

"AN UNMARRIED WOMAN"

An Original Screenplay

by

Paul Mazursky

FADE IN:

BLACK SCREEN: (MUSIC UNDER: BACH ORGAN)... ON SCREEN
APPEAR THE WORDS:

"The last days of Erica's marriage"

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

TIGHT HEAD SHOT OF ERICA

Very attractive woman of thirty-six or seven. She's
wearing a headband... She is jogging...

PULL BACK:

EXT. CENTRAL PARK WEST - N.Y. - MORNING

TO REVEAL MARTIN jogging side by side with Erica. Martin
is about forty. He's wearing a headphone radio set (that's
where the Bach is coming from.) They are both in matching
jogging suits... It's clear that they are serious joggers...

CORNER

as Erica and Martin turn the corner... Erica suddenly hops
over something...

ERICA

Watch the dog shit.

But Martin doesn't hear her. He steps right in it. He
stops, furious...

MARTIN

Damn it. My sneakers are ruined.

ERICA

(joking)

They're only thirty-five dollars.

MARTIN

What?

He takes off the headset and starts to clean the sneaker.

MARTIN

This city is one huge pile of
dog shit.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Erica has found a piece of newspaper. She takes the sneaker and cleans it. Martin takes a cigarette out of his pocket and lights it.

ERICA

What's the point in jogging two and a half miles and then giving yourself lung cancer?

MARTIN

You know, Erica, the longer we're married, the more you sound like my mother.

ERICA

(pissed, hands him
the sneaker)

Clean your own sneaker.

MARTIN

I think you wanted me to step in it.

ERICA

You're going crazy, Martin.

MARTIN

(suddenly tosses the
sneaker away)

The hell with it.

Now they walk, Martin with one sneaker on... He looks pretty funny to Erica. She laughs.

ERICA

Why would I want you to step in dog shit?

MARTIN

(smiles)

If I knew that, I wouldn't be going crazy.

There is a sheepish look on his face. He takes her in his arms and they kiss...

MARTIN

Sorry.

ERICA

I'm not your mother.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARTIN

Do we have time to make love?

Erica runs away and Martin jogs after her...

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

Erica and Martin have just made love. He is getting dressed, smoking... Erica lies in bed. (The RADIO is on: Mozart.)

MARTIN

I've got to quit smoking... I didn't tell you. I had my annual check-up Tuesday.

ERICA

How are you?

MARTIN

Fine.

ERICA

You sound surprised.

MARTIN

The check-up always makes me nervous. My blood pressure goes up twenty points just from the anxiety of the check-up... What are you doing today?

ERICA

I'm working at the gallery.

MARTIN

Good. Maybe we should buy a painting.

ERICA

There's nothing there now I really like.

There is a KNOCK at the bedroom door, which is shut.

PATTI (O.S.)

I'm going to school.

Martin, who is almost dressed by now, unlocks the door and opens it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PATTI is sixteen, bright, pretty... She looks at Erica in bed and Martin getting dressed and knows they have just made love. She smiles.

PATTI

Did the earth move?

Erica laughs.

ERICA

See you tonight. We're having lamb.

PATTI

Bye.

Patti goes.

MARTIN

Sometimes I think we expose her to too much.

ERICA

We still lock the door.

MARTIN

Got to run. I'll see you tonight.

Martin kisses Erica and leaves. Erica looks at the clock next to the bed. She stretches... the MUSIC from the RADIO has now turned into ballet music... Erica gets out of bed...

ERICA

Tonight the ballet world was introduced to a brilliant new talent.

(she stands in
the first position)

The long awaited debut of Erica Benton. Ms. Benton astounded the audience with her incredible performance of Swan Lake.

Erica begins to dance around the room. She's not too good, but she is very spirited.

ERICA

(as she dances)

Her pas-de-deux were breathtaking...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ERICA (CONT'D)
 (she pas-de-deux)
 Her control was miraculous.
 (she does a slow
 turn)
 And her leaps were the best we've
 seen in many a moon...
 (she leaps)
 By leaps and bounds...

As Erica continues to spin...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - VILLAGE BAR - NIGHT

A cab pulls up in front of a bar... the Lion's Head, perhaps... Erica gets out and goes into the bar.

INT. BAR

Very crowded. An intellectual New York crowd. Writers, painters, journalists... lots of singles... Erica looks around... makes her way to the other side of the bar... A BEARDED MAN smiles at her as she passes him.

BEARDED MAN

Hello.

ERICA

(smiles)

Goodbye.

Erica sees her friends at a table and joins them.

TABLE

Three women, already having a drink... Laughing, smoking... JEANNETTE, a gorgeous raven-haired beauty with a slight French accent... ELAINE, tall, big laugh, chain smoker, about forty... SUE, rather mannish looking except for her large breasts which are clearly SEEN through her tight tank top... she's wearing levis and smoking a small cigar... They are all happy to see Erica and all say hello and kiss her...

ELAINE

You're just in time for some big news.

SUE

You're looking great, Erica.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ERICA

I had a good week.

ELAINE

Wait till you hear the news.

ERICA

(to Waitress)

A glass of white wine, please.

WAITRESS

Anybody else?

SUE

Refills for everybody.

ELAINE

(to Erica)

Are you ready?

ERICA

You're in love.

ELAINE

(huge laughter)

Would that I were. Would that there was a creature capable of making me feel that old black magic... It's not my news.

ERICA

(turns to Sue)

Sue?

SUE

The only thing that happened to me this week was my elevator man got picked up for flashing. They arrested him in the basement.

ELAINE

(indicates Jeannette)

It's Frenchy.

The waitress brings the drinks.

ERICA

What's the news, Jeannette?

JEANNETTE

(very tentative)

... I met a man.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ERICA

Oh...?

JEANNETTE

He's really nice.

ERICA

That's terrific.

JEANNETTE

But there's a problem.

ERICA

He's married.

ELAINE

(gales of laughter)

You're not close.

JEANNETTE

He's very young.

ERICA

How young?

JEANNETTE

... Nineteen.

ERICA

(in shock)

Jesus Christ.

ELAINE

Is that news or is that news?

ERICA

Nineteen?

JEANNETTE

But he's very mature.

ELAINE

The problem is does she fuck him
or does she adopt him.

Erica waves to the waitress.

ERICA

I'll have another glass of wine.

JEANNETTE

... He's an actor.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Elaine starts to laugh again. She gets up.

ELAINE

I'm a terrible person. I'm drunk.
I'm giddy. I'm going to the loo.
I'm sorry, Jeannette.

She kisses Jeannette and exits...

SUE

I think Elaine is going through
early menopause.

ERICA

(to Jeannette)
... He's an actor.

JEANNETTE

He understudied Romeo in that
Shakespeare in the Park last summer.
... It's strange. I've dated so
many guys these past few years who
were our age, you know... And they
were like stupid kids... And, Steve
... His name is Steve... He's only
nineteen and yet he seems like the
first real man I've met in years...

ERICA

Patti is going with a boy who's
eighteen and he's really nice.
Some of these kids are so open it
scares you.

JEANNETTE

He doesn't come on... He doesn't
play games... He's not trying to
just... you know, it's not just sex.

ERICA

You know, this is really none of our
business unless you want it to be.

JEANNETTE

He wants to move in with me.

ERICA

How do you feel about that?

JEANNETTE

I'm confused. I think I'd like it,
but then again I think it's crazy.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SUE

Can't he see you and live at his own place?

JEANNETTE

He lives with his parents.

Elaine comes back and sits down. She chokes on her cigarette and starts coughing... Erica and Sue are shocked, too. But they try to appear calm...

JEANNETTE

(smiles)

Maybe I should adopt him.

ERICA

Have you met his parents?

JEANNETTE

No. He says they're very nice. Look, let me tell you the truth. I've been with him three times. Long, long times. Talking through the night. No sex. Just talking.

ERICA

What do you talk about?

JEANNETTE

Last night we talked about my father.

SUE

Is he a teenage therapist?... Sorry, now I'm doing it.

JEANNETTE

I told him about my marriage, about my divorce... about my life as an unmarried woman... and we got to talking about my father... you know, how he never really talked to me... Perhaps I see all men as my father.

SUE

Freudian bullshit.

JEANNETTE

Then Steve put his arms around me and held me. He just held me for a long time. I started to cry. Then he undressed me. And he took his things off...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ERICA

(aroused)

Then...

JEANNETTE

Promise you won't laugh.

ERICA

Tell us.

JEANNETTE

He gave me a massage. He gave me a massage for an hour... It was the most incredible experience I've ever had.

ERICA

Was it sexual?

JEANNETTE

It was and it wasn't... I don't know... He massaged my toes and my spine and my eyes... He actually massaged my eyes... Then he massaged my... I got very excited... I didn't know if it was sex or what... I had an orgasm and then another... and then another...

ERICA

(deadpan)

I think it was sexual.

SUE

Ain't nothing wrong with a good old-fashioned clitoral orgasm.

JEANNETTE

... You think I'm crazy?

ERICA

The only thing that's important is whether or not... is whether or not he is totally honest.

JEANNETTE

I think he is.

ELAINE

What the hell is total honesty?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ELAINE (CONT'D)

If it's good for Jeannette today,
then today is good. Besides, there's
no such thing as total honesty.

ERICA

I think there is.

ELAINE

Is Martin totally honest?

ERICA

I think he is.

ELAINE

I'm not talking about sex or affairs
or that sort of thing... I'm talking
about deep-down gut level total
honesty.

ERICA

I know what you're talking about.
Martin is pretty gut-level.

SUE

I agree. I think Erica has got the
only decent man in the five
boroughs.

ELAINE

I like Martin very much. He's
strong and he's open and he's
vulnerable and he has a gigantic
ego which gets me angry sometimes
so maybe I'm prejudiced but I
don't think Martin or any man can
be totally honest. Not totally.
So why the hell look for the
impossible.

(she drinks)

Go out and have some fun, Jeannette.
The worst that can happen is it'll
end.

JEANNETTE

(laughs)

The worst that can happen is his
parents will find out.

Elaine gives Jeannette a huge kiss and an embrace.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ELAINE

You're fabulous, Jeannette. You're outrageous...

JEANNETTE

You're all my sisters.

They all toast each other... As the glasses clink:

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. TAXI - LATER THAT NIGHT

Erica in the back. As the cab pulls up in front of a large apartment building on Central Park West... The DRIVER is a young man.

ERICA

Keep the change...

DRIVER

Thank you. I'll wait till you get inside the building.

ERICA

Hey, that's nice.

DRIVER

I do it for men, too. This is a rough town.

ERICA

(out of nowhere)
How old are you?

DRIVER

Twenty-two and I get off at four but I'd be happy to quit now.

ERICA

It's nothing like that. A friend of mine is thirty-three and she's going with a fellow who's nineteen.

DRIVER

So?

ERICA

Would you go out with a woman who's fourteen years older than you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DRIVER

Sure.

ERICA

I mean, seriously... Have a relationship...

DRIVER

If it was the right lady, I would.

ERICA

Thanks. Goodnight.

DRIVER

(calls after her)
I'm really only nineteen...

Erica disappears into the building.

DRIVER

(to himself)
I hope she gets raped.

As the cab roars away...

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT

as Erica lets herself in... Martin is watching TV... He wears a bathrobe, drinks a martini...

MARTIN

Hi... You had a long meeting tonight.

ERICA

They're not meetings. What's on the news?

MARTIN

(as she sits next to him)
Looks like war in Rhodesia. The market's up. There may be a garbagemen's strike. The usual.

ERICA

Jeannette is going out with a nineteen-year-old boy.

MARTIN

You're kidding.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ERICA

I'm not going to tell you anything else. But Jeannette is seeing a nineteen-year-old boy.

MARTIN

She's flipped.

ERICA

Men go out with younger women all the time.

MARTIN

Nineteen is three years older than Patti.

ERICA

Where is Patti?

MARTIN

She went to the movies with Phil.

She shuts the TV. They both go into their bedroom.

BEDROOM

as Erica undresses...

ERICA

I like Phil.

MARTIN

Maybe Phil should meet Jeannette.

ERICA

Don't be hostile.

MARTIN

How are Elaine and Sue?

ERICA

They're fine.

MARTIN

Elaine makes me very nervous.

ERICA

She likes you.

MARTIN

I like her. But she comes on too strong.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ERICA

So do you, sometimes.

MARTIN

Sometimes I get the feeling that you prefer Elaine and Sue and Jeannette to me.

ERICA

That's silly.

MARTIN

Do you?

ERICA

Sometimes.

Martin kisses Erica.

MARTIN

I feel sexy.

ERICA

Patti's coming home and I have to get up early tomorrow.

Martin kisses her again. She returns the kiss. He is very passionate... Erica breaks the moment...

ERICA

I really am not in the mood.

MARTIN

(suddenly angry)
You give me a headache.

ERICA

Take an aspirin.

CUT TO:

LIVING ROOM

as Patti lets herself in...

PATTI

(calls out)
Anybody home?

ERICA (O.S.)

(from bedroom)
We're in here, honey.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PATTI

What's going on in there? Should
I go out and come in again?

Martin comes into the room. He pads his way to the kitchen
and makes himself another drink.

MARTIN

Hi.

PATTI

Hi, Dad.

Erica comes in. She's wearing a bathrobe.

ERICA

How was the movie?

PATTI

We saw the new Lina Wertmuller film.
I loved it, but Phil thought it was
flawed.

MARTIN

How old is Phil again?

PATTI

You know how old he is. Eighteen.

MARTIN

Your mothers friend Jeannette is
having an affair with a nineteen-
year-old guy.

PATTI

Good for her.

ERICA

It's not an affair. She's not
sleeping with him.

PATTI

(kidding)
Too bad.

MARTIN

Would Phil go out with Jeannette?

PATTI

You'd have to ask Phil.

Martin goes back to the bedroom.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ERICA

(to Patti)

Don't tell anyone about Jeannette.

PATTI

... Are you and Daddy fighting?

ERICA

No. Why?

PATTI

He doesn't look too happy.

ERICA

See you in the morning...

(kisses her)

Goodnight.

PATTI

Goodnight.

BEDROOM

Martin in bed, drinking... Erica comes to bed...

