

Perfect Couples

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The Couples:

Dave & Julia

The cool, regular couple you see yourself in. They realize they have their flaws, but they're trying. And more often than not, they manage to get it right.

Vance & Amy

The "too much passion" couple. They thrive on the drama, and the highs are high, but the lows are low. Basically, a pair of soulmates whose lives would be much simpler if they'd never met.

Rex & Leigh

The "perfect couple" with big quotation marks, they hold themselves up as ideal partners. They've read all the books, taken all the seminars and can't wait to share what they've learned with anyone within earshot.

Dave

30, middle-American good looks. Quick with a joke, definitely not looking to dirty his hands with confrontation. A no-drama guy who thoroughly enjoys his needier friends' quirks. Think Matt Damon.

Julia

28, smart, sexy and cool. Easily riled, but quick to forgive. Though comfortable speaking her mind, Julia prides herself on being low-maintenance in her relationship. Think Tina Fey.

Vance

30, intense. A guys' guy who manages also to be very sensitive. Vance is opinionated and feels he's doing everyone a service by bluntly sharing his opinions. He's wrong. Dave's best friend, he's high maintenance, but a ton of fun. Think Vince Vaughn.

Amy

29, attractive and kind, but flighty and unfocused. Amy has trouble with life's details: lots of lost keys and stoves left on. Though gentle, Amy taps into an inner tiger when provoked by Vance, which happens often. Think Leslie Mann.

Rex

30, handsome, successful, but way more self-assured than is warranted. Back in college, he was the third in Dave and Vance's group of two. He's also Julia's brother. A party guy and ladies' man until he met wife, Leigh, Rex now approaches coupledness and monogamy with the zeal of the converted.

Leigh

24, very put-together. The youngest of the group, but easily the most mature. Asian-American, but the biggest Burberry-wearing, Pasadena WASP you ever met. Considers it her responsibility to mold the other couples in the successful image of Rex and herself.

COLD OPEN

FADE IN:

INT. DAVE AND JULIA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

DAVE (30, middle-American good looks) approaches the bed where JULIA (28, smart & sexy when awake) SLEEPS sprawled out, taking up most of the bed. Dave sighs.

INT. VANCE AND AMY'S BEDROOM - SAME TIME

VANCE (30, amped-up, even now at bedtime), reaches the bed to find AMY (30, hot & scattered) sprawled out. He seethes.

INT. REX AND LEIGH'S BEDROOM - SAME TIME

REX (30, confident, handsome in a "fratty" way) finds wife, LEIGH (24, very put together, Asian-American) hogging the bed. Rex GOES TO SAY SOMETHING, then reconsiders and consults a book entitled "Communication for Couples".

REX

(off book)

Cherished Partner. I honor your need to be comfortable. Yet, when you leave me so little room, it makes me feel "less than". It makes me feel unloved.

LEIGH

(beat, same tone)

Cherished Partner, I hear you. And now I know that when I leave you so little room, it makes you feel --

INT. VANCE AND AMY'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Vance leans in close to Amy with CONTROLLED RAGE.

VANCE

Hey, sweetheart? I see you've chosen to take up ninety-five percent of the bed.

Amy starts to move.

VANCE (CONT'D)

Oh no no no -- don't get up. Clearly your comfort is the only thing in the world that matters, so please take the other five percent, too. I'm just going to sleep on the floor like a dog.

AMY
 You want more room?
 (springs out of bed)
 You want more room?!

VANCE
 Oh, here we go!

INT. REX AND LEIGH'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Leigh and Rex HOLD HANDS, reciting in UNISON...

LEIGH/REX
 ... And by being brave enough to
 share our needs, we forge a bond,
 two becoming one --

INT. VANCE AND AMY'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Amy THROWS all the PILLOWS AND COMFORTER off the bed.

AMY
 Are these taking up too much
 space?! Are the things on my night
 table in the way?!

She BRUSHES THEM OFF. Vance EMPTIES TWO BOTTLED WATERS onto
 the ground.

VANCE
 Please! I belong on the floor!
 (dumps out flower vase)
 The wet floor!

INT. DAVE AND JULIA'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Dave stews, crowded, as Julia snores. Still asleep, she
 jerks. Her hand LANDS ON HIS FACE. Dave gets an idea...

DAVE
 ("worried" whisper)
 Honey, there's a huge, gross bug on
 your back. The kind that freaks
 you out.

Julia SHRIEKS, and JUMPS to the far end of the bed,
 HORRIFIED. Dave slams his hand down "KILLING" it.

DAVE (CONT'D)
 Got it.

JULIA
 Oh, thank you, so much. I love
 you. Was it hairy?

DAVE
(hero)
Doesn't matter now. It's over.

Content, Dave SETTLES IN to his big chunk of bed.

INT. REX AND LEIGH'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Close on Rex. He beams.

REX
You're right about that book. I
feel heard and validated. Good
night, Cherished Partner.

