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FADE IN:

INT. TRENDY RESTAURANT. NIGHT.

An Italian eatery that could be found in any gentrified urban part of any major city, U.S.A. But this happens to be Boston. It's bustling with business.

ON SETH COBIAN

He's 31, boyishly handsome, yet not too conscience of what he wears, which is a sweater, a button down shirt underneath, a pair of corduroys, and sneakers; no jewelry, but a wristwatch.

He's obviously speaking to someone sitting across from him at the table.

SETH
(a totally innocent
question)
I'm afraid I don't follow?

ON VANESSA RIOS

She's also 33, very attractive, media type, conservative in dress.

VANESSA
Oh, don't get me wrong it's an
desirable field to work in -

We pull back to reveal Seth and Vanessa, sitting together at small table. Seth really likes her, and he tries to show her the best way he can.

VANESSA (CONT'D)
but sometimes I wish, you know -

SETH
You were the one being
interviewed?

Vanessa is about to answer. A busboy comes over to put more bread on the table.

VANESSA
(to busboy)
Grazie.

The busboy nods the gesture off, then moves on to another table. Seth takes a slice of bread from the basket, begins to chew on it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VANESSA (CONT'D)

(aside)

It must be hard bussing tables,
always having to be on your feet,
refilling the bread baskets,
pouring water. I admire anyone who
can do it.

SETH

(swallows; too
affable)

You know, Ho Chi Minh, he worked
as a busboy at the Parker House
Hotel in Boston. ... Not many
people know about that.

VANESSA

Anyway... No matter how hard I
work, trying to research and write
an article on - oh, I don't know -
(an example)

- the significance of how the
Yoruba people kept their religion
hidden under the guise of
mainstream Catholicism after they
were brought to the Americas -

(end of example)

- at the end of the day my work
ends up lining the bottom of the
cages at the Zoo. It can be really
frustrating.

Vanessa takes a sip from her drink. Seth sort of nods in
a unsympathetic way, which she takes as a sign that he's
uncomfortable talking about her job.

VANESSA (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, I'm probably boring you
with the more anguished details of
my job. ... I don't mean to sound
pessimistic. I do actually enjoy
my work.

He smiles in an attempt to reassure her that he does
care.

SETH

No, I was just -

(leans in closer)

Actually, I know exactly how you
feel.

VANESSA

Really? ... How so?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SETH

Take comedy clubs, for instance.

VANESSA

(some interest)

Yeah?

SETH

Sure they're great places to take a date, but I don't think that's very fair. Women especially like them, and I think it's because men in general just aren't that funny.

VANESSA

Then why most of the top comedians men? Or every time I watch Comedy Central, or whatever, they're showcasing a male comedian.

SETH

(succinct)

Publicists.

VANESSA

So why isn't it fair... to you?

SETH

Because after the date the guy will repeat all my jokes, and she'll find him charming. They'll eventually fall in love, get married, have kids, and move into the suburbs.

VANESSA

Because that is what you want?

SETH

Except for the suburbs.

Vanessa nods, not just in agreement, but as if she thinks Seth is a real idiot. But this is so subtle that Seth - and we - don't even notice at first.

LARRY (O.S.)

Seth?!

Seth and Vanessa turn toward the voice. Standing above them is a man, early forties, suit, full of crap grin. This is LARRY, a nervous tick of a man.

LARRY (CONT'D)

How's it going?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

SETH
 (not really pleased
 to see him)
 It's going... well.

Seth nods, though we get the feeling he's not really happy to see Larry, as if he finds him annoying. And for the first time, we see a loss of the confidence he as so far possessed. Larry reaches in to shake hands with Seth. Then Seth notions toward Vanessa, as if the thought of introducing them had just occurred.

SETH (CONT'D)
 I'm sorry. Vanessa, this is Larry
 Fisher.

VANESSA
 Hello, Larry.

LARRY
 Hi.

Larry turns quickly to Seth.

LARRY (CONT'D)
 You know, I heard the strangest
 thing the other day -
 (condescending)
 - that you're writing a comedy
 book?

Seth thinks about the rudeness of the question briefly, then responds.

SETH
 I've put it on hold.

LARRY
 Let me know when you're ready to
 submit a manuscript.

SETH
 (pity response)
 Sure.

A waiter brings a bottle of wine to the table. The waiter then looks to Larry.

WAITOR
 (to Larry)
Signore?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

LARRY

Si, si.
(then to Seth; re:
wine)
A gift from me.

The waiter pours two glasses, then leaves.

SETH

Thank you.

LARRY

(out of the blue)
So, you ever hear from Megan these
days?

SETH

(uneasy; the nerve of
this guy)
It's, uh, you know... been a
while.

LARRY

(looks at Vanessa;
fears tension)
Right - Right. ... Surprising how
time flies when you're...

Seth glances at Vanessa with a uncomfortable look. Larry
looks back behind him.

LARRY (CONT'D)

Well, I better go back to my
table. ... I just wanted to drop
by and say. ... Enjoy the wine.
(to both)
Take care.

VANESSA

It was nice meeting you, Larry.

Larry nods, then leaves the table. Once he's out of
earshot Seth looks at his right hand, the one he used to
shake Larry's hand with.

SETH

(bothered)
Great, now I have to wash my hands
again.

VANESSA

Who is that guy?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

SETH
He's a literary agent.

VANESSA
(with interest)
Yours?

SETH
(are you kidding?!)
Uh... no.

VANESSA
Well he seems to want you as a
client.
(Then)
Whose agent his he?

Seth shakes his Head, becomes a little uneasy. He wishes the subject changed.

SETH
So, uh, what you were saying about
how your producer married a
distant cousin?

VANESSA
(correction)
Editor.
(then)
Whose agent is he?

Seth doesn't want to answer the question, but he has no choice, and so he concedes.

SETH
A former girlfriend of mine.

VANESSA
And this would be... Megan?

Seth nods.

SETH
She's a novelist.

He takes a sip - not a swig, but a sip - from his drink. Then he swipes another slice of bread from the basket. Vanessa then leans in closer.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

VANESSA

You know, I've heard that most novels tell us hard truths about life and injustice and oppression, but that the way the author does this is by camouflaging what they're really trying to tell us, hence the interests are hidden or invisible because everything is so brilliantly personal that you never feel manipulated or lectured. Does that sound right?

SETH

(terse)

Yeah, something like that.

VANESSA

(senses uneasiness;
recoils; smiles)

I'm sorry, I didn't mean to provoke any... residual feelings.

SETH

No, I was just thinking about when I was dating Megan. I didn't know what I was doing, which is funny because all my energy was focused on the relationship. I think she felt the same - I mean, this was before either one of us really made a... decent living at what we do now.

VANESSA

That is interesting.

(then)

You know what, I'd love to hear some stories about your relationship with her.

SETH

I don't know - we only dated for a couple of years.

VANESSA

When was the last time you've had any contact with her?

SETH

A little more than five years ago. During a book signing in New York.
(just thought of something)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (7)

SETH (CONT'D)

Oh, did I tell you that I'm scheduled to appear on the Late Show in a couple of weeks?

VANESSA

(mind is busy)

Hmm.

(then)

You know, returning back to the subject... It'll make an interesting side story for the article. ... You can even start from the beginning. Like, how did you two meet?

EXT. CITY STREET. DAY.

It's now eight years earlier (1999?). Seth and his best friend, ERIC GARDOZA, short, easily disturbed, showing early signs of baldness, of a paunch stomach. Both are 25 here, walk away from a busy newsstand, along a busy city street in Boston. Eric picks up on a conversation. Now and then Seth will glance at a comic book as they walk, and Eric talks.

ERIC

Anyway, so I'm sitting there in the crowded subway car, when all of a sudden this woman with quite a bit of stomach enters and stands near me, and as I'm looking at her I'm thinking, is she pregnant, or is she just overweight?

SETH

(understands)

Of course - The Bulge of Uncertainty.

ERIC

So I wait... maybe a minute - I wanted to see if anyone else would give up their seat. No one budges, so I offer her my seat.

SETH

She must have been surprised.

ERIC

Oh, she was surprised all right - She wanted to know why I would give up my seat.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

 SETH
 (catching on)
 Oh... because she was just fat?
 (Eric nods)
 What did you say?

 ERIC
 I told her I was getting off at
 the next stop. So I exited from
 the carriage, and stepped onto
 another one further down the
 train.

 SETH
 At least you spared yourself of
 any further embarrassment.

 ERIC
 We got off the train at the same
 location. ... I'll never forget
 the look she gave me as we exited
 from station together. It was the
 same expression my junior high
 school guidance counselor gave me
 when I told her my life's goal was
 to be a Bat Boy for the Mets.

EXT. TRENDY CLOTHING STORE. DAY.

Seth and Eric are about to enter. But exiting from the store is SEAN Head, an old friend of theirs, carrying some shopping bags. **[note: Seth doesn't find Sean Head to his liking; Sean Head prefers to be called by his full name.]**

 SEAN
 What a surprise. ... Hi, Seth.
 Hello, Eric.

 ERIC
 Oh, hey, Sean Head.

 SETH
 (not thrilled)
 Hi, Sean...

Sean frowns.

 SETH (CONT'D)
 Head.

Sean smiles again.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SEAN

So, what are you guys up to on this glorious May afternoon?

ERIC

I need to buy some clothes.

SEAN

Sweet. ... You guys heading over to the Gap?

ERIC

(not sure)

I guess so.

SEAN

Oh, you have to go to the Gap, Eric. You just have to. That store is great. Everything is just so clean. And the sales people are so efficient. Like, you can ask them for a pair of tan khakis in a size 34, and then - BAM! - they bring out a pair of tan khakis in a size 34. Just like that. It's amazing, guys. Simply amazing.

SETH

Right.

SEAN

Hey, Seth, my cousin Marcus caught your act the other night at the Comedy Connection. ... What's this new material you have computers? My cousin tried to explain it, but he's such a dunce.

Seth seems to be suspicious of this question.

SETH

(down plays)

It's just part of some jokes I've been experimenting out.

ERIC

(to Seth)

Huh. I didn't know you were doing new material. How's it go?

Seth gives Eric a cold stare. Eric is confused by this.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SETH

It wasn't my best stuff, so I'd rather not talk about it.

SEAN

You're so modest.

(to Pete)

My cousin told me it nearly brought the house down. His wife wet her pants from laughing so much.

ERIC

Must have been quite a show.

SETH

It really wasn't that good.

SEAN

Ah, don't be such a mensch. Tell us how it goes.

SE

(losing patience)

Listen, I'd rather not talk about it.

SEAN

Why? What's the big deal?

SETH

(angry)

I just don't want to talk about, alright?

Sean gets the point.

SEAN

Okay, okay. I get it, I get it.

Sean glances at his watch.

SEAN (CONT'D)

I have to get going. ... See you guys around. ... Anyway, I suppose you guys don't want this discount card from the Gap.

ERIC

Oh, no, we'll take it.

Seth nods in agreement.

Sean gives them a discount card, then walks away.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

SETH

Take care. ... Sorry.

Once Sean is out of earshot:

ERIC

What's the matter with you? We've known Sean Head since freshman year.

SETH

Okay, you don't know this, but a months ago we both had a gig in Providence on the same night. So we drive down there together, and along the way we told each other our material. ... Anyway, to make a long story short, when it's time to perform, he goes first and basically repeats what I told him in the car. ... I'll never do that computer joke again. In fact I'll have to change the style of how I do every joke from now.

ERIC

(can't believe it)
No way? Sean Head? He stole your material?

SETH

(annoyed by Eric's disbelief)
Why are you shocked? He prefers to be addressed by his first and last name? Don't you find that... strange?

ERIC

(concur)
It is a little strange.

SETH

Plus he's always happy. What kind of comedian is always happy?

ERIC

I don't know much about stand-up ethos, but I'm guessing it's not a good thing.

Seth does a "maybe yes, maybe no" gesture with his hand.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

Then we see that Seth maybe feels guilty for talking behind Sean' back.

SETH

Ah, maybe I'm overreacting.

ERIC

Who cares.

INT. TRENDY CLOTHING STORE. DAY.

The popular, mainstream, intended-to-be-trendy clothing store for men and women, a la Gap. It's crowded with various patrons. **[note: We will assume that this is a Gap store.]**

Seth and Eric stand before the naked torso of a male mannequin with a really toned body. Seth is indifferent; Eric is disturbed.

SETH

Wow, this place is pretty tidy.
It's like a hotel suite after the
maid's been through. ... I don't
know about the music, though.

(Re: music)

What is that? Radiohead? ... It's
depressing.

Eric just frowns at something off camera.

SETH (CONT'D)

(off frown)

What's the matter with you?

ERIC

(re: mannequin)

Would you look at this.

SETH

No thanks.

ERIC

This is another fine example of
how these big corporations use
false marketing. ... Who are they
trying to fool? Most men in
America don't look like this. They
want reality? I'll give them a
reality check.

(Then)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ERIC (CONT'D)

This mannequin should seem over weight with very little muscle mass. Its posture should be so awkward that the word scoliosis would come to mind immediately.

SETH

(delivers it straight)

What are you talking about? This is the Gap... not Casual Male.

ERIC

Alright. I need to find the jeans.

Eric and Seth begin to walk across the sales floor.

SETH

(to Eric)

I thought you didn't wear jeans.

ERIC

I have to change my entire wardrobe.

Seth isn't paying attention to Eric, as something has caught his attention off camera nearby, on the sales floor.

Seth' P.O.V.

An attractive female sales person (MEGAN, 22) assists a cantankerous elderly couple. The way Seth would describe her: She's beautiful, but not like a super model or an actress, but like the powerful, kind and intelligent women that actresses portray in the movies. Yes she looks innocent and sweet, but somehow you could see her discarding a condom wrapper with more care than she would a man's soul. Seth is instantly attracted to her.

MEGAN

... May I help you?

OLDER WOMAN

My husband is looking for polo shirts.

OLDER MAN

(cranky)

Where... are your polo shirts. ... I've been in this store for ten minutes - I can't find the polo shirts. ... Where are you hiding them?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

OLDER WOMAN

(cranky)

Will you calm down. You don't have
to be so rude. ... Maybe they
don't sell polo shirts here.

OLDER MAN

(to old woman;
cranky)

What? Like you know if they sell
polo shirts here? ...

(Crankier)

Then why... did you drag me into
this God awful store in the first
place? ... I could be at home,
sitting in the Lay-Z-Boy, watching
reruns of Highway to Heaven.

Seth turns his attention back to Eric. As for the jeans,
there are a plethora of styles, all of which seems very
confusing to Eric. Instead, he chooses to walk over to
another shelf with jeans. Seth who had been staring at
Megan, suddenly realizes what Eric has done and follows,
yet confused.

SETH

(to Eric; off scene
with Megan and old
couple; re: Megan)

Where have I seen her before?.

(looks around;
realizes they are in
a different area of
the store)

What are we doing over here?

ERIC

I have a better feeling about
these styles.

Seth looks around the shelf. They appear to be... women's
styles.

SETH

I'm not sure these are the...

(obtuse)

right fit for you.

Eric ignores Seth, continues to browse the shelf.

SETH (CONT'D)

(continues theme of
earlier
conversation)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

SETH (CONT'D)

And, should I even ask about this sudden need to change your wardrobe?

ERIC

Do you remember Karen Bean - We dated for a few weeks during senior year?

SETH

Vaguely.

ERIC

I ran into her the other day in Downtown Crossing. ... We get to talking, and she tells me that she's asked her new boyfriend to... start dressing like me.

Eric removes a pair from the shelve. Then he starts walking toward the dressing room. Seth follows him.

SETH

(come again?)
Didn't she say you had the emotional depth of a Petri Dish?

ERIC

(angry)
But apparently she thought I dressed well.
(Goes into it here)
What's next? Is she going to ask him to talk like me, to walk like me... to eat the same kind of foods as I eat?... Is he now going to go around campus repeating my *bon mots*?

SETH

You mean, *mal mots*?

ERIC

(concedes)
Yeah.

Eric removes a pair of jeans from the shelf.

ERIC (CONT'D)

(re: jeans)
All right, I'm going to try this pair on.

Eric enters the dressing room. Seth then walks over to where Megan and the older couple are still talking.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

She's showing him the polo shirts. The older man holds up a bright orange polo shirt for the older woman to see. Megan stands back to watch.

OLDER WOMAN

(to older man; re:
polo shirt)

That goes nicely with your body type.

OLDER MAN

(yelling)

Who are you now? ... Gloria Vanderbilt?

OLDER WOMAN

(yelling)

It's because you're stocky.

(Calm; to Megan)

Do you see what I have to put up with all day?

Megan nods out of obligation. Seth walks into the situation. Begins to talking to the older couple.

