

Untogether

By

Emma Forrest

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EXT.LOS ANGELES, 3 A.M

Los Angeles' most famous landmark is seen at the wrong angle - the steel poles holding it up are visible and instead of 'Hollywood', the sign reads 'boowylloH'.

Pan down the hill to one grand house among many:

INT.BEDROOM, 3 A.M

A man is making love to a woman from behind. She turns her head to watch him move and her gaze falls on the tattoo above his heart which says 'Naima'. This is NICK, early thirties, handsome, if booze ravaged. ANDREA, early thirties, is interesting rather than beautiful. She's getting more attractive as she gets older. This was the year he started going down hill.

This could be a love scene from 'Don't Look Now' or 'Betty Blue', an "Are they or aren't they?" But the erotic spell is broken when, as he moves her round and slides on top of her, he starts to sing, in a falsetto:

NICK

"There is a castle on a cloud..."

ANDREA

What?

His 'Les Miserables' warbling continues...

NICK

"I like to go there in my
dreams..."

ANDREA

[Baffled] Are you bored of this?

She has a clipped British accent.

NICK

No! It just helps me not come.

She moves away from him.

ANDREA

It helps *me* not come.

NICK

I didn't mean to ruin the moment.
C'mere to me. Let's start again.

She inches back towards him.

Beat.

NICK

Can I come on your face?

She stares at him. He awaits her response, with the contextually disturbing expression of a puppy.

ANDREA

Not until I've met your Mother.

She smiles, cold.

NICK

Oh. Okay. [Beat]. This has gone awry. Fuck! I'm sorry.

She starts putting on her clothes.

ANDREA

You don't ask that on a first date.
For Christ's sake.

He contemplates this.

NICK

It's not *really* a first date. I met you at a party on Thursday. I texted you at midnight, which was three hours ago.

ANDREA

So?

But you can hear in her voice, she isn't going to win this. He unbuttons her blouse again, almost feeling sorry for her.

CUT TO:

INT.NICK'S BEDROOM, 4 A.M.

Post-coital...

NICK

You're not going to get obsessed with me are you?

She rolls her eyes.

ANDREA

Would you like me to?

NICK

Look, I just broke up with my girlfriend. I'm really not available.

ANDREA

When?

NICK

I'm not available...ever.

ANDREA

I mean, when did you break up?

NICK

Oh. Yesterday.

ANDREA

After the party? After we met?

NICK

Yes. I felt uncomfortable with how much I flirted with you. I broke up with her after that.

He lights a cigarette. She brushes the smoke away.

NICK

She was in love with me. We'd only been together a little while, but she was, you know: she was in love.

ANDREA

Perhaps she wasn't as in love with you as you think. Perhaps she was just in love with the man in your book.

NICK

Yeah?

ANDREA

Used to happen to me all the time.

She adds hopefully...

ANDREA

Still does.

NICK

I'm sorry, I've got to get round to reading yours.

She's a little crestfallen and he sees that and feels bad.

NICK

I remember *wanting* to back when it was first out, when there was all the fuss about you.

Hole being dug. She turns icy again.

ANDREA

You might have told me you had a girlfriend, before I came over.

She watches with a cool writer's eye as he stubs out his cigarette, noting the smoke as it curls around his head, mulling whether he's worth turning into a character.

NICK

Would it have made a difference?

She looks around the room, at the framed posters of all the international editions of his book. They make her feel sick with envy and nostalgia for her own period of acclaim. He isn't her type: so slickly handsome. She isn't his type: unkempt, not beautiful enough.

And because she's so upset, she kisses him. And they're back at it...

Title: **"Untogether"**.

Soundtrack of Fleetwood Mac's 'Tusk' with it's paranoid voodoo plea "Don't say that you love me/ Just tell me that you want me" as Nick moves on top of Andrea. He pins her hands above her head. Camera backs politely out of the room.

Outside his expensive, expansive house, a coyote rummages in Nick's trash.

(Credit sequence over animals - raccoons, skunks, possums, bobcats -running around LA homes both grand and modest, as the city slumbers, wildness encroaching on the sleeping innocents. The only other "living" thing we see is an LA transit bus criss crossing its way up Laurel Canyon. The final thing we see before the credits and song end, is that the lone passenger on the first bus of the morning is a mussy haired Andrea).

INT.KITCHEN, MORNING

A small Laurel Canyon home, built in 1920. Not so distantly related to a tree house, it is all wooden beams and bamboo blinds, wood beamed french windows looking out onto an overgrown garden on the ground floor and a deck on the second floor, accessible by a winding wooden staircase.

Cozy and dense with character, hummingbirds and wild roses dot the property.

Moving across the property we arrive, adjacent to the house, at an *actual* tree house. And it's in the tree house that Andrea sleeps each night. There's room for a mattress. And a cat. And she has an amazing view, much higher than the main house (a ladder is built into the gnarled branches). She climbs out of bed, admires the view across the city, then climbs down the ladder, the cat following her.

Sitting at the eat in kitchen nook of the main house is her sister, LISA, twenty-three. Lisa is like a delicate pencil sketch of her sister, Vivien Leigh to Andrea's blowsy Liz Taylor, the "virgin" to her "whore", elegant, her hair pulled back off her porcelain skin. She is drinking tea from a real china cup as Andrea is glompingly eating cereal, pulling apart the Sunday New York Times, putting in one pile the sections she wants to read. She tosses aside the sports section with irritation.

LISA

Well. He sounds like an asshole.

ANDREA

No, no, he's a hero. He fell in love with a Palestinian woman when he was working as a volunteer doctor in Gaza and then she ended up getting killed. His memoir has sold a million copies.

LISA

But what's his real story? What's he like?

ANDREA

Well...

Walking into the kitchen, MARTIN, closing in on forty, Australian, with an open face to match his heart. He takes the sports section with great delight and kisses the top of Lisa's head.

LISA

Didn't you ask him any questions?

Andrea shrugs.

ANDREA

I mean, guys are weird here. And he's successful so he's exceptionally weird.

She smiles at Martin, not quite discounting him from her statement but letting him know they're not enemies.

LISA

I know it holds certain *memories* for you, but I still think you were better off in England.

ANDREA

Do you honestly miss England?

LISA

Don't you?

ANDREA

No. Everything was broken there, including me. You remember that AA meeting in Spitalfields? I saw people fucking in the back of that meeting.

LISA

I mean, that's very unpleasant but surely not unique to east London.

ANDREA

Yes. It is. People are serious about it in the meetings here. They see things more clearly. You know, they have to: look at the expanse of sky we have here.

She points up at the ceiling. Her arm is a cacophony of sealed over wounds, some inflicted by a Stanley knife, others by a needle. The sight still breaks Lisa's heart. Lisa follows her pointed finger to the wooden beams. Sighing, Andrea gets up and steers her to the kitchen window.

ANDREA

Look!

The sky is blue and infinite.

LISA

I don't see anything.

ANDREA

What do you mean?

LISA

There's nothing there.

Returning to the kitchen, Martin wraps his arms around Lisa who kisses his shoulder.

Despite their large age gap, they're an easy going team - and their romantic calm is tough on Andrea. She rarely interacts with Martin except to ask for favours, as she does now.

ANDREA

If you're going to work, can you give me a lift down the hill?

He wants to be her friend.

MARTIN

You need to learn to drive.

ANDREA

Mmmm.

MARTIN

Or you're not really engaged in this city at all.

ANDREA

It's better this way. This way I get more writing done.

MARTIN

Because you're trapped.

ANDREA

Yeah. It's good.

She glazes over as she flashes on Nick holding her down.

Beat.

ANDREA

So can you give me a lift?

INT.CAR, MORNING

Martin is driving Andrea down the hill. They have trouble making conversation at the best of times. In such close proximity they feel more awkward.

MARTIN

How you doing?

ANDREA

Oh. I slept with someone I just met. Like someone in a Spitalfields meeting would do.

MARTIN

Like what?

ANDREA
Like the old me would have done.

MARTIN
Oh. [Takes this in]. I thought
you'd come here to be the new you?

ANDREA
Yeah. I did. I am.

She looks at him. She doesn't care about his opinion but she
wants it anyway.

ANDREA
Was that whore-ish?

He shrugs and says with absolute good nature:

MARTIN
You do have a whore's vibe to you.

ANDREA
How?

MARTIN
Your clothes.

He thinks.

MARTIN
Your hair.

Thinks some more.

MARTIN
It's really your manner. When I
first met you I thought "She's open
to anything".

ANDREA
But that's not true!

MARTIN
I know that's not true. I know
you're here and you're doing your
meetings and you're clean and you
got yourself together.

ANDREA
It's been a year.

MARTIN

So if this is the first untogether
thing you've done in a whole year?
That's not a big deal. Right?

Her stomach is lurching.

INT.NICK'S HOUSE, MORNING.

We see just how big his home is, the modernist splendor in which he lives. But there's nothing of him in it except all the foreign posters of his memoir. No framed family photos out. No art.

He's looking at his phone, staring at Andrea's number. He stares at it a long time. And then, hungover and bleary, he switches it off.

EXT.RESTAURANT, AFTERNOON

Nick has lunch with his publisher, IRENE, an African-American woman in her mid fifties. Irene is classy, beautiful, rich, and besotted with him. A meeting with Nick is the highlight of her week.

IRENE

What do you think of the Clooney
news?

No response.

IRENE

Him wanting to play you in the
adaptation?

Nick remains nonplussed.

NICK

I think...George Clooney looks like
a dirty old uncle.

IRENE

Oh. I'm so sorry. Were you abused?

NICK

No.

He is amused.

NICK

You saw a best selling memoir
before your eyes just then, didn't
you?

He touches her arm a beat too long, and she blushes, which is
not something she ever does with any other human.

IRENE

No. I...Oh come on, I'd take any
book you had to offer me. You know
that. I'm just waiting for you to
tell me what it is. Why do you
think I'm in California when I
could be in New York? I don't
travel for any other client.

Her compliment goes unacknowledged.

NICK

Sorry. It was a happy childhood.

IRENE

Good! That's good.

She lifts her drink to her perfectly glossed lips.

NICK

Look, I'm a doctor. I wrote a book
that moved people. I don't know
anything about his world of
celebrity...

Interrupting, a fan approaches Nick. She is young, attractive
- Irene bristles, despite herself.

FAN

I'm so sorry to bother you. But I
have to tell you: your book is the
most beautiful love story I've ever
read.

NICK

Thank you.

She puts her hand on her surgically enhanced chest.

FAN

I'm Bliss.

NICK

You're...

FAN

That's my modelling name. I'm on Facebook if you ever want to contact me. I heard they're making a film. I'd kick myself if I didn't tell you: I think I would make a great Naima.

The girl smiles and leaves.

IRENE

You looked horrified.

NICK

No. I was just trying to conjure...what Naima looked like. It's been long enough, now, that I'm starting to lose her.

IRENE

She's on the page, forever. She's in people's hearts, forever.

He looks at his delicate plate of designer sushi.

IRENE

What are you thinking about?

Beat.

NICK

The ocean.

Coming back to life, he takes out his credit card. Irene gets out her black Amex business card.

IRENE

I'll get it.

NICK

I would like to.

IRENE

But, darling, I can expense...

NICK

I would like to because you are a woman and I am a man.

She puts her card away, flustered, blushing.

INT.SPA, DAY

Lisa works at a Beverly Hills spa that is stocked with luxury Buddha statues and \$50 karma candles.

INT.HOME

Andrea is in her office in the main house. She chose to sleep in the tree house so she could make her bedroom a big office instead. Her shelves house an immaculate book collection, all classic bases covered. Two posters advertising her book readings. Poster of her book cover, with prominent blurbs by Fay Weldon, Margaret Atwood, Salman Rushdie:

"At only 23, Andrea Stone has crafted a novel that puts us all to shame".

