LOVERBOY

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LOVERBOY

Written by

Mariepet Mangosing
INT. FRANKIE’S RESTAURANT (JERSEY CITY, NJ) - NIGHT


JONAH (30s, handsome, charming as hell, Asian-American) leans forward, his left hand rests on his hip while the other waves.

JONAH
Essentially, I want the kind of love that makes me want to love myself more. The kind that augments to my life rather than take anything away.

He takes a sip of his fruity drink.

JONAH (CONT’D)
And dating in this digital age is contrived and brutal, who knows who is being genuine or simply posturing for instant gratification.

Jonah snaps his fingers.

JONAH (CONT’D)
Rome wasn’t built in a day and yet here we are. I blame these phones.

Jonah holds his phone up, on the screen are a ton of notifications. Popular dude.

JONAH (CONT’D)
But you see, all that to say, I just really want to find the person that is my forever. You know?

Across the table sits a PRETTY GIRL (30s), absolutely smitten with this take, nods in agreement as she sips her wine.

JONAH (CONT’D)
Maybe that’s corny.

PRETTY GIRL
Yeah, it is.

They both laugh.

PRETTY GIRL (CONT’D)
My bad, I just -- all men have a line they’ll tell you to look good.
JONAH
I appreciate that candor but not all men have a pre-downloaded spiel on love. Next thing you’re gonna say is that we only want sex, too.

PRETTY GIRL
You do.

JONAH
Have a little more faith than that.

PRETTY GIRL
Most girls want that, too. Just so you know.

She cocks a brow, Jonah nods.

JONAH
I’ll be back.

INT. CORNER MARKET – NIGHT

On the counter, multi-pack with bonus deal condoms. Jonah taps his foot impatiently.

SAD SACK CLERK (18) attempts to scan the barcode. Scanner lights up but no beep.

Clerk tries again, no luck. He slowly types the SKU code on the back. Jonah shifts.

JONAH
Sorry, man. Is there a problem?

BEEP IN ERROR. The clerk picks up the phone.

SAD CLERK
(into phone)
Can I get a price check?

Jonah taps his fingers on the counter. STORE MANAGER (40s) waddles over, he takes the box and punches something on the computer then scans the barcode.

BEEP. Finally.

STORE MANAGER
Are you interested in any KY? We currently have a deal.

A line queues up behind him.
JONAH
No. That’s OK. Actually--

SAD CLERK
You can’t make any assumptions
these days. Every woman’s body is
different--

Jonah looks at the lube again.

INT. FRANKIE’S RESTAURANT – NIGHT

Jonah takes his seat again, out of breath.

PRETTY GIRL
I thought you were blowing me off.

JONAH
Me? Never.

PRETTY GIRL
Good. I hate when people blow off
dates or ghost them. It’s inhumane.

JONAH
I cannot agree more.

He clears his throat.

EXT. FRANKIE’S RESTAURANT– NIGHT

Jonah and his date step outside then stand, facing each
other. Their eyes meet each other’s -- Jonah bites his bottom
lip.

JONAH
I’d love to kiss you, is that OK?

PRETTY GIRL
Sure.

They do, soft, slow. Then part. She’s smiling.

PRETTY GIRL (CONT’D)
I was hoping that we could maybe
take things slow. I’m just not
ready for anything physical yet.
You know?

JONAH
Definitely, absolutely.
Jonah backs up into a bag of TRASH, tripping. Condoms, lube and a receipt fall out of his pockets.

PRETTY GIRL
Not all men, huh?

INT. ARCHER BAR - NIGHT

Jonah downs a beer when he waves for another at the CASEY (20s, 90s grunge reincarnate, red pixie cut, bartender). She leans over the counter.

BARTENDER
Another round?

JONAH
Stella.

Jonah checks her out. She slides the beer across the counter.

JONAH (CONT'D)
Not to be all Single White Female but where’d you get your flannel?

She looks down at herself.

BARTENDER
I love that movie.

JONAH
Jennifer Jason Leigh’s performance? Groundbreaking. And that post makeover hair? Radiant!

She strokes her hair and pushes a beer in front of Jonah.

BARTENDER
You ever try it with a splash of Sprite?

JONAH
No but I’ll try anything sweet.

INT. UBER CAR - NIGHT

The bartender and Jonah make out, quick, heavy panting, they don’t even come up for air.

UBER DRIVER (20s) shakes her head in the rearview mirror, miffed. She rolls her eyes.
INT. JONAH’S APARTMENT (BEDROOM) - DAY

Jonah wakes up to a tuft of red hair. He rolls over, Bartender yawns.

JONAH
Hi.

BARTENDER
Morning.

She attempts to cuddle.

JONAH
You want water, K--

BARTENDER
Casey. Sure.

JONAH
How do you take it?

CASEY
Stirred.

JONAH
I’ll be back.

INT. JONAH’S APARTMENT (KITCHEN) - DAY

Jonah pours water from a Brita pitcher into a glass with some ice when STEPHANIE (28, cheeky, Jonah’s younger sister, put together) startles him from behind.

JONAH
You’re always doing that.

STEPHANIE
You forget that I live here, too.

JONAH
Can you live here just a little quieter?

STEPHANIE
Why? Kyle’s not here. He’s already left for work to get art supplies for the kids. It’s just us.

Casey steps into the kitchen.

STEPHANIE (CONT’D)
Or, not.
CASEY
I’m so sorry! Oh my god. Is this your girlfriend?

STEPHANIE
That is abhorrent. I’m his sister.

JONAH
You know what they say! Blood is thicker than water.

He hands Casey the glass. There’s another awkward silence then Casey throws on her jacket.

JONAH (CONT’D)
Hey! I’m not kicking you out or anything I’m just a little--

CASEY
No sweat. I’ll see you around.

JONAH
So I’ll text you?

Casey slips into her heels.

CASEY
Whatever.

She pecks his cheek then closes the door behind her. Stephanie shakes her head, while Jonah looks a bit confused.

STEPHANIE
Guess the date went well.

JONAH
Oh no, it was not a date.

STEPHANIE
Wam bam thank you ma’am.

JONAH
She knew the deal. Besides, primates swing branch to branch in finding a mate.

STEPHANIE
Oh, the lies you tell yourself to avoid feeling like an animal. Very Dad behavior.

JONAH
I’m not lying. And never bring up Voldemort again. I’m far from him.

(MORE)
JONAH (CONT'D)
The girl I went on a date with actually bailed on me, I’ll have you know.

STEPHANIE
What did you do?

JONAH
Why do you assume I did something?

Stephanie pounds her chest like a gorilla.

JONAH (CONT'D)
A box of condoms might have fallen out of my pocket after she wanted to “go slow.”

Stephanie continues to pound on her chest.

JONAH (CONT'D)
It wasn’t my finest moment. But it worked out after a few drinks. Casey was tending bar.

STEPHANIE
Uh huh. Looks like you’re really getting far on that journey to love.

JONAH
It’s not even 9AM, Steph. Why are you on my case?

STEPHANIE
Because I worry you’re going to turn out like our parents: constantly searching for the next exciting thing, ignoring details, never appreciating what they had. Or, worse! The weird uncle that only wears fedoras and hosts poker night every week.

JONAH
This would all mean more coming from someone else. You’ve been with Kyle for years and I haven’t heard a single wedding bell.

STEPHANIE
We’re not talking about me here.
JONAH
I thought girls plan their weddings from birth. You work at a bridal store for heaven’s sake.

STEPHANIE
Not every woman’s dream is to be married!

JONAH
You also said that you would find a new job years ago. I think you and I aren’t that different, you know?

STEPHANIE
Don’t you have some other entanglement to attend to?

INT. CAFE - DAY

Jonah waits in line, concentrating on the menu when he sees a KISSING COUPLE (20s). They have no self-awareness, just in it together.

Jonah looks on wistfully when a BARISTA (20s) shouting for his attention.

BARISTA
Sir? Can I help you?

JONAH
I’ll have the Americano. Actually, no. I’ll take regular drip. Wait!

BARISTA
Please decide.

JONAH
Reg drip. I’m certain.

Barista puts the order into the computer.

BARISTA
That’ll be--

JONAH
Can I get the Americano?

Barista rolls their eyes.
INT. CITY HALL (OFFICE CUBICLES) - DAY

Jonah walks into the building, coffee in hand, walking past WENDY (20s, Jonah’s assistant), who smiles at him.

JONAH
Looking good, Wendy.

WENDY
Only good?

JONAH
Beautiful.

WENDY
Mhmm.
   (whispering)
Healy’s waiting.

JONAH
Sorry, Wen. Owe you big time for stalling.

WENDY
Bill could use the tee time.

JONAH
Done. How’s getting him off the pipe going?

WENDY
All I care is that he stopped smelling like an ashtray. Gotta work on that cholesterol now.

JONAH
Will have to send a steady Cheerio regimen, then?

WENDY
Rather you send him a clue on an anniversary gift.

JONAH
That gold plated Swarovski bracelet? How could he not know?

Wendy nods.

WENDY
Get in there, boss. Healy’s probably thought you’ve certainly abandoned her by now.
INT. JONAH’S OFFICE – DAY

MAYOR HEALY (40s, sounds like a Kardashian, trendy, hoop earrings) sifts through files behind Jonah’s desk.

JONAH
Mayor! I thought you were working from your home office today.

HEALY
That was until James came home and wanted to have some time with Willow.

JONAH
James is back.

HEALY
I cannot wait until our divorce is finalized and we can be free of each other’s shit.

JONAH
Remember who you are, Healy. You’re a doll. He’s the idiot.

HEALY
Yes well, can’t convince my kid otherwise. Anyway. I gotta save face for this upcoming election. As open minded as the city claims to be..

JONAH
Everyone loves a good dramatic story. We’ll be fine for re-election. You’re a staple in the community. What would the Ashbury do without you?

HEALY
I think it’s too naive to employ the same strategy so I’ve gone ahead and vetted a few potential candidates to hire.

JONAH
For?

HEALY
Oh, relax. Not for your job. Just some campaign help.

(MORE)
HEALY (CONT'D)
You won’t even feel their presence around but it’ll be someone to keep things in line. If you catch my drift.

JONAH
I don’t think I’m following.

HEALY
Ducks in a row.

JONAH
Still not.

HEALY
They’re gonna keep any of our bullshit in line especially off socials and out of the mouths of our most elite residents. Do you get it?

JONAH
So, keep our shit offline, technically.

HEALY
Aren’t you funny. Maybe you could be a doll and hire a woman. Clearly dudes are slow on the uptake.

SAMUEL (20s, gawky, Healy’s assistant) runs in, drops all of his papers, and startles Jonah in the process. Samuel scrambles to pick it all up.

HEALY (CONT'D)
Look through these and get someone in here by end of week. Please.

