

A PERFECT MOMENT

A Screenplay

by

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INT – BAR – DAY

A dilapidated bar, attended by a BARTENDER and many older drinkers, who seem stupefied.

The bartender speaks directly into the camera.

BARTENDER

This is where people go when no-one else will take them. It's full of the stupefied and the stupefying, the dregs of humanity who are simply baffled by the remnants of any reality they can remember, with their bewildered brains. One person has to remain sober here, and that's me, the bartender.

A DRUNK comes in and shuffles to the counter.

DRUNK

I need a drink.

BARTENDER

What will it be ?

DRUNK

There's only one drink which is half decent, whiskey.

The bartender makes a shot of whiskey, puts it down on the counter.

BARTENDER

A shot of whiskey.

The drunk takes out a few coins and pays.

DRUNK

Thanks.

The drunk drinks about half of it down.

DRUNK

Shot. My brain is shot. All I know is, I need a drink, from time to time.

The bartender addresses the camera.

BARTENDER

Essentially, they're all drunks, some of them have dementia from excessive drinking. They do not engage their brains, 'cause they ain't

BARTENDER (cont'd)  
got none left. This is such a boring job, full  
of boring people. Drunks are so tedious. They  
got nothing to say.

ALICE, another drunk comes to the counter.

ALICE  
Drink...please. Bourbon.

BARTENDER  
Bourbon boring.

He gets her the drink and puts it on the counter. Alice takes out a note and puts it on the counter. The bartender picks it up and gives her some change. Alice drinks.

BARTENDER  
This place is full of nobodies. Some always  
were nobodies. Some used-ta somebody, but  
became nobody, so they ended up here, with  
the nobodies. They have forgotten who and  
what they were, and people have forgotten  
them.

DRUNK  
It ain't easy, if you ain't got much brain.

ALICE  
I made mistakes, you know.

DRUNK  
Lady, you talking to me ?

ALICE  
I ain't no lady no more. I made mistakes.

DRUNK  
Everyone made mistakes.

ALICE  
Not as many as I made. Not as many as I  
make. I still make mistakes, all the time.

DRUNK  
Ain't no-one ain't never made no mistake.

BARTENDER  
No-one is perfect.

Alice shrugs.

DRUNK

We are the dregs of society and the dregs of psychiatry.

ALICE

Did you mention psychiatry ?

DRUNK

Yes, I did.

ALICE

Psychiatry ain't never done no good, not to me, not to no-one. I ain't never found no-one said they actually benefited from psychiatry.

DRUNK

I used-ta have a brain, before I got some psychiatry.

ALICE

I make mistakes all the time. I can't do anything right.

DRUNK

Don't worry about it. No-one will notice. Not here, anyhow.

DAN and SUZI, two more drunks come in.

DAN goes to the counter. SUZI sits in a corner.

DAN

The usual, twice.

BARTENDER

The usual is, these stupefied drunks just get themselves more stupefied. - Coming up.

Dan looks towards where Suzi is, and then notices the drunk and Alice.

DAN

You come here often ?

ALICE

I don't know. I don't remember.

DAN

You - ?

DRUNK

That is...I come here to drink, forget about stuff.

The bartender puts two drinks on the counter.

Dan pays and picks up the drinks, takes them over to Suzi, and then sits down with her.

Suzi drinks. Dan drinks.

SUZI

I never really came to terms with what happened to me. It was stupid.

DAN

You gotta learn to live a little. You can't just take drugs and never feel nothing.

SUZI

Drugs or drink, or both.

DAN

Both ain't good for you.

SUZI

I know. Drugs ain't good for no-one. Drinks ain't good for no-one. Drink and drugs is bad, real bad. I would prefer to be numb, not feel nothing than remember those things I would much rather forget. I would prefer to think none of it ever happened, but it did. That's what I can't cope with.

DAN

How in hell did you cope with it at the time ?

SUZI

I was on even more drugs back then. I did not notice how bad things were. I only realized when it was all over, when all the drugs I was on finally cleared out of my system, how bad it all was. I needed to go back onto drugs, to blot it all out. But I remember it all.

Suzi drinks.

SUZI

You know, I did weird things when I was on that drug, stuff I would never have done, if I had not been on that particular drug. It made

SUZI (cont'd)  
me crazy, crazier than I was before I was put  
on that drug.

DAN  
Which drug was that ?

SUZI  
I'd rather not say.

DAN  
Name the god-damn drug.

SUZI  
I don't want to do that.

DAN  
Why not ?

SUZI  
I don't want to give it a bad name.

DAN  
But it made you do crazy stuff.

SUZI  
It did not suit me, but it was the only drug  
I was gonna get. Couldn't get anything might  
actually suit me, might make me less crazy,  
behave like a decent, normal, sane human  
being, no, I wasn't gonna get that. I was  
gonna get some shit make me more insane  
than I actually was.

ALICE speaks to the drunk.

ALICE  
I have realised, I am in decline. What  
can I do about it ?

DRUNK  
Nothing.

ALICE  
Nothing ?

DRUNK  
Nothing. You can do nothing about that.  
Decline is inevitable. It is a natural part  
of the ageing process. Nothing can stop

DRUNK (cont'd)  
you getting old.

ALICE  
I don't want to get old.

DRUNK  
No-one wants to get old. People just are.

ALICE  
I don't want to be old.

DRUNK  
You are old.

ALICE  
I don't want to be.

DRUNK  
You are. You were old years ago. Can you  
imagine how old you are now ? You can't,  
can you ? How old do you think you are ?

ALICE  
I don't know. I guess I'm ancient. Sometimes,  
I just don't have enough energy to do what  
I want, so I don't want to do much any more.

DRUNK  
You are definitely old.

ALICE  
When I was young -

DRUNK  
How many years ago was that ?

ALICE  
I don't know. When I was young, I never thought  
I would get old.

DRUNK  
No-one does.

ALICE  
Now, I am old, and I don't know what to do.

DRUNK  
You gotta go with the flow.

ALICE

Some days, I feel I should do something.  
But, then I think, maybe later, and I am  
so tired, I end up doing nothing.

DRUNK

People think old folks just get in the way.  
We do. We are slow.

ALICE

I make mistakes, all the time. I am getting  
weary.

DRUNK

Drink, and shut up.

Alice drinks.

Suzi has finished her drink.

SUZI

I had many disappointments in my life.  
My worst disappointment was other people.  
I been disappointed so much by people,  
I hardly remember a time I was not seriously  
disappointed. I guess, the lesson of that was,  
not to rely on others. Just rely on yourself,  
'cause no-one is gonna do nothing for no-one.

DAN

Some people do.

SUZI

Huh ?

MAN

Some people are selfless.

SUZI

I ain't never met one yet. I met plenty people  
are selfish, met plenty o' them, not one was,  
selfless.

Alice finishes her drink.

ALICE

You know, ain't much fun for us old timers,  
down at the bar. I am stupid.

She looks at her empty glass and holds it in her hand.

DRUNK

We ain't drunk. We're too old to get drunk.

BARTENDER

You are drunk. You're too drunk to realize  
you're drunk.

Suzi looks at Dan with sore soulful eyes.

SUZI

If I had my time over again, I would do things  
differently.

DAN

That's what you hope. If I had my time over  
again, I might end up making the same mistakes  
I did the first time, none the wiser.

SUZI

Older, but not wiser.

