

HOLIDAY

by

Nancy Meyers

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LUSH, ROMANTIC MOVIE MUSIC OVER A BLACK SCREEN

FADE IN:

ON A YOUNG COUPLE KISSING

on the beach. As the CAMERA GLIDES AROUND THEM, the MUSIC soars.

CAMERA WIDENS and we realize we are watching the Young Couple on a large Computer Screen and at the computer's keyboard, writing the MUSIC we're hearing is MILES -- early thirties, boyish, shaggy in his T-shirt and khakis. The depth and tenderness of his composition belies his appearance. We are in:

MILES' L.A. HOUSE IN THE HOLLYWOOD HILLS

Small and Spanish. It's a December afternoon. Through the windows, we see the wind blowing olive trees in a courtyard. Miles continues to compose as we SEE his PRETTY GIRLFRIEND in the b.g., talking on her cell as she gets dressed. An actress no doubt.

Over, we HEAR the VOICE OF A YOUNG ENGLISH WOMAN, IRIS. Iris' Voice is knowing and warm.

IRIS (V.O.)

I have found almost everything ever written about love to be true. Shakespeare said, "Journeys end when lovers meet." What an extraordinary thought. Personally I have not experienced anything remotely close to that but I'm more than willing to believe Shakespeare had. I suppose I think about love more than anyone really should. I am constantly amazed by it's sheer power and by all its subtleties and complexities.

Miles' Girlfriend passes behind the computer screen and Miles, taken with her, seems to now compose to her beauty. She, however, is in a rush and doesn't seem to notice. Miles reaches for her with one arm, kisses her hand, still playing the keyboard with the other. She looks at him impatiently. Oblivious to this, Miles watches her exit as he continues to play.

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

It was Shakespeare who also said, "Love is blind". Now, that, is something I know to be true.

INT. PORSCHE - MOVING - SUNSET BOULEVARD - NIGHT - MUSIC CONTINUES

A COUPLE drives home from a party without speaking. The Woman, in her early thirties, in the passenger seat, turns and stares steadily at her Man. Feeling her eyes on him, he glances over but she seems to see right through him. He can't take it. His eyes return to the road. She nods to herself.

IRIS (V.O.)

And for some, quite inexplicably...
love fades.

INT. BEDROOM - BRENTWOOD - NIGHT - MUSIC CONTINUES

ARTHUR ABBOTT, eighty-some years old, gets in his Queen size bed, alone. A photo of his Beloved Wife, taken in the Fifties, sits on his night stand. Arthur takes his moment to look at the photo, as he always does, before turning out the light.

IRIS (V.O.)

For others, love is simply lost.

The Wind blows a window closed.

INT. PUB - ENGLAND - NIGHT - MUSIC CONTINUES

A GREAT LOOKING MAN, around 40, makes his way through a crowded pub. There isn't a girl in the place who doesn't look in his direction. He shyly smiles at one lucky Girl.

IRIS (V.O.)

-- But then of course, love can
also be found. Even if just for
the night.

INT. LONDON NEWSPAPER OFFICE - AFTER HOURS

A Holiday party is in progress. CAMERA WENDS its way through the festive atmosphere.

IRIS (V.O.)

And then there's another kind of
love. The cruelest kind. The one
that almost kills its victims. It's
called, unrequited love. Of that,
I am an expert. Most love stories
are pretty much about people who
fall in love -- with each other.
But what about the rest of us? What
about our stories? Those of us who
fall in love alone. We are the

(MORE)

IRIS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 victims of the one sided affair.
 We are the cursed of the loved
 ones. We are the unloved ones.
 The walking wounded, the
 handicapped without the advantage
 of a great parking space. Yes, you
 are looking at one such individual.
 Yes, there...in the blue sweater.
 That's right. That's me. And I
 have willingly loved that man --
 (and we see HIM across the
 room, drink in hand,
 talking to a small group)
 -- for over three miserable years.
 The absolute worst years of my
 life. The worst Christmases, the
 worst birthdays, New Year's Eves
 brought in by tears and Xanax.
 These years that I have been in
 love have been the darkest days of
 my life...all because I've been
 cursed by being in love with a man
 who does not and will not love me
 back. Oh, God, here he
 comes...heart pounding ...throat
 thickening...absolutely can't
 swallow... all the usual symptoms.

We are looking at IRIS, smartest girl in the room although
 she doesn't know it. Sweet to her core. The unrealized hero
 of her own life.

Iris slips back, deeper into the crowd and finds a friendly
 face, HANNAH. Hannah is smoking and drinking champagne.
 Iris takes Hannah's glass and downs it.

HANNAH

Uh-oh...

Iris peeks around and spots HIM as another group has grabbed
 him. His name is JASPER. He's not conventionally good
 looking but has a confident and sly sexuality which draws
 women to him. He's clearly the biggest star in the room, the
 paper's most important and recognized writer. Everyone
 wants his attention but few can actually get it.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

(noticing)

Oh, Jasper...You're not still?

IRIS

No, no. No. That's over. Very
 over.

(to young passing
 Assistant)

(MORE)

IRIS (CONT'D)

Peter, bring Hannah another champagne and one for me, will you? Please? Thank you.

HANNAH

I thought so.

(on the QT)

What was the story with you two? You were shagging him, weren't you?

IRIS

More importantly, I was in love with him...truth be known.

HANNAH

Oh yes, I remember, then you found out he was shagging that drip from circulation.

IRIS

Yes. I did... which is when I stopped shagging him. I don't think we should be talking about this at the...

GUY

(passing by)

-- Iris.

IRIS

Jeffrey.

GUY

My wife loved your column last week. Read it to me out loud. Very clever. Made her cry.

IRIS

Thank her for me.

HANNAH

But I always see you two together. He cheated on you and you stayed friends?

IRIS

Yes, well, he doesn't see it as cheating. See, I thought we were together, he said we were only "dating".

HANNAH

Does dating mean you're supposed to assume he was shagging other women?

IRIS

I didn't think so. Obviously. I was head over heels...you know...
(embarrassed)
--everyone knew. Does it look like I'm crying right now?

HANNAH

No, it looks like it's from my cigarette. Did he ever tell you he loved you?

IRIS

Yes. Three, almost four times. When I reminded him of that he said it must've been as an answer to a question...which it most certainly was not.

HANNAH

You know, Iris, when you catch a guy shagging another woman, you're not supposed to stay friends with him. You're supposed to never talk to the prick again, you're supposed to throw things at him, scream, call him names...not do his fucking laundry.

IRIS

I do not do his laundry. Did someone tell you I do his laundry? All we do now is...we...we do e-mails. Not when he's with "her" of course. Also when he's not with her, we talk on the phone. Sometimes for hours...

(loves the thought)

And then there's the occasional long lunch...

(then)

It's bloody torture. But he says we'd be crazy to give up our friendship, that I'm one of the most important people in his life.

HANNAH

I never realized how pathetic you are.

IRIS

Really? God, I'm so aware of it.

Their champagne arrives. Iris drinks hers down quickly.

HANNAH

Fucking men. They always get us right where they want us. Who wouldn't want a fantastic girl like you in love with him...hanging on his every word...he knows anytime he wants to crawl back...

IRIS

(confidentially)

-- Actually he has said some small comments like that recently. Hasn't come right out and said it exactly but...

EDITOR NOT IN THE PARTY MODE

(passing by)

Iris, did you file your story?

IRIS

No, I did not, thank you very much.
(checks her watch)
Down to the wire...Sorry.

Iris takes off, then rushes back to Hannah.

IRIS (CONT'D)

Try to keep this between us.

Iris rushes into:

A TINY CUBICLE OF AN OFFICE.

The walls are covered with Black and White PHOTOS of BRIDES AND GROOMS on their WEDDING DAY. Iris writes the UNIONS column, the only good news in the newspaper, which features Couples on their Wedding Day in every Sunday's Style Section. She sits at her computer and brings up a story which just needs a few last words. She looks at a PHOTO of a BEAMING BRIDE AND GROOM in their Fifties, refers to her notes.

IRIS

(as she types)

The groom's best friend spoke for many guests when he said, "Hilary will open Edward's eyes and round out his life".

MAN'S VOICE

What's it like to be the only person committed to their work while the rest of us are slumming?

Iris looks up. It's Jasper, standing in her doorway. A small bit of holly in his lapel, a drink in his hand.

IRIS
 (loving him, has to look away)
 You mean what's it like to be the only person not to finish their work on time. Hold on....
 (types a last line)

JASPER
 Look how fast that big brain of yours works. Probably a brilliant finish.

IRIS
 I assure you it's not.

She hits a button and sends her story to her editor.

JASPER
 (knowing just how to lean in the doorway)
 Hi...

IRIS
 (dying, she adores him so much)
 Hi. Your column today was fantastic. Loved that line...
 (quoting him)
 "*The onrushing stripping of dignity and thought from British lives.*"
 Gave me the chills.

The smile on his face tells us how much he loves hearing this from her.

JASPER
 Got you something for Christmas.

IRIS
 Got you something too.

She opens her drawer and takes out a gift.

JASPER
 Oh, damn, I don't actually have mine here...as a matter of fact, I may have misplaced it *but* I know I bought you something. Hope I didn't lose it. Could be in my car...

IRIS
That's okay.

JASPER
You want to know what it is?

IRIS
No, I can wait. But here, open yours.

Jasper opens Iris' gift and finds a book.

JASPER
(recognizing it)
You stinker...

She melts. He opens the book. Seems to genuinely love it.

JASPER (CONT'D)
First edition. Where'd you find it?
(seems to be really taken with her)
You're so great...

At this moment her world is near perfection. His eyes seem to brim with tears as he looks at her...but maybe she's just imagining it. Through the glass wall of her office, they see their EDITOR IN CHIEF, HUGH BUCKLEY standing on a chair to quiet down the crowd.

JASPER (CONT'D)
Hate that we can never talk.

IRIS
I know...

They exit together into:

THE NEWSROOM

The crowd has gathered. Iris turns and has somehow lost Jasper. She looks for him as she stands alone, in the back, near her office.

HUGH
First of all, to each and every one of you, a very Merry Christmas. We are not officially closed, as you well know but with any luck, we will not go to war, the flu will not spread and the Queen will not abdicate. Given that, we may be able to get by with a smaller than
(MORE)

HUGH (CONT'D)
 normal staff. Now, before some of
 you rush off on holiday I have one
 rather important announcement.
 This effects Iris. Iris, where are
 you?

Iris, surprised, raises her hand and is pushed forward.

HUGH (CONT'D)
 Iris, I have a tip for you.

IRIS
 Excellent.

HUGH
 A wedding was privately announced
 earlier today which I don't believe
 any other paper in town knows about
 and I want you to be the first to
 report on this particular "union"
 as it is between two of our most
 esteemed colleagues. May I
 introduce, the newly engaged --
 Sarah Smith-Alcott and Jasper
 Bloom.

SARAH steps forward. A sincere, make no waves kind of girl.
 A second banana if ever there was one. She lights up as she
 turns to Jasper who joins her, taking her hand.

CAMERA SLOWLY PUSHES IN on Iris, trying desperately not to
 cry in front of everyone she knows. Jasper says a few words
 but Iris doesn't hear them. When he finishes, he catches
 Iris in the crowd. She gives him a small approving nod and
 the bravest possible smile. As their eyes connect, someone
 pats Jasper on the back and his attention is once again gone
 and Iris is once again, left alone.

IRIS - CLOSE

as she escapes through the crowd and INTO HER OFFICE. She
 takes her coat off the back of her door, slips into it then
 sees the wrinkled wrapping paper from her gift. She picks it
 up, crumples it, then notices the book is sitting on an end
 table, forgotten.

IRIS
 (holding back her tears)
 Yeah, that's right...I'm sooo
 great. Greatest idiot that ever
 lived.

INT. TRAIN - MOVING - NIGHT

Iris, holding the book on her lap, sits in an empty train car, a tissue in her hand.

EXT. SURREY - NIGHT

Snow falls as Iris walks the curve of the cobblestoned street of her small village. At one end of the street is a church. At the other, is the village pub which is overflowing with patrons. As Iris passes the pub, someone calls her name but she doesn't answer.

EXT. VILLAGE HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

A picture postcard stone cottage sits nestled in a winter garden. This is one of the smallest houses you've ever seen. Iris walks the narrow footbridge up to her front gate. She opens the gate and a bell rings. A dog can be heard barking inside the house.

INT. IRIS' COTTAGE

Iris ENTERS, turns on the light and is greeted by her dog, CHARLIE.

IRIS

Hey, look who it is...Give me a
kiss...give me a....
(she hugs him)
You're so warm. Okay. Okay. Give
me a sec, Charlie, I gotta take off
my boots. Hold on...

Iris falls into a soft upholstered chair. She pulls off her boots, sits there for a second in her wet coat, wet hair, looks at her dog.

IRIS (CONT'D)

Guess what?

And then she bursts into tears.

INT. LIVING ROOM - BRENTWOOD, CALIFORNIA - MORNING

The Man we saw driving the Porsche (on page 2), wakes up on a couch. Pillow under his head, blanket over him. He is in a great looking room in a great looking, sun filled house. 6,000 square feet in prime Brentwood. The house has the relaxed good taste you get with a smart decorator.

The Man is ETHAN, artistic good looks, almost forty, tousled hair, T-shirt, boxers, vintage Rolex and a large dose of narcissism which he has never discussed with his shrink.

Ethan sits up, runs his hand through his hair, looks around and catches the eye of the uniformed Gardener, blowing Eucalyptus leaves outside a wall of windows.

ETHAN WALKS THROUGH THE HOUSE

calling, "Amanda". He checks out the oversized Kitchen, the Media Room, the Gym, the expansive Home Office. He passes a Christmas Tree with a Jewish star on top, CLIMBS THE CENTER HALL STAIRS.

ETHAN

Amanda?

A HOUSEKEEPER passes him ON HER WAY DOWN the stairs. She gives Ethan a nod toward the bedroom and a look that suggests he's in trouble.

Ethan continues up the stairs and stops outside of the MASTER BEDROOM DOOR. He hesitates, opens it and A SNEAKER FLIES AT HIS HEAD. HE DUCKS.

The thrower of the sneaker is AMANDA WOODS, wearing white pajamas, a bed-head of fabulous hair, a necklace with some sort of diamond pendant and a red Kabbalah string bracelet.

Amanda wouldn't know how to play the victim if she was one. Men don't just fall for this woman, they fall under her spell. Fiercely intelligent, blazing eyes, a big city girl with a small town in her past. At the moment, she's about to explode.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

May I just say *again* that I didn't sleep with her.

AMANDA

(pacing)

Okay. Right. Your receptionist needs to work 'til 3 in the morning?

ETHAN

A bunch of us were working all night...she wanted to hang out.

AMANDA

Okay, then swear on my life that you didn't sleep with her.

(she gets very still and waits)

Go ahead.

Ethan starts to open his mouth, then stops. Another SNEAKER FLIES at him. He ducks it.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

Your receptionist, Ethan??? That fake-boobed, lip-linered, G-string sticking out... She can't even pronounce people's names!

Amanda starts to quickly gather some of Ethan's books and things.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

See. This is why I knew we shouldn't get married. This is why I told you never to give up your house. I knew it. Inside, somehow I knew this.

ETHAN

First of all, I did not sleep with her and secondly, we've had problems for over a year. You don't want to deal with that, I know, but we have... so let's not make this about Amy.

AMANDA

Oh, I'm well aware we've had problems for over a year. If I work a little too much I never stop hearing about it but if you work too much, maestro, it's for the sake of your "music".

ETHAN

If you work too much?! Amanda, you cut 75 trailers this year. You put a cutting room in the house, you sleep with your blackberry. Look at your side of the bed...it's like a work station..... When was the last time we had sex? Want to take a guess?

AMANDA

Oh, come on, no one has time for sex.

ETHAN

That's not true. Okay?

AMANDA

Okay, that's it! You absolutely slept with her! It's official. We're finished! You gotta get your clothes and all your crap and...

(shooing him out)

Can you get out? Seriously, you have to get out.

ETHAN

I thought you wanted me to get my clothes?

She backs him OUT THE DOOR and DOWN THE STAIRS:

AMANDA

You know what I really think Ethan? I don't think you ever really loved me. How's that? I think you loved the idea of you and me...but not so much me...not Me. Not really.

ETHAN

I don't even know what that means except that you're criticizing the way I loved you. I did the best I could. Is anyone good enough for that job?

That hurts. She opens the FRONT DOOR, tosses Ethan his keys then moves him OUT THE DOOR.

AMANDA

I'll send you your things.

Ethan now stands OUTSIDE THE DOOR in his boxer shorts. Amanda faces him standing INSIDE THE HOUSE. The Gardeners try not to listen.

ETHAN

You know you do this, right? You screw up every relationship you've ever been in. It's what you do.

Amanda SLAMS THE DOOR on him. As she RUNS BACK UP THE STAIRS she HEARS:

ETHAN'S VOICE

Something about you doesn't really want to be a couple. Not really. You resist it...in your own way.

ANGLE - ETHAN OUT FRONT OF THE HOUSE

YELLING up to her Bedroom Window.

ETHAN

And it's hard to detect how you even do it 'cause nobody's quite as smart as you, so you're hard to catch at it, but it always surfaces and this is what happens.

Amanda OPENS an Upstairs Window, looks down.

AMANDA

What happens?

ETHAN

(looking up at her)

Things end. Just like you knew they would. Look, you know how I feel about you. There's nobody like you, but you don't want to be what I need.

(corrects himself)

Not, "I" need... you know what I mean...

AMANDA

I would never cheat on you. Not under any conditions.

ETHAN

And neither would I. Okay?! Look at me...I'm sweating like a God damned pig and look at you, you're the only woman on earth who breaks up with her boyfriend and doesn't shed a tear. That means something doesn't it?

AMANDA

So I'm cursed because I don't need you enough and... why does it bug you so much that I can't cry?

ETHAN

I didn't say you don't need me enough although that's probably true too.

Amanda rubs her chest. Ouch.

AMANDA

Ahhhh...Esophogial spasm. Big
one... Ow!

(sees him looking ashen)
I'll be fine.

ETHAN

I know. I was thinking about me.

AMANDA

(through her pain)
Ethan, it's over so we might as
well be honest with each other.
(very vulnerable)
Just tell me. Did you sleep with
her?

