

"MR. RIGHT TONIGHT"

a kinda not-so-sure rom-com

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WGA Reg.

*"We demand rigidly defined areas
of doubt and uncertainty."
~ **Douglas Adams***

INT. NOELLE'S APARTMENT/BEDROOM - NIGHT

Shy people pleaser NOELLE STONE (late 20s) is wide awake in bed -- probably just got in.

Maybe not -- the clock on the end table reads 4:33 a.m.

Noelle looks at the clock, tosses, turns... Yup, can't sleep. RINALDO, the cat on the bed, isn't having any trouble. Rinaldo cuddles Noelle, comforts her.

Not for long -- Noelle grabs her phone off the end table, finds ASHLEY'S NUMBER, taps it...

RINGING TONE. Someone picks up. BREATHING from the other end.

NOELLE

Hello?

Still just BREATHING.

NOELLE (CONT'D)

Ash?

More BREATHING, RUSTLING.

NOELLE (CONT'D)

Are you sleeping? Sorry. I'll call you tomorrow. Is that OK?

BREATHING, RUSTLING, nothing more.

Noelle hangs up.

Sits up. She's got a splint on her left wrist. Hmmm.

Noelle has a little showdown with her phone, gives in -- she picks it up and dials Ashley again.

RINGING TONE. Someone picks up.

NOELLE (CONT'D)

Ash, sorry to wake you-

KISSING from the other end of the line. Some serious KISSING.

NOELLE (CONT'D)

Are you with someone, Ash? Sorry. I'll just call you tomorrow.

Noelle hits END CALL, ditches the phone on the end table.

The phone light eventually dims.

After a moment, the phone light goes off.

INT. NOELLE'S APARTMENT/KITCHEN - NIGHT

Noelle's on the phone. Again. She has a crutch and an ankle boot on her right foot, paces the kitchen (rather she hops) while she waits for Ashley to pick up. Noelle's a dainty little thing.

ASHLEY (O.S.)
(right as she picks up)
You're pacing, aren't you?

NOELLE
No.

ASHLEY (O.S.)
First, stop pacing. Then stop
worrying about tomorrow.

NOELLE
I'm not worried about tomorrow. I
was just wondering if I should wear
a dress or if that'd be too
desperate.

ASHLEY (O.S.)
Noelle, listen to me. First, stop
pacing. Sit down. Relax.

Noelle stops pacing, sits on a chair at the kitchen table.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)
Good. How's the wrist and the
ankle?

NOELLE
Fine.

ASHLEY (O.S.)
OK. Now stop worrying about
tomorrow. It'll be fine.

NOELLE
You really think so?

ASHLEY (O.S.)
Yes so. I'll call you in the
morning and we'll talk about it.

NOELLE
It's morning already.

ASHLEY (O.S.)
I'll call you in the afternoon and
we'll talk about it, OK?

NOELLE
OK.

ASHLEY (O.S.)
Noelle, you're gonna be fine. It's
just a date.

NOELLE
OK.

ASHLEY (O.S.)
OK?

NOELLE
OK.

ASHLEY (O.S.)
OK.

NOELLE
OK.

ASHLEY (O.S.)
Good night, Noelle.

NOELLE
Good morning.

ASHLEY (O.S.)
Noelle?

NOELLE
Yeah, Ash?

ASHLEY (O.S.)
Don't call me anymore. I'll call
you tomorrow afternoon, OK?

NOELLE
OK.

CLICK.

INT. NOELLE'S APARTMENT/BEDROOM - DAY

Noelle struggles into bed, tries to rest...

She's right back up, back on the phone.

RINGING, Ash picking up.

NOELLE

Sorry, Ash, for bugging you.

ASHLEY

Noelle, I promise you'll be fine.

NOELLE

Just wanted to say thanks. That's all. Love you.

ASHLEY (O.S.)

Love you too, hun.

Noelle hangs up, sets the phone on the end table, but she doesn't get back in bed. She wanders over to the computer on the desk in the room, fires up the outdated machine.

She pulls up her online blog site -- "Noelle's Bell." It takes some doing with only one real working hand, the left wrist, if you remember, in that darned splint.

As she struggles to type in a title for a blog entry, "Mr. Right," OPENING TITLE MUSIC comes in...

Noelle's phone RINGS to cut off the OPENING TITLE MUSIC.

Noelle answers the phone:

NOELLE

Hello?

ASHLEY (O.S.)

(talking as if this were
an old routine)

OK, he left. I accept the apology
your gonna make. Don't worry about
it. I'm not mad. And now I'm all
yours. What are you worried about?

NOELLE

I'm fine, Ash. I'm fine. I'm sorry
I kept bugging you. I'll call you a
little later, OK?

ASHLEY (O.S.)

He already left. I'm all yours.

NOELLE

But can I call you back? I have to
do something real quick. That OK?

ASHLEY (O.S.)
It's OK, Noelle. Apology accepted.

NOELLE
Sorry.

ASHLEY (O.S.)
It's OK, Noelle. Talk to you later.

NOELLE
Thanks. Sorry.

Noelle hangs up, gets back to her blog. That OPENING TITLE MUSIC comes back in and SWELLS as she finishes her blog title, "Mr. Right Tonight."

That's right, that's the title of the movie, "Mr. Right Tonight." Good time to roll the rest of the opening titles.

And we're back to Noelle as she types the body of her blog, which we hear in narration:

NOELLE'S NARRATION
Noelle Stone here for "Noelle's Bell." It's been a few weeks since my last blog entry. Sorry, it's kinda hard to type right now...
(reference to the wrist in the splint)
More about that later. But I'm back with what happened on New Year's Eve. *If you can't say something nice, don't say it at all.* We've all heard that saying a million times, yet people say the craziest things. For those out there who don't know, I'm almost 30 years old and I've never had a serious love. People like to remind me that I'm single -- as if I didn't know. My friends try to set me up, my dad used to ask what was wrong with me. I have a problem -- I'm shy. So, on New Year's Eve, I made big plans after work to do what I wanted to do for a change...

INT. LADY LILIES/SALES FLOOR - DAY

Small clothing store chain. It's closed.

Noelle (no wrist splint or ankle boot) folds clothes at a table with friend and co-worker ASHLEY (late 20s).

Even Noelle's clothing, hair and make-up are afraid to say anything. Ashley, on the other hand, clearly shops at the finer places in town, though she can't afford it.

ASHLEY

In three minutes, when we're off,
Maggie's gonna walk over and have
us to stay late to build displays.

MAGGIE THE MANAGER (40s) at the registers at the front of the little store, counting out the drawers.

NOELLE

I'm OK for some overtime.

ASHLEY

You're my friend -- you're not
spending New Year's Eve at work.

NOELLE

I wasn't that set on my plans.

ASHLEY

What plans did you have?

NOELLE

After work, I go to my car, drive
home, feed Rinaldo, then I put on
my PJs and I sit in front of the TV
for the rest of the night. The plan
was to make it to at least 9.
There'd be ice cream, too -- just
ice cream, nothing else. That was
this girl's New Year's Eve.

ASHLEY

That's a terrible New Year's Eve,
starting with getting in your car
and driving home. 'cause I need a
ride. And babe, you can't sit at
home on the best party night of the
year.

NOELLE

The best party night for couples.
New Year's Eve is worse than
Valentine's Day.

Ashley checks her watch. She buries a mess of clothes under a bunch she and Noelle just folded.

ASHLEY

Just put the folded stuff on top.
Two minutes, then we're outta here.

Noelle keeps folding.

NOELLE
We can still finish.

Ashley looks up at Maggie The Manager, still up front.

ASHLEY
She's not gonna help you get that corporate job. You already got it. What're you worried about?

NOELLE
I haven't applied yet.

ASHLEY
What? Babe, what are you waiting for? I'm getting outta here whether you do or not. That corporate job won't wait for you.

NOELLE
I wrote my letter of interest. I just haven't sent it yet. And yes, I used a manila envelope.

ASHLEY
Good. Because you can't fold a letter of interest.

Ashley sees Maggie The Manager wrapping up her duties.

Ashley checks her watch. Puts more folded clothes on top of the mess Noelle is trying to fold, grabs Noelle by the left wrist (the one that eventually gets the wrist splint).

ASHLEY (CONT'D)
Here she comes. Let's go.

Ashley takes Noelle toward the back.

Maggie The Manager goes after them.

Oh no!

But Maggie The Manager stops at the mess the girls tried to hide at their clothing table. Disappointment.

Noelle hates that she got a ding against her for that. Ashley could care less. She knocks clothes off racks they pass.

They pass STORE EMPLOYEE (female, 20s), building a nearby display. She's annoyed with Ashley's deliberate mess.

INT. LADY LILIES/OFFICE- DAY

Noelle and Ashley punch out at the time clock, move on toward the break room.

ASHLEY

Looks like you've got a free night after all. So I've made up my mind -
- you're not gonna be a boyfriendless loser tonight. Not on my watch.

Noelle shoots a look at Ashley, but no words leave her mouth.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, babe, but it's true. You're not gonna get a boyfriend if you sit in front of your TV, eat ice cream and fall asleep before the eight-o'clock parties that start at six.

NOELLE'S NARRATION

Boyfriendless loser. That's what she said. Ashley -- my best friend since third grade. Who actually says that kind of thing to your face?

NOELLE

Who says that kind of thing to your face?

ASHLEY

Best friends do, hun. I'm being honest here. I'm trying to help.

NOELLE'S NARRATION

Wow, was all I had to say.

NOELLE

Wow.

INT. NOELLE'S APARTMENT/BEDROOM - NIGHT

Noelle types on her computer.

NOELLE'S VOICE

How would you respond to something like that? Would you strike back?
(MORE)

NOELLE'S VOICE (CONT'D)

Or would you follow your
conscience: *If you can't say
something nice, don't say it at
all.*

INT. LADY LILIES/BREAK ROOM - DAY

Noelle and Ashley open their lockers, go for their things.
Ashley lays out her plans for the night under Noelle's
following voice-over:

NOELLE'S NARRATION

I wasn't going to ignore Ashley
like I usually do when people say
unkind things to me. But I wasn't
going to attack her either.
Instead, I decided to turn a
negative into a positive.

Ashley wraps up her thoughts:

ASHLEY

...and so that's why it's important
that I bring you along.

NOELLE

You know, plenty of girls my age
are boyfriendless, that doesn't
mean we're doomed forever.

ASHLEY

That's right, you're not doomed
forever. Because I'm taking you to
a party tonight. How soon can you
be at my place?

NOELLE

When?

ASHLEY

Come on, Noelle. Tonight. For the
party.

NOELLE

I just- I had my plans, Ash.

ASHLEY

Plans you were gonna scrap to work
a longer shift.

Noelle shuts her locker, doesn't know what to say. She waits
for Ashley to finish digging through her mess of a locker.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)
Sorry, I can't find my-

NOELLE
I better get going.

ASHLEY
I'll be just a sec.

Noelle wants to leave, but can't find the words to break away from Ashley. Ashley senses this.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)
You're taking me home, right?

NOELLE
I kinda hafta- Is there anyway Liz can take you? She should be done out there.

Ashley freezes in disbelief.

INT. NOELLE'S CAR - DAY

Noelle drives. Ashley rides.

ASHLEY
What have we always talked about?

Noelle goes to respond, but Ashley cuts her off -- guess her question was rhetorical.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)
Going to a place that's filled with more guys than we could choose from.

NOELLE
We've never talked about that.

ASHLEY
Well, wouldn't that be ideal?

Noelle goes to respond. That question was rhetorical, too...

ASHLEY (CONT'D)
If you could go somewhere that was all guys -- single guys -- all there for your choosing, wouldn't you wanna go?

Noelle goes to respond-

ASHLEY (CONT'D)
I'll tell you your answer. Yes.
Your answer's yes.

Noelle goes to respond-

ASHLEY (CONT'D)
You need a guy, don't you?

NOELLE
No.

ASHLEY
Well, I've got the- What do you
mean, no? You need a guy. And this
party tonight-

NOELLE
I kinda made up my mind about
tonight, Ash. I love you, but-

Ashley's phone RINGS:

ASHLEY'S CELL RINGER
An idiot is trying to contact you
on your mobile device... An idiot
is trying to contact you on your
mobile device...

Ashley pulls her phone out of her purse.

NOELLE
Who is it?

ASHLEY
(checking the number)
An idiot.

Ashley answers the phone.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)
Hey, you... What?... No way... Shut
up... No... No way... Nooooo
Waaaaay... OK, see you there.

Ashley hangs up.

NOELLE
What was that all about?

ASHLEY
Nothing big.

EXT. ASHLEY'S HOUSE - DAY

Noelle's car pulls up to the house, stops.

Ashley gets out.

ASHLEY

So I guess you're really set with your plans tonight?

NOELLE

Just to let you know, there are plenty of people we know who are late bloomers to love. And that's because they waited until it was perfect. So I'm not worried. I think I'm on the right track. When it's right, I'll know it. And I'll go after it.

NOELLE'S VOICE

And there it was -- a negative turned into a positive. I wasn't a boyfriendless loser. I was simply holding out for the perfect guy. The right guy.

ASHLEY

Oh, right. Doug and Carry were late bloomers. And Brandon and Tiffany, too. The perfect couples.

NOELLE

See?

ASHLEY

Doug and Carry split up and Brandon and Tiffany are getting a divorce. Oh, and Tom, who came out of the closet last year and started dating John -- yeah, well, he just left John to return to his straight roots. So I'm not sure what 'perfect' relationships you're referring to.

Ashley gives Noelle time to respond. Noelle's stumped.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)

I guess those were the ones you were referring to. It's your loss tonight if you don't go. Call if you change your mind.

Ashley turns, saunters up the driveway.

Noelle drives away.

INT. NOELLE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Noelle types away on her blog.

NOELLE'S NARRATION

In the end, I don't know if I really turned a negative into a positive. What I do know is that I actually said no to Ashley for the first time since I've known her. I never won with Ashley. Never. This time, I won.

EXT. NOELLE'S APARTMENT COMPLEX - DAY

Noelle drives into her apartment complex.

INT. NOELLE'S APARTMENT COMPLEX/HALLWAY - DAY

An exhausted Noelle drags herself down the hallway, the cell phone in her hand RINGING -- it's Ashley. Noelle doesn't answer. The ringing stops.

A telephone RING comes from one of the apartment units down the hall. The RING gets closer as Noelle nears her unit.

Noelle knows it's her apartment phone that's ringing. She reaches her door, unlocks it, opens it-

INT. NOELLE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Yup, it's Noelle's home phone RINGING.

NOELLE'S NARRATION

I never won with Ashley.

Noelle dumps her purse on the counter, looks at the caller I.D. on the phone -- it's Ashley. She doesn't pick up.

Noelle grabs her cell phone from her purse, greets her wandering cat, Rinaldo.

NOELLE

Hi, Rinaldo.

Noelle goes to:

KITCHEN

She feeds the cat, then goes to:

LIVING ROOM

She plops on the couch, scrolls through various screens on her phone, the home phone still RINGING.

Finally, the home phone stops ringing. The cell phone starts RINGING. It's Ashley.

Noelle picks up.

NOELLE

Hello.

ASHLEY (O.S.)

Where've you been? I've been calling you forever.

NOELLE

I just got home.

ASHLEY (O.S.)

I called your cell, too. Wait, this is your cell.

Noelle hits SPEAKER on her cell to put it on speaker-phone mode, sets it down. Then she's off to her freezer, gets a carton of ice cream. Grabs a spoon from the dishwasher. Back to the phone and the couch, flops down into the couch, digs into the ice cream.

ASHLEY (O.S.) (CONT'D)

I'm only trying to help you, Noelle. And I think this party tonight is really gonna, you know, help you.

NOELLE

I know, but I kinda just wanna-

ASHLEY (O.S.)

You know I'm trying to help you, right?

NOELLE

Yes, and I appreciate it.

ASHLEY (O.S.)

Help me help you, babe.

NOELLE

But I kinda just wanna-

ASHLEY (O.S.)

Can you help me then?

NOELLE

I kinda already have plans, Ash.

ASHLEY

Well that ruins my plans. Parker's gonna be there.

NOELLE

Who's Parker?

