I HOPE WE CAN STILL BE FRIENDS

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FADE IN ON:

THE MOST DEPRESSED MAN ON PLANET EARTH.

KYLE HAMBERG, 31, wears an exhausted face, bloodshot eyes, and several days worth of facial scruff. He sports a short-sleeved shirt and tie combo, and he's working off at least a week's worth of alcohol-induced hibernation.

But more than anything, he has the look of a man resigned to the fact that his misery isn't going away any time soon.

KYLE
Um, ok... Here goes... It's been roughly thirty-two days since I lost my soulmate, lover, and all-around best friend. And so as a result, I'm still stuck in kind of a state of emotional disarray.

PULL BACK to reveal that Kyle is standing in front of a large CLASSROOM CHALKBOARD that reads: "WELCOME TO SCIENCE CLUB!!"

In front of Kyle are roughly twenty-five TEENAGE NERDS, all wearing various combinations of coke-bottled glasses, acne scars, and Gandalf T-shirts.

Kyle stares out at his class with eyes that beg for sympathy.

KYLE
So, if you don't mind, there are a few things I need to get off my chest to anyone who will listen.

INT. THERAPIST'S OFFICE - DAY

CLOSE on the similarly depressed face of a beautiful and professional woman. ASHLEY WALLS, 29, tears welling behind her cute glasses, sits heavily in a leather chair and lets it all out.

ASHLEY
The pain of loss is universal. Every day people experience how it feels to lose someone they love, and somehow they find a way to survive. I think if I keep reminding myself of this, at some point it'll start to help... Right?

INT. KYLE'S APARTMENT - DAY - SIX MONTHS AGO

Kyle paces anxiously in front of Ashley, who sits staring at an assortment of APPLICATIONS and BROCHURES.

ASHLEY
What the hell is the Costa Rica Fellowship?

KYLE
This is what I've been talking about. It's a totally insane oceanography expedition. This thing is huge! -- It's how that guy from last week's "Deadliest Catch" got his start!

ASHLEY
Kyle, that guy from "Deadliest Catch" actually died. Don't you remember, the episode was dedicated in his loving memory. We both made contributions to his children's college funds. You can't be serious!

KYLE
I'm totally serious, this is my dream job. And I want you to come with me.

ASHLEY
Come with you? You mean to live?

KYLE
On a boat! For two years! In the waters of the Pacific Ocean, the natural habitat of Kyle-3000 and Ashburger over here.

Kyle gestures to a large aquarium where TWO TROPICAL FISH swim about, oblivious to the scene in front of them.

Ashley just stares back at Kyle, totally speechless.

KYLE
C'mon Ash, haven't you ever wanted to live on the precipice of something bigger than you? Something totally unknown?

ASHLEY
No. Absolutely not. I want to live on the precipice of indoor plumbing, and air conditioning, and Quiznos. What about having a family together someday like we talked about? Isn't that big and unknown enough for you?

KYLE
Yeah, that's all great, but I'm trying to really expand our lives here. Together.

ASHLEY
So expanding our lives together means abandoning my family, my job, and my future so my boyfriend can go carry out his aquatic death wish?

Kyle lowers his eyes and heads towards the bedroom.

KYLE
You're upsetting the fish. And it's not a death wish... It's a life wish!

Kyle storms into the bedroom and SLAMS the door behind him.

INT. ASHLEY'S PRIUS - DAY - TWO MONTHS AGO

Ashley weaves through highway traffic while she and Kyle are locked in the heat of an argument.

ASHLEY
This makes no sense. You're a teacher! How could you decide you don't want to have kids now? You're surrounded by them all day!

KYLE
Exactly, and those freak shows put the fear of God in me. I mean, what if I wind up with a slut, or a super-depressed emo-freak, or a kid who refuses to wear anything but jean shorts? I don't think I could handle that.

ASHLEY
This is bullshit, Kyle. You never used to be afraid of being a parent before.

KYLE
Yeah, well that was until I overheard the captain of the field hockey team advising her lunch table that if a girl has sex with two guys who both have chlamydia, they cancel each other out. Then there's the twenty-five kids in the Art Club. Turns out they're all a bunch of glue huffers!
(MORE)

KYLE (CONT'D)
Yeah, they were supposed to meet last week to design the new Homecoming float, instead I found them all behind the equipment shed, pupils fully dilated and strung out on industrial strength paint thinner.

ASHLEY
Ok, obviously some kids slip through the cracks. But that's what makes getting it right as a parent one of the most rewarding experiences two people can share together.

KYLE
Right, I know, but how am I supposed to help raise a decent kid if I'm spending every day struggling to survive the perils of life at sea?

ASHLEY
Oh, so this is about you taking the fellowship then? Because you don't think we can have a future together that will make us both happy?

Kyle pauses for a beat before answering. Ashley reads his hesitation and angrily starts to FLOOR THE GAS PEDAL.

KYLE
Whoa, ok, slow down, I didn't answer yet -- Let's just continue our dialogue!

ASHLEY
You hesitated. That's an answer.

Ashley, super pissed now, digs her fingernails into the wheel and SWERVES the car through several lanes of traffic. Other cars BLARE THEIR HORNS. Kyle tries to control his fear.

KYLE
Whoa-whoa -- Use your signal! Use your signal!

INT. KYLE'S APARTMENT - DAY - ONE MONTH AGO

Kyle and Ashley, red-eyed and brokenhearted, face each other in the center of a big WHITE COUCH. Their arguing is over, all that's left now is the gravity of this painful moment.

After a long beat of silence, Kyle finally speaks.

KYLE
So... Are you sure?

ASHLEY
Yeah... Are you?

Kyle nods sadly.

KYLE
Yeah. So this is it then?

She leans towards him, wrapping him up in her arms. He squeezes her back tightly, looking like he doesn't want to ever let go.

It is clear that this isn't just any other hug. It's serious, it's emotional, and it's final. This is their goodbye.

After a long beat, Kyle and Ashley pull apart and stare into each other's bleary eyes one last time.

CUT TO:

INT. KYLE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Kyle sits in a pathetic heap on a LAWN CHAIR in the center of the room. He's wrapped up to his neck in a blanket and eating dried pasta from the box.

There's no sign of Ashley left anywhere. Most of the furniture and wall decorations are gone. In the back closet, T-shirts, sports jerseys, and tennis shoes line one side -- Loose hangers and moth balls fill the other.

Kyle stares sadly through the aquarium glass. Kyle-3000 and Ashburger are all he has left now.

INT. FRIEND'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Ashley wanders around a HALLOWEEN PARTY by herself, dressed up as ARWEN, Liv Tyler's character from "Lord of the Rings." She's the only person in costume at the party.

A CUTE GUY in a cardigan walks by, eyeing her get up.

ASHLEY
It's from "Lord of the Rings." You know, Arwen the Elf Maiden?

CUTE GUY
Uh-huh...

He brushes past her, leaving Ashley alone and embarrassed.

ASHLEY
The E-vite said costumes encouraged!

INT. KYLE'S HONDA - DAY

Kyle sits in a daze behind the wheel, stuck at a red light. On the radio, the infectious chorus to "Every Little Thing She Does Is Magic" by The Police blares out.

Kyle stews until he can't take it anymore.

KYLE
FUCK YOU, STING!!!

Kyle, shaking with rage, looks out his window to the driver next to him. It's a TERRIFIED OLD LADY. The light turns green and she speeds away. Kyle is left to hate himself.

CUT TO:

INT. KYLE'S CLASSROOM - DAY - NOW

Kyle leans against the chalkboard and lets out a big sigh.

KYLE
So, that's all I've got. Thanks to all of you for listening... I am now happy to take your questions, assuming you have any.

A FRUSTRATED GEEK in the back row raises his hand.

FRUSTRATED GEEK
Does this mean we won't be shooting off mini-rockets on the soccer field today?

KYLE
Yes. I'd rather die than shoot off mini-rockets with you right now. So the answer to your question is yes.

The Science Nerds all start to GRUMBLE to themselves.

KYLE
Anyone who wants to go is free to leave the classroom. You will still receive your extra credit.

On cue, the ENTIRE CLASS OF GEEKS rises as one and FILES OUT the open door. Well, almost the entire class. Left behind is one LOVABLE LOOKING TEEN who remains quietly seated at the center of the room. His name is CHARLIE FORRESTER.

KYLE
What about you, Charlie? You taking off too?

CHARLIE
No. I thought I'd hang around. You know, in case you still want to talk.

Kyle smiles. He's genuinely moved by Charlie's goodwill.

INT. THERAPIST'S OFFICE - DAY

Ashley wipes a final tear from her eye and straightens out her jacket, composing herself.

ASHLEY
Oh boy... It feels good to let all that out.
(glances at her watch)
And it looks like we're finishing up right on time too.

Glaring at Ashley from across the room is a CONFUSED PATIENT laid out on a LEATHER COUCH.

The Patient glances up at a CERTIFICATE on the office wall that reads "Ashley Walls - Clinical Psychologist."

PATIENT
Ok, but what does droning on about your break-up for forty-five minutes have to do with my cat getting run over by a dump truck?

ASHLEY
Well, uh, I was going to lead off with that next week, but... My relationship with Kyle was kind of run over by a dump truck... A figurative dump truck. Kyle was sort of like the cat and I was--

PATIENT
--I don't want to be charged for this session.

ASHLEY
Ok. Yeah-yeah, that's fair.

The Patient grabs her purse and blusters out the door, shaking her head as she goes.

PATIENT
Un-frickin'-believable...

As the Patient storms off, Ashley's white-haired, 65-year-old colleague, CYNTHIA BREASTON, pokes her head in. She sees Ashley rubbing her temples in an obvious state of distress.

CYNTHIA
Ashley... What's going on?

ASHLEY
Oh nothing, just bottling up all my worst feelings and darkest emotions... Hold on a sec, I'm almost done...

Cynthia gently removes Ashley's hands from her temples and pulls her up to her feet.

CYNTHIA
Let's take a walk.

EXT. SOCCER FIELD - DAY

Kyle and Charlie methodically set up a series of MINI-ROCKETS along the sidelines of the school soccer field.

CHARLIE
So, if Ashley is so perfect, why'd you two break-up? You have some internet chick on the side or something?

KYLE
No, come on, nothing like that. It's just... When you're in love with someone, all you wanna think about are the things you both want that you already have, not the things that she wants that you can't give her.

CHARLIE
You mean like an orgasm?

KYLE
No, dude... Kids. She wanted kids, ok?

CHARLIE
Ohhh... So you shoot blanks, huh? Holster's loaded but the chamber's empty? Gotcha. It's cool man, nothing to be ashamed of.

KYLE
No, what I mean is... Oh, forget it.

Kyle crouches and aligns the rockets in a perfect row.

EXT. DC STREETS - DAY

Ashley and Cynthia walk and talk down the busy sidewalks of Washington, DC. They each sip large coffees as they go.

ASHLEY
And then he had this crazy dream of taking an oceanography fellowship in Costa Rica and living on a boat together for two years... It was just never what we had planned, and I can't make a rash decision that will only cause us to resent each other in the end.

CYNTHIA
That's a mature outlook. It's difficult to be so self-aware in situations like this.

ASHLEY
Do you think maybe I should call him? I mean, just to check in?

CYNTHIA
Is that all you want? To check-in?

ASHLEY
I just want <u>something</u>. We were together for <u>five years</u> and there's this massive void in my life now. And it's all made up of these tiny things that I can't get back. Like waking up in the morning, and him getting us coffee or me picking up muffins. Is there anything so damn wrong about meeting for coffee and a muffin?

Cynthia ponders for a moment.

CYNTHIA
I saved a scone for myself in the fridge yesterday. We could split it if you want...

Ashley sighs. Not quite the answer she was looking for.

EXT. SOCCER FIELD - DAY

Kyle supervises as Charlie lights a LONG FUSE that connects to the mini-rockets. The fuse catches and starts to BURN.

KYLE
This cold turkey approach to break-ups is slowly killing me. I think I should call her. Just to say hi, you know? Just to say hi.

CHARLIE
I don't know, man. In seventh grade, I had my heart eaten alive by Melissa Cotello and I've sworn off women ever since. Now my life revolves around hardcore gaming, classic rock, and the pursuit of science, and I have to say -- I'm much, much happier as a result.

KYLE
So you think I should take up hardcore gaming instead of calling her?

CHARLIE
Everyone has to find their own specific path in life, but... Yes. That's my advice to you, yes.

Kyle and Charlie turn towards the rockets as the fuse burns out. The rockets BLAST OFF into the air.

For a couple of science geeks, it's an awesome sight.

CUT TO:

INT. KYLE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Kyle sits on the lawn chair at the center of his apartment. He watches an old "Shark Week" on TV and stares at his cell phone, which rests silently on the floor.

INT. ASHLEY'S APARTMENT - SAME

Ashley sits Indian-style on her couch, waiting at the exact same moment for her phone to ring as well.

Ashley has finally had it. She grabs a bottle of beer, sucks down a long chug of liquid courage, and gets set to dial, when the phone suddenly starts to RING in her hand.

It's Kyle. She answers immediately.

ASHLEY
Hello? -- He-hello? Kyle??

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. KYLE'S APARTMENT - SAME

Kyle quivers at the sound of Ashley's voice.

KYLE
Yeah, hey, it's Kyle! How are you??

ASHLEY
I'm... I'm great. I'm awesome, I'm -- Wait, no, I'm sorry. That was all a lie. I'm terrible. How are you?

KYLE
Oh, you know... Still generally wishing for death.

ASHLEY
I'm glad you called. I've really missed you.

KYLE
I've really missed you too.

A long beat.

KYLE
Do you think... Maybe we should meet up? Get together or something? You know, nothing major, just something for--

ASHLEY
--For closure. Right? Just as a way to--

KYLE
--Exactly. Yeah, closure. We definitely need to close this thing up right here. It still feels... relatively open, so yeah, let's just close her up while we still can.

ASHLEY
Ok. What's a good day for you?

KYLE
Um... Well, I'm free right now.

ASHLEY
Really? It's one-thirty in the morning.

KYLE
Oh... So, you've got something going on then?

ASHLEY
No -- No, I'm free. You want me to head over?

KYLE
Door's unlocked, just come on in.

ASHLEY
Ok, I'm on my way.

They both hang up and race to prepare for the meeting. *

INT. KYLE'S APARTMENT - HALF AN HOUR LATER

Ashley lets herself inside the apartment and sees Kyle parked in his lawn chair, watching TV.

ASHLEY
Hey. What're you doing?

KYLE
Oh, hi. Just, uh, watching some old VHS's from "Shark Week" 2003.

They both turn to the TV and watch a MASSIVE GREAT WHITE bear down and inhale AN ENTIRE SCHOOL OF UNSUSPECTING FISH.

KYLE
(exceedingly depressed)
That was awesome.

Ashley walks over to the fish aquarium and looks inside.

ASHLEY
Hey, what happened to my fish? Did you get rid of her?

KYLE
Oh, Ashburger? No, I fell into a deep depression sleep for about 72 hours after the break-up and kind of forgot to feed them. I'm pretty certain that Kyle-3000, um... Ate her. I'm very sorry.
(sensitive beat)
Here, sit down.

Kyle pulls another lawn chair into the center of the room. Ashley parks herself inside it.

ASHLEY
I'm the one who should be sorry. If I had known you were gonna be sitting in patio furniture I never would have taken the couch.

KYLE
No, come on, that was your couch. You supplied the couch when we moved in, you had every right...

Kyle smiles at her and scoots his lawn chair closer to hers.

KYLE
Do you feel any closure yet?

ASHLEY
No. Not really. Do you?

KYLE
No. I'm still just a gaping, wide-open hole of emotional agony.

ASHLEY
This is just so impossible. It's like losing so much more than just a boyfriend. You're the best friend I've ever had in my whole life. I mean, my next best friend was probably Jenny Bates in eleventh grade and I stopped talking to her after she told the wrestling team that I went down on our shop teacher, Mr. Lombardo.

KYLE
Did you?

