

MARLESE

He didn't mean that...

PIA

He said as much, mind you! I lost my chance. No one wants to marry me met anybody and my youth is gone... So don't bitch about being twenty-four...

MARLESE

I wasn't bitching about being twenty-four.

PIA

Let's do another shot.

UMPIRE is talking to HOLLY.

I want a hat that says "If I'm smoking, please poke me in the eye." But people might just think it's a joke. A more realistic option would be a t-shirt that says, "If I'm smoking, look me in the eye and shake your head." Strangers would go along with that. But these options would only work in public, and I always relapse privately.

Quitting smoking is hardest for me on the third day. I feel fresh, withdrawal-free, and, suddenly, an isolated cigarette starts to sound like fun without consequences. One little smoke, after a big ham sandwich. A great idea! The problem is you can't buy just one great idea, you buy a pack of twenty great ideas.

UMPIRE

Working with clients is fun. They bring me their laptop that fell in the toilet, and they're ashamed about having to tell me they were using their laptop in the bathroom, but I can recover their files.

HOLLY

You know, I've got this mac, that has a lot of my old stories on it, but I can't print them. Could you?

UMPIRE

80% chance I could find my way in there.

HOLLY

That's amazing! You're like a magician.

UMPIRE

It's a pretty cool job.

DALE comes up to them.

DALE

Sup dog. Hayley, you look like you need a shot. What say you and me go to shotsville.

UMPIRE

That's a jack and coke.

DALE

Yes.

UMPIRE

I thought you were getting a dirty martini. You know, grease.

DALE

Oh, they were out of olives, boss.

UMPIRE

Dude. why are you such a prick?

Holly walks away.

DALE

I'm a prick. You're the one making people feel uncomfortable, calling people pricks.

UMPIRE

I'm just calling you a prick. Because you're a prick.

INSIDE

HERM opens the door and it's Charles, the next door neighbor.

HERM

Oh, hey, Charles.

CHARLES

Hey, Herm, happy on a Friday all right. Listen. Wondering if you could skate down the hi-fi a few little levels worth. Huh?

HERM

Oh, sure, yeah, sorry. We won't be here long, anyway. It's actually my going away party.

CHARLES

Get outta here! But I guess you're

already doing that... get it, get outta here?

HERM

Yeah. Um... do you want to join us for a drink...

Steps right in...

CHARLES

Of course! Hey. I'm gonna' miss you. Who's gonna' stink up the stairwell with cigarette smoke, now? Don't worry, I never told the landlord, and I never will, all right? Oh, that looks like it's escalating...

OUTSIDE

DALE is choking UMPIRE, holding him over the ledge.

MAX and HERM run out, grab DALE, pull him away, drag him into the house.

UMPIRE gives chase, runs into CHET, who is a brick wall, then falls into the couch.

Umpire, ever the good guy, stops.

UMPIRE

Shit are you all right?

OUTSIDE

DALE

Fucked up coked up obscenity laced tirade! fuck! fuck!

INSIDE

UMPIRE

Shut the fuck up!!!?

He helps Chet stand.

UMPIRE

I'm so sorry, man.

TED and DANIELLE walk out.

SARA

(whispers)

Were you guys hooking up in my bathroom?

Chet scratches the back of his head, reveals blood on his fingers.

PIA

Oh...

UMPIRE

I'll get some swabs.

PIA faints, Chet catches her with one arm, keeping the bloody hand far from her.

Herm walks back in, puts his arm around SARA.

Charles says goodbye.

CHARLES

Have a nice trip.

Charles walks out. Herm nods to him.

HERM

They had fought earlier in the day. At the softball game. He started crying. He kept saying, "he's sick." Or he said, "I'm sick." Then he ran away. Max ran after him.

SARA

He's still a prick though.

HERM

Definitely. Let's get everyone out of here.

SARA

Yeah, we need to let you get to bed.

HERM

I'm going out. I don't want to be sad and lonely. How are you? I'll sleep on the plane.

SARA

Be moderate. You have a middle seat and you don't want to be getting up all the time throwing up everywhere.

Max walks in, flustered, goes to the kitchen.

HERM

Did he leave?

Max holds a bottle in one hand, pours into two shot glasses he holds in the other, serves one to Herm.

