

Frank's Place

By

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BRANDY

"FRANK'S PLACE"

COLD OPEN

INT. OFFICE BUILDING HALLWAY - DAY
(BRANDY, DR. CROWN)

METHODICAL, CLUMPING FOOTSTEPS ECHO FROM THE END OF THE DIMLY-LIT HALLWAY. THE FOOTSTEPS CEASE FOR A MOMENT, THEN CONTINUE AGAIN FOR A FEW STEPS BEFORE HALTING AGAIN.

THREE MORE OBVIOUSLY PAINFUL STEPS RESONATE THROUGH THE HALLWAY, LAST PAINTED IN 1987. BRANDY, A THIRTYSOMETHING PSYCHOTHERAPIST, EMERGES FROM A STAIRCASE, ASSORTED BAGS SLUNG ACROSS HER BODY. SHE LEANS AGAINST THE WALL, WINDED AND DRAINED AS SHE SLUMPS TOWARD HER OFFICE DOOR.

BRANDY

And those fools pay fifty bucks a
month to climb fake stairs at the gym.
Fools!

SHE IS BEAUTIFUL, BUT PLAINFULLY SO. CONSTANTLY FIGHTING SIX FLIGHTS OF STAIRS DOES THAT TO A GIRL. SHE REACHES FOR HER KEYS, CUMBERSOME BAGGAGE BLOCKING HER EVERY ATTEMPT. KEYS FINALLY IN HAND, SHE STRUGGLES TO UNLOCK THE DOOR. NO LUCK. IT'S STUCK. SHE KNOCKS WITH HER HEAD.

BRANDY (CONT'D)

Ow.

KNOCKS AGAIN.

BRANDY (CONT'D)

Ow-er.

SHE SHAKES AN ELBOW FREE, ELBOWS THE DOOR.

BRANDY (CONT'D)

Ow-est.
(whispered scream)

Juan? Juan? Open the door, Juan!

BRANDY JIGGLES THE KEY FURIOUSLY.

BRANDY (CONT'D)

Juan!

DR. CROWN, DONNING A WHITE DENTAL COAT, WALKS BY CARRYING MOLDED DENTAL FORMS LIKE A CHURCH OFFERING. FRANKENSTEIN WAS A CHARMER COMPARED TO THIS GUY. BRANDY PLAYS IT CASUAL, LEANS AGAINST THE DOOR.

BRANDY (CONT'D)

Morning, Dr. Smiley, er, Dr. --

HE INTERJECTS.

CROWN

Crown.

BRANDY

Right. Sorry. So, how goes the dental biz, Dr. Crown? Hey, did you ever think of the irony of being a dentist named Crown or did it never really have an impact?

SHE SNORTS, PROUD OF HER PUN. HE IS INCREDIBLY UNAMUSED.

BRANDY (CONT'D)

A little dental humor there.

HIS EXPRESSION IS UNCHANGED.

BRANDY (CONT'D)

OK, I'm gonna return to the irony of a therapist not being able to open a door.

SHE VIOLENTLY STABS THE LOCK WITH HER KEY.

CROWN

Perhaps if her clients paid her, the therapist could afford a new lock.

BRANDY

Yeah, that seems to be the key to a successful business.

SHE SNORTS AGAIN. HE SIGHS, WALKS AWAY.

BRANDY (CONT'D)

I don't know what's worse --

SHE TAKES A STEP BACK FROM THE DOOR, LOWERS HER SHOULDER.

BRANDY (CONT'D)

A dentist who doesn't smile --

BULGING BAGGAGE LEADING THE WAY, SHE HEADS TOWARD THE DOOR.

BRANDY (CONT'D)

Or a therapist who can't get in to see her patients.

INT. BRANDY'S WAITING ROOM - CONTINUOUS
(JUAN, KEVIN, BRANDY)

THE WAITING ROOM WORKS MUCH LIKE THE OFFICE DOOR. IT'S STUCK IN LOW-RENT HELL AND NEVER GETTING OUT. JUAN, BRANDY'S OVERTLY-FEMININE AND ENGLISH-CHALLENGED OFFICE MANAGER, HOLDS A FOLDER IN HIS HANDS, WIRELESS PHONE PRESSED AGAINST HIS SHOULDER AND EAR. HE RISES FROM HIS TIDY DESK, A DEFINITE GOODWILL PURCHASE.

JUAN

Hold on, I think I gotta delibery.

HE OPENS THE DOOR WITH EASE. BRANDY SPILLS THROUGH, FALLING IN A HEAP OF PAPERS AND BAGS ON THE FLOOR AT THE FEET OF KEVIN'S CHAIR. KEVIN, A GUY WHO MIGHT NOT BE HALF BAD TO LOOK IT WERE HE NOT IN THIS ROOM, SMILES SWEETLY AT HER, DEFINITELY SMITTEN. SHE LOOKS UP AT HIM.

BRANDY

Ready for your session, Kevin?

END OF COLD OPENING

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

INT. BRANDY'S OFFICE - LATER
(BRANDY, KEVIN)

BRANDY AND KEVIN SIT OPPOSITE EACH OTHER IN USED MIS-MATCHED OFFICE CHAIRS.

