

# FALL.

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A full-length play.

WORKING DRAFT

By Susan Ferrara

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Contact:

## CHARACTERS

### HOLLY

Female, late 40's early 50's. From Georgia. Military family. Youngest of seven, but the bossiest of all of them. Rarely leaves her apartment. Somewhat of a recluse. Rigid. Heady. Fierce. Charismatic. Brilliant, award-winning sci-fi/horror novelist. Horrible eye sight. Short. 5'1" to 5'4".

### WILL

Male, late 30s. Strikingly handsome. Appears happy. Always. But is not. Not really. Rarely loses his temper. Everything HOLLY is not: open, athletic, engaging and charming. Maybe even shy; dorky. A good and kind man. Has horrible eye sight. He's not English, he's Scottish. Tall. 6'1" to 6'6".

### TANTRINE

Female, 20's. Finding her way in the world in all that she does. Reacts, rather than acts. A good and kind young woman. Giddy. Happy. Deceptively wise; perceptive.

### BEN

Male, 60's. An eye doctor. Has been on autopilot since his wife died a year ago. Lives on a steady diet of coffee and lemon tarts. Sometimes forgets that he's actually talking when his lips are moving. Reads the paper from start to finish first thing every morning. He's all heart.

### VAL

Female, 50s. Wonderfully direct Manhattan editor. Grew up in Bayridge, Brooklyn. Her writers are her children. Respects no boundaries. Everything is her business. Can't keep a secret – hers or anyone else's.

## LOCATION

New York City, Upper West Side apartment building, various neighborhood eateries, shops, etc. Simple set.

## TIMING

Present Day; September or October; the Fall.

Ellipses indicate chemical reactions, both positive and negative.

1. SUCH SWEET THUNDER.

Sunday, early morning. In darkness, we hear the opening bars of Duke Ellington's SUCH SWEET THUNDER. Two bars in, lights up. A living room. The music is playing. Loudly. It's late. Maybe 2:00 am. Maybe later. No drapes on the tall windows, one of which is open to let in the sounds of the street. A large fireplace dominates one wall. The apartment is littered with books. Dusty. Cluttered. A portion of the kitchen can be seen. Dirty dishes piled up. The table is covered in crumpled pages, notes, half-empty coffee cups, take-out menus, a half-eaten sandwich.

A portion of the room is devoted to models of galaxies. Home-made planets and moons held together with wire and masking tape.

Marked-up index cards cover the wall next to the fireplace.

A woman sits on her couch. Before her, a stack of books on top of which her laptop rests. She's typing. Glasses on. Thick lenses. This is HOLLY.

A knock at the door.

Another knock.

She scrawls something on an index card, pulls off her glasses. Tosses them on the couch. Walks to the wall and slaps the index card, with masking tape, near the rest. Stands in front of the cards. Rearranges them. Goes back to the laptop. Sits on her glasses. The frames, now broken. In quick succession: tapes the glasses with masking tape, puts them on. They dangle at an angle. Tries a number of configurations. Nothing works. Stomps off stage to the bedroom. A light clicks on. Re-enters with a glasses case. Opens it: prescription sunglasses. Puts them on. Dark lenses. The room now, too dark. Looks around and, one by one, finds and turns on a light. With each light, she tests her ability to see her laptop screen. The light in the kitchen, over the stove, over the sink, the table lamps, standing lamp, reading lamp, iPhone light. Peers at her laptop. Walks off stage, clicks on the hall light, the bathroom, three additional lights in the bedroom. Returns to the living room. Peers at her laptop with her prescription sunglasses. The room is now bright enough and she can see. She sits down. Types.

Another knock.

HOLLY walks to the door, opens it with a jerk. It bangs against the wall as she returns to typing.

WILL

Oh.

Still typing and without looking, HOLLY throws a shoe at the old stereo. The music stops with a scratch. Skips. Keeping time with her typing.

WILL

Hello.

In the doorway stands WILL. Clearly disheveled. Wearing glasses. Thick lenses. T-shirt. Shorts. No shoes. Obviously lives in the building. But, even disheveled, not at his best, WILL is a beautiful man. HOLLY doesn't notice; doesn't care. She's working.

This conversation takes forever.

WILL

Hi.

His hand on the door to keep it open.

HOLLY

(typing)...

WILL

Em. Listen.

HOLLY

(typing)...

WILL

I know you're. You must be.

HOLLY

(typing)...

WILL

I mean.

HOLLY  
(typing)...

WILL  
I get it. Truly.

HOLLY  
(typing)...  
WILL  
You're busy. Em.

HOLLY  
(typing)...

HOLLY balls up a portion of an old tin foil food wrapper, sticks a wire through it and jams it in one of the galaxies. Another moon. Another small planet. Stands. Stares.

WILL  
And I don't want to. Disturb you.

Sits back down. Types.

WILL  
But.

HOLLY  
(typing)...

WILL  
It's 2:00am.

HOLLY  
I have nothing of value.

WILL  
What?

HOLLY  
Take what you want and fuck off.

WILL  
No. That's.

Awkward laugh.

HOLLY

I don't have any money.

HOLLY again walks to the index cards. Moves them around. Plucks two cards off the wall, crumples and drops them.

WILL

I'm not.

HOLLY

Take the third award from the left. It's gold-plated. Something. I don't know.

Without looking, she points to the mantel above the fireplace. The fireplace is filled with old New Yorker magazines. On the mantel piece rests – some upright; some not – a variety of awards. They're also stacked on the floor: plaques, framed photos of important people; shots of big events in important buildings with even more important people. If you look closely at the photos, HOLLY in each of them, you can see her evolution. Older photos show a happy, joyous person, not remotely close to the abrupt, distracted woman we see now. There are also a few dead plants, unopened mail and some broken dishes.

Her phone rings.

One ring.

She pulls it from her pocket. Answers it.

HOLLY

(into her phone) Can't talk.

Hangs up. Shoves the phone back in her pocket.

WILL

Maybe I should.

HOLLY

There's something in the kitchen as well. It's French.

Goes back to typing. Sunglasses on.

WILL

That's not.

HOLLY  
Grand Prix de something award. Got it last weekend.

WILL  
I'm not here to.

HOLLY  
Take the thing on the mantle.

WILL  
Em. Uh. I'm not.

HOLLY, finally, looks up and sees him standing in the doorway.

HOLLY  
Seriously. Just.

HOLLY walks to the mantel, picks up the gold-plated award, walks to WILL.

HOLLY  
You are the worst fucking.

Shoves the award at him.

HOLLY  
Here.

Sits back down. Types.

WILL  
I'm sorry.

HOLLY  
What?

HOLLY doesn't look; doesn't engage.

WILL  
I'm not.

HOLLY

What?

WILL

(laughing) I'm sorry. I'm not.

HOLLY

You're not what. What. You're not what.

WILL

I'm not here to rob.

HOLLY

What.

WILL

I'm not a burglar. Here to take your things. I'm just.

HOLLY

You're just what.

She looks up. Stares at WILL.

WILL

I live next door.

HOLLY's phone rings again. She answers and immediately hangs up.

HOLLY

...

WILL

I'm your neighbor. Hello.

HOLLY continues to stare.

HOLLY

...

WILL

I live.

HOLLY

You said that.



WILL  
Next door. Right.

HOLLY  
You don't want anything?

WILL  
No. Well. Yes.

HOLLY  
Which.

WILL  
I just. Listen, I know you're busy.

HOLLY  
I'm writing.

WILL  
Yes. Of course. But the music.

HOLLY  
I need the music.

WILL  
To write. I know.

HOLLY  
You know?

WILL  
You usually finish by one.

HOLLY  
...

WILL  
And. It's half two, actually. Two thirty. And, em, I don't want to. Normally, it wouldn't be a. You know.

HOLLY walks to the door. Stands for a moment. Staring at WILL. Sunglasses on. Like a tiny, white, furious, blind person.

WILL  
But.

HOLLY  
...

WILL  
I've an early shift.

He smiles. Beautiful. Straight, white teeth. HOLLY slams the door. Walks to the stereo. The music starts again. She returns to the couch, types. Pauses. Goes back to the door. Opens it. WILL is still standing there. Still smiling. She grabs the award. Slams the door again. Lights out.

2. COFFEE. BLACK.

Lights up. Later that day. Neighborhood coffee shop. TANTRINE smiles brightly at HOLLY who is still wearing her sunglasses. Her hair, disheveled. Jeans. T-shirt. Boots. Buying her morning coffee. It's 4:00pm.

TANTRINE  
You look.

HOLLY  
Coffee, black.

TANTRINE  
Horrible.

HOLLY  
Thank you. Coffee. Black.

TANTRINE  
All right.

HOLLY  
Give me two.

TANTRINE  
All right.

HOLLY

I have a lot of work.

TANTRINE begins making the coffee.

TANTRINE

This is late for you. You're usually here first thing.

HOLLY

I'm on deadline.

TANTRINE

Bagel?

HOLLY

No.

TANTRINE

Donut? Lemon tarte? They're super hot. Just made 'em.

HOLLY

(a look)...

TANTRINE

No. Okay. Sorry.

HOLLY

...

TANTRINE

It's almost four o'clock. Boy.

TANTRINE makes the coffee.

TANTRINE

Three more hours and I'll be at dinner.

HOLLY

Fantastic.

TANTRINE

A date, actually.

TANTRINE giggles.

HOLLY  
Great. Coffee.

TANTRINE  
He's.

HOLLY  
Coffee.

TANTRINE  
Such a nice man. You'd like him.

HOLLY  
I'm sure. Coffee.

TANTRINE  
He comes in here a lot. Like. A lot. He's so. I mean. I think he might live in your building.

HOLLY  
I already know more than I need to.

TANTRINE  
(softly) I've had a crush on him for months. He's so...(makes an excited face).

HOLLY  
Right.

Short beat.

HOLLY  
How long have we known each other?

TANTRINE  
Oh. I don't know. Two years. Give or take.

HOLLY  
How many times have I spoken to you. First. I mean asked you a question. Asked how you are.

TANTRINE  
Well, you don't really. Not at all. But I just thought.

HOLLY

That suddenly I'd burst into conversation?

TANTRINE

Well. No. Now that you say it like that.

HOLLY

Let me tell you something.

Points a finger at TANTRINE.

HOLLY

I come in here for the coffee. That's it. That's all. Not for you. Not for the. The. Lemon tarts. The whatever. The conversation. Not for.

TANTRINE

Oh.

HOLLY

The idle. Just. The coffee. That's it.

TANTRINE

Oh. I'm.

TANTRINE tears up.

HOLLY

Don't do that.

TANTRINE

I just.

Still tearing up.

HOLLY

Oh for Christ's. Don't do. That. Don't cry.

HOLLY grabs a napkin.

TANTRINE

That was. I just.

HOLLY

I know. I know. I'm sorry.

TANTRINE

It's just. I try pretty hard, you know? I get here super early. And I'm not a morning person. And you. I try to be nice to everyone. And. I. I think that's important. You know. To be nice. It's part of my job. But still. I believe that. And then you. You come here. Every day. Of course I know. Who you are. And. And. I've read all your books.

HOLLY

You have.

