

# OSCAR NIGHT

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OSCAR NIGHT

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FADE IN

INT. ACADEMY'S PRIVATE THEATRE - MORNING

By 5:30 AM, prime time for the East Coast breakfast shows, five hundred journalists are gathered in the Academy's private theater waiting for its president, with the assistance of last year's Supporting Role Oscar winners, to announce the names of this year's nominees.

BEGIN TITLE CREDITS

INT. TEXAS SCHOOL - BARN - MORNING

YOUNG PERSON #1 enters and feeds grain to a steer.

INT. BEVERLY HILLS HOMES - MORNING

Alarm clocks all over Beverly Hills have aroused the fan curiosity and awaken the contenders to learn their fate. Fans as well as industry professionals drag themselves out of bed to the kitchen (coffee, milk, cereal) and then to the television.

INT. TEXAS SCHOOL - BARN - MORNING

YOUNG PERSON #2 enters and feeds grain to several pigs.

INT. CHICAGO FACTORY - MORNING

A national television news reporter is on the air with the factory manager.

TV REPORTER

I'm here in the Chicago factory of R. S. Owens, where this year's batch of one hundred Oscar statuettes is in production.

(beat)

It may take decades to win an Academy Award, but making one is just five hours' work for a team of twelve at Owens. Each statuette is hand-cast from a steel mould kept in a high-security vault when not in use.

TV REPORTER (CONT'D)

(beat)

Can you tell us something about the statue?

We see an empty factory in the background. It is far too early for workers, but we see the tools and machinery.

FACTORY MANAGER

The basic material is britannia metal, a pewterlike alloy of 90 percent tin and 10 percent antimony, more often used for tableware.

(beat)

Each statuette is sanded and polished to a fine gleam, then plated successively in copper, nickel, silver and 24-karat gold, with each layer highly polished before the next one is applied.

(beat)

The finishing touch is a fine spray of epoxy lacquer, to protect it.

TV REPORTER

Thank you. I'm told if you're lucky enough to win an Oscar, never polish it with cleaning solvents. Dusting him off every now and then is all you need to do.

(beat)

Each statuette is engraved with a serial number on the back of its brass base. After a final inspection they are packed in custom-shaped Styrofoam containers, heavily insured, and transported by armoured vehicle to the Academy's offices in Beverly Hills.

(beat)

Well, I understand that it's time for the announcements. Back to the studio.

INT. TEXAS SCHOOL - BARN - MORNING

YOUNG PERSON #3 enters and feeds grain to a group of lambs.

INT. ACADEMY'S PRIVATE THEATRE - MORNING

TV ANCHOR

We're just minutes away from the nominations. We're going to bring them to you live as they are announced.

(beat)

But first, let's bring in our panel of Hollywood experts.

(beat)

Oh, Okay. No time... The Academy President is taking the rostrum.

CHERYL BOONE ISAACS

Hello, everybody. Good morning and welcome to the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. I'm Cheryl Boone Isaacs, president of the Academy.

(beat)

Thank you.

(beat)

I want to thank everyone for joining us for these exciting announcements, celebrating the heroes of movie making. And lucky for us, we have a superhero here with us today. Ladies and gentlemen, the very talented

\_\_\_\_\_.

ACTOR

Thank you very much, Cheryl, and good morning, everyone.

(beat)

Let's get right to it.

(beat)

The 2020 nominees for best performance by an actor in a original screenplay are...

Each year a few surprises will draw gasps from the seasoned observers dragged so early from their beds.

END TITLES

EXT. SCHOOL - RURAL TEXAS - DAY

Overcast Texas winter day. No town, only a very small isolated rural school building. Kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade in one building. Agriculture building detached. On the building we see the outline of the state of Texas and "Future Farmers of America" logo. Leaving the building are five students and a teacher.

EVAN MCCRAY (27) teacher in a light jacket, cowboy hat and boots walks with the students to a neighboring wheat field. A barbed wire fence separates the school from the wheat field. The winter wheat is several inches high and green. Cattle grazing.

EVAN

You guys eat your Wheaties this morning?

They give the teacher a blank stare.

INT. ACADEMY'S PRIVATE THEATRE - MORNING

Two reporters in the audience.

REPORTER #1

What? Did you get that?

REPORTER #2

A western.

REPORTER #1

No?

REPORTER #2

That doesn't happen.

REPORTER #1

Who is that guy?

REPORTER #2

I have no idea.

They begin manipulating their smart phones looking for information.

EXT. SCHOOL - RURAL TEXAS - DAY

EVAN

Oh that's right, you young people don't know what that is. Cereal. They used to advertise it on television a lot. A sports thing, like it will make you stronger.

STUDENT

I know what it is, an orange box with a sports star or something on it. I seen it in the store, but I don't eat cereal.

EVAN

Too much work?

Blank stares all around.

EVAN

First, you have to get up out of bed. Get the box down from the cupboard. Open it. What a hassle! You have to get a bowl. You have to go to the refrigerator, get the milk. Pour it into bowl. Get the sugar and a spoon and put some on the cereal. Really too much blasted work?

Several students chuckle.

EVAN

This wheat winter wheat. Toward the end of the school year, or in the summer, when it's ready to harvest we will come back. It will look like this.

Evan takes a glass jar of wheat and shows the students.

EVAN

Hold out your hands. I'm gonna pour  
some in your hands.

Evan pours. The students examine the wheat. They look out at  
the field.

EVAN

Well this is what will be out here  
in the summer. Some of you know.  
Tony, I know your daddy raises  
wheat; you don't have to hold your  
hand out. You prolly been knee deep  
in it.

STUDENT

So how come there are cattle out on  
it.

EVAN

Good question. Tony you want to  
answer that for me?

TONY

They don't hurt it none. We take the  
cattle off the wheat when it gets  
warm and growin' some.

EVAN

When will that be?

TONY

Next couple of months I recon. I  
will ask my dad if you want.

EVAN

That is about right. In the winter,  
it grows but not that much. They  
figured you can use it to forage  
your cattle in the winter without  
hurting your yield in the summer. So  
why not?

TONY

More economical that way.

EVAN

Why?

TONY

Cause no body wants to feed their cattle in the winter. First off it's cold to get out there and then second them cows can eat you out of house and home if you gotta feed them hay or cubes all winter.

EVAN

Exactly.

The students look at the wheat in their hand and then look at Evan. They are tired of holding it.

STUDENT

What you want us to do with it?

EVAN

Pour it back in this jar, please.

(beat)

Now let's walk back to the classroom.

As they walk back to the building they pass through the school barn with various animals there. Pigs, steers, goats and some sheep.

EVAN

Ya'll ought to know about wheat. It's the number one crop in this county. When you get in the classroom copy down all that stuff about wheat that's on the chalkboard. It's gonna be on your test next week.

STUDENT

Oh, man.

INT. SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY

The students enter and sit down. Evan sits at his desk.

We see a chalkboard with notes on wheat on it. We see a book case. We see a supply shelf with cattle, pig and goat wormers and various jars full of seeds and other agricultural items. We see a trophy case almost full of awards from animal competitions.

EXT/INT. RESTAURANT - LOS ANGELES - DAY

Bright sunny California day. Ritzy Los Angeles location. Valet parking. We follow a group of customers in short sleeves into the restaurant and are greeted by CHLOE BAKER (28). She is the smiling hostess. She could easily be a starlet with a little luck. But for now, she stands with menus in hand.

CHLOE  
Hello, welcome.

She greets people with a smile and shows them to a table.

CUSTOMER  
Anything you recommend?

CHLOE  
Well, ask your waiter. But sure I like the Le Orecchiette -  
orecchiette, chicken sausage,  
caperberries, peppers, garlic foam.  
(half beat)  
I had it earlier and it was to die  
for.

Big smile. She turns to return to the front door.

Her smile disappears for an instant. But it appears again as she greets another group of customers.

EXT. FARM - RURAL TEXAS- AFTERNOON

Evan arrives in his pickup truck to his simple farmhouse. He pats his dog on the head and enters. The BORDER COLLIE is eyeballing him constantly. He throws the ball several times.

Then Evan goes to a barn and throws some hay out for the cattle. He feeds some pigs and a horse.

He notices a cow and a newborn calf in the pasture. He saddles his horse and brings them up and puts them in a stall in the barn.

INT. GYM - LOS ANGELES - LATE AFTERNOON

Chloe works out at a gym. Close combat. Kickboxing and she is particularly enthusiastic attacking a punching bag.

INT. FARM HOUSE - RURAL TEXAS - NIGHT

On the kitchen table is a laptop. The dog wants to play. Evan types.

The phone rings. Evan is called to help a student "pull" a calf (deliver a newborn).

EVAN

All right. Ok. Don't panic.

(beat)

Listen, the calf is probably okay.

(beat)

I'll be there.

EXT. PARKING LOT - LOS ANGELES - NIGHT

Judging from the location and the expense of the cars, this is an after hours watering hole for the film industry's connected.

A well dressed THIEF and con-man is roaming the parking and street, looking into cars. He rejects several cars. He spots a woman's purse in a car. He takes out a small hammer smashes the window and grabs the purse, the alarm sounds. He runs down an ally. He takes the cash from the purse and discards it in a trash container. He walks around the block and then into the bar/restaurant.

Inside, the thief knows several of the people there. He waves and joins a group of friends.

EXT/INT. STUDENT'S BARN - RURAL TEXAS- NIGHT

Evan brings a "come along" and a chain designed to aid in the delivery of a calf. He is greeted by a big eyed kid.

STUDENT

I recon now she I shouldn't have called you, but dad went to town.

EVAN

That is okay. No big deal.

Evan looks over the fence into a stall. The calf is about to be born unassisted.

EVAN

I guess we don't need this then.

STUDENT

Good thing huh.

EVAN

Always better to let her do the work.

STUDENT

Yep.

EVAN

Cleaner too.

STUDENT

Well thanks for coming.

EVAN

Well sure. Just wait a minute. I want a make sure she gets it done.

The calf is born.

STUDENT

It looks like a boy. Hot dog, I got me a steer for next year.

EVAN

You will have to feed him up good.

STUDENT

Can we take him to the show in Fort Worth?

EVAN

If she don't get that afterbirth off his face in the next thirty seconds, you get in there and do it. Okay?

STUDENT

Okay.

The kid is about to climb over the fence. The cow licks the calf's face and the calf can breathe. The calf stands and nurses.

STUDENT

Thanks Mr. McCray.

EVAN

You're welcome. See you at school tomorrow.

STUDENT

I don't know. Maybe I should stay here and watch this calf.

Evan chuckles at the boy trying to avoid school and leaves.

INT. STAGE - LOS ANGELES - NIGHT

Chloe attends acting classes.

There is a break and people are drinking sodas and coffee. Chloe sits on the floor against a wall (drinking water) and confides to her African-American GIRLFRIEND.

CHLOE

I would leave and go back to Oklahoma or wherever but I'm from here. Where does an LA girl run and hide?

GIRLFRIEND

If I don't get a part in the next year, I'm going back to New York.

CHLOE

I may go with you.

GIRLFRIEND

You stick it out girl, you're good.  
You have "the look" and you're a  
damn fine actor.

CHLOE

Thanks. I appreciate that. I just  
hate never having anything.

GIRLFRIEND

I know all my money goes to the gym  
and these classes.

CHLOE

Exactly.

Chloe is not fired up. She looks tired and has her hand  
holding her forehead.

GIRLFRIEND

You do that escort thing?

CHLOE

No, I was thinking about it.

GIRLFRIEND

A girl has to do what a girl's got  
to do. Hell, if I wasn't black I  
would be doing it.

CHLOE

What's black got to do with it?

GIRLFRIEND

Girl, a black girl is gonna get  
stabbed and called a "whore" - not a  
"call girl" or "escort".

(beat)

Somebody gorgeous and white like you  
though is gonna get a movie or book  
deal out of it.

(MORE)

GIRLFRIEND (CONT'D)

You never heard of no black Heidi Fleiss. They would call you the "blonde Heidi Fleiss" and me the "dead black whore" they found in a dumpster.

CHLOE

You should do stand up.

GIRLFRIEND

Now that is something I could do, you know!

CHLOE

You should.

GIRLFRIEND

Ain't that funny. A black girl kisses and tells and she is dead. A white girl kisses and tells and she's famous.

(beat)

But this black girl won't write any best-selling "Players Handbook".

CHLOE

I won't either.

The girls chuckle a bit.

The instructor claps his hands and they resume the class.

Minutes later...

EXT. PARKING LOT - LOS ANGELES - NIGHT

Chloe and her girlfriend exit the acting lessons and notice a police car across the street. The officer is taking a report from the couple that left the purse in the car.

The thief exits the bar/restaurant and gets in a distinctive older car - a red 1966 Charger.

Chloe gets into a poorly maintained 1980 Plymouth Reliant, a junker.

Her black friend walks to the bus stop.

Minutes later...

INT. GROCERY STORE - LOS ANGELES - NIGHT

Chloe buys very little fruit maybe \$2 worth. She goes down the pet aisle. She looks at the prices. The dog food is expensive. She buys the cheapest brand. She pays with nickels and dimes. And has \$93 in her palm when she is done.

Outside in the parking lot some drunken kids drive by and throw out half a large box of chicken tenders. The box lands on the pavement and most the chicken scatters on the pavement. The kids drive out of the parking lot out of sight.

Chloe looks left and right.

Chloe reluctantly picks up the chicken and returns it to the box. Then she puts the box in her car. She appears embarrassed. She sits, eats her fruit and thinks for a very long time.

She takes the dog food back into the grocery.

CHLOE

Can I return this? I just bought it  
two minutes ago.

(beat)

I'm sorry. I don't need it.

The cashier gives her an odd disapproving look. But she does refund her money.

INT. CHLOE'S HOME - LOS ANGELES - NIGHT

It is a very modest home. A jumping and spinning chihuahua greets her. MOM is exhausted in a recliner in the front room.

CHLOE

Hello. Whiskey. Are you a good dog?

(beat)

Mom! Are you still up?

MOM

Yes dear.

CHLOE

It's late.

MOM

I just wanted to see you got home  
okay.

CHLOE

Thanks mom. You worry too much.

MOM

I got Whiskey some chicken tenders.  
Don't eat them; they're for the dog.

She places a few chicken tenders in a food bowl and the box  
is placed in the refrigerator.

MOM

How was your day?

CHLOE

Just like every other day. I worked,  
I worked out and then I learned to  
act.

MOM

Okay. I'm going to bed dear.

(beat)

I love you.

CHLOE

I love you too, mom.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - RURAL TEXAS - EARLY MORNING

Evan throws the ball to the border collie in the yard. He  
gets in his truck and his cell phone is ringing. He looks at  
it and sees that it is "Jack Loveman - Los Angeles."

Evan is trying to compartmentalize his life and ignores it.

A "1" voice message is displayed.

He starts the truck and puts in a CD. We hear red dirt music  
and Evan pulls into the road.

Minutes later...

EXT. FARM TO MARKET ROAD - RURAL TEXAS - EARLY MORNING

Evan is driving and drinking coffee.

The phone rings again and again it is ignored.

A "2" voice message is displayed.

Minutes later...

EXT. SCHOOL PARKING LOT - RURAL TEXAS - EARLY MORNING

The phone rings again and again it is ignored.

A "3" voice message is displayed.

INT. CLASSROOM - RURAL TEXAS - EARLY MORNING

Before school begins, Evan enters his room. There are posters outlining the cuts of meat, other posters and two large flags are the front. His desk is at the front in the center. He sits down.

The cell phone rings again. Evan contemplates answering. Hesitates. Again, it is ignored.

A "3" voice message is displayed. They didn't leave a fourth message.

Three excited young students rush into the classroom.

STUDENT #1

Mr. McCray, your movie won.

EVAN

Won what?

NINTH GRADER

An academic award or something like that.

EVAN

No. I doubt that.

EIGHTH GRADER

Why?

NINTH GRADER

I heard it too. Academic award.

EVAN

Academy Award? First, they don't give Oscars for westerns.

(beat)

Well not nowadays anyway.

EIGHTH GRADER

But it was on the radio.

EVAN

You probably heard it was left off the list.

EIGHTH GRADER

But, you made like 130 million dollars.

EVAN

Not me.

EIGHTH GRADER

Well, the movie.

EVAN

Oscars doesn't go by that. It is more like "art". It goes by how "autistic" you are. Not by money.

NINTH GRADER

No. It WAS the winner. It was on the radio.

EVAN

What station?

EIGHTH GRADER

The Ranch.

EVAN

No. Guys, it didn't "win" anything.

EIGHTH GRADER  
I'm telling you, I heard it!

EVAN  
Well, nominations come out first.  
Then in a month or two then they  
pick a winner.

The phone rings again and Evan begins to think the student  
might be right.

EIGHTH GRADER  
Look it up on the Internet.

McCray leans over to the computer "googles" it and sure  
enough under "Best Picture" and "Best Actor" and "Best  
Original Screenplay" is listed "Hard Ride South".

Long beat.

McCray sits back and is in shock.

NINTH GRADER  
See, I told you. It was a really  
swell movie and it done won!

EVAN  
Who is your English teacher?

NINTH GRADER  
You know, we only got one.

EVAN  
I'm sorry, I didn't believe you. I  
had my doubts. I hope you  
understand.

EIGHTH GRADER  
It's okay.

NINTH GRADER  
How come you're so surprised? You  
been in the Tawakoni County World  
Guardian at least five times. Mrs.  
Adams even got a big Fort Worth  
newspaper article cut out and  
hangin' up in the English room.

EVAN

It's complicated how it works.

The students all sit down and are looking as if they want to learn. Rare in any school.

EVAN

Ya'll sure look like you want to learn.

(beat)

How about you sitting like that, ready to learn, in English and math class too?

NINTH GRADER

Tell us how you did it. We want to make a 130 million dollars too.

EVAN

Does it look like I made 130 million dollars? That money goes to the producer. That's the job you want.

