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Avocado Lovers

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Avocado Lovers

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

Burak Azakoglu

This feature length screenplay written by

Burak Azakoglu

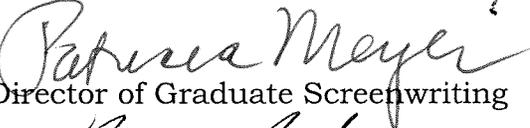
under the guidance of a faculty committee from the School of Film & Television at Loyola Marymount University, and approved by the members of the committee, has been presented to and accepted by the Graduate School in partial fulfillment of the thesis requirements for the degree of Master of Fine Arts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

Advanced Screenplay Project Committee:

Committee Chair: SCWR 690



Committee Member: SCWR 691


Director of Graduate Screenwriting


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Date 5.9.19

AVOCADO LOVERS

Written by

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EXT. THERAPY GAY CLUB, NEW YORK - NIGHT

A long line of PARTY-GOERS wait in the freezing cold.

ART (24, Turkish/American) and JAKE (25, Caucasian) bypass the line and walk towards the entrance with full swagger.

They nod at the BOUNCER. Bouncer nods back. They enter.

INT. THERAPY GAY CLUB, NEW YORK - NIGHT

The walls VIBRATE to CLUB MUSIC. It's a full crowd.

Art and Jake take it all in: the crowd dancing, taking shots, grinding, making out. It's wild.

They approach TEDDY (30s, African/American), who prepares drinks behind the bar.

Teddy hugs them both.

He pours TEQUILA into their mouths.

Art gets on the platform and dances wildly.

Finally, he throws himself off the platform--
--onto a crowd of MEN.

CUT TO:

INT. WALL STREET OFFICE - LOWER LEVEL - DAY

Coffee station. A half-asleep Art pours himself coffee, while BRO BRAD (20s, Caucasian) waits in line next to him.

BRO CHAD (20s, Caucasian) walks in and pats Bro Brad on the back.

BRO CHAD

Yo. Did you go home with that chick last night?

BRO BRAD

(grins)
You know I did.

BRO CHAD

Was she any good?

BRO BRAD

Tight as fuck, bro.

BRO CHAD
Niiice, bro.

They bump fists.

As Bro Chad walks away, Bro Brad turns back to Art.

ART
Women. I'm all about the women.
Chicks...Chicken...Breasts.

BRO BRAD
What?

ART
Uhh--

Art stares at him blankly as he keeps pouring the coffee,
which overflows.

BRAD
Your coffee, bro.

ART
I know, bro.

But he doesn't know.

Bro Brad physically stops Art from pouring the coffee.

ART (CONT'D)
Oh.

Art grabs one tiny napkin and drops it on the spill.

He turns and walks back to his desk, followed by Bros'
confused stares.

Jake shakes his head in disappointment.

Art SMACKS his head on his desk and GROANS.

EXT. FOOD CART - DAY

Art and Jake wait for their food.

JAKE
What did we talk about? Flying--

ART
Flying under the radar. I know. He
caught me off-guard. I hadn't had
my coffee yet.

JAKE
Just don't talk about your personal
life.

ART
I feel like a spy. I'm a douche-
bro, but I secretly work for the
homosexual agenda.

JAKE
You'd be a terrible spy. You can't
even lie properly.

ART
I choose not to lie.

JAKE
Except about chicken breast.

ART
I love chicken breast. It's my
favorite kind of breast.

VENDOR holds out their food.

JAKE
That is the problem.

They walk back to the office.

INT. WALL STREET OFFICE - LOWER LEVEL - DAY/NIGHT

Art sits at his desk and watches THE BROS (a dozen of them;
all white, all fratty) pass him by in SLOW MOTION:

Bros pat each other on the back.

Bros bump fists.

Bros make jokes.

Bros make sex-faces.

Bros laugh obnoxiously.

At night, Bros leave the office in small packs.

As Jake leaves, he nods at Art. Art nods back.

Lights are dimmed.

A CLEANING LADY mops the floors.

Finally, Art is alone.

He gets up from his desk and walks to the window.

He watches the city below.

In the darkness of the night, yellow lights from the buildings complement the yellow taxis that roam the streets.

EXT. ART'S APARTMENT - DAY

The sun is rising over the brick buildings of West Village.

Art unlocks the window to his ground-floor apartment and enters his bedroom through the window.

INT. ART'S APARTMENT - ART'S BEDROOM - DAY

It's a cozy room that barely fits a queen-sized bed. PHOTOS of Art and his FATHER surround the walls.

Art slowly takes off his clothes; throws them on his bed.

He jumps on the bed and falls asleep instantly.

A moment later, his ALARM goes off. He GROANS.

INT. ART'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - DAY

Art sleeps in the shower.

INT. ART'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - DAY

He walks in, clean and fresh, as LEILA (50s) sets the table.

LEILA

Hi, baby.

He kisses her on the cheek.

ART

Hi, mom.

Together, they set out a variety of cheese, jams, tomatoes, cucumbers and olives on the kitchen table. It's a ritual, a dance almost.

ART (CONT'D)

You know my friend Jake? His parents are getting a divorce.

LEILA
Oh, I'm sorry.

ART
I'm not. His dad is very nice. And
very eligible.

He gives Leila a look.

LEILA
I'm too old to date!

She pours two glasses of tea from a Turkish samovar.

ART
Mom, you're beautiful.

They sit at the table.

LEILA
Wouldn't it be kinda sad if I had a
boyfriend when you can't even find
yourself one?

ART
(gasps)
How dare you?

They both chuckle.

ART (CONT'D)
I don't have time for a boyfriend.

LEILA
Me neither.

They eat their breakfast.

INT. SUBWAY - DAY

Completely packed, no space to breathe. Art, in a suit,
stands between TWO MEN, also in suits.

As more PEOPLE enter the already packed subway car, Art gets
pushed back and disappears into the crowd.

INT. WALL STREET OFFICE - LOWER LEVEL - DAY

Art pops an Adderall and chugs his coffee at his desk.

AN ASSISTANT (20s, female) walks up to the office area.

ASSISTANT

Jake. Art. Ben wants to see you.

ART

(sarcastic)

Great, I can't wait.

JAKE

Both of us? Together?

ASSISTANT

Yes, that's why I said both of your names.

She walks away.

Art and Jake get up and walk to the elevator.

INT. WALL STREET OFFICE - ELEVATOR - DAY

Art and Jake alone.

JAKE

Why would Ben want to see us both?

ART

Do you like curvy dicks?

JAKE

What?

ART

This guy I hooked up with the other night had a curvy dick. Like a banana.

JAKE

You need to stop talking about dicks.

(beat)

Did it taste like a banana?

ART

No, more like pineapple.

JAKE

That's weird.

(beat)

Curvy's nice because you can alternate the angles.

ART

What angles?

JAKE
Like, it's not always a right
angle. Anyway, stop it.

ART
Penis.

JAKE
Stop it.

ART
Dicks. Buttholes. Anal.

JAKE
You done?

Art nods.

The elevator door opens.

ART
(whispers)
Balls.

They walk out.

INT. WALL STREET OFFICE - UPPER LEVEL - DAY

Private rooms with glass doors. Sleek, minimalistic design.
This is a whole other world. Art and Jake walk into--

INT. WALL STREET OFFICE - UPPER LEVEL, BEN'S ROOM - DAY

Expensive bottles of whiskey and Cuban cigars on shelves. BEN
(35, Caucasian) sits at his wooden desk.

BEN
(on the phone)
She's seventeen?! Fuck. Fuck, fuck,
fuck, fuck. Fuck! What, am I
supposed to ask every girl I hook-
up with if she's legally fuckable?!
(beat)
I don't give a shit, just fix it.
Fix it, fix it, fix it. Okay, bye.

He hangs up the phone. Notices a startled Art and Jake.

BEN (CONT'D)
Why didn't you knock?

ART
The door was open.

BEN
You always fucking knock!

He takes a moment to cool off.

BEN (CONT'D)
We have a new deal. Herrera. Mid-sized FMCG company. I need you two on board.

Jake nods immediately.

Ben looks down at his phone.

BEN (CONT'D)
One small detail. The buyer is Steven.

Art and Jake look confused.

ART
Our managing director Steven?

BEN
Yes.

JAKE
We're negotiating a deal for ourselves?

ART
Is that even legal?

BEN
Okay, Bert and Ernie. This company needs to be sold fast. Steven is the only interested party. So this deal is happening.
(beat)
Jake, you're on the buyer side. Do whatever Steven wants. Art, you're on the seller side. Learn everything about Herrera.

Ben leans forward.

BEN (CONT'D)
Listen to me. I chose you two for this case because I see your potential. This is your chance to join the big league.

(MORE)

BEN (CONT'D)
If we pull off this sale, you both
get a ticket to the roof.

They both looked surprised.

EXT. FOOD CART - DAY

Art and Jake wait as the VENDOR prepares their order.

ART
Why the fuck would he call it a
"ticket to the roof"?

JAKE
Only upper levels are allowed on
the roof, that's why.

ART
I can literally go on any other
roof in New York and have the same
view.

JAKE
Yes, but this roof is exclusive.

ART
Exclusive to douchebags.

JAKE
When you become managing director,
you can have a roof for whoever the
fuck you want.

Art imagines this.

ART
A safe space, exclusive for the
gays of New York.
(beat)
I think that's just called "brunch"
though.

JAKE
Art, this is our chance. This is
what we've been working for. I need
you on board.

ART
I wonder how many laws we'll be
violating in total. Is someone
keeping record?

JAKE

Art!

ART

I'm on board!

JAKE

Are you sure?

ART

Jake, when someone asks me: "Where do you see yourself in five years?", I say: "Drowning in a pool of money." I promise you we will be on that roof before the year ends.

Vendor holds out their food.

As they walk back to the office, they pass by an add for "Therapy", the gay club.

JAKE

I can't come out tonight. I haven't slept in four days.

ART

I don't need you anyways.

JAKE

You're nothing without me.

ART

Tonight, I will, by myself, seduce an attractive member of the male sex and take him home to pleasure-town.

JAKE

Is pleasure-town the box you live in with your mom?

ART

Yes.

JAKE

You live in a box.

ART

It's a box in West Village.

JAKE

With your mom.

ART
Your parents are divorced.

JAKE
Your dad's dead.

ART
You've put on weight.