MAX

Yes.

SARA walks to the living room, slips her shoes off, stands on the divan.

Umpire swabs Chet's hand as Chet looks on Pia with Marlese.

PIA

I just shouldn't look at it. Everytime
I look at it I faint. But I still look
at it.

SARA

Thank you all for coming. I just called
two van cabs.

Everyone heads outside, where two van cabs wait.

IN THE KITCHEN

(HAVE HERM SAY GOODBYE TO TED AND DANIELLE FIRST. TED SAYS HE HAS THE FLU.)

MAX and HERM drink.

MAX

So... New York... what do you think?

HERM

About... what do I think about New York
and... you?

MAX

And you... me and you.

HERM

Yeah, you know, I think about it,
about us there, and I get really
excited thinking about it. My life
would be a lot more fun... but I don't
know if fun is right right now. This
is coming out bad you're my best friend
and I'm stupid... but, like, see, my
cousin got arrested for growing
mushrooms last week...

SARA

The cabs are here... set an example.

Everyone is sort of flooding out of the apartment.

Max, a bit hurt, starts walking out.

HERM

Wait, Max. Wait, SARA. No, SARA, you go, Max please stay, just for a second.

Max waits.

HERM

So I email my uncle, and my uncle's like, yeah, Leo really needed to introspect. And I thought, you know, I need to introspect. I really just need to live alone in a shitty apartment and have quiet nights and work hard and introspect. Everything in my life has ruptured. Everything around me and inside me feels like violence. everywhere everyone's hurting each other. I hate that about right now. But I really want you to come visit me.

Max gets a text.

MAX

SARA says... come on come on come on.

HERM

Let's make road sodas first.

MAX

Yes.

Max goes to get more ice. Herm hugs him.

EXT. APT - NIGHT

Max and Herm run out with red Dixie cups in their hand. Max opens the door to one, hops in.

JULES

(to Herm)

There's room in the other one.

The other van starts driving away..

Herm chases it down, hits it, it stops, does a Chinese fire drill around it.

IN THE VAN

HERM

It's my party and you were all going to leave without me..

He climbs over, lands in the last empty seat, next to Marlese. Rolls around in her lap a bit.

HERM
can I go to smoke-ville with you?

She puts the one she had just put in her mouth into his mouth. He takes it out, kisses her on the side of her head.
IN THE OTHER VAN

JIM
SARA, where on 18th is it.

SARA
18th...

JIM
Yeah, 18th we've grasped. but where.

SARA
18th and the corner of don't be
sarcastic with me.

Max laughs.

MAX
You're funny.

SARA
18th and Orange Grove.

MAX
I'm going to miss you.

SARA
What are you talking about?

MAX
Well... I mean, with Herm moving away,
Where's our, where's our glue?

SARA
We can still hang out. Don't think
you can abandon me!

MAX
I don't even have your phone number!

SARA
Yes, you do.

Max checks.

MAX
Oh. I do. Neat. Do you have... mine?

SARA
I think so.

MAX
I'll text you it just you don't have
my new one.

IN THE VAN

They share a drink.

MARLESE
I'm excited to come visit... for fashion
week. Thank you. I'm never excited for
it. Only nervous. But now I'm excited.
It will be much more fun to be with
friends.

HERM
Cool. Yeah, I'll look forward to it.
Hopefully work won't be crazy and
we can you know, get meals together.

MARLESE
Did you ever regret that I introduced
you to SARA?

HERM
What? No. Why would you say that?

MARLESE
You were the nice boy from high school.
And I knew she was trouble. And now
it all sort of happened.

HERM
I mean, we only met at a bar, it was no
big deal.

MARLESE
No. I set it all up. I set her sights
on you. I'm sorry, I'm a little drunk.

She pounds the rest of her drink, then puts her cigarette out
in it. Offers the glass to Herm to put out cig. as well.

EXT. RED CLUB - NIGHT

They get out of the cabs as two guys in a band carry guitars
in cases into the building. A HIPSTER stands outside with a
clipboard, smoking a cigarette.

INT. RED CLUB - NIGHT

The group enters as the band members head up stage. On another stage a DJ plays a blistering set. Everyone watches him, dancing with themselves. The whole place is red. Our group of friends wanders into the crowd and disappears. Dispersion. Everyone splits up.

