OVER BLACK:

YALE'S VOICE
It started up again. A... bout a month ago.

FADE IN:

On THOMAS YALE (32). Lying in bed, eyes open. We hear his voice from a different day.

YALE'S VOICE (CONT'D)
I got out of bed.

INT. BROOKLYN APARTMENT -- LATER

His hand picks an orange from a bowl of oranges.

YALE'S VOICE
I packed a lunch.

INT. BY THE FRONT DOOR -- LATER

He slides on his overcoat.

YALE'S VOICE
I grabbed my coat and my briefcase and, like always, headed down McGuinness to the G train.

INT. SUBWAY STATION -- LATER

Empty platform. The train sighs to a stop in front of him.

YALE'S VOICE
It was a day like any other, really. Except that, you know, it was the middle of the night.

INT. SUBWAY CAR -- MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT

We now see Yale is wearing blue pajamas under his coat. He holds his briefcase on his lap. He is sleepwalking.

YALE'S VOICE
I'd wandered out the door before... But this was the first time I'd made it to the station.

The other 3 am train riders look at him strangely. Someone takes his picture. FLASH to:

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INT. ANOTHER SUBWAY STATION -- LATER

YALE'S VOICE
I even transferred to the A, no problem.

He swipes his Metrocard and pushes through the turnstile.

EXT. LOWER MANHATTAN / SUBWAY STOP -- LATER

His slippers shuffle up the subway steps into night.

YALE'S VOICE
I've been walking that same route five days a week...

EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET -- MOMENTS LATER

Shuffling past the marble steps to City Hall.

YALE'S VOICE
... For the past seven years...

INT. ONE FEDERAL PLAZA -- MOMENTS LATER

Yale walks towards the Federal Building's EMPLOYEE ENTRANCE.

YALE'S VOICE
So I made it all the way to the office before I woke up.

He slams face-first into the glass doors and stumbles back, blinking his eyes awake, taking in the city around him. Empty. Asleep. In darkness.

YALE'S VOICE (CONT'D)
That was the last time...

INT. A ROOM SOMEWHERE -- NIGHT

Yale sits across from us, wearing a different pajama top.

YALE
Until this time, of course.

He clears his throat. A MAN OFF-SCREEN talks back to him.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
When was the first?

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YALE
Uh... I want to say three...

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
Three years ago?

YALE
Three years old, actually.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
That seems young. Must've been triggered by something.

YALE
What do you mean?

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
Like a traumatic experience.

Yale spins his wheels again.

YALE
Hmmmmmm... No? No. Nothing I can think of. I mean, it *was* roughly around the time my mother died suddenly and tragically, but... Other than that... no.

An ALARM SOUNDS. TITLES BEGIN OVER:

INT. BROOKLYN APARTMENT -- MORNING

Music hits Yale's ears and opens his eyes.

RADIO DJ (O.S.)
... Wrapping up another set from Steven Tyler, Joe Perry and the rest of the boys, that's none other than Aer-o-smith with...
(screechy singing)
Dream On!
(back to jivey talking)
It's Twofer Tuesday on New York City's only classic rock station, Q one o' four point three. FM in the AM. Let's rock you through your workday with back-to-back *TULL*.

JETHRO TULL'S PAN PIPES CARRY US THROUGH YALE'S MORNING:

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INT. KITCHEN -- MOMENTS LATER

Yale drops an orange in a paper bag.

INT. BY THE FRONT DOOR -- MOMENTS LATER

He slides on his coat.

INT. SUBWAY STATION -- LATER

He stands on the crowded subway platform, briefcase in hand.

INT. SUBWAY CAR -- MOMENTS LATER

Staring at peoples' shoes. At the ads to LEARN ENGLISH.

INT. SUBWAY STATION -- LATER

He transfers to the A, swiping his Metrocard with a BEEP, but the turnstile sticks. He tries the card again.

EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET -- MOMENTS LATER

Shuffling past City Hall, a line already forming.

EXT. ONE FEDERAL PLAZA -- MOMENTS LATER

Another line wrapped around the Federal Building, every race represented. Yale passes them all on his way towards the EMPLOYEE ENTRANCE. This time, the glass doors open for him.

INT. ONE FEDERAL PLAZA -- CONTINUOUS

CLOSE on YALE's GOVERNMENT ID. TOM YALE, U.S. IMMIGRATION. His picture is smiling, but his eyes are closed, mid-blink.

CLOSE on YALE's BRIEFCASE passing through the X-RAY, the outline of a bagged lunch inside.

INT. ELEVATOR -- MOMENTS LATER

Yale pushes 17. The hand after him pushes 18. Yale looks at this man; his sharper suit, his slightly-better briefcase, his S-shaped cuff-links. The elevator fills up between them.

INT. ELEVATOR -- MOMENTS LATER

DING. The door slides open.

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YALE
Excuse me.

Yale squeezes past those going to higher floors and onto --

INT. THE SEVENTEENTH FLOOR -- CONTINUOUS

Pictures of ELLIS ISLAND adorn the walls. Yale's fingers punch a code in the keypad -- 1234 -- And the DOOR OPENS.

INT. INS -- CONTINUOUS

Everything is a variation on beige. The walls are beige. The rugs are beige. Yale says hello to several beige people.

YALE
Morning, Dale. Susan. Hjiman.

One of them gives him a nod. Probably Susan. Yale makes his way past the rows and rows of cubicles, file folders stacked to the seven-foot ceilings, and arrives at --

INT. HIS CUBICLE -- CONTINUOUS

Where a LARGE AFRICAN-AMERICAN WOMAN (40s) is slamming a gigantic stack of file folders on his desk.

YALE
Oh, hi, Urmila. How are you?

She grunts a response. Yale looks at the florescent light buzzing and flickering directly above his rolling chair.

YALE (CONT'D)
Say, Urms, I hate to bother you about this, again, but I still could really use getting that light fixed. Kinda like a little disco in here.

URMILA
(dry)
Then why aren't you dancing.

She shuffles out the door. Yale's office has no windows, no view. A plastic plant sits next to his nameplate which sits next to a framed photograph of a PRETTY BLONDE WOMAN.

Yale hangs up his overcoat, sets down his briefcase, and looks at the stack of files on his desk.

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YALE
(to himself)
And now for the question-and-answer portion of our show.

WE INTERCUT DIFFERENT INTERVIEWS as Yale interrogates --

-- A GUATEMALAN WOMAN (30s) and her AMERICAN HUSBAND --

YALE (CONT'D)
Mrs. Nielsen...

-- A RUSSIAN MAN (30s) and his AMERICAN WIFE --

YALE (CONT'D)
Mr. Nostradov...

-- A GERMAN WOMAN (20s) and her AMERICAN HUSBAND --

YALE (CONT'D)
Mrs. McKeever... You've filed for an I-130 adjustment of status requesting permanent residency here in the United States in petition of your recent marriage.

-- Back to the Guatemalan woman --

YALE (CONT'D)
In a moment, I'll conduct separate interviews with you and your husband to determine if your marriage is bona fide in the eyes of the law.

-- The Russian man raises his right hand.

YALE (CONT'D)
You hereby swear that the evidence you are about to give is the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

RUSSIAN MAN
Yes.

GERMAN GIRL
I do.

GUATEMALAN WOMAN
Si.

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YALE
When were you married?

Yale clicks his pen. He addresses the Guatemalan woman.

GUATEMALAN WOMAN
Five months and three days ago.

YALE
And you live with your husband?

GUATEMALAN WOMAN
Yes. Of course.

YALE
So you came here with your husband this morning?

GUATEMALAN WOMAN
Mh-hm...

YALE
And how did you two get here? Train, bus, taxi?

The woman shifts in her seat, caught in the lie.

GUATEMALAN WOMAN
What was the first one?

-- CLOSE on a red stamp hitting their file -- REJECTED.

-- Yale now sits across from the Russian man.

YALE
You were married in December of last year, correct?

RUSSIAN MAN (THICK ACCENT)
That is correct.

YALE
And how long had you been in the country before you met Kerry?

RUSSIAN MAN
Who?

Yale looks at him.

YALE
Mr. Nostradov, do you know your wife's name?

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RUSSIAN MAN
(beat)
I call her "Honey"?

-- CLOSE on the stamp hitting his file -- REJECTED.

-- IMMIGRANT after IMMIGRANT sits across from him:

MEXICAN MAN
We met through a friend...

AFRICAN WOMAN
He was born in New Jersey...

BRITISH MAN
She sleeps on the left...

JAPANESE WOMAN
His middle name is James...

ITALIAN MAN
Her toothbrush is red...

KOREAN MAN
White...

AUSTRALIAN WOMAN
Blue.

-- COUPLE after COUPLE slides their "proof" across his desk; the endless mounds of paperwork stack up in front of him --

-- Then stacked on top of the files -- a VHS TAPE. Yale looks up at the German woman and her American husband.

AMERICAN HUSBAND
That oughtta do the trick.

CLOSE on the tape, labeled "Dan and Olga's Wedding Night".

YALE
(naive)
Alright...

-- CLOSE on YALE'S MINI TV/VCR playing -- *knock knock*.

OLGA (ON TAPE)
Comeeng!

The German woman, OLGA, in trashy lederhosen costume, bounces into frame. DAN is at the door, wearing a tank top.

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DAN (ON TAPE)
Chimney Sweeper.

OLGA (ON TAPE)
Tank Gudness. My shimnee is so dirdy.

CLOSE on Yale as the moaning begins. And grows louder. Louder still. It slowly hits him -- this is a sex tape.

-- REJECTED.

INT. CAFETERIA -- LATER

Yale sits alone at a corner booth, staring out at the bustling cafeteria. He eats his sandwich. He drinks his drinkable yogurt. The orange remains untouched.

There are voices nearby. They belong to his co-worker NOONAN (30s) and new guy PARDEEP (20s, Indian).

NOONAN (O.S.)
No, I think that's the NRC. Wait, no, the FRC. Yale would know.

Suddenly, they're in front of him.

NOONAN (CONT'D)
Hey, Yale, where do the A-Files end up? Is it the NRC or the FRC?

YALE
Ahhh, that depends. If the alien becomes a citizen, then it goes to the FRC, which is actually a retired limestone mine and one of the first natural archives.

NOONAN
Uh-huh. Hey, this here is Par... Pardeep? Am I saying that right?

PARDEEP
Yes.

NOONAN
He just transferred from the Albany office. This is Yale.

YALE
Pardeep.

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PARDEEP
Hello.

NOONAN
Pardeep's an adjudicator-in-training.

YALE
Oh. Well, you're in the right place. If not the wrong hands.

NOONAN (TO PARDEEP)
This is the guy to go to if you got a question. Yale's in Mensa.

YALE (TO PARDEEP)
It doesn't mean anything.

NOONAN
He's a certified genius.

YALE
It doesn't measure intelligence.

Yale throws out his lunch, except for the orange.

YALE (CONT'D)
Just your ability to recognize patterns.

He puts the orange back in his empty case. And shuts it.

INT. FIRST FLOOR HALLWAY -- LATER

Yale and Noonan maneuver through the halls, Pardeep in tow.

PARDEEP
So, what makes a marriage bona fide in the eyes of the law?

NOONAN & YALE (AT THE SAME TIME)
Paperwork.
(Noonan continues)
Credit card statements...

YALE
Medical records...

NOONAN
Phone bills... Emails....

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YALE
Photos that don't look like they were taken the same day... Her name listed as his emergency contact...

NOONAN
It's pretty obvious. One in two turns out to be a fraud.

YALE
One in three.

NOONAN
I thought it was one in two.

YALE
You're thinking of the divorce rate.

PARDEEP
But how can you tell?

They arrive at the elevator bank.

YALE
Tell what?

Yale pushes UP.

PARDEEP
If they are really in love.

NOONAN
(interrupting)
Shhh... check it...

Noonan motions to THREE MEN IN SHARP BLACK SUITS striding down the hall towards them. Briefcases. Sunglasses. Gold cuff-links. If it's not in slow-motion, it should be.

The one in front is a statuesque AFRICAN MAN (30s), flanked by TWO OTHER MEN, equally tall.

PARDEEP (WHISPERING)
Who are they?

NOONAN (WHISPERING)
The Stokes Unit.

YALE (WHISPERING)
The Eighteenth Floor.

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The three guys from eighteen part the three guys from seventeen as they pass. After a beat:

NOONAN
They investigate sham marriages.

PARDEEP
So, they are like you?

Noonan looks at him.

NOONAN
Do you see us taking cabs on Uncle Sam's dime? No, we do the initial interview, in-office, fifteen minutes. Stokes does surprise visits. In the field. They have an expense account and everything.

Yale watches them walk towards the automatic doors.

NOONAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
See, if we're unsure after our interview, we pass the file along to Stokes and one of their guys takes over the investigation. Course Yale here's never had to do that. Never even dipped the stamp in ink, isn't that right, Yale?

Yale watches the Stokes disappear in the blinding sun.

NOONAN (CONT'D)
Yale?

YALE
Yup?

Yale joins the guys IN THE ELEVATOR. Pardeep turns to him.

PARDEEP
It only takes you fifteen minutes?

The door starts to close.

YALE (MATTER-OF-FACT)
Three. I can tell in three.

CUT TO:

An EGG TIMER, TICKING DOWN FROM THREE MINUTES:

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CHRISTINE (O.S.)
It's just really important to them that we do it in a church.

INT. YALE'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Yale sets the egg timer on his night-stand. He is sitting up in bed. Blue pajamas. He calls out.

YALE
I had no idea they were so religious.

Yale's fiancee, CHRISTINE (30) enters from the adjacent bathroom, cotton ball in hand.

CHRISTINE
They're paying for it, Tom, it's the least we could do. And anyway, I was raised Catholic. What would people think?

She moves to her side of the bed.

YALE
(answering)
You're Buddhist.

CHRISTINE
That's the thing about Buddhism: You can practice it however you want.

YALE
(being funny)
That's the thing about Buddhism?

She gives him a look, then reaches into her bedside table and pulls out a long, silk scarf.

CHRISTINE
Did you make the appointment yet with the doctor?

YALE
What doctor?

She moves onto the bed and straddles him.

CHRISTINE
For the state license, stupid.

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She leans her breasts over his face, begins tying his left wrist to the bedpost. She makes a tight knot.

CHRISTINE (CONT'D)
It's just a blood test. You can do it on your lunch break. In and out.
(beat)
Just don't tell them about the sleepwalking. They could see that as a real problem.

Double knot. She dismounts. Yale looks at her.

YALE
Are you really listening to that?

He gestures to an AUDIO BOOK on her bedside table. SELF HAPPENS by DR. HOWARD -- a dashing man in his fifties adorns the jacket cover.

CHRISTINE
Yes. Does it bother you that much?

