

BLOOD, SWEAT, AND SWEET, SWEET LOVE

Written By

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EXT. BEACH- DAY

MICHAEL MORONE (39) buttons his designer cufflinks.

MORONE (V.O.)
I am handsome.

He tightens his Versace tie.

MORONE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I am powerful.

He slicks back his long, luscious hair.

MORONE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I am sexy.

He walks towards a heavy oak door and pushes it aside without an effort.

Beyond the door is a bevy of bikini-clad babes, all happy to see him.

ALL
Hello Mr. Morone.

MORONE
Hello ladies.

The door closes behind him.

MORONE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I love me.

INT. CAR- DAY

Lucille Morone (mid-30's) drives down the traffic-clogged thoroughfare while Michael sits languidly in the passenger's seat.

LUCILLE
Michael. Michael! Michael Morone,
are you even listening to me?

Michael stares out onto the street with a glazed over look.

MICHAEL
Yeah. Yeah. Yup. Totally.

LUCILLE
What was I talking about?

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MICHAEL
Business. Cooking. The business of

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
cooking?

LUCILLE
I was talking about our plans for
Friday night. You know: Fred and
Nancy's dinner party?

Michael looks mildly disgusted.

MICHAEL
Oh, yeah. That. And look, there is
cooking involved in a dinner
party. See. I was listening.

LUCILLE
Barely.

MICHAEL
Hey, you'd barely be listening to
after an hour of listening to Fred
ramble on and on about how amazing
his last trip to Fiji was, and all
the gorgeous beach he saw there.

LUCILLE
Fred is a sweetheart.

MICHAEL
Fred is a ham, as much so as I've
ever seen.

Lucille purses her lips.

LUCILLE
Hey. You all right?

MICHAEL
Yeah. Great. Why?

LUCILLE
You've been such a downer lately,
more of a crotchety old man than
anything.

Michael rolls his eyes.

MICHAEL
Works been stressful, and it's not
like you've been the life of the
party either.

LUCILLE
Yeah, well at least I still go to

LUCILLE (CONT'D)
parties.

He grumbles under his breath.

LUCILLE (CONT'D)
I'm sorry. What was that?

MICHAEL
Nothing.

LUCILLE
That's what I thought.

The car gets quiet. Lucille slams on the brakes as a car cuts in front of her.

LUCILLE
Learn to drive, jerk-off.

The driver is unrepentant.

MICHAEL
(softly)
Thanks for the ride.

Lucille calms. Her demeanor and body language becomes more sympathetic.

LUCILLE
You're welcome. How long will it be 'til you get your car back?

MICHAEL
Depends.

LUCILLE
On what?

MICHAEL
They're still deciding if it's totalled or not.

LUCILLE
How's it looking so far?

MICHAEL
Not good. Plastic breaks so easily. Not like in good old days. The classic cars. Man, that was where it was at.

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LUCILLE
My aunt used to drive one of
those.

LUCILLE (CONT'D)
It was a boat. Couldn't go
anywhere without burning half her
tank.

MICHAEL
Like a Hummer?

LUCILLE
Exactly. There. You see. It's all
about perspective. Grass is always
greener and stuff like that.

MICHAEL
Yeah. I suppose so.

She tousles his hair.

LUCILLE
You take care at work today. Try
not to let it get the best of you.

MICHAEL
I'll give it my best.

She slows down as she approaches a large industrial building:
SKYROCK TECH, INC. She puts the car into reverse and then
parks it just so along the sidewalk.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
(shaking his head)
I don't know how you do it.

LUCILLE
Do what?

MICHAEL
Parallel park.

LUCILLE
Skills.

MICHAEL
Mad skills.

She reaches out and sets her hand on his.

LUCILLE
Love you.

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MICHAEL
Love you too.

They kiss.

I/E. SKYROCK TECH

He gets out of the car, waves her off, and enters the building.

People shuffle passed him. He recognizes the faces- or rather, the tops of their heads. They are all on their cell phones. They barrel passed him. One clips him on the shoulder, looks up, and gives him a dirty look as he goes.

MICHAEL
Sorry.

Michael continues across the lobby into the elevator.

INT. SKYROCK TECH (ELEVATOR)

He enters the elevator, presses a button, and stares at the door.

Behind him, two EMPLOYEES engage in a heated debate:

EMPLOYEE #1
No, I'm telling you we can't meet that deadline. Anybody that says different is full of crap!

EMPLOYEE #2
Well this is coming from the top, so what can we do but follow through?

EMPLOYEE #1
That's my point! That's my freakin' point. I mean, management gives us these assignments as if knowing they can't be done. They take joy in watching us squirm, I swear.

EMPLOYEE #2
They're out of touch.

EMPLOYEE #1
That's an understatement!

Employee #1 rubs his chin.

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EMPLOYEE #1 (CONT'D)
Have you heard the one about the
management team in a boat race?

EMPLOYEE #2
No. Lay it on me.

EMPLOYEE #1
Oh man, this is rich... so these
managers they get into this boat
race, right? and they lose. So,
later, they run a bunch of tests
to find out why. Turns out there
are too many people calling the
shots and too few people rowing
the boat. Their response- ha!-
their response is to take the
people calling the shots out for
an all-expenses-paid leadership
seminar, while giving the few
rowers they do have a
commemorative pin and
inspirational poster- to boost
morale, you know? Surprise,
surprise, the management team
loses again, and what do they do?
They fire the rowing team, and
take themselves out for a vacation
to the Bahamas!

EMPLOYEE #2
Ha. Well, that's a heck of a
thing.

EMPLOYEE #1
Darn straight. And you know what?
Those few rowers, they're us!
Working our butts off while
waiting, fearing that the next
ticket out the door will be ours.

MICHAEL
(aside)
Preach it.

The two EMPLOYEES pause, turn to MICHAEL, who breaks into a
cold sweat as their eyes mercilessly bear down on him.
Eventually, they return to mind their own business again.

EMPLOYEE #1
So, yeah, anyway, about those
assignments....

The ELEVATOR DOOR dings and opens. Michael shuffles out.

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INT. SKYROCK TECH (CUBICLE)

Michael sits in front of a glowing COMPUTER MONITOR, vapidly hacking away at the KEYBOARD.

His BOSS walks by. He is a beady-eyed, overweight, balding man. He raps on the edge of his cubicle- you know, because cubicle's don't have doors. The boss looms over Michael as he waits to be invited in.

BOSS

Hey Michael how's it going?

MICHAEL

Fine, Mr. Grayson. How about you?

GRAYSON

I'm good, I'm good. Listen, do you have a second?

Michael's hand twitches on the keyboard.

MICHAEL

Sure. What's up?

GRAYSON

I'd like to speak to you about your performance recently.

MICHAEL

Oh. yeah. Is it time for the review already. My, time passes quickly.

Grayson slinks inside the cubicle, rubbing his belly against the paper-thin walls as he does so.

GRAYSON

No, not quite yet. Actually, I'm here so that when that time does come around, we'll both be ready for it.

MICHAEL

How do you mean?

GRAYSON

Well, to be honest we've seen a real downturn in productivity these last few months. From you. For us. That's uncommon. Is everything all right?

Michael gulps. His throat feels incredibly dry.

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MICHAEL

Yeah. Well, I didn't want to say anything, cuz, you know, leave your problems at the door, but yeah...

(with a sigh)

The wife and I- We, um...

Grayson elbows Michael in the side.

GRAYSON

Say no more. Women. I tell you. They can be the worst sometimes. She not giving it up?

MICHAEL

What? Huh? Noooo.

GRAYSON

Come on now. You don't have to be embarrassed about it. It happens in every relationship.

(grandstanding)

We, men, live and breathe sexual prowess. When we're not getting any, well, it can be...

Disheartening. Even to the best of us.

He reaches into his pocket and hands him a business card. The card is an advertisement for DIVAS DEL SOL, a gentlemen's club. A woman pictured on it has luscious, red lips, teased hair, and full breasts. She blows a kiss to him from out from her cheap, cardboard cell.

GRAYSON

Take it.

MICHAEL

(backing down)

No. I can't.

GRAYSON

Take it. We both want you to succeed. It's the least I can do.

Michael takes the card and stashes it in his pocket.

MICHAEL

Thank you, sir. I will do my best to... do my best.

GRAYSON slaps him on the arm.

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GRAYSON

I know you will. For the company.
For me.

Michael nods.

MICHAEL

For the company.

Michael files the card into his wallet. GRAYSON points at him. Michael gives him a thumbs-up and pretends to get back to work.

INT. MORONE HOME (KITCHEN)- LATER

Lucille fries up some sausage. Michael sits at the kitchen table. He fidgets with the silverware.

LUCILLE

How was your day?

Michael shrugs.

MICHAEL

Same as always. Managers are crazy. Work is awful. Everyone's stressed.

LUCILLE

Sounds like a bucket of laughs.

MICHAEL

Oh yeah, definitely. How about yours?

LUCILLE

It was good. The kids are gems-drooling, screaming, stinking gems.

MICHAEL

Sounds equally riveting.

LUCILLE

You get used to it. It's hard to hold their naughtiness against them, the little dears. Sometimes, I want to, but one look into those adorable faces, though, and I just melt. Nobody can stand up to that much cute.

MICHAEL
No, I suppose not.

Lucille mixes the sausages around in the pan. The grease underneath them crackles and burns.

LUCILLE
Oh, fyi, you don't have to worry about going to the party on Friday.

MICHAEL
No?

LUCILLE
No. Nancy's water just broke.

MICHAEL
Wow! That's... Wonderful. I didn't know she was that ready to pop.

Lucille shakes her head.

LUCILLE
Amazing woman. She plans on having the kid without a painkillers. She's an inspiration to us all.

MICHAEL
This is her- what- third kid?

LUCILLE
Fourth.

MICHAEL
Man. Big family. I guess she's gotten the knack of pumping 'em out.

LUCILLE
(aside)
They're our age, you know.

MICHAEL
Are they now? Wow. I guess I never thought about it much, but yeah they definitely are. They must've started real early.

LUCILLE
Just out of high school, I think.

MICHAEL
Boy, that must've been a bear.

LUCILLE
I'm sure it was, nut they made it
happen.

She turns down the heat on the sausages, allowing them to
simmer.

MICHAEL
Good for them. Hey Lucille-

He catches her wiping a tear from her eye.

LUCILLE
Yes?

He turns away.

MICHAEL
Nothing. Forgot what I was going
to say.

LUCILLE
Well, I'm here if you remember it
again.

MICHAEL
Thanks.

He goes back to playing with the silverware.

LUCILLE
Would you mind setting the table?

MICHAEL
Sure thing.

Michael gets up and heads for the cabinets to grab dishes.

INT. MORONE HOME (BEDROOM)

Michael and Lucille make love in bed. Lucille is on top,
vigorously rubbing her genitals against his. He appears
detached the whole time, as if privy to some ball-busting
factoid prohibiting him from enjoying the moment.

Lucille eventually slows.

