

Lovestruck

by

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October 23, 2008

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WAVES OF PINK TULLE AND CHIFFON sway and billow in slow motion.

A dreamy, girly love song from the '60s accompanies the fabric's movement. It's heavenly, mesmerizing. Then:

AMELIA (O.S.)

Well fuck-my-mother. Not again.

The fabric stills. The music stops. And the sexy, bass-y beat of The Rolling Stones' "Miss You" fades up.

The camera pans up to AMELIA, late 30s, a woman who has embraced "intellectual" as a personal aesthetic. She's wearing a HIDEOUS PINK BRIDESMAID DRESS and a look of utter contempt. She addresses someone below her, offscreen.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

You know, I've had a lot of douchebags in my bed before, but you - you are the douche baggiest. And you have fucked with the wrong lady on the wrong day.

No response from the off screen party. Amelia just shakes her head...and yells at the top of her lungs:

AMELIA (CONT'D)

RUTH!

INT. RUTH'S APARTMENT - DAY

The Rolling Stones song is blasting from a turntable in Ruth's cluttered apartment. It's decorated with framed album covers - David Bowie, the New York Dolls, The Kinks, etc.

RUTH, also late 30s, the kind of woman who could both drink you under the table and kick your ass at Trivial Pursuit, dances in front of a mirror while applying make-up and singing along to the Rolling Stones. A cigarette hangs from her lips, ash-ing all over her hideous pink bridesmaid dress.

RUTH

(singing with Mick Jagger)

We gonna come around at twelve with some
Puerto Rican girls that are just
dyyyyyyyin' to meet you!

The cigarette falls out of Ruth's mouth. Makes an ugly burn on the delicate pink fabric.

RUTH (CONT'D)

Aw twatcakes.

(hears Amelia calling)

Coming!

Ruth tries to squeeze around her bed, which takes up the whole room. No go. Her dress is too big. She goes back, rolls over the bed expertly. Pops up on the other side and leaves.

INT. AMELIA'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Amelia's living room is decorated with surrealist art. Every surface is stacked every which way with books and papers.

Ruth walks through the room, a bottle of pink nail polish in hand, painting over the burned spot in her dress. She enters-

AMELIA'S BEDROOM

Amelia is staring at a corner of her bed where the covers and fitted sheet are upturned to reveal black spots in the seams.

RUTH

Oh no.

AMELIA

Goddamn bed bugs. Fifteen hundred bucks to get rid of the bastards last time. They must know I work in academia and don't have the money to keep up with their continual genocide.

RUTH

Time to start hooking.

Ruth blows the nail polish dry on her skirt. It doesn't look half bad. Amelia sighs.

AMELIA

We're like half an hour late. We should go.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY STREET - DAY

Amelia and Ruth walk down the street, their dresses accessorized with old dirty snow boots and sensible coats. It's a freezing and dreary day. A woman walks by them holding a red heart balloon.

RUTH

Do you think it was someone bitter or someone hilarious who put this holiday in the middle of the most wretched month of the year?

AMELIA

If those things can't be mutually exclusive then we're in trouble.

An OLD MAN EATING A CHILI DOG walks towards the two. Impatient with the thick CROWD on the sidewalk, he squeezes between Amelia and Ruth, muttering obscenities.

GIANT GLOBS of chili splatter onto Amelia and Ruth's dresses.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

Aw crapsticks.

The chili globbs slide down the chiffon. Ruth tries to rub it off onto a brick wall. She's only making it worse, but she doesn't seem to care.

RUTH

Do you think we'll be stripped of our bouquets?

AMELIA

Dishonorable discharge is too heavenly a dream.

RUTH

And you're still a firm "no" on the double suicide?

AMELIA

Maybe next time.

The women walk on, stepping over mounds of grimy snow sparsely populated with trash. Soiled Valentine's Day ads stick to their filthy boots. A pair of RATS scurry across some laid out Valentine's Day teddy bears, fake handbags, and pirated DVDs on the street. Ah, New York in the wintertime.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

If I go first, I want you to see to it that I'm buried in this dress.

RUTH

Oh?

AMELIA

I don't want to waste anything nice.

Ruth nods. Noted. DIRK, a dirty homeless man, sorts through the plastic bags in his shopping cart.

AMELIA AND RUTH

Hey Dirk.

DIRK

'Evening beauties, spare some change?

RUTH
Not today, Dirk.

DIRK
Fat ass bitches! Fuck you!

RUTH
Bye Dirk!

AMELIA
I suppose Mindy's gonna freak out when
she sees us-

RUTH
Mindy? Nah--

INT. CHURCH - BRIDAL DRESSING ROOM - DAY

MINDY, the African-American bride (mid 30s), SCREAMS.

MINDY
EEEEEEEE! Oh my GOD! You're here! Can you
believe I'm getting married! Could you
IMAGINE back in the dorm that you'd be at
my wedding? MY WEDDING! EEEEEEE!

Ruth and Amelia, disheveled, stand in the doorway, covering
their chili-stained skirts with coats. TEN STEPFORD
BRIDESMAIDS, perfectly coiffed, beam vaseline-big smiles at
the two black sheep.

MINDY (CONT'D)
Okay, I'm just going to use the little
brides room, then the final inspection!
Eee! I'm getting married!

INT. CHURCH - HALLWAY - DAY

A frenetic team of wedding coordinators rush Valentine's Day
themed wedding decor up and down the hall. Amelia and Ruth
huddle in a corner, contemplate their chili stains. Not good.

AMELIA
Inspection? Fuck me.

RUTH
Shit. We're totally going to ruin her
special daaaaaaaaay.

Silence. They're at a loss. In lieu of action, they slip out
silver flasks from their skirts. CLINK them in a quiet toast.

RUTH (CONT'D)
Bridesmaid's-little-helper. What're you packing?

AMELIA
Vodka and club soda.

Ruth's eyes LIGHT UP. Amelia catches on.

AMELIA (CONT'D)
A cocktail AND a cleaning agent!

Amelia begins to pour the contents of the flask out onto their skirts. Stops herself. Takes a sip first. Proceeds. They rub the fabric vigorously. The stains lighten.

RUTH
It's times like these that you should re-evaluate your position on Fate, Amelia.

AMELIA
I'll think about that, Ruth.

A WEDDING PLANNER with some serious plastic surgery experience scurries up to the two. Gaudy bouquets of red roses in one hand, a walkie talkie in the other.

WEDDING PLANNER
The tardy girls, at last. These are for you. Remember, bouquets at navel level and elbows OUT!

RUTH
Eww, there's something on my roses.

Written on the roses in gold is "Mindy & Darren. True Love."

WEDDING PLANNER
Isn't that special? Real 24 karat gold embossing!

Amelia and Ruth try to smile, but it comes off like a wince.

INT. CHAPEL - DAY

Amelia and Ruth are still smile-wincing, but now they're walking down the aisle together, talking through their teeth.

RUTH
Why are we friends with Mindy again?

AMELIA
Because she's nice?

RUTH
Doesn't sound like us.

AMELIA
Because she was randomly assigned to our triple dorm room after that first girl dropped out to join that cult and we find her lack of introspection refreshing?

RUTH
Vegan co-op housing isn't a cult.

The two reach the altar. Take their places.

AMELIA
Oh God. Look.

Ruth and Amelia watch a legion of artificially rosy-cheeked FLOWER GIRLS in elaborate CUPID COSTUMES shoot "red rose arrows" down the aisle with gaudy gold bows. The 500 WEDDING GUESTS applaud, delighted. Ruth and Amelia are horrified.

RUTH
Maureen Dowd is officially downgraded to the second creepiest thing I've ever seen in person.

AMELIA
So what's your assessment of the talent here?

RUTH
That bridesmaid Jennifer is hot.

AMELIA
Oh, you're gay again?

RUTH
Amelia, you have to respect-

AMELIA
No, of course. I respect your choice. I just need a weekly newsletter or something...you do know "bisexual" is a thing, right?

RUTH
Jason didn't take it well.

AMELIA
Well it certainly is an innovative way to get out of a third date.

RUTH
 Anyway, look at these guys. Grade A
 J. Crew assholes.

Amelia surveys the Groomsmen and guests. Ruth's right.

AMELIA
 I didn't shave above the knee anyway.

RUTH
 Good. Stop bathing altogether and maybe
 you'll stay single for more than 24 hours-

AMELIA
 Chill out. His toothbrush is gone, you
 have my spare key back-

RUTH
 And I'm not letting it go anytime soon.
 Someone needs to save you from becoming
 the poster girl for two-month-monogamy.

AMELIA
 And someone needs to save you from your
 many selves. You're impossible.

RUTH
 Oh darling, it's good to have you back.

The doors to the chapel glide open automatically, revealing
 Mindy in all her bridal glory. The "Wedding March" plays.

RUTH (CONT'D)
 You know this song is from a Wagner opera
 in a scene where the marriage is doomed
 to fail?

AMELIA
 Wasn't he an anti-Semite?

RUTH
 Hitler was his biggest fan.

AMELIA
 Gross.

Mindy, beaming a large smile, continues her long trek down
 the aisle on her FATHER's arm. Ruth feigns excitement.

RUTH
 Now here's the part where her father
 transfers ownership of her to her new
 husband!

AMELIA

Oh Jesus, I was just temporarily blinded
by her giant blood diamond.

RUTH

Maybe it's the spirits of the enslaved
Sierra Leonean children crying out to us.

AMELIA

We're bitches.

RUTH

Historically accurate bitches.

Mindy's Father gives her away. Mindy joins DARREN (30s,
Latino) at the altar. Not even Amelia and Ruth are immune to
the joy of the moment.

RUTH (CONT'D)

Happily ever after.

AMELIA

If you're into that sort of thing.

INT. BALLROOM - EVENING

The reception is in full swing. KIDS giggle, shove skewered
strawberries into a ten-foot tall chocolate fountain. Mindy
and Darren sit at a sweetheart table in front of a life-sized
ice sculpture of themselves and a 24-PIECE ORCHESTRA.

AT A TABLE IN THE CORNER

Amelia and Ruth recline, their BLISTERED BARE FEET resting on
empty chairs. They drink champagne, scan the room.

AMELIA

Okay, who's hotter, Mindy's uncle Charlie
or...Richard Nixon?

On the dance floor, the homely UNCLE CHARLIE shakes his stuff
with abandon to an orchestral version of "The Chicken Dance."

RUTH

Nixon. Nothing against Uncle Charlie but
those Nixon jowls- how could you resist?

AMELIA

Reid?

REID, a dour and unstylish gay man in his 40s, sits across
the table from Amelia and Ruth, nursing a scotch.

REID
Uncle Charlie. I guess.

AMELIA
Why?

REID
Because Nixon's dead and it's a
ridiculous question.

An awkward silence.

AMELIA
Worst. Plus One. Ever.

RUTH
Really. You're pretty humorless for a gay
film studies professor.

AMELIA
He's much more fun on paper.

REID
Sorry to disappoint. I'm dealing with all
this bull shit at work. I'm depressed.

AMELIA
You're always depressed. What's up?

REID
They're trying to force me to take over a
mickey mouse class. "The Romantic Comedy:
Love and Laughs in the Reel World." And
yes, that's R-E-E-L.

AMELIA
Ugh.

REID
The old phone-it-in who used to teach it
dropped dead last weekend. It's wildly
popular, so they don't want to get rid of
it. But I refused. I will NOT cancel my
graduate seminar on Psychosexual Asian
horror films of the 1960s for a trifle.

AMELIA
I can't believe NYU film students want to
take a class on romantic comedies.
Shouldn't they be studying films
involving french people or communists?

RUTH

Seriously. Romantic blah-medies are just loads of subversively anti-feminist, conspicuous-consumption, patriarchal bullshit-

AMELIA

-dressed up in a fairy tale.

REID

To be fair, perhaps by exploring the conventions and appeal of the genre we can- Oh fuck me. It's a bullshit class. I'm not doing it.

FROM A FEW TABLES AWAY

Mindy sees Reid, Ruth, and Amelia laughing. She heads over.

BACK AT THE TABLE

Amelia raises her wine glass in a toast.

AMELIA

To fairy tale bullshit, just like this wedding!

RUTH

Here, here!

Amelia and Ruth clink glasses. Notice Reid's change in facial expression. They turn around. Behind them, Mindy staves off tears.

MINDY

Is that what you guys really think?

AMELIA

No. Mindy-

Too late. Mindy scurries off SOBBING HEAVILY, layers of silk flowing behind her. The GUESTS and Darren act out the shock that's expected in a situation like this. Amelia and Ruth exchange looks. Shit. They get up to do damage control, grabbing full bottles of Dom Perignon on their way out.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Amelia and Ruth sit on the floor outside the "Ladies Powder Room" door, passing a bottle of Dom Perignon back and forth.

AMELIA

C'mon Mindy. Everyone's waiting. You still have to cut the cake!

RUTH

(whispers)

Oh God. What if we don't get cake?!

INT. LADIES POWDER ROOM - NIGHT

Mindy is perched on the toilet, mascara running down her face. Her dress filling the tiny bathroom.

MINDY

I'm not coming out ever! You guys ALWAYS thought I was lame! Just admit it!

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Ruth yawns.

AMELIA

We did not. I mean- we do not. Please, Mindy. We promised Darren you'd be back in a minute-

But Mindy's already devolved into HEAVY SOBBING again. Ruth throws her hands up. This is hopeless.

Two blonde, blue-eyed FLOWER GIRLS skip up to Amelia and Ruth. They're still dressed in the elaborate cupid costumes, with their fake gilded bows and red rose "arrows."

FLOWERGIRL 1

We have to go potty.

Ruth and Amelia recoil. Not fond of children, especially children in costume. Mindy's SOBBING can still be heard through the door. They lower their voices.

AMELIA

Someone's in there. So, um, scamper off.

FLOWERGIRL 2

But we have to go.

RUTH

And I have to get my college roommate out of the john before 600 wedding guests emboldened by the open bar come after my friend and I here with oyster knives.

The girls look at each other. Start to chant.

FLOWER GIRL 1 & FLOWER GIRL 2
We have to potty! We have to potty!

RUTH
Not the sharpest cookies in the jar-

AMELIA
Jesus. Look how far apart their eyes are.
Go on little girls, get mommy another
cocktail.

FLOWER GIRL 1 & FLOWER GIRL 2
We have to potty! We have to potty!

Ruth and Amelia cover their ears. They try kindness, not
exactly their forte.

RUTH
Hey. Little Girls. What are your names?

FLOWERGIRL 1
Karma.

FLOWERGIRL 2
Destiny.

RUTH
Wow. Mommy really was drunk when she was
pregnant. Or maybe mommy is a Hare
Krishna? Does mommy sell books to people
at the airport?

AMELIA
No, I'm envisioning a knocked up Sarah
Lawrence undergrad who was watching the
Dalai Lama on Oprah or something.

FLOWER GIRL 1 & FLOWER GIRL 2
We have to potty! We have to potty!

More MUFFLED WORDS come from the bathroom. But Ruth and
Amelia can't hear what Mindy's saying.

RUTH
(to the Flower Girls)
Ok. Seriously. Shut your candy holes.

FLOWERGIRL 1
You made Mindy cry. You're mean.

RUTH
I've been called worse.

FLOWERGIRL 2

You need to learn your lesson. You should be punished.

AMELIA

And you should be at least fifteen feet away but we all don't get what we want.

FLOWERGIRL 1

We. Have. To. POTTY!

Amelia and Ruth are over it. Ruth hands Amelia a bottle of Dom Perignon. Amelia does a military nod. They both start vigorously shaking their bottles.

INT. LADIES POWDER ROOM - NIGHT

Mindy cries, then starts to watch herself as she cries, reveling in the drama just a little bit. She remembers Amelia and Ruth are outside. Her face hardens in resolve.

MINDY

Amelia and Ruth - you know what?

Silence.

MINDY (CONT'D)

Guys?

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Ruth and Amelia are SPRAYING DOWN the Flower Girls with the pressurized champagne bottles. The Flower Girls run away, shrieking. Ruth and Amelia watch them go, a job well done.

RUTH

What's most awesome about this is that all of our problems today have been solved by alcohol.

AMELIA

Shh. Mindy's saying something. What's that, Mindy?

MINDY (O.S.)

I said, "you know what?"

RUTH

Uh, what?

AROUND THE CORNER

The two Flower Girls watch Amelia and Ruth, champagne dripping from their curls. They pull out their bows and red rose "arrows."

INTERCUT MINDY IN THE BATHROOM/AMELIA AND RUTH IN THE HALL

MINDY

Well I happen to think-

Amelia and Ruth listen. Out of their sight, the Flower Girls raise their bows...

MINDY (CONT'D)

what you two need-

Ruth rolls her eyes at Mindy's dramatic buildup. She makes a 'wrap it up' motion with her hand. The Flower Girls pull their bows even more taut.

MINDY (CONT'D)

Is a little-

The Flower Girls RELEASE their red rose arrows. The arrows spiral on an unexpectedly straight course straight towards Amelia and Ruth...

