

Pardon My French

by
Francesca Rizzo

Francesca Rizzo
497 Hamilton Street,
Rahway, NJ 07065
646 418-3301
fran@francescarizzo.com

EXT. SUBWAY STREET ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Snow SILENTLY blankets the streets as LINDA, a woman bundled in a big men's coat, emerges from the station. A platoon of BUSINESSMEN engulf her - leaving her at the sidewalk...where she slips on the snow.

She grabs the pole stopping her fall. Embarrassed, she dusts herself off and continues on. And slips again.

INT. VIDEO STORE - NIGHT

Linda, entranced by the selections in the Romance section, doesn't notice a MAN trying to flirt with her. After he gives up -- she sees him and flirts feebly but to no avail.

INT. COSMETICS PLUS STORE - NIGHT

Linda saunters down the aisle and sneaks a sniff from a bottle of BRUT, catching a rush from the manly aroma.

EXT. LINDA'S BROWNSTONE - NIGHT

A COUPLE stand entwined in a passionate embrace on the lamplit stoop. In the distance, plodding home, is Linda. She stops at the stoop, staring at them in awe then climbs the stairs, trying not to disturb them as she sidles by.

LINDA

Sorry. Excuse me. I just -- Hi,
Stan.

INT. LINDA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The front door opens, Linda enters and looks down.

LINDA

Hi ya! Hi ya! Did you miss me?
Yes, you did ... yes, you DID!
(sighs)
I gotta get a dog.

INT. LINDA'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Linda, unpacking her groceries and preparing a light dinner, singing a made-up song a capella to amuse herself.

INT. LINDA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Linda lies in bed, clad in Victoria's Secret, watching a sexy French film while she eats a baguette and sips wine. As she watches, hooked on the images and SOUNDS, we hear the STEADY THUMPING upstairs of Stan and his girlfriend.

EXT. LINDA'S BROWNSTONE - NIGHT

Linda's bedroom window, the blue light of the TV flickering as the snow swirls past.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL...Linda's flickering blue window AND Stan's window upstairs, a couple silhouetted against a soft golden glow.

PULL BACK EVENTUALLY TO REVEAL...Linda's blue window, Stan's golden window and eight other windows in the brownstone. All flickering blue.

INT. TOMLIN EDITING ROOM - DAY

The Seine. A dream-like panorama of Paris at night. ROMANTIC MUSIC softly plays as a WOMAN stands alone at the railing. A lone MAN appears along the promenade. They walk slowly towards each other, both increasingly excited. The MUSIC SWELLS, they meet and as their lips touch -- a PHONE RINGS. While the on-screen couple kiss, we HEAR...

LINDA
TomLin Productions.

MOM
So, what's on your filthy mind?

LINDA
Hi, how're ya feelin'.

MOM
I'll live.

LINDA (OS)
You went to the doctor?

MOM
I don't like him. He's very handsy. What, were you out trottin' last night?

LINDA

Nah, I just stopped and got a movie.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL...a shot of the Eiffel Tower on an old monitor and a woman's hands flying over the keys as she talks. Wearing glasses, old jeans and a workshirt we see LINDA editing intently, the phone nestled to her ear.

MOM

You stayed in again?

LINDA

Uh huh.

MOM

With a boy?

LINDA

Yeah, with a "boy". I'm forty years old, Ma.

MOM

Hey. Watch that tone.

LINDA

...Mommy...

MOM

So, what're you doing, making another slide show?

LINDA

Video. It's video, Ma. We haven't worked with slides in, like eight years.

She briskly shakes a cigarette from her pack, jams it in her mouth and brings her lighter up.

INT. POPE KITCHEN - DAY

As MOM languidly lights a cigarette sitting in her immaculate N.J. kitchen. She is a handsome, imaginatively coiffed woman in her sixties.

MOM

I can see you're in a mood. Is Tommy there?

LINDA

He's on the other line.

MOM
Let me talk to him.

LINDA
(into intercom)
Tommy, pick up on two. It's my
mother.
(into phone)
So, where's Daddy --

TOMMY
-- Hey Gorgeous, what's doing?

INT. TOMLIN OFFICE - DAY

TOMMY, a cranky, slightly chubby guy in his late thirties
sits at his desk swamped with papers and bills.

MOM
Hiya, doll. My daughter thinks I'm
a rotten mother because I never
listen.

TOMMY
I don't blame you. I only listen
because she pays me.

LINDA
...Ha ha ha...

MOM
She's a brat, huh, Tom? Tell her
I'm very interested in everything
my daughter does --

TOMMY
She's very interested in everything
you do.

MOM (O.S.)
Vincent! Where are you putting
that? The baggies go in the drawer
by the sink.

BACK TO POPE
KITCHEN...

Mom's covering matchbook covers with contact paper while
talking to her husband, VINCENT, who's just out of frame.

MOM (CONT'D)
BY THE SINK. Yes. Right there.
Good.

(into phone)
So anyway, Tommy, I got up VERY
early this morning, had a cup of
coffee and I made my list.

TOMMY
Uh huh.

BACK TO TOMLIN
EDITING ROOM...

Resigned, Linda SWITCHES MOM TO THE SPEAKER PHONE and screens
her edits of the sight-seeing pleasures of Paris.

MOM
I figured, first - I'm gonna take
all the sheets off all the beds and
do a load. Then I thought --

BACK TO TOMLIN
OFFICE...

Tommy, smiling, leaning back in his chair enjoying the show.

MOM (CONT'D)
Second - I'll take down all the
drapes and shake them out because
they are FILTHY.

TOMMY
Right.

MOM
Then, third, I decide I'll be
ambitious. I'll clean the kitchen
cabinets and wipe them down with a
little ammonia. And then I
thought...

BACK TO POPE
KITCHEN...

Mom, exhaling a cigarette.

MOM (CONT'D)
...Aaah, fuck it.

Tommy laughs.

MOM (CONT'D)
So, you were alone again last
night?

BACK TO TOMLIN
EDITING ROOM...

Linda busy editing.

LINDA
Me? Yeah.

MOM
I don't like this, Linda.

LINDA
Ma, I don't need a penis to watch a
movie.

MOM (OS)
You never know. It could come in
handy.

BACK TO TOMLIN
OFFICE...

TOMMY
BYE, ladies.

He hangs up.

BACK TO TOMLIN
EDITING ROOM...

LINDA
Yeah, well a lotta things could
come in handy right now.

MOM (OS)
Why, what do you need?

LINDA
What do I need? You really want to
know what I need?

MOM (OS)
Yeah.

LINDA
I need something to happen to me,
Ma. Something big. Something
wonderful. Something romantic.

(MORE)

LINDA (cont'd)
 Something that will change my life
 forever.

MOM (OS)
 Oh, you ARE in a mood.

The ROMANTIC MUSIC cassette tape has run out. Linda flips it
 back in again as the VIDEO MONITOR goes to snow.

INT. LINDA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The TV SCREEN snow as Linda lays curled up, eyes open.

INT. TOMLIN OFFICE - DAY

Looking down through the window we can see Linda maneuvering
 a large Electronics box out of a taxi, slipping on the ice.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL...Tommy looking out the window lost in
 thought, broken by Linda CLOMPING in, kicking the snow off
 her boots. Linda triumphantly heaves the box onto the desk.

LINDA
 Hey.

TOMMY
 Hey.

LINDA
 What.

TOMMY
 We're in trouble.

LINDA
 What.

TOMMY
 I finally got through to
 TravelTime. They went Chapter 11.

LINDA
 Get out. How much did they owe us?

TOMMY
 About \$20,000, last count.

LINDA
 WHAT!?! Weren't you BILLING them?

TOMMY

Yes, I was BILLING them - they just weren't PAYING us! I've been BILLING them for the past four MONTHS!

LINDA

They're our only CLIENT, Tom.

TOMMY

I know, Linda. This is MY company, too! And I kept telling you we needed to bring in other work. Not to put all our eggs in one basket. But you never want to know that stuff - you just want to know if you'll need a passport and when your plane leaves.

LINDA

Yeah, but YOU --

TOMMY

No, YOU were the one who kept accepting their jobs. YOU were the one who had to go to FRANCE!

LINDA

Hey! TOMMY! BACK off.

Tommy walks out of the office into the hall to cool down. Linda collapses into her chair and lays her head on the desk. The PHONE CHIRPS. She answers it.

LINDA (CONT'D)

Tomlin Productions. We'll Do Anything.

ALAIN (O.S.)

(sexily)

Come live with me in Paris.

LINDA

Alain! How's it hanging?

INT. ALAIN'S OFFICE - DAY

Alain, a very handsome Frenchman, speaking accented but impeccable English, sits at his desk in Paris. We CUT BETWEEN them as they talk.

ALAIN

It's hanging beautifully, Linda. I need you.

LINDA (O.S.)

Oh, yeah? For how long?

ALAIN

A lifetime.

LINDA (O.S.)

That long, huh?

ALAIN

Well, maybe just a year. You know I have the attention span of a flea.

LINDA (O.S.)

I know. So, what's up, Frenchboy?

ALAIN

(amused)

I love it when you call me that. You are so silly. OK, listen, darling, we are hearing that TravelTime just went down. Is this true?

LINDA (O.S.)

Like the Titanic.

BACK TO TOMLIN
OFFICE...

The DOWNSTAIRS BUZZER RINGS. Linda buzzes the caller in.

ALAIN (OS)

Well, then we have decided, hell, we don't need to go through them to hire you. Right? We can can just book you directly?

LINDA

I don't know. Wait. Let me have Tommy get on.

ALAIN (OS)

Linda - no. Not TomLin, just you. We have enough producers, we need only an editor.

LINDA
Oh, Alain - don't be telling me
this.

ALAIN (OS)
We like Tommy, Linda, he's good,
but it's only you we really need.

The OFFICE BUZZER RINGS. Linda walks the phone to the door.

LINDA
Alain, hold on a sec.

Linda opens the door. Standing there is a very sweet YOUNG
WOMAN who looks about seventeen.

LINDA (CONT'D)
Hi. Can I help you?

KATHY
(shyly)
Um. Is Tommy here?

LINDA
(a little nonplussed)
Tommy? Yeah...sure. Who should I
say is here?

KATHY
Um. I guess me.

LINDA
And you are...?

KATHY
Kathy?

LINDA
Kathy?

KATHY
Un huh.

LINDA
And he's expecting you?

KATHY
Uh huh.

LINDA
Well, he's right down the hall.

KATHY

That one?

She points to the only hall in the office.

LINDA

Yeah. That one.

KATHY

Thanks a lot.

LINDA

No problem.

(back to Alain)

I hate you so much, Alain.

BACK TO ALAIN'S
OFFICE...

ALAIN

(laughing)

The money's very good. So is the wine. Think about it.

LINDA (OS)

No, Alain, I can't do that.

ALAIN

(very sexily)

Then think about Paris. We could sneak away...you and I...someplace quiet, très elegant. Call me when you mean yes. I know you miss me.

LINDA (OS)

Yeah. So does your wife.

INT. TOMLIN EDITING ROOM - DAY

Linda strolls into the editing room, finding Kathy on Tommy's lap, horsing around.

LINDA

Whoops!

The lovers part. Embarrassed, Kathy pecks Tommy's cheek.

KATHY

I'm sorry, see you later, 'kay?

Then she rushes apologetically past Linda out the door. Bemused, Linda smiles pointedly at Tommy.

TOMMY
So, she's young.

LINDA
She looks about twelve.

TOMMY
Well, she's not illegal, she just
seems younger than she looks and
she looks...

LINDA
...young.

TOMMY
Yeah.

EXT. TRIBECA STREETS - DAY

Linda and Tommy, bundled up, walking down the street.

LINDA
She's cute.

TOMMY
Yeah. I don't know what she's
doing with me.

LINDA
Maybe she needs a Dad.

He bumps into her and shoots her a look.

TOMMY
C'mon, it's nice. Y'know, I get to
sort of go back in time.

LINDA
And not screw things up.

TOMMY
And not screw things up.

INT. IRISH BAR - DAY

Linda and Tommy drinking beer and eating lunch at the bar.

TOMMY
Right on the ground, huh.

LINDA

Well, that was in the olden days.
Back when I "did it in the road".

TOMMY

All that gravel.

LINDA

Back when I used to have sex.

TOMMY

Way back.

LINDA

Yep. I think I've pretty much done
this single thing to death.

TOMMY

I know what you mean.

LINDA

I don't know how much longer I can
be a good date.

TOMMY

Right.

LINDA

I think I'm gonna have to put my
foot down.

TOMMY

Yeah.

LINDA

Okay, so. I'm being forced to make
an important decision.

TOMMY

(pointing to her sandwich)
Uh huh. You gonna eat that?

LINDA

Ready? Cause it's important. The
next man I sleep with is gonna be
the man I marry.

Tommy looks up from his sandwich.

TOMMY

Again?

LINDA
I made this decision before?

INT. LINDA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Linda, at her vanity, applying her make-up purposefully, like war paint.

INT. WESTSIDE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Linda, fully made-up and looking "date-ish", is having dinner with a nice-looking BUSINESSMAN in a suit.

LINDA
Well...I don't know, I guess I just sort of fell into it after college. It's certainly not what I set out to do, I mean, travel videos aren't exactly, you know...

The man smiles, and nods.

LINDA (CONT'D)
But, I actually have this dream that some day, I don't know, I'm hoping that eventually I may be able to --

LUKE
--You're a very intriguing woman. Do you know that?

LINDA
That I'm...intriguing?

LUKE
Yes.

LINDA
No.

LUKE
You know, Tommy didn't tell me how attractive you are.

LINDA
Oh yeah? What did he tell you?

LUKE

Well, he said that you were very nice, very funny, a little bossy and looking to settle down.

LINDA

What a guy.

LUKE

So, I just wanted you to know that I'm not really looking to get serious right now.

LINDA

Okay.

LUKE

I'm coming off a bad relationship, actually a series of bad relationships, one right after the other, and I --

LINDA

-- No, it's really okay --

LUKE

And my work takes up a lot of my time, it's difficult for me to make plans --

LINDA

-- that's fine with me --

LUKE

But I mean, just looking at you I see a woman who, at your age, has a lot to offer the right man and deserves to be treated with respect...and I just feel that I should be up front with you so there's no hard feelings after.

LINDA

After what?

LUKE

(intimately)
What do you think?

LINDA

(fed up)
Look, Seth, is it?

LUKE

Luke.

LINDA

Look, Luke, I'm not even real sure
I want to finish having dinner with
you.

A beat. Luke bursts out laughing.

LUKE

You ARE very funny.

INT. LINDA'S HALLWAY - DAY

The next morning. Linda, dressed for a meeting, rushes out of her apartment, fumbling with her keys, dropping them in her haste. She barrels down the hall, then stops in her tracks.

LINDA

Shit.

She's forgotten something. She rushes back, fumbles with the keys, lets herself in. A beat. She reappears, even more discombobulated, with her briefcase.

LINDA (CONT'D)

(Annoyed with herself)
This is great.

As she rushes back down the hall, and bounds down the stairs.

INT. LINDA'S VESTIBULE - DAY

At the mailboxes, she fumbles with her keys, as a TALL, RUGGEDLY HANDSOME MAN climbs the outer stoop, checking the brownstone number against a small slip of paper in his hand.

As Linda wrestles with a roll of magazines wedged in her mailbox, the man enters the outer vestibule and checks out names on the buzzers. He presses one. And waits.

Linda glances at him through the glass door. Her eyes bug out. He is CUTE. Real CUTE. The man glances up at her and, catches her looking at him. She panicks and averts her eyes.

Acting casual, she stuffs the wad of mail into her briefcase and sneaks another look - the man is STARING AT HER. She's embarrassed. He smiles. She opens the door, shyly, and tries to pass him on her way out.

MICHAEL
I know you, lady.

Linda looks up, startled. She squints at his face.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
You have no idea who I am.

LINDA
I have no idea who you are.
(beat)
Oh my God...MIKIE!

He laughs goodnaturedly and bear-hugs her.

MICHAEL
Linda Pope.

LINDA
Oh my God, Mikie, I had no idea it
was YOU!

MICHAEL
That's okay, nobody does.

LINDA
No, I mean it. You're a man!

MICHAEL
Well...yeah.

LINDA
I mean, like...a big man.

MICHAEL
I know, I kinda blew up in college.

LINDA
What are you doing here?

MICHAEL
Looking for you.

LINDA
(Embarrassed)
Get out. Are you living in the
city now?

MICHAEL
Yeah! Since like last week.

LINDA
This is unbeliev --

MICHAEL
You look exactly the same!

LINDA
Yeah, right!

MICHAEL
I mean it.

Linda slyly glances at her watch. She is really late.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
Hey, Linda. I've been looking for
that face for twenty years.

She is absolutely bowled over.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
But, you must be in a hurry. Maybe
I can call you--

LINDA
Oh, no, no, I have...plenty of
time.

EXT. BAIG OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

Linda, rushing to meet an agitated Tommy at the entrance.

