

NO KIND OF LIFE

by

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1 EXT. HOUSE - FRONT - NIGHT 1

An old, well-maintained house sits on a lonely lot.

2 INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 2

JEFFREY HILL closes the screen of a LAPTOP COMPUTER which sits on an end table. He looks at it for a moment and sighs.

He turns to a table on his opposite side with eight pills, a syringe of fluid, and an old-fashioned style glass of clear liquid.

His breathing is labored. He picks up the syringe and injects himself. He sits back in the chair, the rush of the drug overtaking him. As he breathes, tears roll down his face.

His fists clench. He hisses in a breath of air as if a sharp pain overtakes him. He breathes steadily until the pain appears to subside.

He picks up a photograph of himself with four other people: two men and two women, all about the same age. They are all posed for the picture in a park somewhere and are all smiles. Jeff smiles at the picture, melancholy rushing over his visage.

He sighs. He picks up four of the pills and tosses them into his mouth, quickly chasing them with his drink. He picks up the other four and does the same with them.

He picks the picture back up and stares at it with a smile.

JEFF

My dear friends, forgive me.

He holds the picture to his chest in a hug, closes his eyes, and drops his head.

3 EXT. HOUSE - FRONT - DAY 3

A car drives up in front of the house. It parks in such a way to leave plenty of room in the area in front as if others are expected to arrive.

SUSAN TISDALE, one of the women from the picture, gets out of the car and stands in front of the house. Her eyes betray sadness as she gazes at the front of the structure.

She reaches into the back seat of the car and takes out a bag. She carries it up to the front of the house and stops on the front porch. She sighs.

She reaches up over the door frame and pulls down a key. She inserts it into the lock and opens the door.

4 INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY 4

The door opens and Susan steps inside.

5 FLASH INSERT: Jeff stands just inside and smiles. 5

4A Susan closes her eyes and opens them to find no one in the room. She closes the door behind her and walks in. She glances to one side of the room.

6 FLASH INSERT: Susan and Jeff sit on a blanket on the floor. She looks at him, distressed. He strokes her cheek. 6

4B Susan stares at the blank space on the floor where she just saw herself. She walks to the couch and sits. 4B

She closes her eyes.

7 INT. HOUSE - NIGHT - FLASHBACK 7

Susan and Jeff stand near the front door. Jeff holds Susan's hands. She is not looking at him.

JEFF

You know I would never...

SUSAN

I know.

JEFF

Would you at least consider...

SUSAN

I just can't right now.

8 INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY - PRESENT 8

Susan sits on the couch, her head back and eyes closed. A tear runs down her cheek.

The front door opens.

EDDIE (O.S.)

Susan, you here?

Susan quickly wipes her face. She stands and turns to find EDDIE SERTZ, one of the men from the picture, entering with a bag. He spots Susan and stops. They both have very solemn faces.

Susan runs to Eddie and throws her arms around him. He holds her as well. She cries on his shoulder.

SUSAN
I can't believe he's gone, Eddie.

EDDIE
Me either.

She breaks the embrace and backs away.

SUSAN
Sorry.

EDDIE
It's all right.

Susan sits on the couch. Eddie puts his bag down and sits on a chair across from her.

SUSAN
I just can't get over it. It's a really bad dream I can't wake up from. I hoped I would come in here, and he'd be waiting.

EDDIE
Me too. When you called, I thought for sure you were pulling my leg. This place isn't going to be the same without him.

SUSAN
I wonder what'll happen to it.

EDDIE
What do you mean?

SUSAN
I mean, he was young. I doubt he had a will or anything.

EDDIE
Oh... I don't know.

SUSAN
I guess we'll find out soon enough.

EDDIE

Yeah.

They sit in silence for a moment. Susan sighs and shakes her head.

SUSAN

So how about you? At the dinner, you and Brenda were on. How's that going?

EDDIE

How do you think? She just can't handle me.

SUSAN

If anyone could, though... You know you love her.

EDDIE

Well, you're not one to-

Susan sniffles.

EDDIE

Oh geez. I'm sorry, Susan. I just-

SUSAN

It's OK. I can't get used to it either.

They sit for a moment in silence.

EDDIE

You heard from Tom or Brenda?

SUSAN

I had to leave them both messages, but I told them when I'd be here. If they don't show up in the next thirty minutes or so, I'm going to call again.

EDDIE

I'm sure they'll be here soon enough.

SUSAN

I remember the first time I came here. Jeff's parents were here, and I was a friend from school.

EDDIE

He was crushing hard on you.

SUSAN

We were supposed to go out. Anyway, something happened with the car, and we were stuck here. We watched videos until two in the morning when my dad finally showed up here wondering what was going on.

EDDIE

That's still funny. I, on the other hand, was here first for a school project we got teamed up on. I was allowed to stay late.

SUSAN

I was too, after awhile.

EDDIE

Why was it you two never hooked up?

Susan looks away.

SUSAN

Well... It was... I just... It's complicated.

EDDIE

Oh, I see. You want complicated, take me and Brenda. There's complicated.

SUSAN

That's not complicated. That's you unable to commit. It's a wonder you end up together as often as you do.

EDDIE

I'm irresistible, that's all.

SUSAN

She sees something in you, that's for sure.

A knock comes from the door. BRENDA STOCKWELL, the other woman from the picture, enters.

BRENDA

Hey, anyone home?

Susan gets up and walks to Brenda. They embrace.

BRENDA
Hey girl.

SUSAN
Hey.

They break the embrace. Brenda and Eddie stare at each other for a moment.

BRENDA
Eddie.

EDDIE
Brenda.

BRENDA
No little fling this time?

EDDIE
You know you're the only fling for me.

BRENDA
Do you really want to fight about this?

EDDIE
Hey, you were the one who brought it up.

BRENDA
What you want? An apology?

SUSAN
You guys are going to kiss and make up sometime over the weekend right?

EDDIE
Probably.

SUSAN
When?

BRENDA
Tomorrow.

EDDIE
Why not today?

BRENDA
I plan on having a headache today.

SUSAN
Room together?

EDDIE
Of course.

BRENDA
(to Susan)
Gotta keep him close.

Eddie and Brenda kiss. They wrap their arms around each other. Susan steps back. TOM CHASE, the other man from the picture, steps in behind her.

TOM
Already?

SUSAN
I guess.

Eddie and Brenda break the embrace. Brenda slaps Eddie.

EDDIE
Hey.

BRENDA
That's for not waiting until
tomorrow like I said.

EDDIE
Always have to have your way, don't
you?

Susan turns to Tom. She gives him a hug.

SUSAN
You didn't answer.

TOM
I was up late writing again. Slept
right through the phone. I came as
soon as I got the message.

SUSAN
I'm glad everyone came so quickly.
I would hate to have faced this on
my own.

EDDIE
None of us are on our own.

TOM

It all happened so fast, though.
Did anyone have any idea he was
planning this?

SUSAN

None.

BRENDA

Hey, remember when he was talking
about death the other time we were
here?

TOM

The whole bit with it being like a
big relationship?

BRENDA

That's the one.

TOM

My goodness, I'd almost forgotten.

EDDIE

I think I missed that one.

SUSAN

Me too. Where was I?

TOM

Bathroom?

BRENDA

I think so.

EDDIE

Doesn't explain me.

BRENDA

No one can explain you.

EDDIE

I guess I walked into that one.

BRENDA

Yup.

TOM

He said it's like a girl who tried
to grow up too fast and before you
know it, you've done everything
there is to do, and life holds no
thrills anymore.

(MORE)

TOM (cont'd)
Death is that state you reach when
everything has been done, and
nothing is left.

SUSAN
You think he felt like he'd done
everything?

TOM
I didn't think he had this in mind
at the time, but I think he could
have felt like his future would
hold no more for him than it
already did.

SUSAN
That's ludicrous!

BRENDA
Susan, what's wrong?

SUSAN
You're telling me that he felt like
his life was over at the time he
died.

TOM
That's what he was saying, so given
the reason-

SUSAN
No! I don't want to believe that.
He had more to live for. He should
have known that.

TOM
What are you talking about?

SUSAN
He should have known that!

Susan runs up the stairs. The other three look after her.

TOM
What'd I say?

BRENDA
I'll talk to her.

Brenda exits up the stairs. Eddie looks at Tom.

EDDIE
So that's really how he felt?

