

ADVENTURES IN DATING

written by

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FADE IN:

INT. HERMAN'S HOME OFFICE - DAY

An older couple sits in straight-backed chairs facing the camera. MITCH is 85 and his wife SOPHIE is 65. Mitch's left ring finger is in a splint. Their body language indicates they are not happy with each other.

HERMAN (O.S.)
Can this relationship be saved?

Mitch scowls and looks away. Sophie rubs herself soothingly and fidgets. We can hear the clock ticking.

HERMAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
I'll ask you again. Can this
relationship be saved?

MITCH
No. SOPHIE
Yes.

MITCH (CONT'D) SOPHIE (CONT'D)
Yes. No.

HERMAN shakes his head. Dr. Herman Winslow is fifty years old and ruffled in a professorial way. Beneath the outmoded mop of brown hair and perpetual look of concern is a quietly confident, boyishly charming, strikingly handsome man.

HERMAN
Let's talk about what really
happened.

SOPHIE
I already told you, I was just
holding his hand.

MITCH
She manhandled me. I claim domestic
battery. I should sue--

SOPHIE
I grabbed your hand just so you
would stop for a minute and listen
to me. You never listen to what I
have to say!

MITCH
That's because it's all garbage.

HERMAN
Mitch, you're being nasty again.

SOPHIE

I held him and he twisted away from me.

MITCH

I wrenched myself loose, but she wouldn't let go until my finger went 'snap.'

SOPHIE

(crying)

I was just trying to make him understand.

MITCH

What, what don't I understand!

SOPHIE

Me! Fifteen years and it's like I don't even exist. It's all about you, you--

HERMAN

Sophie, I think-- Look, when the Beatles sang "I wanna hold your hand," I don't think a busted finger is what they had in mind. Mitch, in Sophie's defense, you can be a little harsh.

SOPHIE

He has a tongue like a dagger!

MITCH

I wish you'd change!

SOPHIE (CONT'D)

I wish you'd change!

Herman holds up his hand.

HERMAN

You can change yourselves, or you can accept each other as you are, but you cannot change each other. If each of you becomes kinder and gentler, it will rub off, and then acceptance will be easier.

MITCH

But--

SOPHIE

But--

HERMAN

(puts hand up)

You can continue on this emotional roller coaster ride until it kills you, or you can go through a nasty divorce and deal with the consequences of starting over at this late stage of life. Choose.

MITCH

I don't like either option.

SOPHIE

Neither do I.

HERMAN

So just be kinder and gentler. It all begins and ends with tenderness.

(sings)

Tenderness, where is it? Tenderness where is it?

This bit of levity on Herman's part has broken the spell. Mitch and Sophie smile.

HERMAN (CONT'D)

And so I ask you one last time, can this relationship be saved?

MITCH

Fine.

SOPHIE

All right.

HERMAN

Good. Now kiss and make up.

Mitch and Sophie exchange a reluctant kiss that becomes passionate to the point of being uncomfortable in a PDA sort of way.

HERMAN (CONT'D)

That's enough you two. Okay.

Herman rises and leads the couple to the door.

As they exit:

MITCH

We appreciate your help, Son.

HERMAN

Sure thing, Dad. Sophie.

Herman watches the couple as they walk across the garden and enter the main house. He hears them continue to quarrel as they go:

SOPHIE

I'm just trying to give you the best care that I can, despite how rough around the edges you can be.

MITCH

You are amply provided for in my will so deal with it! You're no saint.

SOPHIE

And you're no angel!

MITCH

My bones are fragile. I am not a spring chicken.

SOPHIE

Neither am I.

MITCH

You act like some trailer park teenager on Jerry Springer, for God's sake.

SOPHIE

So do you!

MITCH

We're senior citizens, in case you've forgotten.

SOPHIE

I'm a senior citizen. You're old enough to be my father, so what does that make you!

Herman calls out:

HERMAN

I'm not hearing any tenderness...

MITCH

I'm sorry for acting out.

SOPHIE

I'm sorry too.

As they reach the house they start kissing again. Herman shakes his head.

HERMAN
(to himself)
Two teenagers is right.

EXT. COUNTRY CLUB - DAY

Herman and his friend JEFF WAGMEISTER play pickleball.

HERMAN
I hate this game. It's like the
lawn bowling of tennis.

JEFF
It's all the rage these days. Get
with the times.

HERMAN
So, you were saying?

JEFF
We met on Hinge. You know, the
dating app.

HERMAN
I know what Hinge is.

JEFF
You can't blame me for asking. You
don't even own a cell phone.

HERMAN
I have students. So is Jane the
future ex Mrs. Wagmeister?

JEFF
(laughs)
The third time would definitely not
be a charm there, buddy. I feel
good about it though.

HERMAN
How long have you two been dating?

JEFF
Two weeks.

HERMAN
That's longer than most
relationships last, so your chances
are pretty decent.

JEFF

You'll have a better idea after I get through creaming you. Jane's meeting us for lunch.

HERMAN

The sportsmanlike thing is to let you win since you'll be picking up the tab.

JEFF

It's on Jane. She works here.

HERMAN

In that case--

Herman crushes a serve.

EXT. CLUB RESTAURANT - DAY

Herman and Jeff sit at a lunch table amid half-eaten plates of food with Jeff's new steady, JANE.

JANE

What about you. How did you two meet?

HERMAN

I'm not sure I remember. Christ it was over half a lifetime ago.

JANE

(teasing)

High school sweethearts.

JEFF

As a matter of fact, there is a good story there. Hank here was pursued by the hottest girl in school.

JANE

Really?

JEFF

You wouldn't know it by the way he looks now--

HERMAN

I didn't use to cut my own hair.

JEFF

--but Hank was quite the ladies' man back in the day. Tell Jane how we met.

HERMAN

(thinks)

Wags comes up to me - mind you, I had never met him before, having just transferred - and he says, "Do you know who Pilar DeLongpre is?"

JANE

Pilar DeLongpre being the hottest girl in school.

HERMAN

(nods)

He asks if I knew Pilar. Of course I did, but I had to play it cool and so I tell him no. And Wags says, "You will." And walks away.

JANE

Let me guess, you got to know her.

HERMAN

A dozen times over the course of our torrid three-week love affair.

JANE

Why'd it end so soon?

HERMAN

Pilar was wild. My mother thought she'd chew me up and spit me out.

JANE

Was your mother right?

HERMAN

Probably. I was a virgin teetotaler. Pilar had lots of experience in both areas. I remember the night I told her I loved her.

JANE

Awww...

HERMAN

We were at some bar on Sunset, having downed some double Greyhounds.

JEFF

Vodka with grapefruit juice.

JANE

I know what Greyhounds are. What do you think I am, a FOB?

HERMAN

A couple of those and I spent the rest of the night puking my insides out. Pilar was sober enough to drive me home. My father never let me hear the end of it. "You spent the twenty dollars I gave you on what?!"

JANE

Twenty dollars got you four drinks!

HERMAN

This was the 90's, and I forgot to tip.

(laughs)

I wonder whatever happened to Pilar?

JEFF

I heard she became a shrink. It's always the head cases that become therapists.

JANE

Present company excluded.

HERMAN

One would hope.

JEFF

Want to talk about six degrees of separation? Pilar knows a certain former presidential intern who shall go unnamed, who Hank here used to date.

HERMAN

That's two degrees of separation. And please let's not go into that.

JEFF

Something to be proud of. Not everybody gets to date a celebrity.

HERMAN

Will you stop using the word *date*.
We were fourteen. We kissed once.

JEFF

She was pretty pissed off when the
scandal broke and Hank threw her
under the bus.

JANE

What do you mean?

JEFF

He sold his story to the tabloids.

HERMAN

It wasn't like that at all. I came
home and the local news station was
literally waiting for me at the
door.

JANE

Did someone call them?

HERMAN

Wags...

JEFF

I was interning at the network. It
was a career move. You didn't think
I got to be producer by being nice.

JANE

You sold out your best friend?

JEFF

Hank didn't make out too bad.

HERMAN

The tabloids practically threw
money at me just to learn a few
oddball details.

JANE

Such as?

JEFF

Such as who taught who the art of
the tongue.

JANE

You primed her for the president!

HERMAN

OK, I may have erred on the side of too much information, but am I really the bad guy? The woman has made a career off playing the victim. If she weren't so insistent about remaining in the spotlight people would forget about the scandal by now. And not only that. I always say, If you point one finger at someone else, then three point back at you. She seduced a married man and bragged about it to a best-friend who turned out to be a snitch. She got herself into that mess, and yet I'm the asshole.

JANE

You're not an asshole.

HERMAN

Thank you.

JEFF

Hank has managed to turn his fifteen minutes of fame into fifteen years.

HERMAN

Twenty years, and I'm not famous.

JEFF

He's had models, heiresses, actresses. His last sweetheart was a Bond girl.

JANE

Really, which one?

HERMAN

Eva only looked like a Bond girl, and was only slightly less lethal.

JEFF

If looks could kill, Hank would be dead a dozen times over. And yet, Donna Chupinsky is the most famous of them all. Your one true love.

HERMAN

Now you're just being an ass.

JANE

Quite a track record you've got in the romance department.

JEFF

What else would you expect from the love guru.

JANE

(recognizing)

I knew your face was familiar. I've seen you on Oprah - or was it Ellen?

HERMAN

I haven't made it quite that far.

JANE

I think I have your book.

JEFF

He's written a couple.

HERMAN

Soon to be three.

JANE

The one--I got it as a gift from an ex-boyfriend. I think he was trying to tell me something.

HERMAN

Can This Relationship Be Saved?

JANE

That's it. And the answer was, No it couldn't, so I never read it.

JEFF

And after meeting me, you won't ever need to.

JANE

What's the name of the other book you've written?

HERMAN

Don't Compromise, Never Apologize, and Other Unconventional Rules for Love.

JANE

Sounds like my kind of book. I hate to compromise.

JEFF

Duly noted.

HERMAN

Shaw said it best. You want to go north, your partner wants to go south, and the result is you both get dragged eastward and hate it!

(then:)

Why did you and your ex-boyfriend break up? Take notes Jeff.

JANE

I think it was a cultural thing. With me being Korean--

JEFF

Lucky for me I'm half Asian. From the waist up of course.

JANE

Are you?

JEFF

Eastern European, but Russia and Korea are practically neighbors so we can pretend.

Jane laughs.

HERMAN

I think I know what you mean about cultural differences. In college I dated this Brazilian girl. I was crazy about her. I studied Portuguese, followed her to Brazil. The plan was to marry and raise a couple bicultural kids, spend half the year here, half in Rio. We'd have ourselves a sort of endless summer.

JANE

But your mother didn't approve.

HERMAN

Are you kidding? My mother was crazy about Isabella. The problem was between me and her. We were constantly at each other's throats.

JANE

What about?

HERMAN

What not about! She expected me to be this macho caveman type. You know, wear your heart on your sleeve, that sort of thing. But it's not who I am.

JEFF

Hank fancies himself an intellectual.

HERMAN

And she could be insanely jealous.

JANE

She came by it honestly. Brazilian men are notorious cheaters. I've had a few.

(off Jeff's look)

Well one or two.

HERMAN

She kept me on a tight leash. I couldn't use the bathroom without her asking if I met someone. Without trust, I know it's a cliché--

JANE

Cliches exist because they are true.

JEFF

Like the one about Asian men having little willies?

JANE

Jeffrey!

JEFF

Ask a person why their relationship failed and it's always the ex's fault, right Hank.

HERMAN

Hmmm...

JANE

I'm sorry you were disappointed.

HERMAN

I'm not. As Goethe said, "Beware of wishing for anything when you're young, because you'll get it in middle age." Who needs the aggravation!

A WAITER appears at the table.

WAITER

(to Jane)

Sorry to bother you Ms. Kim, but the chef is asking to see you.

JANE

(to Herman and Jeff)

Excuse me a minute.

As Jane moves off:

JEFF

(to Herman)

Would you stop putting your foot in your mouth! Jane is trying to fix you up with a girl and you're blowing it!

HERMAN

Fix me up? With who?

JEFF

See that girl over there?

A NONDESCRIPT ASIAN WOMAN (40s) sits alone at the other end of the restaurant, inconspicuously eyeing Herman.

JEFF (CONT'D)

That's Jane's best friend, Jenny.

HERMAN

Who said I wanted to be fixed up?

JEFF

Quit arguing and turn on the charm. Enough with the Debbie Downer stuff.

Jane returns.

JANE

So there is no Mrs. Winslow?

JEFF

(breezily)

What are you guys, on a date or something? In five minutes you'll know Hank better than you know me, and you've seen my bare ass.

JANE

And what a sight it is.

JEFF

Yeah well, there's no missus just yet. Pilar was a tough act to follow. When you land the hottest girl in school, you develop unreasonably high standards that pursue you through life.

JANE

Is that true, Herman?

HERMAN

I find that the older I get, the more wedded to my habits I become. I get up at the crack of dawn, which no woman would ever tolerate. Besides, at this point, I don't think I could share a bed with another person.

JANE

There are always separate bedrooms.

HERMAN

In that case, why bother getting married?

JANE

So you're a committed bachelor. Which is what you were before you met me, right Jeff?

JEFF

(laughs)

Absolutely.

JANE

Don't you want kids?

HERMAN

Kids would be a breeze. The hard part is finding someone to raise them with.

JEFF

Bitches be crazy. Present company excluded.

HERMAN

(laughs)

The longer a person remains single, the less likely he is to get married.

JEFF

So we better do it now, Jane, before it's too late.

JANE

Is that really true?