NINTH GRADER

I'm ready let's go.

Evan chuckles.

EVAN

Honestly I don't know much and you have a little time before you produce a film. There isn't any rush.

NINTH GRADER

So tell us what you know.

EVAN

I'm shocked because they don't generally give a nomination to a western.

NINTH GRADER

What's wrong with westerns?

EVAN

Generally they don't do so well.

NINTH GRADER

What do you mean? Everybody likes cowboys, horses, gunfights and stuff.

EVAN

Well, here people do. But everybody isn't like we are out here. And foreigners are totally detached. They don't buy tickets to westerns.

NINTH GRADER

Well, forget them. We ain't gonna watch none of their movies then. Tit for tats the way I see it.

Chuckles.

EIGHTH GRADER

You know what that tells me. Well it must be a hell, heck, of a story then.

EVAN

I'm proud of it.  
(gestures to the computer)  
But this is just crazy.

The phone rings...

EVAN

The phone has been ringing all morning. That is what it's about. I ain't been picking it up.

SEVENTH GRADER

My mom and dad, they don't never answer the phone.

Evan turns and reads the computer screen again.

EVAN

I'm sorry, men. I did't believe you.

NINTH GRADER

You gotta go out there and pick up  
your trophy?

SEVENTH GRADER

Can't they just mail it to you?

Evan chuckles again.

EVAN

Crap no; it is a big deal you got to  
walk up there on stage.

NINTH GRADER

(to the 7<sup>th</sup> grader)  
On television, dummy.

SEVENTH GRADER

Okay, how the ~~hell~~, heck, am I  
supposed to know that?

Evan looks cross at the 7<sup>th</sup> grader that cursed, but then he  
looks at the 9<sup>th</sup> grader.

EVAN

No. no. We're all learning here. No  
shame in not knowing. Now you know.

(beat)

And you shouldn't call people "a  
dummy".

NINTH GRADER

How come? He is!

EVAN

Cause you want to be an FFA officer?

NINTH GRADER

Yea. My momma wants me to.

EVAN

Well people won't vote for you if  
you call them names.

NINTH GRADER

He's gonna vote for me. I'll bet the  
hell out of him.

EVAN

What?

NINTH GRADER

We're friends. He'll vote for me.

EVAN

Secret ballot. I don't know, will he? He might tell you that and NOT vote for you if you keep calling him that.

The school bell rings and the ninth grader remains. The other students exit. Four other students enter and sit down.

FEMALE

Congratulations, Mr. McCray.

EVAN

Thank you.

NINTH GRADER

You ain't gonna tell the girls what you told us are you?

EVAN

What did I tell you?

NINTH GRADER

Cause if they cared they would have been in here before school like us boys. Don't ya figure?

EVAN

I might keep them after class and tell them more than I told you. What do you think about that?

NINTH GRADER

Oh, that is wrong!

(beat)

No, you won't.

EVAN

Chickens.

NINTH GRADER  
(to the girls)  
See, we got the inside information  
before school. You don't know sh...

EVAN  
Open your books to the chapter on  
poultry. Page 87.

NINTH GRADER  
We gonna talk about turkeys too? Mr.  
McCray, my family we got turkeys and  
chickens, both.

Later...

EXT. FARMHOUSE REDLAND TEXAS - NIGHT

Evan is at his table typing at the laptop. The phone rings.  
It is the JACK LOVEMAN again. The phone reveals there are  
"27" messages on his voice mail. This time Evan picks up.

INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION - TX/CA - NIGHT

JACK  
Evan, where have you been?

EVAN  
Right here.

When Evan stops typing, the border collie brings him a tennis  
ball. Evan opens the door to the house and pitches it far  
into the yard. Evan brings his kitchen chair to the  
threshold. As he speaks on the phone, he plays fetch with the  
dog.

JACK  
You haven't answered your phone all  
day. I'm your agent you know.

EVAN  
I have another job you know.

JACK  
Busy?

EVAN

You have no idea.

JACK

Everyone is working hard here too.

EVAN

Listen, I am reliable here for these people. I'm working on this new script every night. I can't be in two places at the same time.

JACK

At this point I have to ask you what your goal is.

EVAN

Goal? Why do I have to have a goal.

JACK

No, you have to have a goal.

EVAN

Why? I'm fine with the way things are.

JACK

Like do you want to even win? We can do this. We will talk you up around town. Send people and the press copies.

EVAN

Come on. It's a western. It's competing with four "non-traditional" sex dramas and a story about a psychotic a serial murderer. And the envelope please...

Beat.

JACK

I called the school.

EVAN

I got the message.

JACK

What are you mad at me?

EVAN

No, just have a lot on my plate.

JACK

Okay. Okay. I understand. Me too.

(beat)

Well, you were nominated for best screenplay.

EVAN

I know; my students told me.

JACK

Well, I talked to John and as the producer he is footing the bill. You will have airline ticket, a tux and a suite at the Roosevelt. Historic, the same bed Humphrey Bogart and Lauren Bacall slept in. Right across the street from the theater. A limo to bring you the 100 feet.

EVAN

Look, I don't know if I can make it.

JACK

What? You're kidding?

EVAN

I live here. I work here. I have animals.

JACK

No one skips the Oscars. It just doesn't happen.

EVAN

Uh, I think it has happen before.

JACK

You trying to make some political statement?

EVAN

What?

JACK

If you want to send a Native American to pickup your award, I'm going to...

EVAN

No. But...

JACK

Well. Let's get with the program.

EVAN

It's just a meat market. We got that here.

JACK

It's the biggest juiciest meat market on the planet. The most beautiful the most wanted women in the world. And YOU are invited.

(beat)

What are you a vegetarian?

EVAN

Okay, you got me there. I'm not gay.

JACK

Evan, listen to me. It would wreck your career.

EVAN

How can that be?

JACK

Trust me. These people hold a grudge.

(beat)

What about Bells Braune?

EVAN

Who?

JACK

Your date will be Bells Braune! I know her. Talked to her this morning. She is my neighbour and my other client.

EVAN

Out in Santa Monica?

JACK

She's in Surfcity.

EVAN

What's that?

JACK

Television. Fridays at 7:00 pm out here.

EVAN

I don't watch that. We got football.

JACK

It's Baywatch only with surfers.

EVAN

Tell me, do you people ever come up with anything original?

JACK

No, not really. Some stories are timeless.

Evan chuckles.

JACK

And the beach is right here. And why take a risk with a new story?

EVAN

If you don't know, I can't explain.

JACK

If you don't come out here for this... they will never buy the script you're working on now.

(beat)

That wonderful relationship we have with our millionaire producer friend John will wither and die.

Understand?

(beat)

This is a movie town and a team town. If you aren't on board for this, they'll maroon you.

EVAN

Still... I wouldn't be able to help you out. I'm not good at that sort of stuff.

JACK

Listen, you want me to be honest with you? This might be a once in a lifetime opportunity. Plenty of one hit wonders out there.

EVAN

Now, I'm depressed.

JACK

You can guarantee me that you can sell something else this good? Maybe not.

EVAN

Gee, thanks.

JACK

Probably you can. You're a good writer. Maybe great. But how do you know the market will be open for another western like we made?

(beat)

The "appreciated" westerns only find a place once every, what 20 years?

EVAN

Good point. Who knows?

JACK

Great westerns have been ignored every year for the last 10 - 20 years.

EVAN

I know what you mean.

JACK

Hey, you might accidentally win.

EVAN

You got that right.

JACK

No, seriously. Sometimes they get a hard-on for an outsider.

EVAN

They get sick of themselves is what you mean.

JACK

Uh...

(half beat)

Right. Sort of like that.

(beat)

No, it is more like every once in a while we have to just go out and have this exotic Vietnamese little person or Icelandic virgin?

EVAN

What? You're talking out your ass.

JACK

You and your cows and pigs there in Texas. The smallest school in all of Texas. That is exotic to us. People will vote for that.

EVAN

Whatever.

JACK

A beautiful blonde surfer girl - a television personality - she'll meet you at the airport. You fly in Saturday. The ceremony is Sunday night. You can fly back Monday. One day off work.

(beat)

I already talked to your boss.

EVAN

You called my principal?

JACK

Yes, I did; I hope that is okay. He said take an entire week. HE is a team player. YOU need to be a team player.

EVAN

You harass John like this to get him to buy my script?

JACK

I'm a tiger. I'm relentless. That is why you pay me.

There is a very long beat.

EVAN

Okay. Okay. One weekend.

JACK

Deal. No worries. Cyndi and I will take care of everything.

EVAN

Who is Cynid?

JACK

Your publicist.

EVAN

Mine?

JACK

Well, for the movie. She works for John. I work for you.

EVAN

Send me the flight information. I'll do it.

JACK

Great. Thanks. Bells is drop dead gorgeous. What a body! She is a real surfer, very genuine. Aussie. Very laid back. Nature girl. Named after a beach in Australia. How can that be wrong for you?

EVAN

Really? You said the best looking woman on TV?

JACK

And the most athletic, if you know what I mean. Google her.

Evan stops throwing the ball and walks to the laptop and brings up Bells' photo.

EVAN

Holy Guacamole.

(beat)

I can't stand next to her. She'll make me look ugly.

JACK

Is that a bad thing?

(pause)

Wouldn't you rather be ugly and have the most beautiful woman on television on your arm. Or the other way around?

EVAN

I see.

JACK

Naturally, everyone will be looking at her and NOT you.

EVAN

That might be a good thing.

JACK

You look good on paper, friend. She looks good in anything.

(beat)

Or I imagine nothing.

EVAN

Okay. I'm persuaded. God help the producers if all agents are like you.

JACK

I'll take that as a compliment.

(beat)

So what is your goal?

EVAN

To be there...

JACK

And?

EVAN

Get home in one piece.

JACK

That will have to do for now.

Five weeks later...

INT. AIRPORT - DALLAS/FORT WORTH - SATURDAY MORNING

Evan is at the airport in Fort Worth. He is standing in the security line. He looks uncomfortable. He might have a fear of flying or claustrophobia. He probably is just a simple man unhappy leaving home.

Evan is holding his hat to his chest. Old school; you don't wear your hat indoors.

LADY

Oh, I know you. I know were you're going!

(beat)

You wrote that movie. You're going to get your Oscar.

EVAN

Thank ya, ma'am. I appreciate you saying that. But, I haven't won yet. I'm just going out there to see if I won.

LADY

Good luck, young man.

EVAN

Thank you.

Evan appears a bit more comfortable.

LADY

Who is your date?

EVAN

An actress, Bells Braune.

LADY

Oh, my!

(beat)

She is gorgeous!

(beat)

How did that happen?

EVAN

I figure, I hired a good agent.

LADY

Yes, you did! She was a professional surfer.

EVAN

Really?

LADY

You lucky dog!

EVAN  
Thanks ma'am.

Minutes later...

INT. CABIN - AIRBORNE AIRPLANE - MORNING

Evan boards the plane and walks past his seat in first-class back into the economy seating. He can't find 1F. The economy seating begins with row 7. He shows the ticket to the FLIGHT ATTENDANT.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT  
This is your lucky day.

The flight attendant shows him to his first class seat. Evan seems surprised.

EVAN  
Hollywood. I would never spend this sort of money.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT  
You must be special to someone.

EVAN  
My mom.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT  
Your mom bought your ticket?

EVAN  
No. Some movie producer.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT  
Well, you just relax.  
(beat)  
Anything you want you just mention.

EVAN  
Thanks.

Everyone getting on and walking through to the economy seats, glances. Maybe curious. Maybe they are looking for celebrities. Evan feels a bit nervous about being in the zoo.

TEENAGER

Mom, I think that was Kenny Chesnee.  
Did you see his hat?

Minutes later...

INT. FIRST-CLASS CABIN - AIRBORNE - MORNING

Several people have devices and laptops. The cabin has a television and it is on a 24 hour news channel.

PASSENGER

Oh, man!

We hear half the plane gasp at the same moment.

The chatter increases.

Evan looks up.

TV NEWS SCROLL

Actress attacked by shark while  
filming Surfcity.

There has been a shark attack in Santa Monica. There is a helicopter shot. And after a moment, Bells' photo is put up. It is a sexy "Surfcity" promotional photo of her and a surfboard.

A laptop in the cabin is streaming the story... and the volume is just audible.

Evan turns and speaks to the passenger.

EVAN

She was bitten?

PASSENGER

Yes. The actress from Surfcity.

EVAN

Killed?

PASSENGER

No, but she's in the hospital.

EVAN

How bad?

PASSENGER

They didn't say.

(beat)

You know her?

EVAN

She's my date for tomorrow night.

PASSENGER

Not anymore, friend.

EVAN

Gee.

Evan takes out his phone.

INT. LAX AIRPORT - NOON

Jack is there, nervous and sweating bullets, waiting for Evan when he emerges from the security area.

JACK

Surreal, it's just surreal.

EVAN

Terrible.

JACK

Tell me about it.

EVAN

How bad it is?

JACK

Bad!

EVAN

She's not...

JACK

Yes. Possibly a career ending injury.

EVAN

But she is okay?

JACK

Oh, yes. She's fine. But as for work... it's all up in the air.

EVAN

We are going to the hospital?

JACK

Yes. Cyndi is there now. I was going to say that.

Minutes later...

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - SANTA MONICA - DAY

Evan and Jack enter Bells' hospital room. Both men have flowers. CYNDI is there.

Jack kisses Bells on the cheek.

BELLS

Thanks for the flowers. You shouldn't have.

JACK

Poor thing.

BELLS

Oh, don't worry about me.

JACK

Worry, that is all I do. You pay me to worry.

(half beat)

I want to go kill that freakin' shark!

BELLS

I know, but don't. He bit me and spit me right out.

EVAN

Well, I can guarantee that shark will never work in this town again.

BELLS

You brought me a toy? Who is this?

JACK

This is ...

BELLS

Evan?

JACK

Your date for tomorrow.

BELLS

You are one handsome looking cowboy.

EVAN

Thank you.

BELLS

You're going to be a big hit out here. Half these women have a cowboy fantasy you know.

(beat)

And you have a hat! My heart just skipped a beat.

Evan is charmed.

BELLS

Oh, I'm sorry. I don't think I'm going to be able to go to the awards.

EVAN

That's okay ma'am. Forget about that. I'm more worried about your leg.

BELLS

You want to see it?

Everyone is silent.

EVAN

Oh, I didn't mean...

Bells pulls back the sheet, exposing a perfectly shaped leg with about 25 stitches in it. It isn't a huge wound. It's been largely an exaggeration by the media.

BELLS

It was a baby or juvenile shark at best.

Jack looks at it most intensely, almost as if he were a doctor. He looks at it from different angles, different light.

Evan glances at it and then back into the television star's eyes. Eye contact. Romance?

JACK

Don't worry baby; plastic surgery is going to smooth that right out.

(beat)

It won't show on the screen. I promise.

BELLS

Forget that. It's a freakin' honourable scar, a badge of honour. A true surfer's injury.

EVAN

You aren't too broken up about it?

BELLS

Why? It happened; nothing to do about it now.

(beat)

Now about our night at the Oscars this I'm broken up about.

Evan shyly ducks his head.

BELLS

You'll ask me out again?

EVAN

The minute you get out of this hospital. You bet.

BELLS

Far out! I can't wait.

(beat)

Your accent is killing me.

She overwhelms Evan with her smile/charisma.

BELLS

Oh, check it out.

Bells reaches to a glass by her bed. She shows him a memento the doctor dug out of her thigh - a baby sharks tooth.

BELLS

Can you believe that? It came out of my leg.

(beat)

Rascal. The shark left a tooth in my leg.

Bells laughs. The room is brightened. She isn't depressed. Oddly, acting and her career isn't totally consuming and not the subject of the conversation.

EXT. HOSPITAL PARKING LOT - DAY

Jack and Evan walk across the parking lot. Jack is walking about 120% normal speed. Jack looks at his watch.

JACK

It is Saturday at 2:30 PM.

(beat)

We have to find you a date.

EVAN

No. That isn't such a big deal. I will just walk in there. No skin off me. It's not like it's the prom or anything.

Jack and Cyndi both glare at him.

EVAN

Okay, I'm sorry. That was a dumb thing to say. It is the prom; same damn thing.

They continue to glare.

EVAN

I was joking.

JACK

Oh, okay. For a minute, I thought you were serious.

CYNDI

Mr. McCray. We should know each other. I'm Cyndi and I'm the film's publicist.

EVAN

I'm sorry. I should have reached out to you earlier. I've just been busy.

CYNDI

Not a problem. You've been in Texas. We'll find you a date. This town is full of beautiful woman.

JACK

So I hear.

Evan turns to look back at the hospital. He looks to Bells' window. She is there, up out of her bed and waving down to them. Evan waves back.

CYNDI

She'll be fine.

EVAN

Well don't go out of your way. I'm fine either way.

Minutes later...

INT. JACK'S CAR - DAY

Jack and Evan are driving to the hotel.

JACK

I'm taking you to your hotel.  
(beat)

Man, you have no idea how hard it was to get a room there. We had 2 reserved but then we needed four.

(beat)

But forget that; I'm going to have you a date before we get there.

Jack voice activates his onboard cell phone. He calls another agent Ari.

JACK

Call Ari.

ARI

Hello?

JACK

Ari, who do you have for me?

ARI

Who again?

JACK

Evan McCray.

(beat)

Best Original Screenplay.

ARI

I'm tapped out.

JACK

What?

(half beat)

You don't have a nubile female type client one?

ARI

I don't.

JACK

Well, you're no help.

ARI

Sorry.

JACK

Call me if something breaks.

Jack makes a second call. It is a voice mail.

JACK

Aaron. Call me. I have a male client and he needs a female date for tomorrow. He is a nominee.

And then a third call. Again voice mail.

JACK

Uri. Call me. Evan McCray and I need a date. Well, I mean he needs a female date. My client. His date was bitten by a shark and he is a nominee. Don't let me down.

