

STEP BACK, DOORS CLOSING

Written by

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FADE IN:

INT. AIRLINER - NIGHT

The lights are off inside this single-aisle narrow-body jet. Passengers sleep, read, and watch movies on their personal devices.

A FLIGHT ATTENDANT walks through economy class and stops at a specific row. The aisle-seat passenger is sound asleep.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT
Is everything alright?

MIDDLE SEAT PASSENGER
I was hoping to see a food menu.

The Flight Attendant removes the menu from the seatback pocket in front of him.

MIDDLE SEAT PASSENGER (CONT'D)
Ah, well there it is. You must be
awful sick of that.

The less-than-amused Flight Attendant fakes a smile and returns to the galley. As the MIDDLE SEAT PASSENGER leans back, he reveals...

JULISA (joo-lee-suh, 24) awake in the window seat. She wears hoop earrings, ripped black jeans, and a Girls PACT T-shirt. Tattoos decorate her arms.

An iPad sits on her lap. Wearing Bluetooth headphones, she watches a nature documentary (audio only).

NARRATOR (V.O.)
(general Australian
accent)
Unlike most birds, megapodes do not
incubate their eggs with body heat,
but rather, they bury them... An
example of extreme precociality,
megapodes hatch in the most mature
condition of any birds on Earth.
With full feathers and open eyes,
they not only possess the ability
to fly, but also, a purpose.

Julisa turns off the screen. She rubs her forehead as if soothing a headache. She then removes her headphones, and trades her iPad for the inflight magazine.

Julisa flips through the pages. She reaches the crossword puzzle, but it's mostly filled out. She then discovers the Sudoku page. Same thing.

As she continues flipping, she eventually lands on a full-page interview. A Martha Stewart-type with perfect teeth smiles at her. *Interior Design with Samantha Fortune.*

SAMANTHA FORTUNE (V.O.)

I first appreciated the mix of traditional and modern elements in my father's whaling cottage when I was five years old. Ever since, I knew I was destined to design mid-century modern homes with a flair for Scandinavian--

Julisa closes the magazine. She leans back and stares into space. The Middle Seat Passenger presses the call button.

The Flight Attendant once again walks through economy class. She stops at their row.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

Would you like to purchase something?

MIDDLE SEAT PASSENGER

Have you ever tried the Mediterranean sampler?

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

I have not, but I've heard very good things.

MIDDLE SEAT PASSENGER

Not sure I believe you... Could I have an extra pillow?

The Flight Attendant, ready to punch this person in the face, walks back towards the galley.

JULISA

Excuse me. I need to use the restroom.

MIDDLE SEAT PASSENGER

Ah, sorry. This person's asleep.

Julisa watches with contempt and bewilderment as the passenger attempts to recline his seat past its furthest point.

MIDDLE SEAT PASSENGER (CONT'D)
Doesn't go back very far. Maybe
there's a trick to it.

He once again presses the call button. Julisa shoots herself with a finger gun.

INT. REAGAN NATIONAL AIRPORT - NIGHT

Julisa exits the jet bridge and enters the terminal. She spots a restroom sign and hurries towards it.

As she passes fellow travelers, she also passes a large sign advertising Washington, DC.

INT. REAGAN NATIONAL AIRPORT - WOMEN'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Julisa is seated on the toilet, and glued to her phone.

ON SCREEN, she texts "I have landed" in Spanish to *Mom & Dad*. She then opens a message from *Sierra Gonzalez*. It's a GIF of two best friends.

Julisa smiles. She then stands, turns, and drops her phone in the toilet!

JULISA

Fuck!

Julisa snatches it out and dries it on her pants. The toilet flushes.

JULISA (CONT'D)

Please don't die. Please don't die.

She presses every possible button, but nothing happens.

JULISA (CONT'D)

Come on!

Julisa runs out of the stall. She beelines towards the paper towel dispenser, but it's empty. She then passes multiple faucets, and suddenly stops. She quickly makes a decision. She takes her phone out of its case, and runs the phone under clean water for point two seconds. She then continues towards the hand dryer and holds her phone beneath it.

JULISA (CONT'D)

I wish I knew how to quit you.

Julisa reaches into her tote bag, searching for something.

JULISA (CONT'D)
 You can't be serious!

INT. REAGAN NATIONAL AIRPORT - NIGHT

Julisa returns to her arrival gate. An AIRLINE EMPLOYEE shuffles papers behind the desk.

AIRLINE EMPLOYEE
 Hi.

JULISA
 Is the plane still here? I'm ninety-nine percent sure I forgot my iPad.

AIRLINE EMPLOYEE
 May I see your boarding pass.
 (Julisa hands it to her)
 Alright, give us a couple minutes.

INT. REAGAN NATIONAL AIRPORT - MINUTES LATER

Julisa is seated as the Airline Employee exits the jet bridge with her iPad. Julisa meets her halfway.

JULISA
 Thank you so much. You don't know how grateful I am.

AIRLINE EMPLOYEE
 You're welcome. I hope the rest of your night is a bit less stressful.

JULISA
 Me too. Alright, thanks again.

As they part ways, Julisa unlocks her iPad. In the background, passengers from another plane disembark and flow through the terminal.

TEENAGE SIBLINGS playfully shove each other. As Julisa uses her iPad, one of the siblings gets shoved into her back!

Julisa falls forward, and the iPad slides across the floor! An ELECTRIC CART promptly drives over it, crushing the screen.

Julisa watches from the floor, defeated.

As the apologetic teenagers help her stand, our focus shifts to...

RYAN (24) listening to "Gypsy" by Fleetwood Mac. He dances through the terminal wearing a backpack, sweatpants, slippers, and blue T-shirt. His good mood's contagious.

He empties his pockets of trash, and lip syncs to a nearby SERVICE DOG. The Service Dog simply watches him. He then reaches a water fountain and fills his reusable bottle. An ATTRACTIVE GIRL catches his eye. As he watches her walk away, the bottle begins to overflow. He quickly removes it, and dances his way into the men's restroom.

INT. REAGAN NATIONAL AIRPORT - MEN'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

In one of the stalls, Ryan now wears blue jeans and chukka boots, but is shirtless. Despite being a healthy weight, he struggles to button his pants. He tightens his belt instead.

He hums the previous song as he wets his hair in one of the sinks. His phone, on the countertop, rings on speakerphone...

RYAN'S FRIEND (V.O.)

Hello.

RYAN

Hey, man. How ya doin'?

RYAN'S FRIEND (V.O.)

I'm good. It's good to hear from you. It's been what? Three, four years?

RYAN

Just about. You ready to make up for lost time?

RYAN'S FRIEND (V.O.)

Well, I thought I was. Your flight got in a little later than I expected.

RYAN

Yeah, there was some security something. Held us up for a couple hours.

RYAN'S FRIEND (V.O.)

Right... Listen, I hate to do this to you, but I think I'm gonna stay in with my girlfriend tonight.

Ryan silently curses to himself.

RYAN'S FRIEND (V.O.)

Hello?

RYAN

Yeah I'm here.

RYAN'S FRIEND (V.O.)

Sorry, man. I've just got this thing in the morning and--

RYAN

No, no need to apologize. I... I understand.

RYAN'S FRIEND (V.O.)

We should still meet up sometime soon though. I'd love to hear what you've been getting yourself into.

RYAN

Yeah, absolutely... Well, I hope your thing in the morning goes well and, make sure you tell your girlfriend some random dude says hi.

RYAN'S FRIEND (V.O.)

Will do. You have fun tonight.

RYAN

Thanks. Talk to ya later.

RYAN'S FRIEND (V.O.)

Bye.

Ryan hangs up the phone. With palms flat on the countertop, and hair dripping wet, he is seriously bummed out.

INT. REAGAN NATIONAL AIRPORT - NATIONAL HALL - NIGHT

Wearing a long-sleeve Henley, Ryan shuffles through the main concourse on his cell phone.

MALE VOICE (V.O.)

Hi, you've reached the voicemail of--

Ryan hangs up the phone. He scrolls through his contacts and dials another number. After the requisite number of rings...

FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)

Hi, this is Kesang's cell phone! I'm unavailable right now--

Ryan once again hangs up the phone. He scrolls through his contacts, but decides to pocket his phone instead.

Massive windows and the nearly 100-foot-tall vaulted ceiling dwarf Ryan as he slumps through the large empty space.

INT. REAGAN NATIONAL AIRPORT - BAGGAGE CLAIM - NIGHT

Ryan continues through the airport as travelers claim their luggage in the background. He approaches a conveyor belt with only one bag remaining.

HUSBAND (O.S.)

Hannah!

Ryan turns towards the voice. A WIFE runs across the floor and jumps into the arms of her HUSBAND. It's undeniably cute.

Julisa, seated against the wall, and wearing a large winter coat, smiles at their reunion. But her smile quickly fades.

Ryan, equally bittersweet, turns back towards the carousel.

As the solitary bag winds around the conveyor belt, the luggage tag slowly comes into focus. It's labeled *his* in cursive. Ryan grabs the handle, and pulls off his luggage.

EXT. REAGAN NATIONAL AIRPORT - METRO STATION - NIGHT

Ryan sprints towards an idling train.

INT. METRO CAR - NIGHT

Ryan tears through the open doors and does a fist pump. Ten or so riders just stare at him.

He glances back at the doors, which remain open. He sighs, and promptly finds a seat.

EXT. REAGAN NATIONAL AIRPORT - METRO STATION - NIGHT

Julisa sprints towards the train.

INT. METRO CAR - NIGHT

Julisa bursts through the doors and breathes a sigh of relief. The doors remain open.

JULISA

Yep.

Julisa passes Ryan as she walks to the metro map on the side of the car.

Ryan, reading the news on his phone, glances up and does a double take. He is immediately enthralled.

Julisa studies the map, while Ryan adjusts his outfit and fixes his hair.

Julisa takes out her phone. She tries to power it on, but nothing happens. She then tosses it onto a nearby seat, and sinks into the seat next to it.

Ryan, sensing an opportunity, prepares to make his move...

RYAN

Do you need some help?

JULISA

Not unless you're a medium that specializes in cell phones.

RYAN

I meant with the map. I probably have the whole thing memorized.

Julisa looks up. She sees Ryan for the first time.

JULISA

Thank you for the offer, but, I'm not sure there's much you can do.

RYAN

Where are you trying to go?

JULISA

My friend's apartment, the location of which, is on this malfunctioning gizmo.

RYAN

Do you wanna borrow my phone?

JULISA

I don't know her number.

RYAN

You could message her on Instagram or something.

JULISA

I have two-step verification.

RYAN

What's her name? You can just use mine.

JULISA

...Sierra Badera. Sierra underscore Badera. Here, can I...

RYAN

Yeah, go for it.

Ryan hands Julisa his phone. She begins typing.

RYAN (CONT'D)

Do you have any sense of what area or neighborhood she lives in?

JULISA

I'm pretty sure she's downtown, but I'm not a hundred percent positive. Hey! We have a mutual friend!

RYAN

Really?

JULISA

Yeah, Jamaan Davis.

RYAN

That's awesome. How do you know Jamaan?

JULISA

Boys and Girls Club. You?

RYAN

Temp assignment. We put together these PowerPoints for some healthcare company.

JULISA

Small world.

RYAN

Very small.

Julisa types her message to Sierra. Ryan covertly celebrates.

JULISA

Done. Thank you.

RYAN
Of course.

Ryan takes back his phone.

RYAN (CONT'D)
So... where are you from?

JULISA
Los Angeles.

RYAN
Is that where you're actually from,
or is it like when people from
Virginia say they're from DC?

JULISA
Yeah, no I, that's where I'm from.
I'm halfway between downtown and
the beach. What about you?

RYAN
Maryland, but I was born in DC.

JULISA
Congratulations.

METRO VOICE (V.O.)
Step back. Doors closing.

The doors finally close, and the train starts moving.

RYAN
The first thing you'll learn about
DC is that the metro's about as
reliable as the weather.

JULISA
Are you referring to my Arctic
attire?

RYAN
Maybe.

Julisa takes off her large, winter coat. Ryan tries not to stare.

