

DO THE FACE

by

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FADE IN

INT. SORORITY HOUSE - TV ROOM - NIGHT

Economics textbooks and pages of notes scattered on an antique coffee table.

CANDY (V.O.)

(perky)

Like everyone else I know, I majored in econ because I wanted to prepare for a future as a powerful business executive somewhere.

SEVEN SORORITY GIRLS surround the table, sitting on the floor and on a patchwork couch. They laugh at SEX AND THE CITY on TV, mostly ignoring the textbooks. A Delta Delta Delta banner above them.

CANDY HUNTER, 22, preppy pretty, a bit chubby from all the free beer in her life, sits in the middle of the couch. She holds index cards.

CANDY (V.O.)

I even minored in art history so that I'd have a discriminating eye for my art collection.

She looks down at an index card with loopy handwriting that reads: "Aristotle with a Bust of Homer." She flips the card over to memorize: "Rembrandt, 1653, Oil on Canvas, Dutch, imaginary portrait." Her eyes go back to the TV. She grabs a blender on the side table and tops off her margarita.

EXT. LAKE MICHIGAN - BEACH - DAY

FAMILIES and FRIENDS swim, tan, play. From a lifeguard tower, Candy presides over it all in a red bathing suit.

CANDY (V.O.)

But I spent my summers back home, lifeguarding, you know, just being a kid. I finally graduated, and I was ready to embark on my life.

A CUTE GUY, 20, calls out to her, and tosses her a Frisbee. They throw it back and forth.

CANDY (V.O.)

I wanted to do something really cool, you know, like make a difference, make the world a better place, all that stuff. One of my mother's friends helped me get an internship at ChipWare, the biggest computer hardware company in the world.

The frisbee lands just before the lifeguard stand. The Cute Guy runs over, and hands it up to Candy, flirty.

EXT. CHIPWARE HEADQUARTERS - DAY

A blue glass building--massive, sleek, I.M. Pei-style. Fountains and rolling meadows surround it.

CANDY (V.O.)

It was in the publicity department, which was perfect because it was away from all the geeks, but we still got all the cool free stuff that I guess they made. And interns are exposed to everything. And everyone knows ChipWare. To all of my friends and relatives in New Jersey, Alabama, Berlin, Tokyo, everywhere, it was like I had all that power just by working there.

VISUALS OF:

A NEW JERSEY WOMAN, 33, in her home office, a poster of Springsteen behind her, talks into the lens of a ChipWare webcam.

A GERMAN MAN, 35, in his bedroom, a punk poster behind him, talks into his ChipWare lens.

A JAPANESE GIRL, 14, in a school computer lab, scans a picture of herself on a ChipWare scanner.

CANDY (V.O.)

I was a celebrity.

INT. CHIPWARE - COPY ROOM - DAY

To the clicks of the copy machine in action, Candy collects the color copies of ChipWare's new ad featuring COLIN FARRELL.

BEEP! The machine jams. Its indicator light flashes red.

She sighs and looks around for help. No one. She opens and closes some flaps. BEEP! BEEP! The sign on the wall says: "Call ext 5-2423 for repairs." She rolls her eyes.

INT. CHIPWARE - HALLWAY - DAY

Candy crosses the building, scouting for another copier.

INT. CHIPWARE - OFFICE - DAY

She makes copies at a machine in a room full of cubicles.

TYLER HARRIS and BART, 22, frat boys, sidle up to her. Their powerful parents forced them into this completely ill-fitting internship. They spend each minute plotting against it.

Tyler's only difference from Bart is that he has a crush on Candy.

BART
What's up, Candy?

CANDY
Whatever, these stupid copies.

TYLER
You going to Maya's party Friday?

CANDY
Yeah, it's going to be so--

A commotion down the hall cuts her off.

CHUCK KEENER, 36, walks in surrounded by EXECUTIVES. An army of jeans. Chuck is used to being one of the most powerful men in the world, and goes out of his way to be friendly.

Candy, Bart, and Tyler are agog.

And suddenly, Chuck looks right at Candy! An odd moment of quiet in his stormy walk. Entranced, he trips over his own feet. He recovers without falling, and glances at Candy, blushing, before re-engaging with his colleagues. Candy's smitten.

The office returns to normal.

TYLER
Fifty billion dollars in the flesh.

BART
Insane.

CANDY
He's got great eyes.

Tyler snorts, and slips an arm around Candy. Still dazzled, she steps out of it.

INT. CHIPWARE - OFFICE - DAY

TRACY LANCER, 40, stares daggers as Candy approaches her desk. Candy couldn't care less.

TRACY
Where the hell have you been?

CANDY
I had to use a different--

Tracy snatches a picture out of Candy's hand and slips it into a manila folder.

TRACY

(interrupts)

It shouldn't take that long to make copies. Go run this to the prop master for Chuck. You have two minutes. If it misses the webcast, we're in rancid shit.

CANDY

Ew.

She hands Candy the folder. Candy walks to the door.

TRACY

Run.

INT. CHIPWARE - HALLWAY - DAY

Candy speed walks. She approaches a huge black door of a corner office, flanked by two desks. TWO CAREER SECRETARIES, 50's, on guard.

Candy walks directly to the door with her folder.

SECRETARY #1

Thank you. You can give me that.

SECRETARY #2

You can't go in there.

Candy sneers at them. While they're stunned, Candy opens the door.

INT. CHIPWARE - CHUCK'S OFFICE - DAY

Candy marches in, expecting a crowd. But Chuck is alone, typing on a laptop in a window nook of his sleek office.

CANDY

Hi. I have this for your prop master.

CHUCK

Thank you. I'll take that--

CANDY

Candy Hunter.

In awe, she hands him the folder. He's impressed by her, too. There's something comfortable about them together.

CHUCK

My name's Chuck. Nice to meet you.
Are you new?

CANDY

I'm in publicity. An intern.

CHUCK

Interns are a vital part of our operation, Candy. We're thrilled to have you.

His sincerity makes her blush.

CANDY

Thank you, um, Chuck. Where is everybody? Aren't you doing the desktop chat soon?

CHUCK

In 30 seconds. Come on over and take a look.

Chuck walks over to his vast black desk, and puts the laptop on it. He sits down in his black leather chair. Candy follows until she's standing next to him.

He points to a black button below his keypad. A tiny webcam lens is above the screen.

CHUCK (CONT'D)

I just push that little button for two seconds, and I'm fed live to our site, our sister sites, and every major news service around the world. We like to keep things simple here.

CANDY

Cool. Can I turn it on for you?

CHUCK

Sure. But you have to keep quiet while I'm talking. The microphone is very sensitive. Is that cool to hang out until I'm done?

CANDY

Sure!

CHUCK

Ok, Candy, in five, four, three, two, one...

Candy presses the button until a red light appears next to the lens. The streaming video appears on the computer screen, along with his subtitled speech.

CHUCK

Good evening, everyone. Welcome to the June 23rd desktop chat...

Just out of the webcam's frame, Candy alternates staring at the pixilated screen and at Chuck sitting next to her. Wow.

CANDY (V.O.)
Ever since I can remember, cool things
just have a way of happening to me.
It's a gift.

INT. CHIPWARE - OFFICE - DAY

Candy sits at her computer, typing on the company's internal Instant Messenger (IM) program. A menu on the left of the screen has a list of all the employees of the company; on the right, the dialogue appears. Candy's logged on as "CandyHunter."

From "TracyLancer," "don't forget to order more ink!" Candy types "k" in response.

Tyler and Bart walk up.

CANDY
I'm so bored.

BART
Our supervisor took off for the
Bahamas for a month.

CANDY
(fraternal)
And you suck.

TYLER
Whatever, he's going to one of the
skanky cheap islands. We're putting
together sushi and poker at 1:00 in
his office. You in, cutie?

CANDY
Tracy said something about working
through lunch.

BART
Interns can't. We have those stupid
lunch hour lectures and shit.

CANDY
Do you think Chuck will ever be at
one?

TYLER
Not a chance.

Bart gestures to the IM screen.

BART
Ask him.

CANDY
What? I can't do that.

BART

Why not? He's on the list.

"ChipKeener" is listed ten names above "TracyLancer."

CANDY

You would never IM him.

BART

I don't know him like you do. My dad IM's him all the time. I heard Chuck dumped his girlfriend over IM.

CANDY

Do you think he'd write back?

BART

(sly)

He'd be impressed by your straightforwardness.

CANDY

Maybe I should ask his secretary.

BART

That's so boring.

Candy double-clicks on Chuck's name. She types "Hello, Will you talk at one of our lunch hor chats?"

Quick as lightning, Bart reaches down and hits "Enter." Her question pops up in the register.

CANDY

Shit! I misspelled "hour."

They all stare at the screen. Seconds pass. No answer.

CANDY

Maybe he's out of his office.

BART

He always has a computer on him.

TYLER

I bet he's out eating lunch. So, you in for poker with us, Candy?

CANDY

No, my work is a vital part of the operations.

Tyler and Bart smirk and walk away. Candy glances at the computer. No response.

INT. CHIPWARE - OFFICE - NIGHT

Candy Photoshops a picture of a mother, a baby, and a computer. Her computer clock reads 8:30.

She clicks the IM logo to maximize it. No response from Chuck.

Putting on her coat, Tracy walks up to Candy's desk.

TRACY

You can finish it first thing in the morning.

CANDY

(haughty)

I'm almost done again.

TRACY

Look, I can see you're trying, but if you do something wrong, you have to do it over correctly.

CANDY

I know. I'll just finish up.

INT. CHIPWARE - OFFICE - NIGHT

Candy sleeps upright in her chair. The BUZZ of a CLEANING WOMAN's vacuum jolts her awake.

The IM icon blinks. She clicks on it. It fills the screen. ChipKeener responded at 11:45 pm: "sure." She grins.

She looks at the clock. 12:15 am. She puts on her coat.

INT. HALLWAY - CHIPWARE HEADQUARTERS - CONTINUOUS

Candy walks past the empty cubicles. She's about to pass Chuck's office. The door is wide open. She slows down to look inside just as Chuck walks out of his office to read something on one of his secretary's desks.

Surprised, he jumps when he sees her, but is instantly cordial. He's in an ecstatic mood.

CHUCK

Hey! What are you doing here so late? What dedication!

CANDY

Thanks. I had to finalize a project.

CHUCK

I'm happy someone's here. I want to show you something.

He waves for her to follow him into his office.

INT. CHIPWARE HEADQUARTERS - CHUCK'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Chuck plops down into his chair, and points to an email. Close next to him, Candy leans forward to read.

CANDY

Wow. You donated five hundred million dollars to lung cancer research?

CHUCK

And it hit the bull's eye. We have a cure for lung cancer! And Dr. Himbert said that they're just getting warmed up. My sister's going to make it.

Candy turns to Chuck. His buzz is infectious. Chuck gets up to pace the office, squeezing a stressball.

CHUCK (CONT'D)

You'll be working on the press release tomorrow.

CANDY

Me?

CHUCK

Of course. You're in PR. If no one knows what we do and how we're helping them, we may as well not do anything. And not because we're egotistical. We use anti-virus programs for computers, and now we have an anti-virus program for the body. The metaphor is complete. We cured cancer. We can cure the world.

He pauses to let Candy respond, but looking at him, she's speechless--way out of her league. Chuck goes to his desk to load his briefcase.

CHUCK

But look at me, rattling on about renewal to a woman who's still so fresh. How did you wind up at ChipWare anyway?

He tosses his stressball to her. She catches it.

CANDY

(blurts)

My mom had connections.

CHUCK

(she's just a kid)

Fantastic.

He shuts his briefcase. Candy walks to him, and holds out the stressball.

CANDY

When you look into the face of
greatness, there's nothing to say.
There's only the inspiration to do.

They're both impressed by this pronouncement.

CHUCK

Who said that?

Candy did. Her lips stretch into a smile.

Their fingers graze as he takes the stressball from her. He considers her. Her blue eyes sparkle at him.

They lean towards each other, and their lips meet, kissing softly. Their arms wrap around each other. They maneuver so that Candy sits on the desk and Chuck stands in front of her as they continue kissing. Candy fumbles to slide his computer to the back of the desk. Her index finger grazes over the black button to turn on the webcam.

Chuck pulls back and takes off his shirt. Her fingers curl on the laptop. Her index finger accidentally presses down on the black button as she gives the laptop a final push to the back of the desk.

The webcam's red light flickers on!

The streaming video comes up on the screen. The length of Candy's body is horizontal on the screen. Chuck moves in over her, kissing his way down her chest.

He pulls down her skirt and panties. She arches her back as he goes down on her.

She gasps. She turns her face to the side. She opens her eyes wide and stares at the streaming video of her and Chuck. Just as she gets what's going on, it's too late -- she climaxes.

CANDY

Aaaaaaaaaaaaaahhhh!

The webcam lens bores into her. The screen freezes and zooms in on Candy's face -- pure ecstasy.

CUT TO BLACK

CANDY (V.O.)

That sucked.

MONTAGE OF CANDY'S SCRAPBOOK

NOTE: Candy's hand turns the pages, each one labelled with the year. The camera follows the cascades of headlines, pictures, and articles underneath. Foreign languages are subtitled.

This sequence is quite long, and even though that's the point, peppy pop music, like "Love Train" or "Walking on Sunshine," should keep it bouncing along like a music video.

1998

NEW YORK POST - Busted: A Lap Atop a Desk Top! (With pic of Candy's Ecstasy Face)

LOS ANGELES TIMES - ChipWare Cures Cancer (tiny article)

LE MONDE (French) - Chuck Apologizes to Global Consumers

CHICAGO SUN-TIMES - Experts: Half of World Population Has Viewed Chuck Clip

WALL STREET JOURNAL - ChipWare Stock Soars

CHICAGO SUN-TIMES - Both Sides Deny Need for Legal Action

YOMIURI (Japan)- ChipWare Slapped with Indecency Suit

IRISH INDEPENDENT - Will Candy take the Stand?

THE NEW YORKER - Talk of the Town - "Who eats candy anymore? I eats sweets."

WIRED magazine - Red Alert! Virus Plagues Chuck/Candy Streaming Video

USA TODAY - ChipWare Cured Cancer; Created Virus as "Morning After Pill?"

1999

VANITY FAIR - Candy Tells All: First Exclusive Interview to Press!

MOTHER JONES - Candy Hunter: Symbol of ChipWare's Economic Excesses

BANGKOK POST - ChipWare Settles Indecency Suit Out of Court

COSMO - Traumatized Candy packs on 20 pounds!

BYTES - The Viral Web Clip that Won't Die. Abstinence Advised. (with a pic of an entire school computer lab frozen on Candy's Ecstasy Face)

2000

HOLLYWOOD REPORTER - Candace Hunter Signs with CAA for Representation in All Areas

LA TRIBUNA (Honduras) - Candy Hunter Collaborates on Autobiography

ST. MARK'S CIRCULAR - How to Guide Your Working Children Away from Scandal

THE NATIONAL INQUIRER - Candy Lashes Out "Chuck who? It's over!"

THE VILLAGE VOICE - Pity The Almost-Innocent: There's a Little Candy in Us All, Jackass

2001

VOGUE - Hats by Candace's Canvas Inc. They're actually cute!

ELLE - Covering Up Blemishes (with candid pic of Candy)

HELLO! Magazine - Candy and Tom Green Out on the Town

TV GUIDE - Candace Hunter's Cameo on E.R.

PEOPLE - Candy and Tom Call It Quits

NY TIMES article by Tyler Harris, Staff Writer (with his pic in sidebar) - "The Allure of Candy Explained"

BANGOR DAILY NEWS - Chuck Keener Marries High School Sweetheart

SPORTS ILLUSTRATED - Review: Candy Hunter 15 Minute Work Out

2002

ESQUIRE - Why I Hate Candy--excuse me--Candace Hunter

(opposing column) In Defense of Candy Hunter

WALL STREET JOURNAL - Candace's Canvas Inc. Dissolved

REDBOOK - Candy's Fresh Start

WINNETKA HIGH SCHOOL ALUMNI NEWSLETTER - Class of 94: Candace Hunter Joins Nelson Real Estate

CHICAGO MAGAZINE - The Best Pilates Class - Even Candy Hunter swears by John Grute's technique

2003

ROLLING STONE - Call Me Candace: I want love. I want kids.

