

**The Coffee Car**

An original screenplay

by

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## **THE COFFEE CAR**

**LOGLINE:** A wealthy New York City socialite becomes destitute when her husband dies in an accident at work. She learns to become self-sufficient in a dog-eat-dog world while struggling with her values, the loss of her social status, and her husband's secret life.

**SYNOPSIS:** Heather Poyser, a woman of means, married to Rick, the CEO of a large industrial manufacturing company, appear to lead the good life. They own a Manhattan Brownstone on the upper East side, a house in the Hamptons and drive luxurious imported Italian cars.

One day Rick is called to fill in for an employee. His company has a deadline to meet and is unable to find anyone on short notice. Rick covers for him after promising Heather he would not.

Rick, an epileptic, has a seizure while welding, sets himself on fire and dies. Heather, broken hearted, soon discovers that she is completely broke. Rick has somehow squandered all their money.

The cars are repossessed, the homes go into foreclosure, and Heather's snobby friends snub her. To add insult to injury, Heather discovers that Rick has been in contact with a woman in Las Vegas.

Feeling betrayed, Heather's curiosity leads her to seeking this woman out, only to discover that it is not what it seems, and that infidelity was not the motivating factor in Rick's relationship with the other woman.

Rick had a gambling problem which led to Heather's bankruptcy. Now Heather has to get a job which proves more difficult than she could have imagined.

Through commuting on the train every morning, sitting in the Coffee Car, Heather meets a group of women who work in Manhattan and befriends them. She comes to rely on them for support.

She meets Jeff, a man she cannot stand, and he slowly grows on her. She goes to museums with him, but tries not to become emotionally involved because she believes he has no money. Heather still wants her former status and wealth.

She loses jobs, is almost evicted, and breaks up with Jeff because he is poor. After some soul searching she realizes that she is in love with Jeff, and people have to be more important than money. After they get back together, Jeff tells her that he has a profession. Her old friends come back, all but one, who snubbed her when Rick died. For the first time, she feels fulfilled, happy, and is ready to move on to the next chapter of her life.

FADE IN:

INT. LONG ISLAND, NEW YORK - HOUSE IN THE HAMPTONS -  
LUXURIOUS KITCHEN - NIGHT

HEATHER, (45), straight, short, precision cut brown hair,  
and RICK POYSER, (48), paunchy, brown hair, grey temples,  
drink coffee. Rick's cell phone rings. He answers.

RICK

Hello? Carl, what?...How short of staff  
are we?...I'll be there first thing in  
the morning.

Heather tops up her coffee, motions to Rick with the pot.

RICK (CONT'D)

No thanks, Heather. There's no one else  
available? Yeah.

Rick shuts off his phone. He looks at Heather, still  
standing with the coffee pot in her hand.

HEATHER

And so ends our vacation.

RICK

You can stay in the Hamptons if you want.  
You have your own car or we can drive  
the Bugatti back to Manhattan tonight.  
There's a big problem at work.

HEATHER

I gathered as much. What is it?

RICK

My chief welder has a broken arm. We have  
a contract with a strict deadline.

HEATHER

What's it for?

RICK

Government military equipment. Carl can't  
find anyone who's qualified, so it looks  
as though I have to fill in.

Heather looks very worried.

HEATHER

You're not considering that. It's  
dangerous and illegal.

RICK

It's only for a few days.

HEATHER

Please hire someone else? I have a really bad feeling about this.

RICK

Stop it! I won't do any welding.

HEATHER

You're telling the truth? Promise?

RICK

I would never lie to you.

EXT. VAN CORTLANDT GOLF COURSE - NORTH BRONX - DAY

Heather and SABRINA, (45), stunningly beautiful, CARLOTTA, (43), long brown hair, tanned and LAURA, (46), black hair, blue eyes, play golf.

SABRINA

I prefer Piping Rock to Van Cortlandt.

HEATHER

Vanny is only a subway ride away, and it's every bit as good as Piping Rock.

Sabrina looks at the others and rolls her eyes. Laura takes out a 9 - iron and swings, then looks up.

LAURA

I'm sure as hell never riding the subway.

CARLOTTA

You'd end up being mugged for your clubs.

LAURA

But I'd have my irons to brain them with.

SABRINA

It may be as good a course, dear, but it's public, so the type of people they allow to play are, well, not exactly up to the standards of Locust Valley.

Sabrina takes her 7-iron and takes a swing, sending her ball much further than Laura's.

CARLOTTA

What she means is the clientele is, well,...

HEATHER

You mean not White? You know, Locust Valley, where you live has a nick name, 'White Shoe', because only WASPs live there and join that elitist club.

SABRINA

Your point being?

Carlotta swings her 7-iron, her golf ball goes 110 yards.

HEATHER

I want to play golf where it's inclusive. Segregation is wrong.

SABRINA

Private clubs have more prestige.

HEATHER

Vanny is equally prestigious.

SABRINA

I don't agree, dear. Even Cole Porter golfed at Piping Rock and was so impressed, he incorporated Oyster Bay into one of his songs.

CARLOTTA

That's true. The wealthy and dignitaries played and vacationed there. The Vanderbilts, the Duke and Duchess of Windsor, and Franklin D. Roosevelt.

LAURA

In all fairness to Heather, Giuliani, Babe Ruth, and Willie Mays played here.

HEATHER

So, famous people and those who lived one hundred years ago give clubs prestige?

Heather sends her golf ball a mere thirty yards away.

SABRINA

Well, actually,...

HEATHER

That was meant to be rhetorical, Sab.

SABRINA

What I was going to say was that the Three Stooges also played here.

Laura and Carlotta laugh.

CARLOTTA

That's par for the course.

HEATHER

Let's finish up. You're all insufferable.

Laura and Sabrina leave in one cart while Carlotta and Heather drive away in the other.

INT. VAN CORTLAND GOLF CLUB FRONT DESK - NORTH BRONX - DAY

Carlotta and Laura go to the locker room, Heather and Sabrina stop at the desk. The CLUB MANAGER, (40) stands.

HEATHER

Hi, what do I owe for today?

Heather digs into her pocket and pulls out a credit card.

CLUB MANAGER

Mrs. Poyser, correct?

HEATHER

Yes.

CLUB MANAGER

Let's see. There are four of you at \$31.00 each, there's the \$4.00 reservation fee, parking, \$3.00, two golf carts at \$37.00 each plus tax on the carts at 8.88 percent. That equals... let's see. That will be \$211.57 in total.

Heather hands him a credit card, turns to Sabrina.

CLUB MANAGER (CONT'D)

Excuse me, Mrs. Poyser?

HEATHER

Yes?

CLUB MANAGER

Your card's been declined. Do you have another?

HEATHER

That's odd. There must be a mistake.

Heather hands him another card. She turns to Sabrina.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

So strange. This is embarrassing.

The manager hands her card back to her.

CLUB MANAGER

This one isn't going through either.

Heather hands him a third credit card.

HEATHER

Here. I know this one is good.

The manager tries the third card. He shakes his head and hands it back. Heather looks at Sabrina.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

Sab, can you spot me for today? I'll have to straighten this out when I get home.

Sabrina hands a credit card to the manager.

SABRINA

I know my card will go through. You're lucky I'm doing this. My policy is never a borrower nor a lender shall I be. I hope I get it back.

HEATHER

For God's sake, Sabrina. I'm your friend.

Sabrina pays and they head to the locker room.

INT. MANHATTAN BROWNSTONE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Heather and Rick sit in a well appointed room.

HEATHER

Are you going to tell me why none of my cards was accepted today?

RICK

I must have forgotten to pay the bills.

HEATHER

All three of them?

Rick doesn't answer her.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

Rick, are you listening?

RICK

Stop nagging me!

Rick stands and walks out of the house, slams the door.

Heather stares at him as he leaves.

INT. OYSTER BAY, LOCUST VALLEY - SABRINA'S HOUSE - DAY

Carlotta, Laura, Sabrina and Heather drink highballs.

CARLOTTA

I think you're overreacting. Maybe Rick did forget to pay the credit card bills.

LAURA

It's been known to happen.

HEATHER

He's been so secretive lately. I think he might be having an affair.

SABRINA

Personally, I wouldn't put it past him.

CARLOTTA

That's a bit of a leap, just because he didn't pay some bills.

HEATHER

That's not all. I heard him whispering on the land line. I picked up the other phone and it was a woman. Then Rick said, "I think Heather's on the line. Hang up."

Heather cries. Carlotta puts her arm around her.

CARLOTTA

It will be okay. Don't jump to any conclusions until you know for sure.

HEATHER

What am I supposed to think?

SABRINA

You'll figure it out, and when you do, we'll be there for you.

HEATHER

This is so out of character for you.

SABRINA

And just what is that supposed to mean? I'm always kind and considerate.

The three women raise their eyebrows, smiling.

SABRINA (CONT'D)

Well, I am. I consider myself to be as good a friend to you as you are to me. Now, let's change the subject. It's becoming all too maudlin.

HEATHER

Just when I think you have a heart, you revert back to type.

SABRINA

Why, thank you. Now, look over there.

Sabrina points to a grey leather footstool.

SABRINA (CONT'D)

Frank and I smuggled it out of Africa on our safari trip. Isn't it marvellous?

HEATHER

What is it?

SABRINA

It's an elephant leg footstool. Look closely. It even has its toenails.

Laura feels the stool. Heather is disgusted.

HEATHER

How could you? Elephants are endangered.

SABRINA

Whether or not I bought the footstool wouldn't have made a difference. The beast was already dead.

LAURA

I agree. Not buying it wouldn't have changed the outcome.

CARLOTTA

Did you get the umbrella stand and three legged coffee table to match?

SABRINA

They have those? Damn! That's disappointing. I wish I had known.

HEATHER

Don't any of you understand? You are enabling the slaughter of elephants and are responsible for more poaching because you bought the stool.

CARLOTTA

They're being killed anyway. Why not put their legs to good use?

SABRINA

I think it looks nice in my drawing room, regardless of what you think.

Heather's cell phone rings. She answers, eyes on Sabrina.

HEATHER

It would have looked a lot better on the elephant! Hello? What? I'm on my way.

Heather stands, runs out the front door.

SABRINA

Well, talk about rude! Did you hear what she said about my stool? Sometimes she can be so insensitive.

There is a silent pause.

SABRINA (CONT'D)

Honestly, what do you think of Heather?

Laura and Carlotta look at one another.

CARLOTTA

Once, when we were lost in Flatbush, she actually got out of the car to give a beggar some money. Shocking.

LAURA

I overheard her say that she felt guilty for being wealthy, while there are hungry homeless people. We all know they're indolent ne'er do wells who won't change.

CARLOTTA

If they wanted to work, they would.

SABRINA

I beat her at chess every time. She claims to have attended Bearley School in the Upper East Side. I checked. She didn't go there. It wouldn't surprise me if she went to Public School 69.

LAURA

Are you serious? That school is in what is now practically the Bowery!

CARLOTTA

The horrid way she plays tennis and golf makes me wonder if she grew up in a Queensbridge housing project.

SABRINA

Thank you. I'm so relieved that you two think like me. If I ever find out that she's been lying to us about her social standing, I'll cut her loose.

LAURA

We do have an image to preserve. After all, we are high society.

SABRINA

Precisely.

CARLOTTA

What do you think about Rick?

LAURA

He's definitely having an affair.

SABRINA

Yes. My Frank would never sleep around.

LAURA

He knows what side his bread is buttered on. He'll never step out of line.

SABRINA

What do you mean?

LAURA

Everyone knows that Frank had no money when you married him. You're family was... is loaded, so to speak.

SABRINA

What has one have to do with the other?

LAURA

Would you risk losing a business your spouse set you up in, and all this for a one night stand or a fling?

SABRINA

How dare you imply that the reason Frank doesn't stray is my money!

Carlotta and Laura look at each other, raised eyebrows.

