

A Peeling

by Steven Burton

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EXT. OCEAN BEACH - SPRING DAY

It is overcast and breezy.

TOM JAMES, an attractive man in his thirties with a camera, stands alone to face the ocean.

He takes a picture towards the horizon.

He looks out over the desolate beach with few people.

After he quickly looks both ways, his pants unzip and then pisses on the sand.

He walks away.

EXT. BOARDWALK - FOLLOWING

Tom steps on to it from the beach.

JENNY EVANS interrupts him.

JENNY

Excuse me.

He looks in the direction of Jenny, a striking woman in her thirties with a free spirit flare and a camera.

JENNY

May I take your picture?

TOM

Sure.

She moves in with the camera for a head shot close-up.

TOM

Why?....

JENNY

Just a minute. A couple more please.

She takes two more at different angles.

JENNY

Good.

TOM

Ok. Now it's my turn of you.

JENNY

Sure. How about over there?

She points away as Tom looks.

TOM

Fine.

EXT. BOARDWALK RAILING - FOLLOWING

The ocean surf is a backdrop.

Jenny moves into view with Tom to strike a campy, fun pose.

Tom takes a camera shot.

TOM

Ok, now why this interest?

JENNY

Good question. Ooh mysterious!  
And there's more.

TOM

But....

JENNY

Come on, let's go take a look.  
Hello, I'm Jenny.

TOM

Tom.

EXT. BOARDWALK - FOLLOWING

From behind Jenny leads Tom with determination.

INT. LOFT - FOLLOWING

The space is open with sparse furnishings.

Jenny with Tom move into an area dominated by various photographs and paintings randomly arranged.

JENNY

Please, have a seat.

Tom sits in a chair.

She moves towards a computer.

INT. COMPUTER - FOLLOWING

Jenny looks at the screen, and then motions to Tom.

Tom moves beside her to look at the screen.

FLASH images of Tom appear.

He looks away from the computer to notice several long distant printed images of him on the beach.

TOM

What's with all these pictures of me?

JENNY

Let's start with curiosity.

TOM

Ok, you've been spying on me.

JENNY

I like to call it observing.

TOM

Well, I don't know...

JENNY

It's just part of my thing. You come here a lot.

TOM

Yes, and usually alone.

JENNY

Except for my long lens.

TOM

Well, I guess so. But, why me?

JENNY

I'm an artist. You may have seen my work. Anyway, my latest is over here...

They move away.

INT. ARTIST WORKTABLE - FOLLOWING

Jenny picks up a photograph.

JENNY

First off, I get a headshot image of a stranger. Here's one.

FLASH headshot of a man.

JENNY

Now, I take this as the only information about him and then the imagination takes over and voila.

She picks up a larger canvas, which is a painted image of the same face with a nude body.

JENNY

Then, the next step is this.

She presents a photo of the same man in the nude.

JENNY

I took this after finishing the painting.

The nude painting and the photograph are next each other.

TOM

You just do men?

JENNY

Oh, no. Ok, now that's three steps. And there's one more.

She presents another nude painting of the same man.

JENNY

Now, here finally I paint based upon the actual nude photo. And that makes four interpretations of the same person. And then hang them next to each other.

TOM

Very interesting.

JENNY

Now, I'm jazzed to do you.

TOM

But, I don't know you and to just take my clothes off.....

JENNY

That's the whole point. We're strangers.

TOM

Maybe, I have to think about this.

JENNY

Ok, Ok. I've thrown a lot at you. I'll get the first phase of you painted, and then take it from there.

She moves to pick up a business card and postcard to give to him.

JENNY

Please go see some of my other work at this gallery.

TOM

I will.

JENNY

What do you do?

TOM

I work in a custom photo lab and  
also a photographer.

JENNY

Great! See how all this is  
connecting.

INT. SUBWAY CAR - FOLLOWING

Tom looks out a window towards another car that moves  
along side on the next track.

EXT. SIDEWALK - EARLY EVENING

Tom walks along a crowded Manhattan street.

EXT. AURA BAR ENTRANCE - FOLLOWING

Tom enters into a laid back Bohemian place.

INT. AURA BAR - FOLLOWING

Friendly patrons greet Tom.

INT. TABLE - FOLLOWING

FRED, a warm, friendly man in his fifties who is Tom's  
uncle, sits as Tom approaches. Fred is a little over  
weight and dressed sloppily.

FRED

Hi, how was the beach?

TOM (Sits.)

Different.

FRED

How?

TOM

I met this woman.

FRED

Ok, Spill it.

TOM

First, the usual? I'll buy the first round.

FRED

Sounds good.

ROSIE, a cute young perky bar maid, interrupts.

ROSIE

Would you guys do me a favor and give me a hug?

They both get up to give her a warm hug.

ROSIE

Thanks, I needed that positive flow. My Mercury is in retrograde.

TOM

And how about your Lincoln?

ROSIE

What? Oh! Very funny, you got me. And how are you?

TOM

It's Friday and I have all next week off.

ROSIE

Well, that calls for a celebration! Same treats?

TOM

Fine with me.

FRED

Ditto.

Rosie walks away.

FRED

Oh, I want to share some recent work.



He refers to the wrapped painting that leans up against the table.

TOM  
Is it finished?

FRED  
No, not yet.

TOM  
Then, wait until later.

FRED  
Oh sure, fine. I just thought you might like to see it.

Fred seems a little confused, but attempts to cover up.

FRED  
About that girl?...

Rosie arrives with the drinks.

ROSIE  
Here we go!

TOM  
Thanks. (Exchanges money.)

FRED  
Cheers!

As she turns to walk away, her foot bumps into Fred's painting that leans against the table.

ROSIE  
Oh, I'm sorry.

FRED  
No damage.

He pulls it out to display.

FRED  
Take a look at my latest.

FLASH on a vague painting of two people in dull colors.

ROSIE

Very interesting. Keep up the good work. I'd love to see it again when you ad color.

FRED

No, it's going to stay that way. I thought it would be interesting to take a color snapshot and paint my impression in black and white.

ROSIE

That's different. I've always liked black and white films, especially on the big screen.

Rosie moves away.

INT. JENNY'S LOFT - FOLLOWING

Jenny gazes at the headshot photo of Tom with moody jazz music in the background.

She props it up near an easel, and then picks up a brush to begin work.

INT. AURA BAR AREA - FOLLOWING

Rosie works as she engages in friendly banter with others.

MAN

Hey Rosie how about going out with me for cigarette break?

ROSIE

I gave those up a long time ago.

MAN

I did too recently. For ten hours while I was asleep!

INT. AURA TABLE AREA - FOLLOWING

Tom and Fred sit with drinks.

Tom points at the painting.

TOM

Are you taking this somewhere?

FRED

Oh no, not particularly. I just thought maybe someone here might like to see it. I showed it to my group the other night.

TOM

Which one?

FRED

Arts Synonymous.

TOM

Arts Anonymous?

FRED

No, not anonymous, but synonymous. It's not a twelve-step program.

TOM

What is the group for?

FRED

Well, it's like a support group for creative people.

TOM

Did they react to your painting?

FRED

Yes, they liked it.

TOM

O.K.

FRED

Yeah! This group is great! They keep praising me or I mean encouraging me. I'm more than just an office clerk.

TOM

Of course. Everybody needs praise. I felt that today.

FRED

Oh, you mean with this girl  
earlier?

TOM

Maybe, I don't know yet.

FRED

Sounds interesting! But, like I've  
told you before. I think Rosie  
likes you.

TOM

I hope not!

FRED

Why?

INT. AURA BAR AREA - FOLLOWING

FLASH on Rosie as she continues her friendly routines at  
the bar.

INT. AURA TABLE AREA - FOLLOWING

Tom with Fred continue.

TOM

She's nice enough, but the head  
always seems to be in the  
clouds...talking about astrology,  
energy fields, peace, love,  
happiness, all that.

FRED

I find that interesting. I don't  
know how much of it to believe, but  
maybe that's all it takes. Just  
believing can feel good.

TOM

Yes, I believe in this drink.

FRED

I'll drink to that. You ready for  
another? My turn.

TOM

Sure.

Fred waves for service.

FRED

Two more please.

INT. AURA BAR AREA - FOLLOWING

FLASH on Rosie as she waves back.

INT. AURA TABLE AREA - FOLLOWING

Fred and Tom relax with jukebox music.

Rosie brings two drinks.

Fred pays for them.

FRED

Thanks a lot.

ROSIE

Anytime. You guys have good  
vibes.

She leaves.

TOM

She always gives us a free round.

FRED

I know. Does she give us the free  
drinks on the rounds you buy or  
me?

TOM

I think mine mostly, but it  
doesn't matter.

FRED

No.

TOM

I'm going to the can.

Tom gets up.

INT. AURA ENTRANCE - FOLLOWING

LINDA, a sexy, middle-aged woman enters.

She looks around and then slowly walks inside.

INT. AURA TABLE AREA - FOLLOWING

Linda stops near Fred to exchange pleasant glances.

She boldly approaches Fred.

She sits down beside him.

She puts her arm around him, and then kisses him on the lips.

WOMAN

Hello.

FRED

Hi.

WOMAN

How are you doing?

FRED

Better. Real good.

She continues to toy with Fred.

