

THE HIGH LIFE

"Divided We Stand"

by
Chris Kelly

TEASER

FADE IN:

1

INT. BOYS' ROOM - MORNING

1

MUSIC blares in the distance is heard as we pan across a made up bed to find LEE looking under his mattress. The sound clearly has no effect on him as he throws some dirty socks behind him.

He scans the surface. Nothing. His head pops up over the bed and he looks over to IAN, who has gained a huge BLACK EYE since we've last seen him. He's not paying attention to Lee as he writes in a book.

LEE

Have you seen my lucky boxers? The ones with the M and M characters on them?

IAN

I didn't know you had a pair... nor did I want to.

LEE

Well, I do. But they're missing.

IAN

Why are they lucky?

LEE

That's not important.

Lee gets up and turns around. He begins to root around in his closet.

IAN

Did you score a lady friend while you wore this magical pair of briefs?

LEE

No...

IAN

Then they're not magical.

LEE

Of course they're not magical, they're lucky.

IAN

Beg to differ. And maybe they were stolen? You do remember the slight ordeal of us getting robbed a couple weeks back?

(CONTINUED)

LEE

That's not the point! The point is
that I need those boxers today.

Lee stops looking in the closet and heads back down to check underneath his bed. Ian focuses his attention back on his writing.

IAN

Looks like the boys are flying
solo.

(off look)

And by 'boys,' I do of course mean
you and Claire, and not your penis
or adjoining testicles.

LEE

Glad to hear it.

Lee gets up and pulls open a drawer from his dresser. He starts to shuffle through clothing items. Ian chucks his pen at the book and stands up.

IAN

Alright! I've had it. It's time to
see where the hell that noise is
coming from.

Ian exits the bedroom and Lee doesn't even look up.

2 INT. APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NEXT

2

Mims' "This Is Why I'm Hot" is blasting through a radio on the counter. CHRIS and EMMA are in the centre of the kitchen dancing around like they're in a rap music video.

Chris circles behind Emma shrugging his shoulders back repeatedly, while Emma shakes her head from side to side.

They're getting far too into the actions. Chris starts to pat his shoulders down as if he's wiping off dust before turning his dance into the robot. Emma keeps pumping out her arms, as if there's a crowd of fans before her.

CHRIS

(badly singing)

This is why I'm hot!

EMMA

Yeah!

CHRIS

This is why I'm hot!

(CONTINUED)

EMMA
 (getting into it/hand to
 ear)
 What?

CHRIS
 This is why! This is why!

EMMA
 This is why I'm hot!

Ian walks in, takes one look and walks right back out. Emma raises her hands in the air as she turns to face Chris, and chest bumps him.

EMMA (cont'd)
 (pointing)
 I'm hot 'cause I'm fly. You ain't -

CHRIS
 'Cause you not!

EMMA
 (shouting)
 Yo! Yo! Yo!

IAN (O.S.)
 Lee! Chris and Emma drank the Kool-
 Aid!

Emma bounces up and down, her hands moving invisible records back and forth, as Chris turns around with one foot in the air, pretending he has a lasso. Together it looks like a malfunctioning rain dance.

CHRIS
 This is why, this is why, this is
 why -

EMMA
 I'm hot!

CHRIS
 Say it again!

Lee walks in slowly and pauses. Chris turns back around and spots him. Lee raises an eyebrow. Chris and Emma just keep dancing.

LEE
 You know you're both the whitest
 people I know, right?

EMMA

(ignoring him)

This is why I'm hot, this is why
I'm hot.

(beat)

And I'm totally down with rap
culture.

CHRIS

Holler!

(beat)

God, I am white.

Emma still dances as Chris stops and lowers the volume on the
radio a bit. Lee smirks.

LEE

If I still had my camcorder I would
have blackmailed you both.

CHRIS

Our CDs were stolen. We have to
make due with the radio now.

LEE

Sure.

CLAIRE walks in, dressed to impress in business attire, while
Emma is doing the macarena.

CLAIRE

What the hell are we listening to?

LEE

The sound of Emma and Chris'
rapidly fading sanity.

EMMA

Hey! We're adorable.

Emma bounces over to Chris, leaning up for a kiss. The couple
kiss, but as the song gets back to its chorus they pull away,
each of them moving to the rhythm attempting to dance again.
Claire and Lee just watch, amused.

LEE

It's better than TV.

CLAIRE

I don't think we should let them
pick the music anymore.

CHRIS

You're just lucky you missed our
dance to Journey's 'Any Way You
Want It.'

LEE

Oh, God.

CLAIRE

It's a little bit sad that they do this completely sober.

LEE

Just a little bit.

Claire walks over to the radio and turns it off.

EMMA

(stops dancing)

Hey! That's my jam!

IAN (O.S.)

Did you shoot them?

Ian enters, and notes that Chris and Emma are still among the living.

IAN (cont'd)

Damn. I had my money on Lee busting out a bazooka to silence you.

LEE

Today? On the most important day in my writing career to date? Bloody violence and murder just isn't an option.

CHRIS

You'll never make it in the real world.

CLAIRE

(excited)

The day has finally arrived. I've been counting down to this day for the past three weeks.

EMMA

(apathetic)

We know.

Lee can't stop himself from grinning and exchanges a content look with Claire. Ian, Chris, and Emma's expressions fall.

CLAIRE

(to Emma)

So does my outfit look okay?
Normal, even? Or would 'normal' be a bad thing?

Emma sheds a fake smile as she opens the fridge.

EMMA

It's fine.

CLAIRE

You're not even looking.

EMMA

You tried out your look for today last night at around nine-ish, if I recall, so I'm sure it hasn't changed since then. Showering three times aside.

CLAIRE

Alright. Be like that.

EMMA

Be like what?

CLAIRE

Nothing. Just go back to pretending today is any other day.

EMMA

If you say so.

Emma exits the kitchen, and Claire's content features finally falter. She turns to Lee.

CLAIRE

Are you ready to go yet?

LEE

Claire, the fellowship starts in two hours. We have plenty of time to get there. No worries.

CLAIRE

I just want to make a good impression.

CHRIS

You and Lee? Mr. and Mrs. Over Prepared And Stressed Beyond Belief?

(off looks)

I meant to think that, not to say it.

CLAIRE

Uh-huh. No conscious attempt to smother our self confidence in the hopes that we fail?

(CONTINUED)

CHRIS

Nope. I hope you guys do...
(dismal)
Great.

LEE

And we will! We got in! That's half the battle. Do you know how hard it is to get into these things?

IAN

Like, a million to one?

LEE

Yep!

Chris stares at his cereal. Lee just smiles, practically bouncing on his feet.

CLAIRE

I know! To think we're going to be meeting with the best of the best. We're going to learn so much.

LEE

It's the opportunity of a lifetime.

Chris CRUNCHES on his cereal, as Emma enters again. She's visibly ignoring Claire, but Claire and Lee are too busy thinking happy thoughts to notice it. Or the fact that no one but them appears the least bit content.

CLAIRE

Maybe we should take a picture?
Or... is that a bit much?

LEE

We'll pick up a disposable on our way home. Today's going to be the stuff of legend!

EMMA

We're still talking about you and Claire and your major success then?

LEE

(not getting hint)
Yep! If only every day could be like today.

Emma marches over, plopping herself on the seat beside Chris, who takes another bite of cereal, still CRUNCHING.

CLAIRE

Relax on the chewing, Chris. We don't want you to choke.

(CONTINUED)

CHRIS

Nope. We wouldn't want that.

(muttering)

Though my suffocation might get you two to stop mentioning this fellowship over the next three minutes.

LEE

Did you say something?

