

# Wash Your Bowl

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A full-length play

By Dylan James Amick

A dinner party celebrating an engagement amongst friends devolves into a spectacle of guilt when a distant terrorist attack steals their attention for the evening.

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| <b>CHARACTER NAME</b> | <b>BRIEF DESCRIPTION</b>       | <b>AGE</b> | <b>GENDER</b> |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------|------------|---------------|
| Louis                 | Newly engaged                  | 30         | Male          |
| Cara                  | Newly engaged                  | 27         | Female        |
| Paul                  | Cara's friend                  | 27         | Male          |
| Zoey                  | Cara's friend, Roald's partner | 28         | Female        |
| Roald                 | Cara's friend, Zoey's partner  | 28         | Male          |
| Blake                 | Louis's friend                 | 30         | Male          |
| Tiara                 | Blake's date                   | 25         | Female        |

**SCENES:**

- SCENE 1 -Louis Arrives
- SCENE 2 - Louis & Cara
- SCENE 3 - Paul Arrives
- SCENE 4 - Louis & Paul
- SCENE 5 - Louis, Paul, & Cara
- SCENE 6 - Roald & Zoey Arrive
- SCENE 7 - Cara, Paul, Roald, & Zoey
- SCENE 8 - Blake & Tiara Arrive
- SCENE 9 - Zoey Leaves
- SCENE 10 - Louis, Paul, Roald, Blake & Tiara
- SCENE 11 - Louis, Paul, Roald, Blake, Tiara & Cara
- SCENE 12 - Paul leaves
- SCENE 13 - Party Over
- SCENE 14 - Louis, Blake, & Tiara
- SCENE 15 - Tiara Leaves
- SCENE 16 - Louis & Roald
- SCENE 17 - Louis & his phone
- SCENE 18 - Louis & Cara II
- SCENE 19 - Louis, his tape recorder, and the painting

**SETTING:** One night in a Harlem, New York apartment during the Fall of 2019.

The beautiful, renovated, one-bedroom apartment of Cara & Louis: An open living room is sunken two steps lower than the rest of the apartment; one must descend into it. An adjacent dining room with six seats is divided only by the elevated floor. An open door frame upstage leads to a hallway - the kitchen off to the right, the Master bathroom & bedroom to the left.

**PRODUCTION NOTE:**

‘/’ before a line indicates simultaneous speaking

**SCENE 1**

THE SOUND of someone working in the kitchen trickles into the apartment.

Through the main door, LOUIS enters, wheeling in a vintage slide projector on a cart. It is bulky and he struggles with it, but he moves the projector into the center of the living room.

Louis takes an extension cord off of the cart, plugs in the projector and powers it on. The light lands against a flat wall with a painting on it. The projected square is centered around the painting.

Louis considers his options:  
*"Does it need to be changed? Is there a different wall? What the hell is that guy in the painting actually doing?"*

Louis goes towards the kitchen stopping just before leaving view, and turns back towards the painting. He goes to the painting and delicately lifts it up, looking for somewhere else to store it in the room.

The sudden sound of a blender offstage scares Louis as he almost drops the painting. He quickly recovers, glad no one saw.

Louis looks down at the painting one last time before deciding to store it in the bedroom offstage.

He returns to the cart and removes a box of glass slides from the side. Louis removes the first slide and places it inside the projector. It shows up on the wall out of focus.

Louis focuses the projector and the image sharpens to reveal the phrase: "WELCOME!" Upon seeing this, Louis is flabbergasted.

He incredulously goes through the other slides in the box; holding them up to the light and trying to see what they are.

Louis is animatedly frustrated. He puts the slides down to cool off for a moment.

He then continues to load the slides in the carousel. Halfway through he clicks next on the projector.

The screen shows "CARA & LOUIS'S NEXT FOREVER." Louis shakes his head in disbelief.

His phone rings; he has a text.

LOUIS

(re: phone)

You gotta be kidding me.

## **SCENE 2**

From the kitchen, CARA enters concerned.

CARA

There's an issue with the drink.

LOUIS

Not enough ice?

CARA

No, the issue's with what's in the drink.

LOUIS

...too much ice?

CARA

It's a Bloody Mary with crawfish.

LOUIS

You bought crawfish in New York?

CARA

Yes, they were frozen. I think they're fine for Bloody Marys.

LOUIS

(Melodramatic)

Is there too much vodka? Is the drink so strong it's turning them into drunken fish zombies?

CARA

They're shellfish.

LOUIS

Hardly their fault.

CARA

I think Roald is allergic to shellfish.

LOUIS

Oooh... Isn't his girlfriend vegan too?

CARA

Not anymore. Got too expensive.

LOUIS

So they probably don't get too much seafood either way. Can't we just give him one without the crawdad?

CARA

I already dropped a handful in the blender.

Louis gives her a look.

CARA

I figured frozen it could be like a flavored ice!

LOUIS

So Roald doesn't get any Bloody Marys. To be fair, it won't kill him to miss out.

CARA

But we didn't specify BYOB.

LOUIS

We still have a full bar.

CARA

I used all the vodka.

LOUIS

A mostly full bar. Plus beer.

CARA

But this is the signature cocktail.

LOUIS

Roald just isn't gonna have any I guess.

CARA

I just feel like if you tell people you are providing drinks, and then tell them there is a signature cocktail, wouldn't you assume it would be universal?

LOUIS

When drinks are provided I'm usually choosing between Amstel and Heinken Lights.

CARA

This isn't a pizza party!

LOUIS

It's never too late-

CARA

People are gonna come in with expectations about the drinks.

LOUIS

I don't think anyone is expecting you to have exotic cocktails waiting for them when they walk in.

CARA

They're Bloody Marys, not Mai Tais.

LOUIS

That might have actually been a little more on theme.

CARA

Not helpful right now.

LOUIS

OK, new idea: we just call them Carries. We've done movie dates too. Just stick Steven King's face on the pitcher, set it leaning on top of a *barely* cracked open door so the second they walked through-

Louis mimes having the Bloody Mary fall all over him. Imitating the prom scene from *Carrie*.

CARA

Babe, I'm really worried Roald's gonna be upset.

LOUIS

Oh Cara, you shouldn't worry about that...

He begins to comfort her.

LOUIS

We both know he's gonna find a reason to be upset.

CARA

You don't think he's gonna feel excluded?

LOUIS

He'll pull through.

CARA

But is this a moment when I'm letting a friend down by not doing the simple task of buying more vodka?

LOUIS

I'm more than happy to run out to the liquor store, but it'll be at least twenty minutes. You just gotta tell me-

CARA

Forget it. You're right. We'll have beer and whiskey.

LOUIS

He can drink like a fish that wouldn't kill him.

Louis texts on his phone.

CARA

(indicating to the projector)

This looks great out here.

LOUIS

Yeah, it sure is something.

CARA

What do you mean?

LOUIS

Nothing.

