

I DREAM OF IVA

written by

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FADE IN:

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Organ music permeates the semi-full Beverly Hills church. By the podium is an enlarged picture of ELAINE. She is a radiant woman in her 70s with a mane of close-cropped platinum hair and the aura of an angel.

ADAM (40) sits in the first pew, staring vacantly in front of him. If you didn't know him you'd take him for some homeless guy who wandered in off the street in an intoxicated haze looking for a soup kitchen. Seated next to Adam is a BLACK WOMAN (Darla) - 60s, busty, heavily rouged and Botoxed.

On the other side of the aisle sits the rest of Adam's FAMILY - grandmother, aunts, cousins, brother. They look over at Adam worriedly. His grandmother starts to get up and approach him but is held back by the shaking heads of his aunts.

Music ends. Adam rises and approaches the podium.

ADAM

My mom didn't paint or draw or write poetry. She couldn't carry a tune. Hell, the woman was basically tone deaf.

(laughs through tears)

But she knew how to love, man. She was a genius in love. Before she died, Mom made me promise not to miss her. "I'll always live inside your heart," she said. I know what she meant by this. I may never find anyone who loves me like my mom did. But if I can learn to love the way I wanna be loved, then maybe, just maybe, like Elaine I too can be a genius in love. Even if I can't keep the promise I made to her. Because I miss you, Mom. So fucking much.

Adam reaches into his coat pocket and extracts a cassette player, puts it on the podium and presses play. Prince's "1999" fills the church. "Life is just a party and parties weren't meant to last," etc.

ADAM (CONT'D)

(dancing)

Get set for the chorus.

Worried looks in the audience. This is so inappropriate.

The PRIEST comes over and grabs the cassette player. Adam wrestles it away from him.

ADAM (CONT'D)

This was my mother's favorite song!  
I'm just trying to honor her spirit,  
man!

The podium gets knocked over as the two men topple over each other. The cassette player flies through the air, knocks down a portrait of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and lands in the holy water font, short-circuiting. The audience collectively groans and shakes its head.

EXT. ADAM'S HOUSE - DAY

Establishing shots of many luxury cars parked around the center house on a cul-de-sac.

EXT. ADAM'S HOUSE - BACK YARD - DAY

Adam's brother, JAMES (late 30s), leads the attendees as they distribute Elaine's ashes in the garden.

INT. ADAM'S HOUSE - DAY

Guests mill about. Adam sits on the floor immersed in a book, Darla by his side. He is turning the pages rapidly, speed reading ART OF LOVING. One or two guests stop to engage him but he holds the book in front of his face as if to say "leave me alone."

Periodically we see MAX, the apricot toy poodle, peeing on furniture and generally being disagreeable.

ADAM

(standing)

Darla, would you care for something to drink - a cocktail perhaps, or some Perrier?

DARLA

I'd love me some wine cooler.

As Adam turns he runs into his grandmother.

ADAM

Nana.

She takes his arm and they stroll through the party.

NANA

My Adam. Why didn't you sit with us at church? I wanted you next to me.

(Adam shrugs)

What will you do now? Will you go back to being a doctor? If you do, plastic surgery, dear.

Nana, who is 90 but looks a fabulous 75, is no stranger to cosmetic procedures. This gets a smile from Adam.

NANA (CONT'D)

Or will you go back to writing, what was it you wrote, dear?

ADAM

(sighs)

I wanna see what's behind door number three.

NANA

I just wish you'd do something with that big brain of yours.

Adam stops at the piano, plays a few bars of the Queen song, "Somebody to Love," sings a line or two falsetto.

NANA (CONT'D)

Adam, please...

ADAM

You're already putting me to work? Mom's grave isn't even cold yet.

NANA

But only because she was cremated. It's never too early to consider your finances, dear. How do you think I've managed to stay afloat all these years?

ADAM

You've buried four husbands and absorbed their fortunes.

NANA

Three. Your grandfather didn't have a nickel to his name, God rest him.

(pause)

I'd just hate for you to lose this house. You've lived here your whole life. You used to pee in that swimming pool.

ADAM  
Ah, the memories.

NANA  
But what will you do when your money runs out? Your mother left you enough to last you through the year, if you're careful.

ADAM  
(utterly alone)  
Can't I just be bereaved?

INT. ADAM'S HOUSE - LATER

Adam stands at the door as guests leave. He turns to see James.

ADAM  
James.

JAMES  
Some show you put on at church. And was that a prostitute?

ADAM  
(deadpan)  
We kept it platonic. At least in the pew. Ba Dum Tss!

JAMES  
I see you butchered the rose bushes.

ADAM  
Glad you appreciate my work.

JAMES  
(down to business)  
Mom left this house to both of us. As I have my own residence, I allow you to remain here--

ADAM  
Hmmm... the fact that I dropped everything to care for Mom in the last years of her life may have something to do with it. Plus you get my gardening and pool cleaning services thrown in...

JAMES  
You had no life, being between what not, so naturally...

(MORE)

JAMES (CONT'D)

Whereas I am busy enough for two.  
Besides we both know you mooched off  
Mom and still do.

ADAM

A matter of interpretation.

JAMES

As joint owners, we will discuss any  
details having to do with the upkeep  
and maintenance of this property,  
however trivial they may seem to  
you.

Adam stares off into the distance. It's not registering.

JAMES (CONT'D)

(whispers)

Let me put it this way. The house is  
to remain as it is. Don't touch  
anything unless you run shit by me!  
Do I make myself clear? Or when you  
blow through your cash, I'll make  
your life a living nightmare!

(Adam shrugs; James calls  
out:)

Tracy, start the car!

Nana appears, eyeing her grandsons.

NANA

Your mother's dying wish was that  
her two boys would get along.

ADAM & JAMES

Fine bye.

They air kiss and James exits.

EXT. STREET - EVENING

Adam takes Max out for a walk. He passes his mailbox, from  
which a bunch of deflated balloons with "Elaine" on them  
hang. They walk by a "For Lease" sign in front of a  
neighboring house. Max pees on it.

Adam sees KATHERINE, 40s. She's also walking her dog. They  
try to pretend they don't know each other but they're too  
close and it's awkward.

KATHERINE

I heard about your mom. If there is  
anything you need...

ADAM

Go on.

KATHERINE

It just felt like the right thing to say.

ADAM

You want to come over? Pool's heated.

KATHERINE

I don't think now is such a good time.

ADAM

Why not?

KATHERINE

Well, your mom just died, and we... after what happened between us, do you really think, I mean...?

ADAM

So... anything I need doesn't include a cup of tea or maybe some whiskey or anything resembling genuine neighborliness, does it. Why didn't you just qualify yourself to begin with. Jeez!

Adam storms off, yanking Max along with him.

INT. ADAM'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Adam goes through the quiet, empty house. Max keeps close by. Adam stops outside his mother's door, peers inside the dark room but does not enter.

INT. ADAM'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Adam asleep in bed. The window is open. A gentle breeze blows in. A rapping at the door. His eyes blink open. Then, suddenly afraid, he closes his eyes.

MOM'S VOICE

Son, may I lie down next to you?

Adam nods. A long moment, then:

ADAM

You were my everything. I can't go on.

MOM'S VOICE

You are better off without me.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

A Rocky III movie poster. Stallone in his iconic pose: shaved chest, skimpy shorts, gold belt, eye of the tiger.

We get a look at the details of Adam's bedroom. It's a curious hodgepodge of stuff spanning decades, books and athletic memorabilia especially.

Adam wakes up, goes to the sliding glass door and opens it for Max to pee, pours some dog food in an already full bowl, and goes back to bed. Max pees on the side of the bed.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Adam lying in bed, eyes open.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Same routine. As Adam goes back to bed:

The phone RINGS. DAD leaves a message.

DAD'S VOICE

Son, don't you think it's time to get out of bed already? It's been ten days. I bet you haven't even showered. Your beard has mites. I don't want to think what your pits must smell like.

(beat)

Sorry I didn't attend the reception. The house just has too many memories for one man. And I only lived there for twenty-five years. You're going on forty! But they were some good times.

(beat)

Get up Son, is what your mother used to say when you were a boy. And now I'm saying it: Time to get up and wash those pits!



INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Adam scrubbing his pits.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Adam exits the house in skimpy running shorts, no shoes, no shirt. He does some stretching and sets out on a trot. As he passes the neighbor's house, he sees a WOMAN (30s) walking on the grass. She is with the REALTOR whose face we saw on the "For Lease" sign.

The woman is Iva. Her hair wafts in the breeze. The sunlight kisses her skin. The seductive sway of her hips. It's all there. Their eyes lock. Time slows. This is the moment. If love at first sight has ever happened, we are pleased to be witnessing it.

EXT. HOUSE - EVENING

Adam's car pulls into the garage.

He goes to the door carrying groceries. At the neighbor's house the "For Lease" sign is gone.

INT. HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Adam unloads the groceries. The doorbell rings. He goes to the front door to see Iva.

IVA

Hello. I'm your new neighbor. Iva.

ADAM

(breezy)

Ah, the first woman. Naturally. I would be Adam. Literally, "son of Adam."

They half shake hands, half hug.

IVA

I was wondering... Shabbat starts in a few minutes and in the stress of the move I forgot to pick up some candles. Could I borrow some?

ADAM

Candles, sure. I think I have some tea lights lying around somewhere, if that'll do.

IVA  
That's fine, thanks.

As Adam rummages through a drawer, Iva gives the house the once-over.

ADAM  
So... you're Russian?

IVA  
Correct.

ADAM  
I could tell by your accent. Not that I've met many Russians. But who hasn't seen Doctor Zhivago?

IVA  
I haven't.

ADAM  
Well I'm a big fan of Russia. I mean I've read all of Dostoevsky. Including Notes from Underground twice. But only 'cause it's so short.

IVA  
I'm not much of a reader. Most Russian women are, but--

ADAM  
But you're not a typical Russian?

IVA  
Trust me, I can be.

ADAM  
What does that mean?

IVA  
You haven't met many Russians. But you'll see.

ADAM  
If that's a promise, I can hardly wait.  
(handing her candles)  
Here you are.

IVA  
Thanks.

ADAM  
At your service, milady.

Adam mock-curtsies. Iva smiles, amused.

IVA  
It was nice meeting you.

ADAM  
You too. If you need any more  
candles or anything... I also have  
dish soap, laundry detergent, and  
whatever else you might need.

IVA  
Okay. Whatever. Bye!

Adam's eyes follow Iva down the steps. On the seat of her  
sweatpants are written the words: "Love Me." Adam sighs.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Adam walking Max. He passes Iva's house. He sees a MAN (40s)  
exiting the house holding the hand of a six-year-old GIRL.

Adam nods to the man, who scowls back.

EXT. STREET - LATER

Adam pulls out of his driveway, sees Iva at the curb  
struggling to fit a box into her trash bin.

ADAM  
Hey. So how are you liking the  
'hood?

IVA  
I'm adjusting.

ADAM  
You, your husband, and your  
daughter, is it?

IVA  
Just me and my daughter.

ADAM  
We should get together sometime.

IVA  
That would be nice. What day does  
the trash come?

ADAM

Yesterday. Leave whatever you can't fit in your bin and I'll put it in mine.

Adam drives off. We follow him up the street. He blasts the music and drums on the dash, feeling good.

EXT. HOUSE - EVENING

Adam returns home to find a note addressed to him taped to his front door. He opens it. It reads: "Dear Adam, Thanks for helping me with my box. Iva." There is also her phone number.

INT. HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Adam dials Iva's number.

IVA'S VOICE

Hello?

ADAM

(on phone)

Hi. It's me, Adam. Thank you for your thank you. It was my pleasure to, um, help you with your box? When you wanna hang?

IVA

How's tomorrow?

ADAM

Tomorrow's good.

IVA

Shabbat starts at six. So anytime after that.

ADAM

That's right... you're Jewish...?

IVA

Yes, well, no. But I'm converting. Well, I haven't started the conversion process yet. But it's in the process.

ADAM

I've heard of people converting for their spouses, but you don't have a spouse.

IVA

It's a long story. I'll tell you  
when I see you.

ADAM

Okay. See you tomorrow at six.

He hangs up, beaming.

MONTAGE

Adam getting ready for his date.

He does some gardening. Trims the hedges of the mountain  
stairs. Rakes mountains of leaves.

He passes a rose bush and takes a defiant whack at it with  
his machete.

Adam cleaning the living room coffee table, rearranging  
pillows.

He shaves Max's bushy hair with a pair of clippers. Max's  
poodle cut is a thing of the past: he now looks like a  
chihuahua somebody left by the side of the road. Then Adam  
applies the clippers to his own straggly hair and beard.  
Developing momentum he runs the clippers over his chest and  
armpits too. We see the after shot. Boyishly handsome, he  
cleans up nicely.

Adam closes his mother's bedroom door. A moment of solemn  
silence to mark moving on with his life.

END MONTAGE

INT. ADAM'S HOUSE - EVENING

The mood is set. Fireplace. Check. Candles. Check. Coffee  
table snacks. Check. Prince on the stereo. Check.

The doorbell rings. Adam appears wearing a slightly outdated  
outfit. He opens the door for Iva.

ADAM

Welcome to my humble abode.

She appraises his new appearance.

IVA

New look?

ADAM  
You like?

IVA  
Mmmm, you look ten years younger,  
and not homeless.

She runs her hand along his freshly-shaven cheek. Adam's knees wobble a bit at her touch.

ADAM  
Thank you.

As he leads her to the sofa:

ADAM (CONT'D)  
Care for anything to drink? I've got  
Champagne, wine...

IVA  
Water is fine.

Adam pours some water. They each take a sip. Max starts humping the sofa. Adam throws a pillow at him. He snarls.

ADAM  
So I saw your daughter...

IVA  
Ayla.

ADAM  
That's very pretty. Unusual.

IVA  
It's Hebrew. Means "bringer of  
light."

ADAM  
She was with a man. A rugged Colin  
Farrell type.

IVA  
Colin Farrell?  
(laughing)  
Maybe from far away.

ADAM  
He didn't look too happy.

IVA

Would you be whistling Dixie if you were paying a woman who is not your wife twenty thousand dollars a month to raise your child?

