

**HOW MAY WE HATE YOU**

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WRITER'S FIRST DRAFT  
1.11.18

**ACT ONE**

**OVER BLACK:**

ELLIE (V.O.)  
I've always loved hotels.

An UPBEAT, HAPPY POP SONG kicks in as we open to:

**EXT. RESORT - VALET AREA - DAY**

A bright and beautiful palm tree lined cul de sac. Valet workers in perfectly pressed uniforms run from car to car. Arriving guests emerge from car doors and are quickly greeted by staff members handing out bottled water, with huge smiles stamped across their faces.

ELLIE (V.O.)  
And not just because of the cute little bottles of shampoo, or the beds that are inexplicably both soft and firm at the same time.

**EXT. POOL - DAY**

A pool server hands chilled facecloths to an attractive couple lounging in sunchairs. They all smile... big.

ELLIE (V.O.)  
I love hotels because everyone's happy to be there. And that's especially true at a five star resort like this.

**INT. SPA - DAY**

Two women in comfy robes eat strawberries from a chocolate-drizzled plate, in a room surrounded by three-to-four hundred candles. They smile at a spa worker. She smiles back.

ELLIE (V.O.)  
One that promises their guests complete wish fulfillment, making sure to exceed expectations on anything you could need or want.

**INT. LOBBY BALCONY - SUNSET**

A couple leans against each other, wine glasses in hand as they take in a stunning sunset.

ELLIE (V.O.)  
So that you can relax, breathe easy, and be completely--

The couple lock eyes... and smile.

ELLIE (V.O.)  
Care-free.

And the HAPPY MUSIC drops out sharply as we **HARD CUT to:**

**INT. GUEST SERVICES DESK - DAY**

A TIGHT SHOT of an older woman's angry red face.

OLDER WOMAN  
(too frustrated)  
I'm here to lodge a formal  
complaint about the lightbulbs in  
my bathroom.

We FLIP to reveal ELLIE (late 20's) standing behind a "Guest Services" sign, taking in this woman's rage and serving back the same plastic smile we saw throughout the opening images.

ELLIE  
I'm so sorry to hear that. Please  
tell me about your unsatisfactory  
lightbulb situation.

OLDER WOMAN  
Okay. But first: you should know I'm  
a Bronze Level Rewards Member. Now,  
it all started when--

And as Ellie nods along, we MUTE this woman and fade into:

ELLIE (V.O.)  
Hi. I'm Ellie. And I get yelled at  
for a living. Remember when I said I  
love hotels because everyone's happy  
to be here? Well, sometimes there are  
exceptions. This nightmare version of  
Mrs. Doubtfire here seems to be one.

OLDER WOMAN  
...So maintenance said they'd replace  
it. End of story, right? Wrong.

ELLIE (V.O.)  
But what about me? I seem happy. I  
mean, just look at my smile. Isn't  
it perfect and convincing?

Ellie is smiling brightly at the woman who's berating her.

ELLIE (V.O.)

It's fake. Muscle memory, earned by years of working in the most dangerous job since old-timey tuberculosis doctors: the customer service industry.

The woman holds out her phone screen towards Ellie and scrolls back and forth between two pictures of lightbulbs.

OLDER WOMAN

See? Now they don't match. This one's a warm white. And this one's a soft white. Warm white. Soft white. Warm white. Soft white.

Ellie tries to stay engaged as we watch her inspect the two identical lightbulb photos.

ELLIE (V.O.)

So how do I deal with this? The key is realizing that these people just want to be heard. So as long as you throw in the occasional, well-placed nod...

Ellie gives a deliberate, single nod as the woman continues.

ELLIE (V.O.)

You can pretty much tune them out. Then you can let your mind wander to a happier place. Personally, I like to name pastas to myself. Carbonara. Fettucini Alfredo. Fettucini Alfredo with chicken nuggets on top. All you really have to do is maintain your company-mandated smile...

Ellie's eyes shift and we catch a glimpse of a placard installed on her side of the desk. It's a little cartoon face that says: "If it doesn't show teeth, it's not a smile!"

ELLIE (V.O.)

And wait for the guest to run out of ways to reword their complaint. Then, when they finally come up for air, you just chime in and say:  
(out loud to the woman, cheery)  
I am going to make this right.  
(back to V.O.)  
And boom. That's all it takes.

The woman smiles for a beat. Then, (still MUTED) quickly resumes her frustrated rant.

ELLIE (V.O.)  
 But Lady Lightbulb here doesn't  
 seem to be giving up. Girl must  
 really love a soft white glow. So,  
 when it seems like maybe someone is  
 complaining because they enjoy it,  
 I have to change up my approach.

Ellie puts her hand on the desk gently to interrupt the woman.

ELLIE  
 Ma'am, I'm so sorry that you, a  
 Bronze Level Rewards Member,  
 (in V.O.)  
 A free status you sign up for online,  
 (back to out loud)  
 Are going through this. On behalf  
 of the entire staff at The Bluffs,  
 I profusely apologize. And I am  
 going to go find someone right away  
 who can fix this. I'll be back as  
 fast as humanly possible.

Ellie turns and slips through a door behind her and into...

**INT. BACK OFFICE - CONTINUOUS**

Ellie closes the door, sits down and takes out her cellphone.

ELLIE (V.O.)  
 They get put in time out.

**INT. GUEST SERVICES DESK - CONTINUOUS**

A quick POP BACK OUT to see the woman standing and waiting.

**INT. BACK OFFICE - CONTINUOUS**

As Ellie sits, therapeutically scrolling through her phone,  
 we hear:

TV HOST VOICE (O.S.)  
 I'm sorry Dulce, that means you'll  
 be going home tonight.

REVEAL that across the room, GABE (31) is laying down,  
 sprawled across several pushed-together chairs, holding his  
 phone above his face as he watches something.

GABE  
 No! Dulce!

As Ellie crosses over to him:

ELLIE (V.O.)

This is Gabe, my best friend and current soulmate. We have almost everything in common. We both love the price of cheap wine, we both order everything with three sides of ranch, and we have a shared mutual affinity for the absolute dregs of reality TV, like this, our favorite: a weight loss competition for dogs.

Ellie sits beside Gabe as they watch a CLIP from "New Leash On Life." It's a black-and-white montage of a chubby dog's time on the show: walking on a treadmill, weighing in, etc.

