

Life Lessons

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INT. MARY'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

ELIZABETH, a pretty girl in her early twenties sits vegged out on the couch, channel surfing. She can't seem to find anything worth watching. MARY, her older sister, appears to be getting ready for work.

ELIZABETH

God daytime TV sucks. It's talk shows or court shows that wanna be talk shows.

MARY

Shouldn't you be studying or something.

ELIZABETH

You kidding? Community college is easier than high school. I haven't even opened my books yet.

MARY

Have you seen my name tag? I can't find it.

Elizabeth is picking at her nails with the sharp end of Mary's name tag.

ELIZABETH

Working tonight?

MARY

Sadly, but maybe I can get out early.

Mary rifles through a pile of clothing.

MARY (CONT'D)

What do you got planned?

ELIZABETH

Seeing Roger. He's taking me to a movie.

MARY

Ugh... Roger still? I thought you were breaking up with him.

ELIZABETH

Well, it's not like I have anyone else lined up. No point in being single if I don't have to.

MARY
Great philosophy.

Mary notices that Elizabeth is picking at her cuticles with her name tag.

MARY (CONT'D)
Is that my name tag?

Elizabeth notices what she's doing.

ELIZABETH
Oh... sorry.

MARY
That's disgusting.

ELIZABETH
Whatever, mom.

MARY
You're lucky I'm not mom. She'd never let you live like this.

The camera reveals Elizabeth is surrounded by trash, wrappers and other post consumer waste that cover the couch and table in front of her.

ELIZABETH
Like what?

MARY
I gotta' go. Just pick up if Roger's coming okay?

ELIZABETH
He doesn't care, trust me.

Mary grabs her coat and makes for the door.

MARY
And please break up with the poor guy.

ELIZABETH
Goodbye mom.

INT. MEIJER STORE - DAY

Gene is helping a CUSTOMER with a DVD player.

CUSTOMER

But if I get this now, how do I know that they won't just make a bigger and better one in a few years?

GENE

Because they have a bigger and better one right now. It's not like you're getting the Porsche of DVD players. You're getting the bottom of the barrel, tide ya' over until hi-def is this cheap player. And when hi-def is this cheap, there'll be a super expensive *ultra* high definition player on the market. See, your thinking ahead by staying behind.

CUSTOMER

I guess you're right, where do I check out?

GENE

Head right down that aisle and Tisha will help you out.

CUSTOMER

Thanks a lot.

The customer takes the player and walks away. Mary, dressed like a manager, enters holding a clipboard.

MARY

Excellent work Gene. You know you're our best salesman?

GENE

Proud to feed the corporate beast.

MARY

I can tell you think highly of your job.

GENE

Wouldn't trade it for a doughnut.

MARY

Good to know, it's probably a good thing you hate it here... I'd hate to see you like Larry.

LARRY a bright-eyed teenager with red hair and freckles smiles from ear to ear, talking with a customer.

LARRY

Thank you *so much* for shopping here. You have a super day!

The camera returns to Mary and Gene.

GENE

Are you kidding? He hates this place more than me. He's only like that when you're around.

MARY

Might explain why he takes his coffee with two creams and a prozac.

GENE

Hell, who needs the coffee and cream?

She giggles flirtatiously.

MARY

So anyway, it looks like it's dying down cause of the game tonight, I'm taking off early, so you can too if you want to.

GENE

Oh thank God. If I had to explain the difference between full screen and wide screen one more time, I was going to shoot myself.

MARY

(shouting to Larry)

Larry, could you go ahead and close up tonight?

LARRY

I'd love to!

Mary and Gene start walking toward the back of the store.

MARY

So, what are you gonna' do with your night off?

GENE

I dunno', probably gonna' go to the rink and shoot a few pucks.

MARY

No kidding? You play hockey?

GENE

Used to. Now I just mess around from time to time. I have a friend that lets me in to the rink at night.

MARY

That's so cool. I'd love to do that. I used to figure skate when I was young and now I'm kind of missing it.

GENE

Oh, that's interesting.

A moment of pause passes between them.

MARY

Um, yeah, I can't believe you're not going to catch the Piston's game.

GENE

Piston's... that's... basketball?

MARY

Please tell me you're joking.

GENE

It is basketball right?

Mary punches out.

MARY

Yes, my God, they're in the final four!

GENE

The final four?

MARY

Man, you need a sports education.

Gene punches out.

GENE

I'm sorry, but basketball's so boring. It only gets interesting in the last two minutes, and that takes friggin an hour to play because of all the fowls. And don't even get me started on that. I mean, you can't even touch another player without getting a penalty.

They start walking towards the store's entrance.

MARY

As opposed to hockey, where you can knock a guy over without even a whistle.

GENE

Damn right. As long as they have the puck anyway.

MARY

Well it's unfortunate that you take a sport, loved by millions of people across the world and completely dismiss it as boring.

GENE

Sorry, it's only interesting if it's on ice.

MARY

Oh, so you're into curling then.

GENE

Actually, yeah, I kind of dig it.

MARY

God and you think basketball is boring.

GENE

I know what I like. Sue me.

MARY

Anyway, I think it's cool that you have a friend that can get you into the rink. I kind of have a friend that can get me into the theatre for free.

GENE

Oh? Really?

MARY

Yeah, she even lets me bring a date... well if the guy is cute enough.

GENE

Oh. That's interesting.

Another awkward pause passes as he walks on. She stops, a little annoyed.

MARY

Okay, what's the deal?

GENE

What? What are you talking about?

MARY

Okay, like, I've been trying to flirt with you for like the past week, dropping hints, giggling all cute and stuff. And whenever I present the perfect opening, you always get all monosyllabic.

GENE

Huh?

MARY

See! And by the way, this-

She pushes on her chest, showing off cleavage.

MARY (CONT'D)

It's called cleavage, would it kill you to notice? I mean, do you think I *like* wearing shirts like this?

GENE

Uh.

MARY

Look, I know I'm not a supermodel, but I'm confident enough about my looks to know I'm at least a 7. Are you just not attracted to me?

GENE

No, it's not that. I think you're really beautiful actually.

Still trying to stay mad, she tries to hold back a smile, but then fails miserably.

MARY

Really?

GENE

Yeah, you're gorgeous. Your looks go up to 11.

MARY

Stop teasing me.

GENE

I'm not even joking.

MARY

Aww... Then what is it? I know you don't have a girlfriend.

GENE

Would you believe that it's because you're my manager and I don't want to get fired?

MARY

No, but nice try.

GENE

What would you believe then?

MARY

How about the truth? C'mon, it's not easy for girls to do the pursuing, I deserve at least that.

GENE

But you're really not going to like the truth.

MARY

Geeze, do you like secretly hate me or something.

GENE

No, it's nothing to do with you.

MARY

Oh, are you... gay? I mean, you don't look gay, I thought I had a pretty good gaydar.

GENE

No, I'm not gay, although I am a firm supporter of gay marriage.

MARY
Then what is it?

GENE
Do I really have to tell you?

MARY
I don't see any way out of it at
this point.

GENE
It's because I'm going to be dead
in two weeks.

Gene starts walking again. Mary tries to absorb what she just heard.

MARY
Wait, *what?*

She rushes to catch up.

MARY (CONT'D)
What do you mean you're going to be
dead in two weeks; how could you
possibly know that?

GENE
Because I'm going to kill myself.

MARY
Don't joke about that.

GENE
Who says I'm joking?

MARY
Who says they're going to kill
themselves so nonchalantly?

GENE
I told you you weren't going to
like it.

MARY
You're serious?

GENE
Serious as cancer.

MARY
But I don't get it, you don't seem
like you're depressed or anything.

GENE

I am.

MARY

But you're always so funny and carefree.

GENE

Yeah, it's an image.

MARY

Now I know you're not being serious.

GENE

Believe what you want.

Mary stops him, holding him by the shoulders, she looks into his eyes, he smiles weakly at her.

MARY

Don't smile.

His smile disappears.

GENE

You won't like me if I don't smile.

She continues looking.

MARY

You are serious aren't you?

GENE

I wouldn't joke about something like that.

MARY

Why are you going to kill yourself?

GENE

It's complicated.

Gene resumes walking, Mary follows him.

MARY

Wait, why in two weeks. What happens in two weeks?

GENE

When you leave a job, you have to give two weeks notice.

MARY

I don't think that applies when
your reason for leaving is *suicide*.

GENE

I figure it's polite; I don't want
to be remembered as rude.

MARY

What?

GENE

Yeah, I gave notice today.

Gene has reached his car, which is a Volkswagen Beetle, and
is opening the door.

MARY

Where are you going?

GENE

Um... home?

MARY

Hell no you're not. You don't just
drop something like that on me and
just head on home.

GENE

Well, where should I go?

MARY

You just told me I have two weeks
to convince you not to kill
yourself.

GENE

No I didn't. I didn't even want to
tell you to begin with.

MARY

Well too bad, you're stuck with me
now. I'm not leaving you to sulk by
yourself. I'm taking you out for
coffee.

GENE

I'm not sure you can force me to
go.

MARY

You want to bet?

GENE

It's a bet you'll lose.

He gets in the car, which is backed into the parking space. Behind the car is a patch of grass and then the road.

MARY

You might be suicidal, but I bet you're not homicidal.

She stands in front of his car, arms spread.

GENE

(out his window)

I guess we'll see.

He starts up his car and revs the engine; Mary closes her eyes. He backs his car over the grass and onto the road, flinging dirt into the air and a little on Mart. She opens her eyes to see this and runs over to his car.

GENE (CONT'D)

Almost made it.

MARY

I'm not taking 'no' for an answer. In fact, I'm not going to settle for anything less than at least an hour of pleasant conversation, and you're paying for the coffee.

GENE

Me? Why am I paying?

MARY

Because since you're going to be dead in two weeks, money shouldn't be an issue. Plus I got my shirt dirty standing in front of your stupid car.

GENE

Hey, don't call my car stupid.

MARY

I'm sure it'll get over it, and hey, if not, maybe it can just *kill itself!*

A car speeds past them, honking its horn.

