INT. ITALIAN CAFE - MID AFTERNOON

Italian Cafe. 12:35. Palm Springs. The place is jammed with guests. Food is cooking, orders are being taken out and an overall hum of conversation is heard. Different shots of different aspects of the cafe are shown.

In the back of the cafe, the door slams open. In walks ALEX, early 20’s, average looking guy wearing aviators. He struggles to pull his bike in. After making his entrance he begins to walk through to the front.

As he walks past the kitchen...

    COOK
    (Angrily)
    Where ya been man?! You’re gonna hear it from Mark!

ALEX walks on by, half genuinely waving to the cook. He makes it to the front counter. Next to him is a fellow waitress.

    WAITRESS
    Well look who finally decided to show up.

No response.

    WAITRESS (cont’d)
    (CONT’D)
    Oh, I’m sorry, I forgot. Do you have a headache? Am I being too loud?

(CONTINUED)
ALEX
No, I’m not hungover.

WAITRESS
Got no money to drink then, huh?

ALEX
Well, when you’re job pays shit-fifty an hour, yeah, you’re kind of low on drinks.

WAITRESS
So what’s the excuse today? Car trouble? Oh, wait you ride a bike. Family member die? Oh, your mom already died three times.

ALEX
For your information, I was up, writing late last night.

WAITRESS scoffs

WAITRESS
Well look, make yourself useful and get me a scotch on the rocks for table 14. And try not to let it slip through your hands like Jill.

WAITRESS walks away. Annoyed, ALEX mimes choking her and beating her up. He looks up and stares across the cafe. There she is, JILL, early 20’s beautiful. ALEX looks. He then heads to the bar to make the drink.

ALEX pours the shot into the glass, looks around to make sure no one is watching. Coast is clear, he chugs it, makes another glass and walks out onto the dining room floor.

The camera follows him and does an establishing shot of the crowded dining room. The shot remains still as we...

CUT TO:

INT. ITALIAN CAFE - NIGHT

Same still shot of an empty dining room. JILL is busting one table and another table remains with two people.

Slowly and unenthusiastic-ally, ALEX heads to the final table and hands the CUSTOMER his change back.

(CONTINUED)
CUSTOMER
Thank you.

ALEX
(Halfheartedly)
Mhmm-hmm

ALEX walks behind the counter and watches the customers leave. He immediately heads to the table to receive his tip. He looks. 75 cents.

In the back, MARK, the mid 40’s, slightly overweight, manager walks up.

MARK
Hey, Alex.

ALEX turns around.

MARK (cont’d)
(CONT’D)
Can I talk to you for a second?

ALEX walks to the back. JILL silently watches him.

INT. MARK’S OFFICE - NIGHT

Inside MARK’s office. Motivational posters everywhere.

MARK
How are you doing, Alex?

ALEX
I’m fine.

MARK
That’s good, that’s good.

Silence

MARK (cont’d)
(CONT’D)
I’m doing good too, by the way. So, the reason I wanted to talk to you is, well, your performance has been lacking lately. Showing up to work late, your professionalism is low, and you’re not very friendly to the customers. What’s going on here, buddy?

(_CONTINUED)
ALEX
Nothing is going on here, Mark. I’m just in a rough spot right now.
Okay, that’s it, I can leave.
Right?

ALEX tries to leave.

MARK
Well, hold on now. I think you really need to evaluate yourself here. I understand that you’ve been late the past two days, and I know it’s probably because of, well Jill. But the drinking has to stop. Now you’re a good looking guy, with a good-- with a -- you have a heart. Just like everyone else. (trying to recover) But don’t think that doesn’t make you special. Because you are apart of this team. And we need you, like every cookie needs exactly 6 chocolate chips. . . You are that sixth chocolate chip. (whispers) You’re the 6th chocolate chip. (normal) Without it, the cookie crumbles. You understand the metaphor?

ALEX is completely bored by this point.

ALEX
Thank you, Mark. I’m going home now.

MARK
Well safe journey, little buddy.

MARK extends his arm out for a shake, ALEX shakes his hand but MARK destroys it by trying a "fancy secret shake". ALEX FINALLY walks out. MARK stands there pleased with himself.

