

LOVE AND HORROR
EPISODE 1 - PILOT
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ACT ONE

INT. FANCY RESTAURANT

White linen tablecloths. The glow of candles illuminates the dining area. A waiter pops a bottle of champagne, and pours it into the glass of:

LISA (23). Her blonde hair and impossibly white teeth give her the sense of a Barbie doll. She is accompanied by ROD, the Ken to this Barbie.

ROD

Who knew we would've ended up here?

LISA

I might have.

Rod chuckles.

ROD

Sure, Lisa. You predicted this like a crazy homeless guy predicts the end of the world.

LISA

Except I was right.

ROD

Good point. Lisa Wellington. Fortune-teller.

Rod holds up his glass, and Lisa CLINKS it with hers.

LISA

This is exactly how I want to spend every night.

ROD

I don't know about that. Wouldn't we get tired of it eventually?

LISA

As long as I'm with you? Never.

Rod smiles and holds Lisa's hand.

ROD

I just want you to know, I don't think I've ever known happiness until I met you.

LISA
 (embarrassed)
 Rod, stop.

ROD
 I'm not lying to you. And until the day comes when one of us leaves this world, I'll look at you every day like I saw you the first time, that fateful day Senior Year.

LISA
 Oh Rod...

The two slowly move in for a kiss. Their lips almost touch when-

SVING! A knife blade STABS through Lisa's chest. Blood spurts on the table, staining the white linen.

Rod, shaking with fear, clenches the tablecloth.

ROD
 What the FUCK!?

Lisa's corpse FLOPS flat on the table, revealing a SHADOWY FIGURE behind her. It holds the bloody knife out, puts its index finger up to its mouth, and whispers:

SHADOWY FIGURE
 Shhhhh...

The Shadowy Figure SLAMS the knife into the table, with the handle sticking up in the air. Fog forms in the room. The Shadowy Figure floats into the cloud, staring at Rod the entire time.

Rod sits there. He's too shocked to react at all.

DIRECTOR (O.S.)
 Aaaaaand CUT! That's a wrap!

INT. SOUNDSTAGE/FANCY RESTAURANT

Reveal: The restaurant is a Hollywood soundstage.

DIRECTOR
 Good job everyone! Get a rest, you deserve it.

Everyone in the studio CHEERS.

Crew clean up the paranormal crime scene. Lisa stands up and wipes fake blood off her face, and Rod laughs as he talks to the attractive makeup lady.

GEORGE IRMAN is the director. 25 but looking slightly younger, it's a surprise that he's ordering around people mostly older than him. But he does his job well.

He speaks to the Producer's Assistant, the messenger for the man too busy to speak directly to his employees, and overall bitch for the master that is the Producer.

He's probably too well-dressed for the job he has.

GEORGE

Never thought we'd get this done.

PRODUCER'S ASSISTANT

Pierce wanted to congratulate you for wrapping up Bloodlust.

GEORGE

Pierce? You two on a first-name basis now?

PRODUCER'S ASSISTANT

Not exactly, but he's not here to tell me otherwise!

The Assistant LAUGHS. George lets out a faint chuckle.

PRODUCER'S ASSISTANT (CONT'D)

But seriously, please don't tell him I called him Pierce. And please don't tell him I laughed on set.

GEORGE

I won't say anything...

George hesitates, trying to remember his name.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

What's your name?

PRODUCER'S ASSISTANT

Oh, he doesn't let me share my name with other employees. That's so if he decides to fire me people don't root for my job back because of emotional attachment.

(beat)

I shouldn't have said that.

GEORGE

Geez, he seems to be riding your ass harder than mine. I remember when he produced my first short. What a nightmare.

PRODUCER'S ASSISTANT

Pier- Mr. Conoway is a very mindful person. He would also like to see you today at noon.

GEORGE

It's...

George checks his watch.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Eleven Fifty-Six right now...