Samuel hands Jonah the stack.

HEALY (CONT'D)
Keep it hot, sexy! You already know the drill! Don’t mess this up!

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

SARAH (30s, street smart, chatty) sits across from her DATE (30s, art film himbo). She leans forward in her chair.
SARAH
Then, I told her that “it’s something borrowed then something blue” and she still went with a lilac scarf.

Date has another sip of his wine but he doesn’t seem super interested in what is happening at this table.

SARAH (CONT’D)
Listen to me. I’m rambling! Curse of the gab. I just love my job and love. What do you love? Tell me everything.

INT. BRIDAL BOUTIQUE (BACK OFFICE) – NIGHT
Sarah steadies her phone between her cheek and shoulder, she counts out tips and has an Excel sheet open on her computer.

SARAH
(into phone)
He was so cute. I think we really connected!
(beat)
And he works at the Historic Landmark Theater. They only play classic films. That’s a great date idea.
(beat)
I’ll have to suggest that next time! All right. I gotta go. Going to this party tonight. No, it’s just a few friends.
(beat)
Love you, Mom.

Sarah’s phone DINGS.

A text from Jason reads: you’re lovely but I’m not looking for anything serious right now. Good luck in all your endeavors!

She’s gutted and deletes the contact.

INT. JONAH’S APARTMENT (LIVING ROOM) – NIGHT
Jonah googles the Swarovski bracelet, he hits PURCHASE. He then sends a text to Casey.

Message gets a READ check mark but no response. Jonah raises a brow as Stephanie pummels through the door.
STEPHANIE
I have to pee!

JONAH
TMI.

FLUSH. She walks out.

JONAH (CONT'D)
Did you wash your hands?

STEPHANIE
Don’t be gross.

JONAH
You wanna get some takeout? I was thinking Chinese.

STEPHANIE
First of all, we order Good Fortune too much. Secondly, I told you a million times that I’m having people over tonight and soon!

JONAH
Who’s all coming?

STEPHANIE
Not you.

JONAH
I live here!

STEPHANIE
For the night, you live elsewhere. Come on buddy.

She starts to usher him out.

JONAH
Why am I being ousted from my own home?

STEPHANIE
We all know what happens after a few drinks. Fraternizing with my friends. Go to your sneaky link’s place or whatever!

JONAH
What even is a sneaky link? Stop. I’m not gonna go anywhere.
STEPHANIE
I don’t want you to cause drama amongst my friends.

JONAH
There won’t be any drama.

STEPHANIE
Remember what happened with Jackie?

JONAH
That was not a big deal.

STEPHANIE
She quit the shop after that!

JONAH
She went on to do girl boss things!

STEPHANIE
Then, don’t drink.

JONAH
I’ll have a respectable amount.
Three MAX.

STEPHANIE
Bad things happen in 3’s.

JONAH
Who’s being dramatic now?

INT. JONAH’S APARTMENT (KITCHEN) - NIGHT

Jonah drinks a beer and flits around the room amongst elder Millennial hipster GUESTS.

Stephanie takes a hit of a joint and shotguns the hit into KYLE’S (30s, grown skater boi) mouth.

Jonah covers his nose and mouth to evade the plume of weed smoke wafting into his face but gets a whiff anyway. He starts to cough and ducks into--

INT. JONAH’S APARTMENT (BATHROOM) - NIGHT

Jonah stands at the sink, coughing. A cloud of vape smoke meets his nose. He turns to see vape smoke from behind the shower curtain.

JONAH
Blueberry?
He pulls the shower curtain aside. Sarah looks up at him.

SARAH
What?

JONAH
Your vape.

Sarah looks between her fingers.

SARAH
Yeah.

JONAH
Do you mind?

Sarah looks down at him but shrugs.

JONAH (CONT'D)
Had a bad day?

Sarah takes another pull of her vape.

SARAH
What are you, James Blunt? No. Millennial dating is a hellscape.

JONAH
Another bad date?

SARAH
It takes time to know people! How do you write someone off after one date?

JONAH
People are dicks.

SARAH
Men.

JONAH
Not all--

SARAH
If you give me that not choosing the right person spiel again, dude, so help me god.

JONAH
I won’t.

Sarah winces.
JONAH (CONT'D)
Come on. Let’s just have a good
time tonight? Deal with whatever
you might be feeling tomorrow?

SARAH
Always a procrastinator.

JONAH
Perfect for working in government.

Sarah reaches for the bottle of Cuervo next to her in the
tub.

JONAH (CONT'D)
Lemme get a hit.

She hands him the vape.

JONAH (CONT'D)
Not that.

She hands him the Cuervo.

LATER
Jonah and Sarah sit in the bathtub, laughing, Cuervo almost
drained. There’s a KNOCK on the door.

JONAH
Use the other bathroom!

Sarah continues to laugh.

SARAH
People must think we’re banging in
here.

Jonah looks over to Sarah, their eyes lock then they start
making out. Sarah pulls away from Jonah.

JONAH
What?

SARAH
I don’t know if this is a good
idea.

JONAH
It never really is.

SARAH
Let’s not tell Stephanie.
JONAH

They lean into each other again, ravenous.

INT. SARAH’S APARTMENT (BEDROOM) – DAY

Sarah faces away sleeping, Jonah looks over at her and quietly gets out of bed. He searches for his shoes in the dark, trying to be quiet. Sarah turns around.

SARAH
Sneaking away?

JONAH
Oh, no.

He leans over for a kiss.

JONAH (CONT’D)
I thought it’s time for a coffee.

SARAH
Mmm, you’ve convinced me.

She starts to get out of bed.

JONAH
Cool.

INT. CAFE – DAY

Jonah and Sarah wait in line behind a FIGHTING COUPLE (30s).

FIGHTING WOMAN
They don’t have oat milk so just get almond or soy. Let’s not make this poor barista wait now as usual, hun.

SARAH
Oof.

(to Jonah, quietly)
How long do you think they’ve been together?

Jonah looks over at her.

FIGHTING MAN (O.S.)
Really? I’m causing the scene?
JONAH
Early 30s, college sweethearts. I’d say at least five.

They finished up their order and continue yelling at each other from afar.

SARAH
I’d probably guess four but there was definitely a “break.”

JONAH
The man who is yelling was the one who dated somebody else in that time.

SARAH
As usual.

Jonah and Sarah exchange a “yeaaahhh” kind of look then turn back to the couple again, who have resolved the fight and are making out.

JONAH
It’s always a choice, right?

SARAH
What is?

JONAH
Staying together.

Sarah peers up at him, leaning into him a bit. Barista waves them next in line.

BARISTA
Hey there! You having the Americano today?

JONAH
Actually I’ll have two regular drips.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Jonah and Sarah sip on their hot coffees, walking leisurely.

JONAH
I’ve gotta rinse off and get to a meeting in an hour but we can hang out later?
SARAH
Ah, yes. Answer the bat signal.

JONAH
Aren’t I lucky? Text me later?

SARAH
Oh, yeah. Totally.

JONAH
Also, maybe we keep this low key until after the election? Healy’s paranoid and doesn’t want another thing to have to deal with.

SARAH
Ouch.

JONAH
Not that you’re someone I have to deal with. Privacy and the like.

SARAH
Political pawn. Got it.

JONAH
Thanks and no Stephanie.

SARAH
No Stephanie.

Jonah smiles, pecks her on the cheek, squeezes her arm and walks in the opposite direction.

INT. JONAH’S KITCHEN - DAY

A disheveled Jonah tosses his keys and his coffee on the table. He opens the fridge for an OJ when Stephanie pops out of nowhere. Again.

STEPHANIE
What you get into last night?

JONAH
You for real gotta stop doing that.

STEPHANIE
You disappeared!

JONAH
Didn’t you want me to make myself scarce?
KYLE
Stephanie, come on. Jonah’s a grown ass man. He doesn’t need an interrogation squad on him.

Kyle stands next to Stephanie.

JONAH
Yeah, I’m not planning a coup.

STEPHANIE
We’re not Irish! You can’t just leave without saying good-bye to me!

Kyle nervously laughs.

KYLE
It’s all right, man. You didn’t really miss much.

Jonah turns his head and there’s a hickey.

STEPHANIE
Nice neck tat.

Jonah covers the right side of his neck.

STEPHANIE (CONT’D)
Other side. Whoever she is, I hope she knows what she stepped into.

JONAH
Late for work. Thanks for the morale boost, sis. Kyle, hoops tomorrow?

KYLE
Roger.

Jonah heads out.

EXT. CITY HALL - DAY

Art deco building, marble columns. Archways hanging over the front entrance. Jonah climbs the front steps and through the doors.
INT. CITY HALL HALLWAYS - DAY

Jonah makes his way down the halls, some office doors open, others shut. Lots of chatter and bustling around. People dressed in business casual. Government issued.

INT. CITY HALL (CONFERENCE ROOM) - DAY

Jonah walks into the room. Samuel struggles to set up the speaker phone with Healy on the line, causing loud feedback to sound on.

    HEALY (O.S.)
    Jesus Christ, Samuel!

The feedback settles.

    HEALY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
    Let’s keep this quick, I’ve got a hard out in an hour. My CBD masseuse awaits! Send in the masses!

Samuel dramatically swings the conference room doors open. No one rushes in while Jonah takes his seat at the head of the table.

    JONAH
    So what is the bare minimum you’re looking for, Heal? Talk to me.

    HEALY (O.S.)
    Someone with a Comm degree and at least 1,000 followers on socials. Not a loser. Chop chop!

    JONAH
    All right, team. Let them in.

RBEGIN MONTAGE

- Various INTERVIEWEES (ranging from 20s to 40s) of different shapes and sizes come in. Quick cuts between them.

- Jonah reaches over, shakes their hand, and most of the time shakes his head “no.”

- Wendy crosses name after name on list. Samuel hangs up the conference room phone (bye Healy).

END MONTAGE
INT. JONAH'S OFFICE - DAY

KNOCKS. Wendy stands in the doorway, Jonah runs his fingers through his hair.

  WENDY
  We've got a few more resumes off LinkedIn. Should I schedule them?

Jonah pinches the bridge of his nose and nods.

INT. BRIDAL BOUTIQUE - DAY

Curated, tailored, clothes in delicate lace sway back and forth, as Stephanie smooths out wedding dresses on tall racks. Sarah measures a CUSTOMER (20s).

  SARAH
  This two-piece gown is so cute.

  CUSTOMER
  I'm in LOVE. It's exactly what I wanted.

Stephanie walks next to them.

  STEPHANIE
  We have similar cut two-piece gowns that are more trendy in our catalog, if you wanted to check it out before ordering.

  CUSTOMER
  I'm absolutely certain I'm good with this dress. I'm the type of person when I find something that works, I commit all the way. I gotta have it all.