MARK (cont’d)
You’ve done it again, Mark. You’ve done it again.

INT. ALEX’S APARTMENT- NIGHT

ALEX walks into his apartment. There are boxes, clothes and other items scattered throughout the place. There is a lone keyboard with chair and one futon. ALEX puts his bike to the side and continues on with his night.

ALEX does his little home work out, some push ups.
Pulls out some cereal but has to find his one and only bowl somewhere. He digs through a pile of clothes to find it.

He pours cereal into the bowl. Looks in the fridge to see that there is barely any milk left. He eats it dry.

He accidentally tries to eat the little plastic toy that’s the prize in the box.

He sits down on the futon holding his stomach.

He looks at himself in the mirror.

He does a second round of push ups.

Goes to the toilet and tries to make himself throw up. He succeeds and looks into the toilet.

ALEX
Beans? When did I eat beans?

ALEX sits down at the keyboard and pulls out pen and paper. He begins to play . . .

ALEX (cont’d)
(singing/improvising)

What would you do, If you had to
write a song?

Tries another

ALEX (cont’d)
(singing/improvising CONT’D)

Singing a song to be the number one
hit.

Tries another

ALEX (cont’d)
(singing/improvising CONT’D)

Screw you Mark, with your
inspirational poster and your
stupid cookie metaphor.

ALEX gives up. He slams his hands on the keyboard. He is defeated, AGAIN. He begins to play again. He looks at his song book. There is a title JILL’S SONG. ALEX takes the page and rips it up.

ALEX lays in his crappy futon. He looks next to him, there is JILL, laying there. He wraps his arms around her and—

(CONTINUED)
6.

She disappears. Disheartened, he grabs a pillow and snuggles with that as the screen fades to black . . .

CUT TO:

INT. ITALIAN CAFE - MID AFTERNOON

The cafe is busy again, ALEX walks in late again, pulls his bike in and heads to the front counter. He walks past the cook.

COOK
Oh, damn, man! Again?!

ALEX, walks on by up to the front and clocks in. He makes another scotch on the rocks and walks to WAITRESS.

ALEX
Here you go.

WAITRESS
What is this?

ALEX
Didn’t you ask for scotch on the rocks, table 14?

WAITRESS
Yeah, yesterday. God.

WAITRESS walks away.

ALEX
Oh, well okay, can’t let this go to waste then, huh?

ALEX chugs it down. He grabs a tray and walks out onto the dining room floor. The camera has an establishing shot of the dining room, jammed pack. Keep the same shot and . . .

CUT TO:

INT. ITALIAN CAFE - NIGHT

Completely empty dining room. JILL is out on the floor busting the tables, ALEX is at the counter, counting his bag full of tips. Just a bunch of quarters and dimes.

JILL walks up to the counter. They both work in silence.

JILL pulls out a small pocket knife and gives it to ALEX. ALEX then pulls out a roll of fruity chap stick and gives it to JILL.

(CONTINUED)
ALEX  
So that’s it?

JILL  
Yeah.

ALEX  
Just like that?

JILL  
What were you expecting, an apology?

ALEX  
It would be nice.

JILL  
Alright.

JILL stares at ALEX, waiting for something.

ALEX  
What?

JILL  
Unbelievable, you are asking me to apologize. After all you said?

ALEX  
I gave you back the chap stick.

JILL  
You’ll never change, will you?

ALEX  
Broke up, two days ago, and you’re already going to that cliche?

JILL  
You’ve got no room in that shit-hole apartment for another person--

ALEX  
I prefer the term hell-hole.

JILL  
You have no personal regard for people around you--

ALEX  
They are adults they can take care of themselves.
JILL
And that! You still act like a child.

ALEX
May I remind you that, that used to turn you on.

JILL
Stop. Just, stop.

Silence.

JILL (cont’d)
(CONT’D)
I’m moving to Seattle, next week.

ALEX
What?

JILL
I called my aunt today, she said I can stay with her for a while. I think it’s best if we— I just go away, I can get closure and move on.

ALEX
What, you don’t think we could work this out?

JILL
There is nothing to work out, not as long as there is still this—

ALEX
This what? This want to do something more with my life than work in this place forever. I wanted to go places.