SETH

(off polo shirt; mock excitement)

No way. Mel Brooks - I saw Mel Brooks in Manhattan last week, and he was wearing that same exact polo shirt, same exact color.

(a la Mel Brooks; modified quote)

Tragedy is when you cut your finger. Comedy is when you fall into an open sewer and die - with your favorite polo shirt.

(End of quote; to Megan)

Would you have that in a medium.

MEGAN

(playing along)

We're out of medium.

SETH

(mildly upset)

That's a shame.

(To older couple)

Sorry, I didn't mean to interrupt. Enjoy your afternoon.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

Seth then walks away, but stays close by. Picks up a tee-shirt on display, still keeps within earshot of Megan and the older couple.

OLDER MAN
I'll take the polo shirt.

Seth is standing in another section of the store, mildly interested in a Breton shirt.

MEGAN (O.S.)
That's a great look on you.

Seth looks up. It's Megan.

SETH
(joking but serious
in tone; holding
shirt up to his
frame)
You think? Because I'm speaking at
a beatnik convention tomorrow
evening, and I don't want anyone
laughing. That's the last thing
they need.

MEGAN
(laughs slightly)
Thanks for helping me out there.

Seth puts the Breton shirt back down on the display shelf.

SETH
Hey, I know how cranky old people
can be - I was raised by two of
them.

(Then)
My name's Seth, by the way.

MEGAN
Megan.

SETH
Hey, I have a couple questions for
you.

MEGAN
Yeah?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

SETH

(pointing upward)

The music that is playing in the store at the moment, is that something that the manager gets to choose, or is it some big corporate decision to pick the songs?

MEGAN

(really doesn't know)

I'm not sure.

SETH

You know what would really be a cool idea? Is if they hired a DJ.

MEGAN

A DJ, huh?

SETH

Sure. They could set up their... equipment over in the corner. They wouldn't really bother anyone, you'd hardly even know he was there.

MEGAN

Except for the thumping house or, worse, garage metal, which will be the aggravation of everyone who works here.

SETH

Well... sure, there's that to consider. ... Hey, you just gave me a great for something: Shed.

MEGAN

Shed?

SETH

Yeah, get it? It's a combination of house... and garage music. Best of both musical worlds. How can you go wrong?

MEGAN

(diplomatic)

Yes, it's very interesting. ... Anyway, I'll run you idea by my manager when I have the time.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (7)

SETH
(off her diplomacy)
I detect a future career in the
State Department for you.

Megan is about to speak, but Eric pops out of the dressing room. He's obviously wearing women's jeans, and not just women's jeans, but "mom jeans". Seth and Megan both realize this, but play like they don't notice.

ERIC
(to Seth; re: pants)
Well?

SETH
(jocular)
I think you've found your new
look.

Eric doesn't pick up on the sarcasm, smiles with satisfaction.

Then Eric goes back into the dressing, presumably to change back into his old clothes. Once Eric is out of earshot, Seth gets to the point with Megan.

MEGAN
So... what was the other question?

SETH
Could I get your phone number?

EXT. SUBWAY STATION - EVENING RUSH HOUR

Seth, dressed for a date, exits from the station. There is a lot of foot traffic along the streets at this time.

Seth casually walks among the crowd. He stops and seems to notice something off camera in front of him.

Seth' P.O.V.

It's Sean Head, and he's walking towards Seth, though Sean doesn't seem to notice.

BACK TO SCENE

Seth calmly turns around so that he's now walking in the opposite direction. He moves quicker with the foot traffic. He turns around, but slowly, in case Sean Head notices.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

When Seth assumes he's far ahead enough, he stops in front of a BEGGAR, soliciting money from passers-by.

BEGGAR
(at anyone who's
listening)
May I borrow twenty-two thousand
dollars?

Passers-by ignore his request.

BEGGAR (CONT'D)
Oh, okay. How about just one
dollar then?

Seth comes into frame and walks up to the homeless man.

SETH
Excuse me? Can you tell me if you
see a bald man, around mid
twenties, wearing a brown blazer
and glasses, walking in this
direction? He's going to want to
talk to me, and I really don't
have the time.

The homeless man peers over Seth's shoulder. We see Sean, the person Seth is describing.

BEGGAR
He's about twenty feet away.

SETH
Thank you.

Seth begins to move away from the area. But the Beggar seems to find this...uncivilized.

BEGGAR
How about you help a brother out,
huh? After all, I did help you.

Seth reaches into his pant pockets, comes up empty.

SETH
(sincere)
I don't have any change.

BEGGAR
I take paper, too.

Seth looks at his watch.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SETH

Listen, I'd love to help you out, but I'm pretty sure I don't have any cash on me, and besides, I'm meeting a girl and I'm sort of running late.

BEGGAR

Come on, man. The least you could do is humor me and look in your wallet.

Seth sighs, then pulls out a wallet from his jacket. He opens the wallet and looks inside, and again sighs.

SETH

I only have a ten.

BEGGAR

Fine with me.

SETH

Seems a bit high...

BEGGAR

(getting an attitude)
Oh, I get it. When you need a favor from me, you're all willing to receive help. But when I need a favor...

(then; re: ten)
Shit, man, I could have asked for at least half that amount in the time I've wasted talking to you.

SETH

(negotiating)
Maybe you can give me change. Say...Seven bucks? That's still a decent amount of money for you: Three dollars.

BEGGAR

(can't believe it)
Give you back some change? Mother fucker, do I look like a bank teller?

(Peers over shoulder)
Oh, you better hurry. Your friend is coming closer. ... Hmm. Maybe I'll whistle to get his attention.

The Beggar begins to whistle softly.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Seth, unwillingly, hands him the ten.

SETH

Don't spend it all in one place.

BEGGAR

Hey, man, this is good Karma for you.

Seth nods, then begins to walk away.

EXT. CAFE. EVENING.

Seth paces around frantically. Looks at his watch. He seems to be under the impression that he's been stood up, or maybe he was late and his date left already.

Then Megan walks into scene in a rush from across the street. She's wearing trendy, shabby and elegant all at once - sandals, jeans, camisole, blazer, black plastic rim eye glasses and a messenger bag type thing ensemble.

MEGAN

Seth.

Seth casually turns to face Megan.

SETH

(excited; calm)
Oh, hi.

They hug.

MEGAN

God, I'm so sorry I'm late. I had a hell of a time on the subway. There was some nut who jumped onto the tracks near Government Center - The police showed up and everything. It was a pretty dramatic scene.

SETH

(no big deal)
Don't worry about it. In fact, I barely got here myself. ... And as long you're okay.

He opens the front door for her. They go inside.

MEGAN

(re: opened door)
Thank you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She goes inside first, Seth is still outside, where we still see him when Megan asks the following:

MEGAN (CONT'D)

(confused)

So, why were you late? I thought you lived only a few blocks from here?

A look of struggle appears on Seth' face, not knowing how to answer the question.

INT. CAFE. EVENING.

Seth and Megan sit at a table.

SETH

So you've been here before?

MEGAN

Yes, but this is my first time dining here. ... My band - I play in a jazz band - we've played here a few times. It's been a while, though.

Megan takes a sip from her drink.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

I've thought about quitting and going solo - I play the tenor saxophone. It's a stupid reason, really. The drummer and the bass player are having a disagreement over where they should be positioned on stage. But I think it has more to do with the fact that they're former lovers.

SETH

Is that something you want to do after graduation, become a professional musician?

MEGAN

Well I certainly don't want to work at the Gap for the rest of my life. ... But, yes. Actually, Wesleyan University has this awesome ethnomusicology program. I might apply there for graduate school.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MEGAN (CONT'D)

At the moment I'm majoring in creative writing at B.U., And I've had a few short stories published in some literary journals, and I've also attended some writing workshops. So that could also lead to something. ... Then again, Law school's a possibility. ... What about you?

SETH

(jocular)

Not so gung-ho about law school.

MEGAN

I'm serious.

SETH

(serious)

I graduated from Northeastern a year ago with a degree in computer science, and right now I'm currently working as a programmer for a company that sells medical supplies. But I'm just not happy with the daily grind. It pays well, but, I get so bored easily.

MEGAN

What would you prefer to do?

SETH

(terse)

Comedy.

MEGAN

Comedy?

SETH

Yeah, stand-up. I'm also the MC for open mike night at a one of the local comedy clubs. The pay's lousy, but at least my attention is being grabbed.

MEGAN

So, what do you like most about doing... stand-up?

SETH

(terse)

The free drinks - if only for economical reasons.

Megan laughs, out of the fact that he might be joking.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SETH (CONT'D)

No, I'm serious. Have you seen what a beer costs these days? ... Oh, sure, the media talk about how oil prices are rising, but where, I ask you, is the exposé on Anheuser-Busch and Coors? ... I'm waiting for the congressional enquiry into the price-gouging of the brewing industry. I hope to watch it in its entirety on C-SPAN.

A short beat.

MEGAN

Hey, this place is getting kind of loud. Want to go somewhere else?

SETH

Yeah, sure.

EXT. PARK. LATER.

Seth and Megan walk in a heavily populated city park, even at this hour. Each as an ice cream cone.

SETH

What are some of the short stories you've written about?

MEGAN

Mostly about my childhood.

SETH

Where did you grow up? Your accent has a sort of southern twang to it. ... I'm from San Diego originally, though some people say I sound like a Midwesterner. ... Go figure.

Seth gives a look, as if he's thinking "God, what is going on with my mouth?" Mouths to himself, "Go Figure?".

MEGAN

I don't hear the Midwest accent. ... I was raised for the most part on the campus of Princeton University, My dad is professor of macroeconomics at the business school. But the location is almost irrelevant, mind you. ...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MEGAN (CONT'D)

My stories are about my family, and we moved around a lot when I was younger - Like, I spent two years in Aberdeen, Scotland. After that, we lived in Chile for two years. And I graduated from a high school in Montreal because my dad taught a semester at McGill.

SETH

Did it bother you? Having to move around so much?

MEGAN

I learned to adjust, which had been sort of theme in my life. ... My last short story is about the night my parents decided to get a divorce. There was so much arguing and fighting. I was eight years old at the time, and it happened on Halloween night.

SETH

(not thinking about it)

That must have been scary.

Seth realizes he's said an unintentional pun.

SETH (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, I didn't mean-

MEGAN

(smiles)

No, it's okay. In fact I wrote the story with the intention readers will find humor. It can't be all dark - and I'm definitely not a morose person.

SETH

So how do you market such a story? I mean, it seems that unless there's like a lawyer or dinosaur involved, people just aren't reading fiction. Do you find that to be true?

Megan thinks about how to answer this.

MEGAN

I bought a pack of gum the other day - I don't know if you've seen it around.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MEGAN (CONT'D)

It's a kind of this Trident gum that comes in a bubble pack. On the left side of the gum it says, 'sweet' and on the right it says, 'sour.' It's actually quite good. ... Anyway, I flipped the packaging over and on the back it said something like 'Now you have the opportunity to make a taste that's all your own,' but, if you really think about it, that is not true. It's just giving you instructions on how to combine these two halves of a flavor. In other words, there's no possibility to use your imagination. ... It's one of the problems in our consumer-driven society. But on the bright side, it's the reason why people still like to read fiction, because there is this yearning in the heart for that kind of freedom and collaboration with another mind.

Seth thinks about this, briefly.

SETH

I have breath problem, don't I?

Megan begins to laugh.

EXT. CITY STREET. NIGHT.

Seth and Megan are walking. It's late, and the date is winding down to its conclusion.

They pass by a female street vendor selling flowers.

VENDOR

Buy a flower for the girl?

Seth nods, and does. He gives the vendor some money and takes a rose, completing the transaction. The vendor seems irritated about something.

MEGAN

(to Seth)

Thank you.

Megan seems to want to say something about the flower, but this is so subtle that Seth doesn't pick up on it. The vendor does, however.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VENDOR
 (to Seth; passive
 aggressive)
 Are you sure you want to give her
 those ones?

Vendor points to some tulips. Seth is taken aback.

SETH
 (joking)
 What are you, my mom?

Vendor shrugs.

Seth and Megan move along.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING. NIGHT.

Seth and Megan stand in front of her apartment building.
 She was in the middle of a conversation.

MEGAN
 And that's how I got involved with
 the local chapter of the Big
 Sister's Club of Greater Boston.

Seth nods.

Megan and Seth stop walking. She looks up.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
 Here's my building.

Seth nods.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
 It's not much, and I have two
 roommates, but, you know, it's...

SETH
 Nice. It's really nice.

MEGAN
 That's funny. The little girl, the
 one I volunteer with from the Big
 Sister's Club, she said the same
 thing when she saw this place for
 the first time. Just like that,
 really nice.

SETH
 You're really passionate about
 that organization, aren't you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MEGAN

You just want to help them all, especially the younger ones - she has a three-year-old brother. Her mom is barely home, she has to work three jobs, and the children are raised by their grandmother who really isn't the best caretaker.

SETH

What about the father?

MEGAN

He took off shortly after the younger one was born.

Seth nods.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

Yeah, it's a bad situation they're in. ... And the role models these kids have - drug dealers, pimps, prostitutes.

Seth nods his Head. There's a short beat. He's thinking about something.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

So who are your role models?

SETH

Me?

MEGAN

(with interest)

Yeah.

SETH

Honestly, I thought only African-Americans had role models these days.

Megan is taken aback by this response. She obviously finds it racist, sexist and just overall insulting. She takes it hard, because we can tell that she was really interested in Seth.

MEGAN

(obviously bothered)

Excuse me?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SETH

Well, you only ever hear about the need for black and female role models, you never hear that white, college-educated men have them.

MEGAN

(furious; terse)
I hope you're joking.
(Then)
You have more than anyone.

Megan crosses her arms, still angry.

SETH

(puzzled)
Really? Like who?

MEGAN

The President, members of congress, captains of industry-

SETH

Whoa, they're not my role models. I couldn't possibly run a Fortune 500 company, and I definitely don't want to be anything like the President.

MEGAN

My point is, it shows what's possible for someone like you.

SETH

No, it shows that it's possible to be an asshole.

A brief beat.

MEGAN

Well, everyone has heroes, Seth.

SETH

Well, you see, therein lies the confusion. Heroes and role models aren't the same. ... My two heroes growing up were Magic Johnson and Steve Martin. But somehow I couldn't fulfill my dream as the first professional basketball player running around the court with a fake arrow through my Head.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

MEGAN

(point taken)

Okay, but-

SETH

(serious)

Role models are just something you want other people to have, if you don't like how they behave. It's just another form of segregation, really. I mean, do you need a role model, do you want someone to make you an example?

MEGAN

(thawing)

Uh, no... but-

SETH

Exactly. Minority youth doesn't need role models, it needs fair economic opportunities. ... Why do some white people think that it's possible to become President? Because it is. Why don't I? Because it isn't. You won't get your role models until you have equal opportunities, and by then you won't need them. ... Moreover-

MEGAN

But-

SETH

Moreover... the whites who present themselves as role models are totally useless. Do you want some God-fearing, family-centered politician who can't even perform a basic task like visiting a male prostitute without making a mess of it as your role model? I don't know anyone who actually lives in a "family" these days, other than a few suburban backwater freaks, and they can't have any idea how the majority of the world live their lives. ... And these are the same people that tell us that marijuana is bad, but cigarettes and alcohol are good; that murder and abortion is wrong, but killing innocent women and children during war is justifiable;

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

SETH (CONT'D)

that the jury is still out on Global Warming meanwhile the polar ice caps are melting at alarming rates and our major cities are so polluted with smog that they look like as if a nuclear bomb went off; that rampant tests in public schools serves an educational purpose, but God forbid that we actually allow our teachers to teach; That-

MEGAN

(heard enough;
demanding)

Alright.

(Then)

But what are you going to do about it?

SETH

(confused)

Do? Well, I'm not going to do anything. ... That's what the damn politicians are for.

Megan then slowly moves closer toward. She looks as if she's going to slap him. She gets within two inches of him, keeping a straight face.

MEGAN

You know what, Seth? ... You really should have listened to that woman back there. ... Because, for future reference, I like tulips.

Seth seems hurt, maybe a little confused, as if he knows he went too far with his diatribe.

But then she smiles and kisses him on the lips.

INT. APARTMENT. EVENING.

Seth in the kitchen, preparing a bowl of cold cereal to eat. Then he moves on to the living room with the bowl.

Seth sits on the sofa, eating a bowl of cereal. He's watching television, the screen is facing away from us. The sounds from the television suggest that he is watching a cartoon.

Seth laughs mildly.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Eric enters the apartment, wearing business suit, tie - professional work clothes. He notices the television screen, becomes irritated.