ASHLEY (O.S.)

Parker.

NOELLE

That didn't give me any additional information, Ash.

ASHLEY (O.S.)

Let me try it this way: PAR-KER.

NOELLE

(still nowhere closer to understanding)

Ohhhhh, Parker.

Noelle still doesn't know.

ASHLEY (O.S.)

You have to go with me to this party. I can't go alone.

NOELLE

Isn't Jamie going?

ASHLEY (O.S.)

With Klisman. I'm not gonna go with Jamie and Klisman. Parker won't think that's creepy or anything.

As Ashley continues to talk about Parker -- Parker this, Parker that...

NOELLE'S NARRATION

And there it was -- the real reason Ashley wanted me to go with her to her stupid New Year's Eve party.

(MORE)

NOELLE'S NARRATION (CONT'D)

And there I was, people pleaser
Noelle, never able to say no to my
best friend Ashley, never able to
do what I ever wanted to do, always
dragged into her shameless guy-
getting schemes, never, ever able
to just say no.

Rinaldo the cat jumps up on the couch, cuddles Noelle.

NOELLE

(into the phone)

I just can't go, Ash. Sorry. I
gotta go.

Noelle hangs up the phone.

NOELLE'S NARRATION

I couldn't believe what I'd just
done. I'd ended it right there.

Noelle's cell phone RINGS.

Noelle looks at Rinaldo.

The cat wants no part of this.

Noelle, of course, picks up the phone (speaker-phone mode).

NOELLE

Hello.

ASHLEY (O.S.)

I can't believe you just did that.

NOELLE

I know. I'm sorry. I just-

ASHLEY (O.S.)

Never mind. I really just need you
tonight. Come on. There'll be other
guys there for you. What if that
perfect guy you were talking about
is there?

As Ashley gets into how being boyfriendless is shameful...

NOELLE'S NARRATION

Ashley was like a bad salesperson.
I often wondered why she was still
my best friend. But I could never
leave her. I needed her. She always
set me straight. But that often
meant bad news for me.

(MORE)

NOELLE'S NARRATION (CONT'D)

I needed something definitive to back up my position here -- a solid, unquestionable defense.

Noelle exits the phone screen on her cell, goes online.

NOELLE'S NARRATION (CONT'D)

The Internet -- I discovered a large number of people in successful relationships who started dating late in life.

Ashley continues to talk...

ASHLEY (O.S.)

...This party could change all that. You could meet The One there. Mr. Perfect. Mr. Right.

NOELLE

(into the phone)

Listen to this: Before they got married, Alden and Mildred Irvin of Kansas City, Missouri, had never dated until their mid-thirties. It says here that they met at a gas station. They've been together for thirty-five years.

ASHLEY (O.S.)

Where are you looking at this?

NOELLE

It's this Living Happily Ever After web site.

ASHLEY (O.S.)

OK, so your gas station could be this party. It's now or never.

NOELLE

Listen to this: Howard and Cecil Gerson of Santa Rosa, California, each lived with their parents until they were in their forties! They met in line at a grocery store. They've been married thirty-five years. They were in their forties!

ASHLEY (O.S.)

You're gonna wait till your forties?

NOELLE

Daniel and Sophia Trubin of Colorado Springs, Colorado -- they were in their fifties when they dated for the first time in their lives. Fifties! They've been happily married for twenty-five years. When it's right, it's right, Ash. And if this party was right for me, fate would step in and make me go. Right now, fate's only telling me my ice cream is melting.

Noelle looks at a picture on her phone of the couple.

INSERT - PICTURE

Daniel and Sophia Trubin pose together at the New Year's Eve party where they met. Balloons and confetti fill the background.

BACK TO SCENE

Noelle is lost in the image.

Then she goes for another scoop of ice cream.

ASHLEY (O.S.)

One word, Noelle: Kyle.

NOELLE

Who's Kyle?

ASHLEY (O.S.)

Kyle.

NOELLE

Which Kyle?

ASHLEY (O.S.)

I don't know last names. Kyle.

INT. NOELLE'S APARTMENT/BEDROOM - DAY - (FLASHBACK)

Noelle (no splint or ankle boot) sits at her computer, looking at the profile of the beautiful KYLE HEMLOCK (30s) on a social networking web site. She scans through pictures of Kyle -- Kyle at a baseball game, Kyle flexing...

NOELLE'S NARRATION

Ahhh, Kyle Hemlock.

END FLASHBACK.

NOELLE
(into the phone)
I don't know any Kyles.

ASHLEY (O.S.)
He's gonna be there tonight.

Noelle is speechless.

Ashley knows she's reached Noelle.

ASHLEY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
You thinking about going now?

NOELLE
No. I'm just trying to think if I
know any Kyles. I just can't-

ASHLEY (O.S.)
Well, when you think of him and
realize this party is the perfect
chance to get your hands on him,
realize this, too: he's single.
Then give me a call back because
that sounds like fate to me.

CLICK -- Ashley hangs up the phone.

Noelle hangs up her phone, ponders the possibilities of the night if she so chooses to go to the New Year's Eve party.

Then she tosses her phone onto the end table and digs into her ice cream, flips through channels on TV.

INT. NOELLE'S APARTMENT/BATHROOM - DAY

Noelle, in her PJs, brushes her teeth. Rinaldo watches nearby.

Noelle's cell phone on the sink RINGS. Caller I.D. shows it's Ashley. Noelle doesn't pick up.

When the cell stops ringing, Noelle's home phone RINGS. Noelle doesn't budge. She rinses her mouth, puts her toothbrush away, wipes her hands and mouth on a towel.

There's a KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK at the door.

Noelle finally loses it. She rips the towel she's using off the bar and takes her aggression out on it, beating the towel to the ground like she's Bob De Niro in "Goodfellas."

Rinaldo hides behind the toilet.

INT. NOELLE'S APARTMENT/FRONT DOOR - DAY

Noelle, calm and collected now, opens the door to find Ashley, all done up for New Year's Eve.

NOELLE

I'll go.

ASHLEY

You're in your PJs.

NOELLE

You're wearing sparkles.

ASHLEY

But you don't wanna go.

NOELLE

No, I'll go.

ASHLEY

But now you're gonna go and you're not gonna wanna be there.

NOELLE

I'm not trying to make you feel guilty if that's what you're thinking.

Rinaldo MEOWS at Ashley.

ASHLEY

Even Rinaldo doesn't want you to go.

NOELLE

I'm gonna go.

ASHLEY

Hun, you're not- Alright, go get dressed. But you're not gonna make me feel guilty.

Rinaldo MEOWS louder in protest.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)

(to Rinaldo)

You can't come, Rinaldo.

(to Noelle)

Hurry up. I got a car. I'll drive.

We gotta go back to my place first -
- I gotta change again.

INT. NOELLE'S APARTMENT/BEDROOM - NIGHT

Noelle types her blog.

NOELLE'S NARRATION

Ashley was never going to stop bothering me until I went with her. So I figured I'd just go. Kyle being there had nothing to do with it. Ashley borrowed a car from some guy out of town or something. Her car had been in the shop two weeks now and I'd been carting her around everywhere. I took advantage of her transportation, never once thinking about the very likely chance that I'd get stuck at a party she'd never want to leave. I should've known.

EXT. MAGIC MANSION STREET - NIGHT

The mansions along the street are all done up for Christmas and Hanukkah still. Ashley, in even fancier attire than before, and Noelle, wearing an awkward dress, pull up in Ashley's borrowed car to the one empty spot on the street to park -- the street is packed.

The girls get out of the car, walk toward the Magic Mansion, which is the flagship house on the block.

Magic Mansion is decorated for New Year's: two big moving searchlights, magic white lights on string, a big wooden cut-out in the front yard depicting two hands clinking two champagne glasses. The top room of the place is lit red. Another room has party lights going wild.

NOELLE

This is a mistake. I'm gonna be the only single one here.

ASHLEY

That dress is a mistake. And that purse.

Noelle's purse is a clunker, not like Ashley's clutch purse.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)

Where's that clutch I got you?

NOELLE

I can't fit anything in it.

ASHLEY

Hun, what's there to fit? License, lipstick, aspirin, Mace.

NOELLE

Mace?

ASHLEY

Sometimes someone somewhere needs a little Mace to the face.

NOELLE

I'm gonna be the only single one here.

ASHLEY

I'm single.

NOELLE

You're gonna be with Parker.

ASHLEY

And guess what? Parker's single, too.

NOELLE

I just remembered how much I hate New Year's Eve and why I wanted to stay home tonight. New Year's Eve is worse than Valentine's Day. It's all about couples.

ASHLEY

Don't worry, Kyle's gonna be there for you.

NOELLE

I don't even know Kyle.

ASHLEY

You know him. Admit it.

NOELLE

Maybe when I see him.

ASHLEY

Well, he's hot. And he's coming alone with Parker. So stay with me... Oh, and here's a tip: You're gonna have to take off when I make my move on Parker, OK?

Noelle knows she's in for a rough evening. The two girls walk down a driveway to the Magic Mansion below.

EXT. MAGIC MANSION/PORCH - NIGHT

Noelle and Ashley approach the front door.

ASHLEY
(to Noelle)
Welcome to Magic Mansion -- your
New Year's Eve destination.

Ashley steps up onto the porch.

Noelle steps up...

She nearly twists her right ankle, falls, catches herself
before she does any damage.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)
Are you OK?

NOELLE
My ankle.

ASHLEY
Your ankle?

NOELLE
I'm fine.

ASHLEY
Is this gonna be the ankle that
comes up all night?

NOELLE
What's that mean?

ASHLEY
You know what it means. Cinco de
Mayo, St. Patrick's Day -- the
whole neck thing and then the elbow
thing. Every ten minutes I had to
hear it. And then you flipped out
and went all blahhhh.

NOELLE
I'm fine.

ASHLEY
You sure?

NOELLE
Yes.

ASHLEY

You're not gonna go all blahhhh
like at that Halloween party when-

NOELLE

If it comes to that, I'll find a
bathroom.

Ashley seems worried now.

ASHLEY

You wanna just go home?

Noelle looks up -- is Ashley serious?

ASHLEY (CONT'D)

No, your ankle looks fine.

Ashley RINGS the doorbell.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)

You just have to make it to
midnight. We'll be outta here no
later than one or two. Four, tops.

Noelle was wrong about a rough evening. It's going to be
worse than that.

BECCA (30s) answers the door, welcomes the girls.

BECCA

Happy New Year!

ASHLEY

Hi, happy New Year. So, Parker
invited us.

BECCA

Oh, Parker. We love Parker. He
should be around here somewhere.
Come on in, get something to drink.

Noelle feels left out already as Ashley goes in with Becca,
leaving Noelle on the door step.

Noelle peeks in -- the place is painted with different colors
of light and shadow like a tango club; lots of COUPLES (20s,
30s, 40s; some married, some not).

NOELLE'S NARRATION

The party was packed with couples --
couples talking with other couples,
couples making out, couples playing
couples games.

(MORE)

NOELLE'S NARRATION (CONT'D)

It looked like a lot of fun... If you were a couple. It couldn't get worse...

TANGO MUSIC starts, GROUPS OF DANCERS dance in a dance room that's viewable from the front door.

NOELLE'S NARRATION (CONT'D)

It got worse. And then I saw him.

Noelle spots Kyle, clearly an athlete, in the sitting room (just off the entryway). He shakes hands with Ashley.

KYLE

How are your vitamin levels?

ASHLEY

My vitamin levels?

KYLE

Do you do regular blood tests to check your vitamin levels?

PARKER (30s), the even hotter, even more athletic version of Kyle, makes introductions.

PARKER

(to Ashley)

Ignore him.

KYLE

You asked how much Vitamin D to take, and I told you I can't tell without a blood test. Everyone's body is different.

Noelle steps into the house -- maybe Ashley can wave her over and introduce her to Kyle.

Ashley sits with Parker, practically drooling. Noelle notices a few TVs hanging from the walls like they do in sports bars.

On the TVs: MR. NEW YEAR'S EVE (50s) offers up commentary:

MR. NEW YEAR'S EVE (ON TV)

It's the most magical night of the year, the last night of the year, a night of love, a night of cheer.

Noelle is distracted by a nearby scene:

MIKE and PREGNANT LIZ (a couple in their late 20s) and LADY WITH A BABY (30s) are chatting. Lady With A Baby tries to get Mike to hold her BABY GIRL. LADY'S HUSBAND (30s) nearby.

LADY WITH A BABY

(to Mike)

It's OK, you can hold her.

MIKE

No thanks, really.

LADY'S HUSBAND

Go on. You won't drop her.

MIKE

But I just don't wanna hold that thing. Why do you want me to hold it?

Noelle looks at another scene nearby:

STRONG MAN and MISERABLE WIFE (a couple in their 30s) are talking with OTHER COUPLES.

STRONG MAN

She wants me to be her personal action hero. She'll see two pitbulls fighting to the death, and she'll push me into the middle to stop them. One time the guy across the street was moving one of those monster gun safes, and she volunteers me to help. You know how heavy those things are?

MISERABLE WIFE

You've got the muscles, I just wanted to see you put them to use for once.

The other couples laugh.

Noelle turns back to Mike and Lady With A Baby:

Lady With A Baby hands Baby Girl to Mike, forces the baby on him. Mike puts his hands behind his back.

LADY WITH A BABY

Just take her. Don't you wanna know what it's gonna feel like to hold a baby?

MIKE

No, I can wait 'til we have ours. I'm not gonna take yours. Please don't make me.

LADY WITH A BABY

But you won't drop her.

MIKE

If you give me that thing, I'm gonna drop it.

LADY WITH A BABY

But you won't drop her, I promise.

MIKE

No, I'm telling you, I promise, I'll drop that thing on purpose if you give it to me.

Noelle is lost in these scenes, still standing in the doorway of the house.

JACK (mid to late 30s) in ragged dress-clothes approaches the house with a small card table and a number of bulky Army bags -- the kind of bags you get when you serve. Jack's got a slight limp in his walk, a limp that might go with those army bags. He stops when he gets to Noelle.

JACK

Miss?

NOELLE

(turning to see she's in Jack's way)

Oh, sorry.

JACK

Is this your place?

Noelle still doesn't move -- she's kind of frozen with fear.

NOELLE

No, sorry.

JACK

So can I get in, or what? Least you guys coulda done was leave a parking spot up front for me. I got more stuff in the van and right now I'm down the street.

NOELLE

Oh, sorry.

JACK

Don't say sorry. How about clearing up some space in the driveway for my van?

Noelle is still frozen with fear.

JACK (CONT'D)
And I still gotta get in the house.

Noelle moves out of Jack's way. Jack pushes his way and his stuff into the packed house.

Noelle enters the house behind Jack, shuts the door.

INT. MAGIC MANSION/SITTING ROOM - NIGHT

Noelle moves closer to Ashley, Parker, Kyle and some TALL AND THIN LADIES. Noelle is short, forgettable, if even seen among these ladies. She's definitely out of place (for you movie nuts, think Giulietta Masina in "Nights of Cabiria" up against the ladies of the street). Everyone talks but Noelle, everyone is sitting but Noelle. Noelle is unremarkable.

Then...

PARKER
(extending his hand for a
handshake)
Hi, Noelle. I'm Parker.

NOELLE
I'm with Ashley.

ASHLEY
We're not a couple, though. Noelle
isn't that wild.

Everyone but Noelle laughs.

Noelle sneaks a peek at Kyle. He's not paying attention.

PARKER
No guy in your life, Noelle?

NOELLE
Yes, I don't.

PARKER
Well, we're all glad you came.

NOELLE
Thanks. I mean, thank you.

Noelle sneaks another peek at Kyle. Still no love.

Parker gives his attention back to Ashley, plants a kiss on Ashley's lips. Noelle is forgotten just like that.

NOELLE (CONT'D)

I'm gonna get something to drink.

No one hears Noelle.

Noelle turns, stumbles through the people, past Kyle who, after Noelle passes, looks up at her, checks her out.

INT. MAGIC MANSION/BAR AREA - NIGHT

Noelle makes a cup of coffee. She chooses caf over decaf.

Noelle eyes plates of appetizers on the bar. Yum. But she can't take one. Not that anyone is paying attention.