ADAM

Twenty thousand makes you about the world's highest paid nanny.

Iva laughs, reaches to pet Max who snaps at her. Without batting a lash Iva swats Max on the snout. This puts him in his place. Adam is quietly impressed.

ADAM (CONT'D)

When did you two break up?

IVA

When did I move in? The day we met. We officially broke up the day I showed up at your door. But we had been running on empty for about a year before that.

ADAM

Whistling Dixie, running on empty. I love your use of slang. Berlitz, is it? Except they didn't teach you what a woman's "box" really means...

A cloud has come over Iva. Max lifts his leg to pee.

IVA

(re: Max)

No! Stop that! What is wrong with your dog?

ADAM

Sorry. I haven't gotten around to housebreaking him.

IVA

How old is he?

ADAM

Six years. Almost seven.

IVA

You should be embarrassed.

ADAM

I am now.

(pause)

(MORE)

ADAM (CONT'D)

Hmmm. How long were you two together?

IVA

Me and Colin Farrell? Since I got pregnant with Ayla. Six years. Almost seven. Like your dog.

ADAM

What happened?

IVA

I came home really late one night. I don't know what got into me. I guess I was in rebellion mode, he could be so vicious. Anyway he felt disrespected, so he threw me out like the tramp he said I was.

(starts to cry)

At least I'm housebroken!

Adam hands her a tissue.

IVA (CONT'D)

Thank you for your hospitality. It's just too soon.

She stands and heads for the door.

IVA (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. Probably you don't understand loss.

ADAM

Try me.

They embrace.

INT. ADAM'S HOUSE - NEXT DAY

Iva appears at the door with a cup of tea. Ayla is by her side. Adam opens.

IVA

I'm sorry about last night. But today is a fresh start, right? This is my daughter. Ayla, meet our new neighbor Adam.

Adam bends down and looks into Ayla's eyes.

ADAM

Nice to meet you, little girl.



She giggles. There is instant chemistry. Max bounds around the corner with a tennis ball in his mouth. Ayla says something to her mother in Russian.

IVA  
She wants to know if she can play  
with your dog.

ADAM  
Of course. Max, this is Ayla.

IVA  
Max was my ex-husband's name. Before  
Colin I mean. He was also a dog, so  
it fits.

EXT. BACK YARD - MOMENTS LATER

Ayla throws a tennis ball with Max in the background as Adam and Iva sit on some lounge chairs talking.

IVA  
So, no wife, kids?

ADAM  
None that I know of, nope.

IVA  
Why not?

ADAM  
I was certain I'd be married at  
twenty-eight, have my first kid at  
thirty, but things didn't turn out  
that way. Guess I just haven't, you  
know, met the one.

IVA  
That is so generic. You can do  
better.

ADAM  
(thinks)  
Well... with each relationship, you  
evolve, you know?

IVA  
What do you mean?

ADAM  
Just, with one girl I learned  
Portuguese and spent a year abroad,  
which was cool.

(MORE)

ADAM (CONT'D)

Another one got me into med school.  
With a third I woke up in Tijuana  
with a back tattoo and a crippling  
case of dysentery.

(Iva laughs)

I knew if I settled down, I'd miss  
out on whatever adventure came next.

(then)

Relationships get stale after a  
while anyway. It's all eating  
leftovers in your pjs watching  
romantic comedies while farting  
under the covers and blaming each  
other.

(Iva laughs)

I never wanted to settle. So when I  
say I haven't met the one, I mean  
the one who is worth letting go of  
future growth.

IVA

You Americans and your obsession  
with growth. No wonder you're all so  
fat.

ADAM

I've just never met... love should  
feel like I got run over by a  
freight train. Or hit by a hunk of  
metal.

He rubs his jaw and looks at Iva, realizing.

IVA

Well, keep trying.

Ayla calls to her mother in Russian.

IVA (CONT'D)

(to Adam)

She feels left out. She wants  
someone to play with her.

ADAM

(doing his best Mighty  
Mouse)

Here I come to save the day!

Adam jumps up and joins Ayla. He throws the ball to the other  
side of the yard and races her along the pool. They do this a  
couple times. Each time Adam wins. Ayla starts to cry.

IVA

Adam, must you be such a bully?

ADAM

I'm sorry, Ayla. Next time I'll let ya win.

Ayla cries even harder.

IVA

The only thing my daughter hates more than losing is an easy victory. Just like her mommy.

The NANNY (Ludmila) shows up and says something to Iva in Russian.

IVA (CONT'D)

Ayla, time to go. The Uber is here to take you to your daddy's.

INT. IVA'S HOUSE - LATER

Iva gives Adam the tour of her partially-furnished place.

IVA

I'm waiting for my sofa to arrive, so let's sit in the kitchen. Unless you prefer to take it to the bedroom and cut to the chase.

Adam's eyes bulge. Iva cracks up laughing.

INT. IVA'S KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Adam sits at the table watching Iva prepare some tea. On the counter are two identical sets of dishware.

IVA

(re: dishes)

This is a kosher kitchen.

ADAM

So... any animal slaughtered herein was killed ritualistically and a prayer spoken over its carcass?

IVA

Very funny. Meat and milk are kept separately. Different parts of the counter, different plates and utensils.

ADAM

Sounds exhausting. Sorry. You could simplify your life by just... if you didn't eat meat or dairy, you'd have nothing to... it would really make things easier.

IVA

Judaism isn't about making things easier, Adam. If anything it makes life a lot more complicated.

Iva whispers a prayer to herself before taking a bite of a fruit, then takes a silver cup and washes her hands several times.

ADAM

At least you'd save on silverware. Even a Jew would appreciate that.

(Iva laughs)

Is Colin--

IVA

Colin is Jewish, yes. But that's not the reason I'm converting. A few years ago, I was in Israel taking care of his mother, who had cancer--

ADAM

--Like my mom--

IVA

We were having relationship issues, whenever Colin was in town. Mostly he was away on business. I met a rabbi who became my therapist, and I fell in love with his way of life. He has the most harmonious family! I told myself, I want that. No, I said: I can have that. Just not with Colin. The more into Judaism I got, the more he judged me.

ADAM

Which is ironic, since he's Jewish.

IVA

Colin's God is money. He hates Orthodoxy. Says it's a cult. He feels sorry for me.

She sits at the table.

ADAM

I don't get... what's the appeal of all this?

IVA

I have a Jewish soul.

ADAM

Jewish soul? That's... your soul is immortal, while religion has only been around a few thousand years...  
(shakes his head)

IVA

Are you religious?

ADAM

I was baptized Catholic, became an altar boy in middle school, visited an ashram in India when I was in college, but I don't really...

IVA

So you're not religious.

ADAM

My God is love.

IVA

What, you just love everybody?

ADAM

There's this quote: "Love your neighbor as yourself." It's by the world's most famous Jew.

IVA

Moses?

ADAM

(smiles)  
Rabbi something or other... It's not really important.

IVA

Love your neighbor as yourself, huh?  
How's that going?

ADAM

I'm trying.

They smile. Adam continues to look at Iva. The tension is thick.

IVA

I just need to find an Orthodox man  
to accompany me on this new path.

ADAM

(bitter)  
Good luck there.

IVA

What?

ADAM

Don't hardcore Hebrews get married  
at twenty and have, like, six kids  
by the time they're thirty-five?

IVA

I guess so. That's the case with my  
rabbi at least.

ADAM

And they don't divorce...

IVA

Not if they can help it.

ADAM

And last I checked - which was  
yesterday - Pico-Robertson has about  
the lowest median income of any  
neighborhood in West LA. Anyone who  
shops at Restoration Hardware such  
as yourself knows sixty grand a year  
won't get you very far. So where  
does that leave you?

IVA

What do you mean?

ADAM

Mid thirties - though you don't look  
a day over twenty-five - but mid  
thirties, divorced, with a child...  
Hell, if I were you I'd settle for  
anyone who'd be foolish enough to,  
you know, settle for you!

IVA

(glares at him)  
Shabbat is almost over, Adam. I have  
to read Torah, so...

ADAM

Look I didn't mean to offend you,  
but you should seriously consider  
getting back with your ex.

IVA

What?

ADAM

I mean, Ayla's father is loaded,  
he's Jewish, and he speaks Russian.  
You can check all your boxes with  
that one.

IVA

Colin - Boris - doesn't love me,  
Adam.

ADAM

Ah, of course there's that. Love.  
Glad you reminded me about love.  
Because it's all that matters!

Iva opens her book.

IVA

Don't let the door hit you on the  
way out.

ADAM

That would hurt if it weren't so  
hilarious.

Adam goes to the door. Before exiting:

ADAM (CONT'D)

I don't know why I'm so upset. I  
must really like you.

Adam leaves Iva alone at the table on the verge of tears.

EXT. IVA'S PLACE - NEXT MORNING

Adam creeps up to Iva's door and is about to place a book on  
her doormat when the door opens revealing Iva.

ADAM

I'm so sorry about last night. I was  
coming from a place of pain.

IVA

I'm the one to blame. I should know better than to discuss other men, real or imaginary, with a suitor.

ADAM

So you consider me a suitor?

She smiles. He hands her the book.

IVA

(re: book)

What's this?

ADAM

I forgot, you don't read much. That, my dear, is a book. And in my case, the product of five years of medical training, and about two hundred thousand dollars of my father's hard-earned cash. If Colin looks pissed off, you should see my dad.

IVA

Seriously.

ADAM

It's a book I wrote on nutrition, which about a dozen people have read. Including my mother, who read it twice.

(pause)

Go ahead, read the inscription.

IVA

(reading)

"To Iva, I am so grateful for your friendship. You are so lovely!"

(touched)

Thank you for this.

They stare at each other. The expectation is thick on Adam's part. Will he get the invite in?

ADAM

So I'll go, friend. Okay, I'm gone. Have a nice day!

EXT. ADAM'S HOUSE - DAY

Adam uses a leaf rake to remove debris from the pool. GABE lies on a chaise drinking a fruity cocktail. There are cucumbers on Gabe's eyes.



GABE

I can't believe she just fell into your lap like that, man. Like an angel from heaven. And she lives right next door?

ADAM

Two doors down. Her and her daughter.

GABE

You didn't tell me she had a daughter. That puts things in a slightly less neon light.

ADAM

The picture gets drabber still. She's looking for an Orthodox Jewish husband.

GABE

You'd look terrible in a kippah.

ADAM

A what?

GABE

A yarmulke. I'm Jewish and hate 'em. Orthodox Judaism is, like, so BC. The rules, and there are about six hundred of 'em... most are about not having sex with farm animals or family members. She Jewish?

ADAM

Converting. Trying to.

GABE

Tell her, if she ain't Jewish by now, she never will be.

ADAM

I don't get it.

GABE

Judaism isn't just a religion, man, it's a race. You're not really a Jew if your mom isn't Jewish, since back in the dusty plains of Israel, they couldn't be sure about paternity.

ADAM

Iva was raised Eastern Orthodox Christian.

GABE

That's what I'm saying. She may as well, I dunno, try and become Asian. A white chick can be a Buddhist if she wants to, but she'll never be Chinese. See what I mean? Besides, I hear converts are treated like second class citizens.

(beat)

Where she from?

ADAM

Moscow.

GABE

Holy shit.

Gabe shoots up in his chair. The cucumbers fall off.

GABE (CONT'D)

She's Russian?

ADAM

She is.

GABE

What does she do?

ADAM

She's working on setting up a hypnotherapy practice after she gets her green card.

GABE

A Russian who isn't legal. That sounds every bit like my ex Anna, the fucking slut. Plus she's a shrink?

ADAM

A hypnotherapist.

GABE

She'll mindfuck you, man.

ADAM

You're a shrink.

GABE

So I speak from experience!

(beat)

Adam, I am warning you. Stay away from this chick. She will take all your money and file for divorce.

(MORE)

GABE (CONT'D)

And in between it will be the best sex of your life.

ADAM

(laughs)

I don't think there's much... I mean you'd have better luck with her, just by being a Hebrew.

GABE

Which is why I'm waiting for an intro. You know I like my maneaters.

Adam's cellular phone RINGS. It's Iva.

ADAM

(on phone)

Hey.

IVA

Hey. Don't ask me if I've read your book. But I have a weird question. Would you be interested in training me?

ADAM

Training you?

IVA

You're in really good shape, and one of my New Year's resolutions is to get in really good shape, so we're a perfect match.

ADAM

I like the sound of that!

IVA

I'll be right over.

ADAM

(to Gabe)

You need to leave. Maneater incoming.

EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE - LATER

A view of the stairs from the bottom. One hundred twenty railroad ties extending seemingly into infinity.

ADAM

My mom had these stairs built. Going up is great for your buttocks. Yeah I said buttocks.

IVA

(laughs)

The view is divine.

ADAM

You have no idea.

Adam's view: He is behind Iva staring straight at her Spandex-clad backside.

EXT. BACK YARD - LATER

They do yoga on the grass. Adam leads Iva through a series of poses. He is stiff, and she is clearly a better yogi, but she lets herself be led.

INT. HOME GYM - LATER

Iva does some dumbbell exercises as Adam monitors her form. She is flushed and panting, and enjoying being touched.

INT. ADAM'S HOUSE - POST WORKOUT

Adam and Iva sit on the sofa in their workout clothes, sipping water. They look at each other. An air of expectation fills the room.

IVA

Look, we are obviously attracted to each other. But I don't think it would be a good idea to get involved.

ADAM

I agree.

IVA

You do?

ADAM

Yeah I do. You just got out of a strained relationship. If we did get involved, and it blew up in our faces as rebounds do... Besides everybody knows dating your neighbor is a bad idea.

(MORE)

ADAM (CONT'D)

Not that I have much experience there... But if we did break up, I couldn't go out for cannoli without being reminded of you. I don't eat cannoli, but... Anyway where would that leave Ayla? I mean clearly she likes coming over and playing with Max.

IVA

Exactly what I was thinking.

ADAM

Good.

A long beat. The two just stare at each other, breathless.

IVA

It is so sweet of you to think of my daughter.

They look at each other for another impossibly long moment.

Then they leap into each other's arms and make out.