(He still doesn't answer)
Just say it. What's the difference
at this point? Why torture me?
Put me out of my misery.
(rubs her chest)
What are we doing, here? Just tell
me. Do what's right for God's
sake.

ETHAN

(beaten)
Okay.
(that got her attention)
Yes. Okay. I slept with her. You
happy? I've been sleeping with
her. She's in love with me. She's
young and...

The Gardener looks over at Ethan, shaking his head. What a
schmuck.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

I-I'm not proud of this...

Amanda nods, disappears into the bedroom.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

Amanda..?

A beat and the FRONT DOOR OPENS and Amanda very calmly
CROSSES TO ETHAN.

AMANDA

Did you say, "Am I happy?"

ETHAN

I didn't mean that. You get me nuts then I say things I don't mean.

AMANDA

You know what cheating is Ethan?

ETHAN

(doesn't want to hear it)
Just.. What? No, what?

AMANDA

It's a coward's way of breaking up. And at it's core, what it is...is unkind. Because it makes everyone involved, including me, feel cheap and crazy. It's a bad way to end things because this is how I'll always think of you. Not as that guy I spent three years with and went to Hawaii with and took cooking lessons with... You will always and forever be the ass-hole that lied and cheated and nothing you ever say or do from this moment on will ever change my mind about you. In the world of love...not that I'm such a genius at it...but in the world of love...cheating is simply not acceptable.

ETHAN

(not dealing with her)
Okay...

AMANDA

And the fact that in this fight, you made this about me and not you makes "ass-hole" the nicest thing I can ever say about you.

ETHAN

No matter what you think and I know you have a very high opinion of yourself -- this isn't all me. And when you're not in such a rage, you'll know it too.

AMANDA

Yeah. Maybe when the rage subsides and I stop having visions of you two TOGETHER... I'll see your side.

Amanda turns, starts to walk away then comes right back, makes a fist and punches Ethan in the face. Twice. He loses his balance and falls on his ass.

INT. HOUSE

Amanda ENTERS out of breath, adrenaline pumping. She jumps up and down out of frustration and lets out a Scream.

BRISTOL, Amanda's PREGNANT ASSISTANT arrives from the kitchen, holding a spiral notebook and a pen and catches the tail end of this.

BRISTOL
Is this a bad time?

AMANDA
No. I'm just flipping out a little.
Fuck! I'm alright. Shit! I'm okay.
What's up?

Fortunately, Amanda is often saved by her unique ability to change subjects with lightning speed.

BRISTOL
Ben needs you.

INT. AMANDA'S GUEST HOUSE

which has been turned into a CUTTING ROOM. Movie one sheets are stacked against the wall. Another wall is filled with videotapes. Sitting at an AVID is BEN, trim, faded John Kerry T-shirt, two day growth of beard. Amanda enters. We can see a beautiful pool and patio umbrellas behind her.

AMANDA
Is it better?

BEN
Yeah, your changes were good. I
just need you to sign off on it so
I can get it over to the studio.
They want it on the air tomorrow.

Amanda nods. Ben hits a button on the Avid and a TV spot for a movie plays. We hear THAT FAMILIAR NARRATOR..... "*This Christmas, Columbia Pictures Presents...*" The movie is a Black Buddy Comedy/Action Film. The images are familiar: Helicopters, Male Stars in Prada suits, Uzis pointed at the lens, Blondes in bikinis, cars careening out of control.

AMANDA
(when it's over)
It finally looks like a hit.

BEN

That's why they pay you the big bucks.

AMANDA

But I still think you cut a little too fast off the guy in the Doo Rag. And try putting the Blonde before the house blowing up, and hang on Will a few frames longer when he says, "Don't hate me 'cause I'm pretty." His smile's great.

(heading out)

And make "Christmas Day" twice as big. And try it in red. But a happy red.

BEN

(taking notes)

Okay.

AMANDA

Okay! We're done!

(impulsively)

Hey. Why don't we take off for a few weeks.

BEN

(laughs)

Yeah.

AMANDA

I'm not kidding. Everyone else in town takes off for Christmas.

BRISTOL

But you always say this is our busiest...

AMANDA

-- I know, but we've got 20 people in the office. They can handle things for a few weeks.

BEN

You'll let them handle things?

AMANDA

(rubs her chest)

I think I gotta get out of town. I need some peace and quiet...or whatever it is people go away for. You know what I really want to do? I want to eat carbs without wanting

(MORE)

AMANDA (CONT'D)

to kill myself. I want to read a book. Not a magazine article...an actual book. I read these reviews, I buy the books but I never read them. Ouch!

(rubs her chest)

Did you read that article in The New York Times last Sunday? Severe stress makes women age prematurely, because the stress causes the DNA in our cells to shrink until they can no longer replicate. So when we're stressed we look haggard. Just women...not men. Remember when they used to say single women over 35 were more likely to be killed by a terrorist than get married? That was... horrible. So now our generation is also not getting married and bonus...real terrorists actually became part of our lives so now the stress of it all shows up in our faces, making us look haggard while Ethan goes on looking cute forever and fucking his 24 year old receptionist.

BRISTOL

I think a vacation sounds like a solid idea.

INT. AMANDA'S HOME OFFICE

Amanda sits at her computer, googling vacation spots.

AMANDA

(typing)

Okay...where do I want to go? By myself...at Christmas... By myself, "depressed" at Christmas. All alone on vacation. Alone, alone...totally alone.

She stops typing. Tries to cry. Quivers her bottom lip, quick breaths...she can't make tears. Stops trying.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

(reading what has shown up on her screen)

Worry free vacations. Good. Where's that?

(reads)

Bora Bora...

(tries out the thought)

"Kayak for one".... Noooo.

(MORE)

AMANDA (CONT'D)

(reads on)

Caribbean?

(thinks about it)

I can't. All couples and kids...
which I do not have.

(continues googling)

Vacation rentals...

(likes this idea)

Yeah. Hole up in a house
somewhere, disappear for a few
weeks...nobody'll know me. Good.

(reads)

*Where do you want to go on your
next vacation? Three clicks is all
it takes to Search, Select and
Contact your perfect vacation home
exchange partner. Click here and
pick a country.*

She CLICKS and a FULL PAGE OF COUNTRY NAMES show up.
Everything from Albania to Zanzibar.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

(reads)

Where do they speak English?

She moves the mouse to ENGLAND and CLICKS. A FULL PAGE OF
NAMES OF TOWNS AND CITIES in England shows up.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

(reads)

Click on a city.

She randomly picks Cotswold. CLICK.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

(reads)

*Barn converted to modern house in
beautiful Cotswold... I like the
sound of that..."Cotswold".*

A PHOTO of the HOUSE in Cotswold shows up. It couldn't look
more ordinary.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

-- Which looks exactly like the
Valley.

(CLICKS on ANOTHER TOWN)

*Isolated country house with distant
views. I could do isolated.*

A PHOTO of the HOUSE appears. Big, gothic, on a hill.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

Oy, The Shining...

(she quickly CLICKS ON
ANOTHER TOWN, reads)

*Christmas in the country. A fairy
tale English cottage set in a
tranquil country garden. Snuggle
up by the old brick fireplace and
enjoy a glowing fire and a cup of
cocoa...*

(just the description is
soothing)

*An enchanting oasis of tranquility
in a quiet English hamlet just
forty minutes from exciting London.*

Amanda CLICKS and a PHOTO of IRIS' COTTAGE SHOWS UP. She smiles as we HEAR the sound of a TEA KETTLE GOING OFF:

CUT TO:

INT. IRIS' COTTAGE - SAME TIME

It's eight hours later in England and Iris is making a cup of tea before bed. She looks wiped out. It's been a hard night. A light snow falls outside the windows. She hears her COMPUTER PING. She sits at the kitchen table and looks at her laptop. It's a HOME EXCHANGE INSTANT MESSAGE. It says:

I'M INTERESTED IN RENTING YOUR HOUSE. IS IT STILL AVAILABLE?

IRIS

Renting my house?

IRIS types back: *Sorry, it's only available for home exchange.*

INT. AMANDA'S HOME OFFICE - SAME TIME

AMANDA

(to herself)

Home exchange??

(READS NEW MESSAGE FROM
IRIS)

*We switch houses, cars, everything.
I haven't done it before but
friends of mine have. Supposed to
be great. Where are you?*

IRIS

(staring at her computer)

Please say America.

AMANDA types: L.A.

IRIS (CONT'D)

Jackpot!

Wiping her tears, IRIS types: *I've never been there but always wanted to go. I'm Iris, by the way. I'm very normal. Neat freak. Healthy. Non smoker. Single.*

IRIS (CONT'D)

(to herself)

-- Hate my horrible life.

AMANDA types: *I'm Amanda.*

AMANDA

(to herself)

Loser, loner, complicated wreck.

IRIS types: *Hi.*

AMANDA answers: *Hi.*

AMANDA thinks about this, then writes: *Must say, your house looks idyllic. Just what I need.*

IRIS types: *Thank you. What does your place look like? I don't need much...just love the idea of being 6000 miles from here.*

AMANDA answers quickly: *I totally get that. My place is nice -- little bigger than yours.*

IRIS: *Not hard to be.*

AMANDA laughs, types: *I have Three Bedrooms, Four Baths, Kitchen, Family Room, Media Room...*

IRIS

(reading all this)

Is she kidding?

AMANDA keeps going: *Home office, Gym, Pool and Guest House.*

Assuming this will never work, IRIS types: *I have a kitchen, bedroom, bathroom, living room. That's it.*

IRIS (CONT'D)

(to herself)

Nice knowing you.

AMANDA writes: *Sounds perfect.*

Both Women sit and look at their computers.

IRIS types: *And I have a dog.*

AMANDA answers: *That's cool.*

Iris smiles.

AMANDA: *Can I ask you one thing?*

IRIS: *Sure.*

AMANDA: *Are there any men in your town?*

IRIS: *Honestly?*

AMANDA: *Yes.*

IRIS: *Zero.*

AMANDA: *When can I come?*

IRIS hesitates, then types: *Tomorrow too soon???*

AMANDA, going on impulse: *Tomorrow's perfect actually.*

IRIS quickly types: *Okay, forms to fill out, etc., but we're on for two weeks, starting tomorrow.*

Both Women SIT AND STARE at their computers. A little nervous.

AMANDA: *Can I call you to talk in person?*

IRIS relaxes: *Love if you would.*

And as quickly as Iris types in her phone number and SENDS, the PHONE RINGS. Iris picks it up.

IRIS (CONT'D)

Hello!

INT. BRITISH AIR - COACH - DAY

The plane is boarding and through the Crowd of Passengers, we see Iris making her way through the Coach Section to her seat. Naturally, it's in the middle of three seats and the seats on either side of her are empty. She settles into the center seat, looks up and sees a great looking Italian Guy looking at the seat right next to her. She can't believe her luck. He smiles at her. She smiles back. He's then joined by his Beautiful Skinny Girlfriend who points him to the next row.

Then, two very pleasing looking Women in their Fifties stop at Iris' row and squeeze into the empty seats knocking her

around a bit. Iris' Blackberry BEEPS. She checks it. It's from JASPER. It says:

HEARD YOU HAVE LEFT FOR HOLIDAY IN LOTUS LAND. FIRST VACATION IN FOUR YEARS IS TURNING POINT. I SALUTE YOU. HOW DO I REACH YOU? JASPER.

Iris closes her eyes, trying to will willpower. Her eyes go to the line: *How do I reach you?* Her eyes well up as she writes back:

Dear Jasper, (she deletes the "Dear") Jasper, We both know I need to fall out of love with you. Would be great if you would let me try. xx. (Deletes the xx). Iris.

The Woman next to Iris has been reading over her shoulder and pats Iris' arm.

ANOTHER BRITISH AIR FLIGHT - FIRST CLASS - NIGHT - IN FLIGHT
CLOSE ON A STACK OF BOOKS

The size you would take with you if you were going away for a year. The stack sits next to Amanda who wears the British Air Eye Shades, sweats, noisy bangle bracelets. Harper's Bazaar lies open on her lap.

With her eyes covered, she takes a Pepsid AC, throws it down with some water, rubs her chest and closes the window shade. She pulls up the comforter, adjusts her pillow. A beat and she lifts her eye shades to her forehead, stares straight up at the plane's ceiling and we HEAR:

THAT FAMILIAR MOVIE TRAILER GUY'S
VOICE

Amanda Woods is proud to present --
"Her Life". She had it all. The
job, the house, the guy. This
holiday season find out what Amanda
doesn't have.

As if to shut the Guy out, Amanda snaps her eye shades back over her eyes.

A BRITISH PASSPORT

is STAMPED by a U.S. Customs Officer. He hands it back to an excited IRIS.

IRIS
Wish me luck!

The Customs Guy says nothing. Iris moves on. A beat and she returns.

IRIS (CONT'D)

I'm a little superstitious. Could you wish me luck?

CUSTOMS OFFICER

Good luck.

ANOTHER STAMP

hits AMANDA'S PASSPORT. A British Customs Officer passes the passport back to Amanda. She yawns, wearing sunglasses.

HELICOPTER SHOT - FREEWAYS INTERSECTING - DAY

A SAN DIEGO FREEWAY SIGN - "SUNSET BOULEVARD" - DAY

IRIS, in the backseat of a TAXI, looks out the open window like a kid, her hair blowing.

EXT. SURREY, ENGLAND - LATE DAY

A Mercedes drives through the picturesque village which is now covered in snow.

INT. MERCEDES - MOVING

The DRIVER slows to a stop and turns to the backseat. AMANDA is asleep wearing the British Air eye shades.

DRIVER

Miss? Miss?

Amanda jumps, lifting her eyes shades.

DRIVER (CONT'D)

We're here.

Amanda lowers the window letting in the cold air. She looks out at a snow covered stone wall.

AMANDA

(disoriented)

This can't be it.

DRIVER

(pointing the other way)

It's just down that lane, but I'll never be able to turn at the other end. Think you can make it from here?

Amanda squints trying to see how long the lane is.

AMANDA

No.

EXT. SNOW COVERED LANE

The Mercedes pulls away and leaves Amanda in heels, jeans, shearling coat, a long red scarf, a Balenciaga bag, a carry on, and a huge black Tumi suitcase. She tosses her scarf over her shoulder, pops the handle on her suitcase and begins dragging it behind her, down the snow covered lane. Whoops. She skids, almost falls, regains her balance. A clump of snow falls from a tree branch, hitting her smack on the head.

AMANDA

Thank you.

CLOSE - AMANDA'S SNOW COVERED MANOLOS

coming to a stop. Tilt up to Amanda, out of breath, arriving at Iris' little gate. She wipes snow from the stone wall and reveals the house number. She looks ahead and sees the TINY COTTAGE, nestled under snow covered branches.

AMANDA

(to the house)

I'm here...

Amanda opens the gate, the bell on it rings a frozen little ring and she drags her things up to the front door, lifts a flower pot and finds a key.

She inserts the key and is greeted by Iris' dog, Charlie. She pets him as she turns on the lights, looks around the cottage, sees it's small, charming Bedroom with pitched ceilings, tiny Bathroom, cramped Kitchen, cozy little Living Room. Amanda stands between her bags, able to see the full place as she does a 360.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

What am I doing here?

EXT. BRENTWOOD STREET - SAME TIME

The Taxi pulls away revealing Iris OUT FRONT OF AMANDA'S GATE, holding her one smallish suitcase. She's overdressed for a warm winter day in L.A. She stands beneath an orange tree, the sun shining brightly on her as she looks through the gate at Amanda's spread.

IRIS

Holy shit.

She presses a button on the CALL BOX.

BRISTOL'S VOICE

Iris?

IRIS

(getting too close to the
box)

Yes. I'm here. Hello.

BRISTOL'S VOICE

Hey... Come on in.

Iris tries pushing on the gate when suddenly it automatically swings open.

IRIS

(leans back to the box)

Sorry.

A wind greets her as she carries her suitcase up the gravel driveway. Pregnant Bristol EXITS THE FRONT DOOR holding a binder.

BRISTOL

Hi, I'm Bristol, I'm Amanda's assistant. I'm really sorry to do this but your plane was late and I have a doctor's appointment, so I've got to take off.

IRIS

Oh, no problem.

BRISTOL

Thanks. I made you this binder, it explains how everything in the house works. The alarm, the password, the gate code...I gave you all the speed dial numbers for police, fire, gardeners, pool man, housekeeper, me. Directions for the phones, the sound system, the TVs, DVD players and TiVos. The equipment in the gym is pretty self explanatory. The exterior lights go on automatically and so do the sprinklers so you don't have to worry about that. Here's clickers for the gate and the garage and keys to the front door, the side door, the mail box and the Prius.

(sees Iris' expression)

Don't worry. It's only a house. It's easier than it looks.

INT. HOUSE

Iris ENTERS, takes it all in...the beautiful decor, the large generous rooms. Her mind is blown.

She places her things by the door and immediately checks out the house. We follow her as she DARTS IN and OUT of rooms SCREAMING FOR JOY. She runs UP THE STAIRS, ENTERS THE LUXURIOUSLY LARGE BEDROOM, checks out the OVERSIZED BATHROOM and SHRIEKS. She opens a door into a DREAM CLOSET. It's insanely BIG. She sees her small English self in the large closet mirror.

IRIS

(to her mirror image)

This is the most brilliant thing
that ever happened to you.

INT. IRIS' COTTAGE - ENGLAND - THE SAME TIME

Amanda is finishing unpacking, trying to squeeze one more thing into Iris' teeny tiny little closet. She gets it in and slams the door closed. Now... what to do with her empty suitcase. She rolls it under the bed.

AMANDA

Okay. Now what?

AMANDA EXITS THE BACK OF THE HOUSE

pulling her coat around her to keep warm. It's getting dark She spots a garden bench, dusts off the snow. Sits on it. The quiet is astounding.

AMANDA

I have not screwed up every
relationship I've been in!

She tries to CRY again. Really gives it her all. Nothing comes. She tries again...waits. Nothing.

TRAILER GUY'S VOICE

Amanda was lost but she knew, in
the game of life...

She bolts off of the bench and out of FRAME.

CUT TO:

THE ROAD - AS SEEN THROUGH A MINI COOPER'S WINDSHIELD

Things are flying by fast and the trees on the side of the road are way too close. A PUNK BAND blares from the Radio.

