

ROSE BUD

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FADE IN:

INT. SULLIVAN'S BAR - NIGHT

A small place - got that local neighborhood bar vibe.

A YOUNG COUPLE grope each other in a corner booth. A symphony of arms, tongues and lips.

MELVIN (50s), perched on a stool at one corner of the bar pays the couple no mind. Beer in hand, he's laser-focused on a basketball game on the bar's flat-screen TV.

Behind the bar, TINA (35), petite and fit, hair in a ponytail, polishes the bar counter with a white rag. She holds a phone receiver to her ear with her free hand.

TINA

Got it. Okay...bye.

Tina hangs up.

TINA

Mel, you need another?

MELVIN

I always do. But I'll pass.

(points at TV)

It's almost over.

The DING of a bell as the front door opens. In comes JAMES (35), business casual attire.

He cradles a RED HEART-SHAPED PILLOW and a BOX OF CHOCOLATES under one arm, grasps a dozen ROSES in his other hand.

Tina waves her hand over the bar.

TINA

Anywhere you like.

James, head bowed and muttering something to himself, lumbers towards the corner of the bar counter opposite Melvin.

He saddles up on a stool and places the roses and the candy on the bar counter just to the side of him.

He sets the red heart-shaped pillow right in front of him. Then slowly bangs his forehead onto it - over and over.

Tina looks towards Melvin. Melvin circles his finger around his temple - gives Tina the "he's crazy" gesture.

James finally plops his head face down into the pillow for the last time - keeps it there.

TINA
What can I get ya?

James doesn't raise his head. Mumbles something indiscernible into the pillow.

TINA
Not a clue, dude.

More mumbles from James.

TINA
Hey! I don't care if you sleep here. But if you're going to stay, order a drink for Christ sakes.

The Young Couple, embarrassed - scramble out of the booth and head towards the door.

TINA
I didn't mean you --

The DING of the bell as the door opens and the couple exit.

TINA
Just as well.

Tina walks over to James, takes in the roses, candy and red pillow. She taps James on the back of the head.

TINA
Let me guess. Valentine's Day gone bad?

JAMES
(raising his head)
The worst. I think we broke up.

TINA
You think...?

JAMES
She just lives a block from here. She told me to wait here while she thinks about it.

MELVIN (O.S.)
I would have kept walking.

TINA
 (turns towards Melvin)
 Ssssh!
 (at James)
 Something to drown your sorrows in?

JAMES
 A shot of Tequila and a picture of
 Budweiser.

Tina looks towards the bar door - checking to see if
 someone's joining him. No one's there.

TINA
 You want a whole picture?

JAMES
 Yes - no mug.

James slumps his face back on the pillow.

TINA
 Alrighty.

Tina goes to the bar tap, pours a pitcher of Budweiser. She
 grabs a shot glass, fills it with Tequila.

Tina delivers the drinks.

James raises his head, places the stems of the roses in the
 pitcher of beer.

MELVIN
 Ah...
 (Citizen Kane style)
 Rose Bud.

James picks up the shot glass, slams it back.

JAMES
 Another, please.

Tina pours another shot.

TINA
 So, what was the issue?

JAMES
 She wanted something different for
 Valentines'. What was the word she
 used...? Oh, yeah - special. She
 wanted something special this year.

TINA
And your first thought was flowers
and candy?

JAMES
My first thought was bowling. She
nixted that.

TINA
(heavy sarcasm)
Wow, seems like a woman with
impossible standards to meet.

JAMES
I know, right?

MELVIN (O.S.)
Hold your ground, mate. What you
got her is just fine.

Tina turns towards Melvin.

TINA
No, it's not.

MELVIN
And believe me, the last thing you
want is an arms race.

What!?

TINA

Arms race?

JAMES

MELVIN
The romance arms race. Let's say
this year he goes all out. A bed
and breakfast weekend get-away or
something.

TINA
Your point...?

MELVIN
Well, then he's got to top it next
year. You know, cause he set the
bar. Maybe have to get her a new I-
phone or something.

TINA
Yeah, because phones are so
romantic.

MELVIN
And the year after that - even
bigger.

MELVIN (CONT'D)

Fore you know it she'd be expecting
two weeks in Hawaii for
Valentine's.

JAMES

He makes a good point.

TINA

(at Melvin)
Is that how you treat your woman?

MELVIN

You know I'm not with anyone.

TINA

Exactly.
(at James)
I think I make a better point.

JAMES

Hmm.

Melvin stands, grabs his coat from a rack.

MELVIN

Suit yourself. I gotta go.
(at James)
I'd keep walking, mate.

The DING of the bell as Melvin slips through the door.

TINA

Okay, let's see what you got here.

Tina picks up the red heart-shaped pillow - examines it.

TINA

Made in China.