ERICA

You're acting like a five-year-old kid, Martin.

MARTIN

Maybe.

ERICA

Can't you understand my feelings?
I can't turn sex on and off. When
I'm in the mood and you're in the
mood, it's wonderful... But it's
not much fun when you make me feel
like it's an obligation.

MARTIN

Maybe you're right.

ERICA

(smiles)

Besides, we had sex this morning.

MARTIN

I'm not much fun to live with, am I?

ERICA

Are you okay?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARTIN

I don't know.

ERICA

What's the matter?

MARTIN

... I feel anxious lately.

ERICA

Is it me? Is it us?

MARTIN

Could be. I don't know... I feel old... I find myself fantasizing a lot...

ERICA

(takes a sip of his
martini)

About women?

MARTIN

I... No. Not women... About taking off. Changing my life for something else.

ERICA

Are you tired of your job?

MARTIN

I'll tell you something. I've been a take-charge type for twenty years. In school, in the army, at work and probably in our marriage.

ERICA

Is there something wrong with being a strong man?

MARTIN

That's the point. I don't feel very strong... I'm tired. I'm tired of being strong.

ERICA

Maybe you should see an analyst.

MARTIN

Maybe... I don't think so.

ERICA

It sounds like you're tired of me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARTIN

I love you.

ERICA

I hope so... I'd hate to join the crowd.

MARTIN

What do you mean?

ERICA

Everyone is so screwed up. Elaine is boozing a lot. Jeannette is totally confused. Sue is... Sue is very lonely.

MARTIN

I guess you're the only one in good shape.

ERICA

I'm beginning to wonder about me.

Martin looks at her... He takes her in his arms... He holds her... They kiss... Very tenderly...

ERICA

I'm the only one who has a man to come home to. Is that just luck?

MARTIN

(jokes)
Luck and a fabulous body.

They kiss again... they begin to get passionate... Soon Erica begins to abandon herself...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Erica, Martin and Patti are all dressed and finishing coffee ... Everyone is moving around the small kitchen, getting something from the frig, cleaning cups in sink, getting toast, etc....

ERICA

I'm getting tickets to the ballet for a week from Friday. Do you want to go, Patti?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PATTI

A week from Friday. I don't know.
Let me ask Phil.

ERICA

Phil can come with us.

MARTIN

Only if he pays.

PATTI

I don't think Phil likes ballet.

MARTIN

Neither do I and I'm going.

ERICA

(to Martin)
It's good for your soul.

PATTI

I think I'll pass, Mom.

Martin gets up. Kisses Erica and Patti.

MARTIN

I'll see you guys tonight. Have a
nice day.

ERICA

We're having dinner with my parents
tonight.

MARTIN

Right. Will you be there, Patti?

PATTI

I can't. I have to work on my math
tonight.

MARTIN

Am I a nagging father?

PATTI

(with humor)
No. You're just feeling the loss
of separation. I'm not your
little girl anymore.

MARTIN

Wash your mouth with soap... Bye...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Martin leaves...

ERICA

I've got to go, too.

PATTI

Do you think Daddy is worried about getting old?

ERICA

Are you taking a psych course this year?

PATTI

Yeah... he jokes all the time. He doesn't seem to take anything seriously.

ERICA

You mean he doesn't take Phil seriously... and that bothers you.

PATTI

No, it doesn't. I don't take Phil that seriously, either.

They put their coats on and exit the apartment.

ERICA

I think you're serious about Phil.

INT. HALLWAY

as they walk to the elevator... Erica presses button.

PATTI

Mom, I'm still a virgin if that's what you mean.

ERICA

That's not what I meant. But I'm glad you told me... What I meant was that you really like Phil.

Elevator arrives. It's empty. They step in.

INT. ELEVATOR

PATTI

I like Phil, but I'm not going to marry him. As a matter of fact, I don't think I'll ever get married.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ERICA

Yes, you will.

PATTI

Don't be so sure.

ERICA

Why not?

PATTI

Most of the married people I know are miserable. In fact, most of them are divorced.

ERICA

There are plenty of happily married couples.

PATTI

Name three.

The door opens and they step out of the elevator.

EXT. BUILDING (CENTRAL PARK WEST) - DAY

as Patti and Erica come out... They stand in front of the building, as Erica hails a cab.

PATTI

I'll see you tonight, Mom.

ERICA

Have fun.

A cab pulls up. Erica steps into it. It pulls away as she gives an address in Soho.

INT. CAB

The driver is about sixty... Erica looks at the driver's license to operate (his picture and his number)...

LICENSE AND PHOTO

reads: GELLER, SAMUEL, etc.

ERICA AND DRIVER

ERICA

Tell me something, Mr. Geller...

GELLER

Call me Sam.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ERICA

Sam. Would you be upset if you had a thirty-three-year-old daughter and she was going with a nineteen-year-old boy?

GELLER

It would be better than if she was going with a nineteen-year-old girl ... That's what they're into these days, you know.

ERICA

... Did you ever date an older woman?

GELLER

I live with an older woman. My wife is sixty-two.

ERICA

How old are you?

GELLER

Sixty-three.

CUT TO:

INT. ART GALLERY - SOHO - DAY

It's a large gallery... at the present time there are some very large pieces by a female artist... they are mixtures of "arranged" objects (a chair... hubcap... sand, stone and mirrors... a motorcycle restructured with a Hopi mask on the handlebars...) and videotaped montages and impressions of the desert... these videotaped scenes keep playing... The gallery is not crowded... Erica sits at a small desk... She's talking to an artist named CHARLIE. He is about thirty, very macho. He is wearing a Mexican sweater and a cap... He's eating a hero sandwich...

CHARLIE

If she wasn't a woman I don't think you'd like her stuff.

ERICA

Her 'stuff' isn't stuff, Charlie. It's art. And you're a classic male chauvinist pig.

CHARLIE

I know. But I'm cute.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ERICA

You're out of style, Charlie.

CHARLIE

(offers piece of
sandwich)

Want a bite?

ERICA

No, thanks.

CHARLIE

You're a beautiful woman, Erica.
But you're living a very sheltered
life.

ERICA

How can you tell?

CHARLIE

It's in your eyes. You can tell
everything from a woman's eyes.

ERICA

Can you tell everything from a man's
eyes?

CHARLIE

Men cover up a lot. Women lay it
all on the line right there in their
eyes.

ERICA

What do you see in my eyes, Charlie?

CHARLIE

Can I be honest?

ERICA

Oh, sure.

CHARLIE

You're not getting enough.

ERICA

You better have your eyes examined.

CHARLIE

You're not really satisfied. Oh,
your old man is okay and all that,
but you're frustrated underneath
it all...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ERICA

Go paint a still life, Charlie.

CHARLIE

Have you ever had an affair?

ERICA

It's none of your business.

CHARLIE

... A woman as beautiful as you
should taste a little variety.
Can you imagine if all you ever ate
was apples? Can you imagine never
tasting a pear? A peach? A papaya?
No way. Same with sex, baby.

ERICA

I'm allergic to papayas.

Charlie laughs.

ERICA

Don't you ever talk about anything
else, Charlie? Politics or books
or the weather?

CHARLIE

Hey, Erica. Who we kidding? There's
work and there's eating and there's
sex. That's the whole ballgame.

PHONE RINGS. Erica picks it up.

ERICA

Rowan Gallery...
(surprised)
Hi... What's up?... I'd love to,
honey... Good. Fifteen minutes...
I'll meet you there.

She hangs up.

CHARLIE

Who's honey?

ERICA

My husband. He's taking me to lunch.

CHARLIE

(gets up)
Well... I think I'll hit the streets
for a while.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Erica opens her eyes very wide and stares at Charlie in a funny way.

ERICA

Bye, Charlie.

Charlie smiles and we SEE him walk out the gallery.

CUT TO:

SOHO RESTAURANT - DAY

Place is crowded... Erica and Martin are finishing their lunch.

ERICA

You know, if we want to go to the Island this summer, we'll have to get on it right away.

MARTIN

I know.

ERICA

I don't think Patti will be out there much. She wants to go to summer school.

Martin signals for the check.

ERICA

Should we share a place with Clair and Fred...?

MARTIN

I don't know.

ERICA

How's work?

MARTIN

Work?... Work is fine.

The WAITRESS comes over with the bill. Martin pays her.

WAITRESS

Out of twenty. Be right back.

ERICA

Martin, did you forget that we're having dinner with my parents tonight?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARTIN

No. Why?

ERICA

You usually don't take me to lunch.

MARTIN

Every day is different.

ERICA

Are you okay?

Waitress brings the change and gives it to Martin. He leaves a tip and they get up. They leave the restaurant.

EXT. SOHO

as Erica and Martin walk back towards the gallery.

ERICA

You didn't answer me.

MARTIN

What?

ERICA

Are you okay? You seem strange.

MARTIN

How can you tell?

ERICA

(laughs)

Your eyes. I can tell everything from a man's eyes.

They walk. Martin says nothing. Erica can't figure out what the hell is happening. She decides it's nothing...

ERICA

If we take a place on the Island,
we'll have to have my club out there.
I can just see them lying in the sun
letting it all hang out... And me...
you know, I can't wait till we meet
every week. It's like a continuing
story... It's part 'Mary Hartman,
Mary Hartman' and part Ingmar Bergman...

Martin suddenly stops walking. He is pale... Erica stops,
looks at him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ERICA

What's the matter?

He just shakes his head, as if to say "I don't know..."

ERICA

You look sick, Marty. What is it?

Then Martin begins to cry. His face falls apart. Erica is frightened. She takes his arm and they lean up against a building... Nobody notices them... Erica puts her palm on Martin's forehead to feel for fever...

ERICA

We better get a cab.

MARTIN

I'm in love with another woman.

Erica looks for the joke but it isn't there...

MARTIN

I've been seeing another woman for almost a year. It's not an affair ... I thought it was... At first... I thought it was just... just a thing, you know... but it's not... I want to live with her... I'm sorry, baby... I don't want to hurt you... or Patti... I don't know why or how... I can't lie to you anymore. I've been lying for a year. I've been going crazy.

Erica is not crying. She's been watching Martin almost as if he were a stranger.

ERICA

Who is she?

MARTIN

You don't know her.

ERICA

Who is she?

MARTIN

Her name is Marcia.

ERICA

Marcia who?

MARTIN

Brenner. Marcia Brenner.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ERICA

How old is she?

MARTIN

Twenty-six. She's a teacher.

ERICA

How did you meet her?

MARTIN

I met her in Bloomingdales. I was buying a shirt and she was standing there next to me. She asked me if I liked a shirt she was buying for her father. For his birthday.

ERICA

And you fell in love with her.

MARTIN

I'm sorry, Erica.

ERICA

For who? Sorry for who?

MARTIN

For both of us, I guess.

ERICA

You tell Patti. You tell your daughter.

MARTIN

Okay...

ERICA

Is she a good lay?

MARTIN

Maybe I'm crazy, Erica. Maybe I'm out of my mind. But there's nothing I can do about it. I'm in love with her.

ERICA

... Yeah.

Erica turns and starts to walk away. Martin just stands there...

ERICA

walking. Tight-lipped... Passes people...

CORNER

Erica coming TOWARD US... CLOSER...

ERICA

No tears... walking...

CORNER

Erica waiting to cross street. Surrounded by other people... Light changes. They cross... But she stands there... Then she grips the street light on the corner and she begins to throw up... Heaving... Someone passes her and gives her a look as if to say... "drinking in the afternoon"...

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

BLACK SCREEN.

Then...

"The Early Days of Erica's Separation"

BLACK...

CUT TO:

INT. LIONS HEAD - NIGHT

MUSIC on the JUKEBOX... Erica, Jeannette, Sue and Elaine sit at their table. Erica looks great. They are all eating, drinking...

JEANNETTE

His mother called me last night.
She called me a cradle-snatcher.
She was hysterical. She said if
I saw Steve again, she'd call the
police.

SUE

What does the father have to say?

JEANNETTE

I don't think he cares.

ERICA

What are you going to do?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JEANNETTE

I'm going to let him move in. You'll probably have to get me out of jail.

ELAINE

You've got a lot of guts.

SUE

Is he going to pay half the rent?

JEANNETTE

I hadn't thought about that.

SUE

He should pay.

ELAINE

Why?

SUE

Come on, Elaine.

ELAINE

There's nothing wrong with a woman paying the rent. Men have been paying the rent for years and that's what's screwed us up.

ERICA

She may be right.

JEANNETTE

I'm very confused.

ELAINE

Have a ball.

SUE

Listen, Jeannette. I wish you the best. But I don't trust men. Any of them. My mother trusted my father for forty years and the old boozier walked out on her one Christmas Eve and never came back. I trusted Jimmy for fifteen years and the son-of-a-bitch stabbed me in the back. And now... Do you mind if I talk about you, Erica?

ERICA

No.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SUE

And now Erica's gotten the old shaftereenie. Men are programmed to last just so long, kiddo. Just so long. Make him pay half the fucking rent.

ERICA

You're really generalizing, Sue.

SUE

Don't tell me you have any pity for Martin.

ERICA

I don't have any pity for myself.

SUE

You should. You're a great woman and you've been dumped by a miserable man.

ERICA

Martin is a fool, but he's not a miserable man.

SUE

Jesus Christ, listen to you.

ERICA

I thought you said Martin was the best man in the five boroughs.

SUE

I was wrong. He fooled me.

ERICA

He fooled me, too.

SUE

You want my hunch?... Martin will be tired of this little thing in about three months and he'll come crawling back.

ERICA

I don't think so... and I don't care.

SUE

You have to care.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ERICA

I care... but I don't care... That part of my life is over.

ELAINE

How is Patti taking it?

ERICA

She's very sad. I think it's easier on kids. But teenagers... She's very upset.

SUE

She has a right to be. So do you.

ERICA

Sue. I am upset. I'm sad. I'm lonely. Everything is suddenly shitty. What do you want me to say? ... Huh?... What the hell do you want me to say?...

Silence at the table... Erica sighs... She takes some money out of her purse and lays it on the table.

ERICA

I'm sorry. I'm in a lousy mood. I'll see you next week.

They all kiss Erica...

SUE

Let me ride home with you.