GABE

I just feel like her journey wasn't over yet.

ELLIE

Are you crying?

GABE

Yes!

ELLIE (V.O.)

Gabe is the most genuine person I know. He never hides how he feels or who he is -- which is how he accidentally came out of the closet on live TV at the age of twelve.

**VFX: FLASHBACK INSERT.** A mid-baseball-game "Meet The Lineup" segment from the 1998 Little League World Series. Kids in uniforms flash by with CHYRONS reading Name, Position, and Hero.

KID #1

Scotty. Third Base. Mark McGwire.

KID #2

Brad. Shortstop. Barry Bonds.

YOUNG GABE

Gabe. Right Field. Diane Keaton.

**BACK TO SCENE.**

Ellie stands and peaks out the door, unhappy to see that Lightbulb Lady is still there.

GABE

Hey, is there a guy in a way too tight green button-down out there?

Ellie looks. We see that there definitely is.

ELLIE

How does he think that shirt fits?!

Gabe joins Ellie by the door. More guests have started lining up at their desk.

ELLIE

Dammit, now the checkout rush is here.

GABE

Hey. Brighten up. This is our job. So we are going to go out there, be professional, and do it. ...And then we'll sneak off to day-drink in my car.

ELLIE

Alright, let's do this.

GABE

See? Just needed the right dangling carrot. Let's go, fellow punching bag!

**INT. GUEST SERVICES DESK - MOMENTS LATER**

Ellie and Gabe face a rapid-fire cavalcade of annoyed guests.

ELLIE (V.O.)

So yeah, maybe I have to deal with people at their absolute worst.

GUEST #1

My friend's room got better towels.

GUEST #2

I'm not using the sofa bed, but it doesn't look very comfortable.

ELLIE (V.O.)

Maybe I'm the human equivalent of a police bomb robot, absorbing explosions until it breaks me and I spend the rest of my days buried in a junkyard.

GUEST #3

The hot tub's too hot.

GUEST #4

I'd like to replace my crown moulding.

GABE

Ma'am, you are not allowed to renovate the guest room.

Gabe turns to see Ellie struggling with a really nasty guest. She looks overwhelmed. Gabe pulls Ellie aside and whispers:

GABE  
Primavera. Baked Ziti. Everything  
that's alla vodka.

She smiles. And as they frantically deal with the customers:

ELLIE (V.O.)  
But at least I've got this guy by  
my side, knowing exactly what I'm  
going through, every step of the--

A disheveled guest stumbles up, interrupting Ellie's V.O.

GUEST #5  
Hey. Someone broke into my room  
and threw up everywhere. So... I  
want a refund.

And as Ellie turns on her plastic smile, we cut to:

**TITLE CARD: HOW MAY WE HATE YOU.**

**INT. STAFF CAFETERIA - LATER**

Gabe shuffles down a row of catering trays. He dollops some scrambled eggs onto a plate, sits at a table across from Ellie and watches her for a beat. We FLIP to see she is ripping off pieces of a bagel and scooping cream cheese right from the tub.

GABE  
Just... treating that cream cheese  
like a dip?

ELLIE  
I need a higher cheese to bagel  
ratio than spreading allows for.  
I had a rough night.

**INT. ELLIE'S APARTMENT - LAST NIGHT - FLASHBACK**

"New Leash On Life" plays on TV in the background. Dogs are exercising like crazy. Ellie's phone rings and she answers it without looking.

ELLIE  
Gabe, where are you? You're gonna  
miss the weigh in!

**INT. CALL CENTER - NIGHT - INTERCUT WITH ELLIE'S APARTMENT**

ROGER, a call center worker in a headset, sits in a cubicle.

ROGER

Hello this is Roger calling from American Dream Student Loans, where you're not just borrowing money, you're borrowing dreams. And I'm calling because I believe I noticed a discrepancy on your account. Is this the Ellie Bennett who attended the Buffalo School of Dental Medicine for... one semester?

ELLIE

Yes, this is she.

ROGER

Okay, so then this is not the Ellie Bennett who attended the Northeastern School of Architecture for one semester? Because your account shows--

ELLIE

No, that is also she. I'm... she. They're both me. Yes?

ROGER

Oh I see. But you're not the Ellie--

ELLIE

Who took an extension program in Urban Planning. Briefly, yes. I kinda started and dropped out of a few schools. Can I help you?

ROGER

(suddenly sad)

Oh, boy. I was so excited to call and tell you there had been a clerical mistake and you've been paying for multiple loans in error -- but you haven't. In fact, I show your payments are actually set to increase. I'm sorry for the call. Oh, and I always end my calls by saying good luck, but Ellie, I want you to know that this time, looking at your account, I truly mean it. Good luck.

ELLIE

Okay, thank you. Hey, Roger, while I have you: do I qualify for any of those loan forgiveness programs?

ROGER

No.

ELLIE

Great.

Ellie hangs up. She stares off in frustration. After a beat:

TV TRAINER VOICE (O.S.)

Get back on that stairmaster, Dulce!

**INT. STAFF CAFETERIA - BACK TO SCENE**

ELLIE

It's fine, it's not worth talking about. I just have to find ways to cut corners. I'll find a cheaper apartment, steal more work bagels...

She drops a bagel into a backpack beside her and zips it shut.

ELLIE

Wait, why didn't you come over last night? I had to watch six hours of TV alone.

GABE

Oh, well I actually have some pretty exciting news. So, last night I was taking one of my Adele baths--

ELLIE

You say that like I know what that is.

GABE

It's exactly what it sounds like. Anyway, I'm sitting there, and it just hits me.

(with meaning)

I know who I want to try and fall in love with.

ELLIE

...Gabe, that has to be the least healthy way possible to say you have a crush.

(then in V.O.)

Gabe is a hopeless romantic. While most of his young gay peers are liking pics like this on Instagram...

**INSERT:** A picture of a jacked guy in a tank top flexing. The like counter ticks up at an insane pace.

ELLIE (V.O.)

Gabe is liking this one.

**INSERT:** A pic of two gay dads and their kids at Disneyland. A comment appears, from Gabe, reading "CUTE CUTE CUTE CUTE!"

ELLIE

Well, who's the lucky guy?

GABE

You know that guy from trivia night who sometimes wears a navy sweatshirt? I wanna say his name is... ..

ELLIE

You don't know his name, you don't have to guess.