Incredulous that she can read. HOLLY's a jerk.

TANTRINE

Of course I have.

HOLLY

I'm. I'm sorry.

HOLLY offers TANTRINE another napkin. TANTRINE blows her nose.

HOLLY

I'm a. I'm an. Asshole.

TANTRINE

I shouldn't be so. It's just that. I'm sorry.

HOLLY

No, it's me. I was wrong. Honestly. Just. Give me my coffee and I'll fuck off.

TANTRINE

Thank you. I'm sorry.

HOLLY

So you can get. Ready for your. Date.

TANTRINE

Date. Right.

HOLLY

I'm sure he's a very lucky young man.

TANTRINE smiles.

TANTRINE

He is. I mean. I'm lucky, too. I mean. He's. I'm reaaaaaally lucky.

HOLLY

Of course you are. You're a nice girl.

TANTRINE

Thank you for saying so.

HOLLY

Right.

TANTRINE

...

HOLLY

Well.

TANTRINE

...

HOLLY

Good.

TANTRINE

...

HOLLY

Coffee?

TANTRINE

Oh. Jeez. Yes. Of course. Um.

TANTRINE bags HOLLY's coffee, reaches into the display case with tongs and bags a rather large brownie.

TANTRINE

We're about to close and most of this stuff just gets thrown out.

HOLLY

Okay.

TANTRINE  
It's a brownie.

HOLLY  
I can see that.

TANTRINE  
For your dinner.

HOLLY  
Perfect.

Waits with a smile. HOLLY puts a fifty dollar bill on the counter.

TANTRINE  
Oh this - this is too much.

HOLLY  
Buy your date roses.

TANTRINE  
Oh women don't.

HOLLY  
They should.

Lights out.

### 3. DELIVERY.

Lights up. A few hours later. 6:00pm. HOLLY's apartment. Both coffee cups on her table. Empty. She's typing; working. Face so close to her laptop screen that her nose almost touches it. Eating the brownie. Her phone rings. She pulls her iPhone out of her pocket. It rings five times. She tosses it on the table where she works. Continues typing. Voicemail. The phone rings again. She hits speaker.

HOLLY  
...

VAL



(on speaker phone) You're fucking killing me.

HOLLY  
I'm working.

VAL  
(on speaker phone) Where are you?

HOLLY  
Last chapter.

VAL  
You gonna finish?

HOLLY  
Not if you keep calling.

HOLLY hangs up. Shoves half the brownie in her mouth. Chews.

A knock on the door.

HOLLY keeps working.

Another knock. Softer.

HOLLY  
(mouth full) I'm busy.

WILL  
(outside the door) It's me.

HOLLY  
...

WILL  
(outside the door) From last night.

HOLLY  
...

WILL  
Open the door?

HOLLY moves to the door. Opens it. It swings wide and hits the wall. WILL stops the door with his hand. Wears a simple, but well-tailored, suit. He smiles. He's holding a small package. HOLLY stands. Stares.

WILL  
I think.

HOLLY  
...

WILL  
We got off to a, well. An unfortunate.

HOLLY  
...

WILL  
Yeah. (smiling) Hello.

HOLLY  
...

WILL  
Would you mind if I?

Waits for permission to enter; doesn't get it.

HOLLY  
...

WILL  
I saw this downstairs. I thought.

HOLLY  
...

WILL  
I'm.

HOLLY  
I know who you are.

WILL  
Ah.

She looks at WILL. Squints.

HOLLY  
You're very tall.

WILL  
I suppose I am.

HOLLY  
What's that?

WILL  
A package.

HOLLY  
You bought me.

WILL  
No, no. It was downstairs.

HOLLY  
You took a package from downstairs.

WILL  
To bring to you. Yes.

HOLLY stands for a moment, still staring at WILL. He smiles.

WILL  
Hello.

He smiles again. He looks like an angel.

HOLLY  
You look like an angel.

WILL blushes. Laughs.

WILL

Well.

HOLLY

That's not a compliment. It's a statement. You look like an angel.

WILL

Ah, okay.

HOLLY

You're blushing.

She's standing too close. Sunglasses off. Staring at him.

WILL

Yes.

HOLLY

You're a grown man.

WILL

I am.

HOLLY

Okay.

HOLLY grabs the package. Slams the door. Beat. She stands in front of the closed door. WILL, just outside. She opens the door. He's still there. Still smiling.

HOLLY

...

WILL

...

HOLLY

You.

She grabs his hand and directs him to sit on the couch. Takes a page from the stack of the pages.

HOLLY

Sit down. Read this. Tell me what you think.

WILL  
What?

HOLLY  
Start there (points). Read it twice.

WILL sits, reads. HOLLY paces behind him.

HOLLY  
It's too wordy.

WILL  
(reading)...

HOLLY  
I don't know. I can't get it. It's just.

WILL  
(reading)...

HOLLY  
There's something wrong with. The. Opening. Opening paragraph.

WILL  
(reading)...

HOLLY  
I don't know. Tell me.

WILL looks up. Smiles at HOLLY.

HOLLY  
What do you think?

WILL  
It's.

HOLLY  
I can't put my finger on it.

WILL  
Beautiful.

HOLLY  
What?

WILL  
Beautiful.

HOLLY

...  
WILL  
...

HOLLY  
That's what you read.

WILL  
That's what you wrote.

HOLLY

...

WILL

...

HOLLY  
Are you hungry?

WILL  
What? Oh.

HOLLY  
Hungry. Are you hungry.

HOLLY sifts through the debris on her table.

WILL  
Well.

HOLLY  
There's. Something here.

Finds a take-out menu from the Chinese place down the street. Stained. Many of the menu items, circled. She orders a lot. It's a thing.

HOLLY  
Chinese?

WILL  
Scottish.

HOLLY  
That was.

WILL  
A joke.

HOLLY  
...

WILL  
I'm Scottish. Not Chine - okay.

WILL laughs.

HOLLY  
Your face is red.

WILL  
Well. It was just a silly.

HOLLY  
Are you sick.

WILL  
No. No.

HOLLY  
Because.

WILL  
I'm not.

HOLLY  
I can't get sick.

WILL  
I'm not sick.

HOLLY  
Good.

WILL  
...

HOLLY  
You're wearing a suit.

WILL  
Yes. Yeah. It's.

HOLLY  
You look.

WILL  
...

HOLLY  
Nice.

WILL  
Thank you.

HOLLY  
You have a.

She points.

WILL  
Monogram. It's.

HOLLY  
On your shirt. That's. All right. Well.

WILL  
They come this way.

HOLLY  
With your initials.

WILL  
No. I mean. Em. Heh.



Short beat.

HOLLY

Chinese was a stupid idea.

WILL

No. No.

HOLLY

You're already. You're busy.

WILL

It's not. Really. I would love to. But I did.

HOLLY

Promise to go.

WILL

To dinner, yes.

HOLLY

A date?

WILL

Yes.

WILL blushes again. A beat.

HOLLY

Is it me?

WILL

What?

HOLLY

Your face. Do I make you feel.

WILL

No. No.

HOLLY

Sometimes, when people meet me.

WILL

It's not you. Well. I don't know, you're.

HOLLY

I'm what?

WILL

Nothing. It's.

HOLLY

I make people uncomfortable. I don't know why.

WILL laughs.

WILL

It's not you. Truly. You're.

HOLLY

What.

WILL

...

HOLLY

(a realization) Ah.

WILL

What?

HOLLY

You want an autograph. That's.

WILL

What? No. No no.

HOLLY

That's why. You keep.

WILL

No.

HOLLY

It's all right. It's not. You know.

WILL

I.

HOLLY

Wait. I have.

Finds a publicity shot. It hangs limply in her hand. WILL grabs an edge. They hold it between them. WILL's eyes fixed on HOLLY's face.

WILL

(smiling) I don't want an autograph.

HOLLY

Oh.

WILL

And anyway.

HOLLY

...

WILL

(softly) You look better in person.

HOLLY

...

WILL

...

HOLLY

Well.

WILL

(softly) Well.

HOLLY

You should probably.

WILL

(softly) Right.

Both still holding the publicity shot.

HOLLY

I don't know what I was thinking.

WILL

...

HOLLY

Of course, you're all. Dressed.

WILL

More so than last night.

The blood rushes from HOLLY's face.

WILL

(teasing; still holding the photo) You all right?

HOLLY

I'm fine.

WILL

You're not sick?

HOLLY

No.

WILL

...

HOLLY

...

WILL

It really is.

WILL's finger reaches for a bit of brownie frosting on HOLLY's chin. Licks his finger. Smiles.

WILL

(softly) Beautiful.

He's just done something he couldn't stop himself from doing. His smile fades and becomes something else. Now it's just two people standing in an open doorway.

Awkwardly. HOLLY pauses for a moment. Then slams the door. Beat. Sits back down. Rubs her chin. Goes back to work. Lights out.

4. THE DOORWAY.

HOLLY's living room. Later that night. 11:00pm. In darkness, a rustling at the doorway. A soft knock. From the street, cars buzzing, horns beeping. HOLLY sprawled on her couch. A crumbled piece of paper in her hand. She wakes with a start. Turns on a small lamp. In her open doorway, two small bags from the Chinese place down the street. Still warm. Opens the bags as she walks to the couch. Smiles. With her fingers, scoops out some noodles and shoves them in her mouth. Closes the laptop and, still smiling, sits and eats. Long beat. Lights out.

5. PRESCRIPTION. THE NEXT MORNING.

The next morning. Monday. 9:00am. Lights up. A doctor's office in a hip shop for glasses. Bright, shiny. All white interiors and silver accents. Some weird, German, pop elevator music plays. BEN sits. Rumped, at a desk with HOLLY's chart. HOLLY wears a beat up t-shirt, jeans and a worn pair of boots. She drinks a large cup of coffee. Her third. Fidgets. She's still wearing her sunglasses. They're prescription.

BEN  
So.  
You.

HOLLY  
Yes.

BEN  
Let's take a look.  
See what we have.  
Here.  
Birth. Date. Okay. Height. Check.  
Good.

HOLLY  
I just need.

BEN  
Right.

HOLLY  
I'm a writer. I write. So. I need.

BEN  
Right.  
Right.

HOLLY  
To see. I can't really see with these. Not really.

Flips the sunglasses.

BEN  
Uh huh.

HOLLY  
Not unless I keep all the lights on. Which is. You know.

BEN  
You're wearing sunglasses.

HOLLY  
Yes I am.

BEN  
Okay.

HOLLY  
I need new glasses.

BEN  
Right.

BEN continues to review HOLLY's chart.

HOLLY  
Broke my frames.

BEN  
Right-right-right.

HOLLY  
So maybe you could.  
Just give me the test.

BEN  
Uh huh. Good.

HOLLY  
And I'll get some new frames.  
Get outta here.  
Get back home.  
'Cause.  
You know.  
I'm busy.

HOLLY is drinking her coffee; tapping her feet.

BEN  
So.

BEN places his chart, gently, on her knee to stop the tapping.

BEN  
Let's get started.

HOLLY  
Perfect.

BEN  
(reading the chart; a click of his pen for every "doot")  
Dootdoot.  
Doot.  
Doot.  
Doooooooo. So.

