The Beginning of The End and The End

By:

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EXT. DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES STREET - DAY

The heavy traffic of a morning rush. Horns HONK. Tail lights FLASH. Cars creep down the street.

INT/EXT. MUSTANG CONVERTIBLE/TOP DOWN (TRAVELING) - DAY

In that traffic, EMILY STANTON (35), soft features, short blonde hair, dressed in business attire creeps towards a light. Her hands grip the wheel at the proper ten and two positions as she sings along with a love song on the radio.

As she arrives at a stop light, Emily looks to her right and sees a YOUNG MAN hand a bouquet of roses to a YOUNG WOMAN.

    YOUNG WOMAN
    You cheating bastard. You expect me to forgive you because you gave me roses?

    YOUNG MAN
    It was just the one time. I swear I won't do it again.

The Young Woman hurls the bouquet into the Young Man's chest.

    YOUNG WOMAN
    It was my fucking sister!

The Young Woman spins and turns her back to the Young Man. She catches Emily staring at her.

    YOUNG WOMAN
    What are you looking at, lady?

Panicked, Emily hits a button on her dashboard. The vinyl roof of the convertible arches forward - painfully slow.

    YOUNG MAN
    Yeah, mind your own business.

Emily clumsily tries to clasp the latch on the top of the roof as it reaches the front windshield.

    EMILY
    Come on, come on, come on.

The latch finally connects. Emily takes one last glance to her right. She's greeted by flipped middle fingers from the Young Man and the Young Woman.

Emily drives forward. She sings much softer now.
As she reaches the next stop light, Emily spots a middle-aged couple on a bus stop bench, ignoring each other as they wait.

Emily stops singing and now merely hums the love song. The light changes, Emily drives forward and stops at a crosswalk.

A MAN walks in front of Emily's car, several steps ahead of his WIFE and CHILDREN. He waves angrily at them to hurry up.

Emily stops humming, turns off the radio and drives on.

EMILY (V.O)
I believe that finding one's soul mate is more a function of fortune than of destiny.

Emily turns into a parking garage entrance.

INT. UNDERGROUND PARKING GARAGE - DAY

Emily pulls into a parking space.

EMILY (V.O)
Sometimes, we're just not lucky.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING CORRIDOR - DAY

Emily reaches an office at the end of a long corridor. A sign on the door reads: EMILY STANTON, MARRIAGE COUNSELING.

EMILY (V.O.)
And we must find the perfect reason to stay in an imperfect relationship.

Emily inserts a key and unlocks the door.

INT. EMILY'S OFFICE - DAY

Emily flips on the light switch as she enters the tidy office. Nothing out of place. She walks towards her desk.

EMILY (V.O)
I know that a person can find their one true love.

Emily picks up a framed picture of her with PETER STANTON (30), boyish looking, on their wedding day.

EMILY (V.O.)
I'm just not sure that anyone finds it twice.
Emily places the picture back on the corner of her desk. She takes a seat and boots up her computer.

INT. EMILY'S OFFICE - DAY (LATER)

Emily sits in a large overstuffed chair. On a sofa across from her are SAM (40s), thin and nervous and NANCY (40s), a bit overweight and looking more than a bit pissed off.

SAM
I've told her that I would do anything to make it right.

EMILY
Okay, let's try a new exercise. It's designed to facilitate emotional healing.

SAM
I'll try anything.

EMILY
Nancy, are you willing to do this?

Nancy crosses her arms in defiance.

SAM
Nancy, please - she's the professional.

NANCY
Fine, whatever.

EMILY
Okay, I'm going to want each of you to take turns imagining that you are watching the other one sleep.

Emily presses a switch on an electronic console stationed on a table next to her. The office lights dim. Emily hits another switch and the room fills with meditative music.

EMILY
Okay, that should help. Sam, I want you to go first. Close your eyes.

Sam closes his eyes.

EMILY
Now, I want you to really concentrate - put yourself in the moment. Nancy is sleeping peacefully in bed.
SAM
Okay, I got it.

EMILY
Tell me what you're feeling - deep down?

SAM
That I love her. That I'm sorry. That I'll never do it again - never.

Sam wipes a tear from the corner of his eye.

EMILY
That's very good, Sam. Nancy, your turn.

Nancy closes her eyes. There is a pause as Emily waits for Nancy to get in the moment.

EMILY
Can you see Sam sleeping?

NANCY
Yep.

EMILY
And what are you thinking of?

NANCY
A pillow.

EMILY
A pillow? To put under his head?

NANCY
No, on his face.

EMILY
Pardon?

NANCY
I see that cheating little bastard just lying in bed. I take a pillow from the closet and place it over his smug little face. It doesn't wake him at first. I start to apply pressure and --

SAM
Maybe we should stop.
Emily flips the lights back on and turns off the music. Nancy still has her eyes shut tight.

NANCY
He's losing oxygen and his feet start to wiggle as he strains to breathe.
(almost orgasmic)
Oh, he's really struggling to get air now... So you think I'm too fat you little cheating weasel? Die - die you bastard!

SAM
This is supposed to be helpful?

Nancy opens her eyes.

NANCY
(to Emily)
Oh, my God. That felt great. You were right. That's a fabulous exercise. Can we do another one?

A clock CHIMES. A look of relief crosses Emily's face.

EMILY
I'm sorry, the hour is up.

SAM
I'm supposed to pay for this?

NANCY
Oh, mister - I can afford a necklace for my whore mistress - is concerned about money now?

Emily walks towards the door and opens it.

EMILY
Really, I'm sorry, but I have other appointments.

Sam stands up and walks towards the door. Nancy follows.

SAM
It wasn't a necklace. It was a bracelet.

NANCY
You may want to sleep with one eye open tonight.
Sam and Nancy Exit. Emily closes the door and rests her forehead on it.

**EMILY**
That went well.

**EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - NIGHT**

LAUREN (40) hustles out of a parked car and opens the passenger door. She takes the arm of MADELYN (6), cute as a button and hugging a large, white, TEDDY BEAR.

**INT. EMILY'S HOUSE/Front Door - Night**

As Emily opens the door, Madelyn rushes in and gives her a huge hug. Lauren enters behind her.

**MADELYN**
Aunt Emily.

Emily scoops Madelyn up in her arms.

**EMILY**
Oh, you give the best hugs. Give me another.

Madelyn squeezes her arms around Emily's neck.

**LAUREN**
Don't choke the air out of Aunt Emily, hon. She's going to need her energy.

**EMILY**
Please, it's the best hug I've had since - well since last time Madelyn gave me a hug.

Emily squeezes Madelyn and gives her a kiss on her cheek.

**EMILY**
(to Madelyn)
Gimme another.

Madelyn squeezes her arms around Emily's neck again. Lauren looks at her wristwatch.

**LAUREN**
Gotta go. Hate to rush off like this, but I'm already late.
EMILY
Go - go already. Besides, Madelyn
and I already have a full schedule
of things to do.

Emily gently lets Madelyn down.

MADELYN
You said pizza and movies.

EMILY
I did indeed.
(to Lauren)
Seriously, off with you.

Lauren leans over and kisses Madelyn on the cheek.

LAUREN
You be good.
(to Emily)
Thanks, Sis. You're a lifesaver.
I'll see you tomorrow morning.

INT. EMILY'S HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A pizza box and empty glasses are on a coffee table.

Emily sits sideways on a sofa with a laptop computer propped
up on her knees. The screen shows a picture of Emily with
Peter, the same man from the photo on her desk, at the beach.

EMILY
Why do you do this to yourself?

Emily taps the keypad and the next picture appears - Peter
and Emily at a restaurant dinner table. Another tap and
another picture - Peter wrestling with a Golden Retriever.

EMILY
I think you loved that dog as much
as you loved me.

Emily closes the laptop, gets up from the sofa and stubs her
toe on the corner of the coffee table.

EMILY
God damn it!

MADELYN (O.S.)
I'm still awake, Aunt Emily.

Emily falls back on the sofa, grabbing her toe.
EMILY
(towards upstairs)
Um, it was just the television, sweetie.
(muffled, to herself)
Mother of God, that hurts.

MADELYN (O.S.)
No it wasn’t.
(beat)
Mommy says that you shouldn’t swear.

Emily grimaces in embarrassment.

LIVING ROOM - LATER

Emily's eyes are wide open in fright as she watches the movie The Shining.

INSERT TV:

JACK NICHOLSON
Here's Johnny!

A frightened Emily grabs the remote and clicks off the TV.

EMILY
The Shining. What was I thinking?

Emily rises. Her toe still hurts. She limps upstairs to the:

GUEST BEDROOM

And looks in. Madelyn is in bed, fast asleep, her stuffed Teddy Bear held snugly in her arms.

MASTER BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Emily tosses and turns in bed. A loud CLATTER comes from outside. Startled, Emily jumps up. There is another CLATTER.

Emily escapes her sheets and tip toes towards the window - peers out. Nothing seems unusual. She goes to the

GUEST BEDROOM

And looks in. Madelyn's asleep. Emily approaches the bed.

EMILY
(in a whisper)
Madelyn, did you hear that?

Madelyn doesn't stir. Emily gently tugs her shoulder.
EMILY
Madelyn, are you awake?

Madelyn rubs her eyes.

MADELYN
What's wrong, Aunt Emily?

EMILY
Did you hear that noise?

MADELYN
No.

EMILY
I heard a noise. I just wanted to make sure it didn't scare you.

MADELYN
I wasn't scared. I was sleeping.

EMILY
Well, it was pretty loud. I think maybe you ought to come sleep in my room.

MADELYN
Sometimes at our house, the cats will knock over a trash can. If it scares me, I just hold on to Teddy.

Madelyn stretches her arms out offering her Teddy bear.

MADELYN
You want Teddy?

EMILY
Oh, no - no, of course not. You keep him.

Emily gives Madelyn a kiss on the forehead.

EMILY
Okay then, everything seems to be fine here. I think ole Aunt Emily ought to get herself to bed.

MADELYN
Good night.

Madelyn rolls over. Emily reluctantly walks towards the door.

EMILY
Good night, sweetie.
Emily stops just before she leaves the room. She goes back to the bed and scoops up Madelyn in her arms, Teddy in tow.

EMILY
You know, you’re Mom just wouldn’t forgive me if you didn’t get a good nights sleep because of this noise thing. It's much better if we sleep together.

INT. EMILY’S HOUSE/MASTER BEDROOM – MORNING

Emily and Madelyn are in bed, a fortress of pillows surrounding them.

Emily awakes. It takes her a moment to realize she has Teddy in her arms. She gently places Teddy next to Madelyn.

INT. EMILY’S HOUSE/KITCHEN – MORNING

Emily and Lauren drink coffee at the kitchen table.

LAUREN
Oh my God, it was so fabulous. Tom's boss has got to be loaded. I should have invited you. There were quite the number of eligibles.

EMILY
I had a fabulous night with my niece.

LAUREN
And Salvador was there. You know, Tom's friend. I mentioned him to you before. He's the one that saw your picture in Tom's office. He wants your number.

EMILY
You want me to go out with a guy because he is drooling over the picture of a complete stranger?

Madelyn, wearing pajamas, charges into the kitchen and gives Lauren a huge hug.

MADELYN
Mommy.

LAUREN
Hey there, sunshine. Did you sleep well?
MADELYN
I slept with Aunt Emily. She was scared.

EMILY
I wasn't scared. Well, not exactly.

Lauren and Madelyn both give Emily a look of disbelief.

EMILY
There was a noise.

MADELYN
I told her it was a cat.

LAUREN
(to Madelyn)
Hey you, why don't you go get your clothes on so we can get home and have breakfast with Daddy.

Madelyn scurries off.

Emily goes to the sink to rinse her coffee cup and other dishes that are on the counter.

LAUREN
Come on, let me set you up.

EMILY
I really don't want to have this conversation again.

LAUREN
I just refuse to believe that you've resigned yourself to spending the rest of your life alone.

EMILY
And, we're having it.

LAUREN
How many dates were you on last year?

EMILY
Is there a correct answer to that question?

LAUREN
One. You went on one date.
EMILY
I'm going to say one.

LAUREN
Fine, be sarcastic. I'm only trying to help. You're not going to find someone by roaming around this house.

EMILY
Did I mention that I don't want to find someone?

LAUREN
You could join an online dating site, hit a bar - anything. You know what I was thinking when I first met Tom?

EMILY
Please don't tell me.

LAUREN
I was thinking - eh, not bad. I'll give him a shot.

EMILY
I'm guessing it was tequila.

LAUREN
Well, yes - technically it was, but that's not the point.

EMILY
So this conversation is indeed pointless.

LAUREN
Seriously though, how long has it been since Peter, um...

Emily finishes with the rinsing and returns to the table across from Lauren.

EMILY
You can say it. Since Peter died - four years, three months, ten days.

LAUREN
That's a long time. Don't you think he'd want you, well, to move on?
EMILY
You're confusing moving on with changing. I've moved on. I just haven't changed.

LAUREN
Fine, stay a hermit. But what about - you know?

EMILY
What?

LAUREN
It's been over four years. Don't you ever get horny?

EMILY
Jesus! Madelyn is just upstairs.

LAUREN
Ah, don't worry, she can't hear me.

EMILY
You'd be surprised. The kid's got remarkable hearing.

LAUREN
Anyway, you know, I was talking to a friend of mine about you.

EMILY
Well, that's special.

LAUREN
She was in a similar situation, all depressed and everything.

EMILY
I'm not depressed.

LAUREN
Right. Anyway, just like you, she lost her guy.

EMILY
I didn't lose my guy. Peter died. I didn't misplace him.

LAUREN
Do you want me to finish the story or not?

EMILY
I beg you not to.
So anyway, to get out of her funk, she went to a bar, grabbed the first attractive guy she saw and...

EMILY
Madelyn - upstairs.

LAUREN
Fine. She grabbed the first guy and - um...

Lauren checks the stairwell to make sure Madelyn is out of earshot and motions for Emily to come closer. Emily leans in.

LAUREN
Just fucked her heartache away.

Emily leans back in disbelief.

LAUREN
Everyone's doing it now. They call it a sexercism. Have you heard of it?

EMILY
(stunned)
No, but I'll be sure to check if there's anything on it in the latest psych journals.

LAUREN
Fine, make fun of me. But it just might work.

Madelyn bursts into the room.

MADELYN
All dressed, Mommy.