The couples at the bar are too busy trying to impress each other, watching the sports bar-like assemblage of TVs showing various sports games/recap and, of course, Mr. New Year's Eve, now taking calls from viewers about New Year's Eve.

MR. NEW YEAR'S EVE (ON TV)

...We're taking calls from viewers with past New Year's Eve stories. We have Lauren on the line from Pasco, Washington. Lauren?

LAUREN (V.O. ON TV)

Hello? Mr. New Year's Eve?

MR. NEW YEAR'S EVE (ON TV)

Yes, hello, Lauren. I understand you have fond memories of New Year's Eve during your childhood.

Noelle watches, looking for hope.

LAUREN (V.O. ON TV)

I used to get the flu every New Year's Eve.

MR. NEW YEAR'S EVE (ON TV)

Eeeuh.

LAUREN (V.O. ON TV)

Every year, without a doubt. I'd hear my family out at midnight, banging pots and pans, blowing horns, yelling and screaming, having fun. And I'd be in bed, numb, unable to feel a thing.

Noelle doesn't see any signs of hope here, but then:

MR. NEW YEAR'S EVE (ON TV)

That doesn't sound like fun,
Lauren. So what changed the night
for you?

Here comes the good stuff:

LAUREN (V.O. ON TV)

As I got older and stopped getting
the flu every New Year's Eve, I
slowly began to realize that New
Year's Eve became the one night a
year guaranteed to send me into
depression. Everyone I knew
insisted I have an amazing time.
They blamed me for bringing them
down? Why not blame the Eve itself?
I blamed the Eve.

MR. NEW YEAR'S EVE (ON TV)

I'm sorry, Lauren, I missing the
'fond memories' part of your fond
memories.

LAUREN (V.O. ON TV)

That's because I have no fond
memories, Mr. New Year's Eve. I'm
not sure what New Year's Eve magic
you're talking about, unless it's
black magic...

This night keeps getting better. Noelle looks at her watch --
7:11 p.m. It's gonna be a long night.

Noelle turns, looks at everyone having a great time. Each
person has a date -- young people in love, married couples...
Everyone has someone, except for Noelle and, well, Kyle.

But, as Noelle sits down on a bar stool and examines further,
Kyle doesn't seem to be interested in meeting girls. He's
busy talking with a nearby couple about something he's
passionate about.

Noelle sips her drink, eyes the appetizers...

She sets down her drink, pulls out her cell phone, scrolls
through various screens. She looks busy anyway.

She checks her e-mail. Checks to see if it's her turn on any
of her phone games like dice and words. Not her turn.

Noelle looks up to see if anyone has even noticed her being
alone. They haven't. She sees Lady With A Baby trying to get
TALL MAN (30s) to hold Baby Girl. He doesn't want the baby.

Noelle looks at her watch -- turns from 7:11 to 7:12 p.m.
It's gonna be a real long night.

Noelle looks back down at her phone, lands on the page she was previously viewing when she was on the phone with Ashley in her apartment.

INSERT - PICTURE

Daniel and Sophia Trupin pose together at the New Year's Eve party where they met. Balloons and confetti fill the background.

BACK TO SCENE

Noelle is lost in the image.

JACK (O.S.)
(facetiously)
Why aren't you enjoying this
awesome party?

Noelle turns to find Jack limping up to the bar. He grabs a plate, stuffs it with appetizers.

NOELLE
Hello. I am. Just taking a time-out.

JACK
Yeah?

NOELLE
No, I'm good, really.

JACK
No you're not.

Huh?

JACK (CONT'D)
You're not good. You can say it, go ahead.

Noelle doesn't know what to say.

JACK (CONT'D)
You're miserable here at this stupid place.

NOELLE
I'm really fine.

JACK

No you're not. There's nothing fine about you.

Noelle is very taken aback.

Jack is somehow managing to get more appetizers on his plate.

JACK (CONT'D)

I've got more.

NOELLE

More?

JACK

There's more where all this came from.

NOELLE

Oh yeah?

JACK

You could care less.

NOELLE

I don't care less. I mean-

JACK

No, you really don't care. You just want to be home right now, watching TV, no one like me to make you feel bad about yourself.

Jack reaches behind the bar, grabs himself a champagne glass.

JACK (CONT'D)

Go ahead, tell me I'm a jerk. I am. You wanna say it. But you won't. You're nice.

NOELLE

Thank you.

JACK

No problem.

Jack sees CHAMPAGNE MAN (40s) wandering, serving guests.

JACK (CONT'D)

(holding out his glass for service)

Champagne?

Champagne Man comes over, pours a full glass for Jack.

JACK (CONT'D)

A little more.

Champagne Man pours more, practically overflows the glass.

JACK (CONT'D)

To the top.

Noelle notices this as weird, too. Champagne Man pours a couple more drops anyway.

Jack pushes a five-dollar bill into a tip glass on Champagne Man's tray, takes a couple bucks change.

JACK (CONT'D)

Thanks.

Champagne Man moves on.

Jack takes a sip, then back to Noelle.

JACK (CONT'D)

So aren't you a bit curious about what I meant when I said there's more where that came from? Wait, don't answer that. You don't care, I know.

NOELLE

I didn't say that.

JACK

But you thought it. I know.

NOELLE

No I didn't.

JACK

You don't have to disagree with me.

NOELLE

I'm not disagreeing with you.

JACK

When you strike back with an 'I'm Not,' that's usually a pretty good sign of a disagreement.

Jack finds a few more appetizers for his overflowing plate.

JACK (CONT'D)

(referring to his plate)
My work here is done.

With plate and glass in hand, Jack is ready to go...

JACK (CONT'D)
You know what you're gonna do?
You're gonna come back to my table
and help me earn my pay tonight.

Jack waits...

JACK (CONT'D)
Come on, girlie. Get up.

Noelle stands.

JACK (CONT'D)
Grab your drink. Put your phone
away first.

Noelle puts her phone in her bulky purse.

JACK (CONT'D)
Nice purse.

NOELLE
It's all I had.

JACK
Now grab your drink.

Noelle grabs her drink.

JACK (CONT'D)
And follow me.

Jack looks at Noelle's awkward dress.

JACK (CONT'D)
That dress all you had, too?

Jack turns and leads Noelle to a square table in:

INT. MAGIC MANSION/PALM READER'S ROOM - NIGHT

It's a dimly lit, very atmospheric room.

JACK
Yup, I'm the party's novelty palm
reader. I'm Jack. And you, girlie,
are my first customer.

NOELLE
You can call me Noelle.

JACK

Just tell me not to call you
girlie.

NOELLE

It doesn't bother me.

Jack sets his plate and glass on a little side table.

JACK

Yes it does. But I like Noelle. OK,
Noelle...

Jack goes to the back of the palm reader table, motions for
Noelle to sit. When she sits, he sits.

JACK (CONT'D)

You ready to have your mind blown?

NOELLE

I guess so.

Jack takes Noelle's glass and sets it on the table.

JACK

You can say you're not impressed. I
know you're not. I can tell. And I
haven't even looked at your palm
yet. Look at that.

NOELLE

That is impressive.

JACK

Come on. You think I'm a fraud. You
think I'm a fool like the rest of
these idiots here.

NOELLE

No I don't.

JACK

Yeah you do.

NOELLE

I don't have a problem with anyone
here.

JACK

Yeah you do. They're happy. You're
not.

Jack grabs a bottle of hand sanitizer on the table and pushes
it over to Noelle.

JACK (CONT'D)
Here, sanitize your hands. I don't
wanna catch anything. No offense.

NOELLE
(sanitizing)
I'm not offended.

Noelle finishes, passes the bottle to Jack so he can use it.

JACK
(pushing it aside to its
spot on the table)
I don't need it, my hands are
clean.

NOELLE
No problem.

JACK
OK, now gimme the hand you're most
comfortable writing with.

Noelle gives Jack her left hand.

JACK (CONT'D)
Lefty.

Should Noelle be offended here? Jeez.

JACK (CONT'D)
Pull yourself up, make yourself
comfortable.

Noelle scoots her chair up to the table.

JACK (CONT'D)
You're not comfortable. And don't
say you are. Because I've got your
hand. And it doesn't lie.

Jack caresses Noelle's hand, tries to get her to relax.

Noelle looks from her hand to Jack's eyes. When he looks up
and his eyes meet hers, she looks back down at her hand,
tries to relax... She can't.

JACK (CONT'D)
(caressing Noelle's hand)
You have a nice hand, Noelle.
Smooth... The compliment's intended
to creep you out.

Noelle forces a smile.

JACK (CONT'D)

Just relax. Our hands are like soft living leather. The skin is constantly renewing itself. Old skin cells flake away, new skin cells grow. We use our hands all the time -- when we work, when we clap our hands at a big idea, when we shake hands, when we clench our fists if we're uptight. Even when we don't use our hands, we're essentially creating patterns. Life experience and life patterns will show up in our palms.

Jack takes Noelle's thumb, hides it with one of his hands. With his other hand, he hides her fingers, exposes her palm.

JACK (CONT'D)

The very first thing to do when you look at anybody's hand is hide the fingers and thumb so you can see the shape of the hand itself. The shape of your hand says a lot about the type of person you are. A rounded hand more or less means you act before you think. A squared hand means you're very skeptical, that you think everything through before you take any action.

NOELLE

Is my hand round or square?

JACK

Yours isn't round or square. It's oval. I call it the Conic Hand. It's a beautiful hand and signifies that you're very emphatic. This is the ability to feel the emotions of others. It causes your aura to radiate a warm, sympathetic energy, which is attractive to the lost souls of the world.

Noelle looks up at Jack as he examines her hand. He doesn't look up, he's lost in her palm. So she hangs out on his face.

JACK (CONT'D)

Emphatic people like you seem to attract the personal confessions of strangers.

(MORE)

JACK (CONT'D)

I bet you get complete strangers
telling you their life stories,
like when you're in line at the
store.

Jack looks up, catches her staring at him.

Noelle's eyes dart back down to her hand.

Jack stops, uses his stare to regain Noelle's attention. She
won't look up.

JACK (CONT'D)

Or with people at work. You
probably work with the general
public.

NOELLE

Retail. I work at Lady Lilies.

JACK

The general public.

Jack moves on to the top line of Noelle's hand.

JACK (CONT'D)

This line here is your heart line.
It'll tell me if you're a giver or
a receiver, if you're selfish or
unselfish, more or less. Your heart
line ends under the second finger,
which means...

Jack looks up at Noelle.

Noelle looks up. Ah, he got her. She wants to know what it
means.

JACK (CONT'D)

Which means you're not selfish or
unselfish.

NOELLE

Oh, OK.

JACK

Which means what?

NOELLE

What do you mean?

JACK

If you're not selfish and you're
not unselfish, then what are you?

NOELLE

I don't know.

JACK

Then why'd you say, 'Oh, OK,' like you agreed with my assessment?

NOELLE

I just mean 'Oh, OK,' like I'm waiting for what's next.

JACK

Exactly my point -- it means you're a giving person to a fault. You put the need of others in front of your own. You're so worried about pleasing me, that you'll just go along with me, even if you don't know or care about what I'm saying.

Jack points out the vertical line on Noelle's hand.

JACK (CONT'D)

This line -- the fate line -- shows that you're a people pleaser. Like the fact that you're really uncomfortable right now, you're hot, you wanna take off your jacket, but you won't because you're afraid you'll offend me with the interruption. Go ahead, take off your jacket.

NOELLE

(taking off her jacket)

I guess it is kinda hot in here.

JACK

Of course it is. But even if you weren't hot, if you were freezing, you'd take off your jacket to please me. You're a people pleaser.

Noelle doesn't know how to respond -- put the jacket back on or leave it off? She leaves it off, tries to settle back in her chair. Jack takes Noelle's left hand again.

JACK (CONT'D)

I can also tell if you're gonna live a long life or a short life.

Jack looks at Noelle's fingers this time.

NOELLE

Let me guess -- I won't live a long
life or a short life?

JACK

(taken aback by her
somewhat new comfort)
Nice. But you won't make it home
tonight.

NOELLE

What?

JACK

Just kidding.

NOELLE

That's kidding? That was a horrible
joke.

JACK

I'm just trying to get you to
relax, Noelle. You're so tense. But
you're almost there.

Jack releases Noelle's hand.

JACK (CONT'D)

You can have your hand back. I can
tell you're not really into this.

NOELLE

(standing up)
No, I'm fine.

JACK

You're lying, Noelle.

NOELLE

No I'm not.

JACK

The great agreer finally disagrees.

NOELLE

I'm really not. I had-

JACK

I can get any girl to disagree with
me, Noelle. Before you go -- I'll
say one other thing...

Noelle stops, looks, listens.

JACK (CONT'D)

You're going to meet him tonight.

NOELLE

Meet who?

JACK

The One. Mr. Right. Before this night is over, you're gonna meet the guy you wanted to meet when you decided to go to this stupid party. The New Year's Eve magic you've been waiting for will show itself.

Noelle doesn't talk. She doesn't know what to say.

NOELLE'S NARRATION

New Year's Eve magic? It was like ghosts and goblins on Halloween. Like Santa Claus on Christmas. I stopped believing in New Year's Eve magic when it failed to exist, like monsters and Santa. But what if? What if this palm reader was right? What if I met Mr. Right tonight? What if there was magic? Well then, I'd surely screw it up.

NOELLE

Thank you for the palm reading.

JACK

You're welcome, girlie.

Noelle pauses... Walks away.

INT. MAGIC MANSION/TV ROOM - NIGHT

Noelle sits alone, but she's among groups of people watching TV (Mr. New Year's Eve) and socializing. She looks across the room at Ashley and Parker. And she looks at Kyle nearby. Is Kyle the one Jack was referring to?

NOELLE'S NARRATION

Knowing I'd meet The One that night didn't make me any more comfortable. I couldn't make any moves. I'd never made such a daring move in my life. I couldn't just approach Kyle. I couldn't just say hello. And then what? Say I think he's The One. I couldn't do that.

(MORE)

NOELLE'S NARRATION (CONT'D)

Ashley could do that. She never had a problem doing that kind of thing.

Noelle looks at the time on her watch -- 7:57 p.m.

She takes out her phone, text-messages Ashley.

INSERT - TEXT MESSAGE

Noelle types: "I just had my palm read."

BACK TO SCENE

Noelle goes to press SEND on her phone, but hesitates.

NOELLE'S NARRATION (CONT'D)

Ashley could help. She could introduce me to Kyle, maybe. She could fill in the conversation gaps if I froze up. She could talk me up, make me look good. She'd open up the spot next to Kyle and tell me to sit down. She could be the magic Jack was talking about. What if? What if that's how it could go down? What if there was magic on that night? Well then, I'd surely screw it up.

Noelle shuts off her phone, looks up at Ashley talking with Parker and Kyle.

Noelle turns her phone back on, sends her text message to Ashley, shuts off her phone.

NOELLE'S NARRATION (CONT'D)

There was nothing I could do after that. The message was sent. Ashley would see it, ask me what the palm reader said, she'd get it out of me no matter how hard I tried not to tell her, and then she'd take action. And there was nothing I could do but go along with whatever she might do.

Ashley doesn't react to the text message. For all Noelle knows, she didn't hear it or feel the vibration of it.

NOELLE'S NARRATION (CONT'D)

Except, nothing happened. Ashley didn't respond. I thought that maybe she wasn't responding for a reason.

(MORE)

NOELLE'S NARRATION (CONT'D)

Maybe I wasn't supposed to meet Kyle like that. Maybe New Year's Eve magic had its own plans. Maybe Kyle wasn't even the right Mr. Right. What if? What if Kyle wasn't Mr. Right and Ashley saw that text? What if she tried to set me up with Kyle and Kyle wasn't the right guy? Well then, I'd most definitely screw it all up.

Noelle stands, shoots out of the room.

INT. MAGIC MANSION/PALM READER'S ROOM - NIGHT

Noelle enters the room, looking for Jack. Jack is not there.

Noelle wanders out into the house.

INT. MAGIC MANSION/DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Noelle walks by the packed room, people eating, socializing. Lady With A Baby is trying to pawn her Baby Girl off on someone else, an OLDER MAN.