DAN

That means, if you start life as an ass-hole, you  
end up as an old ass-hole, you learnt nothing  
the whole of your life.

SUZI

Born dumb, die dumb.

DAN

That's the way it is.

The drunk leaves Alice at the counter and goes over to speak to two other drunks, who  
are talking, the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> DRUNKS.

2<sup>nd</sup> DRUNK

You know that song, Frank Sinatra, My Way,  
he says, "What is a man, What has he got..."  
Then, he says, "to say the words, He truly feels..."  
Should we say what we truly feel ?

3<sup>rd</sup> DRUNK

I reckon we should.

2<sup>nd</sup> DRUNK

What are "the words of one who kneels" ?

3<sup>rd</sup> DRUNK

I don't know. Something like, it hurts my knees  
to kneel all the time.

2<sup>nd</sup> DRUNK

Sinatra, he was a smoker, you know. Time was, you could go into a bar and have a drink and a cigarette. That ain't allowed no more. All you can do, is drink.

The drunk butts in.

DRUNK

Sinatra ?

2<sup>nd</sup> DRUNK

He was a smoker.

DRUNK

I know. He was a singer.

2<sup>nd</sup> DRUNK

Went to the hospital, the stop smoking clinic, they showed you films of legs being cut off, and lung cancer. And the first things I did, when I got outta there, was light a cigarette. Sinatra, he was a smoker, and he had great breath control.

3<sup>rd</sup> DRUNK

What are you saying ?

2<sup>nd</sup> DRUNK

You can have great breath control, if you smoke.

The drunk laughs.

DRUNK

You ain't gonna have no breath at all, if you smoke.

2<sup>nd</sup> DRUNK

Sinatra -

DRUNK

He held his breath under water for one minute, that's how he got great breath control, not from smoking, ass-hole.

2<sup>nd</sup> DRUNK

You don't know nothing. You are ignorant, boy.

DRUNK

Fuck off !

The drunk goes to sit on his own.

Alice looks around the bar and focusses on Suzi.

SUZI

I'm not the woman I used-ta be.

DAN

Things are okay for you. Things are just hunky-dory.

SUZI

They are not hunky-dory for me.

DAN

Yes, they are ! I gotta go see my brother, in his new house. He sent me pictures on my phone. It is a palace, a mansion. He was successful. He has a great life. I have to compare myself to him, and that ain't too good for me, 'cause I am a failure. Ain't so bad being a loser, until someone else is such a god-damn success.

Alice gets up and slowly walks towards Suzi. She stands near to Suzi, staring at her.

SUZI (to Alice)

What's wrong with you ?

No response from Alice.

SUZI (shouting)

What's wrong with you, woman ?

Alice reacts.

ALICE

You look like my daughter.

SUZI

What ?!

ALICE

You remind me of my daughter.

SUZI

Lady, I am not your daughter. You know that.

ALICE

You look like her.

SUZI

Do I ?

ALICE

Yes, you do.

SUZI

I apologize for that.

DAN

Don't worry. She is confused. She's drunk.

SUZI (to Alice)

Sit down.

Alice sits next to them. They look at the empty glasses.

SUZI

Only so many drinks we can afford.

DAN

We come here for the company, the refined conversation.

SUZI

Lady, you are deluded if you think I am in any way your substitute daughter. When did you last see her ?

ALICE

Years ago.

SUZI

How many years ?

ALICE

Six, seven years.

SUZI

She might not even look like me any more.

ALICE

That's possible.

SUZI

Lady -

ALICE

Alice.

SUZI

Alice, I might look like your daughter did six or seven years ago – don't mean I look the way she is now.

ALICE

I know that.

SUZI

But do you appreciate that ? Do you understand that ?

DAN

Do you, Alice ?

ALICE

Yes, I do.

DAN

That is progress, then.

A beat.

DAN

Listen, Alice, I gotta go visit my brother, at his place, which is sumptuous, and I was gonna take Suzi here, along with me, to be my girl, like we are a couple, which we are. We could pretend you were Suzi's mother, if you like. You ain't got much chance to actually see your own daughter, that right ?

ALICE

She won't have anything to do with me unless and until I give up the drink, but I don't have the willpower to do it. I ain't never succeeded yet. I have tried, but I always go back to the drink, and she can't stand that.

SUZI

I don't blame her. If I were her, I would not tolerate a drunk for a mother.

ALICE

But you're a drunk.

SUZI

I did not have children. It is irresponsible to have kids if you're gonna be a drunk.

DAN

People don't know they're gonna be a drunk when they have kids.

SUZI

Surely, they got some idea.

DAN

Fuck that, Suzi. No-one knows when they're young if they're gonna be a lifelong drinker.

SUZI

I did. I had a pretty good idea, I was addicted to drink, when I was young.

DAN

But you're special.

SUZI

I am ?

DAN

Yes, you are, Suzi.

SUZI

Shit. I didn't know that.

DAN

Suzi, I need you to behave yourself when we're at my brother's, 'cause he is rich.

SUZI

How in Hell did he become rich if you're such a scumbag ?

DAN

That is the question I will be addressing when we get there, how come he did so well, and I did so badly ? You know, the problem with drink is, it muddles your brain. I don't have that feeling no more, how much I hated myself for being such a god-damn failure, but I don't care, and that's down to the drink. It kills brain cells.

SUZI

I ain't got no brain cells left. I have drunk my brain away.

Alice burps.

DAN

Alice, you gotta behave like a lady when we go visit my brother.

ALICE

What's his name ?

DAN

I call him, Dick.

SUZI

Is he a dick ?

DAN

He ain't no dick. You can't make no money if you're a dick. I am a dick, and I ain't never made no money. I am a disgrace to our family.

SUZI

Then, why does he want you to go visit him ?

DAN

To show off, I guess. He said something about a new girlfriend, wants to show her the family, and I am one o' them, unfortunately, for him. I am a god-damn loser, and he is a winner.

ALICE

Okay, we gotta keep up this pretence.

DAN

Let's get ourselves all smart and sober.

They get up to go out.

Dan turns to the bartender.

DAN

See ya.

BARTENDER

See ya tomorrow.

Dan, Alice and Suzi go out.

BARTENDER

He'll be back. He always is.

He wipes the counter.

CUT TO:

INT – APARTMENT – DAY

Dan opens up and shows Alice and Suzi into the shabby apartment.

DAN  
Ain't much, but it's home.

ALICE  
I have seen better in my time.

DAN  
I should hope so. You are a lady of some taste and discrimination.

ALICE  
I used-ta be. Ain't so sure now.

SUZI  
This is as good as it gets. It's all downhill from here on.

They get through the hall into the living room.

DAN (to Alice)  
Please, make yourself at home.

Alice sits.

DAN  
Alice, Alice, Buckingham Palace, Christopher Robin is down with Alice, but what is he doing with her ?

SUZI  
What do you think ? He's fucking her.

ALICE  
I should imagine so. What else ?

DAN  
That I do not know.

Alice spots a wardrobe in the living room.

ALICE  
You got a wardrobe in your living room...?

SUZI  
Yes, we have.

ALICE

Why you got a wardrobe in your living room ?

SUZI

To store clothes.

ALICE

Why ain't ya got it in ya bedroom ?

DAN

We ain't got the space. We only got space for a double bed where -

SUZI

We sleep and fuck.

ALICE

I see.

DAN

I got my best suits in there.

