

3 Dead Husbands

by

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FADE IN

EXT. UC SANTA BARBARA STUDENT APARTMENT - DAY

DANI (20), young and sweet, pulls back her long curls to kiss MIKE (22) goodbye at the door step. He kisses her again. She waves cutely as he pulls on a baseball hat and saunters away.

DANI
I love you, Mike!

EXT. BEER MANUFACTURING PLANT - DAY

A sign on a large building blinks: SANTA BARBARA BEER WORKS

INT. BEER MANUFACTURING PLANT - DAY

A giant beer vat splits open. WHOOSH! The huge brown wave comes at Mike. A lone hat floats in a sea of foam.

SUPER: FIVE YEARS LATER

EXT. SANTA BARBARA SUBURBAN HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - MORNING

Dani (25) in pixie short hair, kisses BRADLEY (31), in a skinny tailored business suit. They walk to their cars. Bradley talks on his cell as he gets in his BMW.

DANI
Love you, Bradley!

He waves his briefcase and hurries away.

EXT. FAST FOOD JOINT - DAY

The wind bellows hard. Bradley parks under a tall metallic "Rooster BBQ wings" sign. He looks up as the metal Rooster twists off in the gale and flies down.

Only a briefcase and a wing tip shoe lie next to the rooster.

SUPER: FIVE YEARS LATER

EXT. DANI'S HORSE RANCH - DAY

Atop a horse, Dani (30) with her hair in a ponytail, rides with dashing rodeo star, JOEY (38). He taps the brim of her hat and they kiss. Dani waves and heads for the barn.

DANI
I love you, Cowboy!

NEIGH! She sees a pack of llamas stampede at Joey. Joey's horse bucks him off. His head hits a rock. Blood flows.

She jumps off her horse and kneels next to Joey. Llamas thunder past. She holds Joey and cries out to the heavens.

DANI
NOOOO! JOEY! No. Please God no!

SUPER: FIVE YEARS LATER - PRESENT

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - DAY

Dani (35) runs down a hospital corridor next to a rolling gurney. JIM (30) with huge puffy welts all over his face, struggles to breathe. The NURSE runs alongside the gurney.

NURSE
What happened?

DANI
Bees!

NURSE
Anaphylactic shock. Respiratory
arrest. Epinephrine, now!

An INTERN brings a syringe. The Nurse jams the needle in.

Jim coughs and gasps.

DANI
Jim, are you all right?

He nods his head as he begins to take jagged breaths.

DANI
Then I'm breaking up with you!

She chokes a sob and hurries away down the hallway.

JIM
On our first date?

DANI
Better early than never!

A BEE follows Dani out the door.

EXT. FLOWER SHOP - LATER THAT DAY

A colorful flower shop sits between CARE NURSING HOME and PEACE MORTUARY. A bee follows Dani into the shop.

INT. FLOWER SHOP

Dani walks into the shop in a daze of shock.

YIN LING (36) looks up from a HUGE flower arrangement. She wears a flashy all Chinese silk dress and very high heels.

YIN LING
Dani, Sweetheart. You okay?

DANI
Mike. I thought, an accident.
Bradley - More horrible, but did I
have a clue? No. Finally Joey. I
was heart broken. Sure I heard the
talk. But I tried to make excuses.
Now I know, I'm a man murderer.

YIN LING
Sit down, Sugar. You are just
upset. What happened?

DANI
Bees swarmed Jim. I almost killed
him on the first date! I'm cursed.
A hit-woman by association.

YIN LING
Just a setback, Honey.

DANI
Yin Ling! Everyone said keep
trying. Are you kidding me? I vow
to never kill another man.

YIN LING
No more men??? This is very bad!

BANG! Dani and Yin Ling run outside to see what happened.

EXT. FLOWER SHOP PARKING LOT

A lime green rust heap car jerks to a stop. It explodes again. Out jumps FREDDIE (16). He's tall, skinny, and wears a Star Trek Comic Con shirt. He swaggers in awkward pride.

FREDDIE
You're wondering who that awesome
lady 1972 Dodge Dart Swinger
belongs to? Yeah, that's me.

YIN LING
We thought someone died out here!

FREDDIE
Someone else?

YIN LING
Freddie! No one else! Go inside.
Get Dani some water.

He grabs a Coke and a Cheetos bag through the car window.

FREDDIE
Want my Cola? Only had one sip.

YIN LING
No! "Distant water won't put out a
fire close at hand".

FREDDIE
Give me a break, Yin Ling.

YIN LING
Water!

FREDDIE
Going!

Yin Ling seats Dani at an artistic flower covered table near the front door. Freddie goes into the shop.

Freddie comes back out with a bottle of water.

FREDDIE
You're welcome.

DANI
Thanks, Freddie.

Dani's dad, HOWARD, (65) a handsome rugged gentleman, comes from the back with a tool belt. He sees Dani wipe tears.

HOWARD
Dani? What happened?

DANI
I need a neon sign, I kill men, to
save all humans with testosterone!

Howard crouches by her chair so he can look her in the eye.

HOWARD
Aw, Dani, you never killed me.

DANI
Dad, because I never married you!

FREDDIE
That's gross.

HOWARD
I don't believe you're cursed.

DANI
Oh yeah? "Black Widow?"

FLASHBACK:

EXT. SANTA BARBARA POLICE STATION - DAY

A BLACK LEXUS stops in front of the Police station. ELVIN LYONS (40) hurries into the station. He's a hard, jaded, three piece suit kind of guy that never smiles. Never.

INT. SANTA BARBARA POLICE STATION

Elvin rushes in as Dani and Howard try to leave. He's mad and shouts at the POLICE CHIEF.

ELVIN LYONS
What? You can't let her go!

POLICE CHIEF
No evidence, Lyons. I told you.

ELVIN LYONS
You know she killed Joey Hanson to
get at his rodeo star money. Llamas
don't stampede!

POLICE CHIEF
What do you know about llamas?

Lyons gets in Dani's face and sneers.

ELVIN LYONS
The Black Widow of Santa Barbara.

HOWARD
Get out of her way.

ELVIN LYONS
Oh, you'd like me to do that. Yeah.

POLICE CHIEF
Lyons! You're an insurance
investigator, not a cop! Move!

Elvin bends towards Dani.

ELVIN LYONS
Three men, three deaths, three
settlements. You're an arachnid
that eats her mates whole. I'm the
praying mantis that will catch you.

PRESENT:

Dani searches their faces. Yin Ling pats Dani's hand.

FREDDIE
He really said praying mantis?

YIN LING
"Good luck seldom comes in pairs
but bad things never walk alone."
See? Just bad luck, Honey.

FREDDIE
How do you always spout these
Chinese Proverbs? It's like a
proverb for every occasion list.

YIN LING
Are you trying to diss my culture?

FREDDIE
I'm Irish. Do I gush limericks?

YIN LING
My culture is wise and poetic.

FREDDIE
Irish have Leprechauns. Lucky.

YIN LING
Chinese invented lucky!

Freddie turns his back on Yin Ling and awkwardly pats Dani.

FREDDIE
It's not your fault, like today
when I got a ticket on the 101.

HOWARD
Ticket? Whose fault was it?

FREDDIE
Uhura's.

HOWARD
U-hur-a?

FREDDIE
Star Trek. The beautiful Lieutenant
Uhura. Love at first sight.

HOWARD
You got a girl Star Trek car?

FREDDIE
She's a beauty. No third or fourth
gears -yet. But she can do forty
going down hill with the clutch in.

HOWARD
I suggest you don't take your girl
on the 101. Know your limitations.

DANI
And I finally know my limits.

YIN LING
Limit love? No, Sweetheart!

DANI
It's not like I don't want love or
children, but if I killed again, I
would die too.

HOWARD
Dani, have a little faith. Ya can't
really believe you hurt anyone.

DANI
Dad, I just need to go on. Thanks
for rewiring the back room.

Dani stands from her chair, resolved. Howard stands too.

HOWARD
Want to stay at my house tonight?

DANI
I'm fine at the ranch.

HOWARD
If you need anything, any time at
all, just call.

FREDDIE
Good rhyming, Grandpa. IRISH.

Yin Ling rolls her eyes at Freddie, who eats his Cheetos.

YIN LING
Thanks for the fix ups, Howard.

HOWARD
Glad to help. Bye all.

Howard kisses Dani's forehead and leaves. Yin Ling sighs.

YIN LING
If he was a little younger, I'd go
for your father. Does he know I was
born in the year of the tiger?

FREDDIE
I think I just threw up my Cheetos.

DANI
Come on, Bickersons, let's go in.

They all troop into the shop.

INT. FLOWER SHOP

Yin Ling goes behind the counter. Dani gathers garland.

DANI
Now that I'm done with men for
good, I can get to work. The
Simon's funeral, Yin Ling?

YIN LING
An arrangement of violets, pinks,
and whites with accents of small
yellow roses. It was a stroke.

DANI
You always call 'em right. Deliver?

FREDDIE
An hour ago. You're welcome.

DANI

Thanks, Freddie. Get that ladder,
please. -No, the tallest one.

Freddie puts down a medium ladder and gets a really tall one.
He sets it up by the wire that criss-crosses the ceiling.

Dani climbs up the high ladder with the huge daisy garland.

The shop bell rings. In walks a SHORT MAN.

YIN LING

Flowers for those you love. How may
I help you, Honey?

SHORT MAN

I'd like to order flowers for my
mother's funeral. I'm not sure...

YIN LING

So sorry about your mother. May I
ask what she passed away from?

SHORT MAN

Her ticker. She was one hundred-
four. She would have lasted longer
but liked to dance.

YIN LING

She loved life! Heart is a fire
element. Red roses, orange Asiatic
lilies, and yellow highlights.

SHORT MAN

That sounds really good. Fire you
say? Ma was a fiery woman.

YIN LING

"May your grief be short and your
happy memories long." Credit card?
Good, sweetie. Freddie will assist
you over here. Thank you.

FREDDIE

Right this way, sir.

The door chimes again. A GRIEVING LADY walks in. Short Man
pays the bill with Freddie. Grieving Lady steps up.

YIN LING

How may I help you, Dear?

GRIEVING LADY

My oldest brother was in the Home
next door. He passed yesterday.

YIN LING

We are here to comfort you. How did
your beloved brother die? Can you
tell me his birthday?

GRIEVING LADY

May twenty ninth, forty two. He
drank a bit. Kidneys. I'm happy
he's with his wife now.

YIN LING

"Life is a dream walking, death is
going home." Isn't that consoling?
Chinese proverb.

GRIEVING LADY

Why, yes it is beautiful.

Freddie rolls his eyes. Yin Ling consults her wall chart.

The Bell over the door rings. Dani looks to see who it is.

BEN CHAMBERS (32), walks in. His dark hair curls around his
forehead. His brown eyes are warm with laugh lines in the
corners. He looks like he spends a lot of time outside.

Dani shakes her head and whispers to herself.

DANI

Look away. Never look twice.

YIN LING

Kidney. Water element. Year of
Tiger and Water. Interesting. How
about yellow roses, blue accents.
Yellow ribbon running through it?

GRIEVING LADY

It's perfect. He used to bring a
yellow rose to his wife every
bowling night, her favorite.

YIN LING

Our goal is to comfort with style.
Where do you want them delivered?

Ben picks up a porcelain CUPID with its gold bow and arrow.
He gives the fat cherub a look like, "Are you kidding?" He
sets it down next to an APHRODITE statue.

Aphrodite topples, knocking Cupid. Ben catches Cupid just before it hits the floor, an athletic feat.

GRIEVING LADY
Peace Mortuary this Sunday.

YIN LING
They are excellent, Sweetheart.
Freddie will help with the payment.

Short Man leaves. Freddie helps Grieving Lady.

FREDDIE
This way. Ma'am.

Yin Ling puts on the charm. Ben hides Cupid behind his back.

YIN LING
Hello, Honey. How may I help you?

BEN
I want some flowers for my mother.

YIN LING
Oh, I'm so sorry to hear about your
dear Mother. How did she die?

Ben sees Dani. They lock eyes. Dani hides behind daisies.

BEN
Uh, today is her birthday.

YIN LING
She died on her birthday! Oh, what
sweet tragedy!

BEN
Mm, I'll start over. It's my living
mother's birthday. I'd like a dozen
red roses and one Daisy.

YIN LING
My apologies, Love! I'm so happy
your mother is uh...alive! For you
a big discount. Only \$25.99.