CARA

I know it's not nothing, because you called it something.

LOUIS

That doesn't make any sense.

CARA

Just tell me.

LOUIS

It's nothing! I'm... I'm just going through the slides.

CARA

None broke did they?

LOUIS

Nope. No broken ones.

CARA

Thank god. Those were so expensive.

LOUIS

Yes, they were. Which, if we dig a little deeper in that general direction, I feel like uncovers questions like, maybe, did we need to rent a carousel projector?

CARA

Do you not like it?

LOUIS

I like it fine.

CARA

Louis, this would be a really mean time to tell me you didn't like this idea.

LOUIS

I'm not saying that. No one is saying they don't like the idea. This is my favorite idea of all time; it's the sliced bread of party planning.

CARA

Just say what you don't like about them.

LOUIS

Again, not dislike; just questioning the thought process.

CARA

Why?

LOUIS

It was SO expensive.

She gives him a look.

LOUIS

Your words.

CARA

Yes, I know this cost money, but I really wanna show you off a little. I'm so happy to be engaged, and this is our chance to share it with our friends.

LOUIS

And I am very excited for this dinner party that we are hosting for them to share the moment. I just don't get why we need a presentation too.

CARA

If everyone had that mentality I'd be out of a job. "I mean, it's just make up. Bride does that every day."



LOUIS

Listen, I'm all about people hiring you for their presentations. How else am I gonna maintain my extravagant life style of exotic, aquatic cocktails? But that's a wedding. The thing we're months from.

CARA

It's less serious?

LOUIS

It is objectively-

CARA

I wanna put the best foot forward. I know it's just the smaller version of our family's announcement party, but I want to have that same feeling. Our lives are gonna change, and I want to show our best friends how excited I am for that.

Louis debates his next comment.

LOUIS

Do we need two title slides to accomplish that?

CARA

Excuse me?

LOUIS

I get the presentation; let's dim the lights and do a little show. But at \$45 a slide, did we need to make two title cards?

CARA

This is a night worth investing in, that is all I think I did with that order. Which you could have helped with if you were so worried about the price.

LOUIS

It just feels excessive. A slide projector from what? The 70's? I'm just missing the connection.

CARA

Timelessness. It's a vintage projector because our love is timeless.

LOUIS

Oh.

CARA

Yeah.

LOUIS

Damn, that's pretty good.

CARA

People dress up to look nice, you practice telling jokes so they sound funnier. I don't feel bad about curating this experience.

LOUIS

Did that quote not fit on any slide?

Cara is hurt by his comment.

LOUIS

Seriously? You know I'm just kidding.

CARA

I think you're trying to be rude.

LOUIS

Hey, hey - that's not what I meant.

CARA

Well sometimes you should think about how those comments come off.

LOUIS

It's just, there is a level of reality I think we owe.

CARA

Our friends are coming over to enjoy our cute story of falling in love, culminating in a proposal on top of a mountain. That's what we owe them.

The couple comes together and Louis holds Cara.

LOUIS

I still feel like saying the word welcome would have the same effect - but I see your point. I'm sure everyone is gonna love it, and Instagram the shit out of it.

CARA

God, the last thing I need is everyone looking at their phones all night. I just want this to go well.

LOUIS

It's a party celebrating us. We'll find a way to have fun.

CARA

It's almost party time!

Cara goes to the corner and puts on a record. *Soulful, but not too distracting.* Louis stares at the projector with a disappointed look on his face.

LOUIS

Could we at least turn the projector off for now?

CARA

Oh. I just thought we'd have the "Welcome" up when people came in.

LOUIS

I was thinking maybe we could save the lamp? Don't want to have to pay for that if it burns out.

CARA

Well I don't want to waste it, since we are paying for this anyway.

LOUIS

Still use it in the slide show! It's a great, focused, demanding start. WELCOME!

CARA

Sure, go ahead and save it. It will be fun to turn it on and surprise everyone.

LOUIS

The projector in the middle of the room might give the surprise away, but we'll see.

CARA

You always have something to say.

LOUIS

I'm in the art of talking.

CARA

I think you're so funny.

LOUIS

Thanks.

The pair kiss until Cara's phone goes off and it pulls her away.

CARA

(looking at her phone)

Paul just got off the train, so he should be here in a couple of minutes.

LOUIS

Great, a little alone time with Paul.

CARA

Just try to be nice.

LOUIS

The whole time? Do I get to set my own limit? What are the rules here?

CARA

He's a good guy, and he's my friend.

LOUIS

Can I just say one more thing about him?

CARA

I'd prefer if you didn't.

LOUIS

But I thought of it when you were talking, and now I'm really proud of it... please?

CARA

Fine, let's hear it.

LOUIS

Paul has the kind of personality that makes popular TV shows unbearable.

CARA

Riveting stuff.

LOUIS

Going for a broad emotional appeal.

CARA

Well it didn't work with this broad.

LOUIS

Heyyo! The lady of the evening with some wordplay.

CARA

Get on my level.

LOUIS

How many vodka soaked crawfish did you have?

CARA

They're not vodka soaked - Sorry, did you take the painting down?

LOUIS

Yeah, the seats all look towards the wall.

CARA

Where's it at?

LOUIS

Our room. You okay?

CARA

(with hesitation)

Do you not like that painting?

There is a knock at the door.  
Cara goes to answer it.

**SCENE 3**

PAUL enters from the hallway in a beanie and hoodie holding a 24-pack of canned beer.

PAUL

Here we go! Look at the happy couple!

LOUIS

Hey man.

CARA

Hi Paul.

PAUL

So good to see you Cara, thanks for having me over. I brought beer!

CARA

Yeah, I can see that. Thirsty?

PAUL

It's a party! I brought them to share.

CARA

We're actually providing beer Paul.

PAUL

Oh really?

CARA

There was a note about dinner and drinks on the invite.

PAUL

I just figured it would be a champagne toast. I don't even like champagne.

LOUIS

Why don't you like champagne?

PAUL

Mostly the taste. I don't enjoy it.

LOUIS

Stands to reason.

PAUL  
Glad you agree.

Paul puts the beer down, and  
pulls one out for himself.

CARA  
You are just a card. Showing up at your friend's engagement  
party like we were pregaming!

PAUL  
Sorry, it's my first one of these.

LOUIS  
Ours too.

PAUL  
Look, I just thought it would be polite to bring something.

LOUIS  
Were they all out of Yellowtail?

PAUL  
It's a sipping beer. The kind you have while you actually  
talk to people.

CARA  
Little early in the evening for a pissing contest guys.

PAUL  
Well can I go ahead and drink one of my beers so I'm ready?

LOUIS  
Please, go ahead. And really, thanks for the sentiment. Class  
act.

PAUL  
Sure. Well, here's to you and all the love that eluded my  
divorced parents. Cheers!

Paul cracks the beer and begins  
drinking alone.

LOUIS  
Here, here. Cara can I get you a drink?