MINDY (CONT'D)

Fairy tale bullshit in YOUR lives!

...FTHHHWT! Ruth and Amelia get NAILED SQUARE IN THE EYES with the arrows.

AMELIA AND RUTH

Oww!

EVERYTHING GOES BLACK. AND STAYS BLACK. THEN- FADE UP:

The Flower Girls run down the hall, giggling wildly.

Amelia and Ruth, still out of it, are red-faced. Their eyes well up with tears as they regain a sense of their surroundings. Then, they start choking out laughter, realizing what's just happened. Mindy, hearing them, steps out of the bathroom. Sees them both "crying."

MINDY

Aww, I knew you girls were sorry!

Mindy grabs them up in a tight double embrace.

AMELIA AND RUTH POV - OVER MINDY'S SHOULDER

The watery vision clears and *everything moves in SLOW MOTION.*

Amelia and Ruth blink in disbelief as two men cross the hall. One is an IMPOSSIBLY GORGEOUS MAN, square-jawed and impeccably dressed. The second is an APPROACHABLY ADORABLE MAN, with sparkling eyes and an endearingly rumpled tuxedo.

The Men turn to Amelia and Ruth, respectively flashing them gorgeous million dollar and adorably shy smiles, before disappearing into the ballroom.

The SLOW MOTION STOPS. Amelia and Ruth try to shake it off. Whisper to one another over Mindy's shoulder.

AMELIA

Man, I am DRUNK.

RUTH

Me too. Cake. Now.

INT. BALLROOM - NIGHT

Mindy is back on the dance floor. The orchestra plays "YMCA." Amelia and Ruth run oversized hunks of cake under the chocolate fountain. They stumble, drunk.

RUTH

Oh yeah, I need this.

AMELIA

I know! It was like the whole world was going in slo-mo. Literally. You think it was the Dom Perignon or the rose juice to the eyes?

RUTH

Oh my god.

AMELIA

What?

Ruth is staring at Amelia, in drunken awe.

RUTH

Right now. Right this very moment, you look so...grootiful. Wait, I mean good. Or great. Or beautiful. I dunno, you're just...glowing.

Amelia actually does look a little better, a little more kempt, than she did moments ago. So does Ruth.

AMELIA

Hey. You too.
 (singing)
You. Are. So grootiful...to me-

The Orchestra stops playing. Mindy steps up to a microphone.

MINDY

Alllllrrighty sexy singles, it's time for
 the bouquet and garter toss!

Masses of SINGLE WOMEN AND MEN flock to the dance floor.

AMELIA

So this is a good time to pee-

In the center of the ballroom, Darren retrieves Mindy's
 garter to a chorus of lewd whistles. Mindy basks in the
 attention. Darren looks at her adoringly.

In the background, Amelia and Ruth walk in zigzags the wrong
 way, champagne in one hand, giant hunks of cake in the other.

RUTH

Oh wait, the door's over there. Code
 yellow. Let's Run.

GUESTS

5! 4! 3! 2!-

Amelia and Ruth race across the slippery ball room floor past
 the crowd, trying to escape the moment. They're cracking up.

GUESTS (CONT'D)

1!

Mindy and Darren lob their items with gusto. Too much gusto.
 The groups of single men and women watch as the THE GARTER
 AND BOUQUET sail right over them.

Only the Impossibly Gorgeous and Approachably Adorable Men
 break away from the group, running backwards like they're
 trying to catch a pass.

*EVERYTHING MOVES IN SLOW MOTION once again. THE MEN run
 backwards, elbowing each other out of the way...*

*Amelia and Ruth run and slip across the room, their eyes on
 the EXIT sign, chocolate smeared on their faces, until...*

*SLAAAAMMMM! The Men collide with Amelia and Ruth at FULL
 FORCE. Like a painful-to-watch NFL REPLAY.*

Back to Real Time. Mindy jumps up and down and cheers. The Flower Girls laugh, stick their tongues out at the two.

Amelia and Ruth are on the ground. Each holds approximately half of the shredded bouquet. Entangled with them, the Impossibly Gorgeous Men unhook the garter from their cuff links.

The Four look at one another for the second time.

Ruth and SKIP, the one with the rumpled suit and sparkling eyes, share a moment. The sounds of the wedding drop out.

Amelia and CHAD, the square-jawed man, share an equally intense connection. They blurt out, at the same time:

AMELIA AND CHAD

Do you wanna get out of here?

RUTH AND SKIP

Whoa! That was weird!

The four look at each other. Not sure what to think.

EXT. NYC STREET - NIGHT

The drunken foursome stumbles down the street. Laughing.

AMELIA AND CHAD

Triple Jinx! Quadruple Jinx! Balls!

RUTH

This is so-

SKIP

-weird and awesome!

Ruth throws her hands up smiling, that's what she was about to say! All four laugh.

The group almost knocks into a WOMAN IN A BLUE SWEATER. She rolls her eyes as the drunkards stumble past. They pass the same place homeless Dirk sat before. But Dirk is gone. Only his shopping cart of bags remains.

ON THE STREET

The snow is melting. The water streaming into the gutters.

ON A BANK'S DIGITAL SIGN

The temperature display on the sign changes from 30 degrees to 31 degrees. Then again. 32 degrees...33 degrees...34 degrees...

INT. AMELIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Chad, broad shouldered, with a bit of a swagger, loosens his tie in Amelia's darkened apartment and examines the full-size reproduction of Rene Magritte's "Treachery of Images" hanging over Amelia's bed. The painting is an image of a pipe. Underneath, are the words "*Ceci n'est pas une pipe.*"

CHAD

So, ms. art professor, what's with the pipe?

IN THE BATHROOM

Amelia, still drunk, shaves above the knee in quick, sloppy strokes. With her free hand she stuffs the stack of books next to her toilet into a cabinet.

AMELIA

Um, it's not a pipe, actually.

IN THE BEDROOM

Chad raises an eyebrow.

CHAD

It sure looks like a pipe.

INT. RUTH'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Skip wanders through Ruth's darkened apartment, flips through Ruth's extensive record collection. A record falls out of its case, he fumbles to pick it up. This is not a guy comfortable in his own skin.

SKIP

Are you a musician?

IN HER ROOM

Ruth slips on some cute, funky lingerie. Amuses herself by modeling it in front of the mirror in her darkened room.

RUTH

No, I produce a music show at NPR. I *hate* musicians.

Ruth strikes a pin-up pose but drunkenly stumbles and knocks over a tower of CDs. Where'd those come from?

IN THE LIVING ROOM

Skip couldn't hear her over the sounds of CDs falling.

SKIP

I'm a guitarist-singer-songwriter. We
probably have a lot in common!

INT. AMELIA'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Amelia takes one last sip from her flask before making an
entrance. With this guy, she's going to need to be drunk.

AMELIA

But that's what the french words say:
"This is not a pipe." And it's not. It's
a picture of a pipe. You can't smoke it.

IN THE LIVING ROOM

Amelia steps out of the bathroom. Chad saunters over to her
in the moonlight.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

That's surrealism, Chad. Get it?

Chad steps up to her, lays his hands on her shoulders.

CHAD

Not really. I'm in advertising.

AMELIA

So was Magritte. Then he quit to do
something worthwhile.

CHAD

I suppose teaching 19-year-old trust fund
kids that that pipe is *not* a pipe is more
worthwhile?

AMELIA

Yes. Absolutely.

Chad pulls Amelia closer. Faintly, a COLDPLAY SONG begins.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

Do you hear something? Music?

CHAD

Oh I hear music alright.

AMELIA

Ugh. Maybe you shouldn't talk-

CHAD

Okay-

Chad leans in for a kiss. The Coldplay song FADES UP. And their lips approach, slowly. Really slowly. Amelia opens her eyes, wondering why they're moving so slow. Then Chad goes for it. Their lips connect and...

SLOW MOTION! THE SOUND OF COLDPLAY SWELLS! Chad leans Amelia back on the bed. But Amelia stops him, with a confused look.

AMELIA

Oh, maybe not the bed-

CHAD

Why not?

An awkward silence. Amelia breaks into drunken laughter.

AMELIA

I can't remember!

Chad smiles. Looks deep into her eyes. He leans her back on the bed and the scene gradually fades to black.

INT. RUTH'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Skip, still alone in the living room, won't shut up.

SKIP

So I play at that one coffee shop in the Village every Sunday. I mean *technically* it's open mic, but I'm almost like a headliner at this point-

IN HER ROOM

Ruth yawns. She's heard enough. She throws on a dingy robe.

IN THE LIVING ROOM

Ruth approaches Skip with as little tact as possible.

RUTH

No offense Trip-

SKIP

Skip.

RUTH

Right, no offense, but I'm just not feeling this. I should have told you that I'm possibly a lesbian. Anyway, so, bye.

SKIP

Wow, well that's unexpected. Can I, uh, at least kiss you good night?

RUTH

Um, okay, a little lame, a little fifth grade. But hey, why not?

Skip steps up to Ruth and touches his fingertips to her face. Tilts her eyes up to his. The faint sounds of COLDPLAY begin.

RUTH (CONT'D)

Is that- Coldplay?! From Amelia's place?

Skip ignores her, pulls her in for a long, gentle, AMAZING KISS. Ruth steps back, in shock at how great it was.

SKIP

C'mon. This is going to be fun.

Skip holds out his hand for Ruth to take. What a geek. Ruth holds back her eye roll before deciding...oh what the hell-

RUTH

Okay. But talk less.

SKIP

Fair enough.

Skip leads a still-unsure-about-this-whole-thing Ruth to the bedroom, hand-in-hand. We hear the SQUEAK OF A BEDSPRING. The COLDPLAY MUSIC SWELLS. A slow fade to black.

INT. AMELIA'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - MORNING

Amelia wakes up in her bed. Incredibly hungover. The sun shines oppressively into her room. She fumbles in her night stand and pulls out some sunglasses.

She notices a note on the night stand: "Had to go. Call you later. Chad." Amelia scoffs at it. Crumples it and throws it in the trash.

IN THE LIVING ROOM

We see Amelia's apartment now in full daylight. It's different. Gloriously large and uncluttered. If it weren't for the paintings on the wall, you'd think it was a different apartment altogether. Amelia yawns. Looks around...and continues her schlep to the bathroom without reaction.

INT. RUTH'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - MORNING

Ruth tosses Skip's note in the trash. She gets up out of her bed, which is now luxuriously large and fits into the room perfectly. She easily walks around the area she couldn't squeeze through before. Yawning. Not noticing anything.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY STREET - MORNING

Ruth, still in her sunglasses, stands on the sidewalk, slinging back a bottle of TYLENOL. Amelia leaves an ATM and rejoins Ruth. She stuffs some \$20 bills into her wallet.

AMELIA

Weird. I swear my balance didn't change and I took out like a hundred dollars. I've finally done it. I've killed the brain cells that do math.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - MORNING

The girls nurse black coffees. The Woman in a Blue Sweater enters the shop. The door SLAMS behind her. The girls flinch.

RUTH

So was it good for you?

AMELIA

I think so, I mean yes-- I actually don't quite remember it, but I have this *feeling* that it was the most amazing sex I've ever had.

RUTH

Me too! I can't remember one position, testicle or wet spot, but I just *know*.

AMELIA

It was like the whole world faded to black and...

The girls both take a moment to think back dreamily.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

So are you gonna see him again?

RUTH

God no, he's a musician and I'm not straight right now. You?

AMELIA

He has perfect teeth and works in advertising.

RUTH

Eww.

The two get up to leave. Amelia in front of Ruth.

AMELIA

Oh! I forgot that I need to disown you
for getting it on to Coldpl-

She whips around to face Ruth. Her purse whips around with her, knocking a STEAMING CUP OF COFFEE right into an UPTIGHT BUSINESSMAN's crotch. He SCREAMS.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

Ooh, sorry.

Amelia dabs the Uptight Businessman's crotch with napkins. Ruth CRACKS UP, then realize what she's been accused of.

RUTH

Wait. Coldplay? That was you!

The Businessman waves Amelia off his crotch. Ruth accidentally walks into his backhand and is knocked off her feet. She slams backwards into a pyramid-stacked display of coffee. She hits the ground flat on her coccyx. Surrounded by coffee bags, broken open and spilling beans onto the floor.

EVERYONE in the cafe stares at Amelia and Ruth. A CUTE GUY rushes up to them, all smiles.

CUTE GUY

I know this is weird. But-- can I get
your phone number? There's just something
about you.

RUTH

Uh, which one of us?

CUTE GUY

Oh. Either.

EXT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Amelia and Ruth stand outside, still in shock.

RUTH

Well that was weird.

Amelia nods, glances down at Ruth's shoes. High heels.

AMELIA

Hey. You're wearing heels.

RUTH

I know. Have you lost weight?

AMELIA

Were we talking about something?

RUTH

I don't remember. Jesus, it's hot.

Ruth and Amelia are, indeed, beginning to sweat. They look out over the scene on the street. This is not the New York we saw yesterday. Everything is brighter. Cleaner. Flatly lit. Glowing, almost. Song birds chirp relentlessly. The trees are laden with glorious fall leaves.

And most of all, Amelia and Ruth are different. Thinner. More manicured. Better dressed. Prettier, even.

RUTH (CONT'D)

This is some hangover, friend.

AMELIA

Maybe our best yet.

The two walk off in separate directions. Leaving in sight a news stand, where we can read the headline: "Fall in February?: Global Warming Hits NYC"

INT. CLASSROOM - NYU - DAY

A slide of Meret Oppenheim's artifact, *Fur-Lined Teacup*, is projected onto a screen. Amelia lectures to a SMALL CLASS.

AMELIA

Attraction and repulsion. That's what makes this piece so captivating. It's a teacup, something you want to drink from, though the thought of the fur in your mouth is disgusting right? But maybe it's just supposed to be funny. Comments?

DELIVERY GUY (O.S.)

Amelia Branwell?

Amelia sees the DELIVERY GUY in the back of the classroom. He's holding a vase filled with TWO DOZEN RED ROSES.

INT. AMELIA'S OFFICE - DAY

Amelia is on the phone. Staring at the roses with contempt.

AMELIA

Red roses. They're so literal!

INT. RUTH'S OFFICE - DAY

Ruth's cramped NPR office. She's on the phone with Amelia, staring, nearly nauseated, at her own vase full of roses.

RUTH
They're so vanilla!

INTERCUT AMELIA/RUTH ON PHONE

AMELIA
They're so not us.

RUTH
I've gotten three phone calls today from Flip or Chip or whatever. And it's a 555 number. When did those start existing?

AMELIA
I'm getting the same. My first one-night stand in ten years and it's a stalker. What is their deal?

RUTH
I don't know. But what do you say these roses go straight to the land of the unwanted babies?

AMELIA
To the dumpster! On three.

AMELIA
One. Two. Three!

RUTH
One. Two. Three!

The two DROP the bouquets into their respective trash bins.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Reid, looking defeated, trudges through a lecture. He hates every minute of it, but he's a great lecturer. Something is different with his hair. On the screen behind him is a still from Sandra Bullock's *Two Weeks Notice*. Sandra Bullock's foot is stuck in a flower pot.

REID
The modern romantic comedy heroine is not a cliché. She is a collection of hundreds of clichés. The only true constant and cliché number one is that she must must MUST be immensely, inarguably, across-the-board, unanimously, *likable*.

The Students furiously scribble notes. A picture of Jennifer Aniston appears on screen.

REID (CONT'D)

Cliche 2: She's pretty, a fact of which she's never aware. Because you can't like a pretty girl who knows she's pretty and you *definitely* can't like an ugly girl.

He changes the image on the screen to Reese Witherspoon.

REID (CONT'D)

Cliche 3: Our heroine might have a little post-feminist girl power tacked on. "See, I'm pretty AND I can do complex math." But here's where we run into a problem. The *human* women in the audience are already thinking "wait, she's beautiful, brilliant, and everyone likes her. Why is she single?" Uh oh. Her likability is backfiring. So in most movies, the thing to do is to give the character a flaw. They're narcissists, they're deceptive, they're cannibals, WHATEVER. But that doesn't fly in a romantic comedy where the heroines "flaws" are things you would list as your weaknesses in a job interview: "I work too hard. I'm too nice. I'm deep in debt because I have an unusual affinity for gift giving." So how do we make our character more sympathetic? Meet Cliche 4: She's adorably clumsy.

A montage of romantic comedy heroines executing pratfalls, spilling things, struggling to get dressed in a hurry, etc.

INT. HALLWAY - NYU - DAY

Amelia passes by Reid's lecture room. She sees the sign on the door "The Romantic Comedy: Love and Laughs in the Reel World - Prof. Reid Clerkin." She stops to watch, amused.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

A clip from *How to Lose a Guy in Ten Days* plays behind Reid.

REID

Cliche 5: She's under-appreciated and over-looked at work, despite fierce integrity.

(MORE)

REID (CONT'D)

Kate Hudson in *How to Lose a Guy*, wants to report on the Middle East, but instead has to do features on how-to-get guys. Sympathetic and likable!

A series of rom-com leading ladies plays with characters IDs.