ERIC
(re: showing on
television)
What is this? ... You're watching
cartoons?

SETH
It's Spongebob Squarepants.

ERIC
Come on, turn this shit off. I
want to watch the evening news.

SETH
Fine, go ahead.

Seth gets up from the sofa. Eric grabs the television remote, presses some buttons, obviously switching the channel to his liking.

Seth walks into the kitchen area.

SETH (CONT'D)
I need to call Megan, anyway.

Seth removes the cordless phone from its base.

ERIC
(worried)
Wait a minute. ... Hold on.

Seth is confused. Eric joins Seth in the kitchen area.

ERIC (CONT'D)
You can't call her yet.

SETH
Why not? It's been two days since
our first date.

ERIC
Do you have your talking points
set out?

SETH
(idea is absurd)
Talking points?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ERIC

(can't believe it)

Oh, my God.

(Then)

You do know about talking points,
don't you?

SETH

Yes, I know what talking points
are. I'm just confused as to why I
need them at the moment.

ERIC

Talking to a girl - it's all about
obtuse communication, Seth.

(Then)

Okay, the date was fine, right?

SETH

Better than fine. In fact, that's
exactly what I intend to tell her.
... Now, if you'll excuse me.

Seth picks up the phone. Eric immediately takes the phone
from Seth and places it back on the base.

Seth is taken aback, stares at Eric in disbelief.

ERIC

(like a cantankerous
gym teacher)

You never tell a girl that you had
a great time on a first date. ...
Think about it: If she thinks the
date went well, then all of a
sudden she's going to get the
impression that you really like
her.

SETH

But I do like her - a lot.

ERIC

Yes, yes, but you can't tell her
any of that yet.

Seth seems confused again. Eric clarifies.

ERIC (CONT'D)

Don't you understand? If that
happens then she's going to get
high hopes.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

ERIC (CONT'D)

She tell all her friends, her family, coworkers - and the next thing you know she'll be making plans for marriage. No, no, - it's all happening too soon. ... So what you want to do instead is develop some sort of talking points that tip-toe around all that, yet you do it in a way that still says you are interested in a second date.

Seth stares in disbelief, again.

SETH

Have you ever considered a career in relationship therapy?

ERIC

Fine, make a joke, don't adhere to my advice. Tell her you thought the date was fine. In fact, why don't you just go ahead and propose to her now - get it over with.

SETH

Listen, Eric. ... I know this is hard to believe, especially because she and I have only been out once, but there's a chance that one day I will marry this woman. I'm not saying it will definitely happen, but you never know. And, from what little I do know about Megan, I'm fine with that prospect.

Eric now seems confused, engages in a protracting Head scratching session, like a lower order of primate trying to figure out what a predator is saying.

ERIC

Oh. ... You mean you're into that sort of thing?

Seth just shakes his Head at his friend, removes the phone from its base.

EXT. MOVIE THEATRE. NIGHT.

Seth and Megan have just exited the cinema. They are discussing a movie they have just watched.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

[Note: People will assume the movie they are talking about is Star Wars Episode Three: The Phantom Menace.]
They will continue their walk along busy city streets.

SETH

Oh, that was an awesome film. And that lengthened light saber battle between Qui-Gon and Darth Maul was exciting and tragic. ... How could you not like the film?

MEGAN

My contempt stems from the mishandling of the characters, rather than the plot.

SETH

What do you mean? Did you think the characters were underdeveloped?

MEGAN

Well, not only that, but they were blatant caricatures of ethnic and cultural stereotypes. ... I mean, there's this bug-eyed, long-eared big-handed alien who clumsily jive walks and talks in a partially intelligible stereotypical African-American slave fashion. It was disgusting to watch. The mechanics during the race scene were loud all spoke with an exaggerated drunkard Mexican accent. And then there was the greedy, big-nosed cantina owner who talked with a New York Jewish accent. I mean, why stop there? Surely they could have included some little group of scalping aliens based on Native Americans. ... Anyway, all of it made me just a little too uncomfortable.

Seth thinks about this.

SETH

(obviously defensive)
Yeah, but, what about the special effects?

Megan laughs to herself.

SETH (CONT'D)

What?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MEGAN

Oh... you just remind me of this
guy I dated a couple years ago:
David Dorn.

SETH

David Dorn. Sounds like he should
be selling Volvos and Saabs to the
Berkshires crowd.

(PA system effect)

David Dorn, please report to the
showroom. David Dorn, please
report to the showroom... Your
mother is here with your lunch
box.

MEGAN

No, he was too much of an
introvert to be in a profession
where he had to deal with a lot of
different people on a daily basis.
... He played the bass guitar for
a funk jazz ensemble. He was
really cute, and talented, too. He
earned a full scholarship to
attend Berklee College of Music.

SETH

So, why did you dump him?

MEGAN

He suffered from *l'esprit de
l'escalier*.

SETH

Pardon moi?

MEGAN

It's a French term that literally
means "staircase wit." He could
never think of a comeback in time
after someone had cracked a joke
about him.

SETH

And that's grounds for dumping?

MEGAN

It drove me nuts.

Seth thinks about something.

SETH

So, how do I remind you of him?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ERIC (CONT'D)

...Right, right, Mr. Grayson. You want to really diversify that portfolio before it's, uh, too late. This Internet boom can't last forever, you know... Sure. Okay. ... You too. And thank you for calling. ... Bye, now.

Eric hangs up the telephone. Looks at Seth, who is standing there unaware of what just went down.

ERIC (CONT'D)

(re: phone call)

Old man Grayson. The guy's ninety-four years old, and he's always calling me because he's lonely. The poor bastard.

SETH

Maybe you should introduce him to some of those 976 numbers you've been calling.

Eric seems taken aback.

SETH (CONT'D)

(not amused)

Come on, get your coat.

INT. BAR. NIGHT.

It's packed. Typical student pub. Seth, Megan, Eric, and three of Megan's friends, IRENE, STEVE, and NEVEAH, all sit at a table. There are three different conversations going on.

Seth and NEVEAH

SETH

That's an interesting name: Neveah. ... Is that passed down from an earlier generation?

NEVEAH

No, it's just "Heaven" spelled backwards. My father's a pastor for one of the largest Born-Again Christian Megachurches on the west coast.

Seth nods. Then Neveah briefly shows off a small bag of heroin which she pulled from her expensive hand bag.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NEVEAH (CONT'D)

Excuse me.

Neveah then leaves the table, we assume to go to the restroom. Seth is taken aback, doesn't like the situation.

MEGAN AND STEVE

Steve is depressed. Megan could care less, but pretends too.

STEVE

Brenda hasn't called in three months. ... Do you think I should just let her go and move on with my life?

MEGAN

(sarcastic)
Hmm, I don't know, seems silly to think that she's just blown you off completely.

ERIC AND IRENE

Eric examines the labels on two specific brands of bottle of beer. He seems confused, and depressed. Irene picks up on this.

IRENE

(sincere)
What's the matter?

ERIC

Oh, this entire bottle of Corona contains 350 calories, eight grams of fat, and three grams of sugar. ... Meanwhile, the Guinness contains 345 calories, four grams of fat, and one gram of sugar.

IRENE

Oh, I know exactly how you feel. ... I'm a recovering bulimic, haven't done it in more than a year. Now I'm always scrutinizing those labels. ... Oh, but the bad news is that since I stopped, you know, I've gained two dress sizes, which hasn't really helped my self-esteem.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Eric thinks about this.

ERIC

Well... you could always go back
to the bulimia.

Eric smiles, because he thinks he said something really
clever. Irene finds this so insensitive she can't believe
it.

INT. JAZZ CAFE. NIGHT.

Megan and her band play a set on stage.

EXT. CITY STREET. LATER.

Seth and Megan are walking. The mood is that they are
starting to fall in love with each other.

MEGAN

I'm just upset at how I played
this evening.

SETH

No, no, I thought you were great.
I loved listening to you play.

MEGAN

What did you think of my band
mates?

Seth does a "eh, not-so-much" move with his hand.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

Oh, and I'm at a disadvantage when
I play.

SETH

How so?

MEGAN

I was born with a physical
deformity. ... Look at my pinky?

Megan holds up one hand for Seth to look at.

SETH

Yeah... so? What's wrong with it?
It's a beautiful hand.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MEGAN

True. But it's smaller than most people's. Take a closer look.

Seth does, then we get the sense that he notices.

SETH

Oh, yeah. ... The joint sort of begins lower. It's hardly noticeable.

MEGAN

Albeit, it makes it really difficult to play for long periods of time. ... It's my mom's fault. I think she took some hard drugs while I was in utero.

SETH

Your mom was a drug addict?

MEGAN

I don't know. ... But they were hippies - or at least my mom was. And I do know that my parents grew pot in their backyard when I was about three or four. ... But I guess a lot parents did something like that.

Megan reaches for a scar just above her left eye brow.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

(re: scar)

Oh, and look at this scar.

Seth does.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

I fell off a coffee table and landed near a pair of scissors. I could have ripped my eye out. ... I was three years old, and my parents weren't paying attention to me. Arguing, most likely.

SETH

(re: the scar)

It's barely noticeable.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MEGAN

Are you kidding!? You wouldn't believe how many times I've had to convince people that I'm not an angry person because the way the scar slopes up.

SETH

Oh, yeah. I see it now. ... You know, there was this guy in my office who used to have the same sort of problem, and like you he had a hell of a time convincing people that he's not an angry guy.

MEGAN

So what did he do about it?

SETH

I bought him a happy face mask with the eyes cut out and convinced him to wear it around the office.

MEGAN

Did it work?

SETH

He's now a senior vice president of public relations.

She leans in closer to Seth as they walk. He puts his arm around her shoulder.

MONTAGE OF Seth AND MEGAN HANGING OUT TOGETHER:

-- At a Starbucks. Seth wants to order a latte, which is significantly more expensive than a regular coffee, but Megan stops him. Next we see Megan taking a regular cup of coffee over to the condiment bar and pours some of the coffee out and then adds milk from a container, a makeshift latte. Seth seems impressed by her innovation.

-- Inside a subway station. Megan is about to drop a token into the turnstile, but Seth stops her. He produces a subway pass card. She seems confused. He then gives her his card, she takes it, enters through. He then kindly asks for it back, but instead she gives him a look and drops a token into the turnstile. Seth almost seems hurt by her action, but then she points to a sign that reads "This Station is Under 24 Hour Video Surveillance." Seth then smiles at Megan, thanking her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

-- Walking through the Public Garden, talking. Each has a pretzel. A part of Seth's pretzel falls to the ground. Megan seems to feel bad for Seth. But he shrugs it off, no big deal. Then he takes the fallen piece of pretzel and attempts to give it to some ducks, but they won't take it. Seth finds this disturbing and embarrassing. He then nearly chases the ducks. Megan doesn't seem impressed by this. Finally, Seth gives up. Doesn't understand why they won't take the pretzel. They then walk away, as they are doing this Megan takes the pretzel piece and throws it high into the air behind them. Moments later the pretzel piece falls to ground, along with a duck. Seth and Megan none the wiser.

-- Seth and Megan jogging. Megan is in much better shape. Seth gets left behind. Next, we see Megan on Rollerblades, trying to catch up to someone. Up ahead of her is Seth, on a Vespa, encouraging her to hurry up.

-- At the public library. They walk around. They stop once they notice a group of children seated around a librarian staffer reading a story. Megan and Seth comment on how cute that is. Then Megan notices something off camera, it's a boy who seems shy and is off to himself further away from the group. Megan points him out to Seth. Seth takes the initiative and approaches the boy, asks him what's wrong. The boy points out that he's wet his pants. So Seth gets an idea. Next we see Seth over at a drinking fountain, dousing water on his pants to make it look like he's wet his pants. He turns around, only to see a security guard. The guard then escorts him out of the library.

-- Right outside the Out of Town newsstand in Harvard Square. Seth is reading a comic book while Megan reads *Harper's*. All of a sudden a STREET PERFORMER walks by, and he switches their reading materials, handing Seth Megan's, and vice-versa. Once the street performer is gone, Megan laughs, while Seth is taken aback.

-- Megan and her band practise. Suddenly they stop playing, look to the side. We see Seth pounding on a set of drums, in his own world. He notices them looking at him. He says he's sorry.

-- Seth delivering a joke at a comedy club. He hits the punch line, then he looks over to his side, and we see Megan in the drums, a scene reminiscent of an old-time comedy bit.

-- Megan is using a computer in a lab, typing frantically fast. On the screen we see an AOL-type Instant Message pop-up. It reads: SethCobian: Miss You. She sighs.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

Then she looks over to the next terminal, where Seth is sitting. She types a reply. His screen as an IM pop-up. It reads: MeganNoa: Loser!

INT. BEDROOM. NIGHT.

Seth and Megan lie in bed. It's very late, or very early. They are talking. We are to assume that they have just had sex.

SETH
(in a sort of
reverie)
I had this amazing dream about you
the other night.

MEGAN
(pique interest)
Oh, was it an erotic one?

SETH
No, more pornographic. I think the
erotism might arrive once I get to
know you for more than five
months. Unfortunately for the time
being I regard you exclusively as
a sex object. On an unconscious
level, though; my higher brain
values you and respects you as a
fascinating, multidimensional
human being.

MEGAN
I know what you mean. It so
happens that I've been trying to
reduce you to a sex object, but
it's not going very well.

He turns to face her.

SETH
Am I too fat?

MEGAN
You're not fat.

SETH
I've put on some weight since I
entered college.

MEGAN
Irregardless, you're not fat.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SETH

No?

MEGAN

Far from it.

SETH

Okay... so I'm too skinny?

Megan thinks about this, then:

MEGAN

No, you were right, it's because you're too fat.

Seth looks hurt, isn't sure if she's joking or not.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

(aside)

Hmmm. It's kind of a general, unspecific ugliness, isn't it?

SETH

Huh?

MEGAN

Being fat. You just look at them and say, "Oh, you're fat, I don't want to speak to you" and quickly look away, without seeing if they might be ugly in other ways too. ... If you, say, got back down to this supposed pre-college weight of yours, I might realize I'm dating a real tool.

SETH

(sarcastic)

I never thought about that. I'd always seen fat and ugly as interdependent, sides of the same coin, but now I see that they can exist simultaneously but independently in the same human being. Thank you, you've broaden my mind.

MEGAN

No problema. Anyway, it's like this older boy at my high school who used to have a crush on me during my sophomore year.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MEGAN (CONT'D)

He was about five-foot-three and weighed around three hundred twenty pounds, and had all these self-esteem issues. I didn't want to pin his self-loathing on his weight; he had a whole host of other shortcomings. He'd been ugly at half that weight.

SETH

When did you realize this?

MEGAN

He was stalking me. A few times he got bold enough to climb the tree outside my bedroom window. When my dad found out, he talked it over with his parents and then they persuaded me to come in on his therapy sessions, because they were, like, afraid the tree wasn't going to support his weight.

SETH

Wasn't that dangerous?

MEGAN

It was by the time my friends and I weakened the tree with my dad's saw.

SETH

I meant, going to the therapy sessions.

MEGAN

If anything I found it interesting. It was part of a liberal psychoanalytic program they had at Rutgers University. It was called 'Victims have responsibilities too.' Or some crap like that.

SETH

Are you serious?

MEGAN

Uh-huh. The director of the program told me and my father that if I had the right not to be stalked I also had a responsibility to my potential assailant. ... I eventually got kicked out of the program, though.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

MEGAN (CONT'D)

They said I didn't deserve a stalker if I wasn't going to take it seriously.

SETH

Well, you could have been hurt.

MEGAN

No, not when they're that fat. In fact, you can have fun with it. Like, you can run up to them and yell, 'Chase me!'

SETH

So what eventually happened to this boy?

MEGAN

He fell out of the tree and died when one of the branches broke.

SETH

No, I'm serious.

MEGAN

(serious)

He fell out of the tree and died when one of the branches broke.

SETH

Oh. ... But didn't you and your friends get into trouble?

MEGAN

Surprisingly the local police department don't bother to call in the finest forensics minds when a intoxicated, three hundred twenty-pound seventeen-year-old snaps a branch climbing a tree.

SETH

But you guys weakened the branch.

MEGAN

No, I checked. It wasn't one of the branches we had sawed. ... Isn't it ironic, don't you think?

(Then)

Taught him to mess with me.

She then gives a disturbing, evil laugh. Seth also laughs, but only out of fear.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

Then Megan gets up from the bed, wrapping herself in a blanket. She walks over to a small bookcase nearby the bed. She removes a book from the shelf, examines it briefly like an old football player might look at the Jersey he wore when he lifted the Lombardi Trophy.

SETH

What have you got there?

Then she returns to the bed with the book.

MEGAN

This book changed my life.