Freddie, behind Yin Ling, mumbles under his breath.

FREDDIE
"He who assume make ass out of you
and me."

Ben looks down at his wallet to hide his smile.

Yin Ling jabs an elbow into Freddie's ribs. He mock stumbles back. He hits the ladder.

Dani, who was smothering a laugh, over-corrects. Screams.

FALLS.

Ben looks up and lunges to catch her.

Slow-Motion. They fall to the ground. She lands on top of him nose to nose, toe to toe. They stare as if under a spell.

Yin Ling hurries up on her clacking high heels.

YIN LING
Honey, Sugar!

Uhhh. DANI Uhhh. BEN

DANI
Did I hurt you?

BEN
Only part of me.

DANI
What part?

BEN
The part you're on top of.

She tries to move off. But he holds her tight, not realizing.

DANI
You need to let go of it.

BEN
Of what?

DANI
The part you're holding onto.

Embarrassed, Ben releases her. She lurches and stands. Ben gingerly rolls off the Cupid statue and gets up. A Cupid arrow extends from one side of his butt.

YIN LING
Looks like Cupid got you, Sugar!

Yin Ling tries to pull at it, but Ben twists to avoid her. He gives a yank himself and the arrow comes out. Dani winces.

BEN
Uh, I busted it.

DANI
You and Cupid broke my fall. Are
you all right?

BEN
Fortunately Cupid hit a soft spot.

YIN LING
We won't charge you a thing.
Handsome, you were very brave!

Dani and Ben can't seem to stop staring at each other.

DANI
Have you shopped here before?

BEN
Uh, not lately.

DANI
Why not lately?

Ben pauses. Finally he offers his hand.

BEN
My mother only has a birthday once
a year. Hello, I'm Ben Chambers.

DANI
My name is... My name is...

YIN LING
I'm Yin Ling. This is Dani, and
this is her nephew, Freddie.

BEN
Who owns the shop now?

DANI
Yin Ling and I bought it a year
ago. She's amazing and has a real
gift with our customers.

BEN
She does indeed.

Yin Ling sees their romantic trance.

YIN LING
Freddie, come to the back with me.

FREDDIE

What?

YIN LING

I need you to get a vase up high.

FREDDIE

What?

Yin Ling pulls Freddie with her to the back room.

Ben watches them disappear quizzically, but focusses again.

BEN

Dani, would you like to get coffee?

Dani jerks to reality and releases his hand, panicked.

DANI

Uh no. Allergic to -m mocha latte.

BEN

Then tea. As a favor for rescuing a fair maiden, and perhaps a deep puncture wound?

DANI

And I'm returning the favor by saying thank you, but no. I never date... uh... customers.

BEN

Because they are usually dead?

Dani looks up shocked.

DANI

Dead?

BEN

It's just that you are between a mortuary and a care home.

YIN LING (O.S.)

(From back room)

My idea to buy this location!

DANI

To show I'm truly thankful, the flowers and cupid are free. See you on your mom's next birthday. Bye.

Ben looks at her, smiles, and nods his head in acceptance. Yin Ling and Freddie come back in awkwardly.

BEN

Well, bye Freddie. Dani, Be careful on ladders. Yin Ling, see you next year.

YIN LING

Or sooner! Here's our card. Come again! You can keep the arrow too!

Yin Ling hands him the flowers, arrow and ten business cards.

They watch through the window as he drives away.

DANI

It's getting worse. I probably shouldn't help male customers under fifty. My motto now, "Look Away".

YIN LING

You can always look, Honey.

FREDDIE

Maybe you just need realignment.

DANI

I hope I never see him again.

YIN LING

No ring. Maybe he's my type.

Freddie rolls his eyes.

EXT. BEN'S HOME - DAY

Ben drives up to his house. The front door opens and out comes his mother, LILY (60), and pretty daughter, JANEY (5).

Ben hugs his mom and gives her the roses with a kiss on each cheek. He gives the daisy to his daughter, Janey.

BEN

For the most beautiful mom on her birthday. And for you, Janey, my princess, the daisy.

He lifts and twirls Janey.

JANEY

Thanks, Daddy!

LILY

The roses are lovely.

BEN
My two favorite girls ready?

JANEY
Where are we going for grandma's birthday?

BEN
The Palace, of course.

JANEY
Yay! Did you save a Princess today?

BEN
Maybe.

JANEY
Was she pretty?

Ben rubs his back side where the arrow poked him. Janey dances around them as they walk to the car.

BEN
Just because you two hound me, I won't marry the first girl I save.

LILY
We won fair and square.

BEN
I said I'd think about dating again. The rescue a princess thing-

LILY
Was a good idea, in my opinion.

JANEY
You promised.

BEN
Come on. We're going out on the town in style. Grandma only turns twenty nine once!

LILY
Or twice.

As Ben gets in the car, he smiles. They drive away. RAIN begins to fall.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

The rain pounds on a truck with a horse trailer.

INT. TRUCK

Dani peers through the wipers. She speaks to her dog.

DANI
No rain for months, and now this
deluge for two days. Just my luck.

Arrow barks. She caresses his head.

DANI
You always agree with me, Arrow.

EXT. BRIDGE

A LIPSTICK RED CADILLAC skids out of control right in front of Dani's truck and trailer.

Dani jams on the brakes just as she reaches the bridge. The horse trailer fishtails and jack knifes. As the truck slows, it busts through the wooden bridge rails.

The truck cab hangs over the swollen river run off. The horse trailer keeps it from plunging in, but it strains against the hitch and splintered wood.

INT. TRUCK - LATER

Dani opens her eyes. Her forehead bleeds.

Stunned, she braces herself and looks through her front window to the angry water torrent below her. Arrow pulls himself up from the cab floor and whines.

As she moves, the truck jerks a little more towards drowning.

DANI
Oh God, help me. Please.

The truck slips more. She closes her eyes and braces herself.

The truck jerks VIOLENTLY. Dani screams.

EXT. BRIDGE

A fire engine pulls the truck and trailer onto the road.

An ELDERLY WOMAN with a purple hat stands next to the red car. She gestures with her cell phone to a POLICE OFFICER.

Dani's cab door opens. She steps out very unsteadily, right into the arms of Ben, wouldn't you know.

DANI
My dog Arrow-

She faints. Ben Catches her.

INT. AMBULANCE

Dani lays on a gurney inside the ambulance. PARAMEDIC SAMSON and PARAMEDIC GAINS wrap up exam gear.

PARAMEDIC GAINS
Steady pulse. Light concussion. Her boyfriend? How come you never told?

BEN
Need to know basis. I can stay?

PARAMEDIC GAINS
Sure, Chambers, you're full of surprises. Did you know, Samson?

PARAMEDIC SAMSON
The marble statue has cracked!
Welcome back. Mmm! Pretty too. She looks kinda familiar...

Dani stirs. Ben waves them into the front ambulance cab.

Ben looks admiringly at Dani. She's lovely. Dani opens her eyes and tries to sit up. Disoriented.

The ambulance rumbles into motion. Paramedic Samson drives. Dani sits up more. Ben reassuringly holds her hand.

BEN
It's okay, Dani. We're going to the hospital.

DANI
Where's Arrow? My horses?

BEN
I called your shop. Yin Ling said your dad will pick up the animals.

Dani lays back down.

DANI
What are you doing here?

BEN
I'm a fireman. Swift water rescues,
fires, that kind of stuff.

Dani gingerly touches her head and mumbles.

DANI
Couldn't be an accountant?

BEN
Accountant?

She looks at him. He looks back. She pulls her hand from his.

DANI
Can I go?

BEN
After the hospital checks you.

DANI
The lady in the red car?

BEN
Not a scratch.

DANI
(under her breath)
Don't want to kill women too.

BEN
What?

DANI
I'm glad the woman's fine too.

Ben looks at her hopefully.

BEN
I'd like to ask you some questions.

DANI
Okay.

BEN
Full name. Telephone number.
Address. Favorite restaurant...

DANI
Dani Hanson, 805-687- What?

BEN

Bad joke. It's an, er, old fireman trick. I was hoping now that I've saved you a second time-

DANI

How many Firemen use that trick?

BEN

Lots of clever ones, I'm sure.

DANI

Look, I make it a point to never date guys who are firemen, have high danger jobs, or rescue me.

BEN

I like rescuing you.

Ben smiles winningly at her. She can't look away.

EXT. ROAD

The ambulance jams on the breaks as a bicyclist swerves in front of them, escaping just in time. It's a hard stop!

INT. AMBULANCE

Ben jerks forward, hits his head hard on the cabinets, falls into the aisle, and skins his chin.

Dani winces as he gets up, head and chin bleeding.

DANI

I've hurt you.

BEN

It was an accident.

DANI

It always is... I'm really tired.

She lays back and turns her head to the wall. A tear escapes.

Ben sits back, confused, and dabs at his chin and head.

EXT. HOSPITAL ENTRANCE - DAY

Dani sits in a wheelchair at the curb. Yin Ling and Freddie stand with balloons and flowers. Her forehead has a bandage.

They notice Ben limp to his Fire Chief truck, also with small bandages. He waves goodbye. Dani waves back. He drives away.

YIN LING

So romantic! So brave to say no again. I don't know how you did it, Honey. I could marry him.

FREDDIE

There's a surprise.

DANI

My mind is made up, no matter how chocolate his eyes or how warm his hands.

Freddie has had enough.

FREDDIE

Like the balloons and flowers?

DANI

I wonder where you got them?

FREDDIE

A nice flower shop. You're welcome.

DANI

Thank you, Freddie. I love them.

Howard drives up in his big truck. He stops at the curb and hurries to Dani's side to help her into the cab.

Freddie and Yin Ling give her the flowers and balloons.

HOWARD

You scared me, Dani.

Just then a black Lexus pulls in behind Howard's truck. Out walks Mr. Insurance Detective, Elvin Lyons. The family gathers around her protectively, scowling at Elvin.

ELVIN LYONS

Hello, Mrs. Hanson.

DANI

I didn't report the accident yet.

ELVIN LYONS

The other party did. Your name came up on the computer. I came right over like a concerned citizen.

YIN LING

Do you use the blood bank here or
simply suck life from the living?

ELVIN LYONS

Let's see, was there a new husband
in the truck with you?

YIN LING

Only a dog that attacks the undead!

HOWARD

Mr. Lyons, you best leave.

ELVIN LYONS

I'll be calling you. Soon.

He gets into his black Lexus and drives away.

YIN LING

I would not want to marry that man!

FREDDIE

Amazingly enough.

YIN LING

He who talks with tall mouth walks
with short life!

FREDDIE

There once was a woman named Yin
Ling, who wanted to marry any-

DANI

-Freddie, when I tell Pam on you.

FREDDIE

Speaking of mom, she said it's not
a problem about Sarah's party. She
can handle it herself and you rest.

DANI

I'm fine. I'll be there tomorrow.
Sarah can't turn eight without me.

INT. LUIGI'S PIZZA AND PASTA - DAY

Luigi's Pizza Fun Room rocks. CHILDREN run around, scream at
the arcades, and go down tube slides into the ball pit.

Dani, a band-aid on her forehead, helps her sister, PAMELA
(38), set plates at a table with Howard and Freddie. Pamela's
husband, STEVE (40) holds a pizza slice in each hand.

PAMELA

Who'd think that every kid she
invited would show? You're okay?

DANI

Who would miss this?

STEVE

Not me. Tons of pizza and kids
everywhere.

HOWARD

Pam, did you talk to Steve about
those dinner theater tickets I won
at the lodge? They're Free-ee.

Steve looks at Howard, his mouth full. He balks, almost gags.

STEVE

Dinner theater?

PAMELA

I knew better than to try.

FREDDIE

What's it showing, Grandpa?

HOWARD

H. M. S. Petticoat or something.
How about you, Dani?

DANI

Who would I go with?

HOWARD

Steve? I can't tell the lodge no
one used them. They'll ask.

STEVE

(mouth still full)
I think I have to work.

PAMELA

You don't even know when it is.

FREDDIE

What guy would like dinner theater
about clothes? No guns, car chases.
Just eternal dancing and music.

Steve nods in agreement as he chews his huge mouthful.

STEVE
My brightest child. Oops, sorry
Sarah, didn't see you there.

SARAH (8) stands next to Steve. She smiles at Dani.