REID (CONT'D)

Cliche 6: How about a unisex nickname? Charlie, Sam or Andi, say - to imply that she is plucky and trustworthy and thus and therefore likable. Or maybe-

A montage of romantic comedy parents.

REID (CONT'D)

Cliche 7: Throw in some likable parents that are either very wacky, very ethnic slash regional, or if we're going for the sympathy vote, (which we often are) very very dead.

A montage of "single and alone" moments from various movies.

REID (CONT'D)

Cliche 8: In public she's everyone's friend, but in private moments she is a lonely soul, a fact demonstrated when she orders Chinese take out for one. And then-

A montage of romantic comedy heroines in fashionable clothes, immaculate apartments, and bustling, sunny cities.

REID (CONT'D)

Cliche 9: Even if she works a low paying job, she has an endless wardrobe of well-tailored clothing and an airplane hanger-sized apartment in a major city, usually New York. A sparkling Fall New York where it's always sunny, Central Park is safe at night, and 9/11 never happened.

Amelia walks up to the front of the room, hands Reid a note. She turns on her heel and walks away with a smirk. Reid opens the note. Written inside: Only 25 years to retirement. Hugs, Amelia. PS - What is with the boy band hair? Reid frowns.

REID (CONT'D)

Alright. That's all the time I can bear your eager little faces today. On Thursday, we'll go from "meet cute" to "super romantic first date" to "the inevitable coincidence." If I don't slit my wrists before then.

INT. HALLWAY - NYU - DAY

Amelia walks out past a bulletin board displaying A MISSING PERSONS POSTER. It's a picture of a happy young couple with the text: "Missing since February 14." She doesn't notice it.

INT. RUTH'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Ruth makes out with KATIE, a pretty hipster lesbian, on her now very large couch. Katie closes her eyes and moves her hand down to Ruth's ass.

But Ruth's eyes are wide open, focused on her kitchen table where her cell phone flashes. She can see the number from Katie's embrace: 212-555-1038.

INT. AMELIA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Amelia reads on the couch, but can't concentrate. Her cell phone silently flashes at her from her purse. A "555" number. She tries to ignore it, but keeps stealing glances at it.

Suddenly she freezes. Petrified. It's as if someone is in the room with her. Watching her. *Right behind her.* She turns slowly and lays eyes on...

A COSY BREAKFAST NOOK. With matching throw pillows.

INT. RUTH'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Katie kisses Ruth's stomach, working her way downward. Ruth isn't into it. Her mind still somewhere else.

Amelia flings open the door. Ruth pushes Katie off of her. Katie slams to the floor. THUD.

RUTH

Amelia?

KATIE

Ow!

AMELIA

Ruth, do I have a breakfast nook?

RUTH

What? I- I don't know.

KATIE

Oh my god, is this your girlfriend?

RUTH

No Katie- I'm straight. You should go.

A CHINESE FOOD DELIVERY GUY appears in the hallway with THREE GIANT BAGS of food. He knocks on Amelia's door.

AMELIA

Oh hi, those are for me.

Katie, pissed, walks out past Amelia and the Delivery Guy.

KATIE

Bisexual bullshit.

RUTH

I'm not bisexual, I'm straight!

AMELIA

Jesus, Ruth. Can't you ever just say "it's not you, it's me--"

RUTH

Rewind. Breakfast nook.

INT. AMELIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Amelia and Ruth stare at the breakfast nook.

RUTH

It looks like it's always been there--

AMELIA

I know, but why is it so- unsettling?

Ruth takes a deep breath.

RUTH

Because Amelia, strange things are afoot at the Circle Us.

INT. RUTH'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Ruth sits Amelia down at the kitchen table. She's serious.

RUTH

Okay. So I've been feeling-- I don't know, *empty*, all day. And instead of my usual depression schtick of buying a too-expensive bottle of wine, a cigar, and dancing drunk to Morrissey at full volume, I bought THIS.

Ruth opens her freezer. Inside: a pint of Chunky Monkey. They both stare at the carton of ice cream.

RUTH (CONT'D)

Amelia?- Is anything else kind of weird?
Something you can't get off your mind? Or-

AMELIA

-Someone? Yeah.

RUTH

Me too. I got to thinking, what if it's
Fate? Or God? What if she's trying to
tell us something about those guys?

AMELIA

But those guys are so cheeseless pizza.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

Oh, you're right. They're sugarless
chocolate. Decaf coffee-

RUTH

Nothing to see there folks-

A beat.

AMELIA

Let's go out with them again.

RUTH

Yeah. Okay.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - DAY

Ruth and Skip walk down a winding path together. A pair of
ducks swim alongside them in the water.

SKIP

You know, ducks mate for life.

RUTH

Really? If I was a duck I'd be the
biggest slut.

SKIP

I wrote a song about it once, if you
wanna hear it-

RUTH

Uh, later. Man it's so bright lately!

SKIP

Hey. The whole world is looking a little
brighter to me too lately.

RUTH

Dude, you gotta work on those lines.

SKIP

Or maybe you need to lower your expectations. Then we both win!

RUTH

You have some low self-esteem, pal.

SKIP

I do.

RUTH

That's not a problem I can relate to.

SKIP

I noticed that about you.

Ruth laughs. This guy is growing on her. Behind them, Amelia and Chad walk with hands in their own pockets. Amelia is remembering why this was a bad idea.

CHAD

So I told them "you rent out every billboard in the city, slap an American flag on the box for the red staters and tell the blue staters it's 'green'." Advertising: it's not hard people. What? Why are you looking at me like that?

AMELIA

Because I think you're the Antichrist.

CHAD

I'm not. But I do look awesome in red.

AMELIA

Ugh. New subject: I didn't realize you and Skip were brothers. For some reason I find that kind of creepy-

CHAD

It is kind of creepy that he still insists on taking baths together.

(silence)

Kidding. Geez, I didn't realize you were one of those uptight types.

AMELIA

I'm not-

CHAD AMELIA
A type? A type.

AMELIA (CONT'D)
Stop finishing-

CHAD AMELIA
My sentences? My sentences.

AMELIA (CONT'D)
Argh!

CHAD
Last one was just a guess, I swear.

Amelia smiles despite herself. Chad notices, satisfied.

POSTED TO A TREE THE FOUR HAVE PASSED

Another Missing Persons Notice. Another happy couple.
Underneath their names: "Missing since February 15."

FALLING IN LOVE IN NEW YORK MONTAGE. CUE THE MUSIC!

-Brooklyn Bridge

The Four of them do the "Monkees walk" across the bridge.
Amelia and Ruth clumsily TRIP simultaneously. They all laugh.

-Coney Island

The Four smush into one basket on the Coney Island
Wonderwheel. They merrily eat corn dogs, point out sights.

-Times Square

The Four watch the NAKED COWBOY sing. Skip whispers something
into the Cowboy's ear. MOMENTS LATER, Skip and Chad are in
their underwear, playing the guitar for the laughing girls.

INT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - NIGHT

A KNICKS PLAYER shoots a free throw. Scores! Amelia and Ruth
jump to their feet and APPLAUD. Skip and Chad beside them.

AMELIA
I didn't even know I liked basketball.

RUTH
Look how happy Spike Lee looks!

Chad kisses Amelia on the cheek as they sit back down. She
tries to shake off her weird feeling and enjoy it.

Ruth and Skip appear on the Jumbotron "Kiss Cam", framed in a
heart!

They start kissing...then Ruth climbs onto his lap, starts seriously making out. The kiss cam quickly cuts away. Everyone laughs.

RUTH (CONT'D)

I can't believe how much we did today!

AMELIA

I can't believe I actually had fun in Times Square. I always kind of considered it the eighth circle of hell.

CHAD

Oh no. Not since Guiliani cleaned it up.

Amelia laughs. Then realizes Chad's not joking. Ruth and Skip are looking dreamily into one another's eyes.

SKIP

Can I...get you a Heineken, Rudi?

RUTH

I'll take a Heineken, sure.

CHAD

A capital idea. How about you, Mel?

AMELIA

Um, yeah. A Heineken. Thanks.

The guys leave. Amelia, uneasy for reasons she can't articulate, scans the crowd. SOMEONE reads a newspaper with the headline: *"NYC Now Cleanest, Safest City in Nation."* Then she notices the scoreboard- the Knicks are killing the competition. Something is not right here. And then there's-

AMELIA (CONT'D)

Mel? Rudi?

First the look of epiphany. Then fear.

EXT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - NIGHT

Amelia drags Ruth out onto the sidewalk.

RUTH

Hey! Let go. What's wrong with you?

AMELIA

I just need some air. Ruth- Okay. So-

RUTH

Um, Amelia? Shouldn't we go tell Skip and Chad where we are?

AMELIA
Mel and Rudi. Unisex and plucky-

RUTH
"Plucky?"

AMELIA
New York is clean.

RUTH
Which is awesome-

AMELIA
And the Knicks - they're doing so well.

RUTH
Also awesome...Amelia?

AMELIA
And we're having a delightfully sunny
fall, *in February*.

RUTH
Global Warming sucks and then you die.

AMELIA
And we're wearing four inch heels and our
apartments are bigger and our waists are
smaller and we hear Coldplay during sex
we can't even remember. And most of all,
we like those guys. A cocky ad exec and
an unemployed musician? Ruth-

Amelia grabs Ruth's hands, looks into her eyes.

AMELIA (CONT'D)
I think we're trapped in a romantic
comedy.

RUTH
Me too!

AMELIA
Really!?

RUTH
No. Wait, you were serious?

AMELIA
Yes.

RUTH

Baby, look at me. Are you having a Mary-Todd-Lincoln breakdown on me?

AMELIA

Listen. It all makes sense. The Chinese food and the "555" numbers and... Heineken! It's product placement! And we like sports that are not roller derby now? And "Mel" and "Rudi." It was all in Reid's lecture. It all fits.

RUTH

Okay, still not totally on board the crazy train with you-

AMELIA

Watch this.

Amelia pulls a tissue out of her purse. Blows her nose.

RUTH

You should take that on the road.

AMELIA

Shut up. Watch.

Amelia throws the tissue up in the air, letting it fall to the ground. Ruth shrugs. So what?

AMELIA (CONT'D)

Now where is it?

Ruth looks down. No tissue. Just a spic and span sidewalk.

RUTH

It blew away.

AMELIA

It's not windy.

RUTH

A rat snagged it.

AMELIA

There are no more rats. C'mon Ruth. Don't you feel-- out of character?

Ruth thinks. Sits down on a bench, eyes cast down.

RUTH

Not that this means anything, but- I took my roses out of the trash. I kept them.

Amelia puts a hand on Ruth's shoulder.

AMELIA

I did the same thing.

RUTH

I like Skip. But I don't like that I like him. He blogs and writes songs with no choruses and...he likes Dave Matthews, Amelia. He likes Dave Matthews a lot.

AMELIA

Opposites attract. Hilarity ensues.

RUTH

But if- how did this happen?

AMELIA

I don't know. But- remember at Mindy's wedding, when we thought we were so drunk everything was moving in slow motion?

RUTH

Yeah.

AMELIA

What if everything WAS moving in slow motion? I don't know how, but-

RUTH

Well, okay, this is crazy but right before that, what Mindy said, and those creepy knee-highs dressed as cupids-

Amelia takes out her cell phone, starts dialing.

RUTH (CONT'D)

Who are you calling?

AMELIA

Mindy. She has to know something about this. About these guys or those little girls. Or something.

RUTH

Maybe Mindy's playing a prank on us.

AMELIA

She'd have to have a sense of irony to pull that off.

RUTH

Right. But- let's just go back inside.

AMELIA

She's not answering. We have to find her.

RUTH

C'mon. They're admittedly not the coolest guys we've ever met but they don't deserve to get stood up. And the sex-

AMELIA

You don't even remember it!

RUTH

I'm unclear on your point-

AMELIA

Those guys are not who we think they are. I'm not even sure those guys are real people. Look, you can come with me to Mindy's or you can stay here and fill out your Dave Matthews fan club application.

RUTH

I hate you.

AMELIA

I know. C'mon.

INT. MINDY'S CONDO BUILDING - HALLWAY - DAY

An upscale condominium complex with excessive wainscoting. Amelia and Ruth enter the hallway. Set eyes on piles and piles of boxes and mail at the foot of Mindy's door. Amelia's already worried. She knocks on the door.

RUTH

You're sure they're not on their honeymoon?

AMELIA

She said they were waiting for "April in Paris."

RUTH

Gag. Maybe they're just having endless newlywed sex or something-

Amelia pounds on the door. Ruth sifts through the mail.

AMELIA

Mindy! Darren!

RUTH

Mindy! The new US WEEKLY is out here!
Stars, they're just like us! John Mayer
eats sandwiches too!

But it's useless. Nothing.

EXT. MINDY'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Amelia and Ruth exit the building.

RUTH

It is kind of strange. I usually get two
calls a day from her devoted to celebrity
babies alone.

AMELIA

Her rating system is particularly
disturbing.

Amelia stops in her tracks. She's staring at a telephone
pole. A Missing Persons Poster. And Another. And Another.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

Look at the dates on these. Nothing
before Valentine's Day.

Ruth looks down the street. All of the telephone poles have
these posters on them. For as far as the eye can see.

RUTH

How did we not notice this?

AMELIA

I don't think we were supposed to.

EXT. NEW YORK STREET - DAY

A perfect New York day. Too perfect. A smiling POLICEMAN
waves cheerily to a happy HOT DOG VENDOR. The birds sing.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Ruth and Amelia open the door and stand on the stoop. They're
in designer sundresses and very high heels. They look
beautiful, neat, paranoid, and miserable.

RUTH

My dress is a size 4.

AMELIA

My heels are comfortable.

RUTH
God this is hell.

Amelia starts down the steps, but immediately she TRIPS and falls out of frame.

Ruth rushes to her. Amelia sits up in a pile of freshly raked leaves. She spits out a leaf. Ruth laughs.

RUTH (CONT'D)
Aww, you look like a little clumsy baby bird. I just wanna throw up in your mouth

EXT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Amelia and Ruth walk out of the Police Station. Past The Woman in the Blue Sweater who is on her way in. Ruth is reading from the *New York Times*.

AMELIA
I can't believe they won't let us report a missing person for a week. Ridiculous.

RUTH
Here's something on page 11. "What most confounds police is the similarities between the missing couples. They all share a certain 'opposites attract' dynamic, met each other in unusually coincidental circumstances, and each of the relationships began on or after Valentine's Day. A friend of one of the missing women stated "One minute they were falling in love, the next minute they hated each other, and then the next they were kissing in the rain. The wedding was the last time I saw her."
(beat)
Maybe these people were all so crazy in love they just ran off to start a new life together.

AMELIA
Mindy wouldn't run off and not tell anyone. I get a text message every time she has cramps.

RUTH
Okay, let's assume for a moment we're all "trapped in a romantic comedy." Then why are people disappearing? It doesn't connect. That's not what happens in romantic comedies.

AMELIA

All I know is what happened to these people in the article is what's happening to us. And now they're gone.

RUTH

I guess this means we're not seeing Skip and Chad again, huh?

AMELIA

Ruth!

RUTH

I'm just saying, if this is true maybe we could have some fun with it. I mean, Dave Matthews notwithstanding, it turns out I look really hot as a size 4.

AMELIA

But it's not real, Ruth.

RUTH

Oh, right. And that's-- bad?

AMELIA

Yes!

A group of PRE-SCHOOLERS passes by, holding hands in a single file line. A TEACHER leads them in a round of "Do Re Mi"

AMELIA (CONT'D)

Aww.

RUTH

Precious.

They snap out of it. Look at one another. Horrified.

RUTH

No one's going to believe us.

AMELIA

I know someone who has to.

INT. AMELIA/REID'S OFFICE - DAY

Amelia and Ruth sit across from Reid.

REID

Of course I don't believe you.

AMELIA

How do you explain the slow motion?

REID

You were drunk.

AMELIA
The clumsiness-

REID
You're probably still drunk.

AMELIA
New York is clean-

REID
The mayor's up for re-election.

AMELIA
Finishing each other's-

REID
-Sentences? You're predictable.

AMELIA
But the weight loss-

REID
I hear crazy burns calories.

AMELIA
Mindy won't answer our calls.

REID
You made her cry- AT HER WEDDING.

AMELIA
And the disappearing couples?

REID
Serial killer whose mommy either loved
him too much or not enough. Look, how old
are you two?

AMELIA
37.

REID
A lead female in a romantic comedy is
rarely over 29. Unless they had to adjust
it to 30 because Meg Ryan was too old to
pass for 29. 35 is pretty much the max
unless Dianes Keaton or Lane or Sarah
Jessica Parker is involved-

RUTH
But-

REID

You like your job, Ruth? Respected there?

RUTH

Yes and yes.

REID

Two more checks in the "probably not in an alternate reality arbitrarily ruled by a film genre" column. Have you ever stood in pouring rain and not cared because you were so emotionally worked up?

AMELIA

God no.

REID

Do you both still incessantly judge others and look at the world through the cynic's lens?

