

SEX AND THE MODERN MARRIAGE

By

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Based on the play *Three:* by Brad M. Bucklin and Stan Wells

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1 INT. ARTHUR'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - EVENING 1

ARTHUR is a nebbish man in his early forties, standing looking at himself in the mirror, trying his best to be hip. Changes outfits and looks even more ridiculous. He finally settles on one and haltingly heads for the door.

2 INT. GWEN AND LANCE'S HOUSE - VENICE BEACH - DINING ROOM - EVENING 2

GWEN is the perfect suburban wife. Dressed conservatively with a flare of color, her thick blonde hair pulled tightly into a pony tail. She is setting the dining room table, making sure everything is in it's exact place. LANCE, Gwen's husband - handsome, jockish, charming, comes in from the kitchen, holding a drink. They are both in their earlier forties.

3 EXT. URBAN LOS ANGELES NEIGHBORHOOD - EVENING 3

Arthur pulls up to a row of small studio cottages in his Ford Festiva. He passes a lime green VW bug plastered with colorful sunflower decals and tentatively knocks on the door. There is loud music coming from within, he knocks harder.

4 EXT. GWEN AND LANCE'S HOUSE - EVENING 4

Lance is measuring out two martinis, hands one to Gwen. They toast.

5 INT. ART'S CAR - EVENING 5

Arthur pulls up to Lance and Gwen's house, there is loud music blaring on the CD player. Art is sitting next to MORGAN, she is a pretty 24 year old, new wavish in her own off-beat way, energetic and rather a free spirit. She is rocking to the music. He turns off the car and there is silence.

ART
We're here.

MORGAN
Great, I can't wait to meet your friends.
(She reaches over, gives Art's crotch a playful grab and leaps out of the car.)

(CONTINUED)

Gwen and Lance are at the the door, they greet them enthusiastically.

LANCE
Hey, glad you made it.

Gwen studies Morgan with amusement.

6 INT. GWEN AND LANCE'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - EVENING 6

The dining room where the wreckage of a meal sits on the table.

7 INT. LIVING ROOM - EVENING 7

Art stands before Gwen and Lance reading. They are seated on the couch with after dinner cocktails in their hands listening intently. Gwen has on a turtle neck sweater and conservative pants. Lance is in a pair of cords, nice shirt and maroon dinner jacket. Morgan is absent.

ART
"... as darkness fell about them,
they walked, leaving their lonely
footprints to be washed away by the
rising tide....

8 INT. GWEN AND LANCE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - EVENING 8

Morgan is quietly snooping through the closets and dressers. We hear Art from downstairs, Morgan listens - she's heard his stuff already. She continues to snoop.

ART (O.S)
Slow and painful was their tread,
their marks the only human signs
visible, since they were the only
people on that desolate stretch of
beach.

9 LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS. 9

ART
Their eyes never met, their hands
never touched, no words passed
between them. They seemed to all
the world like two strangers
walking down the road to oblivion.

ON GWEN AND LANCE

(CONTINUED)

There is a pause as Gwen and Lance think of something to say.

WIDER

ART

Well? What do you think?

GWEN

It's good Arthur. It's so sad.

ART

Thanks.

A short pause.

GWEN

Is that it? Is that all you've written?

3.

ART

Yeah.

GWEN

Just the last few paragraphs?

ART

Yeah.

GWEN

Well, what happens at the beginning?

ART

I don't know.

An uncomfortable pause.

GWEN

Oh, well, okay.

ART

Why? What's wrong with it?

GWEN

Nothing. It's a good ending, for something, but, I thought we agreed you were going to start working on the beginnings of stories.

ART

I tried, but I'm no good at beginnings.

(pause, he turns to Lance)

What did you think?

LANCE

Hey, you know you can't judge by me. I'm no art critic.

ART

This isn't Art, Lance. It's literature.

LANCE

Sure ol' buddy, whatever you say.

A restless moment.

10 INT. BATHROOM 10

Morgan winds up in the bathroom, putting on make-up and primping. She looks in the drug cabinet, pulls out a hair net (or Preparation H), looks at it questioningly, then puts it back.

11 LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS. 11

ART

Whatever I say? I say this is a months worth of wasted lunch hours.

He crumples the piece of paper, throws it towards the trash and misses, then sits hard in the easy chair.

GWEN

Arthur, don't listen to Lance.

LANCE

Why? what did I say?

GWEN

(To Arthur)

Just don't get discouraged.

She retrieves his writing from the floor and smooths it out, handing it to him.

GWEN

It'll come together for you someday, I know it will. In the

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

GWEN (cont'd)
Meantime you have always got a friendly ear to listen To whatever it is you think you have to say.

ART
(Defeated)
Yeah, well that's the point, isn't it? I don't know what I'm saying. I'm just killing time with this stuff, waiting for something interesting to happen to me, so I will have something important to write about.

GWEN
Like what, Arthur?

ART
I don't really know. Maybe the sort of thing that only comes along once in a lifetime. A transcendental moment that points the way.

LANCE
Yeah? The Jehovah's witnesses came by earlier.

GWEN
Lance!

ART
Yeah, they have no respect for hard-working, god-hating people.

GWEN
Arthur, (looking up) you shouldn't say things like that.

ART
You're right, you're right. Let's not talk religion. Besides that's not what I meant by "the way", I'm talking about a purely physical occurrence that transforms your life because you are unable to ignore it. Something like death, or losing a limb or your dog exploding.

GWEN
Oh, Arthur!

Lance goes to get another drink.

(CONTINUED)

LANCE

Dogs exploding, I like that.

GWEN

All I know, contrary to what you think, is that someday something good is going to happen to you and you're going to have to give up being so miserable all the time.

ART

Hey, miserable people have a purpose in this world. Maybe in my case it's to write miserable stuff so other miserable people won't feel alienated.

GWEN

That is the most ridiculous thing I've ever heard you say.

LANCE

I don't know. I think exploding dogs was pretty ridiculous.

ART

Well, the world is a ridiculous place, don't you think?

GWEN

Oh Artie!

ART

I'm saying you've got this perfect bunker against the woes of the Universe, right here. While people like me are out in the trenches, the ditches, you can close the door and you are self-contained. Food, water, money, success, each other, a car, kids someday.

LANCE

(Looks at Gwen)

We don't need kids, Artie. We've got you to take of.

ART

(Ignoring Lance)

The point is that it's ridiculous, you no longer need reality!

(CONTINUED)

GWEN

Come on Arthur, you want all this too, and you can have it.

ART

I don't know. I think sometimes that it's better to just look at things from the outside, that way you won't get too disappointed when you find out that what you thought you wanted turns out to be some sort of living hell.

GWEN

Arthur, knock it off. this is supposed to be a fun evening.

(she looks toward the stairs)

Besides, I don't see how you can be so pessimistic about things when you have, uh, what's her name?

ART

Her!? Oh yeah, well, it's still in the early stages.

LANCE

Early stages, hell! This is your fourth date. You've already doubled your old record.

ART

I guess she likes me for my mind.

GWEN

Arthur! Stop putting yourself down like that!

ART

Like what?

GWEN

I don't think age should have much of a factor in a relationship, as long as there are common interests.

LANCE

Like good sex.

GWEN

Lance!

LANCE

Great sex?

ART

Now wait a minute. Who said anything about age? Do I look Too old for her? Do I look like her father or something?

GWEN

No Art, of course not. I thought when you said she just likes you for your mind, that you were thinking she thinks you are tooold. I'm sorry Arthur, I misunderstood what you meant.

ART

Well, no, I don't know. Maybe I did mean that I'm too old for her, maybe that's it. I don't know.

Morgan enters the living room. As she crosses to Art, she makes like she is going to poke him in the eyes a la the three stooges, Art puts up his hand across the bridge of his nose to block.

MORGAN

You're getting quicker!

ART, GWEN AND LANCE

Art looks at Lance and Gwen sheepishly. Morgan sits next to Art.

GWEN

So? what are we going to do with the rest of the evening?

LANCE

I thought we could go down to the pier.

GWEN

The pier? What's at the pier?

LANCE

The ocean, moonlight.

GWEN

It's too cold.

(CONTINUED)

MORGAN

Lets go dancing. I know this great place that I've been waiting to take Art. The music is played through speakers under the floor. Seventies funk. The vibrations go right up your spine, it's unique!

LANCE

I don't know about Art, he's got some pretty strange ideas about dancing, but it sounds like a great idea to me.

MORGAN

(To Art)

I thought you liked to dance?

ART

Yeah, well now it's different, I'm sort of experimenting.

LANCE

Didn't you used to say that dancing can kill you?

ART

Well yes and no. It's actually more complicated than that.

MORGAN AND ART

ART

(to Morgan)

When I was younger. I had this thing about dancing. You see, well, I didn't like it. Then as I matured, I saw what I was missing out on, as part of life. But it wasn't just the actual dance, it was the whole metaphor, "The dance of life", to be able to dance with life, just sort of have your whole life be a dance, even if you're not up on the dance floor. You live your life and then you die. So if you dance your life, you still have to die. You see?

MORGAN

So you want to go or not then?

(CONTINUED)

ART

No, I want to go. It's not a problem for me now, really.

ART AND GWEN

Art looks at Gwen in panic.

LANCE AND MORGAN

LANCE

That sounds just great!
(to Morgan, with a twist)
I bet you know all the new steps,
maybe you can show me a few.

MORGAN

I do whatever the music wants me to do, so I don't really know what I do, but you can follow along if you want.

LANCE

Sure. Sounds, uh, great.

WIDE

Gwen has gone to the closet to get a coat.

GWEN

I'm ready.

They all head for the door.

GWEN

(continuing)

I guess we should take two cars, in case Lance and I want to leave early.

LANCE

C'mon honey, let's live dangerously tonight, break the eleven o'clock curfew and really be wild, just like the old days.

LANCE AND GWEN

Lance grabs Gwen and gives her a big hug and a kiss, she becomes embarrassed.

(CONTINUED)

GWEN

Put me down you big goofball! And don't include me in those "wild old days", you're talking about. I never had any, "wild old days."

LANCE

Nights?

GWEN

Lance!

ON MORGAN

MORGAN

You two are so... married.

LANCE AND GWEN

Pause, as Lance and Gwen take this in, in their own way.

ART

Yeah, well I guess we'd better hit the road.

Art opens the door and they all file out.

12 INT. NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

12

It is really hopping as Morgan leads Arthur, Lance and Gwen into the club. The music is loud and Gwen pulls some ear plugs from her purse. Art finds an out of the way booth and sits. Lance asks Morgan to dance. They go to the dance floor.

Gwen sits with Art trying to get him to dance with her.

13 MONTAGE

13

Later - Lance and Morgan continue to dance.

Later - Morgan comes over to the table, she downs a drink and then goes back out on the dance floor. She is dancing with two rather boisterous and outspoken Gay men JULIO and RENNIE. Gwen dances rather stiffly with Lance. Art is still sitting at the table looking miserable.

Morgan dances.

Morgan, Julio and Rennie come over to the table.

END MONTAGE

(CONTINUED)

Julio and Rennie push their way into the booth forcing themselves between Morgan and Art. Art grows even more uncomfortable.

JULIO

So? Mr. Art, Ju don' like to dance?

ART

Well, I....

RENNIE

I think he needs a little encouragement.

MORGAN

These guys are the best Artie, they can really get you moving.

ART

I, don't want...

Julio and Rennie playfully prod Art out of the booth.

JULIO

Ju will like this we swear.

MORGAN

C'mon Artie, you said you wanted to dance.

She climbs out with them and all three herd Art towards the dance floor.

14

INT. ARTS CAR - OUTSIDE MORGAN'S APARTMENT - LATER

14

The same bungalow we saw Art pick her up at earlier. Art drives up. He looks at Morgan, Morgan smiles, he bends over to kiss her. As he is just about to plant one...

MORGAN

Why don't you move in with me.

Art is surprised.

ART

Uh! Move in with you?

MORGAN

Yea, I think it would be cool.

(CONTINUED)

ART
Really?

