FIND MYSELF AGAIN

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FADE IN.

EXT. HALLWAY (ALLISON’S APARTMENT) - NIGHT

XAVIER WAYNE, 20’s, rim horn glasses and red bow tie, dances down the hall. Headphones in his ear. He’s listening to an R&B song.

In his hand he holds a bouquet of RED ROSES, and a present expertly wrapped with a RED BOW.

He stops at a door. Number 9.

Slightly cracked. Knocks. It opens.

INT. LIVING ROOM (ALLISON’S APARTMENT) - CONTINUOUS

Xavier walks in. Looks down at the floor. High heels, sandals, pink Chuck Taylor’s and... a pair of MEN’S BOOTS!

He turns on the light. On the dining room table is a bottle of wine. TWO glasses!

He looks at a closed door. Allison’s room.

Slowly walks over.

Removes his headphones.

Touches the knob.

From inside he can hear her moans; YES! YES! OH BABY! DON’T STOP BABY, DON’T STOP! The man speaks, YOU LIKE THAT? She responds; YES! I LOVE IT! YES!

Xavier’s had enough. He PUSHES THE DOOR in.

The man jumps up. Falls off the bed.

ALLISON MOON, 20’s, hair all over the place, face dripping with sweat, covers up.

NAKED MAN
What the hell! I thought you didn’t have a boyfriend?

ALLISON
I don’t. Xavier what are you doing?

XAVIER
I was about to ask you the same thing.
ALLISON
I was having sex.

XAVIER
... I can see that.

Allison wraps herself in her blanket. Swiftly pushes Xavier out of the room.

EXT. HALLWAY (ALLISON’S APARTMENT) – CONTINUOUS

ALLISON
What are you doing here?

XAVIER
I just got off work. I came to bring you your birthday gift.

ALLISON
Why did you burst in my door like that? You had to hear us.

XAVIER
Because you’re cheating on me. That’s what people who get cheated on do. They burst through the door and say things like, “Ha! I knew it” or “I can’t believe this”.

ALLISON
Dating?... Baby, we’re not dating.

XAVIER
What?

ALLISON
When did we establish this? I don’t remember.

XAVIER
What about the dates?

ALLISON
Dates? We were just hanging out. I hang out with all of my friends.

XAVIER
Do you have sex with all of your friends?

ALLISON
Some of them, yes.
Realization hits him.

XAVIER
... Wow. I’m an idiot.

Xavier leans against the wall. Deflated.

ALLISON
You’re not an idiot. You’re a nice guy.

XAVIER
That’s code for undatable.

ALLISON
No, I’m undatable.

XAVIER
Why don’t women want me?

ALLISON
They do. You just... haven’t found the right one yet, because you’re looking too hard. Slow down, take a breath and open your eyes.

XAVIER
That was corny.

ALLISON
... So, what’s in the box?

He hands it to her.

She opens. Inside, a TEDDY BEAR.

Her eyes swell with tears.

ALLISON (CONT’D)
Oh my God.

XAVIER
It’s the one your brother got you before he left for duty and...

ALLISON
Thank you.

She goes in for a kiss.

Xavier dodges it.
XAVIER
Whoa. I don’t know where those lips... if you were... you know.

ALLISON
Well, like I was saying, you’ll find your girl eventually and --

XAVIER
Yeah, yeah, yeah.

He leaves.

A BEAT.

Naked man opens the door, still in his birthday suit.

NAKED MAN
So, are we done or...

ALLISON
Please leave.

NAKED MAN
Okay.

INT. LIVING ROOM (XAVIER’S APARTMENT) – LATER THAT NIGHT

Xavier enters the living room, head hanging low. Looks up.

A poster for the film ‘HOUSE OF YUKAI’ hangs on the wall. Written and directed by Xavier Wayne under the title along with praises such as ‘one of the best films of 2013’ and ‘first-rate thriller’.

He shakes his head.

Xavier’s ROOMMATES, DONNY, 20’s, and SHAWN, 20’s, are in the middle of an intense game.

DONNY
I told you, the splash sisters gets no buckets in Kwahi’s house.

SHAWN
Okay. Remember I still got Draymond and KD and both about to tap that ass in the second half.

They speak without looking over.

SHAWN (CONT’D)
X.
DONNY
What’s up negro!

Xavier slumps down on the couch between them.

DONNY (CONT’D)
The refs are cheating. They’re not calling any fouls.

SHAWN
Yo X, your agent called. Something about, only Tarantino gets to take three years off between films. Said to call him ASAP.

Xavier doesn’t answer.

DONNY
That was a foul! You see what I mean?!

Shawn pauses the game.

DONNY (CONT’D)
What the hell? I was about to hit a three. Stop cheating!

A BEAT.

SHAWN
X, what’s wrong?

XAVIER
... Did you know that Michelle moved on? She’s already dating again.

DONNY
Already? Nigga, you broke up three years ago.

SHAWN
Shut up. You’ve moved on too, what about Allison, what do you call that?

XAVIER
A friend with benefits.

SHAWN
What?
DONNY
A friend with benefits is a friend that you can have sex with but still remain friends and not --

SHAWN
I know what it is idiot! I thought you guys were dating?

XAVIER
... Yeah. So did I. I just left her place... she was with another guy.

DONNY
Damn... But she was kind of a ho, so... this is your fault.

XAVIER
Wait, what? Since when was she a ho?

DONNY
High School.

SHAWN
Middle School.

DONNY
Middle School?

SHAWN
She gave me a hand job in seventh grade.

XAVIER
And you’re just telling me this now.

SHAWN
I thought you knew.

DONNY
Everyone knows... except you. But you know now.

XAVIER
I was right in the middle of writing my next feature. Now what?

SHAWN
You finish it.

XAVIER
I can’t... Not anymore.

Xavier goes to his room. Slams the door.
... Are we going to finish? If not, I have the lead so --

Shawn leaves.

Donny unpases the game.

DONNY (CONT’D)
I told you that three was going in.

INT. BEDROOM (CHARLIE’S APARTMENT) -  DAY

Xavier lies on the bed next to CHARLOTTE “CHARLIE” EUBANKS, 20’s, effortless beauty, seriously, she doesn’t try and doesn’t care.

Bodies are close, less lovers, more siblings.

They’re watching a movie. Cliched dialogue and an overbearing sappy score blasts from the TV.

Xavier is completely engaged. Charlie’s eyes are glued to his reactions.

He feels the burns of her eyes melting the side of his face.

Pauses the movie. Looks over.

XAVIER
What?

CHARLIE
You’ve got to be kidding me.

XAVIER
What?

CHARLIE
You’re really enjoying this movie, aren’t you?

XAVIER
Is that a problem?

CHARLIE
Umm... YES! I thought you were supposed to be some kind of sophisticated film geek snob.

XAVIER
I am, I mean I do have great taste in movies.
CHARLIE
Really?

XAVIER
Clearly this is a guilty pleasure.

CHARLIE
You’re guilty alright. You should be locked up for liking this crap.

XAVIER
It’s not that bad. And I just went through a breakup. I need this. It’s therapeutic.

CHARLIE
You can’t break up with someone you were never dating, and it really is that bad and it’s slightly racist too.

XAVIER
WHAT!? I’ve heard many criticisms about this movie but never racist. Elaborate please.

CHARLIE
Okay, first off, the characters are unrealistic. The “super hot and cool best friend is the one” plot died in the nineties, maybe even the eighties.

XAVIER
Ouch.

CHARLIE
On to the subtextual racism. The woman that he chose to marry, that he got down on one knee and proposed to, is a complete bitch. And we never see why he even liked her in the first place, yes she’s beautiful and has a great pair of tits, but is that it?

XAVIER
Of course not, he had... bad taste in women.
CHARLIE
But the movie made him out to be this super smart, sensitive, humble, blah, blah, blah, blah. He’s pretty much the perfect guy. And he chooses her because of what, her looks? Was that his flaw? If so, it was never explained.

She stands to her feet. She’s about to drop the hammer now.

CHARLIE (CONT’D)
Then, he has this best friend, the perfect girl, she likes sports, and video games, she gives him his space, is the voice of reason, and was the only one there when his dad died.

XAVIER
Wow... All of these are legit flaws and I’m actually quite impressed. You sound like a film critic. But where’s the racism?

CHARLIE
You really need me to spell it out?

XAVIER
Yes.

CHARLIE
What color is the fiancee and what color is the best friend?

XAVIER
... Oh come on! You’re reaching.

CHARLIE
Really? The bitchy, money hungry, fame seeking, fiancee just happens to be a dark-skinned black girl while the cool, down to earth, lovable best friend is white. That’s a reach?

XAVIER
Yes. The director himself is a dark-skinned black man.
CHARLIE
My point exactly! The movie has an underlying message to indoctrinate black boys into believing that they should date white women.

XAVIER
Jesus!... You know who you sound like right now?

CHARLIE
If you say --

XAVIER
Lauren.

CHARLIE
There it goes.

XAVIER
She’s always complaining about underlying racism against black women in movies, in music videos, commercials, billboards, magazines, and on and on and on.

CHARLIE
A white girl, complaining about injustices against black women... Just when you thought you heard it all.

XAVIER
I agree that black women get the short end of the stick a lot... but sometimes, like right now, people tend to reach and that just prevents progress.

CHARLIE
... What a nice observation Dr. Wayne. Where did you get your sociology degree from again?

XAVIER
Ha, ha. Okay, next time you choose the movie.

CHARLIE
Great idea. Let’s watch a nineties classic. I just downloaded it.

XAVIER
Like what?
CHARLIE
Love Jones!

XAVIER
Is that a real movie or are you just messing with me?

CHARLIE
Some film geek you are. I’m sure Lauren has seen it.