WIDEN TO REVEAL: Rex squeezed onto the edge of the bed.
LEIGH DIDN'T MOVE ONE INCH.

LEIGH
Good night, Cherished Partner.

She KILLS THE LIGHTS.

INT. VANCE AND AMY'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Anger has turned to passion as they ROLL AROUND on the floor,
KISSING, on the way to crazy love-making.

INSERT TITLE CARD: "PERFECT COUPLES"

INT. REX AND LEIGH'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Still dark. REX FALLS out of bed and lands with a THUD.

FADE OUT.

END OF COLD OPEN

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

INSERT CARD: "**GAMES**"

INT. DAVE AND JULIA'S BEDROOM - FRIDAY EVENING

Dave and Julia dress. A worked-up Julia buttons her top. Dave loves her like this, but tries to calm her.

JULIA
What were you thinking?

DAVE
Have your breasts grown?

JULIA
Don't try to compliment me. And that's not a compliment.

DAVE
Look, we were in a terrible situation, I made a call.

JULIA
Game Night? With our friends? I mean, I love them, but --

DAVE
(laughing)
No, it's going to be a nightmare.

JULIA
There's a reason we've resisted Game Night all these years -- it intensifies personalities. It's like couples' cocaine.

DAVE
Hey, I freed up our anniversary. You heard your brother the other night. If I hadn't suggested this, our anniversary would have become --

FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. REX AND LEIGH'S PATIO - EVENING (A FEW NIGHTS AGO)

Julia and Dave sit around a fire pit with REX and LEIGH.

REX

... You two, us two, a boat, some
kick-A Napa Cabernets, my business
associates... the ultimate party.

JULIA

(beat)

There's no way we said yes to this.

Leigh pulls out her planner.

LEIGH

It's on the books. See, September
ninth. We bought the tickets.
We're so excited.

REX

You owe us three hundred dollars.

JULIA

(clearly this is an "out")
Wait. September 9th is our
anniversary.

REX

Oh my God. That's perfect. Family
celebrating family.
(to Leigh)
It's happening.

LEIGH

(to Rex and Julia)
Your mother's dying wish. She made
me promise to bring you two closer.

REX

God, she loved you, Leigh.

Dave and Julia share a look.

DAVE

Can you excuse us a second?

Julia and Dave move off.

DAVE (CONT'D)

So here's what we know: Anniversary
at Sea ain't gonna happen.

JULIA

Right? How can they think we
agreed to this?

DAVE

Because we did. They did it again.
Trapped us with the "far off plan".

INSERT CARD: "LIKE, 8 OR 9 MONTHS AGO"

INT. INDIAN RESTAURANT - EIGHT OR NINE MONTHS AGO

A QUICK POP of the two couples together.

LEIGH

What are you guys doing the second
Saturday in September?

DAVE/JULIA

(caught)
Uhhhhhhhhh...

EXT. REX AND LEIGH'S PATIO - EVENING

Julia and Dave continue discussing the "far off plan".

JULIA

Uch, I hate the far off plan!
It's so manipulative. Well, it
ends now -- this is unacceptable!

A riled-up Julia STARTS OFF. Dave HOLDS HER BACK.

DAVE

No. This is when bad things
happen. You're this sweet, lovely
person, someone does something
"unacceptable," and you go "Red
Julia". Look at you: the big eyes,
the attack stance. You're Hulk-ing
out here, honey.

JULIA

(crazy-eyed, panting)
I'm fine. I just want to talk.

DAVE

(enjoying her)
You're nuts. It's like Nic Cage is
playing you.

JULIA

We spend so much time with our
friends. All I want is one night
alone. Dinner, some wine, sex or
too much pie, whatever feels like
the right call...

DAVE

And we'll have that. We can get out of Saturday with no tears, we'll just give them something in exchange. They can have Friday.

(musing)

So Friday... What's something that would excite both them and Vance?

JULIA

(pulled up)

Vance? Who's talking about Vance?

DAVE

I have plans with him Friday.

(off her eye-roll)

You know I can't cancel on Vance. He's far too needy.

POP TO:

INT. DAVE AND VANCE'S REAL ESTATE OFFICE - DAY (MAY 2008)

Dave sits with a very worked up VANCE.

VANCE

You want to cancel on me? On this of all nights?

INSERT CARD: "NIGHT THEY WERE SUPPOSED TO SEE 'IRON MAN'"

VANCE (CONT'D)

What did I do to you to make you hurt me this way?

EXT. REX AND LEIGH'S PATIO - EVENING

As we left them. Dave ponders a Friday plan.

DAVE

(snaps, eureka)

I got it. The thing that will make everyone happy: Rex, Leigh, Vance. Not you.

(calling)

Guys, we actually made anniversary plans Saturday, but we're free Friday, and we remembered there's something you've been wanting to --

LEIGH

(hoping against hope)

Game Night?

