

THE SWEETEST KILL

Written by

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INT. AIRPORT - DAY

A woman sits in a busy airport lounge at a window looking out onto a designated doggie relief area. She observes the neuroses of various travelers dotting on their dogs while pulling drags from their vape pens.

On the table in front of her sits a makeshift workstation complete with laptop, phone, multiple charging cables and a Bloody Mary.

Suddenly, a man clumsily sets up shop next to her. He places his coffee down first, spilling it a little, before setting down his laptop, phone and multiple charging cables.

Sitting in uncomfortably close proximity, each person takes a nonchalant peek at the other's situation.

She has a photo of a man and a small dog on the home screen of her phone, a photo of herself standing in front of ancient ruins set as the wallpaper on her laptop, and a tattoo of some sort of symbol on her wrist. A reminder pops up on her work phone - "Big presentation tomorrow."

He has a photo of three young children on the home screen of his phone, a photo with a woman and the same children on a ski slope set as the wallpaper on his laptop, and is wearing a fitness tracker. A reminder pops up, alerting him to "Cole's birthday" in two days time. There are also two missed calls from "The Boss."

She closes her laptop in favor of a book while enjoying her morning cocktail.

He can't help but notice.

SAM (40s), a bit sweaty and disheveled, interrupts her moment of reprieve to strike up a conversation.

SAM

I'd rather have what you're having.

AGNES (40s), professional with an air of edginess, looks up from her book bemused.

AGNES

Sorry?

SAM

I'd rather have what you're having.
The Bloody Mary, I mean.

AGNES

I doubt they're out of tomato juice
this early so...have at it.

Agnes looks back down at her book.

SAM

Looks like we're on par for
obnoxious number of devices.

AGNES

(without looking up)
Okay.

Sam pretends to focus on the spread sheets splashed across
his screen but his mind wanders.

INT. SAM'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - FLASHBACK

Sam is getting dressed for work when his wife LAURA (40s), an
overextended stay-at-home mom, bursts in.

LAURA

Have you seen my keys?

SAM

Hey, what do you think about a few
weeks in Morocco this spring? Just
you and me.

LAURA

Are you insane? That part of the
world is not safe.

SAM

That's not true.

LAURA

Who would watch the kids?

SAM

I dunno, I thought your parents
might want to.

LAURA

(distracted)
For a few weeks? They wouldn't
survive a day in this mad house.
Where the hell are my keys?

Sam grabs hold of Laura's hands and draws her to him.

SAM

Come on, babe. We could go to Casablanca. Ride camels into the Sahara.

LAURA

I don't have time to talk about camels, Sam. The kids are late for swim class.

Laura spots her keys and pushes Sam away.

LAURA (CONT'D)

Bingo.

SAM

Promise me we'll talk about this tonight?

LAURA

Got to go. Have a good day.

Laura storms out of the bedroom.

LAURA (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Kids, let's roll!

INT. AIRPORT - BACK TO PRESENT

Sam hesitates for a beat before trying to engage Agnes again.

SAM

So, what are you reading?

Agnes sighs. She closes her book and turns to face Sam.

AGNES

Life, by Keith Richards.

SAM

Oh! He plays guitar for The Rolling Stones, right? The one who's on drugs all the time?

AGNES

(patronizing)

Sure. The one who's on drugs all the time.

SAM

Sorry, I'm not really up-to-speed on what's cool these days. Or what was cool in the 70s. Or...ever.

(MORE)

SAM (CONT'D)

But if you're interested in what's happening among the kindergarten to grade three demo, I'm your guy.

Agnes laughs.

SAM (CONT'D)

I'm Sam.

AGNES

Agnes.

SAM

You traveling on business?

AGNES

Yep.

SAM

Me too.

AGNES

Is that your family?

SAM

Yeah. That was our trip to Tahoe last winter.

AGNES

Love Tahoe.

SAM

Are you a skier or a snowboarder? Wait, let me guess - snowboarder.

AGNES

Skier.

SAM

Two-planker. Nice.

AGNES

Do people still say that?

SAM

Uncool dad types, I guess.

Agnes smiles, warming to Sam's socially awkward banter.

SAM (CONT'D)

(pointing)

Is that you?

AGNES

Yep.

SAM

Where is that? It looks incredible.

AGNES

Peru. I hiked the Inca Trail last year. Those are the ruins at the top.

SAM

I haven't traveled anywhere outside of the states.

AGNES

Really? Why not?

SAM

Work. Kids. Life.

Agnes takes a sip from her drink. Sam blows on his coffee. Awkward silence, save the hustle of hurried travelers.

INT. AGNES' HOME - BATHROOM - FLASHBACK

Agnes paces, checking her watch repeatedly. A pregnancy test sits on the counter.

She stops and turns about face, looking down at the plastic object that could alter the course of her life.

AGNES

Okay, deep breath. What team are we on, folks? Stripes or solids.

Agnes stares at the stick, shakes it and checks again. No stripe. She exhales, relieved.

She swipes on some lipstick, pulls her hair back and continues getting ready for work.

INT. AIRPORT - BACK TO PRESENT

Agnes pulls the garnish out of her drink and devours it.

AGNES

So, you travel a lot for work?

SAM

I do, yeah. A lot. Too much. You?

AGNES

Same. What do you do?

SAM

I work in sales for an enterprise software company. What about you?

AGNES

I'm a consultant.

SAM

I'm always fascinated by that title. Feels a bit ambiguous, don't you think?

AGNES

You asked.

Agnes turns away and reopens her book.

SAM

Wait, sorry. That sounds fascinating.

AGNES

(closing her book again)

I help prepubescent tech nerds raise cash to fund their billion dollar ideas.

SAM

Any companies I'd know?

AGNES

Probably not.

SAM

Oh.

AGNES

I don't mean to undermine your knowledge of burgeoning tech brands, trust me. Most of these companies never reach their tipping point, and instead piss away the millions we're able to secure for them on ping-pong tables and craft beer on tap.

SAM

Ping pong and craft beer are important, though.

AGNES
Very important.

SAM
The crux of modern corporate
culture.

AGNES
(laughing)
Probably.

SAM
Well, that all sounds pretty
interesting to me.
(pointing to Agnes' phone)
Is that your family?

AGNES
That's my husband and my dog,
Spike.

SAM
What breed is Spike, exactly.

AGNES
Chihuahua, Terrier, Dalmatian,
Australian Shepard mix. We think.
She's a rescue.

SAM
All good breeds.

AGNES
She's special. Superior
intelligence.

SAM
I believe it. It's tough being away
a lot. Don't you think?

AGNES
It can be. Where are you from,
anyway?

SAM
A very small town in the Midwest
that you probably haven't heard of.
You?

AGNES
Here.

SAM
You live in LA?

AGNES
Guilty.

SAM
You know, I've been through this airport maybe...twenty times? At least. En route to some place, delayed, layovers. I've never actually bothered to spend any time here.

AGNES
Really?

SAM
Really.

AGNES
Never had a hankering for overpriced avo toast?

SAM
Nope.

AGNES
Never wanted to strut down Hollywood Boulevard or stalk celebrities at The Grove?

SAM
Definitely not.

AGNES
Well, that's refreshing.

Agnes receives an alert on her phone.

AGNES (CONT'D)
Great. My flight's delayed seven fucking hours.

Sam also receives an alert.

SAM
Looks like I'm delayed too. Six hours for me. Guess this is my office for the day.

Agnes begins packing up her things.

AGNES
You're seriously going to stay
holed up in this asylum?

SAM
May as well use the time to get
some work done.

Agnes looks down at her watch.

AGNES
You just said you've never been to
LA, right?

SAM
Correct.

AGNES
Let's go do something.

SAM
Like what?

AGNES
I don't know. Get lunch, get
matching tattoos. Whatever. It's
better than staying here.

SAM
That's a really nice offer, but...I
should probably stay.

AGNES
It's not a marriage proposal. Just
suggesting a change of scenery.

Sam hesitates for a beat then begins packing up his stuff.

AGNES (CONT'D)
That's the spirit.

EXT. AIRPORT - SAME DAY

Agnes and Sam are waiting in the taxi queue.

SAM
Where are you taking me, my
faithful tour guide?

AGNES
Please don't call me that.

A taxi pulls up and out steps a gnarly DRIVER (70s). He takes their bags. The two pile into the car.

SAM
I'm not going to wake up on ice
without my kidneys, am I?

AGNES
Maybe.

DRIVER
Where to?

AGNES
Venice, please.

DRIVER
I need an address.

Agnes types something into her phone and holds it up for the driver.

DRIVER (CONT'D)
Got it.

EXT. CANNABIS STORE - SAME DAY

Agnes and Sam step out of the taxi. Sam peers up at the sign.

SAM
Marijuana?

AGNES
Wait here. Watch the bags.

Agnes pops into the shop and leaves Sam standing on the sidewalk amidst a myriad of characters.

A STRANGE MAN (50s), dressed in only a speedo and large horns fastened to his forehead, approaches.

Sam pulls their luggage closer and clutches his laptop bag.

STRANGE MAN
Hello.

SAM
Hello.

STRANGE MAN
Would you like a photo?

SAM
Oh, no. Thank you.

STRANGE MAN
Let's take a photo. Five dollars,
okay?

SAM
(anxious)
I'm good, thank you.

Agnes steps out of the shop and grabs her luggage.

AGNES
Making friends already?

She leads Sam to a boisterous Venice Boardwalk where he scans his surroundings.

They climb to the edge of the skate park and watch the skateboarders fly around before situating on the grass next to the roller dancing rink.

A man drops his trousers and relieves himself behind a nearby palm tree.

SAM
There's a lot going on around here.

AGNES
Always.

SAM
I used to be a big time roller
blader.

AGNES
Define big time.

SAM
I was the captain of my roller
hockey team.

AGNES
Roller blades are making a
comeback. Reminiscent of an era
defined by Baywatch, before men
knew how to manscape.

SAM
Hasselhoff was the man, though,
wasn't he?

AGNES
He really was.

SAM
So heroic.

AGNES
So much chest hair.

SAM
The best chest hair.

They both giggle. Awkward pause.

AGNES
Do you roller skate?

SAM
I mean...I probably could? Can't
imagine it's much different than
roller blading.

Agnes lifts Sam's leg and looks at the soul of his shoe.

AGNES
Wait here.

She walks back towards the boardwalk as the roller dancers
put on a show. The music gets louder and a crowd begins to
form.

Moments later, Agnes returns with roller skates.

AGNES (CONT'D)
Here, put these on.

SAM
Oh, no.

AGNES
Oh, yes.

Agnes straps on her roller skates and joins the dance party
unfolding in the roller rink.

AGNES (CONT'D)
(shouting)
Come on!

SAM
Ah, what the hell.

Sam straps on the pair of pink, glitter-coated skates and
stumbles to the edge of the asphalt.

Agnes stops and holds out her hand. He glides towards her.

AGNES
That's it.

SAM
I can't believe I'm doing this.

AGNES
Follow my lead.

Agnes takes Sam's hands and guides him around the rink until he finds his skating legs, surprising her with some choice moves. The crowd reacts.

AGNES (CONT'D)
Look at you.

Sam let's himself go, moving to the music. The crowd cheers louder.

SAM
Not bad for a retired roller hockey captain from the Midwest.

AGNES
You're a legend.

EXT. BEACH - MOMENTS LATER

SAM
That was amazing.

AGNES
You really turned up, roller girl.

SAM
Ha, thanks.

AGNES
Let's walk down to the water.

SAM
You really want to drag our stuff all that way?

AGNES
Leave your gear over there, by those palms.

SAM
No way.

AGNES

We'll take the important stuff.
Trust me, no one is going to mess
with an abandoned bag around here.

Sam reluctantly drags their stuff to the spot Agnes suggested. He pulls off his tie and leather wingtips, leaving them next to his luggage.