ASHLEY
No! She was a total bitch! That's my point. I'm twenty-nine years old and the only truly great friend I've ever had I all of the sudden have to erase from my life. And it just... It fucking sucks!

Ashley faces the floor and tries to keep her eyes from welling up. Kyle puts a hand on her arm to comfort her.

KYLE
Well, who's to say we can't still be friends?

ASHLEY
Friends like, you mean, start hanging out again friends? Come on, that never works.

KYLE
No, not just as friends. As <u>best friends</u>. You said it yourself.
(MORE)

KYLE(CONT'D)
That's what we were, and that's definitely what we can still be.

ASHLEY
I don't know... What if that just makes things worse?

Kyle is struck by a burst of inspiration. He darts into the bedroom and races back into the living room carrying a HUGE MODEL OF A MOLECULAR COMPOUND.

ASHLEY
What's that?

KYLE
This is the key to saving our friendship. Check it out, it's the molecular compound for water.

ASHLEY
Ok...

KYLE
Think of water as what our relationship was like for the past five years. It's made up of two parts hydrogen -- a shitload of love -- and one part oxygen -- basic human companionship. It's all held together by attractive forces, which for our purposes represent all the sex and stuff we had to combine the two elements.

Ashley watches as Kyle starts to break apart the molecule.

KYLE
Now, if we simply just eliminate the attractive forces, then we can create a reaction that separates the molecules.
(pulls apart the molecule)
Resulting in two totally unique elements!

Kyle holds up the model, which now contains only oxygen elements. Ashley stares at it with wonder.

KYLE
And this is what's left. Oxygen. Perhaps the most vital substance on planet Earth. And the scientific equivalent to friendship. This is what we could still be together.

Ashley's mind is blown. It almost makes too much sense now.

ASHLEY
So, we could still be best friends?

KYLE
Yes! Total BFFs!

ASHLEY
I mean, it could work... But we'd have to lay some ground rules first.

INT. KYLE'S KITCHEN - MINUTES LATER

Kyle and Ashley pace around the cramped kitchen space, both holding yellow LEGAL PADS and pens.

ASHLEY
We'll need some kind of guide to let us know what is on and off limits for our friendship at all times.

KYLE
Like a Declaration of Co-Dependence?

ASHLEY
Sounds a little vague. How bout the Ex-Monogamists' Manifesto?

KYLE
A bit militant... Oh -- I got it.
(proud)
The Friendship Constitution.

Ashley ponders it, then nods.

ASHLEY
We should start drafting immediately.

INT. KYLE'S BEDROOM - MINUTES LATER

Kyle and Ashley are hunched over a tiny desk, scribbling out the terms of their Friendship Constitution.

ASHLEY
Ok, we need to start with the most important thing first and foremost.
(beat)
No sex.

KYLE
Right. None whatsoever under any circumstances.

Kyle starts scribbling away on the legal pad.

KYLE
(reading aloud)
Thou shalt not... Have sex... With thee.

ASHLEY
Yeah, um, you don't really have to write it up in Ten Commandments style. It just sounds a little--

KYLE
--Archaic? Right. Good call.
(scratches it out)
Ok -- NO SEX. That says it all really.

THIRTY MINUTES LATER

Kyle and Ashley are pacing the room, brainstorming more rules.

ASHLEY
Here's one. No badgering the other person about their break-up reasons. No whining from me about you not wanting to have kids, no nudging from you about us going to Costa Rica together. Sound good?

KYLE
Put her on the board.

AN HOUR LATER

KYLE
Alright, and if said friendship activities carry on well into the night and/or early morning of the day's chosen event, no party should feel obligated to sleep over at the other party's place of residence.

ASHLEY
Ok, and if said party decides that it is best to sleep over at the other party's place of residence, Party #2 will provide sleeping arrangements in a room separate from Party #1's primary place of rest.

Kyle scribbles it all down furiously.

KYLE
Wait, hold on. I don't think I have any idea what that actually means.

ASHLEY
It means one of us takes the bed, the other gets the couch.

KYLE
Thanks. Got it.

AN HOUR AND A HALF LATER

Kyle and Ashley are running on fumes. Kyle is spread-eagled over the bed, Ashley sucks down coffee straight from the pot.

ASHLEY
Oh, I got another one. Neither of us should feel obligated to talk about any new person we might be dating, but conversations regarding new relationships should be conducted with complete honesty.

Kyle stirs on the bed, scribbling on the pad without even lifting up his head.

ASHLEY
You got that one?

KYLE
(barely conscious)
Yeah. Yeah. Honesty. Yeah.

Ashley nods proudly and takes another swig of coffee.

ANOTHER HOUR LATER

It's finally dawn and Kyle and Ashley are both curled up in exhausted heaps on the bed. As first light starts to creep into the room, Ashley's eyes slowly open.

ASHLEY
Oh shit. Kyle, wake up. We're sleeping in the same bed. We're already breaking rule number twelve!

Kyle winces at the sight of sunlight.

ASHLEY
It's ok. I'll go sleep in the other room.

KYLE
No -- No, wait. It's just lawn chairs out there... I'll go.

ASHLEY
Are you sure?

KYLE
Uh-huh...

Kyle pulls himself off the bed and grabs a pillow.

ASHLEY
Thanks... You're a great friend!

CUT TO:

INT. KYLE'S CLASSROOM - DAY

Kyle wheels a TV and DVD player into the classroom. His STUDENTS all stop their chatter and look up.

KYLE
Ok, last second change of lesson plan today. For purely educational purposes, we're gonna be screening the ground-breaking film, "Weird Science"... Which will, uh, teach you all about some exciting new properties of science... Which are sometimes weird. Take notes.

Kyle starts the movie and parks at his desk. He whips out the scribbled up Friendship Constitution and resumes editing.

INT. COMPUTER LAB - DAY

Kyle sits in front of a school computer, typing up the final draft of the Constitution. He makes sure every word is perfect and every margin looks as professional as possible.

As he works, a super-cute teacher named NATALIE sits down next to him. Kyle makes nervous eye-contact with Natalie and instantly MINIMIZES the document on his screen.

NATALIE
You on Myspace?

KYLE
What? Uh, no. Well, I used to be, back before it got too corporate and I started getting all these weird sex messages and erectile dysfunction emails.

Natalie smirks.

NATALIE
No, I meant right now. You looked a little nervous. Like you had something to hide. I know the old coot who runs the lab is really cracking skulls on that kind of tomfoolery.

KYLE
Oh... Yeah. Right. I guess you caught me red-handed then...

NATALIE
I'm Natalie. Or Ms. Lawler. It's my first year teaching. I've got Algebra II Trig and AP Calc.

Kyle would really like to sit and chat, but he's got bigger fish to fry right now.

KYLE
Ok... Cool. Good luck with all that.

Natalie gets up and takes the disappointing hint. Kyle's in no mood to flirt today.

NATALIE
Alright, well... I'll let you get back to those boner emails then.

KYLE
(not even listening)
Great, yeah, thanks. I'll see ya around.

Kyle pulls up the Friendship Constitution doc and resumes his work, but then suddenly realizes he's been kind of a dick.

He calls out to Natalie before she reaches the door.

KYLE
Hey, wait -- You said Natalie Lawler, right?

NATALIE
Yeah.

KYLE
I'm Kyle Hamberg. AP Chem, Bio, and Physics... I'll add you as a friend. You know, on MySpace.

Natalie smiles.

NATALIE
Ok. Thanks. I accept.

Kyle nods to her as she leaves and then pulls up his Myspace page. He types in Natalie's name and clicks "Add Friend."

From across the lab, the crazy COMPUTER LAB LADY cries out.

COMPUTER LAB LADY
Hey, you! -- Are you on Myspace?! How many times do I have to say it?? NO MYSPACE!!

Kyle ducks down in his chair and minimizes the Myspace page as fast as he can.

INT. SILVER DINER - DAY

Kyle and Ashley sit at a tiny table during the busy lunch rush. A WAITRESS arrives at their table and puts down TWO COFFEES AND A MUFFIN in front of them.

Ashley looks up at Kyle and smiles.

ASHLEY
Thanks.

Kyle nods and opens up his knapsack. He pulls out two LAMINATED COPIES of the Friendship Constitution. He hands one copy to Ashley and holds onto another for himself.

KYLE
So, I worked on it all day. I think it's perfect. Every rule is completely airtight.

Ashley scans the document, impressed.

ASHLEY
Wow, nice. And it's laminated.

KYLE
Yeah, well, they do it free at school, so...

Ashley looks up at him.

ASHLEY
So, do you really think we can make this work?

KYLE
Yeah, of course I do. Why else would we go to all the trouble if we didn't think--

ASHLEY
--I know, I know, but... You're not afraid it might get weird? I mean what if things get all screwed up and we wind up making it all so much worse? What if we end up hating each other and filing restraining orders and leaving answering machine messages where we just breathe into the phone for like fifteen minutes straight... What if it, you know... Changes us.

Kyle looks back at her, slightly pained.

KYLE
You really think that could happen?

ASHLEY
No-no, I don't, I just -- I'm just trying to come at this in the most analytical way possible. It's what I do. And I just want to make sure that this is right.

KYLE
Ash, this is a way for us to keep ourselves in each other's lives. That's most definitely right.

Ashley thinks it over for a second and nods. She's in.

ASHLEY
Ok, so then what do we do now?

KYLE
I don't know... You wanna hang out?

EXT. NATIONAL MALL - DAY

Kyle and Ashley PLAY FRISBEE on the green grass of the National Mall.

KYLE
Go long!

Ashley takes off running and Kyle tears off a bomb of a throw. Ashley DIVES onto the grass to snag it.

She pops right up and shows off for all the joggers, dog-walkers, and picnickers who applaud her amazing catch.

ASHLEY
Thank you! Thank you, I'm awesome!

INT. FURNITURE STORE - DAY

Kyle and Ashley peruse a Georgetown furniture store in search of a nice couch for Kyle. The STORE OWNER directs them to a gorgeous BLACK LEATHER SOFA.

Kyle nods to Ashley, and Ashley nods to the Store Owner.

INT. PET STORE - DAY

Kyle helps Ashley pick out TWO NEW TROPICAL FISH from a massive aquarium tank.

Ashley chooses her favorites and Kyle reaches in with a net to fish them out.

INT. KYLE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Kyle and Ashley jump up and down on Kyle's new couch, flinging pillows at each other and cracking up like a couple of wild kids.

INT. ASHLEY'S APARTMENT - DAY

Kyle pours Ashley's new fish into her very own aquarium tank. They both crouch down together and smile at the sight of the fish swimming around happily.

INT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

Kyle and Ashley sit through a horrible romantic comedy together. They crack each other up while wolfing down handfuls of popcorn.

KYLE
This movie is so bad that it just gave me jock itch.

ASHLEY
This movie is so bad that the Israelis and Palestinians called a cease fire so they could team up to beat the shit out of Hugh Grant.

KYLE
This movie is so bad that I'm happily distracting myself with a montage of memories from my parents' divorce.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Kyle and Ashley are sitting at their own private booth, swapping stories and sharing drinks.

ASHLEY
He was not that short!

KYLE
Ash, the guy is a lawn ornament. I'm sorry, but the fact of the matter is you lost your virginity to a garden gnome. He's like something I'd dangle from my rear view mirror to amuse myself while sitting in traffic.

Ashley rolls her eyes and sips her beer.

ASHLEY
Alright, well what about that moron you dated in college for a year and a half?

KYLE
Which one? There were many.

ASHLEY
You know... The one who tried to do her laundry in the dishwasher when she ran out of quarters. The one who called Titanic "The best documentary I've ever seen." The one who decided to become a Spanish teacher because she was really into tapas that week.

KYLE
Oh, Danielle. Yeah, I really thought she was the one for a while there.

They both laugh and polish off what's left of their drinks.

INT. KYLE'S APARTMENT - MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT

It's 3 AM and Ashley is passed out on the couch, while Kyle sleeps soundly in the lawn chair.

Kyle's eyes creep open and he notices that Ashley's blanket is falling off her leg. Kyle leans over to tuck her in and then parks himself back on the lawn chair.

CUT TO:

INT. ASHLEY'S OFFICE - DAY

Ashley sits at her desk, multi-tasking with notes, emails, and her schedule. Cynthia sits across from her on the couch, reviewing Ashley's copy of the Friendship Constitution.

CYNTHIA
"Also expressly forbidden are bare hand massages, foot rubs, or suggestions of bubble baths that may be construed as an out of bounds sexual advance that could thereby threaten the foundation of the friendship."
(to Ashley)
Well, it's thorough. I'll certainly give you that.

Ashley sets aside her work business and turns towards Cynthia.

ASHLEY
But is it stupid? Is it a huge mistake?

CYNTHIA
What are you instincts telling you?

ASHLEY
My instincts? C'mon, Cynthia. Hit me with some hard stuff. You're supposed to be here to slap me upside the head or say sassy one-liners like "Go get yourself some strange dick, chica."

CYNTHIA
So, is that what you really want? Strange... Dick?

ASHLEY
No! I just want... The part of him that doesn't remind me of the reasons we can't be together anymore.

Cynthia reads the conflict inside Ashley and decides to level with her.

CYNTHIA
Ashley, do you remember four years ago when my husband died?

ASHLEY
Yes.

CYNTHIA
Well, even though a lot of time has passed, I still think of him. Every single hour of every single day. I still hear his voice in my head. I feel him pull the sheets while I sleep. And even though I know that he's gone... There's still a part of him that I know will never truly go away. And there is nothing -- Absolutely nothing -- That could ever get me to give up that small part of him that I have left.

Ashley's heart starts to beat a little quicker as she takes in Cynthia's words.

CYNTHIA
So... If keeping Kyle as a friend is what you have to do to make sure you don't lose the last piece of the most important person in your life... Then do it. And don't doubt yourself.

Ashley nods and smiles warmly.

ASHLEY
Thank you. I won't.

INT. SCHOOL AQUATIC CENTER - DAY

Charlie, wearing goggles and holding a stopwatch, TREADS WATER in the deep end of the school swimming pool.

After a long beat, Kyle BURSTS out of the water with a HUGE GASP. He sucks wind hard. Charlie clicks his stopwatch.

CHARLIE
Two minutes, fifteen seconds.

KYLE
Dammit. Still a ways to go.
(checking his watch)
My heart-rate is way too high too. There's no way I can survive a legitimate underwater predator attack with this level of panic.

Kyle swims to the shallow end of the pool. Charlie follows.

KYLE
Ok, let's cool down with some water calisthenics.

Kyle and Charlie do a series of synchronized stretches interspersed with underwater jogging.

CHARLIE
Hey, do you still need a ride this weekend after your session in the decompression chamber?

KYLE
Oh, no thanks. Ashley said she could pick me up.

CHARLIE
Ashley? What do you have the bends? Do you need to see Nurse Callahan?

KYLE
No, really, it's cool. We've got it all worked out. We decided to be friends.

Charlie cuts off his calisthenics mid-water squat.

CHARLIE
Friends?? Jesus H., Mr. Hamberg. You're a cool guy and all, but you just took a flying leap into the deep end of an empty pool, pal. Prepare yourself for the massive skull fracture and brain hemorrhaging that await you.

KYLE
We're not just friends, Charlie. We're <u>best friends</u>. You understand what that means, right? We share an unbreakable bond. We're like the chlorofluorocarbons of male/female friendships.

CHARLIE
That's horseshit. Everyone knows Lewis acids can bust C-F bonds now. Your gross naivety astounds me.

Kyle finishes up his last calisthenic exercise and pulls himself out of the pool.

KYLE
Dude, you're way too young to have this kind of pent-up bitterness towards females. Don't you realize that girls are the greatest gift science has ever given us?
(MORE)

KYLE (CONT'D)
We have all these emotions, all these unlocked cavities of our brains, all these otherwise useless body parts that are so totally enhanced by the presence of a good woman...

Kyle stops himself in mid-thought.

CHARLIE
What?

KYLE
Towel off. We're gonna find you a girl, Charlie.

Kyle grabs a towel and tosses it in Charlie's face.