As the train disappears underground, dimly lit tunnel walls replace the outside world.

Julisa grasps an armrest, tightly. Her leg involuntarily shakes up and down.

JULISA
How long are we underground for?

RYAN
Depends where you're going.

A normal screeching sound occurs. Julisa clamps her eyes and grasps the armrest even tighter.

RYAN (CONT'D)
How did you survive a six-hour plane ride?

JULISA
I can do flying. I can't do underground.

RYAN
Is it because of the mole people?
(no answer)
They have as much a right to be here as you do.

JULISA
Please stop talking.

The train slowly comes to a halt.

JULISA (CONT'D)
Why are we stopped?

CONDUCTOR (V.O.)
Track work directly ahead of us.
Train'll be moving shortly.

RYAN
They always plan this stuff on the weekend. It's nothing.

JULISA
Are we under attack?

RYAN
Are we -- Why -- What?

JULISA
Is this a terrorist attack?!

Julisa jumps up! Concerned, Ryan follows suit.

JULISA (CONT'D)
I need to get off the train.

RYAN
No you don't. Just take a deep
breath--

JULISA
I'm getting off this train!

RYAN
Put your coat back on!

JULISA
What?

RYAN
It's like the tiny sweaters that
keep dogs from freaking out at
thunder!

JULISA
Tiny sweaters.. Terrorist attack..

Ryan takes Julisa's coat and forces her into it. He zips her
up, and sits her down.

Her breathing steadies and her hands unclench. She relaxes.

An ELDERLY WOMAN watches from across the car.

ELDERLY WOMAN
You two are going to make wonderful
children.

RYAN
Thank you for your input.

The Elderly Woman smiles. The other riders remain impassive.

JULISA
I wanna look out the back.

RYAN
Can I come?

JULISA
Yeah, sure.

Ryan follows Julisa to the back door. They look out the
rectangular window.

INT. METRO TUNNEL - NIGHT

The dim lights illuminate rails, pipes, and cables until they
vanish around the curve.

INT. METRO CAR - NIGHT

Ryan and Julisa face each other, just a few inches apart. Their eye contact lasts impressively long. Ryan breaks it off.

RYAN
So you're good?

JULISA
Yes, sorry. I'm Julisa by the way.

RYAN
Ryan. It's nice to meet you.

JULISA
Ryan... You think I'm insane don't you?

RYAN
Just a little.

JULISA
I'm sorry! It's just this irrational fear of--

RYAN
No, no I get it. It's like when I learned those trains crashed a number of years ago, I always stayed clear of the first and last cars.

The color drains from Julisa's face.

RYAN (CONT'D)
No, that's not... that's not what I meant. I... What I was trying to say was--

INT. METRO CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Ryan strains to hold the door and their luggage as Julisa passes through to the next car.

Ryan stumbles awkwardly through the narrow corridor.

INT. SECOND METRO CAR - NIGHT

The door latches as Ryan reaches Julisa's side. A TOURIST GROUP encompasses half the car. CHILDREN swing on the steel bars and climb over seats.

JULISA
I'm so fucked.

RYAN
Maybe she'll message back.

JULISA
Yeah, maybe...

RYAN
What if I help?

JULISA
How?

RYAN
I don't know... I'll escort you
around DC. At the very least you
won't be alone.

JULISA
I feel like it should be
acknowledged we don't know each
other very well.

RYAN
No, but think of it this way. If it
turns out I'm a total creep, you
can sic Jamaan Davis on me. And as
long as you have access to my
phone, there's an outside chance of
contacting Sierra Badera.

JULISA
What does *sic* mean?

RYAN
Sic, it's like um... You can send
him to beat me up.

CONDUCTOR (V.O.)
We apologize for the delay. Train's
about to move.

RYAN
Come on. What do you say?

JULISA
...What the hell? Let's explore
this whole new world.

RYAN
That's what I'm talkin' 'bout.

The train eases forward. All the children moan.

EXT. CAPITAL ONE ARENA - 7TH AND F STREET - NIGHT (10PM)

DRUMS and rowdy CAPITALS FANS transform the corner into a dance party as Ryan and Julisa ride an escalator to street level.

JULISA
This is Chinatown?

RYAN
The one and only. Wait, stand on
this side.

JULISA
Why?

RYAN
It's just a thing.

Ryan leads Julisa off the escalator and through the crowd. We swing around a HIP STREET BAND playing five-gallon buckets, and then reconnect with Ryan and Julisa in the crosswalk.

JULISA
We should search the bars.

RYAN
After we drop our luggage.

JULISA
Where?

RYAN
There.

Ryan points to a red awning on an all-marble building.

JULISA
Is that a hotel?

RYAN
Yeah.

JULISA
You just skyrocketed from zero to
Weinstein.

RYAN
It's not what you think.

INT. HOTEL MONACO - NIGHT

Ryan and Julisa stroll through a historic lobby with modern decorating. Patrons drink cocktails and lounge by the fire.

The smile of a FRONT DESK CLERK greets them from afar.

FRONT DESK CLERK

Welcome to the Hotel Monaco. How
may I assist you?

A GUEST walks by with an ADORABLE PUPPY on a leash.

JULISA

Oh my God, your puppy is so cute.
May I?

GUEST

Sure you can. This here is Rodrigo.

JULISA

Hello, baby Rodrigo. You are so
precious. Look at your little ears.

Julisa and Rodrigo enter their own little world.

RYAN

Anyway, our check-in's not till
morning and we're actually running
late for a fundraiser.

FRONT DESK CLERK

Not a problem. If you'd like, we
can store your luggage for up to
twenty-four hours.

RYAN

You are a mind reader. Thank you.

Julisa and Rodrigo part ways. The desk clerk prints out a
form.

FRONT DESK CLERK

How long are you two staying with
us?

JULISA

Oh we're not staying. We actually
just met.

FRONT DESK CLERK

I'm sorry?

JULISA

He's helping search for my friend
and it's gonna be so much easier
without these bags.

The desk clerk doesn't respond. Neither does Ryan.

JULISA (CONT'D)

What? You said we could do that.

EXT. HOTEL MONACO - NIGHT

Ryan and Julisa, luggage in tow, descend the marble stairs.

JULISA

Should we walk somewhere else?

RYAN

It's up to you. I'm just imagining
your friend drunk at a bar, and no
bouncer's gonna let us in with all
this stuff.

JULISA

Then let's walk. My legs are still
cramped from the plane anyway.

RYAN

In that case... this way.

Ryan and Julisa begin walking west on F Street.

JULISA

So, Ryan, tell me about yourself.

RYAN

Well, Julisa, what would you like
to know?

JULISA

Where'd you fly in from?

RYAN

(Boston accent)
Boston.

JULISA

(Boston accent)
And what's in Boston?

RYAN

A funeral, well there was a
funeral.

JULISA

Oh, I'm so sorry.

RYAN

No, it's fine. She was one of those relatives you see, like, once a year. It was just weird because she was so young.

JULISA

How'd she die?

RYAN

Cancer.

JULISA

That sucks. Death always makes me think about how insignificant we are. I always remember the posters that say "you are here" and then point to a nondescript dot in an entire galaxy of nondescript dots.

RYAN

I'm actually exactly the opposite. I think on a galactic scale, but in the sense that we're rejoining some sort of greater power as opposed to leaving it... That came out kind of hippie-ish, didn't it?

JULISA

Yes, but that's okay. I don't know, sometimes I have trouble figuring out what the point is.

RYAN

I think you and Socrates would have been BFFs.

JULISA

We were. I'm actually a time traveler.

RYAN

So what about you? What's in DC?

JULISA

The International Women's Leadership Conference for Poverty Alleviation and Economic Empowerment.

RYAN
That's a mouthful.

JULISA
Well we considered dumbing it down,
but then we realized there wouldn't
be any men in attendance.

RYAN
That was pretty good.

JULISA
Your approval is noted.

RYAN
It's just women though? No allies
allowed?

JULISA
I think so. I applied through a
sponsorship program that only
accepted female applicants, but I
can ask them at dinner tomorrow.

RYAN
Please do, because I have a Laura
Dern T-shirt that would be perfect
for the occasion.

JULISA
Do you really?

RYAN
No, but I saw one online.

JULISA
Sounds about right.

RYAN
So what's up with your friend?

JULISA
What about her?

RYAN
How do you know each other?

JULISA
We both went to Santa Monica
College, and then transferred to
UCLA at the same time.

RYAN

Nice. I assume that means Santa Monica College is community college?

JULISA

Yes. It took me four years instead of two, but I'm grateful for the time I spent there. What about you?

RYAN

I went to Fordham, which is up in New York. It's a good school. Lots of white people, lots of privilege, and I really wish they'd stop asking me for donations.

JULISA

It drives me crazy. What do they expect us to say? I'd love to give away my nonexistent funds! Let me just take out another loan and throw it on that student debt elephant loitering in the corner.

RYAN

I prefer cheetahs. Goes faster that way.

JULISA

That was terrible.

RYAN

Well the good news is we're not that far from the next hotel. Now remember, we're paying guests. Just follow my lead when we get there.

INT. WILLARD INTERCONTINENTAL - NIGHT

Ryan and Julisa promenade through the ornate lobby replete with plush furniture, Corinthian columns, old money, new money, and power brokers. They reach the front desk.

CHEF CONCIERGE

How may I be of service this evening?

Ryan almost answers, but doesn't. He just stands there. Julisa gives him a sideways glance. Nothing. The silence continues.

CHEF CONCIERGE (CONT'D)
Is everything all right, sir?

Still no response. Julisa adopts the concierge's puzzlement. Ryan offers zero clues. Julisa kicks his leg!

RYAN
(rich person's accent)
Hello, kind fellow. We are Mr. and Mrs. Voldershnout of the Voldershnouts and we're on holiday from thirty minutes south of the River Thames. I'd like to inquire about your luggage storage policies as we are terribly late for the downfall of American democracy. Please list your available storage options by relevance to congressional sex scandals, with priority given to those involving interns and/or dick pics.

Julisa cracks up laughing. Several guests turn their heads.

CHEF CONCIERGE
I'm going to ask you to leave.

RYAN
Do you have any freebies like chocolate chip cookies or pads of paper--

CHEF CONCIERGE
Now!

Ryan and Julisa, still laughing, hurry out of the hotel.

EXT. WILLARD INTERCONTINENTAL - NIGHT

A DOORMAN bids them good night as they exit the building.

JULISA
That was beyond absurd.

RYAN
In a good way?

JULISA
In a way that'll ensure it's morning before we make it anywhere.

RYAN
Remind me why we're at a second
hotel again.

Julisa jokingly flips him off.

RYAN (CONT'D)
Whoa, easy now.

Ryan's phone starts vibrating. He answers it.

RYAN (CONT'D)
Well look who it is... No, don't
apologize... Hold on, one sec.
(to Julisa)
Wanna go to a party in Dupont? It's
only ten minutes away.

JULISA
I really need to find my friend.

RYAN
For all we know she'll be there.

JULISA
What about our bags?

RYAN
We'll lock them in this girl's
room. I promise.

JULISA
If someone steals so much as a
bobby pin, it'll be your distant
relatives flying to a funeral.

RYAN
(on the phone)
So hey, listen, do you have
somewhere I could lock some bags...
What about somewhere less
outside... Closets work... Great,
cya soon... Bye.

Ryan hangs up the phone.

JULISA
At least I have luggage locks.

RYAN
You've never been to DC, right?

JULISA
Right.

RYAN

I wanna show you something.

INT. ELEVATOR - NIGHT

Ryan and Julisa ride up a twelve-story building. Julisa grasps the handrail, and focuses on her breathing. Ryan smiles to himself.

EXT. METROPOLITAN SQUARE BUILDING - ROOFTOP - NIGHT

A door opens to reveal a stunning view, including the not-so-distant Washington Monument. Julisa slowly ventures to the roof's edge.

JULISA

This is fantastic.

RYAN

It gets better.

Ryan leads Julisa around the corner, past an empty reception area.

RYAN (CONT'D)

Now if you look right over there--

Ryan points through a glass barrier that exists only on this side of the roof.

JULISA

Is that the White House?

RYAN

Complete with an outdoor swimming pool.