And Herm squeezes out the mass and leans over the bar.

Whole thing from Bartender P.O.V.

HERM

Hey I'll have... oh shit it's cash only.
Cash only?

BARTENDER

This isn't a club, dude. It's a party.

HERM

Then why are you even charging for drinks?

BARTENDER

Because you're not my friend.

A GIRL next to Herm gets elbowed, half a jack and coke gets spilled on him.

The person who bumped the girl was Jim. Next to him is Jules.

JIM

(to Herm)

There you are. You're not paying for anything tonight! three shots of tequila please!

SARA appears from behind Herm, gives him a kiss on the cheek. Herm smiles, happy.

HERM

Can we get four? Hey Jim, can we get four?

And from behind SARA appears WOLFGANG, who grabs SARA by the hips and kisses her on the cheek.

SARA

Wolf? Hey.

SARA knows this is bad.

WOLF

You came!

Herm takes notice of Wolf. Takes a shot.

SARA

Oh, was this the party you were talking about? Because I just got dragged here by friends. This is like a coincidence.

WOLF

The band that's playing asked me to do one with them. But I'm on so much L.S.D. What do you think?

Herm takes the shot that was meant for SARA, and it pains him so to see him. Herm walks away as SARA turns to see him disappear back into the crowd.

We follow Herm.. into the crowd, which is becoming ecstatic as it's nearing the end of the set. He runs into Marlese, Max, Pia, and Holly who are all sweaty and vivacious and active.

Marlese starts dancing with Herm, and Herm follows listlessly for a while.

HERM

I've got to go to the men's!

CHET

(suddenly a fanboy)
They're going on they're going on!

He presses his way to the front.

Herm walks up the stairs. An upper room, lit green. He walks up to the bar. The Bartender is distracted, and Herm just grabs a bottle of beer, opens it in his teeth.

Walks through a lot of people to another set of stairs. a curving staircase. He punches his left thigh. Then walks up the curving staircase.

ON THE DANCE FLOOR

The Band begins their set. Intelligent, thrashy, violent rock. Nothing mellifluous.

SARA approaches MARLESE.

SARA

Where's Herm?

MARLESE

I think he went to the bathroom.

SARA

How long ago?

MARLESE

Dunno. Why?

SARA

Wolf's here. He came up and talked to me.
Then Herm ran off.

MARLESE

You didn't make out with him in front of
him did you?

SARA

No. But where is he?

MARLESE

He's gone two minutes. I'm going, too.
Who are these guys?

SARA

They're good. Wolf is singing with them.

Marlese walks past... the line for the bathroom is eight long,
and no Herm.

She climbs the stairs.

EXT. ROOF - NIGHT

15 people are up here, arranged in groups of three and four.
And then there is HERM alone, on the edge of the roof. The
scary thing about the roof is there is no guard-rail.

He smokes a cigarette. And keeps pinching his left hand.

MARLESE comes up the stairs. She's worried. Finds him. Lights
a cigarette quickly so he doesn't think she's been looking
for him.

He's right there on the edge. she doesn't want to startle
him.

So she kind of enters his peripheral vision from the left.

HERM

Hey, Marlese. Can I have another
cigarette?

MARLESE

She had no idea Wolf would be here.

HERM

Can you start it for me? I burned

my thumb on the last one.

MARLESE

Oh no...

(she lights him one)

Let me see.

HERM

Okay I lied about that. I just like it when you start 'em. It makes me feel special.

MARLESE

Then start one for me.

HERM

You wanna' feel special?

He does.

HERM

Don't say you're sorry for making me meet SARA. I love her so much.

(he punches himself in the leg lightly)

It's just she makes me want to hurt myself sometimes.

She hugs him.

DOWNSTAIRS

Concert is on. Max is dancing with SARA. Wishful thinking would suggest a real connection perhaps. Wolf is singing.

MAX

I asked Herm if I could stay with him in New York! He said no!

SARA

Good! You can hang with me!

MAX

I'm scared. That's part of why I wanted to leave!

SARA

What!

MAX

I'm scared! That if I stay here! I'm going to try to make you love me!

SARA

Why the fuck would you say that?

