

DISPARITY OF DEVOTION

By

MIKE SHELTON

INT. WEDDING RECEPTION HALL - NIGHT

The room is filled with people sitting at tables, standing around, and dancing. A man and woman stand at the bar.

The man is NEWTON LAWLER, 31. He is tall and thin, with glasses and short, dark hair. He wears a tuxedo.

The woman, MELISSA LAWLER, 25, is Newton's new sister in law. She wears a wedding dress, and her long blond hair is up.

NEWTON

Melissa, I'm telling you that it's really not that big of a deal.

MELISSA

Maybe you're right, but doesn't it just get to you sometimes?

NEWTON

To be totally honest with you, and don't take this the wrong way now, but the only thing that bothers me is everyone's nagging.

MELISSA

It's not nagging. It's concern.

NEWTON

Concern for what? So I'm thirty one and still single. I've managed to get by this long haven't I?

MELISSA

Yeah, but--

NEWTON

Look at you. It's your wedding day, and what are you doing? Worrying about my love life.

Melissa laughs a little.

MELISSA

You've got a point. I honestly didn't even notice.

NEWTON

And when you can essentially stop time to ask me about my lack of female companionship, you're officially one of us.

Newton gives Melissa a hug as she stands there in shock. He pulls back and wiggles his fingers in front of her face.

NEWTON

Gabba gabba, we accept you, we accept you, one of us.

MELISSA

Well you're definitely one of a kind, Newton.

NEWTON

Indeed. Now go mingle. I'll be on the lookout for Miss Right.

Melissa goes to greet the guests as Newton stares at the bottom of his empty glass.

NEWTON

I'm sure she's out there somewhere.

INT. DARBY CAMPAIGN HQ - NIGHT

A young woman, SARA RENFELD, 28, and petite with dark, shoulder length hair sits at a desk surrounded by phones and miscellaneous papers.

There is no one else around and the place is deathly quiet until a phone rings. Sara quickly picks it up.

SARA

Hello, Darby campaign. How may I help you? You what? But there's nobody else that can cover! I've already been here eighteen hours and we still have to get the flyers out! Pneumonia? Fine. I'll take care of it. Yeah. Feel better.

Sara hangs up the phone.

SARA

No dedication, I swear.

She grabs a stack of papers from a corner of the desk and heads out.

INT. WEDDING RECEPTION HALL - NIGHT

Newton still stands at the bar, staring into the bottom of what is now a full glass.

NATHAN, 26, who bears a strong resemblance to Newton without glasses, walks up.

NATHAN
Big brother!

NEWTON
And how is the groom doing?

NATHAN
Little drunk, but you know how it goes.

NEWTON
Sure.

NATHAN
You alright? You seem to be moping a bit.

NEWTON
You notice that all by yourself or did your wife tell you?

NATHAN
It was the wife. She asked me to come talk to you.

NEWTON
Well I lost that bet. I told Dad you'd keep the pants for at least twenty four hours.

NATHAN
Yeah, yeah, yeah.

NEWTON
But since you're here, I'll fill you in.

DAD, 60, with a short, stocky build and white hair in a military style buzz cut, walks up and slaps Nathan and Newton on the back. He wears a tuxedo and has obviously had many drinks.

NATHAN
Hello Dad.

DAD
My two boys!

NEWTON
Yes Dad, your two boys.

DAD
What a splendid affair. My boy finally ties the knot, and not a moment too soon. You got a real prize there, Nate.

NATHAN
Thanks.

Dad points his finger at Newton.

DAD
And you, when the hell are you going to meet a nice girl and settle down? Are you one of those funny boys?

NATHAN
Funny boys?

Dad rubs his forearm with a fist.

DAD
You know, in through the out door?

NEWTON
I'm not gay, Dad.

DAD
I guess we'll just wait and see, eh short pants?

Dad walks away.

NATHAN
Pay no mind Newt, you know how he gets.

NEWTON
That right there, that's my night in a nutshell. When are you going to get married? When are you going to meet a nice girl? You'll die without a son!

NATHAN
Who said that?

NEWTON
He did.

Newton points to Dad, who talks to HENRY, 65, and a few other partygoers.

NEWTON
I'm just tired of answering the same questions over and over.

NATHAN
Apparently so. I'm gonna get back into the grind with the relatives. Don't let it bother you.

NEWTON
I'll catch up to you later.

NATHAN
Think you'll be able to fit me into your busy schedule of pissing and moaning?

NEWTON
I'll try to squeeze you in somewhere between the best man speech and cousin Mary kicking you in the balls.

Nathan walks away talking to himself.

NATHAN
That only happened once, and I was twelve.

Dad still talks to Henry and the other partygoers.

DAD
My own son plays for the other team. What do you make of all this, Henry?

HENRY
There's worse things in the world than that I'm sure.

Newton saunters over.

NEWTON
Is he telling you I'm gay?

THE WHOLE GROUP
No!

NEWTON
Well I'm not if anyone cares. I
like women.

HENRY
Speaking of women, when are we
going to be attending your wedding?

NEWTON
That's like asking the next time
the Cubs will win the World Series,
Uncle Henry.

DAD
See? It'll be a cold day in hell!
You're going to die alone!

NEWTON
C'mon, it's Nathan's wedding day,
not ask Newton about his wedding
day. It's getting old.

BARRY, a short bald man, 38, walks up.

BARRY
Hey Newt.

NEWTON
Hey Barry, how ya been?

BARRY
Good. We were just over there
talking and wondering when you're
gonna get married. You should be
ashamed of yourself.

An angry look comes over Newton's face. He grabs Barry by
the shirt.

NEWTON
Never, Barry, never! I'm going to
die alone! I'm going to, how do you
say it Dad?

DAD
Die without a son?

NEWTON

Die without a son! Does that answer
your stupid question Barry? And
what gives you the right to tell me
I should be ashamed of myself?
You're not married either!

Barry is very much afraid. Newton glares at him.

BARRY

It wasn't me! Aunt Hildy said it!

Barry points to AUNT HILDY, 75, seated at a nearby table.

NEWTON

Well how about you go back and tell
Aunt Hildy to quit being such a
busybody and mind her own business!

Newton lets go of Barry.

BARRY

I'm sorry, I'm sorry.

NEWTON

And while you're at it, tell her
those cookies she used to make
sucked.

Barry goes back to his table and whispers in Aunt Hildy's
ear. She puts her hand to her mouth in shock and shakes her
head at Newton.

NEWTON

Ok, I need to get outta here.

DAD

Where the hell you gonna go?

NEWTON

Just out. I'll get some air.

Newton walks out.

DAD

That's my boys! They're about as
useful as tits on a bull, but they
got our genes in 'em, so they can't
be all bad, eh Henry?

HENRY

Whatever you say.

DAD
I say we need another drink.
Barkeep, light em up.

He puts his finger in the air signaling the bartender and leans over to Henry.

DAD
That Hildy's a real tightass
anyway.

HENRY
The cookies do suck.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Newton walks along the sidewalk until he reaches a Chinese restaurant with a chef cooking in the window.

He looks beyond the chef to a couple seated at a table.

He watches them talk and laugh for a moment before turning his attention back toward the cook, who chops the head off of a cooked duck with a cleaver.

The chef looks up, making eye contact with Newton and cracking a big smile. Newton gives him a thumbs up and continues down the street.

INT. WEDDING RECEPTION HALL - NIGHT

Dad and Henry continue talking amongst the group. Nathan has since joined them.

NATHAN
What exactly are you asking?

DAD
Your wife, she has friends right?

NATHAN
Yeah.

DAD
Some of which are single?

NATHAN
Yeah.

DAD

See? You're not such a dumbass after all. What you do is you introduce one of those single friends to your single brother, sit back, relax, and watch them get married, and have ten thousand little Lawlers.

NATHAN

Things don't work that way.

DAD

Things do work that way. The trick is to get your head out of your ass.

NATHAN

Good talk, Dad.

Nathan walks away. Dad is befuddled.

DAD

What? What did I say?

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Sara walks along with a stack of flyers in her hand. All the shops are closed, and she sighs in aggravation.

She looks up the street to see a lighted sign reading "CAPTAIN CAFFEINE'S COFFEE". Under the shop name is a cartoon superhero, holding a coffee mug.

She shrugs her shoulders.

SARA

At least it's not a shutout. Thank God it's a coffee shop.

She heads for the shop.

INT. CAPTAIN CAFFEINE'S COFFEE - NIGHT

Newton stands at the counter with PETE, 44. He's a short man with a medium build, blond hair and matching goatee.

He pours Newton a cup of coffee in a takeout cup.

PETE

Families nag, that's what they do.
The trick is to go on enough dates
to have some girl to talk about.

NEWTON

I might have to try that.

PETE

Well it's got Pete's personal
guarantee on it, and I usually
reserve that strictly for the
coffee.

NEWTON

If it's half as good it'll work out
nicely.

Pete places a lid on the cup and hands it to Newton.

PETE

Anyone who'll leave a wedding to
come in here for a coffee gets a
free one.

NEWTON

Thanks Pete. I'll see you on
Monday.

PETE

Take it easy, and remember, dates
for discussion purposes.

NEWTON

Gotcha.

Newton walks toward the door with his head down and walks
right into Sara as she enters. He spills his coffee all over
her and she falls to the ground. The flyers in her hand
scatter all over.

NEWTON

Oh god, I'm so sorry. Are you ok?

SARA

I'm fine.

Newton takes a long, gazing look at her. She extends her
hand.