HOLLY  
Okay.

BEN  
Do you have heart problems?

HOLLY  
What?

BEN  
Heart problems.

HOLLY  
No.

BEN  
(writes) "No heart..."

HOLLY  
I don't see how.

BEN  
Diabetes?

HOLLY  
I need glasses.

BEN  
I need to ask.  
You know.

HOLLY  
No, I don't.

BEN  
It's standard.

HOLLY  
Is it?

BEN  
I ask all my patients.

HOLLY  
Do you?

BEN  
Well, eh, yes.

The weird German elevator music plays.

HOLLY  
...

BEN



(back to chart) Diabetes?

HOLLY

No, thank you.

BEN

Are you a diabetic?

HOLLY

(a look)...

BEN

(writing) "Not a ... dia-be-tic..."

HOLLY

I just walked by a handful of people in your showroom; your reception area, whatever, and they're all picking out glasses.

BEN

Okay.

HOLLY

I could be picking out glasses. Because, you know, I need them. To see, actually. I need glasses to see. I can't keep wearing these.

HOLLY lifts the sunglasses.

BEN

(still looking at chart)

Do you have circulation issues?

HOLLY

What?

BEN

Circula –

HOLLY

I need a pair of fucking glasses to replace the pair of fucking glasses I sat on.

HOLLY grabs and looks at her own chart.

HOLLY

Look. I've answered all of the important questions with a NO.

No.

Diabetes.

No heart condition.

No cancer.

No circulatory issues.

Short beat.

HOLLY

Cancer, really?

You ask everyone who comes in here if they have cancer?

What, they say yes, you're not gonna give them a fuckin' pair of glasses?

BEN

That's not. Now please.

HOLLY

People with cancer need to see. I think we can agree on that.

Tosses the chart on the doctor's desk. He delicately picks it back up and resumes his work.

BEN

Well, yes, um. Of course. Ms. - ?

HOLLY

Holly.

BEN

Holly. I'm here to help and this (lifts the chart)? Is where we start.

HOLLY

...

BEN

Are we. Are we in. Agreement?

HOLLY

...

BEN

If you could just.

HOLLY

...

BEN

Nod.

HOLLY

...

HOLLY stares at BEN. No nod. No recognition. Nothing.

BEN

Well. Okay. We'll just. Fine. Good. Let me. Just, eh. Put this up.

A series of letters, from large to small, appear on the wall. The test. HOLLY stares. Puts her sunglasses back on. Reads.

BEN

Read the bottom line, please. From the left.

HOLLY

A-D-F-H-I –

BEN takes off HOLLY's sunglasses.

BEN

Without these, please.

HOLLY

Uh. A - uh. D - something.

BEN

Well.

HOLLY

I can't see them.

BEN

Right.

HOLLY

Because I broke my glasses.

BEN

Right.

HOLLY

Or maybe I have cancer.

BEN

...

The weird German elevator music plays.

HOLLY

...

BEN

You're a very difficult woman.

HOLLY

Yeah. I get that.

BEN

I'm sorry.

HOLLY

It's fine.

BEN

I shouldn't have. Said.

HOLLY

Doesn't matter.

BEN

You're my patient. You're in - you're in - pain.

HOLLY bursts out laughing.

HOLLY

Just give me the WILLE. Prescription. I'll get the glasses. You'll never see me again.

BEN  
That would be. Great.

HOLLY bursts out laughing again.

BEN  
We'll just. Eh. Finish. Here.

Flips through his chart paperwork.  
BEN  
(still flipping)...

HOLLY  
Can't be that hard.

BEN  
And you can be. On your way.

HOLLY  
Punch some numbers in your little machine over there.

BEN  
(still flipping)...

HOLLY  
Give me my prescription.

BEN  
One second.

BEN arranges his paperwork.

HOLLY  
Get some glasses.

BEN  
Don't. Rush me.

Very deliberately, HOLLY spills a small amount of coffee on the chart and BEN stands up with a start.

BEN  
What are you.

HOLLY  
Sorry.

She's not sorry.

BEN  
What are you. Why would you. Do. Such a thing?

He shakes out the chart. Cleans off the bit of coffee from the floor; from the chart. Pulls off the now damp/wet paperwork. Folds it. Places it in the garbage bin.

BEN  
This is entirely. I have never. In my life.

HOLLY  
...

BEN  
You are. You really are. Well.

HOLLY  
...

BEN  
I'll just have to. I'll have to. Start all over again. That's all there is to it.

He pulls paperwork from his desk. Very carefully arranges it and clips it to his clipboard. This is a process and it's important to him.

HOLLY  
Are you going to.

BEN  
I'm not finished.

HOLLY  
All right.

BEN  
One minute.

HOLLY

I shouldn't have.

BEN  
Don't rush me.

HOLLY  
Okay.

BEN  
I don't like being.

HOLLY  
Yup.

BEN  
Rushed.

BEN continues to adjust his clipboard. Arranges himself, and the clipboard, on his chair.  
A restart. Leans in.

BEN  
So.

HOLLY  
...

BEN  
Do you have heart problems?

Lights out.

## 6. BETTER VISION.

The next morning. Tuesday. 5:00am. An hour or more before sunrise. The sounds and lights of the street bleed into HOLLY's living room. Lights up. She sits on the ledge of the window looking out onto the street. Her face in the semi-darkness; waiting for the sun. Prescription sunglasses, off. New glasses, on. She's dressed in yesterday's clothes. Her phone rings. She pulls it from her pocket. Ignores it. Five rings. Stops. The phone rings again. Answers it. On speaker.

HOLLY  
...

VAL

(on speaker) Why ya gotta make me call goddamned two times before you pick up. Feel like some guy you fucked in a club an' flat left.

HOLLY

...

VAL

(on speaker) You listening to me?

HOLLY

It's five am.

VAL

You're gonna give me a goddamned heart attack.

HOLLY

It's five am.

VAL

(on speaker) Ya know ya got people waitin' on this book like that fat guy.

HOLLY

That's not.

VAL

(on speaker) Dungeon and dragons guy.

HOLLY

(sighing) Game of Thrones.

VAL

(on speaker) Have you showered? Been outside? Got coffee? Has water touched your body? Any part of your body? Take a shower. I'm sending someone. I'll come myself.

HOLLY

...

VAL

(on speaker) It's Tuesday. Gave you four days. What editor does that? Gives you more time. Finish the thing. We'll have dinner. Saturday night.



HOLLY  
I don't.

VAL  
(on speaker) I said we'll have dinner. Saturday night. The end. I love you. I mean it.

VAL abruptly hangs up. HOLLY moves to the couch; her laptop. Sits down to the type.  
Stares at the screen. Really long beat. Writer's block.

HOLLY  
...

HOLLY stomps to the kitchen. Grabs a box filled with broken and chipped plates and cups. Brings it back to the living room. From the box, grabs and throws random, broken and chipped things into the fireplace.

Throws a cup.

HOLLY  
YOU.

Throws a dish.

HOLLY  
STUPID.

Throws a bowl.

HOLLY  
FUCKING.

A knock at the door.

HOLLY moves to the index cards on the wall. Plucks two to three cards off with a grunt. Crumples them to the floor. Keeps plucking index cards off the wall until she's heaving with the effort.

Another knock.

HOLLY stops. Still heaving. Goes to the door. Opens it. WILL stands in the doorway. Dressed in a light blue, monogramed shirt. Jeans. He smiles. Holds a small paper bag.

WILL

Are you.

HOLLY  
What.

WILL  
All right in there.

Still heaving. Adjusts her glasses. Stares. With her glasses on, she can actually see him and his giant, white teeth. She stares at him. Harder. Longer. Seeing him for the first time. He is beautiful.

HOLLY  
Jeeeeesus Christ.

WILL  
Hello.

HOLLY  
Well. You are. Okay.

Still taken aback.

WILL  
(awkward laugh)...

HOLLY  
I'm not playing music.

WILL  
I know.

HOLLY  
What's that?

Points at the paper bag.

WILL  
Oh. Em.

HOLLY  
...

WILL  
(smiling)...Heh.

HOLLY  
Are you drunk?

WILL  
It's 5:00am.

HOLLY  
Okay.

WILL  
I'm not drunk.

HOLLY  
...

WILL  
I couldn't sleep. So.

References the bag.

HOLLY  
Okay.

WILL  
Saw your light. Knew you might be.

HOLLY  
What's in the bag?

WILL  
Chocolate cake.

HOLLY  
Chocolate cake.

WILL  
Yes.

HOLLY  
Give me the cake.

WILL  
No.

HOLLY  
(a look)...

WILL  
I mean. I thought we might.

HOLLY  
It's five o'clock in the morning. Give me the cake.

WILL steps into the apartment and hands HOLLY the cake. HOLLY pulls it out of the bag. Opens the container. Breaks off a piece and stuffs it in her mouth. Offers the container to WILL. He demurs.

HOLLY  
Mmmm. Mmmmm. This is.

HOLLY sits on the couch and eats the cake.

WILL  
It's from the place on the corner.

HOLLY  
(still eating) I know. Mmmmm. My GOD.

WILL  
I couldn't sleep. I just thought.

HOLLY  
(eating the cake)...

WILL  
I don't know what I thought, actually.

HOLLY  
(still eating)...

WILL  
We keep.

HOLLY  
(eating)...

WILL  
You know.

HOLLY  
(eating cake; staring at WILL)...

WILL  
This.

WILL gestures: we keep meeting; I keep coming to your door. Whatever the gesture, it's lost on HOLLY who continues to eat the cake.

HOLLY  
I don't know what that means.

WILL  
All right.

HOLLY  
...

WILL  
I don't want this to be weird.

HOLLY  
(still eating) Okay.

WILL  
But.

HOLLY  
...

WILL  
You see.

WILL smiles. This usually works. Even if he has no idea what the fuck he's doing. He looks, suddenly, terrified.

HOLLY  
...

WILL  
Em.

HOLLY  
...

WILL  
There's this woman.

HOLLY  
(eating cake)...

WILL  
A beautiful woman.

HOLLY  
I don't care.

WILL  
Oh.

Short beat.

HOLLY  
I'm sorry. That was.

Awkward WILL laugh.

WILL  
No. It's. I'm being.

HOLLY  
I shouldn't have.

WILL  
This was a. Bad. Idea.

HOLLY  
No. No. Tell me about this woman.

HOLLY turns to WILL. An apology of sorts. Full attention. HOLLY offers cake. WILL grabs a chunk. Sits on the couch.

HOLLY  
Your date.

WILL  
Right.

HOLLY  
Your date?

WILL  
Well.

HOLLY  
Okay.

WILL  
...

Shaking his head. He thought he was better at this. He's not.

HOLLY  
So.

WILL  
She's.

HOLLY  
Women can be. Stupid.

WILL  
Well. I don't know. Stubborn. She's stubborn, I think.

HOLLY  
Huh.

WILL laughs.

WILL  
She's.

HOLLY

What.

WILL

Well.

HOLLY

She's not pretty enough. Young enough. Smart enough. Wears the wrong. Whatever. Says the wrong thing. Too skinny. Too fat. I don't know. Doesn't shower.