ALICE

What about the moths ?

SUZI

We got mothballs.

DAN

I gotta look my best, like a gentleman.  
I gotta make a good impression.

SUZI

Why ?

DAN

I don't want my brother Dick's girlfriend thinking I am a scumbag.

SUZI

But you are a scumbag.

DAN

I don't want to advertise the fact.

SUZI

He must've told her.

Dan looks a little bitter and upset by this.

DAN

We don't know what he's told her. I would not assume she knows I am a scumbag.

SUZI

Either she knows already, or she will fathom it out when she gets to know you.

DAN

I wouldn't tell her.

ALICE

That would be dishonest.

SUZI

You don't wanna be dishonest, do you, Dan ?

DAN

I suppose not.

SUZI

Then, tell her the god-damn truth.

DAN

If I have to.

SUZI

Yes, you have to.

DAN

Damn.

Dan goes into the kitchen.

SUZI

Dan is a dick.

Dan comes back in with a glass of water.

SUZI

What's that ?

DAN

Water.

SUZI

I don't believe that.

Dan gulps it down.

DAN  
It was water. Now it's gone.

He sits down.

DAN  
I want to put on a good show.

SUZI  
I won't let you down.

ALICE  
I won't either.

DAN  
Good.

Later:

Dan is looking in the wardrobe for a suit. He selects one and takes it off the hanger.

Later:

Dan is dressed in the suit and looks dapper.

Suzi is dressed in her best clothes.

Alice has her best clothes on.

They stand together in front of a large mirror.

DAN  
We look the business. Let's go.

They go toward the door, leaving the mirror empty of their shapes.

CUT TO:

EXT – LARGE HOUSE – DAY

Dan, Suzi and Alice standing outside the door of a large house, Dick's place.

Dan leaves forwards to press the doorbell, but Suzi suddenly speaks.

SUZI  
Hold it !

Dan stops about two inches from the button.

DAN  
What ?

SUZI

I got an itch, here, on the side of my face. It is, irritating as hell.

DAN

Well, scratch it, then.

Suzi starts to scratch her itch.

ALICE

Give it a good scratch.

Suzi gives her itch a really good scratch, then finishes. Dan looks at her.

DAN

Can we proceed ?

SUZI

Okay.

Dan presses the doorbell.

SUZI

I just did not want to embarrass you.

A short delay, then the door is opened by a beaming DICK, Dan's brother.

DICK

Come here.

Dan moves forwards and Dick hugs him on the doorstep.

DICK

My brother !

DAN

That I am.

DICK

I love you, Bro.

DAN

I love you, too.

DICK

Come on in.

Dick opens the door wide and invites them all in. They go inside.

CUT TO:

INT – HOUSE – DAY

Dick shows Alice, Suzi and Dan through the hall into the living.

Once in the living room, Dick speaks to them.

DICK

You all make yourselves at. Please, sit down.

They sit.

DICK

Oh, Dan, I miss you so much.

DAN

I miss you, too.

The long slim legs of NICOLA, Dick's girlfriend, enter the room. She is a tall, slim, elegant and attractive woman.

Dan cannot help but stare at her.

Her skirt is just below her knees.

NICOLA

Hi.

DICK

This is Nicola.

Nicola leans forwards to shake hands with Dan.

DAN

Dan.

NICOLA

Dick's told me so much about you.

She moves along to shake hands with Suzi.

SUZI

I'm Suzi, Dan's girlfriend.

NICOLA

Nice to meet you, Suzi.

Nicola then moves on to shake hands with ALICE.

ALICE

Alice, Suzi's mother.

NICOLA

Alice.

Nicola then sits in a chair, and crosses her shapely legs.

NICOLA

Well, this is nice.

SUZI

Yes, it is.

Suzi takes a good look at the spacious living room, and looks in awe of the modern but elegant look of the place. Then, she sighs.

DAN

You got a great place, Dick. How in Hell do you afford it ?

DICK

I got lucky, just like I got lucky with Nicola.

Nicola smiles.

DAN

You always were the lucky one.

DICK

Not always.

DAN

No...?

DICK

I made my own luck.

NICOLA

He did.

DICK

That is the secret to my success.

SUZI

What ?

DICK

Making my own luck. I never depended on no-one but myself to get lucky, make my way in the world.

Nicola flicks her foot up and down.

NICOLA

He is a self-made man, which I how he got me, his story, he never got a cent from no-one. He made it all himself. That is my kinda man. I feel so lucky to have met him.

DICK

That's my girl.

ALICE

This is the mutual admiration society.

DICK

Of course it is. What is the point in making it, unless you celebrate your success - ?

SUZI

You can celebrate it as much as you like, just don't -

DAN

Suzi !

Suzi looks at Dan.

DAN

We're in Dick's place. Manners, please.

SUZI (ironically)

Sorry.

DAN

I am just a bit puzzled, about how you got so successful, to afford a place like this, to get yourself a girl like Nicola – is she some kinda model ? - when, comparatively, I did not do anywhere near as well. What is your secret ?

NICOLA

He can't tell you that.

SUZI

Why not ?

NICOLA

It's a secret.

SUZI

I see.

DICK

I will tell you..a little of my story, but  
some things must remain untold.

ALICE

Nothing illegal, I hope...?

NICOLA

Certainly not !

DICK

Nic knows.

NICOLA

My lips are sealed.

DICK

She is loyal.

NICOLA

(looking at Dick)

He is just the ideal man.

Nicola addresses Suzi.

NICOLA

How about your guy ?

SUZI

He's not in the same league, clearly, but  
I still like him.

A beat.

DAN

So, how much do you know about me,  
Nicola ?

NICOLA

Enough.

Nicola laughs. Dick laughs with her, as does Dan. Suzi and Alice do not find it funny,  
and frown.

NICOLA

I know all about you, Dan.

SUZI

Dan is The Man.

DAN

What can I say ? I have my admirers.

NICOLA

I'm sure you have, a circle of friends, who value your contribution to their existence, who depend on you for upholding their view of themselves, where they stand in the great scheme of things, their position in society. I am sure you are the Man for them, but...

SUZI

Here come the buts...

NICOLA

You are the Man for that type of environment, Once out of that, you are somewhat incongruous.

SUZI

What ?

NICOLA

Out of place.

DAN

Well, I do admit, I might be a little out of place here, in this abode, this palatial mansion, but I fit in perfectly with my normal drinking-hole, which is my natural habitat.

NICOLA

You're a drunk.

DAN

Some of the time.

NICOLA

Most of the time.

DAN

You would stick out like a sore thumb if you were ever to visit one of my favourite hangouts.

NICOLA

I do fit in here, nicely.

DICK

Come on, folks, lets get friendly, now.

Nicola licks her lips.

NICOLA

Let's talk about something else, something more mundane. So, Suzi, what type of lipstick do you wear ?

SUZI

Can't you tell ?

NICOLA

It's a bit unclear.

SUZI

I don't wear much make-up.

NICOLA

I can tell.

SUZI

It is a natural look.

ALICE

Is it really that important to look good, in this day and age ?

NICOLA

It certainly is, for a woman. Not for the benefit of any man who happens to be looking at her, but for a girl to feel good about herself, she knows she looks good.

DAN

Are you implying, Suzi does not look good ?

NICOLA

Not, I was not implying..anything. I was just remarking on her style choices.

SUZI

I ain't got no style.