JILL
It’s always another dream. You can never be happy. You want to move in together, you find something to complain about, you want a job but once you get one you want another job. Nothing was ever good enough for you. I was never good enough for you.
ALEX
Thats--
The front door bell rings. The clock say 9:02.

JILL
It’s yours.

ALEX
I’ll be back.

ALEX walks to the front. In the door is a older looking woman, in her 80’s, BEV.

ALEX (cont’d)
I’m sorry, we close at 9, it’s 9:02.

BEV
Well, I’m only 2 minutes late.

ALEX
I’m sorry but--

MARK walks up from behind.

MARK
You are more than welcomed to come on in.

ALEX
What?

MARK
Yes, come on in. We’ll take care of you!

BEV
Thank you.

MARK leads BEV to a table and sits her down. ALEX follows.

MARK
Here you go. And Alex, here, will be your server. Can we start you off on a drink?

BEV
Just water please.

MARK
No, problem. Alex?
ALEX walks to the back to get water. He looks around for JILL, but she has already left.

ALEX
Mark. What are you doing, it’s 9:02?

MARTY
I know, but seriously think about it, it’s one table with one person, it’ll be done in a pinch.

ALEX
Yeah, well you sent the cooks home, remember?

MARTY
Well, you’ve worked in the back before, you know how to cook the food.

ALEX
Well, yeah, but-

MARTY
And you can lock up for me.

ALEX
No, no you are not leaving me here by myself.

MARTY
Sure I am, I can trust you. Think of it as a little test. All you have to do is lock up. Just imagine your job is on the line (chuckles) but really imagine it, like it’s real. (chuckles)

ALEX
I can’t believe this, you’re screwing me over man.

MARTY
Oh, come on. It’s one little old lady. It’s not like it’s going to be a big meal, just water, a salad and she’s out of here.

CUT TO:
INT. ITALIAN CAFE - NIGHT

BEV
I would like a small individual house salad with ranch, but only use a quarter of the croutons on the regular serving and substitute that with anchovies. I would like that approximately 20 minutes before my entree which will be as followed, one bowl of minestrone soup, one order of the garlic bread, a small pizza with a quarter of it bell peppers, just green, a quarter of bacon, only the edge cuts of the bacon, a quarter with zucchini and a quarter with mushrooms but look at the mushrooms and examine them, if any of them resemble any presidents of the united states then don’t use them unless they look like Clinton. And I would also like a plate of Shrimp Scampi, prepared to perfection with a teaspoon of garlic, a teaspoon of hot sauce and a tablespoon of basil and a pinch of lemon. And finally a piece of tiramisu cake, fresh. And...... That’ll do it.

BEV sets down the menu. ALEX is just staring.

ALEX
So......?

BEV
(Laughs)

ALEX
(confused)

I’m sorry?

BEV
Oh, I’m sorry dear, I just wanted to see your face. You see, when I go into restaurants, I always make ridiculous demands from my waiters just to see the look on their faces. Oh it’s priceless. (laughs) and it keeps my improv skills up to date.

Silence

(CONTINUED)
ALEX
Salad?

BEV
Oh yes, dear.

ALEX brings out a small house salad. BEV eats the salad, and enjoys it, every little bite, slowly. CRUNCH CRUNCH CRUNCH. ALEX is vacuuming around the cafe but no matter where he goes, he still hears the CRUNCH. Finally, BEV finishes.

ALEX walks over, takes her plate.

ALEX
Ready for the rest?

BEV
Oh, yes, please.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT
ALEX breaks out all the ingredients and begins to cook.

He breaks out the shrimp and tenderizes it for a Shrimp Scampi.

He begins to toss the dough for the pizza.

He tops the pizza with sauce, cheese and toppings. He picks the screen up to place in the oven and looks up ...

ALEX screams. BEV is standing right there.

ALEX
Holy sh- you scared the crap out of me. What are you doing?

BEV
I’m so sorry dear, I didn’t mean to scare you, I was just wondering, if I could maybe watch? I- I figured there was no one else here, and I know it’s-- well it’s not a big deal, I’ll go sit down.