AMELIA

Well, yes-

REID

At best each of you could be the wacky friend. But there are never two wacky friends. And the wacky friend is usually either a token sassy black girl or maybe an approachable gay guy so that the movie can claim "diversity."

AMELIA

But-

REID

Look. These movies exist to reassure single women that their one true love is just around coincidence corner. All the characters reject their soul mates at some point, but the rom-com universe punishes them endlessly until they realize it's meant to be blah blah blah. So even if you were "trapped" in a romantic comedy (which you aren't), and you've met your soul mates (which you haven't), then there's nothing you can do. You'd be fated to be with them. True love in the movies is as inescapable as "Happily Ever After" and "The End."

Amelia looks beaten. Ruth eyes Reid strangely.

RUTH

Are you wearing an ascot?

Reid looks down. He is, indeed, wearing an ascot.

REID

Yeah. I found it in a box of my ex's old Halloween clothes. And I thought, "what the hey?" Like it?

INT. STARBUCKS - DAY

Amelia and Ruth wait in line at a Starbucks. Product placement everywhere. Amelia's eyes are vacant, lost.

RUTH

Maybe Reid's right. Maybe for the first time ever, you're the one who jumped the gun on something. Helloooo? Amelia?

AMELIA

Ruth- The End.

RUTH

Did I miss the beginning and middle?

AMELIA

No. The End. There's nothing after The End. There's nothing after "Happily Ever After" in those movies.

RUTH

Okay...

AMELIA

They meet. They fall. They fight. They get married. Happily Ever After. THE END. That's what happened to those people - maybe to Mindy. They reached "The End."

RUTH

And?

AMELIA

I don't know. Poof. Fade to black. The End. The Big End.

RUTH

Look. Amelia. Can we just blame this all on the current administration or rascally teenagers or something and call it a day!

Ruth makes a gesture to emphasize her point. She KNOCKS over an artfully stacked tower of teacups and saucers.

RUTH (CONT'D)

Oh, FUDge... I mean FRICK. I mean-

Ruth can't seem to get her words out right.

AMELIA

You mean frag? Wait, I didn't mean that-

RUTH

Feck! Fire-Truck!

AMELIA

Son of a glitch we've been PG-thirteened!

RUTH

That's frucktarded. Mother-trucker!
Clocksucker! Fluckface! Shit! Oh! I can
say sh-

AMELIA

Stop! Use it sparingly! We probably only
get one each-

(beat)

Oh shit!

At the entrance, the door shuts behind Chad and Skip.

SKIP

I told you it was them! Why'd you guys
ditch us?

CHAD

That was downright hurtful, Mel.

Everything, once again, moves in SLOW MOTION. And Amelia and Ruth are keenly aware of it. A BARISTA scowls at them, sweeping up broken teacups. The PATRONS look at them like they're crazy.

Chad and Skip stand, dreamily backlit in the doorway, waiting- Ruth reaches over and quietly clutches Amelia's hand. Back to real time. Ruth whispers.

RUTH

Amelia?

AMELIA

Yes?

RUTH
I believe you. Let's run.

Amelia and Ruth CHARGE Skip and Chad, SCREAMING.

RUTH AND AMELIA
Fuuuuuuuuuuuuug!

INT. TAXI - DAY

Amelia and Ruth pant heavily in the taxi. Their hair is cutely askew.

RUTH
We just ran four blocks and I'm not even sweating!

AMELIA
I don't think we do that anymore.

RUTH
Do you think Skip is cute?

AMELIA
Ruth!

RUTH
I'm sorry! I can't help it! I feel like some pod person is about to explode out of my skin!

AMELIA
We're going to die. Mindy's dead and we're going to die too.

RUTH
We're not going to die.

AMELIA
The inevitable coincidences. They're never going to stop. And everyone will keep changing. And we'll keep changing. And then we'll die.

RUTH
Stop it. That's not going to happen. You know what we're going to do? We're going to go home, eat some Chunky Monkey and tomorrow we're going back to work. We like and are awesome at our jobs and Reid said that never happens in those movies. So that's where we'll go. To work. Sanctuary.

(MORE)

RUTH (CONT'D)

(beat)

I'm not going to let you die. Okay?

Amelia nods. Completely unconvinced.

INT. NPR OFFICE - DAY

Somber EMPLOYEES at NPR are packing boxes. Ruth wanders through the office, confused. She finds her melancholy STATION MANAGER staring, forlorn, at his Peabody Award.

RUTH

What's going on?

STATION MANAGER

It finally happened. Congress finally cut our funding. As of Monday WNYC becomes WROKK a station devoted to top 40 R&B and pop megahits. NPR is dead. PBS got hit too. Sesame Street - gone.

RUTH

What!? We're all fired?

STATION MANAGER

Worse. We're not fired.

RUTH

Huh?

STATION MANAGER

Ruth, next week you start producing the new morning show called "Morning Glory with Knucklehead and The Bull." Your new office is on the fourth floor. Steve's got the boxes-

The Manager places his Peabody award in a box. Rethinks it. Puts it in the trash. Ruth looks absolutely carsick.

INT. NYU - CLASSROOM - DAY

Reid teaches class. He's wearing a tight tee shirt and his hair is gelled. His formerly dry, acerbic presentation has been supplanted with genuine enthusiasm.

Projected at the front is a split-screen of Mel Gibson in *What Women Want* and Seth Rogan in *Knocked Up*.

REID

Schmuck or schmoe: today's leading rom-com fella categories! The Schmuck is our narcissistic professional with a soft heart and abs of gold. And our schmoe?

(MORE)

REID (CONT'D)

He's not self actualized but he is sassy and self-deprecating! They're both falling in love and growing up in the process. Yum, don't you want to eat them up with spoons!?

Amelia tries to get Reid's attention from the doorway.

INT. AMELIA/REID'S OFFICE - DAY

Reid melodramatically sighs.

REID

O-M-G, Amelia. I thought we all agreed this was crazytown!

AMELIA

Reid, I just got out of a meeting with my dean. You know what they want me to teach next semester?

Amelia slams a painting down right in front of Reid: a pleasant group of cottages next to a babbling brook, lined by a quaint cobblestone street.

REID

Aww, I feel so cozy.

AMELIA

It's Thomas Kinkade, Reid. Paintings of cottages, Jesus, and Elvis that you buy in the mall. Next to Cinnabon.

REID

It's like he's painting my soul on Christmas morning.

AMELIA

But it's not art! I teach Man Ray and Ernst and Arp.

REID

Oh Amelia Bedelia, I never know what you're talking about.

AMELIA

Reid, Mindy has disappeared. You have to admit something is happening here. I'm teaching the easy listening of the art world, Ruth now has a colleague named "The Bull," and you- look at you!

Reid looks down at his shirt, which is a picture of R2-D2 and C-3PO. Accompanied by the text: *Support Gay Marriage*.

REID

Hey, I am very proud and comfortable with my sexuality and if you're not--

AMELIA

No, Reid. YOU'RE NOT comfortable and proud of your sexuality. You're an awkward misanthrope who only dates "straight-acting" closet cases who wear flannel.

Amelia catches sight of something out of the corner of her eye. Something scurrying. Amelia follows it.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

Oh my God! A rat! This is great, I haven't seen one since-

Amelia stops. Not Amused. She is staring down at a shivering ITALIAN GREYHOUND in a pink bedazzled shirt that reads "Princess." It daintily pees on the rug.

REID

Oh, *that's* just Xena Warrior Princess. She's changed my life.

AMELIA

Can't you see? First you agree to teach the romantic comedy class-

REID

Best decision I ever made!

AMELIA

Then the boy band hair, then the ascot, and now that thing. The whole world has changed and you're changing more every day. And so are we. Reid, we *have* to find out what happened to Mindy. And you're the expert. We need you-

Reid is on the spot. He takes a moment. Then:

REID

Le sigh. You know me, anything for my besties!

AMELIA

FYI you would never say that.

INT. MINDY'S CONDO BUILDING - HALLWAY - DAY

Amelia, Reid, and Ruth reach Mindy's floor. There's even more mail stacked up outside her door.

REID
Ooh US Weekly!

RUTH
Move.

Amelia and Ruth take tools out of their purses. Set to work on the lock. They seem pretty comfortable at the task.

REID
Whoa, you guys are scarily good at this.

The lock clicks. But the door will only open an inch.

AMELIA
Ugh, there's a chain lock on the inside.

RUTH
We didn't bring wire cutters?

Ruth peers into the apartment through the crack. She GASPS.

RUTH (CONT'D)
Look!

From the crack in the door, they can see a pair of motionless legs extending from behind a couch. Mindy's legs.

Amelia, Ruth, and Reid immediately start RAMMING the door with their shoulders. On the third try, the chain breaks. The door flings open.

IN MINDY'S LIVING ROOM

The Four rush up to Mindy's body. Mindy's...very alive body. She lies on the carpet, wadded up tissues and empty cartons of Chunky Monkey surrounding her. She looks like she's been crying for days. Her hair is in braided extensions.

AMELIA
Mindy, what happened?

Mindy's sits up. Looks at the three of them. She just shakes her head, puts her hand over her mouth.

RUTH
You can't talk?

AMELIA

Are you hurt?

Mindy shakes her head again. They're not getting it.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

It's okay, Mindy. You're safe now. Tell us what happened.

Mindy takes a deep breath. But what comes out of her mouth is decidedly un-Mindy. A raucous, SASSY BLACK GIRL VOICE.

MINDY

Girl, I don't know what the hell happened, but it ain't right. It ain't right!

Mindy slaps a hand over her mouth. Ashamed. She sobs.

LATER

Amelia makes Mindy hot tea. Mindy, eyes deadened, answers everyone's questions with her new sad, sassy voice.

RUTH

But why didn't you open the door when we were pounding on it?

MINDY

Just wanted to be alone. Didn't want to have nobody see me or hear me like this.

REID

Where's your tall drink of a hubby?

MINDY

With his people. I kicked him out. He probably hating on me now.

AMELIA

But why? What happened?

MINDY

I just woke up morning after the wedding and WHAM! I realize the biggest party of my life is over. I been planning that wedding since I was sixteen years old. It was like all the air went straight outta me so I just went on back to sleep. Slept all day and when Darren come 'round at six PM, tells me I gotta get up, I said to him "I ain't gonna get got up." That's the first time I talk like this.

AMELIA

But nothing *else* happened?

MINDY

Just went to back to sleep. Next day he came to get me up and I opened my mouth and it was even worse. I tol' him: "Boy, you think I'mma hop up outta here so I can be a frumpy ol' married woman, darning your socks for the next sixty years, you got another thing coming!"

(beat)

Then I realized: my life is over. Ain't nothing to look forward to no more. And I don't even care. Don't wanna see my husband, don't wanna do nothing.

RUTH

Any gaps in short term memory, weight loss, vertigo, acute tinnitus?

MINDY

Huh?

RUTH

Mindy, do you know two guys named Skip and Chad? They were at your wedding.

MINDY

Skip? And Chad? I've never heard names so white in all my life. Hell no I don't know no men named *Skip* and *Chad*.

RUTH

Okay, *Mindy*. Wait, how come she can curse and we can't?

MINDY

Y'all really think we trapped in a movie? 'Cuz that don't make no sense.

AMELIA

I'm wondering about that too. If all those other people disappeared, why not Mindy? She had the fairy tale wedding, got married-

Silence. No one knows. Then.

REID

O-M-G-Z! Mindy is black!

RUTH

Slow on the uptake, this one.

REID

No, listen! Mindy's black! Think about all the missing persons posters. You remember seeing any black people on there? Latinos? Asians? No. Rom-coms are whiter than the inside of Lindsay Lohan's nose. So unless Mindy lands a lucky spot in an Eddie Murphy, Martin Lawrence, or Tyler Perry movie (all total cross-dressers I might add, not that I'm implying anything) her only other option then is to be-

AMELIA

The sassy black friend.

REID

That's why she can curse and you can't. Token friends get leeway.

RUTH

And you're our token gay.

REID

I'm just happy to be here!

MINDY

Well, I'm not! This ain't even how black folk talk. This how white folk think black folk talk! Y'all should be the ones havin' to talk funny. You two is mean. Make me cry on my wedding day. Now I gotta be your comic relief? Oh hell no!

RUTH

Is the whole "crying on your wedding day" gonna be one of things you bring up every time we get together-

MINDY

She kidding?

AMELIA

Children, focus. We have to figure out a way out of this.

MINDY

Throw some ideas on out then, girl.

AMELIA

Well - let's look at what got us into this: a combination of those flower girls nailing us with some roses and Mindy telling us we needed some more fairy tale bull-

MINDY

-shit

AMELIA

-Thank you. In our lives.

RUTH

Can't Mindy just un-curse us, then?

Everyone looks at Mindy. She gives it a go. Waves a hand.

MINDY

Okay...You ain't cursed no more!

They all wait a minute. Nothing changes. She tries again.

MINDY (CONT'D)

You don't need no fairy tale bullshit in yo' lives. You was doing just fine.

They wait again. Nothing.

AMELIA

Can't you try to talk like you used to?

Mindy shoots her a look. Amelia backs down.

RUTH

So what about the little darlings? The flower girls. Let's go hunt them down.

MINDY

You gonna have to be more specific then. I had up near 20 flower girls. Darren got a lot of nieces. Catholics.

AMELIA

They were white, blonde, twins maybe?

MINDY

They was white?

RUTH

Yeah. White. Far apart eyes...

MINDY

Girl. I'm black. And my husband a Puerto Rican. We look like we got any recessive genes floating in our genetic pools?

RUTH

But-

MINDY

These little white girls got names?

AMELIA

Oh. Yeah! Karma and Destiny.

The implications hit everyone at the same time.

RUTH

You don't think they were- actual cupids?

MINDY

You did say the first people you saw after you was hit was Skip and Chad. Tha's what happen when cupid hit yo' ass. Fall in love with first thang you see.

AMELIA

Yeah, you fall in love. You don't get trapped in movie genres!

REID

Wellsies, we were all kvetching about romantic comedies before all that, then you made Mindy cry, maybe that's where the "Karma" aspect comes in.

AMELIA

Karma? Cupids? We're trapped in the worst written romantic comedy of all time.

REID

"Gigli" will be so relieved-

RUTH

So what do we do now?

MINDY

Maybe we can get them cupids back? Do a cupid rain dance or something.

AMELIA

I don't know. Cupid, or cupids as it is, are usually depicted as pranksters who do some haphazard arrow shooting and then leaves the victims to sort out the mess. I've never heard of him/them returning to clean things up.

REID

Well then may I suggest a more academic approach? Think tanking it? Research?

AMELIA

As in?

REID

As in rom-com movie marathon, bitches!

MINDY

What the hell he just call me?

INT. DVD RENTAL STORE - DAY

Amelia and Mindy pull romantic comedy titles off the shelves. Xena shivers in a baby bjorn on Reid's chest. In the background, The Woman in the Blue Sweater browses.

Amelia accidentally knocks over a stand of DVDs. The VIDEO STORE CLERK looks up.

AMELIA

Sorry.

VIDEO STORE CLERK

It's cool, lady. It was adorable.

Amelia sighs. So tired of this. Ruth comes in from outside.

AMELIA

What were you doing out there?

RUTH

I had to pee at the donut shop.

REID

Ooh Xena Warrior Princess *definitely* thinks we should watch *Must Love Dogs*.

RUTH

Okay. I have a question to pose to the group.

(MORE)

RUTH (CONT'D)

If this is really happening, are we trapped in some sort of a parallel romantic comedy universe or did our whole world just change into a romantic comedy?

MINDY

If you in a parallel universe don't that mean they other versions of you out there? Like they two Amelias. Two Ruths-

REID

Impossible. You ladies are one of a kind!

AMELIA

And there were all the articles in the paper about Global Warming when the weather got so nice. If this was some parallel romantic comedy world, the weather would have always been nice.

REID

Look at our resident Nancy Drew go! Now where are those scrumptious Hardy boys?

RUTH

Is there *any* way you can cut down on the histrionic supportive gay guy talk?

Reid frowns. Grabs some DVD titles from the shelf. Taunts Ruth with them.

REID

Rudi, are you just crabby because this new *Reality Bites*? Or is that you've *Never Been Kissed* by anybody but *Mr. Wrong*. Don't worry, *Something's Gotta Give*, *Rumor Has It* *One Fine Day*, just by *Keeping the Faith*, you'll get *French Kissed* or maybe even *Knocked Up*! for *Nine Months*. It'll be *Just Like Heaven*.

Ruth just yawns at his display.

REID (CONT'D)

I'm serious, *It Could Happen to You*.

Ruth holds up *Two Can Play That Game* followed by *Loser*.

RUTH

I gotta pee again.

Ruth leaves. Amelia watches her go, suddenly uneasy.

INT. NYU - SCREENING ROOM - NIGHT

A stack of Romantic Comedy DVDs on the projector. Amelia and Mindy take copious notes. Ruth and Reid have a bottle of tequila and shot glasses between them and are giddily drunk. They all watch *Notting Hill*.