SARAH
Aunt Dani, can you play games?

PAMELA
Sarah, remember she's just been-

DANI
I'm fine!

Dani follows Sarah into the ruckus of noise and kids.

SARAH
Can we play Follow the Leader?

DANI
With just me?

SARAH
All the kids.

Dani sticks two fingers in her mouth and blows an ear splitting whistle. Kids stop, amazed and awed.

DANI
Follow the Leader! Sarah starts!
Get in line!

SARAH
Follow me! Whoo Hoooo!

KIDS
Whoo Hoooo!

Dani places herself halfway in the line. Kids follow Sarah's antics along benches and over a table while adults laugh.

Sarah stoops in front of the climbing worm tubes.

DANI
Sarah. I'm too big to go in those.

SARAH
They're new! Come on!

DANI
Okay...

Dani, still halfway in the line, crawls into the tubes with TWENTY-SEVEN CHILDREN. It is a tight squeeze.

The heavily laden tubes groan and sway.

Steve puts down his pizza, worried. He half stands.

Metal supports Bend. Plastic buckles against Dani.

Kids scream!

Parents rush to hold up and pull the kids out both ends.

Dani, high up, wedged in tight between two bars, hands down the last kid to a dad.

The tube falls apart!

Only the center support stands with Dani stuck high up, her legs out one broken end, arms and head out the other.

A crowd gathers around to look at her. A boy, NOSE KID, (8) picks his nose. He's centered below her, and stares up.

PAMELA

Just stay tight! We called 911!

DANI

Any tighter and I can't breathe!

Fire engine sirens squeal. Red lights rotate and reflect through the window.

Firefighters enter. The crowd gives way, all except Nose Kid.

A tall ladder opens. Up climbs a fireman. Eye to eye, on the ladder stands Ben.

BEN

Why, it's Dani with a flower shop.

DANI

Hello, Ben, with a high danger job.

BEN

So you called me after all.

DANI

Nine-one-one does not count.

NOSE KID

You gonna' save her?

They look down at the kid, who stares up in amazed rapture.

DANI
Are you the only Fireman in Santa
Barbara, Ben?

BEN
No, you're just one lucky woman.

DANI
I wish I were.

BEN
Pardon?

DANI
Could you get me down?

Paramedic Gains stands at the bottom of the ladder.

PARAMEDIC GAINS
Well, hey! It's your girlfriend!

Dani opens her eyes wide. Ben is now the one in the pinch.

BEN
Gains, I got this. Go get the jaws.

Paramedic Gains retreats, grinning.

DANI
Girlfriend?

BEN
He, um, likes to joke. You know the
guys, they always-

DANI
Ben, I'm hanging from a huge
hamster pipe.

BEN
Since this is the third time I've
saved you, as my "girlfriend", how
about one date for a fast rescue?

Dani can't help but laugh incredulously. She looks at the big
crowd of spectators, especially Nose Kid, finger working.

DANI
Fine, I'll go on one date with you
if you get me out fast.

BEN
Done.

Gains clips the "Jaws". The crew lifts the remaining tube and gently lowers her. Easy.

Dani tries to walk out of the ball pit with some dignity, but stumbles. Ben steadies her.

DANI
Thank you. You know, about the
date, Uh, I think the air was thin
up there. I wasn't...

Paramedic Samson walks up and pounds Ben's back.

PARAMEDIC SAMPSON
Some guys have all the luck.

DANI
Ben-

BEN
Gotta Go. It's a date. I'll call!

He walks off fast to avoid her refusal.

Pamela claps her hands.

PAMELA
Okay kids, PINATA TIME!

NOSE KID
This is the best party ever!

Ben smiles and waves at her as he walks out the door.

PAMELA
He's the cute fireman?

DANI
I can't believe I broke my vow! I
said I'd go out with him.

PAMELA
No kidding! What happened?

DANI
He had me between plastic and a
hard place. What do I do? I need a
really safe date. One he will hate.

FREDDIE
Grandpa's dinner theater tickets.

PAMELA
He's right! Dad?

HOWARD
They're yours.

STEVE
You sure you hate him that much?

DANI
If I hated him, I'd marry him.

FREDDIE
One date will only hospitalize him.

Dani is hurt. Pam elbows her son. Freddie looks around.

FREDDIE
What? I meant going to a dinner theater. You know. Mm. Sorry.

DANI
It's a safe location and hopefully it'll be enough to turn him off.

PAMELA
I'm sure he'll be fine.

They look out the huge pizza parlor windows.

EXT. LUIGI'S PIZZA AND PASTA

The Fire Truck Operator spills coffee on the crane controls. He quickly tries to wipe up, but accidentally flips a switch.

Ben walks by the fire truck just as the crane swings and hooks Ben's fire pant suspenders. Up goes Ben, legs running in air. He shouts.

The crane controller, flustered, tries to let Ben down.

The entire restaurant crowd pastes their hands and faces to the windows and watch as Ben slowly gets lowered.

Ben's suspenders POP! Ben FALLS the last four feet. UMPH!

Everyone at the window mouths a collective wince,

SPECATORS
Oooo!

Ben gets up and brushes off as his crew laughs at him.

INT. LUIGI'S PIZZA AND PASTA

Dani's family looks at her. A little worried too.

INT. FLOWER SHOP - DAY

Dani twirls in a pretty sundress at the shop.

YIN LING

You look so sweet for Mr. Hottie.

DANI

Am I over dressed?

FREDDIE

Your dress says you're interested.

YIN LING

How would you know?

FREDDIE

I'm a guy. I think she's pretty,
for my aunt, and my boss, I guess.

DANI

He's right, I should look bad if I
want him to dump me. I can't go
home. That's twenty minutes! Help!

YIN LING

We'll be creative. Mess your hair!

FREDDIE

Ugly it up. Get your work boots on.

YIN LING

Here, let's trade earrings. Mine
won't match you at all. Tie this
around your waist. Use this hat.

Yin Ling grabs a vibrant window dressing for Dani's waist,
her own huge earrings, and a small straw floral hat. She
messes her hair. Dani looks like a cute scare crow.

FREDDIE

I know, ask to drive his car.

The bell above the door sounds. They look round to see Ben
walk in the shop. They try to look composed.

Ben walks to the counter, very business like, to Yin Ling.

BEN
Hi, I'm here for a pretty woman
named Dani. Sorry, she's living.

YIN LING
This way, Sugar!

Ben smiles when he sees Dani. He walks to her and pulls a small potted dandelion from behind his back.

FREDDIE
You're kidding me.

Ben hesitates like he blew it. Dani gives him an awed smile.

DANI
I love dandelions.

BEN
It's the only flower I thought you
wouldn't already have in your shop.
Plus it makes good salad.

She laughs.

DANI
When I was two, I loved dandelions
so much that my dad let the yellow
weed take over the lawn. I always
would say dani. The name stuck.

YIN LING
A woman's heart is a bloom to open.

Freddie rolls his eyes.

BEN
Dani. Now I like your name even
better. You look lovely. Ready?

DANI
Uh, yes, thank you.

FREDDIE
You two kids be good. Don't make me
use Roundup or anything.

Yin Ling slaps the top of Freddie's head.

BEN
Where to?

Dani looks at Freddie and gives a saccharine sweet smile.

DANI
It's a surprise! Do you mind if I
drive your car?

BEN
Uh... sure.

As the door closes behind them, Freddie shakes his head.

FREDDIE
I'd never let a strange woman drive
Uhura. No way! She'd get jealous.

YIN LING
Too bad she has to get rid of such
a good piece of man. He knew her
favorite flower! - -You have dates?

FREDDIE
For your info, I met four Nichelle
Nichols-Uhuras and two Zoe Saldana-
Uhuras last year at Comic Con. Huh!

YIN LING
Is that a language?

EXT. DINNER THEATER PARKING LOT - EVENING

Dani puts the car in park. Ben jumps out to open her door.

DANI
Here we are! We get to see the
dinner theater show *H.M.S.*
Pinafore! Surprised?

Ben looks up at the marquee with a slack open mouth. Dani
turns her back to him and mouths triumphantly,

DANI
Yes!

INT. DINNER THEATER

Dani sits at the dinner theater table with Ben. The actors
sing and dance. Ben smiles happily. Dani looks frustrated.

BEN
I can remember every word! Seems
like yesterday.

DANI
So glad you like it.

BEN

My mom was the drama teacher and short on guys. I didn't think I would like it. But swashbuckling and Swords was fun!

Dani tries to smile.

The finale winds up. The cast rushes out to the audience and plucks out people to join in. A girl chooses Ben.

A guy picks Dani. She tries to refuse, but Ben won't let her.

Ben sings and dances with enthusiasm and fun. Dani can't help but smile. She joins in the Can-can kicks with Ben.

The finale crescendos. Dani gets swung by her partner.

-She slips and hits a pole.

-Which hooks a fabric sail.

-Which engulfs the CAPTAIN.

-Who swings with his sword (just missing Ben's neck).

-Which cuts the set's sail cords.

-Which brings down the main mast.

-Which sweeps the entire cast into the audience, knocking down tables and audience members.

-Ben sprawls into the Cherry desert, looking like blood.

-Ben lays on the floor, a SWORD seems to stick from his chest. Captain holds his hands up, not knowing what happened.

-Everyone surrounds "bloody" Ben. Dani rushes up, terrified.

-Ben jumps up. Cherry "blood" plops from his chest. He pulls the sword from between his arm and body. He smiles at the great joke and bows. TA DA! Everyone claps, cast and crew.

EXT. FLOWER SHOP PARKING LOT - NIGHT

They stand in her parking lot between Ben's car and Dani's truck. He plucks a red cheery from his neck and throws it.

DANI

Boy did my dad miss out. They named you Pirate Bloody Ben.

BEN
Success demands repetition.

DANI
Haven't you noticed I'm a bit
accident prone? Or that you seem to
be when you're around me?

BEN
So what? Didn't you feel something
the first day we met?

DANI
It was Cupid's arrow in your butt!

BEN
Hazards with Benefits. How about
dinner and a movie. Also, I have...
I'd like to tell you about my-

DANI
Ben, you're fun, very handsome, and
a frustrated theater geek, but I
can't date customers, remember?

BEN
Will it help if I don't buy flowers
at your shop any more?

She gives him the borrowed car keys back.

DANI
Sorry, no. But may I ask, why did
you stop shopping here?

He leans into her, almost lip to lip. She holds her breath as
she looks at his big brown eyes. He speaks intimately.

BEN
I'd tell you, but as a customer, I
don't give personal information to
store owners I don't date.

Dani can hardly whisper back under his spell. Almost kissing.

DANI
We keep all customer info private.

BEN
So it seems... No hard feelings.
Thanks for the great time, Dani.
Good night.

He steps back and gets in his car. He drives away.

Dani leans against her truck. She looks at the full moon.

DANI
IT'S NOT FAIR! DO YOU HEAR ME?

A tear trails down her cheek. She hits her truck. OUCH!

EXT. FLOWER SHOP - MORNING

In the morning light, Yin Ling's fantastically blinging gold car races to a bad stop in front of the store. She runs to the shop as fast as she can on her five inch heels.

INT. FLOWER SHOP

Dani opens the store up as Yin Ling runs in.

YIN LING
Honey, sweetheart, well well WELL?

DANI
Well is a deep subject.

YIN LING
Mr. Handsome Search and Rescue!

Freddie rides into the store on his skateboard.

FREDDIE
Well?

YIN LING
Deep subject.

FREDDIE
Is that a Chinese proverb?

Yin Ling glowers at Freddie.

YIN LING
Where's your girlfriend car?

FREDDIE
Right now she only has third gear.

YIN LING
What? No name for your skateboard?

Howard comes in the store with his tool belt.

HOWARD
Hi Dani, I came in case you might
need something fixed.

DANI
Not to hear about my date?

Howard looks around, kind of embarrassed.

HOWARD
If you really want to tell me.

DANI
No, I don't.

Trying to ignore them She goes about her business of opening.

YIN LING
Come on, Sugar. What happened? Did
he loath your outfit?

FREDDIE
Did he get mad when you drove?

HOWARD
Did he hate the show?

YIN LING
Did he kiss you?

DANI
No. No. and No.

YIN LING
Only three no's. He kissed you?

Exasperated, she faces them with hands on her hips.

DANI
No. He seemed to like eclectic
weird clothing. No. He didn't mind
me driving.

