

TECHNICAL FOUL

Story & Screenplay by

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INT. CLOSED BASKETBALL COURT - DAY

An avid 3X3 basketball game takes place between the guys in the yellow jerseys and those in the blue jerseys.

The Yellows are currently:

KEVIN, 37. Five foot five. Assertive and daring. Caucasian. A true redhead both in appearance and character. Short hair. Divorced.

TONY, 36. Five foot seven. Dreamy and introspective in nature. Caucasian. Unruly brown/gray hair and stubbled face. Single.

CHAD, 38. Six foot two. Has a somewhat arrogant personality. Caucasian. In his speech, he challenges political correctness. Short black hair, prone to balding. Married.

The blues are currently:

JOEL, 35. Five foot seven. Has orthodox Jewish roots. Curly blonde hair. Broad-minded and diehard atheist. Single.

MARIO, 36. Six foot two. Of Hispanic descent thou appearing Caucasian. Possesses managerial conduct. Gel-organized dark, black hair. Married.

THOMAS, 36. Six foot five, of Caribbean descent. Pleasant manners. Handsome with dark, brown, well-arranged hair. Married.

At this point, DERRICK , 38, Six foot one, Afro-American with short, curly, black hair, sits aside on a bench. Silent and depressed conduct. Divorced.

The Yellows are on offence.

Tony strolls idly As Kevin holds the ball. Kevin examines him frantically.

KEVIN  
(Anger mixed with  
ridicule)  
Dear sleeping beauty, please join  
us.  
(Intensified tone)  
So we can win this fucking  
ballgame.

Tony continues at his own pace as he takes a look at his watch. Kevin is furious. Once again he hastens Tony.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

Come on man.

The Blues get organized on defense.

Kevin passes to Joel, who passes back to him. The offence begins. As he dribbles, Kevin explores his options.

He leads Joel, who is guarding him, towards Tony and causes him to bump into him.

Kevin now dribbles fast towards Thomas, who is guarding Chad and comes between them.

Chad hurries beyond the three point arc and waves to Kevin.

Kevin passes the ball to him and fiercely blocks Thomas.

Joel notices what is happening and rushes to block Chad's shot.

Tony barely moves.

Chad shoots, but misses.

Mario vaults, catches the rebound and dribbles outside the arc.

CHAD

Foul.

Joel smiles and gestures to him.

JOEL

No way.

Kevin shakes his head and positions himself for defense.

Tony attempts to figure out the situation.

Chad examines his friends. His claim lacks empathy.

THOMAS

Come on dude. He was a mole away.

CHAD

(Mumbles)

Ya fucking arseholes, all of you.

With conspicuous reluctance, he continues to play.

As Mario dribbles, he examines the situation.

Kevin clings to Joel, gestures with his head towards Mario and hastens up Chad.

KEVIN

Take him, man. We can do it.

Thomas glances at the large clock on the wall. He passes by Joel and whispers.

THOMAS

One minute left, man. Let's knock them out and go home.

Kevin is at the center of the Yellows' defense. His gaze is fixed on the blues as he claps.

KEVIN

(Enthusiastically)

Go, go, go.

Kevin now looks at Tony with a rebuke in his eyes as he points at Thomas.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

Make sure he stays out of the paint.

Tony nods slightly.

Joel winks at Thomas. Thomas sprints towards Tony without a ball. He positions himself at first as if he wants the ball. As Tony clings to him, both of his hands are raised in the air.

Joel stops dribbling, and Kevin leaps up to block the pass. Kevin avoids looking back.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

(Loud)

Defense!

In a flash, Thomas is in the paint with Tony behind him.

Joel looks at Mario. The pass option to Mario is blocked by Kevin. Without looking away from Mario, Joel passes to Thomas.

Kevin realizes that he has been misled and vaults forward with a hand outstretched. With a blow on Thomas' hand, he prevents the shot.

Kevin flashes Thomas a teasing smile.

KEVIN (CONT'D)  
Ya thought it'll be easy, ha?

Thomas smiles. He picks up the ball and goes to the free throw line.

THOMAS  
Curb Your Enthusiasm! My free throw is a done deal. We win. Time to go home.

Mario and Joel high five each other as they smile towards Thomas. Each one of them takes a position on either side of the basket. As Tony clings to Mario, Chad clings to Joel.

JOEL  
(Intentionally loud)  
One minute to go. He still believes he can win.

KEVIN  
Cut the bullshit.

Kevin gestures to Thomas.

KEVIN (CONT'D)  
Shoot, quit wasting time.

Thomas laughs heartily.

Kevin waves both hands at Thomas.

KEVIN (CONT'D)  
(Shrill voice)  
Miss the shot, miss, miss, miss.

Thomas tries to concentrate but bursts into laughter again.

Meanwhile, Derrick fiddles with his phone on the bench to the side. He seems very distressed.

Mario notices.

<p>KEVIN (CONT'D) (to Tony and Chad) He misses, don't let'em get the rebound.</p>	<p>MARIO Hey Derrick, are you okay?</p>
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Derrick raises his head. He is unable to say anything. He gestures for his friends to keep playing.

Briefly, the guys look at him.

KEVIN (CONT'D)  
 (To Mario)  
 Social worker later. Ballgame now.

Mario glances shortly at Derrick again. Clearly, he is concerned. Then, his attention returns to the game as he claps his hands.

As Thomas examines the hoop, he bounces a few times, then takes the shot.

The ball bounces on the hoop and out. Chad grabs the rebound.

Thomas cracks up with laughter.

Joel and Mario position themselves for defense.

Chad passes the ball to Kevin.

Thomas positions himself in defense too.

Kevin considers his options as he dribbles. He then grasps the ball.

Tony rambles. Chad also seems unmotivated.

Derrick glances at his watch. There is a sense of distress in his expression and in his voice. He yawns.

DERRICK  
 Four thirty guys. It's over.

Kevin waves his hand at him in dismissal without looking at him.

KEVIN  
 You're free to go home if you wish.  
 (To Chad and Tony)  
 Are ya ready?

Joel waits for Kevin's pass.

Chad and Tony are positioned on either side of the paint. They're guarded by Thomas and Mario, respectively.

Kevin begins dribbling once again. He realizes he's wrong.

JOEL Dribbling vi --	KEVIN (CONT'D) (Face contorted and loudly) Shiiit!
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In rage, Kevin hurls the ball to the floor.

Panting, the guys sluggishly make their way toward the bench. On and around the bench are their bags.

Derrick makes space on the bench. A hollow gaze is fixed on him as he rests his elbows on his knees and holds his chin.

As they make their way, Thomas rests his arm on Kevin's shoulders.

THOMAS

What's up with taking everything so personally, bro?

Kevin slips out from under Thomas's grasp. Angry, he gestures with his hand.

KEVIN

(Assertively)

Gimme a break, man.

Thomas stares at him with amazement. He tilts his head back.

THOMAS

Chill out.

KEVIN

Don't--

THOMAS

Don't what? Come on man, we're here for fun.

Kevin stares at Thomas with blazing eyes.

The guys eyes meet as they examine Kevin's reaction.