KEVIN

I turn on the TV and there's ads for
Miller Lite, Bud Lite, Corona Light,
Michelob Light, Amstel Light.

BRANDY CHECKS HER WATCH.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

The lights go on and on and on. So, I
turn off the TV and pick up a
magazine. What do I see? Ads for
Jack Daniels, Southern Comfort and
Absolut.

BRANDY

Ooh, I like those ads.

KEVIN

You what?

BRANDY

I'd absolutely like to see those ads disappear.

KEVIN

Exactly! They're everywhere!
Billboards, bus stops, radio --

BRANDY

OK, OK, Kevin. What you need to do is treat these temptations for alcohol like any other temptation you'd ignore. Put up a visual block and that will help create a mental block.

KEVIN

That's all fine in theory, but what about everywhere else? The coffee clutch conversations with Joe co-worker's house-warming party? Rhonda receptionist's scantily-clad twenty-first birthday bash? And my manager's precious little Jimmy and his first communion party with a tent full of booze?

BRANDY

People were drinking at a first communion party?

KEVIN

Catholics drink during the mass, why
would they stop there?

BRANDY'S INTERCOM BUZZES. SHE PUSHES A BUTTON ON HER PHONE.

BRANDY

Juan, I'm with a patient.

JUAN (O.S.)

I know ju are. I am the office
administrator, ju know.

BRANDY

Well, can it wait?

JUAN (O.S.)

As ju also know, as the office
administrator, I know not to buzz ju
when ju are with a patient, especially
Mr. I Gotta Crush On You, unless it's
bery, bery urgent.

BRANDY

This better be bery, bery urgent,
Juan.

JUAN (O.S.)

Oh, it is, Miss Brandy. It is.

SHE LOOKS AT HER PHONE, WAITING. SILENCE.

BRANDY

Juan?

JUAN (O.S.)

Jes?

BRANDY

The urgency?!

JUAN (O.S.)

Oh, es the hospital. They say es
bery, bery important to talk to ju.

BRANDY

The hospital?!

JUAN (O.S.)

Si, that es what I am trying to tell
ju but ju jus keep screaming at --

SHE HURRIEDLY CLICKS JUAN OFF, PUSHES ANOTHER BUTTON AND
PICKS UP THE PHONE.

BRANDY

Hi, this is Brandy Meyer.
(beat)

Yes, he's my father.
(beat)

He what?
(beat)

Yes. Yes. OK. Thank you. Thank you
bery much. Um, very much.

SHE SLOWLY HANGS UP. STARES FIXEDLY AT THE PHONE. JUAN
BUZZES. SHE CLICKS HIM BACK ON.

JUAN (O.S.)

Hello? Hello? Miss Brandy?

BRANDY

Yeah?

JUAN (O.S.)

Are ju still alive in there?

BRANDY

Yes. But my father's not.

JUAN (O.S.)

Que?!

BRANDY

My father died.

JUAN (O.S.)

Jesus, Mary and Joseph! That was

bery, bery urgent! How did it happen?

What did they say? Speak to me, Miss

Brandy!

SHE SNAPS OUT OF HER GAZE, CLICKS THE SPEAKER OFF.

BRANDY

So, where were we, Kevin?

KEVIN

Wow, you're really good at this

blocking stuff.

INT. FRANK'S PLACE - DAY

(BRANDY, JUAN, DR. CROWN, PRIEST, HAYWARD, ELMER, FRANK, BAR PATRONS)

FRANK'S PLACE IS PART DIVE, PART HOME. THE RECTANGULAR BAR IS FULL WITH A MIXED CROWD OF EVERYDAY PEOPLE. A PICTURE OF A YOUNG FRANK MEYER IN HIS NAVY BEST KEEPS WATCH OVER THE ANCIENT CAST IRON CASH REGISTER BEHIND THE BAR. A SIMPLE URN SITS NEXT TO THE PICTURE.

BRANDY STANDS AT THE END OF THE BAR, FIDGETS NERVOUSLY. JUAN STANDS BESIDE HER, CHECKING OUT THE CROWD.

JUAN

Ju gotta relax, Miss Brandy. Es like
ju're at jour own wedding or
something. Es jus a funeral in a bar
for jour dad who ju don't even like.

BRANDY

And to think all this time people have
been paying me for therapy when they
could've been paying ju.

JUAN ROLLS HIS EYES. A PRIEST STEPS BEHIND THE BAR, STANDS
NEXT TO THE URN.

PRIEST

If I could have everyone's attention.
I'd like to begin the service for
Franklin Scott Meyer.

THE CROWD QUIETS.

PRIEST (CONT'D)

We gather here today to pay our
respects to Frank, owner and bartender
of Frank's Place for thirty years.

BRANDY
(mutters to Juan)

Thirty-one. But, who's counting?

A FEW HEADS TURN TOWARD BRANDY. THE PRIEST FROWNS A LITTLE.

PRIEST

Frank was a man who loved a good
conversation --

BRANDY
(mutters to Juan)

Never talked to me.

A BIGGER FROWN FROM THE PRIEST.

PRIEST

An ice cold beer --

BRANDY
(mutters to Juan)

Which is why I don't drink.