GABE

I don't know it yet. But with my winglady on the case, we can find that out together at Thursday trivia.

ELLIE

Sure, I'm happy to help! But I would like to reconsider our team name.

GABE

It's Trivia Newton John, it's not negotiable.

Just then, DANA (another staff member who looks to be in her 40's) crosses by them carrying her tray towards the trash.

DANA

Hey guys. Staff meeting in five.

Dana busses her tray, and places her dirty plate on top of a pile of others. The pile starts to teeter slightly--

DANA

Oh, no...

Then the pile crashes onto her chest. Dana uses her full torso to awkwardly try and keep the dirty plates from falling to the ground. A few tumble down and shatter at her feet. And as she finally steadies the pile, we see her shirt is now covered in everything from runny egg yolk to half eaten pancakes.

DANA

...I'm okay.

ELLIE (V.O.)

That's Dana. And she may look like your mom's slightly older friend who works at a Michael's craft store, but she's actually younger than me.

(MORE)

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

She's 27. But life's been hard on her. You see, everything that could have gone wrong to a person, has happened to Dana.

**INT. LOBBY - DAY - FLASHBACK**

The resort staff are crowded around a TV at the lobby bar. A News report plays, with the CHYRON "Kidnapping in Costa Mesa." The staff watch, stoically. Then, amid the silence...

DANA

You know, I was kidnapped once.

**INT. STAFF CAFETERIA - BACK TO SCENE**

Ellie and Gabe cross over to help clean Dana up.

DANA

Thanks, guys. And I hate to ask, but could one of you drop me off at the vet after work? My car got stolen again last night, and I need to pick up Snowball after her chemo.

As Ellie and Gabe nod sympathetically we cut to:

**INT. BREAK ROOM - LATER**

Ellie, Gabe and Dana enter a staff meeting already in-progress and head for seats in the back. The room is very dimly lit.

DANA

Guide me, please. I can't see in the dark well since my botched Lasik.

They sit. Ellie turns her attention to the front of the room.

ELLIE

Oh, you've gotta be kidding me.

A slideshow plays on a screen, set to Green Day's "Time Of Your Life". It's full of photos of a much older male coworker. And in each picture the same woman is posing directly beside him with a gigantic grin on her face. We see them together at a holiday party; her cutting him a piece of birthday cake; him looking at her as if to say "please leave me alone" while she still smiles big.

And the lights turn up as this woman from the photos, BELINDA (mid 30's) stands and claps excitedly at the presentation she put together herself. We now see an elaborate banner overhead reads: "Happy Retirement, Franklin!"

BELINDA

What a lovely tribute! Now, I wasn't planning on saying anything but...

Belinda takes out laminated notecards from her jacket pocket.

BELINDA

Franklin... For the last four years...

And as Belinda continues, we angle back on Ellie and Gabe.

GABE

(leaning into Ellie's ear)  
Ten bucks says she fake cries.

ELLIE

Too late.

REVEAL: Belinda is already wiping away phantom tears.

BELINDA

Uhp, there I go! Darn it! I promised I wouldn't do this!

ELLIE

(sotto, to Gabe)  
Ich.

GABE

(calling out, fake)  
Aw, be strong Belinda!

Ellie stifles a chuckle. And as Belinda's speech continues faintly in the background:

ELLIE

Well... She finally did it. Her go-getter attitude finally wore Franklin down enough to push him out the door.

GABE

God he looks broken.

Franklin is staring off emptily while Belinda is toasting him.

ELLIE

I can't believe she's gonna be the new manager. With this crossed off her list, I wonder what's gonna be the new focus on her vision board.

GABE

Hmm. Taking the MCAT's for fun?  
Giving more judgmental side-eye?  
Ooo, founding and winning an Adult  
National Spelling Bee?

Dana leans over, whispering:

DANA

I always misspell mesothelioma.

And as Ellie and Gabe process that, they turn back to Belinda.

BELINDA

So... To quote the same words that you once said to me: thank you for being the best.

Franklin stands and shudders through a hug from Belinda while Dana and a few other staff members give tepid applause.

FRANKLIN

...I don't remember saying that.

BELINDA

You did.

Franklin grabs a nearby box of his belongings and heads out the door towards freedom. Belinda watches him go, and once he's out of sight, her tone quickly turns dark and stern.

BELINDA

And now for a morning briefing. Today we say goodbye to Franklin, but we also say hello to a new maintenance technician: Derek.

Derek stands to wave, but his elbow accidentally knocks a corkboard off the wall.

DEREK

Whoops! No worries, I can fix that!

Derek grabs his hammer and tries to nail the board back in -- but the nail ricochets off the wall, and grazes Dana's arm, leaving a faint scratch.

DANA

Oh, it's okay. I'm all scraped up from that bike messenger plowing me down anyway.

Belinda glares at Derek for his mistake with a terrifying smile, the kind you'd see on a Real Housewives show. Ellie notices.

ELLIE

Belinda will probably forgive this guy for that first impression, right?

GABE

Oh, yea, Belinda's super forgiving. She's practically Chinese Parliament.

Gabe notices that Ellie is covertly looking at her phone.

GABE  
Hey, what's that?

ELLIE  
Oh, just the saddest apartment listing ever. It's beyond depressing. If I wanna save money, this is the best place I can find in my new price range.

She angles the screen towards Gabe, who reads:

GABE  
"Frequent running water?" Yikes. Well, at least you have a welcoming and rewarding place of work?

BELINDA (O.S.)  
Phone.

Ellie looks up to see that Belinda is staring daggers at her. She pockets her phone. Belinda turns on a dime again, smiling.

BELINDA  
And with that, let's have fun today!  
(180° back to stern)  
But not a lot of it.

The staff get up and shuffle towards the doors.

BELINDA  
Ellie. Hang back.

Gabe looks to Ellie, concerned. He leans in before he exits:

GABE  
You'll be fine. But if I don't see or hear from you in an hour, I'll call the police.

Belinda and Ellie are left alone.

BELINDA  
Ellie, I know you and I don't really see eye to eye on the whole hospitality industry. Our role here is to be selfless. And I feel sometimes you can be a little...

ELLIE  
Are you waiting for me to guess my own insult?