WILL

No. That's definitely not.

HOLLY

What.

WILL

Well.

HOLLY

She's one of those. Maybe. Doesn't listen. Kinda jerky. Her friends are dumb. She's dumb. She doesn't like the music you like.

Still eating the giant piece of cake.

WILL

No.

HOLLY

She hates cake?

WILL

No.

HOLLY

Okay. Good.

Scraping the frosting off the plastic container.

WILL

She's (thinks about it). Blind, I think.

HOLLY



Literally?

WILL

No, of course not.

HOLLY

Why of course not? Don't you think blind people. A blind woman. Is worth your time?

WILL laughs.

WILL

That's really. No. I didn't mean.

HOLLY

So she's not blind.

WILL

No.

HOLLY

I hate riddles.

WILL

It's not a riddle.

HOLLY

It's a metaphor.

WILL

(smiling) Right.

HOLLY

I.

WILL/HOLLY

Hate metaphors.

WILL

Yeah.

HOLLY

Have you ever thought. I don't know.

WILL

What.

HOLLY

Nah. It was just.

WILL

What?

HOLLY

Something came into my head. Nah.

WILL

...

HOLLY

I think it's difficult.

WILL

Yeah.

HOLLY

Meeting people.

WILL

...

HOLLY

And it must be. Frustrating. All this. For you. Especially.

WILL

Especially?

A lame gesture from HOLLY. Suggesting you are who you are; you look the way you do.  
I don't care. This conversation bores me.

HOLLY

It must be frustrating. She must be frustrating. I mean.

WILL

(softly) She is.

WILL removes HOLLY's glasses. She squints up at him.

HOLLY  
What.

WILL

...

He stares at her; leans in to – the phone rings. He stops inches from her face. Five rings. Neither of them move. Voicemail. The phone rings again. It's VAL. HOLLY hits the speaker.

VAL  
(on speaker) Have you showered?

WILL places HOLLY's glasses back on her face. Adjusts them.

HOLLY

...

Smiling, WILL exits. VAL shouts.

VAL  
HOLLY.

Lights out.

7. COFFEE. BLACK. ADVICE.

Lights up. Thirty minutes later. 5:30am. HOLLY and TANTRINE at the coffee shop. HOLLY clutching a giant cup of coffee. Maybe pacing. TANTRINE staring at HOLLY. The sky is still dark.

HOLLY  
So that's.

TANTINE

...

HOLLY  
Right?

TANTRINE  
I guess.

HOLLY

I mean, what would you.

TANTRINE

Me?

HOLLY

Yeah! I have no idea.

TANTRINE

Oh I don't.

HOLLY

I mean. You just did this.

TANTRINE

Well, yeah. But.

HOLLY

So you would know.

Short beat.

TANTRINE

What are we talking about?

HOLLY

Signals. We're talking about signals. That's what people. I mean, a guy. That's what a guy. You know.

TANTRINE

I guess.

HOLLY

You guess.

TANTRINE

I'm. Sorry. It's. It's super early.

HOLLY

I came here 'cause I need. Help.

TANTRINE  
Me?

HOLLY  
Yes you! Jesus Christ. I've been standing here for. Thirty damned minutes. I need your help.

TANTRINE  
...

HOLLY  
Okay, look. I may have misread this. I may have completely. Misread this. Signal thing. He may not.

TANTRINE  
He likes you.

Short beat.

HOLLY  
What?

TANTRINE  
From what you said, yes. I mean. I don't know him or anything but a guy who. Makes excuses. Brings stuff. You know. Cake.

HOLLY  
That's just. Right? Who does that? Nobody does that.

TANTRINE  
And he doesn't want anything.

HOLLY  
No.

TANTRINE  
So.

HOLLY  
...

TANTRINE  
I think that's. Nice.

TANTRINE smiles. Big, fat, happy smile.

HOLLY

...

TANTRINE

I should. Open the shop.

HOLLY

Right. Of course.

TANTRINE exits to the back. Flips on some lights. Returns.

TANTRINE

What's his name?

HOLLY

His name?

TANTRINE

Yeah.

Short beat.

HOLLY

He's. He's (small voice) tall.

Longer beat.

TANTRINE

You don't know his name.

HOLLY

This is.

TANTRINE

That's okay. I mean. Well. You probably should. Know.

HOLLY

I mean.

TANTRINE  
Eventually.

HOLLY  
Jesus Christ.

TANTRINE  
It's not a big deal. Not really, you know (excited smile). I mean. It's kinda cool. I think. Two lovers meet. They're drawn to one another -

HOLLY  
(abruptly) No.

TANTRINE  
What?

HOLLY  
No no no. Not "two lovers".

TANTRINE  
Oh. Okay.

HOLLY  
No.

TANTRINE  
Okay.

HOLLY  
I haven't left my apartment in fourteen years.

TANTRINE  
Okay.

HOLLY  
Guy comes to my door. Brings me cake. And. And boxes. He's just. Some guy.

TANTRINE  
Right.

HOLLY  
There's no drawing here. No being drawn. No.

Short beat.

TANTRINE  
But.

HOLLY  
What.

TANTRINE  
(cautiously) I think you kinda like him.

HOLLY  
No.

TANTRINE  
Yeah. And I kinda think he likes.

BEN enters.

BEN  
Hello honey.

TANTRINE  
(to HOLLY) You.

BEN  
Coffee; black.

TANTRINE  
You got it.

BEN sees HOLLY.

BEN  
Oh. Uh. Yeah. Give me one of them, eh, the lemon tarte things. Give me two. I think I. I need two.

HOLLY  
...

BEN



Well. So. You're here. That's. Something.

HOLLY

Yup.

TANTRINE

Holly was just telling me about a man.

BEN

Okay.

HOLLY

It's. No. I wasn't. No.

TANTRINE

He sounds very nice. I think he likes her (makes an excited face).

BEN

Has he met her?

HOLLY bursts out laughing. TANTRINE hands BEN the tartes. An exchange of cash.

BEN

I didn't mean.

HOLLY

It's fine.

BEN

I'm gonna go. Eh. Out there. Eat my, eh, tartes.

BEN exits. Sits in front of the coffee shop on a bench. Beat.

TANTRINE

He lost his wife. A year ago.

HOLLY

Oh.

TANTRINE

Yeah. So.

Short beat.

HOLLY

Give me a bag for this.

References the brownie. TANTRINE packs it up.

HOLLY

Oh. And.

Looks at TANTRINE. Awkward.

HOLLY

Thank you.

TANTRINE

Sure.

HOLLY

You're a good. Well. You know.

TANTRINE

(a big smile) Of course. Happy to. I mean. Anytime. It's my pleasure.

HOLLY exits to the bench outside joining BEN who gives her a salute with his tarte.  
Behind them, through the glass of the coffee shop, TANTRINE cleans the counter.

HOLLY

I'm sorry. Sorry about your wife.

Short beat.

HOLLY

She told me.

BEN

...

HOLLY

...

BEN

Clara.

HOLLY

What?

BEN  
My wife.

HOLLY eats her brownie. BEN eats his tarte.

BEN  
She liked these. So.

Waves his tarte.

HOLLY  
...

BEN  
Eat 'em every morning. Funny thing.

HOLLY  
Yeah.

BEN  
You married?

HOLLY  
No. Never gave it much thought.

BEN  
Never met the right guy? I'm sorry. Gal?

HOLLY  
Neither.

BEN  
...

HOLLY  
Yeah.

They sit a while longer. Eating their baked goods. A blanket of agreement; camaraderie falls over them. Two odd souls who, with little language, come to know one another.

BEN

Know what I can't get outta my head?

HOLLY

What's that?

BEN

Her ankles.

HOLLY

...

BEN

Horrible ankles.

HOLLY

...

BEN

Beautiful woman. Horrible ankles.

HOLLY laughs.

BEN

You know. People say. "Always thought it'd be me." And it's true.

HOLLY

...

BEN

Bad diet. Stupid habits. Figured she'd find me in a heap on the floor. Too late to help. I was countin' on it, you know what I mean? Didn't want to be the one. Well. You know.

HOLLY

Yeah.

BEN

I'm. I don't know. Maybe that's selfish. Wantin' to go like that.

HOLLY

I don't think so.

BEN

She was much stronger than me.

HOLLY  
Clara.

BEN  
Yeah. She was.

HOLLY  
...

BEN  
Boy.

HOLLY  
What happened?

BEN  
Cancer.

HOLLY  
Oh. That's. I'm so sorry.

BEN  
Yeah. Fast.

HOLLY  
Good. I mean.

BEN  
Barely time to digest. Got the news and.

HOLLY  
(softly) I'm so sorry.

BEN  
Yeah. People talk. This person. That person. They say. "She was the love of my life." "He was the love of my life." You ask them, they tell you. But Clara? She was, uh. She was. She was the arms and legs of me. You know? The head. And all the missing parts.

HOLLY  
...

BEN

I'm not a poet.

HOLLY

...

BEN

Some people change the shape of you.

HOLLY

...

BEN

My Clara.

HOLLY

...

BEN

Been a year.

HOLLY

...

BEN

Haven't washed her coffee cup. Still on the counter where she left it.

HOLLY

...

BEN

That's. I don't know. Silly. I guess.

HOLLY

(softly) I don't think so.

BEN

It's the little things. The day to day things. The. I don't know.

HOLLY

...

BEN

The sound of her walking down the hallway. I miss that. Knowing she's. Comin'.

HOLLY

...

BEN

Yeah.

HOLLY

...

BEN

And my God. You'd be surprised how quickly people get to work. It's. Really. I mean. You get to a certain age. And it's like you're the last guy around. And it's always some. You know. Not that they're. Bad, or anything. But Christ. Like people just want to pair you up; throw available women at you. I don't know.

HOLLY

You're a handsome guy.

BEN

Well, all right. Maybe. But still.

HOLLY

...

BEN

Meet these women now and.

HOLLY

You don't need them.

BEN

Don't want them.

HOLLY

Yeah.

BEN

Ran through me like a gale force, my Clara. Fixed up what was broken. And left.

HOLLY

...

BEN  
Sure I miss her. But.

HOLLY  
(softly) You don't want anyone else.

BEN  
You find the person? The arms and legs of you?

HOLLY  
...

BEN  
You won't want for anything else.

HOLLY  
...

HOLLY's brows knit together. Short beat.

BEN  
(softly) Ah.

HOLLY  
...

BEN  
I see.

HOLLY  
What?

BEN  
I get it.

HOLLY  
What?

BEN  
Listen to me.

HOLLY



...

BEN

I don't wanna burst your lead balloon here or anything. But. These kinds of things? See. You don't get a lotta shots at 'em.

HOLLY

...

BEN

Fork in the road, kiddo. Gotta make a choice.

HOLLY

I don't know what you're talking about.

BEN

Yes you do.

HOLLY

...

BEN

I was lucky.

HOLLY

...

BEN

Met my Clara. I was done.

HOLLY

I don't.

BEN

Fork in the road.

HOLLY

...

BEN

You came to this place soon as it opened.

HOLLY  
(softly) I suppose.

BEN  
'Cause sittin' at home alone with your mind spinnin' was worse than getting yourself out the door.

