

A Peeling  
by Steve Burton

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FADE IN

EXT. OCEAN BEACH - SPRING DAY

It is overcast and breezy.

An attractive man in his thirties with a camera stands alone to face the ocean.

He takes a picture towards the horizon.

He looks out over the desolate beach with few people.

After he quickly looks both ways again, his pants get unzipped and then he pisses on the sand.

INT. BEACH HOME - FOLLOWING

Through binoculars, the man on the beach begins to walk.

The binoculars are put down on a table next to a camera.

EXT. BEACH - FOLLOWING

The man continues to walk.

EXT. BOARDWALK - FOLLOWING

The man steps on to it from the beach and then interrupted.

VOICE (OS)

Excuse me.

He looks in the direction of a striking woman with a camera.

WOMAN

May I take your picture?

MAN

Sure.

WOMAN

Thanks.

MAN  
Right here?

WOMAN  
Yes, that's fine.

She moves in with the camera for a head shot close-up.

MAN  
Why?....

WOMAN  
Just a minute. A couple more  
please.

She takes two more at different angles.

WOMAN  
Good.

MAN  
Ok. Now it's my turn of you.

WOMAN  
Sure. How about over there?

She points towards the railing with the ocean as backdrop.

MAN  
Fine.

She moves over there to strike a campy, fun pose, and then  
he takes a shot.

MAN  
Ok, now why this interest?

WOMAN  
Good question. Ooh mysterious!  
And there's more.

MAN  
But....

WOMAN  
Come on, let's go take a look.  
Hello, I'm Jenny.

MAN

Tom.

INT. LOFT - FOLLOWING

The space is open and sparsely furnished.

They move into an area dominated by various photographs and paintings randomly arranged.

JENNY

Please, have a seat.

Tom sits in an overstuffed chair.

She moves towards a computer, and then downloads from the camera.

After a quick look at the screen, she motions to Tom.

He moves to the computer.

FLASH images of Tom appear.

He looks away from the computer to notice several long distant printed images of him on the beach.

TOM

What's with all those pictures of me?

JENNY

Let's start with curiosity.

TOM

Ok. You've been spying on me.

JENNY

I like to call it observing.

TOM

Well, I don't know...

JENNY

It's just part of my thing. You come here a lot.

TOM

Yes, and usually alone.

JENNY

Except for my long lens.

TOM

Well, I guess so. But, why me?

JENNY

I don't know yet, but just going with the flow. I'm an artist. You may have seen my work. Anyway, my latest is over here...

They move to a worktable in another part of the room, where she picks up a photograph.

JENNY

First off, I get a headshot image of a stranger. Here's one.

FLASH headshot of a man.

JENNY

Now, I take this as the only information about him and then the imagination takes over and voila.

She picks up a larger canvas, which is a painted image of the same face with a nude body.

JENNY

Then, the next step is this.

She presents a photo of the same man in the nude.

JENNY

I took this after finishing the painting.

The nude painting and the photograph are next each other.

TOM

You just do men?

JENNY

Oh, no. Ok, now that's three steps. And there's one more.

She presents another nude painting of the same man.

JENNY

Now, here finally I paint based upon the actual nude photo. And that makes four interpretations of the same person. And then hang them next to each other.

TOM

Very interesting.

JENNY

Now, I'm jazzed to do you.

TOM

What?

JENNY

Paint your face based on the photos with an imaginary nude body.

TOM

Well, it might not be the right body.

JENNY

That doesn't matter, because then you come in and pose nude for a photo. Followed up by a painting of that.

TOM

But, I don't know you and to just take my clothes off.....

JENNY

Look, that's the whole point of

this thing. We're strangers.  
Starting off with only visuals.  
Face, body, and then throwing  
in imagination to make it real  
or not.

TOM

Maybe, I have to think about  
this.

JENNY

Ok, Ok. I've thrown a lot at you.  
I'll get the first phase of you  
painted, and then take it from  
there.

She moves to pick up and give him a business card.

JENNY

Here. I am a legit artist.

Then, she hands him a postcard.

JENNY

Go and see some of my other work  
at this gallery.

TOM

I will.

JENNY

It's going to be an exciting,  
memorable experience. It may hurt,  
but not much. Oh, what do you do?

TOM

I work in a custom photo lab and  
also a photographer.

JENNY

Great! See how all this is  
connecting.

INT. SUBWAY CAR - FOLLOWING

Tom sits and looks out a window towards another car that  
moves along side on the next track.

EXT. SIDEWALK - EARLY EVENING

Tom walks along a crowded Manhattan street.

INT. THE "AURA" BAR - FOLLOWING

Friendly patrons greet Tom as he enters.

Tom approaches a table where his uncle Fred, a warm middle-aged man sits.

FRED

Hi, how was the beach?

TOM (Sits.)

Different.

FRED

How?

TOM

I met this woman.

FRED

Ok, Spill it.

TOM

First, the usual? I'll buy the first round.

FRED

Sounds good.

Rosie, a cute young perky bar maid, interrupts them.

ROSIE

Would you guys do me a favor and give me a hug?

They both get up and give her a warm hug.

ROSIE

Thanks, I needed that positive flow. My Mercury is in retrograde.

TOM

And how about your Lincoln?

ROSIE

What? Oh! Very funny, you got me.  
I needed that. My energy has been  
pulling me down, but now I feel  
better. And how are you?

TOM

It's Friday and I have all next week  
off.

ROSIE

Well, that calls for a celebration!  
Same treats?

TOM

Fine with me.

FRED

Ditto. (Rosie leaves for the bar.)  
Oh, I want to share some recent  
work.

He refers to the wrapped painting that leans up against  
the table.

TOM

Is it finished?

FRED

No, not yet.

TOM

Then, wait until later.

FRED

Oh sure, fine. I just thought you  
might like to see it.

Fred seems a little confused, but attempts to cover up.

FRED

About that girl?...

Rosie arrives with the drinks.

ROSIE

Here we go!

TOM

Thanks. (Exchanges money.)

FRED

Cheers! Here's to a seat on the train!

ROSIE

Oh, speaking of the subway, last Thursday night at about 8:30, I got on an empty N train in downtown Brooklyn. And I remained the only person in this car all the way to 8<sup>th</sup> street in Manhattan where I got off. Can you believe it? It was like the twilight zone.

FRED

Nobody got on or off?

ROSIE

Yes, I swear to God! More later.

As she turns to walk away, her foot bumps into Fred's painting that leans against the table.

ROSIE

Oh, I'm sorry.

FRED

No damage. (He pulls it out to display.) Take a look at my latest.

FLASH on a vague painting of two people in dull colors.

ROSIE

Very interesting. Keep up the good work. I'd love to see it again when you ad color.

FRED

No, it's going to stay that way. I thought it would be interesting

to take a color snapshot and paint my impression in black and white.

ROSIE

That's different. I've always liked black and white films, especially on the big screen.

Rosie moves to the bar.

TOM

That's pretty hard to believe.

FRED

What? The painting?

TOM

No, that story about the subway.

FRED

Well, it's possible.

TOM

Maybe.

INT. JENNY'S LOFT - FOLLOWING

Jenny gazes at the headshot photo of Tom with moody jazz music in the background.

She props it up near an easel, and then picks up a brush to begin work.

INT. AURA BAR AREA - FOLLOWING

Rosie works as she engages in friendly banter with others.

MAN

Hey Rosie how about going out with me for cigarette break?

ROSIE

I gave those up a long time ago.

MAN

I did too recently. For ten hours while I was asleep!

INT. AURA TABLE AREA - FOLLOWING

Tom and Fred sit with drinks Tom points at the painting.

TOM

Are you taking this somewhere?

FRED

Oh no, not particularly. I just thought maybe someone here might like to see it. I showed it to my group the other night.

TOM

Which one?

FRED

Arts Synonymous.

TOM

Arts Anonymous?

FRED

No, not anonymous, but synonymous. It's not a twelve-step program.

TOM

What is the group for?

FRED

Well, it's like a support group for creative people. We all get together and talk about what we're doing. You know, like encouragement and all that.

TOM

Did they react to your painting?

FRED

Yes, they liked it. That always makes me feel good and want to go on.

TOM

O.K.

FRED

Yeah! This group is great! They keep praising me or I mean encouraging me.

TOM

Everybody needs that. I felt that today.

FRED

Oh, you mean with this girl earlier?

TOM

Maybe, I don't know yet.

FRED

Sounds interesting! You know I'm always ready to hear about it when it's right.

TOM

I know. You will.

FRED

Well, in the meantime, like I've I've told you before. I think Rosie likes you.

TOM

I hope not!

FRED

Why?

INT. AURA BAR AREA - FOLLOWING

FLASH on Rosie as she continues her friendly routines at the bar.

INT. AURA TABLE AREA - FOLLOWING

TOM

She's nice enough, but the head

always seems to be in the clouds...talking about astrology, energy fields, peace, love, happiness, all that.