LADY WITH A BABY

You won't drop her. Go on, you can hold her.

OLDER MAN

(taking Baby Girl)
Shouldn't she be in bed right now?

LADY WITH A BABY

(turning, going inside)
I'll be right back.

OLDER MAN

Where are you going?

Lady With A Baby is gone.

Noelle looks around for Jack... He's not here either.

EXT. MAGIC MANSION/PATIO - NIGHT

Noelle goes outside, sees more TVs showing sports games and Mr. New Year's Eve. And a crowd gathered around something going on. She investigates.

Inside the circle of people is a MAGICIAN doing magic tricks. This party is ridiculously extravagant.

INT. MAGIC MANSION/HALLWAYS - NIGHT

Noelle strolls down the hallway, having given up on her search for Jack. Now she's just wandering, passing time.

She turns a corner and sees Jack ahead of her. Jack turns his attention to a room off the hall. Noelle follows him into:

INT. MAGIC MANSION/BEANBAG ROOM - NIGHT

The room is padded with beanbags -- the walls and the floor. Jack is marveling when he notices Noelle is behind him.

JACK
This is literally a 'bed' room.

NOELLE
Is this a beanbag room?

JACK
That's what money will buy you -- a lot of nothing to do with anything.

NOELLE
Can you imagine living here?

JACK
No. This place is wasteful.

Jack battles the beanbags to the center of the room, flops down onto his butt.

Noelle doesn't even attempt to meet him out there.

JACK (CONT'D)
That reminds me -- I forgot to put out my tip jar before you sat down at my table. So you didn't get a chance to give me a tip for your palm reading.

NOELLE
Oh.

Noelle goes into her purse, takes out some cash.

NOELLE (CONT'D)
(holding the cash out)
Here ya go.

JACK
Well, bring it here.

NOELLE
It seems kinda hard to walk over.

JACK
You haven't even tried. Come on.

Noelle takes a step. It's awkward, but she progresses.

Jack lays back, looks up at the surrounding walls and ceiling, all decorated with different color hand prints.

Noelle reaches Jack, hands him the cash.

Jack doesn't take it.

JACK (CONT'D)
Just drop it.

Noelle drops it on Jack's chest. No response.

JACK (CONT'D)
You been thinking about who Mr.
Right might be?

NOELLE
Not really.

JACK
Oh yeah? I bet.

NOELLE
Who do you think it is?

JACK
The question is: Who do you think
it is?

NOELLE
I don't know.

JACK
Yeah you do.

NOELLE
Not really.

JACK
Oh, now it's 'not really.'

NOELLE
Well maybe... Kinda.

JACK

No wonder you're single. But you'll say you're a career woman, right?

NOELLE

Huh?

JACK

That's not working out for you either, is it? Probably barely make the rent on some little apartment you barely fit in.

NOELLE

No. Well, I have an opportunity higher up at the Lady Lilies corporate office.

JACK

But you're not gonna do anything about it.

INT. NOELLE'S APARTMENT/BEDROOM - NIGHT

Noelle turns from her computer to the manila envelope on her desk addressed to the Lady Lilies corporate office.

Then she types.

NOELLE'S NARRATION

I couldn't feel worse.

INT. MAGIC MANSION/BEANBAG ROOM - NIGHT

Jack examines Noelle.

JACK

Homely-looking, too. That's not for everyone.

NOELLE'S NARRATION

I felt worse.

NOELLE

I guess I really suck. My looks suck, my apartment sucks, my job sucks with no future.

JACK

There you go, get defensive. Now stick it to me.

Noelle snatches up the cash she'd given Jack.

NOELLE

I guess with my sucky job I can't afford to give you a tip.

Jack is shocked.

NOELLE (CONT'D)

You're right -- I suck.

Noelle takes off -- she never stood up for herself before.

NOELLE'S NARRATION

To think -- I could've been home feeling just fine, falling asleep by now. Instead I felt like a jerk.

INT. MAGIC MANSION/HALLWAYS - NIGHT

Noelle stomps through the house.

NOELLE'S NARRATION

But it wasn't too late to end this night. My plan was to find Ashley, tell her I was leaving, that I'd just take a cab home, then I'd find that ice cream I'd wanted all day, finish the entire thing, and fall asleep on the couch before the New Year. It was that easy.

MAGIC MANSION/TV ROOM

Noelle enters the room, finds Ashley.

NOELLE

Ash!

Ashley looks up. Then she jumps up out of her seat and shoots over to Noelle.

ASHLEY

Is it Kyle?

NOELLE

What?

ASHLEY

Your palm reading. I got your text. Did that guy say it was Kyle?

NOELLE

That guy was a creep. And creepy.

ASHLEY

Kyle?

NOELLE

No, the palm reader.

ASHLEY

Yeah, he's pretty creepy... But he's cute.

NOELLE

You think every guy is cute.

ASHLEY

What's wrong with that? And don't change the subject. Did he tell you if you and Kyle were-

NOELLE

No. Why would he say Kyle?

ASHLEY

Because that's what he said, right?

NOELLE

No. Not really.

ASHLEY

Why are you downin'?

NOELLE

I'm not feeling well.

ASHLEY

Here we go. Here comes that ankle.

NOELLE

No, my ankle's fine. I'm just exhausted and I wanna go home.

ASHLEY

You're gonna mess up everything I just set up for you. I talked to Kyle about you. And now you're gonna play the whole 'you don't feel good' thing. That's not gonna work, babe.

NOELLE

I just have other stuff I wanna do.

ASHLEY
Like what?

NOELLE
I just-

ASHLEY
You just what?

NOELLE
I just forgot. I'm gonna go home,
OK?

Ashley takes Noelle by that left wrist.

ASHLEY
Come on.

Ashley takes Noelle out of the room toward the front door.

EXT. MAGIC MANSION/PORCH - NIGHT

Ashley and Noelle step outside, shut the door behind them.

ASHLEY
You're acting crazy. Now, I already
got things going with you and Kyle.
Don't screw it up.

NOELLE
I don't want it.

ASHLEY
Yes you do. And between you and me,
I need this to work with you two.

NOELLE
What?

ASHLEY
It makes Parker jealous, like I'm
busy with you and Kyle, not giving
him enough attention.

Noelle can't believe it.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)
I know it sounds selfish and maybe
a little ridiculous, but Parker's
playing hard to get. So I wanna,
you know, up the stakes.

Noelle still can't believe it. Then again, this is Ashley...
Yeah, Noelle can believe it.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)

What do you say? We can both help
each other here. I help you get
Kyle, you help me seal the deal
with Parker.

NOELLE'S NARRATION

My night couldn't get any worse. I
knew it wasn't going to get any
better. Ashley wouldn't let me go
home for that to happen. I wouldn't
say no to her. I never did. Right
there was one more reason why I
sucked. If there was a positive
side to the whole thing, it's that
when you suck at everything, you
don't have to be good at anything.
And somehow that train of thought
gave me the courage to say:

NOELLE

Alright. Let's go talk to Kyle.

Noelle and Ashley go inside.

NOELLE'S NARRATION

I didn't have the courage to say no
to Ashley, but I was going to say
hello to Kyle. I was setting myself
up for humiliation, and worse,
humiliation in front of a house
full of people. But I told myself I
didn't care.

INT. MAGIC MANSION/TV ROOM - NIGHT

Ashley and Noelle enter the room, battle all those standing
to get to the couch where Parker and Kyle are sitting.

A MIDDLE-AGED MAN is holding Baby Girl.

MIDDLE-AGED MAN

(to anyone who will
listen)

Where'd this kid's mom go?

Noelle goes past Middle-aged Man, gets closer to Kyle.

NOELLE'S NARRATION

Each step through the house and toward Kyle made me more and more nervous. The courage I'd had moments before didn't last long. I didn't know what I was going to say. But there I was, getting ready to really do it. I was practically in Kyle's personal space. This was really...going...to happen... I walked right up to him... And then I turned around.

Noelle turns to Ashley.

NOELLE

Oh, I forgot something.

Just like that -- Noelle takes off out of the room, leaving Ashley far behind.

INT. MAGIC MANSION/STAIRWELL - NIGHT

Noelle flies up the stairs, not looking where she's going, only searching behind her to see if anyone's tailing her. She climbs the stairs until she gets to:

MAGIC MANSION/UPSTAIRS HALLS

Noelle runs down the halls, approaches a safe haven -- a closed door.

INT. MAGIC MANSION/KIDS ROOM - NIGHT

Noelle busts into the room -- a very large room, split in half by a hanging bed sheet, BOYS on one side, GIRLS on the other. Noelle heaves the door shut.

The Boys and the Girls stare at her.

Noelle turns to see the kids (between ages 4 and 13).

NOELLE

Oh, hello. Is this kids only here?

TALL BOY (about 11 years old), who's in the middle of a video game, is annoyed with Noelle.

TALL BOY

Yes.

TALL GIRL (about 11 years old) approaches Noelle to safeguard her from the boys.

TALL GIRL
No, you're fine here.
(to Noelle)
He's such a jerk. Come with me if
you wanna live.

Noelle doesn't move.

TALL BOY
Great, another girl.

TALL GIRL
(to Tall Boy)
She's a lady, jerk.

TALL BOY
Same species.

Noelle spots the clock on the wall -- 8:10 p.m. Only 8:10!

Her phone BEEPS -- she's got a text.

TEXT: Ashley: where u go??? come back

Noelle looks up from her phone, examines that hanging bed sheet.

Tall Girl notices Noelle's reaction to the sheet.

TALL GIRL
Trust me -- it's for our
protection. There's no getting
along with those boys. They're what
you call No-One's-Idea-Of-Alright.

TALL BOY
Can you girls keep it down?

Noelle's phone BEEPS again -- another text.

TEXT: Ashley: can't find you!!! where r u

Noelle looks up from her phone.

TALL GIRL
So, do you wanna come with me?

Noelle sees that the girls are watching TV and eating ice cream -- they have the right idea.

Noelle's phone BEEPS -- yet another text.

TEXT: Ashley: u upstairs hiding?

Noelle looks up from her phone.

NOELLE
I can't stay here.

TALL GIRL
It's OK.

NOELLE'S NARRATION
It would've been OK. I think I could've spent the rest of the night there with those girls and their linen wall blocking them from the world. It all would've been OK. But nothing was OK.

Noelle smiles.

NOELLE
OK.

Tall Girl takes Noelle to:

GIRLS SIDE OF THE ROOM

TALL GIRL
(sincerely to Noelle)
That's a pretty dress.

NOELLE
It's all I had.

The Girls greet Noelle.

TALL GIRL
We're watching "Boy of My Dreams."
It's pretty good. The jokes are good.

NOELLE'S NARRATION
Life is a journey, not a destination. That might be true to some, but not for me. I hate the journey. I hate surprises. The unknown is not a rush to me. It's terrifying. And I was deathly afraid of what was about to happen.

Noelle's phone BEEPS -- text message.

TEXT: Ashley: someone to meet u.

Noelle looks up in a panic.

LITTLE GIRL (around 6 years old) steps forward.

LITTLE GIRL
You're safe here. The boys can't
harm you.

Then HEAVYSET GIRL (around 10 years old) speaks.

HEAVYSET GIRL
Boys stink.

TALL GIRL
Boys are slobs.

TALL BOY (O.S.)
Girls are the slobs. Just ask one
to find something. Then good luck
getting it.

Noelle's phone BEEPS -- text message.

TEXT: Ashley: name starts with K and ends with YLE

Noelle's gotta get out of there.

TALL GIRL
(to Tall Boy on the other
side of the curtain)
Yeah, well, boys are lazy. Just ask
one to get up from his video game.
And good luck waiting for the game
to break, cuz he isn't quitting
unless it does.

A STUFFED BEAR flies over the curtain and bombs the girls.

Heavyset Girl throws the bear back over.

TALL BOY (O.S.)
Nice throw.

NOELLE
(to the girls)
I really gotta go.

TALL GIRL
Why? You can stay. Don't let those
boys bother you.

Noelle's phone BEEPS -- text message.

TEXT: Ashley: i know where u r

Noelle's seriously gotta get out of there.

But she does nothing. Wait, she's going to do something...

She stresses out. She hyperventilates.

TALL GIRL (CONT'D)
(to Noelle)
What's wrong?

NOELLE
Nothing.

TALL GIRL
What are you doing with your
breathing?

NOELLE
I don't know. Just breathing.

TALL GIRL
That's not breathing...
(pointing to Heavysset
Girl)
She's breathing.
(then)
I'm breathing.

Noelle stops breathing.

TALL GIRL (CONT'D)
You stopped breathing.

HEAVYSET GIRL
Breathe.

The girls gather around Noelle. They're concerned.

TALL GIRL
You should get some air.

Noelle's phone BEEPS -- text message.

TEXT: Ashley: Found u

Noelle looks up at the door.

NOELLE
(to the Girls)
No, I'm fine.

Noelle's phone BEEPS -- text message.

TEXT: Ashley: yoo hoo over here

Noelle buries her head in her lap.

NOELLE (CONT'D)
I just wanna go home.

TALL BOY (O.S.)
Who's crying over there?

TALL GIRL
Mind your own business.

TALL BOY (O.S.)
It is my business -- it's annoying.

TALL GIRL
(to Tall Boy)
Shut up.

TALL BOY (O.S.)
You shut up. And quiet that lady
down.

Noelle's phone RINGS.

Noelle doesn't look. She knows who it is. Her
hyperventilating starts back up.

TALL GIRL
(to Noelle)
Never mind him. He's a boy. They
don't know anything.

Noelle's breathing ramps up...

TALL BOY (O.S.)
Boys don't know anything? Let me
ask you something -- what makes you
think girls are so smart when they
go shopping with no intentions of
making a purchase?

Still ramping...

TALL GIRL
It's called pricing things out.
That's why you and dad bought a
twenty-dollar backpack for thirty
dollars.

Noelle's phone stops ringing.

TALL BOY (O.S.)

By the time you and mom drove from one place to another, you would've wasted well over the savings in gas, wear and tear on the car, and time. Time is money. It's called thinking things out.

Noelle's phone BEEPS -- text message.

Noelle is an emotional wreck. Heavysset Girl tries to calm her down.

NOELLE

I'm not feeling well.

Other Girls progressively surround Noelle to help, but they're crowding her.

Another BEEP from Noelle's phone.

NOELLE (CONT'D)

I'm gonna throw up.

Is she really gonna...

Oh damn, she's really gonna...

Yup, here it comes.

Then another BEEP.

And another.

NOELLE (CONT'D)

Where's a bathroom?

Noelle tries to escape the group, goes for that door.

She needs a bathroom quick. Here comes that...

Noelle reaches the door, opens it...

She looks up with great fear...

INT. NOELLE'S APARTMENT/BEDROOM - NIGHT

Noelle is at her computer, thinking of what to write next in her blog.

Blocked.

Then she types...

NOELLE'S NARRATION

I don't think it was as bad as
Ashley says it was.

INT. MAGIC MANSION/HALLWAYS - NIGHT

Ashley and Kyle at the door, Kyle all open arms and all
"Ahhhhh!" with Noelle coming at him.

Noelle goes to hurl...

BACK TO NOELLE'S APARTMENT/BEDROOM

Noelle on the computer.

NOELLE'S NARRATION

Oooops.

MAGIC MANSION/HALLWAYS OUTSIDE BATHROOM

Ashley is at the bathroom door, someone (Kyle) inside with
the sink running.

ASHLEY

Kyle, is it bad? It was just an
accident.

Kyle SPITTING. GARGLING.

Yikes!

KYLE (O.S.)

It's fine. Don't worry about it.

ASHLEY

The good news is you totally
blocked me.

Maybe not the best thing to say.

NOELLE'S APARTMENT/BEDROOM

Noelle on the computer.

NOELLE'S NARRATION

I really don't think it was as bad
as all that.

MAGIC MANSION/HALLWAYS OUTSIDE BATHROOM

Ashley grabs Noelle from down the hall, ashamed, drags her to
the bathroom door.

ASHLEY

Kyle? You almost cleaned up? You still wanna meet Noelle?

KYLE (O.S.)

I think we just did.

Noelle turns, tries to escape down the hall again. Ashley grabs, holds her.

