

LIFE LINES

**ACT I**

INT. Spring 2002. NIKKI is sitting at her dining table in her well-appointed condo. Near the table, there are balloons from her retirement party still barely holding their shape. She stares at the lines across her palms and outlines a long one with her finger. There are two envelopes on the dining table.

NIKKI (V.O.)

I'm looking forward to the mail  
being delivered. Somehow it's  
1886 again.

Nikki opens one of the envelopes. The cover letter tells her that it's her final check from her former employer. She recalls her job.

NIKKI (V.O.)

It's not like I want to go back  
to THAT, do I?

INT. An office. Some time earlier. Cubicles with three-quarter walled offices. One fully walled office in the corner and three smaller ones along the windows. Lots of activity in the main area. It's the end-of-year budgeting crunch. NIKKI's phone rings.

NIKKI

Nikki Stevens. Well, how did  
that happen...where...why on earth  
did he leave his laptop in the  
car overnight...there's a  
password, right...why did he do  
that...how hard would it be to use  
the fingerprint security...how  
many social security  
numbers...yes, I'll get on it...yes,  
I'll tell the client..

Camera zooms in on Nikki's screen, showing 35 unread messages in Outlook, many with priority notation. Nikki clicks open an email from Matthew Mellon asking for a large raise for one of his people, someone named T. Rodin. She reads a few more messages, mostly about budgeting.

INT. Matthew Mellon's office. He sits behind his desk. Behind him is the ubiquitous photo of him, his wife, and two nerdy kids on the beach. TRACEY sits on the other side of the desk.

TRACEY

Heard anything about my raise?

MATTHEW

I made the request, Tracey. I asked for ten percent for you. That's twice as much as we're supposed to give to anyone this year.

TRACEY

Call her.

MATTHEW

I should wait for her to ask me about it.

TRACEY

Call her! I need this raise.

MATTHEW

People don't get raises because they need them. They get raises because they earn them. And you have. That's why I asked for it.

TRACEY

Well, don't tell me that. Tell her. Call her. I know you've got balls.

(grins devilishly)

I've seen them.

INT. Nikki's office. There's a tent card on her credenza behind her. It says, "Don't just follow up. Follow through." The email from Matthew is still open on the computer's desktop. Nikki's phone rings. It's Matthew, on his speakerphone so Tracey can hear the conversation.

NIKKI

Hi Matthew. I'm just going over your budget request. I have a few issues here. First, can you explain this large increase for Tracey?

MATTHEW

Sure. Tracey's been here three years, and she's really grown into the job.

NIKKI

That might be, but you've asked for 10% in a budget where we're limited to half of that.

MATTHEW

Well, it's because her performance has been...exceptional.

(makes a face and Tracey reacts with a grin.)

NIKKI

(frowns)

Are you on speakerphone? Is someone with you?

MATTHEW

(wags finger at Tracey to be quiet)

No.

NIKKI

No?

MATTHEW

No.

NIKKI

Well, then let me just mention that the review committee wouldn't go along with Tracey's raise in any case, because they all know that you're sleeping with her. And they won't boost Sandra's raise either, for the same reason.

A scream is heard through Nikki's phone. The speakerphone goes off.

INT. Nikki's condo. She's surfing the Internet.

NIKKI (V.O.)

Okay. Finding a new gynecologist. My whole afternoon's activity. I've hit a new low.

NIKKI peruses the list of Ob/Gyns. Most of the entries are Ob/Gyn. Stops at Gynecologist/Oncologist. She settles on the oncologist. Looks at number and starts to dial.

NIKKI (V.O.)

Well, what am I more likely to get? Pregnant, or cancer? That's encouraging.

INT. A hair salon. Nikki's hair is in aluminum foil.

GLENN

You're a little young to retire, aren't you?

NIKKI

Yes and no. I was a partner at Jackson Consulting. There's some, well, incentive to retire.

GLENN

What does that mean?

NIKKI

The problem is that there are a limited number of partnership shares. I held quite a few, having been a partner for more than twenty years. So encouraging people to retire is an investment decision for the firm. When they look at the future new business I might bring in, and compare it to the business someone younger - or three new partners sharing my holdings - might bring in over the next twenty years, well...

GLENN

So you're out.

NIKKI

I'm out and about. Retired at fifty-five. Don't need to work. No husband, no kids. No obligations. I have a fabulous life.

GLENN

You do. Enjoying the good life.

NIKKI

I didn't say I was enjoying it.

GLENN

What are your plans?

NIKKI

For the first time I can remember, I don't have any. You were the only entry on my calendar for weeks, and now I'm here. It's really strange.

INT. Some days later. Nikki is at a desk in her condo. She's on the Internet. She watches some videos. She reads some blogs. She puts on reading glasses. She reads the financial pages. She buys a tool kit. She shakes her head. The phone rings. She smiles.

NIKKI

Hello? Yes, I remember. How are you? Uh-huh. Yes, I'll be there. That's good.

You get the feeling that things are picking up for Nikki.

NIKKI

No, I know. I'll bring them.

(Hangs up)

Oh boy. I'm excited to be audited. This isn't good.

INT. Restaurant. She's with two friends, CONNIE and GWEN.

CONNIE

So I was just at the lawyer, signing the papers.

GWEN

Well, what is a reverse mortgage?

CONNIE

It's an interesting concept, actually. My parents have this house, the one I grew up in. I love that house, and want to keep it in the family. They'd like to sell it, but they also need a place to live. I don't have any siblings, so in theory, the house would be mine eventually.

GWEN

Not if they sell it and use the money.

CONNIE

Exactly right. So we created this reverse mortgage. I pay them a certain amount every month until they, well, until they don't need the house anymore. Then it's mine. That could mean next week, next year, or much later than that.

NIKKI

Do you remember the French woman who got a reverse mortgage?

GWEN

Sounds like a limerick, like she lives in a shoe: There was a Madame named Francois; who wanted to sell her *chez moi*.

NIKKI

It came up in one of my real estate projects. This 90-year-old woman sold her house to a lawyer who was in his forties. Seemed like a good deal for him. They estimated, generously, that she'd live to 100, so they valued the payments for ten years. The short term made the payments kind of big. Thirty years later, when the lady was 120, the lawyer died. His widow had to continue the payments for another two years.

CONNIE

Well, that would scare me if I was buying a house from someone I didn't love. But this is good either way. If they die, I get a house. If they don't, I still have them. Win win.

GWEN

Good thing I don't do that with my parents. I'd have to kill them. Win win.

CONNIE

You're a scary woman, Gwen.

Waitress arrives with lunches. She puts a complicated meal at CONNIE's place.

CONNIE

Spanakopita. That's mine.

WAITRESS

Spinach, strawberry, gorgonzola salad?

GWEN

That's me. I dream about this salad all month.

CONNIE

You know, you could make that at home. I like to order meals that I would never, ever make.

GWEN

I'm not you. Not a chef. So even this is something I'd never make at home. I couldn't order microwave popcorn here, right? Tell me. Does being a really good chef make it hard to enjoy a restaurant meal?

CONNIE

Not in the slightest. The one thing I can't do in my own kitchen is surprise myself with a meal I didn't cook.

GWEN tastes a bite of her strawberry and spinach salad.

GWEN

Oh!

(orgasmically)

NIKKI

Gwen, you need a man, and soon. Didn't you just meet someone? Bill?

GWEN

Yeah. Bill's a lucky guy. He's getting the benefit of all my pent-up food deprivation.

NIKKI

Or maybe that salad is really as good as sex?

GWEN

Nah. It's different. Here's the difference. With food, the waiting is the same, no matter what you ordered. I mean, you're just hungry. That's the foreplay. But my salad-eating high is really different from the chocolate high or my sushi high.

NIKKI

Sounds like you've spent a lot of time thinking about food.

GWEN

Yes, but even more time thinking about sex. With sex, it's the opposite. During all the foreplay, you're kind of thinking about the person you're with. You hope, anyway. By the time you get to the orgasm, it really doesn't matter much how you got there. Or who. Even if it's yourself.

CONNIE

Hey! You're eating with that hand!

GWEN

Hey, I won the National Book Award with this hand.

NIKKI

Yeah. Tell that to all the people who read your biography of Queen Victoria.

So you're saying that everything counts in sex until the last three minutes.

GWEN

Uh-huh. The opposite of a basketball game.

CONNIE

Three minutes? Some of us are lucky if the whole date lasts much more than three minutes.

GWEN

Yeah. Nothing like listening to married people complaining about the ennui of constant sex with someone they love. When you're single, sometimes it's all foreplay and no final buzzer, so to speak. Lucky for me that Bill seems to enjoy both the journey and the destination. All that free retirement time seems to agree with him.

NIKKI

Not me so much. I seem to have a little too much time for obsessing. So far, retirement has been kind of, I don't know, unfulfilling. And I don't think I've even officially reached retirement yet. My daily life isn't much different from taking a few weeks off. Except I don't need to check voice mail every half hour. Although I do. I'm not sure yet what I should be doing. I'm filled with possibilities, and bereft of options.

GWEN

Are you saying that you are sorry you're not working?

NIKKI

Not really. I don't seem to be able to get my job - my ex-job - out of my head. But I think that's because there's nothing taking its place. Let's just say I'm just not as contented as a retired person should be.

GWEN

You live in Florida. This is where the *lucky* retired people go. It's a place where there is no winter. Every day is summertime, sunny and warm. Your life is a weekend. No job; no Mondays; no bosses. And you're looking for something else. I think you'd be bored in heaven.

NIKKI

Yeah. How spoiled am I? On top of that, I feel guilty for not feeling ecstatic.

CONNIE

Guys, you'd be surprised. I felt the same way when I retired three years ago. You know, everybody thinks that I was always this budding entrepreneur when I opened CookShop.

GWEN

No. We thought that you were the same type A maniac you probably were when you were a corporate lawyer. And we were right.

CONNIE

Well, I am a maniac. But you'll remember, I think, that I did expect to take it easy.

NIKKI

Why did you retire? You didn't have to.

CONNIE

Yes, I did. David had just retired. He had dreams of golf five days a week, year-round. You can't do that in Rochester, New York. And I couldn't bring my job here. So I retired, too. And I expected to spend my days, I don't know, playing quoits or something. I just didn't think about it. Florida, sun, the beach. I didn't think beyond that.

GWEN

And the shop?

CONNIE

Well, we started getting used to our life down here. I'd spend my mornings at the gym. All morning. We'd go out for lunch most of the time. And then it's necessary, but not fulfilling, to spend your afternoons cleaning the house or going to the market. There was much too much time to see friends. We either saw people too often or stayed home and watched TV. Two TVs, in fact.

NIKKI

At once?

CONNIE

Well, in slightly different places. David would keep the business channel on all day at his desk. By the end of the afternoon, he could lip-sync the top stories. And I'd watch the cooking channel in the living room.

NIKKI

I think that you can tell a lot about a person by the channel that's on in the background. Mine's travel.

CONNIE

My sister leaves the fashion channel on. When she isn't out shopping.

GWEN

I think you've got something there. I watch C-Span all weekend. Watching biographies written by other people is probably the only thing geekier than researching the ones I write. On the other hand, I'm kind of in school that way. My daughter watches a channel where people get cosmetic surgery all day.

NIKKI and CONNIE

Yuck.

GWEN

So then what, Connie? You were watching TV.

CONNIE

Well, I was watching, and that led to lots of cooking, and I began to realize two important things. Number one, there must be a lot of people out there like me, obsessing about food preparation. Number two, if I didn't get out of the house, I'd weigh three hundred pounds. So I opened CookShop. And the food channel plays on the shop TV all day. So now I'm not a couch potato; I'm a tycoon.

GWEN

Yeah, I get it. A guy sits around drinking beer: he's a bum. Now picture the same guy, same beer, sitting on a dock with a fishing rod. He's a sportsman.

NIKKI

Gwen, it's different for you. You can write. So you have a built-in hobby. You'll never be bored.

GWEN

Yeah, you'd think so. I mean, I got into this career because I like to write. But once you do it for a living, it isn't fun to do it as a hobby. I don't even keep a journal anymore.

NIKKI

It's very weird, when there are no demands on your time. The last time I had days stretched out ahead of me was before I joined Jackson Consulting twenty-five years ago. And even then I couldn't wait to start doing something with my life.

INT. Twenty-five years ago. Inside the corner office. Young Nikki is being interviewed by JACK. There's a poster on the wall. It depicts a cartoonish female, all eyes and breasts, being spanked by a geeky guy drinking some sort of protein drink.

JACK

So what do I have to do to persuade you to join Jackson Consulting?

NIKKI

Tell me about that poster and why you have it in your office.

JACK

Yeah. Well, the company is a client. They were about to launch this campaign, but they got cold feet at the last minute. The senior management said that the premise was "offensive". Do you think that it's offensive?

NIKKI

Yes.

JACK

That's funny.

NIKKI

Funny?

JACK

Yeah. That's the joke. The guy is a nerd, right? But he drinks the drink and he gets the guts to do anything. Even her. Great drink.

NIKKI

Nope. Still offensive.

JACK

Good thing I'm not interviewing you for anything creative.

NIKKI

Just for the record, that's a little offensive, too.

JACK

(ignoring her)

Well, let me tell you why you want to work here.

NIKKI

Okay.

JACK

It's a great job.