TOM

That's what he said at the dinner last week. I thought it would set her mind at ease knowing he died satisfied with his life.

EDDIE

Tom, you say that when people die in a wreck or of cancer, not the way he did.

TOM

I know that, but that just makes the point more poignantly. He killed himself which only serves to say that he was satisfied with his life as it was.

Eddie smacks Tom in the back of the head.

EDDIE

Have you completely lost your mind?

9

INT. HOUSE - SUSAN'S ROOM - DAY

9

Susan sits on a bed, crying. Brenda knocks on the door.

SUSAN

Please go away.

BRENDA

You know that's not what I do.

SUSAN

I don't want to talk about it.

BRENDA

OK. So what do you want to talk about?

Brenda sits next to Susan. Susan shrugs.

BRENDA

Come on. We haven't seen each other without help in a few weeks. We didn't get two seconds when we were here for dinner, even. What's going on?

Susan shrugs again.

BRENDA

You know, there's this song about losing everything and not having any hope left at all. You try to make everything work, but no matter what you do, your life falls apart.

Susan scoffs.

SUSAN

So you listen to country.

BRENDA

Maybe so, but when you're at your lowest, it's nice to know that someone else is there with you.

SUSAN

Don't most country songs cover that topic?

BRENDA

It's a feeling. It's a feeling that your life sucks, and you know it sucks, but since you know it sucks, maybe you can do something about it.

Susan chuckles.

BRENDA

I've been down there. I know what it's like. We all lost someone last night.

Susan shakes her head.

SUSAN

You don't know what it's like.

BRENDA

He was my friend, too.

SUSAN

Not like he was mine.

BRENDA

What do you mean? I don't remember you ever being intimate with him. I didn't think he was your type.

SUSAN
That's a long story in itself,
Brenda.

Susan sighs.

SUSAN
Just give me a moment alone. OK?

Brenda stands.

BRENDA
Sure.

She exits. Susan closes her eyes and drops her head.

10 INT. HOUSE - DINING ROOM - FLASHBACK - NIGHT

10

SUPER: Four Days Ago

Jeff is alive and well and he sits at a table with the other four. He raises his glass.

JEFF
You know, people say that once you
leave high school, the friends you
think you have aren't friends any
more. They say that your real
friends come from your college
years, but to them, I say that's a
bunch of horse hockey.

EDDIE
What's horse hockey?

TOM
Oh, Lord.

JEFF
Ask Tom, he gave it to me.

TOM
Hardly.

Laughter.

JEFF
Anyway, through the formative
years, we've always had each other.
(MORE)

JEFF (cont'd)
How the five of us met up and
stayed friends for this long is
really a mystery that not even
Sherlock Holmes could possibly
figure out.

SUSAN
To the improbable truth?

ALL FIVE
The improbable truth!

They drink.

JEFF
Still, I want to thank you all for
coming over on such short notice.
You know you didn't have to, and
maybe you didn't even want to.

He glances at Eddie and Brenda.

BRENDA
No, we're on this week, so it's
cool.

JEFF
Eddie, you're not settling down on
me, are you?

EDDIE
Never, my good man.

Brenda smacks his arm.

EDDIE
You know you like me.

BRENDA
Maybe I'm ready to settle.

EDDIE
Sure, as ready as I am.

BRENDA
Maybe.

TOM
Eddie, I really think these
escapades of yours have to come to
a stop at some point.

EDDIE
Do they?

TOM

I like you, but you're no Hugh Hefner.

EDDIE

Now there's an idol.

BRENDA

Tom, why'd you have to go there?

EDDIE

To live in a mansion with a hundred beautiful women is the place to be.

SUSAN

Do you really think they, like, do stuff with him?

BRENDA

I wouldn't.

EDDIE

They'd have to. I mean, he's the ultimate playboy. You know, it's rumored that he's had most of the playmates.

JEFF

Most? Not all?

EDDIE

Well, he decided he'd get married and be monogamous for a few years here and there, or so he says - wink, wink, nudge, nudge.

BRENDA

So your dream is to live out your elder days in a mansion surrounded by young women between the ages of eighteen and twenty-eight who want nothing more than to have sex with you?

All three guys gaze away from the women, as if pondering this very thought.

SUSAN

I'm not sure what kind of reaction you were expecting.

BRENDA

Well, I expected it from Eddie, but I had a higher opinion of Tom.

TOM

I'm human too. Just because I'm still single doesn't mean the thought doesn't cross my mind.

Eddie leans over, and speaks in his best Monty Python English accent.

EDDIE

But, you know, you've, uh, been with a lady, eh?

TOM

It's not really a priority, Eddie?

EDDIE

Whoa, that's really sad, dude. Brenda, can you help him out with that?

BRENDA

Grow up, Eddie.

TOM

It's a personal choice. I find that not being in a relationship allows me to focus on what I need to get done in life. Whenever I have fulfilled my goals, then I will look into a relationship.

EDDIE

But by then, no girl will want you because you'll only be able to hold out for, like, thirty seconds.

TOM

I think I'll manage.

BRENDA

I don't know. Some girls want that satisfaction.

TOM

I planned to wait till marriage anyway.

EDDIE

That's cute, Tom. It really is. Are you sure you're into women? I mean, this celibacy thing really creeps me out.

TOM

Eddie, I never said celibacy. Besides a lack of desire to get into bed with every woman who comes along does not imply in any way that I'm gay, bi, or even undecided. One can concentrate on things other than sex. It is possible. You actually get a lot accomplished.

EDDIE

Sure, whatever, dude.

SUSAN

No, I think he's doing good to be by himself. Look at me. For all I've tried, I'm still alone.

JEFF

I think you choose to be alone.

SUSAN

Not entirely. I just haven't found the right person for me.

BRENDA

I guess it's not for lack of trying.

EDDIE

Now, I've never been able to figure you out, Susan. You've gone out with both men and women, right?

Susan nods and shrugs.

SUSAN

There's some comfort to be found in both sexes, really. But I've never found that perfect fit.

BRENDA

So you've actually been with another woman?

Susan looks away. She nods.

BRENDA
What's it like?

Susan chuckles.

EDDIE
Hey, if you ever decide to find
out, can I watch?

SUSAN
I dunno. It's different than a guy,
I guess.

TOM
So what does that make you?

SUSAN
Do we have to put a label on it?

EDDIE
Of course! We are a people who must
define everything. *

TOM
I'm fine with a little grey area. *

JEFF
Well, look at what Eddie was saying
about you, Tom. He wanted to tack
some kind of label on your state of
being. *

TOM
I'm an enigma.

EDDIE
Hardly.

SUSAN

There are times I just need a break
from it, you know?

*
*
*

JEFF

Well, whenever you need that break,
I'm here for you.

*

TOM

I would hope we all are.

BRENDA

Here, here.

They raise their glasses again.

JEFF

To everlasting friendship. May it
always keep us together.

EVERYONE

(except Jeff, variously)
Cheers.

They drink.

END FLASHBACK

11 INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 11

Susan exits the kitchen with a glass of water. She walks over to the laptop on the end table. She puts her hand on it for a moment. She turns to look outside the front windows of the house. Tom sits outside. Susan walks out the front door.

12 EXT. HOUSE - FRONT - NIGHT 12

Tom looks over. He smiles.

TOM

Hi Susan.

SUSAN

What are you doing out here?

TOM

Ah well, Eddie and Brenda have decided to make up again, so I thought I'd come out here to ignore them.

Susan nods. They both look out over the expanse in front of the house.

TOM

Can I ask you something? Personal, I mean?

SUSAN

Depends on what it is. You can ask, I suppose.

TOM

Why are you so sad?

SUSAN

What do you mean? About Jeff?

TOM

No, in general. We've know each other for years, and to me, you've always seemed sad.

*

Susan stares off into the darkness.

SUSAN

I really don't talk about it.

TOM

I'm sorry.

SUSAN

No, it's OK. Maybe it'll help. The only people who've ever known are my therapist, Dr. Young... and Jeff.

TOM

Bad?

SUSAN

Yeah.

They stare into the darkness again.

TOM

I'm sorry.

SUSAN

No, don't worry about it. It's just hard for me.

TOM

You don't have to.

SUSAN

I've been trying to get over it for years. I gave up on Dr. Young after a couple years, and... well ... Jeff tried.

She looks at Tom. He looks at her, interested. She closes her eyes and breathes in and out deeply. She inhales.

