

*Secret of My Success*

PRIVATE AFFAIRS

by

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REVISED:

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JAN - 4 1966

PRIVATE AFFAIRS

FADE IN:

EXT. RURAL KANSAS - DAY

Under a bright summer sky, wheat fields stretch as far as the eye can see. A highway runs, flat and grey, through "amber waves."

EXT. CAWKER CITY - AT THE EDGE OF TOWN

A sign sponsored by local merchants welcomes us. The highway becomes Main Street.

EXT. A RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD

Boxy clapboard houses with porches on the front look comfortable in the shade of cottonwood trees.

ON THE FOSTER HOME

A tire hangs by frayed rope from the biggest tree. An ancient spaniel snores on the front porch.

BRANTLEY

(voice over)

It seems like only this morning  
that I left for New York City to  
make a new life for myself.

INT. FOSTER HOME - CLOSE ON BRANTLEY

He looks intently into camera. He's wearing a white shirt, a conservative tie and a serious expression. He looks a lot like Michael J. Fox.

BRANTLEY

I was fresh out of Kansas State  
Business School and ready to start  
my climb to the top, ready to go  
for the gold! I wanted success and all  
that goes with it. I wanted to take  
my place in corporate America, and have  
a meaningful experience with an in-  
credibly desirable woman who could  
teach me things they don't offer at  
KSBS, while living a stimulating  
upwardly-mobile life in one of the  
great cities of the world!

A moment's pause. He maintains his serious demeanor.

BRANTLEY

As you know, I did it all, which  
is why I'm being honored today  
with this award ...

He looks down, as we PULL BACK. He is holding a can of  
shave cream.

BRANTLEY

"For Awesome Achievement Under The  
Age Of Thirty."

He grins.

WIDER ANGLE - BRANTLEY'S BEDROOM

Brantley is standing in front of a mirror, making his  
"acceptance speech" to his own reflection. He turns now  
to a stereo and punches on a cassette. MUSIC. Not country  
or rock, but a hard-driving up-tempo song about life in the  
big city. Brantley crosses to the bed and shoves the shave  
cream into the pocket of one of two suitcases that lie open  
there. In these two bags is stuffed an entire wardrobe.  
Beyond the shirt and tie he's wearing, all Brantley has on  
is shorts and socks. Singing along with the cassette, he  
picks up a pair of pants and pulls them on.

CUT TO:

A POSTER ON THE WALL

A staggering view of the New York skyline.

CUT TO:

BRANTLEY

As he buttons himself into a vest.

CUT TO:

AN ADVERTISEMENT

Scotch-taped to the side of a bookcase, the famous "decisions"  
ad that compares three provocative shapes: a wine bottle, a  
woman's body and a Ferrari.

CUT TO:

BRANTLEY

as he puts on his coat.

CUT TO:

THE MIRROR

An article has been torn out of a magazine and stuck in the corner of the frame: "A New Crop Of Millionaires. Some Young Americans Who Have Made It Big." There are photos of several of these super-achievers, to which Brantley has added a snapshot of himself.

BRANTLEY

saunters over to the mirror to check himself out. He looks very "yuppie" in his three-piece suit. He considers the image, nods approval, then glances at his watch.

BRANTLEY

Move it, Brantley.

He starts moving fast, goes back to the bed and forces the suitcases closed, then punches off the stereo and folds in the speakers so the set is portable. With a suitcase in each hand and the stereo under his arm, he hurries out.

EXT. FOSTER HOME

Brantley bangs out the front door. The spaniel looks up sleepily.

BRANTLEY

Freckles.

He puts down his paraphernalia and kneels by the dog, rubs his head affectionately.

BRANTLEY

I've got to go now. And I won't be back for a while. Don't kick off, okay? I know you're really old, but hang in there.

The dog yawns. Brantley smiles and straightens.

BRANTLEY

I'll send you a postcard. A fire-plug in New York City.

He collects his stuff and leaves the porch.

## A FORD SEDAN

waits in the driveway. Brantley puts his suitcases and stereo in the trunk. In doing so, he pops a button off his shirt cuff.

BRANTLEY

Shit.

He finds the button and sticks it in his pocket, then goes around to the driver's side. He stops to look back at the house.

BRANTLEY

Goodbye, house.

(a wistful moment)

Stay mellow.

He climbs in the car, starts the engine and backs out of the drive.

## EXT. CAWKER CITY - BUSINESS DISTRICT

The Ford sedan travels down Main Street. Traffic signals hang in the center of intersections, but there's not a lot of traffic to signal.

## INT. SEDAN

Brantley looks from one side of the street to the other, as if it's new to him, as if he hasn't seen it almost every day of his life.

## EXT. STORE

The sedan takes a parking space in front of a red brick building with a sign across the upper facade: "FOSTER AND COMPANY FERTILIZER. We Cover Central Kansas." Brantley gives the horn a short HONK.

## INT. STORE

GLADYS FOSTER is standing by the cash register, going over receipts. She looks out the front door.

GLADYS

(calling out)

He's here.

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She turns to SUE ANN, a pretty corn-fed teenager who is stocking some seed racks.

GLADYS

Sue Ann, you'll have to watch the counter while we're gone.

She closes her accounts book and goes to an office at the rear of the store.

GLADYS

Warren?

INT. OFFICE

WARREN FOSTER is at his desk, on the phone. Gladys enters.

GLADYS

Brantley's here.

WARREN

He can wait a few minutes.

GLADYS

No, he can't. He'll miss the bus.

WARREN

I'm taking an order.

GLADYS

If he misses the bus, he'll miss the plane in Kansas City.

WARREN

Maybe that wouldn't be such a bad thing.

(into phone)

Yes, I'm still here.

(back to Gladys)

I don't know why he wants to go off to New York when he can stay here and step into fertilizer.

GLADYS

We've been through all that. You don't listen. When you don't want to hear something, you don't listen.

WARREN

You can see the sense in that.

(into phone)

What's that?

(writing it down)

Five hundred pounds of manure ...

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INT. THE STORE

Brantley comes in.

BRANTLEY

Hi, Sue Ann.

Sue Ann smiles sweetly, vaguely flirtatious.

BRANTLEY

(looking around)  
My folks ..?

SUE ANN

Your mom went to get your dad.

She keeps looking at him, smiling. He smiles back, glances down at the cuff of his shirt, considers a moment, then acts surprised.

BRANTLEY

Oh, wow. Look what I did. Pulled a button off my shirt. I'm going to New York with a button missing.

SUE ANN

Your mom keeps a needle and thread in that drawer by the cash register.

BRANTLEY

Does she?

He goes to the drawer and opens it.

BRANTLEY

By golly, she sure does. Let's see ... First I have to thread the needle, right?

He fumbles with the needle and thread, drops the button and has to search for it.

BRANTLEY

I have a lot of trouble with things like this. It's embarrassing. I mean, anybody can sew on a button.

SUE ANN

Here, you'd better let me do it.

BRANTLEY

Really? Would you do that? What a life-saver.

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WARREN

Brantley wrote him a letter.

GLADYS

He answered it.

BRANTLEY

"Dear Brantley, I was very pleased  
to receive your letter of May twelve ..".

WARREN

You memorized it?

BRANTLEY

"If you are ever in New York City  
and I can be of service, don't hesi-  
tate to call."

WARREN

Writing a letter and answering a  
letter are two different things.

BRANTLEY

"Yours truly ..  
(savoring the title)  
Howard Prescott, President."

EXT. BUS DEPOT

The Ford turns in and parks. Brantley jumps out and opens  
the trunk.

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WARREN  
(getting out of the car)  
I'll bring your noisemaker.

BRANTLEY  
Thanks.

He hurries to the side of the depot, where a bus is getting ready to depart.

GLADYS AND WARREN

walk together. He has the stereo. She has the sack of brownies.

WARREN  
We never should've let him go to college. College put ideas in his head.

GLADYS  
Brantley's always had ideas.

WARREN  
That's your side of the family.

Gladys looks at him. He slips his free arm around her shoulder.

AT THE SIDE OF THE DEPOT

A HANDLER stows Brantley's suitcases in the luggage compartment. Brantley turns to his parents as they walk into scene.

BRANTLEY  
Well. I guess this is it.

They stand awkwardly, uncomfortable with the moment.

GLADYS  
(hands him the sack)  
Take care of yourself, Brantley.  
And always be polite. Good manners will take you a long way.

WARREN  
In New York City?

GLADYS  
Good manners and a nice appearance.

WARREN

Be careful, that's the main thing.

BRANTLEY

I will.

WARREN

It's a dangerous place. People die there every day.

A DISPATCHER comes out of the depot.

DISPATCHER

We're boarding for Salina, Topeka and Kansas City.

Gladys holds Brantley very close for a moment, then lets him go. He turns to his father.

BRANTLEY

So long, pop.

WARREN

Don't forget to write. Your mother will worry if we don't hear from you.

They shake hands. Warren gives him the stereo.

WARREN

I hope you know what you're looking for.

BRANTLEY

I've thought about it a lot. I want to take my place in corporate America. I want to go for the gold, while living a stimulating, upwardly-mobile life in one of the great cities of the world.

DISPATCHER

Last call for Salina, Topeka and Kansas City.

Brantley smiles brightly and steps onto the bus.

WARREN

That boy belongs in fertilizer.

The pneumatic doors SWISH SHUT.

CUT TO:

## EXT. TIMES SQUARE - DAY

The electric billboard at One Times Square flashes messages to the noisy rushing crowd below. MUSIC picks up the energy of the city. START OPENING CREDITS.

## BRANTLEY

makes his way along the sidewalk, in high spirits, excited to be where he is, taking it all in, the astonishing mix of people and purposes, styles and rhythms. EXOTIC SALESMEN hawk merchandise displayed on blankets. A DISTINGUISHED-LOOKING GENTLEMAN pokes through a trash can with his walking stick. MESSENGERS ON BICYCLES cut through traffic with death-defying dash. AN OLD MAN stares blankly at a lurid porno-house billboard that declares "The Young Like It Hot!" A FLASHILY-DRESSED LATINO falls into step with Brantley.

## LATINO

Hey, man, you wanta buy some shit?

Brantley gives him a sideways look.

## LATINO

Pure stuff, man. You wanta see?  
You know good shit when you see it?

## BRANTLEY

I ought to. My family's in that business.

The latino frowns curiously and fades into the crowd.

CUT TO:

## EXT. FIFTH AVENUE - DAY

Brantley passes elegant shops and elegant shoppers, stops to look in windows where only "the best" is on display. In one window, mannequins copied from top models watch themselves in an endless fashion show on a video screen.

## INT. THE TRUMP TOWER - LOBBY

When the musician at the grand piano finishes a tune, Brantley breaks into applause. People stare.

## EXT. THE STREET

Brantley's attention is caught by a BLACK MAN selling air boppers. By way of demonstration, the man wears three of his product. When he blows into a mouthpiece, six paper blowouts shoot up, turning him into a clownish Medusa. Brantley

goes over to buy one. He continues walking, unwrapping his bopper, stops at a red light and puts it on his head. People around him don't stop for the light, so he decides to walk against the signal too, has to move fast to dodge a taxi that is suddenly barreling down on him. He looks after the cab and operates his air bopper, sending two blowouts up from his head, like agitated antennae.

CUT TO:

EXT. ONE WORLD TRADE CENTER - ROOFTOP PROMENADE - DAY

Brantley comes out onto the promenade and looks uptown. There is the city, and here he is, at the top. He lifts his arms, Rocky-style, in an exuberant victory gesture!

CUT TO:

EXT. SIXTH AVENUE - DAY

Brantley walks along briskly, dressed in his three-piece suit, looking at the sleek entrances to skyscrapers on both sides of the street.

EXT. THE CONSOLIDATED BUILDING

Brantley stops to look at big brushed metal letters above the entrance, a bold CCC. Less pretentious letters underneath spell out "Consolidated Can Company." Brantley enters revolving doors. END OPENING CREDITS.

INT. LOBBY

Brantley checks a directory, then crosses to a bank of elevators.

INT. EXECUTIVE SUITE

An impressive reception area, coolly modern. Brantley steps out of an elevator and crosses a polished floor. A RECEPTIONIST looks up at him.

RECEPTIONIST

May I help you?

BRANTLEY

I'd like to see Mr. Prescott.

RECEPTIONIST

Do you have an appointment?

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BRANTLEY

No, I thought I'd surprise him.

RECEPTIONIST

Surprise him.

Brantley nods cheerfully.

RECEPTIONIST

Mr. Prescott is very busy ...

BRANTLEY

I don't mind waiting.

RECEPTIONIST

And he doesn't like surprises.

BRANTLEY

Everybody likes surprises.

RECEPTIONIST

Not Mr. Prescott. It's my job to see to it he doesn't get any.

BRANTLEY

What a downer job.

RECEPTIONIST

If you'd like to leave your name ...

BRANTLEY

A surprise exterminator.

RECEPTIONIST

I'll give it to his secretary.

BRANTLEY

Brantley Foster.

RECEPTIONIST

Cf?

BRANTLEY

Of Kansas.

RECEPTIONIST

(strained patience)

Of what company? What did you want to see Mr. Prescott about?

BRANTLEY

About being his nephew.

RECEPTIONIST

Oh. Well. Why don't you have a seat? Mr. Prescott is in a meeting, but I'll let his secretary know you're here.

BRANTLEY

Thanks.

He walks over to a seating group, as the receptionist picks up a phone and dials an extension.

ON BRANTLEY

He sits, considers the subdued elegance around him, sees a large, glossy book on the low table at the center of the seating group and reaches for it.

ON THE BOOK

"The Consolidated Can Story." On the cover, a shining silver cylinder, the simple can glorified, floats in a starry expanse. Pages are turned. Heavy stock. This is a classy book. HOLD ON A PHOTOGRAPH of several executives standing around a desk, their attention focused on one executive who is seated, signing something. It all looks very important and ceremonial. The copy under the picture reads: "In 1956, Underhill Cans acquired Western Container and a new corporate giant was born, under the leadership of Charles Underhill, the "Father Of Consolidated Cans."

BRANTLEY

looks at the man at the desk, then raises his eyes from the page to look at something across the room.

A LARGE PHOTOGRAPH

is centered on the wall facing Brantley. It dominates the area, in size and in spirit. It's the same man, somewhat older than in the book but no less impressive looking: strong features and sharp challenging eyes.

CUT TO:

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM

We are CLOSE ON CHARLES UNDERHILL. The room has been darkened to run a film, but Underhill can be seen clearly in the flickering light reflected off the screen. Again, he is older, perhaps seventy now, but age has not softened him.

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PAN TO HOWARD PRESCOTT. An attractive man in his early forties, impeccably dressed and groomed. He glances at Underhill, looking for some reaction. Seeing none, he looks back at the screen. PAN THE OTHER EXECUTIVES, all watching the film intently. We hear the VOICE OF A NARRATOR, speaking in Japanese.

ON THE SCREEN

A JAPANESE MAN, in western dress, is showing us what appears to be an ordinary can of food. Smiling, he peels off a paper label and takes a bite. He chews, still smiling, as the narrator continues to talk in a flat, instructional tone, as if nothing extraordinary has happened. The demonstrator holds up the bitten container. A CLOSE-UP shows us that indeed the bite being chewed includes a piece of the can itself, as well as some of the contents.

ON PRESCOTT

He presses an intercom.

PRESCOTT

That's enough.

WIDE ANGLE

The screen goes dark and lights come up in the room.

PRESCOTT

The film was made by Fujiyama Can, for viewing by its top executives only.

UNDERHILL

How did we get it?

PRESCOTT

We bought it.

UNDERHILL

From who?

PRESCOTT

A top executive.

UNDERHILL

Makes you think.

There's some uncomfortable shifting in the room.

ON PRESCOTT

PRESCOTT

We'd been hearing rumors for some time about a secret project at Fujiyama, but we couldn't break their security. So, we started looking for a weak link in their chain of command. It took time and a lot of patience ...

UNDERHILL (O.S.)

What else did it take?

Prescott looks at him.

ON UNDERHILL

UNDERHILL

I assume this weak link had a yen for yen. How much?

CUT BETWEEN THEM

PRESCOTT

A quarter of a million dollars and help with emigration.

UNDERHILL

A defector.

PRESCOTT

He's living under an assumed name, somewhere in New Jersey.

UNDERHILL

And what did we get for our money, besides a Japanese movie?

PRESCOTT

We wanted formulas, but he didn't have access. We did get ...

(opening an attache case)

Four product prototypes.

