

Rev. 5/09/00 (Buff)
Rev. 5/11/00 (Salmon)
Rev. 5/18/00 (Cherry)
Rev. 5/30/00 (Tan)
Rev. 6/01/00 (White)
Rev. 6/05/00 (Blue)
Rev. 6/12/00 (Pink)

SWEET NOVEMBER

by

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Based on the screenplay "Sweet November"

by

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SHOOTING DRAFT

June 12, 2000

4/5/00

FADE IN:

1 EXT. SAN FRANCISCO - DAY 1

OPENING CREDITS and MUSIC play as dawn breaks over the city by the bay. Sounds of intense SEXUAL EXERTION FADE UP.

2 INT. NELSON'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY 2

In what is more workout than lovemaking, NELSON MOSS (36) thrusts vigorously into ANGELICA (32), lying spread-eagled on her back. An ALARM goes off, and on cue, Nelson climaxes. OPENING CREDITS and MUSIC FADE OUT.

Finished, Nelson hops to his feet on his way...

NELSON

That was good...

Ambivalent, Angelica watches as Nelson enters the bathroom.

NELSON

Top dog, big dog, bad dog...

3 INT. NELSON'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - DAY 3

Nelson showers.

NELSON

Who's the best dog? It's my dog.

4 INT. NELSON'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY 4

Towel-wrapped, Nelson keeps talking as he crosses the room.

NELSON

It's the big, bad dog.

Angelica pulls on her underwear as she watches Nelson exit.

5 INT. NELSON'S APARTMENT - LIVING AREA - DAY 5

The penthouse is orderly and stark. Entering, Nelson grabs an incoming fax, turns on a coffeemaker and picks up a remote control. Ignoring a stunning view of the city, he closes the blinds and turns ON FIVE TELEVISIONS.

6 INT. NELSON'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY

6

Fax in hand, Nelson speed-dials on a cell phone as he passes Angelica. Entering a walk-in closet, he dresses in a hurry.

NELSON

Number one dog, dog at the top --

ANGELICA

Slow down. We need to talk.

NELSON

Vince?

VINCE (V.O.)

(over phone)

How about those Vitagirl numbers?

NELSON

(into phone)

Yeah, looking good.

(to Angelica, fake
innocent)

Talk about what?

He sees the look on her face, turns his head, rolls his eyes and mouths "us" as she says:

ANGELICA

Us.

He mouths "shit," then turns to flash her a reassuring smile, holding up a finger to wait as he finishes his call.

VINCE (V.O.)

We're T-minus 72 hours from fast
food fame or oblivion. Ready to
sign off on this copy?

Nelson makes an apologetic face to Angelica, uses work to avoid dealing with her, hurries into the living room.

NELSON

Almost. Meet you in twenty.

7 INT. NELSON'S APARTMENT - LIVING AREA - DAY

7

He hangs up the phone, and takes a deep breath. He is in a state of extremely jangled nerves. He pours a giant coffee, praying Angelica will stay in the bedroom as he channel-surfs on all five TVs, stopping on a hot dog commercial.

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED:

7

Catching a good one, he switches sets to the same channel. Braces himself as she enters, wearing undies.

NELSON

Us. Right. Hey -- isn't there some kinda limit on 'us' talks? You know, one okay, two if necessary, three, cruel and unusual.

He flashes a smile and bolts, evading her once again.

8 INT. NELSON'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY

8

Nelson re-enters the closet and finishes dressing, obsessed.

NELSON

Good dog, great dog...

ANGELICA

You forgot about my parents, didn't you?

He did.

NELSON

I can't make it. I'm sorry.

ANGELICA

Nelson, this is their third trip to the city. This is important to me.

NELSON

And this account is very important to me.

(sees how hurt she is)

Come on, it's Doctor Diggety, it's practically an American institution.

(stops)

Hey -- does that play? American institution --

ANGELICA

Stop it -- you know there are actually people who don't work 24 hours a day. They stop. Relax. Have lives.

Dressed in chic clothes, Nelson grabs his suitcase.

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED:

8

NELSON

Yeah, and I'm late for mine.

He rushes out, the door slamming shut behind him.

9 INT. ELEVATOR - DAY

9

Sleepy Madison Avenue types surround Nelson, wide awake as he talks on his cell phone.

NELSON

-- Look, I'm not sure I like the tagline anymore, it's working too hard, needs to be deadpan. I wanna play with it for a few hours --

VINCE (V.O.)

(over phone)

Cut it out, man, copy's good. Apply the 'If it ain't broke' rule.

10 INT. JABE & DUNNE - DAY

10

The elevator opens onto an advertising agency, abuzz with activity. Nelson is met by VINCE HOLLAND (36). Walking side-by-side, both men continue talking into their phones.

NELSON

(over phone)

That rule applies to mediocrity. We want perfection.

VINCE

(over phone)

What we want is a check, Nelson. And bonuses. And promotions. You worry too much.

NELSON

I worry because worrying about losing keeps you winning.

Suddenly aware of themselves, they pocket their phones as an OFFICE MANAGER hands Nelson an advertising award.

OFFICE MANAGER

Congrats, Nelson. You got the Ad Age for the Pelican spot.

(CONTINUED)

10

CONTINUED:

10

Unimpressed, Nelson starts to hand the award to his secretary, BEATRICE (23) -- when Vince plucks it away.

VINCE

You'll hide it like all the others. Whereas I'll take it and put it where it belongs. Over my bed.

Nelson picks up a stack of trades as he blows by Beatrice's desk on the way into his office. Vince follows him in.

BEATRICE

Good morning, Mr. Moss. Vince.

Greeting her, Nelson ignores Beatrice. Vince flirts.

NELSON AND VINCE

Morning, Beatrice.

11

INT. JABE AND DUNNE - NELSON'S OFFICE - DAY

11

A temple of California corporate cool, the place looks like a hip playpen for a kid who never grew up.

Nelson immediately settles down to work, furiously typing new copy into his computer as Vince nervously peers over his shoulder to observe the changes, wants to distract him, change subject.

VINCE

Hey, did you hear? Edgar Price is coming out of retirement. Says everybody's ripping him off; might as well get back in the game and rip himself off.

NELSON

Edgar Price, huh? He's great.

VINCE

Remember that Mercedes spot he did... a trillion years ago?
(folds hands together
as if in prayer)
Genius.

NELSON

Yeah, well maybe a trillion years from now some guy will say the same about you. If you get off your butt and work on this tag.

(CONTINUED)

11 CONTINUED:

11

The door opens and their boss, RAEFORD DUNNE, pokes his head in. He is as anxious as Vince and Nelson about this account.

DUNNE

How's my dream team? Got it locked up?

NELSON

Sure, chief. Just finessing some --

VINCE

Minor details. Minor.

11A INT. JABE AND DUNNE - ART DEPARTMENT - DAY

11A

Nelson and Vince are walking into an art department.

VINCE

Can't wait to show you these boards -- I mean, they came out great, perfect. The best work I've ever done -- of course with your help --

(pauses)

Client's gonna love 'em.

By now they are inside the room and Nelson is quickly surveying a set of storyboards which we don't see. He jabs a finger as he indicates each one, all business.

NELSON

Make this night.

VINCE

Nelson --

NELSON

Give me a bonfire.

VINCE

Nelson, stop --

NELSON

Make this three quarter.
(points to another board)

Nastier. Give me more cleavage, more dogs --

VINCE

Nelly -- stop, stop, stop!

(CONTINUED)

11A CONTINUED:

11A

Just then, Beatrice enters the room, relieved to find Nelson there.

BEATRICE

There you are. Did you forget your one o'clock at the D.M.V.?

NELSON

Sort of. Reschedule.

BEATRICE

The deadline to renew is today.

NELSON

So let it expire.

BEATRICE

It was expired when you got the ticket. That's why you have to go.

NELSON

Beatrice, I don't have time for this. Wait till the presentation's over...

BEATRICE

If you don't renew today, they'll suspend your license, which means the next time you get pulled over, they can throw you in jail. And I bet you don't have time for that, either.

A hush falls over the room.

VINCE

Nobody beats the D.M.V., Nels. Not even you.

12 INT. DMV - DAY

12

Nelson is in hell. The "appointments" line is endless, and a BABY behind him is SCREAMING. Checking his watch, Nelson is scribbling more copy in a notebook as the BABY'S PITCH climbs HIGHER.

13 INT. DMV - TEST ROOM - DAY

13

Annoyed beyond belief, Nelson waits as a PROCTOR passes out tests to a room full of random San Franciscans.

(CONTINUED)

PROCTOR

There'll be no talking, eating, or drinking. If your personal hygiene becomes a distraction, you will be asked to leave --

Running late, SARA (25), stumbles into the room. At the same time, the paper bag in her arms ruptures, spilling a motley assortment of groceries. She gets down on her hands and knees starts picking them up, reaches for a salami log under Nelson's chair...

PROCTOR

If you need to go to the bathroom, raise your hand.

SARA

Can you just pass me the Columbo...

NELSON

The...?

SARA

The salami... under your chair.

PROCTOR

You cannot take the test in the bathroom.

Nelson reaches for the salami, hands it to her.

NELSON

Here you go.

PROCTOR

If you do not come back from the bathroom, you cannot pass the test.

During this, Sara has taken a seat next to Nelson.

PROCTOR

You may begin.

Halfway through the test, Nelson is beginning to fray.

NELSON

Falling rock zone... Christ.

(CONTINUED)

Nelson's eyes wander over to Sarah's test.

NELSON

Hey. Psst.

Sara gives him a "cut it out" look and returns to her test.

NELSON

Number nine. True or false?

SARA

What? You wonder why? What?

PROCTOR

Excuse me! Bring your test forward!

Nelson hunkers down.

SARA

Me?

PROCTOR

Yes, you.

SARA

But I was just trying to tell him to stop...

She's too ethical to rat, too annoyed to let him off the hook.

SARA

... talking to me.

PROCTOR

Bring your test forward!

Sara reluctantly approaches the Proctor, who takes her test.

PROCTOR

You may retake the test in 30 days.

SARA

What?! 30 days! That's a long time -- that's so unfair! I wasn't doing anything --

The immovable Proctor grimly shakes his head, points to door. Steaming, Sara returns to her desk. Gathering her things, she glares balefully at Nelson, who pretends not to notice.

Nelson, talking on his phone, emerges from the DMV.

NELSON

Nelson Moss for Vince. Did Rubin
tweak the music?

VINCE (V.O.)

No, he said it's fine.

NELSON

Cut him. Get Johnson McDonald,
give him the sample, he'll know
what I want.

Just then he notices Sara sitting on the hood of his brand
new Mercedes, she gives him a jaunty wave.

SARA

How'd the test go? Hope you
passed.

He ignores her for a moment, something has caught his eye
-- a beaten-up van with yapping dogs painted on it and
the words: 'BARKING MAD DOG GROOMERS AND DAY CARE.
Sanity in a dog-eat-dog world.' It is parked next to his
Mercedes.

NELSON

(into phone)

Hey, Vince, what about this?
'Barking mad for Doctor Diggety.
Sanity in a dog-eat-dog world.'

VINCE (V.O.)

(over phone)

Now I know you've lost your mind.

SARA

Congratulations, you can read.

She keeps sitting on his hood, staring at him.

NELSON

(to Vince)

Call you back.

He hangs up. Slowly walks over to her, not thrilled
that she's sitting on his car.

NELSON

Can I help you?

SARA

Can you help me?

(CONTINUED)

NELSON

Yeah.

She keeps staring, says nothing. He feels pinned by her gaze, peers around, then points to her van.

NELSON

Oh -- that must be your van.

SARA

This must be your car.

NELSON

And you can't drive? Right, right. This is how you make --

He reaches for his wallet.

NELSON

Oh, shit, right. Well, how much do you make? Doesn't look like much.

I'll cover your expenses --

(reaches for money,
decides against it,
pulls out business
card instead)

Here, call my secretary, she'll take care of it --

She takes the card, peers quizzically at it.

SARA

Is this quest for redemption coming from true remorse, or are you just worried that my sitting on your car will leave a big dent?

NELSON

The dent, I guess.

SARA

That's what I thought.

There's a flicker of recognition in her eyes, as if she has confirmed something in her own mind. He gestures to her -- get up. She doesn't budge. Annoyed, he reaches in his wallet and shoves a hundred dollar bill at her.

SARA

What are you doing?

NELSON

Buying redemption.

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED: (2)

15

SARA
(refuses money)
Oh, redemption's not for sale
today.

NELSON
Okay, I guess I'm going to hell.
Get off my car.

Stunned, she gets off his CAR as he scrambles inside and
ROARS out of the lot.

16 INT. NELSON'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

16

Nelson works out at an intense pace on an treadmill as
he watches all five TV's. Other than shelves of glass
vases and ceramics, the only other decor is a fish tank
occupied by a lone fish. The MICROWAVE BEEPS, Nelson
jumps off mumbling:

NELSON
What is it? It's a hot dog. It's
a hot dog. It's a...

Opening the oven, he grabs a hot dog, nearly burns his
hand.

NELSON
It's a hot dog.
(eureka)
That's right! It's a hot dog!
It's a hot dog!

He cuts it and jabs a piece on a fork, just as the INTERCOM
BUZZES. As he speaks he stares at the hot dog on fork.

NELSON
Yeah?

MANNY (V.O.)
(over intercom)
Mr. Moss, this is Manny downstairs,
I gotta bit of a situation here. A
certain lady, she says...
(whispers,
embarrassed)
Some very strange and personal
things about you.

Nelson still stares at the hot dog on fork, transfixed.

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED:

16

SARA (V.O.)
 (over intercom)
 Give me that thing.

MANNY
 (over intercom)
 Miss, you can't do --

Nelson hears SCUFFLING sounds filter over the INTERCOM.
 Then Sara's voice wafts up, honeyed and seductive.

SARA (V.O.)
 Hey, big spender, come down here.
 I can't stop thinking about you.

Nelson's bewildered, and intrigued. Checks his watch,
 mutters:

NELSON
 Ten minutes.
 (presses "talk")
 Okay. Be right down.

As he walks away, he takes a bite of the hot dog on fork
 and nearly gags before spitting it out.

17 INT. NELSON'S BUILDING - LOBBY - DUSK

17

In sweats, Nelson comes out of the elevator. Sara is busy
 listening to a besotted MANNY tell her his whole life
 story.

MANNY
 -- And then my ex-wife, she say
 you can't fix nothing, Manny, and
 she leaves me for plumber --

Sara finally notices Nelson approaching, flashes a smile.

SARA
 Look at that, Manny. My very own
 Prince Charming.
 (to Nelson)
 I don't think I've ever met such a
 royal asshole in my whole life.

Nelson stops in his tracks, staggered. She is off on a
 toot.

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED:

17

SARA

Does your mother know you treat women like hookers? Or did she raise you to think being nice means patronizing the whole world?

MANNY

Uh-oh. I smell a problem.

Nelson grabs Sara by the arm, whisks her outside.

18 EXT. NELSON'S BUILDING - DUSK

18

Nelson and Sara face off in the street.

NELSON

How did you find me?

She holds up the business card he gave her.

SARA

I'm smart.
(pauses)
And I need a ride.

NELSON

This is a joke, right?
(as she shakes her head)
You want a ride -- from me?

SARA

Yep. Face it, it's your fault I can't drive. The least you can do is schlep me somewhere. It's quick, painless --

NELSON

I am not a schlepper.

Manny knocks on the glass from the inside and holds up a handwritten sign that reads, "You want me call police?" Nelson shakes his head. Turns back to Sara.

NELSON

Been a ball, but some of us have to work.

SARA

Don't make me go too far.

(CONTINUED)

18

CONTINUED:

18

He makes a gesture, cutting her off, heads toward the entrance, Sara stops a clean-cut couple entering the building.