INT. DAVE AND VANCE'S REAL ESTATE OFFICE - THE NEXT DAY
(THURSDAY)

VANCE

Game Night? You never let me have
Game Night. Thank you!

We're in a GUY'S DREAM OFFICE: Sports and music memorabilia,
pics of Dave and Vance having great times from the ages of
ten 'til the present. Vance stands on the desk. He
addresses a nearby autographed picture of a WRESTLER.

VANCE (CONT'D)

Jimmy "Superfly" Snuka, look down
on us from above on this Game
Night. Bless us with awesomeness.

DAVE

I don't think he's dead.

Vance JUMPS OFF the desk, KNOCKING DAVE onto the couch WWF-
style. Dave tries to throw him off. ISABELLA, 22, the guys'
pretty, Latina, Texan assistant enters. VANCE DISENGAGES.

VANCE

("scolding" Dave)
The wrestling, the constant
touching. It's a little gay, man.

Isabella drops some papers on the desk.

ISABELLA

I know you wanted to show the lot
on 11251 Morningside, but the
demolition crew didn't come, so the
tear-down is still there.

VANCE

Thanks, Isabella. That'll be all.

She exits.

DAVE

What are you doing?
(off innocent look)
I saw that. You lifted your sleeve
and slightly flexed your tricep.

Dave DEMONSTRATES. Vance is in fact exposing the muscle.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Do you not have enough drama in
your relationship already? Maybe
don't flex for the secretary.

VANCE

You know what I'm gonna flex: my
hint giving and receiving muscles
on...

(falsetto sing-song)

Game Niiiiiii--

INT. DAVE AND JULIA'S BEDROOM - FRIDAY EVENING

Dave and Julia continue dressing. **[We pick up where we left them at the top of Act One.]**

JULIA

(shakes her head)

Game Night. Not my idea, babe.
Whatever happens tonight is on you.

DAVE

Everyone's looking forward to it.

JULIA

Really? Amy despises games. She's
terrified of people thinking she's
stupid, she hates being timed.
Poor girl. How did Vance get her
to say "yes" to this?

INT. VANCE AND AMY'S BEDROOM - SAME TIME

VANCE is putting on a shirt. Amy wears a SEXY COCKTAIL DRESS
and is excitedly loading on WAY TOO MANY BRACELETS.

AMY

(thrilled)

I can't believe you're taking me
dancing.

VANCE

(primps in the mirror)

Yep. I'm taking you dancing.

INT. DAVE AND JULIA'S BEDROOM - SAME TIME

As we left them. Julia starts to undress.

JULIA

You know what? Let's have sex now.
We're not going to want to after
Game Night.

(off his hesitation)

What?

DAVE

If we're going to be competing, I feel like I should have my edge.

JULIA

Your sexual edge? You feel that your clue-giving is infused with a particular sexual energy?

DAVE

Your tone is mocking, but when I play there is a certain vigor I don't care to compromise.

We hear a DOOR OPEN downstairs.

LEIGH (O.S.)

We're here! Are we the first to arrive?!

JULIA

That happens when you're forty minutes early!

DAVE

Relax. Tonight will be fine. And it's gonna buy us a nice quiet "us" anniversary tomorrow. Let me do this for you.

He KISSES her. She SMILES. She walks to the door and lets out a LONG DEEP BREATH, not quite ready for this.

REX (O.S.)

What's taking so long?! Are you steeling yourself?! It sounds like you're steeling yourself!

INT. DAVE AND JULIA'S LIVING ROOM - AN HOUR LATER

Dave and Julia suffer as Rex and Leigh drone on...

LEIGH

But if I had to name our most remarkable relationship skill? Probably our ability to meet each other in the middle, and make life choices that suit us both.

REX

Take the church Leigh found for us.

POP TO:

INT. KOREAN ORTHODOX CHURCH - LAST SUNDAY

Rex sits with Leigh, a LONE WHITE MAN amidst a CONGREGATION OF KOREANS, taking in the Korean liturgy.

KOREAN MINISTER (O.S.)
Kydo kyo korin do jin zsha shi bo--

Rex understands not one word. He nods, moved.

INT. DAVE AND JULIA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

As we left them, LISTENING TO REX. Vance and Amy ENTER.

AMY
Sorry we're late! Everybody ready?

LEIGH
Yep. Just pick a number out of this hat.

AMY
(terrified)
Why?

REX
Don't you know what tonight is?

Amy LOOKS AROUND THE ROOM: veggies, dip, beers, pads, pens, an easel with a marker, a mini hourglass.

AMY
(realizing)
Is that an egg timer?!
(to Vance)
You son of a bitch!!

She starts beating his chest. He envelops her in a bear hug and strokes her hair.

VANCE
Baby, baby, baby. Shhhh. Shhhh.
(to group)
She's fine. Give her a minute.
This is very fresh.