Jake stops and gasps.

JAKE
Too far. You went too far.

INT. THERAPY GAY CLUB - NIGHT

Weeknight. Not too crowded. Art walks in and looks around.

He notices RAFI (29, Mexican, very handsome), who stands alone in the corner looking at his phone.

Rafi looks up for a second and their eyes meet. But he disappears behind the moving crowd.

Art spots Teddy serving drinks at the bar. Walks up to him.

ART
Hey.

TEDDY
What can I get you?
(looks up)
Oh hi, babe!

He pours two shots of tequila. They each take one.

TEDDY (CONT'D)
Cheers.

ART
Cheers.

Art turns and looks at Rafi once again.

ART (CONT'D)
(to Teddy)
I need one more.

Teddy pours the shot. Art quickly takes it.

ART (CONT'D)
One more.

TEDDY

You sure?

Art nods.

Teddy pours one more. Art takes a deep breath, then takes the shot.

ART

Okay, I'm drunk.

Teddy chuckles.

INT. THERAPY GAY CLUB - NIGHT (LATER)

Art, sufficiently buzzed, and Teddy, painfully sober, sit on stools behind the bar.

ART

Teddy, do you ever feel like a dust particle, identical to all the other dust particles, and if you disappeared, nothing would change?

TEDDY

Sweetie, you don't need the Socratic fucking method, you need a good fuck.

Teddy gets up and scans the perimeter.

TEDDY (CONT'D)

What are you feeling?

Art gets up as well.

ART

I'm feeling...horny.

Art stares at Rafi, who looks lonely.

TEDDY (O.S.)

Go up to him and say you wanna fuck.

Art looks back at Teddy.

ART

I can't say that. What if he's my soulmate?

They both laugh.

EXT. THERAPY GAY CLUB/FOOD CART - NIGHT

Rafi leaves the club and walks to the food cart nearby.

RAFI
(to Vendor)
Hi. Chicken, please.

VENDOR (50s) nods.

VENDOR
You?

Rafi turns around; Art stands right behind him.

ART
Also chicken.

Art and Rafi stare at each other. Rafi chuckles.

VENDOR
Sauce?

RAFI
Hot sauce.

ART
No, no, the hot sauce here is no
good. Try the yogurt.

RAFI
I need spice though.

ART
Then just...get it without the
sauce. I have some at home.

Rafi laughs, surprised by Art's forwardness.

VENDOR
Sauce?

Rafi glances at Art.

RAFI
No sauce.

Vendor holds out the food. Rafi picks them up.

RAFI (CONT'D)
(to Art)
Is that your line; wanna come over
and taste my sauce?

Art abruptly turns and walks away. Rafi follows, confused.

INT./EXT. ART'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Art unlocks the window to his apartment.

ART
I live with my mom, but I have my
own entrance.

RAFI
Convenient. To invite total
strangers home.

Art jumps in and walks inside. Rafi sits on the window ledge and takes a bite of the chicken.

RAFI (CONT'D)
This is good.

ART (O.S)
Wait for the sauce!

He comes back with the sauce and pours some into both of their plates.

Rafi tastes it; it's delicious.

RAFI
Where did you get it?

ART
I make it myself. One of my many
hidden talents.

RAFI
What other hidden talents do you
have?

ART
They're deeply hidden.

Rafi chuckles.

ART (CONT'D)
What about you?

RAFI
I'm a professional cuddler.
Cuddling champion.

ART
Have you competed in the Olympics?

RAFI

Not yet.

A beat. Rafi notices an EVIL EYE hanging by the window.

RAFI (CONT'D)

Where are you from?

ART

I grew up in Istanbul.

Rafi nods.

ART (CONT'D)

Have you been?

RAFI

Years ago. With my mother.

ART

What about you?

RAFI

San Pedro Garza Garcia. It's a small town in Mexico.

ART

Ah, muy bien.

RAFI

Nice accent.

ART

Muchas gracias.

(beat)

That's all I got.

RAFI

(chuckles)

That's all you need.

ART

I can just move to San Pedro Garcia...Garzola and I'll be fine?

RAFI

You'll be fine if I'm there with you.

A beat.

Rafi leans in and kisses Art very slowly, very gently.

Art kisses him back.

They stare at each other for a long moment.

ART
Do you want to come inside?

Rafi takes a moment, then--

RAFI
If we have sex tonight, we won't
see each other again.

Art looks disappointed.

RAFI (CONT'D)
Hey. I want to see you again.

He takes out his phone and hands it over to Art.

RAFI (CONT'D)
Here.

Art puts in his number and gives it back. He looks at Rafi.

Rafi gets up. He turns to Art, leans in and kisses him. Art wraps his legs around Rafi. They make out passionately.

Rafi stops and stares at Art. He kisses him one more time, very slowly. He then turns around and walks away.

ART
Hey.

Rafi stops and turns.

ART (CONT'D)
I hope they hold the Olympics in
San Pedro Gorgonzola next year.

Rafi chuckles. He looks at Art one more time, then walks away.

Art watches him for a long moment, then he goes back inside.

INT. WALL STREET OFFICE - ELEVATOR - DAY

Art and Jake alone.

JAKE
How was pleasure-town?

ART
I've reached new levels of
pleasure.

JAKE
You had sex?

ART
Technically, no.

Jake chuckles.

ART (CONT'D)
But I did meet a guy and took him
home.

JAKE
To do what, knit scarves?

Art nods.

ART
Yes, my plan is to make enough
money knitting scarves so I can
quit this job.

JAKE
That's a lot of scarves.

The elevator door opens. Right in front them is Ben.

BEN
We're having dinner with Steven and
Herrera's son tonight.

JAKE
Tonight?

ART
Why the son?

BEN
Mom died. Dad turned alcoholic. Son
is in charge. No questions about
family.

He walks away in a rush.

INT. CAPITAL GRILLE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

A fancy steakhouse. Red leather couches. Waiters in tuxedos.
Giant pieces of raw steak.

STEVEN (50s) drinks scotch alone at a round table, when Ben,
Jake and Art arrive.

STEVEN

Ben! Come here you crazy bastard!

Steven gets up and hugs Ben.

BEN

Steven, this is Art. You've met
Jake.

Steven shakes Jake and Art's hands. They all sit down.

Ben notices Steven's WEDDING RING.

BEN (CONT'D)

I always forget, Steve. What number
are you at?

STEVEN

Wife number four. Not counting the
gold-digging whores in between.

Jake laughs. Art stares at Jake, confused by his demeanor.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

But let me tell you, if there's one
thing I enjoy more than women, it's
the thrill of gutting a business.
That feeling...It's like a never
ending orgasm.

BEN

Steven, let's avoid phrases like
"gutting a business."

STEVEN

Will you relax? We're dealing with
a toddler here. I'll have him
wrapped around my pinky finger
before appetizers.

Rafi enters the restaurant.

BEN

There he is.

THE HOST directs Rafi to the table.

Stunned, Art stares at Rafi as he shakes hands with everyone.
When it's Art's turn, he smiles at Rafi awkwardly.

RAFI

(surprised, but warm)

Hi.

ART
(in shock)
Hi. Hello. Yes.

Rafi sits across from Art. They glance at each other.

STEVEN
Rafi, it's a pleasure to meet you.

RAFI
Thank you, Mr. Daniels.

Art stares at Rafi, admiring his distinct facial features, his gorgeous suit, and his deep and articulate voice. Rafi's confidence is not snobbish, it's genuine and sexy.

STEVEN
Call me Steven.

RAFI
Steven, I must say, before Ben here advised me to consider financial buyers, I was mainly interested in a strategic purchase.

STEVEN
Why is that?

RAFI
As an investment bank, I assume your priority lies in revenue generation. I doubt you have any interest in the avocado business.

Jake stares at Art, who can't keep his eyes off Rafi.

STEVEN
That might be true, but a strategic buyer would kick out all the management, bring in his own personnel. We want to keep your employees, your production line, your vision.

RAFI
Our company is our family, so I'm happy to hear that. But when cash flow is priority, certain expenses tend to get cut down to maximize profit.

STEVEN
Naturally.

RAFI

I'm afraid it will be our employees' wages that endure the cut.

Art looks at Jake. Their eyes meet for a second. They both look away.

STEVEN

Ben has worked for me so he can vouch for this.

Ben looks up from his drink.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

I always say happiness equals productivity. I can assure you that my priority is to ensure my employees' happiness.

Rafi nods. He glances at Art. Then back at Steven--

RAFI

I'd like to hear more about your firm.

STEVEN

Don't worry, we'll have plenty of time to discuss the details. Let's enjoy tonight. Man to man.

Rafi keeps staring at Art. Ben notices his looks.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

Steak, whiskey, conversation. What else does a guy want?

BEN

I'll drink to that.

Rafi smiles politely.

STEVEN

You know, the world is so degenerate these days. I read somewhere that they're adding a new gender. What the fuck is that? And gay marriage. Where does it stop?

RAFI

Well, I'm gay. Is that a problem?

Complete silence. Every single person at the table is in shock. Ben almost chokes on his drink.

STEVEN
No.

BEN
No. No. No.

STEVEN
No.

BEN
We love gays.

STEVEN
All the gays.

BEN
Elton John. Ellen.

STEVEN
My aunt Muriel.

BEN
Yes.

JAKE
The gays are the best.

Ben elbows Art.

ART
Rainbows everywhere.

Rafi stares at them, confused.

ART (CONT'D)
Excuse me.

He gets up and walks to the restroom.

INT. CAPITAL GRILLE RESTAURANT - MEN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Art splashes water onto his face.

THUD. Bathroom door opens.

Art follows in the mirror as Rafi walks in and stops at the sink next to him.

They glance at each other through the mirror.

RAFI
You're an investment banker, huh?

ART
I get paid a lot, but I hate
myself, so it's okay.

Rafi chuckles.

RAFI
And they don't know you're gay?

ART
Knowledge is a tricky concept.

Art's gaze shifts from the mirror to Rafi.

Rafi takes a step towards Art.

RAFI
Why are you doing this to yourself?

ART
Doing what?

Rafi stares at him.

THUD. Bathroom door opens.

Rafi looks at Art a moment longer, then walks away.

Art stays by the sink and looks at the mirror.

BEN (O.S.)
Hey man. How is everything?

RAFI (O.S.)
So far, so good.