INT. AURA RESTROOM - FOLLOWING

Tom washes his hands in the sink next to a toilet stall.

Low VOICES come from within the stall.

MALE VOICE (OS)

Oh, baby you're incredible. Did you miss me?

FEMALE VOICE (OS)

Yes, and always thinking about you.

MALE VOICE (OS)

Honey, let's get outa here.

FEMALE VOICE (OS)  
I'd love that.

MALE VOICE (OS)  
Let's go.

The stall door opens while Tom dries his hands.

EDWARD, a goofy man, walks out to leave the room.

Tom walks to notice the empty stall as he moves out.

INT. AURA BAR AREA - FOLLOWING

Tom walks in to notice with interest Edward by himself at the end of the bar.

INT. AURA TABLE AREA - FOLLOWING

Tom returns to his table.

He picks up his camera while he does a quick take on Fred with Linda.

He moves away with the camera.

INT. AURA BAR AREA - FOLLOWING

Edward sips a drink while Rosie works.

Tom aims and then takes a distant picture of him, which catches Rosie's attention.

She approaches Tom with a silent question.

Tom refers towards Edward as he silently describes something to Rosie.

ROSIE  
Oh my God! What is this? Bi-polar  
in the toilet?

INT. AURA TABLE AREA - FOLLOWING

Tom sits with Linda and Fred.

FRED

Ah, Tom this is. I'm sorry, what's your name?

LINDA

Linda.

FRED

Linda, meet my nephew Tom.

TOM

Hi. Do you know his name?

LINDA

No.

TOM

Linda, meet Fred.

LINDA

Hello Fred.

FRED

Yes. Do you want a drink?

LINDA

Anything you say, as long as it's a screwdriver.

FRED

You got it.

He tries to signal someone at the bar.

TOM

It might be faster to go up there.

FRED

Good idea. I'll be right back.

He knocks over his painting, and then dashes away.

Tom quickly sets the painting back up against the table.

LINDA

What's your name again?



TOM

Tom.

LINDA

It always takes me at least three times to get a new name, so don't be surprised if I ask you again, Tom.

TOM

Do you come in here much?

LINDA

Oh, yes. But, I change my hair color and style a lot.

TOM

Well, then maybe I did see. Do you live and work in the neighborhood?

LINDA

No, not as a rule.

Fred returns with the drinks.

FRED

Here you go!

LINDA

Thanks.

FRED

Here's to friendship!

They click glasses.

Linda drinks fast as Tom and Fred sip.

LINDA (To Fred.)

What's your name again?

FRED

Fred.

LINDA

Let's get outa here!

FRED

O.K.

LINDA (To Tom.)

We'll see you later.

FRED

I need to go to the cash machine anyway. I'll talk to you soon. Have fun.

Linda and Fred exit.

Tom gets up with his drink.

INT. AURA BAR AREA - FOLLOWING

Tom sits next to Edward and then signals for Rosie's attention.

TOM

Did you see that girl Fred left with just now?

ROSIE

Yes, Linda. She comes in here every so often. Does he know her?

TOM

No, and I hope he knows what he's doing.

ROSIE

Me too. I like him.

TOM

Yes, he's family. Hell, I know him better than my dad, whom I never really had.

ROSIE

What happened?

TOM

Oh, he's still around. I don't hate or dislike him, but don't know him. He took off when I was three with my sister.

FLASHBACK twenty five years ago, with a cute toe headed toddler as he plays in a yard, and then interrupted by a car door slam.

A man in a car drives off as a little girl cries.

A little blond girl cries while she sits in the car as it takes off.

FLASHBACK ends.

Back to Bar.

ROSIE

That's heavy.

TOM

Yes, but the relationship with my mom was good. May she rest in peace. Anyway, besides the uncle thing with Fred, we have a friendship.

ROSIE

But, something's changed.

TOM

What?

ROSIE

Fred's not here. This weekly series has a formula change. Is this a spin-off or what?

TOM

So he's gone. He's wherever doing his thing and so am I.

ROSIE

Sounds like a good idea. Maybe, I'll get to know you better without your security blanket.

TOM

What? I don't have anything like that! I never even had one as a kid.

ROSIE

Maybe, that's why you need one now.

TOM

Look, don't back me into a corner here! Let me breathe.

ROSIE

All right. I wasn't trying to take your oxygen away. I was just trying to light a fire.

She moves away.

INT. BANK MACHINE - FOLLOWING

Fred works a transaction while Linda is in the background with others as they wait.

EXT. SIDEWALK - FOLLOWING

Fred tries to keep up with the free spirited Linda as they move down the street.

INT. AURA BAR AREA - FOLLOWING

Tom looks towards Edward next to him.

TOM

How are you doing?

EDWARD

Not bad. This is my first time here.

TOM

Welcome, my name's Tom.

EDWARD

Edward.

TOM

Nice meeting you. I feel like we've met before.

EDWARD

Oh really. I wonder where?

TOM

I don't know, but it will come to me. There's something about your voice. Do you know anybody here?

EDWARD

No, not yet.

TOM

You will. It's a very friendly place. I'll see you around.

Tom walks away.

INT. AURA BAR ENTRANCE - FOLLOWING

Linda, with a confused Fred enters.

Fred follows Linda.

INT. AURA BAR AREA - FOLLOWING

Linda with Fred sit on stools at the bar near Edward.

Fred looks around and then waves at someone.

INT. AURA TABLE AREA - FOLLOWING

Tom alone at a table waves back.

INT. AURA BAR ENTRANCE - FOLLOWING

RICHARD, a well dressed middle-aged man enters.

INT. AURA BAR AREA - FOLLOWING

Richard sits on a stool next to Linda in a familiar way.

INT. AURA BAR ENTRANCE - FOLLOWING

MARIE, a plainly dressed woman enters with a Bible.

She SPEAKS out towards the bar.

MARIE

The devil is working overtime and  
he doesn't take coffee breaks!

INT. AURA BAR AREA - FOLLOWING

Patrons are with drinks.

RICHARD (Loudly.)

Maybe, he can't drink coffee  
because of the caffeine. So, he  
takes cocktail breaks instead. I'd  
like a daiquiri please.

ROSIE

Coming right up.

Marie moves into view.

MARIE

All you sinners have a good laugh,  
while the good Lord up above is  
crying out for your salvation. I  
pray that the "man" up above finds  
a way into all your heathen hearts.  
Praise the Lord!

RICHARD

Here's to salvation!

Linda, Rosie, and Richard applaud Marie.

Richard clicks glasses with Linda.

Fred moves away from the bar.

ROSIE

Very good, Marie! If I was casting the part, it would be yours.

RICHARD

Yes.

LINDA

Bravo!

MARIE

You think so? Well, the audition is tomorrow. Wish me luck.

ROSIE

Or break a leg.

RICHARD

What is it for?

MARIE

An off Broadway play. My cousin, Alice, knows the director's lover real well. And she's going to put in a good word for me.

RICHARD

Oh, yes, connections are everything.

ROSIE

I have a feeling you're going to get it. I charted your moon for tomorrow and it's lined up beautifully with Saturn, which is perfect for a Pisces.

MARIE

Pisces? But, I'm an Aquarius!

ROSIE

You're kidding? I thought you were a Pisces.

MARIE

No.

RICHARD

I'm a Pisces. Maybe, I should audition.

MARIE

Now, that would be funny.

RICHARD

Yes, but I have no interest in the theatre. I prefer the simple life.

ROSIE

I can't believe I got your sign mixed up and hope I'm not slipping. A lot of people depend on me for their charts and predictions.

MARIE

Don't worry about it. Anyway, I think the part is destined for me.

LINDA

Yes, destiny. It's everything.

ROSIE

Are you going to be able to work your late shift all right? What time is the audition?

MARIE

Not until 2:30, so I'll be able to get some winks in. But, it doesn't matter anyway. I sometimes do better at auditions if I'm a little tired. Less anxious and more relaxed.

LINDA

Yes, relaxation. It's everything. It keeps the real self from hiding.

MARIE

Very well put, but it's hard sometimes.

LINDA

I know.



INT. AURA TABLE AREA - FOLLOWING

Fred joins Tom at the table.

TOM

What brings you back?

FRED

It just didn't seem to be working out? She's all over the place. One minute she seems interested, and then the next she gets distracted. I give up.

TOM

Well, don't worry about it. Someone else will come along, or not.

FRED

You ready for a drink?

TOM

Sure, why not.

FRED

It's your round.

TOM

It is? How do you know for sure?

FRED

This is a catch up, because last week I bought one more round than you.

TOM

You're kidding!

FRED

No, not really. But, I was just keeping score that's all.

TOM

I don't understand.

FRED

Look, I'm sorry. I think I've had too much excitement or drink.

TOM

I didn't think I was being unfair.

FRED

You're not. Let's just forget about it.

TOM

O.K. Let's get another drink and we'll buy our own.

FRED

No, I'll get this one.

TOM

But, you said I owe you one.

FRED

No please. We don't owe each other anything.

TOM

No, we don't.

FRED

But, I feel bad because I caused all this fuss. So, I'll buy the drinks.

TOM

All right, all right. But, after that we'll get our own.

FRED

Fine.

Rosie approaches with two drinks.

ROSIE

These are on the house for being such great guys and customers.

TOM

Well, that solves that.

ROSIE

What?