INSERT CARD: "THE GAMES BEGIN"

INT. LIVING ROOM - THIRTY MINUTES LATER

People draw numbers out of a hat. Everyone's drinking wine, having fun. Even Amy's more relaxed. Dave draws a number as Vance looks on, nervous.

VANCE

Be a one, be a one, be a one.

Dave looks at it, then looks at Vance sadly. Vance deflates.

DAVE

Sorry, Vance. Looks like you and I aren't gonna be on a team... with anyone else!

Dave holds out the number ONE. Vance is elated.

VANCE

Ah! You "Seacrest-ed" me!

REX

Aww, these two guys! Feels like we're back in college again. Who wants to get wasted?

LEIGH

Alcoholics do, Rex.

REX

(calmed, genuine)

I love it when you contain me.

Practicing, Vance hits Dave with rapid-fire clues.

VANCE

America's Mayo--

DAVE

Rudy Giuliani!

VANCE

Die H--

DAVE

Bruce Willis.

VANCE

Looks like your uncle.

DAVE

Uh, oh, wait. Paul Giamatti!

VANCE

What took you so long? You're off.
(accusing)
Did you have sex?

DAVE

No.

VANCE

What about yesterday?
 (off non-response)
 Oh my God. Did you forget we had
 Game Night? You're a sex addict.
 What are you chasing, man? What
 void are you trying to fill?

Julia offers more wine to Leigh, who's been observing the
 guys.

LEIGH

Thanks, hon.
 (beat)
 Say, does it ever bother you that
 Dave and Vance are so tight?

JULIA

It can be complicated.

LEIGH

Rex and I don't have that. It's
 the upside of us being best
 friends. The downside, of course,
 being his truly weird bachelor
 party.

Julia crosses to Amy and pours her more wine.

JULIA

So what did Vance tell you we were
 doing tonight? Cooking class?
 (notices, sympathetic)
 Oh, honey, you've got on your
 dancing bracelets.

AMY

He even made up the name of a club.
 "Ovations."
 (admiring)
 God, he's a good liar.

Vance comes up from behind Amy and gives her a tender kiss.

VANCE

Thanks for doing this, baby. It
 means a lot to me.

AMY

(whispers)
 I'm getting a little drunk.

VANCE

Do that. 'Cause then I get sexy.

They kiss. Rex and Leigh, competitive, start making out hotly. Dave and Julia look at their friends and chuckle.

DAVE

See? We're having fun.

JULIA

You're right. This is good.

INSERT CARD: "THREE MINUTES LATER"

Chaos. "Celebrity" has broken down. Amy SCREAMS AT VANCE as she THROWS HER MANY BRACELETS AT HIM.

AMY

You bastard! You liar! I hate you!

VANCE

I never want to see you again!

REX

(re: bottle of wine)
I just killed this Pinot. What else do you have?

INSERT CARD: "ONE MINUTE BEFORE THAT HAPPENED"

Playing "Celebrity," mid-round. Amy, VERY TENSE, gives Julia clues. Leigh mans the EGG TIMER as it runs down.

REX (CONT'D)

(to Dave re: bottle)
Mind if I open this Pinot?

AMY

(nervous, overwhelmed)
Uh, he's a Muppet. He's a frog.

JULIA

Frog's part of the name, hon. You can't say that.

AMY

I'm sorry, Leigh.

JULIA

Amy, sweetie, I'm your teammate. Stop apologizing to Leigh.

AMY

She's just so pretty.
(grabs another card)
(MORE)

AMY (CONT'D)

First name is like the guy in the
bike store who I introduced you to?
He loaned me that DVD.

JULIA

Alan.
(guesses)
Alan Alda!

AMY

Yes! I got one!

VANCE

(suddenly jealous)
Alan? You're still talking to that
guy?

AMY

Mama's on a roll.
(off new clue, pumped)
This next person is Martin Lawrence--
(hears self)
Dammit!

VANCE

(getting worked up)
Alan gave you a DVD?

AMY

(rattled, to Vance)
Great. You ruined my turn! You
can't stand to see me succeed.
This is why you wouldn't let me
take the bar exam on a lark!

VANCE

Yeah, I'm sorry I ruined your dream
of crying and walking out of a five
hundred dollar test!

LEIGH

Vance, at this point you might want
to ask your partner--

VANCE

How many times did you sleep with
Alan?

LEIGH

Not that.

AMY

Nothing happened with him! You're
so insecure.

(MORE)

AMY (CONT'D)

Let's say what this is really about! We're all thinking it. Ten years ago, before any of us were couples, I slept with Dave.

DAVE

No one was thinking that.

VANCE

You always go to the Dave thing 'cause you want to hurt me. It's not enough Julia and I have to live with the image of you two rolling around naked. Am I right, Julia?

JULIA

If we could remember this moment next time someone suggests Game Night...

VANCE

But it's not Dave. It's all the Daves. And Mikes... and Erics...

AMY

(piling on)
And Larrys. And Chris's, and three Todds.