AMANDA

is driving Iris' electric Blue Mini and has obviously never driven on the left side of the road before. She pulls into:

THE TOWN

Whoa...hard to make the turn from the left. A few shoppers browse past local shops and watch as the Mini fish tails into the street. Small children run to their parents. Amanda parks, gets out of the car, grabs her chest to catch her breath.

AMANDA

(to kids)

Sorry.

(then)

Okay, that was hell.

She looks around...sees the Pub, the Post Office, the Book Shop, the Butcher and the Market. As she heads toward the market, she looks left and a car from the right almost hits her. HONK!!! She leaps out of its way.

INT. MARKET

Small, very English. Bad Christmas music plays in the b.g. Amanda pushes a small cart and drinks from a bottle of wine. She loads up her cart with fresh baguettes, pastries, smoked salmon, local cheeses, Christmas puddings.

CHECK OUT STAND

As a chubby Female Clerk rings up Amanda's goodies.

CLERK

Someone's having a party tonight.

AMANDA

Oh, yeah.

Amanda takes a swig out of the wine bottle.

INT. IRIS' COTTAGE - NIGHT

Amanda sits on Iris' bed, in pajamas and a big sweater and her scarf, eating Christmas pudding and watching The Office on a 15" TV. She pops a Pepsid AC in her mouth and washes it down with wine. The Office cuts to commercial and Amanda's TV spot comes on. "*This Christmas, Columbia Pictures is proud to present...*" Amanda watches, mouthing the words. Then at the end -- twice as big and in red letters -- Christmas Day.

AMANDA

And that's why I make the big bucks.

LATER

Amanda makes a fire in the LIVING ROOM FIREPLACE. It's not so easy without the little gas knob. A LITTLE LATER, she puts on a Supremes CD and sings along. "You can't hurry love, no, you just got to wait." LATER, holding a glass of wine, she looks at Iris' books, reading their titles...there's so many of them. LATER STILL, with an open book on her lap, Amanda sits on the couch, looking at Charlie, the dog. They seem to be having a staring contest.

CUT TO:

AMANDA'S SUITCASE

being tossed on the bed. Amanda throws in her clothes.

CUT TO:

A HOCKNEY POOL SPLASH

Iris swims laps in AMANDA'S POOL as the sun sets on a balmy breezy winter day in Los Angeles.

INT. MEDIA ROOM - A LITTLE LATER

Iris, barefoot, in jeans, blouse, damp hair, scans Amanda's WALL OF DVDs...there's so many of them. Then, she looks at a BASKET FULL OF CLICKERS...there's so many of them. She gets intimidated and reaches for the binder Bristol gave her. The Phone RINGS.

IRIS

(into phone)

Hello?

(notices "GATE" is LIT UP
on phone)

Gate? Oh, no. Disaster.

Iris looks at the multi-lined phone, then thumbs frantically through the binder.

AN AUDI CONVERTIBLE - WAITS OUTSIDE THE GATE

Miles (from page 1) is behind the wheel. His Girlfriend, Maggie sits next to him, talking on her cell. Miles is listening to a movie score on CD.

MAGGIE
 (into phone)
 No, Miles is dropping me at yoga.
 Shut Uppp. Who was he with?

Maggie turns down the Volume on the CD.

MILES
 Maggie! This is the best part.

Maggie holds up her finger as in "one sec". Miles PUSHES the CALL BUTTON again.

IRIS' VOICE
 (from the speaker box)
 -- I'm sorry. Hello. I'm here.
 Can you hear me?

MILES
 It's Miles. Amanda?

IRIS'S VOICE
 No. Sorry. Amanda's not here.
 (BEEP)
 -- Oh, FU!!
 (BUZZ)

Miles and Maggie both look at the Speaker Box as the gate OPENS.

IRIS' VOICE
 If you heard that, I'm terribly
 sorry.

Miles pulls into the driveway, GETS OUT of the convertible. Maggie stays in the car, still on the phone. Iris opens the door, sees Miles.

IRIS
 Hello...

The afternoon breeze blows her hair as MOVIE MUSIC drifts out of the car. It's nostalgic and romantic and colors the scene.

MILES
 Hi. Sorry to bother you...

The wind blows even stronger, rustling Iris' blouse.

MILES (CONT'D)
 (looking at the trees
 blowing)
 Santa Anas.

IRIS

Pardon?

MILES

The wind...it's what makes it so warm this time of year. Legend has it, when the Santa Anas blow, anything can happen.

IRIS

Good day to arrive then.

MILES

You just got here?

IRIS

First time in L.A.

MILES

Really? Well, people bad mouth this place all the time but give it a chance. L.A. is highly misunderstood. There's a lot of magic around here. Plus, there aren't many places where the nights smell like jasmine and the days smell like orange blossoms.

(the wind blows again)

I'm Miles, I work for Ethan.

IRIS

Amanda's ex-boyfriend?

MILES

Yeah. Too bad about that, huh..? Do you know what time Amanda will be back?

IRIS

Amanda's in England...on holiday. I'm staying here for a few weeks while she's gone.

MILES

Oh, that's a little funky 'cause Ethan left some things here and asked me to pick them up. Is that still cool, or...?

IRIS

You're his...?

MILES

Well, I'm a composer, like Ethan
but I help him out with whatever...

IRIS

(referring to the music
coming out of the car)
Did you compose this?

MILES

No, this is the great Ennio
Morricone, it's the score from
Cinema Paradiso.

IRIS

Oh. I loved that movie. I forgot
how beautiful the music was.

They both listen appreciatively when the horn HONKS. Miles
turns. Maggie is clearly ready to go.

IRIS (CONT'D)

Would it be all right if you came
around tomorrow and I'll check all
this out with Amanda's assistant?

MILES

Sure. No problem. Thanks.

IRIS

(extends her hand)
I'm Iris.

MILES

Miles.

IRIS

Right.

The Santa Anas breeze past them again. As Miles gets back in
the car and pulls out the Exit Gate, Iris notices the orange
trees in the yard. As the wind drifts, she smells their
blossoms.

Arthur, (the Older Man introduced on page 2) slowly walks by
the open gate on a walker. Supporting his arm is his frumpy
looking Black Nurse.

IRIS (CONT'D)

'Evening...

Arthur does not look in her direction. Iris notices them
heading for the house next door then spots a SMALL PACKAGE

sitting outside the gate. Iris quickly rushes to it, grabbing it just before the gate closes.

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Iris opens THE PACKAGE, a vinyl cooler bag, and inside, finds a small calorie conscious ZONE MEAL.

IRIS

Why would anyone with this kitchen
have a meal delivered?

Iris opens the Kitchen Cupboards. Nothing but low carb foods, almonds, Pepcid AC, Mylanta. She opens the refrigerator. Soy milk, one egg, 50 bottles of water, two bottles of Pinot Grigio. Iris turns back and looks at the Zone Meal.

WIDE SHOT - THE KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

This gorgeous, Viking-Ranged, Sub-Zeroed, every Williams-Sonoma gadget-ever-made-kitchen has nothing in it to actually eat so Iris SITS ON A STOOL at the HUGE ISLAND and dines on Amanda's tiny ZONE MEAL and a glass of wine.

INT. AMANDA'S BEDROOM - LATER

We are CLOSE ON IRIS' LAPTOP SCREEN. We HEAR: "You've got Mail!" with an English accent.

IRIS' E-MAILS

are displayed. Her eyes scan them and stop when she finds what she wants. An e-mail from: JASPER_BLOOM@TIMES.CO.UK. With her heart beating in great anticipation, she opens him up.

JASPER'S E-MAIL

*Know we must talk. Maybe it is
good you are on holiday. Give us
each a chance to deal with current
agendas. Trying hard to be clear
to myself these days. Know this...
I think of you and smile so deeply
that it can no longer be called a
smile. Maybe scientists will
discover new word to describe.
Sleep well. Jas*

Her heart races. Her legs melt. How does he do it? Six thousand miles away and she's still in the palm of his hand. She braces herself and closes the computer.

INT. BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Iris climbs into Amanda's king size bed, looks at the clock.
It's SIX P.M.

IRIS
(counts quickly)
Seven, eight, nine ten, eleven,
twelve, one... Two a.m. in London.

She yawns, notices a BUTTON by the bed, pushes it and is surprised when BLACK OUT BLINDS SIMULTANEOUSLY LOWER all around the room, delivering the room into total darkness. As the Screen turns BLACK, we HEAR:

IRIS (CONT'D)
He doesn't love you. Forget him.
Forget him.

ANOTHER CLOCK

tells us it's TWO A.M. CAMERA PANS to Amanda, lying WIDE AWAKE in Iris's small double bed. She's not even a little tired. Suddenly, a LOUD KNOCKING on the FRONT DOOR. Amanda quickly rises, runs into the LIVING ROOM. Charlie barks.

AMANDA
(cautiously)
Who is it?

MAN'S VOICE
It's me. Open up, it's freezing.

AMANDA
Who are you?

MAN'S VOICE
Iris...It's Graham. Open the
fucking door before I take a
fucking leak in your fucking flower
pot.

Amanda quickly OPENS the door and we find the rakishly handsome GRAHAM (from page 2). All twinkly eyes and ruffled hair. He's some exotic and pleasing concoction of helplessness and cockiness. Just at the sight of him, Amanda is for the first time in her life, speechless -- which means this man has already changed her.

GRAHAM
(clearly drunk)
You're not Iris.

AMANDA

No, I'm not.

GRAHAM

Oh...then, sorry for my profanity,
I wasn't expecting...you.

AMANDA

I-I wasn't expecting you either.

GRAHAM

Nevertheless...May I just....

AMANDA

Oh, yes, you have to um....

GRAHAM

(ENTERING)

Yes, I do...

(passing her, shakes her
hand)

I'm Graham. Iris' brother.

AMANDA

Amanda Woods. I'm... staying here.

GRAHAM

Amandawoods...Is that all one word?

AMANDA

(watching him disappear
into the bathroom)

No. No it's not.

The Bathroom Door shuts. Amanda catches herself in the mirror. She tries to fix her hair a little when Graham re-enters. God, he's even cuter the second time you see him.

GRAHAM

(looking around)

So Iris is... Where is she?

AMANDA

She didn't tell you?

GRAHAM

Not that I remember.

AMANDA

She's in L.A..

GRAHAM

That's not possible. Iris never
leaves town.

AMANDA

(laughs)

Neither do I. She listed this cottage on a Home Exchange Website. I found it and we switched houses...for two weeks. For vacation. She's in my house in L.A. and I'm here.

GRAHAM

No.... People actually do that?

AMANDA

Apparently. Seems here I am... in my pajamas.

GRAHAM

She did call me a few times this morning but I didn't get a chance to get back to her. Feel awful now.

(a bit woozy)

Do you mind if I sit, I feel I'm going to bump in to you.

AMANDA

-- No, no. Sure...sit...

(Graham sits on the sofa)

You okay?

GRAHAM

Oh, yes, fine. Really sorry about the intrusion. Obviously, I had no idea about this exchange thing and although I may not appear it, I am actually Iris' very respectable big brother, however, on the rare, or not so rare occasion that I come into town and get inordinately pissed, my sweet sister, puts me up so I don't get behind the wheel. Pathetic explanation but, unfortunately it's become a bit of a routine...

(to dog)

Hello Charles.

Charlie nuzzles Graham's leg.

GRAHAM (CONT'D)

So how's it going so far...this exchange thing... I mean, up until I showed up and ruined your night.

AMANDA

Actually it's not going so great.
I'm leaving tomorrow. On a noon
plane.

GRAHAM

Oh. When did you get here?

AMANDA

Uh, three o'clock. Today.

GRAHAM

Ahhh. We made a great impression
on you, have we?

AMANDA

It's not that...no, it's just that
I'm not quite myself right now and
I came here on a stupid whim.
Honestly, I never thought about
anything less, very unlike me...and
the thing is, I don't know what I'm
doing here... so I thought I should
go home...where I at least know how
to drive a car. Would you like
something to drink? Glass of
water? Tea? Wine maybe?

GRAHAM

Wine would be good. Will you have
a glass?

AMANDA

-- Uh...sure.

Amanda crosses to the Kitchen, brings over an open bottle and
two glasses.

GRAHAM

Thank you. I'm really sorry but I
forgot your name?

AMANDA

Amanda.

GRAHAM

Yes. Amanda Woods. Very good name.
It looks like you.

He makes a fist, indicating she appears strong. She sits next
to him.

AMANDA

You think I'm...
 (she imitates his fist)
 Really?

GRAHAM

Well, I imagine everybody does,
 don't they?

AMANDA

Yes, but they don't usually spot it
 this fast. Anyway, I don't feel
 so.....
 (makes the fist)
 Whatever. Like it matters.

GRAHAM

Are you married?

AMANDA

Married? No, no... No. I'm not.
 No.... No.

GRAHAM

That makes two of us.

She's not quite sure where this is headed.

GRAHAM (CONT'D)

So, is it horrible if I stay? I'll
 be gone before you even wake up. I
 promise you will never lay eyes on
 me again.

AMANDA

No, sure, it's fine. Let me just
 get you a blanket.

GRAHAM

It's in the cupboard there...on top
 of the scrabble.

Amanda takes out the blanket and an extra pillow and hands
 them to Graham.

GRAHAM (CONT'D)

So why is it that you aren't quite
 yourself? I'm sort of curious.

AMANDA

Oh, why..?
 (sitting again)
 Because I...I just broke up with
 someone...yesterday and I guess
 (MORE)

AMANDA (CONT'D)

what I was feeling was that I didn't want to be alone over the holidays and I thought if I was somewhere else, maybe I wouldn't realize I was alone but then I got here and I've never felt more alone in my life. Big surprise.

(embarrassed)

Bet you're glad you knocked on this door?

GRAHAM

I am actually.

AMANDA

Yeah. Well. Sorry and good night.

Graham leans over and kisses her. Almost routinely.

GRAHAM

Sweet dreams.

She digests this, then:

AMANDA

Do you think you could... Would you mind... trying that again?

He kisses her again.

GRAHAM

Bad?

AMANDA

Weird. I mean, kissing a total stranger.

GRAHAM

Really? I do it all the time.

She leans in, kisses him. Something's not working.

AMANDA

Maybe if I shut my eyes.

She shuts her eyes and Graham kisses her closed eye lids then kisses her on the mouth. Amanda's eyes open.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

You know, um...given that I'm in a bit of a personal crisis and find myself in a total stranger's home in a town I can't actually remember the name of and considering you showed up and you're insanely good

(MORE)

AMANDA (CONT'D)
looking and really drunk and
probably won't remember me anyway,
I'm thinking.... we should have
sex. If you want.

He looks at her hard.

GRAHAM
That's a fantastic proposition.

AMANDA
Yeah...but I'm serious.

GRAHAM
So am I.

AMANDA
And not that it matters, but I've
never said anything like that in my
life. I've had nearly a bottle of
wine myself and it's just ... the
whole knowing I'll never see you
again thing is sort of exciting.
This is what a vacation is supposed
to be, right? You're supposed to
vacate your life. Do the
unexpected.

GRAHAM
You know this all sounded really
wonderful until I became the cabana
boy.

AMANDA
And you're funny. Which is a real
bonus.

GRAHAM
Yes, well, never meet me when I'm
sober.

AMANDA
Deal.

He pauses, thinks about that, then kisses her.

AMANDA (CONT'D)
Also I should warn you...I'm not
very good at this.

GRAHAM
"This" being?

AMANDA
Um. Sex.

GRAHAM

Oh that can't be true.

AMANDA

I know. I look like I'm hot
but...I'm apparently not. It's
what I've been told.

GRAHAM

That's harsh.

AMANDA

I agree. Nevertheless, the guy I
was living with, mentioned it once
or twice. A girl doesn't forget a
comment like that. Not even me.
But I mean, how bad could I
be...sex is pretty basic. Am I
pretty much talking you out of it?

GRAHAM

Strangely, not at all. How do you
feel about foreplay?

AMANDA

I think it's overrated.
Significantly...overrated.

GRAHAM

You are quickly becoming one of the
most interesting girls I've ever
met.

Amanda rises, grabs the wine bottle and walks to the stereo,
turns it on, then walks backwards, facing Graham, leading him
into the bedroom. Graham follows her, unbuttoning his shirt
as he goes.

GRAHAM (CONT'D)

Look at you, you're already better
than you think.

EXT. COTTAGE - MORNING

Smoke drifts from the fireplace.

INT. KITCHEN

Amanda, now in a robe, is trying to figure out the coffee
maker when Graham tentatively ENTERS FROM THE BEDROOM, fully
dressed.

GRAHAM

Good morning.

AMANDA
(shyly)
Good morning.

She continues futzing with the coffee maker.

GRAHAM
Can I help you with that?

AMANDA
I should know how to do this...

Graham plugs it in.

AMANDA (CONT'D)
Ah, you have to plug them in over
here...

Graham laughs. They're quite close to each other which makes them both a little uncomfortable. Graham opens a cupboard, takes out a bottle of Tylenol. Takes two.

GRAHAM
Care for one?

AMANDA
I already had four.

GRAHAM
So...Amanda...I just want to...

AMANDA
Yeah, listen... You don't have to
worry about a thing here. Okay?

GRAHAM
(unsettled)
Okay...

AMANDA
I mean it was great meeting you and
everything.

GRAHAM
(seriously)
Definitely.
(then)
And, just for the record, your ex-
boyfriend is, in my opinion, quite
mistaken about you.

AMANDA
Yeah, well, you were drunk.

GRAHAM
Not *that* drunk.

Graham's cell phone RINGS. It's on the table, near Amanda.
She picks it up. Sees it says, SOPHIE is calling.

AMANDA
(hands it to him)
Sophie...

GRAHAM
(embarrassed, turns it
off)
I'll call her back...

Amanda nods, opens the cupboards looking for the coffee cups
Graham opens the correct cupboard, hands one to her.

AMANDA
You don't want one?

GRAHAM
I should really be going.

AMANDA
Sure.

GRAHAM
-- Listen, I know you don't want to
get involved...and you're leaving
today and just so you know, I have
rather enormous issues of my own
and even if you were staying, I can
promise you, you wouldn't for one
minute like...

AMANDA
(stopping him)
-- You don't have to do this. I'm
damaged in this area myself. And
anyway, I mean...honesty, we hardly
know each other.