  SARAH
  When you know, you know.

Stephanie looks uneasy. The customer turns to leave.

  SARAH (CONT'D)
  Take care!
  (to Stephanie)
  I loved her energy.

  STEPHANIE
  You're in a good mood.
SARAH
What do you mean?

STEPHANIE
Last week, you vaped in the store then yelled at a customer for hitting her Juul.

SARAH
I’m not always a grump.

STEPHANIE
You haven’t “taken a sad nap” today so I’d say that you’re in a good mood. Did you get laid or something?

SARAH
No.

Beat.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Fine. Yeah.

STEPHANIE
There it is. Why’d you try to lie to me? You’re the worst.

SARAH
I didn’t wanna, I don’t know, get your hopes up.

STEPHANIE
Last I checked, you were the hopeless romantic. Not me.

Sarah thinks for a minute, realizing.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)
But talk away. I totally bitch about Kyle all the time! Least I can do.

SARAH
So far so good but don’t want to jinx it. Don’t want the groom to get a sneak peak right before the wedding, yanno?

STEPHANIE
Sex must be bomb if it makes you hear wedding bells.
INT. JONAH’S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jonah and Casey fuck doggy-style on his bed. Casey muffles her moans in a pillow, Jonah’s concentration face suddenly relaxes. They fall back on the bed, next to each other. Casey high fives Jonah.

INT. STEPHANIE’S ROOM - NIGHT

Stephanie and Kyle exchange glances at each other as the distant moans from Jonah’s room come to a halt.

STEPHANIE
We really need to sound proof this apartment.

KYLE
Maybe it’s time you get out of here, if you really hate it so much.

STEPHANIE
Jonah would be screwed.

KYLE
I think he’s got that covered.

STEPHANIE
Kyle! He can’t afford rent on his own.

KYLE
Like I’ve said a million times before, Jonah’s grown. He’ll figure it out.

STEPHANIE
And where do you suggest that I go?

KYLE
I was hoping with me.

STEPHANIE
Going where with you?

KYLE
In my apartment.

STEPHANIE
Oh.

KYLE
Your enthusiasm is killing me.
STEPHANIE
No, no. It’s not that. I’m just surprised is all.

KYLE
That I’d want to live with you?

STEPHANIE
Not that part. Your crib is a total frat house.

KYLE
How different is that from literally listening to your own flesh and blood boning in the next room?

Stephanie goes quiet.

STEPHANIE
Uh, well, I’m a bad roommate. What if we end up hating each other?

KYLE
You don’t gotta answer me now. I know you need time to stew.

Kyle kisses her cheek, turns the side lamp off, then settles under the covers. Stephanie sits, stunned.

INT. CITY HALL (CONFERENCE ROOM) – DAY

Jonah, Samuel, Wendy and Healy sit around the table, a bunch of resumes laying out in front of them.

JONAH
Anything of note, boss?

HEALY
I like this girl’s logo. It’s edgy.

The logo is a bit phallic.

JONAH
That’s a word to describe it.

WENDY
(stifling laughter)
It’s provocative.

Healy looks up.
HEALY
That’s what we’re looking for. I think Jersey City needs a refresh. We’re New York City’s younger but cooler family member!

JONAH
I don’t think New York would appreciate the relation. Besides technically, Jersey City was founded first.

SAMUEL
I thought New York would be.

JONAH
Jersey was founded by Paulus in 1618. NYC became a thing in 1624.

HEALY
Ah, yes. The NJ versus NY thing. Not relevant to this re-election though boys. Focus.

JONAH
We have invited a candidate to interview today. Graduated from Columbia. Great references.

Jonah slides one of the resumes towards Healy.

WENDY
Interned with Councilwoman Tessa? Rumor has it she’s after your job, Mayor.

JONAH
Consider her poached.

HEALY
Oh, I’m not worried about her involvement with Tessa. She tries to win every election and never makes it on the ballot. What’s this candidate’s Instagram following?

SAMUEL
Under 1K.

HEALY
Never mind.
JONAH
Mayor, I don’t have many Instagram followers. Poaching from the other team could be very valuable.

Healy looks at him, takes a moment then shrugs.

HEALY
You can always buy them.

Just then, LEE (30s, confident, aloof) traipses in, her head high, her short fringe effortlessly sways as she moves. Je ne sais quoi.

LEE
Can I come in?

JONAH
Sure.

Jonah stacks the other resumes and shoves them into a folder.

LEE
I’m actually here to interview for the Campaign Director job. Oh god, am I in the wrong place?

WENDY
No, you’re in the right place!

LEE
I’m always a little early. Sorry about that.

HEALY
A great trait to have. Time is of the essence. But welcome in. I’m Mayor Healy. I’ll let my comrades take care of you now.

LEE
It’s so nice to meet you, Mayor. I’ve heard so many good things.

HEALY
The rumors that I got a Brazilian Butt Life are not true.

LEE
Oh, no. I was just going to say that you’re considered the cool Mayor amongst the Millennials in town.
HEALY

Healy gets up, grabs her bag and leaves. Jonah clears his throat. Samuel follows behind her. Wendy ushers Lee to a chair.

WENDY
Need a water or anything?

LEE
Would love some. You’re Deputy Mayor, right?

JONAH
That is correct.

LEE
I’ve heard some things about you, too.

JONAH
All good, I hope. Was it Lee? Tell me a little about yourself.

LEE
I’m a Columbia grad, magma cum laude. I interned with Councilwoman Tessa and worked for the non-profit Physicians for Reproductive Health. I have been a Jersey City resident for a few years. I love this town.

JONAH
It’s a great city. Why do you want to work for Healy?

LEE
She aligns with my values. Liberally minded and that sort of thing.

JONAH
Yet you interned with someone from the Green Party.

LEE
I had a comeuppance of sorts. Realized that there were other objectives I had in mind working in government.
JONAH

Such as?

LEE

For one, I think that Healy’s personable nature amongst the newer residents in the town is respectable. You grow community from that.

JONAH

For Healy’s upcoming campaign, we want to secure her re-election with ease. As you know, the divorce cramped her style a bit but your job would be to mitigate that.

LEE

That divorce was very messy. Hard not to talk about.

Jonah goes quiet.

LEE (CONT'D)

I mean, it’s no one’s business.

JONAH

Right.

LEE

So, what are next steps?

JONAH

We have a few other candidates we’re considering but we will definitely give you a call either way.

LEE

Thanks.

She gets up, waits a moment, then turns back to Jonah.

LEE (CONT'D)

I really want this gig. I’d do anything.

Jonah nods.

INT. SARAH’S CAR - DAY

Sarah and Jonah make out then pull apart.
SARAH
Hard day?

JONAH
Just having trouble finding a suitable candidate for Campaign Director. Until then, it’s on Wendy, Samuel, and I.

SARAH
And where’s Healy?

They look at each other, pause, then start laughing.

SARAH (CONT’D)
She’s

EXT. SIDE WALK – DAY
Stephanie totes a bag of groceries and looks over to see Sarah and Jonah in the car, kissing.

Stephanie stands with her mouth hanging open then drops the bag on the ground.

She looks around and hides behind a utility pole to hide herself from them. She goes in for another look but the car drove off.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT – DAY
Jonah goes in for a layup. Kyle blocks him.

JONAH
Your game got tighter. Are you playing without me?

KYLE
Lucky streak, I guess.

JONAH
What’s up with Stephanie, though? She was especially venomous yesterday.

KYLE
I’m not sure. She’s been acting really weird to me lately, too.

JONAH
Maybe she’s on the rag.
KYLE
Come on, man. You gotta stop saying shit like that.

JONAH
What? It’s science!

KYLE
This is why you stay single, dude.

JONAH
For your information, I might be seeing somebody.

KYLE
Whaaaat? The bartender?

JONAH
Some Tinder girl.

He lies.

KYLE
I thought you hated the apps.

JONAH
Decided to give them a whirl.

Jonah shoots a three pointer and misses completely.

KYLE
Your three’s are shit.

Kyle flicks his three pointer and also misses.

JONAH
Instant karma.

KYLE
But really, who is this girl? Maybe you can tell Steph and she can stop digging into you deep.

JONAH
I’m taking my time. Speaking of time, hasn’t it been forever for you two? I figured you’d have the whole house, dog, wedding, kid thing by now.

KYLE
Do you know your sister? She’s not too jazzed about change.
JONAH
She’s definitely taken a unique approach to life.

KYLE
I saw this perfect apartment the other day. It’s a huge step up than, what Stephanie called, a frat house. City views, laundry in unit.

JONAH
In unit? Really?

KYLE
I don’t know. Maybe it’ll convince her to embrace change.

JONAH
Whoa. That’s a step forward. But maybe start with having her tooth brush at your place or something first. Or, a drawer for her things. Sloth pace, yeah?

INT. SARAH’S KITCHEN - NIGHT
Sarah carefully prepares a grilled cheese. Jonah hugs her from behind and takes a bite of the sandwich. With his mouth full, he starts kissing her.

INT. SARAH’S BEDROOM - NIGHT
Post-coital, Jonah’s phone lights up while Sarah sleeps. He turns the volume down then swipes through dating apps.

On screen: LEE, 33. He panics, dropping the phone on his face which accidentally swipes RIGHT.

It’s a match! A message appears:

Lee: Sorry, this was a cordial match with who you know type of deal.

Jonah writes back: I was never here.

Lee: :X

INT. BRIDAL BOUTIQUE - DAY
Sarah tries on a dress. It’s a sweetheart neckline, A-Line silhouette. She looks perfect.
STEPHANIE
What are you doing?

SARAH
This is a new style and it came in my size. I’m just curious. Don’t you ever fantasize?

STEPHANIE
I’d rather stay in this realm. Fantasizing feels like a waste of energy.

SARAH
But it’s so important to dream big. And my biggest dream is to have a perfect wedding.

STEPHANIE
Uh huh. Do you maybe have any other dreams?

SARAH
I don’t know, I guess I’d like to sell my stocks or something.

STEPHANIE
You’re loaded?

SARAH
No. I just know they exist and I can make more money.

STEPHANIE
Right. So, anyway. Speaking of fantasies and big dreams, got anything going on with you lately? Maybe a new beau you wanna talk about? A friend turned more?

SARAH
Um. No, no new beau. Just swiping on the apps. It’s brutal out there.

STEPHANIE
Right.

SARAH
I’m gonna change.

Sarah darts into a dressing room. Stephanie gawps behind her.
INT. KYLE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Kyle wipes down some empty drawers, Stephanie walks in and puts her bag down.

STEPHANIE
Kyle! I have something to tell you... what are you doing?

KYLE
Hey! I made some room for your stuff.

STEPHANIE
For what?