He shrugs.

CHRISTINE (CONT'D)
You know, there's nothing wrong with self-improvement, Tom. He gives the tools to take charge of your life; stop listening to other people, start living for yourself.

She crawls under the sheets and gets close.

CHRISTINE (CONT'D)
(like a compliment)
You've got so much potential, Tom. You just need to unlock it. And maybe then you'd go up for a raise. And we can finally move out of this neighborhood...

YALE
And get a dog?

CHRISTINE
Well, we're still in negotiations about that.

She leans in for a good-night kiss. Stops.

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CHRISTINE (CONT'D)
Why do you smell like bleach?

He points to his mouth. A Crest Whitestrip inside.

CHRISTINE (CONT'D)
Guess it's better than yellow teeth.

She kisses the air in his direction, shuts off her bedside lamp and crawls under nine covers. Yale sits motionless, his arm raised, restrained to the post.

YALE
Would be nice to have a dog, though. Wouldn't it?
(then)
To come home from work every night and have something be there to greet you and love you unconditionally?
(no response)
Christine?

DING. The egg timer. Yale removes his Crest Whitestrip.

YALE (CONT'D)
Christine?

Christine is turned away from him, headphones on. Yale reaches for his bedside lamp, but can't quite reach the cord. He shimmies himself down, attempting to get comfortable, his arm raised above his head, the light shining in his face.

INT. SEVENTEENTH FLOOR -- MORNING

Yale drags himself off the elevator, bleary-eyed, exhausted, and makes his way towards the INS offices.

At the far end of the hall, a YOUNG COUPLE, an AMERICAN MAN and his CHINESE WIFE (20s), seem to be in a quarrel. They get quiet as Yale gets closer, and eventually passes.

INT. INS -- MOMENTS LATER

He shuffles down the hallway towards his cubicle, the sound of moaning coming from inside his office. Followed by:

OLGA (O.S.)
Ich benin min hoo-hoo?

Yale steps in --

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INT. HIS CUBICLE -- CONTINUOUS

To see Noonan and a group of INS officers huddled around his TV/VCR cracking up at "Dan and Olga's Wedding Night."

YALE
Alright, come on. Show's over.

The guys groan, starting to disperse.

NOONAN
But look, if you go frame-by-frame, there's not even penetration.

YALE (SHUTTING IT OFF)
Inappropriate. Inappropriate.

Yale spots Pardeep on his way out.

YALE (CONT'D)
Et tu, Pardeep?

PARDEEP
He told me research.

Yale shuts the door behind them.

INT. YALE'S OFFICE -- LATER

An untouched orange rests on his stack of files. Yale sits blankly across from a HANDSOME SERBIAN MAN (30s) holding the hands of his AMERICAN WIFE (30s).

YALE
(drone)
And the frequent trips home?

SERBIAN MAN
Oh, my daughter. She is in university there. I try to visit as much as...

Suddenly, the SOUND of something on eighteen. Footsteps. Yale looks up at the ceiling, distracted, the sound drowning out the Serbian man's voice. Yale stares at the ceiling, the flickering light above him, until the footsteps quiet.

SERBIAN MAN (CONT'D)
... But I know she will love Agatha as much as I do...

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The man smiles at his wife, Agatha, full of hope, as Yale slides open his desk drawer, pulls out a stamp, and SLAM.

YALE
Mr. Kusturica, we cannot approve your section 245 adjustment of status at this time. You'll receive a letter regarding this decision in the mail. After which, you'll need to find other means of staying in country or risk deportation by the end of...

SERBIAN MAN
I don't understand.

Agatha's eyes are filling with real tears.

YALE
You... answered several questions differently and your paperwork was not evidence enough of the union you claim to have.
(looking at them)
Your marriage is not realized by the United States.

SERBIAN MAN
(louder)
My marriage is not realized??

Yale tries to hand him the paper. The Serbian man turns instead to the framed picture of Christine on Yale's desk.

SERBIAN MAN (CONT'D)
Is this your girlfriend?

YALE
Sir...

SERBIAN MAN
Your fiancee maybe? I don't see a ring on your finger.

The man sits forward. Staring daggers into Yale.

SERBIAN MAN (CONT'D)
Well, I've got a ring on my finger, sir. See there? And it signifies my commitment to this woman. Not paperwork and matched answers. Not your law book definition of it.
(MORE)

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SERBIAN MAN (CONT'D)
And here you sit with your rubber stamp and your judgment call and you think you know what love is?

The man stands, towering over Yale.

SERBIAN MAN (CONT'D)
Why don't you ask *her* about it?

AMERICAN WIFE/AGATHA
Emir, please...

SERBIAN MAN
Why don't you ask her what you ate for breakfast and it's the fate of the world?

The man swipes Christine's picture, the glass shatters into pieces on the floor.

SERBIAN MAN (CONT'D)
What does she know? Huh, Mr. Yale? Why don't you test that?

His wife pulls him out the door, but the screaming continues.

SERBIAN MAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
I will cut you, Thomas Yale! I will cut you!

Yale is motionless, staring at the doorway. After a moment, he slides onto the floor to pick up the broken glass. He is placing the tiny shards in his palm, when:

CHINESE WOMAN (O.S.)
Hello?

Yale looks up to see the stockinged legs of the Chinese woman he saw in the hallway. Her American husband is standing behind her. Yale rises to see them.

YALE
Hello.

Unknowingly, his hand is bleeding, cut by a piece of glass.

CHINESE WOMAN
Are you okay?

YALE
(clueless)
I'm fine, how are you?

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CHINESE WOMAN
(pointing)
You're bleeding.

Yale looks; his hand sure is bleeding onto his files.

YALE
Oh my. Right you are.

AMERICAN HUSBAND
Should we get some help?

YALE
(working through the pain)
No no, it's fine... it's like a paper cut... only deeper... and full of tiny bits of glass.

The Chinese woman comes towards Yale, removing the pink scarf around her neck. She takes Yale's hand and begins wrapping it with the scarf.

YALE (CONT'D)
That's fine... That's...

The Chinese woman ties a gentle knot at his wrist. Yale looks, noticing a streak of blue hair hidden in her conservative bun. She looks up at him. He steps back.

YALE (CONT'D)
Thank you.

He gestures to the chairs across from him. They sit.

Yale drops into his rolling chair and scootches forward, crunching over glass, and Christine's picture.

YALE (CONT'D)
So... you... are...

Yale fumbles through their file, his hand bleeding through the scarf.

AMERICAN HUSBAND
Damian and Mae Pritchard.

The husband, DAMIAN, reaches out and hands Yale their "proof of marriage". Yale looks down, a photograph of MAE on her wedding day stares back. He looks up at her.

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YALE
Mrs. Pritchard... You've filed for an I-130 adjustment of status requesting permanent residency here in the United States in petition of your recent marriage. In a moment, I'll conduct separate interviews with you, and your husband, to determine if your marriage is bona fide in the eyes of the law.

Yale raises his right hand, the wound bleeding through the pink silk. The Pritchards do the same.

YALE (CONT'D)
You hereby swear that the evidence you are about to give is the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

MAE AND DAMIAN
I do.

Yale looks at them. And CLICKS a pen.

YALE
When were you married?

INT. YALE'S OFFICE -- LATER

Damian now sits alone across from Yale.

DAMIAN
April 22nd.

YALE
Why did you choose to have it performed at City Hall?

DAMIAN
Well, Mae doesn't have any family here and...
(slight laugh)
I like to pretend I don't have any family here...

YALE
How did you meet?

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DAMIAN
I teach an ESL class.
(explaining)
English as a Second Language.

YALE
I'm familiar.

DAMIAN
Mae was one of my students. Best in class. Well, there *was* this French-Canadian giving her a run for her money...

YALE
Isn't that kind of unethical?

DAMIAN
Which part?

YALE
The part where you married a student?

Damian stops. Thinking.

DAMIAN
I'm only part-time.

YALE (PRE-LAP)
So, you came here on a tourist visa?

INT. YALE'S OFFICE -- LATER

Now Mae sits on her hands across from Yale.

MAE
Yes. Tourist.

YALE
What brought you to New York?

Mae thinks.

MAE
The souvenirs.

Yale is taken off-guard. He almost-smiles while writing.

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YALE
The souvenirs?
(writing it down)
That's a new one.
(then)
And when did you meet your husband?

MAE
I start class right after I came here and we went out that night.

YALE
What did you do on your first date?

MAE
We went to the movies. We saw City Lights. Have you seen it?

YALE
Uh... no...

MAE
It's a silent picture. They're my favorite. I like Charles Chaplin ones the best. There's this theater on the west side that shows 'em, this little old man plays on an out-of-tune piano up front. I love silent pictures.
(beat)
No words to... get in the way of all the rest of it.

Yale looks at her. It is silent for a moment. Unbearably silent. He finally moves, his elbow hits the TV/VCR by accident. The SOUND of Olga's moaning pours out.

She looks at him strangely. Yale reacts. Quickly ejecting the tape. He fumbles with it for a moment. Mae tries not to laugh. Yale recovers. Picks up his pen again.

YALE
Just a few more... details...

WE INTERCUT BETWEEN THEIR SEPARATE INTERVIEWS:

DAMIAN
She sleeps on the right.

MAE
He is on the left.

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DAMIAN
She's an only child.

MAE
He has two sisters.

DAMIAN
Her middle name is Ling.

MAE
I promised I wouldn't say.
(beat)
Francis.

DAMIAN
She's allergic to wool.

MAE
He lactose intolerable.

DAMIAN
She was a painter.

MAE
He wants to be Brando.

DAMIAN
Her toothbrush is orange.

MAE
His is white and...

Mae makes a propeller noise. She looks up at Yale with her big brown eyes.

MAE (CONT'D)
Is that it?

YALE
What were you fighting about in the hallway?

MAE
What?

-- Damian sits across from him now.

YALE
In the hallway before... what were you fighting about?

Damian deliberates.

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DAMIAN
Money.

-- Yale looks at Mae. There's a pause, then:

MAE
The dog. It's the only thing we fight about.

Yale looks up at her -- *an unmatched answer*. She blinks.

MAE (CONT'D)
Is your hand okay?

He looks at his hand, wrapped in her scarf, flexes it.

YALE
Yes...

MAE
(awkward laugh)
Don't suppose I get special treatment for saving your life?

Yale looks up at her. She gives a strange smile. He shifts his chair forward, hitting the desk. When he does, the orange on top of his stack of folders rolls off, onto the floor, and comes to a stop at Mae's feet.

Mae leans over to pick it up. Holds the fruit in her hand.

MAE (CONT'D)
In Chinese culture, the orange is a symbol of happiness.

She looks at him.

MAE (CONT'D)
What is it here?

He blinks. Clears his throat.

YALE
I don't think it's anything.

Yale reaches for the orange. When their hands touch, the flickering light above Yale's head suddenly stops flickering. He looks up at it. And back at Mae.

We hear the strong, yet soothing voice of DR. HOWARD.

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DR. HOWARD (O.S.)
Life... is about choices.

CUT TO:

-- DRAWER POV: Yale slides it open and stares inside.

DR. HOWARD (O.S.) (CONT'D)
What separates you from other warm-blooded creatures...

-- THREE STAMPS. REJECTED. APPROVED. STOKES.

DR. HOWARD (O.S.) (CONT'D)
... Is your ability to make choices.

-- Yale deliberates. He picks up REJECTED. Drops it.

DR. HOWARD (O.S.) (CONT'D)
The average person makes three hundred sixty-two choices in the course of a single day.

-- His hand moves over the APPROVED stamp.

DR. HOWARD (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Seventy percent of these choices are about food.

-- In one swift motion, he grabs the STOKES STAMP, rolls it in ink for the very first time.

DR. HOWARD (O.S.) (CONT'D)
But how many of these choices will affect the course of your life?

-- Yale hands the stamped piece of paper to Mae and Damian. She follows Damian out the door. And out of Yale's life.

CUT TO:

A VIDEO SCREEN -- DR. HOWARD (60), the same man from Christine's audio book, is projected twelve feet by nine, wearing a microphone headset and a mock turtleneck.

DR. HOWARD (CONT'D)
Seven.

Dr. Howard, actual size, steps in front of the screen, his huge image now projected behind him. This is his seminar.

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DR. HOWARD (CONT'D)
But who is making these choices?
(then)
Are YOU in the driver's seat on this road of life?

INT. AIRPORT MARRIOT BALLROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Dr. Howard paces across the stage. A banner behind him reads "PUT THE YOU IN YOUR YOUNIVERSE!" He addresses a crowd of a thousand nodding followers.

DR. HOWARD
Or is it "society"? Is it your boss? Or your mother-in-law? Or your kids? Are you driven by your fear of losing the job you hate to pay for stuff you don't even want?

A side door opens. Yale walks in and finds a solid piece of wall to lean against in back. He observes.

DR. HOWARD (CONT'D)
If that's what's controlling your YOUniverse, then your life is seriously in need of a YOUturn. Before somebody is giving your YOUlogy, and there isn't enough YOU in it.

The audience laughs collectively, like sheep baa-ing. Dr. Howard paces across the stage.

DR. HOWARD (CONT'D)
I was teaching my son to ride a bike, holding the seat as he was peddling along, and I noticed that as soon as he would feel himself lose control, he would let go of the handle bars... Take his hands right off, of course, causing the bike to crash.
(then)
My good friend Jeff Gordon told me that when he's in a race, and his car starts to spin out, the worst thing he can do is look at the wall; that'll only make you drive directly into it, like my son was doing. He would sense the crash and he'd look right at that wall until it happened.
(MORE)

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DR. HOWARD (CONT'D)
(then)
But it's a *choice* -- whether you'll look at the wall and slam into it -- Or look at the road and drive ahead. Isn't that right, Tom?

Yale stands up a little straighter.

DR. HOWARD (CONT'D)
Ladies and gentlemen, my only son, Tom Yale.

The speaker gestures to the back of the room. The thousand nodding followers turn their heads one hundred-eighty degrees to get a look at him. They all frantically wave.

Yale shyly waves back, looking on-stage at his father.

INT. ASPHALT GREEN -- LATER

New York's finest swim club. Yale and Howard, dressed in white robes and rubber shoes, walk towards the Olympic-sized swimming pool; twelve long lanes reflected in the green crystal skylights above.

HOWARD
Three and a half hours on the pulpit. If only I was born rich, instead of handsome.

YALE
Well, I don't know if you've heard, Dad, but there's this new fad called retirement...

HOWARD
A man is defined by what he does, Tom. Not what he doesn't.

Howard takes LANE ONE. Yale gets LANE TWO. He looks up to see his FATHER'S WIFE (late 40s) sitting very far away at the other end of lane one.

YALE
Why do you drag Jill here at every hour of the night?