ALEX
(confused)
No-- it’s fine, you can watch.

BEV
Really?
ALEX
Sure?

BEV
Oh, thank you!

ALEX shakes it off and goes right back to work.

He chops up some basil.

Chops up the veggies for the soup.

BEV watches in amazement.

BEV (cont’d)
Do you think-- I- no never mind.

ALEX
What?

BEV
Nothing. I just-- do you think I could help? Just something small?

ALEX looks over and sees --

FLASHBACK:

INT. KITCHEN - DAY (3 MONTHS AGO)

JILL is standing next to him.

ALEX
You wanna help?

JILL
Oh, that whole women have to work in the kitchen thing?

ALEX
I’m working in the kitchen.

JILL
My point exactly.

They both laugh

FLASH FORWARD:
INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT (PRESENT DAY)

ALEX
Yeah-- sure....... Just. Hand me that mixing bowl.

BEV
Here.

ALEX
Put all the veggies in there and mix it up with this.

FLASHBACK:

INT. KITCHEN - DAY (3 MONTHS AGO)
ALEX and JILL are cutting veggies together.
They start a little food fight.

FLASH FORWARD:

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT (PRESENT DAY)
ALEX hands BEV a spoon.

BEV
Look at them go! And they’re off! Carrots have a lead but the zucchini is making a run and it looks like they might have the lead and--

ALEX tosses the white wine in with the shrimp. Flames burst.

BEV (cont’d)
(CONT’D)
Wow! That was amazing.

ALEX
(chuckles)
Really?

BEV
I mean now we’re talking the difference between eating and dining.

(CONTINUED)
ALEX
You— you wouldn’t want to try it would you?

BEV
Could I?

ALEX
Sure just come one over. Grab the wine in there, now pour it on the edge of the skillet all the way around.

BEV pours and the flames ignite.

BEV
Now stir the skillet, gotta get rid of the flames.

FLASHBACK:

INT. KITCHEN - DAY (3 MONTHS AGO)

ALEX and JILL both pour wine into their skillets and make flames.

They kiss.

FLASH FORWARD:

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT (PRESENT DAY)

ALEX helps BEV stir the skillet until the flames die down.

BEV
Wow!

CUT TO:

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

BEV sits down at her table, surrounded by plates of food. Pizza, soup, shrimp and bread. She begins to eat it, just as slowly as the salad. As she eats, ALEX continues to clean the dining room.

BEV
This is delicious! Great job!

ALEX
Well don’t forget to give yourself some credit. You helped.

(CONTINUED)
BEV
Thank again. I know it’s not normal for a guest to do that but I just felt so happy, seeing every little detail, enjoying it all.

ALEX
Well, enjoy.

ALEX continues to clean up. He looks at the clock. 11:10 PM. He begins to clean the piano on the little stage. He wipes down the "OPEN MIC NIGHT" on the chalkboard. He accidentally hits a key on the piano.

ALEX (cont’d)
Sorry.

BEV
Oh, don’t worry, I’m fine. You play?

ALEX
Uh, yeah. I used to, still do. I’m an aspiring musician.

BEV
Wonderful! You written any songs?

ALEX
Yeah-- I’ve written a few.

BEV
Well then!

BEV gets up and sits at a table close to the stage.

ALEX
(chuckles)
Oh, no. No, I’m sorry, not tonight.

BEV
Well why not?

ALEX
Because-- I.

BEV
I don’t judge. I love music. Please play something, for me?
ALEX
If I play, will you sit down and eat the rest of your food. I don’t want to impose but--

BEV
Oh, don’t worry, I understand. I love it here.

ALEX
(sigh)
Ok.

ALEX sits down and begins to play a beautiful composition. As he plays .......

FLASHBACK:

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT (4 WEEKS AGO)

ALEX and JILL are sitting down at the piano together.

JILL
You’re so talented.

ALEX
Oh, it’s nothing. Just things I’ve been working on.

JILL
You have to make a demo.

ALEX
What? For who, no one is going to buy it.

JILL
For me?

They kiss.

ALEX
I promise, I’m gonna write the best song there ever was, and we’re gonna be millionaires and own tigers and jets and go to ... I don’t know. Helsinki!