KYLE
I don’t know. I thought to like soft launch into the real thing.

STEPHANIE
I haven’t made my mind up yet.

KYLE
I know, I know. But I thought it’d be easier to just transition into having stuff in a shared living space.

STEPHANIE
Totally.

KYLE
You can put your stuff in here!

Stephanie opens her weekender and takes out four pairs of panties.

KYLE (CONT'D)
That’s all you got?

STEPHANIE
I didn’t bring all of my clothes.

KYLE
I figured you’d have more. Or, like extra pairs of period panties?

STEPHANIE
Period panties?

KYLE
There was a Tampon wrapper on the bathroom counter.
STEPHANIE
I told you I was a horrible roommate! Plus, bigger and more important things are afoot!

KYLE
No, no. It’s OK. Really. Take your time, I don’t want you to freak out. Plus, I kind of want to move out of this place anyway and I found this perfect new apartment.

STEPHANIE
Did you hear me-- wait, what? A new apartment? You’re moving?

KYLE
Potentially. Nothing to fret about. I’m just looking.

STEPHANIE
Anyway, I gotta tell you something about Jonah.

KYLE
I think we should stay out of his business, Steph. It’s always Jonah this and Jonah that. I’ve said it time and time again, he’s grown. I’d really like to think about us more.

STEPHANIE
But today, I swore to god I saw him and Sarah.

Kyle quietly heads out of the room.

INT. CITY HALL (HEALY’S OFFICE) – DAY

Healy scrolls through Instagram. She looks at her recent post then shrieks in frustration.

INT. CITY HALL (JONAH’S OFFICE) – DAY

Jonah sits at his desk when Healy prances in.

HEALY
I only got half of the number of likes I usually get on my latest post. I had to hide them today! Have you hired anybody yet?
Lee knocks on the window then stands in the doorway.

LEE
Actually, he has.

Jonah looks at her in shock.

JONAH
Lee. I didn't realize the time.

LEE
You told me to come early to fill out some paper work? What was it - an NDA?

Lee raises a brow, Jonah remembers.

LEE (CONT'D)
I make good on my promises and even better keeping things close to my chest.

Jonah clears his throat.

HEALY
Get you onboarded then. Jonah?

EXT. BRIDAL BOUTIQUE - NIGHT

Stephanie and Sarah lock up the store front.

STEPHANIE
What you got on deck tonight?

SARAH
I don’t know. I’m shot. Maybe I’ll take an Epsom salt bath and take it easy. How about you?

STEPHANIE
I’ll probably follow suit.

SARAH
I’ll see you tomorrow.

Sarah starts walking away. Steph hangs a beat and then follows her.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Stephanie walks close behind but just far enough to stay concealed.
Sarah looks behind her, thinking she hears something.
Stephanie ducks behind a USPS mailbox.

EXT. SARAH’S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Sarah unlocks the front door and lets herself into the vestibule.
Stephanie tries to catch the swinging door to get in but isn’t able to.
She looks up at the windows, defeated.

INT. CITY HALL (LEE'S DESK) - NIGHT

Lee packs her work bag, shutting off her desk lamp. She looks over at Jonah’s office -- still lit up.

INT. CITY HALL (JONAH'S OFFICE) - NIGHT

Lee stands in the doorway. Jonah looks up from his computer.

LEE
Working late?

JONAH
As usual. Thanks for keeping the Tinder thing--

LEE
Mum’s the word, as long as I can keep this job.

JONAH
Sure. Tomorrow Healy would like to know the SEO strategies and maybe how we can appeal even more to the residents.

LEE
Yeah. Right. SEO.

She smiles, all smug, slipping her hand bag around her forearm. She starts to make her way out of the office.

Jonah sits back in his seat, suddenly wary.
EXT. SARAH'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Stephanie sits on the stoop. She takes at her phone out and texts Jonah: “where are you?” No reply.

INT. CITY HALL (JONAH'S OFFICE) - NIGHT

Jonah looks at his phone and ignores the messages from Stephanie. He picks up the phone.

INT. SARAH'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Sarah sits in her bathtub. Her phone RINGS.

SARAH
(into phone)
Hey! No worries. I’ll just see you tomorrow.

She hangs up the phone, a little disappointed. She dunks her head into the water.

INT. JONAH'S APARTMENT (KITCHEN) - DAY

Jonah reaches into the fridge for coffee creamer. When the door SHUTS, Stephanie is waiting on the other side.

JONAH
Jesus, Steph!

STEPHANIE
Good morning, Jonah.

JONAH
Why are you being weird?

STEPHANIE
What do you mean?

JONAH
You look like you haven’t slept. Where’s Kyle?

STEPHANIE
Home. Where would he be?

JONAH
Isn’t he always over here to sleepover?
STEPHANIE
Have you had any sleepovers lately? Anybody new you want to talk to me about?

JONAH
If this is about that Tinder girl I told Kyle about, there’s nothing really to tell yet.

STEPHANIE
Tinder girl? What do you mean?

JONAH
Oh, Kyle was just going on and on about how I can’t seem to hold down a girl and well, I wanted to share--

STEPHANIE
You have a new girlfriend?

JONAH
Not exactly.

STEPHANIE
Dude. I’ve been waiting for ya’ll to come clean or I’d at least catch you but damn!

JONAH
What?

Stephanie’s eye twitches.

STEPHANIE
You and Sarah!

JONAH
Oh, uh, we’re still figuring things out. I’m unsure if she’s into me.

STEPHANIE
She is!

JONAH
Why are you too pleased about this?

STEPHANIE
Your future might not have be a weird uncle after all!

She hugs him.
INT. CITY HALL (CONFERENCE ROOM) - DAY

Healy sits and watches Jonah pointing at a Powerpoint presentation on the projector screen. Her expression is neutral but curious.

JONAH
Managing the budget, the controller told us that we should raise some funds to really spearhead this campaign. The crowd favors the incumbent but we can’t be too careful.

Jonah thinks for a moment.

JONAH (CONT'D)
Let’s lean into the positives of this term and go from there. I believe Lee has some strategies -- up our search-ability, make sure our analytics are up to snuff.

HEALY
Great.

They turn to Lee, who goes pink.

LEE
(weakly)
Uhhh, I can make... infographics about the things we care about?

HEALY
I never thought of that! Brilliant! Jonah, she’s better than you.

JONAH
Doubtful.

Lee looks at him and he narrows his eyes at her, competitive.

INT. SARAH’S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Sarah massages Jonah’s shoulders.

JONAH
I can’t believe that Healy trusts this new girl over me.
SARAH
I think you’re getting ahead of yourself, Jonah. She does a whole other job entirely.

JONAH
But I’m her right hand man! I have the brilliant ideas! I trusted the new hire and she made me look at fool. Healy’s eating out of her hand.

SARAH
What are you going to do about it now, though?

JONAH
That girl is going down.

SARAH
While I do love a revenge plan, maybe we can be more present?

Sarah nudges his shoulder with her nose.

JONAH
You’re right.

Sarah attempts to bring Jonah closer to her but he resists.

JONAH (CONT’D)
Oh, by the way, I know these things feel pretty frivolous and full of pretentious upper class folks but it seems that there will probably be a fundraising event.

SARAH
I’d love to accompany you.

JONAH
Yeah, sure.

SARAH
That was convincing.

JONAH
No, no. Come. Of course.

Jonah kisses her cheek.
EXT. LEE’S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Lee unlocks her car. COUNCILWOMAN TESSA ADAMS (40s, grey suit, pointed) shouts.

TESSA
Lee!

LEE
Councilwoman.

TESSA
What you got for me?

LEE
We cannot talk out here, get in.

INT. LEE’S CAR - NIGHT

Lee and Tessa close the car doors behind them.

LEE
What are you doing here? I can’t be seen with you.

TESSA
When I employ somebody, I expect some kind of results. What information do you have?

LEE
I’m working on it!

TESSA
What’s your plan?

LEE
I wasn’t even gonna get the job, you know. I blackmailed the Deputy Mayor.

TESSA
Excuse me. Why not just use that? Certainly Healy would lose voters that way. What’s the central juicy scandal?

LEE
It’s not really a scandal but Jonah’s on the dating apps.

TESSA
That’s peanuts.
LEE
We matched and he didn’t want anybody to know.

TESSA
Wait a minute. Romance him. He must be hopeless in the dating department.

LEE
How do you know?

TESSA
He’s on Tinder.

LEE
You think that I could find some more stuff just by romancing?

TESSA
Nuclear codes have probably been exchanged during pillow talk.

INT. BODEGA - DAY
Jonah places another box of multi-pack condoms and lube. Same Sad Sack Clerk from before.

SAD SACK CLERK
We don’t have that deal anymore.

JONAH
I’ll take them anyway.

The scanner gun fails to beep. Jonah taps his foot but then stops.

JONAH (CONT'D)
Take your time.

Jonah looks around the store. He notices Lee perusing the vitamins aisle, holding a magazine and some skin products.

Jonah turns back to the clerk.

JONAH (CONT'D)
Any luck?

BEEP. Jonah shoves his card in the reader. It PINGS.

JONAH (CONT'D)
Thank you. I’ll take a bag.
Sad Clerk hands him a bag. He shoves it in when Lee finally gets to the counter.

LEE
Jonah!

JONAH
Lee.

LEE
Funny to catch you here.

Lee puts down all of her items. The Sad Sack Clerk struggles with that damn scanner gun again.

JONAH
It’s the only bodega around here that has it all.

LEE
Except maybe a working scanner.

JONAH
You’d think there’d be a working one around these parts of town.

LEE
Small town, I guess.

SARAH (O.S.)
Jonah!

JONAH
Increasingly shrinking. Sarah!

Sarah leans in for a kiss but Jonah turns away from it.

JONAH (CONT'D)
This is Lee. My co-worker. She’s the campaign director I was telling you about.

He takes a step away from Lee.

SARAH
Oh, it’s nice to meet you. That moisturizer is great.

LEE
It’s the best. Holy grail product.

Jonah gets awkward, he clutches the condoms in the bag.
LEE (CONT'D)

So, how do you guys know each other?

Jonah and Sarah exchange looks.

JONAH

Yes, my friend. Really close.

Sarah seems hurt by this.

LEE

Sweet.

SAD SACK CLERK

Next!

LEE

That’s me. I’ve gotta get going.
See you at work?

Lee leaves them. Jonah looks at Sarah, about to open her mouth.

JONAH

Shit, I forgot I have something with Kyle. I’m late.

SARAH

Jonah!

JONAH

I’ll text you!

He darts out.

EXT. BODEGA - DAY

Jonah pants as he rounds the corner and bumps into Casey.

JONAH

Casey.

He runs. Casey watches, kinda laughing.