HERMAN

You'd think it would be about sowing wild oats, playing the field, finding out what you like, more is better and all that. But what happens is, you develop this idealized version of the one, a sort of greatest hits reel of all your previous romantic partners. In my case, I imagine the legs of Beatrice, the backside of Tristen, the torso of Eva, the breasts of Isabella--

JANE

You men are so superficial.

HERMAN

No woman could ever come close to the idea I have in my head. At least no girl I've ever met.

JANE

Doesn't personality mean anything to you guys?

HERMAN

Personality goes to Helen, April, and Eloise.

JANE

They didn't score in the looks department, so they made up for it-

JEFF

By giving a mean blowjob.

JANE

The love guru can't be single!
That's like, that's like--

JEFF

There are those who do, and those
who teach.

JANE

--that's like, if Mozart couldn't
play the piano.

HERMAN

Mozart is a tough act to follow.

JEFF

Those who can't do, teach.

HERMAN

And those who can't teach, teach
P.E.

JEFF

Or in your case, psychology.

HERMAN

Which reminds me, I have to go soon
or I'll be late for class.

JANE

(rising)

And I have a restaurant to run. It
was nice meeting you, Herman. I
hope you meet the one.

HERMAN

I hope you can be that to Jeff.

As Jane passes her girlfriend, she shakes her head, "No."

EXT. COLLEGE CAMPUS - DAY

Herman pedals his bicycle through the campus. He gets a lot
of "Morning, Professor," mostly from female students.

INT. UNIVERSITY CLASSROOM - DAY

Herman lectures to a class of 50 or so COLLEGE STUDENTS.
Written in chalk on the blackboard are the words:
Relationship Psychology.

HERMAN

Marriage wasn't conceived as being the natural outgrowth of love. It evolved as a means to consolidate wealth and provide for posterity. A sort of business arrangement between families of equal social standing. You might hope to learn to love your partner, but if you wanted romance, you had an affair. True love is a modern invention. And statistics indicate that it is a work in progress. Lots of trial and error, with the emphasis on error. Half of first marriages end in divorce, everybody knows that. And the failure rate rises for every additional attempt at the elusive "till death do we part." But even in lasting unions, partners report staying together out of habit, convenience, or fear of being alone. A sort of sadomasochistic codependency. Take my folks.

The students lean forward in their seats.

HERMAN (CONT'D)

Actually my dad and his third wife. Always at each other's throats. They are too busy playing the blame game to realize that relationships are work, and if we treat them as a job rather than a holiday, there is some opportunity for real growth. And don't worry, I'm not violating patient confidentiality. My father doesn't pay me, so technically, it's just gossip. But please don't tell him or else he'll sue me.

Laughter.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Herman sits at his desk with a pad of paper. The pen is poised over the words **Adventures in Dating: Chapter 24**. He stares at the page for what seems like forever. He fidgets, looks out the window.

He gives up and turns to his laptop computer, opens to a woman's Instagram page.

Photos and videos of a BEAUTIFUL WOMAN (Eva) doing all the usual things: drinking champagne on a yacht, toasting with friends, salsa dancing, swimming with dolphins.

The phone RINGS.

HERMAN

(on phone; forced)

Sidney. How the heck are ya.

SIDNEY (V.O.)

(down to business)

Hank. How's the book coming along?

HERMAN

Just wrapping up the final chapter.

SIDNEY (V.O.)

(he's heard it all before)

Tying it all together.

HERMAN

That's right.

Silence. Herman clears his throat.

HERMAN (CONT'D)

Truth is, I need a bit more time on this.

SIDNEY (V.O.)

(over him)

Hank, Hank, Hank, I negotiated one extension, I can't possibly-- Look, my name is on the line here, not just yours. You're making me look bad!

(lets this sink in)

You got two weeks. If you don't hand in a finished manuscript by Friday after next, you can kiss six figures goodbye. Not only that, you'll have to return the advance. Which I trust you no longer have.

HERMAN

I understand.

SIDNEY (V.O.)

Fifty thousand buckarooskees. Which you no longer have.

HERMAN

I know, I know.

SIDNEY

Who spends that amount of money on an engagement ring, and three years after you two were through!

HERMAN

I was trying to win Eva back. Please can we change the subject?

SIDNEY

Finish the goddamn book, Hank!

HERMAN

I know.

SIDNEY (V.O.)

What's going on? You churned out two best-sellers at breakneck pace, and now you're dragging your feet. Whatsamatter, you depressed?

HERMAN

No, no.

SIDNEY (V.O.)

You know what I think? I think you need to get back in the field. I've seen it a hundred times. You're rusty, you've lost your edge. They say write what you know--

HERMAN

(tired)

I told you, this book is not really about dating. It's about avoiding the pitfalls of dating.

SIDNEY (V.O.)

You talk about avoiding pitfalls, and you're the one who's stuck in a rut.

(beat)

They say write what you know. Go find out!

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

Herman eats alone in a booth, grading papers.

AMBER (O.S.)

Professor Winslow?

HERMAN

Amber, hi.

AMBER

Sorry I missed your office hours. I had cheerleading practice. Would it be okay if I borrowed a minute of your time?

HERMAN

Sure. Have a seat.

AMBER

(holds up her textbook;
shyly)

I was hoping I could get your autograph.

HERMAN

I'd be happy to.

While he writes an inscription:

AMBER

(gushing)

This is such an honor for me! I've read your book twice. My favorite part is where you say love means never having to say you're sorry.

HERMAN

I didn't put it quite that way--

AMBER

It seemed counterintuitive, but the way you explained it makes total sense. How did you explain it again?

HERMAN

If you are truly present in a relationship, you always do the right thing. Therefore, there is never anything to be sorry about.

AMBER

So love means never having to say you're sorry.

HERMAN

(gives up)

Anyway here you are.

Herman hands her back the book. A beat.

AMBER

I am really enjoying your class,
Professor.

HERMAN

Call me Herman. All my friends do.

AMBER

OK, Herman.

(brief pause)

I signed up for your class because
word is you're an easy grader. And
even though you gave me a C minus
on the midterm - you've inspired me
to pursue a career in psychology. I
wanted to ask if you'd be my
faculty advisor, for when I do my
thesis. You know, down the road.

HERMAN

I'd be delighted.

AMBER

You mean you'll mentor me?

HERMAN

I don't see why not. Assuming you
don't change your mind. A lot can
happen in four years, Amber.

AMBER

I'm pretty certain.

HERMAN

Take me for instance. I switched my
major a half a dozen times before
landing on philosophy. Then I
decided that nobody is interested
in philosophy anymore. It's a dying
science, almost on par with
astrology. So I decided to become a
medical doctor. I wanted to be a
psychiatrist, but during residency
I realized that it was the
psychologists who got to have all
the fun, talking to patients,
exploring the depths of the psyche.
I was so busy filling out forms and
conferring with the pharmacologists
about which drugs to prescribe, I
never had the time to learn my
patients' first names, let alone
their histories. I had a career
crisis.

AMBER

What did you do?

HERMAN

I went to the library, read up on the history of psychiatry, and discovered that many of the greatest minds--let's just say I was in good company. There was a precedent for what I wanted to do. William James earned his medical degree but never practiced medicine. Instead he went on to become the founder of psychology. When I found this out, I left residency and enrolled in a masters program in psychology. Then a doctorate.

AMBER

Then a private practice, tenured professorship, publishing contract. You're your way to becoming a household name. All you need is your own show.

HERMAN

You're too kind.

AMBER

I'm your biggest fan.
(laughs)
How did you happen to make relationships your focus?

HERMAN

As the son of a divorce lawyer, I learned that if a couple can work things out, it's better for both parties to do so, so I try to facilitate reconciliation.

AMBER

But from your lectures, you don't seem to believe in romance.

HERMAN

I'm with Schopenhauer who said romantic love is nature's ploy to perpetuate the species. He said, "Marriage means reducing one's rights and doubling one's duties."

Amber jots down Schopenhauer's name.

HERMAN (CONT'D)

His words struck such a chord that I committed them to memory. "With girls," Schopenhauer said, "Nature has had in view what is called in a dramatic sense a 'striking effect,' for she endows them for a few years with a richness of beauty and a fulness of charm at the expense of the rest of their lives; so that they may during these years ensnare the fantasy of a man to such a degree as to make him rush into taking the honorable care of them, in some kind of form, for a lifetime—a step which would not seem sufficiently justified if he only considered the matter. Accordingly, Nature has furnished woman, as she has the rest of her creatures, with the weapons and implements necessary for the protection of her existence and for just the length of time that they will be of service to her; so that Nature has proceeded here with her usual economy. Just as the female ant after coition loses her wings, which then become superfluous, nay, dangerous for breeding purposes, so for the most part does a woman lose her beauty after giving birth to one or two children; and probably for the same reasons."

AMBER

(laughs)

Or as we schoolgirls like to put it, "You better use it while you got it, 'cause it ain't gonna last forever!"

HERMAN

Exactly!

(beat)

Now agapic love. That's Christian love of one's fellow man. It's what the Greeks preached. To realize the Greek ideal, you have to transcend the ego, which is the biggest barrier to love.

AMBER

But everybody has an ego. How can you get rid of what you are?

HERMAN

Glad you asked. You are not your ego. You only think you are.

(beat)

The way out of rampant selfishness is to make your partner your priority. Tell them: "I promise to put you before me, until 'I' becomes 'we.'"

Amber writes this down.

HERMAN (CONT'D)

By assuming you are to blame in any quarrel, you right the balance induced by self-righteousness and what you are left with is not romance, but love. Real love. The rest is just child's play.

AMBER

(blown away)

Wow.

A GROUP of cheerleaders arrives at the table to get Amber. She gets up.

AMBER (CONT'D)

Some of us are getting together for drinks at Hailey's tonight, if you'd like to join.

HERMAN

I'd love to, but I have some work to do.

AMBER

All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy.

(holds out business card)

If you change your mind, my number is on the back. I'm usually off by ten.

She hands him her phone number. Their fingers touch. Amber leaves with her giggling girlfriends in tow.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Mitch sits on the sofa watching sports on TV. Herman puts a plate of food in front of his father and sits down next to him.

HERMAN
Sophie working late tonight?

MITCH
(disgruntled; eyes don't
leave TV)
She's out with friends again.

HERMAN
You two hit another rough patch?

MITCH
I never shoulda married that woman.
She eats veal, for Chrissake.

HERMAN
It's not what you put in your
mouth, Dad, it's what comes out of
it, and you're not exactly a ray of
sunshine.

Mitch turns up the volume on the TV to signal that the conversation is over.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Herman lies in bed trying to write and failing miserably. He puts aside the legal pad and reaches for the Sports Illustrated swimsuit issue.

The phone RINGS. It's Jeff. Intercut between Herman and Jeff, who is sitting on the toilet smoking a joint.

HERMAN
Hey Wags.

JEFF
Yo. Jane wants to set you up with a
chick.

HERMAN
I thought I made a bad enough
impression to prevent that from
ever happening.

JEFF
What can I say? Women.

HERMAN

Wags, I'm really not--

JEFF

Just check her out. I sent the web address to your email. You're really gonna need to get a cell phone man. It's the 21st century. Grab your laptop.

HERMAN

(reaches for laptop; under his breath)

Probably some accountant from the valley.

JEFF

Wait till you check her out. She's Brazilian.

Herman clicks on the web address. His jaw drops when he sees A GODDESS. She may even be the hottest girl on earth.

JEFF (CONT'D)

You there, man?

HERMAN

I, uh, is this a joke?

JEFF

Whattya mean is this a joke?

HERMAN

Is she even real? She looks computerized.

JEFF

It's just filters. Everybody uses them these days.

HERMAN

(regarding pics)

Man alive.

JEFF

I take it you're interested.

HERMAN

I think I've just died and gone to heaven, but why me?

JEFF

Whattya mean, why me?

HERMAN

She's way out of my league.

JEFF

Dude, you're the most eligible bachelor on the planet, and you don't even know it. Which only adds to your charm. You may suffer the occasional bout of diarrhea of the mouth, but nobody is perfect. Just send me some pics so I can send to Jane and we'll go from there.

HERMAN

Pics?

JEFF

Selfies man. Ab shots. Biceps. You relaxing on a yacht drinking champagne. Whatever you have on your phone. Crap you don't have a phone. You really need to get a phone.

HERMAN

I'll see what I can come with.

JEFF

Like, yesterday. Time is of the essence. A bombshell like this doesn't stay on the market for long, bro.

HERMAN

(works the laptop)

There, I sent you the only picture of me I have on this computer.

It's a faculty photo with Herman in a tie in front of a white background. It looks like a mugshot. Not very flattering.

JEFF

If this is all you have, I'll make it work.

(pause)

I sent your pic to Jane. She'll pass it on.

HERMAN

Jane is friends with this woman?

JEFF

Yes, well, loosely. In a sort of roundabout way.

HERMAN

What's her name?

JEFF

Andrea Alves. She's a top model.

During the conversation, Herman does an Internet search, sees various pics of Andrea Alves. Victoria Secret. Vogue. Press releases. Runway shots. Music videos. The works. He clicks back and forth between Instagram and Wikipedia. Yes she even has her own Wikipedia page.

JEFF (CONT'D)

Andrea is looking for someone who can travel with her and fit in with her group of friends.

HERMAN

I don't really travel.

JEFF

Her previous boyfriend didn't drink or smoke so it didn't work out.

HERMAN

I don't really drink or smoke either.

JEFF

So party, travel, make some new friends. You still speak Portuguese?

HERMAN

Ummm.

JEFF

Just do it for a month and have fun. Be happy I'm setting you up. You need to get out of your shell.

HERMAN

I dunno.

JEFF

What's there not to know? She's hot as fuck, wants an intelligent, good-looking man. That's you!

(working his phone)

Here, Massimo says you're good-looking.

HERMAN

Massimo?