FRED

I find that interesting. I don't know how much of it to believe, but maybe that's all it takes. Just believing can feel good.

TOM

Yes, I believe in this drink.

FRED

I'll drink to that.

TOM

Does that mean I'm an alcoholic?

FRED

Nah! It just means you've found something to believe in.

TOM

That makes sense.

FRED

You ready for another? My turn.

TOM

Sure.

FRED (Gestures to Rosie.)

Two more please.

INT. AURA BAR AREA - FOLLOWING

FLASH on Rosie as she waves back.

INT. AURA TABLE AREA - FOLLOWING

Fred and Tom relax with jukebox music, and then Rosie brings two drinks, followed by Fred who pays with a generous tip.

FRED

Thanks a lot.

ROSIE

Anytime. You guys have good  
vibes.

She picks up the money, and then leaves.

TOM

She always gives us a free round.

FRED

I know. Does she give us the free  
drinks on the rounds you buy or  
me?

TOM

I think mine mostly, but it  
doesn't matter.

FRED

No.

TOM

Rosie's subway story reminds me  
of a time when somebody felt my  
ass as I was standing in a packed  
car and couldn't move.

FRED

Didn't you get pissed?

TOM

No.

FRED

Why?

TOM

I guess because it was so weird,  
but harmless.

FRED

Did you see who did it?

TOM

Well, this huge crowd got off  
at 23<sup>rd</sup> street.

FRED

Yeah, and the nut who felt your  
ass had already gotten off.

TOM

Right. But, I couldn't see who did  
it and I walked up the station  
steps feeling strangely good.

FRED

I'd want to know who did it.  
Or maybe not. Anyway, I guess  
you'll never know.

TOM

No. I'm going to the can.

Tom gets up.

INT. AURA ENTRANCE - FOLLOWING

A buxom, sexy, middle-aged woman enters.

She looks around and then slowly walks towards the table  
section.

INT. AURA TABLE AREA - FOLLOWING

She stops near Fred to exchange pleasant glances.

She boldly approaches Fred, sits down beside him, puts her  
arm around him, and then kisses him on the lips.

WOMAN

Hello.

FRED

Hi.

WOMAN

How are you doing?

FRED  
Better. Real good.

She continues to toy with Fred.

INT. AURA RESTROOM - FOLLOWING

Tom washes his hands in the sink next to a toilet stall, when low voices come from within it.

MALE VOICE (OS)  
Oh, baby you're incredible. Did you miss me?

FEMALE VOICE (OS)  
Yes, and always thinking about you.

MALE VOICE (OS)  
Honey, let's get outa here.

FEMALE (OS)  
I'd love that.

MALE VOICE (OS)  
Let's go.

The stall door opens while Tom dries his hands, and then a "goofy" guy walks out to leave the room.

Tom notices the empty stall as he moves out.

INT. AURA BAR AREA - FOLLOWING

Tom approaches to see the "goofy" guy by himself at the end of the bar.

INT. AURA TABLE AREA - FOLLOWING

Tom returns to the table.

He picks up his camera while he does a quick take on Fred with the strange woman.

He moves away with the camera.

INT. AURA BAR AREA - FOLLOWING

The "goofy" guy sips a drink while Rosie works.

Tom aims and takes a distant picture of him, which catches Rosie's attention.

TOM

Do you see that guy over there at the end of the bar?

ROSIE

Yes.

TOM

Well, I was just in the restroom and I heard two distinct voices coming from the toilet stall.

ROSIE

Interesting.

TOM

I just thought there were two people in there for whatever. A female and a male voice.

ROSIE

Ok?

TOM

Well, just one guy walked out of there and it was him.

ROSIE

What? Are you drunk and hearing things?

TOM

No, I swear! I'm not making this up.

ROSIE

Oh my God! What is this? Bi-polar in the toilet?

INT. AURA TABLE AREA - FOLLOWING

Tom approaches the table, and then sits down near the strange woman and Fred.

FRED

Ah, Tom this is. I'm sorry, what's your name?

WOMAN

Linda.

FRED

Linda, meet my nephew Tom.

TOM

Hi. Do you know his name?

LINDA

No.

TOM

Linda, meet Fred.

LINDA

Hello Fred.

FRED

Yes. Do you want a drink?

LINDA

Anything you say, as long as it's a screwdriver.

FRED

You got it.

He tries to signal someone at the bar.

TOM

It might be faster to go up there.

FRED

Good idea. I'll be right back.

He knocks over his painting, and then dashes away.

Tom quickly sets the painting back up against the table.

LINDA

What's your name again?

TOM

Tom.

LINDA

It always takes me at least three times to get a new name, so don't be surprised if I ask you again, Tom.

TOM

Do you come in here much?

LINDA

Oh, yes. But, I change my hair color and style a lot.

TOM

Well, then maybe I did see. Do you live and work in the neighborhood?

LINDA

No, not as a rule.

Fred returns with the drinks.

FRED

Here you go!

LINDA

Thanks.

FRED

Here's to friendship!

They click glasses. Linda downs the drink as Tom and Fred sip.

LINDA (To Fred.)

What's your name again?

FRED

Fred.

LINDA

Let's get outa here!

FRED

O.K.

LINDA (To Tom.)

We'll see you later.

FRED

I need to go to the cash machine anyway. I'll talk to you soon. Have fun.

Linda and Fred exit.

Tom gets up with his drink.

INT. AURA BAR AREA - FOLLOWING

Tom sits next to the "goofy" guy, and then signals for Rosie's attention.

TOM

Did you see that girl Fred left with just now?

ROSIE

Yes, Linda. She comes in here every so often. Does he know her?

TOM

No, and I hope he knows what he's doing.

ROSIE

Me too. I like him.

TOM

Yes, he's family. Hell, I know him better than my dad, whom I never really had.

ROSIE

What happened?

TOM

Oh, he's still around. I don't hate or dislike him, but don't know him. He took off when I was three with my sister.

FLASHBACK twenty five years ago, with a cute toe headed toddler as he plays in a yard, and then interrupted by a car door slam.

CUT TO

A man in a car drives off as a little girl cries.

CUT TO

A little blond girl cries while she sits in the car as it takes off.

FLASHBACK ends.

Back to BAR.

ROSIE

That's heavy.

TOM

Yes, but the relationship with my mom was good. May she rest in peace. Anyway, besides the uncle thing with Fred, we have a friendship.

ROSIE

But, something's changed.

TOM

What?

ROSIE

Fred's not here. This weekly series has a formula change. Is this a spin-off or what?

TOM

So he's gone. He's wherever  
doing his thing and so am I.

ROSIE

Sounds like a good idea. Maybe,  
I'll get to know you better  
without your security blanket.

TOM

What? I don't have anything like  
that! I never even had one as a  
kid.

ROSIE

Maybe, that's why you need one  
now.

TOM

Look, don't back me into a  
corner here! Let me breathe.

ROSIE

All right. I wasn't trying to  
take your oxygen away. I was  
just trying to light a fire.

TOM

I don't know what you're talking  
about.

ROSIE

Maybe you will. But, later  
because some empty glasses are  
calling.

TOM

Calling you what?

ROSIE

Hah! Hah!

She moves away.

INT. BANK MACHINE - FOLLOWING

Fred works a transaction while Linda is in the

background with others as they wait.

EXT. SIDEWALK - FOLLOWING

Fred tries to keep up with the free spirited Linda as they move down the street.

INT. AURA BAR AREA - FOLLOWING

Tom looks towards the "goofy" guy next to him.

TOM

How are you doing?

GOOFY MAN

Not bad. This is my first time here.

TOM

Welcome, my name's Tom.

GOOFY MAN

Edward.

TOM

Nice meeting you. I feel like we've met before.

EDWARD

Oh really. I wonder where?

TOM

I don't know, but it will come to me. There's something about your voice. Do you know anybody here?

EDWARD

No, not yet.

TOM

You will. It's a very friendly place. I'll see you around.

Tom walks away towards the table section.

INT. AURA ENTRANCE - FOLLOWING

Linda, with a confused Fred enters.

Fred follows Linda towards the bar area.

INT. AURA BAR AREA - FOLLOWING

Linda and Fred sit on stools at the bar near Edward.

Fred looks around and then waves at someone.

INT. AURA TABLE AREA - FOLLOWING

Tom alone at a table waves back.

INT. AURA ENTRANCE - FOLLOWING

Richard, a well dressed middle-aged man enters and then walks towards the bar.

INT. AURA BAR AREA - FOLLOWING

Richard sits on a stool next to Linda in a familiar way.

INT. AURA ENTRANCE - FOLLOWING

A plainly dressed woman enters with a Bible, and then stops to address the bar.

WOMAN

The devil is working overtime and he doesn't take coffee breaks!

INT. AURA BAR AREA - FOLLOWING

Patrons drinking.

RICHARD (Loudly.)

Maybe, he can't drink coffee because of the caffeine. You know, high blood pressure. So, he takes cocktail breaks instead. I'd like a daiquiri please.