DICK (singing)

You've either got or  
You haven't got style...

NICOLA (singing)

If you've got it,  
It stands off a mile.

ALICE

What are you saying ?

NICOLA

I got style.

ALICE

Good for you.

SUZI

You might have style, but do you have class ?

NICOLA

I got class.

DAN

You got more style than you got class.

NICOLA

I am not a cheap -

A beat.

NICOLA

I do have some class.

DICK

But more style.

NICOLA

What do you mean by that, Dick ?

DICK

Style is shallow. Class is deep.

NICOLA

I am not shallow.

DICK

But you're not deep.

Nicola gives Dick a puzzled, slightly angry look.

NICOLA

I am not superficial. I am sophisticated.

DICK

In a ball-gown, done up to the nines, you are. In a bikini, you are simply gorgeous.

Nicola smiles.

Dick smiles back at her.

ALICE

I would like to see you in a ball-gown.

NICOLA

When Dick has one of his soirees...

DICK

I ain't had one yet.

NICOLA

We will, in time, hold sophisticated soirees for discerning ladies and gentlemen, folk of high class.

ALICE

Like you, but not like us - ?

NICOLA

You never know, you might get an invite, if you smarten yourselves up a bit.

SUZI

We're dressed in our best.

NICOLA

Your manners and speech have to be, high class, to get an invite to one of our soirees.

DICK

We ain't held one yet.

NICOLA

We will, in time.

DAN

You're bit catty, Nicola.

NICOLA

What are you saying ?

No reply.

NICOLA

Are you saying I am a bitch ?

No answer.

NICOLA

If I am a bitch, I cannot be catty. Cats and dogs do not mix.

DICK

Anyway, folks, let's just concentrate on our better qualities.

DAN

I am loyal.

SUZI

I am..dedicated.

ALICE

I am..devoted.

NICOLA

I am honest.

DICK

I am, distinctive.

NICOLA

I am, sharp.

DAN

Critical.

NICOLA

I can be, I do admit.

DAN

Do you think we are not good enough for Dick, as family ?

NICOLA

Well, you're not, are you ?

ALICE

How could we be better ?

NICOLA

You gotta display polite behaviour.

SUZI

What about you ? You ain't polite.

NICOLA

I am polite to the right type of person.  
I do not have to be polite to you.

SUZI

You think you're better than us ?

NICOLA

I am. I am better than you. I don't have to think about it. I know.

DAN

You are superior.

NICOLA

Yes, I am. I am superior to you, so I don't need to be polite to you. But you are inferior to me, and to anyone else in this little world. You couldn't possibly find anyone lower in the estimation of your social standing. Hence, you must be polite.

DAN

So you only suck up to people with more money ?

NICOLA

That is essentially correct.

SUZI

You are a right diva. That's how they behave. They shit on anyone they think lower than them, and they suck up to anyone higher. They are so socially aware.

DAN

I would call that, hypocrisy.

NICOLA

I would call that, social mobility.

DICK

Nic, that's enough.

NICOLA

Sorry, Dick.

Nicola gets up.

NICOLA

I will go make myself even more beautiful.

She goes out.

Dan looks at Dick.

Dick makes a gesture with his hands, to say, that's how she is.

DAN  
She is using you, Dick.

DICK  
And I am using her.

SUZI  
She's right up herself.

ALICE  
Totally crass.

DICK  
And a piece of ass.

DAN  
She really looks down on us.

SUZI  
Because we're scum.

ALICE  
We can't help that.

DICK  
She is the closing thing to a goddess I have  
ever encountered.

DAN  
She will suck you dry, and then move on.

DICK  
In the meantime, I get to gaze on her beauty,  
and, from time to time, I actually get to fuck her.

SUZI  
She is just an expensive prostitute.

DICK  
I don't care. I am lucky to have her.

DAN  
For the moment.

DICK  
You should see her in a bikini. She looks  
amazing.

SUZI  
But why does she have to be such a stuck-up

SUZI (cont'd)

bitch !

DAN

Why can't she be nice and sweet ?

DICK

Nice and sweet does not come with the territory.

ALICE

And what is that ?

DICK

The expectation that she will always look perfect. The idea of being a model, the ideal woman. That puts pressure on you. The only way you can survive is to believe, you are special. That delusion..in time, you begin to believe in it. That's how you become such a bitch. She is a nice person in the frame of a bitch.

SUZI

I ain't seen nothing nice in her.

DICK

You will do, in time. Her bitch act is just an act.

DAN

She does it so well. It has become her.

DICK

That is a false persona.

ALICE

How would you know ?

DICK

I have taken her to bed, where she confessed her true nature. She wants to be nice, but she is afraid.

DAN

Of what ?

DICK

People will take advantage of her. She is essentially a sensitive soul.

SUZI

So, we gotta be nice to her, but she can crap

SUZI (cont'd)  
on us ?

DICK  
Er...yes.

DAN  
Was she ever nice ?

DICK  
I should imagine so.

ALICE  
But you don't know - ?

DICK  
No.

Nicola comes back in, beaming.

She goes over to Dick.

NICOLA  
Do I look more beautiful ?

DICK (rising)  
Yes, you do.

He kisses Nicola.

They both sit down.

DAN  
Nicola, you look a million dollars.

NICOLA  
More than that, I hope. I am worth more.

DAN  
Are you now or have you ever been, a model ?

NICOLA  
Yes, I was. Not any more. I don't have to work.  
I have my sugar daddy pays for anything I want.

ALICE  
Are you what is known as an escort ?

NICOLA  
No.

SUZI

Have you ever been..an escort ?

NICOLA

No. I am a companion. That's all I've ever been. I was a fashion model, for a while.

DAN

I could tell.

NICOLA

How ?

DAN

Your deportment. How well you stand and walk in high heels.

NICOLA

I'm good at that, balancing on a pin.

ALICE

Can you do anything else ?

NICOLA

Yes, I can.

SUZI

Such as ?

NICOLA

I can dream, and when I wake up, my man is there, and he will do anything I ask him.

DICK

Within reason.

NICOLA

Oh yes, within reason.

DAN

That's good.

NICOLA

He sure is.

DICK

I am The Man, as far as she's concerned.

DAN

What would be unreasonable.

NICOLA

Huh ?

DAN

What demand of yours would he consider,  
unreasonable ?

NICOLA

Er...

DAN

Let him reply.

DICK

Something I could not afford.

NICOLA

But that would never happen. I would never  
ask him for something he could not afford.  
I know exactly how far he would go.

ALICE

How far is that ?

NICOLA

He knows. Not you.

DICK

I know.

A beat.

SUZI

Nicola, lovely Nicola, how come you are  
such a complete C-word ?

NICOLA

A C-word ?

SUZI

Yes, a C-word ?

NICOLA

A companion - ? A confidante - ?

SUZI

You know what I mean.

NICOLA

Of course, I do.

SUZI

Then, why are you one ?

NICOLA

That is one of the great mysteries of the universe, to which I do not have an answer.

DICK

Does it matter ?

ALICE

Of course, it does.

DICK

She is special, remember.

DAN

Do we have to ?

NICOLA

Yes, you have to. If Dick is the Man, I am the Woman.

A beat.

NICOLA

You gonna be staying a few days ?

DAN

That's up to Dick, I guess.

NICOLA

Dick - ?

DICK

Yes. They can stay, if they want.