TOMMY
You're late. As usual.

LINDA
Sorry. These trains are really
screwed --

Tommy ducks into the revolving door, as Linda falters in
choosing the compartment that's right for her.

INT. BAIG ELEVATOR - DAY

Linda and Tommy straighten themselves up for the appointment.
Linda glances at him.

TOMMY
How was your date with Luke last
night?

Linda glares at him. Tommy laughs, he knows Luke is a jerk.

LINDA
You have a booger in your right nostril.

TOMMY
(touching his nose)
Yeah?

LINDA
Yeah. Not with your HAND! You're gonna shake his HAND with that hand.
(beat)
Okay, so what's this guy's name.

TOMMY
You really prepared for this, didn't you. I told you before...Mr. Big.

LINDA
Mr. What??!

The DOORS OPEN. Linda's eyes look straight out of the elevator... and then, drop down.

TOMMY
(extending his hand)
Aaah...Mr. Big?

INT. BAIG LOUNGE - DAY

There stands MR. BAIG, a diminutive, smiling Indian gentleman in a beautifully cut European suit.

MR. BAIG
(beaming happily)
Yes, and yet I am so small! It is a very big joke, is it not?

Behind him is a stunning lounge covered with framed McDONALD'S posters. A woman, MONIQUE, leads the way through French doors.

INT. BAIG PRIVATE OFFICE - DAY

It is a shrine to the French culture - authentic Impressionist art, French antiques, the works.

Mr. Baig sits at his desk, Monique stands behind him.

MR. BAIG

I must first say -- my name is not
'Big', much as I would prefer it to
be. It is 'Bah- eeg'. Say it with
us -- it is fun --

ALL

Bah-eeg.

MR. BAIG

I can see we are going to have a
multitude of laughs. Monsieur
Healy, I must say I was very
impressed with your video tape
and...I think you and your lovely
assistant are going to make me
famous. Correct?

Linda, piqued at the "lovely lady" reference, mouth open --

TOMMY

Mr. Bah-ig, let me just interject
here that Ms. Pope, although
lovely, is actually my PARTNER and
an excellent video editor --

MR. BAIG

(a twinkle in his eye)
-- Ah, but can she COOK?

Linda looks sullenly at Tommy who laughs nervously.

INT. BAIG LOUNGE - DAY

The French doors open and Mr. Baig and Monique lead Linda and
Tommy out.

MR. BAIG

And Monique would be the one
working with you -- she knows
everything there is to know in all
the world...

MR. BAIG (CONT'D)

...I think I'll keep her!

MONIQUE

(wry Brooklynite)
He thinks he'll keep me.

MR. BAIG

And I think you will like the title. Please, be kind with me. It came to me in a dream. Will you hear it?

LINDA

Sure.

MR. BAIG

Ready? Remember, it is a French cooking show, okay? Okay. It is called "FIRST YOU TAKE A LEEK"!

(pause)

L-E-E-K...leek. It is comical. You see?

Linda and Tommy smile frozenly.

MR. BAIG (CONT'D)

So. Is it a deal?

LINDA

We'd like to think --

TOMMY

It's a deal!

Mr. Baig offers his hand -- he is one happy monsieur. Tommy shakes on the deal as Linda glares at him.

INT. ELEVATOR - DAY

Linda and Tommy face front. Linda's pissed.

TOMMY

Did you see the size of this check? We can do this. We can do this.

LINDA

Yeah, Tommy? First, YOU take a leak.

The ELEVATOR DOORS CLOSE.

INT. BAIG BUILDING LOBBY - DAY

The ELEVATOR DOORS OPEN. Linda and Tommy get out.

LINDA

Don't EVER do that to me again. Do NOT make a deal without consulting me. Got it?

TOMMY

We didn't have a choice, babe.

EXT. BAIG OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

They emerge from one revolving door, wedged in together.

LINDA

And don't "babe" me, Tommy. We could've made some calls --

TOMMY

I called Alain. Forget Paris, Linda. They don't need us. They're pulling their own team together there. We've got this here.

LINDA

Yeah, but that's not the point...

TOMMY

Face it, Lin...Paris is gone. Come on...be a big girl, wave "bye bye".

LINDA

This is not funny.

TOMMY

(making her hand wave)
Come on, wave "bye bye" to Paris.

LINDA

(pushing his hand away)
Not with THAT hand! Ew.

EXT. WESTSIDE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Through the window we see Linda, all dolled up, waiting. She squirts lens drops in her eyes as Michael bounds up. Her face brightens. He walks inside and we see the polite awkwardness of a first date.

INT. WESTSIDE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Later in the meal. Linda is nervous but struggling to act cool. The bottle of wine is almost empty.

LINDA

Well, Tommy usually handles a lot of the business stuff, which is great, but, I don't know, I guess somewhere along the line I got a little off-track. Like I've been kind of floating cause, I'm not really doing what I meant to do, y'know, this stupid dream that some day I could actually make...

MICHAEL

Documentaries.

LINDA

Right! How did you know that?

MICHAEL

That's what you were always gonna do.

LINDA

I was, wasn't I? See?

MICHAEL

Oh yeah...you were like Little Miss Margaret Mead. You cracked me up with that film strip thing you made on the Beatles.

LINDA

(remembering, laughing)
"The Beatles & ME"! I don't even know where that is anymore!

MICHAEL

You should make something like that again.

LINDA

Yeah. That was fun. Well. It's not that easy. I don't know...someday.

MICHAEL

Well, if anyone can do it...you can.

LINDA

Yeah?

They look at each other for a moment.

MICHAEL

I thought about you, Linda. I really did.

She's speechless.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

After your family moved away, I used to go park my car by your old house... and then, actually a few years ago, when I got back to the states, I tried to find you again.

LINDA

(trying to act calm)
Oh, really?

Linda clunks her wine glass against her front teeth.

MICHAEL

Yeah, well...it was a bad time for me.

(Beat)

So. Did you ever get married?

LINDA

No, not really.

MICHAEL

Not "really"?

LINDA

Well, actually, not at all.

MICHAEL

Hunh. I would've thought somebody would've bagged you by now.

LINDA

Nope. Nobody bagged me. I'm unbagged. I'm bag-free.

(beat)

What about you, did you ever get... bagged?

MICHAEL

Once. For about a second.

LINDA
Really? When?

MICHAEL
Oh, a while ago.

LINDA
What happened?

MICHAEL
I don't know. I don't think she
liked me.

LINDA
Why not?

MICHAEL
Well, I wasn't a very likeable guy.

LINDA
(teasing)
Mikie, I find that hard to believe.

MICHAEL
(smiling)
Believe it.
(beat)
More wine?

EXT. LINDA'S BLOCK - NIGHT

Linda and Michael walking home under a light snow, finding
all sorts of excuses to bump into each other.

MICHAEL
Linda Pope. I can't believe I'm
walking down the street with Linda
Pope.

Linda smiles awkwardly.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
So. Are you seeing anyone these
days?

Linda trips but covers it amazingly.

LINDA
Me? No. Well...no. I've kinda
been on strike.

MICHAEL

Yeah? I know what you mean. I've been taking a little sabbatical myself.

LINDA

On purpose?

MICHAEL

Yeah, I'm like a monk. I made a vow not to inflict myself on anyone for a while. Sort of a public service.

LINDA

See, and I always thought you were such a nice boy.

MICHAEL

I know. I could never figure that out. You were the only girl in the whole school who'd even talk to me. I was such a little geek.

LINDA

But you were a cute little geek.

MICHAEL

I looked like 'send this kid to camp'.

LINDA

(laughing)

Yeah, you did. What happened, your hormones finally kick in?

MICHAEL

Yeah. Pope, it was the weirdest thing. You know...I'm just this skinny punk and then I go away to Cornell and like, overnight I grow two inches and gain about forty pounds. It was scary. I'd look in the mirror and go "Who's that?"

LINDA

Wow.

MICHAEL

And all of a sudden all these girls start paying attention to me and it was really weird, like, what do they WANT from me? They don't even KNOW me. Y'know, what do you WANT?

LINDA

(dryly)

Yeah...it must have been hell.

MICHAEL

(laughing)

It WAS. I mean, it was...in a way.

LINDA

Yeah, I know. But you must've gotten used to it after awhile.

MICHAEL

Nah. Stays with you.

A beat.

LINDA

(tentatively)

Guess what. I kept all those letters you wrote me.

MICHAEL

God. Burn them.

LINDA

No. They were very...sweet.

The snow is falling heavier as they climb Linda's stoop.

MICHAEL

Did we ever kiss or anything?

LINDA

(a little surprised)

Nope.

MICHAEL

I really was a geek, huh?

Tentatively he leans over. It's a long, still KISS and Linda opens her eyes and looks up into the snowy night.

LINDA

Uh oh.

MICHAEL

What?

LINDA

(embarrassed)

I don't know...Um...I think I'm...

And she faints. We...

PULL BACK TO REVEAL...Michael catching her as she slides down his body. He stands frozen in this tableau.

INT. LINDA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Sunlight streams in on rumpled sheets and strewn clothes. Eventually we see Linda's body slumped over the side of the bed. Silence for a moment, then...

TOMMY

You fainted?

Linda turns over on the bed, phone tucked next to her ear.

LINDA

No...I swooned. I was being so cool and then I actually swooned.

TOMMY

Were you drunk?

LINDA

No, just really, really weak. It's like a sickness, it's like a disease. ...I just get nutty around guys like him. It's a problem I have.

TOMMY

Uh huh.

LINDA

I mean, here's this sweet, gooney guy who's been crazy about me since we were kids and he's, like, suddenly turned into my absolutely perfect type.

INT. TOMMY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Tommy sits on the edge of his bed, clipping his toenails. Past the bedroom door we see KATHY, doing Tai Chi.

TOMMY
And what type is that?

LINDA
The type that never wants to go out
with me. You know. Movie stars.

TOMMY
Movie stars?

LINDA
Well, not movie stars -- more like
a "part" a movie star might play.
Like "a rugged cowboy" or "a rugged
cop".

TOMMY
Well, what's he?

LINDA (OS)
A rugged poet.

TOMMY
Uh huh.

INT. TOMLIN OFFICE - DAY

Tommy walks down the hall towards the bathroom. Linda
follows.

TOMMY
So, did you do it?

LINDA
I was passed OUT, TOMMY!

TOMMY
I meant when you CAME TO, Lin-DA!

LINDA
No, I'm...waiting.

TOMMY
For what?

LINDA
You know. My decision. The next
man I sleep with is gonna be --

TOMMY
(walking into bathroom)
-- You told HIM that?

LINDA
Whaddya think, I'm nuts?

She follows him INTO THE BATHROOM. He stares at her.

TOMMY
Linda.

LINDA
Oh.

She realizes and steps into the hall. He closes the door.

TOMMY
(from inside bathroom)
So what'd he say when you wouldn't
do it?

LINDA
He didn't try.

TOMMY
He's gay.

LINDA
Oh, I doubt it.

TOMMY
He good-lookin'?

LINDA
Yeah.

TOMMY
Three dollar bill, Linda.

LINDA
He's NOT. He's very...not gay.
Believe me. He, like, drips
testosterone.

TOMMY
(exiting bathroom)
Yeah? I'd like to meet this guy.
He better not drip any on me.

INT. POPE LAUNDRY ROOM - NIGHT

Linda and Mom are doing a load. Mom is folding the laundry into immaculate stacks. She is the queen of laundry.

MOM
 (intimately)
 So...is he somebody new or somebody
 old?

LINDA
 Both.

MOM
 Uh huh.

LINDA
 He hasn't actually called again.

MOM
 Uh huh.

LINDA
 So, I don't know...maybe I'll call -

MOM
 (yelling into the hall)
 WHAT, Vincent?

Mom STEPS OUT OF THE ROOM.

MOM (CONT'D)
 I am talking to your daughter! I
 can't have two conversations at
 once --

A beat as Linda stands folding her mom's flannel nightgown.

MOM (CONT'D)
 IT'S INTERESTING TO YOU, VINCENT,
 THAT DOESN'T NECESSARILY MEAN IT'S
 INTERESTING TO --
 (walking back in)
 -- Don't you DARE call him. A girl
 never calls a boy.

LINDA
 Things have changed.

MOM
 Oh yeah? You NEVER let them know
 you like them. They don't like it
 if you like them. You have to NOT
 like them. Then they love you.

LINDA
 That's really healthy, Ma.

MOM
 Well, it works for me. What can I
 say?
 (yelling into the hall)

WHAT???

(to Linda)

See? Now I can't talk -- your father wants me to watch
 something on the TV.

(Steps into hall)

VINCENT, WHAT DID YOU WANT ME TO WATCH?!

Mom STEPS BACK IN.

MOM (CONT'D)
 Egrets. I have to watch egrets on
 the television. I have no life.

Mom WALKS BACK OUT and Linda FOLLOWS.

INT. POPE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Mom huffs in, with Linda just behind her. VINCENT, a big,
 handsome, gentle-looking man in his sixties, sits in his easy
 chair cutting an apple, watching the Discovery Channel.

MOM
 (standing in front of the
 TV)
 Uh huh. Uh huh. Are they mating
 or killing? It's hard to tell.
 (to Linda)
 So, you like this boy?

LINDA
 Well, I really don't know --

Vincent gets up and goes into the kitchen. We hear a
 DISHWASHER OPEN and the CLASHING OF SILVERWARE as...

MOM
 VINCENT! Not from the dishwasher!
 From the DRAWER!

INT. POPE KITCHEN - NIGHT

Even later, Linda and her Mom sit at the kitchen table for a midnight coffee klatch.

MOM
Want some more decaf?

LINDA
Yeah.

She gets up and pours them more coffee.

MOM
(singing low and jazzy)
"Java, Java...java java jing jing
jing." This stuff tastes like crap.

LINDA
I know.
(beat)
You shoulda kept with it, Ma.

MOM
Hey, don't start. Whaddya want,
your father didn't like me singing
in the clubs.

LINDA
Oh, it's all Daddy's fault?

MOM
What do you know about being
married?

LINDA
Not a whole lot.

MOM
Yeah, well try it sometime. It's a
picnic.

LINDA
I can see that.

MOM
Look Doll, you want to know what
you're in for? I'll tell you. In
the beginning... they're so nice,
so romantic -- then they come in --
they take over.

(MORE)

MOM (cont'd)
 Start telling you what to do, where
 to go. What's he doing now?

Linda leans back in her chair and glances down the hall at
 Vincent, who sits in his easy chair, reading.

LINDA
 Reading his bible.

MOM
 Jealous. An animal. To this day.

LINDA
 Dad?

MOM
 You know how every Wednesday I go
 visit my sisters in Linden? You
 know what I do?
 (silently mouths)
 I go dancing.

LINDA
 What?

MOM
 (mouthing very slowly now)
 I...go...dancing.

LINDA
 I have no idea what you're saying.

MOM
 I'll SMACK you!

Linda leans in close to her mother.

MOM (CONT'D)
 (whispering in her ear)
 I go dancing with your aunts at the
 Senior Citizen Center.

LINDA
 So?

Mom furiously SHUSHES her.

LINDA (CONT'D)
 What's wrong with THAT!

MOM
 There's men there.

LINDA

They gotta be like a hundred years
old, Ma.

MOM

Doesn't matter. Your father'd go
wild.

LINDA

So tell him to take you dancing.

MOM

YOU tell him. He's got a date with
the Virgin Mary in there.

Linda leans back again in her chair to steal another glance
at her father who has nodded off, bible in lap.

MOM (CONT'D)

Wait. Someday you'll see.

Linda takes a sip of her coffee. Over this we hear...

MICHAEL (O.S.)

So, do you want to get married?

And she chokes on her coffee. Over this we now hear...the
WAIL of a saxophone.

INT. DAN LYNCH BLUES BAR - NIGHT

Michael and Linda are just getting settled at a small table
in the corner as a small three-piece blues band sets up.
Linda, struggling with a wayward purse under the table, bangs
her head.

MICHAEL

You know...someday.

LINDA

(recovering)

Ooh...you mean "theoretically"?
Like a "concept". Oh. I really
don't --

MICHAEL

'Cause I just can't get over
it...you never even came close?

LINDA

(uncomfortable)

Well, I think I was asked a couple of times, but... it's all a little hazy to me...I don't know, it just never seemed right.

MICHAEL

Why not?

LINDA

I don't really want to ...

MICHAEL

Oh, come on. It's me. Why not?

LINDA

Well, um...they never fit this... picture, I guess, of how I saw --

MICHAEL

So, you broke some hearts.

LINDA

Long time ago, maybe. There were some nice guys...one in particular...

MICHAEL

What happened to him?

LINDA

(changing the subject)

Let's just say that marriage has always been something I am both strongly drawn to and equally repelled by and I'd rather not discuss it anymore, okay?

MICHAEL

But, wouldn't you want to have a kid some --

LINDA

Michael!

MICHAEL

Nah, I just --

ANDY, the bartender stops by the table.