CARA  
That'd be great babe.

LOUIS  
Two Carries?

PAUL  
What's a Carrie?

CARA

One of Louis's many unfunny jokes. The Bloody Mary sounds great.

PAUL

Oh is it brunch already?

Louis goes to get the drinks,  
texting the entire way.

CARA

So how's work?

PAUL

Work's just work, it's always crazy. We have a campaign that goes live end of this month.

CARA

Are you writing much for this one?

PAUL

Yea, more so then usual. Most of the main press release is me.

CARA

That's incredible!

PAUL

I guess. It's really just a pitch summary.

CARA

But you wrote it.

PAUL

It's not me though, it's all just bland. We could try new things, make these actually fun to read instead of a reference you just skim, but no one wants to take chances on anything.

CARA

I mean it is technical writing.

PAUL

It could be so much more interesting though. Everyone is already glued to their phone all day, let's play in to that. Let's give 'em something to look at.

CARA

You haven't changed at all since college.

PAUL

Since I was a closeted actor, really? No change?

CARA

That's not what I mean. Like your spirit hasn't changed.

PAUL

In that I still don't talk about spirits?

CARA

Your confidence. Still taking on the world.

PAUL

Someone has to.

LOUIS

(returning)

Paul did you want one of these drinks?

PAUL

I'm gonna stick to beer, thanks.

(to Cara)

Where are you off to next?

CARA

I'm on the Cape all next week. Heading down Tuesday just to have the day, but working Wednesday and ceremonies every day after.

PAUL

People get married on Thursday?

LOUIS

I'm sure people get married every day.

PAUL

But we aren't talking justice of the peace, five-close-friends weddings here. Real ceremonies, big enough to hire a make up person.

CARA

I mean most weddings hire someone to do make up.

PAUL

What's a Thursday wedding like?

CARA

I guess it's closest to a Friday wedding...

PAUL

But people work the next day. Is it a power move?

LOUIS

It's probably mostly a money saving thing. Less incentive to fill a ballroom on a Thursday.



CARA

Exactly. Their ceremonies are typically the same size.

PAUL

But the guests, are these locals-only weddings? If you're out of town and in the party, that's Wednesday too.

CARA

I'm sure they're local. And either way, it's a wedding. If you're in the party it's probably a big deal for you as well.

PAUL

I think taking days off is a big deal for some people.

CARA

A handful of guests leave right after the first dance for work the next day. If you travel from out of town, you skip the rehearsal dinner (just freaking make sure you let them know). You start the reception by 9, it's a totally reasonable evening.

PAUL

Getting wedding drunk on a weekday just sounds a little college to me.

CARA

Like showing up to a dinner party with a case of cheap beer?

LOUIS

Well if any groomsmen pop up tonight, I'm sure they will flock towards you Paul.

CARA

I don't think Blake's his type.

PAUL

I'll drink to that! When you two tie the knot, do us all a favor, and make sure the day after is guaranteed off for us.

LOUIS

I don't think we're getting married on a Thursday.

PAUL

I've thought about it.

CARA

About Louis putting a ring on it?

PAUL

Sorry, but no. I've thought about if I ever get married, and that's a pretty big if right there because I don't really know that I want that kind of responsibility to a person-

LOUIS

Big fan of this so far.

PAUL

I'm saying that if I got married, I think it would be on a Sunday.

CARA

Sunday night?

PAUL

Sunday day.

CARA

Why Paul, I never would have imagined.

LOUIS

Big Etta James fan?

CARA

Oh, I love that song!

PAUL

More of an 'At Last' guy myself.

LOUIS

Same album.

PAUL

Yes it is. But I think Sunday during the day allows the most time to get down to a wedding, which is always a thing I see in movies, so it feels like part of the experience.

CARA

Totally following you.

PAUL

You wake up Sunday, by two you've been drinking. Leave that night if you need to, or take a Monday off if you have the privilege.

LOUIS

Or just don't work in an office industry.

PAUL

Sure. But the best part of a Sunday ceremony is all the savings you were thinking about, you pass that right over to the couple. Flying for cheap on weekdays now, where ever I'm off to for the honeymoon.

LOUIS

You're a man of the people.

CARA

There is nothing wrong with making your wedding day about you. That's exactly what I want us to do.

PAUL

Good. When is the special day gonna be?

CARA

(cutting off Louis)

We're going to announce it later!

PAUL

Will there be more press coming?

LOUIS

We're actually doing this as an exclusive announcement.

PAUL

OK LeBron.

CARA

I just don't want to have to repeat it for every person. This dinner is a group celebration and we can wait until everyone is here. Right?

The other two mutter in agreement. Paul wanders over to the dining area.

CARA

(to Louis)

Hey, I'm gonna pop into the kitchen and finish up some hors d'oeuvres. You OK?

LOUIS

I'm fine.

Cara exits into the kitchen,

**SCENE 4**

Louis takes his drink to be closer to Paul.

LOUIS

So Cara told me you just got back from a trip.

PAUL

Think she's lying about it?

LOUIS

...I mean we all know Cara's a liar.

PAUL

She does have that look to her, you should watch out for that... I just got back from Toronto.

LOUIS

Nice, visiting anyone?

PAUL

No, I just went to look around. Caught a Jays game.

LOUIS

What was your favorite thing you saw there?

PAUL

I saw a lot of cool shit up there. My first time going, but Toronto is beautiful. It's a lot like New York (On some water you wouldn't wanna swim in), but I went right outside the city to Bluffer's Park, and there was a hiking trail. Just beautiful; I had my camera with me because I've been practicing shooting with real film, and I spent an hour getting shots of the coast line. The city barely peeking behind the trees... I love shooting like that, but when I went down to walk the beach there was this kid running around with her parents. She's like five or six, but she is running up to the waves and trying not to get splashed. And she keeps falling. I don't bother her, because it's a kid on a beach and I'm not trying to get called a pedo in a foreign country. But I keep my eyes on her, I'm taking my time looking for my next picture. And then her mom is like "It's time to go, we gotta leave now," and this kid is NOT having it. She's wailing. She wants to play in the water still, but the mom is holding her and saying she can't. Then, out of the blue, the mom decides to give the kid her phone to play with, like that will cheer her up and what does this kid do?

LOUIS

Oh no.

PAUL

This little shit grabs her mom's phone with this, like, spin-move and B-lines toward the water. The mom is stunned for a second, but then starts chasing her, and right when she catches her - BOOM! This kid hurls that phone right in the water. Sayonara! It was perfect.

LOUIS

Did you get it in a photo?

PAUL

No, I just saw it. But it's crazy like, that kid, she just knew. Already. She didn't need to just stare at a phone when she could look at the world. That's naturally in us!

LOUIS

...cool.

PAUL

Yeah, I thought so. It was a good trip.

LOUIS

Sounds like it.

PAUL

(trying to remember)

So uh, how's everything with the shows coming?