VANCE

Oh yeah? Well I just added an Isabella to mine.

AMY

Your hot assistant?! You slept with her?

A silent BEAT.

DAVE

(scoffs)
No, you didn't.

AMY

(realizing)
Of course you didn't. You sick son of a -- You're just saying that 'cause you think it'll hurt me!

VANCE

We did it. It was great.
(pointed)
And she's good at Celebrity.

Amy starts REMOVING HER BRACELETS AND THROWING THEM at VANCE.
[We're now at the meltdown we'd teased a moment ago.]

AMY

You bastard! You liar! I hate
 you!

VANCE

I never want to see you again!

REX

(re: bottle of wine)
 I just killed this Pinot. What
 else do you have?

AMY

Good-bye! We're over!

She heads for the door.

VANCE

Send my mail here! I'm moving into
 Julia's dead mother's room!

LEIGH

(jumps up)
 This doesn't count as Game Night!

REX

It's fate! Wine Cruise
 anniversary!

VANCE

Sounds great! Count me in!

AMY

Me too! I'll bring Alan!

Amy exits, slams the door. Vance exits to the next room,
 slams the door. Julia stares at Dave.

DAVE

(re: Egg Timer)
 And... time.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. MASTER BATHROOM - NEXT MORNING (SATURDAY)

Dave brushes his teeth. Julia enters, having just woken up, and starts brushing next to him.

DAVE

So Game Night was perhaps not the cure-all I'd hoped.

JULIA

I know you feel bad. We don't need to talk about it.

DAVE

(blown away)

Alien civilizations will one day study you as the pinnacle of earthling wifedom.

JULIA

Happy Anniversary, baby.

DAVE

Happy Anniversary.

They SPIT, smile, then MOVE IN FOR A KISS. VANCE busts into their bedroom. He's wearing a WOMAN'S HOUSECOAT.

VANCE

Ready to be shocked by somebody's rudeness?

JULIA

Unacceptable!

She MOVES TO CONFRONT Vance, Dave HOLDS HER BACK.

VANCE

... Rex and Leigh are here.

JULIA

Are you wearing my mother's housecoat?

VANCE

The coat provides warmth and Olivia's spirit brings me peace.

LEIGH (O.S.)
 (calling)
 Where did you go, Vance? We need
 to talk.

VANCE
 Emotional vultures. Whenever a
 relationship anywhere is in crisis,
 they swoop in, feast on the drama.
 Then they wanna "fix" everything.

POP TO:

INT. REX AND LEIGH'S KITCHEN - MARCH 2009

Rex is on the phone on hold as Leigh reads "US Magazine".

REX
 (beat, to Leigh)
 They don't have a listing for
 Jennifer Aniston.

LEIGH
 Have them check "John Mayer".

INT. DAVE AND JULIA'S LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Dave, Julia and Vance enter. Leigh and Rex are there.

LEIGH
 Vance, sweetie, let us take you to
 Amy now. A fight is a wound. If
 you wait too long to apply medicine
 you'll be left with a scar of
 emotional distance --

VANCE
 Oh, God.

REX
 Dude, don't dismiss this as some
 "chick psychobabble". I believe
 it, too. Me. Rex. The guy you
 and Dave look up to. The leader of
 our group.

Vance looks to Dave, "Can you believe this guy?"

DAVE
 Maybe you should talk to Amy.
 You're gonna eventually. We all
 know how this goes.

FLASHBACK POPS:

THREE SEPARATE SHOTS FROM **THREE SEPARATE BREAKUPS.**

Amy THROWS her PURSE at him, removes and throws her BIG, CHUNKY EARRINGS.

AMY
We're done!

Amy THROWS Vance's CLOTHES at him.

AMY
We're through!

At a meal, she THROWS FOOD at him.

AMY
This is over.

INT. DAVE AND JULIA'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

They're as we left them.

DAVE
Then, miraculously...

FLASHBACK POPS:

THREE LOVING, KISSING PASSIONATE REUNIONS:

VANCE
We're back!

AMY
And we got matching tattoos!

Gleefully running in with a HUGE, ANGRY DOG.

AMY
And we bought a dog!

AMY
And we're having a party and
Smashing Pumpkins are gonna play!!

INT. DAVE AND JULIA'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

As they were, discussing the break-up.

VANCE
Okay, I admit there's a pattern,
but I can't go yet. I go back too
soon, I look weak, give her all the
power. It'll be a disaster.

LEIGH
You two play so many games. And
games are relationship poison.

REX

They prevent you from truly communicating.

VANCE

(turning on Rex)

No. You don't get to be Mr. Relationship. I knew you in college. I know how many girls you slept with. I know what you named your bedroom.

REX

I've changed. And I have way more fun now than I ever did in "The Grotto."

LEIGH

(to Rex, re Vance)

Is that your mother's coat?

JULIA

Her spirit is "comforting him".

