

THE IMPOSTERS

Written by

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Based on The Novel, The Impostors, by Timothy Balding  
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INT. JANET'S APARTMENT - SALON

There is an extravagantly catered affair happening around us. There is a huge buffet lunch set out across one side of the room. There are elegantly dressed caterers holding silver trays distributing drinks and taking dirty glasses.

As we pass through the party we hear a man speaking:

MAN V.O.

...and as I'm standing there, watching this teenager scare off a group of my classmates who were bullying the new kid in town, I decided I wanted to be like this hero. Although I didn't realize it at the time, I think that was the first experience that inspired me to join the army. Ronald standing up for me.

We land on WILL POWER, who is in his funeral attire in character as 'Fred'. He is speaking to three socialites, SHEILA, VERONICA, and SALLY, who are all listening intently to his story.

WILL

It wasn't long after that his family invited mine over for dinner, and our friendship truly began.

SHEILA

Fred, I must say it is such a privilege to hear all of these early stories about Ronald.

VERONICA

Yes, we only knew him after he got together with Janet, obviously, and he rarely talked about his childhood.

WILL

That's a shame. He had such a warming presence when we were young. I always looked up to him.

VERONICA

Clearly.

SALLY

So when exactly did you two reconnect?

(MORE)

SALLY (CONT'D)

Obviously we know that the circumstances were less than ideal...

JANET CHAPMAN joins them and takes Will by the arm.

JANET

Pardon the interruption ladies, but I must borrow the Major here for a few moments.

SHEILA

Of course, have him make the rounds.

Janet walks with Will out of earshot of the others and towards the bar in the adjoining room.

JANET

I figured you could use saving from my inquisitive friends.

WILL

Ms. Chapman you are as much of a hero as your husband was.

JANET

Excuse me?

WILL

Just a story I was telling them about how Ronald saved me when I was a boy.

JANET

Ah, from what? Having too much fun?

WILL

Bullies.

JANET

How original. Yes, my dear friends tend to rely on doing *everything* together, even flirting with a strapping young Major... Sorry about all that-

They approach the bar.

JANET (CONT'D)

(suddenly serious)

How are you doing Will? I know today has been more than you're probably accustomed to.

WILL

Janet, please, it's still 'Fred'.  
And I'm fine, really. How are you  
holding up? I can't imagine what  
this must be like.

Janet gets the bartenders attention.

JANET

I'm having a blast, actually. Just  
need a drink. Yes, I'll take a  
large gin and tonic, light on the  
tonic, and a scotch for the Major.  
Thank you.

(Back to Will)

I'm just tired of playing the part  
of the grieving widow.

WILL

Well, we've almost reached the  
light at the end of that tunnel-  
Sorry, that's definitely  
inappropriate to say right now-

The bartender hands them their drinks.

JANET

(playful)

How dare you, Major. At your best  
friend's funeral reception.

WILL

(raising his glass)

You're right. Let's toast to  
Ronald's memory.

JANET

Oh God no, let's drink to us. For  
putting on a mighty good show.

WILL

To us then.

They cheers and as Will starts to drink Janet realizes:

JANET

You know, I probably should make  
some sort of speech. Dammit.

She turns and raises her voice to get everyone's attention.

JANET (CONT'D)

Everyone, if I could just have your  
attention.

(MORE)

JANET (CONT'D)  
 I would like to take a moment to  
 say a few words in honor of my  
 beloved Ronald's memory...

As Janet's voice fades out we focus in on a framed photo on a  
 mantle piece of Ronald, Janet, and 'Fred' laughing with their  
 arms around each other.

Title Card: THE IMPOSTERS

CUT TO:

EXT. SIDE STREET IN SOHO - DAY

WILL POWER is standing in front of a building's entrance in  
 Soho while a heavy rain is falling. Will enters the building.

CUT TO:

INT. EXTRA! AGENCY ENTRANCE

The elevator opens as Will enters the Extra! Agency's  
 reception area and finds BLANCHE.

BLANCHE  
 Welcome to Extra! - with an  
 exclamation mark - I'm Blanche,  
 without an exclamation mark. How  
 can I help you?

WILL  
 I'm Will Power - with no  
 punctuation. I called earlier and  
 you said, well, just to come over.  
 So here I am, ready for role-  
 playing and improvisation.

BLANCHE  
 You're a funny one. I like you. Go  
 over there and have a seat and I'll  
 let Mike know you're here. He's the  
 boss, the genius behind our  
 organization. Only he gets to hire  
 people, though he does occasionally  
 ask for my opinion.

Will goes to the seating area and just manages to seat  
 himself when he hears MIKE FIELDING booming in-

MIKE  
 Will Power! Your parents must have  
 had a sense of humor.

Mike comes up to Will and shakes his hand vigorously as Will tries to get up out of his chair - Mike ends up lifting him up as a result of the handshake.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Mike, Mike Crophone!

WILL

Really?

MIKE

No, no, just a joke. Willpower and Microphone, we would make a great act! Fielding, actually, Mike Fielding. But I do like playing with words, don't you?

Without waiting for Will do answer his question, Mike starts walking back towards his office and continuing-

MIKE (CONT'D)

Did you hear about the toucan who went to the supermarket to buy some fruit? The girl at the checkout asked him, 'Cash? Credit Card?' and the toucan said 'No thanks, just put it on my bill'.

To ensure that he's understood, Mike pulls a huge imaginary beak from his nose. Will chuckles politely as he observes a conference room right before entering Mike's office.

INT. EXTRA! AGENCY - MIKE'S OFFICE

Mike goes to sit behind his desk and gestures for Will to have a seat.

WILL

Nice offices you have here.

MIKE

Glad you like them. Take a seat. Tell me about yourself!

WILL

Well... I'm twenty-eight, I live in the east village with my roommate, Andy. Work as an actor when I can, and between roles I bartend and wait in restaurants - wait the tables in restaurants - I don't just sit around waiting in restaurants...

(MORE)

WILL (CONT'D)

It's pretty much the stereotypical struggling actor in New York City-type-scenario.

MIKE

And what kind of acting do you do?

WILL

Well, honestly, whatever pays. I've done bit parts on some TV series and landed a few theater runs in the past.

MIKE

Are you working on anything at the moment?

WILL

Not really, I'm bartending part-time at a bar in Chelsea, and I'm part of a Shakespeare troupe that puts on a few shows a year. If we're lucky. But I actively check postings on casting websites - that's how I found this!

MIKE

Sure. So, do you know anything about Extra!?

WILL

Well, I'm guessing you recruit extras...

MIKE

Very perceptive, my boy. Now, I'm not sure if you're union or not, but in our business it wouldn't matter since you're not being paid as an extra regardless-

WILL

And, I'm sorry, what exactly is this business of yours? Surely you don't interview all of your extras personally?

MIKE

Not for crowds, of course. We just line them up against the wall with number cards like a police line-up parade and ask a few questions.

(MORE)

MIKE (CONT'D)

But we also have a lot of individual work, and there I like to make the selection myself.

WILL

Do you hire mainly for film or stage?

MIKE

Neither. We only work in real life.

Mike grins and lets his answer sit in Will's confused silence.

CUT TO:

INT. JANET'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - MORNING

JANET CHAPMAN is making herself a cappuccino. Her husband, RONALD CHAPMAN, enters the room with his coffee already in hand. The two do not regard each other, as Ronald grabs the paper from the oversized kitchen island and is about to head to his study. Janet's back is turned to Ronald when she speaks:

JANET

I'm heading to the publishing house in a moment. I expect I will be there late tonight - we're throwing a launch party for our newest author this evening.

Ronald stops near the kitchen exit in order to speak with her. They are as far apart as possible while remaining in the same room.

RONALD

Yes, I'm sure you'll do a wonderful job of organizing the whole thing.

JANET

Well, I've already organized it, Ronald, now it's just a matter of making sure it all gets carried out correctly.

RONALD

You certainly have a talent for barking orders at underpaid staffers so I'm sure it will be a huge success.

Janet, finished making her cappuccino, faces Ronald but doesn't get any closer to him.

JANET

Do drink your coffee, dear. It's far too early for you to be this unpleasant. Long week at the office?

RONALD

Yes. Thankfully I can do most of my work from home today, so I think I'll do just that.

JANET

Do you want to come to the party tonight?

Janet walks through the kitchen past him and into one of the lounging rooms of the apartment while he speaks:

RONALD

Don't ask questions that you know the answer to, Janet. If I attend one more of those gatherings, I'll have to kill myself.

He follows after her.

INT. JANET'S APARTMENT - LOUNGE WITH FIREPLACE

A myriad of notes and drawings are scattered around the coffee table and Janet starts to collect and organize them into binders that she places into a bag.

JANET

Oh, whatever would I do then?

RONALD

Yes, I'm sure you spend your time dreading the day you find out I've passed on. Tell me, have you already planned the trips you'll take when you're unburdened of me?

JANET

No, so far I've only dreamed of the men I'll finally be able to invite into our home.

RONALD

Lovely. Do me a favor, my sweet wife. If I do go before you, please don't cremate me.

JANET

You want to be *buried*?

RONALD

Yes! What is the point of getting cremated? To have my ashes scattered over the Adirondack mountains? Or into the Hudson? Or to just sit there in an urn over the fireplace for you to look at? No. I must be buried. That, Janet, is the true circle of life.

JANET

I really don't feel like starting my day off with a morbid depiction of-

RONALD

My carcass shall return to the earth, where it will eventually be feasted on by worms and slugs who in turn will be killed and eaten by nearby ants and termites who will eventually emerge into the light and be gobbled up by a squirrel or a rat.

JANET

Please stop it, Ronald, you know I have an overactive imagination.

Having collected all of her materials, Janet takes her belongings and heads past the staircase in the foyer to the closet to get her hat and sunglasses before heading out. Ronald follows her all the way continuing his story, simply to annoy her at this point.

INT. JANET'S APARTMENT - FOYER

Janet is deciding on which pair of shoes to wear.

RONALD

So imagine it! Birds will eventually eat the rodents and fly off into New Jersey, somewhere, or out on Long Island.

(MORE)

RONALD (CONT'D)

Where they will be blasted out of the sky by a gunshot and end up on someone's dinner table. See, in this way, little bits of me will survive in the stomachs of some happy farmers. Of course, the next morning, the cycle can then recommence when the farmer heads to his bathroom and nature takes its course-

Janet, ready to head out, finally interrupts-

JANET

(overlapping with Ronald's last sentence)

Ronald, stop! That's enough! If I wanted you to nauseate me so at the start of the day then I would enter your bedroom while you were changing!

RONALD

(satisfied)

I didn't realize I was bothering you that much, dear.

JANET

I'll be gone the rest of the day. Do try to keep yourself amused while I'm gone. I know it's harder for you when you don't have an easy victim to prey on.

And with that Janet leaves and slams the large wooden door behind her.

CUT TO:

EXT. PLUM & SONS FUNERAL PARLOUR

Now we are in front of a different door. It is raining. We see Janet's hand ring the doorbell. Again.

CUT TO:

INT. PLUM & SONS FUNERAL PARLOUR - ENTRANCE

A small older man, PLUM THE ELDER, scurries to the door with two of his assistants in order to let Janet in. She enters, wearing a lavish rain jacket, and closes her umbrella, which Plum's assistants take for her.

Plum bows deeply to Janet forming a ninety degree angle with his body, and while bowed says-

PLUM THE ELDER

Good morning, madam. You have come to see the deceased once more?

Janet stares at this small old man, afraid he may be stuck in his bent position, before replying:

JANET

Yes, I did call, you know.

Plum remains in his bent position and starts waving his arms and hands around behind him in a frenzy.

PLUM THE ELDER

Dear me, young Plum must have forgotten to tell me. Dear me.

Still waving his hands behind him, trying to signal to his assistants to go to the back and start preparing the body - which they eventually figure out.

Once the assistants have left the room, Plum finally lifts himself back up before saying:

PLUM THE ELDER (CONT'D)

Please, do take a seat. We'll have the thing ready for you in just a moment.

And without waiting for her to sit down, Plum rushes back to get the body prepared. As Janet looks around the room she mutters to herself:

JANET

'Thing'.

Janet sits down, but is immediately uncomfortable. She spots a display case filled with urns, and chuckles to herself as she approaches it to get a better look at the variety of urns displayed. There is a bronze plaque that reads "Cremation Over the Ages". There's a beautiful Egyptian urn that has the head of a cat, next to larger, brightly colored Greek vase that has depictions of a battle painted on. There is a Roman pot, as well as porcelain urns with painted flowers. At the bottom of the case is a little cardboard note with delicate script that read "Reproductions."

CUT TO:

## INT. JANET'S APARTMENT - RONALD'S STUDY

Ronald is sitting in his lazy boy writing in a journal when Janet barges in with several bags of clothing she has purchased. She places them down excitedly and finds the items she purchased for Ronald.

RONALD

Productive day, I see.

Janet pulls out a pink button up shirt, a flowery yellow tie, a green Donegal Tweed jacket, and black and white striped dress pants, placing them all on a the sofa opposite the lazy susan. Ronald gets up and goes to look at the items of clothing.

JANET

They had some fantastic pieces that  
I just think go together  
beautifully!

RONALD

Do you want me to look like a  
goddamn clown?!

SMASH CUT TO:

## INT. PLUM &amp; SONS FUNERAL PARLOUR - VISITATION ROOM

Ronald's body, still cold from the freezer, is laid out on a slab for Janet to inspect - wearing all the clothes we've just seen him mock.

Janet leans over and inspects him - truly takes him in, trying to find something profound and poetic to say while staring at her husband's corpse. After a moment-

JANET

He looks good. Even if he does  
smell like death. Thank you.

Plum the Elder bows again in appreciation.

CUT TO:

## INT. WILL'S APARTMENT

Will's roommate ANDY is sitting in their living room working on his laptop, presumably writing an article for one of the independent papers or blogs he freelance writes for.

Will exits his room freshly dressed, having just showered. He goes to put his shoes on and leave the apartment.

ANDY

You're up early. Where you off to?

WILL

I have a meeting with Mike today at 11. New type of job - he wants to 'brief' me in person.

Will exits.

ANDY

Well that's exciting. You know, I was thinking- oh, yep, never mind. I'm busy too.

CUT TO:

INT. MIKE'S OFFICE

Mike is standing behind his chair at his desk, while Will sits in the chair in front of Mike's desk.

MIKE

Do you weep easily?

WILL

I do, actually.

MIKE

I knew it.

Mike proudly points to his own head while saying:

MIKE (CONT'D)

Psychology.

WILL

I'd probably start crying at a stranger's funeral if I'm being honest.

MIKE

Funny you should say that. Because you are going to be our very first mourner.

Mike pauses for dramatic effect but Will just stares at him blankly.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Yesterday, this stunning, classy, enigmatic lady walks unannounced into my office wearing a spectacular yellow cartwheel hat tilted to one side - Jesus, I wish I had been wearing my fedora - and sits down without invitation on the edge of my desk - right there - and asks huskily after lighting a cigarette, "Do you do funerals?"

WILL

She lit a cigarette in your office?