The call ends. It occurs to Jack to ask...

JACK

We are looking for a female date right? Nothing else will do?

Evan looks at Jack in disbelief.

JACK

Redial.

The other agent's voice mail opens up again.

JACK

And, he's gonna win that freakin' Oscar, so you better call me back. This is Jack.

EVAN

You need to relax.

JACK

It's Saturday. These ass-holes don't answer their phone on Saturday.

EVAN

Don't worry about it.

JACK

I worry. I worry. You don't know me.  
I worry.

They arrive at the Roosevelt Hotel. Jack pops the trunk. Evan exits the car. And gets his bags from the trunk.

Jack begins another phone call and drives off. The very second the trunk closes, Jack peels out barking the tires.

Next morning..

INT. LOBBY - HOTEL ROOSEVELT - 4:00 AM SUNDAY MORNING

The desk attendant is not paying too much attention. The barista from the coffee bar seems to be watching.

Chloe is all dolled up. She has been out on a date with a GUY and her date has a room at the Roosevelt. Clearly she has had a good time. Both are laughing and she is cheerful. But suddenly reality hits her.

The guy enters the elevator; Chloe stops outside. She regrets leading him on and we see her eyes well up. She becomes more teary as the scene develops.

GUY

Come on.

Chloe hesitates.

CHLOE

I can't. I know I took your money,  
but that was for the time. Not for..

Chloe gestures up to the room.

GUY

Well, I'll be damned. No, that's not right.

(half beat)

I thought we had something going here. Come-on up and let's see what happens. No pressure.

CHLOE

You are a nice guy, I'm sure. I'm not a tease. I won't lie to you. I've been attracted to you all night. I mean your funny and good looking. You drive a nice car.

GUY

But you aren't coming up?

CHLOE

You can have your money back. I have it right here.

She reaches into her purse and pulls out some cash.

GUY

You posted an advertisement - 'casual encounter, safe sex greatly reduces the risk of STDs'. You even included the obligatory warning about underage sex trafficking.

CHLOE

I just copied what another girl had in her ad.

(beat)

I've never done this. I'm sorry.

GUY

You bitch.

The guy tries to man-handle her and pull her into the elevator.

INT. HALLWAY - HOTEL ROOSEVELT - 4:10 AM SUNDAY MORNING

It is 6:15 am in Texas. Evan, always an early riser, leaves his room. He clearly needs some coffee.

He exits the elevator in the lobby just in time to see Chloe being pulled into the elevator.

Evan isn't too rash, he watches. Concerned. But he's clearly trying to understand. He's a real cowboy so pulling a woman anywhere is probably not legitimate, but he's cautious. The guy might be a cop or an armed criminal.

Chloe resists half-heartedly and then cries out and resists more vigorously. She's losing the battle and is about to be pulled into the elevator and as a last resort, she tries to scratch his face. She fights back.

Well, that does it. Evan acts.

EVAN

Stop it. She doesn't want to go.

GUY

What?

EVAN

Let her go, 'fore I come over there.

GUY

Who the f%\$# are you?

Evan approaches.

EVAN

You're gonna let her go.

GUY

F%\$# you!

Evan doesn't want to fight... he has closed the distance between them, but he represses the urge.

The guy pulls on Chloe again. She resists and he raises his fist. He's about to strike her.

Before he can hit her, Evan strikes. He punches the guy in the face and the guy falls back into the elevator. He's on his back on the floor. The guy's nose is bloody.

The desk attendant sees this and picks up the phone, dials 911.

Evan enters the elevator and pushes the "12". He exits elevator before the doors close. The guy is trying to get to his feet but he's disoriented still.

Chloe wipes her tears and walks toward a sofa.

Chloe is devastated.

Years of taking bull shit from agents, producers and other Hollywood parasites, one would think she is street smart and tough. But she is not tough. By now she has full-fledged tears in her eyes and she finds a sofa to sit on.

Chloe sits and tries to recover herself. Chloe is the "girl-next-door" on the brink of a nervous breakdown. It is a momentary emotional vulnerability. And she eventually recovers.

Evan sees that Chloe is okay and probably wants to be left alone. He walks over to the desk attendant who is holding the phone still.

EVAN

I think that fellow was trying something with the little lady.

DESK ATTENDANT

Well, I see you punch him.

EVAN

You're calling the cops?

DESK ATTENDANT

They'll be here.

EVAN

Good.

The desk attendant appears skeptical and is probably going to cause trouble for Evan. Maybe the desk attendant thinks whatever bad happens to a whore, she has coming to her. It's not clear but it's probably not going to turn out well for either Chloe or Evan.

Evan contemplates things. The desk attendant doesn't seem too persuadable so Evan turns to Chloe.

Chloe wipes the tears away and looks up at the coffee bar 'open 24/7' sign. Before Evan can get over to the couch, she walks rapidly to the coffee bar.

INT. 25 DEGREES CAFÉ - 4:12 AM SUNDAY MORNING

Chloe is more than just grumpy, she's avoiding all eye contact. Evan is hesitant, but he approaches.

Chloe has already ordered. Evan walks up, he doesn't speak that "sophisticated Italian" so he just holds up two fingers.

The barista is listening as he prepares their coffees. They are standing at the bar waiting for the barista to return.

EVAN

You here for the awards?

She looks down at his cowboy boots. They are work boots nothing fancy and they're a bit worn. She's emotionally shaken and not thinking straight.

CHLOE

Where's your horse?

She ponders things. And she becomes angry. She looks up and into his eye. One would think she'd appreciate Evan's rescue, but she's more upset with herself that she's fallen into this situation.

CHLOE

Why would you ask that?

EVAN

You look like you could be an actress?

CHLOE

What's my name?

Beat.

EVAN

I don't know.

CHLOE

What show am I on?

Beat.

EVAN

I don't know that either.

CHLOE

Am I a movie star?

EVAN

I guess not. But I don't know that much about it.

Beat. She takes her eyes off him and looks forward and down.

EVAN

Oh, you think that was a pick-up-line.

CHLOE

Pretty much sounded like one.

EVAN

Oh, I'm sorry. I was serious.

CHLOE

Are you star struck?

Evan chuckles.

EVAN

No, but I might be persuaded.

CHLOE

Oh, please.

Beat.

EVAN

It's the Roosevelt. The Oscars are tomorrow across the street. You've been out celebrating. And that guy's clearly was stalking you.

CHLOE

No one's stalking me.

Chloe chuckles.

EVAN

Well, maybe I was serious. You could be a movie star. Consider the situation.

CHLOE

Okay. I will.

No eye contact with Evan. Chloe's coffee arrives.

EVAN

Well, bye. It was nice rescuing you.

Chloe is reluctant, but we are on the brink of seeing the attraction between them.

When Evan is looking at her, she is stern. But when Evan looks away, she softens and steals a glance of him. They show a stealthy connection here. We are on the verge of a romantic drama.

Evan's puts money on the bar, but begins to exit.

CHLOE

Wait.

Evan stops.

CHLOE

I considered things.

EVAN

Yeah?

CHLOE

It wasn't a line... and I'm sorry I asked about your horse. Your boots... they're... real. Nothing is real in this town.

EVAN

Tell me about it.

Evan's coffee arrives.

BARISTA

I know who you are?

(beat)  
You're the surfer chick from the  
Boost Mobile commercial.

CHLOE  
Thank you.

BARISTA  
No problem.

The barista smiles, he (or she) too is probably a struggling actor. The desk attendant arrives behind the bar and calls the barista over and whispers something derogatory in his ear, like "she's a whore and the cops are coming." The barista disagrees and whispers something back, like "she's a struggling actress". The barista appears to maybe vouch for Chloe and ask the desk attendant to smooth things over with the cops.

EVAN  
See. You ARE somebody.

CHLOE  
That was twelve years ago.

EVAN  
I don't care. You want to sit down?

Evan gestures to a table. She nods affirmatively.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY

The desk attendant does smooth things over. The cops arrive and the desk attendant points upstairs and then out the front door. The desk attendant appears to be telling them a guest was punched in the nose and the perpetrators ran off down the street.

When the cops leave, the desk attendant looks into the coffee bar through the door. The barista lifts his head to her, a gesture of "thank you".

INT. 25 DEGREES CAFÉ - 4:12 AM SUNDAY MORNING

Evan and Chloe are at a table. Evan tastes his fancy coffee. It's something strange and he frowns. He smiles, pretending that he likes it, when she looks at him.

CHLOE

What, do you have a lot of money?

EVAN

No, but I have a checkbook and cows  
in Texas.

CHLOE

So how many cows do you have?

EVAN

Twenty-seven pure bred Charolais.

CHLOE

What?

EVAN

Nice fat white cows. And a bull.

Evan shows Chloe his smartphone.

CHLOE

Oh, how cute.

She flips through more photos until she see photos of Evan  
working with his students and their steers, pigs and lambs.

CHLOE

These your kids?

EVAN

I'm not married.

CHLOE

Yes, but you could still have kids.

EVAN

I'm their teacher.

CHLOE

What do you teach?

EVAN

Ag.

Chloe looks confused.

EVAN  
Agriculture. You know food.

Beat.

CHLOE  
Wait a minute. You teach agriculture  
in Texas?

EVAN  
Yes. That's right.

CHLOE  
I never meet anyone that taught  
agriculture. What are you doing  
here?

EVAN  
Ag.

CHLOE  
What?

EVAN  
Ya just say "ag".  
(beat)  
No body says, "agriculture."

CHLOE  
Really?

EVAN  
So you're an actress or were you  
just messing with me?

CHLOE  
No, I am. Failed. Failed actress.

EVAN  
Why do you say that?

CHLOE  
Cause it is the truth.

EVAN  
How long you been at it?

CHLOE  
Since I was a baby.

EVAN  
You grew up here?

Chloe is clearly sensitive about this "failed actor" issue. She might even let it ruin this new relationship.

CHLOE  
Yep. Never worked other than as an extra.  
(beat)  
Some commercials when I was a teenager.

EVAN  
Hard luck story?

CHLOE  
No. Not really.

EVAN  
I would expect acting is tough.

CHLOE  
It's great work...

EVAN  
... if you can find it.

CHLOE  
You heard that one, huh?

EVAN  
Yep.

CHLOE  
I'm a hostess at a restaurant. Okay?

EVAN  
So what? You want to know what I do, I talk to a wall all day.

(MORE)

EVAN (CONT'D)

I talk to teenagers that don't want to, or actually sometimes can't, listen.

(beat)

And I shovel a lot of shit.

Chloe chuckles. But then there is a long beat and she thinks about it.

CHLOE

You don't anything to do with me.

EVAN

Maybe, but why would you say that? I might. I just met you. It's 5 - 5:30 now. At least give me until breakfast to make up my mind.

Chloe chuckles.

CHLOE

Okay, look you're here from Texas. You're probably looking for some sort of movie star.

(beat)

Good luck.

(beat)

Listen you need to get real. That shit don't happen.

EVAN

It might.

CHLOE

Well not with me. Cause I'm not what you're looking for. Thanks for the coffee, but I'm about as far from a movie star as you can get.

She gets up to leave.

EVAN

No, please don't go.

(beat)

Finish your coffee.

CHLOE  
I have to be somewhere.

EVAN  
You're right.

Chloe stops her flight and listens.

EVAN  
I did come out here for a movie  
star. Well not actually but...  
(half beat)  
I had one lined up and waiting for  
me...

Chloe is curious and turns... listening but still standing.

EVAN  
I was supposed to go to the awards  
tonight with a "television" star but  
she got bitten by a shark.

Chloe immediately sits.

CHLOE  
Bells Braune?

EVAN  
It's not that bad. But well... she is  
not dating this week.

CHLOE  
You went to see her in the hospital?

EVAN  
Yes.

CHLOE  
What was she like?

EVAN  
Strangely, happy.

CHLOE  
And her leg?

EVAN

It isn't like a chunk of her leg is gone. The media... you know. Maybe... well I doubt she tastes bad, but it's like the shark realized what he was doing and then spit her leg out.

CHLOE

I don't care if you "are" a stupid fish; you don't bite someone with a television show.

EVAN

Not if you're a shark off the Pacific coast anyway.

CHLOE

I know.

EVAN

Even the sharks out here are publicity sensitive.

CHLOE

You're funny.

EVAN

Not really.  
(beat)  
Just weird.

CHLOE

I don't know who you are. But I don't think you're weird.

EVAN

Evan McCray. Nice to meet you.

CHLOE

And you have a movie?

EVAN

Hard Ride South.

CHLOE

Best picture. Best actor. Best production design. Something else I forgot.

(beat)

Really?

(half beat)

I thought you were a teacher.

(half beat)

But you're what? The producer?

(half beat)

Not the director. The director?

(half beat)

I don't know. Gaffer?

EVAN

What's that?

Beat.

CHLOE

Well, who are you?

EVAN

Writer.

Chloe contemplates.

An hour later... 5:15 AM

CHLOE

Well, it's not the first time a man flew across the country for a woman.

(embarrassed)

Oh, wait. I'm making a fool of myself.

(beat)

That is not why you're here. You weren't her date. She was yours!

(beat)

Are you a nominee!

EVAN

Insane isn't it.

CHLOE

It must have been a good script.

A great one. Best Original  
Screenplay.

(beat)

This is a big deal tonight.

EVAN

My agent is looking for me a "date".  
But don't count on it.

(beat)

He's not E-harmony. More like E-  
chaos.

CHLOE

It's Hollywood, they will find you a  
date.

EVAN

Don't count on it. He tried already.

Beat.

EVAN

Listen, why don't you do it.

(beat)

You and me. We'll go. A date.

CHLOE

Well, there are "dates" and there  
are "awards dates".

EVAN

Someone told me that. But, anyway  
you want it?

CHLOE

Beggars can't be chooser.

Beat.

EVAN

Are you begging?

Chloe contemplates.

CHLOE

I'll beg.

EVAN

Well, there you have it. Deal.

CHLOE

All business?

EVAN

How boring?

CHLOE

That's how this town works. Business first.

EVAN

Okay I see. It will be good for you and good for me too? No complications? It's just the market.

CHLOE

I'm not so sure I can handle a real date right now.

Evan glances over to the elevator and then to sofa where Chloe was crying earlier.

EVAN

So, yeah. I understand. Been there myself.

CHLOE

I'm tempted. Really.

EVAN

Nope, no romance. Business only.

This might be a disappointment to Chloe. She is saying "all business" with her lips but her eyes say "a bit of romance". We can see that she immediately regrets this "award dating" warning-him-off.

EVAN

Listen, Monday I'm flying back to Texas. I won't be stalking you or making demands on you. It's just one night. Don't be afraid.

EVAN

Blue carpet, you and me.

CHLOE

Red.

EVAN

What?

CHLOE

The carpet is red.

EVAN

They said blue.

CHLOE

It's red. Trust me. Blue that's that other thing.

Evan seems puzzled at his blunder. But clearly he's a neophyte.

CHLOE

Don't worry I will walk you though it.

EVAN

Walk. Hah. I get it. "Walk the runway."

CHLOE

The runway, that's something else. We say, "Walk the red carpet."

Chloe finds this all bizarre. She contemplates a man totally lost in her Hollywood world, but she feels he might be sweet, genuine and sincere. And he did punch a rapist ass in the nose on her account.

CHLOE

Wait a minute. You were nominated for an Academy Award and you're going back to your old job Monday?

(beat)

Why?

EVAN

I have animals to take care of. The student's have competitions.

CUT TO:

INT. FORT WORTH FAT STOCK SHOW - DAY

Evan remember taking a student to a large (the largest) animal exposition. The student has a steer in the competition. People are abuzz with work, everyone has an exhibit to prepare. Evan and the student work getting him ready. They bath and groom him. There is clipper work. The student's family is all there in support, but they mostly watch.

The family offers him a big foot-long chilidog with cheese and a soda. Evan politely refuses and the student's fat brother takes the chilidog. Even looks nervous. They've been working with and feeding the steer for over a year. There is a lot of money and prestige at stake.

The student leads the steer into the ring to be judged. There are twenty or more in his class. There are thousands in the stands watching. There are television reporters and photographers there. The student leads the steer around the ring, the judge has a difficult choice. Evan smiles confidently at the student and then at the student's parents.

The student doesn't finish in the top four and exits the ring disappointed. Evan gives them a reassuring gesture.

EVAN

It's okay. You have a nice steer. The judge didn't see it. There are other shows you know. Maybe ask your parents if you can go to San Antonio or Houston.

RETURN TO:

INT. 25 DEGREES CAFÉ - 5:20 AM SUNDAY MORNING

CHLOE

(joking)

Like the Oscar awards for cows?

EVAN  
(not joking)  
Yeah, something like that.  
(beat)  
That is what I do most days, help  
kids get their animals ready. I  
write cowboy stories at night.

Again Chloe tries to weigh this guy out. Rural lunatic or  
cowboy prince come to Hollywood?

EVAN  
Why do you have that look on your  
face?

CHLOE  
No one does that.

EVAN  
Sure they do.

CHLOE  
Funny, I thought everyone wants the  
spotlight? These people pretty much  
will kill for what you got.

EVAN  
Not me.  
(beat)  
I think I'd be dangerous if they  
didn't let me go home.

CHLOE  
Okay. I can date you. You're safe.

EVAN  
It's been a date now for the last  
five minutes.

CHLOE  
Any girl would be thrilled.  
Absolutely thrilled.

EVAN  
So you're thrilled?

Chloe is just glowing with joy.

CHLOE

A little yes.

(beat)

Okay a lot.

EVAN

You're serious. It's a done deal?

CHLOE

You better call your people. They probably found someone else anyway.

Evan pulls out his phone. He looks at his messages.

EVAN

Nope. Zero messages.

CHLOE

But you should run this past them. Everything in this town is orchestrated.

(beat)

Too much money at stake. Your producer will be mad at you if you botch things up tonight. Your agent.

EVAN

Forget them. I'm in charge of me.