REID

Oh, here they are again. Look, the mom and the kid extras by the bookstore. Same clothes as last time, totally different day in the movie.

MINDY

Shot!

Ruth and Reid throw back shots. Amelia rolls her eyes.

RUTH

This was a great idea. Maybe romantic comedies are good for something after all-

MINDY

We *supposed* to be researching-

AMELIA

-not playing continuity error drinking games.

RUTH

Um, okay *mom*.

Amelia stares daggers at Ruth. She's just hit one of those touchy long-time friendship nerves. The room goes silent. Reid desperately tries to defuse.

REID

Hey, you know what's trippy? Characters in romantic comedies often watch other romantic comedies. So if we're actually in one, then this is-

AMELIA

Ruth, Where did you go when we were at the video store?

RUTH

I told you, I had to pee. I drank like two pitchers of Kool-Aid at Mindy's.

AMELIA

Nice try. But we don't pee anymore. I'm not even sure where my bathroom is. I haven't seen it in days.

Ruth is busted.

RUTH

Uh-

AMELIA

I saw you put your phone back in your pocket. Who were you calling?

RUTH

Nobody. My dad. Whatever.

AMELIA

Let me see your phone then.

Mindy and Reid look at Ruth expectantly. Ruth folds her arms.

RUTH

Fine. If you let *me* see your notebook.

Amelia pulls her notebook to her chest. Mindy and Reid look at Amelia expectantly. What's going on?

Suddenly, Amelia and Ruth LUNGE at each other. Amelia grabs Ruth's cell phone. Ruth snatches Amelia's notebook.

AMELIA

You've been texting him! A lot!

RUTH

Well at least I'm not lame-o writing my name with his last name in my notebook like a seventh grader!

Ruth holds up the evidence. Along with love doodles, "Amelia Gordon" is written and rewritten. Amelia has taken no notes. In retaliation, Amelia presses a button on Ruth's phone.

AMELIA

Her ring tone for him-

Salt-N-Pepa's "Whatta Man Whatta Man" plays. Mindy lip syncs.

RUTH

I thought you said changing your last name was a patriarchal construct?

AMELIA

It is! This isn't me!

RUTH

Well this isn't me, either!

REID

Oh my god, don't fight!

MINDY

Everybody sit down and shut up.

Amelia and Ruth make a silent truce. Sit down.

MINDY (CONT'D)

Look, you said y'all was self-aware right? Y'all still got free will-

AMELIA

Yeah, but we're losing it. Skip and Chad aren't even here and we can't stop thinking about them.

MINDY

That's why you got to act quick. Because there a ticking clock on your free will.

Mindy points to the screen. At Julia Roberts.

MINDY (CONT'D)

See that? You gotta be the anti-that.

RUTH

The anti-Julia Roberts?

MINDY

The anti-Julia, the anti-Meg, the anti-Sandra, the anti-Drew- The worst romantic comedy characters-

REID

-ever.

MINDY

Gotta scare the boys outta love with you.

AMELIA

But to do that we'd have to see them. It's too risky. We lose control just looking into their eyes.

MINDY

Well then don't look in they eyes! Damn!

RUTH

We're can't get out of this staying home.

AMELIA

Yeah but-

RUTH

Oh! Skip was just texting me about their house in the Hamptons. We could go there with them this weekend, play a little anti-Julia and be done by Sunday.

MINDY

That's good. Straight into the fire, no distractions, no interruptions.

Amelia looks around. Is she the only one not on board?

RUTH

This would be no problem for the old Amelia.

AMELIA

That's not fair. I am the old Amelia.

RUTH

So prove it. Let's do this. Team Awesome. We've spent our whole lives being unlike Julia Roberts. It'll be cake.

Amelia looks at her three friends. All depending on her.

AMELIA

Okay.

REID

Hello! Jealous! I love the Hamptons!

AMELIA AND RUTH AND MINDY

No, you don't.

EXT. VACATION HOUSE - HAMPTONS - DAY

A BLACK MERCEDES pulls up to a gorgeous mansion on the water. A musical flourish crescendos as it approaches.

AMELIA (O.S.)

Does anyone else hear a crescendo?

CHAD (O.S.)

You've got to get those ears checked, Mel. Maybe you have tinnitus, like us.

SKIP (O.S.)

The price you pay for front row at Dave Matthews.

Ruth gets out of the car with a shudder. She turns her attention to the glorious house.

RUTH

Whoa. Advertising pays well, huh Chad?

CHAD

It does, but actually our parents left the house to us.

SKIP

They died in a horrible accident when we were kids.

CHAD

We don't really talk about it.

Amelia shoots a desperate look at Ruth, but Ruth is still taking in the house.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Ruth enters a gorgeous bay-windowed master bedroom. Tosses her suitcase on the bed.

RUTH

Well this is where I'll be.

Skip starts to follow. But Amelia squeezes through the doorway in front of him. Tosses her suitcase down as well.

Skip, Chad, and Ruth's faces fall a little. Amelia grabs Ruth's hand and beams at the guys.

AMELIA

Better start unpacking!

The guys move on. Amelia shuts the door.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

A little help?

RUTH

Sorry. I didn't know we were doing summer camp sleeping arrangements.

AMELIA

Are you with me on this, or not?

RUTH

Hey, I practically came up with this plan. I'm with you. I swear.

AMELIA

Because?

RUTH

Because this is not real and we don't want to disappear. We want to live in reality, even if it means we live the rest of our lives alone together in a big house with sixty cats, scaring neighborhood children.

AMELIA

Especially if it means that.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Arcs of orange juice and champagne fill a fluted glass. Two stalks of celery are planted in a pair of Bloody Marys. Amelia and Ruth descend the stairs. Skip and Chad hand them cocktails. The ladies avoid any eye contact with the guys.

CHAD

I had a feeling you were a Mimosa lady.

SKIP

-and you were the Bloody Mary type.

RUTH

That's so weird, those are our favorite--

AMELIA

Actually, we were thinking of doing some coke.

Everyone stops, stares at Amelia. Amelia kicks Ruth.

RUTH

Right. Coke. We love doing us some cocaine. Want some?

Skip and Chad look at one another. Unsure of how to respond.

SKIP

I get tummy aches pretty easily-

CHAD

Well, uh, I guess we are in the Hamptons. Skip's a musician, I make a lot of money, I'm sure we'll be like fish to water.

Shit. Amelia tries to think on her feet.

AMELIA
I'm sorry. Did I say coke?

RUTH
She didn't mean coke. I mean c'mon, what is this, the White House? She meant, uh-

	AMELIA	RUTH
Crack.		Meth.

RUTH (CONT'D)
Uh, Crack Meth is a very affordable alternative to cocaine.

AMELIA
Whipped up a fresh batch just yesterday-
Skip and Chad look seriously worried now. But Chad's expression suddenly changes.

CHAD
You two are amazing. You're successful, funny, you look beautiful all the time, AND can smoke crack meth without it affecting your lives negatively at all.

AMELIA
Um, thanks?

SKIP
Yeah. I'm impressed. I would never have known you guys do- crack meth.

RUTH
Oh, well yeah, we do!

AMELIA
But you know, we can do it later. We're not fiends or anything.

RUTH
Anymore.

AMELIA
Right.

Awkward silence.

RUTH
So what did you guys wanna do?

SKIP

Uh, well- I was thinking we could listen to some of mom and dad's old records in the basement.

CHAD

And I was hoping Mel, that you and I could go for a walk on the beach.

Amelia FARTS LOUDLY in desperation. Skip and Chad stop cold. Amelia nudges Ruth. Ruth rolls her eyes, FARTS ON CUE.

AMELIA

Whoops!

Skip and Chad are still frozen. Then- They LAUGH.

SKIP

You're the most awesome girlfriends EVER!

CHAD

Seriously!

AMELIA

Girlfriends?

Ruth hides a secret smile. Amelia yanks Ruth aside.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

This is not working.

RUTH

I have to be alone with him.

AMELIA

What!?

RUTH

We have to divide and conquer. Look at them, they're just falling MORE in love with us. We have to get them alone. We have to go deeper.

AMELIA

That's a terrible idea!

RUTH

We'll just have to be extra careful. Don't worry, you're good at careful.

AMELIA

What's that supposed to mean?

RUTH

I trust you. Do you trust me?

Amelia doesn't answer.

RUTH (CONT'D)

Amelia. Do you trust me?

AMELIA

Yes. Okay. I trust you.

RUTH

(to Skip)

So your dead parents' records-- in the basement, you said?

Skip grins. Amelia recommits to her role.

CHAD

Does that mean you're ready for the beach, Mel?

AMELIA

Yeah-- just let me go upstairs and get my strap-on. Just in case you wanna try something new while we're there!

Chad's face: total horror.

INT. BASEMENT - DUSK

An Elvis album spins on the record player. Skip sits on the floor. Plays guitar and sings along with Elvis. Ruth avoids his eyes. Cringes at his vocal stylings.

SKIP

I can't help falling in love with you.

RUTH

Skip?

SKIP

Yeah?

RUTH

You don't actually believe in the whole "one true love" thing, do you?

SKIP

Pssh. I always figured if there were a perfect match for me she'd probably be at home watching cartoons and eating lucky charms on Saturday night like I was. One of those catch-22 situations. But now...

RUTH

Now?

SKIP

I guess I'd say that whole "one true love" thing. It's seeming a little bit more plausible.

RUTH

Does it feel-- real to you?

SKIP

No. It feels unreal. But it feels right.

Skip locks eyes with Ruth. Her eyes start to glaze over as the song changes...

ELVIS RECORD (V.O.)

*You look like an angel
Walk like an angel-*

SKIP

Does it feel right to you?

ELVIS RECORD (V.O.)

But I got wiiiise-

Ruth nods. Skip and Ruth KISS. The Elvis song speeds up-

ELVIS RECORD (V.O.) (CONT'D)

You're the Devil in disguise! Oh yes you are!-

Ruth's eyes pop open. She breaks away from Skip, panicked. Covering her eyes so she won't look at him.

RUTH

Want to hear a good dirty joke? Racist joke? Dirty racist joke?

EXT. BEACH - DUSK

Amelia and Chad walk along the beach, shoes in their hands.

AMELIA

So then I told him "no I do NOT care if it means you'll have to euthanize all these puppies." Ultimately he couldn't do it, so I just had to do it myself. I mean, it's not that hard, guy. Just toss them in the chamber and flip the switch!

(beat)

Anyway, weird tangent. So what's your dog's name?

Chad looks disturbed. They walk in silence for a moment, Amelia smiling to herself.

CHAD

You must be really crazy about me.

AMELIA

What?

CHAD

To push me away so hard. But don't worry, I'll wait it out.

AMELIA

Okay. Get over yourself. You're not my type and you're probably not even real-
(catches herself)
Not even really that good looking.

CHAD

We both know *that's* not true.

AMELIA

Ugh. Did I mention narcissistic, self-absorbed-

CHAD

Those are synonyms.

AMELIA

It bears repeating.

CHAD

I love you.

Amelia just shakes her head, turns back to the house. But she can't go. Chad is tightly gripping her arm. Sparse drops of rain fall.

AMELIA

Hey. Cut out the Rhett Butler crap.
There's no marital rape staircase to
carry me up around here.

CHAD

I love you.

THUNDER BOOMS. A few second of silence. Then: The RAIN POURS.
Chad and Amelia do not move. They shout over the storm.

CHAD (CONT'D)

I'm in love with you and, *for the record*,
you're not my type either! You're a know-
it-all and you fart like a frat boy and
kill puppies and use crack meth and I
don't know what's happening to me. But
this is how the proverbial cookie
crumbled, so let's deal with it!

AMELIA

What do you want me to say? "I love you.
Oh how I've waited for this?" Please.

Chad brings Amelia in close. She avoids his eyes.

CHAD

Look at me, Mel- Amelia.

Amelia trembles. She desperately wants to give in to this
moment. They're both soaked. She won't look at him.

CHAD (CONT'D)

What are you afraid of?

AMELIA

Disappearing.

CHAD

That's ridiculous.

AMELIA

It's not. Trust me.

Amelia suddenly notices the pouring rain.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

It's raining.

CHAD

I didn't notice.

AMELIA
Well you should have.

Amelia drags Chad under a tall lifeguard chair for shelter.

CHAD
Why are you so angry?

AMELIA
Because this is stupid! People should have enough common sense to come in from the rain.

CHAD
You're far too attached to common sense.

AMELIA
What is it with the "I love you" anyway? Why does that have to be the seminal moment? Why does everyone need to hear those words to be happy?

CHAD
I don't. Actually.

AMELIA
Oh really?

CHAD
Yeah, really. I thought you were smart enough to know.

AMELIA
Know what?

CHAD
That it's much better to love than be loved.

They stay still for a moment. Chad pulls her out from underneath the lifeguard chair, back into the open rain. He tilts her chin. She doesn't resist. She looks into his eyes.

And they kiss.

ORCHESTRAL MUSIC CRESCENDOS. The camera moves around them in a smooth 360 degree motion. The kiss doesn't end. Lightning cracks the sky above the water's horizon.

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

Ruth, worried, stands outside the bathroom door. From inside, she hears the sound of Skip RETCHING.

RUTH
Skip, are you okay!?

SKIP (O.S.)
Yeah. I'm fine!

He exits the bathroom, wiping his mouth with his sleeve.

RUTH
I'm so sorry.

SKIP
Yeah, I guess I just didn't know the joke
was going to be that dirty. Or racist.
That was...wow.

RUTH
This is stupid. Amelia's wrong about you.

SKIP
What? Amelia doesn't like me?

RUTH
Amelia looks so much before she leaps
that she never leaps.

SKIP
Huh?

Ruth pulls close to Skip. The twinkling notes of Coldplay
begin. Skip wipes his mouth again. You know, just in case.

Good thing he did, because Ruth POUNCES on him. They kiss
hard. Coldplay BLARES. A quick FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. BEACH - SUNSET

The ORCHESTRAL MUSIC is still in its full glory. The "camera"
still circling around Amelia and Chad. Amelia pulls away. The
"camera" stops circling.

AMELIA
I'm getting dizzy. Are you dizzy?

Chad puts a quieting finger to her mouth. Pulls her back in.
The spinning recommences. The orchestral music rises.

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

Ruth and Skip lay on the floor. Smoking cigarettes.

RUTH

I guess this is the only time we're allowed to smoke, huh?

SKIP

Huh? Hey, will you finally let me play a song for you? I've been working on one I want you to hear. But you have to let me play the whole song. It's important.

Ruth looks pained, but she nods anyway. Skip starts to play a truly awful song (with no choruses), his eyes closed in angsty passion. It's all very coffee house open mic night. Ruth grins, bears it.

SKIP (CONT'D)

*I opened a book
called the Book of Ruth
It was kind of short
but it was full of truth.
And it opened my eyes,
I'm not myself anymore.
I grew up reading that book
And it opened the door-*

FROM ANOTHER ANGLE - We see that a diamond ring is taped onto the back of Skip's guitar.

EXT. BEACH - SUNSET

Amelia and Chad are still kissing, with the camera circling. But Amelia is now stumbling from the dizziness.

She pushes Chad away. Looks at him. Her hair blows in the wind in slow motion as her face transforms from peaceful to panicked. She pitches forward...

And HEAVES. Vomiting. And vomiting. And vomiting. Chad puts a hand on her back for comfort, but she pushes it off. Stands.

AMELIA

This is not real! You are not real. You are not a pipe. You just look like a pipe. But you are not a pipe. You are a noose. And so is-

Amelia looks back at the house. It's quite far off in distance. A light from the basement. Amelia HAULS ASS.

EXT. VACATION HOUSE - HAMPTONS - EVENING

Amelia, sopping wet, races up to the front door. Locked. She looks behind her. Chad is on her tail.

CHAD

Mel!

Amelia picks up a lion statuette from the front walk. BASHES in the window next to the door. She reaches through and unlocks the door. Slips inside.

CHAD (CONT'D)

I had a key!

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

Amelia rushes into the doorway, takes in the bizarre scene. Chad runs in behind her. Skip is finishing his song. He's seriously jamming now.

SKIP

*The door to love! The door to life!
The door to happiness!
The door to the rest of our lives,
The door to no regrets-*

Amelia runs down to Ruth, tries to wrench her out of her position on the floor. But Ruth doesn't acknowledge her. Skip takes the song back to a soft, gentle place.

SKIP (CONT'D)

*And now I need that book-
for the rest of my life
And so I have to ask you, Rudi-*

Skip removes the diamond ring from the back of the guitar. Gets down on one knee.

SKIP (CONT'D)

Rudi, will you be my wife?

AMELIA

No! Ruth! Let's go-

Ruth looks at Amelia: soaking wet and desperate. Then at Skip. He shifts nervously, still holding out the diamond ring. He's adorable.

Ruth looks down at the floor. Takes a breath...and gazes straight into Skip's approachably adorable, twinkling eyes.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Amelia packs both of their suitcases. Frantic. Ruth sits on the bed, admires her ring. Blissful.

AMELIA

Yes!?

RUTH

No- it's not what you think. You think that all of *this* isn't real. But actually it is real. And I know it's real, because it doesn't feel real.