TOM

You don't have to if you don't-

SUSAN

I was raped.

Tom nods.

TOM

Wow.

SUSAN

I was in seventh grade. It was the first day of school and I was so excited that mom let me walk to school all by myself.

She smiles.

SUSAN

I felt like such a big girl.

She sighs.

SUSAN

Anyway, this guy pulled up next to me and said mom had sent him to make sure I got to school all right. I said I was fine, but he told me I was late. I freaked because I didn't want to be late on my first day. So... I got in the car.

She shakes her head. Tom closes his eyes and lowers his head. She wipes away a tear.

SUSAN

Needless to say, I never got to school that day. I realized my mistake after we passed the school. I wanted out, but he wouldn't stop. I tried to get out, but he kept locking the doors every time I'd try. We got to his house and he dragged me inside. "Just a little kiss," he said. "Make an old man happy." Over and over again, he told me I had nothing to fear, but he destroyed me.

*
*
*

TOM

God, Susan, I'm so sorry.

SUSAN

It's in the past.

TOM

Is it really?

Susan shakes her head.

SUSAN

I guess it isn't always. With every man I tried to be with, I only saw his face, felt his hands. That's why I tried being with women, but there was always an emptiness with them.

TOM

What happened to the guy who did this to you?

SUSAN

Oh, I was able to tell my parents and the police where he lived. He went to prison, and was murdered soon thereafter. Dad told me that those guys in jail might be the worst kind of people, but they don't stand for child molesters. The guy who killed him was in for seven consecutive life sentences. He felt he did the world a favor.

*
*

TOM

Did he?

*

Susan shrugs.

SUSAN

The damage is done. I can never go
back to what I was before.
Sometimes, I wish he were still
alive so I could go in there and
yell at him or something. Let him
see what he's done to me.

*

*

She sighs.

TOM

I can't relate to that on any
level.

SUSAN

No one can. It's why I never talk
about it.

Tom nods. They stare out into the darkness.

*

13 INT. HOUSE - BRENDA & EDDIE'S ROOM - NIGHT

13 *

Brenda buttons her blouse. She does not look happy at all.

BRENDA
We've known each other how long?

EDDIE
I said I was sorry. Come on back to bed.

BRENDA
Not until you can keep straight who the hell you're sleeping with. What's my name again?

EDDIE
Brenda.

BRENDA
Are you sure?

EDDIE
Of course!

BRENDA
Well, then who's Katarina?

EDDIE
She was last night, but I swear, baby, tonight I was thinking about you.

BRENDA
Yeah? Then why wasn't my name on your lips?

EDDIE
It is now.

BRENDA
Aw, how sweet.

She moves close to him and takes his hand.

BRENDA
You named your hand.

She scowls and pushes his hand away.

*

EDDIE
Aw, now don't do this to me.

BRENDA
You did it to yourself. Enjoy Rosie Palm and her five sisters. Your very own group orgy on call.

She leaves the room and slams the door behind her.

14 EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT 14 *

Tom and Susan still sit on the porch. *

SUSAN *

Have you ever been in love? *

TOM *

I don't know. I went out in school, *

but nothing serious. *

Brenda storms out the front door. They look over to her. She ignores them and lets out a frustrated scream. She sits against the wall out in front of the porch. *

Tom looks at Susan. Brenda looks up. *

BRENDA *

Oh hi. *

TOM *

Nice night, eh? *

BRENDA *

Tom, tell me this. If you were making love to a woman, and I know this is purely hypothetical, wouldn't you make it a point to know what the hell her name is? *

TOM *

I believe I would, yes. *

BRENDA *

Do I look like a Katarina? *

Tom and Susan look at each other. *

TOM & SUSAN *

No. *

BRENDA *

I didn't think so. *

Susan kneels beside Brenda. *

SUSAN *

Why are you doing this to yourself? *

BRENDA
You mean me and Eddie?

SUSAN

Yeah, you and Eddie. All he does is use you when he can't get sex from someone else. You just fall right into it.

BRENDA

I know. God, how I know it. You know, every time we're apart, I tell myself, "No more. It's over. I'm not going to do this again." But every time I see him again, I just melt.

Tom steps for the door.

TOM

Excuse me.

SUSAN

Sure.

Brenda nods. Tom enters the house.

BRENDA

And then when he leaves, I just beat myself up over it. I mean, right now, we can't see each other because I work days, and he's doing nights. If he'd stay at a job for more than a year or two, he wouldn't be stuck on that shift all the time, but he just can't or won't.

SUSAN

I don't know. He's always been really irresponsible.

BRENDA

And I was hoping he'd grow out of it. I mean, people do get more responsible as they get older. Don't they?

SUSAN

Maybe he just doesn't think he has a reason to.

BRENDA

Why aren't I a good reason?

Susan looks at Brenda for a long moment. She shrugs.

SUSAN
I wish I knew.

15 INT. HOUSE - NIGHT 15

Tom walks through the house, looking around. On the back porch, he spots Eddie, sitting. He walks out the back door.

16 EXT. HOUSE - BACK PORCH - NIGHT 16

Tom exits the house and stands next to Eddie who doesn't turn to him.

EDDIE
So did she send you?

TOM
No, I just thought I'd track you down on my own.

EDDIE
Seriously.

TOM
Seriously.

Eddie sighs.

EDDIE
So I guess you know all about my evening.

TOM
Yeah.

Eddie nods.

EDDIE
I really can't say anything to get myself out of this one.

TOM
Doubt it.

EDDIE
Why do I do this to myself, Tom? I see her and part of me wants to stay and another part wants to just move along. When we get together, I don't want to. When we break up, I don't want to.

(MORE)

EDDIE (cont'd)
She's everything and nothing I want
all at the same time. What the
hell?

TOM
Hm, well, off hand I'd say you're
confused.

EDDIE
Prize to Captain Obvious.

TOM
Who's Katarina?

Eddie drops his head.

EDDIE
I really don't know. Some chick I
met at the club last night. We had
some drinks, had some sex, and I
didn't even get her number.

TOM
Simple as that, huh?

Eddie chuckles.

EDDIE
Sure, simple as that. Heh, that
might not even be her real name.

TOM
Couldn't find her again if you
wanted to?

Eddie shrugs.

EDDIE
Maybe.

TOM
Would you recognize her if you saw
her at the grocery store?

EDDIE
Probably not.

TOM
And you find fulfillment in that?

Eddie sighs. He shrugs.

EDDIE

I don't know why I do it. Sometimes I tell myself that I'm going to be with just Brenda. I mean, she's the only one to stick by me for so long. But then the night comes, and I find myself going out, and before I know it, I've bagged another one.

TOM

You make it sound so clinical.
(like Buffalo Bill in
Silence of the Lambs)
"It rubs the lotion on its skin."

EDDIE

I'm not trying to be that way.

TOM

You are though.

They stare out into the darkness. Eddie turns to Tom.

EDDIE

Did you like that movie?

TOM

What movie?

EDDIE

Silence of the Lambs.

TOM

It was clever.

EDDIE

I thought it was cool. Not scary or anything, though.

TOM

No. Creepy is a better term.

EDDIE

Yeah.

17 INT. HOUSE - EDDIE & BRENDA'S ROOM - NIGHT

17

Brenda lies in bed awake. She stares at the ceiling. Eddie enters. He stands at the end of the bed.

EDDIE

Hi.

BRENDA

Hi.

Eddie stares at the floor.

EDDIE

I'm sorry.

BRENDA

Forget about it.

Silence.

EDDIE

I think I may have a problem.

BRENDA

You think?

EDDIE

I think I'm addicted to sex.

Brenda sits up and looks at him. She smiles and shakes her head.

BRENDA

Give me a break.

EDDIE

No, I mean it. Think about it. Uncontrollable urges. A need to satisfy. Total disregard of others to get it.

BRENDA

Eddie, people don't get addicted to sex.

EDDIE

Then how do you explain it?

BRENDA

Explain what?

EDDIE

Explain that I- um...

BRENDA

That you what? Say you want to be with me and then prove you don't? Claim I'm your girl, and then find someone else in the same day? Why don't you sleep somewhere else?

EDDIE

Brenda-

BRENDA

I mean it. I'm done with you.

She lies down, facing away from him.

BRENDA

Go away.

