

Us Too
by
Alexander Julian III
with
Amanda Julian Johnson

Alexander Julian III
103 Mary Street
Carrboro, NC 27510
919-619-8664
pro4test@aol.com

FADE IN:

INT. ATLANTA - GROCERY STORE - PRESENT DAY

GIDEON WELSH, (tall, gangly, all elbows and knees, 30s) drags her own personal grocery cart, a modified suitcase with a long handle, down the aisle.

She is dressed primly in yesteryear's fashion, and wears way too much make up.

Gideon plucks a box of rice from the shelf, then carefully scrutinizes the label of ingredients.

She CLUCKS her tongue in disapproval, returns the box to the counter and picks out another.

A female SHOPPER waits behind her to get to the same shelf.

Oblivious to the shopper, Gideon takes her sweet time reading the label.

The shopper CLEARS HER THROAT.

Gideon finishes reading the label with a HUMPF of satisfaction, places the box of rice precisely in her cart.

Other items in it are very neatly arranged.

Gideon moves on as the frowning shopper shakes her head in disbelief.

INT. GROCERY STORE - CHECK OUT COUNTER - DAY

Gideon fusses over the bagging done by the BAG BOY, a pimply-faced teen, while a CASHIER rings up her remaining purchases.

A COSTUMER behind Gideon in line sees the wait will be a long one. She wheels her cart impatiently to another line.

GIDEON
(to the bag boy)
No, no! It's important not to pack
the bread tightly.

Gideon removes a loaf of bread from one bag, transfers it with great care to another.

The bag boy stands passively with his hands at his sides, a blank expression on his face.

Like a field general, Gideon inspects her bags. Finally satisfied, she nods at the bag boy, points at her modified cart.

GIDEON (CONT'D)
OK, please begin placing the bags
in there. But carefully. Don't
damage anything.

Gideon turns back to face the frowning cashier.

The same shopper she irritated early in the rice aisle pulls her cart up behind Gideon.

The cashier punches her register and Gideon's receipt scrolls out.

CASHIER
That will be \$70.58, ma'am.

Gideon reaches inside her purse for her wallet. She counts out three twenty-dollar bills and two five-dollar bills. She has several ones in the bill holder but ignores them.

She snaps open the change compartment of her purse. Taking her time, Gideon carefully counts out exactly fifty-eight cents in change, scrabbling for several seconds to find the last penny.

The shopper and the cashier exchange "Good Grief" looks.

Gideon methodically counts out her payment into the cashier's hand.

GIDEON
Twenty-five, fifty, fifty-five,
fifty-six, fifty-seven and fifty-
eight. Thanks.

The bag boy starts out with her groceries, but Gideon snatches her carrier out of his hands.

GIDEON (CONT'D)
No, thank you! I have it.

As Gideon marches off, the shopper shakes her head in disbelief.

SHOPPER
Geez.

CASHIER
Hey, today it went faster than
usual.

(MORE)

CASHIER (CONT'D)

At least she was able to find exact change without emptying every pocket.

SHOPPER

Oh, brother. My sympathies.

The two watch as Gideon leaves the store.

EXT. ATLANTA STREET - DAY

Gideon strides along briskly, dragging the grocery carrier behind her.

Pedestrians hurry to clear a path as she plows straight ahead.

EXT. ATLANTA - FRONT OF BROWNSTONE - DAY

Gideon stands at the entrance with her groceries. To her left are a dozen mailboxes with call buttons.

Gideon stabs the button beneath the mailbox labeled

WELSH - MYERS.

The speaker BUZZES.

Gideon's roommate TINA MYERS answers.

TINA (V.O.)

Hi, Gee! That you?

GIDEON

Yup. Who else would it be? How about coming downstairs to help. I think that damn elevator is still out.

TINA (V.O.)

Be right there.

Gideon unlocks the brownstone front door, lets herself inside.

INT. BROWNSTONE - ENTRANCE HALL - DAY

Gideon navigates her grocery carrier to the foot of the stairs while she scowls at the non-functioning elevator.

FOOTSTEPS echo from above her as someone approaches the second floor landing.

Gideon's roommate TINA MYERS (30s, short, chubby, moon-faced) appears at the top of the stairs. Tina is clad in a soiled sweat shirt and rumpled jeans.

Her ragged tennis shoes are unlaced.

Tina trots down the stairs.

TINA
Hi, roomie! How'd it go?

Gideon scowls, points at Tina's feet.

Tina hesitates, checks out her shoes.

TINA (CONT'D)
Not to worry.
(winks)
But thanks for caring.

Tina reaches the bottom and grabs the four bags of groceries.

GIDEON
I hope I didn't forget anything.
It's always too crowded right after
work. Makes me nervous.

TINA
I'm sure you did fine. Come on,
let's get these up. I'm starving!

Gideon eyeballs Tina's not insubstantial behind.

GIDEON
(mutters)
Surprise, surprise.

Gideon lugs the grocery carrier up the stairs after Tina.

INT. BROWNSTONE - SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY

The two women reach the second floor landing. Gideon sees that their apartment door down the hall is ajar.

GIDEON
Come on, Tina.

Gideon points at the door.

GIDEON (CONT'D)
That's just asking for trouble.

TINA
We could use the excitement!

Gideon CLUCKS her tongue.

INT. GIDEON AND TINA'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - DAY

The women put away groceries. Tina frowns at an expensive can of soup.

TINA
You know, Gee, we could save some money buying generic products.

Gideon eyes Tina's belly.

GIDEON
One of us has got to pay attention to our diets. We aren't getting any younger.

TINA
Right. Keep up on the beauty regime.

Gideon winces, turns away.

TINA (CONT'D)
By the way, your Mom called about a dozen times while you were gone. Left a couple of messages.

GIDEON
Crap! She called me three times at work today already. What is it now?

Gideon walks to the phone machine, punches the play message button. The syrupy voice of Gideon's mother NANCY oozes from the speaker.

NANCY (V.O.)
Gideon, it's me, honey. Sorry to bother you again, but I forgot to remind you that your sister is hosting that meet-up party at her place this Friday. She expects you to be there. Seven P.M. sharp. She really believes in those things. You know that's how she met Darryl.

Gideon rubs her forehead, grimaces.

GIDEON
So, why is Diane still hosting
those ridiculous meet-ups? She got
married last Spring, for Christ's
sake!

A BEEP and the second message plays.

NANCY (V.O.)
Oh, and you can bring that little
roommate of yours, too. Who knows,
she might get lucky and -

Gideon punches the delete message button.

TINA
Hey, I don't mind. You get used to
it.

A spasm of hurt distorts Gideon's features, but she shakes it
off.

GIDEON
I don't! I hate those snide
comments. What the hell is wrong
with being single. Frankly, I'm
tired of playing the eternal
debutante role.

Tina places a comforting hand on Gideon's shoulder.

TINA
Don't let it get to you. We'll have
fun. Maybe meet somebody
interesting.

GIDEON
Riiigghht.

Gideon turns away to load more groceries into the
refrigerator while Tina examines the label of a fancy bottle
of salad dressing. She sees the price and shakes her head.

INT. GIDEON AND TINA'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The women eat dinner off TV trays while watching a wide
screen TV.

ON SCREEN,

the BACHELOR show plays. The BACHELOR goes ga-ga over a very attractive WOMAN while on a date.

Gideon TSK's, disgusted.

GIDEON

Why are we watching this garbage?
Look at that idiot. Can't he see
what a phony she is?

TINA

It's just a TV show, Gee. They set
it up for us to dislike certain
people. It's good for ratings.
Keeps us hooked.

GIDEON

Speak for yourself. But I do see
people just like her at work. And
guys falling all over them. Men are
such suckers for -

Gideon bites back her words.

TINA

"Looks", Gee?

Gideon scowls.

TINA (CONT'D)

Yeah, I know. But listen, there are
smarter men out there, at least I
gotta believe. Men looking for a
woman with inner beauty.

GIDEON

You mean "personality", like in the
old jokes.

Tina reaches over to clasp her friend's hand.

TINA

It can happen, Gee. I know it.

Gideon fights not to show her disappointment.

GIDEON

Come on, Tina. You've been saying
that since we were in college.
I've been waiting almost twenty
years for something good to
happen.

(beat)

I'm going to bed.

In a huff, Gideon scoops up her dinner dishes, marches off.
Tina looks sadly at Gideon's retreating back.

TINA
Sleep well.

INT. ROCKWAY BROKERAGE FIRM - DAY

Gideon sits at a desk facing two large computer screens.

Another MAN, several years older than Gideon, sits next to her at an identical station.

A SECOND MAN and a WOMAN, about Gideon's age, sit across the aisle at carbon-copy work stations.

Down the hall from them all, two female SECRETARIES are working at desks that face the brokers. They are both quite attractive and in their mid-20s.

Gideon talks on a desk phone while typing on her computer keyboard.

GIDEON
That's right, I want the corn, but
only within a dime of that price.

Gideon, all ears, continues typing.

GIDEON (CONT'D)
I know that! So, you should buy it
piece-meal so the price won't
escalate suddenly.

Gideon SLAPS her free hand down on her desk.

GIDEON (CONT'D)
Listen, I know I asked for a large
lot. Just get me as much as you can
in increments, up to a ten cent
ceiling from where it is now. Come
on, Dewey. It's probably rising as
we waste time!

Gideon SLAMS down the phone.

GIDEON (CONT'D)
Moron.

The other three brokers exchange looks, stifle laughter.

Gideon gives the man next to her the hairy eyeball.

GIDEON (CONT'D)
Can it, Louis. Your buddy Dewey
always drops twenty IQ points when
I'm dealing with him. Why is that?

LOUIS MARKEY (late 30s, sharply dressed, handsome in a slick
way) smirks at her.

LOUIS
Come on, Welsh. Lighten up. Maybe
if you
 (sing song voice)
tried a little tenderness
 (back to normal voice)
he might respond better.

The other female broker, LINDA MAYES (early 30s, haughty-
looking but attractive) SNICKERS.

Gideon SNARLS at them. Linda grins back.

GIDEON
And you, Linda; kiss off!

Gideon turns to her computer and types out an order
furiously. Her phone RINGS, startling her.

She jerks up the receiver.

GIDEON (CONT'D)
Talk to me!

INTERCUT

to Gideon's family home.

Gideon's mother NANCY WELSH (late 50s, has the June Cleaver
look down pat) is poised on a posh couch in a sumptuous
living room, cell phone in hand.

NANCY
...Hi dear! It's me calling.

INTERCUT

to Gideon's office.

Gideon cuts her eyes to the side to see if her co-workers
know it is a personal call.

GIDEON
No, James. I can't take that order
at the moment.

NANCY (V.O.)
Oh, dear. Did I call at a bad time?

GIDEON
I'll call you at lunch break.

Gideon hangs up the phone while her colleagues smirk in knowing amusement.

From down the hall, one of the young secretaries approaches Gideon's work station.

It is GLORIA GILLY, (20s, a tall, willowy blond, wearing a tight skirt and blouse which accents her excellent figure). She carries a document.

Gloria stands before Gideon, waits for her to notice.

Gideon looks up at her, frowns.

GIDEON (CONT'D)
What?

GLORIA
I, uh, these are done, I hope. I had a tough time understanding some of the words you used in dictation.

GIDEON
The two syllable ones?

GLORIA
No, I don't think I heard a word like Sibalell.

Gideon sneers, snatches the files from Gloria.

GIDEON
Get me what you've done so far and I'll edit it the rest of the way.

Gloria is relieved to be dismissed.

GLORIA
Sure! I'll send it right down.

GIDEON
You think you can handle that?

Gloria blushes, turns to stride back to her desk. As she passes Louis on her right, he leans toward her.

LOUIS
Don't worry about it, Gloria.
You're doing a great job for me.

Gloria smiles coyly.

GLORIA
Thanks, Mr. Markey.

LOUIS
It's Louis.

Gloria's smile widens.

GLORIA
Thanks...Louis.

Gloria continues back towards her desk walking with even more sway in her hips, while Louis watches her with admiration.

Gideon scowls at them both.

GIDEON
(mutters to herself)
Men.

Gideon gets up from her work station.

GIDEON (CONT'D)
I'll be back in a bit.

Linda bats her eyes at Gideon.

LINDA
Gonna freshen that make-up?

Gideon throws Linda the bird, then leaves the area.

EXT. FRONT OF GIDEON'S OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

Gideon marches out the front door of the office in a huff. She digs her cell phone out of her purse, punches in a number.

INT. ATLANTA CITY LIBRARY - REFERENCE DESK - CONTINUOUS

Tina sits at a large reference desk, surrounded by books and personal nick-nacks.

The main room is quite large, opens up into many aisles. Books are stacked floor to ceiling.

An Atlanta Hawks poster adorns one wall of Tina's workspace. A poster of the Himalayas graces another wall. A fat Buddha statue sits at one end of her desk. Picture of Gideon and Tina in college at the other end.

Tina picks up her RINGING desk phone.

TINA

'Lo, roomy! What's up?

EXT. FRONT OF GIDEON'S OFFICE BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Gideon paces back and forth out front.

GIDEON

I had to hear a friendly voice
before I punch somebody out. God, I
am surrounded by the worst
assholes. They seem hell-bent on
making me feel as miserable as
possible.

INT. ATLANTA CITY LIBRARY - REFERENCE DESK - DAY

As Tina listens, she notices a tall, gawky, BESPECTACLED MAN (30s) perusing books while he struggles to hold on to an armful of large tomes.

The man glances over at Tina, attempts a brief wave. Most of the books he holds CRASH to floor.

Tina grins. The man blushes, turns away.

GIDEON (V.O.)

Tina, you still there?

Tina refocuses on her conversation with Gideon.

TINA

OK, Gideon, OK. What happened?

Tina listens patiently.

TINA (CONT'D)

Well, I agree he's a pig. He's
always been a pig and you know
that. So don't let him get to you.
I think he flirts with those bimbos
partly to rile you up. Don't give
him the pleasure.

Tina nods her head empathetically as Gideon continues speaking.

