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Bad Romance

Chad Edward Wellinger
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BAD ROMANCE

A Screenplay

Presented to

The Faculty of the School of Film & Television,
Loyola Marymount University of Los Angeles, California

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Fine Arts

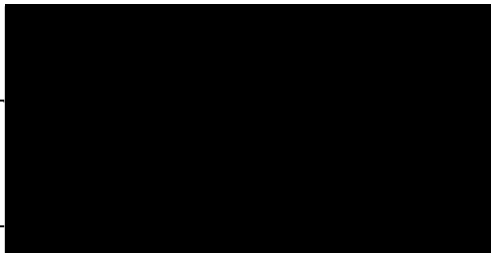
By

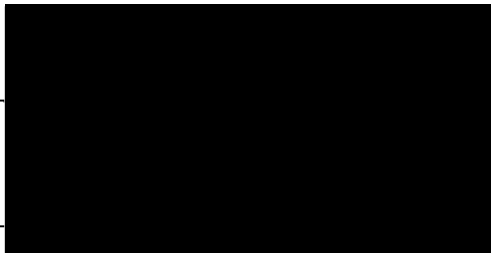
Chad Edward Wellinger

APPROVAL TO ADVANCE TO CANDIDACY

The following student has met all the criteria to advance to candidacy
for an M.F.A. in Fine Arts with an emphasis in Screenwriting

Student: Chad Edward Wellinger Date: 12/08/14

Committee Co Chair (690):  Date: 12/1/14

Committee Co Chair (691):  Date: 5/7/15

Advanced Screenplay Project Title:

BAD ROMANCE

Criteria for advancement to candidacy:

Student has demonstrated sufficient ability and knowledge to complete the thesis project.

Approved to Candidacy

Not Approved to Candidacy

Comments:

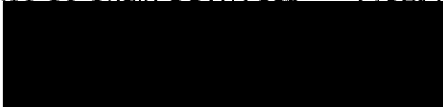
ADVANCED SCREENPLAY PROJECT APPROVAL

The Advanced Screenplay Project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Fine Arts in Screenwriting submitted by the candidate fulfils the requirements and standards set forth in the University Bulletin by the Division.

Screenplay Title: BAD ROMANCE

Student: Chad Edward Wellinger Date: 12/08/14


Committee Co Chair: SCWR 690 Karol Hoeffner

Signed:  Date: 12/1/14


Committee Co Chair: SCWR 691 BETH SERLIN

Signed:  Date: 3/7/15

Graduate Director: Karol Hoeffner

Signed:  Date: 5/7/15

Dean: Steph Uilberg


Signed:  Date: 5/7/15

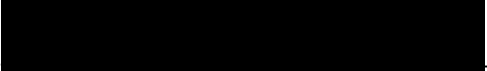
This feature length screenplay written by

Chad Edward Wellinger

under the guidance of a faculty committee
from the School of Film & Television at
Loyola Marymount University, and approved
by the members of the committee, has been
presented to and accepted by the Graduate
School in partial fulfillment of the thesis
requirements for the degree of Master of
Fine Arts in Screenwriting.

Advanced Screenplay Project Committee:


Committee Chair: SCWR 690


Committee Member: SCWR 691


Graduate Director *W*


Dean, School of Film & Television

Date *5/7/14*

BAD ROMANCE

by

Chad Edward Wellinger

A thesis screenplay presented to the

Faculty of the Department of

School of Film & Television

Loyola Marymount University

In partial fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts in Screenwriting

May 7, 2015

FADE IN:

EXT. MANHATTAN - BLACK ENTERPRISES - DUSK (FANTASY)

Last breath of day. *

BLACK ENTERPRISES, a pillar of glass and steel, rises to a sky tinged crimson and gold.

INT. BLACK ENTERPRISES - DUSK (FANTASY) *

Top-floor is a visual sweep of the sleek and modern, the cold and unfeeling.

At reception, ARIANNA GOLDSMITH (20s), a beauty hiding in the duds of a secretary, types away at a computer.

Suddenly, her desk phone BEEPS, the line "MR. BLACK" flashing RED.

She eyes it, nervous -- finally picks up.

ARIANNA

Yes, Mr. Black?

(beat)

Of course, right away.

Hangs up, biting her lip. *

INT. BLACK ENTERPRISES - PRIVATE OFFICE - DUSK (FANTASY) *

Arianna pushes open a massive set of glass doors, slips quietly into the lair of an entrepreneurial prince: *

TRISTAN BLACK (30s), gazes out a wall of windows, deep in thought. *

ARIANNA

(meek)

Mr. Black?

Her voice doesn't register.

ARIANNA (CONT'D)

(bit louder)

Mr. Black? You wanted to see me?

He turns towards her: DEVASTATINGLY HANDSOME. *

HEATH (V.O.) *
(deep, smooth) *
Tristan Black. He was a Pandora's
Box. One Arianna only dared open
in her wildest dreams.

TRISTAN *
See you? Yes, I see you. *

A frown pulls at the corners of his mouth. *

HEATH (V.O.) *
That voice, how it bloomed fear in *
her breast but also titillated, *
turning her thoughts savage and *
sticky sweet... *

Arianna shrinks into self as Tristan strides towards her, a
lion stalking its prey.

TRISTAN *
I realize this is only your first *
week, Miss Goldsmith, but we have a *
dress code at Black Enterprises. *

Arianna looks down at outfit, back up at Tristan.

ARIANNA *
No good? *

He fingers the collar of her blouse. *

TRISTAN *
Too good.

HEATH (V.O.) *
God help me, she thought, his *
scent... beastly. *

TRISTAN *
I like an executive assistant who *
takes *initiative*, Miss Goldsmith. *

He runs his finger along the nape of her neck, then fingers
the top button on her blouse. *

Unbuttons it, Arianna utters a little whimper. *

TRISTAN (CONT'D)
Breath.

She gazes into his eyes. *

HEATH (V.O.)

Initiative, she thought, was that
the key to this dark horse's heart?

Arianna averts her gaze, breast heaving, focuses on a piece
of erotic artwork.

HEATH (V.O.)

Take it, *now*, before that bitch
Janelle in accounting does!

She spins into him, sliding her hands up his chest, then
tears open his shirt, and what riches she finds.

TRISTAN

This shirt is Italian. You'll pay
for that.

ARIANNA

Is that a promise?

He grins.

INT. OFFICE OF GERBER & TROUT - RECEPTION - DAY

FRANNY TRAVERS (late 20s), adorably offbeat, stifles a
thrilled giggle as she looks up from a book she reads at her
desk.

INSERT Book Cover: *Sensitive Skin* by Heath Lorde.

CLIENT sitting in the waiting room and sporting a neck brace,
eyes her curiously.

The law office of Gerber & Trout is a far cry from the sleek
modernism of Black Enterprises; decorating scheme is stuck in
70's ugh.

Franny turns the book over to gaze at the author photo.
HEATH LORDE is criminally handsome, poses with a golden
retriever.

FRANNY

(re: photo)

God, you're good.

She sets down book and begins typing on an outdated computer,
chewing on her lip as she works.

FRANNY (V.O.)

Briar Lindsay had never known
passion, at least not in the
biblical sense--

Her phone's intercom suddenly perks to life:

GERBER (V.O.)
Miss Travers, my office, now.

She cringes. *

FRANNY
Right away, Mr. Gerber. *

Franny sighs, hauls self up.

INT. OFFICE OF GERBER & TROUT - GERBER'S OFFICE - DAY *

EDWIN GERBER (60s) is no Tristan Black, if anything, more
Danny DeVito. *

He sits behind his desk, Franny seated before him, gives her
the evil eye. *

MR. GERBER
Miss Travers, do you take personal
injury lawsuits seriously? *

Her face says "no," but she nods. *

FRANNY
Of course, Mr. Gerber.

Gerber sneers, flopping file onto desk, jabs finger at it. *

MR. GERBER
The Anderson deposition.

FRANNY
It was an intriguing case, sir. *

He nearly lunges at her from across desk. *

MR. GERBER
Are you trying to fucking ruin me?! *

FRANNY
What?!

Gerber flips open folder, begins reading:

MR. GERBER
"Roderick longed to dip his love
wand into Briar's sweet, warm lady
marmalade and cast his spell." *

Franny gasps, eyes pop.

FRANNY

Oh darn.

*

Makes a desperate grab for folder, but Gerber pushes her back into seat.

FRANNY (CONT'D)

Mr. Gerber, please let me exp--

Gerber continues reading:

MR. GERBER

"Roderick was an ace thruster but deathly afraid of having to urinate in front of one of his conquests post-coital."

(beat)

Are you a nymphomaniac, Miss Travers?

*

FRANNY

No, I'm a writer - and one of my characters has serious trust issues.

*

*

*

Off Gerber: What the fuck?!

*

FRANNY (CONT'D)

I'm so sorry, Mr. Gerber, I must have accidentally mixed up--

*

*

*

MR. GERBER

Do you know how close I was to reading this in court this morning?!

*

(shakes head)

*

Certainly not the behavior of someone on the paralegal track.

*

*

FRANNY

But I don't want to be a paralegal.

*

MR. GERBER

Well, you obviously don't want to be a secretary either.

Franny gulps, sensing "fire" in the air.

*

MR. GERBER (CONT'D)

I might have been able to overlook it this one time...

*

*

*

His voice fades out as Franny stares off... fictional heroine Arianna Goldsmith suddenly appears at her shoulder, whispers in her ear: *

ARIANNA *

Seduce him. *

Franny turns to look up at Arianna, awestruck. *

FRANNY *

It's you. *

ARIANNA *

Of course it's me. You've read me so many times I'm basically a part of you by now. *

She narrows her eyes at Gerber as he babbles on... *

ARIANNA (CONT'D) *

Go on, seduce him, just like in *Sensitive Skin: Rope Burn*. He's a fat sitting duck, take your aim. *

FRANNY *

(softly) *

But I couldn't. I can't. *

ARIANNA *

You have all the right equipment. Use it. *

MR GERBER (V.O.) *

Miss Travers? Miss Travers, are you hearing me?! *

Franny snaps to, turns to look at him. *

Arianna yanks Franny up from chair, pushes her forward. *

Franny stands a moment, not quite sure what to do, legs quaking, but then: *

FRANNY *

Oh I hear you. And I'm very upset. *

Arianna smirks. *

MR. GERBER *

I beg your pardon? *

Franny struts over to him, trying her best to vamp it up, stumbles on heel, but catches self. It's not pretty. *

FRANNY

(shaky)

I know I've only been with the firm
a few months, but I've developed
serious concerns about you Mr.
Gerber... specifically, your, your--

ARIANNA

Choice of suits.

FRANNY

Suits.

MR. GERBER

What the hell are you talking
about?

She towers over him, pushing him back into his chair, yanks
at his tie.

FRANNY

I prefer a good birthday suit.

She tries to run her fingers through his hair, but ends up
with a handful of toupee instead. She cringes and puts
toupee back on his scalp askew.

FRANNY (CONT'D)

Have you ever made angry love?

ARIANNA

Oooo, good one.

MR. GERBER

I'm a lawyer. Is there any other
kind?

Franny tears open his shirt, buttons go flying, revealing a
pair of saggy man boobs.

She pales at the sight.

ARIANNA

Oh God, he's got bigger tits than
me.

FRANNY

(re: Arianna)

Now what?

GERBER

Huh?

ARIANNA
Put your tongue in his ear.

FRANNY
But he's got ear hair!

GERBER
I beg your pardon?!

ARIANNA
(bit frustrated)
I'm not used to working with ugly
people!

GERBER
*What is this? Who are you talking
to?*

ARIANNA
Just get it over with -- go down on
him.

Franny gasps, hand going to mouth to catch a gag.

GERBER
What the f-- are you having a
reaction to some sort... drugs,
medication?

Franny kneels down in front of Gerber, spreads apart his
thighs.

FRANNY
Mr. Gerber, would you care for
some... *oral sex?*

Gerber's jaw drops.

FRANNY (CONT'D)
I've never really done it before,
but--

ARIANNA
Don't tell him that!

FRANNY
How hard can it be? Just like
blowing on a whistle or hot soup,
right?

That one mystifies both Arianna and Gerber.

INT. ELEVATOR - DAY

Franny holds box of personal belongings, while Arianna strikes a pose next to her, appraising nails.

ARIANNA

That so would not have landed us on the best-seller list.

Franny wears a forlorn expression as elevator doors slide shut.

INT. NEW YORK CITY COLLEGE - CLASSROOM - NIGHT

A dingy, basement classroom, scrawled up on the blackboard: "How to Write Romance."

A group of misfit students, Franny included, listen as a regal-looking woman, MRS. IRVING (late 60s), passionately reads from a set of pages.

MRS. IRVING

Jackhammer me! Jackhammer me!
Pound me like a black guy, Roberta screamed as Geraldo spread-eagled her. Sh--

Class's teacher, MR. HOLLISTER (40s), interrupts with a round of claps.

MR. HOLLISTER

Alright, Mrs. Irving, thank you.
That was very... *interesting*.
(raises a finger)
But let us not forget, romance and sex are not mutually exclusive.

Mrs. Irving takes her seat in a snit.

MR. FURGIS (50s), a real poindexter, shoots up from his seat, hands covering his tent of a crotch, rushes from room.

MRS. IRVING

Mr. Furgis seems to like it.

Franny rolls her eyes. Hollister checks his watch.

MR. HOLLISTER

Okay, just about out of time, but I've got a bit of exciting news to get you through those next sets of pages.

Franny's pen is poised to takes notes. *

MR. HOLLISTER (CONT'D)

A literary agent friend of mine is
going to be in town for the annual
Hearts Afire romance novel
convention. And whomever's final
project I deem the class standout
will get a very special meeting
with her. *

Franny's face lights up as rest of the class emits a series
of gasps, OOO's and AHHH's. *

Class begins to pack up their things. *

MR. HOLLISTER (CONT'D)

Before you all go, let me pass back
pages from last week. *

Grabs a stack of papers from his desk, begins handing back. *

Hollister lays Franny's pages down on her desk, points to the
"SEE ME" written in corner. *

Off Franny: "Now what?" *

EXT. NEW YORK CITY COLLEGE - NIGHT

Franny and Mr. Hollister exit school building and take the
sidewalk. Franny still hauls box of personal belongings from
work. *

MR. HOLLISTER

Miss Travers, you read a lot of
romance novels, don't you?

FRANNY

Of course. *

MR. HOLLISTER

Your fondness for Lorde's *Sensitive
Skin* series is no doubt evident. *

Franny can't help but crack a proud smile. *

MR. HOLLISTER (CONT'D)

You're an expert mimic, unlike any
I've seen before -- but that's not
what this class is about. *

She stops in her tracks. *

FRANNY

You sound displeased. *

Hollister can't help but grin. *

MR. HOLLISTER

I'm not displeased, Miss Travers, *
more concerned. I think it's about *
time you found your own voice. *

Franny lifts up pages.

FRANNY

But this is my voice.

MR. HOLLISTER

No, that's a variation, a well *
written variation, but mimicry none *
the less and I can't pass you on *
that, let alone introduce you to an *
agent. *

(points to her) *

I need to read a story through your *
eyes. *

Franny is perturbed, one of her eyes starts to twitch. *

MR. HOLLISTER (CONT'D) *

Listen, do you think Du Maurier and *
Flaubert would have been caught *
dead writing fan-fiction? *

FRANNY

We're not writing Flaubert. *

MR. HOLLISTER

True, but that doesn't mean we *
shouldn't try to be authentic. *

He gives Franny's shoulder an encouraging pat.