THE PRIEST FROWNS YET AGAIN, CLEARS HIS THROAT.

PRIEST

And the sea, oh how he loved the sea.

BRANDY
(mutters to Juan)

And not me, as you can see.

PRIEST
(louder)

If I know Frank, he wouldn't want us
to focus on the tough times. He'd
want us to share our favorite stories
of the good times. To laugh, not sulk
in our suds. So, would anyone
unrelated to Frank like to tell a fond
tale of their time spent at Frank's
Place?

A RESPECTFUL SILENCE FILLS THE BAR FOR FIVE SECONDS. A
WEATHERED OLD MAN, HAYWARD, FINALLY CLEARS HIS THROAT AT HIS
USUAL SEAT AT THE BAR.

HAYWARD

I got a Frank story from just last week. I was sittin' here in my usual spot and Frank says to me, Hayward, if I should die any time soon, I want you to know that the day of my funeral, it's free beer for everyone!

EVERYONE GROANS, WISE TO HIS USUAL FREE-BEER ANTICS. HAYWARD'S EVER-SILENT FRIEND, ELMER, SEATED NEXT TO HIM, EVEN SHAKES HIS HEAD.

HAYWARD (CONT'D)

True story.

PRIEST

Anyone else?

BRANDY

I've got a story.

THE PRIEST IGNORES HER THE BEST HE CAN.

PRIEST

Well, if that's it, let's all raise our glasses --

BRANDY

Wait, wait. I've got a really good one.

GLASSES RAISED, THEY LISTEN.

BRANDY (CONT'D)

OK, you have to follow closely, cuz it's a quicky. Here it goes.

(MORE)

BRANDY (CONT'D)

Frank met my mom, got her pregnant,
named me Brandy, cuz he was so fond of
the drink, opened this bar and never
talked to either one of us again.
And, we all lived dysfunctionally ever
after. The end.

AN UNCOMFORTABLE SILENCE LASTS A FEW SECONDS. HAYWARD RISES.

HAYWARD
(to Elmer)

Topped me. I gotta pee. Let me know
if I miss any free beer.

HAYWARD WALKS TOWARD THE BATHROOM.

PRIEST

Well, thank you, Brandy. That was
very, uh, heart warming. Anyone else?

SILENCE.

BRANDY

Come on, surely someone can top that
Hallmark moment. Someone has to have
a better tale about the man, the myth,
the deadbeat dad.

FRANK, THINK DENNIS FARINA'S TWIN, APPEARS ON THE STOOL NEXT
TO JUAN.

FRANK

I got one.

HER EYES BULGE LIKE SHE'S SEEING A GHOST. WELL, SHE IS, IN
FACT, SEEING A GHOST. SHE'S THE ONLY ONE WHO REACTS TO HIM.

BRANDY
(under her breath to Juan)

Oh my god!

JUAN

What?! Do I have a long nostril
hair?!

SHE'S LOOKING PAST JUAN, STARING AT HER FATHER, WHO WAVES.

BRANDY
(under her breath)

Oh my god! Oh my god! Oh my god!

JUAN

It's that long?!

SHE DUCKS BEHIND JUAN, HIDING FROM FRANK.

BRANDY
(whispers)

No, it's him. He's right next to you!

JUAN TURNS, SEES NOTHING.

JUAN

What? Who? Miss, Brandy, ju look
like ju jus saw a ghostbuster or
something.

BRANDY SLOWLY PEAKS AROUND JUAN, SEES FRANK.

FRANK

It's OK, sailor, I'm really here.

BRANDY

You are?

FRANK NODS.

JUAN

Ju are what?

FRANK

Well, not for everyone else. No one
except you can see me or hear me.

BRANDY TURNS BACK TO JUAN.

BRANDY

You are not going to believe the new
best Frank story I have.

SHE EYES FRANK AGAIN.

FRANK

Don't be nervous. You're doing great.
But remember, this is a wake. You're
supposed to say nice things about the
deceased.

BRANDY

(whispered scream)

Nice things?! I'm supposed to say
nice things about a man who was never
there for his wife and daughter
because he was pouring drinks for
strangers?!

JUAN

Miss Brandy, did ju sneak a shot of
something while I was trying to pay
attention but not really paying
attention?

THE PRIEST IS NERVOUSLY CLOSE TO SLAMMING A BEER OR TWO.

PRIEST

Would anyone else, anyone sober, like
to say something nice about Frank
before he is eulogized as a man who
abandoned his family to fill the cups
of wretches?

PATRONS

Heyyyy.

PRIEST

Oh, lighten up.

THE PRIEST GRABS A NEARBY PINT AND TAKES A HEALTHY GULP.
CROWN EMERGES FROM BEHIND THE CROWD, DRINK IN HAND.

CROWN

I've got a story.

BRANDY AND JUAN ARE SHOCKED TO SEE HIM.

JUAN

Jesus, Mary and Joseph! Es dentist
what's his name!

BRANDY

Smiley.

FRANK

Crown.

BRANDY

Right, Crown. Thank you.

FRANK

You're welcome.

SHE GASPS, STILL CAN'T BELIEVE HE'S THERE.

JUAN

Who are ju talkin to? Are ju talkin
to me?