(puts a can on the table)

I sent the others to Research And Development. They're doing a series of analyses to isolate and identify the chemical makeup ...

UNDERHILL

Maybe they should eat it.

Prescott reacts to the vaguely mocking tone in Underhill's voice. There is a tension between these two men, a clear and constant challenge. The other executives stay out of the way.

UNDERHILL

If it tastes lousy or it gives people gas, we don't have a problem.

PRESCOTT

I tried it.

UNDERHILL

And?

PRESCOTT

The container has very little taste. It's hard to separate it from the contents, which is no worse than most of the crap people eat.

UNDERHILL

High praise from a man accustomed to four-star restaurants. How are you at swallowing losses?

WIDE ANGLE

Turning from the question, Prescott addresses the group at large.

PRESCOTT

While we're waiting for our laboratory results, I want each of you to consider what your department will have to do if we need to move fast on this thing. Obviously, it represents a serious threat. But thanks to aggressive intelligence work, and prompt response from management ..

(a pointed glance at Underhill)

We're on top of it.

(to the group)

Thank you. I'll keep you informed.

The executives file out, talking among themselves. Prescott puts the edible container back in his attache case.

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UNDERHILL

If you think we're on top of it,  
you don't know your top from your  
bottom. The Japs are outproducing  
us, underpricing us .. and now,  
they've got us eating their cans.

PRESCOTT

What do you suggest?

UNDERHILL

(gets to his feet)

I'm not running the company anymore.

PRESCOTT

I always welcome ideas from the Chairman  
Of The Board.

They both go to the door. Underhill waits for Prescott to  
open it.

UNDERHILL

Start reading fortune cookies.

PRESCOTT

(a slight smile, vaguely  
superior)

Fortune cookies aren't Japanese,  
they're Chinese.

UNDERHILL

That's right. Your next competitor.  
Think ahead.

He goes out. Prescott takes a deep breath and follows.

INT. RECEPTION AREA

Brantley looks up from "The Consolidated Can Story."

HIS POV

Down a wide hall that leads from the reception area to the  
executive offices and conference rooms. Prescott and Under-  
hill come out of one of several doors.

BRANTLEY

reacts, considers, closes the book and puts it back on the  
table.

INT. HALL

MAUREEN approaches the two executives. Prescott's secretary, she is tailored, businesslike.

MAUREEN

Some messages I thought you'd want to see right away.

She hands memoes to both men, which they shuffle through.

MAUREEN

And Mrs. Prescott just called.

Both men look up.

MAUREEN

(to Underhill)

She can meet you for lunch.

(to Prescott)

She won't be home for dinner.

UNDERHILL

Fine.

PRESCOTT

Fine.

MAUREEN

There's a Brantley Foster asking to see you, Mr. Prescott.

PRESCOTT

I don't know any Brantley Foster.

MAUREEN

He says he's your nephew, from Kansas.

PRESCOTT

What the hell is he doing here?

MAUREEN

I haven't spoken with him.

PRESCOTT

Tell him to leave a number.

He turns to go.

BRANTLEY (O.S.)

Uncle Howard!

Brantley enters scene, his hand extended.

BRANTLEY

I would've known you anywhere.

(shaking hands enthusiastically)

You look just like your picture.

PRESCOTT

Picture?

Brantley takes a photograph out of his coat pocket.

BRANTLEY

I kept it in my room.

(hands it to Prescott)

My uncle who went off to New York  
and became a big success.

Prescott looks at the picture.

#### CLOSE SHOT - THE PHOTOGRAPH

A young Prescott is posed stiffly in cap and gown, looking to the future with chin set, eyes shining. A burr haircut and a couple of zits put it all in perspective.

#### ON THE GROUP

Underhill looks over at the picture. Prescott slips it into his pocket.

PRESCOTT

Why don't I get you something more recent?

UNDERHILL

This is the first time I've ever  
seen one of your relatives.

PRESCOTT

They don't travel much. Brantley,  
this is Mr. Underhill.

BRANTLEY

Mr. Charles Underhill?

(as they shake hands)

I don't believe it. I'm shaking hands  
with The Father Of Consolidated Can!

What an honor! I mean, you  
made it all happen. You built this  
building!

UNDERHILL

Well, I don't think we can say that ...

BRANTLEY

This is really amazing.

PRESCOTT

(Impatient)

I'm sorry we can't visit longer, Brantley, but you have come as a surprise ...

BRANTLEY

And I know how you feel about those.

Prescott frowns quizzically.

BRANTLEY

I guess I should've called first, but I was really anxious to see you and since you said what you did in your letter ...

PRESCOTT

What letter?

BRANTLEY

The one where you said not to hesitate.

Prescott glances at Maureen, who gives an almost imperceptible nod.

PRESCOTT

Yes, of course.

UNDERHILL

You can take Brantley out to dinner tonight, since your wife won't be at home.

PRESCOTT

I've made plans.

UNDERHILL

You just found out.

PRESCOTT

I anticipated.

A long look between them. Then Underhill turns to Brantley.

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UNDERHILL  
How long will you be in New York?

BRANTLEY  
I bought a one-way ticket.

UNDERHILL  
Oh.

BRANTLEY  
I'm here to make a life for myself.

UNDERHILL  
I see. Well, good for you.

PRESCOTT  
Let Maureen know how we can reach you ...

BRANTLEY  
The YMCA.

PRESCOTT  
(to Maureen)  
Make a note of that.  
(to Brantley)  
If there's anything I can do to  
help you get settled ...

BRANTLEY  
I could use a job.

All three of the others look at him, taken aback by his unabashed ingenuousness. He smiles his most engaging smile.

UNDERHILL  
What kind of work are you interested in, Brantley?

BRANTLEY  
Well, for a while, I thought I wanted to be in advertising. Ulcers at twenty five, burnout at thirty. Then I thought, a stockbroker. Wall Street. Where the action is. But then, one day, I was walking along this road, back in Kansas, and I saw these kids kicking a can, the way kids do. And I said to myself, "That could be Uncle Howard's can they're kicking." And I wondered how many lives had been touched by that can, one way or another. And I thought about all the other cans, thousands and millions of cans ... It was awesome.

Prescott, Underhill and Maureen are staring at him in wonderment.

BRANTLEY

I can see myself in cans.

UNDERHILL

Well. I like people who know what they want and go after it.

He looks at Prescott.

PRESCOTT

(to Maureen)

Call Billingsley. Ask him if he can find something for a young man who wants to get started in the business.

BRANTLEY

Fantastic!

PRESCOTT

Maureen can tell you how to get to Personnel.

BRANTLEY

I really appreciate it.

UNDERHILL

Maybe we'll see each other again, Brantley.

BRANTLEY

I hope so.

They shake hands.

UNDERHILL

After all, we're tangentially related.

He walks off. Brantley looks after him quizzically, then turns to Prescott.

BRANTLEY

Tangentially related?

PRESCOTT

I'm married to his daughter.

BRANTLEY

Aunt Vera? Wow.

PRESCOTT

(puts out his hand)

Good luck, Brantley.

BRANTLEY

Thanks again, Uncle Howard.

PRESCOTT

Maybe we should drop the "Uncle Howard." To avoid any suggestion of nepotism.

BRANTLEY

Oh. Right. Well, tell Aunt Vera hello for me.

PRESCOTT

You'll have to come out to Glen Cove sometime.

BRANTLEY

Glen Cove?

PRESCOTT

That's where I live.

BRANTLEY

Oh. I'd like that.

PRESCOTT

We'll see about it.

Brantley smiles and follows Maureen down the hall.

ON PRESCOTT

He takes the photo of himself out of his pocket and looks at it thoughtfully, trying to recognize the person there.

INT. A LARGE OFFICE - DAY

In a long, narrow room, identical desks are lined up in two rows. A mix of men and women work diligently at various calculators and word processors. There's the HUM of electricity, the CLICK of keyboards. An OFFICE MANAGER leads Brantley down the center aisle, stops at the one empty desk.

OFFICE MANAGER

This will be your desk, Foster.

LESTER KAZINSKI looks up from a desk directly across the aisle. Mid-twenties, Lester is not especially handsome but he has confidence.

OFFICE MANAGER

Get settled in and fill out the forms I gave you. I'll be back later.

As the manager walks away, Lester rolls his chair over to Brantley.

LESTER

Welcome to Constipated Cans. I'm Lester Kazinski.

BRANTLEY

Brantley Foster.

LESTER

So, Brantley, how come they sent you to Accounting?

BRANTLEY

I took a course in college ...

LESTER

You want to get out as soon as possible.

BRANTLEY

I do?

LESTER

This is Siberia. Land Of The Lost. Stay here more than a year, you never get out. One day they find you slumped over your calculator, stubby little fingers still twitching.

BRANTLEY

How long have you been here?

LESTER

Nine months. Getting close. But I'm gonna be okay. I've been getting to know the people worth knowing, you know what I mean?

Brantley shakes his head.

LESTER

The people who know what's going on in the company.

(gets to his feet)

Let's take a coffee break.

BRANTLEY

I just got here.

LESTER

They'll never miss you.

EXT. PLAZA - DAY

Brantley and Lester are drinking coffee from paper cups in an open area next to the Consolidated Building. Lester is eating a soft pretzel.

LESTER

I've gotten in with a couple of department heads. And I cultivate secretaries.

(off Brantley's quizzical look)

When it comes to inside information, secretaries are all over it. I'll tell you which ones to get next to.

BRANTLEY

Great. I'm anxious to meet some people.

LESTER

These are not always your big winners, socially speaking. You have your marrieds. Can be fun, but dangerous. You have your older women. Desperation Alley. And you have your terminal ugly. But, hey, this is your future we're talking about. Sacrifices have to be made. And there's plenty of compensation out in the big city.

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BRANTLEY

Is there?

LESTER

Is there? Where have you been, Brant?

BRANTLEY

Kansas.

LESTER

There really is a Kansas, no shit?  
They didn't make it up for "The  
Wizard Of Oz?"

BRANTLEY

I just left there three days ago.

LESTER

Followed the yellow brick road, right?

He tosses his cup and what's left of the pretzel into a  
trash receptacle.

LESTER

So, you don't know anybody at  
Consolidated.

Brantley tosses his cup away too.

BRANTLEY

Well, I've met a couple of people.

They both stand.

LESTER

Yeah? Who?

BRANTLEY

The President and the Chairman Of  
The Board.

LESTER

(gives him a look, then  
smiles)

A little Kansas humor.

They walk back toward the building.

## INT. OFFICE - NIGHT

Brantley is the only one in the office. He puts the cover on his calculator and the cover on his typewriter, gets up, stretches and starts out, passing a MAINTENANCE MAN who is just coming in to clean.

## INT. LOBBY

Deserted. Brantley crosses to the entrance. As he steps into the revolving doors, CHRISTY enters them from the street side. Brantley stares at her through moving glass.

## HIS POV

She's wonderful-looking. Young but sophisticated. The figure of a model, the face of a gamine. Diamonds sparkle at her ears; pearls gleam on flawless skin, neck to cleavage. The silk dress she's wearing moves easily with her, beckoning.

## ON BRANTLEY

He revolves out and in again, never taking his eyes from her.

## HIS POV

As he passes the lobby side, Christy is walking toward the elevators. She's stunning from every angle.

## ON BRANTLEY

He continues out again.

## EXT. CONSOLIDATED BUILDING

Brantley stops to consider the limo waiting at the curb, glances back toward the building, whistles silently and walks off, staggering slightly. Stunned.

## INT. CONSOLIDATED BUILDING - LOBBY - BY THE ELEVATORS - DAY

Brantley, carrying a pre-packaged sandwich and a carton of milk, steps into a crowded elevator, turns to face front. Howard Prescott passes, on his way to another car. Brantley reacts, steps out, just as the doors start to close, and hurries to the next elevator, which is also crowded. He presses in beside Prescott, who is reading a folded newspaper. The doors slide shut.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED

BRANTLEY  
Hi, Mr. Prescott.

PRESCOTT  
(glances at him,  
preoccupied)  
Good afternoon.

BRANTLEY  
It's me. Brantley. Your... you  
know...

PRESCOTT  
Oh, yes. How's the job, Brantley?

BRANTLEY  
Great.

PRESCOTT  
Glad to hear it.

BRANTLEY  
I don't see much of you.

PRESCOTT  
Well, I guess we're both busy.

The car stops and the doors open.

PRESCOTT  
You'll have to come out to Glen  
Cove sometime.

BRANTLEY  
I'd like that. I'd like that a  
lot.

PRESCOTT  
(as he steps out)  
Nice talking with you, Brantley.

He walks off. The doors slide shut.

INT. CORRIDOR

Lester comes up behind LORRAINE, who is bent over a water fountain. He considers her well-shaped rear with appreciation.

LESTER  
So, Lorraine, when are you and  
I getting together?

Lorraine straightens and turns to Lester. From the rear, a sex symbol. From the front, she gives new dimension to the word plain. To make it worse, she has a cold, so her nose is red, her eyes watery.

LESTER

We could be looking at a major event, sexually speaking.

Lorraine SNEEZES.

LESTER

I have some uniforms. State trooper, mounted police ... Whadya think? Some dirty talk. A little humiliation.

LORRAINE

You're such an asshole, Lester.

She walks off.

LESTER

(calls after her)

Don't fight it, Lorraine. You want me.

As Lorraine enters an office down the hall, elevator doors open and Brantley steps out.

LESTER

(staring after Lorraine)

If only the front end went with the rear.

(turns to Brantley)

Lorraine Ledbetter. Secretary to Mr. Peroni, vice-president, Personnel. She's a little uptight. You have to joke around, loosen her up ...

Brantley nods.

LESTER

She knows who's in and who's out, what openings are coming up. And, Peroni's close to Prescott.

BRANTLEY

I was just talking to Mr. Prescott.

LESTER

Sure you were.

BRANTLEY

He asked me how I like my job.

LESTER

Right.

(nods toward the elevators)

I was about to hit the deli.

Come on.

BRANTLEY

I was gonna eat at my desk. I'm running a little behind.

LESTER

(takes the packaged sandwich from Brantley, looks at it)

You weren't actually going to put this in your mouth, were you?

Brantley shrugs.

LESTER

And swallow it? Even rats won't touch this stuff. And New York rats are tough.

He tosses it in a trash can.

BRANTLEY

But I have to work ...

LESTER

The more you do, the more they give you.

(leads him back to the elevators)

You think you get ahead by keeping your nose to the grindstone, right? Wrong. What you get is a sore nose.

An elevator opens. There's an o.s. SNEEZE.

LORRAINE

is coming out of the office she entered, a Kleenex to her nose.

ON THE ELEVATOR

Brantley holds the door.

BRANTLEY

Going down?

Lorraine enters and SNEEZES.

BRANTLEY

Gesundheit.

LORRAINE

Thank you.

She presses her floor.

LESTER

I knew you'd come back. You crave  
my body.

Lorraine shoots him a look and blows her nose in her tissue.

BRANTLEY

Lemon juice, honey and a little  
whiskey in some hot water.

Lorraine turns to Brantley.

BRANTLEY

That's what my mom always gave me.  
(grins)

I used to love getting a cold.

LORRAINE

You're new.

BRANTLEY

Second week.

LORRAINE

I'm Lorraine. Personnel.

BRANTLEY

Brantley. Accounting.

LORRAINE

Glad to know you.

Lester, ignored, is watching this exchange in amazement.

LORRAINE

Stop by for coffee sometime. I  
make a special espresso blend.

BRANTLEY

Really? Espresso?

LORRAINE

My boss is a serious Italian.

The elevator stops and the doors open. Lorraine steps out.

BRANTLEY

Thanks for the invitation.

He turns to Lester.

BRANTLEY

I forgot to joke around.

EXT. SEVENTH AVENUE - DAY

Brantley and Lester are making their way through midday crowds.

LESTER

What it takes is style. Remember in high school, when they used to put two grades on your English papers? All the nerds knocked themselves out on content, gettin' headaches in the library. So they can name the Romantic poets. Does that get them a table at Elaine's? For me, it was Content C-, Style A+, which got me through school without a dependency on Extra Strength Tylenol and prepared me for life in the big city.

BRANTLEY

Style.

LESTER

Rhymes with smile. You wanta get noticed. Dress hot. Be smooth.

Brantley nods thoughtfully.

LESTER

Where are you living?

BRANTLEY

The Y.

LESTER

(incredulous)

As in YMCA?

Another nod.