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

Kyle and Charlie, both sporting messy wet hair, make their way through the busy cafeteria during lunchtime.

Kyle is on the lookout for Charlie's perfect match, while Charlie hides nervously behind him.

CHARLIE
No, seriously, Mr. Hamberg. This isn't necessary. I'm totally fine with my hardcore gaming and classic rock and--

KYLE
--And your pursuit of science, yeah, I know, man. But there's a big bleeding hole in your heart and we're gonna fill it up right now.

As soon as Kyle puts the period on his sentence, he looks up and sees the PERFECT GIRL.

She eats a PB&J with no crusts, wears cute Tina Fey-glasses, and smiles with bright white teeth. Even Charlie knows it right away. She's the one. Her name is ABBY PRENTICE.

KYLE
Buckle up, kid. I'm about to blast you off into the stratosphere.

Kyle moves in, as Charlie desperately tries to hold him back.

CHARLIE
Mr. Hamberg, wait! That's Abby Prentice! I'm not ready for this! I need more training!

Kyle hears nothing as he drags Charlie to Abby's table. Kyle flashes Abby and her friends a winning smile that causes cheeks to blush all around.

KYLE
Hey, Abby.

ABBY
Um, hi, Mr. Hamberg.

KYLE
Sorry to bug you girls during lunch, but I was just wondering... What's your favorite movie?

ABBY
Uh... I don't know... Probably "Mean Girls."

KYLE
That's amazing! Did you know Charlie here's favorite movie is "Mean Girls" too?? That's incredible! Tell her, Charlie.

Kyle pulls out a chair and Charlie nervously sits down.

CHARLIE
Uh... Yeah. It's like totally my favorite. Those girls are all just so mean. Every time I watch it, it's just... It's riveting.

Abby's slightly amused by Charlie's inherent dorkiness.

Kyle nods in approval and whips out a ten-dollar bill. He closes it inside Charlie's hand.

KYLE
Alright, well I've gotta run, but you guys keep talking. Dessert's on me by the way.

Kyle offers Charlie a casual fist-pump as he walks away, leaving the two potential lovebirds to enjoy some privacy.

Charlie slicks back his still wet hair and tries to hide the mile-wide smile on his face.

CHARLIE
Anybody want an Astro-Pop?

EXT. MINI-GOLF COURSE - NIGHT

Kyle and Ashley are deep into a round of mini-golf. Ashley takes a big hack that sends her ball shooting into the water.

ASHLEY
Son of a whore...

KYLE
Sorry, that's a one stroke water hazard penalty. And a warning for mild profanity.

ASHLEY
Why don't you take a one stroke shut your hole penalty?

KYLE
I think I'd rather watch you try to make par in two after you take your drop in the deep rough over there.

Ashley fishes her ball out of the water and drops it into the rough. She lines up what appears to be an impossible shot.

ASHLEY
Ok. How 'bout this? If I can save par, you have to come with me to the annual Walls family reunion at the beach in Maine next month.

KYLE
Are you serious? Missing out on that trip was like the chief reason I agreed to go along with the break-up in the first place. C'mon!

ASHLEY
Please! You know how anxious I get being around my whole family. I need to have a friend there to keep me sane.

KYLE
But don't you remember all the shit they gave me after I sabotaged your Dad's lobster traps and went on a hunger strike during the clam bake?

ASHLEY
I told you, they're sympathetic to your ocean-life moral dilemma and respect your acts of civil disobedience... Can't you just do it for me?

Kyle softens for a moment and thinks over the idea.

KYLE
Alright. How 'bout this: If you can save par from here, I'm in. With no complaints. I promise.

Ashley is re-energized as she lines up for the shot. She crouches down like a real pro golfer to get a proper read on the green. She stands up and takes a few practice strokes.

KYLE
No rush. Just sometime before the Earth crashes into the sun, please.

Putting all the distractions out of her mind, Ashley rears back and takes her cut. The ball SHOOTS OFF THE COURSE into a water hazard on ANOTHER HOLE. Ashley's face falls.

ASHLEY
Dammit...

Kyle is about to gloat, until he sees the disappointment in Ashley's eyes. She really wanted this.

KYLE
Alright. I'll go with you. Just because we're such great friends.

ASHLEY
Yes! Oh my God, I own you!

Ashley's face lights up and she gives him a huge hug.

CUT TO:

INT. AIRPLANE - DAY

Kyle and Ashley are on-board their flight to Maine. Ashley puts her hand on Kyle's arm and nods with gratitude.

ASHLEY
This is gonna be great. You're gonna have so much fun.

INT. WALLS FAMILY BEACH HOUSE - DAY

Kyle and Ashley arrive at the family beach house, which is already jam-packed with every Walls on the Eastern seaboard.

ASHLEY
We're here!

Ashley is mobbed by her parents, KEN, late 50s, a former tough guy now a few decades past his prime, and MAGGIE, mid-50s, an adoring mom who can't keep the smile off her face.

KEN/MAGGIE
You made it! Come over here! Give us a kiss!

Kyle forces a smile and waits for his own awkward welcome. Ken finally looks up and levels a heavy stare at Kyle.

KEN
(deadpan)
Oh, look. Kyle made it too. Isn't that great?

Kyle shakes hands with Ken, who delivers a crippling grip. Kyle turns towards Maggie and gives her a hug.

KYLE
Hey, how are you guys? This is awesome, isn't it?

MAGGIE
Kyle, we were all just talking about what a trooper you are for still coming even after...

ASHLEY
Mom, can we not?

KEN
Not what? Talk about those five years you guys had, three living together, which ended with pretty much the farthest thing from a ring on my daughter's finger?

The entire room falls silent. Kyle is frozen solid.

KEN
I'm kidding! Jesus, nobody around here gets my jokes. Why is everyone else allowed to be funny but me?

Maggie leads Ashley towards the countless AUNTS, UNCLES, and COUSINS waiting to greet her. Kyle hangs back with Ken.

KYLE
I thought it was a good one, Mr. Walls. I definitely laughed.

KEN
Yeah, whatever kid. Now, I know it's a far cry from slumming it in that one bedroom landfill you call an apartment, but while you're under my roof, you're gonna be rooming with Mark, alright?

Kyle turns and spots Ashley's 18-year-old brother, MARK. He wears a cut-off T-shirt and flashes guns that would make Lebron James jealous.

KYLE
Oh yeah, what's up man? Wow, you been working out? You're looking pretty cut there. Lot of definition in the traps area...

Mark shakes Kyle's hand and turns away.

MARK
Yeah.

The rest of Ashley's family crowds around in a big group, leaving Kyle on his own.

Ashley turns and spots him. She gives Kyle a huge smile and mouths "Thank you." Kyle puts on a brave face and gives a genuine thumbs up in return.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

As countless pairs of legs scurry through the chilly ocean, Kyle swims underwater as hard and as fast as he can. He finally surfaces wearing a HIGH-TECH SCUBA MASK, which makes him look like the biggest freak on the beach.

Ken takes a break from body surfing and calls out to him.

KEN
Hey, Kyle. What're you doing out there? Dry humping a hermit crab?

KYLE
Huh? No, just practicing swimming against current while simultaneously skimming for sand dollars.
(pulls out a handful of sand dollars)
Want one?

Ken blows him off and summons Mark and the other Walls men.

KEN
Hey, everyone bring it in, let's play a little beach ball. Kyle, you're in too, unless you're too afraid to get sand in your pussy.

Kyle glares at Ken, whips off his scuba mask, and puts on his game face.

KYLE
Alright, Ken. Let's play.

EXT. BEACH - MINUTES LATER

Ken and Mark have picked teams, and the two sides are ready to play. Kyle heads over with Mark's team and huddles up.

MARK
Ok, I'm all-time QB. Here's the play: Andy, you run an eight-yard curl, Colin, a deep post, Uncle Rob, a stop and go to the end zone, and Kyle, a standard option route over the middle. Ready? Break!

Kyle looks over at everyone else as they break the huddle. They know exactly what to do. Kyle is left clueless.

The team lines up on the sand against Ken's squad. Ken wastes no time covering Kyle.

KEN
Kyle, keep your head on a swivel, ok son? I play a physical game.

KYLE
Only way to play in my opinion, Ken.

Kyle looks over at Mark, who is ready to hike the ball.

MARK
Hut! Hut-hut! Hike!

Mark hikes the ball and everyone starts running. Kyle tries to find a patch of empty sand to park himself for the catch.

He settles down and looks over towards Mark, but something in the distance catches his eye.

It's ASHLEY, pulling off an over-sized T-shirt to reveal the <u>HOTTEST RED BIKINI</u> ever worn since Phoebe Cates in "Fast Times at Ridgemont High." Kyle's jaw drops to the floor.

KYLE
Sweet mother of Hey-zeus...

Ashley looks like she walked off the cover of the SI Swimsuit Issue. Kyle is compelled to walk off the beach and mount her right there, until the ball HITS HIM RIGHT IN THE FACE.

Kyle grabs his bleeding nose, as the ball floats into Ken's hands for an easy interception. Ken then lowers his shoulders into Kyle, SENDING HIM FLYING face first into the damp sand.

Kyle looks up to see Ashley gasping in horror. For a second, Kyle is resigned to taking his beating like a chump, until he looks up and sees Ken high-stepping towards the end zone.

The bad news right now is the girl in the ultra-hot red bikini is no longer Kyle's girlfriend. But the good news is the asshole who just laid him out isn't his future father-in-law anymore either.

And realizing that, Kyle decides to...

KYLE
Fuck it.

KYLE JUMPS TO HIS FEET and takes off in a DEAD SPRINT. He runs faster than he ever has before, taking two strides to every one of Ken's.

Before long, the two men are neck-and-neck. Just a few feet away from the end zone, Kyle DIVES onto Ken's back and PUNCHES the ball out of his grasp.

THE BALL IS LOOSE. Kyle and Ken scramble on all fours across the beach, both eating sand trying to wrestle the pigskin away from each other. Brutal manliness on full display.

The scrum becomes increasingly dirty and personal, until Kyle finally snatches the ball away and gets to his feet. Now it's a foot race in the other direction.

The rest of the family is captivated. Ashley stands with her jaw-dropped, while the men in the family cheer as loudly as they can.

MALE FAMILY MEMBERS
C'mon, Ken!/Get his ass!/Drop the hammer!

Kyle runs his ass off, utterly exhausted, until he looks up and sees Ashley cheering him on. He digs down deep, and with Ken on his heels, he LAUNCHES HIMSELF IN THE AIR and dives into the end zone for the score.

Ken, hands on his hips, looks down at Kyle with a blank face. A hush falls over the rest of the family as Kyle rises to meet Ken's stare.

After a long and brutally uncomfortable beat -- A SMILE finally crosses Ken's face.

KEN
C'mere, you son of a bitch!

Ken pulls Kyle into a huge bear hug. The rest of the family gathers around, cheering and taking pictures.

KEN
Was that a helluva play or what?!

The men of the family applaud Kyle like he's some kind of demi-god. He soaks up every ounce of praise and glory, until he turns and locks eyes with Ashley.

She still looks amazing, but there's sadness in her smile now. It's the sight of Kyle, utterly joyful and surrounded by her adoring family.

This is what she's wanted for so long.

CUT TO:

INT. ASHLEY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ashley sits up in bed, wide-awake and unable to sleep. She shifts restlessly all over the mattress. Something has been keeping her up all night.

INT. MARK'S BEDROOM - SAME

Kyle and Mark are tucked into identical twin beds lined up five-feet apart from each other in the cramped room.

Kyle tosses and turns as well, desperate to find a comfortable angle. He finally settles flat on his back and we see the source of Kyle's irritation -- He has PITCHED A HUGE TENT under the covers.

And this bad boy isn't going away any time soon.

INT. ASHLEY'S BEDROOM - SAME

Ashley's frustration finally boils over and she digs deep into her suitcase in search of her VIBRATOR.

She hops back into bed and sneaks the vibrator below the covers, but as she turns it on, nothing happens.

She pulls the vibrator up from underneath the sheets and flicks it on and off again. Still nothing. She unscrews the bottom and finds that the device has no batteries.

INT. MARK'S BEDROOM - SAME

Kyle, huge tent still pitched, leans over the side of the bed and stares at Mark to make sure he's still asleep.

KYLE
Mark... Hey, Mark... Mark, there's a fire... Wake up, you're literally on fire right now...

No response. Convinced that Mark is out like a light, Kyle sneaks his hand down under the sheets and starts to jerk off.

A RUSTLING SOUND underneath the covers starts to get a little faster and a little louder. Suddenly, Mark's eyes SHOOT OPEN.

MARK
Hey, Kyle... You awake?

Kyle freezes.

KYLE
Um, I am now. Ever since you just said that.

MARK
Did you hear that weird sound?

KYLE
No... Did you?

MARK
Yeah, that's why I asked if you did.

KYLE
Oh, ok... Cause I didn't. I think you must have dreamt it.

Mark knows he's being fed bullshit.

MARK
Are you jacking off in my bed, dude?

KYLE
What?? No! Come on... That's disgusting. Don't be absurd.

MARK
Seriously, man. I spent an entire month at sleepaway lacrosse camp last summer. I know what a midnight jerk sesh sounds like.

Kyle knows he's totally busted.

KYLE
Alright... Fine. But honestly, I would never do it unless it was an extreme emergency. Really, this was more of a medical concern for me than anything else.

MARK
So, were you, like... Thinking of my sister?

KYLE
Huh? No! No way. I was thinking of Carmen Elecktra and that chick from "Lost"... Spanking each other and shit. Swear to God.

Mark stares down Kyle and shakes his head.

MARK
Just do it in the bathroom if you gotta go, man.

Kyle darts out of the bed hunching over to shield his boner.

KYLE
You got it. This'll never happen again. You have my word.

INT. BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Kyle darts into the bathroom and parks himself on the toilet, ready to finally kill the pain.

He breathes for a moment and strikes up a good memory, but the moment is over almost as quickly as it begins when Kyle looks up and sees a FRAMED PICTURE OF JESUS CHRIST staring right at him from the bathroom wall.

KYLE
Oh, Jesus...

Kyle tries to shut his eyes and block out the distraction, until the DOORKNOB STARTS SHAKING.

ASHLEY (O.S.)
Hey -- Who's in here? Open up, this is an emergency!

Kyle yanks up his boxers and unlocks the door for Ashley. She's wearing nothing but a TOWEL over her naked body.

KYLE
Holy shit. What're you doing here?

ASHLEY
I'm... I'm gonna take a shower.

KYLE
It's two in the morning.

ASHLEY
I know. This is when I always take my shower.

KYLE
No it's not.

Kyle follows Ashley's eyes to the REMOVABLE SHOWER HEAD dangling harmlessly from the shower wall.

Ashley quickly blinks away and gets an eye-full of the massive tent that Kyle still has pitched beneath his boxers.

Both parties have now been exposed, and they try to save as much dignity as possible while they still can.

ASHLEY
Alright, I'm just gonna go -- I can shower up tomorrow. No big deal--

KYLE
--Oh no, you take over in here, I'm all done--

ASHLEY
--No-no! You were here first. It's all yours. I'm just gonna... Yeah, I'll see ya.

Ashley darts out of the bathroom and shuts the door, leaving Kyle all alone. Ashley then pokes her head back in.

ASHLEY
Hey -- You wouldn't happen to have four triple-A batteries lying around by any chance, would you?

KYLE
Uh, no... Fresh out. Sorry.

ASHLEY
Ok. Goodnight.

Ashley leaves again, and Kyle sits back down on the toilet and sighs. He leans back and receives one more awkward glance from the picture of J.C. hanging on the wall.

INT. AIRPLANE - DAY

Kyle and Ashley both fidget and jerk around in their seats during the middle of their flight.

They each fiddle with their headphones, leaf through in-flight magazines, and skooch their seat-backs up and down, desperate to find some much needed comfort.

It's not happening for either one of them.

INT. ASHLEY'S PRIUS - DAY

Ashley white-knuckles the wheel as she drives her and Kyle through rush-hour traffic. She and Kyle continue to squirm, until Kyle has finally had enough of the madness.