MAX

I don't know! But I'm scared that if I stay here and Herm goes I'm going to chase you, cause you everywhere, until you love me, and it makes me feel so guilty I want to cut myself.

They slowly loosen the closeness of their dancing.

The song ends.

TED

That's our friend, Wolfgang Hammer.
You might know his band... BIG BAND.

Crowd goes wild...

Wolfgang jumps out in the crowd, right into them, near them.

And he plants a huge kiss on SARA. SARA slaps him hard, but not nearly as hard as Max punches him across the face.

Max sloppily breaks this up. Wolfgang grabs him by the shirt and Max decks him in the face.

The band sees this, and they jump from off the stage, to pound on Max. but max deftly avoids them, scrambles away, and flees up the stairs...

On his way, Max runs into Jim, Chet, all who follow...

chase, chase, chase...

Ends up on the roof...

EXT. ROOF - NIGHT

MAX busts out from the door onto the roof. Sprint to an abrupt pause. It's a roof. No where to go when...

Wolf runs out...

Max stands behind him at all times. Wolfgang has a bloody nose.

WOLFGANG

Where is he?!!

HERM

Who?!

Max sneaks back toward the door...

WOLFGANG
That fuck!

As Max gets to the door, it blasts open again, and the rest of the band pours out. Max falls down, the band falls down, and their a big, rolling mess.

WOLFGANG
We're on a roof. We could fall.
Everyone could fall!

A bunch of people stream onto the roof.

Wolfgang tries to break it up. Max joins him, tentatively. No one wants to get pushed off the edge, but LEAD GUITARIST punches Jim in the head, and Herm tackles him.

WOLFGANG
Stop stop!

Bass player realizes how close he is to the edge, and freaks out, seized with fear.

BASS PLAYER
Aaaaahahahaahahah!

He sobs, and gyrates, experiencing a drug-induced freak-out. Gradually, all become aware of him, stop fighting.

JIM
What's wrong with him?

GUITARIST
I don't know. Dennis? Dennis?!

BASS PLAYER
I'm falling! I'm falling!

DRUMMER
Let's get him off the roof!

The band picks him up, gets him off the roof.

Wolfgang becomes aware his nose is broken.

WOLFGANG
I think my fucking nose is broken!

HERM
Are you okay?

MAX
Yeah. You?

HERM
Yeah. What the fuck happened?

MAX
I broke Wolfgang's nose, Herm.

HERM
Why?

MAX
He tried to kiss SARA.

WOLFGANG goes up to Herm.

WOLFGANG
If my nose is broken, I'm going to
kill you.

HERM
What the fuck are you talking about?

MAX
I'm the one who punched you, Euro
Trash metro-skank.

WOLFGANG
Bullshit. He did. The one who took her.

FRIEND OF WOLFGANG
Let's go, man. If Pitchfork gets a
a photo of this the tour's fucked.

A digital camera flashbulb goes off somewhere, in the pack of
twenty that came up to observe. Wolfgang follows it and down
the steps.

HERM
I came this close to punching him
in the nose again.

MAX
You didn't punch him in the first place.

SARA
Are you okay?

MAX
Yeah.

Max realizes she's talking to Herm. He walks away.

HERM
Yeah. He kissed you?

SARA
He's on drugs. And it was really gross.
I mean he attacked me.

Herm kisses her briefly.

HERM
I don't like not being the last one.

SARA
To kiss me?

HERM
(same time)
To kiss you.

Meanwhile, Max is approached by Joanna, the lady from the National Foundation for the arts.

(BEFORE HE SAYS TO CHET THAT HE'S BABYSITTING HIM.)

JOANNA
Is this how you're spending the time
the grant money bought you?

MAX
Joanna. Did you change your email?

CHET
I'm going out dancing since you
fucked up the party. I'll take
a cab home.

MAX
Okay.

JOANNA
No, I didn't change my email.

MAX
Weird. Can I get you a drink? Can
we talk? I'm on the edge of it,
you know? So close.

WITH Jules and Jim and Pia and Marlese

JIM
Fucking crazy, huh?

JULES
Don't get cocky.

MARLESE

Give him a break.

JIM

See? I stretch out a little bit and
She gets nervous I'm out from under
her thumb.