"Astonishing insight, wit and skill from one so young. A rare achievement".

We see her novel on the shelf above her desk in different editions, different languages. She takes one down from the shelf. She gives herself a paper cut with it. And another edition. Another paper cut, this one deeper and meaner.

INT.CAR/INT.BUS LATE AFTERNOON

Nick is a little drunk after lunch and he looks at his phone for a long time. Then he texts Andrea.

"Thank you for a great night."

He puts the phone away and starts driving.

Almost immediately the phone rings. It is Andrea, calling from the bus. He vacillates a moment about taking the call. Then presses the green button.

ANDREA

You don't write very well. For a writer.

He has her on speakerphone.

NICK

I'm a doctor. I could do a post-coital removal of your spleen but I think you'd be even less inclined to sleep with me again.

ANDREA

Again?

NICK
Yes. What?

INT.ROOM, DAY

Lisa is in a treatment room giving a facial to an unusually handsome man in his early to mid sixties. When we join them they have been sharing silence. He clears his throat:

BRETT
That smells good.

LISA
Mmm, it's very soothing. It has orange and clove and a little bit of myrrh.

BRETT
Sounds biblical.

LISA
Yes: I do a toner and a microdermabrasion and then after that I take a sword and sacrifice you to a vengeful Lord.

Awkward silence.

LISA
Only joking. (Beat) God steps in and saves you at the last minute.

Nothing.

LISA
What do you do?

BRETT
I'm a Rabbi.

More awkward silence.

LISA
You're kidding?

BRETT
No.

LISA
You're not just saying that, because of what I said?

BRETT

I'm not. Why are you so surprised?

LISA

I just didn't think you'd be allowed to do something like this.

BRETT

Why's that?

LISA

Isn't it vain?

BRETT

I'm sure that it is. My wife, Josie gave it to me for my birthday. I don't know what she was thinking. She was trying to be nice.

LISA

I think I remember Josie. Pretty lady? Blonde hair? Older?

BRETT

Older? Ah, *she'd like that.*

LISA

I haven't been in a synagogue since my Grandfather's funeral. I'm such a bad Jew, I feel wrong touching you. Like I'm touching the Torah during my period. I'm not. It finished three days ago.

He grimaces good naturedly. She corrects herself.

LISA

Four days.

BRETT

You're Jewish.

LISA

Our Father.

He grimaces less good natured.

BRETT

When was the last time you went to Temple?

LISA

Fourteen.

BRETT
How old are you now?

LISA
Twenty-three. How old are you?

He smiles but doesn't answer.

INT.CAR

Nick pulls over and puts his head on the steering wheel.

NICK
I thought it went well.

ANDREA
It went well? Like a scrabble game?

He sits up.

NICK
Look: we can have a fling, if you want? An affair.

ANDREA
A fling-air?

NICK
A flingair? [He sounds hopeful] How would you define that?

ANDREA
When it's so light as air, there's no possibility that either of us could possibly get hurt.

She gives herself another paper cut with 'Driving Without Fear' as she says this.

NICK
I bought my nephews a toy called a 'Flinger' once. It was sort of a stretchy, jelly hand and you could fling it at other kids or, if you were bold, at an adult.

He's losing her. At least, she wants him to think that.

ANDREA
Or maybe we're just better as a one off. Think of all those beautiful bands who were one hit wonders.

NICK

No. I want to see you again. But, I guess, I just don't want to feel like I *have* to call you.

Now he wants her to think he's not really bothered.

ANDREA

If you don't want to call me, but you do want to have sex with me, how will I know *when* you want the sex?

Passengers on the bus turn to stare at her. He thinks.

NICK

I'll text you.

He hurriedly hangs up. Puts the phone in his glove compartment. He doesn't like her. Also: he likes her. Very much.

INT.SPA

Lisa is finishing up with Brett, hovering around the edges of the table.

LISA

I think it's admirable that you're not embarrassed to get a facial.

BRETT

I am embarrassed. Richard Burton said that the reason so many actors have drinking problems is that they know they started their day in the make-up chair.

She keeps working.

LISA

Is there anything left you want to do? Like that Bucket List thing?

BRETT

I have no plans to die right now.

LISA

The mask takes ten minutes.

BRETT

I'll hold out.

LISA

I feel nervous with you. I mis-spoke.

It's too late. She's put troubled thoughts into his mind.

She puts the cucumber slices on his eyes, pulling her hands away quickly, and takes the opportunity to study the planes of his handsome face. He has the kind of features that would look right carved on the side of Mount Rushmore.

INT.TREE HOUSE

Andrea tries to read her book 'Driving Without Fear'. She puts it down and starts leafing through Nick's memoir.

She gets a text from Nick - we see his name but not the content, which causes her to raise an eyebrow.

INT.SPA

Brett, now dressed in a sharp suit, is checking out at reception. He's quite stunning. Handing a tip envelope to Lisa, he says:

BRETT

Any time you'd like to reconnect with your roots again, I'd love you to come check out my congregation.

LISA

I don't really like my Father. So that side isn't...I'm not interested in that part of me. I'm sorry.

BRETT

Well. If you change your mind...

He heads for the door...

BRETT

Come before I die.

After he leaves...

RECEPTIONIST

His service is very, very popular. Standing room only.

LISA

Why?

RECEPTIONIST

He was in the underground resistance as a teenager in Holland during World War II and then he came to America and marched with Martin Luther King during the civil rights movement. I can't believe you haven't heard of him. He's really important. He's like this famous, electric orator. He's a total rock star.

LISA

So he's a charlatan?

RECEPTIONIST

Why would you say that?

LISA

Why would you trust the very popular? Except Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young.

RECEPTIONIST

You trust all of them?

LISA

Yes. [She re-thinks] Not Neil Young.

RECEPTIONIST

Why not?

Lisa has thought about this a great deal.

LISA

Because he looks like a horse pee'd on his jeans, but he just kept them on and let them dry in the sun.

HARD CUT TO:

EXT.LAUREL CANYON, MORNING

'Revolution Blues' by Neil Young and shots of Laurel Canyon, from the Canyon Country Store, to the streets with no sidewalks, the 1930's mailboxes, and death defying two way roads that can barely fit one car.

INT.KITCHEN, MORNING

Andrea pads down from her tree house and in to the main house to get tea, Perry the cat following. Martin stares at her with laser vision.

MARTIN

Why are you wearing a bloke's shirt?

ANDREA

Oh, this? This is just my new nightie I've been wearing.

MARTIN

You had a one night stand and now you're wearing his shirt to bed.

ANDREA

It's mine. I earned it.

Lisa walks in and Martin looks to her for support.

MARTIN

Your sister doesn't have a proper grasp on the free market.

LISA

Leave her alone.

He looks at the label.

MARTIN

It's not even a good brand.

ANDREA

How do you know?

MARTIN

Because I used to be able to afford them.

LISA

Stop.

MARTIN

Send it back. Go on.
I'll drop it under his gate for you. You don't want it hanging around, smelling of him and giving you thoughts.

ANDREA

What thoughts?

MARTIN

That it's more than a one night stand.

ANDREA

It's not. I said that. He already asked if I wanted to have an affair and I said "no".

MARTIN

Smells hang around, you know. That's why you get the phrase "hanging around like a bad smell".

ANDREA

But it's a good smell. He smelled good.

Martin sniffs the shirt.

MARTIN

Smells like a pub ceiling.

ANDREA

It's a good smell. But it was just a one night stand.

MARTIN

Then give it back.

Humiliated by her need to cling to it and him, she undoes Nick's shirt and steps out of it. Naked. Angry.

LISA

Andrea! That's my fucking boyfriend!

He looks up at Lisa and says, like a kid telling tales to a teacher:

MARTIN

She's got no arse. I feel sorry for her. Can you imagine how hard it must be to be your sister, with you looking all...

LISA

[Irritated] Stop it. She's beautiful.

She doesn't like anyone criticizing her sister except her. He hangs his head, reprimanded. But then Andrea leaps back in:

ANDREA

That's how Dad fucked us up:
"Andrea's the beautiful one. Lisa's
the smart one". He said it to
everyone. Until I had to become a
writer to prove him wrong.

Lisa quietly wraps the cat food in cling film.

LISA

But you didn't stop being
beautiful.

Beat.

ANDREA

Yeah but...that's not up to me.

Beat.

She holds out her scarred arms.

ANDREA

I mean. I tried?

Martin watches, helpless, then turns to Lisa.

MARTIN

Let's go for a walk.

Lisa puts the cat food away.

ANDREA

There's no sidewalk here.

Forging on, heroic:

MARTIN

Let's drive to a walk.

Lisa nods and takes the car keys off the hook.

Andrea, still naked, watches out the window as they drive
away.

INT.NICK'S BEDROOM, MORNING

Nick wakes up with a girl, who is naked in a far more
glamorous way. He looks over, seeing her warped reflection
through the empty liquor bottle. His expression says "Not
again."

INT.CAR, MORNING

Lisa is silent, still numb from Andrea's monologue.

LISA

I think it's good Andrea isn't out on the roads. I think she'd be a terrible driver.

MARTIN

I have good news.

She smiles, leans into his arm.

LISA

You got another gig?

MARTIN

Yes.

LISA

Whose house?

MARTIN

Not painting a house. A gig gig. The band. Back together.

LISA

What?!

MARTIN

Just for a night. But if it went well, it would be more nights. You've never seen me like that. The way I was. I can't wait for you to see me play. To understand what I can do.

Beat.

MARTIN

You're quiet. Wouldn't you rather be with a rock star?

LISA

I like you how you are.

She leans into him again, but she's looking beyond him, through the window as they pass a family of Hassids on foot.

HARD CUT TO:

INT.SYNAGOGUE, EVE

A packed auditorium of a thousand people. Live music is playing as people take their seats, from a band on stage consisting of a double bass, piano, elaborate drum set, violin and clarinet. The band is multi-ethnic, some Ashkenazi, some Sephardic, even an Ethiopian Jew. Children wriggle on their parents' laps. Younger couples have their arms linked. Here and there young (and not so young women) sit gossiping together as if out on the prowl at a nightclub.

Singing a re-arranged traditional, the Cantor rocks so hard his Yalmulke slips sideways, hanging by one precarious barrette.

There is a palpable energy as Brett, entering stage left, takes the pulpit. A cheer erupts at the sight of him. Lisa, sitting by herself, looks embarrassed, and then excited.

BRETT

I want to start, tonight, by reminding you that at the end of the month we have our trip to Washington to take part in the march for Darfur. I want all of you to make the trip with me. Indeed it is your duty to make the trip with me. You know why?

The Cantor looks up at him. Brett and the sexy, early forties Cantor have an easy banter like a comedy double act who've not only been touring for years but also made millions.

BRETT

My friends. In the words of the great sixteenth century Kabbalist, Rabbi Eliezer Azikri...

CANTOR

And who doesn't love Rabbi Eliezer Azikri?

Lisa looks around her, confused. Are you allowed to talk like this in synagogue? Brett's voice is as powerful as his physique.

BRETT

...The Jewish people are the alarm clock of the world. We are the world's conscience. When the world is sleeping, we go off. Why don't people like Jews? Because nobody loves their alarm clock...

INT.SYNAGOGUE

As the congregation file out, Brett is there to wish them good-night. She pushes past people, arms outstretched as if they were trying to shake hands with Obama.

LISA
Hello.

BRETT
I'm so glad you came.

LISA
Really?

BRETT
I was hoping you'd make it. Did you enjoy it?

LISA
Yes.

BRETT
How does my skin look?

LISA
Fine.

BRETT
Will you be coming to Washington with us on the 31st?

LISA
Oh, I'd love to, but I just found out my boyfriend is playing a show that night. He's used to be sort of a rock guy. Not big like you...