Agnes pops a few cannabis gummies and hands two to Sam.

AGNES (CONT'D)

Here. Have one now and one before
your flight. It'll help you relax.

SAM

What is this?

AGNES

Edibles.

SAM

That's illegal where I live.

AGNES

Well, it's legal here.

Sam throws back both gummies.

AGNES (CONT'D)

Wait! I said one...

SAM

(interrupting, nonchalant)
It's just some spiked candy.

They reach the ocean's edge. Agnes rolls up her jeans and steps into the waves. Sam sheepishly follows suit.

AGNES

Good?

SAM

Freezing.

Her mobile buzzes. RYAN (40s), a film producer and Agnes' husband, is relentlessly persistent.

RYAN (TEXT)

Don't forget to call the fertility
specialist Dr. Stevens referred us
to. xo

INT. BAR - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

The room is packed. Agnes is leaning against the bar amidst a group of FRIENDS when her mobile buzzes.

A reminder reads "shoot up". She tugs at her friend's arm.

AGNES

Come with me to the restroom for a sec.

FRIEND

What? No, I quit that shit a long time ago.

AGNES

Come on.

Agnes leads her friend into a stall and pulls out two vials of clear liquid. She rips open a package to reveal a syringe.

FRIEND

What the hell is that?

AGNES

Relax, it's the hormones I'm taking to get knocked up.

FRIEND

I thought you guys decided to stop trying?

Agnes mixes two vials together and fills the syringe.

AGNES

Ry wants to give it another shot. Pun intended.

FRIEND

What do you want?

AGNES

Here, hold this.

Agnes hands the empty vials to her horrified friend, grabs a fold of skin on her belly and gives herself a jab.

FRIEND

(looking away)
Jesus christ!

AGNES

Savage, right? Gimme the goodies.

Agnes carefully collects the empty vials and syringe into a little bag marked 'hazardous waste' and tosses it in the trash. Someone bangs on the door.

AGNES (CONT'D)
Alright alright.

She and her friend exit the stall. Bystanders snicker.

EXT. BEACH - BACK TO PRESENT

Agnes tucks her phone back into her pocket and spots a SAND DOLLAR wedged into the wet sand.

AGNES
Here.

SAM
Thanks, my kids will love this.

Sam glances down at his watch.

SAM (CONT'D)
We should probably head back.

AGNES
Sure.

SAM
Wait. Is that?
(shouting)
Shark! Shark!

AGNES
What? Where?

Agnes spots a pod of dolphins breaching along the break.

SAM
(frantic)
Everybody out of the water!

AGNES
Sam! Stop it! It's just dolphins.

Agnes laughs hysterically. Sam is flailing. A child wails.

SAM
They're what?

AGNES
Dolphins! Watch, right there. To
the left of those surfers.

Sam watches, nervously, then takes a sharp breath in when he spots the group of dorsal fins sparkling in the sun.

SAM
Oh, thank god.

AGNES
It was all that Hasselhoff talk,
wasn't it?

SAM
Very funny.

AGNES
I'm surprised you didn't rip the
red shorts right off that
lifeguard.

SAM
Just doing my best to protect the
public, ma'am.

Agnes smiles, delighted by Sam's witty response.

AGNES
Have you spent much time in the
ocean? By the ocean? Near an ocean?

SAM
Not really. My wife's family has a
vacation home in Maine, so we try
and get there once a year.

AGNES
How many kids do you have again?

SAM
Three.

AGNES
How old are they?

Sam pulls out his phone and shares a photo of his children.

SAM
That's Ethan, he's the protective
big brother. He's 10. Ella is 7 and
smart as a whip. And that's Cole,
my youngest. He turns 5 in a few
days.

AGNES

They're really cute.

SAM

Thanks. They're a handful. Probably the reason the only time I get to the seaside is during family vacations. Not a lot of time for spontaneous trips to the Caribbean. Not that my wife and I ever did that before kids.

AGNES

I'm sure they're worth it.

SAM

Wait, let me get one last look.

Sam takes in the view and takes a photo.

SAM (CONT'D)

Thanks for bringing me here. Sorry I terrorized half the beach.

They trudge through the sand, inching their way back to where they left the luggage. Sam stops dead in his tracks.

SAM (CONT'D)

It's gone.

AGNES

What's gone?

SAM

My luggage. Look, it's gone!

Sam books it and falls before reaching the palm trees where they left their belongings. Agnes' bag is still there but Sam's is nowhere in sight.

SAM (CONT'D)

My shoes too! This is a nightmare.

Agnes catches up.

AGNES

Whoa, hang on. Take a deep breath.

SAM

Someone stole my stuff! I knew this would happen!

AGNES

Well, you must have attracted it.

SAM

Excuse me?

AGNES

You put out those vibes. You know,
you manifested it.

SAM

I manifested it? What are you
talking about? Wait, there's a
police officer.

(shouting)

Excuse me, officer! I'd like to
report a theft!

Agnes grabs Sam's arm and spins him around.

AGNES

Get a hold of yourself.

SAM

No, YOU get a hold of yourself!

AGNES

Look, it's just clothing, right?
You have all your important bits on
you. Let's go get you some new
threads.

SAM

Is this a joke to you? Do you find
this funny?

AGNES

A little.

SAM

Whoa, my body feels fuzzy.

AGNES

Perfect timing.

SAM

Did you drug me?

AGNES

You willingly took them.

SAM

I'm in so much trouble.

AGNES

Come with me.

INT. BOARDWALK SHOP

Sam is feeling the effects of the gummies. He slowly brushes his hand up and down a fuzzy sweater.

SAM
(dazed and delighted)
That's the softest thing I've ever
felt in my life.

Agnes piles a selection of tacky tourist garb onto one arm. Sam emerges in a poncho dyed in a Rastafarian color story.

AGNES
Ooh, chic.

SAM
Right? It sort of chose me.

AGNES
Something you can dress up or down.

SAM
Pair it with a belt, maybe?

Agnes smiles to herself as their repartee tightens.

AGNES
I think I might snag this wolf-in-
wilderness-emerging-from-it's-den
shirt, what do you think?

SAM
A provocative choice. It says I
care about the environment but also
I care about fashion.

AGNES
Right?

Agnes looks down at Sam's filthy bare feet.

AGNES (CONT'D)
Oh, dude. We need to get you some
shoes.

SAM
To go with my new poncho?

AGNES
To avoid an unsavory infection.

INT. SHOE STORE

Agnes picks up a pair of plain, white sneakers.

AGNES

Can we get these in size 11?

SAM

How did you know my shoe size?
Wait, roller skates, very good.

AGNES

First time doing edibles, yet sharp
as a tack.

SAM

Wait, these are cool. We'll try
these too, please.

Sam hands some neon high-tops to the SALES ASSOCIATE. Agnes laughs.

EXT. BOARDWALK

Agnes and Sam exit the shoe store as incredibly hip music plays. Sam is carrying several bags and looks like a child who has dressed himself for the first time.

They stop at a vendor and Agnes puts on a pair of outlandish sunglasses, choosing something similar for Sam.

AGNES

Here, give these a whirl.

SAM

Very Elton John meets Dame Edna.

AGNES

You know Dame Edna?

SAM

I dated an Australian girl before I
got married.

AGNES

I lived in Australia for a while.

SAM

Of course you did.

AGNES

We'll take these, please.

SAM
Here, let me pay.

AGNES
Oh no, these are on me.

Agnes and Sam march proudly down the boardwalk in their garish get-ups. She drapes her arm around Sam's neck.

A few strides later, Agnes spots a sign for a palm reader.

AGNES (CONT'D)
Hey, how much time do we have?

SAM
Fifteen minutes, maybe. Why?

AGNES
Come on.

Agnes leads Sam into an apartment just off the boardwalk.

SAM
Oh, no. No way.

INT. PALM READER'S APARTMENT

The room is dimly lit and draped in various cosmic tapestries. A witchy PALM READER (60s), emerges.

PALM READER
May I help you?

AGNES
Yes, he'd like a reading, please.

PALM READER
Would you like a palm reading,
intuitive tarot, mediumship?

SAM
Uh, I'm not really sure. Agnes,
maybe we should go.

Sam surveys the whimsical room. Agnes whispers something to the palm reader, handing her some cash.

AGNES
You're all set.

SAM
Nah, I'm good.

AGNES

(low voice)

I just paid for a palm reading,
it'll be quick. I'll wait outside
until you're finished, then we'll
head back to the airport.

SAM

Can you stay?

AGNES

What, for the reading?

PALM READER

Over here, please sit sir.

Sam obeys the woman and situates himself on top of a pile of pillows. Agnes pulls up a stool nearby.

SAM

(nervous)

It's my first time.

Agnes giggles. The palm reader rolls her eyes.

PALM READER

Don't worry, this won't hurt a bit.
Give me your hand. Ah, I see. You
have children, yes?

SAM

I do. Three kids.

PALM READER

I already knew that.

SAM

That's amazing.

PALM READER

I sense that you have a lot of
stress in your life.

SAM

Sometimes, yes.

PALM READER

You work a lot. You're away from
your family a lot.

SAM

I am.

PALM READER

You've been with women outside of
your marriage.

Sam looks up at Agnes then quickly back down at his hand.

SAM

No, I haven't.

PALM READER

Sure. You've been working towards
something. More money, maybe.

SAM

Yes, I've been going after a
promotion at work.

PALM READER

This work is unsatisfying for you,
yes?

SAM

Yes.

PALM READER

I sense you're about to go on an
adventure. Perhaps with someone
you've just met.

Sam looks up at Agnes. The palm reader tugs on his hand and
points to a spot on his palm.

PALM READER (CONT'D)

Your lifeline seems to end here.

SAM

Is that bad?

PALM READER

Not necessarily. When is your
birthday?

SAM

April 6, 1978.

PALM READER

I see.

The palm reader goes silent. Her brow furrows in thought.

SAM

What is it?

PALM READER
My spirit guides tell me you may
only have one year left.

SAM
What? One year left of what?

PALM READER
One year left to live, perhaps.

SAM
Are you allowed to say that to
people? I mean, what happens to me?
Do I get sick?
(panicky)
Tell me, how does it happen?

PALM READER
We're all out of time.

SAM
Apparently!

PALM READER
If you'd like to pay for a full
intuitive reading, we can dig in a
little bit deeper.

The woman pats Sam's hand and smiles. He stands abruptly.

SAM
I have to catch a flight. Oh god,
that's not how it happens, isn't
it?! Here's another twenty, just
tell me how it happens!

AGNES
Sam. Sam! Let's just go.

Agnes pulls Sam towards the door. The palm reader tucks the
cash into her bra.

EXT. BOARDWALK

Sam walks briskly. Agnes trails behind.

AGNES
Sam, wait up!

SAM
You heard the woman. I have one
year left. No time to waste!

AGNES

Don't you think you're overacting just a tiny bit? You have to take those things with a grain of salt. Besides, the rest of her reading was pretty vague.

SAM

She knew I had kids! And that I was up for a promotion!

AGNES

Well, you're not exactly difficult to size up.

Sam turns to face Agnes, frustrated.

SAM

That's just it.

The two stand in silence as the colorful foot traffic of the boardwalk breeze by them in either direction. Neither of them move a muscle, until the moment ends abruptly with the sound of an alarm.

A second alarm sounds. Agnes and Sam both pull out their phones. It's time to return to the airport.

SAM (CONT'D)

Let's postpone our flights.

INT. DIVE BAR

Sam follows Agnes into an empty bar steps away from the beach.

They saddle up to the mahogany slab and pull out their laptops. The BARTENDER looks up from his book.

BARTENDER

We don't have wifi here.

SAM

Here, we can use my hotspot.

The bartender reluctantly closes his book and slams down two cocktail napkins.

BARTENDER

Drink?

AGNES

I'll have a whisky neat.

SAM
Mojito, please.

AGNES
Mojito?