HOWARD
She likes to watch.

In the distance, Jill waves to Yale. Yale waves back.

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HOWARD (CONT'D)
Where's the cap I got you?

YALE
I left it at home. In a box. Under the bed.

HOWARD
It's hydrodynamic, son. The ridges cut through the water.

YALE
The ridges cut through my scalp.

Howard shakes his head and sighs.

HOWARD
I don't know how you ever expect to beat me.

YALE
I don't expect to beat you.

HOWARD
Nor should you.

Howard drops his robe, revealing as good a body as any sixty year-old could have, squeezed into very small swim briefs.

Yale looks at his father. Something's different.

YALE
Did you shave off your body hair?

HOWARD (SHAKING HIMSELF OUT)
I shaved seconds off my time is what I did.

YALE
Dad, you're sixty years old, I don't think that'll grow back.

HOWARD (MAKING A POINT)
Tom, who was the first woman to fly an airplane around the world?

YALE (SIGHING)
Amelia Earhardt.

HOWARD
And who was the second?

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YALE
Please don't quote you to me, okay? And don't make me part of your sales pitch. That's why I stopped going to those things in the first place.

HOWARD
Not that couldn't use it.
(to someone else)
Hey, Chuck?

They slip into the water, adjacent lanes, and put on their goggles, almost competing to see who can do it first.

HOWARD (CONT'D)
How *is* the life of a civil servant?

YALE
Work is fine, Dad.

HOWARD
And Christine?

YALE
She's good.

HOWARD
She's a beautiful girl, Tom. Your first wife should be beautiful. You're lucky she's stuck by you and your fixed income. Riding the same pine for ten years.

YALE
Seven. And not everyone needs a million dollars in the bank to validate themselves.

Howard looks past his son.

HOWARD
Impossible. I've managed to motivate millions and my only son still escapes me.

Howard dips underwater and pushes off the wall first. Yale watches him go. Then follows.

INT. FIRST FLOOR HALLWAY -- MORNING

Yale hurries to catch the closing door of an elevator.

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YALE (CALLING OUT)
Could you hold that, please?

The door's about to shut when -- a man's hand emerges -- S-shaped cufflink adorning his sleeve. The door opens.

Yale looks inside to see a man in a sharp suit and sunglasses; he's even a little sun-kissed. Yale steps in. 18 is lit. Yale takes a step back. Doesn't push 17. The door closes.

INT. ELEVATOR -- MOMENTS LATER

They ride in silence. Yale tries to play it cool as they ride past floor 17 and DING. The man steps off onto --

INT. THE EIGHTEENTH FLOOR -- CONTINUOUS

Yale follows at a good pace towards a door at the end of the hall. The man punches in a code and the door swings open.

Yale grabs the knob just in time. And slowly sneaks inside.

INT. THE STOKES UNIT -- CONTINUOUS

He catches the last glimpse of the man disappearing around a corner. Yale takes in the scenery; the ceilings seem higher.

Strange noises are coming from down the hall. A commotion. Action. Yale inches towards the sound, until he arrives at --

FOUR STOKES playing NERF BASKETBALL. The tall, African man we saw earlier is up for the jump shot and -- Swish.

Yale watches their shiny shoes slide across the carpet in an exuberant display of male camaraderie, when the nerf escapes someone's hands and rolls across the floor to Yale's feet.

He looks at it, reminiscent of the orange.

CHEWY (O.S.)
Can we help you?

They have stopped mid-game. Looking at Yale. The African man, CHEWY (30s), speaks with a thick Nigerian accent.

CHEWY (CONT'D)
You lost?

One of the guys laughs. Yale clears his throat.

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YALE
Uh... I'm an adjudicator?
(then)
I work right below you. On seventeen?

They all stare back.

CHEWY (SLIGHT)
Do you want us to keep it down?

Another guy laughs. Yale tries to laugh along.

YALE
Are you accepting resumes at this time?

They stop laughing and look at him.

INT. CHEWY'S OFFICE -- LATER

Yale sits across from Chewy, as Chewy reads Yale's resume. But Yale is distracted by something. CLOSE on Chewy's desk -- SELF HAPPENS by Dr. Howard, in paperback form. The face of Yale's father stares at him throughout the interview.

CHEWY
(reading resume)
Double major from NYU in Psychology and Criminology. Top of your class from Stanford Law. Member of Mensa... Immigration adjudicator for, Jesus, seven years... Why did you wait so long?

YALE
(distracted)
Hm? Uh... I don't... know really.

Chewy looks unimpressed. Sets down the resume.

CHEWY
Well, there's no doubt you have what it takes *on paper*... but what makes you Stokes material?

YALE
Well... I think I'm really... uh...

Yale gets distracted again by the face of his father.

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YALE (CONT'D)
... Focused. And... with my background in psychology, I'm particularly qualified to recognize patterns in human behavior. Um...

Chewy follows Yale's eye-line to the book.

CHEWY
You a fan?

YALE
What?

Chewy holds up Dr. Howard's book.

CHEWY
Are you a fan?

Yale looks at his father's eyes boring into him.

YALE
I wouldn't say that.

Chewy puts the book down, disappointed.

CHEWY
Of course not.

YALE
(too quick)
Father. He's my. What?

CHEWY
What?

Chewy picks up the book again. Reading the back.

CHEWY (CONT'D)
You're Dr. Howard's only son?

YALE
(trying to smile)
Oh, does it say that there?

Chewy picks up his resume again.

CHEWY
Thomas Yale.

Chewy looks up at him. Yale forces a quote.

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YALE
Like he says, "A man is defined by what he does. Not what he doesn't."

Chewy nods. Yale clears his throat, ashamed of himself.

CUT TO:

CHRISTINE COVERING HIS FACE WITH KISSES.

INT. YALE'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT (LATER)

CHRISTINE (BETWEEN KISSES)
I am... so... so... proud of you...

She sits with Yale in bed, still wearing her work clothes.

CHRISTINE (CONT'D)
Wait until mother hears about this. "Not marriage material." Ha.

She climbs off of him. Begins undressing.

CHRISTINE (CONT'D)
Tell me how you did it again.

YALE
I just... said the right things.

CHRISTINE
Unbelievable. The Strokes Unit.

YALE
Stokes Unit...

CHRISTINE
A real promotion.

YALE
It's not, technically, a promotion...

CHRISTINE
You went up a floor, Yale.

YALE
I know.

CHRISTINE
A thirty percent pay increase? What do you call that?

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She pulls out the silk scarf and straddles him. Taking his left wrist, she begins tying it to the bedpost.

CHRISTINE (CONT'D)
Maybe now we could afford that salsa band.

YALE
I thought you wanted that jazz quintet.

CHRISTINE
We wanted them, and they're strictly cocktail hour, remember?

She makes a knot. Something comes over her. She slowly loops the scarf into a double knot against his left wrist.

CHRISTINE (CONT'D)
It's been a long time.

YALE
What has?

She suddenly takes hold of his right wrist.

CHRISTINE
(seductively)
A whole floor.

She begins tying it to the other bedpost. His arms extend across the headboard like Jesus on the cross. He looks at her, as she slides down the length of his body.

CHRISTINE (CONT'D)
The honeymoon's coming early.

Yale swallows, as we

CUT TO:

A BRIEF MONTAGE OF THE NEXT FEW WEEKS --

-- CLOSE on an s-shaped cufflink being pinned to Yale's shirt. He is welcomed into the Stokes Unit with a hearty slap on the back. Chewy looks proud to have him aboard.

-- Yale breathes in his NEW OFFICE air. There's a tiny window carved above his desk. He looks out at the distant city below -- a direct view of City Hall. SLAM. He turns to see an ATTRACTIVE WOMAN drop a stack of files on his desk.

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-- Yale strides OFF THE ELEVATOR, making his way towards the exit doors, unknowingly passing Noonan and Pardeep on their way up to their windowless cubicles. Noonan just shakes his head as he watches Yale disappear in the blinding sun.

-- Yale buzzes door after door.

-- He interviews different people in the field. Some couples. Some clearly living alone.

-- Yale eats his lunch in CENTRAL PARK. Sandwich and yogurt. Untouched orange.

-- Yale plays NERF basketball with the Stokes guys. He passes to Chewy who goes up for the dunk. Chewy gets it. He gives Yale a high-five. Yale's hand misses it.

-- SLAM. The same attractive woman drops another stack on Yale's desk. She gives him a smile on her way out. Yale looks at the pile.

CLOSE on his fingers flipping through the files -- Nardulli... Ng... Pritchard. Pritchard. His fingers stop. He holds Mae's file in his hand.

EXT. BROOKLYN BRIDGE -- LATER

We follow a YELLOW CAB as it weaves through traffic, crossing the bridge from Manhattan into Brooklyn.

INT. TAXI CAB -- LATER

Yale rides in back, windows down, through the tree-lined streets. They come to a stop-light IN FRONT OF A SUIT STORE WINDOW. Yale looks at it.

YALE
(to the driver)
Could you wait here a minute?

EXT. DUMBO APARTMENT BUILDING -- LATER

Yale shuts the cab door, now wearing a SHARP NEW SUIT, and looks up at the modest brownstone, briefcase in hand.

He walks up the steps, pushes the buzzer -- #4 -- and waits. He switches the case to his other hand, but when he does, the briefcase latch opens.

YALE
Shit...

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Spilling its contents down the steps and into the street. Yale scurries down the stairs to the sidewalk, chasing the scattering papers, when:

MAE (O.S.)
Hello?

Mae's voice comes through the intercom.

YALE
(shouting from sidewalk)
Uh... Mrs. Pritchard?

MAE (O.S.)
(beat)
Yes?

He hurriedly tosses the papers in his briefcase.

YALE
This is Tom. Tom Yale. With Immigration.
(then, softer)
Do you remember me?

Pause.

MAE (O.S.)
Yes?

YALE
Is Mr. Pritchard at home?

MAE (O.S.)
No...
(beat)
Not yet...
(beat)
Not for awhile.

YALE
Well, I was hoping I could come in and ask you a few questions?

Yale is still, waiting with bated breath for the answer, his hands full of papers. Finally, BUZZZZZ. He grabs what he can and rushes through the buzzing door just in time.

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INT. MAE'S BUILDING -- LATER

He limps up the last few steps of the fourth-floor walk-up, covered in sweat, papers sticking out of his briefcase. At the top floor, a door opens. Mae's head pokes out.

MAE
I thought you were Jehovah's witness.

YALE
(out of breath)
They make it all the way up here?

He looks at her. Her clothes are different, casual. Her hair cascades down her ESPN Zone t-shirt and grazes her low-slung jeans.

YALE (CONT'D)
Mrs. Pritchard.

MAE
Mr. Yale.

She opens the door for him. Just as he steps inside, a DOG pounces, shoving its nose into Yale's crotch, shifting things around.

MAE (SHOUTING) (CONT'D)
Danger! Danger!

YALE (SHOUTING)
Oh dear God, what?!

MAE (AT THE DOG)
No, Danger! Bad Danger!

Mae manages to pull the dog away from Yale's nether regions.

MAE (CONT'D)
Sorry. Danger can't see so good, but he can smell like the dickens.

YALE
Huh. There's an expression I haven't heard in awhile...
(beat)
Your English has really improved...

She looks at the white slobber smeared across Yale's crotch.

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MAE
Oh no...

YALE
Oh, that's alright...

MAE
No, he ruin your nice suit...

YALE
This? No, it's incredibly old.
(trying to be funny)
I wouldn't be surprised if that was there already.

MAE
(confused)
Why would it be there already?

YALE
(equally confused)
I don't... um...

MAE
Let me put him in the kitchen.

Mae drags Danger off by the collar. Yale looks around. A few pairs of shoes are lined up by the front door. Yale takes notice that they are all women's shoes.

YALE
(calling out)
So what kind of dog is Danger?

MAE (O.S.)
Oh, I gave up guessing.

Yale takes in the room, searching for signs of Damian. He sees several I HEART NY SOUVENIRS sitting on the window sill.

MAE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
I say he's a hundred percent Brooklyn Terrier.
(entering)
For joke.

Yale lets out an awkward laugh.

MAE (CONT'D)
Take a load off.

Mae gestures to the DOUBLE-WIDE COUCH. Yale looks at it, trying to figure out how one would sit on it.

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He awkwardly lowers onto the edge of the couch. Then slides all the way back to the cushion, lifting his feet off the floor.

His shoes extend awkwardly in front of him. He tries to be taken seriously.

YALE
I assume you received the letter regarding our continued investigation?

Mae nods 'yes', wringing her hands again. He lightens.

YALE (CONT'D)
But "investigation" is such a harsh word. This is more of a...

He scratches his head. She sees a SALES TAG dangling from the armpit of his suit and can't help but smile.

YALE (CONT'D)
A bonus round. To get to know you better.

CLOSE on YALE's BRIEFCASE, as he enters the combination -- 007 -- and CLICK. He pulls out Mae's file. CLICKS a pen.

YALE (CONT'D)
You were born in Nanchang?

MAE
Jiangxi. I move to Nanchang.

YALE
What did you do there?

MAE
I... was a painter.

YALE
You made a living painting?

MAE
I get by.

YALE
And so you came to New York on vacation... signed up for English classes... met an American man and got married all within three months?

Mae thinks.

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MAE
That sound about right.

Yale looks at her. Suddenly serious.

YALE
Mrs. Pritchard, are you aware that a tourist visa expires after three months? So had you not married Mr. Pritchard by the end of April, you would have been in the country illegally?
(then)
Three months doesn't seem like much time to get to know each other. Would you describe it as love at first sight?

MAE
I don't know what that means.

YALE
You know. Love at first sight.
(slowly)
When you... fall in love with someone... the moment you see them.

MAE
It's an idiom?

YALE
What?

MAE
Can I borrow your pen?

She reaches into her back pocket. Pulls out a small notebook. Yale slides his pen across the coffee table.

MAE (CONT'D)
English is chock full of idioms. I write them all down so I can use them later.

She flips to a back page. Reading her list.

MAE (CONT'D)
Piece of Cake. Cup of Joe. Flip the Bird. Excuse My French. In Your Face, that's my favorite.

She begins writing the new idiom in her notebook.

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MAE (CONT'D)
(while writing)
Love... at first... sight.

Mae clicks the pen and slides it back to Yale. He takes it, looking at her, a bit enchanted.

MAE (CONT'D)
Well, I have to take Danger for a walk before Damian gets home. Wag the dog, so to speak.

YALE
I thought he wasn't home for awhile.

MAE
He's not, but Danger only likes to go in certain spots, so it takes awhile. Do you want to come with us? You can keep asking me questions if you want.

She starts out of the room.

YALE
Uh...

MAE
Let me get his leash.