LUCILLE
Hey, anyone in there?

MICHAEL
Yeah. I... Uh... you know.

LUCILLE

Oh. Same problem again?

She rolls off him.

MICHAEL

Yeah. I just can't get it up.

LUCILLE

Are you sure? Not even a little? I swore I felt something.

MICHAEL

Maybe a little. Not enough to...
I'm sorry. It's not you. It's me.
I think I'm broken.

LUCILLE

You're fine. There are medications for that. Might try them.

MICHAEL

Eh, I've never been keen on those things. Never know what they'll do to you.

LUCILLE

Could be worth a try.

They stare up at the ceiling.

MICHAEL

True, but hey, remember, you're really hot. Hotter even than the first day I met you.

She smiles at him.

LUCILLE

You really think so?

MICHAEL

I know so.

LUCILLE

Thanks.

MICHAEL

And you'll make a great Mom one day.

She smiles weakly, nods and turns away.

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LUCILLE

You bet.

Michael slumps back into his pillow and watches shadows play on the wall.

INT. MORONE HOME (BEDROOM)- LATER

Michael lies in bed until Lucille is asleep. Then, he gets up, kisses his wife, and slinks out onto the floor.

INT. MORONE HOME (LIVING ROOM)

He crashes down onto the couch and turns on the TV. Commercials, shows, and edited feature-lengths: all of them scream one thing- sex. Lingerie sales. Frat parties. Business meetings. The subliminal messages ingrained in each and every scene are anything but subtle.

He watches them all like a dog watching a bone feet above his head.

LADY FROM AD

(in a sultry voice)

Come away with me to paradise.

He flips off the television and reaches into his pocket. He finds Grayson's card. The woman stares at him. He stares back. Somewhere, a clock ticks. Minutes pass. Then, Michael tears up the card and throws it away in the KITCHEN TRASH.

He goes back to bed.

INT. MORONE HOME (BEDROOM)

The SUNSHINE descends softly upon Michael's face, tickling his forehead with its warmth. He smiles coyly. It takes a moment for him to remember what ever early-riser knows: sunshine is wonderful, but it also means that you're horrendously late.

MICHAEL

Monkey balls!

He reaches for his phone and checks the time. His fears are confirmed: he is hours late. He searches out his ALARM AP. All the alarms there- "wake-up," "last minute," "get up or else"- have been deactivated.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Honey!

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He jumps out off bed, does a quick change, and hurries into the kitchen.

INT. MORONE HOME (KITCHEN)

Lucille is cooking breakfast.

LUCILLE
Good morning, baby. How'd you sleep?

MICHAEL
Too well, unfortunately. My phone totally freaked out. The boss is

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
gonna kill me!

LUCILLE
(patronizingly)
Oh. I'm sorry to hear that. Won't you have some breakfast before you go? It will make you feel much better.

MICHAEL
Sorry. Smells delicious, but there's no time.

He heads for the door.

LUCILLE
Oh, that's too bad.

He makes it all the way to the door before she lays it on it:

LUCILLE (CONT'D)
Maybe you can grab some breakfast later at Divas del Sol.

His right hand squeezes the door knob so tightly that his fingers turn white.

MICHAEL
(fearfully)
What did you say?

LUCILLE
You heard me.

He turns. Her arms are crossed. On the table between them lie the shredded remains of Grayson's business card.

MICHAEL
Lucille, it's not-

She throws her hands up in the air.

LUCILLE
Don't tell me what it's not, or
what it is, or anything in fact. I
don't want to hear it.

She thrusts an accusatory finger in his direction.

LUCILLE (CONT'D)
After all these years of waiting
and hoping. All the worries and
the

LUCILLE (CONT'D)
tears and the frustration, wasted.
For you!

MICHAEL
It's not me it's-

Lucille shakes her head.

LUCILLE
Oh, it's you. It's all you- you
limp-dicked, weak-willed, pathetic
boy-man.

MICHAEL
Hon, aren't you at least gonna
hear me out- you know, before you
throw the book at me?

Lucille turns red.

LUCILLE
Oh, I'm gonna throw a book all
right, and a lot more too.

She starts picking up dishes.

MICHAEL
Hey, careful now. Your mother gave
us those.

LUCILLE
My mother gave us these to help us
start our home. And, as of right
now, we don't have a home. There's
just you and me and crap ton of
lies.

(MORE)

LUCILLE (CONT'D)
 So, as far as I'm concerned, let
 'er fly-

She starts chucking plates. Michael dodges them to the best of his ability. Shards of dishware clatter around him.

MICHAEL
 The business card. Shoot. Would you stop? This was all a big misunderstanding.

LUCILLE
 I bet it is.

MICHAEL
 It was all Grayson's idea.

LUCILLE
 Then, whoop-de- doo for him. He's guilty by association, then. All the more reason why I won't be sorry for you when you have to call around to get a ride to work.

MICHAEL
 But yesterday we had a talk.

LUCILLE
 Right. It was a real heart to heart by the looks of it.

MICHAEL
 But he could fire me!

LUCILLE
 Then let him! You hated your job anyway.

She throws a final dish. It crashes against the wall, sending fragments ringing and rolling across the floor. They settle. Both Michael and Lucille sigh.

MICHAEL
 Lucille-

LUCILLE
 Too late, Michael. Get out.

MICHAEL
 But-

LUCILLE

Out! Let me show you the door.

She storms passed him. He reaches out to take her hand. She bats it away. She reaches the door and throws it open. He looks at her, at the wreckage. He lowers his head, grabs his briefcase, and heads out the door.

INT. SKYROCK TECH (LOBBY)- LATER

Michael enters the lobby. There are few employees in there now. He waves to them. They glare at him as he passes by. He enters the elevator.

INT. SKYROCK TECH (ELEVATOR)

One of the employees from the other day is there in the elevator as well. The employee takes a good look at Michael and lurches back.

EMPLOYEE #1

Geez. What happened to you?

MICHAEL

Rough morning.

The employee snorts.

EMPLOYEE #1

I guess so.

The doors close. Michael looks upon his harried reflection in elevator's polished metal frame. Michael shakes his head.

The two men ride the rest of the way in relative silence.

INT. SKYROCK TECH (CUBICLE)

Michael returns to his cramped cubicle. Grayson cruises by. He knocks [sort of].

GRAYSON

Hey buddy.

MICHAEL

Listen, Mr. Grayson. I'm sorry I'm late. I-

GRAYSON

Woah, where's the train?

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MICHAEL

Sorry. I've had a rough morning.
My wife found your business card
and totally freaked out. She
might have left me.

GRAYSON

Wow. That truly is unfortunate.

MICHAEL

Maybe if you call her. Maybe you
can set things right.

GRAYSON strolls over to Michael's desk. Michael can feel a
chill roll down his spine.

GRAYSON stops inches away from him. He can feel GRAYSON's
belly brush up against his elbow.

GRAYSON

I could. In fact, I would if
circumstances were different.

MICHAEL

I don't understand.

GRAYSON

Yesterday, we spoke on your
performance. All eyes were on you,
Mr. Morone. Today, you showed up
exceedingly late.

MICHAEL

Right. Because of what you did.
Now, all I'm asking is for a
little slack.

Grayson thrusts a firm hand into the air.

GRAYSON

That's not how the corporate world
works. You perform and are
rewarded for your performance.
Lack of performance is heavily
frowned upon. There are a lot of
young bucks waiting to take your
position, you know.

MICHAEL

Wait, are you firing me?

GRAYSON

I'm giving you the chance to
reevaluate your life.

(MORE)

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GRAYSON (CONT'D)
Apparently, you need it.

Grayson lets his words linger in the air, like smoke. They are the only words Michael has ever heard him speak that were not just hot air.

GRAYSON (CONT')
But I won't belabor the point.

MICHAEL
Mr. Grayson, I can't lose my job right now. I have a car to pay for, a wife to get back, a life to live.

GRAYSON
There are no perfect circumstances, Mr. Morone. Simply opportunities to rise to the occasion.

He digs into his pocket, takes out a blank check and a pen, and sets it on Michael's desk.

GRAYSON (CONT'D)
Please understand this is anything but personal. In fact, as I was mentioning earlier, this is for your own good.

Grayson circles around him like a vulture.

GRAYSON (CONT'D)
But I am not without feelings, no matter what the rumor mill says. I was a struggling person once too. I know hard it is to rise above. So, I tell you what: this is what I'm gonna do... I'm gonna write you a check for one thousand dollars, on top of your severance pay, to use however you wish. I advise you use wisely.

MICHAEL
But-

Grayson shoves the check in his hand.

GRAYSON
Goodbye, Mr. Morone.

Michael takes the check, collects his things, and goes.

INT. SKYROCK TECH (ELEVATOR)

Michael stands in the elevator with EMPLOYEE #2.

EMPLOYEE #2

Heard about what happened. Sucks
to be you.

MICHAEL

Thanks for the sympathy.

EMPLOYEE #2

Anytime.

The door dings. Michael gets out.

INT. MORONE HOME(KITCHEN)

Michael enters his empty home with his full box of OFFICE SUPPLIES in tow. He sloughs over to the kitchen table and throws the box down upon it. It hits with a thud. The shards of business card on it go flying.

Michael sits down and looks around him. Broken plates. Broken memories. A check for a thousand dollars in hand. He kicks the ground on which he sits. Then, he picks up the phone and dials.

MESSAGE MACHINE (V.O.)

Hi, you've reached Lucille Morone.
Sorry I missed you, but please
leave your name and number and
I'll call you back as soon as I
can... Unless you're Michael. In
that case, you can drop dead.

Michael hangs up and tosses the phone aside.

His gaze drops to the floor. He looks at the shattered plates and the pieces of business card resting amongst them. He looks at the woman blowing him a kiss from underfoot.

MICHAEL

Darn it all.

He digs through the trash for the address to Divas del Sol.

EXT. STREET- EVENING

Michael now waits at the BUS STATION. The bus comes. He gets on

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INT. BUS

The bus is full. Michael wades through the sea of people to an open seat next to an OLD MAN. He sits down beside him. The bus starts.

OLD MAN
Where you headed?

MICHAEL
Downtown. You?

OLD MAN
Nowhere. Just headed round in circles. Seeing things I wouldn't see otherwise. Not a bad deal.

MICHAEL
I suppose not. I bet you see all kinds of things.

OLD MAN
Like you wouldn't believe.

A pause.

OLD MAN
For example, when I see you, I see you as a man in transit.

MICHAEL
(matter-of-factly)
Yeah. I am on a bus after all.

OLD MAN
No, no. I mean, between mental states. Spiritual even.

MICHAEL
You auditioning to be a psychic?

OLD MAN
(shaking his head)
No. It's just like I said, I see a lot of things, meet a lot of people. You see that much for so long... patterns begin to emerge.

MICHAEL
And I fit into one of those patterns?

OLD MAN
Maybe. We'll see.
(MORE)

OLD MAN (CONT'D)
That's why I'm asking: to get more information, to make the right assessment.