EMILY
(to Madelyn)
You don't know how happy I am to see you.

LAUREN
(to Madelyn)
Don't you look cute.
(to Emily)
I may not be educated like you. But I'm not the one roaming around an empty house afraid of cat noises.
MADELYN
You want me to leave Teddy with you, Aunt Emily?

EMILY
Oh, that's so sweet.

Emily bends over and gives Madelyn a huge kiss on the forehead.

EMILY
No, I'll be just fine.

LAUREN
You want me to introduce you to Salvador, Aunt Emily?

EMILY
I'd prefer Teddy.

Lauren grabs Madelyn's hand and starts to exit.

LAUREN
(shouting back)
Fine, fine, fine. Have it your way. Are we still on for dinner tomorrow night?

EMILY
Yeah, the Japanese place next to my office. Meet you at six?

Lauren and Madelyn start to walk out.

LAUREN
(shouting back)
Sounds great. Love you. See you tomorrow.

EMILY
You too.

INT. EMILY'S OFFICE – DAY

Emily sits in her office chair with a clipboard in her hand taking notes. CYNTHIA (35) and ANDREW (35), sit on the sofa.

EMILY
Andrew, what do you think about what Cynthia said?

ANDREW
Like I said, I don't want to be married.
CYNTHIA
I don't think he knows what he wants.

ANDREW
Well, I know what I don't want.

Emily writes TOTAL DICK on her clipboard.

CYNTHIA
Then why are you even here?

ANDREW
Because you said that if I did this counseling crap you would finally let it go.

Emily puts two bold exclamation points and draws two bold lines underneath TOTAL DICK.

CYNTHIA
We haven't had sex in five months.
   (looking at Andrew)
   Well, at least I haven't.
   (to Emily)
   Do you even know what that's like?

EMILY
(stream of consciousness)
More than you can imagine.

There is an awkward pause as Cynthia and Andrew stare at Emily. Her face grows red in embarrassment.

EMILY
Um, no. What I meant was, the - um, a lack of intimacy can hurt a relationship.

ANDREW
You weren't thinking about intimacy.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING CORRIDOR - DAY

Emily watches Andrew and Cynthia walk down the office corridor towards the elevators.

EMILY
Okay, I'll see you guys next week.

Andrew turns around and silently mouths *No Fucking Way* and then continues towards the elevators.
EMILY
(to herself)
Fine by me, dick.

Emily looks at her watch.

EMILY
Damn, I'm going to be late.

INT. JAPANESE RESTAURANT/BAR AREA - NIGHT.

GEORGE NELSON (42), handsome, draped in an Armani suit sits at a table as he nurses a drink. His attention is focused on the back of Emily's legs, dangling from a stool at the bar.

George's eyes move up to Emily's backside, then her torso, covered in a white blouse. Then up to the back of her head, her blonde hair laying gently over her back collar.

BAR COUNTER

Emily twirls the stem of an empty wine glass in one hand as she holds a cell phone to her ear with the other. A BARTENDER has his back to Emily as he dumps ice into a bin.

EMILY
(into cell phone)
Lauren, don't worry about it. I don't want you coming if Maddie is sick. I'm kind of tired anyway.
(listening)
Yeah, I got it the first time you said it - it's like an exorcism.
(listening)
Yes, I still think it's idiotic.
(listening)
Love you too. Bye.

Emily ends the call.

EMILY
(muttering to herself)
Sexercism - unreal.

Emily finishes the last of her wine and looks towards a booth in the corner of the bar. She spots a TIPSY MAN nibbling on the neck of an equally TIPSY WOMAN. Emily sighs.

EMILY
But, God, it's been a long time.

As Emily fumbles through her purse for her wallet to pay the bill, George pulls up to the counter.
GEORGE
I was going to get one more. Can I buy you a drink?

Emily takes a quick glance at George, then a double take and then turns back to her purse.

EMILY
You know, that may be the world's worst metaphor.

GEORGE
Pardon?

EMILY
What you really meant is there any chance I can take you home.

George slides into the stool next to Emily.

GEORGE
Wow, what a cynic.

EMILY
Really? Let's see, there's about twenty feet of open bar space from here to him.
   (points at the Bartender)
Yet you decided that the most strategic place to order a drink is next to my stool. Hmm.

GEORGE
Wow, what a psychic. Do you use your super powers just for evil?
   (to the Bartender)
Can I get a scotch please?
   (to Emily)
So, no drink?

The Bartender turns around - gives George the thumbs up.

George's cell phone rings. The ringtone is TUBULAR BELLS from the Exorcist. George pulls the phone from his suit pocket, Emily stares at him in disbelief.

GEORGE
You don't like it?

EMILY
Really? Of all the possibilities, your ring tone is the theme from the Exorcist?
George looks at the phone and then presses the off button without answering.

GEORGE
I just liked the sound. Seriously, what?

EMILY
It reminds me of a conversation I just had with my sister.

GEORGE
Well, unless your Sister is Linda Blair, I think I'm going to need a little bit more information.

Emily laughs. The bartender arrives with George's scotch.

BARTENDER
Ma'am, did you want anything?

Emily glances towards the couple in the booth at the corner, now engaged in a full-throttle kiss.

BARTENDER
Ma'am?

EMILY
Um, sorry.
(to George)
Look, you promise you won't tell me anything about yourself?

GEORGE
What?

EMILY
After we're done with - uh, you know. I really need to remain complete strangers. I'm going to take a wild stab at it and guess that anonymity is one of your fortes - yes?

GEORGE
Among others.

EMILY
(to the Bartender)
He's buying me a vodka martini.

EMILY
(to George)
Metaphorically speaking.
INT. GEORGE'S HOUSE/BEDROOM - MORNING

The morning sunlight peeps through the drapes. Emily lies in bed, staring at the ceiling. She runs her hands through her hair - breathes in. A content look consumes her face.

George has his back towards Emily. His low SNORES signal he's not waking any time soon.

Emily leans over and picks up her white silk blouse and a skirt from the floor. She slowly sits up, clasping her garments to her bare chest.

Emily scans the room for her bra. It seems to be gone.

She spots the strap sticking out from under George's pillow. She grabs the strap and gives it a gentle tug. George stirs and grunts. Emily releases the strap like it was radioactive.

With her clothes pressed up against her, Emily stands up, a bit wobbly, and tip toes out of the bedroom.

INT. GEORGE'S HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - MORNING

With her cell phone to her ear, Emily, now dressed, makes a feeble attempt to pat down her bedroom hair with one hand.

EMILY
(softly - into phone)
It's 6912 Madison street.
(listening)
Please, as soon as you can.

EXT. GEORGE'S HOUSE - MORNING

Bright and sunny. Emily stands just outside the front door. As Emily adjusts her purse strap, she notices that, without a bra, her breasts are quite visible through her sheer blouse.

EMILY
Ah, Jesus.

A PAPERBOY (14) stops his bike and gawks at Emily.

PAPERBOY
Wow.

Emily instinctively cups both of her breasts with her hands.

EMILY
Move it along or I will hurt you.
The Paperboy's eyes are fixed on Emily as he slowly rides forward. He veers off the sidewalk smack into a tree. His testicles land squarely on the bike's crossbar. He GROANS.

EMILY
Ha! I warned you.
(to herself)
I'm going to kill you, Lauren.

Emily removes the purse from her shoulder and holds it up against her chest. It's not large enough to do the trick. She settles on tightly crossing her arms across her chest, looking as if she were hugging herself.

A TAXI pulls up.

EMILY
Thank God.

Emily walks towards the taxi, waddling like a penguin as she keeps her arms tightly clasped around her chest.

With her arms still folded, Emily bends over and, after a few clumsy attempts, opens the door latch.

INT. TAXI - MORNING

Emily slithers into the back seat. She quickly unfolds her arms, grabs the door handle and slams it shut and immediately clasps her arms around her breasts again.

EMILY
Thanks for the help with the door.

The DRIVER (50) puts the car into gear.

DRIVER
It was unlocked.

The Driver turns his head – looks at Emily.

DRIVER
(taken aback)
Hey. Something wrong with you?

EMILY
No.

DRIVER
I mean, you look like you're having a heart attack or something.

EMILY
Please – drive.
INT. GEORGE'S HOUSE/BEDROOM - MORNING

George's awakens. Without turning over, he feels for Emily's presence with his left hand - she's gone. He sits up and studies the empty space where Emily slept.

George spots the bra strap peeking out from underneath his pillow. He digs the bra out and holds it up in the air by the strap - like a man holding the tail of a possum.

INT. PARKING GARAGE - DAY

The Taxi pulls up behind Emily's parked car.

INT/EXT. TAXI - DAY

 DRIVER
Here we are. That'll be twenty-eight dollars.

 EMILY
Could you get my door, please?

 DRIVER
Yeah, why not.

The Driver walks around towards Emily's door.

 DRIVER
(to himself)
Fucking, princess. They're all the same.

The Driver opens the door. Emily struggles exiting the cab, her arms still crossed tightly over her breasts.

 DRIVER
Seriously, lady. I can take you to the hospital.

 EMILY
I'm fine!

Emily finally makes it out - takes a deep composing breath and turns her shoulder exposing her purse.

 EMILY
Open the purse. They're two twenty dollar bills just inside. Take them, keep the change.

The Driver hesitantly opens the purse.
CAB DRIVER
You know, you’re really weird.

EMILY
Yes, I do. Thank you. Please go.

The Driver returns to the car, puts it in gear and drives off. Emily waddles towards her car.

INT. EMILY’S OFFICE – DAY

Emily in her chair. SUSAN (50s) and DAVID (50s) on the sofa.

SUSAN
And I feel like lately, - well, we’re both just treading water.

The sound of a hammer BANGING comes from the corridor.

EMILY
David, do you agree?

The sound of a POWER DRILL comes from the corridor.

DAVID
It’s closer to drowning.

Susan sobs loudly. Emily offers her a tissue box. As Susan removes a tissue, the HAMMERING sound returns.

EMILY
Let’s sit on that for a moment.
Give me a second to check this out.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING CORRIDOR – DAY

Emily exits her office and walks towards the:

ADJACENT OFFICE

A burly, middle-aged CARPENTER hammers shelf supports into the wall. Emily knocks on the door jam.

EMILY
Excuse me.

The Carpenter does not look back.

CARPENTER
Yeah.
EMILY
I'm in the office next door and was wondering how long the noise would be going on.

A MOVER carrying a large box appears behind Emily.

MOVER
Lady, can you move? This weighs a ton.

Emily, startled, moves aside.

EMILY
Yes, of course.

The Mover plops the box on the floor and exits. The Carpenter turns around wiping the sweat off his brow.

CARPENTER
Pretty much all day. The landlord's got a new renter coming in and I was told that the office had to be ready ASAP.

The Carpenter turns back to his work.

EMILY
Well, it's just that I have clients in counseling. I think you could imagine that with the banging --

CARPENTER
(turning around)
You a shrink?

EMILY
Marriage Counselor.

CARPENTER
Oh - yuck, that must suck for you.

EMILY
Oh, and carpentry is a dream job.

The Carpenter removes a LATIN CROSS connected to a chain from underneath his work shirt and shows it to Emily.

CARPENTER
It was good enough for Jesus.

EMILY
I'm sorry. I didn't mean anything by it.
David escapes down the corridor in the background behind Emily. A loud WAIL is heard from Susan.

CARPENTER
Anyway, you need to take your problem up with the landlord. Now, if you'll excuse me.

The Carpenter returns to his hammering. Emily rolls her eyes and turns to leave, running smack into George Nelson.

EMILY
(startled)
Oh, sorry.

It takes Emily a second to realize that it's George.

GEORGE
My mistake entirely.

EMILY
My God, what are in the world are you doing here? You promised --

George extends his hand towards Emily. Emily accepts it.

GEORGE
I'm George. George Nelson.

EMILY
This isn't happening.

George leans over to whisper in Emily's ear.

GEORGE
Wasn't really sure you knew my full name. And yours?

EMILY
Stanton, Emily Stanton. What are you doing here? This is impossible.

GEORGE
Odd as it sounds, I'm here because I'm leasing this office. Are you with the landlord?

EMILY
Oh, - no, of course not. I have the office next store. Speaking of which...

George admires Emily's backside as she exits into the corridor. She takes a few steps and enters:
EMILY'S OFFICE

Susan, has her hands in her face, sobbing.

EMILY
Susan, just give me another minute. Wait, where's David?

SUSAN
He left.

EMILY
That may be for the better.

Susan sobs louder. Emily gives Susan the entire tissue box.

EMILY
Promise, I'll only be a moment.

Emily exits back into the corridor and then into what we know now is:

GEORGE'S OFFICE

GEORGE
So, I see we're going to be neighbors.

EMILY
Speaking of which, I'm working with a client right now and the noise is very disruptive.

The Carpenter starts up a power drill.

GEORGE
Yes, I can imagine.

EMILY
And?

GEORGE
What?

EMILY
And can you do something about it?

GEORGE
Probably not.

George points towards the Carpenter.
GEORGE
He doesn't work for me. He's the landlord's guy.

EMILY
(to the Carpenter)
Can you please just give me a half hour? You've got to have a break coming or something. I have a very, very distraught woman next door.

CARPENTER
Fine, I guess I could eat - thirty minutes?

EMILY
Great, thanks.
(to George, sarcastically)
Wow, that was nearly impossible to take care of. Thanks soooo much for your help.

Emily exits.

GEORGE
You know, I don't think she really meant that.

CARPENTER
You think?

INT. OFFICE BUILDING CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Emily locks the outside door of her office. She sees that the light to George's office is on. The door is slightly ajar.

EMILY
Arrrgh! Just do it.

Emily approaches George's door and taps three times.

INT. GEORGE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

GEORGE
Come in.

Emily enters. Quite a bit of progress was made during the day. The bookshelves are complete. Furniture moved in.

GEORGE
Well, it's my neighbor visiting again. Hope we kept the noise down enough for you.
EMILY
Yes, it was much better. Look, I wanted to apologize for my rudeness earlier. It's just I was with a very distraught client.

GEORGE
Not a problem. I have a lot of those myself.

EMILY
Oh, are you a counselor?

GEORGE
Not exactly.

George points to a walnut door sign in the corner of the room. Emily walks over and inspects it. It reads: GEORGE A. NELSON, LLB - DIVORCE ATTORNEY

GEORGE
I thought it came out pretty good.