NIKKI

That's it?

JACK

That's enough, isn't it? And we're number one in our market.

NIKKI

I thought maybe you'd give me a little more detail about what differentiates your firm from the other consulting firms that you're competing with for clients.

NIKKI (V.O.)

And consultants.

JACK

Okay, two things. First of all, there's our team approach. I like to tell clients, "There's no I in Jack."

NIKKI

Um. Okay.

(Pauses)

NIKKI (CONT'D)

What's the other thing?

JACK

Yeah. Well, we get involved in any project that a client might need help. Even if it's something that we never did before, in a field we don't know anything about. I like to say that I'm a "Jack of all trades."

NIKKI (V.O.)

You are aware that "Jack of all trades" is only half of the cliché.

(aloud)

NIKKI

Well, that'll make for some challenges, won't it?

INT. Present time. In a corporate office. Nikki is being interviewed for a job.

FRANK

Nikki, you've spent quite a long time being a consultant. I'll bet that we've done a dozen projects together. Why not just retire and relax?

NIKKI

I haven't ruled it out. I'm just looking at my options.

FRANK

Do you think that you could adapt to a more traditional managerial assignment in a corporation? It isn't the same as consulting.

NIKKI

Well, as a partner, I had sales responsibility, of course, but I was also accountable for our work product. And that required managing a team of consultants. And budgeting. So it's not that much of a stretch to take a corporate assignment, I think.

FRANK

You don't have to sell yourself to me. How far back do we go? Fifteen years? That wasn't what I was asking. I've no doubt you'd be successful in this position. That's why I contacted you. My question isn't whether you can make this work. I want to know whether this assignment would work for you. And frankly, I don't want to go through this recruitment process again too soon.

NIKKI

I appreciate that. Yes, there are aspects of work life that I'd just as soon give up. But I won't accept a job unless I'm sure that I can commit to it.

FRANK

We don't pay in the same range as you're used to, you know.

NIKKI

I'm aware of that. I'm just evaluating the various opportunities I have. Total retirement, which is one of my options, pays even less than you do. Money isn't the main reason I'm looking at continuing a career.

FRANK

Nikki, I've got to tell you. There's a real wistfulness in your eyes I've never seen before. Wherever you go, I hope that you're running towards something and not away from something else.

INT. Jack's office. Continuation of Nikki's interview twenty-five years ago.

JACK

Now it's time for you to interview with the other partner in the office here. Her name is Ellen.

INT. Hallway. Jack takes Nikki to an office nearby.

JACK

Ellen, this is Nikki.

NIKKI

It's a pleasure to meet you. I attended the Women's Leadership Conference that you chaired in October.

ELLEN

How did you like the conference?

NIKKI

It's the first conference I ever attended where there was a line at the ladies room.

ELLEN

If that's the price you pay for a seat at the table, I'll take it.

NIKKI

Yeah. Getting a seat at the table by giving up your throne. Me too.

JACK

Okay. There's way too much estrogen in here for me. I'm outta here.

ELLEN

Please. Sit down. It's been a long day for you so far, hasn't it?

NIKKI

Yes. You sure have a lot of different skill sets here. And people to go with them. Jack's a character, huh?

ELLEN

It's a diverse group. And Jack, well, maybe you're having some doubts about working here. He's not your ordinary practice leader. I mean, hell, he's kind of a buffoon.

But here's the thing. The man can sell anything to anyone. Clients love him. He takes the men to strip clubs and flirts with the women. He can drink anyone under the table. And in the end, he's got the goods. Us.

NIKKI

Well, I plan to make my decision based on the assignment, not the people.

ELLEN

Look, don't turn down this job because of, well, any person in this office. We work outside. When you're on an assignment, you don't see anyone but the client and the project team for months on end. Don't accept a job because of any person, either. You never know who's going to be here or who isn't. People move around a lot.

NIKKI (V.O.)

Ellen was insightful, picking up on my reservations about working with Jack. But I came aboard anyway, because I knew she'd be there for me. Ellen left Jackson for a client two weeks after I got there.

INT. Frank's office. Present time. Interview with Frank.

NIKKI

I don't know yet, Frank. I really enjoyed working here as a consultant, and working with you, on projects. But you can't be the reason that I come to work here, if I do. And I'm not sure that I have the stomach to start all over if for some reason you weren't around.

Once burned, twice shy. So please don't take it personally if you offer me a position and I decide it's not for me.

INT. Nikki looks out the window of her condo.

Nikki sits at computer. Goes through a calculator to determine her life expectancy. She has 42 years left. Uses the desktop calculator to convert that into minutes. She looks at the calendar. It's the autumn weekend to change the clock.

NIKKI (V.O.)

Oh, great. An extra hour. What will I do with my extra hour? I know what I'll do. I'll fret. Yes, it's official. My inability to find something I want to do has become my hobby.

Nikki goes back to the computer. She leaves the computer and goes to the TV. She leaves the TV and goes back to the computer.

INT. Nikki's living room. Nikki is sprawled in front of television. It's on the Sailing Channel.

JED (O.S.)

Hi. I'm Jed Bartram. We're here with Gordy Donner, who has just finished sailing around the world in his steel ketch. Gordy, what advice would you give to someone just learning the ropes?

DONNER

"The ropes" is right, Jed. Well, technically the only rope on a boat is the one that rings the bell. But lines are really important. You have to know how to use lines, when to use lines, and how to tie the right knot for the right time.

JED

Well, what is the right knot, then?

DONNER

Well, like I said, you need different knots for different situations. But you're not a sailor unless you can tie a bowline.

JED

Bowling?

DONNER

Bowline. It's pronounced like "beau-lynn." But stay away from a captain who pronounces it as if it's at the front of the boat. It isn't a bow line. It's a knot. The perfect knot. It's completely strong, but you can always undo it.

(demonstrates tying a  
bowline.)

JED

Well, thanks Gordy, for that helpful tip. And folks, that's the end of our show today. Remember, you can get sailing lessons from your local Coast Guard Auxiliary. Please don't go out sailing without learning how to do it.

NIKKI furrows her brow and ponders the show. Then she gets on the computer and signs up for sailing lessons from the Coast Guard Auxiliary.

INT. Nighttime. Classroom in middle school. Nikki is among about a dozen students. The teacher is wearing a captain's hat. He looks ridiculous.

TEACHER

Hi all. I'm Captain Rog. This is the Basic Sailing Course. If you're here for some other course, well, you should stay and learn navigation, because you're in the wrong place.

Our class is divided into ten sessions, one every week. Today, I'll be teaching you about boats in general and boat safety. But everything you'll learn about boats is basically about safety.

(Points to PowerPoint presentation behind him with weekly syllabus and reads each session topic)

General

Weather  
Setting the Sails  
Navigation  
Knots and Lines  
Docking and Anchoring  
Communications  
Boat Systems and Maintenance  
Living Aboard  
Safety and Emergency Procedures

NIKKI looks down and begins taking notes.

INT. Restaurant. Nikki walks from entrance towards Gwen. Gwen is sitting at a table, working at her laptop, writing feverishly. She's looking down through glasses.

NIKKI

Hey Gwen. Wow, you're on fire here. Are you writing another biography?

GWEN

Well, I'm writing. A work of fiction.

NIKKI

Wow, a novel this time?

GWEN

Nope. My expense report.

Connie enters and takes a seat. They are all looking at menus.

CONNIE

Well, I'm old.

GWEN

Uh-huh. And how come you weren't old last week? What happened today?

CONNIE

Okay, I was old last week, too. Today was it, though. I had to find a new dermatologist. Mine retired.

GWEN

Doctors retire, Connie. And you went to his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday party last year. Surely you knew that he's older than you are.

CONNIE

Yeah, that's true. But now I went down the list from my insurance company and found a new one.

NIKKI

Do they list them by age? You could pick one fresh out of school.

CONNIE

No. Worse. They list them by specialty. I passed over all the acne guys. I picked a guy who's into wrinkles.

GWEN

Imagine devoting your life to inspecting an endless variety of oozing pores. Well, at least I can finally read this menu. I just got these reading glasses.

CONNIE

Yet another of the joys of midlife. This is great. I'm getting wrinkles, but I can't see them, because I've lost my close-up vision. So I think I look okay, when in reality I'm a crone. A blind crone.

NIKKI

Maybe you should get glasses. Bifocals.

CONNIE

I don't think so. All I'm missing is the stuff that's nearby. My distance vision is still fine. I don't need bifocals. I need, uh, monofocals. Maybe they're unifocals.

GWEN

Uh-uh. That's what I'm wearing. But I think of them as heterofocals.

CONNIE

My dad is eighty-eight and just had a colonoscopy. It was fine. The doctor told him to have another one in ten years. My father said, "From your mouth to God's ear."

NIKKI

Wow. There's a lesson there, but I have no idea what it is. Speaking of lessons, I have to leave in five minutes for my sailing class.

GWEN

You're taking a class? In sailing?

NIKKI

Well, yes. I had to do something. There's a limit to how long you can watch reruns of sitcoms.

GWEN

But sailing? That's so... not you. I picture you not so much "Ahoy! Water!" as "Ahem! Waiter!"

NIKKI

You know, if you have to announce that there's water ahead, you're in more trouble than you think. But I prefer to think of it as "not me up until now." I'm *evolving*. One thing I like about the sailing idea is that it's as different as it can be from the work that I did. It's physical, but it's also intellectual.

GWEN

I could think of lots of very different occupations for you. You could be a teacher.

NIKKI

I've managed to avoid kids until now. No, thanks.

GWEN

Retail?

NIKKI

No holiday crowds, thanks. Too public. Bah humbug.

GWEN

A prostitute? That would be private.

NIKKI

A little too private, I'm afraid.

GWEN

Yeah. After all that consulting, you're done faking orgasms, huh? Metaphorically speaking, of course.

NIKKI

Of course.

CONNIE

Well, I think it's good. Maybe you'll go on a fabulous journey somewhere on a sailboat.

NIKKI

I'm thinking about it.

INT. NIKKI'S CONDO. NIKKI makes arrangements for sailing lessons in the Caribbean. Goes into bedroom. She's in the middle of cleaning out the closet. There's a pile of business suits in a box, awaiting deportation to Salvation Army. She holds up the jacket of a red suit, circa 1980s.

INT. JACK'S OFFICE. He's giving Nikki her end-of-year review. There's a different poster on the wall. It says, "Jackson Consulting. Why use your own employees when you can abuse ours?"

NIKKI

Wait a minute. You're reducing my raise because I wore a red suit?

JACK

Yes. The client complained.

NIKKI

That I wore a red suit.

JACK

Yes. After that meeting in Las Vegas in March. When you presented our findings from the marketing survey. Rob told me that the red dress detracted from your presentation.

NIKKI

He didn't seem to mind that his division gave me a standing ovation. So Rob thought I was too flashy? For Vegas? And you waited until now to tell me?

JACK

What was the point? The damage was done. Look, that's not the only reason you're not getting a raise. You're just not being a manager.

NIKKI

I've asked you time and time again to assign me to projects where I'll get some experience managing the project. You never do.

JACK

I'm just not sure you're ready.

NIKKI

So what do you want me to do so that I'm ready? Besides shop for clothes.

JACK

Find some followers and lead them.

NIKKI

That's your advice? "Find some followers and lead them?"

JACK

Yes.

NIKKI

And this way you can preserve the money for someone else's raise?

JACK

Some of the coins land heads, and some of them land tails. Lose the suit.

A SECRETARY knocks on the office door and doesn't wait to open it. She walks over to Jack and whispers something in his ear.

JACK

Listen, we'll have to finish this later. I've got something to do.

NIKKI (V.O.)

What Jack had to do was leave.  
He'd sold the company to a big  
consulting firm, and retired to  
Costa Rica. And I got on a  
partner track, wearing my red  
suit and bright red high heels.

EXT. At sailing school. Nikki is there with seven other  
students. BRET arrives, wearing a tee shirt that says:  
"There is no God. Believe in yourself instead."

NIKKI (V.O.)

Well, now I've seen everything.  
An evangelical atheist.

INSTRUCTOR

Okay, then. For the next six  
days, we'll be sailing here.  
Let's hope we get some wind. But  
not too much.

Nikki looks around. There are three couples, one  
retired, one twenty-something, one gay and glamorous.  
And the atheist.

INSTRUCTOR

You and you, what are your  
names?

NIKKI

Nikki.

BRET

Bret.

INSTRUCTOR

Nikki and Bret, you're partners.  
The rest of you couples will all  
split up. I don't care how. We  
don't want any mutinies here.

EXT. Various shots of sailing school. Nikki on watch  
with Bret, Nikki adjusting sails, cooking down below,  
fixing toilet, varnishing, anchoring, lying in cockpit  
alone under stars. It takes a while before Nikki  
masters the bowline knot, but she eventually ties one  
wearing a scarf tied around her eyes.

INSTRUCTOR

Putting away a boat isn't just like putting your car into the garage. Remember, everything is about safety. So you tie up the line to the cleat, and then you coil the bitter end so it's out of the way. You don't want to be tripping all over things.

INT. Last night of sailing school. Restaurant with nautical theme, overlooking water. Nikki is having dinner with Bret.

NIKKI

What a day! Fabulous!

BRET

You were glowing out there.