FREDDIE
Dude! Wasn't his car jealous?

HOWARD
And the show?

DANI
If you can believe, he loved it!
Even when the set crashed on us.

Yin Ling leans in close.

YIN LING
I kinda liked your outfit myself.
Now, about the kiss.

DANI
No kiss, and I told him I can't go
out again.

They all sit back, kind of slump.

HOWARD
Oh.

YIN LING
Tragic love story.

Freddie stands and punches the air.

FREDDIE
This is where we need McCoy! Like
when the bad aliens attack the good
aliens. Kirk really wants to help.
Spock reminds Kirk that the Prime
Directive won't let them interfere,
but McCoy says, follow your guts,
Jim! He does! Saves the day! Forget
the Prime Directive, Dani! Follow
your guts!

YIN LING
You have been in one too many light
saber battles.

FREDDIE
You really just mixed Star Wars
with Star Trek?

DANI
A Prime Directive is to save lives.
I shouldn't have gone. There were
falling beams, swords, and blood
cherries everywhere.

They stand in a circle and stare at each other. Sad.

HOWARD
Awe, Dani. Need anything fixed?

DANI
Not right now, Dad. I just wish you
could fix me. I need to get away.

HOWARD
County fair this Friday night?

DANI
More free tickets at the lodge?

HOWARD
Yup.

DANI
Cotton candy? A big toy giraffe at
the arcade? Deep fried Twinkies?

HOWARD
Anything you want.

FREDDIE
Wait! What about McCoy and guts?

DANI
Sorry, Freddie. McCoy is fiction.

FREDDIE
Fiction?

EXT. SANTA BARBARA COUNTY FAIR - NIGHT

Dani walks arm in arm with Howard. She holds two balloons and
enjoys the colored lights, rides, and laughing kids.

DANI
Thanks, Daddy, for getting me away
so my heart can breathe. This week
has been so - hard!

HOWARD
Been a long time since you called
me Daddy. Pam calls me Grandpa now.
That's okay too, I guess.

A woman's voice calls out to Howard.

LILY (O.S.)
Howard?

Dani and Howard turn round to see Lily, Ben's mom, wave.

HOWARD
Yes?

LILY
It's me, Lily Chambers, I mean,
you'd remember, Lily Jensen.

HOWARD
Well I'll be! Birdie? Birdie!

Ben follows with Janey, who has face paint and a ribbon tiara. Dani tries to hide behind Howard and the balloons.

BEN
Who's Birdie?

HOWARD
You look just like you did at
seventeen. What became of you after
high school?

LILY
I married Dean.

HOWARD
You were dating him when I went in
the service. Is Dean here?

LILY
He passed away about ten years ago.
This is our son, Ben, and his
daughter, Janey, our princess.

HOWARD
You're the fireman that saved Dani.

Dani peaks out from behind balloons and waves. Ben grins.

JANEY
Daddy, you saved her?
(To Dani)
He saved you? Really?

Janey looks at Dani and smiles.

DANI
Hi, Janey. It is very nice to meet
you. I wish I had some flowers for
your pretty tiara.

JANEY
She's pretty. Right, Daddy?

BEN
Janey! How about we go look for
that wand to go with your tiara?

HOWARD
I heard you liked the play, Ben.

BEN
Yes, It was great.

LILY

I took Janey the next night and we loved it. Except the finale wasn't as exciting.

DANI

Can you excuse us a minute?

Dani leads Howard away. She talks through smiling teeth.

HOWARD

Are you all right? You're acting-

DANI

He has a daughter! Help! Let's go!

HOWARD

I just don't believe God put you on earth to kill men. Leave it to me.

DANI

What do you mean? Wait!

Howard walks to Lily. Dani wears a frozen smile.

HOWARD

Dani thinks you and I should take the princess to the kid rides so we can yap and catch up, right Dani?

Dani's smile widens, but her eyes panic.

DANI

Oh, Daaaad.

Lily joins the conspiracy and looks at her granddaughter.

LILY

How does that sound, Janey?

JANEY

Have fun, Daddy.

Dani and Ben watch them walk away. Janey smiles and waves.

DANI

My dad has a vivid imagination.

BEN

We've been here on quest for a magic wand. Turns out your dad waved it and here you are.

Ben watches her and sees her definite lack of enthusiasm.

BEN
Ya know, you really don't have to
hang with me if you don't want to.

Awkward silence.

DANI
I apologize. We can hang... out.

They walk. More awkward silence. She sees a cotton candy cart
across the way.

DANI
Cotton candy! Want some?

BEN
Sure.

She runs across the square to the COTTON CANDY VENDOR.

DANI
(Whispers to herself)
I can't get attached.

COTTON CANDY VENDOR
What?

DANI
Sorry. Two please.

Ben catches up.

The vendor gives her a pink and blue. She holds them out.

BEN
Do I get to pick?

A group of teenagers rush through and knock Dani's arm,
knocking the pink fluff into his eye.

BEN
Ahhh! I think I choose pink.

DANI
Oh! Ben. Sorry!

He tries to open his eye. Dani picks pink from his hair.

BEN
Uh, I think my eyelid is sticking.

DANI
I've got a water bottle. You look
good in pink.

They sit down on a Bench. He leans back while she trickles a little water over his forehead and closed eye.

She looks heavenward in frustration. Water goes up his nose.

BEN
Whoa! Mmm! Burns.

DANI
Sorry!

Ben leans forward and blows his nose into a napkin. He blinks his red eye open and shut.

BEN
No harm. Look, I'm as good as new.

DANI
Your eye looks red. This is a mistake. Let's find our parents.

BEN
No. My mom didn't set my curfew until midnight.

A CARNIE shouts out.

CARNIE
Win a prize! Three baskets win!

BEN
Curfew or fun?

Dani sighs and smiles.

DANI
Let's go win a giant giraffe.

They walk over and Ben puts down some money at the Ball Toss.

BEN
Two turns please.

The Carnie gives them three balls each.

CARNIE
Three hoops wins a prize! Anyone can try! Win your girl a prize!

DANI
You go first. My hands are sticky.

Ben shoots.

BEN
Fate keeps throwing us together.
Noticed that?

DANI
Rather violently.

Ben gets two out of three in the basket.

BEN
One more set for the pretty girl.

DANI
Take my turn.

She tosses the ball to him, left handed, as her cotton candy falls. The ball goes sideways. He lunges for it. His head hits a pole. He staggers and shakes his head.

CARNIE
Quite a girl she is, sir.

DANI
Ben, I am so sorry. Maybe-

BEN
I'm not done yet. All in the course
of duty. Watch!

He gets in the last ball. The Carnie points out tiny weird shaped animal key chains and then to the huge pretty animals.

CARNIE
Congratulations! Pick from any of
these fine gifts, or try your luck
for one of the HUGE PRIZES!

DANI
I'd love that giraffe key chain.

CARNIE
You got it little lady.

Ben gingerly touches his head as Dani picks her key chain.

DANI
I'll never lose my keys again.

BEN
How about the Ferris Wheel?

DANI
I don't think so! In movies they
always get stuck at the top. You'll
try to save someone and fall.

BEN
You can choose, M'lady.

Dani scans the rides around them. The machines are
treacherous abominations of risk and loosing one's lunch.

She spots the tame *Tunnel of Amazement* which has boats with
three Benches on a shallow slow moving canal of water.

DANI
That one looks - amazing.

BEN
The Tunnel of Amazement it is.

INT. TUNNEL OF AMAZEMENT

They get in the boat, middle Bench. Dani immediately notices
Nose Kid alone in front of them. He stares at them.

NOSE KID
You guys! Cool!

BEN
Hi buddy. Anything new?

The ride begins and the boat lurches. Nose Kid faces forward.
Dani and Ben sit in the darkness as film fills the walls with
big Rats, Ravens, Spiders, Millipedes, Roaches, and more.

Dani and Ben hear loud SMOOCHING behind them. Ben whispers.

BEN
Don't turn around. The action seems
to be behind us.

DANI
So I can hear. Two teenybopper kids
making out.

BEN
These were often called the tunnel
of love in the old days. This is a
great second date, don't you think?

DANI

Is that what it is? Hmm, none of your injuries have been fatal. If it's a date I get to ask questions.

BEN

Okay by me.

DANI

Why did you stop buying flowers at my shop?

Ben looks at his left hand unconsciously.

The boat lurches to a stop. The film on the wall stalls. A huge BLACK WIDOW hovers above them. Dani swallows up at it.

Emergency lights twinkle on.

BEN

Do you think the whole place lost power? Maybe I should go see.

DANI

Oh no you don't. We're not in any danger of drowning here if we stay put. So, my question?

Ben faces her and begins to talk to her with difficulty.

BEN

Every week I bought flowers for my wife as she was dying of cancer. It felt like I was doing something.

DANI

Oh, Ben.

He takes a deep breath, swallows, and blinks.

BEN

She was funny and beautiful. It hurt her so much to know she'd miss seeing Janey grow up.

DANI

Janey is a wonderful little girl. You are so lucky to have her.

He tries to smile at Dani.

BEN
She's great. She helped me hold it
together. She's the one that's been
pressuring me to date.

DANI
Oh?

BEN
So, have I bombed with the first
woman I've dated since...

Dani takes a deep breath.

DANI
No.

BEN
Do you have any kids?

DANI
(Softly)
No.

BEN
Any ex-husbands around?

She looks at him wide eyed. This is really hard.

DANI
(Even softer)
No.

BEN
Too busy with flower shops, horses,
and being rescued by firemen?

Dani shakes her head. She can't help a tear escaping. Ben
puts his arm around her.

BEN
Oh, Please don't cry. I'm sorry my
story made you sad.

He kisses her on the forehead. She looks up. He SLOWLY leans
in to kiss her. She pulls back.

DANI
I can't.

BEN
Why?

DANI
I don't want to hurt you.

BEN
Hurt me?

DANI
What do you call a cotton candy
stick in your eye, water up your
nose, and a red welt on your head?

BEN
Life's ups and downs.

DANI
Even when those you love get hurt?

BEN
Right here, with you, I feel on the
up side, in spite of all the downs.

Ben closes in the distance. Slowly. Their lips almost touch.

The lights glare back on. They blink. The ride jerks. Nose
Kid stares in their faces, finger working.

NOSE KID
You gonna kiss?

BEN
I was thinking of picking her nose.

DANI
I was hoping he would.

Nose Kid grins and turns forward.

More smooching sighs sounds come from behind.

EXT. TUNNEL OF AMAZEMENT EXIT

They exit from the ride. Ben looks behind and whispers.

BEN
Look.

A cute OLD MAN and sweet OLD WOMAN exit the Bench behind
them. They hold hands. Old Man gives his wife one last kiss.
They look at Ben and Dani and smile.

OLD MAN
It's our fiftieth anniversary.

OLD WOMAN

He asked me to marry him on a ride
just like this one at Coney Island.
You two remind us of us. Good luck!

As the old couple turns away, the old man pats his wife's butt. She grabs his hand and they walk away smiling.

BEN

Who would have thought.

DANI

Fifty years. Together. Happy.
Kissing. With each other.

Dani looks wistfully as the old couple walks away together.

Ben takes her hand and smiles at her, studying her reaction.

BEN

May I?

She looks at him with a slight smile. He takes her hand.

BEN

Your hands are sticky. I like it.

DANI

Your hands are warm.

Howard, Lily, and Janey come around the corner. Dani tries to pull away. Ben gently pulls her back. Howard grins.

JANEY

Look! We found a magic wand.

Janey waves it over everybody. Glitter flies. The group laughs and walks off together into the crowd.

INT. FLOWER SHOP - DAY

Dani stands at the counter with her head in her hands.

DANI

Why did I hold his hand? It was
like magic was in the air.

FREDDIE

What kind of magic?

YIN LING

What else but romantic magic?

FREDDIE

There's Science fiction or Fantasy.
Sci-fi magic is made by technology.
Fantasy magic is just unbelievable.

YIN LING

Quiet! She's talking!

DANI

He's a single parent. I could make
his daughter an orphan!

YIN LING

No, Sweetheart!

DANI

What do I do? He used to buy
flowers here for his dead wife!

YIN LING

Ohhhh! So very romantic.

DANI

Stop! I've got to be strong!

Freddie cuts in and rolls his eyes at the romance stuff.

FREDDIE

Did I tell you I got 1st and 3rd
gears working on Uhura? I don't
have to borrow your truck today.