YALE
Okay.

MAE
Are you sure you have time?

Yale stands, all business.

YALE
This is my job.
(beat)
I'll make time.

EXT. BROOKLYN STREETS -- LATER

Mae and Yale walk-and-talk. She holds Danger on a short lead. Yale holds his briefcase. They are mid-conversation.

MAE
We live on an orchard when I was a girl.
(MORE)

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MAE (CONT'D)
I had this dog, I loved him so much. Dogs are treated different in China. They don't wear sweaters or raincoats. My father named him Tsing-tan, which directly translated means Shit-shoes, because he was always shitting in his shoes.

Yale can't help but laugh.

MAE (CONT'D)
One day I come home from school and my father sold him.

YALE
He sold your dog? Why?

Mae pauses.

MAE
He had to.
(then)
I always think it was too hard to get another dog. And then I found Danger, when I wasn't even looking.
(then)
I guess that's how it happens.
(beat)
When you're not even looking...

They shuffle along the cobblestone streets together.

YALE
Your husband doesn't like dogs?

MAE
He's more of a cat person.

YALE
(beat)
And he tells people that?

She laughs.

EXT. BROOKLYN STREETS -- LATER

Down Under the Manhattan Bridge Overpass. They shuffle past a huge pile of garbage on the sidewalk.

YALE
Ahhh. Nothing like the smell of hot summer garbage.

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Mae lets out a small laugh.

YALE (CONT'D)
(re: the trash)
There has to be a better system than this.

MAE
Here it is.

Mae stops. Yale looks up at the Manhattan Bridge stretched across the river. The lights of Manhattan sparkle and reflect in the water. It's simply beautiful.

YALE
See? This is why I love this city. Because no matter how ugly it can be, you can always find a different view.

They take in the city lights for a moment.

MAE
I've never seen anything like it. Not in Nanchang, that's for sure.

YALE
Sometimes I look around at everything... at the garbage... the chaos... what's on the news. And I still can't believe every day thousands of people risk their lives to cross the border for a taste of McFreedom. And for what?

MAE
Only an American would say that.

He turns to her, realizing he's struck a nerve.

MAE (CONT'D)
You take for granted your freedom. You forget what it's like in other parts of the world. You live on an island long enough, you forget what freedom really is.

Yale thinks for a moment. Looks out at the water.

YALE
I guess I don't feel very free.

She looks at him.

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MAE
Well... you are.

She walks away with Danger. He catches up to her.

EXT. BROOKLYN STREETS -- LATER

Day has turned night. Danger urinates on a tree.

MAE
See that? He waits until we're all the way home. He knows what he's doing.

YALE
Well, Brooklyn Terriers are very intelligent dogs.

She lets out a small laugh. They walk a few more feet.

MAE
This is me.

They stop at the bottom of the brownstone's steps.

YALE
Okay, well...

Yale is cut off by Danger's nose inhaling his crotch.

MAE
(shouting)
Danger... Jesus...

She tries to pull Danger back.

MAE (CONT'D)
(almost fascinated)
Wow. He really likes you.

Yale laughs, trying to play it off.

YALE
He smells *my* dog.

MAE
Oh, you have a dog?

Yale looks at her.

YALE
Uh-huh?

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MAE
(beat)
Well... maybe we'll see you at the park sometime.

YALE
Little... Scrupples would love that.

Yale spots a cab in his periphery. He turns to hail it.

MAE (O.S.)
Mr. Yale?

He turns back to her. She is suddenly inches closer.

MAE (CONT'D)
I have been wanting to do something all day.

Mae leans in. And *rips* the tag off the armpit of his suit. She holds it up to him with a smile on her face. He tries to smile back, embarrassed.

The cab stops in front of them. Yale stands his briefcase on the cab's rooftop, while fumbling through his pocket.

YALE
Feel free to call me... regarding your status.

He hands Mae his card.

YALE (CONT'D)
Mrs. Pritchard.

MAE
Mr. Yale.

He climbs in the car. Shuts the door. The cab pulls away. With Yale's briefcase still on top of the roof.

Mae watches as the cab makes a sharp right, sliding the briefcase off the roof and into the street.

HARD CUT TO:

YALE DIVING INTO COLD WATER.

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INT. ASPHALT GREEN -- NIGHT

He swims alone, his lane the only one lit. We move underwater with him as he does a lap without taking a breath.

PRIEST (PRE-LAP)
And by the powers vested in me... I now pronounce you husband and wife.

INT. ST. ANN'S CHURCH -- DAY

CLOSE on a PRIEST (60s).

PRIEST
You may kiss the bride.

The BRIDE and GROOM turn to kiss. The congregation applauds. We see Yale and Christine are seated in a pew among them.

EXT. PALM HOUSE -- EVENING

Cocktail hour. The elegant glass Victorian house set in Brooklyn's Botanical Gardens is perfectly lit for the wedding. Yale and Christine sip champagne with two other couples, GINA & DAVID (20s) and ALICE & HENRY (30s).

GINA
The thing is, you can't throw rice *or* birdseed anymore...

ALICE
And blowing bubbles is just tacky...

CHRISTINE
That's why we've opted for a timed butterfly release...

The women gasp. Christine finishes a glass of champagne, grabs another.

CHRISTINE (CONT'D)
Which is not only gorgeous, but perfect, because our first date was the butterfly exhibit at the Museum of Natural History... isn't that right, Yaley?
(leaning into him)
God, remember us back then? I was so fat...

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YALE
You were never fat.

She puts her lips out.

CHRISTINE (BABY TALK)
And that is why I'm marrying him.

She gives him a kiss.

GINA
You two... you're gonna last forever.

ALICE
Just promise us you'll wait to have kids.

Christine laughs a little too loudly.

CHRISTINE (LAUGHING)
God, could you imagine *me* being somebody's mother?

She laughs into a sigh. Then sees something on Yale's face. Licks her finger. And wipes it off.

INT. PALM HOUSE -- LATER

Wedding reception. The three couples are seated at their assigned table.

GINA
So... where to for the honeymoon?

CHRISTINE (LOOKING AT YALE)
Oh. Well, we're just driving out to Martha's Vineyard for a few days.

ALICE
I thought you wanted to go to the islands.

HENRY (TO ALICE)
Martha's Vineyard *is* an island.

ALICE
They know what I mean...

CHRISTINE
Tom's afraid of flying.

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ALICE (TO YALE)
Really? I didn't know that.

YALE
Only recently.

CHRISTINE
He hasn't been on a plane since September eleventh.

GINA
Oh God I'm exactly the same way. I mean, I've been on planes, but traveling has become such a nightmare. All the security?

HENRY
It's not that secure.

CHRISTINE
Well, it's still safer than driving.

YALE
That statistic is inaccurate...

GINA
Is that really?

DAVID
Oh, that's right, Tom, you work for the government. Any inside tips?

Yale looks at them looking at him.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Where're they gonna strike next?

YALE
(beat)
That's not exactly what I do...

CHRISTINE
Tom just got a promotion.

Tom looks at her. She puts a hand on his arm.

DAVID AND GINA
Oh, that's great...

HENRY AND ALICE
Really great...

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CHRISTINE
Thank you.

Suddenly a WAITER (20s) stands between the two of them.

WAITER (TO CHRISTINE)
Beef, salmon or pork?

CHRISTINE
Salmon. Thank you.

WAITER (TO YALE)
Beef, salmon or pork?

YALE
I'll have the pork please?

CHRISTINE (TO YALE)
Honey... I'm allergic to pork.

YALE (MAKING JOKE, TO THE TABLE)
Well, good thing I ordered it then.

CHRISTINE
Why don't you get the beef so I can have a few bites?

YALE
Why don't *you* get the beef and eat the whole thing?

CHRISTINE
But if you get the beef, then we can also share the salmon.

YALE
I don't want to share the salmon.

CHRISTINE
I thought you liked salmon.

YALE
I *do* like salmon.

CHRISTINE
So, you just don't want to share with me?

YALE
We don't always have to share everything.

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CHRISTINE (A LITTLE TOO LOUD)
Yeah, Tom, cause that's what I'm asking for. Everything.

Christine folds her arms. Yale looks at her pouting. We PULL BACK to see the waiter is still standing over him.

YALE
I'll have the beef.

WAITER
And how would you like that cooked?

YALE
Medium rare.

CHRISTINE
Medium.

Yale swallows his anger.

BOB EUBANKS (O.S.)
Okay, Ron, we asked your wife the same question...

INT. YALE'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Yale brushes his teeth in the bathroom mirror. The distant SOUND of the television in the next room.

BOB EUBANKS (ON TELEVISION, O.S.)
What was the strangest place you ever made whoopee? How did your wife answer, Ron?

Yale stops brushing. He follows the sound into

HIS BEDROOM. His eyes fixed on the television. The Newlywed Game circa 1978 is the only glow of light.

HUSBAND (ON TELEVISION)
Uh... That would have to be... The kitchen table. Kitchen table.

ON TV: The man's wife rolls her eyes, knowing he's wrong.

WIFE (ON TELEVISION)
The kitchen table, Ron?

Yale takes a seat at the foot of the bed. Christine is under the mound of blankets.

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BOB EUBANKS (ON TELEVISION)
No, Ron, I'm afraid she said... "a 747 bathroom..."

ON TV: The wife flips the card. She gives him a swat with the cardboard answer. Yale watches, awe-struck.

YALE
I'm a game show host.
(then, a revelation)
I'm Bob Eubanks.

CHRISTINE (O.S., UNDER THE BLANKETS)
Tom, it's quiet hours. I have to be at the gallery before eight. Do you mind?

ON TV: The next newlywed couple matches their answers and embrace. It cuts to commercial. TEXT *866 to download this SEAN PAUL VIDEO TO YOUR CELL PHONE. Yale watches the women gyrate to the techno-reggae beat --

YALE
Christine?

CHRISTINE
What.

YALE
What color is my toothbrush?

She finally sits up, pulling a sleep mask off her eyes.

CHRISTINE
What?

YALE
What color is my toothbrush?

He holds his toothbrush behind his back.

CHRISTINE
What is with you?

YALE
I just want to know what color my toothbrush is.

CHRISTINE
Then look at it.
(off his look)
I don't know, blue?

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It is blue. She was right. He almost looks disappointed.

CHRISTINE (CONT'D)
Tell her what she's won, Bob.

She grabs the remote and puts the room in darkness.

INT. YALE'S NEW OFFICE -- MONDAY

It is quiet. Yale sits at his desk writing up a report, when there's the SOUND of footsteps above him. ON NINETEEN. Yale squints at the ceiling. Whatever it is, it sounds like something. He tries to ignore it, picks up his phone:

MAE'S VOICE (THROUGH PHONE)
I don't think it's working...

Yale freezes.

YALE
Hello?

MAE'S VOICE (THROUGH PHONE)
Hello? Mr. Yale?

YALE
Yes?

MAE'S VOICE (THROUGH PHONE)
It's Mae. Mae Pritchard.
(then)
You remember me?

Yale looks around, as if for the hidden camera.

YALE
Did you call me?

MAE'S VOICE (THROUGH PHONE)
I'm downstairs from you. Can I come up?

Yale swallows.

YALE
Uh-huh...

Dial tone. Yale hangs up. Then straightens his tie. He lifts up his arms to see sweat stains on his shirt. He is hurrying to throw on his jacket when his phone rings again.

A thought hits him. He answers.

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YALE (INTO PHONE) (CONT'D)
I'm on eighteen now.

CHRISTINE (O.S., LAUGHING)
Whoa, "I'm on eighteen now," he says.

YALE
Christine?

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. BELLWETHER GALLERY -- SAME TIME

Christine's work. She wears all-black in the all-white room, talks on a headset.

CHRISTINE
Is that how you answer, Mr. Big?
(to someone else)
No no, the Warsaw pics go on the far wall. Auschwitz by the door. Let's not mix camps, people, okay?
(then)
Listen, Tom. Tom, are you listening?

YALE
Yeah?

CHRISTINE
Don't forget the doctor's today. We've got two weeks left and we can't have you wearing a band-aid under your...

SIMON (TO CHRISTINE)
He paints with his penis.

Christine's co-worker, SIMON (30s) hands her a canvas.

CHRISTINE (INTRIGUED)
Seriously?

SIMON (EQUALLY INTRIGUED)
I know.

Yale looks at the doorway, getting anxious.

YALE
Uh, Christine...

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CHRISTINE (TO SIMON)
Does he tape the brush to his penis or does he dip his penis in paint?

SIMON
Who cares, it's fabulous.

YALE (CHIMING IN)
Okay, well, I really should get back to work...

Christine scoffs.

CHRISTINE
Yeah, I'm working, too, Tom.

YALE
I didn't mean it like that...

Mae enters, holding Yale's briefcase.

YALE (INTO PHONE) (CONT'D)
Alright. Thanks for calling.

He hangs up the phone.

MAE (HOLDING UP THE BRIEFCASE)
Somebody forget his lunch-box?

YALE
Wow. Hey.

MAE (ENTERING)
You left on top of cab.

YALE (MAKING JOKE)
And it didn't make it here on its own?

He laughs. She smiles.

MAE
I hope you didn't replace it already.

YALE
No... no...

Yale pushes a nicer briefcase further under his desk.

YALE (CONT'D)
Just a few credit cards...
(taking it from her)
(MORE)

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YALE (CONT'D)
Wow, that's... Thank you, really... cool, you bringing it all the way down here.

MAE
I was on the neighborhood.

YALE
Hm.

MAE
I didn't know what was in there and I thought, in case of emergency...

She gestures to his office.

MAE (CONT'D)
This is different.

YALE
Yeah. Came with the promotion.

MAE
You have a little peephole even.

She looks out the tiny window.

YALE
I'm glad you could catch me here. I'm not usually in the office.

She turns back to him.

MAE
Oh, I'm sorry. You must be busy.

YALE
No, no, not right now...

His phone rings. He quickly lifts the receiver (the faint sound of Christine on the other end) and hangs it up again.

YALE (CONT'D)
See?

Then Chewy enters.

CHEWY
Son of Howard, could you...

Chewy stops when he sees Mae.

CHEWY (CONT'D)
Oh. Excuse me.

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YALE
(to Chewy)
I'll just be a minute, Chewy.

MAE
That's okay. I should get going.

She awkwardly starts out, knocking into Yale's coat rack.

MAE (CONT'D)
This should stay here...

She stands the coat rack back up. Looks at Yale.

MAE (CONT'D)
Nice to be seeing you.

YALE
You too. Mrs. Pritchard.

She gives a small smile and walks out. Chewy leans out of the doorway, watching her go. Then turns back to Yale.

CHEWY
You dog you.

YALE
It's not like that.

CHEWY
What is like, my man?

YALE
Nothing. She's an A-file.