INT. HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

We follow the lovers, lips locked, into the bedroom. Clothes peel off, pictures come crashing off walls, etc.

IVA

(between kisses)

I hope my rabbi approves!

They slam the bedroom door in our face. Max howls.

INT. BEDROOM - POST COITUS

Adam and Iva lie side by side staring up at the ceiling. Adam breaks the silence.

ADAM

That was amazing--

IVA

(over him)

Awful. Your chest stubble is a lethal weapon. All that grease you put in your hair, I'll have acne for at least a week. Plus you use way too much tongue.

ADAM  
 (crushed)  
 I'm sorry. It's been awhile...

Iva cracks up.

IVA  
 We'll work on all that. In the  
 meantime, get over here!

They kiss.

IVA (CONT'D)  
 Not so much tongue!

ADAM  
 Sorry.

#### MONTAGE

Two hungry people in love or at least in lust, have sex in every room of Adam's house. Atop washer, over sofa, against wall, in washer, on a tree branch, in the hammock, in the pool, on the roof.

The lovers build their memories to the song "Nothing's Gonna Stop Us Now," by Starship.

Adam and Iva run hand in hand into a concert hall where the Backstreet Boys play on stage.

Lying side by side at the beach as Adam reads to Iva while she naps.

Watching When Harry Met Sally in bed and eating Chinese take-out out of the box. Iva sniffs the air, lifts the covers, frowns in disgust, looks over at Adam, slaps him on the shoulder. Then Max crawls out from beneath the covers, shakes himself off. They both laugh.

Tandem bikes at Venice. They veer to avoid roller bladers and fall into the sand.

At the petting zoo with Ayla.

Going bowling. Iva has terrible form and bowls strikes. Adam rolls like a professional and it's all gutter balls.

Making sushi... Planting a strawberry patch... Napping together in the hammock... Smoking pot in the car... Laughing at a comedy club.

Taking a hike in Malibu: Adam helps Iva up some steep terrain, pushes her up a ledge and she kicks dirt in his face.

At The Grove shopping mall. They enter J. Crew, exit with Adam wearing new clothes. He throws his old clothes into the trash. We see that Max has a new bouffant hairdo and collar too.

Ayla stands at The Grove Dancing Fountain. Behind her, Adam and Iva hold hands and sneak a kiss.

MONTAGE ENDS

EXT. STREET - DAY

Adam returns from a bike ride wearing Spandex. Iva stands at the door in his bathrobe with a cup of tea.

ADAM

You let yourself in.

IVA

What, do you have a problem with that?

ADAM

Ummm, no, it's just things are going really fast.

IVA

I'll show you fast. Come here you!

Iva grabs Adam's hand and tugs him towards house as his bike crashes to the ground.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Just after sex. Iva rolls off Adam. As they catch their breath:

IVA

Tell me what you like about me?

He turns to her.

IVA (CONT'D)

Colin didn't touch me for months. Didn't compliment me for a lot longer. You could say I'm fishing.

ADAM

Well, where to start?

IVA

Take it from the top.

ADAM

Head to toe, huh? Let's see. Your hair is thick and lustrous, like a lion's mane. It bespeaks the pride and regal nature of the king of the jungle. Queen too. Your skin scintillates like fine porcelain.

IVA

A regular Pushkin...

ADAM

(getting into it)

Your nose advertises grace and refinement. Your eyes, deep and mysterious, are a hue I've never encountered before.

IVA

It's called hazel. Even I knew that.

ADAM

Still, it's new to my palette.

IVA

(kissing him)

Go on.

ADAM

Luscious lips. Elegant neck. Bodacious breasts. Hourglass hips. Haunches like a thoroughbred. With its long, slender legs.

IVA

The better to wrap around you.

ADAM

Aristocratic toes. Have I left anything out?

IVA

A pubis that marries nicely with your pee pee.

ADAM

(laughing)

Yes. Now do me.

(MORE)



ADAM (CONT'D)

What about me turns you on? Is it my rapier wit? Granite physique? Don't be shy now.

IVA

I just told you, your penis fits perfectly inside my vagina. What else matters?

Adam, crestfallen. Iva sees his high school yearbook.

IVA (CONT'D)

Maybe this will inspire me.

She opens it.

ADAM

My mother marked the pages I'm in. There are many of them.

Iva skims the pages with disinterest then closes the book and yawns.

ADAM (CONT'D)

So what do you think?

IVA

I think you peaked early in life.

Adam frowns. Iva laughs, kisses him.

IVA (CONT'D)

You forgot to thank me for the new bedding.

ADAM

(looks around him; notices for first time)

Nice.

IVA

I thought since we'll be spending a lot of time in this bed, but now I'm realizing that the sheets don't go with the bed frame. Or with anything else in this room.

ADAM

We can always buy new sheets.

IVA

Or everything else.

(beat; softer)

You know, I asked God for you, Adam.

ADAM

Hmmm?

IVA

I did. I asked Him to send me a man who could teach me to be healthy and live modestly, a man who'd make me the happiest girl in the world.

ADAM

That's... wow. Thank you.

IVA

And God gives me you? What was He thinking!

Iva laughs and kisses him again.

EXT. BACK YARD - DAY

Iva and Adam are atop a chaise lounge. Iva is on top of Adam. She is wearing a bikini. As they kiss she opens her eyes wide and freezes.

IVA

I can't do this in front of her.

Iva points at his mom's bedroom. Through the window we can see the enlarged picture of Elaine wreathed in flowers, the one from the memorial.

INT. MOM'S ROOM - DAY

Iva and Adam stand in front of the photo.

ADAM

Look I know what you're trying to do by freshening up the space, but I can't possibly part with this photograph.

IVA

Who said anything about the photograph? In Russia it is considered bad luck to keep dead flowers lying around. It dishonors the memory of the deceased.

ADAM

Okay.

Iva takes the wreath and flings it out the door. She places the photo on a shelf, stares at it a long moment. Adam waits for her to give some appropriate remark. She doesn't. He turns to his mother's picture, regards it with heartbreaking tenderness, as though seeing it for the first time, looks like he'll start crying. Iva puts her arm around him. After a long moment:

IVA  
Let's go shopping.

INT. FURNITURE OUTLET - DAY

Iva picks out furniture as an EMPLOYEE trails them. She is like the Terminator of shopping, target and attack: she picks out a bed frame, night stands, etc. She stops in front of a magnificent oak desk.

IVA  
I like this. Very Russian. What do you feel?

ADAM  
I feel I don't really need a new desk. I mean the old one is fine.

IVA  
How old is it?

ADAM  
I'd have to ask my brother. It was his. I sort of inherited it when I moved back home.

IVA  
A writer needs his own space.

Adam sees a papasan.

ADAM  
And also one of these?

IVA  
Doesn't match your decor I'm afraid.

He pushes Iva into the papasan. She melts into the contours.

IVA (CONT'D)  
I'll make an exception, for comfort.

INT. ADAM'S OFFICE - DAY

Iva busies herself tidying Adam's new work space, dusting shelves, clearing space, arranging things on Adam's new desk. The room looks completely revamped. Adam stands back, unsure.

IVA

I've never seen such a thick layer of dust. You could bury a small animal.

(laughs)

It reminds me of an old Russian joke. A housewife is asked, "How did you meet your husband?" She replies, "His house was on fire. I let myself in."

(off Adam's look)

What? You look constipated.

ADAM

It's just... James will kill me when he sees all the changes we made.

IVA

James is your younger brother, correct?

ADAM

He's also the kefir king. With money comes power. And attitude.

IVA

I'm sure you can still kick his butt.

They laugh.

ADAM

One thing's for sure: our little shopping spree took months off my life, financially.

Iva holds up a stack of what we'll learn are screenplays.

IVA

What are these?

ADAM

My stillbirths. Every screenwriter has them. The scripts you write on the way to mastering the craft. For some it is two or three. For me it's been fifteen. And I'm still an amateur.

IVA  
Screenwriting is what you do?

ADAM  
What I used to do.

IVA  
When was the last time you wrote one?

ADAM  
Before my mom got sick. Before I went to med school, actually.

IVA  
Why?

ADAM  
Kinda gave up on all that. Got frustrated. Thought medicine was the answer, or at least a reliable paycheck. Turned out being a doctor was just another dead end. I wasted the prime of my life.

IVA  
Adam...

ADAM  
Everyone knows it's in your thirties when you're supposed to make your mark. I missed my window. Now I'm over the hill. A has-been. Worse. A never will be.

IVA  
That's not true, Adam. A lot of writers don't find an audience until later in life.

ADAM  
Yeah? Like who?

IVA  
Does the name Dostoevsky ring a bell? He was an unknown author when he wrote Notes from Underground.

ADAM  
How old was he? I mean, I should know this, but...

IVA  
He was forty-two. Older than you.

ADAM

Wow, I didn't... I thought you never read Dostoevsky.

IVA

I haven't. Wikipedia.

Adam smiles, clearly impressed.

IVA (CONT'D)

Write another one. It's what you do.

ADAM

What I used to--

IVA

No, Adam, it's what you do. I really have my hands full with you, don't I?

Adam looks at the movie poster now hanging over his desk.

ADAM

When I was a kid, my mom took me to see Rocky III. That's when Rocky takes on Clubber Lang. You know, Mr. T?

IVA

I don't, I'm not a fan. Sorry.

ADAM

Yeah, well, as the credits rolled, she leaned over and said, "Son, one day that will be you up there." That will be you.

IVA

And what did you say?

ADAM

I dunno. "Pass me the popcorn?" I was like eight.

Iva smiles.

ADAM (CONT'D)

But she planted the seed, man. Was it Mom's dream or mine? Maybe both.

IVA

Your mother sounds like a wonderful woman.

ADAM  
Would you like to meet her?

INT. TV ROOM - DAY

Adam and Iva sit on the sofa in front of the TV. Iva rests her head on Adam's chest.

ADAM  
This footage was taken ten days  
before my mom passed away.

Adam hits play. We see his mother on the screen, being interviewed.

ELAINE (ON TV)  
I think with love all things are possible. I really do. I feel that love is beauty. Love is grace. Love is generosity. Love is giving. Love is forgiving. It's just about love. You can talk and you can read. I have books and I have libraries, and it all goes back to love. Once I found that out I thought, it's just love. That's it.

Adam looks down at Iva. She has fallen asleep. He kisses her forehead.

INT. KITCHEN - EVENING

Adam has just finished preparing a couple dishes. He places them on the dinner table, which is candle lit and set for three. The front door opens and Iva and Ayla come in. Iva is carrying a dish herself, which she places at the center of the table.

ADAM  
What did you make?

IVA  
These, my friend, are prohibited potatoes. Ludmila's specialty. The way to a man's heart is through his stomach.

ADAM  
Is that cheese? You know I don't--

IVA

Make an exception. You'll die when you taste how good this is.

ADAM

I may die, but...

She serves him a heaping mouthful. Adam chews, noncommittal.

ADAM (CONT'D)

(through mouthful)

I made us some spaghetti squash and lentils.

She keeps feeding him. We can hardly understand what he is saying.

ADAM (CONT'D)

With some fresh tomatoes and a light dressing.

IVA

Sounds delicious. Not sure we'll have room, though.

They sit. Beside them, Ayla is diligently coloring. Out of her pocket she extracts a half-eaten stick of salami and takes a chew.

ADAM

Is that...?

Ayla offers him a bite. He turns his face away.

ADAM (CONT'D)

Thanks but, uh, I filled up on potatoes.

IVA

Oh, we forgot to say grace. Colin - I know you don't like me bringing him up - but he was always in such a hurry he'd finish his meal before even sitting down, like I just made you. Probably because I'm used to it.

She grabs Adam's hand and takes Ayla's. Adam gets solemn.

ADAM

Dear Lord--

IVA

Hashem.



ADAM

Uh-huh. Thank you for our many blessings. We dedicate our deeds to you, Lord. Grant that we may contribute to the happiness--

Adam looks over at Iva, who has started snoring. His jaw drops. She peeks at him and laughs.

IVA

No really, that was cute. Especially the Hashem part.

Iva takes a bite of Adam's spaghetti squash and smiles.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Adam and Iva sit on the sofa sipping tea like an old married couple. Ayla has her hands in a bowl of gemstones, which she is scattering on the floor.

ADAM

Careful. Those stones belonged to my mother. They're very rare.

Ayla puts one in her pocket.

IVA

Ayla, put that back immediately!

ADAM

It's okay.

IVA

Ayla, play something for us on the piano.

Ayla dutifully approaches the piano. Adam, who was looking glum and stifling belches, brightens up in anticipation of the performance.

ADAM

This should be a treat. My mother bought that piano twenty years ago and I can't tell you the last time anyone--

Without further ado, Ayla bangs on the piano like an infant Beethoven, only without any cadence. Adam looks at Iva, who nods back like a proud mother. He will either explode, or ... join Ayla at the piano and play HEART AND SOUL. Ayla stops her pounding to listen. Iva seats herself on the other side of Ayla and plays along with Adam.

Then Ayla chimes in, and the three are making pretty good harmony, like a little family.

The tune ends. Ayla applauds. Adam looks over at Iva.

IVA  
(teary eyed)  
I'm just so happy right now.

She checks the time.

IVA (CONT'D)  
OhmyGod. Is it? What's the day today? I'm late for my manicure appointment.

ADAM  
It's after 9 p.m.

IVA  
And my appointment was at nine. I have to go.  
(jumps up)  
I won't be more than an hour, two tops. You and Ayla are fine, right?

ADAM  
Uhm, I'm usually in bed by ten...

But Iva is out the door. Ayla smiles mischievously at him.

ADAM (CONT'D)  
(nervous)  
Our first time alone together...

Ayla runs over and pounces on Adam, wanting to wrestle. They knock over a vase which shatters.

ADAM (CONT'D)  
We should go outside.

EXT. BACK YARD - NIGHT

They play fetch with Max. The yard is lit up. Adam holds the ball in front of Ayla.

ADAM  
Okay, Ayla, no cheating this time.

He throws the ball to the other side of the yard, races Ayla to chase it down, lets Ayla get there first. He does it again, she wins again, but close enough not to feel he's letting her.