ALICE

That's not a problem, is it ?

NICOLA

No. Of course not. I am very much looking forward to having you stay with us for a few days, or as long as you wish.

SUZI

What benefit could we possibly derive from staying here for a few days ?

Nicola smiles at Suzi, ironically.

NICOLA

You might learn how to behave in polite society.

SUZI

I'm a drunk, you know.

NICOLA

That's not a problem.

ALICE

I am an alcoholic.

NICOLA

Good for you.

DAN

I am a drunk, an alcoholic and a scumbag.

NICOLA

I know. We can accommodate you.

DAN

Thanks, Nicola.

DICK

She's a nice girl, really.

DAN

We'll see.

CUT TO:

INT – BEDROOM – NIGHT

Nicola showing off a bedroom to Alice.

NICOLA

This is your bedroom, and this is your bed.

ALICE

I am an alcoholic. I have made my bed and I have to lie in it.

NICOLA

Don't worry about that. I am not an angel myself.

ALICE

You are a goddess.

NICOLA

But no angel.

ALICE

Who wants to be an angel ?

NICOLA

I don't.

They smile at each other.

CUT TO:

INT – BEDROOM – NIGHT

Dick showing Dan and Suzi a large bedroom with a double bed.

DICK

This is your bedroom.

SUZI

Nice.

DAN

Roomy.

DICK

I'll leave alone now. Have a good night's sleep.

SUZI

Thanks, Dick.

DAN

Thanks, bro.

Dick goes out.

Dan sits on the bed.

DAN

What the hell is going on ?

SUZI

What ?

DAN

With this Nicola ?

SUZI

She's just a self-centred stuck-up bitch.

DAN

She's tall, slim, sexy and -

SUZI

Nasty.

A beat.

DAN

What is he doing with her ? Why did he  
invite us here, a family of drunks ?

SUZI

She is thoroughly obnoxious and she makes  
no attempt to disguise her contempt for us,  
and he allows her to do it.

DAN

They are trying to provoke us.

SUZI

I think that's it, but why ?

DAN

Maybe, they want us to get drunk, so they  
can...

SUZI

Do what ?

DAN

I don't know. Does their plan rely on us  
getting drunk ?

SUZI

If it does, we can't let that happen. We gotta  
remain sober.

DAN

Can we even do that ?

SUZI

I don't know. I doubt it. We gotta warn Alice,  
they are up to something.

DAN

I'll have a word with her.

SUZI

Good idea, but quietly.

DAN

Quietly.

Dan slowly and quietly goes out.

CUT TO:

INT – BEDROOM – NIGHT

Alice's bedroom.

She is in bed.

Dan creeps in.

Alice stirs and sees that it is Dan.

ALICE

Dan ?

DAN

Yeah.

Dan sits on the bed.

DAN

Something's going on here.

ALICE

What ?

DAN

I don't know. Something.

A beat.

DAN

Suzi said...

ALICE

What ?

DAN

We reckon...

Alice looks at him.

DAN

They plan to get us drunk and then...we don't know. It's some kinda plot, but it all depends on us getting drunk – that's

DAN (cont'd)

why they got us to come here, - they know we're gonna get drunk, so we can't...get drunk.

ALICE

How does it depend on us getting drunk ?

DAN

Maybe, they're gonna shoot someone, in the swimming pool, and they get us drunk, they lay the blame on us.

ALICE

That would make sense, why they need us drunk.

DAN

And they are assured of that, 'cause they know we are three notorious alcoholics, but, we can't allow that to happen. We must keep off the drink. Can you do that ?

ALICE

I'll try.

DAN

Suzi says she will try, and I promise you, I will try to keep off the drink, because our lives might depend on it.

CUT TO:

INT – LIVING ROOM – DAY

Dan, Alice and Suzi, all seated.

Dick comes in.

DICK

We got a surprise for you.

ALICE

What ?

DICK

Just to make you feel at home.

Nicola comes in with a mobile cabinet on wheels and displays it like a magician's assistant. She twirls it around, then stops it, when the doors are facing towards the front.

NICOLA

What could it be ?

She opens it up to reveal a cabinet full of all sorts of spirits and liquers, with lots of glasses.

NICOLA

All types of drinks. Help yourself.

DAN

No, thank you.

NICOLA

What ?

ALICE

We are abstaining.

Nicola looks at Suzi.

NICOLA

You ?

SUZI

No.

NICOLA

You disappoint me. We did this for you.  
We don't drink much ourselves. This is  
a special token of our hospitality.

DICK

It cost us -

NICOLA (interrupting)

We don't talk about how much things cost.  
That would be vulgar.

DICK

Of course.

NICOLA

We'll leave this cabinet, with all its various  
drinks, available here, and keep it open, so  
you can see all the wonderful spirits and  
liquers you could indulge in, if you wanted.

DAN

You know our reputation.

Nicola nods.

ALICE

We are drunks.

SUZI

Alcoholics.

DAN

You did this, because you knew -

ALICE

We were drunks.

NICOLA

Can you resist temptation ?

DAN

I can.

SUZI

I can.

ALICE

I can.

NICOLA

Are you sure ?

DAN

Yes.

SUZI

Yes.

ALICE

I am sure.

NICOLA

So, I can leave this here, then, if you can resist temptation...?

DAN

Yes.

NICOLA

Good.

Nicola goes to sit with Dick.

Dick and Nicola kiss and embrace.

NICOLA

Umm, that was nice.

Nicola turns to speak to the other.

NICOLA

You see, me and Dick, we are not drunks.  
We don't depend on alcohol. We make our  
own happiness. It is based on love.

DAN

What are you playing at ?

DICK

We're not playing at anything.

NICOLA

We are in love.

Nicola kisses Dick.

DAN

Okay. We get it. You're better than us.

NICOLA

It's not like that.

ALICE

Yes, it is.

DICK

I assure you, it is not.

SUZI

This is a trick.

NICOLA

You're paranoid.

SUZI

That's because we have brain damage from  
excessive drinking.

DAN

But you know that already. You're trying to  
provoke us.

DICK

To do what ?

ALICE

To...

SUZI

We don't know, but we do know you are up to something. You are plotting...

ALICE

Conspiring...

DAN

Against us...

SUZI

Somehow.

Dick and Nicola laugh.

NICOLA

We don't have anything planned.

DAN

We don't...

ALICE and SUZI

Believe you.

DICK

That's your problem.

NICOLA

So, you will resolutely not drink any of these wonderful spirits and liquers we got for you...?

DICK

At great cost...

NICOLA

Which we don't...

DICK

Talk about...

NICOLA

Because it's...

DICK

Vulgar.

DAN

No.

NICOLA

Please yourself. We do not indulge in alcohol ourselves.

SUZI

You do drugs instead - ?

DICK

No, we do not.

SUZI

What do you do ?

NICOLA

We make love.

Nicola kisses Dick passionately for almost half a minute.

NICOLA

We only want the best for you.

SUZI

Why should you care about us ?

DICK

You're family.

SUZI

(looking at Dan)

He's family. We ain't.

NICOLA

You're all family.

DICK

Believe us, we care.

SUZI

You couldn't care less.

NICOLA

You got that all wrong. We do care.

SUZI

We don't believe that.

NICOLA

We do...care.

A beat.

NICOLA (to Dick)

We'd best leave them to it. See if they can resist temptation.

DICK

Okay.

