

SERI'S JUNGLE

Written by

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FADE IN:

INT. SERI'S JUNGLE- EVENING

Seri's Jungle is a successful pet store located in a strip mall in the suburbs. The store is excessively clean, cluttered only by the mobiles and sale signs hanging from the ceiling.

SERI is striking in appearance, enhanced further by a fabulous smile and a stylish haircut. She beams with friendliness and determination.

SERI vacuums the floor as a SKOAL CAP DONNING CUSTOMER approaches, his long hair greasy and unkempt.

SKOAL CAP CUSTOMER

How much for this here 'quarium toy?

SERI

That ornament is \$7.99. There should be a price sticker on the bottom of all of our ornaments.

SKOAL CAP CUSTOMER

Do you have layaway? I don't get paid until next week.

SERI

Tell the girl with the red hair up there at the counter that Seri said to put that on hold for you... if you promise to come back next week.

SKOAL CAP CUSTOMER

Sure will. Goldie has a birthday coming up and I want to get her somethin' nice.

SERI

Nothing says happy birthday to a goldfish like a skeleton fish ornament.

SKOAL CAP CUSTOMER

Goldie ain't no fish. She's my wife.

SERI turns the vacuum back on and resumes cleaning the floor.

INTERCOM (V.O.)
Seri to the hamster pavilion.

SERI
Great, another rodent emergency.

SERI turns off the vacuum and hustles over to the small animal section of Seri's Jungle. An EXTREMELY TALL WOMAN stands near an EMPLOYEE WEARING A CAST on her arm.

EMPLOYEE IN CAST
This woman, she, well, she wants to buy every single one of our hamsters.

SERI
How many do we have right now?

EMPLOYEE IN CAST
Thirteen.

SERI takes the EMPLOYEE aside.

SERI
Is she insane? Do you know why the world she is asking to buy thirteen hamsters?

EMPLOYEE IN CAST
She said she wants to make a scarf out of them.

SERI
If PETA heard about that, we'd be closed in no time and I'd be eating cat food for dinner.

EMPLOYEE IN CAST
It is so nasty. I'm gonna tell her no. Plus, she's a freak. Look how tall she is anyway! Freakin' freak.

SERI returns to the EXTREMELY TALL WOMAN, frowning.

SERI
I'm sorry, but we have a small animal policy which prohibits us from selling a customer more than two small animals per month. This lets the animals acclimate to their new surroundings, and allows the owners to become accustomed to their new family members.

EXTREMELY TALL WOMAN
I don't want to wait that long. I
need them all, right now!

SERI
Policies are policies. I'm sorry.

EXTREMELY TALL WOMAN
Hmmm.

The EXTREMELY TALL WOMAN points to the ferret cage.

EXTREMELY TALL WOMAN (CONT'D)
Then I'll take two of those.

INT. SERI'S HOUSE - EVENING

SERI unlocks the front door of her home and comes in. Clothes are strewn everywhere. Empty Chinese food containers sit on the end table. A toppled stack of magazines clutters the floor. HODGES, her loving canine, rises up and greets her.

SERI
Hi, Hodges. How was your day today?
Ohhhh, you are such a good boy.

SERI enters the kitchen. The toaster is out, the sink is loaded with dishes, and a pizza box rests prominently against the clutter on the counter top.

SERI (CONT'D)
About time for dinner, isn't it?
Momma was surrounded by lunatics
and psychos again today. And that
is just the employees.

SERI gets a can of dog food out of the fridge and starts to prepare a dish for HODGES.

SERI (CONT'D)
But it pays the bills... yes, it
pays the bills. That's a good boy.
Here is your dinner.

SERI sets down the bowl for HODGES, who immediately starts to snarf it up.

TRINA, beautiful, driven and enthusiastic, brushes her flowing hair over her shoulder as she reaches for her phone.

The PHONE RINGS, surprising SERI.

INTERCUT - SERI'S KITCHEN / TRINA'S CAR

TRINA

Hey, what's going on, my pet store goddess?

SERI

Hey, Trina. Just gave Hodges a bowl of food and am now looking in the 'fridge... I tell ya, there is almost nothing in it. If I can't find anything, he'd better not stray far from his dish.

TRINA

Glad I'm not coming over for dinner. Things are good?

SERI

Yeah, things are good. How about with you?

TRINA

Livin' the life. I tried to call you the other day but couldn't catch you. Tonight is girls' night out.

SERI plunks down on the couch with a jar of salsa in one hand and a box of Triscuits in the other.

TRINA (CONT'D)

(cont'd, singing)

We're gonna dance 'em, romance 'em, and maybe take a chance with 'em.

SERI

I thought you and X were still in a serious relationship?

TRINA

We are... tonight I'm just head cheerleader, chaperone, and coach tonight. Are you in?

SERI

I'd better not.

TRINA

You haven't come for a long time.

SERI

I'm just really tired. Work has been killing me. I'm sorry.

(MORE)

SERI (CONT'D)

Would you at least swing by in the morning and let me know how it went?

TRINA

Do I bring my own dog food and coffee, or is Hodges willing to share? Wish us luck, and I'll catch you on the other side.

SERI

Send me some selfies, please.

END INTERCUT

SERI eats a few chips, turns on the television, pulls a blanket over herself, and drifts off to sleep.

INT. SERI'S HOUSE - MORNING

TRINA knocks on the door. SERI comes down the hall, her hair in a towel and cream on her face. SERI opens the door.

TRINA

Ohmigod!

SERI

Like you've never seen me in the morning before.

TRINA

Its not just you. It's your house. What a disaster... did you fall behind on your garbage bill?

SERI

Nice to see you too. Won't you please come in?

TRINA enters and sits in the living room, while SERI retreats to her bedroom.

TRINA

I see chips and salsa. Must have been a real rip-roaring evening?

SERI (O.S.)

It wasn't too bad. I partied with a rock band that I found on Craigslist.

(MORE)

SERI (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 We sang Karaoke all night long as
 we downed pitcher after pitcher
 after pitcher of margaritas.

TRINA
 You fell asleep as soon as we got
 off of the phone, didn't you?

SERI walks down the hall and enter the kitchen, tucking in
 her shirt along the way.

SERI
 No. I stayed awake a good five
 minutes. How was girls' night out?

TRINA
 Well, Heather went home with some
 guy who is the poster boy for one-
 night stands, and Sue gave her
 phone number out to about a dozen
 guys or so. Nobody else really got
 out of line.

SERI
 Sorry I missed it. Where are the
 selfies I asked for?

TRINA
 (checking her phone)
 Damn it! I sent those to my mom.
 She's probably pooping herself
 silly, thinking that I'm a wild
 child. I expect she will be
 calling me today.

TRINA stand up and walks over to the breakfast bar.

TRINA (CONT'D)
 This place is a pit.

SERI
 You've already established that.

TRINA
 I mean, really. You need a
 housekeeper.

SERI
 I need a staff of housekeepers.

TRINA grabs the stack of mail piled next to the coffee maker
 and starts rifling through it.

TRINA

Then why don't you get one?

SERI

Yeah, right.

TRINA

Seriously. Look at this place. It would not only give you a clean house, but free up some of your time right now. As it is, I can barely find Hodges on the floor.

SERI

And just how do you think I would afford to pay one, Ms. Moneybags?

TRINA

They aren't that expensive.

TRINA scrolls some more on her phone.

Google is your friend when it comes to coupon codes. Check this one out... "50% off Sexy Maids. The mer, the merrier". What say you?

SERI

Cute. Mer... maid. Not my style.

TRINA

Here's another one. "Buy services from Mr. Tidy, and Mrs. Tidy will join in for free". Two-for-one right there at the click of a link.

SERI

Are you sure you didn't just search for pimps and whores?

TRINA

C'mon, I so want you to have Mr. and Mrs. Tidy show up. I'll even pay for it myself, if I can watch.

SERI

Maybe your mom really should have a talk with you.

TRINA

I'm... pressing... the... contact me button.

SERI

Whatever.

TRINA

You'll thank me later... and click!

EXT. SIDEWALK CAFE - DAY

TRINA, SERI, and HEIDI, the owner of Tidy Heidi sit at a table in a lovely sidewalk café. Each has a salad and a glass of wine in front of them.

HEIDI

I'm really sorry that Wiley, who is Mr. Tidy, couldn't join us today.

TRINA

(spit take)

What? He is Wiley and your name is Heidi. Wiley and Heidi Tidy?

HEIDI

Makes you shiver, doesn't it? So... as I was saying, that is the advanced basic plan. We come on a regular schedule and perform any of the tasks agreed to on the schedule of fees during that period of time.

SERI

I don't know. Doesn't seem like that plan would work for me either.

TRINA

It does still seem to fall a bit short. Do you have any other services at all?

HEIDI

We do offer Mighty Tidy, which is our premier personal assistance service. It not only focuses on keeping your living space spotless, but we assist with personal errands and obligations.

SERI

Please go on.

HEIDI

The sheer beauty of Mighty Tidy is that it does not require, or allow, core scheduled appointments.

(MORE)

HEIDI (CONT'D)

We assign an assistant to you who, based upon their professional judgment, provides those services which appear necessary.

SERI

Can I also put in a special request, like picking up my dry cleaning or taking my pooch to the park?

HEIDI

Certainly. Just leave a note or contact your personal assistant directly.

SERI

And when would my assistant show up?

HEIDI

As necessary... there is no set schedule.

TRINA

Gosh, maybe I should forget about my boyfriend and get an assistant myself? How much for a daily massage after my bubble bath?

HEIDI

You really do think we are an escort service, don't you?

HEIDI reaches in her purse, pulling out a fifty dollar bill and her business card as she stands up.

HEIDI (CONT'D)

Very well. Check out our reviews online. Our assistants are the most reliable in town, and for a busy person like yourself, they can be a godsend. It was a pleasure to meet you both.

(to SERI)

Er, at least you.

HEIDI places the fifty on the table and strolls down the sidewalk.

TRINA

Go ahead. Pull the trigger. There isn't any question that you need this!

SERI

Seems like I would be putting my life into the hands of a trusted stranger?

TRINA

You do that every day with the pet store.

SERI

True. But maybe I don't have to be at the store all of the time. Maybe I can try to stay home and take care of some of those things?

TRINA

I know you, Seri. If you are not at the store, you worry and stress out and drive everybody around you crazy. If you hang around the house too much, even Hodges is going to want to move out.

SERI

Well...

TRINA

(interrupting)

You can do it. Listen, tomorrow night X and I are going out and he has a friend that would like to join us. Wanna make it a double?

SERI

Geez, Trina, why don't you just take control of my life?

TRINA

Well, somebody has to.

SERI and TRINA laugh.

SERI

(waving her arms about)

What the hell... let's throw caution to the wind. I'll order the Mighty Tidy, and then, for even more chaos in my life, I'll go on a blind double date with you and X. Why not? Maybe one of these crazy ideas will work out?

TRINA

Just how many glasses of wine have
you had?

INT. SERI'S HOUSE - EVENING

SERI puts on her earrings as she walks down the hall, wearing a red sheath dress and high heels. She sits on the messy couch next to HODGES.

SERI

Okay, Hodges. Tonight somebody is going to show up that you don't know and is going to try to clean up this mess. Yes, yes... there will be vacuuming. I know how much you love the vacuum.

HODGES wags his tail.

SERI (CONT'D)

(cont'd)

They'll probably try to put away your toys when you're done playing, but you can get them back out again. Momma's big boy can leave his toys out whenever he wants.

SERI gives HODGES a couple of strong pats, walks into the kitchen and grabs her purse.