Emily stands in stunned silence as she glares at the sign.

GEORGE
They didn't have time to hang it today. They're going to do it tomorrow.

EMILY
That's impossible.

GEORGE
No, they promised.

EMILY
That's not what I meant. I meant that it's impossible that they put a divorce lawyer next to me.

GEORGE
Why, are you a divorce lawyer?

EMILY
No, I'm a marriage counselor.

GEORGE
And that's a problem because?
EMILY
Seriously? I have clients that are trying to save their marriage and the last thing they're going to see before they get to my office is a sign for a divorce lawyer?

GEORGE
You really don't think that was already going through their minds on the drive over? Besides, it's not like you never see a McDonald's next to a fitness center.

EMILY
What?

GEORGE
Just because someone is trying to lose weight, doesn't mean you can't have a fitness center next to a restaurant.

EMILY
That's not the same thing.

GEORGE
Heck, you can have a church next to a liquor store. Doesn't mean people are going to skip praying and go straight to drinking.

EMILY
Please, stop.

GEORGE
Or how about a tattoo parlor next to a dermatologist? Hmm, maybe that one doesn't quite work because you could have a tattoo and still have good skin I suppose.

EMILY
This may be the most inane conversation I have ever had.

GEORGE
You're forgetting the bar.

EMILY
Listen - that didn't happen. I'm erasing it. And, this...
(waving at the office)
This isn't going to happen either.
I'm seeing the landlord. I'm not going to take this lying down.

GEORGE
It seems to me that you already --

EMILY
Don't even think about completing that sentence.

Emily's eyes flare. She turns and exits.

GEORGE
(shouting out)
Pleasure meeting you. Again!

INT. UNDERGROUND PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT

Emily storms through the garage.

EMILY
A dermatologist and a tattoo parlor - what a moron.

A BMW, luxury sedan is parked inches away from Emily's driver side door. Emily stares at the license plate. It reads: DE4S LAW

EMILY
Arrrgh!

Emily makes an attempt to squeeze in her car, but there is simply not enough room for her to even reach her door handle.

EMILY
Damn it, damn it, damn it.

INT. EMILY'S CAR - NIGHT

With her hands on the headrest and her rear end facing the windshield, Emily tries to climb over from the passenger seat to the driver side of her car.

As Emily lifts her leg over the gear shift, her rear end hits the car horn on the steering wheel - HONK!

Startled, Emily jolts up - hits her head on the car roof.

EMILY
Crap!

Emily scans the lot to make sure no one has seen her. She makes one last turn of her body - falls into the driver seat.
Emily looks at her left leg. Her nylon is now badly torn.

EMILY
You bastard!

Emily closes her eyes and takes several calming breaths. She looks to her left at George's car, just inches away. The corners of Emily's lip turns upward as she lowers her window.

Emily reaches into her purse and removes a cell phone and a red lipstick. She turns sideways and uses the lipstick to write on the passenger window of the BMW with one hand as she hits the call button on her cell phone with the other.

EMILY
(into the phone)
Hey, it's me. You think that Tom could watch Madelyn for awhile? I really need a drink.

INT. LAUREN'S HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT.

Lauren, Madelyn and TOM (45), Lauren's husband are watching television. Lauren cups her hand over the cell phone.

LAUREN
I need to go out. Can you watch Madelyn for awhile?
(whispering)
Emily's having a problem.

TOM
Sure.

LAUREN
You're a sweetie.
(into her cell phone)
Meet you at the Royal Oak?

INT. EMILY'S CAR - NIGHT

Emily, oddly calm now, has just finished writing on the BMW window with her red lipstick. In very large letters it reads:

U PARK
2 CLOSE
U JERK

EMILY
(into her cell phone)
Great, see you there.

Emily ends the call and drops her phone in her purse. She admires her handiwork on the window.
EMILY
(starting her car)
Perfect.

EXT. FANCY RESTAURANT/VALET AREA - NIGHT

George drives his BMW, with the window still containing Emily's lipstick handiwork, up to the Valet Booth.

George exits the car, approaches the booth and takes a ticket from the VALET (21).

GEORGE
Keys are in the car.

As the Valet hands George a ticket, he spots the window.

VALET
Hey, mister - did you know...?

GEORGE
(heading to the entrance)
I know.

INT. ROYAL OAK BAR - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Emily and Lauren sit in a corner booth. A wine glass is in front of each of them.

EMILY
...So, first thing tomorrow, I'm going to see the landlord and get this taken care of.

LAUREN
Uh-huh.

EMILY
And it's not enough that he moves into the office next to me, then he has the nerve to pin my car in.

LAUREN
Well, he couldn't have known it was your car.

EMILY
Typical BMW owner.

LAUREN
He drives a Beemer?

EMILY
Don't they all?
LAUREN
So, what did he look like?

EMILY
How is that relevant?

Lauren removes her smart phone from her purse.

LAUREN
What's his name again?

EMILY
George - George Nelson.

Lauren starts typing on her smart phone.

LAUREN
(to herself)
George Nelson, divorce lawyer, L.A

A COCKTAIL WAITRESS approaches the booth. Lauren doesn't notice as she's busy with the smart phone.

COCKTAIL WAITRESS
Can I get you ladies another round?

LAUREN
Holy shit!

EMILY
(to the Cocktail Waitress)
I think she wants a holy shit. I'll have another chardonnay.

LAUREN
Wow!
(to the Cocktail Waitress)
A chardonnay is fine. Wanna see?

COCKTAIL WAITRESS
Sure.

Lauren hands her smart phone to the Cocktail Waitress. A picture of George Nelson is on the screen.

LAUREN
What do you think?

COCKTAIL WAITRESS
Holy shit.

LAUREN
Right?
COCKTAIL WAITRESS
I'd do him.

LAUREN
I would too if I were single.

COCKTAIL WAITRESS
I'm not single.

EMILY
Somebody, please shoot me.

The Cocktail Waitress walks off. Lauren holds her phone up to Emily showing her the picture of George.

LAUREN
Seriously, Emily - you wouldn't do this guy?

Emily looks away.

LAUREN
What's going on?

EMILY
I kind of already did.

LAUREN
Shut up! You did him right there in the office?

EMILY
Oh God, of course not.

LAUREN
When?

EMILY
You remember last night when you couldn't make it because Madelyn was sick?

LAUREN
Yeah, sure.

EMILY
Well, I met him at the bar, right after we talked. He was my - um... My - um, sexercism.

LAUREN
Holy shit.
EMILY
You really need to work on your vocabulary.

LAUREN
You must provide details.

EMILY
No, I mustn't. Besides, I feel a little odd about it.

LAUREN
Oh for crying out loud, Sis. There's nothing to be ashamed of. You're a vibrant healthy woman - with needs. It's not like you were out whoring or something.

EMILY
Please, talk louder. I'm not sure everyone could hear you.

LAUREN
Sorry.

EMILY
And I didn't say I felt ashamed. I said I felt odd.

LAUREN
Why on earth would you feel odd? Oh, was it because you were thinking about Peter?

Emily swirls the wine in her glass.

EMILY
No. I think it's because I wasn't.

INT. FANCY RESTAURANT - NIGHT

George and MIKE MCCARTHY (50), heavy, squared jawed with a crew cut are having a meal. Mike takes a large bite of food.

MIKE
(mouth full)
So, how's the new office?

GEORGE
The office is fine. My neighbor's a bit of an ass ache. Albeit a very interesting one.
MIKE
Your neighbor?

GEORGE
The gal who has the office next to mine - Emily Stanton.

MIKE
Where do I know that name from? What does she do?

GEORGE
Peddles false hope.

JOHN
What?

GEORGE
She's a marriage counselor.

JOHN
Hey, Marie and I went to therapy four or five years ago. I wonder if it was her?

GEORGE
Did you hate your therapist?

MIKE
No, actually she was pretty good.

GEORGE
Well, then it wasn't her.

MIKE
What does she look like?

GEORGE
Short blonde hair, blue eyes - thirty-five-ish. Very well put together. Believe me, you wouldn't forget her if you had met her.

MIKE
Well, maybe you ought to be a bit nicer to her so, you know...

GEORGE
Oh, that. I already slept with her.

MIKE
(incredulous)
I thought you said that you just met her.
GEORGE
Well, it's complicated. I kind of slept with her before I really met her. You know how that happens.

MIKE
No, no I don't know how that happens. Ninety-nine, point nine percent of men don't know how that happens. We wish the fuck we did.

GEORGE
First, sorry, didn't mean to touch a nerve. And second, it isn't all that complicated.

MIKE
First, fuck you. And second, well second - fuck you.

Mike takes a large gulp of beer.

MIKE
Off topic, but Marie's been bugging me about asking you over for dinner.

GEORGE
I like to eat.

MIKE
Great. Oh, just so you know, she's going to invite a friend of hers over. She thought you two might hit it off.

GEORGE
No way. You know better than that.

MIKE
Oh come on. What could it hurt?

GEORGE
I'll meet Marie's friend. More than likely I'll want to sleep with her. After that --

MIKE
You don't even know what she looks like.
GEORGE
True. Anyway, after we sleep with each other I probably won't call her back. And then Marie will be on your poor ass, each and every day, asking you why I treated her friend so badly. It's a lose - lose, Mike.

MIKE
You know what your problem is?

GEORGE
Sure, but what does that have to do with this conversation?

MIKE
Your problem is you have a fear of commitment.

GEORGE
No, I don't.

MIKE
I beg to differ.

George wipes his mouth - leans back in the booth.

GEORGE
You and Marie don't have children.

MIKE
What does that have to do with it?

GEORGE
Do you have a fear of children?

MIKE
No, of course not. We just didn't want any.

GEORGE
That's exactly how I feel about commitment. I don't have a fear of it. I just don't want it.

MIKE
You're so full of shit.

Mike takes another large bite of his burger.

MIKE
Emily Stanton. I know that name from somewhere.
INT. LANDLORD'S OFFICE - DAY

Emily and the building landlord, JOHN HASBRO (60), balding and overweight sit at a small conference table. Emily drums her fingers impatiently on the table top - checks her watch.

EMILY
You told him ten o'clock?

JOHN
For the third time, yeah.

The door opens. George enters.

GEORGE
Sorry I'm late. I needed to go to the car wash.
(accusing glance at Emily)
Seems that the windows took a bit longer than usual.

George places his briefcase on the table and takes a seat.

JOHN
Okay, Ms. Stanton - you asked for the meeting.

EMILY
Thank you, John. So, here's the issue. I've been a tenant here for five years and I think you'll agree that I've been a good one.

JOHN
You've been alright.

EMILY
Anyway, as you know, I'm a marriage counselor. Mr. Nelson here is a divorce lawyer. You've got us right next door to each other.

JOHN
And?

EMILY
It's just not suitable. The last thing couples are going to see before they get to my office is a huge sign screaming divorce lawyer.

GEORGE
For the record, my sign is inanimate.
EMILY
You know what I meant.

JOHN
So, George – your thoughts?

GEORGE
I don't really understand what the problem is. It's just kind of like a marital Let's Make a Deal.

JOHN
I don't get it.

GEORGE
You know, let's welcome our marital contestants. We know you're having problems. Would you like what's behind door number one or door number two?

JOHN
Oh, yeah – the game show.

GEORGE
Although we really need a door number three for it to work. I'm thinking maybe a travel agency.

JOHN
Or maybe a mystery door.

GEORGE
Perfect.

EMILY
Neither of you is taking this seriously.

GEORGE
Well, I would be willing to make some modifications to the door signs? You know, make them more generic.

EMILY
Specifically?

GEORGE
Well, you're a marriage counselor and that's pretty much the beginning of the end.
GEORGE (CONT'D)
So for your door, Emily Stanton, the beginning of the end. And for me - George Nelson, the end.

John lets out a laugh. Emily scowls.

GEORGE
Oh, c'mon. Don't be so humorless. Or is that an occupational hazard?

EMILY
I just don't find this funny.

GEORGE
Fine, have it your way. Let's get down to the nuts and bolts.

George opens up a briefcase, removes a document and slides it across the table towards Emily.

GEORGE
That's my lease. There are no provisions for eviction that deal with the incompatibility of any other offices in the building.

EMILY
I'm familiar with the lease provisions.

GEORGE
Notwithstanding, I have already paid Mr. Hasbro here a year in advance which he has already accepted and deposited. Can you confirm that, John?

JOHN
Yeah, that's right.

GEORGE
So, we already have a consummated contract.

JOHN
I suppose.

GEORGE
And as much as I like John, I would not hesitate to sue the living shit out of him for damages should he elect to violate that contract by evicting me without cause. Sorry, John, nothing personal.
JOHN
No problem.

George closes his briefcase and extends his hand to John.

GEORGE
I have a client at eleven. You'll have to excuse me.

John shakes George's hand.

JOHN
Uh, yeah - sure.

GEORGE
(To Emily)
Ms. Stanton, as always - a great pleasure.

George exits.

EMILY
Well?

JOHN
Well what?

EMILY
What are you going to do?

JOHN
There's nothing to do.

EMILY
Maybe you can move him into a different office.

John gets up to leave.

JOHN
This is the best building on the street. We're full up and I got a waiting list three pages long. (a pause) But if you wanted to leave...

EMILY
That's impossible. My clients like it here. It's convenient. Besides, just the cost of moving would --

JOHN
Then stay.
EMILY
That's it?

John shrugs his shoulder and leaves.

EMILY
(shouting out)
I'm not humorless.

INT. GEORGE'S OFFICE - DUSK

George at his desk packing things up for the day. He places a case file inside his open briefcase and snaps it closed. He sits a moment – thinks.

GEORGE
Couldn't hurt.

George opens a drawer on the side of his desk revealing a shoebox sized object wrapped in Christmas theme paper.

INT. EMILY'S OFFICE - DUSK

Emily at her desk buried in a case file.

A RAP on the door jam. It's George, holding his briefcase and the wrapped box. Emily looks up. She's surprised he's here.

EMILY
Yes?

George holds up the box as he approaches Emily's desk.

GEORGE
I brought a piece offering.

Emily stares at the box.

EMILY
Christmas wrapping?

GEORGE
It's the only kind I had.

Emily slowly unwraps the gift as George proudly waits. She eventually pulls a bra out of the wrapped shoe box.