Dick and Nicola get up and hold hands.

They go out through the French doors, which open onto the swimming pool outside.

Dan, Suzi and Alice stare mesmerised at the open cabinet with the bottles of all types of alcoholic drinks.

DAN

No.

ALICE

No.

DAN

No.

They continue to stare at the cabinet.

Later:

Their eyes look glazed over.

Nicola comes in, looking sensational in her bikini.

Dick comes in, wearing shorts and a loose fitting opened shirt.

Nicola takes a look at the bottles in the cabinet.

NICOLA

You ain't touched a drop.

ALICE

Abstinence makes the heart grow fonder.

NICOLA

Indeed.

Nicola turns to speak to Dick.

NICOLA

Not a drop.

DICK

You have done well.

ALICE

We might be habitual drunks, but we have somehow resisted temptation.

NICOLA

Good for you. - You know what I need ?  
Grapes.

She goes into the kitchen.

DAN

Grapes ?

DICK

Unfermented grapes. She likes them...  
unfermented.

They look towards the kitchen, from which Nicola emerges, holding a bunch of grapes.

SUZI

What are you gonna do with those ?

NICOLA

Eat them.

She holds them up, over her head and eats a grape from the bunch.

NICOLA

Delicious.

(to Dick)

You'll do it for me ?

DICK

Do I have to ?

NICOLA

Please. Please.

DICK

Okay. You talked me into it.

Dick turns to speak to the others.

DICK  
She is persuasive.

DAN  
Yes, we know.

Nicola goes out through the French doors, holding the bunch of grapes.

Dick follows her.

DICK  
Come and see.

ALICE  
Do we have to ?

DICK  
Yes, you do. It will take your mind off  
the drink.

DAN  
Okay.

Dan, Suzi and Alice follow Dick out through the French doors.

Dick closes the French doors.

CUT TO:

EXT – SWIMMING POOL – DAY

Nicola parades herself around the rim of the pool.

She passes the ladder and platform, with diving boards.

The grapes are in a small bowl on a table.

Dick sits down on a reclining chair next to the table.

Nicola bends down and splashes some water on her body.

She then, showing off her body, and seeing that everyone is watching her, deliberates  
walks up the highest platform diving board, and poses.

She then goes to the end of the board and performs a perfect dive into the water, with  
little splash as she has the technique right.

She then swims to the end of the pool, and reverses to swim to the other, and then swims  
back to the first end.

Nicola then swims towards where Dick is, reclining on his chair.

She sinks beneath the waves and then rises up, near Dick, but Dick takes little notice of her.

She looks disappointed.

NICOLA

Dick, you promised.

DICK

I'm not in the mood.

NICOLA

Dick...

DICK

Do I have to ?

NICOLA

Please, you promised, please. This is my perfect moment.

DICK

Nic...

NICOLA

Please.

Nick gets up, reluctantly, and picks up the bunch of grapes.

He goes to the edge of the pool and bends down. He holds the bunch of grapes a little above the surface of the water.

Nicola smiles.

She dives under the surface of the water.

Dick has a devious look on his face and suddenly jerks the bunch of grapes up out of the way, as Nicola thrusts up through the surface of the water, but the grapes are not there.

She looks disappointed.

Dick is standing, holding the bunch of grapes and smirking.

NICOLA

You bastard ! You promised me.

DICK

Sorry.

NICOLA

That was my perfect moment.

DICK

Life does not have..any perfect moments.

NICOLA

Yes, it does. That perfect moment is what people live for. That special moment in time when everything is just right. The moment of perfection.

DICK

You can't have that.

NICOLA

Why not ?

DICK

Your special moment should be kissing me.

Nicola looks deflated.

Dick puts the grapes down again on the table, and goes out.

Nicola looks towards Dan.

NICOLA

Dan, would you do me a favour, please ?

DAN

Yeah...?

NICOLA

Come over here.

Dan gets up and goes over to her.

NICOLA

You could do it for me.

DAN

Me ?

NICOLA

I want you to hold the grapes a little above the surface of the water. Hold them there until I come up. I gotta eat a grape.

Dan looks a little puzzled.

DAN

Okay.

Dan picks up the bunch of grapes and holds it a little above the surface of the water.

Nicola dives down.

She comes up and eats a grape from the bottom of the bunch. She smiles broadly.

She finishes eating the grape.

NICOLA

We did it ! Thanks, Dan.

Later:

Nicola has dried herself off and is reclining on the chair.

Dan, Alice and Suzi are seated on straight back chairs.

ALICE

What was that about ?

NICOLA

It was my perfect moment.

They look puzzled.

NICOLA

I had to do it. Dick promised me he'd do it, but he...I don't think I like him much any more.

SUZI

You're nuts !

ALICE

Crazy !

NICOLA

But nice.

DAN

We haven't seen much evidence of that.

NICOLA

I want to be nice. I want to be kind and considerate.

Dan looks doubtful and frowns.

DAN

You have not been nice to us.

NICOLA

I know and I want to change all that.

SUZI

What do you want us to do ?

NICOLA

Just...try to understand.

ALICE

Okay. We'll try. But what was all that about, the grapes ?

NICOLA

There was this movie I saw, many years ago, and none of it made any impression on me, except a scene where that happened. Like two and a half hours of nothing, but like thirty seconds of something, very, very powerful. That image.

DAN

The grapes ?

NICOLA

The grapes, the woman, the swimming pool, the smile. It was a perfect moment in cinema. That was gonna be my perfect moment in life.

ALICE

Films are not life. Films are fiction.

NICOLA

I know that.

ALICE

You do ?

NICOLA

I can tell the difference. I just thought that moment was so special. I wanted to re-create that moment. It was perfect, absolutely perfect.

DAN

Nothing in life is perfect, nothing. When you're drunk, you realize just how imperfect life is, how everything in this world is just plain wrong.

NICOLA

That is why each individual must have their own perfect moment.

SUZI

That is such crap.

ALICE

Why would someone like you, young, tall, beautiful, intelligent...well, maybe not that intelligent...why would you need a perfect moment in your life ? Your life is already perfect, or, at least, almost perfect.

NICOLA

I was insecure.

SUZI

All you have to do, is such Dick's dick, and you are financially secure.

NICOLA

I was emotionally insecure.

SUZI

What the fuck does that mean ?

NICOLA

I need ta make it up with Dick.

DAN

You certainly do.

NICOLA

I have got to behave myself. I will apologize to him.

DAN

You already got it made. Don't spoil it.

Nicola picks up the bunch and grapes and plucks one from it, then eats it.

CUT TO:

INT – LIVING ROOM – DAY

Dick appears to be asleep.

Nicola comes in, wearing a blouse, skirt and heels.

She leans over him.

He wakes.

He sees Nicola. His face first shows surprise, then annoyance, and finally, happiness, as he smiles at her.

NICOLA

I am so, so sorry.

DICK

That's okay.

He sits up.

NICOLA

You'll forgive me ?

DICK

Of course, I do.

She kisses him.

NICOLA

May I sit down ?

DICK

Sure.

Nicola sits next to him.

NICOLA

I was a bit crazy.

DICK

Doesn't matter.

NICOLA

I do have faults.

DICK

Everyone has..some. You are almost perfect.

NICOLA

How do I improve ?

DICK

How perfect do you wanna get ?

NICOLA

Absolutely, one hundred percent perfect.

