping)

What?

EDGAR

Why do I need to be there for you
to yell at your husband?

She steps toward him.

BONNIE

Listen to me, whoever the hell you
are. I have no idea what I'm
getting into and apparently you do.
I'll also tell you I am capable of
anything when I'm angry and
currently I'm really God damned
angry, so I suggest you get me on
that ship if you know what's
healthy for you.

GILDA

It's a steamboat.

BONNIE

Whatever it the hell is!

She and Edgar stare at each other a moment.

EDGAR

Before you bite his head off, just
remember I started all this crap.
Blame's on me.

BONNIE

Uhuh.

He starts heading for the boat, Bonnie follows pulling Ernie,
Gilda behind her.

Gilda slows to a walk and watches them walk ahead.

Bonnie, Edgar and Ernie walk down the lower deck as the boat
engine kicks in and starts to pull away from the dock.

Then Bonnie notices.

BONNIE
Where's Gilda?

They all turn around and walk back to see her standing at the end of the dock as the boat pulls out into the river.

She waves to the three of them then turns away, her work done, letting them go to resolve it themselves.

Bonnie, exhausted, looks blankly at her then turns toward the expanse of the rest of the boat.

BONNIE (CONT'D)
(to Ernie)
I'll be right back.

She heads off along the railing.

77 INT. RIVERBOAT DINING ROOM - SECONDS LATER

77

The governor finishes a long-winded introduction as WAITERS pass out food.

GOVERNOR DALY
...and hopefully incite him to write some more. So without rambling any further, The Louisiana Center for the Book, my wife, and I are proud to present this year's Louisiana Writer Award to Edgar Eckmann.

Applause.

Fred sits there, very uncomfortably, as the Governor beckons him to stand up.

Fred, eventually realizing he's supposed to go up to the podium, stands, steps over to it, and looks out at the crowd as they continue their ovation. He allows a grin and looks down at whatever he scribbled on the piece of paper, beads of sweat on his brow.

78 EXT. RIVERBOAT DECK - MOMENTS LATER

78

Bonnie storms along the railing looking for Fred. She wears a tumultuous expression that can't be pinned to one specific emotion. She hurries toward the front until she reaches a series of sliding glass doors, and peers in.

Fred, and a few of THE OTHER GUESTS, can't help but notice her peering through the glass.

Fred's stands there quietly surprised, caught, not sure how to behave or respond in this circumstance.

Bonnie lugs one of the doors open, and bursts in to the full room. She stands there staring at him, suppressing whatever emotion she's feeling to avoid making a scene.

Fred shares eyes with her, then the audience, figuring out who to address.

Alice sees him seeing Bonnie.

FRED
 (into the microphone)
 I um...

He looks down at the podium.

FRED (CONT'D)
 I um...

Then back to Bonnie for a good moment, happy to see her...

FRED (CONT'D)
 Life seems so all of a sudden...
 Everything changes in some instant
 you're not paying attention.
 You...You forget how to notice
 things, how to be honest...with
 yourself or the person sitting next
 to you...It feels like you were
 married yesterday, you remember
 sweating as she walked down the
 aisle like some kind of vision.

MANY OF THE GUESTS look confused.

FRED (CONT'D)
 Your kid's going to be nine, you're
 stumbling towards forty or whatever
 age you are, you sit in the same
 room with this person you thought
 you knew feeling like there's
 nothing left to say...Your wife
 dies. You don't remember how to
 enjoy your work much less anything
 else. How does ten years suddenly
 happen?

(MORE)

FRED (CONT'D)

I have this problem with time, the way it just runs off, carelessly, with what you thought was your life...Thank you for reminding me what seemed to have slipped my mind. I accept this award as a call to get back to what I love.

Applause...Fred faintly smiles and awkwardly walks off the stage toward Bonnie as Governor Daly retakes the podium.

Alice's brow furrows as she sees Edgar behind Bonnie. She watches as Bonnie grabs Fred, drags and out onto the deck.