INT. STEPHANIE’S ROOM - NIGHT

Stephanie meticulously scrolls through Jonah and Sarah’s social media.
KYLE
Scroll any harder, I think you’re thumbs are gonna fall off.

STEPHANIE
I just want to view any interaction they might have had on socials.

KYLE
Jonah already told you that they’re in the talking stages. I wouldn’t pry so deep.

STEPHANIE
They lied to me at first.

KYLE
I don’t know. Sometimes these things take some time to grow before anything else. Maybe neither were ready to talk about.

Steph’s barely listening, she continues to scroll.

KYLE (CONT’D)
Hey anyway, I think I want to get that apartment. Do you maybe wanna check it out with me?

STEPHANIE
Mhmm.

KYLE
OK, great. I thought you’d put up more of a fight. Can you be there by 7 tomorrow?


INT. CITY HALL (CONFERENCE ROOM) - DAY

Healy, Jonah, and Lee sit around. Jonah has a notepad while Lee has her laptop.

HEALY
It’s gotta be at The Ashbury.

JONAH
But of course. Your beloved there.

LEE
What’s the Ashbury?
JONAH
Surprised you haven’t been there. It’s a night club downtown. An exclusive crowd.

LEE
But it’s a night club. Isn’t that taboo?

HEALY
Look at AOC. She has a good time. Why can’t we?

JONAH
Plus, Healy’s most loyal supporters frequent there. I’m sure it’ll make them nice and generous.

LEE
I thought I was the one directing the ship.

JONAH
But you didn’t even know what the Ashbury was.

Lee seethes a bit.

LEE
I sent you some flyers for the event, Healy. I also went ahead and posted infographics about Women’s Month on our Instagram. So far, 145 likes.

HEALY
Sounds like the Lee’s got it.

JONAH
You mean, the team.

HEALY
Don’t be so sensitive, Jonah. We’re all in this together! Why don’t we do happy hour tonight?

Lee gives Jonah a shit eating grin.

INT. BAR - NIGHT
Line of tequila shots on the counter. Healy picks up one, raises it.
HEALY
To a successful re-election!

JONAH
Cheers!

He grabs his then Lee.

LEE
Cheers?

They all drink.

HEALY
It burns!

JONAH
Bad bad bad.

LEE
Oh, come on. You can’t handle a little tequila?

JONAH
I can handle my liquor. I’m just a whiskey man.

LEE
Aren’t they all?

HEALY
Relax, you two. You have to show up to the press conference tomorrow. We find out who we’re up against.

LATER

Jonah and Lee line up another set of shots. Some are whiskey, the others are tequila. They down them all.

JONAH
You’re like 5 inches off the ground. There’s no way you’re out drinking me.

LEE
I was in a sorority, I think I got you beat.

JONAH
That makes sense.
LEE
Is this the part where you finally say something overtly sexist?

JONAH
No. I was just gonna say that’s why you’re easily swept in competitive fervor. I was Alpha Sigma Phi at NJCU.

LEE
Oh. Come on, next up.

MONTAGE
- Lee takes a shot then Jonah.
- Jonah tries to drink water, Lee punches it out of his hands.
- Lee takes one more shot but then falls off the chair.
- Jonah begs a MAN on the street for a smoke, he passes it over for a drag when Lee runs away with it.

EXT. BAR PATIO – NIGHT
Jonah and Lee sit on a bench, slightly bent over. They’re wasted.

LEE
I think I gotta tap out.

JONAH
No, I think I gotta tap out.

LEE
I said it first.

JONAH
Well I said it second.

There’s a brief pause and then a combustion of laughter.

LEE
We’re fucked tomorrow. Shit.

JONAH
Nah, come on. I got you.
INT. HOLLYWOOD FRIED CHICKEN - NIGHT

COUNTER PERSON (40s) points at Jonah.

    COUNTER PERSON
    Yes? What you want?

    JONAH
    I’ll have a combo #4.

Lee snorts.

    LEE
    You said mambo.

    JONAH
    Extra ketchup.

    COUNTER PERSON
    $9.75.

EXT. HOLLYWOOD FRIED CHICKEN - NIGHT

Jonah and Lee inhale fried chicken and french fries, drinking
giant water bottles, sitting on the curb.

Lee’s phone DINGS. She looks at it. Tessa. She tries to pick
up her phone but her greasy fingers tell her otherwise.

    LEE
    Ah, fuck.

    JONAH
    I got it.

    LEE
    NO. I got it.

    JONAH
    OK, OK. You got it.

Lee picks up the phone and pockets it.

    JONAH (CONT'D)
    Maybe I was wrong about you.

    LEE
    Probably not.

She laughs.

    JONAH
    You’re fun is all I’m saying.
LEE
I usually don’t eat fried chicken.
So, maybe you’re not so bad
yourself.

JONAH
Thanks.

LEE
I’m shocked all of that cost under
$10. Everything’s so damn
expensive.

JONAH
Tell me about it. We easily went
over budget for the gala. But Healy
had a maneuver up her sleeve.

LEE
What maneuver?

JONAH
Nah, never mind. Forget I said
anything. I should get going.

Jonah gets up, clumsily. Lee helps him and they lock eyes.
Jonah kisses her but Lee pulls away.

JONAH (CONT'D)
That was bad. Bad bad.

LEE
Don’t worry about it.

JONAH
Oh god.

Jonah leaves, mortified.

INT. BRIDAL BOUTIQUE - DAY

Sarah tries on another dress, this time a lilac bridesmaid
one. It’s short.

SARAH
What do you think?

STEPHANIE
What’s the occasion? Another
wedding?

SARAH
No. Just dinner.
STEPHANIE
Seems too fancy for a dinner.

SARAH
The guy’s pretty rich.

STEPHANIE
Uh huh. Well...

Stephanie walks over to a rack of ivory midi dresses.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)
You look great in satin. Go with this.

Sarah enters the dressing room, closing the curtain behind her.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)
Do you know where you’re having dinner yet?

SARAH (O.S.)
Um, he didn’t say. Wait, actually, he did. Some Moroccan spot.

STEPHANIE
There’s Moroccan food in Jersey City?

SARAH (O.S.)
Heh. It’s new.

Stephanie knows she’s lying but Sarah comes out.

SARAH (CONT'D)
What do you think?

STEPHANIE
Gorge.

INT. LEE’S CAR - NIGHT

Lee dials a number on her phone. Councilwoman Tessa is appears on the screen.

INTERCUT PHONE CALL

LEE
Healy overspent the people’s taxes on this gala. I’d start digging there.
TESSA
She’s unbelievable.

LEE
Maybe she used taxpayer money, intending to pay it back.

TESSA
Wonderful. Perfect ammo. If we go all the way, you’ll be my Deputy Mayor. Consider it done.

Both Lee and Tessa smile into their phones.

EXT. STREET – NIGHT

Jonah notices Lee sitting in the car, talking on the phone. He looks at her, a bit wistfully.

INT. BRIDAL BOUTIQUE – DAY

Sarah and Stephanie set up new fixtures. Sarah smiles to herself while she works when a COUPLE (30s) walk in, holding hands.

WOMAN
Hey, I’m looking for a co-ordinating set. Do you have any of those?

STEPHANIE
Of course. This way.

Stephanie pulls a geometric pattern set and shows her.

WOMAN
This is rad. Can I try it on?

Stephanie takes the set back and walks her to the dressing room. The woman walks into the room then Stephanie pulls on the velvet curtain that offers privacy.

SARAH
Can I ask you something?

STEPHANIE
Is it Jonah related?

SARAH
You found out.
STEPHANIE
Yeah, of course I did. I know you’re going that gala, too.

SARAH
Not exactly.

STEPHANIE
What do you mean?

SARAH
He like half-heartedly invited me.

STEPHANIE
Are you wanting to know if he does that?

SARAH
No. Ugh, yes.

STEPHANIE
He’s got wishy washy tendencies just like any other guy.

SARAH
Except for your guy.

STEPHANIE
We aren’t talking about Kyle. Listen, he invited you. You’re good, girl. Don’t be pressed.

SARAH
He’s just been so distant lately. Anytime I ask if he’s OK, he just blames Healy and his job.

STEPHANIE
Do you want to be assistant Mayor of this town? You couldn’t take any vape breaks.

SARAH
I don’t know. Maybe I’m just being paranoid.

STEPHANIE
Like I said. My brother’s never been around someone this long. I think it’s a good sign.

This soothes Sarah.
INT. KYLE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Kyle wipes down some empty drawers, Stephanie walks in and puts her bag down.

    STEPHANIE
    What are you doing?

    KYLE
    Hey! I made some room for your stuff.

    STEPHANIE
    For what?

    KYLE
    I don’t know. I thought to like soft launch into the real thing.

    STEPHANIE
    I haven’t made my mind up yet.

    KYLE
    I know, I know. But I thought it’d be easier to just transition into having stuff in a shared living space.

    STEPHANIE
    Oh.

    KYLE
    You can put your stuff in here!

Stephanie opens her weekender and takes out four pairs of panties.

    KYLE (CONT'D)
    That’s all you got?

    STEPHANIE
    I didn’t bring all of my clothes.

    KYLE
    I figured you’d have more. Or, like extra pairs of period panties?

    STEPHANIE
    Period panties?

    KYLE
    There was a Tampon wrapper on the bathroom counter.
STEPHANIE
I told you I was a horrible roommate!

KYLE
No, no. It’s OK. Really. Take your time, I don’t want you to freak out.

Kyle hugs her, she looks unnerved.

KYLE (CONT’D)
I can also get like extra store cubes or something – if you think that’s not enough room.

STEPHANIE
Kyle.

KYLE
Maybe I just get a whole new place. How about that?

STEPHANIE
If you want to.

INT. SARAH’S BEDROOM – NIGHT

Jonah and Sarah make out. They’re about to get into it.

SARAH
Do you have anymore condoms?

JONAH
Shit. No. I’ve been so distracted at work that I haven’t had the chance to pick any up.

SARAH
Aw. Mister. You know my rule.

JONAH
Can we make an exception? I promise to pull out.

SARAH
I don’t think so.

JONAH
Fair.

He turns over, lays down on his back.
SARAH
I mean, I only reserve that for a boyfriend.

Jonah bites his lip.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Or something of that nature.

Jonah kisses her then rolls on top, she’s smiling.

INT. BRIDAL BOUTIQUE – DAY

Sarah stares at her phone but no new notifications.

    STEPHANIE
    You are glued to your phone. You must be down bad.

    SARAH
    No, just on Twitter.

    STEPHANIE
    I see you checking your iMessages.

    SARAH
    What?

Sarah hides her phone.

    STEPHANIE
    You, me, Kyle and Jonah should all hang out some time.

    SARAH
    Oh, I don’t think so.

    STEPHANIE
    Why not?