She nods enthusiastically.

ART
(continuing)
Ok.

15 EXT. MORGANS APARTMENT - A FEW DAYS LATER. 15

Art get's out of his car, opens the trunk and hauls out a suitcase and a knapsack. He goes up to Morgan's door, she opens it and throws her arms around him. They go into the apartment.

16 INT. HOCKEY GAME - DAY - A MONTH OR TWO LATER 16

Lance, Gwen, Art and Morgan are in the stands cheering on their team. Gwen is dressed in a high turtle neck while everyone else is in t-shirts and shorts. They stand up to jeer at a play. Lance remains standing.

LANCE
I'm going to get a beer, anyone
want anything?

GWEN
I'll take a soda and something to
eat. What do they have?

LANCE
Hot dogs, Nachos, pizza.

GWEN
A hot dog, I guess.

LANCE
Morgan?

MORGAN
I'll have a dog and a beer, thanks.

LANCE
Art?

ART
Nothing for me, my stomach is
acting up.

(CONTINUED)

LANCE

Actually, why don't you come with me to help carry the food for the ladies.

ART

Oh!...I.

MORGAN

I'll help you. I need to move my body anyway.

Morgan jumps up and is on her way before anyone can say anything. Lance looks at Gwen and Art, shrugs and climbs after Morgan.

Art and Gwen sit, not moving. Art looks at Gwen sheepishly.

ART

I didn't want to leave you here all by yourself.

GWEN

(she pats his knee)
That's very thoughtful, Artie.

17 INT. ANOTHER NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT 17

Julio, Rennie and Morgan are surrounding Art, dancing up a storm, while Art is trying his best to move to the music.

18 INT. MORGAN'S APARTMENT - DAY 18

It is a plain squarish place. A stucco walled single. Morgan is painting, music is blaring, she is using the beat to paint to. Art is sitting, "posing" trying to read a book. Morgan comes over and playfully paints the tip of his nose red. He jumps up frantically wipes off the paint and bangs into the window, cracking it. She continues painting to the beat.

19 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY 19

Art is sitting by Gwen who is in a hospital bed. Lance is sitting nearby reading a newspaper. Morgan is watching the blood pressure monitor with fascination.

GWEN

I will only be here another day or so.

(CONTINUED)

ART

You are looking well. Doesn't she look good Lance?

Lance grunts without looking from his paper. We see that he is really not reading the paper, but watching Morgan.

GWEN

Thank you for coming Artie, I know how you don't like hospitals.

ART

Yeah, well, I think I can handle you getting a tonsillectomy.

GWEN

Thank you for the flowers Morgan.

MORGAN

Your welcome.

She tucks in Gwen's bed sheet.

GWEN

That's so nice of you.

MORGAN

It's good practice for when I have to take care of my mother one day.

Gwen scowls, Morgan smiles innocently.

20 INT. ANOTHER NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT 20

Art is frozen in the middle of the dance floor, while Morgan, Julio and Rennie dance around him wildly.

21 INT. MORGAN'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON - CARD: SIX MONTHS 21

Music is blaring and Morgan is rocking to the beat in a short skirt watching Art as he finishes packing.

ART

(Yelling over the music) You texted the Uber right?

MORGAN

I was gonna. (she takes out her phone and dials for an Uber.) When do you want it to come?

(CONTINUED)

ART

Now, immediately, right this very second. You had better get that window fixed, someone could break in and kill you or something.

MORGAN

Oh really! You know I didn't even realize it was broken.

ART

Yeah, well it's broken and there won't be a man in the house anymore, at least for a while, so you should....you wanna keep the iPod?

MORGAN

Oh yes, I mean...unless you want it. You paid for it. (fondles the iPod)

ART

Nahhh, you keep it. Want to take care of these plants?

MORGAN

Sure (looking over the iPod) It doesn't work?

ART

(picking up iPod, looking at it) It needs to be charged.

MORGAN

Oh, are you going to keep it?

15.

ART

(Putting it down)
No, I already said....

MORGAN

I'll keep it.

ART

... you keep it.

Pause.

(CONTINUED)

MORGAN

What kind of batteries does it take?

ART

(Not paying any attention) I guess I've got everything. If there's something I forgot I'll come back.

MORGAN

I hate to see you go.

ART

Sure, sure. Well you're young. Young and playful. Unnnh, but you'll see.

MORGAN

What does that make you, old and boring?

ART

Mature.

MORGAN

Yeah? Well if you are so mature, why are you leaving?

ART

Because we decided that.

MORGAN

You decided.

ART

It was decided that a fresh start is better than hell in the present tense. So, hey, you're young, you're resilient, you'll bounce back like a rubber ball.

(she comes over to massage his back)

These bones, hey, these are old bones you're working on.

MORGAN

Why do you always talk about how old you are? (examines his head) You're not even bald yet.

(CONTINUED)

ART

Yeah, well when the wind blows wrong, I'm bald.

MORGAN

I think you worry about it too much. I don't think you have to worry about it.

ART

That's because you don't worry about anything. What do you worry about, getting up too early in the morning by accident?

MORGAN

You're making fun of me. I don't worry about much you're right but still, I don't think you should make fun of me.

ART

When you get older, you'll start worrying about stuff more.

MORGAN

Why?

ART

Every day you'll get up and say "Should I kill myself today, or should I take the bus to work?"

MORGAN

Oh, you don't say that, do you?

ART

In a certain way.

MORGAN

I never heard you say it.

ART

Not out loud, no.

MORGAN

You say it to yourself?

ART

Well, yes, I have these little dialogues with myself all the time. As you get older you start hearing these voices.

(CONTINUED)

MORGAN

Oh? What do they say?

ART

It's sort of a chanting an unintelligible chanting, reminding me of my mortality. It has something to do with the prostate gland. You're too young, maybe when you get older.

MORGAN

What do you think I am, ten years old? You obviously thought I was old enough to come and live with me. What's the problem?

ART

Hey, you're just like a breezy blonde chick. You're just a young.

MORGAN

Fuck you, breezy blonde chick! I'm not even blonde. You act like you don't know me.

ART

Yeah well, did I turn out to be what you thought I was? Did I...? (turning away from Morgan) People shouldn't live together, men and women... they should just... people should... uh, men and women should meet in prisons and talk to each other over telephones.

Awkward pause.

ART

(continuing)

Soooo, you going out to the club tonight?

MORGAN

Yeah, I guess, you want to go?

ART

Catch a band?

MORGAN

Yeah, Julio and Rennie invited you if you want to come along.

(CONTINUED)

ART

I think I'll pass tonight. I might throw my back out or something, dancing.

MORGAN

I could massage it when we get home.

ART

No, I'm kidding. That's gallows humor. You still don't get it. I'm leaving now. (He picks up his bag)

MORGAN

Do you think I've... I don't know, I feel kind of like I failed you or something. I mean, I don't know what I could have done.

ART

Listen, I don't know, I mean, shit. You know. It was me, I try not to take life too seriously. It's just that when you get older you start winding down or something.

(Morgan becomes preoccupied with the iPod)

You start wanting something that will last a little longer, you start thinking you should have it all together. But you find out...

MORGAN

Talk about lasting longer. Shouldn't the batteries in this last longer. Didn't you just buy this, like two weeks ago?

Pause.

ART

Maybe I should wait downstairs, the Uber might come by and miss the address.

MORGAN

You need help with your bag? I could help you carry it down the stairs if you want?

(CONTINUED)

ART
No, I think I can handle it.

MORGAN
Sure?

ART
Yeah, I'm sure.

19.

MORGAN
Are you sure you don't want to take
a plant? I know how much you love
that flowering cactus in the
kitchen.

ART
(With arms full)
I couldn't fit it under my arm too
well.

They cross to the door.

MORGAN
I guess this is it, huh?

ART
Dance one for me.

MORGAN
If you want to go, just give me a
call Julio and Rennie did say.....

ART
Yeah, yeah, alright. So take care
of yourself, I'll be back to get
whateveris left. Sooo, keep you're
roots watered, you're just a young
shoot just shooting up. I'll try
not to burn up in a fire. You know,
these brittle branches just...
phht... well ashes to ashes, see
you down the road. Keep dancing to
the music.

Art exits. Morgan crosses quickly to the door, stops
abruptly and waves after Art.

MORGAN
Okay.

She closes the door, then goes back to the couch and sits. She turns on the ipod on and begins to get back into the music.

22

INT. LANCE AND GWEN'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

22

Art and Lance are seated in the living room. Art's suitcase etc. Sits in front of him. they are both nursing a couple of beers, Gwen is working, moving from the kitchen to the dinning room and back.

ART

Oh, man, what am I gonna do?

LANCE

Get another girlfriend.

ART

Yeah, sure, I've got ten minutes, I'll go out and get another girlfriend.

LANCE

Hey, there are plenty women out there.

ART

I can't, it never works out. I feel guilty, I leave or something. I just don't have the energy anymore.

LANCE

C'mon, you're an okay looking guy. You've got a.... personality.

Art is not amused, he sulks even harder.

LANCE

Okay. So tell me, why'd you split up? What was it this time? She think Herzog movies stink, was that it?

ART

There were a lot of reasons. You know, it just gets to a point where you think, "God! am I just some sort of weird stray cat? Where am I going? I mean what?" I should know better, something should have clicked in my brain before this.

(CONTINUED)

LANCE

Wait a minute. Give me some specifics, some reasons.

ART

You know the reasons, it was all lies. I got tired of trying to be a kid, trying to fool myself, you know, rave clubs, all that shit! Sure a part of me is a kid, but hell, I have other interests. I can't live that life, that specific kid life.

23

WALKING AROUND THE NEIGHBORHOOD

23

LANCE

If that's the way you feel then you're better off without her, don't you think?

ART

Yeah, I guess, but the thing is, I like her, I mean I really like her. Still she can be awfully cool sometimes, you know distant. She has a lot of young friends. I was willing to be young for awhile, but then I got tired. There are these other parts of me. It would have been fine if all I wanted was someone to live with and just... well, you know...?

LANCE

Yeah.

ART

If it was alright....

LANCE

...to just live with her and have sex.

ART

Yeah, but it wasn't alright, I have feelings for her.

LANCE

So.

(CONTINUED)

ART

I should have had better sense. I was willing to play the game, just be this young person for a while, until you realize that you've cut off your other worlds.

LANCE

(Nudging Art)

How many other worlds do you need when you've got a cute little chick like that around the house?

24

ON THE PATIO

24

ART

All of them, all the worlds! I need to feel that I'm open to everything that happens in the world. I am supposed to be a writer right? I can't just go bury my head in the sand. With Morgan I was just living from week to week. We didn't "talk" about anything beyond going dancing and having a good time. Sure she has her art, she's good at it but not serious. She likes doing it, that's fine, but she isn't going to be a serious artist.

(becoming more impassioned)

25

SITTING BY THE POOL

25

She's alright you know. Maybe someday she'll have to go through some shit, that's all I've got to say. She's young, It's no big deal for her that I left. I know that she's sad to see me go But she has her young friends. She'll probably feel it for a while or maybe she has already found someone else. She'll find someone! I'm sure she'll find someone!

LANCE

Gee, Art. I didn't mean to get you all worked up.

(CONTINUED)

ART

Yeah, well, why can't I have it all together like you two, you and Gwen, you are mature adults, you think alike. You have more gears that mesh!

26

INT. KITCHEN

26

Gwen, making dinner has been listening. She crosses behind Lance and begins to rub his shoulders.

GWEN

Oh Arthur, We don't always see eye to eye but we were meant for each other, we never really had to work at it, it just happened because it was meant to happen, it was fate. I think maybe you just try too hard. Age should not be a factor if you really love her. Hey so what if she's not the most sophisticated girl in the world, she's only 24, give her some time to grow. I think she probably needs a little more care and attention like Lance did. You're just going through one of those life crises that everyone goes through. I've read articles about this sort of thing. Everyone goes through them, everyone needs a little extra help, like Lance.

LANCE

What do you mean by that?