Alice storms for the door past THE CONFUSED GUESTS wondering what the hell just happened.

79 EXT. RIVERBOAT DECK - CONTINUOUS

79

Alice charges out the open door and onto the deck after them. A FEW GUESTS peer out after her.

She sees Fred with Bonnie now up at the front of the boat.

ALICE

Hey!?

EDGAR (O.S.)

Alice!

Alice turns back to see Edgar behind her then turns back to Fred and Bonnie, then stops again, realizing, and looks back at Edgar, confused.

She stares at him a moment, notices his bland outfit, turns back once more to Fred and Bonnie on the deck ahead, then back to Edgar again.

ALICE

What the hell is going on?

80 EXT. THE FRONT RIVERBOAT DECK - MOMENTS LATER

80

Bonnie stands in front of Fred, vibrating, disheveled, exhausted, out of reach from the dining room and guests, their hair and clothes windblown.

They stare at each other, the unspoken words saying themselves. They're both jumbles of confusion and pretty much anything else they can feel at this particular moment.

BONNIE

Why?

A beat.

FRED

Have you ever had a moment when you thought: I'm doing this on purpose. I'm screwing up and I don't know why?

She responds with a blank look.

BONNIE

Are we in the twilight zone?

FRED

No.

In the background, MORE GUESTS peer down the deck at them, curiously, and Alice decks Edgar to the ground then crumbles on top of him.

BONNIE

Who does this, Fred?

FRED

How long did it take you to notice I was gone?

She thinks about it, a bit busted as a silence settles in.

FRED (CONT'D)

We were like...stale bread. You're sharing French fries with Ethan, I can't remember the last time you let me put a finger on you, next thing you'll be running off to where ever it is people run off to...like that woman with the barista.

BONNIE

You're the one who took off, Fred...and left me and left Ernie with (stammers)...I mean, Jesus Christ, who does that? What were you thinking?!

He takes that in, realizes she's right...

BONNIE (CONT'D)

Well...?

FRED
I don't think I was thinking.

A beat.

FRED (CONT'D)
Remember what I said, about five
minutes after I asked you to marry
me?

She thinks about it for a moment.

BONNIE
Yeah..., "Don't worry, I'll
eventually disappoint you."

FRED
Well...here you go.

BONNIE
You're an idiot...You know just
because I don't always want to
sleep with you doesn't mean I don't
want to wake up with you every
day...We went stale. It happens.
Time has its wicked way. The spark
goes, it comes back, it goes again.
I get softer, you get softer,
gravity takes over, it's been ten
years. Ten! What'd you expect...? A
happy ending every day?

A beat.

FRED
Yeah.

After a long thoughtful pause...

BONNIE
My favorite thing, it doesn't
happen every week, but
occasionally, I'll be working in
the kitchen and I'll stop for a
second and have this...lull, when I
get lonely all of a sudden, and a
couple seconds later I remember,
you're just in the other room.
You're there, reading your books,
grading your papers...That's almost
enough for me...

FRED

Almost?

BONNIE

Yeah, almost.

They look each other in the eyes, the fading sunlight glaring in.

Bonnie faintly smiles at him, sadly nostalgic. Fred reciprocates...and they stand there, content for the moment, in the wind, under a terrifyingly clear, evening sky.

FRED

Where's Ernie?

Bonnie realizes she doesn't know.

81 EXT. THE UPPER DECK - MOMENTS LATER

81

Ernie leans on the upper deck railing, peering into the wind out at the river and New Orleans beyond.

Fred climbs up onto the upper deck behind him, sees him.

Bonnie follows, but stays behind as Fred walks over to stand next to him, looking out at whatever Ernie seems to be looking for.

FRED

Whatcha looking for?

ERNIE

Whale migrations.

Ernie turns to him, a blank expression on his face for a moment.

FRED

How ya doing, Ern?

Ernie studies him, the facial hair, the suit, the different style...then a smile creeps onto his face, recognizing.