SARA

Maybe you can help? This man -- he's your neighbor, right -- has been standing naked in his window flashing his ass at me and I want him to stop --

NELSON

Ignore her, please.

As the flustered couple scurries inside, Sara stops a young woman on her way out.

SARA

Hi, how are you? We've got a case of vodka and a bathtub full of fudge upstairs, would you like to join us?

NELSON

Stop it or I'll call the police.

SARA

Great. Go ahead. I love the police.

NELSON

Do you have any shame at all?
(pauses)
No.

19

INT. MERCEDES - NIGHT

19

The picture of displeasure, Nelson drives. Sara checks out the luxe car, the leather, the lights on dash. Not impressed.

SARA

By the way, my name's Sara Deever.
(points)
Okay, get in the right lane, put your turn signal on --

NELSON

I know how to drive!

SARA

You want to take the 80 to Oakland --

(CONTINUED)

19 CONTINUED:

19

NELSON

Oakland? You said this would be quick.

SARA

I said it would be painless, too.

Then, she flashes a warm, disarming smile, full of charm -- completely throwing him yet again.

SARA

It's so nice of you to do this for me, Nelson. Sorry if I went too far, but I really did need the ride.

20 EXT. OAKLAND - NIGHT

20

In the midst of an industrial district, the Mercedes pulls up near a nondescript building.

21 INT. MERCEDES - NIGHT

21

Sara pulls a flaming red wig out of her bag and puts it on. Nelson is not amused.

NELSON

Ha-ha. What do you plan to do with that?

SARA

Commit a heinous crime. You'll wait, won't you?

Sara snatches the keys out of the ignition.

SARA

Of course you will.

She climbs out. Nelson bangs his head against the steering wheel.

NELSON

What am I doing?

22 EXT. OAKLAND - NIGHT

22

Sara approaches the building. She goes in. Moments later, an ALARM BLARES.

4/5/00

17.

23 INT. MERCEDES - NIGHT 23

The ALARM CLANGING, Nelson is frozen, completely terrified, realizing this could be far more serious than he imagined.

24 EXT. OAKLAND - NIGHT 24

Carrying lumpy sacks, Sara flees the building.

25 INT. MERCEDES - NIGHT 25

Sara jumps in and jams the keys in the ignition.

SARA

Go! Go! Go!

Nelson is so frightened, he obeys her and FIRES UP the CAR.

26 EXT. OAKLAND - NIGHT 26

Nelson's CAR SCREECHES into motion.

27 INT. MERCEDES - NIGHT 27

SARA

Don't you feel like Bonnie and Clyde?

NELSON

They got shot. Don't open it -- I don't wanna know! This is coercion -- entrapment!

SARA

Will you relax? They're just...

To Nelson's amazement, Sara removes two squirming Jack Russell puppies from the bag.

SARA

... some fine furry friends.
(kisses puppies)
Somebody was gonna slice open your little heads and do nasty experiments on your brains, weren't they?

She lets them go as the car stops for a light. Nelson lashes out, furious.

(CONTINUED)

27 CONTINUED:

27

NELSON

Off the leather, off the leather!
 (trying to compose
 himself)

Let me get this straight. You
 humiliated me, harassed and
 exploited me -- just so -- I could
 help you in some cute save-the-
 puppy caper? Off the leather!

SARA

Not cool enough for you? Better
 if we whacked a few people while
 we were at it?

(points to traffic
 light)

You can go on green in California.

27A EXT. OAKLAND STREET - NIGHT

27A

The MERCEDES swerves and SCREECHES as Nelson is assaulted
 by the slobbering pups.

27B OMITTED

27B

&
27C&
27C

28 EXT. GAS STATION - NIGHT

28

The puppies tumble on the ground, Sara crouched on her
 knees plays with them as Nelson fills his tank with gas.
 Down the street he sees a police car scanning the block,
 its searchlight raking the buildings. His eyes light up.

NELSON

Get ready to go to jail, Sara
 Deever.

SARA

You're not gonna tell them.

The car is coming closer, Nelson nods, excited.

NELSON

Oh yeah. Everything.

SARA

(holds her ground)

Oh no, you won't, I have a hunch
 about you.

(CONTINUED)

The car reaches them; as it glides past, Nelson meekly raises his hand to wave, furious that he has capitulated again.

SARA

See? I knew you weren't as hard-ball as you act.

Stone-faced, Nelson admits nothing. Keeps pumping gas.

SARA

Hey, I have an idea. Let's take them back to my place and give them names --

NELSON

Sounds like a million laughs, but I gotta work.

SARA

What kind of work?

NELSON

Advertising.

SARA

Oh, you mean you convince people they need something completely inessential and blight the landscape in the process.

NELSON

Bingo! That's me!

SARA

Is it fun? Do you enjoy it?

NELSON

People tend to enjoy what they're really good at.

SARA

So the answer is -- yes? You do. But does it make you happy?

NELSON

Everyone knows happiness is a myth, an extremely powerful myth --

Sara's laugh starts as a snicker, builds to a full-blown howl.

(CONTINUED)

28 CONTINUED: (2)

28

SARA
-- Created by advertisers!

NELSON
Exactly.

SARA
So what else makes you miserable,
besides your job?

Nelson doesn't answer.

SARA
What do you do for fun?

He doesn't answer, but she acts as if they are conversing.

SARA
I didn't think so. No hobbies,
diversions, kinky obsessions?
(as he doesn't
answer)
I was afraid of that. What
about --

Nelson rams the nozzle back into the pump.

NELSON
Just get in the car.

29 EXT. SARA'S BUILDING - NIGHT

29

The Mercedes pulls up to the curb.

30 INT. MERCEDES - NIGHT

30

SARA
Would you like to come up for a
cup of cocoa?

NELSON
As scintillating as the evening's
been, I'm afraid not.

Sara is undeniably sincere and sexy, and even Nelson can't help but be tempted just a little.

SARA
I'll make a deal with you. Come
up for one cup, and I'll never
ask you for another ride for as
long as I live.

(CONTINUED)

30

CONTINUED:

30

NELSON

No thanks.

SARA

Okay. See you tomorrow then.

Sara starts to get out, but Nelson stops her.

NELSON

Whoa, whoa, whoa -- hold on.

SARA

Is eight o'clock good? You, me, Manny the doorman, that whole thing?

31

INT. SARA'S LOFT - NIGHT

31

Deliberately chaotic, Sara's loft includes the fire pole from the old station and plants galore. As the puppies carouse in a pen, Sara sets two teacups on the kitchen table, where Nelson is sitting, aware of the fact that she is openly checking him out. He tries to strike a nonchalant pose.

SARA

I can help you, Nelson. I have a gift. A special ability to help men with... problems.

Thinking this is a seduction tactic, he plays along.

NELSON

I don't have problems.

SARA

That's usually the first sign.

Nelson groans as she sits down across from him, dead serious.

NELSON

Of what?

SARA

Denial. I think you work too much.

NELSON

Right. What do you know about work?

(CONTINUED)

SARA

Plenty. You admitted you do nothing else, and it doesn't make you happy. How's that for screwy logic?

NELSON

I admitted nothing. I was silent.

SARA

No special interests. No pets. You hate dogs --

NELSON

Busted! Actually, I do have a pet. A fish. Oscar.

SARA

Cold-blooded doesn't count. You're a walking case study: we've got anger, stress, repression, extreme distraction, egocentricity, and control freakism --

NELSON

Control freakism is not a word --

SARA

Look at you, you're a workaholic in such an advanced stage that all your intimacy skills have withered away to almost nothing. Left untreated, Nelson, you could become emotionally extinct.

Nelson rolls his eyes and drinks his cocoa, checking out her messy loft with a wary look, thinking who is this freak?

NELSON

Out of sheer, perverse curiosity, how does a lunatic like you help a guy like me?

SARA

You live in a box. I could open the lid, let some light in.

NELSON

Wow that's deep. I feel cured already, just hearing about it.

(CONTINUED)

SARA

(ignores him)

If you want my help, it'll require a commitment on your part. You'll have to live here with me for one month, no more, no less, no work allowed.

NELSON

You don't even know me, and you're inviting me to move in with you?

Sara nods.

NELSON

How's my girlfriend supposed to feel about that?

SARA

You don't have a girlfriend. I mean, you can feel it... there's something intimate a woman leaves on a man. You don't have that.

NELSON

Her name's Angelica.

SARA

Well you know what? I feel sorry for Angelica.

NELSON

Great, I'll relay that to her when I leave. Which is right about now --

SARA

October's almost over. We can start midnight on the first of November. If you're brave enough to commit, I will devote myself entirely to you.

Nelson gets up.

NELSON

Brave enough, but not stupid enough.

(pause)

Now listen up, moonbeam. Here's how it works. No more harassment, no more rides, no more extortion.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

31 CONTINUED: (3)

31

NELSON (CONT'D)

Next time you come to my building,
I really will call the cops.
Bye-bye.

He leaves. Frowning, Sara reflects on her failed proposal.

32 INT. JABE AND DUNNE - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

32

At the end of a long table, Raeford Dunne sits next to BUDDY LEACH (65). Vince and agency staff fill one side of the table. Leach and the Doctor Diggety brass occupy the other. Leach's face does not betray one emotion as he listens to Nelson's presentation.

On the wall, white sheets of paper cover boards underneath. Nelson is at the top of his game, a consummate showman. He is so amped up, he's practically throwing off sparks. He holds up a board with an image on it -- a silly looking 50's style hot dog cartoon figure -- Doctor Diggety.

NELSON

This is your brand image, Mister Leach -- we polled your primary demographic and you know what eighty-nine percent said: boring. Safe. We need to drop a bomb.

(dropping the board)

We don't want hot dogs safe.

(working up a head of steam)

What's in a hot dog? Don't tell me! I don't wanna know...

He rips down a white sheet of paper to reveal an image of a hot dog engulfed in flames: the hot dog from hell.

NELSON

They're dangerous!

(pauses)

What are we selling here? We're selling temptation -- desire -- animal instincts -- gluttony -- sin. We want to show man as he really is... a savage... he needs fire, he needs food. He hunts and gathers, what does he get?

(CONTINUED)

Rips down another sheet of what looks like a cave man cooking hot dogs on a grill, his family of savages huddled behind him.

NELSON

He gets a hot dog!

(pauses)

We're pagans, we love our rituals
-- our team hits the ball out of
the park, we're screaming, we're
insane. What do we want?

Rips down another sheet of a crowd at baseball game pitched forward screaming like monsters, all holding hot dogs.

NELSON

We want a hot dog!

(pauses)

Let's go straight to your pre-teen
demographic. Kids. The little
angels. They're not angels.
They're monsters. You give them
a tuna sandwich. They don't want
a tuna sandwich...

(rips down another
sheet)

They want a hot dog!

Board showing a little boy glumly holding up a tuna sandwich and an apple, lusting after the hot dog in the hands of a cute girl next to him. Nelson rushes over to another sheet.

NELSON

We need women. We've got the
mothers, we need their daughters.
Let's answer that age old question
-- what does a woman really want?
You know. I know --

(rips sheet exposing
another board)

She wants a hot dog!

He is like some rabid animal, all fired up.

NELSON

We're hot blooded -- we need sex.
We need a sinful, dangerous food.
What is it?

(rips another sheet)

It's a hot dog! It's a hot dog!

(CONTINUED)

He goes to the last sheet and rips it down. A picture of a total babe in devil costume, all bright reds and cleavage, holding a pitchfork, a hot dog impaled on the prong. The gates of hell sizzling overhead. The words: "DOCTOR DIGGETY. IT'S A HOT DOG" at bottom. Nelson pauses for dramatic effect.

NELSON

Doctor Diggety. It's a hot dog.

There is a long pause as Nelson catches his breath and everyone in the room turns to Leach to hear his reaction.

MR. LEACH

No.

NELSON

(taken aback)

No. What do you mean?

MR. LEACH

It's not for us. You don't understand our company.

NELSON

I don't understand? What did you ask for? Edge.

(points)

This is edge.

Not even willing to deal with Nelson, Leach turns to Raeford Dunne, as he prepares to leave.

MR. LEACH

We'll be going with Baker, Bohanen.

He gestures to his team, they rise, start to leave. Nelson starts to snap.

NELSON

Excuse me. I think you're making a big mistake.

DUNNE

Nelson --

Nelson grabs a sales chart, holds it up.

NELSON

I've seen your sales. You're in trouble.

(CONTINUED)

32 CONTINUED: (3)

32

MR. LEACH

(proudly)

No. We are America's favorite
hot dog, son.

He keeps moving toward the door, and Nelson finally snaps.

NELSON

Were. You're a dinosaur. You're
flatlining. You're dead meat.

MR. LEACH

(spins around,
furious)

You just went too far, you little
punk. I'm gonna tell you what I
really think of your campaign.
It's cheap, tasteless crap.

NELSON

Well that's funny, 'cause so is
your product.

DUNNE

Nelson, stop it --

MR. LEACH

I sell a wholesome hot dog, you
prick --

NELSON

It's mystery meat!

DUNNE

Nelson, I'm warning you --

As Leach's minions hustle him out of the room, Vince and
two other ad guys hold Nelson back. He shouts to Leach's
departing figure.

NELSON

It's toxic waste in a tube!
You're killing me! You're
killing us!

33 INT. JABE AND DUNNE - DUNNE'S OFFICE - DAY

33

Dunne storms in, followed quickly by Nelson.

DUNNE

What the hell happened in there?

(CONTINUED)

NELSON

I know -- can you believe that asshole --

DUNNE

I've always said you're brilliant, Nelson. A goddamn machine, but one of these days you're gonna snap, and we're all gonna burn.

NELSON

What are you talking about, burn?

DUNNE

Do you have any idea what was at stake here? How many millions of dollars we just lost? You just ran my agency's name through the gutter --

NELSON

Gutter? I'm the best thing this agency's got!

DUNNE

Do you have any idea what was at stake here? How many millions of dollars we just lost? You just ran my agency's name through the gutter --

NELSON

Gutter? I'm the best thing this company's got!

DUNNE

Confusing style for substance doesn't make you best. It makes you a wreck. You need a vacation. Now.

NELSON

Screw vacation! Give me another account!

DUNNE

Nelson, did you hear me? Take a vacation -- short or permanent, your choice[]--

(CONTINUED)

33 CONTINUED: (2)

33

NELSON

Are you threatening me?

(laughs manically)

That's hilarious. I'm two Clios
ahead of the game, Ray, you can't
afford to lose me --

DUNNE

You're fired.

There's a dead silence for a few beats.

NELSON

Say that again, I don't think I
heard you.

DUNNE

I said you're fired!

34 INT. JABE AND DUNNE - LOBBY - DAY

34

Nelson hurtles through the lobby. Elevator doors open,
Vince charges out. THROUGH plate glass window, sees
Nelson outside.

VINCE

Nels! Nelson, wait!

35 OMITTED

35

36 INT. NELSON'S APARTMENT BUILDING - HALLWAY - DUSK

36

Nelson tries to unlock his door, his hands are shaking so
badly he fumbles with the key, labors to breathe.

37 INT. NELSON'S APARTMENT - DUSK

37

The door opens and Nelson enters, instantly deflating.
He's very relieved to find Angelica emerging from the
bedroom.

NELSON

God, am I glad to see you.

ANGELICA

You are?

He notices she is carrying an overnight bag. She musters
her strength, mind made up.

(CONTINUED)

ANGELICA

No muss, no fuss. Let's try to do this with a little dignity, shall we?

She crosses toward the door, past him. He is shocked.

NELSON

This is not a good time for this, Angelica.

ANGELICA

Hard to believe but it's not your call, Nelson. I just finally realized... I can't stay involved with a man who doesn't even know he's not involved.

(awkwardly)

So I guess this non-relationship is officially a non-relationship.

All her efforts to be cool are cracking. She looks away, pushing the corners of her eyes, trying to stop a tear.