BEN (O.S.)
Good. We'll see you at the table in
a second.

Ben and Jake, both sufficiently buzzed, walk in without
noticing Art.

They pee at the urinals next to each other.

BEN (CONT'D)
Can you believe he's gay? He looks
so...normal.

JAKE
You never know these days.

Art stays by the sink and listens to their conversation.

BEN

I don't have anything against gays.
Just...If I'm gonna be working with
a guy sixteen fucking hours a day,
I want a guy who thinks like me.

JAKE

Yeah, why doesn't he go into
fashion or something? Stay out of
our business.

Ben chuckles as he leaves the bathroom.

Jake stops when he notices Art. Art looks at him. Jake averts
his eyes and walks out.

Art stares at himself in the mirror.

INT. CAPITAL GRILLE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Art watches as Ben walks Rafi to the exit. They shake hands.

Rafi turns and looks at Art. Art looks back at him for a
moment, then averts his eyes.

Rafi walks out.

STEVEN

What are you kids doing later?

JAKE

The night's young.

STEVEN

That's what I'm talkin' about.

Ben comes back.

BEN

I'm going home. Way too old to play
with you children.

Art keeps his focus on the exit. He hears the conversation,
but it's like a distant chatter:

STEVEN

What the hell are you talkin' about
Benjamin? You were still pooping
your diapers when I was pickin' up
chicks at bars.

BEN

It's the age you feel, Steven, that matters.

STEVEN

Well, I feel like I could fuck a twenty year old.

Jake laughs.

EXT. CAPITAL GRILLE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Two taxis wait at the entrance.

Ben helps Steven to the first taxi. He then gets in the second one.

As the taxis leave, Art and Jake are left alone at the entrance.

ART

What the hell happened to flying under the radar?! You smacked the radar right in the balls!

JAKE

I know, but it's only until we get the promotion. Art, we need to be extra careful. We have to get through this deal without blowing our cover.

ART

Our cover?! We're not fucking terrorists!

Art turns around and quickly walks away.

EXT. ART'S APARTMENT - ART'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Art lies down on his bed and stares at the ceiling.

He covers his face with his pillow and SCREAMS into it.

A KNOCK on the window.

He turns and looks up; it's Rafi. Art opens the window.

ART

What are you doing?

RAFI
I wanted to finish that
conversation.

ART
Look, I can't keep seeing you.
You're my client.

RAFI
Would the situation be different if
I was a female client?

Art looks away. Clearly it would be different.

Rafi nods.

RAFI (CONT'D)
I like you.

ART
I like my job. I like those green
bills.

RAFI
Listen--

ART
No, you listen to me Rafi. You. Me.
No homo. Capeesh?

Rafi stares at him, startled.

RAFI
I'll back out of the deal then.

ART
You're so funny.

RAFI
I'm serious. If your company is so
homophobic that you can't even come
out to your boss, then I refuse to
do business with you. And maybe
this will be a wake up call to you.

ART
No. That's not it. That's not what
I meant.

Rafi walks away.

ART (CONT'D)
No. Rafi. Rafi! Rafi!!!!

INT. WALL STREET OFFICE - UPPER LEVEL, BEN'S ROOM - DAY

In a fit of rage, Ben SCREAMS and throws down his office supplies.

Art and Jake sit across from him and stare.

Ben seems to calm down a little.

JAKE

Maybe--

Ben SCREAMS again.

Art and Jake continue to watch.

Finally, Ben pops a Xanax, and calms down.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Maybe it's a tactic. You know, he's playing hard to get. Trying to squeeze out more money.

ART & BEN

It's not about money.

Ben looks at Art.

BEN

Jake, could I talk to Art alone for a moment?

Art looks terrified. Jake nods and walks out of the room.

Ben leans back and takes a moment to think.

BEN (CONT'D)

He likes you.

ART

Who?

BEN

Rafi.

ART

No. No, no, no, no, no. No.

BEN

I saw the way he was looking at you at dinner.

He leans in towards Art.

BEN (CONT'D)
You gotta go gay.

ART
Go what now?

BEN
Go gay. Be his gay-pal. You know,
take him out to dinner and shit.

ART
How will that solve anything?

BEN
If he thinks you're gay, he'll open
up to you. And you can feed him
bullshit like how well we treat our
gay employees.

ART
I, uhh, I really don't think that's
a good idea.

BEN
He thinks we're a bunch of
homophobes. We need a new image. An
image he likes. And that image, is
you.

ART
I'm not--

BEN
Art. Jake has worked here longer
than you and he's gained my trust.
Even if I promote you both, he'll
always be ahead of you. Which means
when the time comes to pick a
partner, it will be him, not you.
But, this...this is your chance to
get ahead in the game. This is it.
Don't miss it.

Art stares at him, not knowing what to say.

INT. WALL STREET OFFICE - LOWER LEVEL - DAY

Art sits at his desk, stares at Rafi's number on his phone.

ART
(sotto)
Fuck me.

He presses the call button.

RING. RING. RING. RING.

No answer.

He calls one more time. Again, no answer.

He puts the phone down. Smacks his head on the table. GROANS.

EXT. PLAZA HOTEL - DAY

Art sits by the fountain across the hotel and stares at the entrance.

A FATHER (40s) walks out with his SON (5).

SON

Daddy!

Art smiles bittersweetly as the Father holds his Son's hand and they walk down together.

Art waits and waits and waits.

Until finally, Rafi walks out of the hotel.

Art gets up and takes a few steps towards him. Rafi notices and he stops in front of Art. They stare at each other.

ART

Did you know that Miles Davis
recorded a live album here in 1958?

Rafi stares at him.

ART (CONT'D)

I was at home, looking out the
window. What a beautiful day, I
thought, to walk around aimlessly.
No purpose whatsoever.

RAFI

Did Ben send you?

ART

Yup.

Rafi nods.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

SHOTS OF TEQUILA are lined up in front of Art and Rafi.

RAFI

You take a shot for any question
you don't want to answer. No lying.

Art nods.

RAFI (CONT'D)

Why are you at your job?

ART

Money. Why are you selling your
company?

RAFI

I can't afford to keep it. Why
aren't you out at work?

ART

Because my personal life is none of
their business.

RAFI

It's not because the company is
homophobic?

ART

It's not as homophobic as you
think. Ben and Steven talk like
that, but they care a lot about
their employees. And you haven't
even met the rest of the team.

Rafi stares at him, unconvinced.

ART (CONT'D)

What are you like in bed?

RAFI

Passionate. Very passionate. Are
you attracted to me?

ART

Have you seen you?

Rafi chuckles.

ART (CONT'D)

Look, Ben and Steven made a bad
first impression. But if you give
us a second chance--

RAFI
Okay. Tomorrow morning.

ART
What?

RAFI
I'll come by the office.

ART
Tomorrow morning? Why don't we take
you out to breakfast?

RAFI
No, I wanna meet the team.

ART
You wanna meet the team in the
morning...which is tomorrow?

RAFI
Is that a problem?

ART
(jittery)
No. No, no, no, no. No.

Rafi gets up.

RAFI
Tomorrow morning.

Art forces a smile as Rafi walks out of the bar.

He stares at the shots of tequila left on the table.

ART
(sotto)
Fuck me.

He takes a shot.

INT. WALL STREET OFFICE - LOWER LEVEL - DAY

Art stands by the elevator and watches the Bros interact with
each other. It's like he's watching a wildlife documentary.
Finally, he tries to speak up--

ART
(to the crowd)
Hi. Hello.

But no one cares.

Bros continue to joke around and laugh, until...Ben walks in.

BEN

Shut the fuck up, Chad. Until we score this deal, Art is your boss and you do what he says.

They all go silent.

ART

Yes. Hi. Hello.

BEN

(quietly to Art)
Speed it up, Rafi's on his way.

ART

Right. Okay.
(to the crowd)
Nothing racist, nothing sexist, and nothing homophobic. If you're not sure, don't say it. If it's a joke, definitely don't say it. Just act warm and make him feel welcomed.

Bros blankly stare at Art.

DING. The elevator doors open and Rafi walks in.

Art stares at him as he shakes hands with Ben.

BEN

Rafi, welcome. I'm so glad you could join us.

RAFI

Thanks for having me.

The rest of the world disappears for a moment as Art only pays attention to Rafi.

BEN

This floor is all of our junior employees. They are the future of our company.

Bros come up and shake hands with Rafi one by one.

BRO BRAD

Dude, I love the gays.

BRO CHAD

Lesbian chicks man, that's where it's at.

BRO VLAD
Why is it a rainbow flag though?

BRO BRAD
Do you know Neil Patrick Harris?

BRO CHAD
What's a pansexual?

BRO VLAD
Do you hate vaginas?

Art covers his face in frustration.

CUT TO:

MOMENTS LATER

Rafi stands by the elevator.

RAFI
Well, it was nice to meet you all.

BEN
You don't want to see the upper
level?

RAFI
I think I've seen enough.

Ben nods in disappointment.

As Rafi is about to walk out--

ART
Wait! I have something to say.

Everyone stops and stares at him.

ART (CONT'D)
Obviously as a firm, we have a lot
of room for improvement in
the...diversity department. And I
want to take the first step today.

He looks directly at Rafi.

ART (CONT'D)
I'm gay.

Rafi anxiously stares at Art.

ART (CONT'D)

I haven't felt comfortable opening up about it in the office. But I don't think anyone here is hateful. It's more that you're uninformed. And together we can change that.

Jake stares at Art in disbelief.

Bro Brad starts to SLOW CLAP. The other Bros join in.

EXT. WALL STREET OFFICE - DAY

Art and Rafi stand outside the building.

RAFI

Wow, I wasn't expecting that.

ART

Hey, I'm more shocked than you.

Rafi chuckles.

RAFI

I feel like I forced you to come out.

ART

No, it was time.

RAFI

But why did you do it?

ART

Because I meant what I said. I don't think anyone here is hateful. And I wanted you to see that.

Rafi nods.

ART (CONT'D)

So what do you think?

RAFI

I think I have a lot to think about.

He checks his phone.

RAFI (CONT'D)

Hey, I have a question for you. Do you hate vaginas?

ART
(chuckles)
Hate is a strong word, it's more
that I'm scared of them.

RAFI
Yes, I heard they grab back.

Art chuckles.

INT. WALL STREET OFFICE - UPPER LEVEL, BEN'S ROOM - DAY

Art and Jake stand across Ben.