ASHLEY

She's right here to meet you. Kyle, this is Noelle.

(to Noelle, motioning to the bathroom door)

Noelle, this is Kyle.

NOELLE'S APARTMENT/BEDROOM

Noelle on the computer.

NOELLE'S NARRATION

Yeah, I'm pretty one-hundred percent, somewhat sure that this scene is all built up.

MAGIC MANSION/HALLWAYS OUTSIDE BATHROOM

The door opens, Kyle's face and hair still wet, his shirt completely soaked.

BACK TO NOELLE'S APARTMENT/BEDROOM

Noelle on the computer.

NOELLE'S NARRATION (CONT'D)

Double oops.

MAGIC MANSION/HALLWAYS OUTSIDE BATHROOM

Kyle extends his hand to shake Noelle's.

KYLE

Nice to meet you, Noelle.

Kyle's hand hangs there...

ASHLEY

And I think by now Parker is wondering where I am. Have fun, you guys.

And Ashley's out of there.

INT. MAGIC MANSION/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A quiet, very nervous Noelle stands with Kyle in a LINE OF LASER BLAST PARTICIPANTS waiting to get Laser Blast gear.

LASER BLAST COORDINATOR (20s) explains the rules of the game.

LASER BLAST COORDINATOR

Now it's gonna be cold outside, so I suggest you put on coats and gloves. If you don't have any gloves, or if yours are too thick to handle a weapon, your hosts have provided thin gloves that'll give you the comfort of warmth and proper shooting accuracy...

NOELLE

(to Kyle)

I think I'm gonna go find Ashley.

KYLE

You're not up to this?

NOELLE

I'm not really good at this.

KYLE

How are your vitamin levels?

NOELLE

I don't know.

Kyle and Noelle reach the front of the line, choose their gear from boxes. Kyle adjusts the size of a hat he's grabbed.

NOELLE (CONT'D)

So I guess I'll head inside.

Kyle hands the hat to Noelle.

KYLE

Here, try this on.

NOELLE

OK.

Noelle tries it. It's clunky, has a loose wire inside.

KYLE

It's OK -- you don't feel the laser. It's a sensor, like from a remote control.

(MORE)

KYLE (CONT'D)

It basically triggers the sensors on your hat or vest and makes the lights flash.

Kyle gets the rest of their gear, and as they gear up:

KYLE (CONT'D)

Anyway, it's good to check your vitamin levels on a regular basis. It's a simple blood test. It's the only way I know I don't have any vitamin deficiencies. So, like, if you wanna know if your body is running optimally -- people always ask what vitamins they should take. Well, one: Everyone's body is different. So the basic thing you have to do is get blood work done.

Both looking ready for battle.

KYLE (CONT'D)

I think we're ready for battle.

He walks off. Noelle has no choice but to follow.

EXT. MAGIC MANSION/COURTYARD - NIGHT

Cold.

Noelle, geared up and in the Laser Blast zone, sets out for laser combat.

NOELLE'S NARRATION

Now Laser Blast is a game of skill, agility, confidence and other attributes I know for a fact I don't possess.

Kyle is by Noelle's side, very serious about the battle, but he notices Noelle's continued nervousness.

KYLE

You really don't feel the laser. It's a sensor, like from a remote control. It just triggers the sensors...

Noelle is shot in the head -- her hat sensors light up...

Then they SPARK -- POP POP POW!

NOELLE

Owww!

KYLE

Are you OK?

NOELLE

I'm fine.

The hat LIGHTS UP. SPARKS again.

NOELLE (CONT'D)

Owww! I'm fine. I think it's done.

The hat SPARKS again, SIZZLES, SMOKES.

KYLE

Take it off.

Kyle goes to slap the hat off Noelle, hits her ear -- SMACK!
Noelle gets the hat off...

She grabs her smacked ear...

She reaches up to her smoke-marked head.

KYLE (CONT'D)

Are you OK? It's not supposed-
You're not supposed to feel the
laser. It's just a sensor. It's
just supposed to...

Kyle is shot in the head -- his hat LIGHTS UP and BEEPS.

KYLE (CONT'D)

...light up and beep.

NOELLE'S NARRATION

That was a ton of fun.

KYLE

See? It's not supposed to hurt. You
wanna go inside and get warm?

INT. MAGIC MANSION/DINETTE - NIGHT

Kyle opens the sliding glass door for Noelle. They enter.

NOELLE'S NARRATION

Now, while I was sucking at Laser Blast, getting electrocuted and causing Kyle's Laser Blast death, Jack the palm reader was becoming quite the party magnet.

BLOWN MIND GUY (20s) walks by with SKEPTICAL GIRLFRIEND (20s).

BLOWN MIND GUY

Whoa! I normally don't go in for all that voo doo-fortune, palm reading stuff, but how the heck did he know we're gonna get married? We haven't even talked about it yet. I mean, I know you're The One. But how the heck did he know you're The One. It's like I'm a believer now.

Skeptical Girlfriend is skeptical of the fortune telling.

Kyle and Noelle make their way through the house to:

OUTSIDE PALM READER'S ROOM

A LONG LINE OF FORTUNE SEEKERS serpentine out of the room and through the area.

BUBBLY WOMAN (20s) and JUST-AS-BUBBLY FRIEND (20s) are leaving the Palm Reader's Room.

BUBBLY WOMAN

Wow! He said Paul's The One! I knew it. I knew he was The One. I just knew it.

JUST-AS-BUBBLY FRIEND

I knew it, too. But now we know for real that he's definitely The One.

NOELLE'S NARRATION

It was clear that magic -- real magic -- was in the air.

LOUD MUSIC gets LOUDER. The CROWD gets LOUDER.

Kyle grabs Noelle's hand so they don't get separated.

Whoa, he's holding her hand.

NOELLE'S NARRATION (CONT'D)
(referring to the hand-
holding)

I think that magic even found me.

KYLE

It's crazy in here, huh?

NOELLE

Yeah. Loud.

KYLE

Huh?

NOELLE

Loud!

KYLE

Yeah!

Noelle and Kyle are stuck in the mess of people.

KYLE (CONT'D)

It's a pretty cool party, huh?

NOELLE

Yeah! Amazing!

KYLE

Right?

NOELLE

Yeah!

KYLE

It's kinda crowded in here.

NOELLE

Yeah!

KYLE

Crowded!

NOELLE

Yeah!

Kyle tries for one of those intimate "I'm looking into your eyes" moments.

Noelle doesn't notice.

Oh wait, she notices. And they lock eyes.

Turn away, turn away...

She can't turn away. Doesn't want to turn away. She smiles.
Kyle smiles.

KYLE
Is it too crowded in here for you?

NOELLE
Kinda!

KYLE
Is it too crowded?

NOELLE
OK!

KYLE
And too loud?

NOELLE
Yeah!

Some more of that uncomfortable intimate eye contact. More smiling. Wait, they're still holding hands.

NOELLE (CONT'D)
Can you hear me?

KYLE
No! I feel great! I check all my vitamin levels on a regular basis to see if I have any vitamin deficiencies! You wanna go someplace where we can actually hear each other?

Noelle smiles.

NOELLE
Sure!

Kyle takes Noelle into his arms to get her through the crowd.

KYLE
(referring to the arm bit)
I just don't want to get split up!

NOELLE
OK!

NOELLE'S NARRATION
It was more than OK. It was also clear that Jack the palm reader was more than a novelty act.
(MORE)

NOELLE'S NARRATION (CONT'D)

All night, he was solidifying relationships. He knew I'd find The One, and I was pretty sure I did. Yup, Jack's fortune-telling was the real deal.

Noelle can finally just breathe.

Kyle leads Noelle toward a more secluded area of the house.

Meanwhile, inside the:

PALM READER'S ROOM

At Jack's table, unbeknownst to Noelle, HEY GIRL (20s) yanks her hand from Jack's grasp, pops up out of the chair.

HEY GIRL

Heeeeyyyy! You told my friend Jeremiah was The One for her, too. I knew you weren't for real.

Guess you can't fool 'em all.

INT. MAGIC MANSION/BILLIARDS ROOM - NIGHT

The room is lit red from a neon red bar sign near a little bar in a corner. There's an old-fashioned jukebox, dart boards, drinking tables and, of course, a pool table.

Kyle leads Noelle in. She seems a little more confident.

KYLE

This place is insane, huh?

NOELLE

These people must be loaded.

KYLE

I'll agree with that. I don't even know who they are. I just came along with Parker.

NOELLE

Yeah, I don't know them either. I just came along with Ashley. Must be nice, though.

The MUSIC DOWNSTAIRS TURNS TO TANGO -- it's not loud here.

KYLE

There's that tango again. You know how to tango?

NOELLE

Not really. I mean no.

KYLE

The basic idea of it is pretty basic. It's a 'feel' kind of thing, not so much a mental thing. It's a living, breathing conversation between the dancers' bodies. I can show you the basics in less than a minute. Here...

Kyle takes Noelle's right hand in his left hand at a 45-degree angle, puts his right hand around her back, walks her through the steps...

KYLE (CONT'D)

Basically, the tango has a regular rhythm to it -- 'Slow, slow, quick-quick, slow.' Or 'T, A, N-G, O.' So on the T, I step forward with my left foot. And you step backward on your right foot. On the A, I step forward on my right foot...

NOELLE

And I step back with my left foot?

KYLE

See, you don't even have to think about it. It's alive in your body.

Kyle looks over at the jukebox.

KYLE (CONT'D)

I wonder if there's any tango on the box.

Kyle shoots over to the jukebox to see.

That nervousness creeps up on Noelle again.

Kyle scans songs.

Noelle sits on a nearby chair to calm down.

Kyle still scans songs.

Noelle hyperventilates again, like in the kids' room.

Still scanning.

Noelle eyes the door.

Kyle's clearly not finding anything.

Wait, where'd Noelle go?

KYLE (CONT'D)

I think we're outta luck here.

Kyle turns...

No Noelle.

Kyle goes after her, out the door...

Noelle slips back into the room, Kyle on her tail.

Noelle falls back into that chair, breathing out of control.

KYLE (CONT'D)

What are your symptoms?

Kyle kneels down next to her, lays his hand on her knee.

KYLE (CONT'D)

I'm serious -- something as simple as vitamin deficiency anemia can cause shortness of breath, fatigue, dizziness, pale skin... Let me see your tongue. Is it swollen?

NOELLE

I'm fine.

Noelle's breathing gets more intense.

KYLE

What are you doing?

NOELLE

Nothing.

KYLE

That's not nothing. That's something. What is it?

NOELLE

I know it looks bad and sounds bad, and you're probably thinking there's-

The breathing slows.

KYLE
(convincing himself and
her that she's OK)
There you go. It's getting better.

Noelle pulls her leg from under Kyle's hand.

Kyle gives her room.

NOELLE
Sorry. I don't-

KYLE
If you're not comfortable with
tango, we don't have to do it. Most
people just don't like it because
they think it's difficult, but it's
really pretty basic. I didn't have
much more to show you-

NOELLE
No.

Noelle stands, goes to Kyle for the rest of the lesson.

NOELLE (CONT'D)
I'm OK, really.

Kyle moves in. They get into position, this time even closer.

KYLE
You were probably thinking this was
like some corny Hallmark movie move
or something, like I was
shamelessly trying to create sexual
tension here... Like this was all a
sleazy plan to get you to... Is it
working?

Kyle studies Noelle to see if what he's doing is working.

Their eyes meet.

It is working! But Noelle can't take the intimacy after all.

She escapes Kyle's grasp, and she's out of the room.

INT. MAGIC MANSION/BAR AREA - NIGHT

Noelle charges through the crowded room toward Ashley.

NOELLE'S NARRATION

I knew this for a fact: I couldn't breathe and I wanted to go home. My plan was to find Ashley and tell her to get me out of there. Forget the cab. I couldn't wait for a cab. I could already taste that ice cream, I could feel my couch. I'd demand that Ashley take me home. It was that easy.

Noelle gets to Ashley.

NOELLE

Is there any way you can take me home, please?

ASHLEY

What?

Ashley takes Noelle to a quiet corner of the room.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)

What's going on?

NOELLE

I just need to go home. Maybe I'm just nervous about applying for that corporate job. I don't-

ASHLEY

Noelle? Why are you-

NOELLE

I just have to go. Please.

ASHLEY

It's like nine o' clock. We agreed to stay to at least midnight.

NOELLE

I can't make it to midnight.

ASHLEY

Babe-

NOELLE

What do you want from me, Ash? What? Money?

ASHLEY

That's an insult, Noelle. I just want you to have a good time.

NOELLE
(going into her purse)
How about twenty dollars?

ASHLEY
Not even fifty. Stop that.

NOELLE
(going back into her
purse)
Seventy-five dollars?

Ashley takes the cash, puts it in her clutch.

ASHLEY
I'm only taking this because-

NOELLE
Now take me home.

ASHLEY
Noelle-

NOELLE
Ashley, stop talking and just take
me home. Now!

Noelle is shocked she snapped like that.

NOELLE (CONT'D)
I'm so sorry, Ash. I didn't mean-

Noelle tries to pull herself together...

ASHLEY
Just breathe, hun. If that job's
that big of a worry, then don't
send the letter.

NOELLE
No, it's fine.

Ashley feels bad for Noelle. Maybe she'll just take her home.

ASHLEY
You don't seem like it's fine.

NOELLE
I'm fine. I promise.

Ashley's phone RINGS:

ASHLEY'S CELL RINGER

An idiot is trying to contact you
on your mobile device... An idiot
is trying to contact you on your
mobile device...

Ashley looks at the caller I.D.

ASHLEY

(annoyed)

Great. Another idiot.

(picking up all cheerful)

Hey! What's up, cutie?

(to Noelle quickly)

So you're staying, right?

Ashley takes her lack of words as a yes.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)

(back into the phone)

That's hil-arious!.

And Ashley and that 75 bucks go back to the party.

Noelle can't believe it...

Yes she can.

NOELLE'S NARRATION

Fate had to be keeping me at that
party. There's something about
being at the bottom that makes you
believe in fate. We wanna believe
that there's a reason why we have
to struggle. It's fate or destiny
or maybe even New Year's magic.
Because there was no other way to
explain how I lost out on yet
another perfect chance to go home.

Noelle looks around the room at couples everywhere, not a
single person in the house.

NOELLE'S NARRATION (CONT'D)

I tried to figure out why I was so
worked up. Maybe it was that
corporate job. Maybe it's because
Jack never said Kyle was The One...
He just told me I'd meet someone.
If I knew for sure, maybe I'd be
OK. Maybe I could relax. How
ridiculous was that?

INT. MAGIC MANSION/PALM READER'S ROOM - NIGHT

Noelle seeks out Jack, finds him at his table with GUESTS.

NOELLE
Can I talk to you?

JACK
You have to wait your-

NOELLE
Is he the one? Is he Mr. Right?

JACK
Who?

NOELLE
You know. You said I'd meet him.
Mr. Right. Is he really the one?
Mr. Right?

JACK
All of a sudden you're Ms.
Pushy/Say What's Really On Your
Mind. What happened to that shy
little girlie who was in here
earlier?

Noelle tries to lift Jack to his feet by his shirt...

He doesn't budge...

The quick tug slings her into Jack, onto his lap.

JACK (CONT'D)
You're on my bum leg.

NOELLE
I wanna know.

Long Line of Fortune Seekers watch. Noelle is oblivious.

Jack looks into Noelle's eyes...

Tears form in her eyes.

NOELLE (CONT'D)
I wanna know it's real this time.
That it's not my imagination. Can't
you tell me?

JACK
It's not your imagination.

NOELLE
(crying)
Is Kyle the one?

Jack studies Noelle...

JACK
Yeah. Kyle's the one.

Noelle hugs Jack in relief, tears and slobber all over Jack.

Jack holds Noelle -- it's nice. Too nice.

But Kyle enters the room, sees Noelle in Jack's arms.

Jack looks up at Kyle.

NOELLE
(turning to Kyle)
He said you're the one.

Long Line of Fortune Seekers are thrilled. Kinda. They just want their fortunes read.

INT. NOELLE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Late morning.