TINA (CONT'D)
You're the best up there at your job. Take a deep breath and remember that. You blow them all away professionally.

Tina nods.

TINA (CONT'D)
Right. I'll see you at the apartment around Five-thirty.

Tina is about to close the conversation, remembers something.

TINA (CONT'D)
Listen, are we going to that meet-up your sister is having tomorrow?

Tina winces at Gideon's response.

TINA (CONT'D)
Yeah, OK, just for a few minutes. To satisfy your mother. Hey, you want to catch a beer at Lucky's after work?

Tina SIGHS in reaction to what she hears next.

TINA (CONT'D)
Excuuuuse me! Fine wine, I should have said. OK, see you there.

Tina smiles, shakes her head, hangs up the phone.

From the far side of the library, the gawky man watches Tina out of the corner of his eye.

INT. LUCKY'S BAR AND GRILL - DAY

Lucky's is a pleasant, upscale pub catering to the white-collar, after-work crowd.

Tina sits at the bar. Most of the stools are occupied. She drinks from an open bottle of beer.

A variety of BUSINESS TYPES, the majority of them men, mill around, talk in the aisle behind her. Behind the aisle runs a row of circular tables where chatting CUSTOMERS drink, nosh on bar snacks.

Gideon enters Lucky's. Tina turns to see her, waves her over.

TINA
Hey roomie! Que pasa?

Gideon looks around at the crowd self-consciously. Frowning, she approaches the empty bar stool next to Tina.

GIDEON
Really, Tina. Must you draw
attention to me?

TINA
Attention is what we want, isn't
it?

Tina grins lasciviously at a man two stools down from Gideon.
He turns away abruptly.

TINA (CONT'D)
Wimp.

Gideon pulls back, flabbergasted.

GIDEON
I am NOT a wimp. I'm here, aren't
I? Willing to put up with even more
punishment at your behest.

TINA
I wasn't talking to you, Gee.

Tina nods at the guy down the bar. Gideon looks over her shoulder at him, turns back to Tina, HARRUMPHS.

GIDEON
No loss there.

Gideon SLAPS her purse down on the bar top.

GIDEON (CONT'D)
Well, let me order some wine. I'll
need it to tolerate this meat
market.

The FEMALE BARTENDER nearest them is SHIRLEY, an attractive, woman in her 20's.

She is busy mixing drinks for other customers. Shirley moves at high speed, doesn't notice Gideon.

Gideon TAPS the bar-top loudly with her nails. After a few seconds, Gideon loses patience.

GIDEON (CONT'D)
Come on, hon. I need to order
something here!

Shirley turns to Gideon, hands full of drinks.

SHIRLEY
Yes, ma'am. What can I get for you?

Gideon glares at Shirley, mouthing the word "ma'am".

GIDEON
Do you have a decent house Merlot?

Shirley turns to MAX, a burly male bartender who mixes drinks nearby.

SHIRLEY
Hey, Max! We got any house
Merlotte?

Gideon grimaces at the mispronunciation.

Max reaches down behind the bar counter, pulls out a bottle of Merlot, walks it down to Shirley.

MAX
Here you go, Shirley.

SHIRLEY
Thanks!

Shirley grabs a wine glass, starts to unscrew the bottle, but Gideon reaches over the bar for it before she can finish.

GIDEON
Let me take a look at that.

Gideon grabs the bottle from Shirley and examines it. Her eyes tightening critically.

GIDEON (CONT'D)
This has already been opened!

SHIRLEY
Well...yes ma'am, we don't usually
open a new bottle until we use an
old one up.

GIDEON
I have no idea how long this has
been opened.

(MORE)

GIDEON (CONT'D)

Do you know a wine, particularly a red, will go flat quickly if the cap isn't screwed on tightly? And how long has this wine been sitting under there? Six months? A year?

Gideon thrusts the bottle back at Shirley.

GIDEON (CONT'D)

Just bring me a Budweiser.
Unopened, please.

Shirley frowns, hurries off to fill Gideon's order. Gideon turns to Tina.

GIDEON (CONT'D)

Where do they find these idiots!

TINA

She seems to be trying hard.

Gideon SNORTS.

GIDEON

She needs to.

Shirley plunks down an unopened bottle of Budweiser in front of Gideon. Gideon looks at the bottle, then stares at Shirley blankly.

SHIRLEY

It's got a twist off cap, ma'am.

GIDEON

Do I look like the type of person who would drink a beer straight out of the bottle?

Shirley ogles Tina quaffing down a big swig of beer from her own bottle.

GIDEON (CONT'D)

A frosty mug, if you don't mind.

Shirley scurries off, MUMBLES something under her breath.

Several groups of MEN to either side of Gideon and Tina watch the whole scene.

Gideon puffs up with umbrage when one of them CHUCKLES.

GIDEON (CONT'D)

What's your problem, friend?

A GRINNING MAN (30s) leans back on a bar stool, legs spread out in front of him. He is portly, balding and wears a rumpled suit.

He grins at his two buddies sitting next to him, turns to face Gideon.

GRINNING MAN
No problem...lady.

Shirley BANGS down a cold mug in front of Gideon.

GRINNING MAN (CONT'D)
(to Shirley)
Aren't you going to card her?

Shirley gives the grinning man an "are you kidding" look, moves on to serve another customer.

Gideon carefully pours her beer into the mug, trying to ignore the insult.

TINA
(to grinning man)
You're a real comedian, aren't you.

GRINNING MAN
Hey, lady, just trying to have a few laughs.

The grinning man turns to his friends, who all CHORTLE.

GRINNING MAN (CONT'D)
I mean, no offense, really!

GIDEON
You asshole, I-

TINA
(interrupts, to grinning man)
I know you meant none, sweetheart.

Tina edges off of her stool, approaches the grinning man, stands very close to him, right between his spread legs.

GRINNING MAN'S FRIEND
Whoa, Robert, looks like you got a fan!

ROBERT grins lustfully at Tina, who moves in even closer, slides her hand down the front of Robert's shirt then down the front of his pants. Just before she reaches his crotch,

Robert jerks back on his stool and pushes her away, startled.

ROBERT
HEEYYY!

TINA
Relax, Robert. Just trying to check
out your stuff. I mean, no offense,
really.

Tina releases Robert, turns to Gideon.

TINA (CONT'D)
(loud enough for everyone
around her to hear)
You were right, Gideon. He's got a
whanger the size of a pencil stub!

Robert reddens, his friends burst into raucous LAUGHTER.

He turns away from Tina, sputters.

ROBERT
I gotta take a leak.

TINA
Come back when you grow a pair.

Tina turns to Gideon. They look around at the men sitting to
each side of them who have all pulled back, avoiding eye
contact with the two women.

GIDEON
Looks like we've worn out our
welcome.

TINA
Right. Let's blow this popcorn
stand.

The women rise to leave. The men watch their backs warily.

EXT. OUTSIDE OF LUCKY'S BAR AND GRILL - NIGHT

Tina and Gideon walk down the street away from Lucky's.

GIDEON
I guess it's another TV night for
us. What's on, anyway?

TINA
Gee, I'm gonna stop by my Dad's for
a bit to see how he's doing.

GIDEON

Sure. Is he...how's he holding up over there?

TINA

He's OK, I guess. I know he's lonesome without Mom, but he's got his sports and his poker tourneys. He stays pretty busy with that.

Gideon looks at Tina, eyebrows raised.

TINA (CONT'D)

Yeah, he's still drinking too much. Wish I could get him out of that house. But he says between his pension and social security, all he can do is pay his bills. Man, if he would cut out the nightly quart of bourbon, he might be able to afford to do something else. Travel, maybe.

GIDEON

Maybe meet someone.

Gideon pats Tina's shoulder.

GIDEON (CONT'D)

Then, you wouldn't have to worry after him so much.

TINA

Yeah. Well, OK.

Tina peels off, turns right down another street.

TINA (CONT'D)

See you soon. Don't linger out here too long.

Gideon checks her watch.

GIDEON

For God's sake, it's not even 7 o'clock! I'll be fine.

EXT. ATLANTA - OLDER NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

Tina walks toward an older two story home.

She hesitates at the walkway leading up to the front steps, looks at the light in the front window to her left, walks up to the front door, hears a basketball game playing loudly on TV.

Behind the door, Tina's father MILT curses at his team. Tina grins, opens the front door.

INT. MILT CAMPBELL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Tina hangs her coat on a rack in the hallway. The living room with TV BLARING is off to her left.

TINA

Hey, Pop! You got that on loud enough?

Tina turns the corner into the living room. Mismatched furniture, old newspapers, empty fast food containers festoon the area.

Her father MILT CAMPBELL (60s, balding, heavy set, unkempt) is parked in a large armchair quite close to a huge, old-fashioned TV console.

A nearly empty bottle of whiskey and a half-full drinking glass rest on the coffee table in front of him.

MILT

Eh?

Tina walks up to the TV, lowers the volume.

TINA

Jesus, no wonder you can't hear me. Got the game on loud enough?

MILT

Sorry, Tiny. You know my hearing's going. One of the perks of old age!

TINA

Come on, Pop, you've been listening to sports at max volume since I was a kid.

MILT

Well, I guess that's true. Your mother used to complain about the same thing, bless her heart.

Milt and Tina share a wistful smile.

MILT (CONT'D)
Funny. I still miss her nagging.

A tear comes to Milt's eye. He shakes it off, CHUCKLES.

MILT (CONT'D)
Hey, sit down, sit down. To what do
I owe the pleasure of a Thursday
night visit?

Tina plops herself in a chair to one side of Milt.

TINA
Gideon's sister is hosting one of
those meet-up parties at her place
tomorrow after work. Might be kinda
late, so I thought I'd check in
with you now instead of then.

MILT
A hook-up party? What the hell is
that?

TINA
MEET-UP, Pop! Hook-up means
something completely different
these days.

MILT
Well, who you meeting?

TINA
It's like a mixer. You remember
those?

MILT
Sure, it's where you'd go to try to
meet a chick to hook up with.

Tina GROANS. Milt takes a swig from his glass of bourbon.

MILT (CONT'D)
So you and your roommate Gabrielle
are going to meet some guys?

TINA
Gideon, Pop. You know her name is
Gideon. We've been best friends
since college. You've only talked
to her like a couple of hundred
times.

MILT

Old brain, Tiny, old brain, sorry.
So how is Gab...Gideon these days?
Driving you nuts with her ungodly
cleanliness?

TINA

Ha. You remembered that part right.
She's OK. Just having a hard time
at work. I think she feels pretty
lonely there. And unappreciated.

MILT

Well, she's got you to talk to
anyway. She's lucky in that
respect. You know, Tiny, I said
this before I know but I got, like
a ton of space here; your room, the
guest room, you could save a lot of
money moving back in.

TINA

Nah-

MILT

Hey, I wouldn't bug you! You can
run your own life, keep whatever
hours you want, even have men
friends over. You know I'm cool
with that.

TINA

Men friends?

MILT

You like men - don't you?

TINA

Come on, Pop. I like you, don't I?

MILT

You know what I mean, Tiny. Have
you been seeing anybody lately?

TINA

Just casual stuff, Pop.

MILT

Casual...

Tina LAUGHS, pushes her father's shoulder playfully.

TINA

Loosen up, man!

Milt notices his drink glass is empty, reaches for the bottle.

TINA (CONT'D)
Do you really need a refill?

MILT
Yeah, why not. Hey, can you stick around and watch the Hawks with me? They could use some extra Karma tonight.

Milt pours the last of the bourbon into his glass as Tina starts to rise out of her chair.

TINA
You want me to get you some ice?

MILT
Neat will do fine.

TINA
Listen, I can't stay long. I just wanted to see how you were doing. I'll come by for while again Sunday. Who the Falcons got?

MILT
Indy at 4:00. Line is Falcons giving five. Whaddaya think?

TINA
I like the Falcons. But don't bet the farm, Pop. Speaking of which, you doing OK for cash?

MILT
Yeah, yeah, I'm fine. Thank god I get your Mom's social security too. Otherwise, it might be a tough squeeze.

TINA
Especially the way you are putting away the Bourbon!

Tina sits back down.

TINA (CONT'D)
OK, Pop. I'll watch the first half. Then, I gotta go.

Milt raises his glass to her.

INT. GIDEON AND TINA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Tina walks into the living room where Gideon watches a reality show.

ON TV,

A young, buxom, attractive WOMAN is complaining to a MAN her age.

TINA

Hey, Gee. Anything good?

GIDEON

Nah, just another Bimbo trying for her fifteen minutes of fame. Geez, I get tired of hearing them talk.

TINA

I thought you hated that show!

GIDEON

I guess it makes me feel better about myself, somehow. Watching these low-info types make fools of themselves.

TINA

Well, I hate to remind you, we are gonna be around plenty more of them at your sister's place tomorrow.

GIDEON

Crap. How did I let myself get talked into another one of these "Beat-ups". You would have thought I'd have learned my lesson by now.

TINA

Hey, I'm going with you remember. We'll have some laughs.

GIDEON

I might laugh more if I have a drink or two under my belt first.

TINA

No problemo. We'll catch a pre-party drink here before we head over. 7:00 start?

GIDEON

Yes, and hopefully an early finish.

On TV, the bimbo WAILS in disappointment.

GIDEON (CONT'D)
On that thoughtful note, I'm going
to go to bed.

Gideon rises, starts to head out of the room. She thinks of something, turns back to Tina.

GIDEON (CONT'D)
What are you going to wear to this
horror show?

TINA
Why not go a bit "provocative"?

GIDEON
Us? You're kidding, right?

Gideon shakes her head, strides out of the room. Tina's grin slowly fades.

INT. DIANE WELSH MAYES' HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Two dozen casually dressed MEN and WOMEN in their late 20s to early 40s stand around DIANE MAYES'S living room. They have drinks in hand, chatting.

A clock in the background reads 7:55 PM.

Gideon's younger sister DIANE WELSH MAYES (late 20s tall, good-looking, blond dressed in tight-fitting jeans), glides into the living room from the adjacent kitchen area. She carries an extra drink.

She hands it to her ruggedly handsome husband DARRYL MAYES (30), who converses with another couple. Diane pulls him aside.