Chewy looks at him suspiciously.

CHEWY
Could have fooled me.

Yale's face gets hot and red.

CHEWY (CONT'D)
Don't get me wrong... if it wasn't totally unethical... *I'd* moo shu pork her.

And with that, Chewy walks out. Immediately, the phone rings again. Yale hangs his head.

He turns to his briefcase -- 007 -- and opens it; everything in its place, including Mae's file and an untouched orange. It makes him smile. The phone continues ringing.

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He finally answers.

CHRISTINE (O.S.)
Did you just hang up on me?

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - WAITING ROOM -- DAY

Yale sits in the waiting area, his mind elsewhere, filling out paperwork.

NAME: TOM YALE. AGE: 32. He scribbles in the blanks with the appropriate answers, until he comes upon the last one -- IN CASE OF EMERGENCY --

The pen moves in his hand. Yale finds himself writing the name MAE PRITCHARD. He is about to erase it when:

NURSE (O.S.)
Mr. Yale?

Yale stands and follows the NURSE (30s, Latina) in back.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE -- LATER

The nurse straps Yale's arm down with a rubber tube, searches for a good vein.

NURSE
So... when's the big day?

YALE
July fourth.

NURSE
Open your fist.

He opens the fist he didn't realize he was making.

YALE
Guess I'm a little nervous.

NURSE
You can always get divorced.

YALE
No, I mean the needle. I'm not good with needles.

NURSE
Well, that makes two of us.

He looks at her.

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NURSE (CONT'D)
I'm kidding. Just breathe.

He breathes.

NURSE (CONT'D)
Think about your wedding day. Think about waking up every single day of the rest of your life with the same...

YALE
Could you just...

NURSE
And we're done.

He opens his eyes. She holds up three viles of his blood.

NURSE (CONT'D)
See? Wasn't so bad.

She tapes a cartoon band-aid on his tiny puncture wound.

NURSE (CONT'D)
Something to show the little lady.

EXT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE -- MOMENTS LATER

Yale walks into daylight, a pleasant smile on his face, when:

SERBIAN MAN (O.S.)
You.

The Serbian Man is standing there, an umbrella in his hand.

SERBIAN MAN (CONT'D)
Thomas Yale.

YALE
You must have me mistaken with...

The man swings his umbrella into Yale's face, knocking him to the ground, unconscious.

CUT TO: BLACK

MAE'S VOICE (OVER BLACK)
Yaaale? Yaaale?

FADE TO:

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MAE'S FACE. LOOMING OVER US. HER HAIR IS DOWN. ALMOST TOUCHING US. HER MOUTH GENTLY MOVING.

MAE
Yaale?

Yale's eyes peel open to reality. Mae leans over him wearing her ESPN ZONE t-shirt.

MAE (CONT'D)
Mr. Yale?

NURSE (O.S.)
He's awake?

The nurse appears next to Mae. Yale's eyes widen.

NURSE (CONT'D)
Someone beat you up, Mr. Yale. Your fiancee is here to take you home. She helped me carry your lifeless body inside and cut off your shirt.

Yale looks down.

YALE
Why did you have to cut off my shirt?

NURSE
You threw up on yourself. Well, first you threw up on your fiancee.

Yale looks at Mae, mortified; a vomit smear on her shirt.

NURSE (LOUDLY, TO MAE) (CONT'D)
We'll just make sure he can have a BM and then you'll be on your way.

MAE
What's a BM, Mr. Yale?

His eyes widen more.

NURSE
Your fiancee calls you Mr. Yale?

MAE
He's not my fiancee.

YALE
Uh...

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MAE
He's my immigration officer.

The nurse looks at Yale.

NURSE
Huh. Well, *that's* different.

INT. MAE'S APARTMENT -- LATER

Yale is lying on Mae's double-wide couch. It is made up with a sheet and pillow, as if someone had been sleeping there. Mae is in the next room, the sound of running water.

MAE (O.S.)
So, how did the lady get my number?

YALE
What lady?

MAE (O.S.)
The doctor lady.

YALE
(scrambling)
I... guess I had your file in my... briefcase... She must've found it in there...

Mae enters, holding a washcloth and bowl of water.

MAE
Why would she do that?

YALE
(scrambling again)
I... can't... details... hazy...

She sits beside him.

MAE
Ohhh, there there. Rest. You are under the weather.

Yale smiles at her idiom. She leans him back. He gets an upside-down view of her souvenirs on the window sill.

YALE
You weren't kidding about those souvenirs...

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Mae smiles. She dips the washcloth in the bowl of water and wrings it out. She presses the washcloth to his head.

MAE
My family did not have a lot of money from the orchard. So when I turn fifteen, I leave for the city, for Nanchang, to find work. I got a job at a factory. I was a painter there. On an assembly line. We make... souvenirs.

Yale looks at the little plastic snowglobes.

MAE (CONT'D)
I always wonder where they end up. I imagine them making it here. To New York. Flying here on a big plane and being spread out all over the city, in peoples' homes and on shelves in important places, tall windows looking out at everything, the things they'd see.
(then, slowly)
But then I got here. And I realize... they probably never make it out of the airport. Or midtown. Only tourists buy souvenirs and then bring them right back to the country where they were made.

She smiles. Lost and a little sad.

MAE (CONT'D)
Guess they didn't get that far.

He looks at her.

YALE
Why didn't Damian tell me this?

Mae looks at him.

MAE
Because he doesn't know.

She looks away, wringing out the washcloth.

MAE (CONT'D)
So, you are engaged?

YALE
Mh-hm.

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MAE
When is the big day?

YALE
The fourth.

MAE
Of July?

He nods. She leans over him again, her hair sweeps his face.

MAE (CONT'D)
Kind of ironic, isn't it? Getting hitched on the day of independence?

He smiles.

MAE (CONT'D)
How did you meet?

YALE
We... dated in college for a year-and-a-half... Then she ran into my father about three years ago and... we've been together ever since.

MAE
Wow. You must know each other *really* well.

Yale swallows that one.

MAE (CONT'D)
You have been married before?

YALE
Nope. No, this is the first.
(then, slight laugh)
But if I'm going by my father's track record, it probably won't be the last. The man's had more wives than cars.

MAE
How many is that?

YALE
Well... After my mother, there was Janice. This rubinesque hippie woman who worshipped the hem of his garment. They lasted 'til I was in junior high. Wife number three, Agatha, speech pathologist.
(MORE)

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YALE (CONT'D)
They split up when I went off to college. Let's see... number four.
(then)
Pam. I liked Pam.
(then)
They ended while I was studying abroad. I didn't find out until Christmas morning. And number five is Jill. I think. And to be honest, I don't have it in me to get to know her, so...

MAE
What about your mother?

He stops. She wipes his forehead with the washcloth.

MAE (CONT'D)
What was she like?

Yale looks at Mae, like nobody has ever asked him that.

YALE
My mother? Um...
(then)
My mother was an immigrant. From Poland. She came a few years after the war. She lived in Greenpoint, which back then was a completely Polish neighborhood, and she cleaned apartments in Manhattan, which is where she met my father.

Mae looks at him.

MAE
And then what?

YALE
Then, she married my dad, had one miscarriage and then me and lived in Greenpoint the rest of her life which unfortunately wasn't much longer. I really don't remember her that well.

Yale thinks for a moment. Until a memory hits him.

YALE (CONT'D)
We had this piano, this upright, that was always out of tune, and I'd sit underneath it while she played. And I don't remember any of the songs, but...
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YALE (CONT'D)
I remember her shoes. The way they'd push up and down on the pedals. And I remember her legs, she really had such gorgeous legs...
(slight laugh, then)
And sometimes I try to build on that, like if I can remember her legs, then I can remember her waist and her dress and her arms and maybe her face, but...
(then)
Somehow, I only remember her legs.
(then, with a smile)
Best seat in the house.

Suddenly, a tear falls from his eyes. He laughs.

YALE (CONT'D)
How ridiculous. It's thirty years ago.

She reaches out with a delicate hand and wipes the tear from his cheek, touching his face.

YALE (CONT'D)
I've never said it out loud.

They look at each other with glassy eyes. Her face is close to his. Just then, the sound of the door unlocking. Yale and Mae look up to see Damian enter, keys in his hand.

He looks at them strangely.

MAE
Damian. You remember Mr. Yale. From the United States government.

Yale swallows. It is painfully awkward.

YALE
Hello.

Yale quickly wipes the last tear away.

DAMIAN
Hi.

They soak in the awkward silence. Then:

DAMIAN (CONT'D)
Mae, could I speak with you for a minute?

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Mae follows Damian into the kitchen. Yale sits there.

YALE
(calling out)
I was just leaving actually, so...
(louder)
Thanks for the help... Mrs. Pritchard.
(louder)
I'll be in touch.

Yale grabs his briefcase and hurries out the door.

EXT. MAE'S BUILDING -- MOMENTS LATER

He races down the front steps, mumbling to himself.

YALE
Stupid stupid stupid stupid...

He hurries down the sidewalk, runs away from their apartment.

INT. HOWARD'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

CLOSE on photos of Howard; running with the bulls, swimming with Greg Louganis, having some laughs with Barbara Walters and Maya Angelou.

CHRISTINE (O.S.)
And he hit you in the face, just like that?

HOWARD (O.S.)
Did you get in any good swings?

Smooth jazz echoes through Howard's palatial Upper East Side apartment while Yale, Christine, Howard and Jill are seated around the oversized dinner table.

YALE
I was taken off-guard. It was a sucker-punch.

HOWARD
Then how did you know it was him?

CHRISTINE
You think it's gonna leave a scar?

HOWARD (LAUGHING)
From one stitch?

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YALE (CHANGING SUBJECT)
Everything tastes delicious, Jill.

HOWARD (LIKE A COMPLIMENT)
Yes, sweetheart. Just terrific.
Much better than last night's.

They eat in silence for a moment. Christine gives Howard a look, prompting him to say:

HOWARD (CONT'D)
So... Martha's Vineyard, huh?

Yale looks at Christine.

HOWARD (CONT'D)
I thought we talked about you seeing Dr. Zislin, trying some hypnotherapy.

YALE
You talked about it.

CHRISTINE (QUOTING HOWARD)
"Living with fear is not living."

Howard gestures, proud to be quoted.

JILL
I like Martha's Vineyard.

YALE
Could we not do this now please?

HOWARD
Have you been to the mall, Tom?

YALE
What mall?

HOWARD
Any mall. Anywhere.
(off his look)
Well, you know how when you're lost in the mall, you look at that map that tells you what floor you're on -- what does that map tell you?
(beat)
You - Are - Here. And every other map in that mall will tell you the exact same thing, Tom. Because everywhere you go -- you're there.

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CHRISTINE
That's beautiful.

YALE
What does that even mean?
(then, louder)
What does any of it mean, Dad? Self-help. Self-help? That's what we're all doing. Isn't it? Helping ourselves. Every man for himself. Why not help others? Put that in stores. Guides on how to help other people. Let's see if that shit sells.

Yale pushes back from the table, knocking over his wine glass. It smashes onto his plate, breaking.

CHRISTINE
What is with you?

JILL
He's gotten people off drugs.

HOWARD
You can't help others unless you first learn to help yourself, Tom.
(beat)
It's just like on an airplane: Secure *your* oxygen mask, *and then* assist others. You should know that. Well...

Howard almost-laughs. Christine shakes her head at Yale, disappointed, embarrassed.

INT. YALE'S BEDROOM -- LATER

Christine is angrily cleaning; Yale on the edge of the bed.

CHRISTINE
I just don't understand you. Help others? Since when are you such a humanitarian?

YALE
I care about humanity.

CHRISTINE
Well, *I'm* a human, Tom. Aren't I? How 'bout you help me?
(MORE)

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CHRISTINE (CONT'D)
I mean, I finally thought we were getting somewhere.

She lets out a sigh. Lowers her head. Yale looks at her, guilt washing over him.

YALE
We were.

CHRISTINE
I thought we were finally getting through to you.

YALE
(realizing)
Wait, who's *we*?

CHRISTINE
Ever since that stupid promotion...

She slams a dresser drawer. He witnesses her frustration.

YALE
I'm not my father's son.

CHRISTINE
No
(beat)
You're not.

She goes to the closet.

CHRISTINE (CONT'D)
I need to be in my Christiniverse tonight, okay? Why don't you tie yourself to the sofa be --

Christine stops mid-sentence. Bends down.

CHRISTINE (CONT'D)
What is this?

She holds up Mae's pink scarf, blood-soaked.

YALE
What is that?

CHRISTINE
You tell me. It fell out of your jacket.

YALE
I have no idea.

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Yale spins his wheels.

YALE (CONT'D)
Oh. I remember. When I got hit by that guy... this good samaritan came out of nowhere and... helped stop the bleeding.

CHRISTINE
Why didn't you just throw it out?

YALE
(beat)
I was planning to.

She walks into the bathroom. Turns back to Yale.

CHRISTINE
I don't know what's going on... But I think you're into some bad shit.

YALE
Christine...

She slams the door shut.

YALE (CONT'D)
Christine...

Through the door, the sound of Christine's chanting.

CHRISTINE (O.S., CHANTING)
Nam-myoho-renge-kyo...

Followed by the clanging of spiritual bells. Yale looks at the closed door.

EXT. MAE'S BUILDING -- DAY

The door opens. Yale stands across the street reading the paper. He spots Mae coming down the front steps and follows at a distance, keeping the paper in front of his face.

EXT. SILENT MOVIE THEATER -- LATER

Mae pays for one ticket at the booth. Yale watches from across the street, paper in hand.

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INT. SILENT MOVIE THEATER -- LATER

A few rows behind her, Yale watches Mae watch Charlie Chaplin. Up front, an OLD MAN plays the piano to *The Immigrant*.

CLOSE on the screen: Chaplin slides across the slippery deck of the ship full of immigrants.

Mae laughs at Chaplin. Yale watches Mae laugh. They are equally transfixed.

INT. SUBWAY CAR -- MOMENTS LATER

Yale tries to hide at the far end of the subway car, watching Mae from a distance. She sits across from a HOMELESS MAN shouting to himself.

HOMELESS MAN
Nothing is certain but death and taxes.

Yale watches as Mae processes this idiom. Then pulls out her notebook and pen and writes it down -- *death & taxes*.

The train skids to a stop. And begins to empty out. Yale tries to remain hidden. When he looks up again, Mae is gone.

The subway doors close. Yale catches a last glimpse of her as they pull away from TIMES SQUARE STATION.

Yale leans back, defeated. He looks up at the ads to LEARN ENGLISH. And looks at his watch.

INT. ESL CLASSROOM -- DAY

Class in session. A KOREAN MAN (50s) and a RUSSIAN MAN (40s) stand up front, reading from pieces of paper, struggling with their English.