FRED

Never mind. It's something stupid  
I'd like to forget.

INT. AURA BAR AREA - FOLLOWING

Linda, Richard, and Edward carry on.

RICHARD

What does a sailor and a submarine  
and have in common?

LINDA

No idea.

EDWARD

What?

RICHARD

They are both full of semen.

INT. AURA DANCE FLOOR - FOLLOWING

A DJ sets up some AV equipment.

A banner reads, "Disco Friday at the AURA".

EXT. OCEAN BEACH - FOLLOWING

A dark view of the waves and shore.

INT. JENNY'S LOFT - FOLLOWING

Jenny stands to look at the painting she works on.

INT. AURA TABLE AREA - FOLLOWING

Rosie stands at the Table.

TOM

You said something was in  
retrograde. Well, it feels like a  
full moon too.

ROSIE

It's a strange night, but the moon is not full. It feels like a Saturday night, because that's when Linda and Richard usually come in.

TOM

I've never come in on a Saturday.

FRED

I have.

TOM

I didn't know that.

FRED

Sure, a few times.

ROSIE

Say, I just got off my shift. Can I join you guys?

TOM

Sure.

ROSIE

I'll be right back.

She moves away.

INT. AURA BAR AREA - FOLLOWING

Marie sets up for her shift near Edward, Linda, Richard, and others.

Rosie mixes a drink as louder disco music begins to play.

INT. AURA TABLE AREA - FOLLOWING

Tom and Fred continue.

TOM

Now's your chance.

FRED

What?

TOM

Get to know Rosie better.

FRED

She's more interested in you and closer to the same age.

TOM

Don't be so sure. And age doesn't matter. It's about connection.

Rosie returns with a drink.

ROSIE

Party time!

FRED

Cheers!

ROSIE

What happened with you and Linda?

FRED

Nothing much. She looks like what I want, but it's not working out.

ROSIE

Doesn't sound like a good night.

FRED

I've had better.

ROSIE

Well, I'm here to help change that. Come on Tom, how about a dance?

TOM

All right.

Rosie and Tom move away.

INT. JENNY'S LOFT - FOLLOWING

Jenny opens the door to CHAD, her boyfriend, followed by a kiss.

CHAD  
How's things?

JENNY  
I've been working; so let's take  
a break.

INT. AURA DANCE FLOOR - FOLLOWING

With a few other people, Rosie and Tom dance to Disco music.

The happy, loose Linda and Richard join them.

Linda's dance moves quickly becomes sexual, with Richard as well.

Linda focuses on something off the dance floor.

She moves away.

INT. AURA TABLE AREA - FOLLOWING

Linda approaches Fred and then seductively pulls him up.

INT. JENNY'S LOFT - FOLLOWING

While Chad intently looks at the painting, Jenny comes up behind with drinks.

JENNY  
What do you think? It's coming  
along. I just met him today.

CHAD  
You have put his face to my body!  
What's going on here?

JENNY  
I don't know what his body looks  
like yet. It's all imagination,  
so far.

INT. AURA DANCE FLOOR - FOLLOWING

Linda pulls Fred into the dance, where she continues to tease and taunt him.

INT. JENNY'S LOFT - FOLLOWING

Jenny and Chad continue to look at the painting.

CHAD

But, that's my body!

JENNY

Well, maybe similar, but it's not you.

CHAD

Oh, yes it is!

JENNY

It's just that I've seen your body a lot. It's in my mind.

CHAD

Ok, but what is this project? Doing nudes of strange men. It's porno!

JENNY

Look, I've done women too. It's an art installation about identity.

She moves to other paintings nearby next to their headshots and then gestures towards them with explanation.

JENNY

Do you see where I'm going?

CHAD

Not exactly, but maybe I will.

JENNY

Or maybe not, but it will be exciting to see all of these on display.

CHAD

Yes, it's unique.

JENNY

And so are you. That's what this is all about.

CHAD

Yeah, but it looked like you were putting my body with another face. Like trying to improve on me or something.

JENNY

Oh, no honey. But, if that's how you interpret it, that's ok too.

INT. AURA DANCE FLOOR - FOLLOWING

They dance in a fever pitch, when Linda screams out.

LINDA

Take me home!

She collapses and then passes out on the floor.

Fred rushes to her, followed by Rosie, Richard, and Tom.

Fred tries to lift her head.

ROSIE

Don't move her.

TOM

Yeah, maybe something's broken.

FRED

We've got to do something!

RICHARD

I know CPR.

TOM

She doesn't need mouth to mouth.

RICHARD

I didn't say I was going to put my mouth on her, Mr. Doctor!



TOM

Just calm down! We don't know what's wrong!

RICHARD

All right. If you need help, I'll be at the bar.

He walks off in a huff, and then Marie calls out from the bar.

MARIE (OS)

Do you want me to call 911?

ROSIE

Maybe. But, wait a minute. Pat her face.

Fred pats Linda's face after which she responds with moans.

LINDA

Help me! Help me! Take me away!

FRED

Where?

LINDA

Anywhere, anywhere!

ROSIE

Let's see if we can get her up on her feet. I don't think anything is broken. She's just had too much of whatever.

They all help Linda get up.

FRED

Where does she live?

ROSIE

I don't know. Does anyone here know?

No response.

FRED

I can take her to my place around the corner. She can rest or maybe I can call a doctor.

TOM

I'll come with you.

FRED

No, I can handle it. I live on the first floor.

TOM

What's that got to do with anything?

FRED

I won't have any trouble getting her into the apartment.

TOM

So, what happens after you get there? You don't know her. It's just better if the two of us are there.

FRED

Why?

TOM

Two heads are better than one.

FRED

You're right.

TOM

Then, let's go.

FRED

Wait. Linda's head and mine make two. That's enough.

TOM

You might think so, but I would feel better.....

FRED

No! I'm sorry, but this isn't about you feeling better. Linda and I will be fine.

ROSIE

Let's not argue. They should be all right. She needs to rest and food maybe. Do you have food?

FRED

Yes, don't worry.

INT. AURA BAR ENTRANCE - FOLLOWING

Fred moves slowly with Linda towards the door.

ROSIE (OS)

Call if you need anything.

FRED (OS)

I will.

Fred and Linda Exit.

INT. AURA BAR AREA - FOLLOWING

An upset Richard drinks next to Edward.

EDWARD

Fasten your seat belts! It's going to be a bumpy night!

This flawless imitation of Bette Davis gets Richards's quick attention.

RICHARD

And you're fucking crazy!

INT. AURA TABLE AREA - FOLLOWING

Rosie sits with Tom at the table.

TOM

How well do you know Linda?

ROSIE

Just a little. She's sort of a free spirit.

TOM

He could be in for trouble.

ROSIE

No, Linda is harmless.

TOM

How do you know?

ROSIE

I'm going on instinct.

TOM

Well, it could be wrong. Forget the moon, stars, and instincts. Look at the facts. We don't know anything about Linda.....

ROSIE

There's nothing wrong with the moon, stars, or my instincts! I trust them and usually get into trouble when I don't. Don't you think Fred can take care of himself?

TOM

No! He's too trusting.

ROSIE

And you're not trusting enough! What perfect compliments.

TOM

Come on. We're talking about Fred, not me.

ROSIE

Maybe, we should be talking about you.

EXT. SIDEWALK - FOLLOWING

Fred gently guides Linda.

INT. JENNY'S BEDROOM - FOLLOWING

Jenny with Chad lay silently, but distantly next to each other in bed.

INT. FRED'S APARTMENT - FOLLOWING

Fred leads Linda into his small cluttered place.

INT. AURA TABLE AREA - FOLLOWING

Rosie and Tom sit at the table.

ROSIE

I truly believe that Fred is just trying to help someone in need and it will probably make him feel good.

TOM

You don't know him like I do. He has a long history of getting taken for a ride.

ROSIE

Then, why didn't you stop him?

TOM

I'm not about to tell him how to live his life.

ROSIE

So, you're telling me about it instead. Or, what are we talking about? Are you trying to deny Fred happiness?

TOM

No, of course not. I hope he's happy with Linda or anybody else, but someone like you would be better for him.

ROSIE

You've decided this for him?

TOM  
I even told him that.

ROSIE  
Did he agree?

TOM  
Yes, but he's shy.

ROSIE  
Oh, that's no excuse. Everyone is shy. (Pause.) Would you mind massaging my neck a little?

TOM  
I'm not that good at it.

ROSIE  
Don't worry. Whatever you do will be fine. I just need some outside touching.

Tom begins to massage her neck.

TOM  
I can feel some knots.

ROSIE  
Yes, but I think they're going away. Linda just might be the ticket for Fred, even more than me. Although, we both know that I'm God's gift to all males.

Marie approaches and then begins to massage Tom's neck.

MARIE  
Let's have a three way.

TOM  
Go right ahead.

MARIE  
No problem. Besides, I had to get away from the bar for a minute.

ROSIE  
What, Irving again?

MARIE  
Yes, he won't quit.

TOM  
Who's that?

MARIE  
Don't look now, but he's at the  
far end of the bar.

FLASH on an older MAN who sits and leers at the bar  
towards Marie.

MARIE  
He's madly in love or lust with  
me and won't give up.

TOM  
I guess you're not interested.

MARIE  
Hell no! I'm a happily married  
woman. See you later.