EXT. FLOWER SHOP

A black Lexus drives up in the shop parking lot.

INT. FLOWER SHOP

Elvin Lyons comes in the shop and looks around.

ELVIN LYONS

Hello Mrs. Hanson. Did you remember
our appointment today?

Her face reveals she had not.

DANI

Of course, Mr Lyons.

ELVIN LYONS

Could we talk in private?

YIN LING
We're like her family.

FREDDIE
I am family.

Elvin looks at each of them suspiciously.

ELVIN LYONS
Fine. Your first husband. I found out you were at his work an hour before he drowned in that soda vat.

DANI
I brought Mike lunch after class.

ELVIN LYONS
Coincidence that the vat blew up near where you ate lunch? That puts you at the crime scene.

DANI
Crime scene? It was the lunch room. The only lunch room.

ELVIN LYONS
You were only students. How did you force him to buy so much insurance at such a young age?

DANI
Wedding gift. His dad was a broker.

ELVIN LYONS
Best gift ever, right? How long were you married?

DANI
Six months.

ELVIN LYONS
Husband number two. Again you were at the crime scene. Chicken wing sign sabotage.

DANI
I never touched that sign!

Elvin presses forward, not missing a beat to try to trip her.

ELVIN LYONS
A bigger policy payment. A fast learner. A quick turn around. Kids?

Her lips quiver.

DANI
No children.

ELVIN LYONS
Third husband, Joey Hanson. How did
you make docile Llamas stampede?
Married one year. No kids, again.

DANI
I was pregnant. I lost my baby when
I lost him.

A tear falls. Elvin shuffles papers, not wanting to see.

YIN LING
I don't like how you're talking!

FREDDIE
For once I agree with Yin Ling!

Yin Ling is surprised. Dani puts up her hands to calm them.

DANI
I just want to get this over with.

ELVIN LYONS
You bought this flower business
with the blood money?

YIN LING
There's not a drop of blood in our
store Mister Vampire! We bought it.

ELVIN LYONS
So you're in on these murders too?

DANI
She didn't even know me then!

ELVIN LYONS
So you admit you murdered them!

DANI
No!

He leans in close to her.

ELVIN LYONS
Does your kind love their prey or
do you marry only to suck men dry?

FREDDIE

You have gone too far, Dude!

YIN LING

Like he said! You have gone too far, Dude!

ELVIN LYONS

People kill for money all the time.
No such thing as accidents in my book.

YIN LING

An accident might happen to you if you don't leave this shop right now, Honey!

ELVIN LYONS

Are you threatening me?

FREDDIE

Does it sound like it, HONEY?

DANI

Don't you think I've wondered why?
I loved them. I didn't kill them.

ELVIN LYONS

With this new evidence I can reopen your case with the police.

FREDDIE

I think Yin Ling said to leave.

DANI

You won't meet with me again unless it's with a warrant.

ELVIN LYONS

That's a promise.

He leaves. The bell jangles from the closed door. The three watch the Lexus zoom away through the window.

Dani stands straight in anger.

DANI

I've had it! I'm burning up! I'm so angry I could explode! - I could-

A light bulb goes off in Yin Ling's brain.

YIN LING

Burning up! Of course! Why didn't I think of it before! You could date your Handsome Hottie!

DANI

What?

YIN LING

What is your birth date?

DANI

August seventh, seventy-six.

Yin Ling runs over to read a chart by the cash register.

YIN LING

Sign of the dragon in the year of fire -seventy six, in the month of sun -August, which is the hottest month of the year!

DANI

So?

YIN LING

You're all fire! Fire sign with the year of the dragon hasn't happened since nineteen-sixteen! Your fire dragon self is eating up your men!

FREDDIE

Crazy! Nineteen-sixteen. All those people probably started the Great Depression!

YIN LING

I can fix you! I can fix you with Chinese magic Yin and Yang.

FREDDIE

What about Irish magic?

YIN LING

You need Yin to balance your Yang. Yin is water, metal, and earth. Yang is fire, air, and wood.

DANI

Fight my fire. Do you think this is it? Will this break my curse?

YIN LING

Yes! Balance. At least you're a woman, which is Yin. Mr. Cutie's a Man, which is Yang. And boy, is he!

Dani's cell phone rings. She panics.

DANI

It's him! He said he'd call!

FREDDIE

Answer it!

She picks up the phone but forgets to hit the send button.

DANI

Hello? Hello?

After fumbling and almost dropping it, she hits the button.

DANI

Hi Ben. No, not busy. You're sure your head is feeling better?... Good... tomorrow? Hold on a second.

Dani covers her phone. She looks Yin Ling desperately.

DANI

You're sure you can Yin my Yang?

YIN LING

Yes!

Dani speaks again into her phone.

DANI

Dinner and a movie? Hold on.

Dani covers the phone again and whispers to Yin Ling.

DANI

Life or death sure?

YIN LING

Yes!

She speaks into the phone again.

DANI

Tomorrow is great. Okay. See you then. Bye.

Dani clicks the phone off.

Yin Ling squeals and grabs Dani.

FREDDIE
Beat the Prime Directive!

DANI
I'm not a Black Widow! I'm just
really hot! I'm going to break that
curse and Elvin Lyons!

FREDDIE
All right!

YIN LING
We have a lot of work to do! Meet
me at my house tonight at seven.
I'll leave now to get ready.

DANI
Can I bring my sister, Pam?

YIN LING
Sure, sure. Got to run!

EXT. YIN LING'S HOUSE - EARLY SUMMER EVENING

Yin Ling opens the door to Dani and Pamela.

YIN LING
So much to do. Come in, come in!

INT. YIN LING'S HOUSE

Yin Ling leads them through the house. She gathers things in
her arms as she goes like towels, flowers, water.

YIN LING
Because you are such strong fire,
we must surround you by water,
earth and metal. Swim suit?

DANI
Got it.

PAMELA
What do I do?

YIN LING
You're my assistant.

PAMELA
This is so cool!

EXT. YIN LING'S BACK YARD

Dani stands in her swimsuit next to a small plastic blow up boat. Around the boat are metal wind chimes and bowls of water with little floating tea light flames in them.

Yin Ling's pool has floating candles too.

YIN LING

Normally I have just candles, but no fire alone, Honey. I put tea lights in bowls of water to show your soul that fire needs balance.

PAMELA

Very pretty.

YIN LING

Everything is here. Water, metal, and earth. Step into the boat.

She squishes into the dinghy filled with soupy mud.

DANI

Mud? Really?

YIN LING

In, Sugar!

DANI

Ish.

YIN LING

Pamela, help cover her with mud. Earth and water is great Yin to put out fire. All over. Even her hair.

Pamela goes at it with gusto. They get really messy as Dani flicks mud back at Pam.

Yin Ling circles and throws daisies.

PAMELA

This is great!

DANI

Enough already?

YIN LING

Now for the important part to lead her soul to nature's Yin. Pam, help me drag the boat into the pool.

They pull and push the heavy mud laden blow-up-boat.

Pam pulls hard and accidentally falls into the pool.

They all scream and laugh as Yin Ling gives a final push.

A high wheeze of escaping air sounds from the boat.

The dingy floats into the center of the pool.

Yin Ling claps.

Wheeze, ZZZZZ!

Suddenly the heavy mud boat folds around Dani like a taco and it starts to sink.

Dani abandons ship, laughing all the time.

Pam reaches up to Yin Ling for rescue. Yin Ling puts out her hand. Pam pulls Yin Ling into the pool.

The woman laugh like girls and splash dirty pool water at each other. Water/mud logged Dani swims to the steps. Pamela and Yin Ling join her. They sit, laughing and gasping.

DANI

Do you think my fire is out yet?

PAMELA

I know mine is.

YIN LING

What do you think mud does to a pool filter?

They burst out laughing harder.

DANI

I still have plenty of mud in my hair, my ears, and other places that might take years to remove!

YIN LING

Good! Make sure you wear lots of metal jewelry tomorrow. I have scrumptious ear rings you can use.

DANI

It's just a movie so it should be safe with all this.

YIN LING

Wear earth colors. A movie at night is good. That's when Yin is strong.

DANI
That's the weird part. He's picking
me up before noon.

Yin Ling splashes muddy water at her.

YIN LING
More mud and water!

EXT. SANTA BARBARA HOT AIR BALLOON LAUNCH - DAY

A group of colorful huge hot air balloons rise in the sky.

Dani stands in a cute dress with huge dangle metal ear rings
and loopy metal bracelets up her arms.

She gapes at a red balloon with Yellow fire designs which
rise from the base of the balloon opening.

BEN
You like?

DANI
We can't go up in that! You got to
be kidding, all that fire and air
between us and the ground?

BEN
Not fire. It's helium.

DANI
Gas, air and fire combined!

BEN
What?

DANI
Listen, Ben, we shouldn't do this,
even though it looks great. Didn't
you say it was dinner and a movie?

BEN
I did.

He holds up a cam-corder and points to a lunch on a little
table in the balloon basket. He laughs. She does too.

DANI
Very creative.

BEN
You in?

Dani caresses her huge metal earrings.

DANI
I think I need to sign a waiver or
something.

EXT. HOT AIR BALLOON

Dani and Ben float up into the air.

Ben leans against the tall interior basket wall and records the stunning view with the cam-corder.

Dani sits at a small table with a white table cloth. The balloon operator works the controls.

Ben gently pulls Dani to stand up next to him. She holds a rope tightly.

DANI
Are you sure this is safe?

BEN
Safer than your truck.

DANI
It crashed.

BEN
This won't.

Ben gently pries her fingers loose from the rope. He speaks softly in her ear, but first has to move one of the gigantic earrings out of the way.

BEN
Dani, I've got you. Let go.

She looks at the beautiful vista of the Santa Barbara hills that gently flow to the beach along the Pacific Ocean. She slowly lets go of the rope and takes his lifted hand.

DANI
It really is beautiful.

BEN
Yeah, stunning.

Ben puts his arms around her. She smiles and relaxes into him as the breeze blows, and they both look at the amazing view.

INT. YIN LING'S HOUSE

Dani and Pamela watch Yin Ling set out on a table of every kind of Yin food imaginable.

YIN LING

I don't know, sweetheart, how you survived hot air ballooning in one piece! So much Yang!

DANI

It's the first time I've been with Ben when nothing bad happened.

YIN LING

It must have been the water and mud bath and all that metal you wore.

PAMELA

It sounds so romantic. When I told Steve, all he said was, "Do you know how much it costs to go up in one of those things?"

DANI

It felt like I was flying.

PAMELA

Ooo Ooo, like on Titanic where she puts her arms out and he holds her at the front of the ship.

Pam pantomimes the scene with her arms out stretched.

DANI

Kinda. -Except DiCaprio drowned.

YIN LING

This is really serious! We have to get to business, Honey. These are Yin foods to balance Dani's fire.

Dani looks doubtful at the weird food on the loaded table.

DANI

Do I have to eat bean curd?

YIN LING

You can have oysters -one of my favorites.

PAMELA

Ugh.

YIN LING

No coffee, beef, brown sugar,
chicken liver, chillies, eggs. No
ham, onions, peanuts, whisky-

PAMELA

Whisky, (giggles) fire water-

YIN LING

Or wine. Here's the list. Memorize
it. No chocolate.

PAMELA

No chocolate! Sister, she just took
away your chocolate!

YIN LING

It's a matter of life and death!

DANI

Okay, I'll give up chocolate. Did
you know he has chocolate eyes?

PAMELA

Oh yeah, she's giving up chocolate.

YIN LING

What's next for you two?

DANI

It's my turn. What should I do?

YIN LING

A place with water, earth or metal.

DANI

A steel yard on a rainy day?

PAMELA

Some place where you can make out.

They laugh as they sample Yin foods with their chop sticks.

MONTAGE: EXT. LAKE CASITAS RECREATION AREA WATER PARK - DAY

-Dani, Ben, and Janey, play and splash at the water park.

-They fly down water slides.

-They ride in inner tubes on the lazy river.

-They ride a paddle boat together on the lake. Janey smiles
at Dani. Dani smiles back at her and then at Ben.

Not looking, the paddle boat hits a cement warning buoy in the middle of the lake. Ben goes overboard.

Dani jumps in to save him. The paddles come at him to slice him to shreds.

Dani pulls him to the side just in time.

Janey grins as they slosh back into the paddle boat.