JEFF

Her hairstylist. He's the one connecting you to Andrea through Jane. I think you're golden. Jane is a good referral. Life in the fast lane again, buddy. You're gonna love it.

HERMAN

From your lips to God's ears.

JEFF

Just be yourself, everything will be fine.

HERMAN

With this party girl I may need to be you circa 2002.

JEFF

If there was ever a reason to come out of retirement, this is it.

HERMAN

(warming to the idea)
If nothing else, it'll make one helluva swan song.

JEFF

Give me a few days.

Herman hangs up, turns on the TV. The TV shows a segment of a talk show on which Herman is the guest. As Herman watches his expression swings between complacency and disgust.

FEMALE HOST (ON TV)

Today we have Dr. Herbert--

HERMAN (ON TV)

Herman.

HOST (ON TV)

Sorry, teleprompter's been acting up. Dr. Herman Winslow, celebrity psychotherapist and author of the soon-to-be published book *Adventures in Dating*, brings us the do's and don'ts for finding your perfect mate. Take it away Herb. Give it to us rapid-fire, babe.

HERMAN (ON TV)

Dating in the modern age can seem a lot like applying for a job.

(MORE)

HERMAN (ON TV) (CONT'D)

You seek out suitable prospects, put together a resume, list your references, and hope for an interview. All to get your foot in the door, or some other appendage. It helps to have a playbook. First, no selfies. Selfies are a sure-fire indication that you are self-obsessed. The same goes for social media.

HOST (ON TV)

No social media?!

HERMAN (ON TV)

How will you have time for love while carrying on an exclusive, all-consuming relationship with your Instagram account? Third, stay away from dating sites. Most successful matches come courtesy of mutual friends, not apps. Also, never have sex on the first date, or there won't be a second.

HOST (ON TV)

Give it to us rapid fire, Herb, we're pressed for time.

HERMAN (ON TV)

Take an honest inventory. Do you want kids, because isn't that ultimately the point? Don't drink, you'll give yourself beer goggles. Don't watch porn, it kills intimacy.

HOST (ON TV)

No beer. No porn. Are you watching this Fred? Fred is my husband.

HERMAN (ON TV)

Make the relationship your priority, and give it the time it requires.

HOST (ON TV)

Wrapping things up--

HERMAN (ON TV)

The life you build together should be better and sweeter than the life either of you can achieve on your own.

HOST (ON TV)

Uh-oh. That means somebody's about to be getting a divorce.

Audience laughs.

HERMAN (ON TV)

And lastly: Relationships are work. Tell your partner, "I promise to put you before me, till 'I' becomes 'we.'" Let that be your motto.

Herman turns off the TV and rolls onto his side. Then he grabs the Sports Illustrated swimsuit issue. The card Amber gave him with her phone number falls out. He picks it up, looks at it, thinks. Music starts to blare as we cut to:

INT. PUB - NIGHT

Herman is chugging beers with a group of his students, Amber being one of them. She wears her waitress outfit with a plunging neckline. Also at the table are two girls (MICHELLE and STACY) and two guys (RYAN and TY). They sit at a booth with Herman who sits in a chair at the head. Herman slams his glass on the table, wipes his mouth, and as he refills the glasses:

HERMAN

That's quite refreshing.

GUY

We're glad you came out, Professor.

HERMAN

All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy.

Amber smiles.

INT. PUB - LATER

The table is littered with empty glasses. They are all pretty buzzed. They shout over the music.

RYAN

I must admit, Professor. When I thought of what you do to relax, I expected a Norman Rockefeller painting.

MICHELLE

He means Rockwell.

RYAN

I mean white picket fence, family dog, three kids under age ten, and a wife in a plaid skirt with great posture serving roast beef to her husband who is reading the paper.

HERMAN

I don't eat read meat, but the rest is true in some parallel universe I'm sure. Socrates once said, "By all means marry. If you marry a good person, you will become happy. If you marry a bad person, you will become a philosopher." I just skipped the marriage part and became a Buddhist.

MICHELLE

Buddha was married. He left his wife and child on the quest for nirvana.

STACY

And then he went back home and made converts of the whole family.

HERMAN

(beat)

Relationships can be a real mind fuck, and the way out is to transcend the mind through meditation.

TY

Or numb it with beer.

HERMAN

Cheers to that.

(beat)

I don't mean to disparage marriage. It is a way to self-realization. Possibly the thorniest path, but still a way. Take Socrates. He married the most disagreeable woman he could find. She was a real bitch! He realized that if he could get along with his wife, he could get along with anyone.

AMBER

I think he married her because she was much younger than he was.

RYAN

Youth and beauty. That's all a guy wants.

AMBER

And women want stability and financial security.

HERMAN

My students know too much these days. Soon I'll be out of a job!

(laughs)

The Greeks believed in the ladder of love. You go from loving a particular person, you see, then to loving all people, and from there to becoming love itself. Once you climb the ladder and reach the top, you have no need for the rungs. Once you are able to love unconditionally, you have no need for a relationship.

AMBER

You mean you wind up alone. What then?

HERMAN

(thinks)

Then if you're like me you collect credentials, teach a class, write a book, and move back in with your father.

He finishes the rest of his beer. A song comes on.

HERMAN (CONT'D)

I love this song! You know, Socrates said he never met anyone who enjoyed life more than he did. What do you say we all dance! To Socrates!

OTHERS

To Socrates!

The group gets on the dance floor. Herman and Amber pair off and enjoy the moment.

EXT. PUB - NIGHT

Herman stumbles out with Amber.

AMBER

Some of us are heading back to
Ryan's. You wanna join?

HERMAN

I think Jack's had enough fun for
one night.

(walking away)

Ta ta. Toodle-loo. Catch ya later.

Amber watches him go, disappointed.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Herman drunk riding his bicycle, weaving like crazy. He veers
onto the sidewalk, overcompensates, and runs head first into
a big tree. Everything goes black.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Herman lies unconscious on the ground. His eyes blink open. A
blurry image of two women appears in front of him. He blinks
several times until the image of two women in their 40s (FAYE
and MARSHA) becomes clear.

FAYE

You okay?

HERMAN

Am I dreaming?

MARSHA

(lifting him)

Up you go big fella.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Herman sits in the back seat holding his head. The ladies are
in the front.

MARSHA

How you doin' back there baby?
(he grunts)

I'm Marsha. This here is Faye. Faye
is getting over a breakup. I said
let's go have a few drinks, you'll
forget about the bum in no time.

FAYE

And it worked. I'm so tipsy I can't
remember Burt's name. Ooops.

MARSHA

Anyway, Faye here has never had a threesome. Whereas me, see, I'm an old hat. So I say to Faye, why don't we come on to the first guy we happen by? We made a bet. If he agrees to go to bed with both of us, I win. Faye didn't think he would.

FAYE

By "he" we mean you.

MARSHA

And there you were, already on your back.

FAYE

Actually we saw you at the bar. Was that your girlfriend, the redhead you were with?

HERMAN

That was Amber.

MARSHA

You bangin' her?

HERMAN

We're completely platonic.

MARSHA

Good because we hate cheaters.

HERMAN

Actually, Amber and I--

MARSHA

Don't tell us. We don't want to know anything about you.

FAYE

If we keep this as anonymous as possible, it'll be much more of a turn-on, right Marsha?

MARSHA

That's right.

HERMAN

Would you mind just taking me home?

MARSHA
 (cracks her gum)
 That we cannot do.

HERMAN
 I really need to lie down.

MARSHA
 We're getting there, sweetheart.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Herman sits bare chested in bed between the two women, who are down to their bras. He's at a loss.

HERMAN
 Is this how it is now? Women just throw themselves at the first man they meet, and on a dare?

MARSHA
 If you're lucky they do.

HERMAN
 The game has changed.
 (sighs)

MARSHA
 It's every man's dream and you're not in the mood. What's a matter, don't we make you horny?

HERMAN
 It's not that. It's just, I've had a lot of beer, and you know what happens when you drink a lot of beer. Maybe you don't. But if you're a man, things, your equipment, it sort of stalls.

MARSHA
 Why didn't you say something sooner. We have just the thing. Faye, you still have Burt's stash?

FAYE
 I can check.

Faye rises and searches the closet.

HERMAN
 Thank you, but I'm allergic to marijuana.
 (MORE)

HERMAN (CONT'D)

I break out in hives, cold sweats,
the works. Not a pretty picture.

MARSHA

Who said anything about marijuana?

FAYE

(hands him pill)
This'll wake you right up.

MARSHA

Better make it two. Take two.

HERMAN

What are you giving me?

MARSHA

Trust us, it'll make you feel
better. Down the hatch.

Herman swallows the pills.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Herman in the same position, shirtless between the two women,
but with an erection that could pierce steel. Herman stares
down at his pup tent in awe.

HERMAN

Wow, I mean not even in my teens.
It's like iron. Will it ever go
down?

MARSHA

(kissing Herman's neck)
By morning. Right about when we'll
be through with you.

HERMAN

I--I'm not sure I can go through
with it.

FAYE

You ever been with two women?

HERMAN

Two women? Sure I've been with two
women. Let's see, the last time was
when I was in my forties. In the
entire decade, I had two women.

FAYE

You poor guy.

MARSHA
Tonight is your night.

They continue to kiss him.

HERMAN
(squirming away)
I'm not feeling well all of a sudden. I have a headache.

MARSHA
A headache! That's the oldest trick in the book.

HERMAN
I'm serious. I'm dizzy. I'm seeing double.

MARSHA
There are two of us.

FAYE
He does look a little pale. You're all sweaty. You poor thing.

HERMAN
I think I need to go home.

Faye and Marsha look at each other.

FAYE
So who wins the bet?

MARSHA
I did. We got him in bed, didn't we?

FAYE
That wasn't the bet!

HERMAN
(rising)
It's a tie.

He leaves the women arguing.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Herman walking his bike along the sidewalk, still with a massive erection.

HERMAN
(to himself)
I really need to get out more.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Herman lies in bed with his erection. He's looking at the Sports Illustrated swimsuit issue and getting aroused. He turns pages rapidly and then...sees Andrea in a sexually provocative pose. Ashamed, he tosses the magazine away and turns out the lights.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Herman doing paperwork. The phone RINGS. Herman answers.

JEFF (V.O.)
You're in like Flynn.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Herman in bed dialing a number.

EVA (V.O.)
Hello.

HERMAN
He-hello Eva?

EVA (V.O.)
Herman, is that you?

HERMAN
It's not the poolman.

EVA (V.O.)
I thought I told you never to call me again.

HERMAN
That was six months ago. I figured you might change your mind.

EVA (V.O.)
What do you want?

HERMAN
I need a favor. Would you be available to babysit Snookums this weekend?

EVA (V.O.)
Snookums. You mean your cat?

HERMAN
Well he was technically your cat,
once. You see, I'm going away for
the weekend. I have a bit of a ...
date--

EVA (V.O.)
I'm sorry, we have a dog, it
wouldn't work out.

HERMAN
We? Who's we?

EVA (V.O.)
That's none of your business.

Herman cringes. The moment is here. The realization that Eva
has moved on.

HERMAN
You and this guy you're dating?

EVA (V.O.)
(correcting)
He's a Navy Seal, and we're living
together.

HERMAN
Is it serious?

EVA (V.O.)
We're engaged.

HERMAN
So there's still time for you to
change your mind.

EVA (V.O.)
Tsch.

HERMAN
(trying another tactic)
You don't suppose you could give me
back my engagement ring?

EVA
(exasperated)
What?!

HERMAN

You don't really need two rings, do you?

Eva hangs up.

MONTAGE

Herman gets ready for his big date.

He rises early, drinks a cup of raw eggs which he instantly spits out in the sink.

Does some burpees.

Takes his cat for a walk. Snookums is on a leash, but won't budge. The sprinklers go off, drenching him. He runs away, steps in dog poop, trips over the curb and falls.

He checks Andrea's Instagram, studies her former boyfriends, their clothing styles, hairstyles, finds a video of her hairstylist cutting her hair, writes down his information.

HERMAN

(to himself)

I need help.

(picks up phone; dials)

Amber. It's Dr. Winslow. Herman. I need your help.

EXT. MALL - DAY

Herman and Amber stand outside a men's clothing store.

AMBER

I don't understand. What's this about?

HERMAN

You're young and hip--

AMBER

Don't say hip.

HERMAN

With it? Au courant? Avante garde?

AMBER

(laughs)

Whatever.

HERMAN

You're a bright young lady with great taste and a flair for the fabulous.

AMBER

This is true.

HERMAN

And style is not my thing, so--I can pay you.

AMBER

We'll work something out.

She leads him into store.

INT. STORE - DAY

Amber helps Herman select an outfit, waits outside the dressing room for him to model the new look. He exits in club gear. He looks fabulous - for a guy half his age.

INT. SALON - DAY

Herman getting his haircut. Amber looks on as hairdresser (MASSIMO) gives him a faux hawk and a goatee.

As they leave:

MASSIMO

(winks knowingly)
Good luck tonight!

INT. HOUSE - DAY

Herman fusses around his father who is watching TV.

HERMAN

Are you sure you'll be all right? I didn't expect Sophie to leave town all of a sudden.

MITCH

I'm fine. I'll be fine.

HERMAN

I made you a day's worth of meals. If you need anything here is Aunt Meg's number, and Jeff's. You remember Jeffrey?

MITCH
You really should get a cell phone.

HERMAN
I have one. Sam got me one.

MITCH
Who?

HERMAN
Your daughter, Sam?

MITCH
Never heard of him.

HERMAN
(sighs; heads for door)
And don't forget to feed Snookums.

MITCH
Have fun at the game.

HERMAN
Rave, Dad. I'm going to a rave.

MITCH
Go Dodgers.