Marie moves away.

ROSIE  
Thanks for the massage. It felt  
great.

TOM  
My pleasure.

ROSIE  
You have nice hands. You can tell  
a lot about a person from their  
hands. I could give you a reading  
sometime.

TOM  
A hand reading?

ROSIE  
Yes, but it's usually called a  
palm reading.

TOM

You've got quite a few skills and talents.

ROSIE

Oh, maybe a few. (Pause.) Would you like to come over to my place?

TOM

Not just yet.

ROSIE

O.K., whenever you're ready.

TOM

It's a deal. Time to go.

He gets up.

ROSIE

Oh, before I forget. I want to buy one of your prints.

TOM

Great. Which one?

ROSIE

I have one in mind, but maybe I should look at your book.

TOM

Sure. I'll bring it in soon.

ROSIE

Good. See you later.

TOM

Yes, soon.

EXT. SIDEWALK - FOLLOWING

Tom walks with his camera.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING FRONT DOOR - FOLLOWING

Tom stands ready to push the door buzzer of Fred Evans.



He changes his mind, and then walks away.

INT. FRED'S LIVING ROOM - LATER

In the cluttered room, popular music plays.

A woozy Linda gets up from the couch.

INT. STEREO - FOLLOWING

Linda changes the station to find a piano concerto.

INT. FRED'S LIVING ROOM - FOLLOWING

Linda returns to the couch.

Fred enters with a glass of water.

FRED

Here's some aspirin.

Linda swallows them with the water.

LINDA

Thanks.

FRED

No problem. Did you like your dinner?

FLASH on a half empty frozen dinner tray on the coffee table.

LINDA

It was fine. I'm full. I forgot how big those "hungry man dinners" were.

FRED

They sure are. I like all three-chicken, meatloaf, and turkey. You get more food with the turkey because of the dressing. But, sometimes the turkey gets dry if I let it heat too long. (Pause.) This is nice music.

LINDA

Yes, anything with a piano.

FRED

It's relaxing.

LINDA

I used to play.

FRED

Play what?

LINDA

The piano.

FRED

I wouldn't have guessed that about you.

LINDA

Why not?

FRED

Oh, I don't know. I really didn't look at your hands.

Fred picks up her hands to look at them.

FRED

Well, sure enough you have piano fingers.

LINDA

Yes, I guess so. I never understood what that meant.

FRED

Strong.

LINDA

I thought it was long.

FRED

Yes. Strong and long. Both.

LINDA

I guess so.

Linda gets up.

INT. STEREO - FOLLOWING

Linda changes the station to slow dance music.

INT. LIVING ROOM - FOLLOWING

She brings Fred up to dance slowly and closely.

FRED

I'm not really very good at this.

LINDA

Just feel the music.

FRED

I'll try.

LINDA

No try. Just do it.

FRED

Oh...

LINDA

There's something different about you.

FRED

I hope that's good.

LINDA

You're nice. You like to please, don't you?

FRED

Yes, I've been known to. (Pause.) You know my being here now is unusual. I'm usually still at the bar.

LINDA

I like that trait.

FRED

What? Going to the bar every Friday night?

LINDA

No, pleasing people.

EXT. SIDEWALK - FOLLOWING

Tom ambles along on a quiet, dark street.

A sexy female VOICE interrupts.

VOICE (OS)

Hi honey.

EXT. WALL - FOLLOWING

BETTY, a sexy woman with heavy makeup and tight clothes leans up against a wall.

BETTY

How's it going?

TOM

Ok.

BETTY

You're cute. You shouldn't be alone. Do you want a date?

TOM

No, not now.

BETTY

Oh, come on. You can take advantage Of my Friday night special. Any two things for the price of one.

TOM

No thanks, anyway.

BETTY

All right, but maybe some other time. I do house calls.

She goes into her purse to give him a business card.

BETTY

Here you go. Anytime, just leave a message for my cleaning service. The price list is on there in code. I'm sure you will figure it out.

TOM

Ok. Take care.

She notices the camera.

BETTY

Would you like to take a picture of me?

TOM

Sure.

She primps up in a pose.

He takes a picture.

BETTY (Male voice)

Now that should be a great shot.

FLASH on a surprised Tom.

BETTY (Male voice)

I told you, it's two for the price of one. With two or more possibilities, if you get my drift. May I have a copy of that photo? Just between us guys. Please?

TOM

Sure, I've got your card. And there's someone I met tonight who might be right up your alley.

BETTY (Female voice.)

Ooh, great! The more the merrier.

INT. FRED'S APARTMENT - FOLLOWING

Linda and Fred sit closely on the sofa.

LINDA

I've done things to make me feel good. But, I don't think I've ever really felt them deep inside. Maybe, you can feel good without really feeling it. I don't know what I'm talking about.

FRED

Well, don't look at me. I'm no expert about feeling good. (Pause.) But, there's something new going on here. What made you come to me in the bar tonight?

LINDA

Your eyes were like magnets. And then you were like one of those crackling fireplace fires. Warm, cozy, and hard to leave. I felt like a kid again.

FRED

Yeah, but you kissed me like a woman, who knew what she wanted.

LINDA

Well, I guess I felt like a kid and a woman all at once.

Pause.

LINDA

What are you feeling right now?

FRED

Afraid. You're beautiful, practically my ideal woman, and we're alone. Boy, what a fantasy I could have.

LINDA

You can have your fantasy after  
I leave. I'm not a video. Right  
now, I'm here.

INT. APARTMENT - FOLLOWING

SUSAN, a pretty sleepy young woman in a bathrobe, opens a  
door to an anxious Tom.

SUSAN

What ...Come in.

TOM

Sorry, it's so late.

SUSAN

That's all right. Nice surprise.  
But, this is your Friday night  
thing.

TOM

I know, but I just had to see you.

SUSAN

Good. Are you hungry? I've got some  
of your Lasagna.

TOM

No, not really.

He passionately kisses her.

She breaks away from.

SUSAN

Ok, just relax and slow down a  
minute. This is a surprise.

TOM

Sorry.

Tom backs away with frustration.

INT. FRED'S BEDROOM - LATER

With squeals of laughter, Linda and Fred run around the cluttered room.

Linda tickles Fred without mercy.

He pleads for her to stop.

She continues around the bed and all over the room, until they land on the bed.

EXT. BEACH - MORNING

A beautiful sunrise looks out over the ocean.

INT. JENNY'S LOFT - FOLLOWING

Jenny with Chad quietly have coffee at the table.

INT. FRED'S BEDROOM - FOLLOWING

Linda with Fred are in bed wrapped up in comfortable slumber.

INT. SUSAN'S BEDROOM - FOLLOWING

Tom restlessly tosses in the bed.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DREAM

A lively, crowded party takes place with Tom in view.

A man with a gun bursts into the room, and then tells the crowd to get down on the floor.

Chaos with screams as everybody scrambles to find safety.

Tom lays down in terror next to the others as gunshots ring out.

End of DREAM.

Back to Susan's BEDROOM.

Tom bolts up in the bed with Jane in the background.



INT. FRED'S BEDROOM - FOLLOWING

Linda and Fred wake up next to each other with a warm afterglow.

INT. FRED'S LIVING ROOM - LATER

Linda wanders around to look at various framed things on the walls that are crammed together.

Fred walks into the room with coffee.

FRED

Here we go.

LINDA

You've joined a lot of groups.

FRED

Yes. It keeps me busy and out of trouble.

LINDA

But, some kinds of trouble are fun and good for you. You know what I mean?

FRED

I think so.

LINDA

It's very interesting that you joined Jehovah Witnesses.

FRED

Oh yeah, I accidentally buzzed one of them in, one thing lead to another and then I ended up joining for a year.

LINDA

What happened after a year?

FRED

It just wasn't me. I felt like moving on to something else.

LINDA

It's good to keep moving.

FRED

I'd like to move on and join your club.

LINDA

Well, you did last night.

FRED

That was quite an initiation ceremony.

LINDA

And, I hope there's more.

FRED

Me too. I want to keep joining, and joining, and joining.

LINDA

Good, because there are many more rituals to come, which we can makeup as we go.

INT. SUSAN'S BEDROOM - FOLLOWING

Tom waits on the phone for an answer.

INT. FRED'S APARTMENT - FOLLOWING

Linda answers the phone with a busy Fred as he sets up some paintings.

LINDA

Hello.

In a SPLIT SCREEN, Tom talks on his phone.

TOM

Hi, this is Tom.

LINDA

Oh, yes. Remember me?

TOM

Yes, I guess you are feeling better.

LINDA

For sure. Fred is taking real good care of me.

TOM

Good. I'd like to talk to him.

LINDA

Sure.

She signals to Fred, which brings him to the phone.

FRED

Hello?

TOM

Hi, it's me.

FRED

Good morning.

TOM

Yes, how are things?

FRED

So far, so good. It's just what the doctor ordered.

TOM

You had to call a doctor?

FRED

No, it's just a saying. Linda and I are doing fine.

TOM

Is there anything you need?

FRED

I can't think of anything right now.

TOM

Well, if you do, call me.

FRED

I will and thanks for checking.

TOM

You're welcome.

INT. SUSAN'S BEDROOM - FOLLOWING

Tom gets dressed as Susan looks on.

SUSAN

Is Fred Ok?