LAURA

It's just that Frank wasn't born into old money, as the rest of us were.

CARLOTTA

Calm down, Sabrina. Laura's on your side...Speaking of money, do you suppose Rick's spending all his money on that woman he was talking to on the phone?

SABRINA

Absolutely! If Heather leaves him before he squanders all their assets, she'll come out ahead in the divorce settlement.

INT. HOSPITAL - TRIAGE - DAY

A NURSE, (50), overweight, puts her arm around Heather.

NURSE

Mrs. Poyser, I'm so sorry to have had to tell you.

Heather collapses, sitting on a chair.

HEATHER

How did my husband die?

NURSE

Here comes his doctor, now. Ask him.

DR. MAYER, (40), dark curly hair, shakes Heather's hand.

DR. MAYER

I'm Dr. Mayer. I was the attending physician when your husband was brought in today. I'm so sorry for your loss.

HEATHER

What happened?

DR. MAYER

Apparently he set himself on fire with a welding gun during an epileptic seizure.

HEATHER

He was welding?

DR. MAYER

He sustained burns to over 90% of his body, succumbing shortly after arriving in emergency.

HEATHER

Wasn't he wearing inflammable clothing?

DR. MAYER

No. Did you know he was epileptic?

HEATHER

Of course. We both knew. He promised me he wouldn't do any welding. He lied.

DR. MAYER

Mrs. Poyser, I must see another patient right now, but if you need anything, call me. I'm so sorry I couldn't save him.

Heather is left standing alone in the hall.

INT. BANK OF AMERICA - MANAGER'S OFFICE - DAY

The bank manager, JOSEPH WETHERALL, (55) sits across from Heather, cutting up credit cards.

JOSEPH WETHERALL

I hate doing this, but I have no choice. There is another matter of urgency.

HEATHER

What's that?

JOSEPH WETHERALL

You've already received numerous notices, so this won't come as a surprise. Both houses are now in foreclosure.

HEATHER

(crying)

I had no idea. Rick's car was repossessed last week. My beautiful little Enzo will probably go next.

JOSEPH WETHERALL

It was a Bugatti Veyron, correct?

HEATHER

Yes. I was so afraid to drive it in case I dented it or put a scratch on it.

JOSEPH WETHERALL

I used to love looking at that car whenever Rick came into the bank.

HEATHER

I'm beginning to think that he loved that

HEATHER (CONT'D)

piece of metal more than he loved me.

JOSEPH WETHERALL

There may be a solution. If you can come up with the money on one of the houses, you might be able to keep it.

HEATHER

How much would it take?

JOSEPH WETHERALL

No payments on either house have been made for six months, nor the house taxes so, you're looking at around \$180,000.00 to stop foreclosure on the Brownstone.

HEATHER

I don't have that kind of money.

JOSEPH WETHERALL

You might be able to sell your paintings, auction some things off, perhaps?

HEATHER

All our paintings and furniture were leased. They have to be returned. What about my personal savings account?

JOSEPH WETHERALL

It's frozen. You are in a lot of debt.

HEATHER

Please don't do this to me? I need to find a place to live and have transportation to find a job.

JOSEPH WETHERALL

I can leave \$5,000.00 in your account.

Joseph Wetherall hands her a piece of paper.

HEATHER

What's this?

JOSEPH WETHERALL

The welfare office phone number.

Heather's face turns blank.

HEATHER

Is this what I'm reduced to?

JOSEPH WETHERALL  
It's for temporary aid. In your  
situation, take it, you'll need it.

Heather stands. Joseph Wetherall stares sadly at her.

HEATHER  
Thanks anyway.

INT. WEINSTEIN AND CHERNICK ATTORNEYS - LAWYER'S OFFICE -  
MANHATTAN - DAY

Heather, her lawyers, ARI WEINSTEIN, (55), and NATE  
CHERNICK, (60) are in conference.

NATE CHERNICK  
I don't enjoy being the bearer of bad  
news but I'm afraid the insurance company  
won't budge on their decision.

HEATHER  
The letter you sent them didn't help?

ARI WEINSTEIN  
The insurance company sent the  
application for us to peruse. Your  
husband falsified documents and lied on  
his application.

NATE CHERNICK  
What Ari is trying to tell you is that  
your husband failed to divulge that he  
was epileptic, and he did welding without  
wearing mandatory fireproof clothing.

ARI WEINSTEIN  
The insurance company has refused to  
honor his life insurance policy.

NATE CHERNICK  
They are within their rights to dissolve  
the contract.

HEATHER  
In his will, he left me everything.

NATE CHERNICK  
There isn't anything left. He cashed in  
his RRSP's, mutual funds, pension,  
stock options, and frittered that money  
away somehow, and he's managed to drain  
the bank accounts.

ARI WEINSTEIN

He doesn't have anything to show for the millions of dollars you both once had. Do you know where all that money went?

HEATHER

No, I don't. But, he's co-owner and CEO of the welding company. Aren't I entitled to half of the business?

Ari and Nate hesitate, then look at Heather.

NATE CHERNICK

I can see that you don't know. Around eight months ago Rick sold his shares to some offshore investors.

HEATHER

I have nothing. I'm bankrupt.

ARI WEINSTEIN

I know this is difficult for you, so we discussed your bill before you arrived. The work we've done is pro bono.

HEATHER

Thank you both so much.

INT. WELFARE OFFICE - DOWNTOWN MANHATTAN - DAY

Heather, extremely well dressed is seated. A woman next to her looks her up and down.

WELFARE WOMAN

If you don't mind me asking, are you someone's lawyer?

HEATHER

I'm applying for welfare.

The woman laughs.

WELFARE WOMAN

With those threads, you don't stand a chance in hell of getting approved.

A man pokes his head out from behind a cubicle.

MAN IN WELFARE OFFICE

(yells)

Mrs. Poyser?

Heather walks over and sits down in front of him.

MAN IN WELFARE OFFICE

(CONT'D)

So, how can I help you today?

HEATHER

I'm embarrassed. I need money but I'm not like the other people here.

The man snorts.

MAN IN WELFARE OFFICE

Yeah, you are. Otherwise you wouldn't be here.

HEATHER

You don't understand. My husband and I were wealthy and he died...

MAN IN WELFARE OFFICE

Yeah, yeah, everyone has a sob story to tell. I don't care. Fill out the forms.

HEATHER

You're not very sympathetic.

MAN IN WELFARE OFFICE

Should I be? Look at your clothes. They could feed a family of four for a month.

HEATHER

Why is everyone remarking on my clothes?

MAN IN WELFARE OFFICE

You don't appear to be in need.

HEATHER

My clothes are all I have. I'm flat broke. I can't eat my clothes, can I?

MAN IN WELFARE OFFICE

Okay, lose the attitude. Here, start filling these out.

He hands Heather some paperwork.

HEATHER

This is not where I want to be.

MAN IN WELFARE OFFICE

None of the others want to be here, either. They're down on their luck too.

HEATHER

Maybe some of them don't want to work.

MAN IN WELFARE OFFICE

Maybe they enjoy living under a bridge,  
unable to enter a store, or restaurant.

HEATHER

If they wanted those things, they would  
find meaningful employment. This is just  
temporary for me.

MAN IN WELFARE OFFICE

Good for you. Everyone here has said that  
at some point. You're no different.

Heather scowls and writes on the forms.

HEATHER

Will you be issuing a check today?

MAN IN WELFARE OFFICE

If you're approved, six to eight weeks.

HEATHER

How do you expect me to live between now  
and then?

MAN IN WELFARE OFFICE

Excuse me? I was under the impression  
you'd be getting a job soon.

HEATHER

You should be a stand up comedian.

Heather hands him the forms, stands and walks away.

INT. NEWARK, NJ - APARTMENT - GREAT ROOM - DAY

Heather holds box cutters, sits on a large moving box  
surrounded by boxes in a small, run down apartment.

HEATHER

Better start unpacking!

EXT. NEWARK, NJ - TRAIN STATION - PLATFORM - DAY

The commuter train pulls into the station. Heather boards  
a car with a picture of a steaming cup of coffee and the  
words, "Coffee Car Fresh Made Beverage & Snack Service".

INT. COFFEE CAR - DAY

Heather finds a seat across the aisle from three other women, same age.

Heather eavesdrops on AMY, (44) red hair, freckles.

AMY

The funniest thing happened to me yesterday. I saw an old friend I hadn't seen in years. We hugged.

Heather leans in to hear over the noise of the train.

AMY (CONT'D)

When we parted, I noticed that I was missing my Chanel brooch. You know, the one with the diamonds that Joe gave me before the bum decided to split.

Heather is becoming more interested in the story. DAWN, (45), shoulder length blonde hair, petite, giggles.

DAWN

I wouldn't have thought he'd give you a diamond pin after he left.

JUDY, (43), very tall, willowy, black hair, smiles.

JUDY

Didn't he leave you with six children?

AMY

That's right, the dog. He left for work one morning and never came back. Turns out he had a floozy in Vermont.

DAWN

So what about the brooch?

AMY

Stop interrupting and I'll tell you.

Amy giggles. Heather smiles, enjoying the conversation.

AMY (CONT'D)

My pin was gone. I had all the security guards down on their hands and knees looking for it. It must have been kicked or stood on by someone walking by.

JUDY

Grand Central is very crowded.

AMY

I was going to be late for work, so I gave them my number in case it was found.

DAWN

Did they ever find it?

AMY

No. When I got undressed for bed, there it was, stuck in my bra, the pin sticking out. It had been there all day!

The three women laugh.

JUDY

You didn't feel it?

AMY

No. And they called me to tell me they had looked all day. Isn't that hilarious?

Heather laughs. Amy looks over. Heather, embarrassed, looks away. Amy leans over to Heather.

AMY (CONT'D)

Hi, I've never seen you on the Coffee Car. Do you usually sit somewhere else?

HEATHER

Today's my first day.

AMY

Here's an extra seat. Come on. Sit here. I'm Amy, this is Dawn and that's Judy.

Heather stands and sheepishly moves to the four seater.

HEATHER

I'm Heather.

Train pulls into Grand Central Station. The women rise to disembark. Amy turns to Heather at the door.

AMY

If you're going to be on the train every day, sit with us in the Coffee Car.

HEATHER

Why the Coffee Car?

JUDY

With the length of this train we'd never be able to find each other otherwise.

HEATHER

I'll sit in the Coffee Car then. Bye.

The women wave, go off in different directions.

INT. COFFEE CAR - DAY

Amy and Judy board, sit with Heather. An African American, MAUREEN, (49), tall, graceful, sits beside them.

MAUREEN

Hello ladies. I haven't seen you for awhile. Dawn not coming today?

JUDY

We never know who's going to show.

AMY

Heather, I'd like you to meet Maureen. She rides the coffee car most days.

MAUREEN

Hello. As you two know, Alexander, is now over six feet tall and very strong.

Maureen turns to Heather.

MAUREEN (CONT'D)

He's my son and he has Down Syndrome. He's not high functioning and tends to get violent sometimes.

AMY

Where did he hurt you this time?

MAUREEN

I bruised my arm myself. I have told him repeatedly that I have to catch a train to get to work on time.

JUDY

His father should be helping.

MAUREEN

That ship has sailed. Why do you think he left? He couldn't handle the stress.

AMY

So what happened with Alexander?

MAUREEN

I was livid, so I dragged him out of bed, pulled him down the stairs while he

MAUREEN (CONT'D)

fought me all the way. By the time I got him dressed and out the door, I was frazzled and my heart was pounding.

JUDY

You shouldn't have to go through that on your own.

MAUREEN

He's my son. It's not a choice. After I dropped him off I sat in the car shaking. The train pulled out so I thought to myself, what the hell? I went home and spent the day catching up on my reading.

AMY

Good for you. We all need a mental health day sometimes.

MAUREEN

I need a mental health year. My ex is taking Alex this weekend. I'm thinking of having a little pot-luck dinner get together. My place, Sunday? Who's in?