Then, Ayla lies down in the grass and looks up at the stars. Unsure, Adam lies down next to her. She crawls all over him, on his chest then under his legs, slips her arms inside his shirt for warmth, hugs him. Out of his element he tries to control the situation.

ADAM (CONT'D)

This is nice. You don't say much, do you? Is English, don't they speak English in your school?

AYLA

(echoing her mother)  
I'm just so happy right now.

Ayla snuggles Adam. He melts.

INT. FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

Iva appears as Adam leads Ayla to the door.

IVA

I hope it wasn't too crazy.

Adam nods "yes" but says "no, not at all."

Iva takes Ayla's hand and heads out.

IVA (CONT'D)

I'll see you tomorrow.

Then she turns back and holds up her open hand and mouths "five minutes."

ADAM

(bushed)  
Tomorrow's good. Fine.

But she is gone.

INT. ADAM'S HOUSE - NEXT MORNING

The doorbell rings. Adam opens to see Iva and Ayla. Iva holds a cake in one hand and a present in the other. Ayla holds balloons.

IVA

Happy birthday!

ADAM

How did you know, did I tell you it was my birthday?

IVA  
I looked through your wallet and  
found your ID.

ADAM  
(unsure whether she's  
joking)  
Oh.

IVA  
Come on, let's open your present or  
we'll be late for school.

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

They sit at the table and the girls sing to Adam as Iva snaps  
shots of him and Ayla. He opens his gift. It is a typewriter.

IVA  
For your next masterpiece.

ADAM  
(genuinely touched)  
Thank you.

He goes to take a bite of cake but Iva snatches it away.

IVA  
You can eat it later. I have an  
appointment with my rabbi and I need  
you to take Ayla to school.

Adam smiles at Ayla, not minding.

MONTAGE: Adam and Ayla

Adam drives Ayla to school. They sing as they go. He teaches  
her how to float on her back in the swimming pool. He makes  
her pancakes for breakfast. Helps her with her homework. They  
have a picnic in the grass. He reads to her from a book of  
fairy tales. They play Monopoly. When he's not looking Ayla  
grabs extra money. They paste gemstones on a piece of art  
paper as Iva looks on. They pick a bouquet of flowers. Adam  
brushes Ayla's teeth as in the background Iva is on the  
phone. He carries her on his shoulders up and down the stairs  
as she laughs. They run around with Max on all fours.

Through these scenes, we watch Ayla transform from her shy  
tomboy former self to a talkative and confident little lady.

END MONTAGE

EXT. IVA'S PLACE - DAY

Adam rings the bell. Iva opens, looking worried.

IVA  
(hurried)  
Thank you for coming over. Please  
come in.

INT. IVA'S - CONTINUOUS

ADAM  
(noticing)  
Your sofa arrived. Should we sit, or  
just take it to the bedroom and cut  
to the chase?

He grabs her to him teasingly.

IVA  
(frees herself)  
Not now, Adam. Be seated.  
(he sits)  
I need to ask you something. If I  
needed to move in with you - I mean  
me and my daughter - would you be  
okay with it?

ADAM  
(making light)  
I feel strongly about you too, Iva,  
but isn't this taking it a bit fast?

IVA  
It's not that.  
(getting emotional)  
It's Boris.  
(sits)  
He found out about us. He went  
through Ayla's iPad and saw the  
photos from your birthday. He asked  
who you were and Ayla said "Mom's  
new boyfriend." He was furious.

ADAM  
What did you tell him?

IVA  
That you're just a neighbor, but he  
is onto us. I need to know if I can  
count on you. If push comes to  
shove, can we count on you?

A long moment. Adam stands up.

ADAM

Gosh Iva, a month ago we hadn't even met, and now... Look I know it's common for a person, especially if she's a woman, to leave one relationship and pick up where she left off with the next guy.

Iva stares daggers at Adam.

ADAM (CONT'D)

(sits back down, gives in)  
Yes you can count on me. Move right on in, sure. I'll just have to check with my brother first.

IVA

Who? Ah, the kefir king. I want to meet him.

EXT. JAMES' HOUSE - DAY

A lavish home. It deserves a layout in "Architectural Digest."

INT. JAMES' HOUSE - DAY

James, Iva, Adam, and Nana sit at the dining room table. The air is formal. There are also a couple CUTE BOYS in their twenties that nobody seems to know or acknowledge. As an army of SERVANTS attends the guests, everyone is texting under the table - except Nana and Adam.

ADAM

(to James)  
Where's Tracy?

Everyone looks up from his/her phone.

JAMES

We broke up. You know how it is. People are like cars. Wear 'em down and trade 'em in for the latest model.

The boys laugh.

JAMES (CONT'D)

So, Iva. What part of town do you work in? Or shall I say, your office is on which street corner?

The boys snicker.

IVA

(not getting it)

I'm not permitted to work in this country until I am a citizen.

JAMES

So typical.

IVA

But I am a therapist by training.

One of the boys says "sex therapist" under a muffled cough.

IVA (CONT'D)

As I am new in this country, I haven't built up my clientele.

JAMES

I hear the mail order bride business is flourishing in Russia.

NANA

Marriage is legalized prostitution, if you ask me. Giving your body to some fat hairy man just because he's your husband and pays the bills. And all my men have been fat and hairy, and bald, except your grandfather boys, God rest him. A real stallion. With other women too. Which is why I divorced him.

IVA

That sounds a lot like my ex. If there was a hole, he'd plug it. Especially if it was twenty-something and blonde.

The boys laugh. She is winning them over.

NANA

I hope you divorced him.

IVA

Actually, he broke up with me.

This garners some sympathetic sighs.

IVA (CONT'D)

There is a lot of legalized prostitution in Russia, like Nana says. I can't tell you how many women, respectable women, give their bodies for some caviar or a bottle of cheap Champagne. It isn't always about diamonds and pearls, boys.

BOYS

(interested)  
My God, why?

IVA

In Russia, it's what women do. You hook the man. Even if you don't know what to do with him when he is hooked.

JAMES

That's probably why they're called hookers.

IVA

Probably. Anyway, that's all behind me. I have turned over a new leaf.

JAMES

You're like a virgin. Get it, like a virgin?

IVA

(nods)  
I'm on the straight and narrow.

She looks at Adam for support.

JAMES

Is it narrow, Adam? We haven't shared a bathroom in twenty years but I wouldn't call yours straight or narrow.

The boys laugh. Iva does too, which makes James like her more. Everyone is laughing except Adam.

INT. JAMES' HOUSE - LATER

James is taking his guests on a tour of the house. Very angular and masculine, with stark chairs and bizarre artwork, much of it of nude men. James stops before each piece and gives his audience time to duly admire.



JAMES

With this one the artist was trying to convey a sense of the modern world.

IVA

Chaotic.

JAMES

Agreed. And this one.

IVA

Beyond.

JAMES

Exactly. And my personal favorite.

It's a big penis.

IVA

Phallic.

JAMES

You hit it right on the head, honey.

They both laugh.

JAMES (CONT'D)

I really like you. You simply must come to my next party.

ADAM

You don't throw parties, James. God forbid anybody breathe on anything.

JAMES

Not here. I'm having a get-together at Mom's house next week. Fifteen of LA's hottest guys in heels.

(to Iva)

I bet you'd make a sizzling drag queen. You can bring the buzzkill - but only if he wears a dress.

ADAM

Delightful.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Adam and Iva walk Max. Adam looks concerned. After a long silence:

ADAM

Do Russian women really hook men?

IVA

Well I may have overplayed it a bit  
for the table's entertainment.

ADAM

How many?

IVA

Men have I been with?

ADAM

Forget I asked. I don't wanna know.

IVA

How many women have you been with?

ADAM

Hmmm, probably my age in years.

He looks at Iva: your turn.

IVA

A lady never discusses such  
matters...

ADAM

Oh but penises and vaginas are fair  
game?

IVA

Suffice it to say that since I got  
pregnant, there have been only two.  
So I really am like a virgin.

ADAM

(darkly)

You and James sure hit it off...

IVA

He's fabulous.

ADAM

I didn't expect you to be so seduced  
by his wealth.

IVA

Well I am Russian.

ADAM

James may be single, but, um, you're  
not exactly his cup of tea.

IVA

What is it between you two?

ADAM

We are too alike in some ways,  
worlds apart in others. It's a  
personality thing.

IVA

Siblings usually outgrow such petty  
differences when they hit puberty.  
What's your excuse?

ADAM

(stumped)

I, we, uh...

IVA

Maybe your relationship would  
improve if you worked together. Had  
a common cause.

ADAM

If you are suggesting that I work  
for James, I've already tried that.  
It didn't... we were estranged for  
two years. Like I said we don't get  
along.

IVA

I'm not saying--

ADAM

Then what are you saying?

IVA

I'm just wondering what you are  
planning to do when your money runs  
out.

Adam stops, taken off guard.

ADAM

I haven't given it much thought. I'm  
just trying to enjoy this.

IVA

This?

ADAM

Us. What we have.

IVA

What we have won't last, Adam. I'll move out and then what?

ADAM

What if you don't move out? Colin--

IVA

I texted him at your brother's. He believes you are just some neighbor, for now.

ADAM

For now?

IVA

We'll have to keep it cool.

They arrive at her house.

IVA (CONT'D)

You understand I can't risk all this.

ADAM

What's all this?

IVA

The life I'm trying to build.

ADAM

I'm trying to build a life too, Iva.

They stand at Iva's door.

IVA

(thinks)

Let me ask you something. Where do you see yourself in ten years?

ADAM

I have no idea. I can tell you what I'll be doing ten hours from now. But beyond that it's anybody's guess. I just go with the flow.

IVA

In ten years I see myself happily married with two kids.

Adam laughs to himself.

IVA (CONT'D)

What's so funny?

ADAM

I have a question for you. When you met your future ex-husband...

IVA

Max.

ADAM

When you and Max got married, you thought you'd spend the rest of your lives together, yeah?

IVA

I thought that at the time, yes.

ADAM

And when Colin got you pregnant, you thought you'd raise a family with him and live happily ever after, isn't that right?

IVA

Of course. I was deeply in love with Colin.

ADAM

But you're not with either of those dudes. You're with me. Because plans don't work out, Iva. Unless both partners really want them to. It takes two.

He reaches in his pocket and produces a RING. A modest affair - slim band of white gold, ruby stone.

ADAM (CONT'D)

My mother's engagement ring.

IVA

Adam...

ADAM

No pressure, but I want you to know where I stand, and...

(down on a knee)

...kneel. I don't care where I am a decade from now, as long as it's with you.

He offers the ring to Iva. She does not accept.

IVA

I can't. I'm sorry, Adam...

She closes the door, leaving Adam all alone.

INT. PUB - NIGHT

Adam and Gabe enter the crowded, noisy college-type pub and approach the bar. Gabe gestures to the BARTENDER. Adam looks uncomfortable. This is clearly not his type of joint. Gabe notices.

GABE

I'm glad you decided to make it out,  
buddy.

ADAM

(over din)

I can't hear you. This place is  
bedlam.

The beers arrive. Gabe clinks Adam's glass and gulps down the whole bottle.

GABE

That's what these "beer-muffs" are  
for.

He grabs Adam's bottle and takes a swig. Adam is not amused.

GABE (CONT'D)

Don't worry I got us a four-top out  
in the beer garden. It's much  
quieter...

ADAM

Do we really need--

GABE

(looks off-screen;)

(brightens)

Look alive, our dates have arrived.

ADAM

Dates?

EXT. BEER GARDEN - MOMENTS LATER

Adam and Gabe sit opposite two WOMEN - 30s, party girls. The brunette is Sabrina, the blonde is Anna. Gabe carries the conversation.

GABE

So ladies, Adam is a self-titled  
Genius in Love. His goal being to,  
(MORE)

GABE (CONT'D)  
 how do you put it, Adam, cherish  
 a woman to the depths of her being?

The girls look at Adam, who looks like he'd rather be elsewhere.

GABE (CONT'D)  
 Alas, it seems our love genius is  
 also mending a broken heart.  
 (off Adam's look)  
 Come on, get it out, it's good to  
 talk about these things.

The girls lean forward, interested.

SABRINA  
 What happened?

GABE  
 (jumps in)  
 She rejected him on account of her  
 religious views.

SABRINA  
 Is she Muslim?

ADAM  
 Orthodox Jew. In training.

SABRINA  
 (like it's a disease)  
 How did that happen?

Adam shrugs: how to explain?

GABE  
 She met a rabbi who hypnotized her.

ADAM  
 That's not true.

GABE  
 Isn't it? You told me he was a  
 hypnotherapist.

ADAM  
 Well yes, but, Jews don't  
 proselytize, so...

GABE  
 But they do lull you into a  
 suggestible state.

SABRINA

She drank the Kool-Aid.

GABE

Obviously. Why else would an attractive young woman voluntarily submit to a life of misery?

ADAM

I don't think Iva sees it as a life of misery.

GABE

Oh but it is. She's making up for all those freewheeling years. Textbook case of compensation...

Adam shakes his head.

SABRINA

I have this girlfriend, Julie, she did the same thing, only for a guy. She was already Jewish, but apparently not Jewish enough. They made her learn Hebrew, wear a wig, basically they turned her into an old maid.

(Gabe laughs)

She was a prisoner of the kitchen. She'd call me in the middle of the night begging me to come open the fridge for her, because, you know...

GABE

Adam knows all about the Sabbath.

ADAM

Actually Shabbat has brought me and Iva closer. It's the only time I get her undivided attention. Otherwise she's always on her phone.

Gabe steers the conversation back on point.

GABE

Sabrina, tell Adam how it turned out for your friend.

SABRINA

Julie? After a while she couldn't take it. So she divorced the guy and got back together with her high school sweetheart.

(MORE)



SABRINA (CONT'D)

They have a couple kids. She's never been happier.

ADAM

So the Judaism thing may be just a stage--

GABE

No. I think what Sabrina is saying--

SABRINA

I'm saying there's hope.

GABE

(cuts her off)

Thank you Sabrina.

(re: blonde)

Anna here is Russian. Iva, aka the bitch from hell, was also Russian.

Adam looks at Anna, who enters the conversation.