ERICA

No thanks. I'm okay.

Erica leaves. They watch her go.

SUE

... I hope Martin gets a permanent case of the clap and his pecker falls off.

ELAINE

I'll drink to that.

CUT TO:

BAR AREA

as Erica is exiting. The Bearded Man is there again.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BEARDED MAN
Hello.

ERICA
Fuck you.

She exits.

CUT TO:

INT. ERICA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

as she lets herself in... Patti is listening to MUSIC...
reading.

PATTI
Hi, Mom.

ERICA
What are you reading?

PATTI
Freud... I think he was crazy.

ERICA
Who isn't?

PATTI
... I had a fight with Phil.

ERICA
What about?

PATTI
He was defending Daddy. He doesn't
think it was the right thing to do,
but he understands it, he says.

ERICA
Phil is a nice boy.

PATTI
I hate Daddy.

Patti starts to cry. Erica sits next to her. They're both
crying now. Erica holds Patti in her arms.

ERICA
He didn't leave you, Patti, he left
me.

PATTI
I still hate him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ERICA

You'll get over it.

PATTI

I don't want to see him again.

ERICA

Are we talking about Phil or your father?

PATTI

Both of them.

ERICA

That's crazy.

PATTI

Then I'm crazy...

They start to laugh through their tears...

ERICA

You're a goofball...

PATTI

... Would you take him back?

ERICA

... You want him to come back, don't you?

PATTI

I guess I do...

ERICA

It's over, kiddo. For good. You'd better get used to it. Self-pity will get us nowhere.

The PHONE RINGS. Erica and Patti both almost jump at the sound of the ring. They look at the phone, which is on an end table... It RINGS twice, a third time... Patti picks up the phone.

PATTI

Hello?...

Erica looks at her.

PATTI

Oh... Hello, Phil. What do you want?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Erica smiles, gets up, kisses Patti.

PATTI

It's really late, Phil... No...
Call me tomorrow...

Erica exits.

BEDROOM

Erica turns the TV on... As she passes it, she sees her reflection in the mirror... she looks at herself... she examines her reddened eyes... she feels a line near her mouth... she realizes that she is frowning and she makes herself smile a very silly looking smile... She holds the smile for a moment, then lets her face relax into a frown again... (SOUND: OVER all THIS we begin to HEAR the "Johnny Carson Show").

CLOSE - ERICA

in the mirror...

ERICA

... 'Balls,' said the Queen. 'If
I had 'em, I'd be King'...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DOCTOR'S EXAMINING ROOM - DAY

Erica is wearing a white medical robe (kind that opens in the back)... She is having her blood pressure taken by ARTHUR JACOBS, a doctor in his late forties...

JACOBS

You have wonderful blood pressure,
Erica.

ERICA

Aw, you're just a flatterer...

Jacobs begins to examine Erica's nose and throat...

JACOBS

I want you to have a chest X-ray,
while you're here...

Erica can't talk, but she nods.

JACOBS

You have a gorgeous throat...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Jacobs tosses the tongue depressor into a wastebasket.

JACOBS

If you won't sue me, Erica, I'll say off-the-record that you're in very good health.

ERICA

Good.

JACOBS

We'll get the results of the blood tests and the rest of the lab reports in a few days, but you're going to live.

ERICA

Then why am I tired all the time?

JACOBS

It's called divorce.

ERICA

Should I take valium or something?

JACOBS

I'd rather see you smoke a joint than take valium.

ERICA

Seriously, Arthur...

JACOBS

I'm serious...

ERICA

Do you smoke grass?

JACOBS

Once in a while. I get it from my daughter.

ERICA

How is your daughter?

JACOBS

Well, she goes to college in Massachusetts but right now she's working on a film project in the Fiji Islands. It's a very progressive school.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ERICA

How's your wife?

JACOBS

She's also going to school. She wants to be a lawyer so she can handle all my malpractice cases.

ERICA

(laughs)

Well, everything sounds fine with you, Mr. Jacobs. Just pay the nurse on the way out...

JACOBS

Did you feel tired before all this happened?

ERICA

Never.

JACOBS

Never???

ERICA

Arthur, I've always been a healthy person. I've always had a perfect life. Good teeth, nice ass and a high IQ... Now I feel like... Maybe I should see a psychiatrist.

JACOBS

Maybe.

ERICA

Do you think I should?

JACOBS

Erica, it's normal to feel lousy when a husband walks out on you. You'd be crazy if you felt good about it... But it's only been a few weeks... Time is the best healer... I'm not saying you shouldn't see a psychiatrist...

ERICA

You're saying Erica is in good health.

JACOBS

... Are you seeing other men yet?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ERICA
(shocked)

No.

JACOBS
Don't be so shocked.

ERICA
I'm not in the mood for men.

JACOBS
I wasn't referring to sex. Just
companionship.

ERICA
Oh? Are there male companions out
there who don't want to get laid?...

JACOBS
(laughs)
You could have a drink with me.

ERICA
... Is that a pass, Arthur?

JACOBS
No. Just an invitation to have a
drink.

ERICA
Why didn't you ever ask me to have
a drink when I was married?

JACOBS
I don't know. I never thought
about it.

ERICA
It's a pass, Arthur. A definite
fucking pass.

She gets up and exits the room, slamming the door behind
her...

CUT TO:

INT. TAXI (EAST SIDE) - NIGHT

Elaine and Erica sit in the back. Erica is a bit nervous.
Elaine is very up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ELAINE

The thing I like about Hal is that we have a totally honest relationship. There's no small talk. He doesn't tell me he loves me. I don't tell him he's fascinating. It's pure sex. And he's a good lover. Very good.

ERICA

You always were different.

ELAINE

I stopped looking for romance a long time ago.

ERICA

What does this... this Bob do?

ELAINE

He's a press agent. Broadway shows, movies. Hal says he's a nice guy.

ERICA

I feel silly.

ELAINE

It's your first date.

ERICA

If he tries to touch me, I'll break his arms.

ELAINE

(laughs)
Relax.

ERICA

The first time I went out with Martin, he took me home and tried to kiss me. I turned my face away so fast he bumped his nose on my cheek. It was very funny... A week later, we were in bed.

The cab stops in front of a Chinese restaurant near Bloomingdales... Elaine pays the driver.

ERICA

Let's split it.

ELAINE

My treat this time.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ERICA

What makes you think there'll be
another time?

They're out of the cab now and they start into the restaurant.

INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Crowded... should be a nice place... As Erica and Elaine enter they almost bump into two men... HAL and BOB... Hal is an ex-football player and looks it. He's very gregarious... Bob is about forty, quite bald, but with large whitish sideburns and a lot shorter than Hal. In fact, he's shorter than Erica. He is very subdued.

HAL

Hey, baby. You look great.

ELAINE

Erica, this is my animal.

HAL

(to Bob)

Is she great or is she great?

ELAINE

You must be Bob.

BOB

(shakes hands with
Elaine)

Bob Cummings.

ELAINE

Oh, like the movie actor?

BOB

No relation...

ERICA

I'm Erica Ross.

Erica and Bob shake hands. Erica and Hal shake hands.

BOB

I'm glad you could make it, Erica.

HAL

Would it be wrong of me to say that
you are a beautiful woman?

ERICA

Not if you want to.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HAL

You guys hungry? Let's grab a table.

Hal has his arm around Elaine and is already oblivious of Erica and Bob. A WAITER leads them to a table...

BOB

Have you eaten here before?

ERICA

No.

BOB

They say it's very hot food. Very hot.

ERICA

Setzuan's hot.

TABLE

Hal sits next to Elaine. Erica sits next to Bob on the other side of the table.

HAL

Let's order some drinks.

ELAINE

Vodka tonic.

HAL

Erica?

ERICA

A glass of white wine.

HAL

(to the Waiter)

Vodka tonic, a bottle of white wine
... give us a good Chablis...

ERICA

I just want a glass.

HAL

I'll finish what you don't drink,
Erica.

(to the Waiter)

I'll have a double Jack Daniels,
water on the side. Bob?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOB
Beefeaters martini. Double. With
a twist of lemon.

WAITER
One vodka tonic. One bottle of
Chablis, a double Jack Daniels and
a double martini.

The Waiter exits.

HAL
This is nice. You okay, Erica?

ERICA
I'm fine.

HAL
If you don't mind my saying so, you
look like you're in pain.

ERICA
You talk a lot, don't you?

HAL
Easy now. I was being friendly.

BOB
Hal is a frustrated social director.

HAL
I always say what I mean. Sometimes
I talk too much.

BOB
(to Erica)
Do you work, Erica?

ERICA
I work part time at the Rowan
Gallery. It's in Soho.

BOB
I've never been there.

ERICA
It's a good gallery.

BOB
I'd like to visit sometime.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ERICA

We're open every day but Monday.

BOB

Do you paint?

ERICA

No. I've studied painting. But I'm not an artist.

BOB

I'm in public relations.

Elaine and Erica exchange glances. Elaine is trying to see if Erica is okay. Erica sighs a small sigh... The Waiter brings the drinks...

ERICA

What are you working on?

BOB

(wryly)

A new Charles Bronson movie. It's about an ex-Vietnam veteran who comes back to a small town in the midwest and shoots about three hundred people.

ERICA

That should make a fortune.

The Waiter pours the wine for Erica. He waits for her to taste it.

BOB

Try the wine, Erica.

ERICA

What?... Oh.

(she sips the wine)

That's fine.

The Waiter pours the rest of the glass for Erica...

ERICA

I'm not used to being the one who tastes the wine.

ELAINE

(laughs)

See what you have to look forward to.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WAITER

You like to order, please?

Erica spills her wine accidentally. It pours over her blouse.

ERICA

Shit.

WAITER

I'll get you a towel, ma'am.

ERICA

That's okay.

(she gets up)

I'll be right back... Order whatever
you want for me.

ERICA

walking to the ladies room. She goes in...

LADIES ROOM

very tiny. Empty. Erica pulls some towels out of the container and soaks them with cold water. She begins to press the towels on her blouse... Then she stops... Looks in the mirror... Begins to cry... She can't control herself... Door opens. It's Elaine... She puts her arms around Erica and holds her...

ELAINE

I know, baby. I know...

Erica begins to wash her face...

ERICA

If I was Catholic I think I'd join
a nunnery.

ELAINE

At least you can be sure he won't
make a pass.

ERICA

'Make a pass'... Christ, I don't
believe we're having this
conversation.

ELAINE

Erica, they're all going to seem
strange at first...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ELAINE (CONT'D)

You're going to compare all the
men you meet to Martin.

ERICA

(smiles)

Martin who?

ELAINE

(smiles)

Let's eat.

ERICA

Do you ever cry, Elaine?

ELAINE

Do bears like honey?... Come on.

They exit the ladies room.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

as the foursome come out...

HAL

My mouth is burning.

BOB

That was very good Setzuan.

HAL

(to Elaine)

Nightcap, honey?

ELAINE

What do you want to do, Erica?

ERICA

I'm going home. Thanks for the
meal, Bob.

BOB

Let me take you home.

ERICA

No, thanks. I'll get a cab.

BOB

Where do you live?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ERICA
Central Park West in the eighties.

BOB
I live in the nineties. Let me at
least take the cab with you.

ERICA
(hailing a cab)
Sure.

ELAINE
(kisses Erica)
See you later, Erica.

ERICA
Bye.

HAL
Goodnight, Erica. Let's do this
again.

ERICA
Bye.

A cab pulls up. Bob and Erica get in the back. Taxi pulls
away.

INT. TAXI

Erica gives her address. The DRIVER is Latin.

DRIVER
Should I take Fifth Avenue or what
should I do?

ERICA
Take Eighth Avenue.

DRIVER
That's West, right?

ERICA
Si.

BOB
I think they get new drivers every
week.

ERICA
As long as I don't get Bob De Niro.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOB

(laughs)

I really like you, Erica.

ERICA

Are you divorced?

BOB

Twice. My first marriage lasted seven years. Two kids. The whole schmear. But I married an actress. She was more interested in a career than in me.

ERICA

There's nothing wrong with a career, is there?

BOB

She spent most of her time rehearsing scenes with actors. At their apartments.

ERICA

Oh... Who has the children?

BOB

She does. She's remarried.

ERICA

An actor?

BOB

A dentist. She lives in Long Island now and stars in the local little theatre.

ERICA

And the second time?

BOB

My second marriage lasted two weeks. I went to Vegas to plug Liberace and I fell in love with a chorus girl. She was six feet two inches tall. It was just a crazy thing... What about you?

ERICA

I was married for seventeen years. He left me for another woman.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOB

He must be out of his mind.

ERICA

I don't know.

BOB

You were crying when you went to the ladies room, weren't you?

ERICA

Yeah.

BOB

(moves closer)

It's tough at first.

ERICA

Are you uncomfortable?

BOB

With you? No.

ERICA

Then why are you moving closer to me?

BOB

I don't know. I guess I want to be closer to you.

ERICA

Don't, Bob.

BOB

Why not?

ERICA

Because I said so. Because I don't like it.

BOB

I didn't do anything.

ERICA

But you want to, don't you?

BOB

You're paranoid.

ERICA

Do you or don't you want to?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOB

... I'd like to, yes.

ERICA

Save yourself a lot of trouble, Bob.

BOB

(moves away)

You'd think I was asking you to go to bed with me. I just moved a little closer.

ERICA

I'm very, very touchy these days.

BOB

You sure are...

ERICA

(to the Driver)

This is Eighth Avenue. Turn right
... A la derecha...

DRIVER

Si, senora.

BOB

... I'd like to see you again,
Erica.

ERICA

I don't think so.

BOB

Why not? What did I do?

ERICA

It's an unfair universe.

BOB

I didn't make a pass. I didn't touch you...

ERICA

Tell me about Liberace.

Bob says nothing. He moves further away...

ERICA

Don't pout, Bob. You're a nice man.
I'm just not dating.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOB

What was tonight?

ERICA

Dinner.

BOB

Dinner is dating.

ERICA

(laughs)

I guess you're right.

BOB

(smiles)

You're a very complicated woman.

ERICA

These cabs feel like cages...

Silence as they drive... Erica looks out the window... Bob takes a cigarette out... can't find a match...