Kevin growls and stares at Thomas. He shakes his head as he proceeds to the bench. He pulls out a towel from his bag, sits and covers his head with it.

Tony shrugs and dismissively gestures with his hand.

The guys goggle at each other as they sit down. Next they swill from their bottles.

They're still panting.

Silence.

CHAD

These ballgames are killing me.

From under the towel Kevin reacts.



KEVIN

Bullshit.

In an instant, Kevin shakes off the towel and stares at Chad.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

Hey Chad, can I have a word with  
ya? Privately?

Chad shakes his head and smiles.

CHAD

Another one of your,

Scornfully, Chad gestures with his arms.

CHAD (CONT'D)

Once in a life time deals?

Once again, Kevin covers his head with a towel.

KEVIN

(Whispers angrily)  
Ya fuckin' son-f-a-bitch.

Thomas rises, grasps his bag and walks toward the showers.

Tony grimaces and runs his hand through his messy hair.

TONY

Anyone in for staying to shoot some  
more hoops?

As Chad picks up his bag, he stares at Tony in bewilderment.

CHAD

Are'ya nuts? Go home.

Chad turns around and heads for the shower.

Mario rises and lifts the laundry bag off the floor.

MARIO

Guys, jerseys please.

Chad stops. He takes off his jersey, furls it and throws it  
toward the bench. It falls a foot away.

Already at the entrance to the showers, Thomas returns calmly  
to the bench, takes off his jersey and places it in the  
laundry bag. He picks up Chad's jersey too and places it in  
the bag.

Derrick rises. He has a vacuous expression. He yawns as he scratches the back of his neck. He then takes off his jersey, drops it in the laundry bag and puts on a tracksuit top.

DERRICK  
(Barely audible)  
I'll shower at home. See ya next  
week.

Derrick toddles to the exit. Mario follows him and places his arm on his shoulder.

MARIO  
(Whispers)  
Are'ya good? How things at home?

Derrick just stares at Mario in silence. He then takes a glance at the rest of the guys as his breathing becomes more rapid.

Mario realizes that he is in serious adversity.

DERRICK  
You know. It's ahh, it's--

Mario warmly beefs up his grip and stares into his eyes.

MARIO  
It's what?

Derrick's eyes fill with tears. He leaves the place in a hurry.

MARIO (CONT'D)  
Derrick!

Mario stands still. His gaze remains fixed at the exit for a short while. He then returns to the bench.

Kevin and Joel throw their jerseys into the laundry bag, grab their bags and walk to the showers.

Mario takes the laundry bag in addition to his bag. On the way, he picks up the ball and drops it in his bag.

Tony procrastinates. A morose look dominates his face as he remains seated. After a short time, he inhales deeply, stands up and trudges to the showers.

INT. SHOWERS - DAY

As steam spreads throughout the room, hot water splatters on the guys in the booths.

The guys bags rest on a long bench opposite the shower booths.

Chad sings while he lathers.

CHAD

*Sing once again with me, our  
strange duet, my power over you  
grows stronger yet, and though you  
turn from me to glance behind, the  
phantom of the opera is there,  
inside your mind.*

Joel tries to emulate him, but bursts into laughter. For a moment, he turns off the water and calls out.

JOEL

Dude, you're wasting your time  
selling fruit and vegetables. With  
your voice, you should go on a  
tour.

CHAD

*The phantom of the opera is there,  
inside your mind.*

The guys chuckle.

Chad turns off the water and walks toward the bench.

CHAD (CONT'D)

Fruit and vegetables my ass. The  
ten best singers in the world don't  
make as much as I make annually. No  
one. Not even Pabaruzi or  
Pavarotti, whatever his name is. I  
can bury them with one hundred  
dollar bills. *The phantom of the  
opera is there, inside your mind.*

Thomas emerges from the shower booth. He proceeds to the bench, dries and dresses.

Tony leans his arm against the booth partition and rests his head on it. He hums as the hot water runs down his body.

Having dressed, Thomas meticulously combs his hair as he peers into the mirror.

Mario too emerges out of the shower. He gambols to the bench. He then dries and gets organized quickly and sits down. As he waits for his colleagues, he fiddles with his phone.

While still combing his hair in front of the mirror, Thomas turns to Mario.

THOMAS

What's the deal with Derrick ? Is it, uhh, you know, his parents'?

MARIO

I guess so. I ahh, you know, I'll talk to him over the weekend. I might go over to see him.

As Joel walks towards the bench, he shakes his head. Water slivers splash from his hair. He stares at Mario.

JOEL

Derrick, ha ? It's obvious he's bothered--

MARIO

Yeh, I'll check on him.

JOEL

Let me know if I can help.

Kevin hums with pleasure while lathering, as the hot water splashes on his skin.

As Chad checks his phone, he looks up at Tony, still humming as warm water falls on him.

CHAD

Hey Tony, did ya call that number I gave ya?

Tony shakes his head lightly. He turns off the water and approaches the bench.

Chad examines him.

CHAD (CONT'D)

(loud)

Tony! Did--

TONY

(Mumbles)

I didn't.

CHAD

Ha?

Tony stares at him as he begins to dry.

TONY

Ahh, no. I, ahh, I forgot all about it.

Kevin walks out of the shower with an intrigued expression on his face.

Chad takes a glance at Kevin and then back at Tony.

CHAD

Dude, I'm just trying to set you on a date, yeah?

For a moment, Tony stops drying. Drearily, he stares at Chad.

Thomas and Mario exchange glances.

TONY

Let it go, please.

As Kevin dries up, he approaches Tony.

KEVIN

What's up man, ya don't wana get laid?

Tony stares at Kevin with revulsion. He turns his back on him and hurries to get dressed.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

(Hand gestures and aggressive body language)

What did I say? Why d'ya get upset?

Tony turns around. He looks directly into Kevin's eyes and gestures with his hand.

TONY

(Agitated)

Just stay out of my business.

Tony again turns his back at Kevin. His mouth is clenched. Having dressed, he slowly places his dirty clothes into his bag.

KEVIN

(Contemptuously)

Ouch, so touchy-feely.

Both Thomas and Mario stare furiously at Kevin. Joel and Chad both look at him with question marks smeared across their faces.

Joel raises and gestures.

JOEL  
Come on man, what's the point?

Kevin turns around and waves his arm in dismissal.

KEVIN  
You're all full of shit.

He hurries to get dressed and walk away. He lights a cigarette before he exits.

Mario stares at him and shakes his head. He opens his mouth to say something, but doesn't. Inhaling deeply, he closes his eyes. He then turns to his friends, gesturing by spreading both arms out.

MARIO  
I really can't understand him.

A disappointed look adorns Thomas' face.

THOMAS  
He shouldn't vent his anger here.

Joel now hurries to collect his belongings. He checks his watch.

JOEL  
Okay, guys, I'm rushing.

Chad turns to Joel.

CHAD  
Another date, ha? You son of a bitch. Who's the lucky lady this time?

JOEL  
(To Chad)  
None of your business.  
(To Tony)  
Hey man, are'ya good?

Tony stands to the side, his bag in hand, with an impenetrable gaze.

Silence.