XAVIER
I’m sensing hostility.

CHARLIE
Just a little bit.

Xavier turns off the movie.

XAVIER
Gotta deal with it later. I have to get going?

CHARLIE
Oh... What do you have to do?

XAVIER
One of my former classmates from film school wants my help co-writing a TV show, apparently, they have a contact at HBO. We’re having a sort of team meeting.

CHARLIE
That’s great! But how are you going to write for a TV show and finish your script?

XAVIER
... I’ll tell you later.

Xavier kisses her on the cheek and races out the door.

CHARLIE
(yelling)
This better not be one of your stupid ideas.

INT. A BAR AND A RESTAURANT - NIGHT

A bar and a restaurant, the actual name of the place, is nearly empty, with only one customer. He sits at the bar, barely able to keep his eyes open.
Charlie is next to him.

Xavier walks in. Looks around. Shakes his head, he’s not surprised by this.

He walks to the bar. The BARTENDER has a huge smile when he sees him.

   BARTENDER

   XAVIER
   What’s up brotha?

   BARTENDER
   Nothing much. So, what happened at your big meeting? Do I have to finally subscribe to HBO... legally?

   XAVIER
   No.

   BARTENDER
   What? Talk to me. What did you do wrong?

   XAVIER
   Nothing.

   CHARLIE
   You had to do something.

   XAVIER
   I did nothing and that was the problem.

   BARTENDER
   Explain.

   XAVIER
   Okay. What I’m about to say will make you laugh, or get upset or tease me or tell other guys and they’ll tease me or question my sexuality and --

   BARTENDER
   Just tell me what you did.

   XAVIER
   ... I turned down sex.
BARTENDER
Wait! You mean to tell me the whole gay sex ritual, sell your soul, sacrifice your first born child thing is real?

XAVIER
No... maybe, I don’t know, but there was no meeting with HBO. It was at this chick’s house.

BARTENDER
Oh. So you think you’re the first guy to turn down sex? What was wrong? Too big, too skinny, too ugly, didn’t smell right?

XAVIER
No.

BARTENDER
Who was it?

XAVIER
Natasha.

CHARLIE
With a nickname like Nasty Natasha, what did you expect?

BARTENDER
Nasty Natasha, I like the sound of that.

XAVIER
I brought her here last week.

The Bartender’s eyes widen.

BARTENDER
And you turned her down. What the hell is wrong with you?

XAVIER
I don’t like her... not like that at least.

BARTENDER
How did it happen? She asks and you just said no?

XAVIER
Something like that...
FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

INT. LIVING ROOM (NATASHA’S APARTMENT) – DAY

Xavier sits on a couch. He looks around. Confused.

NATASHA, 20’s, walks in, nothing in her eyes say brainstorm. She’s dressed in yoga pants and a tank top, no bra... For a meeting.

XAVIER (V.O.)
I got to her place on time. No one else was there. No biggie. I did show up thirty minutes early. But half an hour after everyone else was supposed to show up. She tells me...

NATASHA
No one else is coming. They just text me. Half an hour late. Can you believe that?

BARTENDER (V.O.)
What did you say?

XAVIER (V.O.)
I was like, Okay. We can still discuss, right? She said...

NATASHA
Sure. Let’s go to my room though. The AC’s broken down here.

BARTENDER (V.O.)
You’re really bad at reading signs.

XAVIER (V.O.)
I know. So anyway, we go to her room.

INT. BEDROOM (NATASHA’S APARTMENT) – CONTINUOUS

Xavier sits on the bed. No notebooks, laptops, or dry erase boards in sight. He again looks confused.

Natasha enters the room, wearing the shortest shorts you’ve ever seen.

She sits next to him.
XAVIER (V.O.)
So, she walks in and sits next to me, wearing panties, you know, the kind they sell in the shorts department and call shorts.

BARTENDER (V.O.)
Get to the good stuff!

XAVIER (V.O.)
So, we discussed the show for five minutes, maybe less. Then...

Natasha turns on some music from her laptop.

XAVIER (V.O.)
She finally cracks open her laptop, but to play the “Isley Brothers” ‘For the Love of You’. Says to me...

NATASHA
I feel like dancing. Dance with me.

Natasha pulls Xavier close to her. Very, very close.

They dance.

XAVIER (V.O.)
So we dance. Then...

Natasha puts his hands on her butt.

Xavier’s eyes widen.

XAVIER (V.O.)
She’s putting my hands all over her. And of course I’m a man so... you know.

INT. A BAR AND A RESTAURANT - SAME

Still at the bar.

BARTENDER
What?

XAVIER
You know. I got a... you know.

BARTENDER
You got an erection. A boner. A hard di --
XAVIER

Yes!

BARTENDER

Then what?

BACK TO FLASHBACK

Natasha’s hand slides down to Xavier’s crotch. She squeezes softly.

XAVIER (V.O.)

She grabbed it.

Xavier backs away. Guards it with his hands.

BARTENDER (V.O.)

And you pushed her away. Tell me you didn’t push her?

XAVIER (V.O.)

I didn’t. But she was still mad. She was like...

NATASHA

What’s wrong with you? I thought you knew what was happening.

XAVIER (V.O.)

So I said... I just can’t do it. She was like...

NATASHA

Why? I know you’re not gay, you slept with Allison Moon, and she said you were surprisingly good.

XAVIER (V.O.)

And I was like, wait a minute, what do you mean, surprisingly? And she was like --

BARTENDER (V.O.)

Get to the end. What was your excuse... or reason?

XAVIER

(Charlie V.O.)

I’m afraid of black women.

FLASHBACK ENDS.

Xavier sits next to the drunk.
He turns.

XAVIER (CONT’D)
I told her that I didn’t want to have sex with anyone else except the one.

BARTENDER
Which one?

XAVIER
The “one”.

BARTENDER
... Oh, the “one” like in those stupid movies you like.

CHARLIE
Exactly.

XAVIER
Whatever, cynics.

CHARLIE
I’m not a cynic. I’m a realist. And I know that those relationships in the movies don’t exist in real life.

XAVIER
What about Love Jones?

CHARLIE
Of course those exist in real life, that wasn’t a typical cheesy... you still haven’t seen it, have you?

XAVIER
... No.

BARTENDER
You’ve never seen Love Jones?

The bartender shakes his head.

XAVIER
To make matters worse. She said that the only reason she wanted me on the project was to have sex with me. She thinks House of Yukai was a fluke.

A BEAT.
XAVIER (CONT’D)
Maybe she’s right.

CHARLIE
Don’t say that. You’re a great filmmaker.

XAVIER
I still have to prove that... And I know exactly what I’m missing.

BARTENDER
What? A great script?

XAVIER
No... well yes, but No. I’m missing her.

BARTENDER
Natasha?

XAVIER
No. The one.

BARTENDER
Who?

XAVIER
I don’t know yet. But I will and soon. And Charlie’s gonna help me.

CHARLIE
I am?

XAVIER
Yes. I don’t trust anyone else. Clearly I have bad taste in women.

CHARLIE
Horrible.

XAVIER
And that’s why I need you to help me pick one.

CHARLIE
Pick one from what? Are you going to use some stupid dating app? Or are we talking a nationwide competition, with rounds, and winners and losers?

Charlie laughs.
XAVIER
Something like the latter.

CHARLIE
I will stab you right now.

BARTENDER
Shhh... I wanna hear the plan.

Xavier takes out his phone. Opens up Instagram.

XAVIER
So, the first three choices are Esmeralda, a writer and comic book artist. Tall, beautiful, super geek. Mia, a dancer... nuff said.

BARTENDER
Why these three?

FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Xavier, 20’s, longer hair, walks into a classroom. Only one other student is there. At the front of the class.

She turns. Smiles. She’s ESMERALDA TORRES, dark eyes, cinnamon skin, and black hair that hangs down her back like a mink coat.

XAVIER (V.O.)
I met Esmeralda on the first day of class.

Xavier walks up to her.

XAVIER
I guess I’m not the only one who believes the early bird gets the worm.

Esmeralda gives him a pity laugh.

ESMERALDA
Hi, I’m Esmeralda.

XAVIER
Xavier.

MONTAGE
Xavier and Esmeralda hang out.

XAVIER (V.O.)
She’s a writer, but her passion is comics and Sci-fi.

A. Esmeralda shows Xavier her collection of comic books and Sci-fi movie posters.

XAVIER (V.O.)
She’s a gamer... like a serious gamer.

B. Esmeralda screams at the TV while playing videos games with Xavier.

XAVIER (V.O.)
And she’s a talented artist.

C. Esmeralda draws a life-like portrait of Xavier.

BACK TO SCENE

INT. A BAR AND A RESTAURANT - NIGHT

He swipes to the next page.

XAVIER
Then, there’s Mia.

CHARLIE
The dancer, right?

XAVIER
Yeah.

CHARLIE
I’m curious about how you met her because I know it wasn’t at a club.

XAVIER
No.

CHARLIE
Because you can’t dance.

XAVIER
Yes I can.

CHARLIE
No you can’t.
XAVIER
Yes I... ah forget it. So, anyway,
I met Mia, not at a club, but on
the street.

CHARLIE
You just walked up to her and said
Hi? That’s bold.

XAVIER
No.

CHARLIE
She walked up to you?

XAVIER
No. Her body called me to her.

CHARLIE
Don’t make me slap you.

XAVIER
No, I’m being serious.

FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Xavier walks alone on the street.

XAVIER (V.O.)
I had just left the train station.
I was on my way to Winchell’s to
get a cream filled donut and large
coffee like I always do when I’m
writing. That’s when I saw her.

SALSA MUSIC PLAYS

A woman, in a black skirt with red ruffles, spins around
gracefully.

She dances like both no one is watching and everyone is
watching at the same time.