SERI (CONT'D)

Let me see... Cheryl said to put my spare key under the mat. I fed Hodges. I have the directions to the restaurant on my phone. Guess I'm ready to go.

SERI walks to the door and opens it.

SERI (CONT'D)

Wish me luck tonight, big guy. And don't wait up for me.

HODGES rolls over on his side as the door closes.

INT. GERARDS BISTRO - EVENING

TRINA is seated along a window next to X, a handsome, physically fit fellow who is dressed to the nines. A sports jacket is draped over an additional chair.

SERI walks up and exchanges hugs with TRINA and X.

SERI

Hi. Great to see you both.

X

You too. And you look fabulous!

SERI

This place looks fantastic. I've never been here before.

X

Gerard is a good friend of mine. When he remodeled and added the bar, he tripled his business.

SERI

Well the view is absolutely fantastic. I have a feeling this is going to be a great night.

X

Hey, here comes Elliot.

ELLIOT approaches, his boyish looks and clean cut appearance preceding him. SERI glances over her shoulder for a peek before he arrives, then looks back at TRINA.

TRINA

Cute isn't he?

SERI nods and winks.

ELLIOT

Hi, I'm Elliot. Nice to meet you.

SERI

Nice to meet you.

SERI and ELLIOT shake hands and are seated at the table.

ELLIOT

So they tell me you are the owner of Seri's Jungle. Sounds like a pretty cool gig.

SERI

Yeah, I couldn't ask for a better career. I enjoy working with people, and of course, love animals.

ELLIOT
Me too. But I don't love eating
them.

SERI
You're a vegetarian?

ELLIOT
Going on ten years now.

X
Maybe that explains your boyish
looks?

ELLIOT
Yeah, I'm sure being a vegetarian
is the fountain of youth.

THEY ALL laugh. A CURLY-HAIRED WAITRESS approaches.

CURLY-HAIRED WAITRESS
Can I get you something to drink?

SERI
I'll have a glass of Chardonnay.

CURLY-HAIRED WAITRESS
Anybody else want refills?

X
Yeah. I'll have another Seven and
Seven.

ELLIOT
Redhook for me.

TRINA
I'm fine for now. Thanks.

The CURLY-HAIRED WAITRESS leaves.

SERI
So what do you do with your time?

ELLIOT
I'm the chief horticulturist at
Spencer's Nursery.

SERI
Don't tell me you don't eat plants
either?

ELLIOT
Of course I eat plants. I can't
just survive on Ding Dongs and
Twinkies and be all this?

ELLIOT strikes a variety of strongman poses. ALL laugh.

MONTAGE - EVENING OF FUN

-- Dinner Table - Conversation and laughter abounds.
-- Dance Floor - Elliot and Seri cutting up the floor.
-- Dance Floor - A circle around X as he struts his stuff.
-- Bar - Seri and Elliot laughing as they share a toast.

END MONTAGE

EXT. GERARDS BISTRO - NIGHT

SERI, ELLIOT, X, and TRINA exit the bistro and stand on the patio under the awning. TRINA and X wave as they walk away.

SERI
Well, I had a very nice time
tonight.

ELLIOT
Would it be too bold of me to ask
you out again tomorrow?

SERI
Bold, yes, but I'd be delighted.

SERI and ELLIOT bump their phones together as SERI's contact information transfers to ELLIOT'S phone.

ELLIOT
You're not going to ghost me, are
you?

SERI
Would I do this if it was?

SERI gives ELLIOT a short hug.

ELLIOT
Pick you up at 7:00.

SERI
See you then.

E/I. SERI'S HOUSE - NIGHT

SERI stops at her doorstep and checks under her mat to make sure the key is no longer there.

SERI rummages through her purse, finds her key, unlocks the door and enters the house.

SERI turns on the lights, and marvels at the sight. The house is immaculate- the kitchen is clean, the living room is clean, the floor is vacuumed and the dog toys are all stacked neatly in a pile.

SERI
Trina will never believe this.

INT. SERI'S JUNGLE/BACK OFFICE- DAY

SERI sits in a paper cluttered office, working on the computer. HODGES lies on a stack of brochures scattered about the floor near a tall filing cabinet.

There is a KNOCK AT THE DOOR.

SERI
Come in, it's open.

EMPLOYEE IN CAST

Sorry to bother you. There is a guy here named Allen that represents a company named Mockingbird Enterprises that would like to talk to you.

SERI
Fine. Haven't these people ever heard of calling in advance? Or texting? Bring him on back.

The EMPLOYEE returns moments later, accompanied by ALLEN, an early-thirties surfer wanna-be with an artificial tan.

ALLEN stands in the doorway.

SERI (CONT'D)
Hi, I'm Seri. Please come in.

ALLEN
Allen Fleecer from Mockingbird Enterprises.

SERI and ALLEN shake hands as they are seated across the desk from one another.

ALLEN (CONT'D)

(cont'd)

Great store you have here. Not many independent stores have such a vibrant and welcoming atmosphere. And who's this big fellah?

SERI

That's Hodges. And thank you for the compliment about the store. Our customers deserve a friendly, fun, and clean and environment to shop in.

SERI makes a sweeping gesture with her arms
As you can see, once you enter through those doors, the cleanliness comes to a screeching halt.

ALLEN

Well, I'm here to see if I you'd be interested in carrying a new concept in the avian market?

SERI

If it will make me a million bucks, I'll buy whatever you have in that old school briefcase you've got there. No questions asked.

ALLEN removes a contraption from his briefcase.

ALLEN

It won't make you a million bucks, but it is high margin and an easy sell. This is the Mockingbird, and consists of two digital cameras and a scalable display screen which you mount on the side of the bird cage. The cameras capture your bird's actions and, every so often, will transmit it to the screen to be replayed for your feathered friend. It gives your bird something new and entertaining to watch and keeps them occupied.

SERI

That is really pretty cool.

ALLEN

It's sort of a web cam for vain parakeets.

SERI
I'm going to have to think about
it. Do you have a price sheet or a
brochure?

ALLEN glances tellingly at the brochures underneath HODGES.
SERI laughs.

SERI (CONT'D)
(cont'd)
I promise it won't end up as vendor
bedding.

ALLEN hands SERI a price sheet.

ALLEN
And, is there a Mr. Seri's Jungle?

SERI
Nope, just me. Nobody else to ask
for the sale... but me.

ALLEN laughs.

ALLEN
Actually, please pardon me for
being so forward, but I thought if
you'd like to grab a Jamba Juice or
a latte, that I might accompany
you.

SERI
Let me think about that too. So
long as you don't come with a price
sheet.

An awkward pause before ALLEN stands up, removing a card from
his pocket and placing the Mockingbird back in his briefcase.

ALLEN
Okay then. Here's my card in case
you'd like to do business or
pleasure or...

SERI'S jaw drops. ALLEN stops mid-sentence.

ALLEN (CONT'D)
Not a good choice of words, was it?

SERI
Better than 'if you want to have
sex'.

ALLEN
Did I just kill the deal?

SERI
No, I promise I'll still consider things. I have your card.

ALLEN walks toward the door, stopping momentarily.

ALLEN
Great. Pleasure to meet you.

SERI
There's that word again. Pleasure.

ALLEN
(sheepishly)
I'll just leave now. Bye.

INT. SERI'S HOUSE - EVENING

SERI places a dish of food out for Hodges and sits down in the living room.

The clock reads 6:55.

SERI
Here you are, Hodgie. You should be proud of your Momma for being ready five minutes early. Gives me a few minutes to enjoy my newly cleaned house.

SERI turns on the television. Wheel of Fortune comes to an end, as the contestant misses the final puzzle.

SERI (CONT'D)
Hodges, you could do better than she did. What a real brain trust.

SERI picks up a magazine and thumbs through it. The clock reads 7:05... then 7:15.

SERI stands up and starts to pace around. The clock reads 7:20... then 7:25.

SERI (CONT'D)
Guess he must have sobered up after I gave him my number. Just my luck.

There is a KNOCK AT THE DOOR.

SERI (CONT'D)
Or maybe not.

SERI opens the door to find ROGER- his dark hair and well-defined chin immediately drawing attention to his face, away from his denim overalls and Converse sneakers.

ROGER
Hi.

SERI
Can I help you?

ROGER
I'm from Tidy Heidi's. My name is Roger, and I'm your personal assistant.

SERI looks ROGER up and down multiple times.

ROGER (CONT'D)
I can see from your reaction that I may not be quite who you were expecting.

SERI
You could say that.

ROGER
Second time here, as you know. I would have just let myself in but we always knock first. Tidy Heidi policy!

SERI
(shaking her head)
Well welcome back. Please come in.

SERI and ROGER shake hands.

As ROGER starts to enter, ELLIOT jogs up the walkway.

ELLIOT
Hey Seri. I'm so sorry I'm late. We had a hydroponic disaster at the nursery which couldn't be left untamed.

SERI
That's okay. See you later Roger.

EXT. SERI'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

SERI and ELLIOT walk down the walkway.

ELLIOT
If you don't mind me asking, who
was that guy?

SERI
That is Roger. He's my lover.

ELLIOT stops dead in his tracks.

SERI (CONT'D)
(cont'd)
Just kidding. He's a guy from the
housekeeping service I use to keep
my place in order.

ELLIOT
That guy's a maid? He looks like a
model, or maybe a stripper.

SERI
Do I detect a hint of jealousy?

ELLIOT
Please! I work with plants. He
works with dirt. I wear a shirt and
tie to work. He wears overalls. Now
who do you think should be jealous?

ELLIOT opens his car door and gets in.

SERI
(under her breath)
His name rhymes with Melliot.

SERI gets in the car and they drive off.

INT. SERI'S HOUSE - AN HOUR LATER

SERI opens the front door to find ROGER on all fours, waxing
the kitchen floor.

SERI
Sorry I'm back so soon. I had to
cut my date short.

ROGER
No need to apologize. Just pretend
I'm not here.

SERI

Let me ask you something. If I told you that somebody was a chief horticulturist...

ROGER

(interrupting) Pothead, huh?

SERI

How did you know?

ROGER

The only men I know of that like plants that much are either potheads or farmers. And, at least from a distance, he didn't smell like a barnyard.

SERI laughs.

SERI

Thanks for the chuckle. I'm turning in.

SERI starts to walk down the hallway.

SERI (CONT'D)

(to herself)

You know, I think I'm going to like having a personal assistant.

SERI closes the door to her bedroom.

INT. SHAMAN'S COFFEE HUT - DAY

(A week later) TRINA and SERI sip excessively large cups of espresso at SHAMAN'S COFFEE HUT, a sixties-styled coffee shop. JAZZ MUSIC plays softly in the background.

TRINA

Sorry that things didn't go too smoothly with Elliot last week. We honestly didn't know he was in to that stuff.

SERI

My first clue was when he said he used to have a dog named Canabis.

TRINA

Did he have a Bob Marley playing in the car when you got in?

SERI

Go ahead... rub it in. I tell ya,
I'm not ready for this dating thing
just yet.

TRINA

You can't give up yet. You need to
get out there and get yourself
some!

SERI

Well, there is this other guy who
came in to sell me this hi-tech
bird toy who was interested.

TRINA

Call him!

SERI

I dunno.

TRINA

Do it. You want to get married at
some point, right? At the very
least, you could use a nice roll in
the sheets.

SERI

You naughty bitch!

TRINA

C'mon! You need to get in a little
warm-up before the heavy hitters
move in.

SERI

Whatever!

TRINA

Are you gonna call him?

SERI

Okay, I will. Hold me to it, okay?

TRINA

What are friends for? Hey, how is
that personal assistant stuff
working out?