GRAHAM
Well, I wouldn't exactly say that.
Anyway, I just wanted to assure
you, you're better off.

AMANDA
Okay.

GRAHAM
No need to go on. Right. Well, I
just wanted to be sure you are okay
(MORE)

GRAHAM (CONT'D)

because I'm somewhat emotionally dysfunctional at this point in my life and it seems I tend to hurt women simply by being myself.

AMANDA

I'm not going to fall in love with you. I promise.

GRAHAM

Okay. Nicely put. Thank you.

AMANDA

I mean, I know myself. I'm not sure I even fall in love. Not like the way other people do. How's that for something to admit?

GRAHAM

Well, like I said, Most Interesting Girl Award.

AMANDA

I'm going to try to see that as a compliment.

GRAHAM

You should.

(putting on his coat and scarf)

Okay, so, this is refreshing. Utter honesty. Alright then, so you probably won't be hearing from me because even if you wanted to, which you clearly don't...I have the classic male problem of no follow through. Absolutely never remember to call after a date.... But... as this wasn't a date, I guess I'm off the hook.

AMANDA

Exactly.

GRAHAM

(takes a sec...)

But what if I wanted to call you?

Amanda doesn't know what to say.

GRAHAM (CONT'D)

Right. Well, if your flight is cancelled or you change your mind...I'm meeting some friends in

(MORE)

GRAHAM (CONT'D)
 the pub in town tonight...and if
 not...then....Well...You're lovely.

She crosses to him.

AMANDA
 So are you.

They hug.

INT. HEATHROW AIRPORT - LATER

Canned Christmas music plays as Camera finds Amanda at the
 HEAD OF A LONG LINE OF PASSENGERS.

She stands across the table from a Uniformed Guard in latex
 gloves routinely feeling around the edges of her open
 suitcase. She watches as he starts to unzip her make up bag.
 She CLOSES HER EYES and HEARS and SEES the trailer version of
 her life continuing.

QUICK CUT - AMANDA WALKING THE SNOWY LANE WITH HER SUITCASE

TRAILER GUY'S VOICE
 She wasn't looking for love.

QUICK CUT - AMANDA OPENING THE DOOR AND SEEING GRAHAM.

TRAILER GUY'S VOICE (CONT'D)
 But that doesn't mean it didn't
 find her.

QUICK CUT - AMANDA & GRAHAM KISSING AGAINST THE BEDROOM WALL

BACK TO REALITY

Amanda realizes her suitcase has passed inspection. She
 moves along in line.

CUT TO:

A BLACK SCREEN

We hear fumbling then the BUZZ of the BLINDS BEING RAISED.
 We're in AMANDA'S BEDROOM IN BRENTWOOD. Iris just woke up.
 As her eyes adjust, she sees her fantastic surroundings and a
 huge smile crosses her face. She remembers she's happy. She
 hits a button on the Bose CD player on the night table and
 Aerosmith blasts through the room. She begins to dance
 around while still lying under the covers. Her cell phone
 RINGS. She lowers the Music.

IRIS
 (cheerfully into phone)
 Hello.

JASPER'S VOICE
Where am I finding you?

IRIS
(stunned, sobered)
Jasper?

JASPER'S VOICE
Is it okay that I'm calling you?

IRIS
I guess... How are you?

JASPER'S VOICE
Could we start with a less
complicated question?

IRIS
(laughs but cautious)
What's wrong?

JASPER'S VOICE
How long are you going to be there?

IRIS
Two weeks. Why?

JASPER'S VOICE
I guess I can wait, but I'm having
some real problems with this
section of my book. I could use
some Iris.
(Iris starts to deflate)
Would it be awful to send you some
pages? Just tell me if it is.
I don't want to mess you up but I
know you're the only one who can
help me.

IRIS
Well, I mean, if you need me...

Iris hits the BLACK OUT BUTTON again and the BLINDS start to LOWER. As she SLOWLY GOES INTO DARKNESS, their conversation continues.

JASPER'S VOICE
You know you're my little survival
kit.
(Iris SIGHS)
Now, honey, I want you to promise
me you'll have fun today, okay?

IRIS
 (from TOTAL DARKNESS)
 Okay. I'll do my best.

INT. SURREY PUB - ENGLAND - NIGHT

The pub is smoky, noisy and packed too tight. Graham ENTERS, his face red from the cold, scarf around his neck. His eyes scan the place for Amanda. She's not there. He hides his disappointment, then brightens when he finds his friends, a COUPLE his age, at a table in the back. He joins his friends and orders a drink. His friend says something to make him laugh, which he does wistfully. As he takes off his scarf, he looks up and sees Amanda through the crowd, sitting at the bar, watching him. He breaks into a smile.

CUT TO:

POV OF BRENTWOOD STREET - MOVING - LATE DAY

From the windshield of Amanda's Prius.

GPS VOICE
 Turn left in 50 feet.

IRIS
 (imitating the voice)
 Thank you very much...

IRIS drives, eating potato chips. She turns a corner and passes her elderly neighbor, Arthur, walking alone. He seems lost. Iris drives past him slowly, looks at him in her rear view mirror then backs up, gets out, approaches him. She speaks to him as if he's not only old but deaf.

IRIS (CONT'D)
 Excuse me, but... may I offer you a lift home?

ARTHUR
 (matter of fact)
 Why? You know where I live?

IRIS
 I believe I do. Yes.

ARTHUR
 Good, then that makes one of us.

Surprised by his sharpness, Iris opens the passenger door, places Arthur's walker in the backseat then helps Arthur in to the front seat. Iris runs back to the driver's side, jumps in, starts driving. Arthur removes something from his seat.

IRIS

(taking it)

Oh, sorry. Movie Star map. I was sightseeing all day. Did you know Antonio Banderas, Goldie Hawn, Dustin Hoffman and Arnold Schwarzenegger all live within a mile of here?

ARTHUR

No, I did not.

IRIS

I don't know if it's true, but it's what the map said. I'm staying at the house right next door to you.

ARTHUR

Which one? The brick monstrosity or the one behind the gates no one can see.

IRIS

I'm in the one behind the gates.

ARTHUR

Yeah? How is it back there?

IRIS

Beautiful actually. This is you, right here, isn't it?

Iris pulls into Arthur's driveway. He lives in a classic Spanish Hacienda with a neatly groomed lawn.

ARTHUR

Had no idea I was so close.

IRIS

Your house is quite lovely. Looks a little like Spielberg's house but...

ARTHUR

-- Smaller?

IRIS

(laughs)

Just a little.

ARTHUR

I've lived here 47 years. Back then there were only 6 houses on this block. Every year, they tear

(MORE)

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

another one down...not that I blame them...they weren't great to begin with but that's how I got confused, didn't recognize one house.

IRIS

That *would* be confusing.

ARTHUR

What part of England are you from?

IRIS

Surrey.

ARTHUR

Cary Grant was from Surrey.

IRIS

That's right, he was. How'd you know that?

ARTHUR

He told me once. Well, I thank you very much young lady...

Arthur can't find the door handle, keeps feeling for it.

IRIS

You are very welcome. Let me help you with that.

Iris runs around to Arthur's side, opens the door, helps him out, hands him his walker and escorts him up the path toward his house.

ARTHUR

Well, this was some meet cute.

IRIS

Sorry?

ARTHUR

It's how two characters meet in a movie. Say a man and a woman both need something to sleep in and both go to the same Men's Pajama Department. The man says to the salesman, "I just need bottoms" and the woman says, "I just need a top". They look at each other and that's it. That's the meet cute. This isn't quite that cute, but...

IRIS

So, you're in the film business?

ARTHUR
Was. Yes I was. I was a writer.

They've arrived at Arthur's FRONT DOOR. Arthur takes out his key, his hand shakes as he tries to get it in the keyhole. Iris watches as he repeatedly tries to insert the key.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
I could be here 'til tomorrow.

IRIS
(snapping to)
Oh. Sorry. Let me help you.

Iris takes the key, opens the door and helps Arthur in.

INT. ARTHUR'S HOUSE

Faded seventies decor. Iris peeks through the rooms, sees an office with lots of books, a cluttered desk, an electric typewriter and sitting in front of a window, amongst assorted knick-knacks -- a dusty Oscar. Stunned, Iris turns her attention back to Arthur who is slowly turning on a lamp.

IRIS
Well... Um...Good-bye then. I enjoyed our meet cute.

ARTHUR
I thank you for rescuing me.

IRIS
Pleasure...absolutely.
(notices a lousy looking dinner on a tray)
You know...I hope you don't find this strange, but I've just arrived in town, don't really know anyone and I was thinking of going out to dinner tonight...if you're not busy, would you like to join me?

ARTHUR
Busy? Honey, I haven't been busy since 1978.

INT. KATE MANTELLINI - NIGHT

Iris and Arthur sit in a booth by the window, mid-meal. Both are drinking beer.

IRIS

So that was your first job in Hollywood? Louis B. Mayer's office boy? That's amazing.

ARTHUR

Actually, my first job was as a Western Union messenger. That's how I met Mayer. I delivered a telegram to his office at MGM. When I walked in, the girls in the office were all in a tizzy...their office boy didn't show up and the boss was screaming. I volunteered for the job and the next day I was on the payroll. I was seventeen years old.

IRIS

Wow. Then how long after that did you become a screenwriter?

ARTHUR

Well, you gotta remember, there was no such thing as film school back then. You learned by being there. I met everybody working in Mayer's office -- all the big stars, the directors... But the ones who impressed me were the writers. They were witty, sophisticated guys with huge intellects... not to mention, they got all the great women. So I started writing and before long I was in the writer's building. They gave me a lovely office, a desk, a secretary, a big davenport. I never wanted to leave.

IRIS

So Hollywood really was as great back then as I imagine.

ARTHUR

It was better...

(takes a good look at her)
You know what I've been asking myself all night? Why would a beautiful girl like you go to a stranger's house for her Christmas vacation and on top of that, spend her Saturday night with an old cocker like me. That's gotta be a story.

IRIS

Oh, because I just wanted to get away from the people I see all the time.... Well, not *all* the people. One person... I wanted to get away from...one...guy....one old boyfriend...who just got engaged...
(her eyes fill up)
and forgot to tell me...

ARTHUR

-- So, he's a schmuck.

IRIS

(laughs, wiping her eyes)
As a matter of fact, he is. How did you know?

ARTHUR

He let you go. This is not a hard one to figure out.
(Iris looks up surprised, her eyes still watery)
Iris, in the movies, we have leading ladies and we have the best friend. You, I can tell, are a leading lady but for some reason, you're acting like the best friend.

IRIS

(tearful)
I've been in therapy for three years and my doctor has never explained anything to me that well.

ARTHUR

You don't live to be my age, without learning something.

Arthur hands Iris his handkerchief. She wipes her eyes.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

So, maybe one day while you're here, I'll take you for a drive and show you the old Hollywood. The one I knew.

IRIS

Would you really? What about now? Are you too tired?

ARTHUR

I haven't been out of the house at this hour in years. Now you want to go for a drive?

IRIS

Well, only if you want to.

POV OF THE SUNSET STRIP - NIGHT - MOVING

Billboards for Gucci, iPod, Skyy Vodka. Bright and brash.

IRIS DRIVES AMANDA'S CAR

at a steady pace. Arthur sits next to her.

ARTHUR

Okay, look up here on the right. That was The Trocadero. The swankiest of the swank. Black tie every night. I first laid eyes on my wife right there. It was raining. She was standing under an umbrella in a satin dress the color of champagne.

Iris LOOKS OVER at the SPOT where the Trocadero was and sees AN EMPTY PARKING LOT next to Chin Chin. Arthur doesn't seem to see the empty lot as he looks out at it and smiles to himself.

DRIVING

ARTHUR

All right, over here, that was Ciro's.

IRIS

I've heard of that.

ARTHUR

Anyone who was anyone went to Ciro's. They had a terrific orchestra. And great fights broke out at Ciro's. Every night ended with a black eye. It was tremendous.

Iris looks over and sees THE COMEDY STORE where Ciro's used to be.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

Okay, now, this place was owned by the great Preston Sturges.

Iris LOOKS OUT her window and sees MIYAGI'S a large JAPANESE RESTAURANT.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

It used to be called The Player's Club. He opened it in the summer of 1940 and if he felt like closing down for the night and just entertaining his cronies, that's what he did. To me, this was the hilt.

Arthur stares up at the Player's Club and for a split second, SEES IT AS IT ONCE WAS: 1940's Packards and Caddies lining the curb and elegantly dressed Men and Women entering the front door.

Iris looks over at Arthur. He realizes he's been day dreaming.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

I think that's enough, kid. I'm pooped.

IRIS

Yeah. Me too.

They drive in silence. The neon bouncing off the windshield.

ARTHUR

On the way home, we'll take a little detour. I'll show you Bogart's house.

IRIS

Great.

EXT. ROLLING HILLS - SURREY - EARLY MORNING

An early mist drifts over the snowy fields.

INT. IRIS' LITTLE KITCHEN

This time it's Graham at the Coffee maker. He's wearing last night's clothes. He hears a loud CLUMP, an "Ouch!!!" from the Bedroom and then Charlie skids out of the room. Then, Amanda STUMBLES IN, looking ship wrecked. She holds onto the door frame.

AMANDA

I haven't had that much to drink in... What am I saying? I've never had that much to drink.

GRAHAM

Yes... I believe no one ever has.

AMANDA

The last thing I remember was
coming in here last night and--

She spots her bra perched on a lamp shade. She shrieks, then
looks up at Graham.

GRAHAM

I had nothing to do with that.

AMANDA

(embarrassed to death)
But you were here.

GRAHAM

(smiles)
I was.

AMANDA

(pointing to bedroom)
Then I guess we...
(Graham shakes his head
'no')
We didn't?

GRAHAM

We did not.

AMANDA

Thank God... I mean, not "thank
God" but just thank God because I
didn't remember doing it. All I
remember is waking up to Charlie
licking my toes.

GRAHAM

Now that was me actually.

AMANDA

It was not!

GRAHAM

No, it wasn't.

AMANDA

(getting it straight)
Was not.

GRAHAM

Was not. I was...kidding.
Obviously not very well.

AMANDA

So now why didn't we...? Can you remind me a little?

GRAHAM

Amanda, call me old fashioned but one does not have sex with women who are unconscious.

AMANDA

Unconscious. Oh. That must've been attractive. Why did you stay?

GRAHAM

Because you asked me to.

AMANDA

(remembering)

Oh, I did. Didn't I? Oh, man...

GRAHAM

From the moment I met you, it's been an adventure.

AMANDA

Yes and I'm deeply sorry about that. I have nothing to say for myself other than, I must be temporarily nuts right now...it's the holidays, I'm jet lagged ..I'm obviously still reacting to this break up or meeting you or...

Graham's cell phone RINGS. It is on the table closest to Amanda. She picks it up, reads it.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

Olivia. Sorry. I didn't mean to look.

GRAHAM

I should probably take this one.

Graham very warmly says "Hello" as he EXITS OUT THE FRONT DOOR. Amanda WATCHES GRAHAM THROUGH THE WINDOW, talking on his cell in the FRONT YARD. He's laughing. Amanda can't help but feel a little jealous.

AMANDA

(to herself)

Olivia. Sophie. Amanda... Busy guy...

Amanda pours herself a cup of coffee as Graham RE-ENTERS.

GRAHAM
I think we should go into town.

AMANDA
What do you mean?

GRAHAM
I think you should get dressed, we should take a drive, get some lunch and get to know each other.

AMANDA
Really? Why?

GRAHAM
Because I'm running out of reasons why we shouldn't. Aren't you?

INT. RANGE ROVER - MOVING - DAY

Graham drives. The classic winter landscape of the English countryside whizzes by... a distant castle, rolling hills. Amanda looks over at Graham, and unlike Ethan, he looks back and smiles. Their eyes connect.

EXT. VILLAGE STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Graham and Amanda walk past the local shops. A Young Camilla Parker-Bowles type passes carrying groceries.

WOMAN
(surprised to see him)
Graham..!

GRAHAM
(not pausing as they pass her)
Cynthia...

Cynthia stops, checks Amanda out.

Amanda and Graham pass by the BUTCHER SHOP. The YOUNG FEMALE BUTCHER can be seen THROUGH THE WINDOW. Both the Female Butcher and her OLDER FEMALE CUSTOMER turn to see Graham and Amanda pass. Graham nods to them both. The Customer reaches on her tippy toes to see them better. Amanda notices.

GRAHAM (CONT'D)
(explaining)
Very small village...

Another Woman, Amanda's age, passes, pushing a toddler in a stroller.

YOUNG WOMAN
 (very friendly)
 Hey, look who's...

GRAHAM
 Yes, how 'bout that.

The Toddler cranes her neck out of the stroller to watch them. Graham grabs Amanda's hand and quickens their pace.

At a stoplight, a real Knock Out sits behind the wheel of her Jaguar XK. She glares at Graham. He waves politely. She gives him the finger.

INT. GRAHAM'S RANGE ROVER - DRIVING - FAST

They're back on the open road.

GRAHAM
 I have a much better place to take you.

AMANDA
 Somewhere maybe a little less crowded?

GRAHAM
 Less crowded and also much more less crowded.

EXT. BABINGTON HOUSE - DAY

The Range Rover drives down a long country lane, bracketed by enormous oak trees. At the end of the lane, a quiet Country Estate turned COUNTRY HOTEL.

INT. BABINGTON HOUSE RESTAURANT - DAY

Amanda and Graham sit across from one another in this idyllic spot. A fire crackles in the fireplace.

AMANDA
 So... you're a book editor?

GRAHAM
 Yes I am.

AMANDA
 In London I presume?

GRAHAM
 I commute every day except when I'm actually editing, then I work at home. It's why I live out here, I
 (MORE)

GRAHAM (CONT'D)
couldn't live in London any more
and get things done. Too many
distractions.

AMANDA
Seems to me there's no shortage of
distractions out here.

GRAHAM
That's not entirely true.

AMANDA
So what kind of an editor are you?

GRAHAM
A very mean one.

AMANDA
No, what I meant was, do you give
massive notes or..?

GRAHAM
Well, the better the writer, the
less notes I have to give.

AMANDA
Right. And what did you study in
school?

GRAHAM
Literature.