ANNA

Russian women will tell a man "no" one hundred times, until finally...

GABE

Anna, this is not what we rehearsed. I'm trying to look out for my boy, and you're, the both of you--

ANNA

(to Adam)

What she needs is a grand gesture.

ADAM

I proposed to her, and she shot me down.

ANNA

Then you have ninety-nine more tries.

Adam thinks about it. Gabe chimes in.

GABE

Here's how it breaks down. Girl gets her heart broken. She's crushed. So in her mind she's not good enough. Then this great guy comes around - you - and goes bonkers for her. She figures there must be something wrong with you. Because only a loser

(MORE)

GABE (CONT'D)

could love her. So she dumps you. Hurt and be hurt. The cycle that keeps the world spinning. But who can blame the bitch. She's confused. If her rabbi were a priest she'd still be Catholic.

ADAM

Christian.

GABE

(continuing)

Meanwhile Adam here is like a little chick, imprinting on the first mother hen he sees. When there are plenty of other fish in the sea. Isn't that right, ladies?

ADAM

Thank you, Gabriel.

(rises)

You've all given me a lot to chew on, and the food hasn't even arrived. If you'll excuse me.

Adam heads to bathroom. Unnoticed, Sabrina gets up and follows. Gabe turns to Anna and smiles.

GABE

Did I ever tell you I have a weakness for Russian girls named Anna?

INT. RESTAURANT - BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Adam stands outside the men's room. He checks his phone. No messages. Sabrina appears in front of him.

SABRINA

I'm getting over my ex too. Breaking up is hard to do.  
(laughs)

Adam nods, still in his own head. A WOMAN exits the ladies' room, but Sabrina doesn't enter. She regards Adam with interest.

SABRINA (CONT'D)

You seem really upset. You, um, want a shoulder to cry on?

They hug. Sabrina pats him soothingly. But the hug gets more involved. We can hear their breathing as their lips almost touch.

SABRINA (CONT'D)  
(softly)  
She's a fool to let you go...

Then, Gabe appears.

GABE  
Whoa! Looks like someone's helping  
someone get over the hump.

Adam and Sabrina break off.

GABE (CONT'D)  
We're leaving. So if you wanna ride,  
now's your chance. Last one out gets  
the check!

Gabe takes Anna's hand and leaves.

EXT. MULHOLLAND DRIVE - NIGHT

The car is parked on a scenic overlook. The city's lights look like heaven's reflection. The girls are seated in the backseat. In front of the car, Adam stands next to Gabe who urinates over the cliff.

GABE  
Ah, this feels good. So should we  
take 'em back to your place or mine?

ADAM  
Gabe, I don't think--

GABE  
Mine then. That way you won't be  
spied on.

ADAM  
I want to go home.

GABE  
Dude you are such a pussy. I need a  
wingman.

Adam walks off. As he passes the car...

ADAM  
Ladies, it's been real. But I'm not  
feeling so hot, so...

Gabe watches Adam go.

GABE  
Girls, movie night at my place,  
whattaya say?

INT. IVA'S PLACE - NIGHT

Adam appears at Iva's door. It's late. He rings the bell. Iva opens in her bathrobe, squints at him.

IVA  
Adam, it's, what are you doing  
here?

ADAM  
Your rabbi's against me, isn't he?

IVA  
What are you talking about?

ADAM  
Well isn't it true?

IVA  
Actually, he encouraged me to be  
with you initially. He says you have  
a pure heart.

ADAM  
I wanna meet him.

IVA  
So you can judge him.

ADAM  
No. Maybe he can talk some sense  
into me. Help me see why you and I  
can't be together. Because clearly  
I'm not getting it.

IVA  
OK, but he charges two hundred  
dollars an hour.

ADAM  
He take Diners Club?

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Adam lies on the sofa. On a chair next to him is his computer. On the computer is Rabbi Efim's face, on Skype.

RABBI

It is nice to finally meet you,  
Adam. I have heard a lot of good  
things about you.

ADAM

I'm here to concentrate on the not  
so good, Rabbi. Like what do you  
have against me being with Iva?

RABBI

For two people to live in harmony,  
they must have at least three things  
in common. Religion, finances, and  
communication. You and Iva only have  
communication, mostly carnal.

ADAM

But she told me that even if I were  
rich and Jewish, she still wouldn't  
have me.

RABBI

What does that tell you?

ADAM

It tells me I love her too much to  
take no for an answer.

RABBI

You only think you are in love,  
Adam.

ADAM

I know what I feel.

RABBI

Describe what you feel.

ADAM

I can't think of anything but Iva.

RABBI

That is not love, it is obsession.

(beat)

Have you ever loved a girl before  
Iva?

ADAM

Mmmm, two or three times maybe.

RABBI

I doubt it.

ADAM

Trust me, I know a lot about love.  
The ups and downs. The agonies and  
ecstasies. Boy meets girl, boy loses  
girl, they have killer make-up  
sex...

RABBI

What you're describing is a bad  
Hollywood movie.

He has Adam's attention.

RABBI (CONT'D)

Love is for the brave, Adam. Love is  
only for the brave. You are proud.  
You have all these expectations.  
When you are ready, love will come  
and separate you from your pride. It  
will grind you down and make you  
into a new being. It will break you  
out of your shell, so you no longer  
recognize yourself. Then, it will  
remake you into its own image. That  
is love. Everything else is just  
romance.

ADAM

Is that Torah wisdom, Rabbi?

RABBI

It's just common sense. Now go write  
your movie.

ADAM

What?

RABBI

Write your movie.

ADAM

Are you for real?

RABBI

Find out for yourself.

Adam thinks about it.

ADAM

You're making it very hard to hate  
you, Rabbi.

RABBI

That's quite a compliment.

EXT. IVA'S BACK YARD - DAY

Iva lies in her hammock reading a book on Judaism. Adam appears.

IVA  
So, how did it go?

ADAM  
Thank you. For everything.

IVA  
Tonight's the party, isn't it?

ADAM  
I guess.

IVA  
And I have just the dress for you.

INT./EXT. ADAM'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Adam and Iva arrive at the front door ripped straight out of the movie To Wong Foo. The party is underway. They peek inside to see the backyard decked out in tables, bright lights, tinsel.

James, dressed like Madonna, is emceeing. He introduces a DRAG COUPLE. They do a little dance in front of the fifteen or so GUESTS. It's all really over the top and fun.

Adam and Iva look at each other. Should they get the hell out while there's still time? A DRAG QUEEN grabs the pair and leads them over to James. James looks them up and down and is impressed but doesn't seem to recognize them.

JAMES  
What are your names, honeys?

ADAM  
Divina and...

IVA  
Divina?

JAMES  
Ladies and ladies, Divina and Divina!

Adam and Iva do their dance for the "girls" and take their seats to waves of applause and catcalls. Even James is clapping.

JAMES (CONT'D)  
Wait, was that my brother?

LATER

Guests are drinking and laughing. James is seated at the head of the table, more relaxed than we've seen him. Adam and Iva are at the other end. Iva motions for Adam to approach James.

ADAM  
Hey James.

JAMES  
Adam. At first I didn't, but you look good.

ADAM  
Why is it so hard for us to get along?

JAMES  
Things came easy for you and I had to work for everything.

ADAM  
But look at what you've made of yourself.

JAMES  
Pretty hot, huh?  
(pause)  
Truth is, I hated you because Mom loved you the most.

ADAM  
Mom didn't love me the most, James. She just knew I needed her the most. You were her real favorite. I mean, you're so damn cute!

Adam spansks his brother on the butt.

JAMES  
Stop, you brute!  
(play slaps Adam's face)  
Now back to your Russian bombshell you go.

Adam takes Iva's hand and leads her to the dance floor. Donna Summer's "Last Dance" comes on. They dance. Just two girlfriends bonding, until the dance gets steamier and steamier.



INT. IVA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

As the song continues, Iva and Adam barge through the front door and stumble into her house, making out en route to her bedroom.

INT. IVA'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

They fall into bed, kissing wildly. Their lipstick smearing, dresses come off, wigs get tangled. It's a funny moment to see these two beauties go at it.

LATER

They are side by side in bed. Iva is texting.

IVA  
Never made it with a woman before.  
It's not bad.

ADAM  
(laughs; tries it out:)  
That was, hands down, the best  
break-up sex I've ever had.

Iva turns to Adam.

IVA  
Break-up sex?

ADAM  
Just... your rabbi advised me to  
emphasize other, non-carnal, aspects  
of communication, so that's what I'm  
gonna do.

He kisses her. Iva considers this.

IVA  
It's just as well... My conversion  
process has been approved. I need to  
find a place within walking distance  
of a synagogue, and pronto.

A beat as this sinks in.

ADAM  
But your lease runs through the  
year...

IVA

The landlord has agreed to let me out of the contract, for a ridiculous fee.

Adam crumbles.

ADAM

There is nothing I can do to win you over, is there? Nothing I haven't already tried?

IVA

You can accept me for who I am. I know it means nothing to you, but converting to Judaism will be a dream come true for me. That and marrying a rabbi.

ADAM

Christ I don't want to hear about it.

IVA

(sweeter than she's ever been)  
I could really use a friend.

ADAM

(thinks)  
You know what, Iva? I'm really happy for you.

Iva doesn't look like she believes him.

ADAM (CONT'D)

I'm serious. Love means wanting your happiness, right? Even if it's not with me.

IVA

You mean it?

ADAM

Sure I do. What are friends for?

EXT. IVA'S PLACE - NIGHT

Adam exits still in disheveled drag - wig askew, lipstick smeared, dress half-torn. He has the post-coitus glow and is still a bit tipsy. As he turns he runs into Boris, who carries the sleeping Ayla.

ADAM

Ahh!

BORIS

Who are you?

ADAM

(thinks)

Eu sou... Desculpa mas nao falo ingles.

Those Portuguese lessons are finally coming in handy. Boris looks Adam up and down suspiciously. Adam smiles sheepishly. Boris wants more.

BORIS

What is your name?

ADAM

O meu nome e Ada-Adama-Amanda.

BORIS

(unconvinced)

Amanda.

ADAM

Voce e Colin, ne?

BORIS

Boris.

ADAM

Ah Boris. Sim. Prazer.

Adam holds out a hand, which Boris doesn't take. The two men regard each other for a long, uncomfortable moment. Ayla shifts in her father's arms.

ADAM (CONT'D)

Tchau Boris!

Boris watches Adam stumble down the driveway. He gets to the street, looks around.

BORIS

Where is your car?

ADAM

Que?

BORIS

I said your car. The street is empty.

Adam pulls out his phone, starts dialing.

BORIS (CONT'D)  
No service here. I give you ride.

ADAM  
Obrigado, mas nao.

BORIS  
I give you ride!

Boris opens the door and motions for Adam to follow him inside.

INT. IVA'S PLACE - CONTINUOUS

BORIS  
(calling out)  
Iva!

Iva appears in a bathrobe. Boris hands her Ayla.

BORIS (CONT'D)  
(in Russian)  
She wanted her mother, screaming  
murder the entire ride. Then fell  
asleep as we pulled up.

Boris shakes his head in disgust, looks at Adam who is standing sheepishly by the door.

BORIS (CONT'D)  
(points to Adam)  
I met Amanda.

IVA  
Amanda?

BORIS  
Who is she?

IVA  
She... Amanda, tell Boris how we  
met.

Iva and Adam exchange a dreadful look. Ayla wakes up and looks around. She sees Adam.

AYLA  
(to Adam)  
Papa!

Adam hides behind his wig and looks away. Boris assumes Ayla is calling for him. He pats her head.

BORIS  
 (to Adam)  
 Let's go, you. You can tell it to me  
 in car.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Boris's car pulls down the road.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Boris drives Adam around. We recognize the unique position Adam is in. Dressed as a woman, he is vulnerable, but also protected by his disguise and free to speak his mind.

ADAM  
 I'm sorry about all that. I lapse  
 into exotic languages when  
 flustered. You have quite an effect  
 on the ladies, Boris honey...

BORIS  
 (not to be deterred)  
 How do you know Iva?

ADAM  
 Ah yes, Iva. We met, lessee we met,  
 recently. Quite recently, in fact.  
 (points)  
 Turn left here please.

Adam will be leading Boris in a big circle and eventually they will wind up where they started, which is to say back at Adam's house.

BORIS  
 Where exactly did you two meet?

ADAM  
 Just, you know, around. Not too far  
 from these parts.  
 (points)  
 Another left, if you would be so  
 kind.

A strained silence.

BORIS  
 Iva never mentioned you to me.

ADAM

There's a lot about Iva you don't know.

(then:)

You were a fool to let her go.

Boris glares at Adam.

ADAM (CONT'D)

Not that I think you should get back with her, no sir. But what I can't understand is, the woman bears your child, nurses your sick mother, and follows you around the world, and you drop her.

(beat)

Why? Answer me this.

Boris grunts. They are back at Adam's house.

BORIS

(sinks in)

You are the neighbor.

Adam nods.

BORIS (CONT'D)

So you are...?

Boris holds up a limp wrist, makes a mincing face. Adam shrugs. As Adam gets out he holds an imaginary phone to his ear and mouths "Call me." Boris grimaces and drives away.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Adam stands on the corner watching Boris drive off.

ADAM

(calling out)

You should really be nicer to her!

Adam lets out a sigh of relief. He sees Iva watching from her window and gives the thumbs up sign: everything's okay.

INT. ADAM'S PLACE - NEXT DAY

Adam comes to the door to see Iva looking like she hasn't slept a wink. She enters.

IVA

Everything's okay? Everything's okay? Everything is not okay.

INT. ADAM'S PLACE - MOMENTS LATER

Iva paces back and forth in front of Adam, who is seated on the sofa.

IVA  
He knows about us. He's sure this time.

ADAM  
I thought I had him fooled. What gave me away?

IVA  
Ayla Face Timed her father. She was wearing your underwear.

ADAM  
I knew I forgot something.

IVA  
On her head.

Adam cringes.

IVA (CONT'D)  
I swore to him it was over between you and me. But there was nothing I could say. You men and your precious little egos.

ADAM  
He'll get over it.