GENE

So coffee then?

MARY

Yes!

She gets into the passenger seat.

GENE

Where at?

MARY

How about the Starbucks on
Jefferson?

GENE

God, not the Starbucks, I've only
got two weeks left, I'm not going
to spend it drinking dirt.

MARY

I don't know, what about a
restaurant. Like IHOP?

GENE

I guess that's a little better, not
much, but a little.

MARY

God, I don't know, I don't even
drink coffee.

GENE

Neither do I.

INT. RESTAURANT - CONTINUOUS

Gene and Mary are seated at a table. Gene takes a sip of
coffee.

GENE

God this stuff is nasty.

MARY

Well, yeah, you're not supposed to
take it black.

GENE

That's what I don't get about
coffee drinkers. At some time, some
point in their life, they had to
have their first cup. Now it's a
well documented fact that nobody
likes their first cup of coffee.

MARY

Oh is it?

GENE

Of course. Now if their first experience with coffee is this nasty, bitter, vomit-inducing bile, why on Earth would anybody want a second go at it?

MARY

You're not supposed to take it black. Most people starting out on coffee mix it with sugar or hot chocolate or something.

GENE

I don't know, I feel like covering camel crap with cocoa doesn't make it suddenly more edible. Why would it work with coffee?

MARY

I think it's the texture.

He takes another sip, gagging it down. As he finishes, the WAITRESS greets them.

WAITRESS

You guys ready to order.

MARY

No thanks.

GENE

Could I get a hot chocolate?

WAITRESS

Sure thing.

She leaves quickly.

MARY

So are you gonna' tell me?

GENE

Right, about the suicide?

MARY

Possible suicide, yes.

GENE

I would call it inevitable, but for the sake of argument, let's compromise with probable.

MARY

Well if I knew this was a negotiation I would have started with "unlikely."

GENE

Are you sure you really want to talk about this? Suicide is just so damn depressing, and we were having such pleasant conversation.

MARY

That is true. Especially that part about the vomit-inducing bile.

GENE

Okay, not the most pleasant adjectives I admit, but it made the point.

MARY

In all seriousness though, I really do want to know what's bothering you so much. Why is it you want to die so badly?

GENE

Why do you want me to live?

MARY

Gene, are you serious? Why do you think I want you to live? I want everyone to live.

GENE

Yeah, but I already told you I'm depressed. By staying alive, I continue suffering... so it sounds like to me, you just want me to suffer.

MARY

What? No! You're twisting my words.

GENE

I don't think so. You did say that-

MARY

(Interrupting)

I want you to live. I don't want you to suffer. You're the one that's making the two synonymous.

GENE

So you're saying that there might be a way to live, without it being such a miserable experience?

MARY

Oh come on. Don't tell me there's nothing that brings you happiness.

GENE

Of course. There's plenty that brings me happiness, but there's also plenty more that does the opposite.

MARY

So you'd just throw away all the good things life has to offer, just because there are a few bad things along the way?

GENE

The way I see it, if I'm dead, I eliminate all the bad things, and I'm no longer around to miss the good. It's a win-win. Or at least a win-draw, which is marginally better than the win-lose I'm currently dealing with.

MARY

But by that argument, the very existence of *anything* bad in life makes the whole thing not worth living.

GENE

Right.

A pause passes.

MARY

But-

The waitress brings his hot cocoa.

WAITRESS

Here you go... Do you guys want any food or anything?

GENE

I've got to be honest with you. I haven't even looked at the menu yet. I'm probably not going to order anything else. Are you?

MARY

No thank you.

GENE

I'm sorry, we're lame customers.

WAITRESS

No it's okay. Don't worry about it.

GENE

No I do feel kind of bad taking up a table and not ordering much. I promise I'll give you a really good tip though.

WAITRESS

Oh, um...

GENE

Oh, should I not be discussing the tip with you? Is that supposed to be a surprise or something.

WAITRESS

No, it's fine. You can give me whatever you want. I mean, of course I'd like a big tip, but seeing as how you guys are only ordering like three beverages, I wouldn't expect much.

GENE

Okay. Well, I'll keep it a surprise then.

WAITRESS

Whatever you like. I'm here to serve.

GENE

Hey when you give people their food, do you ever get the urge to say "you just got served."

MARY

My God, let the poor woman do her job.

GENE

Oh right, I'm sorry.

WAITRESS

I'll be by to check on you in a bit.

GENE

Okay, thanks.

She walks away.

GENE (CONT'D)

She was cute.

Mary gives Gene a look.

INT. ROGER'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

ROGER watches American Idol as Elizabeth sits bored on the couch next to him. He has his arm around her, but his heart doesn't seem to be in it.

ELIZABETH

Let's go do something.

ROGER

Oh, but Simon's on.

ELIZABETH

So what. This is just the same thing it's been for the past five seasons. A lot of people sing, most of them suck, none of them become famous.

ROGER

Yeah, but it's still pretty sweet.

ELIZABETH

Whatever.

ROGER

C'mon, don't be like that.

ELIZABETH

Can't we just, I don't know, do something else?

ROGER

Fine, I'll see what else is on.

Elizabeth sighs as he grabs for the remote. She tackles him, kissing him on the forehead.

ROGER (CONT'D)

Oh, you mean sex! That works too.

EXT. BOARDWALK - SUNSET

Gene and Mary walk along a quiet boardwalk. Waves of a river splash along the rocks past a metal railing. Walking toward them is a BUM dressed much like you'd expect a bum to look.

BUM

Excuse me.

He makes his way closer.

BUM (CONT'D)

I'm not going to give you a line, I just need 90 cents to get a pint. Could you help me out?

Mary answers awkwardly.

MARY

Sorry I don't have anything.

Gene pulls a slip of paper out of his wallet and hands it to the man.

BUM

What's this?

GENE

It's a lotto ticket. I buy them every week.

BUM

You ever win anything?

GENE

Not really. I just buy them because it allows me to dream about what I'd do if I did win. I'm giving that opportunity to you now.

BUM

Well thank you.

GENE

Yeah, jackpot's at 42 million. Just think of all the booze you could buy with that kind of money.

BUM

Hell, I'd be wasted til Christmas. Thanks man.

GENE

No problem.

The bum moves on down the boardwalk.

MARY

Wow, that was something.

GENE

Hey at least he was honest. I respect that.

MARY

So you buy the tickets... hoping you'll win?

GENE

That's the idea.

MARY

Well I guess that means you have some hope. That's a good sign.

GENE

And as you can see, I just gave that hope away.

MARY

There's no budging with you is there.

GENE

Not really, no.

MARY

I still don't see how you can just discount all the great things life has to offer, just because there's a few bad things along the way.

GENE

Because if I'm dead, I won't miss the good things anymore. They have zero value. It doesn't matter.

MARY

And at the same time, all the bad in life is eliminated. I see your point, but you're also making the assumption that there's no afterlife. What if suicide buys you a straight ticket to hell.

GENE

I've thought a lot about that actually.

MARY

And?

GENE

Well, do you believe in God?

MARY

I'm a Catholic.

GENE

Not my question.

MARY

Catholics generally believe in God, yes.

GENE

Do you believe in free will? That God grants us a choice to do what we want?

MARY

Wow this brings me back to my catechism days. I used to think a lot about this sort of stuff and yeah, I mean, I think so... It wouldn't make sense to me that God predestines people to kill or rape others. I think that humans make the choice to be evil.

GENE

I agree. I think God allows us the choice to do what we want to.

MARY

Wait, are you religious?

GENE

Agnostic, but I was raised in a baptist church.

MARY

My brother is agnostic. He likes the freedom to be religious without the burden of having to follow any moral code.

GENE

It's great isn't it.

MARY

Probably one of the better ways of going to hell. At least that's what my dad would say.

GENE

Anyway, where was I. Oh yeah, no matter how much free will we have, there is still one thing we have no choice over: whether or not we are born.

MARY

I guess not.

GENE

So my theory is that since we get no choice in whether or not we want life to begin with, we should be allowed to decide whether or not we want to keep it.

MARY

Well of course you do. You have the option to commit suicide just like you have the option to commit any other sin.

GENE

Yes, but we are also told that if you commit suicide, you'll go straight to hell... at least according to Catholicism, right?

MARY

It's a mortal sin, yeah.

GENE

Well I would argue, that if the choice to commit suicide will automatically lead to eternal torment, then it's not really a choice at all.

(MORE)

GENE (CONT'D)

We are forced to keep living, even though we don't want to because the alternative is so much worse.

MARY

So you're saying that-

GENE

I'm saying that suicide can't possibly lead to hell, because that would deny free will, and no free will means that God predestines everything. And if God is predestining everything, then my suicide would be just another part of God's plan.

MARY

(frustrated)

You have an answer for everything, don't you?

She begins to tear up, and takes a seat, resting her arms on the railings, and letting her forehead sink into them. Gene looks a little confused, then takes a seat next to her.

GENE

Oh, I'm sorry...

She rubs her eyes, trying to look strong.

MARY

No, I'm sorry, I just feel really bad for you.

GENE

I told you I didn't want to talk about this.

MARY

I know. I'm sorry, I just get really involved and it hurts to see someone in so much pain.

GENE

I'm sorry, I didn't want to hurt you. I always hate it when I bring more pain to this already painful world.

MARY

No, it's okay... It's just like, I don't know, a few hours ago I was all ready to ask you out on a date, now I'm unsuccessfully trying to keep you alive... it's a lot to take in.

GENE

I understand.

They look out onto the water as the sun sets and waves crash against the rocks.

GENE (CONT'D)

So do you want to make out then?

Mary playfully hits Gene.

INT. MEIJER - THE NEXT DAY

Gene is stocking a DVD player on a shelf just out of reach. Mary, holding a step stool, sneaks up behind him.

MARY

Don't worry, I'm here to save you.

GENE

Huh?

She puts down the stool and gestures to it.

MARY

Do I need to refer you to our safety training video?

GENE

I don't know. I think I can get it.

She watches as Gene continues to fail at stocking the DVD player.