PRODUCER'S ASSISTANT

Then I recommend you hurry up. Or as Mr. Conoway would say:

He clears his throat and goes into a fairly low voice:

PRODUCER'S ASSISTANT (CONT'D)

"IF I DON'T SEE YOU THERE ON TIME I WILL FEED YOU TO MY DOGS! THAT'S NOT A JOKE. I HAVE A VERY HUNGRY BASSET HOUND NAMED JULIE."

George is visibly weirded out.

GEORGE

... Seeya.

George rushes out of the soundstage.

INT. PRODUCER'S OFFICE - NOON

A mini-bar with all the fixings. Polished hardwood floors. An oak desk with a steel nameplate: PIERCE CONOWAY. Behind the desk is the man himself, 56 and fat. Not exactly a pleasure to look at. At least his suit is well-fitting.

Did we just get transported to an early '60s ad agency? That seems like a legitimate possibility.

George sits across Pierce, his jeans and t-shirt clash with the formal setting.

PIERCE CONOWAY

How do you feel, George?

GEORGE

We just wrapped BloodLust, so...
better than usual, I guess.

PIERCE CONOWAY

Don't guess. Guessing is for the
weak that can't commit to the
simplest things. You're not that.

GEORGE

Noted.

PIERCE CONOWAY

Do you want a drink?

GEORGE

I'm good, thanks.

PIERCE CONOWAY

So. Why are you here?

GEORGE

Your assistant told me you wanted
me here by noon?

PIERCE CONOWAY

Riiight. Was he Indian?

GEORGE

I don't think so...

PIERCE CONOWAY

Hm. I could've sworn my current
assistant was Indian. Anyway, yes,
I wanted to congratulate you on
BloodLust. So. Congratulations.

GEORGE

Thank you!

PIERCE CONOWAY

Before I tell you this next bit of
news, could you close the door?

GEORGE

Yeah, sure.

George shuts the office door.

PIERCE CONOWAY

Lock it.

GEORGE

Is that... necessary?

Pierce gives George a piercing glare.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Yes. Okay.

George locks the door.

PIERCE CONOWAY
Sit. I've been saving this for a
very long time.

George sits across from Pierce, and Pierce pulls out a box of
CUBAN CIGARS from his desk.

PIERCE CONOWAY (CONT'D)
Ever had one of these? Cuban.

GEORGE
I don't smoke.

PIERCE CONOWAY
Today, you will.

Pierce hands one to George. He hesitantly takes it, and
places it into his mouth.

Pierce lights his own cigar, then lights George's.

PIERCE CONOWAY (CONT'D)
I have some big news for you, so I
want you to be relaxed.

George puffs his cigar, and awkwardly takes it out of his
mouth. His face is scrunched like he smelled something bad.

GEORGE
What is it?

George puts the cigar back.

PIERCE CONOWAY
The studio's going broke.

George COUGHS and smoke blows from his mouth.

GEORGE
What?!

PIERCE CONOWAY
Hold on. Take a deep breath.

George COUGHS again.

PIERCE CONOWAY (CONT'D)

Close enough. Look, after those two talking dog comedies flopped, we've been a little underwater. We're hoping to find a way to save the company, secure a little funding in the future... do you understand?

GEORGE

Mr. Conoway, what do I have to do with any of this?

PIERCE CONOWAY

You're our guy. Every picture you've made for us has at least broke even. So we need you to work your magic. I have another assignment for you.

GEORGE

What's the assignment?

Pierce looks at George for a beat.

PIERCE CONOWAY

Would you like to take it?

GEORGE

You're not going to tell me what the job even is?

PIERCE CONOWAY

Depends on if you take it or not.

GEORGE

I don't have time to think about it? Nothing?

PIERCE CONOWAY

Yes? Or no?

GEORGE

Yes. Fine. You haven't screwed me over too much so far.

Pierce extends his hand. George shakes it.

PIERCE CONOWAY

Excellent!

Pierce sticks a cigarette in his mouth.

PIERCE CONOWAY (CONT'D)

Now.