IVA  
Oh yeah? He stopped payment on this month's rent check. There are movers loading my things into storage as we speak!

ADAM  
I was wondering what all that racket was about.

IVA  
How can you be so calm!  
(sits)  
I swear to God I will never depend on a man again for as long as I live. But what will I do now?

ADAM  
(not missing a beat)  
Simple. You move in with me.

IVA  
What?

ADAM  
I got you into this mess, I'll help  
get you out.

IVA  
This is insanity.

ADAM  
It'll be fine, trust me.

IVA  
But we are... I don't even know what  
we are.

ADAM  
That's half the fun. We'll find out.

IVA  
(thinks)  
OK, but just until I find a new  
place.

INT. ADAM'S ROOM - DAY

Iva puts her things into Adam's closet. Adam enters and sets  
a vase full of flowers on the nightstand. Iva smiles at him.  
He rubs her shoulder.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Adam watches as Iva takes over the kitchen, unpacking two  
sets of pots and pans and dishes. He comes over and helps her  
unload.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Adam making a bed on the sofa.

INT. ADAM'S ROOM - NIGHT

Ayla sleeps beside Iva, who stares out the window. Adam  
enters, sits on the bed.

IVA  
I've never felt so lost.



ADAM

Don't worry. Colin won't just abandon you and Ayla. Give him some time. He'll cool off.

IVA

And if he doesn't?

ADAM

We'll make this a permanent arrangement. I already spoke to James. He's cool with it.

IVA

But my Judaism...

ADAM

You should definitely keep looking for a place, if that's what you want. I have some money saved up, if you need help. Push comes to shove, I'd even sell the house.

IVA

Adam...

ADAM

I been here long enough.

IVA

(touched)  
You know I can't...

ADAM

Relax. You can pay me back. But only if it makes you feel better.

They hug.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Adam, Iva, and Ayla are on the sofa watching the Academy Awards and eating popcorn. As the winner for Best Original Screenplay gets announced, Iva leans over to Adam.

IVA

One day, that will be you.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Adam on the sofa typing into his new typewriter. Iva pops her head in.

IVA  
You need anything from the market?  
(re: typewriter)  
What are you writing?

ADAM  
Our love story.

IVA  
Don't expect me to read it.

ADAM  
Why not?

IVA  
Because I hate tragedies.

She smiles and exits. Adam keeps writing.

ADAM  
(calls out)  
Get us some pizza! I'm famished.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Adam returns from his run to find Iva sitting on the sofa reading his manuscript.

IVA  
(re: manuscript)  
This, what is this?

ADAM  
I told you, it's our story. It's not finished, because we're not. But I wanted to get as much of it down as I could while it's fresh. I haven't felt this inspired in... Maybe it's not too late to give up on my dreams, like you said. Right?

IVA  
I hate it. You portrayed me as some ice queen. I'm not that cruel! I told you from the beginning that I was set on converting! You deceived yourself! And the things you wrote about my Judaism. Like it is some cult!

ADAM  
Go easy, Iva. These are my feelings.

IVA  
They're my feelings too!

She shoves the manuscript against his chest and leaves.

ADAM  
(to himself)  
Now what do I do?

IVA (O.S.)  
Try Uber, at least it's reliable!

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Iva getting dressed, still hurt. Adam appears at the doorway, holding a book.

ADAM  
I bought you something.

He hands the Torah to Iva.

ADAM (CONT'D)  
I know you have your own copy, but I  
hoped we might read some together?

IVA  
So... you bought yourself a book and  
are showing it to me, or you are  
giving this to me and want me to  
trade you mine in return?

ADAM  
Not sure. The first one?

IVA  
Good, because my copy is much better  
quality.

They smile.

ADAM  
Where you off to?

IVA  
Synagogue.

ADAM  
But it's not Shabbat...

IVA  
It's Shavuot.

ADAM

What's the difference?

IVA

Shavuot, Adam, celebrates the day God gave the Torah to the people of Israel. It happens to be my favorite holiday.

ADAM

I didn't... I must've... so my present is doubly significant.

IVA

(re: Torah)

It's very sweet of you.

Iva turns and lets Adam button the back of her dress.

ADAM

Can I come?

IVA

To synagogue? Adam...

ADAM

I'm serious. I've been to a church, a mosque, and a Buddhist temple. But never to synagogue. Which is odd, since I have so many Jewish friends. I'd love to experience it with you.

IVA

I don't know...

ADAM

Come on, you'd be doing me a favor.

IVA

(thinks)

OK, but we leave in five minutes. And wear something nice!

EXT. SYNAGOGUE - DAY

Adam and Iva enter the synagogue.

INT. SYNAGOGUE - DAY

Men and women sit separately. Adam is all alone in a pew. We get a feel for the ritual.

Reciting Torah, standing and sitting at appropriate times. A RABBI comes up to Adam and peppers him with questions in a hushed voice.

RABBI

What's your Jewish name?

ADAM

(thinks)

Adam?

RABBI

How is your knowledge of the Torah?

ADAM

I read some in Catholic school.

The rabbi shakes his head, plops a yarmulke on Adam's head, and moves on.

INT. CAR (MOVING) - DAY

Adam and Iva in the car after the service. Adam drives. He is still wearing the yarmulke.

IVA

So what did you think? Amazing, right? Now do you understand my love of Judaism?

ADAM

Well there was a lot I didn't understand, but only because it was in Hebrew.

(Iva laughs)

And what I did get, the English part I mean, I mean if the Jews are the chosen people, and only like half of a percent of the world is Jewish, where does that leave the rest of us poor suckers? I mean you and me? If God created everyone...

Iva has tuned out. She looks at her phone.

ADAM (CONT'D)

(giving in)

I mean it was really amazing.

They drive in silence. Adam turns on the radio. Billy Joel's "Just the Way You Are" is playing. Adam looks over at Iva still on her phone. We hear: "You always have my unspoken passion, Although I might not seem to care."

ADAM (CONT'D)

You think there's room, in the congregation, for one more Hebrew?

IVA

(looks up from phone)  
What? Adam...

ADAM

I'm really good at following rules.  
I was an altar boy...

IVA

I... It wouldn't be right.

ADAM

Then why is it right for you?

IVA

I'm converting for God, Adam, not for a prospective spouse.

ADAM

(hopeful)  
You calling me a prospective spouse?

Iva strokes Adam's cheek, genuinely touched.

IVA

Adam... I love you for who you are, not for who you want to be for me. You don't need to change.

ADAM

You love me?

IVA

(nods)  
Just the way you are.

Iva turns up the radio. They sing together:

ADAM & IVA (CONT'D)

"I said I love you, and that's forever. And this I promise from the heart. I could not love you any better. I love you just the way you are!"

As the song continues:

IVA (CONT'D)

Besides, it's not what's on your head that matters. It's what's in your heart. You of all people--

ADAM

In that case...

Adam takes off the yarmulke and tosses it out the window.

IVA

Adam! That's illegal, and sacrilegious!

The car screeches to a halt.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Adam enters to find Iva emptying her closet, throwing clothes on the bed. She is wearing a bra and panties. When she sees him she puts on a robe.

IVA

Adam! Don't you knock anymore?

ADAM

What are you doing?

IVA

Getting rid of all my old clothes. All the stuff that is non-kosher has to go.

Adam scans the pile atop the bed.

ADAM

Even the "love me" sweats?

IVA

Not part of my new life. From here on, it's house dresses.

ADAM

And all your jeans?

IVA

An Orthodox woman doesn't wear pants. It's unladylike.

ADAM

But you wore these to our Backstreet Boys concert.

IVA

And many concerts before that,  
Adam. Most of them with Colin.

ADAM

The panties too?

IVA

Give me those.

ADAM

But you look so good in G-strings.

IVA

With dresses, you can get away with  
a wider cut.

ADAM

Granny panties.

(Iva smiles)

Bikinis too? No more pool days or  
beach trips?

IVA

I am forbidden to show my uncovered  
body to any man who is not my  
husband.

ADAM

Lucky fella. At least I get to say I  
knew you when.

IVA

Yes, Adam. Now if you'll excuse  
me, I have to change into my granny  
panties.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Adam is at the kitchen counter fixing a fruit plate. Iva  
enters.

ADAM

I figured after all that heavy  
lifting you could use a snack?

IVA

You used a milk knife?

ADAM

This isn't cheese. It's sliced  
apple.



IVA

But you're using a meat plate,  
Adam. You can't mix meat and  
milk. I've told you this before. Why  
are you not getting it?

ADAM

Because it's hard to keep meat and  
milk in my mind when I don't eat  
either.

IVA

It's clear we could never live  
together. I knew that already. Maybe  
now you do, too.

This hurts.

ADAM

You know what Erich Fromm said?

IVA

I don't know who that is.

ADAM

The Jewish... I read you his book.

IVA

I don't--

ADAM

Fromm was born into the Orthodox  
faith but abandoned it early in  
life. Know why? Because he refused  
to participate in an arbitrary  
division of the human race!

IVA

What's your point?

ADAM

That's what all this separating food  
is doing, Iva. Don't you see. It's  
separating you and me!

IVA

There is no you and me!

She walks out.

ADAM

(calls out)

Your rules don't have feelings, Iva.  
But I do.

Adam drops the fruit into the trash, then digs it out and as he stuffs his mouth with food:

ADAM (CONT'D)

(more to himself)

The whole Bible boils down to the Golden Rule. If you just followed that, we could ditch all the rest of this nonsense. But if I treated you the way you treated me, you'd slap my face and tell me to go to hell. And I'd deserve it!

(then:)

So what am I doing?

He spits out the food.

EXT. BEDROOM - DAY

Adam watches through the window as Iva prays. She is in profile, holds her prayer book in both hands and gazes into the distance, mouthing the words to herself. Every few moments she bows her head and bends her knees. It is graceful, theatrical, transfixing. She catches Adam staring at her.

ADAM

I was just - I'm sorry.

IVA

Me too. I've been stressed and I blew up. Please don't take it personally.

(beat)

Look, I... Do you mind if we talk later? I have an appointment and I'm already late.

Iva reaches for her keys and knocks over a stack of papers. Adam helps her collect them.

IVA (CONT'D)

(re: papers)

I've seen practically every property on the market and nothing fits. I'm running out of options. And time. Today's meeting with the realtor may be the last.

ADAM

I should come.

IVA  
You want to help me find a new  
house? You'll sabotage everything.

ADAM  
I was Homecoming King of Beverly  
Hills High School, remember? The  
Hebrews love me.

INT. FIRST HOUSE - DAY

Iva is touring a home, studying everything. Adam stands back  
and watches. The REALTOR tries to play up the place.

REALTOR  
Completely rebuilt a couple years  
ago.

IVA  
The walls have cracks.

INT. SECOND HOUSE - DAY

Iva stands in the bedroom. Outside a truck speeds by and  
HONKS.

IVA  
Street's too busy.

INT. THIRD HOUSE - DAY

Iva walks in, shakes her head, and walks out.

EXT. FOURTH HOUSE - DAY

As the three walk across the front of a fourth house:

IVA  
Don't you have anything nicer?

REALTOR  
The best I can do. It's hard, with  
your lack of credit history. You'd  
think owners would love the prospect  
of cash up front, but it's  
suspicious, and I'll be honest, your  
being foreign doesn't help. Besides,  
this is a small community, and tight  
knit.

Iva looks at Adam, frustrated. He takes his cue.

ADAM  
Like Bel-Air.

REALTOR  
What's that?

ADAM  
Bel-Air is where we live, Iva and I,  
until you find us a dream home.

REALTOR  
Really, what part of Bel-Air did you  
say you lived in, Ms. Romanov?

IVA  
Romanova. I didn't.

Iva wanders off leaving Adam with the realtor.

ADAM  
We live at the top of Stone Canyon.

REALTOR  
Ritzy. I sold a home in that  
neighborhood. To the Parks and Rec  
guy, what's his name?

ADAM  
Yeah I sometimes see him jogging.

REALTOR  
(recognizing)  
Wait, you're that... the barefoot  
guy. I've seen you. Legendary, man!

ADAM  
(laughs)  
Thanks. Yeah, I've lived in Bel-Air  
all my life, except for the stint in  
Hawaii during medical residency.

REALTOR  
(impressed)  
You're a doctor?

ADAM  
(playing himself up)  
And an author.

REALTOR

Get outta town. You know my parents wanted me to go into medicine, but science was never my thing. So you and Ms. Romanovna--

ADAM

(as Iva approaches)  
I think the world of her.

The realtor thinks.

REALTOR

Know what, I just remembered. There's this hot new listing that just opened up. Fully redone, and at nine a month it's a steal. I think you'll find it's exactly what you're looking for.

The realtor gets on his phone. Iva looks at Adam, who shrugs.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Adam running, passes NICK OFFERMAN and waves.

INT. ADAM'S PLACE - DAY

Adam enters after his run. Iva greets him with a hug.

IVA

I got the place! I got the place!

She does a little dance, waves the signed lease in the air.

IVA (CONT'D)

Plus, Colin did come around, just like you predicted. He co-signed with me and agreed to pay three months upfront. Probably he's relieved to get me away from you!  
(beat)  
And it gets better. My green card came through. You are looking at a new American citizen!

ADAM

Looks like things are coming together for you.

IVA

Thanks to you.

ADAM

What are friends for.

IVA

That reminds me: Could you... The owner's family invited me over for dinner. I want to start entering the community even before I've entered it. My rabbi thinks it's a great idea. You wouldn't mind babysitting Ayla, would you?

ADAM

I'd love to, but I kinda have a date.

IVA

A what? Who with?

ADAM

I met a girl, and, well, we sort of have dinner plans of our own tonight, so...

IVA

What exactly are your plans?

ADAM

I've invited her over. I was thinking I'd make something. That way you can meet her. She's really sweet.

Iva stares at him.

ADAM (CONT'D)

Aren't you happy for me? What are friends for and all, right?

IVA

Are you doing this to make me jealous? Because it's not working. Well maybe it is, but only a little.

ADAM

I'm doing it because I need to move on. You said so yourself.

IVA

I didn't mean for you to go screw the first girl you meet.

ADAM  
Who said anything about screwing  
her?