Sam shrugs.

AGNES (CONT'D)
So, what's the plan?

SAM
Haven't got that far yet. I need to be home day after next for my son's birthday, so...

AGNES
Let's change our flights to leaving tomorrow night. Sound good?

SAM
Sure. Hey, don't you have commitments? With work? Or, a husband who might find it weird that you're hanging out with a strange man for the next 24 hours?

The drinks arrive.

AGNES
(typing fast)
I do have a presentation tomorrow that I'm delegating to someone on my team as we speak. I just booked a dog walker. My husband trusts me implicitly and happens to be out of town this week. And yes, you are a strange man.

Agnes downs the snifter in one shot.

AGNES (CONT'D)
I'll have another, please.

SAM
Shots...so early in the day. I mean, that's cool.

Agnes stares blankly at Sam.

SAM (CONT'D)
Okay then. What do I say to my boss?

AGNES

Tell him...

SAM

(interrupting)

Her.

AGNES

Tell her that you have horrible food poisoning and you need a day to recover in LA before you can fly. Simple.

SAM

Got it.

Sam picks up his mobile and dials CATHERINE. He's still high from the edibles.

AGNES

Wait, can't you just text her?

SAM

(whispering)

It's ringing.

AGNES

Oh god.

SAM

(shouting a little)

Hi, Catherine? It's me. Sam.

(shouting a little louder)

No, Sam!

Agnes covers her face with both hands.

SAM (CONT'D)

(still shouting)

I'm alright, thanks. Actually, no, I'm not. That's why I'm calling.

Agnes motions for him to lower his voice.

SAM (CONT'D)

I have food poisoning. And it's bad. Real bad.

AGNES

Jesus.

SAM

Yep. Both ends. Uncontrollably.

Agnes motions for Sam to get to the point. The bartender aggressively flips the page of his book.

SAM (CONT'D)

Anyway, I need to take a day in Los Angeles to recover before flying home. You know, to kick this thing.

Agnes is now buckled over in laughter. Sam smiles.

SAM (CONT'D)

Okay, great. Thank you Catherine. Bye now.

Agnes grabs Sam's phone to ensure he's ended the call.

AGNES

Yeah! Nice work!

They high five.

AGNES (CONT'D)

Is that the first time you've ever lied to your boss?

SAM

First time.

AGNES

You're a natural.

The bartender arrives with Agnes' second round.

BARTENDER

Not sure I agree.

Agnes raises her glass.

AGNES

To living spontaneously.

SAM

To living spontaneously.

AGNES

And losing control of your bodily fluids.

SAM

To losing control...gross.

AGNES

Alright, Starsky. Where to?

SAM
Can I be Hutch?

AGNES
Sure.

SAM
What about driving up the Pacific Coast Highway? I've heard Big Sur is beautiful.

AGNES
It is but that's too far of a drive. What about a wild bender in Hollywood? We could hit The Strip and bar hop. Maybe The Rainbow for some backroom blow and bad food?

SAM
Um, I'm not really sure that's my scene. I want to see something that will really blow my mind - minus the backroom blow.

AGNES
What about we cruise out to Joshua Tree? You're into outdoorsy stuff, right?

SAM
I sure am. Is that far?

AGNES
Far enough.

EXT. VINTAGE CAR RENTAL

Agnes and Sam walk the lot, sizing up prospective rides.

AGNES
This one's cool.

SAM
It reminds me of my grandad's car. But, not in a good way. It always smelled of menthol cigarettes. And moth balls.

Agnes opens the door and takes a whiff.

AGNES
Strangely, it smells just like that. What about this beauty?

She playfully drapes herself over the hood of a classic Camaro. The CAR DEALER notices.

CAR DEALER
(shouting)
Hey, Miss! You'll dent the car!

Sam pulls her to her feet. Agnes is surprised by his effortless vigor. Their chemistry crackles.

AGNES
How much?

CAR DEALER
How long do you need her?

AGNES
Twenty four hours. Just shy of.

CAR DEALER
Two hundred.

SAM
Two hundred? My monthly car payment is less than that.

AGNES
I'll give you \$150 if we can pay cash.

CAR DEALER
(reluctant)
Alright.

EXT. FREEWAY

Agnes lights a joint and turns on the radio.

AGNES
Okay, Hutch. Your first order of business, if you are to be an effective shotgun, is to man the music.

SAM
You got it Starsky.

AGNES
Maybe we drop those names now.

SAM
Is that marijuana you're smoking?

AGNES

Yep.

Sam fiddles with the dials. He lands on a 90s rock station.

AGNES (CONT'D)

Fuck yeah. This is my favorite era of music.

SAM

Oh man, me too.

AGNES

You know how older folks get stuck in a musical time warp? Like, my parents always go on about how great the 60s and 70s were. Anything that came out post '78 is shit to them. I guess this is where I get stuck.

SAM

My parents were obsessed with all the Brits. The Stones, The Beatles, The Who, Led Zepp.

AGNES

Love Led Zepp.

SAM

Favorite album?

AGNES

Tough one. Number two?

SAM

Ditto. Is it because Robert Plant simulates an orgasm?

AGNES

Maybe.

SAM

Same.

Agnes laughs. A song she loves comes onto the radio.

AGNES

Turn this one up.

Sam cranks the dial and the new friends cruise down the freeway passing exits to Hollywood, Los Angeles and eventually they veer off towards San Bernardino.

Agnes is suddenly mentally adrift.

INT. AGNES' HOME - BATHROOM - FLASHBACK

Agnes is staring at her reflection in the mirror with a grim look on her face. She pulls her shirt up slowly to reveal several small bruises across her belly.

The counter is covered with miniature vials of liquid and a container of syringes. Aggressively, Agnes brushes everything off the counter. The vials smash onto the floor.

INT. CAR - BACK TO PRESENT

Agnes blazes through her joint. An awkward silence lingers so Sam pipes up.

SAM

So, who are some of your favorite bands?

AGNES

Where do I start? Pearl Jam.

SAM

Nice. Versus was...

AGNES

(interrupting)

The greatest album of all time?

SAM

Definitely in my top five.

AGNES

What about you?

SAM

It's a toss up between Soundgarden and Screaming Trees.

AGNES

Seattle seriously churned out some of the greats. RIP Chris...and Layne...and Kurt.

Sam rolls down his window and empties his water bottle.

AGNES (CONT'D)

Did you just pour one out for our dead rock heroes?

SAM

I did.

AGNES

You're a trip.

SAM

I used to go to so many shows.

AGNES

Favorite live music experience -
go.

SAM

Lollapalooza in '92. In Chicago.

AGNES

Dude, you were there?

SAM

I was totally there.

AGNES

Me too! That might top my list as
well.

SAM

My wife hates anything belonging to
the rock genre, as she puts it.
We've never even been to a concert
together.

AGNES

Really?

SAM

Yeah. I actually don't remember the
last time she and I did anything
fun together.

Silence, save the wind whistling through Sam's window.

AGNES

That's what attracted me to my
husband, at first. We have the same
taste in music.

SAM

Maybe you and I met all those years
ago? And the universe brought us
together again to...I don't
know...go on this adventure
together.

AGNES

Oh, my dude. You're one tarot card away from charging crystals on the dashboard.

Both Sam and Agnes simultaneously reach for the volume. A movie popcorn moment.

Sam pulls away. Agnes cranks the dial and the two start singing in emphatic unison as they take the exit to "Other Desert Cities."

EXT. JOSHUA TREE

Agnes and Sam roll into a rustic, ramshackle village.

A mixture of bikers, nature enthusiasts and hipsters in search of fetching magic hour photos, meander.

SAM

This place is wild.

AGNES

Come on, let's get some gear.

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE

Agnes walks the aisles with purpose, picking up some wool blankets, a portable lantern, potato chips, water and whisky - the essentials.

Sam is perusing postcards.

AGNES

Hey, grab a few bundles of firewood and meet me at the cashier.

SAM

You got it.

AGNES

Whisky okay?

SAM

I've got spiked seltzers too.

AGNES

I didn't realize I was rolling with a college kid.

SAM

I'm joking...obviously.

Sam pulls the seltzers out of his basket and stashes them on a nearby shelf.

EXT. JOSHUA TREE NATIONAL PARK

Agnes is still at the wheel as they cruise through the park in silence - radio and cell service cease to exist.

The sun casts a technicolor illumination across the desert vegetation.

Sam is mesmerized and Agnes, despite laying eyes on this landscape many times before, is equally so.

EXT. JOSHUA TREE NATIONAL PARK - CAMPSITE

They pull up to an open space and park alongside some giant boulders.

AGNES

This should work.

Sam gets out of the car and immediately begins to explore. Agnes watches him and smiles.

SAM

(shouting)

Hey! Come check this out!

She follows Sam to an open vista, dotted with towering Yucca trees and wild rock formations.

AGNES

You like?

SAM

I definitely like.

The pair scan the horizon. A large lizard quickly crosses their path.

SAM (CONT'D)

Did you see that?

AGNES

Lizards are our friends. It's rattlesnakes you need to be mindful of.

SAM

Remind me, is a rattlesnake bite deadly?

(MORE)

SAM (CONT'D)

Like, you can suck out the venom,
right? Or does someone need to pee
on you, I get those two mixed up.

AGNES

Just watch where you're walking.

Sam pulls out his phone and takes several photos of their distorted silhouettes against the sand. The pair pose and extend their bodies to appear giant amidst the harsh terrain.

SAM

I never want to forget this place.

Agnes pats Sam on the shoulder before wandering away, disappearing behind a boulder. Eventually Sam follows.

SAM (CONT'D)

Agnes? Where did you go?

AGNES O.S.

Over here!

Sam finds her squatting behind a bush. He quickly covers his eyes.

SAM

Oh god! Sorry.

AGNES

Haven't you seen a woman pee in
public before?

SAM

Actually, no, I have not.

Agnes shoots up and zips her jeans.

AGNES

You need to chill out.

She laughs and makes her way back to their campsite.

AGNES O.S.

Watch out for rattlers!

SAM

(jumping)

Ah!

EXT. CAMPSITE - LATER

The sun begins to set as the desert shifts and transforms into a brilliant pastel playground.

AGNES

Follow me.

Agnes leads Sam to a stunning viewpoint. They watch the sun dip below the horizon.

SAM

If I really only have one year left, I'm glad I got to see this.

AGNES

Remember, grain of salt.

Agnes nudges Sam playfully. The two remain in that spot until dusk turns to dark.

EXT. CAMPSITE - SAME DAY, NIGHT

Sam is stoking the campfire while Agnes pours some whisky. She takes a shot. Her mind wanders.

INT. THERAPIST OFFICE - DAY - FLASHBACK

Agnes is rearranging knickknacks on a shelf. Her stuffy THERAPIST (50s), enters the room.

THERAPIST

Careful, my wife picked those out.

AGNES

Sorry. Thanks for fitting me in last minute.

They sit down in oversized chairs facing one another.

THERAPIST

How are you doing?

AGNES

It's been a a week.

THERAPIST

How so?

AGNES

Well, I can't concentrate. My mind won't stop spinning.

THERAPIST

Are you taking the medication I prescribed you?

AGNES

No. My fertility doctor says it lessens my chance of getting pregnant.

THERAPIST

Have you spoken to your husband about this?

AGNES

About what, not actually wanting to get pregnant? Or how these hormones mess with my body? And my mind. No. Not yet.

THERAPIST

Don't you think it's time to have that conversation?

AGNES

He wants this baby so badly it's suffocating.

THERAPIST

The longer you hold off on having this discussion with your husband, the harder it's going to be.

AGNES

I just need more time.

EXT. CAMPSITE - BACK TO PRESENT

Coyotes howl in the distance. Sam jumps.

SAM

Did you hear that? Sounds kind of close.

AGNES

Luckily there's other campers around. Lessens our odds of being ravaged by wild animals. Cheers.