ANDY
(handing him a slip of
paper)
Hey, Noonan. You had a call today.
I think it's that guy from the
magazine.

MICHAEL
(reading it)
Oh, yeah. Good. Yeah. Okay.

ANDY
You two want anything?

MICHAEL
Couple more beers.

ANDY
Got it.

He returns to the bar.

LINDA
Come here often?

MICHAEL
Nah, I just don't have a machine.

LINDA
Ah.

MICHAEL
So, where were we?

LINDA
Um. You don't have a machine.

MICHAEL
No, oh yeah, so do you think you'll
want some kids or...

LINDA
Michael, what is the deal with you?

MICHAEL
(flirty)
I don't know...it's been on my
mind.

She studies him suspiciously.

LINDA
Yeah, well, get it off your mind.

MICHAEL

Whoa.

LINDA

C'mon, let's talk about something else.

MICHAEL

Why?

LINDA

(getting nervous)
Y'know...it's just not a real good subject to be kidding around...

MICHAEL

(teasing her)
What? Whatsa matter?

LINDA

Come on...trust me on this...

MICHAEL

Hey, Pope, you can't let a little marriage talk throw you.

LINDA

It's just, I've always found it to be...

Andy puts down a beer in front of each of them.

LINDA (CONT'D)

...unlucky.

Michael accidentally KNOCKS HIS OVER.

LINDA (CONT'D)

See what I mean?

Michael, the table and the floor are sopped with beer.

MICHAEL

(jerking up)
Oh, jeez. Andy, I'm sorry.

ANDY

Ah, leave it. It's good for the floor.

MICHAEL

(trying to mop it up)
Nah, let me --

ANDY
 (throwing him a towel)
 Shut up, Noonan. Heads up. I'll
 get you another.

Michael catches the towel and glances at Linda, taking a sip
 of her beer.

MICHAEL
 (standing over her)
 You think it's funny, Missy?

LINDA
 (trying not to laugh)
 No, I --

The beer shoots out her nose onto Michael's crotch. She's
 mortified, and still laughing.

MICHAEL
 (laughing)
 You're a classy date, Pope.

LINDA
 (wiping her nose giddily)
 Oh, god...I can't believe I did
 that!

Gingerly, Linda dabs daintily around Michael's crotch area as
 Andy returns with another beer.

MICHAEL
 (wiping her face)
 Sure, embarrass me in front of my
 friends.

ANDY
 (smirking as he leaves)
 Hey, hey, hey...you two want to
 take that in the back?

LINDA
 (calling to him)
 Oh NO...I was just...we were
 WIPING..!

The band LAUGHS and strikes up an impromptu, very raunchy
 rendition of the old blues tune DON'T YOU FEEL MY LEG which
 continues under the following scene.

INT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

In the dark, the front door opens and Linda and Michael come tumbling in, locked in a frenzied clinch. They back up against the wall, kissing like crazy.

LINDA

Oh God.

MICHAEL

...Linda...

LINDA

Michael. Oh, Mikie.

MICHAEL

(stopping for a moment)
You gonna pass out again?

LINDA

No.

MICHAEL

(resuming kissing her)
Good girl.

LINDA

Hey, I thought you were on sabbatical.

MICHAEL

(kissing her hotly)
I am.

LINDA

I'm not so sure. You know, I'm counting on you being good.

MICHAEL

I'm being good.

LINDA

Oh, yeah?

MICHAEL

Very good.

He nibbles down her neck...then kisses the top of her breast and her knees start to buckle as they slide down the wall.

LINDA
(losing it)
Oh no.

MICHAEL
And there she goes...

They crumple down into a throbbing heap on the floor.

LINDA
This is not fair.

MICHAEL
No. It's fair. It's really fair.

As he unbuttons her top button, Linda regains her senses. Is this the man she wants to marry?

LINDA
(softly)
Hey. Mikie.

MICHAEL
What? What's the matter?

LINDA
It's just, y'know...we're not kids, here. Maybe we should think about what's about to happen here.

MICHAEL
I am. I'm thinking a lot about that.

LINDA
Ha ha. No, I think we should really be sure...

MICHAEL
Linda, I'm sure. I've been sure for twenty years. I'm about as sure as I'm ever gonna get.
(beat)
Aren't you?

Linda just looks at him, eyes wide open. He takes this in.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
Ooh, I see...okay.

He smiles to himself and rebuttons her top button.

LINDA
(clarifying herself)
Well, not just yet.
(beat)
This is all so fast and I just
don't know how much of this is
from, y'know, the past and how
much has to do with..

MICHAEL
It's okay.

LINDA
Yeah?

MICHAEL
Yeah.

A long, uncomfortable, interminable beat. Linda's eyes begin to wander around the room.

LINDA
I like what you've done.

We see a lone mattress with a blanket and pillow, a portable typewriter on a crate, a pile of papers and a suitcase. And that's it. That's it.

LINDA (CONT'D)
It's very...Japanese.

MICHAEL
Yep. That's what it is. I was
kinda going for that Japanese
thing.

LINDA
Yeah. I can see that. It's nice.
(beat)
So.

MICHAEL
So.

Now everything seems spoiled. Ruined. Linda's sure it's over. Maybe she should leave.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
You...doin' anything...Saturday
night?

INT. TOMLIN EDITING ROOM - NIGHT

We see a close-up of the same PARIS video, now cut with post effects -- the same COUPLE about to kiss as we hear...

LINDA

Hello?

PULL BACK TO REVEAL...Michael, seated in front of the monitor watching the video as Linda teaches him some editing tricks.

MOM

What'd ya get lucky?

LINDA

Yeah, Ma. I got lucky.

Michael beams at her. He's impressed.

EXT. OLD-FASHIONED SODA SHOPPE - NIGHT

Linda and Michael eating from a communal banana ice-cream barge, talking intently.

MOM

Where were you last night?

LINDA

Out.

MOM

By yourself?

LINDA

No. With a boy.

MOM

The boy you went to high school with?

LINDA

Yeah.

MOM

Now, did I ever meet him?

LINDA

No.

MOM

Maybe I did.

LINDA
No, you didn't.

MOM
What's his name?

LINDA
Michael.

MOM
Was he the lifeguard?

EXT. LINDA'S BROWNSTONE - NIGHT

Michael kisses Linda like a gentleman and bids her adieu.

LINDA
No.

MOM
You have to watch them. Too many
girls around them. They think
they're God's gift.

LINDA
He wasn't the lifeguard.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - DAY

Linda and Michael, laughing and walking briskly.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL...that they're actually trying to catch
up to a RACEWALKER.

MOM
The musician, then. The "mod" one
with the Beatle haircut.

LINDA
No. You don't know him, Ma.

MOM
Musicians you have to watch also.
Same thing.

LINDA
Ma, he wasn't the musician. You
never --

MOM
 -- oh, I know. The baseball
 player. The Polish one.

LINDA
 Mother, he was none of these. What
 baseball player?

MOM
 The polite one. The one who used
 to talk to your father for hours.

LINDA
 Oh, yeah, him. He was nice.

EXT. LINDA'S BROWNSTONE - NIGHT

That night, after a lingering goodnight kiss, Linda watches
 Michael, hands in pockets, bounding down the steps.

MOM
 You have to watch THEM, too.

LINDA
 Baseball players?

MOM
 No.

LINDA
 Polish guys?

MOM
 No.

LINDA
 WHAT, Ma!

MOM
 Polite ones. You never know what
 they're thinking. They could have
 a knife.

LINDA
 That leaves no one left.

She almost calls him back but catches herself. As he walks
 down the street, we see Michael "adjust" his jeans.

INT. MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY - DAY

Linda and Michael on line for the Margaret Mead Film Festival talking excitedly as they peruse the program.

MOM

You can never trust anyone except your mother.

LINDA

Yeah, but I can't date you, Ma.

MOM

(sighing)

Well, what're you gonna do.

He turns her around to see a large poster of Margaret Mead.

INT. LINDA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Later that same day, Linda, still in her coat, standing at the telephone table. We pick up with the conversation.

LINDA

Look, you're the one who wants me to get married!

MOM

EH -- God forbid. I never said that. Frig that. I just don't want you to be alone all the time. I could give a shit -- wait, you like this guy?

LINDA

Yeah.

MOM

What's he like?

Michael enters behind her, carrying his boots.

LINDA

Ma, I can't, he's standing right here.

MOM

Let me talk to him.

LINDA

No!

INT. POPE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Mom sits on the sofa with her fur crafts while Vincent sits in his easy chair. They're watching WHEEL OF FORTUNE.

MOM

I know. I'm a rotten mother.

MICHAEL

How do you do, Mrs. Pope.

MOM

I'm fine, thank you. What's your name again?

MICHAEL

Michael Noonan, Ma'am.

BACK TO Linda's apartment...

Michael stands there awkwardly, looking pleadingly to Linda for help. Linda is helpless.

MOM

You know my daughter from high school?

MICHAEL

Yes, Ma'am. We were friends. We had classes --

MOM

You ever been married?

MICHAEL

Well, yes, Ma'am. But I was very young.

MOM

Uh huh. You're divorced now?

MICHAEL

Yes, Ma'am, I am. But I've learned a lot since then and I think I'm getting real ready to settle down with the right girl. Woman. Ma'am.

BACK TO Pope living room...

MOM

So, Linda tells me you write poems.

MICHAEL

Well, yeah. Yes. I used to.

MOM

You ever read Kahil Gibran?

MICHAEL

Uh. No. I never have.

MOM

Uh hunh. You make a living with this?

MICHAEL

(laughing)

No, not anymore.

MOM

Yeah, I didn't think so.

MICHAEL

I'm actually a sportswriter now, Ma'am. I write for a sports magazine.

MOM

(to Vincent)

Vincent. He writes for the sports. A magazine.

VINCENT

Oh, ask him if he knows if Marciano ever fought Jersey Joe Walcott at the Armory...I think it was in Jersey City --

MOM

(still to Vincent)

Oh, don't start with that. If YOU meet him - YOU ask him.

Her eyes glance at the television screen for a second.

MOM (CONT'D)

(to the TV set)

Betwixt and between!

(back to Michael)

Well, Michael, you sound like you have a good head on your shoulders...

From the TV set WE HEAR...

PAT SAJAK
 ...and the phrase we were looking
 for is "BETWIXT AND BETWEEN"!

VINCENT
 She so smart, she's spooky!

BACK TO Linda's apartment...

MICHAEL
 Well, thanks, Ma'am and it was a
 pleasure talking to you. Do you
 want me to put Linda back on?

MOM
 Alright and it was very nice
 meeting you. You seem like a very
 nice boy, Michael.

He gives Linda the "A-Okay" sign and hands her the phone.

LINDA
 Hi.

BACK TO Pope living room...

MOM
 He's not for you.

EXT. VICTORIA'S SECRET - DAY

Linda briskly passes by the storefront and without breaking
 stride wheels around and glides through the front door.

INT. THE ALGONQUIN LOUNGE - DAY

Linda seated at a table laughing. A PATRON moves away to
 reveal -- Alain seated with her, looking very French.

ALAIN
 ...and I figured, while I was at
 the airport...

He opens his breast pocket and produces an AIRLINE TICKET
 which he PLACES IN FRONT OF HER.

LINDA
 -- Alain. I told you, I can't do
 it to Tommy. Anyway, I'm not
 looking to leave the States right
 now.

ALAIN
What's his name? Bobby? Billy?

LINDA
(wryly)
Mikie.

ALAIN
Mikie. How cute. Then you must stay here. Absolutely. I forgot how much you hate Paris in the spring.

LINDA
You are so transparent, Alain.

ALAIN
You may call me a lot of things, Linda ... but "transparent"! I can't believe it, I am so hurt.
(he smiles, gets businesslike)
Alright. I am serious now. You know lots of things have been happening since the nomination, it's amazing. We are so fucking hot suddenly. We have a lot of big Hollywood projects lined up, documentaries, no more travel shit, and frankly, it would look great for us to have an American on the team. Full-time.

LINDA
What do you mean?

ALAIN
I mean we want you to live in Paris.

LINDA
Are you crazy?

ALAIN
And this is what we are offering...

He hands her a folded piece of paper. She opens it and reads.

LINDA
Aww. You suck.

ALAIN

Come on, Linda, Tommy's been holding you back. You're an editor. For once, step back. Take a look at the "big picture". Think about it...we'll find you a beautiful apartment on the Left Bank...

LINDA

Oh God...

ALAIN

You can go for long weekends to the farm house in Provence...

LINDA

Oh God...

ALAIN

And, you know, we are buying all new state of the art editing equip -

-

LINDA

Oh my God...

He knows he's got her. He REACHES FOR THE TICKET...

ALAIN

But, if your Mikie is more important..

Linda SLAPS HER HAND DOWN HARD on the airline ticket.

INT. TOMLIN OFFICE - DAY

Tommy at his desk as Linda enters with a deli bag.

LINDA

I picked up some coffee but, you know what? They don't carry the rye

--

TOMMY

(greatly amused)

-- you a little preoccupied this morning?

LINDA

Hunh? No. So, anyway, I got you some --

TOMMY
Are you sure?

LINDA
Yeah...I'm fine. What?

TOMMY
Linda, you better go check
yourself.

Perplexed, Linda turns and we see her face. She's forgotten to wash off her green facial clay mask this morning. She exits to the bathroom. From the other room we hear...

LINDA (O.S.)
Okay, so I have a few things on my
mind.

INT. TOMLIN OFFICE - NIGHT

Same day, early evening. Tommy and Linda are in the middle of a fight. Tommy is in the office...Linda is not.

TOMMY
I don't even know this guy.

LINDA (O.S.)
Tommy, he just, y'know, noticed I'd
gotten a little off-track...

TOMMY
He's so brilliant, let HIM pay the
Con Ed.

LINDA (O.S.)
C'mon, Tom -- we started the
company to make documentaries and
all I'm saying is, at some point, I
gotta get back ON track.

TOMMY
And this Michael guy knows what
TRACK to get on? What is he -- a
conductor!

INT. TOMLIN BATHROOM - NIGHT

Linda looking into the mirror, make-up scattered around.

LINDA

Look, I'm just saying I have to start looking at the "big picture".

TOMMY (O.S.)

What the hell do you think I'm doing here?

He appears in the doorway, steaming.

LINDA

Calm down...

TOMMY

...I'm trying to hold this friggin' company together with my TEETH, Linda. You want a "big picture"? Picture" this! ME back in Chicago and YOU back in free-lance. Put a frame around THAT.

Furious, he heads back for the office. Linda follows him.

BACK TO TOMLIN
OFFICE...

TOMMY (CONT'D)

(packing his briefcase)
I don't need this shit.

LINDA

Stop that.

TOMMY

I'm not kidding, Linda. I can't take this anymore. You know, I think you're a hell of an editor and I never minded doing the shit work but, hey, if you don't like what we're doing - if you want to do something else, now's the time. Go do it. `Cause I'm sure as hell not taking the fall for your life.

A long beat.

LINDA

Well, that's not what I want.

TOMMY

Then what DO you want? Just SAY it.

Another long beat.

LINDA

Well, we agreed, you agreed, we'd do the "Leek" pilot so -- we should do it. That'll take about a month.

TOMMY

That's all Baig wants.

LINDA

And after that -- that's it.

Tommy looks at her.

TOMMY

What are you talking about?
Splitting up the company?

LINDA

Yeah. Maybe.

A beat.

TOMMY

Great. Sure.

LINDA

Then we can both see what we want to do. You know...and where we wanna be.

TOMMY

Oh yeah. Yeah. You got it, sister.

Tommy nods. Spent, they sit wearily at their desks. The DOWNSTAIRS BUZZER RINGS. Linda buzzes the visitor in and although just feet apart, presses the interoffice intercom.

LINDA

(to Tommy on intercom)
Okay, that's Michael picking me up.

TOMMY

(to Linda on intercom)
Great.

LINDA

Be nice to him.

TOMMY

I have to be me, Linda.

LINDA
And don't, y'know, say anything...

TOMMY
...about the "big picture"?

The OFFICE BUZZER RINGS.

LINDA
No -- you know...

TOMMY
What?

LINDA
About... "us".

TOMMY
"What" about us?

LINDA
About AFRICA, "stunad"!

She grabs her coat and purse.

TOMMY
Yeah, right. I'm almost gonna tell him I "porked" you a million years ago. I'm almost gonna work THAT little tidbit into the conversation.

LINDA
You didn't "pork" me...I porked you.

The DOORBELL BUZZES again.

INT. TOMLIN BUILDING HALLWAY - NIGHT

Michael waiting at office door. It flings open and Linda stands grinning, her coat and purse in hand.

MICHAEL
Hey, Angel. You look great.

LINDA
Yeah?

MICHAEL
Yeah.

The PHONE RINGS from inside the office.

LINDA
Let's split.

MICHAEL
I thought I'd get to meet --

LINDA
(shakes her head)
Not a real good time.

From the office WE HEAR...

TOMMY
LINDA! It's your MOTHER!