Noelle comes out of the bathroom with a towel wrapped around her body, another towel on her head. For those still wondering -- she just got out of the shower.

She sits down at her computer, her unfinished blog still on the screen. She re-reads some of what she wrote...

Then she types...

NOELLE'S NARRATION
I couldn't believe it. I felt good
about myself. I had a new
confidence in myself, a new hope...
It couldn't last long.

INT. MAGIC MANSION/PALM READER'S ROOM - NIGHT

The clock on the wall reads 9:06 p.m. The room is empty except for Jack, Kyle and an unnaturally-comfortable Noelle.

Jack's got Kyle in the chair, his palm in his hands, Noelle in awe of Jack's work.

KYLE

I get my blood checked on a regular basis. I know for a fact I'm not vitamin deficient.

JACK

You just put it all out there, don't you?

KYLE

Yeah, I do.

JACK

Be careful. You'll put it all out there and someone'll take it all away.

KYLE

Sounds like experience talking.

JACK

I don't put anything out there for anyone.

KYLE

I share who I am. It's who I am.

Jack stands.

JACK

Anyway, that's the reading. I'd double check your blood when you can. There's the tip jar. I'm gonna step outside.

Jack limps out of the room, leaving Noelle and Kyle alone.

Kyle turns to Noelle. Noelle is still looking back in the direction of Jack's exit.

Lady With A Baby sweeps by the room. Peeks in.

LADY WITH A BABY

Hey, would either of you mind holding my baby while I...

Lady With A Baby turns her attention down the hall.

LADY WITH A BABY (CONT'D)

(to Noelle and Kyle)

Never mind.

(to someone down the hall)

Becky? Can you hold Justine for a quick, quick sec?

Lady With A Baby is gone just like that.

Mike and Pregnant Liz walk from the direction Lady With A Baby went.

MIKE

(to Pregnant Liz)

She's unbelievable. Who brings a baby to a New Year's Eve party?

PREGNANT LIZ

Her baby's so cute.

MIKE

Then why is she always trying to give it away? Put it to bed.

Mike and Pregnant Liz pass.

KYLE

You wanna step outside, too? Get some fresh air?

NOELLE

Sure.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD PARK - NIGHT

Noelle and Kyle sit on the swings, Kyle eating from a plate of appetizers.

KYLE

Something to eat? I got it for you.

Kyle eats more off the plate.

Noelle takes something to eat, too, but she doesn't eat it.

NOELLE

Thanks.

KYLE

You wanna ride the slide?

Kyle hands the plate to Noelle, stands, struts over to the slides, climbs the stairs...

Noelle watches...

Stands...

Watches...

Kyle rides down the slide.

KYLE (CONT'D)
Come on, Noelle. Ride the slide.

NOELLE
That's OK.

KYLE
I promise it's safe. Electronic hats are one thing. Slides are something altogether different.

NOELLE
I'm really OK.

Noelle doesn't budge.

KYLE
Come on.

Noelle sets the food she never ate on the plate and the plate down. She stands, ambles over, climbs the stairs...

KYLE (CONT'D)
Come on, I'll catch you.

Romantic, huh?

NOELLE'S NARRATION
I couldn't tell if I was nervous or not. I wasn't hyperventilating, that's for sure. I even tried to make the crazy come. But I seemed fine. I surprised myself.

NOELLE
(thrilled with Jack)
You know, that palm reader guy really seems to be-

KYLE
A wacko? What does he know? Have you ever heard of a guy who does palmistry for a living? At his age, how's that even a career? Kind of a loser, if you ask me. Can't be what you hope for out of life, right?

NOELLE
Yeah, I guess it is kinda weird. He's creepy, right?

KYLE

So, you coming down or what?

NOELLE

You sure you can catch me?

KYLE

(flexing)

I got you.

Noelle pushes off, slides fast...

Of course, something in Kyle's eye makes him flinch...

Noelle lands in the sand on her butt. Hard. OUCH!

KYLE (CONT'D)

Oh, sorry, you OK? Something flew
into my eye.

Kyle helps Noelle out of the sand at the foot of the slide
and over to a park bench. Noelle's holding her tailbone.

KYLE (CONT'D)

It's not supposed- You're not
supposed to get hurt on a slide.
It's just a playground for kids.

Noelle sits on the bench, but it hurts to sit.

KYLE (CONT'D)

Maybe you should work out more. You
work out?

NOELLE

Not really.

KYLE

You ever get check-ups?

NOELLE

I'm fine. I just hit kinda hard.

KYLE

Well, yeah, but you should get
check-ups anyway. Your body's like
a race car. If you look at pro race
cars, they have all these computers
hooked up to them. That's to make
sure they have the right fuel, the
right amount of air going to the
engine... They test everything to
make sure the car is running
totally optimally.

(MORE)

KYLE (CONT'D)

Well, that's just like the fit body -- a human being that's really fit has to be running optimally. And that means you need to test your blood to see what vitamins you need...

Noelle's a good listener.

KYLE (CONT'D)

I guess I've been talking about this stuff all night, huh? It's just that Parker brought it up because his wife is sick all the time, and I was just trying to help. She just needs to know what to take and how much- Anyway, I was just trying to help.

NOELLE

Parker's married?

KYLE

Yeah. Not sure how much longer, though.

Noelle is somewhat relieved to hear that part.

KYLE (CONT'D)

I guess they stick together for the kids.

NOELLE

He's got kids, too?

KYLE

Just two.

Noelle isn't any more relieved to hear the count.

Kyle senses tension.

KYLE (CONT'D)

Everything alright?

NOELLE'S NARRATION

No, it wasn't alright. Parker was married? With kids? And working on my best friend?

NOELLE

Yeah, fine. You know what, I think I forgot something inside.

KYLE

What'd you forget?

NOELLE

I won't be long. That OK?

KYLE

Oh, OK, yeah. Sure. That's cool.

NOELLE

Everything's fine, though. Promise.

Noelle struggles to stand... She's in pain... But she's fine.

Kyle tries to help.

NOELLE (CONT'D)

Thank you. I'm fine.

KYLE

Oh, OK, sure.

Noelle heads toward the Magic Mansion.

Kyle lets her go...

EXT. MAGIC MANSION STREET - NIGHT

Noelle walks much better now, still moving toward the Magic Mansion...

Slowly, but surely.

NOELLE'S NARRATION

Ashley needed to know about her precious Par-ker. And she needed to know before she got too attached. I've seen her hurt before. Not pretty. Didn't need to see that again. She didn't need to be hurt again, either. And she wouldn't be, not with me around. That's what best friends are for...

EXT. MAGIC MANSION/PORCH - NIGHT

Noelle walks up to the door.

NOELLE'S NARRATION

Nothing was going to stop me from getting to her, not even my own personal gain with Kyle.

(MORE)

NOELLE'S NARRATION (CONT'D)
But I think things were going well
enough where I could pick up and
continue on. First...

Noelle goes for the door knob...

Stops...

KNOCKS.

Noelle waits...

KNOCKS.

Noelle waits...

RINGS the doorbell.

Noelle waits...

RINGS again.

Noelle waits...

NOELLE'S NARRATION (CONT'D)
I didn't wanna just walk in. It
wasn't my house. I didn't even
really know the people who lived
there. But I had to get to Ash.

Noelle goes for the door knob...

Goes back to KNOCKING, RINGS the doorbell several times...

Noelle goes to the nearby window, looks in to see if she can
get someone to open the door for her.

NOELLE'S NARRATION (CONT'D)
I didn't want to knock on the
window. That seemed creepy. But
then, there I was looking through
the window. So I gave that up.

Noelle goes around to:

THE SIDE OF THE HOUSE

Noelle goes through a little garden area.

NOELLE'S NARRATION
For some reason, I didn't think it
was creepy to go around to the side
of the house.

Noelle approaches a side gate that's open.

NOELLE'S NARRATION (CONT'D)

And with the side gate open, it
seemed like a welcome sign to
enter.

Noelle goes into:

EXT. THE BACKYARD - NIGHT

It's dark back here. Kinda spooky, too. Lots of foliage,
weird tiki statues.

Noelle trudges through until she comes upon the swimming pool
-- more like a tiki paradise with surrounding palm trees,
tiki torches, an outdoor martini/tiki bar with a bamboo
awning, tropical plants, lots of bamboo and that old 50s
exotica music from the likes of Martin Denny or Les Baxter
piping softly through a garden sound system. Money can sure
buy nice stuff if you call this stuff nice.

On his back at the edge of the steaming pool, Jack reads a
book: "Emotions In Plants"

Noelle stops, watches Jack. Stares. But she sees the back
door of the house and goes for it.

JACK

Noelle?

Noelle still heading for the door.

At the door she actually KNOCKS.

NOELLE'S NARRATION

Maybe someone would answer the door
in the back. You know -- because I
couldn't just walk in.

JACK

Noelle? What are you doing?

With no answer at the door, Noelle turns around to Jack.

NOELLE

Oh, hi. I just stepped out for some
fresh air.

JACK

Well, come on over. Get some fresh
air.

NOELLE

I mean I kinda already got the fresh air, now I'm going back inside. I gotta find my friend.

JACK

Who, that Kyle guy? Lost Mr. Right already, huh?

NOELLE

No, I'm looking for my friend Ashley.

JACK

Come here.

NOELLE'S NARRATION

Nothing was going to stop me from getting to Ashley and telling her the-

JACK

Come on.

NOELLE

OK.

Noelle walks over to Jack at:

EXT. BACKYARD/POOLSIDE - NIGHT

Noelle stands over Jack, still laying poolside with his book.

NOELLE

I kinda have to find my friend real quick, though.

JACK

You really don't like me, do you?

NOELLE

No, I just- I mean- What do you mean?

JACK

You think I'm creepy, don't you? Is it the limp? Or am I just a little too rough around the edges for you?

Noelle's busted.

NOELLE

What? No. Creepy?

JACK
You didn't say that?

NOELLE
No. Who said I said that?

JACK
Did you say that?

NOELLE
No.

JACK
You wouldn't lie to someone who
reads palms, someone who knows?

NOELLE
Creepy? That's not even a word I'd
use. Why would I say that? Who said
I said that?

Jack sits up. Takes a sip from a Mai Tai glass, umbrella and
plants hanging out the top and all.

JACK
You like Mai Tais?

NOELLE
Not especially. I mean, I've never
had one.

JACK
(extending the drink for
her to try)
Here.

NOELLE
No thanks.

JACK
(pushing the drink on her)
Here.

Noelle takes a sip. Yuck!

JACK (CONT'D)
It's awful, isn't it?

Noelle agrees, hands the drink back to Jack. He sips it.

NOELLE
How do you drink that?

At that Jack takes a big swig.

NOELLE (CONT'D)

Can I have another sip?

JACK

(motioning to the outdoor
bar)

They got a Mai Tai guy right there.

MAI TAI GUY (60s) is busy organizing, cleaning the bar.

NOELLE

Mai Tai guy?

JACK

That's the moniker on the bar.

Why is Jack looking at Noelle like that? She can't escape the stare, then...

NOELLE

I guess I'll be right back, then.

Noelle walks over to Mai Tai Guy, wishing she had eyes in the back of her head to see if Jack is still staring.

EXT. BACKYARD/TIKI BAR - NIGHT

Noelle approaches Mai Tai Guy, all done up in tiki, a MAI TAI GUY SIGN right there on the bar.

NOELLE

(to Mai Tai Guy)

I guess you really are Mai Tai Guy.

MAI TAI GUY

We don't serve Mai Tai's here. Just bad ones. And water -- if you're into that kinda thing.

Noelle spots appetizers on the bar, still won't take any.

NOELLE

Is it possible to get a Mai Tai without the alcohol?

MAI TAI GUY

It is not possible. What's the matter, not a rum kinda girl?

NOELLE

Well, I'm not really a drinker.

MAI TAI GUY

None of us are drinkers before we start. So water it is.

NOELLE

That's OK. I'll go with a Mai Tai.

MAI TAI GUY

How about the Trader Vic? It's the only one I got?

NOELLE

OK.

Mai Tai Guy goes to work on the drink.

NOELLE (CONT'D)

This place is sure nice.

MAI TAI GUY

Thanks.

NOELLE

You live here?

MAI TAI GUY

At the bar? No.

NOELLE

I mean the house -- it's amazing.

MAI TAI GUY

That's the lucky couple there.

Mai Tai Guy points to a PERFECT YOUNG COUPLE (this includes Becca, who answered the front door when Noelle and Ashley arrived) having drinks at a table near a ridiculous waterfall and some tiki god statues -- it's magical.

Noelle stares. Envious?

MAI TAI GUY (CONT'D)

Here ya go, little kitty.

Mai Tai Guy hands Noelle her drink.

MAI TAI GUY (CONT'D)

Perfection at its worst... The couple, not the drink.

NOELLE

Ouuuuch!

MAI TAI GUY
I'm joking, of course.

NOELLE
(like Jack)
No you're not. I won't tell.

MAI TAI GUY
Thanks.

Noelle finally decides to grab some appetizers.

NOELLE
Thank you, Mai Tai Guy.

MAI TAI GUY
Don't thank me. You'll hate me soon
enough.

Noelle goes back with Jack at:

EXT. BACKYARD/POOLSIDE - NIGHT

Noelle arrives sipping the Mai Tai, carrying her plate of
appetizers. Jack is finished with his drink.

JACK
Just awful, huh?

NOELLE
I never thought I'd drink something
so terrible. I think I'm gonna
start liking these.

JACK
I really don't go in for this sweet
stuff. Can I get a sip of yours?

NOELLE
(handing it to Jack)
Are they all this bad?

JACK
(taking it, sipping)
Eeeuh. This one's worse than the
one he made me. Can I get more?

NOELLE
Sure. But save some for me. I'd
hate to taste the next one if they
only get worse.

JACK
(handing the drink back to
Noelle)
I can't wait.

NOELLE
Me, too. Let's finish it quick so
we can get to the really bad ones.
(referring to the plate)
You want some appetizers?

JACK
(taking some)
Yeah.

Jack stares at Noelle as she eats for the first time tonight.

JACK (CONT'D)
So everything's going well with
that Kyle guy?

NOELLE
Yeah. So thanks.

JACK
What are you thanking me for?

NOELLE
Well, you made it all possible...
Telling me he was The One and all.

JACK
You people are delusional -- you
all wanna believe in some kind of
magic or something.

NOELLE
But you told me-

JACK
I just said you'd meet The One
you'd end up with. That doesn't
mean there's some magic force.
Everyone wants to romanticize the
whole thing, saying dumb things
they'd never say in real life, like
'We're so meant to be' and 'I wanna
spend eternity with you' and my
favorite, 'I love you.' I bet you'd
go for that kind of thing if that
Kyle guy said it to you.

NOELLE
Oh, so you don't believe in love.

JACK
I don't believe in romance.

NOELLE
What about love?

Jack finishes the Mai Tai.

JACK
I told you I don't go in for the
sweet stuff.

Jack sets down the Mai Tai glass.

JACK (CONT'D)
But here's what I'm gonna do.
(closing up his book)
I'm gonna close up my book. Then
I'm gonna put away my music...

Jack meticulously takes his earbuds out of his ear,
disconnects them from his iPod, wraps up the wire.

JACK (CONT'D)
...Then I'm gonna stand up, count
backwards from ten... And when I
get to one, I'm gonna kiss you.

NOELLE
What are you talking about?

Jack pulls out an iPod case and neatly tucks his device and
tied-up earbuds into the case.

Jack stands and counts...

JACK
Ten...

NOELLE
You're not really gonna- Are you?

JACK
Of course I am, Noelle. Nine...

Noelle backs up.

Jack steps toward Noelle.

Noelle realizes he's really going to kiss her.

JACK (CONT'D)
Eight...

NOELLE
But what about Kyle?

JACK
That guy's a moron. Seven...

NOELLE
But what about him being Mr. Right
and all that?

JACK
Six... You really wanna be stuck
with a moron? That moron talks
about moronic things nonstop. He
doesn't shut up.

NOELLE
But how can you change destiny?

JACK
In five more seconds I'll show you
how I'm gonna change it. Five...

Jack grabs Noelle's hands, pulls Noelle closer.

NOELLE
No, please.