BOB

Do you have a match?

ERICA

I don't smoke.

Suddenly Bob reaches over and grabs Erica. He tries to kiss her. She pushes him away, but he is very strong and insistent. She shoves him, gets the heel of her palm into his face and backs him away from her face...

ERICA

You son-of-a-bitch.

BOB

I'm crazy about you.

ERICA

Who the hell do you think you are?
Get out. Get out of the cab.
Driver. Stop the cab. Stop it.

DRIVER

(not stopping)

This is Eighth Avenue, right?

ERICA

Alto. Stop. Alto. Alto.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DRIVER
Porque?

ERICA
(screams, almost
hysterical)
Stop the fucking cab.

EXT. STREET

As cab screeches to a halt... We SEE Bob getting out...

BOB
At least let me pay for the ride.

INT. TAXI

ERICA
(to the Driver)
Move it. Start the cab.

DRIVER
Huh?

ERICA
Home. Take me home.

DRIVER
Where you live, lady?

ERICA
Central Park West. Where I said
before.

DRIVER
Si, senora.

The cab pulls away, leaving Bob standing there.

BOB
(shouts)
You're a paranoid schizophrenic!

CUT TO:

INT. ERICA'S APT. - NIGHT

As she lets herself in... She immediately smells something strange. She sniffs. She quickly crosses towards Patti's room.

ERICA
(calling)
Patti.

PATTI'S ROOM

Patti and PHIL are necking. They are dressed, but Phil has one hand inside Patti's blouse. She is holding a joint. They break the clinch as Erica walks in... (Phil is tall, cute, looks older than eighteen)

ERICA

What is this?

PATTI

(simply)

We were necking.

ERICA

(very angry)

Wonderful. What a wonderful thing to come home to.

PHIL

I'd better go.

PATTI

What did we do?

ERICA

You're smoking grass.

PATTI

You know I smoke grass once in a while.

ERICA

I don't ever want to see you here again, Phil.

PHIL

We didn't do anything...

ERICA

Go.

PATTI

(angry)

I want him to stay.

Erica grabs Phil by the hand and drags him to the door of the room.

ERICA

Get the hell out of my home.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PHIL
(exiting)
I'll call you, Patti.

Patti gets up and runs to Phil, but Erica stands between them...

PATTI
(crying now)
I want Phil to stay. I want him to stay...

But Phil exits...

PATTI
You can't tell me what to do with my life... I hate it... I hate this house... I don't want to live here anymore...

ERICA
Join the crowd...

PATTI
You can't stop me from seeing Phil...

ERICA
Oh, yes I can...

PATTI
I'll run away...

ERICA
Patti...

PATTI
What did I do? What did I do that was wrong?

ERICA
You're only sixteen years old.

PATTI
You want me to neck in the park?

Erica falls apart now. She starts to cry... She sits down on Patti's bed. Patti sits down next to Erica. They are both crying now.

ERICA
... My mouth is burning.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PATTI

Are you sick?

ERICA

I had Setzuan.

PATTI

Oh.

ERICA

I had Setzuan and I was almost raped
by a midget...

Erica kisses Patti, holds her... then she gets up.

KITCHEN

As they enter... Erica gets water and drinks a glass...

ERICA

I'm sorry I screamed at you.

PATTI

That's okay.

ERICA

I'm trying to figure out how I would
have reacted to you and Phil if Martin
had been here... Would you have done
it in the first place if we were
still living together...?

PATTI

Probably not.

ERICA

So suddenly everything is different.

PATTI

I guess it is...

ERICA

It is, it is...

PATTI

Mom. We really didn't do anything.
We smoked a joint and we necked.
It's not the first time.

ERICA

I'm not sure I know how to be a
father.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PATTI

You don't have to be my father, Mom.

ERICA

... Call Phil and tell him I'm sorry.

PATTI

I'll call him in the morning... Hey, I know it must be strange for you to see your little girl kissing and all that... I'm sorry. We thought you were coming home later...

ERICA

No. It's good that you're honest.

PATTI

And the grass... It must have looked like an orgy to you.

ERICA

I don't like grass. It's illegal and that makes me nervous.

PATTI

Even the government statistics say it really can't hurt you. Booze is worse.

ERICA

Do all the kids at school smoke it?

PATTI

Mostly the teachers...

Erica smiles... they exit the kitchen.

ERICA'S ROOM

As they enter... Erica begins to undress...

PATTI

Was your date rotten?

ERICA

Yeah. It was rotten.

PATTI

Did he make a pass?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ERICA

Yeah.

PATTI

They all do.

ERICA

I had forgotten...

PATTI

You're a beautiful woman. I can see why a man would want to kiss you.

ERICA

You're beginning to sound like my date... Good night.

Erica kisses Patti.

PATTI

Good night... You okay?

ERICA

(smiles)

I'm fine.

Patti exits... Erica looks into her mirror...

ERICA

Erica feels very very sorry for herself, doesn't she?

She nods to her reflection.

ERICA

Poor little Erica...

She makes a baby face...

ERICA

Shape up, Erica.

She suddenly sits up.

ERICA

That's better, Erica.

Patti comes back in.

PATTI

What's the matter?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ERICA

... I really don't know...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. PSYCHIATRIST'S OFFICE - DAY

The analyst is a woman in her late thirties. Her name is TANYA BERKEL. Small, dark, very dynamic. Short cropped curly hair. She is listening to Erica who sits across from her in the small, simply decorated, room.

ERICA

Coming here is a defeat to me. I didn't want to do it. I've always been able to take care of myself. Always. I belong to a club... Sort of a club... You've probably heard about it from Elaine... I've always felt I was the only one in the group who wasn't half crazy all the time... I don't want to talk about Elaine... You see her... You seem to have helped her. At least she seems to have her humour back... I've lost my humour. I feel a lot of rage... When I open my eyes in the morning, I feel angry. Hostile. I'm even getting used to it.

TANYA

There's nothing wrong with anger. If it's appropriate.

ERICA

Is it appropriate to want to kill the man you were married to?

TANYA

It's pretty common.

ERICA

(long pause... Erica doesn't know what to say...)

I feel depressed... Lonely... And I don't like it... What else is new?

TANYA

Tell me more about your anger.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ERICA

What can I tell you? I feel angry.
I was married to the man for
seventeen years and one day he tells
me he's in love with another woman
... So I threw up...

TANYA

You vomited?

ERICA

Right there on the sidewalk. The
two-fifty blueplate Soho special.

TANYA

You should have vomited on him.

Erica laughs.

ERICA

You surprise me.

TANYA

Why?

ERICA

I didn't think you'd be offering
advice. Not this early.

TANYA

Let's get something straight. There
are no rules in this room. Sometimes
you talk. Sometimes I talk. I don't
know what you've read or heard about
therapy, but throw it out. We'll
save a lot of time. Okay?

ERICA

Okay.

TANYA

How the fuck could you have been
married to a man for seventeen years
and have no idea he was in love with
another woman?

ERICA

I don't know how the fuck.

TANYA

Are you angry with me now?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ERICA

A little.

TANYA

Tell me about it.

ERICA

... I had a date with a guy and he made some comment and I said to him, it's an unfair universe... That's how I feel about what's happened to me. It's unfair. Why the hell me? -- And I'm afraid. I have never been afraid of anything in my life. Oh, some things. You know... when Patti was a baby and she had a hundred and five fever... I was afraid she'd die ... I was afraid... I was afraid of the usual things when I was a little girl... But I've never really been afraid... Do you understand?

TANYA

Afraid of what things?

ERICA

Oh... I don't know... Afraid of my report card. Afraid I'd get my white pinafore dirty... Afraid when I got my period the first time...

(smiles)

... I got my period when I was thirteen. Some of my friends... well, not really some... My best friend was Karen Finestein and she got her period when she was twelve. So I figured there was something wrong with me. I had a terrible year from twelve to thirteen. Whenever I went to the bathroom I looked to see if I was getting my period yet. That's all Karen and I talked about. 'Did you get it yet?' 'No.' Jesus ... Then I got it. I was wearing white lace panties that my grandmother gave me for my birthday and I was sitting in my Spanish class and I suddenly felt this strange warm wetness in my crotch. And I had this wierd, crazy feeling of elation.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ERICA (CONT'D)

Then suddenly I was afraid... I was afraid of getting blood all over my white panties... Then the bell rang and all the kids got up and I saw Karen and I caught her eyes with mine and I smiled and she came over and she said what are you smiling about and I said I got my period and she said 'Thank God'...

Erica laughs... Tanya doesn't...

ERICA

... But what does all this have to do with anything? I don't really see how you can help me. What can you do? You can't live my life for me. Can you?

TANYA

Hell, no.

ERICA

So what's the point?

TANYA

If you're looking for a miracle, you've come to the wrong place. If you're looking for help, you might find it here. I don't know. Nothing's certain except death. There are no guarantees. But you're very confused and some of that confusion might just clear up. It's your move, Erica.

ERICA

... I'm scared. I'm really scared.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

ON SCREEN APPEAR THE WORDS:

"Erica begins to experiment"

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. LION'S HEAD - NIGHT

The usual table. The Club is meeting... they are all listening to Sue... It's very intense... except for Sue, who is pretty matter of fact, at least on the surface... They are at the end of a meal...

SUE

I love her. Yeah, Sue is in love. It's the first time since Jimmy hauled ass that I feel like a human being. It's exciting. It's fun. I'm sharing things with another person and that person just happens to be a woman. So that's it, friends. Are you shocked?

ERICA

Not really.

ELAINE

If you're happy, I'm happy.

SUE

Jeannette?

JEANNETTE

I'm not surprised, Sue. But I am a little shocked. You know I love you. It's not that. It's just... Well... I guess I still feel old-fashioned about men and women...

SUE

You mean sex?

JEANNETTE

I guess so.

SUE

Hey, it's terrific that you're honest about it...

ERICA

We're all going through changes.

JEANNETTE

I don't mean to judge you, Sue. Me of all people. I'm living with a teenager.

She laughs.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SUE

Does it make you kind of queasy?
The thought of your friend Sue in bed
with a woman?

JEANNETTE

I can't picture myself doing it.

SUE

Can I tell you something? The sex
is good. But it's just the tip of
the old iceberg. The rest of it is
a lot of shopping and cooking and
taking walks and going to shows and
general all around... Aw, hell... I
was lonely... Really lonely. And
I'm not anymore.

Jeannette puts her arm around Sue and kisses her on the cheek.
So do Erica and Elaine.

ERICA

I'm glad you told us, Sue.

SUE

Let's pay the bill before I start
to bawl.

They all put their share of the bill onto a small tray and
get up...

ERICA

What's her name?

SUE

Katherine. Katherine Thomas. She's
thirty-one years old, and she's black
as coal. She's a choreographer.

ELAINE

Do you tell your mother she's gay
or do you tell her she's black.

SUE

(laughs)

As long as I don't tell her she's a
choreographer.

BAR AREA

As the women enter, laughing now... The Bearded Man who
we've seen before is at his usual perch next to the bar. He
sees Erica and he smiles at her.

ERICA

Sees him smiling at her... Stares right at him.

BEARDED MAN

Winks at Erica.

FULL SHOT

Erica strides over to the Bearded Man. He is surprised, but pleased.

BEARDED MAN

Hello again.

ERICA

What do you want?

BEARDED MAN

What do I want?

ERICA

You understand English, don't you?

BEARDED MAN

I don't want anything.

ERICA

Then why did you wink at me?

By now the others at the bar are picking up on this... The other women have approached, too...

BEARDED MAN

You're drunk, lady.

ERICA

Did you or did you not wink at me?

BEARDED MAN

I have a tic.

ERICA

You're a liar.

BEARDED MAN

Okay, so I winked at you. What the hell's the difference?

ERICA

It's all the difference in the world.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BEARDED MAN

Take her home. She's pissed.

SUE

Why did you wink at her?

BEARDED MAN

Who the hell are you?

SUE

You wanted a little nookie, didn't you, hairface?

BEARDED MAN

What is this, a fucking conspiracy?

BARTENDER

Watch your language, Billy.

ERICA

Billy???? Oh, we're talking to Mister Billy the big Winker...

There's a lot of laughter now... People are really enjoying the encounter.

BEARDED MAN

What is this? A new game?

ERICA

Maybe next time you'll think twice about who you wink at.

BEARDED MAN

I just swore off winking for the rest of my life.

Big laugh...

BEARDED MAN

Now. Can I buy you a drink?

ERICA

(can't believe her ears)

Whew... It's all pretty basic, isn't it?

BEARDED MAN

Huh?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ERICA
(shouts, really
losing her control)
You see something you like and you
wink at the goods. Basic. Basic.
Basic.

Erica turns and exits the bar...

EXT. LION'S HEAD - NIGHT

As Erica comes out. She is shaking... Sue, Jeannette and
Elaine come out.

ELAINE
Are you all right?

ERICA
You bet your sweet ass I'm all right.

SUE
I've never seen you blow your top
like that.

ERICA
Neither have I...
(she smiles)
... I could use a drink...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SOHO STREET - DAY

Erica walking towards the restaurant she had lunch in before
... She goes into the restaurant.

INT. RESTAURANT

Erica looks around and sees Martin. He is already seated at
a table. Place is crowded as usual. Erica joins Martin.

ERICA
Thanks for coming, Martin.

MARTIN
I'm glad you called, Erica.

The WAITRESS comes to the table.

WAITRESS
Hi. Are you ready to order?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ERICA

I'll have a cheeseburger, medium-rare and a cup of coffee.

MARTIN

I'll have the same thing with a diet root beer.

WAITRESS

We don't have root beer.

MARTIN

Do you have Tab?

WAITRESS

Yeah.

MARTIN

Tab is fine.

Waitress exits.

MARTIN

I'm on a diet.

ERICA

I'm worried about Patti. She's very angry at you.

MARTIN

I know. I don't know what to do.

ERICA

I'm seeing a therapist. I think Patti should see her, too. It's expensive.

MARTIN

I'll pay for it.

ERICA

Good. That's settled.

MARTIN

Who's the therapist?

ERICA

Her name is Tanya Berkel.

MARTIN

A woman?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ERICA

Yes.