DIANE
Darryl, it's almost eight. Where
the hell is Gideon? I promised mom
I'd introduce her to a few guys
tonight.

DARRYL
She's not capable of meeting men on
her own?

DIANE
She's certainly capable of
interacting with men.

(MORE)

DIANE (CONT'D)

The problem is she's usually in full combat mode when she does. I don't know why I -

The doorbell RINGS. Diane rushes to answer it.

DIANE (CONT'D)

That must be her. Finally.

Diane throws open her front door to see Gideon standing there. Tina hovers just behind her.

Gideon looks nervous, unhappy, and just a bit drunk.

Tina grins excitedly. Tina wears a low-cut dress, revealing way too much cleavage.

Gideon wears a poorly fitting cocktail dress and is overly made up.

Diane stifles a sick grin.

DIANE (CONT'D)

Glad you could make it. Later is better than never...I guess.

Gideon brushes past Diane into the living room. Tina trails behind her.

TINA

Hi, Diane! Ooooh, this looks fun! Hopefully there's still some snack food left.

DIANE

In the kitchen, Tina.

Tina bolts toward the kitchen while Gideon scans the crowd anxiously. Diane comes up beside her.

DIANE (CONT'D)

How have you been?

GIDEON

No differently than when I saw you last week. I need a drink.

DIANE

If I'm not mistaken, you've had a few already.

GIDEON

Not enough for this occasion, I can assure you.

DIANE

There's wine and beer in the kitchen. Help yourself. But once you are set up, come on back out here.

Diane glances over at TWO MEN who are talking to a WOMAN nearby.

One of the men is leaning in way too close to the woman who is visibly uncomfortable with the invasion of her space.

He is dressed in a sports coat and fuzzy beige sweater, which accents his slight beer belly. He is otherwise handsome, but oozes smarm.

The man BRAYS loudly at a joke he has just told. His companions force smiles.

Gideon follows her sister's glance.

DIANE (CONT'D)

I have someone I want you to meet.

Gideon scrutinizes the laughing man.

GIDEON

Oh, let me guess.

Gideon lurches off toward the kitchen.

DIANE

Come on, Gideon. He's good looking!

GIDEON

Right. I'm gonna definitely need a drink for this.

INT. DIANE MAYES'S HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Gideon walks into Diane's kitchen.

SEVEN or EIGHT PEOPLE stand around a large table, graze on finger-food, drink while talking to each other.

At the far end of the table, Tina swigs down a beer straight from the bottle. A WOMAN nearby eyeballs Tina sternly while talking to another GUEST.

TINA

Hey, roomie. They've still got some grub left. And plenty of wine!

Gideon joins Tina, grabs a plastic cup off the table, pours it full of red wine, takes a big gulp.

GIDEON
God, Tina. Diane has got some turkey in there she wants me to meet.

TINA
Really? Nice guy?

GIDEON
I have no idea. He isn't too hard to look at but he certainly has a hideous laugh.

Gideon tosses down more wine, refills her cup to the brim, looks back at the living room, swallows hard.

TINA
You want some moral support?

Gideon gives Tina a head to toe once over, eyes narrowing, focuses on Tina's bulging cleavage.

GIDEON
...Naaah...I'll handle this. You OK hanging out by yourself for a few minutes?

TINA
Sure! I'll just have another of these beers and then socialize.

Gideon nods OK, trudges out back into the living room.

INT. DIANE WELSH'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Gideon stands in the entrance to the living room, looks around.

Diane spots her, rushes over.

DIANE
OK, Gid. Are you ready to meet this guy? He and his wife split up a few months back.

GIDEON
That's a good sign? You mean I won't get any unpleasant surprises this time.

DIANE

Yeah, I remember that jerk Tomas.
I know how he hurt you.

Gideon looks away, uncomfortable with the memory.

DIANE (CONT'D)

But Oliver is unencumbered. In
fact, I know his ex-wife and can
vouch for the fact.

Gideon looks at the SMALL GROUP of people now being
"entertained" by the laughing man.

HOOTING at another of his own jokes, OLIVER CRANSTON turns to
glance at Diane and Gideon.

DIANE (CONT'D)

Here's our chance.
(takes Gideon by the arm)
Let's go say hi.

GIDEON

Wait a m-

Diane pulls Gideon along, propels her toward Oliver. As the
two approach, he leers at them coming.

DIANE

Hey, Oliver! You're looking sharp
tonight!

Gideon stares at Oliver's belly button peeking out between
sweater and pants.

Tina comes to the living room entranceway. She leans on the
door jamb, observes Gideon.

DIANE (CONT'D)

Oliver, I'd like you to meet my
sister, Gideon. Gideon Welsh.

Oliver extends his hand to Gideon, flashes big teeth.

OLIVER

Any friend of the ever sexy Diane
is a friend of mine!

Oliver ogles Diane's figure.

OLIVER (CONT'D)

Darryl is a lucky man!

Oliver tears his gaze away from Diane, works hard to focus on Gideon.

OLIVER (CONT'D)

Well... so I've heard a lot about you. You are a highly successful commodities broker, I'm told.

GIDEON

I'd hardly say that. But I've been there almost eight years now and haven't been fired. In this market, I guess that's something.

OLIVER

Indeed, it is! I'm totally into the market myself these days. Make my living, and it is a good one I might add, day trading. But I'm always open to a bit of advice, if you know what I mean.

Oliver winks at Gideon conspiratorially.

Diane looks around for an escape route. She cranes her neck, spots her husband talking to another man nearby.

DIANE

I'm gonna let you too talk shop a bit. I need to ask Darryl something before he gets tied up in another lengthy conversation. Nice to see you again, Oliver.

Diane turns to walk away. Oliver checks out her retreating behind.

OLIVER

(to Diane's derriere)

Nice to see you too, Diane!

Gideon frowns at Oliver. When he turns back to her, she has composed herself.

OLIVER (CONT'D)

Hummm. Quite a beauty, your sister. A real catch. Ah, but the single life. I think I'm going to enjoy it. How about you?

GIDEON

Well it has its...ah, moments I guess. My sister tells me that-

OLIVER

(interrupts)

We were talking about the market. Now, I consider myself to be something of a savant when it comes to commodities. In fact, I made a killing in gold and silver over the past two years. And orange juice. Can you believe these so called experts don't follow weather reports? If they had, they'd have known we were in for a rough winter. I knew what the trends would be! If only I hadn't been so preoccupied with problems in my personal life...

Oliver shakes his head in disgust.

OLIVER (CONT'D)

What can I say. Some people put petty feelings first, when really, if you are going to have a good relationship over time, you need to work together. Make it happen, make some money. I mean, if you want to keep your stress level low, you can't beat financial comfort, am I right?

GIDEON

I'm sure it doesn't hurt. But I-

OLIVER

(interrupts again)

Thought you might agree, being a businesswoman and all. Told myself no more artsy-fartsy types for me. From now on, I'm going for the hard-headed broads!

Gideon takes a step back, starts a slow burn.

OLIVER (CONT'D)

Hey, no offense! I mean it totally as a compliment.

GIDEON

Well, OK, I guess. So, you enjoy day trading?

OLIVER

It's my passion. So much better than that middle management BS.

(MORE)

OLIVER (CONT'D)

A dozen years of that with Wilkes
Brothers. Ignorance above,
incompetence below.

(to himself)

A never ending diet of crap.

GIDEON

I heard they had some massive
layoffs, end of last year.

Oliver sloshes his empty drink cup, looks away from Gideon.

OLIVER

Yeah. Hey, listen. I need to
freshen up this drink. You want
something?

Gideon chugs down the last of her wine.

GIDEON

Sure. Red. And be generous, if you
don't mind. I've been up on that
trader's clock all week and need
some help coming down.

Oliver leans in toward her, flashes a flirty smile.

OLIVER

Man, do I know that feeling! Stay
right there. We've got some serious
talking to do.

Oliver strides off toward the kitchen. As Oliver passes Tina,
she catches Gideon's eye, gives her a thumbs up.

INT. TINA'S CAR - NIGHT

Tina and Gideon are on the way home, Tina at the wheel. Both
women are tipsy.

TINA

You shoulda seen the looks on those
fool's faces when I out-chugged
them on two straight beers.

GIDEON

Right. Sorry I missed that.

TINA

Hey, you were too busy flirting
with Mr. Woolly Sweater.

GIDEON
His name is Oliver.

TINA
Wow! Familiarity! And he was kinda
cute, too. You musta hit it off
with him.

GIDEON
Well...he did ask me out for dinner
next week.

Tina gapes at Gideon, then grins.

A passing car BLARES it's horn.

GIDEON (CONT'D)
Jesus! Will you please watch the
road? It's not that big a deal.

TINA
It's a real live date, roomie! Very
cool. Do you like him?

GIDEON
It's something to do. And I guess
he's not that hard to look at.
Beats watching the Bachelor,
anyway. I hope. Did you have any
luck?

TINA
Nahhh. Bunch a wimps. Can't drink
and don't know squat about the
Falcons or the Hawks. I mean, who
the hell wants to talk about I-
phones and Sani-pads.

GIDEON
I-pads Tina.

TINA
Oh! No wonder that guy looked at me
kinda funny.

Tina looks over at Gideon, then LAUGHS hard. Gideon scowls,
but quickly caves in to Tina's infectious laughter, joins in.

GIDEON
Tina, you are always way too much.

INT. ATLANTA CITY LIBRARY - REFERENCE DESK - DAY

Tina sits at her desk, shuffles through papers. The gawky man strolls up with a half-dozen books in hand.

GAWKY MAN

Excuse me, miss. I'm ah...doing a little research for a piece I'm writing for a local paper.

Tina looks up at him quizzically.

GAWKY MAN (CONT'D)

Not sure you can help. But, anyway, I'm looking for old Hawks headlines from the sixties, seventies and eighties. We are doing a "look back in pride" series, and I need to ID some of their finest moments.

TINA

My friend, have you come to the right place. Should I say the right Hawks fan. Not much I don't know about Hawks' history!

GAWKY MAN

You're kidding, right?

TINA

Did you know that Dominique Wilkins played the last forty games of the eighty-eight season with a broken big toe on his left foot? The front office never leaked it to the press, 'cause he couldn't pivot to his right. And nobody caught on all the way through the season. And he lead the league that year with a thirty point seven average!

GAWKY MAN

Wow, that's just the kinda stuff I need!

The gawky man extends his hand to shake, almost dropping books again. He manages to recover, dumps his books on the desk.

GAWKY MAN (CONT'D)

Ned Bunsen at your service.

Tina shakes his hand firmly.

TINA
Tina Myers here.

NED
Another basketball fan!

Ned gives Tina's plump figure a quick once over.

NED (CONT'D)
Did you ever play?

TINA
Yeah, I know I don't look it, but I was fast. Starting guard at Gwinnet High my junior and senior years. You?

NED
I always wanted to. I tried out twice, junior high and high school. Had the height to play back then, but, unlike you, I wasn't too swift on my feet. But I loved the sport anyway.

Ned and Tina smile at each other, enjoying their mutual love of the sport.

A MOTHER with two young, arguing BOYS lines up behind Ned.

NED (CONT'D)
Well. I don't want to hold up the line. But gee, I wonder...

Tina looks at him expectantly, small smile on her face.

NED (CONT'D)
Do you get a lunch break? I'd love to buy you lunch and plumb the depths of your Hawks knowledge.

TINA
Sure! Meet me back up here at noon. I have an hour, and there's a restaurant right down the street.

NED
Great! See you then.

Ned spins around, stumbles over the two rug rats punching at each other behind him. He almost falls, but regains his composure with a flourish.

NED (CONT'D)
(to Tina)
Dominique Wilkins pivots to his
left!

Tina LAUGHS as Ned starts to exit, looks down at her desk at
his books.

TINA
(to Ned's back)
Hey, you forgot your books!

Ned turns, blushes, starts back to get them.

As Ned disappears from sight, Tina glances up at a digital
clock on the wall which reads 11:15. She dials a number on
her desk phone.

TINA (CONT'D)
Hey, roomie. Que pasa?

INTERCUT TO GIDEON'S OFFICE, GIDEON ON THE PHONE

GIDEON
The usual crap. I mean the people,
not the work. We still on for
lunch?

INTERCUT TO TINA

TINA
Well...that's what I was calling
about. I just got asked out on a
lunch date!

INTERCUT TO GIDEON

GIDEON
You're kidding, right? By one of
those bums that have been sleeping
at the library lately?

INTERCUT TO TINA

TINA
Nooo, but thanks for the
compliment. He actually seems like
a semi-normal guy. And he likes the
Hawks!

INTERCUT TO GIDEON

GIDEON
And beer too, I suppose.
(pause)
Of course, I'm kidding. Sure, enjoy
yourself. Hey, we are two for two
this week!

INTERCUT TO TINA

TINA
Yeah, baby! I'll let you know how
it goes.

Tina notices a stern-faced senior librarian walking her way.

TINA (CONT'D)
See you after work!

Tina quickly puts the phone back in its cradle.

INT. GIDEON'S WORKPLACE - DAY

Gideon frowns at her phone, shrugs her shoulders, hangs up.

Linda smirks at her from her desk station. Gideon sneers
back, then turns away.

Gloria approaches Gideon from down the hall. All male heads
turn to watch her coming.

She stops to the side of Gideon's work station.

GLORIA
Sorry to bother you, Ms. Welsh,
but, ah, Mr. Rockway wants to talk
to you.

GIDEON
Mr. Rockway? Did he say why?

Gideon's co-workers lean in, wanting details. Gloria is aware
of the audience.

GLORIA
Not really. But he did seem pretty
grumpy about something.

Gloria smiles with false sympathy, turns abruptly to head
back to her desk.

LOUIS

Gee, Gideon. I hope it isn't anything too bad...

LINDA

Yeah, I'd hate to think someone has been complaining about your behavior to the boss. I mean we all get bitchy at times but -

GIDEON

Dammit! I work three times as hard as you idiots combined, bring in the bulk of our business. I find out you have been badmouthing me I'll...I'll...