AMELIA

Ruth, it's not a pipe!

RUTH

Will you shut up about the pipe?

AMELIA

It's artificial. This isn't love. This isn't you. This is suicide!

Ruth stares off dreamily.

RUTH

Sorry, what were you talking about?

AMELIA

I-- WE are talking about "The End." I know it's hard to resist, but Ruth, those people on the posters- they're all gone. And you're next.

RUTH

You're just trying to scare me. Are we getting into your irrational fear of death now?

AMELIA

Okay, it's not irrational to be afraid of something that's definitely going to happen. But that's beside the point.

RUTH

What was the point?

AMELIA

The point is we had a plan. And now, because you're doing your usual woman-child impulsive joie-de-vivre crap, we're- we're fucked.

Ruth stands up. Gets in Amelia's face.

RUTH

And because you are doing your usual
condescending, risk-averse, repressed
crap, you're going to be miserable for as
long as you live.

Ruth grabs her suitcase away from Amelia. Dumps the contents
out on the bed. Heads for the door.

AMELIA

Well at least I'm going to be alive.

RUTH

Oh, who cares anymore?

AMELIA

What? How can you just let yourself just
be snuffed out of existence?

RUTH

He's my soulmate.

AMELIA

He's an illusion.

Ruth gets up to make a dramatic silent exit but she
accidentally steps into a trash can. It's stuck. She tries to
shake it off. But it won't budge. Amelia shoots her an "I
told you so" look but Ruth isn't having it. She heads out the
door clumping along with her foot still in the trash can.

INT. STAIRWAY - NIGHT

Amelia, suitcase in hand, tails Ruth and her trashcan-shoe
down the grand staircase. Clump. Clump. Clump.

AMELIA

Look at yourself. It's only going to get
worse.

RUTH

I don't know why you're acting like this.
You're the one always slamming me for not
being able to commit-

AMELIA

To a sexual orientation! To a political
party! To a point of view on Radiohead's
last album.

RUTH

That album is trash.

AMELIA

Then why did we have to listen to it on a loop for a month?

RUTH

I changed my mind!

AMELIA

You have no idea what you want and you think marrying *that* is gonna give you some clue? Even if you don't die or disappear or whatever, that guy is a one-way ticket to lameville.

RUTH

All aboard!

Ruth dials her cell phone as she reaches the bottom of the stairs. She props her leg up on the kitchen island and grabs a wooden spoon to crow bar the trash can off.

AMELIA

I'm leaving. And I'm not coming back to save you.

RUTH

Thanks.

(on phone)

Mom? Hi! Guess what? I'm getting married!
-- I know!

POP! The trash can comes off. Amelia storms off.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATE NIGHT

Ruth gives Skip a peck on the cheek. He's also on his cell phone, sharing the news. Amelia heads for the door. Chad steps in her path.

CHAD

Hi. Can we talk?

AMELIA

Um, okay. It's not me, it's you. And him.
And her. Well, it's over.

CHAD

What!?

AMELIA

Yeah, never wanna see you again.

CHAD
I just told you I loved you!

AMELIA
I'm glad you got that out of your system.
Amelia pushes him aside. Walks out of the house.

EXT. VACATION HOUSE - HAMPTONS - LATE NIGHT

A taxi pulls up just as Amelia reaches the curb.

AMELIA
Convenient timing.

CHAD
You're in denial. We're meant-

AMELIA
-to be together. We finish each other's sentences we both like chocolate ice cream and even though there are 6 billion people in the world it just so happens that you and I, who live on the same small pinpoint of the universe, happen to be fated to be together. Is that right?

CHAD
It could be.

AMELIA
Chad. You can't believe in something just because it would be nice if it were true.

INT. CAB - LATE NIGHT

Amelia leans her head against the back seat.

AMELIA
Wide shot. Sappy music. Fade out.

EXT. VACATION HOUSE - HAMPTONS - EVENING

A wide shot. The taxi pulls away. Sappy music commences. Chad watches the cab disappear down the street. FADE OUT.

EXT. NEW YORK STREET - MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT

Amelia looks like hell. Exhausted, she stares vacantly at a massive WALL OF MISSING PERSONS POSTERS. It dwarves her.

Then Amelia sees something out of the corner of her eye. It's The Woman in the Blue Sweater. Amelia grabs the Woman's arm.

AMELIA

Excuse me, do I know you?

The Woman shrinks back, frightened and tight-lipped. She shakes her head and hustles off.

INT. AMELIA'S APARTMENT - LATE NIGHT

Amelia enters her apartment to find Reid and Mindy watching "Big Momma's House 2" on BET. They're hyperventilating with laughter. Xena eats popcorn from a blinged out doggy bowl.

MINDY

Oh, there he go again!

REID

Don't worry. Big Momma got this!

The two realize Amelia is in the room.

REID (CONT'D)

Hey, why are you back? And whatever happened to Baby Ruth?

AMELIA

It didn't work. We were disgusting, we farted, we talked about drugs. And they just fell more in love with us.

REID

Well I s'pose you have to consider movies like *There's Something About Mary*, *American Pie*-- These days being gross could just make you more endearing.

AMELIA

Ruth and Skip are getting married.

Reid and Mindy gasp in tandem.

REID

And I haven't got a stitch to wear!

MINDY

You dummy! Ruth get married, she gonna disappear.

REID

Right. Sucks, but-

MINDY

We Ruth and Amelia's token friends. Two of them, two of us.

(MORE)

MINDY (CONT'D)

Ruth disappear and one of us probably going down too. You wanna play them odds?

REID

But there aren't posters for missing people like us-

MINDY

Yeah. And NYPD wouldn't let no one report me missing when they thought I was gone. You think that was a coincidence? And you think your kind gonna do any better?

REID

Then- then- Team Amelia!

MINDY

And what if she go too?

REID

Can we put in for transfers?

MINDY

You know these white people gonna keep dropping like flies! Till the whole world gone! Not with a bang but with some white people's weddings!

REID

Let's not to jump to confusions here-

Amelia eyes Reid. He fidgets nervously.

AMELIA

Why are you down-playing this so passionately?

Reid goes quiet for a second. Amelia waits for an answer.

REID

I'm just so happy!

AMELIA

Ah jeez.

REID

I am, Amelia. I've never been so happy in my whole life. It's like the whole world has jazz hands and now I've got Xena Warrior Princess and- well I don't mind telling you I've been thinking of adopting a little Cambodian girl and naming her Lulu.

AMELIA

Reid, this isn't you talking. You loathe children and animals-

REID

Miss Bedelia, I'm going to be blunt. I don't think there's a way out. I think Ruth has got the right idea. Romeo and Juliet met on Sunday and were dead by Thursday but it was a pretty darned good run while it lasted.

MINDY

Oooh he crazy! Girl, don't listen to him-

AMELIA

Okay, Mindy? Could you just not talk for a minute? That voice-

Mindy clenches her jaw. Turns to Amelia.

MINDY

Well excuse me for living, the graveyard was full! You think I want to talk like this? You think it's fair that you and Ruth and mid-life-crisis Lance Bass over here are programmed for happiness while I get turned into cries-real-tears Wanda Sykes? It ain't! I was happy before! And for the record Wanda Sykes is very talented and could probably carry a film on her own if someone would let her!

Mindy starts to SOB. Reid puts his arm around her.

REID

Wanda was the only good part of *Monster-in-Law*. She really was.

MINDY

I miss my husband. But I can't go back. This is so embarrassing. Post-nuptial depression. It sound just like one of them made-up white people diseases.

Amelia sits down on the other side of Mindy.

AMELIA

We're all a little emotional. Let's get some sleep. We'll figure out what to do tomorrow morning.

Mindy comes out of her sobs with a few sniffles.

MINDY

But what if Ruth and Skip get married at City Hall or something before then?

REID

No way. Romantic comedies do not have City Hall weddings. Except for *The Wedding Planner*. Oh wait, Mr. McConaughey stopped that one at the last minute. Rule stands. No City Hall weddings.

EXT. CITY HALL - MORNING

Ruth and Skip climb the steps up to City Hall. Hand in hand.

INT. AMELIA'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Amelia collapses into her breakfast nook with a cup of coffee. She goes to sip it. Then stops. Frustrated.

AMELIA

There is nothing in this cup.

She looks out the window. But she's totally unprepared for what she sees. Her eyes widen with horror...Reid runs in.

REID

Amelia! I just remembered! There is a City Hall wedding in a romantic comedy! In *Sex and the City*! How could I be so-

Reid follows Amelia's gaze out the window.

REID (CONT'D)

Uh oh-sies.

INT. CITY HALL - CLERK'S OFFICE - MORNING

Ruth and Skip wait behind other happy COUPLES. One couple is in full bride and groom dress.

RUTH

Why can't we just get it done here?

SKIP

Because we're just here to get the license. C'mon, you're not even wearing a wedding dress. And our parents aren't here. Now I've only seen these things on my grandma's daytime stories, but I think there's some definite protocol. Flowers, tuxedos, jordan almonds...

RUTH

I hate those.

SKIP

Do you really love me so much that you can't wait a measly couple of days for your dream wedding?

A DESPERATE WOMAN comes in the room. A stack of flyers in hand. She holds one in front of Ruth's face. It's another Missing Person's Notice. Another young couple. A CITY EMPLOYEE immediately hops up from behind her desk.

DESPERATE WOMAN

My daughter. She was last seen here with this man. Please, if you see her-

CITY EMPLOYEE

We told you you're not allowed in here.

The Desperate Woman makes eye contact with Ruth. Shouting:

DESPERATE WOMAN

I don't know who this man is! He has no employment record. I couldn't find out anything about him! It's like he doesn't exist. I have to find my daughter!

Ruth looks away. The City Employee SLAMS the door shut. She turns to Ruth. A smile spreads across her face.

CITY EMPLOYEE

Okay, you're next!

EXT. AMELIA'S BALCONY - MORNING

Amelia, Reid, and Mindy all stand on Amelia's balcony.

ACROSS THE STREET

A WORKER finishes plastering the last corner of a billboard. The Billboard is composed to look like Amelia's pipe painting. But instead of a pipe, in the center is a painting of a cracked and broken heart. Underneath, the text: *Mel, This is not my heart. This is just how it feels. - Chad*

In the distance, more of the same billboard can be seen going up all over the city.

REID

It's just like that weird painting of a pipe you have over your bed.

AMELIA
It's not a pipe!

REID
I didn't know you had a balcony.

AMELIA
I don't. Reid, what *is* this?

REID
The grand gesture.

MINDY
The what?

REID
To recap. Romantic comedy classic: Boy meets girl. Boy loses girl. Boy gets sad. Boy makes grand gesture. Boy gets girl back. Happily Ever After.

AMELIA
What if the grand gesture doesn't work?

REID
It always works.

The three hear MUSIC. Kelly Clarkson's "A Moment Like This" to be specific. They look down. *The Slow Motion starts...*

ON THE STREET

Chad stands below them, an iPod nestled in a small speaker dock, held above his head a la Lloyd Dobler.

ON THE BALCONY

Amelia's hair blows in the wind. She's radiant. Frustrated. Back to real time, Amelia shields her eyes. Turns away.

AMELIA
I can't take the slow motion anymore!
Every time I see him!

REID
Correction. Every time he sees you. It's the male gaze.

MINDY
Why you talking about homosexuals? This is important!

REID

G-A-Z-E. The male *gaze*. It's a cornerstone of feminist film theory. A pretty woman appears on screen and everything slows down so the viewer is forced into being dominant and male. It's visual objectification.

AMELIA

Ugh, really? Gross!

INTERCUT AMELIA IN WINDOW/CHAD ON SIDEWALK

AMELIA (CONT'D)

Go away!

CHAD

I can't! I wish I could! So do many of New York's eligible bachelorettes. I'm kind of a catch, if you haven't noticed!

AMELIA

You realize this is stalking?! I'm getting a restraining order!

CHAD

Let me know what time court is!

Amelia laughs, despite herself. Mindy shoots her a look. Amelia chokes out her next words. Unconvincingly.

AMELIA

I- I'm- I am not in love with you!

CHAD

I don't believe you! I'm just gonna stay down here until you're ready to say it!

PASSERSBY start to gather on the sidewalk around Chad. Familiar faces - the Jogger, the Happy Hot Dog Vendor, the Police Man, etc. A NEWS VAN rolls up.

INT. WEDDING PLANNER'S OFFICE - LOBBY - DAY

Ruth and Skip meet with the Wedding Planner from Mindy's wedding. Ruth is uncomfortable.

SKIP

As soon as possible. Whatever she wants. Sky's the limit.

WEDDING PLANNER

I'm thinking Four Seasons for the reception and St. Patrick's Cathedral for the ceremony. This Saturday okay?

SKIP

Yeah, that'd be awesome!

RUTH

Wait! We can't afford this. You're unemployed and I work in radio.

SKIP

It's cool honey. I got a job at Borders. Well, I have to get a social security number or something like that, but then I'm totally in. After a trial period.

WEDDING PLANNER

Wonderful. Okay Ruth, let's talk about *your* dream wedding.

RUTH

I've never thought about it.

WEDDING PLANNER

Never thought about your own wedding? Flowers? Surely the dress?

RUTH

Hey, what about Skip's dream wedding?

The Wedding Planner and Skip laugh heartily at the thought.

WEDDING PLANNER

Oh, funny. Where were we? Oh yes, how about your wedding colors, dear?

Ruth looks like she's going to vomit. She steals a glance at Skip and catches his eyes. Again, she looks deep into those twinkling beauties. Ruth calms herself. This is right.

RUTH

I guess I like green?

The Planner hauls out a GIANT SWATCH BOOK. She opens it up to THOUSANDS AND THOUSANDS of shades of green. Ruth shrinks into her seat, like a trapped animal.

EXT. AMELIA/RUTH'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Chad holds up his iPod "boom box." The Kelly Clarkson song on a loop.

He's attracted a group of SUPPORTERS, all of whom wear t-shirts with his broken-hearted billboard art on them. They hold signs reading "Take him back!" and "Love Conquers All. Even you, Amelia."

INT. AMELIA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Amelia and Mindy talk serious strategy. Reid buffs Xena's nails. The sounds of Kelly Clarkson waft through the window.

AMELIA

We've got to get out of here.

MINDY

You right. We got to go out and bring that girl back cuz it's clear she ain't coming back on her own.

AMELIA

That wasn't exactly what I was thinking- Ruth made it very clear she doesn't want to be saved.

MINDY

I give a damn what that girl think!

REID

Yeah I don't want to be saved either, F-T-Record. And unlike *some* people, I still have to go to work.

AMELIA

Oh no. I haven't been to work in days.

REID

And somehow you never run out of money. Poor you. So sad. I'm organizing a vigil-

MINDY

Shush up. Amelia- once we get outta here, where we gonna go?

AMELIA

Anywhere but here. This city is the romantic comedy mecca. We need to find a haven, hide out for a while-

MINDY

But we don't got time! Ruth getting married Saturday! Two days!

AMELIA

How do you know that?

Mindy gazes at the floor. Wishing she didn't know.

MINDY

She texted. Asked me an' frosted tips
here to be her maids of honor.

Amelia wasn't expecting that.

REID

I told you we shouldn't tell her! Look,
now you hurt her feelings!

MINDY

She ain't herself, girl. You know that.

Amelia pulls herself together.

AMELIA

No. She's entirely herself. She's more
herself than she's ever been.

MINDY

You gonna let your best friend in the
world just up and fade away? You ain't
gonna fight for her?

AMELIA

I fought. I'm done. You want to save
yourselves, you guys can come with me.

Amelia grabs a duffel bag. Starts throwing things in. She
grabs Reid's Hannah Montana hooded sweatshirt from a chair.

REID

Hey! That's my fave!

Mindy just shakes her head.

MINDY

I thought you was better than this.

AMELIA

Well I'm not.

Amelia takes the duffel bag. Leaves the apartment.

REID

Ooh! Hold the elevator!

Reid leaves too. The doors shuts behind them. Mindy stands
alone in the apartment. Pissed.

MINDY

Well this just gonna have to be the first movie where a black woman save the world.

EXT. AMELIA/RUTH'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

A NEWS REPORTER stands with Chad in front of a camera.

NEWS REPORTER

The mysterious "broken heart billboards" have everyone in the city talking. Now we're with the very handsome man behind them - Chad Gordon. Chad, One of the things we all want to know is why her? She broke your heart. I repeat. Why her?

CHAD

I don't know. I just love her. I don't question it. But then again, I don't have enough sense to come in out of the rain.

ON THE CORNER - SEVERAL YARDS AWAY

Amelia, incognito in the Hannah Montana hoodie, overhears Chad's interview. She's fighting a serious urge here. It takes all she has, but she forces herself to cross the street. She hails a cab.

INT. BRIDAL SHOP - DAY

RUTH'S MOTHER, an elegant woman in her 60s, sits in an overstuffed chair. She speaks in an old southern accent.

RUTH'S MOTHER

Well hurry up, Ruth. My heart's fixing to burst out here.