SHE GIVES HIM THE SHHH SIGN AS CROWN CLEARS HIS THROAT.

CROWN

About a year ago, a new tenant leased
the office next to my dentistry,
Bright Smiles, located at 800 North
Washington Drive and currently
accepting new patients.

PRIEST

The story, please, Mr. Crown.

CROWN

Yes, well, this young tenant opened
something close to a free clinic for
what seemed like every unemployed
wingnut in Seattle. After several
hallway encounters with my new
neighbor, who had a knack for locking
herself out of her office, I acquired
quite an arsenal of bar-room
anecdotes. But, it only took one
brief description for our deceased
barkeep to recognize this key-
challenged young woman as his
daughter.

BRANDY LOOKS AT FRANK. HE SMILES.

CROWN (CONT'D)

For the next year, my nightly cognac at Frank's Place was on the house. In exchange, I relayed any chance meetings I had with Miss Meyer to Mr. Meyer. It was the only time I've noticed he's ever taken a break from filling pints, sweeping floors and counting coins in his cash register. Admittedly, I considered the cost to far outweigh the benefit of a free sifter, but when Frank informed me my stories were the highlights of his days, I trodded on.

CROWN RAISES HIS GLASS.

CROWN (CONT'D)

Frank truly loved only three things in life: the sea, his bar and his daughter.

JUAN

Wow, I thought for sure the bar would be numero uno.

BRANDY LOOKS AT FRANK, TEARY EYED. SHE DOESN'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY. THE ENTIRE BAR IS CHOKED UP.

PRIEST

Let's all raise our glasses to Frank.

ALL

To Frank.

BRANDY

To Frank.

HAYWARD RETURNS TO FIND ELMER CRYING IN HIS BEER.

HAYWARD

What'd I miss? Did someone die?

END ACT ONE

ACT TWOINT. FRANK'S PLACE - NIGHT

(JUAN, BRANDY, FRANK, MR. SMITH, BAR PATRONS)

BRANDY SITS WITH JUAN AT A TABLE AWAY FROM THE BAR. SHE'S FIDGETING, KEEPS CHECKING THE SEAT HER FATHER HAS OCCUPIED FOR OVER TWO HOURS. FRANK IS STILL THERE, WAVES AND SMILES AT HER. SHE SMILES UNCOMFORTABLY, WAVES BACK.

JUAN

Who are ju waving to?

BRANDY

Um, a man at the bar over there.

SHE POINTS VAGUELY IN FRANK'S DIRECTION. JUAN LOOKS.

JUAN

The drunken hobo who's head is bery,
bery much heavier than his body?

BRANDY

No.

JUAN

The biker man funeral crasher who es
kind of cute in a dirty, leathery,
come-wash-my-chopper kind of way?

BRANDY

No.

JUAN

Oh, then ju mus be waving at the
inbisible mans.

FRANK WAVES AGAIN. JUAN WAVES.

JUAN (CONT'D)

Hello, inbisible mans! I cannot see
ju, but I bet ju are bery sexy.

BRANDY

Stop it! Oh, this is ridiculous. I'm waving at, I can't believe I'm going to say this. I can't.

JUAN

Ju can.

BRANDY

I can't.

JUAN

Ju can!

BRANDY

No, I can't.

JUAN

Ju know I can say 'ju can' for a lot longer than ju can say 'I can't.'

BRANDY

OK, but you have to swear on our doctor-patient confidentiality that you'll never tell another soul.

JUAN

I swear on our confidentiality I will not tell another soul unless it's Ricky Martin and he's showing me his la vida loca.

BRANDY

OK, you see that stool at the end of the bar?

SHE POINTS TO THE STOOL FRANK'S PERCHED ON.

JUAN

Jah. What about it?

BRANDY

Do you see anyone sitting on it?

JUAN

No. Do ju?

BRANDY

Yes. My dad.

JUAN

Jesus, Mary and Shakira! Ju fell on
the wagon!

BRANDY

No, I'm completely sober! I swear, I
see my dad and he's smiling at me.

FRANK SMILES, WAVES.

JUAN

Oh, I get it. Ju don't mean ju see
him like one of jour crazy patients
sees people. Ju mean ju see him like
in one of jour mamories.

BRANDY

It's memories and no, the only
memories I have are of him behind the
bar serving drinks.

JUAN

So, ju mean ju really --

BRANDY

See him. Yes.

JUAN

Ju mean --

BRANDY

Jah.

JUAN

No!

BRANDY

Yes, he's sitting there winking at me.

JUAN

I think ju are experiencing what ju
tell jour patients es post-static
dress you order.

BRANDY

It's not post-traumatic stress
disorder. He's really there. In
fact, I talked to him.

JUAN

Oh, ju did. And what did jour
inbisible dead dad at the bar say?

BRANDY

He said I was supposed to say
something nice about him.

JUAN

He's right, ju know. Ju were bery
mean.

BRANDY

I was, wasn't I? Maybe I am a little stressed and I'm creating a visual stimulus to vent my anger.

JUAN

I don't know what ju said but it sounds a lot better than ju're loco.

MR. SMITH, A MAN IN A VERY CONSERVATIVE SUIT AND HAT, APPROACHES THEIR TABLE. HE REMOVES HIS HAT.