SERI

Pretty well. There have been about
three or four visits so far, but
I've only seen the guy once.

TRINA

Guy. Did you say guy?

SERI

Yeah. And he's a total hottie.
Rock solid.

TRINA

A man in a short black skirt with a
feather duster in his pocket? I'm
so turned on. I'm going home right
now... I need a quickie.

TRINA abruptly gets up and begins walking away.

SERI

(cupping her hands to her
mouth)

Let me know tomorrow how X looks in
a maid's outfit.

INT. SERI'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

SERI enters the front door and kicks off her sandals in the
entryway.

SERI

What a day. Hodges! Come here and
say hello to momma.

SERI enters the living room.

SERI (CONT'D)

Hodges! Where are you, you lazy
bum?

SERI checks various rooms for Hodges.

SERI (CONT'D)

Hodges. Where can you possibly be
hiding?

There is a KNOCK AT THE DOOR, followed by KEYS IN THE LOCK.

ROGER enters and lets HODGES off the leash. HODGES
immediately runs up to SERI, who pets him.

ROGER

We meet once again. Hodges is
really a great pooch... all of the
other dogs really like him.

SERI

He loves to go anywhere. Thanks so much for taking him and playing with him.

ROGER disappears down the hall.

ROGER

(O.S.)

It's part of the job. He's a great pup, you know, and I really like him. Getting paid to play with dogs is a pretty good gig if you ask me.

SERI

He is pretty great, isn't he?

ROGER returns with an armload of laundry, which he throws on the couch and begins to fold.

ROGER

Generally they take after their masters. He is super friendly and kind and...

ROGER starts to fold a tiger-striped bra.

SERI

(interrupting)

Oh, my... this is a bit awkward, isn't it?

ROGER

What? This?

ROGER holds up the delicates.

ROGER (CONT'D)

(cont'd)

It will only be awkward if some of it becomes missing.

SERI laughs as she looks at his left hand.

SERI

Do you do the laundry for your girlfriend?

ROGER

I did, but she couldn't afford the bill each month. So I had to let her go.

SERI raises her eyebrows, concerned.

ROGER (CONT'D)
Just kidding. But seriously, I'm
not seeing anybody.

SERI
Crapsticks! Look at the clock.
Allen is picking me up in less than
thirty minutes and I need to get
ready. If you're still here, will
you let him in?

SERI walks swiftly down the hall.

ROGER
Sure. Not another pothead, is he?

SERI
He professes to be a bird lover. Do
I know how to pick 'em or what.
Catch you later.

SERI closes the door to her room.

ROGER
(to Hodges)
Your mom attracts some real
personalities, doesn't she?

HODGES wags his tail, as ROGER starts petting him vigorously.

ROGER (CONT'D)
(cont'd, in a mocking voice) I
smoke pot. I like birds. I wear
fishing boots to bed. And yet,
these guys are going on dates. Go
figure, Hodges, go figure.

EXT. FOUNTAINSIDE AT JACKSON PARK - NIGHT

SERI and ALLEN sit close to one another on a park bench. A
gaudy, three-tiered concrete fountain babbles in the
foreground.

SERI
I've really enjoyed myself this
evening.

ALLEN
So have I. I haven't eaten at
Cardinia for a good three years.

SERI

The atmosphere was just fantastic, and the bar of deliciousness has risen to new heights.

ALLEN

I've had a great time. Seri, can you tell I don't date much?

SERI

Get out of here. You've been a real gentleman. Soooo, is my awkwardness a telltale sign that I'm not well-travelled on the dating scene?

ALLEN

I'm surprised you're not spoken for. You must be a tough catch to land.

SERI

That's very sweet of you, and you're earning bonus points. The only thing that seemed out of place was that there were a few times this evening when you wanted to ask me something.

ALLEN

Now is one of those times.

(pause)

Will you go out with me again tomorrow night?

SERI

Last time I went out back-to-back, it was a disaster. But since you have those bonus points on the scoreboard, I'll tempt fate and agree. Gosh, I really should be getting home, as it's almost midnight.

ALLEN

Are you going to turn into a pumpkin?

SERI

Nope, just a grouch. A grouch with an anxious puppy missing his mother.

ALLEN

In that case, let's go.

ALLEN helps SERI off the bench and they walk away from the courtyard.

INT./EXT. SERI'S HOUSE - MORNING

Still in her robe, SERI peers out the front window to see ROGER mowing the lawn with a push mower, and HODGES playing with a rope toy.

SERI smiles, walks over to the doorway, and opens the door.

SERI

Don't tell me that you are always this full of energy in the mornings. You'll put me to shame.

ROGER

Hey, Seri. Thought that I'd start my chores bright and early.

SERI rubs her eyes.

SERI

Early, indeed. Jesus isn't even up yet and he has a big day in front of him. Why don't you come in for a cup of coffee?

ROGER

That sounds great. C'mon Hodges.

SERI delivers a cup of coffee to ROGER and sits across the table from him.

SERI

You seem to really enjoy your work.

ROGER

I do like it. Heidi is a super boss, but in reality, I work for the customers, and I'm not just saying that. When I develop a solid relationship with a client, I find that we appreciate and look out for each other. This job, frankly, is quite rewarding.

SERI

Are you assigned to more than one client at a time?

ROGER

Not those of us assigned to a Mighty Tidy client. You have to work your way up to become an MT assistant, since your experience provides you with guidance in anticipating your client's needs.

SERI

That totally make sense. My clients only bark, meow, chirp, or swim so I don't have the kind of mental mumbo-jumbo to deal with.

SERI refills their coffee cups.

SERI (CONT'D)

What do you do besides work?

ROGER

I enjoy sports, especially hiking and basketball. I will play almost any sport, but rarely watch any. I just love being active, though my enjoyment of sports pales in comparison to my heart's true siren.

SERI

Which is?

ROGER

Making furniture. Wooden furniture.

SERI

That is totally interesting. What a cool hobby. You're not Amish right?

ROGER

According to my genealogy records, I am 100% Amish-free.

ROGER walks around the kitchen, running his hands along the counter.

ROGER (CONT'D)

I really do enjoy it, as it gives me a chance to bring creative visions to life. This job gives me the flexibility to pursue my passion.

SERI (O.S.)
I have a favor to ask... and I'll
certainly pay your hourly rate for
it.

ROGER returns to the table.

ROGER
What is it?

SERI
I am planning on going out to
dinner with Allen again tonight,
but maybe we'll stay in and you
could be host and chef? The dinner
we had last night was off the
charts, and I don't want the second
date to be at a cheesy dive bar.
Can you help me make this special,
or is it not in the scope of your
work?

ROGER
Sure. We do all sorts of things as
PA's, and I'm available, so I'm up
for the challenge. Plus, I
certainly can use the money.

SERI
Fantastic.

ROGER
Any special requests for you and
the birdman?

SERI
Just make sure we have plenty of
wine in case things go south in a
hurry.

SERI grabs the phone, dials, and holds the receiver to her
ear.

SERI (CONT'D)
Stupid voicemail. This is Seri.
Call me when you can. Bye!

Moments later, the PHONE RINGS.

SERI (CONT'D)
This is Seri... oh, hey Allen.
Listen, I was thinking instead of
going out tonight, we could have
dinner over here.

SERI (CONT'D)

Cool. No, you don't have to bring anything.

(pause)

Okay, see you at 6:30. Bye.

ROGER

I'd better get going. I need to shine my cufflinks and wash my butler uniform before this evening.

SERI

You have a butler uniform?

ROGER shuffles over to the front door.

ROGER

No, but you'd like to believe that, wouldn't you?

SERI

I wouldn't, but a friend of mine would.

SERI and ROGER exchange a brief smile as he closes the door.

INT. SERI'S HOUSE - EVENING

ROGER wears a pinstripe vest and pant set underneath a white apron. He hovers over the stove, stirring a large pot.

SERI(O.S.)

I can't believe it. I've been getting ready for almost 90 minutes. You'd think the Queen of England was coming over to visit.

ROGER

(to himself)

I hope Her Majesty likes veal scaloppini.

SERI starts down the hallway.

SERI

Finally, my hair gave up the fight and decided to cooperate. Roger, do you think I...

Stopping mid-sentence, SERI is in awe of the romantic setting ROGER has created. Candles adorn the fireplace and rest atop the white linen bedecking the dining room table. The lights are dim.

SERI (CONT'D)
 Oy my God. The place looks
 fantastic.

There is a KNOCK AT THE DOOR, which SERI responds to. SERI and ALLEN share a brief hug. ROGER extends his hand.

ROGER
 My name is Roger and I am your
 guest experience manager this
 evening.

ALLEN
 Allen. Nice to meet you.

ALLEN shakes ROGER'S hand as he looks him up and down.

ROGER
 May I take your coat?

ALLEN
 Yes, thank you.

As ALLEN hands ROGER his coat, his phone falls to the floor unnoticed.

ALLEN and SERI sit on the couch. ALLEN looks over his shoulder at ROGER.

ALLEN (CONT'D)
 Am I supposed to give that guy a
 tip?

SERI
 Just imagine that he is not even
 here. How did your day go?

ALLEN
 For the most part, it was same ol',
 same ol'. Although... let me tell
 you an interesting story.

MONTAGE - EVENING OF FUN #2

- Couchside - Roger delivers wine and hors d' oeuvres.
- Tableside - Elliot and Seri conversing and smiling.
- Tableside - Roger refilling their wine glasses.
- Tableside - Roger serving chocolate mousse. END MONTAGE

ROGER is in the kitchen, while ALLEN and SERI remain at the table.

ALLEN

Dinner was tremendous. My taste buds feel like they just spent the evening at Disneyland.

SERI

Agreed. It was amazing. If I could cook like that, I'd open my own restaurant.

ALLEN

You don't eat like this every evening, do you?

SERI

Well, I do have a chef that visits me a couple of times a week? But this seemed like a special occasion for me, so I thought Roger could help us out.

ALLEN

You have another Chef?

SERI

Yeah, Mr. Boy-ar-Dee. Have you ever heard of him?

ROGER laughs off-screen.

ALLEN

If you'll excuse me for a moment...

ROGER

(interrupting, O.S.)
Down the hall, left, and left again.

ALLEN

Thank you.

ALLEN disappears. A SOFT BUZZING can be heard.

ROGER (O.S.)

Do you hear that?

SERI

Hear what?

ROGER (O.S.)
That soft noise. There it goes
again.

ROGER sleuths about, and discovers the PHONE VIBRATING
against the baseboard.

ROGER (CONT'D)
Ahhh, we have our culprit.

ROGER picks up the pager and reads the screen: "SNUGGLE
BUNNY".

ROGER (CONT'D)
(in a sorrowful tone)
And, we have another culprit.

ROGER hands the phone to SERI, her smile vanishing instantly
as she checks out the screen.

SERI
Cheating bastard.

ALLEN saunters down the hallway, stopping upon seeing ROGER
holding his coat and SERI holding his phone.

ALLEN
What is going on here? And why do
you have my phone in your hand?

SERI
It was on vibrate and it went off
while you were in the bathroom.
E.T. called. Please phone home.

ALLEN drops his eyes to the floor and approaches ROGER and
SERI.

ALLEN
I'm very sorry about this. She's...

SERI
(interrupting)
Don't say anything else. Just
leave.

ALLEN puts on his coat and opens the door.

SERI (CONT'D)
By the way, the Mockingbird...
there is a low-tech version of it
called the mirror.
(pause)
Don't ever call on my store again.