She's caught.

LINDA
I'll call her LATER!

TOMMY
(pretending he can't hear)
What?

LINDA
I'll call her LATER!

TOMMY
(guilt-tripping her)
It's your MOTHER!

LINDA
(he's got her)
It's my Mom.

Resigned, she leads Michael back into...

INT. TOMLIN OFFICE - NIGHT

Tommy smugly hands her the phone, she gives him the finger.

LINDA
Hey, Ma. How's tricks?

While she is TRAPPED ON THE PHONE with her mom -- the two men size each other up. Their every word is a challenge.

TOMMY
Tom Healy.

MICHAEL

Mike Noonan. Nice to meet you.

(beat)

So. Linda tells me you guys have been in business quite awhile.

TOMMY

Yeah. A long, long time.

MICHAEL

That's what I've heard. So, this is...

TOMMY

Where we work. I work. Then there's the off-line room, right down the hall. Where Linda works.

MICHAEL

Yeah, I know. I've seen it.

Linda looks up.

TOMMY

Really? When?

MICHAEL

Couple of times.

TOMMY

And SOMETIMES...we go on location.

LINDA

(still on phone)

What??

Linda, glares at Tommy. He ignores her.

TOMMY

We went to Kenya once. A million years ago. Right, Lin?

LINDA

(Protesting)

Tom.

(to Mom)

Uh huh...

TOMMY

No office there...just huts.

LINDA

Tom.
 (to Mom)
 Uh huh...

TOMMY

A lotta huts. Very, very
 hot...Kenya.

MICHAEL

I know. I used to live there.

LINDA

(on phone)
 Then get it checked out, Ma.
 Better to be safe than -- what?

Tommy, marking his territory, walks over to the paper cutter and shuffles some tape covers to be cut.

TOMMY

Linda tells me you're a writer of
 sorts.

MICHAEL

Yeah, I'm a writer. Published a
 few books.

TOMMY

Oh, published. A while ago?

Linda rolls her eyes at Tommy.

LINDA

(to Mom)
 Well, that's the way they do it...

MICHAEL

Yeah, right now I'm working for a
 sports magazine.

TOMMY

Really? Which one?

MICHAEL

It's really small. You wouldn't
 know it.

TOMMY

I might. What's it called?

MICHAEL

"Walk Don't Run."

TOMMY
"Walk Don't Run."

LINDA
Does the nurse come in the room
with you?

TOMMY
And the sport is "walking?"

MICHAEL
Yeah.

TOMMY
Well. I'm sure that can be
challenging.

MICHAEL
Not really.

LINDA
(on phone)
Ma, if you think he's getting fresh
with you -- find another doctor!

She walks out of earshot, while Tommy aligns the paper
cutter.

TOMMY
So, tell me, Mike. What are your
plans?

Tommy brings down the cutter blade swiftly.

MICHAEL
Well, I've got this novel I've been
working on and I'll probably --

TOMMY
-- No, your plans with Linda.

Tommy brings down the blade again.

MICHAEL
OH! Well, I thought we'd sort of
get to know each other again and --

TOMMY
-- No. Your plans for tonight.

Tommy brings down the blade one last time.

LINDA
Dinner!

MICHAEL
Dinner, Tom. Dinner and a movie.

INT. LINDA'S HALLWAY - NIGHT

Later, MAKING OUT WANTONLY, Michael's hand in her blouse,
Linda's hand in his jeans when neighbor Stan happens by.

Their hands are stuck.

STAN
(in passing)
Hey, Linda.

LINDA
Hi, Stan.

They wait until Stan's gone.

MICHAEL
This is getting very hard...

A beat.

LINDA
(snickering)
I know.

They both laugh.

MICHAEL
Hey, Pope. Just remember - life is
short.

He kisses her one last time then backs down the hall.

LINDA
Zip your jacket.

INT. LINDA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Linda shuts the door behind her and leans on it.

LINDA
This is...insane.

INT. LINDA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Linda, in her Victoria's Secret robe, lying in bed watching another foreign film, smoking and sipping wine.

She snatches the phone and dials. It RINGS awhile on the other end -- then PICKS UP.

MICHAEL
(groggy and a little
drunk)
Yello.

LINDA
(softly)
Hi.

MICHAEL
Hey, Angel.

LINDA
You alone?

MICHAEL
Yeah. The guys left about an hour ago. We consumed many beers.

LINDA
You feel like some company?

INT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Michael lying on his mattress.

INTERCUT TELEPHONE CONVERSATION...

MICHAEL
What kind of company?

LINDA
My kind.

MICHAEL
Well, what kind of "activity" did you have in mind?

LINDA
Invite me over and find out.

MICHAEL

When?

LINDA

(seductively)

Now.

EXT. LINDA'S BLOCK - NIGHT

Linda, in the pouring rain, trying to hail a cab. Finally, an empty one pulls over. She gets in.

INT. TAXI - NIGHT

She is soaked, but excited. Flushed.

LINDA

Hi! I'm just going right across the park ...it's really easy. 72nd Street between Columbus and Broadway.

She opens the little change window and talks through it.

LINDA (CONT'D)

I'm in a little hurry. Thanks.

She settles in contentedly.

LINDA (CONT'D)

(sniffing the air)

Is that watermelon or strawberry?
It has kind of a fruity --

INT. MICHAEL'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Michael sniffs his armpit as he hops in the shower, checking his face out in his shaving mirror. He's buzzed.

INTERCUT BETWEEN APARTMENT AND TAXI...

INT. TAXI - NIGHT

We see the cabdriver, a demented looking man wearing a knit hat. On the radio plays LOUD STATICKY MUSIC.

LINDA

Excuse me, Sir, but could you put
the radio directly ON a station?
Thank you.

INT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Michael, flicking on his stereo. A towel around his waist,
he faces his apartment littered with beer cans, junk and
pizza debris. He rushes around to clean it up.

EXT. TAXI - NIGHT

The taxi jerking along the street.

LINDA

Sir? Could you not brake and then
accelerate the car every two
seconds -- you keep brakin' and
accelerating -- it's making me a
little...where are we?

INT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Michael, lying on his bed, trying to find the most efficient
yet subtle place to stash his condom supply.

INT. TAXI - NIGHT

Linda, face pressed against the window.

LINDA

Oh, God, you missed the park again.
I am gonna be sooo late. So, so
very late.

INT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Michael, in his robe, lighting two candles stuck in beer
cans. He looks out the window -- she should be here by now.
He pulls a can from a six-pack and pops it open.

EXT. MICHAEL'S BROWNSTONE - NIGHT

Angle up on Michael's window

to see Michael waiting at the window, beer can in hand. As the candles flicker, he makes a noiseless belch.

EXT. TAXI IN CENTRAL PARK - NIGHT

Wide shot down on taxi...approaching a fork in Central Park.

LINDA

Okay, now you're gonna want to bear
left up here -- that's it, bear
left -- bear left -- BEAR LEFT!!!

The taxi bears right.

LINDA

You are the WORST CABDRIVER I have
ever had in my ENTIRE LIFE!!
(checking her watch)
I am so late. This is ridiculous.
Let me out.

The taxi pulls over in the middle of the park.

LINDA (CONT'D)

Alright. Obviously I'm not getting
out. So, just -- get us out of the
park.

DISSOLVE TO:

The taxi comes out of the park -- falters then pulls a U-turn and goes right back in.

LINDA (CONT'D)

No! no! Out of the park!! Out of
the park!!!

The taxi actually BACKS OUT of the park.

LINDA

(crazed)
And don't you - ever - EVER - go
into that park AGAIN!!!

INT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Half an hour later, the DOORBELL RINGING, we see the candles melted and the six-pack depleted as Michael stumbles to the door and opens it.

Linda stands there smiling, soaked and pathetic.

MICHAEL
 (really groggy)
 Aww Angel, look at you! What
 happened? C'mon, get inside.

He whisks her into the apartment, sleepily kissing her.

MICHAEL
 I was waiting and waiting.

LINDA
 Yeah, you look a little like you
 were sleeping and sleeping.

MICHAEL
 (searching for a towel)
 Nah...well, kind of. I had a
 couple of beers...
 (finding one)
 You're all wet.

LINDA
 I'm all wet.

MICHAEL
 (smiling)
 I guess I'm just gonna have to dry
 you off.

LINDA
 (shyly)
 I guess.

He unbuttons her raincoat, slowly revealing the white lace
 trim of something very, very lovely.

MICHAEL
 Uh oh, what's this?

LINDA
 (even more shyly)
 What?

He continues unbuttoning, revealing more and more of a
 romantic, honeymoon-oriented negligee.

MICHAEL
 (turned on)
 Now, see, this is so nice. You
 wore this for me?

LINDA
 Uh huh.

MICHAEL
In the cab?

LINDA
Uh huh.

MICHAEL
Huh.

So shy she surprises even herself, she breaks away from him. He laughs as she wanders skittishly about the room.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
Where you goin'?

LINDA
No where.

Smiling, he lies down on the mattress. Linda self-consciously lights on a chair.

MICHAEL
C'mere a sec.

LINDA
Me?

MICHAEL
Yeah. I wanta talk to you for a sec.

Nervously, slowly, Linda pads over to the mattress. He pats it. Awkwardly she steps onto it, staring down at him.

LINDA
Yeah?

MICHAEL
So. How bout them Mets?

They both laugh, breaking some of the tension.

MICHAEL
Hey, Pope...you sure you want to do this?

Linda ponders this then reaches into the frilly cuff of her sleeve and plops a condom down onto his chest.

MICHAEL
It's a go.

Playfully he growls and grabs her, pulling her down onto him. Shrieking with laughter, they kiss wantonly. Then more seriously.

MICHAEL
(whispering)
Hey. Are you my girl?

LINDA
You want me to be?

MICHAEL
Yeah.

LINDA
Okay.

They kiss again.

LINDA
Will you be my guy?

MICHAEL
(looking deep into her
eyes)
What do you think?

He kisses her with even more intensity than before, and the passion mounts as they fumble feverishly towards...

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
Uh oh...

LINDA
What.

MICHAEL
Nothing, I just...

LINDA
What?

MICHAEL
I had a lotta beers.

LINDA
Yeah?

MICHAEL
And...uh...

LINDA
What?

He begins to laugh ironically and soon Linda joins him.

LINDA (CONT'D)
Aaw, it's okay, Mikie.

MICHAEL
(not laughing anymore)
No. I want to, Linda. I think --
wait a minute.
(he freezes a beat)
Nah, false alarm.

LINDA
Mikie...c'mon, baby, you're
exhausted. It's okay...let's just
go to sleep.

MICHAEL
Shit. Okay. Shit.

Linda pulls the covers up over them and they settle into the bed, spoon-style.

MICHAEL
(into her back)
I'm still a geek.

She smiles and takes his arm, arranging it protectively around her shoulder. Then, contented, she closes her eyes.

LINDA
G'night.

INT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT - DAY

It's early dawn. From above the bed, we see Michael curled on his side, his back to Linda who lays face up, wide awake, wondering what went wrong.

In his sleep, Michael turns and snuggles next to her. Linda, not moving, tries to look at him. Sleepily, his arm comes up and his hand cups her right breast.

Linda, still not moving, tries to decipher if he's awake. Slowly his hand gently massages her breast. He's got to be awake.

MICHAEL
(kissing her neck)
G'morning.

LINDA
G'morning.

He is. His hand slowly travels down out of frame. Linda's eyes glaze over dreamily as he rolls onto her. As they begin making love, we pan up past Linda's ecstatic face onto the wall and into the LeRoy Neiman print taped to it.

INT. MICHAEL'S SHOWER - DAY

Later, Linda is showering. Michael enters the bathroom and pinches her butt through the shower curtain.

MICHAEL
How're you doing, Dear?

LINDA
Oh, we're just fine, Honey.

MICHAEL
We?

She pulls back the shower curtain to reveal a large laminated poster of a bikini-ed model.

LINDA
Close friend of yours?

MICHAEL
Actually...that's my ex-wife.

Linda is horrified. They both stare at the poster.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
I gotta take that down.

LINDA
(wryly)
Well, not on account of me.

MICHAEL
I need a kiss.

He joins her in the shower.

LINDA
(suddenly shy)
Don't look. I'm forty years old.

MICHAEL
So am I. Let me see. Aaaah.

He holds her and kisses her under the water.

LINDA
So, you going to your parents for
Christmas?

MICHAEL
When's that?

LINDA
Day after tomorrow.

MICHAEL
Nah, they're going to Virginia. My
sister's.

LINDA
You didn't want to go?

MICHAEL
Nah.

LINDA
Well, ya know, you're always
welcome at my parents...a little
macaroni, a little gravy, a little
turkey --

MICHAEL
Did you know...I'm an excellent
turkey carver? Excellent turkey
carver.

He nuzzles her as she gives a sigh of relief.

INT. POPE'S DINING ROOM - DAY

To see a turkey being carved really badly.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL...a very upset, knife-wielding Linda at
the head of the table. Mom sits subdued, staring at the
mangled bird.

LINDA
I can DO it, Ma! I don't know what
happened. He had his parents' car,
he had the address...

VINCENT
(entering from kitchen)
Alright, I called the Parkway and
the Turnpike.

(MORE)

VINCENT (cont'd)
 No accidents on that route. He's
 probably just late, Linda.

LINDA
 Four hours is not late, Daddy.
 Four hours is dead.

MOM
 He better be dead, that's all I can
 say.

LINDA
 Ma!

MOM
 I told you I didn't trust him. You
 never listen to me.

Mom suddenly winces from some internal pain.

MOM (CONT'D)
 Vincent.

VINCENT
 (very concerned)
 That pain?

MOM
 Worse.

Linda is alarmed. She doesn't know anything about this. Mom
 winces again and tries to get up.

LINDA
 Did you find another doctor!
 (To Vincent)
 Did she find another doctor!

VINCENT
 He's doing some tests.

LINDA
 He's doing some TESTS!!?

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Mom smiles shakily up at the doctor who stands by her bed.

MOM
 (very politely)
 Well, now we know.

DOCTOR
Now we know.

The smile on her face begins to falter.

INT. HOSPITAL LOUNGE - NIGHT

Linda and Dad are standing, numbly, talking to the same doctor. A romantic MOVIE PLAYS QUIETLY ON THE TV.

DOCTOR
(gently as possibly)
So, Mr. Pope, do you have any
questions about anything I've just
explained?

Tears stream down Vincent's face. Speechless, he stares at the doctor. Linda, fighting to be lucid, takes over.

LINDA
Alright, so...that's it? Can't you
do any chemo or, uh, radiation or --

DOCTOR
We don't recommend it. Not at
this...stage.

Linda's face turns to lead.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Linda leans against the doorway, listening to the hushed conversation of her parents in the hospital room.

MOM
I don't care. I don't want to be
in this friggin' place.

VINCENT
He says just a few days.

MOM
That's bullshit, Vincent.

VINCENT
Then I want you home with me.

MOM
Cause I can't take it here.

VINCENT
I know, sweetheart. I know.
You're gonna come home.

Linda turns and walks into the room.

INT. MOM'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Linda gingerly approaches the bed. Mom slowly turns to her, a tear streaming from her eye.

Linda's face screws up like a child's.

INT. POPE KITCHEN - DAY

Linda is frying eggs on the stove. She HEARS A THUMP from the living room and quickly peers around the corner.

LINDA
Dad! DAD! STOP HER!

VINCENT
What! What happened!!

LINDA
She's re-arranging the furniture!
Ma, stop that! Let Daddy --

Vincent races through the hallway towards the living room.

VINCENT
Let ME do that, honey! I told you -
-

MOM
Yeah, I'll be dead by the time YOU
do anything --

The DOORBELL RINGS.

LINDA
MA! Be NICE to him!

MOM
I'm always nice -- VINCENT. GET
the door. Who is it?

VINCENT
I'll find out shortly, my queen.

MOM
Don't get smart.

VINCENT
Oh, she's a pistol.

SOUND of DOOR OPENING and MUFFLED GREETINGS.

VINCENT (CONT'D)
It's a FRIEND OF YOURS, LINDA!

Curious, Linda heads down the hallway.

INT. POPE LIVING ROOM - DAY

Mom, in a striking velour robe, steering the TV cart as Vincent emerges from the foyer, smiling.

What do I want to be playing on the TV? Can we hear it?
Will we see it from all angles?

Linda pads towards the door, puzzled.

LINDA
(to Vincent)
Who is it?

Tommy enters from the foyer, followed closely by Kathy.

LINDA (CONT'D)
(happily surprised)
Hi!

TOMMY
We felt like taking a drive.

Linda is moved by his gesture. Tommy casually throws an arm around Linda as he makes his way towards Mom.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
Hey, Gorgeous. That's some robe.

MOM
You don't like it - buy me another one.

TOMMY
Ew, she's tough!

MOM
What, you think it's too much?

TOMMY
On anyone else, Doll.

He gingerly kisses her on the cheek.