ROSIE

Coming right up.

The woman moves into the bar section.

WOMAN

All you sinners have a good laugh,  
while the good Lord up above is  
crying out for your salvation. I  
pray that the "man" up above finds  
a way into all your heathen hearts.  
Praise the Lord!

RICHARD

Here's to salvation!

Linda, Rosie, and Richard applaud the woman, whose  
name is Marie.

Richard clicks glasses with Linda.

Fred moves away from the bar.

ROSIE

Very good, Marie! If I was casting  
the part, it would be yours.

RICHARD

Yes.

LINDA

Bravo!

MARIE

You think so? Well, the audition is  
tomorrow. Wish me luck.

ROSIE

Or break a leg.

RICHARD

What is it for?

MARIE

An off Broadway play. My cousin,  
Alice, knows the director's lover  
real well. And she's going to put  
in a good word for me.

RICHARD

Oh, yes, connections are everything.

ROSIE

I have a feeling you're going to get it. I charted your moon for tomorrow and it's lined up beautifully with Saturn, which is perfect for a Pisces.

MARIE

Pisces? But, I'm an Aquarius!

ROSIE

You're kidding? I thought you were a Pisces.

MARIE

No.

RICHARD

I'm a Pisces. Maybe, I should audition.

MARIE

Now, that would be funny.

RICHARD

Yes, but I have no interest in the theatre. I prefer the simple life.

ROSIE

I can't believe I got your sign mixed up and hope I'm not slipping. A lot of people depend on me for their charts and predictions.

MARIE

Don't worry about it. Anyway, I think the part is destined for me.

LINDA

Yes, destiny. It's everything.

ROSIE

Are you going to be able to work your late shift all right? What time is the audition?

MARIE

Not until 2:30, so I'll be able to get some winks in. But, it doesn't matter anyway. I sometimes do better at auditions if I'm a little tired. Less anxious and more relaxed.

LINDA

Yes, relaxation. It's everything. It keeps the real self from hiding.

MARIE

Very well put, but it's hard sometimes.

LINDA

I know.

INT. AURA TABLE AREA - FOLLOWING

Fred joins Tom at the table.

TOM

What brings you back?

FRED

It just didn't seem to be working out? She's all over the place. One minute she seems interested, and then the next she gets distracted. I give up.

TOM

Well, don't worry about it. Someone else will come along, or not.

FRED

You ready for a drink?

TOM

Sure, why not.

FRED

It's your round.

TOM

It is? How do you know for sure?

FRED

This is a catch up, because last week I bought one more round than you.

TOM

You're kidding!

FRED

No, not really. But, I was just keeping score that's all.

TOM

I don't understand.

FRED

Look, I'm sorry. I think I've had too much excitement or drink.

TOM

I didn't think I was being unfair.

FRED

You're not. Let's just forget about it.

TOM

O.K. Let's get another drink and we'll buy our own.

FRED

No, I'll get this one.

TOM

But, you said I owe you one.

FRED

No please. We don't owe each other anything.

TOM

No, we don't.

FRED

But, I feel bad because I caused all this fuss. So, I'll buy the drinks.

TOM

All right, all right. But, after that we'll get our own.

FRED

Fine.

Rosie approaches with two drinks.

ROSIE

These are on the house for being such great guys and customers.

TOM

Well, that solves that.

ROSIE

What?

FRED

Never mind. It's something stupid I'd like to forget.

INT. AURA BAR AREA - FOLLOWING

Linda, Richard, and Edward carry on.

RICHARD

What does a sailor and a submarine and have in common?

LINDA

No idea.

EDWARD

What?

RICHARD

They are both full of semen.

INT. AURA DANCE FLOOR - FOLLOWING

A DJ sets up some AV equipment.

A banner reads, "Disco Friday at the AURA".

EXT. OCEAN BEACH - FOLLOWING

A dark view of the waves and shore.

INT. JENNY'S LOFT - FOLLOWING

Jenny stands to look at the painting she has been working on.

INT. AURA TABLE AREA - FOLLOWING

Rosie stands at the Table.

TOM

You said something was in retrograde. Well, it feels like a full moon too.

ROSIE

It's a strange night, but the moon is not full. It feels like a Saturday night, because that's when Linda and Richard usually come in.

TOM

I've never come in on a Saturday.

FRED

I have.

TOM

I didn't know that.

FRED

Sure, a few times.

ROSIE

Say, I just got off my shift. Can I join you guys?

TOM

Sure.

ROSIE  
I'll be right back.

She moves away.

INT. AURA BAR AREA - FOLLOWING

Marie sets up for her shift near Edward, Linda, Richard, and others. Rosie mixes a drink as louder disco music begins to play.

INT. AURA TABLE AREA - FOLLOWING

At Tom and Fred's table.

TOM  
Now's your chance.

FRED  
What?

TOM  
Get to know Rosie better.

FRED  
She's more interested in you and closer to the same age.

TOM  
Don't be so sure. And age doesn't matter. It's about connection.

Rosie returns with a drink.

ROSIE  
Party time!

FRED  
Cheers!

ROSIE  
What happened with you and Linda?

FRED  
Nothing much. She looks like what I want, but it's not working out.

ROSIE

Doesn't sound like a good night.

FRED

I've had better.

ROSIE

Well, I'm here to help change that.  
Come on Tom, how about a dance?

TOM

All right.

Rosie and Tom move away.

INT. JENNY'S LOFT - FOLLOWING

Jenny opens the door to Chad, her boyfriend, followed by a kiss.

CHAD

How's things?

JENNY

I've been working; so let's take  
a break.

INT. AURA DANCE FLOOR - FOLLOWING

On the dance floor with a few other people, Rosie and Tom  
dance to Disco music.

The happy, loose Linda and Richard join them.

Linda's dance moves quickly becomes sexual, with Richard  
as well.

Linda focuses on something off the dance floor, which  
causes her to move away.

INT. AURA TABLE AREA - FOLLOWING

Linda approaches Fred and then seductively pulls him up.

INT. JENNY'S LOFT - FOLLOWING

While Chad intently looks at the painting, Jenny comes up behind with drinks.

JENNY

What do you think? It's coming along. I just met him today.

CHAD

You have put his face to my body! What's going on here?

JENNY

I don't know what his body looks like yet. It's all imagination, so far.

INT. AURA DANCE FLOOR - FOLLOWING

On the dance floor, Linda pulls Fred into the dance, where she continues to tease and taunt him.

INT. JENNY'S LOFT - FOLLOWING

Jenny and Chad continue to look at the painting.

CHAD

But, that's my body!

JENNY

Well, maybe similar, but it's not you.

CHAD

Oh, yes it is!

JENNY

It's just that I've seen your body a lot. It's in my mind.

CHAD

Ok, but what is this project? Doing nudes of strange men. It's porno!

JENNY

Look, I've done women too. It's an installation and it's art. It's about assumptions and identity. You'll see.

She moves to other paintings nearby next to their headshots and then gestures towards them with explanation.

JENNY

These are some of the others in the show. Women and men who all began as strangers. You see, some of the women's body's may look like me in the first set of paintings, before I actually see their nude body. It's a frame a reference that changes, resulting in the final painting from their nude photo. Do you see where I'm going?

CHAD

Not exactly, but maybe I will.

JENNY

Or maybe not, but it will be exciting to see all of these on display.

CHAD

Yes, it's unique.

JENNY

And so are you. That's what this is all about.

CHAD

Yeah, but it looked like you were putting my body with another face. Like trying to improve on me or something. Or make an idealized version.

JENNY

Oh, no honey. But, if that's how

you interpret it, that's ok too.  
That's what this is all about.  
Impressions and how diverse that  
can be. This may offend a few  
people. Look what it's done  
with you.

INT. AURA DANCE FLOOR - FOLLOWING

They dance in a fever pitch, when Linda screams out.

LINDA  
Take me home!

She collapses and then passes out on the floor.

Fred rushes to her, followed by Rosie, Richard, and Tom.

Fred tries to lift her head.

ROSIE  
Don't move her.

TOM  
Yeah, maybe something's broken.

FRED  
We've got to do something!

RICHARD  
I know CPR.

TOM  
She doesn't need mouth to mouth.

RICHARD  
I didn't say I was going to put  
my mouth on her, Mr. Doctor!

TOM  
Just calm down! We don't know  
what's wrong!

RICHARD  
All right. If you need help,  
I'll be at the bar.

He walks off in a huff, and then Marie calls out from the bar.

MARIE

Do you want me to call 911?

ROSIE

Maybe. But, wait a minute. Pat her face.

Fred pats Linda's face after which she responds with moans.

LINDA

Help me! Help me! Take me away!

FRED

Where?

LINDA

Anywhere, anywhere!

ROSIE

Let's see if we can get her up on her feet. I don't think anything is broken. She's just had too much of whatever.

They all help Linda get up.

FRED

Where does she live?

ROSIE

I don't know. Does any one here know?

No response.

FRED

I can take her to my place around the corner. She can rest or maybe I can call a doctor.