JANEY

Cool! You saved the prince!

Dani looks wide eyed at Ben. He simply smiles.

INT. FLOWER SHOP - DAY

Dani jams flowers into an arrangement and talks to Yin Ling.

DANI

The paddle wheel barely missed him.

YIN LING

See? My methods are working! The daughter likes you. The man likes you. No one hurt. No one died.

DANI

I can't always be surrounded by water, metal, or dirt. We're just dating. Maybe it only happens when I tie the knot... around his neck.

YIN LING

"A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step."

Freddie comes into the shop with a box in his hand and clunks it down on the counter.

FREDDIE

Exactly! That's why I brought this! It's technology that will save you!

DANI

What is it?

FREDDIE

Police scanner. "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure". Ha. Beat that one, Yin Ling.

Yin Ling puts her nose in the air and sniffs.

YIN LING
Chinese.

FREDDIE
We monitor your guy.

DANI
So I can call him and say, "watch
out, you're in trouble?"

YIN LING
I tried to find out his birthday by
pretending I was a birthday floral
delivery at his work.

FREDDIE
You are a floral delivery.

YIN LING
He wasn't there. They said it
wasn't his birthday and wouldn't
give me his real birth date.

Freddie reads the box info. Dani slumps the more he reads.

FREDDIE
-yeah, like I was saying, this bad
baby can monitor "high speed
pursuits, bomb threats, crimes in
progress, riots, toxic chemical
spills, natural gas explosions,
highway hazards, blackouts, airline
and rail disasters." Cool!

DANI
I thought he only fought fires!

YIN LING
Your fire is enough, Sweetheart.

FREDDIE
So we all have cell phones. We
monitor when a big emergency comes
up. We show up if he needs help.

DANI
And hand him a rope to hang by?

FREDDIE
Last month at a store robbery a
bystander knocked out the robber by
being at the right place at the
right time.

DANI

I won't be carrying a six pack like that guy did, and he was six-five.

YIN LING

"He who says it can not be done should not interrupt the man doing it." Go ahead, Freddie.

DANI

You're supporting Freddie?

YIN LING

We should all do what we can. I'll put out the fire. He'll call it in.

FREDDIE

Have you told Ben about, -you know... How you kill men?

YIN LING

FREDDIE!

FREDDIE

I mean how people think that?

She looks from one to the other guiltily.

DANI

At first we weren't dating. Why would I? Now I'm afraid. I did tell him I'm accident prone.

YIN LING

"Better bad news from a butterfly than good news from a wasp."

FREDDIE

Did you just make that up?

DANI

I'll tell him. I will. Soon.

FREDDIE

You tell him, and we'll keep him safe with this.

DANI

No radio. I'm going home to think about how to tell him with a horse ride and then have a long shower.

YIN LING
Take a cool bath, not a hot shower,
more water, less fire.

Dani picks up her purse and heads out the door. She doesn't see her cell phone on the counter.

DANI
Okay. Water for my fire. Man, I want chocolate.

YIN LING
No chocolate!

EXT. DANI'S RANCH HOUSE - DAY

The Ranch has a beautiful house, huge pool, and big property.

KNOCK.

Dani opens the door. Ben holds her phone.

BEN
You left it at the shop. Yin Ling told me to bring it to you.

DANI
Yin Ling? I can't imagine.

BEN
I thought it was a good excuse.

DANI
Pretty good.

BEN
What are you doing?

DANI
I was about to go riding.

BEN
I can ride.

DANI
Okay, but you will have to eat a lunch I make with my own hands after. You willing to risk it?

BEN
You know I live dangerously.

DANI

I know. I'll meet you at the barn.
I need to grab something.

Later

Dani rides with metal bracelets up her arms and water bottles in the saddle bags.

They ride. Ben happily looks as she points to places of interest.

Ben races her. Dani's big dog, Arrow, barks and races around.

She comes to the same hill where the llama stampede killed Joey. She halts her horse and stares and blinks.

BEN

I don't know how you ever leave
here to go into town to work.

DANI

Other times it's hard to come home-
Ben, do you believe life is an
accident or that it has meaning?

BEN

I believe life has a purpose, I
guess. I believe in God, that we
are here on earth to give and learn-

DANI

Even when your wife died horribly
and your daughter lost her mother?
Even when we love desperately, and
the next minute it's snatched away?

BEN

After she died I felt she still
existed, maybe in a better place. I
think she wants me to go on living.

DANI

My dad feels that way. Ben, I need
to tell you something. It's really
hard ...

Ben looks at something far off. She shifts to see what Ben looks at. A Black Lexus stops on the small road.

Elvin Lyons gets out and crouches low to inspect a fence.

Dani races down the hill on her horse to confront Elvin. Ben follows slowly behind.

She stops fast in a cloud of dust, making Elvin jump.

ELVIN LYONS
Hello, Mrs. Hanson.

DANI
Why are you here?

He sees Ben slowly coming towards them.

ELVIN LYONS
New victim? How nice, Mrs. Hanson.

DANI
You're trespassing.

ELVIN LYONS
The road's public. I was examining
perfectly good fence that your
llamas somehow escaped from.

DANI
Please leave.

ELVIN LYONS
What kind of policy does he have?

DANI
I'll call the police.

ELVIN LYONS
The police? That's a good idea.

Ben arrives.

DANI
Now.

Elvin get in his car and drives away.

BEN
Who was that guy?

Dani takes a big breath and squares her shoulders.

DANI
He's an insurance guy. Ben, I need
to explain.

BEN
Insurance? Just get a different
company. Fire him.

DANI

I wish it were that simple. Ben-

Ben's beeper blows off and so does his cell phone. Ben hurriedly punches the beeper and answers his cell phone.

BEN

Chambers. Yeah. Wait. I'm off duty today. No. Yes. Three? Man! Okay. I'm twenty minutes out. Bye.

DANI

Ben?

BEN

They're calling in everybody. There's a six car pile up, a huge sink hole, and a small forest fire.

DANI

What are you going to do?

BEN

They'll make assignments at the station. Sorry, Dani. I was looking forward to the lunch you promised.

Dani nods and looks down. Ben hesitatingly leans over her and kisses her on the cheek.

Dani finally opens her eyes as he drives away. She sighs.

EXT. LOS PADRES NATIONAL FOREST - DAY

Brush and trees burns near an abandoned fire pit.

EXT. HORSE RANCH

Dani's cell phone rings.

DANI

Yin Ling?

INT. FLOWER SHOP

Yin Ling speaks into the phone.

YIN LING

Dani, Honey!

Freddie grabs the phone from Yin Ling.

FREDDIE
The scanner's going crazy. Three!

EXT. DANI'S RANCH HOUSE

Dani holds the phone tight.

DANI
I know. Ben got the call a minute ago and left. No. We're not going to trail him with the scanner.

Dani leads the horses into the stable.

DANI
No. Don't you dare! I'm coming in as soon as I stable the horses. Stay! I'll talk to you soon.

EXT. TOWN ROAD

Lime green Uhura speeds down the road.

INT. UHURA

Freddie holds his phone with one hand and the police scanner with the other. He drives with his forearms.

FREDDIE
He's either heading into a forest fire, or the sink hole, or the 101 six car pile up.

DANI (V.O.)
I can't talk in my car! I don't have a Bluetooth thingy. Wait, someone's calling in.

EXT. 101 FREEWAY

Yin Ling holds the phone between gorgeous long nails as she drives her Blinging car. She stops at the traffic jam.

YIN LING
Hello! Sweetheart. He's not at the 101 crash. But there's a really cute cop, one ambulance guy -Wait. I'm putting us on three-way.

EXT. CAMINO RIO VERDE ROAD

Dani yells into her phone.

DANI
I'm hanging up!

EXT. TOWN ROAD

Freddie listens to the radio squawk, Uhura grinding gears.

FREDDIE
Hey! I just heard Ben's voice! He's
on command at the sinking street.

DANI (V.O.)
Ben?

EXT. 101 FREEWAY

Yin Ling screams into the phone while staring at a nail.

YIN LING
I just broke a nail! I'm trying to
turn around. We've got to help your
man! Get out of my way!

Yin Ling honks her horn at traffic.

EXT. CAMINO RIO VERDE ROAD

Dani yells into the phone as she drives.

DANI
Is he okay?

FREDDIE (V.O.)
Camino Rio Verde. Dude. He's
telling everyone their business.
He's right near you!

YIN LING (V.O.)
I'm heading that way!

DANI
No!

EXT. TOWN ROAD

Freddie yells into the cell phone as he drives Uhura.

FREDDIE
Yeah! I'm almost there!

EXT. CAMINO RIO VERDE ROAD

Dani sees fire engines. She yells at her phone.

DANI
No Freddie!

A POLICE SIREN screams behind her. She pulls over. An ANGRY POLICE OFFICER walks up to her window.

ANGRY POLICE OFFICER
Didn't you see my lights? You sped
up after I signaled - while talking
on a phone!

Dani looks guiltily up at him.

EXT. 101 FREEWAY

Yin Ling looks up at a CUTE POLICE OFFICER straight from Chip and Dales as he too writes a ticket.

CUTE POLICE OFFICER
There you go. You can pay your
ticket by mail or on line.

YIN LING
Can I call you Donald? Yes, I was
on the phone, but it was for a good
reason! My best friend is at the
sinking house. I need to be there
right away. It's life or death!

CUTE POLICE OFFICER
I was just reassigned there. I
don't usually... Best friend?
Follow me.

Yin Ling rolls down the window and smiles and waves at people like a parade grand marshal as she follows him in her car.

EXT. TOWN ROAD

Freddie drives erratically down hill. Gears grind. He holds his cell and scanner. He drives with his forearms.

Insert: Speedometer reads 50.

A siren blasts. A woman police officer stands at his window.

FREDDIE
Fifty! Uhura made it to fifty!

WOMAN POLICE OFFICER
Uhura? Have you been drinking?

FREDDIE
I'd never drink with Uhura!

WOMAN POLICE OFFICER
Are you talking on two cell phones?

FREDDIE
She did fifty!

EXT. CAMINO RIO VERDE ROAD

Dani sits despondent as she takes her the ticket.

BOOM! RUMBLE!

CRIES OF ALARM.

More earth slams into a sink hole as a broken sewer pipe gushes water, eroding the road and hill. A house teeters into the huge hole.

Dani jumps out of her car to go to the catastrophe.

Angry Police officer follows Dani.

Ben hangs from a rope harness.

He reaches for a woman, KITTY LADY, who stands on her broken horizontal open garage door desperately looking down.

KITTY LADY
Bitsy's down there!

Ben almost has Kitty Lady.

The garage door lurches. The Kitty Lady slides and is caught by the elastic of her floral stretchy pants on a piece of jagged metal.

More of the water soaked hill erodes from the broken pipe.

The garage door groans and jerks.

Ben grabs the woman just in time. He puts her in the harness. Firemen grab the woman.

The house slips more. Ben jerks violently.

Dani cries out in alarm.

DANI

Ben!

Ben looks up and sees her.

BEN

Dani?

Ben loses his grip. He slips and swings in his harness.

As he swings, his line slices on a sharp piece of glass and metal from the garage door.

He slips as the line unravels. He throws up a rope as he falls, which catches on a ledge. The long line plays out.

Ben falls into the muddy abyss.

DANI

Ben!

The entire crowd joins her cry of shock and dismay.

Kitty Lady dangles, arms and legs splayed like a spider.

EXT. BACK OF CROWD

Cute Police Officer drives up. Yin Ling jumps out of her car. She follows Cute Police Officer on her high heels.

Cute Police Officer points to the hanging Kitty Lady.

CUTE POLICE OFFICER

Your friend?

YIN LING

There!

Yin Ling points to Dani who's crying and looks in terror where Ben fell.

CUTE POLICE OFFICER

Her?

Kitty Lady blubbers she comes to firm ground.

KITTY LADY

No, not me. Save Bitsy!

Yin Ling brings Cute Police Officer to Dani.

YIN LING
She's right here!

CUTE POLICE OFFICER
She's in life and death danger?

Firemen scramble around to save Ben. They pull the rope hand over hand. Slowly a muddy monster from the Black Lagoon rises up.

Ben collapses to the ground. Paramedics surround him.

Elvin Lyons drives up. He muscled his way in. He watches as Yin Ling points at mud covered Ben.

YIN LING
No. He's in danger! She's here for him, Honey!