LESTER

You need help, Brantley. And I am just the guy to give it to you:

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BRANTLEY

Well, that's really nice ...

LESTER

What are we here for if not to share the good life? And life is good in New York, Brant. On the beautiful island of Manhattan, single women outnumber single men, which means there are wild, sex-crazed women out there looking for you.

BRANTLEY

That's good news.

LESTER

But not at the Y. You cannot operate out of the Y.

BRANTLEY

It's only temporary.

LESTER

As it happens, there's a vacancy in my apartment building. A very hot location. There's a waiting list, but I'll talk to the landlady. We're like that.

He holds up two fingers close together.

BRANTLEY

Thanks.

LESTER

Stick with me, babe.

They enter a delicatessen, where people are packed inside the door, waiting for tables.

LESTER

(pushing through)

Excuse me. Could you let us through? My friend has a prostate condition.

On Brantley's reaction ...

CUT TO:

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

A taxi stands in front of a brick building, one of several brick buildings that stand shoulder-to-shoulder from one end of the block to the other. An anxious CABBIE watches Brantley

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and Lester untie ropes and slide a chest of drawers that's wrapped in a blanket off the top of his taxi.

CABBIE

Don't hurt my cab. Did you hurt my cab?

LESTER

Your cab is perfect. Better than before.

CABBIE

How can it be better?

LESTER

I don't know. It's like a miracle.

Brantley pays the driver and he and Lester pick up the chest.

INT. BRANTLEY'S APARTMENT

A small studio apartment. There's not much furniture: a large bed, a desk, a chair, a crate for a bedside table that holds a very ugly lamp and a Mickey Mouse phone. Nothing on the walls. Nothing on the windows. Brantley and Lester enter through the kitchen, which is the only way in, still carrying the chest of drawers, which they bump against the door frame.

BRANTLEY

Caraful.

LESTER

Right. Wouldn't want to scratch this beauty.

They put it down in the center of the room and Brantley removes the blanket.

BRANTLEY

There. Does that look like a twenty-five dollar chest from Goodwill?

They both step back to take a long look.

BRANTLEY

Yeah.

LESTER

It sure does. Listen, I gotta run. Hot date.

BRANTLEY

At eleven o'clock in the morning?

LESTER

It's the weekend. Every minute counts.

BRANTLEY

Have fun.

Lester goes out. Brantley picks up some clothes that are lying on the bed and hangs them in the closet. He feels something in a coat pocket and takes out the air bopper. He smiles and puts it on, as he crosses to open the window.

## CONTINUED

The window sticks. He gets down on his knees to push harder. It flies up. Brantley collapses on the sill, then puts his chin on his folded arms and looks out at the street. The two blowouts rise from his head.

## MR. BRANTLEY'S BOMBING - DAY

Christy walks past, glances in Brantley's direction.

## ON BRANTLEY

Surprised, caught with his blowouts in the air.

## ON CHRISTY

She turns and walks on, without reaction. She's wearing jeans and a baggy sweater, a canvas satchel over her shoulder. With very little makeup and her hair loose, she looks younger than before, like a college student on her way to class.

## ON BRANTLEY.

He pulls the tube out of his mouth. The blowouts retreat. He gets to his feet, pulling off the air hopper, and heads for the door.

## ON THE ENTRANCE TO THE BUILDING

Brantley comes out, stretches to see down the street.

## HIS POV

Past a couple of other people, Christy can be seen walking briskly.

## ON BRANTLEY

He starts after her, cuts around the other people.

## ON CHRISTY

She stops at the corner. Brantley comes up behind her, catches his breath and puts on a big smile.

## BRANTLEY

Hi.

At that moment, a city bus pulls to a stop. His greeting is lost in the noise of AIR BRAKES and the opening of PNEUMATIC DOORS. Christy steps aboard. The doors close behind her.

## ON BRANTLEY

He tries to see her through the windows, but the light changes and the bus moves on. Brantley stares after the departing vehicle, until he gets a shot from the exhaust and turns away, gagging.

## EXT. CONSOLIDATED BUILDING - DAY

It's the end of the workday. People are pouring out of the building. Brantley comes out onto the sidewalk, as VERA is going in. She is late thirties, lean, long-limbed, classy-looking. She carries shopping bags from Bloomingdale's, Bergdorf, Bonwit. As she steps into the revolving doors, one of the bags slips from her grasp. She looks anxiously back, but the doors keep revolving. She's inside and the bag is out. Brantley sees the situation and acts quickly to pick up the bag. He jumps back in the revolving doors.

## INT. LOBBY

Juggling the rest of her bags, Vera is trying to get back in the doors, but a steady stream of departing employees keeps her out. Brantley comes up to her with the errant bag.

BRANTLEY

Excuse me, I believe this is yours.

VERA

Well, aren't you nice?

Brantley smiles one of those wide-open smiles.

VERA

I'm very grateful.

BRANTLEY

It was nothing.

VERA

It was heroic.

(takes the bag from him)  
You're not from New York.

BRANTLEY

How did you know?

VERA

You didn't steal the bag.

BRANTLEY

I'm from Kansas.

36A

VERA

I knew someone from Kansas once.

Vera gets bumped from behind and drops the bag again. Grabbing for it, she drops a second one.

VERA

Merde!

(starts to retrieve them)

Pardon my French.

Brantley beats her to it, grabbing up the fallen bags.

VERA

You seem fated to take care of me.

BRANTLEY

Glad to help.

They exchange a smile.

BRANTLEY

Well. Have a nice evening.

VERA

I'll do my best.

As Brantley turns to go, the Security Guard comes up to Vera.

GUARD

You need some help, Mrs. Prescott?

VERA

No, thank you...

BRANTLEY

(stops in his  
tracks and turns  
back)

Did I hear...? Did he say...? Are  
you Mrs. Prescott?

VERA

You did. He did. I am.

Brantley gives her an enthusiastic kiss on the cheek.

BRANTLEY

Aunt Vera!

VERA

Excuse me?

BRANTLEY

You're Aunt Vera. I'm Brantley.  
(off her blank look)

Uncle Howard must have told you I  
was here.

VERA

"Uncle Howard" doesn't always tell  
me things. And sometimes, when he  
does, I'm not listening.

BRANTLEY

Well, I'm here.

VERA

I see.

BRANTLEY

Your nephew.

VERA

My God.

BRANTLEY

From Kansas.

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VERA

Am I old enough to have you for a nephew?

BRANTLEY

It's possible to be younger than your nephew.

VERA

I feel better.

BRANTLEY

I've been wanting to meet you just about as long as I can remember... you and Uncle Howard.

VERA

And we've been wanting to meet you, Bradley.

BRANTLEY

Brantley.

VERA

Yes. Well. You must come out to Glen Cove sometime.

BRANTLEY

I'd like to.

(as she turns to go)

When?

Vera reacts to his directness. Brantley delivers one of those smiles.

VERA

How about Sunday? Come around two o'clock and stay for dinner. Howard's secretary can give you directions. Do you know Maureen?

BRANTLEY

I've been cultivating her.

VERA

(a moment)

I'm trying to picture it.

BRANTLEY

See you Sunday.

VERA

Yes.

She goes off to the elevators. Brantley smiles after her, then turns and steps jauntily into the revolving doors.

EXT. PRESCOTT ESTATE - DAY

A large Georgian house behind gates. Very impressive.

INT. TENNIS PAVILION

An open structure that overlooks a clay court. Attractive casual furniture. Howard Prescott, in crisp white tennis clothes, is talking on the telephone.

PRESCOTT

I don't want excuses, I want results. When people start eating cans, they're going to be Consolidated!

EXT. THE TENNIS COURT

Brantley and Vera are volleying for serve.

BRANTLEY

A private tennis court!

He hits the ball. Vera hits it back effortlessly.

BRANTLEY

I've never played on a private tennis court before.

He runs for the ball, returns it. Again, Vera sends it back with easy grace.

BRANTLEY

I've never even seen a private tennis court before. Except in the movies.

He hits the ball up. Vera goes back and smashes it across the net. Brantley just watches it go past.

VERA

My service.

BRANTLEY

I guess you play a lot of tennis.

VERA

(going back to the  
service line)

Catch as catch can. I have some  
lady friends who play.

BRANTLEY

And you play with Uncle Howard.

VERA

On weekends, Howard puts on his  
tennis clothes, comes down to the  
court and talks on the telephone.  
It's not a good game for me.

With perfect form, she tosses the ball and sends it spinning  
across the court. Brantley throws himself at it and manages  
to hit it, but at the wrong angle. It ricochets off the  
pavilion. Vera watches it, then turns, unruffled, to Brantley.

VERA

One, love.

EXT. SWIMMING POOL - DAY

It's a large pool with a high dive. Prescott, a terry  
robe over a swim suit, is lying on a lounge chair near the  
shallow end of the pool, talking on the phone.

PRESCOTT

Why am I still waiting for lab  
reports? If we can't develop a  
formula of our own, we should at  
least be able to steal theirs!

VERA

walks out to the end of the high dive. She's wearing a sleek  
one-piece suit cut high on the hip that shows off a wonderful  
figure.

BRANTLEY

is lying on an inflated raft, looking up at her, appreciative.

VERA

springs off the board, spreads her arms and arches her back.  
A beautiful dive.

BRANTLEY

is impressed. Vera comes up by the raft.

BRANTLEY  
That was incredible.

VERA  
What?

BRANTLEY  
What you just did.

VERA  
Oh. Thanks. Do you dive?

BRANTLEY  
Not like that.

Vera swims to a second raft and climbs on.

BRANTLEY  
I impersonate the Titanic.

Vera looks back at him. He pulls the plug on his raft.

BRANTLEY  
(singing as he sinks)  
"Nearer my God to thee ..."

VERA  
That's terrible.

But as he goes under, she starts to laugh.

EXT. GARDEN - AT THE REAR OF THE HOUSE - DAY

Brantley and Vera, in beach robes, are walking toward the house. Brantley is very animated.

BRANTLEY  
I take the ball. I fake. I fake  
again. I'm in the clear! I make  
it to the goal line! I dive over!  
I break my nose.

They've reached the house. Brantley holds the door open.

BRANTLEY  
It's been crooked ever since.

VERA  
Let me see.  
(runs her finger down  
the bridge of his nose)  
It's a nice nose.

She goes in. Brantley follows.

## INT. LANAI

As Vera and Brantley enter. It's a bright room with an outside wall of glass, furnished in rattan, heavy with plants.

BRANTLEY

I wonder where Uncle Howard is.

VERA

Probably went to change into his  
yachting outfit so he can make  
a call from the boat.

(crossing to a bar that  
stands along one wall)

Fix me a drink?

BRANTLEY

Sure.

(going behind the bar)

What'll you have?

VERA

Vodka.

She sits on a bar stool.

BRANTLEY

With what?

VERA

Ice.

Brantley starts to pour a drink. Prescott enters, wearing a well-pressed suit, shirt and tie.

BRANTLEY

Uncle Howard. May I fix you a  
drink?

PRESCOTT

Thanks, Brantley, I'll do it.

VERA

Uncle Howard likes his drink just  
so. So much scotch, so much ver-  
mouth, just the right touch of  
bitters ... I used to do it, but  
I'm out of practice.

PRESCOTT

Shouldn't you be getting dressed?

VERA

I'd rather not.

PRESCOTT

We're having people for dinner.

VERA

I like them fried.

Brantley starts to laugh but thinks better of it when he gets a look from Prescott.

PRESCOTT

(to Vera)

You're in a strange mood.

VERA

But happy. Strangely happy.  
Happily strange. I invited Daddy.

PRESCOTT

Why?

VERA

I thought an evening with the  
Ridleys might be a little flat.

PRESCOTT

They're nice people.

VERA

Very nice. But not much personal-  
ity. I mean, you wouldn't want  
them for pets.

Brantley is looking from one to the other, like watching a ping pong match.

PRESCOTT

You're not very generous.

VERA

I didn't say godawful, I said flat.  
Daddy's always good for a few peaks  
and valleys. And he's known Arthur  
Ridley for years.

PRESCOTT

That's the point. I invited Ridley  
to dinner because I wanted to get to  
know him better myself.

VERA

No one's going to stop you from  
getting to know him better.

PRESCOTT

Your father tends to take over.

VERA

Don't let him.

She smiles challengingly.

CUT TO:

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Around a long table in a large room: Vera, Brantley, Underhill, Prescott and the RIDLEYS, a couple in their fifties. A MAID is serving beautifully arranged fruits de mer.

PRESCOTT

(to Ridley)

I understand your company has started  
a training program for young employees.

BRANTLEY

watches the others to find out which piece to use from a  
large spread of silverware.

RIDLEY (O.S.)

To teach basic skills. Proper  
grammar, how to write a letter ...

PRESCOTT (O.S.)

We may have to do that at Consolidated.

Brantley picks up a tiny fork and addresses the dish in front  
of him. His fork stops in air when he finds a small cray-  
fish staring up at him.

UNDERHILL (O.S.)

If they aren't equipped for the job,  
they shouldn't get the job.

Avoiding the crayfish, Brantley pokes delicately at other  
things on the dish, doesn't find anything very appetizing.

UNDERHILL (O.S.)

That's the problem with our society.  
People being led by the hand, taken  
care of, when they ought to be taking  
responsibility for themselves.

RIDLEY (O.S.)

Things have changed, Charles. Young  
people today are expecting less, so  
they're making less effort.

Brantley is trying to pull a clam from its shell, but not enjoying the task. The clam holds firm.

RIDLEY (O.S.)

They've settled, compromised, accepted limitations.

WIDE ANGLE

UNDERHILL

What about you, Brantley?

Brantley looks up, startled, and the clam comes loose.

UNDERHILL

Have you settled?

BRANTLEY

No, sir!

He pops the clam in his mouth and chews. And chews.

RIDLEY

What are your ambitions, Brantley?

BRANTLEY

(swallows hard)

I want my uncle's job.

A moment of surprise.

UNDERHILL

Why not?

BRANTLEY

And his house .. and his cars ...

Vera gives him a long, appraising look, as if she hasn't really seen him before.

UNDERHILL

That's the spirit. Aim high.

Brantley smiles engagingly.

INT. LIVING ROOM -NIGHT

Brantley is standing at a silver coffee service that has been set up on a library table. Behind him, the others are seated, coffee cups in hand, in furniture grouped by the fireplace. Brantley works the spigot on a silver urn, pulling the handle forward to release a flow of coffee.

UNDERHILL

How are those grandchildren of yours, Arthur?

RIDLEY

Couldn't be better.

UNDERHILL

Glad to hear it. I'm still waiting for mine.

He glances at Prescott. Brantley's cup is filled. He pushes the handle back. The coffee keeps coming. He works the handle frantically. Still, the coffee flows.

RIDLEY

(good-naturedly)

Well, don't wait too long. You're not getting any younger.

VERA

Before we get into a discussion of Daddy's biological clock, would anyone like more coffee?

Brantley looks around desperately, dumps fruit out of a bowl and puts it under the spigot.

MRS. RIDLEY

No, thank you.

RIDLEY

I'd be awake all night.

Brantley lifts the top of the urn to see how much coffee is still inside. A lot. He looks anxiously for another receptacle.

PRESCOTT

This Wilco takeover ... Is your firm involved?

RIDLEY

No, we've stayed out.

UNDERHILL

Good. There's too many takeovers. People running businesses they don't know anything about.

Vera looks toward Brantley, gets up and comes to the table. She pushes the handle to a straight-up position. The coffee stops running. Brantley almost collapses with relief.

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VERA

(fills her own cup)  
Having a good time?

BRANTLEY

Oh. Yeah. Great. But I have to  
leave soon. I have a ten o'clock  
train to catch.

VERA

I'll take you.

BRANTLEY

To the station?

VERA

To the city. I have a breakfast meeting tomorrow. I'll drive in tonight and miss the morning traffic.

BRANTLEY

Where do you stay?

VERA

We keep a place in town.

She smiles and exits scene. Mrs. Ridley comes to the table.

MRS. RIDLEY

Hasn't it been a lovely evening?

BRANTLEY

It's been amazing.

He smiles and walks off. Mrs. Ridley reaches for a stem of grapes, frowns wonderingly when they come up dripping coffee.

EXT. PARKWAY - NIGHT

A Jaguar hums along the road.

INT. CAR

Vera is driving. Brantley sits beside her. CLASSICAL MUSIC on the stereo. He looks around at the plush interior of the car, runs his hand over the leather seat.

BRANTLEY

They must spray them with something.

A quizzical look from Vera.