He flips out his lighter and fires up the cigarette.

PIERCE CONOWAY (CONT'D)
You know about that new movie?
"Heaven Can Wait," I believe it is.

GEORGE
I think I've heard of it, yeah.

PIERCE CONOWAY
How much do you think it made last weekend. Twenty million? Thirty million?

GEORGE
I honestly don't know.

PIERCE CONOWAY
Ninety-five million. In one weekend. Even the critics are liking it. Liking it, mind you, not loving it. How crazy is that?

GEORGE
Pretty crazy.

PIERCE CONOWAY
I want to get in on something like that. Attractive leads. Medium budget. Outstanding results. That's what I'm expecting from you.

GEORGE
Mr. Conoway, I know I just did this semi-romantic horror, but this seems like... I don't know, maybe not in my wheelhouse?

PIERCE CONOWAY
Nonsense. You're perfect. And also my last director dropped out because his grandmother died. What a flake.

GEORGE
This just feels like a lot. I've never done anything close to this.

PIERCE CONOWAY
Tell you what.

He tosses the cigarette butt into the ashtray.

PIERCE CONOWAY (CONT'D)

Go home. Think about it. I think you'll find this a great opportunity. And if you don't...

(beat)

There could be consequences.

GEORGE

What consequences?

PIERCE CONOWAY

I lose my job. You lose yours.

GEORGE

Understood.

PIERCE CONOWAY

Good.

INT. APARTMENT

A scantily-clad woman in BLUE grinds on top of REED (24). Tall and muscular, he makes out with Blue like a man that's done this thousands of times before.

Reed flips Blue over on her back, and gyrates on top of her.

The door opens and CREAKS. George carries in a bag of groceries.

Reed looks back to see a confused George, unsure of what to do. Blue stands up and puts on her sweatpants and t-shirt.

Reed walks up to George, sweaty and pungent.

GEORGE

Reed, I thought we had an arrangement. Save this stuff for the night.

REED

Couldn't help myself. She was a tiger, and I was... what do tigers have sex with?

GEORGE

Other tigers?

REED

Sure.

GEORGE

Ugh, at least take a shower.

Reed smiles.

REED
Then you should wash the dishes.

GEORGE
Later. I've got work to do.

Blue takes her purse and walks out.

BLUE
Will we ever see each other again?

REED
Hah, no.

BLUE
Sweet. Thanks.

She leaves.

REED
Work? Right now?

GEORGE
Yep.

REED
That's not you. You usually have to overdose on *Friends* before any type of work gets done.

GEORGE
This is different. Romantic bullshit. My producer kind of forced it on me.

REED
Oh! Does he not know about your history with woman?

GEORGE
Why would that matter?

REED
Amy and Charlotte, man!

GEORGE
I thought we agreed not to bring that up.

REED
I think it's appropriate here.

GEORGE

Why do you like that story so much.

REED

It's hilarious!

GEORGE

Not that big of a deal.

REED

It absolutely is.

George puts away the groceries into the fridge.

REED (CONT'D)

I know you're nervous. The band and I are playing at the Cold Pub tonight. You should come. Mingle.

GEORGE

I don't know.

REED

Why?

GEORGE

First of all, not a huge fan of the band's name.

REED

You've said that. Who can't love the name?

ACT TWO

INT. COLD PUB

A drum set labeled POLISH DOG. A four-man group playing in a busy pub. Reed is on the bass. They play an upbeat, heavy-metal inspired tune. But the lead singer has a pop voice. A combination that shouldn't work, but does.

George sits at the bar, hunched over his drink. Reed keeps his eye on George while performing. A young BLONDE BOMBSHELL takes a seat next to George.

BLONDE BOMBSHELL

Could I get an appletini, please?

Reed points his head over to the girl, mouthing the words: GO GET HER.

George turns around.

GEORGE
Great band, huh? My buddy's the
bass player.

BLONDE BOMBSHELL
It's not really my thing.