EMMA

He's just whispering me sweet nothings. Nothing you'd care for.

Emma pats Chris' knee as Lee nods, accepting this.

IAN

Maybe you and Claire should go, though, before one of us gets extremely jealous and Shakespeare rises from the grave to write a tragedy about it.

LEE

Look, will you three just try and see how this is a good thing for all of us? If this fellowship benefits Claire or I in the least bit, you know we'll be letting you three reap the benefits, don't you?

CHRIS

Really?

LEE

Of course! Who else do you think we're going to hire or want on our team? If we make it, you make it! So relax. Put on a smile, because if this goes well, you three might just get jobs!

EMMA

Well, when you put it like that...

Everyone looks happy as Lee nods, his job done. He points to Claire, then the kitchen exit. Claire nods. They head out.

Emma, Ian, and Chris' smiles all drop the instant they're gone.

BLACK OUT:

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

3

INT. HOTEL - CONFERENCE ROOM B - LATER

3

A five star hotel conference room. The place is massive, with two sets of wide red double doors on either side of the room. Circular tables are located in strategic places. Each table holds a variety of information pamphlets on different writing sessions, as well as various snacks and drink options.

It's your standard meet and greet. A huge banner hangs in the middle of the room reading "The Fellowship of the Pen." In spite of the banner's size it's quite tasteful.

It's hung over the one rectangular table, where a guy - ANTHONY - sits behind with a list. He's checking off names and handing out "Hello, my name is..." stickers.

About two dozen people mill about the room picking at snacks, or introducing themselves to one another with a handshake.

A set of double doors open and in steps Claire and Lee. They pause, scanning the rooms interior.

CLAIRE
(gobsmacked)
I think... 'wow' covers it.

LEE
For starters.

They venture deeper into the room, heads swiveling from side to side as faces of their competition flash by.

LEE (cont'd)
Where to start?
(off table; drooling)
A donut or two for celebration,
perhaps?

CLAIRE
(off giant banner)
I think that welcome desk over
there might just have a purpose.

Lee grins and they walk over, both beaming. Anthony, by contrast, looks bored to death.

CLAIRE (cont'd)
Good morning!

ANTHONY
(monotone)
Hello. Welcome to the Fellowship of
the Pen.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ANTHONY (cont'd)

If this is the right conference room and you are a stereotypical starving artist trying to make it in this industry in a state in which millions travel to do so, you have come to the right place.

(beat)

If however, you thought this was a Star Trek convention, that is in Conference Room C. This is room B. Just look to the signs.

LEE

Beam us in, Scotty! We've come to the right place.

ANTHONY

(beat; deadpan)

Please sign in on the sheets below.

Lee grabs a pen and jots both his and Claire's names down. Claire is still looking around, while Anthony rips off two stickers and passes them over to her.

ANTHONY (cont'd)

Please wear these at all times while within the building.

Claire nods, picks up a red marker and scribbles on hers and Lee's name. Lee nods to Anthony, who's too busy yawning to reply back. Claire passes Lee his name tag and the duo walk away from the table.

Claire pulls out a pamphlet from her pocket and peruses it for a second.

CLAIRE

According to the itinerary, this meet and greet is going to last about another hour before the writers arrive and make their introductory monologues.

LEE

So shall we socialize with our fellow brethren? Or simply pray lightning strikes everyone but us?

CLAIRE

Lee, that's terrible!

LEE

It does increase our chances of success, though! Hypothetically speaking.

Claire's expression says it all. They're going to try and make an effort. Lee slumps his shoulders as a stereotypical SOUTHERN BELLE (25, wearing a nice simple dress and comedically large sun hat, who you know just loves to talk) spots them a few feet away.

The Southern Belle smiles like she knows them and starts to approach.

LEE (cont'd)
(whispering)
Do you know her?

CLAIRE
Nope. She seems nice, though.

LEE
The crazy ones always do.

Lee takes a step back as the Belle has finally arrived, and apparently doesn't know the meaning of personal space.

SOUTHERN BELLE
(cue the accent)
Hey, y'all! Man, this sure is a fancy gathering, ain't it? I mean, I've been to some charity balls and youth clubs and what not, though that's really not my thing. I don't know why I brought up clubs, as this place is the last possible venue I could envision the sultry youth sodomizing.
(pondering)
But maybe if there was a wedding of some sort. Hmmm. Then I could get on board. Most definitely.

She puts her finger to her chin and nods to herself as if that settles the matter.

SOUTHERN BELLE (cont'd)
Why, would you believe that once I even broke the law?
(shuddering)
I felt just terrible the next day. I mean, I meant to pay for the lipstick, I did! But that cosmetics lady just distracted me with her conversation. Next thing you know, I walked out and when I pulled out my keys and opened up my front door I realized...
(dramatically; whispering)
I had become a thief!

She fans herself with her hand as if about to faint at any instant from the horror. Claire and Lee don't know how to react as they exchange a look. The Southern Belle notes this and steps back.

SOUTHERN BELLE (cont'd)

Oh sweethearts. I do apologize.
Where are my manners?
(giggling)
I'm Mary Sue.

LEE

Of course you are. I'm Lee. This is
Claire. It's interest -
(smiling)
Nice to meet you.

MARY SUE extends her hand to Claire, who slowly accepts the handshake.

MARY SUE

Not to be confused, of course, with
the fictional character in a story
who is idealized by the author and
integral to the plot wherein the
audience grows a distaste for.

(Shaking head)

No, no, no, no, no. Y'see, my momma
named me that. Unbeknownst to her,
bless her dead soul, I would one
day wish to become an author, and,
well... you can understand my
predicament, or how certain people
may react oddly upon first meeting
me and hearing my name.

Mary Sue giggles again and leans in close to Claire and Lee, nodding between the two of them as if they understand her completely.

CLAIRE

(awkwardly)
I can't fathom why.

MARY SUE

(nodding)

Exactly. Exactly. I knew you'd
understand. Anyways, my agent
wanted me to either change my name
or invent a pen name so that people
reading me wouldn't think I was a
joke. So you know what I did?

LEE

Let him die a quick simple death?

MARY SUE

Oh, Lee! I can already tell you, me and Claire are going to be great friends. Great like Jesus and his disciples great. No disrespect to our Lord savior, of course.

LEE

Of course.

MARY SUE

So anyway, what was I saying?

(Long beat)

Oh, yes. I fired him! Said I'd find a new agent. I haven't yet. But that was three months ago. To put a long story short.

CLAIRE

So... what kind of scripts do you -

FAMILIAR VOICE (O.S.)

(snidely)

Well, well...if it isn't my bestest buddies!

Lee and Claire cringe. Looking behind them, they spot WAYLON shaking his head at the pair of them.

WAYLON

Can't say I'm surprised that you're both here.

Lee rubs a hand through his hair, trying to act casual, as Claire just GULPS.

The room is quiet. Bare. All that remained from the robbery are the two occupied couches.

Emma lies on one, lost in a stare. Chris sits on the other. Ian sits across from them both, leaning against the wall. He taps his foot on the floor, antsy.

IAN

This sucks!

CHRIS

(beat; grimly)

Uh huh.

IAN

No, I mean really, really, really, really, really as in castration might have been a better alternative than this level of suckage.

CHRIS

You know you repeating this monologue every half hour isn't helping?

EMMA

It would be easier if any of us were actually scheduled to work today.

IAN

Or if we had our stolen items to distract us and occupy our time.

CHRIS

Then they wouldn't be stolen.

IAN

Man, I'm so bored I've lost the will to even threaten you for that comment.

CHRIS

(shrugs)
Yay?

EMMA

So what do we want to do today?