CHLOE

Now you are scaring me.

EVAN

Why?

CHLOE

It's complicated.

EVAN

A dress?

(beat)

You need three.

CHLOE

That's what they lined up for Bells?

EVAN

Three parties. Three dresses. They have it all mapped out for Bells, well now they can just do that for you. They even typed it up. Emailed it all to me.

CHLOE

Hair?

EVAN

Hair.

CHLOE

Makeup?

EVAN

Makeup.

CHLOE

Where would I change? I can't change in just any bathroom stall.

EVAN

Hotel room. Right?

CHLOE

Where?

EVAN

Upstairs.

Beat.

EVAN

You can pull it off.

CHLOE

Maybe.

EVAN

You probably had some training.

CHLOE

I go to acting classes every night of the week for... about thirty years now.

EVAN

Yeah. Good. Lots of training. You never know when that'll come in handy.

(beat)

Just think - rich, stuck up, Hollywood prima donna. Just act like you belong there. Act like you own everybody.

Beat.

CHLOE

They act that way.

EVAN

That was rude. I'm sorry. Ignore me.

CHLOE

How about if I play the girl-next-door?

EVAN

Oh, that is way better. See. You got this. Think about all the work you have put in already.

CHLOE

No. That's nothing close to the "red" carpet. I'm an amateur.

(beat)

This is just too big for me. I don't think I can do this.

EVAN

I'm going to text Jack now.

CHLOE

Who is Jack?

EVAN

A man who's job it is to make you happy.

(beat)

Speak up if you're a wimp ...

Typing letters into the phone.

EVAN  
I--f-o-u-n-d--h-e-r.  
(beat)  
Send?

Chloe almost stops him. Part of her body moves to stop him but she doesn't speak and there isn't a hand gesture.

EVAN  
Sent.  
(beat)  
You can't back out now.  
(half beat)  
You'll make me look a fool.

CHLOE  
I won't back out.  
(beat)  
Thanks.

EVAN  
I should be thanking you.

CHLOE  
I hope you're thanking me when it's over.

EVAN  
When it's over, I will be thanking everyone who helped make it possible.

CHLOE  
Oh, I get it. You ARE good aren't you?

EVAN  
I try.

The phone rings immediately. It is Jack. Evan picks up.

Thinking ahead, Chloe writes her name on a napkin.

JACK  
Where are you?

EVAN  
Hotel restaurant.

JACK  
Who is she?

Evan takes the napkin.

EVAN  
Her name is Chloe Baker.

JACK  
Never heard of her.

EVAN  
She's an actress.

JACK  
She there with you now?  
(beat)  
Take her picture and send it to me.

EVAN  
I'm not taking her picture; its 5:30  
am. Get your ass over here and meet  
her. And be impressed.

JACK  
Are you joking?

EVAN  
She's gorgeous. Witty and smart.

JACK  
What did you do give her a test?

EVAN  
She grew up here. She knows how  
stuff works, but she needs those  
dresses.

JACK  
I need to talk to her.

EVAN

Fine you can talk to her. Don't  
embarrass me.

He hands Chloe the phone.

JACK

Darling. Evan likes you. So, welcome  
to the team.

CHLOE

Thank you.

JACK

I'm going to give you my number and  
the number of Cyndi our publicist.  
She has been hired to help us out.

(beat)

Now we are in a rush today. You  
think we can do this?

CHLOE

Certainly. I was born for it.

JACK

It isn't going to be easy you know.

CHLOE

I know, I'm a team player. I know  
what to do.

Chloe looks into a hand mirror.

Barista has heard important parts of their conversation.  
He's vaguely aware of the situation. He notices her looking  
into the mirror. He thinks and brings her a glass of ice.

She looks at him strangely. Without letting Evan see or hear,  
the barista points to his eyes and gestures that Chloe's eyes  
are puffy. She's been up all night and she's been crying. And  
the barista points to Evan's phone, meaning that his agent is  
coming to check her out.

She nods that she understands.

She reaches into her purse and takes q-tips out of a zip lock  
bag. She pours the ice into the zip lock.

Five minutes later...

EXT. ROOSEVELT HOTEL - WOMEN'S BATHROOM

Chloe is on the couch inside the bathroom with the ice over her eyes.

Twenty minutes later...

EVAN (O.S.)

Chloe, Jack is here. He want's to have a look.

CHLOE

Okay, I will be right out.

Chloe get up looks in the mirror; the swelling under her eyes has significantly decreased.

Chloe uses her hairbrush. She quickly re-does her makeup.

Outside, Jack and Evan have an awkward monument waiting. It's something kin to the Fort Worth Fat Stock Show. Jack is the judge and poor Chloe is the exhibit.

INT/EXT. ROOSEVELT HOTEL - DAWN

Chloe comes out of the bathroom. Jack takes a moment but approves. Everyone is relieved.

JACK

(to Evan)

Actually, I couldn't have done better myself.

EVAN

I like her.

JACK

(to Evan)

Me too.

(to Chloe)

Very nice. Why aren't you a client of mine?

CHLOE

That is a very good question.

Jack, Evan and Chloe exit the Hotel. The sun is rising. The light is perfect. Chloe is transformed. Walking out of the building into the morning light, she glows with beauty and no longer appears jaded or grumpy. Her posture and gait has changed from before. She IS about to become a starlet. She is Cinderella.

EXT. JACK'S CAR - MORNING

While they are driving, Chloe is watching Jack and Evan looking for clues. Evan is looking out the window at the good and bad of Los Angeles.

INT. MEL'S DRIVE-IN HOLLYWOOD - MORNING

They are the first to enter the place for breakfast. Chloe is watching Jack and Evan looking for clues. She has a very tiny breakfast. She's very disciplined. Jack expects it. Evan notices; he feels bad because his plate is stacked high. He can't understand for a moment, but realizes.

EVAN

I'm sorry.

CHLOE

It's okay.

Jack thinks they're weird, goofy kids. Apologizing for things that are part of the business.

EXT. JACK'S CAR - MORNING

We see the car pull up outside Chanel's dress shop. Chloe looks up and sees the "magic" sign. Many of her doubts subside.

CHLOE

These dresses we're borrowing?

(half beat)

They are Chanel?

JACK

Yes, that's right. Chanel.

Jack has negotiated for the loan of some designer dresses. Chanel means little to Jack, nothing to Evan, but it means everything to Chloe. She looks less afraid. She is growing in confidence.

The MANAGER arrives at the shop.

JACK

She sounded mad over the phone. Stay here until I smooth this over.

Jack exits the vehicle.

EXT. SIDEWALK IN FRONT OF CHANEL'S - MORNING

JACK

I'm sorry to get you out on Sunday morning.

MANAGER

Well, now listen we agreed to loan the dresses to Bells as a special favor. And now you want them on someone else?

JACK

It was a tragedy. What can I say?

(beat)

And the dresses are just sitting there. You make such nice dresses; pity for three to be idle on such an event.

MANAGER

The gown is worth upwards of \$15 grand, and on top that, \$1,000 or so bucks worth of last minute intricate seamstress work. And the other two dresses... don't ask how much.

JACK

I appreciate it. The producer appreciates it. The entire film. We are big fans of Chanel.

MANAGER

It's a western! And I heard your're  
all wearing denim.

JACK

All but Chloe and for that we came  
to you.

MANAGER

Everyone comes here.

JACK

She's going to be a star.

MANAGER

Everyone's going to be a star.

Jack is losing some of his patience.

JACK

I'm sure they'll fit fine.

MANAGER

No! This is Chanel's. They'll  
perfectly fit or it will not fit at  
all. Do you understand?

JACK

I do. I do. Perfectly clear.

MANAGER

The look must be total. There's the  
clutch and shoes worth a few hundred  
each. And now about jewellery?

JACK

Oh, shit. I forgot the jewellery.

Jack reaches for his phone and looks through his contacts. He  
looks down the street. There are three jewelry stores on his  
left and three on the right. Jack is flipping through his  
phone contacts.

MANAGER

Sizes?

Jack doesn't look up from his phone.

JACK

They are very close. Very.

MANAGER

Well, where is she? I'm going to have to see her to approve of this. Or not.

Without looking up from his phone. Jack gestures to Chloe to leave the car and come to the sidewalk.

JACK

You're going to love her.

Quickly, Chloe exits Jack's vehicle. She know exactly what to do. She walks perfectly toward the manager...

More of the Fort Worth Fat Stock Show. There is a moment of doubt as the manager studies Chloe. But then the manager smiles and... and Chloe is judged a success.

MANAGER

Okay. I already called the seamstress. She will be here in 30 minutes.

MANAGER

(to Chloe)  
Come on in. We will wait inside.

INT. CAR - LOS ANGELES FREEWAY - MORNING

Cyndi is driving and on the phone.

CYNDI

Black, we don't want a white limo.

(beat)

Because of the dress.

(beat)

This was arranged weeks ago. It has to do with the dress. And the girl's skin tone.

(beat)

The pre-awards dinner.

(beat)

Yes.

(beat)  
Give us that really big muscled up  
African driver.

(beat)  
The after-party is arranged. Yes.

She makes a second call...

CYNDI  
Tonight, I also want you to take a  
lot of pictures of my client but  
also his date - a girl named Chloe  
Baker. Send them to me immediately.  
(beat)  
How much?

INT. POV OUTSIDE JEWELRY STORE LOOKING IN - DAY

Jack re-negotiates the loan of jewelry. He appears to be  
apologizing and with his hands he is illustrating and  
exaggerating the shark bite injuries.

The jewelry-store-owner is reluctant still. Jack gestures for  
Evan to come meet the owner. Evan turns on the charm. They  
shake and it seems the owner is perhaps a fan of the Western  
genre. He even shows Evan his high dollar Ostrich boots. The  
storeowner acts out one of the gun scenes from the movie.

Evan takes possession of a set of earrings and a necklace.  
They shake hands. They thank the owner and leave.

INT. CHANEL'S - MORNING

The MANAGER of Chanel's, Cyndi and Chloe are waiting in the  
shop waiting around for the alterations. Evan's film is  
showing on a Cyndi's tablet and Chloe is watching it for the  
first time.

MANAGER  
"Hard Ride South"? That your film?

CHLOE  
Sort of...  
(beat)  
My date tonight.

MANAGER

And you didn't see it yet?

CHLOE

You know I'm constantly busy. And well, westerns never did it for me.

MANAGER

This one just might.

CYNDI

Literally.

Cyndi winks at Chloe.

Later...

The SEAMSTRESS arrives. She is a cranky old African-American woman. Old school.

Cyndi leaves. Jack arrives.

SEAMSTRESS

These dresses were supposed to be picked up yesterday.

JACK

I'm sorry to get you out on a Sunday.

SEAMSTRESS

Why weren't you here yesterday?

JACK

The shark bite.

SEAMSTRESS

Oh, poor child. That blonde surfer girl? I saw that on TV, that was her? Oh, my!

JACK

Yes. But listen. Here is the new girl.

The seamstress looks Chloe over... has her turn around in a circle. Again there is a monument of doubt. The Fat Stock Show.

JACK

Listen. I'm going to make it worth your while...

Jack hands her more than a few hundreds.

SEAMSTRESS

Well, this might work. Okay, lets get busy.

Jack leaves.

Minutes later...

INT. ALTERATIONS - CHANEL'S - DAY

Chloe is in the formal gown, standing and the seamstress is working on the dress.

Cyndi returns with ice tea and some fruit. Chloe eats a few slices of pineapple, some grapes... etc.

SEAMSTRESS

Don't eat too much dear.

Chloe smiles naughtily at Cyndi. She mouths to Cyndi, "One more!" The seamstress looks up scoldingly.

CHLOE

I'm sorry. Last one.

(beat)

Promise.

The seamstress appears not to be amused and continues to work.

Chloe is contorted into various positions. Her body is moved into placed for the alteration; one hand holds her phone and the tablet with the movie playing and the other holding a cup of fruit.

Cyndi takes some photos of her and the various dresses and send them to Chloe's phone. Chloe views them on her phone. She is posing and using the phone and the tablet.

Chloe is multi-tasking - with the other hand eating fruit. She is watching the end of the movie and fitting the dress. Might qualify as physical comedy if she topples over.

SEAMSTRESS

Be still dear.

CHLOE

Oh, I'm so nervous.

SEAMSTRESS

You have a better body than Bells.

(beat)

Well different.

CHLOE

Like what do you mean?

SEAMSTRESS

Well... I don't think you will win any Olympic swim medals... but...

(beat)

Let me put it this way. I'm taking the dress "in" here...

She gestures to Chloe's waist.

SEAMSTRESS

And I'm letting it "out" here and here.

She gestures to Chloe's breasts and hips. It's a compliment, but it's sly.

CHLOE

Really?

SEAMSTRESS

I don't tell stories and the measuring tape doesn't lie either.

CHLOE

Sort of like a camera.

SEAMSTRESS  
That is what they say.

CHLOE  
Wow. Thank you.

SEAMSTRESS  
No problem dear.

Chloe's confidence grows.

EXT. CAFÉ ACROSS FROM CHANEL'S - NOON

Jack's food arrives. It is a heaping plate.

EVAN  
You hungry?

JACK  
Starving. These situations. I just eat.

(beat)  
You aren't why?

EVAN  
We just had breakfast. And that pre-Oscar dinner is in few hours. In situations, I just don't eat.

JACK  
I see.  
(beat)  
So where did you meet this girl?

EVAN  
Coffee shop.

JACK  
At the hotel?

EVAN  
Yes.

JACK  
What time?

EVAN

Five am. She was leaving but she  
agreed to have coffee.

Jack stops chewing his food.

JACK

She was leaving the Roosevelt at 5  
am?

EVAN

What about it?

Jack begins chewing again.

JACK

Nothing. Nothing.

EVAN

Look, she's a good apple.

JACK

I sure hope so, for your sake.

EVAN

I thought we were in this together.

JACK

We are (the three of us) and that  
scares the hell out of me.

(beat)

No offence.

INT. FANTASTIC SAM'S HAIR SALON - LOS ANGELES - DAY

Chloe is waiting for a stylist. She is chiefly being ignored. She sits up, hoping and gives attention to every beautician that walks that by. Time passes. It appears she might never get a stylist; she glances at the wall clock several times.

Several hairdressers enter the shop in a rush and immediately go to a recognizable personality. Plenty of cameos here.

A STAR enters and waits near Chloe. Body language tell us, the star is incensed at having to wait.

When an experienced BEAUTICIAN enters; she and the star make eye contact. The stylist gestures to apologize. The star shows her displeasure.

BEAUTICIAN

I'm sorry. Are you ready?

STAR

I've been ready.

BEAUTICIAN

I'm sorry. Traffic. On a Sunday!  
Can't believe it.

They disappear into the buzz of the shop.

Lonesome Chloe still waits.

Several stars and personalities are being worked on by the experienced stylists. They are working feverously and the process is efficient. Organized chaos. Lots of gossip and chatter.

Chloe is studying the various celebrities and their hairstyles.

A young (rookie) and unimpressive STYLIST rushes into the shop; she is exceedingly nervous. She drops her phone and her car keys.

The young stylist speaks briefly to her manager and the manager gestures to Chloe who is waiting patiently.

The stylist approaches Chloe.

STYLIST

I'm sorry, have you been waiting long?

CHLOE

No. No. It's fine.

STYLIST

Well, first they said I wasn't ready to do something like this.

CHLOE

Don't worry. We're both new.

STYLIST

I just graduated from cosmology school a week ago.

CHLOE

That's okay.

STYLIST

Well, they just called me 30 minutes ago. I've never done anything like this. The Oscars. Wow.

CHLOE

My first Oscars too. Clearly.

STYLIST

Well, congratulations! You are my first Oscar job, if you will have me.

CHLOE

Why wouldn't I?

STYLIST

Well, this is a big night.

CHLOE

I hope so.

STYLIST

Well, yeah but...

CHLOE

You'll be fine. I don't think we shouldn't over do it.

We see several over-done hairstyles.

STYLIST

I'm glad you said that. I do have some ideas. You want to come with me?

CHLOE

Sure.

They find a chair. The rookie stylist looks over Chloe from all angles. The stylist studies and contemplates.

STYLIST

What are you wearing?

Chloe shows the stylist the photos on her phone.

Like a robotic friseur, the stylist goes to a magazine and flips rapidly through it. Without bookmarks, hands shaking, she struggles with the magazine. Finally, she nervously rips out three pages and brings them to Chloe.

CHLOE

Oh, these are nice.

STYLIST

I think so.

Chloe looks at the pictures torn from the magazine. She is frozen in fear.

CHLOE

Which do you recommend?

STYLIST

Well it's up to you.

CHLOE

Well frankly, I need your help.

STYLIST

Really?

CHLOE

I'm kind of lost. You ever get paralysed?

The stylist pauses. What Chloe has said seems very profound to her.

STYLIST

Yeah, yeah I do. Some days the pressure. I know what you mean. I get that way too.

CHLOE

I'm such a mess today. I've only known I'm going since this morning. He only asked me this morning.

STYLIST

Really?

CHLOE

I met a guy.

STYLIST

Yeah? This is a "new guy" AND the Oscars?

CHLOE

Yes.

STYLIST

All this in one morning?

CHLOE

All in five minutes.

STYLIST

I'm a little nervous for you.

CHLOE

Really?

STYLIST

Okay. I guess I would like to try this one.

CHLOE

Go for it.

STYLIST

Thanks!

They get up and go to a basin to wash the hair. Chloe relaxes for the first time in the last 6 hours. Everyone in the shop

is either a chatting machine or a nervous wreck but Chloe almost goes to sleep.

They return to the styling chair. And the work begins.

STYLIST

Where do you live?

CHLOE

West Hollywood.

STYLIST

How long have you been here?

CHLOE

All my life.

STYLIST

Girl, you're the genuine real deal, aren't you?

CHLOE

I guess so.

STYLIST

So how is it going?