GWEN

By what, dear?

LANCE

You are saying I need some kind of help. I can't take care of myself?

GWEN

Oh honey, it's just that I think I know you well enough to know when you need that little extra encouragement.

ART

You know, I don't think it phased her, you should have been there. She's going to go dancing tonight!

LANCE

(To Gwen)

What? I need some, "psychological help"? What kind of person do you think I am?

GWEN

The kind who is happy with where he is and with what he's got, namely me.

Gwen gives him a big loving smile as Art returns, beer in hand.

LANCE

Oh.

ART

She's got a great smile... but what's behind it?

LANCE

(to Gwen, neither listening nor caring about what Art is saying)

What are you really saying though? I mean sure I'm happy where I am, and with you, but who do you think I am? ok, so art was the guy with the brains in school. So he used to get all a's and I played sports and liked to party, but are you saying that I'm not normal, I need counseling or something. I don't open myself up to other worlds? That I am just some dumb husband?

GWEN

Lance, what are you getting so upset about? I was just trying to give you a compliment, shhhssh.

LANCE

Well it didn't sound like it to me.

GWEN

We're supposed to be helping Art and his relationship, not dissecting our own.

(CONTINUED)

Art, still not listening or noticing that he has gotten another beer, heads for the refrigerator.

LANCE

Well, maybe I need to know how you think of me.

GWEN

Lance, stop that, what has gotten into you? You know that I didn't marry you for your brain, I married you for your body.

LANCE

See, that's what I am talking about. I know what it's like to just be an object. Right Art?

Art is busy trying to figure out why he now has two beers.

GWEN

Honey, I'm just joking, I had no idea you were so sensitive about what I think of you. I mean I love you just the way you are, don't you know that?

(she snuggles close to him)

LANCE

(Responding)

...just the way I am?

GWEN

Jus' the way you are, my fancy Lancy.

She tickles him.

LANCE

(Laughing)

Okay, yeah, yeah.

GWEN

(Stopping abruptly)

Now, let's get back to Arthur's problem.

28

PATIO AFTER DINNER - DRINKS IN HAND

28

LANCE

I know what his problem is. He thinks too much and he talks too much. A girl like that, like Morgan wants to have fun, to do things, that doesn't mean she can't do them well. She just doesn't think about things too much. She just does things.

ART

I do things.

GWEN

Nobody said you didn't do things Artie.

LANCE

She's spontaneous, that's what I'm trying to say.

ART

Spontaneous.

LANCE

Right. Remember when you and Morgan came to that big new years party at the office?

29

INT. OFFICE PARTY - INTERCUT THROUGHOUT DIALOGUE

29

Art is drunk, watching all the suits. Sees Gwen talking with a group of people, laughing.

ART (O.S)

Yeah.

LANCE (O.S)

You got drunk because you couldn't stand being around all those successful people.

ART (O.S)

(Defensive)

That was not my idea of success.

LANCE (O.S)

Yeah, well whatever... Gwen was busy trying to sell the other guys wives fancy couch covers or

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

LANCE (O.S) (cont'd)
something and Morgan came up to me
and asked me to dance.

PARTY
Morgan comes up to Lance, very sexy
and sultry. Drags him onto the
dance floor. They dance.

LANCE (O.S)
(continued)
She just wanted to dance. You know
I love to dance, she loves to
dance, so we danced.

30

END PARTY SCENE - PATIO - CONTINUOUS

30

LANCE
She's a damn good dancer, but you
don't think that's worth anything,
do you?

ART
That she's a good dancer?

LANCE
No, that she just does what she
feels like doing. She's free to be
spontaneous.

GWEN
Is this leading up to something?

LANCE
I'm just trying to show Art that
Morgan has some worthwhile
qualities, qualities that he could
have been proud of. You're always
making excuses for your life.

ART
Hey now, this is really comforting.

LANCE
I don't know. I don't know if she
is the kind of girl for you Art,
but she certainly would make
someone happy.

ART
Is this supposed to help?

(CONTINUED)

Lance gets another beer, pops it open, takes a swig, then sits back down. He is getting a buzz.

LANCE

I know if I was going out with her, we'd go out every night. We'd live it up, do any crazy thing we felt like doing! She is free. She is pliable. You can do whatever you want with her, but you don't take advantage of that.

GWEN

You are talking about silly putty, you are not talking about a real person.

LANCE

Silly putty! Silly putty! I'm talking about taking a piece of clay, sculpting it into a work of art! Making it to your liking.

GWEN

Are you saying that women are pieces of clay? That all men have to do is mold them into what they want?

LANCE

I'm just trying to point out that their relationship had a lot of potential that wasn't developed. A piece of clay is spontaneous, it does what it wants until you start molding it. Art could have molded it if he had just gotten out of his shell. He could still make something of it. He could make out of their relationship what I made ours.

GWEN

Wait a minute there buster, what do you mean what you made ours?

LANCE

Honey but you have to admit, you were a little stiff in the beginning. I helped you open up. I also gave you encouragement to pursue your career.

(CONTINUED)

GWEN

You've been very helpful, dear, in some respects.

LANCE

Remember Arty, how I used to show her off, how shy she used to be, remember how reclusive, a real book worm. Now look at her.

GWEN

Alright, alright, you have made your point. But don't forget that I helped you through school. You never would have been able to play football if you hadn't passed Psyche 101.

LANCE

Honey, we are supposed to be helping Art.

GWEN

We're talking about molding aren't we? Well Art let me tell you little bit about molding.

ART

I can mold.

GWEN

Certainly you can dear, you have come a long way, just to get up the nerve to leave Morgan in the first place, which, by the way, was the right thing to do. Remember how Lance used to have this reputation, you know a real ladies man? How he used to go after anything with breasts?

ART

I wanted to take my time.

GWEN

Well, I knew he was attracted to me, so I played into his weakness. I ignored him. Wouldn't give him so much as a backward glance. It drove him crazy and made him tame as a lamb. How's that for molding?

(CONTINUED)

LANCE

I knew what you were up to. I wanted to be molded.

GWEN

It's okay Lance. We are all just big lumps of clay. (back to Artie) You know, Arthur, I did my best to help get you and Morgan closer together.

ART

I'm pathetic.

31 INT. - OFFICE PARTY

31

Gwen goes to Art, but he is too drunk. Then goes to Lance whispers in his ear. He goes over to Morgan and asks her to dance.

GWEN (O.S)

That night at the office party, It was me that encouraged you to dance with Morgan, but you wouldn't, remember? You went into that dance of death routine, so I told Lance to entertain Morgan while you pulled yourself together.

32 END OFFICE PARTY SCENE

32

GWEN

Remember, honey?

LANCE

I didn't do anything.

GWEN

(Giving Lance a curious look) I just wanted you to be nice to her, make her feel welcome for Arthur's sake.

LANCE

Oh, yeah...right.

GWEN

It was obvious Arthur, that you liked her. I thought that if you saw her with Lance it would make you more aggressive.

(CONTINUED)

LANCE

Aggressive? Artie? That was your plan?

ART

We kissed... I think, the night is pretty hard to remember.

33 INT. - OFFICE PARTY

33

Lance is dancing really close to Morgan. He looks around, Gwen is busy talking to people. Art is sitting in a chair passed out. Morgan starts to swoon. Lance catches her.

LANCE (O.S)

Yeah, well I remember everything. I remember Morgan started feeling woozy and I had to take her out for a little walk.

34 EXT. - RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

34

Lance is holding Morgan up.

GWEN (O.S)

Oh, yes... so that's where you went?

LANCE (O.S)

Yeah, we went to a little park around the corner from the club. She was sick!

Morgan veers off into the bushes and throws up.

GWEN (O.S)

Oh dear!

LANCE (O.S)

She threw up.

BACK TO SCENE

ART

She threw up? I didn't know she threw up.

Art is getting uneasy.

(CONTINUED)

LANCE

I tried to make her feel better so I rubbed her head.

GWEN

You rubbed her head? Isn't that ironic, while I was inside taking care of Arthur, you were outside taking care of Morgan, rubbing her head.

LANCE

What are you driving at?

GWEN

Did you like rubbing her head?

LANCE

It was ok. Why?

GWEN

Oh, nothing.

LANCE

Did you like taking care of Art?

GWEN

Maybe I did, but I didn't rub his head.

ART

Hey guys, don't fight over me.

LANCE

We're not fighting over you. This doesn't have anything to do with you it's her insinuations.

GWEN

Insinuations! If I wanted to insinuate something I would ask about the time at the Hockey game when you two were gone getting hot dogs for forty-five minutes.

LANCE

(continuing)

The Hockey game that was months ago? There was a big line. Look honey, I love you.

(CONTINUED)

GWEN

What does that have to do with anything?

LANCE

Hey, I showed her a little attention, you encouraged me to. She was crying out for it. I liked her, I felt sorry for her.

ART

Oh, you felt sorry for her, because she was going out with me, is that it?

LANCE

No, no, of course not Arty. You've got it all wrong. What's wrong with wanting someone? I mean to make them feel good. It made me feel good.

GWEN

Making you feel good is my job.

LANCE

And you do, honey, you do.

GWEN

So what are you saying?

LANCE

Nothing.

There is a pause. Both Gwen and Art look at Lance, waiting for an answer, turning the screws 'til the rat talks.

35

EXT. RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

35

Lance and Morgan are in the bushes. Morgan looks up at Lance and smiles sheepishly. Lance smiles back and puts his arm around her.

LANCE (O.S)

WHAT? Hey, it's not like I wanted to do anything.

GWEN (O.S)

Oh?

(CONTINUED)

LANCE (O.S)

I mean, it was her. How would you like it if someone grabbed you and said "I want you."

36

BACK TO SCENE

36

GWEN

She grabbed you?

LANCE

I'm only human, I'm a normal guy, that's what happened! I mean that's what happened. (turning to Art) You're my friend you think I wouldn't tell you these things?(Art and Gwen turn away) look, I'm not the only guy who slept with her!!

GWEN

(Seething)

You... you...!

ART

(Devastated)

Oh, no.

LANCE

What I mean is, I thought it best you knew... I wasn't the only guy.

GWEN

You.

ART

(Doubly devastated)

Oh, no.

LANCE

She said something about open relationships. Listen I didn't do it on purpose.

GWEN

What!

ART

(Rising weakly)

I'll leave or something.

(CONTINUED)

LANCE

Stay here! We have to settle this, clear the air, right here. You are my friend and she is my wife.

GWEN

Whoa! Watch it with the "wife" stuff mister!

Gwen storms down the hallway to the bedroom. Lance follows.

37

INT. HALLWAY - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

37

LANCE

Look, I didn't do it on purpose!

GWEN

Bullshit! if you didn't want to you wouldn't have done it.

LANCE

I told you what she did. What do you expect! I am only Human. Okay, so I made a mistake. You never made a mistake? You're the perfect one?

38

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

38

Art listens uneasily. Trying to decide what he should do.

GWEN (O.S)

Not with a little 24 year old twit.

LANCE (O.S)

So big deal, she's just a twit. No, she's not a twit.

Art gathers up his coat and things and starts to leave.

GWEN (O.S)

If I was going to choose someone I would have picked Someone with a little more class!

LANCE (O.S)

She's kind of cute, you know!

GWEN (O.S)

I would have chosen someone with a little more substance than an airhead.

(CONTINUED)

As Art opens the door, Morgan is about to knock.

MORGAN

Hi honey. I thought you'd be here.
I wanted to tell you.

Art stares at her, then turns away.

MORGAN

(continuing)

What's wrong? Are you sick?

ART

(Coming unglued)

Aaaaaaaaaahhhhhhhhhhh.

MORGAN

(Calmly)

C'mon over here and sit down.

LANCE (O.S)

So are you gonna hold this against
me for the rest of my life?

GWEN (O.S)

Maybe it won't be so bad, maybe you
won't live much longer. I want to
know how many times, how many times
did this "just happen?"

Art and Morgan listen and stare at each other. Pause.

LANCE (O.S)

Three times...