ERNIE

Hey dad.

Fred kneels down.

FRED

I'm sorry, Ern.

Ernie looks at him another moment then walks into his shoulder with a forgiving hug. Fred tries to hold it together.

EDGAR (O.S.)
I should probably get those clothes
back before the natives get too
restless.

Fred turns to see Edgar standing just in front of Bonnie with a red imprint on his cheek.

He's followed by Alice, who ascends onto the upper deck. She squints at Fred then at Edgar, creeped out.

Fred looks back at Ernie, studying his face, reflecting a glad smile.

FRED
Let me go do this and we'll go
home, okay?

Ernie nods.

Fred looks to Bonnie, stands, and then follows Edgar off along the upper deck toward some hanging life boats, leaving Alice and Bonnie standing there awkwardly as Ernie looks off the side of the boat by the railing.

Bonnie surveys Alice, who feels Bonnie looking at her.

ALICE
I'm freaked out as it is, so can
you quit looking at me like that?

BONNIE
(dry)
You think I'm clean and serene over
here?

After a beat.

BONNIE (CONT'D)
Did anything happen between you
two?

ALICE
Not really.

BONNIE
What the hell does not really mean?

ALICE

No. Nothing happened...I told him something happened in his sleep, but nothing did...

Bonnie wears a puzzled expression.

ALICE (CONT'D)

You can hold that over him if you want...What about you two?

Bonnie thinks about it.

BONNIE

No. Not really.

82

EXT. FURTHER DOWN THE UPPER DECK - MOMENTS LATER

82

Edgar walks a bit further then steps behind a life boat, kicks off Fred's shoes, and begins to take of Fred's clothes...Fred follows and starts to do the same, undressing in the persistent wind as the evening settles over the city.

Nothing's said for a moment. Fred, with his facial hair a bit grown in, taking off the suit, looking the most like Edgar he has...and Edgar taking off Fred's Dockers, the slight shadow of a stubble starting to emerge after a day without shaving.

FRED

(attempting to break the silence)

I read your book.

EDGAR

(nonchalant)

Thanks.

FRED

If I were that good at something, I'd do more of it.

Edgar stifles the gratitude in his expression.

EDGAR

I'll take that into consideration.

He passes Fred's pants to him.

FRED

You didn't exactly make this easy.

Edgar says nothing, not contesting that idea.

FRED (CONT'D)
Alice?

EDGAR
(knowing her drama)
Yeah.

Fred passes Edgar his shirt and tie.

FRED
You'll have to sort that out.

EDGAR
I'd have to at some point anyway.

Another beat.

FRED
I got into some trouble.

EDGAR
Good for you.

FRED
It's actually more your
trouble...I'm sure Lee will fill
you in.

EDGAR
Lee?

FRED
The President of the University.

Edgar winces.

FRED (CONT'D)
Your friends or students or
whatever the hell they are roped me
into this thing with a horse..., so
you're a vandal now.

EDGAR
(dry)
Thanks.

Another beat.

EDGAR (CONT'D)
They're just a distraction.

FRED
What?

EDGAR

That little group, Alice's friend's...they're more a distraction than anything else...I suppose that's what all this has been.

Fred looks up from pulling on his Dockers.

FRED

From what?

EDGAR

You've got a beautiful family, you know that?

FRED

Yeah...I do.

Edgar buttons up his shirt.

EDGAR

I bailed on teaching your classes the last couple days, called in sick then forgot about it so you may um have to deal with that...And you're never allowed back to the Cheesecake Factory.

FRED

What do you mean?

EDGAR

I got in a fight there with some douche-bag named Ethan.

Fred takes that in, accepting the quid pro quo.

FRED

Okay...Anything else I need to worry about?

EDGAR

Bonnie.

After a second.

FRED

I'm on that.

They remain there stuck in a quiet moment as Fred finishes putting on his clothes and Edgar finishes buttoning his shirt then tying his tie.

FRED (CONT'D)
Why didn't you mention your wife?