MIKE

(ignoring Will)

I thought at first she was trying to commission a hit! So I replied - and here's where I was *really* cool Will - "Well, we don't make them happen, if that's what you mean".

Mike pauses for dramatic effect - clearly pleased with himself. Then puts on a truly terrible Bogart impression for a brief moment before realizing what he sounds like:

MIKE (CONT'D)

*And she's gorgeous...*

(clears his throat)

She really is - she's a red head. It turns out she wasn't asking for a 'hit' job after all. She needs someone to play her late husband's best friend at his funeral.

WILL

...why can't he do it?

MIKE

Well, apparently he doesn't exist. I don't know much more than that, though. She was rather tight-lipped about the whole issue, and I never press clients when it's not necessary. That's *your* job. My guess is that the job will span over the next week - she said money wasn't a problem, so let's milk it.

WILL

Okay. So should I meet her, then?

MIKE

I think meeting her might help, yes. Blanche will give you her number and address, she's expecting you at her apartment today, and I don't think she likes to be kept waiting.

And with that, Mike gets up and shakes Will's hand as a signal that Will should get straight to work.

CUT TO:

INT. JANET'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM

Janet is sitting in front of the fire with an empty gin and tonic in her hand when the doorbell rings.

CUT TO:

INT. JANET'S APARTMENT - ENTRANCE

Janet opens the front door to reveal Will, standing and smiling.

WILL

Afternoon, I'm from the Extra! Agency.

JANET

Ah, so you're 'Fred'.

WILL

The name's Will, actually.

JANET

No, you're Fred. I'll explain later. Please.

INT. JANET'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM

Will enters the apartment and follows Janet through the foyer into the living room Janet had been sitting in before Will's arrival. Will takes a seat and Janet has already made her way to the bar cart when she asks:

JANET

Would you like a drink?

WILL

Great, yes, please, I'd love a scotch.

Janet pours Will a scotch and herself a double gin and tonic before joining Will.

JANET

Mike mentioned that you're a Shakespearean actor?

WILL

I'm an actor who has performed Shakespeare, yes.

JANET

How wonderful!

WILL

I'm part of an off-off Broadway Shakespeare troupe. Our most recent production was Macbeth about three months ago. Mike came, which was nice.

JANET

I saw a great rendition of Julius Caesar at The Public last season but I prefer Macbeth. Which has a six week run there I believe.

WILL

Well their productions probably have a higher budget than we did.

JANET

Who did you play?

WILL

We tend to circulate leads and chorus members, so in that production I played Birnham Wood.

JANET

How wonderful! You were a tree?

WILL

I played the whole forest, actually. Like I said, low-budget production. Dragging branches across the stage for weeks - I couldn't get the smell of pine out of my clothes!

JANET

Pine? They should have been Oak!

WILL

It was a New Years production - figured we'd 'recycle' unwanted Christmas trees - like I said, small budget.

JANET

Still, marvelous that you got to appear in Macbeth at all! "Who can impress the forest, bid the tree unfix his earthbound root." I so envy you.

Janet dramatically mimes being a tree with her arms outstretched to look like branches. Then, after a moment, she turns back to Will:

JANET (CONT'D)

Ice?

WILL

No, thanks, it's great as it is.

JANET

Let's get down to business then. My husband Ronald knocked himself off a week ago. A heart attack provoked by an overdose. Sleeping pills, apparently.

WILL

I'm so sorry.

JANET

No, we can skip the sympathy and condolences, don't worry. I'm hiring you, so you don't have to pretend anything at all. Not to me at least. Your acting talents will be required at a later date.

WILL

And what exactly do you require from my acting talents? Mike was rather short on detail. You want me to play your husband's best friend? Is that it?

Janet immediately rises to pour herself and Will another round, even though Will hasn't remotely finished his scotch.

JANET

Yes. It's a rather long story, that  
I shall endeavor to make short.

CUT TO:

INT. JANET'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM

We enter a flashback where we see a younger looking Ronald and Janet sitting together happily with the fireplace lit. We move slowly from the living room into the dining room over the course of the following:

JANET (V.O.)

Ronald and I were married for eight years. The early years were fine, and frankly not important to the task at hand nor would you find them particularly interesting. It started just over a year ago, I suppose.

INT. JANET'S APARTMENT - DINING ROOM

We see Ronald and Janet seated at the table opposite each other. Janet is talking to Ronald but he is ignoring her and looking off into the distance. Then Ronald just gets up and walks out of the room. We follow him.

JANET (V.O.)

Ronald became a little sullen, often abandoning our dinner discussions mid-course and shutting himself in his office until well after I had gone to bed.

INT. JANET'S APARTMENT - RONALD'S STUDY

Janet and Ronald are shouting at each other

JANET (V.O.)

I tried to talk about it with him, at first. Every discussion turned into a shouting match that always ended with him yelling that I didn't understand.

CUT TO:

INT. JANET'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM

Janet holds her composure while she speaks to Will, but is more hurt than she lets on.

JANET

One night, he informed me that he would no longer join me for "these stupid, futile evenings of mental depravity" as he called them. And just like that, our shared social life was over.

Janet stares at her second Gin and tonic.

JANET (CONT'D)

And that's when Fred appeared.

Janet finishes her drink.

WILL

He was your excuse.

JANET

At first, Ronald was just under the weather, or off for work. But I didn't want to wait for people to get suspicious; We needed a more durable solution - I have my pride, you know.

Janet rises to pour herself another drink

WILL

So you invented a best friend.

JANET

Ronald did. He came up with Fred's story. He was going through a very painful divorce, he was suicidal, and practically all of Ronald's spare time had to be spent with him. Another drink?

WILL

I'm okay, thanks. I have to head to another job from here.

JANET

Busy man. I'll try not to keep you too much longer, then.

Janet rejoins Will.

JANET (CONT'D)

As time went on, I embellished Fred's story; gave him other attributes - he's an alpine climber, you know.

WILL

Oh, fantastic. And he's divorced, I assume?

JANET

He was married for seven years, happily at first, like most of us, but gradually his wife drew into herself, slept in a separate bedroom, and eventually announced that she had a lover.

WILL

No respect for the sanctity of marriage.

JANET

Yes, poor Fred. He did try to kill himself after that, despite Ronald's care and attention.

WILL

I guess I should know how?

JANET

I wish I had come up with something more interesting, but I just said that he slit his wrists, I'm afraid. Make sure that you wear long sleeves at all times on this job, because I know my inquisitive friends...

WILL

I'll be sure to do that. So, how did Ronald and I become friends?

JANET

Don't worry, I'll tell you more about Fred next we meet, when I've had a chance to collect my thoughts and remember all of my lies. But in the meantime, I think it's even more important for you, as his closest friend, to get to know Ronald.

And with that Janet rises, glass in hand, and heads up the stairs.

JANET (CONT'D)

I won't be but a moment. Then you can carry on to your next 'damsel in distress'.

Will finishes his drink before getting up and looking around the room. Various pieces of art are intermixed with framed photos of Ronald or Janet, and occasionally of them together. Will picks up a photo of Ronald and Janet presumably on their honeymoon together.

Janet returns down the stairs, without her glass but instead carrying a yard high stack of notebooks that she tosses on the floor in front of Will.

JANET (CONT'D)

Voilà! His diaries.

WILL

Have you read them?

JANET

No! Nor shall I ever!

Janet goes up to Will and takes the photo he is holding out of his hand and looks at it for a moment.

JANET (CONT'D)

Understand this, 'Fred'. I *must* be the woman who had a gloriously happy marriage. I will not be the victim, I will not be condemned forever to sly whispers in room corners and pitying words and looks. I can put on a bloody good show, and you must put on a bloody good show to help me. The only person who knows that Ronald committed suicide besides the two of us is my mother, because she deserved to know and will certainly keep it to herself.

She goes to pour herself another drink.

JANET (CONT'D)

Be sure to send me some photos of you so that I can ensure that I have some ready by the funeral.

WILL  
What does that mean?

JANET  
Don't have to worry about any of  
that, I'll show you when it's done.  
You just focus on learning from  
these diaries.

Almost as an after-thought

JANET (CONT'D)  
Burn them when you're finished.

CUT TO:

INT. BAR IN THE WEST VILLAGE

Will, carrying a small suitcase filled with the diaries,  
enters a nice 'pub-style' bar (think Corner Bistro or Swift)  
and immediately makes eye contact with MARY, an overweight  
thirty year old blond woman, sitting at the bar. She gets up  
as he walks over to her.

WILL  
Hi. I'm Fred... Sorry, I mean Will.

MARY  
You're Charles, in fact.

They laugh while Will joins her at the bar.

MARY (CONT'D)  
I'm Mary.  
(turning to the bartender)  
Sir- Get me a bloody Mary, please,  
and whatever he wants-

WILL  
A scotch, please, neat.

MARY  
What a man. Put it on my tab.

Mary gives Will a quick up and down and stops at the suitcase  
at his feet.

MARY (CONT'D)  
Is that *your* suitcase?

WILL  
Yes, sorry-

MARY

Bringing a suitcase to a first date. Aren't you a strange one.

WILL

I really am sorry. I got stuck with it on another job that ran late.

MARY

Well that's fine, I suppose. What's inside?

WILL

A dead man's diaries.

MARY

Oh, you are a strange one.

The bartender serves them their drinks and Mary toasts Will.

MARY (CONT'D)

Well, here's to our loving relationship!

WILL

Cheers to that! So, what's our story?

MARY

You bumped into me in the West Village and knocked me onto the ground, grabbing at me accidentally while you attempted to keep me upright.

WILL

So, love at first grope, then?

MARY

Exactly - but maybe don't phrase it that way to my sister...

WILL

Fair enough. We'll be at her house?

MARY

Yes. She is hosting our dinner tonight. It'll be family and friends, probably around 20 people or so. Hopefully, there will be a single man among them...

WILL

Well, you should know that I'm the jealous type.

MARY

Oh, good - so am I!

WILL

I hope you don't mind me asking, but why are you renting me for the evening? Why not just go there and find yourself a single man?

MARY

Because my evil sister has mocked me about boys since we were in high school. She's prettier, wittier, and quite shameless.

WILL

Shameless?

MARY

No hesitation about going for it. You see, it's the women who see what they want and grab it by the balls - literally, or otherwise, who get what they want.

WILL

So, what do you want?

MARY

I want to see my sister speechless. I want to walk in there with you on my arm, and have her question everything she thinks she knows.

WILL

That's... specific.

MARY

I told them you're an actor - I figured we could work from truth. Although we're going to have to make you seem more successful than you are, no offense.

WILL

None taken. And what do you do?

MARY

I'm an executive assistant at a private equity firm. It's...

(MORE)

MARY (CONT'D)  
horrible, but it pays the bills.  
Do you speak french?

WILL  
Mais oui, Madame, bien sur. I can  
get by in a conversation.

MARY  
Fantastic. We'll say that you  
primarily play the American in  
French films - nobody ever watches  
them, so you don't have to worry  
about being called out.

And with that, Mary signals to the bartender to close her tab

MARY (CONT'D)  
Come on, I'll call us a car.

CUT TO:

INT. JANET'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM

Janet is on the phone with her mother as she approaches the  
bar cart to make herself a gin and tonic.

JANET  
Yes, mother. Of course I'll see you  
the night before. You could have  
just stayed here with me, you know-  
Well, it wouldn't have been. Sure.

As she talks with her mother, she starts to walk through her  
apartment, glass in hand.

JANET (CONT'D)  
I don't know why you- he'll be at  
the funeral, mother.  
(exasperated)  
Fine. Yes, I'll call him. I'm sure  
he can join us for drinks or  
something.

Janet wanders into Ronald's study

INT. JANET'S APARTMENT - RONALD'S STUDY

JANET

I know, mother. I've already told you, he didn't share anything with me. I mean, I knew he wasn't happy, but I didn't think-

Janet listens to her mother for a moment as she sits at Ronald's desk.

JANET (CONT'D)

Mum, I'll see you in a few days- we can talk about all this then. Or better yet, see what Fred thinks, he might have more insight than I do. Sure. Thanks, mum.

Janet hangs up and sits looking around Ronald's office. Her eyes land on a small wooden cuckoo sitting on Ronald's desk that she recognizes. She picks it up.

CUT TO:

INT. SHEILA'S APARTMENT - ENTRANCE

It is the end of a long birthday dinner party hosted by Sheila at her apartment. Sheila absolutely loves small birds, and as a result there are bird tchotchkes and furniture all over her home. She is wearing a feathered dress.

As Ronald and Janet are saying their goodbyes, Sheila directs them to get their 'goody-bag' from a table surrounded by catering staff. Janet is in high spirits talking with Sheila as Ronald begrudgingly goes to get the bag.

EXT. SHEILA'S APARTMENT - WEST VILLAGE STREET

Ronald is going through the bag as they wait for their chauffeured car to pick them up.

RONALD

Goddamn 'parting gifts'. Who needs these? It's *your* birthday, why are you giving *me* junk?

Ronald pulls out a wooden cuckoo and studies it for a moment:

JANET

It's just a figurine she got for supporting some bird sanctuary or rescue group or something.

RONALD

It's alright. I suppose it's a fitting final parting gift.

JANET

What does that mean?

RONALD

It means I'm done, Janet. I have been for a while.

JANET

Done with what?

RONALD

With all of this. These gatherings, the parties-

JANET

You don't want to go to parties anymore.

RONALD

I don't want to deal with any of it anymore. Parties, dinners-

JANET

You want to become a complete recluse. You don't want to interact with our friends. Have interesting conversations about-

RONALD

(raising his voice)

I don't want to feel obligated to attend these stupid, futile evenings of mental depravity!

JANET

(curt)

Keep your voice down Ronald, they'll hear you.

Their car pulls up and the driver gets out to go open the door for them.

RONALD

I don't care if they hear me, Janet, that's my point.

JANET

I. Care. I will not have you embarrass me tonight.

RONALD

No, God forbid I speak my mind if  
it's going to *embarrass* you.

The two share a look of mutual distaste for each other. Janet breaks it by getting into the car as she speaks.

JANET

Well, fine then. Keep your memento  
of the moment you decided to kill  
our shared social life.

Ronald stays standing, staring at Janet who is now seated in their car.

RONALD

(coldly)

Think of it as a mercy killing, if  
that helps. I think I'll walk for a  
bit.

He closes the car door. Looks at the wooden cuckoo again.

CUT TO:

INT. JANET'S APARTMENT - RONALD'S STUDY

Janet is still sitting at the desk with the cuckoo in her hand. She takes it with her as she exits the room.

CUT TO:

INT. SONYA'S APARTMENT - DINNING ROOM

Will is sitting at one of ten large tables drinking and surveying the party happening around him. Mary is not far from the bar flirting with a smaller man who she has successfully cornered. Will notices SONYA, a very attractive blond woman in her late twenties, heading straight for him.

SONYA

May I join you?

WILL

Of course! Please, have a seat.  
Nice Party.

Sonya joins him and studies him closely as they speak.

SONYA

Thank you. So, it's Charles, right?

Will nods politely

SONYA (CONT'D)  
Charles, what, if you don't mind?

WILL  
Charles Acton.

SONYA  
Oh, I thought you said 'Charles Actor' for a second. That would have been funny, wouldn't it?