MORGAN

Are they having an argument?

LANCE (O.S)

At the Hockey game, at the new
years party, and, and....

ART

God Morgan, you slept with Lance.

LANCE (O.S)

...And when you were in the
hospital having your tonsils out.

GWEN (O.S)

What!

MORGAN

What?

ART

You slept with Lance, three times
he said.

GWEN (O.S)

When I was in the hospital!

MORGAN

I... I...

ART

Behind my back! Jesus, you never
told me.

LANCE (O.S)

You never made a mistake?!!

MORGAN

I don't know what to say. I thought
you knew. Didn't he tell you? I
mean, he told me it would be better
if he told you, he told me he told
you.

ART

Why didn't you tell me, where was
our communication?

GWEN (O.S)

This is it, this is really it.

ART

You didn't tell me and we slept in
the same bed.

LANCE (O.S)

I wouldn't have slept with her, but
it was just, one of those things,
just chance. I mean you happened to
be in the Hospital, you could have
been somewhere else you know.

GWEN (O.S)

Aaaaargh!

ART

What, did you forget or something?
Did it just slip your mind? Were
you going dancing or something?

(CONTINUED)

MORGAN

You are being unfair. Lance said he wanted to tell you. He said that he wanted to be the one to explain the situation to you.

ART

What was the situation! Jesus! It was like nothing ever happened! I mean, what was the situation? What was going on? I mean what the hell!

GWEN (O.S)

I don't think I can continue with this relationship

LANCE (O.S)

Look, look, look, let's not let this ruin our lives, we've got A great life together, besides, it wasn't that big a thing.

GWEN (O.S)

Don't come near me.

There are sounds of a struggle from down the hall. Things start flying out of the doorway as Gwen throws them at Lance.

Art and Morgan don't pay any attention.

MORGAN

(Almost in tears)

He's the one who said he wanted to do it! I'm sorry but I can't always be responsible.

ART

I feel stupid. I feel like an idiot!

MORGAN

Well, he's your best friend! It's not like I picked up some schmuck off the street.

Things stop coming out of Gwen and Lance's bedroom.

LANCE (O.S)

Come here lambchop. Ow,Ow...Stop that.

(CONTINUED)

ART

How many were there? Were there some schmucks off the street too? I don't know, you never told me. Maybe you did it with the guy who broke into our apartment and stole my camera, I don't know! Some guy is jumpin' out the window pulling up his pants with my Nikon! I don't know. I feel like a chump. He is my best friend and I didn't even know!! I come over here to talk and get some consolation and MY BEST FRIEND IS SLEEPING WITH MY GIRLFRIEND!!!

MORGAN

Don't yell at me.

GWEN (O.S)

I can't trust you anymore, ever, ever again. Do you know what that feels like?

LANCE (O.S)

Give me another chance.

Gwen and Lance enter, they are disheveled and frazzled. They see Morgan.

MORGAN

You keep yelling at me, I don't know what to say.

GWEN

(To Morgan)

What are you doing here?.....Bitch!

LANCE

(Also to Morgan)

Home wrecker.

More bawling.

ART

(To Lance)

Mushbrain.

LANCE

She's the one who started the whole thing.

(CONTINUED)

MORGAN

(Anger through tears)

Me!

LANCE

That's right. I was weak. But, your friendship is more important to me than hers.

ART

Yeah, so important you had to help me out by sleeping with my girlfriend.

Art picks up a kitchen chair.

LANCE

Hey, that's my chair!

ART

Yeah, well that was my girl "old friend!"

Art throws the chair and then takes a round house swing at Lance which looks like it's headed for Lance's jaw as the scene goes black.

39 INT. LANCE AND GWEN'S LIVING ROOM - FIFTEEN MINUTES LATER 39

Lance and Art are seated at opposite ends of the couch, while Gwen is sitting sullenly at her desk. Lance is applying ice to his jaw. Morgan is gone.

LANCE

(To Art)

Feel better now?

(pause, no answer))

Want to hit me again?

ART

(Meekly)

No.

LANCE

(To Gwen)

Do you want to hit me?

Pause, Gwen stares at Lance, undecided.

LANCE

(continuing)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

LANCE (cont'd)
It's not the end of the world you know. (to Gwen) You know that I love you, you know that.
(Gwen nods, he turns to Art)
I, I wasn't trying to commit a personal affront to you. You know what I mean? It had nothing to do with you, it was just, it was just something that happened.

ART
Yeah, sure.

There is a long pause.

LANCE
(Cheerfully)
It's in the past!

ART
Can I have another beer?

LANCE
(Jumping up with enthusiasm) Sure, let me get it for you, sit down.

Lance is trying his best. He crosses to the refrigerator and gets three beers and opens them.

LANCE
(continuing)
You know, this whole thing is really kind of interesting when you come right down to it.

Art and Gwen glare at him.

LANCE
(continuing)
Look, I know that it doesn't seem like it right now, but as I said earlier, I'm just trying to be honest. True friends are honest with each other and believe me I am honest when I say that I was not the only guy to sleep with her.

ART
Alright, alright! Why don't you just show me a picture of every guy she went to bed with and really
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ART (cont'd)
make me feel stupid! (pause) God.
And I was leaving her, now I feel
like she was dumping me.

LANCE
What are you going to do?

Awkward pause.

GWEN
There is only one thing to do, one
way, one fair way to settle this,
to make things right again.

ART
Oh?

LANCE
Settle this?

GWEN
We have to purge ourselves, we have
to return to common law, a Roman
law, where if a thief is caught
stealing, his fingers are cut off,
if a person is caught lying his
tongue is pulled out.

ART
Yeah, if a person covets their best
friends girlfriend his....

LANCE
Now wait just a minute.

ART
I'll get the knife.

Art goes to the kitchen, emerging with a cheese grater.

GWEN
Art and I should sleep together.

Art stops mid stride.

LANCE
What! Art and you?

GWEN
Yes.

ART

Uhmmm.

LANCE

C'mon, don't be childish.

GWEN

It's only fair.

LANCE

It's only fair, it's only fair.
Well maybe I ought to punch Morgan,
you think that's fair?

GWEN

I think you "punched" Morgan
enough.

LANCE

Well it's not going to happen.

GWEN

Oh, it's not huh? We're awfully
arrogant aren't we? It's okay for
you to fool around but it's not
okay for me?

LANCE

Look this is ridiculous. Besides,
it's not the same thing.

GWEN

And what is so different about it?

LANCE

Well, for one thing, what you are
talking about is, is, premeditated
sex. Mine wasn't.

GWEN

Oh! I see. You slept with her three
times, and none of those times it
was premeditated. I could grant you
the first, but the second and third
times?

LANCE

(Floundering)

I, I just wanted to... I wanted to
make sure.... Hey, let's get one
thing straight, I still love you
after sleeping with Morgan three
times.

(CONTINUED)

GWEN

Well, that's great, but I don't think I love you after you slept with Morgan three times. Maybe I will find my love for you again by sleeping with Arthur.

LANCE

C'mon! You're not going to sleep with him.

GWEN

Why not?

LANCE

Why not? Cause, cause, then I'd have to look at him afterwards.

GWEN

Arthur, what do you think?

ART

Well, I... uh, I'm not in the most romantic mood.

GWEN

You want to save this relationship don't you? This friendship, for the three of us. I mean like I said, an eye for an eye, an affair for an affair.

LANCE

(beginning to see she is serious)

Affair! it wasn't an affair. Besides, why should you make the same mistake I made? Does that make sense?

GWEN

You already told me I wasn't perfect, remember? And we all know your past.

LANCE

Look, do you want to sleep with him? Does he appeal to you? Lance shows Art off as if he's on an auction block.

(CONTINUED)

ART

Hey!

LANCE

He's skinny, going bald. Do you want to have an affair with a skinny bald guy.

ART

Hey, I'm not skinny.

GWEN

You know I've always liked Arthur.

LANCE

You always liked Arthur.

GWEN

If I hadn't met you first in college, I would have gone with Arthur. I have always liked him, he's so, he's so, creative.

ART

Look, we've known each other a long time. No one could have foreseen what a jerk Lance was going to turn out to be.

GWEN

Who Lance?

ART

(To Lance)

I mean, you've got an irresponsible, wienie. You've always had an irresponsible wienie. Back in college, even in high school, you were always playin' around, you're irresponsible, the big stud! But look, you're 41 years old now, it's time to take responsibility for your actions.

GWEN

He's right Lance.

LANCE

Who have I hurt? I never punched anyone. I never tried to hurt anyone.

Art gets up and moves away from Lance.

(CONTINUED)

ART

So? I sleep with Gwen, three times.
A week and a half apart.

GWEN

(To Lance)

Is that about right?

ART

A month apart?

GWEN

Let's see, the Hockey game, the New
Years Eve party and the hospital.
We're covering about eight weeks
there.

ART

We'll do it twice. Then we'll wait
for something unfortunate to happen
to you, when you need condolence,
you need sympathy and then we'll do
it the third time.

GWEN

Arthur!

ART

We'll wait till you get fired from
your job or get an incurable
disease or something, then Gwen and
I will sleep together.

LANCE

You don't think I hurt? huh? How do
you think I felt all this time,
Skulking around knowing that I'd
slept with Morgan, keeping it a
secret from you? Huh? You think
that was easy?!

ART

You were really torn apart?

LANCE

I was torn up, yes.

ART

You were just shredded?

LANCE

Yeah shredded!

(CONTINUED)

GWEN

Why didn't you tell us if it was tearing you up so badly, get it off your chest?

LANCE

It's not easy runnin' around with a dual personality! (to Gwen) Kissing you sometimes I'd think about Morgan, it was driving me crazy.

GWEN

What! God I hate you!

ART

(consoling Gwen)

You're just, you're just an irresponsible wienie.

GWEN

You were thinking about her while you made love to me?

44.

LANCE

Yes, but I thought of you when I made love to her. I didn't tell you because, because I knew you'd react like this.

Gwen starts crying.

ART

Man, you're really a jerk, you know that? That's something you just don't say to a person.

LANCE

Hey, now's the time to put everything out there, just put it out.

ART

You're incredible, just an incredible idiot sometimes.

GWEN

He's not an idiot.

LANCE

Thank you honey.

(CONTINUED)

GWEN

He's, he's a bucket!

ART

A bucket?

GWEN

A bucket of junk, a cruel,
heartless boar, an asshole, a
maggot, a steaming pile of...

LANCE

This is getting out of hand. The
point is that I made a mistake and
I'm willing to live with that
sorrow. I don't want you to go
through the same hell that I'm
going through now.

ART

Oh, it wouldn't be hell.

GWEN

Hell, you've been through hell? If
you think you've been through hell
so far. (fire in her eyes as she
turns to Arthur) Arthur, tell Lance
about the drive-in.

Art looks at her blankly.

GWEN

(continuing)

When we all went together and you
brought Delia Rose, remember?

ART

Well.

GWEN

Lance and Delia went to get popcorn
and you and I were left all alone
for all that time.

LANCE

(Shocked)

How did you find out about that?

GWEN

(Confused)

Find out about what?

(CONTINUED)

LANCE
Delia and me.

ART GWEN
Not her too!? What!? Oh no!

LANCE
Isn't that what you were talking
about?

ART
It never ends.

GWEN
We were talking about us. We were
going to tell you about us, what we
did while you were gone getting
popcorn.

LANCE
You? You didn't do anything. What
could you do?

GWEN
(To Art)
Go ahead, tell him.

LANCE
Tell me Art.

ART
(Rattled)
It was, uh, well, hell, we were,
uh.

GWEN
Necking.

46.

LANCE
Necking? Necking? I don't care if
you necked with her. You want to
kiss her? Go ahead and kiss her.

GWEN
It was heavy petting.

ART
Well,yeah, we were petting and
necking, a lot.

(CONTINUED)

LANCE

Okay, fine, so we're even. You didn't do anything more than that, I mean you didn't have sex.

GWEN

It depends on what you mean by sex.

LANCE

Intercourse, you didn't have intercourse.