AMANDA
Did you always know this was what
you wanted to do?

GRAHAM
Okay, my palms are starting to
sweat, I feel like I'm on a job
interview.

AMANDA
I know. I'm interrogating you. I'm
sorry. I haven't been on a first
date in a long time.

GRAHAM
Well, since we've already had sex
and slept together twice, I think
we can bend the first date rules.
Why are you blushing?

AMANDA
I don't know. I think you make me
nervous. I'm going to try to be
(MORE)

AMANDA (CONT'D)

myself with you...never easy, but I'm going to try.

She takes a deep breath.

GRAHAM

Okay, we're doing well. Now what was the question? Oh, did I always know I wanted to be a book editor. The answer is... Yes I did. My family's in publishing. My father's a writer of historical fiction and my mother was and is to this day, a very important editor at Random House.

AMANDA

Wow. So you grew up with a busy, important, working Mom.

GRAHAM

Yes I did. She's very formidable. May be the best there is at the job and doesn't let you forget it.

AMANDA

Are your parents still together?

GRAHAM

My parents are not only still together, they are still madly in love. Hideously so.

AMANDA

Why hideously so?

GRAHAM

Because, honestly, it borders on obscene. They're old and they've been spotted making out while walking the dogs. They call each other ten times a day. They set the bar very high when it comes to relationships and commitment which could explain my sister in love with a man who does not even appreciate her and of course, my disastrous romantic life. Okay, believe your time's up. Your turn.

AMANDA

Well, like I said the other night, I own a company that does movie advertising.

GRAHAM

I didn't realize you owned the company.

AMANDA

That's because I probably didn't mention it but now that I know you were raised by such a strong working mother, I can say it and maybe you won't be intimidated by it.

GRAHAM

No, no, I'm still a little intimidated by it.

AMANDA

Well, "a little" is way ahead of the curve.

GRAHAM

What about your family?

AMANDA

My parents broke up when I was 15. It was, at the very least...the defining event of my life. I'm an only child and I just didn't see it coming. We were very close, we used to call ourselves The Three Musketeers and then one night, after dinner, my parents sat me down and told me they were breaking up. I thought they were kidding, then I saw a suitcase out of the corner of my eye. In the hallway. My Dad moved out that night. I think I cried myself to sleep for months. Then I realized I had to toughen up so I refused to let myself cry. Sort of haven't cried since. I also haven't thought of that packed suitcase maybe ever.

GRAHAM

You haven't cried since you were fifteen? Really?

AMANDA

I know it must mean something awful. I know. And I try but it's like something just permanently shut off in there. Anyway, my Dad's remarried and my Mom's still

(MORE)

AMANDA (CONT'D)

single...of course but she's very strong. This has had its effect on me. Obviously. I'm still talking about it 17 years later...

(rubs her chest)

Can't we talk about you some more?

GRAHAM

(bailing her out)

Yes. Absolutely. Okay. Well...I cry all the time.

AMANDA

You do not.

GRAHAM

Yes I do. I cry more than any woman you've ever met.

AMANDA

You don't have to be this nice.

GRAHAM

I happen to be telling the truth. A good book, a great film, the opera... I more than cry. I weep. I'm a major weeper. It's pathetic, is what it is. Strangers have made fun of me...

Amanda softens and as MUSIC BEGINS we DISSOLVE THROUGH TO the REST OF THE THEIR MEAL, their conversation is lively and warm. DISSOLVE TO LATER and Graham moves his seat from across the table to next to Amanda on the banquette. LATER, THEY WALK THE SNOW COVERED GROUNDS... sit on a snow covered hillside, lean back and kiss, the snow creating a blanket underneath them.

EXT. IRIS' COTTAGE - LATE DAY

The Range Rover pulls up to the cottage.

INT. RANGE ROVER

AMANDA

You're right. This was a great idea.

(Graham TURNS OFF the car)

You don't have to... walk me in...

(he reacts)

I mean, it's freezing and...

GRAHAM

-- You can just say you don't want me to come in.

AMANDA

It's not that, I'm just tired, I think I'm gonna take a nap and...
(sees his reaction)
It's not that.

GRAHAM

Okay, I'll pretend I believe you.

AMANDA

Graham, I'm leaving in nine days and that makes this complicated and I'm not sure I can handle complicated right now.

Graham nods. She kisses him. He holds back. She kisses him again.

GRAHAM

And *that* doesn't make it complicated?

AMANDA

Sex makes everything complicated. Even when you don't have it, the not having it makes things complicated.

GRAHAM

Which is why it's usually better to have it. -- Some say.
(she laughs but doesn't bite)
Okay, it's bloody freezing.

He turns the car back on.

AMANDA

I know, I'm gonna sleep in my coat and possibly my boots...

GRAHAM

We're back to being awkward with each other. Did you see this coming?

AMANDA

Graham, you're a book editor from London, I make trailers in L.A.. A long distance relationship would just baffle me but I do find you really attractive and sexy. Incredibly attractive and sexy.

GRAHAM

Yes, well, saying it twice helps.
Well... I'm off to work in the
morning. I promise I won't be
drunkenly banging on your door any
time soon.

AMANDA

Do I have your number?

GRAHAM

I'm in the directory.

AMANDA

Great. And you obviously have the
number here. So, we'll see each
other, okay? We'll figure
something out.

GRAHAM

Good.

Amanda gets out of the car, shivers, making him laugh, then
runs into the house. Graham sits there, thinking. Over, we
HEAR a DOORBELL.

AND A DOOR OPENS - IN L.A.

And Miles is on the other side of it, holding a Fed Ex
package.

MILES

Hello. Bad timing?

Iris, on the other side of the door. Happy to see him.

IRIS

No, come on in. Hi.

MILES

How's it going?

IRIS

I'm good, I'm good.

MILES

This Fed Ex was leaning on the
gate.

(reads it)

From London, England.

IRIS

(opening the Fed Ex)

Oh, a friend of mine is writing a

(MORE)

IRIS (CONT'D)
 book and I give him notes
 sometimes.

Inside the Fed Ex are about 20 typed pages with a NOTE CARD
 paper-clipped on the front.

INSERT - THE NOTE CARD - JASPER BLOOM STATIONARY

But the card is blank. Iris turns the card over. Also
 blank. Iris pales a bit then places the package on the
 table.

Miles hears VOICES FROM THE KITCHEN.

MILES
 You have company?

IRIS
 Oh. I'm having a little Chanukah
 party.

MILES
 What did you... join a temple since
 I last saw you?

IRIS
 My neighbor next door knew I didn't
 know anyone here so he wanted to
 introduce me to some of his
 friends... and...somehow it turned
 into a Chanukah thing. Come on in.

MILES
 (following her in)
 Alright, I'm into the dreidel.

INT. KITCHEN

Arthur and two of his friends, ERNIE and NORMAN, both around
 80, sit around the table. The men all look sharp. Marta,
 the Mexican Housekeeper makes latkes at the cooktop. Miles
 and Iris ENTER, the boys quiet down.

IRIS
 This is Miles...

MILES
 Kendall.

IRIS
 Miles Kendall. Arthur Abbott.

MILES
 (floored)
 Arthur Abbott!! What a thrill to
 (MORE)

MILES (CONT'D)

meet you. I didn't know you lived around here.

ARTHUR

That's code for, you didn't know I was still alive.

MILES

Not true. I absolutely knew you were alive, I just didn't know you lived in the neighborhood. It's a privilege to meet you.

He heartily shakes Arthur's hand. Arthur notices the way Iris looks at Miles.

ARTHUR

You going to join us?

IRIS

Arthur, no... He's just here to pick up a laptop.

MILES

Actually I'd love to. I mean if you have enough...

Iris opens her mouth but Arthur answers.

ARTHUR

We've got plenty. Sit next to Iris.

CUT TO:

CHANUKAH CANDLES

down to almost nothing. A good time is being had by all. Miles is enthralled and refilling everyone's wine glasses. All the guys, including Miles are smoking cigars.

ARTHUR

-- Don't listen to them, they're nuts.

MILES

So you're saying you weren't a ladies man?

ARTHUR

Never. I married very young.

ERNIE

Yes, because he had the greatest girl in town and he had to marry her to take her off the market.

(MORE)

ERNIE (CONT'D)

Everyone loved Marion. She was fun, smart as a whip, greatest laugh...

ARTHUR

What'd he say? She had the greatest ass?

IRIS

Greatest laugh!

NORMAN

Although her ass wasn't so bad either.

Miles and Iris exchange a laugh.

ARTHUR

She had real gumption. She was the girl I always wrote...

Iris is touched by that.

ERNIE

What about you Miles...you're a man about town, I presume.

MILES

No, gents, I sadly, am not.. I'm just a one woman at a time kinda guy. I've been dating a beautiful actress for about eight months. I don't know what she sees in me but I know I'm the luckiest guy in the world to know her.

Iris tries not to react. I mean, she hardly knows the guy

IRIS

Oh, she's an actress. What's she been in? Anything I would've seen?

MILES

She hasn't done that much yet. She was a girl in the cafeteria in Mean Girls...a cigarette girl in The Aviator...

NORMAN

And where is she tonight?

ARTHUR

Look - he's half dead and still interested.

NORMAN

He said, 'cigarette girl'...I'm curious. He's with us... Where is she?

Again Arthur takes note of Iris' interest.

MILES

She's on location in New Mexico. Working on a little indy film. She'll be there for about 10 days.

ARTHUR

Well, her loss is our gain.
(looks at Iris looking at Miles)
Fellas, I think we should leave these young folks and get back to our bedpans.

MILES

Norman, you're calling me for pinochle...

NORMAN

I got your cell. I'll be in touch.

INT. FOYER - A LITTLE LATER

Iris opens the door for Miles who holds Ethan's lap top and some tin-foiled left overs.

MILES

Totally great night. You know, Arthur Abbott is maybe the last of the great Hollywood writers from that generation. There are like famous things we say...because he wrote them.

IRIS

I know. He told me his friends wrote Casablanca but he added the "kid" to "Here's looking at you, kid."

MILES

Hello... Which totally makes the line.

IRIS

Absolutely. "Here's looking at you, Ilsa"...?

MILES
(laughs)
Not so memorable.

IRIS
He's so modest. He gave me this long list of old movies I had to see...none written by him of course. I saw a couple today. They were fantastic.

MILES
Maybe we can see one together sometime.

IRIS
That would be great.

A warm wind from outside blows toward them.

MILES
Okay, so...then, I'll call you.
(kisses her on the cheek)
The brisket was great....loved the latkes... Great hangin' with you...
(kisses her on the cheek again)
Sorry, didn't mean to kiss you twice.

IRIS
No problem.

Miles exits, facing more wind.

MILES
Crazy weather.

IRIS
I know.

Iris feels her cheek where Miles kissed her. She CLOSSES THE DOOR, looks at JASPER'S PAGES, lifts them up, then changes her mind and places them back on the table.

INT. AMANDA'S LARGE, LUXURIOUS BATHROOM - MINUTES LATER

Iris runs a bath. She looks at Amanda's assortment of Bath Products: Anti-Stress Bath Oil, Stress Relief Sea Salts, Stress Less Mineral Bath, Breathe Tranquil Bubbling Bath, Relaxing Bath Salts and Calming Body Cleanser. Iris puts a little in of each.

IRIS
Thank you Amanda.

HOT STEAMY WATER RUSHING OUT OF A TUB FAUCET

A HAND turns it off. We are IN IRIS' TINY BATHROOM. NIGHT.
Amanda lies in Iris' tiny tub. It's so small, it's impossible to stretch out in it. It's quiet. Then:

AMANDA
I'm not sure I can handle
complicated!?! God! I can be such
an ass-hole.

TRAILER GUY'S VOICE
Amanda Woods..!

AMANDA
Shut up!

TRAILER GUY'S VOICE
She pushed every guy away, every
time. It's not will she ever
change, but does she want to?

Big SPLASH as Amanda gets out of the tub.

EXT. COUNTRY HOUSE - NIGHT

The Mini Cooper pulls into the gravel drive of this beautiful, warmly lit house and parks. Amanda steps out, wearing 4" heels and a chic coat. She reaches into the car for a bottle of wine, a baguette, and some gourmet goodies. She heads toward the front door, gathering her strength. She notices smoke coming out of the chimney.

KNOCK KNOCK

Amanda stands at the door. No one answers. She rings the bell, licks her lips, she's a little nervous. She hears music coming from inside. Then, suddenly, there he is.

GRAHAM

answers the door, shirt tail out, hair a bit messed.

AMANDA
Surprise!

GRAHAM
Yes. It is. Hi.

Graham eases the door closed so that nothing can be seen

behind him.

AMANDA

Hi. So, I was home doing nothing and thinking of you and realized a little complication never hurt anyone and then I thought, maybe this isn't complicated at all and I thought how silly it was that we were each in our houses -- alone -- five miles apart and also, I wanted to apologize.... I really am sorry for not inviting you in this afternoon. I don't know what that was about exactly...

(seeing him grow increasingly uncomfortable)

-- but whatever it was, I thought I should get over it and try to...

(realizes)

You're... not alone are you?

GRAHAM

Uh, no I'm not actually. I'm sorry.

AMANDA

No, don't be. I shouldn't've just... Oh. Man.

(Graham looks pained)

Seriously. Do not worry about this. This was just me being stupid.

With that, the door OPENS UP A BIT and standing at Graham's side is a precious FIVE YEAR OLD LITTLE GIRL.

LITTLE GIRL

(in a loud whisper)

Who is it Daddy?

Amanda looks from the child to Graham.

AMANDA

(also in a loud whisper)

Daddy?

GRAHAM

Yes, I am Daddy. Amanda, this is my daughter, Sophie. Sophie, this is a friend of mine, Amanda.

SOPHIE
How do you do?

AMANDA
I'm...fine, thank you. How are
you?

SOPHIE
Very well, thank you. Do you want
to come in?

With that the DOOR PUSHES OPEN EVEN MORE and an ADORABLE FOUR
YEAR OLD GIRL, holding a blanket stands next to her sister.

LITTLE ONE
Daddy, who is this?

GRAHAM
(lifts the little one into
his arms)
This is Amanda. Amanda, my
youngest, Olivia.

AMANDA
(putting it together)
Sophie and Olivia...

Olivia extends her little hand. Amanda, stunned, shakes it.

OLIVIA
Your hand is cold.

AMANDA
Sorry, I am a little cold.

SOPHIE
(nudges Graham)
Dad...

GRAHAM
Sorry. Yes. Of course. Come in.

INT. HOUSE

A big Christmas tree with lots of kids ornaments sits in the
large, warm Living Room. A family lives here. Amanda enters
a bit dazed by it all. Confused and starting to feel
horrified, she looks around for a wife.

OLIVIA
Can we still have hot chocolate,
please?

GRAHAM

Yes...

OLIVIA

With baby marshmallows?

GRAHAM

Yes.

SOPHIE

(whispers)

Dad, take her coat.

GRAHAM

Yes... May I?

AMANDA

Sure, thanks.

(whispers)

Are you married? Tell me fast.

GRAHAM

No...

Amanda takes off her coat to reveal a drop dead gorgeous, low-cut, sexy dress. Olivia, Sophie and Graham just stare at her. Olivia giggles.

AMANDA

I know I'm a tad overdressed.

SOPHIE

I love that dress. It's gorgeous.

OLIVIA

You look like my Barbie!

AMANDA

Oh. Thanks.

OLIVIA

(noticing the wine and
goodies)

Is that for us?

AMANDA

Yes, but, sorry about the wine.

SOPHIE

He'll drink it, don't worry.

GRAHAM

Yes, the idiot will drink it.

Sophie takes the wine and things from Amanda. The Girls dig through the bag to see what she's brought.

GRAHAM (CONT'D)

(whispering)

I apologize for not mentioning this earlier...

AMANDA

You're...

(spells)

d-i-v-o-r-c-e-d?

GRAHAM

(spells)

W-i-d-o-w-e-r.

Amanda sighs. The Girls turn around to see what caused that reaction.

GRAHAM (CONT'D)

Amanda, are you by any chance at all into hot chocolate?

The Girls look to her. Is she?

AMANDA

As a matter of fact, I'm totally into it.

INT. KITCHEN

The Three Girls sit at the table as Graham fixes mugs of hot chocolate, topping each mug off with tiny marshmallows. He's very handy in the kitchen, very at ease. The girls artwork hangs all over the cabinets.

GRAHAM

(as he hands the little one a cup)

Olivia...it's hot, blow on it.

Olivia immediately starts to sip it.

GRAHAM/SOPHIE

(at the same time)

Blow on it!!

Amanda watches how great they are together. Graham then hands a cup to Sophie.

GRAHAM

You too, Soph.

SOPHIE

She has more marshmallows than me.

GRAHAM

No she doesn't, you each have five.

(hands a mug to Amanda)

You have five too.

Graham takes a seat.

AMANDA

If only I ate carbs.

SOPHIE

What's that?

AMANDA

Hmmm?

SOPHIE

Carbs? What does that mean?

AMANDA

Oh, it's all the stuff I never eat
because I don't want to get...

(realizes how stupid it
sounds)

...you know what? Who cares? I'm
just gonna go for it.

Amanda takes a sip, slurps up a marshmallow and gets a
chocolate moustache. The Girls laugh.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

(realizing this)

What? Do I have something on my
lip?

(to Graham)

I don't, do I?

She takes another sip, purposely making it worse. The Girls
crack up. Graham smiles, appreciating her humoring the kids.
Amanda wipes her mouth as Olivia climbs onto Graham's lap and
as she climbs on him, she places her hand on Graham's face.

GRAHAM

(unable to see)

Comfortable?

OLIVIA

(wobbly holds her hot
chocolate)

Blow on mine...

GRAHAM

Do you think there's a chance you
won't spill this on me?

With that Olivia tips her hot chocolate and some of it spills
on Graham's pants.

GRAHAM (CONT'D)

Ahhhh..... Thank you, excellent
timing.

The Girls laugh.

AMANDA

I was a big spiller when I was a
little girl.

SOPHIE

She's the worst.

Olivia continues climbing on Graham.

GRAHAM

Because she can't sit still. Ouch.

OLIVIA

You were like me?

AMANDA

I was. I thought I was the
biggest spiller ever.

OLIVIA

Do you spill now?

AMANDA

Sometimes. Because sometimes you
just can't help it. Right?