Brett laughs.

LISA
But I have to be there.

BRETT
Of course you do. He didn't want to be with you tonight?

LISA
Oh, I didn't ask him. He's not Jewish.

BRETT
This service extends the branch to all faiths.

(MORE)

BRETT (cont'd)
Bring him along next time. As you
can see, music is very important to
us.

LISA
Okay. Good-night. Great sermon.

BRETT
Thank you.

INT.HOME, EVE

Lisa is describing her night to Martin who, paint splattered
and exhausted from a long day, is drinking a beer at the
breakfast nook.

LISA
It was amazing. Just to have a
chance to connect with your
background, from a chance meeting
like that.

MARTIN
Like how we met?

LISA
We met in Rite-Aid.

MARTIN
That was good.

LISA
It was good because it led to us.
But it wasn't as celestial as a
Rabbi, spread out on your table,
like a gift from God.

MARTIN
Yes it was.

LISA
Okay, it was.

MARTIN
Let's go to Rite-Aid now.

LISA
Why?

MARTIN
It would be romantic.

LISA

Okay.

EXT.RITE-AID, NIGHT

It is not romantic. The corner of Sunset and Fairfax, this branch is particularly crack-heady and grim. But Martin only sees her milky loveliness and, putting down a shopping cart of trash bags and razors, takes her in an embrace. As he kisses her, she sees, over his shoulder, a butch lesbian couple wheeling a three legged poodle that is wearing a diaper. She stares at them with one open eye. They look back at her and Martin with equal interest and whisper judgmental as they pass. He notices this.

MARTIN

You're so young, darlin'. It's hard to be in the world with you sometimes.

She hangs her head. This is a circular discussion.

MARTIN

But I love shopping for trash bags with you. And I always did.

INT. ANDREA'S TREE HOUSE, 1 A.M

Laptop in bed, she is working on her book, actually concentrating and productive, when a text buzzes from Nick.

EXT.TREE HOUSE, 1 A.M

We see, through the blue black night-time sky and spooky trees, Andrea climbing down her ladder.

INT.NICK'S BEDROOM, 2 A.M

Andrea is dancing in her underwear. As much as she thinks about him, she isn't thinking about him, now he's watching her. And he is watching, drinking, wishing he could dance.

ANDREA

Dance with me!

NICK

No. I can't. I'm out of shape. And you're good.

ANDREA

You are out of shape, for a doctor.
I was a dancer. Before I was a
writer. What were you? Before?

NICK

I was in med school.

She stops dancing.

ANDREA

Of course. Then you were in a war
zone. I can't imagine what it was
like. Nick...I wasn't going to say
anything...but...the other
night...do you remember what you
talked about, before we fell
asleep?

NICK

About what great breasts you have?

ANDREA

No. You must have been saying that
inside your head. Out loud...you
talked about the rocket attacks.
Remember?

NICK

How's your deadline coming along?

She stares at him, stone faced.

He nods, once, twice, three times. Then pulls her onto his
knee and into a kiss. As he kisses her, and he is distracted,
she slides a bracelet off her hand and deliberately drops it
down the back of his bed.

As he slides inside her, he drunkenly says:

NICK

Do I own you now?

To her great shame, taking it much too seriously, she
whispers:

ANDREA

Yes.

INT.NICK'S HOUSE, MORNING

Creeping out in the morning as Nick slumbers, she notices an invite to a book party that night. She memorizes the time and address.

INT.GALLERY, MIDDAY

Martin is painting the walls in silvery paint. He's wearing jeans and a pink T-shirt, which looks very endearing on one so manly.

Lisa comes by with lunch for him. He looks at her like she's a wrapped gift.

MARTIN

Hey!

LISA

Hey. Brought your lunch. What are you wearing? Is that the white shirt I ruined in the wash?

MARTIN

It is. I love it. Means I'm carrying you to work, in all your beauty and faults.

LISA

What faults?

She digs in the paper bag for him. Reese's Peanut Butter cups. Ham and cheese sandwich. French fries. Vanilla milkshake.

MARTIN

You're an angel. Thank you, baby.

He pulls her onto his knee. She pulls away, sweetly, but still away.

LISA

Late for work. And I may be late home. I'm going to stop by Temple again.

MARTIN

Again? Already?

LISA

Uh, yeah. Things are kind of slow at the spa and it seemed like a great place to network for clients. All those wives of executives.

MARTIN

And executives. Probably a lot of the executives in Hollywood are female at this point, don't you think?

LISA

[Flummoxed] Yeah, probably. Exactly.

MARTIN

Women can do anything.

He pats her bottom, sending her on her way.

EXT.SYNAGOGUE

Lisa pulls up and watches Brett working at his desk at the window, drawing lines through the page, talking to himself. He's "rehearsing" for the service. Then she pulls away and heads to the spa.

EXT.PARK

Martin, taking a break, is sitting on a park bench, smoking a cigarette. Children play nearby. One boy, age five or so, is eyeing him for a bit and, when the kid approaches, Martin quickly puts out his cigarette.

LITTLE BOY

Hello.

Martin looks around nervously, not wanting to be caught chatting to a little boy. He locks eyes with the kid's mother, who smiles.

MARTIN

What's going on?

LITTLE BOY

Why are you wearing a pink T-shirt?

MARTIN

Why wouldn't I?

LITTLE BOY
But pink is for girls.

MARTIN
If I'm a boy and I don't mind
wearing pink, then pink must be for
boys too. Right?

The boy hesitates. Then leans in closer. Martin leans forward to better hear him, as he says in a whisper that morphs to an excited shriek:

LITTLE BOY
Pink is my favourite colour.

Reacting to the shriek-excitement, Martin's face is a combination of alarm and delight.

Having unburdened himself, the boy turns on his heel and runs back to his pals fast as his little legs will carry him.

INT.BOOK PARTY, EVENING

Andrea looks around for someone to talk to whilst she's pretending not to be there just to try and see Nick. Her facade is tested as no-one seems much interested in her and Nick is there with Irene. It's weird and awkward seeing each other out of bed. She pretends she's just walking by him towards the toilets but he grabs her arm.

NICK
Hey!

ANDREA
Fancy seeing you here.

NICK
I didn't know you knew Thom and
Ginny.

She looks antsy.

ANDREA
They're fans of my book.

NICK
Who isn't?

He turns Irene towards her.

NICK

Do you know Andrea Stone? She wrote
'Anxiety Is Freedom' when she was
only twenty-three.

Irene puts out a manicured hand to her chipped one. Amazing
that a seventy year old woman can make her feel so physically
inadequate, but she does.

IRENE

The little English writer. Great
book. Terrible title. Would have
sold a million with a different
title. I've not been up on your
books since.

ANDREA

There haven't been any.

NICK

She moved coasts. She's got an epic
masterpiece under wraps.

IRENE

Well hurry up, woman. You mustn't
leave it too long between books.

ANDREA

Just trying to think of a really
bad title.

Nick smiles and walks off. Irene looks at Andrea but they
have nothing to say to each other and Irene's been in the
business too long to fake the funk. There's nothing Andrea
can give her and so she follows Nick.

INT. BOOK PARTY, EVE

Andrea heads for the door. Nick is deep in conversation with
a young lady she knows he's in the process of picking up. If
he feels awkward about this he doesn't show it.

NICK

Hey! Have you met Chloe?

ANDREA

Hi Chloe. Bye.

He waves at Andrea as she leaves - what a great girl! She
knows the score! - and goes back to his new flirtation.

INT.SYNAGOGUE, EVE

It's packed again. Lisa's eyes gleam as Brett speaks, but so do many other women's.

EXT.SYNAGOGUE, EVENING

Lisa makes her way out, energized, shy, when she accidentally catches Brett's eye.

BRETT
Hey! Limey Jewess!

She's so flattered at him making fun of her, she could burst.

BRETT
I want something from you!

LISA
You do?

BRETT
Yes! Can I call you?

She nods.

INT.BUS, EVENING

Andrea's sitting opposite her favourite bum, Levi, in her pretty party dress. He has a crack addict's tell-tale ring of white around his mouth.

ANDREA
How was your night?

LEVI
Can't complain.

She could complain. She could complain for ages without stopping, but it seems wrong with a homeless man. She looks at his jumble of possessions. She gets out at her stop, changes her heels for flats and pulls out her mini flash light for the hike up the hill.

INT.CAR, EVENING

Nick is driving back from the book party with Chloe beside him, when he sees someone who needs help, a man whose had a heart attack at the wheel of his vehicle.

Bursting out of the car, Nick gives CPR and after several tense minutes, the guy starts breathing again. He doesn't stop to hang about. He's seen so much worse, this doesn't phase him. And anyway: he wants to get home and fuck.

INT.PUBLISHING HOUSE NY/NICK'S HOUSE, LA

Irene is chuckling as she drinks coffee and reads the newspaper:

"Medical- memoirist continues heroics".

SECRETARY

He's on line two.

IRENE

Nice work, Nick. You just sold yourself another hundred thousand copies.

He nods and looks at the paper.

NICK

It's so ridiculous.

IRENE

Enjoy it.

NICK

I'm not.

His phone buzzes and he reads from the text:

"Last night was great. I hope to see you soon" ventures poor, hopeful Chloe. He answers out loud to himself:

NICK

I hope you die.

INT.KITCHEN, DAY

Lisa is doing the NY Times crossword in angry, purple ink. The phone rings.

LISA

Hello.

BRETT

Lisa?

LISA

Yes.

BRETT
It's Brett. Your Rabbi.

LISA
Hi!

BRETT
Remember I wanted to ask you something?

LISA
Yes?

BRETT
I know you hike. You want to hike and I can ask you?

LISA
I could hike tomorrow, if you want? I get off work early.

BRETT
Tomorrow's bad. What are you doing right now?

LISA
Um, okay.

BRETT
I'll ask you again. What are you doing right now?

LISA
Yes, alright. Can you give me half an hour?

BRETT
Okay, so like, 2.30. I'll meet you at Freyman in the parking lot.

She looks at her watch and frowns. That gives her fifteen minutes.

LISA
Okay.

She rushes about putting on make-up, pulling on track pants. She passes Martin's paint splattered overalls hanging from the door on her way out. They only catch her eye for a moment.

EXT.FREYMAN, DAY

Toned LA types sprint ahead of them in track-pants with phrases on the butt. Brett is incredibly fit and has his dog with him. She wants to stand close to Brett but away from the dog.

BRETT

So here's my pitch to you: You said your boyfriend was in a band? I looked them up on the world wide web. They were pretty popular. Would you be able to get him to help you organize an interfaith concert in support of Darfur, since you guys can't come to the rally?

LISA

My boyfriend? Darfur?

He looks at her.

LISA

I didn't mean to say 'Darfur' like it was a bad thing.

BRETT

It *is* a bad thing.

He looks at her.

BRETT

And 'boyfriend'. Is that a bad thing? You guys are still together?

LISA

Yes. Of course we are.

They keep hiking next to each other, she looking at the ground, he looking at the sky.

INT.LIVING ROOM

Martin and Andrea are staring at Perry, who is sitting on an envelope. Martin is smoking pot and practicing chords on his guitar.

MARTIN

You sure it's okay for you to be around me when I do this?

ANDREA

Yeh, no problem. Hippie shit for weak people.

Ignoring the insult:

MARTIN

That's what they say in your meetings?

ANDREA

Yeh, yeh basically.

MARTIN

When did you last go?

ANDREA

I go twice a week. So, I went about a month ago.

He lets the math slide.

MARTIN

I can't believe you wrote a whole novel whilst you were on heroin.

ANDREA

You've never read Samuel Taylor Coleridge?

He shakes his head.

ANDREA

Don't bother.

Beat.