    SARAH
    We’re keeping things chill. For now.

    STEPHANIE
    I feel like dating should be more straightforward than this. I can ask for you.

    SARAH
    I feel like he’ll hate that.
STEPHANIE
He will but I have hope for this. I want to quad date!

Sarah takes a peak at her phone. Still nothing.

INT. JONAH’S APARTMENT - NIGHT

ON THE TV: News Flash - Councilwoman Tessa Adams to officially run against the incumbent Mayor Healy.

Jonah watches, his mouth hanging open.

INT. CITY HALL (CONFERENCE ROOM) - DAY

There is absolute silence in the room. Healy leans against the door, Jonah watches everybody else, Lee hangs her head low.

WENDY
I’ll go grab some coffees.

HEALY
If I go down, all of you are going with me.

INT. CITY HALL (JONAH’S OFFICE) - DAY

Jonah sits at his desk and slumps into his chair. Lee appears at the door then takes a seat in front of Jonah.

LEE
That was intense.

JONAH
Oh, Lee. Hi.

LEE
Is everything OK?

JONAH
You heard Healy. You got a plan, Stan?

LEE
We just gotta keep our head down. The Gala is underway. Leave it to the pro.

She reaches over his desk to grab his arm. Jonah smiles.
INT. BRIDAL BOUTIQUE - DAY

Sarah sulks around the cash wrap counter. She’s slowly unpacking some new jewelry, laying them delicately on stands.

Stephanie looks over at her sullen expression.

STEPHANIE
Usually gold plated makes you ecstatic.

SARAH
Things kind of seem pretty dull right now I guess.

STEPHANIE
What happened?

SARAH
What? Nothing.

STEPHANIE
What did Jonah do?

SARAH
Nothing. We just haven’t spoken about details of the gala. I found out where it was and how to RSVP on Instagram. I’m just bugging out a little but it’s probably just anxiety.

Sarah turns and unpacks some blouses from a nearby box.

STEPHANIE
No wonder you’ve been Beyore!

SARAH
Forget it. You’re just gonna make fun of me.

STEPHANIE
No, sorry. Just remember that he’s just a guy. They’re all just guys. Nothing too special, really. They can never appreciate what they got.

SARAH
Kyle’s pretty great, though.

STEPHANIE
He’s an anomaly. Abnormal really. I don’t really get why he’s so into me.
SARAH
The grass greener on the other side?

STEPHANIE
Maybe. Come on. You’re going to have a great night tonight. Enjoy it, OK?

INT. THE ASHBURY – NIGHT

Jonah dressed to the nines. DONORS donned in fancy garb make small talk in the lobby. Lee walks in and catches Jonah’s eye. He gets nervous and hides behind a catering table.

Sarah arrives, looks around the room for Jonah. She sees him behind the table and walks up to him.

SARAH
Hey.

JONAH
Heyyy.

SARAH
You look so nice.

JONAH
You too.

Jonah spots Lee in his peripherals.

JONAH (CONT’D)
I’m gonna go get us some drinks.

SARAH
Oh, I’ll go with you. My drink order is always pretty complicated. I like it stirred then shaken then stirred again. It’s a whole thing.

JONAH
Stirred then shaken and stirred again. I got it. You can hang tight.

Jonah squeezes her hand, Sarah smiles.

INT. THE ASHBURY (BAR TOP) – NIGHT

Lee sips on a martini. Jonah approaches.
JONAH
Award for most lively and best gala goes to...

LEE
Yeah? I’d like to think I had something to do with it.

JONAH
It’s great, Lee. The pledges are flooding in!

LEE
I bet they are.

Lee returns to her martini.

WITH SARAH

Sarah looks around the room at all of the pleasantries. She feels a little nervous and out of place.

She texts Steph: I feel like an alien. Sarah turns and tries to reach for a champagne flute but the SERVER walks right past her.


INT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - NIGHT

Kyle checks the time on his phone in an empty apartment. He stands in front of the in unit laundry. It is really nice.

INT. THE ASHBURY - NIGHT

Stephanie surveys the room, dressed in a black dress. She’s wearing sneakers. She finds Sarah.

SARAH
You’re wearing sneakers.

STEPHANIE
Being the Dep Mayor’s sister counts for something, right? Where’s Jonah?

SARAH
He’s over there with his co-worker. Hey, we’re laying low. You’re here to support me, OK?
STEPHANIE

Right.

WITH JONAH

Jonah locks eyes with Lee, their body language is facing each other.

An obvious vibe switch is happening between them. Lee strokes Jonah’s arm.

WITH SARAH

Sarah trails behind Stephanie but sees Jonah with Lee. Her heart drops when Lee touches Jonah.

STEPHANIE

Jonah! I freaking knew you were boning!

JONAH

Steph?

LEE

Hey Sarah! And you are? His girlfriend?

STEPHANIE

His sister. JONAH

No! I don’t have a girlfriend. *

JONAH (CONT’D)

I mean, we’re really close friends.

LEE

Phew. I thought maybe things progressed and I’d feel even worse about knowing about your Tinder account. I wouldn’t have kissed you if I thought you were really dating someone else.

Sarah, crushed, darts away without Jonah noticing her.

STEPHANIE

You’re an ass, J.

JONAH

I can explain it all.
STEPHANIE
Ignoring her then having her come here just for you to flit around with this bimbo.

LEE
I’m not a bimbo.

STEPHANIE
Sorry. I didn’t mean that. I’m just a little angry right now. But at Jonah. Not you.

Steph turns around but Sarah is not there.

STEPHANIE (CONT‘D)
Shit, where’d she go?

JONAH
Can you go find her?

STEPHANIE
No! That’s your job. I just came to support her and now that this shit happened, I gotta see Kyle-- Fuck. Kyle!

Steph runs out.

LEE
What is going on?

JONAH
My sister has lost her shit.

Just then, Healy arrives, dressed in the most ornate gala ball gown. Think Sophia Loren at the Oscar’s in the Golden Age of Hollywood.

HEALY
Lee, this event is beyond gorgeous.

LEE
As are you.

JONAH
We’re having a good time here.

SHOUTING. A swarm of middle aged WOMEN (30s/40s) populate the club’s dance floor. In the front, Councilwoman Tessa.

The women throw up signs, protesting the gala. Healy turns red.
Jonah tries to mitigate and lead the crowd out of the place when Lee picks up a sign.

Jonah turns.

JONAH (CONT'D)
Lee?

LEE
It’s nothing personal.

Jonah’s crushed. He stumbles out, Healy yells for him.

HEALY (O.S.)
Jonah! Don’t you leave me!

The crowd closes in on her.

EXT. THE ASH BURY - NIGHT

Jonah holds his phone up to his ear--

SARAH (V.O.)
Hey, it’s Sarah. I can’t come to the phone right now.

Just then, Casey walks up to Jonah.

CASEY
Good job, asshat.

JONAH
I didn’t do anything!

CASEY
Then why do you look guilty?

She shakes her head at him.

JONAH
Where do you keep coming from?

INT. JONAH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jonah sits on his bed, phone in hand. It RINGS. He picks it up, puts it on speaker, barely listening.

HEALY (O.S.)
Jonah, you are so fired. I can’t believe I trusted you. You left me out there to die!
Jonah hangs up then lays down.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT – DAY
Jonah and Kyle sit on the bench. They sit in silence.

JONAH
Did she make it to the showing?

KYLE
Eventually. You got no girls now, huh?

JONAH
Yep.

KYLE
And no job.

JONAH
Yep.

KYLE
Shit. You gonna propose?

JONAH (CONT'D)
Yep.

JONAH
Shit.

They both take sips of their water bottles.

JONAH (CONT'D)
What do I do now?

KYLE
Depends.

JONAH
No one wants to hear my explanations. What other choice do I have?

KYLE
Leave everyone alone for awhile.

JONAH
I gotta get my job back. Or something.
KYLE
Healy’s not gonna get re-elected anyway.

JONAH
Because of the coup at the gala?

KYLE
Yeah. Using tax payers money is no joke. But also...

Kyle takes out his phone and pulls up IG. There’s a salacious photo of Mayor Healy that was posted on the main city hall page.

JONAH
That’s so.

KYLE
You’d need a new job, anyway. Maybe you could come teach at the school or something?

JONAH
Yeah, maybe.

INT. JONAH'S OFFICE - DAY
Jonah tries Sarah again but no avail.

INT. CAFE ELYSE - DAY
Stephanie sips on a latte, Kyle shifts nervously in his seat.

STEPHANIE
Do you gotta take a shit or something?

KYLE
No.

STEPHANIE
You look like your clenching something between your cheeks?

KYLE
That’s not true.

STEPHANIE
You’ve barely had any of your Americano.
KYLE
Stephanie.

STEPHANIE
If you gotta go, just go.

KYLE
Steph! I’m trying to tell you something.

STEPHANIE
Listen, I’m sorry I was so late for the showing but I had to take care of Jonah and Sarah stuff.

KYLE
STEPH.

He takes the velvet box out. Stephanie eyes go wide.

KYLE (CONT'D)
I’m not gonna get on one knee.

STEPHANIE
Yeah, please don’t.

KYLE
Mostly because I actually do have to poop.

STEPHANIE
I knew it.

KYLE
But I think this is right for me. I love you and--

STEPHANIE
We’re just moving in together, maybe this is all moving too fast for me. *I thought we were moving in together first*.

KYLE
What?

Kyle shifts again in his seat, uncomfortable. He crosses his legs.

STEPHANIE
No, I mean.

She thinks for a second, taking a sip of water.
STEPHANIE (CONT'D)
You know me. I get overloaded and overwhelmed and.

KYLE
It’s a yes or no, Steph.

Stephanie hangs on that for a moment too long. Kyle gets up.

STEPHANIE
Wait, where are you going?

KYLE
To the bathroom. I’m sorry.

Kyle scurries away, the velvet box sits between their coffees. Steph touches it.

IT’S A YES OK

EXT. CITY HALL - DAY

Jonah checks left and right, no one around. He stares at the building -- runs his fingers through his hair, both hands on his hips.

INT. CITY HALL (JONAH'S OFFICE) - DAY

Jonah packs stuff up on his desk into a box. He makes his way out, Wendy looks sad as he leaves.

INT. JONAH'S APARTMENT - DAY

Jonah throws his keys on a side table. He notices Steph’s bedroom door open. He goes to it.

JONAH
Steph?

Packed suitcases, some boxes.

STEPHANIE
I’m out of here.

JONAH
So, you said yes? Ohmygod, congrats!

He goes to hug her but she shakes him off.
JONAH (CONT'D)
I thought this was supposed to be a joyous occasion.

STEPHANIE
Yeah, well, I thought it was possible for you to keep your dick in your pants but instead you fucked my co-worker, ghosted her and are already dating somebody else. Kyle told me in between him crying over how I’m such a horrible person.