MR. HOLLISTER (CONT'D)

All I'm saying is, you have *
potential, don't insult your *
talent. *

Off Franny: a wan smile, one hand over her twitching eye. *

EXT. SIDEWALKS OF NEW YORK - NIGHT *

Franny trudges up from the subway with box of belongings, *
steps onto sidewalk. *

She walks along, only the lonely, coat wrapped tightly around her, a few snow flurries fall. *

She's lured to the warmly lit windows of a trendy RESTAURANT. *

Gazes in at all the PATRONS, happy couples and friends, eating and drinking, being merry and gay. *

Franny's reflection morphs into Arianna's. *

ARIANNA *

You know, you could go in if you wanted to. *

FRANNY *

Table for one? Fat chance. *

ARIANNA *

Stop playing the outside looking in card. *

FRANNY *

The inside is for the brave, and people like you: fiction. *

Franny turns from the window and her attention is suddenly drawn up to a giant billboard: *

Heath Lorde stares out, sporting a devil may care grin, touts his latest novel, *Sensitive Skin: Rope Burn*. *

Franny narrows her eyes at his handsome mug. *

FRANNY (CONT'D) *

How'd you get so lucky? *

CUT TO: *

INT. ASTRID'S BOUDOIR - NIGHT *

ASTRID COLLIER (late 30s), icy blonde succubus from hell, rides HEATH LORDE (32) like he's a pommel horse, purrs in satisfaction. *

Heath rolls eyes, half-bored.

Astrid's purrs escalate, culminating in a high-pitched MOAN -- she dismounts, lays back on bed, spent. *

HEATH

You're welcome.

She chuckles. *

ASTRID

Listen, get dressed. We have
dinner reservations at Bijou.

*
*

HEATH

What, no cuddling first?

*
*

She takes a playful swat at his shoulder, gets up, starts
slipping back into a dress.

Can't help but ogle as Heath stands up in all his naked
glory. He's lightning in a six-foot-two bottle, with a
behind you'd like to eat lunch off of.

*

ASTRID

That ass.

HEATH

Too bad you never got that stamp
made: "Property of Collier
Publishing."

Heath smacks it, then shimmies into his pants.

*

INT. BIJOU RESTAURANT - NIGHT

*

Upper East side cuisine du jour, with bougie atmosphere and
clientele to match.

*
*

ASTRID

Remember when I first brought you
here to discuss your contract?

*
*
*

HEATH

How could I forget? I fingered you
all through dessert.

*
*
*

Astrid smirks.

*

ASTRID

Devils food cake.

*
*

HEATH

So moist.

*
*

Astrid licks her lips, taking up his hand.

*

ASTRID

Listen, I want us to maintain our
working relationship... no matter
what happens.

*
*
*
*

Heath is only half paying attention as he picks through the bread basket. *

HEATH *

We screw three times a week, *
Astrid. I don't think it could get *
much more *working* than that. *

ASTRID *

No, I mean *after*... *

HEATH *

After what? *

She lets go of his hand, straightens her posture, icing up. *

ASTRID *

We're cancelling the series. Next *
book scheduled will be the last. *

HEATH *

Series? *

Takes a sip of his drink. *

ASTRID *

Your series, *Sensitive Skin*. *

He chokes on his drink, spraying everywhere. *

HEATH *

(incredulous) *
What? What are talking about? *

ASTRID *

Jan's ready to move on. Her *
contract's up and she's just *done*. *

Heath is in disbelief. *

HEATH *

But people love me, 100 million *
copies love me. Fuck Jan! *

ASTRID *

There's nothing to be done. *

HEATH *

This is bullshit! *

They're beginning to attract stares. *

ASTRID

Keep your voice down. *

(beat) *

It hasn't been easy for her, you know.

HEATH

Oh yea, well what about me? What am I supposed to do while poor old Jan laughs her ass all the way to the bank?!

ASTRID

You'll be free to do whatever you want. Explore other interests, get a hobby. *

HEATH

(scoffs) *

A hobby?!

ASTRID

Of course you'll still be obligated to do press as the film adaptations roll out. *

He snorts in derision. *

HEATH

Of course. *

(beat) *

When? *

ASTRID

You'll make the formal announcement at the *Hearts Afire* ball Collier always hosts. *

HEATH

How convenient. *

ASTRID

Hey, don't worry, like I said, I plan to keep you around. *

(leans in, whispers) *

No one's penis has ever understood my vagina like yours. *

HEATH

What kismet. *

He downs his drink. *

EXT. WASHINGTON SQUARE - NIGHT *

Franny drags her feet past the central fountain, iconic ARCH can be seen lit up in the background. *

EXT. WASHINGTON SQUARE BROWNSTONE - NIGHT *

A handsome, four-story brick brownstone.

Franny trudges up front steps, fishing for keys in bag. *

INT. BROWNSTONE - FRONT HALL - NIGHT *

Door unlocks, opens, Franny enters.

Raucous female laughter can be heard coming from the next room. *

NANA LADONNA (O.S.)
(Irish accent) *

Who's that?!

She sets down her box and hangs up her coat. *

FRANNY

It's just me, Nana, Franny.

NANA LADONNA (O.S.)

Who?!

INT. BROWNSTONE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT *

Franny drifts into living room to find:

NANA LADONNA (70s), a real Irish spitfire, and her best gal-pals IDA and ELBIE (both 70s), hooting and hollering at an episode of *Real Housewives* on television. *

IDA

Side-eye! Drink! *

The girls pick up full shot glasses and toss them back. *

Nana LaDonna points at the screen, laughing. *

NANA LADONNA

Oh look at that dumb bitch go, ha! *

Franny comes around sofa, picks up a nearly empty bottle of whiskey, eyes a couple of pizza boxes. *

FRANNY

You guys, you know you shouldn't be drinking on your medication.

NANA LADONNA

Hey, is that any way to greet your old Nan? Besides we got our medical alert bracelets on.

All three shake bracelet-clad wrists in air as proof.

NANA LADONNA (CONT'D)

Now, c'mon give us a teaspoon of sugar.

Franny bends down and gives her a kiss on the cheek.

FRANNY

Hey, Ida, hey, Elbie.

Both have their eyes glued to the screen.

IDA

ELBIE

Hey, Fran.

Hi, sweetie.

NANA LADONNA

Sit down, take a load off.

FRANNY

It's been a long day. I'm just gonna head upstairs, take a bath.

*
*

NANA LADONNA

Party pooper.

INT. BROWNSTONE - FRANNY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

*

Looks like a Laura Ashley showroom, flowers and frills... a bookcase overflows with paperback romances.

*
*

On the nightstand is a framed photograph of Franny and her Doctors without Borders PARENTS, in West Africa.

*
*

Room's rug has been rolled up -- and Franny, now clad in a black leotard, *taps it out* to Fred Astaire's "Cheek to Cheek."

Franny is a surprisingly deft tapper, watches her reflection dance away in her vanity's mirror.

*
*

INT. BROWNSTONE - KITCHEN - NIGHT *

Nana LaDonna, Ida and Elbie sit playing gin rummy and smoking buck cigars at kitchen table.

TAPPING comes through ceiling causing chandelier overhead to shimmy, sway.

Women gaze up.

NANA LADONNA

Uh-oh, sounds like someone had a day of it. *

She downs her martini.

Ida and Elbie exchange glances: "*Oh, how do you solve a problem like Franny?*"

INT. BROWNSTONE - FRANNY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT *

On a TV plays: *Pretty Woman*. *

Franny sits propped up in bed, clad in a flannel nightgown, reading over Hollister's page notes. *

Knock at door. *

FRANNY

Come in.

Nanna LaDonna enters and shuffles over to her bedside, sits. *

NANA LADONNA

Alright, spill those guts, what's up?

FRANNY

Well, let's see... I tried to seduce my boss, got fired and my writing teacher thinks I have no voice. *

NANA LADONNA

Well, sweetie, you do speak kind of softly. *

Franny lets go of an exasperated sigh.

FRANNY

No, Nana, no writing voice. *

NANA LADONNA

Oh.

FRANNY

Maybe mom and dad are right, I
should just join them in Somalia
and help them deworm orphans.

*
*
*

Nana scoffs, gives Franny a little slap on the wrist.

NANA LADONNA

Jesus Mary and Joseph! What the
hell kind of talk is that? Quitter
talk is what it is!

*

FRANNY

I gave myself eighteen months, I'm
almost out of money... this life
here, I'm not used to it.

*
*
*
*

NANA LADONNA

Now listen, God knows I love your
father, he's my son -- and your
mother, well... the point is,
they're healers gone international,
but that's not your M.O. -- you
know it, I know it.

*
*
*
*
*
*

Franny isn't convinced.

*

NANA LADONNA (CONT'D)

Aren't most writers supposed to
write from life experience?

*
*
*

FRANNY

Maybe, sometimes.

*

NANA LADONNA

Well honey, if you're looking for
your voice you gotta vocalize a
little. You don't go out with
friends, don't date, don't have
sex...

*
*
*
*
*

FRANNY

Nana!

NANA LADONNA

Well, I've flipped through those
sexy books of yours while sitting
on the john. The sex part seems
pretty important. And what do you
have to draw on? Nada.

*
*
*

NANA LADONNA (CONT'D)

You need to slap on some charley,
hike your puppies and get out
there, socialize with some boys.

Franny considers this, glances to television, where a scene
from *Pretty Woman* plays out:

Richard Gere schools Julia Roberts in the finer things in
life.

Suddenly, lightbulb moment, she sits up.

FRANNY

That's it! I need a Richard Gere.

NANA LADONNA

A what?

Franny's smiles, her wide eyes re-filling with optimism.

FRANNY

No, a *Heath Lorde* -- someone to
show me the ropes. And I read about
a book signing tomorrow night!

NANA LADONNA

Honey, have you been washing the
fruit off before you eat it?

Feels Franny's forehead for a fever.

EXT. THE BOOK NOOK - NIGHT

Franny waits in a never-ending line of giddy WOMEN and gay
MEN.

The MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN standing in front of Franny, turns to
her, acts like a little kid on Christmas morning:

MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN

Is this your first Lorde signing?

Franny nods shyly.

MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN (CONT'D)

I can tell. You've got that deer-
in-the-headlights look. God, the
first time is always the best.

Leans in to Franny, as if in confidence:

MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN (CONT'D)

When he shook my hand I got so wet.

Franny cringes. *

Moving down the line taking names is an adorkable Book Nook slave named TOLLIVER (20s). He stops at Franny. *

TOLLIVER *

Hi there. *

He takes her copy of *Skin* and sticks a post-it inside front cover. *

TOLLIVER (CONT'D) *

Your name, please? *

FRANNY *

Franny. Franny Travers. *

He scribbles her name down, smirks. *

TOLLIVER *

I see you around here a lot.
Romance novels, right? *

FRANNY *

Guilty. *

He hands her back her book. *

TOLLIVER *

I'm Tolliver, by the way. Tolliver
Grace. *

They shake hands. *

FRANNY *

(impressed)
Oh, that's a good name. *

TOLLIVER *

Ha, thanks. *

FRANNY *

No, I mean like a good name for a
character in a book or movie. *

She digs in her bag and pulls out a notepad and pen, starts jotting something down. *

TOLLIVER *

(amused)
What are you doing? *

FRANNY

Writing your name down. I haven't
heard it before and I want to
remember it for a character.

Tolliver is oddly charmed, laughs.

TOLLIVER

Well let me see if you got the
spelling right.

He takes notepad from her, reads over, then scribbles
something else down, passes back to her.

Franny reads over his addition, looks up, clueless:

FRANNY

It's a phone number.

TOLLIVER

Right, in case you want to discuss
my name further over coffee
sometime.

FRANNY

Oh. This is unexpected.

She slips notepad back into her bag, bashful, looks back at
up him.

FRANNY (CONT'D)

Thanks.

TOLLIVER

Well, I better be moving on.
(beat)
It was a pleasure paperback romance
girl.

Takes up her hand and gives it a small kiss.

TOLLIVER (CONT'D)

Here's hoping Mr. Lorde turns out
to be all you hoped for.

He lets go of her hand and moves on.

Franny is certainly taken aback, looks down at hand.

FRANNY

(bemused)
What was that?

INT. BOOK NOOK - MEN'S RESTROOM - NIGHT

*

Heath appraises self in bathroom mirror. God, could he be any more in love with himself?

HEATH

You got this. Just like Pitt circa '95.

*

*

Points, winks at self.

INT. BOOK NOOK - NIGHT

A cozy bookstore, the kind bibliophiles dream of -- is crammed with FANS.

NOOK EMPLOYEE #2 shouts into a microphone:

NOOK EMPLOYEE #2

Ladies and gentleman, The Book Nook is proud to welcome New York's very own bestselling Casanova, Heath Lorde!

Heath strides in confidently, amidst a chorus of claps/screams, flashing his mega-watt smile, waves. To them, he's a rock star.

Takes his seat at the signing table.

*

Nook Employee #2 ushers FAN #1 up to the table.

*

Heath extends his hand to the Fan.

*

HEATH

(bit deeper)

Good evening.

She takes his hand, totally starstruck, mumbles something unintelligible, then faints straight away.

NOOK EMPLOYEE #2

Woman down!

*

*

NOOK EMPLOYEE #3 rings a bell, fans clap.

*

NOOK EMPLOYEE #2 (CONT'D)

Folks remember, our ninth fainter tonight gets a free copy of Kathy Griffin's new cookbook: "Bitchin' in the Kitchen."

*

*

*

*

*

#3 drags woman out of the way, and we're off to the races:

*

BOOK SIGNING MONTAGE

- A merry-go-round of Heath greeting fans, handshakes, hugs, signing book after book...

- He takes a selfie with a pair of fans dressed up like Arianna and Tristan. Each gives him a kiss on the cheek.

- He signs his name above FAN #3's tramp stamp, reads: BADASS ROMANCE.

- FAN #4 gives Heath her BABY to hold, gets in for a picture, which her HUSBAND graciously takes.

Heath hands a signed copy to a fan, as the next in line, TOTO (50s), steps up. He's a keebler elf of a pimp who thinks he's six-foot-three, jostles a gold toothpick between his teeth. *

Heath is taken completely off guard, pales. *

Toto gestures to Heath's face, grimacing. *

TOTO *

That look... that's not happiness
to see Toto. *

HEATH *

(hushed) *

What are you doing here? *

Toto grins, hands Heath the copy of his book. Heath opens the cover and finds written inside on a post-it note: *

ME. YOU. ALLEY IN 10. *

Heath looks back up from book, but Toto is gone. *

EXT. THE BOOK NOOK - NIGHT *

Line has moved very little. Franny waits impatiently, standing on tip-toes to see if any relief lies in sight. *

A surly Nook Employee, #4, appears, brings his arm down like a railroad crossing signal. *

NOOK EMPLOYEE #4 *

Alright, sorry guys, this is the
cut-off. Something unexpected has
come up and Mr. Lorde has to jam. *

Middle-Aged Woman turns on him. *

MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN

Are you fucking kidding me??

(spins to Franny)

I'm not even wet yet!

(re: Nook Employee; spats)

This is ridiculous! You're ridiculous!

Franny grabs Nook Employee by arm.

FRANNY

Sir, you don't understand, I have to see Mr. Lorde.

NOOK EMPLOYEE #4

Yea, you and every other desperate woman in New York, lady. Sorry.

FRANNY

Wait, where's Tolliver?

NOOK EMPLOYEES #4

On his break, I don't know.

He yanks his arm back, Franny's at a loss for words as he moves on.

EXT. THE BOOK NOOK - NIGHT

Franny walks away from the bookstore, disheartened.

As she's passing an alleyway she notices a ritzy town car parked outside bookstore's back-door, its engine idling.

She narrows her eyes... could it be?

Arianna pops up at her side.

ARIANNA

Remember, he likes initiative.

Franny jumps, a hand going to her heart.

FRANNY

God, you scared me! Don't do that!

ARIANNA

Oh please, don't be such a marshmallow.

Arianna slinks her way over to town car, stops a moment at back-door to throw Franny her come hither gaze.

FRANNY *
(whispers) *
Arianna no, you can't. *

Arianna smirks, one eyebrow arched. *

ARIANNA *
But we can. *

She opens back-door, and gets in. *

Franny looks about to make sure the coast is clear, then *
tiptoes her way over to town car. *

She notices that the front passenger window is rolled down, *
peeks in: *

Car's driver, GEORGE (60s), sleeps, an open *Playboy* on his *
lap. *

FRANNY *
Excuse me? Excuse me, sir? *

All she gets in return are a series of snores. *

She looks about to make sure coast is clear, then opens back *
door and slips in. *

INT. TOWN CAR - NIGHT

Franny slides across seat, joining Arianna, who's busy *
spritzing perfume into the air. *

FRANNY *
What are you doing? *

ARIANNA *
A precautionary measure. In case *
he kicks you out. *

FRANNY *
Wait, is that my perfume? *

Looks to Franny. *

ARIANNA *
Always leave a little something *
behind for him to remember you by. *

Appraises perfume bottle. *

ARIANNA (CONT'D)

We'll offset the cheap smell with something sexy.