AMY

I'll be there. What time?

JUDY

Count me in.

Maureen turns to Heather.

MAUREEN

You're invited also. Give me your cell number and I'll text the directions.

HEATHER

Are you sure? I hardly know you. Actually, I don't know you at all.

MAUREEN

Then it's settled. Be there, late afternoon and we'll get to know each other better. I make a wicked Sangria.

AMY

She does. Brandy, red wine, vodka, rum and grand marnier with a shot of sprite. It'll knock you flat on your ass.

MAUREEN

I'm on a budget. I don't use Grand

MAUREEN (CONT'D)

Marnier anymore. I've substituted triple sec. It's cheaper and it's just as good.

Heather gives Maureen her number. The train arrives.

AMY

Heather, do you collect driftwood?

HEATHER

I've never done that.

AMY

If you're not busy Saturday, I'm going to Maine to get some.

HEATHER

What do you do with it?

AMY

Come and see. I make wall hangings and all sorts of crafts. I'll pick you up at 8 AM and we'll spend the day, maybe even the weekend. How does that sound to you?

HEATHER

Amy, I hate to admit this, but I'm kind of short on funds right now...

AMY

So, it's my treat.

HEATHER

I can't accept money from a stranger.

AMY

You are a friend, and I want you to come.

HEATHER

I can't even afford lunch money.

AMY

It's taken care of. I'm living pay check to pay check, too. So I know what it's like. Okay?

HEATHER

I barely know you. Why are you being so nice.

AMY

Haven't you ever had friends before?

HEATHER

Obviously not.

AMY

Then it's settled.

HEATHER

Sounds great. Will we be back in time for  
Maureen's pot luck?

AMY

We'll make a point of it.

EXT. OLD ORCHARD BEACH - MAINE - DAY

Heather runs ahead of Amy, both in capris, holding flip-flops. They have bags with pieces of driftwood.

HEATHER

Amy, check this out! It's huge.

Heather holds up a long, twisted piece of driftwood.

AMY

It's perfect. It has a face of an animal.

Heather puts her piece into her bag.

HEATHER

What's Judy's story?

AMY

Judy's husband died of liver cancer three  
years ago. They didn't have any children.  
That's when she came on the Coffee Car.

HEATHER

And Dawn?

AMY

Dawn is the fortunate one. Her husband  
owns a chain of jewelry stores. He's  
actually a lapidary.

HEATHER

Wow. She does have nice jewelry.

AMY

He goes on diamond buying junkets all the  
time. Sometimes he takes Dawn with him.

HEATHER

Where do they go?

AMY

They used to go to South Africa and Amsterdam, but they're more enlightened now and only go to Canada. No blood diamonds there.

HEATHER

They've funded civil wars.

AMY

Right. You can't always know what to avoid, so you just do your best with the knowledge you have.

HEATHER

I try my best. They sound like very conscientious people.

AMY

Not everyone is inconsiderate. I wish that all zoos and aquariums would be closed and the animals released back into their natural habitats.

Amy, excited, jumps up and down.

AMY (CONT'D)

And I want execution for rhino and elephant poachers and large cat hunters.

HEATHER

A bit extreme?

AMY

They'd only do it once. It's mystifying why anyone would kill an elephant. You'd have to be a troglodyte not to be aware, or worse, if you know and don't care.

HEATHER

I know some who couldn't disagree with you more.

AMY

Are they brain dead or just assholes?

Heather laughs aloud.

HEATHER

Both. I used to believe that there was something wrong with me, that somehow I was the one who was out of step.

AMY

I can tell that you have integrity. Don't ever second guess your beliefs.

HEATHER

Amy?

AMY

Hmmm?

HEATHER

Mind if I ask you a personal question? The women on the Coffee Car seem put together, yet only Dawn is married.

AMY

We all were at some point. People change, grow apart, and become disillusioned. It's not a reflection on either person.

HEATHER

I suppose. I guess you're wondering about my situation.

AMY

If you had wanted to share the sordid details with me, I'm sure you would have.

HEATHER

I'd like to tell you now. My husband once told me that he would never lie to me.

The waves become bigger and louder as they crash on the beach next to the two women who continue to walk.

INT. JUMPIN' JAKES SEAFOOD CAFE - DAY

Heather and Amy eat lobster and crab cakes.

HEATHER

This is good. I haven't had lobster in years.

AMY

Why not?

HEATHER

Rick was allergic to all shellfish.

AMY

What was preventing you?

HEATHER

I never got around to it. You adjust to another person's habits, and you lose yourself a little. After awhile, you don't care anymore.

Amy stares out the window for a brief moment.

AMY

I wish my husband had been allergic to shellfish.

HEATHER

What?

AMY

I wish he had been allergic to anything, deathly allergic. I could have saved myself a lot of grief by just poisoning the SOB. He certainly had it coming.

Heather stifles a laugh.

AMY (CONT'D)

And, I could have gotten away with it. After all, it wouldn't have been actual poisoning, would it? Especially since I could have claimed not having previous knowledge that crab, or whatever, would put him into anaphylactic shock.

HEATHER

Didn't he carry an epi-pen?

AMY

You're not listening. He wasn't allergic to anything. I enjoy imagining him dead. It helps get me through the day.

HEATHER

Sometimes, when I think about the other woman and the lying, I, ... never mind.

AMY

You what?

HEATHER

I lie in bed and fantasize about killing him. Does that make me bad?

AMY

It makes you delusional. In case you've forgotten, he's already dead.

Heather smiles, looks out the window.

AMY (CONT'D)

Have you ever played Texas Hold-Em?  
Tonight we're getting some rum and cokes  
and we're gambling for pennies.

INT. SEA CLIFF HOUSE MOTEL - NIGHT

Amy and Heather, inebriated, sit on a queen sized bed,  
cards laid out. A huge pile of seashells and driftwood on  
the desk. Half full bottle of rum on the night stand.

AMY

Ante up. We'll each put in \$2.50.

HEATHER

We're in the big leagues now. I've never  
stayed in a 3 star motel. In fact, I've  
never stayed in a motel, period.

The women play poker while talking and drinking.

AMY

Is that a fact?

HEATHER

Gambling for pennies? Drinking cheap rum  
and cokes? Inexpensive motel? Rick would  
be spinning in his grave, if he knew.

AMY

You're not used to slumming?

Heather giggles uncontrollably. They pour more rum.

HEATHER

You never told me about your blind date.

AMY

I wish I had been blind when he showed up  
at my house. It was the night from Hell.

HEATHER

Why?

AMY

He looked exactly like one of the  
characters from Star Wars.

HEATHER

Han Solo, Luke Skywalker? Which one?

AMY  
Jabba the Hutt.

Heather lies back on the bed, laughing.

AMY (CONT'D)  
It wasn't funny, Heather. The gym isn't open enough hours for him to work off what he ate for Christmas.

HEATHER  
I think I'm going to wet myself.

Heather, laughing, goes to the washroom. Amy counts pennies, drinks, pours more. Rum bottle almost empty.

AMY  
If Rick could only see you now!

Heather emerges from washroom.

HEATHER  
Do you have a tampon I could borrow?  
Amy rummages through her purse, hands her one.

AMY  
It's all yours, and for the record, I don't want it returned.

Heather bursts into laughter, runs into the bathroom.

HEATHER (O.S.)  
At least I'm not pregnant!

Amy follows Heather, stands outside the bathroom door.

AMY  
(shouting through the door)  
Let's go swimming.

Heather exits the bathroom.

HEATHER  
I didn't bring a suit.

AMY  
Neither did I. We won't let that stop us.

EXT. SEA CLIFF HOUSE MOTEL POOL - NIGHT

Heather and Amy, naked, splash, laugh, yell, do cannonballs off the diving board.

AMY  
 (yelling)  
 Let's jump off together this time.

The two women hold hands, run and splash into the pool.

HEATHER  
 Weeeeeeee!

Two security guards enter pool area shining flashlights.

SECURITY GUARD #1  
 Get out of the pool now, ladies.

INT. TOWN OF OLD ORCHARD BEACH POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Amy and Heather sit in their bathrobes in an office.

HEATHER  
 Thish ish another fine mesh you've gotten  
 ush into, Shtanley.

Amy and Heather giggle. An officer enters.

OFFICER  
 I'm releasing you and there's a cab  
 waiting outside. I suggest the two of you  
 go back to your motel and sleep it off.

Heather and Amy stand and walk past the officer.

OFFICER (CONT'D)  
 I'm doing you a favor because you seem  
 like nice ladies.

AMY  
 Thank you, sir. We'll behave. Promise.

HEATHER  
 (saluting)  
 Tanksh, Oshifer, I mean Oshifer.

OFFICER  
 Good. I don't want to hear that you've  
 been disturbing the peace again.

Heather and Amy head for the door.

HEATHER  
 I'd like you to ekshplain how I ended up  
 with thirdy sheven shentsh and you had  
 four dollarsh and shikshty three shents  
 when I wush winning the poker hand?

AMY

I thought you were too drunk to notice.  
It's incredible that you can still do  
math after all that rum.

HEATHER

I had a good educashun, shun.

The two push out the door at the same time, stumble,  
trip. The officer shakes his head.

INT. SEA CLIFF HOUSE MOTEL - DAY

Heather and Amy are lying down. Heather turns to Amy.

HEATHER

My head is killing me. I feel sick.

AMY

Hangover. Too much rum. I don't think I  
can make it to Maureen's today.

HEATHER

Fine by me.

INT. SABRINA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

FRANK (49), short, stocky, black hair, moustache, pours  
two drinks while Sabrina sits, cross legged.

SABRINA

Honestly, Frank, I don't think that  
Heather fits in with our social group.

FRANK

I thought she was your friend?

SABRINA

She was when she had money, but now she  
can't keep up. She's become destitute.

FRANK

All the more reason she needs our help.  
It's not her fault Rick left her in this  
mess. I've always liked Heather. I wonder  
how I could be of any help?

Sabrina scowls. Frank hands her a highball.

SABRINA

This isn't any of our concern. Now, about  
the family room.

SABRINA (CONT'D)

Would you prefer pale grey walls with navy or golden yellow accents? I saw the most beautiful wallpaper the other day. It's all the rage again, you know.

Frank, disgusted, leaves the room, drink in hand.

EXT. DOWNTOWN MANHATTAN - GLASS SKYSCRAPER - DAY

Heather, navy suit, enters building, holding briefcase.

EXT. DOWNTOWN MANHATTAN - RED BRICK SKYSCRAPER - DAY

Heather, light grey suit, enters , holding briefcase.

EXT. DOWNTOWN MANHATTAN - BROWN BRICK SKYSCRAPER - DAY

Heather, taupe suit, enters, holding briefcase.

EXT. DOWNTOWN MANHATTAN - YELLOW BRICK BUILDING - DAY

Heather, brown suit, enters, holding briefcase.

INT. FRANK'S OFFICE - HEAD FIRST FASHIONS - MANHATTAN - DAY

Heather sits in front of Frank.

HEATHER

Thanks Frank. I've applied everywhere.

FRANK

It's just an entry level job. Sorry I couldn't offer you something better.

HEATHER

Sabrina never told me what you did.

FRANK

We manufacture high end designer clothes.

HEATHER

Right here in this little office?

FRANK

Of course not. All the sewing is done in a factory in the garment district. This is the head office. You've probably heard of some of the labels we carry. What am I

FRANK (CONT'D)  
saying? You probably own them. Once a year we donate our seconds to shelters. Sab and I attend the charity banquets. Think you're going to enjoy it here?

HEATHER  
This is great. When you called out of the blue yesterday, I was in shock.

FRANK  
We're friends. Don't ever forget that. Here, I want you to have this.

Frank hands Heather an envelope. She opens it, pulls out a few bills and quickly puts them back.

HEATHER  
What's this for?

FRANK  
A few Benjamin Franklins, to tide you over for the next little while.