TONY  
(Sotto voce)  
Let it go guys, I'm good.

The guys examine him carefully.

THOMAS

Ya sure?

Tony nods affirmatively and displays a dormant expression.

Joel rushes towards the exit with his bag slung over his shoulder.

Mario's eyebrows rise briefly.

MARIO

Ahh, very well. Let's go.

The guys walk toward the exit in silence.

With his bag and the laundry bag, Mario walks towards the light switch.

Chad places a hand on Tony's shoulder and clings to him. He whispers.

CHAD

So, ahh. I mean, will ya call this lady?

INT. DERRICK'S PARENTS CONDO - DAY

The Condo is very spacious. Order and cleanliness are evidently taken care of by a good hand.

Derrick enters the Condo and places the keys on a dresser. His sweaty tracksuit is still on.

His ears pick up the sound of laughter coming from a room to the left of the living room.

He then sees JUDY, Mrs. Bass's caregiver, in her 50s, tall with long black hair. She is busy in the kitchen, located behind the living-room.

Upon noticing her, he gestures with his hand in a questioning manner.

Judy's eyes shut as she tilts her head toward a corridor leading to the other side of the living-room.

Derrick nods to Judy and walks to the room, where laughter is heard.

The door is open.

INT. MR. BASS ROOM - DAY

Derrick peeks into the room from the corridor.

The room is spacious and bright.

MR. CLAY BASS, in his mid 60s, lies in a stylish bed on wheels.

Despite being covered with a blanket, it's visible that both of his legs are amputated below the knee. Above the elbow, his left hand is amputated too. Scars cover his face.

There is an electric wheelchair adjacent to the bed. A special device is attached to the ceiling to facilitate moving from the bed to the wheelchair.

An extra-wide door, is located on the far left. It is adorned with a small shower icon.

Several hooks are visible on the walls. In one corner of the room, frames are stacked upside-down, on the floor.

Mr. Bass's shoulders and head are massaged by his caregiver ANDREA, in her late 30'S. She's a handsome woman, originally from the Philippines, with neat brown hair, pulled back.

Both of them laugh.

ANDREA

I hope Mrs. Bass forget this.

MR. BASS

Whenever she can, she reminds me.

Their laughter increases.

Derrick's presence is noticed by Andrea. A head gesture is made towards him.

ANDREA

(Caring tone to Mr. Bass)  
You need to rest now.

Mr. Bass's eyes are full with gratitude.

As Andrea backs up from the back of the bed, Derrick steps back slightly.

Andrea now arranges Mr. Bass' pajamas. She adjusts the blanket covering him and places the bed back in place.

She then glances around the room.



As she leaves, she turns off the lights and shuts the door.

INT. DERRICK'S PARENTS CONDO - DAY

In the corridor, Derrick steps back as Andrea comes towards him. His hands are wide open, and his gaze is pleading.

As she shakes her head, Andrea walks past Derrick in the living room. She heads over towards Judy.

Derrick holds his head in one hand as he takes a deep breath. Sadness fills his eyes.

DERRICK  
(In frustration)  
You cant do this to me, Andrea. You  
cant do it to him.

Andrea stares confusedly at Derrick from the kitchen.

DERRICK (CONT'D)  
Please.

Andrea turns to Derrick as she wipes dishes.

<p>ANDREA (Determined)</p>	<p>MRS.BASS (O.S.) (Yells)</p>
<p>I must go Mr. Derrick. My children need their mother.</p>	<p>Judy, come here. <u>Now!</u></p>

DERRICK  
(To himself)  
Not this now, shhhit!

A reproachful look crosses Judy's face as she turns to Derrick. She points to Mrs. Bass's room and nods.

MRS. BASS (O.S.)  
(Louder)  
Judy!

Derrick's gaze darts back and forth perplexedly. He is utterly helpless.

Judy and Andrea exchange glances as they examine him.

Slowly, Derrick steps backwards toward the main door.

He exits the Condo abruptly, slamming the door behind him.

INT. RESTAURANT - EVENING

Joel has dinner with ISEUL, an attractive Korean, in her late 20's.

The two sit at a table by a window facing the street. In front of them are plates containing leftover food. In their hands, they both hold wine glasses.

ISEUL  
(Mischievous grin)  
Does your job description include asking out official visitors?

JOEL  
Sure. The mayor demands that I make our guests' stay enjoyable.

ISEUL  
And what is meant by, enjoyable?

Joel smiles.

Their gaze remains fixed on each other as they sip the wine.

JOEL  
We'll see about that later.

ISEUL  
I wonder. What else does this city have to offer?

JOEL  
New York city? Nothing. Absolute boredom.

They smile at each other.

JOEL (CONT'D)  
Did I mention how much I like your name? I-se-ul. Am I pronouncing it right?

Iseul smiles.

ISEUL  
Well, you Americans have a hard time pronouncing my name correctly. It's E-se-u. There is barely any sound from the L.

JOEL  
No L sound, ha? Interesting. Does it, you know, have any meaning?

ISEUL  
Sure, it means dew or rather,  
morning dew.

Joel's attention is captivated by her words.

JOEL  
Cool.

Looking into her eyes, he smiles.

Iseul glows.

JOEL (CONT'D)  
I'm curious, what made you become  
an orchestra director so early in  
your career?

As Iseul examines him carefully, her smile becomes inviting.

ISEUL  
Um, it was a combination of fate  
and ties.

Joel's expression indicates a desire to hear more.

Iseul continues.

ISEUL (CONT'D)  
In my early teens I was considered  
a gifted violinist.

Joel's attention is temporarily diverted beyond Iseul,  
without her noticing.

His attention returns to her. He smiles and nods.

ISEUL (CONT'D)  
When I was fourteen, I was already  
performing solo recitals across  
Korea.

Joel's attention is once again drawn to something beyond  
Iseul. Clearly, he is perplexed.

Joel's POV.

On the sidewalk across the restaurant, a large group of  
Hassidim walk about.

Iseul is engrossed in her story.

ISEUL (CONT'D)  
 A year later, I had already given  
 recitals outside of Korea.

The gaze of Joel shifts from Iseul to the Hassidic group and back again. The sight causes him some discomfort.

ISEUL (CONT'D)  
 By the time I was twenty years old,  
 I was already a big star. However,  
 I also enjoyed tennis, and I wasn't  
 too bad at that either.

Iseul now notices that Joel is distracted. As she turns her head, she sees the group of Hassidim moving away.

ISEUL (CONT'D)  
 What's up? Do you know them?

An uncomfortable feeling prevails in Joel. His gaze drifts to Iseul as he shifts in his chair. He finds it difficult to smile now.

JOEL  
 I'm sorry. It's complicated. Never  
 mind that. Uhm, also tennis, ha?

Iseul's eyes imply she recognizes Joel's difficulty.

ISEUL  
 Ya sure?

A forced smile appears on Joel's face as he nods.

JOEL  
 I'm good. Please continue.

Iseul clearly perceives Joel's distraction.

ISEUL  
 You know what? Let's have another  
 glass of wine and see where things  
 go.

Joel smiles and nods. He raises his empty wine glass and signals the waiter to refill both glasses.