EMILY
(incredulous)
You bought me a bra?
GEORGE
No, it's the one you left.
(off Emily's look)
At my house. The other night.

EMILY
This is not my bra. Exactly how many of these do you have?

George looks away, remembering. Did he grab the wrong one?

GEORGE
You're sure?

EMILY
(pointing at door)
Get out!

EXT. HARDWARE STORE PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Emily pushes a shopping cart with three large orange traffic cones in it towards her parked car.

INT. UNDERGROUND PARKING GARAGE - DAY

George pulls his BMW into his parking space. There are three traffic cones to the side of Emily’s car to prevent George from parking too close.

INT. GEORGE'S BMW - DAY

GEORGE
(eyeing the cones)
Well, you're not entirely humorless.

INT. EMILY'S OFFICE - DAY

Sam and Nancy are on the sofa.

EMILY
Let's start with you, Sam. How are you doing?

SAM
I'm not sleeping so well.

Nancy makes a motion pretending that she is suffocating Sam with a pillow.

EMILY
I have something that I want to try. Have you ever heard of aromatherapy?
INT. GEORGE'S OFFICE - DAY

George sits in his office chair reading a draft divorce settlement. GLENDA (48), very prim and proper looking, sits in the chair on the other side of the desk.

GEORGE
So, let's see. Everything seems to be in sync with what we agreed to. You get the house, keep your car, half of all liquid assets and --

GLENDA
Phoebe.

GEORGE
Pardon?

GLENDA
Our french poodle. I should be able to keep Phoebe.

GEORGE
This is the first time you've mentioned a dog.

GLENDA
It's not a dog. She's a poodle.

GEORGE
Glenda, it might be a little late in the game to send back another modification. You've already got everything you've asked for. I mean, do you even know if he wants the dog? I mean the poodle.

GLENDA
Wouldn't you?

GEORGE
No.

GLENDA
Typical man. What's that smell?

George sniffs around, including around himself.

GEORGE
What smell?
GLENDAScented candles. I'm allergic. Were you burning scented candles in here?

GEORGE
I can assure you, not a chance.

GLENDASA I'm irritating my eyes.

George stands up, walks over to Glenda and sniffs in the air.

GEORGE
Yes, there's definitely something here.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING CORRIDOR - DAY

George sniffs the air as he walks towards Emily's office. He reaches Emily's door and just as he is ready to tap on it, the door swings open as Sam and Nancy exit.

GEORGE
Excuse me.

SAM
Not a problem. Waiting for your appointment?

GEORGE
God, no.

Sam and Nancy walk off. George enters:

EMILY'S OFFICE

And sees Emily at her desk.

GEORGE
For the love of God, what are you burning in here?

EMILY
Bridges? Please tell me I'm burning bridges. Oh, wait - that's your specialty.

George spots two burning candles in the corner.

GEORGE
It's those.
EMILY
They're meditation candles. Some of my clients find them helpful.

GEORGE
Christ, It smells like burnt skunk.

EMILY
It's cardamom. It promotes calmness.

GEORGE
And evacuations I suspect.

EMILY
Is there a point to your visit? I have another client coming any minute.

GEORGE
Yes, thanks to this odor, I have a client leaving any minute. Any chance you consider dousing them for awhile?

EMILY
Perhaps you ought to consider a different office.

GEORGE
Ah, there you go. Now, I get it.

EMILY
And I thought you were thick headed.

GEORGE
You can't win the battle fair and square and so now you're trying to smoke me out.

EMILY
It works with most rodents.

GEORGE
(as he exits)
Yeah, but not all.

INT. GEORGE'S OFFICE - DAY

George re-enters his office. Glenda has left.

GEORGE
Damn it.
INT. EMILY'S OFFICE - LATER

Emily's at her desk packing up for the day. She grabs a manila folder from her desk.

She walks to a coat rack by the door, takes her jacket, flicks off the light switch and enters the:

OFFICE CORRIDOR

Where a RUSH of air hits her. It blows the manila folder open causing its contents to spill into the air. The culprit - a large industrial stand-up FAN just outside George's office.

EMILY

What the...?

Emily scurries to gather the strewn contents of her folder. She then approaches the fan. There's a note taped to the frame. Emily pulls it off - reads it.

INSERT NOTE:

"Hope you don't mind the blow back of your skunk candle. With love, your biggest fan".

BACK ON EMILY

Emily looks for knob to turn off the fan. She finds only a silver stem. The knob's been removed.

Emily storms down the corridor.

EMILY

Okay, mister.

INT. RESIDENTIAL HOME/KITCHEN - DAY

Emily and Lauren prepare food at the center counter with their MOM (68), grace personified.

LAUREN

So, I've been telling Emily about this guy Tom knows - Salvador. He can't stop looking at Emily's picture.

MOM

That's nice.

EMILY

He's a drooler.
MOM
(To Emily)
So have you talked to this fella?
What's his name again?

EMILY
Saliva door.

LAUREN
Salvador.

MOM
Emily, it wouldn't be the worse thing in the world to have a nice dinner with a young man. Why don't you give it a shot?

EMILY
Because it's Lauren's idea. That never ends well.

LAUREN
Oh yeah? Seems to me that you took my advice the other night and George made you feel pretty --

EMILY
(sternly)
That was therapeutic. Not another word.

MOM
Who in the world is George?

LAUREN
Emily's new office neighbor.

Lauren goes to the kitchen window and peers out. She can see Madelyn on the swing set in the backyard.

LAUREN
One look at him and you would get moist.

MOM
That's not so nice.

EMILY
Ewwww - Good God, Lauren.

LAUREN
Oh come on. Have you had all the hormones extracted from your body?
EMILY
Yes, you found me out. I am in fact a sexual zombie. Sorry, Mom. I walk at night with the sexually dead.

LAUREN
Just saying.

MOM
Why can't we just have a nice conversation?

EMILY
She started it.

Emily sticks her tongue out at Lauren as she goes to the refrigerator and grabs three beers.

EMILY
I think it's time to chat with a different gender.

Emily exits out the back door.

EXT. BACKYARD - DAY

Madelyn swings on a swing set.

Emily's DAD, (68) with a bit of a beer belly works the barbecue. Tom, stands next to him. Emily approaches and hands them both a beer.

EMILY
Hey, guys, thought you could use one of these.

TOM
Perfect, thanks.

Dad gives Emily a kiss on the cheek.

DAD
Thanks, sweetie.

TOM
(To Emily)
Hey, I'm going to check to see if the game has started. Can you keep an eye on Maddie?

EMILY
Not a problem.

Tom starts back towards the house.
EMILY
If I were you, I would avoid the kitchen.

Tom looks back and winks at Emily and then enters the house. Dad opens the beer and takes a large gulp.

DAD
Ahh, perfect.

Emily opens her beer and takes a sip. She looks over and spots Madelyn going a bit too high on the swing.

EMILY
Careful, Madelyn - not too high. You'll hurt yourself.

Madelyn frowns as she slows down. Dad glances at the swing.

DAD
She's fine. You used to swing twice that high.
   (flipping a burger)
   So, you get tired of the girls already?

EMILY
Just taking a breather. I need to let them get through their Emily needs to move on blabber.

DAD
Yeah, they probably ought to let up on that.

EMILY
Right?

DAD
So how long has it been now since Peter died? More than four years ago - right?

EMILY
Why is everyone asking me that lately? Yeah, four years - almost four and a half.

DAD
Hmm.

EMILY
Just like Mom and Lauren. You think I haven't moved on, don't you?
DAD
I didn't say that.

EMILY
Well, what do you think?

DAD
I think that I have no idea what I would do if I lost your mother.

(beat)
Look, Lauren and your Mom think that you finding someone new, you know - would be good for ya. Even if that's not true, their hearts are in the right place.

EMILY
Yeah, I suppose. I just wish that they would understand why I can't.

DAD
Hmm.

EMILY
Again with the hmm. What?

DAD
Do you understand why you can't?

EMILY
You're losing me.

DAD
When I was ten, I had this paper route. One day I'm pedaling down the sidewalk and this dog comes out of nowhere and grabs my leg and drags me off the bike. Tore me up pretty good. I ended up with nineteen stitches.

EMILY
This isn't going to end with, once you learn to ride a bike you never forget, is it?

DAD
Let me finish. So anyway, there's no way I'm getting back on a bike. I gave up my paper route and pretty much just walked anywhere I needed to go.
DAD (CONT'D)
About a six months or so pass and a bunch of my friends were going to ride their bikes to the beach. I asked my Dad to drive me there and he said no. That if I wanted to go, I had to ride my bike. So, I cried and yelled and did that I hate you thing and locked myself in my room. Anyway, about an hour later he slips a note under my door.

(beat)
It said - one who fears to suffer, will always suffer from fear.

EMILY
So, did you start riding your bike again?

DAD
Yeah, eventually. I when I did I remember thinking, why in the hell did I waste all that time not riding it?

EMILY
And your point?

DAD
I don't know. Just seems to me that you have to figure out if you don't want to date anyone because you're still in pain, or if you're just afraid of feeling pain again. If it's the latter, well, my Pop would tell you that you need to hoist up your pants and take a chance.

(beat)
Anyway, that's what I think.

Dad pats down the burgers on the grill with a spatula.

DAD
Could you let your Mom know that the burgers are about done?

EMILY
When did you get so smart?

DAD
Well, if you asked your Mom, she would say the day I proposed.

Emily gives her Dad a kiss on the cheek.
EMILY
I love you.
(to Madelyn)
Madelyn, time to eat.

INT. EMILY'S HOUSE/MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Emily, in her pajamas, sits up in bed with a yellow high lighter clinched between her teeth as she reads a case file. She takes the high lighter and runs it over two lines on the page she's reading.

EMILY
You guys are going to make it.

Emily rubs her eyes and tosses the case folder aside. She grabs a TV remote and clicks on the television. She's disinterested the moment it comes on and clicks it off.

Emily opens the drawer on the nightstand and removes a wedding photo album. She opens it to a picture of her and Peter on their wedding day. She stares at it a moment.

She flips to a page where there is a large photo of her, Pete and her Mom and Dad.

EMILY
What do you think, Pete? Is Dad right?

Emily picks up her cell phone from the nightstand, scrolls through the contacts and hits the call button.

EMILY
(into the phone)
Hey, it's me...Look, go ahead and have Tom give Salvador my number.

Emily moves the phone away from her ear as a joyous YELP comes from Lauren. Emily puts the phone back to her ear.

EMILY
(into the phone)
But I want to start with a lunch. Dinner seems like it has too many romantic implications.

(listening)
Yes it does.
(listening)
Okay. We'll talk tomorrow.

Emily hangs up. She presses the photo of Pete against her lips, then gently closes the cover.
INT. OFFICE BUILDING CORRIDOR - DAY.

Emily locks her office door. The fan that George placed outside his office is blowing. As she sneers at it, she spots Nancy walking down the corridor.

EMILY
Nancy?

NANCY
Oh - uh, Emily. Hello - hello. How are you doing?

EMILY
I'm fine. I'm sorry, I'm on my way to lunch. I didn't have us down for an appointment. Did I make a mistake in calendering?

NANCY
No.

EMILY
I have an opening at three if that works for you.

NANCY
Well, this is a bit uncomfortable. Um, here's the thing. I'm not here to see you. I'm here to see...

Nancy points her finger over at George Nelson's office.

NANCY
Look, you were great - just great counseling. Really got in touch with those feelings - good stuff. But - um, I'm leaving Sam.

EMILY
Oh, I'm sorry to hear that.

NANCY
Oh God, don't be. You know, I was hoping that he would have had the decency just to take his own life. A woman can dream I suppose. Anyway, the little bastard is still on the planet so I thought why not suck the financial life out of him.
When we left your office the other day I saw Mr. Nelson's sign here and, well - long story short, I'm going to ask him to handle my divorce.

EMILY
I see.

NANCY
You're mad at me, aren't you?

EMILY
No, not at you.
(checking her watch)
I'm late for a lunch. I really got to go.

Emily starts to walk down the hall.

NANCY
(shouting)
Those feelings exercises were really good.

INT. RESTAURANT/Front LOBBY - DAY

Emily and a well dressed SALVADOR ZAVALA (35), thin mustache, thick dark hair combed straight back, approach the HOST.

HOST
Can I help you, Sir?

SALVADOR
Yes, you should have a reservation for two under Zavala.

HOST
Yes, indeed.

The Host gathers up two menus.

HOST
Right this way.

Salvador extends his hand back to Emily in an effort to escort her.

EMILY
It's a floor, not an ice rink. I can manage, thanks.

SALVADOR
Okay.
Salvador walks forward, rolling his eyes in a - what the hell did I get myself into - look. Emily, following behind lightly taps her forehead in a - what is wrong with me - gesture.

**INT. RESTAURANT - TABLE - DAY**

Emily and Salvador peer over menus, not speaking. The silence is uncomfortable.

**EMILY**
It's so dark in here, it's nearly impossible to read.

**SALVADOR**
Would you like me to order for both of us?

**EMILY**
No, thank you.

**SALVADOR**
I've been here many times before. I know what's good.

**EMILY**
I am sure that's true. That being said, you haven't been out with me before so you really couldn't have any idea what I like.

**SALVADOR**
I was just trying to be helpful.

**EMILY**
You're right. I don't know what's wrong with me. Well, I do. I'm having problems with this guy at work.

**SALVADOR**
I thought you worked alone.

**EMILY**
The guy that has the office next to me. Anyway, that's not important. (putting her menu aside) I'm sorry. All you have asked so far is to take my hand to escort me to a table and to order some food you think I would like. Both very nice gestures. And what do I do? I treat you like you were a nuisance. Please, accept my apology.
SALVADOR
Not a problem.

EMILY
Well, thank you. You order for the both of us.

SALVADOR
Excellent. I think you'll be quite pleased.

EMILY
Listen, would you mind terribly if I don't call you Salvador? It just sounds so, well - formal. Like I'm meeting someone at a United Nations meeting.
(with flair)
Emily Stanton, this is Ambassador Salvador Zavala. Is Sal okay?

SALVADOR
Well, actually, I prefer Salvador.

EMILY
Oh, sure - fine. Dumb request.

There is another long awkward pause in the conversation.

EMILY
So, Salvador it is.

SALVADOR
Yes, thank you.

Another awkward pause.

EMILY
So, how do you know Tom? Oh, never mind. You work with him. I already knew that. God, I forgot how hard it was just trying to make light conversation.