MICHAEL
Nobody asks those kinds of questions anymore.

OLD MAN
I do.

Michael bites his lip.

MICHAEL
You're right. I am transit. To the extreme.

OLD MAN
How so?

MICHAEL
Well, I'm a little bit- a lotta bit- of a country song right now. My wife just left me. I lost my

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
job. I'm just rolling down the road.

OLD MAN
Rough day.

MICHAEL
Yep.

The old man scratches his chin.

OLD MAN
Hmmm. They related? Caught your wife cheating on you with your boss.

MICHAEL
No. She's fine. I'm the stupid one.

OLD MAN
Too many late nights for you, huh? Long business meetings in the city?

MICHAEL
Yes, but not in the love affair
(MORE)

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
 sort of way. More just lost time
 that finally caught up to me.

OLD MAN
 Ah, yes. A common ailment.

MICHAEL
 One that I never saw coming.

OLD MAN
 Cluelessness is the most common
 disease of the modern man, which
 is ironic because we live in the
 Information Age.

The old man cocks his head back.

MICHAEL
 Yeah. I hear you there. They
 should start making fundraisers
 for it and awareness ribbons.

OLD MAN
 Sarcasm in the face of truth is
 the second most common.

MICHAEL
 Two for two. You care to go for

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
 three?

OLD MAN
 I'm only trying to help.

Michael drops his head back into his seat.

MICHAEL
 I know, but what can you do. I've
 got no woman, no job, only a check
 for a thousand bucks and prayer
 that this is all a dream.

OLD MAN
 That's a misspent prayer, but the
 thousand bucks ain't bad. What are
 you going to do with it?

MICHAEL
 I don't know. Blow it I guess.

OLD MAN
 Well, normally I would say, "save
 (MORE)

OLD MAN (CONT'D)
 it for a rainy day," but this
 seems pretty rainy to me. Knock
 yourself out.

MICHAEL
 Thanks.

The old man rests a hand on his shoulder. Michael looks down
 at his address shred. CORMORANT STREET. He looks up again.
 CORMORANT STREET.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
 This is my stop.

OLD MAN
 Well, I'd love to stay and chat a
 bit longer, but it looks like
 you've got places to be.

MICHAEL
 Just trying to find my way back.

OLD MAN
 Then you take care, son, I hope we
 cross paths again.

They shake hands.

MICHAEL
 Me too. You take care.

The bus stops. Michael gets up and shuffles out.

EXT. DIVAS DEL SOL

Michael walks down the street to DIVAS DEL SOL. It a purple,
 art deco style building, which used to be a movie theater back
 when Hollywood was still in its golden years.

Beside it is a VERSATELLER. He deposits the check into the
 teller, pulls out a hundred dollars, and strolls over towards
 the Gentleman's Club.

Michael walks directly up to the BOUNCER at the door and hands
 him a twenty.

MICHAEL
 I've had a bad day. Can you help
 me out with that?

BOUNCER
(pocketing the cash)
We can do that. Come right on in.

The bouncer opens the door for him.

INT. DIVAS DEL SOL

Michael enters the club. A SHARPLY DRESSED MAN serves drinks at the bar. A DJ pumps German Electronica through the loudspeakers. Then there are the GIRLS. Glistening, gyrating on their respective poles.

Mike takes all of it in the same way that an alien would take in a foreign landscape. He heads straight for the bar, the universal home for wayward souls.

Once there, he orders eagerly.

MICHAEL
Whiskey sour.

The BARKEEP nods and pours Michael's drink.

BARKEEP
Should I open a tab?

MICHAEL
No. One's good for now.

He hands the barkeep a twenty.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
Keep the change. I might be back.

The barkeep takes his share and shelves the rest. Michael takes a seat.

The GIRLS on the stage do their thing. Tassels. Breast implants. G-strings. Legs spread-eagle in the air and across the dingy floor.

He sits at the edge of his seat. His eyes are narrow and focus. He leans forward with earnest interest.

His drink disappears down his throat. He goes back to the barkeep, slips the man another twenty, and returns his seat.

Back to the PEEPSHOW: he studies the women as they execute gravity-defying feats on strength and skill on those vertical bars.

He remembers:

Made in Highland

INT. MORONE HOME (LIVING ROOM)- FLASHBACK

Michael flips through channels, lands on a Pole Dancing Competition. He stops on that channel and stares transfixed at the glowing screen. He sets the remote aside. Lucille picks it up again.

LUCILLE

You gotta be kidding me.

MICHAEL

What?! Come on. It's a sport.

LUCILLE

(wryly)

Oh yeah? Please.

(shakes her head)

Every since they started playing Poker on ESPN, everything's a sport... Sport.

She changes the channel. Michael grumbles.

INT. DIVAS DEL SOL- PRESENT DAY

Another drink down. Michael's present strategy is running as thin as his sobriety. He walks up to the barkeep and leans on the counter. His speech is ever-so-slightly slurred.

MICHAEL

How muzzch for a private zession?

The barkeep tips his head toward the stage.

BARKEEP

Each has her own cost. Depends on how she's feeling, but a twenty should you do just fine. You seem to be pretty handy with those.

Michael nods and tips his freshly poured drink toward the informant.

MICHAEL

Zank ya.

He walks up to the PERVERTS' ROW, the collection of lustful, old geezers hanging around the front of the stage. They toss bills at the woman and sidelong glances at the other men beside them. Unwanted competition.

Michael approaches them casually. They form a wall of body odor and bad cologne to try and stop him from proceeding. He wafts the stink away and proceeds to stage.

Made in Highland

Mike takes his time in making his selection. The whiskey in his blood is definitely starting to kick in. His vision begins to cloud.

He staggers up to a TALL, MUSCULAR BLOND. You can see the muscle tone shift under her skin as she moves.

Not having the foggiest on how to arrange for a private dance session, Mike looks turns to the other brutes for advice. No help there. There is no consistency among them. They whisper and claw, anything to gain attention. He simply raises a finger, as if hailing a cab. She comes right over.

She leans in. The wild side of him considers motor-boating her right then and there. He decides he does not have enough to cover that expense.

MICHAEL

How muzch for a private dance?

She sizes him up.

DANCER

Ten for a quickie, thirty if you want something worth remembering.

He checks his wallet. His generosity with the rest of the staff has left him with only twenty left.

She spots the bill.

DANCER (CONT'D)

Twenty works.

He looks down at his shoelaces. It's no crime not to afford the finer things in life, but it's not as much fun either.

DANCER (CONT'D)

Mind if I finish this dance before heading your way?

MICHAEL

(gesturing wildly behind him)

I've in no hurry. I'm right o'er dere.

She winks at him.

DANCER

Gotcha. Thanks. Be there in a jiff.

Made in Highland

MICHAEL

Great.

He wanders back to his seat, almost falling out of it when he sits down. He continues to watch the dance. His muscles relax as he watches their serpentine movements.

Their VAGUE SILHOUETTES play across his vision. Shadows of movement and light.

Five minutes later, the dancer steps off the stage and walks his way.

She towers over him. He is a little intimidated, but then put at ease by her smile.

DANCER

Thanks for waiting.

MICHAEL

My prezzure.

His hands fall to his side. He takes the last twenty from his wallet. It seems to weigh a million pounds.

The dancer lifts the cash from him... [To rid him of his burden, you know?] She stashes the cash in her bra, then begins to run her fingers through her hair.

She turns and contorts her body in front of him. Swaying side to side, up and down. He wants to reach out and touch her. His hands twitch with expectation. That is exactly what

she wants. She keeps going.

She turns around. She shoves her ass right in his face, then lowers it to right above the front of his pants. It hovers there, like a flying saucer. It is not too long before he feels the pull of its tractor beam.

He can feel the rise. The bulge. Suddenly, he is erect. His attention wanders over to his manhood.

The dancer catches onto his diverted attention and tries to win it back.

DANCER

I take it you're an ass man.

MICHAEL

(absently)

Yeah, I guezz'o

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DANCER

Good. That's one of my finest features.

MICHAEL

Hey. Work what yo' mother gay you.

She pauses, then laughs.

DANCER

Just enjoy the ride.

Her glutes are as toned as the rest of her.

MICHAEL

You muzch be some kind of miragle worka. Not even my wife makes me feel like dis.

DANCER

Is that so?

MICHAEL

Yez, but don' tell 'er. I'm in too muzch trouble az it is. I don' want no mo' trouble. I luv 'er, you know?

DANCER

I bet you do.

MICHAEL

I luv 'er so muzch.

He is almost in tears as he says this, and has barely the motor functions to fight the tears back.

She pays the tears no mind. She has seen that kind of thing before. Instead, she keeps it professional, continuing to dance until the egg timer in her brain goes off. Then, she ever so coolly gets off him.

He looks up from her crotch to make weak eye contact with her.

MICHAEL

Zank you. You were won'erful.

DANCER

Come back anytime.

She wanders off. He reaches for her as she goes. His depth perception is way off, and she is long gone. He watches her hourglass figure sway back and forth, retake the stage, and perform for other men.

Made in Highland

Michael turns his attention back to the tent pitched at the front of his pants, which is now starting to subside.

He toasts to his little man, stands up, and heads for the bar. He plops his shot glass face down in front of the barkeep and bows.

MICHAEL
Zank you fo' a lov'y night.

BARKEEP
You got it, pal. Want me to call you a cab?

Michael shakes his head and taps his wallet.

MICHAEL
Zorry. Frezsh out of cash. So, I'll grabba bus. Iz how I got here afta all.

BARKEEP
Ok. Safe travels.

MICHAEL
You zoo.

He hobbles out of the club, making sure to tap the bouncer on the way out.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
Niz bouncer.

Both the bouncer and the barkeep watch him curiously as he leaves.

EXT. STREET

Michael exits the club and wanders to the bus stop. He collapses onto a bench there and dozes off. The bus arrives. Michael, half awake, waves it away. The bus continues on.

EXT. STREET- LATER

The DANCER walks by the sleeping man. She pauses, gives him a shake.

DANCER
Hey, mister. Wake up.

Michael snores. When she gets no other response from him, she takes out her cell phone.

Made in Highland

DANCER (CONT'D)

Hey, Lou. We've got a dozer...
 Yeah, he's one of ours... Best get
 him outta here before the cops
 haul him off... No, he doesn't
 look dangerous... Yeah, I know.
 No one does... Thanks Lou. You're
 the best.

She hangs up and flashes Michael a sympathetic smile.

DANCER (CONT'D)

Hang in there, buddy. Calvary is
 on their way.

A cold breeze catches her. She brings her jacket closer to her
 person, shivers, and walks away.

INT. MORONE HOME (BEDROOM)

Michael wakes up with a wicked headache. He winces, stretches.
 Every muscle aches. He is fully clothed, though covered in
 dirt, dew, and everything else the bus stop threw at him.