BRANTLEY

Expensive cars don't smell like regular cars.

VERA

It's probably the leather.

BRANTLEY

Maybe expensive things just smell better.

(a beat)

Or, maybe I have a sensitive nose.

VERA

Because you broke it?

BRANTLEY

Because of all that fertilizer.

Vera looks at him curiously.

BRANTLEY

Do you have some kind of job?

VERA

No, I'm a lily of the field. I neither toil nor spin.

BRANTLEY

You said you have a breakfast meeting.

VERA

Oh. Well, I do "good works." I'm on charity committees and museum boards.

BRANTLEY

So you need a place in the city.

VERA

It's convenient.

BRANTLEY

Where is it?

VERA

The Trump Tower.

BRANTLEY

The Trump Tower is your place in the city?!

VERA

Not the whole tower. Just one apartment.

BRANTLEY

What a bitchin' place to have an apartment!

VERA

(smiles)

Would you like to see it? We'll stop off for a drink.

CUT TO:

INT. TRUMP TOWER APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Twenty stories up, Brantley is standing at a large window, his arms spread wide to the glitter of New York, a drink in one hand.

BRANTLEY

Wow.

He turns back to the room, which is very glamorous: suede and smoked mirror and oriental art. Vera is curled up in a large chair, watching him.

BRANTLEY

This is the most incredible place I've ever seen.

VERA

I'm glad you like it. I did the decorating myself.

BRANTLEY

You can do anything.

Vera looks at him in surprise.

BRANTLEY

And everything you do is perfect. Even a perfect swan dive.

VERA

Practice.

BRANTLEY

I could practice the rest of my life ...

VERA

I started young. It's an advantage.

BRANTLEY

There isn't anybody like you in Kansas.

VERA

Maybe I should go there and be a standout.

BRANTLEY

No, you belong here, in the Emerald City.

Vera looks at him quizzically.

BRANTLEY

This guy at work says I left Kansas  
to look for the Emerald City.

(turning a complete  
circle)

This is it.

He almost falls over a piece of furniture.

BRANTLEY

Whoa.

(indicates his glass)

Goes right to my head.

VERA

That's where it's supposed to go.

(a moment)

I think we should go to bed now.

Brantley thinks about that.

VERA

The doorman will call you a cab.

Of course. What else was there to think about?

CUT TO:

INT. TRUMP TOWER APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Vera is lying awake in her elegant bed, in her elegant bedroom,  
in her elegant apartment, thoughtful.

CUT TO:

INT. BRANTLEY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Brantley sloshes around on his water bed, restless.

CUT TO:

INT. PHONE BOOTH - DAY

Vera, dressed smartly in a suit, is talking on the telephone.

VERA

Brantley? Vera. What are you  
doing for lunch?

CUT TO:

## INT. CHEZ PAULETTE - DAY

A bistro-style restaurant of understated chic. An ACCORDIANIST wanders among the tables, playing and singing songs in french. A MAITRE D' leads Brantley to a table, where Vera sits with GLORIA CRAGUN, a stylish woman in her early forties who is, at the moment, caught up in the melancholy song being sung.

VERA

Ah, here you are, Brantley. This  
is Gloria Cragun.

Gloria gives Brantley an openly appraising look.

GLORIA

Hello.

BRANTLEY

Glad to meet you.

VERA

Gloria's having a quick drink before  
she goes off to her own lunch date.

Gloria looks back at the musician, as Brantley sits.

GLORIA

The french do have a way with a song.

BRANTLEY

What's he singing about?

GLORIA

Love is shitty.

BRANTLEY

That's the words? Love is shitty?

GLORIA

It's not a literal translation.

(turning)

How has love treated you, Brantley?

BRANTLEY

I don't know .. It hasn't been a  
big deal, one way or the other.

GLORIA

Well, there's plenty of time.

(another long look, then  
turning to Vera)

I do have to run.

She starts to get up. Brantley is immediately on his feet.

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GLORIA

(to Vera)

I'm making a pit-stop at the powder room. Care to join me?

VERA

I think I will.

(to Brantley)

Excuse me a second?

BRANTLEY

Sure.

GLORIA

(to Brantley)

I enjoyed our brief encounter.

BRANTLEY

Thanks. Me too.

We FOLLOW THE TWO WOMEN away from the table.

GLORIA

I would, if I were you.

VERA

What are you talking about?

GLORIA

Don't play games with Gloria. I know why you asked me to stop by for a drink.

They stop in a small reception area just inside the entrance.

GLORIA

You wanted my reaction. Well, here it is: He's the cutest thing since E.T. The time has come. Go for it.

VERA

He's young.

GLORIA

What are you, a senior citizen?

VERA

Well, no ...

GLORIA

Your husband is fooling around. My husband is fooling around. And we're supposed to fill our time with good causes. Fuck the double standard.

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She goes to the door, stops and looks back.

GLORIA

If you don't want him, I'll take him.

She gives a cheerful little wave and exits. Vera considers a moment, then turns back to the restaurant.

CUT TO:

INT. CHEZ PAULETTE - LATER

The accordionist is playing something lighter and brighter. Brantley and Vera are finishing lunch.

VERA

On my next birthday, I'm jumping out of a plane!

Brantley looks alarmed.

VERA

With a parachute, of course. I plan to keep challenging myself with new experiences. Rut prevention.

Brantley nods understandingly, though he's not sure he does.

VERA

But let's talk about you. Where's your apartment?

BRANTLEY

My apartment?

VERA

Is it in a good neighborhood? Is it safe? Is it clean?

BRANTLEY

It's just an apartment..

VERA

Maybe I should see it.

BRANTLEY

Nothing special.

VERA

Will you show it to me? I showed you mine.

BRANTLEY

Well, yeah, sure ... If you want.

VERA

Allons.

She signals a waiter.

BRANTLEY

Now?

VERA

Why not?

BRANTLEY

I only have an hour for lunch.

A WAITER approaches.

VERA

Bring me a telephone.

(to Brantley)

Who is your immediate superior?

BRANTLEY

Mr. Yeager is the office manager ...

A phone is brought and plugged in. Vera dials, as the waiter starts to clear.

WAITER

Dessert?

VERA

I'll leave word that you're with me, attending to family affairs.

WAITER

No dessert.

He gives Brantley a knowing look and exits scene. Brantley hiccups. Twice.

VERA

Drink some water.

He reaches for a glass, hiccups again.

INT. BRANTLEY'S APARTMENT - DAY

The door to the hall opens and Brantley and Vera enter.

BRANTLEY

This is it.

VERA

Cozy.

(looking around)

It could use a few decorative touches ..

(walks over to the bed)

A fake-fur spread. How sumptuous.

BRANTLEY

It came with the bed.

Vera sits, is startled when the bed moves under her.

VERA

My God, it's alive!

BRANTLEY

Water bed. The guy that had the place before sold it to me for fifty bucks.

Vera rocks back and forth. There's quiet SPLASHING.

VERA

I love the sound of surf.

She stands and removes the jacket to her suit.

BRANTLEY

Well, there's nothing else to see. Except the bathroom. It's over there.

(indicates a door)

Just your ordinary bathroom. Marble sink, sunken tub ...

Vera approaches him.

BRANTLEY

Just kidding.

VERA

Do you think I'm attractive, Brantley?

BRANTLEY

Attractive?

VERA

Yes.

She casually unbuttons his coat.

BRANTLEY

Well, sure. Are you kidding? Of course, I think you're attractive.

(He re-buttons the coat)

I mean, you are ... attractive. So I think that. You are definitely attractive.

He smiles at having gotten through that.

VERA  
How attractive?

BRANTLEY  
(the smile evaporating)  
How attractive. Uh .. could I think  
about that and get back to you?

VERA  
Attractive enough to catch your  
eye, turn your head?

BRANTLEY  
Oh. Sure.

VERA  
Attractive enough to go to bed with?

Brantley is dumbfounded.

VERA  
A simple question. Am I?

BRANTLEY  
Well, yeah, you're attractive enough,  
for somebody to think that.

VERA  
How about you? Has it crossed your mind?

BRANTLEY  
No.

Vera gives him a narrow look.

BRANTLEY  
I mean, yes. Maybe it crossed my  
mind, a little. But you're my ..  
you know .. aunt.

VERA  
I married your uncle.

She unbuttons his coat again.

VERA  
So, you find me attractive and you'd  
like to go to bed with me. What are  
you going to do about that?

BRANTLEY  
Nothing.  
(buttons his coat again)  
Honest to God. Did you think I was  
going to do something?

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VERA

Well, I don't know. I knew what you were feeling, before you said it.

BRANTLEY

You did?

VERA

I find you attractive too.

BRANTLEY

Oh, no, you don't. I mean, how could you?

VERA

It's very flattering to a woman to be wanted by a younger man.

BRANTLEY

Jesus, this is terrible ..

Vera unbuttons his coat and pushes it back off his shoulders.

VERA

The answer is yes.

(starts to unknot his tie)

I give in.

As she pulls off his tie, she puts her arms around him and puts her lips up to his, not quite touching, waiting. Brantley hesitates, then makes a helpless gesture and goes for it.

CUT TO:

INT. BRANTLEY'S APARTMENT - A SHORT TIME LATER

The shades have been drawn. Brantley and Vera are in bed. We can't see them very well, but the water in the mattress is SLOSHING.

BRANTLEY

(breathless)

I don't believe this is happening.

VERA

Do me a favor. Don't talk.

Continued SLOSHING.

CUT TO:

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## INT. BRANTLEY'S APARTMENT - STILL LATER

The shades are up. Vera is dressed, finishing a repair of her makeup. Brantley is still in bed, covers to his neck.

BRANTLEY

Can you ever forgive me?

VERA

For what?

BRANTLEY

For coming on to you. I didn't mean to. I don't know what came over me.

VERA

You pleased me.

BRANTLEY

I'm sorry.

Vera gives him a wondering look.

BRANTLEY

I mean, I'm glad. But you're going to hate me after you've had time to think about it.

VERA

Howard usually stays in town on Friday evenings. I'll call you.

She smiles and goes out. Brantley just lies there, not sure what's hit him.

## INT. ACCOUNTING OFFICE - DAY

CLOSE ON A DISTILLED WATER DISPENSER. There is splashing in the upturned bottle. PULL BACK to find Brantley drawing a cup of water. He looks at the sloshing in the bottle, hiccups and quickly downs his drink. He crumples the paper cup and returns to his desk. He unfolds a computer printout and starts entering figures in a calculator, makes an error, clears the machine and starts over again. Lester rolls his chair over.

LESTER

Hey, what's up?

BRANTLEY

What makes you think something's up?

LESTER

Your face.

BRANTLEY

It shows?

LESTER

You have a very nervous face.

BRANTLEY

It shows.

(a deep sigh)

Pop was right. New York is a dangerous place. Three weeks, and look at me.

Lester looks at him.

BRANTLEY

Look at what I've done.

LESTER

What have you done?

BRANTLEY

What's next? Drugs?

LESTER

Jesus. What have you done?

BRANTLEY

I can't tell you.

LESTER

It's that bad? Congratulations.

The phone RINGS. Brantley picks up the receiver.

BRANTLEY

Hello.

(looks stricken)

He does?

(a deep breath)

I'll be right there.

(hangs up and stares blankly into space)

He wants to see me.

LESTER

Who does?

BRANTLEY

Mr. Prescott.

LESTER

BRANTLEY

Don't ask.

He walks off, looking doomed.

LESTER

In case you're not shitting me,  
tell him I said hello. Two k's,  
two i's and a z.

INT. CORRIDOR

Brantley approaches the elevators, presses a call button.

BRANTLEY

He found out. He knows. Oh, my  
God ...

(on second thought)

But he couldn't know. He's not  
having me followed.

(another thought)

Maybe he's having her followed.

Oh, hell. Oh, damn. Oh, shit.

Doors open. Brantley steps in.

INT. EXECUTIVE SUITE- RECEPTION AREA

Elevator doors open and Brantley steps out.

BRANTLEY

He'll kill me. I'm dead.

(an unhappy shrug)

Whatever he does, I deserve it.

The receptionist looks up curiously as Brantley walks past  
her, staring straight ahead, as if he's traveling the last  
mile.

INT. PRESSCOTT'S OFFICE

Prescott looks up from his desk when the door opens. Maureen  
sticks her head in.

MAUREEN

Brantley Foster.

Brantley enters and tentatively approaches the desk.

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PRESCOTT

Come in, Brantley. Sit down. I  
have something to discuss with you.

Brantley lowers himself into a chair and hiccups.

PRESCOTT

Vera talked to me last night. About  
you.

BRANTLEY

She did? About me?

(hiccups)

Oh.

PRESCOTT

For God sake, hold your breath.

Brantley takes a deep breath and holds it.

PRESCOTT

She told me you had lunch together  
yesterday. You took her to see  
your apartment.

Brantley, still holding his breath, looks more and more  
apprehensive.

PRESCOTT

You talked.

BRANTLEY

(still holding that  
breath)

Talked. That's right. We talked.

PRESCOTT

She thinks you've got a lot on the  
ball.

Brantley exhales.

PRESCOTT

So do I. I've decided to take you  
out of Accounting, to put you where  
you can get an overall view of the  
company, where you can learn. I'm  
making you my executive assistant.

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BRANTLEY  
Executive assistant?

PRESCOTT  
It won't be easy. Long hours.  
A lot of demands.

BRANTLEY  
Executive assistant!

PRESCOTT  
I expect performance. So does  
your aunt.

BRANTLEY  
I'll try to be up to it.

PRESCOTT  
I like your spirit, Brantley.

#### A MONTAGE

Brantley celebrates his promotion, to the accompaniment of bright, high-energy MUSIC. He buys some sharp new clothes in a trendy upscale store. He decorates his apartment in a snappy hi-tech style. He lies on a tanning bed, goggles over his eyes, headphones over his ears. He stands in front of a full-length mirror on his bathroom door, considers his new, hotter image and strikes a few G.Q. poses.

#### INT. PRESCOTT'S OFFICE - DAY

Prescott is stuffing papers into an attache case. Maureen is on the phone.

PRESCOTT  
(calling)  
Brantley? Where is that analysis  
you did of the latest production  
reports?

BRANTLEY  
(enters from an adjoining office)  
Right here.

MAUREEN  
(hangs up the phone)  
Your plane leaves at 6:30. I told  
Louis to bring your car.

PRESCOTT  
Call Mrs. Prescott. Tell her I'll  
see her late Sunday.

MAUREEN  
Yes, sir.

She exits.

PRESCOTT  
Brantley, you might give her a  
call later to see if she needs  
anything.

BRANTLEY  
I was planning on doing that.

Prescott pulls an envelope out of his coat pocket, scribbles  
something on it and holds it out to Brantley.

PRESCOTT  
And deliver this to the address I  
wrote on the front. Say I'm sorry  
about tonight.

BRANTLEY  
Right.

PRESCOTT  
Take along a dozen roses.

BRANTLEY  
Right.  
(a beat, surprised)  
A dozen roses?

PRESCOTT  
Make it two dozen  
(gives Brantley a  
fraternal look)  
We're both men of the world,  
aren't we?

BRANTLEY  
I hope so.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

Prescott gives him a clap on the back, snaps his case shut and starts out of the office. Brantley looks at the envelope in his hand.

BRANTLEY  
(reading)  
Christy Welles.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Brantley, carrying a bunch of roses, gets out of a taxi in front of a posh East Side building. He checks the address on a door-to-street awning and goes in.

INT. CHRISTY'S APARTMENT BUILDING - CORRIDOR - DAY

Brantley approaches the door to Apartment 302, pushes a buzzer and waits. The door opens a crack and one eye peers out. It's a lovely eye, large and warmly brown, enhanced by makeup that's been expertly applied.

CHRISTY  
Yes?

Brantley holds up the roses.

CHRISTY  
Are you selling them or what?

BRANTLEY  
They're from Mr. Prescott.

Christy releases a security chain and opens the door. It's the girl in the revolving doors. Not much older than Brantley. A knockout. Brantley stares, immobilized. She looks curiously at him, finally reaches for the roses.

BRANTLEY  
And this.

He gives her the envelope. She opens it and frowns, annoyed.

CHRISTY  
That's why the flowers.  
(holds up two tickets)  
The hottest ticket on Broadway.  
Through a scalper, a hundred  
dollars each.

(MORE)

CONTINUED

CHRISTY (Cont'd.)  
(looks over at  
Brantley's watch)  
It is now an hour and fifteen  
minutes before curtain time.