MOM
(ever the hostess)
You hungry? Who's your girlfriend?
Tell her to come in, she's making
me nervous standing in the hall.
Linda, make them something to eat.
(to Kathy)
Come on in, honey. Watch my
carpet.

MOM
(mouthing to Tommy)
She's very young.

EXT. POPE DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

Kathy sits patiently in the passenger side of the TomLin van while Linda and Tommy stand talking.

TOMMY
He called the office again. I
think he's afraid to call here.
What do you want me to tell him?

Linda looks at him as if to say "Fuck him.". Tommy nods.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
You gonna stay out here?

LINDA
A few days.

TOMMY
I can handle Baig. Call me, okay.

LINDA
'kay..

They look at each other for a moment. Linda nods towards Kathy.

LINDA (CONT'D)
(quietly)
Is this serious?

TOMMY
I don't know, Linda.

Linda starts moseying over to the Kathy's side of the van.

TOMMY (CONT'D)

Linda. Linda.

Linda walks up to the window and taps on it. Startled, Kathy rolls down the window.

LINDA

Hi. I just wanted to thank you for stopping by. It was really nice.

KATHY

Oh, no problem.

(Sincerely)

I mean, y'know, I wanted to come.

LINDA

Well, it was still a nice thing to do.

KATHY

Well, I just think...I think you're great. Just the way you...are.

LINDA

Really?

KATHY

Yeah. And, y'know...all that you've done with your life...your career and everything ...I just...I just admire you. Kinda.

LINDA

(Very flattered)

Oh.

KATHY

And, um...

(Whispering)

...you have really cool crow's feet.

LINDA

Well...thank you. Kathy.

INT. POPE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Linda lies under a blanket, on the sofa, listening to the MURMURS of her parents' nightly going-to-bed ritual which now seem somehow bittersweet to her.

INT. POPE KITCHEN - DAY

Linda's hand rubbing Mom's back and we...

PULL BACK TO REVEAL...Mom seated at the kitchen table, sorting through her hand of playing cards. Vincent discards slowly.

Should a TV be on in the other room here?

MOM

Get outta there. She's looking at my hand, Vincent.

LINDA

I am not.

As they play, the slap of the cards marking time, Mom sneaks a few looks at Linda, who seems elsewhere.

MOM

(eyes on her cards)
The guy's a friggin' jerk.

She slaps down her hand.

MOM (CONT'D)

Gin.

EXT. POPE DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

Linda, trying to start the Lincoln parked in the driveway. She sees Vincent, in the doorway, make a FLICKING MOTION with his hand. The SWITCH! She smiles broadly as the car starts right up. He waves as he shuts the door.

Abruptly, her SMILE FALLS AWAY as she lays her head on the steering wheel.

EXT. LINCOLN / COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT

The Lincoln whisking along, but as it passes a street light, we see Linda, face wet, screaming in grief.

INT. LINCOLN / NYC SKYLINE - NIGHT

Linda, face dry, the New York skyline looming in the distance up ahead.

EXT. LINCOLN / LINDA'S BLOCK - NIGHT

The Lincoln turns the corner, crawling along, looking for a parking space. Michael sits on Linda's stoop. Beardless.

MICHAEL

Lin! Linda!

She continues her search. He runs up and taps the window.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Linda. It's me. C'mon.

She is jockeying into a spot. Michael taps again.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

C'mon, Linda, don't do this. Talk to me.

Furious, she lowers her window.

LINDA

Look, I'm tryin' to park this BOAT.
Leave me alone.

He waits as she gets out, offering to help with her bags.

LINDA

Don't touch `em.

MICHAEL

I'm sorry about your Mom. I mean
I'm sorry about...Tommy told me. I
feel terrible.

(beat)

How is she?

LINDA

She's fine, Michael.

She walks as Michael tries for her bags again. No dice.

MICHAEL

I panicked. I don't know what else
to say. I just panicked. I told
you -- I'm a jerk.

She shoots him a look.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

But I just wanted you to know it's
me. It's not you.

(MORE)

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
I keep pulling this stuff but
somehow, I didn't think it would
happen this...

He looks to see her response. There is none.

MICHAEL
But, obviously that's my problem.

Still no response.

MICHAEL
And you have more important things
on your mind.

No response.

MICHAEL
So. I really screwed up. I'm
sorry. I'm repeating myself. I'm
sorry.

They've reached her stoop and she's gotten out her key.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
You're not buying any of this, are
you?

A very small, tired grin escapes her as she goes inside.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
Well, I felt I owed you an
explanation.

LINDA
Bye.

She shuts the door. TWO SHORT KNOCKS. She opens the door.

MICHAEL
Bye.

INT. LINDA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Linda lugs her bags into the kitchen and flicks on the
answering machine, listening as she goes through her mail...

LUKE

Hey there, Funny Lady. Listen, there's a very, very slight chance I might be able to get away from work early tonight - and I thought, if I can, you'd want to catch a late bite with me. If I can get away. I don't think I can. We'll see.

(as he's hanging up)

It's Luke. We had dinner about a month ago.

MICHAEL

(From country-western bar)

Hey, Angel...weren't we supposed to get together or something yesterday? I think we got our wires crossed somewhere. Call me, Pope.

HANG-UP. PICK-UP. Linda opens the fridge, sniffing various foods that may have gone bad.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

(drunk singing with music)

"My girl, MY girl...talkin' bout My Girl, My Girl." Are you mad at me? Don't be mad at me, Angel.

HANG-UP. Linda smashes a milk carton into the trash. PICK-UP.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

(From quiet bar)

I just talked to Tommy and...God. I'm really sorry, Angel.

(beat)

Call me. Okay?

HANG UP. Linda closes the fridge which sports a magnetic craft fur dog. PICK UP. Linda freezes when she hears it.

MOM

(very weak, but cheerful)

Hi, Hon. We watched the rest of that movie you rented us on the VHR but your father doesn't know how to get it out of the machine.

(yelling)

Vincent, don't touch anything, you'll get electrocuted. Wait till Linda comes.

(MORE)

MOM (cont'd)
 (into phone)
 So, no rush, Sweetheart. I hope
 you got home alright. I'm a little
 tired. 'Night.
 (aside)
 Vincent, don't touch it! Get away
 from it!

Hang up. As the machine rewinds, Linda turns her head to the wall, in pain.

INT. TOMLIN OFFICE - DAY

Linda sits at her desk on the phone, surrounded by "First You Take A Leek" project paraphernalia.

ALAIN
 Well, do you have any idea when you
 could come?

LINDA
 No. I -- no, I don't.

ALAIN
 I totally understand. Um...we are
 starting pre-production around --
 well, do you think -- do you think
 it would be...two months?

Tommy enters quietly.

LINDA
 (getting upset)
 My mother is dying, Alain. What do
 you want me to say? I don't know.

ALAIN
 I know, I'm sorry. I'll see what I
 can do. It's a terrible thing, I
 know.

LINDA
 Well, thanks. I'll call when I
 can.

ALAIN
 We are rooting for you. Good bye.

Tommy pats Linda's head as she hangs up the phone. She blows her nose. She's not sure how much he's heard.

LINDA
 Hey.

TOMMY
Hey. How ya doin'?

LINDA
Okay. I gotta concentrate, do some work.

She gets up and gathers her crumpled Kleenex's and walks a few steps.

LINDA (CONT'D)
Where was I going...?

She's disoriented and confused.

TOMMY
I think you were gonna throw out the tissue, Lin.

LINDA
(laughing)
Thank you. I'm just having a tough time.

TOMMY
(tenderly)
I know. Does she look bad?

EXT. WINTERGARDEN THEATER - NIGHT

Mom emerges from the old, well-cared for Cadillac, looking resplendent in her mink, as Linda offers her hand, Tommy at her side. Mom is stunning, you can even smell her perfume.

LINDA
Ah, you look beautiful, Mommy.

MOM
It's filthy here, huh.

LINDA
It's New York, Ma.

We see Tommy get into the passenger side of the Caddy.

MOM
(yelling to car)
In the LOT, VINCENT! The LOT!!
(turning to Linda)
What, are you two a "thing" now?

LINDA
No, NO. He just wanted to come.

MOM
Hey, you could do worse.

CHRISTMAS MUSIC wafts as Linda guides Mom into the theater.
Pull back to reveal...the theater marquee "CATS".

MOM (CONT'D)
This better be good. I hate cats.

INT. TOMLIN EDITING ROOM - DAY

In the blackness, we see a dancing squiggly line of green.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL...The video monitor and Linda drawing on her paintbox pad. The squiggly line becomes the makings of an animated leek. Tommy, carrying a FEDEX envelope, enters and sits down.

LINDA
So, how's Kathy?

TOMMY
Fine. She got an A in Sociology.
(beat)
You talk to Mike?

LINDA
Say "Bye, bye, Michael".

TOMMY
Well, at least you never did the deed.

Linda continues to draw.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
Eeew. She did the deed.

LINDA
Shut up, Tommy.

TOMMY
So, was he like, say, as big as the stapler on my desk? Or, more like the stapler on your desk.

LINDA
The "Tiny Tot"? Get a life, Tom.

TOMMY

So I guess your famous decision is
beat to shit. I guess wedding
bells are out of the --

LINDA

(not even looking up)
Blow me, Tom.

Tommy laughs and turns his attention to the green animated
leek on the monitor.

TOMMY

Don't you think it's a little
"tacky"?

LINDA

(goofing on him)
First You Take a Leek? Uh...I don't
think so.

He tosses the FEDEX on her lap and leaves. She opens the
envelope and takes out a book of poetry. The cover reads:

"JERSEY NIGHTS" by Michael Noonan.

She opens to the inscription which reads:

I wrote it a long time ago, but it's still the truth.

Intrigued, she turns to page 31.

MICHAEL

SEEING LINDA. October 17, 1984
Hitting the city skyline
like a Hopper painting
from my train window
the autumn light.
I'm alone.
And seeing Linda.
I see her waiting at the crossing
in her old white Mustang.

A few lines down a smile begins to form on her lips.

INT. LINCOLN / PARKWAY - DAY

Linda driving along the Garden State Parkway. From time to
time she glances at the book on the seat beside her.

MICHAEL

I see her in the school parking lot
dusky dark leaning against the hood
a jay in her lips
pink and pursed

EXT. PARKWAY GAS STATION - DAY

While getting gas, Linda smiling as she reads.

MICHAEL

I sit there screwing with the radio
wondering what it might be like
inside Linda.

Wryly, she tosses the book back on the seat.

EXT. POPE HOUSE - DAY

Linda rings the doorbell. No answer. She rings again. Then
uses her key and walks in.

INT. POPE LIVING ROOM - DAY

Linda enters and finds the room in disarray. All the kitchen
furniture is shoved in haphazardly.

SWING MUSIC BLARING from the kitchen down the hall.
Cautiously, she follows the SOUND.

INT. POPE KITCHEN - DAY

As Linda peers in, we see Mom and Vincent dancing the Peabody
on the cleared linoleum floor. Linda leans back and enjoys
the show.

INT. POPE BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mom sits at her vanity, Linda gently brushing her mother's
hair. For all her bravado, Mom looks tired and drawn.

MOM

So, then he says to her 'Don't
worry, we'll put a blanket up
between the beds and everything'll
be alright.' You know, because
they're not married.

LINDA
This is to Claudette Colbert...

MOM
Right. They're not married.

LINDA
In the movie.

MOM
Right. In real life, he was married to Carole Lombard. The blonde.

LINDA
Oh, yeah. The shiny blonde. Not Jean Harlowe.

MOM
No. He was never married to Jean Harlowe. Clark Gable was married to Carole Lombard.

LINDA
Ooooh.

MOM
You know what she said about him when they interviewed her once?

LINDA
Carole Lombard?

MOM
Yeah. They asked her what it was like to be married to CLARK GABLE, the sexiest man in the world, the KING of Hollywood, you know -- in bed. You know what she said?

LINDA
What?

MOM
(tough-talking Lombard)
Well, to tell you the truth, he's no Gable.

INT. LINDA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Linda has just come in as her answering machine records an incoming call.

MICHAEL

Hello. This is Walter Whitman and I'm calling from the...ah, I can't do this stuff. It's me. Surprise! Hope your New Year has been going well. Ok? Umm...well...hm...I don't know what --

Linda snatches up the phone.

LINDA

Hey.

INT. LINDA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Linda lies tucked protectively under Michael's arm.

LINDA

One more time.

MICHAEL

Again?

LINDA

Come on.

MICHAEL

I don't think I can.

LINDA

Yes, you can. You're good. You are SO good.

MICHAEL

Linda, you're the only one who thinks --

LINDA

-- Believe me, you could win awards.

Resigned, Michael picks up the poetry book and sighs.

MICHAEL

From where?

LINDA

Stinking drunk.

Linda huddles close to him as he reads, somewhat embarrassed. He wrote this thing ten years ago.

MICHAEL
 I'm stinking drunk
 alone in a bar in Madrid and
 carving "Pope" on a wet paper
 cocktail napkin with a swizzle
 stick. I look up and seeing Linda
 I take her with me into the tunnel.

He stops and stares at the words.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
 "Into the tunnel?"

Linda, ever so faintly, snores. Michael glances at her. She laughs and knocks the book out of his hand. He playfully wrestles her onto her back. Their eyes lock and her laughter turns suddenly to tears.

LINDA
 (she can't hold back)
 I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I don't
 know why --

MICHAEL
 Hey, it's okay, Angel. It's okay.

He awkwardly gathers her in his arms and soothes her, scared half out of his wits.

INT. POPE LIVING ROOM - DAY

Linda sets up a video camera as Mom sits waiting on the sofa. Her pink nightgown and pretty blazer don't hide how ill she is. Her voice is weak but her will is strong.

MOM
 This is borrrr-ing.

LINDA
 Well, now you know what it's like
 to be a movie star.

MOM
 Yeah, a movie star in her pajamas.

LINDA
 You look beautiful, Mommy.

MOM
 And you need mental help.

Linda sits on the sofa, just out of the camera-frame.

LINDA

Okay, so here's what we're gonna do. You're just gonna sit there looking gorgeous and we'll have a little conversation. And, if you get tired --

MOM

I'm not gonna have to sing, though.

LINDA

No, you don't have to do anything you don't wanta do, okay? Just be yourself.

MOM

Maybe we should wait 'til Tommy can do --

LINDA

Ma!

MOM

Well, what if you forget to turn the camera ON or something?

LINDA

It's on.

MOM

You seven-a-bitch. I wasn't ready.

LINDA

I'll edit it out. I can edit anything out. Okay?

MOM

If you say you can.

LINDA

So...can you remember when you first started singing professionally?

MOM

Well...

(clears her throat)

...we went on amateur shows -- early. I was probably...twelve. My brother and my sisters and I -- I took the male part as you can hear with this voice --

(laughs)

(MORE)

MOM (cont'd)

I even used to imitate Maurice Cheval-yeh. Where you sittin'? Alaska?

LINDA

Ma, this is where I have to sit or I'll be in the picture. So you imitated that guy. Who was it again?

MOM

Maurice Chevalier. Oh yeah, well...I loved him. Him and Cesar Romero. They were "gentlemen." But Chevalier sang.

LINDA

Which song of his did you do?

MOM

You know.

LINDA

Well, tell me again.

MOM

"You Brought a New Kind of Love to Me". I used to imitate him, you know, with the French accent.

LINDA

(trying to lead her on)
That's the one that starts...if a nightingale?

MOM

You know how it goes, Linda.

LINDA

(singing the wrong melody)
I forget...it's like "If a nightingale --

MOM

(annoyed)
Oh, come on...
(softly warbling)
"Eeef the night-een-gales - could seeeng like you" - I told you I don't want to sing.

LINDA

But it was sounding good --

MOM

-- Don't tell me how it's sounding,
Linda! My voice is shot, and I
know it.

LINDA

Okay. I'm sorry, Mommy.

A LITTLE LATER IN THE INTERVIEW...

Mom is happier, more relaxed.

LINDA (CONT'D)

So, how much they pay you there?

MOM

Well, I got twelve dollars a week
in the factory and, I remember now,
I got six dollars a week for two
nights at the club.

LINDA

Okay, so here you are, finally
singing in a nightclub and then
what happens?

MOM

I don't know. What happens?

LINDA

You know, you met Dad...

MOM

Oh. Yeah. Well, I met your father
there.

LINDA

And...

MOM

(confused)

And...

LINDA

(determined)

And...

MOM

And WHAT, Linda?!

LINDA

And Daddy told you to quit!

MOM

Daddy never told me to quit. He loved my singing.

LINDA

But, that's how you always told me.

MOM

Yeah? Well, I lied. I'm allowed.

EVEN LATER IN THE INTERVIEW...

Mom is at the end of her rope -- Linda won't leave her alone with this question.

MOM (CONT'D)

You're like a dog with a bone with this thing! Drop it, already!

LINDA

I just wanna know why you quit, then.

MOM

I was scared! They wanted to book me in the big clubs for the big money and who knew what that meant. Who I'd have to be nice to. It scared the crap out of me! Okay?!