Eddie looks at her for a long moment. He turns slowly and leaves the room. Brenda closes her eyes. She cries.

18 INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

18

Eddie walks into the room and sits on the couch. He hangs his head.

TOM (O.S.)

You know, I had a manager at one of my jobs that told me he had applied for the supervisor position six times before he got it.

Eddie looks up to find Tom sitting nearby with a book open on his lap.

EDDIE

Don't you ever sleep?

TOM

Night owl. It's a curse.

EDDIE

Oh.

TOM

Anyway, he told me this after the second time I'd applied for this supervisor position because I felt discouraged after interviewing twice and not getting it.

EDDIE

Ask me if I care.

TOM

Where's your persistence, Eddie?

EDDIE
Shut up, Tom. This sucks. Now I
know how Jeff felt.

Tom's face sours.

TOM
What do you mean by that?

Eddie looks away as if caught.

EDDIE
Nothing.

TOM
If it were nothing, you wouldn't
have said it. What do you know?

EDDIE
Nothing.

Eddie walks away. Tom follows.

TOM
Don't give me that. You were here,
weren't you? You showed up before
he died.

Eddie sighs. He nods.

TOM
What went on?

EDDIE
It's nothing. He just talked.

TOM
Did he call you?

EDDIE
What do you care?

TOM
I want to know why my friend killed
himself. If you know something, you
should tell us. Everyone.

EDDIE
I don't know. He was depressed.

19 INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

19

Vodka is poured into an Old-Fashioned style glass. Jeff lifts the glass to his lips and drinks.

JEFF

Everyone can have someone, right? I mean, look at you...

Jeff turns. Eddie sits behind him.

JEFF

You're a cheating bastard, and yet you have Brenda.

EDDIE

Well, I don't know if I'd-

JEFF

Oh, just admit it, Eddie. You're in love with her. You always have been.

EDDIE

Now, let's not get crazy here.

Jeff chuckles.

JEFF

There are a lot of crazy people out there, Eddie, and I'm not one of them. You know, there was a doctor who thought he was God's gift to everyone. He put down his patients at every opportunity, had a bad attitude with his staff, and was what you'd call a general asshole.

Jeff takes a drink.

JEFF

Know what he did, Eddie?

EDDIE

I bet you'll tell me.

JEFF

You're right. He would make house calls. Not just any house call, he would make house calls on older people.

(MORE)

JEFF (cont'd)

He's get them to sign over their worldly possessions, and then O.D. them on morphine. They said it was because he watched his mother suffer when she died, and the morphine helped her.

EDDIE

I feel like there's a point to this, but I'm missing it.

JEFF

Once he killed them, he'd calmly walk over to the phone and call an ambulance, letting them know the person was dying, but then he'd leave. They busted him altering medical charts and records after he killed someone to cover his tracks. He thought they couldn't track him. He wasn't so bright at computing, even though, of course, he thought he was God's gift to everything.

Jeff takes another drink.

JEFF

When are you going to slow down Eddie? When are you going to stop trying to be God's gift to women?

EDDIE

Well, if the shoe fits...

JEFF

How long do you think this will last? This game of yours? How long until this obsession leads to other curiosities? You know what started this doctor's killing of his patients? During his internship. Patients died during his shift, but no one could prove anything. Some say he euthanized an old woman who begged him to. Another woman had a suffering child. He asked her to leave the room, and when he emerged, her child was dead. You are addicted to sex, but addicts always need more. He thought he was helping. What are you doing?

EDDIE

Getting laid?

JEFF

With one person at a time?

Eddie looks away.

EDDIE

Usually.

JEFF

But?

EDDIE

Sometimes, you know...

JEFF

It's not enough. You need more. How much more, Eddie. How much do you need?

EDDIE

I don't know. Look, why are we talking about me, anyway? Why are you comparing me to some psychopathic doctor? I'm not a killer.

JEFF

How many women have you slept with?

EDDIE

I don't know.

JEFF

Ballpark.

EDDIE

I really don't know. I've been laid probably every other night since we were in high school.

JEFF

Different person every time?

EDDIE

No, Brenda is in there quite a few times.

JEFF

She's your only repeat?

EDDIE

No. Well, mostly.

JEFF

This doctor officially murdered over two hundred of his patients, but they uncovered records that show over five hundred died under his care. He was an addict and he kept going. Unless you stop, your total is going to be astronomical because you clearly do this more frequently than he did. His was a 20 year career. You've probably racked up over a thousand already. You've already made the move to group sex, and then what? What will happen one night if you can't find someone to satisfy you. What if that hot girl at the bar refuses your advances because you're not as hot as you once were? What are you going to do then?

EDDIE

Oh, come on.

JEFF

Maybe you'll wait outside for her. Maybe you'll ask again. Maybe... Maybe you'll just take what you want without asking. Oh, now there's a whole new thrill.

EDDIE

Give me a break.

JEFF

Once you get your taste of that, then Eddie realizes he can satisfy his urges without playing the pick up game. Now he's Eddie, the serial rapist.

EDDIE

I'm leaving.

Eddie gets up and turns for the door. He opens it but Jeff pushes it closed.

EDDIE

Get out of my way. You're drunk.

JEFF

Oh yeah? Guess what happens in our story when Eddie the serial rapist encounters resistance. He takes his hands...

Jeff holds up one hand (the other holds his glass).

JEFF

...and he wraps them around the victim's neck...

Jeff puts his hand on Eddie's neck. Eddie pushes Jeff down.

EDDIE

Get away from me. What's wrong with you? I'm no killer.

JEFF

Yet. You keep going down this path, and you could be.

Eddie opens the door. He pauses and looks at Jeff, still sitting on the floor, his glass of vodka shattered near him.

EDDIE

Get some rest. Whatever's on your mind has messed you up.

JEFF

You never asked what's on my mind.

EDDIE

I assumed you'd tell me.

Jeff chuckles.

JEFF

Well, you know what happens when you assume.

Eddie chuckles. Jeff looks at him. He gets to him feet.

JEFF

Eddie... I want you to do something for me. It's important.

EDDIE

Sure, Jeff. As long as you don't ask me to find a counseling group called future rapists anonymous, I'll try.

Jeff chuckles.

JEFF

No, you've got a good girl in Brenda. I know you have a rocky history, but she loves you, and you love her.

EDDIE

Jeff...

JEFF

Everything you need is right there. Settle down. Be with her. Commit to her.

EDDIE

You want me to marry her too?

JEFF

I'm hoping for baby steps here. Please do this... If not for me, then for your sake.

Eddie looks at Jeff for a long while.

EDDIE

Sure. Whatever. Go to bed, man. I'll see you later.

Eddie exits. Jeff looks saddened as Eddie leaves.

END FLASHBACK

20 INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

20

Tom appears enraptured with Eddie's story. Eddie shrugs.

EDDIE

That's it. I found out he killed himself that night. Apparently, he had some sleeping pills with the vodka.

Tom nods.

TOM

That's interesting.

EDDIE

Why? Because he called me out,
compared me to a serial killer, and
said to marry Brenda?

TOM

Well, at least he compared you to a
doctor.

Eddie nods with a smirk.

EDDIE

You have a point.

TOM

No, it's interesting because Jeff
apparently had an agenda that
night.

EDDIE

Did he call you too?

Tom nods.

TOM

He wanted to see us before he died.
I guess he wanted to make sure he
said everything he wanted to say
before he... well, did it.

EDDIE

That sucks!

TOM

Yeah, it does. I imagine we both
would have behaved differently if
we'd known.

EDDIE

Yeah, we would have taken him to a
hospital.

TOM

Yeah, we would have.

EDDIE

OK, so what did he say to you?

TOM

If I were you, I'd be more
interested in what he told Brenda.

Eddie looks off, thoughtful. He nods.

EDDIE

That's a good point. But seriously,
I want to know what he told you. I
talked. It's your turn.

TOM

I don't think we volunteered for
turns.

BRENDA (O.S.)

No, but I think we should take
them.

Tom and Eddie turn to find Brenda and Susan standing at the
edge of the room. Eddie's mouth drops open.

EDDIE

Oh God, how long have you been
standing there?

BRENDA

Long enough.

SUSAN

You guys were called over here by
Jeff?

Eddie, Brenda, and Tom all nod.

BRENDA

Weren't you?

Susan looks between them for a moment.

SUSAN

Sure. Yeah, he called me.