BRANTLEY  
I'm sorry. I mean, Mr. Prescott  
is sorry. This trip came up at the  
last minute...

CHRISTY  
Do you have a date tonight?

BRANTLEY  
Uh...No.

CHRISTY  
Why don't you get one?

She sticks the envelope into his coat pocket and closes  
the door. Brantley takes out the envelope and looks at  
the tickets, considers a moment, then pushes the buzzer  
again. Christy opens the door. Brantley smiles an en-  
gaging smile.

BRANTLEY  
Excuse me, but I happen to have  
these tickets...

INT. THEATER

The houselights are still up, as late arrivals hurry to  
their seats.

CN BRANTLEY AND CHRISTY

In two of the best seats in the house. Christy is simply  
but expensively dressed. She looks great. Brantley is  
aware of how great she looks.

CHRISTY  
So, your first job in the city  
is working for Howard. As what?  
A messenger?

BRANTLEY  
I'm his executive assistant.

CHRISTY  
Sounds impressive. What does it  
mean?

CONTINUED

BRANTLEY

Whatever he wants me to do, I do it.

CHRISTY

We have a lot in common.

BRANTLEY

What do you do?

(off her reaction)

I mean, besides what you do for Mr. Prescott.

(still doesn't sound right)

I mean, do you only do what you do for Mr. Prescott, or do you... you know...

CHRISTY

Free-lance?

Brantley shrugs awkwardly.

CHRISTY

I have an exclusive agreement with Howard.

Houselights dim. Brantley and Christy turn toward the stage, as the curtain rises.

EXT. THEATER - NIGHT

People are coming out. The street is crowded, noisy.

ON BRANTLEY AND CHRISTY

As they exit the theater.

CHRISTY

I'm tired of plays about artistic angst. Everybody gets frustrated. I do. Don't you?

(before he can answer)

Of course, you do. But you don't make a big deal out of it. If you did, people would just yawn and change the subject. Are you hungry?

BRANTLEY

A little. Would you like some supper?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

CHRISTY  
Nice of you to ask.

BRANTLEY  
I...don't have a lot of money  
on me.

CHRISTY  
(puts her arm  
in his)  
I do.

INT. CARNEGIE DELI - NIGHT

The atmosphere is bright, busy and loud. Christy is devouring a hamburger with everything on it, an order of fries covered with catsup and a cherry Coke. Brantley is eating turkey on white bread, but he's more interested in Christy than food.

CHRISTY  
Have some fries?

BRANTLEY  
No, thanks.  
(a beat)  
I've seen you before.

Christy looks at him.

BRANTLEY  
A couple of times. Once, you  
looked like...well, like this.  
Another time, you looked like...  
I don't know...a college student.

CHRISTY  
I am a college student. An art  
major.

(off his surprised  
reaction)  
At NYU. I would have finished by  
now, but I dropped out for a year  
to sell gloves at Bloomingdale's.  
Strictly an economic decision. I  
could go to school or eat. I have  
strong feelings about eating.

Brantley nods understandingly.

CHRISTY  
Then, I met Howard.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

BRANTLEY  
And quit Bloomingdale's.

CHRISTY  
Not right away. He was very honest  
about what he had in mind, and it  
wasn't what I wanted to be when I  
grew up. But, he kept outlining  
the advantages of his proposal and...  
(shrugs)  
Howard can be very persuasive.  
(bites into  
a fry)  
I'd reconsider if I were you.  
(off his look)  
The fries. They're incredible.

Brantley takes a French fry.

CHRISTY  
Howard's very good to me. Ex-  
cept he only goes places where  
they wouldn't be caught dead  
serving jumboburgers or a prune  
danish.  
(philosophical)  
Sometimes you just need a prune  
danish.

INT. CHRISTY'S APARTMENT BUILDING - CORRIDOR - NIGHT  
Christy unlocks her door, turns to Brantley.

CHRISTY  
Thanks.

BRANTLEY  
For what? Everything was your  
treat.

CHRISTY  
The company.

They exchange a smile.

CHRISTY  
Well...  
She opens the door.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

BRANTLEY  
He's my uncle.

Christy looks back, quizzical.

BRANTLEY  
That's how I got the job.

CHRISTY  
Why the confession?

BRANTLEY  
Just felt like it.

CHRISTY  
Go back to Kansas. Before you  
get corrupted.

BRANTLEY  
I think it's too late.

CHRISTY  
(a long look)  
No, there's hope. If you move  
fast.

She smiles and goes inside. Brantley just stands there for  
a moment, thoughtful, before he turns away.

INT. BRANTLEY'S APARTMENT - DAY

Brantley, in shorts, is doing aerobic exercises to POUNDING  
MUSIC and the EXUBERANT DIRECTIONS of a TV INSTRUCTOR.  
Unable to keep the pace, out of breath, he collapses in  
the bed and is tossed on the resulting turbulence. He looks  
over at his Mickey Mouse phone, considers, finally sits  
up and dials.

OPERATOR  
(filtered)  
Information.

BRANTLEY  
Could you give me the number for  
Christy Welles on East Sixty-  
Fourth Street?

OPERATOR  
(filtered)  
That number is unlisted.

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED

BRANTLEY

Right. Sorry to bother you.

He hangs up, sighs, then shrugs philosophically and looks again at the TV.

ON THE SCREEN

The indefatigable instructor is talking from a prone position.

INSTRUCTOR

Now let's deal with those love handles. Nobody loves love handles.

Brantley feels for love handles, starts exercising again. The bed SLOSHES under him. The door opens and Lester enters, wearing a red silk robe.

LESTER

Hey, Brant, can you let me have some eggs?

BRANTLEY

How many do you need?

LESTER

Make it four.

BRANTLEY

Check the refrigerator.

The instructor changes exercises and Brantley stands to follow along.

BRANTLEY

Who are you fixing breakfast for?

LESTER

This chick I met last night at The Area. She came by for a drink. After an hour...

BRANTLEY

She decided to stay.

LESTER

Too weak to travel.

Lester comes farther into the room, putting eggs into the pockets of his robe.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

BRANTLEY

What are you making?

LESTER

Gin Fizz

(off Brantley's  
reaction)

You make 'em with egg whites.  
What did you do last night?

BRANTLEY

I ran an errand for Mr. Prescott.

LESTER

Brant, babe, you gotta get somethin'  
goin' for yourself.

BRANTLEY

I'm working on it.

LESTER

Maybe you're not the slickest guy  
in town, but hey, you're likeable.  
There are women who go for your type.  
You gotta get out there. You gotta  
take risks.

BRANTLEY

You're right.

LESTER

What have you got to lose?

BRANTLEY

I'm gonna do it. Starting today.

LESTER

I'll give you a list: cool places  
to meet hot women.

BRANTLEY

You're a pal.

LESTER

You want me to bring back the yolks?

BRANTLEY

That's okay.

Lester gives him a jaunty little salute and goes out.  
Brantley stops exercising.

(CONTINUED)

BRANTLEY  
What have I got to lose?  
(thinks about that)  
I'll do it anyway.

CHRISTY'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Brantley approaches, paper bag in hand. He hesitates but then goes on to the door and enters.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - CORRIDOR

Christy opens her door with the chain on, is surprised to see Brantley.

BRANTLEY  
I was in the neighborhood.

She gives him a doubtful look. He holds up the bag, swings it back and forth seductively. It carries tell-tale grease stains.

CHRISTY  
Danish?

BRANTLEY  
Prune.

CHRISTY  
What did you have in mind?

BRANTLEY  
(shrugs)  
A walk in the park, maybe a movie...

CHRISTY  
I'm doing my income tax.

BRANTLEY  
(taken aback)  
Income tax?

CHRISTY  
Are you good with figures?

BRANTLEY  
My specialty.

CHRISTY  
(opens the door)  
I'll make some coffee.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

BRANTLEY  
(as he steps in)  
What income do you report?

Christy gives him a look.

BRANTLEY  
Do you get a W-2?

She closes the door after him.

INT. CHRISTY'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

The room is spacious, with high ceilings, crown moldings, parquet floors. The furniture is simple, low, modern. The place has a kind of informal glamour.

Christy and Brantley are seated on the floor, surrounded by papers, receipts, cancelled checks. Coffee cups and plates that bear evidence of danish pastry sit on a low table. Brantley puts a last figure into a calculator, gets a total and enters it on a tax form.

BRANTLEY  
Okay, that's it. They owe you money.

CHRISTY  
You're a genius!

Brantley gives a modest shrug.

CHRISTY  
It would've taken me two days to that. Two weeks! How can I repay you?

He just looks at her. She doesn't flinch.

CHRISTY  
The park?

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - DAY

Because it's the weekend and the park is closed to automobiles, people are everywhere, strolling, cycling, playing games.

BRANTLEY AND CHRISTY

skate down the middle of the street. Christy is good. Brantley is very shaky.

CONTINUED

BRANTLEY

I haven't done this in years!

CHRISTY

It's like riding a bike. You never forget.

They pass vendors of food, toys, balloons. Brantley stares wonderingly at a MAN ON A UNICYCLE and, his concentration broken, has to fight to stay up, wildly flailing his arms and finally grabbing onto a HEAVY WOMAN in his path. Startled, she SCREAMS.

BRANTLEY

Excuse me. Thank you.

(as he rolls on)

Nice meeting you.

#### SKATING AREA

A crowd is gathered around an area in the street that has become a makeshift skating rink. A portable radio provides DRIVING NEW WAVE MUSIC and SKATERS show off their skills, racing around at breakneck speeds, weaving in and out. In the center of the area, the "stars" spin and jump and dance with abandon.

#### BRANTLEY AND CHRISTY

watch from the front of the crowd. She is moving with the music.

CHRISTY

Don't you love it? Don't you want to get in there and let go?

A SKATER cuts close to the crowd. Brantley, trying to get out of the way, loses his balance and falls flat.

BRANTLEY

(looks up

at Christy)

Maybe next time.

Christy can't help but laugh.

CHRISTY

Sorry.

(gives him a hand up)

You're a good sport.

(CONTINUED)

73  
CONTINUED

They look at each other.

CHRISTY

(a moment)

All this fresh air and exercise...  
I've worked up an appetite.

INT. THE AREA - NIGHT

A disco-bar-restaurant, loud and raucous, with glittering decor and lights that change and flash and dazzle. A spacey circus with a large company of freaks.

AT THE BAR

Lester, seated on a high stool, is coming on to a YOUNG WOMAN WITH PINK HAIR.

LESTER

The first thing I noticed was  
your eyes.

YOUNG WOMAN

Yeah?

LESTER

(leaning closer)

I can see myself in your eyes!

YOUNG WOMAN

I'm wearing contacts.

Lester looks past her and reacts to something o.s.

HIS POV

Brantley and Christy are moving through the crowd.

ON LESTER

He stares in surprise.

LESTER

I'll be right back.

ON BRANTLEY AND CHRISTY

As they work their way deeper into the action. Lester comes up behind them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

LESTER  
Hey, Brantley.

BRANTLEY  
Oh, hi, Lester.

LESTER  
Long time no see.

BRANTLEY  
This morning.

LESTER  
(smiles at Christy;  
very suave)  
Hi there.

BRANTLEY  
Lester, this is Christy.

CHRISTY  
Hello.

LESTER  
(close to  
Brantley's ear)  
How did you get somebody so  
knocked-out gorgeous so fast?

BRANTLEY  
I did what you said. Took a  
chance.

LESTER  
Where'd you find her? What did  
you say? Let me hear the line  
that hooked this mythological  
creature.

BRANTLEY  
Later. .

Lester steps closer to Christy.

LESTER  
Nice meeting you. I don't suppose  
you've got a sister.

CHRISTY  
She just turned fifteen.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

LESTER

Yeah? Is she engaged or anything?

Brantley gives him a look.

LESTER

Later.

He exits scene. Christy is looking toward the dance floor.

BRANTLEY

How do you like it?

CHRISTY

Very trendy.

BRANTLEY

I'm a trendy kinda guy.

The music gets LOUDER, HARDER, MORE DEMANDING.

CHRISTY

Do you dance the way you skate  
or the way you do income tax?

BRANTLEY

Somewhere in between.

CHRISTY

I'll take a chance.

They push through the crowd to the dance floor, which is packed with bodies in all manner of contortion. Christy is not an exhibitionist, but she's got the moves. Brantley watches appreciatively, keeping his own dancing conservative.

BRANTLEY

Can I see you some more?

CHRISTY

What?

BRANTLEY

(raises his voice  
above the music)

I'd like to see you some more.

CHRISTY

Why?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

BRANTLEY  
I like being with you.

CHRISTY  
Aren't you forgetting something?

BRANTLEY  
He doesn't own you, does he?

Christy gives him a long look, then concentrates on her dancing.  
Brantley decides to let go and hogies with abandon.

AT THE BAR

Lester is staring, incredulous, at Brantley's performance.

YOUNG WOMAN  
Your friend's all over it.

LESTER  
I taught the guy everything he  
knows.

ON THE DANCE FLOOR - LATER

The MUSIC has changed. Brantley and Christy are dancing slow  
and close.

CHRISTY  
I can't be away from my tele-  
phone for very long at a time.

BRANTLEY  
(brightens)  
But I can see you.

CHRISTY  
Howard expects me to be available,  
which is only right...

BRANTLEY  
But I can see you.

CHRISTY  
We can go out sometimes, when I'm  
free.

Brantley breaks into a grin.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

CHRISTY  
As friends. Only. You can't  
interfere with my professional  
commitment in any way. Okay?

BRANTLEY  
Okay.

CHRISTY  
Okay.

Brantley draws her even closer, feeling good.

INT. CHRISTY'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT  
CLOSE ON CHRISTY AND BRANTLEY, in bed, at the moment of moments

BRANTLEY  
Oh. Ah. Mmmmm.

He relaxes with a sigh and lays his head on Christy's shoulder.

BRANTLEY  
I'd like to thank you for one  
of the highlights of my life.

CHRISTY  
Call it a friendly gesture.

EXT. BRANTLEY'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

It is raining lightly. Brantley approaches the entrance, slightly  
disheveled, more than slightly wet, but happy, singing as he  
goes.

VERA (O.S.)  
Brantley.

He looks around, surprised. Vera puts down the window of a  
450SL that's parked at the curb.

VERA  
At last.

BRANTLEY  
Vera!

He goes over to the car.

VERA  
I've been waiting here for an hour.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

BRANTLEY  
You shouldn't have.

VERA  
I know. My God, I could've been  
killed! Where have you been?

BRANTLEY  
I...went to this seminar. On  
art history.

VERA  
Why?

BRANTLEY  
Self-improvement.

VERA  
Never mind improving yourself.  
Howard's out of town.  
(opens the car door)  
You can spend the rest of the  
weekend in Glen Cove.

BRANTLEY  
What'll people think?

VERA  
What should they think? You're  
family.

BRANTLEY  
Right.

With a resigned shrug, he climbs into the car.

INT. PRESCOTT'S OFFICE - DAY

Prescott, at his desk, looks up impatiently.

PRESCOTT  
Brantley?

Brantley comes in from his office looking very much the worse  
for wear.

PRESCOTT  
Check this environmental report  
and let me know if I have to make  
a statement.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

Brantley nods and reaches for the papers. Prescott gives him a close look.

PRESCOTT  
(continuing)  
Did you have a hard weekend,  
Brantley?

BRANTLEY  
You could say that.

PRESCOTT  
Let me give you some advice.  
Brantley concentrates.

PRESCOTT  
(Solemnly)  
Keep your eye on the ball.

BRANTLEY  
On the ball.

PRESCOTT  
Career in first place, personal  
life organized and under control.  
Brantley nods solemnly.

PRESCOTT  
That's how I've handled things,  
if you have an idea of following  
in my footsteps.

BRANTLEY  
I do. Yes, sir, right in those  
footsteps. That's what I'm trying  
to do.

They smile at each other.

INT. BRANTLEY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The phone is RINGING. Brantley comes out of the bathroom,  
dripping.

BRANTLEY  
(into phone)  
Hello.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

CHRISTY  
(filtered)

Hi.

BRANTLEY  
(smiles)

Hi.

CHRISTY  
(filtered)  
I can't see you tonight. Howard  
just called. He's coming over.

Brantley sighs unhappily.

CHRISTY  
(filtered)  
Don't pout.

BRANTLEY  
I'm not pouting.

CHRISTY  
(filtered)  
Yes, you are. I can hear it when  
you pout. You make a pouting  
noise. I'll talk to you tomorrow.

