

A Change of Heart
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INT. DIVE BAR - NIGHT

Dark, smoky and nearly empty. Smooth Jazz plays on the radio. A BARTENDER polishes beer mugs. DENNIS (37), sad-sack, sits at the bar staring into his drink.

A WOMAN (40s), been around the block a few times, voice full of gravel, steps to the bar and motions for the Bartender.

WOMAN
Vodka on the rocks.

Dennis meets her gaze. He opens his mouth to speak, but can't find words.

She waits... this is getting awkward. Suddenly Dennis' face contorts into a look of pain and he bursts into tears.

DENNIS
(through sobs)
Will you have sex with me?

The Woman looks for the Bartender, impatient.

DENNIS
I'll be quick, I swear.

WOMAN
Sorry. If there's one thing I
learned in high school it's not to
fuck crying forty year old men.

The Bartender arrives. She grabs her drink, throws down money and hurries off.

DENNIS
(calling after)
But I'm thirty-seven.

IN THE CORNER

Sitting alone, nursing a brandy is TRACEY (30), surprisingly attractive for this place. She watches Dennis hang his head in shame as she speaks into her cell phone.

TRACEY
Yeah, Dimitri. I've got one...
Let's just say he's the easiest
mark I could ever hope to have...
Be ready, it won't take long.

She hangs up, grabs her drink and makes her way to...

THE BAR

She plops down beside Dennis, full of false perkiness.

TRACEY

You're gonna have to work on your
pick up lines.

He doesn't even lift his head.

DENNIS

What's the point? I'm just gonna
die anyway.

TRACEY

Alright, that's strike two. One
more clunker and I'm going back to
my seat.

DENNIS

It's not a joke. I have a
congenital heart defect.

Perkiness is replaced by clear disappointment, like Tracey's
night has just been ruined.

TRACEY

Oh.

DENNIS

The doctors say I won't live
another month without a transplant,
but I'm so far down the donor list,
it's impossible.

TRACEY

I see... And what about your other
organs, how are they?

DENNIS

Huh?

TRACEY

Nevermind. I'm sure they're fine.

Tracey sips her drink.

DENNIS

It's just, there were so many
things I wanted to do before I
died. I've never even had sex.

TRACEY

A virgin?

DENNIS

(nods)

I thought if I came here I might...
but no. I'm never gonna have sex.
I'll never have a wife, or kids. My
Asian landlord's gonna eat my cat.

He descends back into sobbing.

DENNIS

Oh, Fluffles...

TRACEY

Calm down. No one's going to eat
your cat.

DENNIS

How do you know?

TRACEY

Cause that's stupid.

She takes a look at the sniveling mess before her

TRACEY

I mean, Jesus Christ, *man up*. My
life's been shitty too, but you
don't see me crying on about it.

Dennis composes himself.

DENNIS

What's wrong with you?

TRACEY

Let's just say, when I took out a
hundred thousand dollars in student
loans for med school, I thought I'd
be doing something different with
my life.

Tracey sips her drink, sullen.

TRACEY

I wanted to help people. But I
guess there's no money in that
anymore.

DENNIS

So what *do* you do?

TRACEY
You're looking at it.

Tracey drinks again. Dennis looks around, confused. All he sees is two shlubs at a bar.

DENNIS
Does it pay well?

TRACEY
Like you wouldn't believe.

DENNIS
I don't understand.

TRACEY
Honey, if you understood what I was talking about you'd run screaming from the room.

DENNIS
Try me.

She dismisses him with a head shake.

DENNIS
Oh come on, I'm a real good listener. Like sometimes, my cat will go, "mer-mer-mer" and I know she's getting hungry. And other times she'll be like, "raaaoooww" and I know to leave her alone for a little bit.

Tracey can't help but smile at this.

DENNIS
Look, forget the sex-

TRACEY
Done.

DENNIS
Just tell me about yourself. Your likes, dislikes, things you've been through. I won't judge any of it, I swear.

Tracey looks at Dennis and considers him long and hard. He looks earnest. Innocent. Like a thirty-seven year old puppy.

TRACEY
What's your name?

DENNIS
Dennis. You?

She swirls what's left of her drink, thinking...

TRACEY
Brandy.

DENNIS
Well, hi Brandy.

Tracey downs her brandy and pushes the glass away.

TRACEY
You know what, Dennis? I'm gonna help you with your problem.

DENNIS
You wanna adopt my Fluffles?

TRACEY
Your *other* problem.
(off blank stare)
What I'm saying is, I think we should get out of here and get a hotel room.

DENNIS
Really?!

TRACEY
Yes, but on two conditions. First, you need to order us both another round of drinks. And second, go clean yourself up so you don't look like you've been crying all night.

Dennis stands up, excited.

DENNIS
Sure thing. Bartender! Two more drinks on me.

He rushes off, digging his phone out as he goes.

DENNIS
I'm gonna update my status.

Once he's gone Tracey brings her phone out and dials.

TRACEY

Dimitri? I need a favor. Call up Mikhail and have him bring over the last harvest... It's exactly what it sounds like... Well, if I have to pay, it's not a favor... Fine. Just do it... Yeah, I feel the same about you.

She hangs up. The Bartender brings their drinks.

BARTENDER

Is that guy bothering you?

TRACEY

No. He's just telling me about his Fluffles.

BARTENDER

Fucking pervert.

The Bartender heads off. Tracey pulls Dennis' drink toward her, puts her purse on the bar and rummages through it.

She brings out a PILL BOTTLE and starts unscrewing the top.

INT. DIVE HOTEL ROOM - LATER

Tracey and Dennis stumble into the gaudy and ash stained room. Tracy supports Dennis, who looks completely blasted and can barely keep his feet.

She sets him on the bed and goes to close the door.

DENNIS

(despondent)

This isn't fair. I'm not gonna make it. This is just my luck. I shouldn't have had that last drink.

Tracey comes back to him and rests a pillow under his head.

TRACEY

Don't you start crying again or I'm gonna change my mind.

DENNIS

Alright. But if I fall asleep can you have sex with me anyway?

TRACEY

Sure.

DENNIS

Can you film it?

She ignores that, grabs her purse and heads into the bathroom, leaving the door open.

Dennis struggles to look around...

DENNIS' POV- The open bathroom door. Tracey comes into view putting on a pair of MEDICAL GLOVES. She SNAPS the latex.

On Dennis' face, a look of confusion, and finally, approval.

DENNIS

Sweet.

Dennis passes out.

INT. HOTEL BATHROOM - DAY

Dennis awakens in a bathtub... a bathtub filled with ice. A SIX INCH incision is stitched closed on his chest. He scans the room groggily.

A few feet away, a sickly-looking HUMAN HEART sits on the basin. And on the bathroom tiles before him, a message scrawled in his own blood...

"CALL 911"

...

...

"YOU'RE WELCOME"

He takes it all in again... A ripped out, broken heart. A hastily written goodbye. Blood everywhere.

DENNIS

(smiling)

I'm not a virgin anymore.

FADE OUT