SARA

Can you help me up?

Newton snaps out of his stare and helps her up.

NEWTON

You sure you're ok? I didn't burn you did I?

SARA

No, I'm fine.

Newton turns to Pete, smirking.

NEWTON

Hey Pete, I told you I wanted hot coffee. This girl didn't even get burned.

Pete laughs as Newton turns back to Sara. She just stares at him.

SARA

You're joking right?

NEWTON

Well I was trying to. Not too good huh?

SARA

I probably would have enjoyed it a lot more if I weren't the one with the coffee all over me.

NEWTON

Well if you take it for dry cleaning, just drop the bill off with Pete here. My name's --

Sara throws her hands up.

SARA

Wait! Let me guess.

She eyes Newton up and down in his tuxedo.

SARA

Bond. James Bond.

NEWTON

Close, it's Newton Lawler.

He extends his hand and Sara shakes it.

SARA

That was going to be my next guess. Sara Renfeld.

NEWTON

I'm terribly sorry about the spill.
Can I buy you a coffee to make up
for it?

SARA

Sure, why not?

NEWTON

Let me help you with your papers.

Newton picks one up and looks at it. It says "JIM DARBY -
DEMOCRAT FOR U.S SENATE" on it, with a large picture of JIM
DARBY, a late forties man who sports the stereotypical smile
of a politician on it.

NEWTON

Jim Darby, huh?

SARA

Yeah.

NEWTON

Well at least it's not anything of
value.

Sara peels her eyes in anger as Newton continues picking up
the flyers. He hands her a stack and smiles sheepishly.

NEWTON

Sorry. Bad joke.

SARA

At least your consistent.

INT. WEDDING RECEPTION HALL - NIGHT

A crowd is gathered on the dance floor waiting for the
garter toss. Dad runs up to Nathan.

DAD

Here's what you do. You take the
garter off, turn around and
immediately fire it at your
brother. He'll catch it out of
instinct.

NATHAN

I would if I could but I can't. He
still isn't back yet.

DAD
Where the hell did he go?

NATHAN
I don't know, a walk?

DAD
A plague on the house of Lawler!

INT. CAPTAIN CAFFEINE'S COFFEE - NIGHT

Newton and Sara sit at a table sipping coffee.

NEWTON
So you work on Darby's
campaign? Must be interesting.

SARA
I love it. I don't think I've ever
felt so strongly about something
before in my life.

NEWTON
Really?

SARA
He's not your typical
politician. He really cares about
people. He's the embodiment of the
common man.

NEWTON
That right there. That's what I
can never understand.

SARA
What?

NEWTON
This thing about politicians always
trying to play themselves off as
the common man. I don't want the
common man, I want someone
extraordinary. If I wanted the
common man in office, I'd run
myself.

SARA
Interesting.

NEWTON

Not really. I'm just sick of these phonies that try to pass themselves off as my friend and neighbor when they have millions of dollars in the bank.

SARA

Jim Darby isn't like that, I can assure you.

NEWTON

Guess I'll have to take your word for it.

SARA

You're not interested in politics, are you?

Newton smiles.

NEWTON

Not in the slightest.

SARA

So, what are you interested in?

Newton thinks for a moment.

NEWTON

Honestly, absolutely nothing.

SARA

Nothing?

NEWTON

Not a thing.

SARA

What about your job?

NEWTON

What about it?

SARA

Well, what do you do?

NEWTON

I'm a newspaper writer.

SARA

And that doesn't interest you?

NEWTON

Nope.

SARA

So then why do it?

NEWTON

It pays the bills. Same reason everybody does what they do.

SARA

I love my job.

NEWTON

Do you really?

SARA

Sure.

NEWTON

But isn't there something else you'd rather do.

SARA

I don't know.

NEWTON

Let's jump in the wayback machine for a second, back to when you were a little Sara. Did you go around telling everyone that you wanted to be a campaign associate? Maybe have a little voting booth set up right next to your friend's lemonade stand?

Sara laughs.

SARA

No.

NEWTON

So what did you say? What did you wanna be?

Sara blushes.

SARA

I can't tell you that.

NEWTON

Why not?

SARA
Cause it's stupid.

NEWTON
Oh c'mon, it can't be that bad.

Sara looks around nervously.

SARA
I wanted to be Barbie.

Newton snaps his fingers.

NEWTON
I can work with that. I know exactly what you need to do to accomplish that.

Sara is confused.

SARA
You do?

NEWTON
Sure. Here's what you do...

Newton leans in close. Sara listens intently, sipping from her coffee as she looks at Newton with one eye.

NEWTON
You quit your job, buy a pink corvette, and live out the rest of your days shackled up in the dream house with a man that has no genitalia.

Sara spits coffee on Newton as she breaks out into uncontrollable laughter. She quickly regains her composure, grabbing a napkin from the table and wiping him off.

Newton removes his glasses and cleans them off.

SARA
I'm so sorry.

NEWTON
It's alright. You owed me one. I'm just glad I paid the extra five bucks for that insurance.

Newton and Sara share a smile.

INT. DAD'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Dad, Nathan, and Melissa sit in the living room.

DAD

Whose idea was it to have dinner today?

NATHAN

We didn't think there was any reason not to.

DAD

How bout a wicked hangover?

NATHAN

Oh you'll be fine.

MELISSA

Where's Newt at anyway?

NATHAN

I haven't seen or heard from him since he left last night.

MELISSA

Maybe he went to Carl's.

DAD

Carl, that no good bum.

NATHAN

Carl's ok, Dad.

DAD

Ok my foot. He'd nail Christ to the cross, and then come back and steal the nails.

MELISSA

I didn't know you disliked him that much.

NATHAN

He's just hanging on to some stupid little thing that happened 15 years ago.

DAD

Little thing? Little thing? He drank a whole bottle of Southern on me. I paid eighteen bucks for that bottle.

Newton enters the house, whistling a happy tune.

NEWTON
Hello everybody.

NATHAN
Where did you go last night?

NEWTON
You guys aren't gonna believe it.

DAD
What? You stumble into a meeting of
rainbow warriors and cross over to
the dark side?

NEWTON
I met somebody last night.

DAD
They don't have a penis do they?

NEWTON
She did actually. Kept it in
a little jar in her jacket pocket.

MELISSA
That's gross.

NATHAN
Where'd you meet her?

NEWTON
On the street.

DAD
Oh son, those hookers will be the
death of you.

NEWTON
She's not a hooker.

MELISSA
So how'd you meet her?

NEWTON
I was walking out of Captain
Caffeine's, and I ran into her and
spilled my coffee all over her
coat.

NATHAN
Isn't that romantic?

NEWTON
Shut up.

DAD
C'mon turkeys done.

NATHAN
You made turkey?

DAD
Yeah why?

NATHAN
I get tired every time I eat
turkey.

DAD
Isn't there something in it that
causes that?

NEWTON
Tryptophan.

DAD
You got a hangover too? It's in the
medicine cabinet.

NEWTON
No, the stuff in turkey that makes
you sleepy. It's called tryptophan.

DAD
No it isn't it's something else. It
does start with a T though.

NEWTON
Well, the technical term for it is
turkeysleepy, actually.

Dad stares in silence for a moment.

DAD
You're a moron.

INT. DAD'S HOUSE, DINING ROOM - NIGHT

The group sits at the table.

DAD
So, Newton, this girl you met. Is she nice?

NEWTON
Sure.

DAD
Pretty?

NEWTON
I think so.

DAD
Good, good.

They sit in silence for a moment.

DAD
Did you ask her to marry you?

Nathan chuckles to himself.

NEWTON
Nah, I just drugged her up, threw her in the trunk of the car and jetted off to Vegas. What the hell is wrong with you?

DAD
Is it so wrong to want to see both of my sons married before I kick off?

NEWTON
In danger of dying are you?

DAD
I got one foot in the grave and the other on a banana peel.

NEWTON
I'll be sure and put that in my proposal.

DAD
So, what does she do?

NEWTON
She's in politics.

Dad groans.

NATHAN
In what way?

Newton lowers his head, speaking softly.

NEWTON
Right now she's on the Darby
campaign.

DAD
Oh Jesus. She's a Democrat.

Dad's voice is pained.

NEWTON
Sorry.

DAD
I'm starting to think that hooker
wouldn't have been a bad idea.

Dad casually goes back to eating his dinner as Newton stares
in confusion.

INT. NEWTON'S OFFICE - DAY

Newton sits at his desk reading the paper. His boss, JANE,
35, enters. She has short red hair, and is dressed
professionally.

JANE
Is that our paper?

NEWTON
Nope.

JANE
And why not?

NEWTON
Because we don't have a sports
section, or real news for that
matter.

JANE
A lot of our stories come from real
news.

NEWTON

If you mean how we take an honest to goodness world crisis, and fabricate some ridiculous crap story around it, then you're absolutely right. I mean, who honestly believes this stuff?

Newton picks up a copy of The New York Star Times. The headline reads DEWILDE FAMILY EATEN BY LOCHNESS MONSTER.

JANE

It's not about believing, it's entertainment. One million copies a week equals a lot of entertained people.

NEWTON

Yeah, as long as the checks don't bounce I guess.

JANE

That's what I like to see. A man of principle. How was the wedding?

NEWTON

Typical family function. When will you meet a nice girl? When are you going to get married?

JANE

I told you I would have gone with you.

NEWTON

After the last time? I don't think so.

JANE

What did I do?

NEWTON

You told my dad that you gave me a blowjob in the car on the way over.