ANDREA

It was like sleepwalking. I don't remember doing it. But when it was done, I had a masterpiece. Horrific debt, a quickie marriage to a junkie, no friends, holes in my arms, but a masterpiece.

MARTIN

Why'd it take you so long to write again?

She smiles, sadly.

ANDREA

I got clean.

Sweet man that he is, Martin cannot deal with darkness of this depth. So he changes the subject, pointing to Perry the cat.

MARTIN

It's so weird. If there's a piece of paper, anywhere on the floor, he has to sit on it. Like, "Mmm, cozy!", no matter how small it is.

She looks at Perry.

ANDREA

Yeah, I understand when it's the newspaper. But the pieces of paper just keep getting smaller and smaller and you keep sitting on them and insisting they're cozy. There's a whole room. There's a whole house. Why this piece of paper?

Perry moves. She sees it's a disconnect notice.

ANDREA

Oh, shit. No, sit on it again.

Martin takes it. Looks at her.

MARTIN

It's for a hundred dollars. Even I can pay that.

She's pretty embarrassed. And pretty scared.

ANDREA

What can I tell you?

Lisa walks in from her hike.

MARTIN

Where have you been?

She deflects.

LISA

What's that?

She takes it from his hand.

Lisa goes into her bedroom, gets her checkbook, gets on the phone. Starts sorting out the bill.

A little black cloud, Andrea walks out the back of the house and into the garden towards her tree house.

LISA
What's her problem?

MARTIN
She couldn't pay it.

LISA
I know. That's why I'm paying it.

MARTIN
I guess she feels bad you have the money.

LISA
I have a steady job. I have more money than her. I've had a steady job since I was eighteen. And I didn't blow it on smack. A lot of high heels she ordered online when she was high in that she can't wear now she has to ride the bus everywhere and walk up a fucking mountain to get home.

He puts his arms around her.

MARTIN
You smell all sweaty.

LISA
I'll go shower.

MARTIN
Please don't.

Lisa doesn't want to have sex with him, but she feels guilty after her walk with Brett...

CUT TO:

INT.LISA AND MARTIN'S BEDROOM, EARLY EVE

While Lisa goes down on Martin on the bed, Perry the cat sits on the window-seat, licking himself. He seems to be deliberately mimicking her rhythm, only Martin can see this and she, obviously, cannot.

LISA
Relax.

MARTIN

Okay.

LISA

What's wrong?

MARTIN

I feel I'm being mocked.

LISA

How am I mocking you?

He points at the cat.

LISA

You were looking at the cat that whole time?

MARTIN

I was trying not to.

LISA

Just forget it.

MARTIN

No! Come back!

He looks at the cat.

MARTIN

Go away!

Lisa huffs and walks out and into the bathroom where she closes the door. Perry comes and settles on Martin's chest. He fixes Perry with a glare.

MARTIN

There seems to be some confusion.

INT.TREE HOUSE, EVE

Andrea is reading Nick's memoir when her phone beeps. She finishes the sentence she's reading:

"It was 6 a.m And the sky was beginning to see itself in a new light...".

Only when she's finished reading does she read the text:

"Come to me".

She sighs and puts down the book, wearily gets dressed.

INT.NICK'S HOUSE, DAWN.

Andrea is asleep in bed, snoring sweetly. Checking now and then to make certain she isn't stirring, Nick stands by the window and goes through his phone, looking at girl's numbers, deciding which to delete and which to keep.

INT.NICK'S HOUSE, MORNING.

The edited phone flashes, placed neatly in a corner as Andrea is on bended knee, examining Nick's penis.

ANDREA

It looks absolutely fine.

NICK

Good.

ANDREA

It looks perfect. Can I stand up now?

NICK

Sure.

Now eye to eye, she dusts off her hands.

ANDREA

You're really scared of STD's, for someone who worked in a war zone.

NICK

I saw the ravages there.

ANDREA

It's weird that you'd be brave enough to be there but there's so much you're afraid of here, in American life.

He doesn't argue that point. Doesn't look away from her as he takes a swig of pre-lunch vodka.

NICK

Aren't there little things you're afraid of and big things you're brave about?

Nodding to his vodka.

NICK

Is this okay? To do this in front of you?

ANDREA

It's fine, I never had a problem with drink. You do, though.

He is silent, smiling, it's all eminently ignorable.

ANDREA

[Acknowledging this, answering his previous question] Yes. I'm afraid of Katy Perry. I'm not afraid of Amadinajad.

NICK

Well that's just stupid. You have nothing to fear from Katy.

ANDREA

Oh, 'Katy'.

He shrugs.

NICK

I've met her. She's a very nice woman.

He presses his face into the back of her neck and inhales.

NICK

You're so fuckin' sexy.

With him distracted, she takes a barrette out of her hair and drops it down the back of his bed, where she'd previously dropped her bracelet.

NICK

I fuckin' love fucking you.

ANDREA

You're not really a *natural* wordsmith.

He pulls away.

ANDREA

Come back.

He's turned himself off.

ANDREA

Please?

NICK

I've got a conference call with my agent.

Beat.

NICK
Do you still have an agent?

Beat.

ANDREA
I don't know. To be completely
honest.

She gets dressed. And leaves.

He watches her from the window, walking down the street.

NICK
Come back.

INT.SYNAGOGUE, EVENING

Brett is giving his sermon. Lisa is looking up at him, with the fervor of a cult member, more intensely even than his usual devoted fan club.

BRETT
Israel was an unrequited love until
sixty years ago. And now it's a
tortuous, tortuous love affair.

Lisa tries to blink away the tears in her eyes. She lets them discreetly spill when she davins.

INT.KITCHEN, EVENING

Lisa walks in to find Andrea at the table with her laptop. Assuming she's working, she smiles. When she gets closer, she sees she's looking at TMZ, the celebrity gossip site.

LISA
Andrea! If you're going to waste
your time do you have to do it on
quite such a grotesque site?

ANDREA
It's founded by one of your fellow
congregants.

LISA
It's disgusting.

ANDREA

I know. And that's why everyone hates the Jews.

LISA

That's not why everyone hates the...

She changes thought:

LISA

Everyone does *not* hate The Jews.

ANDREA

Look at me: They don't like it when Jewish writers don't write about the issues they want. Why do you think I am where I am now? No publisher. No agent.

LISA

Because you fucked it up for yourself!

ANDREA

Yeh. But I'm a good writer...

LISA

Of course you are! You're brilliant! You control it all and you fucked it all up. You spent it on drugs and shoes. You used up all your gifts on one book. That's why you are where you are now. Not because of the Jews.

Andrea nods her head, keeps working. Lisa walks out of the room. Andrea repeats to herself, with incredible sadness, because she has not one other thing going for her in the world:

ANDREA

I am a good writer.

INT. ROSCOE'S CHICKEN AND WAFFLES, EVENING

Lisa is trying to take a bite of chicken. Martin is absolutely shovelling the stuff down his throat. She stops trying to eat, and starts crying. He nearly chokes.

MARTIN

What's wrong, angel?

LISA

Nothing. I'm sorry. Just that time
of the month.

He slides in next to her.

MARTIN

Can I do anything?

He starts to rub her tummy.

MARTIN

It's brilliant, you women, the way
you cleanse yourself each month.

People trying to eat their food look at him, upset. She looks
at him, upset. Because he's not who she wants him to be. She
sniffles.

LISA

Want to come to services with me?

He smiles.

MARTIN

I thought you'd never ask.

INT.SYNAGOGUE, EVENING

Martin looks uncomfortable as he watches the live band. He is
sweating profusely. He feels terribly out of his element.

MARTIN

It's very nice of you to bring me.
But I should really have gone to
band practice. It's only a week
away. Maybe I should go?

She shoots him a look. He nods at the stage, chastened.

MARTIN

Bloody good musicians, your lot.

CANTOR

Hands above your head!

MARTIN

Oh, fuck off!

LISA

Martin!

CUT TO:

INT.SYNAGOGUE, EVE

Brett is giving his sermon.

BRETT

To study Torah is to enter into a world in which we can be at home. Like home, it is sometimes uncomfortable, too close or suddenly alien to us. Like home, at times it forces us to live with people who irritate or upset us.

Martin looks worried.

BRETT

But always it calls us back.

Martin looks relieved.

EXT.SYNAGOGUE, EVENING

After the service Brett moves towards them, clutching his wife, Josie who is indeed a good looking older woman, blonde, beautifully groomed, tasteful plastic surgery. Lisa feels frumpy in comparison.

BRETT

You must be Martin. I've heard so much about you. You're supposed to be an incredible musician.

MARTIN

And I'll paint your house for a hundred quid.

Brett smiles, awkwardly.

BRETT

Is that good?

LISA

Not really.

BRETT

Well, we're big fans of your girl here.

MARTIN

Oh, yeh, she's more of a woman, I always try and explain that.

BRETT

To who?

MARTIN

To myself.

Attempting to alleviate the tension:

JOSIE

It's been so long, Lisa. You gave me that great full body scrub, remember?

Lisa smiles, best she can.

MARTIN

I really liked the part with the dancers.

BRETT

Thank-you. That was Lisa's idea.

She watches, furious, as Josie places her hand on her husband's. Martin tries to think of something to say, of some way to endear himself to the Rabbi and by extension, to Lisa.

MARTIN

The Holocaust was a terrible thing.

Everyone looks at him. He tuts, like a little old lady.

MARTIN

Terrible business.

INT. BOOK SOUP, DAY

Martin is putting up flyers for his concert while Andrea is rearranging Nick's books to make them less prominent.

MARTIN

You about finished writing your next book, hey?

ANDREA

Nick hasn't replied to my last text. What do you think that means?

MARTIN

I know you don't give a fuck what I think about anything. But. You need to grow up. You need to write. Before it's too late. Before what ever you had expires.

She doesn't want to hear this.

ANDREA

Oh because you, in your middle aged wisdom, have gotten the band back together for one night only, recapturing your glory days for a room of a hundred lucky people.

MARTIN

I'll be fucking thrilled if we get a hundred people. I'll be thrilled just to have one person, just to have your sister see what I can do.

Beat.

MARTIN

Have you fallen in love with this guy?

ANDREA

Absolutely not. We fuck. That's all.

MARTIN

Because if you were falling in love with him...you'd write. And if you ended up with him or if you didn't end up with him, you'd still have your work back.

This hits her at this exact moment, surrounded by all these books. She rearranges them.

MARTIN

Instead of doing this, wouldn't you rather just make your own books more prominent? Wouldn't you rather have your own, new one out?

ANDREA

Of course I would. But that takes effort that I don't have. I don't have it in me. I wanted to. I thought I might. But it's gone. This is far easier.

He picks up Nick's book, interested. She takes it from him, puts it back on the shelf.

ANDREA

This isn't real writing, you know?

MARTIN

Really?

This makes him want to buy it.

ANDREA

He isn't a *writer*. He's a doctor.
He doesn't slave over sentences.
He's just a chancer who got lucky
because something really, really
sad happened to him. All he had to
do was write it down.

MARTIN

And feel it.

INT.HOME OFFICE, LUNCH

Andrea looks at her computer. And looks at it. She gets up and walks around the kitchen, eating from the cupboard. She finds a bag of cheetos. She looks at the computer again. She leaves Cheeto prints everywhere, pausing only to rip the pages of her international book editions apart.

She can't feel anything.

INT.HOME, EVENING

Lisa comes home from work to find her sister in front of the computer, her hands and around her mouth stained cheeto orange. The keyboard has a dusting of orange too. The books are across the room with the pages ripped out. She looks like she wants to die.

LISA

Good days work?

ANDREA

Sorry. What? Sorry, I'm just so
focused on this.

LISA

I won't interrupt you then.

ANDREA

I'd appreciate that. Thank you.

Lisa goes into her bedroom, irritated at her sister's passive-aggression.