SAM

(nervous)

Right. Cheers. So, uh, know any campfire songs?

AGNES
None that immediately come to mind.
You?

SAM
Several, actually.

AGNES
I bet you're a good dad.

SAM
I do my best.

AGNES
What about a campfire game?

SAM
Sure!

AGNES
Truth or dare.

SAM
Oh, no.

AGNES
Come on. Don't be a pussy.

The coyotes howl again, this time in stirringly close range.
Sam moves closer to Agnes.

SAM
Okay, fine. Truth.

AGNES
When you were a kid, what did you
want to be when you grew up?

SAM
A veterinarian.

AGNES
That's sweet.

SAM
Until I found out vets have to put
animals down sometimes, then I
quickly moved on.

AGNES
Straight to a sales associate for
an enterprise software company.

SAM
I've definitely taken a few detours
in my career. In life in general.
Truth or dare?

AGNES
Truth.

SAM
Same question.

AGNES
Musician.

SAM
Do you play any instruments?

AGNES
I play guitar. And sing, a little.

SAM
Really? Our singalong in the car
didn't suggest as much.

AGNES
Hey! Truth or dare?

SAM
Truth.

AGNES
What is your favorite place? To
hang out, spend time, whatever.

SAM
Favorite place. I'd have to say the
Cuyahoga Valley.

AGNES
I don't know it.

SAM
It's beautiful. I've been going
there since I was...I can't even
remember how long. We take the kids
there now. It's peaceful, just like
here. But with more trees. And
mosquitoes.

AGNES
Sounds nice. Minus the mosquitoes.

SAM
Truth or dare?

AGNES

Truth.

SAM

Favorite country you've traveled?

AGNES

That's a tough one. Uganda.

SAM

Uganda? I don't think I could even point that out on a map! Why Uganda?

AGNES

Gorillas. And the country is so damn beautiful. But mostly the gorillas.

Agnes tops up Sam's whisky. He stokes the fire. Conversation stirs at a nearby campsite.

SAM

Good, the coyotes can feast on those guys.

AGNES

Truth or dare?

SAM

Truth.

AGNES

What song always makes you cry?

SAM

What makes you think a song alone could make a manly guy like me cry?

AGNES

Everyone has a song that makes them feel some feels.

SAM

Alright, let me think. What a Wonderful World. By Louis Armstrong.

AGNES

I love that.

SAM

Truth or dare?

AGNES

Truth.

SAM

What song makes you happy?

AGNES

The Joker, by Steve Miller. It's also my go-to karaoke song. That reminds me...

Agnes lights a joint.

SAM

Oh, midnight toker, I get it. The lyrics of that song are bizarre. Like, what the hell does "the pompatus of love" mean, anyway?

AGNES

(exhaling)

I think it might mean the pomp and circumstance that sometimes surrounds romantic love. How big a deal we make of it. What do you think?

SAM

I think the midnight toker took one too many tokes.

Agnes passes the joint to Sam.

AGNES

Go easy, it's the strong stuff.

SAM

Go easy? I haven't smoked pot since junior high and I've basically formed a habit since meeting you.

(coughing)

Never mind, that's enough for me.

AGNES

I'm sensing your responses are about to become much more descriptive.

SAM

How do you know I won't choose dare?

AGNES

Truth or dare?

SAM

Truth.

AGNES

How old were you when you lost your virginity?

SAM

Excuse me? No way.

AGNES

Gotta answer.

SAM

No I don't.

AGNES

Yeah, you do. Or you could choose dare.

SAM

Fine, I was 18. Freshman year.

AGNES

How wholesome.

SAM

Thanks a lot. Truth or dare?

AGNES

Hmmmm dare...no truth!

SAM

What are you doing out here with me? Really.

Agnes takes a long drag from her joint and stares into the fire.

INT. AGNES' HOME - KITCHEN - FLASHBACK

Agnes pours a large glass of wine. Ryan flies into the kitchen and takes the bottle from her.

RYAN

Easy, I thought we were going to cut back on drinking until after your next check up?

AGNES

We? Really, Ry, are we cutting back?

(MORE)

AGNES (CONT'D)

I seriously doubt a glass of chablis will lessen our chance of conception.

RYAN

Why aren't you taking any of this seriously?

AGNES

(slurring)

You're not the one who has to carry a child and, worst of all, deliver a child, potentially damaging a part of my body that - quite frankly - I'm a big fan of.

RYAN

I totally appreciate how hard this has been on you. But we're trying to start a family here.

AGNES

Family? This doesn't feel like starting a family. It feels like science fucking fiction. I'd like to see you endure all the injections and the bullshit baby making regimen I'm on.

RYAN

You're drunk.

AGNES

No, I'm not.

RYAN

I thought we moved past all this?

Agnes knocks over her glass of wine.

RYAN (CONT'D)

Great. Just great.

SPIKE wanders into the kitchen and begins lapping up the spillage.

AGNES

Spike! No, baby.

Agnes picks up the dog.

RYAN

I'm going out.

Ryan storms out. Agnes pours another glass of wine.

EXT. CAMPSITE - BACK TO PRESENT

SAM

Whoa, where did you go?

AGNES

Sorry. What did you say?

SAM

I asked what you're doing out here with me.

AGNES

(vacant)

I don't know. Just seemed like a good idea.

SAM

I wish I was the kind of person to just drop everything on a whim because it seemed like a good idea.

AGNES

You just did. Didn't you?

Another break in conversation. The camp fire snaps.

AGNES (CONT'D)

One more round?

SAM

Sure.

AGNES

Truth or dare?

SAM

Truth.

AGNES

Do you have any deep dark secrets that you've never told anyone?

A few people walk by their campsite. Sam waves.

SAM

Yep.

Agnes anxiously awaits a response. Sam stays silent.

AGNES

Well? What it is?

SAM

You asked if I had a secret, you didn't ask me what it was.

AGNES

Okay, I'm asking, what is it?

SAM

Sorry, that was the final round.
Game over.

Sam stands and looks up at the brilliant stars that have accumulated over the course of their campfire game. A canopy of sparkling constellations.

AGNES

Come on. Look, I'll tell you mine if you tell me yours.

Sam slams his whisky and sits back down.

SAM

I had an affair. About a year ago, with a coworker.

AGNES

You don't have to go into detail, if you don't...

SAM

(interrupting)

No, it's fine. It feels good to tell someone, actually. This thing eats away at me every damn day. I mean, I deserve it, right?

AGNES

I'm sure it's more complicated than that.

SAM

My wife and I started to drift apart after our second child and before I knew it...I'm not making an excuse, I just...I don't know what happened.

Agnes wraps her arm around Sam and they focus on the fire.

SAM (CONT'D)

I would never do anything to bust up my family, intentionally anyway. The kids are everything to me. But my wife and I haven't been happy in a long time. I know that's not an excuse. Anyway, your turn.

Agnes lets out a deep breath.

AGNES

I had a miscarriage a few years ago. And I never told my husband. I never told him I was pregnant in the first place.

SAM

I'm sorry you went through that. Why did you decide not to tell him?

Sam turns to Agnes and examines her face. She puts on a brave front but her eyes suggest otherwise.

AGNES

I wasn't sure if I wanted kids when we got married. I'm still not sure. I didn't tell him because I considered having an abortion. But, Mother Nature stepped in and sort of made that decision for me. Makes me sound like an awful human being, doesn't it?

SAM

Not awful, but you're right about the human part. I'm sure it was a tough thing to go through. Especially on your own.

Sam wraps his arm around Agnes in an effort to comfort her. She pulls away abruptly.

AGNES

Any whisky left?

Sam hands her the bottle and they both take a swig.

AGNES (CONT'D)

Right, here's what we're going to do.

Agnes jumps to her feet and walks back to the car.

SAM
Where are you going?

She returns with a switchblade. It opens with a snap.

SAM (CONT'D)
Whoa, what's that for?

AGNES
Give me your hand.

SAM
Oh, no.

AGNES
Man up. Give me your hand.

SAM
My blood doesn't clot well!

Agnes slices Sam's hand first, then her own. He let's out a high-pitched yelp.

SAM (CONT'D)
I'm going to pass out.

AGNES
Coyotes can smell blood a mile away.

SAM
Great, I'm dead meat.

Sam is sweating and breathing hard. Agnes gently brushes the hair out of his face.

AGNES
You might be the sweetest kill.

An energy exists between them. Sam clears his throat.

SAM
I knew I'd end up on ice missing a vital organ. Or eaten by wild animals.

Agnes grabs Sam's bloody hand and holds it in hers.

AGNES
Our secrets are officially sealed.

SAM

Lady, you must be really high. I did not sign up to become blood brothers out here in the desert, with ferocious coyotes circling. What if I had an infectious disease? Where did you get that knife from anyway?!

AGNES

I always pack a blade.

SAM

You what?

Suddenly their ceremonial hand slashing is interrupted by a few fellow CAMPERS, who approach their site.

JOSH (30s), a bougie beatnik helps himself to a seat on their blanket.

JOSH

Hey. We heard a woman scream. Everything okay?

AGNES

Yep, all good.

SAM

I could use a few bandaids, actually.

Josh unties the bandana that's jauntily draped around his neck and hands it to Sam.

JOSH

Here you go.

SAM

Uh, thanks.

Agnes uses the blade to cut the sleeve off her t-shirt and wraps up her hand.

JOSH

Thought you two might want to join us.

AGNES

Thanks. We'll stop by in a bit.

JOSH

Cool. I'm Josh, by the way.

AGNES

Agnes. This is Sam.

Blood seeps through the bandana. Sam pretends to be cool with it. Josh jumps to his feet.

JOSH

We've got leftover barbecue if you're hungry.

SAM

I'm in.

Sam pops up and drops right back down - dizzy. Agnes helps him to his feet.

AGNES

You good?

SAM

Never better.

JOSH

We're just over here.

Agnes and Sam follow Josh and the other campers.

AGNES

(low voice)

I'm not really in the mood to socialize.

SAM

(low voice)

I'm not really in the mood for any more unexpected lacerations. I'm starving and chips and whisky aren't cutting it. My blood sugar will drop to disastrous levels.

EXT. NEIGHBORING CAMPSITE

A group of campers circle a raging fire.

Sam makes a b-line for the barbecue as Agnes finds a spot to sit. A few people pull out guitars.

JOSH

Everybody, this is Agnes. And that's Sam over there by the grill.

Sam waves his bloody appendage. Mouth full. Happy.

CAMPER
Who else can play? Anybody?

Agnes slowly raises her good hand.

JOSH
Nice. Hand this lady a guitar.

A guitar is passed around until it lands with Agnes. She removes her makeshift bandage, props the instrument on her knee, and strums a few times to check that it's in tune.

Sam returns and watches her with anticipation.

AGNES
Alright, what are we playing?

CAMPER
Your pick.

Agnes waits a beat before playing the first few chords of a NEIL YOUNG song. The group cheers and whistles while the other guitar players join in.

She sings the first verse, and before long, the entire group is belting out the chorus.

Agnes looks over at Sam. He beams at her while singing his heart out.

EXT. NEIGHBORING CAMPSITE - LATER

The campfire singsong has turned into a dance party under the stars. Music echos into the night sky.

Sam and Agnes are chatting with Josh and a few other campers.

AGNES
Thanks for inviting us over. And
for feeding my friend!

JOSH
Were you ever in a band?

AGNES
Nah. Thought about it.

Suddenly, a man passing by with another group interrupts their conversation.

BEN (40s), recognizes Agnes and stops.

BEN
Hey! I thought that was you.

Agnes freezes.

AGNES
Hey Ben.

BEN
Is Ryan with you?

AGNES
He's away on a shoot this week.

Agnes pulls him away from the group.

JOSH
Who's Ryan?

SAM
Her husband, I guess.

JOSH
Funny, I thought you two were together.

Sam shakes his head no.