JANE

I told everyone I was kidding.

NEWTON

And then revealed that you were my boss.

JANE

So?

NEWTON

So for six weeks after I had to listen to my dad tell everybody that my balls were in my boss' purse.

JANE

Ok, well if you ever need my assistance, just ask.

NEWTON

You're tops on my list.

Jane leaves. Newton sits at his desk for a moment before taking a piece of paper from his pocket. He picks up the phone and dials. An OPERATOR answers.

OPERATOR (V.O.)

Good Morning, Darby campaign. How may I direct your call?

NEWTON

Sara Renfeld please.

OPERATOR

One moment.

Easy listening music plays briefly until Sara answers.

SARA (V.O.)

Sara Renfeld.

NEWTON

Hey Sara, it's Newton.

SARA (V.O.)

Newton who?

NEWTON

Lawler. We met the other night. I spilled my coffee on you?

SARA (V.O.)

I'm sorry, can you be a little more specific? That happens to me at least three times a week.

NEWTON

Ha Ha Ha.

SARA (V.O.)
Just trying to see how long I could
string you along. So what's up?

NEWTON
Just calling to see if you'd like
to get together.

SARA (V.O.)
Ready to spill the beans on what
interests you?

NEWTON
Not quite, but I would like to see
you again.

SARA (V.O.)
Sure. When?

NEWTON
Whenever's good for you.

SARA (V.O.)
Tonight?

NEWTON
Tonight? Uh, tonight's no good.
I've already made plans with
another girl for tonight.

SARA (V.O.)
You call me up for a date when you
have plans with somebody else? Why
you --

NEWTON
Sara. I'm screwing with ya.

SARA (V.O.)
I knew that. So tonight then?

NEWTON
Sure, meet me at Captain
Caffeine's. 8 o'clock?

SARA (V.O.)
No problem.

NEWTON
I might be bringing a friend along
too if that's alright?

SARA

Sure. I have a friend I can ask to come along.

NEWTON

Ok, great. See you tonight. Bye.

Newton hangs up the phone, spins around in his chair, and throws his hands in the air.

NEWTON

Yeah!

Workers standing outside of his office stop what they are doing and stare at him.

NEWTON

Lunchtime, boy do I love lunchtime. I think I'll go out and enjoy my lunchtime, on this day that I have...a lunchtime.

The workers continue staring.

NEWTON

Ah, go back to fuckin' work.

INT. DINER - DAY

Newton and CARL, 31, sit in a booth. Carl is heavy set, with shaggy, dark blond hair.

NEWTON

I'm telling you, she's smart, funny, and beautiful. Best of all she likes me. I'm on cloud nine.

Carl stares off into space.

NEWTON

Carl? You hear me?

CARL

Yeah yeah. Girl. Smart. Cloud nine. I got it.

Newton looks in the direction that Carl is staring.

NEWTON

What are you looking at?

CARL

That girl. Short skirt. No panties.
I want it.

NEWTON

You are a true slob, Carl, and I
mean that sincerely.

Carl snaps out of his daze and looks back at Newton.

CARL

If you've got a shot then go for
it, at least to get your family off
your back.

NEWTON

That's the funny part of this. I
haven't even thought about that.

CARL

So where'd you meet her? Nathan's
wedding?

NEWTON

Sort of.

CARL

Either you did or you didn't.

NEWTON

I met her when I went out for some
air.

CARL

Was it really air, or were you
fighting off the temptation to
strangle one of your blue haired
aunts?

NEWTON

Little of both. I could have used
your help.

CARL

Yeah, those business trips really
stick it in and break it off.

NEWTON

I know. I had the same thing happ--

CARL

Quit getting off the subject. What
happened with the girl?

NEWTON

I was walking out of Captain Caffeine's. I bumped into her and spilled my coffee all over her coat.

CARL

And she found that attractive, did she?

NEWTON

Well I did sweet talk her a little.

CARL

No! Not the "this coffee is supposed to be hot" thing.

NEWTON

Yeah.

CARL

Your clumsy ass has spilled more coffee on more people than I could ever know, and you always use that dumb joke. You mean to tell me she thought it was funny?

NEWTON

A little I guess.

CARL

Well any girl who can hear that, and not automatically dismiss you as a boob is a clear keeper.

NEWTON

She has other qualities you know.

CARL

And I'm sure they're real nice, but the not thinking you're a boob thing is like triple the points.

NEWTON

Thanks for the positive reinforcement.

CARL

So, did ya nail her shut?

NEWTON

No. We just went back inside, I bought her a cup of coffee, and we talked.

CARL
For how long?

NEWTON
I don't know. Eight hours maybe.

CARL
Eight hours?! That's like three dates. What could you possibly talk about for that long?

NEWTON
All kinds of stuff.

CARL
My advice to you is to get on that. These chicks nowadays, if you ain't layin', they ain't stayin'.

NEWTON
What an endearing poem.

CARL
You gotta start thinking like a man-whore, like me.

NEWTON
Neither you nor I are whores.

CARL
I won't deny it. Carl's baloney pony has given many a ride.

NEWTON
You think the pony can rise up and be my wing man?

CARL
Aww man. You want me to go out with a fat chick.

NEWTON
I didn't say she was fat.

CARL
If she wasn't you would've asked me by now.

NEWTON
I don't think she's fat Carl.

CARL

You and me, we're best buds, but don't ask me to jump on the grenade for you.

NEWTON

Alright man whore, look at it this way. Maybe you'll get laid.

CARL

Oh, well in that case, call me hog slayer.

NEWTON

I knew I'd appeal to your tender side. I'll give you all the details once I find out.

INT. NEWTON'S OFFICE - DAY

Newton enters, picks up his phone and listens to his messages.

SARA (V.O.)

Hi Newt, it's Sara. I talked to my friend Liz earlier and she said she'd come out with us if your friend cares to join us. Give me a call and let me know. Bye.

Newton hangs up the phone and throws his hands triumphantly in the air.

NEWTON

Could this work out any better? I don't think so!

Another group outside his office stares.

NEWTON

Don't you people have lives?

INT. CAPTAIN CAFFEINE'S COFFEE - NIGHT

Newton and Carl sit at a table. Newton wears dress casual. Carl, a Hawaiian shirt.

CARL

I'm not worried about fine. I'm worried about laid.

NEWTON

Well that spectacular shirt will certainly heighten your chances.

CARL

Don't I look dashing?

NEWTON

If you're looking to be on the cover of fat party guys weekly, yes.

CARL

What's wrong with my shirt?

NEWTON

Wearing a Hawaiian shirt is like riding in the back of a pickup truck. There's no way to do it and look cool.

CARL

C'mon, it took me like, ten minutes, to put this look together. What do you want me to do?

NEWTON

Just try to put a little more effort into the date than you did on your wardrobe, ok?

Carl looks at his watch.

CARL

They're officially late. It's 8:02.

NEWTON

My god, we've been stood up.

CARL

Nah, her friend is probably just waxing her mustache or something.

NEWTON

Nothing like accentuating the positive.

CARL

Can we at least order something?

NEWTON

You can wait.

CARL
But I'm hungry now.

NEWTON
I'm sure they'll be here soon.
Probably just fashionably late.

CARL
There's that mustache thing again.

NEWTON
Or maybe they just care about their
appearance?

CARL
But what they don't realize is that
it's all for nothing. I'm a party
guy, I can't be tied down.

NEWTON
You love the nightlife?

CARL
I love to boogie.

INT. SARA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Sara runs around the apartment in a frenzy. She has one shoe
in her hand and searches for the other.

LIZ, 27, with long, semi curly blond hair, and a plus size
figure with a pretty face, sits on the couch. She looks at
her watch.

LIZ
We're now five minutes late.

SARA
I know, I know. I just want to look
good, that's all.

LIZ
Why?

SARA
Because this guy is really nice and
I like him. Maybe if you gave
somebody a chance you'd meet a nice
guy too.

LIZ

The day I do, I'll take longer than fifteen minutes to get ready.

SARA

Your date sounds ok. Just go with the flow. I'm not asking you to marry him or anything.

LIZ

Well that's refreshing. I don't know how I managed to dodge the bullet with all the winners you've set me up with.

SARA

Hey I tried.

LIZ

So what are these guys' names anyway?

SARA

Carl and Newton.

LIZ

Newton? You're setting me up with a guy named Newton?

SARA

No, Newton is mine.

LIZ

What is he, a librarian?

SARA

He's a writer.

LIZ

Oh, so he writes the books that go in the library?

SARA

Ladies and gentlemen, Miss cynic U-S-A!

Sara claps her hands wildly.

LIZ

One of us has to be. Good cop, bad cop method. And why should I take a bunch of time to get ready? I just wanna take it off anyway.

Sara finally finds her shoe. She puts it on and heads for the door.

LIZ

Just think, if you wouldn't have spent all of that overtime at the office, you would have found your shoe that much earlier.

SARA

Duty called, and I answered it.

LIZ

Are you a campaign associate or Rambo?

SARA

Let's just go.

INT. CAPTAIN CAFFEINE'S COFFEE - NIGHT

CARL

He stormed in and beat the bejesus out of me with a wire hanger. Whap, whap, whap. I took it for about a minute when I, uh, never mind.

NEWTON

When you what? C'mon tell me.

CARL

I peed my pants and started crying.

NEWTON

That's hilarious.

CARL

I learned a valuable lesson that day. Never touch your dad's remote control.

Sara and Liz arrive and stand at the table.