Ruth steps out of a dressing room wearing a giant, poofy, blindingly white ball gown. She's miserable.

RUTH'S MOTHER (CONT'D)

Oh, Ruthie! Now we're cooking with gas! You're prettier than a red wagon full of speckled pups.

An Employee lead Ruth to a pedestal framed by three mirrors.

RUTH

Do I have to? That thing makes me feel like a music box ballerina.

EMPLOYEE

You look like a princess!

RUTH

Yeah, like Princess Sparkle Slut. Mom, I want to go.

RUTH'S MOTHER

And people in hell want ice water. Goodness, you're as restless as a junebug on a string!

RUTH

Mom, why are you talking like that!? You live outside of DC. You're not southern!

RUTH'S MOTHER

Virginia is south of the MDL, isn't it?

RUTH

The MDL? The Mason-Dixon line? Seriously?

RUTH'S MOTHER

Oh wait 'till the girls at church hear little Ruthie's gone back on her raisin.

Ruth stares at herself in the mirror. Conflicted. In the reflection, she sees...Mindy. Standing outside. Ruth has never been so glad to see anyone in her whole life.

EXT. BRIDAL SHOP - DAY

Ruth rushes out to meet her. Mindy can't get a word in.

RUTH

Mindy! You came! Does this mean you'll be my maid of honor?! Come in, meet my mother. Or something like my mother.

INT. JOHN F. KENNEDY AIRPORT - NIGHT

Amelia walks up to a ticket kiosk. All business. A friendly AIRLINE EMPLOYEE grins back at her.

AIRLINE EMPLOYEE

Where to?

AMELIA

Do you have any flights to Sudan? Darfur?

The Airline Employee checks the computer.

AIRLINE EMPLOYEE

I'm sorry, we must not fly there.

AMELIA
Iraq? Afghanistan? Iran?

AIRLINE EMPLOYEE
Hm. Nope. Doesn't seem so.

The Employee shakes her head. Neither. Amelia pulls out stacks and stacks of \$20 bills.

AMELIA
I have cash. I can get more from the ATM.
It's endless.

AIRLINE EMPLOYEE
Well we'll be glad to take it once you settle on your destination.

AMELIA
Fresno? Antarctica? North Korea?

AIRLINE EMPLOYEE
My, so many places I've never heard of!
You must be quite the traveler!

INT. BRIDAL SHOP - DAY

Ruth looks at herself in the mirror.

RUTH
What do you think of this dress? It's kind of stupid but it's growing on me-

Mindy grabs Ruth by the shoulders. Points at the mirror.

MINDY
Look at yourself, girl! You chasing the fairy tale! Just like I was. But you two was right. It *is* BS. Girl, if fairy tales was keepin' it real they'd just end with "And they lived. Period." And you may not get that. Now take off that fugly dress and let's go get Amelia!

Ruth walks right up to Mindy. Gets in her face. And then- She STARTS TO SING. (R.E.M.'s "It's the End of the World")

RUTH
That's great it starts with an earthquake, birds and snakes, an aeroplane - Lenny Bruce is not afraid.

Ruth's mother and the shop's EMPLOYEES start to sing too. The group dances Mindy into a corner.

RUTH'S MOTHER AND EMPLOYEES
*Eye of a hurricane, listen to yourself
 churn - world serves its own needs, don't
 misserve your own needs.-*

Mindy knocks Ruth aside, the fear of God in her. She sprints.

EXT. BRIDAL SHOP - DAY

Mindy on her cell phone. Breathless.

MINDY
 I don't know. They singing. And there's
 spontaneous choreography-

INT. NYU - DAY

Reid is outside his class, talking into his cell phone.

REID
 Okay, what you're seeing is a rom-com
 musical number. They're gaining
 popularity. *13 Going on 30, My Best
 Friend's Wedding, Enchanted--*

INT. BRIDAL SHOP - DAY

The Employees bourrée around Ruth, in concentric, Busby
 Berkley style circles. Measuring tapes as props.

ALL
It's the end of the world as we know it!

RUTH
And I feel fine!

EXT. BRIDAL SHOP - DAY

Mindy yells into her cell phone.

MINDY
 What do you mean I have to just let it
 "play out?" I got to stop this!

Mindy huffs in disgust and hangs up.

MINDY (CONT'D)
 I knew they wasn't gonna let a black
 woman save the world! Damn!

Ruth, her Mother and the Employees dance out of the shop and
 into the street.

NEIGHBORHOOD KIDS, PEDESTRIANS, and CAB DRIVERS join in, singing and dancing. Mindy sits on the curb waits for it to pass.

INT. JOHN F. KENNEDY AIRPORT - EVENING

Amelia is still talking with the Employee. Exhausted and frustrated. The Airline Employee still chipper.

AMELIA

Let's try this. Where do you fly?

AIRLINE EMPLOYEE

We offer top-class accommodations to all of the world's best destinations. Paris, Venice, Rome, San Francisco, Seattle, several lovely small southern towns and the occasional flight to Los Angeles.

AMELIA

Fine. I'll take Venice. It's the furthest. Maybe it will sink soon.

Amelia hands the Employee her ID. The Employee hands it back.

AIRLINE EMPLOYEE

I'm sorry, ma'am. This is fake.

AMELIA

What?

AIRLINE EMPLOYEE

It's fake. If I may be so bold, I don't know who you think you're fooling but I can see that you're over twenty-nine years old.

Amelia stares at the ID. The DOB is twenty-nine years ago.

AMELIA

So what you're saying, is that I'm stuck?

AIRLINE EMPLOYEE

(remaining cheery)

What I'm saying is that you should leave before I call security.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - FRONT - DUSK

Chad stares at the window along with his Supporters. They're getting tired of holding vigil. And Kelly Clarkson.

JOGGER

Is she even still there?

Chad stares up at the window. There's been no movement at the darkened window. But he's not ready to admit the truth.

CHAD

She's there. She wouldn't leave.

INT. NYU - CLASSROOM - EVENING

Reid stands in front of his class. Dramatically silent. His eager students wait with bated breath. And he speaks:

REID

This may be one of the hardest classes I'll ever teach. Because today, today we're talking about the low point. The Dark Night of the Soul. In this moment, where are our characters are furthest apart, even the heavens won't be able to hold their tears-

DARK NIGHT OF SOUL MONTAGE. CUE THE SLIT-YOUR-WRISTS MUSIC.

-Amelia steps out of the airport. It starts to rain.

REID (V.O.)

Our lovers will find themselves in crowds, but they'll feel so alone.

-Amelia walks the streets of New York in the rain, an adorably clumsy stumble here and there. Alone in the crowd.

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

Hope will dwindle to nothing-

-Chad's supporters are packing up and leaving. Amelia's apartment window is dark. Chad lowers his iPod. Flips it off.

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

And even the strongest will find themselves at a loss-

-Mindy pushes aside the piles of mail and enters her condo. All of Darren's clothes are gone from the closet.

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

People will try to return to how things used to be-

-Ruth starts to dial Amelia's number. But hangs up after one ring. Skip enters with a bouquet of gaudy red roses with Gold Lettering: "Skip & Ruth - True Love." Ruth nods in approval.

REID (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Before realizing that nothing will ever
 be the same again. But the worst will be
 the memories of better times.

-FLASHBACK: Ruth and Amelia clink flasks at Mindy's wedding.
 -FLASHBACK: Chad kisses Amelia on the cheek at the Knicks.
 -FLASHBACK: Ruth laughs at Amelia in the pile of leaves.
 -FLASHBACK: Chad and Amelia's epic kiss on the rainy beach.

INT. AMELIA/REID'S OFFICE - MORNING

Reid enters the office holding Xena. He SHRIEKS. Amelia is
 slumped over her desk. Not moving.

REID
 O-M-G-O-M-G-O-M-G-

Amelia snaps awake. Sits up, bleary-eyed.

REID (CONT'D)
 O-M-G I thought you were dead.

AMELIA
 I wish. I think I was dreaming in memory
 montages or something-

REID
 You're a hot mess, girlfriend. What are
 you doing here?

AMELIA
 I was afraid to go home.

REID
 I mean "here" as in New York.

AMELIA
 You were right. It can't be fought.

Reid puts a consoling arm around her.

REID
 When you give in to it, you're supposed
 to be happy. Why aren't you with Chad?

AMELIA
 I don't know.

Amelia turns her attention back to a painting propped up on a
 bookshelf beside her desk. The Thomas Kinkade painting.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

Last night, when everything seemed hopeless, all I could think of was this painting. Like it was calling me.

REID

What's the verdict?

AMELIA

Well, it's not so terrible. There's no irony or commentary, but it's comforting. Easy to look at. It just- it doesn't look like a place I'd want to live. It looks like a place I'd want to die.

REID

Ew. Mademoiselle Morbid! Now I can't even look at it without seeing a corpse lying on those cobble stones.

Amelia looks at the painting. Then she looks closer.

AMELIA

Reid. That's it!

REID

Excusles?

AMELIA

Reid. This painting wouldn't be this painting if there were a corpse in it. It would be another painting.

Amelia is excited. She grabs her slide projector, plugs it in and turns out the lights.

REID

I'm not following.

Amelia hurriedly flips through the slides until she gets to one of a beautiful, fair woman on a sofa. Circa 1800.

AMELIA

Look. This is David's "Madame Recamier."

REID

Get thee to the tanning beds, girlfriend!

Amelia flips to the next slide. Everything in the painting is identical except that in place of the woman is a coffin, bent in the same pose as the woman. A Magritte painting.

REID (CONT'D)
Gracious! That's disturbing!

AMELIA
What it *is* is an assault on the expected.
Like a corpse in a Thomas Kinkade
painting.

REID
Now you're just making me feel stupid.

AMELIA
The farting, the drug talk, the puppy
euthanizing, those were just mustaches on
the Mona Lisa.

REID
What did you do to puppies?

AMELIA
It wasn't far enough. It wasn't an
assault. Magritte didn't just take
David's painting a draw a mustache on the
woman, he put her in a freaking coffin.
It's not just a joke, it changes the
tone. It changes everything.

REID
Okay, 50 words or less-

Amelia's eyes go between the Thomas Kinkade painting and
Magritte's version of "Madame Recamier."

AMELIA
We have to kill Skip and Chad.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Reid and Xena try to catch up to Amelia who is walking at
breakneck speed down the street.

REID
But how do you know it will work?

AMELIA
I don't. It's a last resort. It's kind of
characteristic of last resorts that you
don't know if they'll work or not.

REID
But Amelia-

AMELIA

Reid. I'm not just doing this for me-

REID

I know but I don't want you to! If you go to jail and then who will be my BFF?

AMELIA

Exactly.

REID

What?

AMELIA

Think about it. Since this whole thing started, have you spent any time with any other human beings? Like, say, any other gay human beings?

Reid thinks about it. The horrible truth dawns on him-

AMELIA (CONT'D)

Even if they're here, it won't matter. Wacky friends don't get boyfriends or lives their own. There's only room for one gay in the kind of movie we're in. One racial minority. You and Mindy, your happiness is at stake here too.

Reid stops. Sits on a stoop. Rubs his head, tired.

REID

I haven't had a boyfriend in ten years. I'm not sure I'm any better off in real life than here. At least here I'm not always miserable.

AMELIA

Reid, there were strange and beautiful things you loved before. And you loved those things because you were a strange and beautiful guy. And in the real world, there's people that will appreciate a guy like you. You just have to let them in.

REID

Will you remind me?

AMELIA

You won't listen, but yes. Sure.

REID

Alright. I'm in. I better call our sister from another mister.

AMELIA

Good. I'll be in there-

Amelia points down the block to a sign: "Gun Shop."

INT. GUN SHOP - NIGHT

Amelia enters a retail gun store. A CRUSTY OLD MAN stands behind the counter.

CRUSTY OLD MAN

What can I do you for?

AMELIA

I need some guns.

The man chuckles heartily. Then stops, realizing Amelia's not in on the joke.

CRUSTY OLD MAN

You're not serious? Darlin', guns are against the law unless you're police. Why, you could kill someone.

AMELIA

You realize you have a gun-shaped sign out there that says "Gun Shop?"

CRUSTY OLD MAN

Oh, you know, it's kinda like when you call a strip mall full of McDonalds and Pay Less Shoes "Ye Olde Towne Center" It's got a nice ring to it.

AMELIA

You don't sell any guns?

CRUSTY OLD MAN

Nope.

AMELIA

Not even a musket? I've always believed in our right to bear muskets.

CRUSTY OLD MAN

No muskets.

AMELIA

Do you sell any weapons?

CRUSTY OLD MAN

We got some nice sling shots here.

Amelia sees something out of the corner of her eye: A display of HEAVY DUTY CROSSBOWS.

AMELIA

How much damage can those do?

CRUSTY OLD MAN

To what?

AMELIA

Um, let's say a deer. Or two. Big ones.

CRUSTY OLD MAN

Close enough range and a good shot?
Fatal. Definitely.

AMELIA

They're perfect. I'll take them all.

EXT. ST. PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL - DAY

The sun rises over the gorgeous, imposing gothic church.

INT. ST. PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL - BRIDAL DRESSING ROOM - DAY

Ruth checks herself out in the mirror. She wears the Princess Sparkle Slut dress. She's smiling. No, GLOWING. She turns to face the same Stepford Bridesmaids from Mindy's wedding.

RUTH

Oh my God, I'm getting married! Eeeee!

Mindy leans against the wall, disgusted. Drinking covertly from Amelia's borrowed flask.

RUTH (CONT'D)

Where is Reid? It's inspection time-

INT. ST. PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL - GROOM'S DRESSING ROOM - DAY

Skip, in a sharp tux, straightens his bow tie. Chad is also in a tux. But he's the rumpled one now. He's crying.

SKIP

Chad? Dude. Are you gonna cry like that during the ceremony?

CHAD

(through sobs)

I don't know, man. This girl-

SKIP

I never thought it'd be me getting married first, man. You're such a catch-

CHAD

I tried to tell her that.

INT. AMELIA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Waves of Pink chiffon and tulle sway and billow. A hand zips up a pink zipper. Manicured feet slip into ballerina pink heels. Amelia stands in front of the mirror, wearing the hideous pink bridesmaid dress from Mindy's wedding.

Reid drapes a succession of crossbows attached to straps over her shoulder like ammo. Like a proud mother.

REID

Why do you have to wear this godawful dress again?

AMELIA

I don't want to waste anything nice.

Amelia holds a crossbow to eye level, pre-practicing her aim.

INT. ST. PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL - DAY

Ruth and her FATHER wait for the double doors to the chapel to open. Ruth beams, but there's an ever-so-slight nervous twitch here and there.

RUTH

Thanks for coming, daddy.

RUTH'S FATHER

Never thought I'd see the day you let me walk you down an aisle on my arm. I guess even blind hogs find an acorn on occasion

The "Wedding March" plays. The double doors open. Doubt is all over Ruth's face. She takes her first step. TRIPS and falls. She stays on the ground, not moving. This is a fight or flight moment...Ruth's face hardens.

She gets up. Brushes off. And continues down the aisle.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY STREET - DAY

Amelia, Reid, and Xena push their way through the crowd.

PEOPLE SCREAM, run, upon seeing Amelia and Reid's big ass crossbows. The Woman in the Blue Sweater scurries across Amelia's path. Amelia stops. Watches the Woman go.

AMELIA

She's an extra! That's why she couldn't talk and why she's always wearing the same thing.

REID

Nice. Shot!

Amelia laughs, then clumsily TRIPS, firing a projectile bolt into a store window. The glass shatters. The bolt just missed Xena Warrior Princess. She whimpers. Amelia pulls herself back up like a soldier. St. Patrick's looms, a block away.

INT. ST. PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL - DAY

Ruth and Skip stand, facing one another at the altar in front of a PRIEST. Ruth is sweating. Skip is blissful. Beside Skip, Chad sways unsteadily.

PRIEST

If there is anyone here who has any reason why these two should not be married, speak now or forever hold your-

OUTSIDE THE DOUBLE DOORS

Amelia listens to the Priest.

AMELIA

Geez, this is so cliché.

REID

Just go!

Amelia BURSTS through the double doors. Crossbow aimed.

AMELIA

Everybody out!

Amelia tosses one of the heavy crossbows to Mindy. Mindy catches it expertly. Skip starts to run, but Mindy grabs him by the scruff of the neck and backs him up against the altar.

Amelia backs Chad to the altar too. Her crossbow aimed straight between his eyes. WEDDING GUESTS flee around them.

CHAD

I knew you'd be back.

AMELIA

You definitely should not talk right now.

Reid ties up the two men with ropes while Xena Warrior princess licks their faces. The action swirls around Ruth.

RUTH

Stop! This is my special day!

Amelia ignores her. Mindy puts a crossbow in Ruth's arms. Aims it at Skip.

RUTH (CONT'D)

What is this for?

AMELIA

Ruth. We have a plan.

INT. NYPD STATION - DAY

The station, though filled with POLICE OFFICERS, is quiet as a cubicle village. Officers play online scrabble, stand around a water cooler not speaking, sleep at their desks. On an assignment board, under Missing Person's cases is written "NO LEADS." The rest of the categories are blank. A YOUNG OFFICER bursts into the station. Grinning ear to ear.