He finds a NOTE pinned onto his shirt. He removes the note
 from his person and reads:

DEAR SIR: THANK YOU FOR YOUR PATRONAGE.
 NEXT TIME, THOUGH, TRY TO DRINK A LITTLE

LESS. YOU'LL FIND YOURSELF
 ENJOYING YOUR
 EXPERIENCE A LOT MORE MORE THAT
 WAY. XOXO, DIVAS DEL SOL

EXT. STREET- FLASHBACK

The bouncer, LOU, gives the sleeping Michael a shake. Michael
 shrugs and rolls over on the bench. Lou shakes his head and
 checks the man's pocket. He finds a wallet, then an ID. Lou
 nods, throws the man over his shoulder, and hauls him over
 into to his car.

INT. MORONE HOME- PRESENT DAY

Michael groans, rubs his head.

MICHAEL
 Ugh. What a night.

He slips out of bed and enters the bathroom.

Made in Highland

INT. MORONE HOME (BATHROOM)

He splashes some water on his face, checks his wallet and cell phone. He has one MESSAGE from Lucille.

He plays the message.

MESSAGE MACHINE (V.O.)

Hi Michael. It's Lucille. Are you all right? I came by the place and you weren't there. I thought maybe we could work things out. Looks like you've already gone figuring things out in your own way. So, yeah... If you get this, give me a call. I'll probably be turning in fairly soon for work, but call me. Okay. Love you. Bye.

Michael checks the time of the message: seven p.m.. He was well on his way to Margaritaville by that time. He checks the time now: seven a.m.. Lucille is still at work. He decides to call her anyway.

He dials. The phone rings. The VOICE MAIL is back to normal.

MICHAEL

Hi honey, got your call. Sorry for not calling you back last night, I was not quite... Sober. But yeah, I'd love to talk, working things out between us. Call me whenever.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

I'm available. Love you. Bye.

INT. COFFEE HOUSE- LATER

Michael and Lucille share coffee.

LUCILLE

So, he fired you?

MICHAEL

Yep. Right there. On the spot.

LUCILLE

Is that even legal?

MICHAEL

Probably not, but he gave me a thousand bucks along with a swift kick out the door.

(MORE)

Made in Highland

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
As far as I'm concerned, let
bygones be bygones.

LUCILLE
But what'll you do for work?

MICHAEL
Figure something out, I guess. It
will be a lot easier getting back
on my feet if I have someone by my
side, helping me out along the
way.

He gives her a puppy-dog look.

LUCILLE
Of course. You've got it. You can
count on me. "' Til death do us
part" all the way.

MICHAEL
Right. Thanks. I appreciate it.
And hon?

LUCILLE
Yes?

MICHAEL
I'd like to try again... with the
kids. I know we haven't had any
luck so far, but this time...
Heck, why not?

LUCILLE
Okay. I'd love to. Why the change
of mind?

MICHAEL
It's just not the same without
you. I wanna work on our family,
leave a positive legacy behind.

LUCILLE
Sounds great. You're the sweetest.
Such a sentimentalist.

MICHAEL
When I'm not being a complete
idiot?

LUCILLE
Pretty much.

He raises his coffee cup up to her.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
To us.

LUCILLE
To us.

They clink coffee cups.

LUCILLE (CONT'D)
(taking a sip)
I'm just glad you never actually
went to that gentleman's club.
That would have been awful.

He nearly chokes on the burning liquid. He pauses,
reconstitutes himself, and takes another sip.

MICHAEL
(taking a sip)
Seriously. Totally would have
been.

INT. MORONE HOME (BEDROOM)- LATER

Michael lies naked in bed. He looks to the nearby bathroom,
from which Lucille emerges, dressed in lacy, red lingerie. His
eyes glaze over with wonder.

MICHAEL
Wow.

LUCILLE
(turning about to showcase
her body)
Not bad, huh?

MICHAEL
Not bad?! I've seen worse at
Victoria Secret.

She giggles and curtsies.

LUCILLE
You liar.

MICHAEL
I'm serious.

LUCILLE
Why, thank you, sir.

He holds his hands out to her.

Made in Highland

MICHAEL

Come here, my jaw- droppingly
gorgeous wife.

LUCILLE

Gladly, my old sap of a husband.

She glides over to him. They lock eyes. There is a twinkle in their crow's feet circumscribed irises as Lucille descends upon him. Michael closes his arms around her and brings her to him.

They kiss, making out sweetly and passionately on the satin sheets.

He rubs his fingers through her hair and downwards to the small of her back. He rests his hands there and brings her...

Into him...

Briefly...

His smile fades as his confidence wanes. The old problem persists.

She feels his manhood retreat back into itself. Desperately, she presses him into her while gripping his buttocks, clawing at his back, anything bring him back.

Still nothing happens.

She relaxes and withdraws.

LUCILLE

(sadly and sweetly)
Next time.

MICHAEL

Next time.

They kiss.

Lucille turns off the light.

EXT. DIVAS DEL SOL- THE NEXT DAY

Michael walks up to the bouncer.

LOU

Hey there, Champ. You have time to
recover since last we met?

Made in Highland

MICHAEL
 (embarrassed)
 Yeah. Hello again.

He hands Lou a TWENTY. Lou shakes his head.

LOU
 Save it. Felicity, the girl
 grinding on you last night, she's
 the real hero. She's the one who
 called me in before the po-po
 could take you in. Nasty fine:
 drunk in public.

He takes back his twenty.

MICHAEL
 I'll make sure she's properly
 thanked, and thank you for
 everything, even the note.

Lou laughs.

LOU
 Sage-like advice. Glad you
 appreciated. Not everyone does.

MICHAEL
 I'll keep that in mind, and keep
 things strictly business this time
 around.

LOU
 Well, I'm sure you can fit in a
 little pleasure while you're here,
 Mr...

MICHAEL
 Morone. Michael Morone.

They shake hands.

LOU
 Lou Dobson. Pleasure to officially
 meet you.... Assuming that is your
 real name.

MICHAEL
 As far as my birth certificate is
 concerned.

LOU
 Well, I applaud your honesty.
 (MORE)

LOU (CONT'D)
 Around here nicknames and
 pseudonyms are king. So many
 secrets. Glad to have a straight
 shooter in our midst.

Michael shrugs.

MICHAEL
 Hey, I am what I am.

LOU
 And, you know what, it takes all
 kinds. Welcome, Mr. Morone. The
 house is yours.

Michael ventures inside.

INT. DIVAS DEL SOL

Michael makes his way over to the stage. The same DJ plays.
 The same bartender serves. Most of the same girls dance. It is
 as if time has stood still.

Vegas and strip clubs: they all abide by the same principal-
 There is always time for a good time.

Michael spots Felicity. She flirts with the usual suspects. He
 heads he way. She waves as he approaches.

FELICITY
 Well if it isn't Sleeping Beauty,
 back from the dead.

He rubs his neck.

MICHAEL
 Ta-da?

FELICITY
 You're lucky Lou is such a beast,
 mister. Otherwise, we'd be having
 this conversation from two
 different sides of a prison cell.

MICHAEL
 And if that were the case, it
 wouldn't be that much of a
 conversation at all.

FELICITY
 Too true.

Michael pauses, considering his next words.

MICHAEL

That was a very nice thing you did.

FELICITY

Hey, it's bad marketing leaving clients behind. Call it littering or loitering, it's still bad for business.

Michael takes out the twenty and hands it to her.

MICHAEL

Here. Take it. As a thank you.

She shelves the cash in her bra.

FELICITY

I never say "no" to good money.

MICHAEL

That's cuz you're smart.

FELICITY

If I'm so smart, why am I still here?

MICHAEL

That's your question to answer, not mine.

She smiles.

FELICITY

You want to know why?

MICHAEL

Why?

FELICITY

Because I'm darn good at what I do. Speaking of which, is there any other service I can provide for you... If you've got time, that is.

MICHAEL

I've got time. And money.

FELICITY

Now you're speaking my language. What can I do for you?

MICHAEL
I need to pick your brain.

FELICITY
(pensively)
Conversations? Those will cost
you. What about?

MICHAEL
Love. Intimacy. Things like that.
Your specialties.

She rubs her chin.

FELICITY
Ok. I may be game. One last
question...

MICHAEL
Shoot.

FELICITY
Aren't you a little old to get the
sex talk?

Michael's eyes roll.

MICHAEL
Hardy, freakin' ha.

FELICITY
I know. I'm a riot, right? Tell
you what: If you've got forty
dollars, you've got my ear.

MICHAEL
Sounds good to me.

He hands her the money.

FELICITY
(pocketing the money)
Look at you. Cut drinking expenses
and suddenly you're Mr. Moneybags.
I like it.

MICHAEL
Eh, what's a buck between friends?

Felicity offers him her hand.

FELICITY
Friends? Ok. We can be friends.
(MORE)

FELICITY (CONT'D)
 Help me down from this stage and
 we can be anything you want.
 These shoes are killing me.

Michael looks down at her legs to her feet. Honestly, her shoes astound her. There is a six inch heel on them.

MICHAEL
 You planning on stabbing someone
 with those?

FELICITY
 If need be. Beautiful and deadly
 have always been two winning words
 with me.

MICHAEL
 I'll keep them that in mind.

He gives her his hand and escorts her down from the stage, guides her to an open table, and pulls out a chair for her.

FELICITY
 Much obliged.

She daintily sits, making sure to tuck the fringes of her skirt under her so as not to rip them.

She crosses her arms and leans forward. Time for business.

FELICITY
 So, what do you want to know?

MICHAEL
 Permission to speak freely?

FELICITY
 Only if the permission is mutual.

Michael nods.

MICHAEL
 Fair enough.

FELICITY
 (waving him on)
 Then proceed.

MICHAEL
 Last night, you made me hard.

She is slightly taken aback by his bluntness, but recovers quickly.

FELICITY

Go me?

MICHAEL

That doesn't usually happen.

FELICITY

So you told me yesterday.

He anxiously rubs his forearm.

MICHAEL

I did, huh? Great, well now you know. The thing I don't know is why here and now. I mean, why can I get a rise here in this dingy bar- no offense...

FELICITY

None taken.

MICHAEL

...And not in the warmth of my own bed.

She cracks her neck.

FELICITY

Maybe you're not the nice, warm bed kind of guy. Maybe you're, instead, the raw, spontaneous, porking at a random friend's dinner party type.

MICHAEL

(ill at ease)
At a dinner party? Really?

FELICITY

Just an example. Don't blame me if you don't get invited to anymore dinner parties that way though.

MICHAEL

I won't. Trust me, there are a few dinner parties I wouldn't mind not getting invited back to.

She chuckles.

FELICITY

Same here. And see, that's what I'm getting at... Middle class: it's all about comfort. Soft bed.

(MORE)

Made in Highland

FELICITY (CONT'D)

Steady job. College education.
Boring! You insert an ounce of
excitement, danger, or passion
into the mix and- boom!- you've
got a recipe for instant success.
Men love it. Their ladies love
it, too, cuz let's face it...
They're bored stiff too.