BEN
What are you doing up here?

AGNES
I'm with some clients. You know tech bros, they can't get enough of J Tree. What about you?

Ben glances over at Josh and Sam, suspiciously.

BEN
I'm on a climbing trip with some college buddies. I didn't know Ryan was working on a new film.

AGNES
Yeah. He always seems to have something lined up before wrapping on a project.

BEN
I just wrapped on an indie myself. Hey, why doesn't he ever cast his pretty wife in one of his big budget films?

AGNES
(annoyed)
Because she's not an actor.

BEN
Right. I'll let you get back to
your geek squad. Let's grab a drink
sometime back in LA.

AGNES
Sure. We'll call you.

Agnes rejoins Josh and Sam.

AGNES (CONT'D)
I'm spent, think I'll call it a
night.

SAM
I'll come with you.

AGNES
All good, you can stay.

SAM
I'm pretty wiped.

JOSH
(winks at Sam)
Good night, you two.

AGNES
Night.

Agnes and Sam walk back towards their campsite. She moves
ahead.

SAM
Hey! Wait up!

AGNES
What was that all about?

SAM
What?

AGNES
Josh winked at you.

SAM
I don't know, he probably thinks
we're going to hook up or
something.

AGNES

Oh yeah? What would give him that impression?

Agnes gathers up the blankets.

SAM

What are you doing?

AGNES

We can't sleep out here. Ferocious coyotes, remember? We're sleeping in the car.

They each crawl in and recline their seats, tucking in under the blankets.

SAM

The stars are unreal here. Despite the crushing sun exposure, the convertible really was a good idea.

Sam notices Agnes is shivering. He wraps his arm around her.

SAM (CONT'D)

No funny business. Promise.

She tucks in under his arm.

AGNES

What are your kids names again? Ethan and?

SAM

Ella and my youngest is Cole.

AGNES

What's it feel like? To be responsible for the lives of three little humans.

SAM

Well, when you put it that way, pretty terrifying. But you just roll with it, you know? Learn as you go.

AGNES

I feel like it's probably not that simple.

SAM

You do your best to make them feel safe and supported. And loved.

(MORE)

SAM (CONT'D)

And then, you just sort of, hope for the best. At least that's been my approach so far.

AGNES

I suppose that goes for all relationships. Making the other person feel safe, supported and loved. Hoping for the best.

Agnes sits up abruptly and points to the sky.

AGNES (CONT'D)

Did you see that? Shooting star.

SAM

Shut up. Wait, I just saw one too!

Sam and Agnes find themselves beneath a meteor shower.

AGNES

If wishing on stars actually worked, what would you wish for?

SAM

First of all, I believe wishing on stars actually works and if I tell you it won't come true.

AGNES

Come on.

SAM

Morocco. I'd love to travel to Morocco someday. That's my wish. You?

AGNES

Can't tell.

SAM

What?

AGNES

Can't tell or it won't come true.

SAM

Ha. I've never met anyone like you.

AGNES

I'll try and take that as a compliment.

SAM
You should.

They move in closer and pull the blankets up tight.

AGNES
Goodnight.

SAM
Night.

EXT. CAMPSITE - MORNING [DREAM SEQUENCE]

Sam slowly opens his eyes and startles himself, momentarily forgetting where he is or who he's with. He looks over at Agnes, who is still fast asleep.

He studies her face until she slowly opens her eyes.

AGNES
(whispering)
Hey.

SAM
(whispering)
Hey.

Agnes grabs hold of Sam's collar and pulls him towards her. They consume each other in a kiss while tearing at each other's clothes. Sam pushes his seat back as Agnes straddles him.

They begin to move, slowly at first. Sam wraps one arm around Agnes and grabs the steering wheel with the other for leverage as their pace quickens.

EXT. CAMPSITE - MORNING

Agnes opens her eyes abruptly to find herself alone in the car. She feels around at her clothing and eventually exhales, relieved.

Sam is sitting on a boulder nearby, watching the desert awake.

AGNES
Morning.

SAM
Hey. How did you sleep?

AGNES

Not bad, considering we could have been eaten by coyotes last night.

SAM

Isn't that why we slept in the car?

AGNES

They can jump, like, abnormally high.

SAM

Jesus.

AGNES

Let's go find some coffee.

INT. CAR - LATER

They cruise along the winding route that stretches through the park. Agnes is at the wheel while Sam takes in the sublime scenery.

He leans back and lets out a loud, joyful yelp. Agnes laughs before becoming lost in thought.

INT. AGNES' HOME - BATHROOM - FLASHBACK

Agnes paces. A white, plastic stick sits on the counter.

She takes a deep breath. This time the result is team stripes - pregnant. Agnes stares at herself in the mirror and begins to sob.

EXT. FLEA MARKET - BACK TO PRESENT

Coffee in hand, Agnes and Sam begin to explore the eclectic stalls. Agnes spots a VENDOR selling handmade bracelets.

AGNES

Morning.

VENDOR

Good morning.

AGNES

How much are these?

VENDOR

Twenty each or two for fifteen.

AGNES
I'll take two.

Agnes puts on a bracelet, grabs Sam's hand and slides the other onto his wrist.

AGNES (CONT'D)
Something to remember our road trip
by.

SAM
That's uncharacteristically sweet
of you. It's not really my style,
though.

AGNES
Sorry for ruining your suburban dad
aesthetic.

SAM
I'm kidding. Thank you.

AGNES
Hey, you know what we should do?

SAM
Head back to LA?

AGNES
No, not yet. We've got a bit of
time still.

Agnes heads for the car.

SAM
Where are we going?

AGNES
You'll see.

SAM
Oh god.

EXT. INTEGRATRON - SAME DAY

Agnes and Sam travel down a long, sandy road until a white,
arresting dome appears on the horizon.

They pull in and begin to explore. Spiritual seekers linger,
lounging in oversized hammocks.

AGNES

Hang out. Go drink some water from
the electro-magnetic well.

SAM

You know, I had a hankering for
electro-magnetic water.

Agnes pops into a small shack. A sign reads "check-in here."

Sam surveys the eclectic mix of hemp-wearing, earthy types. A
WOMAN watches him.

SAM (CONT'D)

(to himself)

So this is what woke people look
like in the wild.

He takes a sip from the water fountain.

WOMAN

Be sure to show gratitude for the
refreshment you're enjoying.

SAM

Oh! Sure. Uh, I'm grateful.

WOMAN

Say it to the water.

Sam bends down over the fountain.

SAM

(enunciating every word)

I'm grateful for the refreshment
I'm enjoying.

She places her hands together in prayer and bows. Agnes
returns.

AGNES

Hey, I got us in for the next sound
bath.

SAM

I was just saying how grateful I am
for the refreshment I'm enjoying.

AGNES

Did you eat some more edibles?

SAM

What's a sound bath?

AGNES

Come on, they're starting soon.

INT. SOUND CHAMBER

Agnes and Sam climb into the dome-shaped room and lay down amidst a small group of spiritual seekers.

A MEDITATION GUIDE enters the sound chamber and begins to play a set of giant quartz singing bowls.

MEDITATION GUIDE

Close your eyes. Relax each and every muscle. Focus on your breath.

SAM

(whispering)

How long is this supposed to last?

MEDITATION GUIDE

Silence, please. This is an acoustically perfect sound chamber. Even the slightest whisper can be heard across the room.

Agnes squeezes Sam's hand. He closes his eyes and tries to settle in.

MEDITATION GUIDE (CONT'D)

Now, relax. Continue to focus on your breath. Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth. Inhale fully. Exhale completely. Good.

The woman continues to play the bowls as both Agnes and Sam slip into a deep state of reverie.

Sam furrows his eyebrows in discomfort.

INT. OFFICE - DAY - FLASHBACK

Sam is arguing with a woman who becomes hysterical. He tries to console her but she slaps him hard across the face.

In shock, he throws a stack of files across the room.

They kiss passionately until she pushes him away.

INT. SOUND CHAMBER - BACK TO PRESENT

Agnes remains in a deep, meditative state until suddenly she appears agitated.

INT. MEDICAL CLINIC - DAY - FLASHBACK

Agnes is sitting in a waiting room alone. A nurse calls her name - the voice echoes until Agnes snaps to.

Hesitantly, she stands and moves towards a room where she's handed a hospital gown.

The nurse gently places her hand on Agnes' shoulder. Agnes nods yes.

INT. SOUND CHAMBER - BACK TO PRESENT

People begin to shift around and stretch as the sound bath concludes. Agnes rolls over to face Sam.

AGNES

You okay?

SAM

Yeah. That was wild. You?

AGNES

I'm good.

They roll up their mats and climb back down from the dome.

EXT. INTEGRATRON

Agnes and Sam fill their bottles with well water. The earthy woman from before breezes by.

WOMAN

Namaste.

SAM

(annoyed)

I'm grateful!

AGNES

Easy. Hey, we've still got some time. I know a short hike not far from here.

SAM

What about traffic? I always hear how horrible LA traffic is.

AGNES

We'll be fine.

SAM

Alright. I'm trusting you. Against my better judgement.

EXT. GIANT ROCK

They pull up alongside a monolithic boulder in the middle of nowhere.

SAM

Where the hell are we?

AGNES

Relax. I thought you were turning into a real yes man.

SAM

Yes, I would like to know where we are. Man.

They park and get out of the car. Sam surveys his surroundings.

AGNES

Come on.

He follows Agnes to the top of a hill that overlooks the expansive Mojave Desert.

She closes her eyes, lets her head fall backwards and takes a deep breath.

AGNES (CONT'D)

You know the old adage, the silence is deafening? I imagine whoever came up with that, spent time here. It describes this place perfectly. The silence is perfectly deafening.

SAM

It's really peaceful.

AGNES

This is where I go when I need to be alone and clear my head. There's a good energy here. Feel it?

SAM

I think so.

Agnes turns towards Sam. They stare at each other, acknowledging one another's presence fully. Tension builds. No one else is visible for as far as the eye can stretch.

Eventually, Agnes breaks their trance.

AGNES

Guess we better head back.

Her words cut through the moment like a plug being ripped from an electrical socket.

SAM

Guess so.

Sam follows Agnes until he stumbles and drops to his knees.

AGNES

Sam? Sam, are you alright?

Agnes kneels with him. Dust kicks up around them.

AGNES (CONT'D)

You're probably dehydrated.

SAM

That sound shower or whatever that was really messed with my head.

AGNES

It can have that affect. Bring up stuff you have buried away.

Sam gently places his hand on Agnes' face and pulls her in for a kiss. She pulls away.

He stands and continues towards the car in a steadfast pace.

AGNES (CONT'D)

Sam, don't do this. Wait up!

SAM

I may have skipped over a few details during our little confessional last night.

AGNES

It doesn't matter. All that matters is that you let it go.

SAM

You're the only person I've ever confided any of this to. Why stop now? The woman I cheated with got pregnant. It shouldn't have happened, but we got careless. It's like...I was subconsciously trying to blow up my marriage...or something.

AGNES

Did she have the baby?

SAM

She miscarried. It was awful, worst day of my life. But at the same time I felt an overwhelming sense of relief.

AGNES

I can understand that.

SAM

You don't think I'm an asshole for feeling that way?

AGNES

No. I think you made some mistakes and you're just trying to figure it out. Like everybody else.

Sam softens his gaze and attempts to kiss Agnes again. She resists.

AGNES (CONT'D)

Don't do this.

SAM

Tell me you don't feel something.

AGNES

Sam.

SAM

Tell me you don't feel something and I'll stop.

Sam places his hands on Agnes' waist and pulls her in slowly. Eventually, she grabs Sam's shirt, pulling him towards her. They kiss, hard, before breaking for air.

AGNES

Are you sure this is a line you want to cross?

SAM
Feels wrong not to.

They fall deeper into a kiss when a few hikers stroll by. Agnes pulls away from Sam and waves politely.