ART

No.

GWEN

... but we could have.

Pause.

LANCE

We were just kids then.

ART

Yeah, right, kids, but that's the difference between you and me pal, I could've and didn't. But you... you. No wonder Delia never went out with me after that! Man, you're a jerk!

LANCE

I didn't bring up Delia Rose in the first place. You're my buddy, buddy, buddy. (takes Art in a bear hug) We've been through a hell of a lot together and I'm sure this is all going to work out and after it's all over, we'll still be buddies! Sometimes the truth hurts, but we've got to tell the truth, right? It purges our souls.

ART

I don't know what purges your soul. (to himself mostly) To think, I was leaving her, it's just weird. You know I'd like to believe there was a good part of being with Morgan too, but now that's all mucked up.

(CONTINUED)

LANCE

There were good things.

ART

It's like the rug has been pulled out from under me. (buries his head in his hands) oh man. They all sit in various degrees of melancholy.

GWEN

Look at us! We look like a bunch of suicidal idiots.

LANCE

Well then, let's liven things up a bit! Open some champagne.

ART

Champagne?

GWEN

Why not? (tousles Art's hair playfully) Let's celebrate. Gwen goes and gets champagne.

LANCE

(To Art)

Sure what the hell!

GWEN

It's all kind of funny really!

ART

Ha, ha....

Gwen comes over with the champagne.

GWEN

Let's put on some music.

LANCE

Sure, whatever you want, don't move, I'll get it. What'll it be?

GWEN

Something we can dance to.

Lance puts on some Tony Bennett. As he turns to dance with Gwen she hands him her drink and turns to Art who is still guzzling his champagne.

(CONTINUED)

GWEN
(continuing)
Arthur, come dance with me.

ART
Me? I okay, sure.

They really get into it. Lance is getting more and more loaded on champagne. He claps to the rhythm of the music as he watches Art and Gwen.

ART
(continuing)
Hey, "Big Chill" huh? "Big Chill."

LANCE
So Art... now that you're a "free agent" what are you gonna do?

ART
Well.

GWEN
Art can stay with us for a while.

LANCE
Sure, that's a great idea. We've got a nice couch here, it's real comfortable.

GWEN
Oh, now Lance, we've got a nice bed too. A great big King sized bed. There's plenty of room.

LANCE
Our bed is big, but not that big.

ART
Well, I guess someone is going to have to sleep on the couch then.

GWEN
Arthur, you're our guest, you should get the bed.

LANCE
But where will we sleep?

GWEN
You can sleep on the couch.

(CONTINUED)

LANCE

So, where will you sleep, the couch isn't (sees the plot) Oh, I see.

49.

GWEN

I wouldn't want Arthur to feel lonely, especially after all you've put him through today. I'll sleep with him.

ART

(Grinning)

You're booted out for the night buddy.

LANCE

He can't sleep in my bed.

GWEN

Oh?

LANCE

Alright, fine, you can do it, you can sleep together, do whatever you want to do, as long as I'm in the room.

ART

Ohhh, now that is weird, man, that's weird city. We'll tell you all about it, but you can't be there. Or maybe we'll just be real loud. I just don't think I could enjoy it much, being watched. It's not a, a, sort of public sporting event, it's a very.

GWEN

Private...

ART

... moment, between two...

GWEN

... loving....

ART

... and caring....

(CONTINUED)

GWEN
... friends, you can just sit out
here and imagine it.

Art and Gwen head for the bedroom. Art holds the door for her.

GWEN
(continuing)
We'll give you a blow by blow in
the morning.

She goes inside. Art grabs the bottle of champagne from Lance.

GWEN (O.S)
Oh Arthur! come to bed Arthur!

Art gives Lance the old thumbs up sign, then goes into the bedroom and closes the door behind him. We hear the lock click.

LANCE
Hey, hey, Okay. C'mon out, the
jokes on me. Yep, I was a bad boy,
ha,ha, ha. (pause) c'mon you guys.

We hear laughter from within. Lance drains his glass, crosses to the couch and sits. We hear squeals and giggles from the bedroom.

INT. living room - NEXT MORNING

Lance is sleeping on the couch. Empty liquor bottles are strewn around him. Art comes out of the bedroom fully clothed but carrying his shoes. He tries to sneak by Lance, who obviously is very hung over.

LANCE
Where are you going?

ART
(Surprised)
Oh!, hey there Lance. I am leaving
now.

LANCE
Thought you didn't have a place to
stay.

ART
I have, uhm, I have an interview
and...

(CONTINUED)

LANCE

...and? Don't you have something to say to me?

ART

Say?

Gwen comes out of the bedroom in a bathrobe.

GWEN

Good morning, Lance. I hope you slept well.

ART

I have to go now.

LANCE

You're not going anywhere until.

GWEN

Lance!

LANCE

You both have something to say to me?

51.

GWEN

Oh!? Yes. It was fantastic, wasn't it Artie?

ART

What?

GWEN

Remember, the blow by blow.

LANCE

Very funny.

ART

I really have to go.

LANCE

Why such a rush? You didn't really do it did you? (takes a moment looks at Art.) I'll kill you.

Starts for him.

(CONTINUED)

GWEN

Lance, stop it, don't you touch
him.

Lance still goes after Art. Art barely makes it to the door. Gwen reaches Lance. She gives him a withering look, he backs away.

40

INT. PSYCHIATRISTS OFFICE - DAY

40

DOCTOR LOIS MEYERSON

the psychiatrist, is a large woman with shoulder length brown hair and a kind but stern face. She stands by her desk, watching Morgan, who is sitting across the room showing her her drawings.

LOIS

So, Morgan, how do these make you
feel?

MORGAN

I don't know, I feel stuck, like I
am in quicksand or something.

LOIS

Tell me about your relationship
with, what was his name?

MORGAN

Art.

LOIS

Tell me about Art.

52.

MORGAN

Well. He left me....

41

INT. MORGAN'S APARTMENT - DAY - MONTAGE

41

Morgan cleaning; rearranging the furniture; having the cracked window fixed. She brings in canvases and paints picture after picture.

42 INT. LANCE AND GWEN'S HOUSE - DAY - MONTAGE 42

Lance is sitting on the couch in his bathrobe, briefs and socks, absently turning the channels on the television. Gwen is busy looking over fabric samples, talking on the phone. She passes Lance, shakes her head, continues talking. Lance is sitting alone at the kitchen table eating a bowl of cereal. It is night. Gwen comes in the front door, dressed in business attire. They barely acknowledge each other. Lance lying on the couch. It is in the middle of the night, he is illuminated by the light of the television screen.

43 INT. LANCE AND GWEN'S HOUSE - MORNING - MANY MONTHS LATER 43

The phone rings, Gwen and Lance's apartment is in the middle of being redecorated. Gwen is in the kitchen standing at the counter, watching the news on a small color tv. She is dressed in an attractive business suit and is draining the last of her coffee.

ON TELEVISION

The newscaster is talking about the guerrilla fighting in a Central American Country.

NEWSCASTER

Direct from the capital we go now
to Art Nagle an independent
reporter who has been following
this story for many weeks.

Art comes on, dressed in green military fatigues. He looks disheveled, but rugged in his own way.

ON GWEN

She stares at the television in disbelief.

GWEN

Art? (yelling off into the
bedroom.) Lance, Lance, Artie is on
television.

LANCE (O.S)

Good for him.

The phone rings.

44

INT. KITCHEN - ANOTHER DAY

44

Indicated by Gwen's change of outfit, the television is off. Gwen picks up the phone.

GWEN

Hello? Good morning Peter. Yes, I was just going out the door. uh,huh... well we're just going to have to order more material regardless of the cost. I can't let anybody else get ahead of me in the market right now. We've got a lock on Beijing hand painted silk and we're going to keep it. Just keep calling until they answer. (she looks at her watch) I've got to get going, I'll see you in a little bit.

She hangs up the phone and heads for the kitchen. On her way she yells into the bedroom.

GWEN

(continuing)

Lance, I have to rush. If you want I will drop you off at the office. Didn't you have an appointment at eight today?

LANCE (O.S)

Mnnnnnmmmmmmmm.

GWEN

Okay, suit yourself.

Gwen exits into the kitchen as Lance appears in the doorway of the bedroom. he looks like hell, unshaven, ruffled, dressed only in a pair of boxer shorts and a torn bathrobe.

LANCE

I'm not going.

Lance goes back into the bedroom. Gwen comes out of the kitchen, looking around.

GWEN

Lance?

She shrugs, then goes to the closet and gets her coat. She grabs some papers from the desk by the window and exits. Pause, Lance enters, looks around, seeing that she is gone he sighs, goes to the kitchen where he rummages around for

(CONTINUED)

some food. He finds a donut and shuffles back to the bathroom. The shower can be heard as Art comes in.

ART

Hello? Is anybody here?

Art hears the water running (he is dressed as we saw him in the news cast) he smiles and tip toes towards the bathroom. The water stops and in a panic he dashes for the bedroom. As he exits Gwen enters in a hurry, muttering under her breath. She rummages in the desk. Not finding what she wants, she heads towards the kitchen, retracing her steps from before she left. Lance enters dripping wet with a towel around his waist. Gwen enters from the kitchen and is surprised to see Lance, Lance is surprised to see her.

GWEN

Oh! you're up.

LANCE

I thought that you left.

GWEN

I did, I forgot my sample book.

LANCE

Oh.

Art pops in from the bedroom.

ART

Boo!

LANCE & GWEN

Aaaaahhhhhh!

ART

Surprise.

GWEN

(Overjoyed to see him)
Arthur.

LANCE

(Underjoyed to see him) What the hell! I thought you were in South America.

GWEN

(Hugging Art)
Arthur, Oh Arthur. I just saw you on tv a couple of days ago.

(CONTINUED)

ART

Yeh, I spent a couple of months down there, then filed my report and flew back yesterday.

GWEN

Did you get my letters? You never answered so I was getting worried.

LANCE

You look like hell.

55.

ART

(To Gwen)

Yeah, I got 'em. I couldn't write back though, we were on the move so much and those guerrillas, they're really paranoid.

GWEN

It's wonderful to have you back, we have to celebrate, just like old times.

Gwen exits to the kitchen, passing Lance who glowers at them.

LANCE

(To Gwen)

I thought you had an appointment?

GWEN (O.S)

They can wait a couple of minutes.

Art and Lance look at one another. Art smiles, Lance mimics him.

45

INT. KITCHEN

45

Gwen is preparing glasses and getting ready to open a bottle of champagne.

GWEN

You nearly scared me to death when you came out of the bedroom like that, especially dressed in those fatigues, you look like a guerrilla soldier or something.

INT. living room - CONTINUOUS

(CONTINUED)

ART

Well, these are the clothes I've lived in for the past couple of months. When you do a story about insurgent guerrillas you have to blend in.

Gwen pops the cork, Art hits the floor and covers his head. Lance nearly loses his towel as Gwen enters with a tray of glasses. She sees Art on the floor. Looks at Lance.

GWEN

(To Lance accusingly)
What did you do?

ART

(Sheepishly getting up) It wasn't him. It was the cork. I'm still a little gun shy. I was in the middle of that fighting and all.

56.

GWEN

Oh Arthur, I'm sorry (helping him up) here, drink this, it'll calm you down.

ART

Champagne, haven't seen this in a while.

LANCE

Where's mine?

Gwen crosses to Lance.

GWEN

I'm sorry for yelling at you dear, don't you think you'd better get dressed?

LANCE

I'm okay.

GWEN

You're dripping.

Lance reluctantly heads for the bedroom.

(CONTINUED)

LANCE

I'll just be a minute.

GWEN

We'll hold the celebration until you return.

Lance exits.

ART

He doesn't look too good.

GWEN

He's a wreck, hasn't sold anything since you left. They want to fire him and he doesn't seem to care.

ART

You think it has to do with, you know... our... our....

GWEN

Agreement.

ART

Right, agreement.

GWEN

Ever since that second night we spent together he has been very morose and out of sorts. (then cheering up) But look at you, Mr. Big time journalist. I told you you'd make it one of these days.