TOM

I don't know.

SUSAN

Do you know my name?

TOM

Ah, come on. What's this all about?

SUSAN

You come in here late without saying much and have sex with me like I'm just some casual nothing.

TOM

Look, I didn't mean to do that. I've just got a lot on my mind. It was a strange day.

SUSAN

How? Wasn't it your regular Friday?

TOM

No, I met this girl at the beach who wants to paint me in the nude, Fred got picked up in the bar, I met this prostitute who's a guy. And that's just for starters.

SUSAN

And, which of those do you want to get involved with?

TOM

I don't know. It's just a little confusing.

SUSAN

Sounds exciting. And, then seeing me after all that must have seen very routine and boring.

TOM

Maybe, I don't know.

SUSAN

Ok. Well, I don't want to be responsible for boring up your life.

TOM

That's not what I meant.

SUSAN

Well, when you figure it out let me know. But, please don't just pretend to be with me or just go through the motions.

TOM

No, and I'm sorry.

INT. FRED'S APARTMENT - FOLLOWING

Linda and Fred look at his paintings on display. They are mostly big, colorful, whimsical, animal depictions.

LINDA

They are you.

FRED

How?

LINDA

Innocent and simple.

FRED

Some people have called them naïve.

LINDA

Yes, and it's beautiful. Hang on to that.

FRED

Thanks. I would like to give you one.

LINDA

I would love that. A gift from one innocent to another.

FRED

It's hard for me to think of you as innocent.

LINDA

Oh, but I am. Why don't you paint me as an animal?

FRED

Great idea! What?

LINDA

A tigress.

She growls with a fierce look.

She leaps towards him.

INT. TOM'S APARTMENT - FOLLOWING

Tom hits the answering button on his machine.

He listens to the elderly voice of GRANDMA JANIE.

GRANDMA JANIE (OS)

Hi Honey. Grandma Janie here. How are you doing? Spring is springing. You wouldn't believe how the garden is growing already. It may come in and move me out. Anyway, I hope you are doing well and would love to hear from you. With love, Bye.

Tom moves towards his camera on the table next to the business card and postcard for Jenny.

He pulls out a book with his name and contact information on the first page.

Various photographs appear as the plastic covered pages turn. They are beautiful depictions of natural settings on the beach, sunsets, etc.

He closes the book.

He moves away.

INT. COMPUTER - FOLLOWING

Tom brings up the recent images of Jenny, Edward, and Betty.

EXT. LOWER EAST SIDE-NY - SUNDAY AFTERNOON

Linda with Fred walk on a sidewalk.

EXT. FRONT BUILDING STEPS - FOLLOWING

Linda with Fred walk towards a front door.

INT. BUILDING STAIRWAY - FOLLOWING

Linda with Fred climb stairs.

INT. APARTMENT DOOR - FOLLOWING

Linda with a weary Fred enter into a cluttered, dark room as quiet music plays.

KIDDER, a scruffy guy, sleeps on the couch.

Linda signals Fred to be quiet as they move into the room.

Kidder abruptly awakens.

KIDDER  
What?

LINDA

Sorry.

KIDDER

That's ok. Hi baby. How's it hangin'?

LINDA

Real good. Meet Fred. My new knight in shining armor.

KIDDER

Oh yeah, but I thought I was.

LINDA

But, of course. But, a damsel such as myself needs more than one. Specialties you know.

KIDDER

All right. Hi! (To Fred) I'm kidder.

FRED

Hi.

KIDDER

Nice to meet you.

INT. BEDROOM - FOLLOWING

Linda pulls out some clothes from the closet.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

Linda, in another outfit, approaches Fred and Kidder.

LINDA (To Kidder)

Do you want to come out with us?

KIDDER

Not right now. I've got some things to do.

FRED

Maybe some other time.



KIDDER  
For sure.

She gives Kidder a big sexy kiss as Fred looks on.

EXT. SIDEWALK - LATER

Linda with Fred window shop.

INT. PIANO STORE - FOLLOWING

Linda skillfully plays a grand piano, with onlookers and Fred as a concentrated audience.

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

Tom looks for an address on a street with Jenny's card.

INT. ART GALLERY - FOLLOWING

With a small crowd, Tom looks at various collage artworks on the walls, by Jenny Oliver, which combine photography and painting.

He is interrupted by Jenny's voice from behind.

JENNY (OS)  
What a surprise!

Tom turns around to find Jenny.

TOM  
Well, I guess so.

JENNY  
I'm glad you're here.

TOM  
Me too. It's very impressive.

JENNY  
Thank you. It's fun to sneak in and maybe get some reactions.

TOM  
Well, you got mine.

JENNY

Yes. The first two stages of you are finished. Now, it's time for your nude photo.

TOM

I'm thinking about it.

JENNY

All right, no pressure. But, it's really not about thinking. Hope to see you soon.

TOM

All of me, right?

JENNY

But, of course.

EXT. ROLLER COASTER - TUESDAY

Linda with Fred move up and down in a car.

EXT. BOARDWALK - FOLLOWING

Linda with Fred walk and then stop.

A MAN with a marionette puppet performs as a boom box plays music with a small crowd.

INT. PHOTO BOOTH - FOLLOWING

FLASH on a series of various playful snapshots of Linda with Fred.

EXT. PHOTO BOOTH - FOLLOWING

They exit when Linda gets an idea.

She pulls Fred to follow.

INT. DOOR - FOLLOWING

Linda with Fred are at the door when a surprised Jenny opens it.

JENNY

Oh, hi. Great! I tried to reach you.

INT. JENNY'S LOFT - FOLLOWING

Jenny shows a nude painting of Linda to them.

JENNY

Here it is. The imagination of what you're body might look like based on the headshot.

LINDA

Very interesting. There is some similarity.

JENNY

Oh really, but now I need a nude photo of you for the last step to paint that.

LINDA

Oh sure, that's right. No problem.

Linda begins to disrobe as a confused Fred looks on.

FRED

Are you going to show it?

JENNY

Yes, soon, but I have a few more people to finish.

LINDA

You should do Fred?

JENNY

Sure. I'll get the camera.

She moves away to get the camera

She returns to Fred.

JENNY

Here we go.

Fred smiles, and then she takes a few close-up head shots.

FRED

Wow. Now, what happens?

JENNY

I do a nude painting of your body from imagination. Then, a nude photo to compare, followed by another painting based on the photo. Are you game?

FRED

Well.....

LINDA

Of course, we'll be in the show together.

FRED

Sure, sounds good, but this posing nude thing.

LINDA

Don't worry honey. I'll come with you and hold your hand or what ever else it takes to relax you. Or think about it as a new group to join.

FRED

Ok.

JENNY

That's the spirit. Now it's your turn.

Jenny aims the camera at the nude, relaxed Linda, and then clicks the camera.

INT. TOM'S APARTMENT - DAY

Tom enters, and then moves to the answering machine to play back.

The first message is from Grandma Janie, in a weakened and confused condition.

GRANDMA JANIE (OS)

Hi dear. I am planning a trip. I  
hope to hear from you before then.  
Love you, bye.

Tom gets on the telephone, starts to punch in a number,  
quickly changes his mind, and then moves away.

INT. BUS TERMINAL - LATER

Tom, with a backpack, boards a commuter bus.

EXT. BUS - FOLLOWING

Tom exits at a rural stop.

EXT. SIDEWALK - FOLLOWING

Tom walks on a quiet tree lined street, with small widely  
spaced houses.

EXT. FRONT DOOR - FOLLOWING

Tom rings the bell, but no answer.

He knocks, waits for a response, but no answer.

EXT. SIDE OF HOUSE - FOLLOWING

Tom moves down a path towards the backyard.

EXT. BACKYARD - FOLLOWING

Tom looks into the over-grown yard, which is a mixture of  
healthy flowers, shrubbery, and weeds.

TOM

Janie, are you there?

Tom moves further until he finds a disheveled elderly  
woman with bright white hair and heavily wrinkled face, as  
she dozes in a lawn chair.

Two cats are nearby who scatter as he approaches.

TOM

Janie?

She lazily opens her eyes to discover Tom.

GRANDMA JANIE  
Yes, oh what a surprise!

TOM  
It's been too long.

GRANDMA JANIE  
It's so good to see you.

They hug.

TOM  
How are you?

GRANDMA JANIE  
I've been better, but that's ok.

She starts to cough.

TOM  
A cold?

GRANDMA JANIE  
Nah! I don't know what it is.

She reaches for a pack of "Lucky Strike" cigarettes on the table, and then takes one out to light.

GRANDMA JANIE  
Want one?

TOM  
No. What's this about a trip?

GRANDMA JANIE  
Great idea, isn't it?

TOM (Refers to yard.)  
Sure. The place sure looks healthy  
around here.

GRANDMA JANIE  
I know, isn't it beautiful?

TOM

And I came prepared for some fun.

Tom pulls out a pair of gardening gloves from his backpack.

FLASH on Tom as he weeds, prunes, and rakes in the yard.

Later, he stops to wipe off the sweat and then surveys the progress.

GRANDMA JANIE (OS)

Ok, break time.

EXT. LAWN CHAIRS - FOLLOWING

Janie sits while smoking with a drink.

Tom takes a couple of close-up pictures of her.