Noelle turns to see GUESTS from the party exiting the house
and entering the backyard.

NOELLE (CONT'D)
Please... Not here.

JACK
Four...

Noelle backs up, Jack moves closer.

NOELLE
I'll kiss you some place else. Not
here. Not now.

JACK
No, not now. In three more seconds.
Three...

Noelle tries to pull away from Jack's grasp, but she doesn't
pull that hard. She's just too nice to be that aggressive.

JACK (CONT'D)
Two...

Noelle is beginning to panic. The crazy breathing is right around the corner...

JACK (CONT'D)

One... more second.

He's really going to do it. He moves in.

Noelle is going to let it happen?

Jack goes in...

For...

The...

Kiss!

Noelle just reacts...

She shoves Jack...

Right into the pool.

Ooops.

NOELLE

I gotta go.

Noelle runs.

Jack, coming up out of water, yells for Noelle.

JACK

Wait!

NOELLE

(back to Jack)

I'm sorry. I gotta find my friend.

Jack gets out of the pool.

JACK

Noelle, come here.

Noelle stops, turns.

NOELLE

I'm sorry.

JACK

That was not cool.

NOELLE

I'm sorry.

JACK

I'm soaking wet.

NOELLE

I'm sorry.

JACK

I just wanna say -- you suck.

NOELLE

What?

JACK

Yeah. You suck. You can't tell something good when it's right in front of you.

NOELLE

What?

JACK

You're a sucky person. You suck. And I mean it. You. Suck.

NOELLE

Oh, I suck?

Noelle gets loud. Everyone out back can hear.

NOELLE (CONT'D)

You tell me I should be with someone -- and it's good, for your information. It's really good. Then you make a move on me? And I suck?

JACK

Of course it's REALLY good. Two morons. You know what? You suck so much more than I even thought.

NOELLE

Thank you.

JACK

The funny thing is -- you think you're so nice. You're mean. You're mean and you don't even try. You're cruel. In other words: You suck.

NOELLE'S NARRATION

*If you can't say something nice,
don't say it at all.* So I didn't.

Noelle walks over to Jack...

And pushes him back into the pool.

NOELLE

Once again tonight, you're right --
I do suck.

Noelle goes for the back door...

She walks right into the house.

INT. MAGIC MANSION/VARIOUS AREAS- NIGHT

Noelle searches the place for Ashley.

NOELLE'S NARRATION

Ashley was nowhere to be found. I
couldn't even find Parker.

Noelle goes through rooms of people, searching.

NOELLE'S NARRATION (CONT'D)

I couldn't believe I pushed Jack
into the pool... Twice. I was so
mad. Who says that kind of thing to
your face?

Noelle approaches the kitchen.

NOELLE'S NARRATION (CONT'D)

I wandered through the house and
into the-

KITCHEN

Noelle enters...

And stops!

Ashley and Kyle are caught... Making out.

They pull apart when they see Noelle. Noelle can't move.

She can't move fast enough. She turns, twists her ankle wrong
while going for the door. The ankle won't bend that far...

Noelle's body weight bends the ankle that far -- CRACK!

Noelle hits the floor, screams in pain.

Ashley rushes over to Noelle's side.

ASHLEY
Sweetie, are you OK?

Kyle comes over, tries to lift Noelle to her feet.

Noelle screams in pain.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)
(to Kyle)
No, don't move her. She broke something.

Kyle lays her back down.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)
(to Kyle)
Get some help.

Kyle shoots out of the room.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)
Where does it hurt? Can you stand?

Noelle tries to stand with Ashley's help...

Noelle goes up on her left foot, afraid to let her injured right ankle touch anything. But she slips back.

She sticks out her left hand to catch herself.

CRRRR-ACK! The left wrist snaps. Noelle screams in pain.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)
OK, just lay still, hun, we're gonna get some help. Just lay still.

Noelle lays still, tries to calm herself down... It's starting to work... It's working... Then her eyes meet Ashley's eyes. Noelle's been hurt before. But now she's hurt and injured. Still, she won't cry.

Wait, she's crying.

Ashley turns away. This is all her fault.

EXT. MAGIC MANSION - NIGHT

Fire truck double parked out front. And an ambulance.

Two PARAMEDICS unload a gurney out the back of the van, slam the doors shut, rush up to the front door.

INT. MAGIC MANSION/KITCHEN - NIGHT

The Paramedics enter, approach Noelle on the floor. Ashley at her side. Two FIRE FIGHTERS and Kyle are there, too.

FIRE FIGHTER 1 speaks to the Paramedics.

FIRE FIGHTER 1
Got a couple breaks here.

PARAMEDIC 1 looks at the right ankle, examines it carefully.

PARAMEDIC 1
How are we tonight? Little too much to drink?

NOELLE
I don't drink.

PARAMEDIC 1
How 'bout some pain meds?

NOELLE
No, I'm fine.

PARAMEDIC 1
It's New Year's Eve -- of course you want pain meds.

Noelle goes to deny it...

PARAMEDIC 1 (CONT'D)
Broke something alright. You on any recreational drugs right now?

NOELLE
No.

PARAMEDIC 1
What's your name?

NOELLE
Noelle.

PARAMEDIC 1
Popping pills? Smoking anything?

NOELLE
No.

Paramedic 1 signals to PARAMEDIC 2 for the gurney. Paramedic 2 lowers it, brings it near.

FIRE FIGHTER 1
Looks like a break at the wrist,
too.

Paramedic 1 looks at the left wrist, tries to move it. Noelle screams in pain.

PARAMEDIC 1
We're gonna get you to the E.R.
We'll get you some good pain meds.

They get Noelle onto the gurney.

NOELLE
I don't want any-

PARAMEDIC 1
(with Paramedic 2 lifting
the gurney)
In the meantime, try-

Mike (of Mike and Pregnant Liz) bursts into the kitchen.

MIKE
My wife's going into labor.

PARAMEDIC 1
What's this?

MIKE
Her water broke. The baby's coming
out.

Paramedic 1 and Paramedic 2 set Noelle down. The two Fire Fighters and Paramedic 2 rush out of the room. The CROWD OF PEOPLE in the kitchen follow them out.

Kyle just stands there. Ashley is shocked.

ASHLEY
You gotta be kidding me.

Noelle waits. Paramedic 1 waits.

Paramedic 2 bursts in.

PARAMEDIC 2
We need the gurney.

Paramedic 1 practically rolls Noelle off the gurney.

PARAMEDIC 1
Sorry, Miss. We'll get right back
to you.

ASHLEY
Wait, this is not OK.

Paramedic 1 and Paramedic 2 roll the gurney out of the
kitchen, leaving Noelle on the floor.

Noelle looks at Ashley.

NOELLE
I was gonna tell you that Parker's
married with two kids.

ASHLEY
I know. He's getting a divorce.

NOELLE
I guess it doesn't really matter
now, does it?

Ashley gets the point, tries to push it aside.

ASHLEY
(referring to the lack of
care from the Paramedics)
This is ridiculous. I'm gonna fix
this.

Ashley goes after the Paramedics. Kyle follows, leaving
Noelle alone.

She just lays there and listens:

Liz SCREAMS. Paramedic 1 tells Liz to PUSH. Mike tries Lamaze
breathing techniques with Liz. Liz tells Mike to SHUT UP.
PUSH! SCREAMS. PUSH!

Ashley comes back in. Here comes her puppy dog -- Kyle.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)
OK, that baby is really coming. Way
more than I need to see.

Ashley kneels next to Noelle to comfort her. Then they hear:

BABY CRYING.

REJOICING.

PARAMEDIC 1 (O.S.)
You wanna hold your baby, Dad?

MIKE (O.S.)

Yeah. This is a baby I wanna hold.
Oh my God -- look what I made.

More REJOICING.

LIZ (O.S.)

I made it, too.

PARAMEDIC 1 (O.S.)

It always takes two to tango, Dad.
Mom, how're you feeling? Any pain?
(to Paramedic 2)
What do we have for Mom's pain?

LIZ (O.S.)

Can I hold my baby?

PARAMEDIC 1 (O.S.)

Ab-so-lutely.
(to Mike)
Dad, give Mom her baby.

MIKE (O.S.)

Look at him, Liz. He looks just
like you.

Noelle manages to squeeze out a smile. Through an opening in the doorway, she sees a LARGE CROWD gathered, Lady With A Baby (still with Baby Girl) tries to get through the crowd.

LADY WITH A BABY

Can I hold the new baby? Here,
someone hold mine.

Noelle responds. Now she's ready for the Paramedics.

PARAMEDIC 1 (O.S.)

OK, that about does it. I think our
job here is done.

Noelle and Ashley wait for the Paramedics, hear the SOUND of COMMOTION move further away. FRONT DOOR OPENS, CLOSES.

They wait...

What the ____?

ASHLEY

You've gotta be kidding me.

QUICK BLAST OF SIREN as ambulance STARTS, DRIVES AWAY. FIRE TRUCKS START, DRIVE AWAY.

Ashley shoots out of the room. Kyle follows.

Noelle just lays there. Not a word.

BECCA (O.S.)

Dad? Dad?

Becca (the one from the Perfect Couple out back, the one who answered the door earlier in the evening) enters the kitchen in search of her dad. She sees he's not in there.

NOELLE

Excuse me, do you know if the paramedics left?

Becca pays little attention to Noelle, but asks:

BECCA

Have you seen that crazy Mai Tai guy?

She yells out again for her dad, then exits.

Noelle must be a mirage -- not really there.

Becca comes back through the kitchen, Mai Tai Guy in tow.

BECCA (CONT'D)

But I didn't do it, Dad. I think those ambulance guys knocked it over when they were taking that gurney out.

MAI TAI GUY

Poodle, that vase is nowhere near where they would've gone with the gurney.

BECCA

What are you saying, Dad? That I broke your vase? This is why I didn't wanna live here.

And they're out of the kitchen, Noelle alone again.

NOELLE'S NARRATION

I'm not gonna lie -- I was happy to see that the perfect couple wasn't so perfect after all. I mean, they were about my age and seemed to be doing so much better than me. They were perfect. That's the way it seemed. Maybe there's no such thing as perfect.

(MORE)

NOELLE'S NARRATION (CONT'D)

Even paramedics aren't perfect.
They left without me. And so did
everyone else. So it was up to me
to get the help I needed.

NOELLE

Hello?

Nothing.

NOELLE (CONT'D)

Hellooooo? Ash?

Go for three hellos? Nah. Noelle had to get up and get the
help for herself.

She tries to stand...

Ouch! Doesn't go over well.

She pulls over a nearby bar stool and uses it to pull herself
up. It's somewhat of a circus act.

Yikes! Looks like it hurts. But she gets herself up, all the
while the bar stool sliding toward the kitchen door.

BAM!

ASHLEY (O.S.)

Noelle, you're not gonna-

Ashley is halfway through the door when she realizes she
knocked Noelle to the floor. There's another Noelle yell.

NOELLE NARRATION

Perfect!

INT. E.R./TEMPORARY ROOM - NIGHT

A TV in the corner of the room has Mr. New Year's Eve
offering up more commentary on New Year's Eve.

MR. NEW YEAR'S EVE (ON TV)

With a little more than fifteen
minutes to go, dreamers are
wondering if that New Year's Eve
magic will show itself.

Noelle's got an ankle boot on her right foot, a wrist splint
on her left arm (both elevated), I.V. in her arm, etc. She's
alone in bed with the bowl of ice cream she wanted all night.

MR. NEW YEAR'S EVE (ON TV) (CONT'D)

Will this year be that special
year? Will you get that big job?
Will you get the big house? Will
you meet someone special or decide
you want to spend the rest of your
lives together?

Noelle loses her appetite for the ice cream, abandons it on
the nearby table.

NOELLE'S NARRATION

No, no, no and no. So, yeah, maybe
there's no such thing as perfect.
That didn't make me feel any better
about myself. I kept coming back to
everything everyone is always so
comfortable pointing out to me --
that I suck. This year would be no
different than last for me. No
different from the year before
that, and the year before that. And
it'd be no different next year or
the following year either.

Ashley enters, her clutch purse in hand.

ASHLEY

Hi.

NOELLE

Hi.

ASHLEY

How you doing?

NOELLE

I don't know. I'm not sure. I guess
I'm fine.

ASHLEY

Did they say when they're gonna
operate?

NOELLE

They're not sure. They have to wait
for the swelling to go down. Could
be tomorrow. Might even be the day
after. So I don't know.

Ashley spots the hand sanitizer station on the wall, goes
over, hits a few squirts into her hand, sanitizes.

Noelle watches quietly, but eventually:

NOELLE (CONT'D)

You were right about that Jack guy.
He's a jerk.

ASHLEY

Who's Jack?

NOELLE

The palm reader?

ASHLEY

Oh, him. I didn't say he was a
jerk. I said he was creepy. Well,
you said it first.

Ashley sits on the bed, grabs the ice cream, eats some.

NOELLE

Sorry about Kyle.

ASHLEY

Why are you sorry? I'm the one
who's sorry. I know you liked him.

NOELLE

It's fine.

ASHLEY

No it's not. I have to admit, he
was more than just a kiss. But as
selfish as I am, I couldn't live
with myself if I took it any
further. So he's yours.

INT. NOELLE'S APARTMENT/BEDROOM - DAY

Noelle at computer. Dressed, but hair still wet and undone
from the shower.

NOELLE NARRATION

Ashley told Kyle that she was
walking away from whatever happened
between them. And Kyle couldn't
contest it. No one ever could with
Ashley. It was that simple.

INT. E.R./TEMPORARY ROOM - NIGHT

Noelle turns to Ashley.

NOELLE

No. I won't let you do that.

ASHLEY

You don't have a choice, Noelle.

NOELLE

You said he was more than just a kiss. You have to let fate take its course.

ASHLEY

It was more than just a kiss, but that's all it'll remain. Fate has taken its course. Kyle and I are done. He's your Mr. Right.

NOELLE

My Mr. Right. But I don't think I'm right for him.

ASHLEY

Don't say that about yourself.

NOELLE

It's fine. I'm OK with not being someone else's 'perfect.'

ASHLEY

You are someone else's perfect. Who says you're not?

NOELLE

Jack. I pushed him into the pool.

ASHLEY

What?

NOELLE

Twice.

ASHLEY

What? What?

NOELLE

He tried to kiss me and I pushed him into the pool.

ASHLEY

Sounds like he got more than just a kiss tonight, too.

NOELLE

He's a jerk. He knows me better than I do. He knows I'm afraid to take that corporate job. But he's mean. And he hates me.

(MORE)

NOELLE (CONT'D)

I feel bad saying it because I lied about it earlier -- but he is creepy.

ASHLEY

Maybe that job isn't right for you right now. Maybe you just need more confidence. And what's wrong with calling him creepy and lying about it? You're no different than any of us. We badmouth anything we're afraid of. Let's face it, he's got a lot to be afraid of.

Noelle and Ashley turn their attention to the TV.

MR. NEW YEAR'S EVE (ON TV)

...I'm speaking to you out there right now. That New Year's Eve magic is upon us. Just look...

Ashley turns her attention back to Noelle.

ASHLEY

You know, there was this guy who I was totally not into at all. Hold your surprise. But he really wasn't for me. Anyway, he asked me out. And I usually would've said yes because I'm an equal opportunity dater. But I was just kinda angry about life at the time. So I said no. Well, this guy kept pushing to go out. I still kept saying no -- you know, like how you do to me?

Noelle responds to that.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)

He wouldn't take no for an answer. Finally I had to just tell him fine, and we went out. And as you'd expect, I had a great time. But I didn't think I would. I think that's partially because I had such low expectations of this dweeb, which is a terrible thing to think. But we do that kinda thing when we're afraid. That night we were both dweebs, laughing so hard my stomach hurt like I did ten sit-ups. His was the hand I needed at a really bad time in my life.

Ashley gets lost in thought.

NOELLE
So what happened?

ASHLEY
That was it. I never saw him again.

NOELLE
Why not?

ASHLEY
I don't know. But all that anger I had, which was stacking up inside of me for weeks, it just went away. It was as if that guy -- I don't even remember his name -- it was as if he came to me to fix whatever drama was going on. And it worked. I think we get that in life. You're in my life and you help me all the time in ways no one else can. I just never tell you. But I think I'm in your life to help you in ways no one else can. And right now I can be the hand you need.