(angry, defensive)

Jesus Christ, I don't know, Linda. I'm not a psychiatrist! If I knew I'd be a fucking millionaire!

(beat)

Cut that out of the tape. I'll sound like a gavone. Put this in.

(to the camera - genteelly)

Who knows why any of us do the things we do. We're all so very complex.

The DOORBELL RINGS.

MOM (CONT'D)

Who's that at the door?

LINDA

I don't know.

MOM

Well, hurry up and go see. It's probably your father with the groceries.

LINDA

(getting up)

Okay.

MOM

Hurry, Linda -- he's got the GROCERIES!

Linda dashes out of the room.

INT. POPE HALLWAY AND FRONT DOOR - DAY

Linda sprinting down the hall.

LINDA

I'm hurrying, MA! JEEZ.

She gets to the front door and flings it open. Vincent stands there, empty handed and embarrassed.

VINCENT

(whispering)

I forgot my wallet. Go get it on the dresser. And don't let your mother see. Did she eat the toast I left for her?

INT. POPE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Later that night, we look down on Linda lying sprawled across her parent's king-sized while Mom lies next to her in a hospital bed wedged alongside. Linda's arm, outstretched, HOLDS HER MOTHER'S HAND through the bars of the bed.

INT. POPE LIVING ROOM - DAY

Mom lies on the sofa, napping. Michael sits in Vincent's easy chair. Uncomfortable, he flips through magazines, as WE HEAR MUFFLED phone conversation coming from the kitchen.

The SOUND of the FRONT DOOR OPENING and Vincent enters with a load of grocery bags.

MICHAEL
 (leaping up to help)
 Let me get that, sir.

He takes a bag and they both leave Mom sleeping quietly.

INT. POPE KITCHEN - DAY

Linda and Vincent, unpacking as she talks on the phone.

LINDA
 (to Michael)
 Tommy says he got them to push back
 the Baig shoot a couple of weeks.

Michael tries to help, but seems to be getting in the way.

LINDA (CONT'D)
 (into phone)
 My Pop just brought in a slew of
 food.

TOMMY
 Oh, she's eating again?

LINDA
 No.

TOMMY
 Let me talk to her.

LINDA
 She doesn't want to talk to anyone,
 Tommy. She's sleeping.

Over the HOME CARE INTERCOM, WE HEAR...

MOM
 No, I'm not. Bring me the phone.

INT. POPE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Mom silhouetted on the sofa, against the blue glow of the television. Vincent sits in his easy chair, reading his bible. We hear Linda talking from the foyer.

LINDA
 You should see how cute she looks
 in her new pink robe. My little
 pink peanut.

Linda enters with Tommy from the foyer.

LINDA (CONT'D)
Look who's here, Mommy!

Tommy sees Mom, who now looks alarmingly thin and ill.

MOM
Hello, Handsome. Thanks for the robe.

TOMMY
(kissing her on the cheek)
You gotta eat, kid.

MOM
It tastes disgusting.

He sits next to her on the sofa.

TOMMY
Well, we all know Vincent can't cook but you still gotta eat.

MOM
Hey! Watch what you say about my husband, I'll give you a smack.

She weakly smacks him. Vincent LAUGHS and fake cowers as he gets up and ambles into the kitchen with a tray.

LINDA
(going into the kitchen)
Yeah. Beat the crap out of him, Ma.

MOM
The mouth on her, huh.

TOMMY
I don't know where she gets it.

MOM
Beats me.

Michael leans out of the kitchen.

MICHAEL
Hey, Tom.

Tommy nods back and Michael returns to the kitchen. Mom makes a face.

TOMMY
Oh, you're bad. Listen, you need
me to do anything?

MOM
(sotto voce)
Just, you know...make sure she's
alright. You know what I mean?

TOMMY
Yeah. Don't worry.

A beat.

MOM
Okay, Hon, I want to sleep a little
bit now. Alright?

TOMMY
Sure.

He gets up and walks toward the kitchen.

MOM
So, if I don't see you through the
week --

TOMMY
I'll see you through the window.

MOM
(laughing weakly)
Smart kid.

INT. POPE LIVING ROOM - DAY

Mom lies on the sofa, covered in blankets. She does not look
like herself. She is dying but will not succumb.

Over the HOME CARE INTERCOM on the end table, WE HEAR...

LINDA
...don't like you talking to him
that way ESPECIALLY in front of my
mother! It upsets her and I don't
want her upset.

We realize that Mom has been listening intently.

NURSE
(far from intercom)
(MORE)

NURSE (cont'd)
 He doesn't seem to understand that
 I am a professional nurse and
 technically she's supposed to
 remain in her bed --

Mom turns up the volume a bit.

LINDA
 No, what he understands is that SHE
 WANTS TO BE ON THE SOFA. And
 whatever she WANTS -- she GETS!
 Okay?

Mom, impressed, weakly manages a grin.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LINDA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

It's very late that same night and Linda and Michael lie quietly together in bed. Linda is lost in thought and Michael noticing this begins to gently stroke her hair. Linda turns to him.

LINDA
 Thank you.

Michael, overcome with emotion, holds her tighter and tighter.

INT. POPE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Lit by a small light, Linda sits on the sofa, holding Mom's head in her lap. After a long silence...

MOM
 I taught him to make my gravy.
 He's not bad. Cheap with the
 garlic.
 (beat)
 You're father turned out to be
 somethin', huh.

LINDA
 Yeah.

MOM
 Who knew.

They glance slyly at each other and grin.

MOM

Help me up.

LINDA

What do you want, I'll get it.

MOM

I want to get up.

LINDA

Maybe you should sleep.

MOM

I'm sleeping my life away, Linda.

(beat)

Help me up.

LINDA

Okay.

Linda gets up and helps Mom slowly to her feet.

MOM

Thank you, honey.

Mom shuffles over to her cassette player and pushes a button.
FADE UP the on a man's voice singing...

MAURICE CHEVALIER

"If the nightingales, could sing
like you they'd sing much sweeter
than they do ... because you
brought a new kind of love to me."

Mom stands, softly lit, eyes closed. As the music fills the room she weakly raises her arms, swaying to the melody.

INT. POPE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Even later. Linda lies asleep in Vincent's chair. The music continues to play as she wakes and opens her eyes.

Vincent stands over Mom on the sofa, her arms raised.

Then, gently, powerfully Vincent GATHERS HER UP IN HIS ARMS and CARRIES HER OUT OF THE ROOM.

INT. POPE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Even later that night, Linda and her Dad sit silently watching television, the volume low so they can HEAR MOM'S WEAK VOICE SOFTLY CALLING through the intercom.

Immediately, Vincent and Linda leap up from their chairs and rush out of the room, leaving the room still.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. POPE BEDROOM - DAY

From over Mom's shoulder, as she lays in a coma in her in-home hospital bed, we can hazily make out Vincent seated in a chair, holding a bouquet, staring at her. The nurse hovers behind, leaning against the wall.

WE HEAR Mom's RHYTHMIC BREATHING swirled with MAURICE CHEVALIER'S lilting voice and hushed MURMURS. Linda's face leans in, whispering.

LINDA

Mom. It's me. Oh, Mommy.

(away)

I'm talking to her. She can hear me.

(back)

Mom, we're still here. Daddy's right by the bed. He has your flowers. And we just want you to rest now. Right, Daddy?

He can't speak, his face wet, his eyes wide in shock.

LINDA (CONT'D)

We think you need to let go, Mommy. You took care of us real good. You did such a good job, Mommy. And we don't want you to hurt anymore. We're okay now, Mommy. We're so strong...so strong...you can relax... that's it...you can let go...

Mom's BREATHING STOPS.

LINDA (CONT'D)

Oh, God -- MOMMY!

VINCENT
My queen. My QUEEN!

FADE TO BLACK

FADE UP ON:

EXT. CEMETARY - DAY

Vincent's face, etched deep with a graceful grief, as Linda stands behind him, stoically. Linda just stares at the grave. Michael comes up behind her, unsure of what to do. Tommy stands with Kathy, struggling with his own emotions.

Finally, Vincent turns to his daughter and smiles.

EXT. POPE DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

The Lincoln idles in the driveway with Michael behind the wheel as Linda follows Vincent carrying her bags and a box.

VINCENT
Oh no, I'm fine, it distributes the weight. You want to tell Mark to open the trunk?

LINDA
Michael, Dad.

She motions to Michael to open the trunk.

VINCENT
(putting bags in trunk)
Oh, I know that.

She hugs him.

LINDA
So, I'll call you tomorrow, okay, Pop? You get some sleep, okay.

VINCENT
Oh, I'll be fine. Just fine.

He walks over to Michael's side and they shake hands.

VINCENT (CONT'D)
Take it easy, Mark. Drive safely.

MICHAEL
Yessir. Thank you, sir.

They pull out of the driveway as Vincent stands waving.

INT/EXT. LINCOLN CONTINENTAL - NIGHT

They ride along, silently, Linda's head on his shoulder.

EXT. CITY SIDEWALK - NIGHT

Michael and Linda walk down the street. Linda, wrapped around him, needy for affection, inadvertently TRIPS him.

INT. LINDA'S HALLWAY - DAY

Linda calling Michael back to her apartment door to fuss over his hair and clothes as he leaves for an interview.

INT. MICHAEL'S HALLWAY - NIGHT

Michael trudges up the stairs and opens his door.

INT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Linda stands there proudly next to the writing office she's just created in his stark apartment. A second hand desk now holds his typewriter, pens, paper and his neatly stacked manuscript.

Michael looks like a deer caught in headlights.

INT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Linda and Michael lay on his bed watching TV. She is nestled against his chest as Michael stares at the tube.

MICHAEL

Hmm?

LINDA

I said you seem distant.

MICHAEL

I'm, like, one inch away from you.

LINDA

Michael.

(beat)

What's the matter, honey?

LINDA

MICHAEL

Nothing.

LINDA

Well, something's bothering you.
Have you heard anything from Random
House?

MICHAEL

Nah, didn't we just send it out
last week?

LINDA

What about the publisher in
Pennsylvania?

MICHAEL

Too soon.

INT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT - DAY

Michael's in the kitchen area getting a beer while Linda sits
on his sofa.

LINDA

Unless it has something to do with
me?

Silence.

LINDA (CONT'D)

Mikie?

(long beat)

Hel-lo, are you there?

Silence. He pops open a can of beer.

MICHAEL

Yeah, I'm here.

LINDA

It has something to do with me.

MICHAEL

I guess.

LINDA

What?

MICHAEL
I don't really want to talk about
it.

She gets up.

LINDA
Well, whaddya want to talk about --
the Mets?

MICHAEL
No.

LINDA
Did I do something?

MICHAEL
No. You're great.

LINDA
Did you meet someone else?

MICHAEL
No. Nothing like that.

Linda waits.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
I can't...I can't really talk about
it.

LINDA
Are you...gay, Michael?

MICHAEL
Get the fuck outta here!

LINDA
Well, I don't know...I'm getting
varicose veins here waiting for
this reason!
(gently)
Come on, Michael. You always could
talk to me about anything, right?
What's the worst that could happen?

MICHAEL
(turning away from her)
Well...okay...I just don't feel
that attracted to you...anymore.

LINDA
Excuse me?

MICHAEL

I don't know...it's weird...I mean,
I was in the beginning...

LINDA

(dumbfounded)
Uh hunh...

MICHAEL

And I still am sometimes...so, I
guess, I don't know...it has
nothing to do with you.

LINDA

It doesn't?

MICHAEL

No. It's, y'know, you're just not
really my...

LINDA

Your "what"?

MICHAEL

My...type. You know, the type I'm
usually attracted to.

LINDA

And what type is that?

MICHAEL

God, I don't know, Linda.
Like...my ex-wife.

LINDA

Models?

MICHAEL

Okay, you're making it sound really
stupid now.

LINDA

Her type is "models", Michael.

MICHAEL

See, this is why I didn't even want
to say anything.

LINDA

What are you doing?

MICHAEL

Huh?

LINDA

Why are you doing this, Michael?

MICHAEL

And y'know, you're gonna be going to Paris, maybe I don't want to go to Paris. Plus, I'm thinking you've been through a lot lately and maybe you need some time to be alone for awhile.

(on a justifying jag)

I don't know...c'mon, Linda. You know me. I told you my history, I warned you. I'm just not real good at these things. You are, you're really great and you need someone who'll, y'know...I don't know... things are a little complicated in my life right now...and I really have to concentrate on my career... well, you know that...and, I don't know, I thought we were just having fun...but I think you have some expectations going that aren't really there...y'know, from high school...I mean, we just really met and everything happened so fast and all that marriage talk...you know...I guess I'm just not ready...yet ...for that sort of thing...I don't know.

(beat)

But, I'm open. Just tell me what you want me to do.

LINDA

Right now, I want you to shut up.

He stops in his tracks. Humiliated and near tears, she grabs her things and heads for the door.

MICHAEL

Come on, Angel...it's me, it's not you.

LINDA

Uh huh. That's good to know.

MICHAEL

Linda. I love you.

LINDA

Oh, yeah? Yeah? Well, love this.

She slams out.

INT. MICHAEL'S HALLWAY - NIGHT

Linda slumps on the other side of the door. Then...

LINDA
(impressed with herself)
Wow. Not bad.

INT. LINDA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Linda lies on her bed, wide awake. She is in crumpled pajamas and old food and many, many letters lay strewn around her. WE HEAR her thoughts...

LINDA (V.O.)
Dear Michael, How could you do
this to me? I just don't
understand how you could do this to
me. You know what I've been going
through with my Mom and everything
and what I really need to know
is...

LINDA (CONT'D)
...how could you do this to me?

She rolls over, snatching up the pad, reading the rest of another letter to herself.

LINDA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Dear Michael, I've been thinking
things over and I realize now the
amount of stress you've been under
with my mom dying and everything,
but, I just want you to know that
I...

LINDA (CONT'D)
...can't believe I WROTE THIS!

Repulsed by her own pathetic-ness she flings the pad across the room as if it were a cockroach. Linda leaps out of bed in a rage, storming around her bedroom.

LINDA (CONT'D)
Dear Michael, Thank you SO much for
your honesty. It has renewed my
faith in men and has done WONDERS
for my teetering self-esteem.
(MORE)

LINDA (CONT'D)

Not to mention my TEETERING self-esteem. I realize how REPULSIVE it must have been for you to be forced to touch me and kiss me and make love to me, Little Quasimodo Girl, over and over again, all those nights, when, in FACT, you would have much rather been nailing any ONE of your stable of stunning, emaciated, adolescent, 12 foot tall, Blonde-Nordic-Arian Victoria Secret Goddesses! And, in closing, I must say how GALLANT it was of you to take so much time out of your oh-so-glamorous schedule of not writing to TRACK me down to my apartment in order to let me know, in person, 20 years later, EXACTLY how attractive you DON'T find me. Thank YOU so very, VERY MUCH!

Linda flings herself onto the bed, her face in the pillow.

LINDA (CONT'D)

MA! Mommy, Mommy, Mommy, Mommy, I don't know what's going on. What's going ON?

Silence.

MOM

He's a jerk. I told you he was a jerk then and he's still a jerk. It's very simple. That's what's going on.

This is not a ghostly conversation. It's just her mother's voice inside Linda's head and it's making sense.

LINDA

He's a jerk.

MOM

You don't need that crap.

LINDA

I don't need that crap.

MOM

Especially with that drinking problem.

LINDA

He had a drinking problem?

MOM

What are you, kidding? You know, you're a little jerky yourself.

LINDA

He obsesses about marriage and then he says I had "expectations". I'm so embarrassed.

MOM

You're a human being...you're supposed to have "expectations". A DOG has expectations. You get the leash -- the dog expects to go for a walk. You keep company with a person -- you expect something's gonna come out of it.

LINDA

Something's gonna come OUT of it!

MOM

That's the whole friggin' point!

LINDA

That's the whole friggin' point!

MOM

Especially at your age.

LINDA

Yeah.

MOM

What does he think -- you were going out with him for your health?

(beat)

I tell you, Linda, Sweetheart, Light of my Life -- that boy had a lotta complexes. You're lucky you found out now.

LINDA

I'm lucky I found out now.

MOM

"Not attracted to you". Who the hell does he think he is? Clark Gable?

Linda grabs her pad and writes furiously.

LINDA

Hey Mike. I got news for you -- you're a sexy guy but...you ain't no Gable. I'M no Gable. There ARE no Gables. As a matter of fact, GABLE wasn't even Gable. And I have that from a very reliable source.

INT. LINDA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Linda, intently going through the contents of a box. She pulls out one of Mom's fake-fur dogs and push-pins it to a blank bulletin board. Then she returns to the box, studying and sorting through each piece of paper and item in it.

Over this we hear...

MOM

Who knows why any of us do the things we do. We're all so very complex.

INT. TOMLIN EDITING ROOM - DAY

Linda sits in front of the monitor, screening Mom's interview tape. From the speakers WE HEAR A DOORBELL RING.