MICHAEL

You think so?

FELICITY

Uh, yeah. I know so. I mean, why
do you think Fifty Shades is so
popular right now? Modern society
puts women on a pedestal. For
better or for worse. Women are
strong. Women are brave. Women are
powerful... All of that is true!
But, still, that doesn't mean we
want our men bending over to our
every whim and worshipping our
vagina. No, we want a man who's as
equally strong as we are. To
challenge and inspire us. We're
hungry for that and, when we get
it, that's when sparks happen.

MICHAEL

So you're saying that I'm-

Felicity vigorously nods her head.

FELICITY

Uh-huh. Totally pussy-whipped.
Scared out of your gourd. Pathetic

FELICITY (CONT'D)

little sheep-dog. Dude, you've got
to stop that stuff. If it means I
lose a customer in the process, I
am okay with that... Just so long
as you stop pleading with your
woman and start pleasing her, I
can die a happy woman.

Michael leans back.

MICHAEL

Woah. That's a lot to take in.

Made in Highland

FELICITY
Deep stuff, I know.

She uncrosses her arms..

FELICITY (CONT'D)
So, what are we going to do?

MICHAEL
We, I, er...

FELICITY
Lame. Fail. Now, again, what are you going to do?

MICHAEL
I'm going to make love to my wife.

FELICITY
And how are you going to do it?

MICHAEL
Like I mean it.

FELICITY
And you're not going to be afraid?

MICHAEL
And I'm not going to be afraid.

FELICITY
And you're gonna take the reigns like a freakin' man should.

MICHAEL
And I'm gonna take the reigns.

FELICITY
Good, then you have my blessing to ride that cowgirl ' til sun-up.

MICHAEL
Whoeee! Dang girl, you're good.

Michael slinks back for a moment as he notices his excitement has caught the attention of the rest of the club.

Felicity just smiles.

FELICITY
I know, nut remember: I'm just a girl, like any other, and you're not afraid.

Michael nods.

Made in Highland

MICHAEL
Right.

FELICITY
Good. You ready?

Michael glances down. His manhood has triumphantly returned.

MICHAEL
Looks like it.

She makes the PEACE SIGN with her fingers and runs her tongue through it.

FELICITY
Then, rock on, Brother. If you think to do it, let me know how it goes. I've got to know if all this is just a bunch of hot air.

Michael laughs.

MICHAEL
Will do.

He gets up from the table taller than before.

INT. MORONE HOME- THE NEXT DAY

Lucille gets home from work.

LUCILLE
Hey, Baby, I'm home. Sorry I'm late. I had to grab some-

She stops and looks around. Lavender-scented candles burn everywhere. Marvin Gaye plays through the Bose sound system. Rose pedals line the floor.

She drops the groceries. Michael stand before her in a velvet robe.

MICHAEL
Hi.

LUCILLE
Uh, hi. This is... unexpected.

MICHAEL
You like?

LUCILLE
I like. What's the occasion.

He closes in.

MICHAEL
No occasion.

LUCILLE
Did you break something?

She takes a step back.

MICHAEL
More like fix it. At least, that's
my hope.

She takes a final step back. Now, she is up against the door.

LUCILLE
Can I help?

He brings his face so close to hers that he can feel the warmth of her breath against his cheeks. Her chest heaves. His legs brush up against hers. Her runs his hands across her side, under her shirt.

MICHAEL
If you wouldn't mind.

LUCILLE
Not at all.

He kisses her powerfully, pressing her body up against the door in the process. There is nowhere to go. Nothing to be. Just them. In that moment.

He removes her shirt, kisses her neck and chest. They slide down onto the floor

The candlelight dances upon the wick. The music plays. The lovers slip OUT OF SHOT, away from under the CAMERA's prying lens.

Moans are heard, sounds of love and excitement, followed violent explosions of raw passion.

The hands of the clock swirl around until they exhaust themselves entirely. Then, at last, they are still.

INT. MORONE HOME (BEDROOM)- LATER

Michael and Lucille lie naked on the floor. Lucille massages his chest.

Made in Highland

LUCILLE
Where did that come from?

MICHAEL
Guess it's been there all along.
Been doing a lot of self-
empowerment exercises lately.
Heck of a time for them to finally
kick in.

LUCILLE
Well, whatever you're doing, keep
it up.

She strikes him with a pillow.

MICHAEL
Hey, what was that for?

LUCILLE
For making me wait so long.

He pauses.

MICHAEL
Was it worth it?

LUCILLE
(playfully)
I'm not sure.

MICHAEL
No?

LUCILLE
Try me again. You know, to verify.

MICHAEL
I can do that.

He pounces on top of her.

LUCILLE
Last time was good, but this time
I want you to come at me harder.

MICHAEL
Your wish is my command.

He nods. He bites hard into her lower lip. She digs her nails into his back. A jolt of pleasure springs up both of their spines, They make love again. Blood, sweat, and sweet, sweet love.

INT. BUS- THE NEXT DAY

Michael sits in the bus with a JEWELRY CASE in hand. He opens the case. A PENDANT lies inside with two, jade doves hovering over a heart of white gold.

The old man look over his shoulder at the piece.

OLD MAN
Nice piece of bling you got there.

MICHAEL
Thanks.

Michael turns.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
Oh, hey! How's it going?

OLD MAN
Fine. Just fine. Who's the lucky lady?

MICHAEL
My wife.

OLD MAN
(nodding)
Ha! Always a good person to buy nice presents for.

MICHAEL
I'd like to think so.

The old man rests his head against the seat cushion.

OLD MAN
So, you seem better today than when I last saw you.

MICHAEL
Like night and day. You definitely helped, plus I got some advice from a rather unexpected place, which totally set me back on the right track.

OLD MAN
Glad to hear that. Life can do that to you: hit you with good and bad news from the side. Almost never head on.

MICHAEL
So, I'm learning, and I'll take
it!

OLD MAN
And now that you're on the right
track, made up with your wife,
what's next?

MICHAEL
(craning his neck)
Well, I kinda still need a new
job. I hear a reliable source of
income can be a very good thing
to have.

OLD MAN
(aside)
I might be able to help out with
that.

Michael turns his full attention to the man.

MICHAEL
Really?! If you could do that,
that would be just awesome. I'd
seriously owe you one.

The old man shakes his head.

OLD MAN
I'm not in the business of holding
debts, son, but I do like to help
out when I can. Young fellows such
as yourself... They're not the
only ones struggling to find
usefulness in this world Getting
old is not easy, you know.

MICHAEL
No, I'd imagine not.

OLD MAN
It does have its advantages
though. For example, getting to
watch your children exceed your
expectations. That is really
something. My son owns his own
business.

MICHAEL
Lucky him.

OLD MAN

He earned it, built it from the ground up. He is the man I'd like to get you in touch with.

MICHAEL

Oh? What's his name? George Grayson Jr.. Spitting image of his old man. Once you meet him you'll see.

Michael's throat tightens as the reality of the situation springs on him.

MICHAEL

Did you say, George Grayson- as in, Head of Skyrock Tech?

OLD MAN

The very same. You know him?

Michael bobs his head back and forth, wondering how much he should let on.

MICHAEL

Eh, rings a bell. It's a small world.

OLD MAN

That it is! Tell you what: I'll give him a call first thing in the morning and see what I can do.

MICHAEL

Uh, thank you. Thank you so much!

OLD MAN

Happy to help. A rising star like you, I can tell you'll go places. Only a man who's fallen like you have really knows what it takes to climb very high.

MICHAEL

Well, I greatly appreciate it. The name is Morone. Michael Morone.

They shake hands.

MICHAEL

George Grayson, Sr. But you can call me George.

Made in Highland

MICHAEL

Ok, George. You got it.

There is steam building up under Michael's collar. He waits until he is off the bus to let it all out.

INT. SKYROCK TECH (OFFICE)- LATER

George Grayson Jr. stands nonplussed beside his old man, who has Michael steadfastly held under his wing.

GRAYSON SR.

Son, I'd like you to meet a good man: Michael Morone.

Grayson Jr. stoically shakes hands with Micheal.

GRAYSON JR.

Good to meet you, sir.

MICHAEL

Likewise, Mr. Grayson.

Gayson Sr. picks up on the tension but cuts right through it.

GRAYSON SR.

Mr. Morone has made quite an impact on me. I really think he'd make a valuable member of your team.

GRAYSON JR.

Oh... Definitely. Definitely. I'll make to sure to phone personnel today and get him connected up with us.

Michael flashes him a knowing smile.

MICHAEL

Thank you so much, sir. It will be a pleasure working for you.

GRAYSON JR.

Oh, the pleasure is all mine. Any friend of my father's...

Grayson Jr. trails off.

Grayson Sr. puts his arms around both of them.

GRAYSON SR.

I'm so glad to see that the two of
(MORE)

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GRAYSON SR. (CONT'D)
you are getting along so well. I
hoped you would.

MICHAEL
(cockily)
Same here. I just know we're going
to be bosom buddies.

Grayson Jr. sneers at him, then quickly converts the look to a smile to save face.

INT. MORONE HOME (LIVING ROOM)

Michael unlocks the front door. Lucille is hard at work in the kitchen.

MICHAEL
Honey, I'm home.

LUCILLE (O.S.)
Come into the kitchen. I don't
want to burn the steaks.

Michael enters the kitchen. Lucille is in the kitchen, wearing nothing but an apron.

MICHAEL
Well, hello there.

She turns to him with a elfish smile.

LUCILLE
How was your day?

MICHAEL
It was... great, actually.

LUCILLE
Oh? How so?

MICHAEL
Got my old job back.

LUCILLE
Really? Though that would be a bad
thing. You hated that job.

MICHAEL
Not when there is a promotion in
tow. And get this, Grayson himself
offered the job.

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He sets his finger along the small of her back. She smacks it with a spatula. He retracts.

LUCILLE

No early desserts for you, mister. Now, wait, I just can't see that man doing a one eighty. What's the catch? You blackmailing him?

Michael shakes his head. Lucille seems a little disappointed.

MICHAEL

No. Just met up with his old man on the bus. The guy really likes me, so he had Grayson offer me a job.

LUCILLE

Ha! That's fantastic, a riot in fact.

Michael stands around, stealing multiple glances of his sassy and gorgeous wife.

LUCILLE (CONT'D)

The table won't set itself you know.

MICHAEL

Of course. I'll get right on it.

He grabs the utensils and plates and arranges them carefully on the table.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

I tell you, this is gonna be the beginning of something good. I can just feel it.

LUCILLE

Me too.

MICHAEL

Table is set!

LUCILLE

In record time too. Gotta keep this trick in mind for next time. Really helps speed things along.

MICHAEL

As long as we're not inviting guests?

Made in Highland

LUCILLE
You embarrassed of me?

MICHAEL
Not at all. I'd shout you praises
to the world.

LUCILLE
No time like the present.

He playfully runs to the window and flings it open.

MICHAEL
I love my wife!