GEORGE
Yeah, me neither. Would you like me
to buy you a drink?

BLONDE BOMBSHELL
Did you not see me order one just
now?

GEORGE
I was thinking maybe you wanted
another drink.

BLONDE BOMBSHELL
No. Thanks for the offer.

The Bartender gives her the appletini. George, destroyed,
looks back at his drink.

INT. COLD PUB - LATER

Reed has his hand on George's shoulder.

GEORGE
I don't know what to do.

REED
But I do. See her?

Reed points to a CUTE REDHEAD at the corner of the pub.

REED (CONT'D)
She's looking around. She doesn't
want to walk to anyone. She wants
someone to go to her.

GEORGE
I don't know...

REED
You DO know.

Reed PUSHES George out of his seat.

REED (CONT'D)
You just don't know it yet.

GEORGE
What do I say?

REED
Ask what her name is and what she
does. That should get you started.

George nods and turns around. Reed gives two thumbs-up.

George walks over to the girl. She plays with the straw in
her drink.

GEORGE
Hey...

CUTE REDHEAD
Hi.

GEORGE
What's your name?

CUTE REDHEAD
Millie.

GEORGE
Oh, cool. What do you do?

CUTE REDHEAD
You know those PSA's you see on
billboards and bus stops? I write
some of those.

GEORGE
That is interesting.

George stands by silently. He looks at Reed.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
What next?

REED
Just make conversation?

GEORGE
(to the Cute Redhead)
So, you see that movie, Blowback?

CUTE REDHEAD
Is that the one where all the kids
sit around and smoke? And do coke?

GEORGE

There's more to it than that, but yeah. That's it.

CUTE REDHEAD

Sure. I mean I've heard of it.

GEORGE

I directed that movie.

CUTE REDHEAD

That's... cool. I mean I could've done without the portrayal of substance abuse as being socially cool and acceptable.

GEORGE

That was one scene.

CUTE REDHEAD

But that's all it takes. Kids take in everything. You can't stop them from having that blasted in their mind. Well, you can, because you make those movies.

GEORGE

I honestly didn't mean to upset you, I am so sorry.

CUTE REDHEAD

Tell that to the millions of people who die from lung cancer and liver disease. You're a disgusting man.

She leaves George, and Reed sits at the bar with his hands over his face.

EXT. GREEK RESTAURANT

Reed and George sit on a curb outside of a Greek Restaurant.

Reed eats a kabob while George spots his reflection in a filthy puddle.

GEORGE

Maybe I'm just trying too hard. I could just write any typical romantic comedy, right? How hard could that be? I'm gonna guess the guys that sit for hours and write cheesy romance schlock don't meet tons of women.

Reed puts down his kabob in its to-go container.

REED

I haven't seen you this sad in a while.

GEORGE

More sick than sad.

REED

That's funny. You could hold your alcohol way better in college.

GEORGE

Fuck you.

Reed laughs and takes the bare kabob stick inside.

George keeps staring at the puddle, but then spots another face's reflection in the water. He looks up to see Carla (20's). Black-haired with a baseball cap on. Unassuming but pretty. She sits next to George on the curb.

CARLA

You do not look good.

GEORGE

I know. Just going through a rough patch.

CARLA

Isn't everyone?

Carla extends her hand.

CARLA (CONT'D)

I'm Carla.

George shakes her hand.

GEORGE

George.

CARLA

Saw your friend. Do I recognize him from somewhere?

GEORGE

Used to model for magazines.

CARLA

No way!

GEORGE

Yep. He thought I was a model when he first met me.

CARLA

Why's that?

GEORGE

There was this modeling club at my college, and I snuck in there.

Carla chuckles.

CARLA

Why were you there?

GEORGE

Free pastrami.

She laughs.

CARLA

Sounds like something I would do.

GEORGE

Yeah.

(beat)

Why are you here?

CARLA

I guess I just liked the fantasy of Los Angeles. It's Hollywood. It's the fancy cars. It's the beaches.