KOREAN MAN
You're funny.

RUSSIAN MAN
What do you mean. I'm funny.

Yale pokes his head in a side door and observes from back. Damian is up front, sitting on his desk, watching them.

KOREAN MAN
You're just funny. You're funny.

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RUSSIAN MAN
What do you mean. What's funny? The way I talk?

KOREAN MAN
You know. You're a funny guy. The way you tell a story and...
(struggling with the word)
Everything.

Damian smiles until he catches a glimpse of Yale in back.

RUSSIAN MAN
(getting into it)
Funny how? Funny like I'm a clown, like I'm here to amuse you?

The Korean man actually looks a little afraid.

KOREAN MAN
You know...

RUSSIAN MAN
(getting way too into it)
No I don't know. *You* said it. *You* said I'm funny. How am I funny? I mean, *what the fuck* is so funny?

Damian stands.

DAMIAN
And we'll stop there for today. Good intonation, Vlas. And Yin, think more about your motivation for next time. Okay, let's give Vlas and Yin a round of applause...

Everybody claps.

DAMIAN (CONT'D)
And remember, if anybody asks you for money, what do you say?

EVERYONE
No speak English.

His students begin to file out as Damian walks back to Yale.

DAMIAN
Mr. Yale. What a surprise.

They shake hangs.

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YALE
Do you have a minute?

LATIN GIRL (O.S.)
Damian?

Yale and Damian look up to see TWO CHUBBY LATIN GIRLS (20s) waiting in the doorway.

LATIN GIRL (CONT'D)
Are you coming?

DAMIAN
Yeah, I'll meet you guys there.

The girls walk out. Yale looks at Damian.

DAMIAN (CONT'D)
Wednesday nights, I let them teach me Espanol. So far I only know how to say Dos Equis.
(laughing)
Let's step into my office.

Damian gestures to his desk up front.

INT. ESL CLASS -- MOMENTS LATER

Damian sits at his desk, feet up, leaning back in his chair. Yale is across from him, squeezed into a student's desk.

YALE
So, you're here part-time?

DAMIAN
Yeah. I try to keep it flexible. You know. For auditions.

YALE
Right. You're an actor.

DAMIAN
Hence the scene study.

YALE
Have you been in anything I would've seen?

Damian puts his feet down. Clears his throat. Puts a hand to his ear like he's holding a microphone.

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DAMIAN
(throaty singing)
Ford Truck... We're built to last.

Yale looks at him.

YALE
Wow.

DAMIAN
Yeah. I mean, it's V.O. but whatever pays the rent, you know?

Yale pulls out their file.

YALE
I talked to your super, a Mr....
(reading file)
Gustis... and he was under the impression that Mae pays the rent.

Damian stammers.

DAMIAN
Right. Well, it's just starting to... pay off. You know. And Mae supports me... in my endeavors.

YALE
Mr. Pritchard, are you in a marriage of convenience? And before you answer, I want to make sure you understand that submitting fraudulent information to the United States government could lead to deportation and/or criminal action under the full extent of the law. So I'll ask again... Are you in a marriage of convenience?

Damian looks at him.

DAMIAN
Yes.

Yale stops.

DAMIAN (CONT'D)
What is a marriage if not convenient. Have you ever tried to pull a duvet cover over a comforter by yourself? It takes two people to make up the bed.
(MORE)

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DAMIAN (CONT'D)
To put up a Christmas tree. One person cooks. The other one cleans. Convenience.
(then)
But that doesn't mean there isn't also love. Friendship. Trust.
(then)
For instance, when I walked in my apartment the other night and saw you lying on the couch... crying... next to my wife... I chose to trust her.

Yale swallows. Damian stares into him.

DAMIAN (CONT'D)
Because that's what a marriage is.

The next ESL CLASS begins filing in.

DAMIAN (CONT'D)
If you put any relationship under a microscope, it all looks the same.
(to someone else)
Hey, Marcus.

The next teacher, MARCUS (30s) comes up to the desk.

DAMIAN (CONT'D)
(to Marcus)
We were just finishing up.

He turns to Yale.

DAMIAN (CONT'D)
We're done here, right?

Damian turns back to Marcus as Yale puts the file back in his briefcase and closes it.

EXT. ESPN ZONE -- NIGHT

Through the window, we see Mae waiting tables in her t-shirt and hat. She serves buffalo wings to a rowdy table of guys. The walls are covered with blaring flat-screen TVs. Every sporting event is represented from every angle.

Yale watches Mae. She looks exhausted, over-worked.

EXT. TIMES SQUARE -- MOMENTS LATER

Yale walks along the neon-lit streets, billboards selling Cup O' Noodles and America's Next Top Model.

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Yale shuffles past an open-air souvenir shop. Stops. He picks up a PLASTIC SNOWGLOBE, shakes it, then turns it over to read *Made In China*. Yale sets it back down.

INT. ONE FEDERAL PLAZA -- DAY

Yale steps into the elevator, pushes 18. The hand after him pushes 19. Yale looks at this man; his pin-striped suit, his silver briefcase, his badge reading FBI. The elevator fills between them.

INT. THE EIGHTEENTH FLOOR -- LATER

Yale walks through the halls, a stack of files in his hands, passing Chewy and the guys playing ball.

CHEWY
Think fast, Yale.

Yale turns and the nerf whips him in the face. He tries to react, dropping all the files to bobble the ball, but still manages to lose his grip. The guys laugh. Someone else gets the ball and throws it back to the game.

STOKES GUY 2
Hey, Yale, you want in?

Yale bends down to pick up the files.

YALE
No, that's okay...

CHEWY
Hey, Yale, how come you passed the Impreveduto file along to Truman?

YALE
(beat)
Oh, uh... I'm still in the midst of this... certain adjudication...

CHEWY
One Night in Bangkok? Haven't you been working on her for a few weeks now?

YALE
She's Chinese, actually. And it's a little more... complicated.

Chewy squints at Yale.

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CHEWY
Hey, Teddy, does he look a little flushed to you?

STOKES GUY 2
Yeah, I'd say he looks a little flushed.

CHEWY
You feeling alright, man?

YALE
Me? Yeah. Why?

CHEWY
Looks to me like you got yellow fever.

The guys crack up laughing at him. The laughter is loud and obnoxious. Yale tries a comeback.

YALE (HAN SOLO IMPRESSION)
"Laugh it up, Fuzzball."

They stop laughing. Chewy looks at him.

CHEWY
What did you say?

YALE
You know... Chewbacca? Star Wars? The movie?

CHEWY
Never seen it.

YALE
Really? But isn't that how you got your nickname? Chewy?
(off his look)
The big, tall, hairy ape... thing...

Yale extends his arm up. Chewy squints at him.

CHEWY
Chewy is short for Chewietel.
(then)
Did you just call me an ape?

The Stokes all look at him, disgusted.

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INT. CAFETERIA -- LATER

Yale eats lunch by himself in a corner booth. He takes a bite of his sandwich, looking at the bustling cafeteria.

NOONAN (O.S.)
To what do we owe this honor?

Yale turns to see Noonan, eating alone at a nearby booth.

YALE
Who's we?

NOONAN
Me... I guess. Pardeep usually hangs in his office... which, by the way, used to be *your* office, before you shit on my house.
(then)
So, what are you doing slumming it with the serfs?

Yale shrugs.

YALE
I just felt like eating in here.

Noonan looks at him.

NOONAN
Yeah, well... it *was* voted the number two cafeteria in any government facility.

Noonan slides his tray a little closer. Takes a bite of his sandwich. Yale looks at him.

YALE
Noonan?

Noonan turns to him.

YALE (CONT'D)
You ever find that doing this job makes you... look at relationships differently?

NOONAN (MOUTH FULL)
Are you kidding? Remember my first year here? I dated that girl from HR? "Aprilgate"?
(MORE)

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NOONAN (MOUTH FULL) (CONT'D)
(remembering)
That was a shitstorm.

Noonan swallows.

NOONAN (CONT'D)
What is it? You and Crystal?

YALE
Christine.

NOONAN
Right.

YALE
I don't know.

NOONAN
Eh, it's just cold feet. Everybody gets cold feet. You just need to distract yourself, you know? Dive into work.

Yale reacts by slamming his head against the table.

NOONAN (CONT'D)
Well, not literally...

YALE
Oh, God...

NOONAN (CONCERNED)
What? What is it?

YALE
It's too much. I don't think I can say out loud.

NOONAN (GENTLE)
Well, do you want to give it a try?

Noonan lifts Yale's head off the table.

YALE
Let's say I've fallen in love with a woman whose marriage I'm adjudicating. And let's say that if I approve her, then she has to stay married to some douche who she may or may not really be in love with.

(MORE)

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YALE (CONT'D)
But if I deny her, hypothetically, then she'll be forced to leave the country, and for the life of me, I can't figure out which is worse.
(then)
What do I do?

NOONAN
Hypothetically?

YALE
No, what do I actually do?

Noonan thinks.

NOONAN
I don't know.
(beat)
But I know the guy to go to.

INT. YALE'S OLD OFFICE -- LATER

Pardeep sits behind Yale's old desk across from Yale and Noonan.

PARDEEP
Maybe she could get a different kind of visa.

YALE
What, like, refugee?

PARDEEP
Maybe an O-1. Special skills visa.

YALE
Really? Is that possible?

PARDEEP
Could be. Is she good at anything?

Noonan laughs.

NOONAN
We know what she's good at.
(in high-pitched voice)
"Me love you long time."

Yale's eyes widen and SLAM -- he punches Noonan in the face.

CUT TO: MINUTES LATER

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They are seated again, Noonan now holds a bloody tissue to his nose.

NOONAN (CONT'D)
Okay, so she petitions that she's a person with extraordinary ability.

PARDEEP
Someone who gives value to the United States... blah blah blah... slap a dozen letters together... maybe get a small story in the paper... It could take awhile, but it might work.

YALE
Pardeep, how do you know all this?

PARDEEP
Because that's how I came here.
(then)
I am the greatest lap-steel guitarist in all of India.

They look at Pardeep.

NOONAN
Or you could just approve her.

Yale looks at Noonan, the voice of reason.

NOONAN (CONT'D)
I mean, she *is* married. And you're engaged... not to mention her immigration officer.
(beat)
Do you really want to risk all that for someone you hardly know... who may not even feel the same way... hypothetically?

Yale lowers his head.

PARDEEP
Look, we all get mixed up sometimes. Occupational hazard.

YALE
So what do I do?

Yale looks up at Pardeep.

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PARDEEP
You say goodbye.

INT. MAE'S APARTMENT -- DAY

Yale knocks on her apartment door. The door starts to open. A CHINESE GIRL (20s), with green hair and a glittered face is standing there.

CHINESE GIRL
Yup. It's Jehovah's witness.

YALE
Is Mrs. Pritchard at home?

CHINESE GIRL
Who?

MAE (O.S.)
Mr. Yale?

Yale looks past her to see Mae with ANOTHER CHINESE GIRL (20s), playing dress-up in the background.

Mae steps forward and immediately trips -- She is wearing a MERMAID COSTUME, complete with sea-shell top and tight green tail. She hits the floor, laughing. Her friends crack up, helping her up.

MAE (CONT'D)
Hang on... Wait for it...

She stumbles up to Yale, leaning in the doorway, radiant.

MAE (CONT'D)
Hi.

YALE
Hi.

MAE
What are you doing here?

YALE
I... came to give you this.

He holds out an orange-patterned silk scarf.

YALE (CONT'D)
I couldn't wash the blood out of the other one...
(MORE)

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YALE (CONT'D)
And I tried to find one like it, but... this just looked like you.

She takes the scarf; her eyes tell us she adores it.

YALE (CONT'D)
And I also wanted to come and tell you that I'm approving your visa.

Mae looks up at him. Then leaps forward, throwing her arms around Yale's neck. He is taken aback.

MAE
Thank you. Thank you, thank you, thank you...

His face is buried in her soft hair, his eyes starting to close. After a moment, she pulls away.

YALE
Yup. All looks good for... you two to stay married, so... goodbye.

Yale looks past her at the two girls primping. He gives Mae a small smile, then starts away, down the stairs.

MAE
Why don't you come with us?

He looks back.

MAE (CONT'D)
We are going to the Mermaid Parade. Have you ever been?

YALE
Uh... nope...

MAE
You live in Brooklyn your whole life and you never been to the Mermaid Parade? You could be strung-up for that in certain boroughs.

Yale lets out a laugh.

MAE (CONT'D)
It'll be fun...

YALE
Oh, well, I'm afraid 'fun' is way out of my jurisdiction...

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MAE
Then it'll only be mildly amusing.
Perhaps even a touch boring.

Yale deliberates.

YALE
What about Damian?

MAE
He is a touch boring, too.

Yale's face brightens.

MAE (CONT'D)
Come on. How many times a year do five thousand mermaids walk the streets of Coney Island?

YALE (BEING FUNNY)
I hope just the once.

She gives him a face. Then leans in her apartment. Grabs a SAILOR CAP. And slaps it on Yale's head.

MAE
(using idiom incorrectly)
In your face.

EXT. CONEY ISLAND BOARDWALK -- DAY

The annual Mermaid Parade. Five thousand women and men dressed as mermaids, mermen, sailors, even a few walking lighthouses, make their way down the Coney Island boardwalk.

It's a colorful pageant of freaks in a faded beach resort.

Yale, Mae, and her two friends are among them, walking with Danger on-leash, dressed as a sea-horse.

Yale takes in the spectacle. Patriotic mermaids. S&M mermaids. Classic cars draped with mermaids.

MAE
Check out that guy...

Mae points to a man dressed as a Coney Island postcard.

YALE
How about her...

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Yale points to a woman with stickers of George Bush covering her nipples. Yale and Mae laugh.

They pass a mother holding her infant baby dressed like a starfish. The starfish baby makes them both smile.

EXT. CONEY ISLAND BOARDWALK -- MOMENTS LATER

Mae, Yale and Danger have stopped for some hot dogs, the parade floats moving behind them.

MAE (TO THE VENDOR)
What is in one of these?

YALE
Oh no, that's... you can't ask that...

MAE
Why not?

Yale feeds Danger a hot dog.

YALE
Two things you don't want to see made -- laws and hot dogs.

MAE
I want to know...

YALE
It's all nitrates and by-products and... shoelaces...
(to the vendor)
Tell her.

The VENDOR (50s) just looks at them. Mae laughs. Yale pays.

YALE (CONT'D)
Just the two.

MAE
You're not gonna have one?

YALE
I'm still full from the churros.

IN THE BACKGROUND, we see a float pass behind them -- a YACHT FILLED WITH SAILORS, or more accurately, flamboyant men dressed in full sailor garb, rage to techno music erupting from their yacht, U.S.S.GAY.