MR. SMITH

Miss Meyer?

BRANDY

Yes?

MR. SMITH

My name is Warren Smith. Your father hired me to be the executor of his estate. I am here to offer my sincerest condolences and give you this.

HE HANDS HER AN ENVELOPE.

BRANDY

Ah, the bill for the party.

MR. SMITH

No, Miss Meyer, it's his will.

BRANDY

Ah, the bill for his life and the party.

(MORE)

BRANDY (CONT'D)

Great, I'll file it with the rest of his mementos, right next to the photos we were never in together and all those advice-filled cards he never sent.

SHE FANS HERSELF WITH THE ENVELOPE.

MR. SMITH

I do hope you read it carefully. Your father left you the one thing nearest and dearest to his heart.

BRANDY

Yeah, like what? The bar?

MR. SMITH

Very good guess, Miss Meyer.

HE RETURNS THE HAT TO HIS HEAD.

MR. SMITH (CONT'D)

Again, I am very sorry for your loss.

HE EXITS THE BAR. SHE'S SHOCKED, LOOKS AT THE ENVELOPE.

JUAN

Well, are ju going to open it?

BRANDY

I don't know. I mean, what if it's true? What if he left me the bar?

JUAN

Then es goodbye wackos and hello sailors for me!

BRANDY

Juan, I can't own a bar!

JUAN

Why not?

BRANDY

First of all, I don't drink.

JUAN

That will help when ju count the money.

BRANDY

And second, I don't know how to make drinks, order supplies or give people the eighty-six.

JUAN

I'll make the margaritas, order the pretzels and give every sexy mans who walks through the door any numero he wants.

BRANDY

Well, it's not true anyway. He probably left me his treasured model sailboat or his favorite bar rag.

JUAN

Or maybe he really did leave ju the bar. Open it!

BRANDY

Fine. I'm going to calmly open it and
it's going to be the exact thing he's
given me his whole life - nothing.

SHE OPENS THE ENVELOPE, SLOWLY READS. JUAN FRETS.

JUAN

Ju gotta read it out loud! The
expense es killing me!

BRANDY

OK, OK. Here it is. To Brandy, my
daughter and only living blood
relative I care to mention other than
my third cousin Trevor, who I hope
goes on to live a long and painful
life, I leave my bar, Frank's Place.
No! It can't be true! It can't!

EVERYONE'S STARING AT HERE. JUAN PRETENDS TO COMFORT HER.

JUAN
(to everyone)

She's bery, bery emotioned full.

EVERYONE RETURNS TO THEIR DRINKS AND CONVERSATIONS.

BRANDY

I can't believe he did it.

JUAN

Hey, ju should be happy cousin Trevor
got the bar and not ju.

BRANDY

He did give it to me, Juan.

JUAN

I'm confusing. What did cousin Trevor get?

BRANDY
(loud, to Frank)

A lifetime supply of spite, which is evidently in big supply here at Frank's Place!

FRANK

I love you, too, sailor!

INT. FRANK'S PLACE - LATER
(JUAN, BRANDY, FRANK, HAYWARD)

IT'S CLOSING TIME. THE BAR'S AN EMPTY MESS. BRANDY WALKS JUAN TO THE DOOR.

JUAN

I'm sorry jour father left ju the bar, honey. But like ju always say, ju gotta look at the right side.

BRANDY

Which is?

JUAN

Other than meeting a hundred sailors a week, I don't know, but I'll sleep on it tonight. Ju do the same, OK?

BRANDY

OK. Thanks for coming, Juan. I'll see you in the morning.

THEY HUG AND SHE CLOSSES THE DOOR BEHIND HIM, STANDS WITH HER BACK TO THE BAR. SHE CAN'T TURN AROUND. FRANK IS STILL SITTING ON HIS STOOL.

FRANK

Finally, some time to ourselves.

SHE LOOKS UP AT THE CEILING IN DISGUST.

FRANK (CONT'D)

I'm not up there yet.

BRANDY

What is happening?! Why am I seeing you and hearing you and hating you so much?!

FRANK

I can help you with the first two right now. The last one might take awhile. Come, sit next to your father.

SHE TURNS AROUND, TEARS STREAMING DOWN HER FACE.

BRANDY

Is it really you, daddy?

FRANK

Yeah, it's really me.

SHE RUNS TOWARD HIM, ARMS OPEN WIDE.

FRANK (CONT'D)

No, Brandy! Don't! I'm a --

SHE PLUNGES THROUGH HIM AND SLAMS INTO HIS STOOL, THEN THE BAR. GLASSES AND BOTTLES TOPPLE OFF THE BAR, SHATTER ON THE FLOOR. FRANK LOOKS AT HER, HELPLESS.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Ghost.

SHE RUBS HER MID-SECTION, WHICH TOOK THE BRUNT OF THE BLOW, THEN SLITHERS ONTO A STOOL.

BRANDY

Great, not only do I own a bar with a huge mess to clean up, I own a haunted bar with a huge mess to clean up.

FRANK

Actually, they don't care much for the H word. They're not too fond of the F word either.

BRANDY

They?