JULES

Oh, you tough? You gonna' be demanding
threesomes, now?

Jim thinks about this. Marlese and Holly look away. Pia looks
Jim right in the eye.

Breaking the tension are Herm and SARA.

HERM

We're going to head out. Anyone want
to split a cab?

We see our friends wander back down... and into the club...

The Dee-Jay plays something really calm, slow... bringing
everybody back... happiness again... the fight is over...

INT. HERM AND SARA'S APT.

HERM

Back.

SARA

We're back.

HERM

Home.

SARA

Don't pout now.

HERM

We didn't kill each other. Max told me
no one wanted to come because they
thought we would kill each other.

HERM opens the fridge, takes out the Hummus.

HERM

Hummus.

SARA

Herm, I know that we hooked up earlier,
but then things got weird, and things

seem great now.

HERM

Yeah. No, I understand. Couch... me...
totally fine.

SARA

You know, I just think, emotionally,
it would be bad for me to

HERM

Run your fingers through my hair?

SARA

Ya.

HERM

And unbotton my shirt.

SARA

Yeah. Thanks for understanding.

Herm kisses her, lifts her up, presses her against
refrigerator, kisses her more, as a PHOTO of them falls off
it's magnet.

LOVE MONTAGE

We see Jules and Jim and Pia, Ted and Danielle sound asleep,
Chet making out with a boy in a club, Marlese and Holly
asleep, and Max having passionate sex with Joanna, before we
come back to Herm and SARA, as they end.

INT. APT - NIGHT

They lay in bed.

SARA

There's this place. I'll think of it,
it's this restaurant, with things,
a vegan place, and they like, you
tell them all your shit, and it's
like they go inside your stomach,
and test it out, like you tested
your aquarium, you nerd. but they have
these omelets, you can't believe they
don't have real cheese in them.

HERM

that sounds good.

SARA

Yeah. They take care of you there.
They'll take care of you...

This sets SARA off. She starts crying..

SARA

I'm so sorry, Herm. I'm so sorry...
I couldn't take care of you...
I can't take care of anything...
when I was growing up everyone
the girls called me bulimic when I
was just skinny but they all thought
I was bulimic and now, I can't
listen to people, you know?

He holds her.

A rock on their window. Another, and a shout.

Herm looks out.

WOLFGANG on the sidewalk. Bandage on his nose. Throws another
stone. Herm opens the window.

WOLFGANG

You broke my nose, you fucker.

HERM closes the window.

HERM

It's Wolf.

SARA goes under the covers.

Another rock. Broken window.

HERM

I'm going to call the cops.

WOLFGANG

They might pick up your girlfriend,
too. For being a WHORE!!

HERM

I'm going to go talk to him.

Gets out of bed, puts on jeans.

SARA

Why?

HERM

Just something I need to do.

SARA

No you don't!

HERM

Nothing's going to happen. And if he wants to fight, I'll just leave.

HERM walks out.

SARA calls Marlese...

SARA

Wolfgang is here. Herm went out there.

Intercut with Marlese...

MARLESE

You let him go out there?

SARA

I'm naked.

MARLESE

Why'd you let him go out there?

SARA looks out the window, sees HERM get AMBUSHED by Wolfgang and a few others. They Jump him.

SARA

Oh fuck! Oh fuck! Fuck!

Hand starts shaking, drops the phone.

EXT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Herm is getting jumped. he defends himself as best he can. But there's hard blows, and blood on the pavement. Wolfgang is punching him in the face when suddenly he is swept off him... by a baseball bat... swung by SARA...with all her love behind it.

SARA

Get off him! Get off him or I'll fucking KILL YOU.

One of Wolf's cronies tries to get the bat from her but she smashes him... hard... in the knee...

BASSIST

You fucking broke my knee.

SARA

I'll beat you to death if you touch him again!!

She's crazy. They back away, hobble into the van.

SARA
Did they hurt you?

HERM
Not as bad as you gave it to them.

It's true. Herm's okay. SARA realizes what she has just done, drops the bat, starts shaking.

HERM
I'm okay. We're okay.

SARA
No! No. Leave me alone. Leave me
alone...

He tries to put his hand on her shoulder, but she shudders violently.

Herm just stands there, watching her cry.