TOM

I'll come with you.

FRED

No, I can handle it. I live on the first floor.

TOM

What's that got to do with anything?

FRED

I won't have any trouble getting her into the apartment.

TOM

So, what happens after you get there? You don't know her. It's just better if the two of us are there.

FRED

Why?

TOM

Two heads are better than one.

FRED

You're right.

TOM

Then, let's go.

FRED

Wait. Linda's head and mine make two. That's enough.

TOM

You might think so, but I would feel better.....

FRED

No! I'm sorry, but this isn't about You feeling better. Linda and I will be fine.

ROSIE

Let's not argue. They should be all right. She needs to rest and food maybe. Do you have food?

FRED  
Yes, don't worry.

Fred moves slowly with Linda towards the door.

ROSIE  
Call if you need anything.

FRED  
I will.

Fred and Linda Exit.

INT. AURA BAR AREA - FOLLOWING

An upset Richard drinks next to Edward.

EDWARD  
Fasten your seat belts! It's going  
to be a bumpy night!

This flawless imitation of Bette Davis gets Richards's  
quick attention.

RICHARD  
And you're fucking crazy!

INT. AURA TABLE AREA - FOLLOWING

Rosie sits with Tom at the table.

TOM  
How well do you know Linda?

ROSIE  
Just a little. She's sort of a free  
spirit.

TOM  
He could be in for trouble.

ROSIE  
No, Linda is harmless.

TOM  
How do you know?

ROSIE  
I'm going on instinct.

TOM  
Well, it could be wrong. Forget the moon, stars, and instincts. Look at the facts. We don't know anything about Linda.....

ROSIE  
There's nothing wrong with the moon, stars, or my instincts! I trust them and usually get into trouble when I don't. Don't you think Fred can take care of himself?

TOM  
No! He's too trusting.

ROSIE  
And you're not trusting enough!  
What perfect compliments.

TOM  
Come on. We're talking about Fred, not me.

ROSIE  
Maybe, we should be talking about you.

EXT.      SIDEWALK      -      FOLLOWING

Fred gently guides Linda.

INT.      JENNY'S BEDROOM      -      FOLLOWING

Jenny and Chad lay silently and distantly next to each other in bed.

INT.      FRED'S APARTMENT      -      FOLLOWING

Fred leads Linda into his small cluttered place.

INT. AURA TABLE AREA - FOLLOWING

Rosie and Tom sit at the table.

ROSIE

I truly believe that Fred is just trying to help someone in need and it will probably make him feel good.

TOM

You don't know him like I do. He has a long history of getting taken for a ride.

ROSIE

Then, why didn't you stop him?

TOM

I'm not about to tell him how to live his life.

ROSIE

So, you're telling me about it instead. Or, what are we talking about? Are you trying to deny Fred happiness?

TOM

No, of course not. I hope he's happy with Linda or anybody else, but someone like you would be better for him.

ROSIE

You've decided this for him?

TOM

I even told him that.

ROSIE

Did he agree?

TOM

Yes, but he's shy.

ROSIE

Oh, that's no excuse. Everyone is shy. (Pause.) Would you mind massaging my neck a little?

TOM

I'm not that good at it.

ROSIE

Don't worry. Whatever you do will be fine. I just need some outside touching.

Tom begins to massage her neck.

TOM

I can feel some knots.

ROSIE

Yes, but I think they're going away. One by one. Linda just might be the ticket for Fred, even more than me. Although, we both know that I'm God's Gift to all males.

Marie approaches and begins to massage Tom's neck.

MARIE

Let's have a three way.

TOM

Go right ahead.

MARIE

No problem. Beside, I had to get away from the bar for a minute.

ROSIE

What, Irving again?

MARIE

Yes, he won't quit.

TOM

Who's that?

MARIE

Don't look now, but he's at the far end of the bar.

FLASH on an older man who sits and leers at the bar towards Marie.

MARIE

He's madly in love or lust with me and won't give up.

TOM

I guess you're not interested.

MARIE

Hell no! I'm a happily married woman. See you later.

Marie moves away.

ROSIE

Thanks for the massage. It felt great.

TOM

My pleasure.

ROSIE

You have nice hands. You can tell a lot about a person from their hands. I could give you a reading sometime.

TOM

A hand reading?

ROSIE

Yes, but it's usually called a palm reading.

TOM

You've got quite a few skills and talents.

ROSIE

Oh, maybe a few. (Pause.) Would you like to come over to my place?

TOM  
Not just yet.

ROSIE  
O.K., whenever you're ready.

TOM  
It's a deal. Time to go.

He gets up.

ROSIE  
Oh, before I forget. I want to buy  
one of your prints.

TOM  
Great. Which one?

ROSIE  
I have one in mind, but maybe  
I should look at your book.

TOM  
Sure. I'll bring it in soon.

ROSIE  
Good. See you later.

TOM  
Yes. Bye.

EXT.      SIDEWALK      -      FOLLOWING

Tom walks away from the bar with the camera.

EXT.      APARTMENT BUILDING FRONT DOOR      -      FOLLOWING

Tom stands ready to push the door buzzer of Fred  
Evans, but changes his mind, and then walks away.

INT.      FRED'S APARTMENT      -      LATER

In the cluttered living room, popular music plays.

A woozy Linda gets up from the couch, and then goes to  
the stereo.

She changes the station to find a piano concerto.

She returns to the couch, after which Fred enters with a glass of water.

FRED

Here's some aspirin.

Linda takes them and drinks the water.

LINDA

Thanks.

FRED

No problem. Did you like your dinner?

FLASH on a half empty frozen dinner tray on the coffee table.

LINDA

It was fine. I'm full. I forgot how big those "hungry man dinners" were.

FRED

They sure are. I like all three-chicken, meatloaf, and turkey. You get more food with the turkey because of the dressing. But, sometimes the turkey gets dry if I let it heat too long. (Pause.) This is nice music.

LINDA

Yes, anything with a piano.

FRED

It's relaxing.

LINDA

That's Mozart's Piano Concerto #21. One of my favorites.

FRED

You know your music.

LINDA  
I used to play.

FRED  
Play what?

LINDA  
The piano.

FRED  
I wouldn't have guessed that about  
you.

LINDA  
Why not?

FRED  
Oh, I don't know. I really didn't  
look at your hands.

Fred picks up her hands to look at them.

FRED  
Well, sure enough you have piano  
fingers.

LINDA  
Yes, I guess so. I never understood  
what that meant.

FRED  
Strong.

LINDA  
I thought it was long.

FRED  
Yes. Strong and long. Both.

LINDA  
I guess so.

Linda gets up and then moves to the stereo.

She changes the station to slow dance music.

She brings Fred up to dance slowly and closely.

FRED

I'm not really very good at this.

LINDA

Just feel the music.

FRED

I'll try.

LINDA

No try. Just do it.

FRED

Oh...

LINDA

There's something different about you.

FRED

I hope that's good.

LINDA

You're nice. You like to please, don't you?

FRED

Yes, I've been known to. (Pause.) You know my being here now is unusual. I'm usually still at the bar.

LINDA

I like that trait.

FRED

What? Going to the bar every Friday night?

LINDA

No, pleasing people.

EXT.      SIDEWALK      -      FOLLOWING

Tom ambles along on a quiet, dark street, and then interrupted.

GIRL'S VOICE (OS)

Hi honey.

A young, sexy, girl with heavy makeup and tight clothes leans up against a wall.

GIRL

How's it going?

TOM

Ok.

GIRL

You're cute. You shouldn't be alone. Do you want a date?

TOM

No, not now.

GIRL

Oh, come on. You can take advantage Of my Friday night special. Any two things for the price of one.

TOM

No thanks, anyway.

GIRL

All right, but maybe some other time. I do house calls.

She goes into her purse to pull out a business card and then hands it to him.

GIRL

Here you go. Anytime, just leave a message. The price list is on there.

TOM

Ok. Take care.

She notices the camera.

GIRL  
Would you like to take a picture of  
me?

TOM  
Sure.

She primps up in a pose, and then he takes it.

GIRL (Male voice)  
Now that should be a great shot.

FLASH on a surprised Tom.

GIRL (Male voice)  
I told you, it's two for the price  
of one. With two or more  
possibilities, if you get my drift.  
May I have a copy of that photo?  
Just between us guys. Please?

TOM  
Sure, I've got your card. And  
there's someone I met tonight who  
might be right up your alley.

GIRL (Female voice.) Ooh,  
great! The more the merrier.

INT. FRED'S APARTMENT - FOLLOWING

Linda and Fred sit closely and pensively on the sofa.

LINDA  
I've done things to make me feel  
good. But, I don't think I've ever  
really felt them deep inside.  
Maybe, you can feel good without  
really feeling it. I don't know  
what I'm talking about.

FRED  
Well, don't look at me. I'm no  
expert about feeling good. (Pause.)  
But, there's something new going on

here. What made you come to me in the bar tonight?