EXT. DESERT RAVE - DAY

People mill about like zombies. Loud trance music thumping. Strobe lights flashing. Herman is trying to dance with ANDREA as Jeff and Jane look on. Andrea is in a world of her own, eyes closed, dancing to a beat only she can hear. We don't know if she's just not into Herman or she's out of it. Either way the music is so loud we can't hear what he is trying to say other than a few words here and there which appear to be in Portuguese. He gives up and approaches Jane and Jeff.

HERMAN
(yelling)
Does anyone want something to drink?

They look at him stupidly. No one can hear anything.

HERMAN (CONT'D)
I'll get us something to drink.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The four are seated at a booth.

JANE
 (to WAITER)
 I'll have the Number 2.

JEFF
 Same.

The waiter looks at Herman, who looks at Andrea. She is curled up in the corner asleep.

HERMAN
 We're still deciding.

He waits for the waiter to leave.

HERMAN (CONT'D)
 The hell is wrong with her?

JANE
 GhB.

JEFF
 Club drug.

JANE
 Bad breakup.

Jeff's phone RINGS.

JEFF
 (on phone)
 Yeah.

He hands the phone to Herman.

JEFF (CONT'D)
 For you.

Herman takes the phone.

HERMAN
 (on phone)
 Hi. Is everything OK? OK.
 (to Jeff)
 I need to leave.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Mitch lies in his recliner. Herman and MEG look at him.

MEG
 He said he fell and hit his head.

HERMAN
What did they say at the E.R.?

MEG
Bruised ribs.

MITCH
Bullshit. I have a concussion.

HERMAN
Have you notified Sophie?

MEG
She's MIA. What else is new.

HERMAN
Thanks, Meg. I'll take it from here.

As he walks her to the door.

MEG
How did your date go?

HERMAN
How did you know I went on a date?

Meg gestures at Mitch. Herman looks at his father with surprise.

HERMAN (CONT'D)
News travels fast.

MITCH
Would you to keep it down. I'm trying to recover. Ow my aching head.

At the entryway.

HERMAN
Thanks for your help, Aunt Meg.

MEG
Swing and miss, huh? Well, come with me tomorrow night. There's this get-together. A movie premier, an after party, and a Hollywood type with a heart of gold. Need I say more?

HERMAN
Thanks, but there's this book that needs finishing.

MEG
Just come for an hour.

Herman sighs.

INT. HERMAN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Herman enters his room to find the litter box filled with poop. The window is open. Snookums is nowhere to be seen.

HERMAN
(searching)
Snookums?

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Herman confronts his father.

HERMAN
Have you seen Snookums?

MITCH
Who?

HERMAN
My cat.

Mitch shrugs.

MITCH
You have a cat? Must be why your room smelled to high heaven. I had to open a window.

HERMAN
Because you didn't clean the litter box--

MITCH
Who am I, your serf?

HERMAN
--and therefore Snookums has escaped.

MITCH
You were allergic anyway. I say good riddance.

HERMAN
(giving up)
You're probably right.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

A small party is in progress. Herman mills about with his Aunt Meg and her boyfriend, LEONARD. Herman does not look like he's having fun.

MEG

There's Diana. The girl I want to set you up with.

(calling)

Diana!

DIANA approaches.

DIANA

(ignores Meg; hugs Leonard)

Leonard, you look fantastic!

LEONARD

Hey Diana. You remember Meg.

DIANA

I don't believe we've met. But you're the foxiest lady Leonard has brought around here, and I've known him for two years.

MEG

We've been dating for three - exclusively.

DIANA

(embarrassed)

Excuse me, I think I see my friends.

Diana walks away. Meg raises her eyebrows at Leonard.

LEONARD

(sheepishly)

She was just drunk.

Herman moves to the bar, where a pretty BARTENDER mixes drinks.

HERMAN

Something to put the fire out please.

BARTENDER

Is that a line?

HERMAN
Forget I mentioned it.

INT. MEG'S CAR - NIGHT

Meg drives Herman home.

MEG
I can't believe Leonard! That
dirty, rotten scoundrel.

HERMAN
Who can blame him for wanting to
stay. He was having a good time.

MEG
Did you hear what that bitch said?
Leonard's polygamous.

HERMAN
You're not married. You'd have to
be married to practice polygamy.

MEG
I told you we're exclusive. Look do
me a favor. Call Diana and find out
if what she said about Leonard
having other girlfriends was true.

HERMAN
Leonard was right, she did look
pretty drunk.

MEG
I don't trust him. He goes to the
gym for hours every day, and his
belly is only getting bigger! What
is he doing at the gym if not
picking up women?

HERMAN
Pilates? Getting a massage?

MEG
I just know he's cheating on me.

HERMAN
I have a question. Where does
Leonard sleep?

MEG

With me. I mean we have separate bedrooms, but we live together. You know that.

HERMAN

And has he ever stayed out all night?

MEG

No.

HERMAN

So who cares where he spends a few hours each day. He comes home to you. This is not your first rodeo, either of you. Just be happy you've found someone who you don't hate.

MEG

You sound like your father. You're too young to be so over the hill.

They drive in silence.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

Herman stands in front of an eye chart. His father stands ten feet away. Herman points to the biggest letter. They are arguing.

HERMAN

I expect more of you. You're supposed to be the more mature person.

MITCH

I am the more mature person. When we argue, it is a given that she is in the wrong.

HERMAN

If I get into a fight with a six-year-old, you don't blame the child do you?

MITCH

I should have known better than to marry a religious fanatic.

(MORE)

MITCH (CONT'D)

Sophia thinks she can commit all manner of misdeeds during the week, confess on Sunday and poof, all gets absolved like magic. She lives in a world without consequences.

HERMAN

And you hide behind spirituality. Rather than worship some Indian guru--

MITCH

Don't call--Swami Rama is not some Indian guru. He is God incarnate. An avatar of Vishnu. I have been a follower of his teachings for fifty years and never wavered once.

HERMAN

Were you a follower when you were married to Mom?

MITCH

Of course I was. You know this.

HERMAN

And did Swami condone adultery?

MITCH

No, but--

HERMAN

So you stopped being a follower the moment you had your affair.

MITCH

You're entitled to your opinion.

HERMAN

Does the name Jesus Christ mean anything to you?

MITCH

Now you sound like Sophia.

HERMAN

Christ said, 'My brethren are those who hear the teachings, and live them.'

MITCH

Jesus is dead.

HERMAN

So is your swami.

MITCH

It's true he left the body ten years ago, but God is omnipresent.

HERMAN

Then see God in your wife.

MITCH

Tsch. Sophia can be the devil.

HERMAN

So much the better's the accomplishment. You're supposed to love your enemies.

MITCH

I didn't say she's my enemy. She's--she's hardly ever around these days. It's more like loving a ghost. Your mother--

HERMAN

Don't drag your ex-wife into this. It's not fair to your current one. Now come on and focus.

Herman points to a letter on the chart.

MITCH

E. Don't you think I know that's an E? What do you think I am, blind?

Herman points to the next letter.

MITCH (CONT'D)

(making excuses)

My head is bothering me. I need to sit down.

HERMAN

Just tell me what you see.

MITCH

I can't. I give up.

HERMAN

You'll never pass that eye exam.

MITCH

I have macular something or other,
and cataracts. What do you expect,
20/20?

HERMAN

That's what I'm trying to tell you.
No driving until we see a doctor.

MITCH

I can see fine. It's the fine print
that's blurry. Besides, I only go
to and from the office. I could get
there with my eyes closed.

HERMAN

You practically do.

Herman takes the keys.

HERMAN (CONT'D)

I'm late for work. And I'm taking
your car.

Mitch tries to grab the keys.

HERMAN (CONT'D)

I moved in with you so I could keep
an eye on you.

MITCH

You moved in because you had no
place else to go after what's her
name ousted you.

HERMAN

That's not true.

MITCH

Oh really? Eva didn't break up with
you?

HERMAN

She did, but I chose to move out.

MITCH

Paint it however you'd like.

HERMAN

You've got to let me help you. And
if you act like a child, that's how
I'll treat you.

Herman leaves.

MITCH
 (calls out)
 Please, Son! I need my freedom!
 (to himself)
 This getting old thing is a real
 pain in the ass!

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Herman lecturing.

HERMAN
 Socrates is considered the father
 of philosophy, but he may have also
 been the world's first
 psychotherapist. In Plato's
Dialogues, what does Socrates do?
 He asks questions. He pretends to
 know nothing. Starting from
 scratch, taking nothing for
 granted, in an air of openness,
 curiosity, willingness to explore,
 he looks, and he listens. See,
 Socrates believed each of us
 already has the answers to all
 life's problems. We just have to
 ask the right questions.
 (waits)
 Any questions?

He scans the class. At the back, an arm comes up. It belongs
 to Andrea, who has been sitting there without his knowing it.

ANDREA
 How was Socrates on apologies?

HERMAN
 (keeps composure)
 Funny you should ask. Arguably the
 most famous *Dialogue* is called The
 Apology. Socrates is sentenced to
 death by his own people, made to
 drink poison. The charge:
 corrupting the youth, by getting
 them to question everything and
 think freely. In the original
 sense, *apology* doesn't mean
 acknowledgment of wrongdoing. It
 means a reasoned argument in
 justification of something.
 (MORE)

HERMAN (CONT'D)

In Socrates' case, a legal defense for the accusation of impiety and corruption. Socrates represented himself to the jury.

ANDREA

So in addition to being a philosopher and a psychologist, he was also the world's first lawyer.

HERMAN

(impressed)

See me after class and we'll discuss this further, Ms...?

ANDREA

Alves.

INT. CAMPUS COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Herman and Andrea stand at the counter awaiting their beverages. The BARISTA is so smitten by Andrea that the blended drink he is making explodes in the blender and splatters all over him. Andrea doesn't notice.

As they walk out:

ANDREA

I'm sorry about the other night. I was getting over a break-up and drowning my sorrows in liquid aminos.

HERMAN

I understand. How long has it been?

ANDREA

Since the breakup? Four days.

HERMAN

I'm getting over one of my own.

ANDREA

How long?

HERMAN

Four years.

ANDREA

You were together for four years?

HERMAN

We were together for eighteen months. We broke up four years ago. I'm a slow healer.

EXT. CAMPUS - DAY

Herman and Andrea walk through the campus. They pass a group of MALE STUDENTS kicking a soccer ball around. The students stop and stare at Andrea. The ball hits a student in the face.

They pass a TREE TRIMMER who is so spellbound by her beauty, he falls from the tree.

A JOGGER stares at her as he runs into a wall.

Only Herman notices this.

ANDREA

So you speak Portuguese?

HERMAN

You noticed.

ANDREA

I wasn't *that* out of it.

HERMAN

No, no. It was so loud in that place. Actually I'm grateful. I can talk myself out of a corner. Into one, too. Not being able to communicate verbally forced me to engage at the physical level.

ANDREA

You mean--

HERMAN

Dancing. Okay, swaying.

ANDREA

Shuffling is more like it.

They laugh.

HERMAN

We can switch to Portuguese any time. But I have to warn you, I have the conversational skills of a ten-year-old.

ANDREA

Then you'll get along great with my son, Noah. He's ten.

HERMAN

I'd love to meet him.

EXT. STREET - DAY

They walk past a bus stop which features a giant poster of Andrea modeling underwear.

HERMAN

(re: poster)

This is surreal.

ANDREA

Not bad for a woman in her forties with two kids.

HERMAN

(stunned)

I don't think I could ever get used to the idea of twelve million people following me. That's like, a million times more than Jesus Christ, and he was the savior of the race.

ANDREA

Twelve million is nothing. You know Cristiano Ronaldo?

HERMAN

I saw you two on the cover of GQ.

ANDREA

John Lennon said the Beatles were bigger than Jesus Christ. With 600 million followers, Ronaldo is even bigger than the Beatles.

HERMAN

It must be like *Truman Show*, everyone watching your every move, only you know it.

ANDREA

I can't take the credit. I didn't design this body or this face. I've worked hard, but the raw material was already there. It's no big deal really.

(MORE)

ANDREA (CONT'D)

There are so many media outlets, we can walk down the street and nobody even notices me. Celebrity is not what it used to be.

A PASSERBY stops for an autograph.

ANDREA (CONT'D)

Well, sometimes it is.

HERMAN

I'm usually the one who gets hit up for autographs. It's a nice change.

ANDREA

Really?

HERMAN

No.

PAPARAZZI instantly appear and descend on the couple, snapping a million pics.

ANDREA

Like flies to shit.

HERMAN

Or honey.

ANDREA

Come with me.

She leads him around the corner and into the public library.

INT. PUBLIC LIBRARY - DAY

They duck into an aisle and wait for the photographers to pass by the window.

ANDREA

This is one of my great escapes. The public library is one of the last bastions of silence.

(beat)

Anyway what was I saying? Oh yes, maya. It's all maya. That means illusion in Sanskrit.

HERMAN

I know what maya is. My dad is, like, an honorary Hindu. I'm just surprised that you do. It's not exactly a household term.

ANDREA

Well there's a lot beneath the surface of me.

HERMAN

For instance?

A photographer enters. Andrea leads Herman into another aisle. As the dialogue ensues they play cat-and-mouse with this photographer.

ANDREA

I'm a self-help junkie.

(pointing to various books)

I've read this one, and this one, and that one, twice. Practically this whole section, although I don't remember much of what I read. It's in one eye, out the other.

HERMAN

I wouldn't have taken you for a reader.

ANDREA

Do I look like such an airhead?

HERMAN

No. It's just that not many people read anymore.

ANDREA

Fashion is so superficial. A girl needs a little substance to, you know, balance her aura. Besides, there's a lot of downtime on set. If I didn't keep myself occupied between takes I'd lose my marbles. I mean, how much social media can a person take?