EXT. SERI'S HOUSE - MORNING

SERI comes out the front door en route to work, dressed in wool slacks and a dark blouse, and pauses upon seeing ROGER washing her vehicle in the driveway.

ROGER

Good morning. Looks like you're dressed for work. Maybe you should take the day off after last night's incident?

SERI

Yeah... incident. Indeed, I do set my own hours and work whenever I want to, but feel like I am needed at the store more often than not. Comes with the territory, you know.

ROGER

I'll be finished here in a couple of minutes and then you can head off in your sparkling clean ride.

SERI

How about you? Do you ever take the day off?

ROGER

Today is my day off. I thought you might need a bit of a pick-me-up after last night, and decided to start off my day by doing a little something extra for you.

SERI

You didn't have to do that.

ROGER

Maybe I didn't mean to clean your car? Maybe it was an accident, like this...

ROGER squirts SERI with the hose. SERI yelps as she runs for the soap bucket and grabs the sponge.

SERI

Accidents are terrible, aren't they?

SERI pegs ROGER squarely in the chest with the soapy sponge.

SERI (CONT'D)

Oooops.

ROGER

A word of advice... never bring a
knife to a gun fight.

ROGER gets a bead on SERI with the hose, squirting her as she
retreats.

SERI

Stop... stop.... no, stop.

ROGER

I'll only stop if you agree to
spend the day with me.

SERI

Okay, I surrender. I'll take the
day off.

ROGER stops spraying her.

ROGER

Before you go in to dry yourself
off, I thought you might check the
interior to make sure that I
cleaned it well enough.

SERI

I don't need to do that. I'm sure
you did a thorough job.

ROGER

Okay, I admit it. I think I may
have ripped the passenger seat.

SERI, soaking wet, approaches the car.

SERI

Those are the best faux leather
seats money can buy. I assume you
have insurance?

SERI looks in the car window. A picnic basket and blanket
rest in the passenger seat, and a cooler is on the passenger
floor.

An ear-to-ear grin overtakes SERI'S mouth.

SERI (CONT'D)

I didn't know making the customer
feel special was part of the Mighty
Tidy package.

ROGER flashes a smile in return.

ROGER
Today only, its free of charge.

EXT. RIVERSIDE PICNIC - DAY

SERI and ROGER sit on a blanket on the bank of a slow-moving river, each holding a glass of white wine. HODGES rests quietly to their side, his water dish nearby.

SERI
This was really just what the doctor ordered. Thanks for mending my ego. Hodges and I have enjoyed it immensely.

ROGER
Me too. I generally don't plan to spend my spare days with my clients.

SERI
So you've gone on picnics with clients before?

ROGER
No. This is truly a first. Not even sure why I decided to set this up... just a spur of the moment thought when I woke up this morning, and I went with it.

SERI
Roger, have you ever been married?

ROGER
Nope. Sure haven't. How about you?

SERI
Me neither. But I'd like to someday. At least, I think I'd like to.

ROGER
Do you ever wonder why you aren't already married? Or doesn't it cross your mind?

SERI
I think I give too much of myself to my job. I think I may come across as a little bossy that may be hard to live with day to day.

(MORE)

SERI (CONT'D)

How about you? Gosh, you seem like you might be a pretty good catch.

ROGER

I'm so embarrassed.

SERI

Sorry about that. I shouldn't have said that.

ROGER

It's okay. I think I may have an issue with commitment. Thinking that a decision, once made, will last an entire lifetime. It's kind of disturbing.

SERI pours more wine into their glasses, raising her glass.

SERI

To overcoming your fear of commitment.

ROGER

To overcoming your obsessive work ethic and bossy personality.

They clang their glasses together in toast. SERI takes a sip and spills down her blouse.

SERI

Fiddlesticks!

ROGER

(mockingly)

Fiddlesticks? Did you say fiddlesticks?

SERI

Yes, I said fiddlesticks. Ever heard that phrase before?

ROGER

Not from somebody under 70. Wow... fiddlesticks.

SERI

Could you pass me a napkin, Sonny, before this wine seeps through to my girdle?

Their eyes lock momentarily, then hearty laughter breaks out.

INT. SERI'S CAR - AFTERNOON

SERI and ROGER ride down the freeway. HODGES sits in the back seat, next to the picnic basket and cooler.

SERI

I'd better not get pulled over for anything. My shirt smells like a brewery.

ROGER

Just be glad it wasn't on your back, or your beautiful, faux leather might...

SERI

(interrupting) Wise ass.

SERI'S cell phone RINGS.

INTERCUT - SERI'S CAR / TRINA'S CAR

SERI

Hey, Trina.

SERI places the call on speakerphone.

TRINA

I tried the pet store, but they said you weren't in. When I found out you weren't at work, I almost called the funeral parlor to see if you were there, but thought I'd take a chance and see if you were still alive first.

SERI

Very funny. What's up?

TRINA

Not much. Hey, weren't you going to see what's his face this weekend? That guy from the store.

SERI glances at ROGER.

SERI

I had a change of heart. Cheating douchebags don't really do it for me.

TRINA

Yikes! That's a bummer. I was going to see if you two wanted to come over Wednesday evening. X is barbecuing ribs and salmon.

SERI

Hey. Don't take away my invitation. That still gives me a couple of days to find somebody to bring over.

TRINA

Okay. Hey- your luck is bound to change sooner or later. I'm sure mister wonderful is probably right under your nose.

(pause)

See ya Wednesday.

END INTERCUT

SERI turns off the cell phone.

SERI

The only thing under my nose is the odor of wine. My breath does not smell delicious.

ROGER

Did she say X?

SERI

Yes, it's her longtime serious boyfriend. As a kid, he used to say 'excellent' almost incessantly. His friends teased him about it, and gave him that nickname, and then when he came into his own, they stopped, but the moniker stood.

ROGER

What's he do for a living?

SERI

He runs a couple of local car dealerships, which are quite successful. He has a great house with a pool and a breathtaking view.

ROGER

Well count me in.

SERI

For what?

ROGER

For the barbecue. You were going to ask me, weren't you?

SERI

I thought you might have to work.

ROGER gently squeezes SERI'S shoulder.

ROGER

I'm gonna call in sick. My client is always at her pet store, and will never know the difference.

INT. LIVELY SPORTS BAR - EVENING

ROGER and his best friend, DENNIS, a broad-shouldered, athletically built stud, throw darts while each enjoys a schooner of beer.

DENNIS

One of these days, you may actually beat me in a game of darts. But today is not that day.

ROGER

You're one cocky bastard.

DENNIS

I know. But the chicks did it.

ROGER

And I never have figured out why.

DENNIS

Let me see if I understand the story. You're assigned a new client, Sherry...

ROGER

(interrupting) Seri.

DENNIS

Right. Seri. And she goes on a couple of dates and they both fail. So you try to be a nice guy, just 'cuz, and you go on a picnic with her. And now you're going to a barbecue?

ROGER

I feel some sort of chemistry. Some sort of, oh, I don't know... connection.

DENNIS

I get connected every weekend with a different girl. Sometimes twice a weekend.

ROGER

Sooner or later, Dennis, one of those plastic dolls is gonna file a palimony suit.

DENNIS

Very funny. I'm just telling you, Roger, that I have known you forever and that when it comes time to get serious, you never seem to get beyond that. That maybe getting all ga-ga over a girl isn't in your best interest.

ROGER

I don't control my feelings, Dennis. Everything happens for a reason, and I don't interfere with it.

DENNIS

Well don't interfere with me now, as my love radar is now on Defcon 5. Excuse me.

DENNIS sets his drink on the table as he struts toward his prey.

A HOT BRUNETTE at the next table turns to ROGER.

HOT BRUNETTE

I couldn't help but overhearing your conversation. He seems like a real ass.

ROGER

He only seems that way. Once you get to know him, then you learn it's a fact.

EXT. TRINA AND X'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

TRINA, SERI, X, and ROGER lounge by the pool, drinks and towels at the base of their chairs. The view from the edge of the property, demarcated by a river rock wall, is stunning and unobstructed from their vantage point.

ROGER

How do you all know each other?

TRINA

I'll take the credit. I'm the common link. People are attracted to me like senior citizens are to a cruise ship buffet.

SERI

And oh, so modest.

TRINA

Yeah, well! Ok, here is the real scoop. As a business broker, I had a pet store listing many years ago for a run-down business named, simply, Great Pet Store.

SERI

Caution- Creative genius at work. They must have pulled all-nighters coming up with that name.

TRINA

As you can tell from the name, it was doomed to fail. But the location was too good to pass up, so I took it on as a listing. In order to attract a tenant, the landlord offered longer terms than a standard lease. And that's how I met Seri.

X

We, well, we pretty much met the same way. I was working at a car dealership, and Trina came in looking at cars. During the test drive, she told me I could sell a bikini to a penguin, and I shared with her my dream of owning a dealership. She knows that someday, that dream will come true, and I want her to be by my side when it happens.

ROGER

Interesting how people are drawn together by fate.

X

Hey, Roger. I need to start grilling. Wanna help me fire that bad boy up?

ROGER

Sure. Doesn't take a rocket scientist to know that God invented the true man trap when he invented the barbecue. Grease, fire, and beer. A golden trifecta.

X

I'm starting to like you already.

X and ROGER leave the poolside. TRINA moves closer to SERI.

TRINA

This guy seems like he might actually have a personality. And what a looker. Yummers!

SERI

He's quite humble and rather well mannered. I'm enjoying getting to know him. I just hope that skeletons don't fly out of the closet like with the last two guys.

TRINA

Third times a charm. I feel it.

SERI

Don't get my hopes up, Trina. I'm feeling a bit vulnerable. Seems like decent guys are few and far between.

TRINA

Most men are pigs. If This one doesn't work out, maybe it is time to throw in the towel and you can become a nun?

SERI

Great idea, but black is just not my color.

X (O.S.)

Just about time to eat, girls.

TRINA

For your sake, I hope this guy works out. Dare I say it again... yummers!

EXT. POOLSIDE - AFTER DINNER

Bamboo torches illuminate the pool and patio. The moon glistens in the clear night sky.

X

I'm glad you guys came over. We have a monster four-day sale starting at the dealership tomorrow, so I'm going to turn in.

TRINA

I think I'll call it a night myself. The sandman is calling my name.

X and TRINA stand. SERI and ROGER start to get out of their chairs.

TRINA (CONT'D)

No, please. Stay and finish your bottle of wine. Stay as long as you'd like.

SERI

Are you sure? We'd hate to impose.

X

It's no problem, really. Good night.

TRINA and X hold hands as they walk toward the house.

ROGER

This is the life, I must say. Truly, this is the life.

SERI

Speaking of which, what do you really want to do with yours, if I may ask?

ROGER

Do you remember my comment about my furniture hobby?

SERI

Yes.

ROGER

I'd like to run with that and go full-time. If I ever get the opportunity, I want to throw the dice, pursue my passion, and see if I can make a living at it.

SERI

Would you show me some of your work?

ROGER

Unless you are really in to wood furniture, which not that many people are, it's not that interesting.

SERI

Please. I'd love to see some.

ROGER

Maybe one of these days.

ELEVATED SHOUTING comes from inside the house.

SERI

I think that we might wish to slip away quietly.

ROGER

Good idea.

EXT. SHAMANS COFFEE HUT - DAY

TRINA and SERI exit the coffee shop, holding steaming cups of coffee.

TRINA

We are glad that you two had a good time. The sparks between the two of you were visible to the naked eye.

SERI

Can I ask you something, girlfriend to girlfriend?

TRINA

Sure. What is it?

SERI

We heard a little yelling in there and I am just dying to know what all the commotion was about.