KYLE
Ok -- You know what? I've gotta start lobbing some knowledge bombs before I lose my mind here, so I'll just come right out and say it: I am outrageously horny right now.

ASHLEY
Oh-my-God, you too?

KYLE
Me too? Fuck yes, me too. What the hell were you thinking prancing around in that red bikini all weekend? My dick feels like it's about to break itself off and punch me in the face right now.

ASHLEY
Oh please, don't act like you're the only one. You were being all heroic and masculine with your High School Hero act, winning the hearts and minds of my entire family.

KYLE
Alright, well congratulations, that makes no sense whatsoever. You're the one who has clearly been firing up five thousand tummy crunches a night in an effort to turn my schlong into a goddamn balloon animal. Yet you're turned on by what? The image of me eating a starfish sandwich while your Dad tries to Russian suplex me?

ASHLEY
It was the idea of you that was sexy more than anything else. I waited five years for my parents to buy into you, then we break up and all of the sudden my Dad wants to have you over for barbeque and a keg throwing competition.

KYLE
Oh, so it was the idea of me that acted as the tractor beam pulling you towards the removable shower head at 2 o'clock in the morning?

ASHLEY
Grow up. It's not like you weren't locked up in there for the sole purpose of jerking it too.

KYLE
Yeah, I was, until I looked up and saw the Messiah judging me from his perch on high on the bathroom wall. Do you have any idea how difficult it is to rub one out while you're being stared down by Jesus Christ? It's almost impossible.

ASHLEY
Trust me, if there was a way to take care of this all painlessly, I'd do it in a heartbeat.

KYLE
Yeah, well when you find out, let me know. It feels like I'm carrying a fifteen pound free-weight in the place where my cock used to be. I'm like a human sundial over here. If I show up to school like this on Monday, I'm gonna wind up at the center of a Dateline special report.

Ashley exhales deeply and looks over at Kyle.

ASHLEY
So then what do we do?

INT. KYLE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Kyle and Ashley burst into the apartment, still as worked up and sexually frustrated as ever.

ASHLEY
Absolutely not. The Friendship Constitution is airtight. You said it yourself!

KYLE
Ok-ok-ok, but this is a special circumstance. A medical emergency. And I really doubt my HMO will cover me taking care of this situation in any other way.

Ashley crosses her arms. She doesn't want to give in, but she's about to lose her mind too.

ASHLEY
So, then what do we do? Just throw out the Constitution?

KYLE
No, of course not! Just ask yourself -- What does Congress do when part of the real Constitution goes out of date? They amend it. Why can't we do the same thing?

ASHLEY
But... It's laminated.

Kyle dives into his junk drawer and pulls out a BLACK SHARPIE.

KYLE
And I'm all stocked up on permanent markers, bitches.

INT. KYLE'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Kyle and Ashley lay over the covers on Kyle's bed, gripping the Friendship Constitution and the Sharpie.

ASHLEY
Alright, so how do we amend this? It says "NO SEX" in capital letters. God, it's the very first rule!

KYLE
How 'bout this? No sex -- Unless absolutely necessary to protect the sanctity of the friendship.

ASHLEY
Are you serious?

KYLE
Come on, you saw how we were going at it in the car. We were a half-step away from a full-blown domestic violence incident. Seriously, this is for our own good here.

Ashley sighs. She knows it's wrong, but she can't help herself either.

ASHLEY
Ok. But, really, just this once.

KYLE
Of course.

Kyle writes in the amendment and then hurls the Constitution and Sharpie across the room. He and Ashley tear off their clothes and maul each other.

TEN MINUTES LATER

Kyle and Ashley lay naked under the covers, both completely spent and relieved. They each catch their breath and turn towards each other.

ASHLEY
So, hypothetically speaking, do you think the world would come spinning off its axis if we were to... I don't know... Do that again?

KYLE
Honestly, I think what we just did helped restore equilibrium to the universe and it would be potentially reckless to dismiss it.

ASHLEY
Maybe we should amend the Constitution to give us an open-ended number of sex acts for the rest of the day?

KYLE
Done.

Kyle grabs the Constitution, makes another amendment, and then pounces back on Ashley once again.

INT. KYLE'S APARTMENT - ANOTHER DAY

Kyle and Ashley fall onto the new couch and pull each other's clothes off while sucking face hardcore.

KYLE
God, this new couch is amazing.

ASHLEY
Yeah, it's fantastic.

Their mouths lock again and shirts, shoes, and everything in between gets tossed onto the floor.

INT. ASHLEY'S APARTMENT - ANOTHER DAY

Kyle and Ashley watch another lame movie at Ashley's place.

KYLE
This movie sucks so bad that...
That it sucks.

ASHLEY
This movie is so bad that... I don't even care anymore...

KYLE
This movie is so bad that all I can think about right now is sex.

Ashley grabs the remote and turns off the TV.

ASHLEY
Fuck this movie.

She pulls Kyle onto the couch and straddles him. Her tropical fish look on while they get down to it.

INT. ASHLEY'S BEDROOM - ANOTHER NIGHT

Kyle and Ashley are making out and undressing each other once again.

KYLE
Be honest, was it embarrassing when you had to request a booster seat for your high school boyfriend on prom night?

ASHLEY
Not as embarrassing as your ex-girlfriend claiming that spray-on tans help combat the effects of Global Warming.

KYLE
I'm just curious, what is it like to lose your virginity to a legally recognized dwarf?

ASHLEY
Ok, shut up now.

Ashley rips off Kyle's shirt and pins him on the bed.

INT. KYLE'S BEDROOM - ANOTHER NIGHT

Kyle and Ashley are passed out asleep on Kyle's bed. Kyle suddenly stirs awake and realizes their rules violation.

Instead of pulling himself up and heading out onto the couch, he reaches for the Constitution and makes another timely amendment.

He drops the Constitution on the floor and wraps his arms around Ashley's sleeping body.

CUT TO:

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

Kyle and Charlie eat lunch together. Kyle sips a bowl of soup, while Charlie tries to put his finger on something.

CHARLIE
Did you wear that tie yesterday?...

KYLE
Huh? Oh, this? Uh, I don't know... Maybe.

CHARLIE
And what's that stain on your shirt? Looks like the remnants of yesterday's sloppy joes.

KYLE
I, uh... I don't--

CHARLIE
--Where you been spendin' your nights, Mr. Hamberg?
(beat)
You nailing your ex?

Kyle chokes on his soup.

KYLE
Hey, keep it down, alright? That kind of talk could cost me my job.

CHARLIE
You are, aren't you??

KYLE
Alright-alright... Maybe we're... A bit more involved than I originally anticipated. But it's ok.

CHARLIE
My white ass, it's ok. Do you realize what you're doing here? You're sliding on a slippery slope down Shit Mountain, my friend. Better wear a raincoat.

Kyle finishes up his lunch and leans in towards Charlie.

KYLE
Hey, Charlie, no offense, but I think I know how to manage my own relationships, ok?

CHARLIE
I'm sorry, was that you talking, or was it your cock and balls sending a message directly through your central nervous system?
(beat)
Mr. Hamberg, I'm not trying to give you a hard time here, I just don't wanna see you get hurt. I mean, there are plenty of available chicks out there for you to waste your energy on who aren't gonna leave you in an emotional straight-jacket.

KYLE
C'mon, man. You can't really expect me to take relationship advice from you. It's only been a month since I set you up with Abby.

CHARLIE
Shit yeah, and I've already tallied three handjobs to my name because of it.

KYLE
And... I'm fired. Thanks, bro. Appreciate the real talk.

Charlie pushes his tray aside and gets serious.

CHARLIE
Look, Mr. H., I just want to return the favor here. You and Abby have helped pull me out of a very dark and lonely time in my life, and I want to do the same for you before it's too late. Ok?

KYLE
And how're you gonna do that?

Charlie motions to a table across the room, where Natalie is clearly checking out Kyle from afar.

CHARLIE
Peep Ms. Lawler over there unbuckling your pants with her eyes while enjoying that breadstick a little too much.

Kyle turns and makes brief eye-contact with Natalie. She glances away and takes a small bite of her breadstick.

CHARLIE
Classic oral fixation and a phallic symbol to boot. Plus have you smelled her hair? It's like someone made a weave out of a vanilla candle.

Kyle just shakes his head and then turns around to exchange one more nervous smile with Natalie.

EXT. DC STREETS - DAY

Ashley and Cynthia, both decked out in jogging suits, power walk down the streets of DC.

CYNTHIA
Ashley, I have to be honest with you, I really don't think engaging in an open relationship with your ex-boyfriend is the proper way to find closure here.

ASHLEY
That's what I thought at first too, but I've experienced nothing but positive changes in my life since Kyle and I started doing it again.

CYNTHIA
Like what?

ASHLEY
Like my power walking. I'm moving at an unprecedented pace here. And my metabolism is so high, I can eat whatever I want now. I had a box of Double-Stuffed Oreos for lunch today. And I'm pretty sure my astigmatism is cured.
(MORE)

ASHLEY(CONT'D)
Ever since we did it in the shower last week, I don't have to wear my contacts anymore.

CYNTHIA
Not to be contrarian, but I find all of that very hard to believe.

ASHLEY
Come on, the mind is more powerful than the body, you know that.

CYNTHIA
So you think having all this sex with Kyle is really just medicine for your mind?

Ashley knows Cynthia can see right through her.

ASHLEY
Ok, fine. I'm pretty sure I have a collapsed lung from all this power walking, I gained four and a half pounds from the Oreos, and my astigmatism is--
(she walks straight into a fire hydrant)
OW!! Son of a bitch! That golden retriever came out of nowhere!
(deep breath)
Ok, so what do I do? Start dating again? I don't think I even know how to do that anymore.

CYNTHIA
Why don't you let me introduce you to some new men? You're not the only one who's on the lookout here.

ASHLEY
Really? You wanna be my wing-lady?

CYNTHIA
Is that what they call it now? Wing-lady? I'm not really familiar with that term. But ok.

Ashley smiles and picks up her pace again.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

It's the end of the day and the halls are nearly empty. Kyle and Charlie walk together and approach Natalie's classroom.

CHARLIE
Alright, I'll toss the alley on this oop. Just follow my lead and strike up an innocent convo.

Before Kyle can back out, Charlie strides into Natalie's classroom. Natalie sits at her desk grading papers.

CHARLIE
Hey, Ms. Lawler?

Natalie looks up from her papers.

NATALIE
Hi, Charlie. What's up?

CHARLIE
Um... Nothing. Mr. Hamberg here was just wondering what your favorite movie is.

Natalie peers forward and sees Kyle half-hidden behind the doorway. He casually lets himself into the room.

NATALIE
Hmm... I guess if pressed I'd have to say... "Doctor Zhivago." Mr. Hamberg, what's your favorite movie?

KYLE
Uh... Probably "Ghostbusters 2." The sequel.

Natalie puts her papers aside and smiles at Kyle. Charlie gives Kyle a thumbs up and slips away gracefully.

EXT. SCHOOL PARKING LOT - AFTERNOON

Kyle walks Natalie to her car. In the background, the soccer and field hockey teams practice on nearby fields.

NATALIE
And even though Zhivago is married, he falls in love with a political activist's wife who becomes his muse and basically forces him to choose between fidelity and passion all during the height of the Bolshevik Revolution.

KYLE
Nice... That sounds pretty cool actually.

NATALIE
It is. Maybe I could show it to you sometime. And you could show me the Ghostbusters. It could be like a double feature.

Kyle and Natalie's pleasant moment is suddenly interrupted when a SOCCER BALL sails off the field and into the parking lot. Kyle snags the ball and BOOTS it back onto the field.

NATALIE
Whoa, nice leg. Hey, you know, some of my friends out here just signed up for this adult kickball league. Have you ever heard of that?

KYLE
Adult kickball? No, but it sounds like the sole reason I was put on this earth.

NATALIE
So, you wanna play then? Can I sign you up?

Kyle can't say no to that smile. He just can't.

KYLE
Yeah. Sign me up.

INT. CONGRESSIONAL COUNTRY CLUB - BALLROOM - NIGHT

Cynthia leads Ashley into the tastefully decorated ballroom at the prestigious Congressional Country Club.

The floor is packed with OLDER AND DISTINGUISHED MEN AND WOMEN, who all make Ashley look like a child by comparison.

ASHLEY
Uh, Cynthia... What is this? I thought you said we were going to a club?

CYNTHIA
We are at a club, dear.

ASHLEY
Yeah, but I thought you meant like Love, or H2O, or Zanzibar...

CYNTHIA
I have no idea what those places are. This is a <u>country club</u>.

ASHLEY
Oh... So, then what are we here for?

Cynthia directs Ashley to a sign by the doorway that reads: "WELCOME TO JEWISH SINGLES NIGHT!"

Ashley's face falls as she takes in the much older and wildly un-sexy clientele out looking for love.

ASHLEY
Oh no... No, Cynthia, this isn't what I was expecting at all. Everyone here is so...

CYNTHIA
What? Uptight? Distinguished? Overdressed?--

ASHLEY
--Fucking old.

Cynthia is clearly embarrassed. Ashley scrambles to recover.

ASHLEY
I'm sorry, I didn't mean it like that. I'm just feeling like a fish out of water here is all.

Cynthia scans the club's slim pickings as the truth settles in. Then her eyes suddenly perk up. She has an idea.

CYNTHIA
You know, an old girlfriend of mine from college mentioned that her son moved out to DC to work as a lobbyist. Jeffrey is his name. I think she said he's newly single too. I don't know if that sounds like someone you'd be interested in, but if you want his number I can--

ASHLEY
--Actually, you know what, I've been thinking about it a lot and... What if Kyle's Costa Rica Fellowship isn't that bad after all?

CYNTHIA
Isn't that bad for what?

ASHLEY
For us.

CYNTHIA
But what about your family, and your job, and your--

ASHLEY
--I know, I know, but... It's only two years, right? And if I give Kyle two years to have his adventure, then maybe he'll finally be ready to give me mine.
(beat)
I told him I didn't want to go because I don't want to live on the precipice of the unknown... But looking around here... It feels like I'm already there.

Cynthia watches Ashley stare into the abyss of sad and lonely singles. It's clear Ashley's mind is made up.

INT. KYLE'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Kyle is building the biggest multi-meat sandwich ever made. He stands in amazement at his creation and gets ready to take the first bite, until his phone RINGS. He answers.

KYLE
Hello?

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. ASHLEY'S BEDROOM - SAME

Ashley paces the floor, nervously clutching the phone.

ASHLEY
Hey, it's me. Um, I just wanted to call you real quick and ask you a question.

KYLE
Ok, lemme guess. There's a party in your pants and you need my Yahoo address so you can forward the E-vite to my dick.

A long, awkward beat.

ASHLEY
Um, no. Look, I've been doing a lot of thinking lately about stuff. I don't know, mostly us... And I think we should sit down and talk things over soon.

KYLE
Is everything ok?

ASHLEY
Yeah, no, everything's fine. I just think we should talk. It's important, but... I think it's a good thing. Don't be nervous.

KYLE
Alright. So, when can we do this?

ASHLEY
Are you free for dinner tomorrow?

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Natalie proudly walks down the crowded halls carrying a BRIGHT RED T-SHIRT.

She locks in on Kyle's classroom and walks inside.

INT. KYLE'S CLASSROOM - CONTINUOUS

Kyle is at his desk amusing himself with a fun little science experiment in which he holds a blown-up balloon over the rising flame of a Bunsen Burner.

KYLE
(turning the flame up)
Yes... Keep burning... The Invincible Balloon lives!

Natalie enters and smirks at the sight of Kyle living out his science fair dreams.

NATALIE
Hey, Mr. Wizard, you still wanna kick some balls with us tonight?

Kyle looks up and the over-heated balloon BURSTS in his hand. He grabs at the floating pieces of charred balloon bits and shuts off the burner.

KYLE
What? -- Oh-Oh yeah. I'm in, baby.

Natalie holds up the T-shirt and hands it over to Kyle.