The phone CLICKS off. Brantley hangs up and just sits  
there. The phone RINGS again. He picks it up.

BRANTLEY  
Hello, Vera.

VERA  
(filtered)  
How did you know it was me?

BRANTLEY  
Just had a feeling.

VERA  
(filtered)  
It's dangerous to answer the  
phone with my name.

BRANTLEY  
It was a strong feeling.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

VERA  
(filtered)  
Howard called. He's working  
late. I'll be there in an hour.

The phone CLICKS OFF. Brantley hangs up, falls back on the  
bed and lies there, undulating.

EXT. CONSOLIDATED BUILDING - NIGHT

Prescott and Brantley come out the revolving doors, both in  
their three-piece suits, both carrying attache cases.

BRANTLEY  
I've been giving a lot of thought  
to edible cans, and I'm really  
psyched about it. Think what  
it'll mean to ecology. That's a  
major source of litter we'll be  
eliminating.

Prescott gives him a look.

BRANTLEY  
So to speak.

A grey limo pulls in at the curb. When Prescott opens the  
rear door, Christy leans out. She's wearing a sexy low-cut  
dress.

CHRISTY  
Hi.  
(sees Brantley)  
Oh. Hi.

BRANTLEY  
(restrained)  
Hello.

PRESCOTT  
You two have met.

CHRISTY  
He brought some roses.  
(to Brantley)  
It's nice seeing you again.

BRANTLEY  
Nice seeing you. Again.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

Polite smiles all around.

VERA (O.S.)

Well. Look who's here.

Brantley, Prescott and Christy react, as Vera sweeps into scene.

VERA

Hello, Brantley. Hello, Howard.  
Hello...

PRESCOTT

This is Miss Welles.

VERA

Miss Welles.

PRESCOTT

(to Christy)  
My wife.

BRANTLEY

My aunt.

CHRISTY

Hello.

VERA

I was in town, running later  
than I expected...Are you working  
tonight?

PRESCOTT

No. Not tonight.

VERA

Good. Then you can take me  
home.

She looks at Christy. Christy looks at Prescott. Prescott  
looks at Brantley. The tension is getting thick.

VERA

Or can you?

BRANTLEY

No. He can't.

Everybody looks at Brantley.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

BRANTLEY  
Not in this car.

General curiosity.

BRANTLEY  
Uncle Howard gave it to me. To  
us. For the night. The car, and  
reservations at Lutece. To cele-  
brate.  
(turning to Prescott)  
Aunt Vera will understand.

VERA  
Understand what? Celebrate what?

BRANTLEY  
Our engagement. Miss Wells...  
Christy...is my fiancée.

A moment, as everyone absorbs this announcement.

VERA  
I think I'd like to sit down.  
She crosses to a hydrant that sticks out from the building.

PRESCOTT  
On a fire plug?

VERA  
Don't be a snob.

BRANTLEY  
I know this comes as a surprise  
to you...

CHRISTY  
Yes.

Brantley shoots her a look.

VERA  
I didn't know you were even  
dating anyone.

PRESCOTT  
You haven't seen that much of  
Brantley.

(CONTINUED)

84  
CONTINUED

VERA

Enough to form an attachment.

BRANTLEY

(nervously)

It all happened very fast.

CHRISTY

Very.

PRESCOTT

It came as a surprise to me too.

VERA

And you're giving them a night on the town. That's very sweet.

CHRISTY

You have such a romantic husband.

VERA

Mmmmm.

(gets up and goes  
back to the car)

I have an idea. Let's all celebrate together.

Brantley and Prescott exchange looks. Christy smiles to herself, starting to see the humor in the situation.

VERA

We'll share this happy occasion.

PRESCOTT

I'm sure they'd rather be alone.

VERA

They'll be alone for years.

CHRISTY

I think it's a great idea.

VERA

There. You see. Christy doesn't mind sharing.

BRANTLEY

(forced good cheer)

Well. This is really turning out to be a special evening!

INT. LIMO

As the celebrants are driven through the city. Brantley and Christy riding backwards, face Vera and Prescott. The bar has been opened and everyone has a drink.

VERA

A toast. To young lovers.

Glasses are raised. The toast is drunk. Christy looks at Prescott with a mischievous twinkle.

CHRISTY

Have we met before?

PRESCOTT

(taken aback)

What? No, I don't think so.

CHRISTY

I'm very good with faces, and I have this feeling we've met before.

PRESCOTT

(firmly)

We haven't met.

CHRISTY

On a professional basis.

VERA

(to Christy)

What profession are you in?

A tense moment.

BRANTLEY

Christy's an artist.

CHRISTY

I do my best.

Smiles all around.

CHRISTY

(to Prescott)

Maybe if I saw you upside down...

A variety of reaction.

(CONTINUED)

86  
86

CONTINUED

CHRISTY

Sometimes I see things better  
upside down. I've tried painting  
on my head.

VERA

How do you ever get it off?

The limousine pulls in to the curb.

BRANTLEY

Here we are!

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Our quartet is seated in an atmosphere of subdued elegance.  
Champagne for everyone. Vera, slightly tipsy, raises her glass.

VERA

To Brantley.

PRESCOTT

Haven't we had enough toasts?

VERA

(stubbornly)

To my nephew.

Prescott sighs helplessly. They all drink.

VERA

Every woman should have her  
nephew.

Reactions around the table.

VERA

Have a nephew.

PRESCOTT

I'll get some menus.

He looks for a waiter.

VERA

Let's drink to that.

BRANTLEY

Getting menus?

(CONTINUED)

87  
CONTINUED

VERA  
Having nephews.

PRESCOTT  
Vera, you've had enough.

VERA  
If only that were true.

PRESCOTT  
(gratefully)  
Ah. Here's the waiter.

A HANDSOME YOUNG WAITER hands out menus. Vera looks up, reacts.

VERA  
(throatily)  
Hello.

WAITER  
Good evening, Madam.

VERA  
Are you someone's nephew?

PRESCOTT  
Vera.

VERA  
A simple question.

She looks back at the waiter.

WAITER  
(maintaining his poise)  
As a matter of fact, I am.

VERA  
Taken.

WAITER  
May I tell you about this evening's special?

VERA  
Oh, my God, I wish you would.  
(smiles)  
Do you like being a nephew?

(CONTINUED)

87  
CONTINUED

PRESCOTT

Goddammit, Vera, stop talking  
and order!

VERA

Howard, I don't think that's in  
the spirit of the evening.

(smiles again  
at the waiter)

And I haven't heard the special.

CHRISTY

What is the special?

PRESCOTT

All right, for Chrissake, what's  
the damn special?

WAITER

(a blank expression)

I'm afraid I've forgotten.  
Excuse me.

He exits scene.

VERA

You frightened him off. Let's  
drink another toast...

(picks up  
her glass)

Two people making an investment  
in the future, knowing they'll  
always have each other...

(her expression  
darkens)

Unless one of them decides to  
piss away that investment...

PRESCOTT

Vera.

VERA

Oh. Sorry.

(to Brantley and  
Christy)

He doesn't like me to swear.

(startin' over)

Unless one of them decides to

(MORE)

CONTINUED

VERA (Cont'd.)  
throw away that investment, and  
go looking for something new,  
something younger...

(to Christy,  
earnestly)  
It happens.

CHRISTY  
I've heard that.

VERA  
It's hard to hold someone if  
he doesn't want to be held.

CHRISTY  
I guess what you have to hold  
is his interest.

Brantley and Prescott look apprehensively at Vera. She smiles.

VERA  
What a sweet thought. You are  
lucky, Brantley, to find someone  
so young, so beautiful and so  
sweet too.

BRANTLEY  
Well.  
(retreating to  
his menu)  
What's everybody ordering?

VERA  
I want the special.

PRESCOTT  
You don't know what it is.

VERA  
Whatever it is, I want it.

CHRISTY  
What I really want is a hamburger.

PRESCOTT  
I've lost my appetite.

VERA  
For what?

90  
INT. CHRISTY'S APARTMENT BUILDING - CORRIDOR - NIGHT  
Brantley and Christy step out of a cage-front elevator.

BRANTLEY  
What a terrible night.

CHRISTY  
I had a wonderful time.

They walk to her apartment door.

CHRISTY  
Have you been getting it on with  
Aunt Vera?

BRANTLEY  
She had too much to drink. She  
didn't mean things the way they  
sounded.

CHRISTY  
It wasn't only what she said. It  
was the way she looked at you. I  
know that look. So, you've been  
fucking Howard's wife.

BRANTLEY  
Don't say that.

CHRISTY  
It's true.

BRANTLEY  
You could use some other word.

CHRISTY  
(looks wonderingly  
at him)  
You're being protective. Of her.  
Aren't you?

BRANTLEY  
You can get to like somebody  
you're fucking!

They both reflect on that observation.

CHRISTY  
You're going to make someone a  
lovely fiance.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

BRANTLEY  
Thank you.

CHRISTY  
You're welcome.

She starts to enter her apartment.

BRANTLEY  
Christy.

She turns back. Brantley kisses her. A long and ardent kiss. When it's over, Christy looks at him thoughtfully, warily.

BRANTLEY  
I know, I made a promise.

CHRISTY  
Yes.

BRANTLEY  
I've kept it.

Brantley takes off his coat and throws it inside her apartment.

BRANTLEY  
Haven't I?

CHRISTY  
(glancing after  
the coat)  
Yes.

Brantley unknots his tie and starts to unbutton his vest.

BRANTLEY  
A promise is a promise.

CHRISTY  
Yes. It is.

BRANTLEY  
Maybe it's okay to cheat on  
some things, but not a promise.

He pulls off the vest, throws it and the tie after the coat, then starts to unbutton his shirt.

(CONTINUED)

72  
34

CONTINUED

CHRISTY

As long as we have an understanding...

BRANTLEY

Just friends?

CHRISTY

Just friends.

BRANTLEY

Right.

Taking off his shirt, Brantley walks Christy backwards into her apartment and kicks the door shut behind them.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BRANTLEY'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Brantley, in his three-piece suit of last night, slightly disheveled, approaches the entrance, as Lester comes out.

LESTER

Brant!

BRANTLEY

Morning, Lester.

He starts inside.

LESTER

Hold it. Wait a minute.

(as Brantley  
turns back)

I'm leaving for work and your're  
just getting home?

BRANTLEY

Looks that way.

LESTER

Not that knockout you had with you  
at The Area.

BRANTLEY

That's the one.

LESTER

Jesus! Brantley, you've struck gold.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

Brantley nods happily, and again starts inside.

LESTER

Where are you going? The office is this way.

BRANTLEY

I'm going to have a shower and a shave, change my clothes...

LESTER

You'll be an hour late.

Brantley shrugs.

LESTER

Prescott's gonna have your ass.

BRANTLEY

I don't think so. I think he'll be very nice to me. I think he might even give me a raise.

LESTER

You've been in that job three weeks, you're an hour late to work, and he's gonna give you a raise.

BRANTLEY

He likes my spirit.

He continues inside, leaving Lester nonplussed.

INT. PRESCOTT'S OFFICE - DAY

Maureen is taking dictation when Brantley enters from his office.

PRESCOTT

Please give your prompt attention to this matter.

(looks up)

Come in, Brantley.

(To Maureen)

The usual copies.

She makes a note in her book.

(CONTINUED)

94  
128

CONTINUED

PRESCOTT  
I've just approved a raise for you,  
Brantley.

BRANTLEY  
A raise? For me?

PRESCOTT  
A reward for your initiative. Your  
ability to assess a situation and  
take action.

BRANTLEY  
Just keeping my eye on 'the ball.

PRESCOTT  
I'd say you're doing more than  
that. I'd say you're picking it  
up and running with it.

BRANTLEY  
The last time I did that, I broke  
my nose.

PRESCOTT  
This time you got a raise. No  
risk, no score.

BRANTLEY  
You should see my swan dive.

CUT TO:

INT. HEALTH CLUB - DAY

Brantley and Lester are working out on Nautilus equipment.  
Lester is on the chest machine, working against tension to  
bring two weights together in front of him. He strains.  
He struggles. Just as he's about to make it...

BRANTLEY  
I got that raise.

Lester looks up, astonished, whereupon the machine snaps  
back, taking his arm with it.

LESTER  
Ahhhhh!

INT. CHRISTY'S APARTMENT BUILDING - CORRIDOR - DAY

Brantley emerges from the elevator, carrying a bag with grease stains. As he does, the door to Christy's apartment opens. He quickly pulls open a door marked "stairs" and ducks inside. After a moment, he peers out through a small window, to see Prescott, scowling, walk past. He waits to hear the elevator doors open and close, then cautiously emerges and continues to Christy's apartment. Her door stands open.

INT. CHRISTY'S APARTMENT

Brantley enters. Christy, wearing only scant lingerie, is standing in the middle of the living room, looking stunned. She has the beginnings of a black eye.

BRANTLEY

He hit you!

CHRISTY

Not hard.

BRANTLEY

I'll kill him.

He hands her the bag, turns on his heels and stomps out.

CHRISTY

Brantley!

She starts to follow, remembers what she has on, or doesn't have on, throws open a closet and pulls out a mink coat, then hurries after Brantley.

INT. CORRIDOR

Christy comes running down the hall, getting into the coat.

CHRISTY

Wait!

The elevator door closes. Christy frantically pushes the call button, decides she can't wait and dashes into the door marked "stairs".

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING

Brantley rushes out and yells after a departing limousine.

BRANTLEY

You son of a bitch!

(CONTINUED)

96  
CONTINUED

He chases the limo, running down the street at full speed, like a lunatic.

BRANTLEY

You bastard!

Christy comes running out of the building and goes after him.

AT THE CORNER

The limo turns into the cross street and rolls smoothly into the flow of traffic. Brantley reaches the corner, scowls after the limo, then turns in the other direction and raises his arm.

BRANTLEY

Taxi!

A cab passes, occupied. Christy rushes into scene and pulls his arm down.

CHRISTY

Stop it! You're going to ruin everything.

BRANTLEY

That scum bag!

CHRISTY

Let's hope he didn't look back.

BRANTLEY

He hit you!

CHRISTY

I'm his mistress.

BRANTLEY

That makes it all right?

CHRISTY

Let's just say he pays for the privilege.

BRANTLEY

That's sick. You're sick!

CHRISTY

I'm realistic.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Christy and Brantley are sitting by the window in a small neighborhood coffee shop. Christy is still wearing the fur coat and bedroom slippers.

CHRISTY

If I were his wife and he hit me, he'd be in big trouble. But I'm not his wife. I do what a wife won't do, take what a wife won't take...

BRANTLEY

Great spot to be in.

CHRISTY

It beats selling gloves.

BRANTLEY

Does it? Do you really like being a...a...

CHRISTY

Come on, spit it out.

BRANTLEY

A piece of property?

CHRISTY

A glimpse of midwest morality.

BRANTLEY

There's nothing wrong with a little midwest morality.

CHRISTY

This, from the guy who's fucking his aunt.

BRANTLEY

At least I don't do it for money.

CHRISTY

Don't you?

BRANTLEY

What does that mean?

CHRISTY

It doesn't hurt to have the boss's wife on your side...unless, of course, the boss finds out which side of you she's on.

EXT. STREET - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Brantley and Christy are walking back toward her apartment.

BRANTLEY  
I've got a regular job, in a  
regular office...

CHRISTY  
You work hard.

BRANTLEY  
Yes, I do.

CHRISTY  
Long hours.

BRANTLEY  
Damn right.

CHRISTY  
So which of us is smarter?

BRANTLEY  
I don't think it's smart sitting  
around waiting for somebody to drop  
by and take out his aggressions.

CHRISTY  
We do other things.

BRANTLEY  
Whatever he wants.

CHRISTY  
Look, I made my choice some time  
ago...

BRANTLEY  
Some choice.

CHRISTY  
Now you come along, Sir Galahad  
Of The Boondocks...

BRANTLEY  
A piece of ass and a punching bag!

Furious, Christy hits him. He steps back, astonished.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

CHRISTY

Get out!

BRANTLEY

Of what? I'm standing on the sidewalk.

CHRISTY

My life.

BRANTLEY

You know what I think? I think you're afraid. Yeah. Afraid you can't cut it on your own. Afraid to leave your cage.

CHRISTY

A cage is something you can't get out of. I'm standing on the sidewalk, just like you are. No cage.

BRANTLEY

You're wearing it.

Christy stares at him defiantly, pulls off the fur coat and drops it on the sidewalk. He's astonished. She smiles, turns and walks off, in only her lingerie.