She whips out a sexy green thong, starts stuffing between the seats.

Franny snaps up thong.

FRANNY

These aren't mine. These are my grandmother's.

ARIANNA

So the granny undies were yours? Yikes!

Franny shakes her head as she stuffs thong into her bag.

FRANNY

We really shouldn't be doing this. Come on, let's go.

ARIANNA

Oh please, where's your sense of adventure?!

Franny notices a LITTLE BLACK BOOK sticking out from the seat pocket in front of her.

Arianna keys into this, snatches book up and then waves it in the air triumphantly.

ARIANNA (CONT'D)

What do we have here? His book of secrets or lies?

FRANNY

Put that back.

ARIANNA

You know you wanna have a look.

She pops open its cover with one naughty finger.

ARIANNA (CONT'D)

Whoops.

Shoves it into Franny's hands with a girlish giggle.

ARIANNA (CONT'D)

This is fun.

EXT. ALLEY - THE BOOK NOOK - NIGHT *

Heath steps from bookstore's back door, finds Toto leaning
against a dumpster, smoking a cigarillo. *

Looks about to make sure no one is around, then darts for
Toto. *

HEATH *

Why aren't you in jail? *

TOTO *

Quite the crowd you attract, *Mr.*
Lorde. *

(snickers) *

I got out, kid. Good behavior. *

HEATH *

Yea, sure. Okay Toto, what do you
want? *

TOTO *

Hey, is that anyway to talk to the
guy who got you off the streets
when you were giving blowies for
lousy ham sandwiches? *

HEATH *

That was Tiny Tim and you know it! *

Toto dismisses him with a wave of the hand. *

TOTO *

The point is, Toto, make you.
You'd be nothing without him. *

HEATH *

What the hell are you talking
about? *

TOTO *

You owe me, big time. *

HEATH *

I owe you shit. *

Toto chuckles, wags finger at him. *

TOTO

You know, when you come to Toto saying you wanna do this whole author bit, I think, 'okay, the kid wants to make some dough outside of the bedroom, fine -- as long as I get my share.' So I cut you loose... in the beginning, some sterling come my way, but then suddenly the checks stopped.

HEATH

You went to jail!

TOTO

You should have forwarded the checks to BoBo.

HEATH

BoBo's dead!

TOTO

Hey, is that my problem?
(beat)
As Toto sees it, you owe him two years worth of missed dough.

He takes a folded-up piece of paper out of his jacket pocket, hands to Heath.

TOTO (CONT'D)

You're outstanding balance.

Heath unfolds paper, looks over.

HEATH

Bullshit. There's no way I owe you this much.

TOTO

Toto charge you interest.

Heath sneers at him.

HEATH

You are a jerk.
(folding paper)
But it doesn't matter. I don't have that kind of cash.

Toto clucks tongue, wags finger.

TOTO *
You better get it, Little Boy Blue, *
I'm telling you. You got thirty *
days. *

HEATH *
And if I can't? *

Toto's face darkens, slips a Polaroid from pocket, shows to *
Heath. *

TOTO *
You remember Tiny Tim, right? *
Well, that's what he looked after a *
battery acid facial. *

Off Heath: "Shit." *

EXT./INT. TOWN CAR - NIGHT *

Franny and Arianna nose way through Little Black Book, eyeing *
the names and addresses of many high-society women. *

FRANNY *
Geez, what's he do, collect women? *

ARIANNA *
All the good ones do. *

Franny jumps as back-door begins to open. She quickly *
stashes the book in her bag -- Arianna fades away. *

Heath ducks head in, taken aback when he sees her. *

HEATH *
Hey! Who are you?!

Franny's about to speak, but: *

HEATH (CONT'D) *
George, who is this? *
(beat; barks) *
George, wake up! *

George jerks awake, turns to Heath. *

HEATH (CONT'D) *
Who is this woman? *

George eyes Franny. *

GEORGE

Well I'll be. 'Mam, who the hell
are ya?

*
*

FRANNY

I'm Franny.

HEATH

What's a Franny?

FRANNY

It's a name.

HEATH

Are you like stalking me or
something?

*
*

FRANNY

No, I'm following you.

*

HEATH

So much better. Scoot over.

*
*

He climbs in and situates self.

*

FRANNY

Listen, I'm really sorry about
this, Mr. Lorde, but I couldn't get
into the signing and I just had to
get you alone. I'm desperate.

*
*

HEATH

Oh yea, what kind of desperate is
that? Because I've known all kinds
of desperate.

*
*

(beat)

*

Listen, do you have any Valium?

*

FRANNY

Valium? No. I think I might have
some Advil in my bag.

*

HEATH

Gimme.

Holds his hand out and shakes it impatiently while Franny
fishes in her purse.

*
*

HEATH (CONT'D)

Where are you headed?

FRANNY

Washington Square.

*

HEATH

Hear that George, get us the hell
out of here.

*
*
*

GEORGE (O.S.)

Yes sir, Mr. Lorde.

FRANNY

Oh, I just need five minutes.

*

Town Car pulls out of alley, starts on its way.

HEATH

Too late.

*

Franny hands him her bottle of Advil.

*

He struggles with cap.

FRANNY

Here, let me.

Takes back bottle, pops cap easily, hands back to him.

He pops a couple pills, then pulls out a silver flask,
drinks.

Offers to Franny, but she shakes head.

HEATH

What's so pressing that you just
had to sneak into my car to see me?

*

FRANNY

Well, I have a proposition for you.

*

He laughs.

*

HEATH

Listen, I don't sleep with fans,
unless, you know, they're like
really hot.

*

(eyes her up and down)

*

And no offense but--

*

FRANNY

Oh no, I don't want to sleep with
you.

*

*

(laughs)

*

Wouldn't that be silly. No, I'm a
writer, like you.

*

Heath lights a cigarette, feigning interest.

HEATH

Oh yea, what have you written?

FRANNY

Well nothing published.

(eyes his cigarette)

I never pictured you as a smoker
and your voice is sort of, well,
it's not exactly how I imagined it
in my head.

HEATH

Gee, sorry to ruin the fantasy.

(beat)

And if you're not published you're
not really a writer yet, are you?

FRANNY

Exactly. That's why I need your
help.

HEATH

My help? How could I help you?

FRANNY

I just think you're great at what
you do.

HEATH

I can't argue with that.

FRANNY

I was sort of wondering if you
might consider mentoring me?
I could pay you. I don't have
much... but if you'll just help me
finish my novel...

HEATH

(laughs)

That's cute, real cute. Listen,
sweetheart, I can be had, but I'm
not cheap.

FRANNY

I'm willing to do anything. I
could be your assistant, free of
charge...

Heath can't help but admire her veracity, considers her a
moment.

HEATH

You are odd.

FRANNY
But endearing.

HEATH
Endearing leaves a lot to be
desired.

FRANNY
(impassioned)
Mr. Lorde, I want to be a romance
novelist more than anything. Would
you just think about it, please?

Town Car pulls up in front of a row brownstones.

GEORGE (O.S.)
Washington Square!

Franny's eyes plead with Heath.

HEATH
Sorry, but I'm no mentor. Try
Danielle Steele.

Franny sighs, accepts defeat with as much grace as possible.

FRANNY
Okay, I understand. Had to at
least give it a try.

HEATH
Well that you certainly did.

He looks out window.

HEATH (CONT'D)
You live here?

FRANNY
Yea, right there.

Points out her Nana's place.

HEATH
What, in an apartment?

FRANNY
No, the brownstone.

HEATH
You've got the whole thing?

FRANNY
Yea.

She begins to open car's door and get out, but Heath pulls her back in by the tails of her coat. *

Off Franny: surprise. *

HEATH *
How many bedrooms? *

FRANNY *
Five. Why? *

Heath beams. *

HEATH *
George, take me and Miss Lonely *
Hearts to Bogart's for a drink. *

GEORGE *
Yessir. *

He looks to Franny. *

HEATH *
Let's go have us a talk. *

Franny smiles as town car takes off. *

INT. BOGART'S - NIGHT *

An upscale bar, a PIANO MAN plays a wistful tune on a piano. *

Franny and Heath sit at a corner table. *

Franny's finally on the inside, but she looks about uncomfotably, turns back to Heath who flashes her his winning smile as a WAITER arrives with their drinks. *

WAITER *
One Manhattan on the sly for the *
gentleman... *

Sets down in front of Heath. *

WAITER (CONT'D) *
And one Grasshopper for the lady. *

Places in front of Franny. *

WAITER (CONT'D) *
Will that be all? *

HEATH *
Yea, thanks. *

Heath watches as Franny takes a sip of her drink. She unknowingly gets a bit of green foam on her upper lip.

HEATH (CONT'D)
Only the hard stuff, huh?

FRANNY
I learned from the best.

HEATH
What do you mean?

FRANNY
Grasshopper's are Arianna's drink, well, until Tristan gets her hooked on absinthe and sleeping pills.

HEATH
Oh right, of course.

Franny sets her drink aside.

FRANNY
Why did you bring me here?

HEATH
For a counter proposal. This whole mentor thing. I think maybe we can help each other out. You live alone, right?

Franny pauses a moment, swallowing the truth.

FRANNY
Of course.

HEATH
I have these friends coming into the city for the *Hearts Afire* convention, well a bit earlier than that -- they're all romance novel cover boys, Fabio-types. And they need a place to crash.

FRANNY
And you want them to stay with me?

HEATH
Well, I was just thinking since you live in such a big place--

FRANNY
Why can't they stay with you?

HEATH

My place isn't big enough. Listen,
do you want my help or not?

FRANNY

How many, for how long?

HEATH

Four guys, a few weeks, tops.

Franny considers this shift in the terms of the deal.

HEATH (CONT'D)

They wouldn't be any trouble. All
you'd basically have to do is keep
the sheets clean...

(beat)

They might do some light
entertaining, but nothing too
intense.

FRANNY

And if I let these *strange* men stay
with me you'll help me with my
novel?

HEATH

I'd be at your disposal.

Franny narrows her eyes at him, skeptical.

FRANNY

Is this like some sort of trick, a
joke? Are you trying to get back
at me for sneaking into your car?

HEATH

I never joke. Joking isn't sexy.

Franny eyes him another moment, then reaches into her bag and
pulls out a big stack of pages, sets down in front of him.

HEATH (CONT'D)

What's this?

FRANNY

My novel, so far... if we're gonna
do this you'll wanna read it.

Heath grins.

HEATH

Beautiful.

He raises his Manhattan for a toast. *

HEATH (CONT'D) *

Alright then, to bad romance and
houseguests. *

Franny follows suit, raising grasshopper. *

FRANNY *

To bad romance and houseguests. *

They clink glasses. *

INT. LA GUARDIA AIRPORT - SECURITY - DAY *

Franny bids Nana LaDonna, Ida and Elbie farewell outside *
airport security. The old broads are all dressed for the *
tropics. *

Nana points her finger at Franny. *

NANA LADONNA *

Now remember to get plenty of booze
and Vitamin D. *

Nana gives her a sly wink. Franny laughs. *

FRANNY *

Okay, I'll try. *

They give eachother a great big hug. *

NANA LADONNA *

I love you darlin'. Now your's
chance to take advantage of your
old gran's place. *

Franny smirks. *

FRANNY *

Love you too. *

NANA LADONNA *

I mean, everything's scotchgarded,
why not? *

INT. HEATH'S PENTHOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT *

Pad is kick-ass, decorated with artful flair, a wall of
windows offers a stunning view of the city. *

Heath strides across the room, shirtless and sporting a pair
of reading glasses. He puts some hot JAZZ on the stereo. *

He sits down on a leather couch with a glass of bourbon and Franny's manuscript. *

A ginger tabby climbs into his lap and takes up shop. *

Strokes cat's fur. *

He flips manuscript open to the first page and begins reading. *

INT. BROWNSTONE - GUEST BEDROOM - NIGHT *

Franny throws a billowing sheet over a queen bed. *

INT. HEATH'S PENTHOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Heath tries to make himself more comfortable as he reads, lays back on couch. *

INT. BROWNSTONE - GUEST BEDROOM #2 - NIGHT *

Franny gets the hospital corners on a twin bed just right.

INT. HEATH'S PENTHOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Once again sitting up, Heath struggles with read. *

He sets the manuscript down a moment, running both hands down his cheeks in frustration, socks back his bourbon, accidentally spilling some on the pages. *

Picks up the pages, shakes them off. Cat laps up some of the spilled bourbon. *

INT. BROWNSTONE - GUEST BEDROOM #3 - NIGHT *

Another bed made up to perfection -- Franny sets a chocolate down on top of one of its pillows.

Smiles.

INT. HEATH'S PENTHOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Heath hauls ass out of the living room, cigarette dangling from lips, a corner of the manuscript on fire, cat hot on his heels. *

KITCHEN

He holds the manuscript under a running faucet. Looks to the cat, who sits by sink. *

HEATH *

This girl is gonna be a full-time job, without benefits. *

INT. NEW YORK DELI - DAY *

Lunch rush. Heath and Franny sit at a corner booth, are surrounded by chatting PATRONS. *

Heath flops Franny's burnt, bourbon stained manuscript onto table.

Off Franny: "Yikes."

FRANNY

That bad?

Heath sighs. *

HEATH *

Your sex scenes read like they were written by Dr. Seuss. *

References a page in manuscript, reads: *

HEATH (CONT'D) *

"Briar Lindsay felt an intense tingling unfurl in her stomach and climb up her throat...?" *

Heath looks to Franny, as if to say, "really?!" *

FRANNY *

What? It's supposed to be an orgasm. *

HEATH *

It sounds like she's about to hurl. *

FRANNY *

Sex makes a lot of people nauseous. *

Heath shakes his head. *

HEATH *

I mean, you write like you've never actually had sex before. *

Off Franny: blank stare. *

Heath narrows his eyes, considering her. *

HEATH (CONT'D)

Oh shit. Wait a minute, you're not... are you a virgin? *

FRANNY

I don't like labels.

Heath's jaw drops. *

HEATH

Jesus, Franny. How do you expect to write good sex when you've never even had bad sex? *

FRANNY

My writing teacher says romance and sex aren't mutually exclusive. *

HEATH

Writing teacher who? What has he written? How many times has he been on *The New York Times* best-seller list? *

FRANNY

I don't think ever. *

HEATH

I'm your writing teacher now, remember? *

(beat) *

And if I may get a philosophical for a moment, great sex scenes are what define a romance novel. You have to be able to write to the sex. *

FRANNY

I'm sure I can do better. I just need to get a bit more imaginative. *

He crosses his arms.

HEATH

Oh really?

FRANNY

Yes.

HEATH

Okay then, if you really think you can pull it off, seduce me. *

FRANNY *
What? *

HEATH *
Seduce me. Right here, right now. *

Franny gazes around the crowded deli. *

FRANNY *
With all these people around? *

HEATH *
I don't care about the people and *
neither should you. *

She shakes her head, utters a nervous laugh. *

FRANNY *
You're serious? *

HEATH *
Haven't we already gone over this? *
I don't joke. *

Arianna stops by booth, dons a waitress's uniform, hands bill *
to Heath, who doesn't give her a second glance. *

She looks to Franny. *

ARIANNA *
Do something that draws attention *
to your mouth. *

As Arianna sashays away, Franny tries to grab onto her *
apron... *

FRANNY *
Wait-- *

But she is unsuccessful and ends up falling out of the booth. *

HEATH *
Wait, what? *

He looks down at her on the floor. *

HEATH (CONT'D) *
Vertigo isn't sexy, hon. *

Franny hauls self up, slides back into booth. *

FRANNY

Jokes aren't sexy, vertigo isn't
 sexy... you have a whole list or
 something?