MARLESE pulls up in her car. SARA runs and gets in. We see them, from a distance, talk for a little, then drive away.

HERM stands alone.

HERM
It's over. It's over.

He dryheaves. Then runs down the street.

EXT. MAX'S APT. - NIGHT

HERM pounds on the door. no answer. pounds again. no answer.

Runs around the apt. desperate for a friend. Climbs up.

INT. MAX APT. - NIGHT

Max and Joanna sleep. Herm bangs on the window.

Max opens the window.

HERM
Come with me to new york. Please
come with me to New York.

MAX
Okay. Herm, this is Joanna.

JOANNA
Hi.

HERM

We met. Well... if you want to go standby, our flight's in five hours.

1ST MONTH

Herm sits at the Editorial booth. in front of screens of gruesome gore. He looks terrible.

Outside, the DIRECTOR has a coked up cell-phone conversation.

DIRECTOR

Cool. So basically what we need, is a more explicit shot of the shit coming out her vagina.

HERM

Okay. Well I could drop this in.

He plays it. Watches it. He swallows some vomit.

DIRECTOR

Yeah... Yeah... I like that shit.

Director lays out a line of cocaine on the desk.

DIRECTOR

You want?

HERM

No thanks. I'll just be a second.

Herm walks out, runs down the hall to the men's room, where he vomits.

2ND MONTH

HERM kisses a HOT FRENCH WOMAN on her bed. They start taking each other's shirts off.

HERM

You know, I'd better... I'd better go. Yeah, I got work really early.

FRENCH GIRL

(hot French accent)

Are you sure?

HERM

I'm sorry.

INT. ELEVATOR - NIGHT

Herm taps his crotch. He can't get an erection.

HERM

What the fuck, dude?

3RD MONTH

Herm is on the phone in the tiny apartment with his Mom. In the apartment are 15 naked people wearing masks that recall Where the Wild Things Are. They have running shoes on. Max applies body paint to a nude, hairy, fat, MAN.

HERM

Yeah, yeah. Herm's executing his piece today. Yeah, I'm helping him out. Oh, you know, just some people. yeah, out in the street. Just friends of ours. Yeah, we'll videotape it. You'll just have to wait and see. You know, I'd love to talk to Dad but I told Max I'd go get him more supplies.

4TH MONTH

He's walking down the street past a magazine stand. Stops. Goes back. picks up a women's magazine. SARA's on the cover! Herm is overjoyed to see this.

Takes three copies to the clerk.

HERM

This is my girlfriend. I mean my ex-girlfriend. (He summarizes everything that's happened to him the last four months. the gradual recovery...) You know, I don't think I should buy these. No.

LAST SCENE

Knock. answer. looks through peep-hole. Backs up, trips over feet of Max, falls.

Max stirs. Herm is completely numb.

He opens the door.

SARA

I didn't want to let you know I was coming because I didn't want to argue with you about whether or not it was a good idea. I

just wanted to come.

HERM
(whispers)

Hi.

Points to Max.

SARA
Oh, that's so cute.
(whispers)
Hi I'm just here for a few days,
for work.

HERM
Did you get my letters?

SARA
Yeah. I'm sorry.

HERM
I guess I mainly wrote them for me.

SARA
They're on really nice paper.

HERM
Oh, yeah, there's this place, new york
has all these special places... to buy
things.

Max stirs again.

HERM
Do you want to get a coffee?

SARA
I was going to ask you the same
question.

HERM
I just need to get my coat. Wake
him up, if you want.

Herm takes a step to his room.

HERM
If I come back out, and you're not
there... I'll hunt you down and
kill you.

SARA
How?

SARA smiles. takes a step further into the apt.
He kisses her on the cheek, hurries into the other room.
She just watches Max. Doesn't wake him up.

MAX
(whispers)
Hey. Good to see ya.

SARA
Hey.

MAX
(whispers)
I think it's better if I stay asleep.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Herm has his lame winter coat on. Looks at himself in the mirror.

Screams with joy into his towel.

He screams with joy into the towel on the rack.

Takes a deep breath. Big smile.

Screams with joy again into the towel.

Takes a deep breath, And opens the bathroom door.

INSERT TITLE: FIGHT MUSIC

the end.