LOUIS

They're fine. I've been doing a lot of open mics.

PAUL

Sounds fun.

LOUIS

Yeah it's good. It's work, but it's good.

PAUL

Sounds like it.

LOUIS

Yeah.

Paul pulls out his phone and begins to check it.

LOUIS

I have some coming up, some-

PAUL

I got in the stupidest argument on twitter today.

LOUIS

Uh, what about?

PAUL

This person just trying to raise money for some charity.

LOUIS

How selfish of them.

PAUL

I think it actually was really selfish. It wasn't a call to donate, it was shaming from somebody up on a high horse.

LOUIS

I hear texting on horseback is the number one killer of teenage cowboys.

PAUL

This dude on Twitter, they're talking about how there is so much trouble in the world right now, and now more than ever - which on a separate note is just a phrase I hate - and that's why he was doing his part and donating to the ACLU.

LOUIS

Do you think he shouldn't?

PAUL

I think every idiot with a checkbook donates to the ACLU. It's a hugely funded organization; why not try and find other lesser known charities that would kill for a fraction of those donations.

LOUIS

I mean I figured it all goes to the same good.

PAUL

One organization isn't going to save us all. If that was possible, it'd be the government.

LOUIS

Spreading the resources I'm sure helps. I mean, that's inequality in the first place, right? Making sure that didn't happen.

PAUL

Like if people wanna help immigrants, there are a bunch of charities based only in Texas and Arizona that need that money. They're the ones dealing with this shit right on the front line and people don't even know their names.

LOUIS

What are some places we could be donating to?

PAUL

It's all online if you look it up. Just do that for 10 minutes before you make a donation. Which is the other thing that pissed me off about the post - don't donate to charity just to brag about it.

LOUIS

I mean if you brag about it for social media points, your donation is really just buying likes, right?

PAUL

Exactly. Why should I answer to a stranger online to prove that I'm doing my part?

LOUIS

Again, that feel's like the government's job. To make me doubt myself like that.

PAUL

I just had to call them on this holier-than-thou bullshit.

LOUIS

Why you?

PAUL

Because other people are too afraid too. I let 'em know. Like Cara said, been that way since college.

LOUIS

Yeah. The stories I hear of your NYU days really sound like something.

PAUL

I bet it was the same for your friends at - Wait, where did you go again?

LOUIS

UVA.

PAUL

Very cool.

LOUIS

It's no NYU.

PAUL

Well at least they both abbreviate well.

LOUIS

God forbid we have to say the whole name.

PAUL

I know, right? You got any thoughts on that Hill guy?

LOUIS

The football player? He's really good at football.

PAUL

But do you think the Chiefs keep him?

LOUIS

One of their star players? Probably.

PAUL

Real messed up. He admitted that he choked his girlfriend and he still got drafted.

LOUIS

Pretty late, but I see what you mean.

PAUL

We show him on TV every week. Don't you think about that?

LOUIS

Tyreek Hill is a football player. He's a guy who runs really fast, and that's the most I think about him.

PAUL

Interesting. Very... telling.

LOUIS

Well as long as you don't record my threats I'll tell you anything.

The joke does not land with Paul,  
who goes back to his phone.

LOUIS

That was a joke of course. I don't have anyone to threaten.

PAUL

Awesome.

(Pointing to the empty wall)

What happened to that painting Cara did?

**SCENE 5**

Cara enters from the kitchen  
holding a tray of hot hors  
d'oeuvres.

CARA

You guys hungry?

PAUL

I thought we had to wait for the rest of our community?

CARA

This is a starter you ass. We have plenty. Plus, Roald just sent me some weird text assuring me he was still coming.

LOUIS

Why was it weird?

CARA

Because it was for an event that was starting within an hour that he was one of six people invited to. Why would he not show up?

PAUL

What happened to-

LOUIS

What are these babe?

CARA

It's ham with ricotta cheese.



LOUIS

Sounds wonderful. Where did you find this?

CARA

It was at some wedding I worked last month. I spoke with one of the cooks and he said it was great because no one can mess it up.

LOUIS

I'm sure I could find a way.

Three phone alerts sound off in succession throughout the apartment. Only Paul checks his.

CARA

I think you should set your sights on something just slightly more impressive than that babe.

PAUL

Holy shit.

CARA

What?

LOUIS

(going for his phone)  
What's going on?

PAUL

(Looking at his phone)

Shit is going down in France right now.

LOUIS

What do you mean?

PAUL

There was a terrorist attack.

CARA

Oh god.

PAUL

Some religious group just took over a store.

LOUIS

Like a food store?

PAUL

Just says it's a hostage situation.

CARA

That's terrible.

LOUIS

Should we put it on the television?

CARA

Why would we do that?

PAUL

That's not a bad idea. It'll probably be mostly speculation, but more details could be nice.

CARA

I don't think we need to have it on in the background. I'm sure they'll keep sending important updates.

PAUL

You don't want to know about what's going on?

CARA

More like, I don't see what gluing our eyes to the television does to help it.

PAUL

So this is an issue with watching TV now? That's life and death for you?

LOUIS

No one's saying that. Let's not let current events take the party hostage.

PAUL

Dude, they've got people trapped in that building.

CARA

And I promise if anything get's too serious, we can turn it on. I just don't think it needs to set the mood as everyone comes in.

PAUL

Whatever you say. I just don't know what's going to make it more serious.

Another knock at the door.

Cara gets the door, Paul opens another beer.

**SCENE 6**

ROALD and ZOEY enter the apartment in formal attire, mid conversation.

ZOEY

I think it's just horrible that human lives are being used as bargaining tools.

ROALD  
History shows that it has worked though.

ZOEY  
It's inhumane.

CARA  
Hey you two!

ZOEY  
Cara!

ROALD  
Evening Cara.

PAUL  
You guys saw the news too?

ZOEY  
The notification came through right as we got off the subway.

ROALD  
Another day, another something.

LOUIS  
I guess. Thanks for coming over, do you want a drink?

CARA  
We have Bloody Marys.

ZOEY  
I could use a drink.

CARA  
But there's seafood in these, so Roald can't have any.

LOUIS  
We have some whiskey in the kitchen if you wanna look-

ROALD  
(pointing to Paul's beer)  
Are these actually up for grabs?

PAUL  
You know it Roald!

ROALD  
(opening a beer)  
All I'm saying is that any country, just like ours that is built on oppressive acts, you have to expect this kind of thing. It's predictable fallout.

PAUL  
I'm sorry, am I going to have to take that beer back from you?

ROALD

I don't see that happening compadre.

ZOEY

It's not even fallout. They weren't saying this is revenge, they feel unheard and want to be listened to.

LOUIS

That's why most people taking hostages yell "Okay, now listen up!" I see that a lot in movies.

ZOEY

I'm all about people fighting and sticking up for themselves, but you can't take it out on civilians.

PAUL

Should they ask for volunteers to stay?

ZOEY

I think they should be taking this out on the government, not the people in the country.