HOLLY  
...

BEN  
This fella. Guy she was talkin' about.

HOLLY  
Yeah.

BEN  
Tell me about him.

HOLLY  
He just. Oh. Oh. He.

A look of panic on HOLLY's face.

BEN  
What?

Panic quickly turns to tears that just run down her face.

HOLLY  
He. Just. Oh no. No. I. I don't really. I mean.

More tears. Years of tears, people.

HOLLY  
Oh. He's.

BEN  
Oh boy. Okay. Aww. C'mere.

BEN sidles up to HOLLY, pulls her close. A kind and sweet hug. Comfort.

BEN

You listen to me. Nobody died making the wrong choice. Well. That's not entirely true, but you know what I mean. Nobody died givin' something. Givin' someone a chance.

HOLLY

...

BEN

What is it about this guy?

HOLLY

(a wail) I DON'T KNOOOOOOW.

BEN rubs her shoulder. Still comforting. She leans into his hug.

BEN

So. You think he likes you? Has an interest, I mean. We're grownups.

A look from HOLLY.

BEN

I was eavesdropping.

HOLLY

I'm not. I mean. He's. I don't think. No.

BEN

Don't.

HOLLY

What?

BEN

Don't do that.

HOLLY

...

BEN

Don't step away.

HOLLY

...

BEN

You owe it to your half-formed self to see if he's the fit.

Short beat.

BEN

Thousand reasons not to.

HOLLY

...

BEN

But.

HOLLY

...

BEN

See it through.

HOLLY

...

BEN

You gonna eat the rest of this?

Points at her brownie. TANTRINE begins spraying the window behind HOLLY and BEN. Three quick spurts of cleaner. A swipe of paper towel. The sun is starting to come up.

HOLLY

Ohmygodi'mgonnathrowup.

Grabs her stomach. Hands BEN the brownie.

BEN

Yup. There it is. First sign.

BEN pats HOLLY's shoulder. TANTRINE sprays the window again.

BEN

Stay in the game, kiddo. Only way you're gonna find out.

In the wet cleaner, TANTRINE draws a big heart. We can almost hear her giggle. BEN eats HOLLY's brownie. TANTRINE wipes away the heart. HOLLY drops her head to her knees. About to vomit as BEN gently rubs her shoulders.

HOLLY

(softly; head between her legs) Oh my GOD.

BEN

Yep. Yep. Yep. That's how it goes. Count to ten.

HOLLY

(softly; head still between her legs)

One. Two. Oh. Oh. Oh no.

About to retch. Maybe a few, horrible retch-y sounds. Lights out.

#### 8. THE THING THAT IS. THE NEXT MORNING.

Lights up. HOLLY's living room. Wednesday morning. 6:30am. A knock at the door. She sits, fully dressed; WILLE clothes. Her face drained of color. Another knock. The door knob turns, the door slowly opens. WILL stands in the open doorway. Disheveled. He looks as bad as she does. HOLLY, seated, stares at him. An uncomfortably long time passes.

WILL

I don't normally.

This isn't what.

They stare at one another.

WILL

Yeah.

Staring.

WILL

(abruptly) I should.

Still staring.

WILL  
I should go.

WILL leaves. Closes the door. HOLLY doesn't move.

HOLLY

...

The doorknob turns again. The door opens. WILL, again, stands in the doorway. His body rigid and uncomfortable.

WILL  
Here's the thing.  
I'm usually pretty direct.  
A direct person.  
I don't.  
I mean to say.  
I don't fanny about. I'm. Jesus.  
I'm confident. And charming.  
I mean.  
People find me charming.  
That's what they.  
You know.  
That's what.  
They.  
Tell me.  
Anyway.  
I've never been one to just.  
You know.

They stare at one another.

WILL  
I sound.  
This is.  
Absolutely.

Doesn't know what to say.

WILL  
Mental.

Just stands there. Weird. Abruptly leaves. The door, open. Empty. A beat. WILL returns.  
Stands in the open doorway.

WILL

What I'm trying to say is.

HOLLY

...

WILL

Look.

I know.

I mean.

Em.

People tell me.

Because they see me and they think.

You know.

"He knows what he wants."

And he's just going to.

You know.

Because.

You know.

HOLLY

...

WILL

You know?

They stare at one another.

WILL

Fucking hell.

Is his accent getting thicker? Yes. It is. And he may be drunk.

WILL

I'm not drunk.

HOLLY

...

WILL

Here's what.  
I want.  
What I mean to say.

HOLLY

...

WILL  
(softly) I think about you all the time.

HOLLY

...

WILL  
And.

HOLLY

...

WILL  
(softly) I don't know why.

HOLLY

...

WILL  
I mean.  
I do know why.  
But.

HOLLY

...

WILL  
It's not.  
That's not to say.  
I mean. I'm not.  
This isn't how.  
I don't usually.

HOLLY

...

WILL



This must seem strange.  
You don't know me.  
And.  
And I don't.  
But.  
This is.

HOLLY

...

WILL

Okay.

HOLLY

...

WILL

Here's the thing.

HOLLY

...

WILL

I know you like chocolate cake.

HOLLY

...

WILL

Because.

You said that once.

In an interview.

Five years ago on a.

I saw you on tv.

HOLLY

...

WILL

And coffee.

Black coffee.

You said that as well.

HOLLY

...

WILL  
Jesus that sounds.  
I sound like a.  
And I'm not.  
I just.

HOLLY

...

WILL  
Fuck.

HOLLY

...

WILL  
Fuck. Fuck. Fuck.

HOLLY

...

WILL  
What I'm trying to say is.

HOLLY

...

WILL  
I know you buy the men on the corner coffee every morning.  
Every morning.  
Coffee.

HOLLY

...

WILL  
And I know you don't look back.  
Because you don't see their faces.  
When you walk away.  
The joy in them.

HOLLY

...

WILL

And I know you check on Miss Elizabeth downstairs because she tells me every Monday when she collects her mail.

He strides in. Stops at the table. Picks up the Chinese menu.

WILL

I know you like Chinese. Because everything is circled on the menu five or six times. Here.

He points.

WILL

I know you give the super all the cash in your pocket when he talks about his family. That you paid for his daughter's surgery. I know you think this doesn't matter because it's just money and you have too much of it. Because that's what Henry told me. The super. Because he cried when he told me. About you. And his daughter.

HOLLY

...

WILL

And I know you feed the birds outside your window because. I see the crumbs on the street. And I know that you look out that window (points) every morning. To the left. And you smile. And I wait for your face. I stand down there every morning. On my way to. Waiting for you. Like some fucking. For weeks. Because I.

HOLLY

...

WILL

I need.  
I need to see.  
Your face.

HOLLY

...

WILL

And.

I don't know what you're thinking.  
With your head out the window.  
Or right now.  
Sitting there.  
Staring at me.

HOLLY

...

WILL  
And I want to know.  
I want to know what that means.  
That look.  
How your face does that thing.  
Softens maybe.  
And you look like you're waiting for something.  
Or someone.

HOLLY

...

WILL  
And I know this sounds.  
I'm being.  
I know this sounds.  
Hokey.

HOLLY

...

WILL  
Is that a word you use?  
I want to say something else.  
But.

HOLLY

...

WILL  
You are like no one I've ever met. No one I've ever seen. Ever heard. And I'm a grown man who makes excuses to come to your door just so I can see your face before you slam it.

HOLLY

...

WILL

And I know this must make me a fucking nutter because I could live on those slammed doors. I could. Every day. Every morning. Every night. The look on your face. The way it. It makes me. I can feel my damned whole fucking body.

His muscles tense.

HOLLY

...

WILL

Women look at me. All the time. And I know it must sound ridiculous. Me saying it. Knowing what it means. But. They do and it doesn't always. It's not what. I mean.

HOLLY

...

WILL

They see me and. Hell. The things they say. You wouldn't believe. Truly. Like out of nowhere. The things. And they touch too much. Really. On the subway. Or buying. Buying coffee. Or a drink at a bar. Makes it so I'd rather just stay inside. All the time. Read a book.

HOLLY

...

WILL

I mean.

I'm a big man.

But.

It's.

It's fucking unnerving.

HOLLY

...

WILL

Fell asleep on a flight once.

Woke up.

Some women's face was in mine.

Right there.

Big smile.

Didn't know her.  
Had no idea.  
You know.  
Half asleep.  
My seat was.  
Reclined.  
And the face on her.  
Hanging over me like she was about to.  
Telling me what she would do.

HOLLY

....

WILL  
To me.  
Thinking I'd care.  
That I'd want.

HOLLY

...

WILL  
(softly) Christ.  
Like I'm doing to you now.  
I sound like.

HOLLY

...

WILL  
Fuck me.  
Listen.  
I want you to know.

HOLLY

...

WILL  
I'm good at this.

HOLLY

...

WILL

You do know that this is something I'm good at. Women. Despite what. I just. Christ. I'm really - and I'm not just saying this – but I am good. Really good. No complaints. They love me. I know. And I don't like to. Talk about it really. Because I sound. That sounded. But I'm not stupid. I'm not a fucking. Jesus, woman. I'm not. There's more to me than. Sure I think I'm good at this because women make it so easy. Which isn't to say that I take advantage. I don't. I just. It hasn't been. It's easy for me. Yeah. But. That's not always. Good.

HOLLY

...

WILL

You know?

HOLLY

...

WILL

What I'm saying is.

HOLLY

...

WILL

Fuck.

HOLLY

...

WILL

You are unknowable.

HOLLY

...

WILL

Brilliant. Unique. Kind. And so quiet about all of it.

HOLLY

...

WILL

And that. That.

HOLLY

...

WILL

Makes me want to sit in this apartment until you speak. Watch you work. Make you tea. Rub your shoulders. Kiss your eyelids. That strand of hair on your face. Brush my finger on your lips. I want to see that that look on your face. When you think of something. And I want you to look at me. And see.

HOLLY

...

WILL

Me.

HOLLY

...

Beat. HOLLY stands. Walks to WILL. Puts her hand on his cheek. Stares at him. Reaches up. On her toes. Kisses him gently on the mouth.

WILL

...

HOLLY

...

WILL

Fucking hell.

WILL grabs and kisses her. Deeply.

HOLLY

Oh.

He kisses her again. Grabs her close. They break. Breathing deeper.

HOLLY

(softly) You have to go.

HOLLY's body is shaking. From head to foot.



WILL  
What?

HOLLY  
(softly) Please.

With difficulty, WILL pulls himself away. Takes a step to the door. Exits. The door slams. HOLLY stands. Still shaking. Takes off her boots. Her pants. Stands in her t-shirt. Underwear. A long beat, staring at the closed door. A decision made. She goes to the door. Opens it. In the hallway. Stands before WILL's apartment. Grabs the doorknob, the door swings open. WILL stands just inside.

HOLLY walks, slowly at first and then very quickly, to him. Grabs at him. His shirt. They kiss throughout. His shirt comes off. They stand. Both bodies heaving.

HOLLY  
Every part of you is.

WILL  
...

HOLLY  
(softly) Beautiful.