JONAH
Stephanie, it’s not what you think.

STEPHANIE
No. It’s exactly what I think.

She throws a curling iron into a bag.

JONAH
You’re made of the same cloth, sis. In case you haven’t noticed. Both of us kind of fucked this up, haven’t we? Just like dad.

STEPHANIE
No. You’re like dad. I’m not having any of that.

JONAH
You were there too, Steph. Lest we not forget.

She swings her bag over her shoulder.
Jonah lets her through and watches her, as she slams the door in his face.

EXT. APARTMENT - DAY
Stephanie lugs a suitcase up the front porch steps. She struggles on each step.

INT. KYLE’S NEW APARTMENT - DAY
Kyle watches outside a window, sipping a coffee.
EXT. APARTMENT - DAY

Stephanie taps a code into a lockbox hanging off the handle. She lets herself in.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY


INT. KYLE'S NEW APARTMENT - DAY

Kyle watches a hummingbird fly away. He turns and views the empty apartment with packed boxes.

INT. CAFE - DAY

Jonah and Wendy sit having coffee.

JONAH
She really was working for the other team, wasn’t she?

WENDY
She was heavily vetted.

JONAH
Who vetted her?

WENDY
You.

They both look each other, slightly wincing.

WENDY (CONT'D)
How could you have known?

JONAH
I should have known the second she was good to keep my secret.

WENDY
You can’t really have thought that.

JONAH
How did I not see it?

WENDY
That she was an undercover spy for the opposing team or that she was just using you to get to Healy?
JONAH

Both?

WENDY
She played you as the fool. Lying through her teeth.

JONAH
I was under the assumption that if you tell yourself something enough times, it ends up being true. Or, at the very least, feels that way.

WENDY
I don’t think that girl was trying to harm you. Just wanted to win.

JONAH
I’ve done way worse for a win.

WENDY
I wouldn’t sweat it too much, Jo.

JONAH
I have no prospects right now. I’m a low life. A nothing. From Deputy Mayor to a total fool.

WENDY
Maybe you need to get out of town awhile.

JONAH
I think I gotta face the music this time around, Wen.

INT. JONAH’S BEDROOM – NIGHT

Jonah scrolls through his phone. He taps SARAH and starts typing: I just want to talk. Can we meet?

INT. SARAH’S KITCHEN – NIGHT

Sarah’s phone dings. On screen reads: JONAH. She deletes the messages and the contact. She blocks Jonah on social media.

INT. JONAH’S LIVING ROOM – NIGHT

Jonah tosses his phone, onto the coffee table. He sinks deeper into the couch, draining the last sip of bourbon in his glass.
He gets up for more but the bottle’s empty.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Jonah sips on some whiskey. He finishes then waves at the bartender over for another. He looks over across the bar and makes eye contact with Kyle, sitting alone.

Jonah looks around and then back at Kyle, who seethes. Jonah gets up to sit next to Kyle.

JONAH
You think I can buy you a drink?

KYLE
I’m all set.

JONAH
What did Stephanie even say to you?

KYLE
Why don’t you ask her?

JONAH
As pleased as pie as it might make you, she’s not really talking to me right now.

KYLE
That doesn’t make me happy to see that.

Kyle takes a sip of his beer.

JONAH
Really. What did she say?

KYLE
Well, she said yes. But when I wanted to call my mom and dad about it and she shut down. Changed her mind.

JONAH
Like, in a command-force closed kind of way?

KYLE
She told me that the return policy wasn’t explicitly listed and she didn’t have a receipt.
JONAH
Did she say it in a rushed way or?

KYLE
Does it matter?

JONAH
Yes.

KYLE
She mumbled.

JONAH
She doesn’t like to admit that she’s smarter than me but...

KYLE
Actually, pretty sure she says it regularly that she’s smarter than you.

JONAH
Yeah, yeah.

KYLE
And prettier.

JONAH
Now I won’t stand for that. She’s still my younger sister, though. By the way she pivoted, I can tell it’s our family to blame.

KYLE
So, you’re admitting that you might be to blame?

JONAH
Maybe. But the rest of our family was not easy to contend with and she basically had to navigate it alone.

KYLE
Do you guys ever speak to your dad?

JONAH
Other than the occasional holiday text from his bed with Marta?

Jonah nods his head, “no.”
JONAH (CONT'D)
He’s way happier with his dream woman and kid.

KYLE
(sighs)
We’ve been together for years and I love her. She used to reassure that she felt the same way but lately, the only thing I’m sure of is that she doesn’t like my polo shirts.

JONAH
There was this one time, before her first swimming lesson, Steph cried to my mom and dad because she was afraid her Speedo issued one piece bathing suit was too tight.

Jonah takes a sip of his drink.

JONAH (CONT'D)
She flailed in the kitchen, as my mom tried to help her out of it. When my mom couldn’t convince her that it wasn’t a boa constrictor snake trying to kill her, my mom let her cry and told her she didn’t have to go to the lesson.

KYLE
So, you think I should tell her that she doesn’t have to marry me? Like, I’m playing some sort of twisted game?

JONAH
Steph ended up going to the class. She wasn’t crying because she didn’t want to go, she was crying because she was scared.

Kyle takes this in. Jonah finishes his drink.

JONAH (CONT'D)
I think that’s maybe why we both don’t know how to choose a lane. It’s more comfortable to swerve but who knew it would be more dangerous.

KYLE
Switching lanes without signaling is very dangerous. Actually.
Jonah finishes his beer then hops off the stool.

JONAH
How about you let me know about school, bud.

KYLE
No. Not still on the table.

He pats Kyle on the back, turning to leave.

INT. BRIDAL BOUTIQUE – DAY

Sarah stares at the door, sitting behind the register counter.

The store is slow, Stephanie quietly stocks the garters, organizing them by color and size.

Stephanie looks over at Sarah. They make brief eye contact.

SARAH
Are we not going to talk about it?

STEPHANIE
Do you want to talk about it?

SARAH
I don’t know. No.

STEPHANIE
(softening)
If you were just going to lecture me anyway so might as well get right to it.

Stephanie finishes a fold and walks behind the counter, next to Sarah.

SARAH
I’m in no position to dole out relationship advice.

STEPHANIE
I couldn’t give Kyle an answer. Something didn’t feel right. Vibes were way off.

SARAH
You’re just like your brother.
STEPHANIE
I’ve been hearing that a lot lately
but that isn’t true at all.

SARAH
Yes, it is. Girl – you’ve been
stringing Kyle along the same way
Jonah has been stringing me along.

STEPHANIE
There’s the lecture.

SARAH
I’m just being honest.

STEPHANIE
Well, you’re not an angel either.
Whenever you talked about having
the best sex of your life, putting
the dots together and grossing me
out.

SARAH
That’s not even relevant. You’re
doing that thing you do when you
feel called out.

The door SWINGS open, some CACKLING echoes through. Two girls
bop around the store, grabbing every pastel colored dress,
accessories, etc.

SARAH (CONT’D)
I played the game. Maybe I just
played a little too hard. All my
eggs in one basket.

CACKLING GIRL #1
Can we get a fitting room?

STEPHANIE
Sure. I’ll take those for you.

Stephanie grabs the girl’s things and hangs it on a rack in
one of the open fitting rooms.

CACKLING GIRL #1
Thanks so much!

STEPHANIE
Sure.

Stephanie makes her way back to the counter.
STEPHANIE (CONT'D)
Is it so awful to say that yeah, Jonah’s choices have really messed with my life?

She wipes the counter with a disinfectant wipe.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)
First it’s sleeping with you then it’s Kyle thinking I coddle him and...

SARAH
What does Kyle have to do with your relationship with your brother?

There’s a caked on stain on the counter, Steph starts attacking it with the wipe.

STEPHANIE
I don’t know. Everything?

SARAH
Now that’s some conspirator shit I’ll never get.

STEPHANIE
I sense a bit of judgement, chief.

SARAH
Listen, if I didn’t know any better, I’d say you’re scared and using Jonah as your shield.

STEPHANIE
It wasn’t me that I was afraid to hurt.

SARAH
Oh, so you wanted to warn me?

STEPHANIE
Yeah.

Girl steps out of the fitting room. Sarah and Stephanie turn to her.

SARAH
It looks lovely.
CACKLING GIRL #2
Doesn’t it? All of my bridesmaids are going to rock this dress so hard! Do you guys have these in more sizes?

STEPHANIE
I’ll check the back!

SARAH
No, I will. I’ll be back.

She turns to walk towards the back stock room.

STEPHANIE
Are you excited for your wedding?

CACKLING GIRL #2
To be honest, no.

STEPHANIE
What do you mean?

CACKLING GIRL #2
I mean, yeah! Tom’s amazing! But planning this whole wedding day has been exhausting. I didn’t know that you pick everything from the gold ring holding the napkin to what song is gonna play when your parents come out during the reception intros.

STEPHANIE
That seems like a lot.

CACKLING GIRL #2
And then finding the perfect dress. For all of the bridal party, then me.

STEPHANIE
I wouldn’t wanna do that.

CACKLING GIRL #2
But it’s worth it. I know the jaded will tell me that weddings are archaic, marriage is a sham of an institution but— it’s just a party.
CACKLING GIRL #1
One that will be remembered for the
rest of your lives by the people
you care about in your life and
importantly, the one you love the
most.

STEPHANIE
And your family and friends, too?

CACKLING GIRL #2
Yeah but mostly the dude you’re
going to marry. Tom’s amazing,
gentle, puts up with my shit. Like,
I have probably tried to cancel
this whole thing eight times for
hating his shoes.

CACKLING GIRL #1
She had other choices.

CACKLING GIRL #2
We all do. But I made the right
one.

STEPHANIE
How do you know that you did?

CACKLING GIRL #2
You don’t. But what’s the
alternative?

Stephanie stares at her. Sarah returns from the back room.

SARAH
We have every size stocked from XS
to XL.

CACKLING GIRL #2
Ahhh! Perfect! We’ll take the mall.

Stephanie looks out at the front door and then suddenly runs.

STEPHANIE
I gotta take a five!

SARAH
OK! Talk later!
INT. JONAH'S OFFICE - DAY

Jonah watches a LIVE VIDEO on his computer: HEALY SECURES RE-RELECTION. Stephanie, out of breath, barrels through the door.

JONAH
Steph! I was literally just going to call you. Listen, I’m so sorry.

STEPHANIE
Shut it, bro. I have a huge favor to ask you and we need to get to it like now then maybe I’ll forgive you for being an idiot.

JONAH
What do you need?

INT. HOME DEPOT - DAY

Jonah and Stephanie hold a sign up in the paint can aisle -- you can’t read it but the bottom of the banner hangs over their heads, propped between two of the shelving beams.