ROALD

One could argue this is how you do that. Look at us, an ocean away in real time discussing what we think another country should do. It's all eyes on them and a religious group I've never heard of is going to be trending online by midnight.

ZOEY

I just feel like when you focus in on it like that, it supports it.

ROALD

There's precedent for the idea. Change starts with the populous, you have to get your message to sympathetic ears. Look at the Yellow Coats, they're starting arguments in the streets just to get people curious about them. They don't even have a plan of action, they are just drumming up potential support.

CARA

Zoey, how long has it been since I've seen you? Was the last time at that silly baby shower?

ZOEY

Um, yeah it was. For Megan.

CARA

Was that back in January?

ZOEY

Something like that. I had just gotten back from the DR.

LOUIS

That's something to brag about now.

CARA

I remember thinking you looked super tan.

ROALD

Was this the woman who wanted to go to Coney Island, and didn't realize pregnant women can't ride roller coasters?

CARA

Yep!

(to Louis)

I told you about that right babe? She thought that it was only the ones with loops that pregnant women couldn't do.

ZOEY

Do you guys think we should turn on the news?

PAUL

Seems pretty serious over there, right?

CARA

I don't know if it's worth watching. Do they know that much about it?

ZOEY

I don't know, I haven't been able to check the news for updates.

PAUL

What do you think Lou? Worth checking out?

LOUIS

I mean it's hard for me to ever pass up a chance to watch mostly commercials. Cable news is like a non-stop commercial.

Louis gets a texts and begins to type a long response.

ROALD

We all have to pay the bills.

CARA

It's just going to be floating heads pointing fingers.

ZOEY

I don't wanna debate journalistic integrity I just want to see what other people know.

PAUL

What if we just checked? If there is nothing new-

CARA

Paul, I've heard you bitch about the news and Fox so many times -

PAUL

No one is saying turn on Fox!

CARA

- and now you're all about 'just hearing them out?'

LOUIS

(still on his phone)

Blake just said he'll be here in no time.

CARA

Can we just not throw all of our focus to a television right now? We have phones, we can check online. I'm sure people are sharing stuff.

ZOEY

Roald hun, are you seeing anything?

ROALD

It's a super market, multiple gunmen, no news I'm seeing beyond that, over and over.

PAUL

The miracle connections of social media.

CARA

Listen guys, I know it's crazy right now. But I really appreciate y'all coming out. It means a lot to see you.

ROALD

Been awhile for all of us hasn't it?

ZOEY

Probably since your birthday.

PAUL

Nah, I missed Roald's birthday. I saw you guys that morning.

ZOEY

At the chicken & waffles spot.

PAUL

Home, as I like to think of it.

CARA

We'll have to make sure we get a photo tonight. Like freshmen year all over again.

ZOEY

(offended)

What a fun series of freak-outs that was.

CARA

I had fun when you were there.

ROALD

Have any of you guys spoken to Leighton Bradley since graduation? Like maybe you, Paul, his old roommate?

PAUL

I have not spoken to that dude in a minute.

CARA

He liked wine from the bag right?

PAUL

Yea, but he didn't like carrying the box around. So dude was just at parties with a baggie of wine resting on his shoulder, taking sips as you talked with him.

CARA

Oh my god I remember that! And he never bought one of those bladder bags or anything, he just held the bag.

PAUL

Do you have any idea how many people just stopped flirting with me, because that motherfucker rolled up looking for a dap while I was trying to get it in?

ROALD

He ended up marrying some girl we met at a debate function. I think I saw online they moved to France last year.

ZOEY

Do you know where he wound up?

LOUIS

Any chance he was by all of this?

ROALD

Well of course there's a chance, the question is how high of one.

PAUL

I doubt it. These guys are in Paris or Nice-

LOUIS

Why wouldn't he move to a major city?

CARA

Not Leighton.

ZOEY

Cara, can we please just flip on the TV?

CARA

Zoey, I promise they aren't just reading off names. Can we please just drop it, because I really don't want that to be what sets the mood while people walk in. Louis, you agree with me right?

LOUIS

(to everyone else)

Did any of you guys have trouble with the buzzer? Blake's asking me to come down.

PAUL

Some cat with a dog let me in.

ZOEY

Same for us.

LOUIS

Weird, I guess I'll have to let him in.

(to Cara)

I'll be right back.

Louis moves to the door and Cara pursues him unnoticed.

The door opens, Louis exits and closes the door behind him.

**SCENE 7**

Cara gently taps her hands on the closed door.

PAUL

He's in high spirits.

CARA

You two really are the couple of the evening.

ROALD

Still think you wanna marry him?

CARA

(indicating to her ring)

I'm a pretty hard maybe.

ZOEY

(raising her hand)

Will our stamps get us into the divorce party too?



CARA

That's actually gonna be a private event.

PAUL

So you're both workshopping material tonight?

CARA

Did he show you his voice-recorder? That was my anniversary present.

PAUL

To record his observations?!

CARA

He likes to talk things through.

ROALD

How was the Maui trip?

CARA

It was so wonderful, I can't wait to show you guys all the pictures!

ROALD

Favorite thing you saw?

CARA

I promise we will be getting into it.

ZOEY

So eager Roald. Clearly Cara has a plan for the evening.

CARA

I mean, I'm not a planner, but I am a planner.

PAUL

Does he write jokes on you too?

CARA

Louis hasn't shared any material with me in a bit.

PAUL

Lucky you.

CARA

Shut up.

ZOEY

Did you talk with him about going to less of the open mics?

CARA

Yes, we've discussed the idea.

ROALD

Does he have to bring customers to get time?

CARA

It's not like that. It's just a lot to go to all of them. He did like three the week we left.

PAUL

He worked three days in the same week? Gotta be a record.

ROALD

That's a lot to ask of you. You shouldn't feel bad for setting boundaries.

CARA

True, and I don't want it to sound that bad. We're engaged, I mean, I'm so happy.

PAUL

Ooo, big but coming.

CARA

No but. The stand-up thing, it's an over correction, he hated his old job and now he wants to love what he does. He'll find a balance. We all did.

ROALD

That makes a lot of sense.

PAUL

You should record that idea for ol' Lou to talk through.

ZOEY

You must want to fuck him something bad.

PAUL

That's just derogatory.

CARA

Should she have said make love?

PAUL

The insinuation is I'm gay, and I just wanna fuck every guy.

ZOEY

I'm not saying that. I just think you pick on him a lot. Like you're teasing another kid you have a crush on.

ROALD

In this case, want to crush on.

PAUL

Don't get in on this too.

CARA

Do you two ever do that? Pick on each other?

ROALD

Affectionately, of course. Not enough to make a career out of it.

CARA

Louis makes me genuinely laugh, I mean that's something I've always loved about him. He gets carried away with trying to make people laugh sometimes, but it comes from a good place.

A pause just long enough to make it awkward.