BRANTLEY

Hey!

CHRISTY

(over her  
shoulder)

Don't come around anymore.

BRANTLEY

You'll miss me!

CHRISTY

Give me a week.

She continues out of scene.

INT. PRESCOTT'S OFFICE - DAY

Vera, in her husband's chair, is pouring over something on the desk in front of her. She looks up when Brantley enters from his office.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

Oh. Hi. BRANTLEY

VERA  
He's at the health club, staying  
in shape.

BRANTLEY  
I'll catch him later.

VERA  
I haven't seen you in a while.

BRANTLEY  
I've been really busy.

VERA  
That has a familiar ring.

BRANTLEY  
I'm...you know...learning the  
business. How have you been?

VERA  
Restless. I'd grown accustomed  
to your nose.

BRANTLEY  
I started to call...

VERA  
So did I. More than once. But  
what was I going to say? I want  
to wish you all the best? How  
about one for the road?

BRANTLEY  
I didn't know what to say either.  
I knew you had to be pretty bummed.

VERA  
Bummed? Moi? Oh, I'll admit to  
a few dark moments. I considered  
entering a convent, but I decided  
I'm not cut out for a life of celi-  
bacy. The Foreign Legion is still  
closed to women -- one of the few  
holdouts. Then suddenly, I knew  
what I wanted to do, and the world  
looked brighter.

(MORE)

CONTINUED

VERA  
(off Brantley's  
quizzical  
expression)  
Get Howard. Catch him with his  
lady-friend and take him for every  
dime he's got.

BRANTLEY  
Oh, you don't want to do that...

VERA  
Why not?

BRANTLEY  
I don't know...It doesn't seem  
fair.

VERA  
Fair? What's fair? Is having  
an affair fair? Oddly enough, it  
is. But the relief is temporary.  
I want revenge.

Howard enters in workout clothes.

VERA  
Hello, Howard. We were just talk-  
ing about you.

PRESCOTT  
Ah, Brantley...We need to talk.

VERA  
I'll take my crossword somewhere  
else.

PRESCOTT  
I'll only be a few minutes.

Vera picks up a folded newspaper and crosses to the door.

VERA  
(as if reading)  
What the worm does. Five letters.

PRESCOTT  
Turns.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

VERA

That's it.

(smiles at Brantley)

The worm turns.

She exits. Prescott goes into his private bathroom and starts to undress.

PRESCOTT

Brantley, I have a favor to ask of you. You remember Christy...

BRANTLEY

Christy? Oh, yes. Christy. I remember her.

PRESCOTT

She's been very moody lately. I thought if we could go away for a few days, some place nice, maybe she'd snap out of it. So, I'm making plans to take her on a little vacation in the Caribbean.

BRANTLEY

That is nice.

PRESCOTT

Of course, I can't let Vera know what I'm doing...

BRANTLEY

No, I wouldn't if I were you.

Prescott gets in the shower, turns it on and raises his voice above the sound of the water.

PRESCOTT

I'm going to tell her I'm meeting with representatives of several Latin American markets, over a period of several days.

BRANTLEY

(raising his voice too)

Sounds good.

PRESCOTT

I want you to take Christy down there and check into a suite.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

BRANTLEY  
(dumbfounded)  
You want me to take her?

PRESCOTT  
I'll arrive on a later plane and  
check into a suite across the hall.  
We'll switch suites, without any-  
one knowing.

BRANTLEY  
You want me to be your cover.

PRESCOTT  
I can't be too careful.  
The water is turned off and Prescott gets out of the shower.

PRESCOTT  
I'd like to set this up for  
next week.

BRANTLEY  
I don't know...I'd like to help  
you out. But this is a little...  
you know...much.

Prescott appears at the bathroom door, toweling himself dry.

PRESCOTT  
I'll find a way to show my ap-  
preciation.

BRANTLEY  
For my service to the company.

PRESCOTT  
Exactly.

BRANTLEY  
Well, I guess I could do it...  
By the way, who's going to head  
up the new Paris office?

Prescott looks at him, surprised by his brass. Brantley looks  
back.

PRESCOTT  
That's a big job.

(CONTINUED)

10  
3  
CONTINUED

BRANTLEY  
It's a big favor.

PRESCOTT  
You're getting the hang of things.

BRANTLEY  
I sure am.

They consider each other with a mix of challenge and professional respect.

EXT. OPEN SKY - DAY

A jetliner sails smoothly through blue sky, over blue sea.

INT. PLANE

Brantley and Christy are sitting next to each other. Christy has a book. Brantley has a magazine. Both are concentrating on their reading. Brantley steals a look at Christy, goes back to his magazine. Christy steals a look at Brantley, goes back to her book.

EXT. HOTEL - NIGHT

A taxi stops in front of a modern, palm-surrounded resort hotel. Brantley and Christy climb out and enter the hotel without a word.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY

A spacious, open-air lobby, lush with tropical plants. Brantley and Christy approach the desk.

CLERK  
Good evening.

BRANTLEY  
You have a suite reserved for Foster.

CLERK  
Yes, Mr. Foster. If you'll register, please.

(puts a card in front of Brantley)  
And you have a telegram.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

He pulls an envelope out of a box behind him and gives it to Brantley.

BRANTLEY  
(opens it and reads)  
"Have been sidetracked to Washington. Will not arrive until Tuesday."

CHRISTY  
What?

BRANTLEY  
"Regrets. H. Prescott."

CHRISTY  
The prick!

The clerk reacts. Brantley turns to him with a smile.

BRANTLEY  
I'll register for Mr. Prescott too. He won't want to lose his suite.

The clerk puts another card in front of him.

CHRISTY  
I have half a mind to go back to New York.

BRANTLEY  
He can't help it.

CHRISTY  
The hell he can't. He can put business aside once in his life. I'm tired of being stood up and taken for granted...

BRANTLEY  
You sound like his wife.

CHRISTY  
Well, I guess you know what she sounds like.

BRANTLEY  
We'll work it out.  
(to the clerk)  
We're ready to go to our suite now.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

CLERK

Of course.

He hits a bell and a BELLMAN flashes to the desk.

CLERK

(hands him keys)

Two twenty two.

BELLMAN

(to Brantley)

Right this way.

BRANTLEY

(to Christy)

Right this way.

INT. CORRIDOR

The bellman pushes a luggage cart that carries Christy's three pieces of matched luggage and Brantley's single suitcase. Brantley and Christy walk behind him. He stops at a door.

BELLMAN

Suite two twenty two.

INT. BRANTLEY'S SUITE - LIVING ROOM

The door opens and the bellman reaches in to turn on lights. He precedes Brantley and Christy into the suite, turns on another lamp, then goes to put on lights in the bedroom.

CHRISTY

I didn't like this deal in the first place...pretending I'm with one person when I'm really with another person...

BRANTLEY

It wasn't my idea. We're in this cage together

The bellman goes back to the corridor.

CHRISTY

Together but apart. The sofa looks very comfortable.

BRANTLEY

I'll flip you for it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

The bellman brings in luggage.

CHRISTY

Put the blue ones in the bedroom.

The brown one stays in here

(to Brantley)

I never was a gambler.

Brantley opens some louvered doors and finds a wet bar, then crosses to a TV-radio combination, flips a switch and gets a movie.

BRANTLEY

This room has some nice features.

CHRISTY

I'm happy you're happy.

The bellman has taken Christy's luggage into the bedroom. Now he brings in Brantley's suitcase.

BELLMAN

Will that be all?

BRANTLEY

I think so.

(hands him a couple  
of dollars)

That's for the brown one.

BELLMAN

Thank you, sir.

He looks at Christy, who glares at Brantley, opens her purse and makes a point of giving the bellman a five.

BELLMAN

And thank you, ma'm.

He gives the key to the suite to Christy and crosses to the door.

BELLMAN

Have a pleasant stay.

He exits.

CHRISTY

Have a pleasant stay.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

She goes into the bedroom and closes the door. Brantley looks at the television screen, makes a face and switches from TV to radio. Seductive Latin MUSIC. He crosses to glass doors that open onto a balcony, slides them back and steps out.

EXT. BALCONY

Brantley looks down.

HIS POV

Overlooking lush tropical gardens, bathed in moonlight.

ON BRANTLEY

As he considers this romantic scene.

INT. BEDROOM

Christy crosses to the same kind of glass doors that are in the living room, slides them open and steps out.

EXT. BALCONY

Christy looks at the beautiful scene below

ON BRANTLEY

He turns.

ON CHRISTY

She turns.

CUT BETWEEN THEM.

Nice. BRANTLEY

Yes. CHRISTY

The music is seductive. The atmosphere is romantic.

Well... CHRISTY

She turns back to the inside.

Goodnight. BRANTLEY

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

He goes inside too.

INT. BEDROOM

Christy opens a suitcase and takes out a filmy nightgown.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Brantley considers the sofa, goes to knock on the door between rooms. It opens a crack and Christy looks out at him.

CHRISTY  
Yes?

BRANTLEY  
I need a pillow.

CHRISTY  
Oh.

She goes to the king-size bed, pulls off one of the pillows and brings it to Brantley.

BRANTLEY  
And a blanket.

CHRISTY  
There's only one. Why don't you call Housekeeping?

BRANTLEY  
I'll use the spread.

Christy shrugs, goes to pull the spread off the bed and drags it over to the door.

BRANTLEY  
Thanks.

CHRISTY  
Don't mention it.

She closes the door. Brantley hauls the bedstuff over to the sofa, then opens his suitcase and takes out a toiletries kit.

INT. BEDROOM

Christy starts to undress.

(CONTINUED)

INT. LIVING ROOM

Brantley brushes his teeth over the bar sink.

INT. BEDROOM

Christy slips the nightgown over her head. There's a KNOCK.  
She frowns impatiently and approaches the door.

CHRISTY

What is it now?

BRANTLEY (O.S.)

I need the key.

CHRISTY

Why?

INT. LIVING ROOM

Brantley is standing at the door.

CHRISTY (O.S.)

Are you going somewhere?

BRANTLEY

Down to the pool.

CHRISTY (O.S.)

Isn't it a little late for the pool?

BRANTLEY

I have to pee.

CHRISTY (O.S.)

What?!

BRANTLEY

There's a men's room by the pool.

The door opens.

CHRISTY

You may use the bathroom.

INT. BEDROOM

As Brantley comes in.

BRANTLEY

You're a good person.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

CHRISTY

Please, just pee and leave.

Brantley goes into the bathroom. Christy puts on a negligee that is more gesture than texture. The john flushes and Brantley comes out.

BRANTLEY

Thank you very much.

CHRISTY

You're welcome.

Brantley goes out. Christy closes the door.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Some hot REGGAE comes on the radio. Brantley smiles, turns up the volume and dances around the room as he undresses. First, his shoes. Then his shirt. Then his pants. A spontaneous striptease.

INT. BEDROOM

Christy comes out of the bathroom, looks toward the door to the living room, listens to the music.

CHRISTY

Damn.

She goes to a dressing table, sits on a stool and starts to brush her hair.

CHRISTY

Damn, damn, damn.

She slams down the brush, stands and kicks over the stool.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Brantley hears the crash, stops dancing and looks toward the bedroom. The door opens. Christy glares at him. In nothing now but his designer briefs, Brantley perches on the back of the sofa and waits.

CHRISTY

The music.

BRANTLEY

Yes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

CHRISTY  
It's loud.

BRANTLEY  
Sorry.

Neither one makes a move.

CHRISTY  
I don't want this to happen.

Brantley just looks at her, ingenuousness all over his face.

CHRISTY  
But you do, don't you? You're  
just waiting for it.

The same innocent expression from Brantley. Christy grabs  
the pillow from the sofa and hits him with it. Caught by  
surprise, he goes over backwards and sprawls on the floor.

CHRISTY  
Oh!  
(kneels by him)  
Are you hurt?

BRANTLEY  
Yes.

Brantley pulls her down to him, kisses her.

CHRISTY  
This is not a good idea.

He kisses her again.

CHRISTY  
It can only cause trouble.

BRANTLEY  
You want me to stop?

CHRISTY  
No.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BRANTLEY'S SUITE - DAY

Brantley, dressed casually, answers a KNOCK on the door. A  
WAITER enters, pushing a breakfast cart.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

WAITER

Good morning!

Brantley puts a finger to his lips and motions toward the other room. The waiter glances in that direction and nods.

WAITER

(lowering  
his voice)

I hope you had a good night's...

He sees the pillow on the floor. And the bedspread. And some articles of female clothing. A small table is on its side. Evidence of abandon.

WAITER

...sleep.

BRANTLEY

It was great.

WAITER

(going about his  
business with aplomb)

The tropic air, I believe. People  
find it very restful.

He lifts a silver cover, revealing a tray piled high with goodies: danish, doughnuts, etc.

BRANTLEY

Perfect.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY

Vera steps up to the desk.

VERA

I'm Mrs. Howard Prescott. May  
I have a key to my husband's  
room?

CLERK

One moment.

(gets a number from  
a guest list)

I'll just check.

He reaches for a phone.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

VERA  
No, you mustn't call. I've  
come all the way from New York  
to surprise him.  
(a sweet smile)  
It's his birthday.

CLERK  
Oh. That's very nice.

VERA  
Yes.

She maintains her smile, but her lip curls slightly.

INT. BRANTLEY'S SUITE

Brantley signs a check for breakfast and gives it to the  
waiter.

WAITER  
Have a pleasant day.

BRANTLEY  
Thanks.

When the waiter opens the door, Vera, passing, glances in.

VERA  
Brantley!

BRANTLEY  
Vera! What are you doing here?

The waiter, caught between them, looks back and forth.

VERA  
Closing in. I know what's going  
on on this island.

BRANTLEY  
You do?

Brantley gives the waiter a look, who smiles and exits.

VERA  
I do.

BRANTLEY  
He's not here.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

Vera gives him a narrow look.

BRANTLEY  
It's true.

Vera marches off down the hall. Brantley glances toward the bedroom, then follows Vera.

INT. CORRIDOR

Vera unlocks the door to the next suite and pushes it open, takes a small camera with a flash attachment out of her handbag and goes in. Brantley follows.

INT. BRANTLEY'S SUITE

Christy comes out of the bedroom, buttoning a shirt over a pair of shorts.

CHRISTY  
Brantley?

She sees the open door to the hall, the breakfast cart, frowns quizzically, picks up a room key and goes out.

INT. PRESCOTT'S SUITE

Brantley is standing in the living room. There's no sign of occupancy. Drapes are closed. Vera comes out of the bedroom.

VERA  
I know my information was correct. I bribed two secretaries and a travel agent.

BRANTLEY  
He got sidetracked.

VERA  
When is he coming.

BRANTLEY  
Uh...Sometime today. We're supposed to meet with the representatives of several Latin American markets.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

VERA

You're trying to protect him.  
Not that I blame you for that.  
You're his executive assistant.  
My God, what a web we weave!

She sits on the sofa.

BRANTLEY

Uh...Listen, my breakfast is  
getting cold...

VERA

Go. Eat. I'll just sit here.

Brantley nods and exits.

VERA

Like a spider.

INT. BRANTLEY'S SUITE

Brantley rushes in, goes to the open bedroom door.

BRANTLEY

Christy?

He stands for a moment, thinking what to do, grabs up the  
phone.

BRANTLEY

(into phone)

Get me the airport. United  
Airlines.

(a moment)

Hi. I'd like to get a message  
to someone coming in on your  
flight from Washington...Oh.  
How long ago? Okay, thanks.

He hangs up, frustrated, gets up and crosses to the door.  
As he reaches for it, there's a KNOCK. He opens it and  
Vera enters.

VERA

Maybe it would be smarter if I  
stayed in here.

BRANTLEY

In here? Uh...Why?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

VERA

(crosses to the  
balcony doors)

I can watch balcony-to-balcony.

Brantley grabs up a piece of lingerie, looks for a place  
to put it, finally sticks it under the cover on the sweet  
rolls.

VERA

When I'm sure they're in there,  
together, I'll go in.

(looks at the cart)

You're not eating your breakfast.

BRANTLEY

I've lost my appetite.

VERA

I'm a little hungry.

(makes a move  
toward the cart)

What have you got there?

BRANTLEY

Let's see...

(lifts the cover  
slightly and quickly  
slams it down again)

You don't want that.

VERA

Why not?

BRANTLEY

There's something in it.

VERA

What do you mean? What's in it?

BRANTLEY

I'm not sure. I think it's dead.

VERA

Dead?