MARY

Quit being so stubborn.

GENE

Just a little more...

Mary sighs and stands on the stool herself, grabbing onto the box and pushing it the rest of the way up the shelf. Gene notices as her breasts brush against his arm.

He continues to look at her as she climbs down. She notices him noticing her, and looks away quickly.

MARY

I know it's your last two weeks and all, but could you at least pretend to not half-ass it.

GENE

I can pretend yes, but I make no promises to how well I'll manage.

MARY

Fair enough. So anyway, what were we going to do today?

GENE

Well, I was planning on going home.

MARY

Sounds great, I want to see where you live.

GENE

Um...

She looks at him with the cutest look she can muster.

GENE (CONT'D)

It's kind of messy.

MARY

Ha! You haven't seen my place.

GENE

Okay fine. I guess there's no point in resisting.

MARY

Good boy...

She begins to walk away, but then turns back

MARY (CONT'D)

Oh, and thanks!

GENE

For what?

She pushes up on her breasts, showing off her cleavage again.

MARY

For noticing!

INT. GENE'S BEDROOM

Gene and Mary are playing Smash Brothers Brawl for the Nintendo Wii.

MARY

So how are you gonna' do it?

GENE

Not sure yet.

MARY

Well, there's always the classics, wrist cutting, pills.

GENE

Too cliché.

MARY

Shot to the head?

GENE

Too messy. Don't want somebody to have to clean it up.

MARY

You could always lay down plastic, or do it in the bathtub.

GENE

Too much work, and I don't want to have to buy a bullet anyway.

MARY

There's always hanging. That hasn't been done in a while.

GENE

Too slow.

MARY

Drowning? I hear it's peaceful.

GENE

According to who? The drowning victims they ask afterwards? Have you ever choked on water? It's one of the most violent reactions the body can make. I don't see how it could possibly be peaceful. And I'm not going to risk it.

MARY

What about falling from a large building? Then at least you get a cool free fall before you go.

GENE

Yeah, but with all that adrenaline, I think I'd be having fun. And then I might regret my decision seconds before impact.

MARY

Definitely not worth the risk. But what else is there?

GENE

I dunno, I think it'd be kind of cool to get ripped apart by some kind of wild animal. Problem is there's not a lot of killer animals in the greater Grand Rapids area.

MARY

Yeah, I guess maybe you'll just have to give up on the whole suicide thing then?

GENE

I'll come up with something.

MARY

You better think fast, cause I don't know how you're going to live with the shame of getting your ass kicked by a noob.

GENE

And double shame cause you're a girl. I want a rematch.

MARY

If you think that'll help.

They play for a bit.

GENE

The John Ball zoo has penguins... think I could get them to peck me to death?

EXT. MEIJER PARKING LOT - EVENING

Mary sits on top of Gene's car, wearing a snow hat, an adorably cute sweater, and a set of pig tails. Gene walks up, he fights a smile as she beams up at him.

MARY

Hi!

GENE

You're stalking me aren't you.

MARY

What ever do you mean? My being here is completely random chance. Nice to see you too, by the way.

GENE

You're looking cute today. I've never seen you in pig tails.

MARY

You like?

GENE

I do. You're adorable.

MARY

So take me ice skating.

GENE

Ice skating?

MARY

Yeah, didn't you say you have a friend that can get you in?

GENE

Oh, yeah, you wanna go?

MARY

Duh.

GENE

Does this mean you're done trying to persuade me not to kill myself?

MARY

Well, it's pretty much pointless arguing with you, so I figure I might as well spend as much time with you as I can before you're gone... you know, it'll help with writing your eulogy.

GENE

You're giving my eulogy now?

MARY

Can I?

GENE

That depends. I want to hear a sample first.

MARY

Okay, give me some time, I'll get on that.

GENE

Can't wait.

MARY

So we going?

GENE

Yeah, just let me get my stick.

INT. ICE RINK - CONTINUOUS

A pair of skates approach the red line. A puck drops. A stick circles slowly around it like a vulture waiting for it's prey. Gene skates in a circle, stopping next to the puck. Mary appears in focus, stopped on the blue line, poised for battle.

MARY

Alright! Bring it!

GENE

Tie game. Seconds left on the clock. Gene, cherry picking on the red line.

He skates again in a circle.

MARY

Alright Gretzki.

GENE

Goaltender passes back, it clears
the zone.

Gene skates along with the puck.

GENE (CONT'D)

Here it is one on one.

Gene easily dekes around Mary. As he passes her, the camera lingers on Mary, who watches passionately with a smile on her face.

GENE (CONT'D)

Gene, barrels past the defender.

He skates to the net, deking back and forth.

GENE (CONT'D)

He's all alone; open net. He shoots
and...

Gene shoots the puck at an empty net, and almost as if in slow motion, the puck clangs against a sidebar.

MARY

He MISSES! Oh my God, what an
upset! Mary wins it!

Mary starts to spin like a figure skater might.

GENE

I thought the game was tied? How
did you win it.

She stops gracefully.

MARY

C'mon, isn't it obvious? Wide open
net and you still miss it. Your
team obviously forfeited out of
embarrassment.

Gene skates toward her slowly.

GENE

Okay, I'll grant you it was a bad
shot, but your team has to be
equally embarrassed by your defense
skills.

MARY

Hey, which one of us is the hockey player here?

GENE

Okay, so I played like when I was ten... I was never any good.

MARY

But you still come down and practice?

GENE

Every now and then, it's good exercise.

MARY

You should take me out here more often. It's been forever since I've been on the rink.

GENE

Yeah, let's see some figure skating.

MARY

Okay, but I'm going to suck in these skates.

GENE

Don't worry, if you fall it'll be hilarious.

Mary hands Gene her hockey stick and starts skating.

MARY

(lightheartedly)

In that case I hope I hit you on the way down.

Mary performs a single salchow and lands it flawlessly.

GENE

Wow.

MARY

Like riding a bike.

She continues performing complicated moves as Gene stares at her with longing in his eyes. She transitions into a spin and a skate slides out from under her, making her fall. Gene skates over to her.

GENE

A bike eh?

MARY

Okay, these skates don't have toe picks, I'm not used to it.

Gene extends his hand to help her up.

MARY (CONT'D)

Now you know if I take that hand you might just fall into my arms... And maybe, just maybe... we might share a cute moment.

Gene helps her up, she gets up with no problems. She looks disappointed.

MARY (CONT'D)

Aww.

Gene kisses her passionately.

INT. HOCKEY RINK - BLEACHERS - CONTINUOUS

Gene and Mary sit on the bleachers, watching the zamboni clear the ice.

GENE

When I was young I used to love playing. Unfortunately I was really small, like freakishly... I was so small I had to take growth hormones to get to the freakish height I am now. Anyway I couldn't do much on the ice, but I put my heart into it and tried my best.

MARY

Like a Mighty Duck.

GENE

Yes, like a Disney character. And my last year of playing was in the pee-wees, where they finally allow players to hit each other. This was also the year, unfortunately, that everybody but me hit puberty.

MARY

Were you scared?

GENE

Actually no. I've never really been afraid of injury, but it didn't matter anyway because I had a mass of pads that could have blocked a farm animal. Oddly enough, everyone else on the team was really afraid to start getting in and hitting people for some reason. Anyway, one of the guys on an opposing team must have hit puberty really early cause he was huge and had gigantic muscles. I can't remember his first name, but on the back of his Jersey it read Armstrong, and I remember thinking it was an appropriate name.

MARY

Lance?

GENE

Yeah, it was probably Lance Armstrong. Anyway, Lance knew he was huge and made a point to knock down anyone in his way. So he ruled the ice in a sense. Anyway, one time Lance was carrying the puck behind the net, and I, as the left wing, was in the perfect position to stop him. So I skated as hard as I could, ducked down, and crashed right into him. We hit each other so hard that he actually flipped over before landing on top of me, crushing me under his weight.

MARY

(Laughing)

Oh my God. Were you okay?

GENE

I was fine, but this dude was pissed. He couldn't pull himself up, so he resorted to half kicking me with his skates and calling me a jerk. But whatever, screw him. He had it coming. Heh. The coaches actually had to run out on the ice pull him off of me he was that big.

MARY

That's so cool.

GENE

Yeah, later in the locker room the coach addressed the team, he said "raise your hand if you're bigger than Gene here." They all raised their hands. He continued, "so if you're all bigger than him, how come he's the only one here with the balls to pull something like that off." It was pretty funny.

Mary laughs, a pause passes as the zamboni continues circling the ice.

MARY

So why are you depressed?

GENE

Do we really have to go there?

MARY

Oh yes, let's do. Let's play the I hate my life game.

GENE

The what?

MARY

I'll start. I hate my life because I'm middle management at Meijer.

GENE

Understandable.

MARY

Your turn.

GENE

Fine, I'll play along. I hate my life because my parents never loved me.

MARY

Oh... that's sad...

GENE

I'm just messing, my parents were-are pretty sweet actually.

Mary hits Gene.

MARY

God, you had my heart breaking in pieces for you you jerk. Give me a real one.

GENE

Fine. How's this? I hate my life because I watch Deal or No Deal from time to time.

MARY

You do?

GENE

Sadly.

MARY

Okay, I hate my life because my car's falling apart... and now it's making a really annoying squeaking noise without cause or origin.

GENE

I hate my life because I work grunt level at Meijer.

MARY

Hey, way to copy mine.

GENE

Sorry, it's a good one.

MARY

Well, you won't have to worry about working there much longer.

GENE

True.

MARY

I hate my life because I'm 24 and I feel like I haven't accomplished anything.

GENE

You know, most people consider that young.

MARY

I don't feel young, and it doesn't help that my parents keep bugging me about getting married and getting a "real" job.

GENE

Meh, don't worry about it, that can wait until your thirties.

MARY

God I hope it doesn't take that long for my life to get started.

GENE

Nah, a cute girl like you will be married in no time.

Mary smiles a little.

MARY

It's your turn.

GENE

I hate my life because I can never open really tight lids with my bare hands.