Megan then hands Seth the book. All of a sudden he seems confused.

Close on - book. It's actually titled "This Book Will Change Your Life".

SETH

(off the title)

Is this a joke?

MEGAN

Yeah.

SETH

(impressed)

Very good.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT. DAY.

Seth and Eric are playing a basketball game. One on one.

ERIC

Are you nervous about going over to her mentor's house for dinner?

SETH

Why would I be nervous? If anything I should be relieved. You would think that after dating Megan for a year that I would have met her earlier.

ERIC

I mean, you told me this woman has been like a mother to her, so in essence, it's like your meeting your intended-to-be mother in law.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SETH

She's not much older than us.
She's only thirty-five. Heck I
have a cousin who's nearly forty.

ERIC

Oh, did I tell you? I'm dating a
woman who's forty-one.

SETH

No.

ERIC

Oh, it's great. We met at a work
seminar at the Ritzy.

SETH

And she doesn't mind the seventeen-
year age difference?

ERIC

I don't know; She's under the
impression I'm thirty-six.

SETH

And she came to that conclusion...
how?

ERIC

I might have mentioned it.

SETH

Am I missing something here? Why
not just tell them your real age?

ERIC

Because, whenever I tell women
that I'm twenty-five, they take
less than one look at me and run
away. And when I say they run
away, I actually mean they're off
to the races. ... But if I tell
them, you know, that I'm thirty-
five, they notice a youthful
appearance, the healthy hue, and
so then I look pretty damn good
for my age.

SETH

What happened with, uh, Allison,
the girl at the Starbucks? I
thought you were going to ask her
out. She really likes you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ERIC
I did ask her out.

SETH
And?

ERIC
I was so nervous that I suggested
we go out for... coffee. I don't
know, I was going for something
unassuming.

SETH
Oh, that's fine. ... I mean, it's
not like you suggested...
Starbucks, right?

Eric gives him a guilty look. Seth read it.

INT. SETH' APARTMENT. EVENING.

Seth is standing in front of full-length mirror,
examining his outfit. He's wearing a really ugly sweater.

SETH
(making a face; to
himself)
God, this is the ugliest sweater
I've ever worn.

There's a knock on the door.

SETH (CONT'D)
(off knock)
One second.

Seth picks up a bottle of cologne from a nearby table.
Sprays some on. Then he goes for the door and opens it to
reveal Megan.

SETH (CONT'D)
Hey. ... Oh, by the way, this
sweater you got for my birthday
looks great.

MEGAN
(agrees)
Yeah, doesn't it?
(Then)
Shall we go?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SETH

Yeah, I just need to get my jacket.

EXT. CITY STREET. NIGHT.

Seth and Megan walking.

SETH

So, what has she written?

MEGAN

Ten books of poetry.

SETH

Wow. Who published them?

MEGAN

She's self-published.

SETH

(confused)

Self-published? And she teaches creative writing at the university level?

MEGAN

So? ... She's very good. The fact that mainstream publishing doesn't understand her has no weight on her.

SETH

But still...

INT. CARRIAGE CAR, SUBWAY. LATER.

Seth and Megan sit side-by-side, cold toward each other.

MEGAN

(cold)

When's the last time you've even read poetry?

SETH

What does that have to do with anything?

MEGAN

When's the last time?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SETH

Junior year - of high school.

Megan finds that answer hilarious.

MEGAN

Here's some advice: Before you judge someone's ability in a field you know nothing about, try presenting an argument with at least some validation.

SETH

Oh, I have validation. ... There's this guy, he's only ever done stand-up comedy once, yet he hangs around the comedy clubs, spewing out suggestions like he's Richard Pryor or George Carlin. He can't even get a gig because his material is so bad, the comedy club managers fear they'll lose customers.

MEGAN

(so what?)

Care to tell me what you're getting at?

SETH

He sucks.

EXT. CITY STREET. NIGHT.

Seth and Megan are walking in a different part of town. They've just exited from the subway station.

MEGAN

(boasting on someone else's behalf; giving the whole litany of reasons)

Patricia has a Ph.D in English literature from Cornell. She's been a distinguished member of the Boston University faculty since 1990. Her writing has been published in numerous respected publications, she's been honored with many writing prizes, including a Fellowship at the Cambridge.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SETH

Jesus Christ, are you her former student or her publicist?

Then Megan really lets him have it.

MEGAN

You're such a fucking asshole.

EXT. FRONT PORCH, PATRICIA'S HOUSE. LATER.

Seth and Megan walk up the stairs of the front porch.

MEGAN

(bitter)
I say the sooner this evening is over, we should consider our options.

SETH

(bitter)
Oh, gladly.

They reach the front door. Megan rings the doorbell.

SETH (CONT'D)

Although, I think you're overreacting.

MEGAN

Fuck off.

The door opens to reveal PATRICIA. She seems tipsy, and not at all inviting. She gives Seth and Megan a once-over, scowling the entire time.

PATRICIA

(really pissed off)
You people are late. ... And we already ate.

Then Patricia shuts the door on Megan and Seth, and we hear the dead bolt being activated.

Megan and Seth stand in awe of what just happened.

Seth breaks the silence.

SETH

So... I, uh, saw a Chinese take-out a few blocks back that looked open?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MEGAN

Well... I could go for some mooshi chicken.

They walk away from the porch, toward the street.

SETH

Yeah, I really like those pancake things that come with that.

MEGAN

Well... You're going to have to order your own, because I'm not sharing with you.

SETH

Oh, like I would eat yours.

INT. MEGAN'S APARTMENT. NIGHT.

Seth sits at a desk in front of a laptop computer, typing away at the keyboard, deeply focused.

A black cat (MAYA) comes into frame, crosses his path. Following the cat is Megan, holding an empty litter pan.

MEGAN

(calling after cat)

Maya!

SETH

(off cat crossing path; typing)

You know, if I were a superstitious person, I'd say I'm doomed. But I have to say I actually feel pretty lucky at the moment.

MEGAN

Oh, don't worry, next week you can clean out the litter box if you'd like. At that time please feel free to let me know if you still feel so fortunate.

SETH

Cute.

(Aside)

Do you have a moment? I'd like you to hear some new material I've written?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Megan continues to look for the cat.

MEGAN

Go for it.

SETH

Keep in mind, this is a rough draft.

MEGAN

Uh-huh.

SETH

(clears throat;
reading off computer
screen)

I've encountered many incompetent people in my life. For instance, just the other day I met up with the Devil. He accosted me on the street. Really, he did. And it was him, I'm pretty sure of it. He had the red suit, the horns, the long tail that pointed at the end, the cloven hoofs, the Van Dyck goatee. Anyway, he told me that he had a proposition: My soul for eternal happiness. All I had to do was some kind of contract. So I said, Okay. But the deal soon came to an abrupt end - neither one of us had a pen.

Seth finishes, laughs a little, then looks to Megan, who's holding the black cat. She doesn't seem to think the joke was all that great.

SETH (CONT'D)

(off her look)

What? Does it suck?

MEGAN

(neither a "yes" nor
a "no")

Maybe have the Devil have a pen, but it runs out of ink. And he like, you know, tries to shake it, hold it upside down, something to make it work.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MEGAN (CONT'D)

But by the time it does, you've already left the area out of boredom - or maybe you've been hit by a bus, so in essence the devil loses out, you know, it could have a nice little moral.

The phone rings. Megan moves to answer the phone. Seth thinks about her idea, and he appears to think that Megan might be right.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

Or you should stick with the impressions for the time being. ... I like that new one you do.

SETH

You mean my Christopher Walken?

MEGAN

(terse)

No, that one does suck.

Megan picks up the receiver. Seth practices some impressions of various celebrities.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

(into phone;
professional)

Hello? ... Oh, hey, Dad.

Seth stops, can't help eavesdrop upon mention of the word "Dad."

MEGAN (CONT'D)

(into phone)

Yeah. That would be great. ... No, we'd love to come. Uh-huh. ... Sure. ... Oh, okay. Yeah, no, take the call. ... Bye.

She hangs up the phone.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

That was my dad. He's hosting a family dinner next Saturday at his house. And we're invited.

SETH

Oh.

MEGAN

What's wrong?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

SETH

I'm a little nervous. You know, meeting your dad and family for the first time. Plus, doesn't he live all the way in New Jersey.

MEGAN

Well, we've been dating for a little more than a year now, I think it's the right time you meet them. And New Jersey's not that far away. We can rent a car, it's a beautiful drive, make a romantic trip out of it.

INT. TRENDY COFFEE SHOP. DAY.

Seth and Eric at a table.

ERIC

Don't do it. Impressing the parents is even more difficult than climbing Everest wearing only a slicker. Or like gaining entrance into the Fraternal Order of the Freemasons.

SETH

Well, I happen to agree with you. Remember that time when I went with Christine Weaver to her house for Thanksgiving dinner and her parents were convinced that I was from the fourth dimension. They kept asking me to show them my time machine.

Seth has just realized something.

SETH (CONT'D)

(aside)
Freemasons?

ERIC

Yeah.
(Then)
Did you know that George Clinton was a Freemason?

SETH

Huh, from the Parliament and Funkadelic?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ERIC

No, from the fourth Vice President of the United States.

SETH

Sounds like you've been doing some homework on the subject.

ERIC

There's a rumor circulating around the office that the new boss is a member. I might join, you know, as to get on his good side.

SETH

I don't know if it's right for you. I mean, no offense, but it's not like joining the Loyal Order of the Water Buffalo. ... It's a highly selective and secretive group, not a keg party.

ERIC

I know that.

SETH

I've heard that they're also sexist. Don't they forbid women from becoming members?

ERIC

(liking the idea)
Huh, maybe I'll actually get some work done. No chance of... distractions.

Seth nods in agreement.

INT. MEGAN'S APARTMENT. NIGHT.

Megan is in the kitchen. Seth enters.

SETH

Hey.

MEGAN

Oh, hi.

(Then)

Listen, I have some bad news.

SETH

What's up?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MEGAN

I couldn't get a rental car for the weekend.

Seth inwardly celebrates the news.

SETH

That's too bad. Because I was really looking forward to meeting your father.

MEGAN

That's so great to hear. Because my dad has agreed to get us Airline tickets and pick us up from the airport.

EXT. ESTABLISHING SHOT OF AN AIRPORT. DAY.

Airplanes landing, airplanes taking off - that sort of scene.

INT. BAGGAGE CLAIM, AIRPORT. DAY.

Seth and Megan grab their luggage from the carousel. One of the people waiting for luggage signals to Seth that he has his suitcase. Seth inspects the suitcase, acknowledges the gaffe, then gives it back.

EXT. PASSENGER PICK-UP, AIRPORT. DAY.

Seth and Megan, both in cold-weather clothing, stand and wait by the curb.

SETH

What kind of car does he drive?

MEGAN

An Audi TT.

SETH

Audi TT? ... Aren't those kind of...

(meaning: small)
aerodynamic?

MEGAN

He was going through mid-life crisis when he bought it. His second wife had just left him.

INT. MEGAN'S FATHER'S CAR. DAY.

Yes, it's a an Audi TT, and, yes, there's very little room leg room inside, especially in the back; this car is a two-door coupe. Megan's father (WILSON) drives. Megan sits in the front passenger seat. Seth is lodged in the back seat, along with the luggage.

WILSON

(stern; strong Cuban accent)

Seth, I apologize to have put the luggage back there with you. ... I have paperwork in the trunk, and it cannot be... disturbed.

SETH

(obviously struggling with the luggage)

Don't worry about it. ... The luggage should keep me, you know, secure in the event of a roll-over.

WILSON

(stern; takes Seth literally, as if Seth thinks Wilson is a bad driver)

What do you mean?

SETH

Oh, uh...

Seth doesn't get to finish. Wilson snorts. This bothers Seth and Megan.

WILSON

(to Megan)

Megan, how are your classes this semester?

MEGAN

Dad, I graduated a year ago. Don't you remember? You attended the ceremony with grandma -

WILSON

(cuts off Megan)

Uh-huh - And...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WILSON (CONT'D)

did you know that your father has been chosen as one of a select group of Cuban exiles to moderate a panel on Life in Cuba after the fall of that Son of a Bitch Fidel Castro, at Stanford University in Palo Alto, California, next month?

MEGAN

That's great, dad.

WILSON

And guess who was not chosen?

MEGAN

Dad, I don't want -

WILSON

Fernando Ferrer. He is the social sciences chair at the University of Central Florida. He thought they would choose him, but... alas, they did not. They realized that he is not the utmost authority on Cuba.

(Venomously)

He is nothing but a communist sympathizer.

(Then in Spanish)

Communista simpatico!

Seth is listening, bored out of his mind, trying to keep the luggage away from him whenever the car turns.

MEGAN

(forced cheerleader)

That's great, dad. Really, congratulations.

WILSON

(boasting; in his own little world)

Yes. ... I am great.

Wilson then snorts again, as if to further emphasize how great he is. Seth is again irritated.

INT. LIVING ROOM, MEGAN'S FATHER'S HOUSE. LATER.

The house is decorated like it belongs in Cuba, before The Revolution and Fidel Castro came into power in 1959. Cuban art, colors, paraphernalia cover the entire house.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

There are also about ten relatives, all are extremely LOUD and stereotypical Cuban Americans. Megan is talking to one of them one-on-one.

Four of the older relatives, all women with a range in ages, talk directly to Seth, as they sit down on a sofa. Seth is weary of any sort of interrogation.

RELATIVE #1
 (about 90 years old;
 cranky)
 Will somebody turn on the air
 conditioning? I'm boiling here.

RELATIVE #2
 Mom, what are you talking about?
 It's close to twenty-two degrees
 outside.

RELATIVE #1
 (cranky; dismissive;
 longing)
 In Havana... it would be sunny and
 warm right now.
 (To Seth; cranky)
 Oye, chico, you're not hot?

SETH
 (uncomfortable)
 Uh, you know, it is, uh, a little
 warm in here, now that you mention
 it.

RELATIVE #1
 (to Seth)
 Who are you?

SETH
 Seth. I'm Megan's boyfriend.

RELATIVE #4
 Who's Megan?

RELATIVE #2
 (re: Megan)
 Your granddaughter, mom.

Seth is trying to make small talk. Looks at the television console setup. Comments on it.

SETH
 That's a nice-looking television
 there, isn't. Man, Megan's father
 must really like television. ...
 (MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SETH (CONT'D)

Do you know if he has a satellite hook-up? I bet he gets HBO on that.

RELATIVE #3

Oh, I love the shows on HBO. I never miss an episode of Arliss.

SETH

Is that right?

RELATIVE #2

She thinks the guy that plays Arliss is attractive.

RELATIVE #3

What? You don't think he's a handsome man?

(To Seth)

My husband, God rests his soul, was a sports agent. He represented all the Cuban ballplayers. ... It's a shame he can't be here with us.

SETH

(sincere)

I'm sorry.

RELATIVE #3

(confused)

For what?

SETH

About your husband. ... When did he pass away?

RELATIVE #3

No, he's in prison. Ten counts of embezzlement.

INT. LIVING ROOM, MEGAN'S FATHER'S HOUSE. LATER.

Seth is now talking to another group of older female relatives. They seem a lot nicer than the previous lot.

RELATIVE #5

So, how long have you and Megan been dating?

Seth seems pleased to be speaking to a nice member of the family.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SETH

Oh, just about fourteen months.

RELATIVE #6

Oh, that's great. That's great.
It's good to see the young people
in love. It seems so rare these
days.

(No clue that this
might be an
inappropriate
question to ask)

And so how often do you both have
sex?

Seth is taken aback.

INT. LIVING ROOM. LATER.

Seth is talking to ROBERTO, 17, Megan's brother. He's tall, muscular, like a football player. They are in a corner, away from everyone else. Roberto is dressed like one of the grandsons of The Teflon Don.

SETH

So, you're Megan's little brother?

ROBERTO

Yeah.

SETH

She tells me that you're leaning
toward attending Yale this fall,
huh?

ROBERTO

Brown.

SETH

Well, either way, it's not too
shabby. ... Do you have a major in
mind? ... And don't worry if you
don't - Personally, I didn't pick
one out until sophomore year.

All of sudden Roberto takes out a knife from his pocket and gets it really close to Seth, in a threatening manner. Seth is taken aback.

[Note: I know the following might seem like a serious and dangerous situation, but it is intended to be funny.]

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROBERTO

(a la Scarface)

Let's get something straight, bro.
If I ever hear that you've hurt my
sister, I'm going to find you and
fuck you up, mad Lucciano style.
... Entiendes?

Seth gulps, nods.

ROBERTO (CONT'D)

Good deal.

Roberto releases Seth from his grip. Now it's like they
were just talking casually.