XAVIER (V.O.)
She was so graceful... and sensual.

She turns. Makes eye contact. This is MIA CHANG, short and
slender, like a firecracker, but inside is the power of a
nuclear bomb.
CHARLIE (V.O.)
What did you do?

XAVIER (V.O.)
I did what any man would’ve done...
I danced.

Xavier moves like a seasoned vet with Michael Jacksonesque spins and Latin shimmies.

CHARLIE (V.O.)
Stop!

FLASHBACK ENDS

Back at Bar

CHARLIE
Just stop it! You can’t move like that.

BARTENDER
I agree brotha, I’ve seen you sober and drunk... you’re terrible.

XAVIER
Okay, whatever. Anyway, I danced...

BACK TO FLASHBACK

Xavier now moves awkwardly and completely without grace or rhythm.

She inches closer to him.

They embrace. Dance.

Mia laughs as she tries to help the uncoordinated Xavier.

XAVIER (V.O.)
It was a weird but cool night.

MONTAGE

Xavier and Mia hang out.

XAVIER (V.O.)
Mia is a professional. She can do it all.

A. Mia gives Xavier a short demonstration of her variety of moves.
XAVIER (V.O.)
She’s unpredictable too... maybe too much.

B. Mia pulls the fire alarm in Xavier’s apartment. Runs off.

XAVIER (V.O.)
And she is not a fan of authority. At all.

C. Mia yells at cops, who are just sitting and eating donuts, while Xavier stands to the side with his head down. The cops get up, politely walk past Mia, and beat Xavier with their batons.

BACK TO SCENE

INT. A BAR AND A RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Xavier and Charlie are sitting next to each other now. The drunk is asleep... and snoring pretty loudly.

XAVIER
I guess he doesn’t like my plan.

CHARLIE
Well it is pretty ridiculous.

XAVIER
There’s one more.

FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

INT. LAUREN’S GARAGE - DAY

Xavier sits in a homemade studio, across from LAUREN MATTHEWS, 20’s, beach blonde hair and ocean blue eyes you’d be happy to drown in.

XAVIER (V.O.)
I was a fan of her podcast and agreed to do it at the height of the House of Yukai hype. The whole time she was talking I kept thinking to myself, Jesus she’s gorgeous... and so smart.

A.) Xavier and Lauren hang out in the library.
XAVIER (V.O.)
She is a voracious reader. She could talk about books for hours upon hours.

B.) Lauren walks the streets holding up signs demanding equality for women.

XAVIER (V.O.)
There’s no cause she’s afraid to stand up for.

C.) Lauren’s room is filled with posters of black culture.

XAVIER (V.O.)
And her knowledge of black culture. She --

CHARLIE (V.O.)
I think I get the point.

MONTAGE ENDS.

XAVIER
You really don’t like Lauren, do you?

CHARLIE
Not really. No.

XAVIER
I’m scared to ask this but...

CHARLIE
No. It has absolutely nothing to do with the fact that she’s white... Or is she black? I forget sometimes.

XAVIER
What happened between you two?

CHARLIE
We have a history. Let’s just leave it at that.

XAVIER
She’s really cool. I think you two should bury this hatchet. What if she’s the one? I can’t have my best friend and my girlfriend hating each other... I’m pretty sure there’s a movie about that.
CHARLIE
You have terrible taste in women.
Except for Michelle. She was cool.

XAVIER
But?

CHARLIE
But this idea is really, really, really, dumb. Your problem is that ever since Michelle left you, you’ve dated down because you don’t think you’re good enough. Raise your standards. Open your eyes.

XAVIER
Allison told me to open my eyes.

CHARLIE
That’s great advice... and by the way, Allison, really? You thought you were dating Allison Moon. Really?

XAVIER
I know, I’m a idiot.

CHARLIE
Yes. You are.

XAVIER
Are you helping me or what?

CHARLIE
... I shouldn’t. I’m sure my feminist card is going to get revoked... hell, my woman card too... But I know I have to be there when this crashes and burns... and this will crash and burn.

Xavier kisses her on the forehead.

XAVIER
You’re the best.

INT. LIVING ROOM (XAVIER’S APARTMENT) - NIGHT
Xavier and Charlie enter the living room.
Donny and Shawn are battling it out again.
XAVIER
Fellas. How much longer?

DONNY
Game one. Best of seven.

SHAWN
I’m sweeping this nigga. Won’t be long.

XAVIER
What’s quarter time?

DONNY
You already know, twelve minutes. Real time.

Xavier looks to Charlie. Mouths ‘sorry’.

CHARLIE
Well, I’m going for the Spurs.

SHAWN
Damn C-Murder. And I liked you.

DONNY
You’re rolling with a winner, C.

CHARLIE
I’ll catch you guys later.

SHAWN
Later.

DONNY
Peace and love girl.

CHARLIE
Last chance to back of this and save yourself the disappointment.

XAVIER
... Well... nope. Still doing it.

CHARLIE
Okay. I’ll see you tomorrow.

Charlie exits.

Shawn presses pause.

DONNY
You always press pause when I got the ball!
A BEAT.

SHAWN
I’m giving her time to leave so that she won’t hear me.

DONNY
Ooooh. Right. You about to say some foul shit, huh?

SHAWN
No.

XAVIER
You better not.

SHAWN
Look at this negro getting all defensive. I just wanted to know... is she single?

XAVIER
... Yeah. Why?

SHAWN
Well, let me see, she’s fine as hell, she’s talented, she’s smart, she’s a smart ass, she’s got a job... she’s damn near perfect. Only flaw I see is being best friends with you.

DONNY
(singing)
Cold blooded.

They pound fists.

XAVIER
You couldn’t get her.

SHAWN
And how would you know?

XAVIER
Because of everything that you just listed. When was the last time you dated a girl like that? I’ll wait.

DONNY
Daaaaaamn.
SHAWN
That’s hurtful asshole. I thought we were supposed to be kind of friends?

XAVIER
We are... kind of.

They all laugh.

Xavier joins them on the couch.

SHAWN
I have a question. Be real with me.

XAVIER
I’m always real. Ask.

SHAWN
... Are you not dating Charlie because you’re afraid of her leaving you like Michelle did?

A BEAT.

XAVIER
No. She’s my friend... just like you two. Simple as that.

SHAWN
Okay.

A BEAT.

DONNY
What happened with Michelle?

XAVIER
She cheated.

DONNY
... Damn... damn.

Shawn unpauses the game.

SHAWN
Let’s finish --

Xavier takes a deep breath.

XAVIER
We used to work together at bargain city.
SHAWN
(sarcastically)
Oh great, story time.

DONNY
What the hell is a bargain city?

XAVIER
Big dollar store chain, only on the east coast. She was the last cashier, the one at the end of the line, that meant she could do returns and purchases.

DONNY
Right.

XAVIER
She was so gorgeous. Big beautiful brown eyes hidden behind a pair of gazelle frames.

BARTENDER
Gazelle frames?

XAVIER
Yeah. She was retro.

DONNY
Dope.

XAVIER
Tall, slender body. Beautiful lips, dimples. Natural hair. Her smile... man, her smile. And that’s not the best part.

DONNY
There’s more?

XAVIER
She was smart. She read books in days, and by days I mean, she could read a book in one day. We’d have arguments and debates about world history, politics, sports, movies... she loved movies. She thinks Manhattan is better than Annie Hall but I didn’t hold it against her. And she was nice, genuinely nice.

DONNY
I’m sorry.
XAVIER
I’m over it.

DONNY
Really?

XAVIER
... No.

INT. XAVIER’S ROOM (XAVIER’S APARTMENT) – NIGHT
Xavier sits at his laptop. Stares at a blank final draft page.

Looks over at his phone.

XAVIER
This doesn’t mean I’m crazy... or obsessed. I just... I just need to know. That’s normal.

He grabs his phone. Paces back and forth.

Stops.

A BEAT.

Dials a number... HANGS UP.

He grabs a hoodie and leaves.

EXT. OUTSIDE OF MICHELLE’S APARTMENT – NIGHT
Xavier paces back and forth outside an apartment complex. He’s looking at a particular door.

Suddenly, an OLDER WOMAN exits her apartment. Walks over.

OLDER WOMAN
Good evening young man.

Xavier turns. Surprised.

XAVIER
Oh. Hi. Good evening.

OLDER WOMAN
Nice night, huh?
XAVIER
Umm... yeah... I’m not a criminal or anything. I’m not here to rob anybody or sell drugs.

OLDER WOMAN
(laughing)
Oh I know that. You’re a nice young man. I can tell... plus I’ve seen you here before.

XAVIER

OLDER WOMAN
Yeah. You were... doing the same exact thing. Pacing back and forth like you were trying to make a decision. If I’m not mistaken you’ve been here about four times.

XAVIER
I think you’re mistaken.

OLDER WOMAN
No. I don’t forget faces. Never have. I’m not complaining. I just thought you were considering getting one of these apartments. They’re nice. I’ve been here fifteen years, when they first opened up. Love it.

XAVIER
... Okay. Busted. I’ve been thinking of moving lately. I’ve got these two wild roommates. I think it’s time to be on my own.

OLDER WOMAN
I understand. Problem is, the apartment you’re always looking at. Someone already stays there. Pretty girl. About your age.

XAVIER
Really?

OLDER WOMAN
Yep.
XAVIER
Oh well. I guess I’ll get going.
Nice talking to you.

Xavier turns, and for a moment, loses his breath. Standing in front of him is MICHELLE MITCHELL, 30’s, the one that got away. She’s everything he described and more.

XAVIER (CONT’D)
... Umm... Hi.

MICHELLE
... Hi.

XAVIER
I... I was Umm...

OLDER WOMAN
He was just in the neighborhood.
Right Xavier?