IVA  
I did! And if you do screw her, you  
and I are through.

ADAM  
Is that some sort of dare?

IVA  
Take it for what it is.

ADAM  
I thought we were through.

IVA  
Fine. I'll get a room somewhere so  
you and whatever her face can have  
your privacy.

Iva enters the bathroom and slams the door.

IVA (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
How old is she?

ADAM  
I'm not... twenty-something?

IVA (O.S.)  
Screw you!

INT. ADAM'S PLACE - EVENING

The doorbell rings. Adam opens to see Sabrina. They ad lib  
hellos and hugs. Iva appears behind him, holding Ayla.

ADAM  
(to Sabrina; re: Iva)  
This is...

SABRINA  
(to Iva; pleasant)  
I've heard a lot about you.

Iva stares her up and down, not moving.

INT. ADAM'S PLACE - NIGHT

Adam gives Sabrina the tour. They each hold a wine glass.

SABRINA

I really like your decor.

Iva passes behind them. A door slams off-screen.

Adam leads Sabrina into the office.

INT. OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

ADAM

My workspace. So, you also write?

SABRINA

I do. But to make rent I read for a talent agency. We're small but up and coming.

She notices the screenplays on Adam's desk, fanned out as Iva arranged them.

ADAM

(old spiel)

My stillbirths. The scripts you write on the way to mastering the craft. As you know every screenwriter has a few. For some it is a few. For me it has been more than a few.

Adam catches himself, changes his tune.

ADAM (CONT'D)

But the last couple aren't all that terrible.

SABRINA

I'd love to read one.

ADAM

You like a good romance?

SABRINA

(smitten)

I do.

They clink glasses.

ADAM

To being up and coming.

Iva appears at the door.



IVA  
Adam, where is your hemorrhoid  
cream?

Adam looks abashedly at Sabrina.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Adam and Sabrina sit by the fireplace finishing dinner. The sound of pots and pans angrily clanking in the kitchen. The pair try to enjoy themselves but it's impossible.

Iva appears carrying a night bag in one hand and Ayla in the other and heads for the front door without looking at Adam.

AYLA  
Papa!

Iva leaves, slamming the door.

ADAM  
That was really awkward. I don't  
know what I'm doing here.

But Sabrina is not to be deterred.

SABRINA  
You have really pretty lips.

ADAM  
(surprising himself)  
The better to kiss you with?

Max howls.

EXT. ADAM'S PLACE - NIGHT

Adam lets Sabrina out. As she enters her car and drives off, she passes Iva's car, parked on the street facing the house.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Adam rolls over on the sofa. The doorbell rings.

INT. ENTRY WAY - NIGHT

Adam opens the door to see Iva.

IVA  
I came over to let you know your  
hose is leaking. I may have caused  
the leak.

ADAM  
At 1 a.m.?

IVA  
Is that what time it is?

ADAM  
Where's Ayla?

IVA  
Asleep in the car.  
(beat)  
So did you two...

ADAM  
(hesitates)  
We did?

IVA  
You are such a bad liar!

Iva turns to go.

ADAM  
She wants to read my work. She eats  
my food. And she says I'm a great  
kisser!

IVA  
I hope I never see you again!

INT. ADAM'S ROOM - DAY

Adam asleep in bed. Phone RINGS. He answers.

ADAM  
(on phone)  
Hello.

IVA'S VOICE  
I need your help.

ADAM  
It's four in the morning Iva.

IVA

You once told me I could call you at any time, day or night, and you'd always be there for me.

ADAM

You once told me you hoped you'd never see me again.

IVA

That was before...  
(breaks down)  
Ayla is sick. Help me, I'm so scared!

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - DAY

Iva opens the door to see Adam with his medical bag, looking every bit the doctor he used to be.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Iva follows Adam towards the bedroom. The door is closed but we can hear Ayla crying inside.

IVA

She has a high fever. I'm so scared!

Adam opens the door. Iva tries to follow him inside but Adam closes the door in her face.

LATER

Iva listening outside Ayla's bedroom door. No more crying. Unable to resist, Iva cracks the door open a little, sees:

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Adam and Ayla are in bed. Adam reads to her.

ADAM

(reading)  
"Oh, but, grandmother, what a terrible big mouth you have.' 'The better to eat you with.'"

Adam tickles Ayla who squeals in delight. He kisses Ayla goodnight. As he rises...

AYLA

I have a question.

ADAM

Yes?

AYLA

Why Mommy and Daddy are not living together?

Outside the bedroom, Iva listens.

ADAM

Have you asked your mommy?  
(Ayla nods)  
What did she say?

AYLA

She cried.

ADAM

(thinks)  
Well, sometimes two people... Let's say... have you ever wanted something really badly, some candy let's say, but no matter how much you beg your mommy, she won't get it for you?  
(Ayla nods)  
What does she say?

AYLA

Too much sugar.

ADAM

Well, sometimes you love someone so much, so very much, and you do everything for that person, but no matter how hard you try, it's not good enough. That's maybe how it was for your mommy and daddy.  
(realizing; to himself)  
And maybe for me as well.

Iva listens, conflicted.

AYLA

Can you be my sugar daddy?

ADAM

Hmmm...  
(laughs)  
I'd be delighted.

MOMENTS LATER

Adam exits the room to see Iva looking upset.

ADAM  
(innocently)  
No more fever.

IVA  
You have no business... who gave you  
the right to discuss such matters  
with my child?

Adam looks at her calmly, not reacting.

IVA (CONT'D)  
(calmer)  
My God I have been meaning to have  
that conversation with her ever  
since her father and I... and you go  
in there and in a few words...  
poof... how did you do that?

ADAM  
Like my mom used to do. We just, you  
know, had a chat.

He smiles and crosses down the hall. Iva grabs his arm.

INT. SITTING AREA - DAY

Adam and Iva sit on the sofa sipping tea.

ADAM  
I'm sorry about last night. Rubbing  
Sabrina in your face... that was  
pretty insensitive of me.

IVA  
No, it's, I deserved a taste of my  
own medicine.  
(quietly)  
Will you be seeing her again?

ADAM  
We've made plans for Thursday night,  
yes.

She buries her head in her hands.

IVA  
I've really lost you this time,  
haven't I? God what have I done?

Adam pats her on the back. Iva finds her way into his arms. They hug. Soon they are kissing.

ADAM  
What's going on?

IVA  
(between kisses)  
I told you. The only thing I hate.  
More than an easy victory. Is  
losing. Try not to wake up Ayla.

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - DAY

Iva lets Adam out.

ADAM  
So when do I see you again?

IVA  
Thursday night. That's if you're  
free.

She smiles and closes the door.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - DAY

Adam and Gabe play a game of one-on-one. Gabe may be out of shape and one-handed, but boy's got skills.

GABE  
So you been seeing writer chick?  
(off Adam's look)

GABE (CONT'D)  
You got back together with psycho  
bitch, didn't you? I knew it! Man  
what are you thinking?

ADAM  
(thinks)  
It's the greatest... All I can say  
is, loving Iva has taught me how  
little I know about love. But I'm  
learning!  
(beat)  
Most of it from her daughter.

GABE  
I wanna meet her.

ADAM  
Iva? You hate her.

GABE  
The little girl.

ADAM  
I don't think that's a good idea,  
Gabe. You look like Jabba the Hutt.  
You'll give her nightmares...

GABE  
Winner take all.

Gabe sinks the last shot.

INT. HOTEL - DAY

Gabe and Adam are at Iva's hotel room. Adam doesn't look like he feels too good about this. He rings the bell.

Iva opens the door. Ayla is in the background.

AYLA  
Papa!

IVA  
No, Ayla. It's Adam.

Ayla hugs Adam.

AYLA  
Papa!

IVA  
No, Ayla!

GABE  
I can see why you're smitten.  
(to Ayla)  
Hi little girl. I'm Gabriel. Gabe.  
I've known your father since we were  
your age.

Ayla sticks her tongue out at Gabe and disappears around the corner. Gabe faces Iva and stares her down.

IVA  
(to Gabe)  
Can I help you?

ADAM  
Gabriel here--

GABE

I got this. I just wanted to meet the object of my friend's obsession. And to say take care of him, since you're clearly not. Because he's obsessed.

(Iva snorts)

It's the whole anxious avoidant thing. You're pushing him away, and it's making him anxious. Adam is not an anxious guy. Sure he lost his mother. That will make anyone a bit shaky. But he's generally steady. He needs a steady girl. Can you be steady for him? Can you?

IVA

(put on the spot)

I'm late for my facial. Goodbye, Gabe. Adam I need you to watch Ayla for me.

Gabe looks at Adam like, this girl will never be there for you. He lets himself out. Now that they are alone, Adam moves to kiss Iva. She turns away.

IVA (CONT'D)

(annoyed)

Adam...

ADAM

(fed up)

Know what, I think Gabe is right. You're a game player.

IVA

You're entitled to think whatever you wish.

ADAM

See, even saying that. It's so noncommittal. Know what, you're right. Maybe I did peak in high school. Because I left this shit on the playground.

IVA

Oh yeah, tell that to what's her face!

(laughs)



ADAM  
 (shakes head)  
 It's always hurt and be hurt with  
 you, isn't it.

IVA  
 Feeling sorry for yourself again...  
 So typical!

Adam stares at her.

ADAM  
 (quietly)  
 Sometimes I wish we never met.

Ayla peeks around the corner, watching the interaction. Adam  
 tones it down.

ADAM (CONT'D)  
 (to Iva)  
 When you are ready for a mature  
 relationship, give me a call. In the  
 meantime, please come home?

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

It's early. Adam sits on the bed and looks at Iva, who wakes  
 up.

ADAM  
 (cheery)  
 Today's the big day. I brought you  
 some bagels and lox to celebrate.  
 Totally kosher.

Iva regards him tenderly.

IVA  
 About yesterday... If I told you I  
 spent my entire childhood locked in  
 the basement by an abusive mother  
 who fed me a diet of dog food and  
 eighties sitcom, would that excuse  
 my behavior?

ADAM  
 Is it true?

IVA  
 Can we please pretend?

Adam rolls his eyes, amused despite himself. Iva takes a bite  
 of a bagel and smiles.

INT. NEW HOUSE - DAY

Adam helps Iva move stuff into her new house. They pass Ayla playing with toys on the floor.

A series of shots shows the house getting fuller and fuller, until it finally looks like a home.

EXT. NEW HOUSE - SUNSET

Adam watches as Iva hangs a Hebrew scroll to the front doorpost.

IVA

It's a mezuzah. Inside is written a verse from the Bible.

ADAM

What's it say?

IVA

God is one, and we are to love Him with our whole heart, all our soul, and all our strength.

ADAM

That's beautiful. It's called the greatest commandment. The second part of it is--

IVA

Love your neighbor as yourself. I know because you taught me.

They regard each other.

ADAM

I sure will miss being your neighbor, Iva.

IVA

Me too.

He goes to hug her.

IVA (CONT'D)

(backs away)

Careful, we're in the no hug zone. Starting today, I cannot touch any man who is not my husband.

ADAM

OK.

IVA

Adam, I want to thank you--

ADAM

Don't mention it. I enjoyed the calorie burn. May even skip today's workout.

(laughs)

IVA

I mean, for giving me back to myself.

She closes the front door so Ayla can't hear.

IVA (CONT'D)

When Boris broke up with me, I had nothing left. No confidence, no hope. And then you came and gave me all your love and affection. You raised me up. I know I can walk this new path with my head held high, because you loved me.

ADAM

Loving you has been my greatest pleasure, Iva. Can I say bye to Ayla?

IVA

Yes, but just, don't say the actual word, bye. It's so dramatic.

They go back inside.

INT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Adam squats in front of Ayla. The phone rings and Iva leaves the room to answer it.

ADAM

Having fun, Munchkin?

Ayla nods.

AYLA

Can you sleep over our new house?

ADAM

I can't today. But, um, you can visit me anytime. And I'll come over here whenever.

AYLA  
Even at 1 i.m.?

ADAM  
(laughs)  
Even at 1 i.m. If your mommy says  
it's okay.

Ayla gets up and runs into the other room calling her mom.

AYLA  
Mommy, can Adam come over at 1 i.m.?

Adam watches her go, turns and heads out the door.

EXT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

We follow Adam down the stairs.

IVA (O.S.)  
Adam, wait!

Adam turns to see Iva standing right in front of him. They look at each other.

ADAM  
If there's ever anything--

Overcome, Iva wraps her arms around Adam and holds him to her. Then, he gets in his car and drives away as she waves goodbye.

INT. ADAM'S ROOM - MORNING

Adam wakes up to face a new day. Or not. He gets out of bed, opens the curtains, squints at the sun, closes the curtains, and crawls back beneath the sheets.

INT./EXT. ADAM'S PLACE - DAY

He walks through the house. It's quiet and he's alone, just like he was after his mom's memorial. But the place has a new feel, and he looks outside to hear the distant sounds of a child's laughter, as though Ayla were still there. He picks up a tennis ball and throws it for Max to fetch. Some glass breaks off-screen.

Adam doing yard work with new clippers. Watering the strawberry patch we saw him plant with Iva.

Adam trimming Max's hair, giving him a nice bouffant hairdo with new scissors.

Adam takes freshly-groomed Max for a walk. They walk by Iva's old house. A REALTOR has just finished staking a "For Lease" sign into the grass. Adam waves at the realtor as Max sniffs the sign.

Adam at his mailbox, checking mail. There is a manila envelope addressed to him with the return address "Iva Romanova." He opens the envelope to see a brochure for a screenwriting class at UCLA.

KATHERINE (O.S.)

Adam?

Adam turns to see Katherine, the woman with whom he had a brief and tense exchange after the memorial.

KATHERINE (CONT'D)

Is it too late to have that drink?

EXT. POOL - DAY

Adam and Katherine sit poolside with drinks.

KATHERINE

So basically I was housebound for the last year. My daughter, I'm happy to say, is back on her feet and ready to face the world again, bulimia free.

ADAM

I had a similar experience, minus the bulimia, only with my neighbor. I guess that makes it a different experience, but it was just as intense.

KATHERINE

Yeah, I saw you two together. You seemed so into each other. I was sure you'd be married by now.