LINDA

Your eyes were like magnets. And then you were like one of those crackling fireplace fires. Warm, cozy, and hard to leave. I felt like a kid again.

FRED

Yeah, but you kissed me like a woman, who knew what she wanted.

LINDA

Well, I guess I felt like a kid and a woman all at once.

Pause.

LINDA

What are you feeling right now?

FRED

Afraid. You're beautiful, Practically my ideal woman, and we're alone. Boy, what a fantasy I could have.

LINDA

You can have your fantasy after I leave. I'm not a video. Right now, I'm here.

INT. APARTMENT - FOLLOWING

Susan, a sleepy young woman in a bathrobe, opens a door to an anxious Tom.

SUSAN

What ...Come in.

TOM

Sorry, it's so late.

SUSAN

That's all right. Nice surprise.

But, this is your Friday night thing.

TOM

I know, but I just had to see you.

SUSAN

Good. Are you hungry? I've got some of your Lasagna.

TOM

No, not really.

He passionately kisses her.

INT. FRED'S BEDROOM - LATER

With squeals of laughter, Linda and Fred run around the cluttered room.

Linda tickles Fred without mercy.

He pleads for her to stop, but she continues around the bed and all over the room, until they land on the bed.

EXT. BEACH - MORNING

A beautiful sunrise looks out over the ocean.

INT. JENNY'S LOFT - FOLLOWING

Jenny and Chad quietly have coffee at the table.

INT. FRED'S BEDROOM - FOLLOWING

Linda and Fred are in bed wrapped up in comfortable slumber.

INT. SUSAN'S BEDROOM - FOLLOWING

Tom restlessly tosses in the bed.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DREAM

A lively, crowded party takes place with Tom in view.

A man with a gun bursts into the room, and then tells the crowd to get down on the floor.

Chaos with screams as everybody scrambles to find safety.

Tom lays down in terror next to the others as gunshots ring out.

End of DREAM.

Back to Susan's BEDROOM.

Tom bolts up in the bed with Jane in the background.

INT. FRED'S BEDROOM - FOLLOWING

Linda and Fred wake up next to each other with a warm afterglow.

INT. FRED'S LIVING ROOM - LATER

Linda wanders around to look at various framed things on the walls that are crammed together and disorganized.

Fred walks into the room with coffee.

FRED

Here we go.

LINDA

You've joined a lot of groups.

FRED

Yes. It keeps me busy and out of trouble.

LINDA

But, some kinds of trouble are fun and good for you. You know what I mean?

FRED

I think so.

LINDA

It's very interesting that you joined Jehovah Witnesses.

FRED

Oh yeah, I accidentally buzzed one of them in, one thing lead to another and then I ended up joining for a year.

LINDA

What happened after a year?

FRED

It just wasn't me. I felt like moving on to something else.

LINDA

It's good to keep moving.

FRED

I'd like to move on and join your club.

LINDA

Well, you did last night.

FRED

That was quite an initiation ceremony.

LINDA

And, I hope there's more.

FRED

Me too. I want to keep joining, and joining, and joining.

LINDA

Good, because there are many more rituals to come, which we can makeup as we go.

INT. SUSAN'S BEDROOM - FOLLOWING

Tom waits on the phone for an answer.

INT. FRED'S APARTMENT - FOLLOWING

Linda answers the phone with a busy Fred as he sets up some paintings.

LINDA

Hello.

In a SPLIT SCREEN, Tom talks on his phone.

TOM

Hi, this is Tom.

LINDA

Oh, yes. Remember me?

TOM

Yes, I guess you are feeling better.

LINDA

For sure. Fred is taking real good care of me.

TOM

Good. I'd like to talk to him.

LINDA

Sure.

She signals to Fred, which brings him to the phone.

FRED

Hello?

TOM

Hi, it's me.

FRED

Good morning.

TOM

Yes, how are things?

FRED

So far, so good. It's just what the doctor ordered.

TOM

You had to call a doctor?

FRED

No, it's just a saying. Linda and I are doing fine.

TOM

Is there anything you need?

FRED

I can't think of anything right now.

TOM

Well, if you do, call me.

FRED

I will and thanks for checking.

TOM

You're welcome.

INT. SUSAN'S BEDROOM - FOLLOWING

Tom gets dressed as Susan looks on.

SUSAN

Is Fred Ok?

TOM

I don't know.

SUSAN

Do you know my name?

TOM

Ah, come on. What's this all about?

SUSAN

You come in here late without saying much and have sex with me like I'm just some casual nothing.

TOM

Look, I didn't mean to do that.  
I've just got a lot on my mind.  
It was a strange day.

SUSAN

How? Wasn't it your regular Friday?

TOM

No, I met this girl at the beach  
who wants to paint me in the nude,  
Fred got picked up in the bar, I  
met this prostitute who's a guy.  
And that's just for starters.

SUSAN

And, which of those do you want  
to get involved with?

TOM

I don't know. It's just a little  
confusing.

SUSAN

Sounds exciting. And, then seeing  
me after all that must have seen  
very routine and boring.

TOM

Maybe, I don't know.

SUSAN

Ok. Well, I don't want to be  
responsible for boring up your  
life.

TOM

That's not what I meant.

SUSAN

Well, when you figure it out let  
me know. But, please don't just  
pretend to be with me or just go  
through the motions.

TOM

No, and I'm sorry.

INT. FRED'S APARTMENT - FOLLOWING

Linda and Fred look at his paintings on display. They are mostly big, colorful, whimsical, animal depictions.

LINDA

They are you.

FRED

How?

LINDA

Innocent and simple.

FRED

Some people have called them naïve.

LINDA

Yes, and it's beautiful. Hang on to that.

FRED

Thanks. I would like to give you one.

LINDA

I would love that. A gift from one innocent to another.

FRED

It's hard for me to think of you as innocent.

LINDA

Oh, but I am. Why don't you paint me as an animal?

FRED

Great idea! What?

LINDA

A tigress.

Linda strikes a fierce feline pose with growls and leaps towards Fred.

INT. TOM'S APARTMENT - FOLLOWING

Tom hits the answering button on his machine and then listens to an elderly woman's voice.

GRANDMA JANIE (OS)

Hi Honey. Grandma Janie here. How are you doing? Spring is springing. You wouldn't believe how the garden is growing already. It may come in and move me out. Anyway, I hope you are doing well and would love to hear from you. Loves and kisses. Bye.

Tom moves towards his camera on the table next to the business card and postcard for Jenny.

He pulls out a book with his name and contact information on the first page.

Various photographs appear as the plastic covered pages turn. They are beautiful depictions of natural settings on the beach, sunsets, etc.

He closes the book.

He moves to the computer, and then brings up the recent images of Jenny, Edward, and the Prostitute.

EXT. LOWER EAST SIDE-NY - SUNDAY AFTERNOON

Linda and Fred walk on a sidewalk.

EXT. FRONT BUILDING STEPS - FOLLOWING

Linda and Fred walk towards a front door.

INT. BUILDING STAIRWAY - FOLLOWING

Linda and Fred climb stairs.

INT. APARTMENT DOOR - FOLLOWING

Linda and a weary Fred enter into a cluttered, dark room as quiet music plays.

A scruffy guy sleeps on the couch.

Linda signals Fred to be quiet as they move into the room.

The guy abruptly awakens.

GUY

What?

LINDA

Sorry.

GUY

That's ok. Hi baby. How's it hangin'?

LINDA

Real good. Meet Fred. My new knight in shining armor.

GUY

Oh yeah, but I thought I was.

LINDA

But, of course. But, a damsel such as myself needs more than one. Specialties you know.

GUY

All right. Hi! (To Fred) I'm kidder.

FRED

Hi.

KIDDER

Nice to meet you.

INT. BEDROOM - FOLLOWING

Linda pulls out some clothes from the closet.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

Linda, in a new outfit, approaches Fred and Kidder.

LINDA (To Kidder)  
Do you want to come out with us?

KIDDER  
Not right now. I've got some things to do.

FRED  
Maybe some other time.

KIDDER  
For sure.

She gives Kidder a big sexy kiss as Fred looks on.

EXT. SIDEWALK - LATER

Linda and Fred walk to window shop.

INT. PIANO STORE - FOLLOWING

Linda skillfully plays a grand piano, with onlookers and Fred as a concentrated audience.

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

Tom looks for an address on a street with Jenny's card.

INT. ART GALLERY - FOLLOWING

With a small crowd, Tom looks at various collage artworks on the walls, by Jenny Oliver, which combine photography and painting.

He is interrupted, by a voice from behind.

VOICE (OS)  
What a surprise!

Tom turns around to find Jenny.

TOM  
Well, I guess so.

JENNY

I'm glad you're here.

TOM

Me too. It's very impressive.

JENNY

Thank you. It's fun to sneak in and maybe get some reactions.

TOM

Well, you got mine.

JENNY

Yes. The first two stages of you are finished. Now, it's time for your nude photo.

TOM

I'm thinking about it.