YOUNG OFFICER

Guys! We got a call! And there's weapons!

All the Officers hop up from their desks, like kids out of bed on Christmas morning. The rush out the door, whooping and hollering. The Police CHIEF knocks over the painstakingly constructed house of cards he's been building. Shouts orders.

CHIEF

Grasso, call all the precincts!
Valtierra, get the equestrian units!

INT. ST. PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL - DAY

Ruth is freaking out, her crossbow lowered. Mindy and Reid guard the doors. Amelia aims at Skip and Chad, now tied up.

RUTH

I can't kill him! I love him!

AMELIA

I know it sounds crazy-

CHAD

It definitely sounds crazy.

AMELIA

I know you love him and that you can't help it. But I also know when I came into this church to stop this from happening, you looked relieved.

Ruth doesn't deny it. She looks at Skip. He looks like a sad puppy dog. She turns back to Amelia.

RUTH

You have no idea- how effing pissed off I am at you. Or how much I've missed you.

AMELIA

I think I can relate to those emotions.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY STREET - DAY

The ENTIRE FLEET of NYPD cars, paddy wagons, and equestrian units speed/gallop down Madison Avenue. Sirens blaring.

INT. ST. PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL - DAY

Amelia and Ruth are making up. Their crossbows still aimed.

RUTH

You were right, I change personalities like underwear. If we get out of this, I'm going to seriously take some time to figure things out.

AMELIA

No, you were right. My risk-averse repressed crap *is* going to make me miserable for the rest of my life. But I'm going to work on that.

SKIP

Uh, Patty Hearsts 1 & 2, would you mind lowering your weapons?

RUTH

Would you mind lowering your voice, I'm trying to talk to my BFF here.

CHAD

You really think we're in a movie? So you're going to kill us? With crossbows?

AMELIA

Chad, I didn't want to do it this way. I wanted to use a gun.

RUTH

Yeah, why don't we have guns?

AMELIA

Long story.

SKIP

I don't buy it. You two rate at least a "Sharon Stone" on the crazy-o-meter, which, I'll admit, is intriguing to a guy like me in an unhealthy way, but you just don't seem like the murdering types.

RUTH

We're not, but then again, you're not real. So in a way it's more like we're taking out The Easter Bunny or a Log Cabin Republican.

CHAD

What are you talking about? We're real!

The sound of POLICE SIRENS can be heard outside. Shit. Mindy peeks out a window, sees the thousands and thousands of NYPD vehicles screeching to a stop in front of the church.

MINDY

Don't worry, girls. Reid and I got this.

EXT. ST. PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL - DAY

The grand front doors to the Cathedral open. Mindy and Reid stand in the middle of them. Reid holds a shivering Xena. The ENTIRE NYPD faces them, guns aimed. Many BYSTANDERS look on. Mindy, nervous, searches for some words- then finds them.

MINDY

Oh HELP! Some crazy white women holdin' us hostage! Help!

Reid looks around to see if anyone's buying it. They are. On either side of the church's doors, Mindy and Reid have rigged their crossbows onto biblical statues. From the NYPD's POV, it looks like two crossbows are pointed directly at them.

REID

They want you to stand back! And, uh, lower your weapons! They got demands!

The Officers get a signal from the Chief to put down their guns. They do. Mindy breaks into a mischievous smile.

INT. ST. PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL - DAY

Amelia gives Ruth a quick crossbow tutorial. Chad and Skip try to wriggle out of the ropes, but no luck.

AMELIA

And since it's already loaded, just make sure you're lined up. Release the safety and pull the trigger. Whap!

RUTH

Okay, I think I can handle that.

SKIP

Stop it! We're not "trapped in a movie."

CHAD

Actually. I think we might be.

AMELIA

(to Ruth)

We should aim for the heart. It will be the quickest.

Ruth nods. She centers her cross hairs on Skip. Amelia centers hers on Chad. They're both shaking. Skip braces for the impact. Chad is putting the pieces together.

AMELIA AND RUTH

1...2...

CHAD

Wait!

AMELIA AND RUTH

3!

Too late. Amelia and Ruth PRESS HARD on the triggers...and nothing happens. The projectile bolts still in the crossbows.

RUTH

They're broken-

CHAD

(to Skip)

They're right-

SKIP

Right about what? We're not real?

AMELIA

(to Ruth)

They can't be broken, I accidentally shot a bolt on the way here.

Chad and Skip whisper among themselves.

CHAD

No they're wrong about that. But they're right about the movie thing. Remember how we kept saying they were too good to be true? And how you proposed to a girl you'd only known for a week when you've spent the last two decades bailing out on girls the moment things got serious? And how we thought my jaw was looking unnaturally square lately.

SKIP

Yeah, but- a movie- that's crazy.

CHAD

Skip. Look at them. A sexually confused Public Radio employee and an art-school-wannabe egghead who makes crack meth? We like these girls. That's weird bro!

SKIP

Oh God. That IS weird.

Ruth re-aims at Skip. Clicks her trigger a few more times. Nothing. She turns away to look at the mechanism in a better light and FTHHWT! Her bolt FIRES and sticks into an image of the already arrow-ridden martyr St. Sebastian.

AMELIA

How'd you do that?

RUTH

I don't know-

SKIP

So *that's* why we were acting so lame. I thought it was just what love did to you-

CHAD

Yeah, me too.

AMELIA

(to Ruth)

Uh oh-

RUTH

What?

Amelia does a test. She points her crossbow at Chad. Clicks the trigger. Nothing. Then, she points her crossbow a few inches over. FTHHHWT! The projectile bolt WHIZZES towards Chad's head. Just misses it. Shatters a stained glass window.

AMELIA

Frack! What now?!

CHAD

Now you put those down and untie us.

RUTH

Why would we do that?

CHAD

Because we want out of this just as much as you. If not more.

EXT. ST. PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL - DAY

Mindy is less nervous now. Now she's running the show, pretending to be getting "orders" from her hostage takers.

MINDY

What's that? Oh, okay. They sayin' they want Hollywood to make a movie where Wanda Sykes the star! And she save the world. From terrorists. White terrorists!

The NYPD Officers write all this down on their note pads.

REID

Ooh, me next, me next.

INT. ST. PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL - DAY

Amelia and Ruth aren't buying it.

SKIP

How are we supposed to prove we're real?

AMELIA

Start with why you were at a wedding where no one's ever heard of you.

CHAD

We crashed that wedding. Our parents thirtieth anniversary party was in the next ballroom and we were bored.

AMELIA

You said your parents were dead.

The color drains from Skip and Chad's faces.

CHAD

Oh my God. We did say that.

SKIP

Mom and dad are dead?

Amelia and Ruth exchange looks. Skip and Chad seem pretty upset by that last one. Ruth whispers.

RUTH

I'm starting to think they are real- they seem pretty broken up about this dead parents thing-

EXT. ST. PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL - DAY

The Police Chief reads back what his assistant has written.

CHIEF

"-Starring Neil Patrick Harris and an 'Anderson Cooper-esque type' as a couple who learn the true meaning of family as they struggle to adopt an orphaned Cambodian baby girl named Lulu who has stolen their heart?" That's going to be a tough sell, son.

REID

Look. I'm just the messenger here.

CHIEF

(into his walkie talkie)
These people are giving us the run around. Get the SWAT team up here.

INT. ST. PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL - DAY

Amelia, Ruth, Skip, and Chad sit on the steps of the altar. Thinking. But no one's got anything. The sirens blare outside. The sunlight shines oppressively in. It's too much.

AMELIA

I really should have taken you up on that double suicide when you offered it, Ruth.

RUTH

For serious.

The sit in silence. Think. Ruth GASPS.

SKIP

What?

RUTH

Suicide! It'd never happen in a romantic comedy-

CHAD

Yeah but if this "thing" wouldn't let you murder us, what makes you think it's going to let you jump off a bridge?

RUTH

Because all we have to do is jump. There's no third party objects to malfunction. And just by committing the act, maybe the world will change back-

AMELIA

But when people jump off buildings in the real world, they die.

SKIP

We could get horribly crippled instead-

AMELIA

That's your silver lining?

CHAD

I'm in. We've got more of a chance changing things back by jumping than by fading to black-

AMELIA

No. We're not jumping to our deaths. Or to our...crippling.

CHAD

I guess I'm in and hoping for crippling. It's not such a loss. I've never even played my Wii standing up.

AMELIA

No! This doesn't make sense.

RUTH

We can't fight this with logic. Remember, Amelia. I promised I wouldn't let you die.

AMELIA

Yeah...but follow through is not exactly your strong point-

RUTH

It'll only work if we all do it. And the rest of us want to do it-

EXT. ST. PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL - DAY

Mindy and Reid collaborate on their next demand.

MINDY

Yeah, an' they sayin' they want a black woman to run for president next time!

REID

A black lesbian woman!

MINDY

Yeah! But not Condoleeza!

CHIEF

(into his walkie talkie)

Now.

The SWAT TEAM descends upon Mindy and Reid. Surrounding them at gunpoint. The Swat Team sees the crossbows rigged up on the statues. Mindy and Reid are screwed. Reid sets Xena free.

REID

Go, girl! Just go!

Xena just stands there and shivers.

MINDY

What the hell we do now?

KID BYSTANDER

There they are!

The Kid Bystander is pointing up at the roof. Everyone, including the SWAT team, cranes their necks up. Reid and Mindy are no fools. They take the opportunity and RUN.

EXT. ST. PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL - ROOFTOP - DAY

Amelia and Ruth see Mindy and Reid hauling ass down the street. Chad lodges a crossbow in the roof's doorway.

RUTH

Fudge me! Our distraction's gone.

The Four see SWAT team members rushing inside the church. They all step to the edge of the roof. It's a long way down.

RUTH (CONT'D)

This is why I prefer not looking before leaping. Everybody ready?

Amelia can't stop looking at the drop.

AMELIA

Yes.

(she turns to Chad)

I love you. I don't particularly *like* you and I'd never go out with a guy like you in real life. And I don't know if it's real or not, but right now, I love you.

Amelia waits for Chad's reaction. He grins.

CHAD

I'm glad you got that out of your system. Well, the first part at least.

AMELIA

Yeah sorry about that. I'm kind of allergic to simple emotions.

Skip takes the opportunity to be romantic.

SKIP

And I love you, Rudi. And I know we're stuck in this lame movie or whatever, but I think I see, like, the real you. And-

RUTH

Um. Skip? Before you go any further-

BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! The SWAT TEAM rams into the roof door from the other side. One of the door hinges breaks off...

RUTH (CONT'D)

Skip. It's not you, it's me.

AMELIA

Your timing is truly impeccable.

BLAM! The door falls, the SWAT Team swarm onto the roof.

SWAT TEAM GUY

Don't move! Hands above your head!

SKIP

You're breaking up with me?

RUTH

Well, I still love you. I can't control that. I just don't want to be with you.

The Four put their hands up. The SWAT Team surrounds them in a dense semicircle, edging them towards the roof's end.

AMELIA

We have no way of knowing if this is going to work. I can't-

RUTH

No, we don't. But you're going to have to jump off this roof believing that it might. Because this is one of those moments in life that calls for a little self-delusion.

CHAD

Why aren't they doing anything?

The SWAT Team is still there, but they're not doing anything.

AMELIA

Because they couldn't hurt us if they tried. They're not the threat.

(beat)

Alright guys. Let's jump off a building and see what happens.

The Four, hesitant at first, drop their hands. The SWAT TEAM members look to one another, not sure how to react.

The Four run, full speed, towards the edge of the roof. *In slow motion, their feet take the last steps on solid ground. And they leap off into nothingness. The bodies fall...*

INT. AMELIA'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY

Bed bugs scurry out from underneath Amelia's mattress corner.

EXT. ST. PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL - DAY

The four are still falling...falling...

EXT. BROOKLYN STREET - DAY

Dirk finds himself back there on the sidewalk, confused. A WOMAN walks by.

DIRK

Spare some change, lovely? No? Well you got fat thighs!

INT. AN APARTMENT SOMEWHERE - DAY

The Woman in the Blue Sweater puts on a green sweater.

THE WOMAN IN THE BLUE SWEATER
Ah. That's better.

EXT. ST. PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL - DAY

The CROWD watches as the sunny sky turns a DREARY GRAY. The autumn leaves fall off all the trees in ONE BIG CLUMP.

*In the air, The Four are STILL falling. Until: Real time.
The four drop like lead weights to the ground.*

CUT TO BLACK. The Blackness Stays. And Stays. THEN:

FADE UP on the sound of sirens. The four lay, like tossed rag dolls over bushes on the sidewalk in front of the cathedral. EMTs rush to the bodies. Then... Amelia's eye flutters open. She's alive. And in a lot of pain. Beside her, Ruth moves.

AMELIA AND RUTH
Fuck.

Amelia and Ruth grimace, then realize what's just happened.

AMELIA AND RUTH (CONT'D)
Fuck! Fuck fuck fuck fuck fuck!

CHAD
Fuuuuck-

SKIP
Mother fucker.

The girls are back to their normal weight and unshiny hair. The guys have receding hairlines and a few extra pounds. Ruth turns to Amelia, her hands on her waistline. An ear-to-ear grin on her face.

RUTH
My fat is back! It worked. We're free!

But Amelia is going through a different set of emotions. She's looking at Chad, in the real world, for the first time.

AMELIA
You have a receding hairline.

CHAD
It's genetic.

INT. DARREN'S MOM'S APARTMENT - DAY

Darren is slumped in a La-Z-boy. The front door opens. Mindy stands in the doorway. She says nothing.

DARREN
You want a divorce, don't you?

Mindy still doesn't speak.

DARREN (CONT'D)
Well it's just not that easy. I love you!

Mindy opens her mouth. Her real voice comes out.

MINDY
I'm not interested in easy anymore. I'm interested in five or six decades of ups and downs and uncertainty. With you.

Mindy approaches him. They kiss a long, real, great kiss.

DARREN
I'm glad you're back. Things have been weird. I quit my job at the firm to become a line cook and I became friends with this white line cook who is in the most screwed up relationship with this hotel heiress who thinks he's rich, but-

Mindy smiles. Kisses him again. Happy to have her life back.

INT. REID'S APARTMENT - DAY

Reid, his hair now back to flat and uninteresting, tosses his flamboyant clothes with disgust out the window.

Xena enters, wearing a glittery shirt. Reid looks at her with the exact same look of disgust. He scoops the trembling dog up...and removes her shirt. Tosses it out the window.

REID
C'mon. Let's explore internet dating.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

Skip and Chad are carried on stretchers into ambulances. Amelia is being handcuffed and read rights by an ARRESTING OFFICER. But she's not listening. She calls out to Chad-

AMELIA
Chad! Do you want to go out for coffee-you know, when I'm next available?

CHAD

I thought you said you would never go out with a guy like me in the real world.

AMELIA

Trust me, it's as big of surprise to me as it is to you. But the fact remains that for unknown and illogical reasons, the thought of not seeing you again, sucks balls.

CHAD

Well you do have so much class-

AMELIA

Chad. Coffee. Yes or no? It's highly possible I'm going to jail or prison for inciting fear in New York City so you'll have plenty of time to back out by the time I can actually go on this date.

CHAD

Then yes.

Amelia cracks a smile. Chad does too.

CHAD (CONT'D)

I hope we're not paralyzed.

BY ANOTHER AMBULANCE

EMTs let Skip and Ruth talk while stabilizing their necks.

RUTH

I guess I'm not sure if I'm straight or gay or bisexual or just Ruthasexual. These are things I have to take some me time to figure out. Also I think I'm just out of your league, Chip.

SKIP

-Skip. My name is Skip. And I told you, I don't care. I would never date a girl like you. You're a pretentious, insulting, flaky, hipster who thinks The Stones are a better band than the Beatles, which is certifiable.

RUTH

That's right buddy, and I fucking love Yoko Ono, for future reference.

SKIP

Okay, actually I've always had kind of a thing for Yoko.

RUTH

Really?

(beat)

Hey, would like you to hang out but never ever date?

Skip thinks about it. Nods and shrugs a "yeah, maybe."

MOMENTS LATER

Amelia and Ruth are being loaded into parallel ambulances. Both are handcuffed and accompanied by ARRESTING OFFICERS.

AMELIA

You don't suppose we have any of that endless ATM money left?

RUTH

Probably not, no. Why?

AMELIA

Because we're gonna need to make bail.

RUTH

Time to start hooking.

AMELIA

Oh Darling, it's good to have you back.

BEHIND THEM

The Crowd dissipates, everyone fairly blasé about what they've just seen. This is New York, after all.

But very briefly, in quick glimpses, we can see two little blonde headed girls weaving through the crowd of grown ups. From their backpacks, the tips of golden bows poke out.

MOMENTS LATER

The Ambulance doors close on Amelia and Ruth. They turn their sirens on and race off into the dreary gray afternoon.

TITLE: AND THEY LIVED.