WILL  
Indeed, indeed. It's Acton, though.

SONYA  
I bet that happens all the time. Since you're an actor, as Mary tells it. What have you been in?

Sonya scoots slightly closer to Will.

WILL  
I almost exclusively work in foreign films. Mostly French, so, unfortunately you wouldn't have seen them. They haven't been distributed here - yet, at least.

SONYA  
Hopeful, then?

WILL  
Always.

SONYA  
What was your last film called?

WILL  
"L'Escargot Qui M'aimait".

SONYA  
What does that mean?

WILL  
The Snail Who Loved Me.

SONYA  
What on earth is that about?

WILL

It's a psychological drama about an Englishman who moves to Burgundy to breed snails for the British market.

SONYA

Is there a market for snails in Britain? I thought that was only a French thing.

WILL

Exactly! That's why it's a drama!

SONYA

Well, that sounds like a very strange movie.

WILL

Well, yes. The French!

Sonya takes in this handsome, younger, film star that is dating her sister in a way that makes Will slightly uncomfortable.

WILL (CONT'D)

Is something-

SONYA

So what are you doing with my stupid cow of a sister?

WILL

... That's not a very nice way to describe her.

SONYA

Oh, please. I'm sure you've heard a far worse description of me.

WILL

Not at all! Quite the contrary, actually. She hasn't stopped talking about how much she admires you.

Sonya freezes for a moment, before realizing with a laugh:

SONYA

Good one, Charles.

WILL

Are you joking? Mary described you as beautiful, intelligent, generous... she only noted that you can be hard on *her*. If I'm being honest, and please don't tell her I told you this, she actually cried when she told me.

SONYA

She cried?

WILL

Yeah. Personally, I think you're both victims of a misunderstanding.

Sonya's husband, who has been watching his wife flirt with a movie star, comes over to get her away from him.

SONYA'S HUSBAND

Come, darling, let's dance.

SONYA

Oh, have you met Charles yet? He's an actor who stars in French films!

Without looking at Will:

SONYA'S HUSBAND

Nice to meet you. Come on-

Sonya's husband takes her hand and leads her to dance. As she is pulled up she whispers to Will.

SONYA

Well I still think she's an ugly stupid cow.

Will watches Sonya get whisked away before taking his drink and approaching Mary, who is talking to a small man, Harold, trapping him in place with her arm against the wall blocking his path.

HAROLD

Mary, I'm very happy to hear how well you're doing-

MARY

Yes, Harold, yes. Oh, this here is my boyfriend, Charles.

Harold uses Will's approach as an opportunity to duck out from under Mary's arm and chuckles as he walks away.

HAROLD

Nice to meet you, I'm sure you two will want to be together a little.

Mary looks after the now departed Harold.

MARY

Shit.

(to Will)

So, you've met the evil Sonya. What did she say about me? Or is it too vile to repeat?

WILL

She was nice, actually. She thinks that you misunderstand her, and as a result has erroneously concluded that she doesn't like you.

MARY

Erroneously, my ass.

WILL

No, seriously. I think you're both just afraid of being the first person to forgive the other. She definitely admires you. She was particularly impressed, might I add, that you managed to catch *me* in your net.

MARY

Bullshit. Come on, let's dance.

Mary takes Will over to the next room where some people are dancing, including Sonya and her husband. Mary and Will start dancing to a pop song; Will happily making a fool of himself through dance. At one point while dancing he dances at Sonya playfully.

As Mary and Will head to get another drink, Mary pulls Will over:

MARY (CONT'D)

Did she really say she admires me?

WILL

Absolutely! I think she practically idolizes you.

MARY

You're a good man Will. A good man or a damn good liar.

WILL  
Why not both?

They cheers their drinks as the party continues around them.

CUT TO:

INT. SOHO RESTAURANT - MID DAY

Mike sits at the head of the table, with Blanche sitting to his right, taking minutes on their meeting. Gathered around the table are Mike's six highest earning Extra! Operatives, four men, Will, Peter, Frank, and Nick, and two women, Anna and Rachel.

Everyone already has their drinks, and food has just been ordered.

MIKE  
Alright everyone, I've gathered you all here to celebrate the Extra! Agency's one year anniversary! I thought that you should finally meet each other! You are all my highest earners, if I can put it bluntly!

PETER  
You've never hesitated before!

Some of the operatives laugh as Mike shoots Peter a thumbs up and a smile.

MIKE  
Banter! I love it! Lastly, I thought you all could *earn* your lunch but having a little ideas session. I want to know how you all think we could expand or improve our business! First, though, introduce yourselves, and tell us a bit about your missions or specialties. Will why don't you start us off?

WILL  
Thanks, Mike. Hi everyone. I'm Will Power. Last night I was Charles. Tomorrow I'm going to be Fred, again. I do boyfriends, job candidates, and will shortly be Extra!'s first mourner.

PETER

Mourner? How do you mean?

MIKE

It's our new line. Or, at least, I hope it will be. Will is going to weep over the grave of a man he never knew.

WILL

I'm even going to deliver his eulogy. I didn't have a chance to tell you that before.

MIKE

Interesting... and you're writing it yourself?

WILL

Yes. Reading through his diaries to get to know him - I'm actually heading home after this to read them.

MIKE

(To himself)

We'll double the rate, then.

PETER

Isn't that a good avenue for development? Variable fees depending on the extent of our engagement?

MIKE

My thoughts exactly. Peter, can you think of another case where this might be applied? From one of your jobs, maybe?

PETER

I had one last week, actually. I was heckling a politician at a public hearing on social housing - I was yelling about the lack of need or space for new homes, when the politician invited me up to share my wisdom if I knew so much about it. I ended up giving a fifteen minute speech! I mean, they couldn't shut me up, the council's moral obligation to provide affordable housing to the poor...

(MORE)

PETER (CONT'D)

the rise in the number of homeless on our streets, and so on. What I didn't know, I made up, of course, as we all do. There were people weeping, and cheering. I ended up getting the majority to favor the new housing project. The power of rhetoric. It never ceases to amaze me.

MIKE

That politician never stood a chance. Peter has a masters in sustainable cities, that's why I sent him on the job.

FRANK

Who was the client?

MIKE

A property developer.

PETER

So, maybe our contracts should stipulate that we are entitled to additional payment for making speeches, or something like that.

MIKE

That's a great idea. We'll have a clause dealing with that from now on. Anna, why don't you introduce yourself, and tell us about the wife missions.

ANNA

Sure, Mike. Hi guys, I'm Anna. I mainly do girlfriends and job candidates, but playing the wife seems to be a strong new job offering.

FRANK

How is playing the wife different from playing a girlfriend?

ANNA

The context. See, my most recent client was a husband who was having an affair, but wanted to break up with his lover and go back to his wife.

(MORE)

ANNA (CONT'D)

But he was afraid that if he ended things with the other woman, she would try to take revenge on him by exposing their affair, ruining his chance to resume happily married life.

FRANK

Aw, poor guy.

ANNA

Well, you've got to give him credit for coming up with this clever plan. He decides to have the affair exposed to his fake wife from Extra! So that he can end the affair without risking exposure. So he invites his lover over while his wife is away on business, and gives me a set of keys to his house. At the agreed time, I burst in on them mid-cunilingus. I suppose he wanted to have one last fling with her...

FRANK

Amazing...

ANNA

You can imagine the scene- outraged wife screaming that her husband is a deadbeat and a slut. Yelling that if she doesn't get out of the house immediately, that... 'I shall smash your face in and cut out your-

MIKE

Yes, yes, I think we get the picture.

RACHEL

Don't you think that was a little bit dangerous? What if the other woman was insane and tried to fight you?

MIKE

We talked about that, naturally. Never want to put anyone in a dangerous situation. Girlfriends don't really attack wives. If anything it's the other way around, so Anna felt comfortable with the odds.

The waiters bring over plates and bowls filled with meats and pasta as everyone gets ready to feast.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Ah, let's dig in, then. And please,  
another round for the whole table,  
thanks!

As the group all start to eat and drinks are refilled, Peter turns to Will.

PETER

So, let me make sure I  
understand... you're giving the  
eulogy as the dead man's best  
friend?

WILL

Fictional best friend, yes.

PETER

He must have been a likeable guy...

CUT TO:

INT. WILL'S APARTMENT - WILL'S BEDROOM - LATER IN THE DAY

Will sits in his room with a stack of the diaries on his desk. He cracks the first one open and starts reading.

RONALD V.O

In love, no half measures; joy or  
misery, nothing in between.

Will flicks forward a few pages:

RONALD V.O (CONT'D)

This furious passion for life  
cannot be contained, only broken or  
lost in madness.

Will flicks ahead in the diary:

RONALD V.O (CONT'D)

To silence a man by your  
indifference to the questions on  
which his life may hang merely by a  
thread is cruel beyond imagineab-

Will shuts the diary. Picks up another one and opens it to a random page and starts reading.

RONALD V.O (CONT'D)

I cannot stand that woman and no longer understand how I came to marry her. She cannot even let me do the dishes in peace.

CUT TO:

INT. JANET'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN

Ronald is standing at the sink washing some dishes when Janet walks over and picks up a plate Ronald placed on the drying rack.

JANET

Ronald, this is filthy! You're useless. Move over.

Janet slides the plate back into the water. Ronald doesn't move over, but instead picks up the plate out of the sink and calmly drops it onto the tiled floor, breaking it into a dozen pieces at Janet's feet, startling her.

RONALD

That should fix the problem.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. JANET'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN

Janet is standing near the entrance looking at the spot where the dish was broken. She goes and pours herself a gin and tonic. She walks out of the kitchen.

INT. JANET'S APARTMENT - DINING ROOM

Janet approaches the table while drinking, stands at the head of the table.

CUT TO:

INT. JANET'S APARTMENT - DINING ROOM

Ronald and Janet are seated at the heads of the dinner table, with Sheila, Veronica, Sally, and their respective husbands, Phillip, Jonathan, and Thomas sit with them - they are mid-dinner.

JANET

All I'm saying is that we deserve a getaway as well! I feel like the men get their weekend retreats, so why shouldn't we?

SALLY

Agreed. Where should we go?

VERONICA

St. Lucia?

SHEILA

The Maldives?

JONATHAN

Hold on, we almost never leave the east coast, and certainly not the country! It's a weekend, Sheila.

SHEILA

Well, maybe we'll take a week long retreat.

RONALD

I think you'd love the Maldives.

JANET

Oh, you don't know.

THOMAS

Ron, why don't you join us next weekend - the Knicks are playing the 76ers and we're heading to Philly for the game!

RONALD

I prefer the 69ers...

THOMAS

The 49ers? That's football Ron. We're talking basketball; it's the superior sport!

JANET

He was just being crude. Crude and stupid.

PHILLIP

So, you don't want to come then? Because if you do I'll have to make a call.

RONALD  
No need. I'm busy next weekend,  
unfortunately.

Janet knows he is lying.

JANET  
Oh, really? What's next weekend?

RONALD  
I have an old friend visiting.

JANET  
How old?

RONALD  
He's a friend from high school. Old  
friend.  
(at Janet)  
He's going through a rough patch.  
In his marriage.

CUT TO:

INT. WILL'S APARTMENT - WILL'S BEDROOM

Will is still seated at his desk reading from a different  
diary now.

RONALD V.O.  
And then she finally let it go. I  
can't believe I've been reduced to  
inventing friends to escape  
spending time with those morons.  
Can't escape the worst one, though.  
I swear there are times when that  
woman makes me want to-

Andy knocks on the door.

ANDY V.O.  
Hey Will, sorry, just wondering if  
I could borrow your tape measure.

WILL  
Yeah, man, come on in.

Andy enters. Will doesn't look up from the diary.

WILL (CONT'D)  
It's in the bottom drawer in my  
closet.

Andy goes to get the tape measure, but notices the stack on diaries on Will's desk.

ANDY  
You getting tipped in books now?

WILL  
No, it's for an Extra! job. Wait,  
what time is it?

ANDY  
Little after six.

WILL  
Shit, I gotta get to the bar!

Will pops up from his desk, grabs a black button down and starts to put it on. Andy approaches the desk to inspect the diaries closer.

WILL (CONT'D)  
I totally lost track of time.  
Jesus. I'm gonna be late!

ANDY  
What are these?

WILL  
A dead man's diaries.

ANDY  
No, seriously.

WILL  
No. Seriously.

Will, dressed for work, goes to the bathroom and uses his mouth wash. Andy follows him.

ANDY  
Okay... why do you have a dead  
man's diaries?

WILL  
To learn who he was.

Will heads back into his room to pack a backpack with some of the diaries. Andy again follows him.

ANDY  
I thought you did job interviews or  
dates and stuff.

WILL

Yeah, well, this time I'm giving a eulogy as the dead guy's best friend. So...

Andy processes this as Will starts to head out of the room to leave for work. Will stops in front of Andy and hands him one of the notebooks.

WILL (CONT'D)

Here, I already read this one, if you're interested. It's mainly just depressing philosophical musings. Although there are a few pages of Aristophanes quotes scattered throughout. So that's fun.

As Will walks past Andy towards the front door.

ANDY

How did the guy die?

WILL

Suicide. I think. Don't write an article about this.

ANDY

I'll wait if you get me an interview with your boss!

As Will is exiting the apartment:

ANDY (CONT'D)

Wait, where did you say the tape measure was?

WILL (O.S.)

Closet!

CUT TO:

JANET'S APARTMENT - WALK-IN CLOSET -- NEXT MORNING

Will has one of Ronald's nicer suits on. Janet is inspecting him as well as looking at other options.

WILL

It's not a terrible fit.

JANET

No, it's not. I suppose beggars can't be choosers. It'll have to do.

Will starts to change back into his clothes while Janet looks through some of Ronald's old clothes and occasionally back at Will.

JANET (CONT'D)

Are you married Will?

WILL

No, no-

JANET

Girlfriend?

WILL

Dozens, actually.

JANET

Really? Oh, you naughty boy.  
Philanderer! *I will find you twenty lascivious turtles, ere one chaste man.* What do you suppose Shakespeare knew about the sex life of turtles? Odd statement, now that I think about it.

WILL

No, no I was joking. I have been *chaste* for almost a year now.

JANET

Chaste or chased?

WILL

Depends on my name for that day. One of the 'lines', as Mike puts it, of the Extra! Agency is the boyfriend. I get a lot of those jobs.

JANET

So you're a gigolo as well as a mourner?

WILL

Not at all. I was afraid of the same thing when I interviewed, but it's a lot less exciting. Mainly just women who want to avoid embarrassment.

Janet exits towards the living room, Will, now dressed in his clothes, follows her.

INT. JANET'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM

JANET

I get it, I really do.

WILL

Well, you've probably never had that problem.

Janet goes to pour herself and Will a drink and gestures for him to sit.

JANET

Only since I got married... I mean how can someone satisfy the need to be desired and admired while dragging a miserable husband around?

Janet joins Will on the couch.

WILL

I suppose-

JANET

Let's talk about Fred. He's in his early thirties - which you can pull off - Ronald knew him from childhood, in Connecticut. They grew up together; Ronald was somewhat of a mentor to Fred. After high school, Ronald went to Wharton and Fred went into the military. I made him a Major. I said he was the youngest Major in the army, I don't know why I gave such a stupid detail... I guess I wanted him to be successful.