Xavier turns to the old woman, his look screams ‘How the hell do you know my name?’.

XAVIER
Right.

OLDER WOMAN
Well, I gotta get going. You two have a nice talk. Michelle.

MICHELLE
Ms. Lewis.

Ms. Lewis goes back inside.

MICHELLE (CONT’D)
... Been a while.

XAVIER
Yeah... how’s everything?

MICHELLE
Good, good... you?

XAVIER
Good.

MICHELLE
That’s good.

XAVIER
Yeah.
A BEAT.

MICHELLE (O.S.)
So...

XAVIER
Why am I really here?

MICHELLE (O.S.)
Yes... well not like that but... yeah.

XAVIER
Well, I wanted to ask you... I needed some clarification.

MICHELLE
On?

XAVIER
Me. Us. You know, why... you dumped me.

A BEAT.

MICHELLE
Did you just get done watching High Fidelity?

XAVIER
No... I love that movie though, but I need to know what my flaws are. What to work on so that I don’t make the same mistake with... so that I don’t make the same mistakes again.

MICHELLE
Is there someone special?

XAVIER
Yes... Kind of, maybe. I’m about to enter a relationship again... the first serious one since...

MICHELLE (O.S.)
Oh.

XAVIER
I need to know. Please.

MICHELLE
It wasn’t you Xavier, it was --
XAVIER
Don’t say that! Every girl says that. Don’t be nice. I mean, I know you can’t help it but... be objective.

MICHELLE
Objectively speaking... it was me. I wasn’t in love Xavier. Not like you were. I didn’t believe in staying faithful to someone. That was a stupid --

XAVIER
Fairy tale.

MICHELLE
I wish I had your optimism. Your idealism. It’s not a flaw.

XAVIER
You still haven’t said what I did wrong.

MICHELLE
Because you didn’t do anything wrong.

XAVIER
Nothing. Nothing at all?

MICHELLE
If anything... you made it harder for me to break up with you.

XAVIER
How?

MICHELLE
Because you didn’t see the signs. They were everywhere.

XAVIER
I’ve been told I need work in that department.

MICHELLE
You’re a good guy Xavier. And your future girlfriend, whoever she is... she’s a pretty lucky lady.

XAVIER
You’re the second person to say that.

(MORE)
The first person who said it was my... well, I thought she was my girlfriend until I caught her in bed with another guy.

MICHELLE
I’m sorry... but it’s true, that girl doesn’t know what she’s missing.

XAVIER
... Still cooking?

MICHELLE
Yeah. I’m a sous chef at the new Japanese restaurant Downtown called Duck, Duck, Goose.

XAVIER
That’s great!

MICHELLE (O.S.)
What about you? I figured you’d be a multiple Oscar winner by now.

XAVIER
Oh me... I’m... still writing. As a matter of fact, I was writing before I left.

MICHELLE
Really? What is it about?

XAVIER
It... Umm... It’s hard to explain. I’ve never been good at pitching and --

MICHELLE
You have nothing?

XAVIER
Absolutely no clue what to write.

MICHELLE (laughing)
Get out of your head Xavier. Put it on the page. Whatever it is I’m sure it’ll be brilliant like House of Yukai.

XAVIER
... I love you.
MICHELLE (O.S.)
I know.

A BEAT.

XAVIER/MICHELLE (O.S.)
(in unison)
Empire Strikes Back.

XAVIER
... Thanks.

They hug.

MICHELLE
Whenever you’re in the neighborhood. Stop by the restaurant.

XAVIER
Definitely.

Michelle goes inside.

Off his look.

EXT. COMIC BOOK STORE - DAY

TITLE CARD - DATE #1 (ESMERALDA)

Xavier waits outside a comic book store. He looks down the street.

Esmeralda, wearing a YELLOW Batman T-shirt and cape, walks up, huge smile on her face.

CHARLIE (V.O.)
Remember, the initial interaction is very important. Watch the hug.

Esmeralda greets him, giant bear hug. Kiss on the cheek.

XAVIER
Good to see you too.

ESMERALDA
I’m really excited about this first issue. A lot of people think it’s a mistake to reboot Batman, it’s sacrilegious and all. I think it’s cool. I mean, it could even lead to DC hiring new writers for new stories.
XAVIER
And you’re one of those writers.

ESMERALDA
Exactly! I showed you my Batman stuff?

XAVIER
Yeah. I love it. Especially the villain, “Boy”. Great name by the way. How do you kill a kid? Even if he is a mass murdering psychopathic genius.

ESMERALDA
I know, right!

Xavier looks at the entrance.

XAVIER
Well, shall we?

They hold hands.

Enter.

INT. COMIC BOOK STORE – DAY

Xavier and Esmeralda lie on the floor staring up at the ceiling. Comics surround them.

ESMERALDA
That was a brilliant first issue.

XAVIER
Yeah. I still can’t believe you read it so fast.

ESMERALDA
I was excited.

XAVIER
I know. I was there.

ESMERALDA
... This is fun.

XAVIER
Yeah.
ESMERALDA
So, do you remember what you were going to ask me, before my phone call rudely interrupted you?

XAVIER
... Umm... yeah! I wanted to know... what was the best date you’ve ever been on?

ESMERALDA
Wow... well, I’d have to say comic-con, 2011.

XAVIER
Who took you to comic-con?

ESMERALDA
Victoria, my ex.

XAVIER
Oh.

ESMERALDA
What do you mean by Oh?

XAVIER
I mean, that’s cool. Absolutely nothing wrong with that.

A BEAT.

ESMERALDA
I’m teasing. I know what you meant. Anyway, we went dressed as Poison Ivy and Harley Quinn.

XAVIER
Nice.

ESMERALDA
We had an amazing time.

XAVIER
I believe you date who you want to date.

ESMERALDA
Exactly! I don’t fall in love with genders, I fall in love with --

XAVIER
People.
ESMERALDA
Right! What about you?

XAVIER
I like girls. I mean I’ve only fallen in love with girls... so far. There was this one time in High School, I had a friend name Aiden, pretty boy, soccer player. We used to hang out a lot and everyone thought we were gay but we weren’t. But if --

ESMERALDA
I was talking about your best date.

XAVIER

ESMERALDA
You were at that premiere?

XAVIER
Yep. My ex took me. I almost broke up with her when she said that Manhattan was better than Annie Hall but --

ESMERALDA
I’ve never seen Annie Hall.

XAVIER
What?

ESMERALDA
Is that a crime?

XAVIER
Felony. I sentence you to watching it with me.

ESMERALDA
Fair enough.

XAVIER
So, anyway, she made up for it by getting us tickets to that premiere. I rewarded her that night with slightly above average sex.

ESMERALDA
My favorite kind.
XAVIER
I saw Woody in person. One of my all time favorite memories.

ESMERALDA
Why did you and your girlfriend break up? Is Annie Hall that much better than Manhattan?

XAVIER
She cheated.

ESMERALDA
Oh. Sorry.

XAVIER
You?

ESMERALDA
She thinks Superman is a better character than Batman.

Xavier laughs.

Esmeralda isn’t joking.

XAVIER
He’s not. Never will be.

ESMERALDA
... Plus the sex was way above average.

They both laugh.

XAVIER
So, other than a love of everything Batman, what else are you looking for in a boyfrie --, I mean, a... partner?

ESMERALDA
Partner? Like business wise?

XAVIER
A person you’re dating.

ESMERALDA
Lover is fine.

XAVIER
What are you looking for in a lover?
ESMERALDA
Let’s see, I like people who... aren’t afraid to laugh at themselves. People who haven’t outgrown their childhoods. And people who are just real. Be yourself. That’s my favorite motto.

XAVIER
Cool.

EXT. COMIC BOOK STORE - NIGHT
Xavier playfully drags Esmeralda away as the comic book store manager locks up for the night.

XAVIER
That was fun.

ESMERALDA
Yeah. We haven’t been out like that in a while. To what do I owe this occasion?

XAVIER
... Nothing special. I just wanted to spend time with a cool person.

ESMERALDA
And you settled for me.

XAVIER
Cool people are overrated.

ESMERALDA
Extremely.

A car pulls up.

ESMERALDA (CONT’D)
That’s my uber. Thanks for the fun... what do we call this?

XAVIER
Hang out session.

ESMERALDA
Thanks for the fun hang out session.

She kisses him on the cheek.

Off his look.
INT. XAVIER’S ROOM - NIGHT

Xavier lies on his bed staring at the ceiling. Charlie sits in a chair, staring at him. Confused.

CHARLIE
So, was it fun, horrible, unexplainable? You haven’t said a word.

XAVIER
I’m trying to soak it in... it was great.

CHARLIE
Okay. How was the greeting?

XAVIER
Firm hug. Kiss on the cheek.

CHARLIE
Oh.

XAVIER
Is that a good oh?

CHARLIE
Yes. Kissing is good. What did you learn?

XAVIER
She dated a girl once. She doesn’t believe in falling in love with genders. She --

CHARLIE
Falls in love with people.

XAVIER
Yeah.

CHARLIE
So, other then the fact that she’ll probably cheat on you with a woman, it was nothing bad at all?

XAVIER
Well...

CHARLIE
Well what? Spill it.
XAVIER
Her schedule is always full. Online gaming tournaments almost every month. She spends a lot of money on comic books... a lot.

Charlie walks to a DRY ERASE BOARD on the wall.

The three names of the girls written on it. Underneath each name, PROS/CONS.

Charlie writes Time, Money Spending in the cons section under Esmeralda’s name. In the pros section, she writes ‘everything else’.

CHARLIE
Tough act to follow.

XAVIER
I’m sure Mia and Lauren are up to the challenge.

CHARLIE
We’ll see.

XAVIER
I see you’re having fun with this.