JULISA

You never see it from the side like this. It's so much smaller... I wonder how many snipers are aimed at us right now.

RYAN

Not as many as when I whip out this drone real quick.

Ryan and Julisa both laugh. They look at each other.

JULISA

Thank you for making me feel less like a cosmic dot.

RYAN

How so?

JULISA

I don't know. I mean, that's the White House. It's right there. The more you travel and the more you see the less scary and more tangible the world becomes, and I probably wouldn't have seen this without you.

RYAN

Well trust me, no one's ever looked at you and thought, look at that gorgeous probably funny, smart, perfect girl... Insignificant.

JULISA

No one's ever assumed I'm smart or funny?

RYAN

Yeah, cause that's what I said.

Ryan's phone buzzes. He reaches for it.

RYAN (CONT'D)

That's probably our Uber.
(looks at the screen)
Oh, God.

JULISA

What's wrong?

RYAN

Not only did I release an invisible drone, but our Uber driver... His name's Muhammad.

Ryan flattens himself against the glass.

RYAN (CONT'D)

Just make it quick you racist bastards!

EXT. METROPOLITAN SQUARE BUILDING - STREET LEVEL - NIGHT

As Ryan and Julisa approach a sedan, MUHAMMAD (35) exits and opens the trunk. He greets them and takes their luggage.

INT. MUHAMMAD'S SEDAN - NIGHT

Muhammad types into his GPS and begins driving.

MUHAMMAD

(very slight accent)

What music would you like? I have Taylor Swift, Billie Eilish, The Weeknd, Post Malone--

RYAN

Can we start with nothing and work our way up?

MUHAMMAD

Absolutely.

Muhammad turns off the radio.

JULISA

Muhammad, where are you from?

MUHAMMAD

I am from Morocco, but I have lived here for ten years.

JULISA

That's a long time. Did you move because of family or--

MUHAMMAD

Brendan Fraser.

RYAN

As in *George of the Jungle*?

MUHAMMAD

Yes! That is him! When I was eleven he was in Marrakesh filming *The Mummy* with Rachel Weisz. Me and my friends would sneak onto set and ask him questions until security chased us off.

RYAN

That's awesome.

JULISA

How does that relate to moving here?

MUHAMMAD

On the last day I was by myself when Brendan called me over.

(MORE)

MUHAMMAD (CONT'D)

He told me about Los Angeles and the film industry, and I decided to become an actor.

RYAN

If it makes you feel better, I wanted to be a professional soccer player.

JULISA

How'd you know that was the right decision?

MUHAMMAD

My mother worked at a riad and my father worked at a tannery. My options were limited, but even after living here for so long, I've yet to discover anything that excites me as much as acting.

JULISA

Are you acting now?

MUHAMMAD

I'm a stagehand at the Shakespeare Theatre Company. Our current production is *Man of La Mancha*.

RYAN

My aunt took me to see that.

MUHAMMAD

You know "The Impossible Dream?"

RYAN

You kidding? I fought a windmill last week.

MUHAMMAD

I have no choice.

Muhammad plays "The Impossible Dream" from *Man of La Mancha*, performed by Brian Stokes Mitchell.

JULISA

But what if it doesn't work out?

MUHAMMAD

What if it does?

JULISA

You could be a wonderful performer,
but the people who succeed are
usually born into it or buy their
success.

MUHAMMAD

What do you want in life?

JULISA

I'm in grad school.

MUHAMMAD

You're not going to quit your
program just because it's hard,
right? Life is about taking that
first step, even when you don't
know what the second one will be.
If Cervantes has taught me
anything, it's that the destination
takes a backseat to the journey.

RYAN

Muhammad, I don't say this very
often, but you should really give a
TED talk.

MUHAMMAD

Does that mean I'm getting five
stars?

RYAN

You deserve it.

JULISA

Well good luck with everything. I
sincerely hope you make it.

MUHAMMAD

Just remember that we're young. We
have time to make mistakes. Wait,
this part's incredible.

Muhammad turns up the volume and sings along. Ryan sings
along with him. Julisa can't help but enjoy the experience.

EXT. KESANG'S ROW HOUSE - DUPONT CIRCLE - NIGHT

Ryan and Julisa climb up the steps. We hear a fun party going
on inside. Ryan rings the doorbell.

JULISA

How do you know this girl?

RYAN
We ran track together.

KESANG (24) opens the door in a stylish, outer space onesie.

KESANG
Ryan!

RYAN
Hey, Kesang.

Kesang gives Ryan a giant hug.

KESANG
Where have you been? I thought you
were killed by the Bunny Man or
swept into a vortex.

RYAN
Kesang, I'd like you to meet
Julisa.

JULISA
It's so nice to meet you, and thank
you for the closet space.

KESANG
Nice to meet you too.

Kesang suppresses a manic smile as she looks from Julisa to
Ryan. Ryan does his best to ignore it.

RYAN
Shall we go inside?

I/E. KESANG'S ROW HOUSE - NIGHT

Two dozen PARTYGOERS have a great time on the first floor and
in the backyard. It's practically a frat house. People play
danger can, take shots, and sign a living room wall covered
in names, pearls of wisdom, and crude drawings.

Julisa, Ryan, and Kesang squeeze the last of the luggage into
a hallway closet.

JULISA
Do you have a bathroom I can use?

KESANG
Just around the corner.

As Julisa disappears from view, Kesang's whole body excitedly
screams *what the fuck?!*

INT. KESANG'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Julisa stares at herself in the mirror, trying to decipher Kesang's demeanor. She once again attempts to revive her phone, but nothing happens.

JULISA

Damn it.

INT. KESANG'S ROW HOUSE - NIGHT

Julisa rejoins Ryan and Kesang by the closet. They were clearly having a heart-to-heart.

KESANG

If you need anything: blow, strippers, *Point Break* on DVD -- I got you. I got you, Ryan.

RYAN

Thanks, Kesang.

KESANG (TO JULISA)

This is one of the best guys I've ever known. He puts kittens in trees just so he can fucking save them. Come here!

Kesang pulls Julisa into another giant hug.

KESANG (CONT'D)

He's one of the good ones. You take care of him, you hear?

JULISA

I hear.

Kesang releases Julisa. She's holding back tears.

KESANG

You two have fun tonight. I'm gonna check on the kiddie pool.

Kesang disappears amongst her friends. It's now Julisa who needs an explanation.

RYAN

Wanna grab a drink?

INT. KESANG'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Ryan and Julisa lean against opposite counters in the narrow kitchen. Ryan drinks a local IPA. Julisa sips vodka with a mixer.

JULISA

We won't be able to keep talking unless you just, let it out.

After significant mustering...

RYAN

My girlfriend and I broke up last week. We'd been dating for four years.

JULISA

Are you okay?

RYAN

You know, it's funny. I cried for three days straight, and then I went to Boston, and the day after the funeral... I don't know what happened, but I suddenly felt amazing. Like an old man who'd been given a second chance at youth.

JULISA

Why'd you feel like an old man?

RYAN

Because when you date someone for that long, you can't help but imagine a life with them. You start thinking about buying a house and having kids, and before you know it you're a twenty-four-year-old listening to retirement podcasts.

JULISA

Her parents loved you, didn't they?

RYAN

What's not to love?

JULISA

I know it just happened, but don't you miss her?

RYAN

I feel this odd combination of trying to remember and forget her at the same time. I want to remember all the inside jokes, but I don't want her birthday appearing on my calendar. Same thing with photos. I'm not gonna throw them away, but I don't want to look at them either.

JULISA

I guess I'm having trouble relating since my longest relationship was with a jar of Nutella.

Kesang enters the kitchen. She somberly acknowledges Ryan and Julisa as she squeezes past them. She then opens the freezer and pulls out a penis-shaped luge. She somberly exits.

JULISA (CONT'D)

That was my first encounter with a penis-shaped ice cube.

RYAN

The first of many one would hope.

JULISA

So who broke up with who?

RYAN

Going right for the jugular.

JULISA

Sorry. I'm getting carried away. What's your favorite color?

RYAN

Green. You?

JULISA

Indigo.

RYAN

You would say indigo.

JULISA

So who broke up with who?

RYAN

While she may have initiated the conversation, it was a mutual breakup.

JULISA

You've been living among politicians for too long.

RYAN

I'm actually completely serious. I almost wish one of us cheated on the other so there was something to blame, but nothing happened. Our relationship simply devolved from this amazing thing to practically nothing without me realizing it.

JULISA

It's better that no one cheated. My trusted Nutella spread his sweetened hazelnuts all over every crepe and pancake that walked through the door.

RYAN

You're making me uncomfortably hungry.

JULISA

What now that you're single?

RYAN

I actually made a list yesterday of all the stuff I need to worry about. Stylish clothes, body fat, condoms, getting a tan, cool haircuts--

JULISA

Cool haircuts?

RYAN

Yeah, I feel like everyone suddenly got a cool haircut. Meanwhile I've been going to the same Greek guy since I was twelve, and I always ask for the regular because one of the haircuts listed on the board is literally called "regular."

JULISA

You're strange, you know that?

RYAN

I've been accused before.

Ryan's phone vibrates. He pulls it out of his pocket.

RYAN (CONT'D)
Huh. An Instagram message.

Julisa reaches for his phone.

RYAN (CONT'D)
Wait, let me unlock it first. Here.

Julisa takes the phone.

JULISA
She's at the 1831 Bar and Lounge,
followed by squid emojis.

RYAN
That's great. I'm glad she's alive.

JULISA
Yeah, me too... Thanks for all your
help tonight. I wouldn't have found
her without you.

RYAN
Of course! It was a nice change of
pace, and I hope everything goes
well with the conference.

JULISA
Yes, thank you. It... should be
good.

Julisa and Ryan awkwardly remain in the narrow kitchen. They
down their alcoholic drinks in unison.

RYAN
So, I've never actually been to
that particular bar.

JULISA
No?

RYAN
No, and in the spirit of this
adventuresome evening, I would love
to accompany you if that is an
option.

(Julisa almost speaks)
Of course, you are obviously
allowed to say no. I realize I'm
still just some random guy you met
on the metro.

JULISA

I would love if you'd accompany me
to 1831 Bar and Lounge.

RYAN

Yeah?

JULISA

Yeah. Besides, how else am I gonna
find the place?

RYAN

Well, in that case, cheers!

Julisa and Ryan clink their glass and beer bottle. They realize their drinks are already empty and awkwardly set them down on the counters.

RYAN (CONT'D)

We'll work on that.

EXT. 1831 BAR & LOUNGE - NIGHT

A group of young people crowd the sidewalk as Ryan and Julisa walk towards the entrance. They reach the bouncer, show their IDs, and enter the bar.

INT. 1831 BAR & LOUNGE - NIGHT

A DJ plays GO-GO MUSIC for a diverse clientele. A mural inspired by *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea* (that contains a squid) decorates the main wall.

As Ryan and Julisa admire their surroundings and squeeze through the crowd, Julisa points towards the bar.

SIERRA (24, Melissa McCarthy's long-lost Chicana daughter) grooves to the music as the bartender pours five shots.

JULISA

Sierra!

SIERRA

Julie! We're doing shots!

JULISA

What are they?

SIERRA

Half Jameson, half butterscotch
schnapps. Tastes like pancakes.

RYAN

Not sure if that's a good idea.
Julisa was cuckolded by a pancake.

SIERRA

(Who the fuck is this guy?)
¿Quien Chingado es ese wey?

JULISA

The guy who made this possible. I
met him earlier tonight.

SIERRA

You just met him? He could be
anybody. He could watch Fox News.

Sierra takes a close-up photo of Ryan's face. The flash
nearly blinds him. She types into her phone.

SIERRA (CONT'D)

Rapist, question mark?

JULISA

Sierra, he's fine. Why'd you order
five shots?

SIERRA

I was macking on this dank-ass
filly from New York. She's over
there.

PAIGE (21, a petite brunette) mingles with her friends.

SIERRA (CONT'D)

She claimed she could drink me
under the table. Little does she
know, I live under the table.

Ryan sports a big smile as Sierra waves her over.