WILL

Well I'll be sure to brush up on my military lingo then...

A telephone rings in the adjoining room. Janet gets up to go answer.

JANET

Sorry, excuse me for a moment.

Janet exits the room and answers the telephone out of Will's earshot.

Will drinks his scotch, and then does a few practice salutes into a Wall mirror he can see off to the side - unsatisfied with them. He realizes he is slouching as well and quickly adjusts his posture to mirror what he assumes a military man would sit like.

Then Janet re-enters the room, telephone in hand:

JANET (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, Will, I forgot about all the last minute arrangements I have to make before the funeral. Would you mind, horribly, helping me with them?

WILL

Of course, Mrs. Chapman, I'd be happy to.

JANET

Will, please, call me Janet, and thank you. Before anything else, could you contact Ronald's bank and tell them that he won't be returning to work?

WILL

They don't know he's dead?

JANET

No, I never got around to informing them. He was taking a few days off when he died, before he died, that is. Just inform them, and invite his closest colleagues and assistant to the funeral. He loathed them all, but it's important for show, for the family. He kept a contact list in his desk in his study. I'm on the line with the funeral parlour, but I'll join you there when I've finished-

She starts to exit the room.

WILL

How do I find the study?

JANET

Up one floor, third door on the right.

CUT TO:

INT. JANET'S APARTMENT - RONALD'S STUDY

Will is sitting at Ronald's desk, on his phone with the contact sheet in front of him. He is looking around the room as the phone rings.

WILL

Hi there, I'm trying to reach Mr. Samuels. Uh- regarding Ronald Chapman. Thank You.

He waits a moment as the secretary connects him through.

MR. SAMUELS (O.S.)

Ronnie! You lazy bastard! I was wondering-

WILL

Good morning, sir, actually my name is Major Acton. I'm calling on behalf of Mrs. Janet Chapman. I have some bad news I'm afraid. Her husband Ronald is dead, heart trouble.

CUT TO:

INT. WALL STREET BANK - MR. SAMUELS' OFFICE

Mr. Samuels is on the phone with Will - there are a number of proposals and pitches on his desk, but it isn't a complete mess. We can hear phones ringing elsewhere in the office as they seem to be going through a hectic period.

MR. SAMUELS

Jesus, I'm sorry to hear that. But why didn't anyone tell us before?

As Will speaks, Mr. Samuels impatiently gestures to one of his underlings to come in and take one of the proposals on his desk that he has finished marking up for edits.

WILL (O.S.)

Mrs. Chapman apologizes for that, but she's been very busy, as I'm sure you can understand-

MR. SAMUELS

Even so, three months...

CUT TO:

INT. JANET'S APARTMENT - RONALD'S STUDY

WILL

I beg your pardon? Three months of what?

MR. SAMUELS (O.S.)

Since he disappeared.

WILL

No, he died a week ago, actually. Ronald Chapman.

CUT TO:

INT. WALL STREET BANK - MR. SAMUELS' OFFICE

Still at his desk, starts looking at a different set of papers.

MR. SAMUELS

Yes, Ronald. He had been ill then? I wish someone had told us. Could have sent flowers to the hospital...

WILL (O.S.)

I'm sorry, I'm not following. He died of a heart attack. It was sudden.

Mr. Samuels realizes he gave the wrong proposal to his assistant.

MR. SAMUELS

Goddamnit!  
(Calling to his assistant)  
Come back!

His assistant comes back in and takes the correct proposal this time.

WILL (O.S.)

Yes, we all wish Ronald was still with us.

MR. SAMUELS

Yes, yes - of course.

WILL (O.S.)

But I'm sorry, what exactly do you mean by three months?

MR. SAMUELS

I haven't seen Ronald in the office since... January? We tried calling a few times...

CUT TO:

INT. JANET'S APARTMENT - RONALD'S STUDY

WILL

Yes, sure... I understand...

MR. SAMUELS (O.S.)

Just thought he went AWOL. Cracked under the pressure... it tends to happen - never suspected that he died.

WILL

Yes, well, since he *is* dead. Mrs. Chapman asked me to invite Ronald's closest colleagues to his funeral. Could you do that for him, for her?

MR. SAMUELS (O.S.)

Yes, yes, of course. Can you give me the information, time and place and where to send a wreath-

WILL

Yes, I'll get you all the information.

Janet enters the study.

WILL (CONT'D)

Okay, thank you, again. Take care.

Will hangs up the phone as Janet starts to speak.

JANET

Will, sorry to interrupt-

WILL

No, not at all, I just finished speaking with one of Ronald's colleagues-

JANET

Oh, excellent. How did he take the news?

WILL

... He was surprised.

JANET

Naturally. Now, Will, I hate to ask even more of you, but my mother will be staying with me the night before the funeral and she absolutely insists upon meeting you-well, Fred.

WILL

I see.

JANET

I've talked her down from dinner to lunch, but I do hope it won't be too much trouble. You can think of it as your dress rehearsal!

WILL

It shouldn't be a problem, Janet. I just have to clear it with Mike, but I doubt he'll take issue with it.

JANET

You're a darling, Will, thank you. I do love my mother, but she tends to make me...

WILL

...Anxious?

JANET

Drink.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. JANET'S APARTMENT - SALON

An agitated Janet sits in her armchair finishing her gin and tonic. On the table is an array of small sandwiches and pastries.

Janet periodically checks the time, while feigning interest in the conversation she is having with her mother, IRENE BLACK (60s), who is sitting on the couch beside her. Irene has not eaten anything today, and is struggling to wait for Fred to arrive in order to eat.

IRENE

He was a good man. Such a good man.

JANET

I know, mother. I know very well.

IRENE

Do you think it could have been his heart condition?

JANET

I think it probably had more to do with the half empty bottle of sleeping pills I found next to him.

IRENE

Why would he kill himself?

JANET

Would you like a drink?

Janet gets up as she asks and heads to the kitchen, mainly concerned with pouring herself a gin and tonic.

IRENE

A sherry, please, dear. Although I must be careful; I haven't eaten anything yet today.

INT. JANET'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN

Janet pours herself another G&T, which she downs very quickly before pouring herself another as well as a sherry for her mother. She glances at the clock before we hear Irene from the other room:

IRENE (O.S.)

Is Fred joining us soon?

JANET

Yes, Fred should be here any minute!

INT. JANET'S APARTMENT - SALON

Janet carries the drinks back to her mother in the lounge and retakes her seat.

IRENE

Thank you, dear. Now, I was asking why you think Ronald killed himself.

JANET

Yes, I know. Do we *have* to talk about this now? We're about to have company...

IRENE

This is our only chance, my dear. You've been so evasive on the phone; we haven't talked about it at all!

JANET

Only in newspapers and novels do people kill themselves for clear cut reasons mother. I suppose he'd just had enough.

IRENE

Enough of what?

JANET

Everything. He became chronically bored of everything he had become. He lost enthusiasm for all the things that had once amused him. The man of action I married retreated into his study, and I never saw him again.

Janet lingers on this thought as Irene studies her daughter. Then the doorbell rings:

JANET (CONT'D)

And then Fred showed up, of course.

CUT TO:

INT. JANET'S APARTMENT - ENTRANCE

Janet opens the front door to let Will in the apartment. She leads him towards the Salon.

JANET

About bloody time, Major Acton!

WILL

Sorry, Mrs. Chapman, I'm really sorry. I got caught up writing the eulogy. How's it going?

JANET

The victims of the Spanish Inquisition got off more lightly.

INT. JANET'S APARTMENT - SALON

Janet leads Will to Irene.

WILL

Good evening Mrs, Mrs... Janet's mother.

IRENE

Good evening, Major. The name's Black, but please call me Irene.

WILL

Thanks, I'm Fred.

Irene and Will take their seats while Janet heads to the kitchen.

JANET

Scotch, Fred?

WILL

Yes, Please.

IRENE

It's very nice of you to come early. Janet's caterers put out this lovely selection of items - please help yourself.

WILL

Oh, I'm fine for now, thanks. I'll start with that scotch.

IRENE

Now, Ronald did mention you a few times, but I didn't realize you were so close that you should deliver the eulogy.

WILL

Yes, well, we went back a long way, and I was absolutely honored when Janet asked... I considered him my best friend, if I'm being honest.

JANET

Ronald wouldn't want it any other way, I'm sure.

IRENE

Mmm. What regiment are you in, Fred?

Janet and Will never discussed this detail.

WILL

You know a bit about the army,  
then?

IRENE

Nothing at all.

Thank God.

WILL

Special services. The forces the  
public doesn't hear much about.  
That's why Ronald and I didn't get  
to see each other too much, except  
in these past few months. All  
highly confidential.

Janet re-enters the room with Will's scotch.

JANET

What's 'highly confidential'?

IRENE

He was speaking about his secret  
life in the army.

JANET

Oh, yes, Fred's a real hero.

IRENE

Now, Major- Fred, why do you think  
he decided to leave us?

WILL

Well, first of all, Irene, I'd like  
to say that Ronald was a good man.

IRENE

He was, wasn't he? That's what I  
was just saying to Janet.

JANET

And I agreed.

WILL

But he was very unhappy. At some point, he stopped taking life at face value and began asking himself some of those profound questions about existence that we should all perhaps confront, but that out of a lack of courage or honesty or ambition we avoid for as long as we can.

IRENE

You know, Ronald told me that I was the only person who listened to him.

JANET

That's completely unfair.  
Completely untrue.

IRENE

He said that you dismissed his philosophical concerns; that you were not interested in his search for sense, for meaning in his life.

JANET

I'm not Mrs. bloody Schopenhauer, mother!

IRENE

Don't swear, daughter, it's unbecoming.

JANET

I didn't marry Ronald for seminars on metaphysics! It wasn't a matter of discussing abstract concepts for fun, I don't mind that at all. He became negative and cynical. He considered simple, superficial conversation as 'mentally depraved'-

IRENE

Aren't you being a little dramatic?

JANET

No, mother. It's most unfair. Everything became too difficult. He wouldn't meet anyone, wouldn't go out in the evening, wouldn't even go for a walk in the park. He became unfit for even the simplest activities of a normal life!

IRENE

Perhaps he viewed it the other way. That you were too difficult to please, or to be with.

JANET

That's lovely, mother. Is that what he told you? I know you two were thick as thieves, always jabbering away secretly together.

IRENE

There was nothing secret between us, Janet, don't exaggerate in front of company. He was just kind and attentive and actually wanted to hear about my life, particularly since your father's death. You didn't come up as often as that in our conversations. Quite the contrary.

There is a tense silence as both women return to their drinks. Irene decides to grab herself one of the tiny sandwiches as Will tries to think of a good way to regain control of the conversation. Before Irene can start eating.

WILL

For what it's worth, Janet, the few times you came up in our discussions you were never paired with disparaging remarks.

JANET

That's sweet of you to say, Major.

WILL

When I last came back from a long mission abroad, we decided to see more of each other. I had problems of my own that I wanted his help with. But he was already long gone. The worm was not only in the fruit but had practically consumed it. He never said it outright, but I'm convinced that he had given up on life, his life. He thought that everything was pointless, useless, vain, destroyed forever... He had lost his taste for living. I can't think of any other way to say it.

IRENE

What a waste, what a waste.

The three of them sit in the salon, drinking in the hanging silence. Irene finally begins to eat her sandwich.

CUT TO:

EXT. CEMETERY IN DARIEN, CONNECTICUT - DAY

Will exits a black town car, as the proceedings for the funeral are to begin shortly. Various funeral guests have arrived/are pulling up. Janet and Irene are already near the coffin.

As Will walks towards Janet, he spots Mike and Peter - Mike sees Will from a distance and gives him a slight nod and a smirk. Will then accidentally bumps into a larger woman who's back is to him. As she turns:

MARY

What in the- Will?! What are you-  
(quietly)  
You're here on a job?

WILL

I'm so sorry ma'am. Major Acton.  
Frederick Acton. And you are?

MARY

Ah, 'Fred'. I'm Mary.  
(realizing)  
I hear you are our 'main event'  
today.

WILL

I am giving the eulogy, yes.

MARY

Fascinating. I'm sorry I can't  
introduce you to my better half,  
but I was informed that he was  
predisposed today.

WILL

I'm sorry to hear that. So, how did  
you know Ronald?

MARY

I was one of his assistants a while  
back. Nasty man, if I'm being  
honest.

WILL

Oh, well, I'll have to disagree with you on that one.

MARY

Yes, I'm sure you knew him far better than I did. It's lovely to meet you - I'm *eagerly* anticipating your eulogy, Major.

Will nods to her as he walks to join Janet and Irene.

We see the funeral guests all taking their seats. Towards the back are Ronald's colleagues, including Mary and Mr. Samuels. Not far from them sit Mike and Peter. Then closer to the front are Janet's three best friends, Sheila, Veronica, and Sally, sitting with their respective husbands. Plum senior and his attendants stand off to the side, to ensure that all the events proceed as planned. A priest finishes speaking.

Janet sits in the front with her mother. Will approaches the podium.

WILL

*Your lost friends are not dead, but gone before, advanced a stage or two upon that road which you must travel in the steps they trod.*

I cite the words of Aristophanes, the father of comedy, whom Ronald and I loved so dearly. We studied his writings together at Hotchkiss, our high school not two hours north from where we are gathered today, and I recall the evenings of laughter we enjoyed together in our studies reading the dialogue from his plays.

Will pauses a moment as he surveys the crowd of people gathered to honor Ronald's memory - he lands on Mary and the bankers.

WILL (CONT'D)

Ronald gave his working life to the noble profession of investment banking, creating the wealth that every society needs to prosper. But he was human too...

Mr. Samuels gives a quizzical look to that statement

WILL (CONT'D)

And was a thinking man, a man devoted to finding a sense to his life, through the company of the books of philosophers, poets, and writers whom we were first introduced to in our youth. And recently, we resumed those evenings together. We met very often for recitations and to remind ourselves just how right Aristophanes had been about the comedy of life.

Janet, clearly impressed with the eulogy thus far, scans her immediate vicinity, and notices that her friends are already weeping. She then begins to tear up.

WILL (CONT'D)

I should not talk about myself on such an occasion, but I would be remiss if I didn't mention what an incredible source of support Ronald was in my own life. I have gone through a number of painful trials this past year, and he was always there for me, often neglecting his own obligations. For that, I must thank him from the depths of my heart. I only wish I could have been there for him in the same way he had been for me.

Will, now moved by his own rhetoric, takes a moment to collect himself, perhaps wiping away a tear or two.

WILL (CONT'D)

I know that Ronald's continual saving grace was his incredible partner in life, Janet. In our nights together, he would speak of how inconsequential he found all things next to the importance of their marriage, and how desperate he was to make her proud. Their love was something I often attempted to learn from in regards to my own troubles. And, Janet, while I know I cannot relieve you of your grief, just know how deeply loved you were, and how you will continue to be by those of us that join you here today.