CHARLIE
Yeah... so much fun. Can I leave now?

XAVIER
You’re not staying the night?

CHARLIE
Donny and Shawn have girls in their rooms. And they’re all coked out of their minds.

XAVIER
Fuck!

CHARLIE
You’re not sleeping if you stay here tonight. Come with me if you want to sleep.

XAVIER
Done deal.
INT. DANCE STUDIO - NIGHT

TITLE CARD: DATE #1 (MIA)

SALSA MUSIC PLAYS

Xavier and Mia, alone, both decked out in all black, her a short skirt, him black dress shirt, slacks.

They stand face to face. Hands together. Staring into each other’s eyes.

A BEAT.

They dance.

Mia moves her body so naturally, you’d think she was born for this reason only.

Xavier is surprisingly good.

Mia is somewhat shocked.

MIA
What is happening right now? Did you practice?

Xavier spins her around.

XAVIER
Maybe.

MIA
I like it.

XAVIER
So... is being a good dancer part of your needs in a... lover?

MIA
Lover? Are you asking if good dancing equates to good sex?

XAVIER
No. I just meant your... significant other.

MIA
So why didn’t you just say boyfriend?

The music slows down.

They adjust their dancing accordingly.
XAVIER
Well some people don’t believe in labels.

MIA
Okay. Well, to answer your question. Yes. It’s very important. It shows courage.

XAVIER
Courage?

MIA
People who say they can’t dance are people that are afraid to let loose. Afraid to be teased. Afraid to truly not care what others think of them. That leads to a lot of bad decisions in their life.

XAVIER
... Damn. I never thought of it like that. I just presumed some people are more naturally gifted than others.

MIA
That too.

XAVIER
Have you ever dated a bad dancer?

MIA
Never. Good dancing doesn’t necessarily mean good person. I’ve dated some jerks who were phenomenal. I mean, M.J., James Brown, Fred Astaire, you name him, they mastered it... but they were horrible boyfriends.

XAVIER
What are the other qualifications?

MIA

The song changes again. Slower song.

MIA (CONT’D)
But most importantly. He can’t be boring.
XAVIER  
And what do you consider to be boring?

MIA  
A person who always does what’s expected of them. By the book. Easy to read. Safe.

Mia’s phone buzzes. She checks it. 
Stops dancing.

MIA (CONT’D)  
I’ll be right back.

She dances off.

XAVIER  
If I had a ring I might make a bad decision tonight.

Xavier dances alone to the slow song. 
The song ends. 
A BEAT. 
No more music is playing. 
Xavier walks over to the laptop. Searches for a new song to play. 
He hears JINGLING KEYS. Voices, a male and a female. 

MALE VOICE (O.S.)  
They’ve been improving each week. I really think it’ll help their marriage... what’s wrong?

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)  
Someone is here.

Xavier walks to the entrance. 
The door opens. MIDDLE AGED COUPLE stare at him. 

MAN #1  
Who are you and how the hell did you get in here?

WOMAN #1  
I’m calling the police.
XAVIER
(quickly)
Wait! Wait! I’m here with Mia, she said it was okay. She’s a student here.

MAN #1
Student?

XAVIER
Well, she comes here all the time to learn salsa and other Latin dances.

MAN #1
I don’t know who Mia is and this is not a dance studio. This is our apartment. This space is used to dance but we don’t have any students, we have clients, we’re marriage counselors.

A BEAT.

XAVIER
(under his breath)
She’s certainly not boring.

MAN #1
What?

XAVIER
Nothing. I’m so sorry. Please don’t call the cops. It was an honest mistake.

The man looks to his wife, nods. She puts away her phone. Xavier grabs the laptop.

XAVIER (CONT’D)
You guys have a great night.

EXT. XAVIER’S CAR – CONTINUOUS
Xavier walks up to his car. Mia sits on the hood.

XAVIER
Dance studio she said. Come here all the time she said.

MIA
Did you get a rush?
XAVIER
A rush?

MIA
When you realized that you could be in big trouble.

XAVIER
Well...

He thinks about what his answer could lead to.

XAVIER (CONT’D)
Maybe a little bit but --

MIA
I knew it! It’s so exhilarating isn’t it?

XAVIER
Yeah.

MIA
That was pretty mild for me.

XAVIER
I figured.

MIA
Maybe not for you though. Big black man in their apartment. You could’ve been shot.

XAVIER
(nervous laugh)
... Yeah.

MIA
That felt good. Too bad we’re going to have to cut this date short. I really got class in the morning. At a real dance studio.

XAVIER
Thank you for coming.

MIA
No. Thank you for inviting me. I like our little dates together.

She hugs him. Kisses him on the lips.

MIA (CONT’D)
We should do this more often.
XAVIER
I have no problem with that.

INT. XAVIER’S ROOM - NIGHT
Charlie is asleep on the bed. Xavier enters.
Jumps on top of the bed. Charlie wakes up.

CHARLIE
You must’ve been a joy as a kid.

XAVIER
My mom’s favorite.

Charlie sits up.

CHARLIE
So, lay it on me.

Xavier takes out his laptop. Plays *pop song*.
Picks Charlie up from the bed.

They dance.

XAVIER
She was great. The things she can do with her body... as impressive as any athlete.

CHARLIE
So you danced? You!

XAVIER
Yes. I’ve been practicing.

CHARLIE
I can tell.

XAVIER
Her flaw though, it may be too difficult to deal with.

CHARLIE
Which one?

XAVIER
Her spontaneity. The place we were dancing at... not a studio.

CHARLIE
What was it?
Someone’s apartment. They showed up.

What did she do?

She left before they arrived. She knew they were coming.

And what did you tell her about that?

Laptop dies. The song ends.

Nothing.

Xavier.

I know, I know. I couldn’t help myself.

So, is she off the list then?

Absolutely not. I can help her work on that.

Sure you can.

They both fall on the bed.

One more to go.

... Yep.

You staying or going?

Staying.

Cool. Can you do me a huge favor?
CHARLIE
What’s up?

XAVIER
... Do you mind... getting the light? I’m exhausted.

A BEAT.
Charlie hits him with a pillow.

INT. A BAR AND A RESTAURANT - DAY
Xavier sits next to the drunk. The Bartender is telling a story.

BARTENDER
The worst and best ten years of my life.

DRUNK
Never get married.

Xavier is silent.

BARTENDER
You haven’t said a word since you’ve been here. What’s up?

XAVIER
... My agency dumped me.

BARTENDER
Oh... sorry.

CUSTOMER
Why?

XAVIER
I haven’t done anything since House of Yukai. Maybe Natasha is right. It was just a fluke.

BARTENDER
Bullshit! That movie was great man. Flukes don’t make movies that good.

CUSTOMER
Question. Why haven’t you made your second movie yet? I thought House of Yukai came out three years ago.
XAVIER
It did... I haven’t written a
script since.

CUSTOMER
Well write one.

XAVIER
I can’t.

CUSTOMER
Why not?

XAVIER
Because... I haven’t found her yet.

CUSTOMER
Your special girl.

XAVIER
Yeah. I know I’ll be right again
when I get her. I know it.

BARTENDER
Was your date good?

CUSTOMER
Yeah, how was the dancer?

XAVIER
Great. Amazing... but she’s crazy.

CUSTOMER
Good crazy or bad?

XAVIER
I didn’t know there was a
difference.

BARTENDER
Oh there is. You see, bad crazy is
like a girl who goes through all of
your text messages.

CUSTOMER
Fights any girl that speaks to you.

BARTENDER
Wants you to check in with her
every time you leave the house.

XAVIER
And what’s good crazy?
BARTENDER
... The same. The chick is just a lot better looking.

A BEAT.

They all laugh.

XAVIER
Well, I guess she’s good crazy.

BARTENDER
Who’s next?

XAVIER
Lauren.

CUSTOMER
Where are you taking her?

XAVIER
I have no clue. I’m too broke to take her to any of the fun stuff she loves to do.

BARTENDER
Sometimes simple is better. A walk through a park. Riding bikes.

XAVIER
Yeah... those sound like great plans.

Xavier’s phone buzzes. He checks it.

XAVIER (CONT’D)
Gotta go. That’s Charlie.

He leaves.

INT. LIVING ROOM (CHARLIE’S APARTMENT) - DAY

Xavier enters the room.

Charlie is on the phone. Huge smile on her face.

CHARLIE
Yeah... Thanks... no problem, just make sure you’re at the next one. Okay... bye.

XAVIER
So, what’s the big news?
CHARLIE
I got a gig!

XAVIER
What! That’s amazing!

Charlie jumps in his arms. Xavier spins her around.

XAVIER (CONT’D)
Where is it? When? How long?

CHARLIE
Well, it’s a small bar. They usually do karaoke there but this is going to be their first ‘real singers’ night.

XAVIER
That’s amazing.

CHARLIE
It’s this Friday. 9:00pm. So, can you --

XAVIER
I’m there!

A BEAT.

CHARLIE
You’re the best... ever.

XAVIER
Yeah, I know.

Charlie slumps down on the couch.

Xavier joins her.

XAVIER (CONT’D)
I need your help.

CHARLIE
Anything.

XAVIER
I don’t know where to take Lauren for our date.

CHARLIE
Keep it simple. You’re not proposing.
XAVIER
That’s what I was thinking. A walk in the park is what I’m zeroing in on.

CHARLIE
Sounds good to me.

XAVIER
Wow. You’re really in a good mood.

CHARLIE
I know. I didn’t say anything bad about Lucy.

XAVIER
... Exactly.

They laugh.

INT. LIVING ROOM (XAVIER’S APARTMENT) - NIGHT

Shawn, Donny and the Bartender sit on the couch.