GRANDMA JANIE

Now, that you've broken the camera, do you want a shot?

TOM

Well, there's still more to do. I'm just getting started.

GRANDMA JANIE

No hurry. Come on, let's catch up. I'm going to pay you.

TOM

No, you're not.

GRANDMA JANIE

Yes, I am.

TOM

No. I'm not here for that. Just to see you.

GRANDMA JANIE

Come on, sit down and relax.

She pours some "Jack Daniels" into a shot glass and offers it to him. They click glasses.

GRANDMA JANIE

Cheers! Here's to ten years ago,  
when you lived in town and I  
answered your ad for gardening work.

TOM

That long? I miss this and still  
love it.

Tom moves to his backpack and then pulls out his book of  
prints.

Janie thumbs through it.

GRANDMA JANIE

You do connect well to nature. They  
are beautiful.

TOM

Choose any of them you want and I'll  
get them framed.

GRANDMA JANIE

I will. Something is missing though.

TOM

What?

GRANDMA JANIE

No people.

TOM

I know, but I'm just getting started  
with that. I took some recently and  
it's a whole new thing.

GRANDMA JANIE

Good, because you don't want to  
ignore your own species.

TOM

No.

GRANDMA JANIE

Now, help me plan the trip.



TOM

Sure. How?

GRANDMA JANIE

Imagine it with me.

TOM

Where?

GRANDMA JANIE

I'm not physically going anywhere.

TOM

What do you mean?

GRANDMA JANIE

But, these are ...

Points to her head and then her heart.

INT. AURA BAR - NIGHT

On the following Friday night, Rosie talks on a cell phone near the bar.

INT. AURA ENTRANCE - FOLLOWING

Tom enters and then waves to Rosie.

INT. AURA TABLE AREA - FOLLOWING

Tom sits at a table.

Richard approaches him.

RICHARD

About what happened last Friday with that CPR thing. Don't worry, I forgive you.

TOM

I'm not asking you to forgive me.

RICHARD

Oh, let's just forget it. I forgive you and you forgive me. O.K.?

TOM

Fine.

RICHARD

What's your name?

TOM

Tom, and yours?

RICHARD

Richard love never fails.

TOM

Maybe so, but my name is Tom, not Richard.

RICHARD

I know. You just told me and my name is Richard Love Never Fails.

TOM

What?

RICHARD

Richard Love Never Fails.

TOM

You've got to be kidding.

RICHARD

No, Richard is my first name.  
Love and Never are the middle names.  
Fails is my last name.

TOM

Did your parents name you?

RICHARD

No, I did. I took the words "Love  
Never Fails" from a greeting card,  
then added my first name. I design  
cards.

TOM

What was your old name?

RICHARD

I don't want to tell you, because it might spoil the illusion. Would you like a new name?

TOM

No, I don't think so.

RICHARD

What would be a good name for you besides Tom? Daiquiri! That's a great first name! Wonderful sound.

TOM

How did you come up with that?

RICHARD

It's my favorite drink. I just finished one.

TOM

Would you like another?

RICHARD

Sounds great.

Rosie moves to join them with drinks.

ROSIE

Marie says this is on the house and since I'm off tonight, this is a free delivery.

RICHARD

Oh how sweet. Thank you so much. I love that word!

ROSIE

What?

RICHARD

Free. It has brought such pleasure, Turmoil and usually means an expensive price tag later.

ROSIE

Not this time sweetie. Oh! I feel better now. I just talked to my numerologist and he said Linda and Fred are very safe and right for each other. It's almost a perfect match.

RICHARD

How did the numerologist figure this out?

ROSIE

By counting the letters in their names. At first, he wanted both the first and last names. But, I forgot Fred's and I don't know Linda's.

RICHARD

Without the last names, doesn't that cut down on the accuracy?

ROSIE

Well, normally it would, but when I told him their first names, he freaked. They are extremely strong and compatible. The first F, in Fred comes before L, for Linda in the alphabet. Also, Fred has four letters, Linda has five, which makes for continuity when the names are together. You see, four letters, Fred, then five letters, Linda. It makes sense, doesn't it?

RICHARD

Well, based on those names, yes. But, there's only one slight problem.

ROSIE

What?

RICHARD

Linda is not her real name.

ROSIE

What is it?

RICHARD

I don't know. She likes to be called Linda, her mother's name, who died suddenly when she was little. Maybe, it helps to keep the memory alive, because they were very close and it was very traumatic.

TOM

Well, I guess that theory is shot to hell!

ROSIE

Oh. I still think they'll be O.K. This guy felt some strong positive energy around them.

RICHARD

At least we know that Linda's dead mother and Fred are compatible.

INT. FRED'S BATHROOM - FOLLOWING

Fred sits on the toilet with pen in hand while he quietly reads from a tablet.

FRED (OS)

Dear Linda, I 'm not very good at this, but wanted to further express how you make me feel. So, that you can put this somewhere and keep it. I've never been happier and want it to go on forever. But, don't go away yet please and this is not goodbye, but instead many more hellos.....

A large thump against the closed door interrupts.

FRED

Ok, I'll be right out. I'm just about finished.

He flushes the toilet.

INT. AURA TABLE AREA - FOLLOWING

Rosie, Tom, and Richard sit at a table with drinks as the evening continues.

RICHARD  
I met someone recently.

FLASHBACK- DAY

A handsome young man tries to hail a cab on a busy New York street a short distance away from Richard as he does the same.

As they continue to try for cabs separately as strangers, their eyes meet into a magic connection.

INT. CAB - FOLLOWING

They ride together with a glow of anticipation.

INT. APARTMENT - FOLLOWING

Richard leads him in.

INT. LIVING ROOM - FOLLOWING

On a sofa Richard and the man share drinks as they speak with dreamy eyes.

They embrace into a kiss.

INT. BEDROOM - FOLLOWING

They make love in bed with a gentle, sensuous manner.

Later, they are asleep cuddled together.

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

Richard opens his eyes to discover that the man is gone.

He lifts up to look around the room to see that nobody is there.

He gets out of bed.

INT. LIVING ROOM - FOLLOWING

Richard frantically looks around the room to see that no one is there.

He sadly sits down on the sofa to look off into the distance.

FLASHBACK ends.

Back to Bar.

RICHARD

All I wanted was to give and share myself in a loving way. But, that wasn't enough.

ROSIE

That's too bad.

RICHARD

It's amazing how one minute you care for a person and think they care for you. There's magic in the air. Then, something weird happens and that's all changed. Everything gets turned over.

ROSIE

No explaining, but feels like some kind of curse.

RICHARD

Oh yes, those dreaded curses.  
(Pause.) Have you ever had those?

TOM

Oh yes, of course. But, it's more a feeling of restlessness for something more. Maybe, I'm looking for it here every Friday night.

RICHARD

Don't' you look for this "something more thing" during the rest of the week too?

TOM  
God, I hope so.

Marie approaches with a ringing cell phone.

MARIE (To Rosie)  
Here hon. You left this at the bar.

ROSIE  
Thanks.

She answers it while Richard and Tom look on.

ROSIE  
Excuse me guys, I need to find some  
quiet to deal with an energy  
alignment. Be back soon.

She moves away.

RICHARD  
Ok, time for another cig break.  
Would you like to join me?

TOM  
Sure.

EXT. AURA PATIO - FOLLOWING

Tom and Richard stand with their drinks.

TOM  
You regret taking that guy home?

RICHARD  
No. Part of what happened felt good.  
I took a chance. I'll do it again.  
But, maybe next time it will work  
out better. Maybe, even find Mr.  
Right. I have been in love before.  
That is most important.

TOM  
Well, good luck.

RICHARD  
Thanks.



EXT. AURA BAR - FOLLOWING

Rosie talks on a cell phone.

ROSIE

Yes, that's right, always seek the white light. Just plug in and share the energy.

She waves to someone.

EXT. SIDEWALK - FOLLOWING

Jenny walks alone nearby as she catches Rosie's attention in front of the bar.

Jenny and Rosie hug.

ROSIE

What a surprise!

JENNY

Is this the place you work and told me about?

ROSIE

Yes, come in.

JENNY

Sure.

EXT. AURA PATIO - FOLLOWING

Richard and Tom are still together.

RICHARD

What are you trying to find?

TOM

I'm just trying to relax and have a good time.

RICHARD

It's not working.

TOM

What do you mean?

RICHARD  
You're already too relaxed.

TOM  
How can you be too relaxed?

RICHARD  
You could be dead.

TOM  
I'm very much alive.

RICHARD  
Well, you're breathing. But, your  
life is like sub-zero.

TOM  
How do you know? You don't know  
me well enough.

RICHARD  
No, I don't. But, that's what  
I feel.

TOM  
It's not true!

RICHARD  
Maybe it's not, but it's something  
to think about as we enjoy our  
drinks.

INT. AURA BAR AREA - FOLLOWING

Jenny with Rosie move away from the bar with drinks.

EXT. AURA PATIO - FOLLOWING

Tom with Richard continue.

TOM  
Well, here's something else to  
think about. You're hiding behind  
fake names.

RICHARD

Now, wait a minute! It's just a name, but I'm the real thing behind it.

TOM

Oh yeah, I'm not so sure. It looks like false advertising.

RICHARD

Look, I may be a lot of things! But, I'm not a fake. And how about you?