NIKKI

Yes. That's what I mean. I really haven't felt this kind of energy for a while. But I need to get upstairs to pack. My flight's really early.

BRET

Too bad you have to go so soon. It's only Friday. You're such an amazing lady. Do you really have to go upstairs now?

NIKKI

Uh-huh.

BRET

Can I, um, walk you to your room?

NIKKI

(smiles)

For starters, sure.

INT. Morning. In Nikki's room. Bret looks up from bed and grins. Nikki is somewhere under the covers. Bret is stroking her head.

BRET

Wow. Your hair sure has a lot of body.

NIKKI

Well...your body sure has a lot of hair.

BRET

You are so cute. I just have to bite you.

(dives underneath cover and bites her behind)

NIKKI

Ouch!

(Laughs. Pulls out from under cover to look at rear end)

I think you made a mark there.

BRET

Yeah. I'm branding you.

NIKKI

You're going to kill me, and when they identify the body, it'll be from dental records. Yours.

Shot from her room overlooking the hotel entrance. Bret helps her to the taxi. He says goodbye to Nikki as she gets into a taxi. There's a friendly kiss.

INT. Nikki's condo. She's surfing the web. The TV is tuned to the Travel Channel. People are sailing. A smile crosses her face. She opens a new page on the screen. She's shopping for a sailboat. She looks at listings and reads an article called "Buying Your First Boat: Don't Skip the Survey."

INT. The conference room in the office. Jack has assembled about a dozen people. He's sitting at the head of the table.

JACK

Are we all here? Okay. I've assembled you together because there's something we need to go over. As you know, here at Jackson Consulting, the relationship between consultants and management, well, me, is very important. That's why I commissioned that anonymous survey last month. Remember, you all responded.

CLIFF

Yeah, I got a reminder message from them every three hours until I sent in a form.

JACK

Well, I think that feedback, upwards and downwards, is critical. And I want to have some documentation of our good morale. So imagine how surprised I was when I saw...this.

JACK puts a PowerPoint slide on a screen in the room. It has some very low ratings for his management style. The first question is "Do you believe that your manager treats you fairly? The response, on a scale of five, was "one."

JACK

I double-checked with the survey folks, because I was sure that the findings were wrong. But they weren't wrong. So there's only one conclusion that I can make from these results...The questions weren't clearly worded. I mean "Do you believe that your manager treats you fairly?" I'm sure that there must be lots of ways you all misinterpreted that question.

NIKKI

Didn't the survey company write the questionnaire?

JACK

No, I did. And since it was my first time, maybe there was some nuance I didn't get right. Maybe you all just didn't understand the question. So today, we're filling out the forms again, together, and I can clear up any confusion while we're here.

CLIFF

You want us to fill them out right here? And tell you our answers?

JACK

That's the only way to get it done. How about I just ask the questions and we'll go around the table? That will be faster. Question one: do you believe that your manager, meaning me, treats you fairly? One through five, five being "absolutely!"

Everyone at the table looks very uncomfortable. JACK goes around the table. NIKKI goes first, but it's clear that she doesn't mean what she's saying.

NIKKI

Four.

The person after NIKKI also says "four" and then the next person says "five" and then everyone says "five" after that.

JACK

I knew it. I knew that those other answers were wrong. To give me that "one" score, just about everyone would have had to give me a terrible rating. So, Nikki, why did you only give me a "four"?

Nikki continues to study the boats for sale. She sees a photo of a used boat that looks perfect.

INT. A week later. Nikki's in an outdoors shop. She's buying foul weather gear. She leaves the shop and goes to a coffee shop, where GWEN is waiting for her.

GWEN

I'm having a romantic crisis  
with Bill.

NIKKI

That's impossible. There isn't a  
romantic bone in your body.

GWEN

I'm highly offended. I think I'm  
very romantic. In a nuanced way.

NIKKI

The whole point of romance is  
that it isn't nuanced. It's out  
there. You take a risk.

GWEN

I thought I wanted Bill to be a  
dog, but now I think I'd rather  
that he was a cat.

NIKKI

Is this some sort of role play  
thing? I'm not sure I want to  
know too much more about this.

GWEN

No. It's a metaphor. I'm a dog  
person. I like dogs. I wouldn't  
want to have a cat.

NIKKI

So far, so good.

GWEN

But I have discovered that I am  
a cat. And I thought that Bill  
liked cats. He has a cat, for  
heavens' sake.

NIKKI

Okay. That actually sounds like  
a perfect match. What's your  
problem?

GWEN

Well, he likes cats and I am a  
cat. But I don't think I want a  
dog after all.

NIKKI

As a cat, I suppose you wouldn't want to have a pet dog.

GWEN

And he's quite a puppy. He's just always there, wagging his little tail, thrilled to see me, like he's been waiting his whole life. Every moment. I come around when I want to and don't need to fuss all of the time, like a cat.

NIKKI

Does that work for him?

GWEN

Actually, I think it does. As a cat person, he has a good deal. He knows that when I'm there, it's because I want to be. I do a fair share of purring. But I suspect that when he comes around, it's only because the little puppy can't figure out somewhere else to be. I never feel special so much as I feel like one of those seat-fillers at the Academy Awards.

NIKKI

Gwen, a relationship is a garden, not a terrarium. It needs to be tended. You can't just pour water all over it and let it self-sustain.

GWEN

I'm self-sustaining. And you know, you can leave food and water for a cat and it'll self-sustain for days.

NIKKI

I know your type. I've dated guys like you. The easiest way to chase them off is to say something heartfelt about wanting to see them again.

GWEN

Well, in the garden of relationships, I'm a cactus. I don't need a lot.

NIKKI

Well, some people are roses. They need watering.

GWEN

They need fertilizer.

NIKKI

Your romanticism is underwhelming. Shoot. You have someone fawning all over you and you're complaining that he's too happy to see you?

GWEN

Somehow it doesn't sound like that inside my head. Well, we'll see how it goes.

NIKKI

I have news.

GWEN

What's going on?

NIKKI

Well, let me first mention that it's nice to have good news, or anything new at all. But this is a little wild. I bought a sailboat. It isn't here. I have to go pick it up next week.

GWEN

That's great. But that isn't all that wild.

NIKKI

It's in Turkey.

GWEN

Oh. Okay. That is kind of wild.

NIKKI

Turkey's one of the great maritime centers of the world. It's on the Mediterranean. The Aegean Sea. Across from Greece.

GWEN

Yes, I actually knew that. I wrote a biography of Helen of Troy, remember. You're going to Turkey?

NIKKI

I have to. That's where my boat is. I've been reading up. It sounds like an interesting place, actually. I never even read a biography of anyone in Europe.

GWEN

Well, technically most of Turkey is in Asia. Maybe you should get yourself a fez.

NIKKI

I rather doubt it. The fez is for men. And it's been illegal for a man to wear one in Turkey since the 1920s. I read that in the guidebook I bought.

GWEN

Do you think you'll be able to send emails or have phone service?

NIKKI

This isn't the Middle Ages and I'm not Captain Cook. It'll be just like I'm sailing around in Hawaii or the Chesapeake. The marina has Wi-Fi, and the owner of the boat has already gotten me a mobile. You won't lose me so fast. So this isn't really a heartbreaking goodbye. It's more like "hold the phone. I'll pick up in the other...country."

**ACT II**

EXT. Marmaris, Turkey. A marina. Early spring. There's a big sign at the entrance "Welcome to Marmaris" in Turkish, German, and English.

NIKKI is on her boat in the marina, washing it down. She looks comfortable. She's owned it for a month. The boat is a 42 foot sloop. All the sails furl and all of the winches are electric. The overall design is for a comfortable cruising boat, not for racing. It's fiberglass, well-cared for, and very easy to handle. She adeptly reties a knot in one of the lines into a bowline.

Nikki walks to the marina office at the entrance to the marina.

INT: Marina office. METIN sits behind an old desk, drinking tea out of a fluted glass. Before Nikki can speak, Metin answers the phone. METIN says something incomprehensible in Turkish. Then he hangs up and is about to say something to Nikki, but the phone rings again. He answers the phone the same way. Finally, he hangs up and turns to Nikki.

METIN

I'm very sorry. Hello.

NIKKI

(repeats the phrase that Metin had used when he picked up the phone both times)

METIN

(puzzled)

Yes?

NIKKI

Did I just say "hello"? I'm practicing speaking Turkish.

METIN

No. You just said "Marina office."

NIKKI

Oh. Yes, I was hoping that you could arrange for some work for my boat. Can you come aboard for a few minutes when you're free?

METIN

We can go now, if you like.

NIKKI

That's fine.

EXT. They walk down the dock to the boat. METIN climbs aboard. They sit in the cockpit. NIKKI gives METIN a bottle of water without asking.

METIN

What do you need us to do?

NIKKI

Let's see. I'd like you to service the watermaker. And I need a grate underneath the camping gas bottles. And there's a cabinet hinge that needs replacement in the aft head. And finally, the boat sits high at the bow. Is there something you can do to fix that?

METIN

We can put lead in the forepeak, under the anchor. Or you can add to the anchor chain. The trim is very close to perfect. You can decide what you want to do.

EXT. They walk down the docks towards the marina office. Here they walk different directions, he towards the office, she towards town.

NIKKI

When do you think that you can start the work?

METIN

We can begin today, no problem.

NIKKI

That is excellent. I'll let you know about the trim when I decide what I want.

METIN

And just to finish, *MERHABA* is hello. For goodbye, *ALLAH'A ISMARLADIK*.

NIKKI

*ALLAH'A ISMARLADIK*, Metin.

EXT. Nikki walks to town, where there's a market day going on. On her way there, she stops at the ATM. She presses button for English, enters PIN, gets cash (300 million lire). The machine asks if she wants a receipt by demonstrating with a graphic of a pine tree ("no receipt") and a fallen pine tree ("yes, please.") She frowns and decides against the receipt.

NIKKI continues to walk to the market. She passes THREE YOUNG BOYS.

BOYS

Hello hello hello!

(as if they're speaking  
Martian)

NIKKI

HELLO!

BOYS whoop and giggle and jump around. English didn't really seem like a language to them.

Lots of shots of cheese vendors, produce vendors, and consumer goods. The colors are bright and random. There are enormous vegetables. The tables are overflowing and lovely to see. The vendors are a mix of men and women. The women are a mix of headscarf-and-pantaloon-wearing farmers and entrepreneurial Western-looking women in slacks. All of the women are very cordial to the tourists who are dressed in skimpy shorts and tank tops over abundant bodies. They don't judge anyone at all.

There's a table of blue jeans with designer stitching, perfect fakes. Next to it is a table with a sign, in English, "Genuine fake watches", with an arrow. A bucket is filled with men's designer briefs, with a sign, in English, that says "10 pairs, 10 Euros, better than shoplifting." Teenaged boys walk through the market area, all in fake designer blue jeans that appear to be too heavy and hot for the weather outdoors. All of the Turkish people cover their arms and legs with clothes. Only the tourists wear sandals.

NIKKI is completely dazzled and engaged. She walks up to a vendor selling lemons and makes a hand gesture that she wants two. The vendor takes two and puts them in a bag.

VENDOR

(writes 300,000 on a piece of paper)

NIKKI (V.O)

Three hundred thousand.  
That's, um, twenty cents.

NIKKI

(hands over a million-lira bill)

I'm sorry. I don't have anything smaller.

(makes hand motions to act that out.)

VENDOR

*HAYIR HAYIR HAYIR.*

The vendor gives NIKKI back her money and shoos her away, pressing the small bag of lemons into her hand. NIKKI is very puzzled. ASLAN walks over to help out.

ASLAN

She simply can't take that much money for only two lemons. Most people buy a whole bag full.

NIKKI

But I don't want a handout. And I certainly can't use a whole bag full of them. This doesn't seem right. I can afford whatever she charges. She has to know that.

ASLAN

It isn't a handout. It's just, well, hospitality. Welcome to Turkey.

NIKKI

Yes. This is taking a little getting used to. Your English is very good. Are you in the tourism industry?

ASLAN

No. I have a leather factory in the suniyi, the industrial area just outside of town. I learned English when I lived in the Philippines for ten years. And I'm always happy to practice. Here in Marmaris, if I want to speak English, I have to find someone in the tourist industry or someone under fifteen years old. The tourism people are busy finding tourists. And the kids don't want to talk to me at all.

NIKKI

Just like in America.

ASLAN

Exactly. Well, I'm happy to see that you've discovered the Friday market.

NIKKI

It's huge. I had no idea.

ASLAN

The farmers make their rounds in the whole region. Today, it's here. Tomorrow, they'll take it down the road somewhere. Turkey is one of only seven countries in the world that produces a surplus of food. Are you walking back to the marina now? May I accompany you for a few moments?

NIKKI

Yes, please do. I know you,  
don't I?

ASLAN

I live near the marina. I've  
seen you there with your ship. I  
knew the previous owner, another  
American who helped me practice  
my English. And my son Erhan  
often sits at the pier and  
fishes.

NIKKI

That's your son? The boy with  
the cat? I've seen him there.  
How old is he? About fourteen?

ASLAN

He'll be fourteen in two months.  
Erhan means "brave and merciful  
ruler". Would you be so kind as  
to speak with him sometime? We  
sometimes speak English at home  
and I'd like him to practice  
with you.