INT.KITCHEN, EVENING

Andrea hears Jewish music coming from the bedroom and storms in.

ANDREA

Jesus Christ! Can you turn this
crap off?

LISA

It's not crap! It's the same words
your ancestors were singing one
thousand years ago.

Andrea comes very close.

ANDREA

You don't like our Father.

LISA

I know you say how great a Dad he
was to you. But the time I was
born, he'd turned to shit and you
know it.

ANDREA

But you love his religion.

LISA

It's not *his* religion. He doesn't
have dibs on it...

ANDREA

And he doesn't have any interest in
it. But he was beaten up every day
of his school going like for being
a dirty kike...

LISA

A lot of people have shitty
childhoods and don't turn into
assholes.

ANDREA

Sure. Like you.

Andrea sits down.

ANDREA

But not me.

In avoiding looking at her sister, Lisa's gaze falls on
something else:

LISA
What's wrong with Perry?

ANDREA
What do you mean?

LISA
He looks weird.

ANDREA
He always looks weird.

Bending, she touches the cat's stomach and he shrieks.

ANDREA
I'm going to take him to the vet.

Her phone buzzes. She looks at the message then back at the cat. She pauses.

ANDREA
Perry, we're going to the vet when
I get back.

INT. NICK'S BEDROOM, EVE

Andrea sits on Nick's lap, takes the drink out of his hand, tries to put it to one side without him noticing.

He notices. Takes it back.

She looks for some recognition in his eyes, that this is a wordless conversation about his drinking. Nothing. In the background we hear 'Can't Keep It In' by Cat Stevens. Nick reaches past her and turns it up. This is the best he can do:

NICK
I like Cat's idea of going into the
ocean and coming out a new person.
I like that idea.

ANDREA
Does it matter what you come out
as?

NICK
No. Islam was completely random. It
doesn't matter what you come back
as. It just matters that you come
back.

He laughs. She kisses him. He pulls her underwear down. He starts going down on her. She keeps talking.

ANDREA
Will you come back to land?

He looks up at her.

ANDREA
I'm thinking of him there, under
the water. I thinking of you, in
Gaza, and what you went through.

He comes up and gags her. Just before he seals off her mouth
entirely she says:

ANDREA
Everything I want to say is making
me feel crazy. It's a relief to be
stopped.

He pulls the gag tight. A quick tear falls down her face and
as soon as he sees it, he takes the gag off.

NICK
Are you okay?

She doesn't answer.

NICK
Andrea? I'm so sorry if I somehow
misunder...

She interrupts.

ANDREA
When we have sex, you always ask,
"Do I own you?" Why do you want to
own me?

He wipes the tear from her face, holds her gaze, steady.

NICK
Because you're beautiful. Why do
you want to be owned?

Though he holds her face, she's wobbling on her words.

ANDREA
I want someone to corral me.
Someone to lead me to some kind of
safety in confinement. I'm just a
loner...looking to be taken up by
another loner.

He holds her. She eventually stops crying and falls asleep, safe in his arms. He is really troubled.

HARD CUT TO:

INT.NICK'S BEDROOM, MORNING

When she wakes up, he is nowhere to be found.

INT.HOUSE, MORNING

Andrea gets home, exhausted after their night together, and then has the walk up the hill. She puts out food for Perry. But he doesn't come out. She rattles it again. She looks in his special places. No Perry. She checks in the tree house. Then she sees a tail sticking out from under the living room sofa. She finds Perry unconscious.

INT.VET, MORNING

Andrea, sitting in the waiting area, looks distraught as the stern vet takes her through the issue.

VET

Look, your cat hadn't urinated in over two days. He has crystals in his urine that can't pass through the tip of the urethra in his penis because it's too narrow. In extreme cases we castrate them and reconstruct a vagina so that the urethra is wide enough for crystals to pass. I'm afraid that's what we're going to need to do to Perry.

ANDREA

You're joking.

VET

I'm serious. Be happy you got him here in time. And that you gave him a unisex name.

Lisa walks in.

ANDREA

Where the fuck were you?

LISA

I was at the Temple.

ANDREA

On a Thursday morning?

LISA

I was helping the Rabbi archive his old sermons.

ANDREA

Of course you were.

LISA

What's that supposed to mean?

ANDREA

You're giving up a good man, who loves you! For an elderly religious fundamentalist.

Their voices are too loud and the other pet owners look at them. Their pets look at them too.

LISA

Martin's a lot older than me, too.

ANDREA

Yes. He is. We all got the message: you like older men. You're too interesting and sensitive and advanced to be with guys your own age, we get it!

LISA

Fuck off.

Ignoring this deliberately, to make her angrier:

ANDREA

But I do feel as if: beyond a two decade age gap, you're kind of just labouring the point.

Lisa brings the volume back down.

LISA

So Martin's good and he loves me. I don't have to be with someone out of gratitude.

ANDREA

You think the Rabbi's going to fix your problems, like a magical unicorn?

A sad dog waiting to be seen peers up in interest.

LISA

I don't think he's a magical unicorn.

ANDREA

You think he's a Pegasus?

Lisa shakes her head. A rabbit arrives in a hamper.

ANDREA

You think he's a Yiddish leprechaun, he's gonna grant you a wish? Lead you to your pot'o'gelt?

Lisa explodes and the dogs start barking.

LISA

So I should be like you? Chasing a man in the prime of his career, screwing every girl he can, keeping you in his cycle of women and texting you when he can possibly remember to give a fuck.

A small pot bellied pig looks outraged.

RECEPTIONIST

Ladies! Calm down!

At just this moment, Perry is brought out by the nurse. They instantly fall silent because he looks so pathetic.

INT.TREE HOUSE, NIGHT

Perry is sitting on the bed. Both front paws are shaved.

The cone round his head is so sad and the wound is dreadful, bloody, purple and stitched. Andrea hears the ping of a text:

She starts to text. She gives up and just calls.

NICK

Oh! There you are.

ANDREA

I can't come over.

NICK

You're working?

ANDREA

My cat had an emergency sex change operation. It cost \$5000. He had crystals in his urine that built up and blocked his penis. So they had to take it away.

She starts to cry. He holds the phone away from his ear. Then he puts it on his heart, takes a breath and brings it back to his ear.

NICK

Can I do anything to help?

Even in her grief she is shocked by this offer and it takes her a moment to process. Her tears dry up.

ANDREA

No. Thank you. I just want to look after Perry. Uh, when he gets better, I guess...I'll see you around.

NICK

He'll get better.

But she's already hung up.

Perry finds some approximation of comfort and falls asleep on her.

INT.NICK'S HOUSE, DEAD OF NIGHT.

Empty bottles around him, he works on a text to Andrea, re-writing a few times before sending.

INT.TREE HOUSE, MIDDLE OF NIGHT

The familiar ping of her phone.

ANDREA

I don't want to deal with you anymore.

This is something new. Perry stirs, ever so slightly, in approval.

EXT.TREE HOUSE, NIGHT

It rains that night, around 4 a.m.

INT. TREE HOUSE, NIGHT

Andrea is woken by it and, with Perry in her arms, admires the astonishing beauty of a rainstorm in Laurel Canyon, as viewed from a tree house fifteen feet in the air. It feels like another planet, something close to where the Ewoks live.

INT.TREE HOUSE, MORNING.

The phone isn't on her pillow anymore, she can't remember where she put it. She reaches around Perry so as not to bother him too much. She rummages through her bag until she finds her phone. It has the text she didn't bother to read.

The subject line is: HAIKU FOR PERRY

The text is:

"Crystals are for snow and jewels

Not good in cats

Girls are better anyway"

She smiles.

INT.VET, DAY

She's waiting to collect Perry from a check up. The vet comes out with Perry in a basket.

VET

Looking good. Things are on the mend. Everything is as it should be.

She looks deep into the vet's eyes, hoping she's included in the prognosis.

INT.TAXI, DAY

In the taxi home with Perry, she remembers to turn on her phone. There are five messages from Nick.

INT.NICK'S HOUSE, EVENING.

It's the first time she's been there in a while.

NICK

Why weren't you answering me? I was going crazy.

ANDREA

I told you. I was very upset about my cat. I still am. I need to get back to him.

NICK

But we haven't had sex yet.

ANDREA

It seemed like a sign, to be honest.

Beat.

ANDREA

The castration.

He winces.

ANDREA

I think we should take a break.

NICK

Why? If what we're doing is meaningless, then what meaning can there be in taking a break?

He pulls her shirt off over her head. She sits there, shirtless, slumpy, feeling unsexy and not really looking it either.

NICK

Have you lost weight?

ANDREA

Why?

NICK

Your breasts look smaller.

ANDREA

I'm sorry, do you want your money back?

NICK

No. No! Jesus, what do you think of me? And you were so sad last time I saw you. I was worried.

ANDREA
So worried you had to run away
while I was asleep.

NICK
I had to go clear my head.

ANDREA
Look. I really don't know you.
Apart from your memoir and I doubt
that it's really you.

This causes him a sharp intake of breath.

NICK
I'm a good guy. You think I'm an
asshole. But that's just here.
That's just the sex. I'm a good
guy. Really.

ANDREA
Oh. Good.

He looks at her.

NICK
I love the part in your novel where
you say that the mouth is the
only...

ANDREA
You read my novel?

NICK
Of course. I've been trying to
piece you together.

ANDREA
I thought this was meaningless?

NICK
Yeah [convincing himself]. But good
writing is good writing.

She looks off into the distance.

ANDREA
We have great sex.

NICK
Thank-you.

ANDREA

I'm not complimenting you. It's not really you, it's all just...chemistry.

NICK

Okay.

ANDREA

What do you think it means?

NICK

The sex? That it works so well?

She nods.

NICK

I think it means we're compatible. In some way.

He shakes his head. She nods hers.

NICK

But you don't want that.

ANDREA

No. And neither do you.

NICK

Yes. I want it with someone. Very much. That's human. I just know, I mean you've told me - that path isn't for you.

She nods. She knows she isn't going to make it work with him. Or anyone.

INT. BATHROOM, MORNING

Andrea is in the tub, attempting to wash away her sadness. Perry is on the closed lid of the toilet, in Buddha pose, staring at her, the cone around his head like a halo

ANDREA

I don't feel good about myself, Perry. I don't feel good.

She tries to make it sound perkier, repeating it, but now sung to the tune of 'A Comedy Tonight' from 'A Funny Thing Happened On The Way To the Forum...'

ANDREA

I do not feel good/ I do not feel
good/ I didn't feel so good/ about
myself/ last night!

Lisa walks in and sits down on the closed toilet and Andrea
composes herself.

LISA

Do you think Martin's going to be
okay for the show?

ANDREA

Yeah. He's really excited. Mainly
for you to see him because you
missed that whole part of his life.

LISA

You think he's ready?

ANDREA

He's certainly been anxiety eating
in preparation.

Lisa feigns ignorance.

LISA

Has he?

ANDREA

Lisa, he's gained about five pounds
this week!

Lisa's phone rings.

LISA

Shh, it's him. [Into phone] Hey,
Martin.

Andrea does a Cookie Monster voice:

ANDREA

"Hello, Lisa. I am *eating*".

Lisa stands up.

LISA

What? Martin? I can't hear you.

ANDREA

Because he's eating the phone. He
accidentally dialed your number
with his tooth.

Lisa hangs up and shoves her in the water.

LISA
Jesus!

ANDREA
What?

LISA
I understand why everybody hates
you.

ANDREA
Everybody does NOT hate me.

Lisa exits and Andrea is there in the cooling water, holding her leg razor. She starts to shave but then loses the will, giving up half way up her shin.

INT.SYNAGOGUE, SATURDAY MORNING SERVICES

Lisa is dancing to 'L'kai Dodi' as the live band plays. She's jumping up and down, eyes closed, hands clapping. She's positively Pentecostal!