SALVADOR
I understand. Your sister said you might be a little nervous.

EMILY
(angry)
My sister?
SALVADOR
Maybe I wasn't supposed to share that.

EMILY
That little shit!

An embarrassed Salvador scans the restaurant to see if the other patrons can hear. Of course, they can.

EMILY
So she prepped you? Told you about Peter? Nice. Why do we even have to talk?

SALVADOR
Who's --?

A WAITER approaches the table.

WAITER
And, are we ready to order?

SALVADOR
Yes, we'll have the...

Emily's face is buried in her menu.

EMILY
I'm going to need a few minutes.

EXT. PARKING VALET BOOTH - LATER

Emily and Salvador approach the valet booth located just outside the restaurant. Salvador hands a parking voucher to an ATTENDANT.

ATTENDANT
Yes, Sir, we'll get that right away. Ma'am?

Emily searches her purse for her valet ticket.

EMILY
I know it's in here somewhere. (to the Attendant)
Go ahead, get his car.

ATTENDANT
(to Salvador)
Are you sure?

SALVADOR
Very.
The Attendant scurries off as Emily digs deeper in her purse.

EMILY
So, it was nice meeting you, Sal.

SALVADOR
It's Salvador.

EMILY
Yes, of course. Don't know why I have such a hard time with that - so silly. Anyway, I'm sorry I wasn't better company.

SALVADOR
Yeah, me too.

EMILY
Oh, you were fine.

SALVADOR
No, I meant I'm sorry you weren't better company.

The Attendant pulls up with Salvador's car, jumps out and holds open the driver side door. Salvador starts to walk to the car and then stops and turns towards Emily.

SALVADOR
You know, if you didn't want to go out with me, you really shouldn't have had Tom give me your number.

EMILY
It was that bad?

Salvador walks to the car and hands the Attendant a tip. Just before he enters the car, Emily pulls the valet ticket out of her purse.

EMILY
Hey, I found it.

SALVADOR
Yes, it was that bad.

Salvador drives off. Emily hands her ticket to the Attendant.

EMILY
I didn't think it was all that bad.
INT. UNDERGROUND PARKING GARAGE - DAY

Emily pulls into her parking space. The traffic cones are gone. George's car is once again parked too close.

EMILY
That does it.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING CORRIDOR - DAY

Emily, just outside George's closed office door, straightens out her blouse, takes a big breath and then barges into:

GEORGE'S OFFICE

George stand's behind his desk, clad only in underwear.

EMILY
Oh my God!

Startled, George hits the floor. Emily jerks around and faces the door.

GEORGE
What the fuck! Are you crazy?

George reaches his hand on top of the desk and pulls down a pair of sweat pants.

GEORGE
I could have had a heart attack.

EMILY
(her back still to George)
Me? You're standing naked in your office and I'm crazy?

George stands up, now wearing his sweat pants.

GEORGE
Yeah, Sybil. You are. I was going to the gym. I was just changing. I didn't expect a banshee to be bolting into my office.

EMILY
Well, have you put your pants on?

GEORGE
One leg at a time.

Emily turns around. George still doesn't have his shirt on revealing his well built upper torso.
Distracted by the appealing view, Emily swallows inadvertently. She then attempts to regain her anger.

(beat)
Oh for God's sake, put your shirt on.

George, staring sternly at Emily snaps his workout shirt from the top of the desk and quickly throws it on.

Better?

It's backwards.

Like you. Consider it an homage.

Fine. Where are they?

And what are they?

My cones. From the parking lot.

Ah, the traffic cones. John, the landlord, took them. He thought they were a parking hazard.

Where on earth would he get that idea?

From me.

You are so out of line, Mister. And, you stole my client.

What client?

George grabs a duffel bag next to his desk.

GEORGE
Crazy Nancy? I want to kill my husband Nancy? That's your client?

EMILY
Well, she was.

GEORGE
Wow, you did a hell of a job with her. Maybe you went a little too light on the meditation candles.

EMILY
She was still trying to work it out. And then she sees your door sign - and wala, screw it, I'll take the easy route. I knew that's why you moved in.

GEORGE
First, Nancy is not a client. I rejected her. Primarily because - and with no thanks to you - she's as crazy as a bat and I got plenty of sane clientele. And secondly --

EMILY
Don't call people crazy.

GEORGE
And secondly, where do you get off calling me a client stealer?

George's office phone RINGS. He picks up.

GEORGE
(loudly, rudely)
What?
(listening)
No - no, I'm sorry Mrs. Andrews. It's just that an insane person just burst in from the hallway.

George cups his hand over the receiver as he looks at Emily.

GEORGE
I have a real client I need to talk to.
(pointing at door)
If you don't mind.
EMILY
I want my cones back!

GEORGE
Anything you say, Sybil.

Emily SLAMS George's door behind her as she exits into the:

OFFICE BUILDING CORRIDOR

As Emily passes George'S FAN, the back of her skirt blows up from the breeze.

EMILY
I've had it!

Emily enters:

EMILY'S OFFICE

And marches to her desk and removes a pair of scissors. She storms back out to the:

OFFICE BUILDING CORRIDOR

And reaches down and pulls the fan plug out of the end of an extension cord originating from underneath George's office door. The fan stops running.

Emily takes the fan cord and cuts it in half with her scissors. She stuffs the snipped cord in her purse and storms down the corridor towards the elevator.

INT. UNDERGROUND PARKING GARAGE - DAY

Emily, angry and flustered approaches her car. As she removes her car keys from her purse, she drops them into a small open drain in the garage floor.

EMILY
Ah, geeez.

Emily gets on her knees and looks in the drain to see if she can see the keys - no luck.

Emily turns towards the elevator and screams just as John Hasbro is driving by in his car behind her.

EMILY
I hate you. You piece of --

JOHN
(from his car)
Emily, everything okay?
Emily turns around.

    EMILY
    (embarrassed)
    Um, yes. I dropped my keys in this drain. Why isn't it covered?

    JOHN
    Oh, I had to remove the cover. Plumbers are coming tomorrow to snake it. Maybe they'll find them. Although it's a pretty long pipe. You got a spare set?

    EMILY
    Not on me. I keep them at my Sisters.

    JOHN
    You want a ride there?

INT. OFFICE BUILDING CORRIDOR - DAY

George exits his office wearing gym clothes, duffel bag in hand. As he steps into the corridor he looks down and sees the snipped fan cord.

    GEORGE
    Nice volley, Ms. Stanton. The ball is apparently back in my court.

George removes his cell phone from his sweat pants, scrolls through his contacts and presses call.

    GEORGE
    Jacob, my man - George Nelson. Hey, I need a favor.

INT. LAUREN'S HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Emily sits on the sofa drinking a glass of wine.

    LAUREN (O.S.)
    I'll be down in a minute.

Emily finishes her wine and pours herself another glass, emptying the bottle. Lauren enters the room.

    LAUREN
    Whew, Madelyn's finally down. I put your spare key on the table by the front door.
EMILY
We need more wine.

LAUREN
Really?

Emily takes a large sip from her glass.

EMILY
Uh-huh.

Lauren exits the living room and heads toward the kitchen.

LAUREN (O.S.)
Merlot or Chardonnay?

EMILY
I don't care.

Lauren returns with a bottle of white wine, takes a seat and pours herself a glass and refills Emily's.

LAUREN
So tell me. How did it go with Salvador? Don't spare any details.

EMILY
Let's see. He was very nice and then I was an ass. Later on, he was nice again and I was an ass again. Oh, yeah - at the end of the date he was nice and I was - hmm - how to put it - ah, I was an ass.

LAUREN
Oh come on, it couldn't have been that bad.

EMILY
It was. And part of it's your fault you know.

LAUREN
My fault?

EMILY
Yep. Why did you tell him about Peter?

LAUREN
Peter?
EMILY
He said something like he understood how I felt because my sister said --

LAUREN
You might be a little nervous.

EMILY
Yes, exactly. Because of Peter.

LAUREN
No. Salvador called me before your date to see if there was a particular restaurant you liked. He really wanted to impress you. He said he was real nervous. I just told him, don't worry, you'd probably be a little nervous too. Was that so wrong?

Emily drinks down almost half her glass of wine.

EMILY
Ooops.

LAUREN
Well, maybe it'll go better the next time.

EMILY
Oh, I'm pretty sure there's not going to be a next time.

Lauren retrieves her cell phone from the coffee table. She starts tapping in a text.

EMILY
What are you doing?

LAUREN
I'm texting you Sal's number. He told Tom he wanted to see you again.

EMILY
Really?

LAUREN
(finishing text)
Yep. So, what do you think?
EMILY
I think Sal has pretty low standards.

Emily gulps her wine - pours herself another glass.

LAUREN
Slow down. You're not a camel.

EMILY
I'm entitled to a little numbness.

LAUREN
(empathetic)
Yeah, yeah you are, Sis. Change topics. Um - how's it going with your office neighbor. Any better?

Emily drinks more wine. She's getting way too tipsy.

EMILY
You won't believe it. The little bastard stole my traffic cones.

LAUREN
Why on earth do you have traffic cones?

EMILY
Because of the BMW, silly. Anyway, he stole my traffic cones and then he steals one of my clients.

LAUREN
How much wine have you had?

EMILY
But I got him back.

Emily reaches into her purse and pulls out the fan cord she had cut off.

EMILY
I snipped his cord.

Emily LAUGHS and SNORTS as she stares at the dangling cord.

EMILY
I gave him a fan-sectomy.

Emily falls back, giggling like a teenager.
LAUREN
I think you're staying here tonight.

EMILY
Get it? A fan-sectomy.

LAUREN
Yes, I got it the first time.

Emily starts to pour herself more wine and then stops.

EMILY
Oooh, I'm feeling a bit woozy.

Lauren gets up and grabs Emily's hand, pulling her up from the sofa.

LAUREN
Come on, let's get you to bed.

Lauren pulls Emily towards the stairs.

EMILY
He's such a dick. He does have a nice chest though.

LAUREN
You really are drunk.

INT. GEORGE'S OFFICE - DAY

George, at his desk. BETH, a very prim and proper fifty something, woman sits across from him.

GEORGE
The trust is in both your names so it should be relatively easy to get your half.

BETH
I want his half as well.

GEORGE
Of course you do.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Emily strides towards her office. As she passes George's closed door, the fan catches her eye. The circular frame containing the blades has been turned downwards. If it were a person, it would look like someone hanging their head.
Curious, Emily tilts the fan face up. Taped to the center of the frame is a crude drawing of a frowny face with the words: "I WAS MURDERED."

Emily smiles and moves on to her office. She turns the handle and pushes the door forward. But it opens just an inch and stops. Something is in the way.

**EMILY**

What...?

Emily leans heavily against the door giving it a few pushes but only manages to move it forward a foot. She puts her head through the small opening.

**EMILY'S POV**

Her office is jammed full with hundreds of traffic cones.

**EMILY**

Arrrrrrrrrggh!

**INT. GEORGE'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS**

Beth jolts from the scream.

**BETH**

What in the world was that?

**GEORGE**

Oh, it's just the marriage counselor next door. She uses scream therapy.

**BETH**

It sounds barbaric.

**GEORGE**

 Doesn't it?

**INT. EMILY'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS**

Emily clumsily makes her way to her desk through and over the mass of traffic cones. She picks up her office phone.

**EMILY**

(into phone)

John, I'm going to need some assistance.

(listening)

I'll explain when you get here.

Emily hangs up - surveys the cones in her office.
EMILY
What am I doing?

INT. EMILY'S OFFICE - LATER

Emily watches John Hasbro as he picks up and stacks the last of the TRAFFIC CONES. He places them on a work cart, filled with cones, manned by a WORKER just outside the door.

JOHN
(to the Worker)
That's the last of them. Take them to the warehouse. Oh - wait a sec.
(turning towards Emily)
Did you want to keep any for your parking space?

EMILY
No. Thanks. I'm good.

JOHN
Okay dokay.

The Worker pulls the cart away. John follows him. Emily closes the door and returns to her desk.

INT. OFFICE CORRIDOR - END OF DAY

George exits his office, briefcase in hand. As he locks his door, he glances to his right and sees light from underneath Emily's closed office door poor into the corridor.

EMILY'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Emily, at her desk, nibbles on a hang nail as she stares at her cell phone.

She glances at the picture of Peter on her desk.

Her eyes focus on back the cell phone as she drums her fingers on the desk top.

EMILY
Just do it.

OFFICE CORRIDOR- CONTINUOUS

George's fist hovers over Emily's door, ready to knock. He hesitates for moment, then shakes his head and walks away.

EMILY'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Emily picks up her cell phone, taps in a number and puts the phone to her ear.
EMILY
(into phone)
Hey, um - Sal. It's Emily.
(rolling her eyes)
Salvador. Yes, of course.

INT. ITALIAN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

A romantic setting crowded with patrons. Emily and Salvador, dressed to the nines, sit in a corner booth.

Salvador talks. He's energetic and engaged. Emily sips wine, occasionally shooting a polite smile as she listens. But we can tell she's bored out of her mind.

INT. SPORTS BAR - CONTINUOUS

George and Mike at a table enjoying beer and chicken wings. Mike wipes the chicken wing sauce off his mouth and slides a folder across the table toward George.

MIKE
Her name's Sharon Lewis. There's a pending charge against her husband. The usual restraining orders and that type of stuff. She got beaten pretty badly the last time - three days in the hospital. And of course, she's flat broke. Can you take this one?

GEORGE
Of course. Just tell her to give me a call.

MIKE
Hey, before I forget, I finally remembered where I heard the name of that office neighbor of yours.

GEORGE
I'm listening.

MIKE
So a little more than four years ago, I'm prosecuting this assault case. We're all ready for opening arguments but this one juror doesn't show up. Judge Walker gets all pissed and everything and he issues a bench warrant for this guy.
Anyway, I get home that night and turn on the news and the first story is about this man that drowned over the weekend trying to rescue some swimmer. Turns out the rescuer is our juror - Peter Stanton.

GEORGE
So they have the same last name. That doesn't mean --

MIKE
Let me finish. So fast forward four weeks. I'm sitting in Judge Walker's chambers. His Clerk brings this gal in. She's got the bench warrant he had issued for Peter Stanton in her hand. Seems that she had waited all day to see the Judge because she wanted to be certain that Peter's name was cleared. She was very determined. Her name was Emily. Blonde hair, real pretty - probably thirty-five or so now. That's what you said - right?