VANCE

I feel faint. What's going on?
 (spasms, as if possessed)
 Uh. My son sucks. His wife thinks she controls him but he hides pornography and weed in the garage.
 (then, "coming out of it")
 What just happened? Did I say something?

VANCE EXITS to "his room". Leigh shoots Rex a look.

REX

(changing the subject)

So, Happy Anniversary, you two.

LEIGH

(remembers)

Oh, right.

She produces a WRAPPED GIFT from her bag.

LEIGH (CONT'D)

Dave, you forgot this at our house.
 The gift? Complete with the card?
 (hands gift to Julia)
 Julia... from Dave.

DAVE

I got her a gift. But thanks.
That's wildly condescending.

REX

So about tonight's Wine Cruise; I hate to be the, "Don't dress like a lesbian, Julia" Guy, but --

JULIA

Unacceptable!

DAVE

("what the hell")
Yeah, go for it.

JULIA

Rex, we're not spending our anniversary at sea with your stupid associates! And starting now, we will not accept any more "far off plans". Or plans made at any time that involve boats or other things that suck. That's it. End of discussion.

A beat as Rex and Leigh absorb this.

LEIGH

Thank you for your honesty.

REX

I feel so much closer to you right now.

LEIGH

It is happening.

JULIA

(pushing them out)
Yep. Big breakthrough. We did it.

She SHUTS the door.

DAVE

That was amazing. We are gonna have a great "us" night tonight.

JULIA

Do we feel we've done everything to ensure that?

DAVE

Vance, right. We don't want him in the way. So I'll just tell him he stays in his room and he's quiet. We bring him a plate, he eats it there. Screw 'em. It's our night.

JULIA

I don't think he should be here at all tonight. And I think you should tell him that.

DAVE

(very uncomfortable)
Sure. Done.

INT. DAVE'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Dave drives, DREADING THE CONVERSATION. Vance SCROLLS THROUGH THE car stereo IPOD.

DAVE

(tentative)
So listen, about Amy --

VANCE

Can't talk about her. Too much pain, it's too raw. It's like...

He HITS PLAY on the iPod. A melancholy COLDPLAY SONG BEGINS.

DAVE

(turns off stereo)
We don't need the soundtrack.

VANCE

I want to underscore the emotional--

DAVE

Let the words sell it.

INT. DAVE AND VANCE'S REAL ESTATE OFFICE (ANTEROOM) - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Vance and Dave enter the ANTEROOM. Isabella is at her desk.

ISABELLA

Hey, guys. The demolition team didn't show at Morningside again.

VANCE

(sotto to Dave)
Wow, this is awkward.

DAVE
It's not awkward.

VANCE
Because I slept --

DAVE
No one thinks you slept with her.

INT. DAVE AND VANCE'S REAL ESTATE OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

They enter. Dave closes the door. He braces himself.

VANCE
You know what we're doing tonight
after Julia goes to sleep?
Morningside property. We'll knock
the damn thing down ourselves.
It's perfect. I got all this
anger. Let's throw stuff through
windows, sledgehammer a toilet.
They have this crappy, thin room
divider, I'm gonna run through it
like the Kool-Aid Man!

DAVE
You can't be around tonight.

VANCE
What? Why??

DAVE
It's our anniversary!

VANCE
Did this come from Julia? It's
your house, you're the breadwinner.
You can have whoever you want --

DAVE
She makes, like, double what I do.

VANCE
(total reversal)
So that entitles her to be boss?!

DAVE
Look, Julia's awesome, she's always
giving me more than I give her.
Tonight she gets the night she
deserves.

VANCE
But where am I gonna go?

DAVE

Where do people go? Go to a hotel.

VANCE

(spiraling)

A hotel?! What am I gonna... check in? Order a club sandwich...?

DAVE

Please don't list normal things like they're bad.

VANCE

(barrels through)

Watch "The Proposal" on Pay Per View? Go downstairs to "Finnegan's" and have a Bud Light?

DAVE

This is done, okay? One night. Don't make me feel bad about it.

(off look)

Vance?

VANCE takes his iPod, puts it in a dock, hits play and EXITS, leaving Dave alone with the POIGNANT STRAINS OF COLDPLAY.

INSERT CARD: "AN 'US' NIGHT"

INT. DAVE AND JULIA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (SATURDAY NIGHT)

Julia happily sits in front of the TV. Dave enters with two full Champagne glasses and sits next to her.

DAVE

Oh my God, what a meal. The oysters, the truffles, and the presentation...

JULIA

If this guy doesn't win "Top Chef" I'm writing Bravo a letter.

They both take big bites of delicious looking pizza.

JULIA (CONT'D)

What a perfect night.

DAVE

It's just getting started.

He hands her a champagne glass and toasts with the other.

DAVE (CONT'D)
Happy Anniversary, babe.

JULIA
Ooh, Champagne.

DAVE
Technically, to be called Champagne
it needs to be from the "Champagne"
region of France. This is... beer.