As they wait, their gazes meet. Their heads tilt in opposite directions as they smile. Then, both of them tilt their heads the other way simultaneously. The two erupt in laughter.

EXT. PUBLIC PARK - DAY

Kevin sits on a bench.

Indifferent and detached, his daughter LISA (17) sits on the bench, off to the side of him.

Rage, frustration, and love are all woven into his gaze towards her.

Lisa is engrossed in her phone. Her head moves to the music as she wears earphones.

A few feet away, CONNOR (6), a chubby redhead, and OWEN (5), with blond curls and a smiley expression, play with 'Transformers'. Next to them are 'Transformers' open packages.

Across the park, RYAN (11), a tough and brazen kid, plays soccer with some other kids. Ryan occasionally gazes at Kevin.

Kevin's facial expression indicates he's trying to find the right words.

KEVIN

Lisa.

There is no response.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

(loud)

Lisa.

Despite appearing to hear him, Lisa ignores him.

Kevin slams his palm against the bench.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

(Yells)

Lisa!

(Quietly)

Damn it.

Connor and Owen are startled. They pause their playing to examine what's happening.

Lisa stares at her father with an opaque gaze. She doesn't remove her earphones and she checks her wristwatch.

Kevin's gaze shifts quickly from the boys to Lisa, then back again. He gestures them to continue playing.

They obey. However, occasionally they peek into their father's and sister's interaction.

Kevin now firmly signals Lisa to take off her earphones.

With contempt, she takes off her earphones and stares at him.

LISA  
(Emotionless tone)  
Yes Dad.

Lisa's gaze shifts from her father to her phone.

An air of nervousness and restlessness engulfs Kevin.

KEVIN  
(Assertive tone)  
Speak to me, I'm your father, for  
god's sake.  
(Conciliatory tone)  
How's school?

Lisa stares at her father for a while.

LISA  
Good.

KEVIN  
Do'ya need anything? You know,  
books, whatever?

Lisa is barely able to contain her laughter. She continues to fiddle with her phone.

LISA  
From you? No.

Kevin is enraged by her response. He observes the boys playing and his gaze returns to Lisa.

KEVIN  
Why do I deserve this attitude,  
Lisa? I'm your goddamn father.

Disdainful eyes stare at him.

LISA  
Perhaps it's your language?

Kevin is furious. He gets up and walks over to watch Ryan's game.

In a brave and successful tackle, Ryan prevents the opponent from scoring.

Kevin claps.

KEVIN  
Good job, son.

As Ryan still lies on the ground, he turns toward his father. A small smile adorns his face. With over-enthusiasm, he returns to the game.

Kevin's face is adorned with a proud expression.

A car horn sounds.

LISA (O.S.)  
(Loud.)  
Ryan. It's mom. Come on, let's go.

Both Ryan and Kevin glance over at her.

The disappointment in Kevin is evident.

As Ryan runs past his teammates, he high-fives them. He then runs by his father and high-fives him as well.

RYAN  
Bye Dad.

Lisa walks to her mother's car. Ryan runs past her.

Owen and Connor gaze at their MOTHER and then at their father. As Kevin approaches them, he gives them both a warm hug. They then grab the 'Transformers' and run towards their mother.

With fire in his eyes, Kevin stares at his ex-wife.

KEVIN  
(Murmurs)  
Fucking bitch!

EXT. PENTHOUSE BALCONY - DAY

Thomas and AMANDA, a well-groomed woman (33), are seated at an elegant garden table under the shaded part of the neat and spacious balcony.

The lassitude of Amanda's appearance doesn't conceal her handsomeness.

Fertility center brochures are placed on the table. In her hand, Amanda clutches a crumpled brochure.

THOMAS

(Sooth tone)

Honey, it's your call. No matter what you decide, I'll be there for you.

Amanda reclines in her chair. Her gaze is fixed on void, and her facial expression is emotional. As evidenced by her heavy breathing, she struggles to hold back tears.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

It's just that, uhm, I'm not convinced going to another center, uhm, you know, would result in a different outcome.

Thomas now rests back and lays his forehands on the table.

Empathy and concern, are evident in his facial expression.

Silence.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

Have we--

In a gentle hand gesture, Amanda shushes him and turns her head towards him.

A long stare ensues between them.

There is a slight nod from Amanda.

AMANDA

(Barely audible)

Adoption.

Thomas tilts his head forward slightly.

As her nods increase, a smile adorns Amanda's face.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

Adoption. We'll adopt.

Her eyes are filled with tears.

Thomas smiles too. A hand is extended to her by him as he stands up. Taking his hand, she stands up too. Their fingers are intertwined, and their foreheads rub against each other.

An embrace of warmth and love is shared between them.

Their hands are still held together as they part ways.

A blissful smile spreads across their faces.





Tony's gaze flits between his phone and the remote control.

SARA COMPETITOR (O.S.)  
Who is Grace Slick?

Tony mutes the TV's volume. In an irritable manner, he throws the remote towards the end of his bed.

Ringling continues on his phone. Despite obvious disinclination, he presses 'receive call'.

TONY  
Yeeees Mom-- Noooo Mom-- I'm busy.

Tony reclines back. He closes his eyes and slowly shakes his head.

TONY (CONT'D)  
I'm busy if I say I am, why--

Tony massages his temples with his free hand.

TONY (CONT'D)  
Ah-ha-- No, I'm not hungry--

Now Tony hits his bed hard.

TONY (CONT'D)  
(Increasing tone)  
Because I'm not hungry, that's why.

Abruptly, he stands up and walks around the room.

TONY (CONT'D)  
(Grim tone)  
Why should I always listen to you?  
Why wont you listen to me for once--

He stops in front of the TV and watches the quiz.

TONY (CONT'D)  
What is the 'Unisphere'?

Tony's body language conveys that he is delighted with the correct answer.

However, he remains upset.

TONY (CONT'D)  
Nothing-- It's nothing.

Tony stares at his phone. The rage in his eyes is palpable.

TONY (CONT'D)

(Yells)

Damn it, I said it's nothing. Are you trying to drive me crazy? No! I'm not coming over. Goodbye.

EXT. CHAD'S BACKYARD - DAY

In Chad's backyard, plants aren't cared for and weeds grow wild everywhere.

The remains of a tarp that was supposed to provide shade over the barbecue are waving in the wind.

At the end of the yard, pieces of metal and wood rest against a warehouse wall.

Occasionally, shrill sound of tin hitting metal can be heard from the warehouse ceiling.

With a can of beer in hand, Chad and BRIAN 40, light-haired and conspicuously obese, stand by the barbecue. They're cheery.

On the table next to them, a deep bowl with a selection of meat ready for the grill as well as a partially covered pot with grilled steaks.

On the table are also some empty beer cans.

Chad handles large steaks on the grill with a Long stainless-steel tong.

Their laughter is excessive.

CHAD

And this fucking gook tells me, listen to this,

They laugh loudly as Chad taps Brian's shoulder.

CHAD (CONT'D)

She tells me, yeah, she tells me, that I, the owner and manager of this fucking business, you get this?

Chad mimics an Asian accent.