She wobbly brings her cup to her mouth. Everyone laughs.

OLIVIA

Dad, do Mr. Napkin Head.

GRAHAM

No, no, we do not do Mr. Napkin
Head for company.

OLIVIA

(bopping up and down on
Graham's lap)
Do it! Do it! Please?

GRAHAM
Ouch. Girls, calm down.

SOPHIE/OLIVIA
Please!!!

GRAHAM
O-kay if you settle down, I'll do
it. Quickly.

Olivia grabs him and kisses him.

GRAHAM (CONT'D)
Thank you for that...

OLIVIA
You're welcome. Now do it!

GRAHAM
Amanda, may I have your napkin,
please?

Amanda hands Graham her cloth napkin and he places it over his head, covering his face. He then takes his glasses out of his pocket and places them on his eyes, but over the napkin.

SOPHIE
(giggling)
Now smoke.

Graham picks up a spoon and holds it like a cigarette, placing it in his mouth, but through the napkin and simulates smoking. All the girls laugh. He scratches his head, coughs, every bit gets screams from the kids. He pulls off the napkin, a little humiliated. Everyone applauds.

OLIVIA
Do it again!

GRAHAM
Are you crazy? It's horrible
enough that I did it once.

Amanda laughs.

SOPHIE
Amanda, guess what? I have dress
up clothes in my room.

AMANDA
You do?

OLIVIA
So do I. And we have a tent too.
Do you want to see our tent?

GRAHAM
Girls, we will not ask Amanda to
crawl in the tent.

OLIVIA
(looking hurt)
You don't like tents?

INT. THE GIRLS BEDROOM - UPSTAIRS

A large tent made out of blankets has been constructed
between the girls twin beds. Amanda, Graham and the Girls
stand in the doorway.

AMANDA
This is seriously cool.

INT. TENT

The Girls enter with ease. Then Graham enters, bent over,
then Amanda enters, barefoot.

SOPHIE
(rushing out)
Hold on...we need an extra pillow.

OLIVIA
Lie down.

AMANDA
Okay...

On the floor are blankets and pillows. Sophie enters with one
more pillow, hands it to Amanda. It's obvious the children
are enamoured with her.

SOPHIE
You can use my pillow.

AMANDA
Thank you.

OLIVIA
Lie down.

GRAHAM
Can you please stop being so bossy.

OLIVIA
Lie down please. Next to me.

The four of them LIE DOWN SIDE-BY-SIDE INSIDE THE TENT. The grown ups lie together book-ended by the girls. A small lamp lights the inside of the tent, giving it an amber glow. On the ceiling of the tent are stars and a moon cut out of construction paper. Everyone lies there silently for a beat. Sophie burps.

GRAHAM

Very nice.

SOPHIE

(giggles)

Excuse me.

Everyone laughs.

AMANDA

(staring up)

This is an exceptionally great tent.

GRAHAM

(also staring up)

Yeah, it's got something, doesn't it?

SOPHIE

It's cozy.

AMANDA

Yeah... Who cut out all the beautiful stars?

SOPHIE

We did.

OLIVIA

The Three Musketeers.

Amanda reacts to that. Graham's hand rests next to Amanda's. He almost holds her hand but doesn't.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

Amanda..?

AMANDA

Yes.

OLIVIA

You smell good.

AMANDA

Do I?

OLIVIA

Yes. I love perfume but he won't let me wear it.

GRAHAM

Because you already smell good.
(to Amanda)
So do you, by the way.

AMANDA

But I'm older so I guess I'm allowed.

GRAHAM

Exactly.

OLIVIA

(turns on her stomach and looks at Amanda, really up close)
I like your eye shadow.

AMANDA

Thank you.

OLIVIA

And your lipstick.

AMANDA

Oh, thanks, it's new.

OLIVIA

What's it called?

AMANDA

I think it's called Coral Shimmer.

Olivia places her finger on Amanda's mouth, touches it then places her finger on her own mouth and rubs it on.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

(whispers)
Looks good on you.

Sophie checks her out... Olivia smiles.

OLIVIA

You know if you wanted to sleep over, that would be okay...we could push our beds together and it can be really fun.

AMANDA

That's so sweet of you to invite me
but maybe another time...would that
be alright?

OLIVIA

(thinks about it)

Yes.

Olivia lies back down, touches Amanda's hand.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

We never have grown ups here that
are girls.

SOPHIE

I know.

OLIVIA

I really like it.

SOPHIE

Me too.

No one says anything as they all continue looking up at the
construction paper stars.

INT. LIVING ROOM - GRAHAM'S HOUSE - A LITTLE LATER

Amanda waits. Graham comes down the stairs.

GRAHAM

I can't imagine anyone making a
bigger hit with my children. They
want to play dress up with you, do
your hair, wear your shoes. They're
already imitating your laugh.

AMANDA

They're great...

GRAHAM

Thank you. Sophie has
unfortunately taken on the role as
my protector. She's brilliant but
I hate when she worries about me
and Olivia's gonna be a real ball
buster... which I must admit I love
about her.

AMANDA

I'm just trying to figure out why
you didn't tell me about them.

GRAHAM

(with difficulty)

Because I just don't ever... tell women about them.

AMANDA

You think I should know your parents make out walking the dogs but not know you're a widower with two kids?

GRAHAM

I was actually thinking of telling you earlier today, when we were having lunch.

AMANDA

And..?

GRAHAM

Why didn't I? Right. Well, I don't know. Something strange seems to happen when women find out I'm a widower with two little girls...it's some kind of weird aphrodisiac and it messes me up...and with you, I really didn't want to play the "poor me" card.

AMANDA

But it's confusing since you're the one who wanted to go out to lunch to get to know each other...

GRAHAM

(painfully explains)

I have no defense except that until I know someone really well, it's easier for me to be just a normal single guy because it's way too complicated to be who I really am... because I am, in fact, anything *but* normal. I'm a full time Dad, I'm a working parent, I'm a mother and a father, I'm a guy who reads parenting books and cookbooks before I go to sleep. I spend my weekends buying tutus... I'm learning to sew. I'm on some kind of constant overload... So, I found it helps to compartmentalize my life, just until I figure this out. And so far, that's been alright... not that I see that many

(MORE)

GRAHAM (CONT'D)

women, contrary to what you may think. This past weekend the girls were with their grandparents and when they're gone, I get to pretend I'm someone else. Someone without hot chocolate spilled on their trousers.... I don't know how to date and be this. And there is the possibility that I'm petrified of what another person will do to who we are and how we get from one day to the next. I feel I'm a guy who can't make a mistake.

Amanda takes that in and wonders if she would qualify as a mistake.

AMANDA

So I guess, given our weird thing, I sort of get you not telling me.

GRAHAM

I didn't think I could introduce my kids to someone I may never see again.

AMANDA

Right. I'm just someone you had sex with once and slept with twice.

GRAHAM

Actually I thought I was just someone you had sex with once and slept with twice.

Neither one knows who's right.

AMANDA

I think we just went way past complicated.

GRAHAM

Well, like you said, I'm a book editor from London...you're a movie trailer maker from L.A. We're worlds apart. I have a cow in the backyard.

AMANDA

You have a cow?

GRAHAM

Yes. I sew and I have a cow. How's that for hard to relate to?

AMANDA
Pretty up there.

GRAHAM
Exactly. Which I believe may
disqualify me from winning bachelor
of the month.

They both wait for the other to say something to make this
better.

GRAHAM (CONT'D)
Well, anyway...thank you for being
so sweet with the kids. I think it
was eye opening for all three of us
because they're absolutely right.
We never do have grown ups here
that are girls.

AMANDA
I had fun....

GRAHAM
Good. Your visit may be the first
step in pulling my odd little life
together. So, really...thank you.

AMANDA
(not feeling so great)
Glad I could help.

EXT. HOUSE

Graham walks Amanda to her car. He's in his shirt sleeves,
she's in her coat. Amanda turns to him:

AMANDA
Graham...I'm glad I came over...

Graham hugs her, holds her close, but doesn't kiss her. The
moment is broken when from behind the house, they hear a Moo.

GRAHAM
Told ya...

They break apart, Amanda smiles, hesitates, then gets in the
car.

CLOSE on an UPSTAIRS WINDOW where Sophie watches Amanda drive
off.

INT. GRAHAM'S LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Graham picks up some toys, turns out lights.

UPSTAIRS... He rounds the corner, picks up Olivia's little socks and shoes then ENTERS HIS BEDROOM where Sophie lies in his bed, under the covers.

SOPHIE

Amanda's not going to sleep over is she?

GRAHAM

Probably not.

SOPHIE

I was wondering what she would make us for breakfast. I bet it would be good.

GRAHAM

Well, she's just here on vacation. I don't think we'll get a chance to find out.

SOPHIE

Too bad. You know why?

GRAHAM

Why?

SOPHIE

I think she has potential.

GRAHAM

So do I.

INT. IRIS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

Amanda, in her pajamas, dives into the cold bed. She lies there, under the duvet, tries to cry. She tries really hard. Nothing comes. She gives it her all. Nothing. She checks her watch, reaches for her cell, dials, waits, then...

AMANDA

-- Dr. Grinstein. Hi, it's Amanda. I'm in England. I know I should've called and told you I was leaving but it was all very last minute. I wanted to tell you, I met a guy. He's maybe a great guy. He's a widower and has two adorable little girls. He's really "different" and well, you know how I can be sometimes. How it's hard for me to "expose myself" as you say...well, with him, I'm fighting that, yet...I don't seem to be doing any

(MORE)

AMANDA (CONT'D)

better... Not that any of this actually matters 'cause I mean I can't be what he needs and we both know that and anyway, we sort of put the brakes on things tonight but.... you know how I said I never fall for "nice"... well, he's maybe the nicest guy I ever met. He's so nice, he's almost maternal. So you're right...all men aren't schmucks. I had to come to another continent to find that out... Anyway, he's got his own stuff to work out but I do like him... He's very real and he's taking sewing lessons! How sweet is that?

(beat)

Okay, well, hope you get this message. You can try me back on my cell. Thanks.

EXT. AMANDA'S HOUSE - ANOTHER DAY

A bright beautiful day in Southern California. The Gardener is clipping the roses. The front door opens and Iris exits.

IRIS

(to Gardener)

Good morning, Jesus.

JESUS

Morning.

The wind blows.

IRIS

Santa Anas...

JESUS

(looking at the trees)

Long time now...

Using the clicker, Iris opens the gate as Marta, the Housekeeper enters past her.

IRIS

Hey, Marta.

MARTA

Buenas dias Iris.

Iris reaches up and PICKS AN ORANGE off the Orange Tree. Iris sees the MAIL TRUCK at Arthur's, scoots over to it.

IRIS
 (to Mailman)
 I'll take it to him...

IRIS KNOCKS ON ARTHUR'S OPEN DOOR

IRIS (CONT'D)
 Helloooo...

INT. ARTHUR'S HOUSE

Arthur is in his office, behind his desk, reading the Los Angeles Times with a magnifying glass. Iris ENTERS, holding his mail.

IRIS
 Good morning.

ARTHUR
 (drops the paper)
 I counted. Nine movies are opening today. I remember when nine movies would open in a month. Half the movies I wrote would never have had a chance in today's world. Now a picture has to make a killing in the first weekend or they're dead. This is supposed to be conducive to great work? What if every book had to be read in one weekend or every painting had to be seen the day it was hung in the museum? Who knew movies would turn into a sporting event?

IRIS
 Have you always been this feisty?

ARTHUR
 I may have slowed down a little, but yes. You gotta fight the fight, kid.

IRIS
 (laughs)
 Can I open a window in here? It's very beautiful outside.

ARTHUR
 I don't think the windows open in here.

Iris tries to open one. It's difficult, but she manages to pry it open, then opens the next. She leans over Arthur's Oscar...touches it when he's not looking.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

I like that Miles by the way.

IRIS

Yes, he's very nice.

ARTHUR

He's got eyes for you...

IRIS

No he doesn't. He's got a gorgeous girlfriend. As he told you.

ARTHUR

And the first night she's out of town who does he go visit?

IRIS

(rolls her eyes)

He was picking up a laptop. Do you want your mail?

ARTHUR

I'm just saying...a girl on a mission such as yourself may want to pay attention to a thing like that.

IRIS

(looks at Arthur's mail)

Gas Company. Phone bill... You got a letter from The Writer's Guild of America West.

Arthur takes a look at the WGA Envelope and tosses it in the trash.

ARTHUR

You watching the movies I recommended?

IRIS

Yes. Love them. Irene Dunne is fantastic.

ARTHUR

Gumption.

IRIS

Yes! Tons of it. Arthur, you don't want to open that letter you just threw out?

ARTHUR

No. They keep writing me about the same thing.

IRIS

(take it out of the trash)
But it looks important.

ARTHUR

It's not. They want to do some kind of tribute to me, an evening with me...I don't know, it sounds God awful.

IRIS

What do you mean? That sounds brilliant.

ARTHUR

Would you like to walk out onto a stage on a walker, looking a hundred years old and see eleven shnooks who showed up to see you? They can forget it. I mean, its very nice...one little old lady in the office probably just found out I'm still alive and said, 'Ew, let's give him a night'. But no, I ain't fallin' for this. Now, what's up?

IRIS

I wanted to know if you wanted to take a little walk, but now I have a better idea.

ARTHUR

What? We should go for a jog?

IRIS

Arthur, is anything wrong with you? I mean physically wrong with you?

ARTHUR

No, I'm just plain old. Too old.

IRIS

So if you were in better shape, you'd do this Writer's Guild night?

ARTHUR

Honey, at my age, you don't get in better shape.

IRIS

(referring to letter)

May I?

(opens it, skims it)

"An Evening with Arthur Abbott."
Arthur, they want to do this soon. I bet with a little exercise, you could walk out there on your own and maybe I could go with you...as your date or something.

ARTHUR

I would take you proudly, but darling, I'm not going. Anyway, how would you propose to get me in shape? Seriously.

EXT. AMANDA'S POOL - DAY

Arthur and Iris are walking side by side in the pool. They reach one side.

IRIS

Alright, we did it! Now back!

Iris turns and keeps walking as Arthur slips under the water.

INT. AMANDA'S HOME GYM - LATER

Arthur is on the recumbent bike. He's not peddling.

IRIS

Now go!

ARTHUR

(still not peddling)

I am.

INT. AMANDA'S KITCHEN - LATER

Iris and Arthur, in their sweats, are drinking orange juice. When Arthur's not looking, Iris moves his walker to where he can't reach it. Arthur finishes his juice and unbeknownst to him, walks perfectly to his walker.

IRIS

Nice walking, kid.

INT. AMANDA'S BEDROOM - THAT NIGHT

Iris sits in front of the laptop. We hear the English "You've Got Mail". Iris spots an e-mail from Jasper. She hesitates, sits up straight, braces herself, then opens it.

JASPER'S E-MAIL

Who What Where When and me?

Iris isn't quite sure how to answer that. Fortunately, the phone RINGS.

IRIS

(into phone)

Hello.

GRAHAM'S VOICE

So, are you ever coming home?

IRIS

Hi!

INT. TRAIN - MOVING - LONDON - NIGHT

Graham sits in a window seat on the train going back home after a day's work. A stack of Christmas presents sit next to him.

GRAHAM

How's it going? You having fun?

IRIS

I met a really nice guy.

GRAHAM

See. And you said you'd never...
What's he like?

IRIS

He's really cute, he's funny, very smart, very successful, I feel good when I'm with him which is an entirely new experience and he's about 85 years old.

GRAHAM

Come on...

IRIS

You know I can pick 'em. He's my next door neighbor...or Amanda's next door neighbor...by the way, have you met Amanda yet?

GRAHAM
 Uh, yes, I have actually.

IRIS
 Oh, dear, can you hold? Call
 waiting. Be right back. Hold on, I
 really want to talk to you.

Iris pushes the FLASH button.

IRIS (CONT'D)
 (into phone)
 Hello.

EXT. SURREY MAIN STREET - NIGHT

Amanda, on her cell, takes Charlie for a walk.

AMANDA
 (into phone)
 Iris, hi, it's Amanda.

IRIS
 Oh, hi, how are you? How's it
 going?

AMANDA
 It's going great. How's everything
 with you?

IRIS
 Oh, I'm loving it. Your house is
 amazing and still in one piece I
 might add. Oh, can you just hold
 for a sec, my brother is on the
 other line.

AMANDA
 Graham?

IRIS
 Yes, he said you met.

AMANDA
 Yes we did meet. How is he?

IRIS
 Fine I think... can you hold for a
 sec?

AMANDA
 Sure.

IRIS
 (pushes FLASH button and
 TALKS TO GRAHAM)
 Hi, sorry, that was Amanda.

GRAHAM
 How did she sound? How's she
 doing?

IRIS
 She just asked me how you are.

GRAHAM
 What did you say?

IRIS
 I asked her to hold. Can I call
 you back?

GRAHAM
 I'll hold while you speak to her.

IRIS
 Really?

GRAHAM
 Find out how she is.

IRIS
 Okay...
 (pushes button, NOW TALKS
 TO AMANDA)
 My brother wants to know how you
 are? How are you? Have you been
 ill?

AMANDA
 No, no, I'm fine. Can you tell him
 I'm good...just taking Charlie for
 a walk down main street. What's he
 been up to, did he say?

IRIS
 I'm not sure. Do you want me to
 ask him?

AMANDA
 Sure...

IRIS
 Okay, hold please.
 (pushes button, NOW BACK
 TO GRAHAM)
 (MORE)

IRIS (CONT'D)

I can't believe you had sex with the woman staying in my house.

AMANDA

He told you that!!!

IRIS

Oh, God, no! I'm sorry! I thought I was talking to Graham. Hold on please. I'm terribly sorry.

(PUSHES FLASH BUTTON HARDER)

I can't believe you had sex with Amanda!!! She's been there four days. The woman's on the rebound, she's probably totally fragile, the one thing she asked me was, 'Are there men in your town?' And I assured her there weren't and you meet her and immediately get in her pants. Have you no sensitivity?

AMANDA

Still me.

IRIS

(dying)

Oh, bollocks. I guess I lost him. Amanda I'm so....

(BEEP)

Can you hold a second, I'm so so sorry.

(pushes FLASH)

Hello?

GRAHAM

Is she still on the other line?