Emma sits up and looks between the two of them, expecting an answer.

EMMA (cont'd)

Alright, I'm going to count to three and one of you better have a way of entertaining me.

(beat)

One...

IAN

You mean you're not going to have crazy sexcapades?

Chris looks to Emma, his male overeagerness kicking in as Emma shakes her head.

EMMA

Not if we don't have the apartment to ourselves.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

EMMA (cont'd)

(beat)

Two...

IAN

Monopoly?

CHRIS

Hell, no! The last time you bit me.

IAN

If you didn't keep landing on the free parking space and raking in all of the taxpayers dollars, I wouldn't have had to lead the one man lynch mob!

CHRIS

That was the roll of the dice! No cheating involved.

IAN

Still, that board game exists to make me suffer. I have to beat it!

EMMA

Monopoly is out of the question. As I recall correctly, every time I tried to buy property you sexistly replied, as the banker 'Where is the man of the household? A woman cannot buy property on her own.'

IAN

It was the original board game! Historical context.

EMMA

Historical bullshit.

(beat)

Three seconds has definitely passed.

CHRIS

We could get coffee?

IAN

I'm down for that.

EMMA

Okay. And on the way I want a better plan for what the three of us can do later.

The guys nod, accepting these terms and everyone starts to pull themselves up, and we CUT TO:

5

INT. HOTEL - CONFERENCE ROOM B - DAY

5

Waylon stands before Lee, Claire, and Mary Sue, grinning at how awkward his presence is making them, but also clearly angry that the two of them are there.

The three of them swap looks, no one quite knowing what to do until Waylon takes a step forward and begrudgingly nods.

WAYLON

Claire.

CLAIRE

Waylon.

(beat)

Lee...

LEE

(firm)

Waylon.

WAYLON

Also known as traitorous,
bastardized, devolved excuse for a
man.

Mary Sue lightly pushes Lee out of her way and steps forward, extending her hand to Waylon.

MARY SUE

(to Waylon)

I'm Mary Sue! It is an absolute
pleasure. You remind me of my dog,
Zeus. Not to be confused with my
dog Tina, as that happens a lot.
They're the same type, y'see.

She giggles.

WAYLON

I'm Waylon. If you didn't pick up
over the awkward pleasantries I
exchanged with these two.

MARY SUE

(shocked)

Oh, my. Has something happened
between the three of you? Do
tell... I won't tell a soul.

She raises her hand in the air as if that decides the matter.

LEE

Mary Sue.

(beat; quietly)

Beat it.

(CONTINUED)

MARY SUE

(gasps)

Why, in all my life I have never been so insulted! Except for that time I was mistaken for one of the Olsen Twins.

She SLAPS Lee and storms off. Her "Hmms" to no one in particular are heard throughout the crowd as she exits.

Several people in the area shoot looks of curiosity at Lee, Waylon, and Claire. Lee rubs his reddening cheek and Waylon laughs.

CLAIRE

Lee! She was just being nice. Extremely neurotic, but nice.

LEE

She was insane. But I guess I had that slap coming.

WAYLON

I like her. Was she the replacement roommate?

Waylon glares at them, eyes daring them to start a scene. Lee and Claire don't rise to the bait.

CLAIRE

So... you got into the Fellowship, I'm assuming? Congratulations.

WAYLON

I did.

Claire nods. Waylon sticks his hands in his pockets, and starts to look around.

CLAIRE

(beat; fishing)

That's good... right?

WAYLON

Obviously.

(beat)

I'm not exactly psyched to see my arch enemies here. But I can be civil.

LEE

We're not your 'arch enemies.'

WAYLON

Are you sure? Because when I pray that you guys fail beyond belief to the point that it discourages people internationally from choosing this career path... it kind of cements my lack of fuzzy feelings for any of your well beings.

CLAIRE

You know we're sorry -

WAYLON

Oh. Are you now? 'Cause I recall saying that once. In fact, let's get more anecdot -

CLAIRE

Not about the end result. Just how it happened.

That shuts Waylon up. Claire walks away, disappearing into the crowd. There's a long beat as Lee and Waylon avoid eye contact.

LEE

You didn't tell us you were still in LA. Maybe things -

WAYLON

You guys lost that right the day you threw me out on my ass.

Lee nods, before turning around and disappearing into the crowd as well. Waylon turns around and heads the other way.

IAN (PRE-LAP)

They're having a great time right now.

Sitting at a table, in front of a painting considered to be modern art (though it looks like a two year old just went crazy with paint). Ian, Emma, and Chris sit with their coffees.

EMMA

Is it wrong that I wish that this fellowship didn't exist?

CHRIS

Nope. That just makes you human. A jealous human, but still we all fall into that category at the moment.

(beat)

If it cheers you up, I gave Lee a lot of shifts over the next two weeks. Partly because he asked me to, and partly because I can.

EMMA

(sipping drink)

That does make me a bit happier inside.

IAN

You can do that? Without hearing speeches or looking like an evildoer?

CHRIS

He hasn't told you?

(beat; loving it)

For the time being, I'm kind of Lee's boss, since he just started and is on the probationary period.

IAN

Holy Divine J.J. Abrams. That cannot be good.

CHRIS

I know. The student has... well, not become the master, but I have the power now...

(off looks)

And I'm mixing up an infamous comment.

(beat)

Anyway, the miraculous occasion transpired like it was yesterday...

Ian leans forward, intrigued to hear more and Chris grins. We zoom in on his face and into a FLASH of white:

TITLE OVER: LEE'S FIRST SHIFT

The place is full of people and customers, as waiters mill about. Behind the counter, just beside the espresso machine Chris is making a fancy beverage, squirting some espresso into the cup.

LEE (O.S.)

Oh, dear God... I've sold out.

Chris looks over to Lee in his yellow and red uniform, with a green apron on top of that. Lee looks sickened with himself.

LEE (cont'd)

I've become a corporate whore! My very well-being is now dependant on the whims of The Man.

CHRIS

Hey! Corporate whores get great tips!

Chris sprays some whipped cream into the mug and puts it on his tray. Grabbing another mug he starts to create another caffeinated concoction.

ALEX (40, suit & shades, AKA the boss), steps out from the back. He looks between Chris and Lee.

ALEX

Chris, good job. Show New Guy the ropes.

LEE

My name is Lee.

ALEX

Chris, tell New Guy he gets a name when he's off probation.

(beat)

Tell him!

CHRIS

(sighing)

You get a name when you're off probation.

LEE

I get it!

ALEX

Anyway, Christoph. You're in charge of him. He does whatever you say and if not, he's fired. Got it?

Chris nods, and Alex smiles, but it comes across as creepy. He heads out onto the floor leaving the guys behind. Lee looks to Chris with abject horror.

LEE

What the hell have I gotten myself into?

CHRIS

A minimum wage job where your soul
just became mine.

(beat)

Bitch.

Chris fidgets with a lever on the espresso machine, and a WHEEZING noise is made. Chris doesn't react to this, while Lee raises an eyebrow.

LEE

What are you doing?

CHRIS

In due time, New Guy.

LEE

Chris, you damn well know my name!

(off espresso machine)

Can I touch it?

Chris starts to stir some syrup into the cup's contents. He WHACKS Lee's hand away, wearing an evil smile.

CHRIS

Nope.

LEE

Give me one good reason why not?

CHRIS

Hmmm... I really want to say, who
did Alex say was the boss? Though
that seems like a cheap card...
plus I'm a bigger person than that.

Chris turns his attention onto the drink he's making again while Lee hangs his head, grateful.