LINDA

Call mom?

Gideon sweeps up her purse, stomps off down the hall.

Linda grins at the other two brokers.

LINDA (CONT'D)

Let's keep our fingers crossed.

Linda and the male stock brokers cross their fingers.

INT. HALLWAY LEADING TO MR. ROCKWAY'S OFFICE - DAY

Gideon strides purposefully toward WILLIAM ROCKWAY'S office. She falters just before turning at the end of the hall.

She faces Mr. Rockway's secretary, IRIS BLOOM (50s), who is primly perched at a neatly organized desk. Iris has a no-nonsense look, peers at Gideon over granny glasses.

Gideon struggles for words.

IRIS

You've come to see Mr. Rockway.

Gideon gulps, nods her head. Iris punches her intercom.

IRIS (CONT'D)

Ms. Welsh is here, sir. Yes, sir. I'll send her right in.

Gideon warily eyeballs the set of doors behind Iris.

IRIS (CONT'D)

He's waiting...

GIDEON
Yes, of course.

Gideon takes a deep breath, heads through the set of doors.

Iris casts a cool look at Gideon's back.

INT. WILLIAM ROCKWAY'S OFFICE - DAY

WILLIAM ROCKWAY, (distinguished-looking white male, 70, dressed impeccably), sits behind a large, ornate desk.

His office is spacious, expensively furnished, cherry wood bookcases filled with leather-bound books, mementos.

He has three phones at the center of his desk and a fancy computer on a platform to one side.

He is going through paperwork.

Gideon enters, approaches cautiously to stand at the foot of his desk.

Rockway reads on for a few more seconds before looking up.

ROCKWAY
Welsh. Gideon, isn't it?

GIDEON
That's right, sir. You asked to see me?

ROCKWAY
That's right.
(clears throat)
It's been a few months since we've talked.

GIDEON
Actually, more like a year and a half, sir.

Rockway frowns after she corrects him. Gideon shifts her weight uncomfortably.

GIDEON (CONT'D)
Well, maybe a bit less than that...

Rockway regards her closely, nods at a chair to his side.

ROCKWAY

Please have a seat, Welsh. There's something I have to talk to you about.

Gideon slowly sinks into her seat, looks like she's about to be sick.

GIDEON

Yes, sir.

Rockway leans back, interlaces his fingers.

ROCKWAY

How long have you been with us, Welsh?

GIDEON

Eight years next month, sir.

ROCKWAY

Eight years! Eight years. Well, well. That is a long time in this business. You would think commodities trading would be a stable enterprise, and of course it was for hundreds of years. But now in this electronic age, everything is faster, more efficient, less personal. I mean, hell, these days we never even meet the people at the other end of our cell phones or computer screens.

Rockway pauses, lost in thought while Gideon squirms.

ROCKWAY (CONT'D)

...yes, well, hmm. I guess what I am saying is it takes a different, perhaps more like a special kind of person to operate well in this hyper-modern, electronic age. And with computers doing so much of the work, the number of actual people needed, well...

Gideon dreads the coming fall of the axe.

ROCKWAY (CONT'D)

What I'm saying, Welsh is that serious changes are coming for this office. We need to streamline and have a more distinct hierarchy.

(MORE)

ROCKWAY (CONT'D)
The proverbial buck needs to stop
somewhere, right?

Rockway looks at Gideon expectantly.

ROCKWAY (CONT'D)
Right?

GIDEON
Listen, Mr. Rockway, I know I could
be easier for my colleagues to get
along with but - I've done well for
you and the firm. My focus has
always been on my sales record. I'm
just not much of a social -

ROCKWAY
(interrupts)
I just want you to know that over
the next few days I'll be carefully
going over the work you and your co-
workers have done this past year.
We need to tighten up, run
smoother. I've been hands-off for
too long. Change has to come.

Rockway twiddles his fingers, lost in thought again.

ROCKWAY (CONT'D)
Has to come.

Rockway comes back to the moment.

ROCKWAY (CONT'D)
Am a clear, Welsh?

GIDEON
Ah, yes sir. I believe so, sir.

ROCKWAY
Good. Good then. I'll be talking to
you again soon. Very soon, I think.

Rockway turns back to peruse the papers he was reading when
Gideon walked in.

GIDEON
Is that all, sir?

ROCKWAY
Wha?...oh right, that's it.

Gideon rises slowly from her chair, totally perplexed. In a
daze, she makes her way out of Mr. Rockway's office.

INT. GIDEON'S WORK STATION - DAY

Gideon walks haltingly back toward her desk as the three other brokers smirk at each other. Gideon sags into her desk chair, stares straight ahead.

LINDA
Bad news, hon?

Gideon sits stonily for a moment, then snaps on her computer screen, starts working.

INT. GIDEON AND TINA'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Gideon slouches into the apartment, hang-tailed like a wet dog.

Tina sits at the couch drinking a beer, an empty bottle on the coffee table in front of her.

TINA
Tough day, roomie?

Gideon slumps into a chair beside Tina.

GIDEON
Not sure, but I have a feeling the boss is thinking about canning me.

TINA
No way, Gee. I mean you are making them a ton of money!

GIDEON
Yes, I'm good at what I do.
Goddammit, that ought to be enough!
But the others hate me. Especially that bitch Linda. I think she might have complained about me to Mr. Rockway. He implied he was going let somebody in my department go real soon.

TINA
He'd be crazy to pick you.

Tina pats Gideon's knee.

TINA (CONT'D)
Come on, Gee. Forget about it.
You're gonna be fine. And you have a big date coming up this week.

(MORE)

TINA (CONT'D)

Things are gonna turn your way, I can feel it!

GIDEON

Don't you ever give up? How can you stay so upbeat all the time? I mean what's to sing about.

TINA

Well, I had a pretty interesting lunch date today.

GIDEON

Really?

TINA

Oh, yeah! His name is Ned. He's a writer for the Atlanta Scoop. You know, that big Indy paper?

GIDEON

Right. The one that runs all those Kooky stories.

TINA

Special interest stuff, sure. And they are doing a story on Hawks history. He's writing it! And he runs into me, can you believe it?

GIDEON

Yeah. He runs into the walking Hawks museum. So, it went well?

TINA

He's coming over tomorrow night for dinner. I'm going to lend him all my Hawks scrapbooks!

GIDEON

You'll want me out of here then.

TINA

Absolutely not! I want you to meet him, tell me what you think of him. You gotta give me an opinion.

GIDEON

Ah...

TINA

Say you'll be there!

GIDEON

OK, if you insist. But if it looks like it could get hot and heavy, I'll find a reason to exit stage right.

Tina rubs her hands together in excitement.

TINA

Fair enough!

INT. GIDEON'S FAMILY HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Nancy Welsh and her daughter Diane sit side by side on a living room couch.

JIM WELSH, (Gideon's father, a long-faced, dour-looking man in his 60s) sits in an arm chair across from them, trying to lose himself in his newspaper.

NANCY

(to Diane)

So, how did it go for Gideon?

Jim GRUNTS.

DIANE

Pretty well, I think. She told me Oliver asked her out for Wednesday night. But you know Gideon, she didn't seem too excited.

NANCY

The poor dear. She just hasn't had your kind of luck with men.

Jim squirms.

NANCY (CONT'D)

She brings some of it on herself, I suppose.

DIANE

You have that right, Mom. She's so on edge all the time. Like she's ready to bite someone's head off.

Jim tosses his paper to the side.

JIM

Oh, come on, Diane. That's a clear exaggeration.

DIANE

I wish it was, Dad. But she seems really unhappy.

JIM

Maybe if the two of you weren't putting her under so much pressure to find some guy to latch on to. I mean, not everybody puts "romance" first in their lives.

DIANE

Hardly anyone puts it dead last in their lives either, Dad.

Jim glares at Diane.

JIM

Maybe you got lucky, Diane.

NANCY

What on earth do you mean, Jim? That she doesn't deserve Daryll?

JIM

I didn't mean lucky like that. I mean...look at you. You look like your mother.

Nancy and Diane look at each other.

JIM (CONT'D)

Whereas Gideon...

The women look at Jim, slack-jawed.

JIM (CONT'D)

(continues)

...looks like me, I'm afraid. Can't always be easy for her.

DIANE

But you found Mom, Dad! Looks don't mean everything.

JIM

I'm a man, sweetheart. Women look for other things in a man besides appearance. Would he be a good provider, a good parent, have a sense of responsibility -

NANCY

And a sense of humor?

Nancy and Diane LAUGH. Jim frowns.

JIM

You know what I mean. And Gideon has the potential to be all those things, which should mean something to somebody.

DIANE

She does. All but the humor.

Jim rises from his chair.

JIM

I need a drink. Either of you want anything?

Diane and Nancy shake their heads "no". Jim walks toward the kitchen.

JIM (CONT'D)

She'll be all right. You two need to stop worrying about her so much. She's my girl. She knows how to take care of herself.

Jim exits.

NANCY

I suppose your father is right...but I do worry.

Diane reaches across the couch, clasps her mothers hand.

DIANE

Let's keep our fingers crossed that this date is a good one. She needs it.

Nancy shrugs her shoulders.

NANCY

I guess we'll see.

INT. GIDEON AND TINA'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Gideon reads a magazine in the living room. She wears casual attire but is still heavily made up.

Toward the back of the room to one side, Tina puts together a meal in the small kitchen. She is stuffed into a pair of jeans.

Tina comes to the living room entrance.

TINA
He should be here any minute!

Tina wriggles in her tight pants.

TINA (CONT'D)
Damn. Have I gained weight?

GIDEON
Aah...not to a noticeable degree.

Tina grins, SPANKS her own butt, waltzes back into the kitchen pleased with herself.

The doorbell RINGS and Tina runs to answer it.

TINA
He's here!

GIDEON
Don't act so excited. It blows your
"hard to get" vibe.

Oblivious to Gideon's comment, Tina yanks open the door.

TINA
Hey, Ned! Glad you could make it.
Come on in and meet my roommate.

Ned enters the apartment. He has a small box of chocolates in his right hand. His pants are about an inch too short on him, showing off a pair of unfashionable white socks.

NED
Hiya.

Ned glances at the Buddha statue on the table near the door, then focuses on Gideon, maintains eye contact with her just a second longer than normal.

NED (CONT'D)
Nice to meet you.

Gideon rises from her chair. Ned thrusts out his right hand to shake hers. He is still holding the box of chocolates in it.

NED (CONT'D)
Whoops!

Ned blushes, turns to give the chocolates to Tina.

NED (CONT'D)
These are for you.

TINA
Oh, boy! I love chocolate!

Gideon's eyes widen as she nods in agreement.

TINA (CONT'D)
Ned, this is my roommate and my
bestest, oldest friend Gideon
Welsh.

NED
Pleased to meet you. Ned Bunsen
here.

GIDEON
(to Tina)
"Bestest" I can live with. Oldest?
(to Ned)
Bunsen, like in Bunsen burner?

NED
Yeah, but a lot cooler!

Tina LAUGHS at Ned's joke. Gideon smiles dryly.

TINA
Well, you two sit down and get to
know each other while I find those
albums for Ned.

Tina drops the box of chocolate on the coffee table in front
of the couch.

TINA (CONT'D)
Help yourselves to some.

GIDEON
They should go well with the polish
sausage you're cooking.

TINA
You bet!

Tina heads out to get her Hawks albums while Gideon and Ned
sit down awkwardly across from each other, Gideon in her
chair, Ned at the center of the couch.

NED
Smells good.

GIDEON

What? The sausage or the chocolate?

NED

Heh, heh. I...ah, have heard a lot about you.

GIDEON

All good, I'm sure. I've heard a fair amount about you, too. Tina's not exactly a closed book.

Ned nods agreement with a grin.

GIDEON (CONT'D)

So, you are a big sports fan?

NED

Well, not really, although I do like basketball a bit. But I got interested in the Hawks from a historical perspective, in terms of what they've brought to the city. I'm taking the angle that the team has stayed tough despite all the setbacks, the ups and downs. And they have managed to succeed regardless of problems and bad breaks. Especially lately. I'm taking the angle that the team's success has spilled over onto the populace in recent years. Their team spirit and winning attitude have become Atlanta's.

GIDEON

Atlanta has a winning attitude?

NED

I guess I'd like to think so, for the most part, at least. You don't like it here?

TINA (O.C.)

(yells)

Hey, I'll be there in a minute!
Can't find my nineteen eighty-five album, dang it.

GIDEON

(shouts back to Tina)

Well, that's not surprising
consider the mess...

(stops herself)

(MORE)

GIDEON (CONT'D)

...the mess you had to deal with at work today. Relax, it's in there somewhere.

Gideon smiles weakly at Ned.

GIDEON (CONT'D)

She's a bit disorganized, but she has a heart of gold, believe me. If she likes you she'll give you the clothes off her back.

Ned squirms uncomfortably at the phraseology.

NED

She certainly has been more than helpful to me.

GIDEON

She's the best there is, if you treat her well. Sometimes though, she's just too wide-open. I mean, she's prone to letting herself get hurt.

Gideon looks closely at Ned, eyes narrowing.

GIDEON (CONT'D)

I'd hate to see that happen.

NED

Tina's a great girl. I think she has the makings of a fine and loyal friend.

(beat)

She clearly has one in you.

Ned and Gideon share a long, serious look. Gideon tears her eyes away, embarrassed by her own staring.

NED

What I'm trying to say -

Tina bursts back into the living room with a huge armful of albums.

TINA

Quick! Somebody grab these.

Ned and Gideon jump up to lighten Tina's load. The three of them place the dozen albums on the coffee table.

Tina grins triumphantly, plops down next to Ned on the couch. Gideon returns to her chair.

TINA (CONT'D)

There you have it. Forty years of Hawks history! I've been keeping scrapbooks for twenty-five years and my Dad gave me his, which go back almost fifteen years before that.

GIDEON

Amazing.

NED

Truly, it is! This is great, Tina! Just what I need. Should save me days of library research.

TINA

Does that mean you won't be coming to the library anymore, Ned?