CHLOE

Well, until this morning terrible.

STYLIST

Oh? It's been rough?

CHLOE

Oh, you know. You're lucky to get an audition.

(half beat)

You walk into a room full of girls that look just like you.

(half beat)

You realize you aren't the only one that wore a short skirt.

(half beat)

Then you can hear another girl over in the room auditioning. And now you're thinking about not doing it like her, as opposed to doing it the

way that you've been thinking of doing it.

(half beat)

Then before you go in, you hear the casting director negotiating the deal for the girl who just got the part. Turns out that it's the same girl that works all-the-time.

(half beat)

Then you go in and you think you're just doing it as an acting exercise. Or thinking maybe they will remember you for next job. I know I'm not going to get it, but I'll just do it as an experience.

(half beat)

And then you get to the part where you're crying over your friend, and you get the tears going and you're emotional and the casting agent gets a phone call. And she asks you to leave the room.

(half beat)

At first waiting it's not that difficult to keep the tears up (cause your life is crap) but it's ten minutes you're waiting out there in the hall.

(half beat)

So you're trying to stay in the zone and you want to come back and pick it up.

(half beat)

And then you leave and you hear the discussion, 'Well was she pretty?'

(mocking casting agent)

Well I don't know.

(half beat)

What do you mean 'Was I pretty?' I was just in the room with you for 10 minutes and you don't know?

STYLIST

Really? They don't talk about your acting?

CHLOE

No. But the hardest part is the second-guessing. Trying to guess what they want. Most of the time they don't know what they want, so how can you do your job?

STYLIST

I'm glad I'm a simple hairdresser.

CHLOE

This place reeks of "the business". If you can stay here you will learn to be a great actress.

(half beat)

And you've worked here a week. Call me in a month and tell me it's simple.

STYLIST

I'm sure some people will be difficult. So finish telling me about auditions.

CHLOE

In the end, you get back to our car and because it went on forever, you got a parking ticket because the no parking sign has been covered by a sign, "Audition is this way."

(half beat)

Then you get in your car. You change clothes. You muster up the guts to go to the next one and you wait in traffic for two hours and you go through it again.

STYLIST

I don't know how you do it.

CHLOE

After days like that, I go to the gym and punch the hell out of this punching bag.

STYLIST

Well, I don't blame you.

CHLOE

Sometimes I just want someone to mess with me, so I can kick them in the balls. You know?

STYLIST

I know what you mean. Me too!

Chloe AND the stylist's confidence grows as they bond.

STYLIST

They told me not to ask about the client's age. But... nothing leaves here.

CHLOE

I'm 28.

STYLIST

Oh, girl you better get it done tonight. This town is merciless once you reach a certain age.

Chloe nods in agreement. Hollywood ageism is a blunt fact. There is a long beat.

STYLIST

Oh, I shouldn't have said anything.

CHLOE

No. No. Don't feel bad. That has been running through my mind all morning. It's now or never. Screw them, I'm going to get mine, tonight.

STYLIST

You have grit.

CHLOE

Ya think.

STYLIST

My neighbour growing up is a professional athlete now. I always

did his hair growing up. He has grit. He told me once, he was 'gonna get his' too.

CHLOE

Really. You think that is what it takes?

STYLIST

You have it. I can tell. You will be fine.

CHLOE

Thanks. I'm just really nervous.

MOM MONTAGE: Cyndi's POV. Chloe calls her mom. Her mom cries. Mom and daughter grew up in "Hollywood" and both know the nature of hit-and-miss fame. Both women know this might be her only night on the red carpet. Chloe sends mom photos of the new hairstyle.

GROOMING MONTAGE: Chloe goes through all this huge process - nails and makeup. She is still basically nervous. Chloe is having her nails painted. A new stylist is doing Chloe's makeup. Chloe overcomes the obstacles and smiles more and more.

CINDERELLA MONTAGE: It isn't an entirely physical metamorphosis; she was already beautiful. However though the day, she slowly moves from very nervous to slightly nervous. She won't become "confident" until later when her feet hit the red carpet. Slowly she leaves jaded behind.

INT. JACK'S CAR - LOS ANGELES - DAY

Jack and Evan are driving in Hollywood. Jack receives a call from a SUPER AGENT.

AGENT

Jack. I may have something here for you. You know my client.

JACK

The A-lister? The one everyone wants for their movie?

AGENT

She just called me. Her fiancé'...

JACK

The other A-lister?

AGENT

He is fighting with her about something. A rabbit that he hit with his car, or something idiotic like that.

JACK

If it falls apart, she is with my guy? Okay?

AGENT

Okay.

JACK

No tell her that. Call her and tell her she doesn't have to put up with any shit tonight, or any night.

(beat)

My guy is ready to go.

AGENT

It's a love hate relationship, so I have no idea what will happen.

JACK

I read the tabloids and we understand.

(beat)

Call me. Bye.

EVAN

I don't know who you are talking about, but I wouldn't encourage that.

Jack ignores the comment and continues driving.

INT. CYNDI'S CAR - LOS ANGELES - DAY

CYNDI

You know if you play your cards  
right...

CHLOE

I know.

CYNDI

Well, just do the best you can.  
(half beat)

You might feel all this pressure but  
I'm not sure there are all that many  
expectations.

CHLOE

Evan.

CYNDI

I'm 100 percent certain he  
appreciates your effort.

CHLOE

Well yes, there is that.

CYNDI

Oscar night romance?

Chloe glows a little at the prospect.

INT. HALLWAY - ROOSEVELT HOTEL - DAY

Evan is standing in the hall in a sharp western style suit.

Chloe emerges from the hotel room in the dress she is wearing  
to the pre-Oscar dinner party. Very hot.

EVAN

Wow. You look great.

CHLOE

Thanks.

(beat)

No really, thanks!

(beat)

Can you zip me up?

Chloe turns her back.

EVAN

This is going to be a great night.

CHLOE

We both look good.

Evan seems to contemplate "we".

EXT. OUTSIDE - MONTAGE MARCHESA BALLROOM - DAY

Chloe has some nice photos taken walking into the pre-event.

JOURNALIST

What's your name?

CHLOE

Chloe Baker.

JOURNALIST

How do you spell that?

(beat)

Never mind..

(beat)

What are you in?

CHLOE

Nothing.

EVAN

...at the moment. She isn't in  
anything at the moment.

JOURNALIST

You're going to be in the running  
for "newest beauty" how do you feel  
about that?

CHLOE

Oh, I'm hardly that.

The photographer/journalist immediately sends the photos to  
Cyndi.

The limo driver and the stylist share the photos they have taken.

INT. TABLE - PRE-OSCAR DINNER - MONTAGE MARCHESA - DAY

Several people are around a table having dinner. Chloe hardly touches her food. A DUBIOUS ACTRESS enters the room. Everyone seems to stop and stare.

The dubious actress is a bit slutty, tattooed and probably qualifies as "drunk", but she does have a ticket, an entourage and "evidently" a fan base out there somewhere.

MAN #1

Drunk-ass whore.

MAN #2

She was turning tricks not twenty-four hours before her first broadcast.

WOMAN #1

Careful, she still may be.

WOMAN #2

I heard there are drug and prostitution arrests, but they are keeping it under wraps. The producers know someone I guess.

MAN #1

(to Evan)

You're an outsider. What do you think of our industry after watching that parade?

EVAN

I probably shouldn't say.

MAN #1

Oh, come on. Tell us what Texas thinks?

EVAN

Really?

MAN #1  
We won't hold it against you. So  
long as it's the truth.

WOMAN #1  
Are you shocked?

Beat.

EVAN  
No not really. I knew you people  
were decadent before. The whole  
country knows; you guys broadcast  
that message for everyone to see you  
know.

Long beat.

Several people chuckle. They are "movie" people who take it  
as a slam on "television".

MAN #1  
Not everyone in Hollywood approves.

EVAN  
Well you shouldn't.

Evan's POV: Chloe circulates about the room and making  
friends.

Chloe's photos have been posted on the internet on the  
various fashion/celebrity sites. Chloe has made a FRIEND and  
she brings over a phone to show Chloe her photo. They begin  
to go viral, orchestrated by Cyndi.

Sitting at the table, Evan is a fish out of water; he would  
rather be at home. But he is enduring it. He might be taking  
it all in (observing), but he isn't talking.

Chloe is buzzing about the room like a bee in a field of  
flowers. She's been raised and has worked in Hollywood  
always, but it's still rare that she gets access to industry  
insiders like this. She's going to take what's coming to  
here tonight. She's determined to meet everyone.

WOMAN  
What a great dress!

CHLOE

Thanks.

WOMAN

Who made it?

CHLOE

It's Chanel.

WOMAN

Wow. It is spectacular.

There is an awkward beat.

CHLOE

I'm here with Evan McCray.

WOMAN

I'm sorry dear. Who is that?

CHLOE

Writer. Hard Ride South.

WOMAN

Oh, he needs to go see..

The woman looks around the room.

WOMAN

See that man in the orange tie,  
black suit. I don't know his name... I  
don't recall. He loved that movie. I  
overheard him saying... well...

WOMAN

Send your date  
(half-beat)  
What's his name?

CHLOE

Evan.

WOMAN

Send Evan over there..

Later...

INT. TABLE - PRE-OSCAR DINNER - MONTAGE MARCHESA - DAY

Evan is sitting at a table. Drinking water so he doesn't have to speak with anyone.

CHLOE

You know what Jack would say if he were here?

(beat)

You need to go talk to that man... over there in the orange tie.

EVAN

Why?

CHLOE

He likes your movie. Some big-shot I think. My friend says he loves your movie.

Chloe's POV: Evan does walk over and introduces himself. The man in the orange tie jumps out of his skin with enthusiasm. Warmly shakes Evan's hands. The big-shot shows Evan his fancy \$3000 boots. They chat, probably about the movie... and then they seem to talk about business. The two men exchange business cards.

Evan returns to the table smiling. Chloe is curious.

EVAN

Studio guy. Producer. Loves our film.

CHLOE

I like how you say "our". I didn't even see it until today.

EVAN

Just a figure of speech.

CHLOE

But I like it.

(beat)

I like you.

EVAN

I like you too.

We think they might kiss. But no; it is too early in the night/film... just a bit more anticipation, please.

The alarm in Chloe's phone goes off.

CHLOE

Come on. It's time to change clothes.

Many guests have the same idea. Half the actresses' phones have sounded the alarm and most begin to leave. It's all orchestrated and scheduled.

INT. HALLWAY - ROOSEVELT HOTEL - DUSK

Inside the hotel room, Chloe changes into her formal gown. Evan waits in the hall. Then Chloe emerges in the gown. Totally spectacular!

EVAN

You just get better looking every time I see you.

CHLOE

Go change. I will wait here.

EVAN

No, I can change in the bathroom. You don't have to stand in the hall.

CHLOE

Thank you for putting up with me.

EVAN

Not a problem.

Later...

INT. HOTEL ROOM - ROOSEVELT HOTEL - DUSK

Evan emerges in a Tuxedo top but from the waist down he is in jeans, leather belt, Texas sized buckle and cowboy boots.

Chloe is not in the room. She has disappeared. Already nervous, Evan looks worried. There is a long beat. He looks out in the hallway, left and then right. He waits. He listens.

Suddenly there is the sound of Chloe laughing and then singing. She comes out of a room five doors down. She emerges arm-in-arm with an established showbiz couple.

THREE ACTORS

We're off to see the wizard, the  
wonderful Wizard of Oz. We're off,  
we're off, we're off.

They skip down the hallway - crazy cheerful.

CHLOE

This is my date. Evan McCray.

They shake hands...

CHLOE

(to the couple)  
Well you go on, we'll catch up with  
you. I forgot something in the room.

The other pair of movie stars move on to the elevator.

Evan opens the door with the key card. Chloe pulls it back closed.

Chloe doesn't say anything until they are out of earshot. And even then she only whispers in Evan's ear.

CHLOE

Darling... I know you're nervous. But  
you don't have your pants on.

EVAN

Oh, this. We don't wear tuxedo  
pants. Just the tuxedo top.

CHLOE

No?  
(half beat)  
In Texas?

EVAN

Yep.

CHLOE

This is the custom?

EVAN

Yep.

CHLOE

You aren't in Texas.

EVAN

Anywhere.

(half beat)

This is the way we do it. We don't wear tuxedo pants.

CHLOE

Does Jack know?

EVAN

Sure.

CHLOE

Does Cyndi know?

EVAN

Definitely, she knows.

CHLOE

Well, are they new jeans?

She looks at them closely.

CHLOE

No.

(beat)

Well, are they clean?

EVAN

Definitely.

CHLOE

This is a joke? Reality television?

Chloe looks left and right for a hidden camera. She looks at the ceiling.

EVAN

I'll change if you want. But the others, we're all wearing jean.

There is a long pause.

CHLOE

You really know what you're doing?

EVAN

You feel bad about this?

CHLOE

Well, yes a little.

EVAN

Do you know who Larry McMurtry's is?

CHLOE

No.

EVAN

Hang on...

Evan takes out his phone... googles... finds a photo. Shows it to Chloe.

CHLOE

Another writer? A Texas writer?

(beat)

He is dressed like this for the Oscars?

(beat)

And he won?

EVAN

Actually he did.

CHLOE

Okay. You're showing your state pride. I get it. Let's go.

(MORE)

CHLOE (CONT'D)

Oh. I'm sorry. It's a western movie.  
Cyndi is sooo smart. Forgive me I'm  
so blonde sometimes. Forgive me?

EVAN

I don't care.

CHLOE

Thanks.

They race to board the elevator with the two stars.

INT. LOBBY - DUSK

They are leaving through the lobby and Chloe grabs Evan's  
arm.

CHLOE

I meet you in that cafe.

EVAN

I know.

CHLOE

Lucky me.

EXT. LIMOUSINE - DUSK

The limos are lined up to spirit people off to the Academy  
Awards ceremony, across the street. Evan and Chloe climb into  
a limo, they get in line and then wait. They will exit the  
limo basically across the street.

INT. JACK'S OFFICE - IN FRONT OF A TELEVISION - DUSK

There are five or six assistants all with laptops and  
tablets. A Facebook and Twitter. A PR army.

Jack is watching a television. Cyndi is monitoring the  
internet and watching television. She is emailing photos of  
the movie cast to everyone and posting/promoting them on  
social media. Chloe's photos from the pre-Oscar dinner are a  
hit.

CYNDI

Chloe is already nearly an internet sensation.

JACK

Really. How many re-tweets?

CYNDI

She is going to come out of this as the real deal.

JACK

The night is still young.

CYNDI

Well, just prepare yourself.

INT. LIMOUSINE - DUSK

The limo leaves the Roosevelt and gets in line behind the other limos.

EVAN

I think we're four blocks away from the Kodak. Now we're got in the elmo probably 100 feet away.

CHLOE

Crazy huh? But that's show business.

EVAN

Why didn't we just walk?

CHLOE

Just be patient.

(beat)

We'll get there. No rush.

(beat)

You're making me nervous.

EVAN

I think you were nervous before.

CHLOE

All day, since the minute you asked me.

EVAN

I make you nervous? Or the Oscars.

CHLOE

Honestly, in a good way... both.

She kisses Evan on the cheek.

INT. JACK'S OFFICE - DUSK

Jack is approached with a deal for the A-list star to escort Evan. The phone rings.

JACK

Please. Tell me...

ARI (O.S.)

Jack, she will do it. She is in a limo. She says she is right behind your client.

JACK

Okay. I'm going to call him.

ARI (O.S.)

She wants to get out and climb in his limo.

(beat)

Tell your man to open the driver side door when she knocks.

JACK

In the middle of the street?

ARI (O.S.)

She wants it what way. She doesn't want to get out of the limo with the fiancé. You know the "the asshole".

JACK

Okay. I will call him.

Seconds later...

INT. LIMOUSINE - DUSK

Evan is on the phone.

EVAN  
I can't do that.  
(long beat)  
Well, I'm not.

CHLOE  
Okay I think we are next.

The A-LIST ACTRESS does exit her limo and walks in the street. She knocks on the Evan's window.

CHLOE  
Is that...  
(beat)  
What does she want?

EVAN  
Nothing.

The knocking becomes more frantic.

EVAN  
It's Jack's doing. I had nothing to do with it.

CHLOE  
He? You? Her?

A hint of tears. Sad. Defeated. Chloe isn't enraged... actually she is selfless. She is about to give in for the benefit of Evan.

CHLOE  
Oh, well go. Open it and go with her. She's...  
(beat)  
A big star.  
(beat)  
You will be in a hundred magazines.  
With me you will be in none.  
(beat)  
No offence.  
(beat)  
And television too.

Long beat. Will Evan throw Chloe under the bus?

The limo pulls up a notch into unloading position.

Evan gives Chloe an awkward unexpected tiny kiss.

EVAN

Come on.

Evan takes Chloe's hand and opens the passenger side door. The procedure is to wait for the doorman to open the door but Evan wants out. Chloe and Evan get out of the limo and the photographer's flashes fill the screen.

EXT. RED CARPET - KODAK THEATER - DUSK

Evan is half blinded by the photographer's flashes. Chloe doesn't flinch, she's a real professional.

Chloe smiles and looks perfect for the photos... But she glances back. The A-list actress is standing on the other side of the limo in the street.

Chloe has a worried look. The A-List actress looks hatefully at her and Evan.

The limo pulls away and eventually the A-list star swallows her pride, pulls up her dress and walks out of the street to the carpet.

The limo, with her husband, apply the breaks a bit hard and the A-list actress hatefully glares at the driver.

Evan and Chloe walk down the red carpet.

The A-list star is steamed and glaring at the limo and then look grudgingly at Chloe and Evan.

The fiancé exits his limo and catches up with the actress. But she protests and demands that he stand at least 20 feet from her as she poses for photos.

Soon it becomes a "photography dual" between the two woman. Chloe vs. the A-list actress. Of course there will be a clear and logical winner in the end - Chloe. Evan was loyal to Chloe over an established top-ten actress. This transforms Chloe into the most beautiful woman on the carpet.