Off Heath's smile: "you know it."

Franny scans the table-top for something with seduction
 potential.

She snatches up a spoon, considers... Heath snickers.

HEATH

Gonna hang it from your your nose?

She spots a small pot filled with a light green condiment.

Theatrically dips spoon into the condiment, takes up a big
 spoonful and brings to her mouth -- shoots Heath a sultry
 stare, which at best, is more "deer-in-the-headlights."

Heath stares back at her, challenging.

Franny ventures an awkward lick, but then thinks better of
 it, tries to slide spoon's head seductively into her mouth.

Slowly pulls the spoon back out, clean.

HEATH (CONT'D)

It doesn't count if you don't
 swallow.

Franny swallows, hard -- but sudden alarm lights up her eyes,
 starts to gag, cough.

HEATH (CONT'D)

Wasabi mustard bites back.

Franny continues to cough and sputter, looks to him, eyes
 watering.

HEATH (CONT'D)

When you're able to seduce me
 properly, my work here will be
 done.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - BOUTIQUE - DAY

Heath and Franny gaze into window display; a trove of rich
 bitch treasures.

He points to a Marc Jacobs purse.

HEATH

You need to be able to describe a vagina like it's a Marc Jacobs purse... and a dick like it's the Gucci wallet that wants to go into the purse.

FRANNY

Are we talking about shopping?

HEATH

No. We're talking about writing. About what women, and *really* gay men want.

Franny frowns, puzzled.

MONTAGE:

Cue Louis Armstrong's "Mack the Knife"

-- Mentor and student stroll through Central Park, Heath doing much of the talking. Franny turns to say something, but suddenly find's him gone. She looks back to see him signing autographs for a couple of giddy FEMALE FANS.

-- At a high-end hair salon, Heath shows a HAIR STYLIST what he wants done to Franny's hair.

-- The two sit under dryers. Heath flips through a magazine, a cigarette dangling from his lips, while Franny writes in her notebook.

-- Franny, now sporting highlights/stylish bob, tries her damndest to describe a handbag provocatively in another's boutique's window. But Heath's unimpressed, pulls her away.

-- A WAXOLOGIST gives Franny the full Brazilian. As the strips are ripped off, Franny reacts in a variety of ways: a scream here, a hysterical giggle there, tears of rage, etc.

-- Franny waddles out of Waxology Studio with Heath, holds a bag of ice on crotch.

-- Heath has Franny pose for a picture he takes with her phone.

-- From a park bench, Heath shows Franny how to use a dating app: "Cupid-Spank."

INSERT APP: Franny's profile pic, not too shabby -- a cupid flies by, stops to shake its booty.

END MONTAGE.

INT. TRENDY BAR - DAY

Heath and Franny sit at bar nursing cocktails, eyes roam the room, on the hunt.

Heath nods to a well-built SUIT (30s) sitting across the bar.

HEATH
How about him?

Franny wrinkles up nose, shakes head.

HEATH (CONT'D)
Yea, probably too much aggression
for you.
(beat)
Wait a minute, hold everything...

Both watch as a dour-looking INTELLECTUAL (40s) passes by.

Franny cringes.

HEATH (CONT'D)
Too serious?

FRANNY
(gazing in another
direction)
He's kind of dreamy.

She points out a debonair PRINCE CHARMING (20s) posing at the other end of the bar.

HEATH
Oh good eye -- and he looks like a
guy who maybe grew into his looks
or was fat as a kid, so he's
probably sensitive.

Franny catches his eye. Prince Charming smirks at her, raises his martini in a friendly salute.

Franny returns the gesture, raising her cosmo.

He starts towards them.

FRANNY
(frantic)
Oh my God, he's coming this way. I
take it back, how do I take it
back?!

HEATH *
Hon, the wheels are already in *
motion. *
(elbows her) *
Smile. *

Franny slaps on a nervous smile that says "possible stroke *
victim" more than anything else. *

But Prince Charming floats past, greeting PRINCE CHARMING #2 *
with a royal kiss. *

HEATH (CONT'D) *
Oh, false alarm. *

Franny sighs in relief. *

Heath gives his head a little shake, as if he has swimmer's *
ear. *

HEATH (CONT'D) *
God, my gaydar must be off. *

They turn back to their drinks, at a loss. *

HEATH (CONT'D) *
We need to get you laid. *

Notices that Franny is already back to writing in her *
notebook. *

HEATH (CONT'D) *
And enough with this thing! *

Snatches the notebook from her. *

FRANNY *
Hey! *

HEATH *
No more writing till you start *
doing. *

Shoves her cell into her hands. *

HEATH (CONT'D) *
Get on that app and start spanking! *

FRANNY *
Alright, alright, geez. *

Begrudgingly gets on app, starts fiddling. *

Suddenly, a SPANK-noise issues from Franny's cell, causing her to nearly jump out of seat. *

FRANNY (CONT'D) *

Oh my God. *

HEATH *

What now? *

FRANNY *

I got spanked. *

HEATH *

By who?! *

Grabs phone from her. *

INSERT I-PHONE SCREEN: A picture of Tolliver. *

FRANNY *

We met at the book signing. I admired his name. *

Heath studies the photo. *

HEATH *

Hmm, not ideal. But he'll do for now. Spank him back. *

FRANNY *

Oh I couldn't. I don't know him, *know him*. *

HEATH *

That's the point. You spank him back to get know each other. *

Franny looks squeamish. *

HEATH (CONT'D) *

Listen, either you do it or I do it. *

FRANNY *

Fine, God, you're so bossy. *

Grabs phone back from Heath and gives Tolliver a "spank" on the app, then sets away from her. *

HEATH *

(makes a pinning motion) *

Good job. You get a gold star. *

(beat) *

(MORE) *

HEATH (CONT'D)

Now, I have a little homework assignment for you. I want you to go home, get on the internet, and explore your dark side a little.

FRANNY

My dark side?

Heath cocks his eyebrows suggestively.

FRANNY (CONT'D)

You don't mean...?

She looks around, leans in:

FRANNY (CONT'D)

(whispers)

Are you talking about porn?

HEATH

Yea, please, thank you.

He scribbles something down in Franny's notebook, tears out a sheet and hands to her.

HEATH (CONT'D)

Here. Go to this site, explore...

Franny reads web address, looks up at Heath.

FRANNY

sexquestrian.com?

INT. BROWNSTONE - FRANNY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Franny sits at her writing desk, staring at laptop screen.

She cracks her neck, shakes out arms and takes a deep breath.

FRANNY

Okay, you got this.

Types in the web address, then hits ENTER.

As site opens a movie begins to play over a gallery of racy thumbnails.

Franny leans in for a closer look, cringing.

We hear HEAVY BREATHING, MOANS, and oddly enough, the BRAYS of a horse (O.S.)

Screen suddenly becomes inundated with raunchy pop-ups, web-cams, etc. *

Laptop kicks into OVERDRIVE, makes a sound like a running vacuum.

FRANNY (CONT'D)

Wait, wait, what's happening?!

Panicking, she tries to X out of pages, but more just keep popping up. *

On-screen commotion suddenly freezes -- screen turns blue, then goes grey. *

Franny punches at power button frantically, but nothing doing.

FRANNY (CONT'D)

Oh my God.

Recoils, slamming laptop shut. *

INT. DICK TEASERS SEX SHOP - DAY *

Kinky treasures galore. Heath browses his way down an aisle, casually dropping items into a basket. Franny follows him, is up in arms. *

FRANNY *

The guy at the Apple Store said I lost everything! *

HEATH *

(nonchalant) *

I know, I know. *

He admires a set of rubber sheets. *

HEATH (CONT'D) *

I sent you to that site on purpose. *
I knew it would totally wipe out *
your computer. *

FRANNY *

You what?! *

Heath smiles, mischievous giggle. *

HEATH *

Clever, huh? *

Tosses sheets back onto shelf, turns to her. *

HEATH (CONT'D)

We needed a clean slate. I knew you'd probably just keep going back to that same old crap trying to fix it.

FRANNY

By crap, you mean my writing? Months, years of--

HEATH

I had to be ruthless. And taking a hit out on your writing was a necessary evil. Sometimes you need a little push.

Franny is beside herself, speechless. Heath picks up an intense-looking vibrator.

HEATH (CONT'D)

We all need a little *push*.

Hits vibrator's ON button, and holy horsepower, does it vibrate.

HEATH (CONT'D)

Whoa, this thing could burn off your clit.

Drops into basket.

FRANNY

(worked up)

You, you're, you're so--

HEATH

Handsome? Charming? Brilliant? Yea, I know.

FRANNY

No, like the Angel of Death but with better hair.

Heath considers this moniker -- then nods his head in approval.

HEATH

I like it.

FRANNY

You don't respect me.

HEATH

(sobers)

No, I respect you. I respect you enough to be an asshole and force you outside your comfort zone.

FRANNY

(sarcastic)

Am I supposed to be able to tell the difference? You're always an asshole.

Heath spits out a surprised laugh.

HEATH

Look at this anger, passion! God, who knew you had it in you. It's what you should be writing with.

Franny is unmoved.

HEATH (CONT'D)

Alright, listen, I'm sorry if you think my tactics were a little underhanded.

Holds out hand for a shake.

HEATH (CONT'D)

Clean slate, no bullshit?

Franny smiles sweetly, gives Heath a playful slap across the cheek.

FRANNY

Clean slate, no bullshit.

She takes basket from him and heads for register.

HEATH

(adjusting jaw)

Well, she knows how to slap.

EXT. WASHINGTON SQUARE PARK - DAY

Franny and Heath head towards brownstone, carry big shopping bags from the sex shop.

HEATH

Oh, there they are!

Heath points/waves to a motley, yet no doubt sexy crew standing on the brownstone's stoop.

Meet "the boys:" twins CHIP and DALE (20s), think Dumb and Dumber for Abercrombie & Fitch, Norse he-man THOR (30s), his "hammer" more than evident in his short shorts, and last, but certainly not least, WHIP, bite-sized, but nonetheless adorable.

An ELDERLY FEMALE NEIGHBOR eyes the boys through binoculars from her stoop.

FRANNY

You went to Dartmouth with these people?

HEATH

Of course. We all graduated Magna Cum Greatly.

FRANNY

What?

Heath doesn't hear her, runs up steps.

HEATH

Hey boyos!

The guys greet Heath enthusiastically, high-fiving, fist-bumping, you know, bro stuff.

Heath steps aside, allowing Franny to come forward.

HEATH (CONT'D)

Guys, I'd like you to meet your warden for the next few weeks, Miss Francesca Travers.

She gives the guys a little wave of her hand.

FRANNY

Hello.
(beat; re: Heath)
It's Frances, actually.

Heath gestures to the twins.

HEATH

This is Chip and Dale.

The twins shake her hand, flash her their perky smiles.

CHIP & DALE

(energized)
Hiya!

They circle her, appraising her clothes/hair, etc.

CHIP *
She's adorable. *

DALE *
Like a ghost from the 90s. *

FRANNY *
The what? *

CHIP *
90s realness. *

CHIP & DALE *
90s realness! *
(high-five) *
Sweet! *

Heath guides her towards: *

HEATH *
This monster right here is Thor. *

Franny shakes Thor's mega-hand. *

FRANNY *
Nice to meet you. *

THOR *
Ja! *

HEATH *
Thor's from Sweden. He doesn't *
speak much English. Well, except *
for a few choice words. *

Thor nods, smiles, revealing a missing tooth. *

THOR *
Ja! *

Franny utters an amused laugh, but suddenly lets out a *
shocked gasp as she spots some *tip* poking out from his *
shorts. *

Heath spots this. *

HEATH *
Buddy, your shorts. *

Thor looks down, growls, readjusts self. *

CHIP *
Such a tip tease. *

Heath nudges Franny. *

HEATH *

You really should see it sometime *

though. It's like a python *

digesting a crocodile. *

Thors grunts happily in agreement. *

THOR *

Ja! Grrr tiger... *

(stroking motion) *

but ja like puss cat. *

HEATH *

And my best bud in the entire *

world, Whip. *

Franny shakes Whip's hand as well, dwarfs him. *

WHIP *

Hey girl, why so formal? Give me *

some sugar. *

(points to a cheek) *

FRANNY *

(bit hesitant) *

Oh, alright. *

She bends down and gives him a quick peck on the cheek. *

FRANNY (CONT'D) *

What's Whip stand for? *

HEATH *

Whip's an aspiring chef. So he's *

good at whipping things. *

CHIP *

Yea, like pus-- *

Dale hits him upside the head. *

DALE *

He makes a kick-ass meringue. *

Heath checks watch, rubs hands together. *

HEATH *

Alright guys, sun's going down, *

what are we doing tonight? *

THE BOYS *

Corrupting Franny! *

FRANNY

Wait, what?

The Old Woman stares at her, shaking head.

HEATH

Meat-packing district time, Peggy
Sue. Tour of the club circuit.

FRANNY

Oh God, Heath, I don't think I'm
ready for *that*.

HEATH

Operation Get Her Laid is now in
motion. Pull 'em out, guys!The boys lift Franny up with pep-squad spirit, disappear into
brownstone.

INT. BROOKLYN BROWNSTONE - FRANNY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Franny sits at her vanity and mirror, tries to calm nerves by
using a vibrator on her neck -- Arianna does her hair and
makeup.

FRANNY

(anguished)

You know I have no talent for
socializing with people my own age!

Arianna suddenly looks up from Franny's hair, mid-tease.

ARIANNA

Oh my God, I just realized
something.

FRANNY

What?

ARIANNA

It's like I'm you're sexy fairy
Godmother.

Appraises self in mirror adoringly.

ARIANNA (CONT'D)

God, I'm described well.

FRANNY

Are you even listening to me? I'm
in panic attack mode here.

ARIANNA

I'm trying, I'm trying. You just think soo much.

Suddenly, a SPANK-noise issues from Franny's cell, causing both her and Arianna to jump.

ARIANNA (CONT'D)

What was that?

Franny snatches up phone, looking...

FRANNY

Oh God, he message spanked me.

ARIANNA

Who?!

FRANNY

Tolliver!

Shows pic to Arianna.

ARIANNA

(squeals)

It's a sign. Practically cosmic! Message him back! Invite him out tonight!

FRANNY

Oh I couldn't! Could I?

ARIANNA

Be the "Arianna" of your own life.

Franny mulls it over a moment, then starts typing away on cell. Arianna goes back to teasing her hair.

EXT. MEATPACKING DISTRICT - TABLEAU NIGHT CLUB - NIGHT

Cue Tone Loc's "Wild Thing."

Heath, Franny and the Boys emerge from a light fog, strut towards club in SLO-MO, sexy music video style.

Franny looks more like a stripper clown than a sexy sophisticate, but nevertheless, she her tries best to "work it."

She stumbles on a heel and is about to go down for the count, but good old Thor's lightning fast reflexes save her from a face plant.