CHAD (CONT'D)

*"You can't tok to me like dis"*

Brian laughs to the extent that he loses his balance. Inadvertently, he reaches out and briefly grasps the barbecue edge. He waves his hand in the air.

BRIAN

Shhhhhhit!

Chad tries to toss some cold beer at Brian's hand, but misses.

Brian's shorts are now soaked.

The laughter continues.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

I, ahh, I hope you showed her the door.

Chad attempts to be serious for a moment. Nevertheless, he bursts into laughter once more.

CHAD

Are ya nuts? D'ya think I'd fire someone with cleavage like hers??  
No way man.

Their laughter continues as they high-five each other.

INT. MARIO'S OFFICE - DAY

Mario's office has a modern, yet modest design. His desk is cluttered with books and papers. Various certificates of appreciation hang on the wall, as well as one plaque attesting to excellence in law studies.

Mario is busy typing on his laptop.

GILLIAN, in her 50's, bespectacled and classy with neat graying hair, taps on the glass wall separating a reception hall from Mario's office.

Mario looks up and sees her. He scratches his head and gestures for her to come in.

It is obvious she's lame.

GILLIAN

I apologize for interrupting, Sir, but the association called, uhm, something urgent.

Mario's eyebrows rise.

MARIO  
Ah-ha. Well, uhm.

Mario purses his lips and scratches the back of his head.  
Finally, he leans back and places both hands on his head.

MARIO (CONT'D)  
Mrs. Davis, would you mind--

GILLIAN  
Gillian sir, call me Gillian.

Mario smiles.

MARIO  
I'll call you, ahh, that name, when  
you call me Mario. But--

A prankish smile adorns Gillian's face.

GILLIAN  
That'll never happen sir.

Sympathy and admiration are evident in Mario's eyes.

MARIO  
One day Mrs. Davis, one day, we'll  
resolve this issue. For now,

Mario now stands up and hovers his hand over his laptop.

MARIO (CONT'D)  
Uhm, this too is urgent. I mean,  
could you please proofread this  
proposal for me? I'll check up on  
the association.

GILLIAN  
Consider it done, sir.

Mario grabs his phone and leaves.

Gillian adjusts his chair for a more comfortable position as  
she sits down.

INT. MARIO'S OFFICE- LOBBY - DAY

Mario places an earpiece, dials and walks up and down. It's  
apparent that he's immersed in the conversation, as he uses  
his arms and facial expressions.

MARIO

Ah-ha-- I get it-- Not detained is good.

He scratches his forehead as he harks.

MARIO (CONT'D)

I understand. The same as the other kid, ahh.

He stops near the glass wall and stares at Gillian.

MARIO (CONT'D)

And what do you think? Is it-- Ah-ha-- very well.

Gillian can be seen through the glass wall, as her gaze is on Mario's laptop.

Mario nods and smiles.

MARIO (CONT'D)

Yeh, I'll take care of it-- I've got something urgent here. I might send Mrs. Davis-- Sure. Who do you think drafted the affidavit last time-- Don't worry. If, as you say, he was with you all the time, it means he has an alibi-- Ahh, no, no, he'll be fine.

Gillian looks up from the laptop to see Mario's gaze fixed on her. She smiles and nods.

Mario, still on the phone, enters his office.

MARIO (CONT'D)

Ahh, Mrs. Davis--

Gillian looks up at Mario. They exchange a few small facial gestures.

Mario's eyes are filled with empathy as he continues. He points his finger to his ear and nods to Gillian.

MARIO (CONT'D)

Yes sure-- I mean-- Ah-ha. Okay, please send Mrs. Davis all the details, and please don't worry. Very well, good bye now.

Mario takes off his earpiece and examines Gillian with admiration.

MARIO (CONT'D)  
Mrs. Davis, do you mind--

Gillian tilts her head aside and narrows her eyes.

GILLIAN  
Sir, please, I'll go over there--

MARIO  
Please don't forget--

Gillian raises. Her face is adorned in a mixture of reproach and appreciation. She then smiles.

GILLIAN  
Sir, I know what to do.

Mario points both index fingers at Gillian and bows a little.

MARIO  
You're the best.

Gillian passes by Mario on her way out. He steps back a little.

Gillian turns and points to his desk.

GILLIAN  
That's done. You can sign it and send it.

Mario smiles as he shakes his head.

MARIO  
Thanks--

GILLIAN  
And sir, you asked me to remind you to call your friend.

With a '*can't remember*' expression, Mario looks at her.

GILLIAN (CONT'D)  
The guy who didn't answer you yesterday.

Mario nods and spreads his arms.

MARIO  
What would I've done without you Mrs. Davis?

As Gillian exits, Mario rearranges his desk a bit and on his laptop, histrionically taps "send".

He now holds his phone in one hand and inserts the earpiece with the other as he leans back.

He inhales deeply and dials.

INTERCUT

INT. DERRICK'S CONDO - DAY

Derrick's living room appears neglected. Objects seem out of place.

Some physics exams are scattered on the coffee table. Red pen corrections are visible.

The walls are covered with pictures of his parents' embracing astronauts and receiving awards at various ceremonies. An upside-down frame lies on an old-fashioned dresser.

A worn-out Derrick is sprawled on a sofa, in front of a TV that emits murmured voices. A red pen is carelessly held in his hand. His gaze is fixed on the void within the room.

A while goes by before he notices that his phone is ringing. He picks it up slowly and looks at the screen. For a moment, he shuts his eyes and shakes his head. He then accepts the call.

DERRICK  
(Dreary tone)  
Yeah Mario.

MARIO  
Man. Are 'ya good?

As Derrick runs his hand over his head, his eyes dart back and forth.

DERRICK  
(Low tone)  
Yehhh, I'm good.

MARIO  
Come on man, are your folks okay?

It's evident that Derrick is facing adversity.

DERRICK  
Listen Mario, I appreciate this call, but--

Mario heightens his focus on the conversation.



MARIO  
Cut the bullshit. What's going on?  
Perhaps I can be of assistance.

Silence.

Mario adjusts the earpiece a bit.

MARIO (CONT'D)  
Are'ya there? You know--

DERRICK  
The bad news first? Or rather the  
very bad news--

Mario's gaze shows great concern.

MARIO  
(Upset)  
Does one of them have an  
exacerbation? Both?

The predicament Derrick is in takes a physical turn. He strikes his thigh hard with his fist.

DERRICK  
(Trembled voice)  
Bro, I'm losing control. Ahh, you  
know, not like I've ever had  
control since the, ahh, you know,  
but--

MARIO  
(Alarmed)  
Man, can I come over? I'll--

Derrick rises and walks around. His posture and conduct indicate a great deal of tension.

DERRICK  
No, no. Please no. I'll tell you, I  
mean, ahh, I'll describe you the  
situation and, ahh, maybe--

MARIO  
Let's meet in person.

Silence.

DERRICK  
Andrea, ahh, you know, my dad's  
caregiver, yeah? She's leaving.  
(MORE)

DERRICK (CONT'D)  
She's gotta go back to the  
Philippines for personal reasons,  
yeah?

Derrick's voice cracks.