(MORE)

WILL (CONT'D)

Now, as those closest to Ronald and Janet already know, they shared a passion for Shakespeare and theater in general. So there seemed to be no better way to end my ramblings than with a few words from the master; *Though death be poor, it ends a mortal woe.*" Goodbye my friend, rest in peace.

Will walks down, now truly saddened by the loss of a man he never knew, and joins Janet in the front row as the coffin begins to descend into the ground. Janet discreetly squeezes Will's hand and gives him a smile.

CUT TO:

INT. JANET'S APARTMENT - ENTRANCE

The apartment is now fully prepared for the reception, with the exception of a handful of caterers prepping some last minute glassware and cutlery in the adjoining room.

Two caterers are standing by the window to see when Janet and her guests arrive for her 'party'. One of them is taking their job far more seriously than the other and is paying close attention to the window.

A number of other caterers are standing ready in the next room lined up the stairs holding champagne bottles.

CATERER #1

-and this guy was eating a Poké bowl!

CATERER #2

(disinterested)

Okay.

CATERER #1

We were on the subway...? Poké is raw fish.

CATERER #2

I know what Poké is.

CATERER #1

How does that not gross you out?

CATERER #2

Did he drop the fish on the floor and then eat it?

CATERER #1

No... but it's raw fish. On the subway. He's like breathing in subway air.

CATERER #2

So were you.

CATERER #1

Yeah but I wasn't eating raw fish.

For the first time Caterer #2 looks up from the window up at Caterer #1.

CATERER #2

So, you're saying that subway air is particularly gross to inhale when you're eating fish.

CATERER #1

Raw fish!

We hear cars pull up and/or see headlights pass through the window.

CATERER #2

-Oh shit.  
(Getting up from the window)  
They've arrived!

CUT TO:

EXT. JANET'S APARTMENT

Janet is approaching her front door with Will and Irene followed closely by Sheila, Sally, and Veronica with their respective husbands. Other cars start to pull up.

CUT TO:

INT. JANET'S APARTMENT - ENTRANCE

The front door opens as Janet is greeted with a dozen or so champagne corks popping out of their bottles. This greatly pleases Janet, who does not notice that Irene was startled by the noise.

Champagne is passed out to all of the guests as they enter and everyone is guided into the Salon and Living rooms where the bar and buffet of food that we saw in SCENE 1 has been arranged.

Mike, a plate stacked with a variety of charcuterie and mini sandwiches in one hand and a glass of champagne in the other, approaches Will, who has just received a scotch from Janet.

MIKE

Ahh Mrs. Chapman - my sincerest condolences for your loss. And thank you for inviting me to this lovely reception!

As he gets close to them he lowers his voice:

MIKE (CONT'D)

Satisfied client, I presume?

JANET

How are you Fielding?

MIKE

*Marlowe*. Phillip Marlowe, for today at least. Private eye formerly hired by this strapping young Major here to deduce whether his ex-wife was having an affair. Alas, it turned out she was, but you are well aware of that I'm sure. At least he gained a meaningful friendship even if he did lose his marriage!

There is an uncomfortable silence as Mike looks between Janet and Will, clearly pleased with his backstory.

JANET

Quite. Well you boys will have to excuse me, I must check on the girls and make sure they've found the bar alright.

And with that she heads towards Sheila, Sally, and Veronica.

Mike puts his food down and gives Will a cheers with his champagne glass.

MIKE

That was a damn good eulogy *Fred*.

WILL

Thank you *Phil*.

Mike notices a framed picture on the bookcase next to them.

MIKE

So, Major, what's that?

Will turns and sees a photo of Ronald and himself on a boat holding up a large fish.

WILL

A wild boar?

MIKE

Very funny, *Fred*. I would say that you caught a Marlin that day. I caught one once, off the Canary Islands. Epic struggle. I don't know how the fish enjoyed the experience but I was exhausted. Caught the bastard though. Then I was instructed to throw it back in the sea! Ridiculous! Don't you think, *Fred*, that fishing and then throwing your catch back into the water is perhaps the most futile pursuit known to man? I was so upset by the experience that I haven't gone fishing since.

Mike then notices another photo on the bookcase, and he and Will start to walk slowly past more pictures; Will and Ronald drinking champagne on camp chairs as the sun set over the Kenyan bush, Will and Ronald in tennis gear, each holding onto a handle of their doubles trophy, Will and Ronald as teenagers dressed in their suits the night of prom.

MIKE (CONT'D)

(quietly)

This is brilliant, Will, absolutely brilliant. I thought I was thorough, but this is taking our profession to another level altogether.

WILL

All the credit has to go to Janet. She truly thought of everything.

Both men look over at Janet, who is now speaking with Peter. Sheila approaches Will and Mike, followed closely by Sally and Veronica.

SHEILA

May we steal the Major for a moment?

MIKE

Of course! I should find the friend I arrived with anyway...

CUT TO:

JANET'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM

Peter and Janet are in the middle of a conversation while Irene is sitting in an armchair not far from them, wiping away some silent tear while sipping her sherry.

JANET

-Well thank you so much for all you've done for our dear Fred, doctor. His friendship has meant the world to me, as it did to my late husband.

PETER

Of course. Fred spoke often and highly of Ronald in our sessions, I feel as though I knew him. Thank you for allowing me to come to the funeral, by the way. I want to make sure that Fred feels he has the support system he needs during this difficult grieving period, as I'm sure you're familiar with.

JANET

I certainly am. Though the Major has in many ways been that same support system for me.

Janet spots Mike heading towards them as Irene gets up from her armchair with the intention of getting another sherry and some of those delicious sandwiches she had the day before.

JANET (CONT'D)

Doctor Strumpf, I would love to introduce you to my mother, Mrs. Irene Black.

Irene turns and shakes Peter's hand.

PETER

Elias Strumpf. It's a pleasure to meet you Mrs. Black. My deepest sympathies for your loss.

IRENE

Thank you Doctor.

JANET  
My mother finally got to meet the  
Major yesterday, after years of  
suspense, no doubt.

IRENE  
Doesn't seem like it's been  
years-

JANET (CONT'D)  
Now if you'll excuse me, I  
should probably help Fred  
escape the clutches of my  
overeager girlfriends.

Janet moves past Mike just as he enters their circle in order  
to speak to Janet more.

JANET (CONT'D)  
Pardon me, Marlowe.

MIKE  
Oh, I was just- Okay... Well hello  
Doctor! And you must be Mrs. Black!

IRENE  
I'm sorry, have we met?

MIKE  
No, we have not. Phillip Marlowe,  
I'm a friend of the Major's.

IRENE  
Impressive that you're able to  
recognize me. No one else here  
seems to even know that I exist...

MIKE  
Well, it's my business to know more  
than most. I'm a private detective.

IRENE  
So do you know about all of these  
guests enjoying my daughter's  
funeral 'party'?

He does not.

MIKE  
...I-

PETER  
-You should have heard him when we  
first met. It was as if Fred had  
revealed more details about me than  
I had ever shared with him. It was  
almost off-putting.

MIKE

Well, I try to be thorough.

IRENE

What were you able to dig up on me then? Anything I should worry about?

MIKE

...you're British.

They all laugh, but clearly Irene was expecting more of an answer.

IRENE

So a therapist, a private detective, and a Major in the army attend a funeral together... it feels like the set up to a good joke!

PETER

Now that sounds like a joke I'd like!

MIKE

It does, doesn't it? A joke or a good old fashioned murder mystery!

Mike chuckles at this thought as Irene thinks on it for a moment.

IRENE

Have either of you had to interact with murderers? In your respective lines of work, I mean.

PETER

Luckily not, to my knowledge at least.

MIKE

Oh, sure, I have. I've had to navigate through most of this city's alleyways at some point or other and interacted with a host of 'undesirables', if you will.

PETER

I thought you mainly dealt with the 'unfaithful'.

MIKE

Most certainly. But every once in a while I'll get a case that involves more.

IRENE

Did you know the Major before he hired you?

MIKE

Now how did you know that he hired me, madam?

IRENE

You're not the only one with keen ears, Mr. Marlowe.

MIKE

Our friendship only blossomed after my time employed by the Major.

IRENE

That seems rare. To befriend your client?

MIKE

Well, we bonded pretty quickly. I was a military man back in the day, before going into detective work.

IRENE

Mmm what, five years ago? Tell me, what ever happened to Fred's ex-wife? Post their divorce. I imagine he had you keep an eye on her for a while, or at the very least spoke about it in his sessions with you.

Mike is having a hard time continuing this improv...

MIKE

Naturally.... However-

Luckily, they are interrupted by Janet's voice.

JANET (O.S.)

Everyone, if I could just have your attention. I would like to take a moment to say a few words in honor of my beloved Ronald's memory.

CUT TO:

## INT. JANET'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM

Janet is in the same position she was in at the end of the first scene - next to the bar with a gin and tonic in her hand and Will at her side. The room quiets down quickly as she speaks.

JANET

First of all, I would like to thank all of you for coming today to see Ronald off with me. Major Acton, his dearest friend, who I am especially pleased to see among us despite his recent trials, has spoken very eloquently of Ronald's immense qualities as a kind, generous, loving and cultured man.

Janet takes out a silk handkerchief from her jacket pocket and slowly dabs her tear-filled eyes.

JANET (CONT'D)

Excuse me. I'm so sorry.

(after a deep breath)

All I would like to add is that I am sure that if my husband were able to send us a message... he would ask you to smile and not weep... And would propose together with Shakespeare: *Frame your mind to mirth and merriment, which bars a thousand harms and lengthens life.* Yes, let us make merry, live long, and suffer less!

And with that she raises her gin and tonic with a laugh as everyone at the reception raises their glasses to toast her words. Will clinks his glass with Janet as they share a smile. Mike, Peter, and Irene cheers each other.

MIKE

Here here!

IRENE

(to Peter)

Is that it?

The two caterers from the beginning of the scene who are now on tray duty are standing to one side of the living room, supposedly on the look out for dirty glasses in need of bussing. They are looking at Janet and Will, who are finishing their drinks post-toast.

CATERER #1  
I don't think this is a birthday  
party...

CATERER #2  
Definitely not...

CUT TO:

JANET'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM

It's the next morning. Janet wakes up in her bed with quite the hangover. She slowly rises and puts on her favorite silk robe. She stretches for a moment and takes in the first day she will have as a 'freed' single woman post all of the required ceremony and mourning. Whereas normally she would go to the bathroom and prepare herself for the day, this hangover requires a prompt cup of coffee before anything else.

We follow her down the hall (stairs) towards the kitchen, where she smells something... is that coffee? The mind sure does incredible things when it is desperate for caffeine...

CUT TO:

INT. JANET'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN

She enters her kitchen, and much to her surprise there stands Ronald with his back to her as he makes his morning coffee.

JANET  
Ronald...?

And there turns Will, coffee in hand, looking slightly hung-over but more or less put together.

WILL  
Not quite. I'm sorry I hope you don't mind... I made enough for the both of us...

JANET  
Oh, thank God it's you, Will.  
Wait... what the hell are you doing here may I ask?

WILL  
... Making you coffee...

JANET  
How did you get into my house?

WILL  
Well, you invited me, actually.  
After the funeral. For the  
reception.

Putting it together.

JANET  
You stayed the night?

WILL  
Yes. The party went on far longer  
than I thought it would, and by the  
time it was over it was pretty late  
and I was hammered so I think you  
told me to take a guest room. Thank  
you, by the way.

JANET  
Of course. Oh, I must look  
absolutely awful. Turn away  
immediately, Will!

Will turns with a smirk.

WILL  
Not at all, Janet.

JANET  
Help yourself to whatever food you  
want, I'm going to go make myself  
decent.

And with that Janet retreats back to her room to freshen up  
and change.

Will finds some eggs, cheese, and toast and quickly makes  
some scrambled eggs.

INT. JANET'S APARTMENT - DINING ROOM

When Janet returns, there is a stack of warm toast, as well  
as two plates of scrambled eggs and two cups of coffee that  
Will has just placed on the table.

JANET  
Will you've outdone yourself, thank  
you!

WILL  
Just trying to 'earn my keep'.

Janet joins Will at the table and starts drinking her coffee.

JANET

So, what did you think of the party? We pulled it off, didn't we?

WILL

It sure feels like it.

JANET

How did you find my girlfriends? I noticed they kept reeling you into conversations. I can't blame them, obviously.

WILL

Yes, the girls were very lively. Definitely curious about my military career... I had to go way beyond the briefing you gave me about Fred.

JANET

What did they want to hear about?

WILL

I remember that one of them, Sheila, I think, wanted to know more about my service in Iraq. Specifically, whether I'd 'killed any Taliban'.

JANET

Did you?

WILL

Well, I have now. Some members from my company and I were coming back from a patrol when we were ambushed and had to fight our way out, leaving a dozen or so of the bastards dead.

JANET

Dear me. These eggs are fantastic, by the way.

WILL

Thank you.

JANET

Well, I suppose you are the youngest Major in the army for a reason, Frederick Acton. What else did you talk about?

WILL

Your late husband, of course. My friendship with him. The early years, how we lost touch when he went into investment banking, but how each time I was on leave from my distant missions I would reach out to him and renew our friendship. And of course, about the extraordinary support that he gave me when my marriage ran into problems.

JANET

Did they ask you about him and me at all?

WILL

No. Not at all. They didn't seem curious at all about that. Out of loyalty, I suppose.

JANET

Perhaps. Though discretion isn't one of their virtues...

WILL

I have to say, there were moments when I couldn't shake the feeling that your friends seemed to have some kind of private joke going on between them that I couldn't quite catch. But that might have just been drunken paranoia.

The eggs and toast now fully consumed, Janet starts to clear the table. When Will attempts to join her she protests.

JANET

I imagine that's a professional tic in your line of work. No, Will, please. You made me a lovely breakfast, let me take care of the dishes.

As she takes the plates into the kitchen Will picks up both his and her coffee mugs and follows after her.

INT. JANET'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN

As Janet starts to load up the dishwasher:

JANET

Oh! We're not completely off the hook just yet. I hope you're free on Friday night. The girls demanded before they left that I should agree to maintain our weekly dinner - and they insisted that you should join us. Some kind of final tribute to Ronald. Sorry, but I accepted on your behalf. I'd really appreciate it if you'd do this for me...

WILL

Well, I haven't been able to say no to you thus far, so why start now?

JANET

Thank you, Will. I mean it. Your support, both while in character and simply as yourself, has made this whole experience far more tolerable.

WILL

I always aim for tolerance, ma'am.

JANET

No I mean it. I feel like I've been able to be myself around you in a way that I haven't been able to do in years.

WILL

I feel honored. And the feeling is mutual. Needless to say, this hasn't been a 'typical' Extra's job.

JANET

Well, I hope you aren't planning to disappear entirely from my life after our dinner on Friday. Or else I'll have to start inviting 'Fred' to all my social gatherings.

WILL

Naturally, follow-up visits could be arranged. Even encouraged.

JANET

Do you follow up with all your clients?

WILL

No. But you're not merely a client,  
are you?

The question hangs in the air for a moment.

JANET

Will, would you like to join me  
today for a trip to the Met? They  
had a new exhibit open up this  
month that I've been dying to see  
but obviously haven't quite had the  
time to until now. If you already  
have plans-

WILL

No plans that can't be changed. I  
would love to join you.