NED

Huh? Oh, no, of course not. I mean of course I won't stop coming. Lots of other history I'll need to research for articles.

Ned picks up one of the albums.

NED (CONT'D)

Can I keep these for a few days?

TINA

Sure. And I'm available to point out the best stories.

Tina bats her eyes at Gideon as Ned turns through an album.

GIDEON

Tina, is something burning?

TINA

Oh, my gosh!

Tina jumps up.

TINA (CONT'D)

My sausages! Be right back.

Tina rushes into the kitchen.

GIDEON

I think I'll step out for a bit, catch a bite to eat. Let you two get some...work done.

NED

Oh, no, Gideon. No need for that. I mean, it would be nice to get to know Tina's "bestest" friend!

GIDEON

"Oldest" too, don't forget.

Ned looks at Gideon with affection.

NED

I'd hardly call you old.

Gideon drops her eyes. She's taken a liking to Ned.

GIDEON

You're being kind. But thanks.

Gideon starts to rise.

GIDEON (CONT'D)

Tina, I'm heading down the block to the Piecrust. I'll be back in a few hours.

NED

Wait-

GIDEON

(whispers aside to Ned)

Besides, I don't like well done sausage.

Tina bustles back into the living room.

TINA

Hey, no need to run off, roomie. I got it under control!

Gideon wrinkles her nose, glances at the kitchen stove.

GIDEON

Thanks, Tina, but I don't really have much of an appetite right now. I want to walk a bit, then maybe grab a bite to eat. Besides, you guys have a lot of research ahead of you. I'd just be in the way.

NED

You won't be in the way. And its Hawks history.

GIDEON
Believe me, Ned, I've seen it all
before. More than once.

Gideon walks to the front door, scoops up her purse along the way.

GIDEON (CONT'D)
You two have fun.

Ned stands to watch her go.

TINA
OK, Gee!

NED
Nice to meet you.

Gideon looks back at them, emits a small smile, closes the door behind her.

Tina turns to grin up at Ned, shrugs.

TINA
Let's eat!

Tina waddles toward the kitchen, waves for Ned to follow. His eyes remain on the door for a second before he turns to join her.

INT. GIDEON AND TINA'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - DAY

In pajamas, Tina sits at the kitchen table eating cereal when Gideon, fully dressed for work, walks in.

TINA
Hey, Gee. Missed you last night.
When did you get in?

Gideon reaches for the cereal box on the counter, shakes it, finds it empty, frowns.

GIDEON
I don't know, around nine thirty, I
guess. Your bedroom door was
closed so I figured -

TINA
Nah. No such luck. Ned was pretty
beat after we looked at Hawks stuff
for a couple of hours. In fact, his
stomach was bothering him some.

GIDEON
(whispers to herself)
What a surprise.

TINA
Eh?

GIDEON
I said "you guys". I thought maybe
you guys were holed up in your
bedroom, you know, looking at
pictures...or something.

TINA
I wish. But he's coming by later
this week to drop my albums off.
We'll see what happens then! Hey,
he's cute, right?

GIDEON
...Okay, I suppose. Not my type,
really, but Okay...

Gideon searches the pantry for more cereal, but there isn't
any.

GIDEON (CONT'D)
You ate both boxes of cereal?

TINA
Whoops. I guess I had kind of a
large bowl for desert last night.
Sorry!

Gideon pulls a half loaf of bread out of the refrigerator.

GIDEON
This will have to do.

TINA
Hey, I forgot. It's your big night
tonight, isn't it?

Gideon grimaces.

GIDEON
Yeah, I guess. I'll have to come
back here after work and get dolled
up. He's picking me up at six
thirty.

TINA
I'm going to stop by Dad's place
after work.

(MORE)

TINA (CONT'D)

I'll probably see you when you get back, unless it's late. And you're getting some action.

GIDEON

Gimme a break...

Gideon turns away, pours herself a cup of coffee.

TINA

Well, good luck, roomie.

Gideon shakes her head.

INT. SAADE'S LEBANESE RESTAURANT - DINING AREA - EVENING

Oliver and Gideon sit across from each other in the posh dining area of Saade's. He is dressed foppishly in tight dinner jacket and a loud shirt.

Gideon is wearing a garish cocktail dress and is overly made up, as usual.

They have almost finished eating. Oliver is holding forth.

OLIVER

...so I told them, go on and let me go, then! Kiss your potential biggest earner goodbye.

Oliver tosses back his drink, BANGS down the empty glass.

Gideon jerks back in surprise.

OLIVER (CONT'D)

Christ. They couldn't overlook one bad bet. Hell, if they had stuck with me I would have hoisted them right up the proverbial flagpole when commodities lifted off last Fall! Idiots.

GIDEON

Well. It sounds like you've recovered in fine fashion. Making all the right calls from your home account.

Oliver turns away briefly.

OLIVER

Yeah. But then Lucy and I started fighting.

(MORE)

OLIVER (CONT'D)
She liked hob-nobbing with the big traders and their wives at Wilkes Brothers. Couldn't handle not being part of the social swirl. Hey, you need another drink?

Gideon shakes her head "no".

Oliver taps his empty glass with a spoon, attracts the attention of a nearby waiter.

OLIVER (CONT'D)
Another one here!

Oliver turns back to Gideon.

GIDEON
I'm with you on that point.
There's nothing that I despise more than idle chatter. I wouldn't have missed that part of the job one bit.

OLIVER
Like I said Friday, you've got good business sense. Why waste time talking when you should be attending to the big boards. Am I right?

GIDEON
It's better than idle chatter, I suppose.

OLIVER
Clearly. And all that arguing with Lucy, it was ultimately distracting. I didn't...couldn't pay attention to the trends the way I needed to.

Oliver's drink arrives. He tosses down a huge slug of it.

OLIVER (CONT'D)
Bitch took things straight down hill for us.

Gideon's jaw drops open.

OLIVER (CONT'D)
Excuse my French. But that's the way it was. We could have been on easy street.

Oliver takes another hit of his drink.

GIDEON
I know relationships can be -

OLIVER
Listen, can we talk frankly for a moment?

GIDEON
I thought...you were.

OLIVER
I mean, about business.

GIDEON
Business?

OLIVER
We're business people first, aren't we? And I have a feeling we could work really well together as a team.

Oliver smiles suggestively, then looks around to make sure no one else is listening.

OLIVER (CONT'D)
In commodities.

GIDEON
I must admit, I am totally not following you.

OLIVER
OK, you are going to make me spell it out. I suppose that's the safest way to do it.

Oliver leans in close.

OLIVER (CONT'D)
We just met, right?

GIDEON
Right.

OLIVER
Does anyone know we went out on this date?

GIDEON
Just my sister. And my roommate.

OLIVER

Listen. I figure if there's a few bucks in it for them too, they'll never let on we knew each other.

GIDEON

What?

OLIVER

Or even better, you can just tell them I stood you up! As far as they know, there never was a real date.

Gideon sits back, tries to hide her shock.

OLIVER (CONT'D)

It works like this. Say you decide you are going to place a big buy order on hog bellies. You call me, leave me a coded message. I've thought it all out. For example if its bellies, you'd simply say "this little piggy went to market" and I know it's time to buy!

Gideon is dumbfounded.

Oliver digs into his dinner jacket pocket. He pulls out several sheets of paper full of coded statements.

OLIVER (CONT'D)

I worked on these all weekend. You aren't going to believe how clever these are. Innocuous codes for almost every commodities transaction possible. For either buy or sell orders.

Oliver carefully slides the sheets over to Gideon.

GIDEON

You're kidding, right?

Gideon picks up the sheets, reads the top line.

GIDEON (CONT'D)

"Don't Bogart that joint, my friend?"

Oliver rubs his hands together excitedly.

OLIVER

Sell tobacco!

Gideon drops the sheets like hot coals.

GIDEON
Is this some kind of joke?

Oliver shows a flash of irritation, but quickly recovers his smarmy smile.

OLIVER
Making big money is no joke. And we can do it. Working together. Fifty-fifty, right down the middle. Hell, I'll even go sixty-forty your way to sweeten the pot.

GIDEON
I've never heard such an absurd suggestion in my life! Do you think I'm a crook?

OLIVER
I was hoping you were a smart businesswoman. Everybody does this. Why stay on the outside slaving away for nickels and dimes?

Oliver leans in to stare hard at Gideon.

OLIVER (CONT'D)
I sure don't want to waste MY youth doing that!

GIDEON
I can't believe you asked me out to make this kind of proposition.

Oliver pats his lips with his napkin.

OLIVER
You thought I was going to make a proposition of a different kind?

He smirks suggestively.

OLIVER (CONT'D)
Well, that might be possible if we can come to some sort of agreement.

GIDEON
Absolutely not! I am completely shocked that you would make such a suggestion.

Oliver scowls, then grins nastily.

OLIVER
Surely, you didn't think I asked
you out on the basis of your
overwhelming beauty.

Gideon looks down at her plate, mortified.

Oliver snatches up his coded sheets, stuffs them in his
jacket pocket.

OLIVER (CONT'D)
Wasted my damn time.

Oliver pulls out his wallet, dumps a few bills on the table.
When he starts to rise from his chair, Gideon looks up.

OLIVER (CONT'D)
That should cover my half. You'll
need to leave the tip, if you think
the meal was worth it.

Oliver starts toward the exit.

OLIVER (CONT'D)
I sure don't!

EXT. OUTSIDE SAADE'S RESTAURANT ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Gideon stumbles out the door into pouring rain. Oliver is
long gone. Ashen faced, tears streaming down her face, Gideon
hails a passing cab.

INT. GIDEON AND TINA'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Tina sits on the couch, drinking beer, reading a travel
magazine.

Her cell phone on the coffee table RINGS. Tina checks to see
who is calling, brings the phone up to her ear.

TINA
Gee? What's up, girl? Where are
you? It's almost eleven.

Tina's face falls.

TINA (CONT'D)
OK, OK. What a lousy shit! But
you'll be all right. Now, where are
you?

Tina holds her phone away from her ear. Gideon SOBS loudly over the phone, tries to talk through the tears.

TINA (CONT'D)
Lucky's. I thought so. I'm coming
right now to get you. But you gotta
stop drinking. Really, you gotta
stop. Promise me.

More HYSTERICS from Gideon through the phone.

TINA (CONT'D)
Just stay put. I'm on my way.

Tina runs to the front door, grabs a raincoat from the entrance closet, scoops a set of car keys off the head of the Buddha statue, rushes out.

INT. LUCKY'S BAR AND GRILL - NIGHT

Tina bursts through the front door of Lucky's. It is still raining outside; she is sopping wet. Lucky's is almost empty.

Down at the far end of the room, Gideon slumps over the bar. There are five empty drink glasses in front of her.

Tina rushes over.

TINA
Gideon!

Gideon raises her head halfway up. Her makeup is a smeared mess. She is dead drunk.

Tina attempts to embrace her. Gideon writhes away, SOBBING.

TINA (CONT'D)
Come on, baby. What happened?

GIDEON
He...he just left me there. He
said, he said -

Gideon WAILS.

GIDEON (CONT'D)
- the vilest things!

TINA
He's nothing, Gideon. Only a total
asshole would -

GIDEON
I feel so stupid! So ugly!

Gideon puts her head in the crook of Tina's shoulder. Her body heaves with heart-wracking sobs.

A COUPLE OF MEN down at the other end of the bar stare at them. Tina glares them down and they turn away.

TINA
Come on, Gee. We gotta get you out of here.

Gideon shrugs off Tina's attempt to stand her up.

GIDEON
I need another drink.

Bartender Max stands nearby. He shakes his head "no".

TINA
No, Gee. No more. Let me get you home and get some coffee in you. You are gonna feel like hell tomorrow.

GIDEON
Don't you see, Tina? I'm in hell already. My life is a fucking mess; a waste.

Tina helps Gideon to her feet.

TINA
It will all look different in the morning.

Gideon clasps Tina's face in her hands, looks straight down at her.

GIDEON
Why can't I look different in the fucking moorrnni...

Gideon loses her footing, almost falls. Tina slings one of Gideon's arms across her shoulder, starts to crab-walk Gideon out of the bar.

MAX
Need some help?

TINA
Kinda late for that, pal. And
thanks for feeding her so many
drinks, asshole.

Max scowls, turns his back on the pair of women.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE LUCKY'S - NIGHT

Tina carts Gideon outside over to her car, a few spots down from Lucky's entrance.

She leans Gideon against the side door, searches for her keys.

GIDEON
I'm gonna be sick.

TINA
OK, I -

Gideon power barfs down the side of Tina's vehicle.

GIDEON
I'm sorry.

TINA
No worries. It needed a wash
anyway.

Tina finds her keys, avoids the barf, opens the passenger door, helps Gideon inside.

Tina runs over to the driver's side, gets in, starts her vehicle. She roars off into the night.

INT. INSIDE TINA'S CAR - NIGHT

Gideon lurches around in the passenger seat, very drunk and extremely upset.

GIDEON
I juss don' care. Don' care
anymore.

TINA
Take it easy, Gee. We'll have you
home in a warm bed in no time.

Gideon MOANS, lays her head against the passenger window, watches the city roll by as she weeps.

Ahead is a trestle bridge over the Chattahoochee River. There is very little traffic on the road this late at night.

As they drive onto the bridge, Gideon SLAMS her hands down on the dashboard.

GIDEON
I want out!

TINA
No, Gee, that's not a good -

GIDEON
I'm gonna be sick again!

Tina pulls over to the side of the bridge. Gideon stumbles out of the car, then staggers up to the bridge railing.

Leaning over the railing, she throws up again.

Tina puts on her blinking lights, exits the vehicle to approach Gideon. As she nears her, Gideon steps up onto a higher crossbar on the bridge's guardrail.

Tina freezes in her tracks.

TINA
Gideon. What are you doing?

Gideon teeters precariously. Tina takes one step closer.

TINA (CONT'D)
Gideon, please!

Gideon glowers at Tina through her tears.

GIDEON
Oh, Tina. Just leave me be. I can't take the punishment any more.

TINA
God, please, Gee. You're gonna feel better, I promise you. Please, just step away from there.