HEATHER  
I can't accept this. There are four hundred dollars in here.

FRANK  
It's just a little something to help out a friend who's down on her luck. It'll be our little secret. There's no need for Sabrina to know, all right?

HEATHER  
How will I pay it back?

FRANK  
You are not required to pay me back. By not taking it, you're insulting me. That's not something you want to do on your first day of work. Go start filing.

Heather hugs Frank, puts the envelope on his desk.

HEATHER  
Frank, I won't forget this.

Heather returns to filing and smiles.

Frank sits down and is on the phone, leans back on his black leather swivel chair facing the window.

Sabrina enters, looks at Heather, walks over to Frank.

Sabrina pulls back on the chair, tipping it so Frank practically falls over backwards. Frank swings around.

FRANK

Heeey! What's the idea?

Heather turns around to see what's going on.

SABRINA

What the hell is Heather doing here?

FRANK

Working. Something you might want to try.

SABRINA

Don't get smart with me! You knew very well that I was opposed to you helping her in any way, shape or form!

Heather leans on the cabinet, arms folded, watches Sabrina in disbelief, jaw open.

SABRINA (CONT'D)

Get rid of her, or else!

Frank squirms in his seat, looks uncomfortable.

FRANK

Please lower your voice, dear. We'll talk about this at home.

SABRINA (SHOUTING)

We'll talk about it now! Do as I say if you know what's good for you. I've had it with your insubordination.

HEATHER

Enough with the histrionics!

Sabrina gives Heather a dirty look, pushes past her.

SABRINA

You're in my way. Move!

Heather doesn't move, stands between Sabrina and the door. Sabrina walks around her. Heather stops her.

HEATHER

Stop. We're going to settle this. Frank, whatever you were going to talk about tonight, say it now.

FRANK

Heather, now you know this was just a temporary job, and honey, I'd never do anything against your wishes.

Heather, shocked, cannot utter a word. Sabrina is angry.

SABRINA

But you did. You went behind my back and hired her. Next thing I'll find out is the two of you are sleeping together!

FRANK

Don't start fabricating stories. I love you and only you.

HEATHER

Are you seriously going to fire me?

FRANK

Sabrina's right. I hired you against her wishes. I'm sorry.

Sabrina sneers at Heather.

SABRINA

That's my Frank. I knew you'd comply.

HEATHER

Acquiesce is a better word. Frank, you're spineless and completely whipped by your wife, whom I once considered to be a friend. And Sabrina, you're nothing more than a malevolent, self - centred nasty shrew.

SABRINA

Never in all my life...

HEATHER

Then maybe the time has come for you to hear the truth.

SABRINA

Frank? Aren't you going to defend me?

HEATHER

I'm not finished. You think that you are so enlightened. I've yet to meet anyone as intolerant, uninformed and completely oblivious to current events, as you. And the way you lead Laura and Carlotta around by the nose is despicable. You're an antiquated, slow thinking snob.

SABRINA

Uuuh, uuuh!

Heather goes to Frank, looks him square in the face.

HEATHER

Don't bother firing me. I quit.

Frank hands her the envelope and winks. She walks out, slams the door. Frank smiles, Sabrina is desperate.

SABRINA

Did you hear what she called me?  
Aren't you going to say anything?

FRANK

What's left to say? She did a good job.

INT. HEATHER'S APARTMENT BEDROOM - NIGHT

Heather opens closet door, pulls out a box marked, 'Rick's Files', dumps it on the floor, sits down.

Heather separates files into two distinct piles.

Heather reads, "Bev's File". Las Vegas phone number. Cell recharging on dresser, Heather phones the number.

WOMAN'S VOICE, (O.S.)

Hello?, Hello. Ricky?

Heather throws the phone, puts her hands over her face.

INT. COFFEE CAR - DAY

Heather walks up to the server, stack of resumés in hand.

HEATHER

I'd like a medium sized coffee, please.

JEFF CROSS, (50), handsome, hands her a paper coffee cup.

JEFF

Help yourself to any of the blends.

HEATHER

Thanks.

Heather pulls down on the lever on the coffee carafe marked, Columbian, filling it to the top.

JEFF

Not leaving any room for cream?

HEATHER

I take it black.

JEFF

I've never seen you before. I work the later train most of the time.

HEATHER

Uh huh.

JEFF

Are you on this train very often?

HEATHER

I am. Why do you want to know?

JEFF

I'm bad at small talk. When I see a pretty lady, I'm curious.

HEATHER

You're right.

JEFF

About what?

HEATHER

You're bad at small talk.

Heather sits down in the four seater, her back to Jeff.

AMY

I see you've met Jeff?

DAWN

He's very good looking.

JUDY

He's looking over. I bet he likes you.

HEATHER

Oh, please. I'm not interested in some schlep who works on a commuter train selling lousy coffee.

AMY

Well, excuse us, Miss La-Di-Da.

HEATHER

I'm not in any mood to talk to anyone trying to hit on me today. I was forced

HEATHER (CONT'D)  
to quit my job yesterday. See my stack of  
CV's? You're not going to believe this.

The loud CLACKETY-CLACK of the train drowns out Heather.

INT. COFFEE CAR - DAY

Amy, Dawn, Judy, and Maureen in their usual four seater.

AMY  
Heather's become a good friend of mine.

DAWN  
Correction. Ours.

The two other women nod in agreement.

AMY  
She's our friend and has been dealt a bad  
hand. To top it off, Sabrina's absolutely  
vitriolic, sabotaging her like that.

JUDY  
I agree. I wish we could help her.

Jeff closes, locks the coffee bar, sits with the women.

JEFF  
I overheard you. Was that the woman who  
was here yesterday with resumés?

AMY  
Heather. She's a wonderful person, just  
off her game right now.

JEFF  
She seemed angry.

DAWN  
She's not ready to meet men right now.

JEFF  
I was only being friendly. She  
practically bit off my head.

DAWN  
Jeff, how's the new business?

JEFF  
Investing in this venture was risky, but  
I may finally see some return on my  
capital. In about a year I hope to see a  
light at the end of the tunnel.

JUDY

What do you get paid for working here?

JEFF

Not much. Around \$11.00 an hour, but I get coffee, train and subway paid.

AMY

Train pass, \$400.00, 3 hours a day at \$33.00, that's \$660.00, and coffee? An extra thousand a month? Are they hiring?

Jeff laughs.

JEFF

If you're serious, they're always looking.

AMY

Hell, who wouldn't be?

EXT. DAWN'S BACKYARD - NEW JERSEY - DAY

People sit, stand, drink, eat. Heather, white sundress.

DAWN

Glad you could make it today. I host these functions a few times a year.

Jeff approaches, Heather becomes uncomfortable.

HEATHER

Thanks for the invite. Listen, I think I'll go...

Before she can finish, Jeff is right beside her.

JEFF

Hello. Great day for a garden party.

DAWN

Jeff, you've met Heather, haven't you?

JEFF

Not formally introduced but we met on the train. By the way, have either one of you tried my Swedish meat balls?

Jeff swings his arm around to point. His hand knocks Heather's glass, spilling red wine on her dress.

HEATHER

You've got to be kidding me.

Jeff runs to the kitchen, yelling back at Heather.

JEFF

I'm sorry. Stay there. I'll help you.

HEATHER

How can he possibly help...this?

Dawn looks at her dress, assesses the damage.

DAWN

It's not that bad. Club soda will fix it.

Dawn goes into the house. Jeff runs out, carrying a bottle of club soda and a tea towel.

JEFF

I've got it, Heather.

As he nears her, he trips, spills club soda down her front. The soda penetrates, her nipples become visible.

JEFF (CONT'D)

(laughs)

Oops! I bet you didn't expect to enter a wet T-shirt contest today, huh?

Jeff rubs her chest with the towel. Heather backs away.

HEATHER

Stop! What do you think you're doing?

JEFF

Helping?

Dawn emerges from the house.

DAWN

Everyone, coffee and tea is ready. Come in and help yourselves.

JEFF

Would you like me to get you a cup of coffee? Black, right?

HEATHER

What are you planning to do with it?  
Scald me?

Heather enters the house, leaving Jeff alone.

INT. DAWN'S HOUSE - DAY

Heather approaches Dawn.

HEATHER

Listen, Dawn, I think I'm just going to leave. Thanks for having me and I'll see you on the train.

DAWN

I could lend you something to wear.

HEATHER

No, that's fine. I kind of want to go home anyway and catch up on some reading.

DAWN

Sorry it turned out like this.

HEATHER

I have to get away from that doofus.

DAWN

Jeff? He's really a hell of a nice guy, if you'd give him a chance.

HEATHER

I'd be hospitalized after a week, if he didn't kill me first.

INT. WARREN HEALTH AND RACQUETBALL CLUB - NEWARK, NJ - NIGHT

Jeff and TOM (50), sweaty, stand by lockers, holding racquets.

JEFF

I've found the woman of my dreams.

TOM

Who is it this time?

Jeff wipes his face with a towel.

JEFF

This time I'm serious. I mean it.

TOM

So, where did you meet her?

JEFF

The train.

TOM

How long have you been seeing her?

JEFF

I'm not seeing her, yet. She hates me.

TOM

That's a good start.

JEFF

I spilled red wine on her white dress.

Tom cringes.

JEFF (CONT'D)

I tried to save her dress from staining, tripped, spilled a bottle of club soda on her and her dress became see-through.

TOM

You're sure you like this woman?

JEFF

It wasn't intentional. I really knew she didn't like me when I tried to wipe the stain off the front of her dress. She thought I was trying to get personal.

TOM

I can't imagine what gave her that idea!

JEFF

She's magnificent. I just don't know how to get her to like me.

They slam lockers, head to showers with shampoo, etc.

TOM

You realise this isn't going to end well.

INT. COFFEE CAR - DAY

A huge line-up. Jeff is selling pastries and coffee. Heather enters, passes by Jeff, sits by her friends.

JEFF

Hi Heather. Are you all cleaned up from the weekend?

Everyone in the line-up turns to stare at Heather, who puts her head down in embarrassment.

HEATHER

What the hell is wrong with that man?

DAWN

He's a little socially inept, but otherwise, he's a pretty good guy.

HEATHER

So says you. Sorry I left, but I was soaking wet.

AMY

Have you found a job yet?

HEATHER

No, but I have an interview this morning.

MAUREEN

Dawn, didn't you say that your husband is expanding his number of stores?

DAWN

Heather wouldn't want to work there.

Heather turns to Dawn, eager upon hearing the news.

HEATHER

Yes I would. I'd love to. Uh, where?

DAWN

His jewelry store. He pays well, and provides benefits including health care.

Heather practically jumps up and down with excitement.

HEATHER

Please tell your husband I want to work there.

Jeff finishes up and sits with the women.

DAWN

It's not for another year, at least.

HEATHER

That's okay. Tell him anyway.

JEFF

I know of some immediate work available.

HEATHER

Doing what?

JEFF

I'll even tell my friend to hire you, on one condition.

HEATHER

Here it comes.

JEFF

Let me take you to dinner and I'll make sure you get the job.

HEATHER

That's not sweetening the deal.

JEFF

It's catering banquets.

HEATHER

I could do that temporarily.

A customer is at the counter. Jeff stands to serve him.

JEFF

I'll pick you up Friday at 7 PM.

HEATHER

No job is worth that.

Jeff finishes with his customer, cleans up his station.

AMY

Why don't you go out with him?

The other women nod in agreement.

HEATHER

Him? Are you serious? He's a bit of a loser, and an utterly clumsy oaf. No way.

AMY

If it doesn't work out all you've lost is one night.

MAUREEN

And you never know who you may meet.

DAWN

You might be pleasantly surprised and find that you do like him.

HEATHER

I'll go, just to get you off my back.

Jeff closes the coffee bar, sits with the women.

JEFF

What's the verdict?