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Among the sailors, in full costume is DAMIAN. Yale and Mae turn back to the parade, just as the U.S.S.GAY disappears out of view. Mae takes a big bite of hot dog.

EXT. CONEY ISLAND BEACH -- LATER

Yale and Mae as well as a crowd of thousands throw fruit into the Atlantic to appease the Sea Gods. A few mermaids follow. People strip off their clothes and begin diving in. Even Danger wades in the waves.

Yale looks up and gets a face full of water. He turns to see Mae laughing. He is not laughing. He looks at her, then dives underwater, disappearing in the blue. Mae stands there a moment, frozen between laughter and terror.

Suddenly, she is pulled under. A moment later, they pop up. Mae is mock-shocked. Yale laughs. The splashing continues.

INT. SUBWAY CAR -- LATER

Mae and Yale sit soaking wet on the nearly-empty train, Danger lies on the floor between them, spent. Mae is wearing Yale's jacket, her head leaned against his shoulder. Yale is perfectly still. Not wanting to move.

EXT. JACQUES' CHOCOLATE SHOP -- LATER

It's dark out. Mae ties Danger's leash to a tree out front. Yale opens the shop door for her. She shimmies inside.

INT. JACQUES CHOCOLATE SHOP -- MOMENTS LATER

Mae and Yale browse the miles of chocolate behind the thick panes of glass.

MAE
Did you know that there are six thousand languages spoken in the world and by the end of this century nearly half of them will be gone?

YALE
Is that true?

MAE
Yup. One hundred eighty-four are spoken in Brooklyn alone, not counting dialects.

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A JACQUES' EMPLOYEE (30s) hands them two hot chocolates.

MAE (CONT'D)
Mmmm... thank you...

Mae is delighted to take her cup. Yale pays for them both.

MAE (CONT'D)
I could get 'em...

YALE
Don't be ridiculous. It's a business expense.

Yale drops a tip in the tip jar. Mae smiles at it. They make their way towards the door.

MAE
What is your fiancee like?

YALE
(slowly)
She's... smart... pretty, and... she can be sweet... when nobody's looking.
(then)
Living together's hard, you know? Those little things start to drive each other crazy... How long it takes her to blow dry her hair... The way she eats cookies over the sink...
(beat)
I don't want to say "mean drunk"...
(then)
But relationships are hard work, you know? I'm sure it's like that for you and Damian.

They walk out the front door.

MAE
It's not the same. Trust me.

YALE
Well, you can't just give up every time it gets hard...

Mae stops. Faces him.

MAE
Why does it have to be so hard?

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Yale faces her.

YALE
I don't want to make my father's mistakes.

She looks at him. Smiles.

MAE
He didn't only make mistakes.

Their toes are almost touching. Suddenly, Mae's knees buckle. Yale catches her.

YALE
You alright?
(off her nod)
You still got your sea legs.

She smiles at the idiom.

MAE
Sea legs.

For a moment, it seems like Yale is leaning in and then:

MAE (CONT'D)
Danger.

YALE
What?

Yale turns to see Danger's leash and collar, but no Danger. Mae's eyes fill with fear.

MAE
Oh my God.

She drops her hot chocolate.

MAE (CONT'D)
DANGER!

EXT. DUMBO STREETS -- MOMENTS LATER

Mae and Yale run through the streets, frantic, shouting out Danger's name.

MAE
What if he got run over?

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YALE
He's not run over.
(calling out)
Danger!

MAE
He doesn't even have his collar on.
How will anyone find his home?
(shouting out)
Danger!

YALE
What if he found it?

MAE
It's ten blocks from here.

Yale looks at her.

YALE
He's a Brooklyn Terrier.

Yale takes hold of her hand and they take off running through the streets. Her mermaid costume rips along a seam, exposing Mae's legs as she tries to keep up with Yale.

EXT. MAE'S BUILDING -- LATER

They round a corner, Yale's hand pulling her forward as they make their way towards her building. And sure enough:

MAE
Danger!

The dog is waiting at the top of the stairs, scratching at the brownstone's door. Mae races up to Danger and covers him with kisses.

MAE (CONT'D)
You're okay...

Yale comes to a stop at the bottom of the steps, watching the relief wash over her. Tears leak from her eyes.

MAE (CONT'D)
See that? He's a genius.

Yale's heart is full. Mae comes down the steps towards him.

MAE (CONT'D)
He knew the way home.

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She stops a step above him and pulls his face towards hers, kissing him on the lips. She wraps her arms around his neck. His hands moves up to meet her face as he kisses her, tasting the chocolate on her lips. For a moment, he is lost. Then --

He opens his eyes.

YALE
I'm sorry.

He pulls away.

YALE (CONT'D)
That was incredibly unethical.

Yale turns and sprints down the sidewalk away from Mae and Danger. We PULL BACK to reveal CHEWY, standing behind a nearby tree, a witness to it all.

CHEWY
(to himself)
It certainly was.

EXT. CITY STREETS -- NIGHT

Yale stumbles around the city in darkness. Shuffling along the sidewalks of Brooklyn. We see Manhattan from every angle as night becomes day. Yale wanders along the rising horizon.

INT. YALE'S APARTMENT -- MORNING

Yale finally shuffles through the front door.

YALE (CALLING OUT)
Christine?

He walks down the narrow hallway, opens the door to --

INT. THE BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Where Christine stands in front of the mirror, dressed in her wedding gown, veil and all. Yale is taken aback.

YALE
Wow. You look beautiful.

He walks up and stands behind her, looking at her reflection looking at herself. She takes a deep breath.

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CHRISTINE
I can't believe this day is here.
(then)
I finally fit into a zero.

She turns to his reflection.

YALE
("we need to talk")
Christine...

CHRISTINE
I'm in love with someone else.

YALE
What? Who?

She turns to face him.

CHRISTINE
I'm in love with the potential you, Tom. And the thing is... that's not the actual you.
(beat, gesturing to him)
This may really be it.

He looks at her, speechless.

CHRISTINE (CONT'D)
I know what you had for lunch today, Tom. You know why? Because it's the same lunch you have every day. Sandwich and yogurt and the sisterhood of the traveling orange. And I thought at least with the promotion, things would be different, but...
(beat)
Nothing's changed. You're exactly the same.

Yale almost-smiles, knowing he's not the same. Then, forces himself to look more sad.

CHRISTINE (CONT'D)
Oh, Tom...

She touches his face. Leans lovingly towards him.

CHRISTINE (CONT'D)
I loved you in college.
(then)
(MORE)

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CHRISTINE (CONT'D)
But I also loved rollerblading in college. You know? And I think that maybe when we broke up that first time, it was for a reason.

YALE (RE: THE REASON)
You cheated on me with Eric Grissom.

CHRISTINE
Are you really bringing that up now?

She turns away from him and starts to cry.

YALE (CONSOLING)
No, no, shhh... Teeny, c'mon, don't cry. Hey... Hey, you're a zero.

CHRISTINE (HAPPILY CRYING)
I know.

She looks at her reflection again. Tries to make crying look pretty.

CHRISTINE (CRYING LESS) (CONT'D)
My parents are gonna freak.
(then)
Do you think we have to return all the presents?

YALE
I think so.

CHRISTINE
Even the ones I opened?
(crying again)
Oh God, this is so embarrassing. What's your father gonna think? What are we gonna tell everybody?

YALE
Who cares about everybody. It's up to us.

CHRISTINE
Yeah. You're right.
(beat)
But when people ask, I broke up with you, okay?

She wipes the tears away. She suddenly remembers:

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CHRISTINE (CONT'D)
Oh my God, now you're never gonna get to hear the song...

YALE
What song?

CHRISTINE (POUTY)
I've been taking singing lessons so I could sing a song for you on our wedding day and now it's totally gone to waste.
(then, searching)
Unless you want to hear it now?

YALE
Okay...

She pulls a speaker/microphone karaoke machine out of the closet. She takes the mic in hand, pushes PLAY on the little tape deck. A karaoke power ballad begins. And Christine begins to sing. Badly. Very, very badly.

CHRISTINE (SINGING)
I could stay awake just to hear you breathing / Watch you smile while you are sleeping / While you're far away and dreaming /

We PUSH IN on YALE's SMILING FACE, as he watches her wave her hand dramatically, closing her eyes for emphasis.

CHRISTINE (CONT'D)
I could spend my life in this sweet surrender /

Christine's voice jumps an octave and recovers. But all Yale can do is smile. Because in his mind, he is already --

EXT. BROOKLYN STREETS -- LATER

Racing through the streets towards Mae.

Christine's voice is replaced with the real song, as it continues over Yale running at top speed in the pouring rain. He tries to hail a cab. It's off-duty. He continues sprinting -- through the puddles --

-- Turning down Mae's tree-lined street --

-- Splashing up the steps to her brownstone --

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-- He pushes #4 over and over and over, until -- BUZZZZ. He crashes through the front door --

-- Climbing two steps at a time --

-- Until he reaches the landing --

-- The door swings open --

CHEWY leans in the doorway. Yale stops, his eyes wide.

CHEWY
You are just in time, my man.

Yale looks past him at Damian, sitting on the couch, tears in his eyes, wearing the sailor's costume. Yale is confused.

YALE
What are you...

CHEWY
Your case was reassigned.

YALE
To who?

CHEWY
Let's see here...

Chewy peruses their file.

CHEWY (CONT'D)
To me.

Yale sees the red REJECTED stamp across it. His heart sinks.

CHEWY (CONT'D)
I put her on the first flight back to Bangkok.

YALE
You sent her to Thailand?

CHEWY
(turning to Damian)
Is that in Thailand? Well... I'm sure she'll make it home eventually.

Chewy holds up their file.

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CHEWY (CONT'D)
Marriage of convenience. Wasn't that hard to figure out... She pays the rent. He lets her share the bed, except of course the nights his boyfriend sleeps over.

Yale turns to Damian. Registering the sailor costume.

CHEWY (CONT'D)
See this is what these people do.

Yale turns back to Chewy.

CHEWY (CONT'D)
They pretend to be something they're not. They destroy the system. They feign interest in people to get what they want and they don't care who they hurt in order to get it.

Chewy looks Yale square in the eyes.

CHEWY (CONT'D)
You're fired.

And shuts the door in Yale's face. Yale is motionless. His head spinning. His chest tightening. He is helpless.

YALE'S VOICE
It started up again. A... bout a month ago.

INT. YALE'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

FROM ABOVE: We PUSH IN on YALE, lying in his empty bed, red pajamas, eyes open. Everything of Christine's is gone.

YALE'S VOICE
I got out of bed.

INT. YALE'S APARTMENT -- LATER

His hand picks an orange.

YALE'S VOICE
I packed a lunch.

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INT. YALE'S APARTMENT -- LATER

He unlocks the front door.

YALE'S VOICE
I grabbed my coat and my briefcase and, like always, headed down McGuinness to the G Train.

INT. SUBWAY STATION -- LATER

The gate is down. A sign says "No G Train on Weekends".

YALE'S VOICE
It was a day like any other, really. Except that, you know, it was the middle of the night.

EXT. BROOKLYN STREET -- LATER (NIGHT)

Yale shuffles, briefcase in hand, coat over his pajamas. Cars are whizzing past him towards the on-ramp for the Brooklyn Bridge.

EXT. BROOKLYN BRIDGE -- MOMENTS LATER

SECURITY CAMERA POV: Yale's slippers start across, threading a straight line against the railing.

But his straight line veers. His course changes. His slippers begin shuffling diagonally, into oncoming traffic.

Horns honk. Tires screech. Headlights beam. As Yale continues his shuffle across the five lanes of speeding cars. He is on a direct course for the edge when --

ARMED GUARD #1 (O.S.)
FREEZE! PUT DOWN THE CASE!

Suddenly, TEN ARMED GUARDS are there, in riot gear. But Yale cannot stop. Unable to hear them in his state.

ARMED GUARD #1 (CONT'D)
I said FREEZE!

ARMED GUARD #2
I think he's trying to kill himself.

The guard cocks his gun.

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ARMED GUARD #3
Jihad bullshit.

Yale is only a few feet from the railing. He inches closer.

ARMED GUARD #1
Stop or we will shoot!

Closer. Closer.

ARMED GUARD #2
He's headed for the edge.

His legs hit the railing, sending his body forward, swinging over the top, when someone grabs his coat. They pull him back onto the bridge, throwing him to the ground.

Yale wakes as the armed guards swarm him, pointing their guns in his face. He raises his hands, confused.

ARMED GUARD #1
Why do you smell like bleach?

Yale opens his mouth just wide enough for us to see the Crest Whitestrip inside.

MAN'S VOICE (PRE-LAP)
So, your girlfriend dumped you a week before the wedding...

INT. A ROOM SOMEWHERE -- NIGHT

Yale sits across from us, wearing his red pajama top.

MAN'S VOICE
And on the same day, you were fired from your government post, nudge nudge...

We PULL BACK to see this room is a POLICE INTERROGATION ROOM. This is the continuation of the same scene from the opening. The MAN'S VOICE we heard earlier belongs to a POLICE OFFICER (40s). He is flanked by TWO OTHER COPS, drinking coffee.

POLICE OFFICER #2
Don't forget his mother died when he was two...

POLICE OFFICER #1
Right, right.

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POLICE OFFICER #3
Hey, if something happened to my mother, I'd try to kill myself, too.

YALE
I wasn't trying to kill myself. I told you. I was sleepwalking.

POLICE OFFICER #1
Hey, Mikey, didn't you have that cousin with that thing?

POLICE OFFICER #2
He used to wet the bed. Had to sleep on rubber sheets 'til he was fifteen. Turned out he had four friggin' kidneys. Medical marvel, they said. Maybe that's you.

YALE
Yeah, I'm not really sure it's...

POLICE OFFICER #1
I think it's the mother thing.

POLICE OFFICER #2
I think it's stress-related.

POLICE OFFICER #3
Definitely stress-related.

POLICE OFFICER #1
But some abandonment issues, too.

POLICE OFFICER #2
Definitely.

Yale listens to them psychoanalyze him, as we cut to:

INT. POLICE STATION -- LATER

Yale is released. An OLDER MAN IN UNIFORM returns Yale's belongings. Coat and briefcase are laid on the counter.

Yale looks at his case, dials in the code -- 007 -- and opens it. He sees a bagged lunch inside.

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EXT. GREENWOOD CEMETERY -- EARLY MORNING

Yale sits on the grass, leaning against his mother's grave. He takes the last few bites of his sandwich. And takes in his surroundings. It is quiet, shaded, serene.

Yale finishes his sandwich and picks up the orange. He looks at it. Wipes it on his shirt. And slowly peels it in one long swirl.