IRIS

I can't believe you already had sex with her? I'm so embarrassed.

GRAHAM

I can't believe she told you and why are you embarrassed?

IRIS

No one had to tell me. It's just that you both asked how each other were so many times that I can only assume you've already had sex and for some reason aren't speaking.

GRAHAM

Did she say we're not speaking?

IRIS

No, Graham...

GRAHAM

Good. No, I think we're just not seeing as much of each other. How much longer is she here or are you there? When does she leave?

IRIS

Promise me you won't humiliate me. Another 8 days I think. Be nice to her, Graham. She sounds great. She's got this amazingly beautiful house...

GRAHAM

Really? Amazingly beautiful?

IRIS

Yes. With a media room, a gym, a gorgeous pool, gates. Look, I don't want to keep her waiting but she wanted to know what you were up to?

GRAHAM

(rising)

Just about to get off the train and go home to the girls.

IRIS

Okay, I'll tell her. Everything okay, otherwise? The girls are good?

GRAHAM

They're great. They miss you. I'll call you soon. And say hi to Amanda for me...or don't...whatever you feel is better. No, say it.

IRIS

Oh God...

GRAHAM

Sorry. I happen to like her...perplexing as that is for me.

IRIS

Then you should call her. Take it from me -- women don't understand the not calling thing. We hate it

(MORE)

IRIS (CONT'D)

more than you'll ever know. More than hate.

GRAHAM

Yes, but I don't think she wants me to call. I'm pretty sure she doesn't.

IRIS

(BEEP)

Graham, I gotta go.

GRAHAM

What exactly is a media room?

IRIS

(rolls her eyes, BEEP)

I'm sorry. Are you still there?

AMANDA

(driving in the Mini with Charlie next to her)

Yes...I'm in your car now...on my way home.

IRIS

You drove into town?

AMANDA

(feeling dumb)

You don't?

IRIS

(covering)

No, I do...all the time. Yes. Well, my brother's just getting off the train from London, on his way home to the kids..he wanted me to make sure I said hello...and I'm sorry about what I said before...I obviously didn't realize I was speaking to you. And I apologize for my brother if he's done anything stupid. He's a good guy down deep...well not even down deep...he's a good guy on every level...he's a phenomenal father...he's had a rough time these last couple of years. Try to forgive him if he's been a twit.

AMANDA

No, he's been great. I'm sure I've been much more of a twit, actually.

Amanda is now PASSING BY the Surrey TRAIN STATION and SEES GRAHAM carrying the stack of presents and getting in his car. Distracted, she slows down.

IRIS
Knowing him, I doubt that. So,
stay well, okay?

AMANDA
I will. Definitely. You too.

Amanda hangs up and watches Graham pull away from the station.

BACK IN L.A.

The phone rings. Iris picks it up.

IRIS
Yes. Hello.

MILES' VOICE
It's Miles.

IRIS
Oh, Miles! Hi.

MILES' VOICE
What are you up to?

IRIS
I was actually just going to
Blockbuster to get the next movie
on Arthur's list.

MILES' VOICE
You want some company?

Iris's eyes go to the e-mail before her --

Who What Where When and me?

IRIS
(into phone)
Love some.

INT. BLOCKBUSTER - SAN VICENTE BOULEVARD - NIGHT

Iris has put on a little more make up, some perfume, a snug sweater. She walks the aisles looking at the videos. Miles ENTERS carrying two Ice Blended Mochas from Coffee Bean.

MILES

I brought you the best drink in town, didn't know if you liked whipped cream so I told them just a little squirt. You look great by the way.

IRIS

Thanks.

MILES

Really great.

IRIS

Thanks. I'm feeling good. Been working out with Arthur.

Miles reacts.

IRIS (CONT'D)

What?

MILES

No, that must be...an awesome workout.

(tries not to laugh)

I'm sorry. I'm trying not to picture it.

IRIS

Okay, the workout's not that great but the conversation is...please stop laughing.... the conversation is fantastic...

MILES

That, I totally believe.

As they make their way across the store, Miles pauses, picks up the *Body Heat* video.

MILES (CONT'D)

You ever see this?

IRIS

I don't think so.

MILES

Great score by John Barry. Just oozed sex...

(hums the score, moves on to another video)

Love Batman...Very pure, very dark, very Wagnerian.

(MORE)

MILES (CONT'D)
 (hums the score, moves
 down the aisle)
 Chariots of Fire...(hums it)...took
 electronic, synthesized scores to a
 whole new level. (moves on) One of
 my top five favs... Chinatown.
 Jerry Goldsmith...
 (hums it intensely, then)
 "Forget it, Jake... it's
 Chinatown." Killer...
 (moves on)
 Driving Miss Daisy. Hans. Very
 unexpected. Remember how great it
 was?

He hums Driving Miss Daisy while he pretends to drive. Iris
 laughs. He's insanely charming.

MILES (CONT'D)
 Okay...
 (picks up Forest Gump)
 Great melody....
 (hums Forrest Gump)
 Sorta perfect.
 (spots The Mission)
 You gotta check this out sometime,
 it's so genius, it like comes from
 a whole other place.
 (spots Pink Panther)
 Okay, you can sing this one...it's
 the most memorable movie theme
 ever...and what's brilliant
 is....it makes you laugh whenever
 you hear it.
 (gestures for her to sing)

IRIS
 (shyly at first)
 Da doo, da doo, da doo, da doo da
 doo da doo da dooooooooooooo
 dddddadoo.

A Young Couple walks by and laughs.

MILES
 See. Even gets a laugh in
 Blockbuster.

Miles looks up and catches something OUT THE WINDOW.

HE SEES HIS GIRLFRIEND, MAGGIE

who is supposed to be in Santa Fe, walking arm in arm with a
 very cute, Older Guy.

MILES

What?!?

Iris looks up and sees Maggie just as Miles takes off,
EXITING THE STORE. Iris stays and watches from inside.

Through the store window Iris sees Miles call Maggie's name
Maggie turns and dies at being caught. Miles walks to her.
Iris sees Maggie getting upset and starting to explain then
the new Boyfriend joins her and starts doing the talking.
Miles looks at Maggie hoping she'll stop the guy but she
doesn't.

INT. AMANDA'S LIVING ROOM - IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING

Miles flops down on the sofa. Wiped.

MILES

Why do I always fall for the bad
girl?

IRIS

(handing him a CUP OF TEA)
You didn't know she was a bad girl.

MILES

I knew she wasn't good. Do you have
anything a little stronger?

Iris hands him a VODKA with her other hand.

MILES (CONT'D)

The question is -- Why am I
attracted to a girl I know isn't
good?

IRIS

Because you're hoping you're wrong
and every time she does something
that tells you she's no good you
ignore it and every time she comes
through and surprises you, she wins
you over and you lose that argument
with yourself that she's not for
you.

MILES

Exactly!

(Iris nods knowingly)
And on top of that, there's the old
standby...I can't believe a girl
like that would actually be with a
guy like me.

IRIS

I think a guy like you is a pretty rare find.

MILES

I'm not, believe me. You know what she said tonight? She said she finished in Santa Fe after two days and has been staying with whatever his name was which means she's been right here in town which means when I spoke to her this morning on her cell and she said, I'm looking out my window and it's snowing, she was in Santa Monica... What did she do? Go to weather.com? That must've made them both scream with laughter. Meanwhile, I sent her Christmas gift to Santa Fe yesterday. Stood in line at Fed Ex so she'd get it on time. She's a cheat and a liar and...I'm stuck in love with her.

Iris hands him the entire Vodka Bottle.

MILES (CONT'D)

I'm such a colossal loser. Look, I don't want to ruin your Christmas, you don't have to listen to this.
(finishes off his drink)

IRIS

It's okay. I like the company.

MILES

Did you see me talking to her tonight?

IRIS

I did.

MILES

You know, I didn't really give her a chance to explain. Maybe she was gonna tell me it was all a stupid mistake. Maybe I went too nuts and now she thinks she can't call me.

IRIS

It didn't look like you went that nuts.

MILES

It didn't? You think she knows she can call me?

IRIS

I'm sure she does.

Miles takes out his cell, checks for messages.

IRIS (CONT'D)

What about some food? You hungry at all?

MILES

You know, this isn't the first time this has happened to me. Girls have been dumping on me one way or another my entire life which is what made Maggie so extra sweet. Thought I finally hit the jackpot. You would never do a thing like this to a guy, would you?

IRIS

Me? No, I...I wouldn't actually. No.

MILES

Of course not. You're like...all about being good. You radiate "good".

IRIS

Which is apparently a really big turn on.

MILES

It should be.

IRIS

Yeah...in Fantasyland. Look, I'm gonna fix us some fetuccini. Does that sound good?

Miles just sits there, dazed.

IRIS (CONT'D)

I know it's hard to believe people when they say, I know how you feel, but I actually know how you feel.

Miles looks up at her.

IRIS (CONT'D)

I was seeing someone back in London. We work at the same paper, then I found out he was also seeing this other girl, Sarah, from the circulation department on the 19th floor. A person you'd never suspect he'd even know or be interested in. Turns out he wasn't in love with me like I thought or wanted to believe... seems I actually had it all wrong...and maybe he was her boyfriend all along. Anyway, I understand feeling as small and as insignificant as humanly possible, and how it can actually ache in places you didn't know you had inside you and no matter how many new haircuts you get or gyms you join or how many glasses of Chardonnay you drink with your girlfriends, you still go to bed, going over every detail and wonder what you did wrong or how you could've gotten it so wrong, and how in the hell, you could think you were that happy. And sometimes you even convince yourself that he'll see the light and show up at your door, but after all that, however long "all that" is.....you'll go someplace new and meet people that make you feel worthwhile again...and all that fuzzy stuff...those years of your life...that will eventually begin to fade.

A long beat.

MILES

Well fuck!
 (hands her his Vodka)
 You need this more than I do.

Iris drinks the vodka.

MILES (CONT'D)

That's what you're doing here?
 You're getting over somebody?

IRIS

Yes. This is me in good shape.

MILES
Is this the guy who sent you pages
from his novel?

IRIS
(pouring another)
Yeah, that's him. He "needs" me...

MILES
So, he stays in touch...

IRIS
(drinking)
All the time.

MILES
So that makes it impossible to
forget him. Which is great for him
but sucks for you.

IRIS
See how great your life is compared
to mine?

She smiles bravely.

MILES
Okay. Let's go. I'm making you
some fetuccini. It's Christmas Eve
and we're going to celebrate being
young and being a-live.

IRIS
Miles, you really are an incredibly
decent man.

MILES
I know. Always been my problem.

CUT TO:

PASTA ON A PLATE

And Amanda is carrying it to the couch in IRIS' HOUSE, where
she snuggles under a blanket, in front of the fire, deep into
a book. A small tinseled Christmas tree sits in the corner.

Charlie lies on the couch and puts his head on Amanda's
stomach. Amanda takes a dog biscuit out of her pocket and
routinely feeds it to him.

EXT. BOARDWALK - VENICE - SUNSET

Iris and Arthur walk slowly side by side, chatting up a storm. Iris carries Arthur's walker.

INT. AMANDA'S MEDIA ROOM - NIGHT

Alone in the dark, Iris smiles as she watches the spirited Carole Lombard in Nothing Sacred.

EXT. ENGLISH COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

Rolling Hills as far as you can see. Amanda walks along the road, carrying her groceries. She's on her cell and we hear her say, "What's going on at the office?"

INT. TRAIN - MOVING - NIGHT

Graham is on the train, working on a manuscript. A Woman passes who from the back looks like Amanda. Graham loses his concentration.

INT. NEIMAN MARCUS - BEVERLY HILLS - DAY

Arthur is having a new suit fitted. Iris watches, then Miles steps in with directions for the tailor.

INT. LENSMAKERS - DAY

Arthur sits in front of the mirror in his too big glasses from the eighties. Miles hands him a pair from the 21st Century. He tries them on and Iris whistles.

INT. MILES' HOUSE - HOLLYWOOD HILLS - NIGHT

Miles sits at his keyboard. Iris ENTERS with two mugs of tea.

MILES

Okay, here it is... Arthur's theme song. We give him a CD with this tune and every time he hears it, it gives him the confidence that he can walk out there. Ready?

Miles plays the Indiana Jones Theme.

MILES (CONT'D)

Just kidding. Alright, here we go...a little Arthur in the night.

And Miles plays a fantastic theme...nostalgic yet spirited.

IRIS
It sounds like him.

MILES
(finishes it, then)
I also wrote one that sounds like
you.

IRIS
You did?

She sits next to him on the piano bench.

MILES
Iris...if you were a melody. I
used only the good notes...

Miles plays a tender, romantic melody. Iris is touched.

MILES (CONT'D)
(sings)
And Iris lives next door to....
(plays Arthur's theme)

Iris laughs, clearly falling for the guy.

INT. VILLAGE CAFE - SURREY - DAY

Amanda sits against a banquette reading the Herald Tribune and drinking a cappuccino. She looks up and finds Olivia, Graham's four year old, standing before her, red cheeked, in her hat, coat and mittens. Amanda brightens at the sight of her.

AMANDA
Olivia...! Hi.

OLIVIA
(shyly)
Hi.

AMANDA
How are you? How've you been?

OLIVIA
I had a stomach ache on Christmas
but I'm all better now.

AMANDA
Awww... That's too bad but I'm
happy you're all better.

Amanda LOOKS UP and sees Graham and Sophie ENTERING. Sophie runs to Amanda as Graham hangs back.

OLIVIA
I thought you went back to America.

AMANDA
No, I'm still here...
(looks up to the
approaching Graham)
-- for one more day.

GRAHAM
Hey...

AMANDA
(thrilled to see him)
Hi. It's great to --

GRAHAM
(equally thrilled)
-- Yeah, you too.

HOSTESS
(approaches Graham)
Table for three?

GRAHAM
Yes. Please.

HOSTESS
This one okay?

She shows them to the table directly next to Amanda.

GRAHAM
Sure.

They all laugh as Graham takes the banquet seat alongside Amanda. The girls sit across from Graham in chairs. They all sit awkwardly, given their proximity.

GRAHAM (CONT'D)
(to Amanda)
How are you?

AMANDA
Would you like to...join me?

The Girls get excited.

GRAHAM
Sure. Thanks.

Amanda scoots over and Graham sits next to her. The Girls sit across from them.

GRAHAM (CONT'D)

What should we have...what are you having?

AMANDA

Just a cappuccino...

GRAHAM

Couldn't interest you in lunch?

AMANDA

Yes, you could...

GRAHAM

Great.

Graham shares his menu with Amanda. She looks at him, behind the menu. The closeness of her is powerful. She starts to say something when:

WAITRESS

(interrupting their moment)

You ready?

GRAHAM

Yes. Um... Girls? Chicken stew?

SOPHIE

I want what Amanda's having.

AMANDA

Chicken stew.

SOPHIE

(to Waitress)

Chicken stew please.

GRAHAM

Make that four...

OLIVIA

I want one.

GRAHAM

Yes, you're one of the four.

OLIVIA

Oh.

They all laugh.

SOPHIE

You know what we got for Christmas?

AMANDA

What?

SOPHIE

Nail polish like yours.

She shows Amanda her painted fingers.

GRAHAM

Very expensive gift...

The Girls tell Amanda all about their gifts. Graham and Amanda listen as they Girls go on and on.

DISSOLVE TO:

LATER IN THE MEAL

Amanda is now doing the talking and the Girls are cracking up. Olivia spills her drink. Amanda cleans it up without missing a beat, still talking. Graham watches, then laughs as Amanda finishes her story.

LATER STILL

Amanda is TAKING A PHOTO of the Girls with her phone. The Girls get close together and smile. Then Sophie asks for the phone and she makes Graham and Amanda get close together. We SEE THROUGH THE PHONE and Graham and Amanda aren't even in the photo. Graham raises the phone and suddenly they appear and smile.

EXT. RIVERBANK - LATER

Amanda, Graham and the Girls watch a boat go down the river. It's freezing. Graham opens his overcoat and pulls Sophie inside. Amanda bends down and takes off her scarf and wraps it around Olivia. Olivia hugs Amanda around the neck.

EXT. RIVERBANK ROAD

Graham places the girls in their car seats then walks to Amanda who leans against the Mini.

GRAHAM

We're going to my parents for dinner. Can I call you when I get them in bed?

AMANDA

Sure.

Graham kisses her on the cheek, gets behind the wheel and drives off. Amanda waves to the Girls.

INT. IRIS' HOUSE - EARLY EVENING

Amanda is packing. Outside, it's snowing. Charlie barks at the window. Amanda packs a bit more then goes to the Living Room, looks out the window, doesn't see anything. She opens the front door and Graham is standing there. He grabs her and kisses her.

AMANDA

Where are the girls?

GRAHAM

Sleeping at my parents.

Amanda rushes him with a kiss, he falls backwards. She grabs him, takes him in the house and shuts the door on us.

INT. BEDROOM - A BIT LATER

Post coital. Lying side by side. Catching their breath.

GRAHAM

So you're totally great. Fuck!

AMANDA

Yeah, this is a bitch.

GRAHAM

Well, you must come to London all the time for work, right?

AMANDA

London? Never.

GRAHAM

New York?

AMANDA

Not really. But that's easier. Do you go there often?

GRAHAM

No. Rarely actually.

(then)

Long distance relationships can work you know.

AMANDA

Really? I can't make one work when I live in the same house with someone.

GRAHAM

So, this could be a good solution for you.

AMANDA

Graham, I can't see you leaving the girls... L.A.'s halfway around the world...every time you'd see me you'll be gone for week. Can you see yourself doing that very often?

GRAHAM

Not often... But you're your own boss...you can travel.

AMANDA

I'm my own boss because I don't really trust anyone else. If I'm not there, I'll have no business.

Hmmmmmm.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

Okay, let's say we tried this. We just commit to doing it. We each go back and forth and we do this for like six months.

GRAHAM

Yes. That's do-able.

AMANDA

And then let's say...we hit a wall. Like... I can't constantly get on a plane or the girls can't deal with you leaving again. We start to feel the tension and we know this isn't going to work...so we start fighting 'cause we don't know what else to do... Then, after a long, tearful...at your end...phone call...we say goodbye. And it isn't like we're ever going to bump into each other. So, that'll be it. For real. It'll be...over. Then what's left? Two people feeling totally mashed up and hurt.