He pulls his head back into the kitchen.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
You happy?

LUCILLE
Extremely. And look: dinner is
ready.

MICHAEL
Imagine that.

He sits down. She comes over with the steaks. She bends over,
giving him a complimentary glance of her exceptional breasts.

LUCILLE
Bon Appétit.

MICHAEL
Mmm. Thank you.

She serves the food and joins him at the table.

LUCILLE
Now say grace.

Michael bows his head. Lucille does the same.

MICHAEL
Thank you God for that which we
are about to receive.

LUCILLE
Amen.

They lift their heads and lock eyes.

LUCILLE (CONT'D)
Pass the salt, if you'd be so
(MORE)

LUCILLE (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

kind.

He picks up the shaker and gives it- well- a shake.

INT. SKYROCK TECH (OFFICE)- THE NEXT DAY

Michael types away at his computer with a smug grin on his face. He has an office now. Even a door. Grayson raps on it and waits.

MICHAEL

(singing)

Come in.

GRAYSON

Just wanted to say welcome back,
Mr. Morone.

MICHAEL

Why thank you, sir. Glad to be
back.

GRAYSON

I gravely apologize for the
misunderstanding from the other
day. Please consider I was only
looking out for the good of the
company.

MICHAEL

Oh, I'm sure, and don't worry.
It's water under the bridge.

GRAYSON

Glad to hear it.

MICHAEL

After all, everyone makes
mistakes.

Grayson swallows his pride through the gaps in his front
teeth.

GRAYSON

Yessss.

Grayson digs into his jacket pocket and pulls out a SMALL
ENVELOPE.

GRAYSON (CONT'D)

Now, as a means of expressing my
heartfelt apologies, I'd like to
(MORE)

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GRAYSON (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
invite you to our Annual
Executive's Ball. All the best and
brightest from our company will be
there.

Michael sweeps the envelope from out of Grayson's hand, rips it open, and examines its contents. Once everything checks out, Michael nods.

MICHAEL
Aw, thanks, Mr. Grayson. That's
awful nice of you.

GRAYSON
It's the least I could do. And
please feel free to bring your
lovely wife along as well.

MICHAEL
Oh yes, wouldn't do anything
without her.

GRAYSON
No, I wouldn't expect so. I
earnestly look forward to seeing
you there.

MICHAEL
Same here. Ta.

Grayson exits. Michael stashes the envelope beneath his keyboard.

INT. MORONE HOME (BEDROOM)- LATER

Michael dangles the envelope above his wife's head. She swats at it as he lifts it up and down like a pinata.

LUCILLE
Let me see that.

She elbows him in the gut. He lowers the envelope.

MICHAEL
Ooh, no fair.

LUCILLE
Fair is a place where they go
judge pigs. Besides, everyone
knows life isn't fair. Not even
in love...

MICHAEL
 (wincing)
 And war.

She opens up the envelope and reads the invitation inside.

LUCILLE (CONT'D)
 "To whom it may concern: We hereby cordially invite you to the Annual Executives' Ball, held..." Blah, blah, blah. "RSVP immediately..." Yadda yadda yadda "Drinks and food will be served.

She turns to her husband.

LUCILLE (CONT'D)
 Wait, baby, is this for real?

MICHAEL
 One hundred percent. At this rate, I'm a shoe in for management by the end of the year.

She kicks her feet with excitement.

LUCILLE
 That's wonderful. To think: by then, you'll finally be able to provide for me in a manner in which I can grow accustomed to.

MICHAEL
 I know, right?! Who'd've thunk it?

She pats him on the shoulder.

LUCILLE
 You did good. I'm proud of you.

MICHAEL
 I'm proud of me too.

She smacks him with a pillow. He just smiles.

He lies back in bed with his arms unfurled. His gaze falls whimsically upon the ceiling.

MICHAEL
 To think: in a short span of time, people could be looking up to me, even referring to me as Mr. Morone.

LUCILLE

I hope you go places. I hope you go as far as any man possible can. Because we're a team.

MICHAEL

We're a team.

LUCILLE

Now the only thing I've got to worry about is making sure no pretty little thing snatches you out from under me. That happens, you know. All the time. A little bit of pride and it goes straight to his junk.

He wraps his arms tightly around her and laughs.

MICHAEL

Don't worry, hon. These arms: they're as tight as a vice and all around you

She kisses him.

LUCILLE

Well said. So, Mr. Morone: what's the first item on the agenda for tonight?

MICHAEL

(playfully haughty)

I thought a little fraternization with the help might be in order.

LUCILLE

Oh? Anyone you had in mind.

MICHAEL

I'd say so. One must keep such persons in mind, at all times in fact. After all, it can get rather lonely up there at the top.

LUCILLE

I'd be happy to volunteer for the job, if you're taking applicants.

MICHAEL

Hon, you're already signed up. The sole applicant in fact. Passed with flying colors.

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LUCILLE

That's very good to know. And how long does is the position open.

MICHAEL

Now and forever.

LUCILLE

Perfect. I'm all in.

They kiss. He tickles her underneath the sheets. She giggles. She turns off the light.

Under the soft glow of moonlight, they recommence their sultry, nocturnal dance.

EXT. SKYROCK TECH- LATER

Michael opens the car door for Lucille. Michael is dressed in a tuxedo. Lucille wears a shimmering ballgown.

LUCILLE

Why thank you, sir.

MICHAEL

Anytime.

She gets out. He closes the door. They step toward the entrance of the building.

LUCILLE

So, how many people are expected to be at this little shindig?

MICHAEL

It's not so much the number of people expected to be there, but rather the caliber.

LUCILLE

Hmm. Well, we raise the bar so high already, it'll be fascinating to see who else makes the cut.

MICHAEL

Indeed.

LUCILLE

And you're going to introduce me to all these new fancy friend you've made?

Made in Highland

MICHAEL
Like your were the hottest new
attraction the world has ever
seen.

LUCILLE
Oooh, then I'm eager to rub elbows
with all of them.

MICHAEL
You should be.

They reach the front entrance. Michael opens the door.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
After you.

LUCILLE
Graci. You open the door for me,
and the world opens the door for
you.

MICHAEL
Exactly.

She walks by him. He pinches her butt.

LUCILLE
Careful, Tiger. You're not the
only one with claws.

MICHAEL
Maybe I want the claws to come
out.

Lucille winks at him.

LUCILLE
Be careful what you wish for. You
just might get it.

She enters the building. Michael follows suit.

INT. SKYROCK TECH (LOBBY)

Michael spots Employee #2.

MICHAEL
(waving him down)
Hey, you. How's it going?

The employee's jaw drops.

EMPLOYEE #
Good, good, and you?

MICHAEL
Top of the world, man.

EMPLOYEE #2
Glad to hear it. Say, didn't
you...

Michael brushes the comment off.

MICHAEL
Naw, just a media stunt. Grayson
was just pulling a fast one to
boost productivity. The old man
loves me!

EMPLOYEE #2
Cool. Well, nice to see you again.

MICHAEL
You as well.

Michael keeps on walking. Other employees turn their gaze to him. Their wives and other significant others do their best to correct their partners' rude gestures. Michael and Lucille pay them no mind.

LUCILLE
(under her breath)
They're staring at us.

MICHAEL
(under his breath)
Good. Let them look. From here on
out, all they're gonna see is the
seat of my pants as I climb up
that old corporate ladder.

She hugs his arm.

LUCILLE
Well, aren't you the fireball.

MICHAEL
You have no idea.

They reach the elevator. Michael waves her forward.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
Going up?

LUCILLE
I do believe we are.

They climb inside the lift. The door closes. They rise to the EXECUTIVE SUITE.

INT. SKYROCK RECH (EXECUTIVE SUITE)

Michael and Lucille, now tightly arm in arm, laugh as they exit the elevator.

The SUITE is full of commotion. Men in tuxedos. Women in designer clothes and expensive jewelry. Champagne carried by highbrowed waiters. An open bar. Spirited murmurs about stock options and vertical integration.

They walk a few yards into the suite. Grayson Sr. spots the couple and waves them down.

GRAYSON SR.
Michael! So glad you could make it.

He and Michael shake hands.

MICHAEL
Likewise. You're looking dapper.

Grayson Sr. brushes the shoulder of his Armani tux.

GRAYSON SR.
Why thank you. You're not looking so bad yourself.

MICHAEL
(gesticulating toward his wife)
Much appreciated. Allow me to introduce you to my wife, Lucille.

Grayson Sr. takes Lucille's hand and kisses it. Lucille smiles.

MICHAEL
Hon, this is Mr. George Grayson Sr., father of my boss.

LUCILLE (CONT'D)
What a wonderful company your son operates. Thank you so much for allowing us to be part of it.

GRAYSON SR.

Nevermind that. We're lucky ones to have your husband aboard. And, with such a lovely woman such as yourself at his side, I don't see any reason why we shouldn't expect anything but the best from him.

Lucille blushes.

LUCILLE

You're too kind.

GRAYSON SR.

Only being honest. Only being honest. Still, I won't hold you up any longer. I'm sure you want to enjoy this fabulous party.

MICHAEL

Are you kidding?! Our time is yours.

GRAYSON SR.

No, no. There are lots of people you simply have to meet. Now go, off with you. Have fun.

Grayson Sr. looks over his shoulders.

GRAYSON SR. (CONT'D)

My son should be around here somewhere. Makes sure he introduces you to all them personally.

MICHAEL

I most certainly will.

Grayson Sr. reaches out to take Lucille's hand once more.

GRAYSON SR.

All my best to you, my dear. Keep this one in line for me, would you you? Even the best and brightest need a good anchor.

LUCILLE

(looking to her husband)
Oh, I will.

MICHAEL

You have a marvelous night.

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GRAYSON SR.
You two as well, and do make sure
to wave goodbye before you exit.

LUCILLE
We'll make a point of it.

Grayson Sr. wanders off to chitchat with the other Kings and Queens of High Society.

LUCILLE (CONT'D)
(aside)
Well, he's certainly the
charmer...

MICHAEL
(aside)
And his snake shouldn't be that
far away either.

They search the crowd until they George Grayson Jr, who is presently accompanied by none other than Felicity.

It takes a moment for Michael to recognize her. Her tassels and glitter are gone and have been replaced by permed hair and flawless makeup. Michael stumbles over his own feet as he sees her.

LUCILLE
(concernedly)
You okay?

MICHAEL
Yeah, just the alcohol talking.

LUCILLE
(curiously)
But you haven't had any yet...

MICHAEL
Preemptive strike. Maybe I should
hit the restroom before taking on
Grayson.

LUCILLE
Yeah. Sure. Do what you've got to
do.

Grayson Jr. spots him on his way out.

GRAYSON JR.
Morone!

Michael stops, turns. Grayson beckons.

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GRAYSON JR. (CONT'D)
Get on over here.

Lucille tugs on Michael's shirt sleeve, encouraging him to do as Grayson says. Michael gulps down the little spittle in his throat and wanders over to his boss.