NIKKI

That would be fun. What's your  
name?

ASLAN

It's Aslan. It's the Turkish  
word for lion.

NIKKI

Lion. Another brave and merciful  
ruler. Well, maybe not so  
merciful, if you're the prey.

ASLAN

What did you name your boat? Or  
is it still a superstition that  
you shouldn't change the name?

NIKKI

No, in this case, I had to change it. The previous owner made it a condition of sale, because his new boat had the same name. It was just as well. It was called "Chick Magnet." Didn't quite suit me. From the looks of him, it didn't really suit him either. I'm thinking about naming it Barbarossa, after the Turkish pirate.

ASLAN

(smiles)

Barbarossa wasn't a pirate.

NIKKI

The Pirate Barbarossa wasn't a pirate?

ASLAN

He was the admiral of the Turkish fleet during the reign of Suleiman the Magnificent. He was born in one of the Greek islands.

NIKKI

Admiral Barbarossa?

ASLAN

He spoke Greek, Arabic, Spanish, French and Italian. His five volumes of hand-written memoirs are in a museum in Istanbul. If he lived just a little farther west, not much, you'd be calling him a Renaissance man. Unfortunately, your history books were written by his conquests, not his countrymen.

NIKKI

I'd better read up.

NIKKI (V.O.)

Or just shut up.

EXT: They approach a storefront that advertises *börek*. Aslan steers her inside.

ASLAN

You learn many of the wonderful things about Turkey by eating, rather than reading. Please try *börek* with me.

INT. *Börek* shop. There's a photo of Ataturk in the shop. In fact, there's a photo of Ataturk in every shop NIKKI ever visits.

The man behind the *börek* counter selects two egg-sized balls of dough. He rolls one out on a counter smeared with sunflower oil until it is the size and shape of a small pizza, swirls it around in the air, like pizza, until it is large and so thin that you see the grain of the counter underneath it. He places a generous dollop of a white, crumbly cheese on the dough, folds it, rolls it, and swirls it again. Then he puts more cheese in the center, folds it up, and bakes it. Then he serves it to eagerly waiting diners.

NIKKI

Wow. This is heaven.

ASLAN

Turkish cookery is one of the great cuisines of the world. The kitchens of the Sultan were the pride of the Empire. For better or for worse, the Sultan's family included people from all over the western world, so there were a lot of influences.

NIKKI

So Turkey invented fusion cuisine.

ASLAN

Yes. Four centuries before America thinks it did.

ASLAN and NIKKI say goodbye at the marina entrance.

NIKKI

Thank you for the walk, and everything else. ALLAH'A ISMARLADIK. Goodbye.

ASLAN

I'm the one who's leaving. So that isn't exactly the proper goodbye.

NIKKI

There's a proper goodbye?

ASLAN

Yes. There's one goodbye to say to the one leaving, and another for the one staying. You should say to me: GÜLE GÜLE. That means "Go smiling."

NIKKI

Okay, then. Go smiling. GÜLE GÜLE.

INT. Nikki is at the navigation station on the boat, at the computer. There are books stacked on the desk: Boat Maintenance, some guidebooks about Turkey. She's taking a CD-ROM course in Turkish. "The boy is on the table. The flower is red. The elephant is running."

NIKKI (V.O.)

Well, if I ever meet up with a red elephant, I'll be in great shape to give it a flower. Good thing I have Metin and Aslan. This course doesn't even tell you how to say hello to anyone.

VOICE

Hello? Hello? Anyone home?

NIKKI

Coming!

(Goes topside)

Hi. Come aboard.

Two Americans board. He's in his mid-60s, gray-haired, with a paunch, wearing a dirty tee shirt. She's fifteen years younger than he is, and she's wearing a floppy sun hat, a camisole, and shorts. They both look like the disheveled tourists that patronized the Friday market.

PAUL

So you're the one who bought  
Jim's gorgeous boat.  
Congratulations. I'm Paul, and  
this is Sherry.

NIKKI

Nice to meet you both. I'm  
Nikki. Want some sun tea?

SHERRY

Another American. There are five  
American boats on this dock  
alone. How do you like Marmaris?

NIKKI

Well, I've only been here for a  
few weeks. It's working out well  
so far. Today I went to the  
weekly market.

SHERRY

What a trip. Two miles of white  
cheese.

PAUL

And the crap-fest.

SHERRY

Listen. There's a lot to know  
about this place. We can help  
you if you need anything. We've  
lived aboard for five years now.  
We know the best guys in the  
Sunie, the cheapest camping gas  
refills, and we have the  
schedule for the outdoor  
concerts in the castle. My  
gynecologist here got her  
training at Johns Hopkins. All  
the liveboards monitor channel  
69. You have boat issues or  
history questions, go to Paul.  
For everything else about life,  
come to me.

NIKKI

That will be a big help.

PAUL

The area is totally ancient. Y'know, a lot of what I always thought of as Greece and Rome is actually in Turkey. You can sail up towards Istanbul and visit the world's first mausoleum, although there isn't much left of it. Or King Mausoleus, for that matter. Or you can go see the Roman city of Ephesus. It's one of the Seven Ancient Wonders. Marmaris itself is a great town for history.

NIKKI

What can you tell me about the castle here on the harbor?

PAUL

That castle's been around since 3000 BC. Rumor has it that the present castle was commissioned by Suleiman the Magnificent to prepare for his siege of Rhodes. When he finally saw it, he said "Mimar as", which means "Hang the architect!" and that was the name of the town since then. Now we all want to hang whoever built the touristy restaurants along the harbor.

NIKKI

They're relentless. I've started going through the bazaar just to avoid the harbor.

PAUL

So what do you need to get that you haven't been able to find here?

NIKKI

Well, let's see. I've got loads of food. Some of the electronics need work, but there's a dealer right in town, so I'm good. There's a stainless fitting that I need to replace, and none of the shops carry any of the brands I know. Maybe you can help me figure out what to buy on a few things.

PAUL

Let's go have lunch in town, and then I'll take you to my favorite machine shop.

SHERRY

He just likes the guy's tea.

NIKKI

I can see the Zagat Guide entry now. Best tea in a machine shop in Marmaris. That'll be fine. Are you hungry? I can go whenever you want.

PAUL

I'm ready. Let's go.

EXT. NIKKI sits at the restaurant with SHERRI and PAUL. The waiter comes to the table and drops off a giant pide, about two feet long and puffed to the shape of a football.

NIKKI

What is this?

SHERRI

It's pide. Bread.

NIKKI

It's huge.

SHERRY

It's mostly air. You'll see. It'll go fast.

PAUL

Sometimes the waiter gives us a salad or our tea for free. These guys really want to show you a nice time. Look at how all these tables are covered in white tablecloths. It's not like this is a four-star restaurant or anything.

SHERRY

One place in town sprinkled rose petals all over our table when we went out to dinner there.

PAUL

Nikki, you should get one of the kebabs. I like the chicken with pistachios. Sometimes I get the lamb kebob, which is in a yogurt sauce.

EXT: At the table. End of meal. The waiter brings the check in a carved wooden box. He sprinkles lemon water over everyone's hands.

SHERRY

Save room for pudding. There's a place right down the street. We always go there next.

NIKKI

If this is that healthy Mediterranean diet, sign me up.

INT. Outside a carpet shop. Nikki is carrying a plastic bag with Turkish writing on it. A stainless tube and other marine-looking items are peeking out of the top. She turns to look at a beautiful small silk carpet. PAUL and SHERRY look at each other.

PAUL

We're going to go back now. As you might have guessed, we've already seen a Turkish carpet or two since we got here.

NIKKI

Thanks for your help today. I'll see you back at the marina.

(PAUL and SHERRY leave. Nikki walks into the shop, where there is a CARPETSELLER and his SON.)

CARPETSELLER

Are you from America? Perhaps you would like to speak with my son. He's in the university studying English. He needs practice selling carpets. Would you like some apple tea?

NIKKI

I'm not falling for any of that. I live here.

SON

Oh. Then maybe I can get you Turkish tea.

NIKKI

Yes, thank you. I never knew how important tea is to Turks. I always heard about Turkish coffee. But nobody seems to drink coffee here.

SON

That is true. We drink tea all day.

CARPETSELLER

Yes, tea is most important. In Ankara, our capital, there was a terrible story. The lion got away from his cage at the zoo. He walked all the way to the government offices. When he was there, he ate some workers. Then he went upstairs and ate some of the ministers. At last, he ate the tea man. So the people finally decided to capture him.

NIKKI

That's a good story.

CARPETSELLER

How do you like Turkey?

NIKKI

So far, very much. It's much more like America than I had expected. It's very Western.

CARPETSELLER

Yes, indeed. When the Empire fell, we had the great leader Ataturk. He made our republic more Western.

NIKKI

Yes, I've read about him. Everyone seems to have his picture in their shops.

CARPETSELLER

Look at what he said about Gallipoli, where he defeated Winston Churchill.

Shows NIKKI a poster on the wall with an Ataturk quote, in Turkish and English: *"Those heroes that shed their blood and lost their lives... You are now lying in the soil of a friendly country. Therefore rest in peace. There is no difference between the Johnnies and the Mehmets to us where they lie side by side now here in this country of ours... you, the mothers, who sent their sons from faraway countries wipe away your tears; your sons are now lying in our bosom and are in peace. After having lost their lives on this land. They have become our sons as well."*

CARPETSELLER

He was a great man, a visionary. He formed a democratic, secular state, emancipated women, made primary education compulsory, and changed our alphabet from Arabic lettering to a Western one.

NIKKI

I have a lot to learn about Turkey. You know, I actually do need a small carpet at the bottom of the companionway ladder.

(turns to SON)

NIKKI (CONT'D)

Maybe I should talk to you. Do you have anything about a meter wide?

EXT. Street. NIKKI walks out of shop. She's carrying a bag with a rolled-up carpet. She walks by the harbor.

VENDOR

Hello! Want to go on a boat ride?

NIKKI

No thank you. I'm on my own boat.

VENDOR

Can I go with you?

INT. At the navigation station of the boat. The carpet is on the floor at the bottom of the companionway ladder. NIKKI is using the Turkish course. She has a page on the desk divided into two columns. The left side has English verbs, nouns, and phrases. The right side is only partly filled in. Examples are "I need", "Tell me about", "paint thinner", "Here is my problem."

EXT. In the marina. NIKKI sees ERHAN fishing. There's a stray cat nearby. ERHAN catches a medium-sized fish and puts it in a bucket. Then he catches a tiny fish and gives it to the cat. NIKKI walks up to ERHAN.

NIKKI

Hi. I met your father. Did he tell you?

ERHAN

Yes. Do you like Marmaris?

NIKKI

Very much. It's like America, you know.

ERHAN

I want to see America.

NIKKI

Maybe you can visit me in Florida someday. Is this your cat?

ERHAN

No. He lives...no house.

NIKKI

Oh. He lives outdoors.

ERHAN

Yes. Out the doors.

NIKKI

Maybe you can help me learn Turkish. You talk to me in English, and I'll talk to you in Turkish. And then we will change sides. Can we do that?

ERHAN

Yes.

NIKKI

*EVET. ŞİMDİ.*

*From here on, all dialogue in Turkish will be written here in English and shown in small caps.*

INT. Navigation station. NIKKI is wearing a headset plugged into the computer. There's a camera window open. She dials CONNIE. CONNIE appears on the monitor, at her computer, with a similar headset on.

NIKKI

Connie!

CONNIE

Nikki!

NIKKI

I told you I wouldn't be all that out of touch.

CONNIE

On the contrary. What's it been, like two weeks?

NIKKI

Well, it's taken me this long to sort out my computer system. From now on, we can talk anytime we want.

CONNIE

Notwithstanding the seven-hour time difference.

NIKKI

True. But we can have a meal together. It just won't be the same one.

CONNIE

It's great to hear your voice. How is everything? Are you settled on the boat?

NIKKI

More than I might have imagined. I'm all moved in. Mostly everything works. And apparently I'm a very good varnisher. Something I never knew about myself.

CONNIE

You learning any Turkish?

NIKKI

More than I need, and less than I'd like. In general, you can cruise around here without knowing anything. Restaurants and the people who work on boats speak fluent English and German and probably other languages, too. So English is fine on the waterfront. The only challenge is when I go deep into the town to a plumber or a mechanic. Tourists aren't usually looking for face masks or beveled wood screws.

CONNIE

I actually don't want to meet the guy who is. Tell me about Turkey. The place to visit, not the hardware stores.

NIKKI

It's really pretty here. I guess I never thought about what the place would be like. The mountains are in the distance, and right now there's snow on them, but it's more like summertime down here by the water.

CONNIE

Have you met anybody there?

NIKKI

Well, naturally, I've met lots of boaters. Locals too. I've never been in a friendlier place. And Florida was the friendliest place I'd ever been before. There's a contentment here that's intoxicating. I met a guy who told me that the reason he liked living here on the coast is that the water comes right from the mountains. Imagine finding contentment because you like the taste of the municipal water.

CONNIE

I just spent two hours in a salon listening to some woman bitching about having to walk from the regular parking because the valet parking at the mall was full.

NIKKI

Well, on the minus side, I don't think there's valet parking anywhere in Marmaris. On the plus side, nothing is very far away.

CONNIE

You actually sound kind of revitalized.