THE ONION (online) - Motion for Candy Hunter Spawn Vetoed by World

ZOOM IN TO SIDE OF SCREEN:

Personal Ad of the Day: "Fun, caring SWF, comes with a bit of baggage, but don't we all? (picture withheld)"

EXT. CHICAGO STREET - MORNING

In a blue suit, Candy, now 27, walks down the street on her way to work. Five years after the scandal, she's become an adult -- a bit more mature, more grave.

INT. BAKERY - MORNING

Candy stands in line with two chocolate croissants and coffee. She glances behind her and sees JUSTIN TIMBERLAKE.

She pretends not to notice him, but flits her eyes to check him out. Finally, she pays the CASHIER.

EXT. CHICAGO STREET - MORNING

Candy giggles into her cell phone. It's so small, it always looks like she's talking to herself. It's her only reliable companion.

CANDY

Oh my god, you'll never believe who
I just saw--

CUT TO:

INT. SUV - MORNING - CONTINUOUS

Justin with a bunch of FRIENDS. Loud music thumping.

JUSTIN TIMBERLAKE

--Candy Hunter! Just buying
breakfast. It was crazy.

They all laugh.

PUNK FRIEND

Dude, what did she get?

EXT. CHICAGO STREET - MORNING

Candy approaches the Chicago Avenue subway station.

MALE TEENAGE VOICE (O.S.)

Do the face!

Startled, Candy sees a MALE TEENAGER in saggy jeans on the opposite corner.

MALE TEENAGER

Do the face!

He breaks into a rendition of her Ecstasy Face. She ducks her head, and walks down into the station.

CANDY (V.O.)

That's so annoying.

TILT UP: To a billboard on top of a building, featuring a WOMAN, also posed in Candy's Ecstasy Face, next to a washing machine with the caption: "I Love Bright Brights."

INT. NELSON REALTY OFFICE - DAY

Beige, bathed in fluorescent light. Candy in her cubicle, plays jazz Mp3's on her computer. Munches on a crunchy croissant. Crumbs flake onto the floor.

As her placard reads, CHARLENE BON, 40, uptight, in the opposite cubicle, chews on her pen and glares at Candy. Candy relents by putting on headphones, plugs them in. Charlene still glares.

CANDY (V.O.)

So, this is my life now.

A shadow falls over Candy. MR. ROLAND, 50's, timid, stands over her. She takes off the headphones.

MR. ROLAND

Candy. How about you come and have a chat with me in my office? Before you get settled in.

Candy puts her croissant on a pile of documents and gets up. Mr. Roland frowns at the croissant. She tosses it away. Grease and chocolate stains remain on the papers.

INT. MR. ROLAND'S OFFICE - DAY

Candy sits in front of Mr. Roland's desk in this homey office filled with pictures of houses. Mr. Roland, in the doorway, searches for something in the hallway.

CANDY (V.O.)

Poor Mr. Roland. He's afraid to be alone with me.

A FEMALE SECRETARY, 40's, enters and sits on a chair on the side as Mr. Roland retires to his desk chair.

MR. ROLAND

Here we are. Have a piece of sweets.

He gestures to a candy dish. She takes a piece.

MR. ROLAND

How are you, Candy?

CANDY

Fabulous.

MR. ROLAND

That's great to hear. I just want to voice a little concern.

(MORE)

MR. ROLAND (CONT'D)

You're one of our top brokers, and yet the other workers here are reluctant to work on projects with you. I feel like my team is divided against itself. Do you know why this is?

Years of bashing from the media means that Candy is unfazed by this kind of confrontation.

CANDY

Okay, in other words, Charlene hates me. If I could make everyone like me, such a sudden force would knock the earth off its axis. All I can say is that I love my job, and as you said, I'm good at it. I can sell apartments, but I can't control other people's feelings. You can send me out alone and know the job will get done.

Under her voiceover, Mr. Roland continues to talk, solicitous. Candy nods, politic.

CANDY (V.O.)

So, maybe I don't love my office, but I hate applying for new jobs.

CUT TO:

INT. OFFICE - DAY

At an interview.

EXCITED MALE EXECUTIVE

Are you really the Candy Hunter?
Could you just do the face once,
really quickly?

INT. OFFICE - DAY

At another interview.

SMUG FEMALE EXECUTIVE

So, tell me about yourself.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

At another interview.

GOSSIPY FEMALE EXECUTIVE

So, tell me about Chuck.

CUT TO:

INT. NELSON REALTY OFFICE - DAY

Candy returns to her cubicle. She stashes her headphones into an overstuffed desk drawer. Charlene shoots her a look of satisfaction that makes Candy's eyes roll and body droop.

Her phone rings. She picks it up.

INT. CHICAGO TRIBUNE OFFICE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

HENRY JOHANNSEN, 30, go-getter, talks into the phone. A flurry of office noise around him.

HENRY

Candy, my dear. It's Henry, from the Trib. How are you? It's already been five years, and Ken's down my neck for a commemorative piece. What do you say to a little interview? Just like old times, a couple drinks and hanging out?

INT. NELSON REALTY OFFICE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Candy watches Charlene twirl her hair around her pen as she screeches into the phone to a customer.

CHARLENE

It's a steal, darling! A masterpiece!

Candy's shrugs. She has nothing better to do.

CANDY

(into the phone)
Okay.

INT. DRAKE HOTEL - COQ D'OR BAR - NIGHT

Over martinis, Candy and Henry sit side by side in this clubby bar in one of the most exclusive hotels in town. Interviews have become second nature to her.

CANDY

Yeah, it's like I'm finally grown up. I've finally moved out of, like, the dollhouse. Like, finally.

CANDY (V.O.)

Damn it. I talk like an idiot. But don't forget to smile.

Candy giggles, a bit drunkenly. Henry's just as tipsy.

HENRY

How do you feel about that?

CANDY (V.O.)
So, blah, blah, blah. I was really thinking about my date with Mark later on that night anyway. He's so darn gorgeous and brilliant.

INT. PIZZERIA UNO - NIGHT

Candy sits alone at a table for two. An empty wine glass in front of her. A WAITER, 30's, male, approaches.

WAITER
Another one, um, Candy?

CANDY
No, thank you, sir.

EXT. CHICAGO STREET - NIGHT

Candy marches away from the restaurant. A FLASH signals a photo taken of her.

CANDY (V.O.)
How many "I stood up Candy Hunter" stories can the National Inquirer possibly buy? Crackheads.

She pulls out her cell phone, and dials.

INT. JOHN HANCOCK BUILDING - SIGNATURE LOUNGE - NIGHT

At a table in this 95th floor bar that overlooks the whole city, Candy sits across from MYRNA, 27, yuppy. Myrna talks and gesticulates under Candy's voice over.

CANDY (V.O.)
Finding good friends has become difficult, too. All of my pre-Chuck peeps bailed on me, or at least made sure to move to a different city. Hell, I probably wouldn't want to be seen with me either if I wasn't me. So, I had the city to myself.

Myrna pauses to take a quick sip from her martini, and continues talking.

CANDY (V.O.)
Ironically, my only weird consolation was that I found a friend who couldn't care less about all the attention around me. In fact, she prefers to talk about herself and people I don't know. All the time.

MYRNA

So, I asked Suzy about what the weather was like in Phoenix, because with Dara's wedding in May, Katie has to buy...

And she continues.

CANDY (V.O.)

I once convinced myself that she did this on purpose, as if she understood my utter boredom with myself. I felt comforted. But I know the truth: she's completely oblivious.

MYRNA

And I have to take Snuffers to the vet again. His allergies...

And she continues.

CANDY (V.O.)

Of course, she's lonely, too. We shop really well together.

INT. JOHN HANCOCK BUILDING - SIGNATURE LOUNGE - LATER

Myrna has one empty drink in front of her. Candy has four.

MYRNA

I have to get home, and call Jack in Thailand. Let's work out this week!

Candy looks after Myrna leaving, at all the COUPLES sitting around the dark tables. Envious, she turns to look out over the shimmering lights of the city.

CANDY (V.O.)

(slurred, drunk)

I just want to be in love. I liked Chuck right away, but it wasn't love. Will I fall in love at first sight, or will I learn to love someone? Or will they have to learn to love me? Hell, all those journalists I know convinced the entire population of the planet that I'm a flake--an American girl with everything and nothing. Screw those freaks. If they can turn the whole world against me, I can make one man love me.

She looks around again at the contrasting faces of the people.

She stares at a GORGEOUS BLONDE MAN, 28, alone at a table.

CANDY (V.O.)

I pick... him!

A GORGEOUS WOMAN, 28, comes up next to him with his coat.

CANDY (V.O.)

No, wait, maybe someone else.

Determined, she looks out over the lights of the city again.

EXT. OUTDOOR MALL - NIGHT

Candy and Myrna walk past the stores. Myrna eyes the display clothing, while Candy scopes out the GUYS.

MYRNA

So, we're on a guy-finding expedition?

CANDY

Right. This time, I'm not going to wait until they ask me out. I am going to ask them.

MYRNA

That's not really a big deal.

CANDY

Well, I haven't dated much recently. And I just don't understand why people let certain people into their lives, and not others.

MYRNA

You should have a friend set you up. That's the best way.

CANDY

I'd love that.

MYRNA

That's how I met Dave. Saturday's our third date.

Well, great for her.

CANDY

Do you know anybody who'd be good for me?

MYRNA

No. But keep looking. Let's go in here, sweetie. I need black pants.

Myrna goes into an Express. Incredulous, Candy stares after her. And follows her in.

EXT. OUTDOOR MALL - NIGHT

Myrna hauls shopping bags from women's stores: Express, Victoria Secret, Sephora. Alienated, Candy has no bags.

MYRNA

Don't look now, but those guys are checking you out big time.

A cluster of NERDY TEENAGE GUYS in front of a computer store.

CANDY

Computer geeks. They lust after me. It's creepy.

MYRNA

Luke married a game designer.

CANDY (V.O.)

Who the hell is Luke?

Candy takes another look at the Geeks. Still no. She spots a cd store.

CANDY

Let's go in here!

INT. CD STORE - NIGHT

Candy scans the shop as Myrna stands next to her. Only an OLD WOMAN and ADOLESCENT GIRLS are in the store.

CANDY (V.O.)

Skunked.

MYRNA

Which CD do you want?

CANDY

Maybe it should be someone I have regular contact with.

MYRNA

I was friends first with almost all of my boyfriends.

CANDY

Like, my company has three floors.

MYRNA

There you go.

CANDY (V.O.)

No, wait. Duh, my office romance record sucks.

INT. CANDY'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Candy walks into this plush, rosy chintz extravaganza, like a British bed & breakfast with girly American touches. The ultimate comforting sanctuary.

CANDY (V.O.)
That was Thursday night. My weekend
was the same as always, though.

EXT. STREET - MORNING

In sweats, Candy power walks at sunrise.

INT. CANDY'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Candy reads a Flannery O'Connor book on her couch.

INT. CANDY'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

A TV dinner rotates in the microwave. Candy stares at it.

INT. CANDY'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Candy sips a cup of tea and dials her cell phone.

CANDY (V.O.)
I didn't say one word until Sunday
night.

SOUND of ringing on the line until voice mail.

WOMAN'S CRISP VOICE (O.S.)
Hello, you've reached Hugh and Lana.
Please leave a message.

CANDY
Hi, mom and dad. It's Candy, just
saying hi. Call me when you get in,
ok? Ok, bye.

Candy sits on her sofa and stares out the window.

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

Candy walks out with the other workers for lunch.

CANDY (V.O.)
Lunch. Maybe habit can work for me.
It's all about lunch hour habit.

EXT. ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO - DAY

Candy walks up the white marble entrance stairs.

INT. ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO - CAFETERIA - DAY

Candy stands at the back of the long line for food. She
scans the tables, packed with TOURISTS and STUDENTS.

Her eyes settle on HORACE, 32, dorky, glasses, wiry, acne.
He sits alone at a table for two against one of the walls.
He stares at a print of Monet's "Water Lilies" hanging above
the table as if he's absorbing all of its meaning.

CANDY (V.O.)
 He's probably one of those computer
 geeks. Maybe it was meant to be.

Candy advances in line. She looks back at Horace. He chews a cheese sandwich, watching the Water Lilies like television.

Candy selects a small salad, non-fat dressing. And he's still staring. She pays for the salad, and walks to his table.

CANDY (V.O.)
 I wonder if he's a Mac man or PC. I
 bet Mac. Better graphics.

CANDY
 Can I sit here?

He barely glances at her before looking at the poster again.

HORACE
 Yes.

Candy puts her salad and handbag down. She unzips her bag, and pulls out a McDonald's sack and a Virginia Woolf book.

Her Big Mac, fries, soda, and salad arranged, she eats. Her eyes wander up to the poster and attach to it, too.

Horace sniffs and gives a recriminating glance at her McDonald's bag. He eats one of the four cookies on his plate.

CANDY (V.O.)
 That's a lot of cookies. What is he
 watching for?

INT. ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO - CAFETERIA - LATER

Everything else done, she eats her salad. He's still looking at the Water Lilies.

CANDY
 So, are you into computers?

He faces her, and all his focus goes to her. Disarming.

HORACE
 Not inordinately so.

She's pretty sure she knows what that means.

CANDY
 Me, too. So, you come here often?

HORACE
 I work here.

CANDY
You're a bus boy?

HORACE
An apprentice conservator.

Silence. Her turn to speak. Horace has long ago befriended silence, and the power that comes with it, while retaining the timidity of a scholar. It flusters her.

CANDY
Coolness.

HORACE
Thank you.

He gets up to leave. She panics.

CANDY
Do you want to have dinner with me?

HORACE
Why?

CANDY
Like, for a date. I can just tell that we might get along.

HORACE
We just had lunch together. You didn't say anything.

CANDY
You seemed occupied. But it seemed like a comfortable silence, Horace.

He pauses. She points to his small name tag.

CANDY
My name's Candy. Hunter. I know we just met, but I'm not some strange psycho. Or you know...

HORACE
I know who you are.

CANDY
Do people call you Horace?

HORACE
Yes.

CANDY
So, Horace, what do you think about dinner?

She smiles at his puzzled expression.

HORACE

Okay.

CANDY

Great.

HORACE

Is this Candid Camera?

CANDY

No. It's just me.

CANDY (V.O.)

(flat)

And that, gentle viewers, is the story of how romance lived on.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Young, urban chic decor. Candy and Horace hand their menus to the WAITER. They haven't gotten much more comfortable.

A FREE-SPIRITED WOMAN, mid-30's, taps Candy's shoulder as she breezes by.

FREE-SPIRITED WOMAN

Love your new hairstyle.

HORACE

Who was that?

Candy shrugs "I don't know." Horace smirks.

HORACE

What did it look like before?

CANDY

My hair? It was longer, wavier. You must have seen it. Like, from the Cosmo article to the Redbook piece.

Horace shakes his head.

CANDY (V.O.)

When I look at people, I can see the magazine article they're mentally writing in their head. His article is entitled "Awkward Ennui with Candy."

HORACE

What is it like to be famous?

CANDY

Weird. But you get used to it, so I guess, routine. What is it like not to be famous?

Horace chuckles, gestures around him.

HORACE

It's pretty weird, too.

CANDY

You know, being a celebrity is really about repetition. If you look at actors, athletes, politicians, they all prepare to be famous. They hone their skill, and when the spotlight finds them, they do what they do again and again and again.

HORACE

Or they keep getting better.

CANDY

Some do. And some don't need to. But I got in on a fluke. I tried to keep up. I liked hats. My agent got me a deal for a fashion line, but really, what does that have to do with the, um, thing with Chuck? It didn't work.

HORACE

Sounds exciting to me.

Candy shrugs.

CANDY

Chuck went back to his computers and cancer cure.

HORACE

Do you talk to him?

CANDY

Not since that night.

HORACE

Not once?

CANDY

No. I started reading a lot. Philosophy, biographies, poetry, everything. Not that I had anyone to talk about it with. I think my thoughts have changed, but I don't really have a way of measuring my actions. Except in interviews. You know?

HORACE

I haven't read much about you.

(MORE)

HORACE (CONT'D)

I don't read many contemporary works myself. I assume you're set, though. A life of leisure for Candy?

CANDY

You know how you have to spend money to make money? You can also lose a lot of money that way. But I love my job. I'm a real estate broker.

HORACE

My aunt does that, too. In Vermont. What about computers?

CANDY

I don't really know much about them. I was talking to Katie, at the Today Show, you know, Couric, once about real estate, and she helped me start out. I love finding homes for people.