AGNES
We should go.

Sam tugs at Agnes to stay in that spot. She pulls him towards the car. He reluctantly follows.

AGNES (CONT'D)
Are you still seeing this woman?

SAM
No. She wouldn't speak to me after that. Transferred to another division of the company. It's been over a year now.

They continue towards the giant boulder. Sweat beads form on their flushed faces.

AGNES
I wasn't exactly honest either.

SAM
About what?

Agnes links arms with Sam. They keep walking.

AGNES
I didn't have a miscarriage. I had the pregnancy terminated. And I've never told my husband.

Sam listens intently.

AGNES (CONT'D)
Say something.

SAM
That must have been a horrible thing to go through alone.

AGNES
It's just that he'd been pushing so hard for us to start a family. He's still pushing. I've thought about telling him, but it would kill him. So I had to let it go. And you need to let go too.

Sam and Agnes embrace. The silence is deafening.

EXT. GIANT ROCK

They arrive back at the car and Sam looks around, taking in the desert landscape one last time.

AGNES

Hey, can I ask you a strange question?

SAM

At this point? You can ask me anything.

AGNES

Have you ever fantasized about switching places with someone?

SAM

Of course I have.

AGNES

Not to escape reality. But to experience what life is like, from another person's perspective?

SAM

Not really. Until I met you.

A few cars drive up and a group of people pile out. Sam moves in closer to Agnes.

SAM (CONT'D)

I love how spontaneous and fearless you are. I envy your freedom.

AGNES

Sometimes I think about what it would be like to have a family. Tiny people who look up to you and emulate you. Family traditions, first birthdays. A full table at Christmas.

SAM

I can assure you, you're romanticizing it.

Agnes hands Sam some water. He devours it.

AGNES

I don't think I am. I'd love to know what it's like to live in a close-knit community, where kids still play in the street. And you know all your neighbors. Well, the tolerable ones.

SAM

It's not the 1950s.

AGNES

No, but you have that, right?

SAM

Yeah, I guess we do.

AGNES

Be grateful.

SAM

Please stop. You sound like the woman back at the well.

AGNES

Back in a minute.

SAM

Don't be long, we're cutting it close.

Agnes nods and wanders around to the other side of the giant boulder.

Sam leans up against the car, contemplating everything Agnes just said.

Agnes leans up against the rock and exhales, checking her watch. She reemerges on the other side of the boulder. The group of hikers return.

SAM (CONT'D)

Let's roll. I'll drive this time.

AGNES

Wait. What if we keep going?

SAM

What do you mean?

AGNES

Just for a few more days. I know this amazing hike to the top of these dunes that look just like the Sahara.

SAM

Don't you have a flight to catch too? Meetings to attend? Craft beer budgets to secure?

Agnes tugs at Sam's shirt.

AGNES

We could pretend we're in Morocco. Come on. Stay on this adventure with me, a little while longer.

SAM

It's not easy for me to say no to you.

AGNES

Then don't.

SAM

I'm torn completely in half, believe me. But we gotta go.

AGNES

Fine. You're right. You're absolutely right. Here.

Agnes tosses Sam the keys, gets in and slams the door. Sam bends down and leans into her window.

SAM

You're killing me.

AGNES

Temporary lapse in judgement. Must be the heat. Let's just go.

Sam gets into the car. Agnes stares straight ahead while he stares at her.

He cranks the ignition and the car turns over a few times before the engine ceases.

SAM

This is not happening.

Sam tries again and again - no dice.

SAM (CONT'D)
This is not happening!

AGNES
Alright, alright. Calm down.

SAM
I have to make this flight!

Sam snaps, startling Agnes.

AGNES
Let me ask these kids if they have
jumper cables. Stay here.

Agnes wanders over to the group of hikers, who agree to help.
They pull up next to their car.

SAM
Thank you so much! We really
appreciate this.

Agnes attaches the cables and before long, the car is
revived.

AGNES
Purrs like a kitten. Thanks, guys.

She gets into the car and Sam peels out. Swirls of dust kick
up behind them.

AGNES (CONT'D)
A bit dramatic, don't you think?

SAM
I've always wanted to do that.

They make their way down the sandy, deserted road. Cactus and
brush blow by in a blur, a thick dust in the air.

Suddenly, a man appears on the horizon. He desperately waves
for them to stop.

AGNES
Hey, slow down.

SAM
I'm not stopping the car, Agnes.

AGNES
We can't just leave him out here.

They drive by a scruffy HITCHHIKER (60s), who is waving his
arms more frantically than before. He and Agnes lock eyes.

AGNES (CONT'D)

Stop!

Sam slams on the brakes.

AGNES (CONT'D)

We can at least give him a lift to town. He could die out here.

The hitchhiker approaches the car and crouches down next to Agnes' window.

HITCHHIKER

Hey, thanks for stopping. My friend and I were out here hiking...somehow lost our way.

AGNES

Here, have this.

Agnes hands the man a bottle of water and he urgently slams it back. Water dribbles down his chin and glistens in his thick, filthy beard.

Another HITCHHIKER approaches and takes a swig of water.

HITCHHIKER 2

(panting)

Thank you.

SAM

Hop in. We'll drop you guys down the road where you can call someone.

HITCHHIKER 1

We actually dropped our gear a quarter mile down that trail. Couldn't carry it any further. Mind if we grab it?

SAM

Sorry man, we're in a hurry. Can you go back for it later?

HITCHHIKER 2

It would mean a lot.

AGNES

No worries, we'll wait.

The hitchhikers wander down a trail to fetch their gear. A beat later, a loud scream pierces the perfect silence.

SAM
What was that?!

AGNES
We should go help.

SAM
Are you out of your mind? We're
getting out of here.

Agnes jumps out of the car and bolts down the trail. Sam reluctantly follows, leaving the KEYS in the ignition.

Hitchhiker 2 emerges from the brush and hops into the driver's seat. He tosses a few bags out the window as he peels out.

Agnes and Sam reemerge on the road, confused.

SAM (CONT'D)
(shouting, desperate)
They took the car! They took the
fucking car!

Sam paces, holding his face in his hands. Agnes spots something down the road.

AGNES
Come on, I think I see some of our
stuff.

They run towards the pile to find both of their bags.

AGNES (CONT'D)
It's all here. He didn't take
anything?

SAM
He cleaned out my cash but left
everything else. Passport, phone,
it's all here.

AGNES
I don't get it.

SAM
Lucky us, a car jacker with a heart
of gold.

AGNES
Technically we weren't car jacked.

SAM

Not the time to split hairs over semantics. We're still stranded in the middle of nowhere. With no water. And my phone is dead.

AGNES

Mine too. Not that it matters, there's no service out here anyway.

SAM

Maybe someone will drive by? Except in this scenario, we legit end up on ice with our kidneys missing.

AGNES

Let's start walking. The Integratron is only a few miles back.

SAM

I'm never going to make my flight.

AGNES

You're still in the game, Hutch.

The pair battle the heat of the day as they march back to civilization. Turkey vultures swirl overhead.

Agnes pulls out a scarf from her bag and fashions a turban to protect her head.

SAM

Where did you learn to do that?

AGNES

India.

SAM

Of course.

AGNES

Take off your shirt, I'll make you one too.

SAM

Can't. Body conscious.

AGNES

Stop it. You need to protect your head.

SAM

From vulture poop?

AGNES
From heat stroke.

Sam removes his shirt and hands it to Agnes. She glances a moment too long at his fit frame.

AGNES (CONT'D)
Here you go.

SAM
Thanks.

AGNES
It's a good look on you.

SAM
Shut up.

They soldier on. Sweat drips down Sam's back. Agnes bites her lip.

SAM (CONT'D)
You good?

AGNES
Yeah, good. Actually, I'm a bit
lightheaded.

Sam wraps his arm around her, steadying her. They keep walking.

SAM
I've got you.

EXT. INTEGRATRON

Sunburned and dying of thirst, they head straight for the well.

Water cannot be consumed fast enough as tourists watch their desperate display in horror. A CHILD hides behind his MOTHER.

MOTHER
That's why you need to stay
hydrated, honey.

Sam splashes water on his face and let's out a loud sigh of relief.

SAM
(shouting)
We survived!

AGNES
Calm down, you're scaring the
tourists.

Sam stumbles, lightheaded.

SAM
Whoa.

Agnes helps him into a nearby hammock.

AGNES
Wait here.

SAM
Where are you going?

AGNES
To find us a ride back to LA.

SAM
(sleepy)
Wait. Lay with me for a second.

AGNES
We're running out of time, Sam.

SAM
Please.

Agnes crawls into the hammock with Sam. He wraps his arm around her. They begin to sway.

SAM (CONT'D)
What if you're right. What if our
journey doesn't end here?

Sam holds Agnes' hand to his chest, gently caressing it.

AGNES
I thought you had to get back?

SAM
That was before.

AGNES
Before what?

SAM
(lucid)
Before we came close to becoming a
vulture buffet. I don't have much
time, remember? The tarot witch
said so.

AGNES

We could hitch a ride into town,
rent another car. Maybe hit up
those dunes I was telling you
about?

SAM

(dozing off)
That sounds great.

AGNES

There's also this place that's
totally off the grid. Just a bunch
of random nomads and art
installations. We could spend a few
nights there too?

Sam is fast asleep. Ben walks by with some friends. Agnes
pulls the side of the hammock up and buries her face into
Sam's chest. Ben breezes by without noticing them.

AGNES (CONT'D)

Sam? Did you hear anything I just
said?

He snaps to. His demeanor turns on a dime.

SAM

(groggy)
What time is it?

AGNES

I don't know, my phone's dead.

SAM

I thought you were going to look
for a ride back to LA?

Agnes scans Sam's face. His expression is serious, urgent. He
lets go of her hand.

ANGES

Right. Be right back.

INT. CHECK-IN OFFICE

Agnes ducks into the small hut and approaches the counter.
The CARETAKER (50s), looks up from his cross-stitch.

CARETAKER

Can I help you?

AGNES

My friend and I were on our way
back from Giant Rock and a
hitchhiker stole our car and...

CARETAKER

(interrupting)

Stole your car? That kind of thing
doesn't happen around here.

AGNES

Well, it did. It does.

CARETAKER

Are you alright?

AGNES

Yes, but we need to get back to LA
to catch a flight.

CARETAKER

We need to call the police.

AGNES

Sure, but if I could just use your
phone for a minute first...

NEIL (70s), a NorCal hippie who wears socks with sandals,
interrupts.

NEIL

Excuse me, but I couldn't help
overhearing what happened to you.
What awful luck.

AGNES

Do you have a phone I can use?

NEIL

I'll do you one better. How about a
lift to LA?

AGNES

Are you serious? That would be
amazing! Wait, I have a friend with
me. Do you have room for two?

NEIL

I think we can manage.

EXT. HAMMOCKS

Agnes runs towards Sam, who is fast asleep.

AGNES

Sam! Wake up, I found us a ride. We gotta go, now.

He rolls out of the hammock and onto his feet in one fell swoop.

AGNES (CONT'D)

This way.

EXT. PARKING LOT

Neil is standing next to a school bus converted into a full-blown hippie wagon, complete with a psychedelic paint job and political slogans.

NEIL

(waving)

Over here!

Agnes spots her new friend and waves back.

SAM

That's how we're getting back to LA? On the magical mystery tour bus?

AGNES

Come on, this guy is cool. And we don't have a ton of other options. Or, any other options.

They reach the bus as a few more old hippies climb aboard.

NEIL

I'm Neil, by the way.

AGNES

Agnes.

SAM

Hi, I'm Sam.

NEIL

I heard what happened, man. What a trip.

SAM

Yeah. Hey, thanks for giving us a lift. You're a lifesaver.

NEIL

Happy to help. Shall we?

Neil motions for Agnes and Sam to board the bus.

They're met with a mix of colorful seniors -- Deadheads and diehard flower children from another era.