ANGELICA

I tried to get close to you. I did.

NELSON

(panicking)

Wait -- please -- whatever I did -- or said, I didn't mean, I'll be better --

She knows he's lying, that's even more humiliating to her.

NELSON

Please -- don't go.

ANGELICA

I'm not staying just because you don't want to be alone.

She exits, leaving Nelson alone in the silent penthouse. He approaches his display of glass and ceramics and stares at them blankly. Then, with a sudden, violent swipe, Nelson sends the entire collection crashing. Someone KNOCKS on the door.

MANNY (O.S.)

Mr. Moss? You okay?

(CONTINUED)

37 CONTINUED: (2)

37

NELSON

I'm fine.

Blood seeps from a cut on Nelson's hand.

MANNY (O.S.)

You gotta delivery.

NELSON

Leave it!

MANNY (O.S.)

I'm not sure you want me do that,
 sir. It's from the loco lady?
 The other night? She said I don't
 deliver it personal, she gonna --
 (voice lowers)
 I'm too shy to say it, Mister Moss.

NELSON

I said leave it!

Nelson wraps a towel around his hand. Opening the door,
 he finds a tattered box. Stamped on the lid: NOVEMBER.
 The box starts to move. Horrified, Nelson lifts the
 lid-- a Jack Russell puppy has a ridiculous-looking
 Halloween hat tied to its head -- dangling from the hat
 is a key.

38 INT. NELSON'S BUILDING - LOBBY - DUSK

38

Nelson storms off the elevator carrying the box with the
 WHINING PUPPY inside.

NELSON

Manny! Manny!

Gone for the night, Manny has left a Polaroid of himself
 in costume on a sign that reads, "Manny Say Happy
 Halloweens!" Activated by Nelson's movements, an
 electric GOBLIN next to the sign CACKLES demonically.

NELSON

Shit!

39 INT. NELSON'S APARTMENT - DUSK

39

On the phone, Nelson paces as the hyperactive PUPPY races
 through the apartment -- sees the fish in the tank and
 starts madly BARKING.

(CONTINUED)

39 CONTINUED:

39

NELSON

You're a delivery service. You deliver things.

(to dog)

Stop it! Shut up!

DISPATCHER (V.O.)

Not live animals, sir. Too dangerous.

NELSON

So what you're saying is, if I kill the dog, you'll take it.

DISPATCHER (V.O.)

Please don't kill the dog, sir.

Nelson slams the phone down and watches in horror as the BARKING PUPPY lifts a leg and pees all over the carpet.

40 EXT. NELSON'S BUILDING - NIGHT

40

Holding the box, Nelson leans over to talk to a CABBY.

NELSON

I have an unusual request. But I will pay you two hundred dollars.

CABBY

Get lost, you sick son-of-a-bitch.

As the CAB SCREECHES away, Nelson becomes unhinged. Starts howling in rage. Inside the box, the PUPPY BARKS in unison.

41 INT. SARA'S LOFT - NIGHT

41

CHURCH BELLS RING at the stroke of midnight as Sara packs a trunk. Seeing beyond the area from night before -- the loft includes an office cluster and a large bed. A key turns in the door. The door swings open. Nelson stands there looking like a disheveled madman. He carries the box over to Sara.

NELSON

Do me a favor. Stay out of my life. Good-bye.

She removes the puppy from the box, kisses it, then flashes one of her winning, adorable smiles.

(CONTINUED)

41

CONTINUED:

41

SARA

Did you think about my offer?

NELSON

The last thing I feel like doing
right now is playing the Sara
Deever Mad Hatter Game.

He puts the box down and moves towards the door.

SARA

What happened to your hand?

NELSON

Nothing.

SARA

May I look at it?

NELSON

Why?

Ernie has exhausted himself, collapses on the floor.

SARA

Because I'm a vampire. I know
some things about first aid.

Nelson warily allows her to examine his hand.

NELSON

What are you after? What do you
want from me?

She leads him to the bathroom as he studies her
suspiciously.

42

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

42

Sara treats Nelson's hand.

SARA

So what'd you do today?

NELSON

What'd I do today?

(pauses)

I got fired.

(pauses)

They took the company car.

(pauses)

And my girlfriend left me.

(CONTINUED)

SARA

Perfect.

NELSON

Define 'perfect.'

SARA

It's November first. Our month to be together.

NELSON

You're actually serious about this, aren't you?

SARA

Very.

NELSON

You think I'm just gonna drop everything --

SARA

Sounds like you already have.

NELSON

-- Live here, and let you mess with my head for a whole month?

SARA

I wouldn't put it that way, but yeah, that's what you should do.

Sara removes her sweater, revealing a very persuasive undershirt, and then returns to working on his hand.

NELSON

So this... whatever you call it --

SARA

Help.

Sara stands and starts unbuttoning Nelson's shirt.

NELSON

What are you doing?

SARA

Taking your shirt off.

NELSON

Why?

(CONTINUED)

42 CONTINUED: (2)

42

SARA
So you can clean up.

NELSON
Why?

Out in the open now, the sexual tension between them intensifies.

SARA
Because you smell like puppy piss.

Sara takes the shirt to the kitchen.

43 INT. SARA'S LOFT - BATHROOM - NIGHT (LATER)

43

Shirtless, Nelson seems bewildered, can't decide whether to wash up or get out of there -- he catches his reflection in the mirror, studies it for an answer, mutters:

NELSON
Just for the night.

He turns on the water, leans down to wash his face.

44 INT. SARA'S LOFT - NIGHT

44

Sara sprays the shirt with detergent.

She crosses the last day of October off a large wall calendar and then tears the month away, revealing November.

45 OMITTED

45

46 INT. SARA'S LOFT - NIGHT

46

Cleaned up, Nelson comes from the bathroom, Sara brings him the shirt. Nelson sniffs it and puts it on. They move closer.

They kiss. Channeling his desperation, Nelson lifts her onto the bed, spins her down and pulls at her clothes.

SARA
Wait, Nelson, stop... stop.

Sara pushes him back.

(CONTINUED)

46

CONTINUED:

46

NELSON

What?

SARA

Look at me. Gently. Slowly.

He starts in just as aggressively, and again she stops him.

SARA

Nelson, what are you doing?

NELSON

What does it look like I'm doing?

SARA

Just take it easy. It doesn't have to be like this. We've got all night.

He stares at her for a long moment and then pulls away.

NELSON

To hell with the whole goddamn thing.

Nelson yanks on his clothes.

47

EXT. SARA'S BUILDING - NIGHT

47

Pouring rain. Wearing his suit with no shirt, Nelson storms out the door. Sara follows pulling her sweater on.

SARA

Nelson, wait a second! Would you stop for one second?

He keeps going. A few pedestrians gawk, but most keep going.

Nelson pulls Sara aside.

NELSON

I have no words to describe how totally whacked you are!

SARA

What are you so pissed off about?!

(CONTINUED)

47 CONTINUED:

47

NELSON

This has been the day from hell,
and the absolute last thing I need
is you telling me what to do in
the sack!

SARA

Please come back. I won't tell
you what to do. We don't even
have to do anything. Just don't
go.

For a moment, Nelson's guard drops and his face betrays
how weary and shattered he is by the events of the day.
She slips inside the opening in the crack.

SARA

Tell me what you want me to do,
Nelson, and I'll do it. Tell me.

48 INT. SARA'S LOFT - NIGHT

48

Sitting on the bed, Nelson stares intently at Sara,
standing in front of him.

NELSON

Take that off.

Sara pulls her sweater over her head, revealing the same
persuasive undershirt he saw earlier.

NELSON

That, too.

Sara removes her shirt. Exposed, she waits for Nelson to
make the next move. Gently, he kisses her stomach. As
he slowly works his way upward, a swooning Sara grows
increasingly breathless.

SARA

Would you like to be my November,
Nelson?

NELSON

Yes.

Finally letting go, they meet in a deep, sensuous kiss.

49 EXT. SAN FRANCISCO - DAWN

49

Daylight returns to the hectic city.

50 INT. SARA'S LOFT - DAY

50

Alone in bed, Nelson is sound asleep, jerks bolt upright screaming -- a cross-eyed cat is gnawing at his toes.

He grabs the cat by the scruff of neck, ready to hurl it, then guiltily peeks to see if Sara's around, muttering:

NELSON

Nice cat... nice kitty...

Sara's gone. Nelson abruptly drops the cat -- it streaks across the bed and barrels out to the living area where it is attacked by Ernie, the puppy. Sounds of FURRY FIGHTING ensue.

Nelson jumps out, throws on his boxers, momentarily puzzled -- where's the rest of his clothes? Grabs his cell phone and heads over to a TV set surrounded by plants and ferns. He tries to turn it on, it doesn't work. Shrugging, Nelson lowers himself to the floor and begins a practiced routine of situps as he punches a number on the phone.

51 INT. STARBUCKS - DAY

51

Vince winks at the CUTE CASHIER as he steps up to the front of the line.

VINCE

Double venti caffe latte and your phone number.

Vince's PHONE RINGS.

CUTE CASHIER

(ignoring the pass)

Double venti caffe latte: 3.85.

Wedging the phone between his ear and shoulder, Vince digs cash out of his wallet.

VINCE

Notorious Nelson! Holy Christ man, I been trying to call you. What the hell is going on?

INTERCUT BETWEEN Nelson and Vince.

52 INT. SARA'S LOFT - NELSON - DAY

52

exercising.

(CONTINUED)

52

CONTINUED:

52

NELSON

Edgar Price.

VINCE

Edgar Price?

NELSON

Edgar Price.

VINCE

Edgar Price? Wha... Wha... Wha...

NELSON

Can you get us a meeting?

VINCE

You and me?

NELSON

You and me. Edgar Price's new company. Game?

53

INT. STARBUCKS

53

VINCE

I will get us that meeting. Genius. They stuck with me with that knob, John Headley. I'm dying.

54

INT. SARA'S LOFT - DAY

54

Sara enters the loft.

NELSON

Gotta go.

VINCE

You're a genius, Moss! Anyone ever tell you that?!

NELSON

Call me.

Hanging up, Nelson continues to exercise...

(CONTINUED)

SARA

Stop what you're doing right now!

NELSON

Why?

She reaches him, grabs the cell phone, swats him like a nanny.

SARA

Because it's the same boring thing you do every day and you can't do that with me.

NELSON

Right.

(points to TV)

What's wrong with your TV? It doesn't work --

SARA

Of course it doesn't work, it's a planter.

(CONTINUED)

NELSON

Right.

(pauses)

Where are my clothes?

Sara walks away, toward the kitchen.

SARA

I gave them away.

NELSON

You what --

SARA

Don't worry, I got you these --

She throws a pair of jeans and sweatshirt at him. The insane CAT streaks past, SCREECHING. Nelson almost trips on it.

SARA

Poor Sasquatch. Catnip overdose.

NELSON

(holds up clothes)

This is not 'helpful,' Sara.
Give me my shirt and pants back.

SARA

Clothes are clothes. All they
do is cover up a body.

NELSON

Yeah, well, it's just that this
body likes to be covered in its
own clothes.

Sara grabs Ernie.

SARA

Ernie, you're gonna stay with me
for a while until I find you some
decent parents.

(turns back to

Nelson)

When do I get to meet your
parents?

He stalks toward her, eyes burning.

NELSON

My parents are dead.

Sara sets Ernie on the floor.

(CONTINUED)

SARA

I'm sorry.

NELSON

Sara, I am not amused. I want my clothes back. Now.

SARA

I told you, I gave them away. I'll never lie to you.

Too defeated to fight, Nelson throws on the jeans and sweatshirt. The jeans are about four inches too short. As he is getting dressed, CHAS (30) shambles through the door, looks exhausted.

CHAS

I slept three hours last night. Tried valerian root, melatonin...
(points to sweatshirt on Nelson)
Hey, that looks like my sweatshirt.

Chas goes straight to the coffeemaker, pours a cup, kisses Sara.

CHAS

You know what finally put me to sleep? Jimmy Cagney. Public Enemy. Violence as a tranquilizer, how twisted is that?

Nelson staggers forward, too dazed to speak.

CHAS

Hello, you must be November.

NELSON

I must be November.

SARA

His name is Nelson.

CHAS

(extends hand)
I'm Chas. Keep the sweatshirt. It looks better on you.

NELSON

Is this some communal, culty, Squeaky and Charlie type of deal?

(CONTINUED)

54 CONTINUED: (3)

54

CHAS

(laughs)

Funny. Much hipper than October.
What a wanker.

(checks his watch)

Gotta go. See you around, Nelson.

And just as quickly as he entered, he exits. As the door shuts behind him, Nelson glares at Sara.

NELSON

I think I'll pull myself out of
monthly rotation while I'm ahead.

55 INT. LOFT BUILDING - STAIRCASE - DAY

55

Nelson exits the loft, and Sara follows.

SARA

-- Nelson, I told you helping men
is my gift.

NELSON

You didn't tell me it was a
cottage industry. And who the
hell was that, your pimp?

SARA

Chas lives upstairs. We look
after each other.

NELSON

It doesn't seem like he needs
looking after.

SARA

Everyone needs looking after,
Nelson.

56 EXT. SARA'S BUILDING - DAY

56

On the street, they pass two old-guard bay area hippies
in their 60s -- husband and wife AL and OSIRIS. They're
unlocking the door to their bookstore, Christopher's
Books, with pictures of Ginsberg and Ferlinghetti in the
window.

SARA

Hey, guys, this is Nelson.

But Nelson's off, without saying a word to them. Sara
barrels after him.

(CONTINUED)

56

CONTINUED:

56

SARA

That was so rude! Al and Osiris
are great! They were close
personal friends of Jack
Kerouac□--

NELSON

I don't care. I don't read.

Diagonally across the street, a vegetable market. The vendor, a Chinese woman, wags her finger and shouts at pictures of her family propped up on her Buddhist altar. Sara gives her a wave and continues with Nelson a few steps, where they encounter ABNER (10). He wears a red balaclava, practices balancing on one leg. Seeing Sara, Abner stops balancing and avidly follows her as if she were the Pied Piper. Nearby, a HOMELESS MAN rummages through the garbage, incongruously dressed in the chicest gear imaginable.

HOMELESS MAN

Sara, can you spare fifteen bucks?

SARA

Okay, now you're just being
greedy, Bruce. I already gave
you those clothes.

Nelson puts a brake on, gasps.

NELSON

Jesus -- those are my Prada
pants□-- my sweater --

Petrified, Bruce takes off running.

SARA

Doesn't it feel good to give?

NELSON

No!

Nelson calls after the Homeless Man.

NELSON

Hey, hey. Give me back my pants.

ABNER

Are you November?

NELSON

Where am I?

(CONTINUED)

SARA

Nelson, this is a great kid,
you've got to meet him. Abner.
He wants to set a world record.
What's today's project, Abner?

ABNER

Standing on one leg.
(hands Nelson watch)
Would you time me, I have to
break the current record of
300 hours.

NELSON

No.

Abner does a head-to-toe on Nelson, doesn't like the
attitude.

ABNER

Nice pants -- expecting a flood?

NELSON

Nice hat -- planning a bank
robbery?

Bored with Nelson, Abner peels off in the other
direction.

SARA

That's pathetic -- you let a
ten-year-old wind you up?

NELSON

Forget him, what's the deal with
you? You sleep with half the
city, get the whole neighborhood
involved?

SARA

Would you prefer I was a virgin?

NELSON

Considering the alternative, yes.

SARA

That tender tender male ego is
bruised, isn't it?

(sweetly, tenderly)

I'm yours, Nelson Moss. All
yours.

That sends alarms ringing in his confirmed bachelor's
brain.

(CONTINUED)

NELSON

Look, Sara, you're great. You're a very sexy, smart, interesting, somewhat unusual woman...

She just looks at him so guilelessly, he fumbles.