JANET

Excellent! Oh, this will be such  
fun! Although, we have to stop by  
the Coroner first, to tie up the  
last details. Just some paperwork,  
I imagine. I'll have the car  
brought around.

CUT TO:

INT. BELLEVUE HOSPITAL - OFFICE OF THE CHIEF MEDICAL EXAMINER  
WAITING AREA

Janet and Will are standing in the waiting area of Dr.  
Recta's office when he opens his office door, and signals for  
Janet to enter.

JANET

I won't be but a moment, Will. Then  
we can head to the Met.

INT. BELLEVUE HOSPITAL - OFFICE OF THE CHIEF MEDICAL EXAMINER

Janet sits down as Dr. Recta gets comfortable in his chair  
and looks at Janet for a moment.

DR. RECTA

Can you tell me about your sex  
life?

JANET

Most certainly not! What kind of  
question is that?

DR. RECTA  
With your late husband, I mean.

JANET  
With whom *else*? What on earth are you implying?

DR. RECTA  
It's necessary for my report.

JANET  
I cannot for the life of me understand why.

DR. RECTA  
Nevertheless, I do need to know before signing off on the case.

As Janet considers for a moment while taking in this overweight and completely classless man in front of her.

JANET  
Well, if you *really* require such information... I would say we had the normal life of a happily married couple.

Dr. Recta nods at this as he consults some paperwork on his desk.

DR. RECTA  
Your husband died of a heart attack.

JANET  
Yes, so I was told by the hospital.

DR. RECTA  
Did he jog?

JANET  
Good Lord, no.

DR. RECTA  
Any other sport?

JANET  
Not in years.

DR. RECTA  
Which brings me back to my question about your... your...

JANET  
...Fornication?

DR. RECTA  
I do have to ask.

JANET  
You're not implying that we were...  
that we were... *on the job* at the  
time, as it were, are you?

DR. RECTA  
No, no. But the autopsy found large  
traces of Sildenafil citrate in his  
blood.

JANET  
From his sleeping pills, I suppose?

DR. RECTA  
No, see, that's the problem.  
Sildenafil is the active ingredient  
of erectile dysfunction drugs.

JANET  
Erectile *what?*!

DR. RECTA  
Dysfunction. Essentially, your  
husband died from a heart attack  
provoked by an overdose of Viagra  
or some similar product.

JANET  
Good God.

DR. RECTA  
You didn't know he was taking the  
pills then? He was doing it in  
secret? You hadn't noticed any  
'dysfuntion', shall we say?

Janet is so stunned by this information that she can only  
manage to move her head from side to side.

DR. RECTA (CONT'D)  
I briefly considered holding an  
inquest, but I've decided against  
it. The medical report is cut and  
dry; there's no doubt as to the  
causes of death, so it wouldn't be  
useful. I must say, however, this  
is the very first case of its kind  
in my humble career.

(MORE)

DR. RECTA (CONT'D)

I've come across plenty of overdose deaths, deliberate and otherwise, but never with the use of Viagra. Sleeping pills, certainly, antidepressants, often...

The Doctor's voice blurs out as Janet has ceased to listen to him, instead fixating on his erratic collection of tchochkes. After a moment, she interrupts him.

JANET

Do you require my signature on anything?

DR. RECTA

... Yes. Sorry. If you could just sign these for me.

He puts forward two pieces of paper which Janet promptly signs. She then gets up and exits the office without saying goodbye.

INT. BELLEVUE HOSPITAL - OFFICE OF THE CHIEF MEDICAL EXAMINER  
WAITING AREA

Janet is in such a trance that she heads straight for the exit with the intention of leaving this horrible place when her train of thought is interrupted by Will's voice:

WILL (O.S.)

Off to the Met!

Janet turns and sees Will, smiling at the prospect of spending the day with her.

JANET

I'm so sorry, Will, but I have to head back home.

WILL

Oh, okay. We can go some other time. Is everything alright?

JANET

Yes. Well... no. I just... I need some time, I'm sorry.

WILL

No it's... It's totally fine-

JANET

Do you need the car to take you home?

WILL  
No, I'll be fine. It's your car,  
after all.

JANET  
Okay. I'm sorry, let's talk  
tomorrow.

And with that Janet exits the doctors office. Leaving Will standing there wondering what the hell just happened.

CUT TO:

INT. WILL'S APARTMENT

Will enters his apartment, and Andy is there, same as usual, working on his laptop.

Andy looks up and immediately notices that Will is wearing his funeral attire from yesterday.

ANDY  
Wow. A post-funeral walk of shame.  
That's gotta be the most shameful  
walk of shame there is.

WILL  
It's not what you think, Andy.

ANDY  
I think you spent the night with  
the widow.

WILL  
Not how you mean it.

ANDY  
Aren't you still getting paid by  
her? Dude...

WILL  
Andy, no. It's not- I stayed at her  
place because I got very drunk, and  
she has like a dozen bedrooms so...  
nothing happened.

ANDY  
... you slept in, huh?

WILL  
Well, we were gonna spend the day  
together, but we stopped by the  
coroner's office first and...

(MORE)

WILL (CONT'D)

whatever he said to her when she signed the report must have freaked her out cause she just- she had to go home after that.

Will joins Andy on the couch.

ANDY

Maybe the loss really hit her once she signed off on it?

WILL

I mean, maybe. I'd be surprised though. She barely seemed to care about him at all - she honestly seemed more relieved than anything, to be done with it all.

ANDY

Could be a front.

WILL

Yeah but... when she left she looked... confused.

ANDY

Hm. Maybe he didn't kill himself.

WILL

I mean... He seemed to have really hated his life based on what I read in his journals. Although I didn't read all of them.

ANDY

Really?

WILL

They got so preachy and negative; they weren't even that useful for the eulogy.

Will gets up and heads to his room.

WILL (CONT'D)

But they might have something.

INT. WILL'S APARTMENT - WILL'S BEDROOM

Will walks over to his desk where there are two journals stacked in a corner. The suitcase that Janet gave Will is on the floor with ten diaries inside. Andy has followed him to his room by this point.

WILL  
I skimmed through most of them. But  
I stopped reading them when I got  
to these...

As Will gets situated to start searching through the diaries,  
Andy stays by the door.

ANDY  
Do you want some help?

WILL  
No, there's only two left so... I  
should be able to handle it.  
Shouldn't you be writing?

ANDY  
It can wait. Why don't I see if you  
missed anything in the other  
journals?

Will considers this for a moment.

WILL  
Yeah, alright.

ANDY  
Nice.

Andy picks up the suitcase and heads back to the couch in the  
living room.

With Andy out of the room, Will starts sifting through the  
first journal. He reads one page halfway through the  
notebook:

RONALD V.O  
A Monday stolen from the office.  
Devising strategies for survival...

His voice fades as Will turns to a few pages later.

RONALD V.O (CONT'D)  
I finally told Janet about my  
disgust with the firm and my job.  
She says the exact words I do not  
want to hear:

JANET V.O.  
It's done us very well indeed,  
Ronald. Do make an effort.

RONALD V.O

I cannot abide optimists - and I'm married to one! What greater cruelty is there than to tell an unhappy man that he is mistaken in his suffering? I loathe the bank... perhaps I could actually orchestrate the bank's downfall. All I would have to do is...

Ronald's voice trails off as Will skips ahead in the journal.

RONALD V.O (CONT'D)

Intellectually, I am a grotesque failure...

Will sighs and moves to the second journal. Skimming through the second half until he reaches something that catches his eye.

CUT TO:

INT. JANET'S APARTMENT - RONALD'S STUDY

Ronald is sitting at his desk. His journal is open but he is not writing. Next to his journal is Janet's address book, unopened. There is also a bottle of scotch on the desk with only a third of the liquor left - a glass is in Ronald's hand.

The tchotchke from Sheila's party is also on the desk, and Ronald is staring at it. He picks it up and studies the writing on the base. He seems to make up his mind about something, and opens up Janet's address book to the 'S' section. He picks up his phone and dials a number. The phone rings for a moment before someone answers.

RONALD

Hello, Sheila? Yes, it's Ronald. Hi - is Phillip there? Oh, that's right, they went to Boston didn't they? Damn, I forgot... No, I have the day off and I wanted to see if- Well, what are your plans today?

At some point in Ronald's conversation with Sheila we turn to see Janet leaning against the doorway to Ronald's study with a gin and tonic in her hand. For a moment it looks like they are both in the room together, but then we cut to Janet's perspective and the study is empty, as it is now present day.

Janet studies the room for a moment, sipping her drink, before taking out her cell phone to make a call as she enters the study.

CUT TO:

INT. WILL'S APARTMENT - WILL'S BEDROOM

Will is glued to the journal he is reading, when his phone rings. He sees that it's Janet calling and quickly answers.

CUT TO:

INT. JANET'S APARTMENT - STUDY

Janet is seated at Ronald's desk.

JANET  
Hello, Will? It's Janet.

CUT TO:

INT. WILL'S APARTMENT - WILL'S BEDROOM

Will is still at his desk.

WILL  
Yeah, Janet, hi. Are you okay?

CUT TO:

INT. JANET'S APARTMENT - RONALD'S STUDY

JANET  
Yes. Well, no... I don't know.  
Listen I'm sorry about running off  
earlier-

WILL (O.S.)  
No no no-

JANET  
-it would have been lovely to go to  
the museum with you, but I got some  
strange news at the coroner's  
office and I don't know what to  
think of all this...

CUT TO:

INT. WILL'S APARTMENT - WILL'S BEDROOM

Will stands to go close his bedroom door.

WILL

What did the coroner tell you?

A moment passes as Janet considers what to tell Will.

JANET (O.S.)

Can you come to the house? I would like to talk to you in person about it.

Will considers how much of the journal is left - it's not a lot...

WILL

I can head over in half an hour.

JANET (O.S.)

Thank you, Will. I'll feel better when you're here.

WILL

Okay, I'll be there soon.

Will hangs up and is about to go back to the journal when he hears Andy open the door - he is standing in the doorway holding one of the journals that he just read.

ANDY

(indicating journal)  
This guy is the worst...

CUT TO:

INT. JANET'S APARTMENT - SALON

Will is sitting on the couch holding his glass of scotch. He is dreading having to share his revelations with Janet, but knows that he has to - he's just not sure when to interject. Janet is sitting in the armchair next to him mid explanation. She, notably, doesn't have a drink.

JANET

I was in complete shock. I just had to be home.

WILL

No, no- I understand, really. I, um-

JANET  
He was cheating on me. He had to  
have been. It's the only  
explanation-

WILL  
Yes.

JANET  
...'Yes' as in you agree with my  
theory?

WILL  
No. Yes as in Ronald was cheating  
on you.

Janet registers this.

JANET  
You know this?

WILL  
Yes. I'm sorry-

JANET  
How do you know?

WILL  
...I didn't burn the journals.  
There's more-

JANET  
(Overlapping with Will's  
last line)  
/he wrote about- There's more?

WILL  
Yes. I'm sorry, Janet, I'm not sure  
how to tell you this, so I'm just  
going to say it. Ronald was having  
an affair with Sheila. And with  
Sally. And Veronica.

Janet simply stares at Will while he speaks. Then it starts  
to sink in.

JANET  
You're certain of this?

WILL  
...Yes.

The two of them sit in silence for a long beat. Eventually:

JANET

I... I knew- that he-

Janet stammers a little bit as she cannot control her emotions for the first time in a long time. Will starts to move towards/reach for her.

WILL

I can't imagine-

As she rises and with enough force that it stops Will from consoling her:

JANET

Please... excuse me for a moment.

And without waiting for him to do so, she heads upstairs.

We stay with Will, who is perplexed about what to do now. We can hear the grandfather clock in the corner ticking.

Will gets up from the couch and walks towards the staircase. He contemplates following after Janet. He looks back at the bottle of scotch that has about three glasses and some change left in it. He pours himself another glass.

We cut to the grandfather clock as it ticks; it is 3:55. The time fades to 5:10. Now Will is on his phone standing in front of the bookcase looking at a picture of Janet, Ronald, and 'Fred' - the bottle of scotch is empty on the table. Will is on his phone waiting for an answer.

ANDY (O.S.)

Yo, I've been reading these journals - did you know this guy was paying someone to collect bank clients'-

WILL

Andy, Andy! I need help.

CUT TO:

INT. WILL'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM

Andy is on the couch with all of Ronald's journals around him. A few are open on the coffee table in front of him. A few open on the couch by him. Some on the ground maybe. He has clearly been taking notes on Ronald's writings.

ANDY  
What's wrong?

CUT TO:

INT. JANET'S APARTMENT - SALON

Will is still standing by the bookcase.

WILL  
I told her what he did. What *they* did. And she had to go upstairs. She was crying... Maybe I shouldn't have told her! Stupid... What if she hates me?

ANDY (O.S.)  
...You're worried that-

WILL  
I think I'm crazy for her man. I mean, she's always been amazing, but... seeing her hurt - it was the worst feeling I've ever felt in my life. All I wanted to do in that moment was make her happy.

He heads to the empty scotch bottle and, since he isn't paying attention to it, attempts to pour himself another glass. He starts looking around as he's talking to discern if there is more whiskey nearby.

WILL (CONT'D)  
(realizing as he speaks)  
I love every moment I spend with her man. It's not like anything else I've ever experienced. I don't know what to do. I even love her teeth!

CUT TO:

INT. WILL'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM

Andy's still on the couch trying to comprehend Will's breakdown.

ANDY  
You... what? What's happening?  
Will, are you- drunk?

CUT TO:

INT. JANET'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM

Will is in the adjoining room looking for another bottle of Scotch.

WILL

No! I- I have... drank some. That's not the point, it doesn't change how I feel! Look, it's been over an hour and I'm not sure if I should-

CUT TO:

INT. WILL'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM

ANDY

You've just been... hanging out in her house for an hour? Alone? Drinking?

CUT TO:

INT. JANET'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM

WILL

... Janet's *in* the house... She just went upstairs. You're not being helpful Andy.

ANDY (O.S.)

I'm sorry, fine. Why don't you just go talk to her? Just make sure she's okay, you know?

WILL

Yeah, but- she would have called for me if she wanted me to go up there, I know it.

As Andy speaks Will hears Janet as she starts heading down the stairs.

ANDY (O.S.)

Well what are you just gonna wait around-

WILL

Shit, she's coming down, I gotta go!

Will hangs up the phone and makes for the staircase.

JANET (O.S.)  
Will! We are going out!

CUT TO:

INT. JANET'S APARTMENT - ENTRANCE

We see Janet come down the stairs glamorously changed and ready for a night on the town.

JANET  
Don't just stare, Will. Say 'Janet,  
you look absolutely gorgeous'.

She does a little spin and stands in front of him, arms akimbo.

WILL  
Janet, you look absolutely  
gorgeous.

JANET  
That's better. I'm really going to  
have to train you on how to talk to  
a woman, my boy. And to think  
you're supposed to be a  
professional boyfriend! Those women  
are being short-changed. Now, go  
and get freshened up, on the  
double! I laid out some options  
from the old bugger's clothes on my  
bed. I booked us dinner at *The  
Edition*, I don't know about you but  
I'm absolutely famished. I also got  
us two tickets to see *Macbeth*; the  
reviews of this particular  
production aren't phenomenal but I  
figured we could judge it  
ourselves! I hope that's okay. Did  
you already have plans tonight?