MARTIN

Good.

ERICA

I'm glad you think it's good.

MARTIN

You really hate me, don't you?

ERICA

Yeah. But I'm working that out.
Hating you is a waste of my energy.

MARTIN

I don't hate you, Erica.

ERICA

You always were a compassionate man.

MARTIN

How the hell can you hate someone
you were in love with for seventeen
years?

ERICA

It's very easy.

MARTIN

If you want to make me feel even
guiltier than I do, you're succeeding.

ERICA

Good.

MARTIN

This is ridiculous.

ERICA

Martin. Do you know how many times
we had sex?

MARTIN

(surprised)

No.

ERICA

At least two thousand times. That's
figuring twice a week for seventeen
years.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARTIN

(smiles)

There were weeks when we... when it was four or five times a week.

ERICA

(puts her hands on her breasts)

So this body which was yours for the asking is suddenly abandoned.

The Waitress brings the food.

MARTIN

I don't understand.

ERICA

Did you fall out of love with my body, with my flesh, or did you fall out of love with me? With me? Erica?

MARTIN

... I still love you.

ERICA

(angry)

Bullshit.

MARTIN

But in a different way. I can't explain it. I'm in love with Marcia. I really am. Maybe it's male menopause and all that crap. I don't know. I love her. But I still love you. I always will.

ERICA

I was your hooker, Martin. A high-priced, bright, classy hooker. Upper-west-side-by-way-of-Vassar-hooker.

MARTIN

... You've got a lousy analyst.

ERICA

How long do you think Marcia will last?

MARTIN

Forever, I hope. I'm going to marry her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ERICA

The awesome sanctity of marriage.

MARTIN

(angry)

Look, Erica. If you want to talk,
I'll talk. If you want to argue, I'd
better go.

ERICA

I want to argue.

MARTIN

Then I'm splitting.

ERICA

Goodbye.

Martin gets up. He takes out a twenty dollar bill and puts
it on the table. He pauses, looks at Erica...

ERICA

Do you want change?

MARTIN

You're flipping, Erica.

He exits. Erica picks up her hamburger and takes a large
bite, chewing with gusto...

CUT TO:

INT. ANALYST'S OFFICE - CLOSEUP - ERICA - DAY

ERICA

... Everywhere I go I see couples.
Holding hands, arms around waists,
cheek-to-cheekers... I'm jealous...

TANYA (THE ANALYST)

listening, watching...

ERICA (O.S.)

My bed feels cold... There are so
many things I want to share at the
end of the day... I tell Patti
everything...

ERICA AND TANYA

ERICA

I think you helped her. She's very strong. Very. Martin called her yesterday and he's going to see her ... She's happy... I'm glad... I think about her leaving home... Going to college. It's a couple of years away, but I think about it as if it's going to happen tomorrow...

TANYA

It's not abnormal to think about it.

ERICA

I guess I'm lonely.

TANYA

I was lonely too when I got divorced.

ERICA

I didn't know you were divorced.

TANYA

Now you know. There's nothing wrong with feeling lonely. Or depressed. Or angry. Or anything. They're feelings. Sometimes I feel good, sometimes I feel lousy. But I'm not ashamed of how I feel.

ERICA

I feel guilty about it.

TANYA

You're entitled to your feelings. They're yours. Enjoy them.

ERICA

When were you divorced?

TANYA

Three years ago... Did you ever feel lonely when you were married?

ERICA

Not much. I don't think so.

TANYA

Never???

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ERICA

It was a different kind of loneliness.
It was... This is different. I wasn't
scared then. This scares me.

TANYA

Didn't you ever want to be alone?

ERICA

Yes, but I knew it wasn't forever.

TANYA

You think you're going to be alone
forever?

ERICA

... I haven't had sex in seven weeks.
It's been seven weeks since Martin
left me. I always took sex for
granted.

Erica stops talking. Tanya says nothing...

ERICA

Oh, boy, this isn't fun... Where was
I?

TANYA

Sex.

ERICA

(smiles)

I was hoping you'd forgotten... You
know, I've always thought of myself
as being well adjusted sexually.

TANYA

I don't know what that means.

ERICA

I had a good sex life. I wasn't
embarrassed about sex. I took it
for granted. It was fun. We were
pretty wild, Martin and I...

TANYA

I don't know what that means either.

ERICA

(almost shouts)

It means we fucked and we sucked.
Now do you know what it means?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TANYA

Why are you angry?

ERICA

(angry)

If I knew why I wouldn't be here.
... I'm sorry, Tanya... I guess I'm
thinking about seeing other men and
it's scary and I'm sort of asking you
what to do.

TANYA

I can't tell you what to do.

ERICA

I know.

TANYA

I know what I would do.

ERICA

(afraid)

What?

TANYA

I would go out and get laid.

CUT TO:

EXT. SOHO BAR - NIGHT

As Erica gets out of a taxi. She goes into the bar.

INT. BAR

This is a painter's hangout. Crowded. Very animated. Erica
looks around, then finds an empty spot at the bar.

ERICA

(to the bartender)

A glass of Chablis, please.

Erica looks around... She is nervous... An attractive-looking
MAN steps into the spot next to her. He smiles at her. She
smiles at him. Then the man turns to the bartender.

MAN

Two beers, Tommy.

Erica turns and sees that a woman is waiting for the Man to
get the beers.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She quickly turns away from the woman's glance... The bartender puts Erica's wine on the bar. She sips it... She looks to the other side of the room... She pays for her wine, picks up the glass and walks to the other end of the bar. She sees someone she knows. A WOMAN of about thirty-five, wearing blue jeans, boots and a sweater. The Woman is with a BLACK ARTIST.

ERICA

Hello, Jean.

JEAN

Hi, Erica. It's good to see you.
Erica Benton, Edward Thoreaux.

EDWARD

Hello.

ERICA

(they shake hands)

Hi.

JEAN

Erica works over at the Rowan.

EDWARD

I haven't seen the new show.

ERICA

It's very controversial. Either you hate it or you love it.

JEAN

Edward just got back from a year in Rome. He's a painter.

ERICA

How was Rome?

EDWARD

Either you hate it or you love it.
I loved it.

ERICA

I was there once for three days.
It was very beautiful.

JEAN

I can't imagine hating Rome.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EDWARD

Well, there's a certain amount of posing, pretention. 'La bella figura' they call it. Some people can't take it. Then there are the pinchers... The men go around pinching women. It can be a drag for a woman.

JEAN

Sounds like New York.
(to Erica)
Are you alone?

ERICA

(laughs)
Yeah. Martin and I are getting divorced.

JEAN

(shocked)
I'm surprised.

ERICA

Everybody is. What else is new?

JEAN

I'm sculpting pretty good these days.
And Edward and I are an item.

ERICA

What happened to the Frenchman?

JEAN

I kicked him out. He thought work was a dirty word. Besides, he's a lousy painter.

ERICA

How did you two meet?

EDWARD

(smiles)
Right here. Jean picked me up.

ERICA

When did this happen?

JEAN

Last Saturday.

Suddenly Charlie the painter appears. He's all smiles. He's holding a drink.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHARLIE
What's happening?

JEAN
Hi, Charlie.

ERICA
Hi.

EDWARD
Edward Thoreaux.

CHARLIE
(shakes hands)
Charlie.
(to Erica)
Are you slumming?

ERICA
I wasn't up to now.

CHARLIE
(to Jean)
What does she want from me?

JEAN
There's a party at Tom Whalen's loft.
Why don't you come?

CHARLIE
Tom Whalen? Is he the one who paints
turtles?

JEAN
Yeah.

CHARLIE
I pass.

JEAN
Erica?

ERICA
Thanks, Jean. I don't think so.
(to Edward)
It was nice to meet you.

EDWARD
Arrividella.

Jean and Edward depart...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHARLIE
(scornfully)
Arrividella my ass.

ERICA
Is prejudice another one of your
wonderful traits, Charlie?

CHARLIE
What are you doing here alone?
Where's 'honey?'

ERICA
We're getting divorced.

CHARLIE
(doesn't believe
her)
Sure.

ERICA
It's true.

CHARLIE
What happened?

ERICA
He left me for a schoolteacher. She
was buying a shirt at Bloomingdales
and he fell in love.

CHARLIE
Hey... Should I be sorry?

ERICA
No.

CHARLIE
Wow...

ERICA
Yeah... Wow... Buy me another glass
of wine.

CHARLIE
Be right back.

Charlie goes to the bar. Erica looks at her hands. They
are shaking. She takes a deep breath. She looks around.
No one is looking at her. Charlie comes back with the wine
and gives it to her. She sips it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ERICA

What do you see in my eyes, Charlie?

CHARLIE

Fear, confusion.

ERICA

Is that all?

CHARLIE

I don't know.

ERICA

(tosses the rest of
the wine down)

... Take me to your loft, Charlie.

Charlie is in shock.

CUT TO:

INT. CHARLIE'S LOFT - NIGHT

As they enter. Charlie turns the light on. It's a pretty big loft. It's filled with enormous paintings. And they're good... The kitchen and a bed are all in the same area, as well as a lot of tubes of paint, brushes, etc... Erica looks around. The paintings are all very lyrical. Charlie is strangely nervous. Erica is very tense.

CHARLIE

... You want a cup of coffee or something something?

ERICA

No.

CHARLIE

I have some Chianti somewhere.

ERICA

Charlie...

CHARLIE

What?

ERICA

Let's do it. Now. Before I change my mind.

She starts to take her things off.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHARLIE

I tell you now, Erica. I don't get involved with my women. I'm a short term guy. I don't believe in marriage...

By now, Erica's blouse and skirt are off.

CHARLIE

... I don't fall in love. You can't count on me for anything but sex. I am what I am and I make no bones about it.

ERICA

Charlie. I am very nervous. Your talking is only making me more nervous.

Charlie stops talking. He shrugs and takes his sweater off. He takes his pants off. Erica is about to take her bra off. Charlie stops taking his shoes off and stares at Erica. He wants to see her body and he is beginning to get excited... Erica just can't take her bra off... She goes over to the light switch and turns off the light... The room is illuminated now only by a night light coming from the kitchen area ... Dim figures in the darkness...

CHARLIE

I can't see.

ERICA

That's the idea.

CHARLIE

You act like some kind of virgin.

ERICA

I've only slept with one man in seventeen years.

CHARLIE

I was wrong. I could have sworn you'd had a few affairs... Where the hell are you?

Erica moves in the darkness. She stumbles. Charlie comes to her. They are both nude. He puts his arms around her.

CHARLIE

Hi... Jesus, you have a beautiful body.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

They lie down... Charlie begins to kiss Erica...

CHARLIE
You're shaking.

ERICA
Charlie?

CHARLIE
What?

ERICA
I think I'm lying on a tube of paint.

CHARLIE
I'll lick it off.

As they begin to make love...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LOFT

Total darkness... We HEAR Erica stirring about... she gets up and switches the light on... Charlie is sleeping... Erica gets dressed... her shoes are next to the bed... She puts them on... Charlie hears her and wakes up, smiling...

CHARLIE
That was nice.

ERICA
I like your paintings.

CHARLIE
I like you.

Charlie reaches for Erica and kisses her. She kisses him back, then breaks away.

ERICA
I have to go.

CHARLIE
I'll see you tonight.

ERICA
No you won't.

CHARLIE
Are you mad at me?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ERICA

No.

CHARLIE

Then come back tonight.

ERICA

No.

CHARLIE

Why not?

ERICA

(kidding)

Don't get involved with me, Charlie.
You'll only get hurt. I don't
believe in marriage. I don't fall
in love... I travel a lot...

Charlie begins to laugh.

I'm on the road all the time.

CHARLIE

Your ex old man is an asshole.
I'll tell you that.

ERICA

Good night, Charlie.

Erica smiles and exits.

CUT TO:

EXT. CENTRAL PARK WEST - MORNING

Erica wearing her jogging outfit... She is jogging alone...
She spots some dog shit and leaps over it... As she continues
to run, she sees a figure in the distance, running towards
her... It is Martin... Erica continues to jog... Martin jogs
to her, but she continues on her way... Martin turns and
follows her...

MARTIN

(jogging)

I want to talk to you.

ERICA

(jogging)

Call me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARTIN
(catches up to
her)
This is silly.

But Erica continues to jog... Martin runs in front of her,
blocking her way... Erica stops.

ERICA
What do you want?

MARTIN
(out of breath)
You want to give me a heart attack?

ERICA
What do you think?

MARTIN
I just wanted to tell you that
I had a nice talk with Patti. She's
okay.

ERICA
I know.

MARTIN
How are you?

ERICA
I got laid last night.

MARTIN
... Remember Billy Higgins?

ERICA
No.

MARTIN
Yes, you do. He was with Merrill,
Lynch. Tall, blond guy. About my
age. A tennis player.

ERICA
I remember him.

MARTIN
He had a heart attack last week.
He's dead.

ERICA
I'm sorry.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARTIN

You look good.

ERICA

Martin, please have a linear conversation, will you?

MARTIN

I just want us to be friends. If not for me, for Patti.

ERICA

I don't want to be your friend.

She begins to jog. They jog side by side...

MARTIN AND ERICA

jogging.

MARTIN

What the hell do you want me to do?

ERICA

Leave me alone.

MARTIN

... Billy Higgins was supposed to move to the Los Angeles office. They want me to take his spot.

ERICA

Take it.

MARTIN

I'd be moving to L.A.

ERICA

Good.

MARTIN

If I go, can Patti spend some time with me?

ERICA

It's up to her...

Martin stops jogging. He watches Erica jog away...

ERICA

jogging... very upset...

CUT TO:

INT. ANALYST'S OFFICE - ERICA AND TANYA - DAY

ERICA

... He's out of my life, but he still has this power over me... I still think about him. I want it to be over. What do I mean 'want?' It is over... But the memories are still there... You know...? His smell is still in the apartment. And it's nice... Martin loved English muffins with blackberry jam. I could live without English muffins. But I love blackberry jam... You know what I did yesterday... I threw a new jar of blackberry jam out... I didn't want it around... Now that's crazy ... And a little expensive... It's such a tricky thing... I've only told you the bad parts. But we had mostly good times together... We really had a lot in common... We did. We shared... I think part of the trouble was that I did so many things not as myself, not as Erica, but as part of a team. Martin and Erica. Martin and Erica. And it wasn't his fault, either. I accepted a certain role... It was comfortable. It fit like an old shoe...