Xavier exits a room. He’s wearing black dress pants, black shirt and a RED TIE.

SHAWN
Are you going to be parking cars as well?

DONNY
I was thinking he was going to be the piano player.

Xavier looks at the Bartender.

XAVIER
Anything from you?

BARTENDER
Lose the brown shoes.

XAVIER
This is nice.

SHAWN
Yeah, but... no it’s bad.

DONNY
Very bad.
BARTENDER
Lose the brown shoes.

Xavier goes back inside.

Moments later, he returns. Gray sweater, brown slacks, same shoes.

SHAWN
Better.

DONNY
Worse.

BARTENDER
I told you already.

He goes back inside.

Moments later, he returns. Red plaid shirt, black jeans, black Chuck Taylor’s.

SHAWN
Hate the shirt.

DONNY
Yeah... and the pants.

BARTENDER
Question.

XAVIER
Yes.

BARTENDER
Why are you so concerned about what you’re wearing to Charlie’s gig?

XAVIER
Because I’m taking Lauren. This is our date.

BARTENDER
What?!

SHAWN
Big mistake.

DONNY
Makes sense.

SHAWN
Stop talking Donny.
BARTENDER
Dude, what happened to a walk in the park, a bike ride? Simple.

XAVIER
This is simple.

BARTENDER
No it’s not.

SHAWN
This is bad.

XAVIER
Why?

BARTENDER
You really need us to spell it out for you?

XAVIER
... You know what? No. I don’t care. I’m wearing this and I’m going to support my best friend and I’m taking Lauren. End of story.

Xavier grabs his cell phone. Exits.

DONNY
I’m confused. Why is this a bad thing?

BARTENDER
Because Charlie --

SHAWN
Don’t pay attention to him. He’ll forget five minutes from now.

DONNY
Hey man... ah, you’re probably right. 2K16?

BARTENDER
I’m down.

SHAWN
Let’s do it.

INT. KARAOKE BAR – NIGHT
Xavier enters the bar. It’s empty.
Charlie is on stage in a red dress. She assists the crew in assembling the equipment. Looks up. Spots Xavier. Smiles.

Moments later, the smile leaves when Lauren enters.

They find a seat.

**LAUREN**
I’m so excited. This is a really cool place. I’m getting a 1960’s vibe. Motown, Philly Soul.

**XAVIER**
I’m right there with you.

**LAUREN**
Where is everyone?

**XAVIER**
Don’t know. This place is always packed like crazy, I’m sure it’ll fill up soon.

**LAUREN**
I feel overdressed.

**XAVIER**
You’re not. You look amazing.

**LAUREN**
Thanks. I’m so shocked that Charlie wanted me here.

**XAVIER**
What?

**LAUREN**
We have a little... history.

**XAVIER**
I didn’t know. She said she has no problem with you. Trust me.

**LAUREN**
Cool. So, where have you been the last week or so?

**XAVIER**
Busy doing this and that.

**LAUREN**
Like?
XAVIER
Like... writing.

LAUREN
Really! That’s awesome. Can you divulge any details or is it a top secret plot?

XAVIER
Kind of top secret... but I can tell you the genre.

LAUREN
Romantic comedy-drama.

XAVIER
... Exactly.

Xavier looks up at the stage. The bar crew have left. Charlie stands with the bar OWNER.

LAUREN
What do you think is happening?

XAVIER
I don’t know. I hope it’s not cancelled.

Charlie nods to the owner. He leaves the stage.

She grabs a stool and sits. The lights dim. Only a spotlight remains on her.

She picks up her guitar. Plays a few notes.

CHARLIE
I’d like to Thank you all for coming out tonight. You look like a wonderful crowd.

Xavier and Lauren clap.

CHARLIE (CONT’D)
I’ll be singing an original song.

Charlie sings and plays like the house is packed.

Xavier and Lauren are both into the song.

Realization hits Lauren. The lyrics of the song have a deeper meaning.

She looks over to Xavier. He’s clueless.
Charlie ends her song.
Xavier and Lauren stand and applaud.
The lights come back on.
Charlie forces a smile. Walks over.

XAVIER
You were... I... there are no words.

LAUREN
I second everything he just tried to say.

CHARLIE
Thank you.

LAUREN
That song was so powerful. The lyrics really spoke to me. I had a similar experience in college.

XAVIER
Wait. Did I miss something?

CHARLIE
Of course you did.

LAUREN
You always do.

CHARLIE
Don’t worry about it.

LAUREN
What’s your plan? I know some people in the music industry. Mostly interns but they can slip your music to --

CHARLIE
I’m fine. I’m doing the social media Youtube thing.

LAUREN
That works. Let me know what I can do. I have close to a million followers because of my pod cast.

CHARLIE
That’s nice. I appreciate it.
LAUREN
I appreciate you inviting me.

CHARLIE
... Well... you’re welcome.

XAVIER
So, what are your plans for the night?

CHARLIE
Nothing special. You?

XAVIER
Lauren and I are --

LAUREN
Actually, I have to cancel. I forgot I can’t stay out too late. Big interview tomorrow.

XAVIER
Oh... well, let’s reschedule.

LAUREN
For sure. Just hit me up tomorrow evening.

Lauren and Charlie hug. Awkwardly.

LAUREN (CONT’D)
You were fantastic. Thanks again for thinking of me. I never expected it.

CHARLIE
... Neither did I.

LAUREN
But I enjoyed it.

CHARLIE
I’m glad you did.

A BEAT.

Lauren leaves.

XAVIER
I couldn’t think of where to take her and she’s been so busy lately and --

Charlie walks away.
INT. XAVIER’S ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Xavier stands and stares at the dry erase wall. Charlie sits on the bed reading a book.

    XAVIER
    Three good choices. Three good dates... still undecided for me. What about you?

Charlie is deep into her book. No response.

    XAVIER (CONT’D)
    C?

Still nothing.

    XAVIER (CONT’D)
    I think I’ll choose Lauren. What do you think?

Xavier jumps on the bed.

    XAVIER (CONT’D)
    Hey!

    CHARLIE
    What the fuck is wrong with you?

Xavier is taken aback.

A BEAT.

    XAVIER
    I’m sorry. I --

    CHARLIE
    Why would you invite her? To my first fucking gig!

    XAVIER
    I’m sorry. I --

    CHARLIE
    You wanna know what she did?... She fucked my boyfriend. He left me for her and she didn’t even want him. And you know what he did after she rejected him?... he tried to come back to me. And you invited her to my fucking show.

TENSE BEAT.
Charlie takes a breath. She needed that outburst.

She gathers her things.

    XAVIER
    Where are you going?

    CHARLIE
    Home.

LONG BEAT.

    XAVIER
    I’m sorry.

Charlie leaves. Slams the door.

Off his look.

TITLE CARD: DATE #2 ESMERALDA

INT. LIVING ROOM (XAVIER’S APARTMENT) - NIGHT

Xavier and Esmeralda sit on the couch. They’re watching Woody Allen’s ‘Annie Hall’.

It’s the last scene of the movie.

Xavier watches Esmeralda’s reaction. He smiles as he hears the dialogue for the hundredth time.


The credits roll. Xavier stops the movie.

    XAVIER
    So... thoughts?

    ESMERALDA
    It was okay.

    XAVIER
    Okay? That’s it?

    ESMERALDA
    It didn’t blow my mind.

    XAVIER
    What was it missing? No, what did you like?

    ESMERALDA
    I liked... Diane was good, I guess.
XAVIER
You guess? What about Woody?

ESMERALDA
He plays the same character in every movie.

XAVIER
Yeah, himself. What’s wrong with that?

ESMERALDA
Nothing, if you’re a fan.

XAVIER
Okay, what else?

ESMERALDA
... Umm... The music, the cinematography.

XAVIER
And...

ESMERALDA
That’s it.

XAVIER
Really?

ESMERALDA
I’ve seen better romantic comedies.

XAVIER
It’s not a romantic comedy. It’s a drama, with jokes.

ESMERALDA
I’m sorry. I feel like I just offended you.

XAVIER
Art is subjective. It’s fine. You’re fine. It’s good. We’re good.

ESMERALDA
Okay.

A BEAT.

XAVIER
So...
ESMERALDA
I have to... you know, stuff.

XAVIER
Yeah. Me too.

They hug awkwardly.

ESMERALDA
Next time. We can watch something I pick. Like Spiderman 2.

XAVIER
... Yeah.

ESMERALDA
You’re not thinking of Amazing Spider Man right?

XAVIER
Of course not.

ESMERALDA
Cool.

XAVIER
Yeah.

A BEAT.

ESMERALDA
Alright. Bye.

XAVIER
Bye.

Esmeralda leaves.

Xavier shakes his head. Disappointed.

TITLE CARD: DATE #2 (MIA)

INT. LIVING ROOM (XAVIER’S APARTMENT) - NIGHT

Xavier and Mia sit on the couch. They watch Spike Lee’s ‘She’s Gotta Have it’.

Mia is smiling. Xavier is too.

The movie ends.

XAVIER
So, what --
That was a great ending!

Really?

Yes. She ended up alone... but still free. I like that. Monogamy is a form of slavery. Never have truer words been spoken. Men are cool and smooth when they sleep around, women are sluts and whores. No more of that thinking. Wow. This movie should be remade today with all the slut shaming going on.

I... I did not expect that reaction.


Exactly.

The acting was cool.

Low budget. Looked great.

Black and white worked very well.

The musical number.

Brilliant.

And the decision to put it in color.

Genius.

Wow... I feel like watching another one.
XAVIER
Read my mind.

Xavier changes the film on his laptop.

They sit back and enjoy.

TITLE CARD: DATE #2 (LAUREN)

INT. LIVING ROOM (XAVIER’S APARTMENT) - NIGHT

Xavier and Lauren are on the couch. They’re both supposed to be watching Kevin Smith’s ‘Clerks’.