WILL  
Not at all - and if I did I would  
cancel them.

JANET  
Excellent. Well, go on. I'll have  
the car brought round.

As Will heads towards Janet to make his way up the stairs

WILL  
Of course, my lady.

As Will passes Janet, she places her hand on his arm:

JANET  
Will? Thank you.

And with a smile, Will heads up the stairs.

CUT TO:

EXT. JANET'S APARTMENT - ENTRANCE

Will, freshly changed, opens the car door for Janet and then enters next to her.

EXT. THEATER - THEATER DISTRICT

Janet and Will are exiting the theater having just watched Macbeth. They pass a few production posters for Macbeth including one that has the three witches posed (with the same actresses that play Sheila, Veronica, and Sally).

JANET  
What did you think?

WILL  
I thought that was a pretty solid production all around. Lady Macbeth was fantastic.

JANET  
Yes, I agree, and the three witches were great as well-

They are interrupted by a woman, Melissa (40s) who reaches them before they reach the curb of the sidewalk.

MELISSA  
Janet? I thought that was you- we didn't get a chance to talk at the reception but I'm so sorry...

JANET  
Yes. Thank you.

MELISSA  
(to Will)  
I'm Melissa, by the way. Melissa Lawson.

As Will shakes her hand, he is unsure whether he should introduce himself as Will or 'Fred' - which Janet realizes:

JANET

This is my dear friend, Will Power.  
We were just catching up.

WILL

Pleasure to meet you.

MELISSA

Power? That's a strong name; I  
don't recognize it. What industry  
are you in?

WILL

...Film and Entertainment.

MELISSA

Oh, how exciting! What did you  
think of the play?

WILL

We were just discussing that - I  
thoroughly enjoyed it.

MELISSA

Yes, I think the reviews were quite  
unfair-

JANET

Well, it was lovely to see you,  
Melissa.

MELISSA

And you - I wish it were under  
better circumstances. Say, Charles  
and I are staying in town through  
the week... maybe we could all have  
dinner at the club?

JANET

I'm actually thinking of changing  
clubs.

MELISSA

Oh... well, perhaps some other  
time. Enjoy the rest of your night  
and lovely to meet you!

WILL

Likewise.

MELISSA

Sorry again, for your loss.

JANET

Thanks.

And with that Melissa leaves.

WILL

She seemed... inquisitive?

JANET

Her husband's even worse.

WILL

I'm surprised you didn't introduce me as 'Fred'.

JANET

Well, you can't be the Major forever, Will. And I don't want you disappearing along with him.

WILL

I'm glad to hear it.

JANET

Is tonight going on my Extra's! Bill?

WILL

Absolutely not.

JANET

Good.

CUT TO:

INT. JANET'S TOWN CAR

Will and Janet are seated in the back seat.

JANET

Where should we go now, Will? The night is still young!

WILL

Why don't we go to one of my favorite bars?

(To the driver)

Can you take us down to west fourth street?

CUT TO:

INT. 'FAT CAT' JAZZ BAR - WEST VILLAGE

Will and Janet are sitting on a couch/lounge chair listening to the band play. They are close. Janet nestles up to Will slightly, and Will puts his arm around her - she doesn't resist.

After a moment Janet turns into Will's ear and whispers:

JANET

*I'll never pause again, never stand  
still, till either death hath  
closed these eyes of mine or  
fortune given me measure of  
revenge.*

WILL

... Henry V?

JANET

Henry VI! Part 3. When Warwick  
finds out his brother has died.

They sit for a moment as Will tries to decipher how Janet meant the quote.

JANET (CONT'D)

Though in fact, fortune won't have  
to wait longer than Friday night.  
Are you still up for it, Will,  
Friday night? It won't be  
particularly pleasant. It will also  
be your last performance as Major  
Acton. Will you still come?

WILL

Of course.

Janet kisses Will. A real kiss - the kind Will has been craving. When she parts from him:

JANET

You realize also that they must be  
aware you're not Fred, not Acton,  
not a major, or a near-suicide?

WILL

I hadn't thought of that. But yes,  
you're right. That certainly  
explains their behavior at the  
wake.

JANET

They let me tell all those stories about you, while mocking me behind my back, I'm sure. I wonder if they knew about each other, though? They're going to find out now, that I promise.

WILL

I'm with you all the way, Janet.

JANET

I know.

CUT TO:

EXT. JANET'S APARTMENT - ENTRANCE

The car pulls up to the house, and Will exits and holds the car door open for Janet, who exits slowly.

WILL

Is the car okay to take me home or...?

Janet just takes Will's hand and leads him towards the house.

CUT TO:

INT. SPA AND SAUNA - CHANGING ROOM

Will enters the locker room with his bag and towel that was given to him - he is immediately greeted by Mike's booming voice:

MIKE (O.S.)

Will, my boy, over here!

Mike is down one aisle of lockers, already shirtless, emptying out his pockets into the locker in preparation to take off his pants.

Will heads towards him.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Now we just need Peter and the trifacta will be complete!

Will reaches Mike just as he begins to take his pants off.

WILL  
Is there a reason we're meeting in  
a *spa*?

MIKE  
Oh, don't worry, it's my treat.

Will timidly starts to undress.

WILL  
That's not what I meant. I actually  
have to talk to you about something-

PETER (O.S.)  
Well don't you look stunning!

Peter comes down the hall to join them, also carrying his  
towel the spa provided.

MIKE  
Ah! Perfect timing!

As Peter joins them down the aisle:

PETER  
Mike, why are we meeting in a spa?

WILL  
My question exactly.

MIKE  
Well... I wanted to talk to the two  
of you about the future of  
Extra!... and I thought we could  
test out this location for a new  
series we could offer potential  
clients.

PETER  
'Uncomfortable business meetings?'

MIKE  
Close! 'Horrible first dates for  
your ex!' Are we supposed to be  
fully unclothed for the sauna or-

WILL/PETER  
No!

CUT TO:

INT. SPA AND SAUNA - SAUNA

Mike, Will, and Peter are sitting in a sauna. Will and Peter sit with their towels wrapped around their waist while Mike sits comfortably in his underwear.

MIKE

Hopefully your paychecks reflect just how well Extra! Is doing. As a result, I am looking for ways for us to expand. Now, obviously, looking at new lines we could offer, such as this, is always fun, but I also want to explore the possibility of expanding into different cities. And that brings me to you gentlemen.

PETER

Uh oh.

MIKE

You two have been my most consistent earners, and clearly have an interest in the company. I want to know if you'd be interested in playing a larger part in the operation.

PETER

Thank you, Mike. Of course I'm interested - in what capacity are you thinking?

MIKE

I've started scouting locations in LA, because of course that would be the most logical next city for our operation... I'll need assistance in running the office here and that can serve as training to run our eventual next location.

PETER

Wow... That's incredibly exciting, Mike...

MIKE

Will? Any thoughts? Would you be interested...?

WILL

Yes, but- I would love to play a part in your vision for this company but I came here expecting to quit.

PETER

What?

MIKE

Why?

WILL

I love working at Extra! You both know I do. But I've broken the cardinal rule. I started seeing Janet beyond our professional relationship and I'm crazy about her.

This hangs for a moment.

PETER

Well I can't blame you-

WILL

She's booked us a one-way trip to the French Riviera after the weekend. I have no idea when we'll even be back... it's all so sudden and exciting. I have to head straight from here to prep for a pretty important dinner... I'm sorry Mike.

MIKE

No I... I understand.

PETER

Congratulations... I guess.

WILL

Thanks man.

MIKE

... Why don't we just call it your vacation?

WILL

I have vacation days?

MIKE

You do if you become a partner. You don't have to decide right now.

(MORE)

MIKE (CONT'D)  
But don't quit because you think  
I'd want to fire you. I don't.

WILL  
Okay. Thank you, Mike, I- I'll talk  
to Janet about it, but that sounds  
pretty ideal to me.

PETER  
Well we should celebrate!

MIKE  
Absolutely.

WILL  
Agreed, but I kind of have to  
run... like I said-

Will starts to get up, and Peter quickly follows suit.

PETER  
Yes, yes, your lady is waiting on  
you. I wanna get out of here  
anyway, saunas are unbearable...

MIKE  
Peter wait, we have more to discuss  
and I want to get my money's worth  
out of this sweat room.

Peter begrudgingly sits back down.

MIKE (CONT'D)  
Will, I am not accepting your  
resignation, but I'm granting you  
some time off with the expectation  
that we will discuss your future  
role in detail before you go off on  
your trip.

WILL  
That sounds more than fair.

Will shakes hands with Mike and then Peter.

WILL (CONT'D)  
This is exciting.

MIKE  
Yes indeed!

Will makes to leave the sauna.

PETER

Good luck with the super important dinner!

WILL

Thanks, I'll need it!

Will exits the sauna. We sit with Mike and Peter for a moment.

MIKE

Janet would make a promising investor.

PETER

Well that's for sure.

CUT TO:

EXT. VERONICA'S TOWNHOUSE - CHELSEA

Will and Janet exit their town car - Will is in a polka dotted designer suit and Janet is in an emerald green dress. They slowly approach the townhouse.

JANET

What are you thinking about, Will, dear?

WILL

About acting. About how it's so much easier in life than on the stage.

JANET

Mmm. For our sake, tonight, I hope you're right.

WILL

(Stopping in front of the door)

Are you sure that you want to go through with this, Janet? We could just as easily get back in the car and go for a nice dinner-

JANET

(fixing Will's collar)

No, Will. *You must be proud, bold, pleasant, resolute. And now and then stab, when occasion serves.* Tonight, I must stab!

WILL  
Shakespeare?

JANET  
No, Marlowe.

WILL  
Mike?

JANET  
(laughing)  
No, no, no. Christopher. The man  
some claim faked his own murder to  
escape persecution for blasphemy  
and reappeared under the assumed  
name, Shakespeare. You only have to  
read Marlowe's plays to know that's  
rubbish. Quite inferior.

WILL  
Obviously.

CUT TO:

EXT. VERONICA'S TOWNHOUSE - FRONT DOOR

Veronica opens the door excitedly to invite Will and Janet  
in.

VERONICA  
(Calling out behind her)  
Janet and the Major have arrived!  
Come in, come in!

CUT TO:

INT. VERONICA'S TOWNHOUSE - ENTRANCE

As Janet enters she and Veronica share a hug/kiss on the  
cheek. Will enters after

VERONICA  
Thank you so much for taking the  
time to join us, Major Acton.

WILL  
My pleasure; thank you for the  
invitation.

VERONICA  
Of course. Turn that game off!  
(In a french accent)  
À table!

CUT TO:

INT. VERONICA'S TOWNHOUSE - DINING ROOM

Everyone is seated at the dining table, with Veronica and Thomas at the ends of the table. Janet and Will are seated opposite each other in the middle of the table with Sheila and Sally, and Phillip and Jonathan seated to their respective sides.

THOMAS  
You know, Fred-

VERONICA  
Thomas, please! It's Major Acton.

WILL  
Oh, that's quite alright. I go by Fred among friends.

THOMAS  
Thank you. As I was saying... my company has recently acquired a small cyber security firm that's doing some ground breaking work. They could definitely benefit from having a sit down with someone at the DOD, I don't know if maybe you have any contacts you might-

VERONICA  
Thomas, don't harass our dinner guest for a meeting that you can very easily get yourself.

Jonathan has been inspecting the food as the maid has finished placing all of the food out for the group.

SHEILA  
Everything looks fantastic,  
Veronica.

SALLY  
Smells lovely!

As they begin serving, Sheila gestures for Will's plate.

VERONICA

Janet, Fred, what would you like?

WILL

That's wool of bat and tongue of dog, isn't it? I'd love to try that.

JANET

(without missing a beat)

The Turk's nose with Tartar's lips looks particularly fresh as well.

PHILLIP

What? Veronica, what on earth are you serving us?

SHEILA

Don't be stupid, Phillip, our friends are just having a little literary joke.

As Sheila and Veronica help make plates for Will and Janet, Jonathan inspects a plate of salmon to make sure it is cooked to his liking. Phillip is clearly following the game on his phone.

SHEILA (CONT'D)

So, Janet, how are you holding up? The wake was fantastic, by the way.

VERONICA

Yes, quite.

JANET

I'm fine, thanks. I miss him very much, of course.

SALLY

Yes, of course. We all do.

JANET

I'm sure. Fred has been of great support to me, though.

VERONICA

Yes, we're so happy you could join us tonight, Fred. I must say, it's nice to finally get to know the man responsible for robbing of us Ronald all those evenings-

SALLY

The fish is cooked, Jonathan.

JONATHAN

I'm just making sure! You remember what happened when we were in Shanghai-

SALLY

We are not currently in Shanghai!

Jonathan, deciding to pick his battles, starts to eat his salmon.

JANET

You know, I saw a fascinating documentary the other day about how monkeys lie to each other.

WILL

Tell us about it.

JANET

There was this troop of monkeys who scavenge their food on the banks of the river. If one of them sees a poisonous snake slide out of the water it yells out, "Snake, snake!"

SHEILA

In monkey language, of course.

JANET

Yes, of course. So they all scamper up the nearest tree. However, these treacherous animals have been observed crying out the same thing when they happen upon a particularly exciting piece of food - a dead fish, for example. So they trick the other monkeys into running off into nearby tree, and get to enjoy the meal in piece.

WILL

I love that. They're so similar to us.

THOMAS

I don't see the parallel, personally.

VERONICA

Never mind, dear. I've often wondered about consciousness in other forms of life.

(MORE)

VERONICA (CONT'D)

We know that trees think, for example, and that they can communicate with each other to an extent. Could they lie to each other? If there was an environmental benefit to the particular tree, perhaps?

JANET

To be is to lie. It's inescapable. I personally don't even have a problem with it. What's unpardonable isn't lying, it's betraying, cheating on someone. A spouse, for instance, or a friend.

Jonathan is inspecting various cuts of steak that have been placed in front of him on a large tray that he is worried aren't cooked enough. They are all rare to medium rare.

Will is watching the ladies, who all hold their cards close to their chest.

VERONICA

Well said.

JONATHAN

I can't eat this. None of this meat is cooked through-

SALLY

It's medium rare, Jonathan

JONATHAN

(looking up for the server)

It's bleeding all over the dish. Excuse me? Yes, can we cook this a little more please? Thank you.

The server takes the dish back into the kitchen. Jonathan starts to inspect some of the other food options.

SALLY

(quietly)  
I'm sorry, V.

VERONICA

That's quite alright-

THOMAS

So, tell us, Fred; Did Ronald ever lie about seeing you to get out of a dinner party? I wouldn't hold it against him, personally.

WILL

Well, we'd have to cross reference every date of your dinners with my hazy grief-stricken recollection of those months in order to be sure...

THOMAS

Hm... so it's possible, then. He always struck me as the secretive type.

JANET

Well, Ronald did keep meticulous diaries, you know. He wrote down almost everything about his life.