Firemen help him. He coughs and tries to stand. They all watch as his face gets wiped. He's recognizable now.

Elvin Lyons speaks up.

ELVIN LYONS
Mrs. Hanson? Hey! Isn't that your new boyfriend?

YIN LING
Yes, he was in real danger! Luckily there's lots of water and mud here-

CUTE POLICE OFFICER
That's Ben Chambers.

YIN LING
-Or he might have died!

Elvin Lyons looks over at Ben. The entire house plummets.

Freddie also shows up with Woman Police Officer behind him.

The three police officers and Elvin surround Dani.

Cute Police Officer is getting frustrated. He points at Dani.

CUTE POLICE OFFICER
She tried to kill Ben Chambers?

DANI
What? No!

ELVIN LYONS
You tried to kill him already?

FREDDIE
She didn't kill him already!

YIN LING
No, we all came to save him.

DANI
Yin Ling! Freddie!

Ben, dripping, comes closer, exhausted and confused.

The crowd, plus the FIRE, RESCUE and the POLICE listen in.

ELVIN LYONS
Ben Chambers, are you acquainted
with Mrs. Hanson?

BEN
Mrs?

Paramedic Gains and Paramedic Samson come up.

CUTE POLICE OFFICER
They said she tried to kill you.

BEN
Kill me?

PARAMEDIC GAINS
I thought she was your girlfriend!

ELVIN LYONS
Exactly!

BEN
Dani, what are you doing here?

ELVIN LYONS
That's what I'm trying to find out
before she kills someone else. But
no one will cooperate!

CUTE POLICE OFFICER
Someone else? What? Who?

ELVIN LYONS
Her three dead husbands!

DANI
 I didn't kill any of them!
 (softly)
 I don't think...

BEN
 Three dead husbands?

PARAMEDIC SAMSON
 I knew I'd seen that face! She's
 the Black Widow of Santa Barbara!

People in the crowd recognize her and start to murmur.

DANI
 No!

YIN LING
 No!

FREDDIE
 No!

ELVIN LYONS
 Yes!

Ben, a wreck, staggers and looks hurt as he stares at her.

BEN
 Black Widow?

DANI
 Ben, it's not what you think
 they're saying.

BEN
 What are they saying?

Dani looks at Ben with pleading and fear.

DANI
 I was trying to tell you.

Ben steps closer. Freddie and Yin Ling flank her as if to protect her.

BEN
 Dani?

She steps back. Yin Ling and Freddie shuffle with her.

DANI
 Ben, I...

BEN
The Black Widow of Santa Barbara? I
think I heard of...

Dani looks at Ben and then the crowd.

YIN LING
No, Honey, you see-

Dani stops Yin Ling. She says softly,

DANI
Yes, I guess I am.

BEN
Why?

FREDDIE
She-

YIN LING
You-

Ben looks at Elvin Lyons.

ELVIN LYONS
Yep. All that Life insurance made
her a rich woman. Do you have any
evidence? I'd appreciate your
cooperation.

He looks at the pit that almost got him. He shakes his head
and almost smiles at Dani. The exhaustion and shock hit him.

BEN
I guess you were right all along.
You shouldn't date customers...for
their life insurance.

Dani reels back as if slapped.

Freddie tries to punch Ben, but Yin Ling shoves Freddie aside
and punches him herself.

Ben staggers, then rights himself.

YIN LING
Ever heard of accidents? Oops!

FREDDIE
You're wrong dude. All wrong.

Ben rubs his jaw. Hangs his head. He finally looks at Dani.

BEN
I'm sorry I said that. I gotta go.
Goodbye, Dani.

Dani watches Ben walk to his truck.

Angry Police Officer takes Dani by the arm to face him.

ANGRY POLICE OFFICER
Mrs. Hanson, come with me. Mr.
Lyons too, for questioning.

ELVIN LYONS
About time.

The crowd disperses.

Dani stands straight. She looks at Yin Ling and Freddie.

DANI
Ben's right. I would have killed
him. He was surrounded by earth and
water and it wasn't enough. He's
getting away in the nick of time.

Elvin Lyons hears with satisfaction, yet a little quizzical.

Yin Ling cries. Freddie pats Yin Ling's back.

Alone, Ben sits on his truck bumper. He watches Dani walk
away surround by the Police and Elvin Lyons.

The Police car drives away.

Ben blinks and swallows.

Kitty Lady sees her cat lick itself on her mailbox.

KITTY LADY
Bitsy!

She runs to hug her cat. Ben watches Kitty Lady love, croon,
and pet her cat. He closes his eyes and hangs his head.

EXT. LOS PADRES NATIONAL FOREST - DAY

Flames and smoke rise from the tree tops of the forest.

EXT. SANTA BARBARA POLICE STATION - DAY

Police cars and Elvin's Black Lexus sit in front of the
Police station.

INT. SANTA BARBARA POLICE STATION

Elvin Lyons leans forward in aggression and shouts at the seasoned Police Chief.

ELVIN LYONS

The proof's staring you in the face, yet again you look the other way! She almost killed again!

DANI

No! I didn't!

Dani starts to rise from her chair but Police Chief puts a soft, but firm hand on her shoulder. He stands instead. As he rises, he wears years of authority. Elvin steps back.

POLICE CHIEF

Lyons, you telling me that I and my detectives didn't do our jobs? That I personally didn't comb her ranch, the sign, or the beer vat? You saying that she caused the sewer pipe to break and wear down the hill from the inside for months, so somehow her boyfriend would die so she could get his insurance, even though she's not married to him?!!!

ELVIN LYONS

Yes!

Police Chief has had enough and shouts at Elvin.

POLICE CHIEF

YOUR WIFE AND HER BOYFRIEND ARE
ALREADY IN JAIL! GIVE IT UP!

Elvin blinks a couple times. He stares at the Police Chief, and then at Dani. She stares back.

Like a robot, he walks out of the station.

Dani looks around her. No one speaks.

DANI

Can I leave?

Police Chief nods.

POLICE CHIEF

Mrs. Hanson, Please stay out of trouble.

INT. FLOWER SHOP - BACK ROOM - DAY

Dani, Freddie, and Yin Ling silently work on flower arrangements. An "Earth Wind and Fire" song plays softly in the shop. Yin Ling's accent seems to have gone way down.

YIN LING

You're not talking much.

DANI

Funny, I could say the same thing about you two.

FREDDIE

Aunt Dani-

DANI

Since when do you call me aunt?
Everyone pull yourself together.
I'm fine.

YIN LING

I can see that, Dani.

DANI

And since when do you call me Dani?
What happened to Sugar, Honey,
Sweetheart, Dumpling?

YIN LING

I never say Dumpling.

DANI

I'm sure Mr. Lyons will tape up
"public menace to men" posters all
over town. At least I hope so.

FREDDIE

No way. We need to let people know
the truth about you.

DANI

No more interfering! I got a huge
cell phone ticket! One fifty!

YIN LING

I thought my cute cop would give me
a break, but he didn't.

FREDDIE

Three hundred for reckless driving,
plus one fifty. How could I have
treated Uhura like that?

DANI

I don't care about the ticket! I'd
pay a million to keep Ben safe.
From now on we leave him alone!

YIN LING

Alone.

DANI

I'm going home. Although the forest
fire is faraway, I'm bringing my
horses to town just in case.

FREDDIE

We'll take these flowers over to
the funeral home.

Freddie and Yin Ling leave with two huge arrangements.

The shop bell rings as someone enters.

Dani looks with hope. She deflates when she sees her dad.

DANI

Oh, hi Dad.

HOWARD

Hi, Dani. How are you?

He covers her in a big fatherly hug.

DANI

I'm great.

Dani breaks down and bawls like a baby. Howard talks softly.

HOWARD

I can see that.

DANI

Oh, Daddy, you shouldn't have
hugged me. I wish everybody would
stop being nice to me!

HOWARD

You only deserve nice.

DANI

I love him but can never be with
him, have children, or grow old
with him. Am I a freak of nature?

HOWARD

Now Dani. I've been pondering this a lot. Mike, Brad, and Joey got to be loved a very special woman. Do you regret loving or being loved by them before they returned to God?

DANI

But three times?

HOWARD

I don't know God's plans. Maybe not everyone needs to stay on earth as long to learn what God has to teach. I do know God didn't make a mistake in you.

DANI

You seem so sure.

HOWARD

I'm only sure you can't give up, Dani. God has a plan for us all. Trust in him. Trust in love.

Freddie and Yin Ling come back in.

FREDDIE

You won't believe. The deceased lady was born August 1916. Yin Ling says she was a fire dragon too!

Yin ling walks over to a big red bouquet of flowers.

YIN LING

Freddie, we missed this bouquet.

DANI

Wait. I think I'll take it over myself before I go home.

Dani takes the flowers and walks out the shop with them. Yin Ling, Freddie, and Father look at each other with worry.

INT. PEACE MORTUARY CHAPEL

Dani walks to the front of the quiet mortuary chapel. She sets the flowers down at the end of the casket.

She looks at the beautiful old woman who lies in peace. Tears fall as she fixes the sprays of roses and lilies.

DANI
Hello my sister of fire.

Dani takes one red rose and puts it in the still hands.

DANI
I wish I could have known you. Did
you love? Did you marry? Did you
have children? Were you happy?

Dani tenderly moves a lock of the woman's hair into place.

A MAN stands next to Dani. She jumps. Embarrassed, she does
not look at him but turns to go.

DANI
Pardon me.

ELVIN LYONS
Mrs. Hanson?

Dani freezes. She slowly turns. There's Elvin Lyons.

DANI
You followed me to a funeral home?

ELVIN LYONS
No. I'm sorry I alarmed you. I'm
here because this is my grandma
Lucy.

DANI
Oh. I'm sorry. I'll leave.

ELVIN LYONS
May I ask, why are you crying? You
didn't even know her.

DANI
I felt like I did. I apologize.

Elvin contemplates Dani and then looks at his grandmother.

ELVIN LYONS
It turns out she caused the 101 six
car pile up. Texting.

DANI
Texting?

ELVIN LYONS
She was a fiery woman who loved
life. She was ninety eight.

DANI

Can I tell me a little about her?

ELVIN LYONS

She was married to my grandpa for seventy-two years. They had four kids, including my father.

DANI

Seventy-two years.

Elvin clears his throat. He shifts his feet and loosens his collar as he looks at Dani. He looks back at his grandmother. He bows his head in acknowledgement and resignation.

ELVIN LYONS

Look, may I call you Dani?

DANI

Um, I guess so.

ELVIN LYONS

Dani, a lot of people will do anything for money.

DANI

I really should go.

ELVIN LYONS

Please, this isn't easy to say. My wife and best friend tried to kill me for my insurance money and run off together. They accidentally killed a stranger instead. I did my best to prove you guilty of the same.

DANI

I'm not your ex-wife.

ELVIN LYONS

I have another confession. It was grandma Lucy who also caused your accident on that rainy bridge.

DANI

I thought she looked familiar.

ELVIN LYONS

I apologize. For everything.

DANI

You mean that?

ELVIN LYONS
I do. On Monday I'm closing your
case. Your insurance settlement
will be in the mail.

DANI
Then you were right about my other
insurance settlements.

He looks startled.

ELVIN LYONS
I was right?

DANI
What I mean is that I'm quite well
off. You can keep the money, now
that you don't think I'm guilty.

For the first time a smile slowly dawns on his face.

ELVIN LYONS
The company is not at liberty to do
that. But, you can do with it what
you want after you get it.

DANI
Thank you for finally believing me.

ELVIN LYONS
Thanks for being a person that let
me believe. Sorry for the pain I've
caused. Especially your boyfriend.

DANI
He's not my boyfriend anymore.

ELVIN LYONS
I didn't mean to hurt -well maybe I
did. If there's anything I can do.

DANI
It's for the best, I'm sure.

ELVIN LYONS
The flowers are pretty. They're
just what my grandmother liked.

DANI
Yin Ling always gets it right. Um,
I don't know your first name.

ELVIN LYONS
Elvin.

DANI
It's a pleasure to finally meet
you. Take care, Elvin. Bye.

ELVIN LYONS
Goodbye, Dani.

Dani leaves through a side chapel door and closes it.

EXT. LOS PADRES NATIONAL FOREST - DAY

Huge billows of smoke fill the sky. The fire jumps a road.
Fire fighters retreat. Helicopters dump fire retardant.