GRAYSON JR. (CONT'D)
Good to see you, my friend.

He and Michael shake hands.

MICHAEL
Likewise, Mr. Grayson.

GRAYSON JR.
I see you brought your lovely wife along, as expected. Wonderful.

He and Lucille shake hands.

LUCILLE
Mr. Grayson... My husband has said wonderful things.

Grayson Jr. laughs.

GRAYSON JR.
I'm sure.

He turns to Felicity.

GRAYSON JR. (CONT'D)
This... is my girlfriend,
Felicity.

FELICITY
Pleased to meet your acquaintance,
Mr....

Michael pauses. A cold sweat collects around his brow. He holds out his hand to take hers.

MICHAEL
Morone. Michael Morone.

FELICITY
Mr. Morone.

MICHAEL
And, er, and this is my wife,
Lucinda... uh, Lucille.

Lucille shakes Felicity's hand.

LUCILLE
Hello, Felicity.

FELCITY
Hello, Mrs. Morone. Pleasure.

An awkward silence creeps into the conversation. Grayson Jr. greets it with a warm smile.

GRAYSON JR.
Enjoying the party so far?

MICHAEL
Oh, yes. It's lovely. You certainly spared no expense.

GRAYSON JR.
Certainly not. Why do otherwise? I mean, when the payoff is so great.

LUCILLE
Our thoughts exactly.

GRAYSON JR.
Glad you agree, Mrs. Morone. I am so happy to have your husband back with us. He really is an invaluable asset to this company.

LUCILLE
We're delighted to be here.

GRAYSON JR.
And I want to apologize for my indiscretion with the business card. I thought it would provide relief, but really it did nothing but the opposite.

LUCILLE
Accidents happen.

GRAYSON JR.
Well spoken, and thank you for your understanding.

LUCILLE
You're welcome. Sometimes we must plow ahead to form a better tomorrow.

GRAYSON JR.
Indeed.

Michael shifts nervously in place.

MICHAEL

Speaking of plowing ahead, we'd really hate to be a bother. If you have other obligations now, feel free.

GRAYSON JR.

All in good time. All in good time. Meanwhile, it would be good to just chat with you wonderful people. Business can be so cutthroat at times, can't it? One must take every opportunity to unwind. Yes?

MICHAEL

Yes. Well, if it's no bother, then yes, I'd love to chat.

GRAYSON JR.

Excellent. We can use my private office to do so. Being in my position certainly has its perks. At your rate, you will very soon find that out for yourself.

MICHAEL

Yes I look forward to it.

They move into Grayson's private office.

INT. SKYROCK TECK (OFFICE)

The design is simple and elegant. Teak furnishings. Gold inlays. Paper lanterns. Lots of red and black in the color scheme.

The four partygoers take a seat on a nearby leather couch. Grayson Jr. takes a champagne flute and raises it high into the air.

GRAYSON JR.

A toast to the future of Skyrock Technologies. May it be a long and

GRAYSON JR. (CONT'D)

prosperous for all.

The others raise their glasses.

ALL

Cheers!

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Michael gulps down his flute so quickly that it dribbles down the side of his mouth and down onto his chin.

LUCILLE

Babe!

Lucille wipes the side of his mouth with her napkin.

LUCILLE (CONT'D)

(to the others)

Honestly, I can't take this one anywhere.

Grayson Jr. laughs.

GRAYSON JR.

We encourage a healthy appetite here at Skyrock Don't we, Mr. Morone?

Michael turns red.

MICHAEL

Yessir. That we do.

Lucille crumples up her napkin and turns her attention back to present company, specifically to Felicity. Felicity coolly matches her gaze.

LUCILLE

You look so familiar. Have we met before?

FELICITY

I don't believe so, but I get that a lot. I have one of those faces I suppose.

LUCILLE

(momentarily appeased)

I guess so.

GRAYSON JR.

Felicity is a bit of a social butterfly. Perhaps you've seen her out and about.

LUCILLE

I don't get out much.

(to Michael)

Keeping my husband out of trouble is a bit of a full-time endeavor.

Grayson nods.

Made in Highland

GRAYSON JR.

I could imagine, and you seem to be doing rather well at it, especially recently. His transformation has been absolutely astounding. Keep up the good work.

LUCILLE

Well, I can't say that I can take the credit for the change all by my lonesome. This new Michael comes as a bit of a surprise to me as well... Not that I'm complaining. Quite the opposite in fact.

Grayson Jr. leans in towards Michael.

GRAYSON JR.

Interesting. So, do tell us, Mr. Morone. What ever is your secret, if not for your vision of a wife?

Michael's eyes shift around, looking for an exit but finding none. His gaze stops at Felicity. They lock eyes. Felicity signals him to move on. He does so, though not without Lucille noticing it.

MICHAEL

I- uh, well- ha, the thing is... it's not all that exciting.

GRAYSON JR.

Even still, won't you entertain us. After all, we are your captive audience.

MICHAEL

I've been, uh...

LUCILLE

Go ahead, baby. Tell him.

MICHAEL

Okay. It's a little bit

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

embarrassing but I- I've been seeing a life coach.

Everyone leans back. Nobody quite expected that reply.

Made in Highland

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

I don't talk about her much. I mean, what is a life coach anyway. It takes more effort to explain what a life coach is than to actually talk about the life-change she brings with her.

GRAYSON JR.

But surely we must give this person credit where credit is due. Who is she? Perhaps I might recommend her to others.

MICHAEL

She- well- she prefers to keep a low profile. She caters mostly to celebrity types. Anonymity is key.

GRAYSON JR.

I see. Well, let me ask you this then: How did you have the good fortune of meeting her?

MICHAEL

It's a funny story, actually. You see... I... I...

Felicity jumps in.

FELICITY

Sweetheart, please, you're belaboring the point. If he doesn't want to say, he doesn't have to.

GRAYSON JR.

How hard is it to speak the obvious and get on with it?

FELICITY

You want the obvious... All right, here it is.

(to Lucille)

Mrs. Morone, the person of which Michael is painfully and vague referring to is... me.

Lucille leans back.

LUCILLE

You?

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FELICITY

Yes. I'm the life coach in question. Grayson gave him my number shortly before he had to let Michael go the first time around. After Michael got canned, I agreed to do work for him pro bono, with the understanding that he would pay me when he was fiscally and mentally in a place where he was able to do so.

Felicity looks at Michael.

FELICITY (CONT'D)

The whole thing was intended to be kept under wraps. I don't usually do charity work. It threatens the value of the service I provide my richer clients. Still, the change I have seen in Michael recently has been well worth the hassle.

LUCILLE

(confused)

I see. Well... Thank you for your service. I suppose I owe you a great deal of gratitude.

FELICITY

Think nothing of it. It's simply what I do.

GRAYSON JR.

But, sweetheart, don't you want you exploits known?

FELICITY

Not today, dear. Sometimes we must take one for the team. Surely, you must understand this?

GRAYSON JR.

(crossly)

If you insist.

Grayson Jr. sets his flute roughly down on the couch, spilling champagne thereupon.

FELICITY (CONT'D)

Dear, you're making a mess.

GRAYSON JR.

The staff will clean it up.

(MORE)

Made in Highland

GRAYSON JR. (CONT'D)
 Now, if you'll excuse me, I've
 got to catch some air.

FELICITY
 Do you need some company?

GRAYSON JR.
 No. No thank you.

Lucille taps Michael on the shoulder.

LUCILLE
 But Mr. Grayson , your father was
 so insistent on you showing my
 husband around. Perhaps you could
 do so only the way passed the
 window?

Grayson Jr. musters up a plastered smile.

GRAYSON JR.
 I suppose I could do that, yes.
 All right, then. Follow me, Mr.
 Morone. We have much to discuss.

MICHAEL
 On my way!
 (to Lucille and Felicity)
 You girls have fun, and sorry
 about the confusion.

FELICITY
 Think nothing of it. See you two
 in a bit.
 (to Grayson Jr.)
 Kisses.

Grayson Jr. blows her a kiss back and departs. As Michael
 catches up, Grayson takes him forcefully by the arm.

GRAYSON JR.
 (through clenched teeth)
 If you think you can just waltz in
 here and make a fool out of me,
 think again. I promise you sooner
 or later your day will come.

MICHAEL
 (with a witty grin)
 'Til then, muffin, I believe you
 have an empire to present to me on
 a silver platter.

Grayson grumbles.

The men exit. The CAMERA stays with the women.

Lucille self-consciously rubs her shoulder.

LUCILLE

You really did do a good job on him.

FELICITY

Thank you.

LUCILLE

How'd you do it? I don't mean to pry, or to ruin any industry secrets, but he's my husband. A wife's supposed to know him inside and out, and you seemed to unlock him without any effort at all.

Felicity shakes her head.

FELICITY

Trust me, I wasn't doing anything you weren't. In fact, without you, I'm sure he'd still be as worse off as he ever was.

LUCILLE

If only I could believe you.

Lucille looks at the floor.

FELICITY

You don't believe you're a good wife?

LUCILLE

Not all the time. I don't think any sane person does. There's always room for improvement. I'm sure he feels the same way. That's why he hired you.

FELICITY

Trust me, you're doing great.

FELICITY (CONT'D)

Michael has told me on multiple occasions how much he loves you. Everything he has done is for you.

She tears up, then laughs.

Made in Highland

LUCILLE (CONT'D)

It's funny to hear all this coming from you now. When I first saw you, I thought you brought only trouble. Don't get me wrong, you're amazing; but the way he was looking at you, I thought there was something there. Something not platonic in the least.

Felicity nods.

FELICITY

Trust me, you wouldn't be the first one worrying about that. My line of work requires a closeness to my clients that can easily be misconstrued as, well, something else entirely.

Lucille smiles.

LUCILLE

What made you want to become a life coach in the first place?

FELICITY

An ex-boyfriend of mine, actually. He was a musician, and not a very good one at that. All broody and "fight the man." At first, it was great, to be in love with that kind of virgin flame; but after a while, it started to get old. He noticed. I noticed. He reached out for help. Together we landed him a job in the recording industry. That's where he is to this day, I think. Still on his feet. A big-shot in fact.

LUCILLE

And you and he?

FELICITY

Split. Caught him cheating on me. That's the danger of boosting a

FELICITY (CONT'D)

man's confidence: it goes to his head and to his balls. Neither of those things are convenient for lasting relationships.

Made in Highland

She chuckles.

LUCILLE
You ever figure out how to keep
that in check.

FELICITY
It's a delicate balance, really.
You want him to be a man, but you
also want him to be a good man.
It's a lot of trial and error.

LUCILLE
You can say that again. Well,
thanks for your story and your
time.

FELICITY
No worries. Say, do you have any
chapstick? My lips are killing me.

Lucille digs into her purse and takes out the requested item.

LUCILLE
Oh sure. Here you are.

FELICITY
You're a dear.

Felicity takes out a hand mirror and applies the chapstick. As
Felicity puckers her lips, Lucille catches her reflection in
the mirror.