SARA

Sorry we're running late. I couldn't find my shoe.

CARL

Aww, it's like Cinderella.

Newton glares at Carl before getting up to seat Sara. Liz seats herself.

NEWTON
Don't worry about it. You look
great.

SARA
That's sweet.

CARL AND LIZ
So sweet my teeth hurt.

Newton whispers into Sara's ear.

NEWTON
At least they have something in
common.

CARL
What?

NEWTON
Nothing. Carl, this is Sara.

The two shake hands.

CARL
Nice to meet you. Can we eat now?

Sara laughs.

SARA
Sure, but wouldn't you like to meet
Liz first?

CARL
Hi Liz. You hungry? I sure am. I'd
really like to eat now as a matter
of fact, which I was just
commenting on mere seconds ago. Hey
Pete!

Carl waves for Pete, who comes to the table.

PETE
What can I get ya?

CARL
Did you put that burger on the menu
yet?

PETE
No Carl. This is a coffee shop. I
can get you a donut if you want,
but no burgers. I don't even have a
grill.

CARL

Well, one day you'll have a grill,
and you'll have burgers, and
everyone will love them, and you'll
thank me for it. People will come
from all over just to sample the
Carl burger.

PETE

Well until that day comes, what can
I get you?

Carl lowers his head in defeat.

CARL

Coffee black. Two chocolate donuts.

NEWTON

The usual.

PETE

Coffee, black and sugar.

SARA

I'll have the same.

LIZ

Coffee, cream and sugar, and a
banana muffin.

PETE

Back in a sec.

Carl leans in close to Liz.

CARL

So, do you like big bananas?

He gives her an odd wink.

LIZ

Not as much as charming men like
you.

NEWTON

Carl, you disgust me.

CARL

Yeah, I do that a lot.

LIZ

No it's fine. To answer his
question, I don't. I like tiny

LIZ
ones. So I guess you still have a
chance.

CARL
Oh yeah?

LIZ
Yeah.

CARL
You couldn't handle me, sister.

LIZ
I'm pretty sure I could, big guy.

CARL
Well, I'll see your clever retort
and do you one better. You wanna go
someplace and screw like banshees?

Newton and Sara go bug eyed. Liz is stunned.

LIZ
What did you just say to me?

CARL
You heard me, or did all of your
pent up sexual frustration cause
you to go deaf?

LIZ
I'll show you sexual frustration!

She stands up, and pulls Carl out of the coffee shop. Carl
gives Newton thumbs up and a childish smile as he goes
through the door. Pete returns with the orders.

PETE
Where are they going?

NEWTON
Uh, they said something about a
place that has cheeseburgers.

PETE
Alright, I'll just leave this here
in case they come back.

NEWTON
Thanks Pete.

Pete sets down the order and heads back to the counter.

NEWTON
Sorry about that.

SARA
Oh no, it's completely fine. Trust me.

Newton looks around uncomfortably. Sara notices.

SARA
Something the matter?

NEWTON
No, not really. I guess I was just expecting Carl to be around a bit to help break the ice a little.

Sara puts her hand over Newton's.

SARA
You'll be fine.

NEWTON
So, uh, what do you feel like talking about?

SARA
Why don't you tell me about your job?

NEWTON
What do you want to know?

SARA
All I know is that you write for a newspaper. Anything else you feel like sharing is fine.

NEWTON
I write for the New York Star Times.

SARA
The tabloid?

NEWTON
Or as my father likes to call it, "the lowest common denominator".

SARA
Sounds like my kind of guy.

NEWTON

Hey, I didn't go giving you a hard time about your job.

Sara's eyes open in surprise.

SARA

What's wrong with my job?

NEWTON

Nothing, really. Our respective careers actually have a lot in common.

SARA

How on earth did you come to that conclusion.

NEWTON

Easy. We both earn our livings from fakes. Fake stories, fake people, it's all relative.

Sara quickly gets up from the table.

SARA

I didn't come here to be insulted.

NEWTON

No, you probably came here because you thought I worked for a reputable paper and I'd do a piece on your boss.

Sara slaps Newton and storms out of the coffee shop.

Newton looks over to Pete.

PETE

Go get her. I'll put it on your tab.

Newton nods in agreement and heads off after Sara.

EXT. CAPTAIN CAFFEINE'S COFFEE - NIGHT

Sara walks briskly along with Newton in pursuit. When he catches up, he steps in front of her and she stops.

SARA

What?

NEWTON

You didn't have to smack me like that.

SARA

And you didn't have to say those things.

NEWTON

And I'm sorry for that. I honestly have no idea how to talk to people sometimes. Especially on dates.

SARA

And this is what you do? Insult people?

NEWTON

I didn't mean to. Sometimes I try to joke and it comes out all wrong. Would I still be single at this age if I didn't have some weird problem?

Sara gives Newton a once over as he stands there with a pleading look on his face.

SARA

I suppose not.

NEWTON

Can you just give me a chance? Maybe get to know the real me?

SARA

Alright.

Newton places his hands on Sara's shoulders.

NEWTON

Thank you.

INT. SARA'S OFFICE - DAY

Sara sits at her desk, sifting through papers. Liz enters.

LIZ

So how did things go?

SARA
Little rough.

LIZ
Really?

SARA
Yeah. He said I work for a fake
and only went out with him again
because I thought he worked for a
real newspaper and he'd do a story
on Darby.

LIZ
I can see the logic in that.

SARA
That's not even remotely true!

LIZ
Maybe not to you, but to the
untrained eye, you can seem really
involved in the cause.

SARA
I can?

LIZ
Yeah, so cut the guy some slack,
huh?

SARA
Does giving him another chance
count?

LIZ
It's a start.

SARA
Then at least I've got that going
for me.

LIZ
Which is nice. So go out, have
fun, live it up.

SARA
Definitely. Feel like lunch today?

LIZ
You think you can drag yourself
away from the salt mines?

SARA
I'll make an exception in your
case.

LIZ
I'm flattered. I'll be back later.

There's a knock at the door and Jim Darby enters.

JIM
Ah, there's my two lovelies.

SARA
Hello, Mr. Darby.

Jim saunters over to Sara's desk and rests a hand on it. He leans in toward Sara, suggestively.

JIM
Now Sara, how many times have I
asked you to call me Jim?

SARA
Sorry. Jim. Is there something I
can do for you?

JIM
No. I just wanted to see how the
most special lady on my campaign
was doing.

SARA
I'm fine.

Jim strangely stares at Sara. Liz takes a seat on the desk next to him.

LIZ
I'm fine too.

JIM
That's nice, Lisa.

Jim doesn't even look at her.

LIZ
My name is Liz.

JIM
That's great, Lisa. Really great.

Jim gets up from the desk and backs out of the office, staring at Sara the entire way.

JIM
You two have a nice day.

SARA
You too.

Jim cracks a cheesy wink and a smile and closes the door.

LIZ
You know, Newton may have had a
point with that fake thing.

SARA
Don't be silly. I really think he
can accomplish something.

LIZ
Please. The only thing he wants to
accomplish is getting you in the
sack.

Sara folds her arms across her chest, glaring at Liz.

LIZ
What? You know I'm right. He can
go on and on about how he
specifically requested you based on
your qualifications, but unless
your qualifications have anything
to do with those two things you
stuff into your bra every day, I
call shenanigans.

SARA
Thanks for the pep talk.

LIZ
I just call 'em like I see 'em.

INT. NEWTON'S OFFICE - DAY

Newton works on his computer. Jane enters.

JANE
Ok, fill me in on the new lady you
were talking about.

NEWTON
What do you wanna know?

JANE

She nice? Pretty? Met the fam?

NEWTON

Let's see. Yes, yes, and no,
although she has met Carl.

JANE

I hope you prepared her for that.

NEWTON

She brought a friend with her so I
think that helped.

JANE

I feel sorry for the friend.

NEWTON

I did too, at least until she
pulled Carl off to have sex
somewhere.

JANE

Are you kidding me?

NEWTON

Absolutely not.

JANE

So they leave and then it's just
you and what's her name?

NEWTON

Sara.

JANE

You and Sara. Then what?

NEWTON

We had a cup of coffee, got in an
argument, made up, and headed home.

JANE

Make up sex. Nice. Your place or
hers?

NEWTON

We went to our own homes.

JANE

Goodnight kiss?

NEWTON

Nope.

JANE

You going soft?

NEWTON

No, I just haven't thought about it.

JANE

Better get on the ball. If you ain't layin, she ain't stayin.

NEWTON

Are you sure you and Carl aren't related?

JANE

What do you mean?

NEWTON

He said that same thing to me recently.

JANE

So what's next?

NEWTON

Sunday dinner at my dad's.

JANE

Will the rest of the family be there?

NEWTON

Naturally, and Carl will be there too.

JANE

I thought he's not allowed there anymore.

NEWTON

Technically he's not, but I'll sweet talk the old man into it.

INT. DAD'S HOUSE - DAY

DAD

No No No. Absolutely not.

NEWTON

Dad, be reasonable here. It's one dinner.

DAD

I don't want him here.

NEWTON

You're holding some stupid grudge over something that happened years ago.

DAD

I don't care if it happened years ago or if it happened yesterday. I don't want him here.

NEWTON

Would it help if I gave you my word that he won't drink your Southern or steal your remote?

DAD

No it wouldn't. It's bad enough you're fraternizing with the enemy, now I have to let that idiot into my house too?

NEWTON

Fraternizing with the enemy?