JENNY

All right, no pressure. But, it's really not about thinking. Hope to see you soon.

TOM

All of me, right?

JENNY

But, of course.

EXT. ROLLER COASTER - TUESDAY

Linda and Fred move up and down in a car.

They walk along the boardwalk, and then stop.

A man with a marionette puppet performs as a boom box plays music with a small crowd.

INT. PHOTO BOOTH - FOLLOWING

FLASH on a series of various playful snapshots of Linda and Fred.

EXT. PHOTO BOOTH - FOLLOWING

They exit, when Linda gets an idea and then pulls Fred to follow.

INT. DOOR - FOLLOWING

Linda and Fred are at the door when a surprised Jenny opens it.

JENNY

Oh, hi. Great! I tried to reach you.

INT. JENNY'S LOFT - FOLLOWING

Jenny shows a nude painting of Linda to them.

JENNY

Here it is. The imagination of what you're body might look like based on the headshot.

LINDA

Very interesting. There is some similarity.

JENNY

Oh really, but now I need a nude photo of you for the last step to paint that.

LINDA

Oh sure, that's right. No problem.

Linda begins to disrobe as a confused Fred looks on.

FRED

Are you going to show it?

JENNY

Yes, soon, but I have a few more people to finish.

LINDA

You should do Fred?

JENNY

Sure. I'll get the camera.

She moves away to get the camera and then returns to Fred.

JENNY

Here we go.

Fred smiles, then she takes a few close-up head shots.

FRED

Wow. Now, what happens?

JENNY

I do a nude painting of your body from imagination. Then, a nude photo to compare, followed by another painting based on the photo. Are you game?

FRED

Well.....

LINDA

Of course, we'll be in the show together.

FRED

Sure, sounds good, but this posing nude thing.

LINDA

Don't worry honey. I'll come with you and hold you hand or what ever else it takes to relax you. Or think about it as a new group to join.

FRED

Ok.

JENNY

That's the spirit. Now it's your turn.

Jenny aims the camera at the nude, relaxed Linda, and then clicks the camera.

INT. TOM'S APARTMENT - WEDNESDAY

Tom enters, and then moves to the answering machine to play back.

The first message is from Grandma Janie, in a weakened and confused condition.

GRANDMA JANIE (OS)

Hi dear. I am planning a trip. I  
hope to hear from you before then.  
Love you, bye.

Tom gets on the telephone, starts to punch in a number, quickly changes his mind, and then moves away.

INT. BUS TERMINAL - LATER

Tom, with a backpack, boards a commuter bus.

EXT. BUS - FOLLOWING

Tom exits at a rural stop.

EXT. SIDEWALK - FOLLOWING

Tom walks on a quiet tree lined street, with small widely spaced houses.

EXT. FRONT DOOR - FOLLOWING

Tom rings the bell, but no answer.

He knocks, waits for a response, but no answer.

EXT. SIDE OF HOUSE - FOLLOWING

Tom moves down a path towards the backyard.

EXT. BACKYARD - FOLLOWING

Tom looks into the over-grown yard, which is a mixture of healthy flowers, shrubbery, and weeds.

TOM  
Janie, are you there?

Tom moves further until he finds a disheveled elderly woman with bright white hair and heavily wrinkled face, as she dozes in a lawn chair.

Two cats are nearby who scatter as he approaches.

TOM  
Janie?

She lazily opens her eyes to discover Tom.

GRANDMA JANIE  
Yes, oh what a surprise!

TOM  
It's been too long.

GRANDMA JANIE  
It's so good to see you.

They hug.

TOM  
How are you?

GRANDMA JANIE  
I've been better, but that's ok.

She starts to cough.

TOM  
A cold?

GRANDMA JANIE  
Nah! I don't know what it is.

She reaches for a pack of "Lucky Strike" cigarettes on the table, and then takes one out to light.

GRANDMA JANIE  
Want one?

TOM

No. What's this about a trip?

GRANDMA JANIE

Great idea, isn't it?

TOM (Refers to yard.)

Sure. The place sure looks healthy around here.

GRANDMA JANIE

I know, isn't it beautiful?

TOM

And I came prepared for some fun.

Tom pulls out a pair of gardening gloves from his backpack.

FLASH on Tom as he weeds, prunes, and rakes.

Later, he stops to wipe off the sweat and then surveys the progress.

GRANDMA JANIE (OS)

Ok, break time.

Janie sits in a lawn chair smoking with a drink, when Tom takes a couple of close-up pictures of her.

GRANDMA JANIE

Now, that you've broken the camera, do want a shot?

TOM

Well, there's still more to do. I'm just getting started.

GRANDMA JANIE

No hurry. Come on, let's catch up. I'm going to pay you.

TOM

No, you're not.

GRANDMA JANIE

Yes, I am.

TOM

No. I'm not here for that. Just to see you.

GRANDMA JANIE

Come on, sit down and relax.

She pours some "Jack Daniels" into a shot glass and offers it to him. They click glasses.

GRANDMA JANIE

Cheers! Here's to ten years ago, when you lived in town and I answered your ad for gardening work.

TOM

That long? I miss this and still love it.

Tom moves to his backpack and then pulls out his book of prints.

Janie thumbs through it.

GRANDMA JANIE

You do connect well to nature. They are beautiful.

TOM

Choose any of them you want and I'll get them Framed.

GRANDMA JANIE

I will. Something is missing though.

TOM

What?

GRANDMA JANIE

No people.

TOM

I know, but I'm just getting started with that. I took some recently and it's a whole new thing.

GRANDMA JANIE

Good, because you don't want to ignore your own species.

TOM

No.

GRANDMA JANIE

Now, help me plan the trip.

TOM

Sure. How?

GRANDMA JANIE

Imagine it with me.

TOM

Where?

GRANDMA JANIE

I'm not physically going anywhere.

TOM

What do you mean?

GRANDMA JANIE

But, these are ...

Points to her head and then her heart.

INT. AURA BAR - NIGHT

On the following Friday night, Rosie talks on a cell phone near the bar.

INT. AURA ENTRANCE - FOLLOWING

Tom enters and then moves towards the table area as he waves to Rosie.

INT. AURA TABLE AREA - FOLLOWING

Tom sits at a table.

Richard approaches him.

RICHARD

About what happened last Friday with that CPR thing. Don't worry, I forgive you.

TOM

I'm not asking you to forgive me.

RICHARD

Oh, let's just forget it. I forgive you and you forgive me. O.K.?

TOM

Fine.

RICHARD

What's your name?

TOM

Tom, and yours?

RICHARD

Richard love never fails.

TOM

Maybe so, but my name is Tom, not Richard.

RICHARD

I know. You just told me and my name is Richard Love Never Fails.

TOM

What?

RICHARD

Richard Love Never Fails.

TOM

You've got to be kidding.

RICHARD

No, Richard is my first name.  
Love and Never are the middle names.  
Fails is my last name.

TOM

Did your parents name you?

RICHARD

No, I did. I took the words "Love  
Never Fails" from a greeting card,  
then added my first name. I design  
cards.

TOM

What was your old name?

RICHARD

I don't want to tell you, because  
it might spoil the illusion. Would  
you like a new name?

TOM

No, I don't think so.

RICHARD

What would be a good name for you  
besides Tom? Daiquiri! That's a  
great first name! Wonderful sound.

TOM

How did you come up with that?

RICHARD

It's my favorite drink. I just  
finished one.

TOM

Would you like another?

RICHARD

Sounds great.

Rosie moves to join them with drinks.

ROSIE

Marie says this is on the house and since I'm off tonight, this is a free delivery.

RICHARD

Oh how sweet. Thank you so much. I love that word!

ROSIE

What?

RICHARD

Free. It has brought such pleasure, Turmoil and usually means an expensive price tag later.

ROSIE

Not this time sweetie. Oh! I feel better now. I just talked to my numerologist and he said Linda and Fred are very safe and right for each other. It's almost a perfect match.

RICHARD

How did the numerologist figure this out?

ROSIE

By counting the letters in their names. At first, he wanted both the first and last names. But, I forgot Fred's and I don't know Linda's.

RICHARD

Without the last names, doesn't that cut down on the accuracy?

ROSIE

Well, normally it would, but when I told him their first names, he freaked. They are extremely strong and compatible. The first F, in Fred comes before L, for Linda in the alphabet. Also, Fred has four letters, Linda has five, which makes

for continuity when the names are together. You see, four letters, Fred, then five letters, Linda. It makes sense, doesn't it?

RICHARD

Well, based on those names, yes. But, there's only one slight problem.

ROSIE

What?

RICHARD

Linda is not her real name.

ROSIE

What is it?

RICHARD

I don't know. She likes to be called Linda, her mother's name, who died suddenly when she was little. Maybe, it helps to keep the memory alive, because they were very close and it was very traumatic.

TOM

Well, I guess that theory is shot to hell!

ROSIE

Oh. I still think they'll be O.K. This guy felt some strong positive energy around them.