BEN
That was so fucking good. You
almost convinced me, you know, I
almost thought you were actually
gay.
(to Jake)
I actually thought he was gay!
(to Art)
How did you act so well?

ART
I took an acting class in college.

BEN
Well, it fucking paid off. Wasn't
he great, Jake?

JAKE
Yes, top notch.

ART
Ben, here's the thing. We need to
show Rafi that we care.

BEN
You just came out in front of the
whole fucking office. What more
does he want?

ART
Well, I was thinking...There's an
LGBTQ recruitment event at Barnard
College. It attracts all the best
students in New York. We could
attend this year to recruit college
seniors. And we'll invite Rafi of
course. And Steven could also make
an appearance.

BEN

You want us to actively recruit the gays?

ART

Yes.

BEN

I don't know, man. The minute you have a gay guy in the office, you have to watch what you say not to offend them. You can't even make a fucking joke.

ART

I know, it's a big bummer. But we have to do this if we want the Herrera deal.

Ben takes a moment to think.

BEN

Fuck it. Let's recruit some homos.

Art grins.

EXT. BARNARD COLLEGE - GARDEN - DAY

Art, holding a huge cardboard box, leads Ben, Jake and the Bros through the gates--

--into the garden, filled with STANDS that belong to COMPANIES from various fields.

Balloons and RAINBOW FLAGS cover the whole area.

This is the polar opposite of the Wall Street office.

Students from diverse backgrounds (sexual identity, ethnicity, socio-economic status, etc.) walk around the green fields happily.

For Art, this is heaven.

For the Bros, this is a zoo filled with exotic animals.

Art points to their stand. They all walk to it, while still observing their surrounding.

Art lays down the box on the table. He opens it, takes out item after item, and hands them over to the Bros.

ART

Brad, you will hand out the flyers.
Chad, you will hand out our
business cards. Vlad, you will
collect the students' resumes. Jake
and I will do all the talking.

BRO VLAD

What's Ben gonna do?

BEN

I'll try not to choke on all this
political correctness in the air.

ART

Okay, then. Showtime.

As Ben walks away, STUDENTS begin to approach the stand.

Art and Jake shake hands with them, one by one.

Then they talk to them, answer all of their questions.

Bro Brad hands out flyers.

Bro Chad hands out business cards.

Bro Vlad collects resumes.

Everything seems to go well, until the Bros notice the
BARNARD STUDENTS (20s, all female) coming in and out of the
school buildings.

BRO CHAD

Bro, look at those girls going to
class. Why is it all girls? Why are
there no dudes?

ART

It's an all girls school.

Bro Chad and Bro Vlad stare at him in shock.

BRO VLAD

Sign. Me. Up.

Before Art can say anything, Bro Chad and Bro Vlad leave the
stand to follow the Girls.

Art shakes his head.

EXT. BARNARD COLLEGE - MATHS BUILDING - DAY

Bro Vlad and Bro Chad approach two BARNARD GIRLS who are coming out of class.

BRO VLAD

Yo. You girls wanna hangout with a couple of good-looking Wall Street dudes?

BARNARD GIRL #1

No.

BRO CHAD

Come on, we'll get some drinks, have some fun.

BARNARD GIRL #2

We're actually a couple, so.

BRO CHAD

Whoa!

BRO VLAD

Fuck!

BRO CHAD

Lesbians, man. Right on!

BRO VLAD

Can we watch you make out?

Both Girls stare at them in shock, until--

BARNARD GIRL #1

Sure, just a sec.

She takes a moment to stretch. Then, out of nowhere, she punches Bro Vlad right in the face.

BARNARD GIRL #1 (CONT'D)

Watch that, you piece of shit.

BRO VLAD

Fuck! You cunt!

Bro Chad laughs.

EXT. BARNARD COLLEGE - GARDEN - DAY

Art and Jake continue to talk to Students. Meanwhile Bro Brad now does all the Bros' jobs.

Right then, Art notices Rafi and Steven walking in from opposite directions.

They walk by all the Students and finally arrive at the stand.

STEVEN

Rafi! How wonderful to see you!

Rafi smiles politely.

RAFI

You as well.

They shake hands.

Steven looks around.

STEVEN

I love this. All the gays under one roof. How beautiful.

Rafi turns to Art.

RAFI

You've done a great job.

ART

(smiles)

Thanks.

RAFI

I'm gonna look around. I'll see you inside at the conference.

He walks away.

Ben appears from nowhere.

BEN

What conference?

Art looks startled for a moment.

ART

Uhh...The students gather in the auditorium afterwards and every company introduces themselves on stage. Nothing complicated, just a two minute pitch.

BEN

I'm gonna need you to pitch that shit.

Art nods.

STEVEN

I don't know if I can stand here
any longer.

Right then, PRESIDENT VALERIE (50s) approaches Steven.

PRESIDENT VALERIE

Steven?

STEVEN

Yes.

He tries to figure out who she is.

PRESIDENT VALERIE

Valerie. We went to college
together. I'm the President of
Barnard College.

STEVEN

Oh, I'm sorry to hear that.

She stares at him for a moment.

PRESIDENT VALERIE

What are you doing here?

STEVEN

Recruiting some bright, gay minds.
You see, I'm all about diversity.

PRESIDENT VALERIE

Really? The last I remember, you
were a sexist pig.

STEVEN

You're still a sexy pig.

PRESIDENT VALERIE

Sexist, Steven. I said sexist. I
don't need you here polluting my
school.

STEVEN

I'm not--

PRESIDENT VALERIE

But since you came all the way from
your precious Wall Street, I'd love
to hear from you at the conference.

She smiles and walks away before Steven can say anything.

Art and Ben look at each other nervously.

INT. BARNARD COLLEGE - AUDITORIUM - DAY

As the Students settle down in their seats, President Valerie gets on stage.

PRESIDENT VALERIE
Welcome to our annual LGBTQ+
Recruitment Conference.

Everyone CLAPS.

PRESIDENT VALERIE (CONT'D)
We have a record of one hundred and
twenty three companies here with us
today. But there's one company in
particular that I can't wait to
hear from. Let's welcome to the
stage, Gladwell.

Art, Jake, the Bros, Ben and Steven all get up on the stage
anxiously as the Students CLAP.

PRESIDENT VALERIE (CONT'D)
Let's hear a little bit about the
culture at an investment bank,
shall we? Any questions?

Suddenly almost ALL of the students raise their hands.

BEN
(whispers to Art)
We're fucked.

STUDENT #1
Is it true you set up clients with
prostitutes?

STEVEN
No, what's a prostitute?

STUDENT #2
Do you do cocaine?

BEN
Never. That's Satan's powder.

STUDENT #3
Is the Wall Street culture really
sexist?

BRO CHAD
No, dude. We love sex.

STUDENT #4
Is it homophobic?

BRO BRAD
The opposite. It's homo-philic.

STUDENT #5
Do you experience toxic
masculinity?

BRO VLAD
What's toxic about masculinity?

MURMURS in the audience.

PRESIDENT VALERIE
I don't think Gladwell is taking
this seriously, so I'm gonna need
them to step down now.

ART
No, wait.

He takes a step forward.

ART (CONT'D)
Look. I'm not gonna lie to you,
it's tough working at an investment
bank. Even if you work at the most
gay-friendly company on the planet,
you're gonna get a client from
"bumfuck, nowhere" who doesn't want
to deal with gay employees and you
won't be able to say anything about
it.

(beat)
We're such a weird generation, you
know, on one side there's gay
marriage and on the other side,
there's conversion therapy. And
we're kinda stuck in the middle of
it all.

(beat)
But let me tell you something.
You're here because you're the most
accomplished students in New York.
You don't need us. We need you.
This industry so desperately needs
you. We need different
perspectives. We need diverse
opinions.

(MORE)

ART (CONT'D)

The number one rule of investing
is, to reduce risk and increase
gains, you have got to diversify.
We need you to change the culture.
And this is the first step today.
It starts right here, right now.

All the Students CLAP.

Rafi nods and smiles.

EXT. BARNARD COLLEGE - GARDEN - DAY

Art and Rafi stand outside the auditorium.

RAFI

That was...promising.

Art chuckles softly.

RAFI (CONT'D)

I'm convinced there's some
potential to this company. And you,
you're a smooth talker.

ART

Yes, that's my nickname.

They look at each other for a moment and smile.

ART (CONT'D)

Thanks for giving us a chance.

Rafi nods.

RAFI

I should get going.

ART

No, don't.

RAFI

What?

ART

I'd like to...hangout with you,
outside of work, if that's okay.

Rafi smiles.

INT. PLAZA HOTEL - NIGHT

Rafi and Art walk through a hallway. Black and white photographs cover the walls: Marilyn Monroe, Elizabeth Taylor, Greta Garbo, Marlene Dietrich.

Rafi looks at a photo of Mrs. Patrick Campbell.

RAFI

Who's that?

ART

British actress. She was badass. At the time, only men were allowed to smoke in public, but she lit a cigarette here at dinner, and when the waiter asked her to put it out, she said:

(imitates British accent)

"I understand this is a free country. I shall do nothing to change it."

Rafi chuckles.

Art moves over to Josephine Baker.

ART (CONT'D)

She performed at the Persian room. But she refused to perform for a segregated audience. And they couldn't ignore her demand.

Art stops at Truman Capote.

ART (CONT'D)

He hosted the Black and White Ball here in the Grand Ballroom. 1966. He was openly gay at the time.

Rafi slowly walks up to Art.

RAFI

At the ball, did he dance with his...partner?

ART

He wouldn't dare.

Rafi holds Art's hand and spins him around. They hold each other and dance very slowly.

RAFI

How do you know all of this?

Art looks at Rafi for a long moment.

ART
From a different life.

He puts his head on Rafi's shoulder.

INT. PLAZA HOTEL - ELEVATOR - NIGHT

Art and Rafi watch the hotel through the glass elevator.

Rafi reaches out and holds Art's hand.

Art turns and looks at him.

INT. PLAZA HOTEL - RAFI'S SUITE - NIGHT

It's a beautiful room overlooking Central Park.

Art immediately walks to the window. He takes in the view.

Rafi stands at the door, watching Art.

Art turns to look at him. They slowly walk towards each other.