Horace chuckles and shakes his head.

CANDY

I was serious before when I asked what it's like not to be famous. What is your life like? How does a conservationist spend his time?

HORACE

Conservator. A metals conservator. I conserve metallic art pieces.

CANDY

So, you, like, fix broken sculptures?

HORACE

I preserve. I try to keep things stable so that they stay in their current state. And if they do break, I try to make it so that they don't deteriorate more. It's like freezing them, temporally. My specialty is armor.

CANDY

So, you're like a handyman? Is that how curators start out?

HORACE

If they wimp out. Curators get all the attention, but pieces would rust into oblivion without us. I have seven years of training. It's art, chemistry, history all mixed together. A lot of research. I also treat private collections.

CANDY

What is an average day like for you?
What do you do with your life? You
get up at 8:00 on a Monday, and what
do you do?

Horace sees that Candy is sincere to the point of perplexity.

HORACE

How boring can you stand? I get up
at 7:00. I take my asthma medication.
I put frozen waffles in the toaster.
Then I take a shower, and when I get
out and dressed, breakfast is ready.

CANDY

Then what?

Rapt, Candy listens as he continues.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Candy and Horace walk down a street in downtown Chicago.
There's a warmth between them.

CANDY

Thanks for going out with me.

HORACE

I had a good time.

CANDY

Me, too.

CANDY & HORACE

I'll call you.

They chuckle.

HORACE

I'll call you.

CANDY

(skeptical)
Great.

But Horace is really intrigued by her.

HORACE

It's still early. Do you want to go
somewhere else?

CANDY

Sure, but I don't really go for bars
or clubs.

HORACE

Me, neither. Let's just walk. I need to exercise more. Volleyball season is coming up.

CANDY

That's so cute.

EXT. CIVIC CENTER PLAZA - NIGHT

Candy and Horace walk into the plaza with the Picasso statue in the middle. The statue is a 50-foot high dog, abstract and made out of steel. The area is deserted.

CANDY

Did you preserve this statue?

HORACE

No, you have to have the political skills of Machiavelli's right hand man to get near this old dog.

CANDY

It's very nice.

HORACE

(sarcastic)

Picasso would have been very touched by your analysis.

CANDY

What do you think?

HORACE

It's not his best, but people like it. Makes them think about art. No one's sure that it's a dog, of course. It's untitled.

CANDY

(flirty)

Another touching analysis. Personally, I like the Miro better.

Candy points to the Joan Miro sculpture across the street. It looks like an abstract woman-shape made of ceramic, with outstretched arms and a large salad fork protruding from the top of its button-shaped head.

Shocked, Horace looks at her.

HORACE

So do I.

Candy feels like she was being patronized.

CANDY

So, when you do research, I guess you always find what you're looking for?

HORACE

Not always, but I'm quite good.

CANDY

Do you ever find something that you're not looking for?

Their eyes lock. Horace smiles.

HORACE

I think I just have.

INT. NELSON REALTY OFFICE - DAY

Candy surfs the web. The phone rings. She answers it.

CANDY

Hello, Candy speaking.

MALE VOICE

Darling!

CANDY

Hor--

MALE VOICE

How's my favorite real estate mogul slash cultural icon?

CANDY

Hey, Tyler.

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - CONTINUOUS

Tyler, her fellow former-ChipWare intern, now a 27 year old journalist, waits in line with a stack of magazines in one hand. He talks into a wireless cell phone headset.

TYLER

So, five years! Jesus. Happy birthday.

INT. NELSON REALTY OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Candy conjures up a giggle.

CANDY

Funny. Where are you?

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - CONTINUOUS

The frustrated CASHIER tries to get Tyler's attention to pay. Tyler looks out the window as he talks.

TYLER

A nasty little bodega in your fine city of Chicago. Wrapping up a few stories out here.

CANDY

Cool.

TYLER

So, what you do say to a little commemorative piece? Sulzberger's really hot on this coverage.

CANDY

Okay.

TYLER

Pick you up at eight tonight. You don't have plans, do you?

CANDY

Tonight works.

INT. LEXUS CONVERTIBLE SPORTSCAR - NIGHT

In the driver's seat, Tyler watches Candy descend from her front door. She wears a conservative blue dress.

TYLER

C'mon, Daisy Duke, hop in. I'll catch ya.

CANDY

Not in this dress.

She gets in. He guns the engine, and takes off.

CANDY

Cool car! Damn, how'd you get this model already?

TYLER

My Lexus peeps look out for me. And my parents were stumped for an Easter gift.

CANDY

My dad's still on some toolish wait list.

The refrain from the Beatles' "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds" blares. Candy looks at her cell, lets it go to voice mail.

Tyler pulls out his cell phone from his inner blazer pocket, and tosses it on her lap. Their phones are identical.

TYLER

Good choice. You get bluetooth,
too?

CANDY

Yeah, but I have to figure it out.
I don't know why they make it so
complicated if it's supposed to help.

TYLER

You're such a princess. I'll explain
it. It uses a synching platform....

Candy listens as they cruise along.

INT. LE COLONIAL RESTAURANT - NIGHT

A hip Vietnamese restaurant, chic and sleek, in red and black.
Candy and Tyler swirl digestifs. Both tipsy. Tyler still
adores Candy, and she tries to deflect it.

TYLER

Now, correct me if I'm wrong, but
two of your quotes tonight are
verbatim from your Vanity Fair
interview, one from Time, and you
actually stole a joke from Jay Leno.

CANDY

I'm tired of thinking of different
ways of saying the same things.

TYLER

Nothing has changed in your life, or
your mind? Is it that you've only
gotten more beautiful?

CANDY

As a matter of fact, I've met someone.
A really cool guy.

TYLER

(steely)
Well, well. Do tell.

CANDY

I don't know if I should.

TYLER

Oh, come on, do you want everyone to
continue to labor under the
misapprehension that you're incapable
of true feelings and true
relationships? This is sweet. This
is good. And you can share the
limelight a little.

CANDY

Really?

TYLER

Didn't we once talk about how the news is plastered with blood and guts and other bodily fluids? This is your chance to share your happiness with others. A little uplift.

CANDY

Well, he's really, like, amazing. Brilliant. Without him, the Art Institute would be like a pit of rusty ashes. And I hope he can save the Picasso dog statue before it's too late.

TYLER

What's his name?

CANDY

Horace. Isn't that a funny name? He's a preservator. He, like, bosses around the curators. He's been there for nine years.

TYLER

What's he like?

CANDY

He's so thoughtful. And precise. His world is unlimited. He goes between art, science, history, psychology. And I feel like I'm the best I can be when I'm around him. The world seems in harmony.

TYLER

(gritting his teeth)
Interesting.

CANDY

Now I'm just waiting for his call.

Candy and Tyler stare at each other, calculating, in their own worlds.

CANDY (CONT'D)

And he's from a small town in New Jersey...

And she keeps going.

INT. CANDY'S VOLKSWAGEN JETTA - MORNING

Parked at the newsstand at Water Tower on Michigan Avenue, Candy finishes reading Tyler's NY Times article.

Happy, she tosses it into the back, and drives off.

CANDY (V.O.)
I didn't think he could write such
nice things about someone other than
me. Maybe we're all healing.

Candy turns up Lake Shore Drive. The turquoise water gleaming
alongside her car. Her radio blaring pop music.

CANDY (V.O.)
So, it's Thursday. Hump Day plus
one. The perfect day to ditch work
and visit my parents. And wait for
Horace to call about weekend plans.

EXT. WINNETKA - HOUSE - DAY

The Jetta pulls into the driveway of a magnificent Tudor-
style suburban home and parks behind a Toyota Prius, which
is behind a Cadillac Escalade SUV.

INT. HOUSE - FOYER - DAY

Immaculate classic American interior design.

CANDY
Hello?

INT. HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

Candy searches for any sign of life.

CANDY
Hello?

INT. HOUSE - SPIRAL STAIRCASE - DAY

Candy calls up the stairs.

CANDY
Are you guys up there?

INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Distraught, Candy stares straight out of the patio door at
the manicured back yard.

She looks to the side, and finally spots the well-coiffed
backs of the heads of HUGH and LANA HUNTER, 60's. They read
and drink tea in a patio set.

EXT. PATIO - DAY

Candy walks out of the patio door. Her parents smile at
her. WASPs, staid.

CANDY

There you guys are. I was afraid
you'd gone out.

HUGH

Honey, of course not.

They stand up. Candy hugs both of them.

LANA

We're so happy that you could come
home. What an odd day for your
company to take a holiday.

CANDY

It's some saint's birthday or
something.

LANA

At least the shops are open. Jessie
just got in the cutest skirts.

INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Sitting on high stools, Candy and her parents eat salmon and
salad around the kitchen's island. The news plays on the TV
nestled into the shelf of cookbooks.

CANDY (V.O.)

My parents are really wonderful, but
they keep themselves a bit removed.
I guess we need our space. We don't
need to know everything about each
other. For instance, I've never
asked if they've actually seen the
webcast.

On TV, the picture of Candy's Ecstasy Face comes up behind
the NEWSCASTER. Hugh fiercely snaps the remote. The channel
switches to a home and garden show.

CANDY (V.O.)

But they've definitely seen the face.

Candy checks her cell phone. It reads 12:36. No voice mail.

EXT. SHOPPING STREET - DAY

NOTE: Music plays over this shopping sequence. The music
pauses every time a cell phone rings and someone answers.

Candy and her parents stroll along the quaint shopping village
street. Candy checks her cell phone. It reads 1:30.

INT. WOMEN'S CLOTHING STORE - DAY

Lana pulls a skirt off a rack and shows it to Candy. BEEP!
BEEP! Lana answers her cell phone.

LANA

Lance! Where are those geraniums?

INT. ICE CREAM PARLOR - DAY

Old-fashioned. Candy and her parents select flavors.

EXT. SHOPPING VILLAGE - PIAZZA - DAY

They eat their ice cream. "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds" blares out. Her dad answers his cell phone, and it stops.

HUGH

Jake. How'd the trading go?

He walks away. Lana smiles apologetically at Candy. BEEP! BEEP! Lana answers her cell.

LANA

Oh, Mary. I'm having ice cream with my daughter now.

She listens for a second, and then walks away to talk more.

Candy checks her cell. It's 2:50. She presses a button to make sure it's on "Loud" mode.

INT. INTERIOR DESIGN STORE - DAY

Lana examines a teak dresser while Candy wanders around.

INT. BOOKSTORE - DAY

Candy and her parents each leaf through books on sailing.

INT. WOMEN'S CLOTHING STORE - CHANGING ROOM HALLYWAY - DAY

Candy and Lana examine their sun dresses in the big mirror.

BEEP! BEEP! Lana rushes back to her changing room to answer it. Candy goes back to her dressing room.

LANA (O.S.)

Your dad says hello. He's wandered over to the fishing store.

EXT. ELECTRONICS STORE - DAY

Each with a few bags, Hugh and Lana walk into an electronics store, but Candy gestures that she'll stay outside.

Candy sits down on a wooden bench. On its other end, she glowers at a metal statue of a lonely old man posed as if he's feeding pigeons birdseed.

Her cell phone reads 5:05. She scrolls to "Horace," and rings it. It rings... and rings... until...

HORACE (O.S.)

Hello.

CANDY

Hi, Horace. It's Candy.

HORACE (O.S.)

(monotone)

You got me fired.

CANDY

What?

HORACE (O.S.)

You got everything wrong. I am not in charge of curators. I am not. And the Picasso people are pissed.

CANDY

I'm so sorry.

HORACE (O.S.)

It's not like I'm going to get a clothing line or an agent out of this. You ruined my life. And suddenly everyone thinks that I'm your boytoy. I'm not.

CANDY

I'm so sorry.

HORACE (O.S.)

I never want to see you again. Forget my funny name.

Click. Candy's eyes tear up. She holds them back.

Hugh and Lana come up next to her. Their smiles drop when they see her so distraught. Candy does her best to be strong.

HUGH

Honey, are you okay?

CANDY

I'm fine.

LANA

Are you sure?

CANDY

Yeah. It's just a guy problem.

Hugh and Lana freeze like deer caught in headlights. This is beyond their bounds.

Candy gets up and walks to their parked Prius. Hugh and Lana share a quick glance of muted fear, and follow her.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Near tears, Candy steers her Jetta out of the driveway.

EXT. LAKE SHORE DRIVE - NIGHT

In silence, Candy drives south. The lake blends into the night sky. Chicago, in a purple haze of night smog, looms in the distance.

She pulls out her cell, calls "Myrna." It rings, until voice mail. She hangs up. She calls "Tyler." It rings once.

TYLER (O.S.)

Hello, gorgeous.

CANDY

I'm coming over.

INT. THE DRAKE HOTEL - TYLER'S SUITE - NIGHT

Posh. A KNOCK on the door. Tyler takes an apple from a fruit basket on side table. The open card on the table reads: "Enjoy the room! Mommy and Daddy." He jams the card into a crevice between the fruit to hide it, and opens the door.

TYLER

Come in, you beautiful victim.

He hugs her. She stiffens at his touch.

INT. THE DRAKE HOTEL - TYLER'S SUITE - NIGHT

An opulent spread of rooms, with a room service cart along one wall. Tyler lords over it all.

TYLER

Have you eaten yet? I ordered enough for both of us. Their duck's for shit, but try the sirloin.

CANDY

I'm not hungry.

TYLER

Maybe these will make you feel better.

He produces a dozen red roses. She takes them, blushing.

CANDY

Thank you, Tyler.

She sits on the gilded cream couch, the roses on her lap. Tyler sits on the other end.

The TV blares a sketch comedy show.

COMEDY ACTRESS (on TV)
But Hooooooraaaaace, I loooooove you.

With the remote control, Tyler turns it off.

CANDY
Did you know this was going to happen?

TYLER
(deflecting a "yes"
answer)
I would never do anything to hurt
you.

CANDY
He hates me.

TYLER
So, he wasn't the right guy for you.
Anyone with an ounce of empathy could
see that the backlash wasn't your
fault. How could you foresee this?

CANDY
I couldn't.

TYLER
I bet the Institute was just waiting
for an excuse to get rid of him.

CANDY
I can't believe this. I'm a life
ruiner.

TYLER
It's not your fault. Let it go.
You're a gorgeous, charming girl.
And you've suffered enough.

CANDY
I know you're flattering me, but
thanks for the comfort.

TYLER
Candy, forget it. You'll probably
never see him again. Just let it
drift away. A week ago, you wouldn't
have cared less about a conservator
with an armor fetish.

CANDY
I just feel awful. I could help
find a new job for him.

TYLER
Candy, you need someone who's strong
enough to take care of you. And who
can accept you for all that you are.

This makes Candy uncomfortable.

CANDY

I'm not so weak.

TYLER

Do you know why I drove my Lexus all the way out here from New York?

CANDY

Because you're in love. With it.

He playfully tugs a lock of her hair. She moves her head away.

CANDY

Tyler. You're a great friend, but I don't think that we're right for each other romantically.

TYLER

I'm not cute enough for you?

CANDY

You're gorgeous. It's just something else. I don't know what.

TYLER

You're going to throw me away because of something you don't know?

CANDY

I need more time.

TYLER

We've been flirting with the inevitable for the past five years. For five years, I waited for the Chuck thing to die down, and for you to recover. Luckily, it also gave me five years to sample the field so that now I can devote myself to you without regrets. But I can't bear to wait another five years for you to date, drop, and get over Horace. I'm transferring to Chicago permanently.

CANDY

For me?

TYLER

From the moment I first saw you, I knew we'd spend our life together.

Candy doesn't know what to say. He leans towards her. Instinctively, she leans away.

CANDY

Thank you, Tyler. You know, you're my only friend who kept talking to me after the thing with Chuck.

He puts his arm around her. She gets up.

CANDY

I need to get home.

INT. OFFICE - NELSON REAL ESTATE - DAY

Candy sits down in her cubicle with croissants and coffee.

Charlene looks over at her.

CHARLENE

What are you doing here?

Candy's unsure how to respond.

CHARLENE

The Westmont Complex?

CANDY (V.O.)

Asshat!

Candy jumps out of her seat, and rushes out.

CHARLENE

You're welcome.

EXT. WESTMONT APARTMENT COMPLEX - DAY

A new apartment building with a line of prospective BUYERS. Candy rushes to the front of the line--generating looks of anger and curiosity--and pushes her way into the door.