GEORGE

Oh no, I meant why are you here. Like, sitting here.

CARLA

Aha. Saw you talking to your friend, and also saw you were staring at this puddle like some kind of asshole who likes to pretend to be introspective.

George laughs.

GEORGE

Is that what I am?

CARLA

That's what I was expecting.

GEORGE
And you like people like that?

CARLA
I guess I do. But only because I am
one of those people.

GEORGE
Funny.

INT. GREEK RESTAURANT

Reed exits the bathroom, but through the glass wall sees George talking to Carla. Reed stands and watches, shaking his head while smiling.

EXT. GREEK RESTAURANT

GEORGE
What do you do for a living?

CARLA
Wouldn't you like to know?

GEORGE
Ah. A mystery.

CARLA
Don't worry. If you call me, you
might know.

Carla takes out her notepad and pen. She scribbles her number down, rips out the sheet, and hands it to George.

CARLA (CONT'D)
Your turn.

Carla hands the pen to George. He writes his number on the notepad and she takes the pen back.

INT. GREEK RESTAURANT

Reed covers his mouth with his hand in shock. George got a girl's number. He actually did it.

EXT. GREEK RESTAURANT

George and Carla stand up.

GEORGE
I'm glad we talked.

CARLA
Me too.

GEORGE
Maybe we'll talk later?

CARLA
Maybe.

GEORGE
Great!

George takes a beat, and the color flushes out of his face.

CARLA
Are you okay?

George nods his head, but his expression says otherwise.

CARLA (CONT'D)
Do you need me to call someone? Or-

George VOMITS all over Carla. Her shirt gets covered in the remains of a depressing night.

Reed runs outside and lifts George's shoulder over his. Reed then says to Carla:

REED
Sorry.

Carla, visibly disgusted, says nothing. She runs in the street and gets on her phone.

Reed, supporting George, walks home.

INT. PRODUCER'S OFFICE

The Producer's Assistant walks into the empty office with a stack of papers. He dumps the papers on the desk, shaking the desk a bit and opening a drawer slightly ajar.

The Assistant walks over to shut it, but sees a wooden box. He opens the drawer a little more to see a cigar, which he sees the word CUBA printed on.

PRODUCER'S ASSISTANT
No way...

INT. APARTMENT

George sits at his laptop, trying to churn out a rom-com script. It doesn't seem to be working, as he's distracted by Carla's slip of paper with her number on it.

He takes out his cellphone and types in the number. The phone RINGS, but goes to the:

ANSWERING MACHINE

Hey, this is Carla, leave a message at the tone!

BEEP.

GEORGE

This is George, sorry about last night, that was stupid. I know you're probably upset, and I know we'll probably never talk again, but I had a great time. Sorry I ruined your night.

George hangs up.

He then types on his laptop, but only gets so far. He's only written half a page, which he promptly erases.

Leaning back in his chair, he thinks for a moment. Then he stands up to go to the CALENDAR, which has George and Reed's plans written all over it. George looks at today's date, and sees: POLISH DOG PRACTICE.

INT. HILLMAN'S BASEMENT

Lead singer HILLMAN (38) is muscular and bald. He's shirtless, for no discernible reason.

The band members are STEVE, a scrawny drum player with a chipped tooth, BILL, an older guitar player with long hair, and of course REED on the electric bass.

HILLMAN

Alright, let's start it off from the beginning. Bill and Steve, make sure you try to keep up. Reed, make sure not to go too intense on that time change.

Reed nods.

George walks down into the basement.

HILLMAN (CONT'D)
George! How'd you get in here?

GEORGE
You left this-

George pulls out a key.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
In one of your escapades.

HILLMAN
Escapades? Don't remember that.

INSERT - FLASHBACK

Hillman, in George's apartment, THRASHING AROUND drunkenly.

George and Reed calmly stand by, watching.