DERRICK (CONT'D)  
My dad is so bound to her, damn it.

Silence.

DERRICK (CONT'D)  
It's over. D'ya get it? I've no  
idea how to break the news to him.  
You know how he needs her.

MARIO  
What the--

Derrick continues to pour out his heart.

DERRICK  
Hang on man, there's more. Now,  
Judy, my mother's caregiver, yeah,  
I've been given an ultimatum by  
her, yeah? If my mother doesn't  
stop yelling at her, she'll leave.  
She's a good caregiver, but it's my  
mother, you know. It's crazy man.

Mario's brain is in work.

Derrick again circles around the room.

MARIO  
We might be--

Derrick waves his arm in the air.

DERRICK  
Ya think we're done? Her vision is  
completely gone. It's neither  
twenty percent nor ten percent  
anymore. It's, I mean, ahh,  
absolute zero. She sees nothing. Ya  
following me? Nothing!

Derrick's legs tremble again. As he tries to grab the  
armrest of the sofa and falls. His phone falls out of his  
hand.

His head is on the couch as he sobs bitterly.

Mario adjusts his earpiece with one hand. Empathy and concern are evident in his body language.

MARIO  
Derrick! Derrick!

His gaze becomes aghast, as he examines his phone.

MARIO (CONT'D)  
Derrick?

Alarmed, Mario leaves the office with the keys to his car.

END INTERCUT

I/E. DERRICK'S CONDO - DAY

Mario emerges from the elevator to find Joel knocking on Derrick's door.

JOEL  
Derrick, please open the door.

Mario approaches. Alarmed.

MARIO  
Thanks for coming on such short notice. Can you hear him? Should I call nine--

Joel turns to Mario with a worried expression. Firstly, he waves his finger negatively, then points to his ear and nods.

Mario appears to be tense. He forcefully knocks on the door and then listens closely.

Abruptly, the door opens. Derrick stands, wearing an embarrassed smile. Tears have made his cheeks wet.

Avoiding eye contact, Derrick gestures for them to enter.

With concerned expressions, Mario and Joel walk in. They stare awkwardly at each other.

Derrick hurriedly clears a few items.

The three sit down.

Silence.

MARIO (CONT'D)  
Who's with'em now?

DERRICK  
Can I get you something--

MARIO  
I'm good.

Derrick now turns his gaze to Joel.

Joel shakes his head and smiles awkwardly.

Derrick sits back on the couch and rests his hands on either side.

The agony he's going through seems to be excruciating.

DERRICK  
For now they're fine. She's with  
him. So he's happy, for now, you  
know. And Judy is there too.

Again Derrick turns his gaze to Joel as he gestures towards Mario.

DERRICK (CONT'D)  
Did he fill ya in?

Joel clears his throat and shifts his gaze from Derrick to Mario and back again. An empathic nod is given by him.

Derrick takes a deep breath.

His gaze is pointed straight ahead. In his speech, he uses his hands.

DERRICK (CONT'D)  
(Voice stifled)  
How do I tell my old man? That's my  
only concern, you know. How should  
I tell him? I mean, ahh, he needs  
her and he's bound to her. He'll  
die. It's obvious. If she leaves,  
he won't want to live.

Derrick gets up. Tears fill his eyes. Agitated, he scrutinizes his friends. He then walks up and down the living room.

Both Mario and Joel follow him with their gazes.

Mario gets up. He stops Derrick by placing his hand on his shoulder as he passes him. He looks at him intently.

MARIO  
How can we help?

Derrick avoids eye contact.

Mario bends slightly to make eye contact.

MARIO (CONT'D)  
Are these 'family issues' or  
whatever, true? I mean, uhm, you  
know. Is it the money? We can--

Derrick now stares at Mario. He then shakes his head, frees himself from Mario's grasp and sits down.

DERRICK  
She's going. That's a given.  
Nothing we can do about it. It's my  
father, he's my concern.

Mario sits down as well. His gaze remains glued to Derrick's.

MARIO  
Can you hospitalize him on some  
pretext, for a few days? You know--

DERRICK  
(Blank stare)  
It's a death sentence to  
hospitalize him. I'd rather die  
than do that to him.

Derrick now shakes his head.

DERRICK (CONT'D)  
You must understand. Her presence  
is so valuable in his situation. He  
adores her. She's great. She's much  
more patient than I am. Since the  
accident, I haven't seen him smile  
without her nearby. Are yah with  
me?

With a grim expression, Derrick scrutinizes his friends.

DERRICK (CONT'D)  
He smiles only when she's around.  
You get it? What am I talking  
about? He communicates only to her!  
So, how do I break the bad news to  
him?

Derrick leans his elbows against his thighs and rests his head between his fingers.

Derrick (CONT'D)

(Loud)

Shhhit.

Mario clears his throat. He looks at Joel and then at Derrick

MARIO

Correct me if I'm wrong. Uhm, your father's disability is physical, isn't it? His brain, I mean, is fine, yes? Surely he can--

DERRICK

His frustration is the issue, not his physical condition. It's his despair. Damn it, if it wasn't for Andrea, he would've died. Her presence literally keeps him going.

JOEL

Is he, uhm, I mean, does he see a therapist or, you know, is he part of a support group?

Derrick inhales deeply.

DERRICK

Initially, he attended support meetings. When it became clear to him that he would never return to the lab and that he would not receive the promised appointment to head NASA, he stopped attending.

MARIO

(Amazed)  
Head NASA??

JOEL

(Thrilled)  
What?

DERRICK

Listen guys, before the accident it was confidential. After? Ahh, who cares?

Mario and Joel are both awestruck.

Joel nods as he examines the pictures on the wall. Mario massages his cheeks.

MARIO

Wow, I guess, uhm, sorry, I'm speechless, and--

DERRICK

You're speechless?? I've got to tell him somehow. Got'ta do it.

Derrick spreads his arms wide.

DERRICK (CONT'D)

I have no idea how.

Joel gets up and walks around the room. His mind is clearly filled with thoughts.

With a serious face, he turns to Derrick.

JOEL

Obviously, this is tragic. Yet, we should be practical. Are there any physicians who are aware of his condition? Someone, you know--

DERRICK

Well, Dr. Coleman-Evans, you know, Chief Health and Medical Officer at NASA, considers herself a good friend. Whenever she's in town, she comes over, but--

Mario points at Derrick.

MARIO

There you are--

Derrick inhales deeply and shakes his head.

DERRICK

Dr. Coleman-Evans always attempts to conduct positive dialogue, to encourage him, you know, when she comes over. Then again, he is so embarrassed of his situation, he just murmurs without establishing eye contact. It's so fuckin awkward.

Mario and Joel look empathetically at Derrick.

JOEL

Prior to the accident, were they close?

Derrick nods, still troubled.

DERRICK

Yeah. Both families met out of work often, you know--

Joel straightens up. He speaks with his hands.

JOEL

In my opinion Dr. Coleman-Evans is a key figure here.

DERRICK

As I just said, he just murmurs when she's around.

Mario appears to be exploring the possibilities. He straightens too.

MARIO

Wait, wait, Joel has a point. But this should be a joint effort. Uhm, I think the caregiver, what's her name, Andrea, yeah?