INT. WESTMONT APARTMENT COMPLEX - APARTMENT - DAY

A sprawling luxury loft. Candy shows around an EAGER COUPLE, who peer into every nook and cranny.

CANDY (V.O.)

So, fine, I was late, but I sold four units before lunch. You're probably thinking that it was like shooting whales in a barrel with all those people out front, but they're real estate junkies who go to every opening. Frankly, I rock at my job.

EXT. WESTMONT APARTMENT COMPLEX - DAY

Candy leaves the building.

CANDY (V.O.)

Poor Horace. Tyler said it's not my fault, but I feel so guilty. I can't get him out of my mind.

EXT. ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO - DAY

Candy looks up at it from the bottom of the marble steps.

CANDY (V.O.)

Luckily, I'm unstoppable today. These punks don't stand a chance.

INT. ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO - ATRIUM - LATER

Candy marches up to FREDERICK, 40's, at the info desk, dapper and a gushing fan. His eyes bulge at the sight of her.

FREDERICK

Candy! Hi, I'm Frederick!
(conspiratorial whisper)
You have to know that I think you got screwed over and deserve better than these scandals, but you're not welcome here.

CANDY

Thank you, Frederick, but I have to see the, um, head conservator.

FREDERICK

Please say you have an appointment.

Candy shakes her head.

FREDERICK

If I call down to him, he'll turn you away. But if you know that Jim Mather's workshop is down those stairs and the second door on the right, you may just find him yourself.

CANDY

Thank you.

Candy walks to a staircase in the corner of the room.

FREDERICK

My pleasure. You're a good girl!

INT. ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO - CONSERVATOR'S WORKSHOP - DAY

CLANG! CLANG! CLANG!

From the doorway, Candy scans the room lined with sinister metallurgical tools and armor parts, like a medieval blacksmith's workshop.

She spots JIM MATHERS, 60, scrawny, scholarly, wearing goggles, ear protectors, and a rubber apron, as he bangs on a piece of metal on a worktable.

He looks up, and takes off his goggles and ear protectors. Condescending, he stares Candy down.

CANDY

Can you please give Horace his job back? He didn't say those things. I got it all wrong.

JIM

While I don't doubt your hapless role in the matter, I cannot. Our Institute has been irreparably disgraced. Furthermore, you're not welcome here.

CANDY

I'll never come back again, but Horace's job is his life. And he's good at it.

JIM

Are you presuming that because you are the Candy Hunter it gives you the right to tell me how to run my department?

CANDY

Well, you fired him because of me.

JIM

So, because you're famous, you have the answer to everything? Well, dearie, real people have to suffer sometimes. And work hard without recognition. That's life.

CANDY

This doesn't make sense. Horace--

JIM

You can make sense of this to security.

He picks up a phone.

JIM

And USA Today, if you don't kindly take your leave now.

Scared, Candy hurries off.

INT. NELSON REALTY OFFICE - DAY

Candy sits at her desk.

CANDY (V.O.)

What a thug. I don't need recognition for everything. But how I can help Horace? If only Horace wanted to work at People or something, I could hook him up so fast.

Candy's phone rings. She picks it up.

CANDY

This is Candy.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Hello, this is Kim Spade from the Trib. Care to comment on Horace Martinek's dismissal from the Art Institute?

CANDY

I'm shocked that such a leading institute would disregard the need for cutting edge conservation. He's one of the best in his field, though. The offers should be flying at him.

CANDY (V.O.)

Oh, damn. I have to stop blabbing like that. Yes. Yes, Horace Martinek, I am going to help you as much as I know how, and you'll never even know.

INT. UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO - LIBRARY - DAY

Horace reads at a long wooden tables, with a laptop surrounded by mounds of medieval books marked with post-its. The laptop is on a museum job webpage.

TWO WOMEN and a GUY pull up chairs around him. DANA, 32, loud, cynical, dressed in black, a raspy whisper voice. ROSE, 32, sweet, subdued, elegant. VEEJAY, 32, Indian, friendly, preppy plus a streak of red-dyed hair. All academic/museum types. They've been a quartet of friends for ten years, and the easygoing familiarity shows. Rose and Veejay are dating.

VEEJAY

Oh, buddy. What are you doing here?

HORACE

I still have research projects. And I don't want to fall behind on new articles.

ROSE

My friend at the Field Museum thinks she can arrange something up.

HORACE

Thanks, Rose.

DANA

Horace, you should be really pissed off right now. Like, shrieking pissed.

Horace shrugs.

VEEJAY

(joking)

Whoa, control your catatonic state.

HORACE

This is all I know how to do. I guess it was just a bonus to get paid for it. I still have a private commission. I'll find something.

DANA

Let Veejay and me show you how to vent with some beer.

HORACE

I don't know, Dana. Maybe Sunday afternoon? After our research support session? I really have a lot to do.

Rose, Candy, and Veejay get up to go.

VEEJAY

All right, dude, but remember we're here for you. And fyi, Candy's been talking to the press about you again.

ROSE

(under her breath)

I thought we weren't going to tell him that.

They leave. Horace reads until they're gone. Then he logs into Lexis-Nexis, and enters "Candy Hunter." 1-20 of 535,234 articles appear. He clicks on the most recent, entitled "Candy Calls for Conservation Awareness."

The article and her Ecstasy Face come up. He stares at it.

HORACE

(soft, kind)

Who are you?

INT. NELSON REALTY OFFICE - DAY

Candy sits at her desk, and dials her phone. On her computer screen displays Yahoo! White Pages with Horace Martinek's address at 6 West Chicago Avenue and Yahoo! Yellow Pages with Art Supply Stores.

CANDY (V.O.)
 Ok, practical. Must be practical.
 Down to earth.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)
 Henry's Art Supplies.

CANDY
 Hi, I was wondering if you could put
 together a gift basket for a metals
 conservator friend of mine. Do you
 know what he would need?

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)
 Well, a lot has to do with what they
 work with and what they prefer, but
 we can figure it out.

CANDY
 You rule. And for the card, just
 say "Thanks for your expertise."
 Leave it unsigned. It's going to 6
 West Chicago Avenue.

INT. NELSON REALTY OFFICE - DAY - LATER

Candy dials her phone.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)
 The Art Institute of Chicago. How
 may I direct your call?

CANDY
 Frederick, please. In the info booth.

The line clicks and rings.

FREDERICK (O.S.)
 This is Frederick. How may I help
 you?

CANDY
 Hey, Frederick. It's Candy.

FREDERICK (O.S.)
 Oh my god! Hello! How are you?!

CANDY
 I'm ok. I have a question for you.

FREDERICK (O.S.)
 Oh my god, anything!

CANDY
 What kind of health insurance do
 employees at the Institute get?

FREDERICK (O.S.)
Oh. Um, let me check.

INT. NELSON REALTY OFFICE - DAY - LATER

Candy dials and line rings.

CANDY (V.O.)
I used to have an assistant who would
dial for me. Yep. That rocked.

The line answers.

MALE VOICE (V.O.)
Blue Cross/Blue Shield.

CANDY
Hello, who could I talk to about
continuing coverage for a friend of
mine?

INT. JHOON'S GROCERY - DAY

Horace steps up to the cashier with his basket of groceries.
The CASHIER, 40's, presses a button on top of a toy robot,
and it WHIRS and FLASHES LIGHTS.

CASHIER
Congratulations! You're our 100,000th
customer. You've won one hundred
days of free groceries.

HORACE
Really? Thanks!

The Cashier gives him a certificate, and looks down at his
cheese sandwich and cookies.

CASHIER
Maybe you'd like to kick it up a
notch today?

HORACE
No, thanks. That's all I need.

Horace smiles and walks out of the store with his groceries.
The Cashier dials a number on the phone.

CASHIER
The Falcon has flown.

INT. BLOOMINGDALE'S - DAY

Candy talks into her cell phone in the men's clothing dept.

CANDY
Thanks, Jhoon.

She hangs up.

CANDY (V.O.)

What else does he need? He's so low maintenance. A new library card?

Tyler appears in a cool black leather jacket.

TYLER

Tell me the truth. This, or the orange one?

CANDY

(whatever)
This one.

TYLER

I think so, too. Let's bag it, and get to dinner.

They walk to a CASHIER.

CANDY

Do you ever get bored of going out to restaurants?

TYLER

No way, not until I get a personal chef. Unless you do.

CANDY

How about if we go to the symphony? Some culture.

TYLER

Why not? My grandmother has box seats. We'll go later this week. Happy, Candy?

CANDY

Yes. Thanks, Tyler.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Candy walks home from dinner with Tyler, carrying a doggie bag. From across the street, she looks up at 6 West Chicago Avenue, Horace's apartment. She sits on a bench and looks up at all the dark windows. A STREET PERFORMER with a tuba plays, off-key, from the corner.

INT. UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO - LIBRARY - NIGHT

Horace, Veejay, and Rose pack up their books to leave. Horace sits his laptop, angled away from the others. On the screen, Lexis-Nexis lists 400-420 of 535,234 Candy Hunter articles.

VEEJAY

(to Horace)

Dude, call it a night. It'll be here tomorrow.

Veejay walks over to Horace. Horace clicks the window closed.

HORACE

(yelps)

Ok!

DANA

Exciting stuff, huh, tiger?

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Horace walks out from the subway staircase and towards his apartment a few steps away. A TOURIST, 30, male, in a "Chicago!" t-shirt approaches him.

TOURIST

Excuse me! Sir!

Horace looks back at him, eyes wide, scared.

TOURIST

I put a fifty into the subway fare card machine by mistake, and I'm going home now. Could you take it off my hands?

The Tourist gives him the subway card.

HORACE

Sure. Thank you.

The Tourist waves, "no big deal." Horace lets himself into his building. The Tourist waves across the street.

Candy, still on the bench, waves back and smiles. The Tuba Player blares next to her.

CANDY (V.O.)

I wish I could do more for him. I just don't know how. He must be dying inside.

CANDY

(to Tuba Player)

Excuse me, Mr. Tuba Player? I think some people are trying to sleep. Plus, the acoustics are better down on the subway platform.

The Tuba Player stops playing and studies her.

TUBA PLAYER

What do you know about acoustics,
Candy Hunter?

CANDY

Just trying to help you out.

He shrugs and packs up. Candy also gets up and leaves.

INT. UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO - LIBRARY - DAY

With a few day old stubble, Horace reads 7,020-7,040 of
535,234 Candy Hunter articles on his laptop. Unopened books
around him.

Veejay, Rose, Dana, and TEN ARMORISTS, men and women, 30's,
ranging from Goth to meek, march up to him. He closes his
laptop and keeps his hand on top of it.

HORACE

What's going on?

DANA

This is an intervention, sucker.

ROSE

It's time for you to get out of here
and work a gallery showing.

Horace is speechless, touched. Veejay gestures to the crowd.

VEEJAY

Once we told your armorist friends
about what happened at the Institute,
each one insisted on getting you
back on your feet.

HORACE

Thank you. All of you.

DANA

Domesticating the Modern Medieval.
Armor for the masses. That's our
show, and you are chief conservator.

VEEJAY

Conservators don't have many
opportunities to show off, so we're
going to make this count.

MEEK ARMORIST

As much as we know how.

Friendly chuckles.

GOTH ARMORIST

Ready to go?

Horace smiles and nods.

INT. NELSON REALTY OFFICE - DAY

Candy's work phone rings. Her cell phone follows, blaring "Lucy in the Sky With Diamonds." The display reads "Tyler." She answers her work phone.

CANDY
Hello, this is Candy.

TYLER'S VOICE (O.S.)
Hey, babe.

EXT. BUCKINGHAM GARDENS - CONTINUOUS

Tyler walks along the plaza next to the turquoise lake. MEN and WOMEN doing Tai Chi in the background.

CANDY (O.S.)
How did you call both numbers?

TYLER
Sweet new technology. I just finished a stupid Tai Chi interview.

CANDY (O.S.)
Oh, I want to take classes.

TYLER
Candy, don't waste your time. They're all greasy-haired sun-droolers. One of them was feeding me all this fluff about how it revolutionized his life. Meanwhile, the guy's still a balding forty year old hospital cashier. Do you really want to make friends with Baldy?

INT. NELSON REALTY OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Candy grimaces, and clicks to another museum webpage.

CANDY
Hmm... You know, I'm not really in the mood anymore.

TYLER (O.S.)
I told you the symphony was lame.
(amused)
You want to flake, don't you?

CANDY
Neither of us is really into it.

EXT. BUCKINGHAM GARDENS - CONTINUOUS

Tyler is amused.

TYLER

Candy, it's okay. You forget how well I know you. I know you'll be dying to get culture and go to the symphony, and then flake an hour before. That's cool. We could just chill instead. A bottle of wine. Some cd's.

CANDY (O.S.)

I think I just want to relax tonight. I'll talk to you later.

Beep. She hangs up. Tyler glares back the Tai Chi-ers.

TYLER

You relax every night.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Candy talks into her cell phone.

CANDY

Hey, Myrna. What's up?

(pause)

I'm trying to dodge this guy tonight.

How about if I join you for drinks?

(pause)

Ok, maybe next weekend. Bye.

She enters her apartment building.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

She walks to her apartment door. A silver envelope that says "Candy" is taped to the door. She winces.

INT. CANDY'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Amidst the chintz, Candy listens to her one answering machine message.

TYLER'S VOICE

Candy, Candy, Candy. Call me, call me, call me. It's me.

She opens the envelope, and takes out an invitation card that reads: "Gallery Opening at the Diamonte. 160 N Loomis. Mandatory attendance. 8:00 tonight."

CANDY (V.O.)

I won't go. I'm putting my foot down.

INT. CANDY'S LIVING ROOM - LATER

Candy reads a book of Shakespeare's sonnets. She yawns, and looks at the clock. 7:45.

CANDY (V.O.)
 I'm pathetic. All right, I'll go.
 But I'll be an hour late.

EXT. DIAMONTE GALLERY - NIGHT

Candy stands in front of 160 N Loomis. A tattered awning reads "Diamonte Gallery." The windows are painted black.

CANDY (V.O.)
 How trendy.

She sees something move in the alley next to the gallery. It's Horace. She sees him dial a number on his cell phone.

CANDY (V.O.)
 Oh! Who is he calling?

Her phone blares out "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds." She jumps to the side and keeps her eyes in Horace's direction as she fiddles to turn it off in her bag.

CANDY (V.O.)
 Freakin' Tyler! I may as well go in
 and soothe the boy.

INT. DIAMONTE GALLERY - NIGHT

Candy steps into the neglected candle-lit one room gallery with hardwood floors. Only a partition in the center of the room.

CANDY
 Hello!?

Horace walks in from the back.

HORACE
 You're here! I know it was a last
 minute thing and I didn't know if
 you could come, but I just had to
 see you.

Candy's jaw drops. She sees a picnic basket sitting on a checkered blanket, behind the partition.

HORACE
 I read that you like picnics. But
 not the bugs. Esquire, January 2002.

Horace aims a remote control at a wall, and a cd plays of park sounds--birds chirping, leaves rustling.

CANDY
 But you hate me.

HORACE

It's a peculiar joke that a person can hurt you a lot, but you can still like her. I haven't been able to stop thinking about you.

Candy giggles through misty eyes.

CANDY

I-I've been thinking about you a lot, too. Aren't you so mad?

HORACE

Fortune turns her wheel when she will. No use going crazy.

Candy looks at him like he's crazy.

HORACE

It's a rather medieval concept. They also passed over me for a promotion. And my boss was psychotic.

CANDY

Yeah, I know--
(stops herself)
How bad that can be.

INT. DIAMONTE GALLERY - NIGHT - LATER

Done with dinner, Candy and Horace lounge on the blanket.

CANDY

So, you read everything about me?

HORACE

I began by plowing through every article about you. There are a lot. But then I realized that I don't care what other people think about you. That narrowed it down. I scanned for your quotes.

CANDY

Taking those out of context isn't always the best idea. I mean, it's weird that these thoughts that leave your lips before a bite of asparagus tempura become words in stone.

HORACE

Do you read all your articles?

CANDY

Binge and purge.

HORACE

I noticed how you've changed. This soft girl snapped into something sharper.

CANDY

That's my own kind of armor.

HORACE

But it's more than that. You used to think that the world was so big and endless, and now you realize that this is it. You have to fare your best with what you have, and that means that was most familiar to you took on a different meaning. So, it's like you're seeing the world for the first time, and you're overwhelmed all over again. But somehow stagnant.