She takes a sip. They kiss. It gets heated. She rises,
crosses off and motions for him to follow.

INT. DAVE AND JULIA'S BEDROOM - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Dave sits on the bed. Julia emerges from the bathroom
wearing a SEXY NEGLIGÉE. She looks amazing.

DAVE
Wow.

JULIA
I like it. It's a little creepy
that Leigh and Rex picked it out.

DAVE
If that creeps you out, don't read
the card they wrote from me.

They fall onto the bed. They kiss for a beat, then the phone
RINGS. Dave checks the CALLER ID.

DAVE (CONT'D)
Isabella? She's not one of our
friends. Why is she ruining our
anniversary?
(hits speakerphone button)
Isabella, is everything okay?

VANCE (O.S.)
It's drunk. I got reeeeally Vance.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. ISABELLA'S BATHROOM - SAME TIME

Vance is holed up with Isabella's portable phone.

VANCE
(drunk, beside himself)
I messed up, man. I went to a
hotel. It was worse than I
thought.

(MORE)

VANCE (CONT'D)

They made me sign up for a rewards program... I watched some movie with Kate Hudson and a guy whose Australian accent kept comin' out --

DAVE

What happened, Vance?

VANCE

I went to Amy. It was too soon, she rejected me, so I came here for revenge. Isabella was not on board. Here's what you gotta do...

DAVE

(to Julia)

This is where he asks me to make what he did my fault.

VANCE

Come tell Isabella we were playing Truth or Dare. You dared me to hit on her as a joke. I said, "No that's rude," but you forced me.

(then)

It's two minutes away. Just...

Vance continues. Julia turns to Dave.

JULIA

(mouths)

Go.

Dave looks at her, "Are you sure?" She nods. A beat. Dave is torn. He turns to the phone.

DAVE

Vance? Can't do it, buddy. I'm sorry.

VANCE

Dave --

Dave hangs up the phone. He takes a beat, shakes it off.

JULIA

If you don't go, you'll be miserable. It'll be quick.

DAVE

No. I already did the hard part.
(taking shirt off)
Now, I skipped lunch, so don't be frightened if you notice some "ab."

JULIA
 (thinks, then)
 If we're really doing this, I'm
 gonna change out of my brother's
 lingerie.

DAVE
 I think that's for the best.

Julia EXITS. Dave stares at the phone, feeling guilty.

INT. ISABELLA'S BATHROOM - TEN MINUTES LATER

Vance is there, not knowing what to do.

ISABELLA (O.S.)
 Come out, Vance. You're just
 making this more awkward.

The DOORBELL RINGS. Vance sighs, relieved. He opens the
 door a crack to watch Dave's performance.

INT. ISABELLA'S LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME

Isabella opens the door. It's not Dave. IT'S JULIA.

ISABELLA
 Julia?

JULIA
 (so half-hearted)
 Is Vance here? We dared him to
 come hit on you. We forced him.
 Because we're jerks.

Vance enters and heads for the door. He turns to ISABELLA.

VANCE
 Try not to hold this against them.

INT. DAVE AND JULIA'S BEDROOM - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Dave is UNDER THE SHEETS, expectant. Julia walks in.

DAVE
 Where did you go?

Vance enters. Dave reacts, surprised.

VANCE
 What, are you naked? You're
 insatiable. Are you, like, gay, so
 you feel the need to prove
 something? You can tell me.

DAVE

You went to get him? But tonight was about us. We didn't want the drama.

VANCE

(put off)
Drama?

AMY STORMS IN, with her ARMS FULL, surprising everyone.

AMY

You monster!

Amy THROWS her things at Vance: CLOTHES, CD'S, etc.

VANCE

My pants? You brought throwing stuff from home?

AMY

To get back at me you drag sweet, young Isabella into our mess?

VANCE

How do you know about Isabella?
(realizing)
No. Is this because I called --

REX and LEIGH ENTER.

REX

Hey, guys.

VANCE

Vultures! You told her?!

AMY

(shakes her head)
I was there when you called. After your drunken visit, I needed the help of a true relationship genius.

Leigh BEAMS as Amy PUTS HER ARM AROUND HER.

REX

Leigh had it handled, so I went to the garage for my carpentry.

LEIGH

(to Dave and Julia)
We asked Amy not to come, but now that we're here, let's fix this.
(to Vance and Amy)

(MORE)

LEIGH (CONT'D)

You two love each other. Stop playing your games and start being honest about what you need.

REX

C'mon, Vance. Don't you want a partner who really gets what you're all about?

POP TO:

INT. KOREAN ORTHODOX CHURCH - LAST SUNDAY

Rex stands and sways with Korean congregants who sing a joyous song in their native tongue. He mumbles gibberish.

INT. DAVE AND JULIA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

As they were.

DAVE

Okay. Everybody out!

VANCE

No, Dave. You need to moderate this. You have unique insights into my psyche and Amy's.