George takes a long sip of beer.

EXT. ITALIAN RESTAURANT/PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Salvador escorts Emily towards her car. Emily removes a remote from her purse and points it - BEEP BEEP.

They reach Emily's car. Salvador opens her door.

SALVADOR
So, that went much better - yes?

EMILY
It was delightful. Thank you.

Salvador moves forward to give Emily a kiss. Emily turns her head to make sure it lands on her cheek rather than her lips.

INT/EXT. EMILY'S MUSTANG/FREeway - (TRAVELING) - NIGHT

The lights from the oncoming traffic bounce off Emily's face. Tears trickle down her cheek as she listens to a heart break love song playing on the radio.

Emily snaps out of it - turns off the radio.
EMILY
What is wrong with you?

Emily takes a deep breath. Okay, got her bearings straight now. She opens the center console to retrieve a tissue. Next to the tissue box is a car-sized bottle of Febreze air freshener. It catches Emily's attention.

EMILY
No.

Emily clicks her tongue - contemplates. A wry smile appears.

EMILY
Yes.

EXT. TARGET STORE/PARKING LOT - NIGHT

It's near closing. There are only a few cars in the lot. Emily, carrying two plastic store bags, approaches her car.

INT. OFFICE LOBBY - NIGHT

Emily, holding the two plastic store bags, receives a door key from a far too old SECURITY GUARD.

EMILY
Thanks. You're a life saver. So forgetful of me to leave my key at home.

SECURITY GUARD
Don't lose it. It's the master.

EMILY
(as she heads to elevator)
I won't.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Emily, with the gait and posture of a soldier, marches down the corridor. She reaches George's office door, inserts the master key and opens it.

Emily gets on her knees and spills the contents of the plastic bags on the carpet. There are four large spray bottles of Febreze fruity AIR FRESHENER, a BATH TOWEL and several ZIP TIES.

Emily picks up a Febreze bottle and places a zip tie around the neck of the bottle and the squeeze trigger. She firmly pulls the end of the zip tie causing the Febreze squeeze trigger to engage. The nozzle emits a continuous spray.
Emily tosses the bottle into the office as if it was a tear gas canister.

**EMILY'S POV - GEORGE'S OFFICE**

The Febreze bottle bounces up against the corner of the room, a continuous plume of fruity fragrance emitting into the air.

**BACK ON EMILY**

EMILY

Perfect.

Emily grabs the next bottle, pulls the zip tie tight and tosses the bottle into the office.

**EMILY'S POV - GEORGE'S OFFICE**

Another bottle hits the floor and bounces up against George's desk, the spray emitting into the air.

Moments later a third bottle hits the trash can.

The fourth bottle rolls into the other corner of the office. The office fills with a misty cloud of Fruity Febreze.

**BACK ON EMILY**

Emily, still on one knee reaches up to the door handle and pulls the door shut. She takes the bath towel and crams it into the small air space beneath the door.

**INT. OFFICE LOBBY - NIGHT**

Emily, with a cell phone to her ear and a smile on her face, approaches the Security Guard. She hands him the key.

**EMILY**

(mouthing)

Thank you.

Then heads towards the exit door.

**EMILY**

(into cell phone)

No, it turned out to be a pretty good night after all.

(listening)

Yeah, love you too, Sis.

**INT. UNDERGROUND PARKING GARAGE - THE NEXT MORNING**

Emily waits outside the parking garage elevator. The door opens and she enters the:
**ELEVATOR**

Presses a floor button and waits. She spots George coming and frantically presses the CLOSE DOOR button.

Just as the doors are about to close, George sticks his briefcase between them. They bounce open and he enters.

GEORGE  
(sarcastically)  
Thanks for holding it.

The doors close and the elevator starts upward. After rising two floors, the lights flicker and then go out. The elevator jerks to a halt.

EMILY  
No.

GEORGE  
I'm sure it'll be back on in a minute.

An emergency light activates. Emily and George move to the opposite back corners. They don't talk for a few moments. George starts to whistle the military taps.

EMILY  
Please don't. I'll pay you to stop.

Emily points to the emergency call box on George's side of the elevator.

GEORGE  
Just trying to lighten things up.

EMILY  
Why don't you try that?

George nods, walks to the emergency call button and presses it. A crackling, buzzing sound is heard.

GEORGE  
Hello, anyone there?

JOHN (V.O.)  
Yeah, this is John Hasbro. Who am I talking to?

GEORGE  
Hey, John - it's George Nelson. Looks like the power went out. I'm stuck in the elevator.
JOHN (V.O.)
Oh Fuck.

GEORGE
Need to watch the language, John. I've got a lady in here with me. Well, kind of - it's Emily Stanton.

Emily sneers at George.

JOHN (V.O.)
You guys hold tight. The whole block is down. Some guy ran into a power pole with his car. We're supposed to have an emergency generator. I was on my way down to the basement to see why it didn't kick on. I'm sure you'll be out in no time. I'll buzz back in twenty.

GEORGE
Got it.

Emily removes her cell phone from her purse. George removes his from his suit coat. They both punch their call buttons.

EMILY
I'm not getting any reception. What about you?

GEORGE
None.

They both put their phones away - stare at the walls.

ELEVATOR - TWENTY MINUTES LATER

The elevator speaker crackles.

JOHN (V.O.)
Can you guys hear me?

EMILY
Finally.

GEORGE
We hear you, John. What's the scoop?

JOHN (V.O.)
Well, there's bad news and there's worse news. What do you want first?
GEORGE
Surprise me.

JOHN (V.O.)
Well, the generator's fried. It's pretty much toast.

EMILY
Please, let that be the worse news.

JOHN (V.O.)
I've been told by the City that they'll be able to restore power --

EMILY
Yes!

JOHN (V.O.)
In about four hours.

EMILY
No!

JOHN (V.O.)
Or so.

ELEVATOR – THIRTY MINUTES LATER

Emily and George sit down at opposite sides of the elevator floor. They both use their suit jackets as pillows against the elevator wall.

George has his briefcase propped up on his knees and he is reading a case file.

Emily has her cell phone out and is repeatedly pressing the call button and putting the phone up to her ear.

GEORGE
Don't know why you're wasting your time with that. It's not going to work.

EMILY
You never know. What are you reading?

George doesn't look up and instead keeps his focus on the case file.

GEORGE
A case file.
EMILY
A future wealthy divorcee?

GEORGE
No, a currently broke woman. In more ways than one.

EMILY
What do you mean?

George closes the file.

GEORGE
It's a pro bono case.

EMILY
(sarcastically)
Right.

GEORGE
Why did you ask if you're not --

EMILY
I'm sorry, go ahead.

GEORGE
I have a good friend who's also a District Attorney - Mike McCarthy.

EMILY
That's surprising.

GEORGE
Why? I know all sorts of attorneys.

EMILY
No, that you have a friend.

George goes back to reading the file.

GEORGE
Suit yourself.

EMILY
I was kidding. What happened to your love of sarcastic repartee? So, Mike, your friend...?

GEORGE
He works in the D.A.'s domestic violence unit.
GEORGE (CONT'D)
Every so often he runs across a victim who wants to divorce the bastard that's beating her, but she can't afford a divorce lawyer - you know, she's trapped. Mike's one of these rugged-looking guys with a soft heart. So, he asks me to take the cases.

EMILY
For free?

GEORGE
Yeah.

There is an awkward silence.

GEORGE
What?

EMILY
I'm just surprised is all. That's real nice of you. I admire that. It means that there's hope for you.

GEORGE
You really have a way with compliments.

EMILY
I said there was hope.

GEORGE
Look, I'm sorry about the traffic cones. That was a little overboard.

EMILY
Speaking of which, how did you get so many?

GEORGE
One of my clients is the largest road construction contractor in the State.

EMILY
Well played.

GEORGE
And?

EMILY
And what?
GEORGE
Don't you want to apologize to me?

EMILY
No.

GEORGE
Oh come on. I apologized for the cones. Don't you think you at least owe me an apology for accusing me of stealing your client?

EMILY
No.

GEORGE
What about the skunk candle?

EMILY
Nope, that was actually a real meditation candle.

GEORGE
What about destroying my fan?

Emily considers this.

GEORGE
You know I could have pressed criminal charges?

EMILY
For what?

GEORGE
Fan - dalism.

Emily lets out a laugh.

ELEVATOR - AN HOUR LATER

Emily and George are still in their respective corners.

EMILY
...So my sister sets me up on this lunch date.

GEORGE
God, I hate being set. Why is it that everyone thinks somehow the only thing standing between you and eternal happiness is their personal attention to the matter.
EMILY
So, you're single?

GEORGE
Let's stay with your story. You were saying?

EMILY
Anyway, she sets me up on a date with this guy named Salvador.

GEORGE
Salvador? What, was he a bull fighter? I think I would just go with Sal.

EMILY
Right? That's what I thought.

GEORGE
It's obvious.

EMILY
Anyway, it did not go well. He was a nice enough guy. Believe it or not, I was about as rude as a person could be.

GEORGE
I can believe it.
(beat)
Sorry. Go on.

EMILY
We went out again last night.
(a pause)
It was better.

GEORGE
So you'll see him again?

Emily turns her head away.

EMILY
I don't know if better is good enough.

George nods. The emergency call speaker CRACKLES.

JOHN (V.O.)
George, Emily - can you hear me?

EMILY
Oh thank God.
Emily bolts up and goes to the call box.

EMILY
This is Emily. Is it fixed?

JOHN (V.O.)
Good news. It should only be about another hour.

EMILY
(yelling)
That's not good news. How can you say you got good news and tell us we're still trapped for an hour? That's bad news.

GEORGE
I'm sure he's trying everything he can.

EMILY
But you agree that it's not good news?

JOHN (V.O.)
I'll check back when I get more information.

GEORGE
Thanks, John.

Emily returns to her corner slumps back down to a sitting position. Just as she does the emergency light goes out. The elevator car is in complete darkness.

EMILY
(panicked)
What happened?

GEORGE
The emergency light is on battery power. I'm guessing that it just ran out of juice.

EMILY
How can that happen? Don't they check these things?

GEORGE
They're supposed to. I'm guessing it's the same guy who took care of the generator.
George removes his Smart Phone from his briefcase and presses the flashlight icon. He places the phone on the floor giving the elevator car a dim glow.

GEORGE
Better than nothing.

EMILY
Thank you.

ELEVATOR - THIRTY MINUTES LATER

Emily and George still in their corners. The elevator is dark other than the glow of light from George's phone.

EMILY
...I don't know. I've just found that the more handsome the man, the less character he possesses. I think most women share that experience.
(beat)
No offense.

GEORGE
I'm not sure what to say. Are you saying I'm handsome or that I lack character?

EMILY
Well, both.

GEORGE
Well then - offense taken, and thank you.
(beat)
You know, men don't feel that way about women. They don't think a woman's look has anything to do with what kind of person she is.

EMILY
Please. A man stops thinking altogether the minute he sees an attractive woman.

GEORGE
That's not fair.

Emily laughs.

EMILY
Right. Any woman would tell you that it's not fair.
GEORGE
There's something I've been meaning to ask you?

Emily shoots George a suspicious look.

EMILY
And?

GEORGE
Why did you go home with me that night?

There is an awkward pause.

EMILY
Physical therapy.

GEORGE
What?

EMILY
You ever hear of a sexercism?

GEORGE
Thankfully, no.

EMILY
My husband died several years ago.

GEORGE
I'm sorry to hear --

EMILY
I wasn't looking for sympathy.

GEORGE
Okay, I will try to listen without empathy.

Emily rolls her eyes.

GEORGE
Go on.

EMILY
Anyway, I hadn't really been out in a long time. Some people thought I might be depressed, or maybe just afraid of - you know, moving on. Not that I was of course.

GEORGE
Of course.
Anyway, I was advised that a reckless night with a stranger may be the jolt I needed. That's where you came in.

GEORGE
(feigning hurt)
I feel so used.

EMILY
Please.
(beat)
Well, in a way I guess you were. Anyway, you kind of screwed it up. You were supposed to remain a complete stranger.

GEORGE
Look, I never planned for that --

EMILY
Okay, your turn.

GEORGE
What do you want to know?

EMILY
Why are you such a dog?

GEORGE
That's a bit unfair.

EMILY
Really? Because as a professional in the relationship business I think I have a pretty good read on these things.

GEORGE
Well, you're wrong.

EMILY
Am I? Let me see your phone.

GEORGE
What on earth for?

EMILY
Diagnostics. C'mon – let me see it.

GEORGE
Suit yourself.
The light from the phone twirls as George slides his phone across the elevator floor to Emily.

Emily grabs the phone, turns it over and taps the screen bringing up George's photos. She slides her finger over the phone moving from picture to picture.

   EMILY
   Just as I thought.
   
   GEORGE
   What?
   
   EMILY
   You have no pictures of loved ones, no girlfriend, no wife, no kids.
   
   GEORGE
   Maybe I'm just not a picture taker.
   
   EMILY
   Or, maybe you don't have any loved ones because - you know, you're a dog. How many women have you slept with in the last year?
   
   GEORGE
   Not counting therapy?
   
   EMILY
   I will throw this phone at you. Now, how many?
   
   GEORGE
   I can't say.
   
   EMILY
   Oh, come on. We've been sharing.
   
   GEORGE
   No, I mean I really don't know.
   
   EMILY
   You don't know because there have been so many or you don't know because you have a horrible memory.
   
   GEORGE
   The first one.
   
   EMILY
   So, you are a dog.
GEORGE
It would seem so.

EMILY
Okay, so why? Why haven't you ever fallen in love? Why haven't you married?

GEORGE
I'm jaded. Can we move on?

EMILY
Oooh, a soft spot. Details please.

GEORGE
No.

EMILY
That's not fair. I've shared.

GEORGE
Fine. I was engaged once.

EMILY
Oooh, interesting.

GEORGE
Sophia was her name. I was unlucky in an odd way. I happened to meet and fall in love with someone I thought was the best person on the planet. And then, she was gone.

EMILY
Oh my God. She died?

GEORGE
No, she fucking left me at the altar.

EMILY
Ouch.

GEORGE
Sorry for the language. This story really doesn't bring out the best in me.

EMILY
Don't worry. I'm already used to the worst in you.