Mario plumbs Derrick's reaction.

MARIO (CONT'D)

She should also be around--

JOEL

Good idea.

A glimmer of hope is visible in Derrick's eyes as he examines his friends.

JOEL (CONT'D)

It's essential to provide him with hope. We should offer him an appropriate alternative.

Again, Derrick's face goes numb.

DERRICK

Alternative? Can't you get it? This is precisely the problem. He is immensely attached to Andrea. You must understand. When she takes a weekend off, he becomes so depressed, he neither eats nor talks till she's back.

Joel and Mario exchange glances. Mario stands up and goes to examine a photograph of Derrick's parents near a space shuttle. He slightly nods.



MARIO

Very well. First, how much time do we have? I mean, when is she leaving? Has she--

Derrick's scrunches up his face.

DERRICK

I've no idea. She said soon.

Silence.

Mario sits and scratches the back of his head.

MARIO

What if? Uhm, what if?

He turns around abruptly, pointing a finger out.

MARIO (CONT'D)

Andrea. Yes. I believe she can find a suitable replacement. I'm sure she's familiar with the caregiver community. Surely--

DERRICK

(Loudly and angrily)

Stop! Stop! You're not listening to me.

(Tone softens)

The bond created between my father and Andrea is at stake here. She is essential to him. Another caregiver isn't the solution.

Mario and Joel exchange glances.

For a short while, Derrick holds his head in his hands and keeps his eyes closed.

Mario and Joel examine him.

Derrick moves awkwardly on the couch as he opens his eyes.

DERRICK (CONT'D)

Let's say, for discussion's sake, Andrea finds someone, yes? Who assures me that my father will agree to accept her?

MARIO

Andrea can help us with that. But, hang on.

A curious expression crosses Mario's face as he turns to Derrick.

MARIO (CONT'D)

What do you mean it's a given? What exactly are her issues? Maybe--

DEREK

She's leaving, nothing--

JOEL

Yeah, Mario has a point.

As Derrick gazes back and forth between Mario and Joel, he leans back. It is evident that he's contemplating something.

DERRICK

I ahh, I didn't, you know, I didn't go into details. She said she has important issues at home, and I--

MARIO

What issues? Family? Health? Finance? Did she not clarify?

DERRICK

No, I didn't ahh--

JOEL

So we need to look into that too.

Mario speaks directly to Derrick.

MARIO

Time to get down to business.

A mixture of curiosity and hope fills Derrick's eyes as he stares at Mario.

DERRICK

What do ya mean? I--

MARIO

Can you arrange a meeting with Andrea and Dr. Coleman-Evans, that is ASAP of course.

Joel nods affirmatively.

Derrick is hesitant.

DERRICK

How? I mean--

His hands open in a questioning gesture as he glances between his friends rapidly.

DERRICK (CONT'D)

Andrea can come over if I ask her,  
but Dr. Coleman-Evans? I'm not sure  
she--

JOEL

If she's as close as you say she  
is, I'm sure she'll understand.

MARIO

We must act fast.

Mario stands up, followed by Joel.

Derrick lingers for a moment. He stares at them intently. He  
nods and gets up too.

Mario and Joel walk to the door. At the door they turn  
around.

MARIO (CONT'D)

(Confident tone)

We're with ya on this. We'll find a  
solution, please don't worry.

A confused and embarrassed Derrick stares at them. He nods.

INT. ELEVATOR - DAY

Joel and Mario stand with their faces sealed. As the elevator  
stops, Joel holds the door and turns to Mario.

JOEL

Head NASA, ahh?

MARIO

Yeah. Shit!

INT. TONY'S OFFICE - DAY

Tony's office is placed at the far end of a warehouse. It  
exudes emptiness and grayness and lacks any decorative  
elements or design.

A simple fluorescent lighting system illuminates the room.

The main warehouse area is clearly visible through a large  
window without curtains.

At the back of the office stands a simple desk with a small  
computer monitor.

Several documents and furniture catalogs are scattered on the table in no particular order. Next to the desk is an old-fashioned file cabinet.

A blank stare fills Tony's face as he stares at the monitor. His left elbow rests on the table and his left palm holds his chin.

MR. OLSON (O.S.)  
(Thunderous and angry)  
Tony!

Tony clearly hears his name called.

He ignores.

MR. OLSON (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
(Louder)  
Tony! I'm calling you. Where the hell are ya?

Tony's face is filled with embitterment. He breathes deeply, however, he continues to stare at the monitor.

MR. OLSON's figure walks briskly past the large window.

Mr. Olson, in his late 60s, balding and gaunt, now enters the office. He stands by Tony's desk and glares at him.

MR. OLSON (CONT'D)  
(Loud with body gestures)  
Why don't you answer me when I call you? What's wrong with you, ha?

Tony gives Mr. Olson a jiffy glance as he arranges the catalogs on his desk.

Mr. Olson grabs a catalog and slams it against the desk hard.

Embarrassed, Tony looks towards Mr. Olson.

MR. OLSON (CONT'D)  
(Loud with body gestures)  
What is the status of the Brooks family order?

Tony's expressionless eyes just stare at Mr. Olson.

MR. OLSON (CONT'D)  
(Loud with body gestures)  
Is it ready? Have you labeled it?

Through the large window, Tony notices a WAREHOUSE WORKER peering into his office. He shifts uncomfortably in his chair. His gaze returns to Mr. Olson.

TONY  
(Softly)  
No dad, I'll--

MR. OLSON  
(Loud with body gestures)  
Have you hired a contractor for this project? Have you coordinated with the carriers?

TONY  
I said I'll--

MR. OLSON  
(Loud)  
Damn It, what have you been doing since the morning?

Tony's gaze is briefly directed towards the window. The warehouse worker now vanishes.

Mr. Olson walks towards the door.

TONY  
I'm busy--

Mr. Olson turns back to Tony.

MR. OLSON  
Busy my ass.

Mr. Olson now points his finger and waves it at Tony.

MR. OLSON (CONT'D)  
(Intimidating tone)  
This shipment should be out of here already. Damn it, I need the warehouse floor space.

Mr. Olson exits.

Tony stares at the door for a moment. With both hands, he stretches the skin of his face.

He then leaves the office.

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

A side street near a large square, Jersey City.

Kevin sits on a bench with his laptop. A cigarette hangs from his mouth. There's an empty 'take-away' coffee cup beside him.

He creases up his face as he studies carefully an online storage unit auction site. His pupils move rapidly from side to side.

Abruptly, he straightens up. He inhales, lingers slightly with the smoke and then blows it out, followed by a dirty cough. He now holds the cigarette in his hand.

He firmly strikes the bench with his free hand as he shakes his head.

KEVIN

Damnit!

Kevin examines his surroundings.

He once again browses the site and considers his options.

Utilizing the magnifying glass feature, he focuses on a specific image on the site. He sees a bid of twenty dollars is currently on the table for this auction.

As he raises his head upward, he closes his eyes and tarries. He opens his eyes and focuses on the keyboard shortly. Then he taps the digits four and zero and press ENTER.