BELINDA

Selfish. Look, I know this is just "some job" to you, where you get to spend time with your best friend. And I totally get that. I have a best friend, too. Her name is--

(beat)

Nicole. You've probably heard me mention her. Anyway, what I'm saying is: I know Franklin usually looked the other way when you slacked off. ...Just know that I won't.

And as Belinda crosses off, high on her power trip, we cut to:

**EXT. HOTEL GROUNDS - LATER**

Ellie and Gabe walk through manicured hedges, getting some air.

ELLIE

She hates me, Gabe. I can't do this. I can't work for her!

GABE

Hey, let's not assume the worst. Maybe this promotion will lead to a change of heart and she'll learn to rule with compassion.

(beat)

I'm kidding, she's like Pol Pot in a neckerchief. But we'll get through this. Together.

ELLIE

...Well it's not like I can quit anyway. I'm \$93,000 in debt, with no marketable skills and my most recent browser search is "age cutoff for selling your eggs."

GABE

Yeah you're not doing that.

Just then, SPENCER (a way too hot pool waiter) and WHITNEY (another staff member in her early 30's) approach them.

SPENCER

Heads up. Whitney has it on good majority there's a secret shopper.

ELLIE (V.O.)

That's Spencer. He has 36 abs; 95,000 Insta-followers and a 24 word vocabulary. He means on good authority.

WHITNEY

A valet saw one of their report cards sticking out of a briefcase today. A valet who knows not to mislead me.

ELLIE (V.O.)

And that's Whitney, head of the resort's spa and relaxation center. She's also the intense daughter of a SEAL team member and claims she can break your thumb with only a click pen. She's been banned from a lot of laser tag arenas for tackling.

ELLIE

Man, today sucks. First that type-A gargoyle takes over, and now I have to be on my best behavior because someone's secretly judging me?

SPENCER

I like when we have secret shoppers. I just flirt a little more than normal and I usually get the bonus.

ELLIE

Bonus? What bonus?

SPENCER

If you get mentioned positively enough in a secret shopper's review, accounting sends you like two grand. It's how I bought that Jetski I lost.

ELLIE

Gabe, this is exactly what I need! With two grand I could stay afloat for a few months and not have to move into some slum! No slum!

GABE

No slum! All we have to do is figure out who the shopper is and charm the crap out of them!

(then realizing)

...Oh my god.

With dawning horror:

ELLIE

We're gonna have to be nice to a guest.

GABE

We're gonna have to be nice to a guest.

**END OF ACT ONE**

ACT TWO**INT. GUEST SERVICES DESK - LATER**

Ellie and Gabe work at their computers, a few feet apart.

ELLIE (V.O.)

One of the downsides to having your desk out in the open is the need to constantly look busy. Thankfully Gabe and I have gotten really good at finding creative work-arounds.

Ellie picks up her office phone and presses a button. Gabe's phone rings. He answers, brightly:

GABE

Guest Services, how can you ruin my day?

ELLIE

Okay, so I'm looking through the guests that checked in today, but it's not like it's gonna say "I'm a secret shopper" in the notes section.

GABE

Hmm. Well, I haven't found anything either, but open up the guest profile for Ed Woodwick. Very funny photo ID.

Ellie clicks Woodwick and a man's really bad ID photo pops up.

ELLIE

"Yes, DMV employee. I choose the one where it looks like I'm mid-fart."

GABE

Okay, so maybe we should look at all the guests who requested upgrades? That's only... 104 people. You wanna start with A or Z? Ellie? ...Ellie?

We see Ellie is zoned out with a content smile on her face. She's staring at the cute lobby bartender MAX, who from her POV is backlit by the sun as he pours wine and laughs with guests.

ELLIE (V.O.)

That's Max. Max is smart... and funny... And he has an adorable dog named Snacks and they are completely inseparable. Just Max and Snacks, going on hikes together... taking camping trips in his Jeep Wrangler.

(MORE)

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

Actually, I'm making all of this up. Max is new here and I haven't talked to him yet, but daaaaaamn he's cute.

GABE

Ellie!

Ellie snaps back into focus.

GABE

Dude, get it together, your mouth has been hanging open for a full ten seconds. Also: Winter is coming.

Panicked, Ellie looks up to see Belinda is walking right at them. She and Gabe quickly hang up their fake phone calls.

BELINDA

Ooo, look what just arrived! Now it really feels official!

The cryptic chanting of O FORTUNA swells as Belinda, in slow motion, opens a box and takes out General Manager business cards with her name on them. Ellie and Gabe cringe as she lays them into the business card holder on the desk. The music cuts out.

BELINDA

Oh, and one more thing. I'd like you both to start wearing these smart watches. They'll buzz whenever a guest hits... your button.

Belinda places a red button in front of each of their workstations.

BELINDA

...Or whenever I need to find you.

They sadly put on their watches. Belinda walks off, pleased.

GABE

Did she just--

ELLIE

Put trackers on us? Yea, I don't want to talk about it. Look, Gabe, I have no idea how to find this secret shopper. I think we may need help from someone with... skills.

GABE

Oh, you mean a maniac like Whitney?

**HARD CUT TO:**

## INT. LOBBY - LATER

Gabe and Ellie watch as Whitney gives a rapid-fire, Sherlock-style, militaristic re-con reading of the guests in the lobby.

WHITNEY

...And it's not the guy by the ficus. Secret shoppers tend to live nearby and there's a keychain hanging out of his pocket that looks like a New York Islanders logo. Sure, most sports teams have fans everywhere, but we're talking about the Islanders. That guy's from Islip. And Mr. Dweeb at the bar isn't your mark either. Look at the visible sliver of his socks. Music note pattern. And he's writing on a napkin. That's a straight up aspiring musician right there, which only means one thing: he's real poor. He's not a guest. He came here to "write" because of the free snacks. That's why he's about to finish that bowl of almonds and ask for more.

The guy immediately finishes the almonds and signals a waiter.

ELLIE

That. Was.

GABE

--Terrifying. You were about to say terrifying, right?

ELLIE

I was.

WHITNEY

Then thank you both. You should see what I can do with hair samples.

Ellie notices Dana is beside them, looking under a couch.

ELLIE

What's wrong, Dana. Did you lose your blood thinners again?

(then in V.O.)

Reminder: Dana graduated high school eight years ago.

DANA

No, some kid from childcare lost a stuffed hippo toy and his dad is freaking out. I've looked all over.

ELLIE

Sorry... I'd help but I'm kinda busy.