HILLMAN (CONT'D)
(slurring)
I have the feeling I'll pass out
here sometime. If you bring it up,
I won't remember this. Slap me in
the face if I'm being square.

Hillman collapses with a loud THUD.

END FLASHBACK

George SLAPS Hillman.

HILLMAN (CONT'D)
The fuck man?

Hillman's eyes widen.

HILLMAN (CONT'D)
Riiight.

George throws Hillman the house key.

HILLMAN (CONT'D)
Good man. So, what brings you here?

GEORGE
Just needed to clear my head. Can't
write for some reason.

STEVE
Lady troubles, I'm guessin'.

HILLMAN

Shut up, Steve!

(to George)

But if it really is a woman, let me tell ya this. Us, as a band, never bring up relationship troubles. I recommend you do the same.

STEVE

Bullshit!

HILLMAN

Shut up, Steve.

STEVE

You came here chugging absinthe and crying about Laura.

HILLMAN

Shut the FUCK up, Steve!

STEVE

Just saying.

HILLMAN

(to George)

Look, my advice to you is simply, push it out. Find the source of pain. Sometimes, it's not even the woman that's the trouble.

BILL

That's coming from the guy that punched a wall because Tina broke up with him over the phone. It's still here, he hasn't fixed it.

HILLMAN

I have!

The hole in the basement wall, with what looks to be stuffed with neon green play-doh.

George thinks Hillman's advice through.

As Polish Dog begins to play their next song, George leaves.

EXT. HILLMAN'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Birds chirp. Kids play. And George is ready to rid himself of this burden of a film.

He pulls out his phone, and calls:

INT. PRODUCER'S OFFICE

Pierce Conoway, sitting idly in his office. His phone RINGS.

INTERCUT between PIERCE and GEORGE.

Pierce picks up the phone.

PIERCE CONOWAY

Hello?

GEORGE

Mr. Conoway. I know you had a lot of hope in this romantic movie, and I did too, trust me, but I don't think I can follow through.

PIERCE CONOWAY

(beat)

Hm. I understand.

GEORGE

You do? Great! Oh, thank you so-

PIERCE CONOWAY

Hold on. I said I understand. Not that I'm happy with it.

GEORGE

Of course, Mr. Conoway, but-

PIERCE CONOWAY

Listen to me, George. Is your phone close to your ear?

GEORGE

I don't see why it wouldn't be...

PIERCE CONOWAY

Push it closer.

George awkwardly smushes his cellphone against his ear.

PIERCE CONOWAY (CONT'D)

Is it closer?

GEORGE

I think so.

PIERCE CONOWAY

Good. Now I want you to listen to me very carefully. I've sunk a lot of money into this film already. Do you want to know how much?

GEORGE

Uh-

PIERCE CONOWAY

Fifteen. Million. Are you understanding me right now, George?

GEORGE

That is a lot of money.

PIERCE CONOWAY

I've attached two big names already, who for contractual reasons I am not allowed to reveal to you. The point is, this project is one ticking time-bomb. Making it means you get to stop the timer, and you get to live. But quit now, and you're cutting the wire that blows you up. The wire that means you get to quit this movie, but I'll be sure you never work on any production in this town ever again. You won't get as much as a goddamn commercial for a dollar store. We are on the verge of bankruptcy, and if this doesn't go smoothly, we're ALL out of a job. Are you understanding me now, George?

GEORGE

(beat)

Y-yeah, I get it.

PIERCE CONOWAY

Good. I'm glad we're on the same page. Get crackin'.

Pierce hangs the phone up, but George stands there with his phone in his hand, petrified.

END INTERCUT.

ACT THREE

INT. APARTMENT

Reed throws George's first draft, titled UNTITLED ROMANTIC MOVIE FIRST DRAFT, on the floor.

GEORGE

Dramatic, much?

REED

Sorry, but what is this? Did you just take the most generic, boring thing you can think of and replace the characters' names with yours? And how unrealistic can you make a relationship? Man George, stick with blood and guts.