NIKKI

I'm a bit, I don't know, reinvented. And exhausted.

CONNIE

This is so cute. You're coming of age.

NIKKI

Yeah. Old age.

EXT. Several days later. Shot of boat from stern view. The new name is "Second Wind." Camera follows Erhan from marina entrance to the boat. He's carrying "Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire." The cat follows behind him.

NIKKI

ERHAN! IS IT FOUR-THIRTY ALREADY?

ERHAN

Yes, I am coming from school.

NIKKI

WHAT BOOK IS THIS? HARRY POTTER. OKAY.

NIKKI (V.O.)

Now that'll be some useful vocabulary for him to learn. Wizard. Witch. Goblet. Maybe there will be some red elephants.

NIKKI

WOULD YOU LIKE SOME LEMONADE?

NIKKI (V.O.)

A goblet of it, maybe?

NIKKI goes to galley and squeezes some lemons into a strainer above a pitcher. She adds some sugar and water and stirs it, then makes two large glasses and takes them back to dinette table, where ERHAN sits with the book.

NIKKI

OKAY, LET'S GET STARTED.

ERHAN

"The Riddle House. The villagers of Little Hangleton still called it the Riddle House..."

EXT: A tea house. NIKKI sits with JENNIFER, who is on a visiting boat. They're drinking tea.

JENNIFER

Freddy'll be back when he finishes his run.

NIKKI

Where did you get the boat and where are you traveling?

JENNIFER

We picked it up in Kuşadası and that's where we're returning it. We have ten days.

NIKKI

You're covering a lot of miles, then. Is it just the two of you on this charter?

JENNIFER

No. We're with my sister and her boyfriend. They're out shopping today.

NIKKI

That's good, I guess. It must be hard to spend all that time together in such a small space.

JENNIFER

Well, Freddy and I don't have a problem. But maybe it was a mistake to do this with my sister. Things are getting a little tense between us all. They don't have experience chartering like we do.

NIKKI

Don't they like sailing?

JENNIFER

Oh, that's not the problem. My sister's never been sailing before. But her boyfriend Earl went to Annapolis. So he's been pretty stubborn, because he acts like he knows everything.

NIKKI

He went to the Naval Academy?

JENNIFER

Yeah. He was in the navy, too, for six years. But just a bureaucrat, you know. Some kind of officer. But he doesn't know about cruising like Freddy does. That's a whole different thing.

NIKKI

Like what?

JENNIFER

Well, here's one example. Like anchoring. Navy boats don't go into little harbors like we do. So the other day, we drove into this harbor. There were already some boats in there when we got there. Freddy likes to go in real close to town, because the dinghy doesn't have an engine and it's hard to row with all of us. But Earl was all "we can't anchor here. It's too close to that powerboat."

NIKKI

Well, that's a valid debate. Sometimes it's hard to judge the distances when you swing around.

JENNIFER

It got kind of heated. In the end, Earl gave in and we anchored close to town like me and Freddy wanted to.

NIKKI

But the bad feelings lasted. I know how that is.

JENNIFER

Yeah. And it didn't help matters when we came back from town and we were banging into that other boat.

EXT. Nikki's sailboat. Several days later. NIKKI sits in the cockpit of the boat. She's hooking up an electronic instrument. ERHAN walks up the dock, carrying a fishing pole. The cat follows him. In the other hand, he holds a plastic supermarket bag.

NIKKI

ERHAN! HELLO!

ERHAN

Hello, Madame Nikki. I have something for you.

ERHAN hands NIKKI the bag. She opens the top and sticks her face inside for a good whiff. She smiles.

NIKKI

THANK YOU SO MUCH. I was just about out of lemons, too. I forgot to get them at the Friday market. ARE THESE FROM YOUR GARDEN?

ERHAN

Yes. We have too much lemons.

NIKKI

Too many.

ERHAN

Yes. Too many. But you have under many.

NIKKI

Too few. WELL, I AM HAPPY THAT YOU HAVE SO MANY LEMONS. And that I can also have some. Would you like lemonade?

ERHAN

(beaming)

Yes, please.

NIKKI

I think I'll have some too.

NIKKI sits with ERHAN in the cockpit with the lemonade. She has a ten-foot line in her hand.

NIKKI

ERHAN, IF YOU'RE GOING TO BE A SAILOR, YOU HAVE TO LEARN A BOWLINE KNOT. YOU ARE NOT A SAILOR UNLESS YOU CAN TIE A BOWLINE. WOULD YOU LIKE ME TO TEACH YOU HOW?

ERHAN

Yes, please.

NIKKI

OKAY. HERE IT IS. YOU TAKE THE LINE AND YOU MAKE IT INTO A, A...

ERHAN

A loop. LOOP.

NIKKI

YES. THANK YOU. HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT WORD?

(makes the loop)

ERHAN

From Harry Potter.

NIKKI

THEN YOU TAKE THIS LITTLE PART AND GO BEHIND, THROUGH, AROUND AND DOWN. THERE'S YOUR BOWLINE. I'LL SHOW YOU AGAIN.

(Takes apart knot and does it again, slowly.)

YOU TRY IT NOW.

ERHAN appears to make the knot the same way, but he does it fast, and it falls apart.

ERHAN

Here. No!

NIKKI

TAKE YOUR TIME. THERE'S NO RUSH. LET'S DO IT AGAIN.

EXT. Some days later. Entrance to marina. BRET gets out of a taxi. NIKKI is waiting for him. They kiss hello.

NIKKI

How was your trip?

BRET

Long. But I did manage to get a little sleep. You look great.

They arrive at the boat.

BRET

Wow. It looks better than the photo. Who did the varnish?

NIKKI

I did.

BRET

And I was there when you learned how. I feel honored.

NIKKI

Would you like something to drink? Let's get your stuff stowed. Then we can talk about our trip.

INT. Belowdecks. A little later. They are sitting at the dinette, looking at a paper chart. A pilot book is open in front of Nikki.

NIKKI

Do you have any particular places you want to visit?

BRET

No. I know you're the expert on Turkey now. I'll leave it to you. But if you don't mind, I'm still in school here. Just tell me why you pick the places we're going.

NIKKI

Okay. Here are my considerations. First, good harbors. Second, day trips. And third, interesting places. That can be third because there are lots of interesting places with good harbors within a day's sail of each other.

BRET

I'm in your hands. That sounds great. Do I need to know how to speak Turkish? I haven't so far.

NIKKI

You only need to know as much as you want to learn. Most of the people I meet are tourists, and most of them speak English, or Turks in tourist businesses, which means they speak English pretty well. But you should learn GUNAYDIN, which means good morning, LUTFEN, which means "please", TEŞEKURLER, which is "thank you", and ÇOK GUZEL, which means "very good", "very pretty", or just "awesome". I've had half-hour conversations saying only those things.

BRET

Maybe I'll just leave it to you. I'll never remember those. I was hoping that Turkish would be, like, "hello-shma", "goodbye-shma", and "howmuch-schma".

NIKKI

It's not like pig latin, you know. It's a language.

BRET

Maybe I'll just learn the words for yes and no.

NIKKI

Okay. But only if you'll remember which one is which.

BRET

I'll just pretend I'm working  
and let you do all our  
communicating.

NIKKI

That reminds me. How is it that  
someone who tells me that he is  
gainfully employed can just take  
off for weeks at a moment's  
notice? Did you secretly retire?  
Or will you need to work while  
we're cruising?

BRET

Well, when you put it that way,  
both. Two years ago, I sold my  
construction business. But I'm  
like you. I just couldn't sit  
around all day reading the paper  
like some of my friends do. So I  
started over. I have an Internet  
business.

NIKKI

Okay.

BRET

I sell toy trains. So I don't  
need to run a shop or anything.  
The site does all the selling.  
All I need is a BlackBerry and  
an Internet connection once in a  
while.

NIKKI

Who sends out the trains people  
buy?

BRET

Regional fulfillment centers.

NIKKI

Who handles the phones?

BRET

A call center. People in the southwest somewhere. So I can be home or in Utah or in Antarctica, if I want. If there's an Internet connection.

NIKKI

I'll get you set up right here. Second Wind is a full-service business center.

The next morning. The VHF radio is on. There's chatter from the rest of the marina, about weather or just morning talk. Nikki is at the chart table, looking at the plotter screen. Bret comes in wearing only bikini briefs. He nearly crushes her against the bulkhead. They begin to make love against the instrument panel.

Close-up of VHF unit. They're pressing against the TALK button.

Paul and Sherri are on their boat, listening indifferently to the VHF banter of boaters. All of a sudden, it's all Nikki's unmistakable voice, and then Bret's groaning. The whole marina can listen in on the couple making love. Then it stops suddenly.

Back on Nikki's boat. They're still at it. The VHF falls to the floor and they stop transmitting. They finish.

Later. Nikki is drinking coffee and going over the guidebook.

Bret comes out of the aft cabin. He is wearing a tee-shirt that says, "It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent that survives. It is the one that is the most adaptable to change. Charles Darwin".

NIKKI

Coffee?

BRET

I'll get it.

BRET takes coffee from a French press.

BRET

So I had a dream.

NIKKI

I'm listening.

BRET

Leonardo da Vinci shows up at my place. We're having a nice chat. I say, "You'll love the City. How about we go to the Metropolitan Museum?" So he says, "What, and look at my own stuff? I don't think so. Take me to Bill Gates."

NIKKI

Yeah, he'd be a technology guy, wouldn't he?

BRET

So he flies me to Seattle on that glider he made. And all he keeps saying is "Wow, this is sweeeeet."

NIKKI

You're chatting in English? He's a stoner?

BRET

I guess so. It's a dream. How do I know? Maybe I speak Italian in my dreams. That can't be harder than flying three thousand miles without an engine.

NIKKI

You've got a point.

BRET

So I was wondering. Is there somewhere around here that I can get a haircut?

NIKKI

Actually, yes. I'll take you to a place I know. But I strongly recommend that you get a shave, too.

BRET

You think I need a shave? I just shaved last night.

NIKKI  
(caresses his face. It's  
smooth.)

Yes, you need one. But not  
because of stubble. You need one  
because you should have the  
experience.

EXT. The bazaar. It's crowded. A youngster walks by  
with a tray of simit breads on his head. NIKKI leads  
BRET into a barbershop.

BARBER  
Hello.

NIKKI  
My friend would like a haircut  
and a shave.

BARBER  
Very well.

The barber sprays BRET's head with water from a plastic  
sprayer. Next he gives him a relatively normal haircut  
with scissors and comb, using the scissors to clip the  
hairs in BRET's eyebrows, inside his ears, and in his  
nose. Then, he uses a trimmer, but not an electric one,  
to raze BRET's neck, and then he repeats the process  
with an electric trimmer. A straightedge razor is next,  
around BRET's ears, sideburns and neck. Last, the  
barber dips a large cotton swab into something  
flammable. He lights the swab, and taps BRET's ears all  
around with this fireball.

NIKKI  
How is that?

BRET  
How does it look?

NIKKI  
Like it stings.

BRET  
Well, now you know how it was.

NIKKI  
I smell a hair fire.

BRET  
Yes. That doesn't surprise me.

The barber washes BRET's hair twice by dipping his face down into the sink, washing his face as well. After the wash, the barber applies two different types of pomade - the first application involving a quite vigorous massage - and then an alcohol-based spray like an aftershave, fanning a towel to dissipate the alcohol. The towel is then used to clean the counters, the mirror and the rest of the barber's workplace.

NIKKI

I don't know which looks cleaner, the counter or your face.

BRET

I haven't seen this much of my skin in years.

INT. A hardware store in the main part of town. NIKKI needs a tool.

SHOPKEEPER

MAY I HELP YOU?

NIKKI

HELLO. DO YOU SPEAK ENGLISH?

SHOPKEEPER

No.

NIKKI

DOES SOMEBODY HERE SPEAK ENGLISH?

SHOPKEEPER

No. SORRY.

NIKKI

I NEED...

SHOPKEEPER

WHAT DO YOU NEED?

NIKKI

I...SOMETHING VERY SMALL...

(mimes dropping a screw into a grate.)

OH! BOO-HOO! I NEED SOMETHING...

(makes spidery claw with fingers.)

SHOPKEEPER

(walks NIKKI over to side of shop and indicates exactly the right tool.)

THIS?

NIKKI

YES! THANK YOU. HOW MUCH?

NIKKI (V.O.)

This is a good sign. I don't even know how I'd ask for this in an American store.

EXT. Nikki and Bret are ready to leave the dock. He's in a Speedo and looks good in it. They pull the dinghy into the davits. Nikki is at the helm. She uses hand signals to let Bret know what she needs him to do. He goes aft and drops the two stern lines. Then he goes forward swiftly and drops the mooring line. They're free from the dock. While she motors out of the harbor, he recovers all of the fenders and stows them, and then he joins her in the cockpit. They hoist the sails and sail. No boats are in sight. Nikki goes below and brings up a laptop PC and a scribbled slip of paper. She begins to write.

BRET

What are you writing?

NIKKI

I keep a journal. It's something I just started to do after I got here.

BRET

I'm on watch then. What do you write about?

NIKKI

Everything. Stuff about the boat, places I've been, anything funny that happens, food I especially enjoy. I like to go back and read how clueless I was when I first got here. I'm a regular scribe.

BRET  
Like a medieval monk.