She’s asleep.

He wakes her up.

LAUREN
Shit, did I --

XAVIER
Yes. You fell asleep.

LAUREN
I’m so sorry. I’ve been working so much lately.

XAVIER
I know.

LAUREN
And this movie is too boring to keep me entertained.

XAVIER
Boring?

LAUREN
It’s just a lot of talking. Nothing else.

XAVIER
Just a lot of talking? Are you serious?

LAUREN
I’ve never been a fan of Kevin Smith.
XAVIER
I didn’t know that.

LAUREN
He’s corny. I loved his Prince story though.

XAVIER
The simplicity of the story is what makes it so great. The friendship, the banter, the decision making adults deal with that we never think about when we’re teens.

LAUREN
Boring.

A BEAT.

XAVIER
Can I ask you a personal question?

LAUREN
How personal?

XAVIER
Relationship wise.

LAUREN
Shoot.

XAVIER
You slept with Charlie’s boyfriend?

LAUREN
Wow... Okay... Yes. Yes I did.

XAVIER
That’s why you were shocked she invited you.

LAUREN
She didn’t?

XAVIER
No.

LAUREN
And she was pissed?

XAVIER
Extremely.
LAUREN
It wasn’t like that. I know
everyone says that, but it wasn’t.
He lied to me. And when I tried to
tell her, it was too late. Damage
was done. Does she hate you now?

Xavier hangs his head. Nods.

LAUREN (CONT’D)
Sorry. I should’ve told you.

XAVIER
It’s been a week.

LAUREN
I’ll talk to her.

XAVIER
Good luck.

INT. LIVING ROOM (XAVIER’S APARTMENT) – DAY
Xavier is playing video games against Shawn and Donny.

XAVIER
How does your ass feel Shawn? The
human body can only take so much
punishment.

SHAWN
It’s not over yet.

XAVIER
It was over when you put the game
on son.

SHAWN
Back me up partner.

DONNY
... It’s over.

SHAWN
You fucking suck.

The game ends.
Xavier celebrates.

SHAWN (CONT’D)
Next time.
XAVIER
Yeah sure. You guys ready?

SHAWN
I guess.

XAVIER
Let’s go.

INT. XAVIER’S ROOM – CONTINUOUS

Xavier, Shawn and Donny stare at the dry erase board.

SHAWN
So, how does this work?

XAVIER
Now, we compare.

SHAWN
Okay. Umm... Pros.

XAVIER
Esmeralda is a geek. I’m a geek. She’s a writer. I’m a writer.

DONNY
Pick her.

XAVIER
I’m not done yet. Her cons are her time and what she does with her money.

SHAWN
Her money?

XAVIER
Yeah, she... it’s about... stop making me sound sexist.

SHAWN
Sexist?

XAVIER
Or a whatever ist. Next, Mia. She’s fun. She’s exciting.

SHAWN
That’s a synonym of fun.

XAVIER
She’s... she’s fun.
DONNY
Pick her.

XAVIER
Donny, I swear to God.

DONNY
Sorry. Continue.

XAVIER
Then there’s Lauren. She’s been really busy so I haven’t much time with her... but she’s smart, and worldly. And she speaks her mind.

SHAWN
But?

XAVIER
She didn’t like Clerks. Hated it. Said it was boring.

DONNY
It was.

XAVIER
Mia loved She’s Gotta Have it. She’s a Spike fan.

SHAWN
Cool... But still crazy.

XAVIER
Esmeralda didn’t like Annie Hall either.

SHAWN
More than his other movies or at all?

XAVIER
At all?

SHAWN
Wow. I liked it. It’s not better than Midnight in Paris or Hannah and her Sisters but it --

XAVIER
Are you trolling me right now?
CHARLIE
No. And please don’t ever use that word again. Annie Hall is good but Hannah and her Sisters is better.

XAVIER
Whatever.

SHAWN
So who’s the lucky lady?

XAVIER
I don’t know.

SHAWN
After six dates? Some people claim to know within the first fifteen minutes.

XAVIER
I’m not some people. There’s a method to my madness.

DONNY
Just freaking pick somebody.

XAVIER
Mia.

SHAWN
Great.

XAVIER
No. You’re right. She’s nuts.

SHAWN
I didn’t say any --

XAVIER
Esmeralda.

DONNY
Cool.

XAVIER
But she’d never have time for me.

SHAWN
Lauren.

XAVIER
... You think so?
SHAWN
Hating Clerks is not as bad as hating Annie Hall. And it’s almost like you’re dating a black girl.

XAVIER
Almost a black girl. My favorite kind.

A BEAT.

XAVIER (CONT’D)
That was a bad joke.

SHAWN
Horrible.

XAVIER
So Lauren it is.

SHAWN.
Cool.

DONNY
... I would’ve chosen Mia... she’s a dancer... a dancer.

Xavier leaves.

INT. LIVING ROOM (LAUREN’S APARTMENT) - DAY

Lauren sits on her couch. A bowl of popcorn on her lap.

Xavier enters.

LAUREN
Have you ever seen Love Jones? It’s a classic nineties movie starring Nia Long and Larenz Tate.

Xavier sits on the couch.

XAVIER
Lauren... I haven’t written anything since Michelle dumped me. Nothing completed at least.

LAUREN
I already knew that.

XAVIER
I know.
LAUREN
So...

XAVIER
I think I know the key to my success. What I’m missing.

LAUREN
That’s great. Was is it?

XAVIER
Not a what, a who.

LAUREN
Who is -- wait, it’s me?

XAVIER
Wow. You got that pretty quickly.

LAUREN
That was a weak set up and lead into. You really need to stop watching those cheesy romantic movies.

XAVIER
Once you become my girlfriend I’ll be writing my own cheesy romantic movies.

LAUREN
... Are you joking?

XAVIER
No.

LAUREN
You think I’m the key?

XAVIER
Yes.

LAUREN
That’s stupid. Like really stupid.

XAVIER
I don’t... not to me.

LAUREN
You are the key Xavier. Not some girl. What about Charlie? Why are you coming to me? What did she say about this?
XAVIER
Well...

LAUREN
You’re still not talking?

Xavier shakes his head.

LAUREN (CONT’D)
You’re like a brother to me. I
never knew you even liked me.

XAVIER
The two dates. That’s... that’s why
I --

LAUREN
I thought it was because we were
friends Xavier. We always hang out.

XAVIER
... I’m so stupid. Allison said I
wasn’t an idiot but she was wrong.

He falls back on the couch.

LAUREN
What was your back-up plan?

XAVIER
Esmeralda or Mia.

LAUREN
Was this an experiment? A Test. You
were testing us weren’t you? You
mother-fucker!

Xavier doesn’t respond.

LAUREN (CONT’D)
This is too funny. Stupid but
funny. Call them now. Right now.
Get it over with.

Xavier takes out his phone. Dials a number.

Mia answers.

MIA (O.S.)
Hey!

XAVIER
... Umm... would... do you want to
date?
MIA (O.S.)
What? Like, date you?

XAVIER
Yes, me.

MIA (O.S.)
Sweetie, I’m not the dating type. I like my freedom, just like Nola Darling.

XAVIER
Right. Stupid of me. I’m really, really drunk.

MIA (O.S.)
No. I’m flattered but --

XAVIER
Bye.

Xavier hangs up.

XAVIER (CONT’D)
I don’t want to call Esmeralda.

LAUREN
Commit to this stupid idea.

Xavier dials another number.

Esmeralda answers.

ESMERALDA (O.S.)
Hey X! Make it quick. In the middle of an intense battle... Shoot it! What the hell is wrong with you!?

XAVIER
Okay... what do you think about dating?

ESMERALDA (O.S.)
Like, you?

XAVIER
Yes me!

ESMERALDA (O.S.)
I never thought of it. I don’t have time for a boyfriend X. You know this.
XAVIER
  Yes I do. Have fun.

Xavier hangs up.

A BEAT.

He throws his phone against the couch.

  XAVIER (CONT’D)
  That saved me time and gas money.

  LAUREN
  No one advised you against this?

  XAVIER
  ... Charlie.

  LAUREN
  Of course she did.

  XAVIER
  I blew it. I’m an idiot.

  LAUREN
  Yes you are.

  XAVIER
  I don’t know what to do.

  LAUREN
  Talk to Charlie.

Xavier leaves.

DREAM SEQUENCE

INT. LIVING ROOM (CHARLIE’S APARTMENT) – DAY

Xavier sits on the couch. Fidgeting.

Charlie enters, wearing a brown Whitney Houston sweater. Sits.

  CHARLIE
  What’s up?

  XAVIER
  Well... Umm...

  CHARLIE
  Use your words.
Okay. Let’s just get it over with. Shawn and Donny believe that...
that you like me. I don’t --

Charlie grabs Xavier and starts kissing him passionately. He returns the kisses. They are in full make out mode.

SUDDENLY, the door bursts open.

Lauren walks in.

LAUREN
What are you doing?

Xavier looks back.

XAVIER
Wait! It’s not what it looks... okay it is but, I... I...

Lauren leaves the apartment in tears.

Xavier turns back. Charlie is pissed.

CHARLIE
What about me?

XAVIER
Charlie... I...

Charlie runs into her room and slams the door.

Shawn and Donny then enter the room. They laugh and point at Xavier.

XAVIER (CONT’D)
Shut up! Shut up! Shut up! Shut up!

DREAM SEQUENCE ENDS

INT. BEDROOM (XAVIER’S APARTMENT) - DAY

Xavier jumps up from his sleep like he was falling off a cliff.

SHAWN (O.S.)
X, you okay in there?