EDGAR
I don't know...What could I have
told you that you hadn't already
heard before?

Edgar looks off into the evening, pensive.

EDGAR (CONT'D)
Nothing holds it off the way you
hope it might...

FRED
(confused)
Huh?

EDGAR
You sit there in some dreadful
waiting room, thinking: holy shit,
she's dying...

Fred almost asks a question, but let's Edgar continue.

EDGAR (CONT'D)
And all the things, all those dumb
little things, going to Rouses
Market together to get Pop Tarts,
Folgers, and some Windex. Going to
our little cafe grading papers
across from each other..., walking
past each other in the kitchen,
brushing our teeth together, the
stuff you wouldn't usually think
twice about, that doesn't really
seem like life when you're doing it
cause it's just what you do, how
you fill the days...and then she's
dying from some unnoticed lump...,
but it's just another typical day
outside, people running errands,
buying groceries, going to work,
and what you'd had was all there
is...

A beat.

EDGAR (CONT'D)
You'd do anything to get back to
it...or something like it.

Fred's understanding moves in, and he lets the weight settle...he looks down at his feet wondering what the hell to say, and then decides on nothing.

EDGAR (CONT'D)
You love your wife?

FRED
More than anything.

After a second.

FRED (CONT'D)
It's myself I have the problem with.

Edgar gives him a faint smile, agreeing, and puts on his suit jacket.

EDGAR
Well, at some point, we all have to get over that.

Fred gives him a faint smile back as they stand there, sort of understanding each other for the first time, and continue looking off at the skyline, getting windblown under the tall blue evening.

83

INT. BECKHAM'S BOOKSHOP - A LITTLE OVER A YEAR LATER

83

EDGAR'S VOICE (O.S.)
Fred faintly smiled back at him as they stood there, sort of understanding each other for the first time...and continued looking off at the skyline, getting windblown under the tall, blue evening.

Edgar, looks up from the end of his new book...Applause.

He stands at the podium in front of a poster of himself with a suggestive look next to the cover of the new book, entitled "Too," near a tall stack of his books on an adjacent table, and looks up and out at EVERYONE looking back at him...

The bookstore is packed with HIPSTERS, PSEUDO-INTELLECTUALS, ELMORE LEONARD, and SYCOPHANTS. MOST OF THE WOMEN, whom make up most of the crowd, stare longingly at him.

Alice stands in the background with Edith.

Edgar looks through the crowd, searching for someone...to no avail.

84

INT. BECKHAM'S BOOKSHOP - A BIT LATER THAT EVENING

84

Edgar sits at a table, signing books. He smiles gratuitously as he passes a book to A FAN then reaches for another, opens it and without looking up prepares to sign the inside cover.

EDGAR

Who can I make it out to?

FRED (O.S.)

Fred.

After a pause, Edgar looks up to see who's standing there...and smiles.

EDGAR

I'm glad you made it.

FRED

Me too.

Edgar notices Bonnie and Ernie standing in the background, shares a wave with them.

Fred puts a copy of the New York Times open to a review of Edgar's book in front of him.

FRED (CONT'D)

Nice review.

EDGAR

Thanks.

FRED

Did you notice this?

Fred points to the opposite page from the review - in a half page ad-space sits the roman numeral II over the slogan: Find Your Self. www.too.com.

ROLL CREDITS.

Zoom out from the ad to see a Bloomberg-like BUSINESS MAN reading it in his office, curious...Then we see him sitting with Gilda and HIS DOUBLE on a bench near Central Park...Then split screens with A JAPANESE WOMAN reading the same ad in Japanese on the train outside Tokyo.

Then we see her sitting with Gilda and HER DOUBLE...Then split screens with A MOROCCAN MAN and his double, then A PARISIAN WOMAN and hers, A GUY IN DETROIT, A GIRL IN FLORIDA, A MAN IN BRAZIL...and so on, and so on...This will be followed with an infommertial for Too, Inc. with Gilda during the rest of the credits.