HEATHER

Oh, all right. If I have to I'll go out with you on Friday.

JEFF

You don't have to sound so enthusiastic. It's not root canal.

Heather writes down her cell number, hands it to Jeff.

HEATHER

There. Give me a call for directions.

The train stops. Heather quickly heads for the door.

JEFF

Did any of you ladies feel that cold breeze or was it just me?

AMY

She's nice once you get to know her.

JEFF

I have my doubts.

INT. HARMONY BANQUET HALL - NEW JERSEY - NIGHT

Heather, black skirt, white button down shirt, black panty hose, black flat shoes. Puts white linen tablecloths on large tables. ROBERT, (55) shouts orders at SHERI, (28), and Heather.

ROBERT

Hey, new girl. Straighten out that tablecloth. It's hanging on one side. Sheri, hustle, hustle. Let's go ladies, we don't have all night.

Heather straightens out the tablecloth, hurries into the kitchen for cutlery, napkins. Sheri finds wine glasses.

HEATHER

Sheri, is he always this demanding?

SHERI

Yeah. He's even more uptight tonight.

HEATHER

What's tonight?

SHERI

Some charity for clothing the homeless,  
or something.

Heather's face falls.

SHERI (CONT'D)

Hey sister, are you feeling okay? You're  
as white as a sheet.

Robert pokes his head into the kitchen.

ROBERT

Are you two on strike? Let's move it. The  
guests are arriving in ten.

Heather puts cutlery, dishes on gurney, rolls it out,  
sets tables. Sheri places floral centerpieces on them.  
Robert puts out name placers. The guests arrive, find  
their designated tables and sit down.

Heather goes into the kitchen, re-enters carrying a tray  
of hors d'oeuvres. Sheri opens bottles and pours wine.

Heather sees Frank and Sabrina sitting across from one  
another. Frank gives her a feeble wave.

SABRINA

Who are you waving to? Is it Darren?

Frank looks down and doesn't answer. Sabrina swings  
around and looks straight at Heather, who stares back.

Heather, flustered, drops the tray of hors d'oeuvres.

ROBERT

Clean up that mess and get back into the  
kitchen. I want to have a talk with you.

Robert stands over Heather, watching her with his arms  
folded, tapping his foot.

As Heather bends down to clean the food off the floor,  
Sabrina walks over to Robert and her.

SABRINA

Good help is so hard to find.

Robert nods in agreement. Heather fumbles around, trying  
to pick up the pieces of the hors d'oeuvres.

ROBERT

Anything I can do for you, Ma'am?

SABRINA

No, not at all. I thought I knew this individual, Helga, isn't it?

Heather stands and looks right at Sabrina.

HEATHER

You know damn well who I am.

Robert stares, slack jawed. Heather gives a steely stare.

SABRINA

Pity you couldn't be sitting with us at our table. Apparently the old adage has come to fruition. The bottom feeders slip into the abyss while cream rises.

HEATHER

So does shit!

Sabrina turns, walks back to her table. Robert takes Heather by the arm and pulls her aside.

ROBERT

You're fired! You're slow, sloppy, and that display of rudeness to a most distinguished guest is unacceptable. Just who did you think you were talking to?

Heather takes off her apron and tosses it to the floor.

HEATHER

I know exactly to whom I was speaking. Distinguished? That's a laugh. I used to be as wealthy as she.

ROBERT

Sure you were! She happens to be one of New York City's elite. You need a lesson in respect.

HEATHER

No, Robert. People have to earn respect. It doesn't come with a bankbook.

ROBERT

Get your things and don't come back. Your pay check will be mailed to you.

Heather walks away with tears of anger and frustration.

INT. HEATHER'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Heather rummages through Rick's files, phones a number using Rick's cell phone.

HEATHER

Let's get to the bottom of this right now. 702-555-4592. Good, it's ringing.

Heather waits until a woman with southern drawl answers.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Hi Ricky. It's been months, honey.

HEATHER

Honey? Who the hell are you?

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Ah might be askin' ya the same question.

HEATHER

I'm Rick's wife. Who are you?

There is a pause, a sucking in of air from the woman.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

You's Heather, huh?

HEATHER

How do you know that?

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

I's BEV SCOTT. But ya'll can call me Bev. Ricky never stops talkin' about ya.

Heather is confused.

HEATHER

He didn't? Doesn't?

BEV (O.S.)

Thass right. He dotes on you. How is Ricky anyways? Is he there?

HEATHER

No. How you can be so nonchalant when you're having an affair with my husband.

BEV (O.S.)

When I'm what?

HEATHER

You heard me.

BEV (O.S.)

Honey, I don't know where ya got that silly notion in that pretty little head of your'n that we was anythin' but platonicals. Is you callin' 'bout the money?

HEATHER

Platonicals?

BEV

Don't you know what that means, hun? It's when you'se just friends and don't diddle each other.

HEATHER

Yes, yes,...what money?

BEV

I tole Ricky that it was goin' to be difficult for me to git it, but I'm tryin', I really is.

HEATHER

The two of you really were platonic?

BEV

Good grief. Just what did Ricky tell ya? Listen, why don't the two of youse come for a visit, and it'll be just like old times, c'eptin ya'll be here of course.

HEATHER

I, uh, we have some spare time in two weeks. How about if I come, we come then?

BEV

Sounds peachy, sugar. Call me when you git to Vegas. I wondered when I was goin' to git to meet Ricky's better half. Bye.

HEATHER

Bye.

Heather scratches her head, a look of confusion on face.

INT. COFFEE CAR - DAY

Judy, Dawn, Heather, Maureen, and Amy sit three in one four seater, and two across the aisle in a four seater.

AMY

How was your first banquet shift?

HEATHER

I was fired.

The four women snicker, trying not to laugh.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

It's not funny. I dropped a tray of hors d'oeuvres and then reacted to Sabrina's insults. My boss overheard and fired me.

DAWN

The same Sabrina?

HEATHER

The one and only.

AMY

What was she doing there?

HEATHER

Frank's company was there. They donate clothes to homeless organisations.

MAUREEN

What a coincidence!

HEATHER

There are no coincidences. According to Carl Jung, it's synchronicity.

AMY

Or in your case, just bad luck.

Heather sees a woman working the coffee bar.

HEATHER

Where's Tweedle Dum today?

AMY

Is that any way to talk about your future husband?

HEATHER

In your dreams.

EXT. HEATHER'S APARTMENT - DOOR - NIGHT

Heather finds eviction notice on door. She phones Amy.

HEATHER

Hi Amy. My rent's due and I'm being evicted. What should I do?

INT. COFFEE CAR - DAY

The train pulls into Central Station. As the women disembark, Jeff grabs Heather's arm.

JEFF

Heather, may I talk to you for a moment?

HEATHER

If you're about to ask me out, the answer's no.

JEFF

That's not what I was going to ask.

HEATHER

Oh, I see.

JEFF

The ladies and I took up a collection to help you out. It's not much but it will pay your rent this month and there's some extra for you to go to Las Vegas.

HEATHER

You did that, for me?

JEFF

Not just me. All of us discussed it and decided you needed some help.

Heather looks at the envelope, then at Jeff, smiling.

HEATHER

I can't believe this. You're all so kind.

JEFF

We're friends, aren't we? Go find out about this other woman.

INT. PETROSSIAN BAR - BELLAGIO HOTEL - LAS VEGAS - NIGHT

Heather sips coke, faces lobby, straining to see every attractive woman walking by. A chubby, blotchy faced, greasy haired woman comes over, sits across from her.

BEV

I just know'd it was ya'll from your pitchers.

HEATHER

You're Bev!?

BEV

Indeedy. Where's Ricky?

HEATHER

First, what's your connection with Rick?

BEV

I guess Ricky is ascares to tell ya. See, Ricky and me has a gamblin' problem.

HEATHER

Gambling?

BEV

How do you think he lost all that money? It sure weren't on booze or fillies, and I mean the two legged kind.

HEATHER

That's a relief,.. I suppose.

Bev waves to the waiter.

BEV

What does one have to do around here to get a libashun, hun? Cartwheels?

A waiter comes over to the table.

WAITER

What would you ladies like?

BEV

We'd like to be friends. Haha. Bring whiskey, straight up.

HEATHER

I have a drink, thanks, anyway.

WAITER

Do you have a preference for either bourbon or scotch?

BEV

Big bottle of Jack Daniels. Gotta love that Tennessee stuff. They know how to run a still. My daddy had a good one, till them damn revenuers shut him down.

Bev turns to Heather after the waiter leaves.

BEV (CONT'D)

What are you drinkin', hun?

HEATHER

Coke.

BEV

No shit! Honey, you gotta drink somethin' with a kick. I'm partial to Jack Damage.

Bev lets out a cackle of a laugh.

BEV (CONT'D)

Get it, get it? Jack Damage?

HEATHER

Yes, I got it. What I don't get is what my husband has been doing, with you?

BEV

It started out with the slots, progressed to the ponies during the day, then blackjack, and craps, until finally, baccarat. Ever played baccarat, honey?

HEATHER

Can't say that I have.

The waiter hands Bev her drink. Bev stops him.

BEV

I might be askin' you to bring me the bottle, sugar. Don't be hidin' it on me.

The waiter walks away.

BEV (CONT'D)

Gotta keep a close eye on these guys. When you'se payin' top dollar in these gin joints, ya hafta make sure they're pourin' it from the right bottle, and not givin' ya the cheap stuff.

HEATHER

Is it expensive?

BEV

Bet your ass it's expensive.

HEATHER

It's more costly in bars, I suppose.

BEV

I never pay.

HEATHER

I'd still like to know what Rick was

HEATHER (CONT'D)  
doing here with you?

BEV  
Ricky's been keepin' little secrets from  
you, ain't he, that bad boy!

HEATHER  
In more ways than you know.

BEV  
Now, what was I sayin' before?

HEATHER  
Baccarat.

BEV  
Right. Good when you're winnin'. Ya get  
hooked when suddenly you're up sixty  
thousand or so, then you crash and burn.

HEATHER  
Was Rick ever up that much?

BEV  
Sure was, lottsa times. See, it's like a  
drug. The rush is exhilaratin'.

HEATHER  
Explain the game to me.

BEV  
Sure thing hun. Then we hit the tables. I  
really dasn't, with my addiction and all,  
but what the hell? It's simple. Each hand  
has two cards and a maximum of three.  
Cards less than ten are at face value.  
Aces are worth one. If it is a double  
digit, you drop the left digit so face  
cards have no value.

HEATHER  
Wait, I think I've got it.

BEV  
So, when the dealer gives you a total of  
8 or 9, you can't take another card. If  
it's less than 5, you get another card.  
If you have a 9, and the dealer has an 8  
or less, you win.

HEATHER  
Do you win often?

BEV

Some nights I's up, some nights I's down.  
Ricky played them big tables.

HEATHER

Meaning?

BEV

Ricky would play the one hunnerd thousand  
minimum tables. Too rich for my blood.

Heather gulps, loses the color in her face.

HEATHER

Did he ever win?

BEV

Not often. He lost over a million in one  
night. It was a sight to behold.

HEATHER

Jesus Christ! What was he thinking?

BEV

He loved to play, 'specially with me.

HEATHER

Were you and Rick, romantically involved?

BEV

Man, I hate that I can't smoke in here.  
Takes all the joy outta drinkin' and  
gamblin'... Now what kind of a dumb assed  
question is that?

HEATHER

I was just wondering.

BEV

I told ya, Jeezus! If I dint like ya and  
ya wasn't Ricky's wife, I'd slap the  
taste right out of your mouth.

HEATHER

Excuse me?

BEV

Hell no, we wasn't involved sexily. Yuk!  
We was purely hands off each other.

Heather raises an eyebrow.

HEATHER

Thank God for that!

BEV

I may be a lot of things, but I ain't no skank. If ya don't believe me, ask him yourself when he gets here.

HEATHER

He's not coming, Bev. Rick is dead.