TANYA

Martin left you, Erica. You talk like it was your fault.

ERICA

Maybe it was... Maybe if I had been more independent... I don't know...

TANYA

Maybe you would have left him.

ERICA

It's a very subtle thing. What I'm trying to say... How much time do I have?

TANYA

There's plenty of time.

ERICA

I didn't mean in my life.
(she smiles)
I meant in this session.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TANYA

I know what you meant.

ERICA

... I don't want to live with Martin.
I want to understand who I was when
I lived with him...

(pause)

I had sex. Finally. With Charlie
the papaya... He's one of those
really cute pigs.

TANYA

How did it go?

ERICA

He performed and I performed... It
was fine... But I couldn't sleep.
I felt like I was one of Charlie's
girls... And I was... I'm afraid all
my relationships will be like that...
When you're not married that's what
it comes down to.

TANYA

Bullshit.

ERICA

You have a way with words.

TANYA

How about all the senseless, dumb-
dumb marriages where the woman is not
only just some stud's girl, she's
his slave? His slave. She cooks and
she sews and she takes care of the
kids and she jerks him off when he's
depressed. And when things really get
rotten, she gets a job as a waitress...

ERICA

I didn't have that kind of relationship
with Martin.

TANYA

I know you didn't. But something
was wrong. And just being married
didn't make it right. Real compassion
makes it right. Real feeling makes
it right. A marriage certificate
ain't worth beans unless there's the
rest.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ERICA

Where do I find the rest?

TANYA

If I knew I'd write a book about it
and make a lot of money.

CUT TO:

INT. ROWAN GALLERY - DAY

Erica and two men are putting a new show together... The gallery is closed... One of the men is HERB ROWAN, the fiftyish owner of the gallery. The other man is SAUL KAPLAN, the artist... He's about forty. His work is bold, striking ... Large, large canvasses... Abstract expressionism...

SAUL

What do you think, Erica?

ERICA

I think it's too low.

SAUL

I like it low. Herb?

HERB

I'm hungry.

ERICA

I really like it low.

They hear a tapping on the front window. Erica turns and sees an attractive young WOMAN tapping...

ERICA

(calls)

We're closed.

But the Woman keeps tapping.

HERB

Ask her if she likes it high or low.

Erica goes to the door.

DOOR

As she opens it... The Woman is about twenty-five, dressed very casually...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ERICA

We're closed.

WOMAN

I'm Marcia Brenner.

ERICA

I don't... Oh.

MARCIA

I called, but a service picked up.

ERICA

We're working on a new show.

MARCIA

I wanted to talk to you.

ERICA

This is a bad time.

MARCIA

I could meet you later. I'm off today.

ERICA

I thought you were a teacher.

MARCIA

I'm a substitute. I'm off today.

ERICA

... I'll be right back.

We SEE Erica go back to the men and tell them she's taking a short break. Erica comes back to Marcia and goes outside.

EXT. GALLERY

They stand in front of the store. In the b.g., we SEE the two men continue to experiment with the photos...

ERICA

What do you want?

MARCIA

... You're beautiful.

ERICA

When I'm angry.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARCIA

I wanted to talk to you. I'm not a ... I never went out with a married man in my life. This thing with Martin just happened.

ERICA

He told me.

MARCIA

But you don't believe him, do you?

ERICA

What's the difference?

MARCIA

He's guilty as hell. It's killing him.

ERICA

Do you want me to be guilty?

MARCIA

No. Just not hostile.

ERICA

Martin wants to be forgiven and he sent you here?

MARCIA

He doesn't know I'm here. That would make him guiltier.

She laughs.

ERICA

I can't help you.

MARCIA

You'd feel better too.

ERICA

How the hell do you know how I feel?

MARCIA

I'm a woman.

ERICA

You're a kid.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARCIA

I'm twenty-six, Erica. Can I call you Erica?

ERICA

This is absurd.

MARCIA

I saw a French movie once where a man got on an airplane and he saw the stewardess take her high-heeled shoes off and put on her slippers. He fell in love with her and his wife found out and in the end she came into a restaurant and shot him.

ERICA

I saw it. Truffaut.

MARCIA

I thought it was a fantasy when I saw it.

ERICA

I'm not going to shoot Martin.

MARCIA

Let him come over and see you.

ERICA

No.

MARCIA

Please.

ERICA

I told him if you go to California and Patti wants to see him she can. What else do you want?

MARCIA

I guess I want him to stop talking about you. When we were... seeing each other before, we just talked about 'The Problem.' Now that there is no problem, we've got a new problem.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ERICA
(can't help
laughing)
Maybe things will lighten up in
California.

MARCIA
(laughs)
I like you. I wish we could be
friends.

ERICA
That's another movie.

Charlie walks up to Erica.

CHARLIE
Hi.

ERICA
Hi, Charlie... This is Marcia Brenner.

MARCIA
Hello...
(to Erica)
Thanks for talking to me.

Impulsively she kisses Erica and leaves.

CHARLIE
Friend of your daughter's?

ERICA
Of my husband's.

Erica walks into the gallery, shutting the door on Charlie.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ARTIST'S LOFT - DAY

Erica is in bed with the artist we saw earlier at the Rowan Gallery. They have just made love... The walls are filled with huge paintings like the ones we saw in the gallery. The place is much neater than Charlie's. (The artist's name is Saul Kaplan.)

SAUL
Where would you like to go for dinner?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ERICA

I can't Saul. My daughter will be home from school. We're eating at home.

SAUL

How old is she?

ERICA

Sixteen.

SAUL

Call her and tell her to join us.

ERICA

(out of the question)

No.

SAUL

Would it embarrass you?

ERICA

It wouldn't make me feel good.

SAUL

She doesn't have to know I'm your lover.

ERICA

You're not my lover.

SAUL

You know what I mean.

ERICA

I'm not very good at hiding my feelings.

SAUL

What are your feelings?

ERICA

I just slept with a man I barely know. Casual sex is not my bag.

SAUL

Nor is it mine. I don't go to bed with every woman I meet.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ERICA

I'm experimenting, Saul. That sounds pretty cold, I know. But that's the way it is. I want to see how it feels to make love with a man I'm not in love with.

SAUL

How does it feel?

ERICA

Sort of empty.

SAUL

At least you're honest.

ERICA

The sex was very good. You're a very nice man.

SAUL

You have a bizarre way of handing out compliments.

ERICA

It's the best I can do.

Saul leans over and kisses Erica. She returns the kiss. Then they break.

SAUL

(very tenderly)
I'd like to see you again.

ERICA

I have to go.

SAUL

Answer me.

ERICA

I don't know.

SAUL

Why did you flirt with me at the gallery?

ERICA

I think it was mutual.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAUL

Silly games we play. No need for them.

ERICA

You want to know how I really feel? As soon as the sex was over I wanted to leave. It's not your fault. But that's the way I feel and I can't do anything about it.

SAUL

That's pretty hostile.

ERICA

No, it's not. It may be cold, but it's not hostile.

SAUL

(weary)

Why don't you go home? I'm developing a very large headache.

ERICA

My husband used to get headaches when I didn't want to have sex.

SAUL

That poor son-of-a-bitch must have had migraines.

CUT TO:

INT. ERICA'S APT. - NIGHT

As Erica enters. Patti is in the kitchen. RECORD PLAYER is on: JONI MITCHELL.

PATTI

(calling)

Mom?

ERICA

Hi, honey.

KITCHEN

As Erica enters. Patti has prepared dinner. Fish, vegetables, rice...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PATTI
I broiled the fish.

ERICA
(kisses her)
Good.

PATTI
You okay?

ERICA
I'm fine.

PATTI
I got an A in Psych. I think I'll
become an analyst.

ERICA
You're a funny girl.

PATTI
I think I'll major in Psychology and
minor in Welding. That way I'll be sure
to get a job.

ERICA
(helps with the
food)
I met Marcia Brenner today.

PATTI
Daddy's girlfriend?

ERICA
She was very nice.

PATTI
What did she look like?

ERICA
(they sit at the
table)
She looked like you in about ten years.

PATTI
You think he's having an affair with
me through her?

ERICA
(laughs)
You should become an analyst.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PATTI

What did she want?

ERICA

She wants me to see Martin. She wants me to forgive him.

PATTI

That's pretty sick.

ERICA

The fish is good.

PATTI

How the hell can you forgive him?

ERICA

... How's Phil?

PATTI

Oh, that's over. We're not going to see each other anymore.

ERICA

(surprised)

What happened?

PATTI

Nothing really. He's just too serious about me. He's too possessive. I didn't like it.

ERICA

So what are you going to do?

PATTI

I'm going out with a boy named Greg this weekend. We're going ice-skating.

ERICA

Just like that.

PATTI

Are you mad?

ERICA

No. I'm surprised it's so easy.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PATTI

I liked Phil a lot, Mom. But I'm not ready to be anyone's permanent girl. I'm too young.

ERICA

I think I feel the same way.

FADE TO BLACK.

ON SCREEN:

"Erica Falls in Love"

FADE IN:

INT. LOFT ELEVATOR - NIGHT

ROCK MUSIC HEARD... Erica, Jeannette, Elaine and Sue in the elevator (a freight elevator)... As it goes up... they are all animated, laughing with nervous anticipation... the elevator comes to a stop... they open the doors and we SEE a huge loft filled with about seventy-five people. Big party.

INT. LOFT

As the four women step out... Another small group steps in to go down... The crowd is dancing, talking, eating, drinking, smoking grass... MUSIC comes from a RECORD PLAYER... This is Jean's loft... Her work is everywhere: large, stained wooden sculptures... very strong, very earthy... All ages are here, except for children... Edward Thoreaux sees Erica...

EDWARD

Hello, Erica.

ERICA

Edward Thoreaux... these are my friends. Jeannette Lewin, Elaine Liebowitz...

Jean comes up to them...

JEAN

Hi.

ERICA

Hello, Jean.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Jean kisses Erica on the cheek.

JEAN

You look wonderful.

(to the others)

I'm Jean Starret. Erica has told me about your club.

ELAINE

This is a nice change of pace for us.

ERICA

Elaine Liebowitz, Jeannette Lewin...
Sue Miller...

They all shake hands.

EDWARD

What club?

JEAN

Oh. This is my lover, Edward Thoreaux.

EDWARD

We've already been introduced. Tell me about your club.

ELAINE

Do you know anything about consciousness raising?

EDWARD

Not really.

ELAINE

(laughs)

Neither do we.

ERICA

We get together once a month and just talk about things.

EDWARD

That's very American.

SUE

Aren't you American?

EDWARD

I'm from Cleveland, but I try to forget it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ERICA

He's been living in Rome for a year.

JEANNETTE

I lived in Rome when I was seven years old.

EDWARD

Did you like it?

JEANNETTE

All I remember was the ice cream.
It was delicious.

Erica, during the preceding conversation, has spotted Saul Kaplan. She walks over to him.

ERICA AND SAUL

SAUL

I was hoping you'd show up.

ERICA

Hello, Saul.

SAUL

I like Jean's work.

ERICA

So do I... How's your headache?

SAUL

(smiles)
I've had it ever since you left.

ERICA

How's the party?

SAUL

The usual.

They walk towards the sideboard where the food and drink is.

SAUL

Whenever you put about fifty artists into one room, you get a pleasant combination of gossip, paranoia, envy, fear, trembling, hatred, lust and pretense. It's wonderful.

Erica laughs as she pours herself a glass of wine.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ERICA

Tell me some good gossip.

SAUL

Well...

(Looks around the
room)

Do you see the short, wiry fellow
in the corner?

Erica looks around.

HER POV

A short, wiry man of about twenty-eight. He's got his arm
around a woman who is about fifty. They are both very
drunk...

SAUL (O.S.)

The one with his arm around Lady
Macbeth... His name is Conrad Zweiback.

SAUL AND ERICA

SAUL

He's Hungarian. Very intense, very
ambitious. Can't paint for shit.

ERICA

Who's the woman?

SAUL

She is the wife of Henry Gebhart, the
critic.

ERICA

I've never met him.

SAUL

Gebhart is about seventy years old.
He's a spider. Sets traps for young
artists, using his wife as bait.

ERICA

Is Gebhart homosexual?

SAUL

Not at all. That would make sense.
Appears he likes to watch his wife
make love to other men.

ZWEIBACK AND MRS. GEBHART

SAUL (O.S.)

If the other man is pleasing to Lady Macbeth, he becomes the new discovery of Gebhart.

ERICA AND SAUL

ERICA

How do you know all this?

SAUL

I was discovered by Henry Gebhart.

(he laughs)

I'm kidding. But the story is true. You're very beautiful tonight.

ERICA

You look pretty good yourself.

SAUL

Do you want to dance?

ERICA

(laughs)

You're full of surprises.

SAUL

Remember, we really don't know each other.

TANYA

Hello, Erica.

From out of nowhere, Tanya Berkel appears. She is with a very mannish-looking young WOMAN of about twenty-five. They are holding hands. Erica is very surprised to see Tanya... even more shocked at the other Woman...

ERICA

Tanya... What are you doing here?

TANYA

I'm an old friend of Jean Starret's. Erica Benton, this is my friend Sophie Windman.

SOPHIE

Hello.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ERICA
(shakes hands)
Hello... This is Saul Kaplan. Saul,
Tanya Berkel.

SAUL
Hello.

They all shake hands.

TANYA
Jean is a big talent, isn't she?

ERICA
Yeah...

TANYA
See you later. Have fun.

Tanya and Sophie move away.

SAUL
Who was that woman?

ERICA
That was no woman. That was my
analyst.

SAUL
I didn't know you were in analysis.

ERICA
I didn't know she was a lesbian.

SAUL
Is she a good therapist?

ERICA
She's helped me.

SAUL
Then what's the difference?

ERICA
Were you ever in analysis?

SAUL
No. I'm afraid if I stopped being
crazy, I would stop creating.

ERICA
You're not crazy.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAUL

I told you, you don't really know me. Come. We'll dance.