CANDY

So, not only did I get you fired, but I'm going to ask you to do the opposite of your job. You're going to have to unfreeze me.

HORACE

I see you as a person now.

CANDY

You should know that I haven't dated in a while. I'm not really sure what do.

HORACE

I read that. And you should know that I've never had a girlfriend.

CANDY

Are you kidding?

HORACE

First of all, I'm ugly.

CANDY

What?

HORACE

Second, I've spent my life reading. Reading about immaculate people. Always the best words in the best order, the best actions at the best times, the best poses in the best light.

(MORE)

HORACE (CONT'D)

I looked away from all the imperfect women I met because they were so much less than what I'd read about. Only recently I realized that there are no immaculate people. And people can be more amazing than they let on at first. After reading about you, I'm happy that you're a real person because you're so much more than what's on the page.

She reaches out, and puts her hand over his. The feeling is electric for both of them.

EXT. DIAMONTE GALLERY - NIGHT

Horace locks up. They walk away.

CANDY

Was that your secret conservator lair?

HORACE

It's actually the very best gallery we could afford. My friends are coordinating a "Save Horace" armor show.

CANDY

You're lucky to have such good friends.

HORACE

Nothing big. Maybe twelve suits. We hope to get that many guests.

Candy perks up with an idea.

CANDY

I have a surprise for you.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

An antique, molded door opens. Candy and Horace walk into the empty apartment. Cavernous. High ceilings. Ornate moldings. Plastered-over windows. Cobwebs.

CANDY

This is perfect for you. The other place was too industrial.

Horace marvels.

HORACE

It's beautiful.

CANDY

It's a white elephant that's been on the market for two years. The owners would love to be patrons of the arts. I bet I could get it for free.

HORACE

Thank you, Candy.

They look at each other. Close, but unsure about kissing. Candy looks away first. And walks to the door.

CANDY

It's the least I could do.

INT. NELSON REALTY OFFICE - DAY

Elated, Candy sits in her cubicle. She even smiles at Charlene.

On her computer, "Horace Martinek" is the sender of a lot of emails that day. She types one to him now.

INT. CANDY'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Stiff, Candy sits on her couch. The buzzer rings. She jumps up. She presses the call button, and opens the door. Footsteps come up the stairs, and Horace appears.

HORACE

Hi.

CANDY

Hello. Welcome to my home.

Horace walks into the festival of chintz that is her apartment. He takes in the antique chairs, the ornate flowery vases, the pile of papers and magazines shoved into a corner behind the TV. Horace's head snaps back in surprise.

Candy closes the door, very self-conscious.

CANDY (V.O.)

It's weird to have someone else in my apartment. Should I be doing something? Is my apartment weird?

She looks at Horace, who smiles politely at her.

HORACE

Unique apartment.

CANDY

Most of it's from my grandmother.

HORACE

So, you had no choice?

CANDY

No, I picked each piece out.

Candy walks towards the kitchen. Horace follows, still marveling at the decor.

INT. CANDY'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Bland and small. A pot boils on the stove.

CANDY

Dinner's almost ready. You wanted something simple, right? Like macaroni and cheese?

HORACE

Perfect.

CANDY

Great.

Candy tries to relax against the counter.

CANDY (CONT'D)

So, how was work?

HORACE

Great.

CANDY

Great. I guess just make yourself comfortable, and I'll be out with dinner in a sec.

INT. CANDY'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Candy puts a chintz plate of macaroni and cheese in front of Horace on the table in the corner of the living room, and one down for herself. A puddle of cheesy orange water sloshes to the side of the plate. Candy sits down.

CANDY

Sometimes it turns out all watery. Sorry. It kind of tastes the same. Is it okay?

HORACE

(amused)

I'm sure it's fantastic. I'll get a glass of water.

CANDY

I'll get it!

HORACE

Candy, sit down. Relax.

Horace gets up and goes to the kitchen before she gets a chance. Candy hears cupboards opening and closing, and finally water pouring.

Horace returns with two classic Burger King Star Wars glasses filled with water, complete with pictures of characters.

CANDY

Those were from my uncle.

HORACE

Very cool.

He takes a bite of macaroni. Candy watches until he chews and smiles. Then she eats, too.

INT. CANDY'S LIVING ROOM - LATER

With a small distance between them, Candy and Horace sit next to each other on the couch listening to a jazz cd through the TV speakers.

CANDY (V.O.)

I think that this is normal.

The cd ends, and Candy fiddles with the remote. It flicks to The Simpsons.

HOMER SIMPSON (on TV)

Lisa, I don't want you to go to work unprepared. I got you this manual. It was only a nickel.

LISA SIMPSON (on TV)

"How to Intern." By Candy Hunter?! Dad!

CANDY (V.O.)

Damn pop culture ambush.

She flicks it back back to jazz and furtively looks askance at Horace. He's absorbed in the music.

CANDY (V.O.)

Yes. Normal.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. APARTMENT - HORACE'S GALLERY - NIGHT

With a fitted magnifying glass on one eye, Horace pores over a molded armor breastplate at one end of a long table---the only furniture in the space. On the other end, Candy reads RIGHT HO, JEEVES by P.G Wodehouse.

CUT TO:

INT. GALLERY - NIGHT

Candy and Horace admire a landscape watercolor exhibit.

CUT TO:

INT. UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO ART MUSEUM - ARMOR GALLERY - DAY

Horace points out a German suit of armor to Candy.

HORACE

So, the very best suits have--

CUT TO:

EXT. MARSHALL FIELDS - DAY

Candy points out an Armani suit in the window to Horace.

CANDY

So, the very best suits have--

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

Hey, Candy!

They turn to see a SKATERBOY TEENAGER at the corner.

SKATERBOY

Do the face!

Candy walks away. Horace almost follows, but turns back.

HORACE

Leave her alone.

SKATERBOY

Hey, I read about you. You're a loser! Horace. Go eat some candy.

Horace is speechless. Candy returns, and drags Horace away while the Skaterboy continues to taunt.

CANDY

Thanks, but you don't have to try that again. It doesn't stop.

INT. CANDY'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Candy and Horace eat cereal while watching I Love Lucy. They're noticeably more relaxed with each other, but still sit apart.

CANDY (V.O.)

We don't really talk all that much, but it seems so unnecessary. We just like to be together.

(MORE)

CANDY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Sometimes we take each other out for
 a spin with our thoughts on stuff,
 but it's those conversations that
 are the whipped cream, not the
 substance of our relationship.

They continue to watch TV in silence.

CANDY
 So, should I buy tickets for the
 Cubs game Saturday?

HORACE
 Actually, Saturday is Pageturner's
 Books annual Four Quarters Sale. My
 friends and I make a ritual of it.
 Every person can buy any four books
 for a quarter each, but you only
 have half an hour to decide.

CANDY
 I've heard of that.

HORACE
 I want you to come and meet my
 friends. If you're dating me, you're
 basically dating them, too.

CANDY
 I'd love to.

HORACE
 We have to get there early. It's
 high stakes.

CANDY
 I'll be at the front of the line.

INT. UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO - CLASSROOM - DAY

Horace, Veejay, Dana, and Rose sit in a circle in student
 chairs with attached desks.

VEEJAY
 So, if I emphasize the cultural
 intersection of Singer and Morris,
 then you think that will lead my
 students into a discussion about
 today's racial concerns in art?

DANA
 Yes, but don't let them push you
 into that tangent bullshit they get
 into when they talk about current
 events.

ROSE
 (to Horace)
 All right, Slim, it's your turn.
 Whatta ya got?

VEEJAY
 Pass the synopsis, please?

HORACE
 I'm going Power Point today.

DANA
 Ooooh, fancy.

Horace takes his laptop out of his bag.

HORACE
 This is a pre-seminar for a seminar
 on Saturday that you all will attend.

DANA
 Saturday's the book sale. Don't
 pull any seminar crap.

HORACE
 It will be at the bookstore. And it
 involves a fifth participant.

Power Point opens on his computer. A picture of the four
 friends at a gallery. The screen blinks. Candy's ecstasy
 face comes up.

VEEJAY
 You got the virus?! That's so ironic.

HORACE
 No.

The computer screen blinks again. Candy is crudely pasted
 into the picture of the foursome so that she stands next to
 Horace. A title appears letter by letter underneath: "Candy
 is Good For You by Horace Martinek." The friends gasp.

DANA
 You've been seeing her behind our
 backs!

ROSE
 Once the girl finished ruining her
 life, she set her sights on ruining
 yours.

VEEJAY
 She single-handedly turned your dorky
 hermit lifestyle into an unemployed
 dorky public lifestyle.

HORACE

That's exactly what I want to change, this impression of her as this public image. She is a person, and we're not going to leave here until you all see her as one, too.

ROSE

And you have so much faith in her that we have to be prepped to meet her?

DANA

Which one of us ever called you a curator from Jersey?

HORACE

Everyone makes mistakes. She had the best intentions. Please, just give her a chance. I like her.

Rose, Dana, and Veejay shrug and share concerned glances.

VEEJAY

You know we all recognize this artificial induction as a propagandistic maneuver that can just as easily foster resentment as acceptance?

HORACE

You know what a daredevil I am.

He pushes a computer key, and the next frame appears: Who Is Candy? He pushes another key. The next line appears: 1. A successful professional.

EXT. PAGETURNER'S BOOKSTORE - DAY

A line of PEOPLE starts at the glass door and extends around the block. Horace, Rose, Dana, and Veejay are in the middle. Veejay and Rose each have an arm wrapped around the other.

DANA

If she's not here in three minutes, she's on her own. Let the book hordes be merciful on her "oh, so human soul."

HORACE

She'll be here.

Candy comes rushing down the sidewalk.

VEEJAY

(whispers)
Oh my god, it's really her.

DANA
 (sarcastic)
 What are the recommended areas of
 conversation again?

Candy awkwardly stops in front of them. Rose, Dana, and Veejay are momentarily stunned, and manage to nod "hello."

CANDY
 Hey, y'all.

HORACE
 Candy! We were getting worried.

CANDY
 Remember what I said about the front
 of the line? I know the owners from
 my book tour. We got a VIP entrance.
 First to go in. C'mon.

DANA
 Fuckin' great.

ROSE
 We can't cut everyone. We'll be
 dismembered.

HORACE
 Can we go in through the back
 entrance? No one will know.

CANDY
 Yeah, no problem.

DANA
 Let's move it, kids.

They walk back around the block.

HORACE
 (joking, to Dana)
 So, VIP treatment is good when you're
 the one getting it?

Dana smirks and sticks out her tongue at him.

HORACE
 Candy, this is Dana, a gallery
 director. Veejay, an assistant
 professor of art history at the
 University of Chicago. And Rose,
 also a gallery director.

Horace hands Candy a typed list of books.

HORACE
 Here are our wish lists.
 (MORE)

HORACE (CONT'D)

If anyone finds those books, you get them to the wisher asap.

VEEJAY

People get in the night before and hide their books in other sections in case they wind up at the end of the line.

CANDY

That's not fair.

DANA

Only because we didn't have time this year to do it ourselves.

INT. PAGETURNER'S BOOKSTORE - TRAVEL SECTION - DAY

Candy, Horace, Rose, Dana, and Veejay walk past the bookshelves. "9:00" is stamped on each of their hands. They meet the first STREAM OF PEOPLE entering the room from the front door entrance. They lock eyes, like rival gangs, and bound up the stairs.

INT. PAGETURNER'S BOOKSTORE - ART SECTION - DAY

Horace and his friends quickly browse the fancy art books, pulling them off the shelf, tucking them under their arms to sift through later. Candy hangs back.

CANDY

I'll be in fiction.

HORACE

Godspeed.

DANA

Remember to scout for the list.

CANDY

Absolutely.

INT. PAGETURNER'S BOOKSTORE - FICTION SECTION - DAY

A wall of PEOPLE blocks the wall of books. Candy ducks and weaves to pick out three paperbacks.

CANDY (V.O.)

I'm the closest I've been in years to interesting, artistic, intelligent, non-agenda-wielding people who could even be the first non-embarrassing friends I've had in years. There's so much riding on this.

Tucked into a shelf is a huge book about Ashcan Artists. She confirms it on the Wish List, and grabs it. Great.

INT. PAGETURNER'S BOOKSTORE - ART SECTION - DAY

The clock on the wall reads 9:26. Candy squeezes in next to Horace and his friends. They each hold four books in their arms and browse through another.

CANDY
(to Veejay)
Hey, look what I found.

Veejay jerks with shock at the Ashcan Artists book.

VEEJAY
Oh my god. Thanks. Okay, now I
have to cut down again.

CANDY
I only found three books that I want.
I can get this for you.

VEEJAY
Would you? Thanks!

Dana squints at Candy's books: THE STRANGER, ATLAS SHRUGGED,
and A TALE OF TWO CITIES.

DANA
You're getting those?

CANDY
Yes. Yay, intellectual fiction.

DANA
You do realize, don't you, that you
can get those used, anywhere, for a
dollar each?

Candy withers. Horace tries to come to her defense.

HORACE
Then she's saving seventy-five
percent.

DANA
We're saving ninety-nine point six
percent. Look, if I give you thirty
bucks, can you put those back, and
I'll give you three real books to
get for me?

VEEJAY
Dana, let her get what she wants.

A HIPPIY WOMAN, early 20's, takes away a Rodin book next to
Dana's pile.

DANA
 (to Hippy Woman)
 Rot in hell with leprosy.
 (to Candy)
 Please, Candy. Can you help me out?

Candy looks at the clock. The others look, too. 9:28. Dana is practically jumping up and down.

CANDY
 Sure. No problem, Rose.

DANA
 Thanks. I'm Dana.

Dana sifts through the table of books and piles three heavy art books onto Candy's arms.

HORACE
 (to Candy)
 She really appreciates it.

DANA
 You've added a year to my life.
 Now, let's run.

Candy follows them careening down the stairs.

INT. PAGETURNER'S BOOKSTORE - CHECKOUT LINE - DAY

An EMPLOYEE, 30, stamps "9:30" onto Candy's hand. She steps behind Horace and his friends. Candy looks at the PEOPLE in line. All of them either stare at her, or glance repeatedly.

Candy looks at Rose, Dana, and Veejay. They stare at her. Rose leans back on Veejay, whose arm is around her. In contrast, Candy stands a foot apart from Horace.

CANDY (V.O.)
 So far, the headline of their mental magazine article is "She's an Idiot Who, Nonetheless, Has Learned How to Read."

VEEJAY
 So, let's get this out in the open.
 What is Horace Martinek really like?

CANDY
 A daredevil in shining armor.

They all chuckle, nervous, but more relaxed.

VEEJAY
 Did he tell you about his suit of armor in college?

Candy shakes her head.

VEEJAY

He made it his freshman year. It followed him into every new dorm room, too precious to touch, let alone wear. But the night before graduation, we plied him with shots of Peach Schnapps until he was willing to run past the sorority houses.

DANA

He thought that no one would know that it was him because he'd be covered, but everyone knew that he was the only student on campus with a suit of armor in his room.

They all chortle at the memory.

ROSE

It was probably for the best. It opened him up to a period of medieval reenactments.

CANDY

That's cute.

DANA

(half-joking)

Cute's your code word for "dorky," isn't it?

VEEJAY

Truth be told, those were also the golden days of our making fun of him.

HORACE

My friends are the wittiest people ever about armor.

ROSE

And he knows we adore him. Horace told us that you minored in art history. Which artists do you like?

CANDY

I like, um, oh my god, my mind just went blank. I can't remember specific artists now. Um, oh my god, that's so weird.

Flustered, Candy looks down. She's carrying all art books. So are Horace and his friends, with titles like "Matisse," "Cezanne," etc. Candy is still stumped. Horace and his friends exchange glances, but don't say anything.

EXT. SIDEWALK CAFE - DAY

They sit at a table with coffees. No one sure what to say. "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds" blares out. Grateful, Candy answers her cell. She gets up and walks a few feet away.

CANDY

Hello?

SPLIT SCREEN:

INT. PRIVATE JET - DAY

Chuck Keener sits in an sleek airborne office.

CHUCK

Hello, Candy. It's Chuck Keener.

CANDY

(wind knocked out of
her)

Hi.