Agnes and Sam move through the upright, plastic seats in search of a place to sit when a woman points to an empty space at the back. MONA (70s) is wearing a pro-choice shirt and lot's of beads.

MONA

Over here, you two! There's plenty of space. Grab a few pillows, make yourself at home.

AGNES

Thank you.

MONA

Neil tells us you were hoodwinked by hitchhiking banditos. Or is it hijacked?

Mona's husband ANDY (70s) pipes up to gently correct her.

ANDY

I believe they were carjacked, dear.

AGNES

Something like that.

ANDY

Hello, I'm Andy and this is my wife Mona.

AGNES

Agnes.

SAM

Sam, nice to meet you both. We really appreciate you letting us crash your hippie road trip.

Agnes elbows Sam.

ANDY

Hippies? Who said anything about hippies?

Andy winks at Agnes. Sam surveys his travel companions. People are playing music, lighting incense and one old-timer is smoking an unfathomably large joint.

SAM
Sorry, I meant granolas.

AGNES
Sam.

SAM
Senior citizens?

Agnes face-palms. Andy and Mona laugh. Neil joins the group in the back as the engine kicks up.

NEIL
I hope my friends aren't harassing you.

AGNES
Absolutely not. We're so grateful for the ride.

An angelic looking woman joins them. MARY (70s) is Neil's clairvoyant wife.

NEIL
This is my beautiful bride, Mary.

MARY
Hello. Nice to meet you both.

AGNES
Likewise. So, what are you guys doing traveling around in this incredible bus?

NEIL
Well, we're all old friends.

MONA
Who are you calling old?

MARY
We met during the Summer of Love in '69.

NEIL
Every year we get together for a reunion. This is our 50th.

AGNES
That's amazing. I can't imagine friendships lasting that long.

MARY

We're sort of each other's chosen family, I guess you could say. Each year we pick a different place to road trip to. This year we chose Joshua Tree. I love it here.

AGNES

It's definitely a special place.

ANDY

If you haven't tried psychedelics in the desert, you kids are missing out.

MARY

It's quite dazzling without the supplemental enhancements, if you ask me.

Mary glances at the bloody bandage still wrapped around Sam's hand.

MARY (CONT'D)

What happened to your hand?

SAM

Oh, this? Well...the carjacker pulled a knife on us so I, um...I fought him off.

Agnes rolls her eyes. Mary notices and smiles.

MARY

Oh! How brave. I'm so glad Neil overheard your dilemma. If it had been a few minutes later, we would have missed you.

NEIL

The Integratron was our last stop before making the journey home.

AGNES

Well, we're really happy to have met you. Thanks again for letting us tag along.

The old bus rattles it's way through town and onto the freeway. The towering Yucca trees become progressively elusive as the landscape turns desolate and dotted with wind turbines.

SAM

How long have you two been married?

NEIL

Forty three blissful years. We have two beautiful children and three grandchildren.

AGNES

Congratulations.

MARY

As much as I appreciate my husband's romantic sentiment, I'm sure being married to me hasn't always been blissful.

Neil kisses Mary's hand. She blushes.

Sam and Agnes watch the loving exchange unfold between their new friends until Sam cuts the tender moment short.

SAM

Have either of you thought about what life would be like if you never met?

Agnes is mortified.

AGNES

Sorry, he tends to verbalize his thoughts before thinking them through.

MONA

Story of my life.

MARY

That's a fair question. I'm sure a young couple like you two must contemplate that all the time.

Sam opens his mouth to say something but Agnes squeezes his arm, prompting him to stop.

AGNES

What do mean?

MARY

What it's like to be married to the same person for the greater part of your life. Nowadays, young people have so many options. So many ways to meet new people.

NEIL

The dating game has definitely changed since the sixties. It's not as simple as asking a girl out for coffee anymore. You need to be a rocket scientist to figure out all these apps and things.

SAM

True, but I think it's still possible to meet someone the old fashioned way.

Agnes turns to face Sam, anxious about whatever words he utters next.

SAM (CONT'D)

Agnes and I met that way. Without any dating apps or digital assistance.

MARY

How did you two meet?

AGNES

Yes, honey, tell them how we met.

Agnes snuggles up to Sam and plays along.

SAM

Well, it's a good story actually.

Sam clears his throat, stalling. The hippies listen intently.

SAM (CONT'D)

Agnes and I met at the airport.

MONA

That's the story?

SAM

We both used to travel a lot for work. I was sitting at a cafe at LAX and...

AGNES

(interrupting)

A bar. It was a bar, wasn't it honey?

SAM

Right. Yes it was. So, my flight was delayed and I had several torturous hours ahead of me.

(MORE)

SAM (CONT'D)

And in walks this striking woman.
(turning to Agnes)
She sits down next to me and that
was it.

The hippies let out a collective, heartfelt sigh. Agnes looks at Sam, meeting his gaze. For a beat, the hippies fade away and Agnes and Sam linger in the moment.

MONA

Then what happened?

Agnes places her hand on Sam's arm, signaling that it's her turn to contribute to their fictional love story.

AGNES

Well, I happened to have a similar flight delay. We started chatting. I thought he was funny, in a dad-joke-telling kind of way. And the rest is history.

SAM

Come on, babe, the story doesn't end there.

MARY

I sensed there was more to it.

Agnes swallows hard. The hippies are tuned in, like preschoolers at story time.

AGNES

Like I was saying, we got to chatting and Sam suggested we take advantage of the delay and hit the beach. Neither of us are from Los Angeles...

SAM

...and neither of us had seen the Pacific Ocean before.

AGNES

From there, we both decided to defer our work commitments for a few days.

SAM

And spontaneously drove out to Joshua Tree.

AGNES

We're here celebrating our 10-year wedding anniversary.

The hippies applaud.

NEIL

What a story. Congratulations.

SAM

She's more beautiful than the day I married her.

Agnes blushes, uncharacteristically. Sam pulls her in for a kiss, taking her off guard. The bus erupts in cheers.

MARY

The strong connection between you two is obvious. Your aura is glowing a beautiful shade of green. Do you have any children?

SAM

Two! A boy and a girl.

AGNES

Eddie is 5 and...Pearl is 2.

SAM

Pearl takes after her mom. Voracious curiosity. Always up for an adventure.

AGNES

And Eddie is really into music.

SAM

Very musically inclined, in sort of an emo-Pacific-Northwest kind of way.

Awkward silence for a beat. Agnes shoots Sam a concerned look, indicating their story may have gone one fib too far.

MONA

Well, be sure to foster that creative energy. The world needs more artists. We have more than enough bankers, you know what I mean?

MARY

Mona used to teach early childhood development at Berkeley.

AGNES

Ah.

NEIL

Parenting isn't that complicated.
All you have to do is love them.
The rest sort of works itself out.

Conversation slows as the bus continues to rattle down the freeway, passing downtown Los Angeles, the Hollywood sign perched high in the distance and signs leading to Santa Monica.

Neil carefully observes Agnes and Sam before breaking the lull.

NEIL (CONT'D)

I forgot to ask, where are you two
visiting from?

Suddenly, a loud pop sounds. The BUS DRIVER narrowly maintains control. They pull over abruptly, as the group is tossed around.

NEIL (CONT'D)

Hang on!

MARY

What was that?!

NEIL

Flat tire, I think. Everybody stay
calm.

As the bus comes to a complete stop, Neil shuffles to the front to assess the situation.

SAM

(low voice)

You've got to be kidding me.

The driver gets off the bus. Neil turns to face his friends.

NEIL

Well, the adventure continues,
folks! We have a flat. But not to
worry, roadside assistance is on
the way. Unfortunately for our
young friends, we won't be able to
get you to LAX in time for your
flight.

AGNES

It looks like we're close to the next exit. We'll just walk and grab an Uber from there.

Neil gives a thumbs up and hops off the bus.

SAM

We're walking?

AGNES

It's not far. Put your shoes on.
Honey.

Sam pulls on his colorful kicks, now covered in desert dust. Mary pulls a CRYSTAL out of her bag and places it in Agnes' hand, squeezing it closed.

MARY

Here. It's rose quartz. It stimulates the heart chakra and emulates love. I charged it in the desert sun.

Agnes hugs Mary hard.

AGNES

Thank you.

Andy hands Sam a joint.

ANDY

Here, man. Something to take the edge off before your flight.

SAM

Uh, thanks.

Agnes and Sam hug and high-five the hippies as they exit the bus.

EXT. FREEWAY - CONTINUOUS

Agnes and Sam join Neil and the driver. A stream of manic LA traffic blows by them.

SAM

Thanks so much for helping us out.

AGNES

Really, we can't thank you enough.

NEIL

It's our pleasure. Sorry we couldn't get you all the way there. By the way, you two should consider dating.

SAM

What do you mean? Ten-year wedding anniversary. Two kids. Remember?

NEIL

I know a tall tale when I see one.

Agnes and Sam look at one another, ashamed. Busted.

NEIL (CONT'D)

Don't think anything of it. You're young, enjoy yourselves! My wife is right, though. You two do have a strong connection. Embrace it.

Sam and Agnes look at each other and look away.

NEIL (CONT'D)

You better get a move on, you don't want to miss your flight. Or, whatever adventure you're onto next.

Sam shakes Neil's hand and Agnes gives him a kiss goodbye. The pair of imposters make the trek to the nearest exit.

Neil watches until they disappear down an offramp and smiles.

INT. PIZZA JOINT

Agnes and Sam rush into the dingy little restaurant, startling a COUPLE playing pool. The MANAGER emerges from the kitchen.

MANAGER

Restrooms are for customers.

AGNES

We don't need your restroom.

The manager looks them up and down. Both filthy and sunburned.

MANAGER

What you need is a shower. The menu is on the wall.

The couple racks up the balls. One asks "stripes or solids?" Agnes overhears them and is lost in thought for a moment.

SAM
(whispering)
Hey. You alright?

AGNES
Yeah, sorry. Just tired.

SAM
Can we use your phone to call a taxi? It's kind of an emergency.

MANAGER
Get an Uber.

SAM
We would, but our phones are dead. Sir, please, can we use your phone?

MANAGER
No, you many not.

AGNES
Here's a twenty.

MANAGER
(pointing)
It's over there.

INT. TAXI - SAME DAY

Agnes and Sam sit in silence. The DRIVER watches them in the rearview mirror before piping up.

DRIVER
I know you two.

AGNES
Sorry?

DRIVER
Didn't I pick you up at the airport yesterday? You look terrible.

AGNES
Can you turn up the radio, please?

Agnes and Sam both gaze out of their respective windows.

Strip malls, billboards and palm trees blur and distort as they fly by.

SAM

Look, we don't have a lot of time left. There's some things I want to say.

AGNES

You don't have to say anything.

SAM

Just listen, please. The past few days have had a major impact on me. It made me realize that I can't go on living the way I was before I met you.

AGNES

What are you talking about? You're about to go home to celebrate your little boy's birthday. You need to pull it together.

SAM

I know. I can't wait to get back to my kids.

Sam's words cut into Agnes. She does her best to hide it.

SAM (CONT'D)

What I mean is, you showed me that it's okay to take a risk. To choose the road less traveled. Even if down that road awaits some gnarly dudes plotting to steal your car.

AGNES

(cracking a smile)
Even then.

SAM

Life is short. The palm reader on the boardwalk called it.

AGNES

I think you've managed to evade that premonition.

SAM

What are you going to do about the car?

AGNES

That's why you should always get the insurance.

SAM
I'm sorry. I'll help pay for it.

AGNES
I'll file a police report. It'll be fine.

Their hands unintentionally connect in the middle seat. Sam brushes his fingers across hers. Agnes pulls away.

SAM
Hey, what did you wish for last night?

AGNES
What?

SAM
The shooting stars. What did you wish for?

AGNES
I wished that you'd make it back in time for your flight.