ART

Maybe we've done enough. We've made our point, haven't we? He looked at me like, like some sort of madman.

GWEN

Yeah, well I don't know, while on the one hand watching him go down hill has torn me apart inside, still, I don't know. He's done it before to get my sympathy and it's worked. I would forgive him and he wouldn't have to pay the consequences for his actions. This time I am going to make sure he pays, and pays big.

(CONTINUED)

ART

But he looks like hell, he certainly seems to be a tortured and suffering soul, isn't that enough? I don't know if I have the heart to go through with our plan, he's my best friend.

GWEN

He's my husband! I can't just let it go Arthur, I mean, I love him, otherwise I wouldn't have stayed around. But it's because I love him that I can't let him get away with this. If we don't go through with it, it will be like he won, he screwed around with my life, with your life, and there were no consequences.

ART

I understand, but some of the things I've seen have opened my eyes, made me look at things, the whole world, differently.

GWEN

Cut the crap Arthur, you are coming back here tonight. After you get washed up.

Lance enters, dressed in a business suit that is a little rumpled and he remains unshaven.

ART

Hey, big guy, nice suit. Busy day?

LANCE

I have a meeting with a prospective buyer.

ART

That's great. I thought maybe later we could meet, catch up on the news, down a few brews.

LANCE

I don't know, I don't think I can.

ART

I haven't seen you for ages, I got some stuff to read to you, new material, some beginnings.

(CONTINUED)

LANCE

To tell you the truth, I'm going to be pretty busy, probably for the rest of my life.

GWEN

Lance.

ART

Yeah, well, I guess I'll see you guys tonight then. I got some errands to run.

GWEN

Dinner will be around seven.

LANCE

(To Gwen)

He's coming here tonight?

GWEN

Of course.

LANCE

Fine, that's just fine. I suppose he's going to stay over night as well.

GWEN

I think it would be a nice gesture, after all he's been sleeping in the jungle.

LANCE

Nice gesture? Right.

GWEN

(Looking at her watch)

I really do have to go now.

LANCE

Sure, you're right, I'd better be heading out too, I don't want to miss my important meeting.

GWEN

See you tonight Arthur.

ART

Since you guys are leaving, I'd better be on my way.

Lance passes Art and gives him an evil look. Lance exits first.

(CONTINUED)

ART
 (continuing; To Lance)
 I guess I'll see you tonight then.

Gwen and Art look at each other and then head out the door.

46 EXT. MORGAN'S APARTMENT - DAY 46

Art gets out of his car and goes up to Morgan's apartment. He is still dressed in his fatigues, and hesitates at her door, straightening his hair.

A car drives up to the corner. Art doesn't see it.

ON CAR
 It is Lance. He looks determined and upset, watching as Art
 knocks on Morgan's door.

47 INT. MORGAN'S APARTMENT - DAY 47

Morgan is painting, she whistles to herself softly. She is dressed in old painting clothes and her hair is pulled up on top of her head. Art knocks. She stops whistling and listens, another knock. She puts down her brushes and goes to the door

MORGAN
 Who is it?

ART
 Art.

MORGAN
 (Surprised)
 Art? The Art that used to live here?

ART
 Yeah.

She opens the door. Art stands there uneasily.

ART
 (continuing)
 Hi Morgan.

Morgan smiles.

MORGAN

Come on in.

ART

Uh, I called, couple of days ago.

60.

MORGAN

You called?

ART

Yeah, I got your machine though.

MORGAN

So, how are you doing?

ART

Alright, Okay, I just... uh, came to get my stuff.

Morgan gives him a looking over, she turns him around.

MORGAN

How are you?

ART

I just came to get my cactus.

MORGAN

Give me a hug. (they hug) You're so skinny, didn't you eat while you've been gone?

ART

Yeah, well... bugs and stuff.

MORGAN

Come, sit down.

ART

No really. I can't stay. I have a... I have a meeting.

MORGAN

(Pushing him down)

Sit down, would you sit.

ART

(Sitting)

Okay. How have you been?

(CONTINUED)

MORGAN

I've been fine, how are you? You're so skinny.

ART

Well, I'm ok.

MORGAN

Yeah.

ART

Doin' lots of stuff.

MORGAN

(Interested)

Uh, huh? like what?

61.

ART

Like uhhhhh, well, I got a big article in a big magazine.

MORGAN

What was it about?

ART

Well, it was about bag people. I lived with the bag people. I became a bag person.

MORGAN

Yes.

ART

I was living that way after we broke up, you know homeless, no place to go.

MORGAN

How do you like the apartment, looks different huh? I did fix that broken window.

Art looks around nodding. There is a pause.

ART

Been working a lot.

MORGAN

Yeah, I have.

(CONTINUED)

ART
...lot of paintings.

MORGAN
I've been doing a lot of productive things, thinking, working out physically. I feel good.

ART
Uh, huh.

MORGAN
So, how are the bag people?

ART
Oh, well... sad, really, sort of sad.

MORGAN
How did that make you feel?

ART
Oh, it made me feel lucky, lucky for what I had, for one thing. It was the right thing to do, basically, I decided to just go with where I was, which was at the bottom rung of humanity. I lived with these people and learned to appreciate what I had. Then I wrote an article about them, exploited their experience, made some money. I did some good, it made me feel good.

MORGAN
What brought you back?

ART
Well, after the bag people I went down to South America, I lived with the rebels in Chile. I just got back yesterday.

MORGAN
Oh, that's so exciting.

ART
Yeah, I've got agents and stuff now. Actually, if I can keep it up I'm a working journalist.

MORGAN

So now you're back in town for
awhile?

ART

This is my home base, yeah.

MORGAN

Have you got a place?

ART

Well, yeah, I got a place. Like I
said I plan to work as much as I
can right now while I'm hot. I have
a little dump. Well not really a
dump, but you know, I'm comfortable
in dumps.

MORGAN

We'll have to have a house warming.
I mean a dump warming.

Pause.

ART

(Looking around again)

I see you're into these amoeba
shapes.

MORGAN

I've always been a little
distracted, but after you left my
work got much more focused. (she
points to one that Art is looking
at) That's right after you left.
Look at how it's so disorganized.
This too (pointing to another
Painting) although this has a
little more form to it. It's very
busy Don't you think?

ART

(Studying them
carefully)

Mmmmmmmmm.

MORGAN

Now I'm more into, kind of
geometric, simple clear. What do
you think?

(CONTINUED)

ART
(Still studying)
Yeah.

MORGAN
I woke up one morning and just spat
this out.

ART
You did this in the morning? I
remember when you barely moved an
eyelid before noon.

MORGAN
It's amazing the stuff that's come
out of me, my therapist said.

ART
Whoa... hold on, you're going to a
therapist? Are you actually paying
money to see him?

MORGAN
Uhh, her, and that's one of the
things I've come to understand.

ART
Understand? Understand what?

MORGAN
Your sense of humor. I talked a lot
about you with my therapist. She
said that you, "were trying to
overcome a deep sense of inadequacy
and futility through the use of
self-deprecating humor." That when
you made fun of something or
someone, you were really making fun
of yourself.

ART
Oh.

MORGAN
(Gleefully)
I always thought you were making
fun of me.

ART
Yeah, well.

MORGAN

I found out that it really wasn't your fault that we didn't stay together, or that it wasn't my fault, like I thought, that it was inevitable because of who we were at the time. I mean you hated yourself and I just wanted to have fun.

ART

I don't know if I really hated myself.

MORGAN

You know, when I slept with Lance, and all those other guys, I didn't feel like I was cheating on you because it didn't mean anything to me. I was experimenting, it was performance art. My therapist says I shouldn't feel guilt about that, so I don't. I'm able to accept what happened to us as fate. Finding that out freed me creatively, you see?

ART

(Lost)

What?

MORGAN

My paintings. Because of what we went through I have grown, I am able to do all this. It's all thanks to you Artie.

She gives him a hug.

ART

Yeah, well, you're welcome.

MORGAN

It's great to see you. (another hug)

ART

It's interesting.

MORGAN

I'm pleased.

Pause.

(CONTINUED)

ART

You have grown a lot, or something, that's good. To me that says there is a god somewhere. That people can actually improve their lot in life.

MORGAN

Are you involved with anyone?

ART

well, No, Not exactly. Sort of but not really. I had better get my cactus.

MORGAN

I don't know where it is.

ART

Probably in the kitchen.

Art heads into the kitchen.

MORGAN

So, what is she like?

ART

Who?

MORGAN

You're new girlfriend.

ART

She's not really my...

MORGAN

Is she older?

ART (O.S)

She's about my age.

MORGAN

That old huh?

Art enters from the kitchen with the cactus.

MORGAN

(continuing)

Have you known her long?

ART

Welllll, listen Morgan, I really, I... it's complicated.

(CONTINUED)

MORGAN

Hey, I don't want to make you talk about her if you don't want to.

ART

No, it's not that, It's just... well...

There is a knock on the door. Morgan looks at Art and then at the door. She crosses to open it.

MORGAN

Who is it?

LANCE (O.S)

Lance.

MORGAN

(Surprised, shocked)

Lance? Lance?

ART

Oh great.

Morgan crosses to the door. Art starts to panic looking for a hiding place. Finally he runs into the bathroom. Morgan opens the door, Lance bursts in.

LANCE

Alright where is he?

MORGAN

Just wait a minute, you can't... what are you doing?

Lance ignores Morgan and starts searching for Art.

LANCE

Art! Oh Art ol' buddy... I know you're here.

Lance then goes to the bathroom.

LANCE (O.S)

Ah ha! I wanna talk to you!

Lance and Art reappear.

ART

What the hell are you doing here?

(CONTINUED)

MORGAN

(To Lance)

Yeah, what the hell are you doing here?

LANCE

I came to talk to Art.

ART

(To Lance)

It would be better if we left now.

MORGAN

Art, don't leave.

LANCE

Has your old bed buddy there, told you what he's been doing since he last saw you?

MORGAN

He's told me.

Art frantically tries to herd Lance out the door.

LANCE

He's told you?!!!

ART

Lance, let's leave, let's talk about this someplace else.

LANCE

I want this to end! I didn't drag it out. I didn't try and break you're goddamn soul!

MORGAN

What are you talking about?

ART

Nothing, it's nothing.

LANCE

Ah, ha! You haven't told her, have you Art?

ART

Lance.

LANCE

Why not old buddy! Why haven't you told her? Why don't you write a

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

LANCE (cont'd)
book about it, huh? Let the whole world know that you've been sleeping with Gwen to get back (Points at Morgan) at you.

MORGAN
What?! Gwen?!

ART
It's not what you think.

MORGAN
You asshole!

LANCE
See that! I'm not the only one you are hurting.

ART
Hey... where do you get off telling me how much I'm hurting you? You hurt me and Gwen.

MORGAN
This is something, this is really something.

LANCE
I am here asking as a friend, don't you think I hurt enough? Don't you think I know that I screwed up. I'm sorry for christ sake. I can't take this anymore.

ART
Let's go somewhere else and talk about this?

LANCE
I wouldn't have followed you here if this wasn't the most important thing in my life right now.

MORGAN
You are having an affair with Gwen, just to get back at me? You scum.

ART
Now wait a minute, I seem to remember.

(CONTINUED)

LANCE

(To Morgan)

You don't know the half of it. I'm there in the house, they are in the bedroom sleeping in my bed, laughing, giggling, carrying on. It's vindictive, it's hateful.

MORGAN

(Turning away)

That's charming.

ART

This is all getting blown out of proportion.

MORGAN

(Turning to Art)

We never laughed in bed.

ART

We have this agreement, it isn't what you think.

MORGAN

Ohhhh, this sounds real mature.

LANCE

(To Morgan)

Could you leave us alone for a minute?

MORGAN

What?

ART

I'll go.

LANCE

No.

MORGAN

Okay... okay... hold on there for a moment, if you two assholes want to duke it out, do it somewhere else.