FRANNY *
(relieved) *
Thanks. *

THOR *
No Ja. *

A long-ass line of UNDERLINGS wait to get into club. *

Franny instinctively starts to wander in that direction, but *
Heath grabs her by the arm and yanks her back towards him. *

HEATH *
What are you doing? *

FRANNY *
(points) *
The line... *

Heaths shakes his head. *

HEATH *
No, we don't wait in lines. *

Pulls her towards a yoked-up ginger bouncer at entrance named *
JOHNNY RED. *

HEATH (CONT'D) *
Yo, Johnny Red! *

Secret handshake, bro-hug. *

JOHNNY RED *
What's up, Mr. Lorde? You bring me *
any fine looking poundcake tonight? *

Heath looks to Franny. *

HEATH *
Virgin poundcake. *

Johnny Red gives Franny the up-down. *

JOHNNY RED *
Mmmm, cherry season. *

Shoots Franny a wink, unhooks rope, ushers them inside. *

INT. TABLEAU NIGHT CLUB - NIGHT *

Cirque du Baz Luhrmann. *

A DJ mixes jams from a work station installed in a baby grand, DANCERS swing from chandeliers, scantily clad MODELS create an erotic tableau up on a stage. *

Lights FLASH, music POUNDS -- place is a hot, sweaty jungle of dancing, grinding CLUB-GOERS. *

Heath and the Boys cut through the crowd with ease, but Franny is encumbered by her good manners, trying her best not to bump into people, finds self apologizing at every turn. *

Chip and Dale notice Franny's having a time of it, stop to help. *

CHIP
Need a hand? *

Twins each offer up a hand. *

FRANNY
Oh, thanks. *

Franny starts to take their hands, but much to her surprise, they lift her up and onto their shoulders, move on. *

DALE
(gazing up)
How's the view? *

FRANNY
(laughs)
Better! *

They continue on. *

INT. TABLEAU NIGHTCLUB - PRIVATE BOX - NIGHT *

Table service -- box is crowded with HANGER-ON's, mostly of the wannabe supermodel variety. *

Franny gazes through a pair of opera glasses at mayhem below. *

Opera Glasses POV: The Boys get down and dirty on the dance floor, Magic Mike-style, attracting the attentions of many a female. *

Franny turns to Heath, who nurses a drink and lords over box with Gatsby pinache. *

FRANNY
Your friends sure know how to dance. *

Heath takes a look for himself through own pair of glasses. *

Opera Glasses POV: It's like each Boy is giving their
respective FEMALE a private show. Pure sex. *

HEATH
(grins)
Yep. God love 'em. *

BOX ATTENDANT offers to refresh Franny's drink with a bit of
Grey Goose. She happily accepts. *

Heath watches Franny sip her drink with ease. *

HEATH (CONT'D)
(surprised)
You're a smooth drinker. *

FRANNY
(smiles, shrugs)
I went to college. *

HEATH
Oh yea, how come you never got
laid? *

FRANNY
What's appealing about some sloppy
frat boy rutting on top of you?
I mean, if he can't quote Tristan
Black while he's inside me, I'm not
interested. *

Heath chokes on his drink, laughs. *

HEATH
Whoa, Franny. *

She smirks, proceeds to drain drink. *

A couple of the female Hanger-On's stumble over to Franny's
side. *

HANGER-ON #1
(giggly)
Hey, do you know where we can get
some coke? *

Alcohol is starting to hit Franny. *

FRANNY
(animated)
Oh my God, yes! CVS has it on sale
this week. *

She digs into handbag and proffers a coupon. *

Hanger-On's look at coupon, then each other: "Like, WTF?!" *

They stumble away. *

HEATH *

And she's back. *

She gestures to Box Attendant for another drink. Attendant gladly obliges. *

Franny bops head to music as she takes drink from Attendant, downs. *

Picks up opera glasses and gazes into again. *

Opera Glasses POV: *

-- On stage, a group of SEXY FEMALE MIMES, with some real acrobatic tricks, do body shots off one another for the amusement of some WALL STREET TRADERS. *

-- In box across the way, a couple of Fellini-esque CLOWNS make-out. *

-- Tolliver smiles/waves up at Franny as he makes his way through the throng below. *

She lowers glasses, spins to Heath. *

FRANNY *

Oh God, he's here. *

HEATH *

Who? *

FRANNY *

Inspiration. I did something a little crazy. *

Tolliver enters box. Heath gives him the up-down, isn't terribly impressed. *

Tolliver goes straight for Franny, smiling wide. *

TOLLIVER *

Paperback Romance Girl! *

FRANNY *

Boy with the Name, hey! *

He swoops her up in a big hug. *

TOLLIVER
Thanks for the invite.

FRANNY
Of course. I thought, why coffee,
let's go straight to the alcohol,
right?

TOLLIVER
Ha, good thinking.

Tolliver is suddenly taken aback by the sight of Heath.

TOLLIVER (CONT'D)
Whoa, you're Heath Lorde.

HEATH
(unabashed)
Yes, it's me.

Takes up Tolliver's hand and gives it a shake.

HEATH (CONT'D)
I've heard so much about your name.

TOLLIVER
Great to meet you too, man. Love
the books.
(re: Franny)
How do you two know each other?

FRANNY
Uh, Heath is my--

HEATH
Newest friend. We just really hit
it off at that signing.

TOLLIVER
That's amazing!

Tolliver takes a seat next to Franny.

INT. TABLEAU NIGHCLUB - NIGHT

Drinks in hand, Franny, Heath and Tolliver make their way
downstairs, out onto main floor.

Whip rushes up, taking Heath aside.

WHIP *
Hey, we've rounded up some trust *
fund uglies that wanna head back *
and party. *

HEATH *
Right now? *

WHIP *
Uh yea, they're horny, you're broke *
and Toto's back in Kansas. Let's *
jam. *

Heath looks to see Franny starting to chat comfortably with *
Tolliver. She laughs at something he's said. *

HEATH *
(taken aback) *
He made her laugh. *

WHIP *
What? *

Heath gestures to pair. *

HEATH *
How'd he make her laugh? *

WHIP *
Who cares? She's got her hook-up. *
She'll be fine. *

HEATH *
I mean, he's a high-six, at best. *

WHIP *
C'mon. *

Drags Heath away. *

Franny pulls Tolliver into the throng of dancing Club-Goers. *

Casts a quick glance over her shoulder, Heath nowhere in *
sight, her disappointment evident. Continues on with *
Tolliver. *

INT. TABLEAU NIGHT CLUB - DANCE FLOOR - NIGHT *

Franny gets down and dirty on dance floor. She's a natural. *

Tolliver, not so much. *

TOLLIVER *
How are you doing this?! *

FRANNY *
I'm a tap dancer! *

TOLLIVER *
Professionally? *

FRANNY *
Personally! *

She does a little tap dance jig, then proceeds to grind up
against his front. *

FRANNY (CONT'D) *
Mmmm, your front is all toasty. *

Spins to face him, dances up against his body -- Tolliver
does his best to follow. *

TOLLIVER *
Dancing is sort of my Kryptonite. *
I always feel silly. *

FRANNY *
Okay, it's official, you need *
another drink. *

INT. TABLEAU NIGHTCLUB - PRIVATE BOX - NIGHT *

Franny and Tolliver raise glasses in a toast. *

FRANNY *
Here's to chance meetings outside *
bookstores. *

TOLLIVER *
Chance meetings outside bookstores. *
And let's not forget Heath Lorde. *

Franny fakes a smile. They clink glasses, drink. *

Franny grabs bottle of Grey Goose and tops off Tolliver's
drink till the vodka is spilling over. *

TOLLIVER (CONT'D) *
Ha, whoa, that's good. *
(beat) *
If I didn't know any better, I'd *
say Paperback Romance Girl is *
trying to get me drunk. *

FRANNY

Boy with the Name, you might be
right.

INT. TABLEAU NIGHTCLUB - BAR - NIGHT

Franny and Tolliver do tequila shots. Shit is starting to
get messy.

Franny gives Tolliver's shoulder a playful swat.

FRANNY

Nameboy, you're adorable. Like a
meerkat or something.

She takes off his glasses and puts on herself.

TOLLIVER

Well, you're like the hottest girl
here.

Franny brays with drunken laughter, gives Tolliver a push
that nearly knocks him over.

FRANNY

God, no, not me! Arianna is!

TOLLIVER

Who?

FRANNY

(serious; bit slurred)
Wait a minute, excuse me -- we have
been talking for a very long time
and I can't even remember your
name.

TOLLIVER

(laughs)
It's Tolliver! You love it,
remember?

FRANNY

(relieved)
Right! Thank you!

She picks up another shot, but then sets down, turning back
to him.

FRANNY (CONT'D)

Wait, what is it again? I think
you said it and I wasn't even
listening.
(giggles)

TOLLIVER

Tolliver.

FRANNY

If you say so, Mr. Man.

She takes the shot.

Tolliver smiles, oddly charmed by her.

TOLLIVER

You wanna go back to my place?

Franny laughs.

FRANNY

You little slut. Yes!

INT. TOLLIVER'S STUDIO - DAY

Franny and Tolliver burst through door, lips locked hot and
heavy.

They fall back onto a futon, taking short breaks from mauling
one another, to tear off a piece of clothing.

With nearly superhuman strength, Franny just rips off her
undies.

TOLLIVER

Holy smokes.

Tolliver starts to go down on her.

Franny throws back her head in exaggerated ecstasy, but then
starts giggling.

Tolliver lifts head up.

TOLLIVER (CONT'D)

Ha, what's so funny?

FRANNY

Your face is in my wacky place.
Finally!

She pushes his face back down, notices Arianna sitting in a corner of the room, smoking a cigarette and watching.

Arianna shoots her a wink.

FRANNY (CONT'D)

Uh, hello? Hello down there? Do we have a condom?!

Tolliver gazes up, eager beaver.

TOLLIVER

(wipes mouth)

Yea, of course.

He jumps to, goes searching through a night-stand drawer -- bingo, he's found one, starts unwrapping...

Franny arches head back, laughing.

After Tolliver has made the necessary adjustments, he slides gently on top of her.

TOLLIVER (CONT'D)

Are you sure?

FRANNY

Just do it. New pages are due in a week and I can't stand being a virgin one second longer.

Tolliver recoils.

TOLLIVER

Whoa, wait, you're a virgin?

FRANNY

Technically.

(beat)

But I'm pretty sure I broke my hymen years ago with an intense tap move.

Tolliver stands. Franny props herself up on her elbows.

FRANNY (CONT'D)

Wait, what's happening? You're going slack.

Condom slips off and falls to the ground.

TOLLIVER

A virgin? That's just a lot of pressure.

FRANNY

What, did you think I was some sort
of slut or something?

TOLLIVER

No, but experienced. You always
buy those romance novels, you hang
out with Heath Lorde, obviously
wax...

Franny pulls Tolliver back down onto futon.

FRANNY

Think of the story you can tell
your friends -- unchartered
territory...

Tolliver shakes his head.

TOLLIVER

I'm not really the Christopher
Columbus type.

Moment of uncomfortable silence, then:

TOLLIVER (CONT'D)

Hey, would you mind showing this
novel I've been working on to Mr.
Lorde?

Off Franny: "seriously?"

EXT. BROWNSTONE - NIGHT

Franny trudges up steps to brownstone, Tolliver's manuscript
in hand.

She looks ruffled and dejected, wears only one high-heeled
shoe.

INT. BROWNSTONE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Heath sits on the sofa wearing glasses and reading one of his
own books, looks up as Franny enters.

FRANNY

What are you still doing here?

Heath quickly throws off his glasses -- checks his watch.

HEATH *
Pulling up in the pumpkin kind of *
late. *

FRANNY *
Were you waiting up for me? *

HEATH *
Ha, no. *
(beat) *
Okay, maybe a little. *

Franny crosses to fireplace, grabs a box of matches from *
mantel. *

FRANNY *
That's almost sweet, for you. *

Bends down and lays Tolliver's manuscript on top of logs in *
fireplace. *

HEATH *
So, did you and that guy...? *

FRANNY *
Fuck? *

Heath flinches a bit on "fuck." Franny strikes a match. *

FRANNY (CONT'D) *
No. *

Throws lit match on top of manuscript, catches fire. *

HEATH *
Did you learn *anything*? *

FRANNY *
Yea, wait till after the guy has *
had sex with you to tell him you *
were a virgin. *

She plops down next to Heath on sofa. They watch as the fire *
starts to really take off. *

HEATH *
Well, I'm proud of you for trying. *
You surprised me tonight and I'm *
rarely surprised. Everything will *
come together eventually, trust me. *

FRANNY *
Eventually needs to happens very *
soon. *

(MORE)

FRANNY (CONT'D)

I have to start writing, Heath,
like yesterday. I have class
deadlines.

Both go quiet as they think. Heath suddenly turns to Franny.

HEATH

I know, kiss *me*.

FRANNY

What?

HEATH

My kisses are better than any
you've ever read described in some
book.

FRANNY

It would be too weird.

HEATH

So is dissecting a frog, but
doctors still have to do it to
understand their anatomy.

FRANNY

Doctors?

HEATH

Okay, surgeons.

FRANNY

(shakes head)
I don't know.

HEATH

I'm a man, you're a woman.
You want to start writing, then
let's start doing - you know, what
we can, in good taste.
(beat)
Unless you're too scared.

FRANNY

(defensive)
I'm not scared.

HEATH

Good. Then it should be helpful.

Heath cups Franny's face gently in his hands, peers into her
eyes.

HEATH (CONT'D)

Ready?

Franny nods, sheepishly, gulping.

He bends his face to hers and their lips are pulled together with an almost magnetic force, and they kiss.

It's an effortless looking kiss, so effortless in fact, that as the passion mounts Heath is just about ready to lean Franny back down onto sofa...

But he suddenly unlocks his lips from hers. It's obvious Franny could have gone for more. She looks a bit lovestoned.

Heath also reels a bit.

HEATH (CONT'D)

That was... how would you describe that?

FRANNY

Huh.

HEATH

Yea.

Moment of silence, then:

FRANNY

I don't quite know what protocol is, but should I offer you your gum back?

Heath laughs, lays his head on Franny's shoulder.

HEATH

Oh Franny.

INT. BROWNSTONE - FRONT HALL - DAY

Franny enters from the outside, is surprised to find a PRIEST (60s) sitting on the entryway bench, clutching his rosary and muttering a novena to himself.

FRANNY

(confused)

Can I help you?

Priest smiles sweetly.

PRIEST

I always look to God for help, my
 child. But an afternoon delight
 with the twins never hurts.
 (wink; raises rosary)
 You'd be surprised how multi-
 purpose these babies are.

Brings finger to mouth: "shhh."

Franny narrows her eyes at Priest, puzzled.

REVOLVING DOOR MONTAGE:

EXT./INT. BROWNSTONE - FRONT DOOR - DAY

Cue Louis Prima's "Just A Gigolo."

Buzzer sounds.

Franny answers door and is met by a sour-faced Park Avenue
 DAME (40s) who holds a yappy Pomeranian.

FRANNY

Yes?

DAME

I have a 2:30 appointment with
 Whip.

FRANNY

A 2:30 appointment?

WHIP (O.S.)

Carlotta!

Franny turns to see Whip descending stairs in nothing but a
 cooking apron that reads "Spank the Cock."

DAME

Whip, darling.

Dame shoves the pom into Franny's arms, brushes past her and
 greets Whip with a warm embrace.

EXT./INT. BROWNSTONE - FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

Buzzer.

Franny answers door, is met by a group of tipsy YOUNG WOMEN
 wielding dildos, obviously celebrating a bachelorette party.
 They're liquored up and horned.

BACHELORETTES

(chant)

We want Thor! We want Thor! We
want Thor!

INT. BROWNSTONE - FRANNY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Franny sits at her desk wearing earmuffs and trying her best to do some writing on an old electric typewriter.

But it's not easy, what with the commotion coming from the next room... a woman's SCREAMS and Thor's impassioned "JA's!"

INT. HEATH'S PENTHOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Heath and Whip sit at bar counting out one-hundred dollar bills, a shit-load of them. High-five.

INT. BROWNSTONE - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Franny plunges toilet -- raises up plunger to find a couple condoms hanging from it. Cringes.

EXT./INT. BROWNSTONE - FRONT DOOR - DAY

Buzzer.

Franny answers door and is met by a group of GIRL SCOUTS selling cookies.

GIRL SCOUTS

(sweet)

Hi! We're--

FRANNY

Oh that's just sick.

Slams door in their faces.

END MONTAGE.

EXT./INT. HEATH'S PENTHOUSE - FRONT DOOR/ENTRY - NIGHT

BUZZER.

Door swings open: a shirtless, cat-toting Heath is surprised to find a worked up Franny on his doorstep.

HEATH
(bewildered)
Franny. How'd you out find where I
live?

She lifts up his little black book and waves it in the air.

FRANNY
I should have known. God, how
could I have been so blind?!

HEATH
(points to book)
Hey, I've been looking for that!

She stamps her hand to his chest and forces him back inside,
kicking door shut behind her.

FRANNY
They're hookers aren't they?!

HEATH
Okay now, don't get mad.

Franny scoffs.

FRANNY
Mad? Mad?! What are you some kind
of bestselling author slash part-
time pimp?

She suddenly realizes Heath is half-naked and her hand is
still on his bare chest.