SIERRA (CONT'D)

Julie, I'm so glad you're out!
(to Ryan)
All this girl does is work. She's
losing her friends. She's losing
her family. She's miserable.

JULISA

I'm not miserable.

Paige joins them. Sierra hands out the shots and offers a
toast.

SIERRA

To Julie, and her future realization that it is better to smell the roses, than to trample them!

Julisa reluctantly raises her glass and downs her breakfast-flavored shot. She's pleasantly surprised.

Ryan tries not to gag. Paige appears indifferent.

Sierra hands Paige the fifth shot.

SIERRA (CONT'D)

Drink up. It's gluten-free.

INT. 1831 BAR & LOUNGE - 30 MINUTES LATER

Ryan and Julisa sit on barstools, while Sierra and Paige single-handedly tear up the dance floor.

RYAN

So what was that toast about? The whole trampling roses bit.

JULISA

She just thinks I'm a workaholic because I stopped blacking out three nights a week.

RYAN

Are you?

JULISA

Maybe, but I'm better when I'm busy. If I have a hundred things to do, I'll do all of it. If I have one thing to do, I'll watch Netflix.

RYAN

So what are you studying in grad school?

JULISA

Communications. So far it's just been a bunch of requirements. Cognition, theories, research methods, et cetera.

RYAN

Will you get to take a class where you invent your own language?

JULISA

Yes. I've proposed a hybrid between Spanglish and Elvish.

RYAN

Is that why you're studying communications?

Julisa almost answers, but doesn't. She looks over at Sierra and Paige who are having the time of their lives.

JULISA

What are you passionate about?

RYAN

Am I allowed to say California girls or is that too obvious?

JULISA

Only if you steal the mic and channel your inner Beach Boy.

RYAN

To be honest, and I swear this isn't a line, I just want to help people. I haven't translated that into a career yet, but something that would leave the world better than it is today.

JULISA

You're the worst.

RYAN

Why?

JULISA

Because I don't know what I'm passionate about, and now that you said helping others, I feel like an asshole for not having an equally altruistic answer.

RYAN

Communicators help people.

JULISA

Yeah, but... I think I'm gonna dropout out of grad school.

RYAN

Why?

JULISA

Because I don't care. Not having a goal in life terrifies me, so I applied to grad school to help me feel more in control... That's the first time I've said that out loud.

RYAN

Well maybe you have a passion and you just haven't realized it yet.

JULISA

Like what?

RYAN

When I was in kindergarten, we were asked what we wanted to be when we grew up. Some of us wanted to be astronauts, others wanted to help sick animals, then we got to Herbert.

JULISA

That's a fake name.

RYAN

The names have been changed to protect the innocent. Anyway, our teacher asks him, Herbert, what do you want to be when you grow up? And he answers, I want to take pictures of naked women.

JULISA

There's no way this is true.

RYAN

I swear to God. I'm sure there were parent-teacher conferences and a secretly proud father, but Herbert knew exactly what he wanted. So when he got older, he bought a camera, he studied photography, and you know what Herbert does today?

JULISA

What?

RYAN

He manages an Olive Garden over in College Park. No, I'm kidding. He's a photographer for Playboy, and he travels the world taking pictures of naked women.

JULISA

If you want your picture taken, all you have to do is ask.

RYAN

We'll see where the night takes us, but my point is, your dream doesn't have to be profound. It just has to be something you truly care about, regardless of what other people think.

JULISA

That was surprisingly insightful... I wonder what Sierra and her filly are passionate about.

RYAN

This might be it.

Paige grinds on Sierra. Sierra high-fives a nearby JACKED DUDE.

RYAN (CONT'D)

So what's your plan for the rest of the night? You get her address?

JULISA

Yeah, she actually lives in Georgetown--

RANDOM GIRL (TO RYAN)

Excuse me. Hey, can you take our picture?

RYAN

Um, yeah, sure.

As Ryan swivels to take multiple shots, we remain focused on Julisa. She contemplates whether to continue her night with Ryan or Sierra. She makes her decision just as the RANDOM GIRL thanks Ryan and re-joins her friends.

RYAN (CONT'D)

Anyway, Sierra lives in Georgetown--

JULISA

Do you wanna get some food? I haven't had dinner yet.

RYAN

Yeah, definitely. There's this place in Georgetown called Martin's Tavern? It's one of those quintessential DC restaurants.

JULISA

Lead the way.

Ryan leads Julisa out of the bar. Sierra and Paige take a well-deserved break from dancing.

I/E. UBER - NIGHT

The driver silently listens to NPR, while Julisa and Ryan ride in the backseat. They look out the windows and trade glances with each other. They can't help but smile to themselves as the car drives down the increasingly quiet street.

INT. MARTIN'S TAVERN - NIGHT

Ryan and Julisa enter the warmly lit restaurant. Old paintings of 18th-century fox hunts and drawings of DC before it became a city contribute to the uniquely Washingtonian ambiance.

A few relaxed diners enjoy an easygoing conversation. The HOST (40s) approaches from the bar.

HOST

Table for two?

RYAN

Is the proposal booth available?

HOST

Right this way.

JULISA (TO RYAN)

Should I be concerned?

Ryan and Julisa are seated and given menus. Ryan leans his against the wall.

HOST

May I start you out with something to drink?

JULISA

Do you have hot chocolate?

HOST
Of course, and for you, sir?

RYAN
Water's fine.

The host walks away. Ryan peeks behind his menu.

JULISA
What are you looking at?

RYAN
A plaque which commemorates this booth as the place where a famous couple got engaged. Three guesses, go.

JULISA
Romeo and Juliet.

RYAN
No.

JULISA
Sonny and Cher.

RYAN
No.

JULISA
Bacon and eggs.

RYAN
No.
(knocks down the menu)
JFK and Jackie O.

JULISA
That's so cool! Which side was Jackie on?

RYAN
I have no idea.

JULISA
Before we go, I have to sit on your side to make sure I get the full experience.

RYAN
I promise that whichever side you're on, I'll have the better view.

JULISA

You are disgustingly charming. I want to swoon and throw up at the same time.

RYAN

Before you do either, let's decide what we're ordering.

The host/waiter returns with their drinks.

HOST

Would you like some more time?

JULISA

Nope. Way too hungry.
(skims the menu)
Wanna split the fried oysters?
They're a natural aphrodisiac.

Ryan chokes on his water. Julisa smiles and continues reading as Ryan barely manages a thumbs-up.

JULISA (TO HOST) (CONT'D)

I'll also have the Tavern Burger with jalapeños and American cheese.

RYAN

Make that two. Thanks.

The host/waiter takes their menus and heads for the kitchen.

JULISA

You doing okay over there?

RYAN

Just wondering how the JFK-Jackie conversation would've started.

JULISA

I wanna know how it ended. Whether he got on one knee or leaned across the table.

RYAN

Maybe Jackie proposed to him. Don't assume women can't put a ring on it. Hashtag, feminism.

JULISA

Would you prefer to be on the receiving end of your proposal?

RYAN

I believe I would.

JULISA

What would be your ideal engagement?

RYAN

Mariachi band. Can't get engaged without one. After I say yes, I'd want my best friends to start spraying champagne like we just won the Super Bowl. Then I'd like to stuff my face at an all-you-can-eat sushi restaurant.

JULISA

Be still my heart.

RYAN

How would your ideal proposal go?

JULISA

I would be on the receiving end, obviously, but I want it to be small and private. And somewhere significant to our relationship, like the first place we met. I'd also want to keep it secret for at least a week, that way it's truly ours before we share it with anyone. It would be more intimate that way. As far as the ring's concerned, I just want something simple yet elegant that will remind me of his love every day for the rest of my life... And then I'd like to stuff my face at an all-you-can-eat sushi restaurant.

RYAN

That also serves sashimi.

JULISA

Do you believe in soul mates?

RYAN

You know, I actually do. I asked and answered this question when I took Philosophical Ethics my sophomore year.

JULISA

Unexpected, but now I'm super curious.

RYAN

When people claim they've found "the one," I'm tempted to call bullshit because if they were born under different circumstances, I have no doubt they would have found someone else. However, this reality is our only option. We can't decide to exist in another space or time.

JULISA

Hey look, our future selves just walked through the door.

RYAN

One, that would be terrifying. Two, I doubt it would negate what I'm saying. Determinism is the idea that every action is a reaction. We're at this restaurant because you missed dinner, you missed dinner because we were searching for your friend, we were searching for your friend because your phone wasn't working.

JULISA

And my phone wasn't working because I dropped it in a glass of water.

RYAN

Exactly, but if every action is a reaction, and two people claim to have found "the one," then that couple was destined to fall in love, which to *me* sounds like the literal definition of soul mates.

JULISA

You know, most people just reference Disney movies.

RYAN

That probably would've been easier.

JULISA

Wait though. If you believe people are destined to fall in love, does that mean you don't believe in free will?

RYAN

I believe the presumption of free will is necessary, whether or not it's real.

JULISA

But if everything is predetermined, then love means nothing.

RYAN

Why?

JULISA

Because if you're not choosing to love someone, then you're not choosing to care for them, or protect them, or spend the rest of your life with them.

RYAN

You're pretending love is ever a choice. We don't decide who we fall in love with. It just happens. Just like you can't decide who you're attracted to.

The host/waiter returns with their fried oysters.

JULISA

May I ask you a personal question?

HOST

Depends on how personal.

JULISA

Are you married?

HOST

Seventeen years and counting.

JULISA

Do you believe you were destined to fall in love?

HOST

No. In fact, I almost married someone else.

JULISA

What if someone argued your choice to get married was merely the logical conclusion of events outside your control?

HOST

I'd say that just because my choice
was inevitable, doesn't mean I
didn't make a choice.

Julisa and Ryan almost speak, but words escape them.

HOST (CONT'D)

I'll return with your entrées
shortly.

The host/waiter walks back towards the kitchen. Julisa is speechless. Ryan gestures "mind blown" with his hands.

EXT. MARTIN'S TAVERN - NIGHT (2AM)

Long shot across Wisconsin Avenue of Julisa and Ryan leaving the restaurant. A dreamy jazz ballad inspired by Charlie Rouse begins to play...

MONTAGE - RESIDENTIAL STREETS BEHIND MARTIN'S TAVERN

A) Ryan and Julisa, talking and laughing, stroll down a brick sidewalk lit by old-fashioned street lamps.

B) A dirty car is parallel parked on the street. On the back window, someone has drawn a heart with their finger.

C) Two brightly colored row houses display a pair of muddy running shoes on their respective stoops. Bedroom lights switch off moments after Ryan and Julisa pass by each one.

D) Atop a blue recycling bin, two cans of rosé and a pizza box from 90 Second Pizza have been delicately balanced.

E) COWORKERS kiss and part ways outside The Tombs restaurant and bar.

F) A FERAL CAT walks in and out of moonlight before disappearing into a backyard.

END OF MONTAGE

EXT. GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY - NIGHT

Ryan and Julisa stroll through the campus' main gate. Healy Hall, the university's flagship building, shines bright before them.

Ryan finds a small foam basketball on the ground.

JULISA

I love wandering around at night.
It's the only time you can explore
a major city all by yourself.

RYAN

Don't forget apocalyptic scenarios.

JULISA

You're right. We should also
acknowledge *The Twilight Zone*.

RYAN

So when's your conference?

JULISA

Not till Monday.

RYAN

Do you have any plans for tomorrow?

JULISA

I was going to explore the National
Mall, become best friends with AOC,
and steal the Declaration of
Independence.

RYAN

I never do touristy stuff like
that.

JULISA

People often don't in their
hometown. Wait, where do you live?

Ryan finds his bearings and points north.

RYAN

Ten miles that way.

JULISA

Do you have roommates?

Ryan is almost too embarrassed to answer.

RYAN

My mom and stepdad.

JULISA

...Welp, this has clearly been a
waste of time.

RYAN

Agreed. Good luck with all your future endeavors.

JULISA

Why are you so embarrassed? Pretty much everyone lives at home.

RYAN

I know. I just -- I had this vision for my twenties, and it didn't involve arguments over washing the dishes.