MARY

I hate my life because I once forgot my lines in a school play.

GENE

I hate my life because I can never remember people's names.

MARY

Do you remember mine?

GENE

Not a chance.

MARY

I'll make it easy then, you can just call me "Cutie."

GENE

I'll never remember that.

Mary fake laughs.

MARY

I hate my life because I... Oh my dog got hit by a car a few years back.

GENE

That's sad, what was it's name?

MARY

Obi.

GENE

Don't tell me it's short for Obi-Wan?

MARY

It was; my sister's a Star Wars geek. Sadly, the force wasn't with little Obi.

GENE

Well the force of that car hitting him.

Mary gets angry.

MARY

Hey, that's not nice.

GENE

Too soon?

MARY

A little, but I'll forgive you because that dog was a jerk. It wouldn't let you pet it without the risk of losing a finger. Wouldn't be surprised to find someone put a hit out on the mongrel.

GENE

I hate my life because every day feels like the same thing.

MARY

You're bored?

GENE

That's one way of putting it.

MARY

I hate my life because I'm lonely.

Gene says nothing.

MARY (CONT'D)

I'm lonely, and the only person on this earth that's making me *not* so lonely is going to be dead by weeks end.

Gene is silent; the zamboni clears the last bit of ice and exits the rink.

GENE

I hate my life because, well because a lot of reasons. I guess it just feels like there's no point to any of it. Almost everything sucks and the few things that don't will just turn around and hurt you later. I hate my life because I can't form meaningful, lasting attachments to anything or anyone. I'm told that love is the answer, love is all you need, love love etc. Etc. Well you know what? I've tried love and it's more like a drug. It makes you feel good for a little while but it lets you down just when you're the most addicted. And you'll friggin' do anything just for another high.

MARY

Maybe the problem is you just haven't found the right person.

GENE

See, that's what everyone says, but... I don't know, I look at old married couples and they look downright miserable. Yeah, maybe they might have found a high that lasts them a few years, but it seems like that high just goes away eventually. Is that what I have to look forward to? And you know, it's not just love that's let me down, it seems like everything... I hate how everything I've ever believed in: school, friends, girlfriends, work, and God has let me down.

Gene takes a breath.

MARY

Even God?

GENE

Especially God. You know I used to be a pretty hard core Christian?

MARY

Well, you said you were Baptist right?

GENE

Yeah, but you know, most of the people at my church just showed up because they felt like they had to. I was a true believer...

MARY

And now you're agnostic.

GENE

It took years for it to happen, but I slowly realized something: God never answered my prayers, He never listened to me. My church always used to talk about a "personal relationship" with God... that you can connect with God on a personal level.

MARY

I'm familiar with the concept.

GENE

Well for a guy I'm supposed to have a personal relationship with, God really sucks. I have a better relationship with my friggin' desk lamp, and it's just a man-made object, not the creator of all existence.

MARY

You couldn't have always felt that way though.

GENE

No I mean, when I first converted, I felt like I really did have a personal relationship with the almighty. And it felt great, but that's all it was, a feeling. A feeling generated by faith... just another drug that'll let you down like everything else.

MARY

There are people that will argue that your faith wasn't real.

(MORE)

MARY (CONT'D)

That if you truly believed, it would never go away.

GENE

Well screw them. I believed. I believed and worshipped with my whole heart. Whoever says that real faith will never fade are either too delusional to face the reality that it has, or just got the drug of faith to last a little longer for them.

MARY

So you believe there is no God?

GENE

See, that's what's messed up. I believe, almost absolutely that there is a God, I mean if I go back to origin of life I think I have to. I just believe that God doesn't give a shit about us anymore.

MARY

Easy to believe considering the shape of things in the world.

GENE

Yeah, that's exactly my point. I mean, imagine you, with your limited human amount of grace and mercy. If you were given omnipotence, and could make the world a better place, hell, make it a perfect place, end all the war, famine, disease, and suffering, wouldn't you do it?

MARY

Yes, I would, but I don't have the wisdom of God.

GENE

See, but that's no excuse. The Bible says we were given the mind of God and the Spirit to discern. Why do we see injustice and do our best to fight it and He sees injustice and completely ignores it?

MARY

Maybe there's a good reason for it that we don't know. Maybe it's to make us appreciate heaven more. Or maybe it's just because to stop it would mean to deny free will.

GENE

Yeah, okay, so what do we need free will for anyway. The only thing it seems to accomplish is making us miserable.

MARY

Yeah, but it's what makes life life. I mean, would you rather be a mindless robot?

GENE

Yes, actually. If it made me happy then yes, I would rather be a mindless robot, because the only thing I use free will for is to make myself happy, or to make others happy. If I could get rid of free will and make the whole world happy and peaceful, I'd do it in a heartbeat.

MARY

I've always believed that God gives us free will so that we can choose whether to believe in him or not.

GENE

I've heard that argument before and if that's the real reason we have free will, then how messed up is God? God creates a bunch of stupid, uninformed people so that He can have the ego trip of people *choosing* to believe in him without any good reason to. Then, when they choose *not* to believe in him, he gets the added pleasure of sending them to hell to suffer for all eternity. I mean, that argument makes God look like an egomaniacal tyrant with a hell of a lot of insecurity.

Mary doesn't respond right away. She looks at him and gives a weak smile. Gene smiles back at her.

MARY

You've got some issues.

GENE

I know.

She puts her arm around him and hugs him.

MARY

You know. I've thought about that before. Actually, a lot of that... and I used to spend hours on it. I actually did research... for instance did you know that research shows that prayer has no effect on recovery rates for dying patients?

GENE

I did, actually.

MARY

I looked it up because... well my aunt was diagnosed with breast cancer some time ago. I prayed every day for a year for God to heal her, believing it would happen. And for a year, I watched her get worse and worse until chemo was too much for her and she inevitably died. We were really close too.

GENE

I'm sorry.

MARY

I blamed God... I mean didn't he say he'd hear our prayers? But my prayers fell on deaf ears, or perhaps, no ears at all. And I lost faith.

GENE

You seem to believe now though.

MARY

Well, it's because my lack of faith made me miserable. Everything seemed pointless, and I grew bitter because of it. So I made a conscious choice to stop worrying about the details and just believe.

GENE

Willful ignorance.

MARY

It's cliché but true, ignorance is bliss. And blind faith has given me a certain amount of peace. I'm not a model catholic by any stretch of the imagination, but I believe enough to go to mass and be bored out of my mind once a week.

GENE

Well if it works for you... are you suggesting that I should just stop asking questions and just believe?

MARY

Well, maybe not in God, but you have to believe in something.

GENE

Not if I'm dead.

MARY

Okay, you've convinced me. I'm committing suicide too.

GENE

Hell yeah! Let's do it together!

MARY

Oh man, I've gotta' put in my two weeks notice.

GENE

Shut up, I know you don't really want to do it.

MARY

No, I think you've made a great argument for it, and I don't see any reason why I shouldn't do it too.

Gene ponders this for a bit.

GENE

Because you love life.

MARY

No, I hate my life... didn't we just go over this?

GENE

You hate things about your life... a lot about it. But deep inside under all the pain and misery, you have hope. And that's what'll make it so that no matter how depressed you get, no matter how much you want to die, you'll never even come close to committing the act.

MARY

And what makes you say that.

GENE

Because even I have hope.

Mary smiles.

MARY

Well, I do believe we're making progress.

INT. MARY'S APARTMENT - LATER

Mary enters her apartment, turns on the light and closes the door. She walks past her sister's room... the door is closed, the light is on and sexy noises are seeping out of the bedroom. Mary sighs in disgust, goes into her own bedroom, and puts a pillow over her head. She lays on the bed, still holding the pillow, looks at the wall and watches the shelf shake. She sets the pillow down, pulls out her phone, and calls Gene.

GENE

Hey, what's up?

MARY

Okay, so you know that scene in Jurassic Park where they're sitting in the Jeep and the glass of water vibrates?

GENE

Yeah, T-Rex coming to jack them up. Awesome scene.

MARY

Well imagine replacing the dinosaur with your little sister losing her virginity for the tenth time, and you'll know what I'm going through right now.

GENE

God that's disgusting.

MARY

Yeah, imagine if that was your sister, what would you do?

GENE

My sister is twelve, so I'd murder her boyfriend.

MARY

God I gotta' get my own place.

GENE

Don't be hating. She's got to do something with all those hormones.

MARY

I know... she's what some might consider an adult now. It's just... I don't know, I'm a few years older than her and all I can think about is all the sex I'm not having.

GENE

I don't know, I think a pretty girl like you could do something about that.

MARY

Maybe. Any chance you could be over here in 10 minutes?

A silence passes on the phone.

MARY (CONT'D)

Gene?

TITLE: Nine Minutes Later

INT. MARY'S APARTMENT (LIVING ROOM)

Mary opens the door to see Gene standing there holding a rose. They instantly start making out.

MARY

What took you so long?

GENE

Had to get the flower.

They start taking each other's clothing off. She takes the rose and smells it.

MARY

It's fake.

GENE

Like my desire to take things slow.

They kiss some more as they make their way toward Mary's bedroom.

MARY

Fine by me.

She tosses the flower in with the mess that is her living room. They continue on her bed... both managing to get a few more articles of clothing off.

MARY (CONT'D)

Hey... stop for a second.

GENE

What's wrong?

MARY

Nothing... I just don't want you to think I'm easy.

GENE

Wouldn't dream of it.

MARY

I'm serious though. I don't really like a whole lot of guys... but I've liked you for a while now and I feel like I've wasted so much of my life. I don't want to waste another second.

GENE

Then let's not.

They start kissing again.

INT. MARY'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM

The both lay on Mary's bed, looking happy and satisfied.

MARY

I've never been good at pillow talk.

GENE

Don't worry about it.

Gene is still pawing at her.

MARY

You're not done are you?

GENE

What can I say, you're just really sexy.

MARY

Well I can't say as I mind hearing that.

GENE

This is weird. I was planning on using these last two weeks trying to detach myself from everything in this world... So that I'd feel like I was leaving nothing behind.