Art runs his fingers through Rafi's face, exploring every inch. He then unbuttons Rafi's shirt and runs his fingers through his chest.

Rafi kisses him very slowly. He kisses Art's nose, his chin, his lips.

He moves Art to the bed and gently places him on the bed. He gets on top of Art. They stare at each other. They kiss.

INT. PLAZA HOTEL - RAFI'S SUITE - DAY

Art wakes up alone in Rafi's bed.

He looks around the room; Rafi's not there.

He checks his phone, and GROANS.

He gets up. Just as he puts on his boxers, the door opens: It's the BUTLER (50s), impeccable uniform and bright smile.

BUTLER
Ah, I thought I heard a noise.

Butler walks in.

ART
Oh, shit. I'm so sorry--

BUTLER
No, no, please make yourself
comfortable.

He opens the curtains.

BUTLER (CONT'D)
Mr. Rafi sends his apologies. He
had to work and didn't want to wake
you.

Butler walks out of the room. Art haphazardly puts on his
pants and shirt in a rush.

BUTLER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
But he arranged breakfast.

Butler brings in a beautiful tray with coffee, orange juice,
and a selection of pastries and jams.

Art stares at it, stunned.

ART
Could I get that to go?

INT. WALL STREET OFFICE - ELEVATOR - DAY

Coffee in one hand, scone in other, Art looks suave as fuck.

As the elevator doors open--

The Bros SCREAM!

Shocked, Art almost drops his coffee.

ART
What the--

INT. WALL STREET OFFICE - LOWER LEVEL - DAY

Bro Brad puts his arm around Art and walks him out of the
elevator.

BRO BRAD
Come here, buddy.

Bro Chad pops open a bottle of champagne. Everybody cheers.

Ben stands in the corner, smiling.

BEN
Rafi signed the Letter of Intent.

ART
(surprised)
When?

BEN
Just an hour ago. He came by the
office. Said you helped him see
things in a different light.

Ben walks to Art and holds out his hand.

BEN (CONT'D)
You did good.

Art shakes Ben's hand, surprised. Suddenly, he feels proud.

Bro Brad pats Art on the back.

Bro Chad gives him a high-five.

Bro Vlad fist-bumps him.

As Art is showered with attention, Jake anxiously watches
from a distance.

Art finally sits at his desk.

He sends a text to Rafi: "I'm a hero."

Meanwhile, he watches the Bros celebrate.

Bros take turns chugging the champagne from the bottle.

Rafi replies: "Don't get too cocky. It's not official yet."

Art watches the Bros have a burping contest.

Another text from Rafi: "I'm picking you up after work."

Art beams. He quickly replies: "What do you wanna do?"

Rafi responds with a link to an article titled "Turkish Oil
Wrestling." Attached is the photo of two muscular oiled up
Turkish Men wrestling each other.

Art bursts into laughter.

INT. WALL STREET OFFICE - LOWER LEVEL - NIGHT

Jake intently stares out the window.

He watches as Art walks out of the office building and gets inside a limo.

INT. RAFI'S LIMO - NIGHT

Art and Rafi make out fiercely in the back as the limo moves through the streets of New York.

Art gets on top of Rafi.

Rafi grabs Art's ass and spanks him.

Art loosens up Rafi's tie, takes it off and uses it as a blindfold.

Rafi's eyes closed, they kiss very slowly.

Art unbuttons Rafi's shirt, moves his hands through his chest.

Rafi throws away the blindfold and pins down Art to the seat. He gets on top of him and kisses his neck, his ear, and finally his lips.

The limo stops.

EXT. METROPOLITAN MUSEUM - NIGHT

DRIVER gets out and opens the back door. Rafi and Art sit innocently. PUFF. Art blows a piece of hair off his face.

INT. METROPOLITAN MUSEUM - NIGHT

Art and Rafi walk through the FRIDA KAHLO & DIEGO RIVERA exhibit: "AUTHENTIC LOVE".

A massive Black and White PHOTOGRAPH of Diego Rivera holding Frida Kahlo stands at the entrance.

PAINTINGS of both artists are spread out through the gallery, as well as PHOTOGRAPHS depicting their lives separately and together.

After a long walk, Art stops and reads a quote by Frida Kahlo, which covers an entire wall:

"I used to think I was the strangest person in the world, but then I thought there are so many people in the world, there must be someone just like me who feels bizarre and flawed in the same ways I do...I hope that if you are out there and read this and know that, yes, it's true I'm here, and I'm just as strange as you."

Rafi walks up next to Art.

RAFI

I wanna take you up to the roof.

ART

The roof is open only in the summer. But it's understandable that you don't know that since you're not a New Yorker.

RAFI

Can you be quiet for one second?

The MUSEUM COORDINATOR approaches Rafi.

MUSEUM COORDINATOR

(smiles)

Rafi.

They shake hands.

MUSEUM COORDINATOR (CONT'D)

Please follow me.

ART

(quietly to Rafi)

What are you doing?

The Museum Coordinator leads them to a private elevator.

MUSEUM COORDINATOR

Enjoy the roof.

RAFI

Thanks, John.

Art stares at them blankly.

INT. METROPOLITAN MUSEUM - ELEVATOR - NIGHT

Art and Rafi alone in the elevator.

ART

Are you kidding?

RAFI
Am I a "New Yorker" now?

ART
See, this is exactly why I need to
be filthy rich.

RAFI
I didn't bribe anybody though. I'm
just friends with the coordinator.

ART
Right. Do you send him eighteen
boxes of avocado every year?

RAFI
No, I just suck his dick.

Art stares at Rafi, trying to see if he's serious.

Rafi looks dead serious.

But then he laughs.

ART
(chuckles)
Fucker.

RAFI
Why do you think everything is
about money?

ART
Because it is.

Rafi stares at him, unimpressed.

ART (CONT'D)
What?

RAFI
I'm about to give you the secret to
the universe. You ready?

He leans in.

RAFI (CONT'D)
(whispers)
Not everything is about money.

The elevator doors open. Rafi walks out.

Art stays back for a moment, annoyed.

ART
That's because you have money!

He follows Rafi.

EXT. METROPOLITAN MUSEUM - ROOFTOP - NIGHT

A gorgeous view of Manhattan.

Art points to the roof of the Plaza Hotel hiding behind Central Park.

ART
Your home.

They walk to the edge of the roof.

RAFI
I wanna tell you something.
(beat)
I'm looking for something serious.
With you.

ART
Did you forget that you live in Mexico?

RAFI
Did you forget those things that fly in the air?

He points to a plane in the distance.

RAFI (CONT'D)
What are they called again?

Art chuckles.

ART
You don't want me as your boyfriend; I'll spend all your money.

RAFI
Can you stop joking around for one second?

He takes a step closer.

RAFI (CONT'D)
I like you. A lot.

Art finally gets serious.

ART

I know.
(beat)
I don't like me.

RAFI

Why not?

Art stares at him for a long moment. He then looks away.

ART

Maybe if I could afford a
psychologist, I would know.

RAFI

You're not giving yourself any
credit.

Art turns back to Rafi.

ART

I think I've sold off so much of my
soul that there isn't any left. I'm
soulless. Like a ginger.

Rafi smiles bittersweetly.

ART (CONT'D)

I miss being a kid.

Rafi stares at him for a long moment. He then leans in and
kisses Art very gently.

Art kisses back and holds him. He puts his head on Rafi's
shoulder and wipes away a tear from his cheek.

He looks out at The Plaza.

ART (CONT'D)

Obviously I'm not a zillionaire
like you.

RAFI

Yes, that's quite obvious.

Art grins as he shuts Rafi's mouth with his hand.

ART

But if you wanna come over, I can
cook you dinner. My mom's out of
town.

RAFI
 (muffled)
 I'd like that.

Art chuckles.

INT. ART'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Rafi watches intently as Art puts olive oil, diced onions, pine nuts, rice, and spices into a pan. He stirs the mixture periodically.

Meanwhile, he rinses grape leaves and places them on a large cutting board.

He places a teaspoon of the rice mixture at the bottom of each leaf.

Together, Art and Rafi roll the leaves tightly into cigar shaped DOLMA; stuffed grape leaves.

They lay the dolma side by side in a saucepan and let it cook.

Art picks up one dolma and feeds it to Rafi.

RAFI
 Mmmm.

Art then pours two glasses of wine.

RAFI
 Is there any Turkish dish that uses avocados?

ART
 I don't think so. But we can always do Turkish-Mexican fusion.

RAFI
 Kebab tacos?

Art chuckles.

ART
 It's gotta be more sophisticated.

He offers Rafi one of the glasses.

ART (CONT'D)
 Like Tres Leches Baklavas.

Rafi smiles and CLINKS his glass against Art's.

RAFI
To Tres Leches Baklavas.

They both take a sip.

ART
Do you think I'm too sarcastic?

RAFI
Yes.

ART
(sarcastic)
Answer faster.

Rafi chuckles.

Art places the dolma into two plates and sits down at the kitchen table.

ART (CONT'D)
I didn't use to be.

RAFI
You're funny.

Rafi sits as well.

RAFI (CONT'D)
But sometimes I think you're hiding behind your jokes.

ART
You're hiding too.

RAFI
Hiding what?

ART
You don't want to sell your company, not really.

RAFI
I just signed the Letter of Intent.

ART
Exactly. You're stalling.

Rafi looks down.

ART (CONT'D)
Is there another reason, maybe?

Rafi opens his mouth to speak, but--

Keys JINGLE and door OPENS off-screen.

ART (CONT'D)
Mom?

LEILA (O.S.)
Hi honey, my trip got cut short.

Art stares at the door nervously.

Leila walks into the kitchen.

LEILA (CONT'D)
Oh, hi.

ART
Mom, this is Rafi.

Rafi gets up.

Leila stares at him for a moment.

She then walks up to Rafi. She hugs him and kisses him on the cheek.

LEILA
Rafi, I'm Leila. Nice to meet you.

RAFI
(smiles)
You too.

She notices their plates.

LEILA
You made dolma?
(to Rafi)
He must really like you.

ART
Mom!

Rafi chuckles.

Leila picks out a dolma and tastes it.

LEILA
(approves)
Mmhm.

She grabs a bottle of wine from the cabinet and a wine glass.

LEILA
I'll be in my room. You kids have
fun.

RAFI
No, stay. Please.

She notices the bottle of wine on the kitchen table.

LEILA
(disgusted)
What is that?