Bev lets out a stream of breath.

BEV

Wondered why he weren't answerin' my calls. Cancer? Heart?

HEATHER

Nothing like that. It was an accident.

BEV

Poor bugger. I guess you'se here to collect the money.

Heather looks surprised.

HEATHER

Tell me about it.

BEV

Ricky bailed me out a lot.

HEATHER

Jail?

BEV

Shit. Ya don't know nothin', do ya?

HEATHER

I'm sorry. It appears I don't.

BEV

Ricky helped me out when the bosses was breathin' down my neck.

HEATHER

Who?

BEV

When ya owe the casino the kinda money I owed and ya can't pay up, they tend to get a might fidgety, ya know?

HEATHER

Care to elaborate?

BEV

What?

HEATHER

Would you like to tell me what happened?

BEV

I lost at baccarat. Ya have to place ten thousand dollar bets. I was down to nothin' on one of them losin' streaks.

HEATHER

Why didn't you simply stop betting?

BEV

You don't gamble, do you?

HEATHER

Afraid not.

BEV (CONT'D)

It wern't no retric question.

HEATHER

Rhetorical.

BEV

Yeah, what you'se said. Ricky slipped me fifty thousand and I bet it all and lost.

HEATHER

Rick gave you fifty thousand dollars?

BEV

Lent. Isn't that why you'se here? To collect from me?

HEATHER

Not really, that's not...

BEV

Cuz I ain't got it. Can't get blood from a stone, Mama always said. I told Ricky lotsa times. I'm in hawk up to my boobs.

Heather cringes at the analogy.

BEV (CONT'D)

Hey, I was goin' to try to hit ya up for a loan. I dasn't even know how I's a goin' ta pay for Jack.

HEATHER

What are you saying?

BEV

Jack, Jack Daniels. Are ya good for it?  
Cuz I ain't doin' dishes, honey.

Heather holds her head in her hands, shocked.

BEV (CONT'D)

Well, what d'ya say?

HEATHER

If you don't have the money, I'll just  
waive it. Besides, no court of law  
would, ... without evidence. Forget about  
the money. Consider it a gift.

BEV

You'se all right, like Ricky said ya was.

Heather motions for the waiter. He walks over.

WAITER

Yes?

HEATHER

I'm ready to pay. What do I owe?

The waiter places a vinyl billfold on the table.

WAITER

Whenever you're ready.

The waiter leaves. Heather opens it. Her face turns pale.

BEV

Ya'll right?

Heather continues to stare at the bill.

BEV (CONT'D)

Ya sure is concentratin', like you was  
countin' the hairs on a hog's back.

Heather looks around for the waiter. She calls him over.

BEV (CONT'D)

Somethin' wrong?

WAITER

Yes?

HEATHER

Is this amount correct? You seem to have  
made a slight error.

WAITER

No, it's two dollars for the coke, one hundred for the bottle of Jack Daniels.

Heather chokes.

BEV

Thanks a lot, sister. I'm glad ya offered to pay, cuz I sure don't have it.

Heather hands her debit card to the waiter who leaves.

HEATHER

You're welcome, Bev. I'm leaving now. Thanks for the information and it was...nice, or something, meeting you.

BEV

Now don't ya go cheapin' out. Leave the guy a nice tip. Ricky always did.

HEATHER

Sure, I will. Bye now.

Bev scampers off with her bottle. Heather stares at her.

INT. COFFEE CAR - DAY

Dawn, Amy, Judy, Maureen, and Heather are on the train.

AMY

How did your trip to Vegas turn out?

HEATHER

Rick wasn't cheating on me after all. I had him pegged all wrong.

DAWN

What was his connection with that woman?

HEATHER

She was some sort of gambling partner he lent money to when she was losing.

AMY

If they weren't intimate, why would he lend her money?

HEATHER

Beats me. She isn't the kind of person Rick would have befriended, normally.

MAUREEN

Why not? Aside from the gambling?

HEATHER

She's an alcoholic hillbilly. It's all so confusing.

AMY

You're sure she wasn't lying?

HEATHER

If you had seen her, you wouldn't ask. I believed her when she said they were strictly 'platonicals'.

The women laugh. Heather shakes her head in disbelief.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

I wish I had taped the conversation.

AMY

So do we.

JUDY

At least he wasn't cheating on you.

HEATHER

My husband had another bizarre life. It's left me discombobulated.

DAWN

Are you sorry you went?

HEATHER

No, In some ways, I'm relieved. In other ways, I'm baffled. But, more important, I'm disappointed that Rick couldn't have confided in me, that he didn't trust me.

AMY

Are you going to be okay?

Heather smiles.

HEATHER

I think so. A weight has been lifted. I want to thank all of you for chipping in to help me with my trip.

The women look at each other, confused. Jeff leaves cubicle, jumps into the conversation.

AMY

We didn't...

JEFF

It was our pleasure, right ladies?

Jeff winks at the other women. Heather does not see.

HEATHER

I'm so happy I don't drink. Have you any idea what Jack Daniels costs these days?

The train pulls into the station and the women, except Heather, exit. Jeff taps her shoulder.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

Yes?

JEFF

How are you?

HEATHER

Better, and thanks for everything. I've been very rude to you and I'm sorry.

JEFF

Are you a magician? Because every time I look at you, everyone else disappears.

HEATHER

Is there something wrong with you?

JEFF

No, but there's something's wrong with my cell phone. Your number isn't in it.

Jeff grins a silly grin and Heather shakes her head.

HEATHER

Have you had much success with women capitulating to your pick up lines?

JEFF

No, unfortunately. That's why I'm giving them a last shot on you.

HEATHER

Lucky me.

JEFF

Listen, I know we got off on the wrong foot, and the job didn't work out, so I was wondering if you'd like to meet today for lunch? No cheesy lines, I promise.

Heather hesitates, then sucks in a big breath of air.

HEATHER

I have a job interview at ten, so I suppose, sure, where and what time?

JEFF

The Greenwich Village Bistro, 13 Carmine Street, say, at twelve thirty?

HEATHER

Sounds good.

JEFF

It's a quaint little place, good atmosphere, great prices. I go there quite often with my sons.

HEATHER

I'll be there but if something unforeseen comes up, give me your cell number.

Jeff reaches into his pocket, hands Heather two cards.

JEFF

Write down your number on the back of one of these in case I need to call you.

HEATHER

Didn't I already give you my number?

JEFF

I lost it.

HEATHER

I should have known.

JEFF

You can see right through me.

Heather smiles.

HEATHER

It's not that difficult. You're transparent. Here's my number, again.

Heather leaves the train. Jeff jumps up, happy, and bangs his head on the door-jamb. He rubs the top of his head.

JEFF

Owww.

INT. GREENWICH VILLAGE BISTRO - DAY

Heather and Jeff eat lunch.

HEATHER

This French onion soup is amazing.

JEFF

The food here is great.

HEATHER

And the beer! Watermelon beer? Who'd have thought?

JEFF

It's an experience. What exactly are you looking for in a job?

HEATHER

A means to an end, nothing specific.

JEFF

Gotcha. Know the blonde you sit with?

HEATHER

Dawn?

JEFF

While you were in Vegas, I overheard her saying her husband's business is hiring. You might want to ask her about it.

HEATHER

Already have. What about you?

JEFF

What about me?

HEATHER

Aren't you interested in finding a job?

JEFF

I have one.

HEATHER

I know, but...

JEFF

But what?

HEATHER

You're satisfied with what you're doing?

JEFF

I've never been more settled in my life.

HEATHER

Whatever makes you happy, I guess.

A customer, BARRY, (50) walks by, looks at Jeff.

BARRY  
Hey, Jeff? Long time no see.

Barry shoots a glance at Heather.

JEFF  
Take a seat. We're almost finished.

Barry remains standing.

BARRY  
Have to run. Who's your charming friend?

JEFF  
Barry, meet Heather. Barry's one of my oldest friends. We met in Kindergarten.

BARRY  
Nice to meet you, Heather. Hope this big lug is treating you properly.

JEFF  
Yeah, yeah, yeah, get out of here.

BARRY  
How's the new career going?

JEFF  
Great. I've never been happier. I'm so glad I got out of that rat race.

Heather furls her eyebrows, confused.

BARRY  
Good for you. I might be looking for something similar in the near future.

Heather looks at Barry with a confused expression.

BARRY (CONT'D)  
Nice meeting you, Heather, Bye.

HEATHER  
Bye.

JEFF  
Are you free this afternoon?

HEATHER  
Yes, I am. What did you have in mind?

JEFF

Since we're in Manhattan, we should take advantage. Do you like art galleries?

HEATHER

Love them.

ESTABLISHING SHOT OF METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART - OUTSIDE

INT. METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART - 1000 5TH AVENUE - DAY

Heather and Jeff wander around the gallery.

JEFF

John Singer Sargent's work is incredible, don't you think?

Heather and Jeff stand in front of a portrait, entitled, Charles Deering, at Brickell Point, Miami, 1917.

HEATHER

I adore his use of light and shadow, and the colors, so rich and vibrant.

Jeff looks at Heather, admiringly.

JEFF

I'm glad you like him. Sargent is one of my all time favorites.

HEATHER

He's fast becoming one of mine.

Jeff takes Heather's arm and they exit the art gallery.

ESTABLISHING SHOT - GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM - EXTERIOR

INT. GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM - MANHATTAN - DAY

Heather and Jeff stop at the Frank Lloyd Wright exhibit.

HEATHER

I'm partial to Frank Lloyd Wright. My father built our house with his design.

JEFF

Did he build it himself?

HEATHER

You name it, he did it, framing, electrical wiring, drywall, plumbing.

JEFF

Where is he now?

HEATHER

Dead. Both my parents died in 9-11. They had never been to the World Trade Center and wanted to make a day of it by eating breakfast there.

JEFF

Talk about bad timing!

HEATHER

It was a long time ago, sort of.

JEFF

I can't imagine.

HEATHER

I was pretty bummed out. I took long walks over the bridge.

JEFF

Where were you going?

HEATHER

Nowhere. A couple of times I even contemplated jumping.

JEFF

Did you get help?

HEATHER

I suppose I should have, in retrospect.

JEFF

What did Rick say?

HEATHER

Never told him. Our marriage wasn't great.. Wow, I've never told anyone that before.

Jeff hugs Heather.

JEFF

I'm so sorry.

HEATHER

Let's move on. Are you familiar with Franz Marc?

JEFF

He's one of my favorite artists.

HEATHER

Me, too. Everyone loves his blue horse.

JEFF

I like his yellow cow.

HEATHER

Artists who paint outside the box excite me. Picasso was a genius, from fractured faces to one line drawings.

JEFF

There will never be another painter quite like Pablo Picasso.

HEATHER

My sentiments, exactly.

Jeff looks at his watch.

JEFF

Heather, I hate to break this up, but I just remembered I have to meet my son. I'm running late. Call you later?

Heather nods and waves as Jeff runs off.

INT. COFFEE CAR - DAY

Dawn and Amy are seated when Heather sits down.

HEATHER

Where are the others today?

DAWN

They took an earlier train.

HEATHER

Jeff reminded me about your husband's stores. Is he hiring yet?

DAWN

Not yet. Who's Jeff?

HEATHER

Coffee Car Jeff.

AMY

Surely you can't mean Tweedle-Dum?

HEATHER

He's not so dumb.

Dawn and Amy smile knowingly at each other.

DAWN

You're talking to him now?

HEATHER

We went for lunch on Tuesday and I'm seeing him on Saturday afternoon.

AMY

What did I say again?

HEATHER

It's just an afternoon in the park.

AMY

That's how it starts.

HEATHER

Listen, this is between us, but as nice as he is, he's complacent about work. I'm used to men with more drive. He's not a potential boyfriend or husband.

DAWN

I was never under that impression.

HEATHER

How can you say that?

AMY

You're coming off as a bit of a snob.