DANA

It's okay, I could use some alone time to chill. I took my blood pressure during lunch and it did not go well.

GABE

Too high?

DANA

No, my arm got caught in the machine at CVS and they had to call the fire department to cut me out.

As Dana crosses off, Gabe turns back to Ellie.

GABE

Oh, so I thought of a few meet-cute options for Trivia Guy that I wanted to run by you. One: I walk by him and pretend to choke on an olive. Heimlich, dating, marriage. Two:--

ELLIE

Could we maybe put this Trivia Guy stuff on hold for a bit? Just until we figure this out? We have time.

GABE

Time is not on my side. I'm 31. In gay age that's like 67. I'm close to dating retirement here, just waiting for my Gay.A.R.P. card to arrive.

ELLIE

Gabe, don't spin out on me, okay? We'll get to your thing. I promise.

Whitney does an army-style whistle and points at a guest.

WHITNEY

There. By the elevators. Right age, expensive jacket, has a brown briefcase like the one the valet saw. And he has a resort branded pen sticking out of his pocket. But not this year's pen. Last year's. He's a regular... That's your guy.

ELLIE

...Well hello there, secret shopper. Looks like your little secret is out.

Ellie smiles watching him. Beside the guy, Maintenance Derek is on a ladder fixing a sconce... which he drops and shatters.

GABE

Yikes. Well, on the bright side when Belinda murders this guy, she'll probably go to jail and won't be our boss anymore?

**INT. BELINDA'S OFFICE - LATER**

Belinda sits at her hyper-organized desk. The wall behind her is covered with individually labeled, custom cabinets. She's like the evil spokeslady for The Container Store. As she stares blankly, we FLIP to see Derek, seated across from her, smiling.

BELINDA

Derek. I know this is your first day, but this isn't working out.

DEREK

(still chipper)  
Oh, I agree. I am bad at this!

BELINDA

Well, great. That makes this much easier. Okay, let's get you fired.

DEREK

First there's something you need to know: I'm not who I said I am.

Derek smiles cheekily, then takes off his "Maintenance" hat.

BELINDA

...Huh?

DEREK

My name is Gordon Caffrey, I work for corporate, and I was Undercover Bossing myself! Surprise!

BELINDA

Wait. You Undercover Bossed... yourself? Why?

GORDON

Because it seemed fun! Although I definitely hurt myself a few times. Electrical work is real tricky! Also, I thought I could get some new innovative ideas from staff members like they do on the show, and bring them back to my mom to impress her.

As he says "my mom", Gordon points to a picture tacked onto Belinda's meticulous corkboard. In it, Belinda smiles, posing with an angry woman who seems to be yelling at someone out of frame. It's a very sad picture for Belinda to have on display.

BELINDA

(her fangirl showing)

Your mom is Constance Tillman-Reed?!  
But... you have different last names.

GORDON

Yea, she asked me to legally change mine so that I didn't reflect on her professionally. She thinks of everything. Anyway, I guess I biffed it here, but hopefully I'll pull it off at the next property where I try it. So don't tell anyone you saw me!

Gordon stands to leave. Belinda looks back at his mom's pic.

BELINDA

...Wait. Let me show you around. Maybe you'll find a staff member here with some "new innovative ideas" to report back to your mother about.

GORDON

Okay, sure! But let me run and check on something real fast. I'm like 30% sure I left the water running in the bathroom a while ago.

**EXT. POOL BAR - LATER**

Ellie and Gabe covertly watch the secret shopper while he tans.

GABE

Look at us spying on people. It's like that Halloween we were Rizzoli and Isles and spent two full parties explaining who Rizzoli and Isles are. Hey, do we watch too much TV?

They notice Dana, looking under used towels near the kiddy pool.

ELLIE

I guess Dana still hasn't found that hippo toy.

Just then, Dana's phone rings. She takes it out of her pocket, but immediately bobbles it and drops it into the pool. She sighs. Ellie and Gabe turn back to the secret shopper.

ELLIE

Okay, here's what we know. This guy is staying here alone, and he doesn't have a wedding ring. So, maybe I'll set him up with a personal waitress for the day. A hot one. A little eye candy compliments of 'ole Ellie.

GABE

...Did you feel good saying that?

ELLIE

I did not, but I very much want to keep my apartment so I'm willing to do some pretty questionable things to get this money. Anyway, which of our more buxom, floozy coworkers do you think I should send his way? Brandy? Candy? Mandy?

GABE

Uh, none of the above. Ellie. His sandals have more than two straps.

Ellie looks. We punch in on his sandals and see it's true.

ELLIE

Ohhhhhhhh.

She turns towards Spencer who's at the bar, picking up drinks.

ELLIE

Hey Spence? I need your help and I need you to take your shirt off.

SPENCER

Okay.

JUMP CUT. Ellie stands in front of the secret shopper (MISTER STRICKLAND) with the shirtless and ripped Spencer at her side.

ELLIE

Mr. Strickland! Hi, I'm Ellie, a Guest Services Specialist dedicated to making your stay with us perfect. And this afternoon I've arranged for Spencer here to be your own personal server. Again, my name is Ellie. And please let me know if you need or want anything. My name is Ellie.

STRICKLAND

Thank you, Ellie.

Ellie crosses back over to Gabe.

ELLIE

Okay, step one's complete. He knows my name. Dude, we're doing this!

GABE

Great, because this charming little cattle prod bracelet has gone off twice since we've been out here, so I should probably go see who pushed it.

ELLIE

No, we're just getting started! The front deskers will help whoever pushed it. Gabe, c'mon I need you.  
(then, tempting him)  
...My next idea involves Tina Turner.

Gabe is unphased. It seems like Ellie's temptation didn't--

GABE

Okay, what is it?

**INT. LOBBY BAR - LATER**

Belinda and Gordon walk through the lobby towards the bar.

GORDON

...So then my mom transferred me to corporate accounting, but that wasn't the right fit either. I felt so stifled there. I'm a creative. I can't work on Excel all day.

BELINDA

Hmm. I find Excel to be a fun tool for both business and personal life.  
(then, selling)  
Anyway, this is our bar, and as you see, I've started a small library where guests can borrow a book while they drink. And it's been quite a success. Isn't that right, Max?

Belinda flares her eyes at Max intensely: "Say yes."

MAX

Oh, yeah. Big hit. People love it. It's just... it's a good thing.