TOM

What?

RICHARD

You come in here every Friday night and repeat the same old thing. It's safe here and that's all you want. You just float through a haze that disappears when you leave. You don't experience or feel it! It's gone when the alcohol wears off.

Jenny with Rosie enter to see Richard and Tom in an animated conversation.

ROSIE

Oh, there they are.

JENNY

I met him.....

They begin to move towards them, and then Jenny stops Rosie.

JENNY

Let's wait a minute. This looks good.

They stop to observe Richard and Tom without notice from a distance.

TOM

You can't tell me what I'm experiencing.

RICHARD

What are you experiencing tonight?

TOM

I found you to talk to or argue with.

RICHARD

No, I found you.

TOM

We're talking together, so why does it matter who did the finding?

RICHARD

Do you want more than talk?

TOM

No, talk is just fine.

RICHARD

Why?

TOM

Because you're not what I want.

RICHARD

Come on, take a chance.

TOM

Not that one.

RICHARD

What have you got to lose?

TOM

Maybe everything.

RICHARD

Haven't you ever lost everything before?

TOM

I don't think so.

RICHARD

It can be very exciting. And besides you never really lose everything. As long as you're alive, there's always a way out. And maybe even after you're dead, but I'll find that out later. I have no fear.

TOM

Well, I do.

RICHARD

So be it. What do you want then?

TOM

I'll know it when I see it.

RICHARD

Maybe. You still have time.

TOM

For what?

RICHARD

To find out what you've already found.

TOM

You mean you?

RICHARD

No, you.

TOM

Jesus, this is getting too deep.

RICHARD

You're probably right.

TOM

And what do you want?

RICHARD  
The same as you.

Rosie with Jenny approach to find a surprised Tom.

TOM (To Jenny)  
Oh my god! Are you stalking me?

JENNY  
No, I know Rosie and stopped in.  
What a small world. Now take off  
your clothes like I want you to.

ROSIE  
What?

TOM  
We've met.

ROSIE  
I guess so, where?

JENNY  
At the beach near my place and  
I want him for my installation  
that I told you about.

ROSIE  
Oh, good idea. Do it Tom. There's  
a good vibe around that.

TOM  
I'm thinking about it.

RICHARD  
What's this all about?

JENNY  
I want to take a nude photo of  
Tom.

RICHARD  
Oh, do tell! May I watch? My name  
is Richard.

JENNY  
Hi. I'm Jenny.

RICHARD

Nice to meet you and maybe  
I could help persuade him.  
Although, I haven't had too  
much luck so far.

JENNY

Oh really. It looked like you  
were doing a good job just now.

TOM

Now, wait a minute, none of this  
is what it seems! I'm not  
interested in that!

JENNY and RICHARD

What?

TOM

Getting together with Richard.

RICHARD

Oh, well I'll just have to wallow  
alone with my fake names.

JENNY

Then, what about my nude?

TOM

Ok, time out.

Tom moves away.

ROSIE

What's been going on here?

RICHARD

We've been diving into one  
another's lives.

ROSIE

And you've been trying to push  
him into your deep water, right?

RICHARD

You might say so.

ROSIE

Be careful. We don't want him  
to drown.

RICHARD

Don't worry dear. I've learned  
a few tricks from a lifeguard.

ROSIE

You're terrible.

RICHARD

Thank you.

INT. AURA BAR AREA - FOLLOWING

Tom has a drink at the crowded bar.

INT. AURA ENTRANCE - FOLLOWING

A spaced out, calm Fred enters and then slowly moves  
inside.

INT. AURA BAR AREA - FOLLOWING

Fred is at the bar where Marie greets him.

MARIE (To Fred)

How are you doing, babe?

FRED

I don't know yet.

MARIE

Oh, can I get you anything?

FRED

I'm not sure.

MARIE

Ok, just let me know. Your  
buddies are here.

FRED

Good.

From the other end of the bar, Tom spots Fred.



Tom approaches Fred.

TOM

I'm glad you could make it. I've been wondering about you all week.

FRED

Well, I'm still here and it's very good to see you.

TOM

All right, hey it's Friday. Come on, it's my round.

FRED

Ok, sure.

Tom signals to Marie at the bar.

Rosie, Richard, and Jenny approach them.

ROSIE

Hi honey. How are you?

FRED

Like I woke up from a dream too fast.

RICHARD

That sounds interesting.

ROSIE

Does this have anything to do with Linda? How is she?

FRED

She's happy, I hope.

Marie comes with Fred's drink, and then joins in.

TOM (To Fred)

You look nice and mellow.

RICHARD

Come on, tell all.

ROSIE

No, you don't have to. This is not a kiss and tell firing squad.

FRED

I want to.

TOM

Then, let's go sit down.

FRED

No, I feel like standing.

TOM

What's up? You always sit. It's your favorite position.

FRED

Well, not right now. How about going someplace else?

ROSIE

Sounds good.

EXT. PARK - FOLLOWING

Rosie, Jenny, Tom, Richard, and Fred amble on a path with benches.

ROSIE

Oh, look up!

They look up into to see a bright star.

JENNY

It's looking down on us.

ROSIE

That's Mars, and a very good sign. It's a good connection night.

RICHARD

Oh, I like the sound of that.

ROSIE

Or some incredible news to find out. Maybe, Fred?

JENNY

Well, sounds good, but I have to  
Get back home. I'll invite you  
all to the show which will feature  
Tom. Right Tom?

TOM

We'll see.

RICHARD

Well dear, I'll try to push this  
along. I think it's a great idea  
and want to support the arts  
in whatever way possible.

Jenny moves away as they wave goodbye.

ROSIE

Let's go over there.

EXT. BENCH - FOLLOWING

The group sits together.

ROSIE

Fred, are you all right?

FRED

I'm a little numb or something.

TOM

Oh, I know where this is going.  
Time to bring in the censors.  
You don't have to tell all the  
bedroom details.

RICHARD

Unless, you want to.

ROSIE

Well, how is she after last week?

FRED

Resting.

ROSIE

Oh, at her place?

FRED

No.

ROSIE

Still at yours?

FRED

No, she's gone. I feel like I'm trapped inside of a cloud.

ROSIE

Cloud nine?

FRED

No, not now, but earlier I was. We were really hitting it off all week.

ROSIE

That's wonderful.

TOM

Yeah, that's great. We should all get together sometime.

FRED

Not possible.

TOM

Why?

FRED

She died.

ROSIE

What?

RICHARD

Oh, my God. What happened?

INT. BATHROOM - FLASHBACK

Fred opens the bathroom door to find Linda slumped on the floor.

In a panic, he tries to revive her, but she seems lifeless.

End of FLASHBACK.

Back to Bench.

ROSIE

I'm so sorry.

FRED

The doctors said it might be some kind of heart attack.

They all move to hug him, except Tom.

TOM

I knew you shouldn't have taken her home!

FRED

What do you mean?

TOM

Look at all the trouble she's caused you!

FRED

Wait a minute! Linda didn't cause any trouble. She died! We all will and glad I was there. I'm in shock, but I'll get over it. At least, I have something to get over.

TOM

Yeah something stupid! A dumb mistake. You can't save the world. You've done this a thousand times. Helping crazy strangers!

ROSIE

Both of you settle down!

RICHARD

Yeah!

FRED

If this is a dumb mistake, I want more.

TOM

Well, it was and you will.

FRED

I don't care what you think. Linda was happy. We liked each other. I want to feel that way again, but if I don't, I know I did tonight. I wish the same for Linda. I have another chance and hope she has too. But, I don't know.

ROSIE

None of us know. But, you sent her off to a beautiful, magical place and gave her the best moments of her life.

FRED

Maybe. (Pause.) This has not been a normal Friday night.

ROSIE

You can say that again.

RICHARD

And again.

TOM

Why did you cut me off this week? I might have been able to rescue this. Can you count the number of times I've saved you?

FRED

And I'm grateful, as I've told you before.

TOM

Then, why didn't you let me this time?

FRED

This was different. I needed to get through this by myself.

TOM

But, are you ready for that?

FRED

I don't know. It's a risk to see if I survive. You've felt that way, right?

TOM

Of course I have, but don't bring it around to me. We're talking about you.

FRED

Well maybe we should be talking about you. I wonder about you a lot and care. Sometimes I ask, is he missing something?

TOM

What?

FRED

I don't know.

TOM

What is this? Analyze Tom night. You're all doing it! Maybe, you should all compare notes and figure it out for me!

Tom rushes away.

EXT. SIDEWALK - FOLLOWING

Tom walks with unsteady frustration among other people.

He takes his cell phone out to make a call.

TOM

Are you there? Well, I wish you were home. I love you. And in case I haven't told you enough. I love you, I love you. I love you etc, etc. etc. Boy, I'm really fucked up! I just don't know what do! Hope to see you soon. No, I'm going away, but not that far. I'll let you know.

He clicks off the phone.

He wanders away.

INT. AURA BAR AREA - FOLLOWING

Rosie, Richard, Fred, and Marie are together.

MARIE (Hugs Fred)

I'm so sorry.

FRED

I'll be all right. We all will.

MARIE

Including Tom. Death hits everybody differently. Hell, I cracked up laughing and got the hiccup at my Aunt Agnes funeral. It just hit me that way and I really loved her.