ART
I took the opened bottle in the
cabinet.

LEILA
Art, why are you serving our guest
garbage?

ART
I don't know mom, I must be a
terrible person.

Leila grabs Rafi's glass from the table and pours it out into
the sink.

LEILA
I got a new shipment of Nero
d'Avola.

She grabs a bottle opener, opens up the bottle in her hand.

LEILA (CONT'D)
(to Rafi)
It's a Sicilian grape produced in
the Urla region of Turkey.

She pours three glasses.

LEILA (CONT'D)
You'll love it.

INT. ART'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Art, Rafi and Leila all sit and enjoy their wine.

LEILA
And then he pooped on the carpet!

Rafi and Leila LAUGH.

ART

I was six!

Art's phone BUZZES. He quickly checks it.

ART (CONT'D)

It's work. Sorry.

He gets up and walks out of the room.

LEILA

(to Rafi, dejected)

It's always work.

Rafi looks at A PHOTO of Art, his Father, and Leila at the Plaza, twenty years ago. Art's father in a tuxedo, Leila in a beautiful dress, and little Art in a tiny tuxedo. They look so happy.

RAFI

Is this in front of the Plaza?

Leila nods.

LEILA

We used to stay there a lot when we visited New York with his father.

Rafi nods. He examines the photo.

LEILA (CONT'D)

You know those residences on top the hotel? He says he'll make enough money for us to live there one day.

Rafi looks up at Leila, a bitter smile on his face.

LEILA (CONT'D)

He keeps trying to recreate the past.

RAFI

It's hard to let go.

Leila stares at the photo.

LEILA

Those are wonderful memories. But not because we were rich. Because we were together.

She takes a sip of her wine.

LEILA (CONT'D)
The Plaza won't ever be The Plaza
without his father.

Rafi stares at her, saddened.

INT. ART'S APARTMENT - ART'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Art looks through his wardrobe, while Rafi lies on Art's bed.

ART
I have to go to work really early.

RAFI
Come here.

ART
Trying to find you some pajamas so
your ass won't freeze.

RAFI
Come here.

Art gives up and walks to the bed. He gets on top off Rafi.
They look at each other.

ART
Thanks for staying.

RAFI
You're welcome for staying.

Rafi kisses Art softly.

Art kisses his nose, his chin, his lips again and again.

Rafi gets on top with a quick move. He kisses Art very
slowly. He caresses Art's hair and looks into his eyes.

They sleep, holding each other.

INT. WALL STREET OFFICE - ELEVATOR - DAY

Art and Jake alone. Unlike before, there's awkward tension.

JAKE
How was your night?

ART
Boring.

JAKE
No hook-ups?

Art shakes his head.

ART
I think Manhattan ran out of dicks.

JAKE
If that ever happened you'd be on
the first train to Hoboken.

ART
And you'd be sitting right next to
me.

Jake rolls his eyes.

JAKE
How's Rafi?

ART
How would I know?

JAKE
He's your client.

ART
Yours too.

JAKE
My client is Steven. And we're
taking him out tonight by the way.

ART
(sarcastic)
Have fun.

The elevator doors open.

JAKE
We, as in the whole office.

Art's face falls.

JAKE (CONT'D)
See you tonight, bro.

Jake grins as he walks away.

INT. ONE OAK NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

Minimalistic, cold and impersonal. MEN in suits. WOMEN in short dresses. All on their phones. It's like Wall Street has migrated over here for the night.

HOUSE MUSIC vibrates through the walls.

Steven sits next to Ben. Across the table are Art, Jake and the Bros.

Bottles of high-end whiskey and cognac arrive at the table.

Ben talks into a WAITRESS' ear. She nods.

Ben checks his phone and signals the Bros.

A moment later, Ben and Steven get up and walk away.

BRO CHAD

(to Art)

Dude, I gotta ask, with this whole Rafi thing...Are you really gay?

ART

Am I really gay? Are you really an octopus?

BRO CHAD

What?

BRO BRAD

Dude, I've never seen you with a girl.

ART

Because we don't hangout outside of work.

JAKE

We're hanging out now.

Art stares at Jake, startled.

BRO CHAD

Yeah, dude. Let's see your moves.

ART

My moves? My movement. The motion. You know I would, but I don't see any hot chicks around.

Right then, Ben and Steven come back with a DOZEN HOT CHICKS (20s), high-end escorts. Art stares at them in shock.

Blonde Girl immediately sits next to Steven. A couple of Girls sit next to Ben. The Rest stand around the table.

Art no longer has a choice. He chugs his drink.

And another drink.

And another drink.

He gets up, walks up to Ginger Girl and holds her hand.

They move to the dance floor.

And Art and Ginger Girl--

DANCE.

LIKE.

CRAZY.

Jake takes out his phone and RECORDS a video of Art.

Art doesn't notice Jake. He looks back at the Bros. They're all watching.

Art leans in and finally, he kisses Ginger Girl.

The Bros CHEER.

As the song ends, Art walks back to the table, exhausted. He sits down between Bro Brad and Bro Chad.

BRO CHAD

Nice, bro.

He pats Art on the back.

BRO BRAD

My man.

He shakes Art's hand.

BRO CHAD

I give up. How you convinced that Rafi dude to choose us, I'll never know.

ART

He didn't have much of a choice, you know. We are his only offer.

BRO BRAD
No way, man. There's always
multiple offers.

ART
Not on this deal.

BRO CHAD
Dude, you really believe that?

ART
What do you mean?

BRO BRAD
You know how Ben is.

Art doesn't know.

BRO BRAD (CONT'D)
He probably hid the other offers.

Art looks at Ben, who heatedly mansplains something to Girls.

He looks at Steven, who makes out with Blonde Girl.

He stares at Ben and Steven together.

And finally, something clicks.

Art quickly sobers up. He gets up.

And he storms out of the club.

Jake anxiously watches him leave.

INT. WALL STREET OFFICE - LOBBY - NIGHT

Art enters the building and quickly walks to the elevator.

He presses the button repeatedly.

INT. WALL STREET OFFICE - UPPER LEVEL, BEN'S ROOM - NIGHT

In a craze, Art goes through every document on Ben's desk,
looking for some sort of evidence.

He looks through all of the drawers.

Until finally--

He finds it. Right there inside the "Herrera" folder. Not
even hidden properly.

EXT. WALL STREET OFFICE - NIGHT

Art walks out of the building, lost in thought.

He comes face to face with Jake.

They stare at each other.

ART
There's another buyer.

JAKE
So?

ART
So?! So, we're legally obligated to
tell Rafi!

JAKE
There's nothing legal about this!
We agreed to negotiate a deal for
ourselves. And if it fails, it'll
be on us.

ART
So what, we do nothing?!

Jake shrugs.

JAKE
Isn't that what you would do if you
weren't sleeping with the client?

Art stares at him, startled.

JAKE (CONT'D)
I know. And Ben is suspicious too.
He asked me to keep tabs on you.

ART
He's the one who wanted me to
pursue Rafi in the first place.

JAKE
He never told you to hook-up with
him. You crossed the line.

ART
Seriously? What line Jake? Where
the fuck is the line?!

JAKE
Listen to me. I don't give a fuck
who you sleep with.

(MORE)

JAKE (CONT'D)

But you'll keep your mouth shut until Rafi signs this deal. And I won't mention anything to Ben. Otherwise this whole thing will blow up in our faces!

Jake takes a moment to calm down.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Did it ever occur to you that you're jeopardizing both of our careers?

Art looks away.

He then turns to face Jake one more time.

ART

Did you know about the other buyer?

No answer. Jake only stares at him.

Art turns and walks away.

EXT. PLAZA HOTEL - NIGHT

Art stands outside. He stares at the hotel in all its glory. Finally, he gathers his courage and walks in.

INT. PLAZA HOTEL - CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Art slowly walks to Rafi's suite.

He's about to knock on the door, but--

He doesn't.

He sits down on the floor, his back against the door.

He looks around, noticing every little detail.

When suddenly, the door opens.

RAFI

Art?

ART

Oh, hi.

RAFI

What's wrong?

Art gets up.

He looks at Rafi for a long moment.

ART

Nothing. I got lost, on the way to
my room. Then I remembered I don't
live here.

Rafi chuckles softly.

Art hugs Rafi.

They kiss for a brief second.

RAFI

Are you okay?

There's so much to say, but--

ART

I'll see you in the morning.

Art walks away.

EXT. WALL STREET OFFICE - DAY

A HOMELESS WOMAN sleeps outside the building.

Little snowflakes land on the street, very slowly.

INT. WALL STREET OFFICE - UPPER LEVEL, BEN'S ROOM - DAY

TIME SLOWS DOWN.

Art and Jake stand across from Ben, quiet and still.

Ben pours himself a glass of whiskey.

His hand shakes as he downs his drink.

He looks lonely. Very lonely.

Art watches Jake. He looks stern.

His attention shifts to the door as Rafi and Steven arrive.

Ben gets up and welcomes them in.

Steven shakes Jake's hand.

Rafi shakes Art's hand.

Art looks at Rafi for a long moment.

Rafi and Steven sit across from Ben.

Ben takes out two copies of the contract.

He places one in front of Steven. And one in front of Rafi.

He holds out a pen to Steven. And a pen to Rafi.

And they sign.

Art watches Rafi, who tries to hide his sadness.

He shifts his attention to the window. He watches the snow.

INT. WALL STREET - UPPER LEVEL - DAY

As Rafi comes out of Ben's room, he sees the Bros waiting outside the door. They shake Rafi's hand.

BRO BRAD
Congratulations, bro.

RAFI
Thank you. Where's the bathroom?

Bro Chad points to the bathroom.

BRO CHAD
Right through there, bro.

As Rafi walks away, Art and Jake come out of Ben's room.

Bros huddle around Art and CHEER him quietly, yet ardently.

Jake, pushed aside, watches from a distance.

INT. WALL STREET OFFICE - MEN'S ROOM - DAY

Rafi looks at himself in the mirror for a long moment.

He then turns on the faucet and splashes water onto his face.

THUD.

Jake walks in. He stops at the sink next to Rafi.

JAKE
Congratulations, man.

RAFI

Thank you.

Rafi dries his hands.

As he is about to walk out, Jake stops him.

JAKE

Rafi, I, uhh, I accidentally sent something to your phone. Please ignore it.