GORDON

And what about you, Max? Do you have any ideas for improving the resort?

MAX

No, I'm pretty new here, so I haven't come across any problems yet.

Belinda coughs intentionally. Max clocks her intent and adds:

MAX

Plus, place is already run so great.

Gordon turns to Belinda.

GORDON

Bless you. Most people only say bless you when people sneeze, but I think we should say it when people cough, too. That's an idea of mine.

Gordon walks off to look around the room. Once he's gone:

MAX

Is he a friend of yours?

BELINDA

Definitely not. He's a legit idiot from corporate, but I need to impress him because his mom is sort of my idol: Constance Tillman-Reed.

MAX

Isn't that the lady who fired the guy painting her portrait because he was taking too long?

We see a slightly unfinished portrait over the lobby fireplace.

BELINDA

Yea, she's the best. So strong. So feared... It's insane her genes ended up in that walking wet sponge.

We see Gordon is now touching the drapes, intrigued.

BELINDA

But if I can get him to tell his mom some of my ideas, it'll really put me on her radar. Although he does not make it easy to hold my tongue around him.

GORDON

(calling out)

Hey Max, you got any glass cleaner? I was by the windows for two minutes and now they're like handprint city.

**INT. RESORT RESTAURANT - LATER**

Strickland sits behind a finished lunch plate. It's quiet. Then, in one swift movement, a waiter clears the plate as a second waiter places down an over-the-top dessert covered in lit, colorful sparklers. And in the same moment Gabe jogs by his table, dropping off a portable speaker that blasts Tina Turner's "Simply The Best." It's a big spectacle. Strickland looks around, with a huge smile, then takes a picture of the dessert with his phone. And as he does that we see, written on the plate in chocolate drizzle: "Compliments Of Ellie."

**INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS**

Ellie and Gabe walk away from the restaurant, the dessert still sparkling in the background behind them.

GABE

That was amazing. Also, I really need to exercise more. I jogged by that table for like two seconds and now I can't feel any of my limbs.

Ellie takes out her phone and starts texting as they walk.

GABE

Oh, also, can we talk about what I should wear to trivia night now, just in case the thing I look best in is dirty and I need to do laundry. Do you know that black polo I have with those little fake muscle pads sewn into it?

ELLIE

Sorry, what? I'm texting a valet to get them to detail Strickland's car.

GABE

It's okay, nevermind. I think I'm gonna head back to the desk for a bit. I'm so behind on e-mails.

ELLIE

Okay, but could you help me with one last thing first?

(off Gabe's look)

Gabe, please. This is it. And then we'll sit down and get our trivia night planning on, I promise.

**INT. GUEST FLOOR HALLWAY - LATER**

Ellie and Gabe watch as Strickland exits his room and turns a corner. Then they run to his door, put in a key and go inside.

**INT. STRICKLAND'S GUEST ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Ellie zips opens a backpack and dumps out a bunch of white hand towels onto the neatly made bed.

ELLIE

I checked our Instagram page to see what guests post about the most, and apparently they love those towel sculptures that housekeeping leaves.

GABE

Oh, cool, that seems fair. I've literally had to shave a guy's neck and didn't even get a thank you but I'm glad people appreciate a towel folded into the shape of a swan.

ELLIE

I wanna make a really impressive one.

GABE

And you think we can do that?

ELLIE

Yea, how hard can it be? Even creepy Mildred from housekeeping can do it.

CHYRON: 45 MINUTES LATER. They stand in front of the saddest towel sculpture ever. We can't even tell what it is. Ellie checks the time, then walks to the room phone and picks it up.

ELLIE

(beat, then so cheery)  
Hi Mildred!

TIME JUMP. In a quick MONTAGE, Ellie and Gabe fold towels into shapes with an older housekeeper. They're laughing and they're having fun. Then, they show Mildred out the door. They turn back and take in their legit towel sculpture masterpiece: a huge ornate sandcastle surrounded by a river full of swans.

GABE

I seriously feel like Banksy.

...And just then, we hear the BLIP of a key card reader. Ellie and Gabe look at each other in panic, then frantically scramble towards the closet. They squeeze inside and shut the door.

**INT. GUEST SERVICES DESK - LATER**

Belinda walks Gordon by Ellie and Gabe's desk - which is empty. Her tone with Gordon is now noticeably more overt, less subtle.

BELINDA

Okay, well here's an idea you should definitely tell your mother about.

GORDON

In-house frozen yogurt bar.

BELINDA

No. Please don't guess. You see, sometimes our associates are off helping other customers. So if their desk is empty and a guest requires assistance, all they have to do is press this button, and it notifies the associate on a company-supplied smartwatch.

GORDON

Hmm. That is interesting...

Belinda lights up. Then steps towards Ellie's call button.

**INT. CLOSET - MOMENTS LATER**

Gabe and Ellie hold their breath as they listen to Strickland moving around the room. They speak in freaked out whispers.

GABE

What exactly is our plan here?!

ELLIE

I don't know! Wait until he falls asleep? Or poops? I don't know!

Just then, Ellie's watch buzzes. Buzz. Buzz. She frantically tries to stop it but can't! And just as she finally does... the closet door pulls open, revealing a terrified Mr. Strickland.

STRICKLAND

Ahhhh!!!

In sheer panic, Ellie forces a gigantic smile.

ELLIE

Hello! It's me, Ellie! I trust your day is going well?

**END OF ACT TWO**

ACT THREE**INT. BELINDA'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER**

Belinda sits at her desk, glaring like she did earlier at "Derek." This time we FLIP to see it's at Ellie and Gabe.

BELINDA

You were in his closet?! What were you thinking?!

GABE

It's actually a funny story.  
(then, off Belinda's scowl)  
Right, I forgot, you hate those.

ELLIE

I'm sorry. We were just trying to do something special and... we panicked.

BELINDA

Franklin may have let you do whatever you want -- goof off, stroll in late, call in sick for the entirety of the Winter Olympics.

ELLIE

We were sick!

GABE

'Cuz it was the Winter Olympics.

ELLIE

...Okay, we were definitely not on the same page there.

GORDON (O.S.)

I'd love to bobsled.

We pan to REVEAL Gordon is also there.

GORDON

There should be bobsledding places the way there's go-kart places.

(then)

Sorry, just observing for corporate research, pretend I'm not here.