CHRIS (cont'd)

(beat; reflective)

Actually, I'm not. Now, in Canada
we'd have manners and be polite
about this situation. But here, I
believe the saying goes something
akin to "na, na, na, na, na".

Lee rolls his eyes and turns spotting: LAURA, an attractive blonde waitress walking past holding a tray with various fancy coffee's and muffins.

LEE

Who, Mister Christopher, is that
siren serving coffee?

CHRIS

That, dear New Guy, is Laura and she's off limits as she's already dating a good friend of mine from here.

LEE

Bollocks. Who the hell do you frequently pal around with from here outside of working hours?

CHRIS

Brent. Laura. And... other people.
(off look)
So I don't always go to the staff bowling nights. They're still all very good friends.

Chris confidently turns to his beverage, placing it on the tray with the other filled drinks.

LEE

What's your mate's last name?

CHRIS

(beat)
Shut up!

Lee smirks, as Chris hands Lee the tray with four coffee mugs. Lee isn't prepared. He clenches onto the tray for dear life, hands shaking as he tries to keep a balance. Nothing falls. But it's apparent this is Lee's first time doing this.

CHRIS (cont'd)

Take those to table five. That's the one with the real picture of Michael Jordan, but a forged signature by our boss.

(smiling)
And if you break any of those cups it comes out of your salary.

Lee's smile drops and Chris tilts his head in the direction of tables as a signal for Lee to get to work.

Lee starts to slowly mutter as he walks away trying to balance the shaking tray in front of him, as we CUT TO:

Ian's laughing, while Chris looks like he's pondering over his flashback.

CHRIS

So Lee and I still have some kinks to work out with the new dynamics in our friendship. I'll get the hang of this being his boss thing.

IAN

Make him balance filled coffee cups on his head.

CHRIS

Oh! That's a good one.

Chris scribbles the point down on a napkin.

EMMA

Or give him the wrong orders on purpose and send him to the tables to get practice dealing with malevolent customers.

IAN

Oh! You could make him donate his tips to charity.

CHRIS

Now they're all good ideas, but they may take some time to initiate. Besides, we don't want Lee to quit. Then all my point taking will have been for nothing! And I'll have lost all leverage...

Ian and Emma nod, perfectly understanding as Chris continues to jot down their ideas and we:

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

9

INT. APARTMENT - HALLWAY - EVENING

9

Lee and Claire walk side by side down the hall, looking quite jolly.

LEE

That was quite a good day, if I do say so myself.

CLAIRE

Meeting Joss Whedon and his infamous lackeys? Heck, yes.

LEE

I'd be honored to be his lackey.
(beat)
Not like that.

CLAIRE

That part where he made that comment about Fox executives being better people in this modern day, despite his and every other showrunners history with them had me in stitches.

LEE

He was definitely paid to say that.
(gleeful)
And I don't think he liked Mary Sue.

CLAIRE

No, and he's an anecdotal person as well.
(giddy)
I still can't believe we were in a room full of writers in the "business" though.

LEE

Over the teaching bug?

CLAIRE

The minute I get hired by a show.

They come to a stop outside their apartment door. Lee pulls out his keys.

CLAIRE (cont'd)

(quietly)
Should we tell them we ran into you-know-who?

(CONTINUED)

LEE

(beat)

No. Hasn't his name been banished from being uttered in the inner sanctum?

Lee sticks a key in the lock. Then pauses.

CLAIRE

I guess. But secrets do have a tendency to come back and bite the keepers in the ass. If they find out that we found out... well, we'll be found out, and then presto. Everything's out and we're being yelled at.

LEE

I don't know what has me more worried. The fact that I followed your train of thought or the part where I kind of agree with you.

CLAIRE

And I understand where you're coming from with not telling them. I mean, the first week without him was odd.

LEE

(nodding)

Tense vibes were definitely present.

CLAIRE

And things are finally starting to get normal.

LEE

So perhaps it's best not to shake up the nest, then?

(off look)

We'll tell them. Just... in time. Like, in another week or two?

CLAIRE

Like "Hey, guess who we ran into"?

LEE

Exactly. We can practice acting shocked and indignant and everything.

To effectively prove his point, Lee contorts his face to look shocked, but instead comes across as constipated.

CLAIRE

Your "shocked" needs medical attention.

LEE

I think it's Emmy worthy.

Claire nods, agreeing to this as Lee pulls out his keys and unlocks the door. They enter the apartment.

Lee takes off his jacket and hangs it up. He looks around the living room as Claire shuts the door. They're the only ones present.

LEE

(shouting)

We're back!

IAN (O.S.)

Are we in?

LEE

Let's just say we've made progress.

Ian and Chris step out of the kitchen. Chris looks to Ian with an "I told you so" expression.

CHRIS

That's a 'no,' then.

LEE

Well... it's a start. Claire and I still have another week at this thing.

CLAIRE

Plenty of time to develop a contact or two.

Lee nods along, while Chris and Ian don't look like they care. The girls' bedroom door opens, and Emma steps out, dressed very fashionably with hair done and make up applied.

CHRIS

Wow.

EMMA

(grinning)

That's what I was going for.

CHRIS

It definitely worked.

Emma glances at her watch, and looks between Chris and Ian.

EMMA

Shall we head off?

CHRIS

Yeah. The concert starts soon,
doesn't it?

(to Ian)

Do you have the tickets on you?

IAN

In my back pocket!

LEE

A concert? A bit of live music
could just make this awesome day
even better.

CLAIRE

I'm up for it. Just give me ten
minutes to get ready!

Claire starts to head towards her room.

IAN

Actually...

Claire stops. Ian pulls out several tickets from his pocket.

IAN (cont'd)

We only bought three tickets.

CLAIRE

Oh.

LEE

(surprised)

Didn't think of picking up an extra
two tickets for us?

CHRIS

We didn't think you'd be home by
the time we left. Sorry.

LEE

You could have texted to see.

IAN

We thought you'd both be busy.

Emma takes the tickets from Ian and puts them in her purse.
Lee and Claire are looking at the trio, expecting some
further explanation.

EMMA

Sorry.

LEE
 No, it's fine.
 (beat)
 You didn't know. Right?

Flashes of guilt pass over Ian, Chris, and Emma for a second. Ian looks to the floor, while Chris looks for a way out.

CHRIS
 Right.

CLAIRE
 What concert are you headed off to?

EMMA
 Bon Jovi.

LEE
 Gah! I wanted to go to that.

It's awkward. You can tell Lee and Claire are still surprised they weren't invited.

CHRIS
 Anyways... have a good night.

IAN
 Don't wait up!

With that Chris, Ian, and Emma head for the door, leaving.

EMMA
 Bye.

Emma waves as she shuts the door. Lee takes a seat on the couch.

IAN (O.S.)
 This concert is going to be epic!

Claire drops her bag on the floor and leans against the wall. Lee exhales deeply and folds his hands. It's quiet for a long beat.

CLAIRE
 We've been personally excluded.

Lee bites his lip and looks to the door. His back to Claire.

LEE
 Are you sure that's what that was?
 They said they thought we wouldn't
 be here.

CLAIRE

I don't buy it. Not for a second.

(beat)

Maybe I'm jaded because as a supply teacher I see kids lying to me and to each other all the time.

(rambling)

Like, there's no way Karalyn Kripke would have done the wheelbarrow position with David Thresher. A)

Her parents would have her excommunicated, and B) She's obviously in love with Matt Campbell.

(beat)

Do you see my point? There's no way Chris, Emma, and Ian did not just do that on purpose. They're smarter than they'd like us to think.

LEE

Someone likes their high school gossip.

CLAIRE

(cheekily)

What else do you think we discuss in the teachers lounge?