HERMAN

A lot, if you're like most people.

ANDREA

I've even read you.

HERMAN

I'm flattered, and also sorry that my book didn't help you and your husband.

ANDREA
Ex-husband.

She buries her face in a book. They wait for the photographer to pass by the aisle. She leads him up the stairs.

ANDREA (CONT'D)
And it would have taken more than a whole library of how-to books to save that marriage. Obviously.

HERMAN
(genuinely impressed)
You really are more than just a pretty face.

ANDREA
To Marcus I was, I mean wasn't. Marcus is my ex.

HERMAN
Let me guess. Was he cruel? Insensitive? Unfaithful? Abusive? All of the above? Usually when I ask a person why their relationship failed, it's always their partner's fault.

ANDREA
See, I don't believe that. I believe when you point the finger of blame at someone, three fingers point back at you.

HERMAN
I say that all the time!

A LIBRARIAN overhears them.

LIBRARIAN
Keep your voice down.

HERMAN
(softer)
I say that all the time.

ANDREA
That's probably where I got it from.
(laughs)
As I see it, a failed marriage provides the opportunity for introspection and self-evaluation.
(MORE)

ANDREA (CONT'D)

Marcus may have had a bad temper, and he wasn't the best communicator, it's true. But I was self-absorbed, self-righteous, shallow, and had unrealistic expectations. I expected the relationship to be all sunny days. What I wouldn't accept is that there are rainy days, too, and cold ones, and sad ones, that make you feel blue. Did I mention I am also a poet?

(laughs)

And Kevin was right.

HERMAN

Who's Kevin?

ANDREA

I mean Marcus. Kevin was my last boyfriend. We weren't together long enough to have serious problems. Kevin was just a fling. But Marcus, the father of my children, he brought the best out in me, and also the worst. Yes, I was self-centered, and maybe I still am. You spend enough time in the spotlight, it's bound to go to your head. And I'm also a bit shallow. I'll admit it. How else could I do what I do. But I'm in on the secret. That's what separates me from the pack, you see. I know the game. The world of fashion is like the emperor's new clothes, you are familiar with the story. Except we are not naked. We wear Tom Ford. But I don't have unrealistic expectations of where it will all lead. The illusion is bound to end sooner or later. The pretty face also. I accept the fact. The ride was worth the fall. I don't know what I'll do when it's all over, and I don't care, because I live in the present. Not bad for a small-town girl from southern Brazil, wouldn't you say?

HERMAN

Is Erechim such a small town?

The photographer is getting warmer. Andrea pulls Herman into the ladies' restroom.

INT. RESTROOM - DAY

Thankfully it's empty.

ANDREA

How did you know I was born in Erechim?

HERMAN

I know a lot of things about you, not just where you were born, but also your birthday. I know your height and weight, how and when you started modelling. I know your parents' names, and that you have a sister. I know you had your ears pinned back at the age of eleven and swore off plastic surgery ever since. And let's see, you've had two serious boyfriends since Marcus, the aforementioned Kevin being one, the other one's name I can't remember. And from the looks of things, you're one hell of a kisser.

Andrea doesn't know quite how to take this.

HERMAN (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, I've just never met someone with such a substantial web presence. I feel I know you better than all of my ex-girlfriends combined.

ANDREA

They didn't have their own Wikipedia--

HERMAN

(laughs)

I don't mean just what I've found online, but what you've told me in the last ten minutes. You're amazing, dynamic, articulate, and self-aware. All that and you're a perfect ten. They keep bugging me about it, but you're the one who should be on TV.

ANDREA

My English is not so good. I don't mean my vocabulary, it's my accent.

(MORE)

ANDREA (CONT'D)

After a while my tongue gets tired
and I start to slur. I sound like
I've had too many caipirinhas.

HERMAN

You could have fooled me.

She pulls him out of the restroom. The coast seems to be clear.

INT. LIBRARY - DAY

As they exit the restroom the photographer blocks their way.

PHOTOGRAPHER

(snapping photo)
Say cheese!

INT. CAR - DAY

Herman drives.

ANDREA

Tell me something. Is it true that
therapists are broken people who
are trying to fix themselves?

HERMAN

In my case, it was my parents'
marriage I couldn't fix. They
separated when I was in my
twenties. I think they were
suffering the whole empty nesters'
syndrome. I thought they could work
things out but there was too much
hostility, so I did what any normal
college kid would do and slipped
them some ecstasy.

ANDREA

You did what?

HERMAN

I gave them ecstasy. The club drug.

ANDREA

I know what ecstasy is. But why in
God's name did you give it to your
parents?

HERMAN

It was my mother's idea. She thought it'd help my dad open up.

ANDREA

So what happened?

HERMAN

I mixed it in their drinks. I thought I'd make use of the time before it kicked in and make a quick trip to the market. That was my mistake. While I was out they argued and my dad stormed away. He spent the night at his mistress's house.

ANDREA

On ecstasy?

HERMAN

(nods)

It worked like a truth serum. He told his mistress he was still seeing my mother, and my mother he was still seeing his mistress.

ANDREA

Everything went kaboom.

HERMAN

I've spent a career cleaning up that mess with other people.

ANDREA

Is that way you've never married, because you are still traumatized about your parents?

HERMAN

(thinks)

I don't have an easy answer for that.

EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

Andrea's son NOAH runs into his mother's arms.

INT. CAR - LATER

Herman drives, Noah sits in the back seat.

ANDREA

(to Noah)

Can you say *Tudo bem? Tudo joia?*

(to Herman)

I'm trying to teach my son Portuguese. It's hard, with his father being American, and we only get to Brazil once a year.

NOAH

Are you Brazilian?

HERMAN

(trying)

Nao mais eu morava la anos atras.

NOAH

What?

ANDREA

(laughs)

We're still learning.

HERMAN

Me too.

EXT. SCHOOL - LATER

Andrea's daughter, BRISA (15), comes to the car.

ANDREA

Brisa, meet my friend Herman.

BRISA

Mom, where's your car? You promised you'd let me drive.

ANDREA

Brisa has her learner's permit.

HERMAN

Say no more.

Herman flips her the keys.

INT. CAR - DAY

Brisa backs out of the school driveway, turns too soon and hits a tree, denting the side of the car. A group of students watches her. She starts to cry.

HERMAN

It's okay. It's not even my car.

BRISA

(feeling better)

Whose car is it?

HERMAN

My dad's. With all the dings, he won't even notice.

EXT. ANDREA'S HOUSE - DAY

Herman walks them to the door.

HERMAN

It's been a real blast.

ANDREA

Let's do it again sometime, minus the fender bender. Which I'll pay for of course.

The kids enter the house.

HERMAN

Are you free for dinner tomorrow?

ANDREA

I'd love that.

HERMAN

OK, I'll pick you up, say at around seven?

Andrea kisses Herman's cheek and skips up the steps.

EXT. CAMPUS - DAY

Herman rides his bicycle through campus, gets a lot of odd looks and gestures from students and faculty.

INT. FACULTY REC ROOM - DAY

Herman eats lunch. At a nearby table, other faculty members are huddled around a magazine. They laugh in his direction.

The dean (STANTON) approaches Herman. He flops a copy of the magazine in front of him. The magazine shows a picture of Herman and Andrea exiting the library ladies' room.

The caption reads: Victoria Secret Model With New Mystery Man Engage in Hanky Panky.

STANTON

(officially)

As dean of this fine institution, I speak for the powers that be when I say this kind of publicity will not be tolerated. Keep your personal life out of the tabloids, Herman. Who do you think we are, USC?

WISECRACKER #1

At least it wasn't of Hank with a student.

WISECRACKER #2

Not this time it wasn't

STANTON

And I hear you're peppering your lectures with Socratic anecdotes again. How many times have I told you, you're not teaching the foundations of thought in 3rd century Athens. You're teaching modern interpersonal psychoanalytic theory. Freud. Adler. Maslow. Jung. Yes, yes?

Stanton leaves. The wisecrackers are still going on about the tabloids.

WISECRACKER #1

(to Herman)

Are you on TikTok? Snapchat? Why not make the press your best friend and cash in on all that free publicity.

WISECRACKER #2

We can help you with that!

Laughter all around. Herman gets up and leaves.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Herman doing paperwork. The phone RINGS.

HERMAN

Hello? Hi!

ANDREA (V.O.)

Hi. I wanted to let you know I booked a photo shoot, so I can't make dinner.

HERMAN

Oh. OK. Maybe we can do it another time?

ANDREA

Why don't you join me!

EXT. PHOTO SHOOT - BEACH - DAY

Herman watches Andrea pose for the camera with a hot male model (DIEGO). The director clocks Herman and mistakes him for a film grip.

DIRECTOR

(to Herman)

You there, it's not lunch yet. Get back to work!

He hands Herman an aluminum shield reflector and positions him by the camera.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Herman and Andrea walk along the beach after the shoot.

HERMAN

I can't believe you get paid for that!

ANDREA

You try looking like you're having a good time while holding your breath in waist deep freezing water for thirty seconds, then do it again twenty more times. I earned every penny of that ten grand.

A soccer ball rolls their way. Andrea picks it up, twirls it deftly. It's clear she's an athlete. Diego runs up to them.

Andrea makes like she's going to give the ball back, but keeps it.

DIEGO

(familiar)

Playing hard to get again?

ANDREA

What do you say to a little two on two?

DIEGO

Challenge accepted.

HERMAN

I'm not much of a volleyball player.

ANDREA

Not volleyball. Footvolley, it's part soccer, part volleyball.

HERMAN

I'm not much of a soccer player either. I haven't done much of anything but pencil pushing since grad school.

ANDREA

Come on. You've lived in Rio. That's the capital of the sport. You'll be a natural.

EXT. BEACH VOLLEYBALL COURT - DAY

Andrea and Herman against Diego and Director.

A SERIES OF SHOTS as we see Herman standing behind Andrea, staring at her behind. Diego, taking the game very seriously, serves. Herman is so distracted by the view of Andrea that the ball lands right in front of him. 1-0.

Diego serves again. Herman and Andrea both go for the ball, run into each other, Herman grabs her to keep her from falling down, holds her. She smiles at him. They look at each other. 2-0.

Diego serves a third time. Andrea heads the ball to the director, who kicks it in Herman's direction. Herman dives for it, falls, Andrea falls on top of him. They laugh like children. 3-0.

Diego may be winning the match, but Herman is winning the war.

DIEGO

You two are a laughingstock.

ANDREA

We're just getting warmed up.

DIEGO
Oh yeah? Prove it.

ANDREA
Winner take all.

Herman serves the ball to Diego, who chests it to his knee then kicks it to Andrea, who heads it to Herman, who shoulders it to the director, who knees it to Diego, who showboats a little before kicking it to Andrea and so forth in the longest rally ever until the director knocks it to Diego at the net who goes up for a header as Herman jumps to block the header and they butt heads and crumble to the ground, the ball landing on the opposing side.

ANDREA (CONT'D)
We win!

She gives a dazed Herman a high five.

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

Herman and Andrea sit on the beach with the rest of the crew. They are a little off to the side. There is a barbecue. Fruity cocktails. A bonfire. Nice music plays. Andrea takes a hit off a joint, hands it to Herman. He declines.

HERMAN
Need a refill?

She nods. Herman takes their cups and goes over to the bar. From this vantage point he sees Diego whisper something in Andrea's ear. She nods.

MELANIE (O.S.)
Hi.

Herman turns to see a PRETTY YOUNG LADY (Melanie).

MELANIE (CONT'D)
Hi.
(laughs)
I'm Melanie. Wardrobe assistant.
Well, assistant to the assistant
but not for much longer if I play
my cards right.

HERMAN
I'm Herman.

MELANIE
I know who you are. You're Andrea's
flavor of the week.
(MORE)

MELANIE (CONT'D)
 (Herman stares into his
 cup)

How about you and me go for a ride
 in my cabana...since your
 girlfriend is busy.

Herman watches Andrea and Diego walk towards a boat on the
 dock and enter it.

HERMAN
 No thanks.

MELANIE
 Why not? It'll only take a minute.
 If you're like most guys.

HERMAN
 I'm sorry. I don't want to miss my
 flight.

She shrugs. Herman sets down the drinks and walks to his car.

MELANIE
 (calls out)
 Don't let anyone mess with your
 head. You're better than that!

INT. AUTOMOBILE REPAIR SHOP - DAY

Herman sits in the waiting room, flipping through magazines.
 The waiting area has a rotating stack of books. He sees a
 woman (GAYLE) browsing the selection. He catches her eye and
 they smile. The RECEPTIONIST calls out:

RECEPTIONIST
 Winslow? Car's ready.

Herman motions "one minute" and approaches Gayle from behind.

HERMAN
 (re: book)
 I wouldn't recommend that author.

GAYLE
 No?

HERMAN
 Much too verbose.

Playing along, she picks up another book.

HERMAN (CONT'D)

What can he possibly know about staying together when he's been divorced twice!

GAYLE

(playing along)

What would you recommend?

Herman picks up a book.

HERMAN

Now this guy. To the point. Never been divorced - possibly because he's never been married. And I know him personally, so I can say he's a really good guy.

Herman hands her the book, which happens to be one of his own. She smiles, charmed.

GAYLE

I'll think about it. It's a gift for my sister.

HERMAN

(re: accent)

Are you Australian?

GAYLE

I'm from New Zealand. People always get us confused.

HERMAN

Australia and New Zealand?

GAYLE

Me and my sister. We're twins.

HERMAN

(shyly)

I'd like to hear more about it. Say, over drinks?

GAYLE

(thinks)

Thanks, but--

HERMAN

Look at me, name dropping my own self. Pathetic.