NATALIE
Great! Welcome to "Saved by the Balls."

Kyle admires the shirt and pulls it on over his button-up and tie to see how it fits.

EXT. NATIONAL MALL - AFTERNOON

Kyle arrives on the field just in time for the pregame warm-ups. He spots Natalie waving him over to join the rest of the team. Kyle jogs over and Natalie gives him a hug.

NATALIE
You made it, awesome.
(to team)
Hey guys, this is Kyle. He's new to kickball, so go easy on him, ok?

The rest of the team offers meek waves and hellos. They look like a pretty ragtag group.

KYLE
So who's our first victim?

Natalie points across the field.

NATALIE
Them.

Kyle's eyes go wide as he spots a team of FINELY-TUNED ATHLETES engaging in a synchronized stretching routine.

They all sport IDENTICAL HEADBANDS AND MATCHING HIGH-SOCKS, which move in perfect rhythm as they count out an intense round of jumping jacks.

The team name on their jerseys reads: "SUCK MY KICKS"

KYLE
They don't look so tough.

The Suck My Kicks engage in a WILD MOSH PIT CELEBRATION that fires the team up to a truly unnecessary level.

EXT. KICKBALL FIELD - MINUTES LATER

The two teams take their positions as the game is about to get underway. The Suck My Kicks are up first, and one by one they BLAST the ball into the gaps, scoring almost at will.

The Saved by the Balls crew looks lost, as their opponents waste no time in breaking their spirit. Finally, Kyle takes control by calling a team huddle.

KYLE
Hey, guys! Time out! Bring it in!

The rest of the team huddles around Kyle, desperately looking for some guidance and leadership.

KYLE
Hey, um, I know most of you guys don't know me, but I'm a science teacher. And this game is at least 90 percent pure physics. If it's ok, I'd really like to pitch to the next few batters.

Kyle's teammates have no qualms with his request. The PITCHER hands over the ball. Natalie looks on, impressed.

Kyle takes the mound and lines up for his first official kickball pitch. He breathes deep, rears back, and rips off a SCREAMING PITCH that takes a WICKED CURVE over the plate.

UMPIRE
Strike!

The Suck My Kicks take notice and shut the fuck up. Kyle flashes a broad grin. He knows it's on now.

KYLE'S KICKBALL MONTAGE:

--Kyle HURLS another NASTY PITCH that leaves the Suck My Kicks befuddled. Strike outs and easy pop flies abound.

--Stepping up for his first at-bat, Kyle whips a ground ball down the third baseline. He races towards first as fast as he can, just barely beating the throw with a HEAD FIRST SLIDE.

--Kyle DIVES, JUMPS, and HURTLES in order to get his hands on every fly ball within reach. He scoops up grounders with grace and PELTS opposing BASE RUNNERS square in the back for easy and humiliating outs.

--Kyle RUNS THE BASES like a madman, rounding third with home plate square in his sights. He acrobatically DODGES the throw home and SWAN DIVES to score an amazing run.

--With a tie score in the final inning, Kyle steps up to the plate with a chance to win it. He stares down the PITCHER and rears back to kick, launching a CRUSHING DRIVE deep into centerfield and OVER THE FENCE.

It's a HOME RUN! Natalie and the rest of the team GO WILD, as Kyle rounds the bases pumping his fist like Kirk Gibson in the '88 NLCS.

EXT. NATIONAL MALL - EVENING

The sun sets as the teams head in from the fields. Kyle slaps five with his new teammates. Natalie chases from behind to congratulate him.

NATALIE
Hey Slugger, you coming to the bar to celebrate? It's pretty much the real reason we play, so we have an excuse to drink excessively on a Tuesday night.

KYLE
Are you kidding? That's awesome... Oh wait... Shit, I forgot I've already got something tonight.

NATALIE
Can't you cancel?

Kyle mulls it over for a long moment. Natalie flashes another smile that's impossible to say no to.

INT. IRISH TIMES BAR - NIGHT

Kyle shouts into his phone over the ROWDY BAR CROWD.

KYLE
Hey, Ashley?! Can you hear me?

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. ASHLEY'S BEDROOM - SAME

Ashley, looking great in a new special occasion dress, yells back into the phone.

ASHLEY
Yeah, what's up??

KYLE
I got kinda bogged down playing kickball tonight. The team is out celebrating our historic victory... You think we can push this dinner back to another day?

ASHLEY
You... You're playing kickball? With who?

KYLE
Nobody, just some new friends.

Kyle looks over to Natalie, who's playing a fierce game of flip cup against the Suck My Kicks. Natalie nails her flip, then turns and smiles at Kyle.

KYLE
Actually, why don't you just come over here. We can talk at the bar. Is that cool?

ASHLEY
Uh... Yeah, I mean it was kind of something important, but I guess--

KYLE
--Awesome! Thanks, bud!

Kyle hangs up and heads back to the action at the bar.

BACK TO:

INT. ASHLEY'S BEDROOM - SAME

Ashley stands frozen, confused and annoyed.

ASHLEY
Bud?... I'm a fucking bud?

INT. IRISH TIMES BAR - HALF AN HOUR LATER

Kyle, Natalie, and the rest of their team win another game of flip cup against the dejected Suck My Kicks clan.

KYLE
Oh my God, we're so good! It's like physically impossible for us to lose at this point!

Natalie, now more than a few sheets to the wind, grabs Kyle around the neck and hugs him.

NATALIE
We are fucking awesome!

KYLE
I know! It's so fantastic!

Kyle hugs her back. A long hug. A hug that neither one of them is in any rush to end. Kyle then looks up and sees Ashley entering the bar. He pulls away from Natalie.

KYLE
Hey, I'll be right back, ok?

Kyle slips away and meets Ashley on the other side of the bar.

KYLE
Sweet, you made it.

ASHLEY
Yeah. This looks fun. So, uh, who's the chick?

KYLE
What chick?

ASHLEY
The one who was just dry humping your leg over there.

KYLE
Oh, who, Natalie? She's just... She's just this math teacher. You know, nobody. Just a friend.

Ashley glances up towards Natalie and sees her scoping out Kyle from afar. Ashley knows it's time to spring her big news now.

ASHLEY
Ok... Well, um, I wanted to meet with you tonight to tell you...
(beat)
To tell you I've decided I want to--

NATALIE (O.S.)
--Kyle! You still playing? C'mon!

Kyle directs his attention up at Natalie.

KYLE
Yeah, gimmie one second. I'm coming right up.
(to Ashley)
Hey, uh, we're right in the middle of a game right now. You mind if we do this a little later?

ASHLEY
Um... Ok, but--

KYLE
--Awesome, thanks. Oh, and you're still in for chaperoning the Winter Ball with me next week, right?

ASHLEY
Uh, yeah. Sure.

KYLE
You rock. I'll call you tomorrow.

Kyle takes off back towards the flip cup game. Halfway there, he stops in his tracks and turns back to Ashley.

KYLE
Hey, wait, I'm sorry -- Didn't you say you had something important you wanted to talk about?

Ashley stops on her way to the door and answers without hesitation.

ASHLEY
Don't worry... It's not important anymore.

Kyle watches her go, confused. After a moment, Natalie walks up behind him and drags him back to the flip cup game.

INT. DC STREETS - MOMENTS LATER

Ashley, struggling to mask her hurt, stomps down the sidewalk on a mission. Her phone is glued to her ear.

ASHLEY
Cynthia?... You awake?

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. CYNTHIA'S OFFICE - SAME

Cynthia pushes aside some work on her desk and removes her eye-glasses.

CYNTHIA
Of course I'm awake Ashley, it's seven-thirty. I'm not an invalid, you know?

ASHLEY
Right, well... I think I'm gonna need that number. Of that guy you know?

CYNTHIA
Really? What changed your mind?

ASHLEY
Nothing, just... Just Kyle's out at a bar with this Algebra tramp with a great ass and really stupid shiny hair and I just need to...

Ashley trails off. She doesn't want to say it, but Cynthia can read her mind through the phone.

CYNTHIA
(cringing)
Go get yourself some strange dick, chica?

ASHLEY
Damn straight.

INT. SCHOOL GYMNASIUM - AFTERNOON

A group of TEACHERS and STUDENTS work to transform the school's dusty gym into a winter wonderland in preparation of the upcoming Winter Ball.

Kyle struggles to carry an entire long table all by himself across the length of the gym floor. While Kyle strains himself, Charlie simply surveys the room with a keen eye.

KYLE
Yeah, it's cool, man. Don't help me out or anything.
(drops the table)
I got it.

Charlie helps Kyle straighten out the table.

CHARLIE
Only because I admire and respect you, Mr. Hamberg. But I'm here on a reconnaissance mission of my own.

KYLE
And what're you running recon for?

CHARLIE
Trying to scope out the top spots to share that special Winter Ball HJ with Abby tomorrow night. I'm thinking behind the bleachers would be doable, but it's a little commonplace. The fifty-yard-line is empowering, but a bit cliché.

Kyle starts taping paper snowflakes along the wall.

KYLE
Nice to hear you two kids are working out. By the way, I'm surrounded by superiors and colleagues right now, so can we keep this convo PG please?

CHARLIE
No prob. That reminds me, what's going on with you and Ms. Lawler's fine ass?

Kyle sneaks a peak across the gym at Natalie, who stands atop a ladder, hanging a LARGE BANNER.

KYLE
Not much. I just -- I don't think I'm ready to start dating someone new yet. I mean, Ashley and I were together for over five years. Think of where you were five years ago. It's like I hardly remember how dating even works anymore.

CHARLIE
Mr. H., five years ago I was locked up in my room, sitting on the top bunk doing the same thing to my privates that my once-in-a-lifetime ladyfriend now does to me out of the pure goodness of her heart. The more things change, the more they stay the same. Just keep talking to her. You still know how females work.

Kyle keeps watching Natalie as the banner goes up. Her smile radiates even from forty yards away.

KYLE
Yeah, but I gotta lay off. Ashley is gonna help chaperone the dance with me. I don't wanna do something that could totally mess up our friendship.

CHARLIE
Mr. Hamberg, come on, how are you not getting this yet? -- <u>Women are non-recyclable</u>. It's not possible to eat a delicious chocolate chip cookie and then poop it out into something useful like a satellite radio. When love has run its course, it just turns into shit like everything else.

Kyle turns to Charlie and slaps him in the stomach with a stack of paper snowflakes.

KYLE
Alright, Dr. Phil, deck the halls in this place and get out of my sight. Go on. Seriously, you're giving me a headache.

Charlie shrugs and retreats to the other side of the gym.

EXT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Ashley walks nervously towards the small coffee shop where she is set to meet Jeffrey. As she approaches the door, she checks out her reflection in the window.

ASHLEY
Ugh, you hag.

Ashley frantically adjusts her hair and clothes as fast as she can. She looks a bit crazed as JEFFREY, 30s and kind of impossibly good looking, steps out of the shop.

JEFFREY
Ashley?

Ashley turns with one hand stuck in her hair and the other tucking her blouse into her skirt.

ASHLEY
Um... Yeah?...

JEFFREY
Jeffrey. It's great to meet you.

Ashley removes the hand from her skirt and gives Jeffrey a warm shake. He turns to a small table right behind him.

JEFFREY
I hope you don't mind I ordered for us. Cynthia said you're a big blueberry muffin fan.

Ashley looks over at the table. A steaming hot coffee and an amazing looking muffin are waiting for her.

ASHLEY
Wow. That's perfect. Thank you.

JEFFREY
No problem. And don't worry. You look great.

Ashley takes a seat and tries to keep the smile from jumping off her face.

INT. KYLE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Kyle stands in front of the mirror and ties a perfect Windsor knot, completing the smooth ensemble he has put together for the dance tonight.

He adjusts his collar and blazer and admires how well he has cleaned up for the special occasion.

KYLE
I'm like a white Will Smith.

He takes a satisfied breath and then holds up both hands in front of him like the Lady Justice statue.

KYLE
Ok...
(looks at one hand)
Friendship with Ashley...
(looks at the other hand)
Sex with Natalie.
(one hand)
Friendship with Ashley.
(other hand)
Sex with Natalie.

He weighs both hands and makes his decision by holding the Friendship with Ashley hand high above the other.

KYLE
It is decided.

INT. ASHLEY'S BEDROOM - SAME

Ashley stands in front of a mirror as well. She looks great in another knockout dress with her hair done perfectly.

Just as she wraps up the finishing touches, her phone starts to RING. She grabs it and answers.

ASHLEY
Hello?

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. JEFFREY'S BMW - SAME

Jeffrey clutches his Blackberry and weaves through the busy lanes on I-95.

JEFFREY
Ashley. It's Jeffrey from the other day. How's it going?

ASHLEY
Oh, hey. I'm fine.

JEFFREY
Great. So, listen, I had a really awesome time meeting you and... Well, I got tickets to this gala tonight at the Museum of Natural History. I know it's really late notice and it's totally ok if you don't wanna go, but... I think we'd have a great time together if you wanna check it out.

Ashley tries to stall before she makes her choice.

ASHLEY
Oh -- Um, can you just give me one second?

JEFFREY
Sure.

Ashley sets the phone down and weighs her options. She turns to a PICTURE on her dresser of her and Kyle holding each other prom-photo style at last year's Winter Ball.

She holds the picture up close and stares at it. She's even wearing the same dress now as she was then.

She sets the photo face down on the dresser and picks the phone back up. She realizes it's time for a change.

ASHLEY
Hey -- I'd love to go. I'm even already dressed for it.

INT. SCHOOL GYMNASIUM - NIGHT

Kyle stands against the wall and sways back and forth to the beat of the hip-hop jam that the kids are all rocking out to.

In the center of the floor, Charlie and Abby clutch each other tightly and slow dance, while the rest of their CLASSMATES jump around and go crazy.

Kyle nods his approval to Charlie as he recognizes the sight of first love. Charlie gives Kyle a thumbs up in return.

Kyle's mind quickly shifts to Ashley, and he whips out his phone to send her a quick text reading "*Hey where are you?*"

He fires off the text and then looks up to see Natalie, standing by herself on the other side of the gym.

INT. MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY - SAME

Ashley walks through the museum doors alongside a herd of the rest of DC's best and brightest.

She scans through the crowd and sees Jeffrey, decked out in a smooth tux, waiting for her under a huge WOOLLY MAMMOTH.

JEFFREY
Wow, you look better than Pocahontas.

ASHLEY
I know, that bitch has nothing on me.

Jeffrey laughs and gives Ashley a hug and a kiss on the cheek.

JEFFREY
C'mon, I want to introduce you to some people you're gonna like.

INT. SCHOOL GYMNASIUM - SAME

The DJ starts up a smooth slow jam and all the kids instantly pair off and start dancing cheek-to-cheek.

Kyle moves his way through the crowd, keeping one eye on all the kids, and the other on the lookout for Ashley.

He searches far and wide, but doesn't see her anywhere. He's just surrounded by a swarm of young lovers, leaving himself feeling like the only single in the room.

INT. MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY - SAME

Jeffrey holds court with a group of WASHINGTON BIGWIGS, who all sip flutes of expensive Champagne.

Jeffrey has them eating out of his hand. Every other word from his mouth earns big smiles and nods of approval.

JEFFREY
So I sat him down and said -- Rich, I only want you to ask yourself one thing: Do you wanna live in <u>our</u> world, or in <u>theirs</u>? That's all it took.

Off to the side stands Ashley. Just like Kyle, she looks swallowed up by the mass of social circles all around her.

Ashley checks her cell phone and sees she has a text from Kyle. She reads it and instantly feels like an asshole.

ASHLEY
Shit...

She texts Kyle back and glances up to see Jeffrey waving her over. She flips her phone shut and joins Jeffrey and his audience.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL GYMNASIUM - SAME

The slow song reaches a powerful crescendo just as Kyle gets a new text from Ashley. It reads "*So sorry. Big emergency with a patient. Can't make it.*"

Kyle closes his phone and slumps his shoulders. He's seriously bummed. Charlie sidles up beside him and offers his support.

CHARLIE
She's not coming, huh?