TRINA

X was upset with me, because I'd learned of a car dealership that is coming up for sale and didn't tell him about it before he found out.

SERI

So what's the big deal?

TRINA

This dealership is out of town. This may be his golden opportunity... the chance of a lifetime. But if he were to buy it, he'd pack up and move and I'd have a tough decision to make.

SERI

Ohhh. No wonder you didn't tell him.

TRINA

I feel badly that I didn't tell him, but I can't just pack up my life and leave everything behind for a guy. I mean, am I wrong here?

SERI

Only you can answer that, Trina. But maybe you won't be faced with making that choice.

TRINA

Would you give up this place?

TRINA exaggerates as she outlines her body with her hands.

TRINA (CONT'D)

And this smokin' hot filly? He'd be a fool to leave this. Oops, time slipped right by. I gotta run.

SERI

See ya later, Seabiscuit!

INT. ROGER'S APARTMENT - DAY

The tidy dwelling is sparsely furnished with various wooden furniture pieces. Two beautiful wooden clocks decorate the walls.

SERI knocks on the door. ROGER opens it.

ROGER

Glad to see it is you and not some zany hee-haw trying to recruit me into their religion.

ROGER and SERI enter the apartment and sit on the couch.

SERI

This is a great apartment you have. It has a certain Spartan touch, and the end tables are fantastic.

ROGER

Thanks. I kind of like it myself. So, how did you get my address?

SERI

I called Heidi and asked for it.

ROGER

What'd you say to make them give that to you? I'm stalking my personal assistant...

SERI

Nope, just that I had a surprise for you.

ROGER

And what is it?

SERI stands and extends her arms out like a game show model.

SERI

Me.

ROGER chortles.

SERI (CONT'D)

Show me where your wood working stuff is.

ROGER

Are you really sure you care to see it?

SERI

Would I have asked if I didn't?

ROGER

Ok. You're the boss. Let's take the tour. But I warn you...

(MORE)

ROGER (CONT'D)
keep your hands and head inside the
tram at all times and photography
is strictly forbidden.

EXT. STREET BLOCK - DAY

ROGER and SERI stroll down the sidewalk.

ROGER
Maybe after I amaze you with my
handiwork, we can grab lunch or
something?

SERI
I can't, Roger. I'm really busy
today, and the store needs me.

ROGER
That's okay. There is a good pickup
game of hoops that I was planning
to drop in on.

ROGER and SERI enter an iron gate.

EXT. ROGER'S SHOP - DAY

ROGER opens his storage unit, revealing a crowded bevy of
furniture, wood, and shop tools. An orderly workbench runs the
length of the back wall.

SERI
Wow. You made all of these? They
are beautiful.

ROGER
You should have seen my early
pieces. Thrift stores would have
even turned them down as donations.
They were awful!

SERI
These pieces are fabulous. What is
that machine?

ROGER
That is the Sawminator 3000. It is
really the secret sauce that goes
in to all of my work, and is my
most prized possession.

SERI

More like awesome sauce! Not like I hang around in wood shops or anything, but I've never seen one of those before.

ROGER

To the best of my knowledge, I am the only person in the city that has one, so I have to order my parts online from the manufacturer. They're very pricey, and that has turned out to be one of my life choices. Instead of a bank account, I have the Sawminator 3000.

(sarcastically)

My parents are so proud.

SERI looks at her phone.

SERI

It's the store calling. I only had time to swing by for a few moments on my way to work, and now I'm paying the price.

SERI starts walking away.

ROGER

So the furniture was all you came by to see?

SERI looks over her shoulder.

SERI

You'll have to figure that out on your own. Later!

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD PARK - DAY

ROGER dribbles a basketball past DENNIS, shoots, and misses. DENNIS gets the rebound and sinks a medium range shot.

DENNIS

Bingo! Three games to one. NBA, here I come.

ROGER

I think all of the towel boy positions are already filled, but I wish you luck with that.

ROGER and DENNIS sit on a nearby bench, sipping their sports drinks. DENNIS waves his hand in front of ROGER'S face.

DENNIS

Anybody home? Your mind seems to be off in the clouds.

ROGER

I'm attracted to my client, Dennis. And when has that ever been a good idea? Ever in the history of the earth? I really, really like her and we haven't even known each other very long.

DENNIS

How serious are you?

ROGER

She's all I ever think about. Dennis, I don't want to mess this one up. I feel it. I feel like I could, you know, commit.

DENNIS

Have you told her how you feel?

ROGER

No.

DENNIS

Then what is holding you back, brother?

ROGER

She's too busy with her work. Her store is successful, and she loves it. She gives it her all... heart and soul.

DENNIS

You'd better straighten that out right now. You can't play second fiddle to anybody or anything. Except me.

ROGER grabs the basketball from the bench.

ROGER

Bring it on, towel boy, bring it on.

INT. SERI'S HOUSE - NIGHT

HODGES meets SERI at the door, and they walk into the kitchen. SERI opens the cupboard, retrieving a can of dog food, and presses the messages button on the answering machine. She notices a note on the refrigerator/

SERI

(reading the note aloud)

Hey. I stopped by earlier, hoping to surprise you, but you weren't in. Did a few chores, played with Hodges, and then headed out. Dinner is ready and in the fridge.

SERI opens the refrigerator. Take-out Chinese containers and two fortune cookies are prominently centered on the top shelf. She removes them.

A text arrives from TRINA.

SERI (CONT'D)

(reading the text)

Getting up early to go to Shaman's for a mocha to start my Sunday off right. 7:30. Meet me or die. Just kidding.

SERI (CONT'D)

(to Hodges)

Geez, Hodges... one day I'm a social mole, and all of a sudden I'm Miss Popularity. And Miss Popularity now has a hot date with Chinese food. Let's eat!

INT. SHAMAN'S COFFEE HUT - MORNING

SERI approaches a table, where TRINA is sitting, reading a magazine. TRINA looks up and smiles.

TRINA

Hey. Glad you could make it.

SERI takes off her coat and sits down.

SERI

Meet me or die?

TRINA

I was trying to be funny.

SERI

Being a comedian is not in your future. If I were you, I'd focus on keeping your day job.

TRINA

How's Roger?

SERI

He's interesting. Did I tell you he does woodworking? I went to his shop yesterday morning and he showed me some of his creations

TRINA

Is he any good at it, or just a hack?

SERI

He's great at it. He has this Sawminator 3000 machine. I guess it is the only one in the entire city, and he says it is invaluable in terms of contributing to his success.

TRINA

The Sawminator 3000. That name was obviously created by a man with an itty-bitty...

SERI

(interrupting)

Saw?

BOTH laugh.

TRINA

Let me ask you something. Do you think maybe you two are meant to be? That a future together is in the cards?

SERI

What are you talking about?

TRINA

C'mon, Seri. Can't you see the big billboard with flashing neon lights? Fate is bringing you two together. You responded to an advertisement for a cleaning service, and ended up meeting this terrific guy.

SERI

It is a bit strange, yes. So far, it isn't anything serious, as we're just a couple of people that enjoy spending time together. Really, I don't hardly know the guy, and I don't think he like the idea of a serious relationship.

TRINA

Big, flashing billboard Seri. Big!

SERI

How is X?

TRINA

He's being a bitter, whiney baby about me not telling him about that other dealership. It's still for sale, and I think he is seriously considering making an offer on it. It's stressing me out.

SERI

Don't let it worry you too much. Things happen for a reason.

SERI stands and puts on her coat.

TRINA

You're probably right. Have fun at the Jungle with all your fury friends.

SERI

I always do, Trina, I always do.

INT. SERI'S JUNGLE/BACK OFFICE- DAY

SERI glances at the clock, which reads 3:45. SERI takes her phone from her back pocket and dials.

INTERCUT - BACK OFFICE / ROGER'S SHOP

ROGER

Hello?

SERI

Hey. What are you up to?

ROGER

Just tinkering around in the shop.
How about you?

SERI

Tinkering? Okay, Grandpa! I'm
still here at work. Did you happen
to work today?

ROGER

I fertilized your back yard today
and took some of those old paint
cans to the hazardous collection
mobile. Also signed up to rent a
tiller, and picked up a spare part
for your lawn mower which needs
replaced.

SERI

Thanks. Um, sorry for the short
notice, but would you like to come
over for dinner tonight?

ROGER

Yes, that sounds like a good idea.
However, before I say yes, I have a
question.

SERI

What's that?

ROGER

Who's cooking?

SERI

You won't even have to lift a
finger. 7:30 okay?

ROGER

Yeah. I can't stay too late though,
since I have to work tomorrow.

SERI

Cute. See you at 7:30

END INTERCUT

INT. SERI'S HOUSE - NIGHT

ROGER opens the door to SERI'S and enters. Lit candles
illuminate the otherwise dim apartment. A wine decanter rests
on an end table, between two previously filled goblets.

SERI leads ROGER into the living room, and they sit on the couch.

ROGER

Looks like you've really outdone yourself. Are you feeling your inner Martha Stewart?

SERI

No, but I did learn it from an old pro.

ROGER

Now don't go calling me old. My fragile ego can't take the body blows.

SERI

Who says I was even referring to you?

SERI laughs as she gets up off of the sofa.

SERI (CONT'D)

I will return with some appetizers.

ROGER (O.S.)

Seri, I'm kind of curious about something.

SERI

Go ahead.

ROGER (O.S.)

I've shared with you my dream, you know, about the furniture, and I was wondering... what is your dream? What do you want to do after the pet store?

SERI returns, placing a vegetable and cheese tray on the table as she resumes her position on the couch.

SERI

Frankly, Seri's Jungle is the realization of my dream. I've wanted to own a pet store ever since I was a little girl. I even used to play Pet Store with my Barbie dolls.

ROGER

So how did you get into the business?

SERI

My father became very ill, and one day he told me to write down three things that I wanted more than anything in the world on a piece of paper and give it to him the next day. So I took the piece of paper...

SERI'S eyes start to fill with tears.

SERI (CONT'D)

And read it to him.

ROGER

You don't have to finish the story.

SERI

It's okay. Okay. I'm ready. It said get married, own a pet store, and have my dad feel better. He said "In my heart, I know that two of those will happen." And then...

SERI weeps as ROGER puts his arms around her to console her. A tear rolls down ROGER'S cheek.

INT. SERI'S HOUSE - A LITTLE LATER

ROGER and SERI finish their last couple of bites at the dinner table.

ROGER

Dinner was an absolute treat. Maybe you should come to work for Heidi?

SERI

I'm glad you liked it. It was a new recipe and I thought it turned out as a B+ or an A-. Listen, I'm sorry about losing my composure earlier.

ROGER

Please don't apologize. That was a very touching story, and I appreciate you sharing a bit of yourself with me. You gave me a little glimpse into that head and heart of yours.

SERI

Let's do something fun. Let's play a game. I'm going to go pick one out.

SERI takes the dishes to the kitchen and disappears down the hallway.

ROGER

I'm not very good at games, but I like to play Battleship, and Uno, but I'm horrible at Operation. The thought of yanking bones out of a plastic patient with a red nose is disturbing

SERI returns holding an unopened Twister game.

SERI

I was thinking more along the lines of this.

ROGER

Oh my.

ROGER and SERI play Twister, laughing and giggling as THEY collapse onto the floor. THEY embrace. HODGES runs over and licks their faces.

SERI

(whispering)

Do you wanna stay the night?

ROGER gazes into SERI'S eyes.

ROGER

Do you even need to ask?

INT. SERI'S HOUSE - MORNING

ROGER stirs and comes to in a queen-sized bed and realizes where he is. HODGES approaches, wagging his tail, sniffs ROGER'S face, and turns away.