NIKKI  
Clearly not a monk.

(snaps Bret's waistband)  
I'm a monkette.

BRET  
That makes me your monkee.  
(starts making monkey sounds  
and crawls over her. After  
twenty seconds, she jumps up  
to retake the watch.)

EXT: They tie the boat up with the help of someone on the dock at a restaurant in a harbor near Fethiye.

INT. They're eating dinner at the restaurant. That's what they are expected to do in exchange for the free dockage.

EXT: The next morning. Taxi stand. The sign at the taxi stand says "Forty million lire to Dalyan."

TAXI DRIVER  
Seventy-five to Dalyan.

NIKKI  
(whispers to BRET)  
This guy's trying to cheat me.  
The sign said forty.

NIKKI  
*TOO MUCH.*

TAXI DRIVER  
*SIXTY-FIVE.*

NIKKI  
*IT SHOULD BE FORTY.*

TAXI DRIVER  
*TAMAM. FORTY.*

NIKKI  
*TAMAM. FORTY.*

(hands the taxi driver forty  
lire)

Taxi driver begins to drive very quickly.

NIKKI

*TOO FAST! YAVAŞ YAVAŞ!*

Taxi driver looks frustrated.

TAXI DRIVER

*SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTES.*

NIKKI

(realizes her error)

*YES. SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTES.*

NIKKI (V.O.)

I'd just conducted a fine  
negotiation in Turkish. Except  
the price of the ride was fixed.  
I'd just spent five minutes  
negotiating how long the trip  
would take.

They're in a flat boat. Exterior shots of the rock  
tombs. They step off of boat at the Kaunos settlement.  
The camera notices that the taxi driver who took them  
to the boat comes with them.

EXT: In front of a large façade of rock tombs.

GUIDE

The settlement here might be  
from as far back as the ninth  
century BC. Kaunos became a  
great power in the Lycian era  
during the fourth century before  
Christ. We think that the Lycian  
federation of twenty-three  
states might very well be the  
first republic in history. It  
was like an ancient United  
Nations. It was a powerful trade  
partnership. They had their own  
language and the culture was so  
strong that Lycians in Xanthos,  
twice fought to the death rather  
than surrender to foreigners.

The GUIDE has a conversation with the cashier. Somehow  
entry fees are paid, including the driver's.

## GUIDE (CONT'D)

Xanthos is nearby, and you can see what I mean. In the sixth century BC, it was evident to the people of Xanthos that the Persians would conquer them. Unwilling to submit to their rule, the men set their own houses on fire, killing all the women and children. Then they fought to the death to the last man. This event was repeated when Brutus led a siege to the city during the Roman civil wars in the first century BC. The men murdered their own families, then burned themselves alive. It's said that Brutus wept as he witnessed it.

## NIKKI

We're going there soon.

## GUIDE

Wonderful. Don't forget to visit Patara, birthplace of Saint Nicholas, Santa Claus.

## BRET

I thought he came from the North Pole.

## GUIDE

Santa Claus was inspired by a real saint, Saint Nicholas. He was a fourth-century bishop from Lycia. The bishop was credited with many legends. One of them is his generosity. For example, a local man had three daughters and no money for dowries. In those days, a girl without a dowry would have no choice but a life of prostitution. They say that the bishop tossed three bags of gold through the man's open window. The gold fell into stockings that were drying above the fireplace. You can see where that idea led.

BRET

He'd be a little overdressed  
here in all that fur.

GUIDE

Well, the Northern Europeans  
really took to this saint, and  
it's cold up there at  
Christmastime. Your American  
picture of the fat man in the  
red suit comes from that poem  
about "the night before  
Christmas." That poem is only  
from 1823. But there isn't any  
doubt that he was from a place  
that's as far as it can be from  
the North Pole. When he died, he  
was buried near here, in Myra.  
Even the name Myra should be  
familiar to you. It's myrrh, the  
incense of the three wise men.  
Now the saint's remains are in  
Bari, Italy.

BRET

Well, gosh. I was okay thinking  
that God was dead. But Santa  
Claus? That's depressing.

GUIDE

Well, if you visit Myra, there  
are more rock tombs there. Don't  
miss them. But now, let's look  
at the rock tombs here.

EXT. A few days later. NIKKI and BRET are in the  
dinghy, drifting around in Oludeniz. It's turquoise and  
spectacular. The boat is within sight, anchored nearby.

BRET

Why can't we bring the boat  
here?

NIKKI

We're not allowed. It used to be okay for yachts to stay here. But this cove is landlocked, and any trash or oil that boaters left or dripped just stayed right here. So in 1983, it was prohibited to stay here on anchor. But there isn't any law keeping us from floating around for a while.

BRET

Guess I should be reading the cruising guide. Have to earn my keep.

NIKKI

Yeah. Or you can just swab the deck. I don't want you to think you're here just so I can have my way with you.

BRET

If you had your way with me, all I'd ever do is rub your feet.

NIKKI

And if you had your way with me... Oh wait. You do. You dog.

BRET

This is the greatest place I've ever been.

NIKKI

Yep, it's gorgeous. And the antiquities around here are amazing. To be able to sail to a lot of them, well, that's just so fine.

BRET

I don't only mean the GPS position. I just mean life. I swear.

Not on a Bible, of course. But I'd swear on "The Origin of Species" if you like.

NIKKI

So tell me this. Are we so jaded about everything that we've never even mentioned any former life partners?

BRET

I will if you will. You first.

NIKKI

Relationships never really fit in with my other life choices. I was one of the first women ever admitted to the partnership of my firm. I traveled all week, every week. We didn't all have mobile phones and email in those days. It wasn't easy to line up Saturday night dates, because I wasn't home on Tuesday to go somewhere and meet anyone new. If I did meet someone, I wasn't around on Wednesday to take the call asking me out. Men that I met were usually clients or colleagues, always a bad idea. Or they were already married. A worse idea. So there isn't much to report. What about you?

BRET

Divorced. Kids were already grown. We were mismatched. Nobody's fault. In the end, I developed a theory about marriage. I decided that a good marriage is like Communism in its Marxist, purest form.

NIKKI

Can you be more heretical? First, you've skewered religion, and now this? You are Karl Marx.

BRET

No, I'm really more Groucho Marx. Hear me out. I'm not for governing by Communism, for the simple reason that it doesn't work as a form of government. It doesn't even work in a lot of marriages. I do think that it's the foundation of every really good relationship I know.

NIKKI

What do you mean?

BRET

Well, my view of Communism is "from each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs." This actually worked well in my construction business. I had a partner who was relentlessly easygoing. Dave was great with clients. Couldn't stand paperwork and couldn't manage his way out of a paper bag. Luckily, I did those things well, and hated the "what's your pleasure" sessions that took up most of his time. We both did what we were good at and we both got rich in the process. Neither of us would have made it on our own.

NIKKI

That's something that always bothered me about the way our consulting practice was structured. We each did everything, sales, service delivery, management. And none of us were good at all of it. So what did Dave have to do with your marriage?

BRET

It began to bother me that I had a better marriage with Dave than I did with my wife. Dave and I always were straight with each other about what we needed and what wasn't working. My wife and I played those dating games. I always thought that I wouldn't have to play hard-to-get in my own marriage, but there I was. We wanted different things, and neither of us was willing to give up our own needs to meet each other's.

NIKKI

I agree that marriage is about shared goals. And for that matter, so is government. I see the connection now.

BRET

Yes, but that's where I think Communism fails as a form of government. I cared about Dave's well-being. His well-being resulted in mine, too, so it wasn't completely altruistic on my part. We were just co-dependent. In the good way.

NIKKI

And a marriage?

BRET

Same thing. I know lots of couples who don't make it simply because the economics of the relationship aren't level. I don't mean who makes the most money. I mean who takes out the garbage, who talks to the relatives on the phone, and who cleans up after dinner.

NIKKI

Does it have to be the same person every day? I'm not sure I want to be the designated bug-killer.

BRET

No. And that's my point. It just has to be equitable over time.

NIKKI

Everyone has to put in their fair share, whatever that means. From them according to their abilities, huh?

BRET

Right. And Communism as a governing philosophy nearly always fails in practice. One person realizes that if he doesn't perform to his highest abilities, his needs are still met by someone who fills the gap. Then eventually the second guy figures that out, and then a third person, and soon everybody figures out that they can slide under the radar. Eventually the resulting work product doesn't meet anyone's needs. It's like when you have six guys living in an apartment, and nobody does his own dishes if there's already a dirty dish in the sink. In marriage, we describe that as irreconcilable differences. But in the relationships that work, it's great.

NIKKI

So you're really looking for perfect pairings of humans, even if it turns out to be you and Dave. There's something kind of Biblical about that. You have the makings of a whole ark. Which you might want to look for while you're here. It's on Mount Ararat here in Turkey.

BRET

Santa Claus, Noah, this country is just filled with characters.

NIKKI

Want to chart the next course for us? According to your abilities?

BRET

Oh, you little Bolshevik.

EXT. The camera pans the boat, under full sail on a starboard tack heading east, with the mountainous land behind it. A gulet is in the periphery, also with its sails up. BRET and NIKKI are on the high side of the boat. The waves lap against the side of the boat only the slightest bit. You can hear the bleating of sheep in the distance. NIKKI adjusts the mainsail. The speed goes up a half a knot, which energizes her.

INT. Years ago. A conference room. It's an office building in Miami. It's dark outside. NIKKI and FRANK are the only ones left in the office. They're working on a presentation for Frank to give to his Board of Directors.

FRANK

We need a hook. You want me to tell the CEO that it isn't enough that we're number one in our own market. What's better than being number one?

NIKKI

Being number one next week. Next year. If you want continued success, you've got to reinvent yourself. And the best time to do that is before you have to. Let's look at the strategy statement again...I have it.

FRANK

Go.

NIKKI

We're competing against everyone else, right?

FRANK

Uh-huh.

NIKKI

But we're not competing against ourselves. Look at how you're sitting on that robotic technology your incubator lab developed.

FRANK

It's not time yet. And we have a huge customer base for our existing technology, not to mention the six plants that would shut down if we converted. Surely we shouldn't make all our customers convert to new software to run our systems, just to use our untested robots. And our revenues would drop dramatically because the robot operating costs are so low. We make a lot of money on technical support.

NIKKI

Your revenue loss is a reduction in your customers' expenses. They don't care whether your revenues go down if their profits go up. Their own management will want them to leave you as soon as they can make the business case to go. Successful companies have the courage to cannibalize their own core businesses.

FRANK

We've been around for a hundred years. That argument won't fly.

NIKKI

Oh, you don't think that century-old companies should cannibalize their own revenue stream? Okay. I can give you examples of companies that might be better off if they'd done that.

FRANK

I dare you to give me three.

NIKKI

Okay. Here goes. Kodak. Invented the digital camera. In 1975. But Kodak's big moneymaker was film. Digital cameras would kill that business. They low-keyed the camera idea until they had to save their market share. Kodak's in third place now.

FRANK

Yeah, yeah. I said three.

NIKKI

Telephone companies. They stalled on building high speed Internet facilities for consumers, because businesses would have wanted them too. Those investments would have eaten into the revenues from the big pipes that already fed offices. Cable companies had somewhere between fifty and a hundred percent more subscribers than phone companies until the phone companies got smart. And three. Newspapers. Didn't bring their classified ads online until the business almost dried up. Same problem.

FRANK

So what do we tell them?

NIKKI

The hook. "Someone will knock us out of first place very soon. Let's make sure we keep the championship title in the family."

FRANK

That's exactly what we need. Thanks, Nikki.

EXT. A short time later. Second Wind is approaching Kekova Roads. From the harbor, you can see ancient sarcophagi sticking out of the water.

BRET

Whoa. There's a hazard. What is that?

NIKKI

Let me look. Oh. It's a sarcophagus.

BRET

More dead people?

NIKKI

Yep. There was a city here.

BRET

Yes, I see the town over there.

NIKKI

No. I mean that there was a city  
HERE.

BRET

Here? Like in the water? This  
water?

NIKKI

Yes. Right underneath us.  
There's a sunken city. Look on  
the chart. It probably fell as a  
result of an earthquake.

BRET

Let's dive.

NIKKI

We're not allowed. Too many  
people had the same idea and  
filled up their pockets with the  
city. So diving is prohibited  
now. But we can look at some  
ruins in town.

BRET

What's there?

NIKKI

Oh, a castle, some Roman baths,  
a medieval amphitheater for 300  
people, some more tombs. The  
usual.

BRET

Yeah. Ho hum.

NIKKI

We're in Santa territory. So  
it's ho ho ho.

As they enter the large harbor, young people race out the pier. Some carry signs for Ibrihim's restaurant, while others point to signal for Hassan's restaurant next door. As soon as the kids see the American flag on the stern of the boat, they begin to wave giant American flags to woo the sailors into their own restaurants. Someone is waving a large foam finger that says "#1". NIKKI and BRET anchor. She's at the helm and he's letting the chain out. BRET comes back from the bow into the cockpit.

NIKKI

Now here is the toughest choice we'll have to make on this whole cruise.

BRET

Whether to ever leave?

NIKKI

No. Where to eat dinner in Kekova Roads. Wherever you go, the whole staff at the other restaurant will know.

BRET

Let's just take the dinghy in and see what our options are.