Tina takes another step toward Gideon. In response, Gideon leans out further over the bridge rail.

TINA (CONT'D)
No, Gideon!

GIDEON
What's the point, Tina. What's the use.

(MORE)

GIDEON (CONT'D)

I'm not living the life I'm supposed to. The one I wanted. The one everybody else wants for me.

TINA

Come on, Gee. Because some idiot shat on you? We've been putting up with that nonsense for years. Listen.

GIDEON

I don' wanna...

TINA

Listen, Gee. I'm going to tell you a story.

GIDEON

Noooo...

TINA

You gotta listen, Gee! It's a true story. About Audrey and Agnes VanHart. Sisters. Twins actually.

Gideon MOANS, turns her head away.

TINA (CONT'D)

They lived almost a hundred years ago. Grew up on a farm outside of Wichita, Kansas. Graduated from a one-room school house and then headed East for college. At Georgia Tech, our alma mater.

Gideon looks fully at Tina for the first time.

TINA (CONT'D)

They've even got a plaque about them on the field house wall.

Tina sees she has Gideon's attention.

TINA (CONT'D)

Yep. That's how I first found out about them. They played basketball. Both of them were six feet four inches tall!

Tina takes a small step closer to Gideon.

TINA (CONT'D)

And men, Gee, men were a couple inches shorter then.

(MORE)

TINA (CONT'D)

Too much iodine in the food, I guess. Anyway, it was real tough going for them socially.

GIDEON

Eh?

TINA

After college they worked for the Atlanta Journal for awhile as journalists. Wouldn't do reporting though cause they hated having their pictures taken. I mean hell, they were a head taller than everybody else!

Gideon MOANS softly, eases back off the rail a bit. Tina warms to her tale.

TINA (CONT'D)

Agnes, well, she starts writing a journal on the side about their lives. I read it, actually. Agnes loved her work, but they were both so damn lonely. They felt like freaks.

GIDEON

God, Tina, please -

TINA

I'm not bullshitting you! That journal is still around today. Anyway, they got to be in their thirties and decided it was time for another reality. I guess they'd had enough of this one. Like you're feeling now, maybe.

Tina takes two more steps towards Gideon, close enough to touch her.

TINA (CONT'D)

So, they put their heads together. They decided they were gonna see the whole world, then end up somewhere they didn't feel weird or left out.

Tina reaches over, touches Gideon's upper arm. Gideon's SOBS turn to SNUFFLES as she listens to Tina's story.

TINA (CONT'D)

And that's exactly what they did.
They took almost four solid years
and traveled this old world stem to
stern. Saw it all, did it all.
Loved who they would or could along
the way. Do you know where they
ended up? And why?

GIDEON

...tell me.

TINA

A remote village in the Kovomi
Mountain range in the Balkans. The
why? Well, you may have seen
something about this place on the
internet. The "why" is because the
average man in that area grows up
to be six feet five inches tall!

Tina grins.

TINA (CONT'D)

Now, there's a couple of
resourceful women with real heart
and soul. All the guts in the
world, too. And they ended up
living very full lives, I might
add. Very full lives indeed...

Tina looks straight into Gideon's face.

TINA (CONT'D)

And that, Gee, that. That could be
us, too.

Gideon looks beseechingly at Tina, stumbles into her arms,
weeping. Tina pats her back, leads Gideon over to the car.

TINA (CONT'D)

Let's go home.

Tina loads Gideon into her vehicle and gets a bit of barf on
her hand from the passenger side door as she closes it.

She looks at the barf, shrugs her shoulders, wipes it off on
her raincoat, heads around to the driver's side.

INT. GIDEON AND TINA'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - DAY

Tina nurses a coffee at the kitchen table. She is dressed for
work.

An exhausted Gideon enters. She is dressed for work also, minus the heavy makeup and her hair is a mess.

TINA

Hey.

GIDEON

Sorry about last night. I was so pissed off. Not a smart time to drink. But thanks. Thanks for being there.

TINA

We got each others backs, right? I thought you might be taking the day off today, call it a long weekend.

Gideon pours herself a cup of coffee with a shaky hand, sits down at the table.

GIDEON

Missing a day now might insure the axe falls on me. Can't chance it.

TINA

Well. Glad you give a shit.

Tina smiles. Gideon forces a flicker of a grin back, gulps down more coffee. Tina rises to leave for work.

TINA (CONT'D)

I'm gonna stop by and see Dad tonight for a little while. Shouldn't be late. You OK with that?

GIDEON

I'm fine.

Gideon sits up straighter in her chair.

GIDEON (CONT'D)

I'm over whatever it was. Atlanta tough.

Tina salutes her with a power fist, then exits the room.

INT. GIDEON'S WORK STATION - DAY

Gideon sits stiffly at her work desk, types in orders.

She hasn't bothered with makeup and her hair still needs combing.

The other three brokers are all occupied, The two men work while Linda is busy reading a fashion magazine.

Suddenly, JIMMY LAO, (an Asian broker in his late 20s) shifts back in his chair when he notices Mr. Rockway heading their way.

JIMMY
Boss on the horizon.

Linda dumps her magazine into a trash basket beside her desk, punches on her computer.

All heads turn to watch Mr. Rockway approach. Rockway pulls a chair from the side of Louis Markey's desk, positions it so he is facing the group of brokers.

ROCKWAY
I figure this is less obtrusive and
attention getting than me calling
you all into my office.

Rockway looks back at the two secretaries about thirty feet away.

ROCKWAY (CONT'D)
Plenty of privacy back here anyway.

Rockway looks into Linda's trashcan. The fashion magazine cover faces up at him.

ROCKWAY (CONT'D)
Maybe too much.

Linda looks stricken.

ROCKWAY (CONT'D)
(clears throat)
Well.

Rockway looks around at his employees.

ROCKWAY (CONT'D)
I've come with some big news.

Linda and Louis glance at each other, then fixate on Gideon like cheetahs stalking prey.

ROCKWAY (CONT'D)
Good news and I guess bad news,
really. Like the old joke goes,
which do you want to hear first?

Rockway LAUGHS at his own joke. No one else moves a muscle.

ROCKWAY (CONT'D)
Well, the good leads to the bad, so
I'll start with that.

Rockway looks over at Gideon, who can barely maintain eye contact with him.

Linda grins maliciously.

ROCKWAY (CONT'D)
Welsh, this has been a long time
coming. And it is way overdue.

The other brokers can barely contain their glee.

ROCKWAY (CONT'D)
As of today, I'm appointing you
supervisor of this unit! You have
done an exceedingly fine job of
predicting the markets and making
this firm a damn good profit while
doing so.

Gideon's mouth drops open. She can't believe her ears. Linda looks like she has been gut-punched.

ROCKWAY (CONT'D)
And, of course that will come with
a substantial raise. Substantial!
Which brings me to the bad news.
Gideon here brought more profit
through the door this past twelve
months than the other three of you
combined.

Louis puts his hand up over most of his face, trying to hide his dismay.

ROCKWAY (CONT'D)
So. I'm instituting a ninety day
provisional "proving ground"
period. What each of you needs to
prove to me during that time is
that you are capable of increasing
your profits by at least fifty
percent.

The brokers still look worried but are relieved not to be fired.

ROCKWAY (CONT'D)
And the first two to get there
stay.

Rockway looks at the three brokers carefully to see that they understand the import of what he has said. The brokers are stunned.

ROCKWAY (CONT'D)
And Welsh will be monitoring your progress. She will be reporting to me personally from now on.

Rockway SLAPS his hands down on his knees.

ROCKWAY (CONT'D)
Any questions?

Dead silence.

ROCKWAY (CONT'D)
Good!

Rockway rises from his chair.

ROCKWAY (CONT'D)
Welsh, meet me in my office in about thirty minutes. We'll go over the details.

Rockway walks back down the hallway, leaves the chair where it was. The three brokers force themselves to look over at Gideon. She stares straight ahead with her mouth slightly open.

She shakes her head to clear it, casts an ice cold look at her former colleagues.

GIDEON
Hmm. I suggest we all get busy.

Gideon turns back to face her computer, sees Linda reflected in her computer screen.

GIDEON (CONT'D)
(to Linda's reflection)
And best empty that waste basket.

On the computer screen, a huge smile spreads across Gideon's face.

INT. MILT CAMPBELL'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Milt prepares himself a burger in his messy kitchen, a half-full glass of booze next to him on the counter.

O.C., Tina walks into the house.

TINA (O.C.)
Hey, Pop! Where you at?

MILT
Back here, Tiny! Making some grub.
You wanna burger?

Tina walks into the kitchen, carrying a bag of household supplies. She hungrily eyeballs the burger cooking.

TINA
Sure. Got enough meat left?

MILT
Oh, yeah. Always prepared for
company.

Milt starts making another patty as Tina puts her bag down on the counter.

TINA
I'm gonna figure you washed your
hands.

MILT
Hey, I spilt some Bourbon on them
earlier. That should be good
enough, right?

Both LAUGH.

TINA
Well, there's hand soap in this bag
somewhere.

Milt ignores Tina's last remark.

MILT
So what's new, kid?

Tina winks at Milt.

TINA
I'm seeing somebody.

MILT
No kidding. That's great! Nice guy?

TINA
What would I be doing with an
unnice guy, Pop?

MILT

You know what I mean. Does he like sports?

TINA

That's part of the Myers definition of a nice guy, right? 'Course he likes sports! In fact, he's a huge Hawks fan.

MILT

No kiddin'!

TINA

Yup! He's a magazine writer, doing an article about Hawks history. Met him at the library. He's using our scrapbooks for his research.

MILT

You keep a close eye on those scrapbooks, Tiny. There gonna be worth a lot of money some day.

TINA

I dunno, Pop. I think their value is probably more personal than material.

Milt draws a breath to argue.

TINA (CONT'D)

But, I'll keep a tight rein on them, not to worry. Anyway, we had a date and he's been over to the apartment. And we're gonna get together again later tonight!

MILT

Any heat?

Tina slugs Milt in the arm affectionately.

TINA

That's personal stuff, Pop. But I'm hoping...I kinda like him.

MILT

He'll make a move if he's smart enough to see what a great girl you are.

Tina hugs Milt around the neck.

TINA

Glad at least you think so, Pop.

Milt flips the burgers.

MILT

How's Gabby, er, Giddy doing these days?

Tina looks away for a second.

TINA

Actually she's better today than yesterday. Had a rotten date last night and got drunk after he walked out on her.

Milt nods. He can relate to getting drunk.

TINA (CONT'D)

But she called me at lunch today. She got a big promotion at work! Gonna mean a huge raise, too. I think that really did something for her ego.

Milt looks up from the burgers.

MILT

Her ego?

TINA

Yeah, Pop. She's not as tough as she looks. Or you think.

MILT

She could take some tips from my girl about toughness, then.

TINA

I might not be as tough as you think either, Pop.

Milt waves the spatula in a "no" motion at Tina.

MILT

Nah. We raised you good, Tiny. And you were always fulla heart. Took care of your own Mom after she got sick like she was your own kid. I never expected anything like it, but probably I should have.

(MORE)

MILT (CONT'D)

In my book, you can have beauty and charm all day long, but you can't bank on either. What you can bank on is heart. And loyalty. Those are the things that make toughness. You got 'em both.

Milt starts to flip a burger, looks back at Tina with a tear in his eye.

MILT (CONT'D)

And I'm mighty proud of that.

Tina points to the pan on the stove.

TINA

Pop! Don't get carried away. You're gonna burn those burgers.

Milt whips around to the stove.

MILT

You're right. Priorities. After all, it's dinner time.

Milt and Tina LAUGH heartily.

MILT (CONT'D)

But keep me posted on the...romantical developments.

TINA

I'll be sure to do that, Pop. Let's eat.

INT. GIDEON AND TINA'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Sitting on the couch, Gideon reads a business magazine. The intercom BUZZES. She rises to go press a button on the intercom.

GIDEON

Who is it?

NED

(through the intercom)

Hey, Gideon, it's Ned. I stopped by to drop off these older albums and pick the rest up from Tina.

GIDEON

Tina's not back yet, Ned. She should be here in a few minutes.

EXT. FRONT OF BROWNSTONE - NIGHT

Ned stands in the rain, talks to Gideon through the intercom. He has no umbrella and his rain coat is wrapped around Tina's albums. He's soaked to the bone.

NED

Um...it's raining. Do you want me
to wait here outside?

INT. GIDEON AND TINA'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Gideon is flabbergasted at her lapse in thoughtfulness.

GIDEON

No! I mean of course not. I'm
buzzing you in right now.

Gideon BUZZES Ned in. She paces nervously around her front door, then grabs her purse off the entrance way table, yanks a hand mirror out of it to check her grooming.

She catches herself primping, shakes her head "no", shoves the mirror back in her purse.

Ned's FOOTSTEPS approach. He stops outside the door, KNOCKS on the door three or four times.

Gideon runs back into the center of the room on tip-toes. She pats her hair in place, returns with exaggerated casualness to the door. She opens it to see Ned standing in the doorway looking like a wet rat.

He and Gideon stare at each other.

Gideon snaps out of it.

GIDEON (CONT'D)

Geez, you're soaked!

NED

Yeah. Sorry, I'm dripping a bit. I
could wait in the hallway if you'd
like.

GIDEON

Oh no, no, no. Come on in.

Gideon stops Ned just inside the door after she shuts it behind him.

GIDEON (CONT'D)
You wait right here for a minute.
I'm going to get you a couple of
towels.

Ned puts the albums on the entrance-way table, places his wet coat on a rack beside the door, turns to speak as Gideon rushes off.

NED
(to her back)
That would be great...

Gideon hustles out of sight.

NED (CONT'D)
I guess?

Gideon hurries back into the room with two large towels which she thrusts out to Ned.

GIDEON
One's for drying off with. When
you're done, put the other one down
on that chair and make yourself
comfortable.

Ned towels off. Gideon returns to her seat on the couch. She tries not to watch Ned, but keeps checking out his face and body.