NELSON

But we... ah... don't know where this is... I always think it's best to clarify issues... the beginning of... I'm not ready for... I can't be your man-man...

She starts to laugh so hard tears roll down her cheeks.

SARA

You are the most egotistical lunkhead I've ever met!
(settles down)
It's one month, Nelson. Get it?

Now he's insulted. And amazed. He's never been treated this way before. To save face, he acts tough.

NELSON

The truth is, I don't have a month. Time is money...

SARA

Okay. How long can you put your big fat lucrative career on hold to try this thing out? Wait a minute -- you're unemployed --

NELSON

(stung)
You know, the more I think about it, this 'project' of yours feels like an excuse to get laid.

That hurts. She flushes, looks away. He feels bad, didn't expect her to react this way.

NELSON

I'm sorry, I didn't think you'd...
(gentler)
I just don't understand why you're doing this, is all.

SARA

I have my reasons.

(CONTINUED)

56 CONTINUED: (4)

56

She starts to walk. He comes abreast of her, chastened.

NELSON

Still friends?

And like a brilliant emotional acrobat, she flips her mood back to lighthearted, done with consummate grace.

SARA

Only if you give me what I want.

NELSON

What?

SARA

Time.

NELSON

All I can do is a day.

57 EXT. PACIFIC HEIGHTS SOCIETY BUILDING - DAY

57

Sara's Barking Mad Dog Day Care van is parked outside a ritzy building.

58 INT. SOCIETY LADY'S HOUSE - DAY

58

Nelson stands stiffly behind Sara, who gestures expansively toward a rail-thin Nancy Kissinger-style SOCIETY MATRON.

SARA

-- Nelson's helping me today. He loves dogs.

Sitting on the sofa, floor, chairs, posed like perfect little stuffed animals, are Society Lady's six beloved dogs. Immaculately groomed, heads daintily cocked, front paws folded over each other -- they are glaring coldly at Nelson. Sara pats their heads as she clips leashes on them.

SARA

And these are the best behaved doggies in the whole wide world, aren't they? So elegant, so dignified. Just like their mommy.

SOCIETY LADY (MATRON)

(with supreme false
modesty)

I like to think so.

Extremely put out, Nelson walks beside Sara -- each holds three dogs on leashes as they head up a path. The dogs don't pull or tug, prance with military precision.

NELSON

Always a thrill to explore new career possibilities. How much do you charge for this?

SARA

I don't do it for the money.
(shouts to dogs)
Okay, guys, ready to be bad?

All six tails begin to wag in furious unison. Incredulous, Nelson watches Sara unclip all the dogs from leashes and swat them on the rump.

SARA

Raise some hell, fellas, and don't tell Mommy!

Suddenly, nothing short of pure canine bedlam is unleashed. The six prissy DOGS go insane -- race up the green, YIPPING and HOWLING, fighting with each other, rolling in the dirt, scrambling through mud puddles, BARKING at babies. Overjoyed, Sara runs with the pack, clapping her hands and shouting.

SARA

Bad dogs! Bad dogs! I'm so proud of you!

Nelson rolls his eyes, checks his watch. Lurches back when a wet, muddy pooch shakes all over him.

NELSON

Get away from me!

Another dog barrels up to Nelson. Desperate for a pet, the dog leaps up, licks and slobbers all over Nelson's hand.

Disgusted, Nelson yanks his hand away. Sara shouts from farther away.

SARA

Be nice to Winston -- he's insecure -- needs a lot of affection.

NELSON

I do not give affection to a hairy, dirty thing.

(CONTINUED)

59 CONTINUED:

59

Suddenly, Nelson is screaming. Winston has wrapped himself around Nelson's leg and is feverishly humping away.

NELSON

Get him off me! I'm going to kill him!

SARA

Winston! That's enough! Come here, boy!

Winston comes running to her, throws himself on the ground and lets her rub his back. Sara looks up to see Nelson storming off the green.

60 EXT. VAN - IN PARK - DAY

60

The van is parked near a hose. Nelson sits glumly in driver's seat. Outside, Sara hoses off all the filthy dogs.

61 INT. VAN - DAY

61

Nelson checks his watch again. Peers at Sara in the side mirror.

NELSON'S POV - SIDE MIRROR

She is radiant, clearly gets so much genuine joy from what she's doing, she couldn't look more beautiful.

NELSON

in van: stares, moved in spite of himself. Feels like a jerk for being so uptight. She comes to the window, breathless.

SARA

Look at them -- aren't they incredible?

The dogs are soaking wet, shivering, waiting patiently for Sara to tell them what to do next.

62 INT. VAN - LATER

62

Trying to be a good sport, Nelson awkwardly helps Sara to dry the dogs with hair driers. Winston starts to make a move toward Nelson.

(CONTINUED)

62 CONTINUED:

62

NELSON

Winston. Stay away. You're not my type.

Sara smiles to herself, thrilled to see he's managed to bend, just this little bit.

63 EXT. PARK - ICE CREAM STAND - DUSK/SUNSET

63

Sara is licking an ice cream cone, counting money as she waits for Nelson to make up his mind about his order. Her van is parked nearby.

SARA

Thirty bucks, not bad for a few hours work.

Nelson's tempted to say something glib, but bites his tongue. However, he can't help but register a look of pity mixed with horror at how pathetic the earnings are.

NELSON

I'll go for the lemon sorbet.

She almost chokes -- the look on her face is not unlike the one he just made -- pure pity and horror.

SARA

Tell me something. When was the last time you spent the whole day outdoors?

NELSON

I think... when my parents dragged me to Alcatraz for the day, at the age of nine.

He gets his sorbet and they start walking up the street together.

NELSON

Now you tell me something.

SARA

Anything.

NELSON

What's so enlightening about what we did today?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

NELSON (CONT'D)

(as she peers at
him, confused)

Why is letting some dogs go wild a better way to live than my way? Granted, it was mildly amusing, but I gotta tell you, my third eye didn't open.

SARA

These things take time. You don't have time.

NELSON

No, seriously, it's a question of values. Why is doing something fundamentally trivial better than living a responsible life, boring as that might seem to you?

She is silent, he presses on. His tone is gentle, slightly teasing, but there's real truth to what he says.

NELSON

And who made you the expert, the doctor, the guru? Why do you have all the answers?

Still, she is silent. He teases her.

NELSON

Come on, show me your resume.

Just then, they pass a three-sided bus stop with a big ad for "DIVINE PETS.NET -- America's favorite pet store." Sara points.

SARA

I used to own that company, Divine Pets.

Nelson cracks up, her timing as usual is brilliant.

NELSON

Uh-huh.

SARA

I did. But after a while it wasn't fun anymore. So I quit.

NELSON

Was that before or after you toured as a stand-up comedienne?

SARA

Oh, I never did that.

Nelson stands there somewhat bemused as Sara comes forward with a scarf, smiling.

SARA

This will be good for you...

She starts to blindfold him with the scarf.

SARA

... Sharpen your instincts.

He laughs, oh goody a sex game, tries to grab her.

SARA

Not those instincts. Okay, this is the object --

(as he grabs her again)

Stop it -- I run around so you lose track of where I am.

(as he's pushing the scarf down)

Don't do that, leave it on -- count to ten and try to find me.

She secures the blindfold and races off. He pauses for a moment, then:

NELSON

One two three -- I'm gonna get you! Four five six -- I know where you are! Seven eight nine ten.

(pauses)

This is really stupid.

He starts to walk, bumps into a chair, takes a few steps more, bumps into a table, a few steps more and he trips over a stool and crashes on the floor.

NELSON

Ow, shit!

She runs over to him, laughing.

SARA

Oh my God, you're really bad, you didn't even get close.

NELSON

(tries to rip off scarf)

This is funny?

(CONTINUED)

She helps him remove the scarf, still laughing. Once again, his flight mechanism kicks in and he wants out. He takes a deep breath, has to say something.

NELSON

Sara, you're not gonna be upset when I leave tonight...? I told you, one day.

SARA

Yep. You told me. And you're a man of your word.

NELSON

Don't get me wrong, I appreciate what you're trying to do -- crazy as it may seem to me.

SARA

That's me. Just... crazy.

(sweetly)

What are you more afraid of? Spending two consecutive nights with a woman? Or discovering this whole thing might not be as crazy as you think?

He is flummoxed for a moment.

NELSON

Hard to say. I've definitely never met a woman like you, though.

SARA

Good.

He covertly checks the time.

NELSON

So, maybe I should just hit the road.

SARA

Stay for dinner. I have your favorite.

NELSON

You don't know my favorite.

SARA

Yes, I do.

(CONTINUED)

64

CONTINUED: (2)

64

NELSON

Oh, yeah?

SARA

Lean steak, no fat?

Her sweetness and sincerity get through, even to him.

SARA

Go on, stay for dinner, then
you're free to go. No strings
attached.

65

EXT. SARA'S LOFT - DECK - NIGHT

65

Nelson and Sara have dinner on a plant-covered deck, lit
by strings of cheap lights. Ernie is begging at Nelson's
feet.

SARA

Mitch was my October. He was the
shyest man I ever met. We focused
on confidence building.

NELSON

Was the patient cured?

SARA

My treatment was a little too
effective. We had to terminate
the month early.

NELSON

What about September?

SARA

There was no September.

Nelson feigns disbelief.

SARA

I'm not a weirdo about it.

NELSON

August?

SARA

Paul was so sad.

NELSON

Now he's happy?

(CONTINUED)

65

CONTINUED:

65

SARA

Now he's gay.

NELSON

Happy gay or gay gay?

SARA

Gay gay but very happy about it.

Nelson has to ask:

NELSON

And you and all these guys...

Nelson gestures suggestively.

SARA

Does it really matter?

She flashes the most beguiling smile.

NELSON

I suppose attraction has nothing
to do with it.

The smile just becomes more beguiling, meaning: of
course.

NELSON

Why a month?

SARA

Long enough to be meaningful.
Short enough to stay out of
trouble.

NELSON

You defy every law of nature
I know.

SARA

Good.

The sound of a MAN LAUGHING drifts over from another
porch.

SARA

Listen... do you hear that? What
a wonderful laugh.

(CONTINUED)

65

CONTINUED: (2)

65

She cocks her ear, listening to the MAN LAUGHING. Then they hear a BABY CRYING... a BASKETBALL GAME down the street, a DRUNK WOMAN SINGING like an alley cat. A symphony of SOUNDS: lives being lived around them.

SARA

Doesn't life just... take your
breath away?

Once again, he finds himself so moved by her, he is wordless. There is a long silence between them.

SARA

What's your secret dream, Nelson?

NELSON

I'm not much on that kind of
thing.

SARA

Come on, everyone's got one.

He listens to the SOUNDS, and takes a leap -- lets himself open up for a moment.

NELSON

My father sold door-to-door.
Vacuum cleaners, life insurance,
for a while he sold plastic food.
We were kind of the joke of the
neighborhood. And believe me, the
neighborhood was a pretty grim joke
itself.

SARA

Where did you live?

NELSON

Daly City, just up the freeway...
(pause)
Anyway, after dinner every night,
my dad would shut himself in the
TV room and listen to 45s. Frank
Sinatra, Tony Bennett. For a
year or so, I desperately wanted
to be a singer.

SARA

You thought it would make him
happy?

(CONTINUED)

NELSON

No. I thought those guys were
everything he wasn't. Successful,
proud, in control...

He stops himself -- feels too exposed, shocked that such
a sincerely-felt statement actually came from his lips.
She feels his discomfort, reaches over and takes his
hand.

(CONTINUED)

65

CONTINUED: (3)

65

SARA

I'd like to hear you sing
sometime.

NELSON

That will never happen.
(wants to go; pulls
back chair)
Well, time to...

SARA

I'd like you to do something else
for me, before you leave tonight.

NELSON

What?

SARA

Do the dishes. I hate doing
dishes.

66

INT. SARA'S LOFT - NIGHT

66

Nelson is washing the dishes. Sara sits on the floor,
letting Ernie teethe by nipping her hand the way puppies
love to do.

SARA

So, what will you do when you go
home?

NELSON

I don't know, I don't really map
out my evenings...

SARA

I know. You'll turn on the TV.
Get bored. Turn on your computer.
Check out your work. Get bored.
Surf the net. Get bored.
(softly)
And think of me.

She stands up and leaves the kitchen. He seems torn,
debates with himself as he finishes the dishes. Turns to
see Sara removing the last bit of her clothes before
slipping into bed.

SARA

I'm making this as difficult as I
possibly can.

Nelson stares, his determination quickly waning.

67 INT. SARA'S LOFT - NIGHT (LATER) 67

Raining. Nelson lies awake, studying Sara as rainy reflections of streetlights roll over her. Rising, he quietly dresses.

68 INT. NELSON'S APARTMENT - LIVING AREA - NIGHT 68

Raining. Nelson in his empty, sterile apartment, watching TV. Bored, he flips from channel to channel. Turns it OFF. Goes to his computer, looks at some work in progress on it. Gets bored.

SAME SCENE - LATER

Nelson surfing the net. Bored, he starts to disconnect when he thinks of something. He types in: "DIVINE PET.NET." His face slowly registers shock as the site comes up and he reads.

CLOSE ON MONITOR

Web site: Next to a picture of Sara and a blonde woman, who bears a striking resemblance to her -- the words: "SARA AND CLAIRE DEEVER, CO-FOUNDERS." The company is based out of Indianapolis, Indiana.

SAME SCENE - LATER

Nelson is typing something on his computer.

CLOSE ON TYPING

He has already written: "WATCH TV. WORK. SURF THE NET. GET BORED." And now he's typing -- "THINK OF ME."

69 INT. SARA'S LOFT - DAWN 69

Bathed in sunlight, Sara sleeps under a pile of blankets. Nelson tiptoes into the loft, carrying a travel bag. As he approaches the bed, ERNIE GROWLS dementedly, ready to pounce.

Nelson points a finger, is amazed when ERNIE STOPS GROWLING, THUMPS HIS TAIL ON FLOOR, awakening Sara. Overjoyed to see Nelson, Sara beckons him. Nelson slides into bed, kisses her.

NELSON

Try to be wrong once in a while.
It would be good for my ego.

70 INT. SARA'S BATHROOM - DAY 70

Nelson, wearing floral boxers, examines Sara's bathroom, frowning at the cast-iron tub. She is washing her face.

NELSON

Don't you have a shower? I hate sitting in dirty water.

She lifts her head from the sink, water dripping, and laughs.

71 INT. SARA'S BATHROOM - LATER 71

The two of them are sitting in a steaming tub, she is washing his back.

SARA

See? That's not so bad, is it?

(points)

Can you grab some more soap?

Reaching up to get the soap, he tries a cupboard door, surprised to find it locked.

NELSON

What do you keep in there?

Secret, nasty toys?

She raises an eyebrow; mock mysterious face. He finds the soap on a counter, hands it to her.

NELSON

I looked up your web site last night. Your sister's pretty, looks a lot like you.

SARA

It is not my web site. Not my anything, anymore.

NELSON

Why'd you quit?

SARA

It started out small. And it got big.

NELSON

That's generally considered a good thing in business.

(CONTINUED)

SARA

Everything got big. Desires.
Pressures. Lives. Egos. I
didn't like the big me. Not a
good person. Not happy. And the
amazing part is, I got out before
it got really big, can you
imagine.

NELSON

No, I can't imagine you with
millions and millions of
dollars□--

She sighs with relief, then beams happily as Chas
saunters into the bathroom with his morning cup of
coffee.

CHAS

Did you switch beans or something?
It tastes different.

SARA

Hazelnut. You don't like it?

CHAS

Too perfumy. Stick to classics --

Nelson is so outraged by this intrusion he slaps the
water.

NELSON

Excuse me. Privacy? Heard of it?

CHAS

Hi, Nelson. Nice pecs, you must
work out. Me, I don't have time.

(pauses)

And you look absolutely adorable.