Seth starts to walk away. Then he comes back.

SETH

Where's the nearest bathroom?

ROBERTO

Down the hall, third door on the
left.

SETH

Thanks.

ROBERTO

Sure.
(then)
Oh, hey.

Seth stops, turns to face Roberto.

ROBERTO (CONT'D)

Make sure you move the handle a
few times in order to flush.

SETH

You mean, like up an down?

ROBERTO

Yeah, you gave to jiggle it a bit.

Seth nods, turns around. Once he's out of earshot.

ROBERTO (CONT'D)

(re: Seth; to self)
What an idiot.

INT. DINING ROOM, MEGAN'S FATHER'S HOUSE. LATER.

All the relatives, young and old, Megan's father, Roberto, Megan and Seth are seated in the dining room. They have all just finished dinner. Seth notices something in the buffet to the side. It's a plate.

SETH

(affable)

That's a very nice plate in the buffet, Mr. Noa.

WILSON

(stern)

It was given to me by my mother right before she died. ... Growing up in Havana, we were poor like the Malecon holds back frightening waves of Mother Earth's liquid... and, so, that was the only plate we had. We took turns eating on it, my mother, sister and I. I would wash it with a dirty towel that my mother brought home from her job as a hotel maid, and it was our only towel. Four times a week we didn't have running water, and when we did, the water was unsafe to drink, so I had to build a fire to boil the water. I was three years old at the time. ... Suffice to say.... that plate, it is priceless.

Seth gulps, then gives a sympathetic look.

RELATIVE #6

Who wants Cuban coffee?

A chorus of "right here". This lightens the mood. The relative gets up from her seat.

SETH

(affable)

So how is Cuban coffee different from American coffee?

RELATIVE #6

Megan, you've never served your boyfriend Cuban coffee.

MEGAN

I've offered.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SETH

But for the sake of assimilating into this family here, I think I'll be a little more forthcoming when someone offers me some. ... Usually I just go to Starbucks for coffee. It's good stuff. Though somewhat addicting, like cocaine - not that I know what cocaine is like. Really, I've never done any sort of drugs in my entire life. ... As a kid, I wouldn't even let my mom give me cough syrup.

The relatives all shoot Seth quizzical looks. Wilson is very stern, looks angry.

MEGAN

(off looks)

What he means is that he'll have some Cuban coffee this evening. ... He was trying to be funny. He's a comedian.

WILSON

(takes offence;
stern; to Seth)

A comedian, eh? ... Well, let me tell you something, Cantinflas. ... Mi tío Elpidio -

(points to ELPIDIO,
84)

He nearly had half a jaw blown off during the Bay of Bigs. There's nothing funny about that, is there?

SETH

(scared; nervous)

Oh, I, uh, tend to stay away from political humor. I do mostly knock-knock jokes.

(Turns to face
Elpidio)

You know, "Knock-Knock." "Who's there?" ... "Joe." "Joe who?" "Joe mo..."

MEGAN

(warning)

Seth!

Seth stops.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

WILSON

I'll be right back.

Megan's father leaves the table, then the room. The rest of the relatives begin to talk to each other. Again they are loud.

SETH

(to Megan, leans in;
terse)

Megan, I'm scared of your father.

MEGAN

He just takes some time getting through to him. But once you do, you'll see a softer side of him. ... Hey, I know: I think it would be a nice gesture if you have your coffee without any creamer, just like my dad does.

SETH

(like a toddler)
What if it's too hot?

But Megan doesn't answer, or she doesn't hear Seth. She's busy speaking with one of the relatives.

INT. DINING ROOM, MEGAN'S FATHER'S HOUSE. STILL LATER.

Same setup as before, but this time everyone has a cup of coffee in front of them. All pour some sort of creamer into their coffees, except for Wilson and Seth. Megan gives Seth a nod of approval.

Wilson takes a sip, as does Seth. Seth winces in pain. Megan shoots a look. Seth, nods, toughens up. But when she turns her Head, Seth blows in the mug.

WILSON

And, now, I'd like to ask tio Elpidio, to say a few words about the atrocious dictatorship of Fidel Castro.

Now Elpidio stands up. He is urged on by the relatives. It is here that we notice he is shaky and has a slight speech problem.

ELPIDIO

(thick Cuban accent;
like a great orator)

In 1941...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ELPIDIO (CONT'D)

as a young student, Fidel Castro was looking for his ideology. Displaying a fascination with power, war and domination since childhood, Fidel Castro discovered fascism and promenaded around campus with a copy of Mein Kampf in his armpit. ... According to many fellow students, "El Loco" mimicked the speeches of Hitler and Mussolini in front of a mirror, practicing their mannerisms hour after hour.

Everyone looks on with great interest. Megan and Seth seem bored. Megan shoots Seth a shrug, and a "apologetic look." We get the sense that she thinks Elpidio is off-color.

ELPIDIO (CONT'D)

When Fidel Castro entered the University of Havana in 1945, he soon joined a gangster-type group and carried a pistol, so he could impose his will...

Seth looks over at Wilson, who is enamored in the diatribe. Seth has never seen or heard anything like it, and as a result, he seems to forget that he's holding a mug of scolding hot coffee, and downs the like water, by accident.

SETH

(stands up; in pain;
voice muddled
because of burnt
tongue; he sounds
like Elpidio)

Ah! I - I need water!

At this point Elpidio assumes Seth is making fun of him. The others - briefly including Megan - think the same. Seth' voice is muddled throughout the rest of scene.

ELPIDIO

(to Seth; feelings
hurt)
What - What are you doing?
(to Wilson)
What is he doing?

SETH

(voice still muddled)
I burned my tongue.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ELPIDIO
(to Seth; angry)
Stop it! You're making fun of me!

MEGAN
(warning)
Seth.

SETH
No, I'm not making fun. I really
did burn my tongue.

ELPIDIO
Why is he still making fun of me.
(in a panic)
Tell him to stop. Tell him to
stop.

WILSON
(to Seth)
Stop this display, right now!

SETH
But my tongue, it really hurts.

ELPIDIO
(to Seth)
You're making fun! Stop it!

WILSON
(to Seth; angry)
You, idiot. Why are you making fun
of mi tio Elpidio?

SETH
No, I'm not making fun of him! I
burned my tongue on the coffee!
... And I'm not an idiot.

Elpidio covers his ears. Can't listen to it anymore.

ELPIDIO
(pleading)
Make him stop! Make him stop!

SETH
No, I'm not making fun! I don't do
stuff like that!

MEGAN
Dad, I think Seth is really in
pain.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

SETH

I am! I am!

ELPIDIO

(sobbing)

Make him stop. Make him stop. He's making fun. He's making fun.

WILSON

I'm warning you!

SETH

But my tongue. My tongue.

Suddenly, Elpidio can't take it anymore and rushes Seth, who then gets pushed back into the buffet. This action causes the buffet to sway from the side to side. The plate is becoming loose.

MEGAN

(re: buffet movement)

Seth, the plate!

Seth reaches out for the plate, but it's too late. It crashes to the tile floor. Everyone is in shock.

The room falls quiet, everyone in shock.

Finally, one of the older male relatives breaks the silence.

MALE RELATIVE 1

(to Wilson)

I told you the tile was a bad idea.

(to Roberto)

I told your father, Who puts tile... in the dining room?

EXT. CITY STREET. DAY.

Warmer weather now. Seth and Eric, who's wearing all black - black button-down shirt, black trousers, black tie, black sunglasses, and a pair of checkered Vans shoes - walk and talk along a bustling urban street.

ERIC

Did I tell you, I've been... caught?

SETH

(confused)

Caught? ... Caught doing what?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ERIC

On my resume, I lied about one of the companies I had supposedly worked for. ... And last week someone in human resources did a little background check...

SETH

So they told your supervisor?

ERIC

(hiding something)
Uh... no.

SETH

No?

ERIC

Here's the thing: This guy at human resources, he wants me to... date his sister.

SETH

(to the point)
So, you're being blackmailed?

ERIC

(thinks about it)
Is it really politically correct to use that term these days?

SETH

I'm not sure.
(then)
What do you prefer?

ERIC

(thinking)
Extortion seems a little more easy-going.

SETH

Extortion??? ... I'm not sure I like that.

ERIC

Anyway, I told him I'd do it.

SETH

Really? ... Don't you find that sort of thing... forced?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ERIC

(pretty upbeat)

Actually, I'm not that disturbed about it. I don't really have many prospects going on.

SETH

So, what does this woman look like?

ERIC

No clue.

SETH

Should be great.

ERIC

Imagine if we hit it off, that would be quite the story to tell the grandchildren, wouldn't it?

SETH

You've already envisioned children with her, huh?

ERIC

Oh, yeah, three of them.

SETH

Let me ask you something, when you envision your children, are they sitting by a lake filled with ducks, playing with wooden boats and dolls?

ERIC

Yeah. But in realty I know they'll be playing with a portable video game, throwing rocks at the ducks, and smoking.

Seth stops walking, looks up at the store to their left. It's a florist.

SETH

I'm going to pop into this florist. I want to pick something out for Megan.

ERIC

Is it her birthday?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

SETH

Oh, that's right, I forgot to tell you. Megan had a short story published in an anthology. ... Anyway, she got off work early today and she's at the apartment, waiting for me.

ERIC

(looking upset)

Oh.

SETH

What?

ERIC

Oh, it's just that, I was going home. And now - I can't show up there empty handed, so now I have buy her something. She already doesn't like me.

SETH

She said she doesn't like you?

ERIC

No. But I can tell she doesn't like from her body language.

SETH

It's not true. And maybe she just doesn't know you. Give it more time.

ERIC

You guys have been dating for a year and half. How much more time does it take?

Seth shrugs.

ERIC (CONT'D)

I'll just go to my office and catch up on some work. ... And in case this blind date doesn't work out, I need to erase all the porn I've viewed on my terminal. That should take me the rest of the night.

INT. SUBWAY. DAY.

Seth and Megan sit in a carriage. It's crowded.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SETH

Ah, there's no way it's true. I don't believe you.

MEGAN

Oh, it's true, my friend, it's true. In fact, I had my agent call his agent personally to verify.

SETH

Michael Claxton, though. I can't believe he would not only agree to blurb the anthology, but to point out your story in particular as his favorite.

MEGAN

Now why is that so hard to believe? Because he's such a great writer?

Seth thinks about that.

SETH

No, that's not it.

INT. GROCERY STORE. CEREAL AISLE. DAY.

Seth and Megan push a shopping cart at the super market.

MEGAN

What's wrong with shopping here?

SETH

I feel out of my social sphere whenever I shop at one of these natural grocery stores. ... I'm bracing for the moment when my mother is going to appear from around the corner and yell, "What are you doing here? Do you know how much a jar of peanut butter costs in a place like this?"

MEGAN

You have serious problem with trying anything new, don't you?

SETH

Well, not if it hasn't been around too long?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MEGAN

(aside)
It's like you're always
performing, aren't you?

SETH

I wish I could stop. I really do.

Seth looks off to the side. Grabs a box of cereal.

MEGAN

Anyway, I like shopping here. You
can't find a lot this stuff in the
big chain super markets.

SETH

I know exactly what you mean.

Seth holds up a box of cereal. Some sort of variation of
Corn Flakes.

SETH (CONT'D)

(facetious)
Have you ever heard of this stuff -
Corn Flakes. Pretty unique.

MEGAN

At least that brand is certified
organic.

SETH

Certified organic. Huh. ... You
know who used to work as one of
those organic certifiers? My
illiterate, womanizing
grandfather.

INT. GROCERY STORE. CHECK OUT LINE. LATER.

Seth and Megan wait in line with shopping cart.

SETH

(just remembered)
Hey, I just remembered, I received
two tickets to the Red Sox -
Yankees game this Saturday. ...
Any interest in going?

MEGAN

Sure.
(then)
That's hockey, right?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SETH

Baseball.

MEGAN

Whatever.

SETH

Well, it's a pretty important game. The Sox are trailing New York in the division by four games.

MEGAN

Tsk.

SETH

Huh?

MEGAN

Oh, nothing.

SETH

No, that was definitely something.

MEGAN

Oh, I was just thinking how silly it is to, you know, root for a professional sports team these days.

SETH

What do you mean?

MEGAN

Come on, Seth, you know. ... The players change teams so often, that we've come to the point where we don't root for certain players, we root for the uniform.

Seth finds this insulting.

EXT. SUBWAY STATION. DAY.

Seth and Megan each carrying two grocery store bags.

SETH

I think we forgot to get soy milk.

MEGAN

No, I bought some.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SETH

Oh, okay.

They about to Head toward the entrance steps of the station when a woman exits. She notices Megan and seems to be under the impression that she knows her from somewhere.

WOMAN

Oh, my God. Megan?

Megan acknowledges the woman.

MEGAN

Yes.

NATALIE

(smiles)

I thought it was you.

(about herself)

Natalie Alvizo.

(further)

From the Boston feminists support group.

MEGAN

Oh, right - right. How are you, Natalie?

NATALIE

I'm doing well. And yourself.

MEGAN

Fine.

(then)

Natalie, this is my boyfriend, Seth.

SETH

(to Natalie)

Hi, nice to meet you.

Seth puts a bag down and reaches out to shake Natalie's hand, but Natalie ignores the gesture, leaving Seth feeling uncomfortable.

NATALIE

(abruptly to Megan)

Listen, I'm having a bit of a...
soiree at my place Saturday
afternoon for new members, and I
would like it if you were to come.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

NATALIE (CONT'D)

Afterward, we're watching a documentary on the music of Ani DiFranco.

MEGAN

Oh, I'd love to attend, but I sort of told Seth that I would go with him to the baseball game.

Seth has the look that says he finds her answer to be insulting.

SETH

(to Megan)

Well don't feel obligated to go to the game. If you'd rather go to her house, that's fine.

Natalie is suspicious of this conversation, as if Seth, in her eyes, is being overly domineering.

MEGAN

(to Seth)

I made a commitment to go with you to the game.

SETH

But now I know you'd rather not go.

(then)

I'll just take Eric to the game.

(re: Natalie)

Go to her house. I'm sure you'll have a better time there, anyway.

MEGAN

Seth, I'm going to the game.

SETH

But I'll be sitting there in the bleachers, feeling guilty the entire time. You don't even like baseball.

MEGAN

I like baseball.

SETH

Name one player on the Red Sox - in the entire history of the team.

MEGAN

What does that have to do with it? I can still enjoy the game.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

SETH

Yeah, but you basically told me you didn't see the point of rooting for a team if the players change so frequently.

MEGAN

But they do. So what? It's just a game - I don't care who's playing. And I also don't care who wins.

Natalie picks up on this, goes on the defensive. She get's in Seth' face.

NATALIE

(seething)

Listen, Seth. If Megan wants to go to the fucking baseball game, then you better God damn well let her. ... Do you understand me?

Seth is genuinely frightened, gulps, steps back, and steps on one of the bags. Megan seems to have been thinking about something.

MEGAN

On second thought.

(to Natalie)

I think I would rather go to the meeting at your house on Saturday.

Natalie backs away from Seth.

NATALIE

(to Megan; smiling)

I'll have my PA e-mail you the directions.

MEGAN

Sure. See you there.

Natalie moves along out of frame, down the steps.

Seth is still frightened. Megan is totally oblivious to Seth' discomfort.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

You can be real insensitive sometimes.

Megan then goes up the stairs toward the entrance of the station, leaving Seth behind.

EXT. ESTABLISHING SHOT OF FENWAY PARK. DAY.

People gathering in crowds, exiting from the stadium.

INT. MEGAN'S APARTMENT. DAY.

Seth, wearing a Red Sox baseball hat, enters the apartment. He has just come from the baseball game.

SETH

Hello?

MEGAN (O.C.)

We're in the kitchen.

SETH

(confused; to self)

We?

INT. KITCHEN.

Seth walks in. We see Megan and a man their age sitting at a small table, talking and laughing about something.

SETH

Hello?

MEGAN

Oh, hi, honey. How was the game?

SETH

Great. We won. ... And...

Seth removes something from his jacket pocket. While doing this keeps his gaze on the guy. The shock that a guy in the kitchen of his girlfriend has not yet sunk in.

SETH (CONT'D)

I caught a foul ball.

(to The guy)

You know, I don't think we've met.

MEGAN

Oh, that's right. Sorry. Seth, this is Hugo. He and I used to be in a band together in college.

Hugo gets up to shake hands with Seth. They do.

HUGO

Nice to meet you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SETH

Likewise.

MEGAN

I ran into Hugo at the feminists meeting. He's a new member.

SETH

Isn't it just for women?

HUGO

Actually, feminism is the belief that both sexes are equal, and many feminists are, in fact, male.

SETH

Oh.