JILL
Just as long as we go together.

(CONTINUED)
ALEX
I think I love you.

JILL
Stop.

ALEX
I’m serious. Do you?

JILL
I tolerate you.

ALEX
Ouch! (laughs)

JILL
I love you too.

They smile

FLASH FORWARD:

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT(PRESENT DAY)

ALEX finishes playing. He sits and stares for a second.

BEV sits there and smiles.

ALEX
Thanks. Now--uh- eat.

CUT TO:

BEV sitting down with a book in her hand, she has finished her meal. ALEX rushes to clean the table up. He looks at the clock. 12:30 AM.

ALEX (cont’d)
Ready for the check?

BEV
No, not quite, I’m just enjoying some Shakespeare.

ALEX
Well, it’s tomorrow, so I think I’ll just grab the check and set it down for you.

BEV
What’s your hurry? What’s the big idea?
ALEX
It’s midnight, the cafe closed at 9. I should have been out of here.

BEV
Is that the way to talk to a customer? (chuckles)

ALEX
Look, I have tried to be civil about this, but this is ridiculous. I’m going home, have fun locking up. Oh and if robbers come in and hold you up, the money is in the safe, all 2,000 of it. Goodbye!

ALEX walks away.

BEV
Wait! Come back!

ALEX
What?

BEV
That anger. That rage! Do it again.

ALEX
What the hell are you talking about.

BEV
Are you into theater?

ALEX
No.

BEV
Here try this, this monologue right here in this book. Right here, Edmund’s monologue.

ALEX
Are you crazy? I’m not playing Shakespeare with you. I’m going home.

BEV
If you do it, I’ll leave.

ALEX
You’ll leave?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

BEV
I promise, once you have had your moment, I’ll leave.

ALEX
Promise?

BEV
Yes.

ALEX reluctantly takes the book and begins to read . . .

ALEX
(reading)
Thou, Nature, art my goddess; to thy law
My services are bound. Wherefore should I
Stand in the plague of custom, and permit
The curiosity of nations to deprive me,
When my dimensions are as well compact,
My mind as generous, and my shape as true,
As honest madam’s issue? Why brand they us
With base? with baseness? bastardy? base, base? Edmund the base
Shall top th’ legitimate. I grow; I prosper.
Now, gods, stand up for bastards!
BEV claps.

ALEX (cont’d)
Now will you leave?

BEV
How did it feel?

ALEX
(sigh)
It felt good.

BEV
In what way?
ALEX
I don’t know it just-- it felt like I was-- I don’t able to transfer my feelings for a little. I was angry, so I used that. It felt-- actually it felt good.

BEV
You’ve done it before then haven’t you? You know a little something.

ALEX
It was from me, it was from my girlfr- ex. She was really big into theater.

BEV
Ohh, how about this monologue.

FLASHBACK:
INT. ALEX’S APARTMENT- NIGHT (4 DAYS AGO)

ALEX is sitting at his piano. JILL is practicing a monologue. Both are overlapping each other, competing for the room. Finally, enough is enough.

ALEX
Babe, babe? Please, could you stop, I’m trying to write?

JILL
Maybe you should take a break and let me practice, my audition is in two days.

ALEX
Look, you’ve been doing this all day, I think it’s as good as it’s going to get.

JILL
No, I have to keep practicing until I get it perfect--

ALEX
Well you know what, there is no such thing as perfection, especially when it comes to friggin shakespeare. The guy was a hack.
JILL
Well, this hack just happened to write a show that I am auditioning for, and if I get in it maybe we can move into a bigger place together.

ALEX
What’s wrong with this place?

JILL
You’re serious?

ALEX
Well, yes certain things can be improved, but money is tight.

JILL
Well when is that going to be solved, you’ve been sitting there all day with your piano, and nothing has come out.

ALEX
Hey, if you have a problem with the way I make a living--

JILL
Do you have a problem with how I make a living?

ALEX
It’s not a living!

JILL
What?

ALEX
It’s not a living. I’m sorry it’s not, it’s memorizing words and shit in hopes that maybe you’ll get a chance to sleep with the director and maybe he’ll throw you a friggin bone!