(as she gives him a
look, he stops)

Don't forget dinner's at eight,
on the dressy side.

He turns and walks out the door.

NELSON

Doesn't that guy know how to make
his own coffee?

(off her stern look)

I mean, what if he'd walked in
just as I was...

(reaches underwater)

Doing this?

(CONTINUED)

71 CONTINUED: (2)

71

She slaps the water with her hand.

SARA

Stop it! We have important things
to do today...

72 INT. MUNI TRAIN - DAY

72

Nelson and Sara stand in a rail car crowded with
commuters. As the car jostles and bodies bump up against
him, Nelson squirms with discomfort.

NELSON

I still don't see why we couldn't
take a cab?

SARA

Because I make the rules, Nelson.
Rules you must submit to, utterly
and completely.

NELSON

You know, if you want to be a
dominatrix that badly, why don't
we just go buy you the leather
and get it over with.

SARA

Kinky. Maybe even strangely
arousing. But if we took a cab,
we'd miss out on all this.

NELSON

Exactly.

Sara studies Nelson, stiff and impenetrable once again.

SARA

You know what this train is,
Nelson?

NELSON

You mean besides a buffet of bad
breath and body odor?

SARA

It's 55 lives. All happening at
once, in the exact same place, at
the exact same time. Imagine how
much hope and lust and fear and
love are in this car, right now, at
this very moment. Look around.

(CONTINUED)

NELSON

I try not to.

SARA

I dare you. Look at someone,
anyone. That woman by the door.

A woman in her early 40s stands near one of the doors,
her head leaning against the window as she stares out at
the passing city with a distant, detached expression.

SARA

What do you see?

NELSON

Female, 32-45, primary household
decision maker. Watches 2.5 hours
of television a day, spends 27
minutes at the grocery store,
values price over brand.

Ignoring him, Sara gazes at the woman with empathy and
wonder.

SARA

I think she's a mother. I think
she loves her family so much it
hurts. I think she'd throw
herself in front of this train for
them if she had to. And I think
when she gets into bed at night,
she makes love to her husband like
he was the king of Egypt.

As Sara enjoys the fruit of her imagination, Nelson
reconsiders the woman, this time seriously.

NELSON

I think she's got a dead-end job,
a husband she can't remember why
she married, and a kid who doesn't
understand any of it.

Nelson's grim assessment rolls over Sara like a cloud,
darkening her entire disposition.

SARA

Maybe. Maybe it's worse. Maybe
nothing about life even makes
sense to her anymore. Maybe some
days she wishes she could just
quit pretending and end the whole
goddamn thing.

(CONTINUED)

72

CONTINUED: (2)

72

Nelson stares, silenced by Sara's sudden bleakness.

SARA

You want to go to the dark side,
Nelson? I can get there faster
than you can. Believe me.

Looking away, Sara takes a deep breath and then smiles
again, as irrepressible as she was just moments before.

SARA

But what for? We see the world we
choose to see. And I think my
first choice was a helluva lot
more fun, don't you?

As the train jostles and jerks, Nelson and Sara search
each other's eyes.

73

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO DOCKS - DAY

73

Hurrying down the pier, Sara waves when she spots Abner
waiting patiently, holding a paper bag.

SARA

There you are!

Abner approaches, removing his balaclava. He's a cute
kid, just shy and awkward. Nelson wants to make up for
yesterday.

NELSON

Hey, Abner, you've got a face and
it's a good one, too!

Abner giggles, as Nelson's PHONE RINGS.

SARA

Cell phones are outlawed in my
world.

NELSON

What can I say? The revolution
has begun.

She doesn't like this. Nelson answers the phone.

VINCE (V.O.)

Call me genius, I don't mind.

NELSON

What up, Vince?

73A EXT. FINANCIAL DISTRICT - DAY

73A

Vince gesticulates as he strides down a crowded sidewalk.

VINCE

Friday, November 17. You, me and
Edgar Price.

(shouts)

Pucker your lips, we got the
meeting!

A74 OMITTED
thru
D74

A74
thru
D74

74 EXT. SAN FRANCISCO DOCKS - DAY

74

Nelson steps away, sits on a nearby piling as Sara and
Abner head toward the cluster of kids.

NELSON

You're genius, Vince.

VINCE (V.O.)

About time you said so... Hey,
heard about Angelica. Sorry, man,
but truthfully? As much as I loved
her, I knew she wasn't for you.

NELSON

Did you? Funny you tell me now.

VINCE (V.O.)

Yeah, well, you know... discretion,
valor... do I smell a new female
friend?

Nelson watches the other kids coldly survey Abner, as if
he's too soft for this event. The tough kids are
showing off their remote-controlled sail boats: Most of
them are simple, macho, tough -- they look like Mad Max
boats.

NELSON

What makes you say that?

VINCE (V.O.)

When my man skips his usual
morning check-in calls, I know
there's estrogen in the air.

(pauses)

C'mon, c'mon, c'mon. Don't insult
me. I have a life. Who is she?

(CONTINUED)

74

CONTINUED:

74

NELSON

You wouldn't know her.

VINCE (V.O.)

But would I like her? On a scale
of nine to ten, is she --

ABNER WITH KIDS

pulls his boat out of a bag and the kids start to laugh.
Abner's is a hand-made sailboat, full of whimsy and
invention, an eccentric work of art.

KID #1

Oh that's really cool, not.

KID #2

What is it? Pokeman's dinghy?

The kids have gathered in a circle around Abner, they are
intimidating, threatening. Becoming concerned, Sara
turns to Nelson, waves him over.

NELSON ON PHONE

NELSON

Listen, I gotta run, great news on
the Edgar thing --

VINCE (V.O.)

Wait, wait -- quick thumbnail -- I
need a gossip fix here --

NELSON

See you on the 17th.

74A

NEAR LAUNCH AREA

74A

He hangs up and joins Sara and Abner as one of the BIG
BROTHER ORGANIZERS tries to break the circle up.

BIG BROTHER ORGANIZER

Come on, all boats in the water?

KID #1

Except for this kid's.

The kids leer contemptuously as Abner nervously steps
forward and lowers his sailboat into the water.

(CONTINUED)

74A CONTINUED:

74A

KID #2
That's not a kid, that's a girl.

ABNER
(turns to Nelson)
Maybe I'll just forget about it.

NELSON
No, ignore them, Abner.

KID #1
(disdainfully)
Abner?

The kids huddled together, checking Abner out, hiss his name.

KIDS
Abner.

The Organizer comes forward, shaking his head telling the tough kids to stop. As he raises his arm holding a starter pistol, Nelson spots a techie nerd packing up a model submarine on a nearby bench.

NELSON
Hang in there. Just wait a minute.
(whispers)
Abner is a great name.

74B ANOTHER ANGLE

74B

As the Organizer raises the pistol to fire, Nelson bolts over to the techie nerd.

NELSON
Wanna make a hundred bucks?

74C ON TECHIE NERD

74C

Covertly slipping his remote-controlled sub into the water.

74D ON RACE

74D

The remote-controlled sailboats glide in the water. Suddenly, the lead boat tacks off course. The next lead boat tacks off course and out of position.

KID #1
Hey! My boat's all screwed up!

(CONTINUED)

74D CONTINUED:

74D

KID #3

What the hell --

As the techie nerd snickers, Abner's boat starts sailing in a physically impossible straight line for the finish as the rest of the flotilla has to tack back and forth.

WIDER

Abner looks up at Nelson, who winks back. As his boat passes the others, narrowly beating the last two boats to the finish, Abner grins from ear to ear.

ABNER

I guess I'm winning.

KID #1

Hold on -- that little creep is cheating!

ABNER

No, I'm not. My boat's just better.

Abner's boat nudges the end of the pond; he calmly announces:

ABNER

See? I guess I won.

75 EXT. STREET - DUSK

75

Nelson and Sara stand outside Abner's little house, watching him unlock the door. Before stepping in he waves to them.

ABNER

Can we do that again? With cars, next time, maybe?

Nelson nods, Sara shakes her head. Abner closes the door, smiling. The minute he's gone, Sara turns to Nelson.

(CONTINUED)

SARA

Sometimes a good idea is not a good idea, know what I mean?

They start to cross the street toward her building.

NELSON

Those kids were laughing at him. Have you ever been laughed at?

(pauses)

Okay, cheating is... bad, I guess.

SARA

Yeah, you're a father figure now.

NELSON

Get out of here -- father figure. The kid just met me.

SARA

You're a man. When you don't know who your father is, you're not very picky about your role models.

She stops, stunned. A Circuit City man is standing outside her building with a big box.

SARA

What's that?

NELSON

Don't be mad, I got you a little present. A flat screen TV.

SARA

That's not a 'little present' for me, it's a 'little present' for you.

(sweetly, but firmly,
to Circuit City man)

Take it back. Better yet, you keep it. I never watch TV.

She unlocks the door and leaves Nelson stunned outside.

Carrying a bottle of wine, Nelson trudges up the steps with Sara, feeling very put out.

SARA

Stop pouting, we promised Chas Cherry we'd come.

(CONTINUED)

76

CONTINUED:

76

NELSON

Oh we're calling everyone by first and last names now? I don't want to waste my night with Chas Cherry. I want to get naked with Sara Deever.

SARA

You have a one-track mind, Nelson Moss. Trust me, you won't be bored. Chas Cherry's a great cook.

77

INT. CHAS'S LOFT - NIGHT

77

Nelson sitting across from Chas, who has metamorphosed into an extravagantly made-up, gloriously stylish transvestite.

SARA

That was Chas. This is Cherry.

Chas extends a manicured hand, Nelson is trying his hardest to go along with it, forcing himself to be hip, ebullient.

NELSON

Great, great, this is very -- you know -- Pink Flamingoes -- great outfit, and the makeup, wow.
(faltering)

Wow.

BRANDON (O.S.)

This wine is so Martha Stewart --

BRANDON enters from the kitchen with the uncorked bottle of wine. Also fully crossed, Brandon's get-up is even more flamboyant than Chas's.

BRANDON

In other words, perfect.

SARA

That was Brandon. This is Brandy.

NELSON

Brandy and Cherry, great. So. Here we are... surprise!

He laughs uncomfortably, working double-time to be cool. Chas and Brandon start to tease him, with a light touch.

CHAS

Do you think he's uncomfortable?

(CONTINUED)

BRANDON

About what?

CHAS

I don't know, maybe he doesn't like...

(points to the meal)

Lamb stew.

(to Nelson)

I hope you're not vegetarian, Nelson, I forgot to ask.

BRANDON

Actually, we just presumed you were a meat eater.

NELSON

Right, right, you presumed right. Lamb stew, great.

He is dying, desperate to get out of there.

CHAS

Could it be the music? Maybe classical Italian opera... just sets you on edge...

BRANDON

You don't have anything against Italians, do you?

NELSON

No, I love Italy! I love Puccini! I love Michelangelo and -- and --

He looks in the other room, sees a TV playing.

NELSON

I just want to watch a little TV.

CHAS

Oh, we understand that need, completely.

Nelson gets up and leaves the room in a hurry. Sara, Chas and Brandon exchange a look.

Nelson sitting on sofa, watching a TV ad.

(CONTINUED)

CLOSE ON TV

Lycos commercial with man in kilt -- wind raising kilt up -- dog running to castle -- dropping off a package. Pair of boxer shorts for the man.

CHAS (O.S.)

I always liked this spot, but I would have remixed it, those two lines at the top get swallowed.

BACK TO SCENE

Surprised, Nelson turns around to see Chas standing behind him. Sara is next to him, rubbing her temples.

SARA

Who ate them? The dog?

CHAS

Don't be Cruella, Sara. That's one of Nelson's ads. He won Gold Pencil for it.

NELSON

(surprised)

How did you know that?

Sara exchanges an embarrassed look with Chas, shrugs.

SARA

I meant to tell you, Cherry, I'm sorry I meant Chas, works in advertising, too.

NELSON

(smirks, bored)

Really? What firm?

CHAS

Baker, Bohanen...

Nelson's smirk disappears.

NELSON

Chas... Whatley?

BRANDON

Oh look, baby's famous.

Nelson's jaw drops, he is horrified.

(CONTINUED)

NELSON

Oh my God, you have been that
Chas... all this time?

(it registers)

Wait a minute, you didn't get
the Doctor Diggety account
did you?

CHAS

Nelson, does it really matter?

NELSON

Oh sure, maybe not to Cherry --
but I bet it matters to Chas.
I know it matters to Nelson.

Just then, the PHONE RINGS. Sara picks it up. She is
still rubbing her temples, as if there's a headache
coming on.

SARA

Hello?

Nelson points an accusatory finger at Sara.

NELSON

She should have told me.

(pauses)

I mean, this is... awkward. If
I'd known who you were...

CHAS

You would have been nicer to me?
Thanks.

They stop talking when they see how upset Sara is as she
says to the person on phone:

SARA

I said: he's busy. No I can't
talk to you, either. Good-bye.

She hangs up. Glares angrily at Chas, really rubbing her
temples.

SARA

Ten guesses who that was.

CHAS

Sara, it's not what you --

(CONTINUED)

SARA

How long have you been doing
this behind my back? What does
she want?

She sees how confused Nelson is, tries to make light as
she backs out of the room.

SARA

Oh, it doesn't matter. I'm
gonna go downstairs.

(to Nelson)

I have a headache. You stay.

And she hurries to the front door. Nelson looks worried,
starts to go after her -- Chas shoots him a look -- let
her go.

NELSON

What was that all about?

CHAS

She gets migraines.

NELSON

No, the phone call. Who was that?

CHAS

Her sister, Claire. Long story.

(sees Nelson's look)

I'm not telling it.

Clearly in pain, Sara locks the closet in the bathroom,
comes out when she hears the DOOR OPEN. As Nelson
enters, she flashes a smile.

SARA

Hey, sorry I lost it back there.

NELSON

That's okay. Gives me a little
boost to know you're not perfect.

(gently)

Feeling better?

SARA

Oh yeah. All gone.

(CONTINUED)

79

CONTINUED:

79

NELSON

Chas told me it was your sister on the phone. Why does that upset you so much?

She shrugs and heads over to the bed. Throws on the charm.

SARA

Remember the part about getting naked -- we could do that now.

NELSON

Don't dodge me.
(sits down beside her)
Talk to me. What happened?

She freezes up. Quite simply cannot tell him anything. He is really surprised, and a little hurt.

NELSON

That's not fair. You expect me to be so honest, so forthcoming...

SARA

But this is your month, not mine.

She sees how mad he's getting, leans in and kisses him.

SARA

Never go to bed angry.

Aroused by the kiss, Nelson prolongs it, unzips her dress, slips his hand inside, caresses her back. Is surprised to feel her stiffen under his hands. He backs away, studies her. He sees what she's trying to hide.

NELSON

You're not feeling well are you?
(as she gestures evasively)
Maybe we'll get naked tomorrow,
tonight we'll wear P.J.s.

80

INT. SARA'S LOFT - BEDROOM - MORNING

80

Sara and Nelson sound asleep, arms wrapped around each other, both wearing pajamas. Hearing a KNOCK on door, ERNIE starts BARKING insanely. Pissed, Nelson lifts his head, shouting:

(CONTINUED)

80

CONTINUED:

80

NELSON

Ernie, shut up.

ERNIE keeps BARKING. Then Nelson hears a louder KNOCK. Annoyed, he rolls out of bed and heads for the door. Opening it, Nelson finds Abner with an old trunk beside him.

ABNER

Wanna buy some junk?

NELSON

Abner, it's, uhh... a little early.

ABNER

I think I can break the record for tallest house of cards, but I gotta buy 75 decks, so I thought maybe I could sell some of my stuff.

Awake, Sara listens as Nelson waves Abner in.

NELSON

Yeah, sure... come on in.