GAYLE

It's not that. I'm married. But my
sister is available.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Herman dines with the sister (GWEN). She's fifty pounds heavier than her sister, eats like a horse, and drinks copiously as she goes off about her ex.

GWEN

What a piece of shit. He moved in with me because he needed a place to crash after, like, two weeks of dating, and you know how they say you never really know a person? Well, I found out he was running some Ponzi scheme. Out of my garage, if you can believe it. Obviously I dumped him but he refused to leave. I threatened to call the cops and told him to be out by the time I was back from my sister's. You know what he did? He set fire to my bed. Fortunately I came home before the whole place went up in flames. I had to get a restraining order. And he still owes me ten months in back child support.

(beat)

What about you? What's your worst dating nightmare?

HERMAN

(to himself)

I'm living it.

(to waiter)

We'll take the check.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Herman opens the door to see:

HERMAN

Eva. What a surprise.

Eva lets herself in.

EVA

I'm like herpes. You'll never get rid of me. Where's my cat?

HERMAN

Snookums?

EVA

I went to your father's and he said he's never heard of you having a cat.

HERMAN

Yes, there is that. Snookums has gone missing, I'm afraid. I've scoured the neighborhood. I've posted signs. I've done everything in my power to locate the beast but he hasn't shown up.

She swats him.

EVA

You're the beast. I knew I couldn't trust you to give him the proper care.

HERMAN

You made me take him.

She swats him again.

HERMAN (CONT'D)

Ouch. Stop that.

EVA

I'm bereaved.

HERMAN

Don't jump the gun.

Eva holds up her phone. It shows the now-infamous picture of him and Andrea.

EVA

Will you explain this?

HERMAN

(tables are turned)

I don't have to explain anything to you. We broke up.

EVA

So now you finally admit it, after five years.

HERMAN

Four. And yes, I'm finally over you.

EVA

(abruptly changes tune)
Can't we give it another try. I miss you.

HERMAN

You're just jealous because I moved on.

EVA

Takes one to know one.

HERMAN

Speaking of which, where's Mr. Marine?

EVA

He got stationed abroad. Oh, what does it matter. I'm single and available. You're here and alone.

She tries to kiss him. Herman closes the door.

HERMAN

Look, Eva. There's a lot we need to discuss.

EVA

Enough talking. That's all we did when we were together. Yap yap yap yap yap.

HERMAN

I seem to remember there was a lot of communicating between the sheets.

EVA

(wistfully)
You remember.

HERMAN

I remember that you were like a tigress about three days out of thirty. The rest of the time was a frigid nightmare. A prolonged PMS--

EVA

You were no walk in the park.
Moody, withdrawn, depressed,
insanely jealous.

HERMAN

I had ample reason to be jealous.
All my suspicions were confirmed.

EVA

And your holier than thou attitude,
just because you have a few
initials after your name.

HERMAN

You were on the phone every waking
hour, texting, shopping,
documenting all the trivial
minutiae of your existence. As if
anyone cared.

EVA

The Navy Seal cared.

HERMAN

Of course that's how you met. You
used your Instagram as a dating
app. While we were living together!
There's a name for ignoring your
partner for your phone, you know.
It's, it's, I think it rhymes with
snubbing. Oh I can't remember.

EVA

You could look it up if you had a
phone.

HERMAN

Face it, the grass is always
greener with you, Eva. You're like
that Groucho Marx joke, "I would
never join a club who would have
someone like me as a member."

EVA

I don't see how that applies to me.

HERMAN

Now that I don't want you, you're
all over me.

EVA

So you're saying we're through? I
never thought the day would come.

HERMAN

I'm saying it was good while it lasted. You need to find yourself, Eva. And you need to stop looking in the wrong places. Everything is a phase with you. I was a phase. Ballroom dancing was a phase. Baha'ism was a phase.

EVA

I'm still into Baha'i.

HERMAN

Raw foodism was a phase. Am I missing any -isms? I'm not going to be another phase, because I don't do repeats.

AMBER appears at the door.

EVA

You!
 (mistaking her for Andrea)
 You're not nearly as good-looking in person.
 (to Herman; salvaging dignity)
 I just came to tell you, face to face and once and for all, we're through!

Eva storms off.

HERMAN

(calls out)
 You know what, you are like herpes. You are a real pain in the ass!
 (to Amber)
 Hi!

AMBER

Who was that?

HERMAN

My ex. If you'd have come a moment later, we would have been at each other's throats or in each other's pants. It coulda gone either way.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Herman is going around his office collecting framed photos of Eva and depositing them in the trash as Amber watches.

HERMAN

What did you want to see me about?

AMBER

Two things. First, a letter of recommendation, for when I apply to grad school.

HERMAN

And the real reason?

AMBER

Relationship advice. There's this guy. How do I make him like me?

HERMAN

I'm sure you have no problem in that department.

Beat.

AMBER

What happened between you and her.

HERMAN

Me and Eva?

(sighs)

I couldn't make her love me. I did it all. The poetry. The flowers. Back massages until my finger were numb. Trips to Las Vegas. I hate Las Vegas. Fancy jewelry I'll never pay off.

AMBER

She wasn't satisfied?

HERMAN

She just took, took, took. And I just took it, took it, took it.

AMBER

You were her hero.

HERMAN

(over her)

I was a martyr. Marx said it best: "If you love without calling forth love, then your love is impotent, a misfortune."

AMBER

What did Groucho Marx know about love?

HERMAN

Not Groucho. Karl Marx.

AMBER

The communist? What did he know?

(Herman smiles)

It sounds to me like she didn't appreciate you. You need someone to make you feel potent again.

HERMAN

(in a reverie)

All I asked of Eva was that she let me love her. She wound up bored and irritated. And like some glutton for punishment, I tolerated her shenanigans - Christ she'd fuck anything with a pulse - until the day she kicked me out of my own house, which was the day after she had sex with the poolman. I should have known what I was getting into. Eva was married when we met, but managed to keep it a secret.

(catching himself)

I shouldn't be revealing all this.

AMBER

It sounds to me like Eva was your Xanthippe.

HERMAN

My who?

AMBER

The wife of Socrates.

Herman looks at her.

HERMAN

I think you'll make a fine psychologist.

AMBER

Know what I think? I think you need to hop right back in the saddle.

HERMAN

No no. Eva cured me of my foolish romanticism.

(she approaches him)

Amber, please.

AMBER

I'd like to show you something. I bought this new outfit, for that certain someone I'm hoping to impress. You think he'll like it?

Amber wiggles out of her dress to reveal a lace negligee. She comes around to Herman's side, sits on his lap. They regard each other for a long moment.

Dean Stanton appears at the door. Amber jumps up, covers herself. Herman looks away.

INT. STANTON'S OFFICE - DAY

Stanton is at his desk, lecturing Herman.

STANTON

(reads)

"Romantic involvement between a teacher and student raises ethical concerns due to power imbalances within this dynamic. Teachers hold positions of authority over their students, which could potentially lead to exploitation or manipulation if taken advantage of."

(beat)

I'm sure you are aware that this calls for immediate dismissal.

HERMAN

(half-heartedly)

It's not what it looked like.

STANTON

All I have to do is get the ethics committee involved, again--

HERMAN

That was a long time ago.

STANTON

I'll need a written apology, for your file.

HERMAN

Don't be ridiculous. Why would I provide you with an admission of guilt when I did nothing wrong?

(Stanton won't budge)

(MORE)

HERMAN (CONT'D)

Forget it. I was going to ask for a leave of absence anyway.

STANTON

Well you've got it, except this is permanent. No apology, no leniency. Final chance.

(Herman won't budge)

Why are you making this harder on yourself than it needs to be? Can't you see I'm trying to help you?

Herman stares out the window.

STANTON (CONT'D)

In that case, I ask that you turn in your lesson plans and progress reports. So as not to jeopardize future employment I will note in your file that you tendered your resignation. That's as far as concessions go.

HERMAN

That's very kind of you, considering I did nothing wrong.

STANTON

(arranging papers)

I don't know if this is some sort of midlife crisis you're going through, but--

When Stanton looks up, Herman is gone - only to reenter.

HERMAN

You wanna know the real reason I never got married? I knew the day would come when I'd wake up and not feel like going into work, but with a family I couldn't quit so I'd be stuck. Well that day has come, and I'm outta here.

STANTON

You're not quitting, Herman. I'm firing you.

Herman leaves.

STANTON (CONT'D)

(to himself)

Definitely a midlife crisis.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

Herman plops down in front of the TV next to his dad. He hands him a beer. Mitch waves it off. Herman cracks it open and takes a long pull, draining the can.

MITCH

Long day?

HERMAN

You could say that again.

MITCH

Yeah, well. Try doing nothing. See how time really slows down. But I've become so forgetful that I lose track, so it all balances out. That's gallows humor for you.

(beat)

So what is it, girl trouble?

HERMAN

In a way.

MITCH

Don't act rashly. Be gentle on her. She's in a tight place and feeling contrite and being vulnerable. Look past your hurt and rejection, which is what this is, and remember the love you both shared.

HERMAN

Who are you talking about?

MITCH

Your mother and I were together for thirty years, raised three kids, and one of them died.

HERMAN

You raised two kids, Dad.

MITCH

And one of them died. We didn't see eye to eye, and we couldn't go on harmoniously. It doesn't mean I don't still love her.

HERMAN

Who are you talking about, Mom or Sam?

MITCH

Your mother was the love of my life. The other relationships have been fillers. I mean I love Sophia, but it's a different form of love. It's a special bond to raise kids, and you're getting up there.

(beat)

My hope is that you will experience that intense, lasting love that brings life into the world. Or adds to its beauty. Even by raising another man's child.

HERMAN

Dad, who are you talking about?

MITCH

Your girlfriend, Eva. Isn't she your girlfriend?

HERMAN

We broke up.

MITCH

Good, because there's someone I'd like for you to meet.

(calls out)

Hermosita!

HERMOSITA enters.

MITCH (CONT'D)

Meet my new caregiver, Hermosita.

HERMAN

Caregiver? When did this happen?

MITCH

Sophie finally had enough. Said she needs help with things like cooking and cleaning. But no bathing. At least not yet.

(he spans Hermosita on the behind)

Hermosita, meet my son, Herman. Hermosita is a native of Peru. Her English is only so-so, which means you won't have anything to fight about.

HERMAN

Hello.

(Hermosita nods)

MITCH

Do you have a date for the wedding?

HERMAN

What wedding?

MITCH

Your cousin Austin is getting married this weekend. Hermosita would love to be your date. I already talked her into it. Herman and Hermosita. Has quite a ring, don't it!

Herman looks at Hermosita, who smiles shyly.

EXT. WEDDING - DAY

It's a garden wedding reception. A SERIES OF SHOTS showing Herman and Hermosita having a nice time.

Sophie comes over to Herman.

SOPHIE

I hate to bother you, but could you go talk to your father? He's throwing a conniption.

HERMAN

What about?

SOPHIE

Says he's not having a good time. He wants to leave.

Herman approaches his father, who is sitting off by himself.

MITCH

Get me a taxi.

HERMAN

(a little tipsy)

Dad, the reception is just getting started. Drink, dance, have a few laughs.

MITCH

I don't need to be told what to do. Get me a taxi. I'll be inside waiting.

Herman returns to Sophie.

HERMAN

Maybe I can drive him home and come back.

SOPHIE

It took us two hours to get here. By the time you get back the party will be over. I'll call an Uber.

HERMAN

I'll go inside and keep him company.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

Herman walks in, sees his father lying back on the sofa. It looks like he's asleep.

HERMAN

Dad?
(louder)
Dad?

Herman sits down next to his father, puts his hand on his chest, then on his neck. He hangs his head low. Mitch is dead.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

Herman opens the door to see his sister, SAMANTHA. They embrace.

EXT. BACKYARD - DAY

Herman sits with Aunt Meg, Sophie, and Samantha. It is after Mitch's funeral. There is an urn on the table. Everybody sort of stares at it.

SOPHIE

I'm thinking of burying it in the backyard.

MEG

You mean the ashes?

SOPHIE

The whole thing. What do I need a urn for without any ashes in it? Unless someone else is planning on dying soon. Speaking of which, where's Leonard?

MEG

(subdued)

I caught him having an affair.

Herman abruptly stands.

HERMAN

I'd like to say a few words if I may.

(beat)

The way I like to remember my father is in Ray Bans and a three-piece suit, with his slicked-back hair in his black BMW. He was the first to own a mobile phone. He was the first to do many things. He had his finger on the pulse.

Vegetarianism. Hindu holy man.

Kombucha. He was a brilliant litigator and a charming devil when he wanted to be. I remember him as the man who had all the answers and called all the shots. He was my best friend. That's something of a cliché, but if I go simply by the number of hours we spent together since he and my mother split 20 years ago, there's no one I've spent more time with. He brought me into this world, he was the hero of my youth, and in the end, he was my best friend. I never told him I loved him. I showed him. They say imitation is the highest form of flattery. Well, everything I've done in life - books, graduate school, jogging - has been me imitating my father.

(beat)

My dad hated psychology. He regarded it as a pseudoscience that indulged the neuroses of spoiled brats. Becoming a therapist was the first and only time I disappointed him. I studied psychology to understand the complex personality that was Mitch Winslow.

(MORE)

HERMAN (CONT'D)

My training taught me that although never formerly diagnosed, because he avoided shrinks like the plague, he was narcissistic, emotionally stunted, a melodramatic, megalomaniacal prig who passed off uninvestigated opinions as home truths, a man whose holier than thou attitude masked a ludicrous hypocrisy, who himself was guilty of every flaw he perceived in others, and he was the most critical person I ever met. Except for maybe me.

(beat)

I followed in his footsteps in all this as well. But whereas my dad hid behind the mask of spirituality, psychology has been my mask. Well, I'm done hiding.