FRANK

(points up)

They, them, him.

BRANDY

You mean, like a higher power? Like God?

FRANK

He goes by many names, but I'm told he's keen on The Man.

BRANDY

But you never believed in God.

FRANK

Well, I believe I'm sitting next to my baby girl with a chance to make things right and that's all I need to believe right now.

BRANDY

What do you mean make things right?

FRANK

In a nutshell, I have the chance to make it up to you know where but not until I make it up to you know who.

HE POINTS AT HER.

BRANDY

Make what up to me?

FRANK

All the lost time and missed opportunities. I have the chance to be the father I never was, the father you always needed.

BRANDY

As a ghost on a bar stool?

FRANK

Hey, I don't make the rules.

BRANDY

So, what are the rules, in a nutshell?

FRANK

If you agree to run the bar, I can sit on this stool forever, unseen by everyone else, until I've proven myself to be an adequate father.

BRANDY

Adequate is very vague.

FRANK

Again, I'm not the rule maker.

BRANDY

Right. So, I run the bar while you
earn your father of the year badge
then float off to the pearly gates?

FRANK

I think they're more like really nice
oak doors.

BRANDY

And if I don't agree to the terms?

FRANK MAKES THE THROAT SLASH SIGN ACROSS HIS NECK.

BRANDY (CONT'D)

Well, I'm sorry, daddy, but I just
can't make that kind of decision right
now. You see, I'm suffering from post-
static dress order.

SHE GRABS HER PURSE, SLINGS IT OVER HER SHOULDER.

FRANK

I didn't expect you to say yes
tonight, sailor. I just came to let
you know this is a chance for us to
make things right.

BRANDY

A chance to make things right for you!
What do I get out of it?

FRANK

With those eyes and that smile, you'll get a marriage proposal at least once a week. Beyond that, Brandy, I can't say. We'll just have to find out.

BRANDY

Whoa, ghost dad barfly and fifty-two drunken proposals a year. It's every girl's dream come true. If you don't mind closing up, I'm going to get in my car and drive until I hit reality. Goodbye, daddy.

SHE EXITS. FRANK HANGS HIS HEAD CLOSE TO THE BAR. HAYWARD RETURNS FROM THE BATHROOM, LOOKS AROUND, SHAKES HIS HEAD.

HAYWARD

Not again.

INT. HALLWAY - MORNING
(CROWN, BRANDY)

A FATIGUED BRANDY SLOWLY FIGHTS WITH HER KEYS, TRYING, YET AGAIN, TO GET INTO HER OFFICE. CROWN WALKS BY, ACTS AS IF ALL IS STATUS QUO.

CROWN

Trouble with the door, Miss Meyer?

BRANDY

Yep. You taking notes? This will make for another amusing anecdote.

CROWN

I am sorry the stories came as such a shock. It was your father's wish to keep them secret.

BRANDY

Well, I wish I'd never had a father. Hey, my wish came true! I didn't!

CROWN

So much anger, Miss Meyer. I hope you're able to contain it when you're with your patients.

BRANDY

Seeing how they rarely pay me, it's not like they're able to ask for their money back. Now, if you'll excuse me, I have a group session - that's big bucks, you know.

SHE THROWS HER SHOULDER INTO THE DOOR JUST AS JUAN OPENS IT.

INT. BRANDY'S WAITING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

(JUAN, BRANDY)

BRANDY TUMBLES TO THE FLOOR. JUAN HELPS HER UP AS SHE GATHERS HER THINGS.

JUAN

Ju really have to stop falling through the door, honey. Ju're gonna get yourself a percussion.

BRANDY

Is my group here?

JUAN

Jes, they been waiting for ju. I think one of the crazies es gonna kill one of the other crazies in any minute.

BRANDY

OK. Hold all my calls.

SHE WALKS TOWARD HER OFFICE DOOR.

JUAN

Wait! Ju gotta tell me what ju decided about jour dad's bar!

BRANDY

I decided it was all a dream, a very bad dream.

JUAN

I had a dream, too. I was dancing on the bar with two sailors. They were twins, but one of them was me and I didn't like what I was wearing. What do ju think that means?

BRANDY

It means don't ever open that door if you hear me asking you to open the door.

JUAN

It does?

INT. BRANDY'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER
(BRANDY, STEVE, MONIQUE, SARAH, WENDY, KEVIN)

BRANDY'S PATIENTS ARE IN MID BICKER. STEVE IS AN EXTREMELY TAN AND WELL-GROOMED MAN. HE ALSO SUFFERS FROM EXTREME NARCISSISM. EVERYTHING'S ABOUT HIM.

STEVE

I have a very important tanning session to get to. What do any of you have to do today besides moan about your pathetic lives?

MONIQUE, A 35-YEAR-OLD WOMAN SITS SLUMPED IN HER CHAIR, DEPRESSION RIDDLED, A HUMAN EYOR.

MONIQUE

Nothing. Absolutely nothing.

MONIQUE SIGHS, SLUMPS EVEN FURTHER. SARAH, A FRAIL BUT BEAUTIFUL WOMAN IN HER 20S, WHO CONTINUALLY BATTLES BORDERLINE PERSONALITY DISORDER, A LOVE-HATE RELATIONSHIP WITH EVERYTHING IN LIFE, ANGRILY CHIMES IN.