The three other women stiffen.

SALLY

Oh really? Anything interesting in them?

JANET

I haven't read them yet. It's been such a busy few weeks.

VERONICA

I imagine it would be rather disconcerting to read someone's private musings after they've passed.

JANET

Oh, I agree - I have no intention of reading them.

The women's relief is practically tangible. After a moment:

JANET (CONT'D)

But Fred has, though. He's told me some fascinating tales about Ronald's secret life - tales that involve all three of you, actually.

At that, Phillip starts to pay attention to the conversation. Jonathan, also stops inspecting in order to listen more closely.

JANET (CONT'D)

Fred, my dear Will, pray tell us  
what you learned.

After giving Janet a slight nod, Will turns to the husbands.

WILL

Thomas, Phillip, Jonathan; did you  
know that your wives were all  
sleeping with Janet's husband?

There is a moment of silence, as the men process what Will  
just said and the women stare at their plates. Jonathan looks  
at Sally.

JONATHAN

(To Sally)

Is this true?

PHILLIP

So you're saying... Ronald wrote  
about having an affair with my wife  
in his diaries?

WILL

In one, particular diary. The last  
one, yes.

PHILLIP

(To Janet)

And you know this to be true?

JANET

Yes.

JONATHAN

(To Sally)

How could you do this to me?!

The server starts to re-enter the dining room carrying the  
tray of now overcooked steaks and is walking behind Thomas:

THOMAS

(Aggressively pushing his  
chair out and standing up  
while he speaks)

I think I need to speak with my  
wife-

Thomas' chair knocks into his server, who falls forward and  
drops the tray, spilling some of the hot steaks onto  
Jonathan, who starts to scream.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

Jesus!

Sally starts to get up from her seat

SALLY

Jonathan! Are you ok-

Jonathan grabs one of the steaks that fell on the table in front of him and throws it at Sally.

JONATHAN

Stay away from me, you whore!

The steak hits Sally rather hard in the chest and knocks her back into her seat.

VERONICA

Jonathan! Don't throw food across my dining-

THOMAS

(Still standing)

Don't you dare yell at Jonathan, woman!

SHEILA

I think everyone needs to-

At that moment a bowl of mashed potatoes (thrown by Phillip) flies in between Will and Sheila and smashes on the wall.

PHILLIP

I knew you were lying about that evening watch group! Nobody goes bird watching at night!

JANET

(Getting up)

I think, we should perhaps call it a night. Will, shall we?

WILL

Yes, thank you - the food was fantastic.

As Will and Janet start to scurry out, more food is thrown and their sounds fade out as we start to hear Mike's voice.

MIKE V.O.

The whole point of the Extra! Agency is to make life easier for our clients.

Thomas and Veronica are clearly yelling at each other across the room, while Sally is in her chair crying.

MIKE V.O. (CONT'D)

We provide a service so that you don't have to face a difficult situation alone.

Will and Janet quickly get back to their car. Will opens the door for Janet and looks back at the townhouse - we hear another crash as some large plate or bowl is broken.

CUT TO:

INT. EXTRA! AGENCY - MIKE'S OFFICE -- NEXT DAY

Mike is sitting at his desk across from Andy, who has a recorder on the table and is taking notes.

MIKE

There's no shame in choosing the easier option.

ANDY

Do you think that the services Extra! provides could ever be considered morally questionable?

MIKE

Well, to be honest, I believe that nowadays *anything* could be considered morally questionable given the right circumstances. But no, here at Extra we make a concerted effort to avoid morally dubious scenarios. The nature of this business operates closer to the grey area, certainly, but we never cross that line.

ANDY

What would you say to those who might argue that impersonating others and deceiving strangers for profit is inherently crossing that line?

MIKE

I would say that we all do those very things in our daily lives. Socializing, to an extent, *is* deceiving.

(MORE)

MIKE (CONT'D)

You present yourself very differently to your friends in private than you might 'on the job' interviewing a CEO. All I've done is found a way to monetize that immensely human tendency.

ANDY

Have you ever turned down job opportunities because they may have required you to cross that line?

MIKE

Yes: there have been some potential clients that we turned away because they failed our background checks... and we have yet to do a corporate job - those have all felt suspect. We don't do cover-ups at Extra! All my agents know that.

ANDY

Have there ever been any issues with that?

MIKE

...not from my agents...

CUT TO:

INT. JANET'S APARTMENT - SALON

Janet has a drink in her hand as she anxiously looks over some of the photos on the bookcase. She checks the time (again) and then takes a sharpie and starts to draw something on one of the photos.

We hear the doorbell ring. Janet stiffens.

CUT TO:

INT. JANET'S APARTMENT - FRONT DOOR

The front door is opened to reveal Veronica, dressed rather sultrily. She enters and we see that it is Ronald at the door, scotch in hand.

RONALD

Well hello there, gorgeous.

VERONICA

Good evening, sir.

They share a kiss.

RONALD  
I have a surprise for you.

VERONICA  
As do I. Fun!

They start walking through the apartment towards Ronald's study.

RONALD  
What's your surprise?

VERONICA  
You first, Ronny.

RONALD  
Isn't it ladies first?

VERONICA  
Not tonight.

RONALD  
Well I bought something I thought  
we could use. It's in the study.

As they approach the door to the study we hear the doorbell ring again.

RONALD (CONT'D)  
I'm not expecting anyone else...  
stay in the study for now and let  
me get rid of whoever this is.

Ronald walks towards the front door leaving Veronica in front of the door to the study. After a moment she starts to follow after him.

CUT TO:

INT. JANET'S APARTMENT - FRONT DOOR

The door opens to reveal Will standing there, with a suitcase and a backpack. Janet gestures for him to enter the apartment quickly.

JANET  
They're going to be here any  
minute!

WILL

Oh, I thought they had already...  
you told me to come over-

JANET

I know. I just wanted you here. I  
don't really know what they're  
going to say.

Will approaches Janet to comfort her.

WILL

It's okay, I'm here. I'm not going  
anywhere. You know you don't have  
to see them if you don't want to.

Janet kisses Will and then leads him through the foyer.

JANET

Thank you, Will. But I have to do  
this. Then it can finally be over.

WILL

Do you... want me there? With them?

JANET

No. I'll speak with them alone.  
It's best if they don't know you're  
here. It shouldn't take long.

WILL

I'll get my things upstairs, then.

The doorbell rings. Janet stiffens. Again.

JANET

Of course tonight is the first time  
they come early...

WILL

Hey. The second you don't want them  
here anymore, you kick them out.

Janet smiles and touches Will's face. Gives him a nod and  
heads towards the front door as Will quickly heads up the  
stairs.

CUT TO:

INT. JANET'S APARTMENT - FRONT DOOR

The door opens to reveal Sheila and Sally, both dressed for  
seduction. Ronald is clearly stunned.

SHEILA  
Well hello lover boy.

SALLY  
Aren't you going to invite us in?

RONALD  
I...uh

VERONICA (O.S.)  
I guess my surprise comes first  
after all.

Ronald turns around to see Veronica leaning against the entrance wall as Sheila and Sally walk past Ronald into the foyer.

RONALD  
Well this is definitely... a  
surprise. How long have you all  
known?

SHEILA  
Why don't we talk in your study?

CUT TO:

INT. JANET'S APARTMENT - RONALD'S STUDY

All three of the women have gotten comfortable in Ronald's study, Sheila and Sally have taken seats and Veronica is leaning against Ronald's desk, while Ronald remains standing with his drink.

SALLY  
Aren't you going to offer us a  
drink, Ronald?

RONALD  
Of course, sorry.

Ronald finishes his scotch quickly and heads to his bar cart to refill his glass and starts making their usual drinks of choice, : vodka on the rocks with an olive for Veronica, vodka soda for Sally, and a vodka martini for Sheila. The girls talk while he is preparing their drinks.

SHEILA  
I assume you want to know how long  
we've known.

RONALD  
I'm certainly curious, yes.

SHEILA

We found out about each other last month.

VERONICA

Did you imagine that your wife's three best friends never spoke to each other?

RONALD

I didn't think you'd speak about this, no.

SALLY

Oh, do you feel betrayed, my dear?

Ronald, having finished preparing their drinks, starts to hand them to each of the ladies.

RONALD

So, you've known for at least a month. Why confront the lascivious adulterer now?

VERONICA

Oh, you misunderstand, Ronny.

SHEILA

We're not upset with you. In fact, we thought maybe this is exactly what was needed.

RONALD

I'm not quite sure I follow.

SALLY

Well, we've not only discussed how we are all sleeping with our friend's husband, but also about how... things have been more difficult... lately.

Veronica picks up a cock ring Ronald recently purchased that is sitting on his desk.

VERONICA

The same issue that inspired this purchase, no doubt.

Sheila gets up and caresses Ronald.

SHEILA

We thought that if you can't handle affairs with the three of us then maybe you should just choose one of us.

Sally gets up and joins on Ronald's other side

RONALD

You want me to-

SALLY

Or, you could try using a little booster...

Sheila procures a bottle of Viagra (or similar) and presents it to Ronald.

SALLY (CONT'D)

It's amazing what two attractive women and some cash can land at a pharmacy

CUT TO:

INT. DRUG STORE - PHARMACY PICK UP COUNTER

The back of the drugstore seems empty except for Sally, Sheila, and a drug store attendant. The drug store attendant stands staring at Sally and Sheila as they take the bottle of Viagra and leave a hundred dollar bill on the counter.

SHEILA

Thank you, handsome. Maybe we'll come find you if this doesn't work out...

And with that the two women start to confidently walk away. As the attendant pockets the money he starts to say, almost to himself

DRUG STORE ATTENDANT

You know they just sell these over the counter now...

CUT TO:

INT. JANET'S APARTMENT - RONALD'S STUDY

Veronica is now standing behind Ronald, while Sheila and Sally remain to either side of him.

VERONICA  
So what do you think?

RONALD  
(taking the pill bottle)  
...I think we should drink to it.

Ronald and Veronica kiss while Sheila and Sally start to undress. The group cheers their drinks and then Ronald takes out three pills and downs them with the remainder of his scotch.

Ronald starts to undo the buttons on his shirt while Veronica gets on her knees and starts to undo Ronald's belt.

VERONICA  
Let's see if the pills are fast  
acting, ladies!

But before Veronica can get Ronald's pants off, he backs away breathing difficultly.

SHEILA  
Ronald, what's the matter?

Ronald is clutching his chest, clearly in pain, unable to talk. The women are paralyzed in fear, and then suddenly Ronald collapses on the floor.

They stay where they are for a moment. Then they share a look of concern with each other before we:

CUT TO:

INT. JANET'S APARTMENT - SALON

Janet is sitting in an arm chair, with a gin and tonic in her hand, facing the sofa where Sally, Sheila, and Veronica are sitting, telling Janet their story.

SHEILA  
He was gone.

VERONICA  
We tried his pulse, tried pumping  
on his chest, even tried mouth-to-  
mouth. But it was clearly over. We  
understood right away that he had  
heart failure.

JANET  
You called an ambulance of course.

SALLY

We should have. Yes, we should have. But he looked so very dead.

JANET

You're experts of course.

The three women avoid Janet's eyes as a silence falls. After looking at each of them, Janet continues:

JANET (CONT'D)

I should call the police, you know. I could have you all jailed for manslaughter at the very least... But tell me, what did you do afterwards?

VERONICA

We panicked, basically. We saw the sleeping pills by Ronald's couch; we put the pills in our pockets and left it by him on the desk.

SALLY

We cleaned the glasses and put them away, along with the bottles...

SHEILA

Then we ran for it. You called us that evening to tell us that you found Ronald dead that evening. And that was that.

SALLY

Until your friend read Ronald's diaries... what's his name again? 'Major Frederick Acton'...?

JANET

Will.

Another silence falls upon the women. Then:

VERONICA

We really are sorry, Janet-

JANET

(putting her hand up to  
silence her)

Please.

Janet finishes her gin and tonic.

JANET (CONT'D)

How have your husbands taken the news?

SHEILA

They've left us for a week or two.

SALLY

They had to 'get away'.

SHEILA

To 'think it over'

VERONICA

To 'see if they can find forgiveness in their hearts'.

Janet gets up and goes to the bar to pour herself another drink.

JANET

Well, you have a better chance with them than with me. You may leave now.

VERONICA

Oh, okay.

JANET

Leave my house. I will not inform the authorities of your crimes, I don't need all that attention... but as I see it, you all owe me your non-incarcerated lives. If you ever hear from me again, it will be to call in a favor, and you will do so unquestioningly. Understood?

The girls indicate that they understand as they get up. Janet looks at them as she sips her drink.

JANET (CONT'D)

Good. Out.

CUT TO:

INT. JANET'S APARTMENT - FRONT DOOR

Janet shuts the door and turns to find Will holding a gin and tonic for Janet. She smiles as she approaches him.

CUT TO:

INT. JANET'S APARTMENT - LOUNGE

Will and Janet are seated on a couch.

WILL  
How do you feel?

JANET  
Like a fraud.

WILL  
Why?

JANET  
They killed him, Will. They killed  
my husband and I don't care.

Will considers this for a moment.

WILL  
Do you want to see them arrested?

JANET  
Yes. But I don't want to deal with  
the repercussions of having them  
arrested.

WILL  
Okay.

JANET  
And I don't feel the need to get  
justice for Ronald. At all. Is that  
horrible?

WILL  
No, Janet. 'What's past is  
prologue.'

JANET  
Wonderful, Will, it cannot ever  
have been better said.

She takes Will's hand.

JANET (CONT'D)  
All I want is to go away with you.

WILL  
Well, how convenient that we're  
going away tomorrow.

JANET

Have you given any thought as to what you want to do upon our return?

WILL

Yeah. I told Mike I'm gonna take him up on his offer. I want to help Extra! grow. I can see it, you know?

JANET

I think that's fantastic, Will. I do. But I have to be honest, I meant about 'us'. Because, speaking for myself here, I think once we've done the Riviera from end to end and beyond... once we've scaled the Eiffel tower, and emptied the bookshops of Saint-Germain; run with bulls in Pamplona and sung with Basque choirs in the squares of Saint Jean de Luz; Once we've done all that and much, much more, I think I'd actually like to try a slow, calm, peaceful life with you. Is that too forward of me to suggest?

Will pulls her in for a deep and passionate kiss.

WILL

I hope that answers your question.

JANET

Just promise me one thing, Will.

WILL

Of course.

JANET

Let's never stop lying to each other.

WILL

Never, my love.

JANET

But please, only lie to me about the important things. About how beautiful I look in the mornings as I awake; about how you always adore what I wear; about how I never age.

(MORE)

JANET (CONT'D)

Lie that you want to go dancing  
with me every night of our lives;  
lie to me that I really do not  
drink too much.

WILL

I can do all that. Whether they're  
lies or not.

JANET

What lies would you like me to tell  
you, dear Will?

WILL

Just call me 'Major' from time to  
time.

And with that they share another kiss as we pan over to the  
framed photo from the first scene of Janet, Ronald, and  
'Fred', only now Ronald has been drawn over so that the photo  
just shows Janet and Will enjoying that particular day that  
never happened.

Fade to Black.