He shuts the laptop and straightens up. His attention is now drawn to the fact that the cigarette has been burned to the filter.

He examines the surroundings, squishes the filter towards the bench and throws it under it. Then, lights another cigarette and examines his surroundings again.

INT. LARGE SUPERMARKET - DAY

Chad examines the products on the shelves as he walks through the aisles. At the same time, he is on the phone with Kevin.

CHAD

Come on man, I'm not going to lose money again.

KEVIN (O.S.)

(Enthusiastically)

No, no, this time it's a win-win situation. Don't--

It's evident that Chad is impatient.

CHAD

Yeh, yeh. With you it's always the best deal or whatever. Take your business elsewhere.

KEVIN (O.S.)

Come on man, this one can put me back on my feet. I'll get my ex's teeth out of my neck--

An ATTRACTIVE WOMAN, in her early fifties searching for a particular item attracts Chad's attention. As he examines her from feet to head, he smiles.

CHAD

(Loud, on the phone)  
Wait, wait, wait. A close examination is required here.

KEVIN (O.S.)

What the fuck?

Chad's smile widens as he approaches the attractive woman.

CHAD

Talk to you later. I'm busy.

Chad hangs up and places his phone in his blazer inner pocket.

CHAD (CONT'D)

May I help you, mam?

The woman scrutinizes him hesitantly.

ATTRACTIVE WOMAN

Uhm, d'ya work here?

CHAD

Do I work here? Well, some people say I don't work at all.

Chad laughs out loud while lightly touching the woman's shoulder.

She dodges his touch.

In satisfaction, Chad nods. He performs a sweeping hand gesture towards her.

CHAD (CONT'D)

I own this establishment.

Astonished, the woman stares at him. She takes a step back.

ATTRACTIVE WOMAN

(Defensively)

Uhm, I'm looking for inexpensive disposable cutlery. Do you--

Chad continues to chuckle.

CHAD

Sure, disposables are in the next aisle. You'll find the inexpensive brands on the bottom shelf.

He gestures with his hand.

The woman walks away.

Chad clears his throat as he continues to examine her.

CHAD (CONT'D)

Ahh, excuse me, mam.

Instinctively, the woman turns her head back.

CHAD (CONT'D)

You know, I wonder,  
(With a flirtatious smile)  
Why don't you send your husband shopping?

The woman stares directly into his eyes.

ATTRACTIVE WOMAN

(Assertively)

My husband works to provide for our family. Unlike some men, he doesn't hit on women in the supermarket.

Vigorously, she walks away.

Chad taps on his belly and grins.

CHAD

(To himself)

I wouldn't count on that.

Chad now continues to examine the shelves. His attention is drawn to a package that has been thrown under the shelves.

Chad scours for someone. He notices a YOUNG MAN of Asian descent, dressed in the supermarket uniform, arranging products in the vegetable and fruit department.



He waves.

CHAD (CONT'D)  
Hey, hey there, you. Come here.

The young man notices Chad's call and rushes to him. With an awkward smile, he approaches Chad.

YOUNG MAN  
Yes sir.

In a scowl, Chad points beneath the shelf. His hand gesticulates nervously.

Still smiling awkwardly, the young man bends slightly, notices the package and nods.

YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)  
Sure sir. Yes sir. Right away sir.

As the young man drops to his knees and tries to reach the discarded package, Chad leaves the scene.

INT. CORRIDOR - EVENING

The corridor is ample and fancy.

Thomas, wearing a luxury, brand-name suit, stands outside the elevator. He appears agitated.

With one hand, he holds his phone to his ear, and with the other, he holds a briefcase.

THOMAS  
(Rigid tone)  
Goddamn it, wasn't I clear? I don't discuss this at home. Right now I'm at home!

Thomas shakes his head and ends the call. He proceeds towards the door of his penthouse.

Outside, he lingers for a moment. A sigh escapes his lips as he leans against the wall. In an abrupt movement, he strikes the wall hard and straightens himself. He glances in both directions before entering.

INT. PENTHOUSE LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Spacious and well furnished, the living room has a contemporary style that is pleasing to the eye. The walls are adorned with large modern artworks.

Despite two large chandeliers hanging from the ceiling, the room's current lighting is hidden.

A wood bar with a posh design is situated at the far end of the room. Bar lighting differs slightly from the rest of the room's lighting.

Large glass sliding doors lead to a large balcony. A nice set of curtains, from the ceiling to the floor, partially obscure the view.

In an armchair, Amanda sits with legs crossed. Her eyes are closed and a big smile adorns her face. The sound of music coming from Air Pods moves her body.

THOMAS  
(O.S.)  
(Het up tone.)  
Honey.

No response.

Thomas enters. He loosens his tie and places his brief case and phone on a dresser.

Amanda's moving head catches Thomas's attention. He removes his tie and jacket and places them in a dedicated closet near the entrance.

Procrastination is apparent as he stretches his neck.

From behind, he then approaches Amanda and bends towards her.

AMANDA  
(Softly)  
I know you're here.

Amanda opens her eyes, raises one arm and pulls Thomas's head towards her.

They kiss in this impossible position.

With a smile, Thomas breaks free from the hold.

THOMAS  
How did'ya know?

Amanda clings to Thomas as she stands up. She hugs him.

AMANDA  
(Whispering)  
I know everything.

Amanda takes a step back and examines Thomas carefully.

AMANDA (CONT'D)  
Are'ya okay?

As Thomas avoids eye contact, he turns towards the bar.

Amanda sits down. Her gaze follows him.

THOMAS  
Uhm, sure! A drink?

A pensive look crosses Amanda's face.

AMANDA  
(Hesitant tone)  
Okay.

She's clearly bothered.

AMANDA (CONT'D)  
Uhm, yeh. Whatever you're having.

Thomas reaches behind the counter and retrieves two bottles of beer. Opens them, discards the caps in a bin, and sits next to Amanda.

A bottle is passed to her, and he looks in her eyes and raises his bottle.

THOMAS  
Cheers.

The expression on Amanda's face is one of wonder.

She vacillates.

In a hesitant motion, she reaches her bottle towards Thomas's raised bottle, until there is a click between them.

AMANDA  
Cheers.

As they swig from the bottle, their eyes meet.

Silence.

Thomas places the bottle on the coffee table and turns to Amanda. His expression is ambiguous.

THOMAS  
So, I began online research. It  
turns out that we can start  
adoption procedures online. Then--

Thomas's phone rings. As he gazes towards the entrance, his face becomes troubled.

He turns back to Amanda.

THOMAS (CONT'D)  
(Louder)  
Uhm, we'll be interviewed by a  
welfare representative and...

The phone keeps on ringing.

THOMAS (CONT'D)  
A uh... a uh.

Abruptly, he gets up and vigorously walks towards the entrance. He checks his phone, turns it off, and lingers at the entrance.

Amanda follows him with her gaze. She catches his eye.

There is concern on her face.

Thomas now walks towards the balcony. An angry expression is on his face.

Amanda's gaze follows him.

AMANDA  
(Edgy tone.)  
It's your brothers friends again,  
isn't it?

Thomas ignores her. He opens the large glass doors and steps outside.