EVAN

Well, here you are.

CHLOE

Never a real film role, but here I am. Thanks to you.

EVAN

All that work.

CHLOE

Yeah.

EVAN

Since you were a baby?

CHLOE

Yeah.

EVAN

You gotta love Hollywood.

CHLOE

I got the idea you didn't so much like it.

EVAN

I didn't say "I gotta". I said "you gotta" love it.

CHLOE

I do.

The dress, the natural light, the artificial lighting, the makeup, hair, shoes and the girl - everything is perfect. The photography there on the red carpet is perfect. The planets are in alignment.

The A-list star is fuming; her dress sucks. She has this odd look to her in the photos. Past her prime and in a fit over her failed romance and now being jilted by Evan, in front of the entire world. The A-lister loses the competition. The media love Chloe. The TV announcers point out all of the star's flaws.

The media along the rope line know something isn't right. They question the A-list actress.

MEDIA

What's wrong?

Where is your fiancé?

Why did you arrive alone.

Did you break up with your fiancé?

Why are you wearing orange and the  
carpet is red?

The A-list actress ignores the media and appears to be a snob. She is distant. She tries to smile. She is very impersonal. Cold.

They ask Chloe very different questions.

At each question, Chloe walks over near the rope and answers them each personally.

MEDIA #1

What's your name?

CHLOE

Chloe Baker. This is my date, he wrote Hard Ride South, a great movie. His name is Evan McCray.

Chloe moves along the line.

MEDIA #2

You look great. Why don't we know who you are?

CHLOE

Well I just got here a minute ago. This is my date, he wrote a great movie. His name is Evan McCray.

Chloe moves along the line.

MEDIA #3

Online media are dubbing you "best newcomer." Can you comment on that?

CHLOE

I don't know if I'm the best. But I am new. This is my first Oscars. This is my date, he wrote a great movie. His name is Evan McCray.

The media glance at Evan. Evan gestures humbly back at Chloe, that she should have their attention.

Chloe moves down the line.

MEDIA #4

Where are you from?

CHLOE

I grew up here, about twenty blocks... uh that way..

She points in a direction.

CHLOE

This is my date, he wrote a great movie. His name is Evan McCray from Texas.

PHOTOGRAPHER

(to Chloe)

Can we get some shots of just you?

Evan stands back and lets her pose alone for photos. He's not mad he's being left out of some of the photos. He's smiling ear to ear. But Evan does appear a bit like a fish out of water. She dwarfs him in star appeal and that is perfectly okay with Evan.

Chloe gives them only a few of just her. Chloe gestures for him to return to his side. She's toying with them. They take photos of both of them. These photos aren't so great. He can't take his eyes off her.

PHOTOGRAPHER

(to Evan)

Don't look at her. Look at us.

When the A-list actress sees the media is in love with Chloe, the star is clearly boiling mad. She tries to rush things along.

A-LIST STAR  
Move your carcass.

She gives Chloe an ugly look.

MEDIA  
Hey what is going on here?  
(beat)  
They are going to fight.  
(beat)  
Get this on film.

Evan whispers in Chloe's ear.

EVAN  
Take your time. You just get your picture taken. I'll deal with this woman, if you don't mind.

EVAN  
Thank you.

EVAN  
You're doing great.

Evan kisses her on the cheek and then gestures to the photographers that she's all theirs.

Evan then walks over to the A-list star. Evan will charm the star and bring his apologies.

Evan fakes a phone call. Evan takes out his phone... pretends to be reading a text.

EVAN  
I'm sorry, I just got a text we were supposed to...

A-LIST STAR  
Well... I don't even really know you.

EVAN  
It's never too late. I'm Evan.

Chloe is working the media. Smiling a waving. Cut to the bleachers; there are just as many eyes on Chloe as on the A-list star.

Evan walks nearer to the star.

EVAN

Can I have a photo with you?

(beat)

Just one?

The star smiles and nods. She extends her hand.

She smiles and whispers to him as the photographers work. They are smiling, but the words show hostility.

A-LIST STAR

(smiling)

Do you know how important I am?

EVAN

I'm sorry.

A-LIST STAR

I have never been treated this badly.

EVAN

It was a big misunderstanding.

A-LIST STAR

Your agent is an idiot.

EVAN

You know I'm up for an award tonight.

A-LIST STAR

Your movie sucked.

(beat)

And let me tell you something I'm not accustomed to this.

EVAN

I know you said that. But I'm willing to make it up to you.

(beat)

I have an idea for a film. You. A brave, strong and glamorous frontier woman. You will be the first woman to star in a western in a very long time.

Evan notices, the star's actor fiancé is on the carpet a few yards behind the star actress. He is looking jealously at them.

EVAN

Your fiancé can have a supporting part. Nothing really.

(beat)

But you will be legendary!

Slowly the A-list star seems to be warming to the idea.

A-LIST STAR

Me?

(beat)

Legendary?

EVAN

Film history!

A-LIST STAR

Maybe.

EVAN

They pay you about 15 million a picture right? This will be something like 20 million, the way I calculate it.

Evan and the star slowly move down the red carpet. Chloe is filling SD cards and charming everyone.

EVAN

And no one will touch it but you.  
And I will make it even better next  
week. It's you. It has Best Actress  
written all over it.

A-LIST STAR

You think?

EVAN

You can use it to show people your  
range. You're never gonna be a Greta  
Garbo. But you could be bigger, if  
you create your own legend. How  
about playing a tough as hell pissed  
off frontier woman?

A-LIST STAR

Maybe.

EVAN

You've survived this long in  
Hollywood, all this crap; you'll be  
right at home in a two-hour movie  
full of Comanches trying to rape and  
kill ya.

A-LIST STAR

What happens?

EVAN

Well, you kick their ass.

(beat)

How are you with a Springfield?

A-LIST STAR

What's that?

EVAN

A gun.

This talk is making the A-lister... moist. She looks  
seductively into Evan's eyes.

A-LIST STAR

I'll read it.

EVAN  
And, accept my apology?

The star is sceptical but accepts the apology.

A-LIST STAR  
Okay. Fine. We can work together?

EVAN  
Sure. Of course.

A-LIST STAR  
I don't want that prick near me  
tonight.

EVAN  
Just tell him.

The actress' fiancé now looks apologetic.

The A-list actress notices Chloe down the line, talking, entertaining. She gestures to Evan to return. The two women make eye contact. The star waves friendly to Chloe. Chloe smiles and waves back.

A-LIST STAR  
What's her name?

EVAN  
Chloe Baker.

A-LIST STAR  
She is lovely.

EVAN  
Thank you.

A-LIST STAR  
It's my part though, right?

EVAN  
It's all you.

All scenes have a purpose and perhaps you've figured it out. This scene is a "time suck" so Chloe can have her "fair share" of the time with the media.

Again, we see Chloe down the line charming the media and gesturing to Evan. We can tell from the gestures, Chloe is talking more about Evan than herself. She talks to no one without mentioning Evan. Chloe motions again for him to join her.

Evan catches up to Chloe who is nearing the last of the photographers on the carpet.

She hugs him and together they pose for pictures. They whisper to each other out of the media's ear-shot.

CHLOE

What did you say? She was glaring at me and now we are best buddies.

EVAN

I told her what everyone in this town wants to hear.

CHLOE

Green light?

EVAN

I told her I'm going to make her legendary.

CHLOE

How are you going to do that?

EVAN

I'm not. I'm going to make YOU legendary.

Chloe chuckles and the best photo of the night is taken.

The last of the media in the line speaks up.

MEDIA

Where did you guys meet?

Chloe and Evan walk to the rope.

CHLOE

Over coffee.

EVAN

This morning.

MEDIA

Wow. You look like you are high school sweethearts.

CHLOE

Thank you.

EVAN

You know I wish that were true. I think I've been missing out.

MEDIA

Good luck inside.

CHLOE

Thanks.

(to Evan)

Oh, he's talking to you. Sorry.

EVAN

Thanks.

It's gone well and Chloe is emotional. There is a slight tear in her eye. She grabs Evan and pulls him near. She whispers in his ear.

CHLOE

Thank you.

EVAN

Heck, you're the life of the party. I'm just your ticket in.

The images appear almost immediately on social media. All the photographers now have cameras that automatically upload the photos to their smart phones and from there to the net.

Cyndi, Chloe's mom, the limo driver and the stylist share the photos. Chloe's best friend shares the photos.

INT. KODAK THEATER - DUSK

Everyone is standing around socializing, waiting for the ceremony to begin. It is too early to take their seats.

A Best Actor nominee, RYAN, walks up to Evan. Hugs him. Ryan is dressed in a tuxedo top and blue jean pants. Boots.

RYAN

Evan. If I win, you're the first person I'm going to thank!

EVAN

Appreciate that.

RYAN

Can't act off a blank page buddy! I should know, I've tried.

EVAN

Thanks.

RYAN

I mean it.

Ryan continues to work the crowd. Chloe looks at Ryan's tux top and blue-jean bottoms, boots. Evan notices her looking at Ryan's jeans as he walks off.

She grabs Evan and pulls him close... she whispers in his ear...

CHLOE

You're so smart.

EVAN

The jeans?

CHLOE

Yes.

(beat)

Your idea?

Evan nods, yes.

CHLOE

But you were going to change clothes for me?

EVAN  
What was I supposed to do? You  
didn't like it.

She kisses Evan on the cheek, very near the mouth.

Later...

They meet the producer of Evan's movie. He too is dressed in  
a tuxedo top and blue-jean pants.

EVAN  
Chloe, this is my boss. John.

CHLOE  
Nice to meet you, John.

Evan is called away. We see him a few yards away enter a  
conversation.

CHLOE  
This is the best day of my life. And  
I want to say thanks. The hair and  
the clothes and the publicity.  
(half beat)  
Thank you.

JOHN  
You're welcome, young lady. Evan is  
a genius as far as I'm concerned.  
And anything for his lady.

CHLOE  
Well, I'm just his date tonight.

Chloe looks over at Evan. John notices something emotional in  
the look.

JOHN  
Have to start somewhere.

CHLOE  
He says he is going back to Texas  
tomorrow.

JOHN

Well, you never know about these things... I've seen stranger couples than you two.

CHLOE

No I mean about his career.

JOHN

I don't think he likes it here.

CHLOE

You two are going to make another film?

JOHN

He'll be back. He's writing a story about a woman that survives a Comanche attack.

CHLOE

I wasn't aware.

Chloe contemplates things and she becomes a bit nervous.

CHLOE

I like your boots. Now those are NOT work boots. So exotic. Some kind of snake?

JOHN

Thank you. I was hoping someone would notice.

CHLOE

I did. They are nice.

Beat.

CHLOE

Congratulations on the film.

JOHN

One film is cheap but it takes notoriety to ride the train.

CHLOE

What a ride!

JOHN

I'm lucky to be here.

CHLOE

Every movie you make from now on  
will be taken seriously.

JOHN

It's a nice feeling. We've been  
ignored for decades. It's a hard  
hard town.

CHLOE

Tell me about it.

JOHN

How long have you been ignored?

CHLOE

(smiling)

A while. A good long while.

Someone calls John away. Evan returns.

EVAN

You want to go sit down?

CHLOE

Not just yet.

EVAN

All right.

More standing around. The established stars, the couple from  
earlier at the hotel, come and hug Chloe.

Later...

INT. STAGE - KODAK THEATRE - NIGHT

Applause. Evan is on the stage at the rostrum.

EVAN

I don't know what to say... Thank you.

He walks off two steps.

The music begins.

He returns to the rostrum.

The music ends abruptly.

EVAN  
Thanks, mom. Hi, kids.

He walks off three steps.

The music begins.

He returns to the rostrum.

The music ends abruptly again.

EVAN  
Forgive me. I'm very nervous.  
(beat)  
I'm sorry. I forgot. Thanks, Jack.  
Thanks. John.

Evan exits the stage.

It might be the worst Oscar Speech in the history of the ceremony, but Evan doesn't appear to realize it. He's won.

The music doesn't begin until he is well off the stage and there is no chance of a return to the rostrum.

It is almost like a gag, because the TV cuts to a confused orchestra leader and then an even more confounded sound editor in the production booth.

The audience laughs at the dead airtime. But they are all in show business so that clap.

INT. BACKSTAGE - KODAK THEATRE - NIGHT

There is something of an INTERN or page just standing and watching the interviews backstage. There is a short line before the winners answer questions.

EVAN  
Can you help me out?

INTERN  
Certainly.

EVAN  
My date and I, we didn't discuss  
this. What happens now?

INTERN  
Well, you're going to stand here  
until the media are ready for you.  
You will answer two and a half  
minutes of questions.

EVAN  
Then what?

INTERN  
Well, some people go back and sit  
out front. Other people hangout in  
the next room and watch it on the  
monitors.

EVAN  
Can you find my date and bring her  
back here? To me?

INTERN  
Yes, sir.

The intern uses a seating chart for this purpose.

INT. SEATING - KODAK THEATRE - NIGHT

The intern creeps out and motions for Chloe to come  
backstage.

INTERN  
Mr. McCray asked me to bring you  
back stage.

INT. BACKSTAGE - KODAK THEATRE - NIGHT

Evan is called before the reporters... Chloe is moving that way  
but she is still a good distance out.

EVAN  
Chloe Baker will be here soon.  
(pause)  
Don't worry. You will get to talk to  
her.

He waits on her; Chloe arrives and takes his arm. She is  
taking it all in and is looking about.

EVAN  
You want to hold it?

CHLOE  
No.

EVAN  
You are shy?

She does touch the statuette and smiles.

They step up to the microphone. The photographers jump at the  
opportunity.

Of course, ignoring the media, Evan is preoccupied with  
Chloe. Serious eye contact between the two.

CHLOE  
Congratulations.

She seems perfectly calm but then she suddenly breaks her  
concentration and kisses and hugs him enthusiastically.

The media is a bit rushed for time, but they chuckle at the  
P.D.A. It's not too much but clearly it is a genuine and a  
fresh story for them.

REPORTER #1  
Hello? Hello? I'm over here.  
Yeah.

Evan looks out at the reporters.

REPORTER #1  
So I wanted to ask you, do you think  
that winning an Oscar will move the

needle to get more western films made?

EVAN

I hope so. It is hard to believe we live in a country where western movies don't sell tickets. That's what they say. It's not true. Where I'm from, it is almost blasphemy for there not to be cowboy movie to chose from.

REPORTER #2

In your screenplay each animal had a name. And each horse was in all caps, like the other human characters.

EVAN

Did you hear your own question? Like the "other characters". You think the horses are characters too, or you wouldn't have phrased it that way.

Evan smiles.

REPORTER #3

Who's your date?

EVAN

This is Chloe Baker and she is a fantastic actress. The prettiest woman in the building, I swear.

REPORTER #3

What is she in?

Chloe is about to answer, "nothing" but...

EVAN

She is weighing her options.

Evan nudges her to the microphone.

CHLOE

I feel very happy right now.

The next winner, Best Production Design is approaching.

CHLOE

This man... Thank you.

The reporters all smile... The moderator calls the next winner to the mic.

Chloe and Evan exit the press room.

They have a bit of privacy but not a lot.

Chloe lets the excitement and inhibitions go. She jumps up and down and tears come. She almost knocks Evan over with a power hug.

CHLOE

This is fantastic. Oh, I mean not for me... well it is... but for you.

Evan is not as excited as she is.

CHLOE

You won an Academy Award. You are ...  
(half beat)  
How old are you?

EVAN

Twenty-seven.

CHLOE

You are going to win four more in your life.

EVAN

I don't know about that.

CHLOE

Yes. Yes. You will. You're young and you are very very talented.

EVAN

Oh, please.

CHLOE

No, I'm not just saying that.

EVAN  
Thank you. You're terrific.

She kisses him! He kisses her back.

The organizers and backstage crew and a few celebrities chuckle at the PDA. More photographer's flashes go off like a machinegun.

INT. GOVERNOR'S BALL - NIGHT

Things are odd for a moment. Neither Chloe or Evan are sure what to do. They just mirror the others.

EVAN  
That's...

CHLOE  
Yes. It is.

EVAN  
Well, let's do what he's doing.

Evan follows the A-list BEST ACTOR WINNER who checks out the food. Chloe and Evan sample the food. The Best Actor eventually heads over to the "engraving station" to have his name placed on his Oscar.

Evan falls in line and also visits the engraving station. Chloe is close by his side.

"Engraving" is a bit of a misnomer in this case. Evan finds himself conversing politely with a jeweler who uses a tiny screwdriver to affix the nameplate with two black screws.

JEWELER  
Congratulations, sir.

EVAN  
Thank you.

Beat.

EVAN

Wow, manually?

(beat)

Do they do this every year with the  
statuettes?

JEWELER

Yes. Yes, this happens each year.  
The bronze nameplates are all  
created well in advance of the  
ceremony. Se don't know the winner.

EVAN

(joking)

Oh, okay I was curious how that  
worked.

JEWELER

Your first one?

EVAN

Yes.

JEWELER

In the old days you had to hand it  
back to us and it would take a week  
or so to engrave it.

CHLOE

I always wondered how they got  
engraved without tipping off the  
winners.

JEWELER

Yes. Ma'am. Lots of security. They  
don't trust anyone.

EVAN

Good to know you guys are organized.

The personalized statuette is wiped clean of smudges and  
fingerprints with a small towel. It is handed back to Evan.

EVAN

Thank you, sir.

JEWELER

No. Thank you.

The Best Actor gives the Oscar to his date/wife and leaves to bring back Champaign. Evan just mirrors the Best Actor winner.

EVAN

(to Chloe)

If you will hold this, I'll get us some Champaign.

CHLOE

(whispers)

Oh my God.

Chloe is surprised by the weight and within seconds there is a blast of camera flashes.

CHLOE

(embarrassed)

It's not mine.