TOM

So what did he tell you?

SUSAN

I think it was your turn.

EDDIE

(to Tom)

Yeah, nice try trying to divert the
focus there.

TOM

I had to try.

BRENDA
 It looks like Jeff knew us all too well, and if Tom's and Susan's stories are like Eddie's and mine, we have to get our thick skins on.

EDDIE
 (to Brenda)
 I want to know what he told you.

Brenda nods.

BRENDA
 You'll know. I promise.

TOM
 So Brenda is next?

BRENDA
 No, Tom, you're still next. Nice try again.

TOM
 This is embarrassing.

EDDIE
 How do you think I feel? I thought it was just you, and now she knows everything.

BRENDA
 Is that such a bad thing?

Eddie looks at her for a moment. He looks back to Tom.

EDDIE
 Tom, get on with it.

Tom takes a large inhale and exhale. He looks at the ceiling.

TOM
 All right.

21 EXT. HOUSE - FRONT - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

21

Tom pulls up in front of the house and parks. He gets out of the car and walks toward the front door.

JEFF (O.S.)
 Hey.

Tom spins and looks at Jeff sitting on his own car nearby.

TOM
Hey. What's up?

JEFF
I'm just out here checking out the stars for you.

TOM
The stars?

Tom looks up at the sky. He looks back to Jeff.

TOM
I don't get it.

JEFF
I guess I've gotta respect your desire to be completely and utterly single until you reach your goal of getting into the Hollywood screenwriting scene. Just admirable, you know.

TOM
Well, thanks.

JEFF
I mean, you're putting your whole life on hold for a dream. A dream that you've pursued for how long now?

TOM
Ten years.

JEFF
Wow. Ten years. Ten years with no girlfriend and no progress.

TOM
Right.

JEFF
I wish I had your conviction. I wish I could aim so high that I never have a prayer of ever progressing with my life until something near impossible actually happens, and still be happy.

TOM
I'm not sure I like your implications here.

JEFF
Why? Am I wrong?

Tom stares at him.

JEFF
Is your life progressing outside of
your endless writing and pitching?
How many scripts have you written?

TOM
Twenty.

JEFF
Pitch them all?

TOM
Yes.

JEFF
Contests?

TOM
Yes.

JEFF
Festivals?

TOM
Yes.

JEFF
Hid one under a pizza and had it
delivered to Steven Spielberg?

Tom sighs.

TOM
Yes, clearly we've discussed this.
Clearly, I'm making no headway.
Clearly-

JEFF
-you're wasting your life.

TOM
That's not fair.

JEFF
No?

Jeff gets off his car.

JEFF

You're telling me that you stagnating while waiting for the writing equivalent of winning the lottery isn't wasting your life? What's going to happen in forty years when you still haven't sold anything? When you've got a laptop with two hundred worthless files?

TOM

That's not going to happen.

JEFF

Damn right it's not. You need to jump start your personal life.

TOM

I can't concentrate on-

JEFF

Look, I'm not asking you to give up on your dream, Tom. Don't get me wrong here. I've read what you've written, and it's good. I like most of your stuff.

TOM

Most?

JEFF

Hey, not everyone writes gold all the time, but I think you can make it. But you can't stop everything else until you do. I don't know where your problem is, but you've got to divide yourself a little, or you're going to wake up an old man with nothing to show for eighty years of dreaming.

TOM

I swear, as soon as-

JEFF

-as soon as nothing! Tom, I want you to promise me that you will share your life with someone. Never give up on your dream, but don't live your life alone.

TOM

Jeff, why are you telling me this?
Why did you call me out here just
to criticize me and my life?

JEFF

I just wanted to talk to you.

TOM

I thought something was wrong.
You've never just called me up, and
asked me to come over, and now,
it's just to give me a hard time.
Thanks a lot, Jeff. I'll sleep real
well tonight.

Tom turns to walk back to his car.

JEFF

Tom, don't leave like this.

TOM

If you want your knife back, I
decided to keep it.

JEFF

Tom...

Tom turns.

TOM

What? What do you want from me? You
don't think I'm frustrated? You
don't think I want more out of my
life than I have? You don't think I
am pissed beyond all measure
because not a single freakin'
person in L.A. knows how to respond
to a letter or E-mail or anything?
I know I'm getting older. I know my
time is running out. But if I give
up now, I throw away everything
I've worked for.

JEFF

I'm not asking you to do that.

TOM

No, you want me to divide my
interests.

(MORE)

TOM (cont'd)

Continue to not even get a rejection letter, and then let someone else see me at my lowest instead of being allowed my humiliation in private. Go to hell, Jeff. And you know I don't tell that to just anyone.

JEFF

I'm sorry. I just wanted to tell you that-

TOM

Jeff, I'm not sure what you've told me other than that I am a loser in my field. Thanks, Jeff. You're a great friend.

Tom gets in his car and drives off. Jeff watches him go.

END FLASHBACK

22

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

22

The four sit on the couch and chairs. Tom stares at the floor.

TOM

You have no idea how much I regret that night, but when I think about what he said, he's right. I've spent ten years working toward a goal that is so lofty, few ever attain it. I look at all the movies made, especially those on MST three K, and I know I can do better. But it's an uphill battle. Jeff was right. I just wish I could apologize.

SUSAN

Tom, he didn't tell us anything about what he was up to. He was giving us his last requests in the final moments of his life.

EDDIE

They didn't have to be his last moments, though. He took his own life. It's not like he was dying from a disease or anything. He killed himself.

(MORE)

EDDIE (cont'd)
That's a stupid way to die, and
telling off your friends is a
stupid way to spend your final
moments with them.

BRENDA
He was telling us the harshest
truths about ourselves. Stuff that
we didn't want to hear.

EDDIE
(to Brenda)
What did he tell you?

Brenda sighs.

BRENDA
Mine went about like everyone
else's did. He was very forward,
and I sure didn't want to hear what
he had to say. Reminds me of
Jigsaw.

TOM
But without the tests.

BRENDA
He tells us what we don't want to
hear, and he's giving us the chance
to change.

SUSAN
He knows all the dark little
secrets we keep from the rest of
the world, and instead of letting
us hide within them, he flings them
at us, and forces us to deal with
open criticism about what we're
doing.

BRENDA
The choice is the same though: live
or die.

Eddie and Tom looks at each other. They nod.

TOM
I never thought of it that way. And
if anyone should have, it would be
me. He related my life to a sort of
living death, it seemed.

EDDIE
He called me a serial killer.

BRENDA
No, he called your life ultimately
unfulfilling.

EDDIE
Oh yeah, you were listening.

BRENDA
That's right.

Eddie sits back and looks at her.

EDDIE
So tell us what our personal Jigsaw
told you.

Brenda sighs.

BRENDA
All right.

23 INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - FLASHBACK 23

KNOCK, KNOCK. Brenda opens the front door and looks in.

BRENDA
Jeff? You here?

JEFF (O.S.)
I'm in the dining room.

Brenda closes the door behind her and walks through the house
to

23A THE DINING ROOM 23A

where Jeff sits with cards laid out in front of him. He
collects the cards and deposits them at the bottom of his
stack.

JEFF
Have a seat.

Brenda sits across from Jeff as he plays with the cards, but
does not shuffle them in any way.

BRENDA
What's going on?

JEFF
You ever play poker?

BRENDA

Um, no.

JEFF

Watched any games? Played it before?

BRENDA

I played it a little in college. I was never any good at it.

JEFF

That's fine. I wasn't either. Let's play a hand.

Brenda looks confused but nods.

BRENDA

All right.

Jeff deals her and himself five cards each.

JEFF

So, do you think you have a good hand?

BRENDA

I think so.

A look at Brenda's hand shows a four of a kind. She starts to lay down her cards to show him, but-

JEFF

Not yet. I want to ask you something. You know that poker usually involves betting, right?

BRENDA

I really don't like to bet on these things.

JEFF

Why not?

BRENDA

Too risky.

JEFF

What's wrong with a little risk?

BRENDA

I don't want to lose anything.

JEFF

Well, we're not using real money,
so there's nothing to lose, right?

BRENDA

Um, OK.

JEFF

What do you think your hand is
worth?

BRENDA

I think it's really good.

JEFF

How much would you lay down for it?

BRENDA

Um, fifty bucks?

JEFF

Alright, I see your fifty but I
think mine is worth two hundred, so
I'll raise you by two hundred. Is
it worth laying down another two
hundred dollars?