STEPHANIE
Are you sure he’s supposed to be here?

JONAH
Yeah, he mentioned that while he was re-arranging his office, some paint chipped and had to get some.

STEPHANIE
Was it a big chip?

JONAH
You know that answer to that.

STEPHANIE
I can’t believe I hurt him.

JONAH
You close your eyes before you leap.

Stephanie looks over at him.

STEPHANIE
Jeez, man. You really don’t know how to not insert yourself in everything, huh?
JONAH
I’m not inserting myself. I’m trying to be comforting!

STEPPANIE
Let’s just not talk.

Over the loudspeaker, an HOME DEPOT EMPLOYEE.

HOME DEPOT EMPLOYEE (O.S.)
(stammering)
Can I have someone come to the key kios- key... kiosk? Key. Kiosk?

Stephanie and Jonah exchange looks.

STEPPANIE
Where is Kyle?

Jonah looks over and sees Kyle’s recognizable gait.

JONAH
There!

STEPPANIE
Kyle! Hey!

Kyle turns around, circling in confusion, and doesn’t see where the source of his name calling is coming from.

Jonah whistles.

JONAH
Bud!

Just then, an employee riding one of those tractors holding a giant piece of plywood drives in front of him, blocking his view.

STEPPANIE
Damnit.

When the tractor drives past, Kyle’s gone.

JONAH
Where’d he go?

Stephanie runs, checking every aisle. Jonah follows suit. They meet back in the aisle and don’t see him.

STEPPANIE
We lost him! Let me call him.
She dials her phone and hears a ring from behind her. She turns and sees a sobbing Kyle, sitting on a paint can.

JONAH

Found him.

He winces.

STEPHANIE

Hey, babe.

She reaches down and hugs him. He stays sobbing.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

Did you see the sign?

Jonah tries to exit but Stephanie tugs on his jacket. Kyle looks up.

KYLE

Yes. Yes, I will.

Stephanie and Kyle kiss. Jonah gets uncomfortable.

The sign above their heads reads: “Kyle, marry me?”

INT. BRIDAL BOUTIQUE - DAY

Stephanie stands in a beautiful A-line shaped dress, with a sweetheart neckline. The veil hangs nicely behind her, revealing buttons all down the back. It’s an amazing dress.

SARAH

You look great.

STEPHANIE

This will be you one day.

SARAH

Yeah.

INT. JONAH’S APARTMENT - DAY

Jonah tries to call Sarah but it goes straight to voicemail.

He straightens his tie in the mirror, brushes off lint on his black suit, and takes a deep breath.

Jonah grabs a card and his keys then walks out of his apartment, closing the door behind him.
INT. JONAH'S APARTMENT HALLWAY - DAY

OLD NEIGHBOR (80s) walks slowly down the hall, Jonah locks his door.

OLD NEIGHBOR
Nice meat.

Jonah looks back at her and smiles to himself.

INT. WEDDING VENUE - DAY

Stephanie and Kyle stand in front of each other, a MINISTER (50s) behind them.

MINISTER
And you guys have some words you want to share with each other?

Kyle immediately starts bawling.

STEPHANIE
Yes, yes we do. I’ll start. Kyle--

Kyle’s crying gets louder and louder. It fills the room.

Jonah stifles laughter but then hears a huge snort. Sarah. He turns to her and they make eye contact.

INT. RECEPTION VENUE (COCKTAIL HOUR) - NIGHT

Jonah roams around the room, Stephanie and Kyle flit around, greet people.

He makes his way to the bar. The bartender brings him a drink when Sarah taps Jonah on the shoulder.

He turns toward her.

JONAH
Didn’t think you’d come up and say hi.

SARAH
I’m not. I just want to get a drink.

JONAH
Oh, right. Sorry.

Jonah starts to walk away.
SARAH
Wait.

JONAH
Sarah, I’m sorry.

SARAH
This is hardly the time for this.

JONAH
I know.

SARAH
It’s your sister’s day. You know how pissed she’d get if she knew?

JONAH
Yeah, I’m more concerned about Kyle, though. I feel like he’d start crying again.

They look over at them, a weepy Kyle hugs Stephanie, who is lovingly embracing him.

SARAH
She looks beautiful.

JONAH
Yeah.

SARAH
Are you OK?

JONAH
Trying. But we don’t have to talk about it now. I just have so much to explain.

SARAH
Well, maybe we can meet for coffee or something.

JONAH
I’d love that.

Stephanie clocks the two of them talking to each other and starts making her way toward them.

SARAH
Shit.

She scampers the other way.
JONAH
Hey, you. Congrats little sis!

STEPHANIE
Where’s Sarah going?

JONAH
She was just getting a drink.

STEPHANIE
Did you apologize to her?

JONAH
Oh, today’s not about me.

STEPHANIE
Did you say sorry to her?

JONAH
Yeah. I tried.

STEPHANIE
Jonah!

JONAH
Shouldn’t you be like having your first dance or something?

STEPHANIE
Dad didn’t show.

JONAH
I’ll dance with you.

STEPHANIE
Yeah. I was hoping as a wedding gift, you could maybe handle that.

Jonah shakes his head.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)
I already can’t get Kyle to stop crying.

JONAH
His face looks puffy.

STEPHANIE
He’s gonna hate the wedding photos.

JONAH
Remind me to pay for the reshoots.
STEPHANIE
Thanks for being here, Jo. Our family sucks but you don’t. Well, sometimes at least.

JONAH
I couldn’t miss it for the world.

STEPHANIE
Are you ready with that speech?

Jonah nods, emphatically.

INT. RECEPTION VENUE (DINNER) - NIGHT

Jonah stands with one hand in his pocket, the other holding a mic.

He paces back and forth, the wedding guests gently laugh.

JONAH
When Stephanie first told me that I had to do give a speech, I resisted. I thought: no one’s gonna wanna hear from a man that allowed a whole swarm of protestors storm the Capitol!

One weak laugh from the back.

JONAH (CONT’D)
Tough crowd. Bad joke.

Jonah clears his throat.

JONAH (CONT’D)
I’m not a comedian. I don’t do stand up and I certainly don’t think I could possibly regale you with funny anecdotes or hard truths disguised in something easily digestible.

Stephanie and Kyle look at each other, sitting in front of him. Stephanie catches Jonah’s eye and nods, warmly.

JONAH (CONT’D)
But I’ll tell you some stuff that I know and the things that I don’t.

Beat.
JONAH (CONT'D)
I always thought that the best way to live is to have cake and eat it, too. One foot out the door. Waiting for the other shoe to drop. Wait, maybe I am good at anecdotes!

Guests laugh.

JONAH (CONT'D)
Anyway, I don’t really think that way anymore. I think that sometimes we get so afraid of facing the parts of us that want to stay in the dark. I mean, imagine reaching into a closet at night? You don’t want to face whatever monster lurks behind the trench coat you never use.

Laughs.

JONAH (CONT'D)
But Stephanie and Kyle? You guys found a flash light and went right in there.

Stephanie and Kyle look at each other.

JONAH (CONT'D)
And for that, thank you. For teaching me how to look at things from a perspective of light.

Stephanie holds back tears.

JONAH (CONT'D)
Maybe one day, I’ll be able to share it with somebody right.
Cheers to Steph and Kyle. I love you guys.

Jonah raises a glass, everyone else follows suit. Stephanie gets up and slaps his shoulder.

STEPHANIE
You’re so freaking corny.

They embrace each other.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)
Glad you exist.

They hold onto each other just a bit longer.
EXT. WEDDING VENUE (DRIVE WAY) - NIGHT

Stephanie and Kyle load into a black SUV. They wave at the guests before the car drives away.

Jonah flicks a lit but finished cigarette, a plume of smoke trails behind him.

He looks over at GUESTS, some funneling out to go home, others going back to the bar for one last night cap.

Sarah appears behind him, vape smoke, et al.

SARAH
Nice speech. Did you steal it from Google?

Jonah turns.

JONAH
No, actually. I came up with that on the way up to the wedding.

SARAH
Crafty.

JONAH
I really meant to tell you earlier that I’m sorry. How everything went down back there.

SARAH
Yeah, it was pretty shitty.

JONAH
If it makes you feel any better, I got my heart handed to me, too.

SARAH
I don’t think we should compare notes.

JONAH
You’re right. Not becoming of us.

SARAH
Not at all.

Jonah points over an OLD COUPLE (80s) talking closely at the table.

JONAH
What do you think they’re talking about?
Sarah looks over and starts laughing.

SARAH
They probably can’t even hear each other, if I’m being honest.

Jonah chuckles.

JONAH
You’re right.

There’s an awkward beat.

SARAH
I should go see what the other bridesmaids are doing to get home.

JONAH
Hey, Sarah! Do you maybe wanna get coffee sometime?

SARAH
Maybe.

JONAH
That’s good with me.

SARAH
See ya.

INT. JONAH’S HOTEL ROOM – NIGHT

Jonah loosens his tie around his neck. He unbuttons his shirt, while staring at the mirror. His eyes are bloodshot.

He grabs a glass and a whiskey bottle on the bar cart. He gets a whiff and immediately gags.

JONAH
Nope.

Jonah reaches for his phone and texts Sarah: I’m free next Sunday, if you really wanted to get that coffee.

INT. HOTEL ROOM – NIGHT

Dressed in a robe and eye patches, Sarah reads a text from an unknown phone number.

It reads: Sunday’s good.
Sarah thinks for a moment, she takes a deep breath and sends a THUMBS UP emoji. Her phone RINGS.

SARAH
(into phone)
Hey James. I’m on my way back from the wedding. I’ll see you soon, I can’t wait.

INT. JONAH'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Jonah gets into bed and browses through some adult entertainment.

An alert pops up: Charge to Stephanie and Kyle’s Wedding Tab?

Jonah clicks YES.

INT. HOTEL - DAY

Guests filter out with weekenders. Some still in their dresses and suits from last night.

Women hold their heels in their hands. Men walk around with the dress shirts hanging out.

Continental breakfast is being served in the lobby.

Jonah looks around, hoping to see a familiar face but no one he can recognize.

He steps outside, hailing a cab.

EXT. HOTEL - DAY

Jonah looks behind him one last time, making sure he didn’t miss anything. He tosses his weekender into the seat next to him. CAB DRIVER (40s) waves.

CAB DRIVER
Where to?

JONAH
Jersey City.

INT. CAB - DAY

Jonah smiles at his phone and then opens a dating app.
HINGE GIRL (20s-30s) pops up with a tantalizing message: just looking for a FWB. Is that OK?

Jonah exits the app and peers out the window.

Happy but hungover couples call their cabs, go home together.

Jonah’s alone but on his way home.

THE END.