SARAH

I hate your tan. I hate anything tan.

STEVE

I have the best tan in Seattle.

SARAH

Exactly.

WENDY, A 50-YEAR-OLD WOMAN TRAPPED OUTSIDE AN 80S PUNK-ROCK LEAD SINGER, ROLLS HER EYES AND BRUSHES HER HOT PINK HAIR AWAY FROM HER EYES. WENDY COUNTS A BIPOLAR DIAGNOSIS AS JUST ONE OF HER MANY STRUGGLES. SHE'S ON HER PHONE, FIERCELY POKING THE KEYBOARD.

WENDY

Bicker, complain and fight all you want. I'm ordering ten new Blu-ray players. Ten! What a deal!

BRANDY ENTERS.

BRANDY

Sorry I'm late.

SHE THROWS HER BAGS ON HER DESK, SITS ON AN EMPTY CHAIR
INSIDE THE GROUP'S CIRCLE.

BRANDY (CONT'D)

What are you discussing?

STEVE

Well, to bring you up to speed,
you're late and now I'm going to be
late for my bronzing appointment.

BRANDY

I'm sorry I'm late, Steve. We'll make
sure to end the session on time.

STEVE

Oh, so I'll have to pay for a full
session even though I'm not receiving
a full session? And, why are you
late, yet again? I am always here on
time, ten minutes early as a matter of
fact.

WENDY

Speaking of ten, I was just telling
the group I ordered ten Blu-ray
players.

SARAH

I hate technology. It reminds me that
there's people.

BRANDY

OK, Sarah. Thanks for sharing that.
Let's get back to Wendy for a sec.
Wendy, why do you feel you need ten
Blu-ray players?

WENDY

If I order one and it doesn't work,
I'll have nine more.

MONIQUE

What if the other nine don't work?

WENDY

I never thought of that. Do you think
I should order twenty? Oh my god, I
should've ordered twenty.

BRANDY

No, I think ten is a healthy number.
Remember how you ordered twenty wall
calendars? And twenty cordless
phones?

STEVE

And twenty minutes into our session,
we haven't discussed my problems.

KEVIN

Will you cut her some slack, fake
bake? Her dad just died.

THE GROUP IS SILENCED. BRANDY THROWS A STERN LOOK KEVIN'S
WAY.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

Sorry. Did I over share?

BRANDY HOLDS HER HANDS OUT LIKE SHE'S HOLDING A COFFEE POT AND A CUP.

BRANDY

Here's the pot. Here's the cup.

SHE AIR POURS. AND POURS. AND POURS SOME MORE. STEVE QUICKLY MOVES HIS CRAZILY-EXPENSIVE SHOES OUT OF THE WAY.

STEVE

You're going to spill on my Berlutis!

BRANDY STOPS POURING, GRINS SARCASTICALLY. SHE HANDS THE IMAGINARY CUP TO KEVIN. HE TAKES IT WITH SOME HESITATION.

KEVIN

You didn't spike it, did you?

BRANDY

No, Kevin, there's no alcohol in your imaginary coffee. But, now that you've opened that tasty little bottle I call my personal life, let's have a sip, shall we? Yes, my father died. The good news is, he already died to me long ago.

MONIQUE EAGERLY SITS UP, A RARE EXHILARATION IN HER EXPRESSION. HER EYES WIDEN WITH CURIOSITY.

MONIQUE

And the bad news?

BRANDY

The bad news is, he left me his bar, Frank's Place.

KEVIN

No way, Frank was, um, is your dad?

BRANDY

He was is.

KEVIN

I've been there. Kind of a dive, but
a cool dive.

STEVE

I'm sorry your father passed, but what
does this have to do with my problems?

BRANDY

As you know from numerous
conversations we've had in group, it's
not always about you. Other people
and their problems are equally
important.

WENDY

Yeah, like my Blu-ray players.
They're going to take forever to ship.

STEVE

Who cares about your Blu-ray players?

KEVIN

Who cares about your Goldfinger tan?

MONIQUE SLUMPS AGAIN.

MONIQUE

Who cares? Period?

KEVIN, STEVE AND WENDY BICKER BACK AND FORTH, THE VOLUME'S
TOO MUCH TO BEAR. BRANDY WHISTLES LOUDLY. ALL ARE SILENT.

BRANDY

We all need to care. And we all need to be more respectful if we're going to help each other. That's why we're here.

HER PATIENTS SIT QUIETLY, SEEMINGLY SOAKING IN HER ADVICE FOR TEN SECONDS.

KEVIN

So, he left you the bar?

BRANDY

Yes.

SARAH

I hate bars -- on windows.

BRANDY

I'm not fond of them, on corners, but I'm leaning toward keeping it. While I don't believe in fate, destiny or the force --

SHE LOOKS AT SARAH.

SARAH

(mutters to herself)

I hate the computer generated Yoda.

KEVIN AND SARAH QUICKLY BUMP FISTS.

BRANDY

-- I have a feeling I'm supposed to. I think it'll help me resolve some issues I have with my father. There's just one, tiny big thing.