KYLE
No... Something about a work emergency. What can you do, right?

CHARLIE
I know what you can do. That sweet piece of polynomial ass standing all by her lonesome against the wall over there.

Kyle glances over to Natalie and sees her smiling at him. He offers a brief wave and smiles back.

CHARLIE
Alright, Mr. H., I'm outta here.

KYLE
Already? But the dance just started. Where're you headed so soon?

Charlie motions towards the exit doors, where Abby is anxiously waving Charlie over.

CHARLIE
I got a date with the softest right hand in three states.

Charlie takes off towards Abby with a spring in his step.

Kyle watches with a hint of admiration. He sighs and then turns back towards Natalie. He starts walking towards her, and she starts walking towards him.

They meet in the middle of the dance floor, surrounded by dozens of slow dancing kids.

KYLE
Hey.

NATALIE
Hey.

KYLE
Do you... Wanna dance?

Natalie nods and puts her arms around his neck.

NATALIE
Absolutely.

Kyle puts his arms around her waist and they sway together looking not at all unlike the kids all around them.

INT. MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY - NIGHT

Ashley and Jeffrey share a drink together by the bar. The rest of the party continues to bustle all around them.

JEFFREY
So you're sure this isn't like pulling teeth for you? I just hate going to these things alone, it makes it feel like more work.

ASHLEY
No, come on. This is... Fun.

Jeffrey can tell she's faking it a little bit.

JEFFREY
You wanna get out of here and find some place a little more private?

ASHLEY
What do you have in mind?

Jeffrey reaches into his coat pocket and pulls out a couple cookies made in the shape of tiny dinosaurs.

JEFFREY
I don't know, but I've got cookies shaped like little dinosaurs.

Ashley takes a cookie and smirks. The guy's a politician alright, but he's still got charm.

ASHLEY
Yeah. Ok.

Jeffrey takes Ashley's hand and leads her away from the party, towards the woolly mammoth exhibition.

INT. KYLE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Kyle and Natalie, still in their Winter Ball attire, sit on the floor watching the tense finale to "Ghostbusters 2."

They both share a pint of Haagen-Daaz and watch with wide-eyes as PETER VENKMAN talks shit to the evil VIGO.

BILL MURRAY/PETER VENKMAN
Only a Carpathian would come back to life now and choose New York. Tasty pick... Bonehead! If you had brain one in that huge melon on top of your neck, you'd be living the sweet life in Southern California's beautiful San Fernando Valley...

Vigo responds with a SCREAM and pulverizes Venkman and the other Ghostbusters with a paralyzing wave of energy.

BILL MURRAY/PETER VENKMAN
Oh, darn it... Oh, darn it!

Kyle's eyes light up like he's watching the movie for the first time.

KYLE
Jesus! He's amazing! Who else can deliver a line like that? Seriously? Who else can deliver a line like that?

Natalie laughs and plays along.

NATALIE
Nobody.

KYLE
Who's the star of Doctor Zhivago?

NATALIE
Um... Omar Sharif.

KYLE
Ok, can Omar Sharif deliver a line like that?

NATALIE
Only in dreams.

KYLE
Exactly! See, you get it. You totally get it.

As the slime-filled climax plays out on-screen, Kyle and Natalie can't take their eyes off each other.

KYLE
You know... I forgot to tell you... I really like your dress.

NATALIE
Oh yeah?

KYLE
Yeah. The way it sparkles and everything. It's great.

NATALIE
This was actually my senior prom dress. Thank God it still fits.

A soft silence falls over them. Natalie takes Kyle's hand.

NATALIE
I was kind of a prude back then... I never got a chance to take it off for anyone on prom night.
(beat)
Do you want me to take it off for you?

The Ghostbusters are still sliming the shit out of each other on TV. Kyle's gaze doesn't break from Natalie.

KYLE
Yeah...

NATALIE
Alright...

Natalie slips the straps down from her dress and unzips the back. Before she removes the rest, she leans in and KISSES Kyle. Hard.

Kyle grabs onto the dress and takes care of the rest.

CUT TO:

INT. SILVER DINER - DAY

Kyle and Ashley sit down for another important lunch. Kyle takes a breath and gathers his nerves.

KYLE
Yeah, uh, I just wanted to get together because... Well, because I haven't seen you much lately, and I just wanted to talk and see how you were doing.

ASHLEY
I'm great. How are you?

KYLE
I'm... I'm awesome.

It starts to feel awkward.

KYLE
Ok, and, um, just in keeping with the spirit of the Constitution... I think I should tell you that I'm kind of seeing someone right now. So, I don't know if we're gonna be able to keep... You know...

ASHLEY
Oh... Oh, you mean keep... Yeah-yeah, totally. That definitely makes sense.

KYLE
Ok. Cool. You know, it just says we're supposed to be completely honest about all this stuff. I'm glad you under--

ASHLEY
--I'm seeing someone too.

Kyle flinches. He's caught way off-guard.

KYLE
Really? Like, since when?

ASHLEY
I don't know, not very long. He's a lobbyist, he asked me out to this cool political event and... So, yeah...

KYLE
Oh, alright. Alright, nice...
(beat)
Wait -- So, is that where you were the night of the Winter Ball? When you cancelled on me?

ASHLEY
What? Oh -- Um... I-I can't remember. There was a whole bunch of stuff going on that day, and it was just--

Kyle hits back.

KYLE
--So, I'm dating that girl from the kickball team. You know, the math teacher?

ASHLEY
The math teacher? You mean the one who was "just a friend"?

KYLE
Yeah, well... She's kind of more than a friend now. Obviously...

ASHLEY
Oh, well that's really nice. A math teacher and a science teacher. You guys should be very happy leading the fight against Global Warming and disproving the existence of God together.

The tension starts to rise between them, although neither side wants it to get ugly. Ashley takes a breath and tries to soften.

ASHLEY
But I'm happy for you, Kyle. Really.

KYLE
Oh, thanks, yeah. I'm happy for you too.

ASHLEY
You don't have to be.

KYLE
Yeah, but I am.

Kyle reaches into his pocket and pulls out his copy of the Constitution. It's littered with amendment scribbles.

KYLE
In fact, I'm gonna go ahead and add an amendment stating that I do have to be happy for you, no matter who you decide to date, or why.

Ashley reaches into her purse and makes the amendment to her copy of the Constitution as well.

ASHLEY
And I'm making the same amendment, so we can both agree to be happy for each other. Which is exactly what I am... For you...

KYLE
Great. Thank you.

They each take a sip of water while grinding their teeth.

KYLE
We can still be friends though.

ASHLEY
Oh sure.

KYLE
Like, still be each other's best friend.

ASHLEY
Why not?

KYLE
Exactly.
(beat)
Uh, so... You wanna hang out?

CUT TO:

EXT. NATIONAL MALL - DAY

Kyle and Ashley play another game of frisbee on the National Mall fields.

Kyle's eyes look like they've had all the fun sucked out of them. He throws a long pass to Ashley that goes way over her head. She doesn't even attempt to catch it.

The frisbee sails into the waiting jaws of a DOG, who promptly runs away with it. Ashley just watches and gives no chase.

ASHLEY
Screw it...

INT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

Kyle and Ashley check out another lame movie together. They both watch in obvious states of misery.

KYLE
This movie blows cock.

ASHLEY
No shit. Can we just go?

KYLE
Sure.

They both get up and walk over the other patrons on their way towards the exit row.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Kyle and Ashley pound beers and trade sideways glances, as the bitterness between them starts to really swell.

KYLE
(mean)
Hey, remember that time you lost your virginity to a fucking midget?

ASHLEY
(meaner)
Remember that year and a half of your life you wasted pretending you were in love with a functional retard?

KYLE
(muttering)
She didn't give head like a retard...

ASHLEY
What??

Kyle finishes his beer and looks away.

KYLE
Nothing...

EXT. KYLE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Kyle and Ashley stand awkwardly outside the door to Kyle's apartment.

KYLE
So, um... You know, I'd totally like to keep hanging out or whatever, but I've got dive training tomorrow morning so...

ASHLEY
Oh yeah, no problem. I've got stuff that needs doing too. Somewhere.

KYLE
Ok, cool. Well, we'll do this again... You know, a little later.

ASHLEY
Ok. Yeah. Sure.

They both share the briefest hug possible and part without even a goodbye. Before long, Ashley fades into the herd of foot-traffickers flooding the sidewalk.

INT. ASHLEY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Ashley watches TV on the couch next to Jeffrey, trying to keep her irritation with Kyle from registering on her face.

JEFFREY
Hey, you alright?

ASHLEY
Yeah, I'm fine, I'm just...

She's suddenly distracted for a moment as she glances over at her AQUARIUM. She sees that ONLY ONE of the tropical fish remains in the tank.

ASHLEY
Hey, did something happen to my fish?

JEFFREY
Oh yeah, it was the weirdest thing. You must have forgotten to feed them for a little while or something, 'cause when you were in the bathroom I saw one of them literally <u>eating</u> the other one. It was insane! Can you believe that?

Ashley's shoulders fall as she keeps staring at her one surviving fish, drifting alone in the water.

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. CHESAPEAKE BAY - UNDERWATER - DAY

A TINY BLUE GILL FISH wanders alone in the underwater depths. Far off in the distance, Kyle swims through the dark and dingy water, decked out in full SCUBA GEAR.

Kyle explores the vast underwater environment all around him. It is still and empty. Almost no sea life within sight.

He keeps swimming and swimming as far as he can, but that doesn't change the feeling that he's all alone down here.

INT. NATALIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The doorbell rings and Natalie answers. Kyle steps inside and gives her a hug and a kiss.

NATALIE
Hey you. How was the dive today?

KYLE
Awesome. I got all the way to 100 feet deep. One more weekend of open water training and I'm certified.

Kyle pulls a charming bottle of cheap wine from behind his back and hands it over.

KYLE
So, in case you wanted to celebrate by getting wasted and throwing yourself at me tonight, I got you this.

NATALIE
Aw, how sweet. Hold on a sec, I'll pour us a glass.

Natalie bounces into the kitchen, leaving Kyle to mill about the room. The apartment is intellectually decorated. Lots of thick books on the shelves and art on the walls.

Kyle spots a row of FRAMED PHOTOS lined up on one of the bookshelves. He checks out the shots of Natalie with all her friends and family.

One of the photos is of a TEENAGE NATALIE surrounded by a group of classmates, all wearing matching vests. A BANNER reads: "*St. Augustine Math Mavericks - 1998 State Champs.*"

KYLE
Hey, congrats on winning the state math mavericks title ten years ago. That must have been sweet.

NATALIE
Oh, the photo? Yeah, that was actually the day I decided that teaching math was my true calling in life.

She comes back into the living room holding two glasses of wine. Kyle keeps looking at the photo. He spots a GOOFY GUY with AWFUL TEETH next to Natalie with his arm around her.

KYLE
Whoa, who's this guy beside you giving you the rubdown?

NATALIE
Oh, that's Daniel. He was my high school boyfriend.

KYLE
Seriously? And you weren't bothered by the busted grill he's sporting there?

NATALIE
What?

Kyle keeps teasing in a playful way.

KYLE
I mean, c'mon, those teeth are insane. Did you wear a mouth-guard when you guys made out? He looks like he's sucking on a bear trap for God's sake.

Kyle anticipates a laugh, but instead Natalie just snatches the photo from his hand and puts it back down on the shelf.

NATALIE
You don't have to be a jerk...

KYLE
Shit, no, I'm sorry. I was just having a little fun. I'm sure Daniel's a helluva guy. And a brilliant mathematician.

Natalie sees that Kyle meant no harm, so she lets it slide.

NATALIE
It's ok. Let's just watch the movie.

TWO HOURS LATER

Kyle and Natalie sit closely together on the couch, watching another epic scene in "Doctor Zhivago."

Natalie is completely riveted. Kyle looks like he wants to jump out the window.

KYLE
Hey, uh, quick question. About how long is this movie? Approximately?

NATALIE
Why? You don't like it?

KYLE
No-no, I'm just wondering if I'm gonna have to file for social security by the time it's over.

Natalie pulls away from Kyle and glares at him. He tries to respond with a winning smile.

KYLE
What? You're offended?

NATALIE
How can you not love this movie? It's a classic.

KYLE
Well, yeah, on the list of all-time great film mustaches, Zhivago is top ten with a bullet, but c'mon, if I see one more sweeping landscape or fur hat I'm gonna thumb out my own eyeballs.

NATALIE
It's incredibly moving. It won six Oscars!

KYLE
For what? Most suicide attempts inspired by a feature film? I mean, hell, I'm about two minutes away from opening up a vein right here on your couch.

Natalie angrily turns off the TV.

NATALIE
This is such bullshit. I sat all the way through your shitty movie and never complained once!

KYLE
Whoa-whoa-whoa, let's not say things we're bound to regret in the morning. Ghostbusters 2 is and always will be an American treasure.

NATALIE
Jesus, you're really serious about that movie, aren't you? I thought you were just showing it to me as a gag. It was horrible. They made the Statue of Liberty walk by spraying it full of pink jizz! On what planet does that even remotely make sense?

KYLE
How many times do I have to tell you? -- It was positively charged slime! It's not that complicated!

They both pause for a moment to cool down and catch their breath. For the first time, Kyle looks legitimately troubled.

KYLE
Can I ask you something?

NATALIE
What?

KYLE
Could you ever see us having a water balloon fight in the apartment? Or dressing up as Han Solo and Princess Leia for Halloween? Or racing to see who can be the fastest to chug a gallon of milk?

NATALIE
Kyle... What's your point?

KYLE
My point is how're we supposed to be a couple if we can't be each other's best friend first?

Natalie sighs and shakes her head.

NATALIE
I'm twenty-eight years old, Kyle. I've already got plenty of friends. If all you want out of a relationship is another buddy... Then maybe you should just go.

Kyle nods and grabs his coat.

KYLE
Yeah. You're right. See you at school on Monday.

He lets himself out, leaving Natalie utterly dumbfounded.

EXT. DC STREETS - NIGHT

Kyle races through the streets, clutching his cell phone.

KYLE
Ashley? Ashley, you there??

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. ASHLEY'S APARTMENT - SAME

Ashley, wearing an old T-shirt and sweats, talks on the phone in the corner of the apartment. Jeffrey watches TV well out of earshot.

ASHLEY
Kyle? What is it? What do you want?

KYLE
I have to see you. Meet me for dinner tomorrow night. Our entire friendship -- No, our entire lives depend on it.

Ashley looks over at Jeffrey, who is still none the wiser.

ASHLEY
Ok. Fine. But this better be important. I don't have time to just goof around with you anymore.

KYLE
I promise it's going to change your life. For the better.

Kyle hangs up and pumps his fist in the middle of the street.

INT. FANCY RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Kyle, wearing a dusty suit that hasn't come out of the closet in years, sits anxiously at the best table in the house. He spots Ashley entering the room and waves her over.

KYLE
Hey! Ash, over here!

Ashley is confused, but still downright radiant. She sits and quickly starts angling for the fastest possible exit.

ASHLEY
Hey. So, I can't really stay long. Jeffrey's coming over later and--

KYLE
--I decided I'm ready to have kids.

Ashley blinks back at him for a beat.

ASHLEY
I'm-I'm sorry?

KYLE
I'm totally ready. I'm good to go. The engine is primed and I'm fired up to start making babies.

ASHLEY
O-kay... Where the hell did this come from?

KYLE
I thought about it and you're too important to me. I want to do whatever it takes to keep you in my life.

ASHLEY
So, having a child with me right now is your definition of "doing whatever it takes"?

KYLE
Right. Exactly.

Kyle reaches under the table and hands Ashley a SHOPPING BAG full of gifts.

ASHLEY
What's all this?

KYLE
Look inside. Check it out.

Ashley opens up the bag and pulls out a BABY ONESIE that reads "I Heart My Daddy."

KYLE
Isn't that the cutest thing <u>ever</u>? I mean can you imagine that being worn by an actual baby?? How freaking cute would that be?

Ashley keeps digging through the bag. The next thing out is a BOX SET of The Wiggles: Greatest Hits.