BRENDA

I don't think so. I'll fold.

JEFF

Why?

BRENDA

Because, I don't want to lose
everything.

JEFF

Brenda.

BRENDA

What?

Jeff lays down his cards. Zilch. Brenda lays her four of a
kind down.

JEFF

That's a good hand.

Brenda looks at it for a moment.

BRENDA

You stacked the deck.

JEFF
Why do you say that?

BRENDA
I just think you did.

JEFF
You do deserve to win sometimes.

BRENDA
Ok, so I win.

JEFF
No, you folded. You had the second highest hand in poker. The only way I would beat you is a royal flush, and do you know the astronomical chances of me getting that?

BRENDA
If you stack the deck?

JEFF
You're missing the point. Yes, I stacked the deck...

BRENDA
I knew it.

JEFF
...but you folded in a mock betting situation with four of a kind.

Brenda sighs.

BRENDA
Where are you going with this, Jeff?

JEFF
How are things with Eddie?

BRENDA
All right, this was fun.

Brenda gets up and turns to the front. Jeff goes after her.

JEFF
Brenda, come on.

BRENDA
Why? Why is this important all of a sudden.

(MORE)

BRENDA (cont'd)
It's after ten o'clock and you call me out here just to play a poker and ask how things are with Eddie? What's really going on?

JEFF
I just wanted to talk to you.

BRENDA
OK, you first. You talk to Susan recently?

JEFF
Why do you ask?

BRENDA
You want to talk about Eddie, I want to talk about Susan.

JEFF
It's complicated.

BRENDA
Is it?

JEFF
Brenda, you and I both know that Susan has issues with guys. She always has.

BRENDA
So? Eddie has issues with commitment.

JEFF
Brenda, you know how he feels about you?

Brenda stares at Jeff silently. She closes her eyes and sighs.

JEFF
And I know how you feel about him. All you need to do is something about it. Don't go through life with this half life with him.

Brenda snaps her eyes open and glares at him.

BRENDA
What do you want me to do? Change him? He won't change unless he wants to.

JEFF

What about you? Do you want to?

Brenda walks toward the door.

BRENDA

Shut up, Jeff! I'm sorry I came over here tonight. I don't know what your deal is, but you have no right to pry into my personal business.

JEFF

Why not? You're not doing it.

Brenda stares him down for a long moment. She turns to the door.

BRENDA

Good night, Jeff.

She exits and slams the door behind her, rattling the pictures on the walls.

JEFF

Good luck, Brenda.

END FLASHBACK

24

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

24

Brenda is in tears. Eddie stares at her, his mouth hanging open. She looks at him.

BRENDA

Well, now you know.

EDDIE

Brenda...

Brenda gets up and run out of the room. Eddie watches her. He looks at Tom and Susan who look at him, as if expecting him to follow her.

EDDIE

What?

SUSAN

Seriously.

TOM

Call it a recess.

Eddie sighs and walks after Brenda. Tom looks at Susan.

TOM
Nice night, huh?

SUSAN
Oh sure. It's been a real dream.

25 INT. HOUSE - BRENDA & EDDIE'S ROOM - NIGHT

25

Eddie enters. Brenda lies on the bed, staring away from the door. Tears stream down her face.

EDDIE
Brenda?

BRENDA
What?

Eddie shuffles into the room and shuts the door. He sits next to her on the bed. She continues looking away from him.

EDDIE
I really don't know what to say.

BRENDA
Then why bother?

EDDIE
You know I've always had this bat out of hell attitude.

BRENDA
Are you trying to justify yourself?

Eddie sighs and nods.

EDDIE
Yeah.

BRENDA
Please don't.

EDDIE
It's just- I- What I'm-

He sighs again.

EDDIE
I don't know-

Brenda sits up and looks at him, angry.

BRENDA

What is your problem? Why don't you just spit it out? Say what you want to say. There's no better time. The whole thing is set up beautifully, isn't it? Jeff tells us with his dying breath that we should be together. What better time to come clean with how you really feel?

EDDIE

I look at you, and I- I want-

BRENDA

You can't even do it, can you?

Eddie stares at the ground.

BRENDA

Oh my God.

Brenda gets out of bed and stands at the door. She wipes tears from her face.

BRENDA

Well, at least you can't lie about it either.

She storms out of the room.

26

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

26

Tom and Susan sit where they were before.

TOM

I consider my belief to be more of a lifestyle because it's more than some once a week deal. You should know by now that I'm not some browbeating radical. That doesn't help anyone.

*
*
*
*
*
*
*

SUSAN

I've run into more than one of those, and I've always been worried you might become one of them.

*
*
*
*

TOM

No, a normal person might think we'd butt heads, but that attitude is as much a choice as everything else is.

*
*
*
*
*

SUSAN

Like whether to spend your life
alone or not.

*
*

TOM

Yeah, something like that.

*

Brenda storms through and slams out the front door. Tom and Susan watch her and then turn to each other. They play a quick game of paper-rock-scissors, which Tom loses.

*

TOM

All right. I'll talk to her. Maybe a guy perspective will help this problem.

SUSAN

Yeah, good luck with that.

27 EXT. HOUSE - BACK - NIGHT

27

Brenda stands well off the porch, her arms folded. Tom walks out the door.

TOM

Didn't go well, did it?

Brenda scoffs.

BRENDA

Prize to Captain Obvious.

TOM

What happened?

BRENDA

Eddie was Eddie.

28 INT. HOUSE - BRENDA & EDDIE'S ROOM - NIGHT

28

Eddie sits on the bed, staring at the floor. Susan enters.

SUSAN

What did you do?

Eddie scoffs.

EDDIE

It's what I didn't do that's the problem.

SUSAN

I see.

EDDIE

Why is this so important right now?

SUSAN

I think you know.

27 / 28 SPLIT SCREEN BRENDA / EDDIE

27 / 28

BRENDA

I want him to be happy.

EDDIE

I want to make her happy.

BRENDA

And maybe that's not with me.

EDDIE

But I don't know how to do it.

BRENDA

He could have his heart set on someone else.

EDDIE

She's the only constant I have in my life.

BRENDA

Maybe I need to let him go.

EDDIE

I don't want to lose her

BRENDA & EDDIE

I just don't know what to do.

EDDIE

If I tell her now, it'll seem forced and stupid.

BRENDA

If he were to come out here right now and finally just tell me, I'd believe him.

EDDIE

How could she believe anything I say?

BRENDA
He's too afraid to say it unless
it's true.

EDDIE
Am I wasting my life without her?

BRENDA
Jeff said I never stood up for
myself before.

EDDIE
Am I just being stupid because of
what Jeff said?

BRENDA
If he can't come out and tell me
how he feels tonight...

EDDIE
I think if I don't tell her what
she needs to hear...

EDDIE & BRENDA
It's over.

END SPLIT SCREEN

28A	INT. HOUSE - BRENDA & EDDIE'S ROOM - NIGHT Eddie stares at the floor. Susan still sits next to him.	28A
27A	EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT Brenda stares at the ground. Tom stands next to her.	27A
28B	INT. HOUSE - BRENDA & EDDIE'S ROOM - NIGHT Eddie looks up.	28B
27B	EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT Brenda turns around.	27B
28C	INT. HOUSE - BRENDA & EDDIE'S ROOM - NIGHT Eddie leaves the room.	28C

27C EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

27C

Brenda walks inside.

29 INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

29

Eddie and Brenda meet in the center of the room. Tom and Susan enter from their respective points. Eddie and Brenda stare at each other.

BRENDA

Eddie...

EDDIE

Brenda...

BRENDA

Eddie, I don't think-

Eddie puts a finger over her mouth with a "sh."

EDDIE

Brenda, I've spent a lifetime running away from everyone, including you. Call it fear or whatever you want, but I know I need something more than my shallow, so-called life.

Eddie sighs.

EDDIE

Brenda...

Eddie stares at her. He takes a deep breath. Tom and Susan stand next to each other and watch. Brenda says nothing as she looks into Eddie's face.

EDDIE

I...

Brenda holds Eddie's hands. She maintains her stare into his eyes.

EDDIE

I love you.

He breathes out in relief.

EDDIE

I do. I always have.

Brenda smiles.

BRENDA
I love you too.

They kiss.

BRENDA
So... Does this mean you'll be monogamous finally?