They meet again in a fury of fast moving hands. Lips. Bodies moving toward the couch. Clothes coming off. Skin, revealed. They fall into its cushions still kissing and grasping at one another. Lights out.

9. CLEAN SHIRTS. NEXT MORNING. THURSDAY. 7:30AM.

Lights up. Thursday morning. 7:30am. HOLLY sits on her couch wrapped in a blanket. Her lap top closed. Her face a screen on which last night and this morning plays.

A knock at the door.

HOLLY wraps the blanket tightly around her. Jumps up to the door.

HOLLY  
You don't have to knock.

Opens the door, expecting WILL. The doorway is empty. HOLLY peeks around the

corner to see TANTRINE standing in front of WILL's closed door wearing a light blue men's dress shirt. The shirt reaches her knees. It's monogrammed. TANTRINE knocks, twirls, smiles.

HOLLY

Oh.

TANTRINE

Oh my gosh. I'm so sorry. I knocked on the wrong. (sees that it's HOLLY) Hey!

HOLLY

...

TANTRINE

I didn't know you lived. You're right next door. That's so. (excited face). Cool.

HOLLY

What are you.

TANTRINE knocks on WILL's door.

TANTRINE

I made a mess at dinner. I promised to clean his shirt.

HOLLY

What?

TANTRINE

At dinner. He. Well. I just. I'm so clumsy. He didn't mind though. He's so (excited face). I can't believe you live next door!

WILL, like HOLLY, opens the door thinking it's her. Big, fat smile on his face. Seeing him, TANTRINE twirls around in his too-big shirt, monogrammed shirt.

TANTRINE

Just like I promised. Cleaned and ironed. Did it myself. Didn't have a hanger, so. Hah.

Twirls. Again.

TANTRINE

Can I come in?

HOLLY, seeing this small exchange, slams the door. Reaching past TANTRINE, WILL strides into the hallway.

WILL

No. No. No no no no.

Reaches HOLLY's door. Knocks. Tries the doorknob. It's locked. From inside HOLLY's apartment. A scuffle. A box dragged from the kitchen into the living room. One cracked plate thrown against the fireplace with a crash. Lights out. In darkness, a scream. Two hard pushes against a door. A kick. A broken lock.

10. SOME EMERGENCY.

Lights up. Moments later. WILL stands just inside HOLLY's doorway. Her arm dripping blood. A portion of HOLLY's t-shirt covers the wound.

WILL

Show me.

HOLLY

It's fine.

WILL

You're dripping blood on your floor. Show me.

HOLLY

It's nothing.

Exasperated, WILL pulls out his wallet, shows HOLLY his hospital ID

WILL

You see this? This means I'm a doctor. Now show me your arm. Tell me what happened.

HOLLY

You're a? It's just a cut.

WILL

Tell me how.

HOLLY

A broken plate.

HOLLY lifts her shirt from the wound and the blood drips faster. A gash on the inside of her left arm.

HOLLY

Oh my god. Look at that. That's cool. Look at all that.

She pokes and prods at her injury. A small giggle. She's in shock.

WILL

Don't do that. Come with me.

WILL drags HOLLY to the sink in the kitchen. Rinses her arm off to determine the severity of the cut.

HOLLY

It's nothing. I just.

WILL

Do you have bandages? Gauze?

HOLLY

No.

WILL

Band-aids?

HOLLY

No.

WILL

Give me that paper towel.

HOLLY grabs the paper towel; gives it to WILL. He presses it gently on the wound.  
TANTRINE enters from the doorway.

TANTRINE

Um. Are you guys okay? Can I help?

WILL

Get me two towels from the bathroom.

TANTRINE exits. Returns with two towels.

TANTRINE

Are these all right?

WILL  
Perfect.

HOLLY  
I'm fine.

WILL looks about. Sees the masking tape on her coffee table. Applying pressure to her arm; the cut, he pulls her toward the coffee table.

WILL  
Sit.

HOLLY sits on the couch. WILL folds the towels under HOLLY's injured arm. A cushion while he works.

TANTRINE  
Should I. Should I call someone.

WILL  
A moment.

WILL grabs the tape and very quickly and efficiently cuts five inch long, half inch wide strips of the masking tape. Applies the strips to HOLLY's arm. Make-shift stitches pulling the cut together to stop the bleeding.

WILL  
(to TANTRINE) You can go. And thank you.

TANTRINE  
I'll help you get to the. Outside.

WILL  
Good.

HOLLY  
You're not coming? She's not coming?

WILL  
No.

Applying pressure to HOLLY's arm, WILL reaches into his pocket, grabs his iPhone.

WILL

It's WILL. I'm on my way in. Deep cut. Four to five inches. It's going to need stitches. I'll do it. Clear # 2 for me. Who? Her name is Holly. She's a friend.

Sees HOLLY's face pale. Knows she's nervous.

WILL  
I'll take care of her.

Short beat. WILL gives HOLLY a reassuring smile; a quick grasp of her hand.

WILL  
Right. Thanks, mate.

WILL hangs up. Makes another call. The doorman.

WILL  
Billy. WILL. I'm well thank you. Am coming down with Holly. Can you call us a cab? Mt. Sinai. Yes. She's fine. Just a. Small cut.

Hangs up.

WILL  
A friend of mine is going to meet us outside. We'll be there in ten minutes. Maybe less.

HOLLY  
...

WILL  
You're gonna be all right.

HOLLY giggles. Pokes at the masking tape.

HOLLY  
Masking tape. Hah.

WILL  
Don't do that.

HOLLY.  
I'm fine. Fine. Fine. Fine. You look so serious. Doesn't he look serious.

She's starting to sound loopy.

HOLLY

(to WILL) You have such pretty eyes.

WILL

Right. Can you stand?

HOLLY stands. TANTRINE and WILL guide her to the door. HOLLY falters.

WILL

(to TANTRINE) Let me.

WILL lifts HOLLY in her arms. TANTRINE opens the door and they all exit. Lights out.

11. HELLO PEPPER SPRAY.

Three hours later. Lights up on HOLLY’s living room. WILL on his hands and knees cleaning the blood from the floor. Two bloody towels at his feet. His shirt is covered in blood. Large splashes, speckles and blots. In his hands, a bloody towel. A jingling at the door. Keys. It’s VAL. She doesn’t notice that the door just swings open. The lock, broken. She looks up. Sees WILL. He smiles, because that’s what he does. VAL sees the blood, his shirt, the towels and reaches into her crumpled purse and pulls out pepper spray which she, while screaming, sprays at WILL. It doesn’t even come close to hitting him.

VAL

AA

The thin stream of pepper spray hits an area behind the couch. The canister runs out of spray and VAL, dumbfounded, throws the empty pepper spray canister.

VAL

Who are you?

WILL

I’m.

VAL

Why are you here?

WILL

I was.

VAL

What have you done?

WILL

I'm sorry. I'm not.

Sees his bloody shirt. The towels. The half clean floor. VAL charges WILL. She's furious.

VAL

Oh my GOD. You killed her. You killed my.

Hits him with her purse.

WILL

No I.

Hits him with her purse.

VAL

Where is she? Where did you put her? Is she in the. The. Oh my GOD you chopped her up. You. You. You. You chopped her up. You. You. She's in the freezer.

WILL

No.

VAL

Where is she? OH MY GOD. She's in the river. Oh my fucking god. You threw her in the river. She's in the fucking river. How DARE you?!

WILL

No. She's not. Listen.

VAL

How dare you stand here. Talk to me about.

Hits him with her purse and doesn't stop.

WILL

Let me explain.

VAL

I will kill you myself. You. You. You. Horrible person. You are a horrible person. Horrible.

A light clicks on. The bedroom. HOLLY enters.

HOLLY



(to VAL) What are you doing?

VAL

What? You? You're - ohmygod.

WILL

(to HOLLY) I tried to tell her.

VAL

(to HOLLY)

Ohmygod. You're all right.

Beat.

VAL

(to WILL) How dare you stand there and let me think that she was dead. What kinda person just.

(to HOLLY) Oh my GOD. I thought you were. Oh. Look at you. Oh my. Jesus.

VAL wraps HOLLY in a bear hug.

HOLLY

Ow.

VAL steps back. Looks at HOLLY.

VAL

What happened to you.

HOLLY

Ow.

HOLLY's still drugged. WILL gently takes her hand and leads her to the couch.

HOLLY

(to WILL) You need to go.

VAL

Who is this guy?

WILL

Hello. I'm WILL.

HOLLY  
He's a doctor.

VAL  
Get the fuck outta here.

A nod from WILL.

WILL  
Not really. No. I live next door.

VAL  
(to HOLLY) He's a doctor? He lives next door? You said nothing to me about this? I walk in. There he is. Covered in blood. And.

Finally looks at WILL. He's beautiful.

VAL  
Fuck me. (to HOLLY) He lives next door?

HOLLY  
He does.

VAL  
A doctor?

HOLLY  
Apparently.

WILL blushes.

WILL  
I should. I should go.

VAL  
Huh.

WILL  
Her pills are on her bedside table. She needs another in (checks his watch) two hours. One every four hours. She'll be fine.

HOLLY  
Fine. Fine. Fine.

WILL

Well. I'll just.

WILL heads to the door. Exits. VAL sits with HOLLY on the couch.

VAL

A doctor lives next door? A doctor, looks like that?

HOLLY

Yup.

VAL

What did you do to your hair? That's what you looked like when he.

Her hair lays in clumps on her head. Half a pony tail.

VAL

You looked like this all day?

HOLLY

I cut my arm.

VAL

I heard. You couldn't comb your hair.

VAL tries to tidy HOLLY's bangs.

HOLLY

...

VAL

Seems to me you shoulda made some sort of effort. I mean. I know work is work. But. Maybe some face wash. A new shirt. Something. A fucking comb.

HOLLY

I cut my arm.

HOLLY extends her arm. A beat.

VAL

Did you shower?

Lights out.

12. LETTERS UNDER THE DOOR. FRIDAY. 6:30AM.

Lights up. HOLLY sits at the window ledge. With difficulty, a slip of paper is shoved under the door with a grunt. HOLLY walks to the door and grabs the letter. Walks to the fireplace, pulls out a cigar box and tosses it inside. Puts the cigar box back in the fireplace. Goes back to the window ledge. Long beat. Lights out.

13. THE ARMS AND LEGS OF YOU. SATURDAY. 6:30AM.

Lights up on the coffee shop bench. BEN and HOLLY sit. WILL just to the left of them. HOLLY's hair in a messy pony tail. Her face white. Glasses on. There's a chill in the air. BEN watches the exchange between these two.

WILL  
How's your arm?

HOLLY  
Fine.

WILL  
Any pain?

HOLLY  
No.

WILL  
Will you let me look at it?

HOLLY  
No.

WILL  
You'll back to hospital, then, let them look.

HOLLY  
Maybe.

BEN  
Uh. You wanna sit? Join us? We're just havin' some coffee. A few tartes. Sit down.

HOLLY  
No.

WILL blushes.

WILL

I'm good. Thank you. Just wanted to. Well.

HOLLY

...

WILL

I'll come by later. Check on you.

HOLLY

No need. I'm fine.

WILL

I'd like to. Make sure.

HOLLY

I'm fine.