GEORGE
Nice.
EMILY
You're right - sorry. Go on.

GEORGE
Anyway, so I got my little heart broken. But eventually I pulled my big boy pants up and spent day and night studying to get through law school. Then I started building a practice. I really didn't have much time then to start a relationship.

EMILY
But you had time to sleep with women.

GEORGE
It doesn't take all that much time. Do you want the rest of the story or not?

EMILY
Please.

GEORGE
Anyway, all of a sudden I'm spending ten hours a day dealing with wrecked marriages.

EMILY
Like I do.

GEORGE
No, not like you do. You deal with couples that can see the iceberg. They're asking you which way to steer the ship. I deal with couples that are already in the water.

EMILY
Fair enough.

GEORGE
After fifteen years of it, I gave up on the concept of true romance or soulmates or whatever term is used now a days to describe your one and only. That's what I mean by I'm jaded. I've just seen too many couples in the water.
ELEVATOR – THIRTY MINUTES LATER

The phone battery is dying. The light is dimmer. Emily and George still sit in their corners.

EMILY
....So, now it's been more than four years since Peter died. You would think that those years would pass by slowly. It seems more like a wink. I miss him.
(clearing her throat)
Give me a moment.

Emily struggles not to cry. George just watches, captured by the moment.

EMILY
There is some truth in the phrase your one and only. You know?

George nods.

EMILY
Peter was my mine. I really don't think you get another. And I'm perfectly okay with that. I'm not sad or angry. Not at all. I just haven't found a reason to...

GEORGE
Move on?

EMILY
No. It's not that. Look, I have a great career - a family that I love. I'm living in the present. It's just that starting another relationship seems so pointless.

GEORGE
Pointless?

EMILY
Yes, pointless. I can't imagine starting a relationship with someone when I already know that they won't compare to Peter. That I'm never going to take his pictures down. That I'm never going to stop telling stories about things we did together. That I am never going to consider him second.
How could I expect anyone to live with that?

GEORGE
Maybe someone would.

EMILY
I don't think so.

(beat)
Who knows? Maybe I'm just waiting for some grand gesture - some sign telling me it's time. Maybe I'm more damaged than I thought.

GEORGE
Who wouldn't be? Losing someone all of a sudden like that. But you got to take solace in the fact that he died trying to save someone.

The elevator lights go back on and the car starts moving. Emily gathers her things and heads for the front of the elevator car, her back turned to George. George stands up.

GEORGE
What is it?

EMILY
How do you know how Peter died? I never mentioned that.

GEORGE
Ah, shit.

EMILY
(shouting)
How did you know?

GEORGE
Mike, my friend - the one I told you about. Peter was a juror on one of his trials. We were having a drink and I happened to mention your name.

EMILY
Why would you mention my name to him?

GEORGE
Because you were being a bitch and I was venting.

(beat)
Oh, Christ. That's not what I mean.
The elevator reaches the third floor and the doors open. Emily moves forward and then turns towards George.

    EMILY
    There wasn’t a moment in the four hours we were trapped in here that you couldn’t have mentioned that you already knew about Peter? Maybe before I spilled my guts? Were you seeing if my details were going to match up with what your District Attorney friend told you?

    GEORGE
    Emily.

    EMILY
    It’s a shame. You’re exactly who I thought you were.

Emily storms out.

**INT. OFFICE BUILDING CORRIDOR - DAY**

George follows Emily as she walks rapidly to her office.

    GEORGE
    You got to believe me.

Emily enters her office and slams the door behind her.

    GEORGE
    Oh, c’mon.

George looks down at the bottom of his office door and sees the towels that Emily had crammed in the night before.

    GEORGE
    What?

He removes the towels and enters:

**GEORGE’S OFFICE**

And is instantly overwhelmed by a cloud of Fruity Febreze.

    GEORGE
    Good God!

George frantically waves his arms in an attempt to clear the air. Realizing the effort is hopeless, he stretches to reach his briefcase on his desk.

He finally grabs it and then exits into the:
OFFICE BUILDING CORRIDOR

And slams his door shut.

GEORGE
(yelling at Emily's closed door)
That could have killed me. Hey!

INT. EMILY'S OFFICE - DAY

Emily at her desk, her face buried in her hands.

EMILY
(hearing George's tantrum)
Ass wipe.

Emily gathers herself, grabs a case file and starts reading.

INT. GEORGE'S HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A large house with a large living room - very sterile looking, white painted walls, no pictures or no art.

George, still in his business suit, sits on the sofa with his feet propped up on a coffee table as he eats from a large bucket of chicken legs. A basketball game is on the television. There's a KNOCK on the door.

GEORGE
(shouting)
Come on in, Mike.

The door opens and Mike enters.

MIKE
Did I miss anything?

GEORGE
Not much. Grab us a couple of beers.

Mike heads off to the kitchen and returns with two beers. He takes a seat on the couch, opens both the beers and hands one to George. Mike sniffs the air.

MIKE
Are you wearing perfume?

GEORGE
It's Febreze.
MIKE
I think you over did it.
What's the score?

George slides the bucket of chicken towards Mike. Mike grabs a leg. They both focus on the silent television as they talk.

GEORGE
We're down by six.

MIKE
It's still early. How was the day?

GEORGE
I spent nearly four hours trapped in an elevator with Emily Stanton.

MIKE
No way. What happened?

GEORGE
Power outage.

MIKE
And?

GEORGE
And, all in all, we were pretty much forced to talk to each other. You know, there wasn't any escape available.

MIKE
That must have been awkward. I mean, given how shitty you are at making small talk.

GEORGE
I can make small talk.

MIKE
Believe me, you suck at it.

GEORGE
Well, as it turns out I ain't that good at large talk either. Anyway, amazingly it wasn't awkward. I liked talking to her. In an odd way, being trapped was kind of liberating. You know what I mean?

MIKE
Nope - haven't got a clue.
GEORGE
It was the first meaningful
conversation I've had with a woman
in a long time.

MIKE
That's because you're a dog.

GEORGE
People keep telling me that.

MIKE
So what's so different about this
Emily gal?

GEORGE
I don't know, Mike. She's got a
real spirit about her - a fire in
her belly. I mean she vandalized my
car and my fan. She air bombed my
office.

MIKE
What in the hell are you talking
about?

GEORGE
Her intensity. I find it
attractive. And with all that,
she's got a real soft side too.
Anyway, It doesn't matter.

MIKE
Because you're still a dog?

GEORGE
No, because I screwed it up.

MIKE
How so?

GEORGE
I inadvertently told her that I
knew about how her husband died.
You know, what you told me. She
thought that I was hiding it from
her for some reason. Like there's a
reason for me to do that.

MIKE
What an idiot.

GEORGE
Don't be so harsh on her.
MIKE
No, I meant you. What an idiot.

GEORGE
Oh.

MIKE
I mean, that was really stupid.

GEORGE
Yeah, point taken.

MIKE
(yelling at the T.V.)
God damn it, that's a foul.

George scans his white, barren walls.

GEORGE
You know, I don't have a single picture of anyone on my walls.

MIKE
Yeah, I've noticed that. It's actually kind of spooky.
(taking a bite of chicken) Reminds me of serial killers.

GEORGE
What?

MIKE
When they're caught, more often than not they don't have any pictures of loved ones up in their homes. You know, because they're sociopaths.

GEORGE
Hmm.

MIKE
But I don't think you're a serial killer.

GEORGE
Well, thanks for that.

MIKE
But I haven't ruled out sociopath. So, what are you going to do about Ms. Stanton?
(yelling at the TV) ) Christ - another bad call.
GEORGE
I haven't a clue.

INT. EMILY'S OFFICE - DAY

Emily's in her chair. A pensive YOUNG WOMAN sits on the sofa.

EMILY
Let's talk about your emotional needs.

INT. GEORGE'S OFFICE - DAY

George's in his chair with a legal pad in his hand. A confident MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN sits in a chair across from him.

GEORGE
Let's talk about your financial needs.

INTERCUT BETWEEN EMILY'S OFFICE AND GEORGE'S OFFICE

YOUNG WOMAN
I'm just not sure the last time we had a real conversation.

MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN
We stopped talking years ago.

YOUNG WOMAN
I think he is losing interest in me.

MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN
I finally lost interest in him.

YOUNG WOMAN
He won't tell me what's going on in his mind.

MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN
Not that he ever had anything interesting to say.

YOUNG WOMAN
I just want him to love me again.

MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN
I just want him to pay.

INT. EMILY'S OFFICE - DAY

EMILY
I think I can help.
INT. GEORGE'S OFFICE - DAY

GEORGE
I think I can help.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING CORRIDOR - LATER

George and Emily leave their offices and enter the corridor at the same time. Awkward stares from both of them.

GEORGE
I see you had a long day too.

EMILY
I am sure our days had absolutely nothing in common, Mr. Nelson.

GEORGE
So, we're back to stage one?

EMILY
Would you mind terribly if you waited to get on the elevator until after I get off it? You know, just in case of any malfunctions.

GEORGE
Well, it's the least I can do. After all, you're busy all day in your office creating future clients for me.

Emily just nods and walks away.

EMILY
(to herself)
Ass.

GEORGE
(to himself)
What is it about her?

INT. FITNESS CENTER - DAY

Several people are working out throughout the fitness center.

TREADMILL AREA

Emily and Lauren, dressed in workout clothes are on adjacent treadmills. Emily jogs and has no problem keeping a rapid pace.

Lauren walks at a much slower pace but despite that, sweat pours down her face as if she had just finished a marathon.
...I mean, what kind of man would be snooping into people's background like that? And then he has the nerve to talk to me yesterday - like nothing happened.

Lauren stops and gets off her treadmill, grabs a towel and wipes the sweat from her face.

LAUREN
You know you've been talking about him since we got here.

Emily stops her treadmill - grabs a towel.

EMILY
If it bothered you, why didn't you say anything?

LAUREN
Because unlike you, I can't carry on a conversation while my lungs are exploding.
(taking a big breath)
Jesus, my heart's beating like a hummingbird.

EMILY
I'm sorry I went on and on. He's just such an ass. But, not another word. I promise.

Lauren puts her finger to her neck to check her pulse.

LAUREN
I think I'm stroking out. You had me doing too much, too soon.

EMILY
You were on level one. The only other option is stationary. Look, you're just a little out of shape.

LAUREN
Yeah, like you're out of circulation.

EMILY
Well, I'm going to be working on that. Maybe not with Sal, but --

LAUREN
No you won't.
EMILY
Yes I will.

Lauren looks towards the:

WEIGHT ROOM AREA

Where BILL (30s), fit and firm, has just finished his workout.

TREADMILL AREA

LAUREN
Okay, I'll take you up on that.
(nodding towards room)
See that guy?

EMILY
Yes.

LAUREN
He's been stealing glances at you the entire time you were here.

EMILY
No he hasn't. I would have noticed.

LAUREN
Well, you didn't. You were consumed with whining about George. Tell you what. I need another towel. They're over there by him. Why don't you saunter over, grab us a couple of towels and make a little small talk while you're at it.

EMILY
(pointing at a towel bin)
But there are towels right here.

LAUREN
Oh God, that's not the point. Go! And grab me some water while you're at it. I'm dying here.

EMILY
Fine.

Emily pulls her hair back and forms a ponytail.

EMILY
Towels and water?
That would be lovely.

Emily takes a fortifying breath, turns and walks towards the:

**WEIGHT ROOM AREA**

Where she immediately catches Bill's eye.

**BILL**
Good morning.

**EMILY**
Oh, good morning. Just - um - getting some towels and water.

Emily goes to the towel bin and finds it empty.

**BILL**
It may be a minute before you get those. They emptied the bin ten minutes ago. Clean ones should be here any sec.

**EMILY**
Oh, thank you. That was very helpful.

Emily goes to the water cooler and fills a paper cup.

**BILL**
I don't mean to be awkward. I know that people don't like to be - well, introduced at a fitness center of all places.

Emily turns around and faces Bill.

**BILL**
I'm Bill - Bill Lowenstein.

**EMILY**
Oh, nice to meet you.

There is a very awkward pause.

**BILL**
Do you have a name?

**EMILY**
Yes.

**BILL**
And?
EMILY
Oh, I see. So silly of me. You were asking for my name.
(beat)
It's - um, Lauren.

BILL
That's a very pretty name. Were you named after someone?

EMILY
I was named after my sister.

BILL
I'm confused. Your sister and you have the same name?

EMILY
Oh - um, no. Of course not. I mean I was, um - named after my sister as in my parents named my sister first and then they named me.

Bill looks at Emily with a look of total confusion on his face. Red-faced with embarrassment, Emily hands him the cup of water.

EMILY
Please, have some water on me.

Emily walks away flustered and embarrassed.

BILL
(calling out)
I already have a water bottle.

Emily arrives back at the:

TREADMILL AREA

Lauren sits against the wall, her hand on her chest as if she had a heart attack.

EMILY
Get up. Let's go.

LAUREN
What about my water?

EMILY
I blew it. Please just get up and start walking.

Emily walks away, frantically waving for Lauren to follow.
EXT. DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES STREET - DAY

Two fire trucks are parked on the street adjacent to Emily's office building. Several people, including George, stand on the sidewalk looking up at the building. Emily approaches.

   EMILY
   What's going on?

   GEORGE
   Seems that there was a small fire. They're just going through the building now to make sure everything is okay.

   EMILY
   A fire? Where?

   GEORGE
   Third floor. There isn't any chance that you forgot to blow out one of your meditation candles is there?

Emily grimaces as the possibility hits her.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING CORRIDOR - DAY

Emily walks briskly down the corridor towards her office. George trails just behind her. A fireman exits Emily's office and passes them in the corridor.

INT. EMILY'S OFFICE - DAY

John Hasbro inspects the office. The drapes above a table where Emily's candle sat have been burnt almost to the top. The ceilings are blackened with smoke damage and everything in the office is totally soaked from the fire sprinklers.

Emily and George enter.

   EMILY
   Oh my God.

   JOHN
   Yeah, it's pretty much a total loss. Thankfully, all the damage was contained to your office.

Emily walks around the office picking up soaked case files. They are disintegrating in her hand. She goes to her desk and reaches for the power button on her computer.

   GEORGE
   I wouldn't do --
Emily hits the button. There is an electrical POP.

GEORGE

That.

EMILY

Everything is ruined.

Emily surveys the office.