DICK

That is just not possible. No-one can ever be one hundred percent anything, let alone perfect.

NICOLA

I know, but the attempt is worthwhile, even noble.

DICK

Nicola, face reality, you are not the deepest vessel in the universe.

NICOLA

I try.

DICK

But you are essentially a glossy cover with nothing inside.

NICOLA

No. Not nothing. There is something inside me, beneath the surface. Anyway, I thought you wanted a superficial girlfriend, because it was easier. A really deep girl might expose you for the shallow person you are.

DICK

I'm deeper than you.

NICOLA

That does not mean much.

DICK

I guess not.

NICOLA

Why did you choose me ?

DICK

You were cute...

NICOLA

And...

DICK

And...

NICOLA

Shallow...

DICK

Shallow...

NICOLA

And that is what you wanted.

DICK

Is true.

NICOLA

It really suits you your brother is a drunk,  
you can look down on, you find his status  
in society a subject for amusement.

DICK

Everybody has to be superior to someone.

NICOLA

What about the one at the very bottom ?

DICK

Everyone looks down on him -

NICOLA

Or her -

DICK

Or her.

NICOLA

But she has no-one to look down on. She  
must be terribly lonely, at the bottom of  
the pile.

DICK

He or she probably is. Make sure that's not  
you.

Nicola stands.

NICOLA

You are a patronizing condescending prick !

DICK

I thought this was, kiss and make up.

NICOLA

I tried.

Dick scoffs.

DICK

You have some way to go.

NICOLA

You're not perfect.

DICK

I never said I was.

NICOLA

Okay, Dick, maybe I'll try again later.

Nicola goes out.

Dick sinks his the back of his head into a cushion and closes his eyes to sleep.

CUT TO:

INT – KITCHEN – DAY/NIGHT

Late afternoon.

Nicola, Dan, Alice and Suzi, seated around the large kitchen table.

NICOLA

I feel rejected.

ALICE

I'm sorry.

NICOLA

Not your fault. It's Dick...

SUZI

He's being...

DAN

A prick.

NICOLA

Exactly. You know, we have a relationship, but somehow I feel he treats me like I'm a prostitute, which I most certainly am not. He does not treat me as an equal.

ALICE

That is when relationships fall apart.

NICOLA

He wants out ?

ALICE

Could be.

NICOLA

Why doesn't he just tell me, so's I can move on ?

SUZI

Men are like that. They're ass-holes. They also want other people to take responsibility in case things go wrong.

ALICE

Men do not like guilt.

DAN

No-one likes guilt, not just men.

ALICE

Men can't cope with guilt. They hate it. They want everything to be someone else's fault, not theirs, and anyone will do, as long as it's not them. They hate blame.

NICOLA

Surely, if a man happens to be to blame for a disaster, he must own the blame ?

ALICE

Men would do anything to avoid being blame for anything goes wrong.

NICOLA

That is useless.

ALICE

Of course, it is.

NICOLA

Why is that part of their psyche ?

ALICE

I guess it's their position in society, the patriarch thing, they are infallible. They have a psychological need to pass any blame or guilt onto another party.

NICOLA

Wow, Alice ! You got some brain there, girl.

ALICE

What's left of it, after the drink damaged  
it for good.

NICOLA

You could've been a professor of philosophy,  
with a brain like that.

ALICE

Could've been, should've been, might've been.  
I ain't none o' that. What I am is a scumbag, all  
down to the drink causing me, brain damage.

NICOLA

That is such a shame.

ALICE

I guess it is, but I can't care about it now. All  
I can care about is a drink.

NICOLA

You been abstinent for a...

ALICE

Period of thirty-six hours, one and a half days.

SUZI

Is that a record ?

ALICE

It could be, for me.

NICOLA

Well done.

ALICE

I hate being a drunk, but I am habituated,  
and habits are hard to break.

SUZI

Nicola, you got a cushy number here, don't  
get yourself thrown out.

NICOLA

What should I do ?

SUZI

Suck his cock.

Nicola looks with some disdain.

DAN

You could do better.

NICOLA

You think so ?

DAN

Sure. He's a good catch, but a girl like you, a total knockout, you could get anyone.

NICOLA

I don't know about that.

DAN

Sure you could. Believe in yourself.

NICOLA

I usually do, but...I don't know...my confidence has taken a knock.

SUZI

Dick has knocked you sideways.

ALICE

Men are all bastards !

NICOLA

Not all, surely - ?

DAN

A lot of them are.

SUZI

Oh, Dan...you are The Man.

NICOLA

What do I say to Dick ?

ALICE

Why should women accommodate men who are difficult ? Why bow to their whims, like they are the only people who are upset ? You need to be economically independent, girl.

NICOLA

I used-to be. It's just, it's easier to depend on someone else.

ALICE

It doesn't work. You have to rely on your man

ALICE (cont'd)  
not being a completely destructive bastard.

DAN  
My brother has changed. He used to be a decent human being, but it seems money has gone to his head. He wants to be king in his own house, dictator...not nice, not nice at all.

NICOLA  
All I wanted was a perfect moment, for once in my life. I angered him, somehow.

SUZI  
You ask him why he got so upset.

NICOLA  
Was it something I said ?

ALICE  
Who knows ?

NICOLA  
I don't.

ALICE  
Men aren't really sensitive. They just pretend to be, when it suits them, and they're so fucking insensitive about anybody else's feelings, like their feelings matter. Truth is, they don't.

NICOLA  
Umm, I gotta think about this.

Nicola ponders for a while.

NICOLA  
You know, my problem is, I was too cocky, too...I would go too far...you know, they talk about, "I overstepped the mark", but I never knew where the mark was.

DAN  
Nicola, there's nothing wrong with your attitude or personality.

NICOLA  
What about my behaviour ?

ALICE

Maybe, you relied too much on things working out okay for you. When it all goes wrong, you need compassion for others, before you can sympathise with yourself. You are attractive and vivacious. You don't want to lose your bounce.

NICOLA

But I am shallow.

SUZI

There's worse things than shallow.

ALICE

Maybe, you should reject him before he rejects you.

DAN

Get your retaliation in first.

SUZI

Do it to him before he does it to you.

ALICE

You're young enough to escape from him.

NICOLA

But is that what I want ?

ALICE

Protect your own safety.

NICOLA

I do.

ALICE

Your future safety.

NICOLA

I don't know what that's gonna be like. No-one does.

ALICE

You can predict what might happen.

NICOLA

I don't know about that.

Nicola looks thoughtful.

NICOLA

Maybe, you're right. I'll speak to him.

She gets up and goes out.

DAN

A brave girl.

ALICE

She sure is.

SUZI

How come we are supporting her when she insulted us ?

DAN

She is now treating us as equals.

SUZI

I suppose so.

ALICE

The girl's got guts.

DAN

She's gotta put herself first.

ALICE

She always did.

DAN

She must do now.

CUT TO:

INT – LIVING ROOM – NIGHT

Dick, seemingly asleep on the sofa.

Nicola comes in and switches on one of the lights, and turns it to dim.

Dick appears to wake up.

NICOLA

Dick, we gotta sort ourselves out.

DICK

What are you talking about ?

NICOLA

Our relationship.

DICK

Do we have one ?

NICOLA

I think we do.

DICK

That's what you think.

NICOLA

Yes.

DICK

So, what do you wanna talk about ?

NICOLA

Do you love me ?