They cross to another area of the loft, passing through the crowd... Just before they reach the area where people are dancing, Erica sees Elaine arm in arm with Charlie. Elaine spots Erica.

ELAINE

(waves)

Hello.

Charlie sees Erica. Charlie and Elaine come over to Erica and Saul. Charlie is very drunk and is smoking a joint.

CHARLIE

Hello, baby.

ELAINE

You know each other?

ERICA

Yes.

ELAINE

Charlie tells me he's a great artist.

ERICA

Elaine, this is Saul.

SAUL

Hello.

CHARLIE

What am I, chopped liver?

ERICA

Saul Kaplan, Charlie.

CHARLIE

The Saul Kaplan? Oh, boy, this is a real honor. I bow at your feet, man.

Charlie gets down on his knees.

CHARLIE

This guy is a real, fucking artist.

SAUL

Thank you. You may rise.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ERICA
You're drunk, Charlie.

CHARLIE
(gets up)
And stoned. What a combination.

ELAINE
Is he dangerous?

CHARLIE
Ask her if I'm good, baby.

ERICA
Shut up, Charlie.

CHARLIE
We really got it on one night.
Dynamite. And then she goes and
shuts the door on me. I mean what
did I do to deserve such a rotten
fate? I balled my ass off and the
lady won't see me again.

Erica tosses her glass of wine in Charlie's face. Charlie
laughs. Several people turn and watch...

SAUL
(very calm over
his anger)
Why don't you go home, Charlie?

CHARLIE
Why don't you fuck off?

SAUL
I'll wipe the floor with you.

CHARLIE
Up yours.

ERICA
Let's leave.

SAUL
(angry)
No. He leaves. We stay.

CHARLIE
Oh, I get it. You're balling her,
too.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Saul suddenly grabs Charlie by the shirt. Saul is very strong, very angry.

SAUL

Mind your dumb fucking manners. You hear me?

Saul shoves Charlie away from him. Charlie is so drunk, he falls down. Edward Thoreaux appears and gets between Charlie and Saul. Sue and Jeannette are there, too, by now.

SUE

(to Erica)

You okay?

Erica nods, but she isn't...

CUT TO:

EXT. VILLAGE STREETS - NIGHT

Saul and Erica walking...

SAUL

There's nothing like an egg cream to calm the nerves.

ERICA

Why do they call ~~this~~ an egg cream? I've never seen them put an egg in it.

SAUL

Jewish logic.

They stop in front of a small candy store, with a newsstand in front of it and an open counter. The OWNER is a Latin.

SAUL

Two egg creams, please.

The Owner prepares the egg creams.

SAUL

I love the way tradition is passed on in this city. To have an egg cream prepared by a Puerto Rican could only happen in New York.

OWNER

I'm Cuban.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAUL

I beg your pardon.

OWNER

That's okay. I got nothing against Puerto Ricans.

ERICA

Do you know why they call them egg creams?

OWNER

I guess because the foamy milk looks like egg white.

SAUL

Bravo.

The Owner serves the egg creams. Saul pays... He lifts his glass and clinks it against Erica's glass.

SAUL

To Egg Creams. Long may they live.

OWNER

... It goes down good with a pretzel.

They laugh.

SAUL

Two pretzels.

OWNER

I don't know. Maybe they used to put an egg in it.

SAUL

I never had one with an egg in it.

OWNER

It would taste pretty lousy.

ERICA

How do you know if you never tried it?

OWNER

You got a point.

ERICA

Put an egg in mine.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OWNER
I ain't got any eggs.

ERICA
(drinks her
egg cream)
Delicious.

The Owner nods and cleans up the counter... Erica and Saul
turn away from the Owner...

SAUL
Tell me about your marriage.

ERICA
Everything was very good for seventeen
years. Then Martin met another woman
and left me.

SAUL
What does he work at?

ERICA
He's a stockbroker.

SAUL
Is he smart?

ERICA
Why do you ask?

SAUL
I'm curious about the kind of man you
lived with.

ERICA
He's smart. He's interesting.

SAUL
Was he interested in art?

ERICA
Not passionate about it. But he
has good judgment, I think.

SAUL
I was married for nine years.

ERICA
When was this?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAUL

We were divorced three years ago.
I have a son who is twelve and a
daughter who is nine.

ERICA

Where are they?

SAUL

Miami Beach. My wife ran off with
a diver.

ERICA

A diver?

SAUL

(laughs)
Yes. A high diver. He goes up on
the high boards and jumps huge
distances.

ERICA

Strange.

SAUL

They're very happy.

ERICA

Were you angry when it happened?

SAUL

Let's walk.
(to the Owner)
Good night.

OWNER

Take it easy.

ERICA AND SAUL

walking...

SAUL

The diver... his name is Bernie. He's
about six-foot three. A monster. So
there was never any question of physical
anger...

She smiles.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAUL

... He's a kid. You know. Very sweet really. Unformed. It was impossible to get angry with him.

ERICA

I meant with your wife.

SAUL

I don't think I was a very good husband. My work is everything to me. It always has been. When it happened I felt kind of relieved.

ERICA

I don't think I believe you.

SAUL

It's true.

ERICA

Don't you miss your children?

SAUL

I love them. Sometimes I miss them. But it's okay. We see each other every summer. I take a place in Vermont.

ERICA

I would miss my daughter.

SAUL

What can I say?

CORNER

They stand there...

ERICA

I don't know...

SAUL

What should we do?

ERICA

Find me a cab.

SAUL

You're going home?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ERICA

I'm tired.

SAUL

I'd like to see you. You know that.
But I won't push it.

ERICA

Okay.

He hails a cab, but the cab passes...

SAUL

I don't believe in karma or any of
that stuff. But when something
sweet comes along in my life, I
treasure it. I try to hold onto it.

He hails another cab. It stops in front of them...

ERICA

Good night.

She gets into the taxi and it drives away...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ANALYST'S OFFICE - DAY

Erica sits down opposite Tanya.

ERICA

Are you a lesbian?

TANYA

You get right to it, don't you?

ERICA

I'm not going to stop seeing you.
I just want to know.

TANYA

Tell you the truth, I'm not sure what
I am... Today, I'm having an affair
with a woman. Three months ago, I
was seeing a man. I don't know about
tomorrow.

ERICA

Then you're bi-sexual.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TANYA

I'm a woman, Erica.

ERICA

The times they are a-changing.

TANYA

How are you?

ERICA

I met someone I like... A man. The man you met at the party.

TANYA

Saul Kaplan.

ERICA

Yes.

TANYA

He's a good artist.

ERICA

I don't know where it'll go... He's nice. I want to see him again. But I don't really want to get involved. Yet I am involved... The thing I'm not interested in is grabbing satisfactions. And I have been. I don't want to go to bed with someone just because I have a physical need. I don't want to wake up in strange beds. I don't want to wake up with people I don't know... I'd rather masturbate... I'm jumping the gun on this relationship with Saul... I see the future... I make it up... I see myself loving a man and the man not loving me in the same way... If Martin did it, why wouldn't another man?

TANYA

Depends on the man. Depends on the woman.

ERICA

But I do feel better about myself. I really do...

TANYA

Good.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ERICA

I'm getting a little tired of talking about myself. Enough is enough. You know?

TANYA

Sure... Why don't you stop coming here?

ERICA

(surprised)

For good?

TANYA

Who knows? See what happens out in the streets. I'm always here. You want to talk, just pick up the phone. Try it for a while.

ERICA

You baffle me.

TANYA

I told you, there are no rules.

ERICA

(laughs)

What about the rest of the hour?

Tanya gets up.

TANYA

No charge.

Tanya smiles. Erica gets up. She embraces Tanya. She is close to tears. They hold each other for a moment. Then Erica leaves.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SALSA NIGHT CLUB - NIGHT

Wild, SALSA MUSIC... Crowded... Erica and Saul dancing... He is not a great dancer, but he really gets into it...

VARIOUS CUTS

as they dance...

SAUL... THEN ERICA... DANCING...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SAUL'S LOFT - SAUL AND ERICA - NIGHT

making love...

ERICA

very passionate... An Erica we've never seen before...

DISSOLVE TO:

LOFT AGAIN - LATER

Erica is making eggs at the stove... Saul is painting... enormous canvas... Abstract expressionist piece... gallon cans of paint... spray equipment...

ERICA

How can you work with someone else around?

SAUL

Habit, I guess. When I was a student in Paris, I shared a small place with two other men. We had to paint together or not paint at all.

ERICA

Do you want hot sauce on your eggs?

SAUL

Please.

ERICA

Grated cheese?

SAUL

Everything.

ERICA

I stopped seeing my analyst. Actually, she stopped seeing me.

SAUL

Good.

ERICA

(finishing the eggs)
I felt panicky when she told me to stop... I felt that I hadn't even begun to tell her all the things I had to say...

SAUL

Tell me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She brings the eggs to Saul and they sit on the floor and eat...

ERICA

I don't think I trust you yet.

SAUL

(smiles)

Then don't tell me.

ERICA

I feel like a kid sometimes. Just starting out. What do I do? What do I want to be? I'm excited. I'm happy. Happier.

SAUL

(eating)

Delicious.

ERICA

I'm not sure of anything. I just want to do things. I'd like to travel.

SAUL

We'll travel.

ERICA

I want to see Greece. I want to see the ruins in Persia. I want to see India.

SAUL

India I could without.

ERICA

Why?

SAUL

I like a nice bathroom.

ERICA

I may go back to school.

SAUL

What's wrong with the gallery?

ERICA

It's okay. But it's very easy. I think I'd like a challenge.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAUL

You could open a restaurant and
make eggs.

ERICA

I'm thinking about commercial art.
I was good at it.

He finishes his eggs. So does she. She starts to get up,
but Saul takes her hands in his... They sit opposite each
other... He kisses her...

Erica kisses Saul...

SAUL

Does it still feel empty?

ERICA

No.

SAUL

Why do you only have one child?

ERICA

Do you want to have a child?

SAUL

No, no.

ERICA

I had two miscarriages after Patti.
Then I stopped wanting another child.
Why do you ask?

SAUL

I want to know everything there is
to know about you.

ERICA

That would take a lot of time.

SAUL

I have a lot of time.

ERICA

(gets up)
I have to go, Saul.

SAUL

Will you ever spend the night with
me?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ERICA

I don't know.

He gets up.

SAUL

Will I ever spend the night with you?

ERICA

What's the difference?

SAUL

There's something very nice about waking up next to someone you like.

ERICA

I know... I'll talk to you tomorrow.

SAUL

Let me take you home.

ERICA

I'll get a cab.

SAUL

I want to meet your daughter.

ERICA

It's a quarter to eleven. She's probably sleeping.

SAUL

Are you ashamed of me?

ERICA

Come to dinner tomorrow night.

SAUL

I don't know your address.

She smiles... She gets a piece of paper and a paint brush and she paints her address on the paper... finishing with a flourish...

SAUL

(reading the paper)
I like your style...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ERICA'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Erica and Patti... Erica is cooking...

PATTI

I have a date with Phil this weekend.

ERICA

I thought that was over.

PATTI

I don't see why we can't be friends.
Just good friends.

ERICA

Maybe you can.

PATTI

I can. I don't know if Phil can.

ERICA

What about Greg?

PATTI

He's cute. But I think he wants to
go to bed with me.

ERICA

How old is he?

PATTI

Eighteen.

ERICA

It's a problem, isn't it?

During all this, they move in and out of the dining room,
setting the table.

PATTI

Yeah. They all want to sleep with
you.

ERICA

Do your girl friends sleep around?

PATTI

Some of them. Louise Riley got an
abortion last week. It cost ninety-
five dollars. She said the doctor
was awful. He kissed her on the
mouth right after the abortion.

ERICA

Poor Louise... Have I ever met her?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PATTI
No.

ERICA
Do her parents know?

PATTI
No.

ERICA
Where did she get the money?

PATTI
We all loaned her money. I loaned
her fifteen dollars.

ERICA
Why didn't the boy pay?

PATTI
She was too embarrassed to ask him.

ERICA
That's stupid.

PATTI
We were all pissed at her.

The DOORBELL RINGS. Erica goes to the door.

DOORWAY

as she opens the door. Saul is there, carrying a bottle of
wine. He comes in and Erica shuts the door.

SAUL
Fancy, schmaney.

ERICA
Marjorie Morningstar lived in this
building.

PATTI
Hi.

ERICA
Saul Kaplan... Patti Benton.

SAUL
How do you do?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PATTI

I've seen one of your paintings at
the Museum of Modern Art.

SAUL

Did you like it?

PATTI

I didn't understand it.

SAUL

(laughs)

I'm going to like you.

ERICA

She never lies.

SAUL

... I like your place.

PATTI

How old are you?

SAUL

Thirty-nine.

PATTI

You don't look it.

SAUL

Ah.

PATTI

You look older.

ERICA

Patti.

PATTI

I wasn't being hostile... How old
do I look?

SAUL

It's very hard for me to read age in
young women... But I already know
you're sixteen.

PATTI

Do I look it?

SAUL

To me, you look wonderful.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Erica opens the wine and she pours some for them.

PATTI

Can I have some?

ERICA

No.

SAUL

Why don't you give her a half glass
and cut it with water.

PATTI

That's what the French do.

ERICA

We're not French.

PATTI

Booze is worse than grass.

ERICA

Stop it, Patti.

PATTI

I smoke grass once in a while.

SAUL

So do I.

ERICA

(to Patti)

You're too damn precocious.

PATTI

No, I'm not. I'm just a normal
sixteen-year-old girl. As a
matter of fact, I'm not even
normal. I'm still a virgin.

ERICA

Shut up, Patti.

SAUL

Sixteen is a difficult age.

ERICA

So is thirty-six... Let's eat.

They go to the dining area... Saul sits... He lights a
cigarette.

KITCHEN

Patti and Erica getting the food.

ERICA
What's bothering you?

PATTI
Nothing.

ERICA
I just told Saul you never lie.

PATTI
I guess I'm nervous. This is the
first time you've brought a man
home.

ERICA
Was that wrong?

PATTI
No. I'm glad.
(smiles)
I can't help being nervous.

They bring the food into the dining room.