Jake passes by Rafi and walks out of the bathroom.

Rafi takes out his phone. There's a new text from an unknown number. He opens it. It's a video. He presses play.

VIDEO: Art at the nightclub, making out with Ginger Girl.

INT. WALL STREET OFFICE - UPPER LEVEL - DAY

Rafi storms out of the bathroom.

He quickly gets on the elevator.

EXT. WALL STREET OFFICE - DAY

The snow has picked up its pace.

Rafi exits the building and walks to his limo.

Art runs out after him.

ART

Rafi! What's wrong?

Rafi stops and turns.

RAFI

I know what you're hiding.

ART

You know about the other buyer?

RAFI

(startled)
What?

ART

(shocked)
What!?

RAFI
There was another buyer?

ART
Who said that?

RAFI
You just fucking said it!

ART
Right. Wait so, what did you think
I was hiding?

Rafi takes a step closer.

RAFI
You let me sign this deal, knowing
there was another buyer?

ART
Knowledge is a tricky concept.

RAFI
Stop! You think this is a joke?!

Art looks at him for a long moment.

ART
There was a another buyer; South
African company. Mid-sized avocado
cultivator, looking to expand. I
found out last night.

Rafi stares at him.

He shakes his head, then turns and walks away.

He gets in his limo and shuts the door.

The limo quickly drives off.

Art watches, his heart broken.

INT. WALL STREET OFFICE - LOWER LEVEL - DAY

Art walks out of the elevator, dejected.

Bros CHEER and SHOUT loudly.

Jake, once again, watches from a distance.

The Bros hold Art and raise him up on their shoulders.

Ben walks up to them and grins.

BEN
 (to Art)
 You deserved this promotion.

As Ben is about to walk out, he turns to Jake.

BEN (CONT'D)
 (as an afterthought)
 Jake, you're promoted too.

He walks away.

Art, still on the Bros' shoulders, stares out the window, lost in thought.

INT. WALL STREET OFFICE - LOWER LEVEL - NIGHT

Mostly empty and dark now.

CLEANING LADY mops the floors.

Art gets up from his desk. He slowly walks around the office.

He walks by the Bros' desks. Then Jake's desk.

He walks to the window. He watches the street below. It looks abandoned; quiet and still.

He turns and looks at the Cleaning Lady.

ART
 Excuse me, hi.

Cleaning Lady turns around.

ART (CONT'D)
 How do I get to the roof?

CLEANING LADY
 Only Upper Levels have access to
 the roof.

ART
 I, uhh, I actually just got
 promoted.

She looks at Art for a moment.

CLEANING LADY
 Oh, that's right, I saw you today.
 Come.

Art follows her.

INT. WALL STREET OFFICE - ELEVATOR - NIGHT

Art rests his head against the wall.

Cleaning Lady stares at him.

CLEANING LADY

(somber)

You're so young.

Art smiles half heartedly.

CLEANING LADY (CONT'D)

You're not gonna jump, are you?

ART

Huh?

CLEANING LADY

We had two. Young kids. Both new here. It's so sad. I don't know if it's the hours or what, they can't take it. That's why they don't let Lower Levels on the roof anymore.

These words hit Art like a ton of bricks. It's like everything he thought was wrong.

ART

I thought...

CLEANING LADY

My daughter asked if I could get her an interview here. I said "No way. You're too valuable."

Art looks at her for a long moment.

ART

I'm not gonna jump.

She nods.

CLEANING LADY

Good.

INT./EXT. WALL STREET OFFICE - ROOF - NIGHT

Cleaning Lady unlocks the door with her key.

She waits there, as Art walks outside.

Snow falls.

Art walks to the edge and looks at the view.

Manhattan with all its glory.

He watches the city. It's not lively, not like before. No humans. No laughter. It's just buildings, quiet and still.

Snow falls.

Tears fall down his cheeks.

He looks at the view a moment longer.

He then turns and walks back slowly.

CLEANING LADY
(smiles)
Happy?

Art stares at her for a long moment.

He then nods unconvincingly.

ART
Thank you.

He walks inside.

INT. ART'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Art, in his pajamas, walks in as Leila sits on the couch and does the crossword.

LEILA
Good morning, honey.

Art sits across Leila.

ART
(dejected)
Mom.

Leila looks at him for one second and immediately recognizes that something is wrong.

LEILA
What happened?

She puts down the crossword.

ART

Can we get a metal detector and look for gold?

LEILA

Why?

ART

I want money, but I don't want to work for it.

Leila chuckles.

ART (CONT'D)

I'm not happy, mom. Working there, I feel like I lost who I am, I turned into a cardboard cutout of myself.

Leila stares at him for a long moment.

LEILA

Do you know why we moved to New York?

ART

Because it's a "concrete jungle where dreams are made of".

LEILA

What?

ART

Because you got a higher-paying job. And you wanted me to get a better education.

LEILA

No. Because I knew you were different. You were nothing like the other kids. I thought you might be gay, but even if you weren't, I knew you'd have a hard time, because you'd be forced to fit in when all you wanted was to stand out. We moved to New York because I wanted to give you the best chance to be who you are.

She takes a moment to just look at him.

LEILA (CONT'D)

If you can't be yourself at your job, then it's not a job worth keeping.

Art looks stunned.

He gets up, sits next to Leila, and hugs her.

They hold each other.

ART

But I won't be able to buy you a nice apartment and...I don't know, diamond necklaces.

LEILA

Moms don't want necklaces. Moms want their kid's happiness.

ART

That makes no sense.

Leila chuckles softly. They continue to hold each other.

After a moment--

ART (CONT'D)

Mom, how gay was I as a kid?

LEILA

You would put on my silk robe and dance to Abba.

ART

Okay, so not that gay.

They both chuckle.

INT. WALL STREET OFFICE - LOWER LEVEL - DAY

Art sits at his desk, lost in thought.

An Assistant walks up to him.

ASSISTANT

Your desk upstairs will be ready tomorrow morning.

ART

Okay.

ASSISTANT
 (half-hearted)
 Congratulations.

As the Assistant walks away, Art looks around to see if anyone is nearby.

He then discreetly searches online for the phone number of "Altschul Group" in New York.

He dials the number.

VOICEMAIL (O.S.)
 You've reached the Altschul Group.
 Please leave a message with your
 name, phone number, and--

Art hangs up.

EXT. WALL STREET OFFICE - DAY

Art exits the building. He searches for Altschul Group's address on his phone, then continues to walk.

EXT. ALTSCHUL GROUP BUILDING - DAY

Art looks at the OFFICE SIGN at the entrance, then walks in.

INT. ALTSCHUL GROUP BUILDING - DAY

He walks up to the RECEPTIONIST (male; annoying as fuck).

ART
 Hi. I work for Gladwell. I was wondering if Ms. Mehta was in today.

RECEPTIONIST
 Do you have an appointment?

ART
 I don't.

RECEPTIONIST
 I can't give you that information.

ART
 Could I get an appointment?

RECEPTIONIST
 What is your title?

ART
Junior analyst. Actually no, I was
just promoted--

RECEPTIONIST
Are you aware that she is the
managing director?

Art glares at him, frustrated.

RECEPTIONIST (CONT'D)
Also she's currently out of the
country.

ART
When is she coming back?

RECEPTIONIST
I can't give you that information.

WOMAN (O.S.)
Peter, when is Jiya coming back
from London?

RECEPTIONIST
(to Woman)
Tonight.

He gasps. Art grins.

RECEPTIONIST (CONT'D)
(to Art)
You don't know what time.

WOMAN (O.S.)
What time?

Receptionist stares at Art. He takes out a piece of paper,
writes down the time and hands it over to Woman.

Art rolls his eyes.

ART
(sarcastic)
Thanks.

He walks out.

EXT. ALTSCHUL GROUP BUILDING - DAY/NIGHT

Art stands outside the building. He takes out his phone and
looks at a photo of JIYA MEHTA (50's, Indian).

He sits and waits.

Hours pass by. The sun sets.

Art stares at the entrance, trying not to fall asleep.

Hours and hours later, just as the sun rises--

JIYA MEHTA, in high heels, looking powerful as hell, gets off a MERCEDES and walks towards the office.

Art gets up and quickly approaches her.

ART

Ms. Mehta, hi. I work for Gladwell.
Could I please talk to you for five
minutes about the Herrera deal?

Jiya stares at Art; he looks miserable.

JIYA

You look like shit.

ART

I feel like shit.

She chuckles lightly.

She then takes out her phone and checks the time.

JIYA

Five minutes.

She walks in. Art follows her.

INT. ALTSCHUL GROUP BUILDING - JIYA'S ROOM - DAY

Art sits across Jiya as she looks at her phone. A PLAQUE on her table reads: "Indian Businesswoman of the Year."

JIYA

Didn't Herrera go to what's-his-name?

ART

Steven.

JIYA

Fuck-face.

ART

Yes, that's the one. But what you
should know is--

Art takes a deep breath.

ART (CONT'D)
Ben Blackwell, who is the senior
advisor on the deal, never relayed
your client's offer to Herrera.

Jiya continues to look at her phone, unaffected.

JIYA
I'm not surprised; it happens all
the time.

Art stares at her, stunned.

JIYA (CONT'D)
Investment banks don't follow the
law, they follow the money.

ART
Yes, unfortunately I am aware of
what we follow. Doesn't it bother
you that they cheated you out of
the deal?

She looks up at Art for the first time.

JIYA
Honey, I got four meetings before
lunch with companies just like
Herrera. I'm sorry. You gotta
choose your battles.

Art stares at the plaque for a long moment.

He nods.

ART
Thank you for your time.

He gets up and walks out.

As Art closes the door, Jiya anxiously picks up her phone.

JIYA
(into phone)
Get me Kaya on the phone.

EXT. PLAZA HOTEL - NIGHT

Art nervously stands outside.

INT. PLAZA HOTEL - RAFI'S SUITE - DAY

Art knocks on the door.

After a moment, Rafi answers.

They stare at each other.

ART

I want to apologize, for being a piece of shit. Obviously I'm a terrible person and bad things should happen to me. Clearly I'm not capable of loving anything but money. Basically I'm the asshole you warn your kids about.

Rafi opens his mouth to speak, but--

ART (CONT'D)

I'm very fucked up. No one should ever interact with me. In fact, I should be quarantined.

RAFI

Are you done?