KYLE
You know The Wiggles, right? They're huge with babies right now. Like Duran Duran circa 1984 huge. I got another set for my car as well, I'm totally digging it so far.

Struggling to control the look of horror on her face, Ashley pulls out the last item in the bag. It's a PICTURE FRAME with a photo of a RANDOM BABY inside.

ASHLEY
And what's this?

KYLE
A picture... You know, of a baby.

ASHLEY
But whose baby is it?

KYLE
It's just the one that came with the frame. I figured you could just look at that random baby until we have our own, and then we could replace it with a photo of whatever our baby looks like. Which will totally be way cuter than that one.
(beat)
So, what do you think?

Ashley stuffs the items back in the bag and stares at Kyle, pain rising in her eyes.

ASHLEY
I can't believe you.

Kyle shifts uncomfortably in his seat, totally caught off guard by Ashley's reaction.

KYLE
What? What's wrong?

ASHLEY
Are you serious -- What's wrong?? What's wrong is a month ago, I went temporarily insane and asked you to dinner to tell you that I was ready to uproot my life and live on a boat in Costa-fucking-Rica--

KYLE
--Wait, hold on, you never said anything about coming with me on the fellowship.

ASHLEY
I know, 'cause you had already blown me off for that geometry slut. And now you want to come back weeks later and try to pull this shit? After I've finally managed to move on? Fuck off!

Heads start to turn around the restaurant at the sight of Ashley's anger.

KYLE
What is wrong with you? I'm willing to give up everything I have, my future, my dream job... Just to make you happy!

ASHLEY
Oh nice, I could really get used to having that held over my head for the next forty or fifty years. You decide you'd rather settle down with me than contract scurvy and pull rabid Man-o-Wars out of your asshole for two years and that's supposed to make me want to be the mother of your child? Christ, Kyle -- I don't even want to be your friend anymore.

Kyle staggers as he absorbs the gut punch.

KYLE
Ok, well, that's kind of fucked up.

ASHLEY
No, what's fucked up is you telling me you want to be best friends, when you really just want to line me up for some cheap ass while you move in on other chicks.

KYLE
I'm sorry? Line you up for cheap ass? From my perspective, it seemed like a pretty even split on who was soliciting the sex here.

ASHLEY
Bullshit.

The neighboring tables are now officially locked onto the meltdown happening right before their eyes. Kyle doesn't even notice as he whips out his cell phone.

KYLE
Ok, well to confirm, I'm just gonna flip through a few of your old text messages. Here we go. "There's a hunger inside of me. Come over." Real subtle. "I like my vagina the same way I like my turkey -- Stuffed." Thanksgiving-themed. How festive. Oh, here's a good one. It reads simply: "FUCK. NOW." All caps, bold, and underlined!

An OLD MAN sitting at the next table has finally heard enough. He turns around and gets in Kyle's face.

OLD MAN
Excuse me, I'm trying to have dinner with my family. Can you two take this fracas some place else?

KYLE
Hey, Pappy, this is a private conversation, so why don't you finish your veal, enjoy retirement, and mind your business, alright? Appreciate it.

The Old Man stands up to wave over the MANAGER, while Ashley tries to stifle the pain and rage she's feeling inside.

ASHLEY
Well thanks for confirming how I felt all along. I'm basically just your whore.

KYLE
Yeah, well you know what they say about whores: You know it's time to quit when you start cumming with the customers.

ASHLEY
Go to hell, Kyle. Actually, no, first go take your stupid fellowship, get cock rot from Free Willy and choke on a blowfish, then go to hell.

KYLE
Fine! I'll do all those things, cause I'd rather wash up on a deserted island and suck dick for quarters for the Swiss Family Robinson than raise some shitbag kid in the suburbs with you for the rest of my life!

ASHLEY
And I'd rather go home right now, fuck my new boyfriend stupid and then drink myself into a coma in hopes that I wake up someday and forget about the five years of my life that I wasted being with you!

Just as the Manager makes his way over to the table, Ashley darts up and storms out.

MANAGER
Excuse me, is everything ok over--

Kyle nearly knocks the Manager over as he springs to his feet and chases Ashley out the door.

EXT. RESTAURANT - CONTINUOUS

Kyle races to catch up with Ashley as she hails a cab.

KYLE
So that's how it's gonna be, huh? You're gonna walk out on us after five years of being the best thing in each other's lives?

ASHLEY
Yeah, right after I make one more amendment to your stupid Constitution first.

Ashley reaches into her purse and pulls out a pen and her beat-up copy of the Constitution.

ASHLEY
(scribbling)
Rule #34... In the event that Kyle suddenly turns into a complete and utter raging douchebag... HE CAN GO FUCK HIMSELF!!

With that, Ashley throws the Constitution at Kyle, stomps into a cab, and SLAMS the car door as hard as she can.

Kyle picks up her Constitution and stares at the last words Ashley has left behind. He tries to rip the paper in half, but it won't tear because of the laminating.

KYLE
Goddamn!... Laminating!...

INT. ASHLEY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ashley and Jeffrey lay in bed in the middle of the night. Jeffrey is passed out, but Ashley is still wide-awake.

Tears fall down her face as she cries as softly as she can. Her gentle sobs finally stir Jeffrey out of his slumber.

JEFFREY
Hey... What's wrong, babe?

ASHLEY
Nothing, just... I was thinking about my pet fish that got eaten and... I'm just a little upset about it.

Jeffrey pats her on the shoulder and rolls over, turning his back to Ashley as she sniffles softly to herself.

INT. KYLE'S CLASSROOM - DAY

Kyle sits alone at his desk, holding the laminated Friendship Constitution over a huge BUNSEN BURNER FLAME.

He watches in a daze as the plastic bubbles and burns, allowing the paper underneath to toast. Charlie enters the room after smelling the harsh fumes from the hallway outside.

CHARLIE
Jesus, Mr. Hamberg, what're you doing?

Kyle doesn't even look up. He just keeps watching the Constitution burn.

KYLE
What I should have done a long, long time ago, Charlie.

Charlie pulls a seat up in front of Kyle's desk. Charlie sports a dejected look that rivals Kyle's for sheer misery.

CHARLIE
I think I know what you're going through. Abby dumped me last night.

Kyle finally snaps out of it and puts out the flame on his Bunsen Burner. He sees the pain written across poor Charlie's face.

KYLE
Shit... I'm sorry, man. What happened?

CHARLIE
I don't know. I asked a million questions and didn't get a single answer.

Charlie looks up at Kyle with pleading eyes.

CHARLIE
Do you think we could go fire off some rockets or something?

KYLE
I'll do you one better.

EXT. SOCCER FIELD - AFTERNOON

Kyle and Charlie stand in front of a massive SUPER ROCKET, which is really just a HUGE PYRAMID of tiny rockets all stacked up and taped to each other.

The guys construct their pyrotechnic monstrosity while continuing their conversation.

CHARLIE
I've decided it's just not worth it. I refuse to subject myself to this level of hurt again. I'm going back to a female-free life. Not even a thousand simultaneous handjobs could possibly cancel out the amount of pain I feel in my heart right now.

KYLE
Tell me about it.

CHARLIE
I'm going to narrow my focus to hardcore gaming. With enough practice, I can compete at a national level and maybe carve out a decent living for myself. It's not really about the money, it's about what makes me happy at this point.

KYLE
You're exactly right. I need to start doing what's gonna make me happy for once too.

CHARLIE
And what's that?

The guys finish taping up their SUPER ROCKET. Kyle leans down to light the fuse.

KYLE
Word on the application for my fellowship came in... I set sail in two weeks. I'm not a science teacher anymore, Charlie. I'm a badass oceanographer.

As soon as Kyle finishes his sentence, the fuse burns out and the super rocket BLASTS into the sky above them.

The bottom row of rockets IGNITES, setting off the row above it and so on, until the entire pyramid EXPLODES in a fantastic show of fire and colored smoke.

CHARLIE
Holy shit. It's beautiful.

KYLE
It sure is.

From the parking lot, the school PRINCIPAL sees the carnage in the sky and rushes over to the field.

PRINCIPAL
Jesus Christ, Kyle! What the hell are you doing?? Are you trying to get yourself fired?!

KYLE
No, sir, Principal Laski.
(beat)
I quit.

The FLAMING WRECKAGE of the super rocket finally CRASHES to the ground. Charlie puts his arm on Kyle's shoulder as they watch the smouldering heap char the grass in front of them.

INT. CYNTHIA'S OFFICE - DAY

Ashley sits up on Cynthia's couch, letting it all out again.

ASHLEY
This is just the right thing to do. I should have realized it from the beginning. When you break-up with someone, you do it for a reason. Just cut each other off. It's the only way to move on.

Cynthia just nods and looks down at the floor.

ASHLEY
So, now he can have whatever kind of life he wants in Costa Rica, and I'll get exactly what I'm looking for here. It's the perfect set-up really. Nothing like thousands of miles of distance to really put someone out of your mind for good.

Ashley looks to Cynthia for confirmation, but she is silent.

ASHLEY
Don't you think?

Cynthia finally looks up and locks eyes with Ashley.

CYNTHIA
No. I think you're both making a big mistake.

ASHLEY
What? Why? You saw how miserable he made me. Why should I have to put myself through that?

CYNTHIA
Because it's worth it. That's why. Because for all the hurt and the pain that you have to suffer through now, it's worth it to still have him there. Just to tell you that everything is going to be ok in a way that no one else can.

Ashley takes in Cynthia's words and focuses her thoughts.

ASHLEY
I really appreciate you talking with me so much, Cynthia, but I'm a psychologist too. And a damn good one. All I'm looking for here is a little support. I already know how to talk to myself like a shrink.

CYNTHIA
I'm not trying to talk to you like a shrink, Ashley. I'm trying to talk to you like a friend.

Without giving Ashley a chance to respond, Cynthia turns around to her desk and buries herself in some work.

Ashley leans back on the couch and looks up at the ceiling, left with only herself to help sort out her feelings now.

CUT TO:

EXT. COSTA RICA BEACH - OCEAN DOCKS - DAY

Kyle hauls his belongings across an awesome sandy beach.

He approaches the DOCKS up ahead and whips out a Fellowship BROCHURE. The brochure showcases a picture of the RUSTY OLD DIVE BOAT that will be Kyle's home for the next two years.

KYLE
Ok, made it... Home sweet--
(beat)
Ho-ly shit...

Kyle lowers the brochure and gets his first look at the REAL FELLOWSHIP BOAT.

It's a RIDICULOUSLY SWEET MEGA-YACHT, pulsating with loud music and squeals of excitement coming from those already on-board.

Kyle looks up and spots a distinguished BEARDED MAN in his 60s peering down at him from the top deck. This is DR. WINSTON ZIMMET, the head of the Costa Rica Fellowship.

DR. ZIMMET
Hello there! You must be Kyle! You're the last fellow to arrive, let's get you on-board!

Before Kyle can respond, a team of CREW MEMBERS emerge and take hold of his luggage, whisking him away to board the fantastic ship.

EXT. FELLOWSHIP BOAT - TOP DECK - MOMENTS LATER

Kyle gets his first glimpse at the incredible set up he's about to enjoy during his time at sea.

Fellowship STAFFERS patrol the top deck carrying trays of hors d'oeuvres and flutes of champagne.

TWELVE OTHER GEEKED OUT FELLOWS chill out in a badass HOT TUB, reel in FISHING POLES over the top railing, or speed around in JET-SKIS in the water down below.

The place is basically the sickest party Kyle has ever seen in his life. He stares in bewilderment as Dr. Zimmet approaches with a huge smile.

DR. ZIMMET
Not bad, huh? Think you could get used to living like this for the next couple years?

KYLE
This is... This is nothing like the brochure. Are you sure I'm in the right place?

DR. ZIMMET
Absolutely. We made some upgrades to the program this year. Remember the poor young man who died on that episode of "Deadliest Catch"? One of our esteemed alumni and the heir to a massive oil fortune. Can you say "endowment"?

Kyle locks eyes with some of the other Fellows, who welcome him warmly and invite him to join in on the fun.

KYLE
This is incredible...
(beat)
Oh my God, is that an omelette chef?

Behind the hot tub, an OMELETTE CHEF works his magic and cooks up eggs made to order.

DR. ZIMMET
Indeed it is. Come on, I'll show you around.
(loud, to everyone)
And after Kyle settles in, everybody get ready because we'll be officially setting sail and preparing for our first deep sea dive together!!

The Fellows all SCREAM AND APPLAUD, none louder than Kyle.

INT. JEFFREY'S BMW - EVENING

Jeffrey and Ashley, both dressed to the nines once again, make their way through highway traffic.

JEFFREY
You sure you don't mind coming with me to one of these things again?

ASHLEY
No, come on, of course not. I think they're fun.

JEFFREY
Alright, well I owe you one. This weekend we'll do whatever you wanna do. What kind of stuff did you do for fun before you met me?

Ashley takes a moment to think it over.

ASHLEY
I don't know... Nothing special. But I'll think of something.

Jeffrey smiles at her and steps on the gas.

EXT. FELLOWSHIP BOAT - TOP DECK - DAY

Kyle stands on the deck getting fitted with his scuba gear by Dr. Zimmet's trusty staff. He and all the other excited Fellows are decked out in full deep-sea diving suits, scuba fins, and oxygen tanks.

DR. ZIMMET
Ok, everybody ready? Stay close as a group and keep your eyes wide open. Remember, today's adventure is just the first of many!

Zimmet leads the Fellows to the side of the boat. He faces them once more before getting set to jump.

DR. ZIMMET
Get ready to see a part of the world you've only dreamed of!

Kyle smiles and watches as Zimmet DIVES into the ocean. Kyle and the other Fellows all pour in behind him.

INT. NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART - EVENING

Jeffrey holds court over another elite political gala.

He reels in his crowd of onlookers with his usual spiel, this time with his arm around Ashley. She stands close by his side, feeling very much like part of the group.

JEFFREY
So, I said to him -- Anthony, think about it. Whose world do you wanna live in. Ours? Or theirs?

The crowd eats it all up, as usual. Jeffrey shoots a winning smile to Ashley, who returns it, proud of her man.

EXT. OCEAN DEPTHS - UNDERWATER - DAY

Kyle is 400 feet below the surface. All around him is OCEAN LIFE of every size, shape, and color imaginable.

MULTI-COLORED SCHOOLS OF FISH wander about. JELLYFISH, EELS, and SEA TURTLES all float past a stunning CORAL REEF that shimmers against the bright blue water.

Kyle soaks it all in with eyes wide open and a huge smile under his scuba mask. He swims to get as close as he possibly can to all the stunning creatures surrounding him.

He then turns and spots ONE SINGLE FISH swimming by itself in a seemingly empty corner of the ocean.

The fish is identical to the tropical fish that Kyle once shared with Ashley.

Kyle locks onto the tiny fish and swims closer towards it. Everything around Kyle fades away and it slowly starts to feel as if he and the fish are now the only living things in the entire ocean.

Just as Kyle makes it within inches of the lonely fish, it looks at him for a moment and then swims away, disappearing into the abyss.

Kyle's face falls as he watches it go. He stops swimming and just drifts in the water alone while the other Fellows continue their underwater explorations far off behind him.

INT. ASHLEY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Ashley is seated at the dining room table, waiting as Jeffrey serves her a plate of freshly cooked food.

JEFFREY
And for being such a good date at yet another painfully boring work function, I present you with my famous Chicken Marsala and homemade couscous.

ASHLEY
Awesome, looks great, thank you.

Jeffrey sets down the attractive plate and sits. There's a clear lack of conversation between them as they start to eat.

ASHLEY
Hey, do you dare me to try and fit this entire piece of chicken in my mouth?

JEFFREY
Um... Why would I do that?

ASHLEY
I don't know... It might be funny.

JEFFREY
Yeah. But it would also be stupid.

Ashley nods and they both go back to their food.

INT. FELLOWSHIP BOAT - KYLE'S ROOM - SAME

Kyle, still soaking wet and melancholy, sits on a KING SIZE BED in the middle of his incredible room.