Once completely naked, he splits the fruit open, peels off a section and puts it in his mouth. He closes his eyes, tasting the sweetness, leaning back on one hand.

He feels something in the grass. Picks it up.

It's a bouquet of dried flowers, about a month old. Yale looks at the flowers, confused. Within the bouquet, he finds a tiny card that reads, "Happy Birthday. Love, H"

HOWARD (PRE-LAP)
What is the American dream?

INT. AIRPORT MARRIOT BALLROOM -- LATER

Howard is on-stage, finishing up his seminar. Yale stands at the back of the room, observing.

HOWARD
Is it owning a fancy house? Is it driving the nicest car? Is it watching the Yankees win the World Series on a sixty-one inch plasma TV? Well, it doesn't hurt...

Some laughter in the audience. Howard looks at his crowd. Zeroes in on his son.

HOWARD (SLOWLY) (CONT'D)
Or is it the dream... "that every man, regardless of his birth... every man has his shining, golden opportunity... to live, to work, to be himself... and to become whatever his manhood and his vision can combine to make him."

These words stick to Yale. The audience bursts with applause. Yale finds himself applauding, too. TECHNO MUSIC awkwardly kicks in as people approach Howard for autographs and advice. Howard graciously honors them, but looks over their shoulders to find his son's face in the crowd.

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INT. MARRIOT BAR -- LATER

Yale and Howard sit at the hotel bar, drinks in hand. Howard looks like he's heard the whole story already.

HOWARD
I didn't realize you had a thing for minorities...

Yale gives him a look.

HOWARD (CONT'D)
Except for when I found all those National Geographic's under your bed with the pages stuck together.

YALE
Jesus, Dad.

HOWARD (SLIGHT LAUGH)
Oh, lighten up.

Howard takes a sip of his drink. Yale looks at him.

YALE
How often do you visit her?

HOWARD
Every year. On her birthday.
(then)
This year I was a day late. I don't know what happened.

YALE
Why didn't you tell me?

HOWARD
Because it's private. I don't tell you everything. And you obviously don't tell me everything, so...

YALE
I just wish I knew, that's all.

HOWARD
It doesn't change things.

Howard finishes his drink. Turns to his son.

HOWARD (CONT'D)
They broke the mold with your mother.
(MORE)

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HOWARD (CONT'D)
(then)
She loved with her whole body, you know? She really... she really loved you, Tom.
(then)
Better than I could.

Howard rattles the ice in his glass.

HOWARD (CONT'D)
There comes a moment in your life that you don't even realize is a hinge. And a door either opens or closes.

Howard looks at his son.

HOWARD (CONT'D)
You're my only son, Tom.
(then)
You're all I've got.

Yale looks at his dad.

HOWARD (CONT'D)
I know I wasn't the best father.
(beat)
I'm just glad it didn't have any real affect on you.

Howard pats his son on the back. Yale smiles to himself, as we hear a LOW-FLYING AIRPLANE --

EXT. AIRPORT MARRIOT -- LATER

The plane screams across the sky over Yale's head. He exits the Marriot. His eyes follow the plane as it disappears over the buildings and lands at nearby JFK.

And all at once, it hits him. Yale takes off like a shot. Running in the direction of the airport.

EXT./INT. JFK AIRPORT -- LATER

He crashes through the automatic doors, racing straight up to the AMERICAN AIRLINES counter, out of breath.

YALE
I need your first flight to Nanchang.

FEMALE EMPLOYEE
Oh-kay...

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A FEMALE EMPLOYEE clicks a few buttons on her computer.

FEMALE EMPLOYEE (CONT'D)
I can put you on the 8:15...

YALE
Great...

FEMALE EMPLOYEE
Into Heathrow...

Yale sinks.

FEMALE EMPLOYEE (CONT'D)
... Where you can catch the 6 am into Dubai, you'll have a fourteen hour layover, then transfer to the 8 am Nippon Air flight into Shanghai, before catching the red-eye into Nanchang 7:30 next Tuesday.

She looks up at him.

YALE
So that's... four planes altogether?

He is already sweating, the panic setting in. He nods until he can say the words out loud.

YALE (CONT'D)
Yes.

FEMALE EMPLOYEE
Great.
(beat)
Now if I could just see your passport?

Yale stops. For a moment, he is frozen, looking at her. And then he takes off again. Bursting out of the airport.

INT. YALE'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Yale sits on the floor, cutting his picture out of his old INS ID badge. He slides the 2x2 out. Looks at it.

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INT. PASSPORT OFFICE -- DAY

Yale sits in the waiting area, holding his proof of citizenship and photo. He waits in the packed room, every race represented. He bounces his leg, anxious.

VOICE (O.S.)
Now serving number 276.

Yale looks at his number -- 415. He sighs.

INT. JFK SECURITY CHECKPOINT -- DAY

Yale shows his PASSPORT PICTURE to security. He is allowed through. A few feet later, he shows it again.

-- Yale puts his shoes on the x-ray belt. Walks with stockinged feet through the metal detector.

-- Yale gets a thorough pat-down by a MALE EMPLOYEE.

INT. AIRPLANE -- LATER

Yale tightens his seat belt, seated next to an ARAB WOMAN wearing an abaaya. She bends down towards her shoe. Yale watches her, nervous. Then hears the SOUND of velcro; she tightens her sneaker.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT'S VOICE
Secure your own mask, and then assist others...

Yale looks up at the FLIGHT ATTENDANT (30s) demonstrating how the oxygen masks will fall from the ceiling.

INT. AIRPLANE -- LATER

The wheels lift off the tarmac. Yale closes his eyes tight. The plane rising fast. His heart races. His breath quickened. And very slowly, he opens his eyes --

He looks out the window at New York City; its skyline may never be the same, but it makes him smile. It gets smaller and smaller as they pierce through the clouds --

EXT. DUBAI AIRPORT -- NIGHT

-- Another plane lands in Dubai, the sun rising over the Persian Gulf --

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EXT. SHANGHAI -- EARLY MORNING

-- And another soars over the Shanghai skyline, a million twinkling lights guiding its way --

EXT. NANCHANG AIRPORT -- LATER

Yale steps into the sunlight, bleary-eyed and nauseous from the traveling. He looks out at the small city of Nanchang.

A row of TAXIS are lined up. A DRIVER (40s) approaches and lures him to his cab, all the while speaking Mandarin.

YALE
I don't... I don't know what you're saying.

INT. TAXI CAB -- CONTINUOUS

The driver puts Yale in back, climbs up front, and pulls his cab forward.

CAB DRIVER
Where go?

YALE
I don't know. I... Do you have a center of town?

The driver looks at him. Speaking Mandarin again.

YALE (CONT'D)
Center? A midtown. Main Street?

The driver continues in a language Yale can't understand.

YALE (CONT'D)
What about an ATM? Can you take me to an ATM? ATM. Need money.

CAB DRIVER
You no have money?

The taxi comes to a screeching halt.

EXT. MIDDLE OF NANCHANG -- MOMENTS LATER

The cab pulls away. Leaving Yale on the dusty roadside.

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EXT. NANCHANG STREETS -- LATER

Yale shuffles along, his thumb out, cars passing him by. He sees a street sign that points to destinations in all directions. But Yale has no idea what it says.

-- He crosses a bridge, a river beneath his feet, into a more happening part of the city. There are no tall buildings, but plenty of sidewalk traffic and locals riding bicycles.

-- He finally comes what appears to be a BANK. He searches frantically for the three letters -- ATM. And finally spots one. He runs to it like an oasis in a desert.

EXT. NANCHANG STREETS -- MOMENTS LATER

Yale pays an OLDER MAN (60s) working a noodle stand. The man hands Yale a container full of noodles. And his change.

EXT. NANCHANG STREETS -- MOMENTS LATER

Yale rests the container of noodles on top of a NEWSPAPER MACHINE. He takes the change and drops it in. Lifting the handle, he pulls out a paper. Scanning the different sections, searching, but he doesn't know what for.

He looks up at a TEAHOUSE. Races inside.

INT. TEAHOUSE -- MOMENTS LATER

The teahouse is brimming with locals enjoying the quiet.

YALE (O.S.)
Excuse me?

They all turn to him, standing at the front entrance.

YALE (CONT'D)
Can anyone help me? I'm...

He drops the change. Bends down to pick it up.

YALE (CONT'D)
Does anyone speak English?

They all stare at him with blank expressions. He holds up the newspaper.

YALE (CONT'D)
I'm trying to find the classified section?

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Most of the people return to their tea, ignoring him.

YALE (CONT'D)
The classifieds? Jobs? Work?

YOUNG MAN (O.S.)
Work?

Yale turns to a YOUNG MAN (20s) at the counter.

YALE
Work. Yes. Where in here? Work.

Yale shows him the newspaper. The young man flips to a certain section, assumedly the classifieds.

YOUNG MAN
Work.

YALE
Work. Factory work?

The young man looks at him, unsure.

YOUNG MAN
Work.

YALE
Work. Thank you. Thank you.

Yale walks out.

EXT. NANCHANG STREETS -- LATER

Yale sits on a curb, holding the newspaper in one hand and a map of Nanchang in the other. He is circling different ads, trying to match the street names in the paper with the ones on the map. He plots different points.

EXT. FACTORY GATES -- DAY

Yale talks to a GUARD at the front gates of a factory.

YALE
Her name is Mae? Mae?

The guard nods his head, shooing him away.

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INT. ANOTHER FACTORY -- LATER

Yale talks through a thick pane of glass to the SECURITY at a front desk.

YALE
What about Mae Pritchard?
(louder)
Pritchard?

INT. TRAIN -- NIGHT

Yale has fallen asleep on the train, the map and newspaper spread across his lap. His eyes open to see that the train is empty. The doors are open leading to outside.

EXT. ANOTHER TRAIN STATION -- MOMENTS LATER

Yale steps onto the platform. Lost. Map in hand. A MAN (40s) walks past in a suit. Yale tries to stop him.

YALE
Excuse me.

The man in the suit looks at Yale, his tattered, dirty clothes. And keeps walking.

EXT. JIANGXI CITY -- LATER

Yale wanders the streets, exhausted, a stranger in a strange land. He shuffles past a live MONKEY SHOW in the middle of a pavilion. For a moment, he stops and watches. The monkey does a back-flip. Yale claps.

He turns to see a fruit stand nearby, a young woman is leaning over a pile of oranges. Yale's eyes widen.

He runs to her. Spins her around and --

YALE
Oh. Sorry.

The WOMAN (50s) yells something at him in Chinese.

YALE (CONT'D)
Sorry. Sorry.

She waves her hand at him. He turns away, looking out at the city again. He rubs the sleep from his eyes, looks up.

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A BILLBOARD towers over him -- he can't read the sign, but the smiling face of a Chinese woman looks back at him. She wears a pink smock, and a pink scarf tied around her head.

Yale's eyes shine. He turns to the woman by the oranges.

YALE (CONT'D)
Excuse me... What does that say?

She tries to move away from him. He keeps on her.

YALE (CONT'D)
The sign. What does it say?

She reluctantly stops. He points frantically at the billboard.

YALE (CONT'D)
The sign. The sign. Where is it?

He holds up the map to her.

YALE (CONT'D)
Where?

The woman looks at the map. Dangling an index finger over the different streets. It finally lands. Yale looks at the map, where her finger rests.

YALE (PRE-LAP) (CONT'D)
Her name is Mae.

INT. ANOTHER FACTORY -- LATER

Yale pleads with the SECURITY GUARD seated at the front desk.

YALE
Mae. Please. I have to find her. It's an emergency.

SECURITY GUARD
Emergency.

YALE
Yes. Emergency. Mae Fong. Or Mae Pritchard.

ANOTHER GUARD walks past Yale, punches a code in the keypad and pushes open the door to the factory.

SECURITY GUARD (O.S.)
Sorry. There are lotta Mae's.

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Yale sees his opportunity.

YALE
No there's not.

He bursts through the door, pushing it open just in time. The security guard reacts. But Yale turns and runs away from him, down the long corridors --

He hears a mechanical noise coming from the far end of the hallway. He follows it. He turns down one hall --

But it leads into a wall of guards. Yale turns --

-- Rounding another corner, the machine noise growing louder. Yale finally comes upon it --

THE FACTORY FLOOR. Yale looks out at the sea of CHINESE WORKERS, mostly young girls, all wearing pink smocks and pink scarves around their heads, tirelessly working their assembly lines. Little plastic snowglobes move past them.

Yale looks out.

YALE (CONT'D)
Mae?

His voice is drowned out by the sound of the machines. As he makes his way through the rows and rows, the women start to take notice.

YALE (CONT'D)
MAE?

A few heads pop up, the women look at him strangely.

YALE (CONT'D)
Mrs. Pritchard?!

And suddenly, from the center of the enormous room, Mae rises to her feet, wearing her own pink smock and scarf. She looks out across the room at Yale. Their eyes meet. Her cheeks fill with color.

MAE
Mr. Yale?

Security has spotted him. Yale dodges them, hopping over the assembly lines to get to her, knocking a few plastic snowglobes to the floor. Some of the women scream, leaving their stations.

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YALE
Mae!

The assembly lines quickly pile up, as the women stand and watch Yale make his way towards her. The guards shout for the women to return to work.

Yale shouts over the mechanical drumming.

YALE (CONT'D)
When you walked into my office for the first time, I felt like I had been... woken up... from a really long dream. Not a bad dream. But not a good one either.

One guard almost catches him. Yale slips away, practically crawling over people to reach her.

YALE (CONT'D)
And when I found out you were gone, and I thought I lost you... I felt like I had lost houses that hadn't been built yet. And children who'd never be born and pets that hadn't been buried in the backyard and thousands of mornings and nighttimes and afternoons and I love you, Mae...

The guards grab Yale's arms. He struggles to break free.

YALE (CONT'D)
I love you. I've loved you since the first time I saw you.

Mae looks at him. Her eyes fill with joyful tears.

MAE
Love at first sight.

YALE
Something like that.

Yale breaks away from the guards and races towards her. She rips the scarf off her head, weaving through the machines and coworkers to reach him.

And when she does, he takes her face in his hands. And kisses her lips. The sweetest and deepest of kisses. The room looks on, as he lifts her up in an embrace, and holds her as tightly as he can.

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PARDEEP (O.S.)
So, how long have you been married?

INT. INS -- DAY

Yale and Mae sit across from us now.

MAE
What is it now?

YALE
Five-and-a-half months?

MAE
I lost track of time.

YALE
We went traveling through the South Pacific for a little while.

MAE
But we came back here to get married.

YALE
And for the dog.

MAE
Right. Of course. Danger. Can't forget Danger.

Pardeep sits across from them. He smiles. Then slides open his drawer. Pulls out a stamp -- APPROVED.

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