She stands firm staring at both of them, then starts pushing them towards the door.

MORGAN

(continuing; to Art)

You know, I was really glad to see you when You came in, really glad.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MORGAN (cont'd)

I had been thinking about what I did, how I acted, we've changed. I just didn't think that you of all people could be so spiteful. I am sure that this has to do with me, maybe we should have all sat down and cleared this up, but we didn't... If you want your cactus then take it and leave when you're through. I don't want any phony excuses for you to come back here, ever.

Morgan has pushed them out the door and slams it in their faces.

48 EXT. MORGAN'S DOOR STEP.

48

ART
(Meekly)
Morgan.

Art turns to Lance, still holding his cactus.

ART
(continuing)
This is great, just great.

LANCE
You made your bed, as they say.

ART
Why the hell did you follow me here?

LANCE
I want you to stop.

ART
Do you realize what you did?

LANCE
Do you realize what you are doing?

ART
Things could have been great between Morgan and me, there was a chance. I could see it, a spark beginning to flame, it finally could have been terrific. But you... you....

49

EXT. STREET IN FRONT OF MORGAN'S APARTMENT.

49

Art is walking quickly down the street, not paying attention where he is going. Lance follows, trying to keep up.

LANCE

I think she had the right to know what's been going on.

ART

What's been going on? What's been going on?! We were getting back at you, for what you did, doing to you what you did to us.

LANCE

You're killing me, killing me I tell you.

Art stops and faces Lance.

ART

Gwen was right. You have to get the last lick in don't you... you have to get away with something. The more I think about it, especially now, the more I believe in my heart of hearts that we should have gone through with it, actually gone through with it.

Art continues walking.

LANCE

What? What are your saying?

Catches him, turns him around.

ART

I am saying that my conscious is clean. If I had time to explain things to Morgan I would have told her that nothing ever happened between Gwen and I, because nothing did happen between Gwen and I, now everything is down the toilet, my chance to get Morgan back, and our retribution for your... your... heinous acts.

LANCE

You mean, you guys never... you didn't actually... you were

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

LANCE (cont'd)
pretending all this time? Ha, you
didn't fool me, you never actually
slept with her?

ART
You see that, now you are gloating,
I did sleep with her.

LANCE
Yeah, but you didn't do anything.

ART
I wanted to hurt you, Gwen wanted
to hurt you, we wanted to get back
at you for all the hurt, the pain
you caused.

LANCE
(Cheerful)
Well you did.

ART
I don't think you realize how much
you hurt me, how much you hurt
Gwen.

LANCE
I do, really, (brightening) but...

ART
Now look at you. Damn! Gwen is
going to go nuts. Now that you know
that we didn't... you can't tell
Gwen! You've got to pretend you
don't know.

LANCE
Hey, it's alright. Listen, I'll
straighten everything out with
Gwen, don't worry.

Lance heads towards his car.

ART
Sure, go ahead, just go right
ahead. You have effectively ruined
any kind of reconciliation between
Morgan and I, you'll tell Gwen,
you'll gloat about it, how I
spilled my guts, then she will hate
me for all eternity.

(CONTINUED)

LANCE

Don't be silly. Listen, I'm your friend.

ART

Oh right, I forgot. I've got you for a friend, my life really is in the gutter.

LANCE

Come over to our house just like you planned and everything will be just like the good old days, trust me. We can shoot the breeze, you can read some of your new stuff. Once the air is cleared, we can get back to our normal lives. Listen, I am sure that once you explain things to Morgan you two will get back together again.

ART

Didn't you hear her? She doesn't want me to come back ever.

LANCE

Hey, don't worry about that, she'll cool down. It will work out. If there is one thing I know it's women.

Lance gets into his car.

ART

Don't worry about it? You barge in here and ruin my life for the second time and all you can say is "don't worry about it".

LANCE

Hey, Artie, I mean it. Come over and we'll celebrate just like we used to, champagne, the works. Lance starts his car and begins singing "celebrate, dance to the music."

ART

Celebrate!?

Art's fury begins to boil over and with one enormous scream, hurls his cactus to the ground. Then looks at the mess, takes a beat and starts picking up the pieces.

50 INT. LANCE'S OFFICE - DAY 50

Lance is talking animatedly on the phone. He hangs up and immediately goes and hugs the nearest co-worker.

51 INT. FLOWER SHOP - DAY 51

Lance is buying a big bouquet of flowers. He is still happy and smiling.

52 EXT. STREET - DAY 52

Art is shuffling, dejectedly along, his hands shoved in his pockets. He heads into an alley where there are some homeless people. They recognize Art and invite him to sit with them.

53 INT. LANCE AND GWEN'S APARTMENT - DAY 53

Gwen is seated center, on the couch looking over her wedding album.

54 INSERT 54

Close on pictures of their wedding cake, guests, her with Lance.

55 BACK TO SCENE 55

Lance enters. She slams the album closed.

LANCE
Hello gorgeous!

Lance hands Gwen the bouquet of flowers.

GWEN
Lance! How sweet of you. What's the occasion?

LANCE
Oh things, this and that, all is right with the world. You are not going to believe this, but while I was in the office, I got a call from some guy in Cleveland. He wants to buy the old Clements building. Ha! I've been trying to
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

LANCE (cont'd)
unload that place for years and all
of a sudden, WHAM, just like that,
it's gone! Baby we are starting all
over, you and me, back to the old
days. I love you so much.

Hugs a bewildered Gwen

GWEN
My goodness Lance! Give me air! I'm
really happy that you sold
something.

LANCE
You love me, don't you! I mean, I
really know that now.

Gwen goes to put the flowers in the kitchen, still
bewildered.

GWEN (O.S)
Sure I love you.

LANCE
Yes, yes, I know.

Gwen comes back in.

GWEN
Lance, what has gotten into you all
of a sudden? Does this have
anything to do with Arthur and me?

LANCE
Welllll, a little bit, a little
eency weency bit.

GWEN
A little widdle bit, huh?

LANCE
Just a weedle, uh huh, yup.

GWEN
What did you do to him!!?

LANCE
Do to him? I didn't do anything to
him.

GWEN

Why are you acting this way, then?

LANCE

Let's just say he's been an inspiration.

GWEN

I see, now that he's back, you're motivated. You've seen what a success he's become so now you have to go out and prove yourself again.

LANCE

I don't have to prove myself, not to him.

GWEN

To me.

75.

LANCE

Not to anyone.

GWEN

Lance....

LANCE

Hey, you know what I've been through these past months. What you and Art were doing. I can't tell you what it felt like.

GWEN

So?

LANCE

So, it worked! You showed me how wrong I'd been, the errors of my ways. Let's face it I did some things that were just terrible.

GWEN

Yes.

LANCE

Your punishment worked.
(hardly able to contain himself) I know now, how wrong I was. I have been punished and now things aren't so bad anymore. I've still got you, I'm on

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

LANCE (cont'd)
a roll at work, I know things are going to be different, just wait and see. We are going places, I am inspired. Hey, let's go out and buy some things.

GWEN
That's fine, dear. But remember, Art is coming over tonight.

LANCE
I know.

GWEN
We have some unfinished business, Art and I. You don't mind I take it.

LANCE
I don't mind, why should I mind?

GWEN
My this is a far cry from your gushing outbursts and pleadings the last time.

76.

LANCE
Honey, I don't see what the big thing is. Look Art is my best friend, I trust him with my wife, and I trust you even more. So, Art is welcome here any time.

GWEN
Arthur and I have to go through with this, he will be sleeping in your bed. You have to know the same hurt, the same pain. What are you smiling about?

LANCE
You two, you two guys.

GWEN
What are you laughing about?

LANCE
I can't believe you both pulled one over on me like that! It was good, I have to admit, you had me. I mean
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

LANCE (cont'd)
when he told me, I almost fell
over! (Gwen stares at Lance,
getting the jist of things.) You
really had me going, and I deserved
it, you little trickster you.

GWEN
What? What!

LANCE
C'mon honey, the game is over. Art
told me everything.

Pause.

GWEN
That son of a bitch! He promised,
he promised! God-dammit!

LANCE
Honey, look, I learned my lesson,
really I have, isn't that what it
was all about, it's over now, it's
time to celebrate, get our lives
back to normal.

GWEN
So this is what those flowers were
all about?

LANCE
I feel great, just great.

77.

GWEN
You know that nothing happened
between Art and me, so nothing
happened to you! Now think you have
the upper hand, you won. That's
what it is all about... because we
didn't do what we said we were
going to do... I COULD KILL ART!

LANCE
Wait a minute. I was going crazy. I
learned my lesson. We're all even
now. An eye for an eye.

GWEN
No we're not even....

(CONTINUED)

LANCE

The game is over, honey. (he goes to hold her)

GWEN

Don't touch me!

LANCE

You don't think I understand but I do, I really do. You're mad at Art for telling me, but honey, Art is really a great guy, a good friend.

GWEN

You are right dear, I really have no right to be angry at Arthur. It was my decision too. I mean after all, if you say you are going to do something then you should really do it.

LANCE

Gwen...

GWEN

No, you're quite right dear, the game is over, it's time for reality. Arthur should be here any moment, I think I'll go and check the hors d'oeuvres.

Gwen goes to the kitchen. Lance goes to fix himself a drink. Braced by the alcohol he goes to the stereo to put on some music. The doorbell rings.

LANCE

I'll get it honey.

Lance opens the door. Art stands there uneasily.

LANCE

(continuing)

Art ol' buddy, c'mon in. You look like you could use a drink, have a seat.

Lance tries to remain jovial. Art crosses to the couch and sits on the edge. Lance goes to the liquor cabinet and starts mixing drinks.

ART

Where's Gwen?

(CONTINUED)

LANCE

In the kitchen cooking something wonderful.

Lance crosses to Art, handing him a drink.

GWEN (O.S)

Is that you Arthur?

LANCE

It's him honey. We're having drinks, what would you like?

GWEN (O.S)

Sex on the Beach.

ART

She sounds pretty jolly. Everything alright?

LANCE

Couldn't be better.

Gwen enters with a tray of hor d'oeuvres. A hunk of cheese with a large knife sticking from it.

GWEN

Hello, Arthur. Lance told me that you told him about our little charade, or did he tell you he told me already?

ART

Uh... no...

GWEN

Good, I'm glad I was the one to tell you, because I didn't want you to think I was upset about it.

ART

Uh...good, I mean...I'm glad that you aren't angry with me....

GWEN

Angry with you? Oh, no. As Lance pointed out, it was just a game, after all.

56

INT. LANCE AND GWEN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

56

Gwen and Art are laughing, toasting with their champagne. Then it hits them, they stare at one another.

GWEN (O.S)

That first night we went into the bedroom together, well, we had no idea what we were going to do, since neither of us really wanted to have actual sex with the other one. We laughed and pretended then started talking about it.

Art climbs into bed with Gwen who is in a full length woolnightgown. Art balances himself on the edge of the bed, looking very uncomfortable.

GWEN (O.S)

(continuing)

We decided that you not knowing we didn't actually have sex was the same as actually having sex. So we would pretend to make love three times, then we could callevrything equal.

Art and Gwen start making passionate sounds while trying to stay as far apart as possible.

GWEN (O.S)

(continuing)

It seemed to be working well enough.

57

BACK TO SCENE

57

GWEN

You were genuinely upset and concerned...

LANCE

I was concerned... it worked.

GWEN

(To Art)

He was so busy worrying about me sleeping with you, or someone else, that he didn't have the energy or time for anything else. He even had my phone at work tapped.

(CONTINUED)

LANCE

I never heard anything, all I got was static.

GWEN

It's the thought that counts, honey. You lost control of yourself. You were so consumed by jealousy, guilt or whatever. I finally saw in you what I was feeling inside. Of course that's all rather meaningless now, isn't it?

LANCE

But, we can start over now, from a clean slate.

GWEN

(Turning to Art)

By the way Arthur, how is it that Lance came to know the truth?

ART

Ahhh... welll... I ran into him while I was, uh, picking up a few things.

GWEN

Where was this?