DICK

Of course I do.

NICOLA

But...

DICK

I don't like you.

Nicola is upset by this and pauses before replying.

NICOLA

I don't understand that.

DICK

You don't understand much, do you ?

NICOLA

I try to...

DICK

But you don't.

She crouches down beside him.

NICOLA

Dick, I want you to love me and like me.

DICK

Then, you gotta improve.

Nicola looks a little blank, though upset.

NICOLA  
How do I do that ?

DICK  
Don't you know ?

NICOLA  
No.

A beat.

DICK  
You did not consider my feelings.

NICOLA  
When ?

DICK  
When you did that silly grape in the swimming pool scene.

NICOLA  
That was not silly.

DICK  
No, it was stupid and inconsiderate.

NICOLA  
I don't understand that at all.

DICK  
You wouldn't.

Nicola stands up.

NICOLA  
What did I do wrong ?

DICK  
The whole god-damn thing.

NICOLA  
I am ignorant of what upset you.

DICK  
No, you're just ignorant.

NICOLA  
Of what, specifically ?

DICK

You calling that, your “perfect moment”.  
That should have been when you kissed me.

NICOLA

Maybe, you’re right there.

DICK

You know I am.

NICOLA

I’m sorry, Dick.

DICK

Okay.

NICOLA

How can I make it up to you ?

DICK

Just think, before you do something. Just think, for once in your life, how what you do might affect someone, before you do it.

NICOLA

I’ll try. But, I must reconsider my part in our relationship.

DICK

What’s up ?

NICOLA

I am not an ideal partner for you.

DICK

I do not complain, unless I am grievously offended. Most of the time, you’re okay.

NICOLA

Thank you very much. I just think, you deserve someone better, more considerate.

DICK

You satisfy me, most of the time.

NICOLA

I must learn how to review the consequences of my actions before I do anything. That is difficult for someone like me, because I am strong-willed and determined, too much.

DICK

Nobody's perfect.

NICOLA

But there's quite a lot wrong with me.

DICK

I wouldn't say that.

NICOLA

I am too insistent.

DICK

Maybe, sometimes. Most of the time, you're okay.

NICOLA

A resounding endorsement.

DICK

In every relationship, there must be give and take.

NICOLA

But, how much give, and how much take ?

DICK

That's what each couple have to work out, between them.

NICOLA

Do I give enough ?

DICK

Yes, you do.

NICOLA

I take too much.

DICK

I don't mind.

NICOLA

That's my Dick. Only, I might have to... disappear.

DICK

What !?

She walks around the room.

NICOLA

I might decide to cancel my part in this relationship.

DICK

I thought you loved me.

NICOLA

I do, but I don't like you.

A beat.

DICK

What did I do wrong ?

NICOLA

You don't know - ?

DICK

No.

NICOLA

You're too critical. I could do better than you. A girl like me should be treated like something special, because I am, special. You just treat me like anyone, not someone special. I am beautiful. My opinion matters. I don't think I can tolerate your attitude.

DICK

But, Nic, I love you.

NICOLA

But you don't like me. I don't think I could live with someone who doesn't like me. How am I supposed to tolerate that level of abuse ?

DICK

It's not abuse, it's constructive criticism, because I want you to be perfect.

NICOLA

For whose sake, yours or mine ?

DICK

For both of our sakes.

NICOLA

I don't believe that.

DICK

I'm sorry...I have been so dismissive of you and your feelings.

NICOLA

Am I entitled to have any feelings, in your opinion ?

DICK

Of course you are.

NICOLA

You do not communicate that message to me at all.

DICK

I gotta improve my communication skills.

NICOLA

Yes, you do.

A beat.

NICOLA

I've had enough of this. I'm gonna leave.

DICK

Don't go.

NICOLA

Why not ?

DICK

Because I love you.

NICOLA

But you don't like me.

DICK

I do...I do..like you.

NICOLA

I don't like you at all, now. I gotta go.

DICK

Nic !

She goes out.

Dick gets up to follow her, then stops, thinks, and sits down again.

DICK

Shit.

Dan, Suzi and Alice come in from the kitchen.

DAN

What's up, Dick ?

DICK

Didn't you hear ?

ALICE

We do not eavesdrop on other people's conversations.

DICK

You must have heard.

SUZI

We did not.

DICK

Okay. Nic's leaving me.

DAN

Why ?

DICK

Because I'm a prick.

ALICE

What in particular ?

DICK

Because she could not tolerate my criticism of her.

DAN

She could go anywhere. She could get any man.

SUZI

Someone as precious as that, you have to handle them with care. Their ego is fragile. You cannot criticise them.

DICK

It was constructive criticism, hoping to help her improve.

Alice sighs.

ALICE

You threw her away, you ass-hole.

SUZI

She can do better than you.

DICK

I know.

ALICE

And you will not beg her to stay.

SUZI

It is beneath your dignity.

DAN

You idiot.

SUZI

You got no patience, Dick. You gotta to learn to put up with your own stupidity.

They go out.

Dick reflects on what has happened.

CUT TO:

INT – KITCHEN – DAY

Morning.

Nicola, Dick, Alice and Suzi, seated at the large kitchen table.

NICOLA

I gotta go soon. I don't really want a final scene with Dick.

ALICE

It's the best way.

A beat.

Nicola stands.

DAN

You come and visit us at our drinking-hole.

NICOLA

Is that a formal invite ?

SUZI

It is.

NICOLA

I might just take you up on that offer.

She goes to the back door.

NICOLA

See you all.

DAN, ALICE and SUZI

See you.

Nicola goes out.

SUZI

She done it !

They all applaud, then realize they must not wake Dick, so stop.

SUZI

That girl's got guts.

DAN

She's got everything, guts, beauty, brains.  
She is one helluva package.

ALICE

Too good for him, that's for sure.

CUT TO:

INT – BAR – DAY

The bartender wipes his counter, then sees Dan, Alice, Suzi and Nicola come into the bar.

Nicola goes over to the counter.

BARTENDER

Yes, ma'am.

NICOLA

Four short whiskeys, please.

BARTENDER

Come right up.

He takes out a tray, puts four small glasses on it, then pours out the four drinks.

Nicola hands him a note.

The bartender hands her some change.

She picks up the tray and goes over to the table where the others are seated.

BARTENDER

She is way above the usual clientele we get in here.

NICOLA

Here you are.

She sits down.

NICOLA

So, this is your drinking-hole ?

ALICE

Yep.

Alice drinks. Dan drinks. Suzi drinks.

Nicola drinks.

NICOLA

You guys really helped me.

DAN

A bunch of drunks ?

NICOLA

Yes. You talked some sense into me.  
I was a timorous coward.

ALICE

You have got everything, beauty, youth,  
intelligence, guts, everything.

NICOLA

But I needed you to make me realise I  
could break free and be myself. I just  
wanted a perfect moment in my life,  
an image I could re-create and say, this  
is mine, forever and ever. But now I see,  
there are many special moment's in a life,  
and none are perfect, but they are special.

SUZI

We know that, even though we're drunks.

Suzi finishes her drink.

ALICE

Maybe, we could help other people.

DAN

Our wisdom ?

SUZI

Only when we're sober.

A beat.

NICOLA

So, what do we do now ?

ALICE

We adopt your philosophy, to appreciate each special moment in our lives, but we must never think any moment, no matter how special, is perfect.

THE END