(beat)

Plus, I'm a woman. I'm trained to know when I'm being manipulated and can sense fake drama.

Lee and Claire share a look.

LEE

So how do we want to handle the situation?

(lightbulb moment)

Politely host an intervention wherein we confront them over their jealousy but also manage to talk things out?

CLAIRE

God, no. They want to make a point, we'll make one right back.

Lee's mouth drops, as Claire stands up tall. Music would be swelling on cue if this was a presidential speech.

CLAIRE (cont'd)

Of course, you realise, this means war.

Claire's eyes squint, menacingly as we CUT TO:

11 INT. APARTMENT - KITCHEN - THE NEXT DAY

11

Ian sits at the table eating dinner. Emma stands at the sink, her hands deep in soapy water. She's cleaning some dishes.

EMMA

We should really invest in getting a dishwasher.

(beat)

After we buy a new TV, of course. Or we could get a maid?

IAN

I wanted to order one online, but Lee started to speechify me with words and full sentences and everything.

EMMA

It sounds grammatically correct.

IAN

Unfortunately, it was. The fact that he was also correct in saying that having a maid wouldn't be sensible also pisses me off.

Emma scrubs away at dirt on the dish with a sponge, some bubbles splashing onto her shirt. Claire strides in, wearing a nice formal black dress.

CLAIRE

(casual)

Hey! Are you guys going to be up later tonight?

EMMA

Maybe. I have work in the morning.

CLAIRE

Oh, too bad. I'll see you later, then.

Claire turns around - she has Emma right where she wants her. Emma shakes the hair out of her eyes.

EMMA

Where are you off to?

Claire stops. Licking her lips a tad, she turns back around, playing it cool.

CLAIRE

Oh, just a dinner. With some friends... and writers from the Fellowship.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CLAIRE (cont'd)

(beat)

Not on the itinerary, of course.
Just a social thing.

(genuinely)

We'd have invited you guys, but
we're kind of a tight knit group
even though it's only been two
days. Plus, Joss said no guests. He
wants to get to know us.

Ian COUGHS on his meal. Emma lays her hand on the edge of the sink, trying to act dignified... but the soap causes her hand to SLIP, making her slide and fall onto the floor.

Claire steps over to help, but Emma waves her away. WINCING she pushes herself to sit up.

EMMA

(gritted teeth)

Have fun. Tell us all about it.

CLAIRE

Oh, I will.

Claire turns and exits. Emma starts to stand up, almost SLIPPING again. But luckily not.

CLAIRE (O.S.) (cont'd)

Lee. Very nice in your tux. Ready
to go?

LEE (O.S.)

Yeah. Nothing much going on here.

A few seconds pass and we hear the sound of a door opening and closing. Emma picks up a dish from the sink, starting to rinse it under the tap.

Ian looks at her with his mouth full, waiting for her to say something. She's clenching the dish pretty tightly. It BREAKS in her hands.

IAN

(muffled)

Y'okay?

EMMA

Yep. Just peachy.

Emma opens up the cupboard below and tosses the plate pieces in the garbage. The sound of the front door opening can be heard again.

IAN

Maybe one of them forgot their
golden ticket.

EMMA

Hopefully, I'll wake up and this will all just be a bad dream.

Emma turns her attention back to the sink as Chris enters with a backpack and in his work attire.

CHRIS

I just ran into Lee and Claire at the stairwell. Guess where they're going?

IAN

We know.

Emma starts to scrub the dishes to the point where it's almost violent. Chris drops his backpack on the floor.

CHRIS

(angry)

You know? The Fellowship is one thing. On some level, yes, I'm happy for them. But this is just...

(beat)

There's not even a word for it.

IAN

Exactly. I mean, what the hell have we done? We work just as hard. We're younger. Supposed to be better, simply by definition.

EMMA

And they're always just throwing it in our faces. Never realizing we never ask them about it or bring it up in conversation.

CHRIS

Plus... they're stupid.

(off Emma's look)

Alright, they're not. But saying it does make me feel better.

IAN

Me too.

Chris takes a seat at the table.

EMMA

The faster this week is over with the better.

IAN

And it would be a lot easier to hate them if we weren't friends with them.

DING! Chris pulls out his cell phone. He flips it open. He's received a text message.

CHRIS

(reading aloud)

Hey, sweetness. When am I going to see you again? Have you broke it off with that balding guy yet?

(beat)

Man, this dude does not give up. Claire must have really made an impression, because I haven't texted this guy since Waylon left.

No-one reacts to the name of their former roommate. Emma steps away from the sink, and Ian quirks an eyebrow.

EMMA

It was love at first sight. For him, anyway.

IAN

Balding guy?

CHRIS

I'm guessing Claire said she was dating Lee at the time.

IAN

Always plausible. Just tell him he's been fake phone numbered.

EMMA

No. This is destiny. This... is a beautiful thing.

Emma has a glint of evil in her eye as Chris retracts his phone from the blonde's reach.

IAN

I know that look. That's the "I'm about to do something evil" look.

CHRIS

No that's the "Chris, I'm going to use sex as a weapon to get what I want" look.

EMMA

The two are very similar.
(to Chris)
Hand me the phone.

CHRIS

No. Claire's still Claire and
doesn't want to meet this guy.

EMMA

Look, nothing terrible is going to
happen. We're just going to set up
a little meeting between the two of
them. Maybe we tell Text Message
Guy that her and Lee broke up?

IAN

You say 'we' like we're already
going to do it. Or that anybody but
you will be involved in the plot.

EMMA

Look, I love Claire. I do. But she
was rubbing that dinner in our
faces, Ian, and you know it.

(mocking Claire)

'Are you going to be up later?
Perhaps we can discuss my
brilliance...'

(back to Emma)

I call bull crap! She deserves to
get shaken up a bit. If anything,
all this will do is get her mad at
us and change the conversation for
the week off of the fellowship.

IAN

Can't we just talk about our
feelings with them?

CHRIS

No! That's admitting defeat.

EMMA

Chris, hand me the phone please.

CHRIS

No. I'm all for planning sabotage
and creating a little mayhem, but
this is just mean.

EMMA

Ian, did you know that when Chris
was nine he thought the word vagina
meant -

Chris SMACKS his fist against the table. All eyes are on him. Emma smiles, victorious. As he slides the phone over to her.

CHRIS
(begrudgingly)
Here!

Emma flips the cell open and starts to text.

IAN
What did Chris think the word
'vagina' meant?

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

12

EXT. TYPICAL STREET - LATER

12

Stereotypical apartment buildings rest on either side of the street. There's a convenience store with its neon "Open" sign flickering. Claire and Lee walk past, along the sidewalk.

Claire looks at the numbers of the apartment buildings as they walk pass them.

LEE

This has to be one of your most convoluted plans ever. We can't go home, because then our roommates would find out the dinner is an imaginative invention designed to spite them. So we walk around aimlessly instead... just to prove a point.

CLAIRE

Are you still talking?

LEE

We're being immature.

CLAIRE

Lee, those three are being just as immature and you know it. Furthermore, they started it!

LEE

This isn't like you.

Lee stops in his tracks, shoving his hands in his pockets. Claire plows on ahead for a few steps, before turning around.

LEE (cont'd)

I want an explanation, or I tell them we're lying about a certain event transpiring.

(beat)

I'm not kidding. You're acting different.

CLAIRE

It's all in your head. I'm still the same cuddly Claire - who doesn't really like to cuddle - that I always was.

LEE

No... you're not.

(CONTINUED)

CLAIRE

Look, I'm just sick of being a pushover all the time. Okay? So yes, I'm trying something out. And maybe I'll revert back, because from my cynical perspective I don't believe someone can change overnight. But I still have to try.