EXT. GARDEN - DAY

Herman sits on the back porch sipping a beer. Samantha appears beside him. They clink glasses.

HERMAN

I'm glad you came. I know how you are about flying. It's good to see you.

SAMANTHA

You too. Did he ever ask about me?

HERMAN

Often. Usually in the past tense. But often. I'd suggest he call you, but he'd turn it on you.

SAMANTHA

He hated me for not being a boy and when I tried to be one he hated me even more.

HERMAN

That's because he was a malcontent. And with that I'm officially through badmouthing the deceased.

SAMANTHA

You know Sophie will probably sell this house.

HERMAN

She probably will.

SAMANTHA

She probably already put it on the market.

HERMAN

She probably did.

SAMANTHA

Where will you go?

HERMAN

I'm trying to live in the present.
How's Toni?

SAMANTHA

Good. She wanted to come, I said what for? Flowers are for the living, you know?

HERMAN

Yeah.

SAMANTHA

You seeing anybody?
(Herman shakes his head,
no)
You been using that phone I got you for your birthday?

HERMAN

I been meaning to.

SAMANTHA

I installed some cool apps.
(beat)
And Herman, you can always come live with me.

HERMAN

With you and your girlfriend in Hell's Kitchen? I wouldn't last through the winter. I don't know how you do it.

SAMANTHA

New York's the place to be. As I'm sure you'd discover if you come and visit.

HERMAN

I love you, Sam.

They hug.

INT. ROOM - DAY

Herman with his new phone. He is on a dating app. He swipes left until he sees a pretty lady of indeterminate age. This is ELAINE. Her location: less than 1 mile away.

A cat MEOWS. Herman looks up from the phone.

HERMAN

Snookums?

Snookums is perched on the window ledge, then jumps outside and disappears behind a ledge. Herman climbs out the window and follows the cat.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Herman chasing after Snookums. He sees a WOMAN (who happens to be Elaine) walking her dog. The dog lunges at Snookums. Herman intervenes and the dog bites his hand.

ELAINE

Oh my God, I'm so sorry! Are you okay? Angel is usually so good with strangers.

HERMAN

Angel?

ELAINE

My dog's name. I'm Elaine.

HERMAN

(clutching his thumb)
I'm in excruciating pain.

ELAINE

Let's go inside. I'll dress that wound.

HERMAN

No really, it's ok.

ELAINE

I insist.

INT. ELAINE'S HOUSE - DAY

Elaine is applying a bandage to Herman's hand. At his feet Angel licks his ankles.

ELAINE

I've never seen you in the neighborhood before.

HERMAN

I'm trying to get out more. Have you been here long?

ELAINE

A few years. My ex, Derek, bought this house when I was pregnant with our daughter. We put it on the market when we got our new place but couldn't sell it. When we divorced I came back here. It's only temporary. Too many bad memories.

(beat)

All done. How's that feel? Be sure to change the bandage once more today. I don't think you'll bleed much but just in case, you don't want the wound leaking on your clothes.

(looks at dog)

Looks like Angel's in love.

HERMAN

It may be contagious.

(a moment, then:)

You have very beautiful eyes.

He kisses her.

INT. ELAINE'S BEDROOM - LATER

They lie in bed, post coitus.

ELAINE

That wasn't too bad. I didn't expect it, but it wasn't too bad.

HERMAN

I'll say. When can we do this again?

ELAINE

Whenever my dog attacks you again I guess. Which I hope will be never.
 (off Herman's look)
 Don't get me wrong. You're a swell guy, but I'm not looking for anything serious.

HERMAN

Who said anything about getting serious?

ELAINE

Let me fill you in on a little something about women, Mr. Matchmaker. Do you know why women have sex with men?

HERMAN

I suppose because they want to. Because it feels good.

ELAINE

No, that's too simple. You've given me a man's reasons for wanting to have sex. Women are more complex.

HERMAN

So, sex isn't supposed to be fun?

ELAINE

Here are the reasons a woman has for going to bed with a man. A. Because she is getting back at a partner who is noncommittal, unfaithful, or just an asshole. B. Because she is getting over a breakup and wants to wash her ex's scent off her. C. Because she is getting up there in years and wants to prove to herself that she's still got it. D. Because the guy is so hot she cannot resist the opportunity. E. Because she loves him, wants to marry him, bear his children, and spend the rest of her life with him.

HERMAN

Which one am I?

ELAINE

A bit of A through C, but definitely not E.

(MORE)

ELAINE (CONT'D)

I'm still in the middle of a bitter divorce, the last thing I need is more drama. Besides, I'm too old to have another kid.

HERMAN

What about D?

ELAINE

The Man You Just Can't Resist? I haven't decided yet. But I'd let myself be persuaded if you could manage another go before my daughter gets home from school.

Herman rolls on top of her.

EXT. STREET - LATER

Herman walking home, disheveled but refreshed. He's half looking for Snookums, but more he's seeing things in a new light. He walks slowly, taking in his surroundings. This is the street he grew up on and he's only now really seeing it.

He sees a young blonde WOMAN pushing a BABY in a stroller. An elderly WOMAN helping her HUSBAND into their car. A FAMILY (husband and wife, three young children) having a picnic on their front lawn. A young COUPLE sharing a kiss beneath a tree. All these stages and phases of love.

As Herman reaches his house he looks down to see Snookums snuggling his leg. A BLEATING CAR HORN scares Snookums away.

Herman looks up to see Jeff.

JEFF

What happened with you and Andrea?
I'm sorry about your father by the way. It was his time. What the hell happened with you two?

HERMAN

Everything was going great until she walked off with some model guy.

JEFF

That was her ex-boyfriend.

HERMAN

Exactly my point.

JEFF

He wanted to get back together. She told him she wasn't interested.

HERMAN

So you're saying--

JEFF

You misread the situation and acted like a dufus. Dude, she's into you!

EXT. ANDREA'S HOUSE - DAY

Herman stands outside with flowers. Andrea opens the door.

HERMAN

(handing her flowers)

Flowers for the living. Just a something I heard. It sounded better in my head.

(beat)

I misread the situation and acted like a dufus. Forgive me?

She studies him, smells the roses.

ANDREA

You've arrived at a crisis in my life. Come in.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Andrea stands in front of Herman, holding a cocktail dress in each hand, one black, one white.

HERMAN

This is your idea of a crisis? You want me to help you pick out a dress? I don't even know the occasion.

ANDREA

It's fashion week. Duh!

HERMAN

Oh, in that case, bring both.

ANDREA

Some help you are.

HERMAN

What do you want me to say? You'd look great in a toga, or a tutu, or one of those get-ups they dress runway models in that makes you look like an inflatable object ready for a moon landing.

ANDREA

(laughs)

What are you doing this weekend?

HERMAN

I have absolutely no idea.

ANDREA

You wanna join me in New York?

HERMAN

New York? Sam will go crazy if I'm in New York. She's always bugging me about visiting her.

ANDREA

Who's Sam?

HERMAN

My sister.

ANDREA

You own a tuxedo?

HERMAN

No.

ANDREA

You look like you're a forty-four regular. I'm sure we can find something. The perks of having so many exes...

MONTAGE

Andrea and Herman in New York. A series of Polaroids appear on the screen highlighting their trip.

Posing with celebrities.

Front row at a runway show.

Clinking glasses at a gala dinner party.

Court side at a basketball game.

Getting out of a limo.

Getting in a limo.

At Samantha's small apartment eating with Samantha and her girlfriend, Toni.

End Montage.

EXT. ANDREA'S HOUSE - DAY

A limousine drops them off.

ANDREA
Wow that was fun.

HERMAN
Enough to make your head spin.

ANDREA
I'd invite you in, but you probably
have things to do.

HERMAN
(laughs)
Actually, no. I'm out of work,
recently orphaned, and homeless.
Everything I own is in the back
seat of my father's car, and it's
apparently been towed, so all that
I own I have on me, and these
clothes belong to you. So I am
completely free.

ANDREA
If you need a place to stay man,
quit the foreplay, just ask.

HERMAN
(laughs)
I actually got that movie
reference. And I accept. But only
if you let me pay you.

ANDREA
We can discuss it on the way in.

HERMAN
I'm open to the barter system.

ANDREA
What are you proposing? That I hire
you as a manservant.

HERMAN

I prefer the term lackey, but I'm not particular.

ANDREA

Be careful what you wish for. This household is a war zone. My kids can be savages.

HERMAN

I'm not one to turn my back on a challenge. Hit me with your best shot.

ANDREA

Fire away!

They laugh.

HERMAN

I'll make dinner.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Andrea is at the table with her children. Herman is decked it in chef's regalia and serves dinner.

BRISA

(re: food)

What is this?

NOAH

It looks like horse poop.

BRISA

Mom... Why can't we order Postmates like we always do?

ANDREA

Children, mind your manners. Herman is our guest.

BRISA

I thought he was the help.

ANDREA

That too. Now eat!

They reluctantly taste, and their faces brighten up. It's not bad.

HERMAN

He likes it, hey Mikey!

ANDREA
 Seriously. What is this?

HERMAN
 Chef's secret. If I tell you, I'll
 have to--however the rest of that
 goes. Oh and I used everything you
 had in your fridge, so we'll have
 to go to the store tomorrow.
 There's a Farmer's Market on 3rd
 Street.

ANDREA
 Great. The kids love field trips!

The kids whine.

EXT. FARMERS' MARKET - DAY

Herman leads the troops through the fruits and vegetable
 stands, grabbing things as he goes. He knows his way around.

BRISA
 (over it)
 I hate my life and I want to die.

ANDREA
 (re: fruit)
 All these shapes and sizes, so many
 bright colors. It's like being a
 kid in a candy store.

HERMAN
 Only this candy won't rot your
 teeth or give you cellulite.

BRISA
 Gross!

Herman takes a bite of an apple. Brisa looks around, appears
 to have a change of heart. She starts taking pictures.

ANDREA
 Brisa, let's go.

BRISA
 Wait. I'm getting so many likes!
 This place is da bomb!

INT. KITCHEN

Herman teaches the kids how to make a fruit salad.

HERMAN

What's your favorite class in school?

NOAH

Art. It's the only class they don't give homework.

HERMAN

Art was always my favorite too. Think of this as edible art. You make it, then you get to eat it, then you wear it, just not on your belly and thighs.

Andrea watches, charmed.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Herman is trying to write. Andrea pops her head in.

ANDREA

How do you know your way around the kitchen so well?

HERMAN

My dad's wife hated to cook, so when I moved in to help out, I had to become a chef overnight. And he was as finicky as a kid. The man could live on coffee and scones. To get him to eat nutritiously, I had to get past his taste buds. The secret is lots of salt.

ANDREA

I have never seen anything like it. They practically cleared their plates.

HERMAN

They ate a few bites.

ANDREA

For my kids, a few bites is practically clearing their plates!

Herman laughs, goes back to writing.

ANDREA (CONT'D)

What are you working on?

HERMAN

(ironic)

The last chapter of my much awaited masterpiece. It's due tomorrow.

ANDREA

How's it coming?

HERMAN

(shakes head)

I used to think I knew a thing or two about relationships. I've had a rude awakening. But I like to finish what I start. Besides, I have to find somewhere to stay, and rent ain't cheap in this city, so...

ANDREA

You can stay here.

HERMAN

Andrea, we both know--

ANDREA

What, what do we know?

HERMAN

I'm not sure. It seemed like the proper thing to say. I have no idea where this is headed, or what we are doing.

ANDREA

Neither do I. Isn't that the fun of it?

She kisses him on the cheek.

ANDREA (CONT'D)

Good night. Oh and, you may want to turn in soon. Breakfast is at 6, and it won't make itself, and the kids are due at school at 7:15. Don't let Brisa drive.

EXT. SOCCER FIELD - DAY

Herman drops off Noah at the soccer field. The COACH runs over.

COACH

My assistant coach is a no show.
Mind filling in?

Herman nods yes and parks the car.

LATER

Herman playing scrimmage with the boys.

EXT. MALL - DAY

Herman waits outside the Century City Mall. Brisa appears,
gets in the car.

BRISA

Get out of here quick!

HERMAN

What's the matter? Are you
embarrassed to be seen with me?

BRISA

Randy broke up with me.

HERMAN

Who's Randy?

BRISA

The guy who broke up with me.

HERMAN

Does your mother know you have a
boyfriend?

BRISA

I don't. He broke up with me.

HERMAN

Cast iron logic. Why did he break
up with you?

BRISA

He likes my best friend.

HERMAN

Some best friend.

BRISA

Duck, there he is.

HERMAN

Why should I duck? He doesn't even know me.

(looks outside)

That's Randy? That brace-faced, pimple-ridden, sunken chested, floppy haired excuse for a real man--but I'm sure he is a very nice boy, who wouldn't know a great girl if she came and sat on his face. Uh...

BRISA

That's sweet. You really think so?

HERMAN

Trust me, next year you'll be in high school and Randy will be a distant memory. You'll probably be dating college boys by the time you're sixteen.

BRISA

Gross!

HERMAN

Right, gross!

(beat)

Any guy who doesn't like you for who you are--who's that girl he's with?

BRISA

That's Ashley. My ex best friend.

HERMAN

What does she have over you?

BRISA

She likes to French kiss.

HERMAN

Oh, that explains everything.

Brisa laughs. Herman pulls over.

HERMAN (CONT'D)

Why don't you drive.

BRISA

But he'll see me.

HERMAN

That's the point. Show him how a
real woman handles a hunk of metal,
thatta girl.

She revs the engine and drives away.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

Herman sits at the kitchen table helping Noah with his homework. Then Brisa gets him to tie her rollerblades. Andrea looks on.