MARY

You're not still thinking of committing suicide are you?

GENE

Of course not. I know moments like these don't last, and that eventually my life will just go back to the crapfest it was... but I don't know. It's the moments like these that make us want to keep living... as irrational as it is to do so.

MARY

But sir, you quit your job. How could you possibly go on living without that \$7.50 an hour?

GENE

I don't know. I think that job was killing me far more than suicide ever could.

MARY

They should include that in the training video.

INT. MARY'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Elizabeth is sprawled on the couch, eating a bag of potato chips. She's watching Iron Chef. The faint flicker of the T.V. lights her face. Gene exits Mary's room, only to see Elizabeth for the first time. She is topless. Noticing who has entered the room, she quickly grabs a blanket and covers up.

GENE

Um... hi.

ELIZABETH

Who are you?

GENE

I'm Gene... I'm a friend of your sister.

ELIZABETH

Well I should hope you're more than just friends with her... considering the noise you were making earlier.

GENE

You should talk. You and your boyfriend were shaking the walls.

ELIZABETH

(pauses)
This is weird.

GENE

Yeah, I'm good at first impressions.

ELIZABETH

Sorry about my nakedness. I'm not used to Mary having guys over.

GENE

Sorry about barging in on you... I couldn't sleep and was going to get a glass of water.

ELIZABETH

No worry's. Glasses are in the cupboard over the sink. Oh, I'm Elizabeth by the way.

She extends one hand to shake Gene's. Her blanket falls a little as she lets go of it, but she remains mostly covered. They shake hands.

GENE

Nice to meet you.

He heads toward the kitchen and grabs a glass. Elizabeth heads toward the dirty clothes hamper and finds a tank top to put on.

ELIZABETH

(to Gene)

There's cold water in the fridge.

GENE

Oh, tap's fine thank you.

Elizabeth returns to the couch, looks back at Gene as he's filling the glass, then quickly returns to watching Iron Chef. Gene wanders back over to the couch, standing beside it.

GENE (CONT'D)

So, Iron Chef? That's a little old school.

ELIZABETH

Yeah, it's like the only thing on at 3 in the morning.

GENE

I used to love this show. Always made me want to be a chef.

ELIZABETH

Yeah, but this is the crappy American version.

GENE

That sucks... half the charm is the bad English dubbing.

ELIZABETH

Oh, I totally agree. You can sit you know.

She clears off a space for him next to her. He takes a seat.

GENE

Okay, only for a bit though.

ELIZABETH

So how did you and Mary meet?

GENE

I took her hostage once. She developed Stockholm syndrome and we sort of just hit it off.

ELIZABETH

Shut up. How'd you really meet?

GENE

Ugh... you're going to make me admit to working at Meijer, aren't you?

ELIZABETH

Don't be ashamed. I used to work there back in high school.

GENE

Why'd you leave?

ELIZABETH

You kidding? That job sucks. I'm a weekend secretary at the admissions office at CC now. It's basically the easiest job in the world... spend 8 hours getting my homework done one day a week.

GENE

Sounds cool. I'm actually leaving Meijer though. I've already put in my two weeks.

ELIZABETH

Good for you. What's next for you?

GENE

(pauses to think)
I don't know actually.

ELIZABETH

Good plan.

GENE

I thought so.

ELIZABETH

You know, we're hiring another secretary for the weekdays.

(MORE)

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

It's a little more work, but it's still a cake job.

GENE

That's an option. Maybe I'll look into it.

ELIZABETH

I could probably put in a word for you if you apply.

GENE

Sounds good.

A pause passes as something interesting happens on the TV.

GENE (CONT'D)

So maybe you could answer me something. Mary's like one of the hottest girls I know-

ELIZABETH

Present company excluded of course.

GENE

Don't we have a high opinion of ourselves.

ELIZABETH

C'mon. Do I need to show you my boobs again?

GENE

No, I've got a fairly good memory thanks.

She hits him.

ELIZABETH

You perv.

GENE

So anyway, I was wondering how she could possibly be single. And the way she talks, she sounds like she doesn't really date a lot.

ELIZABETH

Between you and me, she doesn't get out much.

GENE

Hmm.

ELIZABETH

She once was madly in love with this one guy from her high school. They were a couple for years, engaged to be married even. But then he went off and joined the military. Got shipped to Iraq.

GENE

Did he die?

ELIZABETH

As far as we know he's still alive. They said they were going to stay together, but only a few months after he left he broke things off with no explanation at all.

GENE

What a douche.

ELIZABETH

Yeah, no kidding. Mary was devastated. She hasn't dated anyone since.

GENE

Er... maybe I shouldn't be hearing all this.

ELIZABETH

Oh yeah, this is probably stuff Mary should tell you, but I've got plenty of gossip if you want to hear it.

GENE

Maybe some other time.

ELIZABETH

So he's not my boyfriend.

GENE

Huh? Who?

ELIZABETH

The guy I was banging walls with earlier. He's not my boyfriend. You called him my boyfriend earlier.

GENE

Oh, him?

ELIZABETH

Yeah. Well. I mean, he used to be my boyfriend. I broke up with him today.

GENE

That's odd, it sounded like things were going great between you two.

ELIZABETH

Oh yeah, I just wanted to give him a good send-off. He deserved that much, at least... I've been leading him on for weeks.

GENE

So how'd he take being dumped.

ELIZABETH

Pretty well actually. I mean, he didn't cry.

GENE

Well that's good. Hate to see them cry.

ELIZABETH

Yeah, no kidding.

GENE

Why do I get the feeling you're a bit of a heartbreaker.

ELIZABETH

Hey, not my fault no guy can satisfy me for long.

Gene finishes his water.

GENE

Well, I should probably get back to Mary now.

ELIZABETH

Leave the glass, I'll take care of it.

GENE

You sure?

ELIZABETH

Yeah, it's no biggy. Just... don't tell Mary I told you all those things about her.

GENE

My lips are sealed.

He goes back into Mary's room. Mary is asleep on the bed. Gene cuddles up next to her.

MARY

Where'd you go?

GENE

To get a glass of water.

MARY

Mmm.

She closes her eyes and goes back to sleep.

GENE

Oh, and I saw your sister naked.

Mary jolts up in her bed.

MARY

What?

INT. MEIJER STORE - THE NEXT DAY

Mary sees Gene sorting some CDs on the shelf. She pulls him behind a nearby aisle, kissing him passionately.

MARY

Sorry, I've always wanted to do that.

GENE

Personally, I don't give a crap if we get caught, but you still have a job here.

MARY

I don't care.

GENE

Fair enough.

She kisses him again.

MARY

What do you want to do tonight?

GENE

Sorry. Can't hang out. I've got job hunting to do.

MARY

Really?

GENE

Yeah, I figure I'd better.

MARY

(glumly)

Okay...

GENE

But I'll stop by later tonight if you don't mind.

MARY

Of course I don't, just stop by whenever, I'll be home all night.

She kisses him again. As their lips part, we see Larry in the background.

LARRY

Awesome, totally awesome!

INT. CC OFFICES - LATER THAT DAY

Elizabeth sits at a desk in an empty office building. She's filling in a Suduko puzzle. Gene approaches the desk without her noticing. He clears his throat.

ELIZABETH

Oh! Hey, sorry. I was in the zone. 'bout to finish a four star puzzle here.

Gene notices what she's working on.

GENE

Ugh... suduko.

ELIZABETH

You don't like suduko?

GENE

I don't like homework. And that's basically all suduko is... homework problems disguised as fun.

ELIZABETH

Maybe for me homework is fun.

GENE

Right...

She starts filling in boxes until she gets to the last number.

ELIZABETH

Wait, that's not right... dammit, quit distracting me.

GENE

Uh... my bad?

ELIZABETH

So what can I do for you?

GENE

Thought I'd take you up on that job here... could I get an application.

ELIZABETH

No.

GENE

Well, by all means if suduko is more important to you, don't let me keep you.

ELIZABETH

Okay, thanks... okay I'm kidding. But I really can't get you an application. This is a big boy job... you know, the kind that requires a resume.

GENE

A resume. God I thought I'd go my whole life without having to write one.

ELIZABETH

You don't have a resume? God, even I have a resume, how pathetic is that?

GENE
Really pathetic it seems.

ELIZABETH
No kidding. Well do you have an hour to spare?

GENE
I guess so... why?

ELIZABETH
Because lucky for you, this office doubles as a help center for resume building. Would you like me to help you with that?

GENE
Well, only if you wouldn't mind doing your job.

ELIZABETH
Normally I would actually, but you're cute so I'll make an exception.

INT. CC OFFICES - LATER

Gene sits at a computer, Elizabeth is eagerly leaning toward him as she sits at his side.

GENE
Okay, so what do I do?

ELIZABETH
Okay, this computer is equipped with special resume building software called M Sword. So double click on M Sword.

GENE
M sword? I don't see- Oh MS Word. Cute.

He double clicks

ELIZABETH
Loading... loading... I hate how slow these things are. Okay first click on "document."

GENE
Where?

ELIZABETH
At the top, next to format.

GENE
I don't see...

ELIZABETH
Ugh...

She leans past him, grabbing the mouse over his hand, pushing the cursor to the right spot.

GENE
Ooh...

ELIZABETH
(condescendingly)
There you go.

GENE
Sorry, I grew up on macs... I'm still getting used to the second mouse button.

ELIZABETH
This is gonna' take a while.

INT. CC OFFICES - LATER

Its a little darker outside as they seem to be finishing up on the resume. They are standing by the printer.

GENE
Still can't believe you claim to be into sci-fi, but have never seen Firefly.

ELIZABETH
I've been avoiding it, God it's been hyped so much there's no way it can possibly live up to it.

GENE
Trust me it's good. One of those Fox shows that was too good to stay on the air.

ELIZABETH

You know, one day television will evolve to the point where lasers scan our eyes, and three dimensional images will be downloaded directly into our brains, and even that far in the future, there will still be nerds whining about Firefly getting cancelled.