(reasoning)

It's like last week, a student called me 'ma'am.' At the time I was shocked. I realized I didn't want to be a 'ma'am.'

(playful)

Is any of this making sense to you or am I coming across like a loon?

Lee nods and starts to walk again. There's a long beat as the two of them just walk down the sidewalk.

Claire SNIFFS. She still scans the apartment building numbers as they walk past.

LEE

So how do you want to kill the next few hours?

CLAIRE

I... was thinking we stop by Waylon's new place.

LEE

Alright. In case I haven't said so earlier tonight - are you mad?

Claire stops in front of next red bricked, eighteen storey apartment building. It's definitely one of the older buildings in the neighbourhood. A homeless man sits outside it, holding out a cup.

LEE (cont'd)

We're already here, aren't we?

Lee takes in the building as Claire nods.

LEE (cont'd)

(annoyed)

May I ask why we are here?

CLAIRE

I just want to see how he's doing.

(off look)

Partly to ease off my guilt.

(MORE)

12 CONTINUED: (2)

12

CLAIRE (cont'd)

And partly because I scanned his registration information today from that booth when that guy took his washroom break.

LEE

You're bonkers. You know that?

Claire marches forward and Lee starts to rant as we CUT TO:

13 INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - FOURTEENTH STOREY

13

A door from the stairwell opens, and out steps Claire and Lee. Each slightly gasping for breath. Lee still ranting.

LEE

So we can talk to someone who thinks we're his arch nemesis... or nemisi, whatever it's called, and try and work out our issues, but we can't talk to the people we are on good terms with?

CLAIRE

Yeah. This has to be done. We're going to be dealing with him over the next few days.

(reasoning)

Talking to Emma, Ian, and Chris right now would just be crazy.

LEE

Women are insane.

(beat)

And I'm beginning to understand how our living situation became so dysfunctional in the first place.

CLAIRE

You don't have to come.

LEE

And leave you to be insulted all by yourself? What kind of man would I be?

CLAIRE

A wise one. I can see this blowing up in my face. But I have to try.

Claire comes to stop outside a red door marked "1409". She looks to Lee, this is it. Slowly, Claire raises her arm to knock until:

LEE

Are you sure we should do this? Are we even welcome here?

(CONTINUED)

CLAIRE
 (over-enthusiastically)
 Of course we are!
 (beat)
 So we kicked him out of our
 apartment three weeks ago and
 didn't know he was still in town.
 Bad calls were made on both sides.
 It's in the past.

LEE
 O-kay. If you say so... but maybe
 we should just head back home.
 Admit to the group that there is no
 dinner.

CLAIRE
 No! We've come this far.

Lee finally shakes his head, accepting this is going to happen. Claire simply stares at the door in front of them for a long beat.

LEE
 Are you going to knock?

CLAIRE
 No... yes... maybe?
 (worried)
 What if he does just shut the door
 in our face?

Lee looks to Claire. He KNOCKS on the door.

LEE
 Guess we'll just have to find out
 where we stand outside the
 professional realm.

Claire nods, crossing her arms. Lee keeps fidgeting. The door opens and JENNIFER (the Goth chick from 1x04) stands before them.

It takes a second or two, but Claire's eye's widen! Lee appears confused, and scratches his chin. Jennifer looks between the two of them.

JENNIFER
 Do I know you?

CLAIRE
 Nope! First time I've seen you in
 my life.
 (over-compensating)
 I've led a long life.
 (MORE)

CLAIRE (cont'd)

Not that I'm old - approaching middle age but in denial about it. I think I saw a wrinkle the other day when I was looking in the mirror.

JENNIFER

Okay. That's a bunch of information I'm both indifferent to and apathetic towards.

(off looks)

So... can I help you?

LEE

Um... yes. Is Waylon home?

JENNIFER

Wow. Didn't know his gravitational pull included friends. Hang on a sec.

Jennifer disappears into her apartment and Lee leans over to Claire.

LEE

Is that who I think it was?

CLAIRE

The girl who we got fired to save Emma's job. So she retaliated by letting a skunk loose in our apartment. Yep.

LEE

Thought so.

(reflective)

She still has a roof over her head, so she's not doing that bad.

Waylon appears in the doorway. His expression turns from a grin to shock.

WAYLON

Well, ain't this a surprise.

CLAIRE

We came to see how you were doing.

WAYLON

Right.

Waylon SLAMS the door in their face.

LEE

That could have gone better.

Claire grimly smiles as she KNOCKS again, and we CUT TO:

14

INT. O'GRADY'S - BOOTH - SAME TIME

14

Chris sits with his arm around Emma on one side, while Ian sits on the other. All of them with their respective drink of choice in hand.

IAN

Now, remember. As a couple, even though by definition you obviously each have somebody. Tonight your job is to use your couplehood so I can trick an unsuspecting lass into sleeping with me.

CHRIS

I think we can do that. Em?

TARA the waitress walks over with a plate of garlic bread.

TARA

There you guys are.

Ian winks conspiratorially to Emma and Chris, then turns to face Tara.

IAN

Tara, what I'm about to tell you is strictly waitress-customer confidentiality. Not to be repeated to any other table you're covering.

TARA

Um... okay. I guess I did take the Hippocratic Oath before O'Grady's felt comfortable letting me wait tables.

IAN

(explaining)

Basically, every single girl here who's either heterosexual or mad at their cheating ex-boyfriend is going to look at Chris and Emma.

(pointing)

Then have an "epiphany" movie moment, upon which they realize a relationship is what they truly want. And since they have to start somewhere...

(proudly)

Enter me.

TARA

It sounds like you're the third wheel.

(CONTINUED)

EMMA

I have to side with Tara.

IAN

Nope. The third wheel is an improperly functioning social condition situation which provides company to a metaphorical vehicle of which it is not necessary.

(beat)

I am the wheel of genius! I'm merely using a couple to prey on single girls' emotional insecurities. Which means tonight, the wheel of fortune will do its job and throw me someone attractive.

CHRIS

That's a lot of wheels.

TARA

I'm lost. And what's with the black eye? Make up or real?

Chris is about to open his mouth. Ian shoots him a look.

IAN

You swore we would never tell!

EMMA

It's a long story. We can't get into it.

CHRIS

Though it is so awesome! I hope they turn it into a children's novel someday.

IAN

Guys! Unity! I gave you all twenty dollars to never mention it again.

Chris and Emma nod, grateful for the cash. Chris shrugs his shoulders at a curious Tara.

TARA

(defeated)

Alright, well, I have to serve table nine, so...

Tara heads off, as Chris looks over to Ian.

CHRIS

Do you feel lucky?

IAN

Luck has nothing to do with it. I brought bait.

EMMA

This is never going to work.

IAN

Bait does not talk.

(beat)

A fish will be coming along any second now.

Ian watches as some girls at the bar remain invested in their own conversations. A WOMAN walks past, paying no attention to the gang at the table.

EMMA

The one that got away.

IAN

It'll happen. Plenty of fish in the sea, as they say.

CHRIS

Maybe we should stop with the metaphorical discussion?

(beat)

Single desperate girls will be drinking. So find someone who drinks like a fish and then stick to simple conversation. One, maybe two syllable words at most.

IAN

Got it.

EMMA

And if you bring home any tramps, you're the one who's going to have The Talk with them tomorrow before you kick them out.

Emma points her finger threateningly as Ian nods. Another girl walks past, this one checks Ian out, but FLINCHES at the black eye.

CHRIS

Maybe it's your face deformity. You're not going to get lucky, unless it's with a blind chick.