ON NELSON AND ABNER

sitting on the living room floor as Abner pulls one colorful, homemade toy after another out of the trunk. Composed entirely of found parts, the hand puppets, figurines and other toys are wildly original. Believing Sara is still asleep, Nelson and Abner speak softly:

NELSON

Abner, what is this stuff?

ABNER

I make my own toys. It's cheaper.

Amazed, Nelson chuckles, but Abner takes it the wrong way.

ABNER

Never mind.

Abner starts to put the toys away, but Nelson stops him.

(CONTINUED)

NELSON

Whoa, whoa, wait a second.

(beat)

Why do you wanna set a world record?

ABNER

I wanna be good at something.

As Nelson studies Abner, Sara listens intently from the bed.

NELSON

Do you have any brothers or sisters?

Abner shakes his head.

NELSON

Neither did I.

Abner looks up at Nelson with a new sense of connection.

NELSON

It's lonely sometimes, but you know what?

(pointing to
his temple)

It makes you use your imagination. It makes you creative. You're already good at something, Abner. This stuff is incredible.

Watching now, Sara smiles, as proud as she is touched.

NELSON

Other kids just buy toys at a store. All that takes is money. This stuff is ten times cooler. Abner, you're an artist.

The affirmation sinking in, Abner smiles as he picks up a spider puppet.

ABNER

They don't do much though.

NELSON

Really?

Nelson puts his hand into a wild, red-eyed mad man puppet and brings it to life with a silly puppet voice:

(CONTINUED)

NELSON

I happen to do a lot, young man.
Why just last night, I cloned
myself and then ate me for dinner.

ABNER

(smirking)
I think I'm a little old for that.

NELSON

Oh right... of course you are.

Nelson now sees Sara is awake, and they exchange a grin.

NELSON

In that case, I'm sure you're
also too old for this...
raaaaagh!

Nelson attacks with the mad man puppet and Abner, his kid
instincts kicking in, flees.

ABNER

Aaaahhh!

As Nelson and the mad man chase Abner and his spider
around the loft, ERNIE BARKS furiously. Cornering Abner,
Nelson reaches out with the mad man puppet and taps
Abner's spider.

NELSON

You're it.

The chase reverses.

ABNER

Raaaaagh!

Gaining ground on Nelson, Abner rounds a corner and runs
smack into Sara.

SARA

No running in this house!
(scary alien voice)
Unless I get to play!

Sara whips Abner's one-eyed alien puppet out from behind
her back and chases after its creator.

SARA

Ah-hah-hah-hah-hah!

(CONTINUED)

80

CONTINUED: (4)

80

Fleeing, Abner soon finds himself pursued by Sara, Nelson and Ernie all at once.

JUMP CUT TO:

SAME SCENE - LATER

as the game evolves, Abner and his spider puppet prowling the loft.

Behind Abner, the mad man and the alien silently appear in doorways and above furniture, but when Abner spins around, they're gone. Even Ernie scampers past with Abner's wire dog strapped to his back, but Abner misses it.

Finally, Abner outsmarts the grown-ups, backtracks and catches them both in the kitchen, looking the other way.

ABNER

Ahhh!

SARA

Eeewwwwh!

NELSON

Arrrrrrrhhh!

Sara and Nelson flee, but someone trips, and as they collapse into a pile, Abner jumps on top, all three laughing hysterically.

81

OMITTED

81

&

&

82

82

83

EXT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

83

In very high spirits, the three of them sit at a table outside the coffee shop. Abner and Sara share a banana split. Abner is horrified to see the waitress bring Nelson a fruit salad. Sara whispers to Abner.

(CONTINUED)

SARA

I know, don't say anything.

A Porsche pulls up to the curb, LEXY, a lingerie model in the passenger seat, checks out the street.

LEXY

The movie starts in ten minutes.
Maybe we should skip it.

A MAN jumps out of the car, says:

MAN FROM CAR

Don't worry, babe, you'll get
your cappucino.

Seeing Nelson, the Man stops dead in his tracks. It is Vince. He whistles as he takes in the whole scene.

VINCE

Ooooh. Somebody went domestic.

Just then, Abner checks his watch, jumps up.

ABNER

Gotta go. Mom's home for an hour
between jobs!

He runs off. Vince edges a little closer to Nelson's table, checking Sara out head to toe.

VINCE

Okay, okay. Wow. Well, I guess
it all makes sense. 'Mystery
Woman Unveiled' on...
(looks around)
What street is this? Where am I?
I'm lost!

NELSON

Um... Sara, Vince, Vince, Sara.

Lexy calls out from the car, impatient to leave.

LEXY

Vince, the movie...

VINCE

(doing a weighing
of scales)
The movie... the cappuccino...
the movie... women.

(CONTINUED)

SARA

God, that is one of the most astute observations about female behavior I've ever heard. Are you a psychologist?

VINCE

(confused, laughs)
 Funny. She's funny. Right?
 That's good...
 (points to his car)
 Meet the lovely Lexy -- my man
 Nelson, his woman Sara.

SARA

Hey, Lexy.

LEXY

Hi.

VINCE

See, they get along. Why don't the four of us go out together sometime, you know, do something depraved?

Just then a WAITRESS comes out and Vince stops her.

VINCE

Quick order. Cappuccino.

WAITRESS

(harassed)
 Quick answer. No quick orders.

And she walks back inside the coffee shop.

VINCE

I love this place. I'm gonna come here every day. So I guess the movie wins.

(winks to Sara)
 Keep you women happy, that's our job.

(heading back to car)
 Don't forget, my man. The 20th.
 You, me, and God.

(reaches his door)
 Sara -- a pleasure, and an honor.

He gets in the car, REVS the ENGINE and off they go.
 Nelson is embarrassed, starts doing a tap dance.

(CONTINUED)

NELSON

He's actually a good guy. Deep down. Somewhere.

SARA

He seemed okay.

NELSON

I just mean... the glibness... kind of wears you out after a while.

SARA

Do you always talk about your friends that way?

NELSON

No. Fortunately, I don't have any friends besides Vince)
(raises his hands)
Okay, I should be ashamed of myself, I'm a lousy human being.

SARA

(pauses, doesn't indulge him)
So what is it? Some kind of boy's club, work friendship?

NELSON

I guess so. I don't examine certain details of my life too closely.

SARA

Do you trust him? Isn't that what friends are for?

Nelson shrugs, then nods, then shakes his head, then nods and shrugs again. She cracks up. He's unaware he's doing it.

SARA

Would you trust him to be there for you...

NELSON

When?

SARA

In a scary situation, let's say.

(CONTINUED)

83 CONTINUED: (4)

83

NELSON

You may have noticed -- I don't put myself in those situations.

SARA

(the sweetest smile)

Do you trust me?

Aware of what he's doing now, Nelson shrugs, shakes his head, nods. She hits him with a look.

SARA

Show me the house where you grew up.

84 EXT. HOUSE (OLD NEIGHBORHOOD) - DUSK

84

A decaying working-class neighborhood; "for sale" signs dot the front yards. Nelson's neglected old house has a "for sale" sign in front. He balks, feigning indifference.

85 INT. HOUSE - DUSK

85

She opens the front door, extends her hand to Nelson who's like a spooked horse out on the porch.

SARA

It's just a house, Nelson.

He takes a deep breath, still balking, then gives in. Holding Sara's hand, he enters and slowly wanders through the empty living room... memories, images, and sounds washing over him. He is silent for a long time, then:

NELSON

You remember blue and it turns out to be green. Maybe it turns out we were... happy once in a while.

There is a set of double doors half open, leading to a room beyond. Together they open the double doors and step inside.

86 INT. OLD TV ROOM - DUSK

86

Humming a Frank Sinatra, she guides him to the center of the room and begins to slow dance with him; after a while, he whispers in her ear.

(CONTINUED)

86 CONTINUED:

86

NELSON

Sara, I may not know a lot of things...

(gently)

... but I do know how to slow dance. And you are terrible. Now, watch me, I'll teach you.

As he teaches her how to slow dance, see the look of pure gratitude on his face -- this is a big moment for him. He is crossing an irreversible line.

SERIES OF SHOTS

to show the passage of time.

87 INT. LOFT BATHROOM - DAY

87

Nelson lying in the bathtub, shakes his head. Sara is painting his toenails. He doesn't like the color.

88 EXT. VEGETABLE STAND - DAY

88

The two of them buying vegetables; the Chinese woman holds up pictures of her family to Nelson, enjoying his reaction.

89 INT. LOFT - NIGHT

89

Blindfolded, a naked Nelson gropes his way around the loft, trying to find Sara who is stripping and tossing her clothes at him, laughing.

90 EXT. STREET - DAY

90

The two of them taking another walk; CAMERA MOVES OFF of Nelson to reveal... he is walking Ernie, the puppy, on a leash.

91 INT. SARA'S LOFT - DAY

91

As Sara cuts her hair with a FLOWBEE, Nelson dresses in business attire. Three weeks of November are crossed off the large wall calendar. It is November 20th.

(CONTINUED)

NELSON

Every woman I know spends 200 dollars on a haircut. You use a vacuum cleaner.

SARA

Quit trying to change the subject.

Visibly upset, Sara shuts OFF the SELF-GROOMING MACHINE.

SARA

You made a commitment. Our time isn't over.

NELSON

It's one meeting.

SARA

Why is going to some pow-wow with that slicko Vince such a big deal?

NELSON

Because it's probably the chance of a lifetime, that's why.

SARA

Well, if it's a whole lifetime, just postpone it for one more week.

NELSON

Sara, when Edgar Price says he'll meet you, you don't say, 'Wait, how about next month?' You say, 'Thank you. I'll be there.' He's one of the greats. Where's my phone?

SARA

I hate it. I threw it out.

OFF Nelson's look, Sara produces his cell phone and slams it down on the table in front of him.

SARA

What if the Great One hires you to start tomorrow?

NELSON

I should be so unlucky. My gizmo.

Sara digs his memo recorder out of a hiding place.

(CONTINUED)

91 CONTINUED: (2)

91

SARA

That would ruin everything -- we haven't finished! You haven't sung for me yet. You promised you would.

Nelson pours a huge coffee.

NELSON

That's a promise I know I didn't make, because that's a promise I'd never keep.

Nelson chugs the coffee and sets out to leave, so distracted he forgets to say goodbye to Sara. As Sara watches the door shut behind him, she begins to look frightened.

SARA

(to closed door)
Nelson, please don't go.

92 INT. POWER RESTAURANT - DAY

92

An innocent-looking WAITRESS delivers lunch to Nelson, Vince and EDGAR PRICE (60). Nelson is essentially taking command of the meeting, showing the same cool professionalism he exhibited when he delivered his presentation. As he talks, Edgar Price studies him carefully.

NELSON

We know a lot of guys who do this for the awards, Mr. Price, but that's not us.

Vince thoughtfully nods his head, then flashes a wicked smile.

VINCE

That doesn't mean we don't get the awards.

NELSON

But still... we're not about acclaim, hand-holding, dinners, sending prostitutes to the client...

PRICE

Prostitutes? That's new.

Sensing that Price is a hound dog, Vince cozies up.

(CONTINUED)

92

CONTINUED:

92

VINCE

You've been retired for a long time. We got stories for you.

Price's eyes light up, he laughs. Vince seems worried that Nelson is coming off as a stick in the mud.

NELSON

We're about the work. If the work is great, it speaks for itself.

Vince nervously starts to fill the silence, when Price speaks.

PRICE

That's all I need to know.
(smiles, they're in)
That, and -- married? Any kids?

VINCE

We've avoided the family thing for some time. All our lives.

PRICE

Good. Because if you're worried about 'quality of life' or paternity leave or any other new age crap, much as I like you, we can stop right now. I need to be your full-time commitment.

Nelson debates a moment, not sure he likes the tone, but he plays along, playing politic.

NELSON

I can do that.

VINCE

If only it were so easy with women.

93

EXT. CHINESE TEA SHOP - DAY

93

Chas and Sara walk toward the Chinese tea shop.

CHAS

He'll come back, even if he gets the job.

(CONTINUED)

SARA

I'm not worried about it.
(totally worried)
You really think so?

CHAS

My God, I've never seen you like
this.

SARA

It's just that... we still have
ten days to go... and he was doing
so well.

CHAS

What's ten days when you'll boot
him out in the end?

SARA

Ten days is a lifetime, Chas.
(pauses)
I should have locked him in. I
should have tied him to the bed.

CHAS

Wouldn't have stopped him. I know
guys like Nelson. When push comes
to shove, he's only gonna do what
he wants to.

SARA

That's one of my favorite things
about him. It's also what scares
me. It's so amazing, Chas. He
was changing, right before my
eyes.

CHAS

Happens to the best of us.

Now Vince is doing a little song and dance for Price.

VINCE

Just so you know, I've got a couple clients in my hip pocket, some great leads for new accounts. So we come -- fully loaded.

PRICE

You're not selling me a car, Holland, and frankly I'm not overly impressed with you anyway.

(to Nelson)

But your reputation precedes you, and if I have to take him to get you, I will. This is my offer. It's good as long as we're at this table.

Clearing their plates, the Waitress spills a drink. It soaks the napkin Price is writing on and pours into his lap.

WAITRESS

I'm sorry. I'm so sorry.

PRICE

You know... we are what we do in this world, sweetie, and you're a waitress. All that requires is that you bring the food and drink to and from the table without making a mess. That's it. So when you screw up something so incredibly simple as that... well that just doesn't say a whole helluva lot about you, does it?

Stunned, the Waitress carries the dishes to a nearby wait-station where she breaks down and cries.

VINCE

Women like that I give dumb a bad name.

ON NELSON

as he watches the Waitress cry, then turns to appraise Price, who doesn't skip a beat as he grabs a new napkin.

(CONTINUED)

PRICE

They should fire her.

(pauses)

I always say -- a bad hire strengthens the competition's hand. A good general feeds off his enemy.

NELSON

Actually, Sun Tzu said the last line, in The Art of War.

VINCE

Did he? Interesting.

Price starts to rewrite the offer. Suddenly he stands as if to leave, he's pulling a tactical maneuver to make them nervous.

PRICE

That's right. Smart man, Nelson.

Price writes the offer on the napkin. Vince picks it up, reads it, jaw dropping. Price grins -- loves his own sense of drama -- extends his hand to Nelson. But Nelson does nothing. And Vince starts to freak.

VINCE

Nels? Are you there...?

NELSON

Not interested.

PRICE

You don't like my offer?

NELSON

Mr. Price... my father was a poor man... embarrassed by his own life. I swore I'd never end up like him. I thought money and success would be the difference. But you're rich and successful, and I don't wanna ever end up like you either. It's not the offer I don't like... it's you.

Vince and Nelson face each other, both aware of Price on his cell phone only a few yards away. Vince is very nervous.

VINCE

Act normal, he's watching us.

Price returns, casually drops the napkin with the offer on the table. Vince picks it up, reads it, jaw dropping. Price grins -- loves his own sense of drama -- extends his hand to Nelson. But Nelson does nothing. And Vince starts to freak.

VINCE

Nels? Are you there...?

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Not interested.

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97 EXT. POWER RESTAURANT - DAY

97

Nelson loosens his tie as he exits. Vince flies out.

VINCE

Okay, what the hell was that?
You just shit in God's face, do
you realize that?!

NELSON

If that's your God, you're in big
trouble. The guy's not for me --

VINCE

Not for you? Edgar Price is your
goddamned soul daddy -- you're
practically cloned from his
D.N.A. --

NELSON

No. I am nothing like that man.
If I am: shoot me.

VINCE

Where's the gun?! Shoot me! This
is my career, too, you know!

(pauses)

It's that new girl isn't it?
She's got your balls in a jar.
This is why domestic is dangerous,
Nelson, this is why we stay wild --

Nelson waves his arm as a cab passes. The cab stops.
He opens the door, feels bad for Vince.

NELSON

I'm sorry I cost you the job,
Vince.

VINCE

No, no, I don't need pity. Not
from the man who dive-bombed his
career twice in one month.