LANCE

(Anticipating the trap) I was following Art....

ART

At Morgan's apartment.

GWEN

(Very interested)

Oh...?

LANCE

I was following him. I wanted to talk, to tell him that what you were doing to me had opened my eyes and to stop, to make you stop. I had no idea he was going to Morgan's apartment.

GWEN

So... you met Art at Morgan's apartment? Was she there?

(CONTINUED)

LANCE

Yes, for a while. As I said I was following Art.

ART

I went to pick up some things. Morgan and I got to talking. I found out she had changed, I had changed, things were looking real good between us. Then Lance came barging in and told Morgan what he thought we were doing and now she hates my guts.

LANCE

Art and I talked. He told me you guys hadn't really done it. We laughed about it.

GWEN

You laughed about it?

ART

No. I never laughed. Lance laughed.

GWEN

So, Arthur, you and Morgan were hitting it off again.

ART

We didn't have much time before Lance came barging in. Aw, hell, what's the point anyway. You can't go back, no matter how you may have changed, or want things to change.

Art downs the last of his drink, then heads for the bar.

GWEN

Artie, you don't have to give up. Get her some flowers or something and she'll fall right into your arms. Right Lance?

Pause.

LANCE

I... uh....

GWEN

It's time Arthur.

(CONTINUED)

ART

Time?

GWEN

To keep our word. We broke a promise and now Lance once again has the upper hand. I can see those great big clumsy wheels turning. He thinks he got away with something, and I let him, I was weak and undisciplined. I think you are gloating because you think you were right about me all along. You think that your guilt could be bought off with a little smooth talk, some flowers, some tail wagging. (bitterly impassioned) Arthur, get in the bedroom!

Art hesitates for a moment, then obeys automatically.

LANCE

Now honey....

Gwen turns back to Lance.

GWEN

You are not winning this one, Lance. People are not clay, they aren't pieces in your private little game. We change, not always because we want to, but because something happens beyond our control, or at least we think it is beyond our control. (Gwen kicks off her shoes) I think that it is at those moments, when we are out of control, that we learn the most about ourselves and those close to us, don't you agree (she starts taking off her dress) I have always been in control, I prided myself on being steady as a rock and you used that.

Art walks in from the bedroom.

GWEN

(continuing)

What are you doing out here?

(CONTINUED)

ART
Are we actually going to...?

GWEN
We have an obligation to fulfill.
Get in that bedroom and get
undressed right now, I'll be there
in a minute!

Art stands undecided.

GWEN
(continuing)
Arthur! do I have to remind you
that it's your fault it has come to
this.

LANCE
Now hold on, a joke's a joke.

83.

GWEN
(Matter of factly)
I told you Lance, the "game" is
over.

LANCE
You are not going to do this Art,
not just after seeing Morgan. What
about her? You heard Gwen, you can
patch things up.

ART
Yes, but....

GWEN
Do you think you can go back to her
after what Lance did, you think you
can erase what he said? Perhaps
somewhere down the line you can
become friends, but never lovers,
never the way it was.

LANCE
Yes you can ol' buddy, I'll help
you. I'll tell her I was lying,
listen...

ART
You heard Morgan, Lance, you were
there. What have I got to loose?

Arthur heads towards the bedroom.

(CONTINUED)

LANCE

(To Art, off)

How about my friendship, you could lose that. (to Gwen) What are you doing?

GWEN

After all these years and all those girls, you don't know what I'm doing?

LANCE

You're putting on a strip show, so what, that doesn't mean you are going to actually do anything.

GWEN

I think that you are finally starting to realize that Arthur and I are going to go into that bedroom and have sex. The real thing this time, the sweaty bodies, the moaning and groaning, the climax. Even though the idea of actually going through with it, of having someone else. I suppose you wouldn't understand Lance, you wouldn't understand that I have never had anyone but you. And even though the idea of sleeping with someone... of having them on top of me, the thought, the thought of their body on mine is a little abhorrent.

ART (O.S)

Now wait a minute!

Gwen stands before Lance, almost completely naked.

LANCE

You really think you're getting to me, don't you?

GWEN

At this point I don't care if we, "get to you", or not. It's a matter of principle, of keeping our word. I thought, at first, that all this would somehow save our marriage, that we wouldn't end up a statistic, but I wonder now if that's possible.

(CONTINUED)

LANCE

You know if you go through with this, you'll be no different than me. You will have made the same mistake and worse because you are doing it for some goddamn principle. I did it because I was horny, because I wanted to, it made me feel good, not because I had to "purge" myself of some principle.

Gwen turns and goes towards the bedroom.

58

INT. HALLWAY

58

Lance follows Gwen down the hallway.

LANCE

Don't do this Gwen. Gwen, this has gotten out of hand. Gwen this isn't you, look at me. This isn't you at all.

At the bedroom door Gwen whirls around to face Lance.

GWEN

This is me Lance, this is all me. She disappears behind the door and slams it in Lance's face.

We hear the lock click from inside. Lance listens at the door.

There are no giggles, no squeals of laughter, just silence.

Lance paces the room, listens, paces.

LANCE

Don't do this Gwen, you are making a big mistake, Gwen. Gwen!

59

INT. MORGAN'S APARTMENT - DAY

59

Morgan is nowhere in sight, but we hear someone banging around in the kitchen. there is a soft knock on the door. The banging stops. Morgan enters holding a potato masher. She goes to the door.

MORGAN

Hello?

(CONTINUED)

ART (O.S)
Morgan, it's me, Art.

MORGAN
I don't think I want to talk to
you, go away.

Morgan opens the door a little

ART
Morgan, I have to explain...

Art shoves a hand full of daisies and assorted other
flowers through the crack.

ART
(continuing)
These are for you.

Morgan looks at them, smells them and then takes them
from Art's protruding hand.

MORGAN
They're nice. Thank you.

ART
Can I come in?

MORGAN
You already got your plant. What do
you want to come in for?

ART
I want to explain. I want to tell
you what happened. You need to know.

MORGAN
Know what?

ART
That I have a clear conscience,
Gwen and I never really slept
together. I mean we slept together,
but we didn't do anything. I
couldn't do anything. I think it
was the pressure. I was really
feeling pressured.

Morgan opens the door and lets Art in. Art closes the door
behind him but doesn't lock it.

(CONTINUED)

MORGAN

What are you saying?

ART

We wanted to get back at Lance, so we pretended to sleep together, then he found out that we didn't really sleep together, actually I told him that day, remember, when we were here. Well Gwen got real upset and said we really had to sleep together, so there we were, supposed to do the real thing, but I couldn't, I just couldn't. I thought of you.

MORGAN

You thought of me and you couldn't have sex?

ART

I couldn't have sex because I didn't want to have sex with anyone but you.

MORGAN

That's nice.

ART

I made a mistake. I got nervous. That whole thing with Julio and Rennie.

MORGAN

They were asking about you.

ART

Great, the point is, think I can dance now. My voices, I haven't heard them in a while. I don't think that our age difference has to be a problem. If you still hate me, I'll go. I don't blame you. Why would you want to take me back? I left. I was insecure. Why would you want a bald, older guy who can't look himself in the mirror in the morning without putting a bag over his head. and cutting little holes so he can see his toothbrush, of course it has to be a big bag, so it can fit over his nose. Then when he goes out he wears his formal

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ART (cont'd)
bag, from Nordstrom's or Gucci,
Donna Karen with flares...

MORGAN
Stop it. You don't look that bad.

ART
Bad, but not that bad.

MORGAN
I like the way you look.

ART
You do? I always thought, well, I
don't know. You're so beautiful,
and, why would you want me?

MORGAN
Because you aren't like anyone
else.

ART
Yeah, I'm not? Thanks.

MORGAN
So?

ART
So?

Suddenly the door bursts open and in comes Lance.

ART
(continuing)
Oh great!

MORGAN
What is this?

LANCE
(To Art)
We have got to talk.

MORGAN
What is it with you two?

ART
Morgan, I swear I've been telling
the truth.

(CONTINUED)

LANCE

I can't take it anymore. Gwen is making my life a living hell.

MORGAN

You two want me to step outside again so you can, you can do what men do, punch each other or something?

LANCE

I don't want to punch Art, he's my friend. Art is my buddy, right Art?

ART

What are you doing here, Lance?

LANCE

I had to talk with you.

ART

Why here? Why not on the street, or in front of a speeding train or something?

LANCE

This is important.

ART

(Indicating Morgan)

Well, this is important too.

LANCE

You've got to help me.

ART

I'm sorry but I can't help you, Lance.

LANCE

You could if you wanted to. She's killing me. You have no idea what I've been through it's even worse than before and it's all because you didn't do it.

ART

No Lance, we didn't do it. I couldn't get it up, is that what you want to hear? You want me to announce it to the whole world.

(CONTINUED)

MORGAN

I'm sorry I doubted you.

LANCE

No, you don't understand. I want you to sleep with her, don't you see, it's the only way. You've got to try.

MORGAN ART

What? Come on now, that's weird.

LANCE

I mean it! if you actually go through with it she'll leave me alone, things will get back to normal.

Just then the door bursts open and Gwen zeroes in on Lance.

GWEN

Why am I not surprised.

MORGAN

Ok, Ok, I think I need to lock that door.

LANCE

What are you doing?

GWEN

I followed you, I knew you were up to your old tricks.

LANCE

I came here to talk with, Art.

Gwen sees Art.

GWEN

Art! What are you doing here?

ART

I came to talk with Morgan.

LANCE

I followed Art.

Gwen turns to Morgan.

MORGAN

I live here. You people obviously have some things to work out, so I
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MORGAN (cont'd)
would appreciate it if you went
somewhere else to do it.

ART
I don't believe this. I don't
believe this is happening. I
finally think that my life is
coming together, that I'm no longer
going to be that stray cat, that
beast to the beauty and then my
best friends come along and screw
it up.

Art heads for the door.

MORGAN
Not you Art.

ART
What?

MORGAN
Not you. You stay here. They leave.

ART
You want me to stay?

MORGAN
We have to get ready.

ART
Ready? For what?

MORGAN
We're going dancing, remember. (she
gives him a wink)

ART
Oh yeah, dancing.

Art starts a little awkward dance in front of Lance and
Gwen.

MORGAN
I guess you two will have to do
without Art tonight, maybe for a
while. I think the both of you
should get a life. To think I once
looked up to you, you seemed so
together, but now. You took
advantage of Art's childlike
nature.

(CONTINUED)

ART
Childlike nature?

MORGAN
Art needed some support from his
friends and what did he get?

GWEN
I have always supported Arthur.

MORGAN
You have always wanted to mother
him, to smother him.

GWEN
Now wait a minute, where do you get
off?

MORGAN
This is my house, I get off here.
Where do you get off?

LANCE
Hey, you can't talk to my wife that
way.

MORGAN
Shut up pee wee.

LANCE
Pee Wee?

ART
Morgan!?

MORGAN
The name fits, doesn't it Gwen?

ART
I've never seen you like this.

MORGAN
My shrink says I should be more
assertive. It feels good. Do you
like it?

ART
Yeah, sure, I think.

MORGAN
Now everyone out. Except for Art,
Art is mine.

(CONTINUED)

Gwen and lance head for the door. Gwen turns back and looks at Arthur.

GWEN

Arthur?

Arthur hesitates. Finally he turns to Morgan and takes her hand.

MORGAN

(To Gwen)

Out!

Gwen gives him one last look, then turns abruptly and leaves. Lance is at the door. He starts to say something but Morgan shuts the door before he can say it. Art and Morgan are alone. Art is a little uneasy.

ART

I can see we have a lot more to talk about.

Morgan goes to the bed giving Art "bedroom eyes" on the way.

MORGAN

Come to bed, Arthur.

ART

Yeah, Ok, sure. You know I feel a little tense.

She pulls him onto the bed.

MORGAN

You'll be just fine.

ART

You think so? I don't know, things don't always work just right when I'm pressured, maybe we could just.

MORGAN

Shut up.

ART

Sure, Ok.