JULISA

Well, if that's all you argue about, consider yourself blessed. I still live at home with all five of my sisters. Four of us share one bedroom, one of us sleeps on the couch, and the youngest one sleeps with my parents. It's impossible for us to not be at each other's throats all the time.

RYAN

...I would like to formally recant my statement concerning dishes.

JULISA

Yeah, I bet you would.

RYAN

And if I had to be honest, moving back home has helped me learn to adult.

JULISA

What adulting have you learned?

RYAN

I now have a credit card. I'm now financing my first car with zero percent APR.

Ryan and Julisa high-five.

RYAN (CONT'D)

I schedule my own doctors' appointments--

JULISA

You didn't do that before?

RYAN

How's the view from that high horse
of yours?

JULISA

Endearing.

RYAN

Well, in conclusion, I know I'm
lucky. It's mostly just my stepdad
that drives me crazy, but he makes
my mom happy, and for that I'm
genuinely grateful.

JULISA

That's the sweetest thing you've
said all night.

Ryan responds with a warm, subdued smile. They continue
walking onto campus.

EXT. GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY - DAHLGREN QUADRANGLE - NIGHT

Ryan and Julisa sit on top of a water fountain, which has
been turned off for the winter. They bounce the small foam
basketball back and forth. Behind them, a chapel brightens
the night with illuminated stained-glass windows.

RYAN

So what's it like having five
sisters?

JULISA

Messy, and loud. There's always
someone watching TV, or listening
to music, or talking on the phone.
But at least we're never lonely.

RYAN

That is a legitimate plus.

JULISA

Yeah, and there are other benefits
too. They're just easy to forget
when someone's stolen your clothes.

RYAN

That I cannot relate to. All I have
is one sister, and I'm pretty sure
we're different sizes.

JULISA

Let me guess. Size two?

RYAN

Just about... One thing I love about getting older, is that my sister and I are coming closer and closer together. She's six years younger than me, and when you're a kid, that represents an entire eon of human existence, but it doesn't feel that way anymore.

JULISA

Well, trust me. Most of my sisters were born one after another, and we often wish for eons between us.

RYAN

Toss a coin in the fountain.

JULISA

I'll wait till there's water in it. I do want the younger ones to see me as a role model though. It's another reason I'm still in school.

RYAN

One thing I've always wondered, is how much my parents' divorce affected my sister. I didn't even realize how much it affected me until relatively recently.

JULISA

How'd it affect you?

RYAN

Academically. I went from having straight A's in third and fourth grade, to straight C's in fifth and sixth grade, and then back to straight A's again. But my sister was only five-years-old, so the effect would've been less obvious... or maybe it wasn't. Hopefully I'll have more insight when I have kids one day.

JULISA

I want kids one day, but I've started to feel guilty about it.

RYAN

Why?

JULISA

I read this article that argued the only way to save the planet is to have fewer children. It makes more of a difference than living car-free, recycling, and becoming vegan all at once.

RYAN

Pshhh. What do scientists know? I believe it was Sir Isaac Newton who once said, science ain't shit but hoes and tricks.

JULISA

Sounds like something he'd say, but you should ask your sister about the divorce. I have a feeling it affected more than just your grades.

RYAN

Yeah, but that involves having my people contact her people, and then deciding on a lunch spot, which is always a power play over whose office is closer to the restaurant--

JULISA

You're right. I forgot you're a high-powered executive.

Ryan and Julisa both laugh. A moment passes as Ryan checks his phone.

JULISA (CONT'D)

What time is it?

RYAN

Two forty-five.

JULISA

I should probably head to Sierra's apartment soon.

RYAN

Yeah, it's starting to get pretty cold.

A beat. Ryan visibly squirms with indecision.

JULISA

What was that?

RYAN

I just... I haven't been in this position in a very long time.

JULISA

What position is that?

RYAN

You know, I... We...

Julisa plays dumb, secretly enjoying his newfound insecurity.

JULISA

Is there something you'd like to ask me?

(Ryan nods)

What would you like to ask?

Ryan takes a deep breath and steadies his nerves.

RYAN

Can I kiss you right now?

Julisa smiles and nods her head. They both lean in and share a single non-gratuitous kiss.

EXT. 35TH STREET BETWEEN PROSPECT AND M - NIGHT

Ryan and Julisa walk downhill on the cobblestone street. Ryan glances at his phone as they search for Sierra's "apartment," which is actually a row house. They approach the front door.

INT. SIERRA'S ROW HOUSE - NIGHT

The lights are off as Ryan and Julisa walk inside.

RYAN

How can she afford this place? It's gotta cost a million dollars--

Julisa immediately begins making out with Ryan. Moments later, they start ripping each other's clothes off.

INT. SIERRA'S ROW HOUSE - LATER

Julisa's Girls PACT T-shirt hangs off an armchair.

Ryan's blue jeans and chukka boots lay across the floor.

Julisa's cell phone peeks out from an open bag of rice on the kitchen counter.

Ryan and Julisa lie under the sheets on an air mattress, post sex. Julisa uses a regular pillow. Ryan uses one from the couch. They face each other, struggling to stay awake.

JULISA

I didn't expect this to happen tonight.

RYAN

Me neither.

JULISA

Well considering you've been single for all of five minutes, I'd guess not.

RYAN

Yeah... Something tells me my ex hasn't rebounded this quickly.

JULISA

...What's it like being in love?

RYAN

Said one twenty-four-year-old to the other... It's fun. It's being able to have entire conversations, without saying anything at all... but you've heard that cliché before... I remember, the first time I told her, that I loved her. We were on our first date, after months of hooking up, and I'd left nothing to chance. I picked the restaurant, I picked the table, and as I slid into the booth, my jeans ripped straight through the crotch.

JULISA

Oh, no.

RYAN

I was so embarrassed... But we were lying in my room later that night, and all I could think was that I had never shared these words with anyone. My family doesn't even say them that much, and this girl, out of every girl I'd ever met, she was going to be the first one I'd say them to...

JULISA

Did she say I love you back?

RYAN

Yes.

JULISA

Someone once said those words to me, outside of family I mean.

RYAN

Did you reciprocate?

JULISA

No.

(Ryan laughs)

I didn't love him.

RYAN

Poor guy.

JULISA

Don't feel too bad. He was the captain on the soccer team, because of course he was, and we'd been hooking up for a little while, but then he broke it off, and then he came back.

RYAN

Sounds like a real Prince Charming.

JULISA

Well it should be noted we were each other's first.

RYAN

That'll do it.

JULISA

Yeah, but we were in his room, we had just had sex, and then he just kind of says it out of nowhere.

RYAN

What'd you say?

JULISA

I pretended I didn't hear him. I said, *what was that?* And he immediately goes *nothing, it was nothing*, but I heard him crystal clear. I just didn't feel the same.

RYAN

Isn't it interesting that a hundred years from now, we could have flying cars and peace on earth, and every futuristic trope you can think of, but we'll still be having these same conversations.

JULISA

I think that means they're the conversations worth having.

RYAN

That makes sense... Julisa?

JULISA

Yeah?

RYAN

I think I'm falling asleep.

JULISA

In that case, scoot over. I wanna be the little spoon.

Ryan scoots over and holds Julisa from behind, adjusting to avoid a face full of hair.

RYAN

Sweet dreams, Julisa.

JULISA

Sweet dreams, Ryan.

Ryan and Julisa close their eyes and fall asleep, capping the end to a perfect night.

EXT. GEORGETOWN - MORNING

Scenes of life shortly after sunrise: black squirrels chase each other around the trunk of a tree, a homeless person sleeps beside a closed liquor store, and joggers keep a leisurely pace on the C&O Canal towpath.

INT. SIERRA'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Paige gets dressed as Sierra sleeps in bed. She then picks crumpled jeans off the floor and searches through the pockets. She finds a wallet and steals the cash inside. She then turns towards the bed and kisses Sierra on the cheek. Sierra, sound asleep and snug as a bug, responds with a peaceful smile.

INT. SIERRA'S ROW HOUSE - MORNING

Paige tiptoes through the living room, as Ryan and Julisa sleep in the background. She reaches the front door, walks outside, and inadvertently slams the door.

Ryan and Julisa jolt awake. They then notice each other, and blissfully remember the night before.

RYAN
It's too early.

JULISA
You're too early.

RYAN
What?

JULISA
I don't know. It's too early.

RYAN
I have to use the bathroom.

Ryan kisses Julisa, grabs his phone, and walks across the room. He's naked.

JULISA
Your breath stinks by the way.

RYAN
Like freshly cut lilacs? I know.
It's a problem.

Ryan opens a closed door, which happens to be a closet.

RYAN (CONT'D)
Weird looking bathroom.

INT. SIERRA'S BATHROOM - MORNING

Ryan thumbs through his phone as he closes the door.

ON SCREEN, we see a missed call and voicemail from *Mom*.

He holds the phone to his ear.

RYAN'S MOM (V.O.)
Hey, hun. I hope you and Steve had a good time last night. I wanted to let you know that I finally told grandpa about Caitlin.

(MORE)

RYAN'S MOM (V.O.) (CONT'D)

He said that although he hates to see handsome girls in distress, he hopes she finds herself badly positioned on a windy day, which is about as damning as it gets from him. Anyway, I took tomorrow off, so if you want help returning the ring, I'll be free all day. I love you, grandpa loves you, John loves you, and we'll see you later tonight. Alright, bye.

Ryan lowers his phone. He gives himself a moment, and lifts the toilet seat.

INT. SIERRA'S ROW HOUSE - MORNING

Ryan approaches Julisa, who continues to lie in bed. She types on her phone.

RYAN

It works?

JULISA

It works.

RYAN

Thank, Jeebus. I can finally get rid of you.

Julisa feigns insult as Ryan jumps onto the air mattress and climbs under the sheets. They start making out, quickly getting hot and bothered.

RYAN (CONT'D)

Condom?

JULISA

Yeah.

Ryan leans over the air mattress and reaches for the floor, but the mattress suddenly starts losing air.

JULISA (CONT'D)

What happened?

RYAN

My keys. They pierced the mattress.

Julisa cracks up laughing as the mattress sinks in the middle, and rises on the sides.

RYAN (CONT'D)
We're going down!

INT. SIERRA'S KITCHEN - MORNING

Ryan and Julisa, halfway between clothed and naked, sit at opposite ends of the table. They silently eat bowls of cereal and stare at their phones.

Sierra strides into the room.

SIERRA
What up, love birds?

JULISA
Good morning, Sierra. Have fun with your filly last night?

SIERRA
Before or after you shady bounced?

JULISA
We texted you.

SIERRA
I refuse to believe it. I also refuse to believe that air mattress will ever walk again.

JULISA
We'll buy you a new one.

SIERRA
Not good enough. That air mattress and I had a spiritual connection.

RYAN
You could always try a Ouija board.

SIERRA
Finally, a voice of reason.

JULISA
Well on behalf of traveling sisterhood types, I apologize for destroying your furniture.

SIERRA
Thank you. Apology accepted. I assume that includes him.

JULISA
He's an honorary member.

Sierra gestures *I'm watching you* to Ryan. She then tosses leftovers into the microwave, and notices the open bag of rice.

JULISA (CONT'D)

What's your plan for today?

SIERRA

First thing's first. We gotta re-up with my dealer for some Cherry Blossom. It's an indica strain that is perfect for strolling around the Tidal Basin. After that, we'll get half-smokes at Ben's Chili Bowl, and browse the gift shop at the International Spy Museum. They sell these secret cameras that look just like shirt buttons, and if we wanted, I bet we could easily infiltrate--

JULISA

Um, Sierra?

SIERRA

Yeah, what's up?

JULISA

Is there any chance we can postpone till later this week?

SIERRA (TO RYAN)

I knew I couldn't trust you.

RYAN

Just eating some oats.

JULISA

This has nothing to do with trust. I just want to explore the city with a native Washingtonian.

SIERRA (TO RYAN)

I bet you've never even used a Ouija board.

JULISA

I would smell many roses along the way.

The microwave beeps. Sierra removes, and broods over, her leftovers.

SIERRA

(You like him, don't you?)
¿Te gusta o que?

JULISA

Maybe.