CHUCK

Candy, I've always blamed myself for what happened. People debate who was at fault, but I know that you were a promising young girl and I should have been more responsible. I'm sorry. We've both paid for it, in our own ways, but now I want to give you the opportunity to set yourself right in the world's eyes. The World Health Organization is presenting me with the Golden Heart Award for saving 10 million lives from lung cancer in five years. They do a presentation with speeches by meaningful people in the recipient's life. When they gave me the speaker list, you were omitted--because they were being polite--but it didn't feel honest to me. You deserve proper recognition, not that tabloid junk. Will you speak?

Candy is numb, shocked.

CANDY

Speak about what?

CHUCK

Anything you want. It'll be a receptive crowd.

Candy looks at Horace, Veejay, Rose, and Dana chatting and goofing around at the cafe table, so happy and normal.

CANDY

I don't do public statements anymore.

CHUCK

This would bring closure for both of us, Candy.

CANDY

(he's right)

I'll do it.

CHUCK

Terrific. I'm told you're slotted between my high school science teacher and Jacques Chirac. You'll be contacted with details.

Chuck hangs up, and the split screen disappears.

Candy walks back to the cafe table. Horace and his friends stop their chatter and look up at her.

CANDY

That was Chuck. Keener. He wants me to give a speech at his World Health Organization Award. I'm after his science teacher and before Jacques Chirac. What am I going to say?

Veejay, Rose, and Dana look at her like she's from Mars. Horace gives a consoling look.

INT. UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO - CLASSROOM - DAY

Horace, Rose, Dana, and Veejay sit in their circle of chairs.

VEEJAY

At least now we know that somewhere within the World Health Organization, there's a corps of badass promoters. Whatever she says is going to be insane.

DANA

I hope her speech steers clear of tough issues. Like naming her favorite artists.

HORACE

She was just nervous. If she was just a random woman who I met on the street, you would all love her.

DANA

If she was a mime you met on the street.

(MORE)

DANA (CONT'D)

She had nothing to say until she was invited to speak in front of the leaders of the free world. She must hire a platoon of writers.

HORACE

She's more used to interviewers than normal people. She wasn't herself.

The friends nod, maybe.

VEEJAY

That's probably for the best. She's so unaware of the socio-political-technological-cultural-environmental-economic forces that she's put into action, that if she'd brought any of them up, one of us would have gone ballistic.

HORACE

We're just dating. Rose, do you expect Veejay to save the world?

ROSE

I don't feel like he's making it decay through a semiotic strategy of rampant consumerism and blithe irresponsibility. What do you two talk about anyway?

HORACE

Our days, hopes, fears, dinner.

ROSE

Has she discussed Chuck with you?

HORACE

No, we just talk about normal, human stuff.

DANA

Are you trying to run under the "we're all human" banner? Please, we're too old to waste our time with lost causes. We've chosen each other as friends. Carefully.

VEEJAY

We've been friends for ten years, man. Don't you think that your girlfriend should be something like us?

ROSE

She'd be our Scrappy Doo.

HORACE

That's something she would say!

The friends shake their heads.

DANA

We'll read about her speech in the Inquirer, but we'd rather not spend time with her.

VEEJAY

Of course, all of this is null if she's like the minx in the webcast with you.

HORACE

(perplexed)

We're taking it slow. If I were her, I'd still be getting accustomed to my face.

VEEJAY

You're seducing her! She must be dying for some action.

HORACE

I don't know.

VEEJAY

Horace, we all know what a hot young American she is.

HORACE

(dropping it)

Anyway, if we're at the ten year mark, then give her a little more time.

EXT. APARTMENT - HORACE'S GALLERY- NIGHT

It's starting to come together. A bit spooky with some suits of armor only completed up to the hips, or missing arms or a head. On a couch, Candy proofreads a press release on a clipboard. Horace inspects a suit complete up to the hips.

CANDY

Your friends are really cool. Sorry I wasn't really myself.

HORACE

Don't worry about it. It's hard meeting so many people at once. We plan our lectures, but you can't plan a conversation. I think you're more alike than any of you realize.

CANDY

They're very smart.

HORACE

I don't know if intelligence has much to do with friendship. Building a common history does, though. We'll just keep doing things together, and you'll relax.

He walks over and sits down next to her, so that his leg and arm are right against her. Candy tenses at the closeness, and does everything she can to avoid his eye contact.

CANDY

I don't know if I'll be able to with this speech coming up. I really don't know what to say. I just don't want to be ridiculed. Or pitied.

HORACE

I have a technique when I give a lecture, and I feel like the subject is getting away from me. I take a step back and identify what's on my mind. All the facts and my feelings. I don't judge. I just identify. And then the subject seems obvious because you work with what you have.

CANDY

It helps knowing that you'll be there with me. I won't have to go alone or with the least embarrassing PR-hungry celebrity who'd agree to go with me.

He smiles and puts his hand on her leg. Abrupt, Candy stands. She goes to a suit of armor and contemplates the dark headpiece. Horace comes up behind her, and puts his hand on her shoulder. She turns around. He's so close.

HORACE

It's so sexy of you to help me with this gallery.

Horace stares at her, puppy dog-like. She's nervous.

CANDY

Let's get some dinner.

She turns away just as Horace moves in to kiss her. He gets her cheek. She turns back to him, and they have a short, proper kiss on the lips.

Neither knows what to do now. Candy backs into the suit of armor. KER-CLANG! They both whip back to steady it. She flashes a fragile smile and walks to the door.

HORACE

By the way, we're practicing for our volleyball league on Saturday. Your attendance is mandatory.

CANDY

I like volleyball.

HORACE

My friends will be more laidback this time.

CANDY

They're not competitive at sports?

HORACE

Actually, I suppose they are. And our sixth can't make it, so just bring along a friend.

Candy freezes. Shit.

CANDY (V.O.)

This is getting so intense.

Horace holds her hand as they walk out.

INT. CANDY'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Candy lies on her couch, and dials Myrna's number on her cell. It rings and rings. Goes to voicemail.

CANDY

Hey, Myrna. It's Candy. Just to say hi, and to see if you're up for a volleyball game this Saturday. It'll be a lot of fun. Please give me a call back. Bye. 555.2232.

INT. CANDY'S LIVING ROOM - LATER

She fell asleep on the couch. Her cell reads 12:34. No messages.

INT. NELSON REALTY OFFICE - DAY

The computer clock says 5:27. "Lucy in the Sky With Diamonds" plays out. Candy digs into her purse to find her cell. It's "Myrna." She answers.

(Intercut as needed between Candy and Myrna in an office that's exactly the same as Candy's)

CANDY

Hey, Myrna. What's up?

MYRNA

I'm so bored at work.

CANDY

Me, too.

Silence.

CANDY

So, are you up for volleyball?

MYRNA

Nah. I'm going to a concert Friday.
I'll be too tired Saturday.

CANDY

Are you doing anything on Saturday?

MYRNA

Just relaxing.

CANDY

Come on. It'll be fun. It's with
that guy I'm dating and his friends.

MYRNA

Oh, yeah?

CANDY

You have to meet him.

MYRNA

Thanks, hon. I'll sit this one out.

CANDY

Ok. Have fun Friday.

MYRNA

You, too!

Candy hangs up. Charlene glares at her. She glares back.

INT. CANDY'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Candy reclines on her couch with a clipboard on her knees,
and dials "Tyler" on her cell. It rings once.

(Intercut with Tyler in his fancy hotel suite)

TYLER

Hello, cutie. What's up? Finally
getting around to calling me back?

CANDY

I didn't know you called.

TYLER

Whatever. Anyway, heard about your
Golden Heart Speech. Wild. You
know it's going to be on pay-per-
view?

CANDY

What?

TYLER

It's a fund-raiser. And a brilliant idea. Chuck and Candy reunited in front of millions. They'll make piles of cash.

CANDY

Oh my god. Look, I need a favor. Can you play volleyball on Saturday?

TYLER

I can swing that. Are you putting together a team?

CANDY

No, it's just that Horace invited me to play with his friends, and we need a sixth. They're sort of museum, professor-ish, gallery-type people. Really smart.

TYLER

Ok, Candy. So, in effect, I'm going to meet my rival. And play volleyball with him and his friends. What, will Chuck be the referee?

CANDY

Tyler, sometimes I think that we're not right for each other because you can be so nice to me, but so mean to everyone else. I'm giving you a chance to prove yourself. Please, I need a friend there.

TYLER

Fine. I really am too nice to you. By the way, are you hungry? I know the chef at Scallion.

CANDY

Okay.

Candy hang ups. She tosses the clipboard onto the couch as she gets up. "Chuck Keener" is written on the clipboard's cover page, along with lots of colorful doodles, but no words.

EXT. LAKE MICHIGAN LAKEFRONT - DAY

Dressed in stylish beachwear, Tyler and Candy walk along the asphalt path that borders the turquoise lake. They're surrounded by WALKERS, RUNNERS, ROLLERBLADERS, CYCLISTS. A billboard in the background for the Gold Heart Award advertises "Chuck and Candy Reunite! Only \$29.95."

TYLER

So, he conserves armor?

CANDY

And all metal-related works of art.

TYLER

Where do you find these guys?

CANDY

There haven't been so many.

TYLER

I hope not. Hey, how's your speech going?

CANDY

God, it's so hard. I don't know if I should be serious or funny, or talk about him or me, or the world, or cancer, or computers, or what.

Silence as Tyler tenderly stares at her.

TYLER

I have no idea what you just said. Your lips have the most graceful way of moving.

CANDY

Please behave today. Be nice to everyone.

TYLER

I'll show them what a knight in shining armor really looks like.

EXT. BEACH VOLLEYBALL COURT - DAY

On the beach next to Lake Michigan, Candy, Tyler, Horace, Veejay, Rose, and Dana stand in a circle.

DANA

Ok, three on three. Who wants to be captain?

VEEJAY

I'll take it.

TYLER

Me, too.

VEEJAY

All right, Tyler, you can pick first.

Rose and Dana preen for him. They're obviously attracted.

TYLER

I'll take Horace. I've heard such great things about you and your metal.

Horace walks to Tyler's side.

VEEJAY

Rose, you're mine.

Rose smiles at Tyler as she walks to Veejay's side.

TYLER

Join the team, Candy.

Candy joins Tyler and Horace, and Dana joins Rose and Veejay.

TYLER

Let's play some volleyball.

Tyler takes off his shirt and walks onto the court. He's ripped. Rose and Dana squeeze each other's arms and gawk. Horace pinches his t-shirt and looks at Candy.

HORACE

I burn easily.

EXT. BEACH VOLLEYBALL COURT - LATER

In position, Rose serves. Tyler sets it, and Candy spikes it right at Dana's head. Dana drops to avoid it. Candy cringes as Dana gets up.

DANA

(to Candy, impressed)
Sweetass, man.

MONTAGE of volleyball plays: bumping, serving, diving.

CANDY (V.O.)

It's really working. We're really good. Every play is an opportunity to nail somebody with the ball, but no one's going for it. We're actually a team. Dana even said to me--

As they're rotating positions, Dana leans over to Candy.

DANA

Your friend is so hot.

CANDY (V.O.)

Thank god Myrna couldn't make it. She sucks at this.

Rose has the ball to serve.

TYLER
 (to Rose)
 Hey, hold up a second.

Tyler jogs under the net and up to her. She smiles at his muscular chest so close up. She snaps out of it, and tries not to giggle as she looks at him in the face.

ROSE
 Hi.

TYLER
 Hey, Rose, you're doing great, but
 your motion's a bit jagged.
 (to everyone else)
 Do you mind if we take a practice
 hit or two?

The others nod. Rose's smile falters. Tyler gets behind her and guides her arm into a correct serving motion.

TYLER
 Just trying to help. How does that
 feel?

ROSE
 (overcome, offended)
 Good.

TYLER
 Just one more time.

He guides her again.

TYLER
 Ok, now try it with the ball.

Rose executes a perfect serve.

TYLER
 I knew you could do it.
 (to everyone else)
 All right, let's go.

Tyler jogs back to his side of the net. He smiles at Candy, as in "I'm so nice."

EXT. BEACH VOLLEYBALL COURT - LATER

Tyler models a "set" motion for Dana. She stiffly complies.

EXT. BEACH VOLLEYBALL COURT - LATER

Rose hits a serve. Like a home run, it pops way past the other side of the court. Candy runs to get it.

HORACE
 (to Tyler)
 Generous of you to share your
 expertise with the girls.

TYLER
 (overly friendly)
 Don't feel left out. I've got my
 eye on your spike. Follow through.

Candy returns to position and serves. Dana returns it.
 Horace bumps it for Tyler to return. Instead, Tyler sets it
 back higher to Horace.

TYLER
 It's all yours. Practice.

Horace sets it back even higher.

HORACE
 I insist.

VEEJAY
 You guys lost the point.

Tyler waits for the ball to come down.

TYLER
 Good skills are better than winning
 in the long run. Right, Horace?

Tyler sets it to Horace. Horace sets it back to him. Tyler
 catches it. Then throws it gently into the air.

TYLER
 Here, maybe this is easier.

Horace spikes the ball really hard.

TYLER
 Better.

Horace glowers at him, but Tyler is too busy smiling at Candy.

EXT. BEACH - LATER

The group mills about in a circle after the game.

TYLER
 How's about a round of drinks on me?

CANDY
 Great!

The others fidget.

ROSE
 I have to work on the exhibit.

VEEJAY

I'm so beat.

DANA

I don't want to.

CANDY

Horace?

HORACE

I have few errands to do for the show.

Dana tugs on Horace's t-shirt, as in "let's go."

HORACE

(to Candy)

I'll call you later.

After rushed "Good-bye's," Horace and his friends walk away.

TYLER

Deadbeats. So, what are you in the mood for?

Sad, Candy looks after Horace and his friends.

CANDY

Anything.

TYLER

Theoretically, I shouldn't feel threatened. He's a hideous tool, and they all blow at volleyball.

That makes Candy even sadder.

INT. NELSON REALTY OFFICE - DAY

Candy talks on the phone with Horace, who's in his gallery.
(Intercut as necessary)

CANDY

Henry V is opening tonight. I hear the armor is terrific.

HORACE

Tonight? I can't. I have to check out the Reser Gallery.

CANDY

Oh.

HORACE

Yeah.

CANDY

Are you going alone?

HORACE
I think Veejay is going, too. And
Rose. And Dana.

CANDY
Oh. Well, have a good time.

HORACE
Have a good night, okay?

CANDY
Hey, Horace?

HORACE
Yeah.

CANDY
Do you want to come up and meet my
parents sometime? Like, for dinner?

HORACE
I'd like that.

CANDY
Great.

CANDY (V.O.)
This is our last chance for anyone
in our circles to like the other.

INT. HOUSE - FOYER - NIGHT

Candy and Horace walk through the front door.

CANDY
(yelling)
Hello?!
(to Horace)
Sometimes, they're hard to track
down.

INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

No parents. Candy looks out at the patio area. Also empty.

HORACE
Should we ring the doorbell?

He looks at the bare stove. No signs of cooking.

HORACE
Or call their cells?

Candy shrugs and walks to the foyer again.

INT. HOUSE - FOYER - NIGHT

In a formal suit and dress, Hugh and Lana glide down the stairs to Candy and Horace.

LANA
Honey, have you been here long? We didn't hear your car come in.

CANDY
We just got here.

Hugh and Lana shake Horace's hand and size him up.

LANA
We're so happy that you could join us for dinner.

HORACE
I'm glad to meet you.

HUGH
Come this way.

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

They walk into the room, where four covered plates of food and wine are waiting for them on dining room table.

LANA
We had Rosa lay something out.

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER

They've finished eating. Candy gets up and picks up plates.

LANA
We have that cherry cheesecake that you like for dessert.

CANDY
Yummy. I'll get it.

HORACE
I'll help.

HUGH
Candy can handle it.

Candy raises her eyebrows at Horace as she takes the plates through the swinging door into the kitchen.

Business-like, Lana and Hugh turn to Horace.

LANA
Candy has the luxury of spending a lot of time with you, slowly getting
(MORE)

LANA (CONT'D)

to know you. We know how young relationships unfold, by coincidence and circumstance.

HUGH

Our first dates are among the happiest memories in my life.

LANA

Did Candy tell you how we met? We were both poli-sci majors at Cornell. And we never spoke to each other. We were both at Northwestern for our MBA's. And we never spoke. It wasn't until we were working at Goldman Sachs that we sat next to each other at a client dinner at Morton's and started talking. After five years of breathing the same air, Hugh proposed three months later.