ZOEY

Jokes are just about context, you know? Not punching down. I hear so much shit about how hard it is to be funny now, and people who say humor is off limits. The only thing, that has barely started to change, is we're not letting people say overtly racist shit in public. Sometimes. Still there's always some asshole asking for an exception, some thing we "just had to be there for" to get why it was OK for another Governor to wear blackface. It was good enough to make them laugh, but why say a joke out loud just for yourself?

**SCENE 8**

The door opens.

Louis enters mid-conversation with two people: BLAKE in a suit holding a bottle of Yellowtail, and TIARA in a club dress and heels.

LOUIS

I had wondered why it didn't match the other floors.

TIARA

Oh I hope they never change it, I love that mosaic tiling.

LOUIS

Hey guys, you have all met Blake, this is his date, Tiara.

CARA

Blake. You brought someone.

BLAKE

Cara, it's so good to see you too! This is Tiara. She works in hospitality.

TIARA

Hi, Blake *just* told me about your engagement. It's such a pleasure to meet you, and congrats!

CARA

Thank you.

LOUIS

She was just telling me how our lobby is from the original building; New York history right?

TIARA

It's a gorgeous building, and they seem to be doing a lot of work to it.

CARA

Oh, do you know someone else who lives here?

TIARA

Uh, my grandfather used to live here actually. When it was first built. I grew up in the city.

CARA

Oh wow. Our apartment was a renovation obviously, but we love it here. Look at us, learning about our home. I am so glad Blake brought you with him as a guest!

PAUL

Is that Yellowtail?

BLAKE

Had to bring something, it is a celebration after all!

CARA

I'm just so embarrassed, I only set six places.

LOUIS

(to Tiara)

You're totally fine.

BLAKE

(to Roald)

Did you get a plus one?

ROALD

Zoey and I were both invited.

CARA

Zoey and I went to school together.

BLAKE

But not for the full time.

ZOEY

(checking her phone)

Not all of us were there on our parent's dime.

CARA

Blake, this is supposed to be a pretty intimate gathering.

TIARA

I had no idea.

ROALD

(to Paul)

I can't say we've been to too many of these either.

PAUL

I feel like I've been to this party a couple times.

BLAKE

Cara we are all here to celebrate you and my best friend. The more the merrier right?

CARA

(Through her teeth)

Of course. I'm just so glad you both could make it for our special evening.

TIARA

Thanks.

PAUL

I'm Paul. I didn't get a plus one.

CARA

Nobody got a plus one!

BLAKE

I'm sorry. I didn't think it would be a big deal! Don't you hate getting stuck at dinner things with no-one you know? It's torture.

ZOEY

(to Tiara)

Hi, I'm Zoey. And this is my boyfriend Roald.

TIARA

That's a great name.

ROALD

It's certainly memorable. How do you know um, Blake?

TIARA

We, uh, met on Bumble last week.

PAUL

Truly a tale as old as time.

TIARA

Only two weeks in our version I guess.

PAUL

Thinking about switching back to Tinder?

TIARA

(smiling)

I have a Tinder too, but it's a "break-incase-of-emergency" situation.

BLAKE

That app is just white people anyway.

PAUL

News to me. I feel like I've matched with a black person on Tinder before.

TIARA

OK.

BLAKE

Your personal experience doesn't invalidate other's. You gotta read more man.

ROALD

(to Tiara)

Paul's just sad he's as equally unsuccessful at dating online as he is in real life.

PAUL

I don't know how any woman doesn't fall asleep talking to you.

ROALD

Sometimes they do, that's why we moved in together.

TIARA

(to Zoey)

How long have you two lived together?

ZOEY

Like two years now. Did you see what was going on in France?

CARA

I'm sure not everyone is as wrapped up in politics as you are.

TIARA

I saw some alert on my phone about a hostage situation in Nice.

BLAKE

Another day in America.

PAUL

It was in France.

BLAKE

And I bet we only care because we think they look American.

ROALD

What do you mean?

BLAKE

We all know what I mean

CARA

I don't think there's a need for any of us to talk about it right now.

BLAKE

Everyone knows the media uses the word American when they mean white.

PAUL

But what if they're French?

ZOEY

For all we know, it could be all kinds of people stuck in that market. No-one tweeting from around there has had any info from what I've seen.

BLAKE

I'm just saying, if these were black hostages we wouldn't be hearing about them. American Media doesn't care about black people. Do you remember how wild it was when Kanye said that?

TIARA

I think I was like ten.

CARA

So Tiara, what do you do in hospitality?

TIARA

Uhhh, I organize private events.

CARA

Oh really, I work in weddings.

TIARA

Planning?

CARA

No. I do hair and make up.

TIARA

Very nice. I work with contracts at a convention center.

CARA

I bet that's fun too.

TIARA

It's always interesting. You know how people are when they plan big events.

Cara laughs a bit too hard at this joke.

TIARA

What about the rest of you? Events too?

PAUL

Marketing.

ROALD

I teach.

ZOEY

Whole bunch of shit for me, I write. Louis can I borrow you for a minute?

LOUIS

So long as it's not plagiarizing.

Louis and Zoey go off by the eating area.

ZOEY

Are you concerned at all about what's going on in France right now?

LOUIS

Of course! Certainly on some level.

ZOEY

Do you? Like, beyond just morbid curiosity?

LOUIS

At least a lingering question of mortality beyond that.

ZOEY

You don't have to make a joke right now.

LOUIS

I know.

ZOEY

I'm just trying to talk to you, because I feel like it is worth checking in on what's happening.

LOUIS

I think the party's going fine...

ZOEY

It's crazy that Cara is shooting down turning on the TV.



LOUIS

Well earlier there was a record playing too.

ZOEY

You don't have to stick up for her right now, I promise they're not listening to us.

LOUIS

Zoey, what do you want me to do here?

ZOEY

Talk to Cara.

LOUIS

I'm trying to balance my conversation across the room. Don't wanna just puppy dog her all night.

ZOEY

Talk to her about turning on a TV.

LOUIS

God, is the party really that boring for you?

ZOEY

If you stopped trying to make yourself laugh for two seconds you could use some of that brain power for empathy. If that was you trapped in a store wouldn't you want the eyes outside watching out for you?

LOUIS

I think plenty of people are watching.

ZOEY

I know you're smart enough to know we need to be aware of the wave of fascism in Europe right now.

LOUIS

I've never been, sounds lovely. I'm gonna talk about what I know about. You're free to seek out your own conversations. If you'll excuse me.

Louis rejoins the main room's conversation, as Paul finishes a story-

PAUL

This little girl grabs her mom's phone with this, like, spin-move and B-lines toward the water. The mom is stunned for a second, but then starts chasing her, and right when she catches her - BOOM! This kid hurls that phone right in the water. Sayonara! I'm telling you, it was a picture perfect moment.

TIARA

I love that! Kid didn't want anything to do with that phone.