The room is decorated like a five-star suite at the Plaza. A sick PLASMA TV hangs from the wall. There's a fully stocked WET BAR in the corner. A HUGE AQUARIUM takes up half of the rear wall behind the bed.

Despite the incredible accommodations, Kyle couldn't look more depressed. Finally, he pulls a SATELLITE PHONE off the wall and dials a number he knows by heart.

INT. ASHLEY'S APARTMENT - SAME

Ashley and Jeffrey are carrying their dishes to the sink.

ASHLEY
Hey, I've gotta run to the bathroom. I'll be right back out to help, ok?

JEFFREY
No problem.

Jeffrey turns on the sink and starts rinsing the dishes as Ashley's phone starts to RING.

JEFFREY
Ash, phone's ringing! My hands are soaking!

ASHLEY (O.S.)
Let it go to the machine!

Ashley's machine BEEPS. A familiar voice fills the room.

KYLE (V.O.)
Yeah, uh, hi. Ashley, it's Kyle, calling from the middle of the Pacific Ocean... Um, I don't exactly know how to say this, but I'm sitting here in a ridiculously tricked out maritime suite that has satellite TV and a full wet bar for some reason and... It turns out all I can think about is how badly I screwed things up with you.

Jeffrey listens with a blank stare. Ashley emerges from the bathroom, listening closely to every word.

INT. CHARLIE'S BEDROOM - SAME

Charlie, still miserable and heartbroken, plays a game of World of Warcraft on his computer.

As he navigates the interactive world, he receives an IM from someone named **HannahShotFirst**. It reads: *Hey, it's Hannah from history class. Sorry about you and Abby...*

Kyle's voice carries over as Charlie reads.

KYLE (V.O.)
I know the way we left things between us was bad, and now it must seem like there's no going back from there, but even if you'd rather swallow a cyanide pill than see my face ever again, I still can't have you out there thinking you're the kind of person that I can just leave behind for good. Because you're not...

As Charlie types back, his WARCRAFT CHARACTER is approached by a BEAUTIFUL ELF. Charlie gets another IM reading:

HannahShotFirst: *You're way too cute for her anyways. I always thought she was kind of a bitch.*

Charlie smiles again for the first time in days.

INT. COUNTRY CLUB BALLROOM - SAME

Cynthia meanders around another Singles Night populated with plenty of DISTINGUISHED OLDER FOLKS. She looks lonely and saddened by her bad luck once again.

KYLE (V.O.)
Today I finally got a chance to live on the precipice of the unknown. I was 400 feet below the surface of the ocean, and I saw a part of the world I'd only dreamed of before. But it didn't matter, because that part of the world didn't include you...

Cynthia is about to leave the ballroom, until she is approached by a kind-faced man named ALAN. Alan doesn't say a word, he just stands in front of Cynthia and smiles.

CYNTHIA
Can I help you?

ALAN
I'm sorry, I'm just a little nervous. It's not every day I decide to ask the most beautiful woman in the room to dance with me.

Cynthia barely knows how to react, but the smile on her face comes naturally. Alan extends his hand and she takes it.

INT. ASHLEY'S APARTMENT - SAME

Ashley still stands outside the bathroom door, frozen as she takes in the rest of Kyle's message.

KYLE (V.O.)
And I don't care if you're in my life as a girlfriend, or a best friend, or whatever... But I know now that I need you here somewhere. I do. And I just had to say it because I don't want to wait two whole years to finally tell you how important you still are to me. So I'm telling you now...
(beat)
Yeah, so that's everything I guess. Thanks for listening and have an excellent night. Bye.

Kyle hangs up and the machine BEEPS again. Ashley is still frozen where she stands, shock and raw emotion written all over her face.

Jeffrey looks over at her, unsure how to proceed.

JEFFREY
That... Was your ex-boyfriend?

ASHLEY
Yeah.

Jeffrey nods. There's a long beat of silence between them, until Jeffrey breaks it with a BURST OF LAUGHTER.

JEFFREY
Holy shit! That was like the most ridiculous thing I've ever heard in my entire life!

Jeffrey keeps laughing his ass off, while Ashley just stares at the blinking light on the answering machine.

JEFFREY
You seriously dated this guy? Was he always this much of a raging puss-bag?

Jeffrey keeps laughing to himself, until Ashley finally looks up and glares at him.

ASHLEY
Fuck you.

The laughter stops in an instant. Jeffrey looks back at her with confusion.

JEFFREY
What? C'mon, I'm just messing around. The guy's a total nut!

ASHLEY
Here's a quick rule check for you, Jeff. You don't get to talk crap about someone's ex until you've effectively made them forget about that person. And so far the only thing you've made me forget about are the decent standards I used to have when selecting a rebound guy.

JEFFREY
Ok, wait a second -- What's your problem?

ASHLEY
My problem is that instead of watching shitty reality TV and eating Pop-Tarts with Kyle, I'm stuck here with you, picking apart dry chicken while pretending to give two shits about how you spent your day making it easier for twelve-year-olds to buy assault rifles.

JEFFREY
Ok, that is not what I do -- And hold on -- Are you saying you'd rather be back together with that clown than be with me?

ASHLEY
No, what I'm saying is "that clown" is my goddamn best friend, and I'd rather do nothing with him than do anything with you. Because Kyle may not shave regularly, he might not own a power suit, or drive a car with automatic locks and windows... But I know for damn sure that he'd never turn his back on me while I cried in my sleep. And lately, that's pretty much the only thing I've really needed.

Jeffrey's all out of bullets now. There's nothing he can say to that. Ashley finally breaks off her hate stare and grabs her coat.

JEFFREY
Where are you going?

ASHLEY
Out. And don't waste your time being here when I get back.

She reaches for the door and then turns back around.

ASHLEY
Oh yeah, and one more thing.
(beat)
Your couscous sucks ass.

With that, she's gone, leaving Jeffrey shaken by the sound of the slamming door.

EXT. FELLOWSHIP BOAT - TOP DECK - EVENING

Kyle wanders aimlessly around the rocking top deck of the fellowship boat. All around him are other Fellows chowing down on PLATTERS OF SUSHI, SINGING KARAOKE, or making use of the sweet TETHERBALL AND BADMINTON COURTS.

Kyle watches sadly as everyone around him has the time of their lives.

KYLE
Seriously?... Tetherball?

He turns and spots Dr. Zimmet sitting on the edge of the deck by himself, gazing out at a MAGNIFICENT AMBER SUNSET. Kyle walks over to Zimmet in search of some peace and quiet.

KYLE
Do you, uh, mind if I sit down?

DR. ZIMMET
Kyle, hi. Of course not. Join me.

Kyle takes a seat next to Dr. Zimmet and stares out at the sunset with him. It's one of the most amazing sights Kyle has ever laid eyes on.

Dr. Zimmet pulls out a BOTTLE OF CHAMPAGNE and offers a glass to Kyle.

DR. ZIMMET
Care for some champagne?

KYLE
Oh, no thanks.

DR. ZIMMET
You sure? It's the real deal. Dom Perignon. Ever since the endowment, we're swimming in the stuff. I'm starting to put it in my cereal now.

Zimmet sits back and takes a long look out at the sunset. It's the kind of sight that never gets old for him.

DR. ZIMMET
It really is amazing, isn't it?

KYLE
Yeah. It is.

DR. ZIMMET
So... Is it everything you hoped it would be?

Kyle waits for a long beat before answering.

KYLE
No.

Dr. Zimmet reads the discontent on Kyle's face. Zimmet's reaction says this is something he's seen before.

DR. ZIMMET
Let me guess... A woman?

KYLE
You could say that.

Zimmet nods and turns back towards the ocean. The sun slowly starts to fall behind the water horizon.

DR. ZIMMET
Kyle, can I share with you a lesson I've learned from spending the past thirty-five years living at sea?
(beat)
The big difference between people and fish is... If you find a fish that you like, and you have to let it go... At least you know there's still a million more out there exactly like it.

Kyle stares out at the water as the words sink in. He knows what he has to do now. He hops to his feet and grasps Dr. Zimmet's hand in a warm shake.

KYLE
Dr. Zimmet, thank you for everything, but I think I have to get off this boat as quickly as possible.

DR. ZIMMET
I know you do, son. There's one like you every year. And I haven't blamed a single one of you yet.

Zimmet turns and WHISTLES to the members of his crew.

DR. ZIMMET
Hey, Carlos! Fire up the jet-ski! We got a waffler!

Zimmet puts his arm around Kyle and walks him to the other side of the deck, where the karaoke and tetherball rage on.

DR. ZIMMET
Hey, how 'bout an omelette for the road?

INT. CAB - NIGHT

Ashley sits in the back of a cab weaving its way through traffic. She clutches her phone and waits for an answer.

ASHLEY
(into phone)
Cynthia! It's Ashley. I just wanted to call and say... Thank you for being such a good friend.

INT. COUNTRY CLUB BALLROOM - SAME

CLOSE on Cynthia's phone, sitting unattended on an empty ballroom table. As the phone's "New Message" chime RINGS, we turn to see Cynthia dancing cheek-to-cheek with Alan.

Cynthia holds Alan's shoulders tightly, as they both get lost in the moment together.

EXT. OCEAN - SAME

Kyle holds on tight as Dr. Zimmet's crew member, CARLOS, navigates the jet-ski through the choppy ocean waters.

KYLE
Hey, thanks a lot for getting me to the airport, by the way!

CARLOS
No problem, sir!

Kyle pulls out his folded up omelette and offers a bite to Carlos.

KYLE
You want a bite of my omelette?

CARLOS
No thank you, sir!

Kyle nods and takes a bite as Carlos revs up the gas and ZOOMS towards the shore.

EXT. REAGAN NATIONAL AIRPORT - NIGHT

Ashley's cab pulls up at the departures gate and she rushes out as fast as she can.

INT. REAGAN NATIONAL AIRPORT - MOMENTS LATER

Ashley runs her ass off towards the closest TICKETING AGENT.

She cuts through the line full of TRAVELERS and nearly collides with the ticket counter.

ASHLEY
This is an emergency -- I'm in like three destination weddings this weekend. I need to get on the next flight to Costa Rica!

INT. COSTA RICA AIRPORT - SAME

Kyle pulls the same stunt at the Costa Rica airport. He runs through a BUSY CROWD and barrels into the nearest ticket counter.

KYLE
I have to get to DC right away or I'm gonna miss my liver transplant!

INT. ASHLEY'S PLANE - NIGHT

Ashley sits in her seat on the plane, looking like she's about to hyper-ventilate. She tries to get a grip and waves down a FLIGHT ATTENDANT.

ASHLEY
Excuse me. You don't happen to know where I can score a Valium, do you?

The Flight Attendant looks at Ashley like she's insane.

INT. KYLE'S PLANE - SAME

Kyle grips his armrests and holds his breath as his plane gets in the air. He's so nervous that he grabs his paper BARF BAG and starts HUFFING AND PUFFING into it.

The WOMAN sitting next to Kyle leans away from him and shifts over to an empty seat in the next row.

INT. ASHLEY'S PLANE - EIGHT HOURS LATER

Ashley's plane has finally landed and the "Fasten Seatbelts" sign DINGS off. Ashley is the first one out of her seat. She races past each row on the way to the exit.

ASHLEY
I'm serious, I'm late for like eighteen weddings!

INT. KYLE'S PLANE - SAME

Kyle squeezes through a cramped row full of PASSENGERS trying to unload their luggage. He muscles his way towards the exit, pissing off everyone within reach as he goes.

KYLE
Sorry, sorry -- Excuse me! I have a liver transplant!

INT. COSTA RICA AIRPORT - MINUTES LATER

Ashley runs as fast as her legs will carry her through the arrivals gate.

INT. REAGAN NATIONAL AIRPORT - SAME

Kyle does the exact same thing at Reagan, as he races towards the taxi lane outside. He blows through another long line and jumps into the first cab he sees.

INT. COSTA RICA CAB - MINUTES LATER

Ashley is planted in a Costa Rica cab now. It zooms onto the streets away from the airport.

COSTA RICA CABBIE
So, where we going?

ASHLEY
Um... Oh shit... I have no idea.

EXT. ASHLEY'S APARTMENT - SAME

Kyle dives out of his cab and sprints to Ashley's building. He pounds on her BUZZER and yells upstairs as loud as he can.

KYLE
ASHLEY!! ASHLEY!!! IT'S ME!!
KYLE!!!

PISSED OFF NEIGHBOR (O.S.)
SHUT THE FUCK UP!!

KYLE
SORRY!!!
(beat)
DO YOU KNOW WHERE ASHLEY IS?!?
(another beat)
ACTUALLY NEVERMIND -- I'LL JUST
CALL HER!!

As the Neighbor yells back, Kyle whips out his cell phone and dials Ashley's number.

KYLE
Hello?? -- Ashley??

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. COSTA RICA CAB - SAME

Ashley's eyes light up at the sound of Kyle's voice.

ASHLEY
Kyle, thank God! Where are you? I have to talk to you.

KYLE
I'm on your front steps, screaming your name into the buzzer thingie.

ASHLEY
Wait, what?

KYLE
I'm in DC!

ASHLEY
Why the hell are you in DC?? I'm in the middle of Costa Rica!

KYLE
What the shit are you doing there??

ASHLEY
I came to see you! I just did the whole crazy sprint through the airport thing!

KYLE
So did I! I sprinted my ass off!

KYLE/ASHLEY
FUCK!

They both take a moment to catch their breaths.

ASHLEY
We need to meet. As soon as possible. Where's somewhere directly in the middle?

KYLE
I'll call Mr. Horowitz, the Geography teacher.

ASHLEY
Great, call me back.

They both hang up simultaneously and turn to their cabbies.

KYLE/ASHLEY
I need to go back to the airport!

CUT TO:

INT. MIAMI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - MORNING

The arrivals gate is packed on a hectic morning. Travellers haul luggage and usher children on the PEOPLE-MOVERS that slide across the busy floor in both directions.

Kyle, red-eyed and utterly exhausted, rides on one side of the people-mover, searching far and wide for Ashley.

Ashley, ready to pass out on her feet, rides on the other side, where she anxiously scans for any hint of Kyle.

Everyone around them looks straight ahead and minds their own business. It seems like not a single pair of people in the entire airport are making eye-contact.

Until Kyle and Ashley finally lock eyes as they move towards each other from opposite directions.

They both break into sweet smiles as they creep closer and closer to one another. As their paths cross, Kyle holds up two coffees. Ashley holds up two muffins.

Neither of them have any trouble keeping their eyes open now.

INT. AIRPORT ARRIVALS GATE - MORNING

Kyle and Ashley walk down the airport floor together, picking apart their muffins while they talk.

ASHLEY
No way! Tetherball and badminton??

KYLE
Yes, it was ridiculous! And you should have seen the toilets. I would have slept on one if I didn't already have a King-size bed with 1200 thread count Egyptian sheets.

Ashley slows her stride and looks up at him.

ASHLEY
Sounds like they had everything you ever wanted on that boat.

KYLE
Yeah, they were close... Just not close enough.

They keep walking and hold their gaze for a long beat.

ASHLEY
So then what do we do now?

Kyle looks around and spots the huge FLIGHT MAP that lists all the arrivals and destinations of the day's flights. He leads Ashley over towards the map.

KYLE
I don't know... I mean, we're both here, stuck in the middle of an international airport...

Kyle and Ashley reach the flight map and gaze up at it. The swarm of travellers around them keeps moving.

KYLE
Maybe we should go somewhere.

ASHLEY
Yeah... I guess we could go pretty much anywhere we want.

KYLE
Ok then, your choice. Pick any place and we'll go there. Together.

Ashley scans the map for a moment and then looks back at him.

ASHLEY
Actually... I think I'm pretty good right here.

She gives him a sweet smile and he does the same right back to her.

KYLE
Yeah... I think I am too.
(beat)
So... You wanna hang out?

She nods and they start walking together, their eyes locked on each other the whole way until they are swallowed up by the herd of travellers and we...

FADE OUT.

THE END