GENE

All I'm saying is don't knock it until you've seen it.

A paper is vomited out of the printer.

GENE (CONT'D)

So what now?

ELIZABETH

Leave it with me and give Sherry a call on Monday. I'll put in a word for you.

GENE

Thanks, I'll owe you one.

ELIZABETH

You already do. How do you feel about letting me come over and watch Firefly?

GENE

Sorry, hanging out with Mary tonight.

ELIZABETH

Oh I get it, you'd rather have wild premarital sex than watch TV?

GENE

Yes, actually... but raincheck?

ELIZABETH

How about tomorrow after I get out of class. Mary works tomorrow night so you have no excuses.

GENE

Yes, because my whole life revolves around your sister.

ELIZABETH
Give it time, it will.

GENE
That sounds ominous.

She laughs the evil laugh of a mad scientist.

INT. MARY'S APARTMENT - MARY'S BEDROOM

Gene and Mary lie naked next to each other on the bed, sheets covering them.

GENE
So I saw your sister today.

MARY
Oh really? Did she have clothes on this time?

GENE
For a bit she did.

Pauses, then realizes he's joking

MARY
Don't be crude, that's my sister.

GENE
I'm sorry. But your sister's actually pretty cool. She helped me get a resume together, and she's gonna' try and get me a job at her work.

MARY
That's cool. You really want an office job?

GENE
Of course. I've always wanted to work in an office... Getting to sit on my ass all day.

MARY
It's harder than you think you know.

GENE
Anyway, she said she wanted to come by and watch Firefly with me tomorrow. Said she's never seen it.

MARY
She did? Huh.

GENE
What?

MARY
I can't believe it. She's totally
trying to seduce you.

GENE
What? No way.

MARY
Trust me, you don't know her like I
do.

GENE
I don't know, it seemed innocent
enough, I mean she knows I'm with
you.

MARY
That she does.

GENE
Are you getting insecure? Cause
seriously, regardless of what she's
thinking, which I seriously
wouldn't read too much into, I know
at least from my end that nothing's
gonna' happen.

MARY
We'll see.

GENE
Good to know you have faith in me.

MARY
It's not you, it's her. She has a
way with guys... and she's just
broken up, so she's on the prowl.

GENE
Well, I'll tell her not to bother.

MARY
Don't get me wrong, I do trust you,
and I hate to be the jealous
girlfriend, but honestly I feel
really weird about it. I mean,
don't you?

GENE

Not really. She's like the female version of an old friend of mine. It'd be a little like hooking up with a dude.

MARY

I don't know, maybe we could all hang out together some time. I don't want to stop you from being friends with her. She doesn't exactly have a lot of normal friends.

GENE

You think I'm normal?

MARY

Normalish.

GENE

I'm glad I used you as a reference.

INT. MARY'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - THE NEXT MORNING

Elizabeth is once again sprawled on the couch watching TV. The phone rings and Mary is heard off screen answering it. She hands the phone to Elizabeth.

MARY

It's for you... it's a boy.

ELIZABETH

Ooh, I hope he's cute.

MARY

He is, trust me.

Elizabeth takes the phone

ELIZABETH

Hello? Oh hey, how's it going... Yeah I'm good too... No, it's cool, I understand... Yeah, do you mind if I pick them up after my yoga class? That's fine, where do you live? Oh, that's just down the street from my class... Okay, cool see ya'.

Mary pretends like she wasn't extremely interested in that phone call.

MARY

What was that about.

ELIZABETH

Oh, he was gonna' let me borrow some DVDs. I'm stopping by later to get them.

MARY

Oh, cool.

ELIZABETH

Hey, did you say anything to him about me?

MARY

No, why?

ELIZABETH

Nothing, he just sounded a little funny, that's all.

MARY

Wait, did you ever tell him anything about me?

ELIZABETH

Nothing he wouldn't know anyway.

MARY

Okay, just curious.

They stand in silence for a bit.

INT. GENE'S APARTMENT - DAY

A knock at the door prompts Gene to get up from playing the Wii and open it. It is Elizabeth. She's dressed in typical sexyish yoga attire.

ELIZABETH

Hey, cool place.

GENE

Come in. I've got the DVDs in my room.

She enters. He retreats into his room to grab the DVDs.

ELIZABETH

Cool place.

She notices his television.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)
How can you afford something like that.

GENE
Well if you combine my employee discount with my advanced knowledge of Meijer pricing loopholes... well a lot of expensive stuff becomes affordable.

She notices his MSU banner.

ELIZABETH
You into sports?

GENE
Just hockey. Why?

ELIZABETH
The MSU banner.

GENE
Oh, my parents are fans. I think they want me to go to college so they get me stuff like that.

He emerges from his room with the DVDs in hand. Elizabeth nods towards the Wii.

ELIZABETH
So you any good?

GENE
Pretty sweet actually.

ELIZABETH
Bet you can't beat my jigglypuff though.

Gene pauses to think. He hands her a wiimote.

GENE
Well, I hope I don't have to let you win like I did with Mary.

ELIZABETH
Ha! Not likely.

INT. MEIJER STORE - LATER THAT NIGHT

Mary is going over a checklist on her clipboard. Behind her is Gene holding a fake flower. He grabs her shoulders, scaring her.

GENE

Hi there!

MARY

God you scared me. Don't do that.

GENE

Sorry. I have that effect sometimes.

MARY

(cheerful)

What are you doing here on your day off.

GENE

I'm giving you this flower to help alleviate my guilt.

MARY

Guilt?

GENE

Yeah your sister came over, she seduced me and I gave in.

Mary scowls at him.

GENE (CONT'D)

(overdramatically)

I'm sorry.

He hand her the rose.

MARY

Not funny.

GENE

Okay, I'm kidding. But she did hang out for a bit... we played some brawl. It really wasn't a big deal.

MARY

You know, you might be way more honest than you have to be.

(MORE)

MARY (CONT'D)
I thought about it, and I really
don't mind... too much.

GENE
That's good... cause damn your
sister's hot and I don't want you
getting in the way.

Mary smells the rose.

MARY
Fake... like your chances of
getting any tonight.

GENE
Might have to just take some right
now then.

He grabs for her butt, she playfully screams and swats his
hand away.

INT. MARY'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM

Elizabeth stares at the T.V. catatonically, though it seems
to be off.

MARY
Hey, I want to make an attempt at
cleaning up the place tonight.
Gene's coming over.

Elizabeth doesn't respond.

MARY (CONT'D)
Is something wrong?

Elizabeth hesitates for a moment.

ELIZABETH
Er, well, it seems... I'm sort
of... pregnant.

MARY
What? What do you mean sort of
pregnant.

She holds up what appears to be a home pregnancy test.

ELIZABETH
Well, this line is sort of blue.

MARY
What?

Mary grabs the thing out of her hands.

MARY (CONT'D)
Let me see that.

She looks over it.

MARY (CONT'D)
Okay, that's really blue.

ELIZABETH
I thought it looked more light
blue.

MARY
Oh wait, it says here on the box
that it has to be cyan to be
positive. I think you're okay.

ELIZABETH
Really?

MARY
No! Of course not. Blue is blue.

ELIZABETH
Oh.

They're both silent for a bit.

MARY
So... you're pregnant.

ELIZABETH
I peed on that you know.

Mary sets the pregnancy test down.

MARY
This is big.

She sits on the couch next to Elizabeth.

MARY (CONT'D)
How'd you know to check?

ELIZABETH
It just occurred to me that I'm like
two weeks late... and I don't know,
I just saw like three movies about
unwanted pregnancies and I
panicked. Bought a test, and next
thing I know, I'm a walking cliché.

MARY

So what are you gonna' do? Are you gonna' marry Roger?

ELIZABETH

God no. I just broke up with him.

MARY

Then what? Adoption?

ELIZABETH

I don't know, maybe. I was kind of thinking I'd just get rid of it.

MARY

You're not serious. You're one of the most pro-life people I know.

ELIZABETH

Not anymore, it seems.

MARY

I can't believe what I'm hearing... that's a baby inside you.

ELIZABETH

It's just a cluster of cells right now.

MARY

You gotta' tell mom and dad.

ELIZABETH

You kidding? They'd flip! They'd be planning my wedding before Roger even found out about it.

MARY

Well you gotta' tell Roger. It's his kid too. It is his kid right?

ELIZABETH

Of course it's his kid! What kind of slut do you think I am?

MARY

Well I don't know, which one of us is pregnant?

ELIZABETH

Well eff you too.

Mary is silent for a bit.

MARY

I'm sorry. It's just, this is a lot to take in.

ELIZABETH

This must be tough for you huh?

MARY

That's not fair. I really don't know what to say. You know I'm pro-life. I thought you were too.

ELIZABETH

God Mary, this isn't politics. This is your sister... with a problem. A problem that's going to get a lot bigger really soon.

MARY

I'm sorry, I really am, but don't get mad at me because you're irresponsible.

ELIZABETH

I gotta' get out of here.

She makes for the door.

MARY

Where are you going?

ELIZABETH

Out. Don't even think about telling mom and dad.

MARY

I won't, I swear. Where are you going?

ELIZABETH

I just need some air. I'll be back later.

She leaves.

INT. GENE'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Knocks summon Gene from the couch. It's Elizabeth.

GENE

Uh... hi?

ELIZABETH

Um... do you mind if I come in?

He gestures for her to enter and she does.

GENE

Is something wrong?

ELIZABETH

Kind of... I'm sort of... I mean...
I'm really pregnant.

GENE

Woah. How'd that happen?

ELIZABETH

You really want the details?

GENE

God no.

She takes a seat on his couch. He sits next to her.

GENE (CONT'D)

Did you tell Mary?

ELIZABETH

Yeah, I did actually. That's kind
of why I'm here.

GENE

Didn't go over to well, huh?

ELIZABETH

To say the least.

GENE

I can see her overreacting to this
sort of thing.

ELIZABETH

She is really passionate, I'll give
her that.

GENE

Obnoxiously so sometimes.