EXT. SIDEWALK - FOLLOWING

An intense Tom walks.

INT. AURA BAR AREA - FOLLOWING

Rosie, Marie, Richard, and Fred are with drinks.

RICHARD

Fred, you can stay at my place tonight.

ROSIE

You are welcome at my place too. Whatever you want. We're all here for you.



FRED  
God, that feels good.

MARIE  
Here's to Linda!

RICHARD  
Good luck.

ROSIE  
And peace.

FRED  
We didn't have a long time to get  
to know you, but we did get started  
and it felt good.

ROSIE  
A sweet stranger.

FRED  
She loves to keep moving and still  
is with us now.

LINDA'S VOICE (OS)  
Oh, yes I am and love you all.

This shocks everyone as they turn towards Edward as he  
sits nearby, who has just flawlessly imitated Linda.

EDWARD  
Sorry, if I scared you, but it's my  
tribute.

FRED  
I've got to go. Thanks and I'll see  
you later.

He abruptly leaves followed by a concerned Rosie.

EXT SUBWAY STAIRS - FOLLOWING

Tom stumbles down.

EXT. SUBWAY PLATFORM - FOLLOWING

Tom with a few strangers in the background waves towards the tracks like hailing a cab.

EXT. SIDEWALK - FOLLOWING

Susan lifts her cell phone up to her ear.

She listens with concern and then punches a button to make a call.

INT. SUBWAY - FOLLOWING

Tom stares out a window in a tunnel.

INT. AURA BAR - FOLLOWING

A concerned Susan walks in to see Tom's friends.

They have a concerned conversation and then Susan leaves.

EXT. SUBWAY STOP - FOLLOWING

Tom walks up the steps.

EXT. BEACH - FOLLOWING

Tom walks in the dark.

He sits down on the sand to stare out towards the ocean.

A thought hits him and then he gets up.

He walks away from the beach.

EXT. JENNY'S LOFT - FOLLOWING

Tom knocks loudly on the door.

A surprised Jenny opens the door.

JENNY  
Well hello.

TOM

Hi, sorry not call first, but I'm here.

JENNY

I can see that. Not a problem come in.

INT. JENNY'S LOFT - FOLLOWING

Jenny leads Tom in.

JENNY

Would you like something to drink?

TOM

That would be great, but I just want to warn you, I've had a lot already.

JENNY

Oh, I see...

TOM

Well, what the hell! One more won't hurt!

JENNY

Ok, have a seat. What would you like?

TOM

Maybe, just a beer if you have it.

JENNY

Sure.

She moves away.

INT. COUCH - FOLLOWING

Tom sits with a beer.

Jenny sits nearby with a drink.

JENNY

Nice to see you. How are you doing?

TOM

Ok, it's been a wild night, but now I'm ready.

JENNY

For what?

TOM

Your picture.

JENNY

Oh, that's great!

TOM

Where?

JENNY

Over by the work area if that's ok?

TOM

Sure.

JENNY

I'll go over to set up.

She moves away with her back turned towards him.

Tom gets up to clumsily strip off his clothes.

INT. WORK AREA - FOLLOWING

Jenny quickly sets things up with the camera, backdrop etc.

She turns around to look towards Tom.

INT. COUCH AREA - FOLLOWING

Tom stands totally naked with his clothes scattered about.

INT. WORK AREA - FOLLOWING

A surprised Jenny quickly checks Tom out.

JENNY

Well, I guess you're ready.

TOM (OS)

Is this what you want?

JENNY

Yes, we are ready here, but could take some pictures over there to start if you want.

TOM (OS)

Whatever, both places are ok.

Jenny picks up the camera and then moves towards Tom.

INT. COUCH AREA - FOLLOWING

Jenny approaches Tom within a few feet.

She picks up the camera, aims it towards Tom, and then makes adjustments.

She clicks the camera.

She looks at it on the camera.

JENNY

Looks great!

TOM

Aren't you going to warn me?

JENNY

Yes, I can, but this was just a test.

TOM

How many more?

JENNY

A few more. I just want you to have fun with it. This just between you and me.

TOM

And the ones who see it later.

JENNY

Well yes, but they will enjoy it too especially if you do. Maybe think of it as a shared experience.

TOM

Yeah, just my body.

JENNY

No more than that. Your beauty is a combination of mind with body which is what we'll see.

TOM

I hope so.

JENNY

Please trust me.

TOM

I do.

Jenny takes a few more shots from different angles.

INT. WORK AREA - FOLLOWING

Before a backdrop Tom poses with more ease as Jenny takes more shots.

JENNY

I think we have it with a few choices. Would you like to see them?

TOM

No, not now. I would like to be surprised later. I trust you.

JENNY

Thank you very much.

TOM

You're very welcome.

INT. COUCH AREA - FOLLOWING

Tom picks up his clothes.

Jenny approaches.

JENNY

Do you want to dress in the other room?

TOM

No, it doesn't matter. You've seen everything else. Just one more piece of the puzzle to the mystery of me. Maybe, you should take pictures of that?

JENNY

No, that's ok. Do you want anything?

TOM

I don't think so.

Jenny walks away.

Tom gets dressed.

He sits on the couch in a quandary with fatigue.

He flops down.

Later, Jenny brings a sleeping Tom a blanket which she puts over him.

She walks away.

EXT. SIDEWALK - MORNING

As Tom walks, he speaks on the cell phone.

INT. TOM'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Tom enters to look at a blinking answering machine.

He hits the button to listen.

FRED (OS)

I hope you are OK. It was an upsetting night and I didn't mean to hurt your feelings. Talk to you soon. Bye.

SUSAN (OS)

I left a message on the cell too.  
Where did you go? Let me know.  
I love you too.

ROSIE (OS)

Tom, are you there? ...I guess not.  
Anyway, we will all be all right.  
It's in the stars! Ha-ha!  
See you soon. Love Rosie.

GRANDMA JANIE (OS)

Not to worry, but somebody thought  
I should be in the hospital.....

He continues to listen with concern and then hangs up.

He is upset as he makes three quick phone calls.

INT. KITCHEN - FOLLOWING

Tom quickly eats some cereal.

INT. FRONT DOOR - FOLLOWING

Tom leaves.

EXT. SIDEWALK - FOLLOWING

An anxious Tom looks around.

Separately Susan, Rosie, and Fred meet up with Tom.

After a brief conversation, they move towards the street.

Fred hails down a cab.

All four get in.

EXT. HOSPITAL - FOLLOWING

All four get out of the cab.

INT. HOSPITAL RECEPTION AREA - FOLLOWING

All four rush up to a reception desk with attendants.



TOM

I'm here to see Grandma Janie.

ATTENDANT

Who?

TOM

I mean, Jane Grant.

ATTENDANT

Are you her grandson?

TOM

Yes.

ATTENDANT

Well, we've been trying to reach her son without any luck.

TOM

Look, it's a long story but she wasn't close to him. She called me tonight!

ATTENDANT

Ok, ok. Don't worry. You should see her.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - LATER

Tom enters Grandma Janie's room with her asleep in bed.

She weakly opens her eyes with a smile when Tom touches her hand.

GRANDMA JANIE

I just got back from a trip and ready to take another one.

TOM

Where?

GRANDMA JANIE

I don't know.

TOM

You're so lucky to be able to travel. That's what I should do more of. Any suggestions?

GRANDMA JANIE

Just take chances and travel with your greatness.

Tom nods and then gently hugs her.

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - LATER

Tom sits in a chair while Rosie, Susan and Fred sit on a sofa nearby.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - LATER

Janie sleeps peacefully.

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - FOLLOWING

Tom dozes in the chair.

EXT. WINDY OCEAN BEACH - NIGHT - DREAM

Tom slowly walks towards the surf.

He dives in.

EXT. UNDER WATER

Tom tosses around for several cycles.

His voice mystically comes up.

TOM (OS)

I know something that nobody else knows. And they don't have to, but they will.

EXT. OCEAN - FOLLOWING

Tom thrusts upward above water.

His eyes open.

The sea is calm with a bright distant horizon.  
He begins to swim with steady strokes towards it.  
End of DREAM.

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - FOLLOWING

Tom abruptly awakens as a nurse stands over him.  
She gives him sad news.  
Tom comforted by Rosie, Susan and Fred slowly walk out.

SEVERAL MONTHS LATER

EXT. ART GALLERY - OPENING NIGHT

A banner reads, A PEELING  
New Photography - Painting Collages  
By Jenny Oliver

Various people enter.

INT. ART GALLERY - FOLLOWING

A large crowd mingles with drinks, appetizers, and live music as they view the artwork on the walls.

FLASH on paintings - photographs combinations of various people which include both headshot and nude images.

A slow movement around the room reveals the pairs of; Rosie and Fred; Richard and Edward; Marie and Husband; Susan and Tom; as they react to the artwork in various parts of the gallery.

FLASH on the paintings and photographs of Fred, and then Tom as part of the exhibit.

Chad and others look on.

Later, a lively party with louder music and dance is in progress.

INT. LINDA EXHIBIT IMAGES - FOLLOWING

Rosie, Fred, Richard, Edward, Jenny, and Marie observe quietly together.

Later, this same group affectionately pose together with the images of Linda as Tom takes several pictures of them.

Tom joins the group to pose with them.

Susan stands with Chad as he takes their picture.