EMILY

I'm so sorry, John. Please forgive me.

JOHN

For what?

Emily points at the wall.

EMILY

I'm pretty sure that this is all my fault.

GEORGE

You don't know that for sure.

EMILY

(pointing)

There was a candle there.

JOHN

Hmm. Don't worry. The insurance pays either way.

EMILY

But it was so stupid of me. What can I do to help?

JOHN

Nothing really.

(scanning the room)

It's going to take me a good month, maybe more, to restore this place. Paint, drapes, carpeting. Not to mention that all of the electrical has to be inspected.

(beat)

I don't have any vacancies, Emily.

EMILY

Meaning?
JOHN
Meaning that you're going to need to find another place for awhile.

EMILY
All my clients are local. I'll lose them by the time I find and move into another space.

JOHN
I'm sure you'll be fine.

EMILY
I'm not. It's not like you can ask people in counseling just to put everything on hold for a month. They'll go somewhere else.

JOHN
I don't know what to tell you. I have nothing to offer.

EMILY
You've already forgiven me for this mess. That's more than I deserve.

JOHN
Look, not necessarily today, but sometime soon I'm going to need you to go through and figure out what is salvageable - what you want to take. We'll be gutting the place on Monday. Okay?

EMILY
Yeah, I understand. Thanks.

JOHN
I got to start making some phone calls.
(to George)
There's going to be quite a bit of noise up here for a few weeks.

GEORGE
Sure, not a problem.

John exits. Emily looks at the corner of her desk. The picture of her and Peter has been completely ruined - nearly unrecognizable. Emily falls back into her desk chair.

George walks over puts his hand on her shoulder.
GEORGE
It'll be okay.

Emily buries her face in her hands and SOBs.

George looks around the office having no clue on what to do.

Emily takes a deep breath and looks up at George. Her mascara has run down both sides of her face. George points at it.

GEORGE
You may want to check a mirror.

EMILY
What?

George makes a motion at his own cheek mimicking where Emily's mascara has run.

GEORGE
You know, sometimes when women cry the make-up can get - well, you know - streaky I guess would be the right term.

EMILY
I have clown face?

GEORGE
It would seem so.

Emily looks at the table where the candle sat and examines the blackened walls.

EMILY
Good God, it smells in here.

GEORGE
It certainly does. You know what would really come in handy now?

EMILY
A fan.

GEORGE
Yep. I had one but...

EMILY
You'll go get me another one?

GEORGE
Yes - sure. I'll be back in a little bit.
George exits.

EMILY  
(to herself)  
Buck up girl. You've survived much worse.

Emily stands up and immediately reaches her hand to the back of her dress. It has been soaked from the water on the chair. There is a large stain.

EMILY  
Ah- geeeeez!

INT. EMILY'S HOUSE/KITCHEN - NIGHT

Emily sits at the kitchen table with a cell phone to her ear. There's a steno pad in front of her with a list of her client names. Several of them have been crossed off.

EMILY  
(Into the phone)  
No, I haven't been able to find a place yet, but I promise I'm working on it.  
(listening)  
No, I completely understand. Yes, he's a very good counselor.  
(listening)  
Thank you. Again, sorry for calling so late.

Emily crosses a name off the client list.

Emily's house phone RINGS. The answering machine picks up.

LAUREN (V.O.)  
Emily, where are you? I've tried your cell but you're not picking up. You're starting to get us worried. Hello? Are you there? Okay, guess I'll see you in the morning. Love you. Call me.

Emily scrolls through her contacts on her cell phone and hits the call button.

EMILY  
Hi, Pop. Can you talk for a bit?  
(listening)  
You know that dog of yours?  
It bit me for the second time.  
I'm going to need some help.
INT. EMILY'S CAR - DAY

Emily, wearing blue jeans and an old sweatshirt drives. Dad's in the passenger seat wearing overalls. Lauren's in the back seat wearing a white blouse and a pastel skirt, as if she were dressing for an afternoon tea party.

EMILY
Thanks again for helping guys. I'm pretty sure I couldn't have done this by myself.

DAD
Not a problem, sweetie.

LAUREN
For the record, I'm not actually moving or cleaning anything. Really I'm more here for moral support.

DAD
We kind of figured that out from your outfit. It's not exactly HazMat worthy.

LAUREN
(to Emily)
Any luck finding an office?

EMILY
None. The nearest one available is six blocks from here and they want double what I'm paying now. I can't afford that. I've got no idea what I'm going to do.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING CORRIDOR - DAY

Emily, Lauren and her Dad walk down the corridor towards her office. As they reach her office door, Emily notices that the door knob is missing.

EMILY
What in the world?

Emily bends down and peers through the hole in the door left from the removal of the door knob. She presses her hand up against the door and it swings open, causing her to fall forward, landing on the wet and soiled carpet.

EMILY
Arrrgh. Again! Really?
DAD
Are you sure that's your office?

EMILY
Of course I am.

DAD
Because your name is on that one there.

Dad points at George's office. Emily stands up and looks at the door sign. It reads: EMILY STANTON, MARRIAGE COUNSELING.

EMILY
That's impossible.

DAD
Try your key.

Emily inserts her office key in the door knob and turns. She hears a click and slowly opens the door and enter:

GEORGE'S OFFICE - DAY

Emily, her Dad and Lauren enter. On top of the desk are three electric candles and a box with an envelope on it with the words FOR EMILY STANTON written on it.

Emily takes a seat in the desk chair, opens the envelope, removes a letter and starts to read.

She looks concerned, after a brief moment she laughs and continues reading. She laughs again as she continues reading. She then opens the box on the desk and removes two walnut door signs.

EMILY
Well, I'll be.

Emily returns to the letter. Tears well up in her eyes.

LAUREN
What is it?

EMILY
(fighting back tears)
I need a minute.

Emily stands up and exits. Lauren walks over to the desk and peers down at the letter.

LAUREN
(to her Dad)
Do you think I should read it?
DAD
It seems like it may be a private matter.

LAUREN
That's good enough for me.

Lauren grabs the letter and starts to read it out loud.

LAUREN
(reading)
"Dear Ms. Stanton, by the time you read this letter I may already be dead."

DAD
Dear God.

LAUREN
(still reading)
"That's just a joke. I'm quite all right."

DAD
Whew.

LAUREN
(reading)
"As you can see, there are three electric candles for use in your meditative exercises. You can just burn incense when you use them as it presents much less of a fire danger. Personally, I would recommend that you go with a scent other than skunk."

DAD
I don't understand this at all.

LAUREN
Ssssh.
(reading)
"You do still owe me thirty-nine dollars and fifty-six cents for my fan. John will have an address that you can forward your payment to."

DAD
Kind of a cheap bastard.

LAUREN
Dad.
(reading)
LAUREN (CONT'D)
"In the elevator, you said that you were looking for some kind of sign or perhaps a grand gesture. The sign part was easy. In fact that there are two of them inside the box. Please accept them as a memento."

Lauren looks at the two walnut signs on the desk. One reads: EMILY STANTON, THE BEGINNING OF THE END. The other sign reads: GEORGE NELSON, THE END.

LAUREN
I don't get this.

Lauren returns to the letter.

LAUREN
(reading)
"On to the grand gesture. I have little to offer other than my office. I have been assured by John that your lease terms will remain the same. Now, I know that you can be stubborn, but you really have no choice other than accepting it as I have already signed another lease. As a note, you would like my new building as the parking spaces are very wide and the corridors are well ventilated."

DAD
This gets weirder and weirder.

LAUREN
(reading)
"Now on a more personal level."

GEORGE (V.O.)
I am truly sorry. Please believe that I never intended to ambush you with my knowledge of your past. Even though it did not end well, I am glad we were trapped in that elevator together. I am glad that we had a chance to really talk. Now, there was one thing you were wrong about - the idea of moving on. You won't ever find someone to replace Peter. But that doesn't mean you can't find someone new."
I am more than confident that such a person would be perfectly happy to let you hang pictures of your past on their otherwise empty walls. There are plenty of us out there like that. Warmest regards: George Nelson.

Lauren starts to tear up.

DAD
Is that it?

LAUREN
Yes. Do you know what this means?

DAD
Yeah. It means that Emily gets to have an office.

LAUREN
God, you're such a man.

INT. EMILY'S/GEORGE'S OFFICE - DAY

Emily sits in a chair in what used to be George's office. JIM (30s) and LINDA (30s) sit across from her on a couch.

LINDA
I think we can make it. I really do. We just need to talk more.

EMILY
That's a great start.

Construction related NOISE emanates from the hallway.

JIM
Doesn't that noise drive you nuts?

EMILY
No, actually, it's comforting in an odd way. It reminds me of someone.

INT. EMILY'S HOUSE/KITCHEN - NIGHT.

Emily, Lauren and Madelyn at the counter making snacks.

LAUREN
Okay, I'll make sure that I pick Madelyn up by seven thirty.
MADELYN
We're watching another movie -
right, Aunt Emily?

EMILY
Indeed we are. I got a special one
for you tonight.

LAUREN
(to Madelyn)
Hey, sweetie, why don't you go
upstairs and get your jammies on so
you'll be ready for the movie.

MADELYN
Okay, Mommy.

Madelyn scampers off.

LAUREN
So, what are you going to do?

EMILY
I'm going to pay him for his fan.

LAUREN
How is that going to --?

EMILY
Lauren, I got it handled.

Lauren grabs her purse from the kitchen counter.

LAUREN
You are a mystery. I gotta go.
Thanks for watching Madelyn.

EMILY
Love you.

LAUREN
(exiting)
You too.

INT. EMILY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Emily and Madelyn, both in their pajamas are curled up on the
sofa watching a movie on television. Emily clicks the remote
turning the television off.

MADELYN
Can't we watch it again?

Emily kisses Madelyn on top of the forehead.
EMILY
No, we both got to get up early.
You run upstairs to your room and
I'll be up in a sec to tuck you in.

MADELYN
Okay.

Madelyn hops off the sofa and starts towards the stairs.

MADELYN
You want me to just go straight to
your room, Aunt Emily?

EMILY
No. I already made up the guest
room.

MADELYN
Okay, I just didn't want you to
have to wake me up later to move
me. You know, in case you get
scared.

EMILY
That's sweet. I'll be fine.

Madelyn runs up the stairs. Emily calls out to her.

EMILY
My room is fine.

MADELYN (O.S.)
Okay.

Emily walks back towards the kitchen.

INT. EMILY'S HOUSE/KITCHEN - LATER

Emily sits at the kitchen table reading the letter George
left in the office. There's a half-empty glass of wine on the
table along with stationary, envelopes and a check book.

Emily puts down the letter and rips out a blank check.

EMILY
(as she writes check)
Thirty-nine dollars and fifty-six
cents.

Emily grabs a piece of stationary paper.
(as she writes)
Dear Mr. Nelson...

INT. UNDERGROUND PARKING GARAGE - DAY

Emily approaches the elevator and enters.

INT. ELEVATOR - DAY

Emily sees George approaching. She presses and holds the door open button.

GEORGE
Well, that's a promising start, thank you.

The doors close. The elevator ascends.

GEORGE
I'm sorry about the lease papers, John assured me that everything was in order.

The elevator suddenly jerks to a stop. Emily smiles.

GEORGE
Again?

EMILY
The lease papers are fine. I'm afraid I have you here under false pretenses.

Emily presses the emergency call button.

EMILY
Now, John.

JOHN (V.O.)
(through speaker)
Roger that.

The elevator goes dark.

INT. UNDERGROUND PARKING GARAGE - DAY

John Hasbro places an "OUT OF ORDER" sign on the exterior of the elevator door.
INT. ELEVATOR - DAY

Emily removes one of the electric mediation candles George gave her from her purse. She turns it on. The elevator car is enveloped in a dark glow.

Emily goes to one corner of the elevator and sits down. She places the electronic candle on the elevator floor.

EMILY
Please move to your corner, George.

GEORGE
What's going on?

EMILY
Humor me.

George goes to the other corner of the elevator and sits.

GEORGE
I still don't get it.

EMILY
For some odd reason, this is the only place where we have had a meaningful conversation. And I needed to have another one with you. First, I wanted to thank you for the office. It was --

GEORGE
Emily, that really isn't necessary.

EMILY
Do you ever let a woman finish a sentence?

GEORGE
Sorry.

EMILY
It was an incredibly kind thing to do. It was a magnificent gesture on your part. You certainly didn't have to do it and I know you did so without expectations. And your letter - I've read it a dozen times now. It made me realize that it is time for me to get back on my bike.

GEORGE
Your bike?
EMILY
It's just a story from a real smart man I know. The point being, there was a moment in here the day that we were trapped that I felt a spark. I need to know if you felt one too.

GEORGE
Before that.

Emily scoots across the elevator floor closer to George.

EMILY
You have empty walls?

GEORGE
I've been told as much.

EMILY
Room for pictures of the past as well as ones of the future.

GEORGE
There is plenty of space.

EMILY
Well, I've finally realized that the creation of new memories doesn't have to result in the erasure of old ones. I don't know why it took me so long to realize that. But, I'm going to try to start again.

Emily leans over and kisses George on the cheek.

EMILY
What about you?

INT/EXT. EMILY'S CAR - DAY

Emily drives down an L.A City street. George is in the passenger seat. Emily pulls up along side a curb.

SUPER: SIX WEEKS LATER

George leans over and kisses her on the cheek.

GEORGE
Thanks for the lift. See you tonight.
EMILY
Have a good day.

George exits the car and Emily pulls away.

She turns on the radio. A love song is playing.

Emily arrives at a stop light and looks out the passenger window. She sees a young couple embracing.

Emily switches view to the other corner and sees a middle-aged couple arm in arm as they walk down the street.

A family walks by the intersection in front of Emily's car. The husband is holding the hand of a little girl in one hand and the hand of his wife in the other.

Emily drives on.

EMILY (V.O)
I do believe in a one true love.

Emily makes a right turn, heads down a side street and turns into a parking garage entrance.

INT. UNDERGROUND PARKING GARAGE – DAY

Emily pulls into a parking space.

EMILY (V.O)
And I don't know if it can be found twice in one lifetime.

Emily exits her car and walks to the elevator. She presses the button and the doors open.

EMILY (V.O)
But I believe that a life spent not trying to find out is a wasted one.

Emily enters the elevator and turns, facing the garage. The doors slowly close.

FADE OUT.