PAUL

She already knew she didn't need to just stare at a phone when she could look at the world. That's naturally in us!

LOUIS

I bet she didn't want anything to do with the bill either.

PAUL

With what?

LOUIS

The phone bill.

PAUL

What kid that age pays a phone bill? They don't have income.

LOUIS

I meant the bill, the bill to replace the phone. After it got ruined.

ROALD

Is that part of the phone bill?

LOUIS

For me it is. I have T-Mobile so I just lease my phone, I guess I was saying that if it got destroyed I would have to add that payment to my bill.

TIARA

What brought you to New York Cara?

CARA

I wanted to do costumes for theatre, but I got tired of sitting in basements.

TIARA

I feel that. I need a window or something in my office. And you're a performer, right Louis?

LOUIS

Kind of I guess.

ROALD

Pretty objectively, you perform for an audience.

LOUIS

I do stand up now.

BLAKE

After he abandoned his best friend!

TIARA

You used to work at Blake's firm, right?

LOUIS

I did. But I've been gone for almost a year or so now.

BLAKE

We were practically running that place when you left.

TIARA

Did Cara inspire you to pursue that?

LOUIS

No, I didn't do it because Cara told me to. I just didn't like my job.

CARA

They're not a great company, and Louis questioned what he was putting out in the world.

BLAKE

I tend to focus more on what we pull in.

CARA

And it shows.

ROALD

A lot of elite paying jobs require you to check your morals like that. They think it's part of what they pay for.

ZOEY

The word for that is bribery.

ROALD

There you are.

TIARA

Not all companies. I think it is important to step away from a company if you know they aren't good. Good on you for sticking to that integrity Louie.

LOUIS

Please, just... I'm so sorry. It's totally cool, but could you call me Louis? I just prefer to go by that name, and we're just meeting so I wanna get out ahead of that.

BLAKE

Sorry good looking, only I get to call him Louie.

LOUIS

Blake, I really prefer Louis.

BLAKE

OK, that's fine. Don't quit on me too!

LOUIS

I'm just trying to be honest about it.

BLAKE

Go ahead, be the honest comedian. That's what it's all about, right? Living your truth.

ZOEY

Cara I wanna turn on the news. Where's your remote?

CARA

Zoey, seriously. You're being so rude.

ZOEY

Right now, I don't give a fuck about your manners I want to know what's happening to those people.

CARA

What about what's happening with me?

ZOEY

Excuse me?

CARA

What about your friend, in the same goddamn room as you, that you still haven't said congratu-FUCKING-lations to!?!

ZOEY

Why do you think I came?

CARA

Apparently to demand television and make me feel bad.

ZOEY

I'm not doing anything to make you feel bad.

CARA

You are.

ZOEY

Maybe that's your guilt because you know it's shitty of you to demand we ignore the world around us and focus on you just because some guy bought you a blood diamond.

LOUIS

Hey, I don't think it's a blood diamond.

CARA

I'm getting married. I hoped my best female friend would care about that.

ZOEY

Why do you need to clarify? Am I also your best friend comma didn't finish undergrad?

CARA

I just expected certain things from seeing you.

ZOEY

What do you think the people in that supermarket expected today?

LOUIS

I asked the guy who I bought it from if it was a blood diamond and he told me it wasn't.

ZOEY

They were grabbing some groceries late at night, and then someone threatened their goddamn lives.

CARA

And what? And because they are trapped we should just stop living our lives?

ZOEY

I don't think you would ever consider that.

CARA

It's an unreasonable ask!

PAUL

...but I mean, would you? Like, right now.

ROALD

I don't think morality thrives in ultimatums.

ZOEY

That's theoretical nonsense.

CARA

That's real. If you got off the high horse of not having your way you'd see that. There's no ability to practice asking that much of people.

ZOEY

Louis, do you wanna turn on the TV?

CARA

It's our home.

ZOEY

I'm asking him.

CARA

Lucky him.

LOUIS

Again, I feel like I did as much research as I could on the engagement ring.

ZOEY

Do you really care about that?

BLAKE

Blood diamonds are real. You know who-

LOUIS

Why do you keep asking me that? Of course I care. You're at my engagement party too, so clearly I care what you guys think of me.

ZOEY

If you care what I think of you then stand up to your fiancé. Give us five tight minutes of that!

CARA

You are just being a bitch now.

ZOEY

This is ridiculous! All I have asked to do is stay updated on a terrorist attack!

CARA

Why do you need to be in control?

ZOEY

Why would you hate us being able to know what's happening?

CARA

How could you possibly not shut down this whole bleeding heart bullshit for a single night and celebrate someone you have known for almost ten years now! A DECADE! You always post shit about community, and being present - here is your community! This isn't new. It's just your friends, your best friends are getting married, and if you could not try to make me feel bad for being excited about that right now, it'd be just goddamn swell.

ZOEY

You're being really self involved about this whole thing.

CARA

Zoey I think you should go.

ZOEY

I'm sorry. What?

CARA

If you feel that way, then I don't think you should be celebrating with us tonight.

ZOEY

(to Louis)

Wanna say anything?

LOUIS

You make me wanna "Shout?" But that's a pretty over played wedding song.

ZOEY

You are just a constant let down.

CARA

You're rude. Get out of our house.

ZOEY

Fine. Let's go Roald.

ROALD

Do you wanna step outside for a minute Zo?

ZOEY

What are you talking about?

ROALD

Only a question.

ZOEY

You're ready to leave right?

ROALD

Zoey-

ZOEY

Right?

ROALD

I think I'm gonna stick around for a little bit.

BLAKE

Wow, losing the crowd now.

ZOEY

(to Blake)

CAN YOU SHUT THE FUCK UP PLEASE?

(to Roald)

Why would you do that?

ROALD

I get that you're upset-

ZOEY

She is kicking me out!

ROALD

I'm sure we could still talk this out.

TIARA

Maybe I should actually get going.

BLAKE

You wanna leave sugar?

CARA

No reason for you to leave now. The numbers just worked themselves out.

ZOEY

Roald I want you to come home with me.

ROALD

I hear that, but our friend Cara needs me right now too. A person must hold all commitments equally responsibly.

ZOEY

What about being responsible to me?

ROALD

I have been, I'll still be home tonight. I don't think this has to be a fight.

ZOEY

You wanna ditch me and not fight?

ROALD

I'm honoring a commitment that we both agreed to weeks ago.

ZOEY

God, you are such a pussy.

PAUL

That's toxic.

ZOEY

And you're a fuckboy for going along with it.

PAUL

I was backing you up.

ZOEY

And there you still are.

ROALD

Zoey, there's no need to make a scene. This is just one night.

ZOEY

Things are one in a vacuum.

Zoey begins to leave.

CARA

(blurting it out)

It's going to be in April!



ZOEY

What is?

CARA

We're getting married in April. Two years from now, not the next one.

(to the room now)

Louis and I are getting married four-three-twenty-one. It's our countdown to eternity.