Nelson gets into the cab.

NELSON

No. I guess you don't.

And the cab takes off.

98 EXT. STREET - DAY

98

Sara walks down the street, wraps her scarf tighter,
shaking. She rubs her temples, not feeling well. Keeps
walking.

(CONTINUED)

98

CONTINUED:

98

NELSON (O.S.)

Have you ever heard of an aerides
odoratum?

She looks over. Nelson is in a taxi, stuffed to the
gills with flowers. He holds up an exotic purple orchid.

NELSON

It reminded me of you.

She takes the orchid, walks abreast of the cab as it
slowly makes its way down the street.

SARA

You got the job, didn't you?

NELSON

Best offer anyone ever made me.

He hands her a bouquet of roses.

SARA

When do you start?

NELSON

We had a hard time agreeing on
that.

(hands her tulips)

He suggested immediately.

(hands more flowers)

I suggested never.

He hands her the biggest bunch of flowers of the batch.

(CONTINUED)

98 CONTINUED: (2)

98

NELSON

He was the biggest prick I ever met, Sara.

She has reached the front of her building. Howls with delight, drops the flowers in her arms. Nelson leaps out of the cab, they kiss, flowers all around them.

98A INT. SARA'S LOFT - NIGHT

98A

Sara and Nelson are holding each other, asleep in bed.

98B EXT. SAN FRANCISCO - NIGHT

98B

The city sleeps.

99 INT. SARA'S LOFT - DAY

99

Nelson is brushing Ernie, who keeps squiggling back to try to bite him. Nelson may tolerate dogs now but he's not St. Francis of Assisi -- he fake threatens to whack Ernie with the brush, growling. Sara is poring over a slew of cookbooks checking out recipes for roast turkey.

SARA

How does vegan turkey sound?

NELSON

Vile. Come on, let's keep Ernie.

SARA

Nope. He got placed, he goes.

NELSON

But you love this little monster.

He doesn't notice that as she sets a book down, she doubles back, holding her stomach as if nauseated.

SARA

There's another one coming soon, I'll love him.

NELSON

Cold, heartless woman.

She smiles thinly, the wave of nausea passes and she resumes perusing the books. Forces herself to sound bright.

(CONTINUED)

99

CONTINUED:

99

SARA

How does turkey with Cajun oyster stuffing sound?

NELSON

Ordering sounds better.

SARA

You can't order Thanksgiving dinner, this is one time in life when it's good to be trad.

NELSON

In that case, are you inviting your family?

SARA

No. Holiday fights are a little too traditional for my taste if you know what I mean.

NELSON

What do you guys fight about?

SARA

Money, religion, sex, Sara's decisions, Sara's 'unconventional lifestyle.' They think I'm a freak.

NELSON

You are a freak.

SARA

(shrugs)

Anyway, boring subject.

The truth is she feels too shitty to talk, turns her head from him to hide another wave of nausea.

NELSON

I'm sure they miss you.

SARA

I know they do.

She slams the book shut to indicate: end of conversation.

(CONTINUED)

99

CONTINUED: (2)

99

NELSON

You know, there's a good tradition called making up. Try it.

SARA

Some day I'll have to.

Someone KNOCKS on the door. Becoming more upset, anxious to be alone, she pleads.

SARA

Nelson, will you walk down with him, please?

NELSON

Sure. Come on, boy.

As Ernie trots off with him, Nelson opens the door, revealing a BURLY MAN.

BURLY MAN

The password is 'Mentos... Fresh and Full of Life.'

NELSON

What else?

The Man forces a smile and gives the thumbs-up sign. Nelson hands him Ernie's leash and follows them out. The moment the door shuts, Sara rushes into the bathroom.

100

EXT. SARA'S BUILDING - DAY

100

The Burly Man exits with Ernie, followed by Nelson. As the Man leads Ernie toward his van, Ernie keeps peering back at Nelson who meekly waves, genuinely sad.

ABNER (O.S.)

Why can't she keep one, for a change?

Nelson looks down to find Abner, wearing his balaclava and holding his skateboard.

NELSON

Guess she helps more this way.

The two of them stand there watching the van pull away.

ABNER

I've been thinking about something.

(CONTINUED)

100 CONTINUED:

100

NELSON

You have? Glad to hear it.

ABNER

I'm thinking: if you wanna adopt me, you can. Father-Son Day's on Monday. It would be good timing.

NELSON

I don't quite know what to say, Abner.

Sensing rejection, Abner looks away. Nearby, Al and Osiris are changing the window display in their bookstore.

NELSON

I tell you what. I can't adopt you, but I'll come to Father-Son Day if you want.

ABNER

Promise?

NELSON

Promise.

An ecstatic grin spreads across Abner's face.

ABNER

Wait till my mom hears!

As Abner runs off, Osiris comes out to check the window display, waves to Nelson.

OSIRIS

Hey, Nelson, like the new display?

NELSON

Beautiful, Osiris. Always had a soft spot for Che Guevara.

OSIRIS

How's life? How's Sara?

NELSON

Both are...

(peers up at loft)

Great.

(CONTINUED)

100 CONTINUED: (2)

100

He slowly takes in all the life on the street -- sees the Chinese fruit vendor sweeping up her sidewalk, she nods to him. In a thrift store nearby, a twelve-year-old girl practices dance moves, peering at herself in a mirror. Nelson absorbs it all, feeling something he's never felt before: part of place. True contentment. Love. His eyes roam up to the billboard which was being replaced a few weeks ago. A new ad is up. It says: LIFE IS CHOICE, MAKE THE RIGHT ONE.

There is a moment, a transcendent moment. If ever you could see a person have a revelation, it would be right here, right now. He spins on his heels and runs inside.

101 INT. SARA'S LOFT - BATHROOM - NIGHT

101

Sara's face is wet, and her hands tremble as she forces down pills. In raw frustration, she pounds her fists on the counter. Hearing Nelson's FOOTSTEPS ON the STAIRS, she scrambles to pull herself together.

102 INT. SARA'S LOFT - DAY

102

Nelson enters, shouting.

NELSON

I have an announcement to make!

He stops in the doorway to the bathroom. Sitting next to the tub, Sara drinks more water.

NELSON

What's wrong? Are you okay?

SARA

Yeah, I'm fine.

Nelson enters the bathroom and gestures toward the locked cabinet.

NELSON

What do you keep in there?

SARA

Nothing.

NELSON

Nothing usually doesn't require a lock. What's wrong?

(CONTINUED)

102

CONTINUED:

102

SARA

I'm fine. So, what's the big announcement?

NELSON

Come on, Sara, talk to me.

SARA

Am I okay? No, I'm not okay. I have a migraine. And I miss Ernie.

Sara returns to the kitchen and busies herself chopping vegetables. Nelson follows.

SARA

So, come on, what's your big announcement?

NELSON

Marry me.

SARA

Technically, shouldn't that be a question?

NELSON

Will you marry me?

SARA

Are you insane?

NELSON

Yes, I am, and you should be very proud of the work you've done.

(kisses her)

I stood on the street, Sara, and I realized: This is it. Life will never be better or sweeter than this. I am happy. I'm in love. Everything just clicked for me.

SARA

That's incredibly sweet, but you don't understand...

NELSON

Yes, I do. It all makes sense: I want you, I want this life.

Nelson's CELL PHONE RINGS inside one of the kitchen cabinets. Nelson retrieves it and drops it into the water-filled sink.

(CONTINUED)

102 CONTINUED: (2)

102

NELSON

Marry me.

He pulls off his watch and drops it into the sink as well.

NELSON

Marry me, Sara.

SARA

You're forgetting something.

Sara moves to the refrigerator to gather more vegetables.

NELSON

What?

SARA

We made a deal, remember?
One month. That's it.

NELSON

Did you hear what I said? I said
I'm in love with you. I've never
said that to anyone, ever.

SARA

Well then this is a really big
breakthrough for you -- you can
finally say things that you could
never say before.

NELSON

Sara, I know you're not feeling
well, but I gotta say... I was
hoping for a different reaction.

SARA

We made an arrangement, Nelson.
One month and not a day more.
That was our deal.

NELSON

Screw the deal. I just asked you
to spend the rest of your life
with me. Doesn't that mean
anything to you?

SARA

Of course it does.

Sara tries to turn away, but Nelson won't let her.

(CONTINUED)

102 CONTINUED: (3)

102

NELSON

You said you'd never lie to me.

SARA

I haven't.

NELSON

Then look at me and tell me you don't love me.

Sara's eyes fill with tears.

SARA

Please don't make me do this right now.

She heads for the bathroom.

NELSON

Do what, tell the truth?

SARA

(stopping)

This! What you want, what you need... I can't give it to you, Nelson. Any of it. Ever.

NELSON

Why not?

SARA

... because of me.

NELSON

What about you? For God's sake, Sara, please just tell me what's wrong. All I want is the truth.

SARA

I can't --

Rushing into the bathroom, Sara slams the door behind her.

NELSON

Sara?

As he tries the door, Nelson hears her becoming violently ill inside.

NELSON

(banging on the door)

Sara? Sara! Sara!

(CONTINUED)

102 CONTINUED: (4)

102

Throwing his shoulder into the door, Nelson breaks it open and finds Sara, slumped over by the tub, with vomit covering the floor beside her.

NELSON

Jesus.

103 INT. BATHROOM - DAY

103

Delirious and crying, Sara fumbles to cover the vomit with a towel as Nelson bursts in.

NELSON

What the hell is going on?

He sees the key in the cabinet door, lunges toward it.

SARA

No! You can't do that! Get out!

She tries to stand up and stop him from unlocking the cabinet, but she's too weak. Yanking open the cabinet, he gapes speechlessly at over 90 bottles of prescription medicine. Sara weakly pulls herself to her feet. Gathering a last surge, she angrily rips the shelves from the cabinet, sending scores of bottles rolling around the floor.

(CONTINUED)

103 CONTINUED:

103

SARA

There. Is that enough truth for you?! Are you happy now?

Sara hurls bottle after bottle at Nelson. He stands there dumbly, lets them bounce off him.

SARA

You just couldn't leave it alone, could you?! You just had to know!

She turns to leave -- her body literally collapses and she starts to crash to the floor. Nelson grabs her, she is limp in his arms. He gently lies her down, panicking as she grows increasingly faint.

NELSON

Sara, talk to me...
(as she doesn't respond)

Please... just talk to me, tell me what's wrong, so I can help.

She closes her eyes. He is terrified, shakes her.

NELSON

Sara? Sara!

104 INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - DUSK

104

A bewildered Nelson sits in a curtained-off area in a busy emergency room, being grilled by a DOCTOR.

Sara is conked out on a gurney, attached to an IV drip.

DOCTOR

Do you have her medical records?

NELSON

No.

DOCTOR

Who's her doctor, so I can track them down...

NELSON

I don't know who her doctor is.

The Doctor looks at him, taking stock of this shell-shocked man.

(CONTINUED)

104 CONTINUED:

104

DOCTOR

Do you have any idea what's wrong
with her?

NELSON

I'm sorry, I don't know anything.
I called a friend of hers, maybe
he...

He peers around helplessly, sighs with relief when he
sees Chas racing into the emergency room looking for him.

105 INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - DUSK

105

While Nelson stands off by himself, feeling exiled and
helpless, Chas confers with a NURSE outside Sara's
hospital room. Nelson can see her in a bed, unconscious,
hooked up to blinking machines and a web of IV's. Nelson
slowly comes over to Chas, taps him on the shoulder.

NELSON

I'm sinking. Fast.

Chas and the Nurse exchange a look. The Nurse goes in
the room to check on Sara's vitals.

CHAS

I'm sorry you had to find out this
way, Nelson. She was diagnosed four
years ago. It's a non-Hodgkins
lymphoma.

Nelson is stunned.

CHAS

(shakes his head)
Come on, let's get a drink.

106 INT. BAR - NIGHT

106

Nelson and Chas share a booth. Nelson has left his drink
untouched, is desperately pumping Chas for information.

NELSON

Wait a minute -- you said -- she
stopped her treatments --
(astonished)
A year ago? How could she --

(CONTINUED)

106

CONTINUED:

106

CHAS

-- You're not listening, Nelson.
For Christ's sake, bone marrow
transplants, chemo, experimental
treatments... She stopped because
they didn't work.

(pauses)

Nothing worked.

Nelson finally takes a gulp of his drink to brace
himself. Tries to be brave.

NELSON

Look, I'm no doctor... but one
year unchecked...

Chas holds a clear honest gaze on Nelson

CHAS

It has spread everywhere.

Nelson inhales sharply, like someone kicked him in the
stomach. He is struggling not to cry and puts so much
energy into the struggle, he deflects the emotion to
anger.

NELSON

God damn it. Talk about trust --
talk about honesty -- how could
she get involved with me and not
tell me she was sick?

Chas quietly sits there, lets him blow off steam.

NELSON

I mean, what was she thinking?

CHAS

She was thinking you'd be like
all the others. Just a month.

That stops Nelson. Chas continues, his manner gentle,
calm.

CHAS

You need to understand something,
Nelson. Rules are how she copes.
When life's out of control,
people go to great lengths to
invent the illusion of control.

(softly)

Believe me, I know.

(CONTINUED)

106 CONTINUED: (2)

106

NELSON

The rift with her family? That's what it's about, isn't it? Her rules?

(as Chas is silent)

Oh come on, Chas, I love her too, you're not betraying her.

Chas studies Nelson, nods.

CHAS

Yes. She saw what was coming, but they wouldn't let go, kept trying to run her disease. So she took off.

NELSON

And came here?

CHAS

(nods)

She told me since she couldn't live a normal life, she was gonna live an abnormal one, best way she knew how.

Nelson hangs his head, trying to collect himself.

NELSON

I don't get it, she loves life more than anyone I know, how could she just... give up?

CHAS

She's not giving up. She's making the most of what she's got left.

NELSON

But... I'm saying... she should fight it, instead of accepting...

CHAS

Fate? Why? What's so bad about acceptance, Nelson?

Suddenly, all the emotions pour through the cracks and Nelson just bursts into tears and cries like a baby.

107 INT. HOSPITAL - SARA'S ROOM - MORNING

107

Nelson steps into her room. She is awake, but drained. The strain between them is so palpable you can touch it. They're like two people spiritually exposed for the first time.

(CONTINUED)

107 CONTINUED:

107

NELSON

Hi. Feeling any...

SARA

(can read his mind)

You want to know why I didn't tell you, don't you?

He sits down on the chair by the bed. Nods.

SARA

This is why.

She gestures to the whole set up: the room, her in bed, him standing there looking stricken, afraid to move.

SARA

Look at us, look at you. You probably think I'll break if you touch me, I'll crumble if you say one harsh word. You measure every step, every thought...

(pauses)

That's not how I want you to be.

He leans forward, takes her hand and kisses it.

NELSON

Then I will learn to be better.

SARA

Oh God, Nelson. If anyone could, it's you.

She runs her fingers through his hair. They are silent a few beats.

SARA

Will you help me do something?

NELSON

Anything.

SARA

Get me out of this hellhole. I don't want to die here.

108 INT. HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - DAY

108

Nelson holding Sara tightly, she walks like a child on eggshells, every step hurts her. They pass a NURSE.

(CONTINUED)

108 CONTINUED:

108

NELSON

She just wants to take a stroll
down the hall.

The Nurse nods and doesn't make a peep. They keep going down the hallway, Sara's knees buckle and he quickly lifts her up, carries her the rest of the way to the elevator. The Nurse sees them get into the elevator.

NURSE #2

Wait! She can't leave the floor!

109 EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY

109

Hurrying, Nelson helps Sara outside. The lights and noise of oncoming CARS disorients her. He steps toward the street, shouts:

NELSON

Taxi!! Hang on, baby. We'll
get you home.