(then)

Well, I'm just going to go into the living room and work on some new comedy material.

Hugo and Megan start a new conversation.

SETH (CONT'D)

So, yeah, if you need me, that's where I will be.

Megan and Hugo continue talking, laughing about old times.

Seth is about to leave. Megan stops him.

MEGAN

Oh, Seth?

SETH

Yes?

MEGAN

Would you mind throwing my trash out, seeing as how you're going toward the door anyway?

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING. EVENING.

Seth exits the building with a trash bag. We follow him to a dumpster. He tosses the bag into the dumpster.

INT. APARTMENT. EVENING.

Seth enters. We see that Megan and Hugo are putting their coats on, as if to go outside.

MEGAN

(to Seth)

An old friend of ours is playing tonight at this club in Cambridge. Would you like to come along?

SETH

Nah, I'll just stay in.

HUGO

Come on, Seth. It'll be fun.

SETH

I'm sure it will be, but I'm tired.

MEGAN

Okay. Well, could I pick you up anything while I'm out?

SETH

I'm okay. But thanks. ... Have fun at the club.

Megan and Hugo leave. Hugo seems suspicious of something about Seth.

INT. COFFEE HOUSE. DAY.

Seth and Eric sit at a table.

ERIC

I don't like it.

SETH

Me either. ... You think she's having an affair with this guy?

ERIC

(of course)

Do I think? It's only obvious.

Seth seems hurt.

ERIC (CONT'D)

And she's messy, too.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SETH
(confused)
What do you mean?

ERIC
(should be obvious)
Seth, she brings the guy back to her apartment, knowing that you will be there.

SETH
Well, I was at the game with you.

ERIC
Yeah, but she knew you'd be back.

SETH
I could have gone back to our apartment.

ERIC
Why would you have done that? It seems rude of you to have thought to just leave her all alone on a Saturday.

SETH
I'm speaking in the hypothetical, Eric.

ERIC
I knew that.

SETH
I don't think you did.

ERIC
Look at us. We're fighting.

SETH
Well, you're the one calling my girlfriend incompetent. I mean, what does that say about me? That I attract idiots?

ERIC
(sarcastic)
Fine, she's not messy. She's a regular player, your Megan. In fact, I bet she's so clever that she's got a whole harem you know nothing about.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SETH

Damn right.

Then Seth thinks about what he's just said.

INT. MEGAN'S APARTMENT. EVENING.

Seth enters. Megan at a desk typing at a computer.

MEGAN

Oh, hi. ... Where have you been?

SETH

My apartment. I had to take care of some stuff.

MEGAN

I made some extra ravioli, you're welcome to it if you'd like.

Seth nods. Then he takes a seat next to Megan. His body language suggest that something is wrong. Megan picks up on this.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

Something wrong?

SETH

Oh, I got a parking ticket today.

MEGAN

But you don't have a car.

SETH

I'm going to contest it.

(then)

Are you having an affair with your old friend Hugo?

Megan is taken aback by the question.

MEGAN

Excuse me?

SETH

It's just that I came over here the other night from the Sox game and found you guys together and alone in the kitchen talking and laughing...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MEGAN

I don't believe it. Of course I'm not having an affair with Hugo.

SETH

I don't know. If there was just some way that I could be convinced you weren't.

MEGAN

Okay, then how about the fact that he's gay?

SETH

Oh.

(then; smiling)

So, what kind of ravioli is it?

MEGAN

Do you really think I'd be so stupid as to bring a guy back here knowing that you'd be here later on?

SETH

I know, I know - in fact, I defended you in that respect to Eric.

MEGAN

You discussed this with Eric? Oh, I should have known he'd get the idea in your Head. He's a real idiot, you know that?

SETH

I know.

(then)

Listen, I'm sorry. I should never have brought it up. ... So, he's really gay, huh?

MEGAN

Uh-huh. You saw how he was dressed. No straight guy dresses that nicely.

Seth nods in agreement. He then seems satisfied and moves toward the kitchen.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

It's kind of funny, though?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SETH

Why's that?

MEGAN

Because he thinks you're gay, too.

Seth is taken aback by this. Returns to the living room.

SETH

(offended)

Why did he think that I was gay?

MEGAN

Because, he thought you didn't seem bothered enough when you entered the apartment to find your girlfriend alone and talking to another guy.

SETH

Well, what did he expect me to do? Kick his ass right there in the kitchen?

MEGAN

Who knows? ... Anyway, don't let it bother you.

SETH

Yeah, like I'm going to do that. ... I don't know the guy. Why would I let his opinion matter to me?

INT. THERAPIST OFFICE. DAY.

Seth, sits on a couch. Sitting across from him is a male THERAPIST, 45.

SETH

I don't know. I've always been neat and orderly. And, before I met Megan, sometimes I would camp up my voice at the clubs in order to attract women, you know, to make myself seem more like a friend, someone they can trust. Primarily a strategy - one that really didn't work well ... But that doesn't mean I'm gay, does it?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SETH (CONT'D)

I mean, really, if you spend some time with me, just hang around me for a day, you'd see that I lack any sort of understanding of women to be considered homosexual. ... Not that I feel there's anything wrong with being gay. Although, I do cringe whenever I see same-sex couples holding hands in public. But then again I do the same whenever I see heterosexual couples showing that kind of public affection.

The Therapists nods in slight agreement.

SETH (CONT'D)

I blame my mother. I think she coddled me too much as a child. She was a single parent. ... She would always buy me dolls and stuffed animals when my friends would get toy soldiers and sporting equipment for Christmas. ... For my seventh birthday, she bought me this Rainbow Bright game. I don't know what ever happened to it.

Seth takes a sip from the tea. But the cup is empty.

SETH (CONT'D)

(re: tea)
May I have some more? ... What is it, anyway?

THERAPIST

Japanese tea.

Seth nods.

The therapist puts down a note pad, then moves over to a table where a tea kettle is. He moves the kettle to Seth and pours some tea into his cup. Then he goes back to his chair, and his note pad.

THERAPIST (CONT'D)

Listen, I know it can difficult for a bright heterosexual male such as yourself, Mr. Cobian, to give off some sort of conventional male aura.

Seth takes a sip from tea. He begins to cringe, as if the tea is too hot.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

THERAPIST (CONT'D)

But-

SETH

(interrupts; re: tea)
Do you have any ice cubes?

THERAPIST

It is customary in Japan that tea
be taken extremely hot. Part of
the culture, per se.

SETH

(re: tea)
I understand. It's just that, I
had a pretty bad experience once
with an extremely hot beverage.

THERAPIST

I'm sorry to hear it. But, I don't
have any ice cubes.

(then)

Anyway, going back to the subject
of assimilating into a mainstream
American culture of sports and
tools, I-

SETH

I'm sorry, I can't drink this. Do
you have anything cold?

The therapist, sighs.

THERAPIST

No, I don't.

(then)

Anyway-

SETH

Do you have any water?

THERAPIST

No, I don't have any water.

SETH

A faucet? I could just dump this
tea out, and fill the cup with
water from a faucet.

THERAPIST

No water, not even a faucet.

(then)

Now, I-

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

SETH

Have you always had no water to give patients?

THERAPIST

Yes, that has always been the case.

SETH

Well, I'm not sure I like that. And, I hope you don't take this the wrong way, but it's very undemocratic.

The therapist shakes his Head and sighs again, then writes down some notes on a pad of paper. Seth notices, becomes suspicious.

SETH (CONT'D)

What are you writing?

THERAPIST

Just some notes. Standard practise.

SETH

Notes on what?

THERAPIST

Well, your session, of course.

SETH

May I have a look?

THERAPIST

I'm sorry, but I don't show my notes to anyone.

SETH

I understand. ... But... they're notes on my session, correct?

THERAPIST

Mr. Cobian, my policy is to never share notes with anyone, including patients.

SETH

Why? What's the big deal? Why can't I see them?

THERAPIST

It's a privacy matter.

(then)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

THERAPIST (CONT'D)

Now, is there anything else you would like to talk about?

SETH

(continues)

I'm not sure I like how your keeping the notes from me.

Therapist becomes agitated.

THERAPIST

Like, I said, it's a privacy matter.

SETH

I understand. But...they're my notes.

THERAPIST

Mr. Cobian, I need them unaltered to complete any sort of accurate analysis.

SETH

I wouldn't change them. In fact, we could read them together.

THERAPIST

Sorry.

SETH

Okay, what if you got something wrong?

THERAPIST

I doubt it.

SETH

You seem pretty sure.

THERAPIST

I am.

SETH

Oh, really?

THERAPIST

Yes.

A pause. The room is getting filled with uneasiness.

SETH

I don't like your self-assurance.

Therapist sighs again. Knows this is going nowhere.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

THERAPIST

I think it would best if you'd
leave now, Mr. Cobian.

SETH

Yeah, I think you're right.

Seth gets up from sofa. As he does, he tries to sneak a look at the notes, but the Therapist clutches them closer, out of Seth' view.

Seth then gives up, moves toward the door to exit. Once he's at the door, he looks back.

SETH (CONT'D)

So, same time next week?

THERAPIST

Better make it an hour later.

SETH

Okay.

THERAPIST

Have a nice weekend, Mr. Cobian.

SETH

(smiles)
You too.

Seth leaves.

INT. SETH' APARTMENT. DAY.

Seth plays a video game in front of the television. Eric reads a book on the sofa. They engage in a conversation, nonetheless.

SETH

Oh, there's definitely a Madden
NFL video game cover curse.

ERIC

Get out of here! There's no
validity to that statement.

SETH

Oh, come on. Four years ago,
Daunte Culpepper appears on the
cover, and misses the entire
season because of an injury.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SETH (CONT'D)

Three years ago, Marshall Faulk's on the cover, and has his worse season since entering the league. Then two years ago, Michael Vick gets injured during the preseason after posing for the cover, and then - then! - suffers a broken bone the day after the video game is released. And let's not forget about last year when Ray Lewis broke his wrist and failed to record a single interception the season after he appeared on the cover. ... How's that for validation?!

ERIC

(to himself)

Yeah, and women call me immature.

SETH

Huh?

Eric nods his Head, as if to say, "Oh, nothing."

Megan enters the apartment.

SETH (CONT'D)

Hey.

MEGAN

Hi.

(then, to Eric; not too enthusiastic)

Hey, Eric.

ERIC

Hi.

MEGAN

(to Seth)

Are you ready to go? ... I don't mean to rush you, but Irene and Thom are double parked outside.

ERIC

Oh, Irene's out there? ... Tell her I said, hi.

Megan brushes it off.

SETH

(to Megan)

Let me just grab my bag.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Seth leaves the room. Megan and Eric are alone.
Uncomfortable for both.

MEGAN

So, what's new?

ERIC

I bought some slacks the other
day?

MEGAN

Oh, was Ann Taylor having a sale?

Ann Taylor is a women's clothing store. This is a
reference to two years earlier, when they first met at
the Gap, when Eric tried on women's jeans.

Seth enters the room, carrying a bag. It's sort of small.

SETH

Alright, I'm ready.

MEGAN

(re: bag)
Uh, is that all you're bringing
with you?

SETH

Yeah? Why?

MEGAN

Seth, we're going skiing. You need
a lot of layers.

ERIC

Tsk.

SETH

(to Eric)
What?

ERIC

Nothing. Just, the whole idea of
skiing.

SETH

And what's wrong with skiing?

ERIC

It just seems like a stupid thing
to do. Besides, I don't think I
could engage in an activity that
costs the same as the GDP of a
small country.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

MEGAN

Well, that's why you weren't invited.

ERIC

What?

(to Seth)

You said I was invited.

SETH

I didn't want to hurt your feelings. And besides, I knew you'd turn the invitation down if I had.

ERIC

(sincerely happy; re:
Seth)

Now, that, my lady, is a real friend.

Seth nods in appreciation. Megan rolls her eyes.

INT. CAR. DAY.

Seth and Megan sit in the backseat. Irene (we met her earlier) rides shotgun. Irene's husband, THOM, drives.

IRENE

I can't believe you've never been skiing before, Seth.

SETH

Well, it's true.

MEGAN

I've been trying to get him to go for two years.

THOM

(to Seth)

Huh, so what finally convinced you?

Seth and Megan exchange uncomfortable looks.

INT. MEGAN'S BEDROOM. NIGHT. (FLASHBACK)

Seth and Megan are in bed.

MEGAN

You know my friend, Irene?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SETH

Yeah.

MEGAN

Well, she and her new husband Thom have rented a cabin in New Hampshire next weekend. And they have invited us to go skiing with them.

SETH

I don't know.

Megan looks at Seth seductively, kisses him.

MEGAN

I knew you would say that. ... But I'm sure there is something that can be done to change your mind.

SETH

(amused)
Oh yeah? ... What did you, uh, have in mind?

She smiles. Then she positions herself in a way that suggests she will soon unzip Seth's pants. You get the idea.

INT. CAR. DAY.

Same people as before. We focus on Seth. He still needs to answer Thom's question.

SETH

Oh, it just felt like it was... time.

Thom nods in agreement, as if he understands what Seth is talking about.

EXT. CABIN. EVENING.

The car, an SUV, pulls into the driveway of a contemporary cabin.

THOM (O.C.)

Here we are.

MEGAN (O.C.)

(re: cabin)
Oh, it's gorgeous.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

 SETH (O.C.)
 (re: cabin)
 Yeah, it's not bad.

INT. CABIN. EVENING.

The interior looks like the photos from the pages of a Pottery Barn catalogue. Very clean and neat - as if no one actually lives there.

Seth, Megan, Irene, and Thom enter the cabin. All are taken aback by the interior and the views of the mountain and nature from the large windows.

INT. CABIN. LATER.

Seth, Megan, Irene all sit on a sofa, drinking wine. Thomas stands before them, telling them what he thinks is an amazing story. He has a wine glass in his hand as he's doing this.

 THOM
 (narrating)
 Okay, this one's about the guy who
 took the world's longest piss.

Megan and Irene make indignant, disgusted faces and moans. Seth just looks like he's not happy to be there at all.

 IRENE
 Honey, I don't think Seth and
 Megan want to hear about that one.

 THOM
 Oh, come on, guys, it's not as
 disgusting as it sounds.

Megan and Irene then rescind, allow Thom to proceed.

 THOM (CONT'D)
 (waiting for Seth'
 approval)
 Seth?

 SETH
 (deferring to
 manners)
 Sure, why not.

Thom then gives Irene a look, as if to say, "Told you so."

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THOM

(narrating)

Well, there's this guy right? And he's urinating in front of a bush outside Fenway Park. A couple of other guys notice him as they enter the ballpark to watch the Red Sox play - they think nothing of it, you know, just some guy taking a leak, what's the big deal? ... But when they exit the ballpark after the game a few hours later, they notice that the same guy is still standing behind the bush, with his trousers kind of off, but not completely, you know, like he's still draining his lizard. ... So they talk it over and decide that maybe this guy might need help. They approach the guy tentatively, and once they get closer they ask him if he's all right. But... just as they were about to speak, a really hot Hispanic woman gets up from out of the bush in front of the guy.

Megan, Irene, and Seth suspect where this story is going.

THOM (CONT'D)

That's right - it turned out that he wasn't taking a piss... but instead he was just getting the world's longest blowjob!

Thom begins to laugh at his own joke really hard, and Irene and Megan actually laugh as well. Seth, however, is disgusted, does a pity laugh and smile.

THOM (CONT'D)

Alright... who wants Margaritas?

IRENE

Arriba!

Thom, Irene, and Megan laugh at the pun. Seth again, only smiles out of politeness.

INT. CABIN. MORNING.

Seth is in the kitchen preparing a breakfast of scrambled eggs, bacon, pancakes, hash browns, orange juice and coffee.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Megan enters the kitchen, rubbing her forehead, in pain.

SETH

Good morning.

MEGAN

'morning.

SETH

How are you feeling?

MEGAN

I'm a little hung over. But I'll
be okay once-

(notices The
breakfast; smiles)

What's this?

SETH

I made a little breakfast.

MEGAN

Oh, that was nice. Thank you.

Megan begins to look for a plate.

SETH

I wonder where Thom and Irene are?

MEGAN

They're not in their room?

Megan has a plate for her and Seth. They begin to put
food on the plates.

SETH

No, and the car is gone.

MEGAN

I don't know.

SETH

So, uh, what's the deal with Thom?

MEGAN

Kind of vulgar, isn't he?

SETH

Oh, yeah.

We hear the front door go. Thom and Irene appear with a
couple of bags.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

THOM

Good morning.

SETH AND MEGAN

'Morning.

Thom and Irene enter the kitchen.

IRENE

We brought breakfast.

Seth seems offended.