ROGER

You can't be serious! My breath isn't even half as bad as yours!

ROGER walks into the kitchen and reads a note on the refrigerator.

ROGER (CONT'D)

(reading aloud)

Good morning, sunshine. I want you to know that I had a superb time last night. You're wonderful company... but not much of a Twister player. I'll see you later. P.S. Maybe next time we'll play Uno, so you can stand a chance.

ROGER (CONT'D)

Between you and I, Hodges, I let her win. Always let your boss win, Hodges. Tidy Heidi rule #2.

INT. ROGER'S SHOP - DAY

DENNIS straddles his 15-speed bicycle just outside of Roger's shop, as ROGER straightens his work bench.

DENNIS

You really should come riding with me today, even if only for an hour or so.

ROGER

I can't. I have to work for a while today, and then tonight I'm going to invite Seri over for dinner.

DENNIS

(slapping his chest)

Bros, baby, bros! I understand, but don't forget about me. Next thing you know, you'll probably make her something here in the shop.

ROGER

That's a brilliant idea. Hey- did you like how it felt?

DENNIS

What's that?

ROGER

The brilliant idea. Your first time wasn't it?

DENNIS

You're whipped. I can see it in your eyes.

ROGER
Is that a crime?

DENNIS
To the D-man, it's a misdemeanor
punishable by death.

ROGER shakes his head in disbelief.

ROGER
Okay, I give. When did you become
the D-man?

DENNIS
The ladies have always called me
that. They know what the D stands
for.

ROGER
Dumb ass? Dynamite.

DENNIS
(mocking AC/DC song
"T.N.T.")
'Cuz I'm T.N.T. I'm dy-no-mite.

ROGER
You're a true piece of work,
Dennis.

ROGER pulls down the metal door to the storage unit.

DENNIS
(muffled voice)
Power load... T.N.T., watch me
exploooode.

INT. ROGER'S APARTMENT - EVENING

ROGER answers the door, and SERI and HODGES enter.

SERI
Notice the time. 6:45. Exactly as
written on the invitation.

ROGER
Did you like my invitation? I'm a
real poet laureate.

SERI
Let me see: Dinner at Roger's, I
hope you'll arrive. Specifically
how about 6:45?

(MORE)

SERI (CONT'D)

Before, during and after dinner I'd like to spend, an evening with you and with man's best friend.

ROGER

You memorized it?

SERI

It wasn't exactly a novel. By the way, nobody has ever invited my dog along on a date. You must really like him.

ROGER

Yeah, and it gives you one less excuse to go home.

SERI sits on the sofa, as ROGER uncorks a bottle of wine, pours a glass for each, and sits closely next to SERI.

SERI

Thank you.

ROGER

Dinner is in about 30 minutes or so.

SERI

In the meantime, tell me. What would be the perfect woman for you to marry, so that I can keep my eyes out for you in case I see one.

ROGER

Well, hmmm. Pondering. Pondering. Pondering. I guess she'd have to be somebody who is smart, and funny, and, well, share a lot of the same qualities you possess.

SERI

Really?

ROGER

Yeah. Most importantly, she'd have to put marriage above everything else including job, money... above everything.

SERI

What if she's spontaneous, like this?

SERI guzzles her wine.

ROGER
Oh yeah?! Watch this!

ROGER guzzles his wine.

SERI
So, would you ask her if you found
the perfect person?

ROGER
Probably. Isn't it...

SERI'S CELL PHONE RINGS.

SERI
(into phone)
This is Seri. Have you put her in a
separate cage? Did you give her a
bath? Still? Okay, I'll be down.

SERI hangs up.

ROGER
Problems at the Jungle?

SERI
Apparently a Pomeranian has been
chewing it's own fur for the last
several hours and is bleeding. His
sibling sold yesterday, so it may
be separation anxiety.

ROGER
So you have to go?

SERI
I'm sorry. I really am. I'm just
going to leave Hodges here and you
can bring him when you come to work
tomorrow.

SERI kisses ROGER on the cheek and leaves.

ROGER looks at HODGES, and pulls a Twister box out from under
the couch.

ROGER
Okay, Hodges, best of five?

INT. SHAMAN'S COFFEE HUT - DAY

TRINA writes in her daily planner while SERI flips through a pet industry brochure.

TRINA

So based upon what he said, you think he wouldn't be able to pull the trigger?

SERI

I don't know. He seems very tentative about getting close to somebody. I think something is holding him back.

TRINA

Maybe it's the fact that he works for you?

SERI

He could always quit. It's too early in the morning to think about deep feelings like this. Say, how is X?

TRINA

I'm still having a hard time believing this, but he is currently negotiating with the out-of-town dealership.

SERI

What? Are you serious?

TRINA

Unfortunately, yes. If they reach an agreement, he'll be able to just acquire the inventory, the lease, and be up and running on day one. With his sales record, he won't have any trouble getting financing and being profitable right out of the chute.

SERI

Where does that leave the two of you?

TRINA

Perhaps in separate cities. I don't know what to think, Seri. It makes my stomach hurt to think about, which makes me have to pee.

(MORE)

TRINA (CONT'D)

Do you know how many time's I've
peed in the past few weeks?

SERI hoists her oversized coffee mug to cover her look of
disgust.

SERI

Eighty times? Two hundred times?
Nine thousand times?

TRINA clangs her mug against SERI'S.

TRINA

You're getting warmer. I just sent
you a couple of pictures of you and
Roger from the barbecue.

SERI checks her phone, glancing at the photos.

SERI

Hey, even I took a good picture for
once.

TRINA

In the other thirty-one, you looked
like shit.

SERI

Hey!

INT. SCULLY'S CROSSTOWN PAWN - DAY

ROGER enters as an electronic chime alerts the proprietor of
a customer.

SCULLY, an obese man who sweats profusely, rises from his
stool and looks up from the television playing on the
counter.

SCULLY

Hey, Roger.

ROGER

Hey, Scully.

SCULLY

Can I help you find something, or
just window shopping as usual?

ROGER

Just browsing, as usual.

ROGER walks over to the power tools section. A spit-polished table saw prominently stands out.

ROGER (CONT'D)
How much for this?

SCULLY
Eleven large.

ROGER points to a heavily-worn belt sander.

ROGER
How 'bout this?

SCULLY
Two and a half. Listen, I don't mind you coming in every week or so, but are you ever gonna spend any money in here? All you ever do is come in and ogle my tools.

ROGER
I keep hoping to find a hidden treasure.

SCULLY
Power tools are the hottest commodity I can get my hands on. I charge premium prices, but I pay premium dollars for them. But, to show you I've got a big heart, I'll give you a bargain on anything leaning against that far wall. Half off, today only.

SCULLY points to a wall across the store.

ROGER saunters over to peruse the items- old bear traps, a moose head, a broken bicycle, a rusted-out wheelbarrow, and a Donny Osmond record.

ROGER
Maybe some other time. Thanks.

The electronic chime plays again as ROGER exits the store.

INT. SERI'S JUNGLE - DAY

SERI faces the aquarium supply shelves. A gentleman wearing a t-shirt with a picture of a banana taps SERI on her shoulder.

BANANA TEE CUSTOMER
Excuse me.

SERI

Can I help you find something?

BANANA TEE CUSTOMER

I'm looking for pooper scoopers.
Shit snaggers. Crap catchers. Turd
tongs. Dook...

SERI

(interrupting)

Yeah, I get it. I can show you
where they are. How big is your
dog?

BANANA TEE CUSTOMER

It's not for my dog. It's for her.

THE CUSTOMER points down the aisle to a young boy holding a
pot-bellied pig in his arms.

SERI

She's pretty cute. Did you just buy
her?

BANANA TEE CUSTOMER

My boy did. He bought her on
Facebook Marketplace.

SERI

Well, the scoopers are right there.
And thanks for coming in.

BANANA TEE CUSTOMER

I'll see you next week when the
goat auction ends on eBay.

As the BANANA T-SHIRT CUSTOMER leaves with his SON and POT-
BELLIED PIG, a WOMAN in an orange blazer and fedora
approaches.

FEDORA WOMAN

Can you tell me where I can find
Seri Merle?

SERI

I'm Seri Merle.

FEDORA WOMAN

I'm Nancy from Echelon Property
Management. Can we use your office
for a second?

SERI

Listen, I'm really busy. Can't you come back another time?

FEDORA WOMAN

No. I'll just tell you out here. Your lease is up and the owners are considering not renewing your lease.

SERI

What?

FEDORA WOMAN

They want you to present to them a five-year business plan, complete with leasehold improvements. It is due a week from Friday.

SERI

You've got to be kidding me? I've built Seri's Jungle from a hole in the ground into the successful business it is today.

FEDORA WOMAN

Then it shouldn't be any problem developing a presentable, comprehensive plan. Good day, Miss Merle.

The WOMAN in the fedora arrogantly trots away.

SERI marches to the front counter, grabs her purse, and storms out in a huff.

EXT. SERI'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

ROGER is repairing a lawnmower as SERI pulls up.

SERI

Hi. More tinkering, I see. How'd your day go?

ROGER

It just got better. I'm glad to see you.

SERI

I'm glad to see you to. Roger, I need to talk to you about something. Can you come inside for a minute or two?

ROGER

Sure. There's something I would like to talk to you about as well.

SERI

Really?

ROGER

I'll meet you inside as soon as I get these boots off.

INT. SERI'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

SERI paces near the fireplace as ROGER enters the living room.

ROGER

Wow. You really look out of sorts.

SERI

Oh, I'll be okay. I'm just rattled.

ROGER

So what's bothering you? Did I do something wrong?

SERI

No. It isn't you at all. I had some bad news delivered to me at the store by this woman in this hideous orange blazer and a fedora, if you can believe that.

ROGER

I can't! Fedoras should only be worn with purple blazers.

SERI

Seriously, my lease is set to expire and the building owners want me to prepare a business plan for them as a condition of considering renewal of my lease.

ROGER

That doesn't sound particularly bad.

SERI

I know. It's not really all that bad. It just makes me very nervous that they aren't automatically renewing my lease.

ROGER
Does your current lease have a
renewal clause?

SERI
It does... but it's subject to
their conditions.

ROGER hugs SERI, takes her hand, and THEY sit on the couch.

ROGER
You'll do fine. Just take some time
to think about your plan, begin to
write it, and the next thing you
now you'll be all set.

SERI
That's the problem. There isn't any
time. I have until next Friday to
deliver the plan.

ROGER
Wow. That's tight. But I believe in
you. Is there anything I can do to
help?

SERI
Thanks for the offer, but I'd
better tackle this one on my own.
Hey, didn't you say that you wanted
to talk to me about something?

ROGER
It's no biggie. Maybe later.

SERI
Maybe now. C'mon. Tell me.

ROGER
Very well.

ROGER stands and paces in front of the fireplace.

ROGER (CONT'D)
I'm not really sure how to say
this, but I don't think I can work
for you any longer.

SERI
What do you mean?

ROGER

I mean I don't feel right about taking money from you, because I'm starting to develop these feelings for you. I'm starting...

ROGER places a hand on SERI'S knee and gazes into her eyes.

ROGER (CONT'D)

I'm starting to fall in love with you.

SERI throws her arms around ROGER and they embrace.

SERI

I'm calling a dog-sitter. Let's get out of here for a while.

ROGER

What about the lawnmower?

SERI

If I'm no longer paying you, then what's the big deal? You can pretend to be a husband and get around to it next year.

EXT. LOUIES MINI-PUTT - AFTERNOON

SERI places her ball on the mat of the 16th hole and putts. The ball ricochets off of the windmill obstacle and ROGER retrieves it.