SIERRA (TO RYAN)

Would you be willing to order Amazon's most expensive, best reviewed air mattress before you leave?

RYAN

Yes.

SIERRA

And you're not a Republican?

RYAN

I am not.

SIERRA

...Then I hope you enjoy your hormone-induced romp through the increasingly vanilla Chocolate City.

Julisa rises and hugs Sierra.

JULISA

(After the conference, we'll spend so much time with secret cameras, they'll make us special agents.)
Despues de la conferencia, pasaremos mucho tiempo con camaras escondidas que nos haran agentes secretos.

SIERRA

(I'm just glad the old Julie is back, even if it means less time together...)
Yo solo estoy feliz que la Julie de antes esta de regreso, aunque signifique poco tiempo juntas...
(English)
Homewrecker, you want in on this?

RYAN

I thought you'd never ask, literally.

Ryan joins the group hug. It lasts several moments.

SIERRA
The filly stole my cash.

EXT. GEORGETOWN - ESTABLISHING - DAY

View from above Prospect and 35th: Sunlight sporadically shines upon Sierra's row house, the Whitehurst Freeway, Key Bridge, and Rosslyn skyline. It's partly cloudy.

EXT. 35TH STREET BETWEEN PROSPECT AND M - DAY

Ryan and Julisa exit Sierra's row house.

JULISA
Where to?

RYAN
I don't know. What do people in their twenties usually do after one-night stands?

JULISA
Was this a one-night stand?

RYAN
I guess it depends on whether we see each other again. Are you moving to DC?

JULISA
No. Are you moving to California?

RYAN
No.

JULISA
Well I guess that settles that.

RYAN
(walking downhill)
Come on. I just remembered everyone gathers by the waterfront to swap war stories.

JULISA
Wait, did you text Kesang yet? I'll need my luggage about an hour before the dinner starts.

RYAN
What dinner?

JULISA
The one with my sponsors.

RYAN
What sponsors?

JULISA
The people who paid for this trip.

RYAN
I didn't know people paid for this trip.

JULISA
I mentioned it last night.

RYAN
No you didn't.

JULISA
Yes I did.

RYAN
...Okay. What time does it start?

JULISA
Six.

RYAN
It's almost twelve. So we have what? Five hours before we never see each other again?
(no response)
Seriously?

JULISA
I'll have a little free time, but I just promised it to Sierra.

RYAN
Well this sucks.

JULISA
You're the one who realized it was a one-night stand.

RYAN
I know, but... I thought we had more time together.

Julisa walks down to Ryan and kisses him on the cheek.

JULISA

We'll just have to make the most of it.

Seemingly convinced, Ryan offers his arm. Julisa takes it, and they walk down the steep incline towards the street below.

EXT. GEORGETOWN WATERFRONT PARK - DAY

Ryan and Julisa stroll along a concrete path that cuts through gently sloping hills and shade trees. The Potomac River laps against the bordering shoreline. They hold hands for the first time.

Light pole banners advertise The International Women's Leadership Conference for Poverty Alleviation and Economic Empowerment.

JULISA

How many people have you slept with?

RYAN

Four.

JULISA

That's it? I'm twenty-five percent of your sexual experience?

RYAN

I've always been a relationship guy. Besides, this last relationship covered some prime gettin'-it-on temporal real estate.

JULISA

You have some catching up to do.

RYAN

How many people have you slept with?

JULISA

Twelve, maybe thirteen. I'll have to consult my list.

RYAN

Where would I rank on such a lascivious piece of paper?

JULISA

Oh, easily top ten.

RYAN

Oh, good. That's, that's what I was hoping for.

JULISA

I'm kidding! You're actually vying for the top spot. You asked what people usually do after one-night stands. Well, trust me. It doesn't involve holding hands.

RYAN

It's amazing how open people are after sex, which leads me to this very open-ended question. What's something you've never told anyone?

JULISA

I don't know. Do you have an answer prepared for this?

RYAN

If I did I'd probably be cheating.

Julisa acknowledges his point. In a nearby patch of grass, a FATHER and DAUGHTER in Nationals gear throw a baseball back and forth.

JULISA

My dad caught me watching porn when I was in elementary school.

RYAN

That's something you go to therapy for.

JULISA

Well thankfully it wasn't during the act. My dad took our computer into work because I accidentally downloaded a virus, and the IT guys saw everything I did.

RYAN

How'd he react?

JULISA

I think he was more embarrassed than I was. I didn't get in any trouble though. My mom simply sat me down and gave me her best version of *the talk*.

RYAN

I never had the talk, but my mom would always tell me to be careful in a way that clearly meant don't get anyone pregnant. She thought I was a teenage Casanova. In reality, the only boobs I'd seen were in the pages of *National Geographic*.

JULISA

Do you want kids one day? I can't remember what you said last night.

RYAN

I don't know. Before last week, I would've said yes, absolutely, but now that the world's my proverbial oyster... Maybe I'll just say fuck it and join a monastery.

JULISA

Way to take advantage of the oyster.

RYAN

Just trying to follow in Batman's footsteps.

JULISA

Do you really think we'll never see each other again?

RYAN

I mean, I'm not sure what our options are. I guess we could FaceTime.

JULISA

I don't want to FaceTime, or Zoom, or text.

RYAN

Well, what do you want?

JULISA

I just want to have fun and enjoy myself, and share those experiences with someone else.

RYAN

That someone else shouldn't be me though.

JULISA

Why not?

RYAN

Think about it. I dated a girl for four years, and this is how I am a week after breaking up with her. I'm either in shock, denial, or a complete psychopath.

JULISA

I'm not saying I want to get married, or even start a relationship. I just think it would be a shame to lose whatever it is we have.

RYAN

So who's it gonna be? Are you moving to the east coast, or am I moving to the west coast?

JULISA

We could meet in the middle. I heard Nebraska's lovely this time of year.

RYAN

Ah, yes. The only state I don't know a thing about.

Ryan and Julisa step aside for PROTESTORS heading home. One of them, a woman in her 20s, wears a maroon and white beanie. Ryan swivels to look at her...

RYAN (CONT'D)

Anyway, I love the idea of absence making the heart grow fonder, but those stories are only enjoyable from an outside perspective.

(no response)

Julisa? ... Hey, what's goin' on?

JULISA

You were obviously just staring at that girl.

RYAN

The protestor?

JULISA

No the girl five hundred yards that way.

RYAN

She was wearing a Fordham hat. I wanted to see if I recognized her.

JULISA

Did you think she was cute?

RYAN

Did I... That doesn't really seem to be relevant.

Julisa shoots him a death stare.

RYAN (CONT'D)

Ugliest girl I've ever seen.

JULISA

...Was it really a Fordham hat?

RYAN

It really was.

JULISA

...Okay. Sorry.

RYAN

It's alright. You good?

JULISA

Yeah... Was she really that ugly?

RYAN

Without question. I'm surprised her loved ones let her out of the house.

JULISA

Stop. I know she wasn't.

RYAN

You kidding? She looked like something a cat coughed up.

EXT. GEORGETOWN HARBOR / 30TH STREET NW - DAY

Ryan gives Julisa a full tilt piggyback ride down the middle of a dead-end street. After numerous zigs and zags, they finally reach a Capital Bikeshare station filled with bright red bikes. Ryan continues to hold Julisa.

RYAN

You want to explore the National Mall. I think this is the best way to get there.

JULISA

How does it work?

RYAN

I've never used them before, but I'm pretty sure you just swipe your card and return the bikes to any station with available slots.

JULISA

What if none of the stations have available slots?

RYAN

Then we steal the bikes, travel all the way up and down the Americas, and discover the true meaning of friendship.

JULISA

I really hope there aren't available slots.

RYAN

Yeah, me too. Alright... Are you gonna pay or what?

Julisa flicks Ryan's ear.

RYAN (CONT'D)

Ow. Why do I have to pay?

MONTAGE - VARIOUS

A) ROCK CREEK PARK TRAILS - Ryan and Julisa leisurely bike along a concrete path that hugs the Rock Creek Parkway.

B) ROCK CREEK PARK TRAILS - Standing beside their bikes, Ryan and Julisa admire the Potomac River. Kayakers paddle downstream as Julisa points to Healy Hall's spire in the distance.

C) ROCK CREEK PARK TRAILS - As Ryan and Julisa bike around a curve, the backside of the Lincoln Memorial appears in the distance.

D) CAPITAL BIKESHARE STATION - Ryan and Julisa return their bikes to a different Capital Bikeshare station. Every slot is available.

E) LINCOLN MEMORIAL - Ryan and Julisa climb the main steps. They pass through the central columns, and gaze upon the nineteen-foot statue of Abraham Lincoln.

F) LINCOLN MEMORIAL - Ryan and Julisa wander throughout the central chamber, observing the ceiling, columns, and statue from different angles.

G) LINCOLN MEMORIAL - A mural containing Greek figures represents unity, fraternity, and charity. Beneath it, a triptych of an unnamed speech is carved into the wall. Julisa recognizes the speech.

H) LINCOLN MEMORIAL - Ryan and Julisa enter an extremely small and narrow bookstore. As they peruse the merchandise, Julisa looks at photos from the 1963 March on Washington. The last photo is of protestors around the Reflecting Pool.

END OF MONTAGE

EXT. REFLECTING POOL - DAY

Ryan and Julisa walk along the long, rectangular pool that stretches out before the Lincoln Memorial. They share the path with PROTESTORS mingling about after a demonstration for DC statehood.

Ryan checks the time on his phone, counting their remaining hours together.

RYAN

You know, we have time. It's like one and a half *Lord of the Rings* movies, plus or minus a bathroom break.

(no response)

You doing okay?

JULISA

Yeah, sorry. I'm just thinking about history, and the echoes of people who came before us.

RYAN

Right... What?

JULISA

Nothing. So what's it like living so close to the heart of... everything?

RYAN

It's a mixed bag. I'm sure I'm more socially conscious, but I could've done with fewer disputes at the dinner table.

JULISA

Do you enjoy living here?

RYAN

Yeah, definitely. There's all sorts of cool stuff to do, even if most of my time is spent in Maryland.

JULISA

Would you ever consider moving?

RYAN

I mean, I live with my mom and stepdad, so yes, at some point I will consider moving. The only issue I have with DC is that it's small. That being said, the only other place I've lived is anything but small.

JULISA

New York?

RYAN

The big kahuna.

JULISA

Would you ever move back?

RYAN

No, well, not indefinitely. New York is an incredibly exhausting place to live, but there are definitely two New Yorks. One for rich people and one for poor people, so maybe after my first million I'll give it another shot.

JULISA

What was the rent like?

RYAN

A thousand dollars a month, but that's like the absolute bare minimum. And that's pretty much what it is in DC too, and I would assume LA. You just get a little less space in New York.

JULISA

And you'd never give the west coast a chance?

RYAN

I never said that. West coast best coast actually sounds more like my vibe, I'm just not ready yet. But the good thing about my current job is that if I do become ready, I can transfer and at least have some sort of employment wherever I go.

JULISA

Where do you work?

RYAN

Trader Joe's.

JULISA

You work at Trader Joe's? I love Trader Joe's! I'm addicted to the cauliflower gnocchi.

RYAN

Huh. That's usually a white girl thing.

JULISA

Well it should be an everyone thing. Were you there during the pandemic?

RYAN

Oh yeah. I aged ten years and got paid for two.

JULISA

Ugh, I couldn't imagine. I felt like I was fighting COVID on all sides anytime I went.

RYAN

That is accurate. I would legit build walls of paper bags next to the registers in an effort to block air molecules from customers in line.

JULISA

That's the sort of practical advice they just don't tell you about.

RYAN

It was better than nothing. How was remote learning? I was lucky enough to miss all that.

JULISA

Honestly, it could've been worse, but I was so looking forward to finally having a real college campus experience... At least parts of my final year were still in person.

RYAN

What'd you study?

JULISA

History.

RYAN

Why history?

JULISA

I just really enjoyed it, but it all started with one teacher. She knew ever detail of every period, and it inspired me because history is usually a male-dominated field.

RYAN

And you say you're not passionate about anything.

JULISA

Maybe I'm like you. Not sure how to turn it into a career yet.