THOM

Bagels, cream cheese and coffee.
... Feel free to help yourselves.

Thom and Irene leave the room.

Seth is about to speak.

MEGAN

Thank you.

Megan goes for a bagel, hides her plate of food that Seth made. Seth is taken aback.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

(to Seth; mouthing)
We're their guests. ... Sorry.

Seth is disturbed, then nods in agreement. He gets tossed the contents of his plate as well. Then the pan he used to cook with.

Thom returns with another bag. Something's wrong.

THOM

Do I smell bacon and eggs?

INT./EXT. SERIES OF SHOTS - SETH' FIRST TIME SKIING

1) Seth putting ski clothes on in his room in the cabin. This is a tedious process for him, so many items. And when he thinks he's finished, there is something he has forgotten.

2) Seth struggles to walk in full ski outfit, including boots, almost falling down the stairs, through the house, outside the house, toward the car. He is happy to be at the car. Then he is taken aback to see that Megan, Irene and Thom are still in regular clothes, standing near the car.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Megan then lifts up a duffel bag, which we are to assume has her ski clothes in it, and she will change inside a locker room.

3) Seth on the slopes.

4) Falling down.

5) Can't get going.

6) Can't stop.

7) Riding a lift with Megan.

8) At the top of the hill. Megan goes first, does it very well. Seth' turn, he goes too fast, nearly runs into a group of children. The children then start to kick him and pelt him with snow balls.

9) Again at the top of the hill. Seth goes down on his own, successfully. Megan is at the bottom of the hill to greet him. Applauds him. Seth begins to jump up and down for joy, as if he's just won the Gold at the Winter Games. He begins to taunt the same group of children from earlier that pelted him. Megan tells him that is enough.

INT. BAR. NIGHT.

Seth, Megan, Irene and Thom all sit at a table. All are drinking beer, except for Seth. He has a cola of some kind.

MEGAN

Oh, I'm getting tired.

IRENE

Yeah, me too.

(then to Thom)

We should get going.

THOM

Get going? But we just got here.

IRENE

You know what, I'll just take Megan home and you and Seth can spend some time together.

Seth isn't sure he likes this idea.

SETH

Huh?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MEGAN

(to Seth)
Yeah, you don't mind, do you?
(softer)
Thom shouldn't be alone.

Seth has no choice.

SETH

No, I don't mind.

INT. BAR. LATER.

It's just Seth and Thom. There are now more beers in front of Thom. The same cola drink in front of Seth.

THOM

So, you've never had alcohol in your entire life?

SETH

Well, I wouldn't say that, but I only drink on very special occasions - weddings, funerals - those type of events.

THOM

You're a dark horse, Seth.

Seth laughs.

THOM (CONT'D)

(aside)
Hey, Seth, do want to have some real fun tonight?

SETH

I don't know, Thom, I think we should probably get back to the cabin. Megan and Irene are probably wondering where we are.

THOM

Ah, man, what are you? Pussy whipped?

SETH

No.

THOM

Then let's go have some fun.

INT. CAB. NIGHT.

Seth and Thom in the backseat.

THOM
(to driver off
camera)
Make a left at the next light.

SETH
Where are we going?

THOM
You'll see.

EXT. STRIP CLUB. NIGHT.

The cab pulls up. Seth and Thom exit out. Seth has to rub his eyes to realize where they are. Thom pays the cab fare. The cab drives away.

THOM
Alright, let's go have some real
fun, Seth.

SETH
Listen, Thom, no disrespect, but
I'm not really into this sort of
thing.

THOM
Fine, you'll know where I will be.

Thom begins toward the door. Talks to the bouncer, then enters the club.

Seth just walks around outside. Then he walks up to the bouncer.

SETH
Excuse me?

BOUNCER
What?

SETH
Is there any chance you could tell
me where I might find a cab stand
around here?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOUNCER

There isn't one. I'll call one for you if you'd like.

SETH

Thanks.

BOUNCER

Just to let you know, It'll take an hour to get one out.

SETH

Whatever.

Some time has passed. Seth waits outside the strip club. A stripper exits the club. Walks further away from the club, stands near where Seth is sitting. She removes a cigarette from her hand bag.

STRIPPER

(to Seth)

Hey, do you have lighter?

SETH

No, but I have some matches.

STRIPPER

Would you mind?

Seth shakes his head, gets up to light a match for the stripper. Then Seth sits back down.

STRIPPER (CONT'D)

Rough night?

SETH

No, well, sort of. My girlfriend's best friend's husband dragged me out here. And now I'm just waiting for a cab.

STRIPPER

You could wait inside, if you'd like. Donovan, he's the bouncer, will let you know when the cab arrives.

SETH

That's okay. I like the fresh air.

Stripper laughs.

STRIPPER

You from around here?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SETH

I live in Boston.

STRIPPER

Nice. ... I can't wait to leave
this place.

Seth nods.

STRIPPER (CONT'D)

I'm a student at the local
community college. ... I'm hoping
to transfer to the University of
New Hampshire next semester.

Seth nods.

STRIPPER (CONT'D)

So what do you do?

SETH

I'm a comedian.

STRIPPER

No, seriously.

SETH

I'm a comedian.

STRIPPER

Oh.

Seth begins to shiver. He only has on a thin jacket, and didn't expect to sitting outside a strip club in the middle of winter waiting for a cab. The Stripper is perceptive to his discomfort.

STRIPPER (CONT'D)

Hey, and I hope you take this the
wrong way, but I could give you
ride to where you need to go. I
mean, in all honesty, I don't
think that cab will be here
anytime soon.

Seth thinks about this.

SETH

I don't know - what about my
friend in there?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

STRIPPER

Well, didn't you say he came here on his own free will, and basically dragged you out here to the middle of nowhere? ... Anyway, sounds like he would do the same to you if given a choice.

Seth thinks about this, seems to agree. Gets up from seat.

SETH

Good point.
(then)
I'm Seth, by the way.

STRIPPER

My name's Cinnamon.

Seth nods, in a guilty way.

STRIPPER (CONT'D)

(laughing)
Just kidding. It's Matilda.

Seth smiles and laughs.

SETH

(re: fooling him)
That was a good one.

They walk toward out of frame.

STRIPPER

I hope you like hip-hop. Because that's all I have in my car.

SETH

Oh, you mean like the Beastie Boys?

INT. CAR. DAY.

The stripper (Matilda) drives. Seth rides shotgun. Some really loud and vulgar hip-hop music plays on the stereo.

SETH

So, is that your only job - back there?

MATILDA

Yeah. ... I used to work at the Gap in Hanover.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SETH

No kidding. My girlfriend used to work there just before she graduated from college.

(then; re: the Gap)

I like that store. Although some of my friends describe those types of establishments as indicative of America's unhealthy fascination with consumerism. But I have to say there is something very appealing. And let us not forget about the service, it's pretty structured, is it not? The company seems to be obsessive on cleanliness and organization; The managers would have made fantastic propagandists during the early days of the German Worker's Party - everything has to be just so orderly.

MATILDA

(confused)

Uh, yeah.

SETH

So why did you quit?

MATILDA

Because of a medical condition.

SETH

Medical condition?

MATILDA

I'm narcoleptic. ... But don't worry, I only have episodes during the daytime. ... Or when I am extremely bored - which is rare.

Seth nods.

INT. CAR. DAY.

Matilda drives. Seth talks, unaware that he's boring her to tears with his latest observation. As he goes into his monologue, we notice that Matilda is losing consciousness.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SETH

...And do you get the sense that advertisers are trying desperately to make the word "sweet" the new "it" word? I mean, it's everywhere you look. In movies, in songs, in books. Have you noticed this? ... And the way some people pronounce the word: Sweet. Like it's two syllables. Sue-weet. I don't know. Sounds like a pig call, if you ask me. You Know: Sooo-eee! ... And what's the background behind that one, anyway? ... And then you have to wonder which word is next on the list? ... Bitter? ... Sour? ... Savory? ... Hey, this song is savory. ... Huh, I could go into advertising, it's not that difficult.

Some times passes...

SETH (CONT'D)

...So, if you think about it, there's really no need to put a zero at the end of prices that end in zero... like... \$2.30 Or \$67.40 - isn't that considered redundant? And if, then why stop at just one zero, why not add two or three? What's the difference?

Matilda is closing her eyes. Seth finally notices her.

SETH (CONT'D)

Are you okay?

No response. She's out.

SETH (CONT'D)

Matilda?

Seth POV - Up ahead on the road, cars are coming in their direction.

Back to scene. Seth tries desperately to take the wheel.

EXT. ROAD. NIGHT.

The car swerves off to the side, nearly crashes into another car. Both cars park off to the side.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Seth gets out of Matilda's car. He's disheveled.

Then getting out of the other car, which we can clearly see is Thom and Irene's SUV, is Irene and Megan. They are very surprised to see Seth getting out of the car.

MEGAN

Seth?

Seth turn around, a worried look on his face. Then tries to act cool.

SETH

Megan?

MEGAN

What are you doing here?

Seth is about to speak. But then Matilda exits from the car, disheveled, as if she just woke from a long sleep, and could use more shut-eye. Megan notices her, and of course, her outfit, the shoes, the glitter.

Megan gives Seth a cold stare. Seth tries to lighten the mood.

SETH

This is Matilda. ... She used to work at the Gap - like you.

Megan is not amused, folds her arms across her chest. Irene just shakes her head in disgust.

INT. CABIN. NIGHT.

Seth and Megan arguing. She's been crying.

SETH

It's not my fault. ... You're the one - you're the one that told me to keep an eye on Thom.

MEGAN

How dare you turn this situation back at me. ... I can't believe you were in a car with a stripper. ... And where the fuck were you going, back to her place?

SETH

No, she was taking me back here.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Megan is taken aback, horrified at the prospect that Seth was bringing another back to the cabin to sleep with.

SETH (CONT'D)

(off look)

That's not what I meant. She was going to drop me off - but she has narcolepsy, and then one thing led to another.

(then)

And I didn't know she was a stripper? ... She told me she was a college student?

MEGAN

(angry)

Yeah right, Seth. Do you really expect me to believe that you didn't know she was a stripper? ... She smelled like berries for God's sake.

Then Megan breaks down and cries.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

I can't do this. I can't look at you.

She leaves the cabin.

EXT. CABIN. NIGHT.

Megan walks away from the house, down a path. Seth follows close behind.

SETH

Megan?

She ignores him.

SETH (CONT'D)

Megan?

MEGAN

Leave me alone.

He catches up to her. She looks him in the eyes. She's been crying.

SETH

I didn't do anything with her. I swear.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MEGAN

My whole life I have been disappointed. My parents, family, boyfriends, teachers, friends - You were the one person I thought I could trust, Seth. ... And now I can never trust you. Even if you are telling the truth, even if she was only giving you a ride home, I'm always going to have these lingering doubts. That's not how I want to live. ... I'd rather get out of this, even it means being alone.

SETH

Megan, I'm so sorry.

MEGAN

Me too, Seth. Me too.

She then walks away. Seth begins to cry.

SETH

Megan?

She ignores him. Seth just shakes his head in disbelief.

All of a sudden, a taxi pulls up. In the cab is Thom. Seth notices.

THOM

(discreet;
intoxicated; re:
cabin)

Hey, Seth. Is it safe to go inside?

EXT. CITY STREET. DAY.

Seth and Eric walking. Somber mood.

SETH

She wants to try couples counseling, but I'm pretty sure nothing will change her mind.

Eric thinks about something to say, and out of his mouth is the first thing to come to mind.

ERIC

Bummer.

INT. DR. DANFORTH'S OFFICE. DAY.

Seth and Megan sit on a sofa facing DR. DANFORTH, female, fortyish, hippie in dress, a licensed couples therapist, who is sitting in a papasan chair.

MEGAN

Dr. Danforth, I don't know what it is with Seth. He's just really regressed in he past year or so. He's become a unbearable, miserable asshole. Just so unpleasant to be around.

Seth is taken aback by Megan's description of him.

DR. DANFORTH

(to Seth)

Okay, Seth, what do you think makes you such a miserable, negative, unpleasant asshole -
(as an afterthought)
in Megan's eyes?

The consensus is that this relationship is over.

INT. MEGAN'S APARTMENT. NIGHT.

Megan is working, typing at her computer.

There's a knock at the door. She walks over to the door, peers through the peep hole, sighs, opens the door. It's Seth, he's holding a box.

SETH

Hey.

MEGAN

(re: box; indignant)
What's this?

SETH

Some stuff you left at my apartment.
(then)
May I come in?

MEGAN

Yeah, just set it down in the living room.

Seth walks in.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SETH

Where in the living room.

MEGAN

(antsy)

I don't know, Seth. Put it down
anywhere.

Seth sets the box down. Megan has gone back to her
computer.

SETH

So, what's new in your life?

MEGAN

Seth, if you don't mind, I really
need to finish this manuscript.

Seth nods, starts toward the door. Stops.

SETH

Oh, did I tell you? I've been
invited to perform at the Montreal
Comedy Festival this year.

Megan isn't impressed.

MEGAN

Listen, Seth. I don't care. ... We
can't have conversations like we
used to, that's not how this
works. ... So if you don't mind, I
really need to concentrate here...

Seth nods, starts again toward the door. Just as he is
about to open it. Looks back at Megan. She's not even
paying attention to Seth, keeping her focus on her
computer screen.

Seth is about to say something, when her phone rings.
Megan answers after one ring.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

Hello?

(happier tone)

Oh, hi. ... I'm fine, thank you.
... Uh-huh. ... Well, I had a
great time too. ... I'd love to
tonight, but... I can't.

Seth had been listening. Almost seems happy at her last
words.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MEGAN (CONT'D)
 Tomorrow night would be much
 better. ... I have to finish this
 manuscript.

Seth is depressed again.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
 Sure...
 (notices Seth still
 lingering)
 Oh, would you hold on a second.
 (to Seth, covers
 phone)
 Seth, please leave.

Seth opens the door.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
 (into phone)
 Oh, nothing. I thought I heard a
 noise in the other room...

Seth leaves, closes the door behind him.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING. HALLWAY.

Seth is walking away from camera.

MEGAN (O.C.)
 Seth?

Seth turns around. We see Megan.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
 My keys?

Seth gives her his keys.

SETH
 What about mine? Can I get them
 back?

MEGAN
 I don't have them.

SETH
 What do you mean?

MEGAN
 I don't know- I must have lost
 them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SETH

How could you lose them?

MEGAN

Seth! ... Just go.

Seth does leave.

INT. THERAPIST OFFICE. DAY.

Seth visits with the same therapist from earlier. They are in their same settings.

THERAPIST

Mr. Cobian, have you considered the fact that maybe the two of you just weren't meant to be?

Seth seems uneasy by this news, in fact, almost hurt. The therapist picks up on this, continues.

THERAPIST (CONT'D)

My first wife and I were at each other's throats constantly during a four-year marriage. Yet, after the divorce I was miserable as hell. I wept to my friends. I couldn't eat, couldn't sleep. For a moment, I actually thought about suicide. ... But then as time went on, I got my life back on track, and I started dating other women, I began to realize that my first wife and I just should never should have been married. ... It doesn't mean we are bad people, just bad for each other.

Seth nods, as if he seems to understand.

THERAPIST (CONT'D)

Have you dated since the break-up?

SETH

No. ... I can't. I still love Megan - it feels too much like I'm cheating - as funny as that sounds. ... Besides, I just doubt I could find someone as great as she is.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SETH (CONT'D)

I mean, I'm sure there some great women out there, but, I'm afraid it would take someone very special to tolerate someone like me. ... I don't know.

THERAPIST

(quoting; like a wise sage)

Ah, but a cynic is a man who knows the price of everything, and the value of nothing.

SETH

(quoting)

And a sentimentalist is a man who sees an absurd value in everything, and doesn't know the market price of any single thing.

THERAPIST

(confused)

Pardon?

SETH

That's the retort to your quote. ... Oscar Wilde's "Lady Windermere's Fan", act three.

THERAPIST

Whatever. I once read it off a Starbucks cup.

EXT. RESTAURANT. NIGHT.

Seth and Jenna, his date for the evening, are walking up to the entrance of a trendy restaurant.

JENNA

Okay, I have a confession to make.

SETH

(interested)

What's that?

JENNA

Oh, an expression of regret.

SETH

I meant, what is this confession of yours.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JENNA

I knew that, silly - I was just making a joke. Duh.

SETH

Right.

JENNA

But, I really do have a confession to make.

SETH

Okay. What is it?

JENNA

Well, you see, my old college roommate surprised me this weekend by coming into town... And, well, to make a long story short... there will be three for dinner.

On a small scale, Seth seems to like his odds. We can see that he's thinking about having a date with two attractive women.