GEORGE

That's what I want. I might have to check out that movie everyone's drooling about. "Heaven Can Wait"?

REED

Please do.

GEORGE

Wanna come?

REED

Oh sure, just let me grab my lip gloss and panties.

GEORGE

Good point.

George sits on the couch.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

This is crazy. I don't want to make anything shitty, but I also don't want to deal with stuff like this.

REED

Life isn't what you want to do. Stop whining and kick this movie in the ass.

GEORGE

Will do, sir. I just don't know how to go on with this.

REED

If you can't get a real relationship anytime soon, I recommend you do your research.

GEORGE

Starting with "Heaven Can Wait." What asshole came up with that?

INT. MOVIE THEATER

George sits in a dark theater, watching "HEAVEN CAN WAIT." The film features two beautiful lead actors, kissing on the beach during a sunset.

ATTRACTIVE MAN

Don't ever let me lose you.

ATTRACTIVE WOMAN

I don't think I could.

ATTRACTIVE MAN

You know, sometimes, the strangest things give us the most beautiful gifts.

George YAWNS in the theater. Looking around, he sees that quite a few of the women are crying in their seats.

He sees a man rolling his eyes, sitting next to his wife.

But then he notices something. Every crying lady, every embarrassed man: all couples.

The movie ends and the theater lights turn on. George stands up, but as he gets ready to leave, MARBURY, an overweight, pale guy in his 30's, stops him.

MARBURY

What a shitstorm, huh?

GEORGE

Didn't love it a whole lot either.

MARBURY

Name's Marbury.

Marbury extends his hand, and George slowly shakes it.

GEORGE

George.

MARBURY

So, what're you doing here?

GEORGE

What?

MARBURY

You are at a romantic drama during a matinee showtime. By yourself.

GEORGE

So are you.

MARBURY

Yeah, but only 'cause the new Axe Connor movie was full.

GEORGE

Axe Connor? The torture porn?

MARBURY

Yeah! You know of it?

GEORGE

Sure. Not really my thing, though.

The theater is now empty, except for George and Marbury.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Marbury, what are you really doing?

Marbury chuckles.

MARBURY

You got me. I recognize you, man. George Irman! Horror great! I saw you walking in here, decided to buy a ticket for... whatever this was.

GEORGE

I appreciate that.

MARBURY

Hey man, just needed to ask, what are you doing here? Watching this?

GEORGE

I got hired to do a romance.

MARBURY

Oh shit, no way! Like that ahh...

Marbury snaps his fingers.

MARBURY (CONT'D)

New one? Bloodlust? So fucking pumped, man!

GEORGE

No, no not that. But we did finish shooting, so expect it soon.

MARBURY

Awesome!

GEORGE

But we haven't even started this one. I haven't even come up with a real title.

MARBURY

Bet it's gonna be brutal, though.

GEORGE

I mean... it's more of a straight romance. All the lovey-dovey stuff.

MARBURY

Oh. So... no blood or guts? Just two Hollywood phonies going at it?

GEORGE

I guess, yeah.

MARBURY

Hm.

They stand around awkwardly for a beat.

MARBURY (CONT'D)

Welp, I'm off. Thanks for the... well, thanks.

GEORGE

No problem.

Marbury quickly leaves the theater, and George stands.

A theater janitor walks in.

THEATER JANITOR

What are you still doing here?

GEORGE

Oh, sorry.

THEATER JANITOR

(sarcastically)

Oh please, just stand and stare. I'll just sweep around you.

George rushes out while the theater janitor glares at him.

INT. BOOKSTORE

A commercial bookstore populated by only a few people.

George walks through the shelves of the romantic section, as he texts on his cellphone.

REED
(texting)
What are you doing now?

GEORGE
(texting)
Research

REED
No amount of "research" fixes your
lack of women

GEORGE
You never know.

George stops in front of the SENSUAL section. He spots a novel: WHIPS OF PASSION. The cover displays a woman gripping onto the handle of a whip.