ELIZABETH

I don't know. I'm overreacting too.
I don't know what the heck I'm
gonna' do.

GENE

Well, I guess you have four options really. You could raise the baby yourself. You could raise it with your ex. You could put it up for adoption, or you could get it taken care of.

ELIZABETH

I'm not raising this baby myself. I'd be the worst mother ever.

GENE

You'd learn.

ELIZABETH

Chances are I'd screw it up. I don't want my baby to turn into a sociopath.

GENE

Okay, raising it with your ex...

ELIZABETH

Roger? God no. He's too much of a dumbass to raise a kid, and I'm not getting back with him.

GENE

Okay, adoption.

ELIZABETH

I guess that's a possibility. But who's to say the parents I give him to will be any better than me.

GENE

I think they'd be a little better. At the very least they'd want the baby.

ELIZABETH

Yeah, but how do you know they won't be like super strict religious types you know. The kind of parents that punish their kids so much that they're just waiting for a chance to act out... do something stupid.

GENE

Like get pregnant?

ELIZABETH

Exactly.

GENE

That is a possibility.

ELIZABETH

And how do I know they won't be like child molesters or something.

GENE

I think they run background checks.

ELIZABETH

It's still a possibility though. And I don't want to lug this thing around for nine months anyway.

GENE

So then get it taken care of. It's not too expensive, and its pretty simple this early in the game.

ELIZABETH

I thought about that actually. I mentioned it to Mary and she flipped.

GENE

Somehow that doesn't surprise me.

ELIZABETH

Yeah, she's pro-life. I mean, I'm pro-life too, or at least I was. Suddenly my stance doesn't seem so black and white anymore.

GENE

Why were you pro-life?

ELIZABETH

I don't know. That's how I was raised I guess. It just seemed kind of wrong to kill babies.

GENE

But it's not a baby right now. It's not really anything right now.

ELIZABETH

I know. Just a bunch of cells... But I was just a bunch of cells once. What if I had been aborted?

GENE

Then you wouldn't be having this problem right now, that's for sure.

ELIZABETH

I don't know. It still feels kind of wrong to me. But it also doesn't feel right for me to have the kid.

GENE

You're worried that it's life will suck, hell I don't blame you. But if you have it, and his life does suck, then he *will* blame you. But when was the last time you heard a fetus complain about being aborted?

ELIZABETH

I guess that's something to think about.

Gene's cell phone rings. He looks at it.

GENE

It's Mary.

ELIZABETH

For the love of God I'm not here.

GENE

Of course your not. I haven't seen you all night.

He answers.

GENE (CONT'D)

Hello? What's wrong? No I haven't seen her... Yeah, I can meet you there... Okay, I'll see you in a little bit... see ya.

He hangs up.

GENE (CONT'D)

Er, I need to go. Maybe I can calm her down a bit.

ELIZABETH

That's fine... do you mind if I crash here for a while?

GENE

Fine by me... just stay out of my
porn.

ELIZABETH

I make no promises. Just don't tell
her we spoke please.

GENE

Not a problem. I'll be back in a
bit.

ELIZABETH

See ya.

He leaves.

EXT. GIANT TIRE SWING - EVENING

A giant tire swing hangs from a large girder. Mary sits on
the swing, flustered. Gene twists her back and forth.

GENE

Pregnant?

MARY

Yeah, pregnant. Can you believe it?

GENE

Yeah, actually.

MARY

What's that supposed to mean. Do
you think she's some kind of a slut
or something?

GENE

A little, yeah.

MARY

Oh God, she is a slut isn't she?

GENE

The first time I heard her, she was
getting the sex on. The first time
I saw her, she was topless, not
that I'm complaining.

MARY

(getting angry)
Don't joke about that.

GENE

She's not a slut, really. Just has an active sex drive... apparently too active.

MARY

And she won't tell our parents.

GENE

Can you blame her?

MARY

I guess not. God, I don't know what to do.

Gene spins the swing and hops on.

GENE

Well, try not worrying about it. It's her problem.

MARY

How can you say that? I'm her sister.

GENE

Yeah, but she's an adult. She'll figure out what to do.

MARY

Yeah right, she wants to just get rid of it... Like it's a piece of trash.

GENE

Well maybe she should.

Mary sighs deeply.

MARY

I guess it shouldn't be surprising that you're pro-choice.

GENE

The hell I am.

MARY

Huh?

GENE

I don't think there should be a choice... I think abortion should be mandatory.

MARY

That's sick, don't joke about that.

GENE

Who's joking? What makes parents arrogant enough to think they have the right to bring someone into this world.

MARY

You know, you might not think so, but this world can actually be a pretty cool place.

GENE

That's irrelevant. As long as it has the potential to be bad, it's not worth the risk.

MARY

You might think so, but I for one am glad I was born.

GENE

Yes, but only because you were born. If you were never born, you wouldn't have anything to miss.

MARY

But I have to be born first before I can know whether or not life will be bad. Your logic is circular.

GENE

No it's not. Try to imagine that your life is so bad, you wish you were never born.

MARY

But no matter how bad my life gets, I'll never wish that.

GENE

Maybe, maybe not... but for any given person, for every unborn fetus, there is the potential that they will grow up to have a life so bad that they would rather not have been born.

MARY

I suppose.

GENE

And that is a wish they will never get, because their parents were selfish enough to ignore this possibility. Everyone talks about whether they want kids or not, but they never even stop to consider how immoral it is to reproduce if their kids end up not wanting life.

MARY

Well most people do want life, and if they don't they can...

She stops herself.

GENE

They can what? Commit suicide? Are you saying you support suicide now?

MARY

They can get help.

GENE

Some can, yes, the lucky ones. But as long as some can't, my point still stands.

MARY

But you're just totally ignoring all the good things life has to offer.

GENE

Yes, because if you're not born, you won't ever miss all those good things life brings, and you'll additionally be spared of the bad things.

MARY

I'm never going to just discount how great life is because it might be bad. Sorry.

GENE

(pauses)

Do you believe incest is wrong?

MARY

What does that have to do with anything?

GENE

Nothing. I'm just curious.

MARY

Yeah, I bet... yes. I believe incest is wrong.

GENE

Why?

MARY

Because it is. It's... gross.

GENE

But the people committing the incestuous act don't think it's gross, so then why is it wrong?

MARY

Because, I mean, incest causes lots of birth defects and genetic diseases.

GENE

So you're saying that children of incestuous relationships would be better off not being born?

MARY

No, that's kind of an extreme case.

GENE

But you are saying that there should be a certain quality of life, before reproduction is even attempted... otherwise incest wouldn't be wrong.

MARY

I guess so.

GENE

But with any pregnancy, there is the potential to be birth defects or genetic diseases. What is it about regular couples that makes it okay for them to decide that their genes are good enough for their spawn? Because the odds are a bit better?

MARY

I don't know... clearly you've thought a lot more about this than I have. Why don't you tell me?

GENE

As long as the potential exists, it should make no difference whether the couples are related or not. And not just birth defects, you have no idea what kind of horrors can befall a perfectly healthy child. Until you can guarantee that the child will have a great life, all reproduction should be considered immoral.

MARY

So what, you just want life on earth to stop?

GENE

Well, that's not my goal, but that would be a byproduct of mandatory abortion. I think the world would be a lot better in the long run without humans making each other miserable and destroying the place in the meantime.

MARY

I can't talk to you about this.

She gets up and begins walking away.

GENE

Mary, this is just like you trying to convince me to not kill myself. You want life at all costs, but you don't give a damn about the quality of it. With how crappy this world can be, with how much worse it's getting, and considering the peaceful alternative of non-life, Elizabeth's baby would be better off terminated... I'm sorry if that's hard for you to hear.

She stops, and turns around.

MARY

Did Elizabeth tell you about the baby?

GENE
 (hesitates)
 No.

MARY
 She did didn't she.

Gene frowns.

MARY (CONT'D)
 What did you tell her?

GENE
 What she needed to hear.

MARY
 What's that? To just kill an
 innocent baby?

GENE
 She needed someone to be
 supportive. Not someone to shove
 their beliefs down her throat.

MARY
 (caught off guard)
 She's my sister. Stay out of it.

GENE
 Fine. Don't worry about it.

MARY
 Fine.

She walks away, as she leaves, the song "Have You Ever Seen
 the Rain" by Creedence Clearwater Revival or something
 cheaper begins to play.

MONTAGE

- A) Gene gets off tire swing, starts walking the opposite way.
- B) Mary walks toward the camera
- C) Elizabeth looks at her cell phone in her hand.
- D) Elizabeth dials Roger and get's his voicemail.
- E) Mary tries to make a call from her car. She hangs up
 looking frustrated.
- F) Gene walks by himself into the zoo.

G) Mary arrives home and runs into Elizabeth's room. It is empty.

H) Elizabeth is watching the news through tears, there's a story about global warming on.

I) Gene enters the Penguin Tank.

J) Gene watches as a Penguin repeatedly swims up and down against the glass in the tank.

K) Mary is making a sandwich, she looks across the counter at her cell phone.

INT. ROGER'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Roger sits at his couch listening as Elizabeth paces back and forth, it is raining in the background.

ELIZABETH

And I told Mary and she totally flipped, but she said I should probably tell you and I agree, so here I am, and I'm telling you.

ROGER

Wow.

ELIZABETH

You're telling me.

ROGER

Well I know I'm not ready for this at all, but maybe this is a good thing.

ELIZABETH

What! You can't be serious. How could this possibly be a good thing?

ROGER

Well, I don't know. Maybe it's fate. Like this is what brings us back together. Maybe we were meant to raise this baby together.

ELIZABETH

Roger, there's no us. What we have is over.

ROGER

But this kind of changes things,
doesn't it?

ELIZABETH

Yes, this changes things. This
changes a hell of a lot. But it
doesn't change anything about us. I
know this hurts to hear, but I
don't love you. It'd be no good for
us or the baby... being born into a
loveless marriage.

ROGER

It wouldn't be entirely loveless...
I still love you.

Elizabeth sigh and sits down, holding her forehead.