JENNA (CONT'D)

I hope you don't mind.

SETH

Nah, of course not. What's one more?

They reach the door. Seth holds open the door for her to go in first, which she does. Doesn't say thank you.

INT. RESTAURANT. NIGHT

Seth and Jenna now sit at a table. Seth looks depressed. As we pan over, we find out why. The roommate that Jenna spoke of is a guy. A good-looking guy. His name is DAVID.

SETH

So, David... you and Jenna are former roommates.

DAVID

Well, we were more than roommates - if you know what I mean, dude.

David and Jenna share a romantic stare.

SETH

Right.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Seth gets up from his seat.

SETH (CONT'D)

Excuse me. I'm just going to get
some... air.

David and Jenna aren't listening. They continue to stare
at each other, smiling.

Seth leaves the table. He obviously has no intent on
returning.

EXT. CITY STREET. NIGHT.

Seth is walking alone. Then something catches his
attention off camera. It's the same beggar from earlier.
The beggar is standing at a busy street corner,
soliciting people for money.

Seth walks up to him.

SETH

Hey, remember me? ... I gave you a
ten dollar bill a couple years
ago.

BEGGAR

Oh, yeah. Yeah, man, thanks. ...
Think you could help me out again?
... I'm trying to enough money for
a bus ticket so that I can see my
family in New York for the
Holidays.

Seth doesn't listen to his spiel, knows he's just talking
a bunch of BS, nonetheless he gives the beggar a fifty
dollar bill. Beggar is taken aback by the gesture.

BEGGAR (CONT'D)

Whoa, a fifty. *Gracias*.

SETH

De nada.

Seth nods, is about to walk away, when something catches
his attention. He picks up a page from the newspaper.
CLOSE ON- page. It's an article on Megan. She's sold the
rights to her first novel to a major publishing house.

BEGGAR

You know, this is good Karma for
you, man. ... Look out for the
signs.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Seth nods in agreement. Then he runs away from there.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING. NIGHT.

This is Megan's building. Seth comes into frame, still running. He goes up the entrance steps.

INT. HALLWAY. APARTMENT BUILDING.

Seth appears at a door to a unit. Megan's unit. Knocks on the door.

Nothing.

He knocks again.

SETH

Megan, are you there? Please open up - we need to talk. ... I'm - I'm sorry.

He knocks again.

SETH (CONT'D)

Megan?

All of a sudden, the door opens to reveal a really tall and goofy looking guy in his late 30s, wearing PJs and smoking jacket, a la Hugh Hefner. We hear rock music in the background, coming from the apartment unit. Seth is taken aback, to say the least.

GUY

(almost friendly)
May I help you?

SETH

Oh, uh... is Megan... here?

GUY

Megan? ... Oh, yeah, the chick who used to rent this place. ... No, man, she moved out.

SETH

Do you know how long ago that was?

GUY

I don't know. I've been here for about six weeks.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SETH

I'm sorry to bother you, then.

Seth, sad, begins to walk away.

GUY

Hey, would you like to come in? I made extra paella. It'll just go to waste.

Seth thinks about this.

SETH

No thanks.

He continues to walk away from the unit.

INT. MAIN STAGE, COMEDY CLUB.

Seth makes his way to the stage.

ANNOUNCER

Ladies and gentleman, give a laughing welcome to Seth Cobian.

Seth takes the microphone.

SETH

(addressing the audience)

Whoa! Great crowd, great crowd. I can always tell what sort of night it's going to be by just looking at the crowd.

(looking into audience)

Good, good - no one's yawning. ... Please, sir, if you could put that pillow to the side until the end of the show. And, you, miss, make sure you turn down the bedside light.

There's laughter.

SETH (CONT'D)

...Oh, what's big these days? iPods? Bluetooth headsets? Hybrid cars? High Definition television? ... Yeah, television. I bought a high definition television, finally. And what I really like about it are the commercials now.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SETH (CONT'D)

Yeah, seriously, commercials. I find them even more repulsing than ever. ... Oh, they try to be clever - but I don't see it. There's this one I saw the other day. A beer commercial. Two guys standing at a bar, sucking down a couple of Budweisers. Then they turn around and they look out into a crowd of other homely men who look sort of like them. Then one of the guys says to his friend, "Man, it doesn't get better than this." Then his friend says, "No, it sure doesn't." Then the commercial ends. ... And afterward I found myself thinking, Oh, I can think of a million ways, it does get better than that.

More laughter.

SETH (CONT'D)

So, has anyone here ever thought about trying something like this? Being a stand-up comedian? ... The reason I am asking is because, well, if you think about it, nearly everyone has told a joke in their lives, we all have the ability to be funny in a large crowds. ... Yet, someone like me, we have the audacity to come up here and basically say, Yeah, you're funny, but I'm better. That joke you told at the Holiday party was fine when the audience is a bunch of yuppies all hooked up on spiked egg nog, but could you hold your own in front of men and women who mourn the loss of Lynard Skynard.

More laughter.

HECKLER (O.C.)

And do you think you're better than all of us?

Seth thinks about it.

SETH

No, sir, I don't think I'm better than all of you. ... Just you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

More laughter.

SETH (CONT'D)
So, I was in New York last week...

Seth notices something in the audiences, which causes him to pause.

Seth' POV - Someone in the front rows of the audience is reading a book. We zoom in to reveal that the book is the same one that Megan showed him in her apartment earlier. The one titled "This Book Will Change Your Life."

SETH (CONT'D)
(thinking about the
book)
...uh.... Uh....

HECKLER (O.C.)
You suck!

Seth doesn't have a comeback. He is suffering from "Staircase wit."

INT. BOOKSTORE. DAY.

There's a marketing poster for Megan's book, as well as some other books by other authors.

Seth enters the store. An employee walks up to him.

EMPLOYEE
Excuse me, sir? Are you here to
get a book signed?

SETH
Oh, uh, yeah. That's right.

EMPLOYEE
Sure. Please, follow me.

The employee directs Seth where to go. Seth then thanks the employee.

Seth approaches the back of a line. Then he notices something off camera.

Seth' P.O.V.

Megan sitting at the table. Busy signing copies of her book, talking to people, doesn't look up, doesn't notice Seth.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BACK TO Seth

He smiles. Gives a look that suggest that he has fond memories of her.

BACK TO MEGAN

A man comes into frame, holding a bottle of water, approaching Megan. He sets the bottle of water on the table, kisses Megan on the lips. These two are definitely in love.

BACK TO Seth

A look of a man who's heart broken. Excuses himself from the line. Leaves the store.

INT. TRENDY RESTAURANT. NIGHT.

Back to the present. Seth and Vanessa at their table. Somber mood.

SETH

And that was the last time I saw her.

Seth takes a swig from his drink.

VANESSA

My God. That was such a beautiful story.

Seth nods, in appreciation.

VANESSA (CONT'D)

Do you ever use some of that in your stand-up material?

SETH

No.

The waiter sets the check down on the table. Seth reaches for the bill.

VANESSA

Oh, I've got it.

SETH

Are you sure?

VANESSA

Of course. It's a business expense.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Seth laughs. Vanessa gives him an enticing look, almost flirting. Seth reads it.

SETH

So... that's what this was, huh?
Business?

VANESSA

Well, yes.
(then)
Why?

SETH

(trying to work
around the obvious)
Oh... I don't know.

VANESSA

(disappointed)
You don't know?

Seth takes a deep breath. Then he speaks his mind.

SETH

Okay, Vanessa, I'll level with you here. I've been interviewed for what seems like a hundred times, and you're the first journalist, the first reporter... that I'm attracted to.

VANESSA

(flattered)
Yeah?

SETH

Of course. Look at you: You're smart, funny, beautiful...

VANESSA

Thank you.

SETH

I hope you don't find this to be presumptuous, but could I call you? Maybe we could go out?

There's a brief beat. Vanessa has the look of someone with something on their mind.

VANESSA

(terse)
Let's get out of here.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SETH
 (perking up; can't
 believe it)
 Are you serious?

VANESSA
 (then)
 Come on.

INT. VANESSA'S LIVING ROOM. LATE NIGHT.

Seth and Vanessa sit on a sofa. Their lips are locked in passion; Okay, they're making out.

Seth releases. Vanessa is confused.

SETH
 Have you ever wondered why we use
 coffee as the euphemism?

VANESSA
 (confused)
 Huh?

SETH
 (philosophically)
 Why do we choose coffee? ... Why
 not wine? Or Crackers? ... Or
 cheese?

Vanessa lunges at Seth, putting her tongue into his mouth. Then he comes up for air.

SETH (CONT'D)
 Okay, forget the cheese.

There's a short beat. Vanessa smiles at Seth.

VANESSA
 You're cute.

Vanessa stands up, then leads Seth into another room, which we presume to be her bedroom.

INT. BEDROOM

Nicely decorated, like the living room. Like a cover photo on a Pottery Barn catalogue.

Seth and Vanessa make out on an expensive poster board bed. She gets up, smiling.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VANESSA

I'll be right back.

Seth nods. Vanessa gets up from the bed, walks toward what we assume to be the bathroom.

VANESSA (CONT'D)

Oh, there's a box of condoms in the top drawer of the bedside table.

Vanessa goes into the bathroom. Closes the door behind her as she enters.

Seth gets off the bed with much jubilation, opens the drawer of the bedside table.

We focus now on Seth, as he tries to open the box of condoms. As he attempts this, the box slips out of his hand, and lands under the bed.

Seth gets down on the floor on his knees, reaches into the under of the bed with his arm. He grips something, pulls it out. Seth looks at it, taken aback. It's a book.

Close on - book. From the byline, we can tell that it's one of Megan's novels. Seth opens it, revealing notes written in it.

Close on - notes: The notes are scary, like as if whoever wrote the notes is dangerously obsessed with destroying Megan's career.

Back to Seth. Seth is taken aback, thinks about this. Doesn't know what to do.

Then we see it on his face that it finally dawns on him. This entire evening with Vanessa... it was a way of gaining information about Megan.

Seth thinks about something that Vanessa had said earlier.

VANESSA (V.O.) (FLASHBACK)
(CONT'D)

...I've heard that most novels tell us hard truths about life and injustice and oppression, but that the way the author does this is by camouflaging what they're really trying to tell us, hence the interests are hidden or invisible because everything is so brilliantly personal...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Seth is now conflicted. Does he sleep with Vanessa, knowing that she was only using him?

Then Vanessa steps out of the bathroom, she's wearing a very racy and sexy negligé. Sadly for him, Seth is no longer conflicted. Though it is clear on his face that he is not happy with the decision he is about to make.

VANESSA (CONT'D)
 (off Seth worried
 look)
 Something wrong?

Seth gives her a look that says "I can't do this."

INT. APARTMENT. DAY.

Present time. Seth' apartment unit. A new one.

Seth, wearing a ratty old workout outfit, takes a swig from some sort of healthy smoothie drink.

We then see Eric, stockier and balder now. He's reading a newspaper article. He see that from the masthead on the front page this newspaper is the *Boston Globe*, a hint at where Vanessa works

Seth takes a seat in the living room. Eric puts the newspaper down, disturbed about something.

Eric sighs. Shakes his head.

SETH
 Did you read the part where she destroyed my act? ... I don't think she even saw it.

ERIC
 You couldn't just sleep with her? ... I don't get it - you had a perfect opportunity thrown in your lap - literally - and you just toss it to the side. ... Do you realize how many men out there would have loved to have been in your situation?

SETH
 I've already told you. I couldn't do it. ... My conscience wouldn't let me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ERIC

That's why I never listen to mine.

SETH

Well, that's easy to do when your
conscience is a mute.

Eric ignores the snide comment, grabs a basketball from
the floor. Puts on a warm up suit jacket.

ERIC

Alright, let's just go to the
basketball court before it gets
too crowded.

SETH

Nice warm up suit, by the way.

ERIC

Thanks. It's Lycra.

(then)

Oh, hey, I forgot to mention this:
I saw Karen Bean the other day.

SETH

Oh, yeah. The woman you once told
her boyfriend to dress like you.

ERIC

Get this: We get to talking, and
she actually tells me that she's
sorry for suggesting that her
boyfriend dress like me. She
didn't realize how insensitive it
was at the time. She apologized -
nine year late, but nonetheless...
And, we're meeting for dinner
tonight. Not bad, eh? ... And she
still looks amazing, like she's
never aged.

Seth thinks about this.

SETH

So, what are you going to wear?

Eric is disturbed again. Depressed.

EXT. CITY STREET. DAY.

Just outside an apartment building. Seth and Eric
walking.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SETH

Oh, did I tell you: The booking producer for the Late Show called my manager this morning. I've been bumped off.

ERIC

Why?

SETH

Because of that article Vanessa wrote. It ran in some of the New York papers.

ERIC

That's terrible.

SETH

Said they found a replacement right away. Some other comedian from around here.

ERIC

Who?

SETH

I have no idea.

ERIC

Could be anyone, I guess.

This leaves Seth and Eric baffled, as they continue to walk. **[Note: Their expressions should be the same as they were after Eric told Seth about the Bulge of Uncertainty story earlier in the movie.]**

EXT. COFFEE HOUSE. DAY.

We see Sean Head, Seth and Eric's friend from earlier in the movie. He's older looking now, but is wearing a hairpiece.

He stands at the counter, ordering a drink.

SEAN

I'll have a vanilla soy nut latte with non-fat milk and two packet of Equal.

BARISTA

Four-thirty.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Sean pays the barista with a five. Drops change in a top jar. Walks away.

Sean notices something off camera. His POV - It's Megan, still very attractive. She's at a table, typing away at a laptop computer. **[Note: Keep in mind that Sean and Megan never met before.]**

He takes a seat at an empty table next to her. He finds her attractive. She notices him, smiles at him.

SEAN

Hi.

MEGAN

Oh, hello.

SEAN

I'm sorry to bother you, but may I ask you something?

Megan nods.

SEAN (CONT'D)

This is going to sound strange, but would you mind helping me out by listening to a joke I've come up with about computers. ... I'm a professional comedian and I'm scheduled to appear on national television next week. I just need some feedback.

MEGAN

Sure, go for it. ... I've reached an impasse with this anyway. And I should get going soon.

(she closes the
laptop lid)

So, how does this joke go?

SEAN

A mechanical engineer, an electrical engineer, a chemical engineer and a computer engineer were driving down the street in the same car. All of a sudden, the car broke down. ... The mechanical engineer says, "I think a rod broke." ... The chemical engineer says, "but the way it sputtered at the end, I don't think it's getting enough fuel." ...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SEAN (CONT'D)

The electrical engineer says, "I think there was a spark and something is wrong with a fuse." ... Then all three turned to the computer engineer and asked, "What do you think?" And the computer engineer says, "I think we should all get out of the car, then get back in and try the ignition again."

Megan laughs, for which seems out of politeness.

SEAN (CONT'D)

(off her laugh; re:
joke)

It's still a work in progress.

MEGAN

No, no, I thought it was very cute.

(then)

I was just thinking about someone, an ex-boyfriend of mine. He's a comedian, too. But he would never do a joke like that. He was more into telling these long, boring, immature narratives about - oh, I don't know - video games and baseball. Or recalling these pointless conversations about useless stuff with his friends that no one would really care about.

SEAN

Oh, those type of jokes never work. The key is to strike an immediate rapport with your audience. Give them something they can relate to.

Megan seems to agree.

MEGAN

I'm Megan, by the way.

SEAN

Sean.... Head.

(then)

So where are you off to now?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

MEGAN

I'm taking a cab into Cambridge. My brother is a grad student at MIT, and I'm meeting him and his new girlfriend for lunch.

SEAN

What a coincidence, I'm just about to head into Central Square. ... Would you be interested in sharing a cab? ... I have plenty more jokes.

MEGAN

Sure, I'd like that.

They smile at each other, again. She gets up from her seat. He gets up from his seat. They walk toward the exit.

SEAN

Hey... so, who's this comedian you were involved with? Perhaps I know him.

MEGAN

Oh, I seriously doubt it. ... He's really not that good.

Sean nods.

FADE OUT.

[Note: The following is a suggestion for after the credits.]

FADE IN:

INT. OFFICE. ERIC'S CUBICLE.

Eric on the phone, discreetly.

ERIC

Hello? Is this Vanessa Rios? ... Hi, Vanessa. You don't know me, but I'm a good friend of Seth Cobian's, you interviewed him a while back. ... Anyway, I understand that you might be looking for information on Megan Noa - I think I might be able to help you out. ... Uh-huh.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ERIC (CONT'D)

Are you, by any chance, maybe free
for dinner this evening? ...

(surprised)

Yes, my name is Eric Gardoza. How
did you...? Hello? ...
Vanessa? ... Hello?...

FADE OUT.