JUAN ENTERS QUICKLY.

JUAN

What's the thing? Keep the bar!

BRANDY

Juan! Were you listening on the intercom?

JUAN

No, I had my cabeza pressed against the door.

KEVIN

So, what's the thing?

BRANDY

I did some number crunching last night and I can't afford to run a bar and pay for this office.

WENDY

If you don't have an office, where would we meet?

BRANDY

We would meet at the bar, when it's closed, of course.

STEVE

Where is it? I am not driving any further than I have to.

BRANDY

Downtown.

STEVE

I vote yes. Much closer for me.

SARAH

I hate the word vote. It sounds like moat and I hate moats.

BRANDY

No, a vote is a great idea, Steve.

STEVE

Naturally.

BRANDY

By voting, the group will be able to come together to settle an issue. It'll build self esteem, conquer your fears, yada, yada, yada. Any questions?

WENDY RAISES HER HAND.

BRANDY (CONT'D)

The therapist recognizes the honorable woman from over there.

WENDY

Can we vote on whether or not we want to vote?

BRANDY

The therapist vetoes the motion. Any other questions? No, OK, let's see hands.

(MORE)

BRANDY (CONT'D)

All in favor of me keeping Frank's
Place and moving our sessions to said
bar?

STEVE'S HAND FLIES INTO THE AIR. EVERYONE ELSE WAITS FOR ONE
ANOTHER TO MAKE A MOVE. NADA.

BRANDY (CONT'D)

OK, I'll make an addendum to the first
vote. All in favor of me keeping the
bar and not forcing you to pay your
outstanding bills today, raise your
hand.

THE OTHER FOUR HANDS SHOOT UP.

INT. FRANK'S PLACE - MORNING
(FRANK, BRANDY, SAILOR)

FRANK SITS ON HIS STOOL. THE BAR IS EMPTY.

FRANK

Twelve hours a day, thirty years in a
row I stood behind this bar. And I
never noticed it. After only one day
on the outside looking in, I can truly
say, this place is a dump.

BRANDY UNLOCKS THE DOOR, ENTERS. FRANK TURNS TOWARD THE
DOOR, SMILES.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Sorry, ma'am, we're closed.

SHE WALKS TOWARD THE BAR.

BRANDY

That's OK, I don't drink.

FRANK

Don't drink? Why's that?

SHE HOPS UP ON THE BAR NEXT TO HIS STOOL, HER LEGS DANGLING LIKE A LITTLE GIRL ON A FENCE.

BRANDY

My dad owned a bar, kind of turned me off to the whole alcohol thing.

FRANK

I imagine he wasn't around for you much, probably wasn't the father you deserved.

BRANDY

Not so much.

HE LOOKS INTO HER EYES, EXTREME SADNESS FILLS HIS GHOSTLY HEART.

FRANK

Well, he won't not be around much longer then.

BRANDY

Not unless I keep the bar and give him a second chance. Give us a second chance.

A GLIMMER OF HOPE SPARKS IN HIS EYES.

BRANDY (CONT'D)

But, I'd have to run the very business that caused all our problems in the first place. That could be a bummer.

THE GLIMMER FADES.

FRANK

Maybe it's not worth it. Maybe he's
not worth it.

BRANDY

Maybe not, but I think I'll give it a
shot, as we in the bar business say.

SHE CHORTLES. HE SMILES. HIS GLIMMER SHINES AT FULL
BRIGHTNESS.

BRANDY (CONT'D)

Cuz life's too short for maybes.

FRANK

Sounds like your dad could learn a lot
from you.

SHE SWINGS HER LEGS OVER THE BAR, HOPS BEHIND IT.

BRANDY

Sounds like I could stand to learn how
to pour a drink or two.

THEY SHARE A WARM SMILE, ONE THEY HAVEN'T HAD IN FOREVER.

FRANK

How about we start with a brandy old
fashioned?

SHE GRABS A BOTTLE OF WHISKEY.

FRANK (CONT'D)

That requires brandy, not whiskey.

SHE FURROWS, PUTS THE BOTTLE DOWN AND GRABS ANOTHER.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Getting colder and clearer. That's
vodka.

HER FURROW NARROWS. SHE SETS THE VODKA DOWN, READS THE LABELS ON THE BOTTLES VERY CLOSELY, THEN GRABS A BOTTLE OF BRANDY. SHE HOLDS IT UP FOR HIS APPROVAL.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Would you looky here, I think we found ourselves a bartender! Or, at the very least, a reader.

THE DOOR OPENS. A SAILOR WALKS IN.

SAILOR

I'm sorry, ma'am, but I saw you through the window and I had to step in to ask you two questions.

BRANDY

Fire away, sailor.

SHE WINKS AT FRANK. HE ROLLS HIS EYES.

FRANK

I can't wait for this.

SAILOR

Are you open and if so, will you marry me?

FRANK

I told you, at least once a week.

BRANDY

Well, I am open, but how about we start with a brandy old fashioned and go from there?

THE SAILOR SALUTES.

SAILOR

Aye-aye, captain.

HE APPROACHES THE BAR. BRANDY GRABS A GLASS.

FRANK

OK, the first thing you do is --

FADE OUT:

THE END