110 INT. SARA'S LOFT - DAY

110

Chas and Brandon wait. Suddenly, the door swings open, and Nelson enters with Sara in his arms. She is moaning, in pain.

BRANDON

Oh, sweetie, let me take her...

Nelson precariously transfers Sara to Brandon's care. Brandon barks an order to Chas.

BRANDON

Get the donnetal and codeine.

(to Sara)

We've got a nice hot bath for you,
baby.

Nelson watches helplessly as Brandon leads her into the bathroom, where he and Chas remove her clothes. Nelson is so bereft, all he can do is stand outside the bathroom and literally bang his head against the wall.

He moves to the doorway as they are lowering Sara into the tub. He can't help himself, has to say something.

NELSON

Listen, Sara, I know doctors,
I can call...

(CONTINUED)

110 CONTINUED:

110

Her eyes meet his, she is deeply humiliated, hisses to Chas.

SARA

Shut the door, just shut the
door! I don't want him here.
Tell him to -- go!

Nelson can't move. Chas comes out, gently pushes Nelson
out, closes the bathroom door behind him.

NELSON

I can't stand by and do nothing,
just watch her...
(can hardly
say it)
Die.

CHAS

That's why she wants you to go.

Wearing an ill-fitting coat and tie, Abner pushes through
the front door. Chas immediately slips back into the
bathroom and closes the door so Abner can't see.

NELSON

Hey, Abner. Today's not gonna
be a great play day.

ABNER

No, it's gonna be Father-Son
Day. Did you forget?

NELSON

Oh, God. I'm sorry, Ab, I can't.

ABNER

But you promised.

Abner looks shattered as Nelson struggles to remain
poised.

NELSON

Right.

111 INT. SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - DUSK

111

Teacher oversees a room of FOURTH-GRADERS and their
fathers.

FOURTH-GRADER

My dad takes me fishing, too, and
sometimes we go out for pizza and
he tells me about girls.

(CONTINUED)

111 CONTINUED:

111

The fathers chuckle as the boy sits. Glassy-eyed, Nelson seems only half there, but he focuses when Abner stands.

ABNER

This is Nelson. He's not my dad, but he does a lot of dad stuff, like he told me I should be myself, and it was cool to be creative. And we made up a game called Dr. Shrink that was really fun. And he taught me not to cheat. Mostly, he's my friend.

As Abner sits back down, Nelson smiles painfully.

112 EXT. STREET - DUSK

112

Nelson holds Abner's hand as they walk to Abner's house. Across the street, all the lights are blazing in Sara's loft.

ABNER

See you tomorrow?

NELSON

I don't know, Ab. I'm probably not gonna be around here tomorrow.

ABNER

How come?

NELSON

I gotta do some thinking, make a tough decision.

ABNER

She says you're not respecting her choices or something like that?

Nelson looks at him, stunned. How did he know that?

ABNER

I dunno, you always see that on TV, women complaining and stuff.

NELSON

(overwhelming)

I think you're the coolest kid I've ever met, Abner.

113 INT. TAXI - NIGHT 113

Nelson slumped in back, in a daze. Outside, tableaux of the city glide past the window: a couple kissing against a car, an ambulance careening down a street, SIRENS BLARING, a blind man gingerly heading up a sidewalk, led by a seeing-eye dog.

114 INT. NELSON'S APARTMENT - DAY 114

The penthouse is a mess. The door to the deck is open, and the curtains billow in the cold WIND. Fully-clothed, Nelson sleeps on the couch.

115 EXT. SAN FRANCISCO - NIGHT 115

Nelson sits on a bench overlooking the bay. Unshaven and unkempt, he stares out at the water and the night.

116 INT. SARA'S LOFT - DAY 116

Though not up to full strength, Sara looks much better than the last time we saw her. She's pulling a tray of muffins from the oven. Chas is chopping vegetables; they're making Thanksgiving dinner.

SARA

Ouch! Shit! You bastard!

She has burned her hand, drops the tray and muffins splatter all over the floor. Chas immediately rushes over, concerned.

SARA

It's nothing, just a teeny tiny little... ouch.

Her face is red and mottled from trying not to cry.

SARA

Really, I'm fine, I'm really fine, we're going to have fun tonight. Fun is a great Thanksgiving...

(voice wobbles)

Tradition.

CHAS

Come here...

She walks over and Chas enfolds her in a big hug. She is spinning, really distraught, afraid of what she's feeling.

(CONTINUED)

116 CONTINUED:

116

SARA

He asked me to marry him.

CHAS

He's not the first.

SARA

It's the first time I wanted to say yes.

CHAS

Did you?

SARA

No. I let the whole thing go too far.

CHAS

For...

SARA

Both of us. Besides it's a moot point. He's gone.

She leans down to pick up the broken muffins strewn all over the floor.

CHAS

He'll be back.

SARA

I don't want him to come back. Look what I did to the muffins.

She's becoming unraveled, has to keep the subject changed.

SARA

Maybe I can salvage a few of these...

CHAS

You know, it's okay to break your own rules, Sara.

SARA

Where's the mix? I'll start again --

CHAS

You didn't mean to fall in love, but you did... it's okay to admit you need him.

(CONTINUED)

116 CONTINUED: (2)

116

She stands up and throws some of the muffins into the wastebasket.

SARA
Stop it, would you?

She spins around to face him, eyes glittering.

SARA
What rule says I should put him through hell? All it will do is hurt him.

CHAS
He'll hurt no matter what.
(pauses)
Maybe you should let him decide.

SARA
My life is not his decision.

She turns her back on him, needs to compose herself.

SARA
You shouldn't keep Brandon waiting.

He nods and starts to head out, stops.

CHAS
Let yourself have some happiness, honey. You're entitled.

117 OMITTED

117

&
118

&
118

119 INT. LOFT - LATER

119

The table is set with a motley collection of mismatched plates and silver, decorated with Abner's puppets. The feast is laid out for Brandon, Chas, Abner, Al and Osiris. Al raises a glass of wine in toast.

AL
Happy we-stole-your-land-and-killed-your-people day.

Suddenly, CHRISTMAS MUSIC BLASTS and Sara bolts up as Nelson swings in through the window over the fire escape. He is dressed as Santa Claus, carries a huge pack.

(CONTINUED)

119 CONTINUED:

119

NELSON

Merry Christmas, Sara!

SARA

You mean, Thanksgiving.

NELSON

Not for you. You shouldn't have to wait.

Astonished and moved, all of Sara's friends make a move to leave.

CHAS

Maybe we'll grab a turkey pot pie at the coffee shop.

(pauses)

Nice to see you, Nelson.

Nelson nods, watches all of them leave, then turns back to Sara. He regards her with such tenderness, she is struck speechless. He unties his big bag.

NELSON

For you, sweet Sara, I bring the twelve gifts of Christmas.

As Nelson describes each gift, he removes it from the pack and hands it to Sara, beginning with a big salami.

NELSON

One: The famous Columbo log. The salami that started it all.

(digs out another gift -- wigs)

Two: A kaleidoscope of coiffures for the Barking Mad Pet Crusader.

He plops a wig on her head and returns to his bag.

NELSON

Three: A bullwhip for the dizzy dominatrix. So you can rule your world in style, and whip me into shape.

He cracks the whip, and Sara shrieks.

NELSON

Four: 'Sara,' a custom-made fragrance capturing that special something a woman leaves on a man.

He opens the bottle and passes it under her nose.

(CONTINUED)

119 CONTINUED: (2)

119

SARA

Oh, Nelson. This is...

NELSON

... only the beginning. Five:
Why Is Harriet So Hairy?, the
definitive guide to understanding
our transvestite friends.

(another gift)

Six! Tiny Bubbles -- for those
leisurely soaks we love so much.

He hands her the bottle of bubble bath, then pulls out a
plastic Muni train, shakes it.

NELSON

Seven: A hundred Muni train
tokens for the the many, many
great rides of your life.

He hands her the bus, then pulls out a C.D.

NELSON

Eight: A collection of music
to swoon by. Which fits nicely
with gift number nine...

He grabs her and spins her around the floor as he hands
her some vouchers.

NELSON

Dance classes at Mildred's Academy
of Dance, guaranteed to get you
off my toes in a week.

He runs to the door. Opens it.

NELSON

Ten: For the gentlelady who hates
doing the dishes... a dishwasher.

SARA

Nelson, please, this is too
much...

Nelson runs back to the door, reaches for a sack.

NELSON

It's not enough. Eleven: Live in
your loft, back by popular demand,
I give you...

He shakes open the sack, out tumbles Ernie, the puppy.

(CONTINUED)

119 CONTINUED: (3)

119

NELSON

Ernie!

Completely overwhelmed, Sara wraps her arms around Ernie and kisses him.

NELSON

And if this last gift doesn't prove how much I love you, nothing will.

LOUD MUSIC KICKS IN as we --

CUT TO:

120 INT. CABARET - NIGHT

120

On stage, Nelson, wearing a white dinner jacket and black tie, sings "Time After Time."

In the audience, Sara watches with glee as Nelson sings directly to her. Meanwhile, the diverse crowd goes wild for the rare, unabashedly heterosexual performance.

121 INT. SARA'S BUILDING - STAIRWELL - NIGHT

121

Sara and Nelson arrive at Sara's door.

(CONTINUED)

121 CONTINUED:

121

SARA

You were brilliant, Nelson, but I'm afraid I'm going to lose you to Vegas.

NELSON

Nope.
(pauses)
Never.

122 INT. SARA'S LOFT - NIGHT

122

Sara enters and freezes. Novembers torn from innumerable calendars are everywhere.

Every reachable inch of wall space and half the furniture are covered with the month. Nelson walks up behind Sara and wraps his arms around her.

NELSON

Look around, Sara... every month is November... and I love you every day.

SARA

But, Nelson... it's almost over.

Nelson spins her around to face him.

NELSON

Who told me once that we see the world we choose to see?
(pauses)
This is our month and it never has to end.

SARA

But you know that I'm --

Nelson kisses her lightly on the lips.

NELSON

I surrender all attempts to control life, yours or mine. I live for one thing: to love you. To make you happy. To live firmly and joyously in the moment. November is all I know and all I ever want to know.

(CONTINUED)

122 CONTINUED: 122

Conflicting currents of joy and sadness play across Sara's face. She kisses Nelson and hugs him with all her might.

SARA

By the way, that was three things.

123 INT. DMV - TEST ROOM - DAY 123

Sara retakes the driving test.

124 EXT. DMV - DAY 124

Sara exits waving her license, and Nelson wraps his arm around her.

NELSON

Okay, hot shot, now that you have your license, what do you wanna do?

SARA

Take a walk.

125 EXT. STREET - DAY 125

They are walking down the street, taking in all the familiar sights of the street.

DISSOLVE TO:

125A INT. MUNI TRAIN - DAY 125A

The two of them licking ice cream cones as they look out the train window, talking and laughing.

126 OMITTED 126

127 INT. SARA'S LOFT - NIGHT 127

Nelson and Sara gently make love.

As the BELLS of the nearby CHURCH RING TWELVE ominous times, Sara stares at the large wall calendar. Every day of November but the last has been crossed off. Kissing Sara's neck, shoulders and breasts, Nelson doesn't see her anguished face.

127A INT. SARA'S LOFT - SERIES OF SHOTS - NIGHT (LATER) 127A

over the course of the night: Nelson and Sara sound asleep in each other's arms.

Later, they disengage their hold, still asleep.

Later, they come back together, embrace, still sleeping.

Later, Nelson still asleep, Sara awake, reflecting.

Later, Sara studying Nelson's face in repose, she is coming to a decision.

128 OMITTED 128
thru thru
130 130

131 INT. SARA'S LOFT - DAWN 131

Nelson wakes up as dawn is breaking, surprised to see Sara's not in bed with him. He peers around, sees her fully-dressed, pulling the Novembers off the wall one-by-one. Most are already piled up in her arms.

NELSON

What are you doing?

Removing the last calendar, Sara opens her trunk. Most of the gifts Nelson gave her are inside. She adds the calendars.

SARA

I thought I'd keep half. I put the other half in your bag.

Sara drapes Nelson's travel bag over his shoulder.

NELSON

Sara, stop this, please...

Sara crosses the last day of November off the large calendar. Then she tears the month off, revealing December.

SARA

It's time for you to go, Nelson.

NELSON

What are you talking about?

SARA

Our month is over.

(CONTINUED)

131 CONTINUED:

131

NELSON

Haven't we been through this a hundred times before? I'm not going anywhere.

She puts on a jacket.

SARA

I made you agree to a month for a reason.

NELSON

Because you're sick? I don't care if you're sick. The only thing I care about is you.

SARA

Then that's why you should go.

NELSON

No.

SARA

You said you would stop trying to control life, yours and mine.

(firmly)

Now you have to keep your word.

She wraps a scarf around her neck, turns and heads toward the door.

NELSON

Where are you going?

SARA

Out. To give you time to leave.

132 EXT. SARA'S BUILDING - DAWN

132

Sara steps into the dawn, trying to stay calm. Suddenly breaks into a run as if she has to flee everything. Nelson careens out of the building in pursuit, practically dressing as he runs, throwing a jacket on.

NELSON

Sara! Stop it! Come on, come back!

133 EXT. CITY - DAWN

133

Nelson chases Sara through the streets.

NELSON

Sara!

134 EXT. PARK - DAWN

134

The park is deserted. Halfway through, Nelson catches her. They both gasp for air.

NELSON

Sara, stop it. Will you please stop this, I'm not leaving you -- I know you love me.

SARA

I do, Nelson. I've never felt anything like it. I never thought I'd have the chance and you gave that to me.

NELSON

Then why are you doing this?

SARA

Because it's starting to happen, Nelson --

NELSON

-- It doesn't --

SARA

-- If you leave now, everything we had will stay perfect forever --

NELSON

-- Sara --

SARA

-- All we have is how you'll remember me and I need that memory to be strong and alive --

NELSON

-- But I want --

SARA

-- If I know I'm remembered that way then I can face anything. Can't you see, Nelson, you're my immortality.

NELSON

I want to take care of you, Sara.

SARA

I'll be alright. I'm going home. They know I'm coming. They're ready.

(beat)

You said I come first.

(CONTINUED)

NELSON

You do.

SARA

Then try and understand. I need to do this.

NELSON

It just doesn't seem...

SARA

Just like I need to know you'll go on and have the beautiful life you deserve. I want you to fall in love again someday, be a husband, have a family.

NELSON

I only want you.

SARA

You have me forever. Now let me go.

NELSON

I can't believe you've even got me considering this.

(long pause)

This is truly what you want.

SARA

Yes. It is.

NELSON

Alright, Sara, alright.

SARA

Close your eyes, this time count to twenty. Go ahead.

Nelson soaks up as much of her as he can. Then reluctantly, he closes his eyes. Sara blindfolds him with the scarf.

NELSON

... One, two, three, four, five, six --

Sara stands on her tiptoes and whispers in his ear.

SARA

I love you, Nelson Moss.

(CONTINUED)

NELSON

I love you, Sara Deever.

SARA

Remember me.

NELSON

... Seven, eight, nine, ten,
eleven --

As Nelson continues counting, Sara walks to a spot twenty yards behind him and waits at the foot of a statue.

NELSON

... Twelve, thirteen, fourteen,
fifteen, sixteen, seventeen,
eighteen, nineteen, twenty.

Nelson steps forward. Then, turning, he walks straight toward the statue and arrives at the exact spot Sara stood just a moment before.

Slowly, he removes the scarf. Sara, of course, is gone. All around Nelson, shades of the park emerge in the dawning light.

Looking down at the scarf in his hands, Nelson smiles. At the same time, dawn breaks, piercing the park with glimmering, amber light.

Carefully wrapping the scarf twice around his neck, Nelson walks out of the park and into the street, just as a red Muni train slowly makes its way across the awakening city, its empty windows aglow in the dawn.

FADE OUT.

THE END