HUGH

It goes to show that you never know when marriage is just around the corner, or miles down the highway.

LANA

I believe that once you start talking to someone, you can tell if they're right for you rather quickly. After that, it's just a matter of filling in the details.

HORACE

Yes, ma'am, I'm enjoying filling in the details about Candy.

HUGH

Unlike Candy, Mrs. Hunter and I don't have a generous amount of time with you, so we're going to be straightforward.

LANA

Candy has gone through an extraordinary amount of pain, and we do all we can to ensure a perfect life for her now. That includes finding the right man.

HORACE

Who would that be?

HUGH

(steely smile)
No cheating.

LANA

Where did you go to college?

Candy walks back in. She distributes plates of cake. Lana and Hugh eat with huge bites. Candy sits down.

HORACE

University of Chicago. Chemistry and art history double major. Are you familiar with Professor--

HUGH

(interrupting)

How much do you make a year?

Lana gives a knowing look to Horace.

LANA

Did. How much did you make a year? Of course, we'll assume you're readily employable.

CANDY

What's going on?

LANA

Honey, this is for your benefit. There are some things that should be clear about a person right away. You don't mind, do you, Horace?

Horace sits up straight, brave for the challenge.

HORACE

I make \$39,000.

LANA

Do you have investments?

HORACE

Only in my mind.

LANA

Are you still paying back student loans?

HORACE

Yes.

HUGH

If the Inquirer asked you for a tell-all interview, how much would you demand?

HORACE

I wouldn't do it.

LANA

Do you have plans to write memoirs?

HORACE

No.

HUGH

What's your history with drugs and alcohol?

HORACE

Wine occasionally. I've never done drugs.

LANA

Not even a spliff?

HORACE

I once inhaled a mouthful at a Phish concert. I no longer go to Phish concerts.

HUGH

Are there any health concerns in your family?

HORACE

Kidney cancer on my mother's side.

LANA

What if Candy had a last minute invitation to a benefit, and she's tied up at work. You're on Michigan Avenue. Which store would you choose for her outfit?

HORACE

Armani.

HUGH

Could you afford that?

HORACE

No.

LANA

How do you feel about pre-marital sex?

CANDY

Stop! Horace, I'm sorry.

HUGH

Honey, we're just making sure that Horace is compatible with you. Or finding out that he's not.

CANDY
 These things don't have anything to
 do with it.

Lana and Hugh raise their eyebrows.

LANA
 (to Horace)
 Candy is also very idealistic.

EXT. HOUSE - DOORSTEP - NIGHT

Candy hangs back to talking to Hugh and Lana as Horace walks
 to the car.

HUGH
 We want you to be happy, Candy.

CANDY
 He's fantastic, isn't he?

Candy winces at their reticent expressions.

LANA
 We don't want you to get hurt.

CANDY
 Bye. Thanks for dinner.

Candy turns and walks to the car. She overhears her parents
 as they go back into the house.

HUGH
 I suppose he does what he can without
 good looks or money.

LANA
 What would our friends think?

INT. CANDY'S JETTA - NIGHT

Candy drives down Lake Shore Drive as Horace looks at her.

HORACE
 Did your parents just reject me?

CANDY
 It happened so fast.

HORACE
 They were like master fencers. When
 they'd finished whipping around their
 foils, all my clothes dropped like
 rags.

CANDY
 They just don't know how to react to
 my bringing someone home.

HORACE

They had the confidence to make up
for it.

They settle into reflection on the evening.

INT. CANDY'S JETTA - LATER

Candy and Horace drive through city streets.

HORACE

Candy, I've been thinking about this
for a while, and--

CANDY

Don't say it. I know that everyone
else thinks that we're wrong for
each other, but we don't feel that
way. Remember, you said you don't
care what other people say about me.
You only care about my quotes --
what I say.

HORACE

I wasn't--

CANDY

I can prove--

HORACE

Candy. I was just thinking that
you've never been in my apartment.
Do you want to see it?

CANDY

Okay.

He puts his hand on her arm, an awkward attempt at intimacy.

INT. HORACE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The door opens. Candy and Horace step in. A huge abstract
sculpture of fused metallic fragments sits in the middle of
the room. Roughly the shape of a discus thrower. There's
NOTHING else in the room except cream carpets and white walls.

CANDY

Wow.

HORACE

Isn't it beautiful?

CANDY

Stunning.

HORACE

I had to choose between lots of little things that I didn't really care much about or one thing that I'm crazy about.

CANDY

I like it, too.

HORACE

I'll give you the grand tour.

INT. HORACE'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Horace presents the room to Candy. Small and bare. A tiny cafe table with two blue plastic chairs.

INT. HORACE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

A twin bed against the wall. A bookcase filled with books. A door to a closet. Horace and Candy stand at the door.

CANDY

So, if you count those books as part of the bookcase, you have exactly six things in your apartment.

HORACE

And one wonderful woman.

INT. HORACE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Candy and Horace sit on cushions against the wall. They face the statue and sip red wine.

CANDY (V.O.)

He's so cute.

CANDY

Why don't you have a suit of armor here?

HORACE

I thought I should have some variety.

Awkward silence. They turn their heads and look into each other's eyes. They lean in for a kiss. They pull back, and then kiss again. It becomes passionate.

INT. HORACE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Both shirtless, Candy and Horace's lips are locked together as they descend onto the twin bed.

CANDY (V.O.)

I can't believe it's finally happening again. He's so cute. He's so good.

Horace lifts his head and looks into her eyes.

HORACE
Do you want to, um, ...?

CANDY
Yes.

HORACE
I love you.

Candy's eyes shine as she smiles.

CANDY (V.O.)
I'm in love with you.

Candy lifts her head and kisses his lips.

CANDY (V.O.)
Oh, damn! Did I say that or think it? It's too late now to say it, or to say it again. Damn. Damn!

HORACE
I should tell you--it's my first time. I just never, um, met someone who, um... Is it yours, too?

CANDY
No.

CANDY (V.O.)
Okay, I know I said that out loud. I think it's safe to say "I love you" now.

She looks into his eyes. They're so bright, and attentive, and big, and consuming, and overwhelming. Like Chuck's webcam.

FLASHCUT to webcam lens.

Candy's expression twists into primal disgust.

CANDY
I... I can't do this with you.

Candy pulls away and stands up. Freaking out.

CANDY
I can't do this with you. I can't do this with you.

Candy rushes out. Horace lies speechless on the bed. His face contorts into a mask of agony.

INT. HORACE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Fully dressed, Candy opens the front door. She looks back at the dark bedroom. Silence. She runs out.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Candy wanders down the dark streets, lost in thought.

CANDY (V.O.)

I'm a failed celebrity who can't have sex. My life has been plastered over by futile actions and words. Why can't I just be? Just be embraced by life and live it like every other single person in this world manages to do. Why can't I keep a boyfriend? Or keep a friend? Or keep some semblance of dignity? Why am I always about to fall off the edge of everyday life? I've been a high school swimming champion, a Tri Delta, a CEO of a fashion company, and a real estate broker. I thought I was building up to something for the rest of my life. And I have. I'm a failed celebrity who can't have sex. Fuck!

Candy waits at a corner for a "walk" signal.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

Excuse me, ma'am?

Candy turns to see a HOMELESS MAN, sitting against a doorway, 50's, leering at her.

HOMELESS MAN

Do the face!

She bursts into tears.

INT. HORACE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Horace, Veejay, Dana, and Rose sit on white cushions lined against the wall, facing the metallic statue. On the other side of the statue, a pile of blankets, like a makeshift bed, lines the wall. Horace is haggard, jumpy.

HORACE

Do you know what my face is? Ugly. This is where it happened. Here was the last moment where Candy Hunter thought that I was attractive enough to look at. I can't sleep in my bedroom anymore. It confirms my ugliness. No one has to say "I told you so." I just said it.

VEEJAY

She can't help it. She's an image herself. She can't see beyond what she is.

DANA

It's not like she's gorgeous.

HORACE & VEEJAY

Yes, she is.

HORACE

I loved her. I told her that I loved her, and she didn't respond. You all think that I'm an idiot. I am.

VEEJAY

(joking)

No, just unfortunate enough to be dumped by a C-grade celebrity.

Everyone glares at him. He shrugs.

VEEJAY

Sorry.

ROSE

Horace, we know that you're sensitive enough to be horribly hurt by her, but also smart enough to realize that she was wrong for you anyway.

HORACE

I just want one girl to find me attractive. Just one. Out of the whole world. How much convincing do I have to do?

ROSE

The right girl is out there, waiting for this Candy puff to get out of the way. And she won't have to drag you to award shows to impress you.

HORACE

I really thought that she liked me. And then she looked at me like a banshee who came head to head with Medusa. Sorry to mix cultural allusions.

VEEJAY

Hell, Candy wouldn't know the difference.

DANA

You'll always have us, you medieval pretty boy. And you have the armor show to prepare.

INT. IRISH BAR - NIGHT

Candy and Myrna sit on bar stools and sip cosmos.

CANDY

Thanks for having a drink with me.

MYRNA

Honey, you don't have to thank me. It's been such a long time. I'm so happy to see you!

Right.

CANDY

How have you been?

MYRNA

Same old stuff, blah, blah, blah. Eric still insists on Mexican every night, and I'm so bored of burritos. What's new with you?

Does she really want to know? Candy's shocked.

CANDY

I loved a guy, but I lost him.

MYRNA

Oh my god. Sweetie, that's awful. That reminds me of what happened with Janet and Todd. She bought a--

Candy interrupts to avoid this tangential story.

CANDY

I freaked out when I got close to him. His eyes were like camera lenses, and even though I knew they weren't, and he only cares about me, I ran. If I ran from him, I can't be with anyone. I'm going to be alone for the rest of my life.

Breathless, Candy pauses to see if Myrna will actually respond to her situation.

MYRNA

Did you tell him?

CANDY

I freaked out. It was a nightmare.

(MORE)

CANDY (CONT'D)

I want to apologize to him, but will it just happen again? Why work to put myself in the exact same position again, if I'm only going to hurt him again and again. It would be best for him to find someone else.

MYRNA

So, you're going to ditch him?

CANDY

As much as my face can. I don't want to hurt him.

MYRNA

Don't you think he's already hurt?

CANDY

He knows how messed up I am. He won't take it personally.

MYRNA

Todd took it personally when Janet rejected him. He's a player like no other, but he couldn't get over her. He can only take it personally. He's been with a lot of women?

CANDY

No, he's a--
(a revelation)
Oh my god. He thinks he's ugly. And now he must think he's grotesque. No wonder he didn't call after me.

MYRNA

Why bother if he's ugly?

CANDY

I think he's gorgeous.

MYRNA

Did you tell him that?

CANDY

I can't say for sure.

INT. CANDY'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Candy sits on her couch, on her cell phone.

CANDY

Horace, it's me. Please call me. I want to explain about the other night. I miss you.

She presses a button to hang up. The cell phone rings almost immediately. The display reads "Horace." She answers.

CANDY

Horace! Thank god you want to talk.

HORACE (O.S.)

Only to say this. You hurt me for the last time. I don't know what you'll do next, and I don't want to know how much more it can hurt. We both know that we're not right for each other. So, that's it. Our relationship is demolished.

CANDY

No, I think that you're--

HORACE (O.S.)

I will not be dumped by Candy Hunter.
I will not be dumped by Candy Hunter.

CANDY

I'm not dumping you.

HORACE (O.S.)

I am dumping you.

Click. Candy hears Horace hang up.

CANDY

I love you.

Her cell phone rings. It reads "Tyler." She tosses it aside, to let it go to voice mail, but reconsiders and answers it.
(Intercut with Tyler in his fancy hotel suite)

TYLER

Hey, honey, how's it shaking? I wanted to call and apologize for what I said about Horace. I just care for you so much, and it hurts that you don't feel the same way yet. You know I want you to be happy.

CANDY

Horace dumped me.

Tyler punches the air, and mouths "Yes!"

TYLER

(overly sweet)
Do you want to talk about it?

CANDY

You would do that?

TYLER
For you? Of course.

Candy considers.

CANDY
I hate being so alone. You know me
the best out of everyone in the whole
world. I think I should talk to you
about this. But Tyler?

TYLER
Yes?

CANDY
I never want you to publish another
word about me or by me.

TYLER
I know how to keep you safe.

INT. THE DRAKE HOTEL - TYLER'S SUITE - NIGHT

Tyler and Candy sit on opposite ends of the couch. Candy
sniffs into a tissue.

TYLER
Of course it makes sense that you
have intimacy issues. It's not your
fault. Just like the, um, thing
wasn't your fault.

CANDY
Thanks for being here for me.

TYLER
Candy, I know that you still have
feelings for Horace, but don't you
think that you should give in to who
you really are?

CANDY
What do you mean?

TYLER
I know that you enjoy being with me.
There's never a dull or quiet moment.
We know each other. We like each
other. We like the same things. We
trust each other. Do you know what
that is?

CANDY
What?

TYLER
It's love.

Candy considers this.

TYLER

You don't have to say anything. The phrase "I love you" must be about as appealing to you as a webcam right now, but let yourself think about it. Let yourself enjoy all that we have.

Candy tentatively reaches out and lays her hand on top of Tyler's. He puts his other hand on top of hers.

TYLER

You're safe.

CANDY

Maybe Horace wasn't so perfect. I mean, if he didn't have those three friends, he wouldn't have anybody. Tyler, will you go to the Golden Heart with me?

TYLER

I'd love to. And I'll show you what a normal, healthy relationship is all about. Let's try this.

He puts his arm around her. She tenses, but through sheer will, relaxes into it.

EXT. ARMANI - DAY

Their arms around each other, Candy and Tyler walk into this Michigan Avenue store.

INT. ARMANI - CONTINUOUS

Candy goes to inspect a rack of dresses.

TYLER

Oh, no, you don't. You have a private fitting, my dear.

INT. ARMANI - LATER

On the second floor, Candy walks out of a dressing room in a modest blue satin dress. A SALESMAN, 40's, and Tyler study it. Candy twirls. The room is a black and tan boite.

CANDY

What do you think?

Tyler snorts.

CANDY

It's kind of elegant.

SALESMAN

I read that blue is your favorite color.

TYLER

You can do better.

Candy walks by the window and looks down on the PEOPLE bustling along the sidewalk.

TYLER

Aren't you glad you don't have to deal with the rabble?

Candy nods in acknowledgment, but keeps looking out the window, longing for more interaction.

TYLER

God, the sunlight makes you look like an angel.

(to Salesman)

What's next? C'mon, impress us.

Tyler snaps his fingers.

INT. STARBUCKS - DAY

Holding an Armani dress bag, Tyler waits with Candy at the end of a long line. Candy looks at the back of a newspaper, held aloft by a TEENAGER. An article is entitled: "I dumped Candy Hunter." Tyler notices Candy looking.

CANDY

Do you think the press manipulated his words?

TYLER

I don't see how they could have.

Tyler gently moves her 180 degrees, effectively switching places, so that the paper is out of her eyeline.

TYLER

Don't let yourself pay attention to that stuff.

INT. APARTMENT - HORACE'S GALLERY- NIGHT

Suits of armor are arranged in the apartment, which is otherwise decked out in medieval style with modern touches - high backed chairs, a tapestry of a decrepit Chicago street, torch holders on the walls. Mahogany, red, green, and gold color scheme. It looks cool.

Horace arranges a row of "The Modern Medieval Domestic" brochures on a side table next to the front door. Dana finishes arranging the red curtains and walks over to him. She puts his arm around him.

DANA

How are you holding up?

HORACE

I think we're ready. This is going to be exciting for the ten people who show up.

DANA

I mean, about Candy?

HORACE

I miss her.

DANA

There's a difference between comfort and love.

HORACE

Well, maybe I was never completely comfortable with her. She was so unique. And beautiful.

DANA

There's also a difference between lust and love. At least we got the space out of the deal.

Horace gathers his thoughts as he looks around at the medieval decor around him.

HORACE

I do wonder what she would say about how it turned out.

Horace goes back to the brochures.

INT. CANDY'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Candy sits on the couch with her laptop on the coffee table in front of her. Tyler paces the room.

CANDY

I don't know what I want to say about Chuck. Especially with him in the room, right there, looking at me with everyone else. Even his wife.

TYLER

Well, what have you learned from the experience?

CANDY

I don't know how to put that into words. It's who I am. I may as well just go up there and breathe. And I think the speech is supposed to be about him, not me.