Ned walks over to the armchair Gideon has indicated, carefully arranges the towel over it. He gingerly sits down, tries to make sure he doesn't get anything wet.

He and Gideon regard each other uncomfortably. Silence stretches.

Gideon finally speaks.

GIDEON (CONT'D)
What am I doing? I'm in terrible
form tonight. Can I get you
something to drink?

Gideon starts to rise from the couch.

NED
Oh, no, thanks. I'm just fine,
really.

Gideon sinks back down on the couch, not sure what to do or say next.

GIDEON
She'll only be a minute, I'm sure.
She's visiting Milt.

Ned's brow furrows at the sound of a man's name.

GIDEON (CONT'D)
Milt! Of course not. I mean of
course!

Ned looks thoroughly confused.

GIDEON (CONT'D)
Ned is her Dad. I mean MILT is her
dad, sorry! Where is my brain
tonight?

NED
Long day at work, I figure.

GIDEON
Yes, but a rare good one. I got
promoted.

NED
Why, that's just great! But not a
bit surprising based on what Tina
says about you.

Ned hesitates to speak further, clears his throat.

NED (CONT'D)
And I certainly am not surprised
myself. After all, you strike me as
a won-

The BUZZER sounds for a full three seconds. Gideon rushes to
the intercom, punches it.

GIDEON
Tina, is that you?

TINA
(through the intercom)
Yep, 'fraid so! Left my key there
again.

Gideon eyeballs Tina's house keys draped across the small
Buddha statue on the entryway table.

GIDEON
What a surprise.

Gideon BUZZES Tina in, opens the apartment door a crack. A few seconds later, Tina bustles in and grins when she sees Ned in the room.

TINA
Hey, Ned! Didn't know you were coming so early or I woulda been here sooner!

Tina hangs up her coat.

TINA (CONT'D)
Gideon has been known to freak out over unexpected company.

GIDEON
I what?

TINA
I mean, in a good way!
(to Ned)
She likes to be prepared. Ready to make sure everyone is comfortable, has something good to eat or drink.

NED
She's been just fine.

Gideon tries to hide a smile. She likes Ned's compliment.

Ned points at Tina's Hawks albums.

NED (CONT'D)
I finished up with those today! I'd like to get the ninety's books from you to review over the weekend. I'd want to have the article ready for next Wednesday's printing.

TINA
Cool! I'll go get 'em.

NED
And I'm hoping you aren't busy Saturday. I got Hawks tickets!

Tina fist pumps the air.

TINA
Woo-Hoo, Hawks time!

NED
Well, both of you, really.

Ned pulls three tickets out of his pocket.

NED (CONT'D)

My contact with the Hawks gave me three tickets.

Gideon looks stunned but Tina is overjoyed.

TINA

Oh, boy, Gee! They've got the Heat coming tomorrow. Should be a great game!

GIDEON

I...ah...gosh, I already have a commitment. It is my parent's anniversary tomorrow and my sister and I are taking them out to dinner.

Ned looks crestfallen.

NED

Well...

TINA

That's a shame, Gee. I mean, not about your parents, of course! Hey, we'll just have to pull out a Hawks victory without you.

GIDEON

If they have your enthusiasm for the game, how can they lose?

Tina SNAPS her fingers.

TINA

Ned, can we ask my Dad to come?

NED

You mean, Milt?

TINA

(oblivious to Ned knowing Milt's name)

Milt would love it. Get him outa the house for a change.

GIDEON

(to Ned)

I hope you like beer.

Everyone LAUGHS.

NED
(to Gideon)
Another time, then.

GIDEON
Well, I'm sure it would be more
amusing than entertaining my
mother's and sister's opinions
tomorrow night. You guys have fun.

As Tina and Ned talk about the game, Gideon regards Ned wistfully.

INT. ANTOINE'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Gideon, Diane, Daryll, Nancy and Jim sit around a circular dining table at Antoine's. They are dressed up nicely for the occasion.

A WAITER hovers over Nancy, the last to place her order.

NANCY
And I don't want that brisket
overdone. Tell the chef to turn it
just once.

WAITER
I'll be sure to do that, ma'am.

NANCY
Please don't forget. I won't eat
well-done meat.

The waiter nods, scurries off while Jim grins at his retreating form.

DIANE
And mom, you wonder why Gideon is
so fussy over details.

GIDEON
She does?

NANCY
I'm sure she meant it in a nice
way, Gideon. And I think it's just
fine to assert yourself when you
are paying for something. Right,
Jim?

JIM

Since I'm paying, I suppose you
will want me to confront the waiter
if your order comes out wrong.

NANCY

A man should be assertive! Don't
you agree, Daryll?

Daryll opens his mouth to say something, but nothing comes
out.

JIM

I'm sure you assert yourself well
enough when Diane tells you to.

DIANE

Dad!

Gideon smirks.

NANCY

Let's change the subject, shall we?
(to Gideon)

You said on the phone you had some
big news. But you wanted to wait to
tell us when we were all together.

Gideon pats her mouth with her napkin fastidiously before
speaking.

GIDEON

That's right. Yesterday, Mr.
Rockway promoted me to supervisor
of my unit. The promotion will come
with a lot more responsibility but
I'm getting a sixty percent raise!

DARYLL

Congratulations!

JIM

It's about time, sweetheart.

GIDEON

Thanks.

NANCY

I thought you were sick of that
job.

GIDEON

No, Mom. Not the job. The people I
have to deal with sometimes.

(MORE)

GIDEON (CONT'D)

But the job itself...well...I'm damn good at it. And I have always found it interesting.

DIANE

Hog bellies are interesting?

JIM

Come on, Diane.

GIDEON

It's not about the commodities themselves. It's about understanding the big picture. How political, climatic, even cultural events can effect the supply and demand for a particular product. It's about predicting the future in light of those ongoing events. That's one of the big draws for me.

NANCY

That makes sense, I suppose. But aren't other things more important than work?

JIM

Nonsense. Being good at your job and liking it; and putting those two things together...

(to Gideon)

That's a rare feat indeed! Something I'm not sure I ever accomplished.

DIANE

But Dad, you've been a super successful attorney!

JIM

Perhaps. But I haven't always liked it much.

(to Gideon)

I'm proud and happy for you.

Gideon fights choking up.

GIDEON

Thanks, Dad. I guess that's the other big draw. Having someone else recognize you are good at something. Especially someone important to you.

Gideon and her father raise their wine glasses to each other in a toast. The others follow suit, Nancy last.

NANCY

Your father is right, dear. We all
find happiness in our own way. And
I'm glad you are having some,
wherever it comes from.

Gideon looks narrowly at her mother, unsure if this is
compliment or critique.

INT. HAWKS ARENA - MAIN AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

The Hawks-Heat game is at the end of the 4th quarter. Milt
and Ned flank Tina in the stands in very good seats close to
the action.

They all HOWL in distress as a HEAT PLAYER swishes in a
fifteen footer to give the Heat a two point lead with ten
seconds left.

Milt clasps his head in his hands.

MILT

Noooooo!

Ned shakes his head in exaggerated frustration. He is not as
wrapped up in the outcome as the Myers's are.

TINA

Hang in there, guys!

The Hawks inbound the ball, take it quickly down court. They
pass the ball around the horn until

TRAE YOUNG takes a pass in the corner with two seconds left.
He arches the ball up and it RATTLES in for a three-pointer,
giving the Hawks the victory as time expires.

Tina and Milt are ecstatic! Ned claps his hands together
vigorously. Tina and Milt hug each other, jumping up and
down. Then they turn to hug Ned, who clumsily reciprocates
the gesture.

MILT

Man, that was great. What a
finish! What a game! I can't
remember the last time I had so
much fun.

TINA

Yeah, I know, Pop. You even forgot to order a beer the whole second half.

Milt can't believe it himself.

TINA (CONT'D)

Ned, that was a blast. Thanks a bundle for bringing us!

NED

Sure, it was my pleasure.

Milt and Tina high-five each other once more.

NED (CONT'D)

But we aren't quite done with the game yet.

Tina and Milt look at Ned, puzzled.

NED (CONT'D)

Let's wait for the crowd to clear out a bit. Then we're gonna take a short trip out that door there.

Ned points to the exit leading to the Hawks dressing room. Tina and Milt are wide-eyed.

TINA

What?

MILT

We're going to the Hawks locker room? They won't let autograph crashers down that far.

NED

We not chasing autographs. But who knows, we might get lucky...

Milt and Tina hop around like two kids at the candy store.

NED (CONT'D)

But we have to wait a bit.

TINA

Oh, Ned!

Tina gives Ned another bear hug.

INT. HAWKS ARENA - OUTSIDE HAWKS LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

Milt, Tina and Ned, with Ned in the lead, approach the entrance door to the Hawks locker room.

A muscular SECURITY GUARD is posted outside. He sports a name tag that reads

CUMMINGS.

Ned steps up to him.

NED
Officer Cummings, right?

CUMMINGS
You must be the writer. Trae said
you'd be stopping by.

Tina and Milt's jaws drop.

CUMMINGS (CONT'D)
I'll be right back.

Cummings enters the locker room. The din of player's voices TALKING and SHOUTING comes from inside. As the door closes, Tina SQUEALS, grabs Ned's shirt.

TINA
Your kidding, right? Is this really
happening?

MILT
Trae YOUNG? He's coming out here?
No way m-

The locker room door swings open and Cummings leads Trae Young outside. Kyle and Trae shake hands.

TRAE
Good to see you again, Ned. Were
the seats OK?

Milt and Tina GASP, realizing that Trae provided the seats to Ned.

NED
They were super, Trae. Thanks!

TRAE
I expect you to say great things
about me in your article.

NED
(steps to one side)
Let me introduce you to two of your
biggest fans. Hawks admirers all
their lives.

Trae grins at the stunned Myers's.

NED (CONT'D)
Trae, meet Tina and Milt Myers.
Trae has been helping me with the
more recent Hawks history.

Tina and Milt stick out their hands at the same time,
interfering with each other.

Everyone LAUGHS.

Both Tina and Milt withdraw their hands, then thrust them out
simultaneously.

The same thing happens.

Laughing, Trae shakes hands with them both by using both of
his.

MILT
I can't believe I just shook the
hand that won the game!
Ambidextrous on and off the court.

Tina digs through her purse, hauls out a cell phone.

TINA
You know I gotta ask this. Can we
get a picture with you?

TRAE
Sure. Ned, you do the honors?

Ned takes Tina's cell phone, sets it to take a picture. Milt
and Tina crowd around Trae, who hugs them both. Tina and Milt
grin deliriously. Tina jumps up and down with excitement.

MILT
You gotta hold still, Tiny. This
picture goes front and center on
the Hawks Scrapbook series.

Tina struggles to hold still. Ned takes several shots of the
trio.

TRAЕ

I've seen your scrapbook collection. Really something. If you don't mind, I'll put some photos of me and the boys in the last one. Have 'em all sign it too.

Milt is about to swoon, recovers enough to make an offer.

MILT

Mr. Young, if you don't mind? Can I get one with you, Ned here and my daughter?

TRAЕ

Why not.

Milt grabs the camera from Ned, excitedly pushes him into position.

TRAЕ (CONT'D)

(to Ned)

Hey, you're almost as tall as LaBron. And you smell better!

EXT. OUTSIDE HAWKS ARENA - NIGHT

Tina, Milt and Ned walk towards the parking lot. Father and daughter babble excitedly.

MILT

Man, this has to be one of the best nights of my life. I only wish Jeannie coulda been here to see it!

TINA

Mom wasn't nuts about basketball like we are, Pop. But she'd have loved to see you having this much fun.

Tina pulls Ned back a little to speak privately.

TINA (CONT'D)

One of the best nights of my life, too.

Ned smiles at her, nods his head in agreement. As she turns away from him, Ned's smile transforms to a worried look.

EXT. OUT FRONT OF TINA AND GIDEON'S BROWNSTONE - NIGHT

Ned and Tina pull up in Ned's car. Ned looks around to see there are no parking places open nearby.

NED

Looks like I'll have to drop you off here. I gotta write up what happened at the game tonight while it's still fresh. You don't mind?

TINA

Nah. I just want to thank you again for bringing my Dad along tonight. He had a ball! And he'll go gaga over those team pics and signatures.

Tina leans slightly towards Ned, offers herself up for a goodnight kiss. Ned hits his door button, POPPING open Tina's door lock.

NED

It was great fun. I'll come by Monday after work with those albums. That OK by you?

Tina screws up her courage.

TINA

Ned,...where is this thing going?

Ned winces. He was hoping to avoid this conversation.

NED

I think this thing is developing into what I hope is a lasting friendship.

TINA

Friendship.

Tina's eyes mist up with hurt, but recovers before Ned can react.

TINA (CONT'D)

Sure! I get it. There's someone else, right?

Ned can't hold her eyes.

NED

No. Not exactly. Well, someone I'm interested in. In that other way, I guess there is.

Tina sits silently, mulling this over. Then she nods her head, assuring herself of something.

TINA

Fine. I understand. Just bring my scrapbooks by tomorrow. You can drop them off with Gideon because I have to work late. We gotta do all the reshelving from the weekend tomorrow after our customers taper off.

Ned pats Tina's shoulder affectionately. She eyeballs his hand, wanting more but knowing it won't happen.

NED

Great. I'll see you later then.

Tina gets out, then turns back to look at the car as Ned drives off, her face sad.

TINA

You, too.

INT. TINA AND GIDEON'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Gideon watches the news on TV when Tina walks in and rubs her Buddha statue on the belly.

GIDEON

Hey, Tina. How was it?

TINA

OK, OK, pretty good, I guess. Milt coulda died and gone to heaven. Ned introduced us to Trae Young!

GIDEON

Trae Young?

TINA

Only Boston's best shooter this year. Trae has been helping Ned with his article. Got us free tickets. Great seats. Won the game! And the team is gonna autograph our scrapbooks.

GIDEON

It sounds like an ideal evening for you. Yet, you don't seem to excited. Something wrong?

TINA

Nah. Well yeah, maybe. I was hoping for a good night kiss, but I think I got the brush off instead.

GIDEON

I don't know, Tina. Ned seems pretty shy to me. Give him a bit more time.