REED
WTF does that mean?

GEORGE
Hold on, gotta go

REED
U moron

George turns off his phone, and picks up the book.

The WOMAN next to him, carrying a basket full of erotica novels, shakes her head.

WOMAN
Weirdo.

As she leaves, George sits down and begins reading.

INT. CARLA'S APARTMENT

Carla, in her pajamas, checks her messages.

PHONE
You have ONE unheard message.

BEEP.

GEORGE
 (answering machine)
 This is George, sorry about last
 night, that was stupid...

INT. BOOKSTORE

George reads WHIPS OF PASSION. So far, it's pretty bad:
 "Vivian finds a whip in the bathroom. What is this? She
 wonders, as she places it against her hip"

RING. George takes out his phone.

GEORGE
 (into phone)
 Hello?

CARLA (V.O.)
 George?

INTERCUT between Carla and George.

GEORGE
 Carla! How's it going?

CARLA
 Good. Where are you right now?

GEORGE
 At the bookstore. Hey, I have a
 weird question.

CARLA
 Shoot.

GEORGE
 If you found a whip randomly in
 your bathroom, would you just start
 rubbing it against yourself?

CARLA
 What? Ohh... you reading Whips of
 Passion?

GEORGE
 Maybe.

George and Carla chuckle.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
 Have to do research for this
 screenplay I'm writing.

CARLA

I see.

GEORGE

Never mind, that was stupid...

CARLA

No, hold on. If I found a whip in a bathroom, I would probably not rub it against myself. Who knows where it's been?

GEORGE

Right? In here she just goes at it.

CARLA

I'm glad you see the flaws. I wouldn't have taken you for a guy that would read trashy erotica un-ironically.

(beat)

So, about that night...

GEORGE

Oh Carla, I am so sorry. Really, I just couldn't call you-

CARLA

No, no it's fine. I got your message, actually. It's why I called back.

GEORGE

That's great!

CARLA

Got all my stuff at the dry cleaners', they needed a wash anyway.

GEORGE

Oh thank God.

CARLA

I know we got off on a weird foot, but... do you think you might wanna meet up sometime? Legitimately?

GEORGE

Like... a date?

CARLA

I guess so, sure.

George covers his phone and FIST PUMPS.

CARLA (CONT'D)

George?

GEORGE

Yes, yes, absolutely. When's a good time for you?

CARLA

Saturday is good.

GEORGE

Saturday it is. I'll tell you the place later?

CARLA

Sounds great!

GEORGE

Cool! Awesome! Great!

CARLA

Enough with the adjectives, Casanova.

GEORGE

See you Saturday, Carla.

CARLA

You too.

END INTERCUT.

George turns off his phone and yells:

GEORGE

YES!

He turns around to see a group of customers looking at him like they've just seen a madman shit himself.

EMPLOYEE

Sir, we're going to have to ask you to leave this area of the store.

GEORGE

Alright.

EXT. BOOKSTORE

George walks out of the bookstore with a wide smile.

As he walks away, he gets a PHONE CALL.

GEORGE
(into phone)
Hello?

INT. PRISON - SAME

Pierce on a payphone in prison. He wears an orange jumpsuit.

PIERCE CONOWAY
Heyyy, George!

INTERCUT between George and Pierce.

GEORGE
Mr. Conoway?

PIERCE CONOWAY
That's me! I am actually calling
you from the State Penitentiary.

GEORGE
Are you joking around?

PIERCE CONOWAY
No, no, apparently someone reported
me about my possession of those
delicious Cuban cigars. Here's the
deal. I trust you, I do, and I know
we agreed on a month for that
script, but we're going to need it
by next week, and you'll also act
as executive producer. Got it?

GEORGE
Uh... I... we-

PIERCE CONOWAY
Great talking to you, gotta go.

Pierce hangs up the phone and gets escorted away by two
prison guards.

George hangs up and stands in the parking lot.

END.