Short beat.

WILL

Well. I'll just.

Turns to BEN.

WILL

A pleasure to meet you.

BEN

WILLe here.

A handshake and WILL exits. Long beat.

BEN

Knew a guy once.

HOLLY

I'm not in the mood.

BEN

Had a crush on a girl. She lived across the way. Could see her house from his bedroom

window. Talked about her; loved her, probably, since sixth grade. Never said a word. Never talked to her. Nothin'. Always told me she had some look about her that said she wasn't available. Thirty years later? Finds out. She had a thing for him all along. They're together now, thank God, but – Jesus Christ – the time they wasted. Making up stories to keep from doing the thing that needs to get done.

HOLLY

He has a girlfriend.

BEN

You think he has a girlfriend. There's a difference.

HOLLY

She's right behind us.

BEN

Yeah. She can't hear through glass. She's not a superhero.

HOLLY

...

BEN

What are you doing. I mean. Really.

HOLLY

I'm not going to get involved with some one.

BEN

You don't even know if he's involved.

HOLLY

I'm not going to get involved with someone that has a - a- a tangled.

BEN

You have no idea.

HOLLY

I saw it.

BEN

What did you see.

HOLLY

...

BEN  
Ah.

HOLLY  
What?

BEN  
Never woulda guessed it.

HOLLY  
What.

BEN  
That's a shame.

HOLLY  
...

BEN  
You're purposely goin' down the wrong road.

HOLLY  
I don't know what you're talkin' about.

BEN  
Every time he's around you, he blushes like a 14 year old school girl.

HOLLY  
You just met him!

BEN  
I just saw it happen. Guy's eighteen feet tall and he's a wreck around you.

HOLLY  
That's not.

BEN  
Ask the question.

HOLLY  
...

BEN

You finally look like someone who's dusted the furniture.

HOLLY

What does that even mean.

BEN

And you blow it all up.

HOLLY

I don't know what that means.

BEN

Yeah. Sure I just met him. The guy. And I just saw you two together.

HOLLY

For thirty seconds.

BEN

You think it takes longer than that? Gotta say.

HOLLY

Wish you wouldn't.

BEN

He's one helluva prize.

BEN laughs. Enjoying HOLLY's discomfort.

HOLLY

...

BEN

What happened.

HOLLY

Nothing.

BEN

What did you do.



HOLLY  
Nothing.

BEN  
Guy comes asking after your arm. Looks like he hasn't slept. Dressed like a doctor.

HOLLY  
Because he is a doctor.

BEN  
I don't care what he is. Point is, I saw the look on his face. What's the matter with you?

HOLLY  
...

BEN  
I'm. I'll say it. I'm disappointed.

HOLLY  
...

BEN  
What are you doing with your life?

HOLLY  
I'm.

BEN  
What is your life if you don't do this one. Thing.

HOLLY  
...

BEN stands. Tosses his coffee cup.

BEN  
This is it kiddo. This is the party. Make a choice. Take a chance.

HOLLY  
...

BEN  
Don't waste it.

BEN gives HOLLY's hair a pat. Exits. Long beat. In the window, we see TANTRINE put something in a bag, leave the counter and join HOLLY on the bench.

TANTRINE

I thought. I thought you might like.

Hands HOLLY the bag. HOLLY opens it. It's a brownie.

HOLLY

Thanks.

TANTRINE

I'm sorry about your arm. Does it hurt much?

HOLLY

It's fine.

Beat.

TANTRINE

This is. I don't like. Conflict makes me (makes uncomfortable face).

TANTRINE starts to tear up.

HOLLY

Don't. Don't cry.

HOLLY pulls a napkin from the brownie bag.

TANTRINE

It's just. I think you. Misunderstood. Before. In the hallway. And I didn't know. At all. I mean. I didn't. Until he told me.

HOLLY

What did he tell you?

TANTRINE

Well that he. You know. The two of you are. You know. He's. Well. He's sooooo. (teary excited face).

HOLLY

What.

TANTRINE

I just mean. I mean he's so. Really. So. (teary excited face). But I thought you should know. On our date. When we went out. He's super super nice but. I had no idea what to say. It was kinda. Intimidating. At dinner. He's kinda shy and, honestly, and I don't mean this in a mean way. He's kinda.

HOLLY

...

TANTRINE

He's kinda super old.

HOLLY

...

TANTRINE

...

HOLLY

How old are you.

TANTRINE

Twenty three.

HOLLY

Ah. Right.

TANTRINE

Next month.

HOLLY

...

TANTRINE

I'm sorry I didn't. Say anything. In the hallway. I didn't know. And. Well.

She tears up again.

TANTRINE

If I thought that I hurt your feelings or anything. I mean. I had no idea.

HOLLY hands TANTRINE another napkin. She sniffles.

TANTRINE  
I just wanted to say.

HOLLY  
It's okay.

HOLLY pats her hand.

TANTRINE  
I'm sorry.

HOLLY  
No need.

TANTRINE  
I've never given people your age much credit. What I mean is.

HOLLY  
All right.

TANTRINE  
Never thought you knew what.

HOLLY  
...

TANTRINE  
I mean. I thought we were the only ones who didn't know what the hell we were doing, you know?

TANTRINE smiles.

HOLLY  
You're young.

TANTRINE  
Well.

HOLLY  
What comes next is even worse. It never gets better. Ever.

TANTRINE  
What? No it isn't. That's not true.

HOLLY

You have no idea. You're twenty two. Twenty three. You're standing in front of this small window. All this hope and excitement. It doesn't last. It all ends. People lie. Things change. You change. You hear things. Life is over.

TANTRINE

No it isn't. Jeez. Why do you? That's awful. Why would you say such a thing?

TANTRINE gets up to go back to the Coffee Shop.

TANTRINE

You're really.

HOLLY

I know.

TANTRINE

No you don't.

HOLLY

I'm sorry. I'm.

TANTRINE

No. I thought. Because I read your books. I thought you were cool. You know. Someone I could look up to. And when you started coming to the coffee shop, I was like "this is amazing". Amazing. Here's this super cool woman. Doing everything I want to do. I wonder if maybe I can talk to her sometime.

HOLLY

...

TANTRINE

And this is what you tell me?

HOLLY

Well.

TANTRINE

You know why most of us don't listen to people like you anymore?

HOLLY

"People like me?" Nice.

TANTRINE

Because you think you've learned everything there is to learn. And you think there's nothing you can learn from us or anyone else.

HOLLY

...

TANTRINE

He likes you. And you're sitting out here on this bench. Like a. Like a. I don't know. Like some baby person.

HOLLY

...

TANTRINE

If I thought he liked me? I'd be at his apartment. Not sitting here being mean and saying things that are stupid. Guy like that. He's super nice. And you're being all. I'd go back to his apartment right now. Tell him everything I had to tell him. Everything.

HOLLY

...

TANTRINE

That's what I would do.

HOLLY

...

TANTRINE

Yeah. If I were you.

HOLLY

...

TANTRINE

Which I'm not. So there.

HOLLY

...

TANTRINE

Learn that.

TANTRINE does a gesture. A mic drop and an explosion. She exits back to the Coffee Shop. Grabs the spray cleaner and paper towel. Three spurts. Draws an angry face in the window cleaner. Wipes it all away. Lights out.

14. HEART OF A LION. SATURDAY. 2PM.

Lights up. VAL and HOLLY sit on the couch. VAL shakes out a pill from the bottle. Hands it to HOLLY with a glass of water. HOLLY takes the pill.

VAL

If it were me? I woulda been over there knee deep in that guy thirty minutes ago. (under her breath) Shoving goddamned love letters under your door.

HOLLY

You don't know.

VAL

Don't I? Let's see then.

VAL marches to HOLLY's hiding place. Digs around.

HOLLY

Wait.

VAL

Known you for over twenty years and this is the first time I truly wanted to punch you in the face.

Finds the cigar box.

VAL

Cigar box. You're like a fourteen year old boy.

VAL opens the cigar box.

HOLLY

Don't!

VAL grabs one letter.

VAL

They're all. Sealed. You haven't even read them?!

HOLLY

I'm. I've been.

VAL

Read them.

HOLLY

I'm.

VAL

Don't finish that sentence.

VAL extends the cigar box.

HOLLY

...

VAL

What. Is he a jerkoff?

HOLLY

No.

VAL

Was he mean? Is he stupid?

HOLLY

No, he's.

VAL

What?

HOLLY grabs the cigar box

HOLLY

...

VAL



You like him.

HOLLY

I don't see how you could ever know that.

Beat.

VAL

Well, okay. You're probably right. You don't need him.

HOLLY

...

VAL

That's fine. You're too busy anyway. Book's due. Another one, two, three of them - more - to write.

HOLLY

...

VAL

Who has time for a guy, lives next door?

HOLLY

...

VAL

You'll be fine. You don't need anything. You sure don't need that mess, do you? All that mess that comes with actually telling someone how you feel.

HOLLY

But.

VAL

How you might feel. Close the door. Let it go. Fuck him. He's no prize. Just some guy. Stitched up your arm. Who is he to you anyway? You don't have time. All you need is right here in this room. You don't need to do anything but work. Do you? What is he to you, anyway?

HOLLY

He's (softly) kind.

VAL

Is he?

HOLLY  
(softly) Yes.

VAL  
How important is that to you?

HOLLY  
I. I don't know.

VAL  
Don't you? (in earnest) Grab your testicles and give it a go.

HOLLY  
You are.

VAL  
I suppose we could talk about all that nonsense you read in Cosmo.

HOLLY  
No one reads Cosmo.

VAL  
But I don't believe in it.

HOLLY  
...

VAL  
I believe in love. Full stop.

HOLLY  
...

VAL  
Woman to woman. What the fuck are you doing, sitting here?

HOLLY  
You're impossible.

VAL

Maybe he just likes your writing. Maybe he likes having someone to talk to right next door.  
Maybe he met you and thought.

HOLLY

...

VAL

“This is absolutely the woman for me.”

HOLLY

...

VAL

But you won't know that until you step out that door.

HOLLY

I don't know.

VAL

I know you.

HOLLY

...

VAL

Doesn't matter how long it's been. There's something about this guy.

HOLLY

No.

VAL

Let's agree that that's enough.

HOLLY

No.

VAL

Let's agree that you'll give up this nonsense. Not answering the door. Not seeing him.

HOLLY

This is not your.

VAL

Clean up this place. Throw out those magazines. Wipe off that table.

HOLLY

...

VAL

This place is stagnant. So are you. Forgive me. You know I'm right.

HOLLY

...

VAL

And tell this guy you like him. Like I know you do.

HOLLY

Why is everyone trying to.

VAL

Because. That's why.

HOLLY

(a look)...

HOLLY's face says everything: I'm too old for this. I don't know what I'm doing.

VAL grabs Holly's face.

VAL

You are.

Beautiful and strong.

Kind and all heart.

You are a goddamned lion.

And I am proud to know you.

Proud.

Every day.

You are like my own damned flesh.

Now get outta here.

I love you.

I mean it.

HOLLY

...

VAL

You really should. Get a - housekeeper. Or janitor. Something.

HOLLY

...