XAVIER
... Yeah. I’m fine. Just a dream.
SHAWN (O.S.)
Cool... now shut up!

DONNY (O.S.)
Shut up!

SHAWN (O.S.)
Shut up!

INT. LIVING ROOM (CHARLIE’S APARTMENT) – DAY

Xavier sits on the couch. Nervous.

Charlie enters with tea. Wearing the BROWN WHITNEY HOUSTON SWEATER from the dream!

Xavier’s eyes widen.

CHARLIE
What?

XAVIER
Umm... nothing. Nothing.

CHARLIE
So, who says sorry first?

XAVIER
I’m sorry. I’m stupid.

CHARLIE
Very.

XAVIER
I was inconsiderate.

CHARLIE
Extremely.

XAVIER
And...

CHARLIE
Stupid.

XAVIER
Right. Forgot about that.

CHARLIE
I know why you’re here.

XAVIER
You do?
Charlie takes a sip of tea.

CHARLIE
You are so blind Xavier.

XAVIER
Michelle said the same thing.

Charlie walks around her apartment.

CHARLIE
I believed I was the right choice all along. But for some reason, I was scared. Scared that you would reject me. Pick Lauren, or Mia, or Esmeralda. Or anyone but me.

A BEAT.

XAVIER
I was so stupid. But...

CHARLIE
But what?

Xavier notices suit cases by the door for the first time.

CHARLIE (CONT’D)
Oh. I’m going to New York.

XAVIER
For what?

CHARLIE
The Atoms.

XAVIER
The what?

CHARLIE
They’re a rock and soul band.

XAVIER
Oh. So, you’re going to their concert?

CHARLIE
No. I’m the newest member.

XAVIER
Wow... how?

CHARLIE
... Lauren.
XAVIER
... That’s great. It’s pretty fucking awesome actually.

CHARLIE
I know.

XAVIER
Well, when are you leaving?

CHARLIE
Saturday morning. So what were you going to say?

XAVIER
That we should hang out before you leave.

CHARLIE
Cool. What did you have in mind?

XAVIER
A movie.

They hug.

Xavier leaves.

INT. MOVIE THEATRE - NIGHT

Xavier stands in the lobby of a movie theatre. Very few customers. Slow day.

A MANAGER walks out and greets him with a hug.

MANAGER
Superstar. Long time no see.

XAVIER
I need a favor. A huge favor.

MANAGER
What?

XAVIER
I fucked up... with a very special girl and I need to make it up to her.

MANAGER
How can I help you?
XAVIER
Have you ever seen Love Jones?

MANAGER
Of course. You?

XAVIER
Doesn’t matter. I want to show it on the big screen. Just the two of us. It’s her favorite movie.

MANAGER
... Wow. Well...

XAVIER
Please... this is my last chance.

A BEAT.

MANAGER
Okay. I’ll see what I can do.

XAVIER
Thanks! You won’t regret this.

INT. LIVING ROOM (XAVIER’S APARTMENT) - NIGHT
Xavier exits his room. Dressed quite dapper.

Shawn and Donny sit on the couch. Playing video games as usual.

SHAWN
Where are you going looking so fancy?

XAVIER
On a date.

SHAWN
I thought you got triple rejected?

XAVIER
I did.

SHAWN
So are you taking yourself on a date?

XAVIER
No. Charlie.

Donny drops his controller. Gets in Xavier’s face.
A BEAT.

Slaps him.

Xavier slaps him back.

He slaps Xavier back.

Xavier slaps him again.

Shawn jumps in between them.

    SHAWN
    What the hell are you guys doing?

    XAVIER
    Why did you slap me?

    DONNY
    Why are you asking so late?

    XAVIER
    What?

    DONNY
    You were supposed to ask after the first slap, like in the movies. And I would’ve said, I --

    XAVIER
    WHY-DID-YOU SLAP ME?!

    DONNY
    Because you’re stupid.

    XAVIER
    What?

    DONNY
    You don’t see that it’s too late?

    XAVIER
    What the hell are you talking about?

    DONNY
    You blew it. She liked you from the beginning. And you asked her, the girl that was in love with you, to help you find a girlfriend. Not just any girlfriend, ‘the’ girlfriend. You blew it.
XAVIER
Not exactly. Do you know where I’m taking her?

DONNY
Nowhere.

XAVIER

DONNY
I’m sorry. That’s cute... but it’s too late. Let this be a lesson.

XAVIER
Whatever. What do you think Shawn?

Shawn is silent. He simply stares at Donny in shock.

XAVIER (CONT’D)
I’ll see you guys in the morning.

DONNY
See you tonight.

XAVIER
Whatever.

Xavier leaves.

DONNY
Shawn, you okay?

SHAWN
... Did you smoke today?

DONNY
No.

SHAWN
Okay. Makes sense.

EXT. CHARLIE’S APARTMENT - NIGHT
Xavier waits by Charlie’s door. Checks his phone.
Knocks.
A BEAT. Nothing.
Knocks again.
A BEAT. Still no response.

Xavier takes out his phone. Sends a text.

A BEAT.

He gets a reply!

Checks.

INSERT ON REPLY (V.O. in Donny’s voice) - FUCK! I am so SORRY. I completely forgot you had something planned. The photo shoot date got pushed up. Rain check? - Charlie

Xavier sighs.

INT. MOVIE THEATRE - LATER THAT NIGHT

Xavier sits ALONE in the theatre watching “Love Jones”.

INT. LIVING ROOM (XAVIER’S APARTMENT) - NIGHT

Xavier walks into the apartment. Head down. Eyes to the floor.

Shawn and Donny are in their usual places.

He sits in between them.

Donny looks over.

XAVIER
If you say anything, I swear to God
I’ll....

Donny nods.

They all sigh collectively.

A BEAT.

Xavier stands. Smiles. Goes to his room.

INT. XAVIER’S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

He sits at his desk. Takes out his laptop. Furiously types away.

TITLE CARD: ONE YEAR LATER
INT. THEATRE - DAY

Two ACTORS who resemble Xavier and Charlie, sit on a bed, they’re on a STAGE.

XAVIER
Let’s watch a movie.

CHARLIE
Has to be something good. No more corny romantic comedies.

XAVIER
How about a nineties classic?

Charlie puts the movie on. Kisses him on the cheek.

They make out. Music plays.

Lights go out.

A BEAT.

The audience erupts in applause.

Lights come on. Xavier stands on the stage with the cast. They bow.

INT. BACKSTAGE - DAY

Xavier and the cast are taking selfies. Charlie enters. Xavier spots her.

They embrace with a hug.

CHARLIE
That was so good.

XAVIER
Thanks. I tried.

CHARLIE
So... did they have sex at the end? I don’t remember that happening. I mean, I know it’s just an adaptation.

XAVIER
It’s called artistic license.

CHARLIE
We loved it.
XAVIER

... We?

Charlie turns and points, a HANDSOME MAN, 30’s, walks over.

HANDSOME MAN

Loved it.

Extends his hand. Xavier shakes it.

CHARLIE

This is my boyfriend Justin.

XAVIER

It’s nice to meet you.

JUSTIN

Is it? It doesn’t hurt, just a little bit?

XAVIER

... No. I --

CHARLIE

Don’t pay him any mind.

JUSTIN

In all seriousness, the play was fantastic.

XAVIER

Thanks.

CHARLIE

So, how’s everything?

XAVIER

Good. Great. I’ve written ten screenplays.

CHARLIE

Wow!

XAVIER

Yeah. I’m in a groove. What about you?

CHARLIE

Everything is great. Album is complete and has a release date. I met this great guy... then he moved to Europe, so I started dating Justin.
JUSTIN
Nice. Hurts to laugh.

CHARLIE
How’s your... you know. Your...

JUSTIN
You have a girlfriend?

XAVIER
... No. Too focused on writing.

CHARLIE
That’s what I like to hear. Look, if you’re not writing tonight, join us as the third wheel for dinner. We’re going to Duck, Duck, Goose.

JUSTIN
Please.

XAVIER
... Sure.

Charlie BEAR HUGS him.

CHARLIE
It’s on us.

JUSTIN
It is?

CHARLIE
Well of course by us I mean you.

JUSTIN
... Whatever you say sweetheart.

They leave.

Off Xavier’s look.

INT. THEATRE - NIGHT

Xavier cleans up. He’s alone, or so he thinks.

TRACY, 20’s, the actress who plays Charlie, approaches him.

TRACY
I took care of the back. Took out the trash too.
XAVIER
Really? You didn’t have to do that.

TRACY
I know. I wanted to.

XAVIER
Thanks.

TRACY
Any plans for tonight?

XAVIER
Just hanging out with an old friend. You?

TRACY
Nothing.

A BEAT.

TRACY (CONT’D)
Okay. Have fun.

Tracy walks towards the exit.

XAVIER
(to himself)
I could be wrong... fuck it. Tracy!

She turns.

XAVIER (CONT’D)
... Would you like to go out with me? Tonight.

TRACY
I thought you hanging with an old friend?

XAVIER
I am. It’s Charlie and her fiancee. I’m the third wheel. It’s at Duck, Duck, Goose, cool restaurant. Michelle works there.

TRACY
So, you want me to go out on a double date, with the real life person that I’m portraying in a play, who used to be in love with you, at the restaurant where your ex now works?
XAVIER
... That does sound crazy. You know what, never --

TRACY
I’d love to go.

XAVIER
... Really?

TRACY
Yes.

XAVIER
Okay... I’ll pick you up around 7:00.

TRACY
Great.

Tracy leaves.

XAVIER
This should be a movie... no, a TV show. My life is a TV show. Wow.

Tracy walks back over.

TRACY
Who are you talking to?

XAVIER
Huh? Oh, no one. Let me walk you to your car.

They walk off.

FADE TO BLACK