Tina SIGHS.

TINA

I think he's got someone else in mind. I mean, he almost said as much.

Tina walks over to the couch, plops down.

GIDEON

Now, don't run him off before you're sure.

TINA

Why? You like him around?

GIDEON

Well...he seems like a nice guy. I mean nice to you, anyway. A definite cut above those douches at the bar, or at work. A couple of notches.

TINA

OK, I'll hang in there. For now. But I'm not gonna chase him any more. Just friends. In fact, he's coming over Monday after work to drop off my books. Can you handle taking care of that?

GIDEON

Sure. And I'll try to feel him out on where he stands.

Tina shrugs a diffident approval. She's OK with that plan, but not counting on anything.

On the TV, the Hawks game is being recapped. Tina focuses on a true love.

TINA
What a game. Atlanta tough!

EXT. FRONT OF BROWNSTONE - DAY

Gideon trudges up the street to her Brownstone carrying a bunch of documents from work to review.

She strains to find her key, inserts it in the lock, heads inside.

INT. TINA AND GIDEON'S APARTMENT - DAY

Gideon enters. Tina isn't home.

Gideon dumps her pile of work on the coffee table. She grabs a soft drink from the refrigerator, sits down on the couch, starts going through work papers.

LATER,

she has a pile of documents spread out on the table in front of her when the intercom BUZZES. Gideon goes to the doorway and punches the intercom button.

NED
Hi, Gideon. It's Ned. I've got all these albums to return.

Gideon punches another button.

GIDEON
Come on in.

Gideon unlocks their apartment door, then rushes over to a mirror to tidy herself up before primly sitting back down on the couch.

Ned KNOCKS on the apartment door.

GIDEON (CONT'D)
It's open!

Ned butts the door open with his hip and stumbles in with a pile of albums in his arms.

NED
Mind if I set these down?

Gideon looks at the cluttered coffee table in front of her, points to the corner of the room by the apartment door.

GIDEON

Just put them there for now. Tina will know better what to do with them.

Ned dumps the albums down, brushes himself off.

GIDEON (CONT'D)

She's obviously not here yet.

NED

I figure not. She said she was working pretty late. And she'd be all over these albums like a -

Ned cuts himself off.

NED (CONT'D)

Ehe. Well, I see you've got work to do. Maybe I should just drop these off and go.

GIDEON

No, please. Make yourself at home. I'm just wading through a bunch of paperwork. I have to make a tough decision at the end of the month.

Ned sits in the chair to the side of Gideon.

NED

Why? Um, I mean you aren't going anywhere are you?

GIDEON

No, not me. One of my colleagues may be leaving though.

NED

Really.

GIDEON

Yes. And I've got to decide which one.

NED

Doesn't sound like much fun.

GIDEON

You know, it is funny. Before last week, I would fantasize about giving any one of them, no, hell, all of them the axe. Especially Linda. In as brutal a way as possible. Now that I actually have the power in my hands to let one go, I ... I'm not sure I have the heart for it.

NED

Isn't that the way with people. We think we know ourselves, how we'd act if only given the chance. But when it comes right down to dealing with someone, flesh and blood, the heart takes over.

GIDEON

I don't know...

NED

It doesn't surprise me. You, I mean. Like the old adage, your bark, I think, is much worse than your bite.

GIDEON

Are you implying I'm a dog?

Ned grimaces.

NED

Oh, Christ no, Gideon. Really, you gotta forgive me. I am pretty bad at expressing myself.

GIDEON

Well, you're not alone there. I sometimes think that I must be pretty scary for most people.

NED

Scary? Not to me! I -

Ned reins himself in.

NED (CONT'D)

What I mean is, from the first I, I kinda thought, no, really I was sure.

(MORE)

NED (CONT'D)

All you have to do is watch you and Tina together, you can see how you really feel about each other. It's nice. It's good. Makes me feel good.

GIDEON

Tina is the best person I know, Ned. I'm so glad she has your interest.

NED

Oh, man.

Ned gulps.

NED (CONT'D)

Yeah, she's great, she really is. I can see her becoming a true friend.

GIDEON

Friend?

Ned has his head slightly bowed. Then he looks up guiltily.

NED

The truth is Gideon, I...damn I don't know how to say this...I, there's somebody else I'm really interested in. In a non-friend kinda way, you'd have to say. And I had to tell Tina...

Gideon looks puzzled, then heartbroken.

GIDEON

Oh, no, Ned. You told her you have someone else?

NED

Well, not exactly. I mean, I told her I was interested in someone, but, uh, there's no one in my life yet, anyway. But there is someone I'd like it to be.

Gideon struggles not to ask the next question.

GIDEON

Who?

Ned looks down at the floor for several seconds, screws up his nerve and looks back up into Gideon's unhappy face.

NED
Her roommate.

Gideon stares at Ned as the realization slowly hits her.

GIDEON
Oh, God, Ned...me?

Ned comes forward out of his chair, half kneels in front of Gideon. She puts her head down, places her hand on the coffee table for support.

Ned puts his hand on hers.

NED
First time I walked in. Tell me you
don't hate my guts.

Gideon lifts her head, looks deeply at Ned, then back down at his hand which covers hers.

She slowly withdraws her hand.

GIDEON
Ned, this is awful. I mean what
about Tina?

Ned looks shamefaced at his feet.

NED
I know, I know. I told her I just
wanted to be friends. But she
doesn't know how I feel about you.
But what can I do? It's how I
feel. I'm ashamed of myself. I
should have said something sooner.

GIDEON
What could you have said? Nothing
sounds right.

NED
I am so sorry. I think the best
thing is, maybe just for me to go
away...

Gideon is torn between her feelings for Ned and her old friend.

GIDEON
I...I...

Ned starts to rise but Gideon catches his hand.

GIDEON (CONT'D)
No, Ned. I think I feel the same
way about you. We maybe just have
to deal with it. Or maybe just let
it go. One way or another.

Gideon sits up straight, determined.

GIDEON (CONT'D)
We have to talk to her.

Ned sinks back down in his chair.

NED
We'll get through it. We'll all get
through it.

Ned and Gideon look deeply into each others eyes, their
decision made.

EXT. FRONT OF BROWNSTONE - NIGHT

Tina strolls toward the Brownstone entrance, whistling
happily. She enters the building.

INT. GIDEON AND TINA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Ned and Gideon sit close together, Ned on a chair, Gideon on
the couch. They hold hands as they talk, heads close.

Tina's key sounds in the door. Ned and Gideon jump up, spring
apart. Tina is way early.

Tina enters, sees the pair in front of her looking very
guilty.

TINA
...Hey, guys. You look like kids
with their hands stuck in the
cookie jar! What's up?

NED
Well, uh, Gideon and I were, well-

Gideon takes a step toward Tina.

GIDEON
Tina. Come on in and sit down.

Gideon glances over at Ned. He fidgets with his hands, looks
down at his shoes.

GIDEON (CONT'D)
The three of us need to talk.

Tina walks forward, a puzzled expression on her face.

Gideon and Ned sit down, leaving Tina room on the couch between them.

EXT. FRONT OF BROWNSTONE - NIGHT

From a birds eye view, Tina opens the front door of the apartment building.

Close up, she is in a state of shock, her face ashen, wet with tears. She walks slowly to the sidewalk, turns back to look up towards her apartment.

After a moment, she turns, trudges to her car, gets in.

She starts driving and her

CELL PHONE RINGS.

She looks down to see it is Gideon calling, punches the hang-up button.

EXT. FRONT OF MILT MYERS'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Tina pulls up in front of Milt's house and parks at the curb rather than the driveway. She gets out of her car quietly and walks toward the front of the house.

Through the living room window, she watches Milt drinking a glass of Bourbon while he watches a football game on TV.

Milt is pretty drunk, shouting EXPLETIVES at the screen.

Tina stands observing him for ten seconds, stone-faced. Then deep sadness settles into her face.

Tina heads back to her car, where her

CELL PHONE is RINGING AGAIN on the shotgun seat. She gets in, punches the hang-up button and drives off.

EXT. ATLANTA CITY STREETS - NIGHT

Tina drives through the streets of Atlanta. It is late and there isn't much traffic around.

Up ahead, Tina sees the Chattahoochee River bridge; the same one she talked Gideon down from a few days earlier.

INT. TINA AND GIDEON'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Gideon sits tensely on the edge of the couch, punching in Tina's number on her cell phone.

INT. INSIDE TINA'S CAR - NIGHT

Tina's face is swollen from crying.

She finds the exact same spot Gideon stood at earlier on the bridge, then pulls over.

She picks up her RINGING cell phone and looks at it miserably.

EXT. CHATTAHOOCHEE RIVER BRIDGE - NIGHT

Tina gets out of her car, ringing cell phone in hand and stands just outside the open door, looks at the side of the bridge.

After a few seconds, she approaches the guard rail.

INT. TINA AND GIDEON'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Gideon INHALES SHARPLY when Tina answers her call.

GIDEON

Tina! Please, listen. You've got to listen. I like Ned, sure, but you are my best friend! I love you like family! There's no way I'm trading that for Ned! He understands that perfectly! There's no way!

EXT. CHATTAHOOCHEE RIVER BRIDGE - NIGHT

CLOSE UP, Tina's tear-stained face is all we see.

TINA

No, Gee. I love you too. And I don't want to get in the way of your shot for happiness. Ned is a great guy. He was honest with me about his feelings. And he'll do real well by you, I know it.

INT. TINA AND GIDEON'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Gideon is crying also.

GIDEON

I can't know that, Tina. But I do know you've been solid for me for almost twenty years! I'll not give that up!

EXT. CHATTAHOOCHEE RIVER BRIDGE

Tina takes a deep breath, leans against the rail, looks out over the water, cell phone at her ear.

TINA

I was always better at reading people than you. You can't know it, but I do. I want you to have the room you need to give this a real try.

INT. TINA AND GIDEON'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

GIDEON

No, Tina! I don't need room! Where are you? Please come back here and talk to me!

EXT. CHATTAHOOCHEE RIVER BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

TINA

(resolved)

It's gonna be fine, roomie. You'll see.

(beat)

Stay Atlanta tough.

As Gideon begins to PROTEST over the phone, Tina looks at the screen, and punches the phone off.

Close up, she gazes out at the horizon for a moment. Her face hardens in resolve as she looks down at the

DARK WATER below.

INT. NED AND GIDEON'S HOME - FAMILY ROOM - DAY

Left hand corner screen reads "1 year later", then fades.

Gideon watches a wide screen television in a comfortably furnished living room. She sits in a large chair with high arms. Her torso is not visible.

A sportscaster talks about the Hawks on the tube.

Ned walks in from another room, a writing tablet under his arm.

Gideon looks up at him, smiles.

From Ned's P.O.V., Gideon is six months pregnant.

NED

How are you feeling?

Gideon looks down at her stomach, touches it with one hand.

GIDEON

Not bad, really. Is pregnancy supposed to feel good? I mean it just feels right somehow.

Ned beams, puts his hand on her shoulder.

NED

It is right! We both waited a long time for a blessing like this. We got lucky.

Ned sits down to the side of Gideon in a matching armchair.

NED (CONT'D)

You're gonna be a great mom.

GIDEON

It is weird. My mood, I just don't wake up cranky anymore. In fact, most of the time, I feel happy.

Gideon's smile fades a bit.

GIDEON (CONT'D)

But I still get sad sometimes...

NED

Yeah, I know. I know you miss her.

Gideon rises up from her chair, walks to a mantle over a fireplace.

Several pictures are arranged there. A large one of Gideon and Tina, heads together, smiles out at the viewer.

Tina's small Buddha statue sits next to this picture. Gideon picks up the Buddha, a tear in her eye as she smiles sadly at it.

GIDEON
Atlanta tough.

Gideon gently returns the Buddha to its place.

GIDEON (CONT'D)
Has she really been gone that long,
Ned?

NED
She has, indeed. But I know if she
was here, she'd be really happy,
happy for you.

Ned smiles into Gideon's face.

NED (CONT'D)
I'm sure of it, my love.

Gideon's frown transforms slowly into a sweet smile.

EXT. A TIBETAN VISTA - DAY

From a far distance, a train crawls along a track through the middle of a valley in an exotic land. Huge mountains loom in the background.

A Tibetan monastery sits at the top of the mountain in the middle.

Closer up, through the train's windows, the train is about half full.

Most of the travelers appear to be local and Asian, dressed in the typical garb of the land.

A few EUROPEAN BACKPACKERS sit together. Otherwise most of the travelers are alone.

INT. INSIDE THE TRAIN - DAY

From the far end of the train, a middle-aged Asian man ambles forward.

He totes a suitcase that is covered with stickers showing lands he has previously visited. He has a backpack on.

He looks left and right for a suitable seat.

From the man's P.O.V., most of the bench seats ahead are occupied by at least one person, but there are two bench seats facing each other towards the rear of the car.

The bench seat facing away from him is open.

SOMEONE is reading a HIMALAYAN ADVENTURE TRAVEL GUIDE in the opposite seat, holding it up over their face.

The man approaches the empty seat.

He stands in front of the person with the travel guide, starts to ask in Korean if he can sit down, then notices the guidebook being read is in English.

He switches to slightly broken English.

KOREAN MAN

Excuse me, sorry. Do you mind I sit here?

A few seconds go by before the reader slowly lowers their guidebook. It is Tina!

Tina looks up at the man.

He smiles at her shyly.

Tina grins broadly back at him, motions with her arm to offer him the seat across from her.

He slides his suitcase under the seat. He takes off his backpack, opens it to unload his own guidebook. He sets the pack on the floor, takes his seat.

He holds the guide up, turns the book's cover toward Tina.

It is the HIMALAYAN ADVENTURE TRAVEL GUIDE, Korean language edition. He points to the guidebook Tina is holding.

KOREAN MAN (CONT'D)

Look! Me, too!

Both laugh. They compare guides, start to talk with even more animation, make warm eye contact.

EXT. A TIBETAN VISTA - DAY

The train curls around a mountain bend and out of sight.

FADE OUT.