The photo-journalist don't seem to care; they rush off seeking other photos.

A few chairs down, a three-time Oscar-winning CINEMATOGRAPHER turns to Chloe with his smartphone camera.

CHLOE

It's not mine.

CINEMATOGRAPHER

Still. It's a nice photo.

The CINEMATOGRAPHER takes a photo of Chloe (and the Oscar).

CHLOE

Thank you.

(half beat)

You won!

She points to his Oscar.

CINEMATOGRAPHER

Cinematography.

CHLOE

And you take photos with your phone?

CINEMATOGRAPHER

This is the best place. Everyone with their statue has to come by here to this desk.

The CINEMATOGRAPHER shows Chloe a few candid photos on his phone.

CINEMATOGRAPHER

And you can be as close to them as you and I are now.

CHLOE

Smart man.

CINEMATOGRAPHER

It's fun for me.

CHLOE

Yes. I should have brought my phone.

CINEMATOGRAPHER

Oh, perhaps, but there are more than enough photos tonight.

CHLOE

Can I...

CINEMATOGRAPHER

Of course.

A singer performs atop a platform in the middle of the sprawling space, launching into a rendition of Marvin Gaye's "Let's Get It On" as partygoers sway to the beat.

Chloe types her phone number into the cinematographer's phone and he sends the photo to her phone.

Evan returns with Champaign.

The cinematographer takes a photo of the two of them and sends it to Chloe's phone.

The Governors Ball is not the night's final destination for many. When the singer covers a Madonna song, it winds down relatively quickly. The song seems to be a signal for people to begin to leave for the other after-parties.

The Best Actor clutching his statue and flanked by security and his impressive entourage, leave the ballroom.

Chloe remains in possession of the Oscar. Evan doesn't think to ask for it back.

Evan and Chloe follow the alpha-herd-actor/animal out of the room. The herd of other celebrants follow him out also.

EXT. SIDEWALK - KODAK THEATER - NIGHT

Chloe (with Oscar in hand) and Evan exit the building.

It's no surprise the Best Actor needs the security. A swarm of well-wishers and celeb-gazers want their peek.

Chloe and Evan exit unmolested but stop to watch the Actor deal with it. Chloe and Evan seem to be studying the Best Actor. The actor looks over at Evan and Chloe (still holding the statuette) and gives them a nod of approval.

A single reporter leaves the tabloid-mass covering the Best Actor.

REPORTER

Best Screenplay. How does it feel?

EVAN

I'm thrilled. If you told me a year ago that we'd be nominated, I wouldn't have believed it. And if you told me a week ago we'd win, I still wouldn't have believed it.

The thief is lurking about in front of the theater. He is taking mental notes as people enter the limos. He eyeballs license plates, purses and statues.

Later...

INT. LIMO - NIGHT

We see the thief is walking from the Kodak toward the Roosevelt.

Chloe and Evan are in the limo, also moving from the Kodak Theater to the Roosevelt. Chloe has a bad feeling and glances at the thief. Intuition is telling her something.

Chloe and Evan arrive at the Roosevelt. The thief is watching from the Roosevelt sidewalk when they exit the limo. The statue is left in the back seat. The window is down and the thief glances at the Oscar there.

EVAN

We will be right back.

The driver drives around the block while they change clothes.

The thief finds his red Charger a few blocks away and drives away.

EXT. HALLWAY - ROOSEVELT HOTEL - NIGHT

Chloe and Evan exit the elevator and are walking down the hall arm-in-arm. Chloe finishes singing the end of "Tonight" from West Side Story.

EVAN

Wow!

CHLOE

You said I was a fantastic actress.

EVAN

I did.

CHLOE

How do you know?

EVAN

Anyone who has done what you did today, can act.

(beat)

The make up, the shoes, the hair... the way you handled, John, the dressmakers, the media.

(beat)  
In a week you will be the media  
darling. In two weeks you will be on  
TV and in a year you will have a  
feature film.

CHLOE  
You don't know that.

EVAN  
Actually, I do.

Chloe is about to change into her third dress of the night.

Evan trips the lock with his security card.

CHLOE  
You want to watch?

Long beat. Evan contemplates; it is a grueling choice... He  
looks at his watch. He glances down the front of Chloe's  
dress. Agony.

EVAN  
Oh, better not. Just yet.

She looks at him for an explanation.

EVAN  
You're still on the clock.

CHLOE  
Oh, work. I forgot. Another party.

She smiles. He smiles. He opens the door and lets her inside  
to change.

Evan waits in the hallway.

He looks in reverse-wise through the eyehole, it's distorted  
and he can't see anything.

He scolds himself for not accepting her invitation.

EVAN  
Idiot! What was I thinking?

INT. OSCAR'S AFTER PARTY - NIGHT

Evan and Chloe are driven to an after-party.

The thief is hanging around looking fairly innocent. Well dressed. Just observing.

Two A-list stars get out of a white Rolls-Royce in front of them and they are promptly serenaded by a mariachi band.

Walking inside, more photos are taken. Again, Chloe is marvelous, dress perfect. She isn't aware but already she is pretty much an internet celebrity. She might have a clue, because the doorman knows her name.

INT. JACK'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Jack and Cyndi are sitting at a computer and reviewing all the articles and photos. They alternate between media and social media. Chloe's headlines we see are all positive - "phenom" and "star potential".

INT. BALLROOM - OSCAR'S AFTER PARTY - NIGHT

Evan walks to fetch Chloe water. He speaks to no one. Several people "congratulate" him. He simply says "thank you" and moves on.

Chloe is chatting with several people, mostly listening. He hands Chloe a water and walks away.

Evan notices an AGING STAR sitting alone at a table.

Chloe is about to meet the epitome of Hollywood power - cameos from the two most powerful men in the industry.

SPIELBERG

(to Bob Iger)

Who is the new starlet?

IGER

I don't know, let's find out?

Chloe's POV. Evan is sitting at a table speaking with the aging movie star from the 1960s. He has asked her questions. Evan is listening intently. Evan laughs and is clearly entertained.

The 1960s actress then question him. Evan points to Chloe. And the '60s star smiles in approval.

More questions and laughing. The '60s star loves the attention of course. Evan appears to be learning something.

The aging stars' HUSBAND returns to the table. Evan and he seem to hit it off well also.

The powerful men (Iger and Spielberg) approach Chloe. It is almost as if they get a charge out of sending a fright through the newbies. Maybe it is their private joke - an initiation into the club.

SPIELBERG

(to Chloe's back)

So, who was that starlet in the black dress?

Chloe has changed her dress but she was wearing a black dress. They have her attention, she's listening but doesn't turn.

IGER

I don't know, but she's with that cowboy.

There is a half beat. She spins around. Her heart stops but starts again. Long beat.

CHLOE

Chloe Baker. Nice to meet you.

She extends her hand and they shake.

SPIELBERG

What are you in?

CHLOE

Nothing.. "yet".

IGER

Good answer.

SPIELBERG

I'm sure you will find something.  
You have a nice healthy natural  
look.

IGER

Your red carpet pictures are all  
over the web.

CHLOE

Really? How embarrassing.

SPIELBERG

No, you looked great.

IGER

You're with Evan McCray?

CHLOE

I sure am.

SPIELBERG

Talented young man.

CHLOE

I'll tell him you said that.

SPIELBERG

I already did. But sure, tell him  
again.

Beat.

SPIELBERG

Well, we better get back to our  
wives.

CHLOE

Thank you.

IGER

Good luck.

CHLOE

Thanks. Nice to meet you.

SPIELBERG

Nice to meet you too.

Iger gestures "thumbs up" and walks away.

INT. HALLWAY - OSCAR'S AFTER PARTY - NIGHT

Inside she feels that she handled herself well, but outside she is about to hyperventilate. She may vapor lock.

Chloe calmly but quickly exits the main room. She leans against a wall outside a bathroom in a panic mode. She splashes her face at a drinking fountain.

The security guard notices.

GUARD

Ma'am are you okay.

CHLOE

Oh, yes. I just met Steven Spielberg and Bob Iger.

The security guard chuckles.

CHLOE

At the same time!

GUARD

You say something dumb?

CHLOE

No.

GUARD

You faint?

CHLOE

No.

GUARD

You're lucky then. Most people do the first time that happens.

CHLOE

I feel sick now.

GUARD

You'll be okay. Just relax.

Chloe is calmer now. She chuckles at her fright. She and the guard laugh together.

GUARD

If you think about it, it is pretty funny. They do that to a lot of new people.

EXT. PARKING LOT - OSCAR'S AFTER PARTY - NIGHT

The thief is making the rounds and looking into the various cars. He finds nothing to steal. He spots the limos. He stands in the shadows and waits.

Evan's chauffeur is standing outside the limo. The windows are down and he looks in the back at the statue. He nods his head in approval of the award.

There is ANOTHER DRIVER and they make eye contact.

CHAUFFEUR

My guy won!

ANOTHER DRIVER

Really. That's great. I never drove an Oscar.

Evan's chauffeur raises the window and locks the doors. He leaves the limo toward the restroom.

He tells the other driver...

CHAUFFEUR

Hey watch my car will you? I got to go take a leak.

The other driver waves, okay.

INT. BALLROOM - OSCAR'S AFTER PARTY - NIGHT

The A-list Actress and her fiancé have another spat. Their conversation is inaudible, until she loses it and shouts.

A-LIST STAR

You dick!

(beat)

You freakin' asshole.

Everyone stops socializing to watch. The Actress storms out of the room toward the parking lot. The fiancé races after her.

EXT. PARKING LOT - OSCAR'S AFTER PARTY - NIGHT

We follow Evan's chauffeur inside. And then we follow him outside again. The driver doesn't see the limo that was parked next to him. It's gone.

The chauffeur senses something is wrong. He immediately runs to an open/broken window to check if the Oscar is still there. It isn't.

The chauffeur opens the door and searches every inch of the car. Broken glass is on the seats and limo floor. The Oscar has been stolen.

INT. OSCAR'S AFTER PARTY - NIGHT

Evan is still with the older couple at a table.

POV Evan. The chauffeur comes to find Chloe. He tells Chloe the news in a hushed tone. Her face becomes ashen. She spots Evan across the room. She moves to him and whispers in his ear. She looks at Evan's face for a reaction. There isn't one, but a "concerned" expression. Evan isn't excitable.

The reaction from the older couple tells more of the horror. For them it's a terrible thing, the worst possible thing that could happen.

EXT. PARKING LOT - OSCAR'S AFTER PARTY - NIGHT

Chloe is in despair. Evan calmly walks to the limo. Evan searches the car.

EVAN

Maybe it just rolled up under the seat.

CHAUFFEUR

I checked.

EVAN

Did you see anyone?

CHAUFFEUR

No. Yes. There was a limo here. And I asked them to watch.

(beat)

And when I came back out...

Chloe disappears back inside.

EVAN

Well, it doesn't mean they took it.

(beat)

Actually I sort of doubt that.

Evan searches the front of the limo.

EVAN

We'd feel sort of silly if it just rolled up under the seat. If someone hid it there...

A POLICEMAN arrives. We see Evan dealing with the police. A crowd is gathering. Jaws are dropped and many are in dismay. Lots of chatter.

POLICEMAN

Looks like you will have to pay your speeding tickets now.

The policeman is taking a report. Evan gives him a strange look.

POLICEMAN

That is what a guy told me.

EVAN

You stopped a speeder with an Oscar?

POLICEMAN

Yep.

EVAN

Did you give him a ticket?

POLICEMAN

Hell, no.

EVAN

I wasn't aware of that. I guess we better find it then.

The crowd grows. Chloe is inside however, un-panicked and hunting the thief. Chloe finds the security guard who spoke/laughed with her earlier and they review the surveillance tapes.

INT. SECURITY ROOM - NIGHT

The security camera tapes aren't good HD video, very dated equipment.

We can however, see that the feuding couple - the a-list actress and fiancé - have blown up and left the party early. They leave in the limo and of course their driver doesn't remain to watch over Chloe and Evan's car.

On the monitor, Chloe and the security guard see a man break the window, enter the limo and take the trophy. They follow him via the security cameras to a car in the parking lot.

The thief with the Oscar in hand gets to a red Charger and backs out half way from the parking spot...

CHLOE

Great. A man in a black suit.  
Leaving in a red car, I can't read  
the plates.

SECURITY GUARD

I'm sorry. I was sure hoping...

On the monitor then, the car pulls back into it the parking spot. The thief, empty handed, gets out. He walks back to the party.

Chloe springs into action. She counts the parking spots on the video...

CHLOE

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. Red and old.  
It is in the eighth car. Let's go.

CUT TO: the statuette in the 8<sup>th</sup> car in the parking lot.

SECURITY GUARD

It looks like a Dodge Charger

They run out of the security room.

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

With the security guard, Chloe runs out to the parking lot and picks up an ornamental landscaping rock from the landscaping. She smashes the window of the thief's car.

She is about to retrieve the Oscar, but the thief arrives.

The thief smashes the guard over the head with the rock and knocks him unconscious. The thief punches Chloe a couple of times in the gut and in the face; she takes it fairly well.

Chloe doesn't give up; she gets up off the mat like Rocky (1976). All this is caught on a bystander's video phone. Paparazzi from the front of the building arrive. Many have video camera.

The police and Evan are running in that direction also.

The thief might make it to the car and might escape, but Chloe tackles him.

For an instance there is a tug-of-war with the Oscar. Chloe fights with the thief. She kicks him in the nuts and wins back the trophy.

The thief gets up. Chloe swings the Oscar and "clocks" the thief with the 8 lbs statue, knocking him unconscious. Chloe is about to hit him again (coup de gras) with the statuette.

Evan arrives just in time to stop her. Clearly she is furious.

The police arrive and handcuff the thief.

EVAN  
Are you okay?

CHLOE  
That bastard. He stole your Oscar.

She hands Evan the Oscar. Evan hands it to the 1960's Actress. And Evan hugs Chloe.

EVAN  
Are you okay?

CHLOE  
Me? Of course. I'm fine.

Her lips and nose are bloody. Her eye is already beginning to swell. She has bruised ribs and one may even be broken. He hugs her and she's tinder.

Later...

INT. LADIES BATHROOM - OSCAR'S AFTER PARTY - NIGHT

The bathroom is a crowded mess.

1960S STAR  
Don't you worry; we are going to get you cleaned up.

The women are all talking and saying basically the same thing - "it was terrible," "Who did he think he was?" and "did you see her clock that guy?" Endless chatter.

Chloe looks in the mirror. Chloe's dress is torn. Chloe has a swollen eye and a fat bloody lip.

A woman arrives with some ice in a plastic bag. It takes about three women to put it on her face. Everyone wants to be part of the solution.

They put Chloe on the sofa. They take her dress to the sink to wash the blood out. A woman arrives with some thread and needle. She begins to work on the dress.

The various women, mostly former stars, adopt Chloe and she is accepted into the sorority. In the most competitive

industry in the most competitive city in the world, they are a TEAM working to restore Chloe.

Chloe is repaired to the best of their ability.

EXT. PARKING LOT - OSCAR'S AFTER PARTY - NIGHT

The police are taking the thief away.

The security guard is up and holding his head but explaining things to the patrolman. He is pointing to the various security cameras.

The husband of the 1960s star is standing beside Evan, his new wingman. Evan is talking to a sergeant policeman.

EVAN

You don't need the Oscar do you?

POLICE

As Evidence? No, I don't think so. Given this is all on about six cell phones and the security tapes.

(beat)

My lieutenant just told me to expect a lot of press. But, you're free to go. And lock that thing up will ya?

Later...

INT. HALL OUTSIDE LADIES BATHROOM - NIGHT

With Oscar tightly in hand, Evan waits outside the bathroom for an eternity. Finally, he sits down on the floor, pulls out his phone and watches the entire incidence on social media. He doesn't put the Oscar down.

EXT. ROOSEVELT HOTEL - NIGHT

A vast sea of media is hanging out in front of the Roosevelt hotel where Evan has a suite. The limo driver opens the window to the back.

EVAN

Drive around some more, please.

Chloe has a black eye, bruised arms and back, and a fat lip.

EVAN  
She can't go through the paparazzi.

CHAUFFEUR  
No, sir.

CHLOE  
I'll do it. I don't care.

EVAN  
No, you won't.  
(beat)  
I have another plan.  
(beat)  
We'll just take you home. Put you in  
your bed.  
(half beat)  
Then I'll come back here collect all  
the stuff.. return it to the shops.

Chloe gasps.

CHLOE  
My ear rings.

She feels for them on her ears.

They are both there. She didn't lose them in the fight.

CHLOE  
Oh, thank god.

EXT. CHLOE AND HER MOTHER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Three AM. Chloe's mother is out on the front porch with a scrapbook showing the media her baby pictures. There are more media there than in front of the Roosevelt.

They park the limo on the street; no one seems to notice. Evan rolls down the window.

MOM

Oh, she was a great kid. She worked so hard singing and dancing.

(beat)

Here get a picture of this. This is when she was eight and in ballet.

MEDIA

Was she abused as a child?

MOM

No, why would you ask something like that?

MEDIA

Did you know she was a prostitute?

MOM

No, she's not any prostitute. Who told you that?

MEDIA

She has a ad on Craig's List.

MOM

Well that doesn't mean. Anybody could...

MEDIA #2

When was she last arrested for prostitution?

MOM

She hasn't.

MEDIA #3

When did she start turning tricks?

MEDIA #2

What caused her to stray, you think?

MOM

She's a good girl. I told her all she had to do is work hard and a film role would come.

(beat)

She has been the hardest working girl in this city for the last 20 years.

The reporters chuckle at the phrase "working girl".

MOM

You're all a bunch of sick vultures.

With that she just stare at her trying to understand why she won't just open up and tell them the entire story. If they wait there maybe she'll say more.

Mom retreats inside her home and slams the door.

INT. LIMO - NIGHT

Chloe falls into hysterics. She tries to exit the Limo. Evan holds her. Then she collapses in depression

CHLOE

My mom.