VAL

I'm older than you, my friend. And I only have one regret.

HOLLY

And what's that.

VAL

Closing a door.

VAL exits. Lights out.

15. A VISION. SUNDAY. 2:30AM.

Lights up. WILL's apartment. Clean. Lived in. Comfortable. Photos of far-off places on the walls. WILL sits, reading. Thick glasses on. Shoeless.

A knock at the door.

WILL walks to the door. Opens it. HOLLY stands. She pushes the door open. Steps in and begins.

HOLLY

When I was fourteen. I broke my foot.

WILL

Okay.

HOLLY

When I was fifteen.

WILL

Would you like to sit down?

HOLLY

I'll stand. I was in a car accident. When I was fifteen. Glass from the window. Right here (points to her left cheek). And I can still feel a piece of glass here. In my hand. Tore open my calf jumping a fence. Here.

WILL  
Sit down.

HOLLY  
I'll stand. There's more. Injuries. And scars. Over the years. And I never cared. I never cared how it looked or how it felt. I just looked in the mirror on my worst days and asked myself to remember. Then I wrote about it. Everything. I wrote about everything. Since I was a kid.

WILL  
Please.

HOLLY  
Let me finish.

WILL  
...

HOLLY  
I don't.  
I don't have regrets.  
I don't feel the WILLE way other people do.  
I haven't.  
I never have.  
I don't do this. I don't. Confront some guy who had the grace to stitch me up after I did something stupid.

WILL  
It's.

HOLLY  
Let me finish.

WILL  
All right.

Beat.

HOLLY  
How easy is all this for you?

WILL  
What. Easy?

HOLLY

This.

This.

Knocking on my door and telling me that women find you attractive.

WILL

That's not.

HOLLY

Don't talk.

WILL

(smiles)...

HOLLY

Don't do that.

WILL

(still smiling)...

HOLLY

Don't smile.

WILL

It's. I'm.

HOLLY

It doesn't work.

WILL stops.

HOLLY

I see you standing there.

And what do I know about you?

Do I know that you're.

You're a good man?

Do you kick.

Kick dogs.

WILL

No.

HOLLY

How many women have you dated.

How many have you.

Had.

You can do whatever you want.

Why not.

Why not have.

Thousands.

WILL

I don't think.

HOLLY

You follow me to a coffee shop to SPY on me.

WILL

What?

HOLLY

For some.

Some odd reason.

Like I'm an animal in the zoo.

With nothing better to do than to be WATCHED.

WILL

I didn't.

HOLLY

And I have to say.

I didn't care for that much.

I can take care of myself.

WILL

All right.

HOLLY

I know we don't know each other well.

WILL

We don't.

HOLLY

I know who I am and how people treat me.



I've known that longer than you've been on this planet.

WILL

That's not.

HOLLY

Do not.

A long, pointed finger jabs his chest.

HOLLY

Interrupt me.

WILL

...

HOLLY

How difficult is it for you to wake up every morning.

Look in the mirror.

Decide what to do and how to do it?

WILL

I.

HOLLY

I swear to GOD if you speak.

One.

More.

TIME.

WILL

...

HOLLY

You don't know me.

You saw me on tv.

Once.

Twice.

I don't care how many times.

That wasn't me.

Just.

Some stupid set of rules given to me by a PR person.

"Do this." "Do that".

Say this. Say that.  
Paid to make me into some international.  
Money machine.  
So she could send her not even fucking born.  
Children to college.

WILL

...

HOLLY

Everyone likes chocolate cake.  
That's not special.  
That's not.  
Intimate.  
That's not the whole of me.

WILL

...

HOLLY

I would never see you.  
On a plane.  
And stick my great fat HEAD in your face and pretend to know who you are.  
So don't pretend now.  
(softly) To know me at all.

WILL

...

HOLLY

Yes.  
Yes.  
I paid for the.  
The surgery.  
For the girl.  
Yes.  
I did that.

WILL

...

HOLLY

Who, with money, wouldn't?

WILL  
(softly) Plenty of people.

HOLLY  
And yes.  
The men at the end of the block.  
Fine.  
I did that, too.  
I bought them coffee.  
Twenty bucks.  
Who cares.  
Two things you saw.  
Where I was.  
Whatever you want to think I was.  
Human.  
And on this planet.

WILL  
...

HOLLY  
I don't know you.  
I don't know what kind of music you like.  
I don't know what you look like in the morning when you're not feeling well and you don't want to talk.  
I don't know who.  
Who you've lost in your life.  
I don't know the name of your first dog.  
If you had dogs.

WILL  
(softly) Quincy.

HOLLY  
...

WILL  
...

HOLLY  
(softly) I like that name.

WILL

...

HOLLY

I haven't left my apartment in.

Fourteen years.

Fourteen.

I've lived in that room for.

All those years.

And I didn't know how long I'd been there until.

WILL

...

HOLLY

(softly) You knocked on my door.

WILL

...

HOLLY

I am not a woman to mess with.

I am not someone to.

To.

What we did.

WILL

(softly) Holly.

HOLLY

(a look) ...

WILL

(under his breath) Holly.

HOLLY

(a look) ...

WILL

...

HOLLY

I know that you don't care about that young woman.

WILL

She's very nice, but it was just.

HOLLY

If you don't like her, you shouldn't be.

WILL

That's not.

HOLLY

She's a very nice girl. And this. What we.

WILL

It meant nothing. Just some dinner. I like her but.

HOLLY

Not that way she wants. But you could. In time.

WILL

This isn't the conversation I want to.

HOLLY

If you spent time with her.

WILL

What?

HOLLY

If you got to know her. Weren't so.

WILL

What are you doing?

HOLLY

I like her. She's a good. A good girl.

WILL

You like her so I have to like her, too?

HOLLY

She's kind. You're kind.

Two kind people.

WILL

What's the.

What's the matter with you?

HOLLY

...

WILL

I mean really. I thought I was. But you. You.

HOLLY

...

WILL

I like you. You. You're the. The person. I like.

HOLLY

But. In time I think you could. Talk to her. Find out what she likes to do.

WILL

I just told you how I felt and you're trying to talk me out of it.

HOLLY

...

WILL

Who does that?

HOLLY

I just wanted to.

WILL

...

HOLLY

(softly) Thank you.

WILL

What?

HOLLY

I'm thanking you.

Ending this.

This conversation.

And.

WILL  
For what?

HOLLY  
For knocking.  
For.

WILL  
You're thanking me for knocking on your door?

HOLLY  
Yes.  
I think we can both.  
Agree.  
That there's no need to.

WILL  
No.

HOLLY  
That it was a mistake.

WILL  
No.

HOLLY  
That we shouldn't.

WILL  
Sit. Down.

HOLLY  
What happened.

WILL  
SIT.

HOLLY  
...

WILL

DOWN.

HOLLY

...

WILL

I think you.

HOLLY

...

WILL

Have lost your mind.

HOLLY moves toward the couch. Sits. Scrunches herself into the corner. Farthest away from the other side.

WILL

Why are you here?

HOLLY

What?

WILL

Why are you here?

HOLLY

I told you why.

WILL

No you haven't.

I've spent the last twenty four hours.

Leaving. Leaving.

Letters under your door.

HOLLY

I.

WILL

I've never written a letter like that in my life.

Never.

And.



You didn't read them.  
You bloody didn't.

HOLLY  
I knew what they.

WILL  
No you don't.  
If you knew what they said.  
We wouldn't be sitting here.  
Having such a stupid, pointless.  
We wouldn't be having this conversation.

HOLLY  
Well.

WILL  
You are an impossible, fucking woman.

HOLLY  
That's right.  
I am.  
So let's just.

WILL  
No.

HOLLY  
What?

WILL  
I lied.

HOLLY  
I know you did. Of course you.

WILL  
No. You don't know. I mean.

HOLLY  
...

WILL

John Lee Hooker.  
Star Wars.  
Your books.

HOLLY

...

WILL

Favorite music.  
Favorite movie.  
Favorite thing to read.

HOLLY

...

WILL

I smile because it's easy.  
Because I'm lazy.  
Because I'm nervous.  
Because whatever you see of me standing here.  
Is not how I see myself.  
I don't see myself.  
This way.  
I try not to think of it.  
It's a pain in the arse.  
Looking like this.  
It's not what you think.

HOLLY

...

WILL

And now. You think that. Because you say it. I'll. I'll just do it. That I'll see.

HOLLY

Reason.

WILL

Reason? What the hell bloody reason would there be for you to suggest that I go back to a girl I had dinner with once except the one thing. The one. Thing. You're not saying.

HOLLY

I.

WILL  
Say it.

HOLLY  
I.

WILL  
Say it. Say it right now.

Is his accent getting stronger. Yes. It. Is.

HOLLY  
(softly) You terrify me.

WILL  
I told you how I felt and I meant it. I'm not some teenage boy gonna just change my mind because the woman I love tells me to –

HOLLY  
(small voice)  
What?

WILL  
- find someone else.

HOLLY  
...

WILL  
I won't. Because. I don't want to.

HOLLY  
...

WILL  
I lied. I lied to you. The other night.

HOLLY  
...

WILL

I'm not good at this. I'm completely. I'm mental. I asked five of my friends for advice before I ever knocked on your door and I kept asking them because I didn't know what to do or how to do it. I've never had to. No. That isn't true. I've never wanted to and there's the difference. I spend most of my time alone. I like being alone. I like walking alone. Biking alone. Riding alone. Being alone. I add one person to the mix and. I don't know what to say. Or if I do know what to say, I'm sitting with the wrong person.

HOLLY

...

WILL

That girl. At the coffee shop. She asked me. I wouldn't have thought of asking her to dinner. She asked me. So. I spent a lot of the night listening. And you know what I learned? That no one knows what they're doing. No one understands. Any of this.

HOLLY

I've known you for seven days.

WILL

So what. I don't know how these things work. And neither do you.

HOLLY

...

WILL

Just. Say my name.

HOLLY

I. Have to go.

WILL

My name.

HOLLY

This isn't.

WILL

My name.

HOLLY

...

WILL

...

HOLLY  
WILL.

WILL  
Say it again.

WILL reaches over, kisses HOLLY's eyelids. Moves the strand of hair off her face.

HOLLY  
WILL.

Brushes his fingers over her lips.

WILL  
Yes.

HOLLY  
WILL.

She pulls him to her and kisses him. He smiles. Lights out.

16. THE MISSING PART. SUNDAY. 6:30AM.

Lights up. BEN eating his tartes on the bench in front of the Coffee Shop. VAL enters. Sits. Coffee in hand. It's early morning. Behind them, TANTRINE is cleaning the window.

BEN  
You need?

VAL  
More room? No, thank you. I'm good.

BEN  
Tarte?

VAL  
What kind?

BEN  
Lemon. You like lemon?

VAL

I like lemon.

BEN gives VAL the tarte. Eats.

VAL

Ummm. This is a good one. Thanks.

She crosses her legs and he notices her ankles. She's got good ankles. He laughs. They sit. Eating their tartes. Smiling together.

BEN

Beautiful morning.

VAL

Sure is. Not bad.

BEN

Never better.

As BEN and VAL sit comfortably, lights fade.

End of play.