CANTOR
Come on you guys! Look, Lisa's got
the right idea!

Two women in the congregation turn to each other and whisper.

INT.SYNAGOGUE

The congregation file out.

BRETT
Can I talk to you?

LISA
Of course!

They go into his office.

BRETT
It's so wonderful to have someone
as enthusiastic as you here.

LISA
Thank-you.

BRETT

I know it really means a lot to the Cantor and I.

LISA

Oh, no problem.

BRETT

It's just. Some people think you're dancing is...is... a little sexy.

This is not where she thought the conversation was going. She has no idea how to possibly respond. She is crestfallen.

LISA

I'm just dancing. That's just...how I dance. I'm happy.

BRETT

I know. And it's ridiculous. I just thought you should know.

LISA

No, thank-you. Good to know.

She walks out. After she leaves, he sits at his desk, staring into space, feeling shitty, and longing, and mainly shitty.

INT.ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, DAY

Lisa has come by to collect Martin from work, at a nearby school he's been painting. He's singing as he works.

MARTIN

We've pared the set list down to ten from twelve, leave them wanting more, blah blah...

LISA

Can we get home?

MARTIN

And we've already sold three hundred tickets. Three hundred!!

LISA

I really, really need to pee.

MARTIN

So? Pee. It's right there. I painted the sign myself.

Martin holds the paint brush in his hand, pointing towards the toilets. Lisa looks at the sign he painted, dubious.

LISA
That doesn't look like a lady.

MARTIN
Yeah, it does.

LISA
No. It doesn't.

MARTIN
But you know that it is.

LISA
Nah. I'll skip it.

MARTIN
You just said you were bursting.

LISA
I'll just go in my pants.

MARTIN
Because I am not Jean Michel-Basquiat, you literally would rather piss yourself than go in this toilet.

LISA
Yes. I would. [She pauses. He thinks she's seen sense]. Basquiat was an abstractist. So that wasn't a good example.

CUT TO:

EXT.SCHOOL, DAY

Lisa walks out with piss stained jeans. Martin is shaking his head in disbelief.

LISA
What? I'm sure I'm not the first kid to piss themselves in that classroom.

He stops and faces her, and raising his voice says:

MARTIN

You're not a kid. Just because you're younger than me - you're still an adult, you know? You're meant to be.

INT.HOME, DAY

She pulls off her jeans and throws them in the washing machine. Martin follows her in. She doesn't stop loading laundry. He tries to touch her arm, tender, scared, loving.

LISA

What do I have to do to make you stop being attracted to me?

MARTIN

I'm not attracted to you...right now. I'm afraid of you. What's with you? What's changed? What have I done? It's like I annoy you.

LISA

You're annoying.

He has never, ever said this before:

MARTIN

You're a cunt.

Lisa storms out of the room. He takes a beat, then goes after her.

MARTIN

That was unforgiveable. You're not a cunt. You're lovely.

LISA

I am, though. I hate it.

MARTIN

I didn't want to spoil the surprise. But...I've written you a song.

LISA

I don't want to hear it right now, please.

MARTIN

No. You won't. I'm going to play it for you on the night.

INT. ITALIAN RESTAURANT, EVENING

Andrea looks pretty. Only after she's sat down do we see the guy she's dining with, already at the other side of the table. A simultaneously super straight laced looking and super whacked out Stephen Colbert kind of guy, early forties.

ANDREA

Thanks for meeting me.

ELLIS

Well I was in town for a few days from Chicago. I live there now. It's great to see you. You look great.

ANDREA

Thank-you. You too. Kind of.

ELLIS

Did you finish your novel?

ANDREA

No, I've been blocked.

ELLIS

Did you fall in love?

She squirms.

ANDREA

No. Not really.

ELLIS

Not really?

ANDREA

Why? Did you?

ELLIS

I didn't fall in love, but I *did* re-marry.

ANDREA

Wow. You really like getting married.

ELLIS

I do. I like it. I like that registry office smell. A very lovely Swedish girl.

ANDREA
Swedish? Wow. And - are you still
taking smack?

ELLIS
I do. I *do* still take heroin. Yeah!
Do you?

ANDREA
Nope, I got clean.

Helpful, concerned:

ELLIS
Maybe that's why you're so blocked.

ANDREA
Perhaps.

Beat.

ANDREA
It was a funny old relationship we
had, Ellis.

ELLIS
Oh my God, I know. I was fucking a
lot of women while we were married.

ANDREA
You were?

ELLIS
Of course!

ANDREA
I'm not surprised. Or bothered. I
just...don't remember any of it.

He smiles, benign. Andrea looks at her bread basket.

ELLIS
So - what can I do for you?

ANDREA
Just wanted to see you, I guess. My
heart sort of opened, a little, for
someone, and a lot of other stuff
came back in with it.

ELLIS
What are you thinking, pretty lady?
What are you writing in your head?

She shakes her head. She doesn't know.

INT.NICK'S HOUSE, DAY

Nick is drinking and writing. He's *really* drinking and *really* writing, wearing just boxers. The doorbell rings.

When he opens it, he sees Irene standing there.

NICK

Irene? What are you doing here?
Come in!

She steps inside, not removing her sunglasses.

NICK

Let me make myself decent...

He says it with the flirtatious tone he always offers her. To his bewilderment, she does not volley it back as she usually does.

IRENE

Please do.

He puts on his clothes, turned away from her, trying to gage what's going on.

NICK

What brings you to the West Coast?

IRENE

You.

NICK

You can't be asking me to do any more promotion, we're flogging a dead horse here...

IRENE

We're not flogging anything.

She removes her glasses. Her eyes are terrifying.

IRENE

The ninth printing of your "memoir"
[she uses finger commas] is being
halted, effective immediately.

NICK

Why?

IRENE
Existing copies are being pulped.
You know why.

He sits down.

NICK
I knew this day would come.

He grips the arm of the chair.

NICK
I'm so sorry.

IRENE
I don't think you are.

He sees the look of utter contempt on her face. She is, in that moment, a stand in for every woman he ever managed to woo.

NICK
I'm sorry you found out.

INT.GREYHOUND BUS, DAY

The bus is packed with congregants leaving for the Washington rally. Brett and his wife hold hands. The Cantor goes up and down the aisle singing songs. The bus has just started to pull away from the station. But someone runs towards it, waving her arms, begging it to stop.

Lisa. When it pulls over, Brett looks at her quizzically, and Lisa smoothes down her dress and steps on.

INT.HOTEL ROOM, NIGHT

The whole synagogue delegation are staying in the same low budget hotel. The sound of singing and folk guitar being played from a room. Lisa, who doesn't have anyone to hang out with, passes the Cantor in the corridor.

CANTOR
Night, honey. See you bright and early.

LISA
Night.

She keeps walking up the hall, alone, towards the bank of elevators. When she gets there, Brett is already waiting, alone.

BRETT

Hey.

LISA

Hey.

BRETT

I was surprised to see you
because...you told me you couldn't
come.

LISA

Plans changed.

BRETT

Did you boyfriend's show get
delayed.

Beat. Then her voice is very quiet.

LISA

No. But I wanted to be here. With
you.

From here, they say nothing else to each other, the tension
between them palpable.

The elevator arrives, empty. She steps inside. He won't get
in. He's going to wait for the next elevator. The doors
close. She is too stunned to bat an eyelash.

INT.CLUB, NIGHT

A sign hanging on the back of the little stage says 'Temple
of Love'.

Andrea, sitting alone, is served drinks by a surgically
enhanced waitress wearing a white mini-skirt the size of a
belt and the texture of bedazzled phlegm. As soon as she
leaves, Andrea says to no-one in particular.

ANDREA

I never want to wear that skirt.

Martin pokes his head out.

MARTIN

Where is she?

ANDREA

She's coming. I'm sure she just had
trouble parking.

The band amble up on stage. They rip straight into a cover of 'Hoist That Rag' by Tom Waits. They are AWESOME! The crowd are nuts for them and Andrea has to push her way through to see properly. Martin is an amazingly sick guitarist and singer. She never imagined he'd be this good. He is transformed, as he plays, from a lumpen prole to a mythical rock beast.

The crowd - small but passionate - goes wild.

INT.DRESSING ROOM

Andrea is shoving Martin in the shoulder, over and over.

ANDREA

I didn't realize you could play guitar. I mean, like that. Like, really play.

But he can't meet her eyes.

MARTIN

Where was she?

ANDREA

Lisa never told me what a big deal you were.

MARTIN

Lisa doesn't really know. *Where was she?*

Andrea suddenly feels quite heartbroken.

ANDREA

I don't know.

Girls are trying to get around her to talk to him.

CUTE GIRL

Hey, can I get you a drink?

MARTIN

No thank-you. I'm taken.

ANDREA

Are you crazy? Why'd you say that? They only wanted to get you a drink. Talk to them! Fuck Lisa! She isn't fucking here!

MARTIN

You'd like me to cheat on your
sister? That's not going to happen.

ANDREA

No! Of course I don't want you to
cheat on her. But I would like her
to treat you better.

MARTIN

She treats me fine.

Now she turns it back on him:

ANDREA

Where is she?

EXT. HOTEL ELEVATOR, EVE

The doors open again. We realize that it hasn't actually
moved. Brett is waiting for her. He steps inside. She looks
at him.

BRETT

I'm sorry about that.

The doors close. She kisses him.

INT. UNISEX CLUB BATHROOM, EVE

Andrea walks in on Martin crying.

ANDREA

Martin?

MARTIN

You're right. She should be here.

Andrea puts her arms around him in a hug. Martin puts his
head on her shoulder. Then he kisses her. A flash of tongues.
They stop as soon as they started.

MARTIN

I'm so sorry. I'm sorry. You look
like her. And you smell like her.
But you're nice to me.

She wraps her arms around him again.

ANDREA

Oh, babe. It's okay. It didn't mean anything. Except that you're not happy.

Martin wipes his eyes, nods.

He untangles himself from her.

ANDREA

Then why put yourself through it?

He looks at her like she's mad.

MARTIN

Because I love her.

EXT.ELEVATOR

We cut back to the kiss between Brett and Lisa and see that:

Brett does not kiss her back. She realizes it at the same time we do. She pulls away. Hangs her head in mortification. He lifts her chin up to level.

BRETT

I can't.

LISA

[Furious, a child] Why not? Don't you want to? Before you die? I'm twenty-three. You're in your seventies.

BRETT

It won't make me younger. It won't make me not committed to another woman. It won't change anything. *Of course* I want to. But by choosing not to, I am exercising my humanity.

EXT. DARFUR PROTEST, MORNING

Lisa, who has, from the swell of her face, from the squint of her eyes, been up all night sobbing, wades out into the crowd as police try to hold back the more aggressive breakaways.

LISA

Pigs!

She yells at the cops.

LISA

Pigs!

Brett notices her, anxious about last night and how it may have spilled into today.

BRETT

Calm, Lisa, calm. This is a peaceful protest.

The congregants look at her askew.

Lisa seems to calm down. She seems to bend to tie her shoelace. Then she picks up a rock and throws it square at a policeman's head.

EXT.PROTEST, DAY

Police remove her in handcuffs, sliding her into the back of a cop car, as Brett watches her, helpless, Josie clinging to him in horror. As she's being taken away, she says out loud, for all to hear:

LISA

Why doesn't he want me? Why doesn't he want me?

One brave protester, genuinely interested, asks:

BRAVE PROTESTER

Who? Who?

Lisa look at her like she's retarded.

She asks again, softly this time:

LISA

Why doesn't he want me?

The police car drives off.

INT.HOUSE, L.A

Lisa is tucked up in bed with Andrea sitting on the end.

ANDREA

I'm worried about you.

LISA

Don't be. I'm fine.

ANDREA

Okay then. I'm worried about Martin.