EXT. NIKKI and BRET climb down into the inflatable. She starts the engine and motors to shore. A kid on the dock motions for her to tie up next to one of the restaurants.

KID

Hallo, hallo, hallo.

NIKKI tosses the dinghy painter to the kid on the dock, who ties it quickly and expertly.

NIKKI

Thank you. But we don't know yet where we'll go for dinner. Is it still okay to tie up here?

KID

Of course. Welcome. We hope you come to Ibrihim's, but if you don't, we hope you will just visit for a cup of tea.

Another kid, KID #2 runs down the dock.

KID #2

Come to Hassan's. We show you  
our dinner. Just look, just  
look.

EXT. After dinner. NIKKI and BRET drinking wine in  
cockpit, still anchored. The dinghy is drifting behind  
the boat.

BRET

How do all of the charterers  
find their own boats? They all  
look the same.

NIKKI

I don't know. I used to have the  
same problem when I used to rent  
cars when I was out of town.

BRET

Oh. I guess you would.

NIKKI

I'd be on a project out of town.  
I'd fly in and get my car in the  
same place in the airport. I had  
to use the brand that had a  
contract with my firm.

BRET

Lots of frequent flyer points.

NIKKI

Yes. The busman's holiday. I  
used my points on my vacations  
at the same airport gates in  
which I spent every week of my  
work life. Anyway, so one night  
I was on a two-year project and  
the whole project team had gone  
out to dinner at a restaurant in  
a strip mall.

BRET

Pulling out all the stops, I  
see.

NIKKI

Actually, the restaurant was okay. So I went outside to the crowded parking lot. I knew I had a Buick Skylark. I *always* got a Buick Skylark.

BRET

Business travel is so glamorous.

NIKKI

It was winter in Minneapolis and I was freezing. I found the car and put in the key. The key wouldn't budge. I tried and tried. Then I got worried I'd break the key off in the car. They'd made me sign a disclaimer in the airport. I don't remember the wording, but it was something like, "Hey, it's cold here. If you get stuck, you knew what you were in for." I really didn't want to break their car.

BRET

You could use a lighter to warm up the keyhole.

NIKKI

I had the same idea. I walked back towards the restaurant to get a pack of matches. And on my way I saw my own rental car, and in the passenger seat was the bag of stuff I'd bought at the drugstore on the way there. My key worked right away.

BRET

You'd think that they didn't even sell two Skylarks in the same year. Maybe it was another rental car.

NIKKI

Well, from that time on, I picked out my own car from the lot. Blue. I always got blue. My blue Skylark.

BRET

People would think that you'd finally given in and bought a car. No. They'd know that nobody would drive a Skylark on purpose.

NIKKI

(looking ashore at the sleepy businesses)

Turkey is still untouched by the international chains. Not a Starbucks in sight. Even the European shops. Everything here is a family business.

BRET

The kids work all summer when they're out of school, I guess.

NIKKI

This all takes me back to my childhood. I used to work in my parents' candy shop at the beach in New Jersey.

BRET

My family went to Maine every summer. I look back and realize that I spent every summer minute with somebody in my immediate family. How do people do that?

INT. An office. FRANK is at his desk. NIKKI is looking at the photo on the credenza of Frank, his wife and kids.

FRANK

That's Judy, my wife, with our two boys.

NIKKI

That's one fine-looking family.

FRANK

I couldn't get through a day without them. Nikki, if you don't mind my asking, you never talk about your family. Are you married?

NIKKI

No. I guess I never got around to it. My parents didn't really seem to be enjoying themselves too much. I suppose I just don't know what I'm missing. Besides, Jackson Consulting is my family. At least that's what it says in the HR manual.

FRANK

Yeah. Our manual says the same thing. Trust me. Your work family is a fake family. I'm lucky. I have a real family to go home to.

NIKKI

That would be good. But consulting, with all the travel, is hard on families. Lots of my colleagues have fake families at home, too.

FRANK

How long have you and I known each other?

NIKKI

Must be more than ten years. If you add it all up, I've probably spent more time with you than half the guys I've dated.

FRANK

I've always thought you were like a little sister to me.

NIKKI

Well, I'm honored to be a member of your extended fake family.

FRANK

Maybe you should think about finding a real one.

EXT. NIKKI and BRET still sitting in cockpit.

BRET

You're deep in thought.

NIKKI

Just enjoying the view.

BRET

(looking at her)

Me too.

**ACT III**

EXT. Several days later. The marina in Marmaris. BRET has left. NIKKI sits in the cockpit of the boat. The boat is away from its normal berth, tied side-to at a charter dock. The dock is near the work sheds and the shelter is less protected than the normal docks. ERHAN approaches, cat following behind.

NIKKI

GOOD MORNING, ERHAN. I MISSED YOU.

ERHAN

I am happy that you are here.  
Kedi is happy, too.

NIKKI

KEDI LOOKS THIRSTY. MAYBE SHE WANTS MILK. DO YOU WANT LEMONADE?

ERHAN

Yes.

NIKKI

I HAVE SOMETHING FOR US TO DO THIS AFTERNOON. SOMETHING I GOT ON MY TRIP.

ERHAN fusses with a line that's strewn in the cockpit. When he finishes, it's a perfect bowline.

NIKKI

THAT'S GREAT, ERHAN. YOU HAVE PRACTICED.

ERHAN

I can do it from the left and from the right.

NIKKI

OKAY, NOW I WANT YOU TO TRY SOMETHING NEW. CAN YOU DO IT WITH YOUR EYES CLOSED?

ERHAN fusses with the line while NIKKI gets the milk and the lemonade. He never does get the bowline to work.

ERHAN

Why close my eyes?

NIKKI

If you're really a sailor, you will feel the right bowline. Now let's sit at the table here. I have something to show you.

NIKKI puts a DVD into a small player on the table. The titles come up. It's a Harry Potter movie with subtitles. ERHAN watches it carefully, partly for fun and partly as school.

NIKKI

Want me to turn the titles off?

ERHAN

Yes. I want to watch it in Florida today.

After the movie ends, ERHAN climbs up the companionway into the cockpit. ASLAN appears on the dock, looking for Erhan.

ASLAN

Erhan. Time to go home. Ramazan dinner.

ERHAN

You know, if I had a mobile phone, you could just call me. You wouldn't have to walk all the way here.

ASLAN

(calling down the companionway)

This is your fault, Nikki. He sees all these electronic gadgets you have and wants everything. Right now it's a phone.

NIKKI pokes her head up into the cockpit.

NIKKI

Aslan! How are you?

ASLAN

Very good today. Starving, though. I haven't eaten all day.

NIKKI

I don't know how you can do Ramazan. I couldn't fast for ten hours in a row one time, let alone every day for a month.

ASLAN

It's difficult. But it's spiritual, too. And there are pleasures. Any meal is more wonderful if you are without food for a long time. Ramazan is about self-control and reflection. Experiencing hunger also helps you to remember the less fortunate.

NIKKI

I'm afraid most of us don't do enough of that.

ASLAN

A Ramazan meal is always special. Today is Monday, and Ramazan ends in a few more days. Could you come to Ramazan dinner at our house on Wednesday? Gul was just asking me when she would see you again.

NIKKI

Thanks, Aslan. I'll be there.

EXT. Wednesday. Entrance to Aslan's home. The outside is modest and clean. There's a large lemon tree brimming with lemons in the front yard. There are lots of trees, olive, avocado, and plum, nearly filling the yard.

NIKKI goes up to the door, which is flanked by a half dozen pairs of shoes. Some are regular shoes for going outside, and the others are to wear indoors.

ASLAN

Nikki, happy to see you here. We'll speak English tonight for Gul and Erhan.

NIKKI

What a lovely home. So many trees!

ASLAN

If you have land, why not grow things that you can eat?

NIKKI

Thank you for all those lemons. Now I have no excuse for not eating salad. Other than pudding, of course.

ASLAN

You should have salad and pudding. And I do hope that you have been building an appetite for tonight. Please come inside. But first, please take a pair of shoes for inside the house.

NIKKI obediently slips off her sandals and slips into a pair of old, clean slippers.

NIKKI

Hello everyone.

GUL kisses NIKKI right, left, and right. NIKKI gives her some homemade brownies.

GUL

Nikki, so good of you to come.

NIKKI

Thank you for inviting me. This is my first Ramazan dinner. Is there anything I need to know or need to do?

GUL

Well, it's a special dinner. But we do not have a service or say any prayers at dinner. Ramazan is very holy, but our prayers are private. Erhan, wash your hands, please. We are eating now.

INT. Dining table.

NIKKI

This soup is delicious. Please tell me about it.

GUL

It's a traditional soup called tarhana.

ASLAN

Tarhana is like a dough for bread. The dough has yogurt and some vegetables, and yeast.

NIKKI

Sounds like sourdough bread.

ASLAN

Yes. But tarhana does not get baked, just dried. It needs to ferment and dry out for days before using it in the soup. Some people dry it in the sunshine on the roof. Then it can stay for a year.

NIKKI

Bread soup. Okay.

GUL

Erhan! You are finished the soup already? You eat too fast! YAVAŞ, YAVAŞ! What will I do with him? Everything is too fast.

NIKKI

Oh. I'm not the only one who tries to slow him down.

GUL

No. He wants to do everything.

NIKKI

I am lucky. He wants to help me with my Turkish.

ASLAN

He wants to sail with you sometime. He tells us that you want to take him sailing.

NIKKI

Yes, I'd enjoy that. But you are also invited, both of you. Can you all come with me sometime? There's room for all of us.

GUL

Thank you. Yes. But not until you come back from your trip.

NIKKI

Oh, Erhan has told you about that?

GUL

Yes. I think he's as excited as you are. He thinks that you will send him an email every day and tell him where you are.

NIKKI

I will do that.

ASLAN

So Nikki, what are your plans for this trip?

NIKKI

I'm leaving Marmaris soon. I would like to sail up the coast. I have only been as far as Bodrum. But I'd like to go to Kuşadası, and then on to Izmir. I really want to see Pamukkale, too.

ASLAN

You can sail all the way to Istanbul, you know.

NIKKI

I don't know if I'll get that far. I'm coming back here for the winter. Every mile I go away is another mile that I have to sail back.

GUL

But you like the sailing. You are very lucky, Nikki. It is hard for you to decide what is the trip and what is the destination, isn't it?

NIKKI

I hadn't thought of that. Yes, I have the best of both worlds.

ASLAN

When do you leave?

NIKKI

Not for two weeks. There is some work that I need to do on the boat first. You can't go sailing unless everything on the boat is working. I have crew meeting me here then.

ASLAN

By crew, you mean your boyfriend Bret?

NIKKI

Well, my friend, anyway. It's a little odd calling him a boyfriend. He's not a boy. I'm not a girl. My grandmother was already a widow when she was my age. And he's half a world away. For now, I think I'd better stick to "crew."

GUL

I am so happy you were able to visit us again.

NIKKI

The pleasure is all mine. Thank you for a delicious meal.

NIKKI walks back to the boat after dinner. She turns on the VHF radio.

SHERRY

Second Wind, Toy Boat calling  
Second Wind.

NIKKI

Second Wind. Hi Sherry.

SHERRY

Nikki, where have you been? I've  
been calling for an hour.

NIKKI

Sorry. I had Ramazan dinner with  
Aslan and his family.

SHERRY

When are you moving your boat  
back here from the charter dock?

NIKKI

As soon as the work's done. I  
want to make it easy for Metin  
to finish up. I'll be leaving  
soon on the big trip. Everything  
has to work. I don't sail unless  
the boat is ready.

SHERRY

Have you heard the weekend  
forecast? It's not good. Strong  
winds. Even in the harbor. It  
would be best if you got your  
boat back here before then.

NIKKI

I'll bring it back when the  
work's done. And in the  
meantime, it'll be tied up  
securely. Nobody touches the  
lines except me and the yard.  
I'm not worried. And I'm always  
on board.

SHERRY

Except tonight, for example.

NIKKI

Well, I wouldn't have left the  
boat with a bad forecast coming.

SHERRY

I hate it that you're always on your own over there. I'll be much happier when you're back here on D dock.

NIKKI

Thanks, Sherry. You're just like a sister to me.

SHERRY

You hate your sister.

NIKKI

Well, you're like somebody else's sister, then. A good sister. It's actually nice to have a guardian angel around. Thanks.

INT. Friday. NIKKI is testing the VHF at the navigation station. She's watching a clock. The piece of paper on the desk says "ON at 2:17". The voice on the VHF is giving the weather, first in Turkish, then in English.

VHF (V.O.)

Forecast for Saturday. Lycian coast. Winds force 7-8. Gale warning.

The clock says "2:22". The clock turns to "2:23." The VHF power goes off. She puts the unit in its charger. She writes "OFF at 2:23" on the piece of paper on the desk. Nikki looks up at the VHF and sees that it is already fully charged. She sighs, and takes a dolmuş to an electronics shop in town.

NIKKI

Hello. I don't know what's wrong with this unit. It's charged. The self-test works. But if it's on for ten minutes, it goes dead.

SHOPKEEPER

I can look at it. Did anything bang it?

NIKKI

*Bang it.* (Long pause.) I...dropped it once. But that was a while ago, and it was working yesterday.

SHOPKEEPER

Would you like some tea?

NIKKI

Thank you.