EDDIE
I want to be.

BRENDA
You better be.

EDDIE
I wonder if they have support groups for this.

BRENDA
We'll look into it.

They embrace. Tom and Susan smile. Brenda and Eddie break the embrace. They look at Susan.

BRENDA
Isn't it your turn now?

Susan sighs. She nods.

30 INT. HOUSE - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

30

Jeff and Susan sit on a blanket on the floor of the living room. Empty plates sit near them. Susan lifts a wine glass and takes a drink.

SUSAN
I know there's some kind of message there, but I still don't get it.

JEFF
See, the first two thirds of the movie is a dream and the last third is a combination of reality and a dream.

SUSAN
Why wouldn't it all be reality?

JEFF

Because I don't think the freaky
burned face guy is real, and the
little people in the bag certainly
aren't real.

SUSAN

And she wouldn't be tormented by
them.

JEFF

I don't know. I don't get that
part.

SUSAN

See? It doesn't make sense.

JEFF

No, it does if you think about it.
What about the name of the
waitress?

SUSAN

What about it? Diane in the first
part and Betty in the second? She
reversed the names.

JEFF

Yeah, in her dream.

SUSAN

I was hoping she killed the
waitress, took her identity, and
then met Rita when the gunman
failed to kill her.

JEFF

Too normal. Lynch isn't like that.

SUSAN

Oh, I see.

JEFF

So what lead you to watch
Mulholland Drive?

SUSAN

Oh, I don't know.

JEFF

Was it before or after you found
out Naomi Watts was topless?

Susan laughs.

SUSAN
You know, I'm not totally like
that.

She takes a drink. She looks at him. He smiles at her.

SUSAN
OK, it was after.

He laughs.

JEFF
I knew it! I know you too well.

SUSAN
Yeah, I guess.

Jeff picks up his glass, which is an old-fashioned. He takes
a drink.

JEFF
Susan, you said you aren't really
(finger quotes)
"like that."

She shrugs.

SUSAN
Yeah.

JEFF
Why didn't we ever get together?

She averts her eyes.

SUSAN
That's rather...forward.

JEFF
I just want to know, because I've
always liked you. I've always
wanted to be with you, but anytime
I tried, you'd change the subject,
or be with someone else. I don't
know how many people I've seen you
with of both sexes that it didn't
drive me crazy not to be able to
hold you myself.

Susan stares at the floor.

SUSAN

If there were any man I could look at without getting the most horrible memories, it might have been you.

JEFF

Might have been? Is it too late?

SUSAN

We're friends, Jeff. Isn't that enough?

JEFF

It has been. But... Our time is running out. We need to make the most of what we have left to us while we have it.

SUSAN

Wow, you are being direct tonight. Is this why you had me over for dinner? I thought we were just talking and having a good time, but you've got ulterior motives.

Jeff looks at her for a moment.

JEFF

Yes. I don't mind admitting it. I wanted to talk to you alone, which is why no one else is here. I wanted to admit that I like -- no, I love you. I wanted you to know that, and know also that I want you to stay with me.

SUSAN

What, tonight?

JEFF

For the rest of my life, Susan.

SUSAN

So you're hoping I'll have sex with you?

JEFF

That's not what I'm asking for.

SUSAN

Then what are you asking for?

JEFF

Just stay with me.

Susan looks at him. He reaches out and strokes her cheek. She closes her eyes. A tear runs down her face.

SUSAN

Why are you doing this?

JEFF

I need you to tell me something.

SUSAN

What is it?

JEFF

How do you feel about me?

SUSAN

You're a good friend, Jeff. You always have been.

JEFF

No, I want to know about you. I don't want the stock, auto-answer someone gives their distant acquaintance. I want your honest emotional answer.

SUSAN

I don't have that.

JEFF

Susan, please.

Susan gets up and walks to the door. Jeff runs after her. He takes her arms and spins her to him.

SUSAN

Jeff...

He kisses her. She is initially shocked, but her guard quickly drops. She closes her eyes. Her arms wrap around his neck. His arms wrap around her waist. The embrace continues until-

Susan's eyes snap open. She gasps and backs away. Tears stream from her eyes.

SUSAN

Jeff, dammit! Why would you...?

JEFF
You do love me.

SUSAN
I can't love anyone.

JEFF
But you can if you open up.

SUSAN
I can't let anyone hurt me...

Jeff steps towards her. She drops her head into his chest. He wraps his arms around her. She allows herself to be held.

SUSAN
You know what I've been through.

JEFF
I do. You can get through it.

SUSAN
I can't. I've been through hell and I... I just can't.

JEFF
I can bring you out.

He looks at her. She turns her face to him.

JEFF
Just take my hand and come with me.
I can keep you safe.

Her guard drops. Their faces close in for another kiss.

She comes to and breaks the moment. She steps to the door.

SUSAN
Jeff, I'm sorry. I just...

Jeff takes her hands as she stands by the door.

JEFF
You know I would never...

SUSAN
I know.

JEFF
Would you at least consider...

SUSAN
I just can't right now.

JEFF
You can't go on like this, Susan.
This is no kind of life for anyone.

SUSAN
Good night, Jeff.

She leans in and pecks him on the cheek. She hastily leaves.
Jeff sighs and watches her walk to her car.

END FLASHBACK

31 INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

31

Susan stares at the floor, her hands folded before her.

SUSAN
He watched me until I was
completely gone. Maybe he was
hoping I'd turn around. I think it
was after that he called all of
you.

She wipes a tear from her eye.

SUSAN
It's my fault he died. He killed
himself because I wouldn't tell him
I loved him.

TOM
Do you?

SUSAN
Yes! I did. Oh God, how I wanted to
stay, but I just couldn't. I wanted
everything. If I'd known, I would
have. I would have done it to save
his life even if I didn't love him.

EDDIE
So you think he killed himself
because you wouldn't tell him you
loved him?

BRENDA
Eddie, don't be insensitive.

EDDIE
No, I'm serious.

Susan looks at him.

SUSAN
What else could it be?

TOM
I think Eddie's got a point. Jeff isn't the impulsive type. He never was. And even if he did flip out one night, he'd let you sleep on it and get back with you later. He wasn't one to kill himself.

SUSAN
But he called me first, and after I wouldn't stay with him, he called each of you individually, and then killed himself. The bottle with the sleeping pills was right there with him.

BRENDA
But why would he have done that? Was something else going on?

EDDIE
You know, I thought something was odd when he had us all over for dinner out of the blue.

SUSAN
I thought it was nice, but you've got a point. That was very impulsive of him as well. You think he was planning this then too?

TOM
It's possible.

BRENDA
I wish he'd left us something. A note. Anything.

EDDIE
He called 911 himself. He left the door unlocked for the medics. No one's looked for anything.

TOM
He would have made it obvious.

BRENDA
Then where is it?

TOM
It would be in here. This is where
he knew we would spend all our
time. In fact, it's going to be
obvious where ever it is.

Susan looks up, realization dawning on her face.

SUSAN
Of course...

Susan turns to the laptop sitting on the table. She lifts the
screen, upon which is a post it note that reads "The answers
to all the questions." She presses the power button.

SUSAN
Laptop.

BRENDA
Why?

SUSAN
If you were Jeff, how would you
have left a message?

EDDIE
I'd write a note.

TOM
Jeff wouldn't.

BRENDA
No, he'd go through the trouble of
taping his final message, and then
saving it to his laptop.

SUSAN
You know he would.

BRENDA
Will it just play?

TOM
Oh yeah. He figured that out some
time ago. Pretty easy.

The OS loads up and a video starts playing automatically.

32 ON THE SCREEN 32

A view of the room where Jeff chair sits pops on. Jeff walks into the frame and sits in his chair, facing the camera.

JEFF

Hello everyone. I'm glad you found the laptop all right. If you're not my friend, would you please return it to my house so my friends can find it?

*

31A ON THE COUCH 31A

Tom laughs and shakes his head.

TOM

Just in case, right?

*

32A ON THE SCREEN 32A

Jeff sighs.

JEFF

I want to apologize if I hurt any of you this evening. I know you thought I was acting weird, and I hope you'll understand why I did it. Eddie, I wasn't drunk. My glass had water in it. I had emptied the vodka and replaced it so you felt comfortable. It also hid the fact that I was on morphine at the time, which I was prescribed to make me feel more comfortable in my final days.