NOELLE
How can you help?

ASHLEY
Do you like that palm reader?

NOELLE
He said I sucked. He called me a sucky person.

ASHLEY
But do you like him?

NOELLE
He hates me. He despises me.

ASHLEY
But do you like him?

NOELLE
Like him?

ASHLEY
Was it more than just a kiss, yes or no?

NOELLE

Yes. But I'm not gonna do anything about it.

ASHLEY

You gotta tell him.

NOELLE

It's too late. The night's over and he's gone. Even if I wanted to, I wouldn't have a way to contact him.

NURSE (30s) enters the room.

NURSE

Time to move you to your room.

Nurse gets Noelle's bed in order, wheels her into:

INT. E.R./HALL - NIGHT

Nurse wheels Noelle down hall, Ashley at Noelle's side.

ASHLEY

It's not too late if there's really that New Year's Eve magic upon us.

NOELLE

(facetiously)
Yeah.

ASHLEY

He's here.

NOELLE

Who? Mr. New Year's Eve?

ASHLEY

No, dummy, the palm reader. He's in the waiting room.

NOELLE

Jack's here?

ASHLEY

Yeah, in the waiting room. Waiting to see how you're doing. He's asking about you every two seconds.

NURSE

You must be talking about that creepy guy out there.

NOELLE AND ASHLEY

Yes!

NURSE

He left.

NOELLE

What?

NURSE

About five minutes ago.

INT. NOELLE'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Nurse gets Noelle situated in her new room, walks out.

Mr. New Year's Eve on TV:

MR. NEW YEAR'S EVE

Don't wait for the magic to come to you. Go out there. Go get it. It'll meet you, I promise...

ASHLEY

(to Noelle)

I'm gonna go get him. Wait here.

NOELLE

Wait. He really came to see me?

ASHLEY

Yeah.

NOELLE

I don't deserve him... I gotta go with you.

ASHLEY

You can't go with me. How are you gonna go with me? And why?

NOELLE

We've got-

Noelle looks at the wall clock: 11:49 p.m.

NOELLE (CONT'D)

It's almost midnight. I don't wanna miss it.

ASHLEY

Don't tell me you believe all that New Year's Eve magic stuff?

NOELLE

Are you kidding me? But what if?

Noelle and Ashley look at each other -- the plan percolates.

ASHLEY

OK, this is gonna be fun. First,
you're taking out the I.V.

NOELLE

No, you have to help. I can't self-
inflict pain on me.

ASHLEY

Well, I have to find a wheelchair.

Right there in the corner of the room.

NOELLE

Right there. Now the I.V. -- I'll
close my eyes while you do it.

ASHLEY

No way, we're doing this together.
And I'll close my eyes.

NOELLE

OK, but we both keep our eyes open.

Noelle brings out her arm.

Ashley goes in on the I.V.

They both close their eyes together.

ASHLEY

OK, you're watching, right?

NOELLE

No. Did you close your eyes?

ASHLEY

(eyes still closed)

No.

NOELLE

OK. Fine. On three we open our eyes
and pull.

ASHLEY

OK.

NOELLE

You have to open your eyes, though.

ASHLEY

Fine. You open your eyes, too.

NOELLE

OK. Ready? One... Two... Three!

Both girls let go of the I.V. They've done nothing, eyes still closed.

NOELLE (CONT'D)

Did you pull it?

ASHLEY

No. Did you?

NOELLE

No. You're supposed to pull it.

ASHLEY

So were you.

MR. NEW YEAR'S EVE (ON TV)

We've got just over five minutes...

Noelle opens her eyes to see the TV. Time's a wasting.

Ashley opens her eyes, too.

Noelle looks at the I.V. She's gotta go for it somehow...

Ashley yanks it out.

Noelle almost screams.

INT. HOSPITAL/HALL - NIGHT

Noelle (with a small blanket around the arm that had the I.V.) is pushed in a wheelchair by Ashley down the hall back toward the E.R., both on the lookout. Ashley's clutch purse on Noelle's lap.

NOELLE

Whatever you do, don't get us caught.

ASHLEY

I don't get us caught. You get us caught. I get away with everything, remember? That's why you hate me.

NOELLE

I don't hate you.

SUSPICIOUS NURSE sees the girls. She's suspicious. Noelle sees the look.

NOELLE (CONT'D)
You just got us caught.

ASHLEY
No I didn't.

Ashley breaks into a sprint down:

INT. E.R./HALL - NIGHT

Suspicious Nurse goes after.

NOELLE
(to Ashley)
Go! Go! Go!

ASHLEY
I'm going!

NOELLE
Go faster!

ASHLEY
I am going faster!

NOELLE
Go faster than that!

ASHLEY
Maybe you are capable of pushing
that someone into the pool!

NOELLE
Faster! Don't forget I pushed him
in twice!

Ashley pushes faster.

E.R. PERSONNEL have joined in the chase.

At a junction in the hall, Ashley wonders which way to go.

ASHLEY
Which way? Left?

NOELLE
Right?

Ashley goes left.

NOELLE (CONT'D)
No, right! Right!

ASHLEY
I thought you said left was right!

NOELLE
No, I meant go right! Go back!

Ashley spins the chair around, barely gets by E.R. Personnel.

INT. E.R./WAITING ROOM - NIGHT

The TV in the room shows Mr. New Year's Eve.

MR. NEW YEAR'S EVE (ON TV)
We're down to the last couple
minutes of the year.

The room is empty. Yup, no Jack. Ashley pushes Noelle nonchalantly toward the front door.

MR. NEW YEAR'S EVE (ON TV) (CONT'D)
Have you spotted that magic yet?
That New Year's Magic.

FRONT DESK LADY (30s) looks up at the girls.

FRONT DESK LADY
Hey, what are you girls doing?

NOELLE
(to Ashley)
To the parking lot! Hurry!

Ashley is back to running.

ASHLEY
(to Front Desk Lady)
Thank you!

And Ashley races Noelle out of the E.R..

EXT. E.R./PARKING LOT - NIGHT

The lot stretches far.

Ashley pushes Noelle in the wheelchair through the lot.

ASHLEY
Oh my God, it's freezing out here!

NOELLE
He drives a van!

ASHLEY
I saw it!

NOELLE
Where?

ASHLEY
No, I saw it when he came over
here!

NOELLE
Where'd he park?

ASHLEY
I don't know!

E.R./WAITING ROOM

BIG E.R. GUY (30s) and TIRED E.R. Guy (30s) rush through the waiting room and out the door to the parking lot. Mr. New Year's Eve is still on TV.

MR. NEW YEAR'S EVE (ON TV)
OK, here we go. The last sixty
seconds of the year. Fifty-nine...
Fifty-eight... Fifty-seven...

E.R./PARKING LOT

Ashley is running out of breath, she's slowing.

ASHLEY
We're never gonna find it. He's
gone.

NOELLE
Go to the exit. Maybe he hasn't
left yet.

ASHLEY
Where's the exit?

NOELLE
I don't know. I came in here in an
ambulance. You drove.

ASHLEY
Yeah, but I have no idea where we
are now.

Big E.R. Guy is catching up, YELLING for Ashley and Noelle to stop. Tired E.R. Guy is falling behind because he's tired.

NOELLE
(to Ashley)
You gotta go.

ASHLEY
I can't go anymore.

Ashley stops, grabs her clutch purse from Noelle's lap, lowers herself to the ground and goes into purse.

Noelle spins the wheels on the wheelchair to escape the approaching Big E.R. Guy...

Not gonna happen with one working arm.

Ashley pops up to spray Big E.R. Guy with her Mace spray.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)
Sometimes someone somewhere needs a
little Mace to the face.

She points. Shoots. Maces her own face.

Ashley's phone RINGS:

ASHLEY'S CELL RINGER
An idiot is trying to contact you
on your mobile device... An idiot
is trying to contact you on your
mobile device...

Who's the idiot now?

INT. E.R./WAITING ROOM - NIGHT

MR. NEW YEAR'S EVE ON TV IS STILL COUNTING DOWN...

MR. NEW YEAR'S EVE (ON TV)
Thirteen... Twelve... Eleven...

Big E.R. Guy and a way-out-of-breath Tired E.R. Guy enter the E.R. with Noelle, who's in deep thought. Ashley, rubbing her Mace-irritated face, is nearby.

TIRED E.R. GUY
(to Ashley, heavy breaths
between words)
You...can...wait...out here...this
time.

Noelle turns to Ashley...

NOELLE

Ashley. Despite all this, thanks
for bringing me to the party
tonight. Really.

ASHLEY

You're welcome, hun.

MR. NEW YEAR'S EVE (ON TV)

Seven... Six... I can feel the
magic. Believe, everyone,
believe... Three... Two...

Noelle catches a last glimpse of the TV as Big E.R. Guy and
Tired E.R. Guy push her along and then into:

INT. E.R./HALL - NIGHT

The sound of the TV fades, and eventually nothing but the
SQUEAKING WHEELS of the wheelchair.

Big E.R. Guy looks at his watch, and says to Tired E.R. Guy:

BIG E.R. GUY

(a little out of breath)
Happy New Year.

E.R. PERSONNEL 2

(still way out of breath)
You...too...man. Whew!

Silence... Except for the SQUEAKING WHEELS of the wheelchair.
And Noelle's thoughts:

NOELLE'S NARRATION

There it was. Or rather, there it
wasn't. No New Year's magic for me
after all. But I smiled anyway. You
know why? Because, even though Jack
was gone, he was waiting for me. He
cared for me. And I guess that's
all I really needed that night. And
Ashley really fought for me, too.
How great is that? But I remember
thinking on the way down those
halls back to my room that Jack
would be in there waiting for me.
Maybe he never left the E.R., never
left the parking lot.

(MORE)

NOELLE'S NARRATION (CONT'D)

Maybe we somehow passed magically
in the halls on my way out and his
way back in without my knowing it.
I wasn't going to be upset if he
wasn't there.

INT. NOELLE'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Big E.R. Guy pushes Noelle into the room. Tired E.R. Guy
finally takes a break in a nearby chair.

NOELLE'S NARRATION

And there he was.

INT. NOELLE'S APARTMENT/BEDROOM - DAY

Late afternoon.

Noelle, done up like for a date, stops typing.

Her phone RINGS.

She picks up.

NOELLE

(into the phone)

Hello... Hi... Yeah, I'm ready... I
can't wait... I'm a little slower
now with the crutches, so give me a
sec... Bye. See you in a sec.

Noelle hangs up the phone.

She types a few more sentences...

Clicks POST on the screen. The blog posts.

She exits the Internet. Clicks to shut down her computer. The
screen shows a MESSAGE: Are you sure you want to shut down?
CANCEL? OK? The computer will shut down automatically in 30
seconds. (The SECONDS are COUNTING DOWN.)

Noelle grabs that manila envelope addressed to Lady Lilies
corporate office, limps away.

Rinaldo the cat, on the bed, looks up at Noelle as she exits.
Rinaldo goes back to sleep. All is right.

And those SECONDS on the computer are still COUNTING DOWN:
15... 14... 13...12... 11... 10... 9... 8... 7... 6... 5...
4... 3... 2... 1... Shut down.

INT. NOELLE'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Noelle is surprised. Sitting next to the bed is...

Kyle. He stands.

KYLE

Hello.

NOELLE

Hi.

BIG E.R. GUY

(to Kyle)

Excuse me while I get her back into bed.

Big E.R. Guy puts Noelle back in bed. Kyle helps.

BIG E.R. GUY (CONT'D)

(turning to go)

OK, we're nearby... So don't be trying any more escapes, alright?

NOELLE

OK. Sorry again.

Big E.R. Guy exits the room.

KYLE

So I kinda wish I got here a little earlier to see that whole chase.

NOELLE

It wasn't that exciting.

Silence.

NOELLE (CONT'D)

Look at me, I'm not freaking out.

KYLE

Yeah. Do you do that a lot -- that breathing thing?

NOELLE

Here and there -- when I get anxious about something. Even if I think something good will happen, I freak out. I don't know why.

KYLE

Oh.

NOELLE
It's weird, I know.

KYLE
Maybe you have an anxiety disorder.

NOELLE
I don't know.

KYLE
The basic signs are there -- the breathing and all. When does it happen? I mean, are there specific things you stress out about?

NOELLE
I'm not sure. I guess.

KYLE
If that happens again, breathe into a paper bag. That can help.

NOELLE
Does that really work?

KYLE
It should.

Kyle comes closer to Noelle. He sees the covers aren't covering her completely. He covers her.

KYLE (CONT'D)
Kinda cold in here.

NOELLE
Thanks.

Kyle's got something on his mind.

NOELLE (CONT'D)
Sorry about breaking in on you and Ashley.

KYLE
That whole thing- I guess that just happened.

NOELLE
It's OK.

KYLE
I was coming in to look for you after you left me in the park...

NOELLE

I'm sorry about that, too. I was-

KYLE

I ran into Ashley and asked if she knew where you were and then somehow we were in the kitchen and somehow...

NOELLE

It's OK-

KYLE

She just was so right there. And...

NOELLE

It's really OK.

KYLE

Well, not really. I don't know what kind of awful person you think I am, but I'd never-

NOELLE

It's really OK. I don't think you're an awful person.

KYLE

Because I'd never-

NOELLE

Kyle, it's really OK. I understand if you felt I was ditching you. So I understand if you thought we were done.

KYLE

Really, I'd never- Wait, what do you mean 'done'?

NOELLE

It's not like we were dating, so I don't feel like you were cheating on me or anything.

KYLE

Oh, you think I meant- Oh, no. I- You thought something was going on between us?

NOELLE

Oh, you mean-

KYLE

I was thinking- You thought- I thought you thought I was a jerk for taking Ashley from Parker.

Noelle didn't think about that.

NOELLE

Oh. Right. Oh, yeah, no. Um... It's all really fine.

KYLE

Look, I just wanted to say sorry. But I gotta get going.

Kyle stands to leave.

KYLE (CONT'D)

Hope you're feeling better. You should check into that anxiety disorder thing.

Kyle can't leave fast enough, but stops, turns back.

KYLE (CONT'D)

You're gonna be OK, right?

NOELLE

(smiling)

Yeah. I'm gonna be fine. Thanks, Kyle. Oh, and Kyle -- Ashley was more than just a kiss, right?

KYLE

I'm in love.

NOELLE

Don't let her get away, then.

The two share smiles. Then Kyle is gone.

INT. NOELLE'S APARTMENT/HALLWAYS - DAY

Noelle, with crutches, slowly makes her way down the halls.

NOELLE'S NARRATION

I'd had a plan: I'd find Ashley, tell her I was leaving that stupid party, that I'd take a cab home, then I was going to find that ice cream I'd wanted all day, finish the entire thing, and fall asleep on the couch before the New Year.

(MORE)

NOELLE'S NARRATION (CONT'D)

It was that easy. But I just couldn't make it happen. While Ashley and I were escaping the E.R. to find Jack, he was out getting food. He returned after they brought me back to my room. And he waited all night while I was having surgery.

INT. NOELLE'S HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Sunlight streaming in through windows. Noelle has had surgery. She opens her eyes. Jack's in the room to greet her.

EXT. NOELLE'S APARTMENT/MAILBOXES - DAY

Noelle drops the manila envelope in the outgoing mail. Her breathing ramps up...

She closes her eyes, concentrates... Smiles.

EXT. NOELLE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Noelle steps out into the late afternoon light.

NOELLE'S NARRATION

New Year's Eve magic? I don't know. Like Jack, maybe I just don't go in for that 'sweet stuff.' I do know that Kyle was not Mr. Right. Jack certainly wasn't Mr. Jerk. Yeah, maybe there is no magic. Or maybe that magic just hits some of us late because...

Some TANGO MUSIC here would be fitting as Noelle says hello to someone off-screen.

NOELLE

Hi, Jack.

And she limps OUT OF FRAME to greet him.

INSERT: Computer Screen showing Noelle's blog. At the end it reads, "...because I might have a date with Mr. Right tonight."

FADE TO BLACK
AND END TITLES.