HEATHER

Look how I'm struggling to make ends meet. I want a man who isn't and I won't apologize for that.

DAWN

Wow! I never thought you'd say that.

HEATHER

Surely you know what I'm referring to, Dawn. Your husband has the qualities, and the bank book, that I'm looking for.

Amy stares blankly at her and then frowns.

AMY

That's terrible. Money isn't everything. People matter, not things.

HEATHER

I've been rich, and I've been poor, and

HEATHER (CONT'D)

I'm telling you Amy, I like being rich a whole lot better.

AMY

I understand, but to blow someone off because he'll never be a billionaire?

HEATHER

I do have standards, and I'm not lowering them just because a person is nice. He has to have goals and aspirations.

AMY

He has goals for the future.

HEATHER

I'm just not seeing it, Amy.

Amy is about to say something when Heather turns to Dawn.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

Dawn, tell me about the job.

DAWN

When you didn't get back to me I didn't think you'd want to work there. He needs an accountant. I wasn't sure you if you were qualified.

HEATHER

I'm not. I doubt I'll ever get any work.

Dawn texts her husband. She waits for the answer.

DAWN

Sorry Heather. He needs someone with experience and a degree. There aren't any sales persons jobs available right now.

HEATHER

If I had wanted a sales person's job I would go to Walmart to be a greeter.

AMY

There you go, judging again. It's honest work and it's all some people can get. You sound like your old friend, Sabrina.

Heather frowns at this remark.

HEATHER

I don't mean to, but Walmart? Seriously?

Dawn looks at Amy and they look horrified.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK LOOP - NEW YORK CITY - DAY

Heather and Jeff ride bicycles through the loop. The sun is beginning to set. Jeff and Heather pull over, stop.

JEFF

Maybe we should take the bikes back and grab a bite to eat.

HEATHER

I'm hungry and it is getting dark.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - NEW YORK CITY

Heather and Jeff stroll through the park, eating hotdogs.

JEFF

How's your smokie?

HEATHER

The sauerkraut was a good recommendation.

Jeff points to a group of clowns performing slapstick skits. In doing so, he hits Heather's hotdog, spills mustard and ketchup on her pastel pink sweater.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

Oh, for...

Jeff takes his napkin and tries to wipe it off.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

Don't touch me there. I'll wash it when I get home. I hope mustard comes out.

JEFF

There's something you don't know about me, Heather. I'm a bit of a klutz.

HEATHER

(sarcastically)

No. You're making that up.

JEFF

It's true. Did you know Simon and Garfunkel performed in Central Park?

HEATHER

I know. I saw them on September 19th, 1981. I love Simon and Garfunkel.

A disheveled, emaciated man, sits, stares at Heather, an open hat in front of him. She slows to look.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

Jeff, wait a minute. I have to go back.

They return to the hotdog stand. Heather gets in line.

JEFF

Are you still hungry?

HEATHER

It's not for me.

Heather scans the menu board, steps up to the counter.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

Two foot long smokies, with everything,  
French fries, ketchup packs, two cans of  
soda and a couple of bags of trail mix.

Jeff watches her. The hot dog vendor hands her a small box. They return to the man. Heather gives him the box.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

I thought that you might like a meal and  
I just happen to have this extra one.

The man, gaunt, deep set grey-blue eyes, is aghast. He reaches in, unwraps the silver foil from a hotdog.

HOMELESS MAN

Gee, thanks, lady. Are you sure?

HEATHER

I'm sure.

HOMELESS MAN

I don't know what to say. No one has ever  
been this kind to me before.

HEATHER

Someone gave me a hand once when I needed  
help. I'll never forget that.

HOMELESS MAN

You'll always have good fortune. I'm  
going to eat tonight. Thank's lady.

Jeff and Heather walk away.

JEFF

Heather, It's none of my business, but  
aren't you a little strapped for cash?

HEATHER

My grandmother used to say, "When it's gone, it's gone," meaning it's only money and I'll get more, somehow. Besides, he needs it more than I.

Jeff looks at her, smiling.

INT. COFFEE CAR - DAY

Dawn, Amy, Heather and Judy sit in their usual seats.

HEATHER

Well, I still don't have a job.

DAWN

On the bright side, Sam's opening a store in Hoboken in six months. If you complete the AGS diamond grading system course he may hire you as an assistant.

HEATHER

I appreciate that, but I need one now.

Jeff pours a dark Columbian roast, hands it to Heather.

JEFF

A gift from me to you.

As Jeff hands her the coffee, the train lurches and he spills it on Heather's sweater.

Heather wipes off her shoulder, takes the coffee.

HEATHER

Thanks. For nothing.

JEFF

Sorry, didn't mean that. Are you burnt?

HEATHER

I'm quite all right, in spite of you.

JEFF

At least now you can't say that I never gave you anything.

The women laugh.

JEFF (CONT'D)

Do you want to go see 'On the Waterfront' on Saturday night?

HEATHER

I saw that years ago. Where is it playing?

JEFF

The Film Forum in the South Village. They show all the classics.

HEATHER

I'd like to see that again, sure.

JEFF

Then it's settled. Dinner and a movie, because you need to eat.

HEATHER

Thanks for the coffee.

JEFF

Not necessary. You already thanked me.

HEATHER

You don't have to spill food on me every time you want to talk to me, you know.

JEFF

Can I help it if I'm shy?

Jeff walks back to the coffee bar to serve a customer.

AMY

Wow. This is getting serious.

HEATHER

No, it's not. We just seem to like the same things and hang out together.

DAWN

Oh, I see.

JUDY

I'd say that you two were dating.

HEATHER

Well, we're not.

AMY

Denial!

HEATHER

Stop it. It simply isn't the case.

AMY

That's your story and you're sticking to

AMY (CONT'D)

it, right?

HEATHER

Right!

AMY

It's been over eighteen months since you lost your husband. It's about time you stepped out a little.

HEATHER

Thanks for the advice, Mom!

EXT. FILM FORUM THEATRE - SOUTH VILLAGE - NIGHT

Large number of people spill out onto Houston Street.

JEFF

Did you enjoy it?

HEATHER

Marlon Brando at his best.

JEFF

What caught you about the movie? The oldies are very different.

HEATHER

The naturalness in which they played their roles.

JEFF

Such as?

HEATHER

What gave it verisimilitude was when Eva Marie Saint dropped her gloves and Marlon Brando picked them up. Instead of handing them back to her, he played with them, folding them, peeling back the fingers. It's exactly what someone might do.

JEFF

You wanna hear my philosophy of life? "Do it to him before he does it to you."

HEATHER

That's the way Terry interpreted life only because he had been pushed around so much. It summarized a lifetime of having to scarp for every morsel and every bit of self-confidence.

JEFF

Edie's world view is the opposite.  
Everybody cares about everybody else.

HEATHER

Which do you believe to be true?

JEFF

They're both accurate, depending on your  
life experiences. What's your take?

Heather bites her lower lip, hesitates to answer.

JEFF (CONT'D)

Well?

HEATHER

I'm of two minds. Before Rick died, I was  
Edie, naive, trusting, and lived in a  
protective bubble in a pretty world.

JEFF

And now?

HEATHER

The truth? It is a dog-eat-dog world, and  
if you're weak, you don't survive.

JEFF

But you said that you were of two minds?

HEATHER

I'd like to believe that everyone has  
good intentions and is kind to everyone  
else. Silly notion, isn't it?

JEFF

That's Utopia. It doesn't exist.

HEATHER

We have the potential though.

JEFF

On the flip side, we have the potential  
for great evil. One only has to look at  
historical figures. Take Vlad the  
Impaler, Ivan the Terrible, Genghis Khan,  
Attila the Hun, Caligula, Nero,  
Robespierre, and Leopold II of Belgium.

HEATHER

What did he do?

JEFF

He killed ten million Congolese, about 50 percent of their population.

HEATHER

How do you know all this?

JEFF

I did a paper on it in history class.

HEATHER

Oh, interesting.

JEFF

Tomas de Torquemada during the Spanish Inquisition tortured Jews with methods you can't imagine. No horror movie made to date can rival what he did to humans.

HEATHER

In the last century, the obvious ones.

JEFF

Sure, Stalin, Hitler, but the grand prize goes to Emperor Hirohito. Twenty million Chinese, millions of other Asians and millions more dead during World War II.

HEATHER

And the list goes on.

JEFF

Do you still believe that humans are kind and inherently good?

HEATHER

Seems to me it's all men who are the perpetrators.

JEFF

Mostly. Ever hear of Elizabeth Bathony? Totally obsessed with blood, she tortured and killed 650 girls, ate their flesh, forced them to eat each other, drank their blood, and even bathed in it.

HEATHER

That's so gross.

JEFF

She is the most prolific of serial killers. Women aren't exempt.

HEATHER

Statistically, there are more men.

JEFF

Of course. What I'm trying to point out is that the way we treat others in our species is despicable.

HEATHER

I enjoyed the movie, and now I feel horrible. You're so depressing.

JEFF

You got me started on a passion of mine and I went too far. Sorry.

HEATHER

What passion is that? Serial killers and war mongers throughout history?

JEFF

The study of human nature. It's fascinating. That's what I like about the movie, different POV's regarding the human condition.

HEATHER

I'd still like to think that most humans are basically decent and the ones we've spoken about are few and far between.

JEFF

Everyone has the capability to be evil. Stalin was quoted as saying, "Death is the solution to all problems. No man, no problem."

HEATHER

That's pretty dark, Jeff.

JEFF

On some level. The human race can't continue much longer due to over population. The wheels are in motion.

HEATHER

And yet I still see young people having more than one or two children.

JEFF

People who have large families nowadays have their heads in the sand. It's obscene.

HEATHER

Maybe humans have run their course. It's time for another species to take over.

JEFF

Couldn't agree with you more.

INT. COFFEE CAR - DAY

All of the women are on the train. Jeff is not working.

AMY

I had morphine with my third baby, due to a C-section after some horrific complications which I won't go into.

DAWN

Were you breast feeding?

AMY

Yes. I nursed all my children. But that isn't the story I'm telling.

JUDY

Doesn't morphine go into the milk?

MAUREEN

That can't be good.

AMY

Oh, for God's sake. He grew up to be just fine. Morphine makes me hallucinate. When I was leaving the hospital, the nurse said to take anything on the baby's cart.

HEATHER

Such as?

AMY

Diapers, wash cloths, shampoo, soap, etc.

MAUREEN

They did that when I took Alexander home.

AMY

Are you going to let me finish? Christ! I asked her if I could take the navel cleaner I'd been using to clean the umbilical cord stump. She said, "Show me." I opened the door and pointed to the glass tube and stick taped to the inside, She huffed and puffed and said, "That's the rectal thermometer!"

The women burst into laughter.

AMY (CONT'D)

If you've ever tried to laugh after abdominal surgery, you know just how painful that can be.

MAUREEN

Did your son get a navel infection?

AMY

He's grown up fine, thank you.

JUDY

You were on morphine while nursing? I have to Google that. Doesn't sound right.

AMY

Get over it. That wasn't the point.

HEATHER

You've made my day. Navel cleaner!

AMY

How are you and Jeff getting along?

Heather stops laughing, bites her lip.

HEATHER

Tonight I'm going to tell him it's over.

AMY

Why?

HEATHER

It's complicated, but it has to be done.

INT. BAGATELLE'S FRENCH RESTAURANT - GREENWICH VILLAGE

Heather and Jeff dine.

HEATHER

Why would someone, such as yourself, be so complacent about working in such a dead end job as the Coffee Car?

JEFF

I love that job.

HEATHER

Really?

JEFF  
What are you driving at?

HEATHER  
Nothing.

Heather looks down at her plate.

HEATHER (CONT'D)  
There's something we have to discuss.  
Look, these past few weeks have been  
great, but I don't think we should see  
each other anymore.

JEFF  
Why?

HEATHER  
I can't get involved with you.