MOM

Who's that at the door?

LINDA

I don't know.

On the monitor WE SEE the following video footage...

MOM

Well, hurry up and go see. It's probably your father with the groceries.

LINDA

(getting up)
Okay.

MOM

Hurry, Linda -- he's got the GROCERIES!

Linda dashes out of the room.

LINDA
I'm hurrying, MA! JEEZ.

We hear the MUFFLED SOUND of the front door opening as Mom sits alone on the sofa, straining to hear until she realizes that the camera is still on her.

MOM
See. And she forgets to turn the camera OFF!

She sits there, getting more and more self-conscious, trying to act "natural".

Linda, laughs, assuming the tape is over. She leans forward, her finger poised over the off button when...

MOM (CONT'D)
(singing slow and jazzy)
"If the nightingales, could sing like you"

Linda has never seen this. In a stroke of professionalism, Mom has sat up and with difficulty sings a weak but still snappy Chevalier impersonation.

MOM (CONT'D)
"They'd sing much sweeter than they do - For you brought a new kind of love to me - If the sandman brought me dreams of you - I'd want to sleep my whole life through - For you brought a new kind of love to me"
(she laughs)
With music, it's a lot better.
(beat)
So, you got your song. You happy? And that's for you from your rotten mother...so don't say I never gave you anything.

Mom looks to the door. Linda is still nowhere in sight. She turns back to the camera...

MOM (CONT'D)
Look, I don't want to get maudlin here... but...I know I should say something very important now...but, I'm...really not prepared...so, I hope you find someone - that's a helluva thing to say - edit that, too.

(MORE)

MOM (CONT'D)

Look at me trying to give advice.

(laughs at herself)

I don't know what I'm saying here...Aah, just have a good life, Baby. Take what you get, stick with your gut, do what you want, have a little fun and don't fuck it up.

(laughs ironically)

Pardon my French.

Her hearty laugh quickly turns into a cough, then into a silent wince.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL...Linda, wasted, staring at the screen. Tommy stands silently behind her. He rests a hand on her shoulder. She looks up at him. He smiles down at her.

LINDA

When did you get a dimple?

TOMMY

I've always had a dimple.

LINDA

Hunh.

(beat)

How's Kathy?

TOMMY

She's okay. She's, you know...she's got exams.

LINDA

Ooh...exams.

She gets up from her chair and stretches.

TOMMY

How's Michael?

Linda listlessly waves "bye bye" as she wanders out of the room.

INT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT - DAY

A BUZZER. Michael pads to the door carrying a shopping bag. Tommy stands there, smiling.

MICHAEL

(looking in the hall)

Oh. Hi. Is...Linda with you?

TOMMY

Yeah.

MICHAEL

She downstairs?

TOMMY

Yeah.

MICHAEL

I should go down and talk to her.

TOMMY

Nah. I think you're pretty much history.

MICHAEL

She told you that?

TOMMY

No. I think you're pretty much history.

MICHAEL

(pushing past him)
I'm gonna go talk to --

TOMMY

(stopping him)
-- Look. Noonan. Not only are you an asshole...you're an asshole with incredibly bad timing.

MICHAEL

Fuck you.

TOMMY

Just give me the clothes.

MICHAEL

Look, man, what went on between me and Linda --

TOMMY

(grabbing the bag)
-- YOU look, what went ON between you and Linda was "HIGH SCHOOL." What the hell was that all about? You're dicking around like who's taking who to the Prom.

(MORE)

TOMMY (cont'd)
 Ya'know, nobody knows what the hell
 they're doing anymore, but the
 woman just lost her mother, the
 least you coulda done was fake it.
 Little piece of advice, "Mikie" -
 grow the FUCK UP!

INT. VIDEO STUDIO - DAY

A big smiling cartoon leek face.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL...PANDEMONIUM! The set, although small,
 looks great. Linda and Tommy stroll through, passing the
 HUGE GREEN LEEK LOGO.

LINDA
 Nice touch.

TOMMY
 My idea.

She smacks him.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
 (yelling to stage manager)
 Sue, is the refrigerator working
 yet?

LINDA
 So, now where is the...uh...the --
 God, I feel so out of it.

TOMMY
 So, take it slow -- Hey, look
 who's here. Somebody wants to say
 hello!

Linda turns and breaks into a surprised grin.

LINDA
 DADDY! What are you doing here?
 You said you were going to Aunt
 Annie's! You lie!

Vincent, looking spiffy but a little shaky, comes striding up
 through the crowd of crew and audience members.

VINCENT
 Oh, Tommy and I cooked it up.

TOMMY
 (beaming)
 Get it? "Cooked" it up?

VINCENT

He told me to say that.

LINDA

I know, Dad. So, you wanta come sit in the booth with me?

TOMMY

Vince wants to be an audience. Tell her!

VINCENT

Oh, I love these shows. That's how your mother taught me how to cook. You should see me in my kitchen sautee-in' up a storm!

TOMMY

(being signaled)
Places!

Vincent is led to the studio audience as Linda and Tommy jog to their positions. Last minute details are handled.

INT. VIDEO BOOTH - DAY

On Monitor #1 we see Mr. Baig, in an oversized French chefs hat, smiling excitedly as Monique coaches him. Linda gives a resigned sigh, this is really so silly.

Monitor #2 scans the audience, mostly the entire BAIG FAMILY and Vincent, his coat on his lap, taking it all in.

On the set we see SUE make the count -- 5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1.

MR. BAIG

Bonjour! I am Monsieur Baig and yet, I am so small! Welcome to my wonderful show! Today, we are going to explore the many, many, many, many magnifique mysteries of French Cuisine -- BUT -- FIRST ...

Two crew members flip up cue cards.

MR. BAIG (CONT'D)

... You take a leek!

AUDIENCE

... You take a leek!!

Linda grimaces until she spots Vincent, on Monitor #2, having a grand time and Tommy proudly surveying the scene.

INT. VIDEO STUDIO - NIGHT

The crew is packing up. Linda and Tommy stand outside the men's room door, waiting.

LINDA
Congratulations. You did a good job. It's cute. It's a cute show.

TOMMY
Thanks.

LINDA
It'll be a piece of cake to edit.

TOMMY
Yeah. Something you could get used to, huh?

Linda looks at him warningly. Mr. Baig pops up in his overcoat and French chef's hat as Tommy is called away.

MR. BAIG
Aah...you are coming to the wrapping party tomorrow night?

LINDA
I got my invite right here.

MR. BAIG
I am sorry to have heard about your mother.

LINDA
Thank you.

MR. BAIG
But you know she is still here.

Linda turns to him. He looks intently into her eyes.

LINDA
Excuse me?

MR. BAIG
Some people will always be here. Correct?

LINDA
 (riveted)
 Correct.

MR. BAIG
 Life is much longer than we think.
 (he turns to the set)
 And all this is so much busy work.
 But it's such a nice way to pass
 the time, don't you think?

LINDA
 Yeah. It's...nice.

Mr. Baig waves to his family and Monique, who wait for him by the exit door. Tommy walks up and slaps him on the back.

MR. BAIG
 Ah...my public is awaiting for me.
 Au revoir.

LINDA
 Yeah, au revoir.
 (turning to Tommy)
 So exactly what time IS this
 "wrapping" party tomorrow night?

TOMMY
 Nine o'clock. But we should go
 earlier.

LINDA
 Meet you there at eight thirty,
 then?

TOMMY
 Yeah. Or we could go together if
 you want.

LINDA
 Well, when are you picking up
 Kathy?

TOMMY
 I'm not picking up Kathy.

LINDA
 Oh, she still has exams?

TOMMY
 No.

An awkward silence.

TOMMY (CONT'D)

So...do you want to go together?

LINDA

What, like a date?

TOMMY

Yeah, like a date.

LINDA

(flustered)

Get outta here.

TOMMY

Could happen.

Vincent emerges from the men's room, beaming.

VINCENT

Let's EAT!

INT. WEST SIDE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

It's the same restaurant where Michael and Linda had their first date. Tommy, Vincent and Linda have just finished their dinner. The same WAITRESS arrives with dessert menus.

VINCENT

(pointing to menu item)

Well...let's see. I don't even know what these things are. What's this?

LINDA

(reading over his shoulder)

Oh, get that, Daddy. It's like coffee Whip N' Chill. You'll like it. We'll both have the cappuccino mocha mousse.

(overly formal)

Will you be having dessert, Tom?

TOMMY

(mocking her formality)

Well, yes, Linda. I believe I will. I believe I will be having the Mud Pie, Miss. Thank you.

The waitress leaves. Linda and Tom sit silently while Vincent looks around the restaurant.

Tommy casually TOUCHES HER HAND. Linda raises her glass to take a sip and CLINKS IT against her front teeth.

TOMMY (CONT'D)

Drink much?

Linda ignores him.

VINCENT

This is some fancy-dancy place. I like coming into New York, we used to come in a lot back when. Your mother and I.

LINDA

Really? She always yells about how dirty it was.

VINCENT

Oh my yes. She was always yelling about something.

TOMMY

Yep. She was a pisser.

Appalled, Linda shoots him a look. Vincent LAUGHS.

TOMMY (CONT'D)

Remember the time she met Fernando Lamas?

LINDA

Cesar Romero.

TOMMY

No, it was Fernando Lamas.

LINDA

Cesar Romero.

TOMMY

At the fight at the Garden, wasn't it, Vince?

VINCENT

He's right! It WAS Fernando Lamas. We met him after I fought Charlie Fusari. Yeah, at the Garden. I remember...

As Vincent speaks, Linda's eyes move from Tommy to him.

VINCENT (CONT'D)
...she was so thrilled, you should
have seen her.

TOMMY
You weren't jealous?

VINCENT
Me? Nah. He was just a movie
star. I mean, she married me,
right? Nah, this was different.
We were this close to him at the
Garden, Fernando Lamas, and she
couldn't get over how elegant he
was. How every movement was so
graceful -- she said he was "the
personification of class. A true
gentleman."

And she can see who the "true gentleman" really are.

LINDA
She said the same thing about Cesar
Romero. I swear it.

They all LAUGH.

VINCENT
You know, she could have been a
movie star herself if she wanted
to. Oh, she could sing, she could
dance...and she kept up with it!
Did you know she used to practice
ballroom dancing every Wednesday at
the Senior Citizen's Center with
your aunts?

LINDA
(acting surprised)
You're kidding!

VINCENT
Oh yes, your mother was something.

TOMMY
That she was.

A silence.

VINCENT

You know what she told me? One night after she got sick we're sitting at the table eating dinner and she turns to me and she says "You know, if I knew you loved me so much..."

MOM (V.O.)

...I would've been a helluva lot nicer to you."

VINCENT

...I would've been a helluva lot nicer to you."

Vincent LAUGHS heartily, joined by MOM in VOICE-OVER. Tommy is moved and Linda sees something in him she's never seen.

EXT. LINDA'S BLOCK - NIGHT

Linda, strolling alone, hands in the pockets of her big coat, lost in thought. She stops in front of a mailbox and looks up, staring into the night sky. She reaches into her roomy pocket, pulls out a letter and drops it in.

INT. TOMMY'S APARTMENT - DAY

Tommy has the newspaper spread all over his bed and reads as he eats a bagel. The PHONE RINGS.

TOMMY

Yeah.

LINDA

So, is it a date or what?

TOMMY

Well, gee -- when you ask like that how can I refuse.

LINDA

So, how should we do this?

TOMMY

I'll pick you up around eight fifteen?

LINDA

You'll pick me up?

TOMMY
Well, not physically.

LINDA
Where? Here?

TOMMY
No, how about you wait on the
corner and I'll just snag you into
the cab as I go by?

LINDA
So, here, then.

TOMMY
Boy, this is gonna be fun.

EXT. LINDA'S BROWNSTONE - NIGHT

Linda and Tommy emerge from the front door dressed to the
nines, she in a black gown and cape and he in a European-cut
tux. Uncomfortably elegant. She looks at him.

TOMMY
No, you don't look fat.

He tries to take her elbow. Linda can do it herself.

EXT. BAIG'S TOWNHOUSE - NIGHT

The cab pulls up to an elegant private townhouse and they get
out. Linda opens her side before Tommy can get around.

They ascend the staircase to the iron-gated front doors. A
BUTLER greets them and shows them in.

INT. BAIG'S FOYER - NIGHT

Linda and Tommy stand in the foyer of this stunning home.
Uniformed PARTY SERVERS scurry around. Linda removes her
cape and Tommy looks at her and smiles.

TOMMY
You're looking lovely tonight.

LINDA
This is as good as it gets.

TOMMY
No it isn't.

At the end of the foyer, Mr. Baig and Monique wave excitedly as they walk briskly towards them.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
Fix your dress.

LINDA
What?

TOMMY
The top.

LINDA
What?

TOMMY
Your dress.

LINDA
Where?

TOMMY
I think it's a nipple.

LINDA
God.

Embarrassed, Linda adjusts herself just as Mr. Baig and Monique join them.

MR. BAIG
I am ready for my close-up!

TOMMY
You have a beautiful place here.

MONIQUE
Thanks. I bought it before we were married.

Linda and Tommy look at Mr. Baig.

MR. BAIG
I am one lucky son of a bitch.

LINDA
We thought you might need a hand.

MONIQUE
We might. We might.

CUT TO:

INT. BAIG'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A turkey being carved badly.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL...that Tommy is now the one wrestling with the bad bird. The party's in full swing as Linda saunters over to the table.

TOMMY

Hey, Gorgeous, how about a last dance?

LINDA

I see you're the designated turkey carver.

TOMMY

(pulling her away)
It's my destiny. Come on, Toots.

With a flourish, Tommy whirls her onto the dance floor. Tommy believes he's Fred Astaire. He's not.

LINDA

Exactly what dance IS this?

TOMMY

I don't know, Linda.

They dance badly a few more moments.

LINDA

Could I make a suggestion?

Linda whispers in his ear.

DISSOLVE TO:

They're dancing The Peabody around the dance floor. As they glide along, Linda relaxes into Tommy's arms.

TOMMY

It's kinda like riding a bike,
isn't it, Lin?

She smiles and nestles her face to his ear.

LINDA

(whispering into his ear)
You wanta know something, Tom?

TOMMY

What, Lin?

LINDA

(tenderly)

Africa...was not the worst night of my life.

Tommy smiles and lightly kisses her neck. And as the music ends, the audience applauds and we hear...

BANDLEADER

What a great crowd. You're all in showbiz -- you should appreciate this...

Throughout his joke, we see Linda and Tommy beaming, standing side by side in the audience.

BANDLEADER (CONT'D)

I get a call the other day from this Broadway producer. He's got a play he wants me to act in, so I ask him "Who's directing?" He says "Nichols." I say "MIKE Nichols?" He says "No, LESTER Nichols. He's been doing a helluva a lot of summer stock." So I say "Well, who wrote it?" He says, "Simon." I say, "NEIL Simon?" He says, "No, BENNY Simon. He's been working on this thing for ten years and he's got it honed to the bone. And, hey, we got a great choreographer!" "Who?" "Tharp." "Not..." "TWYLA?" "No, SHEILA. She's a flashdancer from Queens. But, wait till you hear who's your co-star, GOULET." So I says, --

Mr. Baig innocently walks up and takes over the microphone, with Monique at his side. The Bandleader is not happy.

MR. BAIG

Very, very humorous.

(into the microphone)

Hello, Ladies and Germs! Monique and I would like to have an announcement now.

MONIQUE

(interjecting)

Monica.

Linda and Tommy look up surprised. All eyes turn to Mr. Baig.

MR. BAIG

But before we do we would like to call our wonderful producer, Mr. Healy to the stage. Please, Mr. Healy.

Tommy balks but egged on by the crowd, he grabs Linda by the hand and makes his way onto the stage. As he does, Monique hands Mr. Baig a white envelope.

MR. BAIG (CONT'D)

(greeting them on stage)

First, let me say "thank you" to you and your lovely assistant for making my dream come true!

Linda is quite miffed about the "assistant" reference, but remains gracious.

MR. BAIG (CONT'D)

And because we had so much fun making our pilot -- TomLin Productions has agreed to make it a habit! I have in my hands a contract, signed by Mr. Healy, that says he and Miss Pope are going to take this show to the TOP!

Linda is shocked. She knows nothing about this decision.

TOMMY

See, I was gonna talk to you about this.

MONIQUE

(into the microphone)

And we hope you'll all say "Yes!" To making the shows with us!

TOMMY

Thirteen weeks and we're OUT, man!

CREW

Yessss!

Linda is speechless. Her eyes start tearing up.

MR. BAIG

You know that means there will be plenty of work for all of you to be doing, but FIRST --

CREW

...you - take - a - LEEEEEK!!!

Linda, blinking furiously, runs off the stage. Tommy, in deep shit, follows...leaving Mr. Baig, Monique and the Bandleader alone on stage. An embarrassed silence.

The Bandleader steps up to the microphone.