IAN

Are you kidding me? Chicks dig scars.

14 CONTINUED: (3)

14

EMMA

Ian, honey, that's a scar of
humiliation. Not one of pride.

Emma snickers, and Ian just glares, the black eye making him
look a tad scarier.

15 INT. WAYLON'S APARTMENT BUILDING - SAME TIME

15

CLOSE UP on Claire's fist knocking on the door again, before
pulling back to reveal Claire. Lee's leaning against the
wall.

WAYLON (O.S.)

Go away!

LEE

Maybe we should head back. It's
been an hour.

WAYLON (O.S.)

What Captain Jackass said!

CLAIRE

(beat)

No. We're here. We're going to at
least have words with him.

WAYLON (O.S.)

Fine. I have two words for you!
Starting with "Fuck" and ending
with... can you guess it?

Claire sighs and knocks again. A beat. The door swings open,
it's Jennifer.

JENNIFER

You two really can't take the hint,
huh?

(beat)

Band kids in high school? Working
out your loser issues?

CLAIRE

Deflecting, are you?

Jennifer's black clothing, dragon tattoos on her arms,
multiple piercings, and white make up except for the black
lipstick say it all.

JENNIFER

Does it look like I care what you
think?

(CONTINUED)

CLAIRE

Look, just let us in, please. We
won't talk to you.

Jennifer steps away from the door.

JENNIFER

(bored)

Fine.

Claire smiles, grateful and walks past. Lee falls in behind her, though he looks Jennifer up and down.

LEE

It does look like a Nine Inch Nails
concert threw up on you, though.

Jennifer rolls her eyes and shuts the door.

JENNIFER (O.S.)

Whatever.

16 INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - WAYLON'S APARTMENT

16

It's bigger than the gangs' apartment, with three bedroom doors along the far wall and a kitchen just a step above the living room. The apartment is very open and spacious, with hardwood flooring.

It's painted a hideous neon green colour, only to be covered by several terrible paintings of what is presumably called "Art" hanging along the walls. One looks like a vortex in a library, but for some reason has toothbrushes glued in the centre of it.

JENNIFER

(before they can speak)

Don't insult or even develop an
opinion on my art.

Lee and Claire take it all in - from the ripped apart teddy bear (apparently assaulted by a Koala with a nut cracker) painting, to Waylon, who sits on a leather seat a few feet away, not looking at them.

LEE

Hey...

CLAIRE

(trying to sound sincere)

Nice place.

Waylon grunts.

(CONTINUED)

CLAIRE (cont'd)

I really love the paint job. It's like living in a nuclear plant.

(beat)

In a non radio-active hazardous for your health way.

Silence. We can hear the clock ticking in the background. Tick. Tick. Tick. Tick.

A bedroom door on the right opens and out steps ROBIN (42, in a sleek business suit, attractive but has clearly had plastic surgery done - particularly in the bosom area). She oozes confidence as she saunters over to the kitchen without a glance at the others.

She opens the fridge and pulls out a mickey of spiced rum. She glances at Waylon, Claire, and Lee.

ROBIN

(whiny high pitched voice)

Well, isn't this awkward.

She glances at Claire and Lee in turn, sizing them up, Then she glance at the paintings on the wall and FLINCHES.

ROBIN (cont'd)

Damn it! Those paintings are still here! I always forget to not look at them sober.

JENNIFER

You don't understand true beauty.

ROBIN

Apparently sweetie, neither do you. Because magazines with the pretty people, that's how the world works.

(sweetly)

Okay?

WAYLON

Flawed logic aside, she has a point.

Robin opens up her mickey and takes a swig. She walks over towards Lee and Claire, furrowing her eyebrows.

ROBIN

Now, what do we have here?

WAYLON

Lee and Claire, these are my new roommates Robin and Jennifer.

LEE

It's a pleasure.

JENNIFER

It really isn't.

ROBIN

Jenny, play nice!

Jennifer gives Robin the finger and storms off into her bedroom. Robin just laughs, taking another swig of her mickey. Not realizing how uncomfortable she's making Lee and Claire.

ROBIN (cont'd)

(fondly)

Step children. Is there a stronger bond that exists on this green earth?

WAYLON

Foster homes? Adoption agencies?

ROBIN

Oh, if only Jenny hadn't been an adult when her dad passed and I'd have had the choice.

(to Claire)

Learn from my mistakes. Marry for money over love. Or make sure the dumbass you're in love with has life insurance so when he accidentally bites it.... presto! You're rich.

Robin mimes steering the wheel of a car, before presumably crashing it. She laughs again.

ROBIN (cont'd)

(laughing)

Or make sure the airbag works!

LEE

(amused)

Sound advice.

CLAIRE

I'll keep that in mind.

WAYLON

Kind of sounds like the time you tried to seduce the taxi driver you thought was Enrique Iglesias undercover.

(CONTINUED)

ROBIN

It does! It does...

Robin SIGHS as Jennifer comes out of her room again. Ignoring Lee and Claire's presence, she heads over to the kitchen. Robin takes another swig of her rum and then seals it up.

ROBIN (cont'd)

Well, I'd love to stay and chat Waylon, I really would, as I find our conversations always make me think. Which is something I'd forgotten to do a long time ago. But I'm afraid I'm off to the hospital.

WAYLON

Alright. Be good.

JENNIFER

Off to the hospital? Did something happen? Did you run someone over?

ROBIN

(laughing)

No. Nothing like that. This time. I'm just off to find some terminally ill eighty year old man, convince him we're in love, and hope he bequeaths everything to me in his will when he passes.

With a smile, she tosses her mickey into her purse and heads out. Waylon and Jennifer act like this is normal. The apartment door closes.

WAYLON

God, I love her.

JENNIFER

She's pure evil. It keeps things interesting.

Off this we:

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

17

INT. WAYLON'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - LATER

17

Claire and Lee are sitting down on a brown leather couch now. Waylon still sits in his spot on the comfy chair. Jennifer is no longer present.

Lee COUGHS. Waylon flicks his eyes over, then goes back to focusing his attention elsewhere.

CLAIRE

Maybe... this was a bad idea.

Lee looks over to Claire, with a "you think?" expression. Waylon looks slightly remiss for a second, but the others don't pick up on it.

LEE

Yeah. At least we put the effort in.

Claire nods, and she and Lee stand up. They head out of the living room. Waylon doesn't watch them leave. He concentrates on the turned off TV.

They make it to the door when Lee turns around.

LEE (cont'd)

Oh! You'll be happy to hear that Ian got beat up by someone in a wheelchair.

Silence. Followed by more silence. Lee turns back to the door, when the leather chair spins around.

WAYLON

Really?

LEE

Yep! It all started when he threw a library book behind him and didn't think anyone was there.

CLAIRE

Security didn't intervene either because... you know. I don't think they wanted to report restraining a special needs person.

WAYLON

Or they hate Ian.

LEE

That's what I said.

(CONTINUED)

It's a nice moment.

WAYLON

What else have I missed?

LEE

Chris has become a little power mad monkey since he's now my boss in the workplace.

WAYLON

Seriously? And I'm not there to help him come up with meaningless tasks for you to accomplish?

It gets awkward again for a second, until Lee just lets the comment slide. He and Claire start over to the living room couch again.

CLAIRE

And Emma went to get her hair cut by some girls in the high school I was covering. It's free, because frankly they need the practice.

(grinning)

They ended up dying her hair all the colours of the rainbow.

Waylon bursts out laughing.

LEE

She had it like that for about a week and was threatening to sue the high school.

CLAIRE

She wouldn't go out in public.

LEE

Except for that time she wore a wig you borrowed from the drama department.