Ben stands by his command truck as ash and smoke blow by. He
speaks into his walkie-talkie.

BEN
Wind's turned. We're moving out.

RADIO (O.S.)
Our new line is grid three.

BEN
Grid three! Send retardant planes
and water drops. I'm heading to the
Hanson Ranch now. Out!

Ben jumps in his truck and speeds away.

INT. FLOWER SHOP

Yin Ling answers the shop phone. Freddie listens nearby.

YIN LING
Flowers for those you love. Why,
hello, Honey! No. She said she
wouldn't be in for a couple days.

She looks at the phone. Hangs up.

FREDDIE
I didn't think he'd call her again.

YIN LING
Maybe the two dozen roses I sent
him every day worked after all. Do
you think Dani is all right?

FREDDIE
The fire isn't anywhere near her.

EXT. CAMINO RIO VERDE ROAD - DAY

Ben drives to Dani's gate. The smoke is thick.

EXT. DANI'S RANCH HOUSE

Dani's truck sits in front of her ranch house. Ben jumps out and pounds on the door. The smoke is heavy. He coughs.

BEN

Dani? Dani! It's Ben!

He Bends his head to listen. He hears a faint calling.

DANI (O.C.)

Arrow! Arrow! Come on, Boy!

Ben races around the house, jumps a fence, past a huge pool, to the back of the property.

BEN

Dani!

Dani whirls around. Her worry turns to surprise.

DANI

Ben?

BEN

We have to go!

DANI

I took my horses into town this morning but couldn't find Arrow!

BEN

The fire could block the road!

Dani hesitates. Ben pulls her to his truck, while Dani calls,

DANI

Arrow! Arrow!

They get in his truck and head out the drive.

EXT. CAMINO RIO VERDE ROAD

Ben drives fast. They peer through the smoke. Dani coughs.

DANI

The fire was far away this morning!

BEN

That's the way wild fires go. They
can turn on you in an instant.
Create their own wind and weather.

They ride down the road through smoke. A huge tree on fire
blocks the road. The flames jump high.

DANI

Oh!

BEN

Is there another road out?

DANI

No.

BEN

Back to your place!

Another tree catches fire and falls onto the truck.

It hits the window, breaks it, and knocks Ben unconscious.

Dani kicks the burning branch out the window and pulls her
outer shirt off to smother the flames on his shirt.

Ben's forehead and side of his arm look burned. He's out and
blocks the steering wheel. She can't move him.

From the passenger side, she leans over him, puts the truck
in reverse. She jams the gas with her left foot. They slide
out from under the flaming tree. Ben's radio squawks.

RADIO (O.S.)

Chambers! Do you copy? Grid three
closed. Evacuate. Chambers?

She drives backward to her house, dodging hot spots.

EXT. DANI'S RANCH HOUSE

As they drive up to the ranch, flames come over the mountain
ridge towards them. Thick smoke billows.

Dani brings the truck to a stop on the side of the house. Ben
wakes and groans.

DANI

Ben. Ben! Come on. My pool!

Dani helps Ben out of the truck. She puts his arm around her
shoulders and half walks, half drags him to the side gate.

The fierce wind blows a flaming branch onto a nearby shed.

The shed burns. They stumble to the back yard. The smoke is thick. Ben groans and starts to fall. Dani urges Ben up again. They limp to the pool.

EXT. POOL

Dani helps him onto the huge pool steps. The water wakes Ben up more as he sits in it.

She runs to the shed and grabs a big white fiberglass canoe. She drags it to the pool deck next to Ben.

The fire gets closer.

Dani turns the canoe upside down like a dome and drags it over the steps. She holds it above their heads in the pool.

They scoot to a lower step, their heads just above the water.

DANI
Will this work?

BEN
Or cook us.

They peek out as the wall of fire heads towards them.

She lowers the canoe's dome to the water. The canoe is mostly balanced by the sweeping steps of the big pool to cover them.

INT. CANOE

Dani looks at Ben's face so close to hers. He's weak.

DANI
I'm so sorry, Ben. I tried to keep
you safe, I did. I don't know why I
kill men.

Ben gently touches her lips with his finger.

DANI
Yin Ling says I'm made of fire and
burn up men. Now it's literally!

BEN
Shh. I just want to be with you.

DANI
Why?

Dani looks at the glowing canoe walls. Ben gently holds her face in his hands. He looks bad, but works hard to say,

BEN
That day when I saw you go, it was
like losing my wife all over again.
I realize now that I have a choice.

DANI
My dad said God has a plan and I
need to believe.

BEN
I don't know exactly, but when we
get out of this, I want to marry
you. I love you. Believe that.

Faces so close, he gently kisses her. She kisses him back.

DANI
I'm afraid.

BEN
I'm not.

DANI
We're about to be boiled.

BEN
Yes. I'm afraid of that, but it's
worse not to have you. Say it. Say
you'll marry me.

DANI
I...

BEN
And besides, Yin Ling keeps sending
me flowers. We can hardly walk
through the house. Please say yes.

Dani nods and finally pulls Ben close.

DANI
Ben, whether we get out of this or
not... I love you. I'll marry you.

Ben closes his eyes and sighs. Dani gently kisses him.

BEN
I could do that all day.

The water laps around them as they hold each other. Ben is barely holding on.

Suddenly HUGE LOUD DRUMMING falls on the canoe shell!

They scream.

Orange and red drops fall around them into the pool water.

DANI
Is this it?

BEN
It's fire retardant!

Dani lifts the canoe and they peek out.

BEN
The fire's blowing back on itself.

The air is clearing and she throws the canoe off. Ben closes his eyes in relief, exhaustion, and pain.

She looks out at the vista of charred foliage, orange fire retardant, and clean wind blowing smoke the other way.

She turns back to Ben to smile at him in joy.

He's gone!

Dani screams and searches the murky water. He lies under.

She shoves the canoe away and dives under to pull him up.

EXT. POOL

Dani drags a seemingly dead Ben to the top steps, his head in her lap.

Another plane drops retardant just past them.

Dani frantically blows into his mouth.

A helicopter circles and finds a place to land.

A dog barks. Arrow comes from under the house.

Dani cries as she continues rescue breathing. Arrow licks Ben and wines.

Ben is burned, bruised, and worst of all, unconscious.

Fire Fighters run up.

Dani looks up, all hope lost, as the fire fighters take over.

VIEW: Helicopter blades whirl against the sky.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - EVENING

Dani runs beside Ben's rolling gurney. Blood scabs on his forehead and a burn covers one arm. Oxygen is over his mouth. The same nurse and staff, as with Jim, work on him.

NURSE
What happened!

DANI
The fire.

NURSE
Burns on his right arm and
forehead. They said he started
breathing on his own in the
helicopter.

Ben opens his eyes and looks up at Dani. He moves the oxygen.

BEN
Dani?

DANI
Ben, are you all right?

He nods his head hesitantly. Dani stares at him.

DANI
I'm-

BEN
Don't leave me, Dani.

Ben grabs her hand tight as they wheel them into a curtained stall in the emergency room. They stop.

Dani looks at him, his wounded head, his burned arm.

DANI
No, Ben Chambers, I won't leave.

Ben smiles. Ow! He tries to touch his hurt head.

BEN
Forever?

DANI
And the next day after that.

Yin Ling, Freddie, Howard, Lily, Janey, Pamela, and even Steve hurry into the hospital emergency room. His mom, Lily, takes his other hand.

LILY
Ben, dear!

JANEY
Daddy? What happened?

BEN
I was saving a princess, but she rescued me.

The nurse steps into the group with righteous indignation.

NURSE
How did you all get in here?
Everybody's gotta go! He hasn't even seen a doctor! No children!

BEN
Wait!

Ben takes Janey's hand and speaks to his daughter.

BEN
Janey, is she a good princess?

Janey smiles at him and Dani. She holds his good hand.

JANEY
You kept your promise.

Ben takes Dani's hand.

BEN
Dani, tell me again. Will you marry-

Yin Ling reads Ben's chart. She interrupts.

YIN LING
Look! May nineteen seventy-seven.
You are fire dragon too! Fight fire with fire, Honey!

FREDDIE
Cool!

CHRIS (32), a Chinese cool surfer type, walks up to Yin Ling.

CHRIS
Nancy? I got your call. What's happening?

DANI
Who is this, Yin Ling?

Yin Ling drops her accent and answers.

YIN LING
Everybody, this is my younger
brother, Chris.

FREDDIE
Wait! Where'd your accent go?

CHRIS
Are you kidding? Nancy and I are
fifth generation from the Valley.

YIN LING
East Valley.

FREDDIE
Nancy?

CHRIS
Yeah, Nancy.

DANI
Why the accent?

FREDDIE
And Chinese proverbs?

Yin Ling elbows Chris. She puts her Chinese attitude back on.

YIN LING
Yin Ling is my middle name. I love
Chinese culture and knowledge.
Besides, It's good for business!

CHRIS
Yeah, while I was surfing, she was
hanging out in China town.

HOWARD
Well I'll be.

FREDDIE
That's Yin Ling for you.

Elvin Lyons walks in. He looks at Dani sheepishly.

ELVIN LYONS
The company sent me over when your
name came up.

DANI
Look, everyone's alive.

Elvin smiles. Yin Ling walks over to Elvin, suspicious.

YIN LING
What are you doing here?

DANI
It's okay. He cleared me. Yin Ling,
meet Elvin.

Yin Ling puts her flirt on.

YIN LING
Really? What's your birth date, Mr.
Insurance Detective, Elvin?

ELVIN LYONS
March, seventy four.

Yin Ling looks up at Elvin with more warmth and steps closer.

YIN LING
Year of the tiger, just like me!
Tell me, Elvin, are you married?

ELVIN LYONS
Not recently. By the way, my
grandmother's flowers were just
right. Thank you, Yin Ling.

YIN LING
You are very welcome, Honey.

Freddie rolls his eyes. Nurse tries again to push them out.

NURSE
Come on, everyone. Out!

Howard pushes forward to Dani.

HOWARD
Wait. Did I hear a proposal?

Dani smiles at Ben. She carefully kisses him sweetly.

DANI
Yes, Ben. I'll marry you, even for
worse and hopefully for better.

They all cheer. Even Nurse smiles as she pushes them out.
They each hug or kiss Dani and Ben as they pass them.

The emergency room is a party as they pass by the other two occupied beds. In the first bed they pass is the Old Man and his wife, who they met on the fair ride.

The Old Man holds up an arm in a cast. He holds his wife's hand. They call over to Ben and Dani.

OLD MAN

A minor flesh wound sky diving.

OLD WOMAN

We had a feeling about you two!

The second bed holds Nose Kid. The doctor extracts a small red toy from his nose.

Dani and Ben look at each other and smile.

Nose Kid points to the other nostril. Out comes a second toy.

Nose Kid grins and waves. They smile and wave back.

NURSE

Congratulations. Doctor will be right with you.

Nurse pulls the curtains around Ben's bed and leaves.

DANI

What did Janey mean by keeping your promise?

BEN

Mom and Janey beat me at cards. I had to ask out the first eligible princess I saved.

DANI

Even if she didn't want you to?

BEN

I took a Cupid's arrow for you.

DANI

And are you happy you did?

BEN

Definitely.

DANI

Me too.

EXT. DANI'S RANCH HOUSE - AUTUMN - DAY

The beautiful sun shines down on autumn leaves.

Dani and Ben kiss each other on the steps of their home, their backs to us. Light beams obstruct their profiles.

The angle changes to the front view.

He smiles at her. They are in their sixties!

He walks down the steps to look at the road.

He holds out his hand for her. She joins him as they search the drive.

He holds her close.

A car swerves into their gates. A second car comes in behind.

The cars stop and eight doors open.

Out pour two families with small kids. They spill around Dani and Ben with hugs and kisses.

Ben and Dani hug and swing their grandchildren.

GRANDKIDS.
Grandma, Grandpa!

Another car drives in. Out jumps Yin Ling, still just as flashy, and Elvin Lyons!

The last car is a very shiny yellow "Uhura", which skids to a stop. Out steps an older Freddie from the passenger side.

From the driver's side steps the actual Zoe Saldana "Uhura". They walk arm in arm up the steps to hug Dani and Ben.

Dani and Ben walk into the house. They laugh and chat with everyone as they go in the door.

A Bee flies off a nearby flower and zooms up to the sky.

FADE OUT.