LIMO DRIVER

You want me to go?

Evan nods. The limo quietly pulls away.

Long beat...

CHLOE

I was struggling, a starving actress...

EVAN

You know you don't have to say anything.

CHLOE

...living here, trying to succeed. Last week, the option was presented

to me. I weighed the pros and the cons.

EVAN

I don't care. I mean I do care. But, it's not you. It's this town.

CHLOE

My girlfriend does it and they don't follow her around.

EVAN

You're different.

CHLOE

Well, anyway I decided to try it, last night, once to see if it was something I could handle.

EVAN

I understand.

CHLOE

It wasn't; that's why you had to punch that guy, I just forgot to take that ad down. Can we go do that? Can I take it down? Will you help me? I need a computer.

Later...

EXT. LOW DOLLAR ECONOMY HOTEL - NIGHT

The limo pulls up.

Later...

INT. JACK'S OFFICE - MORNING

Jack and Cyndi are sleeping. One in the desk chair and one on the sofa. We can see the computer screen and things have turned negative. The media have found Chloe's online "personal escort" classified ad. And they are sensationalizing it.

All three of their phones (land/cell/cell) ring simultaneously. They are awoken.

INT. SECOND FLOOR ECONOMY HOTEL - MORNING

Chloe and Evan are in the same bed. Evan is shirtless and in his boxer shorts. Chloe is still in her outfit from the post Oscar party. Evidently nothing sexual happened.

EVAN

You okay?

CHLOE

No.

EVAN

Well, what's wrong? Your face hurts  
I'm sure. Your ribs?

CHLOE

A little.

EVAN

Well what's wrong.

CHLOE

It's all over.

EVAN

Your career? Maybe not.

CHLOE

No, it is. What happens to women  
like me in Texas?

EVAN

Ahh, they usually get married.

Chloe chuckles a bit.

CHLOE

(sentimentally)

You are a very sweet idiot.

Evan knows his arguments (that her career might not be over) have no weight, except to spare her a little pain. Postpone the harsh reality. He chuckles that she called him an idiot. It wasn't going to work, but he'd tried to hid the harsh landscape from her.

CHLOE

They get married 'cause they can't work. This town is like that too. Who's going to hire me now?

EVAN

Yeah, well once you get branded. I see what you mean.

CHLOE

You want to get married? Is that why you're still hanging around?

EVAN

Yeah, I was just trying to cheer you up.

CHLOE

Where you?

EVAN

You ever thought of doing something other than acting?

CHLOE

No!

EVAN

Barrel racing?

Chloe, although she thinks that she's in a bad situation, she chuckles at Evan's sense of humor. He's being silly and facetious but basically that is all he can do for her.

CHLOE

And just think, the other day I almost had a part. I was called back and man I just knew. I was high for a week, off that. Oh, my life is a roller coaster ride.

EVAN

The roller coaster don't care, honey.

CHLOE

What?

EVAN

The roller coaster don't care, if you are up or down. Someone's always at the top, right.

CHLOE

Yeah.

EVAN

So, they don't care who's down.

There is a racket outside. The Pakistani is yelling at the media, cursing them. The media are cursing back at him.

Evan looks out the window. There is a sea of media again. Evan ponders this but clearly doesn't understand something other than the whole escort thing has the reporters out.

Evan, still shirtless and in his boxer shorts, puts on his cowboy hat, walks out to the rail. He looks down and the media go diving for their cameras. Not entirely calm, Evan looks left and then right. He hates they're camped out waiting for Chloe. He's probably thinking how much he'd enjoy walking down and kicking a few of their asses.

Standing by the office is the Pakistani manager with his middle finger in the air, looking straight at Evan. Evan doesn't know what he's done. This is just random; some people just hate celebrities or anyone successful.

Chloe wakes up, takes her phone and sees the negative headlines online.

Inside the room, Evan's phone rings.

Later...

EXT. ECONOMY HOTEL - MORNING

Jack and Cyndi arrive at the hotel. They climb the stairs. Cyndi has sunglasses, a hat and a new dress for Chloe.

JACK  
Okay, we're here. Everything is  
under control.

EVAN  
Nothing is under control, Jack.

CYNDI  
(to Chloe)  
You okay?

Chloe sniffs and uses more tissue.

CHLOE  
I will be.  
(beat)  
Tomorrow. Or maybe after I move  
away...

Chloe has a lot of dignity but there are tears. Scars now.

Evan throws on a shirt and pants.

JACK  
(to Evan)  
Cyndi is here. She can fix this.

CYNDI  
I'll be with you guys in a minute.

Chloe is still in tears and Cyndi escorts her into the  
bathroom.

CYNDI  
Here change into this.

Cyndi hands her the dress and shows her the hat and  
sunglasses.

Evan is pacing the room; he's angry and threatens to go  
downstairs and tell them off.

EVAN  
I should go down there and tell them  
THEY are the whores.

CYNDI

Don't use that particular word with the media, not today.

EVAN

How about "hypocrisy."

CYNDI

How will that help?

EVAN

I'm just upset. I hate the damn media. Everytime they do this I want to barf. And they are so damn scatter brained. Like it's one way or another, it can't be both ways but the media are all over the place.

JACK

The media has nothing to do with this..

EVAN

They have everything to do with it. I was there. I know what happened. She didn't want to sleep with him.

JACK

The media is off limits and the industry will not tolerate anything derogatory. Especially today. The Oscars weekend is like one voice, everybody promoting the town and the industry. It means money. You can't go off on the media.

EVAN

The hell I can't.

Inside the bathroom Chloe has finished changing clothes. She is listening to the conversation through the door. Evan, Jack and Cyndi aren't aware she is listening.

JACK

I recommend we say nothing. We go home and in a week it will all blow over.

CYNDI

It's my job dealing with the press.

JACK

It's her job.

CYNDI

No press and no pictures for a week or so. Can we all agree?

(MORE)

CYNDI (CONT'D)

Evan you and I'll walk down to the stairwell. Bring your Oscar. They will all run down there. Jack, you get her out of here. Go the other way.

EVAN

Good, I'm going to give them a piece of my mind.

Cyndi looks worried.

EVAN

What we need is a lightening rod.

Cyndi is confused.

EVAN

Where are you from?

CYNDI

Minnesota.

EVAN

Farm girl?

CYNDI

Yes.

EVAN

You put lightening rods on your houses and barns.

CYNDI

Yes.

JACK

What is he talking about?

CYNDI

He's going to tell them off. So, he's the story and not her.

JACK

No, no. It will be worse than it was before.

EVAN

For me maybe. I don't give a rats ass about this town. But we are talking about her.

JACK

This is not you. When they made changes in your movie; you let it slide. When I first took you as a client, I asked around about you. I talked to ten people at that little school you teach at. They all said you get along with everyone. They said you were mild mannered and a go along get along guy. They said you were political in a baby kissing way. So be the good guy and lets have a nice long career. Let's keep making money.

EVAN

They're cowards and hypocrites. They went after her mother. By god, they won't say shit to me.

JACK

If you go out there calling names,  
you will never work in Hollywood  
again. The money people don't like  
that sort of thing at all.

Chloe reveals herself.

CHLOE

Evan, don't get involved. Really you  
don't have to say anything.

EVAN

I'll go down there that way and make  
a "reasonable effort" at it and you  
get her out that way.

CHLOE

Thank you.

EVAN

Not a problem

Evan leaves, walks toward a stairwell and begins dealing with  
it.

CYNDI

Get her out that way.

Cyndi is about to follow Evan to face the reporters. But her  
phone buzzes... with notifications. All the phones in the room  
buzz. She reads headlines. They are about the fight over the  
Oscar.

CYNDI

It was on Fox, CNN and MSNBC.  
Streaming everywhere.

JACK

Too bad.

CYNDI

No, the fight. She's a hero. It's  
gone viral.

Outside, Evan mutters to himself as he walks.

EVAN

She's never done anything like that. The Chinese hacked her account and posted that. No, the guy was American and I broke his nose at the Roosevelt last night. The cops were there. There's a police report that backs up the story.

(beat)

And if that doesn't work. I have to say something about the awards... that will get them riled. Everyone's telling me like what to do and it was like, people are yelling at me about sexual harassment and corporate greed, but really it's climate change, and I was like "Guys, there are plenty of horses in the corral. Pick a horse and ride one."

The reporters, on the ground level, follow him away from the hotel room door.

Will Evan step up and ruin his career? Cyndi suddenly realizes that she needs to go stop Evan. She is about to race out of the room.

JACK

What about us?

CYNDI

Take her to a hospital. And take some pictures. Same plan as before.

Cyndi exits the room and follows Evan.

EVAN

I'm Evan McCray. I'll answer any questions you have.

REPORTER

Where'd Chloe Baker learn to fight?

Evan is shocked, that was not the question he expected.

EVAN

I don't know, you'll have to ask her.

REPORTER

We can't find her. Is she up there in your room?

Cyndi joins Evan at the far end of the hotel.

CYNDI

(whispering to Evan)  
It's going to be okay.

(to the media)  
This was a very hard night for Chloe. You have to understand there will be answers, but not this minute.

REPORTER #2

What exactly happened?

Well a lot. A criminal stole Mr. McCray's Oscar and Chloe became involved in an altercation with the man. She fought the man.

REPORTER #3

And she won?

CYNDI

Well, he's in jail. And Mr. McCray has his Oscar back.

REPORTER #4

It that true, Mr. McCray?

Jack and Chloe leave second floor and are descending the stairs. Escape is near. No one notices them.

EVAN

(awkward)  
Yes. She's a fantastic actress and she won.

Evan is best described as a cowboy that comes across better on paper and in life. He botched his Oscar speech and now he's almost botched this.

REPORTER #5

How long have you been dating?

CYNDI

She did tell me she wants to extend her appreciation to the LAPD for their assistance.

REPORTER #2

What are the extent of her injuries? Minor?

CYNDI

I wouldn't describe them as minor. This was a very dangerous criminal and he didn't give up easily. She's being examined now and but I can say she has contusions to her face and probably broken ribs and possibly a broken hand. Other than that I can't say anything else.

REPORTER #2

How is she feeling?

CYNDI

As good as you can expect. She's been a on the verge of being recognized for 10 years and now she has a real chance and this unfortunate incident happened.

That seems perhaps like enough. The reporters seem satisfied; they begin putting up their recording equipment and begin to walk to their vehicles. But there is one last smart ass.

REPORTER #6

What about reports that she was a prostitute and had an escort ad on Craig's List?

The reporters stop and turn. They are listening. Some take out their recorders and cameras again.

Cyndi is about to speak.

EVAN

Bull shit! She's never been arrested for anything. Her information was hacked by a stalker and she's never been involved in anything like that. I guarantee it.

REPORTER #6

Can you prove that?

EVAN

Well, I'm pretty sure I broke the fellow's nose two nights ago down at the Roosevelt. That proof enough? There's a police report, if you'll bother. Ask the staff, there were at least two witnesses.

REPORTER #6

How's that proof? You punched someone?

EVAN

Well, you gotta earn something like that. Same as Chloe, I don't go around fightin' innocent men.

The reporters are satisfied. They shake their heads that this suffices as an explanation. They return to their vehicles.

Evan glances in Chloe's direction. Chloe and Jack are just now exiting the room. They need more time to escape. Evan serves as a distraction.

EVAN

You want to know what I thought of your Academy Awards?

The media ears prick up. They return their attention to Evan. They raise their cameras once again. They take out their voice recorders again.

Cyndi tries to usher him away.

CYNDI

No, no don't. We won. We win. Just  
leave it be.

There is a long beat.

EVAN

I love this town. I love the way  
you've adopted me, made me welcome,  
and I love the way you've shown all  
this concern for Chloe now that she  
needs you. Appreciate ya!

Chloe and Jack are making progress down the row of hotel  
rooms. Chloe has forgotten something and they return.

EVAN

There's only one problem. I heard  
all those speeches last night and I  
don't know which horse to ride.  
Sexual harassment, corporate greed,  
gay rights, health care, or global  
warming?

REPORTER

Don't you mean climate change?

EVAN

See there you go again, I don't know  
what horse to get on. Aren't we just  
confusing everybody with all these  
issues? I thought we made movies.  
And, nobody ever says anything about  
the farmers.

Evan glances. Chloe and Jack begin again. This time they  
leave the room with a dress, two shoes and a purse.

REPORTER

You think the cowboy should have  
won?

EVAN

Cowboy? I did win.

REPORTER

I mean the Western? For Best Picture.

Running, Jack drops a shoe and must stop to pick it up.

EVAN

(veiled sarcasm)

This year is was tough, the industry nominated a movies about a transvestite, a lesbian, a gay male, a serial killer, a pedophile and a cowboy? And the award went to.. the transvestite! I love my movie but thought it should have gone to the movie about the pedophile.

Cyndi once again tries to persuade him off the stage.

Jack drops Chloe's purse and must stop to pick it up.

A reporter is about to interrupt with a question.

Another reported stops him...

REPORTER

No, let him go. He's about to say something dumb. I can feel it.

EVAN

Listen why are you asking me what I think? At the pre-Oscar dinner, she was 'the best newcomer'. At the ceremony she was 'the most dazzling'. At the after party she was a 'brave gladiator in Chanel'. And now you want to know what I think? You have got to be kidding me! Chloe fought the guy and is banged up. She's your story.

He glances once at Jack and Chloe as they make their escape.

Chloe is holding her hat with one hand and hiding her fat lip with the other. Jack is holding a jacket over Chloe.

Chloe and Jack finally make it to the car. Jack's car pulls out of the parking lot.

Evan sees the escape has been successful. He is about to walk away, but someone asks one last question.

REPORTER

So, what's next?

EVAN

Me? I'm going to Texas. You? You can go straight to... find Chloe and ask her where she learned to fight.

INT. JACK'S OFFICE - DAY

Chloe has been to the hospital and has some dressings on her face. She's a rib compression band on. And she has a splint on her hand.

Cyndi is doing some makeup work on Chloe to cover her eye.

The team (Evan, Chloe, Cyndi and Jack) are all in the office. We see the three dresses hanging in the office. There are shoeboxes and purses lying about. On Jack's desk are the two earrings.

The entire story is being replayed on television. Positive story... "Oscar Night brings Love."

Cyndi chuckles.

Negative story... "Screenwriter bitter about Oscar Win."

Jack has his head in his hands and in despair.

Stetson over his head to shade the light. Evan is sleeping on Jack's sofa and holding the Oscar like a child hold a teddy bear (see the famous photo of Joan Crawford sleeping in her bed and holding her Oscar).

Chloe is clearly enamored and thinks it is charming.

Later...

INT. CHLOE'S CAR - LAX AIRPORT

Evan is beside her in the car, happy as a lark. The traffic, nor the fact that he is about to fly, bother him.

CHLOE  
The Chinese military?

EVAN  
I was thinking about telling them that. International intrigue. How happy their editors would be. Glad I didn't. It would have ruined the whole thing.

CHLOE  
That would have been funny. But thank you.

EVAN  
Well, they bought the other story. I doubt they even looked into it.

CHLOE  
Lucky they haven't.

EVAN  
And you thought they were professionals?

CHLOE  
Well, yeah.

EVAN  
These media people are like electricity; they take the path of least resistance. It was easier to report we are in love.

Long beat. Chloe smiles... sucks air in through her teeth.

CHLOE  
Are we?

They enter the airport drive and park.

Evan exits the car leaving the Oscar in the back seat.

CHLOE

Call me.

EVAN

Everyday probably... if you'll answer.

CHLOE

Call every "night".

EVAN

I will.

Evan leans in the window and gives her the movie's best & longest kiss.

Evan finally turns to enter the airport.

CHLOE

Aren't you forgetting something?

EVAN

I don't think so.

CHLOE

Your Oscar?

EVAN

Oh, I forgot.

(beat)

You want to hold on to it for me?

CHLOE

Why?

Long beat. Evan has no quick or witty reply.

EVAN

Because I want you to take care of it for me.

CHLOE

Oh. How sweet.

EVAN

Truth is... you'll have a hard time getting rid of me, if you have my Oscar.

Of course, Chloe dreams of a long-term relationship. Is this something like an engagement-ring? Chloe seems a bit shy but sheepishly smiles.

EVAN

I'm sorry. I know you're going to be busy. Long distance relat...

Relationships.

CHLOE

I'm not that busy.

EVAN

So I'll be back.

CHLOE

I can't keep your Oscar.

EVAN

I figured.

CHLOE

I intend to win one of my own.

EVAN

You do that!

She hands Evan the Oscar. Reluctantly he accepts it.

Chloe's phone rings. Caller ID says "Jack Loveman".

She attempts to hand Evan the phone.

CHLOE

It's Jack. It's for you.

EVAN

He's not calling me. I promise you that.

(half beat)

He's calling you.

Chloe holds the phone. Evan hits the speaker-phone and answer button. Turns it back toward Chloe.

CHLOE

Hello.

JACK

Chloe, can you be at a reading?

CHLOE

When?

JACK

Now.

CHLOE

Yes.

(beat)

What sort of role?

JACK

Surf City. Can you play a surfer girl?

CHLOE

Like a fish.

JACK

Great. You're one of three girls. Get over to Santa Monica. I'm texting you the address right now.

CHLOE

Are you my agent now?

JACK

You bet your sweet ass I am.

She receives a text. She looks at the phone's GPS.

CHLOE

I'm on my way now.

Evan kisses her again.

Chloe drives away and blows Evan a kiss. We hear a distant joyous scream, as she is a half block away.

Evan walks into the terminal.

EXT. SCHOOL CLASSROOM - RURAL TEXAS - TUESDAY MORNING

Early. Before school, Evan enters the classroom, and places the Oscar inside a glass trophy case. There are two trophies on the left - Best Market Steer and Best Market Broiler. On the right there are Best Barrow and Best Dairy Goat.

End Credits:

FADE OUT