TYLER

No matter what a person says, it's
always about themselves.

(sardonic)

That's why I can bear to supposedly
write about other people.

CANDY

I don't know.

TYLER

See, you can't change yourself to
mesh with everyone. You're meant to
be with people who are similar to
you. It's what you know best.
Granted, there aren't many people
like you, so you have to savor those
who are even more. You really
shouldn't accept more of these
speeches just for the thrill of it.
Be who you are.

CANDY

It's too late now. I can't cancel.
And this is my chance to set it right.

TYLER

You're just going to intimidate
yourself to death. Look, this is
actually what I do for a living.
I'll write it for you.

CANDY

But if you can do it and I can't,
then we're not so similar after all.

TYLER

Of course, we're not identical.

He points to two overlapping circles on the coffee table,
remnants of coffee mugs, that look like a venn diagram.

TYLER

We're like that. Of course, we have
some things that are beyond each
other, but most of it's the same.

CANDY

But they just happen to be in the
same place.

TYLER

Well, how's that for fate.

Candy points to the overlapping section.

CANDY

Is that our interests? Or values?
Or personalities? Or history? Should
it be one-dimensional or three-
dimensional?

TYLER

Candy, you need to get out of your
head for a little while. I've never
seen you so stressed.

Candy shrugs and falls back into the couch. Tyler sits down
next to her, puts his arm around her. She stares at her
laptop. He kisses her on the cheek.

CANDY

(tense)

Tyler--

TYLER

Candy. It's ok. Just relax. Now,
let's get into this speech for real.
Should it start funny-to-poignant or
poignant-to-funny?

He takes his arm away from her and begins typing.

CANDY (V.O.)

I would--

CANDY

I would have thought of something
eventually.

Silence as she watches him type. He didn't hear what she
said. He notices the silence and smiles at her.

TYLER

My pleasure, love. All the great
politicians have speech writers.
They'll respect the fuck out of you
by the end.

INT. CANDY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Candy finishes applying her lipstick. She's dressed in a
gold ballgown, and looks stunning. The doorbell rings.
Candy twirls in her floor-length mirror.

INT. CANDY'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Candy opens the front door. In formal clothes, Hugh and
Lana walk in.

LANA

Honey! You look beautiful.

Hugh and Lana each hug Candy and sit on the couch.

HUGH
Is Tyler here yet?

CANDY
No. They sent the wrong limo. He
had to wait for the replacement.

LANA
This one must know that nothing is
too good for you.

CANDY
Well, he prefers this year's models.

HUGH
He follows limo releases?

CANDY
He follows every car ever made. And
buys a lot of them, too.

Hugh and Lana nod their approval.

INT. LIMO - NIGHT

In a tux, Tyler sits sprawled out on the backseat. All the
windows are open, and pop music blares from the car.

He looks out the window and sees Horace walk into a White
Hen Pantry convenience store. He grins a cruel victor's
smile and hits a button to talk to the DRIVER.

TYLER
Pull over, please.

INT. WHITE HEN PANTRY - NIGHT

The bell above the door jingles as Tyler walks in. He sees
Horace in the wine section. Tyler ducks into the medicine
row. He doesn't quite know why he's there, except to show
off. He sees the condom rack and grabs a box. Perfect.

Horace walks towards the CASHIER carrying two boxes of wine.
Tyler zips to get there first. He cuts in front of Horace
at the counter, and looks back, feigning surprise. Horace
is jumpy, nervous.

TYLER
Horace! How are you?

HORACE
Good.

Tyler looks down at the boxes of wine.

TYLER
Fancy party tonight?

HORACE

My armor show. This is for the reserves. So, how's Ca--

TYLER

(interrupting)

Candy's amazing. But you knew that. Just amazing. I'm on my way to the pick her up for the Golden Heart. She's going to blow everyone away.

Tyler advances to the CASHIER.

TYLER

(to the cashier)

Pack of Parliaments.

Tyler tosses the condoms on the counter. Horace gasps.

HORACE

(whispers)

She's sleeping with you.

TYLER

Truthfully? She can barely handle holding hands, since the, um, thing with Chuck. Could you imagine a deeper psycho-sexual scar? But if she's ever going to do it, tonight's the night. Her night of closure. Respect.

Horace is speechless. The CASHIER rings up Tyler.

TYLER

(pointing to the wine)

Probably about the time you break into those.

In shock, Horace drops the boxes of wine. Tyler helps him pick up the dented boxes. Tyler remains smooth, solicitous.

TYLER

(whisper)

I can tell you this because you're a guy, but I hope she's beautiful when she does it. Some chicks get all sweaty and smelly. She looked okay in the webcast, but you never know.

Horace is still stunned by all this information.

HORACE

None of the interviews mentioned. She never mentioned. I can't believe I didn't realize.

TYLER

Yeah, only one way to find out then.

He winks at Horace as he walks out of the store. The Cashier impatiently grabs the boxed wine from Horace's arms.

EXT. ROWHOUSE APARTMENT - NIGHT

Horace hustles down the street carrying a paper bag. A huge CROWD is outside of the building. Dana's at the front door, gnawing at a fingernail, nervous.

HORACE

Who are these people? If they don't get out of the way, no one will see our sandwich sign.

DANA

They're here for the gallery. They got these postcards.

She shows him a stylish postcard, with a personal message from Candy to the invitee. Horace drops the bag. Dana picks it up. She raises her eyebrows at the awfully dented boxed wines inside.

DANA

Apparently, Candy billed this as the cool alternative for celebrities not at the Golden Heart.

HORACE

(reading)
It's also one of the after-parties.

DANA

You're a smash!

HORACE

Good thing I picked up extra wine.

Horace spots Justin Timberlake in line, and then looks down at his pathetic wine.

HORACE

Crap.

DANA

Candy must like you a lot to do all this. Maybe she is good for you.

Thoughtful, Horace nods.

DANA

Go get her, loverboy.

INT. LIMO - NIGHT

Lana looks at Tyler from her seat opposite his, awed by his good looks. Hugh and Tyler drink scotch. Candy fidgets.

TYLER

Mr. and Mrs. Hunter, I'm impressed that you like to drive your daughter to these events.

LANA

It's our special way we of staying close to our little girl. And exquisite choice of corsage, Tyler. It's divinely handsome.

Candy looks askance at her mother, before burrowing into her large purse and pulling out two typed pages.

CANDY

I overcame my speech block after all. I wrote it last night. In a flash of rare brilliance.

TYLER

Fabulous. But you already have a speech. It's in the tele-prompter. Remember, dear?

CANDY

Yeah, but this will really be me talking about Chuck.

TYLER

Candy, you loved the original version. Everyone else will love it. What did you do, edit it?

Candy looks down.

TYLER

You re-wrote?

CANDY

I wrote something else.

TYLER

(to Hugh and Lana)
We wrote the original together.

Lana gives a "why are you being so mean?" look to Candy.

CANDY

I didn't ask you to.

TYLER

You don't have to ask. I know what you need.

That doesn't sound right to Lana. She frowns at Tyler. Candy sees her, and they share an understanding look. Neither likes Tyler much right now.

EXT. CHICAGO SYMPHONY BUILDING - NIGHT

Gorgeous and stately. Limos, red carpet, PAPARAZZI.

INT. LIMO - NIGHT

The car stops at the red carpet. Hugh and Lana gawk at the CROWDS. The door opens, and Candy steps out into the air lit by camera flashes. Tyler slides to the open door. He looks down to see two pieces of paper wedged next between the seat and the arm console. Candy's speech. He quickly looks away, and steps out of the car to join Candy.

INT. CHICAGO SYMPHONY BUILDING - ATRIUM - NIGHT

Tense, Candy and Tyler sip wine amid the BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE. Chuck greets people on the other side of the room. Most of the people swivel their heads looking at Candy and Chuck and back again.

P.A. ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
Please take your seats. Our show is
about to begin.

TYLER
That's us. Good luck, honey.

He takes her glass, and sets both of their glasses on the nearest table. He offers her his arm.

Candy opens her bag. Confused, she jostles it.

CANDY
Where's my speech? I can't find it.

TYLER
It's being transcribed into the tele-
prompter.

Tyler winces to himself. Stupid, bad lie.

CANDY
What?

TYLER
You know, to erase our original.

CANDY
How did they get it?

TYLER
I gave it the technical advisor.

CANDY

You haven't left my side.

TYLER

He walked right by.

CANDY

How stupid do you think I am?

TYLER

I don't know what I was thinking.
You sure it's not in your bag?

Candy looks at him like he's grown ten nostrils.

CANDY

You say that you love me and that
you want to take care of me and that
we're practically identical, but
that's only because you don't listen
to what I'm really saying.

TYLER

Of course, I do, Candy. We're a
team.

CANDY

You only love me because you want to
love yourself. I am not who you
are. When I'm with Horace, I'm who
I want to be. I'm not going to settle
for you.

Candy turns and marches away.

TYLER

I'll meet you at the seats.

EXT. CHICAGO SYMPHONY BUILDING - NIGHT

Candy doesn't even notice the camera flashes as she leaves.
She looks for her limo, but can't find it among the gridlock.
She rushes down the street, her arm out to hail a taxi.

INT. LIMO - NIGHT

With the windows open, Hugh and Lana chat.

LANA

He seemed like such a catch, at first.
He looks like your cousin, Gregory.
All cheekbones and confidence.

HUGH

Who can we trust nowadays?

The car stops at a stop light. Hugh sees something outside
and starts in surprise. Lana follows his gaze.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Horace is running full force down the sidewalk towards them.

Horace sees Hugh and Lana staring at him and runs to them.

HORACE

Thank god! Did you already drop off
Candy?

Hugh and Lana look away, trying to ignore him.

HORACE

I love her. For all she is, and
does, and says.

Hugh and Lana meet his eye. He's so sincere.

LANA

Horace, get in.

EXT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Candy jumps out of a taxi and marvels at the long line to the gallery. Cool. Except that she has to fight her way through it. Damn.

INT. LIMO - NIGHT

Horace pulls out the two pieces of paper from the seat.

HORACE

What's this?

LANA

That's Candy's speech. Thank god
you found it before it's too late.

Horace reads it over, smiling softly.

EXT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Candy walks to the head of the line. "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds" blares out. "Unknown Caller." She answers it.

CANDY

Hello?

INT. CHICAGO SYMPHONY BUILDING - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

A balding TECHNICIAN, 50's, talks to her over his cell phone.

TECHNICIAN

Candy Hunter. Please report to
dressing room four. You're up in
six and a half minutes.

EXT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Candy winces. Her phone beeps. It's "Horace."

CANDY
Can you please hold on?

TECHNICIAN (O.S.)
I've got six minutes.

Candy beeps over to Horace.

CANDY
Hello?

INT. CHICAGO SYMPHONY BUILDING - ATRIUM - NIGHT

Horace scans the room as he speaks.

HORACE
I'm here. I'm sorry I didn't try to understand you that night. We were both so wrapped up in ourselves.

CANDY
I'm sorry, too. I haven't been able to get you out of my mind.

HORACE
And now I'm in your awards building. Your parents got me through security. With your speech. Where are you?

CANDY (O.S.)
I'm at your gallery. Looking for you.

They both consider this.

CANDY (V.O.)
Horace, hold on.

A beep. Then another beep.

TECHNICIAN (O.S.)
Candy, did I lose you?

CANDY (O.S.)
I'm here, and so is Horace Martinek. I've had an emergency. A very urgent emergency. And Horace is going to deliver my speech for me.

HORACE & TECHNICIAN (O.S.)
What?!

CANDY (O.S.)
It'll be fine. I give approval.

TECHNICIAN (O.S.)
 Okay, Horace. Report to dressing
 room four. Pronto.

He clicks off.

HORACE
 Candy?

CANDY (O.S.)
 Don't worry, Horace. I trust you.

HORACE
 Thanks. But I also have to give a
 speech. To open the gallery.

EXT. APARTMENT - HORACE'S GALLERY - NIGHT

Candy shakes her head.

CANDY
 But there's so much at stake with
 this for you. I don't want to ruin
 it. They all think I'm an idiot.
 More so than everybody else.

HORACE (O.S.)
 I want you to do this. Dana has a
 copy of my speech.

CANDY
 Should I patch her through so that
 she has your okay?

HORACE (O.S.)
 We're not that advanced. She'll
 trust you. Now we'll really
 understand each other's lives. Good
 luck.

Click. He hangs up.

CANDY
 I love you.

She waits for a response, but silence. She looks at her
 phone to confirm that they're no longer connected.

INT. CHICAGO SYMPHONY BUILDING - STAGE - NIGHT

Sweating bullets, Horace stands at the podium in front of
 the CELEBRITY CROWD. He holds Candy's speech. It's soggy
 and smeared from his sweaty hands.

HORACE
 Candy Hunter has had a serious medical
 emergency, so she asked me to take
 (MORE)

HORACE (CONT'D)

her place. I mean, it's not so serious, or really medical, but she's not here. And I am.

The crowd whispers among itself. Chuck raises his eyebrows.

Horace swallows, dry, and looks at the teleprompter. He recites.

HORACE

The perks of being an historical footnote are often overlooked by...

He looks down at Candy's typed speech. It begins with, "For five years, I've tried to think..." He looks between the teleprompter and the paper. Crap. Which one to read? He skims the written speech. He looks up at the teleprompter: "the clever pundits of our globe." He returns to Candy's typed speech.

HORACE

Sorry about that, folks. To start again. For five years, I've tried to think about what I've learned from this incident.

Tyler glares at him from his seat.

HORACE

Five years ago, I just wanted to be like everyone else--everyone else that I knew--but then I was put face-to-face with the whole world. All I know now is that I've talked enough about myself and I get in trouble when I talk about other people, but I want to thank those who were kind enough to treat a person like a person and those few who made me realize that true love is better than all the eyes of the world. And to Chuck, congratulations for all the good that you have accomplished.

The AUDIENCE applauds, impressed by the sincerity, if a little disappointed by the lack of scandal.

INT. LIMO - NIGHT

Puzzled, Hugh and Lana squint at the car's mini-tv, where Horace finishes the speech waves to the appreciative crowd and puzzled Chuck, and walks off the stage.

LANA

What emergency?

INT. HORACE'S GALLERY - NIGHT

Next to a platform with a podium, Dana, Rose, and Veejay scrutinize Candy as she studies Horace's speech.

CANDY

This means so much for him.

ROSE

Candy. All you have to do is relax. You'll be able to do what you want to do if you let yourself fly with the moment.

VEEJAY

We'll cheer you on. Unless it freaks you out. You'll be terrific.

CANDY

Thank you.

DANA

(joking)

You can't be any more awkward than Horace. Now go! You'll rock!

She gently pushes Candy up the steps of the platform. Candy walks to the microphone flanked by two fierce suits of armor. The BEAUTIFUL and INTELLECTUAL CROWD stares up at her.

CANDY

Medieval art has been my obsession since I was five and made my first suit of armor out of tin foil. This very exciting and personal show is the culmination of a monkish devotion that has found me holed up in libraries and laboratories for the past two decades.

Candy looks up at Horace's smiling friends, giggles, and continues reading.

EXT. CHICAGO SYMPHONY BUILDING - NIGHT

Horace rushes out, and runs to Hugh and Lana's limo.

LANA

What did you do with Candy?

HORACE

She went to my art show.

He opens the door and gets in.

HORACE

Did Candy send you invites, too?

Confused, they look at him.

HUGH
How did Candy get there?

HORACE
Only Candy knows.

He takes out his cell, and calls "Candy." It rings and goes to voice mail.

HORACE
(into phone)
Please, please stay where you are.
We're on our way.

INT. HORACE'S GALLERY - NIGHT

Candy fights to get through the CROWD to the exit door. People smile and nod at her, out of respect. She glows.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Candy stands at the top of the stoop. She looks around for a cab, until she sees Horace running from across the street.

He bounds up the stairs. They hug.

CANDY & HORACE
I love you.

Just as they kiss and "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds" fades in, the camera pans to...

Hugh and Lana, in their limo across the street, smiling up at Horace and Candy kissing. And then, we...

FADE OUT

Until we... FADE IN

INT. CHICAGO SYMPHONY BUILDING - ATRIUM - NIGHT

Tyler presses his cell phone to his ear. It rings and goes to voice mail.

TYLER
Candy, you didn't ditch me, did you?

FADE OUT