RICHARD

At least we know that Linda's dead mother and Fred are compatible.

INT. FRED'S BATHROOM - FOLLOWING

Fred sits on the toilet with pen in hand while he quietly reads from a tablet.

FRED (OS)

Dear Linda, I 'm not very good at this, but wanted to further express how you make me feel. So, that you can put this somewhere and keep it. I've never been happier and want it to go on forever. But, don't go away yet please and this is not goodbye, but instead many more hellos.....

A large thump against the closed door interrupts.

FRED

Ok, I'll be right out. I'm just about finished.

He flushes the toilet.

INT. AURA TABLE AREA - FOLLOWING

Rosie, Tom, and Richard sit at a table with drinks as the evening continues.

RICHARD

Do you want to hear about somebody I met recently?

TOM

Sure.

RICHARD

He had beautiful dark brown eyes, dark hair. We met on 57<sup>th</sup> street, both trying to get a cab. Well, magically our eyes met and we locked into each other. Then, the next thing, we were sharing a cab.

ROSIE

Ooh! How romantic! I love it!

RICHARD

I gave directions to my place and when we arrived he followed me in without any questions.

ROSIE

I think I know where this is going.

RICHARD

When inside, things really started clicking. One thing led to another and we made beautiful love. It was great and I passed out into a deep sleep. I woke up with a start a few hours later, to discover that he wasn't next to me. So, I got up and looked around the apartment. He was gone and was devastated. Then, I noticed an opened closet door, looked inside to find a coat missing.

TOM

Was it valuable?

RICHARD

The coat didn't matter! All, I wanted was to give and share myself in a loving way. But, I wasn't enough. He had to take an old coat.

ROSIE

That's terrible! But, maybe this was a way for you to work out some bad karma. It's off your shoulders.

RICHARD

It's amazing how one minute you care for a person and think they care for you. There's magic in the air. Then, something weird happens and that's all changed. Everything gets turned over.

ROSIE

No explaining, but feels like some kind of curse.

RICHARD

Oh yes, those dreaded curses.  
(Pause.) Have you ever had those?

TOM

Oh yes, of course. But, it's more a feeling of restlessness for something more. Maybe, I'm looking for it here every Friday night.

RICHARD

Don't' you look for this "something more thing" during the rest of the week too?

TOM

God, I hope so.

Marie approaches with a ringing cell phone.

MARIE (To Rosie)

Here hon. You left this at the bar.

ROSIE

Thanks.

She answers it while the Richard and Tom look on.

ROSIE

Excuse me guys, I need to find some quiet to deal with an energy alignment. Be back soon.

She moves away.

RICHARD

Ok, time for another cig break.  
Would you like to join me?

TOM

Sure.

EXT. BAR PATIO - FOLLOWING

Tom and Richard stand with their drinks.

TOM

You know that guy who took your coat?

RICHARD

Yes?

TOM

Do you regret taking him home?

RICHARD

No. Part of what happened felt good. I took a chance. I'll do it again. But, maybe next time it will work out better. Maybe, even find Mr. Right. I have been in love before. That is most important.

TOM

Well, good luck.

RICHARD

Thanks.

EXT. AURA BAR - FOLLOWING

Rosie talks on a cell phone.

ROSIE

Yes, that's right, always seek the white light. Just plug in and share the energy.

She waves to someone.

Jenny walks alone nearby and catches her attention.

Jenny and Rosie hug.

ROSIE

What a surprise!

JENNY

Is this the place you work and told me about?

ROSIE

Yes, come in.

JENNY

Sure.

EXT. BAR PATIO - FOLLOWING

Richard and Tom are still together.

RICHARD

What are you trying to find?

TOM

I'm just trying to relax and have a good time.

RICHARD

It's not working.

TOM

What do you mean?

RICHARD

You're already too relaxed.

TOM

How can you be too relaxed?

RICHARD

You could be dead.

TOM

I'm very much alive.

RICHARD

Well, you're breathing. But, your life is like sub-zero.

TOM

How do you know? You don't know me well enough.

RICHARD

No, I don't. But, that's what I feel.

TOM

It's not true!

RICHARD

Maybe it's not, but it's something to think about as we enjoy our drinks.

INT. BAR AREA - FOLLOWING

Jenny and Rosie move away from the bar with drinks.

EXT. BAR PATIO - FOLLOWING

Tom and Richard continue.

TOM

Well, here's something else to think about. You're hiding behind fake names.

RICHARD

Now, wait a minute! It's just a name, but I'm the real thing behind it.

TOM

Oh yeah, I'm not so sure. It looks like false advertising.

RICHARD

Look, I may be a lot of things! But, I'm not a fake. And how about you?

TOM

What?

RICHARD

You come in here every Friday night and repeat the same old thing. It's safe here and that's

all you want. You just float through a haze that disappears when you leave. You don't experience or feel it! It's gone when the alcohol wears off.

Jenny and Rosie enter to see Richard and Tom in an animated conversation.

ROSIE  
Oh, there they are.

JENNY  
I met him.....

They begin to move towards them, and then Jenny stops Rosie.

JENNY  
Let's wait a minute. This looks good.

They stop to observe Richard and Tom without notice from a distance.

TOM  
You can't tell me what I'm experiencing.

RICHARD  
What are you experiencing tonight?

TOM  
I found you to talk to or argue with.

RICHARD  
No, I found you.

TOM  
We're talking together, so why does it matter who did the finding?

RICHARD

Do you want more than talk?

TOM

No, talk is just fine.

RICHARD

Why?

TOM

Because you're not what I want.

RICHARD

Come on, take a chance.

TOM

Not that one.

RICHARD

What have you got to lose?

TOM

Maybe everything.

RICHARD

Haven't you ever lost  
everything before?

TOM

I don't think so.

RICHARD

It can be very exciting. And  
besides you never really lose  
everything. As long as you're  
alive, there's always a way out.  
And maybe even after you're  
dead, but I'll find that out  
later. I have no fear.

TOM

Well, I do.

RICHARD

So be it. What do you want  
then?

TOM  
I'll know it when I see it.

RICHARD  
Maybe. You still have time.

TOM  
For what?

RICHARD  
To find out what you've already found.

TOM  
You mean you?

RICHARD  
No, you.

TOM  
Jesus, this is getting too deep.

RICHARD  
You're probably right.

TOM  
And what do you want?

RICHARD  
The same as you.

Rosie and Jenny approach to find a surprised Tom.

TOM (To Jenny)  
Oh my god! Are you stalking me?

JENNY  
No, I know Rosie and stopped in.  
What a small world. Now take off your clothes like I want you to.

ROSIE  
What?

TOM  
We've met.

ROSIE

I guess so, where?

JENNY

At the beach near my place and  
I want him for my installation  
that I told you about.

ROSIE

Oh, good idea. Do it Tom. There's  
a good vibe around that.

TOM

I'm thinking about it.

RICHARD

What's this all about?

JENNY

I want to take a nude photo of  
Tom.

RICHARD

Oh, do tell! May I watch? My name  
is Richard.

JENNY

Hi. I'm Jenny.

RICHARD

Nice to meet you and maybe  
I could help persuade him.  
Although, I haven't had too  
much luck so far.

JENNY

Oh really. It looked like you  
were doing a good job just now.

TOM

Now, wait a minute, none of this  
is what it seems! I'm not  
interested in that!

JENNY and RICHARD

What?

TOM  
Getting together with Richard.

RICHARD  
Oh, well I'll just have to wallow  
alone with my fake names.

JENNY  
Then, what about my nude?

TOM  
Ok, time out.

Tom moves away.

ROSIE  
What's been going on here?

RICHARD  
We've been diving into one  
another's lives.

ROSIE  
And you've been trying to push  
him into your deep water, right?

RICHARD  
You might say so.

ROSIE  
Be careful. We don't want him  
to drown.

RICHARD  
Don't worry dear. I've learned  
a few tricks from a lifeguard.

ROSIE  
You're terrible.

RICHARD  
Thank you.

INT. BAR AREA - FOLLOWING

Tom has a drink at the crowded bar.

INT. BAR ENTRANCE - FOLLOWING

A spaced out, calm Fred enters and then slowly moves inside.

INT. BAR AREA - FOLLOWING

Fred is at the bar where Marie greets him.

MARIE (To Fred)  
How are you doing, babe?

FRED  
I don't know yet.

MARIE  
Oh, can I get you anything?

FRED  
I'm not sure.

MARIE  
Ok, just let me know. Your buddies are here.

FRED  
Good.

From the other end of the bar, Tom spots Fred, and then approaches him.

TOM  
I'm glad you could make it. I've been wondering about you all week.

FRED  
Well, I'm still here and it's very good to see you.

TOM  
All right, hey it's Friday. Come on, it's my round.

FRED  
Ok, sure.

Tom signals to Marie at the bar.

Rosie, Richard, and Jenny approach them.

ROSIE

Hi honey. How are you?

FRED

Like I woke up from a dream too fast.

RICHARD

That sounds interesting.