DAD

She's a Democrat, son. A Democrat.

NEWTON

You're really thinking too much into it.

DAD

You see that? Already starting to get in your head. Brainwashing's all they know, and they're washing your brain good.

NEWTON

Then you leave me no choice.

DAD

Oh really. What are you gonna do?

NEWTON

Well I thought I would be able to get through this, but I may as well tell Sara the truth.

DAD

What? That your friend is a rotten, thieving bastard?

NEWTON

That I'm gay.

DAD

Whaddya mean you're gay?

NEWTON

I just can't help it. I've been trying to fight it off since I started seeing Sara, but if I don't have your support, well.

DAD

You're bluffing.

Newton takes out his wallet.

NEWTON

I think I have that big stud's number in here somewhere.

Dad grabs Newton by the shoulders.

DAD

Listen. Put the wallet away. Invite whoever you want. Just don't be gay son. Don't be gay.

NEWTON

You got any Barbra Streisand records?

Dad shakes Newton.

DAD

Don't be gay!

NEWTON

Alright, we'll see you around four.

Dad releases his grip. He breathes heavily with nervousness.

DAD
Yeah, sure.

Newton exits.

INT. NEWTON'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Newton is on the phone with Carl.

CARL (V.O.)
No way.

NEWTON
C'mon, I already went through all
of this with my dad. I gotta deal
with you too now?

CARL (V.O.)
The last time I was in that house I
got the crap beat outta me.

NEWTON
That was fifteen years ago. Aren't
you just a tad bit old to be afraid
of my dad now?

CARL (V.O.)
He beat my ass!

NEWTON
True, but just think of how much
bigger you are than him now.

CARL (V.O.)
You know something, you're right. I
can take him.

NEWTON
How bout we try making it through
dinner first?

CARL (V.O.)
Fine, but if he tries anything,
I'll drop the hammer. I'm fat and
I'm crazy.

NEWTON
Fine. See you Sunday.

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

Newton and Sara walk along.

SARA
I need to ask you something.

NEWTON
Ok.

SARA
Is there anything I should know
about your family? Things I should
or shouldn't talk about?

NEWTON
I'm one hundred percent positive
that it's going to come up at some
point, but try to avoid talking
politics for as long as you can.

SARA
Why?

NEWTON
My dad is a die hard Republican.

SARA
I see.

NEWTON
Yeah, and he'll get on his soapbox
the first chance he gets.

SARA
I'll do what I can.

He smiles at her.

NEWTON
Thanks.

Newton grabs Sara's hand and they stop walking. They look
into each other's eyes for a moment before kissing. Newton
pulls back and looks at her suspiciously.

NEWTON
You and my dad are going to get
into it aren't you?

Sara smiles.

SARA
I'll try my best to avoid it.

NEWTON
Yeah, I'm doomed.

They continue walking along.

EXT. DAD'S HOUSE, PORCH - NIGHT

Newton and Sara stand on the porch as Dad opens the door.

DAD
So I hear you're a Democrat.

Newton's eyes open wide with fear. He quickly jumps in front of Sara.

NEWTON
Dad, this is Sara.

Sara extends her hand around Newton and Dad shakes it.

SARA
Nice to meet you Mister Lawler.

DAD
Call me Tank. Everyone does.

SARA
Ok. Tank.

DAD
C'mon in.

They enter the house and Dad closes the door.

INT. DAD'S HOUSE, HALLWAY - NIGHT

Newton discreetly grabs Dad by the arm.

NEWTON
Make yourself at home, Sara. We'll be there in a sec.

SARA
Ok.

Sara heads to the living room.

DAD

I've got some snacks in the kitchen. I wasn't sure what you Democrats eat so I got a little bit of everything.

NEWTON

Would you knock it off already?

DAD

All things considered, she looks nice, Newt.

NEWTON

Thanks, I think.

DAD

Why are you holding my arm?

NEWTON

Well I was going to tell you to lay off the politics stuff, but Tank?

DAD

You don't like it?

NEWTON

Who has ever called you Tank?

DAD

Nobody. I just thought it was time I had a nickname.

NEWTON

And you gave yourself one?

DAD

Sure.

NEWTON

Isn't it a little late in the game to be doing things like that?

DAD

Ah, you don't know shit from fat meat.

He pulls his arm away and heads to the kitchen.

NEWTON

This is true.

The doorbell rings. Newton opens the door and Nathan and Melissa enter.

NATHAN

Hey, didn't expect to see you here this early.

NEWTON

Figured I'd let Sara get settled in with Dad before everyone got here.

NATHAN

So she came then?

NEWTON

She's in the living room.

MELISSA

Who's everyone? Somebody else coming?

NATHAN

Carl's coming.

NEWTON

How'd you know?

NATHAN

Dad must have called me right after you left on Thursday. He rambled on for about an hour.

NEWTON

About what?

NATHAN

He said he was letting Carl in the house for the sake of his future grandkids. You did the gay thing didn't you?

NEWTON

Indeed.

NATHAN

I'm surprised he went for it. Probably took him awhile to decide what was worse. You dating a dude or a democrat.

NEWTON

C'mon, I'll introduce you to Sara.

INT. DAD'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Newton and Sara sit on a loveseat, Dad in his chair, and Nathan and Melissa on the couch.

MELISSA

I'm glad you could make it Sara.
It's nice to have a woman around
here for a change.

SARA

Happy to help out. Oh, before I
forget.

Sara reaches into her purse, taking out a small handful of tickets. She gives them to Newton.

NEWTON

What are these?

SARA

There's a fundraiser dinner next
week at the Ford Hotel. I thought
you guys might like to come.

DAD

What kind of fundraiser?

SARA

It's for the Darby campaign.

Dad quickly shakes his head no.

DAD

Sorry, but I'm not givin' one thin
dime to that guy.

SARA

But I gave you the tickets. It's
free.

DAD

Free huh?

SARA

Absolutely.

DAD

Well I guess I'd be a fool to pass
up a free me--. Hey,
waitaminute. Thsi is one of those
brainwashing tactics isn't
it? Trying to butter me up for a
vote?

SARA
No, nothing like that. I just
thought you'd like to come.

DAD
I'll think about it.

SARA
Thanks. Can someone tell me where
the bathroom is?

DAD
It's around the corner there.

Sara gets up and heads for the bathroom.

NEWTON
Dad--

Dad holds a hand up that stops Newton from speaking, and
starts to giggle uncontrollably.

NATHAN
What's so funny?

DAD
You'll see.

Newton, Nathan, and Melissa look at each other in
wonder. Sara returns from the bathroom a moment later.

DAD
So what did you think of the decor?

SARA
Interesting, but a little juvenile
for my taste.

DAD
Juvenile? There's nothing juvenile
about it!

NEWTON
What did you do?

DAD
Oh nothing.

SARA
He taped a picture of the
Democratic party symbol inside the
toilet bowl.

Dad breaks out into uncontrollable laughter.

NEWTON
I'm burning your food.

DAD
It would probably taste better if
you did. Now hold down the
fort. I'm gonna go take out my
frustrations on that picture.

Dad exits.

NEWTON
What a sad, little man.

The doorbell rings.

NEWTON
Carl. Thank God.

NATHAN
So go answer it.

NEWTON
It's your turn. I got it when you
showed up.

NATHAN
It's your friend.

NEWTON
Like you don't know Carl.

Another ring.

NATHAN
Better hurry flash, the natives are
getting restless.

NEWTON
Oh, how I hate you.

Newton gets up and heads for the door.

INT. DAD'S HOUSE, HALLWAY - NIGHT

Newton answers the door and Liz is standing there.

NEWTON
Hey Liz. Didn't expect to see you
here.

LIZ

Carl asked me to come along. He said he needed protection. I hope you don't mind.

NEWTON

No, not at all. Where's he at?

LIZ

Parking the car.

NEWTON

He actually let you out at the door? He must like you.

Carl walks up.

CARL

It wasn't a complete stop. More like a tuck and roll.

NEWTON

That's heartwarming. I'm just glad you guys are here.

CARL

Why what's up?

NEWTON

I was preparing for Sara and my dad to go at it any minute.

CARL

Nice. Maybe that'll take some of the heat off of me.

NEWTON

Sorry, friend, but your job is to take the heat off Sara.

CARL

Shit.

Carl and Liz enter the house.

INT. DAD'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Newton, Carl, and Liz enter the living room.

NATHAN

Hey Carl.

CARL
Nathan, Melissa, this is Liz.

SARA
I didn't know you were coming.

CARL
She's my bodyguard.

LIZ
I still don't understand this
bodyguard business.

NEWTON
Carl's afraid of my Dad.

LIZ
Why?

CARL
Because when me and Newton were
kids, I drank a whole bottle of --

Dad comes storming into the room with an empty bottle in his
hand.

DAD
Southern Comfort!

He takes a swing at Carl with the bottle, but Carl drops to
the floor and he misses.

CARL
Help! Help!

Newton and Nathan restrain Dad.

NEWTON
What the hell are you doing?

DAD
I need my revenge. Lemme go, lemme
go.

NATHAN
Gimme that bottle.

Nathan pries the bottle from Dad's hands and Carl jumps up.

CARL
A ha!

Dad kicks Carl in the balls and he falls like a stone. Newton and Nathan let Dad go and attend to Carl. Dad raises his arms in victory. Melissa runs into the kitchen.

DAD
The day is mine!

NEWTON
You ok?

CARL
My balls. He kicked them. Hard.