JEFF  
What's wrong with me?

HEATHER  
There's nothing wrong with you.

JEFF  
Then why not go out with me?

HEATHER  
Why should I?

JEFF  
We get along well, or so I thought.

HEATHER  
I don't intend to end up with a barista  
earning \$11.00 an hour on a commuter  
train.

Jeff stares at her in horror. A long, awkward pause.

JEFF  
Money shouldn't be a criteria for a  
relationship.

HEATHER  
When you haven't got any, it's the only  
thing.

JEFF  
I feel sorry for you.

Heather stands.

HEATHER

Please, don't say anymore.

JEFF

Don't worry, I'll stay away from you.

Heather stands and walks out of the restaurant.

INT. COFFEE CAR - NIGHT

A cold and rainy night. Jeff sits down across from Amy.

AMY

Hey, big guy. We haven't seen you in weeks. Sorry to hear about you and Heather.

JEFF

Her values are skewed. Besides, she doesn't want to see me anymore. I changed commuter trains because I can't face her.

Amy's cell phone rings.

AMY

Hi, Heather. What's up?

Jeff watches Amy, interested.

AMY (CONT'D)

I took the last train home tonight.

Amy listens.

AMY (CONT'D)

You're going where? In this weather?

Amy clutches at Jeff's sleeve. Jeff whispers.

JEFF

Where's she going?

AMY

Which bridge?

Amy turns to Jeff, still holding her phone.

AMY (CONT'D)

She hung up. She's going to the bridge to think.

There is a pause.

JEFF  
Oh, God, not the bridge.

AMY  
Do you think she'll do anything?

JEFF  
Did she say which bridge?

AMY  
She said that Simon and Garfunkel sang about it.

JEFF  
Bridge, bridge, which one? Most people commit suicide off the Brooklyn Bridge, not the George Washington bridge.

AMY  
Bridge Over Troubled Water! That's it.

JEFF  
That's meaningless. All the bridges are over water.

Jeff grabs his cell phone and punches in something.

JEFF (CONT'D)  
Here it is, Amy, the 59th Street Bridge. The Queensboro Bridge. Ed Koch, you know?

AMY  
She's going for a walk to clear her mind.

JEFF  
At night, in the rain! Were you aware that she contemplated suicide once before?

AMY  
Shit! In that case, let's go now.

JEFF  
I'd rather do this alone, if you don't mind. This has something to do with me.

EXT. QUEENSBORO (59TH STREET) BRIDGE - NIGHT

Jeff runs on the bridge. Hard rain, blowing wind. Heather's up ahead, leaning on the rail. He shouts.

JEFF  
Heather, stop!

Heather does hear him or look up. Jeff runs faster.

JEFF (CONT'D)  
(shouting louder)  
Heather, Heather?

Heather looks up and Jeff is 10 feet away, walking now.

HEATHER  
What are you doing here?

JEFF  
Saving you.

HEATHER  
From what?

Jeff inches slowly, not letting her notice his proximity.

JEFF  
Please don't do anything rash.

HEATHER  
How did you know I was here?

JEFF  
Amy is worried about you.

HEATHER  
That Amy! Always interfering.

JEFF  
I know you hate me, but don't end it like  
this. Please don't jump because of me.

HEATHER  
Don't what? Kill myself, over you?

JEFF  
Heather, we have to talk.

HEATHER  
I don't hate you and I'm not about to  
jump.

JEFF  
You're on a bridge, at night, and you  
contemplated jumping once before...

HEATHER  
I came here to do some soul searching and  
I've come to a conclusion.

Jeff is upon her, grabs her arm, pulls her towards him.

JEFF

I've got you, you're safe.

HEATHER

I'm not suicidal. Listen, Jeff,... I enjoyed our time together.

JEFF

So did I. Am I that bad a person?

HEATHER

Of course not. I think we should try.

JEFF

But you said...

HEATHER

I know, I said a lot of things. But, I realise now that you were right. People do have to be more important than things and money. I see that now.

JEFF

Heather, I'll never be as rich or successful as Rick. I'll never own a Bugatti, or a home in the Hamptons, but, like Rick, I'll never cheat on you.

HEATHER

I don't want to be without you.

JEFF

Really? Come home with me tonight. No strings attached, I promise.

HEATHER

I've been trying so hard to stand on my own two feet..to be independent.

JEFF

I know you have. Don't worry about finding a job right away.

HEATHER

I can't live off you. You're broke.

Jeff looks at her, confused, shakes his head.

JEFF

From the start I knew we had something.

HEATHER

We do. You spill food on me and I'm left wet and covered in stains.

Jeff lowers his eyes, embarrassed.

JEFF

I'm going to have to work on that a bit.

Heather hugs him, they kiss. It pours hard, they run arm in arm on bridge, laughing as they get soaked.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - NEW YORK CITY - EVENING

A clear night, warm. Heather and Jeff walk.

HEATHER

I left because of your job. How superficial was that?

JEFF

You mean my job on the Coffee Car?

HEATHER

What else would I mean?

JEFF

Is that what you think I do?

HEATHER

Isn't it?

JEFF

It's what I do on my way to work.

HEATHER

You never told me you had another job.

JEFF

You never asked.

HEATHER

I just assumed...

JEFF

Nah. Forget about it. Heather, two years ago I was made President of U.S. Bank Corporate Payment Systems.

HEATHER

Don't you have to have a degree for that?

JEFF

I do. I'm a CA with a Masters in history.

HEATHER

I'm very embarrassed right now.

JEFF

They said the management acumen I had demonstrated over the years in banking made me the ideal choice to take the reins.

HEATHER

What an opportunity! You must love it.

JEFF

I hated it. What the corporation didn't take into consideration was that my wife had just died of cancer the week before.

HEATHER

I can relate.

JEFF

I had ulcers, headaches, and slipped into a deep depression. I wore my bathrobe and never left the house. They fired me.

HEATHER

You must have been devastated.

JEFF

Au contraire! I did the happy dance. I was finally free, out of the rat race.

HEATHER

But you said you were working?

JEFF

My oldest son and wife had me over for dinner. My four year old grandson complained that all the video games were only for the big kids.

HEATHER

I wasn't aware.

JEFF

It led me to thinking, so I went home, crunched numbers and researched the internet. Three-quarters of children under ten have a mobile device. This spells big money if you can create design applications just for kids.

HEATHER

Wow. I never thought of that.

JEFF

Neither had I so I ran it by my sons. We

JEFF (CONT'D)  
design kid-friendly apps.

HEATHER  
I don't want to sound skeptical, but  
aren't most parents trying to wean their  
children off video terminals?

JEFF  
Sure, so we only design educational ones  
promoting good health.

HEATHER  
A bit of an oxymoron, wouldn't you say?

JEFF  
No. Here's why. After fifteen minutes,  
the game switches to a big stuffed animal  
who will only resume their game where it  
left off after five minutes of exercise.

HEATHER  
And it works?

JEFF  
Like a well oiled machine. So far parents  
like it and the kids love the exercises.

HEATHER  
I can see how it would work.

JEFF  
We've been receiving nothing but praise  
from parents, accolades from the press,  
and now, the money is pouring in.

HEATHER  
I must say, I'm impressed.

Heather stops walking, listens to a busker, drops five  
dollars in his guitar case. Heather stops dead.

JEFF  
What's the matter? Do you feel ill?

The color drains from her face. Sabrina, Carlotta, and  
Laura lock eyes with Heather.

HEATHER  
Those women used to be my friends.

JEFF  
Would you rather we went the other way?

HEATHER

No. Let's keep going.

SABRINA

(shouting)

Yoo hoo, Heather? It's me, Sabrina.

Heather and Jeff are face to face with the women.

SABRINA (CONT'D)

Didn't you hear me? I called your name.

HEATHER

I thought I heard some shrill bird.

SABRINA

(points to the busker)

Very funny. Always the kidder! Still slumming with winos and bums, I see.

HEATHER

There it is! What do you want, Sabrina?

Sabrina puts her arms around Heather and squeezes hard.

SABRINA

Come now, let's let bygones be bygones.

Sabrina looks Heather up and down.

SABRINA (CONT'D)

I don't know how you manage to always look so good on such a limited budget!

HEATHER

There it is again.

SABRINA

There what is, dear?

CARLOTTA

We miss you and don't care if you're poor.

SABRINA

Let's not go too far, Carlotta.

JEFF

Heather, aren't you going to introduce me to your friends?

HEATHER

Jeff, meet Sabrina, Carlotta, and Laura.

Jeff reaches out and shakes each of their hands.

SABRINA

I suppose you're finally over that  
philandering misogynist husband of yours.

Heather bites her lower lip, a look of fury on her face.

LAURA

I would never tolerate the indiscretions  
he had with women. Would you, Sabrina?

SABRINA

In one way, you're fortunate he died.  
Infidelity should be punishable by death.

Sabrina laughs at her own remark. Heather and Jeff are  
angry, Laura and Carlotta appear uncomfortable.

HEATHER

I don't have to dignify your toxic  
comments with an explanation, but, in his  
defense, Rick wasn't cheating on me.

Sabrina sneers and rolls her eyes at the other women.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

What was that look for?

SABRINA

Come off it, Heather. Denial!

LAURA

We've decided to let you back into the  
fold. Isn't that right, Sabrina?

SABRINA

I've decided that we'll make allowances  
on your behalf since it wasn't entirely  
your fault. The two of you can even come  
to our country club as our guests.

CARLOTTA

Once or twice. We can't make a habit of  
it, can we, Sabrina?

LAURA

Lord knows neither of you can afford it.

HEATHER

I see you two are still under Sabrina's  
influence. Don't either one of you have a  
single thought of your own?

SABRINA

Just because your life is in the toilet,  
don't take it out on them. They know that  
I am their natural born leader.

Carlotta and Laura balk, take a step back from Sabrina.

JEFF

Honey, what ever made you think that  
these reprobates were your friends?

SABRINA

Well! I've never been so humiliated and  
insulted in all my life.

JEFF

Judging from what Heather has told me,  
and after what I've been privy to just  
now, this isn't the last time someone  
will take a verbal swing at you.

Sabrina tugs at Carlotta and Laura's sleeves, trying to  
pry them away from Heather and Jeff.

SABRINA

Girls, let's go.

The two women hesitate, not moving.

SABRINA (CONT'D)

Laura? Carlotta?

Laura shakes her head from side to side.

CARLOTTA

I'm with Laura. I am not your girl. Don't  
tell me how and what to think.

SABRINA

This is mutiny. How dare you side with  
that ill mannered pauper?

Sabrina makes a horrible face at Heather, glaring.

HEATHER

I must say, Sabrina, you've mastered that  
Joan Crawford chain saw face perfectly.

Laura and Carlotta stifle a laugh.

JEFF

Sabrina? Can't say meeting you was a  
pleasure, but it was definitely an event  
I'll not forget soon.

Jeff waves at Sabrina who walks away, not looking back.

CARLOTTA

Heather, you were so calm. How did you keep your cool back there?

LAURA

No one ever talks to her like that.

HEATHER

I was good, wasn't I?

CARLOTTA

Laura and I are really sorry about the way we treated you. Can you forgive us?

HEATHER

I've always liked both of you and I don't hold a grudge.

CARLOTTA

Is it really true that you commute into the city every day by train?

HEATHER

Yes. I sit in the car that sells coffee and pastries. That's where I met Jeff and some great women. You know, without my train gang, I'd be lost.

LAURA

Sure, but you two led the good life. What happened to Rick was tragic.

HEATHER

Certainly, for him, but my life wasn't all that great. We weren't getting along. I was stagnating. Rick died, and I began to live. The Coffee Car saved my life.

The three women hug and start to cry.

JEFF

This couldn't be any more schmaltzy, could it? ..I know just the place for the best ice cream and the opportunity to become better acquainted.

The three women link arms and walk with Jeff.

FADE OUT.