LISA

Why?

ANDREA

He's fucking devastated you weren't there.

LISA

How was it.

She thinks a moment before telling her.

ANDREA

I kissed him. He kissed me, for a second. Because he thought I was you. He wanted me to be you.

Lisa looks at her sister, long and hard. Then she starts to cry.

ANDREA

I'm sorry. But you should have been there!

LISA

That's why I'm crying: because I don't care.

ANDREA

What?

LISA

I don't care. I need to speak to Martin.

EXT.GARDEN, LATE AFTERNOON

Andrea looks up at the bedroom window and sees her sister with Martin, still crying. She waves at her. She waves back. Uh-oh. This gives Lisa courage to go through with it.

INT.BEDROOM, EVE

Lisa gasps for breath. She finally gets it, slows her sobbing.

LISA
You're an amazing man and I really,
really want to still be in love
with you. But I'm not.

MARTIN
Is there someone else?

LISA
No.

MARTIN
Then how do I fix it?

Lisa shakes her head.

LISA
You can't.

MARTIN
Will you lay down with me. I'm
feeling a bit faint.

They lay on the bed. It's such a romantic place, this little
house. The wood cabin, the rose bed spread.

LISA
No-one's ever been as nice to me as
you have.

MARTIN
There's gonna be others.

He kisses her hand.

MARTIN
I knew this day was coming. I knew
I wouldn't have you forever. I knew
that from the very get go. Okay.
So. Now I go home.

LISA
Home home? Why? What about the
band? It could happen for you
again.

He kisses her other hand.

MARTIN
Nothing here for me except you.
Fuck the band. I don't care. It was
only ever you.

Then he gets off the bed and walks out of the room, passing Andrea on her way up. Andrea walks in to find Lisa sobbing inconsolably on the bed. They hear the sound of Martin's car starting up.

Perry comes up on the bed and stares really hard at Lisa's crumpled face.

EXT.THE GROVE SHOPPING CENTRE, DAY

Martin goes to see a movie by himself, because he can't think what else to do. The couple on screen kiss. He has to walk out.

As he blinks back into daylight, he notices the dumb green trolley that chugs back and forth through The Grove, for tourists and children. It moves at about a mile an hour.

Martin watches it approach on the tracks. Then, before he knows what he's doing, he throws himself in front of it.

Shoppers gasp in horror/bemusement.

Because it moves so slowly, he has to sort of just sit there, waiting to die. He looks up at the trolley. Waits. The tourists look down at him. This isn't going to work.

STALL HOLDER

That's not going to work.

Though he stays very still, this registers on his face. Eventually he has to get up.

EXT.HOUSE, NEXT DAY

A cab beeps outside the house.

ANDREA

He didn't have to go back to Australia.

LISA

I told him he didn't even have to move out of the house.

Lisa's youthful blindness makes Andrea ache for him.

ANDREA

Of course he had to move out. You're so fucking selfish. You always knew you were going to do this. You knew.

LISA
I didn't know.

ANDREA
He moved coasts for you.

LISA
So what? He'd already moved
countries. Continents.

ANDREA
For himself. Not for you.

LISA
That isn't my problem. It's his
life. Not mine.

ANDREA
When you love someone your lives
intertwine. You don't understand
that? He took responsibility for
you.

LISA
He's older than me.

ANDREA
You should have taken
responsibility for him. What do you
think it is to make love? Don't you
think there's a promise?

Lisa is silent.

ANDREA
I mean, do you care about sex?
Even?

Beat, needling, cruel.

ANDREA
You don't like it, do you?

LISA
You're so pathetic.

ANDREA
Of course I am. I'm completely
pathetic. I was born with a broken
heart.

LISA

Don't write sentences for me when we fight. You're not even that good anymore.

ANDREA

I can still fight.

LISA

I meant your writing. I don't know why you still bother. It's done. You had your run. You wrote one great book. Most people never have that much.

ANDREA

Don't talk to me.

LISA

Will you...

ANDREA

DO NOT TALK TO ME.

Lisa waits.

LISA

Will you...

Andrea kicks her between the legs and when she's doubled over, pulls her hair.

Lisa is crying. It takes her a while to be able to speak as she clutches her crotch in pain.

LISA

I was only going to say: will you go to the airport with him? I can't do it. And I don't want him to go alone.

INT.TAXI, DAY

The cab is filled with Martin's luggage. Andrea's staring at Martin, whose staring straight ahead.

ANDREA

I kicked my sister in the vagina.

Wearily:

MARTIN

You didn't have to do that.

She nods.

ANDREA
Are you going to be okay?

MARTIN
Haven't really got a choice have I?

ANDREA
You do. You could fall into a pit
of sorrow and despair.

MARTIN
That's not one of the choices.

The cab turns in to the airport.

MARTIN
You?

ANDREA
I'm going to dwell and turn the
unhappiness over and over in my
mouth like a fine wine.

MARTIN
Course you are. He's not there.

ANDREA
Who?

MARTIN
Nick? The writer?

ANDREA
He's not a real writer.

MARTIN
The bloke whose name doesn't even
matter because he isn't there.
There's nothing except the writing,
and you're not doing it. He just
triggered some feeling in you, just
like the drugs used to.

The cab passes Mulholland, looking down on the city, all that
wildness and all those twinkling lights.

ANDREA
It's this town.

MARTIN
This isn't a town.

ANDREA
It's a dreaming board.

She closes her eyes.

When she opens them it is because the cab has come to an abrupt brake.

In front of them, at the lip of the canyon, is the most majestic deer.

She reaches for Martin's hand. He squeezes it.

INT.HOME

Andrea returns from the airport.

ANDREA
Guess what we saw on the way?

LISA
I'm not talking to you.

Remembering they're fighting:

ANDREA
I don't give a shit anymore.

And so they get on with their day, in fight stasis, moving from room to room like satellites orbiting each other.

INT.KITCHEN, NIGHT

Lisa hovers over Andrea.

ANDREA
What?

Lisa doesn't say anything.

LISA
Jesus Christ, what?

Lisa solemnly hands her sister the cover of the NY Times Arts section.

"Bestselling memoirist accused of inventing Gaza love story".

INT.BEDROOM, NIGHT

Lisa and Andrea are laying next to each other on the same bed
Lisa had broken up with Martin on.

LISA
There wasn't really a Naima.

ANDREA
No.

She lets this marinate.

LISA
Who was there?

ANDREA
He's just a man. By himself. With a
story in his head.

LISA
That's so fucked.

ANDREA
I feel sorry for him.

LISA
What?!

ANDREA
I do. We all make up stories. I lie
every day. So do you.

LISA
No I don't!

ANDREA
You do. You thought that Rabbi was
going to ask you to be his new
wife. You lied to yourself. Flat
out, and you knew it. I'm not
judging you for it. I'm not.

Lisa moves away from her on the bed.

ANDREA
I pretend I'm finishing my book.

LISA
You are finishing your book. You're
almost done.

Andrea reaches over to the bedside table and hands her sister
the manuscript.

ANDREA

Read it.

As she flicks through it, Lisa realizes that after thirty pages, it is nothing but blank pages.

Andrea smiles sadly.

LISA

You've done nothing the whole summer?

ANDREA

I wrote some clever texts to Nick.

Beat.

ANDREA

I did do one thing. Just a short story. Because I was trying anything to avoid the book. But I sent it out two weeks ago and I've heard nothing back yet.

Lisa considers this.

LISA

What did you see?

ANDREA

Huh?

LISA

On your way to the airport?

ANDREA

A deer.

Lisa smiles, pleased but a little underwhelmed.

LISA

Yeah. They live here.

INT.SPA, DAY

Lisa is saying goodbye to a client, when, to her horror, Brett walks in.

BRETT

Hi.

LISA

Hi.

BRETT
Can I talk to you?

The receptionist looks at her.

LISA
You want a regular facial or an
express?

INT. TREATMENT ROOM, DAY

Brett is covered in mud, with two cucumbers on his eyes. He is half naked and all vulnerable. He can't see Lisa.

BRETT
I just wanted to say: I'm sorry if
I've ever hurt you.

Lisa does not acknowledge this. Not out loud. But it means a great deal to her. And it flips a sort of switch.

LISA
I'm just going to leave that for
ten minutes. I'll be outside.

But she opens the door, closes it and stays inside, sitting at the end of the room, looking at him, in silence.

INT.LAWYER'S OFFICE, DAY

Nick is in a room with Irene who has turned to ice.

IRENE
We're going in to damage control.
You need to go on Larry King and
explain. He'll go easy on you. Do
you have anything to say?

He looks at his lawyer.

NICK
No.

INT.SPA, DAY

Lisa opens and closes the door as if she's just returning to Brett.

LISA
Time's up.

She wipes the mask off, spritzes him with toner. He opens his eyes and smiles up at her. She steps back.

LISA
Finished, now.

CUT TO:

INT.TREATMENT ROOM, DAY

Brett has left. Lisa sits in her chair, bereft.

She goes to clean up, takes the cucumbers that were on his eyes. She looks at them. Then pops them in her mouth and chews them. Until they're all gone.

INT.FROZEN YOGHURT SHOP, DAY

Nick is seated stiffly opposite Andrea at a metal table. How the mighty have fallen. Around him are paragons of health. You can see the blood moving sluggishly beneath his sallow skin. Andrea looks around her. Why are they here? She tries to be upbeat.

ANDREA
You're not going to have any?

NICK
I'm having trouble chewing.

ANDREA
That's okay. You know if you only eat foods that you don't have to chew, you don't ingest any calories?

She looks at him.

ANDREA
That was a lie.

She works up the courage to broach the elephant in the room.

ANDREA
So you are really a doctor?

NICK
I'm really a doctor.

ANDREA
And you did volunteer work in Gaza?

NICK

Yes.

ANDREA

But there was no Naima?

NICK

There was an Arab girl in a McDonalds who I thought was very pretty.

ANDREA

What?

NICK

She just stayed in my head.

ANDREA

What happened to her?

NICK

She stayed in my head.

She's shocked by what he did and also that he might actually be a true creative.

ANDREA

Well. Wow. Yes. That's real writing. Experience strained through imagination.

NICK

I only lied about love. That was the only part I lied about.

ANDREA

That's why people are so upset. If you had lied about anything else, they would have forgiven you.

He hangs his head.

NICK

I know that. I just made it how I wanted it to be.

ANDREA

I don't think that's so bad.

NICK

No? You don't think I'm a horrible person?

ANDREA

Yes, I do, but not because of that.
It's actually been another of the
things that makes me like you.

He exhales sharply.

NICK

You've got to stop doing that.

ANDREA

What? Liking you?

NICK

Yes!

ANDREA

It makes you not like me.

NICK

Yes. You're such an amazing girl
otherwise.

She gets up and walks away.

NICK

Bye.

He's sitting there and he notices a couple whispering about him. It's come to this. Entirely alone, but for the gawkers, in a frozen yoghurt cafe, the afternoon sun as unflattering to him as the articles at the news stand.

INT.HOME

When Andrea gets home, she finds Lisa sitting at the table looking serious. She's petting Perry.

LISA

I'm going back to London at the end
of the month.

ANDREA

No you're not.

LISA

I want to go back.

ANDREA

Bullshit!

LISA

I always miss it no matter how much you tell me that I don't. I want to go home. This isn't the right continent for me. It's a Feng Shui of the soul: I'm not in the right corner of the room here. Do you understand?

Andrea starts to tremble.

ANDREA

How can you do this to me?

LISA

This isn't about you.

ANDREA

I'll come with you.

LISA

You're the one who wanted us to live here! You're the one who always dreamed of being in California! "David Hockney light", you said. You got clean, properly clean here. You *stayed* clean here. Don't be an idiot.

ANDREA

But...

LISA

Or just be an idiot in your usual ways.