ART

I'm done.

RAFI

You lied to me.

ART

Yes.

RAFI

You lied to your boss.

ART

Yes.

RAFI

You lied to your coworkers.

ART

Yes.

RAFI

You lied to--

BZZ BZZ.

Art checks his phone. Incoming call from: "Altschul".

ART
 (to Rafi)
 Hold that thought.

Art answers the phone.

RAFI
 Are you kidding?

Art shushes Rafi.

RECEPTIONIST (O.S.)
 Hold for Jiya Mehta.

CLASSICAL MUSIC plays over the phone as Art and Rafi stare at each other awkwardly.

JIYA (O.S.)
 The CEO wants to have dinner with you.

ART
 (startled)
 The who what, now?

JIYA (O.S.)
 Aren't you the idiot who slept outside my office?

ART
 Yes, that's me.

JIYA (O.S.)
 Dinner with my client, the CEO.

ART
 When?

JIYA (O.S.)
 Right now. I'll text you the address.

She hangs up the phone.

Art turns back to Rafi.

ART
 I have to go.

RAFI
 Good. Don't come back.

ART
 I'm gonna come back.

RAFI
Don't.

ART
I will.

RAFI
Don't!

ART
I will!

Art runs out in a hurry.

Rafi shuts the door furiously.

EXT. PLAZA HOTEL - NIGHT

Art approaches a taxi. Just as he opens the door, he notices the cars ahead. It's rush hour traffic and nothing is moving.

He shuts the taxi door and runs to the subway station.

INT. SUBWAY STATION - NIGHT

He finally arrives at the station.

A SIGN reads "The subway is closed."

Art SCREAMS in frustration.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Art runs in a frenzy on the streets of New York.

INT. L'ARTUSI RESTAURANT - NIGHT

He enters the restaurant completely out of breath. He walks up to the Hostess.

ART
(panting)
Hi...I'm...looking...for...

Right then, he notices KAYA NKOSI (50s, black; no bullshit), who sits alone at a table. She looks badass as she sips her Martini.

Art slowly approaches her, terrified.

Kaya notices him. Without a word, she points to the seat across from her. Art sits.

He stares at her for a long, awkward moment, as she sips her drink.

KAYA

Why didn't you come to me before he signed the deal?

ART

I'm in a complicated relationship with money.

KAYA

You know what I learned about money all these years?

ART

That it doesn't make you happy?

KAYA

No, money makes you very happy. But it follows the law of diminishing returns.

She takes another sip.

KAYA (CONT'D)

When you have enough money to live a decent life, any extra money you earn brings you less and less happiness. At some point you gotta ask yourself what you're sacrificing for that big apartment or that new car.

Art stares at Kaya's gorgeous diamond necklace.

ART

It looks like you sacrificed a lot.

KAYA

I did. But I never sacrificed my principles.

She looks directly at Art.

Art gulps.

ART

Steven--

KAYA
Fuck-face.

ART
Is that like a common nickname
or...?

KAYA
I know how to get him to back down.

ART
(surprised)
How?

KAYA
Men never know how to pick-up their
trash. They always leave a trace.

Art stares at her, startled.

WAITRESS
(perky)
Hi, welcome.

Art stares at the Waitress.

WAITRESS (CONT'D)
(to Art)
Can I get you a drink? Our
signature cocktails are out of this
world. We have--

KAYA
(firm)
No. Thank you.

Waitress quickly walks away.

KAYA (CONT'D)
(to Art)
Call Mr. Herrera.

Art takes out his phone and calls Rafi.

RING. RING. RING. RING.

No answer.

ART
He's not picking up.

KAYA
Try again.

Art shakes his head.

ART
He's not gonna pick up. Tomorrow I
can--

KAYA
Tomorrow I'm leaving for Cape Town.
Go get your man.

ART
(musing)
My man.

He snaps out of it.

ART (CONT'D)
My man. Yes. It's just...it's still
rush hour, so traffic--

She stares at him sternly.

Art sighs.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Art once again runs in a frenzy on the streets of New York.

INT. PLAZA HOTEL - RAFI'S SUITE - NIGHT

Art POUNDS on Rafi's door repeatedly.

Until finally, Rafi answers.

RAFI
What?!

ART
I need you to trust me for one
second.

Rafi stares at him blankly.

INT. L'ARTUSI RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Art enters along with Rafi. They walk up to Kaya's table.

Kaya gets up and shakes Rafi's hand.

Rafi takes Art's seat.

ART
I'll just pull up a chair.

KAYA
(stern)
Wait over there.

ART
(terrified)
Okay.

Art watches them from a corner:

Rafi and Kaya talk, smile, laugh. It's like Kaya is a completely different person around Rafi.

She pulls out some documents from her briefcase. She puts on her glasses and shows Rafi certain numbers.

Rafi examines the documents carefully. He asks questions. Kaya explains in length.

Art focuses on Rafi. He tries to notice every detail: what he wears, the way his body moves, the way he smiles, laughs.

As the meeting ends, Rafi and Kaya shake hands.

Kaya gets up from her seat and walks to Art.

She looks him up and down.

Finally--

KAYA
Thank you.

She walks out of the restaurant.

ART
(sotto)
Anytime.

EXT. L'ARTUSI RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Art and Rafi alone on the street.

RAFI
Thank you.

Art nods.

ART
(humorous)
I feel like you should forgive me
now. It is time for forgiveness.
Forgive and forget. Bury the
hatchet. Water under the bridge.

Rafi chuckles lightly.

RAFI
I forgive you.

ART
(surprised)
Wait, really?

Rafi nods.

RAFI
But I think I need some time alone.
And you need some time to figure
yourself out.

ART
Isn't that just a polite way of
saying "You're a shitty person and
I hate you"?

RAFI
I don't hate you.

ART
Yes, you do.

RAFI
I don't.

ART
You do.

RAFI
You're making it harder than it
already is.

A beat.

ART
I'm sorry.

They just stare at each other. Not much else left to say.

RAFI
I should go.

ART

Okay.

Rafi looks at him for a moment longer.

RAFI

Bye.

He walks away.

Art watches him leave, dejected.

INT. ART'S APARTMENT - ART'S BEDROOM - DAY

Art sleeps in his bed.

His ALARM goes off. He GROANS.

INT. ART'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - DAY

Art sleeps in the shower.

INT. SUBWAY - DAY

Completely packed, no space to breathe. Art, in a suit, stands between TWO MEN, also in suits.

As more PEOPLE enter the already packed subway car, Art gets pushed back and disappears into the crowd.

INT. WALL STREET OFFICE - LOWER LEVEL - DAY

Art sits at his desk, lost in thought.

Bro Brad walks up and pats him on the back.

BRO BRAD

Bro, why didn't you move upstairs?

Art blankly stares at him for a moment, then--

ART

Oh. Uhh, I have a feeling I might not last long up there.

Right then, Ben walks out of the elevator. He looks FURIOUS.

Everyone turns to look at Ben as he KNOCKS down everything on his way and SCREAMS like a monster.

Finally he stops right in front of Art.

BEN

You got ten seconds to explain
yourself before you're fired.

This is it. This is Art's moment.

He takes a deep breath, and--

ART

I'm gay.

BRO BRAD

Poor dude, he's having a
concussion.

BRO CHAD

(to Art)

Bro, you're not gay. You were just
pretending.

ART

I'm gay as a fucking unicorn! I
like dick...and balls...and I have
rainbows coming out of my ass!

Ben turns to Bro Vlad.

BEN

Call security.

Bro Vlad nods.

ART

I'm gay!

BEN

You're fired!

ART

(louder)

I'm gay!!

BEN

(even louder)

You're fired!!

ART

(loudest)

I'm gay!!!

EXT. WALL STREET OFFICE - DAY

TWO SECURITY GUARDS hold Art and escort him out of the building as he repeatedly SCREAMS--

ART
(relieved and happy)
I'm gay! I'm gay! I'm gay!

PEOPLE walking by stare at Art.

PASSERBY #1
Should we be worried?

PASSERBY #2
Honey, this is New York.

They keep on walking.

Finally, Jake walks out of the building.

Art turns to face Jake.

ART
I'm gay.

JAKE
I know.

ART
I don't think you do.

They look at each other for a long moment.

ART (CONT'D)
Call me when you quit your job.

He turns and walks away.

Jake watches him leave. He then walks back inside.

EXT. PLAZA HOTEL - DAY

A TAKE-OUT BOX in his hand, Art runs up the stairs and into the hotel.

INT. PLAZA HOTEL - RAFI'S SUITE - DAY

He KNOCKS on the door repeatedly.

ART
Open up, open up, open up!

Finally the door opens.

But it's not Rafi, it's the Butler.

ART (CONT'D)
Oh. I'm looking for--

BUTLER
Mr. Rafi just left.

ART
Fuck me!

BUTLER
Uhh...

Art runs to the elevator.

INT. PLAZA HOTEL - LOBBY - DAY

Art runs around the lobby, searching for Rafi.

ART
Rafi! Rafi!

Everyone stares at him like he's crazy.

As he's running around, Art literally runs into Rafi and almost knocks him down.

ART (CONT'D)
Rafi!

RAFI
(startled)
What happened?!

ART
(panting)
I brought you chicken. With my
spicy sauce. And I added an
avocado.

He gives Rafi the take-out box.

RAFI
(in shock)
Thank...you.

Art takes a deep breath, then--

ART
Hi, my name is Art.

RAFI
What are you doing?

ART
I like short walks on the beach,
that end at the liquor store. I eat
like a gorilla. I'm a slut in bed.
I'm currently unemployed. And I
miss my dad more than anything.
(beat)
I'm also just a boy, standing in
front of a boy, asking him to love
me.

RAFI
You did not just say that.

ART
I would apologize, but love means
never having to say you're sorry.

RAFI
Stop it.

ART
I can't. I wish I knew how to quit
you.

RAFI
I hate you.

ART
I love you.

A beat.

RAFI
You do?

Art nods.

Rafi stares at him for a long moment.

RAFI (CONT'D)
Okay.

ART
Okay?

RAFI
Okay.

He leans in and kisses Art.

Art sighs and kisses him back repeatedly.

They finally hug.

EXT. PLAZA HOTEL - DAY

The snow still covers the streets, but the sun is shining.

It's a beautiful day.

Art and Rafi walk out of the hotel holding hands.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END