The brothers help Carl to his feet and sit him on the couch. Melissa returns with a cup of coffee and hands it to Dad.

MELISSA
Here, drink this.

NEWTON
What the hell is wrong with you?

DAD
I got my revenge!

NEWTON
Revenge for what?

DAD
Drinking my Southern.

NEWTON
Are you serious? That's what all of this is about?

DAD
You're damn right it is.

NEWTON
You're pathetic.

DAD
The only thing that's pathetic is the fact that I didn't have you bring him here sooner.

NEWTON
Alright alright, why don't you just lighten up a little bit there, Tank.

NATHAN

Tank?

NEWTON

Dad tried to tell Sara his name was Tank. Apparently it's real hip with the old folks to give yourself a ridiculous nickname.

NATHAN

Oh that's nothing.

DAD

You shut up Nathan.

NATHAN

Dad told Melissa his name was Snake.

MELISSA

Oh god, I forgot all about that.

CARL

After that kick to my junk he should change his name to Bruce Lee.

NATHAN

Oh you picked the perfect day to come to dinner. Most people don't find out how crazy our family is for weeks, even months. You're very lucky.

SARA

I knew I was lucky the moment I met Newton.

CARL

That's funny. I usually have the opposite thought when someone spills hot coffee on me.

DAD

Let's find out.

Dad throws his coffee into Carl's crotch. Carl screams.

CARL

My balls are on fire! My balls are on fire!

NEWTON
Jesus, Dad.

A timer bell sounds.

DAD
Dinner's ready.

Dad casually walks towards the kitchen.

INT. DAD'S HOUSE, DINING ROOM - NIGHT

The family and friends sit at the dinner table.

LIZ
So how long have you two been
married?

MELISSA
A week and a day now.

CARL
Had you asked Nathan, he probably
would have said forever and a day.

A slice of ham hits Carl in the face.

DAD
Mind your mouth.

CARL
Damn, old man. Your aim is
incredible.

DAD
It's your big mouth that's
incredible.

NEWTON
Can we just have a nice, quiet
dinner?

CARL
I second that.

DAD
This isn't a democracy. I'll
decide when we can and can't have a
quiet dinner.

SARA
Do you believe in a dictatorial
society?

Newton buries his face in his hands.

DAD
In my house I do.

SARA
But don't you think that people
should have a right to vote, no
matter what the situation is?

DAD
Maybe if I were one of those
bleeding heart types, but this is
my house, and in my house the buck
stops here.

Dad lightly taps on the table. Sara giggles slightly.

DAD
What's so funny?

SARA
You just quoted a Democrat.

DAD
No I didn't.

SARA
Harry Truman was a Democrat.

DAD
Truman? A Democrat? No way!

NEWTON
She's right, Dad.

DAD
He was?

NEWTON
Yep.

DAD
I've been living a lie. The
greatest president of my time was a
Democrat, and all these years I
thought he was a Republican. What
am I gonna do now?

CARL

Maybe you could throw hot coffee in someone's crotch or some ham in their face. You seem to be pretty good at that.

The table freezes. Dad glares at Carl momentarily before lunging at him. Carl lets out a girlish scream.

EXT. DAD'S HOUSE, FRONT PORCH NIGHT.

The family and friends leave the house. Carl holds his head.

NATHAN

Alright everybody, we'll see you later.

MELISSA

Take care Sara, it was nice to meet you.

SARA

Same here.

MELISSA

Keep an eye on Carl, Liz. He took quite a beating.

LIZ

Will do. Hope to see you guys soon.

DAD

Have a safe drive home you two.

NATHAN

You should really let us do dinner some Sunday, Dad.

DAD

Maybe if you guys didn't live all the way out where Jesus lost his shoes, I'd take you up on it.

NATHAN

I'll take that as a no. See ya later.

Nathan and Melissa head off to their car.

CARL

I think I have internal bleeding in my head.

DAD
Rocks don't bleed, son.

CARL
I'll get the car.

Carl turns to Newton.

CARL
You owe me. Big time.

Dad goes in the house.

SARA
You think he's ok to drive?

NEWTON
He's fine. I've seen him in worse
shape before.

LIZ
I'm sure he has a thick skull.

NEWTON
You know him all too well. So how's
it going with you guys?

LIZ
I'll put it like this. I'm more
worried about his ability to do
other things than driving.

NEWTON
Understood.

Carl pulls up and beeps the horn.

LIZ
Ok guys. I'll see you later.

Newton and Sara wave as Liz heads to the car and they drive
off.

SARA
So I guess it's just you and me.

NEWTON
Yep.

SARA
Feel like doing anything?

NEWTON

Sure.

A brief pause.

SARA

Ok. What do you feel like doing?

NEWTON

I don't know.

SARA

No ideas?

Newton puts his hands in his pockets.

NEWTON

How bout a drink?

Sara shrugs her shoulders.

SARA

Sure, why not? Maybe you could spill some more hot coffee on me.

NEWTON

You liked that huh?

SARA

Must be some weird fetish I've developed.

The two laugh.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Newton and Sara sit at the bar having drinks.

NEWTON

Well, I'd say dinner went better than I had hoped.

SARA

Really?

NEWTON

Absolutely. I always manage to conjure up these horrible thoughts when it comes to my dad.

SARA

Such a glass is half empty type of
guy.

NEWTON

I wasn't always like this. It's
taken many years of training to
become this negative.

Sara smiles just as her cell phone rings. She looks at the
caller ID, and quickly answers as Newton looks on in wonder.

SARA

Yes, Mr. Darby. I'm
sorry. Jim. What can I do for
you? Now? Umm, ok, I guess
so. I'll call when I'm done. Bye.

Sara hangs up the phone.

NEWTON

What's up?

SARA

I have to go.

NEWTON

Where?

SARA

I have to pay a visit to two
friends of the party.

NEWTON

Now?

SARA

Yeah, they've decided to give a
huge donation to the campaign and I
need to go pick it up.

NEWTON

But, Sara, it's Sunday night.

SARA

I'm sorry, Newton, but this is
important.

Newton sighs in frustration.

NEWTON

Fine.

SARA

Are you mad?

NEWTON

A little yeah. I mean, we've been dating for quite awhile now, and it's been good, but seventy five percent of the time you have to up and leave because of work.

SARA

That's not true.

NEWTON

At the movie theater, you had to leave to go fix the copy machine. At dinner, you had to leave to call the caterer for the banquet. At my apartment, you had to leave because you were the only person with a key to the cabinet that has the post it notes. See where I'm going? It's a disparity of devotion is what it is. I'm devoted to you and you're devoted to your job.

SARA

I'm devoted to you too.

NEWTON

Yeah, when it doesn't conflict with your work schedule.

SARA

But this is really important.

NEWTON

Oh, it's all bullshit. Why don't you open your eyes and see that?

Sara is angry.

SARA

It's not bullshit. It's my job.

NEWTON

Going over to someone's house to get money for Darby on a Sunday night? If that's your job, than your lower than a telemarketer.

Sara gets up in anger.

SARA

You know what your problem is? You don't believe in anything. That's why you haven't been able to answer that question from the first night we met.

Newton picks up his drink. The glass is nearly empty, and he holds it at eye level.

NEWTON

There is something I believe in, now that you mention it.

Sara places her hands on her hips.

SARA

Oh yeah? What's that?

NEWTON

I believe I'll have another drink.

SARA

Goodbye, Newton.

Sara turns and quickly exits, leaving Newton to stare at his glass.

INT. DARBY CAMPAIGN HQ, LUNCHROOM - DAY

Sara makes coffee as Liz walks in.

LIZ

Oh thank you. I was just coming to make it.

SARA

If I had only waited five more minutes.

LIZ

Very funny.

SARA

No, just lazy.

LIZ

Actually I did think that earlier. I figured you'd slept in since I didn't see you on the train.

SARA
No, I actually got in to work quite
early this morning.

LIZ
Early? What for?

SARA
Couldn't sleep.

LIZ
Newton keep you up all night?

SARA
In a way.

LIZ
What am I missing here?

SARA
We broke up last night.

LIZ
You broke up? Why?

SARA
He got mad because I've had to
leave so many of our dates for work
stuff.

LIZ
Well, I guess I can see the logic
in that.

SARA
What?

LIZ
I know I wouldn't want my date
ducking out all the time. It makes
sense that he'd dump you.

SARA
I broke up with him.

LIZ
What?

SARA
Yeah, I'm not putting up with that.

Jim Darby enters just as Liz goes to answer.

JIM
Who's not putting up with what?

Sara looks around the room.

SARA
Uh, Liz was just saying that the American people shouldn't have to put up with shady politicians anymore, and that they need someone like you in office.

Jim smiles his fake smile.

JIM
That's awfully kind of you, Lisa. I just hope the public thinks the same.

LIZ
My name is Liz.

JIM
Keep up the good work. So Sara, how'd everything go with the Steinmetz's?

SARA
Wonderful.

JIM
Excellent. You know, I got worried when I didn't hear from you last night.

SARA
Yeah, sorry. Got out kinda late and didn't want to call.

JIM
Next time, don't worry about that. You just remember that anytime you need anything, anything at all, you just call "Big Jim".

SARA
Ok.

JIM
See you later, Sara. Goodbye Lisa.

Jim exits.

LIZ

What the hell? How can you possibly expect me to vote for someone that can't even remember my name?

SARA

At least he said to keep up the good work.

LIZ

Yeah, because I seem to be doing a bang up job of getting the word out to the people that work here.