JILL
You think I would sleep for a role.

ALEX
Well you have obviously been using your skills somewhere else, because there is nothing here--

(CONTINUED)
They both begin to argue as the audio dies out and a piano instrumental plays. They begin to throw stuff at each other. They become more physical with each other. JILL immediately flees the scene.

BEV
(V.O)
Look, when I vow, I weep. And vows so born,
In their nativity all truth appears.
How can these things in me seem scorn to you,
Bearing the badge of faith to prove them true?

FLASH FORWARD

EXT. ITALIAN CAFE - NIGHT (PRESENT DAY)
ALEX is sitting down outside, depressed. BEV walks on out.

BEV
You ok?
Silence.

BEV (cont’d)
(CONT’D)
Hey, do you want to do some improv?

ALEX
No, I do not want to do improv, ok?
Can’t you just leave me alone? Please?

BEV
We’ll play a game, it’s called question question. The trick is to hold a conversation entirely with questions.

ALEX
Thanks for the invite but I have to go in there to clean your mess.

BEV
I did it already.

ALEX
No you didn’t. Did you?
BEV
Don’t I always?

ALEX
What?

BEV
Aren’t we playing?

ALEX
(sigh)
Do we have to?

BEV
Why not enjoy the game?

ALEX
Don’t you want to go home? Aren’t you a snowbird, from Canada? Can’t you just go back to Canada, now?

BEV
Can’t you just enjoy the game?

ALEX
Why?!

BEV
What else is there to focus on?

ALEX
How about my future, my career?

BEV
How about food?

ALEX
How about money?

BEV
What about happiness?

ALEX
What else?

BEV
What about now?

ALEX
Wait, can you repeat that?

(CONTINUED)
BEV
What about now? Oh fiddlesticks, you can’t repeat questions two times in a row like that. You won.

ALEX thinks for a second

ALEX
I won?

BEV
Yeah.

Now that he has fully taken in that he has won......

ALEX
Yeah!!!!!!! I won! I won!

ALEX hops up and shouts, grabbing BEV and jumping up and down. BEV sits back down.

ALEX (cont’d)
Yeah! I won! And now? Come on, we gotta go--

ALEX turns around. BEV is gone.

ALEX (cont’d)
(confused)
Hello? Where did you-?

ALEX looks on the ground. There is a monologue written on it. He picks it up and looks.

JILL
(V.O)

Hello, my name is Jill Brown and I will be preforming a monologue from The Tempest.

CUT TO:

INT. AUDITION ROOM - DAY

JILL is performing her piece for casting directors at a table.

JILL
(CONT’D)

One of my sex, no woman’s face remember--

(CONTINUED)
Save, from my glass, mine own. Nor have I seen
More that I may call men than you, good friend,
And my dear father. How features are abroad
I am skill-less of, but, by my modesty,
The jewel in my dower, I would not wish
Any companion in the world but you,
Nor can imagination form a shape
Besides yourself to like of. But I prattle
Something too wildly, and my father’s precepts
I therein do forget.

CUT TO:

EXT. AUDITION BUILDING. - DAY

JILL walks out, excited. She turns the corner and --

ALEX
(V.O)
Hey.

JILL turns around, there he is.

ALEX (cont’d)
How’d it go?

JILL
I got it.

ALEX
Surprised?

JILL
No.

ALEX
Me neither.

They smile.

ALEX (cont’d)
So I have an appointment with a Mr. Broom and Mr. Mop at my apartment today. They both convinced me that

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
ALEX (cont’d)
I might be stuck there a little bit longer, but I should still make it nice. Would you like to join me?

JILL
Can I practice in the living room?

ALEX
You gotta make it perfect, right? It obviously worked.

JILL
Yeah.

ALEX
I was thinking, maybe on the way to our apartment, we could make a pit stop in Helsinki?

JILL
(chuckles)
I like that.

ALEX
Good! Thank god! Yes? Oh what a relief, I need someone to help get the bus tokens home.

They smile. JILL walks over and they kiss and hug. They grab each other’s hands and make their way down the street. The camera pans up as JILL and ALEX run to make the bus at the stop.

FADE TO BLACK

THE END