Belinda breaths deep, swallowing her mounting frustration, then turns back to Ellie and Gabe.

BELINDA

You two really screwed up here. Big time. That guy was a secret shopper.

Ellie doesn't look surprised to hear this. Belinda clocks it.

BELINDA

Oh... I see. You already knew that. That's why you cared about impressing him. For your own selfish reasons. Typical.

(turns to Gabe)

But you. You're even worse. You just ditched your work all day to help her? I had guests calling me down to your desk to tell me "Gabe's button must be broken."

GABE

I guess it's possible it is broken.

Belinda presses a button. Gabe's watch buzzes so loud.

GABE

Yea, I feel it. It's faint, but I feel it.

Gordon leans in again.

GORDON

You know... That button thing might not be the best system. Since his button is closer to the front entrance than hers, it's gonna get pressed a whole lot more. Like how the first stall in a bathroom is always the dirtiest.

BELINDA

(snapping)

Really?! You're criticizing my ideas? The genius behind the God Bless you for coughs?! The guy who's mom has handed him ten different cushy corporate jobs and yet he's still never accomplished a single thing?!

(realizing she exploded)

I'm sorry... I just...

Gordon tries to smile through it, but we see he's embarrassed.

GORDON

No. It's okay. You just call it like you see it, and... you gotta respect that! I'll just... I'm gonna...

Gordon exits quietly. Frustrated by her accidental outburst, Belinda turns back to Ellie and Gabe, now madder than before.

BELINDA

You two have always been a problem together. Well now I can finally do something about it. I'm splitting you up.

(dropping the hammer)

I'm transferring you to night shift.

ELLIE

Belinda, please. I made a mistake, but I--

BELINDA

No, not you.

(to Gabe, enjoying this)

You.

**INT. BREAK ROOM - MOMENTS LATER**

Gabe opens his locker and grabs a backpack. Ellie's behind him.

ELLIE

Gabe, I'm so sorry. She's hurting you to hurt me. I won't let her get away with it. I'm gonna fix this.

Gabe silently collects his stuff. He's clearly down.

ELLIE

Ugh, say something. I hate seeing you this upset.

(getting an idea)

Hey, lets talk Trivia Night plans! That'll cheer you up, right? So obviously we'll get there early to scope out the table with the most attractive lighting--

Gabe slams his locker shut a little too hard. Ellie flinches.

GABE

So now you want to talk about it? Because you've ignored me every single time I've brought it up. All you cared about was your stupid secret shopper plan -- and look where that got us.

ELLIE

Gabe, I know you're upset, and you should be, but let's not compare crises here. I needed that money to cover my rent next month, okay?

(MORE)

ELLIE (CONT'D)

And I'm not trying to be mean, but you don't even know this Trivia Guys's name. I know you think you're getting old in the gay single world, but you're being a little irrational.

GABE

Oh, am I? Do you have any idea what it's like to be a guy like me on a gay dating app? To have guys block me when I tell them my real age? To have someone ask for a "shirtless pic" and I know the conversation might as well be over because my body isn't perfect?

ELLIE

Gabe, you're not out of shape! Your body's like... an 8!

GABE

Well unfortunately a straight guy 8 is a gay guy 3. The standards are insane. And over time, this body is only gonna get worse. Have you seen my dad? He's an actual potato. So, yeah, you can think I'm overreacting, but maybe you don't know everything I'm going through because all you cared to focus on was yourself. -- You know what? Maybe Belinda's right about you... You are selfish.

Gabe slings his bag over his shoulder and heads for the door. And for the first time, we see our heroes go separate ways.

**INT. GUEST SERVICES DESK - LATER**

Ellie stands alone behind the desk. She looks over to where Gabe usually stands. It's an empty space.

ELLIE (V.O.)

...Guilt is a tough emotion. Hunger, I get. You're hungry, so you eat. Sadness I definitely get. You're sad, so you eat. But you can't eat guilt away. Guilt just kind of sits there, reminding you what you did. Like... I don't know, an empty container of cupcakes that you just binged through in the dark. Also, I'm really starting to think I have an unhealthy relationship with food.

Just then, Ellie sees Dana still looking around for the hippo. She watches her for a beat. Then:

ELLIE

Hey Dana... You need some help?

**INT. VARIOUS LOCATIONS - LATER**

In QUICK CUTS, we see both Ellie and Dana looking around the resort for the stuffed hippo toy. Ellie looks inside the linens of a housekeeping laundry bin, Dana reaches between bushes in the garden, etc. And as they look all over, we hear:

ELLIE (V.O.)

Gabe and I have hunted down a lot of stuffed animals over the years. And while searching the entirety of a 30 acre resort wasn't always fun, it was always worth it when we delivered a toy back to a kid and made their day. After a few times, Gabe suggested we start planning these extravagant kid-toy reunions. Like this one time when we found this stuffed ostrich, and Gabe literally went out and bought a drone because he thought it would be cute for the ostrich to look like it was flying back to the kid.

(beat)

And also because he thought it would be a good opportunity to show off his vocal skills.

**INT. LOBBY - FLASHBACK - DAY**

Ellie operates a drone with a remote control while an ostrich toy "flies" across the lobby towards an excited child. Gabe stands by the kid, clapping along to himself as he belts out:

GABE

*I believe I can fly! I believe I can touch the sky! I think about it every night and day!*

**INT. HALLWAY - BACK TO SCENE**

Ellie continues searching for the hippo toy.

ELLIE (V.O.)

And Gabe was right. That song really did accentuate his handsome baritone. But more importantly... that kid looked so happy.

Just then, Ellie notices something sticking out from behind a planter near an elevator bank. She crouches down and picks up... a tiny stuffed hippo, with a name tag that reads Holly.

ELLIE

Hey there, Holly. Everyone's been real worried where you've been.  
 (smiles, getting an idea)  
 But maybe you just needed a little vacation, too.

**INT. VARIOUS LOCATIONS - LATER**

In a cute, scored MONTAGE, Ellie takes pictures of Holly the Hippo as if she's a guest at the resort. We see her watching TV in bed, surrounded by room service in a robe that's huge on her... Laying on a spa table as Whitney puts cucumbers over her tiny, little eyes... Lounging by the pool as Spencer hands her an extremely tiny cocktail... Exercising in the fitness center with a little sweatband on her head...