Lets her eyes linger on his impressive pecs a second more,
then takes her hand away, self-conscious.

Notices the cat in his arms.

FRANNY (CONT'D)
What's *that*?

HEATH
Cat.

FRANNY
I know that!
(looks about)
But where's your golden retriever?

HEATH
Golden retriever?

FRANNY

The dog that's always with you in
your author photo!

HEATH

Oh *that*. God, that was the
photographer's dog. He thought
it'd make me look more relatable...
or was it kind-hearted?

Franny cries out in frustration.

FRANNY

More lies!

HEATH

Not a lie, illusion -- and admit
it, it does make me look more
relatable.

FRANNY

You've turned my place into some
sort of bizarre bordelo.

HEATH

(nonchalant)

Hey, c'mon, it's not gonna be so
bad.

Franny throws up her arms in exasperation.

FRANNY

My God, it's like my life has
become some sort of X-rated Noel
Coward play!

HEATH

Who?

FRANNY

For one thing, it's *illegal*.

HEATH

But should it be, really?

FRANNY

How do you even know people like
that? You're supposed to be *Heath*
Lorde!

A moment, then:

HEATH

Because I used to be one of them.

Off Franny: confusion. *

INT. HEATH'S PENTHOUSE - BALCONY - NIGHT *

Heath has thrown on a shirt -- stands at balcony railing gazing out across city, smoking a cigarette. *

Franny studies him from a lounge chair. *

HEATH *

When I first moved to New York, I was a callboy, the expensive kind, with only the best clients. *

FRANNY *

I can't believe what I'm hearing. *

Heath turns to throw her a look. *

HEATH *

Hey, how do you think my books got to be so hot? *

FRANNY *

Well, why are you doing this now, helping them, with who you are? *

HEATH *

God, Franny, don't be a snob. *

FRANNY *

Don't be a dick. *

HEATH *

Because I remember my friends, ok? *

She stands, forthright. *

FRANNY *

Well, I can't do this, it's too much. We could get in a lot of trouble. *

HEATH *

Sit down... c'mon, will you, please? *

She weakens, shrinks back down onto chair. *

HEATH (CONT'D) *

We won't get in any trouble, I promise. They're discrete professionals. *

FRANNY

Discrete? Chip and Dale have weekly sex sessions with a Priest!

HEATH

Who, Father Ted?

(dismissive hand-wave)

He's not a Priest. He just dresses like one, costume. And they don't have sex. He gets off on pretending the twins are his naughty Sunday School students. At the worst, he gives them a spanking.

Franny takes a moment to grapple with that weird mental picture.

FRANNY

Whip and Carlotta?

HEATH

Okay, they're fucking.

He flicks his cig off balcony, joins her on lounge.

FRANNY

This is all very confusing.

HEATH

I don't think you realize the creative potential this situation could afford you.

FRANNY

I am not having sex with them.

Heath chuckles.

HEATH

Like you could afford them.

(beat)

No, I'm talking about observing, learning from them. They have all the experience you'd ever need.

Franny takes a moment to mull this over, looks Heath right in the eyes.

FRANNY

This better be good.

HEATH
(smirks)
Oh it will be.

*
*
*

INT. BROWNSTONE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

*

The boys have all congregated on or around the couch, Franny sits opposite them in a wingback, paper and pen in lap.

*
*

Heath glides in with a pitcher of frozen margaritas.

*

CHIP
(excited)
Is this midnight margaritas?!

*
*
*

Dale gives him a little slap upside the head.

*

DALE
You can't have midnight margaritas at eight p.m., goonburger! God, it's like the law.

*
*
*
*

CHIP
Don't call me a goonburger, butt breath!

*
*
*

Gives Dale a punch to the shoulder, the two start to bicker/wrestle -- Whip and Thor try to break it up.

*
*

HEATH
Guys, stop! This isn't midnight margaritas. It's happy hour story time.

*
*
*
*

Boys all exchange confused glances.

*

CHIP
Is this like school? Are we going to be tested after?

*
*
*

DALE
(worried)
Test? I didn't even study!

*
*
*

THOR
(growls; adjusts crotch)
Ja.

*
*
*

HEATH
No, we're gonna help Franny with her novel.

*
*
*

They all look to Franny, who smiles, then back at Heath wearing expressions that say "do we have to?"

CHIP

Can't we just give her a free fuck?

Heath hands Chip a margarita.

HEATH

(chuckles good-humoredly)

Oh Chip...

(serious)

No.

INT. BROWNSTONE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Franny paces the room as she lays out her story for Heath and the boys.

FRANNY

Briar Lindsay is a rose among thorns, every man would want her, I mean, if she was awake enough to meet them.

(beat)

You see, she has this very rare disorder, Kleine-Levin syndrome.

CHIP

Kevin Klein who?

HEATH

Chip, let her talk.

FRANNY

Also know as Sleeping Beauty Syndrome - she literally sleeps weeks, sometimes months at a time. That is until she meets wealthy financier Roderick Van Hudson at a Whole Foods during one of her waking periods. Sparks fly immediately, for you see Roderick really teases out one of the symptoms of her disorder: hypersexuality.

Chip, Dale and Thor "Ooooo" and "Jaaaa."

WHIP

I once knew this hooker who's client had a Sleeping Beauty fetish, used to like to drug her with sleeping pills then have his way with her.

HEATH

Yes, I remember her, Mustang Sally!

DALE

Franny, that's what you should do. Drop the sick girl in the wheelchair thing.

FRANNY

Wheelchair?

CHIP

Yea, get rid of the Kevin Klein thing. I hate hospitals.

FRANNY

What a minute, what you're describing here sounds sort of like... rape.

WHIP

Not if the chick consents beforehand, signs an NDA or something. What if there's this super rich dude, super hot, super hung, who women just want to be with, anyway possible, even unconscious.

FRANNY

(chewing nails)

That's dark.

(beat)

I like it. Where would Briar come in?

WHIP

She's the woman to break him of his habit. She won't sleep *for* him so he can sleep *with* her, so he has to change -- because he falls for her, yes!

Franny looks to Heath, impressed.

HEATH

Whip audited a comparative
literature course at Columbia.

Whip raises his margarita in the air.

WHIP

Thank you.

CHIP

Oh! I know what you can call the
sleeping pills, *Goodnight Moons!*

DALE

Yo, bro-ditto, smart sauce
awesomeness!

CHIP AND DALE

(high-five)

Sweet!

Franny sinks down onto wingback, creative wheels already
turning in her head. Heath comes to her side.

HEATH

Told ya they were good. And we're
just getting started.

INT. BROWNSTONE - FRANNY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Franny sits watching as Chip and Dale prepare to simulate a
sexual scenario for her.

CHIP

We're gonna role-play and hopefully
it'll give you some idea how sexy
people act.

FRANNY

Got it.

DALE

(re: Chip)

Okay, you be Franny.

CHIP

I don't want to be Franny. You be
Franny.

DALE

(whines)

Chipp, no! We already discussed
this.

CHIP *
 Ugh, fine. I'll be Franny. *
 (beat) *
 Okay, and *action*. *

Dale rings an imaginary door-bell. *

DALE *
 Ding-dong! *

Chips opens the imaginary door. *

DALE (CONT'D) *
 Hi there, UPS delivery. *

CHIP *
 (hands to cheeks; high- *
 pitched) *
 Heaven's to Betsy! Look how big *
 that package is! Good thing I *
 answered the door, you probably *
 wouldn't have able to fit it in my *
 box. *

DALE *
 I bet it is very snug. *

Chip titters -- then gets serious again. *

CHIP *
 Oh how rude of me. Would you care *
 to come in for some ham or perhaps *
 a spongebath? *

DALE *
 Would I! *

The two are about to make-out passionately. *

FRANNY *
 And scene! *

Camera pulls out to reveal Father Ted sitting next to Franny. *
 Gives her a gentle slap on the hand. *

FATHER TED *
 Shame, child. It was just getting *
 good! I order you to say five Hail- *
 Mary's and diddle yourself silly. *

INT. BROWNSTONE - GUEST BEDROOM - DAY *

Heath and Franny sit observing Thor as he disrobes. *

At the sight of Thor's "hammer," Franny's mouth drops, sports a stunned expression. Heath crosses his arms and smiles proudly.

FRANNY
That's uh, well, that's...
(crosses legs)
One intense Gucci wallet.

THOR
Ja!

Heath gestures to the open notebook on Franny's lap.

HEATH
Jot down some notes, study its lines and curves. The heartthrob in your story should definitely have this sort of anatomy. How would you describe it?

Franny thinks it over a moment.

FRANNY
It's a, uh, a... penis of Herculean proportions? A throbbing colossus?

HEATH
(nods)
Not bad.

FRANNY
(gasps in excitement)
Oh, I know! A hot cock so big it needed its own area code!

HEATH
I like it!

THOR
JA!

Heath snaps a quick "hammer" pic with his cell, shows to Franny.

HEATH
Text to you for inspiration. God, doesn't it photograph beautifully?

Thor grins, as Franny starts to takes notes.

INT. BROWNSTONE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Franny and Whip stand at counter wearing aprons, an array of miscellaneous food items set out before them.

WHIP

What are the two things people
think about most?

FRANNY

Kitchen related injuries? Where's
the fire extinguisher?

WHIP

No, food and sex. Bring the two
together, and BAM, you got 'em
hooked. Don't be afraid to get
inventive.

Gestures to a can of whipped cream, bottle of chocolate
syrup, honey, some strawberries, Cheez Whiz...

WHIP (CONT'D)

You got your toppings, garnishes
and sticky situations...

Franny picks up whiz, eyes curiously.

FRANNY

Cheez Whiz?

WHIP

Yea, can turn a guy's dick into a
cheeto if you want.

Franny nearly gags.

Next, Whip picks up a banana and fig.

WHIP (CONT'D)

Your quintessential erotic fruit
for your classy types.

Sets fruit down and points to some dark chocolate, oysters,
red wine, tequila.

WHIP (CONT'D)

Now here you got some of your more
popular aphrodisiacs...

Franny points to tequila.

FRANNY

Oh I've tried tequila on a guy
before. It doesn't work.

WHIP

Franny, tequila is a universal
truth. What went wrong?

FRANNY *
He was parthenophobic. *

WHIP *
Say what? *

FRANNY *
Had a fear of virgins. It's a *
thing, I looked it up. *

WHIP *
Damn, girl. What a freaky *
exception to the rule. *

He takes a swig from tequila bottle. *

INT. BROWNSTONE - KITCHEN - NIGHT *

Mucho candlelight, a little "La Vie en Rose" swirls about in *
the air as Franny sits at counter typing away on an electric *
typewriter. *

Heath floats over with a couple of sandwiches and an open *
bottle of wine, takes a seat next to her. *

HEATH *
Okay, writing break. I made you my *
famous three-way grilled cheese. *

Franny looks up from work. *

FRANNY *
(smirks) *
Three way? *

HEATH *
Three kinds of cheese, silly. *

She picks up a half and takes a ravenous bite. *

HEATH (CONT'D) *
Good, right? *

Franny nods approvingly as she chews. *

He pours them each a glass of wine. *

HEATH (CONT'D) *
Here's to you, Miss Lonely Hearts, *
and the best little whorehouse in *
Washington Square. *

Franny grins as the two exchange conspiratorial glances,
clink glasses and drink.

FRANNY

You wanna know something crazy?
We've been running around together
for weeks and I still don't know
any more about you than what I
could learn from the flap of one of
your books.

HEATH

Well, except for the...

Hums tune to Roy Orbison's "Pretty Woman."

FRANNY

Ha, I guess that's true, but I mean
something else, something real.

HEATH

I like mystery. It's my little
security blanket. If no one ever
really knows you, you can't ever
get hurt, there are no
expectations.

FRANNY

Sounds awfully lonely, Mr. Heath
Lorde.

HEATH

Kind of like this paperback romance
fanatic I know.

Franny gives his shoulder a pretend punch.

HEATH (CONT'D)

People like facade, smoke and
mirrors, the Heath Lorde they
fantasize about in their heads.
Believe me, they'd be very
disappointed with the real me.

FRANNY

Oh, why's that? Really, I want to
know.

A moment, then:

HEATH

(stares off a bit)

For all the fancy suits and
apartments and parties, you have no
idea how close I always am to
having nothing again. Every day I
wake up and think, one wrong move,
and you'll be right back where you
started -- to being some poor
little boy from a Pennsylvania
mining town with no nice shoes to
wear to church on Sunday. How
pathetic is that?

Downs wine.

FRANNY

We all have something to lose...
and gain.

(gazes into his eyes)

I'd still like you with no shoes.

She suddenly takes up his lips with an unexpected kiss.
Heath goes with it for a moment, put then pulls back.

HEATH

(bemused)

What are you doing?

FRANNY

I have to seduce you, remember?

(deadpan)

And, I'm right at that crucial
point in the story when Briar and
Roderick need to *really* kiss, we're
talking heat lightning here, and I
needed a memory refresher for
description purposes.

HEATH

Oh, why didn't you say so? You
should have tried it like this
then.

He takes up her lips with a much grander kiss, lasts several
moments... as he pulls away, his hand caresses her cheek.

HEATH (CONT'D)

Get what you needed?

Franny fingers her lips, as if they're in after-shock.

FRANNY

Uh yea, I feel a description
forming.

(beat; gazes up)

Heath, your hand...

Heath suddenly realizes his hand is still caressing her cheek
-- lets it fall away, a bit embarrassed.

HEATH

Sorry, you had a bit of grilled
cheese on your chin.

Wipes at her chin with a napkin to cover.

HEATH (CONT'D)

Hey, I almost forgot.

Pulls an invitation from his jacket pocket, hands to her.

HEATH (CONT'D)

Happy *almost* Valentine's Day.

She takes the invitation from him, reads: *You're cordially
invited to Collier Publishing's annual HEARTS AFIRE BALL,
Saturday, February...*

Franny looks to Heath, smiling.

HEATH (CONT'D)

Call up the fairy godmother. We're
gonna knock 'em dead, what with the
way you dance.

INT. NEW YORK CITY COLLEGE - CLASSROOM - DAY

Franny stands in front of class reading a passage from new
pages.

FRANNY

Briar was quickly coming to realize
that the only passion worth seizing
lay in waking life, not dreams.
She couldn't bear the thought of
sleep-walking through another day,
let alone night.

(beat)

(MORE)

FRANNY (CONT'D)

But what a cruel twist of fate then
 that Roderick, man with half a
 dozen faces and twice as many
 grins, the man her loins ached for,
 lusted after her only while she
 slept, only in his own dark
 fantasies.

(beat)

"I must find the wind-up key to his
 heart," she told herself, "endear
 myself to his soul and then make
 him mine."

Franny looks up from the pages -- stunned silence from class.

Suddenly, everyone breaks out in applause, well, everyone
 except Mrs. Irving.

MR. FURGIS

Good stuff, Franny!

MR. HOLLISTER

Here, here, Miss Travers!

MRS. IRVING

Did anyone else find it the
 slightest bit derivative?

MR. HOLLISTER

What inspired this sudden change?

FRANNY

I met a Roderick.

She takes her seat, smiling.

EXT. NY CONVENTION CENTER - DAY

A pair of WORKERS raise a banner over entrance that reads:
 37th ANNUAL HEARTS AFIRE CONVENTION.

INT. NY CONVENTION CENTER - DAY

Convention gets under way, and it's quite the affair -- those
 Trekkies ain't got nothing on these LONELY HEARTS.

Rows upon rows of booths are set up, promote popular romance
 series and their AUTHORS, others hock sex toys, lingerie,
 "Team Arianna" and "Team Tristan" t-shirts.

One stand even sells "Cupid-Legs," convention's quirky answer *
to turkey legs... at another, Lonely Hearts have picture *
taken with FABIO LOOK-A-LIKE's, strike sultry poses. *

But of course one of the biggest attractions is Heath. *

He graciously greets fans and signs books from his booth,
well, it's more like a throne, really.

Astrid the Ice Queen stands at his side, taking in the "Lorde *
mania." *

 ASTRID
 (announces)
 Alright everybody, Mr. Lorde is
 going to take five.