The dark lips. The sultry eyes. The alluring physique. Lucille
recognizes all of them at the same time... From the woman in
the DIVAS DEL SOL ad. Lucille gasps.

LUCILLE
It's you!

FELICITY
Huh?

LUCILLE
You. From the Divas del Sol
advertisement?

FELICITY
(defensively)
I think you have me mixed up with
someone else.

LUCILLE
No. It's you all right.
(MORE)

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LUCILLE (CONT'D)
How could I have been so blind.

FELICITY
Please calm down, Mrs. Morone.
Let's not make a scene.

Lucille rises to her feet.

LUCILLE
A scene?! You want a scene. I can definitely get you one of those. To think I was duped by two bit stripper.

FELICITY
(getting irritable)
Hey, let's not get personal here.

LUCILLE
Personal? Let's talk about personal for a second. All those wonderful moves in bed, all that newfound confidence: he found those between your legs, didn't he?

FELICITY
No. Sorry, lady, that's not a service I provide.

LUCILLE
Well, remind me of the service you do provide. It's gotten real cloudy as of recent.

Felicity gets angry.

FELICITY
I built his confidence. I gave him back to you. End of story.

LUCILLE
For a pretty penny I bet?

FELICITY
Nothing comes for free.

Lucille shakes her head.

LUCILLE
People like you give women a bad name.

FELICITY

And people like you make sure that name keeps going.

Lucille tears up.

LUCILLE

You're right. I can't live up to the fantasy you create. So what? I don't waltz through life in a G-string. I have to work, have to eat, have to put up with all the stuff life throws at me.

FELICITY

And you think I don't? Sure, I create unrealistic expectations for the men I entertain, but so does everyone else. I don't ask them to clean up, dress nice, speak politely, and sit still. I invite them to be as wild and raucous as they were meant to be. It's not pretty, but at least it's real.

Lucille bites her thumb.

LUCILLE

So, what Michael and I have isn't real? Is that what you're saying?

FELICITY

I'm saying I gave you guys the chance to be more real than you've ever been. I'm not magic. I'm not special. I just gave Michael the permission to be himself, away from fear, doubt, and all the other shit we throw on metro-men today. People say, don't taste, don't touch. I say, dig in!

LUCILLE

I give him my all- body and soul- every day of our marriage. Isn't that enough?

FELICITY

And yet he was still afraid of it. You see, it's not you. It's society. I am the anti-society. That's why I was able to reach him in a way that you weren't.

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Lucille pauses.

LUCILLE
I'd say screw you, but I'm sure
enough people have already beaten
me to that pleasure.

The words sting. Lucille storms off. Felicity stares blankly off as she goes.

INT. SKYROCKTECH (EXECUTIVE SUITE)

Michael and Grayson Jr. chat with MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS.

GRAYSON JR.
I see the stock projections
looking very positive in the next
fiscal year...

Lucille charges toward her husband.

LUCILLE
(elbowing her way through
the crowd)
Excuse me. Pardon me. Pissed wife
coming through.

The crowd parts. All eyes turn to her.

MICHAEL
Hey, hon. Did you and Felicity
have a nice talk?

LUCILLE
Oh yes, very enlightening. In
fact...

Lucille snatches a champagne flute out from one of the member's hands.

LUCILLE (CONT'D)
If I may, I'd like to propose a
toast to my loyal husband. I think
he will fit in well here.

She tosses the champagne all over him.

LUCILLE (CONT'D)
Along with all the other snakes in
the grass preying on their wives
wasted love and affection here.

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MICHAEL

Wait? What? I don't-

LUCILLE

That's right, you don't anything.
Don't deserve me. Don't deserve
this. It's all a ruse. And guess
what? I'm calling you out on it,
here and now. Go ahead: show your
cards.

Michael sets his open hands before her, palm up.

MICHAEL

This is all I've got: two hands to
hold you; one heart to love you;
one mind made up in your favor.

LUCILLE

(tearing up)

I don't believe you.

He gets on his knees.

MICHAEL

Then, don't believe me. Instead,
believe this.

He reaches into his pocket and pulls out the pendant.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

I'm nothing without you. I need
you, Lucille. Can't you see that?

She snatches the pendant from the case. She gestures to toss
it away, yet keeps it in hand.

LUCILLE

I love you, baby, but how can I go
on knowing I'm not enough?

MICHAEL

You're more than enough. This
experience... this right here.. It
is all just a detour. That's all
it is.

She looks away.

LUCILLE

Maybe then it's time to let me off
and continue on without me. I'm
sure Felicity, for one, would make
a much lovelier companion than I.

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MICHAEL
Lucille....

She throws her hands up in the air and walks away. Michael slumps over. He does not follow.

Grayson Jr., meanwhile, takes the opportunity to rest a cold, calloused hand upon his shoulder.

GRAYSON JR.
Like I told you, Mr. Morone.
Eventually, it's always game over.

Felicity approaches.

FELICITY
Grayson, sweetheart?

GRAYSON JR.
Yes?

FELICITY
Shut up.

She socks him upside the head. He goes down. Felicity picks up Michael and departs.

EXT. SKYROCK TECH

Felicity and Michael sit on the street corner outside the towering building. Michael has his head in his hands.

MICHAEL
It's over.

FELICITY
Oh, stop being so melodramatic.
Nothing's over 'til it's over.

MICHAEL
But she left.

FELICITY
And she left before, right?

MICHAEL
Yes.

FELICITY
So, it's at least possible that
she might come back, right?

MICHAEL

Right.

FELICITY

So sit yourself up. I can't stand
a man with bad posture.

Michael sits up. He watches the cars go by.

MICHAEL

How's your hand?

She shows him her bruised knuckles.

FELICITY

Hurts like a mother.

MICHAEL

Solid right hook, though.

Felicity smiles.

FELICITY

In my line of work, a defenseless
woman is easy pickings, and we
girls are anything but easy.

MICHAEL

Apparently. So, what do I do now?

FELICITY

Nothing. You've done enough. It's
her turn now.

MICHAEL

To do what?

FELICITY

What she wants. Love is funny like
that. You can threaten it, cover
it, contain it, rename it.
Eventually, though, true love just
does its own thing. You've got to
be okay with that if you want a
prayer of having love survive.

MICHAEL

So, I- what?- go home and wait in
the meantime?

FELICITY

Pretty much.

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MICHAEL

Ok. Guess I'll get going then.

He gets up.

FELICITY

Guess so.

He looks back.

MICHAEL

Sorry for getting you mixed up in all this.

FELICITY

Eh, comes with the territory. All the more reason for a solid right hook.

MICHAEL

You need anything?

FELICITY

Naw. I'm good.

She looks down the course of the street.

FELICITY (CONT'D)

Actually, if you could spot me some money for cab fare, I would be most appreciative of that.

MICHAEL

I could give you a ride?

FELICITY

Naw, something tells me putting distance between my butt and the inside of your car would be a very good thing right now. One whiff of my Chanel and your wife... Let's say it would be counter-productive, to say the least.

MICHAEL

Point taken.

Michael reaches into his wallet and takes out the last of his thousand dollars. He hands it to her.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Keep the change.

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FELICITY
You're Aces.

She gets up, brushes herself off, and waves a TAXI down. When it starts to pass her up, she flashes the driver. The car stops immediately.

FELICITY (CONT'D)
For what it's worth, I do hope you
and your wife get back together.
The ooie-gooey love stuff is
confusing, but nice.

MICHAEL
Safe travels. Tell Lou high for
me.

FELICITY
Will do.

She gets in the cab and the vehicle starts off down the road. Michael waves goodbye.

INT. MORONE HOME (BEDROOM)- LATER

Lucille sits on the bed she shares with her husband. The pendant rests loosely in her hand.

She flips it over. It has an inscription on the back:

TO MY LOVELY WIFE, LUCILLE

She drops the chain. The pendant dangles in mid-air.

OUT OF SHOT: Michael enters.

Lucille considers running, but she is out of places to go.

Michael makes his way into the bedroom.

LUCILLE
Hi.

MICHAEL
Hey.

LUCILLE
I don't hate you.

MICHAEL
That's good.

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LUCILLE
I don't particularly like you
right now either.

MICHAEL
That's understandable.

A pause.

LUCILLE
Sit down. You're making me
nervous.

Michael sits down beside her.

LUCILLE (CONT'D)
I never understood how important
trust was in a relationship until
recently.

MICHAEL
Yeah. Same here.

LUCILLE
I don't think trust is broken, but
it's not perfect either.

MICHAEL
What do I have to do to repair it?

LUCILLE
There's nothing you can do.

MICHAEL
So is this it? Is it over?

She looks him in the eyes.

LUCILLE
Do you want it to be?

His gaze does not waver.

MICHAEL
No.

LUCILLE
Ok.

She looks down at the pendant.

LUCILLE
I'm pregnant, you know?

MICHAEL

You are?

LUCILLE

Yeah, my cycle's been irregular for a week or so. Didn't think much of it, 'til, on a lark, I had it checked out. You're gonna be a daddy.

Tears of joy line both of their eyes.

MICHAEL

That's so wonderful!

He goes to hug her. She remains stoic.

LUCILLE

A house divided cannot stand.

MICHAEL

Lincoln?

LUCILLE

Or Jesus, take your pick. The question is: do you believe it?

MICHAEL

I do. With all my heart.

LUCILLE

And will you be faithful and true.

MICHAEL

Yes. And will you help me be the best man, the best father I can be?

LUCILLE

I will. I promise.

MICHAEL

Then it's a deal, then.

She nods.

LUCILLE

Yes. To tell you the truth, I'm a little scared.

MICHAEL

Of what?

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LUCILLE

Being a mother. I've wanted it for so long. To think I actually will be one... I don't know how to process that.

MICHAEL

Me neither, but don't worry, everything will be all right.

He puts his hand on hers.

LUCILLE

Promise.

MICHAEL

Cross my heart. All for you.

LUCILLE

Likewise.

They kiss.

LUCILLE (CONT'D)

Still don't know what we're gonna do for money, though.

MICHAEL

The Divas Del Sol might be hiring.

She punches him in the gut.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Deserved that. Nice shot.

LUCILLE

Thanks.

She leans over. He slips his arm around her. They look out the window, onto the endless stars.

INT. MORONE HOME (DAY)- MONTHS LATER

The Morone family celebrates the coming of their newest child with a co-ed baby shower. Lucille is pregnant, almost ready to burst.

She opens her first gift. She looks inside and blushes.

LUCILLE

Michael Morone!

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MICHAEL

What? Nobody ever said the kid was the only one who could get toys on these things.

Everyone laughs.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Besides, I figured you'd want a big family.

LUCILLE

I do. I don't think the universe it ready for an army of Morones, though.

MICHAEL

We'll acclimate them to the idea one child at a time.

LUCILLE

Sounds lovely.

They kiss.

She reaches for the next present. The camera PANS OUT, leaving the group with its bright hope for tomorrow.

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