SARA

I'm sure he meant on the whole.

LIZ

I doubt it. That man there is precisely the reason why the democratic party symbol is the jackass.

SARA

Can't you just go with the flow?

LIZ

I don't want to work here anymore.

SARA

Well, I guess you could quit.

LIZ

And take away what little social life you have left?

SARA

What's that supposed to mean?

LIZ

It means that all you do is eat, sleep, drink, and now because you've pushed Newton away, date this campaign.

SARA

It's important.

LIZ

You think that once this is over and Darby gets into office, you're going with him?

SARA
I haven't thought about it.

LIZ
Well you should, because I can safely say that he probably isn't, and you'll be left all alone.

SARA
I won't be all alone.

LIZ
Ok, so maybe you'll get a cat, but as long as your career comes first, you'll always be single.

SARA
Talk about the pot and the kettle. Your whole relationship is based on sex.

LIZ
Carl is a tender, loving man, and he cares deeply about me.

INT. BAR - DAY

Newton and Carl sit at the bar, visibly intoxicated.

CARL
Whores! All they care about is themselves!

Carl holds up his glass, and Newton taps it with his.

NEWTON
I'll drink to that.

Carl leans in closely.

CARL
I gotta tell you something.

NEWTON
What?

CARL
Look at me. I gotta tell you something.

NEWTON

So tell me.

CARL

Sara...is crazy. Look at you. You're a handsome guy. She's nuts.

NEWTON

Yeah.

CARL

So she thinks your garbage. Happens to the best of us.

NEWTON

I'm not garbage.

CARL

You shit on her job, man. Her job.

NEWTON

I didn't shit on her job. She kept leaving our dates.

CARL

It's the same thing. Her job is important to her...

NEWTON

More important than me.

CARL

...and you shit on it.

NEWTON

Stop saying that! How the hell can I be with someone that keeps ducking out on me? It's her fault.

CARL

It's six of one, half a dozen of the other. You shit on her job, you shit on her. Whatever.

NEWTON

Yeah. Whatever.

CARL

Whores!

Newton jumps at Carl's sudden outburst.

NEWTON
Something happen between you and
Liz?

CARL
Liz is a tender, loving woman, and
don't you forget it!

Carl shakes a finger at Newton. His eyes catch the wagging
finger, and he stares at it. After a moment he shakes his
head, snapping out of it.

CARL
C'mon, we gotta go.

NEWTON
Where?

Carl puts his hands on Newton's shoulders, looking at him
with purpose.

CARL
We have to get you and Sara back
together.

NEWTON
You're gonna help me?

Carl breaks out into laughter.

CARL
No, I just wanted to see how you'd
react. I'm hungry. Let's hit that
all night place.

Carl helps Newton up from his chair and they walk toward the
exit.

NEWTON
Do you think you can help me get
Sara back though?

CARL
I got a better idea. There's this
waitress at the restaurant. Hot.

NEWTON
What good is that gonna do?

CARL
You're right. You'd probably get
pissed when she goes to serve the
other people.

NEWTON
Thanks Carl, you're a true friend.

CARL
Hey, I'm on your side. Now let's
go get an omelet.

Newton and Carl exit the bar.

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

Newton and Carl stagger along.

CARL
So you really want me to help you
get Sara back, huh?

NEWTON
Yeah. Isn't that what I asked you?

CARL
Yeah, but I'm just saying that
maybe that isn't what you really
want to do?

NEWTON
What the hell are you talking
about?

Carl stops walking. Newton stops right alongside him.

CARL
You said it yourself, man. She
keeps ducking out on you and it
pisses you off.

NEWTON
Yeah, but I still care about her.

CARL
As you should. She's awesome, and
I love her to pieces --

NEWTON
So you'll help me?

CARL
But sometimes things just aren't
meant to be. The only way to find
out is to set her free and see if
she comes back.

They stare at each other in silence momentarily.

NEWTON

You are such an asshole.

Carl laughs.

CARL

I know. You just make it so easy though. You know I'll help you. Let's just go eat and try to work something out.

Carl looks up the street. He looks on in curiosity.

NEWTON

What are you looking at?

Carl points.

CARL

Isn't that where Sara works?

Newton looks to where Carl is pointing. It's a small office building with the lights still on.

NEWTON

Yeah, so?

CARL

So, the lights are on.

NEWTON

Yeah, and?

CARL

And you said she's a workaholic. She's probably inside.

NEWTON

And what am I supposed to do? Stand across the street and yell "Stella!" at her?

CARL

I thought her name was Sara.

NEWTON

It's from "A Streetcar Named Desire" ass.

CARL

I knew that. But no, you don't wanna do that. Too used. Too cliched.

NEWTON
So what do you suggest?

Carl smiles mischievously.

INT. DARBY CAMPAIGN HQ - NIGHT

Sara sits at a desk working feverishly. A sudden banging on the window startles her. She looks to the window and Newton is banging on it.

NEWTON
Sara! Sara! Sara!

EXT. DARBY CAMPAIGN HQ - NIGHT

Newton keeps banging on the window but looks to Carl, who stands out of sight. Carl waves his hands in encouragement.

CARL
Keep going. You're doing great.

The lights inside go out. Newton stops banging and turns to Carl, a depressed look on his face.

CARL
Ok, so "The Graduate" thing didn't work.

NEWTON
Apparently not.

CARL
Damn. I had such high hopes too. I mean it worked in the movie, and he was banging the chick's mom.

NEWTON
So now what?

CARL
Not sure, really.

NEWTON
I just need to get her to talk to me. I just need the chance to apologize and make things right.

CARL

Maybe you could use the power of the press. Interview her or something.

NEWTON

Carl, I work for a tabloid. We don't exactly do things like that.

CARL

Hey, I don't see you coming up with any ideas.

NEWTON

You're right. I'm sorry.

CARL

Oh Jesus, don't apologize. Now you're acting like a complete tool. Does your father endorse this type of behavior?

Newton's eyes light up in revelation.

NEWTON

Carl, you magnificent bastard. That's it!

CARL

What?

NEWTON

I can't explain now. I gotta get to work, but I'm gonna need your help soon.

CARL

Sure man, whatever you need.

NEWTON

Alright, I'll see you.

Newton runs off down the street. Carl puts his arms out.

CARL

What about the omelet!

INT. NEWTON'S OFFICE - DAY

Newton sits at his desk on the phone.

NEWTON

Well yes sir, we here at the Times are extremely excited about it as well. Ok then, I guess I'll see you Saturday night. You take care. Goodbye.

Newton hangs up the phone just as Jane walks in, holding a sheet of paper.

JANE

Newton, what is this?

NEWTON

That's a favor I'm going to need.

JANE

I can't publish this.

NEWTON

Why not?

JANE

Because it's not what we do.

NEWTON

Oh, well I already set it up, so even if you don't print it, it's still going down.

JANE

You'll just have to call and cancel.

NEWTON

And I'll have to have to resign and clean out my desk.

JANE

You can't do that.

NEWTON

Oh yes I can. That is of course unless you print that. So do we have an understanding, or is Averman going to be your lead writer now?

JANE
You're a bastard.

NEWTON
And a good one at that. See you
later. I'm going to lunch.

Newton gets up and leaves.

INT. DINER - DAY

Newton and Dad sit in a booth.

NEWTON
So that's the gist of it. I just
want to make sure you're there.

DAD
Well, that's awfully noble of you
son, but I really don't know why
you asked me to meet you for lunch
and explain all of that to me.

NEWTON
Like I said. So you'd be here.

DAD
You think I'd pass up a hundred
dollar a plate dinner because
you're not dating the person who
gave me the ticket? What do you
think I am, a moron?

NEWTON
I thought maybe you'd have a little
dignity in regards to the matter at
hand, yeah.

DAD
To hell with dignity, steak is
steak. Sounds like you still have
a little bit of work to do
though. I suggest you get a move
on it.

NEWTON
Yeah. I'll see you later.

DAD
Saturday.

NEWTON
Yeah. Saturday.

Newton gets up and leaves. Dad picks up the check from the table.

DAD
And of course, I'm stuck with the bill.

INT. BANQUET HALL, LOBBY - NIGHT

Sara stands in the lobby. She wears a fancy dress and looks at her cell phone. Liz walks up and is also wearing a fancy dress.

LIZ
Did he call?

SARA
Who?

LIZ
Newton. Isn't that why you're looking at your phone?

SARA
No.

LIZ
Thinking of calling him?

SARA
No!

LIZ
So then what are you doing looking at your phone?

Sara sighs.

SARA
I don't know.

LIZ
Why don't you just call him? It's obvious he wants you back. If he didn't he wouldn't have come banging on the windows that night.

SARA

Yeah, and I haven't heard from him since.

LIZ

Well you did shut the lights off on him. Not exactly a sign of "Hey come and get me".

SARA

Yeah, I guess it wasn't.

LIZ

So you should call him, put yourself out here a little bit.

Sara puts her cellphone away.

SARA

After this is done. I'm too busy for it now.

Liz rolls her eyes.

SARA

What? What's wrong with that.

LIZ

Oh, nothing. Nothing at all, cat lady.

Jim Darby walks up holding a red cloth napkin. He waves it in Sara's face.

JIM

Do you mind telling me what this is?

Liz raises her hand in excitement.

LIZ

Oh I know! It's a napkin!

JIM

It's a red napkin.

SARA

Is there a problem?

JIM

Red is Republican! Do I look like a Republican to you?