They pass the sign for LAX. The airport is in clear view.

SAM
We should exchange numbers.

AGNES
I don't think that's a good idea.

SAM
Why not?

AGNES
Let's just tuck away the past 24 hours and think about it when we need to. If our paths are meant to cross again, they will.

EXT. AIRPORT

The sun is beginning to set. Slowly, they crawl their way through traffic to departures.

SAM
I don't even know your last name. Mine is Roberts. Sam Roberts.

Agnes stays quiet.

SAM (CONT'D)
 You can't just disappear on me like
 that.

The taxi pulls up to the drop-off point.

DRIVER
 Terminal 1.

AGNES
 You go, I've got this.

SAM
 (desperate)
 So that's it?

AGNES
 Of course not. Go check the board
 to see if your flight has left.
 I'll be right behind you.

Sam reluctantly gets out of the car and runs into the
 terminal.

AGNES (CONT'D)
 Driver, go. Please!

DRIVER
 What about your friend?

AGNES
 Just go!

The taxi pulls away. Sam runs back out just in time to see it
 pull away.

SAM
 (shouting)
 No! Agnes!

Tourists, families and business travelers breeze by him in
 either direction.

Crushed, Sam walks back into the terminal.

INT. AIRPORT TERMINAL

He checks departures again - his flight is on time and about
 to board.

INT. PLANE CABIN - SAME DAY, NIGHT

Sam stares out the window, fidgeting with the bracelet Agnes bought him. A familiar song sounds in the form of a ringtone - the same song Agnes performed the night before.

Sam smiles and shakes his head. The PASSENGER next to him notices.

EXT. CAMPSITE - FLASHBACK

Agnes is joyously strumming the guitar and singing. The light from the campfire highlights her face as sparks gently drift into the night sky.

INT. PLANE CABIN - BACK TO PRESENT

The passenger next to Sam taps him on the shoulder, interrupting his daydream.

PASSENGER

Excuse me. Excuse me, sir. You're on my safety belt.

SAM

Oh! Sorry, here you go. Hey, do you mind if I borrow your phone charger?

The woman reluctantly hands it over. Sam plugs in his phone, which explodes with notifications.

PASSENGER

Popular.

He scans the long list of texts and missed calls, zeroing in on several from Laura.

LAURA (TEXT)

Where are u? Did you get my msg?
Wanna make sure you'll be home in
time for Cole's bday. Call me. xo

SAM (TEXT)

Sorry, back-to-back meetings. Been
a crazy trip. Home soon, about to
take off. xo

Sam puts his phone away, leans back and closes his eyes. A beat later, he opens them abruptly and checks his phone again.

SAM (CONT'D)
 (low voice)
 We took photos. In the park.

PASSENGER
 Are you okay?

SAM
 (flipping through phone)
 Yes, sorry.

Sam lands on a series of photos of he and Agnes' silhouettes at sunset and stops at one where they're linked arm-in-arm. These are the only photos he has of her. Shadows. He leans back again and exhales sharply.

PASSENGER
 Are you sure you're okay? That bandage looks nasty.

Sam quickly tucks his hand into his armpit.

SAM
 Yes, thank you.

The lights dim and the plane prepares for take-off. Sam watches as he pulls further and further away from the sprawling lights of Los Angeles.

INT. AGNES' HOME - SAME TIME

Agnes opens the door and is immediately greeted by her hyper little mutt.

AGNES
 Spikey! Mama missed you!

After ample belly rubs and filling her dog's bowl with food, Agnes flips through a stack of mail on the counter.

Among the pieces is a travel magazine with a feature about Morocco on the front page.

AGNES (CONT'D)
 Of course.

She pours a glass of wine and wanders down the hall.

INT. BEDROOM

Agnes peels off her filthy clothes. The crystal Mary gave her falls to the floor from a pocket in her jeans.

Examining the rock, she places it on her bedside table and sits down on the edge of the bed.

Agnes notices the matching bracelet she bought with Sam, twirling and twisting it between her fingers, before sliding it off her wrist.

Opening a drawer, she pulls out a wooden box and tucks the bracelet inside.

INT. PALM READER - DAY - FLASHBACK

Sam examines a plate of crystals as Agnes and the witchy palm reader settle payment up front.

AGNES
(whispering)
Hey, I'd like to play a little joke
on my friend.

PALM READER
Oh?

AGNES
(whispering)
Yeah. Can you tell him he only has
one year left to live?

PALM READER
Oh, no. That would be compromising
my practice as a spiritual healer.

Sam overhears the palm reader and glances over.

AGNES
(whispering)
It's just a harmless prank. Here.

Agnes hands the woman a few twenties. She tucks them into her bra and waves Sam over.

INT. BEDROOM - BACK TO PRESENT

Agnes gets into bed and curls up with Spike. Rolling onto her back, she stares up at the ceiling and let's out a deep breath before closing her eyes.

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

Agnes is about to hop in the shower when Ryan takes her by surprise.

RYAN
Hey! You're home!

AGNES
Hey, you scared me.

Ryan grabs Agnes and pulls her in tight, kissing her hard.

RYAN
I missed you. God, you're filthy!

AGNES
I was about to take a shower.

RYAN
Did that meeting in New York get cancelled?

AGNES
Nope, just postponed.

RYAN
Lucky me.

Agnes tightens her robe.

AGNES
What about you, I thought you were on location until the weekend?

RYAN
Wrapped early, if you can believe it. I flew back this morning.

Ryan strokes Agnes' hair. She pulls away.

RYAN (CONT'D)
Ava, come on. What's wrong baby?

Agnes, who is actually named AVA, is struck by the sound of her real name.

AVA
I'm just tired. And I really need a shower.

RYAN
Want some company?

AVA
Let's take Spike on a hike. You get changed. I'll be quick!

RYAN
 Alright, hurry up.

Ryan kisses Ava's forehead and jogs towards the kitchen.

RYAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 Spike! Where you at, girl?

INT. BATHROOM

Ava's robe drops to the floor. She steps into the shower, closing her eyes as the water pours over her.

EXT. MONTAGE - FLASHBACK

Ava is watching Sam search for shells on the beach. He waves at her and she smiles.

Campfire illuminates Sam's face as he and Ava laugh, playing truth or dare.

Ava and Sam are cuddled up close in the car under a star-filled sky.

INT. BATHROOM - BACK TO PRESENT

Ava wraps her hair in a towel and looks in the mirror, letting out a long, deliberate sigh.

RYAN O.S.
 Babe, what's the hold up?

AVA
 (shouting)
 Coming!

INT. SAM'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - SAME TIME

Sam is flipping through photos of the desert on his phone.

He switches to a browser, searches for "Agnes Venture Capital Los Angeles" and scrolls through Google images, but finds nothing.

He's wearing a party hat. A large cake sits on the counter in front of him. Laura calls to him from the backyard.

LAURA (O.S.)
 Honey? We're ready!

SAM
(shouting)
Okay!

Sam lights the candles and gives his shoulders a shake, in an effort to rally.

He carries his son's cake towards the backyard while singing the birthday song. A choir of child and adult voices join in.

EXT. HIKING TRAIL - SAME DAY

Ava follows Ryan and Spike down a winding trail. She stops to catch her breath.

RYAN
Babe, you alright?

AVA
Yep, all good. You guys go, I'll catch up.

Ava climbs onto a nearby rock. Her mind begins to drift.

EXT. MONTAGE - FLASHBACK

Ava and Sam kiss passionately on the outskirts of the Mojave.

Ava and Sam's hands connect and caress as they sway in the hammock.

Sam beams as he shares the fictional story of how he and Ava met with the hippies on the bus.

EXT. HIKING TRAIL - BACK TO PRESENT

Spike can be heard barking in the distance. Ava snaps out of her daydream and jogs up the trail.

INT. SAM'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Sam is lying in bed flipping through his phone, which illuminates the frustrated expression on his face. Laura stirs next to him but remains asleep.

He opens a browser and searches for "Agnes Los Angeles consultant high-tech" but search results return nothing.

Sam rolls onto his side and pulls up the silhouette of he and Agnes in the desert sun. He lets out a long, deliberate sigh.

A FEW MONTHS LATER

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Sam is sitting in a cubicle, staring blankly at his computer screen. He reaches into his laptop bag and discovers a paper napkin with something inside. When he opens it, pieces of a sand dollar spill onto his desk.

SAM

No!

An ADMIN ASSISTANT drops off some mail.

ADMIN ASSISTANT

Everything okay?

Sam clicks open his email and pretends to be focused on work.

SAM

Yeah. Thanks.

Shuffling through the pile, Sam comes across a small package with a strange object inside. Ripping it open, the crystal Mary gave Ava drops to his desk.

SAM (CONT'D)

No return address.

Sam rolls his chair back.

SAM (CONT'D)

Hey, excuse me? Did you see who dropped this package off?

ADMIN ASSISTANT

It came by courier, I think.

Sam examines the handwriting on the envelope. It's addressed to Sam "Hutch" Roberts.

He begins typing something into the search bar, excitedly at first, but then stops and slowly deletes each letter.

Sam stares at the blinking cursor for a beat before being called to a meeting by a COLLEAGUE.

COLLEAGUE

Sam, you coming?

SAM

On my way.

Sam is suddenly alone in the office. The silence is deafening.

INT. AVA'S HOME - BEDROOM - DAY

Ava is zipping up her carry-on. She bends down to kiss Spike, who is perched on the bed watching her.

AVA

I'll see you really soon. I love you.

She takes off her wedding ring and leaves it on the nightstand.

INT. UBER CAR - DAY

Traffic crawls as Ava stares listlessly out the window. She grabs her phone and makes a call.

AVA

Hi, this is Ava Matthews. I need to cancel an appointment with Dr. Stevens. No, no need to reschedule. We're not going to continue with treatment. Thanks, you too.

She tosses her phone back into her bag and leans back. A MOTHER (40s) in a neighboring car attempts to calm her small children who are having a meltdown. She and Ava lock eyes.

Ava smiles sympathetically. The woman stares helplessly back at her.

INT. AIRPORT TERMINAL - SAME DAY

Ava surveys the list of international flights on the departures board.

INT. RESTROOM

Women rush in and out. Ava stands at the end of a long row of sinks and mirrors, staring at her reflection.

INT. AIRPORT TERMINAL - RESTROOM - SAME TIME

Sam emerges from a stall, wearing shorts and a t-shirt, pulling his carry-on behind him.

He's holding a dress shirt and pants. He unzips his carry-on and hesitates for a beat before tossing the clothes into the trash.

Sam makes his way to the departure gate. His phone rings.

SAM

Hey. Yeah, I'm just about to board.
About two weeks this time, I'll
keep you posted. Give the kids a
kiss for me. I will. Bye.

The board at the gate reads Marrakesh. Sam hands the flight attendant his boarding pass and disappears into the tunnel.

INT. AIRPORT LOUNGE - SAME TIME

Ava is sitting in the same bar - in the same seat - as the day she met Sam.

Once again, she finds herself observing the neuroses of various travelers, coaxing their dogs to relieve themselves while getting in one last pre-flight vape.

On the table in front of her sits a journal, her phone and a glass of wine.

Suddenly, a MAN clumsily sets up shop next to her. He places a pint of beer down first, before setting down his laptop, his phone, and several charging devices.

Ava takes a peek at his situation. He has a photo of a baby on the home screen of his phone, a million files are scattered all over his desktop, he's wearing an Apple watch that won't stop binging and his shirt has right-out-of-the-package creases across it.

The man notices Ava observing him.

MAN

Hello.

AVA

Hey.

MAN

I'll bet you're headed somewhere
much more interesting than me.

AVA

Oh yeah? What makes you say that.

MAN
Just a guess.

AVA
Where are you headed?

MAN
Minneapolis. You?

Ava packs up her stuff and takes one last sip of her wine.

AVA
Morocco.

FADE TO BLACK.