ADAM

That woulda been a dream come true for me. At least I used to think so. Now I'm not sure what to think.

KATHERINE

Are you still writing?

ADAM

(nods)  
A love story.

KATHERINE

Based on real life?

ADAM

Is it that obvious?

KATHERINE

I hope it's hopeful, your love story.

ADAM

I'm having trouble... I mean, it's hard making Iva a sympathetic character. She's fucking nuts - in a good way? I'm not sure how anything will turn out...

KATHERINE

Write it the way you want it to turn out, and maybe it will. If that makes any sense.

They smile at each other.

ADAM

I'm really happy we're friends again, Katherine.

INT. ADAM'S BEDROOM - DAY

Adam in bed. The phone rings. His dad's voice comes on speaker.

DAD'S VOICE

So I've been thinking about your situation, and, well, lemme see if I understand all this. The girl says, "We have different beliefs. But all that aside, I still wouldn't marry you. Why, because I'm not in love with you!"

(pause)

You say, "Your lifestyle is the opposite of mine, you can't work in this country so I'd have to support you, with what money I haven't a goddamn clue. Basically you are everything I never wanted!"

(MORE)

DAD'S VOICE (CONT'D)  
 Nevertheless, I'll sign up for  
 forever with you, if you'd have me,  
 but only because you won't have me."  
 Does that sound about right?

Adam picks up.

ADAM  
 (on phone)  
 Hi Dad.

DAD  
 Well, hello. As I see it, you love  
 playing the game just as much as  
 this girl did.  
 (laughs)  
 You've had your fun, now move on. Or  
 as your mother used to say, "It's  
 time to get the fuck up, Son!"

ADAM  
 (on phone)  
 Thanks, Dad.

DAD  
 Now when can I see you?

#### WRITING MONTAGE

Adam looks at the typewriter on his desk. His Rocky III  
 poster looms overhead.

ADAM  
 (to himself)  
 If you build it, he will come, huh?

Adam seated at his desk, looks at a framed picture of Iva and  
 one of his mother. Looks at Max on his lap. Faces the blank  
 page. Then starts typing.

Adam sits in a classroom with a roomful of other  
 SCREENWRITERS. On the board is written "Advanced  
 Screenwriting." As the INSTRUCTOR lectures, Adam takes notes.

Adam in the cafeteria getting feedback from his instructor on  
 his screenplay, nods in consideration.

Adam's car pulls out of his driveway. On the rear window we  
 see an Uber sticker.

Adam picking up Uber passengers, engaging them in  
 conversation, doing a little networking. A PASSENGER in a  
 suit hands Adam his business card.

Adam out at a coffee shop with friends, getting out some.

Adam exiting class, waving at a female classmate.

He's in his office typing furiously, pulling out pages, throwing some away, placing others face down on the desk. The manuscript is growing.

Adam doing handstand push-ups against the wall.

Sitting in the papasan, reading pages. On TV, the fight scene from Rocky plays.

He's in his backyard with a group of actors. Gabe is there, maybe a couple students, Katherine, and his father, and maybe James. They each hold pages of the screenplay and act out scenes as Adam directs.

The screenplay still growing.

Adam in the quad with a larger group of students, acting out scenes.

The screenplay is getting thicker.

Until Adam places the last page on the pile. It's done. He turns the manuscript over to reveal the title: ADAM & IVA.

He holds it up, blows imaginary dust off it, looks up at the poster of Stallone and pumps his fist in the air.

He looks at the TV, where Rocky delivers his famous line: "Yo, Adrian, I did it!"

MONTAGE ENDS

EXT. IVA'S PLACE - DAY

Adam climbs the steps to Iva's place and leaves a copy of the screenplay at her front door.

EXT. SABAN THEATER - DAY

Adam approaches the front of the theater. It is some sort of networking conference for screenwriters. There are booths where people are filling out information and standing in line waiting to enter.

SABRINA (O.S.)

Adam?

Adam turns to see Sabrina.



ADAM  
Sabrina. Hi!

SABRINA  
How are you?

ADAM  
Better now. You look great. I've  
been meaning to call you.

SABRINA  
I've been meaning to call you!

Then an SUV pulls to the curb and a WOMAN (60s) exits. People  
seem to recognize her.

ADAM  
Isn't that Melissa Mathison?

SABRINA  
Who?

ADAM  
She wrote ET.

SABRINA  
(joining in on enthusiasm)  
I loved ET!

ADAM  
Me too! Let's say hi.  
(to woman)  
I'm sorry, I don't usually do this,  
but hi.

WOMAN  
Hello.

Adam stands there, starstruck.

WOMAN (CONT'D)  
We've met, haven't we?

ADAM  
It sure feels like it. I love your  
work.

Someone stops to say hello to the woman.

SABRINA  
(whispers to Adam)  
Melissa Mathison is dead. I just  
googled her.  
(MORE)

SABRINA (CONT'D)  
(to woman; leading Adam  
away)  
He doesn't get out much.

ADAM  
It's like I just saw a ghost.

WOMAN  
(calls out)  
Nice to see you again!

INT. THEATER - DAY

Adam and Sabrina enter the theater. Sabrina looks around, spots someone off-screen, waves.

SABRINA  
There's someone I'd like you to  
meet.

A GUY sidles up to Sabrina. He's very British. They kiss.

SABRINA (CONT'D)  
Adam, this is my boss, boyfriend,  
Angus. Boss, boyfriend. First one,  
now the other.

ANGUS  
Now both!

SABRINA  
This is Adam, the guy I was telling  
you about? With the really strong  
script that Tilda would be perfect  
for?

ANGUS  
Oh, yes. For a moment there I  
thought you were a rival and I'd  
have to challenge you to a duel, but  
yes. Now that I know you are just a  
potential client I'm relieved, but  
only somewhat. Look at your jawline.  
It's so chiseled.

Adam laughs. He likes this guy.

ANGUS (CONT'D)  
Anyway about your script. I'd love  
to talk more about it. We'll set up  
a meeting.

ADAM

Great.

SABRINA

Great.

ANGUS

Now then...

(points off-screen; leads  
Sabrina away)

Is that Melissa Mathison?

INT./EXT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Adam asleep in bed. He opens his eyes, sees the curtains wafting in the breeze, gets up and goes outside. He opens the sliding glass door and enters his mother's room. He sees his MOTHER lying in bed. She wears the gown from her memorial picture. She looks ethereal, radiant, peaceful.

ELAINE

Hello Adam.

ADAM

Hi, Mom.

ELAINE

I was just having a rest.

She approaches her son, stands before him. He begins weeping. She hugs him.

ELAINE (CONT'D)

I think this is my last time coming here.

ADAM

Stay with me, Mom. Please.

Adam hugs his mother tightly. When he opens his eyes, she has disappeared. Hold on him alone in the room. Then, ever so faintly:

ELAINE

I am always with you...

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

Adam loads a piece of furniture into the moving van parked in his driveway. His cell phone RINGS. He answers.

DON (ON PHONE)  
Mr. Strange? It's Don Carruthers.  
With Raindance?

ADAM  
OK.

DON  
Usually I get more enthusiasm when I  
say Raindance.

ADAM  
OK!

DON  
Yes. Well, I'm calling to inform you  
that your screenplay has made it to  
the semifinals.

ADAM  
My screenplay?

DON  
This is Adam Strange, isn't it? You  
do write screenplays?

ADAM  
Yes.

DON  
Well, you wrote a winner. A  
semifinalist, at least. And we'd  
like to fly you up for a table read  
with industry execs. I don't hear  
any enthusiasm on your end.

ADAM  
Well that's because I didn't enter  
any contest.

DON  
That's odd. Someone must have, on  
your behalf.

ADAM  
Who?

DON  
Iva Svirsky?  
(beat)  
Did I mention Sly Stallone will be  
judging your work?

ADAM  
I'm sorry, Iva who?

EXT. IVA'S PLACE - DAY

Adam runs up the front steps, rings the doorbell. Iva opens.

IVA  
(nonchalant)  
Oh, hi Adam.

ADAM  
Hi.

IVA  
Why are you so out of breath?

ADAM  
I ran here.

IVA  
From where?

ADAM  
My new place. It's within walking distance. Well running distance, which I wouldn't recommend. Ouch, side cramp.

IVA  
Why did you move out of your home?

ADAM  
Man cannot live on Uber alone. Biblical reference. New Testament. Sorry.

IVA  
Why did you move out of your home, Adam?

ADAM  
I ran out of money, so James bought me out. Turns out my mother owed a ton in back mortgages and whatnot, so I got a lot less than expected. Bright side: it was still enough for a condo in Beverly Hills. Actually an apartment in Beverly Hills adjacent, but why split hairs? It's month to month. Just a transitional thing until I find out what I'm doing for the rest of my life.

(MORE)

ADAM (CONT'D)

I'm not lost, because I've found  
you. And what matters is here I am.  
Hi!

(finally catches breath)

IVA

Hi.

ADAM

I also wanted to thank you for  
submitting my screenplay... I  
brought you some candles. So you  
won't run out.

(hands her candles)

IVA

Thank you, and you're welcome.

ADAM

Did you read it, my story I mean?

IVA

I skimmed some parts. Just the  
ending really.

ADAM

What did you think?

IVA

Not so tragic.

They share a smile.

IVA (CONT'D)

Come in?

Adam follows Iva inside.

INT. IVA'S PLACE - CONTINUOUS

Adam looks around the place, sees a MAN bent over beneath the  
kitchen sink. Adam looks back at Iva questioningly.

IVA

Is everything OK?

ADAM

Is that... Mr. Svirsky?

IVA

(laughs)

Oh God no. That's Vlad. He's my  
handyman.

Vlad looks over his shoulder at Adam and waves a grimy hand.

ADAM  
(to Iva)  
So, Mrs. Svirsky?

IVA  
(laughs)  
Oh, that. I took my rabbi's last name.

ADAM  
You married your rabbi? I knew it!

IVA  
Adam, he's seventy years old with a wife and six kids.

ADAM  
Then why?

IVA  
To symbolize my marriage with Hashem, with God.

ADAM  
Is that a Judaism thing?

IVA  
It's my thing. I can practice my own personal religion.

ADAM  
Even in the Orthodox community?

IVA  
We're in America, right? It's still a free country.

ADAM  
(taking it in)  
So what, you're like a Jewish nun now?

Iva laughs.

IVA  
I guess I realized that Judaism is a concept, and a concept can never love me back. I just needed time to process it.

ADAM  
Thank God for time.

Vlad walks past the pair and exits.

IVA  
Do you still love me back, Adam?

A long beat.

ADAM  
What, Jewish guys don't do it for  
ya?

IVA  
(coming clean)  
They all look like Ben Stiller.

ADAM  
(offended)  
I like that guy!

IVA  
You haven't answered my question. Do  
you still love me back?

ADAM  
Do I ever. Yes, I do!

IVA  
I do, too.

Adam and Iva hug and kiss.

ADAM  
(doing his best Rocky)  
You ain't never gettin' rid of me.

Ayla appears around the corner.

AYLA  
Papa!

IVA  
No, Ayla. Well not yet. We'll see.  
Maybe?

ADAM  
Maybe is good. I like maybe.

The three hug and dance like one happy family. Rod Stewart's  
"Have I Told You Lately" plays as Adam sweeps Iva into his  
arms.

IVA  
Adam what are you doing?



ADAM

Grand gesture. It's a Russian thing.

Adam dances around with Iva in his arms until she shakes her head "enough" and he lets her down. He picks up Ayla and saunters off into the other room as Iva looks on.

The music abruptly ends. Scene freezes. Adam's voice:

ADAM (V.O.)

That's at least how I wrote it.

EXT. BACK YARD - DAY

Adam sits at the table with friends and family gathered around to hear his story.

ADAM

It didn't turn out that way, as you all know. Iva and I didn't get back together. But I did see her one last time. I was coming out of the movie theater one day...

EXT. CENTURY CITY - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Adam strolling through the mall, still wearing the clothes Iva helped him pick out.

ADAM (V.O.)

...And who should I happen to see?

Iva and Ayla exit a retail outlet. Iva is on her phone. Still dressed kosher. They don't see Adam. He starts to call out, but instead just watches as they disappear into the crowd.

EXT. BACK YARD - DAY

Back to Adam and guests.

ADAM

And that's how our story ends.

(pause)

My question is, which version do you prefer: the Hollywood one, or real life?

The guests look at each other.

GUESTS IN UNISON

Real life.

DAD

A storybook ending may work for strangers seated in a dark theater - if this thing you've written ever makes it to the big screen - but those of us "in the know" never would approve of you two winding up together. Of course, I never got to meet the real Iva...

NANA

Plus, you got to keep the house.

ADAM

(raises glass)  
Thank you, James.

JAMES

It's nice to have a medical doctor on my team, and working for me Adam gets to actually use his degree.

DAD

Amen.

ADAM

And we all know how much you like to boss your big brother around...

JAMES

There's that too. But I gotta disagree about Iva. The girl had taste. I mean she knew a beautiful tool when she saw one.

ADAM

Well I couldn't decide either. Which is why I needed to have it both ways. But in writing it, I realized...

GUESTS IN UNISON

What did you realize?

Adam is far off, but comes back with a laugh.

ADAM

Aw, who says you can't have your cake and eat it too...

TRACY (O.S.)

Did somebody say cake?

James's boyfriend, TRACY (Ken doll handsome), appears and sets a cake down on the table. The cake is shaped in the image of Elaine's face and bears one candle, which James lights. A moment of respectful silence.

ADAM  
(to James)  
Can you believe it's been a year?

JAMES  
(raises glass)  
To Mom.

ADAM  
To Mom.

Everybody toasts to the memory of Elaine. Music starts playing. Cake gets passed around. Guests resume their chitchat. Adam sits off to the side, thinking. The doorbell RINGS. Nobody notices but Adam, who rises.

INT. ADAM'S PLACE - ENTRANCE - MOMENTS LATER

Adam opens the door and is surprised to see Iva and Ayla. Iva holds a plate of fruit. She is wearing jeans. She smiles at Adam. Their eyes lock. Hold on that look. Keep holding... And holding...

FADE OUT

THE END