A BLACK FAMILY WITH A YOUNG BOY passes between them. The boy holds a sign, which reads "Future DC Governor."

RYAN

Let's ask him.

EXT. NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART - DAY

As Ryan and Julisa aimlessly stroll down the sidewalk, they pass a HOMELESS MAN with an overladen shopping cart.

HOMELESS MAN

Hey, man. Can you help me get
somethin' to eat?

RYAN

Sorry, dude.

Ryan and Julisa keep walking. Once out of earshot...

JULISA

I think I have some ones.

RYAN

It's fine. There are plenty of
shelters he can go to.

Julisa's disappointed, but continues walking.

JULISA

The shelters must get pretty busy
this time of year.

RYAN

Yeah, hopefully they have enough
space.

JULISA

...He reminds me of a kid I saw one
time.

RYAN

The homeless guy?

JULISA

Yeah. I went to a Peruvian
restaurant, and this ten-year-old
kid opened the door asking for
change. I told him I didn't have
any, and it took me a full five
minutes to realize I just turned my
back on a homeless child. So I
bought him lunch, but then I left
immediately afterwards. It's like I
was so embarrassed I ignored him
the first time, that I ignored him
again. Any homeless adult could've
started out as that homeless kid.
It makes it much harder to turn a
blind eye.

Ryan stops in his tracks. He and Julisa just stare at each other. He then raises his arm as if to say, "go for it."

Julisa jogs back to the Homeless Man. She gives him a couple dollars, then rejoins Ryan.

RYAN

Feel better?

JULISA

From helping a poverty-stricken man? Yes.

RYAN

I'm sorry. There are just so many homeless people in DC, I've gotten used to ignoring them.

JULISA

I know, but they need two dollars much more than we do.

RYAN

Well I feel like a terrible person.

JULISA

Just make sure your actions match your words. The world doesn't need anymore lip service.

Ryan and Julisa approach a small metal sign, stationed before the museum's southern entrance.

JULISA (CONT'D)

National Gallery of Art, West Building. It's a shame museums are so expensive. Hopefully that guy gets to see them one day.

RYAN

The museums are free.

JULISA

What?

RYAN

Yeah, well, most of them. You still have to pay for the Spy Museum, the National Building Museum, I'm not sure about the Holocaust Museum--

JULISA

Why are we still outside? Come on! Let's go, let's go, let's go!

RYAN

Okay.

INT. NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART - WEST BUILDING - DAY

Skylights illuminate interconnected rooms filled with world-renowned paintings. Security guards monitor respectful guests, while Julisa and Ryan wander throughout the space.

Ryan, once again, glances at his phone.

JULISA

What time is it?

RYAN

Two fifteen.

They take a moment to process what this means...

RYAN (CONT'D)

So, were you ever any good at art?

JULISA

I took advanced art in high school, but only because I wanted colleges to think I was committed to something. You?

RYAN

I was actually pretty good. I kind of regret not keeping up with it.

JULISA

What kind of art?

RYAN

Drawing mostly, but I tried just about everything. Sculpting, photography, voice lessons.

JULISA

My mom made me take piano lessons. She would convince me to practice by saying how much my guinea pig liked it.

RYAN

Your mom sounds great.

JULISA

Manipulative is more like it.

RYAN

I wish someone would've told me you can make art a profession. Like, I bet you would've enjoyed piano if you played songs on the radio.

JULISA

You don't know what songs I played.

RYAN

Let me guess. Watered-down Beethoven and *Deck the Halls*.

JULISA

It was actually *Jingle Bell Rock* thank you very much.

RYAN

You see my point though? What kid is gonna be inspired to become a professional pianist through Christmas music?

JULISA

I feel like you just insulted a very small yet extremely passionate group of people.

RYAN

I'm willing to take that risk... Think any of these artists would be surprised they're in here?

JULISA

Probably a couple. I always think it's funny, and slightly depressing, how these paintings could represent an entire life's work, yet we stare at them for half a second, think...

(*meh.* shrugs shoulders)
and continue walking.

RYAN

I just feel bad for the ones who died in obscurity, only to have their work sell at Sotheby's for millions of dollars.

JULISA

I know what you mean. My greatest fear is that I won't live long enough to see my stick figures critically acclaimed.

RYAN

The Louvre won't know what hit it.

They pass a HANDSOME MAN who blatantly gives Julisa the up and down. Ryan turns to her for comment.

JULISA

(re: her T-shirt)

He's probably part of Girls PACT.
Wanted to see if he recognized me.

RYAN

I did not do that.

JULISA

It was pretty close.

RYAN

Hey, hold on.

Ryan and Julisa stop in front of *Wivenhoe Park*, a 19th-century oil painting of an English countryside.

RYAN (CONT'D)

This is above Barb's couch.

JULISA

Who's Barb?

RYAN

My dad's cousin, I think. I've seen it a thousand times. Never given it a second thought.

We zoom in on gorgeous details: cows grazing in the sunlit pasture, ducks resting beneath lush elm trees, women riding in a donkey-led carriage, birds flying against enormous fluffy clouds, and fishermen tending to their nets.

Enthralled, Ryan continues to inspect the painting...

JULISA

It's not that great.

INT. NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART - GARDEN COURT - DAY

A statue of cherubs playfully wrestling a swan adorns a central fountain.

Ryan and Julisa sit on folding metal chairs, surrounded by tropical foliage and white marble.

Julisa reads a museum pamphlet, advertising paid internships.

RYAN

The last time I remember being here, at least I think it was here, there was a painting with an actual safety pin sticking out of it. My friend thought it was some sort of optical allusion, so he reached out and accidentally touched it. We were so sure the police were on their way that we booked it out of there as fast as possible.

JULISA

How old were you?

RYAN

Probably six or seven.

JULISA

That's so funny. Who thought it was a good idea to take six-year-olds to an art museum?

RYAN

My aunt. We would always go on "field trips" during the summer, presumably to give my parents some alone time.

JULISA

My mom desperately could've used your aunt. If day-care fell through, we would just follow her to work.

RYAN

What does she do?

JULISA

She's a housekeeper, and it would always be in these huge expensive mansions, but she wouldn't let us just sit there. She would teach us how to clean. And just to illustrate how tough she is, there was one time I didn't clean because I was sick, so she gave my sisters a dollar every time they finished something.

RYAN

That is exceptionally cruel.

JULISA

They got like three or four dollars, but we would get other things too. We would take products out of the trash if they were new or mostly full.

RYAN

...I'm surprised I haven't asked you this yet, but are you working right now?

JULISA

I'm a teaching assistant. Some people use it as a stepping stone, but I'm just trying to pay tuition.

RYAN

Well, funny enough, I think I might actually be interested in teaching.

JULISA

Really?

RYAN

Yeah. I train a lot of new employees at Trader Joe's, and I'm surprised how much I enjoy it. I'm not fully committed to the idea yet, but it's been slowly creeping in there for some time.

JULISA

I feel like we're very similar in a lot of ways, but this is not one of them. Even proctoring an exam stresses me out.

RYAN

Yeah, I'm not sure why I am the way I am, but the majority of the stress I feel tends to be self-inflicted. For example, my ex and I didn't get to see each other very often, so if I wasn't with her, I was in robot-mode trying to organize my personal life. That way when we did spend time together, I could be totally present and actually try to have some fun.

JULISA

I hope I'm not speaking out of turn, but I feel like that would've had a negative impact on your relationship.

RYAN

Why?

JULISA

Cause you made yourself entirely dependent on another human being in order to enjoy yourself? There'd be so much pressure on your time together, and no two people have fun every time they see each other. If you never gave yourself time to relax on your own, it just seems like you would've been a ticking time bomb.

RYAN

Huh... That's interesting...

JULISA

You know what? Forget I said that. I'm the last person who should be giving advice on relationships or relaxation--

RYAN

No, it's just... Maybe you're right... I'm now trying to figure out whether I was ticking or not...

Out of Julisa's view, Ryan toys with a SMALL ENGAGEMENT RING.

JULISA

How about the rest of this art museum?

INT. NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART - MULTIVERSE - DAY

Ryan and Julisa stroll past a glass wall, which showcases a cascading waterfall.

JULISA

Try not to think about it. Seriously, I have no idea what I'm talking about.

RYAN

I know but, you're not dumb.

They approach a tunnel labeled "Walkway to East Building." The ceiling and one of the walls flicker with 41,000 white LED lights.

RYAN (CONT'D)

Having said that, I am getting more and more distracted by our jump to hyperspace.

Ryan and Julisa step onto a moving walkway. They admire the mesmerizing sculpture of light. Patterns within the light travel throughout the two-hundred-foot tunnel.

JULISA

Are you gonna remember this weekend?

RYAN

You kidding? How could I forget Wivenhoe Park?

JULISA

I'm serious.

RYAN

I'll remember all of it.

JULISA

Before we say goodbye, I want to take a picture together.

RYAN

We can do that. Just don't send it to me, okay?

JULISA

Why not?

RYAN

I have this thing with photos. Without them, I can remember a trip, or event, or a girl, and recall everything that made them special. But when I have photos, those are the only images I remember.

JULISA

I'd be so afraid I'd forget.

RYAN

I keep a journal just in case.

JULISA
These lights are beautiful.

RYAN
Not as beautiful as--

JULISA
Don't say it.

RYAN
...Wivenhoe Park.

JULISA
You know when you look at the stars, how they may not even be there anymore?
(off Ryan's look)
Because they're so far away. It takes the light thousands if not millions of years to reach us. By that time, the stars could be long gone.

RYAN
That sounds vaguely familiar.

JULISA
I just love how they live on, even after they die. Everything we'll ever experience, and everything we've already experienced, is and will be captured by light. After it bounces off of us, it scatters in almost infinite directions throughout the universe, meaning that this moment could last forever.

Julisa and Ryan memorize each other's every detail as the LED lights flash and wave behind them.

RYAN
The walkway's ending.

Julisa smiles. She takes Ryan's hand, and they step onto solid ground.

INT. NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART - EAST BUILDING - DAY

A wall of paneled windows looks north onto Pennsylvania Avenue from the second floor. We pan almost 360 degrees, revealing a massive atrium with modern art, and land on a wall of paneled windows facing the West Building.

Sunlight silhouettes Julisa and Ryan, along with several pieces of furniture. They attempt to take a selfie.

RYAN

You have to take it from an upward angle.

JULISA

I know, but -- I'm trying to get rid of these shadows.

RYAN

It's because we're not getting enough natural light. We need to pivot towards the windows.

JULISA

For someone who doesn't like keeping photos, you sure know a lot about selfies.

RYAN

Hey. Y'all aren't the only ones allowed to take full-frontal nudes. Alright?

Julisa takes a photo.

RYAN (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

JULISA

What does it look like I'm doing?

RYAN

You can't just take one. You gotta take a bazillion of them.

Julisa's phone takes rapid-fire photos as she holds down the camera button. After a few seconds of smiling, Ryan attempts different facial expressions, which causes Julisa to laugh.

RYAN (CONT'D)

What?

JULISA

Come here.

Julisa kisses Ryan as her phone continues to take photos. She stops kissing him.

JULISA (CONT'D)

Think we got it?

RYAN

We should probably keep kissing
just in case.

Julisa rolls her eyes and pockets her phone.

JULISA

We should put a placard on the
wall. People probably think we're a
live art exhibit.

RYAN

*Selfie: A Generational
Introspective.*

JULISA

Of course we did just walk through
room after room of self-portraits
from hundreds of years ago.

RYAN

*Narcissism: A Time-Honored
Tradition.*

JULISA

Would you stop doing that?

RYAN

No: I Will Not.

As Julisa shakes her head, an AFFECTIONATE COUPLE (80s)
enters her field of view.

JULISA

Look at these two.

RYAN

They remind me of my grandparents.

JULISA

Mom's side or dad's side?

RYAN

Mom's side... When I was younger, I
stayed with them for a week while
going to some sports camp, and
their living room had two couches
in it, in an L shape, but a couple
feet apart. And my grandpa walks
in, doesn't notice me on the one,
goes straight for my grandma on the
other, and he just starts flirting
with her.