Tina lifts the roses out of the pitcher of beer. Sees that a
frayed rubber band is holding them together.

TINA

Classy.

Tina picks up the box of chocolates.

TINA

Ahhh - a Whitman's Sampler.
So, which drug store?

JAMES

Pardon?

TINA

The pillow's bout five bucks. The roses are bound by a rubber band. Any florist worth their weight would've bound them in a ribbon.

(points at roses)

Those scream retail.

(taps the box)

But those are the dead give-away.

JAMES

Chocolates...?

TINA

I'll break it down for you. You got your Godiva chocolates. For my money, the best - but also the most expensive and you got to look for them. They aren't going to be on the shelf of your local grocery. After that, you have your Sees Candies. Not real expensive, but you have to actually drive to a Sees store to get them. You know, make an effort. And then...

(picks up the box)

You got your Whitman's Samplers.

JAMES

No good?

TINA

Available in any grocery or drug store worldwide and perfect for Valentine's Day. That is if you're broke or if you're twelve. You're obviously not twelve. Are you broke?

JAMES

No...Christ, chocolates are far more complicated than I would have guessed.

TINA

I'm guessing everything is.

TINA

So, you said she lives a block from here. Which direction?

JAMES

Why does that matter?

TINA
To pick the correct drug store.
Which direction?

JAMES
West.

TINA
The Rite Aid right off the freeway
off-ramp. You got all this there -
on your way to her place.

JAMES
You're kind of scaring me.

TINA
Five minutes in and out - tops. Am
I right?

An embarrassed James, nods.

Tina rests her elbows on the counter - feigns a dreamy-eyed
girl look.

TINA
That really does sound special.

JAMES
I know, I know. What makes it worse
is that it's our anniversary. We
met Valentine's day two years ago.

TINA
Ahh...

JAMES
Ahh what?

TINA
She wanted an engagement ring. That
was the something special.

JAMES
Really?

TINA
So you must not want to marry her.

JAMES
Of course I do. She's everything to
me. I just haven't found the right
time to ask.

TINA
Your two year anniversary falls on
Valentine's Day and you couldn't
think of the right time to ask?

James takes his smartphone from his pocket.

JAMES
I'll send her a text.

TINA
No! No text. Jesus, how thick are
you?

Tina grabs the box of chocolates.

TINA
I got a better idea.

She opens the box. Several pieces are missing.

TINA
You ate some!?

JAMES
I was hungry. Dinner wasn't going
to be for a couple of more hours.

An eye roll from Tina as she goes to the Cash Register. She
opens a drawer underneath the register, removes an ink pen
and a small blank piece of paper.

She returns to James - hands him the pen and paper.

TINA
What's her name?

JAMES
Amy.

TINA
Okay. Write - *Amy, I love you.*
Please marry me.

James looks at her - confused.

TINA
Go on. I mean unless you really
don't want to be with her.

James writes on the paper.

TINA
Okay - give it here.

James hands Tina the paper. Tina neatly folds it in half, tucks it underneath the center piece of chocolate, then puts the cover back on top.

TINA

Okay - pay attention now. I'm going to need you to focus.

James nods his head like an eager student.

TINA

You tell Amy that this note was in the box the whole time. That all you wanted her to do was open it so you could start your new life together. Got it?

JAMES

That's genius.

James picks up the box, the red heart shaped pillow and starts to reach for the roses.

TINA

Too late for those.

JAMES

You're a lifesaver!

James scurries towards the door. DING as he exits into the street. A satisfied smile crosses Tina's face.

INT. AMY'S TOWNHOUSE - JUST A BIT LATER

A teary-eyed AMY (32), clad in a black cocktail dress, holds the box of chocolates in one hand as she reads the hand-written note in her other.

An anxious James awaits her reaction.

Amy tosses the box of chocolates on the floor, wraps her arms around James' shoulders.

INT. SULLIVAN'S BAR - DAY

Tina at the bar wiping glasses.

Amy on a stool in front of her, reaching inside her purse.

SUPER: THE NEXT DAY

TINA
So, you're happy?

AMY
Ecstatic. I know he would've gotten
there sooner or later. But you
know, the sooner --

TINA
The better.

AMY
I can't thank you enough.

TINA
Hey, it was your idea. Pretty
clever.

Amy retrieves a hundred-dollar bill from her purse, places it
on the counter.

AMY
We agreed on a hundred - right?

TINA
You know - keep it. It was my
pleasure.

Tina slides the bill back towards Amy.

AMY
You sure?

Tina nods as she reaches under the bar, retrieves the roses,
still steeped in the beer pitcher.

AMY
He put them in beer?

TINA
He did indeed.

Tina removes a rose from the pitcher, hands it to Amy.

TINA
For your memory book.

AMY
Thank you.

TINA
Label it - Rose Bud.

FADE OUT.