BANDLEADER

So...I say..."ROBERT Goulet?" And he says, "...Yeah."

CUT TO:

The Bar table, where Linda is angrily popping her contact lenses into two champagne glasses.

TOMMY

You alright? You okay?

LINDA

LINDA

(to bartender)

Thank you. That feels much better.

TOMMY

Oh, good. Okay, so...it's not bad, Lin. We're only committed for these --

She swoops up the champagne glasses and strides away from him, her tiny purse dangling from her arm. Tommy follows.

TOMMY

Come ON, Linda. Things got tight.

Linda gets her cape from the coat checker.

TOMMY

I had to act QUICK!

LINDA

I told you to NEVER do this to me again, Tom.

TOMMY

I didn't want to bother you.

LINDA
Oh, bullshit.

The doorman opens the front doors and she glides right through, with Tommy at her heels.

EXT. BAIG'S TOWNHOUSE - NIGHT

Once outside, Linda realizes she's bat-blind and can barely see the steps. Gingerly, she feels her way down.

TOMMY
Where are your eyeglasses?

LINDA
I couldn't fit them in my bag. Let me go.

TOMMY
Who's touching you?

A stray cab turns down the street. Linda tries to hail it. The cab continues on past her.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
He thinks you're toasting him.

She heads for the main avenue as Tommy trots up beside her.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
So, whaddya' say, partner.

LINDA
I say you better find another editor.

TOMMY
Linda. I'm kinda thinking you really owe this to the company.

LINDA
Well, Tom, you're kinda thinkin' wrong. You made this deal - you lie in it.

TOMMY
Don't be like this, Lin.

LINDA
Don't BE like this? You sign contracts without consulting me and I'm not supposed to be mad?

(MORE)

LINDA (cont'd)

Look, I'm not your assistant. I said I'd cut this pilot and that's exactly what I'm gonna do. And then I'm outta here. I made plans.

And that does it. Tommy's snaps.

TOMMY

Wait a minute, am I supposed to grovel at this point? I always forget where I'm supposed to lick your boots. Is it here?

LINDA

I don't really care where you do it.

TOMMY

Good. Cause I've HAD it with apologizing for taking care of things. No matter WHAT DECISIONS I make - they're always WRONG!

LINDA

Yeah! Decisions YOU make.

TOMMY

Hey, somebody's got to deal with reality, Linda. YOU obviously can't.

LINDA

Excuse me?

TOMMY

I kept telling you to cool it with TravelTime and the trips to Paris. They weren't PAYING us!

LINDA

I know.

TOMMY

Twenty thousand doll--

LINDA

I KNOW and I'm SORRY! That was months ago. Things change. I've changed. And I'm doing business different now.

TOMMY

(suspicious)

Oh yeah? With who?

LINDA

Let me ask you something, we've been working on crap all these years because it's ALL ABOUT MONEY, right?

TOMMY

Hey, that's how the world runs, sweetheart! You need money to BUY FOOD, you need money to PAY THE BILLS--

And that's Linda's breaking point.

LINDA

I KNOW what you need money for, Tom. I'm not a CHILD!

A beat.

LINDA (CONT'D)

Look, I...I don't know...maybe it's NOT about the money, Tom. Who knows ...maybe it's about other things... nice things.

(walking away from him)

I don't know...just call me "kooky."

TOMMY

Hey, where ya going, "KOOKY"!

She continues to walk, grumbling under her breath.

TOMMY (CONT'D)

Y'got marbles in your mouth? Talk to ME!

From halfway down the block, she yells...

LINDA

I said -- "THIS is why I never got married!"

INT. TOMLIN EDITING ROOM - NIGHT

Linda, exhausted, editing steadily through the night.

INT. THE ALGONQUIN LOUNGE - DAY

Alain sits alone at a table, checking his watch. Linda arrives, disheveled, and sits across from him. She removes the PARIS TICKET from her bag and PLACES IT ON THE TABLE.

LINDA

-- I know this is screwing you up
but you know you can replace me,
Alain.

ALAIN

I don't believe this...after all
the time we've waited --

LINDA

I know. And I'm grateful. But
there's something I have to do
here.

ALAIN

The boyfriend? Oh, Linda, you are -
-

LINDA

No, NO ... that's...no, it's
something personal...a little
sociological project --

ALAIN

-- Oh, that First You Take a Leakey
crap Tommy has you doing?

LINDA

It's not crap. And it's done,
anyway. I finished cutting it last
night. Tommy and I are splitting
up the business.

ALAIN

Really? Hm. I'm not shocked. Hm.
So, then, what the hell is keeping
you here?

LINDA

This thing...this...documentary.

ALAIN

And you have funding?

LINDA

No. It's small. It's just a little personal little --

ALAIN

Then bring it with you. I don't care. Don't shoot yourself in the ear --

LINDA

In the foot.

ALAIN

You know what I mean, LINDA! You are so PISSING ME OFF, HERE.

The lounge gets suddenly quiet.

ALAIN (CONT'D)

I am offering you an opportunity to live out your fantasy. Isn't that what you want, huh? To come live in "Gay Paris"? Fall in love? Kiss in cafes? Walk along the Seine every goddamn night of your life?

LINDA

Fuck you.

ALAIN

No? How about a picnic under the Eiffel Tower, we'll eat croissants and baguettes and all that "crepe" you Americans put in your movies?

LINDA

Yeah, well, I've got stuff to do. And I have to be someplace real to do it.

ALAIN

(laughing)

And you think Paris is not real?

LINDA

Well, for you it is.

ALAIN

I'm feeling like there is a lot of rejection in this room.

LINDA

Yeah, it's been going around.

ALAIN

Oh Linda, Linda, Linda. This is devastating. I had such plans. For you, for me, for our futures. But, you see, you've made a choice with your heart and you must go with it. No matter who suffers.

Linda smiles. Alain smiles, he's been playing with her and they both know it. He PICKS UP THE AIRLINE TICKET and tucks it into his pocket.

ALAIN (CONT'D)

Look, can you recommend another editor? Female, perhaps?

INT. POPE KITCHEN - NIGHT

The steam billowing up from a pot of pasta, Vincent is pouring into a drainer in the kitchen sink. Linda watches, as she monitors the sauce, marveling at Vincent's expertise as he prepares a big Italian dinner for the two of them.

LINDA

Should I stir this some more?

VINCENT

(cutting a loaf of bread)
Put it this way. It couldn't hurt.

A beat.

LINDA

So...you're doing okay, Daddy?

VINCENT

Oh, yeah. I'm fine.

LINDA

You miss her, huh.

VINCENT

Oh, sure. But, you know, we talk all the time.

Linda stares at him.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

You think your father's cracking up?

LINDA

No.

VINCENT

(draining the pasta)

You know, when you're with someone a long time...you get to know how the other person thinks. What they would say. Y'know, even when they're not with you. When you're in the store. When you're at work. We talked about everything, your mother and I. Everything. Hey, I still ask her things, cause she's so smart she's spooky. Your aunts used to call her "la strega". The witch. She could sniff out a person like a bad melon.

Linda smiles to herself.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

Did she tell you she told me she wanted me to get married again? After?

LINDA

No.

VINCENT

I says to her... 'Nah. I don't wanta. You're it, Grace.' I told her, 'You're the love of my life.'

(a beat)

We're married 41 years. 42 this May. And, you know what? Our marriage is better now than it's ever been!

LINDA

(with a burst of laughter)

Sure! Cause she's not yelling at you all the time!

VINCENT

(shocked)

Your mother never yelled at me. That was just her way. It was her sense of humor.

LINDA
You think so?

VINCENT
I know so. That's why I asked her
to marry me. She was very
entertaining, better than the TV.
(beat)
Yeah. You know, she was the only
girl who could ever make me laugh.
(he pauses a moment)
Now, that's what I miss. I miss
Grace's laugh.

INT. TOMLIN OFFICE - DAY

Tommy's sad face as Linda packs her desk supplies into a big
box. The air is very strained.

LINDA
So, he really liked my little green
guy?

TOMMY
Yeah. He loved it.

LINDA
(holding a paperweight)
Is this mine or yours?

TOMMY
Yours.
(beat)
Look, he wants to know if we can
use the logo in the opening for the
other shows.

LINDA
Sure. Take it. It's my gift.

An excruciating beat.

TOMMY
So, if you...y'know, need
anything... money, whatever...you
know...

LINDA
Yeah...thanks...

Tommy gets up. He can't take it anymore.

TOMMY
Look, I'm gonna head out --

LINDA
(tossing him the Tiny Tot)
Here! You can have THIS, too.
Don't say I never gave you
anything.

TOMMY
(deeply wounded)
You're brutal, Linda.

LINDA
Hey, YOU'RE the one rushing out!
I'm just saying GOODBYE!

TOMMY
Nah, Linda. YOU'RE the one with
the ticket to PARIS!

A beat.

LINDA
Who told you?

TOMMY
You think I'm stupid?

A beat.

LINDA
Well, I'm not going.

TOMMY
You're not?

LINDA
Nuh-uh.

Another beat.

TOMMY
Then tell me something. What the
fuck are we doing here?

LINDA
Nice mouth.

TOMMY
No, I'm not kidding with you, Linda
-- why are you splitting up the
business?

LINDA

Because...I have to change my life
in a really big way and...you won't
let me.

TOMMY

Oh, yeah?

Trying to get a rise out of her, he starts FAKE SPARRING to
her cheek.

LINDA

C'mon, I can't keep fighting you.

TOMMY

Yeah, you can. You can fight me as
long as you want.

LINDA

Don't even try it, man.

TOMMY

C'mon, you can do it, babe.

LINDA

Tom. C'mon, I gotta go.

TOMMY

Aaw, don't make me win. I always
win.

But she SPARS BACK anyway. She's pretty good.

TOMMY (CONT'D)

Vince teach you that?

LINDA

Yeah.

TOMMY

Good. Nice cross. But what
happens if I hit back?

He taps her lightly on her cheek.

LINDA

(half-laughing)

Stop.

TOMMY

Whatsa matter? Heh, little girl?

LINDA
C'mon, stop it, Tom...

TOMMY
Lin...you just make it way too easy
for me.

He's right. She LANDS A GOOD ONE into his stomach. He doesn't expect it. He retaliates by PUTTING ONE HAND ON HER FOREHEAD, keeping her at bay.

LINDA
SEE! SEE! This is EXACTLY what
I'm talking about!

TOMMY
You don't like it? Then don't run
away -- DO something about it.

Furious, she POWERFULLY KNOCKS HIS HAND AWAY.

They stand there, breathing heavily. Change is in the air. He reaches his hand to her face to gently touch her cheek. She flinches.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
It's always been just a little too
close for comfort, huh, Lin. You
don't go for guys who stick around,
do you? You like your cowboys to
get on their horse and ride outta
town in the end, dontcha?
(a beat)
Well. Adios. I'm gonna take off.

Linda is caught. Frozen. Then, as he moves to leave...

LINDA
No, don't --

She GRABS HIM and KISSES HIM awkwardly. They are both equally stunned. He KISSES HER BACK, quite passionately.

TOMMY
Hey, Lin--

LINDA
What?

TOMMY
I think...uh oh...

Tommy FALLS TO THE FLOOR IN A FAKE FAINT.

LINDA
 (laughing)
 You are so mean to me.

EXT. IRISH BAR - NIGHT

Tommy and Linda, arms draped around each other, stroll out of the saloon into the summer night. Tommy takes a few steps to hail a cab, but Linda stays behind.

TOMMY
 C'mon. Let's get a cab.

She studies him.

LINDA
 (softly)
 Would you carry me?

TOMMY
 What?

LINDA
 Would you carry me, if I needed you
 to?

TOMMY
 Get outta here.

She still doesn't move.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
 Now?

She shrugs. Finally, Tommy SIGHS and, grunting -- HE PICKS HER UP.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
 You weigh a fucking ton.

LINDA
 Thank you. You're such a
 gentleman.

TOMMY
 So you blew off France because of
 me.

LINDA
 Oh, you wish.

He CARRIES HER a few steps -- then stops.

TOMMY
Okay? You wanna walk now?

LINDA
No.

TOMMY
Don't get used to it.

LINDA
Just to the corner, okay?

TOMMY
I'm gonna get hurt.

He CARRIES HER DOWN THE STREET.

INT. LINDA'S HALLWAY - NIGHT

Linda climbs the staircase and fumbles with her keys at the door. From the darkness...

MICHAEL
Don't freak, it's me. Stan let me in.

LINDA
Uh huh.

MICHAEL
You look great.

LINDA
Thanks. Professional modeling school.

MICHAEL
Hey, Lin...

He MOVES TOWARDS HER. And she can still feel his pull.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
I'm scared. I'm really scared...I miss you. Come on, Angel...

Although she can still feel the attraction, Linda realizes that she's no longer under it's power.

LINDA
No, Michael...

As he leans into her we HEAR...

FOOTSTEPS and Tommy's voice from a few flights down.

TOMMY

I think I got a hernia.

Michael looks at her, startled.

MICHAEL

Hey, Linda...

LINDA

I'm not doing this with you any more.

MICHAEL

But, Baby...

Tommy reaches the landing holding a bottle of champagne. He sees Michael and doesn't know what's happening here.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

(acquiescing to Tommy)

It's okay, man. I just stopped by.

(to Linda)

Just wanted to say thanks. I think I got a publisher.

LINDA

The one in Pennsylvania?

MICHAEL

Yeah.

LINDA

Did you sign anything?

MICHAEL

Tomorrow.

LINDA

Good. Good for you, Mikie.

MICHAEL

Yeah, thanks. So. Bye.

LINDA

Bye.

Michael nods to Tommy as he makes his way down the stairs. After the DOORS CLOSE downstairs, Linda opens her door.

INT. LINDA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

As Linda flicks on a lamp Tommy is drawn to the large bulletin board now covered with objects and pieces of paper.

As he studies them, Linda COMES UP BEHIND HIM and RESTS HER HEAD AGAINST HIS BACK. Her arms limp at her sides.

Past them we can now see more closely the carefully arranged items on the board. They are the meticulous storyboards for Linda's personal documentary of her mother's life. Tacked interspersed are little bits of night club memorabilia and photos of Mom...healthy, robust, funny, tough, candid, posed...with Vincent, with Linda, with Tommy.

EXT. LINDA'S BLOCK - NIGHT

Michael, in the street, LOOKING UP at her golden glowing window. He pulls a crumpled letter out of his pocket and reads it under the light of a street lamp. Over the following we hear:

LINDA (VO)

Dear Michael, A few weeks ago I begged my mother to die and she did. She was in my hands and now she is not. She is not. She is...not.

INT. LINDA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Tommy stands with his eyes closed. Waiting for Linda to let him know how she feels about him now. After Michael.

LINDA (VO)

And I wish your mother was dead, too. Because she will die. And your father, too. Or maybe you'll die before them both. And maybe I'll die before I wake.

Linda's ARMS SLOWLY CIRCLE TOMMY'S WAIST. His arms cover hers.

INT. VINCENT'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Vincent, in the dim light of his kitchen, silently chopping garlic cloves, making himself a late dinner. He looks up for a moment -- STARING OFF INTO SPACE.

LINDA (VO)

My mother died alone, surrounded by our kisses. Totally alone. And on that last night when we rushed in to her soft voice calling, she reached her still beautiful hand through the bars of the bed and whispered "I just felt like some company".

INT. LINDA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Slowly Tommy turns in Linda's arms and gingerly, almost painfully, THEY EMBRACE AS LOVERS.

LINDA (VO)

So, I guess what I'm trying to say is that you were wrong, Michael. It's not that life is short...I think it's that sometimes life is so long and we could use the company, you know.

They hold each other tight. Tighter.

FADE TO BLACK

WE HEAR...

A LITTLE GIRL'S VOICE imitating MAURICE CHEVALIER singing "You Brought A New Kind Of Love To Me" soon joined by MAURICE himself and then by MOM'S voice forming a jazzy trio.

WE SEE...

A VIDEO MONITOR with the TITLE:

TomLin Productions

Presents

...over a close-up of...

INT. POPE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

...Vincent being interviewed sitting on the sofa.

VINCENT

(having a good ol' time)

The night Grace and I got married, she said to me, "I will never curse at you as long I live." And I looked at her cause I knew she had a, y'know, a salty disposition, so I said to her, "Oh, Grace, you don't have to say that to me." And she said, "No. I want to. I will never curse you." And she never did. In all the years that we were married. But one night, I must admit, I cursed her. I did. I got mad at her for something, I don't even know what it was, but I got so mad I called her a "stupid son of a bitch." And I'll never forget, she turned and looked at me, madder than I ever saw her in her life and she pointed her finger right in my face and she said to me, she said, "Don't you EVER ... call me stupid."

The TITLE "Pardon My French" slaps over the image.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

(laughing)

Oh MY.

The image turns into a video montage of MOM and VINCENT, shot by Linda and imaginatively intercut with post-effects of the old publicity photos, snapshots and memorabilia.

And over this...

...the CREDITS ROLL...