ROGER

If I'd have known I'd be chasing down all of these balls, I would have invited Hodges along.

SERI

I was much better at this when I was a kid.

ROGER

Have you ever thought about having kids?

SERI

I have, but I haven't decided if I'd make a good mother or not.

ROGER

Why is that?

SERI

Because of Seri's Jungle. It consumes so much of my energy, that I don't know whether or not I'd be able to devote enough of myself to kids, let alone to a husband.

ROGER lines up his putt on the 17th, takes a stroke, and sinks a hole-in-one.

SERI (CONT'D)

Ohhhhh, sure. Mr. PGA here making his fourth hole-in-one of the round.

ROGER

You can just call me Tiger.

SERI laughs.

SERI

Don't take this the wrong way, but I think of you as a man child. Wait. Does that sound as weird as I think? That I'm strongly attracted to a man child?

ROGER

I think you need either therapy or a stiff drink. Or maybe a slow, filthy blaze to take the edge off?

SERI

Some of the things you say just put me at ease. You'd be great with kids, I think.

ROGER

Having kids is a monster commitment. Some people say it's only for 18 years, but I consider it lifelong.

SERI

So you don't know whether or not you'd like to try to have them?

ROGER

Nope, sure don't. And I'm not going to even think about it right now.

SERI and ROGER play the 18th hole, and their ball disappears into a clown's nose.

ROGER (CONT'D)
But I know I'd like the trying
part.

SERI playfully backhands ROGER'S arm.

SERI
Take it easy, Tiger.

INT. GROCERY EMPORIUM - EVENING

ROGER pushes a half-full shopping cart, trailing SERI by a few steps.

SERI
This is one of those chores which
I've never enjoyed.

ROGER
I've always found it mentally
stimulating. Should I buy this?
Should I buy that? Look at what
that lady is buying, my God! She's
gonna burst her belt. In my mind,
what is there not to like about it?

SERI
People watching? Really?

ROGER
Let's do this together... I'll be
your mental guide. Take those two
young girls over there. Neither is
tall enough to reach the popcorn on
the top shelf, so they'll either
have to figure out how to get it
down or leave without it.

One of the YOUNG GIRLS scales the shelving like a monkey and
retrieves a bag of popcorn

ROGER (CONT'D)
Now if that isn't entertainment, I
don't know what is.

SERI
Not exactly prime time TV, Roger.
Look at all the junk food in here.
I've gained about 3 pounds just
walking down the aisle.

SERI points to products on the shelves.

SERI (CONT'D)
Poppycock. Cracker Jacks. Fiddle
Fiddle. Which of those should we
get?

ROGER
How about Fiddle Fiddle?

SERI
Why Fiddle Fiddle?

ROGER
Since you like to say fiddlesticks,
I thought you'd naturally like
Fiddle Fiddle.

SERI
You're never going to let me live
that down, are you?

ROGER
Not in this lifetime.

INT. ROGER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

SERI and ROGER put away groceries.

ROGER
Are you going to stay for dinner?

SERI
I can't. I have to work on that
stupid business plan. Tomorrow will
be here sooner than you know.

ROGER
It's okay. Maybe some other time
this week?

SERI
Roger, please don't take this the
wrong way. Maybe I shouldn't see
you this week? Since I'm no longer
paying you, you probably shouldn't
come around either.

ROGER
Aren't you taking this a little too
seriously?

SERI positions herself directly in front of ROGER and sees
the concern in his eyes.

SERI

I really need this business plan to be the best that it can be. Seri's Jungle is my life. I can't afford to lose it.

ROGER and SERI hug.

SERI opens her purse, snags her phone, and scrolls to the picture of her and ROGER.

SERI (CONT'D)

Here. Trina took this picture of us over at X's place. I think we look pretty good together.

ROGER smiles. SERI gently kisses ROGER and walks to the front door.

SERI (CONT'D)

See you soon, I hope.

ROGER

So do I, Seri, so do I.

SERI exits.

MONTAGE - TIME AWAY FROM EACH OTHER

-- Den - Seri working on her business plan.

-- Roger's Shop - Roger works precisely with a jigsaw.

-- Seri's Jungle - Seri working on the computer.

-- Tennis Court - Dennis and Roger playing tennis.

-- Bedroom - Seri sits in bed, working on the plan. She pauses to look at her nightstand, upon which was a frame with their picture.

-- Roger's Shop - Roger applies varnish to an item, sighs, and stares out the window of his shop.

END MONTAGE

INT. ROADSIDE TAVERN - NIGHT

ROGER and DENNIS sit at a bar littered with peanut shells.

ROGER

I haven't seen her in eons.

DENNIS

Don't you still work for her?

ROGER

Actually, Dennis, I'm unemployed. When Heidi found out that I voluntarily resigned from the account, she fired me.

DENNIS

Why didn't you just lie to her?

ROGER

If I knew she was going to can my ass, I would have. Not having a paycheck sucks. Anyway, it's been a long time since we've seen each other, so tonight will be really special.

DENNIS

Jesus. You're still head over heels, aren't you?

ROGER

I am. She may be the one.

DENNIS

Don't do it. I'm telling ya. Life's too long to spend with one woman.

ROGER

For you, a weekend is too long.

DENNIS

Amen to that. Wanna shoot some pool?

ROGER

I should probably go home and get ready for tonight. I need to change clothes and shower.

DENNIS stands up, shakes his head, and starts to walk away.

DENNIS

You're way past head over heels. Way past it. Just give me plenty of time in advance to plan the bachelor party.

DENNIS disappears into the bar crowd.

ROGER
(to himself)
Everyday is a bachelor party for
that guy!

INT. ROGER'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

ROGER takes off his coat, places his phone on the counter, and goes down the hall. He returns, checks his phone, and sees that he had a missed call

SERI
(over voice mail)
Hi. It's Seri. I really hate to do
this to you but I am going to have
to take a raincheck. I absolutely
have been looking forward to dinner
tonight, and more importantly,
seeing you. But I just can't. I
hope you understand. Good bye. Oh,
Hodges says hello and he misses you
too.

ROGER
So much for the clean clothes and
the shower.

EXT. SERI'S HOUSE - MORNING

ROGER walks to the front door, carrying a cup of coffee and a pastry bag.

ROGER knocks three times, and places his key in the lock.

ROGER
Hello? Are you still here? Seri?

HODGES prances down the hall.

ROGER (CONT'D)
Hi, Hodges! Is your mom still here?

ROGER pets HODGES as his tail wags.

ROGER (CONT'D)
No? How about you and I go for a
walk? Huh? A walk. Today is your
lucky day.

HODGES circles around at ROGERS feet.

ROGER (CONT'D)
And now it is my lucky day as well,
as I'm going to eat her pastry.

EXT. PARK PATH - MORNING

ROGER and HODGES walk through the park. A YOUNG BOY and his MOTHER approach.

YOUNG BOY
Can I pet your dog, Mister?

ROGER
Yes, his name is Hodges.

YOUNG BOY
He sure is pretty.

ROGER
Thanks. He likes you too.

YOUNG BOY
Is he yours?

ROGER
No, he belongs to my friend Seri.

YOUNG BOY
Why isn't she here?

ROGER
She is busy at work. Seems like
that's all she has time for.

YOUNG BOY
Do you wish she was here?

ROGER
Yes.

YOUNG BOY
I bet she wishes she was here, too,
if she had a choice. Being at the
park with friends is the best!

MOTHER
Okay, Spencer, time for us to go.
Say thank you, please.

YOUNG BOY
Thank you for letting me pet your
dog.

ROGER drops down to one knee to the boy's level.

ROGER
And thank you for opening my eyes.

INT. SCULLY'S CROSSTOWN PAWN - DAY

SCULLY and ROGER stand across from each other at the front counter.

SCULLY
Are you sure you want to do this?

ROGER
Yeah, I'm sure.

SCULLY
She's a real beauty, you know.

ROGER
I know. I've never seen another
just like her.

SCULLY
Deal?

ROGER
Deal.

SCULLY SHAKES ROGER'S HAND, TEARS A CHECK FROM A CHECKBOOK,
AND HANDS IT TO ROGER.

ROGER walks past the Sawminator.

ROGER
I'm going to miss you, old friend.

ROGER walks away, glancing over his shoulder a final time as
he exits.

INT. SERI'S JUNGLE / OFFICE - DAY

TRINA knocks, and enters the office, closing the door behind
her.

TRINA
Hey.

SERI

Hey. What brings you by for a surprise visit? Care to have a seat?

TRINA

No, I'm good. I came by to tell you X decided last night to buy that dealership and is heading over there today to sign a contract.

SERI

Oh dear. I'm sorry.

TRINA

I don't know what it is going to do to our relationship. I haven't even told him yet that I'm seriously considering staying put.

TRINA paces about.

TRINA (CONT'D)

(cont'd)

I mean, this is a major decision. I have a life here... my friends, my job. I even have two new leads today for listings.

SERI

Couldn't you do the same thing there that you do here?

TRINA

Of course. It's just a very difficult choice, Seri. I've always thought about having to make the choice between a man and a career, and thought I'd choose career.

TRINA wipes her partially moist eyes.

TRINA (CONT'D)

But I can't stand the thought of losing X. He's my soul mate. He's who I'm meant to be with. Do you get me?

SERI slowly looks to her left, then nods her head.

SERI

I get you.

TRINA

I'm sorry to dump on you. I'll let you get back to work. And be careful when you leave this office...

SERI

(interrupting)

Yeah, yeah. It's a jungle out there. Like I haven't heard that 1,000 times... today!

TRINA

See ya.

SERI

Good luck with your listings.

INT. INSIDE TRINA'S CAR - DAY

TRINA drives down the street, past the dealership where X works, and sees him smiling while working with a customer.

TRINA pulls in to a small mini-mart. A HAGGARD MAN in an army jacket comes out of the store, motioning for TRINA to roll down her window.

TRINA

Hi. I'm gonna run in and talk to the owner, Dale, so if you could just fill it up and clean the windshield, that would be great.

HAGGARD MAN

I'm Dale Wilsbury.

TRINA

Whoops. Sorry about that.

HAGGARD MAN

Me too. First impressions are hard to shake. And you seem like a bitch to me. Get your own damn gas.

The HAGGARD MAN leaves in a huff.

TRINA honks her horn, flipping the bird to the HAGGARD MAN, who returns the favor.

TRINA and the HAGGARD MAN exchange wildly obscure and obscene gestures for a few moments. TRINA drives away.

TRINA

That's one less listing to worry about.

INT. SCULLY'S CROSSTOWN PAWN - AFTERNOON

SCULLY comes out of the back room and hands a general ledger to TRINA.

SCULLY

This is the past five years worth of operating results. All of our transactions are monitored closely by local law enforcement, so you can trust the books.

TRINA

Will it tell me what you paid for that moose head on the wall over there?

SCULLY

Right down to the penny. \$31.95 incidentally.

TRINA

I think you overpaid.

SCULLY

Well if you like it, I'll give it to you for half-off. Today only.

TRINA

Not interested. Care if I look around at your inventory for a moment?

SCULLY

Go ahead. It changes on a daily basis, you know.

TRINA walks around the store and stops in front of the tools.

TRINA

Wow. This one is sure shiny.

TRINA inspects the Sawminator; her eyelids aflutter when she recognizes the origin of the merchandise.

TRINA returns to the front counter.

TRINA (CONT'D)

So, eight percent commission and seven thousand for retainer fees, which includes marketing?

SCULLY

Whoa! How about five percent and no retainer fee?