ROSIE

Does this have anything to do with Linda? How is she?

FRED

She's happy.

Marie comes with Fred's drink, and then joins in.

TOM (To Fred)

You look nice and mellow.

RICHARD

Come on, tell all.

ROSIE

No, you don't have to. This is not a kiss and tell firing squad.

FRED

I want to.

TOM

Then, let's go sit down.

FRED

No, I feel like standing.

TOM

What's up? You always sit. It's your favorite position.

FRED

Well, not right now. How about going someplace else?

ROSIE

Sounds good.

EXT. PARK - FOLLOWING

Rosie, Jenny, Tom, Richard, and Fred amble on a path with benches.

ROSIE

Oh, look up!

They look up into to see a bright star.

JENNY

It's looking down on us.

ROSIE

That's Mars, and a very good sign. It's a good connection night.

RICHARD

Oh, I like the sound of that.

ROSIE

Or some incredible news to find out. Maybe, Fred?

JENNY

Well, sounds good, but I have to Get back home. I'll invite you all to the show which will feature Tom. Right Tom?

TOM

We'll see.

RICHARD

Well dear, I'll try to push this along. I think it's a great idea and want to support the arts in whatever way possible.

Jenny moves away as they wave goodbye.

ROSIE  
Let's sit over there.

They move to sit on a bench.

ROSIE  
Fred, are you all right?

FRED  
I'm a little numb or something.

TOM  
Oh, I know where this is going.  
Time to bring in the censors.  
You don't have to tell all the  
bedroom details.

RICHARD  
Unless, you want to.

ROSIE  
Well, how is she after last week?

FRED  
Resting.

ROSIE  
Oh, at her place?

FRED  
No.

ROSIE  
Still at yours?

FRED  
No, she's gone. I feel like I'm  
trapped inside of a cloud.

ROSIE  
Cloud nine?

FRED  
No, not now, but earlier I was.  
We were really hitting it off all  
week.

ROSIE  
That's wonderful.

TOM  
Yeah, that's great. We should all  
Get together sometime.

FRED  
Not possible.

TOM  
Why?

FRED  
She died.

ROSIE  
What?

RICHARD  
Oh, my God. What happened?

INT. BATHROOM - FLASHBACK

Fred opens the bathroom door to find Linda slumped on the floor.

In a panic, he tries to revive her, but she seems lifeless.

End of FLASHBACK.

Back to BAR.

ROSIE  
I'm so sorry.

FRED  
The doctors said it might be some  
kind of heart attack.

They all move to hug him, except Tom.

TOM  
I knew you shouldn't have taken  
her home!

FRED

What do you mean?

TOM

Look at all the trouble she's  
caused you!

FRED

Wait a minute! Linda didn't cause  
any trouble. She died! We all will  
and glad I was there. I'm in  
shock, but I'll get over it. At  
least, I have something to get  
over.

TOM

Yeah something stupid! A dumb  
mistake. You can't save the world.  
You've done this a thousand times.  
Helping crazy strangers!

ROSIE

Both of you settle down!

RICHARD

Yeah!

FRED

If this is a dumb mistake, I want  
more.

TOM

Well, it was and you will.

FRED

I don't care what you think. Linda  
was happy. We liked each other. I  
want to feel that way again,  
but if I don't, I know I did  
tonight. I wish the same for Linda.  
I have another chance and hope she  
has too. But, I don't know.

ROSIE

None of us know. But, you sent her off to a beautiful, magical place and gave her the best moments of her life.

FRED

Maybe. (Pause.) This has not been a normal Friday night.

ROSIE

You can say that again.

RICHARD

And again.

TOM

Why did you cut me off this week? I might have been able to rescue this. Can you count the number of times I've saved you?

FRED

And I'm grateful, as I've told you before.

TOM

Then, why didn't you let me this time?

FRED

This was different. I needed to get through this by myself.

TOM

But, are you ready for that?

FRED

I don't know. It's a risk to see if I survive. You've felt that way, right?

TOM

Of course I have, but don't bring it around to me. We're talking about you.

FRED

Well maybe we should be talking about you. I wonder about you a lot and care. Sometimes I ask, is he missing something?

TOM

What?

FRED

I don't know.

TOM

What is this? Analyze Tom night. You're all doing it! Maybe, you should all compare notes and figure it out for me!

He quickly leaves.

INT. AURA BAR AREA - FOLLOWING

Rosie, Richard, Fred, and Marie are together.

MARIE (Hugs Fred)

I'm so sorry.

FRED

I'll be all right. We all will.

MARIE

Including Tom. Death hits everybody differently. Hell, I cracked up laughing and got the hiccup at my Aunt Agnes funeral. It just hit me that way and I really loved her.

EXT. SIDEWALK - FOLLOWING

An intense Tom walks.

INT. AURA BAR AREA - FOLLOWING

Rosie, Marie, Richard, and Fred are with drinks.

RICHARD

Fred, you can stay at my place tonight. Just don't take any coats.

FRED

What?

RICHARD

Oh nothing. Just an inside joke.

ROSIE

Well, you are welcome at my place too. Whatever you want. We're all here for you.

FRED

God, that feels good.

MARIE

Here's to Linda!

RICHARD

Good luck.

ROSIE

And peace.

FRED

We didn't have a long time to get to know you, but we did get started and it felt good.

ROSIE

A sweet stranger.

FRED

She loves to keep moving and still is. But, with us now.

LINDA'S VOICE (OS)

Oh, yes I am and love you all.

This shocks everyone as they turn towards Edward as he sits nearby, who has just flawlessly imitated Linda.

EDWARD

Sorry, if I scared you, but it's my tribute.

FRED

I've got to go. Thanks and I'll see you later.

He abruptly leaves followed by a concerned Rosie.

INT. TOM'S APARTMENT - FOLLOWING

Tom enters, moves to answering machine, and then pushes the button.

GRANDMA JANIE (OS)

Not to worry, but somebody thought I should be in the hospital.....

EXT. SIDEWALK - FOLLOWING

Tom moves out into the street, when Rosie and Fred appear.

An upset Tom briefly speaks to them.

Fred hails down a cab.

All three get in.

INT. HOSPITAL RECEPTION AREA - FOLLOWING

Tom, Rosie, and Tom rush up to a reception desk with attendants.

TOM

I'm here to see Grandma Janie.

ATTENDANT

Who?

TOM

I mean, Jane Grant.

ATTENDANT

Are you her grandson?

TOM

Not a real one.

ATTENDANT

Well, we've been trying to reach her son without any luck.

TOM

Look, it's a long story but she wasn't close to him. I'm like an adopted son, or a grandson, like family and she called me tonight!

ATTENDANT

Ok, ok. Don't worry. You should see her.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - LATER

Tom enters Grandma Janie's room with her asleep in bed.

She weakly opens her eyes with a smile when Tom touches her hand.

GRANDMA JANIE

I just got back from a trip and ready to take another one.

TOM

Where?

GRANDMA JANIE

I don't know.

TOM

You're so lucky to be able to travel. That's what I should do more of. Any suggestions?

GRANDMA JANIE

Just take chances and travel with your greatness.

Tom nods and then gently hugs her.

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - LATER

Tom sits in a chair while Rosie and Fred sit on a sofa nearby.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - LATER

Janie is peacefully asleep.

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - FOLLOWING

Tom dozes in the chair.

EXT. WINDY OCEAN BEACH - NIGHT - DREAM

Tom slowly walks towards the water's edge in the surf, and then dives in.

EXT. UNDER WATER

He is tossed and overtaken by the motion of the waves for several cycles, when his voice mystically comes up.

TOM (OS)

I know something that nobody else knows. And they don't have to, but they will.

EXT. OCEAN - FOLLOWING

Tom is suddenly thrust upwards above water where his eyes open.

The sea is calm, with a bright, distant horizon.

He begins to swim with steady and confident strokes towards it.

End of DREAM.

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - FOLLOWING

Tom abruptly awakens as a nurse stands over him.

She appears to give him sad news.

Tom, flanked by Rosie and Fred, slowly walk out of the hospital.

SEVERAL MONTHS LATER

EXT. ART GALLERY - OPENING NIGHT

A banner reads, A PEELING  
New Photography- Painting Collages  
By Jenny Oliver

A crowd mingles and enters the front.

INT. ART GALLERY - FOLLOWING

A large crowd mingles with drinks, appetizers, and a live band as they view the artwork on the walls.

FLASH on paintings - photographs combinations of various people which include both headshot and nude images.

A slow movement around the room reveals the pairs of; Rosie and Fred; Richard and Edward; Marie and Husband; Susan and Tom; as they react to the artwork in various parts of the gallery.

FLASH on the paintings and photographs of Fred, and then Tom as part of the exhibit, as Chad and others look on.

A lively party with louder music and dance is in progress.

Later, Rosie, Fred, Richard, Edward, Jenny, and Marie surround the images of Linda included in the exhibit as Tom takes several pictures of them all together.

FADE OUT