Fans groan. *

Astrid begins massaging Heath's shoulders, bends to his ear. *

 ASTRID (CONT'D)
 God, can you imagine?

 HEATH
 What?

 ASTRID
 The sales for this next book when *
 all these saps find out it's the *
 end.

Dollar signs gleam in her eyes. *

 HEATH *
 Yea, just imagine. *

INT. NEW YORK CITY COLLEGE - CLASSROOM - DAY *

Franny and the rest of class sit listening to Hollister. *

 MR. HOLLISTER *
 Alright, before we leave, I've got
 the answer to the question you've
 all been eagerly working towards
 and waiting on -- who gets that
 private meeting with the big-league
 lit agent?

Mrs. Irving gets ready to jot down the winner in her *
notebook, Mr. Furgis takes a hit off his inhaler, Franny's *
feet tap-dance nervously under her desk. *

MR. HOLLISTER (CONT'D)

From day one of class I could tell that this person's passion for romance writing was nothing if not honest, but the problem was that they weren't being honest in their work. But much to my amazement, in just six short weeks, they've turned their work upside down, all for the better, and are finally discovering what a good writer prizes above all else, a voice.

Mrs. Irving grins, satisfied, thinking herself the winner.

MR. HOLLISTER (CONT'D)

Franny Travers...

Mrs. Irving's jaw drops.

MR. HOLLISTER (CONT'D)

It's with great pleasure to tell you that you'll be meeting with Doris Chancellor, real-life literary agent.

Franny can hardly believe it, she's equal parts stunned, elated, feet still tap-dancing under desk. *

MR. FURGIS *

Congratulations, Franny.

She can't help but grin from ear to ear.

FRANNY *

Thanks, Mr. Furgis.

Mrs. Irving scoffs, turns round in seat to glare at her.

MRS. IRVING *

(mouths)

Bitch. *

Franny blows her a kiss -- Mrs. Irving ducks. *

INT. SUBWAY CAR - DAY *

Cue David Bowie's "Modern Love."

Franny does a celebratory tap dance in subway car, which is empty, save for a FEMALE WINO, who grooves in her seat and cheers her on. *

She takes a pole for a twirl, owns it. *

Blows a kiss to Heath, pictured on an advertisement for his upcoming novel: *Shed the Skin*.

EXT./INT. SUBWAY STEPS - BROOKLYN - DUSK

Franny dances way up steps like Ginger Rogers, gliding by amused SUBWAY RIDERS effortlessly.

EXT. STREETS OF NEW YORK - DUSK *

She runs/dances/twirls down sidewalks of New York, on the wings of a dove. *

Street lamps flash on as she passes -- yes, she's finally got that undefinable something, the power. *

INT. BROWNSTONE - FRANNY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT *

Franny sits at her vanity and mirror whilst the boys try to gussy her up for the ball. They're like the mice in *Cinderella*, but sexy mice. *

Chip & Dale blow out Franny's locks, while Thor darkens her eyelids with shadow, draws lipstick on her lips, pats own together, as if to show her how it's done. *

Whip comes running into room holding up a to die for gold gown. *

WHIP
(out of breath) *

What about this?! *

FRANNY
Oh it's beautiful! Where'd you find it? *

WHIP
It's Thor's, from when he was down and out and had to work drag in Chelsea. *

Franny looks to Thor, who nods, smiling, jutting out chest like he has breasts. *

THOR
Ja! Me puss cat, ja! *

INT. BROWNSTONE - FRANNY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT *

Franny gazes at reflection in mirror, a bit in awe of self. *

Dripping in gold, hair and makeup done to perfection, she's a vision. *

The boys gather round her, pleased with their work. Chip and Dale high-five, Thor and Whip do a chest bump. *

Yea! WHIP THOR
 (warrior-cry) *

JA! *

EXT. BROWNSTONE - NIGHT *

Whip accompanies Franny down front steps, gestures to a supped up SUV waiting at curb. *

WHIP
 M'lady, your uber Lux awaits. *

Franny bends to give Whip a hug. *

FRANNY
 (gestures to get-up) *

Thank you, for this. *

WHIP
 It was nothing. A little Midas touch for a girl with a heart of gold. *

She smiles. *

WHIP (CONT'D) *

(wags finger) *

Just don't forget what happens at midnight. *

FRANNY
 What? *

WHIP
 Hopefully everything turns to sex. *

Shoots her a wink, then opens door of SUV for her. *

Rest of the guys hang out of one of brownstone's upstairs windows, wave, shout good-byes.

Franny waves back, blows them a kiss, then disappears into SUV.

EXT. BROWNSTONE - UPSTAIRS WINDOW - NIGHT *

Chip, Dale and Thor wave as SUV drives away. Thor is swept up in the moment, gets choked up. *

THOR

Ja, I just so happy for dis girl.

Blows nose into a kleenex.

Chip and Dale exchange smiles, lean heads on Thor's shoulders. *

INT. THE PLAZA - GRAND BALLROOM - NIGHT

One damn classy affair, like something out of a Chanel No. 5 commercial -- BALL ATTENDEES revel like there's no moment like the present, mingle, drink, dance, etc. *

A MICHAEL BUBLE-TYPE croons from a bandstand, is accompanied by a BAND. *

Heath, looking dapper as ever in a fitted tuxedo, poses for photographs with Astrid against a "step and repeat" backdrop. *

INT. THE PLAZA - GRAND BALLROOM - NIGHT

Heath answers questions from REPORTERS, who thrust their pocket recorders in his face -- Astrid lingers in the background. *

REPORTER #1 *

Heath, who made the suit? *

HEATH *

Armani. Always Armani. *

REPORTER #2 *

How do you feel about the casting choices for the upcoming *Sensitive Skin* movie? *

HEATH *

Inspired. *

REPORTER #3 *

C'mon Heath, tell us, did Tristan really buy the farm at the end of *Rope Burn*? *

HEATH
(teasing)
You'll find out April 11.

REPORTER #4
Mr. Lorde, who's the special woman
in your life this month?

Heath is about to say something but is suddenly struck mute,
gazes up:

Franny appears at top of the staircase, a "Cinderellian"
vison, gazes down at the revelry below.

HEATH
Franny?

THE REPORTERS
Who?

Franny's newfound confidence ebbs a bit, but she takes a deep
breath, starts down staircase, no doubt turning a few heads
in the process.

Heath drifts away from press hubbub, as if in a trance.

ASTRID
Heath, were not done here!

He makes a beeline for Franny, who turns towards him just as
he's approaching, BEAMS.

HEATH
Do my eyes deceive me, Arianna?

He takes up her hand and twirls her round once.

FRANNY
No, tonight I thought I'd try just
being me.

HEATH
Good choice.

FRANNY
I did have a little help from a few
fairy ho-brothers.

Heath laughs, offers her his hand.

HEATH
Shall we go a round on the floor
and make everyone jealous?

Heath leads her out onto the dance floor just at the Buble-type/Band start in on "SWAY."

The pair quickly get in-sync with each other's rhythms as they begin to dance, are a sight for sore eyes.

Arianna goes dancing by with Tristan, gives Franny a big thumbs up.

Franny can't help but giggle.

HEATH (CONT'D)
(light-hearted)
Hey, what's so funny?

FRANNY
God, if Nana could only see me now.

HEATH
(laughs)
Who?

FRANNY
(whispers in his ear)
We did good teach. I got the meeting with the agent.

Heath stops dancing right in the middle of the floor.

HEATH
You're kidding?!

FRANNY
I have a meeting with a one Doris Chancellor tomorrow morning at 10:30.
(squeals in excitement)

HEATH
You darling! I knew you could do it!

Swoops her up in a big hug and twirls them around excitedly.

Mid-twirl, Heath eyes a dour looking-woman staring at him with contempt from the edge of dance floor. He sets Franny down.

Meet JAN MCMURRAY (40s), looks sort of like a poor man's Marianne Williamson. She raises her flute of champagne to Heath in a salute, sports a disparaging smile, then downs bubbly.

Franny sees this debbie downer, notices Heath's concern --
they start to dance once more.

FRANNY
Who's that?

HEATH
(shrugs off)
Just an old work associate.

He dips Franny with sudden joie de vivre - brings her back
up. She's exhilarated.

FRANNY
Never in a million years did I
think I'd be dancing with my idol.

HEATH
(off-put)
I'm your idol?

FRANNY
Ever since that first book...
(quoting)
"Tristan Black. He was a Pandora's
Box. One Arianna only dared open
in her wildest dreams."

HEATH
Don't idolize me, Franny. You can
do better. You are better. You're
you, always, unapologetically you.

They dance on, Franny's enthusiasm deflated a bit.

INT. THE PLAZA - GRAND BALLROOM - NIGHT

Band has taken five, Ball Attendees all gather near stage,
where an MC (30s) stands.

MC
Ladies and Gentlemen, give a big
round of applause for tonight's
guest of honor, author of the
bestselling *Sensitive Skin* series
and your favorite swoon-bait, Heath
Lorde!

Attendees clap fervently as Heath crosses stage, takes mic
from MC.

Arianna stands next to Franny, whoops and whistles.

HEATH

Good evening, thank you, you're too kind.

(little bow, waves)

What a bash, am I right?

More claps.

HEATH (CONT'D)

A special thanks to Collier Publishing for pulling out all the stops again this year. And of course to Collier's very own guardian angel, I love her and I know you love her, Astrid Collier!

Astrid accepts attention/round of applause with due grace, a natural.

HEATH (CONT'D)

My partnership with Collier over the past five years has been one helluva ride and I'm incredibly grateful to have been given the chance to share my beloved Arianna Goldsmith and Tristan Black with the world. Writing isn't easy, the publishing game isn't easy and I sure know there's a whole lot of writers out there who deserve such success and fanfare much more than me.

Catches Franny's gaze.

HEATH (CONT'D)

But all twisted fairy tales, no matter how many copies they've sold, have to end sometime. And tonight I'm excited, and would be lying if I didn't say a bit sad, to announce that the next installment in the *Sensitive Skin* series, *Shed the Skin*, will be that ending, the last book, set to hit bookstores April 11.

Ball Attendees erupt in surprise -- GASPS, shocked WHISPERS. Reporters text frantically on phones.

ARIANNA

(pained wail)

NOOOO!!!

Faints into Franny's arms. *

HEATH *

So tonight, as we viva la romance,
let's raise a glass to Tristan and
Arianna, 100 million copies sold,
new voices, and more importantly,
to a happy ending... *maybe*.
(wink) *

Raises his champagne flute, everyone follows suit. *

HEATH (CONT'D) *

To a happy ending! *

ALL *

TO A HAPPY ENDING! *

Everyone drinks/claps. *

JAN (O.S.)

(drunken holler)

Oh hiss, boom, *WHORE!*

Crowd peels away to reveal, Jan, toasted and mad as hell.

Points to Heath with a full champagne flute, slopping bubbly
all over the place. *

JAN (CONT'D) *

You life ruiner! Circus gigolo
thief!

(belches) *

Heath panics, looks to Astrid out in audience, but she's
equally as stunned/panicked. *

Jan stumbles up on to stage, tries to wrestle microphone from
him -- they struggle. *

HEATH

Jan, c'mon, no. Don't do this. Not
tonight.

JAN

Oh give it up ya little cunt
jockey.

Heath is taken off guard by that one, can't help but utter a
little shocked laugh, lets go.

Jan takes up microphone, points to audience, swaying on her
feet.

JAN (CONT'D)

I'm gonna tell you a story, about a boy...

Astrid looks around frantically for security, mouths to Heath: "DO SOMETHING." But he's at a loss.

JAN (CONT'D)

A boy who got everything because he had his face perpetually planted in Astrid Collier's muff.

Astrid gasps, all eyes turning to her. *

JAN (CONT'D)

(cackles) *

Oh look at her face, she knows it too, ha, a filthy whore in Dior. That's the look of truth.

(beat)

But the better truth, the more truthier truth is that he didn't write a goddamn word of it, any of it. Arianna and Tristan are my babies...

(points to self)

Jan McMurray, mine, me, ME! I wrote the first *Sensitive Skin* when I was just some fucking secretary at an accounting firm. *

Ball Attendees look around at one another, not quite sure how to take this.

Stunned, Franny drops Arianna. *

JAN (CONT'D)

Heath Lorde? Bull-*shit*! *

(snorts in contempt) *

Like that's his real name. He's had you all fooled. The perfect man dreamed up by Collier's marketing department. You know he doesn't even really have a golden retriever.

That does it. Ball Attendees gasp in horror. Never make up a fake dog. Commotion really starts to stir up. *

Likewise, the truth-bombs are exploding in front of Franny's eyes, starts connecting the dots... *

JAN (CONT'D)

I say we castrate the son of a--

Suddenly, a SECURITY GUARD comes out of nowhere and tackles Jan to the ground.

But for such a small woman, she sure puts up one hell of a fight.

Heath tries to help Guard, but ends up getting a right hook to the face, goes flying back.

Things spin out from here, Franny flees like Cinderella at the tolling of the midnight hour, questioning Ball Attendees descend on Astrid... *

Heath climbs to his feet, lip bloodied, massaging jaw - gazes out into chaos for Franny, but she's already gone. *

EXT. THE PLAZA - NIGHT

Franny waits impatiently at curb for an Uber, still reeling. *

FRANNY

God, you stupid corndog! Stupid, stupid! *

Looks at cell, casts a glance down street, then over shoulder.

FRANNY (CONT'D)

Ugh, c'mon!

Heath comes running out of hotel, spots her. *

HEATH

Franny, wait! *

FRANNY

Just leave me alone. *

He tries to lay his hand on her shoulder, but she shirks him off.

HEATH

Franny, listen--

She turns on him, angered.

FRANNY

You lied to me! And I trusted you, dammit, idolized you! Opened my self up to you! But this whole time, God, it's just been some act, some ridiculous illusion.

HEATH

Hey, that's not fair. I've been playing to this part long before I ever met you. And it was still me, basically...

*
*

FRANNY

(scornful laugh)

No, Heath, something tells me you're never just you. You're a fake, a phony -- a guy who takes advantage of poor, naive young women and turns their places into whorehouses. You're a con artist.

*
*

Heath flinches.

*

FRANNY (CONT'D)

I mean, God, I should have known you weren't a real author! We never talked about writing, you never once asked to read any of my new stuff...

*
*

HEATH

Well it worked didn't it? You got exactly what you wanted.

*

FRANNY

That's beside the point.

He shakes his head.

HEATH

No, I think it's exactly the point. You're making me out to be some conniving douchebag, but when it comes right down to it we're not that different.

*

FRANNY

I am nothing like you.

*

HEATH

What do you call what you do with all these romance novels?! Hiding between the lines in reality with your little mousy girl act and living vicariously through fiction. It's the same thing, sweetheart, variation on the same lie.

*
*
*

FRANNY

Just tell me one thing, 'Heath Lorde,' what's your real name?

Heath hesitates a moment, then:

HEATH

(shakes head)
I'm sorry, I can't. I just can't.

FRANNY

(spats)
Coward!

Just then, a horse-drawn carriage clip-clops in front of them. A COACHMAN looks down at Franny and Heath, smirks.

COACHMAN

Nothing like a little carriage ride
round the park to ease a lover's
quarrel. What do you kids say?

Franny and Heath gaze up at him, like "what the fuck?!"

HEATH

Keep it moving, pal.

Franny starts for carriage.

FRANNY

Wait! I'll go!

Heath tries to grab her, but she's too quick.

HEATH

Franny!

FRANNY

(points)
No, you stay!

She climbs up into carriage.

HEATH

Wait!

Coachman gives him a wave, carriage takes off down street.

Heath runs a few steps after carriage, stops suddenly, looks down to see that he's stepped in a big pile of horse shit.

HEATH (CONT'D)

Ugh. Ironic karma.

REPORTERS (O.S.)

Heath! Heath!

He turns to see press stampeding out of Plaza, straight for him. Runs for it.

EXT./INT. HORSE-DRAWN CARRIAGE - CENTRAL PARK - NIGHT

Franny looks about inside of carriage, desperate.

FRANNY

(verge of tears)

Arianna? Arianna, where are you?!

I need you, dammit!