(MORE)

RYAN (CONT'D)

I'll never forget because my grandma turned into a school girl right before my eyes. It was the youngest I'd ever seen her. They must've been in their eighties. I could see that being you one day.

JULISA

Where do you see yourself?

RYAN

My crystal ball only works on other people.

JULISA

I never know if I should feel happy or sad for people who stay together their entire lives.

RYAN

Why wouldn't you feel happy?

JULISA

Because what if they settled? To an extent, ignorance is bliss, but I have serious reservations about anyone who marries their high school sweetheart.

RYAN

As depressing as that is, I understand your point. I remember hearing our personalities aren't even fully developed until we're thirty-ish. If we're happy-go-lucky at twenty, we could be almost anything at thirty. If we're happy-go-lucky at thirty, we'll most likely be the same at sixty.

JULISA

What personality do you wish to assume?

RYAN

Debonair and a little cheeky. I think I can pull that off in six years. You?

JULISA

Evil mastermind with a soft spot for apex predators. Specifically whale sharks.

RYAN

See? That's why we shouldn't get married. I hate whale sharks.

JULISA

I knew we'd find a deal breaker.

RYAN

You know, one of my biggest insights into love and relationships actually came from a Humans of New York post. It was a kid talking about how sometimes he loves his girlfriend more, and sometimes she loves him more, and it just kind of blew my mind because I always thought of love as either a yes or no. I never viewed it as a moving scale before.

JULISA

Everything's a spectrum.

RYAN

The only real question I'm struggling with is...

JULISA

What?

RYAN

I shouldn't say.

JULISA

Come on. Tell me.

RYAN

...If you thought you found the one, and it ends up you were wrong, how can you ever trust yourself again?

Ryan and Julisa share a long, contemplative pause.

JULISA

I don't know.

RYAN

Yeah, me neither.

The older Affectionate Couple slowly disappears from view.

RYAN (CONT'D)

How long until your dinner starts?

JULISA
(checks phone)
Two hours and twenty-seven minutes.

RYAN
So we have one hour and twenty-seven minutes?

JULISA
Yep.

RYAN
Should we pretend we have all the time in the world? Stave off reality for just a little bit longer.

JULISA
I like that idea, but I do have one request.

RYAN
What's that?

JULISA
Can you help me choose a filter?

RYAN
For you, anything.

Ryan sits next to Julisa. They scroll through their selfies.

EXT. MADISON DRIVE AND 3RD STREET - DAY

Julisa and Ryan stroll down the quiet sidewalk.

JULISA
Ooh, let's cross the street!

They jaywalk towards the southwest corner, and encounter a large STREET VENDOR. The colorful array of sweatshirts, flat brim caps, and souvenirs encompasses the entire frame.

RYAN
Please tell me you're not gonna buy something.

JULISA
Why not?

RYAN

Because buying a Washington, DC sweatshirt is the most touristy thing you can possibly do.

JULISA

So what? I'm a tourist. And how could I resist these commemorative plates?

RYAN

If you even have to ask.

Ryan casually looks around. He notices a flat brim cap emblazoned with the American flag.

RYAN (CONT'D)

Did your family ever wear those Old Navy Fourth of July T-shirts?

JULISA

Oh yeah. We got a new one almost every year.

RYAN

So did we. I feel like they belong in the same category as baseball cards and drive-in theaters.

JULISA

Americana at its finest... Reminds me of Tlacolula.

RYAN

What's that?

JULISA

It's a town in Oaxaca where my mom's from, and yes, I recognize the irony.

RYAN

Have you spent a lot of time there?

JULISA

Three months when I was thirteen. It was mostly in my aunt's café. I would make coffee, sincronizadas, carrot cake, banana bread...

RYAN

Sounds tough.

JULISA

Eh, sometimes. More than anything, it's just a reminder of a really happy childhood.

RYAN

I'm glad you thought of it.

JULISA

Me too... Ryan?

RYAN

Yeah?

JULISA

I'm really gonna miss you.

RYAN

I thought we were pretending we had all the time in the world.

JULISA

Easier said than done.

RYAN

That's not true. We just have to flex those creative muscles. What do you want to do next week?

JULISA

Here or--

RYAN

All. The time. In the world. The world is your oyster. What do you want to do?

JULISA

...I've never been to Mexico City.

RYAN

Perfect. What can we do there?

JULISA

We can visit Teotihuacan. It's an ancient Mesoamerican city. I've always wanted to visit and learn more about my ancestors.

RYAN

That is an excellent answer. Is there anything else?

JULISA
Let's go to the snow!

RYAN
What snow?

JULISA
I don't know. I've just never seen any.

RYAN
You've never seen any? There's probably some lurkin' around the corner.

JULISA
What do you want to do?

RYAN
Build snowmen in Mexico.

JULISA
That's not fair.

RYAN
What? That sounds awesome. And there's nothing stopping us. We could go if we wanted.

JULISA
It's that easy?

RYAN
Only if you want it to be.

Julisa and Ryan turn back towards the merchandise. Julisa flips through a rack of sweatshirts.

JULISA
Hey, Ryan.

RYAN
What's up?

JULISA
What do you think?

She reveals a sweatshirt to Ryan. We can't see the front.

RYAN
No. No, absolutely not.

EXT. MADISON DRIVE AND 3RD STREET - MINUTES LATER

Ryan and Julisa cross the street towards Capitol Hill. Julisa wears a *Federal Booty Inspector* sweatshirt. Ryan carries her large, winter coat.

RYAN

How long did it take to get your certification?

JULISA

That's classified.

RYAN

Do you think I have what it takes?

Julisa slows down to look at Ryan's butt. She then speeds up to continue walking next to him.

JULISA

No.

EXT. FREDERICK LAW OLMSTED'S "SUMMERHOUSE" - DAY

A serene and attractive structure made of red brick sits in the foreground of the United States Capitol Building.

RYAN

This might be my favorite place in DC.

Ryan leads Julisa through an open archway. Inside, a hexagonal shape is revealed, comprised of three archways and three alcoves with built-in seating. A fountain resides in the middle beneath an open sky.

Julisa peers through a wrought-iron grille within one of the alcoves, discovering a peaceful grotto with flowing water.

RYAN (CONT'D)

I first discovered this when I ran cross-country in high school. I would hide in here and rest up when I didn't feel like running the whole way.

JULISA

No one noticed?

RYAN

We had a big team.

Ryan's phone buzzes. He glances at it and is immediately caught off guard.

JULISA
What is it?

RYAN
It's my ex. I forgot she existed
for a second.

JULISA
What does she want?

Ryan's eyes become glassy, quickly filling up with tears.

RYAN
This is so stupid. I'm sorry, this
is beyond unnecessary--

JULISA
It's fine. You're fine--

RYAN
She just -- We're officially
Facebook unofficial... You're
allowed to laugh at that.

They both laugh: Ryan through his heartbreak, and Julisa through her tepid relief.

RYAN (CONT'D)
We didn't want to do it right away
just because -- We thought it would
be easier than doing it all at
once.

JULISA
Because slowly peeling off a Band-
Aid is always easier than ripping
it off.

Ryan acknowledges her point.

JULISA (CONT'D)
At least it won't be posted on the
news feed.

RYAN
Was that a thing?

JULISA
Yeah.

RYAN

Fucking Facebook... I don't think either of us are ready to tell our friends yet.

(no response)

What?

JULISA

Nobody's gonna care.

RYAN

Of course they will.

JULISA

No they won't. I mean -- Your best friends will care. Kesang last night, she cared, but otherwise... It'll just be a blip on everyone else's radar. I don't know if that makes it better or worse.

RYAN

Kind of worse... At least no one can say we didn't try our best, you know? But it kills me that, all the work we put into that relationship, and all the lessons learned, will be benefited by future boyfriends and girlfriends.

JULISA

Ryan, that's not a bad thing. It's positive if you learn from your experiences. Take this weekend for instance...

RYAN

What about this weekend?

The tables have turned. Julisa begins tearing up.

JULISA

Before last night...

(re: tears)

Fuck. It's like yawning, it's contagious.

They both laugh.

JULISA (CONT'D)

I've never had a night and a day like we've just had together, and the truth is... There's no ticking clock.

(MORE)

JULISA (CONT'D)

This isn't the end of some magical summer abroad, and there's no asteroid hurtling towards Earth. I don't even need to catch a plane till Thursday.

(Ryan laughs)

It's just that... Everyone has so much more agency than they give themselves credit for. I have family back home, but there's nothing else. I've all but decided to drop out of grad school, I subsequently won't have a job, my best friend lives in DC.

RYAN

Are you saying what I think you're saying?

JULISA

I'm saying that for the first time in a long time, I'm ready to take a risk, and figure out what I'm supposed to do with my life. Part of me wants to take that risk with you, but the other part of me knows I'm not ready to make that choice yet.

RYAN

So, you're *not* moving cross country to continue hooking up with me?

JULISA

No, I'm not. Maybe when the bullshit of youth is over, we'll meet back up and start something truly special, but until then, I need to see what else this nondescript dot has to offer.

RYAN

As much as I really don't like that answer, I know you're right. And hell, I should enjoy being single for a while. If this is what my first weekend outside of a relationship looks like, I'm about to clean up.

JULISA

Just promise you won't become a fuckboy.

RYAN

I don't think there's too much chance of that... Should we hug it out?

Ryan and Julisa share a deep, loving embrace.

RYAN (CONT'D)

Thank you for a great twenty-four hours.

JULISA

Thank you for being a world-class tour guide.

Someone's phone vibrates.

RYAN

Is that me or you?

JULISA

I think it's you.

Ryan reaches for his pocket.

JULISA (CONT'D)

Please don't answer it.

RYAN

Let me just see who it is... It's Kesang.

Julisa acquiesces. Ryan answers his phone.

RYAN (CONT'D)

Hey, Kesang... We were just about to head over... I think we could do that... I'll tell you about it later... Yeah. No, that sounds good... Alright, cya soon... Bye.

JULISA

Change of plans?

RYAN

We have one more stop to make.

EXT. MADISON DRIVE AND 3RD STREET - DAY

Ryan and Julisa cross the street away from Capitol Hill. They walk past the large Street Vendor, and back onto the quiet sidewalk.

EXT. NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART (NGA) - DAY

Ryan and Julisa pass the small metal sign, stationed before the museum's southern entrance.

They once again pass the Homeless Man, and Ryan slyly drops something into his cup.

Inside, we see the small engagement ring atop a bed of coins.

Ryan and Julisa continue walking west across 7th Street. Once out of the crosswalk, they pass through open metal gates at the corner.

EXT. NGA SCULPTURE GARDEN - ICE RINK - DAY

Dozens of people skate around a large ice rink. The National Archives Building is featured prominently in the background.

JULISA (O.S.)

Think Kesang will even remember what I look like?

RYAN (O.S.)

She wasn't that drunk.

Ryan and Julisa stand before a ticket booth window.

JULISA

What size do you wear?

RYAN

Ten.

The BOOTH ATTENDANT hands Julisa and Ryan two pairs of skates.

JULISA (TO THE BOOTH ATTENDANT)

How much is it?

EXT. NGA SCULPTURE GARDEN - ICE RINK - MINUTES LATER

Julisa and Ryan, wearing their skates, place their shoes and the large winter coat in small lockers.

RYAN

So how would you tell your parents you're dropping out of school?

JULISA

Skywriting probably. Or possibly through song.

RYAN

Two straightforward approaches.

JULISA

I don't know. It'll be hard, but I think ultimately they'll be happy for me.

RYAN

Well if you need me to do anything, just let me know.

JULISA

I think I'll keep your existence a secret for a minute. Not sure they'd be as understanding if they knew a boy influenced my decision.

RYAN

Cries internally.

Ryan and Julisa approach the opening to the ice rink.

RYAN (CONT'D)

This might be a good time to tell you I'm terrible at this.

JULISA

So am I. Just hold on tight.

Julisa and Ryan hold hands, and venture onto the ice. They help each other balance, and take enamored glances at each other.

Melancholy gradually takes control, but happiness and gratitude confidently replace it. They skate around the rink for a long, continuous shot until we slowly fade to black...

THE END.