BRISA

(to Herman)

Remember, you promised to do Zoom
yoga with me at six.

BOY

After my soccer practice!

BRISA

I asked first!

ANDREA

Children, learn to share.

(to Herman)

It seems someone is a hit.

INT. ROOM - NIGHT

Herman lies in bed staring at the ceiling. Andrea appears in the doorway.

ANDREA

I hope I didn't wake you.

HERMAN

What's the matter?

ANDREA

It's cold. I can't sleep. Can I
borrow your body warmth for a
little?

HERMAN

What will the kids think about you
hugging the help?

ANDREA

I sent them off to a sleepover.

HERMAN

What do they think we are anyway?

ANDREA

I suppose they think you're a friend. Probably homosexual. Mommy has a lot of gay bffs.

HERMAN

In that case, hop right in.

ANDREA

You sure I didn't wake you?

HERMAN

I'm too exhausted to sleep. Parenting really takes it out of you.

ANDREA

Parenting is easy. It's children that take it out of you. The noise, the mess, and the waste.

HERMAN

How do you manage on your own?

ANDREA

I have an army of helpers. Driver, cook, nanny, and tutor. Even a life coach, though I don't know what I'm paying her for.

HERMAN

Some army.

ANDREA

And you'll be glad to know they'll all be back to work on Monday.

HERMAN

Thank God.

ANDREA

Did you finish your book?

HERMAN

I've given up. It's all psychobabble. Who am I to give relationship advice?

ANDREA

Don't be so hard on yourself.

HERMAN

I'm not being--

ANDREA

Yes you are. You're your own worst critic. It takes one to know one. But there's an upside to self-loathing. How do you think I've been able to fit into a size zero all these years?

She cuddles into him.

HERMAN

(laughs)

Do you realize we're doing everything in reverse? I've moved in and we haven't even kissed.

ANDREA

Is that a hint?

HERMAN

Maybe. Yes.

They kiss.

ANDREA

I once took this weekend-long seminar. They filled us with all these facts and figures, and then on the last day they told us to forget everything we had learned, just go out and greet life with open arms.

HERMAN

That's bullshit.

(thinks)

That's brilliant. If only I'da thought of it sooner! I've spent 23 chapters laying down all the rules of dating, only to break them all. So the final rule can only be-- What time is it?

ANDREA

Just past three.

HERMAN

I still have a few hours to finish this thing.

(kisses her)

You're a genius!

He jumps out of bed.

INT. ROOM - DAY

Herman at the desk, scribbling away. He finishes writing, grabs the manuscript, jumps up from the desk, runs past Andrea, then back to her and kisses her.

HERMAN

Thank you!

EXT. DRIVEWAY - DAY

Herman runs to his car, throws the manuscript into the passenger seat, and speeds off as Andrea watches him go.

INT. CAR - DAY

Herman in bumper to bumper traffic, pounds the steering wheel.

EXT. STREET - DAY

He pulls over, stuffs the manuscript in his book bag, gets out of the car, opens the trunk, and pulls out his bicycle. He hops on, then back off, runs over to the car and activates the emergency blinkers. Then pedals away.

EXT. STREETS - DAY

Herman hauling ass through the city streets on his bicycle.

More traffic, not even enough room for a bike. He turns onto the sidewalk but there are too many pedestrians. He gets off his bike, stands it against a parking meter, makes the sign of the cross over it, and breaks into a run.

EXT. STREETS - DAY

Herman in a full sprint.

EXT. LITERARY AGENCY - DAY

Herman reaches the literary agency, panting like crazy, leans against the wall to catch his breath. A SECURITY GUARD sees him. He straightens, salutes the guard and walks inside.

INT. LITERARY AGENCY - DAY

Herman in the lobby waiting for the elevator. He checks his watch, fidgets. A big crowd. All the elevators are on high floors. What the hell he has run this far. He spots the stairwell, runs for it.

INT. STAIRWELL - DAY

Herman running up the stairwell. And up. And up. Five floors, ten, fifteen. He's practically crawling by the time he reaches the twentieth floor. He bursts through the door.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Herman enters the hallway. The elevator opens and empties two passengers who had been waiting with Herman on the lobby level. Oh, well.

INT. LITERARY AGENCY - DAY

Herman rushes into the agency, waves at the RECEPTIONIST, walks down the corridor towards Sidney Levitt's office.

HERMAN (V.O.)

I set out to write a rulebook of love. I found out that when it comes to affairs of the heart, there is only one rule worth keeping: there are no rules! So make your own, and then be prepared to break them all.

Herman enters excitedly, manuscript in hand. Sidney is on the phone.

SIDNEY

Herman. Where the hell you been!

HERMAN

I've been writing. It's done, Sid. Right on schedule, and not a moment to spare.

Herman drops the manuscript on the desk.

SIDNEY

Didn't you get my messages?

HERMAN

What, no. What messages?

SIDNEY
I've left several.

HERMAN
(breathless)
I haven't been home. I changed my
number. I moved out. I met this
girl--

SIDNEY
Woah, slow down.

HERMAN
Well, what is it? What did you want
to speak to me about?

SIDNEY
Deal's off, Herman. The publishers
found out about your fiasco with
the coed.

HERMAN
My what?

SIDNEY
Dismissed for unethical behavior?

HERMAN
(astonished)
News travels fast.

SIDNEY
They want nothing to do with an
author guilty of sexual misconduct.

HERMAN
I'm not guilty of anything.

SIDNEY
Allegedly you are. They cancelled
the book deal.

HERMAN
Cancelled? They can't do that!

SIDNEY
They can and they did. It's in the
contract.

HERMAN
What am I going to do now?

Sidney rises and leads Herman to the door.

SIDNEY

I'm sorry, Herman. You'll have to look for another publisher. And while you're at it, find someone else to represent you, because I quit.

HERMAN

You can't do this to me. I literally ran across town to get here on time.

SIDNEY

One word: email!

He closes the door on Herman.

EXT. STREET - DAY

A downcast Herman mopes down the street, still clutching his manuscript.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

Herman is feeding manuscript pages into the fireplace and watching them go up in flames.

HERMAN

(to himself)

Shows you what you know. Charlatan.
Hack. Hoax. Quack. Mountebank.
Fraud. Fake. Sham. Humbug.
Impostor. Pretender. Dissembler.
Cheat.

Andrea enters and stares.

ANDREA

What are you doing?!

HERMAN

(pausing; solemnly)

They say depression is to wish you had never been born. I wonder, does this mean I am depressed?
(continues feeding pages into fireplace)

ANDREA

(goes to grab him)
Stop that this instant!

HERMAN

Trust me, it's not worth saving!

ANDREA

Then let's open the flue. Otherwise
you're liable to kill us both!

She opens the damper and waves away the smoke.

ANDREA (CONT'D)

There, now fire away.

HERMAN

You're not going to stop me?

ANDREA

Why would I? You're a big boy, and
it's your book. If you wish to
destroy months of hard work, go
right ahead.

Herman lays the manuscript aside and buries his head in his
hands.

HERMAN

It's as if I've died and been
reborn - in hell. What do I do now?

ANDREA

You need sun. Fresh air. An ocean
breeze.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Andrea and Herman rollerblade on the beach. It is clearly his
first time.

HERMAN

I feel ridiculous.

ANDREA

You look it.

HERMAN

You sure know how to provide
encouragement.

She takes his hand.

ANDREA

You're doing fine. Kids pick it up
in about five minutes.

(MORE)

ANDREA (CONT'D)

It's been two hours and you're still struggling to stay on your feet.

HERMAN

I thought the aim of this was to restore my sense of accomplishment, not drain it to the dregs.

ANDREA

Just keep at it. You can't think about your problems while trying not to fall. And that's the point. You think too much.

They pass a pair of rollerbladers (TRAN and LEV).

ANDREA (CONT'D)

Lev, Tran. You remember Herman.

LEV

Do we ever. You two were all the rage in NYC.

TRAN

(to Herman)

What did you say you do?

HERMAN

I don't. I used to, but not anymore.

(off their confused looks)

I am a human *being*, not a human *doing*.

ANDREA

Herman enjoys life.

HERMAN

(glum)

Can't you tell?

TRAN

That's great. You could be on our show.

ANDREA

Tran and Lev have a podcast.

LEV

We invite common, everyday people to teach us something interesting.

TRAN

Everyone is an expert in something interesting. That's our motto.

ANDREA

(to Herman)

Their podcast is very popular.

HERMAN

I know nothing.

ANDREA

Herman is very modest.

HERMAN

And also unoriginal. I borrowed the line from Socrates.

LEV

Socra-who?

HERMAN

Socrates. He only happens to be the father of philosophy.

TRAN

See, you do know something. Come on our show and tell us all you know about this dude Socrates. Is he still alive?

HERMAN

He died about 2400 years ago.

TRAN

Bummer.

LEV

And Andrea can join in.

TRAN

We've been dying to have you on our show since forever!

INT. THERAPIST'S OFFICE - DAY

Herman lies on the sofa, awaiting his appointment. DR. DELONGPRE enters.

HERMAN

(rising)

Pilar. I mean, Doctor.

PILAR

Herman.

HERMAN

You recognize me?

PILAR

(all business)

I recognized the name.

HERMAN

Well it's been over 30 years. You haven't aged a day.

Pilar smiles. The flattery has pierced her defenses. She motions Herman to the couch. They sit.

PILAR

So the doctor becomes the patient.

HERMAN

It's not me I'm here to talk about. The only way they'd let me in was if I made an appointment.

PILAR

So what do you want to discuss?

HERMAN

You. Tell me all about you.

Herman looks at Pilar hopefully. She takes a breath.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

Herman puts on his tie at the mirror. Andrea is in the background.

ANDREA

Just when the caterpillar thought his life was over, he became the butterfly.

(beat)

Why are you so quiet?

HERMAN

I'm just nervous. I always get like this before speaking engagements.

ANDREA

You'll be fine. But why are you wearing a tie?

HERMAN

'Cause I'm gonna be on TV.

ANDREA

You can wear whatever you want.
It's a podcast. You're not gonna be
on camera.

INT. PODCAST ROOM - DAY

Herman is speaking into the microphone. He wears a shirt and tie, and sweatpants. Tran and Lev and Andrea are also present.

HERMAN

So you see, Socrates believed that we all have the truth within us, waiting to be discovered. His job was to bring it out. He did this by asking questions.

TRAN

Wait--

HERMAN

(continuing)

It has come to be called the Socratic method, or the art of dialectic. It can be applied to all aspects of life.

TRAN

But--

LEV

Will you stop interrupting!

TRAN

Oh you're such a nag.

ANDREA

What is wrong with you two!

TRAN

It's that time of month.

LEV

Takes one to know one, bitch!

HERMAN

(taking his cue)

Socrates believed that everybody seeks the best in life, but we often fail to achieve it through ignorance. Therefore no one tries to hurt your feelings. They just don't know what is best.

LEV

I don't see how that applies to me.

TRAN

Me neither.

HERMAN

Well, in every disagreement, both parties are right - from their point of view. Tran, why do you interrupt?

TRAN

I'm trying to direct the flow of the interview. It's what a good host does. Johnny, Jimmy, Jay, Joe, they all do it.

HERMAN

And Lev, why do you get angry at Tran for interrupting?

LEV

Because a great host lets his guest speak.

HERMAN

You see. You are both right. The resolution lies somewhere in the middle. I never thought I'd say this, but it's all about compromise.

MONTAGE

Herman on various talk shows, getting the hosts to open up.

We see him on Joe Rogan.

ROGAN

My wife says I smoke too much pot. She thinks it's affecting my libido. My libido is fine. I'm just bored with our sex life.

On Bill Maher's Club Random.

MAHER

The problem with being single is, I'm surrounded by a group of strangers who are doing what my wife could be doing if I had a wife.

(breaks down)

I'm afraid of dying alone!

With Russell Brand.

BRAND

The problem with having a kid is, I feel dethroned. I used to be the center of Linda's attention. So I bury myself in work, preach to an invisible audience of millions, but it's really a means of escaping my anxiety.

With Jimmy Fallon.

FALLON

I have no problems. I laugh all the time. If you fake the funk long enough, you believe it! It doesn't always work though. Some days I'm totally miserable. But in a fun way!

With Jimmy Kimmel.

KIMMEL

You haven't met many Irish women. If I talk about my wife live on air, she'll have my balls with a bottle of Guinness. Newsflash: she already has!

INT. SET OF SHOW - DAY

Herman is on the set of his own show. He's pacing. His cell phone rings.

HERMAN

Hello, Sidney. How the heck are ya?

SIDNEY (V.O.)

Congratulations on all your recent successes.

(MORE)

SIDNEY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Listen, I spoke with the publishing house, and it's a go again.

HERMAN
Sorry, Sidney. I burned the manuscript.

SIDNEY (V.O.)
But, why?

HERMAN
I'm through dispensing advice. People know what to do, my job is to help them figure it out.

Herman hangs up and approaches the stage. Jeff and Jane are in the background. Jeff wears a tag that reads "Producer."

JEFF
(to Jane)
You'll never guess who I managed to get for the inaugural segment. Wait till you see the look on Hank's face. Sometimes I amaze myself!

JANE
Tell me!

Jeff whispers the name of the surprise guest to Jane, who covers her mouth in delicious surprise.

On stage, Andrea and Herman are adjusting themselves in their seats, with an empty chair between them. They reach across and share a good luck kiss. Andrea winks at Jeff, who gives her the thumbs up sign.

ANNOUNCER
Please welcome today's guest, Donna Chupinsky!

DONNA appears onstage and takes her place between the hosts.

ANDREA
Welcome, Donna. I ask you, can this relationship be saved?

Donna glares at Herman.

HERMAN
(eyes bulging)
Sorry?

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END