The SHOPKEEPER orders a cup of tea on his intercom. He takes the VHF to the back of the shop and fiddles with the unit. NIKKI reads an English-language sailing magazine that's on a small table at the front of the shop. The tea arrives on a bronze tray. The SHOPKEEPER returns a half a minute later.

SHOPKEEPER

There's a gale coming tomorrow.

NIKKI

Yes, I heard about it.

SHOPKEEPER

Can you leave the radio here for a few hours? I think I know why it isn't working.

NIKKI

I'll be back in the morning.  
THANKS.

EXT. NIKKI ducks into a small shop. A woman in a headscarf and pantaloons (salvar) is making gozleme.

WOMAN

HELLO NIKKI. CHEESE AGAIN?

NIKKI

YES, PLEASE.

WOMAN

SIT, PLEASE.

NIKKI sits alongside a window. The woman rolls out the dough. She sits with her legs astride the large round board at which she works. When the dough is paper-thin, she brushes it with oil and sprinkles cheese and parsley on it. Then she folds it expertly, sautés it in oil on a single-burner stove, and serves it to NIKKI.

WOMAN

*TEA?*

NIKKI

*YES, PLEASE.*

The woman fetches some tea and brings it to NIKKI. NIKKI watches out the window and eats the gozleme slowly, savoring every bite. When she is finished, she pays the woman and leaves the shop.

EXT: The next morning. NIKKI returns to the electronics shop.

NIKKI

GOOD MORNING.

SHOPKEEPER

Hello, Miss Captain.

NIKKI

Is it too soon to get my radio?

SHOPKEEPER

I replaced the circuit board and battery. I cleaned up the contacts. Then I left it on all night. When I arrived this morning, it was still on.

NIKKI

So it's working.

SHOPKEEPER

Right now, yes. But I do not really know what was wrong with it. The battery was charged when it turned itself off. Maybe it wasn't the battery. Maybe it was the contacts. The only way to know is to use it.

NIKKI

I'm not going anywhere for another week or so. I can continue to test it. I won't need it at the dock, for sure.

NIKKI returns to the boatyard. She stops in at the office to see METIN.

NIKKI

Thank you for fixing that leak  
in the water pump. I just  
couldn't find it myself at all.

METIN

It was very small.

NIKKI

Yes. It wasn't unsafe. It was  
just driving me crazy.

METIN

We don't want you to be crazy.  
Also, the diver looked at the  
zinc from the refrigerator. It  
does not need to be replaced  
yet.

NIKKI

Thank you. I'll be back in the  
fall. We can look at it again  
later. Do you need me to move  
back to my slip?

METIN

No. You are fine where you are,  
in the work area.

NIKKI

I'd rather wait until the  
morning. I don't like to dock in  
the afternoon winds.

METIN

My men will help you if you  
would like to go today. There  
will be a lot of wind tonight.

NIKKI

Yes, I know. But my boat is  
secure. I made sure of it.

METIN

The men can stay if you need  
them.

NIKKI

No, it's fine. It's already after hours. They want to go home.

METIN leaves and walks up the dock. NIKKI goes to the computer and calls CONNIE.

CONNIE

Nikki. I think I talk to you more while you're in Turkey than I did when you were here. But I miss our lunches.

NIKKI

I wish you could come over and have lunch with me here. I could order you pudding for dessert. It's made out of chicken.

CONNIE

Chicken? As in, chicken?

NIKKI

Really. Chicken. If you think about it, we make cakes out of eggs.

CONNIE

Yeah, I guess so. I wonder which came first. After all, Mexicans put chocolate in their chicken. Why not sugary chicken for dessert? Sounds yummy.

NIKKI

I want to take you to the Friday market. It's like the biggest open market you ever saw. Tables and tables of every fruit that's in season. Strawberries first. They're everywhere. And cheap. And then the price goes up. And then they're gone. Then apricots are everywhere, then cherries. Right now the cauliflowers and cabbages are immense. The farmers will fill a whole bag with tomatoes or lemons for a dollar.

CONNIE

Listen to this. Taylor's back from school for a visit. She brought a *boyfriend*.

NIKKI

Wow, I haven't seen her for a year. How is she doing? Please send my love.

CONNIE

You'd only be returning hers. You're all she talks about these days, Nikki and her boat. Nikki and her travel. When can I see Nikki?

NIKKI

Can you put her on the phone? I'd love to talk to her.

CONNIE

She and her guy friend are out at the beach. But that'll be good if you can talk. Even though I think it's patently unfair.

NIKKI

What is?

CONNIE

Real nice. I had her. Fourteen pounds! It was like pushing out a watermelon. Raised her. Paying for college. Worrying about her. And she came out great.

NIKKI

She did.

CONNIE

Meanwhile, you spent all that time on you. Becoming in-ter-est-ing. And now she likes you as much as she does me.

NIKKI

Connie, you're just as in-ter-est-ing as I am. You're just her mother. It's a curse. And one, I add, you took on willingly. I'm basically her grandmother. I get to hang around her as long as we're both having fun, and then I give her back to you to feed and clothe.

CONNIE

I'd do anything for her, and she knows it. But she hasn't figured out yet how lucky she is that I do.

NIKKI

You can't do things for people and then demand that they appreciate them.

CONNIE

I don't need her to appreciate them. I just want her to notice them.

NIKKI

Believe me, Connie, she notices. I was the same way with my mother. She was there for me absolutely all the time. I never thought twice about asking for any sacrifice from her at all.

CONNIE

It doesn't sound like you noticed either.

NIKKI

The proof is in my choices. She's probably the reason I didn't want to have kids. The job just looked too hard. And now she's gone, and I wish I could tell her I saw it all.

CONNIE

Nikki, you're good at lots of things, but giving comfort isn't on the list. So my reward for all my work will be...that I won't get any grandchildren? And you get my daughter when she finally can fend for herself? Thanks a bunch.

NIKKI putting finishing touches on boat for crew arrival.

She tests the VHF. It works fine for 30 minutes. She turns it off.

NIKKI settles in for the weather. She's tied up alongside on the starboard side of Second Wind. There's about twenty feet of space between her bow and the boat tied in front of hers. Nikki takes a nap. It's dusk. The wind starts to pick up. Noisy CHARTERERS come in, speaking English but with a variety of accents. They begin to dock in the space behind Second Wind. Nikki doesn't wake up.

CHARTERER 1  
(steering)

Tie that off.

CHARTERER 2  
(Goes to stern)

I have it.

(Goes ashore with line and  
ties off the stern line on  
shore)

(To CHARTERER 3)

Can you toss me the other rope?

CHARTERER 3  
In a moment.

(Goes to the bow)

Got it.

Here it is.

(tosses the bow line, but the bow isn't close to the dock and the line falls in the water.)

Oops.

CHARTERER 1

Hey, come on. I don't have much more time.

CHARTERER 3

(tosses the wet line again, which slaps CHARTERER 2 in the face at the bow. This time CHARTERER 2 holds onto the line.)

Take this line.

CHARTERER 2

I have it. But the boat won't fit in this space.

(ties up boat loosely, but securely.)

CHARTERER 1

There's space in front of that other boat. Just move that one up.

CHARTERER 2 unties the stern and spring lines of Second Wind, moves the stern line to the next cleat forward, reties the bow to the next cleat forward, and neglects to retie the spring lines. CHARTERER 4 just watches all that's going on.

CHARTERER 1

(surveys the scene)

We're good now.

CHARTERER 3

Let's get to the bar. We can finish up in the morning.

CHARTERER 4

Think we should stay for a few minutes? It's getting kind of windy.

CHARTERER 3

You can stay if you want.  
There's an Efes with my name on  
it.

CHARTERER 4

Hey, this is my first charter.  
You know what you're doing.

EXT. The charterers leave, presumably to go get drunk somewhere.

EXT. Second Wind's stern line rubs against a rusty nail. There's a backward hitch in both bow and stern lines, so they're secure. NIKKI, who is asleep, isn't aware that anyone has moved the boat.

EXT. An hour later. Big storm. Waves in harbor. It's gotten pretty dark. Sailors all tucked into boats.

INTERCUT harbor and below decks. Second Wind is alongside the work dock and nobody sees her. The lights go off around the docks. The power on the dock is off. NIKKI pokes her head out into the cockpit. She notices that there's no power on the dock, but she can't see that the boat's in a different place than it was when she fell asleep. She doesn't see her spring lines, which are in a jumble around the midship cleat. Nikki goes below and tries to use the Wi-fi but it's down. The stern line chafes and breaks. The spring lines weren't retied, just laid on the deck. Boat starts to flail. Noises of the rubrail hitting the dock. Now Nikki notices that something is wrong. She comes topside and sees the stern that has pulled away from the dock, and notices the useless spring lines piled around the cleats on deck. She doesn't see anyone nearby on the dock. The wind is making a lot of noise. There's no point in yelling for help. She can't get off the boat anyway. She starts the engine. The bow thrusters won't help her tie up the stern.

ERHAN (O.S.)

Kedi, Kedi!

EXT. Marina entrance. ERHAN is in marina, looking for the cat. It's pitch black now. ERHAN almost steps off of dock while he's chasing the cat, just catching a piece of the dock to steady himself at the last moment.

EXT. Harbor. Waves breaking. A GULET at anchor breaks free and is torn to shreds. Nikki tries to use the VHF, but it isn't working. Wifi is still down. She starts to yell for help, but the wind is noisy. She can't reach any of the other boaters. She pans around with her flashlight and sees ERHAN.

ERHAN sees her and runs to her. Slips but catches himself. The bow line is chafed from the heavy load of the boat without a stern line and is about to break.

NIKKI

Erhan, I'm in trouble. Listen very carefully.

ERHAN

I will help you. What do I do?

NIKKI

I will give you a line. You will need to tie a bowline for me. You will tie it on that piling with the red line tied around it. Do you see the piling?

ERHAN

Yes. Give me a line.

NIKKI walks carefully along the lifelines with a new line in her hand. She ties one end to the cleat on the bow, and tosses the new line to him from the bow. She wants to secure the bow line, which is chafing and could break any minute. He doesn't know how to tie a line to a cleat on the dock, but he can try to tie a bowline around the post that is too tall for him to reach the top. (Otherwise Nikki might have tied the bowline loop on board.) He takes the line she's tossed and ties a bowline from the bow. He's going a little fast, because he's scared. The first one falls apart.

NIKKI

Take your time!

ERHAN ties a second one around the piling and succeeds this time. The bow is secure, but the stern is too far for a line to reach. NIKKI tosses a long line to ERHAN from the amidships cleat, and he ties another bowline to secure it to another post. NIKKI pulls that spring line in with the electric winch while ERHAN ties another bowline at the stern. She pulls the boat in to the dock, using the electric winch on her end of the stern line. Now she can step off of the boat. She helps Erhan aboard. Then they finish securing the boat together. The cat, wet and a little spooked, jumps aboard with them.

INT. Main salon. They're drinking cocoa. They both have towels around their heads.

ERHAN

If I had a phone, I could call my parents. I don't really want to walk home now. Will you call them for me?

NIKKI

Erhan, you can't go home right now. It's too dark. You can sleep up forward. I'll call your parents. They're probably very worried.

Nikki goes to the navigation station to call Aslan.

EXT. The next morning. NIKKI walks ERHAN back to the house. ASLAN answers the door. ERHAN runs into his arms.

ASLAN

I hear that you were a real sailor yesterday.

NIKKI

It's no exaggeration that he probably saved my life. A comedy of errors and I was in real danger.

ASLAN

I don't think it was a comedy at all.

NIKKI

You're quite right. But Erhan showed some real skill and a lot of maturity. He's a fine young man.

ASLAN

I'm proud of you. Even though I was worried.

ERHAN

Maybe if I had a mobile phone, you could have called me.

ASLAN

You really are turning him into an American, aren't you? I'm not sure whether to be grateful or concerned.

NIKKI

He did the next best thing. He's the one that made sure that I called you as soon as we could.

EXT: A few days later. Second Wind is in its normal berth. Nikki is ready to leave the dock. Aslan, Gul, and Erhan come by to say goodbye to Nikki.

NIKKI

I have something for you.

ASLAN

We have something for you, too.

NIKKI

Here are bus tickets. I would like you to visit me when I'm in Kuşadası. We can all stay aboard for the long weekend that you close the shop in August.

GUL

We couldn't possibly take these. You are too generous.

NIKKI

It's the least I can do after your hospitality to me this summer. And I want to show Ephesus to Erhan. I want him to know it isn't just the name of a beer.

GUL

That is wonderful. I'm not sure how else he might get to see it.

NIKKI

Well, I'm off. I'm meeting Bret at Bodrum in a few days.

ASLAN

We didn't want you to be lonely when he isn't with you. Here is Kedi.

(hands NIKKI the cat)

NIKKI

Good. She can help me find fish to eat. I wonder if she can learn English.

ASLAN

You can just talk to her in Turkish. She'll understand just as well. GÜLE GÜLE, Miss Nikki.

NIKKI

Thank you. You know, I really am smiling.

NIKKI puts the cat down the companionway. She steps onto the dock and hugs GUL, ASLAN and ERHAN. Then she comes aboard and starts the engine. ERHAN handles the lines, tossing them aboard adeptly. NIKKI sails away and disappears on the horizon.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END