LIZ

Well, there's this one way that you wear your hair sometimes --

JIM

Oh, be quiet Lisa.

Liz throws her hands up in anger.

LIZ

Liz! My name...is Liz! What the hell is wrong with you that you can't remember my goddamn name!

Jim ignores Liz, keeping his stare on Sara.

JIM

It's things like this, the little details, that are going to cause me to look for someone else to be my assistant when I get into office. You either shape up or ship out, Missy.

Jim throws the napkin to the ground and storms off. Sara fights back tears.

LIZ

See, what did I say? All for himself. And you may have thrown away one of the best things to ever happen to you because of it.

SARA

My God, what have I done?

LIZ

Nothing yet, but I'd suggest you patch things up as soon as possible.

Sara quickly retrieves her cell phone and dials a number.

INT. NEWTON'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Newton stands in his bedroom getting dressed. A cell phone on the nightstand rings. Newton goes over and picks it up, looking at the caller id which says "Sara" on it.

He smiles and sets the phone back on the nightstand, letting it continue to ring.

INT. BANQUET HALL, LOBBY - NIGHT

Sara stands anxiously, still on the phone. She close it.

SARA
It went to voicemail.

LIZ
So why didn't you leave a message?

SARA
I need him to hear what I have to say first hand. What about Carl? Can he get hold of him?

LIZ
Carl's here already. He's at the table.

SARA
Already?

LIZ
Yeah. It's about that time you know.

INT. BANQUET HALL, DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Carl and Dad sit at their table across from each other, with Nathan and Melissa in between and three empty chairs. Carl looks uncomfortable as Dad peers at him.

The room is filled with people, who chat and mingle amongst one another. A server walks by. Dad raises a hand.

DAD
Excuse me.

The server stops.

SERVER
Yes sir?

DAD
Is there a different type of area that my friend here should be sitting in?

Dad points at Carl.

SERVER

I'm sorry?

DAD

You know, like a lower class section. A special place for people like him. Maybe next to the bathroom?

NATHAN

Dad!

SERVER

I'm sorry, sir, but all patrons have assigned table numbers on their card.

Carl holds up his card.

CARL

Yeah, and mine says table nineteen, just like on that little thing on the table here.

Carl points at the number on the table, which says nineteen.

CARL

So how about you pass me one of them there rolls and quit your bitching?

Dad folds his arms across his chest. Melissa passes the rolls to Carl.

Jim Darby walks up and pats Carl on the back. Dad puts his hands up, forming a cross with his fingers.

JIM

And how is everybody doing tonight?

CARL

Uh, fine I guess. How are you?

JIM

Good, good. Just stopping by to thank you for your support.

DAD

It's your dime, buddy.

JIM

I'm sorry?

Sara and Liz walk up and take seats at table.

SARA
Time. He said it should be a good
time.

JIM
I hope so. You folks take care.

Dad picks up a red napkin.

DAD
This is an odd choice of napkin you
got here. I thought red was
usually reserved for Republicans.

JIM
Just a slight mix up with the
caterer.

Jim walks away, an angered look on his face. Dad laughs.

DAD
You see that? His face was as red
as the napkin!

SARA
Glad you could make it, Mister
Lawler.

DAD
Hey, I told you and Newton I'd
come, so I came.

CARL
I love it when you talk dirty like
that.

LIZ
Manners, Carl.

CARL
Do I need to do the roll thing
again?

SARA
Funny that you mentioned
Newton. Is he coming?

DAD
Can't say really. He seemed pretty
upset about everything that
happened.

SARA

I know, but that's why I need to talk to him. To let him know --

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

And now, ladies and gentlemen, the reason we're all here. I give you our next great Senator, Jim Darby!

The crowd cheers as Jim walks through the banquet hall, making his way to the podium. He shakes hands with people he passes, gives thumbs up, and waves.

He shakes the announcer's hand and smiles in fake embarrassment as the crowd continues to cheer.

DAD

What a crock.

Liz nods in agreement. Sara shrugs her shoulders.

After a moment the cheering subsides. Jim clears his throat and leans in to the microphone.

JIM

Thank you, everybody. Now, I do have a speech prepared, and I plan on addressing it later, but first I'd like to take this opportunity to let you all in on a big surprise...

The crowd looks at each other in wonder.

JIM

...You see, a young man called me earlier this week. A young man who just so happens to be an esteemed member of the press, The Times to be exact, and he wanted to use this event as a tool to let everyone know that his paper has endorsed my candidacy.

Oohs and aahs from the crowd.

JIM

So, ladies and gentlemen, a round of applause for Mister Newton Lawler.

Newton walks out to cheers from the crowd.

Sara, Liz, Dad, Carl, Nathan, and Melissa all look at each other with curiosity.

LIZ
What's going on here?

CARL
I have no idea.

SARA
You didn't know about this?

CARL
I did not.

NATHAN
Dad?

DAD
Nope. He just asked me to be here.

Newton shakes Jim's hand and steps to the podium.

NEWTON
Thank you, everybody, but I have a little confession to make. You see, when I talked to Mister Darby a few days ago, I told him that I wished to speak at this function and extend an endorsement from my paper, which is true, but that really isn't the reason I'm here...

The crowd mumbles collectively. Jim stands off stage, looking around nervously.

NEWTON
...The real reason I'm here is because I desperately need to speak to someone, and this is the only way I could think of. I've received word from a reliable source that she's seated at table nineteen, so can we get a light down there?

A spotlight moves around, stopping at table nineteen and shining on Liz.

Liz smiles nervously and points to the spot next to her. The light quickly moves over to Sara, who smiles sheepishly.

NEWTON

Sara Renfeld, ladies and gentlemen...

Sara waves slightly. Light clapping from the crowd.

NEWTON

...Sara works as an associate for the Darby campaign. She loves her job, and she takes it very seriously. I guess it was a little too much for me though, because I ended up getting mad over her high level of devotion and we broke up...

The crowd groans with displeasure. Newton raises his hands to calm them down.

NEWTON

Now, now. I realize that I was wrong. I had no right to try and keep her all to myself. I realize that Sara is truly a treasure and should be shared with everyone. And it might be too late, but I just wanted to say one thing. Sara, could you stand up please?

Sara looks around nervously, and slowly stands up.

SARA

I'm listening.

NEWTON

That night that we broke up. One of the last things you said to me was that I didn't believe in anything, and that really stuck with me despite my response. I gave that a lot of thought, and realized that for the most part, you were right, except for one thing.

SARA

What's that?

NEWTON

Us, Sara. I believe in us, and I don't care if you have to work twenty two hours a day, because I

NEWTON
can take comfort in knowing that
I'll at least have the other two
with you...

A tear streams down Sara's cheek.

NEWTON
I love you, Sara, and I just hope
that you can see it in your heart
to love me back. That's it, that's
all I wanted to say, and if you
can't I'll just go back to the
petty little life I led before you
came along.

Newton steps back from the podium. The crowd is deathly
silent as Sara slowly makes her way toward Newton at the
podium.

She stops and stands a few feet away from him.

SARA
I'm sorry, Newton, but I just don't
think it will work out. My work
occupies far too much of my time
for us to have any type of
relationship.

The crowd groans in disappointment. Newton lowers his head
in sadness.

DAD
Aww, what the hell!

SARA
So I guess I'll just have to quit
that job won't I?

Newton perks up, raising his head just as Sara rushes into
his arms and kisses him passionately.

Jim walks out onstage.

JIM
What about the endorsement?

Newton and Sara stop kissing.

NEWTON
Oh, yeah...

Newton leans in toward the microphone.

NEWTON

The New York Star Times fully
endorses Jim Darby for the U-S
Senate.

Jim and the crowd are stunned.

JIM

The what?

NEWTON

The New York Star Times.

JIM

The tabloid?

NEWTON

That's the one.

JIM

What the hell good is that going to
do me? You planning on putting my
picture next to the alien baby?

NEWTON

No, not at all. Your spot is next
to the Abominable Snowman article.

SARA

And you can pick out your own damn
napkins from now on. I quit.

JIM

You were never that devoted anyway.

Sara waves him off.

SARA

Whatever. I have a new object of
my devotion now.

Sara and Newton go back to their kissing. Newton raises a
finger in the air, swirling it in a circular motion.

Patriotic music starts to play, and Newton, Sara, and Jim
are doused in a shower of red, white and blue confetti and
balloons.

Jim waves his arms in the air at rapid pace.

JIM

Turn it off! Turn it off! I
haven't given my speech yet!

The shower continues to fall as Jim storms off the stage.

DAD
You don't see that everyday.

Liz turns to Carl.

LIZ
Why don't you do things like that?

CARL
What, break up with you and come up
with some scheme to get you back in
front of a crowd of people?

LIZ
Just romantic stuff in general.

CARL
I'm really not that bright. Dinner
and a movie just about maxes out my
abilities as a boyfriend. I'll
work on it though.

Liz smiles.

LIZ
You better.

Carl and Liz share a kiss.

Newton and Sara break their kiss, turn to the crowd and wave. The crowd breaks into a standing ovation.

Newton takes Sara by the hand and leads her toward the exit. He stops at the door, turning back to the crowd.

NEWTON
Enjoy your dinner everybody! We're
gonna go have some freaky makeup
sex!

The crowd goes quiet. Newton looks to a shocked Sara. He winks at her and turns back to the crowd.

NEWTON
God bless America!

Newton gives a thumbs up and the crowd erupts into its loudest applause yet.

Newton and Sara smile at each other and exit the banquet hall.

THE END