SCULLY wipes the sweat from his head with a handkerchief.

TRINA

Do you want marketing, or do you think a pawn shop mogul is just going to drive up off the street and buy it?

SCULLY

Okay, how about a three thousand retainer?

TRINA

Six and a half-percent, a three thousand dollar retainer, and that shiny machine over there?

SCULLY

Fine. But you're robbing me blind.

SCULLY withdraws a checkbook from his shirt pocket.

TRINA

Great. By the way, how much for that Donny Osmond album?

SCULLY

\$50.

TRINA

Who's doing the robbing around here? Oh, what the hell. Make that check out for \$2950.

INT. ROGER'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

ROGER pries himself off of the couch and answers the telephone.

INTERCUT - ROGER'S APARTMENT / TRINA'S CAR

ROGER

Hello?

TRINA
Hey. This is Trina.

ROGER
Hey. What's up?

TRINA
I thought we might throw a little surprise congratulations party for Seri this Friday. She's been working so hard on her business plan that she deserves a little treat.

ROGER
That sounds great. Trina, I have a favor to ask of you and you can say no if you'd like.

TRINA
I never say no to my friends.

ROGER
In that case, here is what...

END INTERCUT (as their voices fade).

INT. SHAMAN'S COFFEE HUT - MORNING

TRINA and SERI rest in the large wicker chairs in the far corner of the hut.

TRINA
Thanks for meeting me this morning before work.

SERI
Not a problem. I needed a little break from my business plan anyway.

TRINA
That has to be done Friday, right?

SERI
Well, I can turn it in Saturday morning, but for all intents and purposes it is due Friday.

TRINA
Why don't you come over on Friday and we'll celebrate? It was such fun last time.

SERI
That's awfully nice, but maybe
Roger was already planning
something.

TRINA
Give him a call and ask. You said
the guy is an early riser.

SERI pulls out her phone and dials.

INTERCUT - ROGER'S APARTMENT / SHAMANS COFFEE HUT

ROGER
Hey, Seri! Do you know what time
it is?

SERI
I do.

ROGER
Ha-ha.

SERI
I'm sitting here with Trina and she
wanted to know if we wanted to go
over and party a little bit at
their place on Friday night.

ROGER
Will there be skinny dipping?

SERI
I haven't checked, but I don't
think it's on the agenda. But there
will be beer for sure.

ROGER
In that case, I'm in.

SERI
Me too. I miss you.

ROGER
I miss you too. Oh, quickly, I have
a joke. Knock-knock.

SERI
Who's there?

ROGER
F (pronounced ph)

SERI
F who?

ROGER
Fiddlesticks.

SERI giggles.

SERI
You are such a dork. Bye.

END INTERCUT

TRINA
So you guys are coming over?

SERI
Yeah. That will be great. I'd better get moving, as I've got a ton of things to do.

TRINA
Okay. By the way... what's not on the agenda?

SERI
Oh, he asked about skinny dipping.

TRINA
No problem by me. I might join him. One hundred percent naked.

SERI
You aren't serious, are you?

TRINA nods and smiles

SERI (CONT'D)
(playfully) Whatever!

TRINA
Girls will be girls.

SERI walks away.

An OLD GEEZER at the table across from TRINA removes his hearing aid, then raises and lowers his eyebrows at TRINA.

TRINA (CONT'D)
And dirty old men will be dirty old men.

INT. TRINA AND X'S HOUSE - EVENING

The front door opens, revealing TRINA, wearing a semi-formal dress and a diamond necklace.

TRINA
Welcome, Guest of Honor.

SERI and TRINA hug.

SERI
You look absolutely stunning.

TRINA
And welcome, date of the Guest of Honor.

TRINA and ROGER hug.

ROGER
Seri's right. You look fantastic.

TRINA
Thank you. Please come in and have a seat for a moment. X will be with us shortly. You brought your swimsuits right?

ROGER
If I say no, does that mean I can't swim anyway?

TRINA
You're my kind of guy!

ROGER and TRINA high-five.

SERI
You two are on crack.

TRINA, ROGER, and SERI are seated in the living room.

SERI (CONT'D)
So what's the big occasion?

TRINA
I just thought it would be nice.
That's all.

X enters, wearing a tuxedo and carrying a tray containing four crystal wine glasses and a decanter of Chablis.

X
Hey everybody.

X gives SERI a kiss on the cheek. X and ROGER shake hands.

ROGER

Bond, isn't it? James Bond.

SERI

Wow, you are all snazzed up. Look at you!

X

We wanted to do something special for you, to take your mind off of that business plan. How did it turn out?

SERI

Rather nicely, actually. I'm proud of it, but I hope the building owners understand my vision. I'm scared they won't like it and won't renew my lease.

TRINA

We're all rooting for you.

X

We are. Long live Seri's Jungle!

ROGER AND TRINA

(together)

Here, here.

THEY ALL share a toast and a sip of wine.

TRINA

X has an announcement he'd like to make.

X

Well, since I have the floor... as you both know, I've been in negotiation for an out-of-town dealership for some time. That deal is slated to close a week from Monday, and then we're putting the house up for sale and moving.

ROGER

What? Really.

TRINA

We won't be that far away. Really.

SERI

Did you say we? We won't be far away?

TRINA

No, we won't.

TRINA hugs SERI.

SERI

(into Trina's ear) You made the right choice.

TRINA

(into Seri's ear) There was no choice.

ROGER

Congratulations you guys. That is great news.

X

We're stoked. Hey, let's go outside. I'll fire up the barbecue and we'll get this party started.

EXT. TRINA AND X'S HOUSE - NIGHT

SERI, ROGER, X, and TRINA walk up to a table, prepared with two full-settings of crystal and silver.

SERI

Where are the other settings? I only see two here?

ROGER

Yeah, what's up with that?

TRINA

This is your night, Seri. We want to take your mind off of those plans.

X

So just sit back, and relax, and let us take care of you for a while.

X seats SERI at the table. ROGER sits down.

TRINA

Tonight, we're featuring rack of lamb in a light mint sauce, rice pilaf, and steamed vegetables.

SERI

Stop, you guys. It's no big deal. It was just a business plan. For the love of Pete.

X

And tonight is also for Roger. He used to wait on people hand and foot as a personal assistant. Now we're going to give him a taste of his own medicine.

SERI

Well...

TRINA

(interrupting)

Well, nothing. Just hang out and we'll be back. Trust me, we'll join you later.

TRINA and X stroll away.

ROGER

I really missed you while you were busy with your plan.

SERI

I missed you too. I hope they renew it.

ROGER

Me too, Seri. If not, that is what is meant to be.

TRINA and X return with a large white box topped with a red ribbon.

X

Before dinner, we thought you might like to open a gift.

SERI

Is that for me?

TRINA

Yes, your name is on the tag.

SERI

Who is it from?

SERI looks at the tag, noticing the "from:" is left blank. SERI unties the bow and unwraps the gift- a handmade fiddle.

SERI (CONT'D)
Oh my. Oh my. This is beautiful.
Where did you get this?

ROGER
I know this talented artisan...

SERI
(interrupts) Come give me a kiss.

ROGER gets out of his chair and kisses SERI.

ROGER
Look at the back.

SERI
Hey, there is a little compartment
back here. How clever!

SERI opens the compartment and a little note falls out.

TRINA
What does it say?

SERI
It says...
(holding back tears)
You'll never play second fiddle to
anyone.

ROGER drops to one knee and holds out a jewelry box. SERI
opens it, revealing a diamond ring.

ROGER
Seri, you're all I ever think
about, day and night. Your smile.
Your laugh. Your company.

Tears run down SERI'S cheek.

ROGER (CONT'D)
I used to think I was afraid of
getting close to somebody. Falling
in love. Getting married. I was
afraid it would be with the wrong
person. But as I kneel before you
this evening, I don't have a single
ounce of fear in my body. You are
the right person. My right person.

ROGER (CONT'D)
(cont'd)
Fate may have brought us together,
but nothing will ever take us
apart. Will you marry me?

ROGER places the ring on SERI'S finger.

SERI
I will.

SERI falls into ROGER'S arms and they share a long embrace. X
pops a bottle of champagne and pours everybody a glass.

TRINA and SERI hug.

TRINA
I'm so excited for you.

SERI
You were in on this, weren't you?

TRINA
Girls will be girls.

X places two more chairs at the table and walks into the
house. SERI, TRINA, and ROGER are seated.

ROGER
Well, that is a big load of my
chest.

SERI
I have a confession to make, Roger.
I haven't been totally honest with
you tonight.

X returns with an easel, props it up, and places an apparent
painting wrapped in plain brown paper behind ROGER.

X takes a seat at the table.

X
What'd I miss?

TRINA
Seri just told Roger she hasn't
been honest with him.

ROGER
What do you mean? Don't you want to
marry me?

SERI

I want that more than anything in the world. I want to be your wife. I want you to be the last thing I see when I go to bed at night and the first thing I see in the morning when I wake up.

ROGER

Then what? What is it?

SERI

In a few minutes. I have a little present of my own for you.

SERI points behind ROGER. ROGER is startled when he sees the easel.

ROGER

What in the world?

SERI

Please. Open it.

ROGER opens the plain brown paper.

ROGER

Look.

ROGER rotates the painting revealing an artist's rendering of a new building with two entrances; one to a pet store and one to a furniture shop.

ROGER (CONT'D)

You can't be serious.

SERI

After meeting you, I would never have planned my future without you. I love you, Roger.

ROGER

And I love you, Seri.

ROGER and SERI kiss and they toast their glasses.

TRINA

If you'll excuse me for a moment. All of these toasts have mother nature a' callin'.

TRINA excuses herself from the table.

X

So what do you think of that? It's a fantastic rendering and the new building has a great location. It will be perfect.

ROGER

I'm completely blown away. Nothing could surprise me more than I've been surprised tonight.

SERI

Are you excited?

ROGER

Excited about the business plan? Yes. Excited about spending the rest of my life with you? I'm ecstatic.

TRINA returns with a dolly, atop which rests a giant box wrapped in blue polka-dot paper.

TRINA

Anybody for some Let's Make A Deal? SERI and ROGER look quizzically at each other.

X joins TRINA near the box.

X

We figured, since we're moving and all, that we'd like to give you an early wedding gift.

TRINA

But if you don't invite us to the wedding, we're taking it back.

SERI

You two are really just too much.

SERI kisses X on the cheek.

SERI (CONT'D)

Shall we?

ROGER

We shall.

SERI and ROGER unwrap the box, revealing the Sawminator.

ROGER (CONT'D)
You shouldn't have done this.

SERI
Wow. Now you'll be the only guy in town with two of these things.

ROGER
One, actually.

SERI
What happened to the other one?

ROGER
You're wearing it.

SERI shakes her head in disbelief and happiness and jumps into ROGER'S arms.

INT. LARGE CHURCH - WEEKS LATER

A PASTOR faces ROGER and SERI.

PASTOR
Roger, you may kiss the bride.

ROGER and SERI kiss and turn to face the congregation. X and TRINA clap. HODGES barks his appreciation.

ROGER and SERI stroll down the aisle and out of the church, enduring a shower of confetti and applause.

INT. RECEPTION HALL - AN HOUR LATER

A CROWD has gathered in a circle on the dance floor. An EMCEE and a six-member WEDDING BAND stand silently on stage.

The EMCEE grabs the microphone.

EMCEE
Ladies and gentleman, let's give it up for the newlyweds.

The CROWD applauds. ROGER and SERI break into the circle and start to dance as the WEDDING BAND raise their fiddles to their chins and begin to play.

FADE OUT.