31B ON THE COUCH 31B

Everyone just stares, slack-jawed.

32B ON THE SCREEN 32B

Jeff takes a folder off of the table next to him. He opens it.

JEFF

You'll find this in a fireproof box under my bed. The key is in the top drawer of my dresser. It's a copy of some of my medical stuff so I could remember the names of everything. OK, I have...

He looks at something on the page, mouthing it silently to himself, as if sounding it out first.

JEFF

...an...aortopulmonary paraganglioma.

31C ON THE COUCH

31C

The four look at each other.

EDDIE

I hope he explains that.

32C ON THE SCREEN

32C

Jeff smiles.

JEFF

I asked the doctor what that meant, and he gave me this long-winded explanation for it, so I asked layman's terms. He said I could call it a tumor around my heart, and that it's malignant and growing. You see, I went into the doctor having some severe pain in my chest, and I'd been putting it off for awhile. My doctor was very kind and gave it to me straight. I could live a little longer in a hospital or live a little better at home. Either way, he gave me a few days to a week because it was so far progressed.

31D ON THE COUCH

31D

Everyone stares, slack-jawed again.

SUSAN

Oh, my God. He didn't say a word to anyone, did he?

Everyone else shakes their heads.

32D ON THE SCREEN

32D

Jeff cringes in pain. He reaches for a syringe on the table beside him and injects himself.

JEFF

Sorry, I took a shot of this stuff between each of your visits to hide what was going on and so I could function with each of you. I know you're upset that I didn't involve any of you in this, but I had so little time remaining that I needed to make the most of it without sympathy. I also know I made all of you upset, but when I learned my life was over, I had to say something to every one of you, and I knew it would be something that first, you didn't want to hear and second, you wouldn't admit to yourselves. Brenda and Eddie, for crying out loud, marry each other. This on and off crap you practice is insane. And Eddie, if you think you'll have trouble being monogamous, get some porn for awhile or something. Brenda, just deal.

31E ON THE COUCH

31E

Eddie and Brenda look shocked.

EDDIE

Porn?

BRENDA

Deal?

They look at each other, shrug and nod.

32E ON THE SCREEN 32E

JEFF

Tom, I respect what you're doing,
but you need to get out more. Find
a nice girl and settle down while
working toward your goal. Don't die
alone.

31F ON THE COUCH 31F

Tom nods.

TOM

OK.

32F ON THE SCREEN 32F

JEFF

Finally, Susan.

31G ON THE COUCH 31G

Susan watches, transfixed. A tear rolls down her face.

32G ON THE SCREEN 32G

JEFF

My dear Susan, I loved you. Even
now, I love you. If I had told you
the truth, you would have stayed. I
know this, but I wanted you to make
the decision from your heart, not
out of obligation. I know you
probably felt like I killed myself
because you rejected me, but it had
nothing to do with that. I wanted
to admit my feelings to you for a
long time, and I never had the
courage. Now, at the end, I knew it
was my last chance. It was selfish
of me, and I didn't consider your
feelings. I'm sorry I made you
uncomfortable. I want you to be
happy more than anyone, and I wish
I could have been a part of it.

(MORE)

JEFF (cont'd)

You know more than anyone what you need to do. Try to get past your fear and stubbornness to do it.

31H ON THE COUCH

31H

Susan scoffs.

SUSAN

Stubbornness?

TOM

He knows us all very well.

32H ON THE SCREEN

32H

Jeff sighs.

JEFF

This thing is eating me from the inside out, and the pain is unbearable. It's an odd thing knowing when you're going to die. A lot of people are surprised by it when it comes and then it's all over. Me? I'm going to die in about thirty minutes. I don't think all the vodka in the world could get me drunk with that thought on my mind.

He looks at his glass and chuckles.

JEFF

I just wish it was really vodka and not water.

31I ON THE COUCH

31I

Everyone just watches.

32I ON THE SCREEN

32I

Jeff takes his glass in his hand.

JEFF

My last water. I raise my glass to you, my friends. I love you all. I had a will rapidly drawn up, and you are all the owners of this house and everything in it.

(MORE)

JEFF (cont'd)

I didn't have time to divvy it up. Sorry. I leave you with this: we were all living a dead life. We all had such high hopes growing up that living that way was no kind of life for any of us. Yes, I said us. I learned about the preciousness of life too late, and I wanted you all to try and make something of the time you have left. To everlasting friendship. May it continue to keep you all together.

He drinks and puts down his glass.

JEFF

Goodbye.

He points a remote at the screen and it goes blue.

31J ON THE COUCH

31J

Everyone just stares at the screen.

SUSAN

(whispered)

Goodbye.

She breaks down and cries.

33 EXT. HOUSE - FRONT - DAY

33

Super: One Week Later

Eddie carries two bags and puts them in his trunk. He closes it to reveal Brenda and Susan walking out behind him.

SUSAN

So you're going home together?

BRENDA

Well, driving separate, but ending up at the same place.

SUSAN

Are you planning on...?

BRENDA

Once I can keep Eddie's piece in his pants long enough, I'd like to. Even he's entertaining the idea after this last week.

SUSAN
That's nice.

BRENDA
I know. I hope it works out.

SUSAN
Me too.

Eddie walks up on them.

EDDIE
Me three.

SUSAN
I think you could be a good guy if
you let yourself.

EDDIE
Well, far be it from me to not
honor the last request of a dying
man.

SUSAN
Yeah.

BRENDA
You going to be all right?

SUSAN
I'll be fine. We got through the
funeral. I'll stay here for a
couple weeks to finish up. He did
pretty much everything already, so
there isn't much.

BRENDA
Okay. If you need any help-

SUSAN
I'll call.

Brenda hugs Susan. She steps back. Eddie hugs Susan.

SUSAN
Be good, Eddie.

EDDIE
I'll try. I've got some dates to
break, but I'll try.

SUSAN
She's worth it.

EDDIE
I know. We'll see you.

Tom walks up on the group.

TOM
Where's my hug?

Brenda hugs Tom.

BRENDA
Goodbye, Tom. Find yourself a woman
or something.

TOM
Sure. Or something, right?

Eddie and Tom shake hands.

EDDIE
See you around, man.

TOM
Thanks, Eddie. Be good.

EDDIE
Be bad. At least for a little
while.

TOM
I'll consider it.

EDDIE
No, you won't.

TOM
You're probably right.

Eddie and Brenda walk to their cars. They drive off in
caravan fashion. Tom turns to Susan.

TOM
You got this?

SUSAN
I got it.

Tom hugs Susan.

TOM
I don't suppose you ever considered
you and me...?

SUSAN

Not at the moment. We'll see how we feel in a couple years. Right now, I just think it would be forced. Does that make sense?

TOM

Perfect. See you later, Susan.

SUSAN

See you, Tom.

Tom picks up his bag and walks to his car. He gets in and drives off.

Susan walks up the sidewalk into the house.

34

INT. HOUSE - DAY

34

Susan closes the door behind her. She leans against the door and closes her eyes.

FLASH INSERT: Jeff kisses her. She is initially shocked, but her guard quickly drops. She closes her eyes. Her arms wrap around his neck. His arms wrap around her waist. This time, the embrace doesn't break.

Susan opens her eyes. The voice-overs overlap.

JEFF (V.O.) (FROM 32)

You know more than anyone what you need to do.

She walks toward the phone.

EDDIE (V.O.) (FROM 27)

It's what I didn't do that's the problem.

SUSAN (V.O.) (FROM 12)

I gave up on Dr. Young after a couple years.

EDDIE (V.O.) (FROM 29)

I love you.

JEFF (V.O.) (FROM 30)

You can get through it.

SUSAN (V.O.) (FROM 12)

It's in the past.

TOM (V.O.) (FROM 12)
Is it really?

BRENDA (V.O.) (FROM 29)
I love you too.

JEFF (V.O.) (FROM 32)
Try to get past your fear and
stubbornness to do it.

BRENDA (V.O.) (FROM 29)
Isn't it your turn now?

EDDIE (V.O.) (FROM 8)
He was crushing hard on you.

SUSAN (V.O.) (FROM 30)
I can't let anyone hurt me...

She picks up the phone. She dials a number. It rings.

RECEPTIONIST (V.O.)
Dr. Young's office.

SUSAN
Hi... I need to schedule an
appointment...

FADE OUT.

THE END