But nothing. Carriage continues on.

EXT. BROWNSTONE - NIGHT

A taxi drops Heath off -- runs up front steps, finding door ajar, enters FRONT HALL.

HEATH

(shouts)

Franny? Franny?

LIVING ROOM

Heath enters, is surprised to find Toto, a pair of ripped GOONS and Whip lying in wait.

Well, actually the Goons watch one of Nana's DVR'd reality shows on the TV.

Franny is tied to a chair, whilst Chip & Dale and Thor are chained to stripper pole, shirtless, sporting spiked dog collars and sucking on pacifiers.

HEATH (CONT'D)

What the hell is this? Whip?

Whip averts gaze, sidling closer to Toto. Chip and Dale spit out pacifiers.

CHIP

He's a traitor!

DALE

Ratted us out!

THOR *
(muffled) *
Ja!

TOTO
Shut it!

Toto spreads arms out to Heath. *

TOTO (CONT'D)
Honey, you're home.
(grins) *
Hear you all been playing house *
with blondie over here.

Franny shoots Heath a nervous glance. *

TOTO (CONT'D)
Little sore I didn't get invited to
no house warming party.

HEATH
Well, we just wanted to get settled
first before we had people over.

Heath cracks a nervous smile, but Toto is none too amused.

TOTO
Fiji, Cabbage Patch, get him.

Goons rise from couch, flexing those muscles, come at Heath. *

INT. BROWNSTONE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Franny and Heath are now tied up in back to back chairs. *
Toto circles them.

HEATH
Toto, you can have me. Just let
her go.

TOTO
Uh-uh, she's the Mama Hen of this
roost, she been taking business
away from Toto. She's not going
anywhere. She's gonna pay the
price just like you.

Gives Franny's cheek a pinch.

FRANNY
Ow!

Heath struggles against ropes, glares up at Whip. *

HEATH

How could you do this to me?!
You're supposed to be my best
friend!

WHIP

I'm sorry, Heath, but he said he'd
cut off one of my hands if I didn't
fess up. You ever heard of a sous
chef with a hook?! *

TOTO

Whip has always been a good boy,
dependable, does what he's told. *

HEATH

Yea, like a dog. *

TOTO

(pokes Heath in chest) *

Unlike you. Such a disappointment.

HEATH

Aw gee, sorry dad. *

Franny tries to turn to Heath. *

FRANNY

He's not really your dad is he?

TOTO

Hey, blondie, cut it!
This is a trial, for crimes
committed against Toto. *

(beat)

Fiji, bring.

Fiji lifts up a tank of battery acid, passes to Toto.

HEATH

Toto, wait. We got your money,
more even-- *

TOTO

This isn't about money no more. *

This is personal. You've broken
Toto's heart. You were always my
favorite boy, such a pretty face *

and tight ass, but so stupid. *

Franny watches as Toto uncaps gas tank, gulps. *

FRANNY

It's times like these I really wish
I had Black's skills of
persuasion... or Arianna's coveted
pocketknife!

HEATH

What?

FRANNY

Did you even read the books?!

HEATH

I skimmed!

TOTO

Hey, Romeo & Juliet, cut it out.
Time to take your poison.

FRANNY

Oh God, and the worst part is I'm
going to be a disfigured virgin!

Chip leans towards Dale.

CHIP

Note to twin, if we make it out of
this alive, remember for sad
Lifetime movie idea.

Toto begins to lift tank over Franny and Heath's heads...

TOTO

Ciao, cuckoo birds.

The pair squeeze their eyes shut, cringing. But just as
Toto's about to douse them--

NANA LADONNA (O.S.)

Eat my sparks, scum!

Toto spins round and comes face to face with Nana and her
taser gun. Gun connects with his neck and sparks fly!

Toto does a funny little dance as electrical currents course
through him.

HEATH

Who's that?

FRANNY

(smiles)
That's my Nana!

Thor spits out pacifier, mugs for camera. *

THOR *
(suddenly English) *
Talk about a *Nana ex machina*. *

Ida and Elbie follow Nana's lead, are like two geriatric *
Charlie's Angels: *

Ida takes on Goon #1 with mace and a knee to the balls -- *
Elbie frantically blows on rape whistle while beating Goon #2 *
over the head with her carry-on luggage. *

Once they've got the two baddies groveling on the ground, *
they use all their strength to pull a china cabinet down on *
top of them. *

Nana pulls taser from Toto's neck. He collapses into a *
groaning heap on the floor. *

NANA LADONNA *
Girls, medical alert bracelets *
activate! *

They all do, Ida gets on her flip-phone.

IDA *
9-1-1 emergency, we've got a pimp *
down, and a bunch of tied up *
hookers here! *

EXT. BROWNSTONE - NIGHT *

Police cruisers surround brownstone, lights flashing. *

OFFICERS bring Toto, Goons out in handcuffs... followed by *
the boys, Heath and Franny. *

Nana, Ida and Elbie come out on front steps and watch as *
Franny is put into the back of a cruiser. *

Franny takes one last wistful look at Heath. *

NANA LADONNA *
When I said use the place, I was *
thinking more along the lines of a *
wine and cheese party. *

IDA & ELBIE. *
Kids. *

INT. POLICE STATION - BOOKING - NIGHT

Franny holds up an identification placard as she has her mug shot taken, turns to her side: FLASH of a camera.

INT. POLICE STATION - HOLDING CELL - NIGHT

Franny sits on a bench, looking forlorn.

A group of HOOKERS stand off to the side, give her the stink-eye.

An OFFICER appears at bars.

OFFICER

Alright Cinderella, you made bail.

Franny rises as he unlocks cell door.

EXT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Franny and Nana LaDonna exit station, walk down front steps.

And boy, what a sight Franny is, hair and make-up a mess, gown torn in several places.

FRANNY

I'm really sorry, Nana. Things got way out of hand. I'll pay you back, I promise.

NANA LADONNA

Oh don't sweat it. I won big at an Indian casino on the trip.

FRANNY

(gasps)
Wait, what time is it?

NANA LADONNA

(checks watch)
Quarter to ten.

FRANNY

Oh my god, my meeting! I have to go!

NANA LADONNA

Honey, forget the meeting. Don't you wanna wait for that boy? I don't think he's made bail yet.

FRANNY
(shakes head) *
I gotta go.

NANA LADONNA *
Like that? You look like you just
got off a bender.

FRANNY
I don't have time to change.

Turns to go, but Nana grabs her by arm. *

NANA LADONNA *
Sure, he's not worth waiting for?

Franny shrugs, as if to say, "what can you do?" *

NANA LADONNA (CONT'D) *
'Cause when you were being *
handcuffed earlier I saw you *
looking at him the way you look *
when you're reading one of your *
books.

FRANNY *
Oh Nana, I'm getting too old for *
these stories. *

NANA LADONNA *
Since when has my sweet Franny *
become such a cynic? *

Franny just gives Nana a peck on the cheek. *

FRANNY *
I'll pay you back and explain *
everything later.

And with that, she takes off running.

EXT. SIDEWALKS OF NEW YORK - DAY

Franny runs, dodging PASSER-BY'S, maneuvering in her high *
heels with the deft step of a dancer. *

A NYC Tour Bus suddenly pulls up, drives alongside her. TOUR *
GUIDE points to Franny. *

TOUR GUIDE

(into mic)

Folks, if you look to your left
you'll see the archetypal damsel in
distress racing to rescue
herself... From herself.

TOURISTS take pictures of Franny with their phones as she
hoofs it.

FRANNY

(waves off)

Okay, thank you, thank you!

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - CROSSWALK - DAY

Franny waits impatiently for the signal to change, when it
finally does she dashes across street.

A few cars give her the horn.

INT. SUBWAY - DAY

Rides subway, feet tap-dancing in place -- gets all sorts of
amused stares from RIDERS.

INT. NY CAFE - DAY

Franny bursts into cafe, PATRONS turn to stare at her.

She spots a sophisticated-looking woman sitting by herself in
a booth -- the agent, DORIS CHANCELLOR (50s). She hustles
over.

FRANNY

Doris Chancellor?

Doris eyes Franny up and down.

DORIS

Yes?

FRANNY

Whew, good!

Franny plops down in seat.

DORIS

You're Franny Travers?

FRANNY

Yea, sorry I'm late. It's been a hectic morning.

She chugs a glass of ice water, dribbling.

DORIS

Is everything alright?

Franny slams empty glass down.

FRANNY

(raises hands)

Honestly... I've been better.

Doris eyes the bar-prints/blackened fingerprints on Franny's palms with trepidation.

Franny quickly hides hands in her lap.

DORIS

Mr. Hollister speaks very highly of you.

Takes Franny's manuscript out of an attache case.

DORIS (CONT'D)

I read over some of your pages and was quite impressed.

FRANNY

Thank you.

DORIS

I like the dark subject matter, provocative. Tell me, how does it end, I mean, how do they end up together? Or were you planning a series?

FRANNY

No series. And they don't end up together.

DORIS

(chuckles)

But dear, they have to.

FRANNY

But they don't.

DORIS

It's a romance, they have to.

FRANNY

It's not possible.

DORIS

There's no choice in the matter.
They always end up together.

FRANNY

Not in my story. I mean, aren't you tired of reading the same thing over and over? Girl tracks boy down at book signing, convinces him to help her with her novel -- but of course the boy has other plans, inevitably turning her Nana's brownstone into a brothel... they fall for each other a bit, insert montage, yada yada, but then suddenly she discovers that this whole time the boy's just been playing a part -- and girl can't help but wonder was he playing her too? And here we are, weeks later, and I'm still a virgin!

DORIS

(eyes Franny queerly)

Are we talking about the same story?

FRANNY

It's the same story. And it's tired. God, I'm tired, aren't you?

DORIS

Huh?

Franny starts nodding to self.

FRANNY

YES, that's it! I am tired of romance! Thank God.

(beat; looks to Doris)

This is all wrong.

DORIS

I beg your pardon?

FRANNY

I need a change. I mean, I found a voice, but I sort of feel like I picked that voice up at a filthy yard sale or something.

(MORE)

FRANNY (CONT'D)

No, I have another voice inside me,
a real one, and God help me I'm
gonna tease it out.

Doris takes up Franny's hand, genuinely concerned.

DORIS

Dear, is it drugs?

FRANNY

(smiles)

Doris Chancellor, this is self-
realization 101!

DORIS

Is that over the counter?

"HOW CAN YOU MEND A BROKEN HEART?" MONTAGE:

INT. BROWNSTONE - FRANNY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Franny sits at desk, typing away on a new laptop -- pauses
for a read.

INSERT TEXT ON LAPTOP SCREEN:

"BAD ROMANCE" by FRANCES TRAVERS.

FRANNY

(deep breath)

Okay, let's do this.

Starts typing...

EXT. TIMES SQUARE - DAY

Dreary. Heath walks along, hands in pockets.

As he's passing a NEWSSTAND, a headline catches his eye:

NY WHISTLER'S front page: "Lorde Unmasked!" Is accompanied
by a picture of Heath and Jan fighting over microphone.

A sub-head reads: "ASTRID COLLIER, SEX-ADDICT?"

Turns away, looks up to see that the giant billboard touting
Shed the Skin is being replaced with an ad for heartburn
medication.

A CITY WORKER paints over Heath's grinning face with a paint
roller.

INT. BROWNSTONE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Franny sits on couch working on her laptop, while Nana
LaDonna, Ida and Elbie workout to a Zumba video. *
*

INT. HEATH'S PENTHOUSE - DAY *

Heath watches as MOVERS carry away all his, well, Collier's
possessions. Picks up cat and hugs to him. *

INT. TRENDY BAR - NIGHT *

Franny has cocktails with a DATE, they chat, laugh. *

INT. BROWNSTONE - FRANNY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Franny packs all her old paperback romances into boxes.

Picks up *Sensitive Skin*, is about to put into box - turns
over to gaze at Heath's photo.

She can't help but smile -- places book in box, closes flaps
and tapes up. *

EXT. BROWNSTONE - NIGHT

Franny sets boxes at the curb -- rains. *

END MONTAGE.

EXT. NEW YORK SKYLINE - DAY *

We fly towards Manhattan. Spring has finally arrived, and
it's glorious! *

SUPER: 18 Months Later *

EXT. THE BOOK NOOK - DAY *

Street is lined with flowering trees, petals paint the
sidewalks. *

A sign hanging in the Book Nook's window reads: *

BOOK SIGNING TODAY! with Frances Travers, self-published
author of "Bad Romance." *

INT. THE BOOK NOOK - DAY

None of the fanfare of a Heath Lorde signing, but a handsome
turn-out for an unknown nonetheless. *

Franny finally sits at the coveted "author's table,"
graciously signs a book for none other than Doris Chancellor. *

DORIS *

I loved it, so heartfelt, so
quirky. *

FRANNY *

Well, I told you they couldn't end
up together. *

DORIS *

You were right. It's better this
way -- funnier! Lunch Tuesday?
Little Brown's got their eye on
you. *

FRANNY *

You got it. *

The two trade good-byes, and Doris floats away. *

Nana, Ida and Elbie step up next with their own copies. *

FRANNY (CONT'D) *

Aww you guys, you didn't need to
buy copies! *

IDA *

We didn't have a choice. *

ELBIE *

Your Nana made us. I can't even
read I have cataracts. *

NANA LADONNA *

I'll make Ida read it aloud to you
then. *

(beat; re: Franny) *

Hi sugar, so far so good? *

Franny gives her the "A-Ok" sign. *

Just then, a mystery guest steps up: Heath. *

Franny is no doubt taken off guard, but she hides it well,
acts almost as if he's just another stranger.

Nana looks to Franny, and she communicates it'll be fine with a nod. *

The girls drift away. *

HEATH

Hi.

FRANNY

Of all the book stores, in the all the boroughs of Manhattan, in all the world, he walks into mine. *

HEATH

Casablanca, right? *

Hands her his copy. *

HEATH (CONT'D)

I read a review in *The Mirror*. Said it's really something. *

FRANNY

Did it? Well that was very kind of them.

She opens book, pen poised to sign, glances up at him. *

FRANNY (CONT'D)

Name?

A moment, then: *

HEATH

Noah. Noah Winter.

Franny considers that name a moment, grins. *

FRANNY

Noah, huh? Biblical. *

HEATH

Ha, yea. Go figure.

She scribbles something down in book, then hands book back to him. *

FRANNY

There you go, Noah. Nice to meet you. *

HEATH

You too, Miss Travers. It is Miss, isn't it? *

FRANNY

Perpetual table for one.

They trade a knowing smile -- Heath turns and goes, next CUSTOMER steps up.

EXT. THE BOOK NOOK - DAY

Heath steps from bookstore, immediately opens cover and reads inscription.

He grins, shaking head, moves on.

EXT. THE BOOK NOOK - DUSK

The book signing is a wrap.

Franny exits the bookstore and crosses to the curb, looks about, then dials for an Uber.

She waits patiently a few moments, no tap-dancing feet this time.

Then:

CLIP-CLOP, CLIP-CLOP, CLIP-CLOP...

Out of nowhere, a horse and carriage stops in front of her.

COACHMAN

(deep, smooth)

May I interest you in a lift,
m'lady?

Franny tries to make out the identity of the Coachman, but the sun's in her eyes and he's in shadow -- but something about that voice...

The Coachman offers her his hand -- she takes it and he pulls her up onto seat, and she comes face to face with Heath, dressed in head-to-toe coachman attire.

FRANNY

So this is what you're doing with
your nights now?

HEATH

Hey, at least it's legal.

HEATH (CONT'D)

(beat)
Now, where to?

FRANNY

(cracks a smile)
Upper West side.

HEATH

You and the Nana have a new place?

FRANNY

No, *I* have a new place.

She takes his top-hat and places on her own head.

HEATH

Whew, things are looking up.
(handles reins)
Giddy-up boys.

Horses set off down the street -- Franny eyes Arianna and Tristan waving from sidewalk. She waves goodbye.

Carriage leaves the fictional lovers behind, heads for setting sun.

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

So how many bedrooms are we talking?

FRANNY (V.O.)

Just enough, *Noah*.

FADE OUT.