(beat, to Amy)

Because he slept with you.

(to room)

I'm sorry. We're all thinking it.

DAVE

(to Julia, pissed)

You had no right going to get him.

JULIA

Wait -- you're mad at me?

DAVE

Yes. I finally step up and do the right thing and you don't let me have it. Why?

JULIA

I was trying to be nice.

DAVE

Nah, you're nice, but you're not that nice. You begged me to get rid of him. What possible reason could you have to pick him up?

LEIGH

What an interesting relationship challenge.

(to Rex)

I think we need Dr. Dahlquist.

REX

I agree. This is a situation where she'd want us to ignore her request to stop calling her at home.

JULIA

Nope. Not interested in this. Happy Anniversary, everybody!

She STOMPS out. Dave follows.

INT. DAVE AND JULIA'S LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Dave follows Julia. She keeps walking, trying to lose him.

DAVE

We were having a good time. Why did you choose to ruin it?

JULIA

It was already ruined once Vance called! You were either gonna go, or stay and worry about him.

She enters a room. He follows.

INT. JULIA'S MOTHER'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

A small guest room, full of clothes and knick-knacks left over from Julia's mom. Dave shuts the door.

DAVE

(putting it together)

I think I get it. The night's ruined, so you might as well get something out of it. You pick up Vance, you pick up a chit.

She scoffs.

DAVE (CONT'D)

It keeps happening. I goof up -- with Game Night, with Vance -- you say it's okay, but really, you hold on. You earn a chit, squirrel it away. It's a little game you play.

From the other side of the door WE HEAR:

LEIGH (O.S.)

Games!

JULIA

Really? And where do I redeem my
"chits"?

He gestures around at all the MOTHER'S BELONGINGS.

DAVE

Here. In my...
(air quotes)
Home office.

Julia takes this in.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Two years, your mother was around.
And she was not a kind woman. But
I couldn't say anything. Because
of your chits, you kinda own me.

JULIA

(beat, realizing)
That's my game.
(slumping on bed)
It's unacceptab--

DAVE

(sits with her)
No no, don't do that. It's my
fault too. I know when I'm getting
away with something I shouldn't.

JULIA

Leigh was right. These games.
They mess with you.

They sit there a little lost. A beat.

LEIGH (O.S.)

Now make her feel safe so she knows
she can be honest about her needs!

DAVE/JULIA

Go away! / Enough!

DAVE

(beat, re: Leigh)
I do give you what you need, right?

JULIA

You usually do.

Not the answer he was hoping for.

JULIA (CONT'D)

I mean tonight, you could have asked Vance to leave without me forcing you.

DAVE

Yeah. I should have.

JULIA

I sometimes wish you'd do the right thing without me asking. To know what I want before I say it. It's an awful lot to ask, but you do it for Vance. I wish sometimes you could do it for me.

DAVE

Of course I can. I want to give you that.

(beat, re: clock)

So tonight. There's forty minutes left. No more games.

(musing)

What do you want that you're not asking for?

JULIA

No, I think we're done for tonight. It started so great and we just blew it. I want it to end. I'm disappointed, I'm angry...

DAVE

(gets an idea)

Angry, huh? I've actually got something for that.

He takes Julia's hand and leads her out.

MUSIC CUE: WILCO'S "YOU AND I"

EXT. DILAPIDATED HOUSE - A LITTLE LATER

Dave and Julia drive up to a mess of a house, the mailbox reads 11251 Morningside Drive.

QUICK POPS: The couple tears into what's left of the home. They THROW THINGS through windows, SLEDGEHAMMER a TOILET, JULIA CRASHES through a rice paper wall like the KOOL-AID MAN. It's cathartic. JOYOUS. Julia turns to Dave, gives him a HUGE KISS. Then back to the SMASHING.

INT. DAVE AND JULIA'S BEDROOM - 4:53 AM

Dave and Julia enter, both messy, clothes tattered, covered in plaster dust. They're just SPENT. Two zombies.

JULIA
God, that felt good. Thank you.

DAVE
I hope it was the right house.

They collapse on the bed. A beat. The PHONE RINGS. Julia checks the caller ID.

JULIA
That's weird. It's someone named
"Vance".
(sighs)
Do you think there's any way those
two end up together?

DAVE
I just want them both to be happy.
So hopefully, no.

Dave hits the speaker button.

DAVE (CONT'D)
Hey, buddy. Whose bathroom you in?

VANCE
Not this time. We're 40,000 feet
over Ohio. We're going to Paris!

INT. PLANE - SAME TIME

Vance and Amy share the airplane phone.

AMY
We're getting married!!

INT. DAVE AND JULIA'S BEDROOM - SAME TIME

Dave and Julia, exhausted, both stare at the ceiling.

DAVE/JULIA
(small)
Unacceptable.

Dave takes Julia's hand. The two drift off, as we...

FADE OUT.

END OF SHOW