They sit at the table, looking at each other. She puts her arms around her.

ANDREA

Yeah. Okay. I will.

INT.HOSPITAL, NIGHT

Two nurses watch and whisper about Nick as he works the ER floor.

NURSE

He's back to being a real doctor?

NURSE 2

Yup. Night shifts in ER as self-flagellation.

Considering...

NURSE

Well. [Beat] I still want my money back.

As he washes down the wound of a stabbing victim, he grimaces.

He has heard everything.

INT.PHARMACY CLOSET, MIDNIGHT

Nick is hiding in the closet, drinking from a flask of whisky.

INT.NICK'S CAR, NIGHT

Driving home from his shift, the flask is on his lap, he has a cigarette in his mouth and is digging in his jeans for a lighter. Instead he finds an old phone number from his carousing days. 'Ellie'? 'Ella'? He smoothes it out. He's drunkenly reading it when he flips the car.

CUT TO:

INT.REHAB, DAY

Group therapy.

COUNSELLOR

Do you want to introduce yourself, Nick?

NICK

Do I need an introduction?

COUNSELLOR

Please.

NICK

My name is Nick and I'm...

He can't bring himself to say "an alcoholic".

NICK

...a doctor. And I'm also...

The room looks at him expectantly.

NICK

...sort of a writer. I was sort of a writer, although I can't really write. I just thought up a good story.

COUNSELLOR

And?

NICK

And...

Everyone looks at him. He's beat down.

NICK

And I'm a prick. And a liar. And I deserved everything that befell me.

The others look at him blankly.

NICK

Everything that happened to me. "Befell" is a little over-written.

INT.TREE HOUSE

Andrea is on the phone, looking at Perry as Perry diligently tries to open the wound from his operation.

ANDREA

I can't get him to stop doing it. It's making me crazy.

PHONE VET

It won't heal properly. If he keeps licking the wound you need to cover it but not with a bandage.

ANDREA

How? With what then?

PHONE VET

A T-shirt.

ANDREA

A T-shirt

PHONE VET

Yeah, like for a baby or for a little dog.

INT.PETCO

Andrea is looking at dog T-shirts. They're all retarded. She picks the least dumb she can but it's still pretty dumb.

INT.HOME

Andrea smells Nick's shirt, the one she couldn't part with. Then, taking a large pair of scissors, she cuts most of it away, refashioning it with a few stitches here and there. When she is done, she puts it on Perry instead of the dog T-shirt. She adjusts it as best she can.

EXT.STUDIO CITY NEWS STAND

Andrea is staring at the new issue of the New Yorker on the bottom shelf. She walks closer and closer. She gets closer. Levi is hovering nearby.

ANDREA

If I give you ten dollars can you open that New Yorker for me?

He does.

LEVI

Any page?

ANDREA

Can you look and tell me if there's a story by Andrea Stone?

Levi skims the pages.

LEVI

Anthony Lane. Adam Gopnik. Yes.

ANDREA

Yes?

LEVI

Yes. There. Andrea Stone.

She walks trembling steps towards Levi, hands him the money, clutching his hand as she does, not letting go.

INT. REHAB, DAY

Sitting in a communal rec room, Nick picks up his just arrived, weeks late issue of the New Yorker and starts leafing through. He sees Andrea's name.

NICK

Holy shit!

He leans back to enjoy it, genuinely happy for her. And then his expression starts to change. He puts down the mug of coffee. The fellow broken inmates stop what they are doing and turn to face him as they sense something seriously awry.

NICK

Holy shit.

EXT.REHAB, NIGHT/ANDREA'S HOUSE, NIGHT

Nick is in the hallway, yelling into a pay phone. An operator keeps breaking in and the line is crackly and distant.

NICK

I'm in fucking rehab, on the other side of the fucking country, and you're going to drive me back to drink!

ANDREA

I don't drive.

NICK

Brilliant, Andrea, New Yorker worthy. Oh wait, but it didn't come out of *my* mouth so why would you bother using it?

ANDREA

You didn't like the story?

NICK

What are you talking about? I LOVE having my life splashed across the page for the world to read.

ANDREA

But you did it yourself.

NICK

I did it *myself*? This isn't even writing. You made me do things to you so you'd have something to write about again. You realize that?

ANDREA

I didn't make you do anything.

He smacks the page.

NICK

I'm here and I'm here and I'm here.
Except it's fiction?

ANDREA

That's right, it's *fiction*. It's my
fiction from my pen onto my paper.
It's mine when it hits the page.

NICK

But you're describing me! You're
describing my cock and what I
drink. You're writing about how I
am in bed.

ANDREA

So what?

NICK

So what?

She shrugs.

NICK

I wish I'd never met you. I could
have put it anywhere. I could have
had anyone! It's just...filling
holes. Those fucks we had were not
worth it.

ANDREA

They were for me.

NICK

You're a fucking vampire!

INT.TREE HOUSE, NIGHT

She hangs up gently, as if that will somehow turn back time
and turn down the volume of his voice and rage. Lisa sees her
walk out.

CUT TO:

EXT.HOUSE, DAY

There is a knock at the main door as Lisa is labelling the
last of the boxes to NY. Dirty and tired from packing, she
answers the door to the Cantor from Synagogue.

CANTOR

Lisa.

She looks at him blankly.

CUT TO:

EXT. BUS STOP, DAY

Andrea is at the bus stop, holding a bag of groceries in each hand. Her ipod is in her ears.

A crackhead is also at the bus stop. The crackhead, likely also a prostitute, bears the scars of the very worst that can become of a woman who comes to L.A with dreams. She is skinny with missing teeth and bleached hair, but also the remnant of plastic surgery, cheap surgery, weird injections in her cheekbones. It makes Andrea so sad, the alternate paths we all have.

ANDREA

Crack...right?

And, just like that, mistaking her empathy for a slight, perhaps one slight too far after a decade of them, the crackhead reaches out and smacks Andrea in the face. Bam! And storms off.

CUT BACK TO:

INT.HOUSE

Lisa blinks at the Cantor.

LISA

God, I'm so sorry. I didn't recognize you for a moment without the context, without your guitar. What are you doing here? I'm sorry I haven't been in Temple, I'm moving home, I've been really...

CANTOR

Lisa, Brett died last night. Josie found him in the morning when she woke up.

She is absolutely flummoxed.

LISA

But he was so healthy. He wasn't sick. I'm sorry, I'm exhausted. I don't think I'm understanding you right.

CANTOR

Nobody understands how the heart
can suddenly stop in the night, why
things can just end this way.
You're just so young, Lisa. You'll
accept that as you get older.

LISA

I accept it.

CUT BACK TO:

EXT.BUS STOP

Leaving her groceries at the stop, Andrea gets on an arriving
bus in a daze. The driver doesn't say anything and there is
no-one else on board.

INT.HOME

Lisa is crying when Andrea walks in the door with her bashed
up face. She stops when she sees her.

LISA

Jesus! What happened?

Andrea looks at her tears, wipes one away as she asks calmly:

ANDREA

Hey. (Beat) What was the name of
that school that has the week's
driving intensive you wanted me to
do?

LISA

What?!

ANDREA

Why are you crying? Don't cry,
little one.

INT.AIRPORT

As Andrea walks Lisa towards departures, Lisa's face is red
and tear stained, whilst Andrea is calm.

Motioning towards her sister's luggage:

ANDREA

Let me carry this for you.

INT.NICK'S HOUSE, L.A, AFTERNOON

Nick pays the taxi and walks back into his house for the first time. He puts down his suitcase in the hallway. Now he can see what Andrea could see. That it's an amazing house with nothing of him in it.

INT.BEDROOM, EARLY EVE

Nick unzips his bag and starts busily unpacking because he can't bear to lay back on this bed. Something drops. He finds the nest behind his bed that she's created. The hair barrette. The bracelet. A whole pile of intimate, feminine trinkets. He doesn't know what the fuck is going on, or which specific crazy bitch did it, until he finds the bus ticket. It's like all the way through their fling she had been doing jail time with him, scratching her name on the wall so the person who came next would know that she had lived.

INT.HOME, EVE

Andrea is sitting at her desk, writing when she is distracted by the glorious sound of Perry, peeing gushingly from his brand new vagina. She is grinning like a proud parent when she hears the familiar ping of a text.

EXT. TREE HOUSE, EVE

Nick gets out of a taxi and has it wait. Looks up at the tree house in amazement.

NICK

Rapunzel, Rapunzel! Let down your hair.

Andrea looks angrily out from the little window.

NICK

Or your ire. You choose.

She stares at him. Weighs her options, given the intrusion.

ANDREA

You can come up here to me.

So Nick shakily climbs the ladder. He is much too big for her little home. He looks different. No booze bloat. Looks like he's maybe started sleeping before 5a.m. He sees her face, the bruises under the eye.

NICK
Jesus Christ! What happened?

ANDREA
I got smacked. At the bus stop. By
a crack-head.

NICK
Did they catch him?

ANDREA
Catch her. And, no. It's the LAPD.
Do you think they really care?

NICK
Probably not.

He brightens as he realizes:

NICK
I care.

He's embarrassed by this realization, has to turn his back
but there's nowhere to go in this little space.

The dusk plays up the colours beneath her eyes. He think she
looks beautiful. She does.

NICK
Can I stay the night with you?
Here?

She lets this marinate.

INT.TREE HOUSE, NIGHT

She's in her pajamas, in bed. He sits on the end of the bed.
Shy, hanging his head.

He can't cry because if he starts, he will never, ever stop.
So, instead, he shyly takes off his clothes and gets into the
bed.

ANDREA
Do you remember the things you said
the first night we...

He cuts her off.

NICK
None of that means anything to me.

She looks crestfallen.

Then:

NICK
Can we please just start again?

CUT TO:

INT.SYNAGOGUE/PLANE EVE

Light from the Ark bounces off the ceiling of the synagogue. We see the congregation and hear Brett's voice, less a flashback than a subliminal memory.

BRETT V.O
Preciousness is only half the truth. The other half is that moments of preciousness slip away.

The light of the Temple whites out to reveal Lisa on an east coast bound plane. She looks out the window and hears:

BRETT V.O
We must hold the world close, but we know it cannot last. How do we cling, and still let go? The paradox is reconciled with God. Given God, everything is more precious, because none of it is ultimately ours.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. TREE HOUSE, NIGHT

Nick gently pulls Andrea into a spoon, but it's such unfamiliar territory for them, it's like negotiating a complex Kama Sutra move. She finds her comfortable place and he puts his arm around her. The sky fades to black as they fall into sleep. The 'Naima' tattoo has been burned away.

INT.TREE HOUSE, NIGHT

Nick and Andrea are fast asleep, holding each other. It is a lovely picture until, from the corner of the frame, a really nasty, poisonous looking spider crawls towards the bed. It crawls up the sheets and stops between them on the pillow. It seems to be weighing its options. Whether or not to bite. And then, just like that, it turns on its legs and is gone.

INT.TREE HOUSE, DAWN

They are in different positions, on their own places in the bed. He stirs in his sleep. Then blinks awake and sees her eyes already open.

NICK
I dreamed I was falling.

He smiles.

NICK
And you were falling next to me.

Just the faintest stirring of light in the sky, now. He sits up.

NICK
If I give you my car, you want to drive us to breakfast?

ANDREA
I can't drive without a passenger who has a license.

NICK
Alright. If neither one of us is capable of driving yet, then we'll both just have to walk.

He steps into his clothes and climbs down out of the tree house.

We follow them down to the ground, out onto the street. Nick and Andrea walk up the street and right before the screen goes dark - like the moment in the Jaws credits when Roy Scheider and Richard Dreyfuss finally make it back to land - we see Nick reach out and take Andrea's hand.

In the far, far distance, the HOLLYWOOD sign is the right way around.

THE END