A long awful moment.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

Or....

GRAHAM

Thank God.

AMANDA

-- Maybe we should realize that what we've had these past few weeks is perfect and maybe it won't get any better than this...and maybe you liking me is really only because you know it can't work. And maybe I can fantasize about how perfect you are because I can't ever really be with you...and maybe maybe... Maybe we're trying to figure this out because it makes us feel good to feel this way... 'Cause we both know, if you lived in L.A., we'd take months to get to this point so maybe the fact that I'm leaving in eight hours makes this far more exciting than it might really be. Maybe.

GRAHAM

You're seriously the most depressing girl I ever met. I have another scenario for you.

AMANDA

Good.

(rubs her chest which is beginning to hurt)

GRAHAM

I'm in love with you.

Did she hear him right?

GRAHAM (CONT'D)

I apologize for the blunt delivery...but as problematical as this fact may be... I am in love. With you. And I'm not feeling this because you're leaving. And not because it makes me feel good to feel this way, which, by the way it does, or did, before you went off like that. I can't figure out the math of this thing, I just know I love you. I can't believe how many times I'm saying it...and I realize I come with a package deal, three for the price of one... and my package perhaps in the light of

(MORE)

GRAHAM (CONT'D)

day, may not be so wonderful or one
anyone even wants a part of other
than me...but...I know what I
want...which is in itself a miracle
and what I want is you.

(she turns to him, he
waits...)

And you speechless at this moment
is not exactly the reaction one
dreams of.

AMANDA

I wasn't expecting "I love you".
Hold on. I'm trying to find the
right thing to say.

GRAHAM

I think if the obvious response
doesn't immediately come to you...
then...well...we can just... We
should just talk about something
else. Like possibly what a
complete ass I am.

Amanda's chest tightens and hurts.

GRAHAM (CONT'D)

As I recall, you did promise me you
wouldn't fall in love with me.

AMANDA

Sh-sh...

GRAHAM

I guess I just wasn't listening.

AMANDA

(moving toward him)

I never met a guy who talks as much
as me... you say so much more...but
could you just, for now...be quiet.
Please.

She kisses him deep and hard.

INT. SMALL JAPANESE RESTAURANT - L.A. - DAY

It's lunch time and this small West side restaurant is
packed. Miles and Iris are eating at the Sushi Bar. They are
deep in conversation and their body language suggests they
have become close.

MILES

I don't know how I've never seen
The Lady Eve before...

IRIS
Stanwyck was dazzling. So sure of herself.

MILES
And sexy.

IRIS
Really sexy. Every movie he's told me to watch has a powerhouse woman in it.

MILES
You ever think maybe he's trying to tell you something.

Miles cell phone rings.

IRIS
I didn't, but now that you mention it...

Miles isn't listening anymore. He's staring at his cell.

IRIS (CONT'D)
-- What's the matter. Who is it?

MILES
(staring at the phone)
Maggie.

That stops Iris cold.

MILES (CONT'D)
(into phone)
Hello. Hi... I'm doing okay. You don't sound so...

He covers his free ear, so he can hear. Iris tries not to listen, but can't help it. Miles gets flushed as he listens to Maggie's end of the conversation. Iris starts to sink.

MILES (CONT'D)
Maggie... I'm tied up for a bit...
(Iris is relieved then
Miles checks his watch)
Well, what time could you be there?
Alright, I'll meet you there as soon as I can.

He hangs up, looks at Iris, stunned. Iris waits.

MILES (CONT'D)
She misses me.

IRIS
 (ever the good girl)
 See. She came to her senses.

Miles puts down his chopsticks, lost in thought.

IRIS (CONT'D)
 We should get our check.

MILES
 No, take your time. I can wait 'til
 you're done. You love the spicy
 tuna here...

Miles steals a glance at his watch, looks for the waitress.

IRIS
 I'm fine. And if you need to go I
 can get this.

Miles leans over, quickly kisses Iris on the lips.

MILES
 You are the best.

IRIS
 Ha.

Miles gets up, takes off. Iris sits alone, swallows hard.
 Looks around, anyone watching?

MILES
 (returns, talking)
 No, that's not right. We're
 eating. I'm not going to leave you
 here alone.

He sits back down but so doesn't want to be there.

IRIS
 Miles, go.... I'll see you at the
 Writer's Guild tonight. I mean, if
 you can make it still.

MILES
 I gotta get all the way to
 Beachwood but I'm gonna try to be
 there. Anyway, I'm bringing the
 music. I mean, I want to be there.
 I just don't know how long this is
 gonna take. I'm sorry.

IRIS
 It's all good. Don't worry.

Miles rises, kisses her on the head, exits. Iris fumbles for her wallet, drops a bunch of change, picks it all up, calls for the Waitress. Sits alone.

CLOSE - JASPER'S PAGES

Iris picks them up and carries them up the stairs.

INT. BEDROOM

Iris falls onto the bed, looks outside, the trees are blowing hard. She pushes the button to close the blinds and the room falls into darkness. She turns on the night table lamp, begins reading. The phone RINGS.

IRIS

(into phone, hopeful)

Hello.

(sits up)

Jasper? I'm just reading your pages. I hadn't forgotten, I've been busy, that's all. How are you?

(laughs)

Gee you sound far away.

(he's getting to her)

That's not true... stop...I meant to answer you. You sent me... What kind of surprise? No, I don't think I got it...

(a little confused)

Alright. I'll look.

INT. FOYER

Iris rushes down the stairs, holding her cell.

IRIS

(into phone)

I don't see a box or anything. Checking the kitchen now...

(ENTERS KITCHEN)

Not in here... Okay, hold on, I'm gonna go check the gate. When did you send it?

Iris OPENS THE FRONT DOOR and standing there, right before her, is Jasper, in the flesh. He holds a small gift.

JASPER

I found your Christmas gift.

IRIS
(floored)
You've shown up at my door!

JASPER
Yes, I have.

Iris throws her arms around Jasper, hugging him almost too hard. He kisses her. She holds back.

IRIS
Why are... What are you doing here?

JASPER
I was just going to ask you that.
How long have you been gone?

IRIS
Just two weeks.

JASPER
Feels like forever. Can I come in?

IRIS
Yes, of course. Oh my God.

JASPER
Some house...

IRIS
Really...what are you doing here?
I'm in shock.

JASPER
My publisher wanted me to "take
some meetings"...

IRIS
-- But you hate L.A..

JASPER
Not if you're here.

IRIS
(trying to digest this)
How's... Sarah?

Jasper shoots her a look. Almost a reprimand.

JASPER
She's fine.

IRIS

I never did get a chance to talk to you about that...your engagement. I was surprised you never mentioned it.

JASPER

I didn't know myself until the day before. Do we have to talk about it right now?

IRIS

No...but...

JASPER

-- What about something to drink?

INT. KITCHEN

Iris opens a bottle of wine.

JASPER (CONT'D)

This place suits you.

IRIS

(laughs)
Yeah, right.

JASPER

Really...you look different to me here.

Iris doesn't answer.

JASPER (CONT'D)

Iris, look at me...
(she looks up at him)
I came here because I had to see you. Had to.

IRIS

Jasper, I don't understand this. I mean, I was right there..for three years. Remember? Square peg...round hole.

JASPER

What?

IRIS

That's what you said to me once. That we weren't really right for each other. We were a square peg and a round hole...

JASPER

I don't remember that. I just know
I didn't like when you were gone.
I also never checked my e-mail
more, it was driving me crazy that
I wasn't hearing from you.

She can't believe this. He sounds like her. He takes her in his arms.

JASPER (CONT'D)

I don't want to lose you.

He kisses her.

IRIS

Lose me? This is too confusing...

JASPER

(pulls her to him)
I know. C'mere...

INT. MILES HOUSE - SAME TIME

Maggie paces, in tears. Miles listens. It's getting dark outside.

MAGGIE

I screwed up. Didn't you ever
screw up Miles? No, you probably
never have. I made a mistake. I
was stupid and impulsive...he was
older and...

Miles looks outside and sees the Olive Trees bending and stretching in the wind. Miles BEGINS TO HEAR Iris' MELODY in his head. It fills the soundtrack.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

-- I wish you'd just say something.
I mean, how many ways do I have to
say it? He wasn't what I thought
and I started thinking about you
and hoping you'd forgive me...

Miles looks at her. She stops right before him, looking very beautiful and vulnerable and open.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Will you Miles? Will you forgive
me?

Iris' melody fades.

INT. IRIS' BEDROOM - ENGLAND - 3 A.M.

Graham is asleep. Amanda is awake...thinking about the day they were lying in the snow, kissing and laughing. She turns to Graham, his eyes open. She smiles faintly, apologetically.

INT. AMANDA'S LIVING ROOM - L.A. - SAME TIME

It's dark outside and only a small light is on in the room. Iris and Jasper lie on the sofa, entwined. Iris gazes up at him.

JASPER

This look in your eyes. This is what I was always looking for.

IRIS

I've always looked at you like this.

JASPER

No you haven't.

He kisses her and then slides his hand down her pants, under her panties and over her backside.

JASPER (CONT'D)

Ohhhh... I remember this ass.

He pulls her to him...by way of her ass. She blinks.

IRIS

Ummm...

JASPER

What's wrong?

IRIS

Can you remove your hand from my bottom...please?

(He doesn't)

Please.

(he slips it out, she untangles)

You know what?

(laughs at herself)

I never thought I'd say this, literally - never - but I think you were absolutely right about us.

(he looks confused)

Very square peg...Very round hole.

JASPER

You can't mean that.

IRIS

The great thing is...

(breaks into a smile)

I actually do. And I'm about three years late in telling you this but nevertheless, some things need to be said. Jasper -- you did not treat me right. You broke my heart and you acted like somehow it was my fault...my misunderstanding... I was too in love with you to ever be mad at you so I just punished myself... But, *Ohhhh*, I remember *this ass* somehow newly entitles me to say -- It's over. This twisted toxic thing between us is finally finished. And you really can't just waltz in here, on my great Christmas holiday and tell me I'm suddenly looking at you the way you wanted me to. Like I have just improved and qualified to be with you. I'm miraculously done being your Girl Friday. I got a life to lead, buddy...and I don't think you're in it... Now, I'm terribly sorry, but I've got to be somewhere really important and you've got to get the hell out. And anyway, do you think Sarah would appreciate us doing this? She's a nice person. She deserves better.

JASPER

Honey, you've changed.

IRIS

I know. I think what I've got is something slightly resembling gumption.

A TOWN CAR SITS IN ARTHUR'S DRIVEWAY

Iris, in a dress and heels, scoots around the Town Car and knocks on Arthur's door. Without hesitation, the door opens. Arthur is standing there, ready to go, speech in hand. He wears his new suit, new glasses. He pauses when he sees how lovely Iris looks.

ARTHUR

Iris, you're a knock out.

IRIS
Thank you. And may I say, so are you?

ARTHUR
Did I do my tie okay? I haven't worn one in so long.

IRIS
(fixes it a little)
It's perfect.

ARTHUR
I like this Hugo Boss. He cuts a nice suit. I got you something.

Arthur reaches inside and brings out a Box with a WRIST CORSAGE in it. Iris can't believe it.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
Forgive me, last time I had a date, this is what we did.

IRIS
(slips it on)
It's beautiful.

ARTHUR
If it's too corny or if it's gonna ruin your outfit...you don't have to wear it.

IRIS
I like corny. I'm looking for corny in my life.

ARTHUR
Nice line.

IRIS
It's all those movies...

ARTHUR
(smiles, then)
Okay, let's do it. Let's get this embarrassment over with.

INT. TOWN CAR - MOVING - NIGHT

Arthur and Iris sit side by side.

ARTHUR
Do not feel bad for me if only a couple of dozen people are there.
(MORE)

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

I'm not exactly Quentin Tarantino.
I don't even think people
appreciate the old films anymore
for the writing. It's the directors
they remember. Plus it's the
holidays...people are away...

IRIS

Arthur, you gotta shut up.

The Car slows down.

IRIS (CONT'D)

This it?

ARTHUR

(to Driver)

Stay here. We'll be out real fast.

INT. WGA - LOBBY

Iris helps Arthur through the fairly empty Lobby. A Young
Film Student type approaches Arthur.

YOUNG MAN

Mr. Abbott?

ARTHUR

Yes, sir.

YOUNG MAN

We're all ready for you.

Two Attendants OPEN DOUBLE DOORS as Arthur takes Iris' arm
and they head:

INTO THE AUDITORIUM

As they ENTER, a packed room rises to it's feet. A few
hundred people, of all ages, applaud as Arthur walks the
center aisle toward the stage. Light bulbs flash. Arthur
tightens his grip on Iris. She places her hand on his.

He reaches the bottom of the stage. Another Attendant waits
to help him up a small set of stairs. The room quiets.
Arthur lets go of Iris. She smiles at him as his new escort
takes his arm.

Iris takes a seat in the front row, an empty seat next to
her. Then, out of the loudspeakers, we HEAR ARTHUR'S THEME
MUSIC. Upon hearing it, Arthur lets go of the Attendant's
arm and climbs the stairs alone to a rounding swell of
applause.

Miles, a little out of breath, slips into the seat next to Iris, wearing a coat and tie.

MILES

The man is a rock star.

IRIS

(stunned)

Hi...

ARTHUR

(from the podium)

Thank you. I'm absolutely overwhelmed...

(then)

--that I could climb those stairs.

Laughter from the audience.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

Thank you very much for coming tonight. I am honored. I came to Hollywood over sixty years ago and immediately fell in love with motion pictures. And it's a love affair that's lasted a lifetime. When I first arrived there were no cineplexes or multiplexes. No such thing as a blockbuster. I was here B.C.. Before cable, before DVD, before conglomerates owned the studios, before pictures had special effects teams and definitely before box office results were reported on the nightly news. To make a good picture, all we needed was a director, a producer, actors and a writer with a story to tell. Our vocabulary was a simple one. Emotion, dreams, tears and laughter.

ANGLE - IRIS AND MILES

Their eyes on the stage.

IRIS

He's fantastic.

Miles looks at Iris as she watches Arthur. The warmth in her eyes touches him.

MILES

Iris.

IRIS

(turns to him)

Yes?

MILES

What are you doing New Year's Eve?

IRIS

I'll be back home New Year's Eve.

MILES

Do you know, I've never been to
England. Never been to Europe.

IRIS

No?

MILES

If I came over there, would you go
out with me New Year's Eve?

IRIS

(smiles at him)

I'd love to.

They both return their eyes to the stage, Miles nods to
himself. Nice!

EXT. IRIS' HOUSE - ENGLAND - MORNING

A Mercedes waits for Amanda. She exits the house in her
shearling coat, red scarf, just like she arrived. Graham
stands in the doorway.

AMANDA

Okay, we're not gonna make this a
bigger deal than it already is.

GRAHAM

No we're not.

AMANDA

It's not like we're never going to
speak or e-mail...or...

GRAHAM

No set rules.

AMANDA

None. So, I'm just going to kiss
you, for the millionth time and

(MORE)

AMANDA (CONT'D)
 say.... be seeing you.
 (she kisses him)
 Be seeing you.

GRAHAM
 (moves her hair out of her
 eyes)
 Take care of yourself.

Amanda walks to the car, waves, gets in and the car takes off. Graham watches the car drive slowly away from the cottage.

INT. CAR - MOVING AWAY FROM THE HOUSE

The Driver who dropped Amanda here two weeks ago is behind the wheel.

DRIVER
 Have a good holiday, Miss?

AMANDA
 Yeah....great. Maybe the best
 ever.

Suddenly very hot, Amanda pulls her scarf off. She looks out the car window. Children pass by, laughing on a sled. Whoa. She's really hot. She unbuttons her coat a little. Clears her throat, checks her plane ticket, passport, phone. All set. Then, she clicks opens her phone, looks at the Photo of herself with Graham. Closes the phone. She rests her head on the seat...doesn't feel quite right. What's going on? She's a little out of breath. Without knowing, without trying, with no effort whatsoever, her eyes begin to well up. Amanda sits straight up, stunned. Is it going to happen? Then, one small tiny little tear makes its way out of her eye and rolls down her cheek.

TRAILER GUY'S VOICE
 Amanda Woods! Welcome back!

Amanda screams. She tries to make herself cry, just to get it all out. But all she can make is one more tear. She's thrilled.

AMANDA
 Turn around! Turn around and go
 back! Please!!!

DRIVER
 Forget something?

AMANDA
 Yes!

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD

The car turns around and takes off back toward the cottage.

INT. CAR

Amanda is so excited, she's about to leap out of the moving car.

AMANDA

Can you go any faster?

DRIVER

This little lane is always
tricky...gonna take a bit...

AMANDA

That's okay...

Amanda opens the car door, rushes out and runs, a happy, expectant look on her face. She gets to the cottage, opens the little gate, rushes up the stairs, opens the door.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

Graham?

She doesn't see him at first.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

Graham?

Graham, back in the bedroom, steps into view. He wipes away tears. Amanda says nothing. Graham waits.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

(from the Living Room)

I was just thinking. Why would I
leave before New Year's Eve? That
makes no sense at all.

Graham sighs quite loudly. Wipes his eyes on his shirt sleeve.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

I mean you didn't exactly ask me
out but you did say you love me so
I'm thinking I've got a date...if
you'll have me.

GRAHAM

I've got the girls New Year's Eve.

AMANDA

Sounds perfect!

Graham smiles and as Amanda rushes to him, we:

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. GRAHAM'S HOUSE - ALL LIT UP - NIGHT - NEW YEAR'S EVE

INT. GRAHAM'S LIVING ROOM - MUSIC OVER

Olivia, in a party dress and carrying a noise maker, runs through the room. She is followed by her Aunt Iris, also in a party dress. Iris dances a bit as she carries two glasses of champagne. She delivers one glass to Miles who is sitting on the sofa, deep in conversation with Sophie. He smiles when he sees Iris.

Amanda dances in with a tray of hors d'oeuvres. She stops in front of Graham who twirls her. Amanda then dances over to Iris who takes an hors d'oeuvre and the two women connect. Amanda whispers something to Iris and Iris laughs. Graham joins them and puts his arm around his sister. Iris rests her head on his shoulder. Feels like the makings of a great party. Camera pulls back and away, out the window and eventually we Fade to Black.