DINING ROOM

as they all are seated now... eating...

SAUL
Your mother is a great cook.

PATTI
How can you tell from one dish?

SAUL
She made me eggs the other night.

PATTI
With hot sauce and grated cheese?

SAUL
Yeah.

PATTI
She really likes you then.

ERICA
I don't think I'm having fun.

SAUL
I am.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PATTI

Mom. Relax. I know that you and
Saul are lovers.

Saul begins to laugh.

ERICA

It's not funny, Saul...
(to Patti)
You're being hostile.

PATTI

You've always told me to tell the
truth. Obviously, you invited Saul
here to prepare me.

ERICA

Prepare you for what?

SAUL

I'm the one who asked to come here,
Patti. I wanted to meet you.

PATTI

(suddenly angry)
I have a father.

SAUL

I don't want to be your father.

PATTI

... I'm sorry.

She is very upset. She leaves the room.

ERICA

Life is full of surprises.

SAUL

She'll get over it.

ERICA

You're a threat to her.

SAUL

Go talk to her.

Erica gets up and starts towards Patti's room.

PATTI'S ROOM

The RECORD PLAYER is on full blast.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Patti is sitting on her bed, crying. Erica comes in. She sits down next to Patti.

PATTI

I'm sorry.

ERICA

It's okay.

PATTI

I was mean to you.

ERICA

I'm not marrying Saul, Patti. He's just my friend.

PATTI

You can marry him.

ERICA

I don't want to marry him... No one is asking you to stop loving your father.

PATTI

It's hard.

Patti gets up. She wipes her face.

PATTI

It's... It would be easier if Daddy could see me here sometimes.

ERICA

Sure. I can handle that.

PATTI

Thanks...

Patti and Erica walk out.

DINING ROOM

as they come in... Saul is smoking... Patti shakes hands with him.

PATTI

I behaved like a sixteen year old.

SAUL

(smiles)

What's for dessert?

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CENTRAL PARK WEST - MORNING

Erica jogging... She sees Martin... He is not wearing his jogging outfit... He is obviously waiting for her. She jogs over to the bench he is sitting at...

MARTIN

Good morning.

ERICA

How come you're not jogging?

MARTIN

I have an early appointment. What's up?

ERICA

You can come to the house to see Patti whenever you want.

MARTIN

Good.

ERICA

But call first.

She gets up to go. Martin gets up, too.

MARTIN

I'm not taking that job on the coast.

ERICA

Why not?

MARTIN

The money was no good.

ERICA

Speaking of money, I stopped seeing the analyst.

MARTIN

Are you cured?

ERICA

Also, I'm looking for a job. So the money thing will be easier for you... If I find a job.

MARTIN

We could make it even easier...

ERICA

What do you mean?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARTIN

I broke up with Marcia...

ERICA

I'm surprised.

MARTIN

She's very nice. But she's a kid really. Her friends were all half my age. I felt like everyone's father.

ERICA

She seemed to be a nice woman.

MARTIN

Erica... Take me back. I want to come back.

ERICA

You're crazy.

MARTIN

I still love you.

ERICA

I don't.

MARTIN

I never stopped loving you. That's the truth... I felt old. I felt like I was dying and I tried to... I couldn't help myself with Marcia... Can you understand that?... I found myself doing things and not knowing why... Take me back, Erica.

ERICA

I can't help you, Martin.

Martin takes her in his arms and kisses her... Erica doesn't return the kiss... but she doesn't struggle either... Finally, Martin stops kissing her... He realizes that it is useless...

ERICA

Remember. Call first.

Erica jogs away from Martin... Her figure RECEDING FROM FRAME...

FADE TO BLACK.

ON SCREEN:

"Erica and Saul"

FADE IN:

INT. EMPLOYMENT AGENCY - DAY

This is an East Side Manhattan agency... nicely appointed... Erica is waiting her turn to be interviewed. She has a large art portfolio with her... Seated next to her are several other women. They are all younger than Erica... The WOMAN next to Erica is about twenty-five, very dynamic, well-dressed, attractive...

WOMAN

Last summer I sold kites in Provincetown. I made six thousand dollars in profit.

ERICA

That's fantastic.

WOMAN

So if nothing breaks here, I'll be back in Provincetown. Trouble is, everyone there has already bought a kite. The craze may be over.

ERICA

What kind of job are you looking for?

WOMAN

I have an M.A. in Fine Arts, but that's not worth a subway token. I've had half a dozen things in the past four years. But most of them were really fancy names for secretary. It's deadening.

ERICA

I'm working part time in an art gallery.

WOMAN

That sounds exciting.

ERICA

I need more money. I just got divorced.

WOMAN

Money is tight, very tight.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ERICA

Especially for women.

WOMAN

My boyfriend has been out of work for five months. It's brutal all over.

ERICA

I thought the economy was in an upswing.

WOMAN

Only in the newspapers.

A woman comes over to them. Her name is CLAIR SWEENEY.

CLAIR

Mrs. Benton?

ERICA

Yes.

CLAIR

Come with me, please.

ERICA

(gets up)
Good luck.

WOMAN

You too.

Erica follows Clair to her desk and they sit down. Clair moves the interview along at a brisk pace...

DESK AREA

CLAIR

My name is Clair Sweeney.

(she reads Erica's
application)

You want to get back to commercial art?

ERICA

Yes. I haven't done it since college. But I was pretty good. I have my portfolio.

CLAIR

That won't be easy.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ERICA

I know.

CLAIR

(smiles)

At least you don't want to be a filmmaker.

ERICA

Do you want to see my portfolio?

CLAIR

I wouldn't know if it's good or bad. If I send you out on something, you'll show it... Frankly, I don't have anything like that right now.

ERICA

Do you ever?

CLAIR

It's rare... I'll tell you what I have... I have a hostess at a very nice restaurant.

ERICA

I don't think so.

CLAIR

It's a hundred and seventy-five dollars a week and tips. The tips can come to another seventy-five.

ERICA

What else?

CLAIR

I have a sales job at a boutique. It's a beautiful place in the East Sixties.

ERICA

I don't think it would be interesting.

CLAIR

It's money.

ERICA

(smiles)

Maybe I should drive a cab.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLAIR

You know, you're not just competing with men. You're competing with women. Thousands of women. Young women.

ERICA

I realize that.

CLAIR

... Why don't you try the sales job?

ERICA

Not yet. But thanks anyway.

CLAIR

That's all I have for now that would work for you.

ERICA

Okay...
(she gets up)
Should I call again or what?

CLAIR

Sure. Keep bugging me.

ERICA

... Is this your agency?

CLAIR

I'm a partner. I run the place with my ex-husband. He's a good businessman, but he was a rotten husband.

ERICA

Sounds familiar... Bye...

CUT TO:

INT. ROWAN GALLERY - DAY

Erica and Herb, the owner of the gallery...

HERB

I love you dearly, Erica. But I'm already a charity ward.

ERICA

Come on, Herb. You're making money.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HERB

I barely survive.

ERICA

You can afford a small raise.

HERB

What's small?

ERICA

Two hundred a month.

HERB

(laughs)

Why not two thousand?

ERICA

Herb, I've done a good job for you.
I never thought about money. You
got a free ride.

HERB

I think you've enjoyed the gallery.

ERICA

I have, but I...

HERB

Seventy-five a month.

ERICA

One-fifty.

HERB

A hundred and you work two nights.

ERICA

Deal.

They shake hands.

CUT TO:

EXT. WASHINGTON SQUARE PARK - DAY

Erica and Saul walking... Nice weather...

ERICA

Patti will have to stay home alone
those two nights.

SAUL

She can handle it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ERICA

I worry about her. But, I guess I have to do it.

SAUL

You don't have to...

ERICA

Yes, I do. I want to be independent of Martin.

SAUL

(smiles)

I may not look it, Erica, but I have plenty of money.

ERICA

I don't want your money, Saul.

SAUL

You're very stubborn these days.

ERICA

I'm just getting more realistic about myself.

SAUL

I would take money from you if I needed it and you had it.

ERICA

(jokes)

You're an artist.

They stop at an Italian ices cart which is run by a young long-haired guy and they buy two ices during the following...

SAUL

One lemon and one...

ERICA

Two lemons...

SAUL

What's Patti going to do this summer?

ERICA

She wants to go to summer school.

SAUL

You know what would be very nice?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAUL (CONT'D)

Very nice, indeed? If you could both spend the summer with me in Vermont.

ERICA

I couldn't leave the gallery. I just got a raise.

SAUL

Herb would let you go for the summer.

They get the ices and walk...

ERICA

Maybe for a week or something. But not the whole summer.

SAUL

It's very beautiful... We could have a lot of fun...

ERICA

Your children will be there, won't they?

SAUL

Yes. I have a local woman who does most of the shopping and cooking. It's very informal.

ERICA

I can't, Saul.

SAUL

You keep saying you can't.

ERICA

I don't want to... What would I do? ... Watch you paint? Go swimming? Catch fish?

SAUL

Sounds nice, doesn't it?

ERICA

No... Saul. I'll come up a couple of weekends.

SAUL

Life is very complicated...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ERICA

Saul, I've been on a vacation for seventeen years, only I didn't know it. Now is not the time for another vacation.

SAUL

Don't be a masochist, whatever you do.

ERICA

That's stupid.

SAUL

I know you want to get out on your own and I approve...

ERICA

I don't need your approval.

SAUL

Let me finish... But taking two months off to be with someone you like very much... that's not really out of line.

ERICA

How do you know? How do you know what I need? What I have to do for myself?

SAUL

(wryly)

Maybe we should see a marriage counselor.

ERICA

Saul, you're free to see other women.

SAUL

I don't want other women. I want you... Do you want to see other men?

ERICA

Not today... I don't know about tomorrow...

They sit on a bench.

ERICA

I don't know what's going to happen...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ERICA (CONT'D)

I may move to a smaller apartment...
I may get another job... Am I in love
with you?... I don't think about it
like that... I like you very much...
It's nice... But I want my own space
... My own self? Do you understand?

SAUL

I understand that the more you talk
the way you do, the more I want you.

ERICA

That's not my fault.

SAUL

I'm not one to be alone for too long.
I don't think I could hold out for
a whole summer. Knowing myself,
I'd probably meet someone.

ERICA

You probably will...

SAUL

But I don't want to.

ERICA

Then don't.

SAUL

Craziness...

ERICA

I have to get back to work.

They get up and walk away.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SOHO RESTAURANT - DAY

Same place... Elaine and Erica having lunch.

ELAINE

I'm taking lithium.

ERICA

What does it do?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ELAINE

No more depressions. I used to be manic-depressive. Now I'm just in between.

ERICA

Did Tanya put you on the lithium?

ELAINE

Yeah... It works, too.

ERICA

Good.

ELAINE

But it's very dull... I sure as hell miss my highs... How are you?

ERICA

Okay.

ELAINE

How's Saul?

ERICA

He wants me to spend the summer with him in Vermont.

ELAINE

He's really nice.

ERICA

I'm not going.

ELAINE

You're crazy... Send me... Do you know how rare a man like Saul is?... Do you really know how many jerks there are out there?... He's bright. He's grown-up... Is he a good lover?

ERICA

Very good.

ELAINE

Then what the hell are you looking for?

ERICA

... Erica...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SAUL'S LOFT - DAY

One large bag is packed... Saul is putting some things into a smaller suitcase... Erica is sipping wine...

ERICA

Is that all for the whole summer?

SAUL

I keep some things at the house.

ERICA

I'm going to miss you.

SAUL

Good.

ERICA

I'll definitely be up for the July fourth weekend. I'll take Wednesday off and stay through the following Tuesday.

SAUL

Bring Patti.

ERICA

I probably will. She may even bring her friend Phil.

Saul laughs.

ERICA

What's funny?

SAUL

I was just thinking about combinations... You and me... Patti and Phil... My kids and your daughter... my ex-wife and her high diver and your husband...

ERICA

Ex...

SAUL

It's as American as apple pie...

He finishes packing... He pours himself some wine and raises the glass in a toast...

SAUL

To Erica.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ERICA

To Saul.

They drink...

CUT TO:

EXT. SAUL'S LOFT BUILDING - DAY

Saul loads the two suitcases into a station wagon. Erica stands there. Saul comes around to her...

SAUL

You can still change your mind.

ERICA

See you in about six weeks.

Saul kisses her... She kisses him...

SAUL

You're very stubborn.

ERICA

Drive carefully.

Saul gets into the wagon and drives away... Erica watches the car disappear from view... then she briskly crosses the street...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. GARDEN RESTAURANT - DAY

(FAST WALTZ MUSIC is HEARD)... Erica, Jeannette, Elaine and Sue are laughing... drinking...

SUE

If I break a leg, I'm suing you, Erica.

ERICA

You can do it.

ELAINE

I'm not doing it.

ERICA

Yes, you are.

JEANNETTE

I'll help you, Elaine.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SUE

Help me.

ERICA

(gets up)

No more stalling...

She almost trips... they roar with laughter... Other people there smile at them... watching the four women... Now they all get up, still laughing... We SEE that they are wearing ice-skates... they step out from the table and move cautiously onto the ice-skating rink... This is Rockefeller Center...

RINK

crowded with skaters of all ages... Jeannette skates out first... she is good, very good... she skates back and helps Sue out onto the ice... now Erica and Elaine come out onto the ice... they all begin to skate... at first they are rather clumsy... but soon, with Erica and Jeannette on either side, they begin to skate with some rhythm...

ERICA, JEANNETTE, ELAINE AND SUE

as they skate around the rink...

SUE, ELAINE, JEANNETTE

CAMERA PANNING OVER their faces... TO Erica...

ERICA

On impulse she skates free of the three of them and does a pretty damn good pirouette in center ice...

END CREDITS BEGIN TO ROLL...

Erica joins the other three women... Now they skate arm in arm... around the rink... END CREDITS STILL ROLLING...

CLOSEUP OF ERICA

skating freely... smiling...

CLOSER - ERICA

She may not know where she is going, but she is going somewhere...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Her face FILLS the SCREEN... Moving...

ON SCREEN, OVER Erica's face, APPEAR the WORDS...

"AN UNMARRIED WOMAN"...

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END