**INT. GUEST FLOOR HALLWAY - LATER**

Ellie stands in front of a guest room, and places the hippo on the ground along with a stack of photos with a Post-It reading "Holly's Big Vacay." And as she walks away, we see a smile comes across her face... But then it quickly fades a little.

ELLIE

Man... Gabe would have loved this.

**INT. GUEST SERVICES DESK - NIGHT**

It's the Night Shift. Gabe stares at a clock. It's 1:00 AM. Beside him, a weird looking staff member hands Gabe a binder.

NIGHT SHIFTER

And last but definitely not least,  
 here's a list of local escorts who've  
 been banned from the property.  
 You're gonna wanna keep that handy.

GABE

Great. Loving this already.

The guy heads into the back office. And as Gabe opens the binder, a handful of energy drinks are placed down on the desk in front of him. And we pan up to reveal... Ellie.

ELLIE

Like I'd leave you to get through  
 this alone.

Gabe can't help but smile a little to see her.

ELLIE

Gabe, I'm so sorry. I was being selfish. I just... freaked out. I'm in so much debt that a loan company rep apologized to me. I can't decide what I want to do with my life, and I work a job where I literally have to apologize to people when it rains.

(beat)

I have exactly one thing going right in my life right now and that's you. So I can't--

Gabe hugs her. It's a very sweet moment. Once they let go, Ellie grabs an energy drink and cracks it open.

ELLIE

Okay, let's caffeine up. Your winglady is reporting for duty, and we've got a lot of planning to do before we see this guy at trivia. I brought meet-cute research.

Ellie zips open her bag and pulls out copies of *The Wedding Planner*, *Maid In Manhattan* and *Selena*.

GABE

Aw, the J-Lo Rom-Com collection! I mean, Selena doesn't really fit, but we're looking at eight hours of purgatory here, so sure let's do it!

And as Ellie puts a DVD into her computer, we zoom in towards the computer screen, and then pull out, dissolving to:

**INT. GUEST SERVICES DESK - MORNING**

TIGHT on the computer screen as the DVD root menu for *Selena* plays on a loop, with faint Tejano music. We turn to see Ellie and Gabe, sitting in chairs behind the desk, both fast asleep. Then we hear: Buzz. Buzz. Buzz. And as Ellie and Gabe stir awake, they open their eyes to see... Belinda standing at the desk, having pressed Gabe's watch button.

BELINDA

Sleeping on the job now? You two are really on a roll lately.

GABE

Sorry, but it's my first day being nocturnal. There may be a slight learning curve.

BELINDA  
 ...Fix yourself up, Ellie. Day  
 shift starts in ten.

Belinda smiles cockily and turns to walk off... but she  
 immediately bumps directly into Gordon.

GORDON  
 Whoops! Sorry!

And Belinda notices that beside Gordon is his mother CONSTANCE.

BELINDA  
 Miss Tillman-Reed! Welcome to The  
 Bluffs. I'm--

CONSTANCE  
 I know who you are. My son called  
 me yesterday and told me everything.

BELINDA  
 Oh. About that. I should--

CONSTANCE  
 He said you're doing a remarkable job  
 here. I wanted to see it for myself.

Belinda looks to Gordon, surprised. He gives her a faint smile.  
 And as Belinda processes this, a Guest walks up towards them.

GUEST  
 Excuse me. My son lost his favorite  
 toy the other day, and when we woke  
 up this morning, we found this.

He shows Belinda, Constance and Gordon the pictures and note  
 that Ellie left.

GUEST  
 It really made our trip. I just  
 wanted to know who to thank.

ELLIE  
 (calling out from the desk)  
 Oh, Gabe did that!  
 (then, smiling at Gabe)  
 ...Gabe always does that.

GUEST  
 Well, thank you, Gabe. You're a  
 good guy.

And as the guest crosses off:

CONSTANCE

Impressive.

ELLIE

Yeah, Gabe's the best at making guests happy. It's a shame he's on the night shift now.

CONSTANCE

What? Belinda, why is your best associate on the night shift?

BELINDA

It... was just a one time scheduling issue.

ELLIE

So Gabe's not on the night shift? I guess I had that wrong.

BELINDA

(hating this)

Yes, I guess you did.

Behind the desk, Ellie and Gabe do a no-look fist bump. Just then, Constance's phone rings. She looks at it.

CONSTANCE

Excuse me. It's from someone more important than you, you understand.

BELINDA

Of course, by all means!

Belinda is in awe of her, even when she's being dissed. And as Constance steps aside, Gordon turns to Belinda.

GORDON

You were right. What you said yesterday... My mom has handed me a bunch of opportunities, and I still have no idea how things work here. But that ends now. She and I talked, and you are looking at your new Assistant Manager! And I look forward to learning from you for eight to fourteen hours a day.

And as Belinda's eyes go wide with panic, we angle back to Ellie and Gabe, relishing in Belinda's discomfort as we:

**END ACT THREE**

**TAG****INT. BAR - NIGHT**

Ellie, Gabe, Spencer, Whitney and Dana crowd around a table with drinks as a Trivia Announcer sits on a little stage.

TRIVIA ANNOUNCER

After eight rounds of play, it seems we have a tie. Will Trivia Newton John and Team Ashley Quizdale send up one representative each for a tiebreak?

As Gabe steps towards the stage, our staff chants:

ELLIE / SPENCER / DANA / WHITNEY

Gabe! Gabe! Gabe! Gabe!

And we see, also walking towards the stage, is a Very Cute Guy in a navy sweatshirt! Gabe clocks it and turns back to Ellie in shock. She excitedly gives Gabe thumbs up. Gabe and the guy arrive on stage, and stand facing each other.

TRIVIA ANNOUNCER

Okay, here we go. The first team to answer correctly wins it all.  
(then)  
Nominated for Oscar gold in 2004 for her portrayal of Erica Ba--

GABE

Diane Keaton!

SWEATSHIRT GUY

Diane Keaton!

TRIVIA ANNOUNCER

...Whoa.

ELLIE

Oh my god, it's a meet cute. We've got a meet cute people!!!

And as Ellie happily watches Gabe and the guy, we hear a voice:

VOICE (O.S.)

Hey, you're Ellie, right?

Ellie turns to see, standing beside her, is Max.

MAX

Hey. I'm Max.

And as Ellie smiles...

**END OF PILOT**