ELIZABETH

Roger, have you looked at this
world. We've got war, unemployment,
Global Warming... Is this something
you even really want for your
child?

ROGER

I think they deserve the chance.

She is silent for a really long time. Slinking her head
further into her hands.

ELIZABETH

Roger, the only reason I'm even
coming to you is because I believe
this child is half yours. I know
it's my body, but I still feel you
have equal rights to the kid. If
you want it, and I mean really want
it, I will choose to have this baby
for you, but I want you to
remember, that whatever it's fate,
there will be no us. It's over
between us.

Roger looks at her, clearly hurt.

INT. MARY'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Mary, sitting on the couch watches as Elizabeth comes through
the door. She stands to meet her.

MARY

Hey, sorry about overreacting earlier.

ELIZABETH

Don't worry about it.

MARY

Can we try this again, this time with my supportive face?

ELIZABETH

Seriously don't worry about it. I overreacted too.

MARY

Okay.

ELIZABETH

I talked to Roger.

MARY

How'd he take the news?

ELIZABETH

Not well... but I talked to him and he was eventually a little more supportive.

MARY

What does he want to do?

ELIZABETH

He wants me to have an abortion.

MARY

Oh.

ELIZABETH

And I thought about it... and that's what I'm going to do.

MARY

Oh.

ELIZABETH

And I know you're against it... that you think it's murder, but I've made my decision and I'm going to go through with it.

Mary is silent.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

And I hope that this won't change things between us, because I really need my sister right now.

MARY

I'll always be your sister, no matter what you do.

ELIZABETH

Your cool with this?

MARY

Well, no, but it is your decision. And though I won't be driving you to the clinic or anything. I won't get in your way either.

ELIZABETH

You won't tell mom and dad?

MARY

No. They'd be even less cool with your decision.

ELIZABETH

(sincerely)

Thanks. I really appreciate this.

MARY

Can I have a hug?

ELIZABETH

Of course.

They hug each other as the picture fades to black.

INT. MEIJER STORE - DAY

Mary in work attire watches as Larry comically fails to stock a DVD player above his head. He drops it on the floor with a clatter. He looks around and sees Mary.

LARRY

Oops.

MARY

That's coming out of your paycheck you know.

LARRY

I'm really sorry, I didn't mean to.

Mary picks up the DVD player and shakes it. It rattles.

MARY

Don't worry about it. We'll just ship it back to the manufacturer.

LARRY

So what's up with Gene? Isn't he supposed to be here today?

MARY

(upset)

Yeah. It's supposed to be his last day actually.

LARRY

Probably just skipping. It's tradition to skip your last day.

MARY

I don't know. I feel like he would have called in at least.

LARRY

Did you try calling?

MARY

Yeah, his phone's off. You're probably right, he's probably just skipping.

LARRY

Oh well, at least it's slow.

MARY

Yeah.

EXT. MEIJER PARKING LOT - LATER THAT DAY

Mary gets in her car and goes to turn on the ignition. When she looks up, she sees Gene standing in front of her car. He is holding a bouquet of fake flowers. She turns off her car and gestures for him to enter. He smiles and gets inside.

GENE

These are for you.

He hands her the flowers.

MARY

Fake, all fake.

GENE

Like your chances of forgiving me.

MARY

Forgiving you for what? You were just being you. I shouldn't expect you to be anything different.

GENE

I was being an ass. When your sister came to me in distress, I was as supportive as I could be.

MARY

She told me about it. You're always there for people more than you'll ever know.

GENE

But when you came to me the same way, I wasn't supportive. I attacked you when you needed someone the most. And that's why you should be mad, and that's why I'm sorry.

MARY

I forgive you.

GENE

Thank you.

MARY

You know, when you didn't show up for work today, it crossed my mind that maybe you...

GENE

That I killed myself? What would ever make you think that?

She gives him a look.

GENE (CONT'D)

I wanted to. I wanted to so badly. But I wasn't even close to actually committing the act.

MARY

Maybe something I said actually stuck with you.

GENE

Maybe. I guess just sitting around the penguin tank had an effect on me.

MARY

Oh?

GENE

Yeah, well most of the penguins in the tank were just resigned to their fate... just lying around and waiting to die.

MARY

God, everything is death with you.

GENE

But there was this one penguin swimming around in the water. It swam until it ran into the glass. When it realized it hit a wall, it just kept swimming down until it reached the bottom. Once it reached the bottom, it just floated back to the top, then swam back down to the bottom. I was there for at least a half hour and it never stopped doing that.

MARY

Huh.

GENE

Well, sometimes I kind of feel like that penguin. Like I'm the one person discontent with life. The one person trying to find something better.

MARY

I don't think your the only person that's discontent with this life.

GENE

But it sure feels that way, especially since nobody seems to have any problems with bringing more people into this world. We're like penguins in a cage, so resigned to the fate we have, we don't try to challenge it. Don't try to make it better.

MARY

What are you saying?

GENE

I don't know... probably just pretentious psychobabble... but I do know this. I still wish I was never born, and I still think that we'd be better off not bringing more people into this world, but no matter how much I want that, there will still be millions of babies each year, and the human race will keep going. And I guess I can either kill myself and not worry about it, or I can actually spend the rest of my life trying to make the world a better place. That way, maybe this big penguin tank won't feel like such a cage, and maybe future penguins like me won't beat their heads against the wall trying to escape it. I guess I'm choosing the latter.

MARY

So maybe I won't have to spend the rest of my life trying to save yours then?

GENE

No you won't. I promise you that. But if you can forgive me, I'd like to keep pursuing whatever it is we have.

Mary looks at him with sadness in her eyes.

MARY

Of course I can forgive you Gene, and I really love you. But what we have... we can't keep it going. I believe that despite its problems, the world is a fundamentally good place... a place worth bringing a life into. And one day, certainly not immediately, but one day I'm going to want to have a child and show them the beauty of this life.

GENE

Even though that's a beauty they'll never miss if never conceived?

MARY

I don't want to debate this. I'm just telling you how I feel.

GENE

I understand. But don't you think it's a little early in the relationship to be talking about kids anyway? I mean, who's to say that one day down the line one of us doesn't change our minds about things?

MARY

You mean what if one day I change my mind? Cause do you really see yourself changing your opinion?

GENE

I guess not. But I don't know. I'm not opposed to adopting. Considering how many unwanted kids are born each year, maybe that makes more sense anyway.

MARY

(pondering)

That's a solution, I guess.

GENE

But?

MARY

But I don't think it works that way. It's more than just the issue of having kids. It's a fundamental difference in basic views on life. We were stupid to ignore it before.

GENE

It can work that way if we don't let it get to us... I mean, we haven't even given us a chance.

MARY

Think about it, do you honestly see this working? Maybe immediately, but what about in a year, in five years, in ten. Don't answer, just think about it

GENE

(thinking)

... I don't think any permanent happiness can be found with anybody... but I want to squeeze as much happiness out of this as we can.

MARY

And that's the problem. I still believe that there's somebody out there that's perfect for me. That I can be 90 and happy with.

GENE

I understand.

MARY

And though it kills me to end what we have, I need to be with someone that feels the same way. I hope you understand.

GENE

I do. I hate it and I wish you'd change your mind, but I agree. It doesn't make sense for us to pursue a relationship where we want two separate things.

He sighs and droops his head. She rubs him on the back. After a moment he opens the door and exits the vehicle.

GENE (CONT'D)

We can still be friends though, right.

MARY

Of course.

GENE

With benefits?

MARY

Ugh... You perv.

TITLE: ONE WEEK LATER

INT. GENE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Gene and Elizabeth are on the couch, watching TV together.

ELIZABETH
(Outraged)
That was it?

GENE
Well there's a movie that finished
up some of the plot lines, but
yeah, that's it for the TV show.

ELIZABETH
God, I can't believe this was
cancelled. This could've been like
the next Star Trek, only good.

GENE
The cynic is converted.

ELIZABETH
I'm glad you convinced me to watch
it.

GENE
No problem... Hey so I never asked,
how did the operation go?

Elizabeth doesn't answer immediate. She looks away from Gene.

ELIZABETH
I guess about as well as can be
expected. Surprised they can take a
life so quickly.

GENE
Are you regretting it?

ELIZABETH
No, I think it had to be done it's
just... I don't know. I wish my
sister didn't look at me the way
she does... I guess it's to be
expected.

GENE
Give her time. Pretty soon things
will go back to the status quo.

ELIZABETH
Hey, if you don't mind my asking,
did you guys end up breaking up
because of me.

GENE

Well, yes and no, really. Your situation just brought out a lot of stuff that probably should have been revealed sooner, rather than later is all. The very reason we came together is the same reason we couldn't stay together.

ELIZABETH

Yeah... you know, I probably shouldn't be telling you this, but she's still a little heartbroken over you. I miss you two being together... I liked seeing her happy.

GENE

In honesty, I still miss her too. It was like we always worked together, and then it was a whole lot more... and now it's nothing. How come the "let's be friends" line never seems to have meaning?

ELIZABETH

Probably because it's hard to be friends when you're thinking about each other naked.

GENE

Damn, I'm gonna' miss that.

ELIZABETH

I don't blame you. I've seen her naked, she's got a kicking body.

GENE

(sighing)

Sigh... Sometimes I wonder if it'll be this way with everyone I meet.

ELIZABETH

Oh, cheer up emo kid. I'm sure *someone* else will come around.

GENE

Yeah, maybe.

He smiles at her. She smiles back. He keeps smiling at her. A look of horror crosses her face.

ELIZABETH

Hey, don't look at me! I'm not gonna' be your rebound!

GENE

Oh, sorry, I just kind of thought we were sharing a moment there.

ELIZABETH

Yeah, I know. We totally were. But then all of a sudden, I remembered, oh yeah, your my sister's ex. And oh yeah, I just had an abortion. I'm gonna' see if I can learn from my mistakes this once. Starting anything now would be awful.

GENE

Now?

She smiles. A look of relief covers his face. He smiles. She smiles back.

FADE TO BLACK

CREDITS