WAYLON

Did you take pictures?

CLAIRE

We bought a disposable. But she broke it.

WAYLON

Damn! That would have been Facebook worthy! Ya know, had I not deleted you guys from everything.

And it's weird again. Lee twiddles his thumbs.

LEE

(beat)

How did you find this place?

WAYLON

Two weeks ago I spotted an ad in a bar. I was in a hostel until then. But I figured I got into the Fellowship, so I should stick in town.

CLAIRE

And your roommates?

WAYLON

They're insane! But I'm used to that.

Claire smirks, as Lee leans forward. Josh Ritter's "Good Man" starts to play.

WAYLON (cont'd)

P.S I am definitely going to hook up with that Mary Sue chick. Just to spite you.

LEE

That's fine by me. She'll probably tell you all of the STDs and everything else that's happened to her in her life before you actually get some.

WAYLON

Hey, I'll be informed. Or I can get her a mute button.

CLAIRE

You'd have to with that one. Or ear plugs.

WAYLON

Oh and I got a job!

(playful)

You assgoblins. I'm a working man now.

CLAIRE

Seriously?

Waylon nods proudly, telling them more - PULL BACK slowly as the conversation fades and the music replaces it.

Claire laughs as Waylon uses various hand gestures in whatever story he is telling them.

17 CONTINUED: (3)

17

Lee just shakes his head as they continue to talk. From the looks of it things might just be okay. It's hopeful.

18 INT. APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - THE NEXT AFTERNOON

18

There's a new TV with a red bow stuck to it, as if it was a gift.

Chris and Emma are sitting on the couch, cuddling, watching a programme. There's a long beat as they are content to simply watch whatever's on.

EMMA

I don't know how we survived
without this.

CHRIS

I know. It's given us so much.

They watch for another beat as the apartment door opens. It's Claire and Lee.

CHRIS (cont'd)

(excited)

You got us a TV?

LEE

You were all reading too much and
being productive.

(beat)

It was weird.

EMMA

(to Claire)

I think I speak for all of the
other jealous roommates when I say
thank you.

CLAIRE

No problem.

Claire and Lee grab a seat on the other couch.

CHRIS

So how was the Fellowship today?

Lee's shocked as he looks between Claire and then to the others. Chris and Emma are all ears.

LEE

Today we did various writing
exercises, and even got to visit a
set so we could be shown the
difference between writing and the
actual production.

(CONTINUED)

CLAIRE

And Joss Whedon even referred to us by our names.

CHRIS

Aw, man!

CLAIRE

We have name tags... but still!

CHRIS

It still counts.

EMMA

You're going to have to sleep with him to get us all jobs, Claire.

CLAIRE

He's married!

EMMA

You think that stopped Brad Pitt?

The song stops playing as Ian steps out of the Guy's bedroom.

IAN

(to Chris and Emma)

You guys are the worst bait ever.

CHRIS

We tried to tell you!

IAN

Not one woman was interested in me last night. I'm shocked. I had a fake story to explain the black eye and everything.

LEE

Assaulted by a mugger to get the sympathy card in play?

IAN

I was going for something more believable like a fight with an escaped convict. It gets the age old life and death card in play.

CLAIRE

Because that's just realistic.

LEE

It is reminiscent of that time Chris made me serve a leading mob boss at work.

CHRIS

Sorry about that.

(defensively)

But Little Hands Mugsy hates me ever since the time I mistakenly assumed his sister was his wife.

IAN

Why do they call him Little Hands?

CHRIS

I don't know. It's not something you ask the resident crime lord.

Chris' cell phone DINGS! And there's a KNOCK at the door. Emma JUMPS up, attracting attention to herself from everyone.

Chris and Ian exchange looks, knowing full well what this means.

CLAIRE

You guys didn't steal magazines from our neighbors again, did you?

IAN

Nope.

There's another knock.

MAN AT DOOR (O.S.)

Hello? Anybody in there?

EMMA

That sounds like it's for me.

Emma heads towards the door, while Chris turns his attention to Lee and Claire.

CHRIS

So how was the dinner last night?

LEE

(surprised)

Dinner? What dinner?

CLAIRE

(scrambling)

Oh, it was great!

CHRIS

Any anecdotes you care to share?

LEE

Stories... so many great stories! Heh. Claire, which one do you want to tell first?

(CONTINUED)

18 CONTINUED: (3)

18

Chris and Ian nod along, while Claire GULPS. Emma opens the door just enough so she can squeeze through and close it.

19 INT. APARTMENT - HALLWAY - CONTINUED

19

Before us stands TEXT MESSAGE GUY (25, dressed casually, has a beard and appears to be quite normal) holding a bouquet of flowers. His eyebrows contort, and Emma awkwardly smiles.

EMMA

Hello.

TEXT MESSAGE GUY

You're not Claire.

EMMA

(acting surprised)

Claire? Oh, you know Claire?

TEXT MESSAGE GUY

Yeah, we met a while ago. But she really made an impression on me.

He looks off in the distance as if recalling the memory. Quite smitten with our Claire from the looks of it. Emma looks guilty as Text Message Guy comes back to reality and raises his flowers.

TEXT MESSAGE GUY (cont'd)

I just came over to apologize if I came on too strongly. I sometimes tend to do that. Even though I know from her lack of response that she probably doesn't want to see me.

(beat)

A few of my text messages were actually drunk, I'm sad to say. Which is no excuse, but it's the truth.

EMMA

Uh huh.

TEXT MESSAGE GUY

So is she home?

EMMA

(torn)

Nope. You actually just missed her.

(beat)

She got back together with her ex.

TEXT MESSAGE GUY

Oh.

(off flowers)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

19

CONTINUED:

19

TEXT MESSAGE GUY (cont'd)
Um... can you give these to her and
tell her I'll stop texting?

He extends the flowers to Emma, who takes them.

EMMA

Sure.

She looks to the flowers, and back to Text Message Guy who is clearly shocked Claire isn't there, but is trying to maintain an understanding face.

TEXT MESSAGE GUY

And... just tell her that I think
she's really great.

Text Message Guy gives a little wave and starts to do the walk of shame down the hallway. Emma watching him go, looks to the bouquet then back at him leaving. Her shoulders slump.

20

INT. APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUED

20

Emma steps in through the apartment door, closing it with her foot. Claire and Lee appear to be in the middle of a convoluted story.

CLAIRE

And then Joss saved Lee.

LEE

(beat; thinking)
The Heimlich manoeuver. Works
wonders.

Chris and Ian are clearly impressed. While Claire spots Emma and the flowers.

CLAIRE

(changing subject)
Hey. Have a gentlemen caller we
don't know about?

LEE

Is Chris going to have to kick some
arse?

CHRIS

I hope it's not a sign from Little
Hands that I only have twelve hours
to live or something.

EMMA

(not paying attention)
Yup. Something like that.

(CONTINUED)

CHRIS

Crap! I better go apologize
profusely again.

Chris RUSHES out of the chair and out of the apartment.

IAN

Don't get shot!

LEE

Should one of us go with him?

IAN

Nah.

Emma glumly drops the bouquet on the coffee table and heads into her room.

Claire sits up, taking notice of the flowers and at how it's just herself, Lee, and Ian in the room now.

IAN (cont'd)

So... anything else interesting
happen? Meet anybody else you want
to tell us all about?

Lee nervously smiles. He and Claire swap a worried look.

CLAIRE

No, not really.

LEE

Can't say we did.

Ian looks from one to the other, frowning - but lets it slide, his attention drawn back to the TV. Lee exhales, looking at Claire as if wondering how long they can keep the secret, and we:

BLACK OUT:

END OF SHOW