(lifts the cover)  
It's a brassiere.

BRANTLEY

Oh, is that what it is.

VERA

What's a brassiere doing in there?

CONTINUED

BRANTLEY

Can you believe it? A first-class hotel like this.

(picks up phone)

This is Mr. Foster in two twenty-two. There's a brassiere in my sweet rolls!

INT. HOTEL LOBBY

The desk clerk is on the phone, dumbfounded.

CLERK

Excuse me?

(a moment)

Well, I'll certainly have someone look into it.

He looks at the phone as if someone has gone crazy, hangs up, and turns to Howard Prescott.

CLERK

You're in two-twenty-four, Mr. Prescott.

He signals and hands a key to a BELLMAN.

CLERK

Many happy returns of the day.

Prescott gives him a quizzical look, then follows the bellman toward the elevators but stops when he sees something c.s.

HIS POV

Christy is walking through the open lobby toward the pool area.

ON PRESCOTT

PRESCOTT

I'll be along in a minute.

He hands a bill to the bellman, then walks off in Christy's direction.

INT. BRANTLEY'S SUITE

Brantley pushes the breakfast cart over to the door.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

BRANTLEY

They're going to take care of it.

VERA

You're acting very strange, Brantley.

BRANTLEY

Am I?

VERA

Very jumpy. Is something wrong?

BRANTLEY

No. Everything's fine. If you're hungry, we can order something. How about a club sandwich? They make a great club sandwich.

VERA

No, thank you.

(indicates the cushion beside her)

Sit down.

Brantley goes to sit on the sofa.

VERA

Relax.

He lets himself go limp.

VERA

There. That's better. Isn't that better?

Brantley smiles, and hiccups.

EXT. BY THE POOL

Prescott and Christy are standing together.

PRESCOTT

I'm sorry about Washington. There was this hearing on industrial espionage...as if Consolidated Can would do a thing like that.

CHRISTY

I was angry at first, but I got over it.

(CONTINUED)

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3

CONTINUED

PRESCOTT

Good. I've had two days of  
hassle. I'm ready for a little  
R and R

(stroking the  
inside of her arm)

Why don't we go up to my suite?

CHRISTY

I don't feel like it.

PRESCOTT

(nonplussed)

You don't feel like it?

CHRISTY

People do have feelings. Even  
someone you pay for.

PRESCOTT

I thought you got over being angry.

CHRISTY

I did.

PRESCOTT

Then what the hell's wrong? Didn't  
you get along with Brantley?

CHRISTY

We got along fine.

PRESCOTT

Then what is it? What's happened  
to you?

CHRISTY

I'm not sure.

PRESCOTT

Where is Brantley?

CHRISTY

I'm not sure.

PRESCOTT

You're not sure about anything.

CHRISTY

True. You came at a bad time.

INT. BRANTLEY'S SUITE

Brantley and Vera are still on the sofa. Vera is moving closer.

VERA

I've missed you, Brantley. You made me feel young. You put life in my life, lifted my spirits. Would you like to fool around, while I'm waiting for Howard?

Brantley looks at her in surprise.

VERA

Forget I said that. You're an engaged person. I can't fool around with an engaged person. I'm too much a romantic.

BRANTLEY

Are you sure you don't want a club sandwich?

(gets to his feet)

Why don't we go down to the coffee shop?

VERA

I don't want to miss Howard.

BRANTLEY

Once he gets here, he's here. You can catch him anytime.

Brantley goes to the door, opens it and reacts.

ANGLE ON THE CORRIDOR

Christy and Prescott are standing at the door to Prescott's suite, as Prescott unlocks it. Their backs are to Brantley.

ON BRANTLEY

He quickly closes the door.

BRANTLEY

I've changed my mind.

(turns to Vera)

I don't want a club sandwich.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

VERA

For God's sake, you're making  
me nervous.

(reaching for  
the doorknob)

I think I'll go back to Howard's  
suite and wait there. Maybe I'll  
hide in the closet.

BRANTLEY

No! Don't go!

Vera looks at him wonderingly.

BRANTLEY

I'm not engaged.

VERA

What?

BRANTLEY

The engagement's broken.

VERA

Since when?

BRANTLEY

This morning. That's why I've  
been acting weird. I'm...you  
know...upset.

VERA

Poor Brantley.

He shrugs unhappily.

VERA

Why are all the good things  
breakable? Homes, hearts, en-  
gagements...

BRANTLEY

So, we can fool around.

(drawing her away  
from the door)

While you're waiting for Howard.

(glances toward  
the bedroom)

Just give me a minute. To get  
ready.

He smiles suggestively, hiccups and rushes into the bedroom.

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INT. BEDROOM

Brantley grabs articles of Christy's clothing, crams them into her open suitcase and snaps it shut. He starts to undress, remembers something and dashes into the bath.

INT. BATHROOM

Brantley scoops up cosmetics and perfume bottles, looks around anxiously, puts them in the bathtub and pulls the shower curtain across. He continues pulling off his clothes as he goes back into the bedroom.

INT. BEDROOM

Dropping his briefs, he takes a leap into the unmade bed, pulls the covers up to his waist and lies back in a relaxed attitude.

BRANTLEY  
(calls out  
seductively)

Ready.

INT. CORRIDOR

Prescott steps inside his suite, looking back at Christy, who has stayed out in the corridor.

CHRISTY  
I'm going to put on my swim-  
suit, sit in the sun and reflect  
on some things that need reflecting  
on.

PRESCOTT  
Try reflecting yourself into a  
better mood. After I take a nap,  
I'll join you for lunch.

He goes into his suite and Christy goes to the door of the next suite.

INT. BRANTLEY'S SUITE

Christy enters, almost bumps into the cart, frowns curiously and goes toward the bedroom.

CHRISTY  
Brantley?

INT. BEDROOM

Brantley sits bolt upright in bed.

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CONTINUED

VERA

My God.

She pulls the covers over her head, as Christy opens the door.

CHRISTY

Oh.

BRANTLEY

Hello.

CHRISTY

Sorry. I had no idea...  
(looks at the hump  
that's Vera)

Who is it? The maid? A passing  
tourist?

BRANTLEY

I'd like to explain...

CHRISTY

What's to explain? You saw some-  
thing move, so you jumped on it.

The hump starts to rise, indignant. Brantley pushes it down  
again.

CHRISTY

You have the right. I mean, it's  
your suite.

She turns to go.

BRANTLEY

Wait.

CHRISTY

I don't do three-ways.

BRANTLEY

Shit.

INT. LIVING ROOM

The waiter has come in the open door to the hall to get the  
serving cart. He lifts the tray cover and picks up the  
brassiere. Christy grabs it from him as she passes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

CHRISTY  
That's mine.

She goes out.

INT. BEDROOM

Brantley sits on the side of the bed, very agitated. Vera pulls the sheet from over her head.

VERA  
Who was that?

BRANTLEY  
Never saw her before.

VERA  
You're lying.

BRANTLEY  
Yes. I lie all the time now.  
And you know what? It's not  
working out.

He reaches for his trousers.

INT. CORRIDOR

The waiter has just pushed the cart out of Brantley's suite. Brantley comes charging out, sticking one arm into a shirt sleeve. He looks in both directions.

WAITER  
(indicates Prescott's  
suite)  
She went in there.

BRANTLEY  
Thanks.

He hurries to the next door, getting into his other sleeve.

INT. PRESCOTT'S SUITE

The living room is empty. Brantley crosses to the bedroom door.

INT. BEDROOM

Christy is just getting into bed with a surprised but pleased Prescott.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

PRESCOTT

What's this?

CHRISTY

I'm through reflecting. It's a waste of time.

PRESCOTT

Well, that's better...

He reaches for her. Brantley appears at the door.

BRANTLEY

Hold it!

Prescott and Christy look up.

PRESCOTT

What are you doing in here?

BRANTLEY

I have something to say.

(to Christy)

In there, a minute ago, I had the feeling that you were feeling something you didn't say you were feeling...something that I was feeling too.

PRESCOTT

What is he talking about?

BRANTLEY

If I'm right...if we're both feeling the same thing, then we should do something about it.

PRESCOTT

I want you the hell out!

BRANTLEY

(ignoring Prescott)

If I'm wrong, if you don't feel that way...then I guess this is the big goodbye.

Outraged, Prescott starts to get out of bed but hesitates when he remembers he doesn't have anything on.

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED

BRANTLEY  
I can understand why you wouldn't  
want to feel what I feel, because  
it really screws things up.

PRESCOTT  
Brantley, if you have any hope  
of keeping your job...

BRANTLEY  
You'd lose all you've got, just  
like I'm losing all I've got.  
The thing is, I'm not happy with  
what I've got.

PRESCOTT  
All right, dammit, you're fired.

BRANTLEY  
There, I've said it.

PRESCOTT  
What the hell did you say?

BRANTLEY  
I'm in love with Christy.

Prescott looks at Christy.

BRANTLEY  
It's not her fault. She told  
me to stay away. Don't come  
down on her.

PRESCOTT  
I took you in, gave you a job,  
gave you a future, and you sneaked  
around behind my back...

CHRISTY  
Oh, Howard, can it.

Prescott looks at her in astonishment.

CHRISTY  
(to Brantley)  
I give up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

PRESCOTT  
Give up what?

CHRISTY  
I didn't want to fall in love,  
with anybody. Certainly not a  
hick from Kansas who thinks life  
is beautiful and love conquers  
all, and Santa Claus lives at  
the North Pole.

BRANTLEY  
(smiles)  
With Mrs. Claus and all the elves.

CHRISTY  
But I can't help myself. I'm  
going with you.

Christy gets out of bed, pulling the spread around her like  
a toga. Prescott is speechless.

BRANTLEY  
You love me. It's incredible.  
It's the greatest thing that ever  
happened in the history of the  
world!

Christy goes to him. They kiss. Then Christy turns to Prescott.

CHRISTY  
I know you're pissed, and I don't  
blame you. But what happened  
happened. And it's not as if you're  
giving up the woman you love. What  
we had was nice, but it was never  
that.

BRANTLEY  
Look at it this way: You're not  
losing a mistress, you're gaining  
a niece.

PRESCOTT  
I'll break your goddam neck!

He stands, grabs the sheet and wraps it around his middle.  
Brantley and Christy exit quickly.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

BRANTLEY

He's not taking it well at all.

INT. CORRIDOR

Brantley and Christy come out of Prescott's suite, Christy in her "toga." The waiter is coming down the corridor, carrying a tray with drinks and an ice bucket.

He stops in his tracks to watch them go into Brantley's suite.

WAITER

Where does he get the strength?

INT. BRANTLEY'S SUITE - BEDROOM

Vera is putting bulbs in her flash attachment.

Brantley and Christy appear at the door.

BRANTLEY

Vera.

VERA

My God!

Startled, she presses the flash.

BRANTLEY

It's me. And Christy.

VERA

Disguised as a bed.

BRANTLEY

She's the one who came in a while ago.

VERA

(innocently)

Came in where?

BRANTLEY

We're leaving, as soon as we get our things together...

CHRISTY

(looks around curiously)  
Where are my things?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

VERA

Try the bathtub.

Christy frowns curiously and goes into the bathroom.

VERA

Are you engaged again?

BRANTLEY

Not exactly "again."

VERA

You mean, when you said you were, you weren't? What an odd thing to lie about.

BRANTLEY

But we are in love with each other. We're giving up everything and going away together.

(gives her a key)

Uncle Howard's in his suite. Alone.

Vera looks at Brantley, then at the key, then toward the bathroom, putting it all together.

VERA

I'm starting to understand... My God. To say we're a close group would be an understatement.

BRANTLEY

I'm glad it's out in the open.

VERA

How is Howard taking it?

BRANTLEY

He wants to break my goddam neck.

VERA

He's upset.

BRANTLEY

Wait till he finds out you know, and that we know you know, and that you know we know...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

VERA  
(thoughtfully)  
It's probably better if he doesn't  
find out.

BRANTLEY  
You're not angry.

VERA  
Angry? I'm grateful. If there's  
anything a wife likes better than  
finding her husband with another  
woman, it's not finding her hus-  
band with another woman.

CHRISTY  
(comes to the door  
of the bathroom)  
That's a very good attitude.

VERA  
I've decided it's your final  
destination that matters, not  
where you stopped for gas.

Brantley and Christy reflect on that, as Vera crosses to the  
door.

VERA  
(turning back)  
You've done me a great favor,  
the two of you. If there's  
anything I can do for you in  
return...

Brantley and Christy exchange a look.

EXT. ESTABLISHING SHOT - PARIS - DAY

EXT. DE GAULLE AIRPORT - DAY

A concorde drops onto a runway, like a great prehistoric bird.

INT. AIRPORT

A CHAUFFEUR IN UNIFORM is among those waiting at an arrival  
gate. He holds a sign neatly printed: "Prescott." Howard  
and Vera approach him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

PRESCOTT  
I'm Howard Prescott.

CHAUFFEUR  
Ah. Bonjour, monsieur...madame...  
I am Phillipe, at your service.

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

On a busy boulevard. A plaque by the entrance identifies  
"Consolidated Can."

INT. RECEPTION AREA

A SECRETARY is on the telephone.

SECRETARY  
Merci, Phillipe.  
(hangs up and  
punches an intercom)  
Monsieur and Madame Prescott  
are on their way.

INT. BRANTLEY'S OFFICE

Brantley, in his shirt sleeves, sits behind a modern desk.

BRANTLEY  
Thank you, Alise.  
(punches a line  
and dials)  
Hello. I love you. They're  
on their way.

He hangs up, gets out of his chair and puts on his coat.

EXT. BOULEVARD

A Mercedes limousine glides through traffic.

INT. LIMOUSINE

Phillipe is at the wheel, the Prescotts in back.

PRESCOTT  
You don't want to go to the  
hotel first?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

VERA

I'm too anxious to see our little family.

(suggestively)

There'll be plenty of time for the hotel. For all the hotels. In Paris. In Venice. In Rome.

PRESCOTT

I think the second honeymoon is going to be better than the first.

VERA

It should be. All that practice.

Careful smiles.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

On a tree-shaded street in a fashionable neighborhood. Brantley gets out of a Peugeot, as the Mercedes pulls up. He goes to open the rear door for Prescott and Vera.

VERA

Brantley! My favorite nephew.

PRESCOTT

Your only nephew.

VERA

That too.

Vera and Brantley embrace.

BRANTLEY

Has it really been a year?

VERA

It can't be. I'm not any older.

Brantley and Prescott shake hands.

BRANTLEY

Uncle Howard. Welcome to Paris.

PRESCOTT

Reports indicate you're doing a good job here, Brantley.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

VERA  
Of course, he's doing a good job.

PRESCOTT  
Vera's always had faith in you.

VERA  
I saw his potential right away.  
(locks arms with both of them)  
Now let's go see what I really came here to see.

They start into the building.

INT. APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM

As Brantley opens the door for Prescott and Vera, Christy comes into the room.

CHRISTY  
Hello!

Hugs and kisses.

VERA  
You look wonderful.  
(to Prescott)  
Doesn't she look wonderful?

PRESCOTT  
Wonderful.

VERA  
Better than ever. How is that possible?

CHRISTY  
I must be happy.

VERA  
Isn't it wonderful how things work out?

BRANTLEY  
If you keep your eye on the ball.

A NURSE enters, carrying a BABY wrapped in a blanket.

(CONTINUED)

135  
CONTINUED

VERA

Ah, here's what I've been waiting for.

The nurse hands the bundle to Brantley and exits. Brantley pulls the blanket away from the baby's face.

BRANTLEY

Say hello to Brantley, Jr.

VERA

He looks just like you!

Indeed, as much as it's possible for a three-month-old to look like an adult, this baby looks like Brantley.

The nurse re-enters with a SECOND BABY, which she gives to Christy.

CHRISTY

And here's Howard.

She pulls back the blanket the second baby is wrapped in. As much as the first baby looks like Brantley, this one looks like Prescott. There's a moment of stunned silence.

VERA

Well.

PRESCOTT

Look at that.

VERA

I have a question...

Brantley, Christy and Prescott turn to her as one.

VERA

Does the mother or the father make twins?

CUT TO EACH PERSON, including the babies, as they all consider the answer to that question, ENDING ON BRANTLEY, as a certain possibility dawns on him.

(CONTINUED)

13  
CONTINUED

BRANTLEY

Well. I guess it's your final  
destination that matters, not  
where you stopped for gas.

He manages a philosophical smile.

FADE OUT:

THE END