(back to Zoey)

I wanted to make the announcement while we were all still together.

Zoey stares blankly at Cara.

ZOEY

I'll let you know if I'm available.

Zoey storms toward the exit and out of the apartment.

**SCENE 9**

A long, tense pause.

BLAKE

April's great... I love the weather in April, some people complain about the rain but I don't mind it. It's never too hot... I don't have any confirmation, because that's a long time from now, but I uh, I got a good feeling about that April too. Should be beautiful. Another beautiful April.

LOUIS

Thanks Blake.

BLAKE

And can I also say, I haven't seen people get that excited about TV since UVA went all the way in the tournament.

LOUIS

My god, that last game?!

BLAKE

Just that overtime!

PAUL

That was a fun series to watch. My thing is I just can't stand Kyle Guy.

BLAKE

I'd hate him too if he wasn't on my team.

PAUL

That dude has a real 'punch-me' kind of face.

ROALD

It was really that whole team that took it. De'Andre Hunter made that happened too.

BLAKE

No doubt, Hunter is gonna be a first rounder for sure.

(to Tiara)

Do you watch any basketball?

TIARA

No I don't seek it out.

BLAKE

Any sports?

TIARA

I like going to baseball games.

PAUL

There we go! The greatest sport.

LOUIS

When compared against NASCAR as it often is.

PAUL

Who makes that comparison?

LOUIS

The common viewing audience?

PAUL

(to Tiara)

Who's your team?

TIARA

Oh, just who ever is playing. I really only like to watch it live. It's an activity that needs beer and nacho cheese.

BLAKE

I can fuck up some ballpark nachos.

PAUL

Stadiums are the place to be. Sports, concerts, nothing like people coming together.

ROALD

They're a fun project to spend tax dollars on.

BLAKE

Louie -- sorry, I mean Louis, do you remember that game we went to our sophomore year? When we tried to get better seats?

LOUIS

Yeah, I don't think-

BLAKE

We're at a basketball game, and its pouring rain outside. So by the time our wet asses get inside we see that the stadium is still basically empty. Tip off is two minutes out and there is just a sea of unclaimed seats. So rather than hike up and around to the shitty seats we bought, the two of us decide to just take one of the empty seats. Someone might come, but maybe the rain will keep enough people out for us to stay. So we post up right in line with the paint on our side, like three rows back. Perfect view. Then the game gets going, and more people start showing up; we keep scoring and other people fill in the spots around ours. It's almost the end of the first half and we still have these seats, our boys have the lead, and we're going apeshit in the stands. This miracle of a day was being gifted to us, when all of sudden Louis feels this tap on his back. There's a tap on his back, and it's these two jacked bros - both double fisting. They say we're in their seats, but they're all pissy about it. He starts apologizing and pulling at me to go when this thick necked motherfucker says "If you knew these weren't your seats why did you sit there?" All high and mighty about it. Like he never moved over in a movie theatre after the trailers started. Never mind that they we're showing up half way through a two hour game. So I decide screw it, today's been good enough for me, I don't care what happens next. So I get up in their faces. I'm yelling about how these are our seats they need to just leave us alone. I tell them to sit down and let me and my friend watch the game. And this piece of work throws a full beer at me. Not even a pour, just tosses a cup at my face. Beer still in it. Splashes all over me, Louis stepped up on a chair like there was mice, and the security ended up coming to kick out the two dudes trying to move us. So the seats were a little wet, but we had them until the end of the game now.

PAUL

You got two dudes kicked out because you stole their seats?

LOUIS

They were also getting rowdy.

PAUL

After Blake said he was yelling at them.

ROALD

It could have seemed like bullying on their end.

PAUL

It's a dick move on you guys.

BLAKE

I think it all evened out.

TIARA

What happened?

BLAKE

So from the seats that now felt better knowing we stole them-

LOUIS

It also made our foam fingers grow bigger.

BLAKE

We won that game, so it was a great night in Charlottesville. The two of us go out, hit up a house party we know. Crowd there isn't great, so we follow some new friends to their party. These girls knock on the door; we all get let in. And right past the threshold, we are locking eyes over a beer pong table with the two dudes from the stadium. We are standing in their apartment.

ROALD

No shit?

BLAKE

I'm not shitting. We are eye to eye with these guys, and they take a break from their game to walk over to us at the door. Before I can tell Louis we should split, they call us out. "Hey fan boys, what do you want? Looking for your seats?" Then my man went full sass on em, looked straight at him and said "We were gonna wait and see where you wanted to sit."

TIARA

Stop! You did not?!

LOUIS

Wish I hadn't.

BLAKE

They punched him in the stomach so hard he threw up immediately. Fell right into it too. Man, we were kids back then, crazy how much things change.

TIARA

Not everything though. You guys are still friends.

BLAKE

I still get yelled at by people on their way out.

LOUIS

And parties still go downhill when you show up.

CARA

But not this one! Sorry y'all I just needed a minute there.

LOUIS

You're totally fine babe.

CARA

It's okay Louis. Sorry for that little scene folks. But I think this is a great chance for everyone to refill their drink, and I'm going to pull out a few more hors d'oeuvres for us to snack on.

ROALD

And dinner?

CARA

After the slide show. Along with the announcement of our wedding date, Louis and I put together a beautiful visualization of our journey together. I know you'll love it.

ROALD

I'm sure I can't even imagine.

CARA

Soon enough. Louis could I borrow you?

LOUIS

No return policy. Still want it?

CARA

(vaguely gesturing)

Yes, could we um...

LOUIS

Sure.

As Louis and Cara walk away together:

ROALD

(to Paul)

You seeing any update on the supermarket?

PAUL

(quietly)

I'm looking, but I'd hate to kill this joyful mood.

BLAKE

(to Tiara)

You look really great tonight by the way. I know you didn't dress up for me, self empowerment and all that, but I appreciate it.

TIARA

Thanks, I feel a little over dressed.

BLAKE

Nah, some people just don't get how to throw a party.

LOUIS

How are you doing babe?

CARA

I'm hanging in as best I can.

LOUIS

You always find a way.

CARA

I can't believe Zoey just came at me like that.

LOUIS

She really *blew up* huh?

CARA

Really?

LOUIS

It was right there.

CARA

I'm freaking out a little bit. Does everyone in this room hate me right now?

LOUIS

I care about you Cara.

CARA

Does everyone else in this room hate me?

LOUIS

I think you both made a lot of valid points, and some of the judges are probably still scoring.

CARA

I didn't want to kick her out but she just wouldn't drop it.

LOUIS

It was clearly important to her.

CARA

You think it was the right call, right?

LOUIS

I don't follow a lot of world politics, so I don't know how much value we should be putting on this event.

CARA

I mean about kicking her out.

LOUIS

I think you kicked her out with all kinds of class.

CARA

Do you think I shouldn't have kicked her out?

LOUIS

She seemed half out the door either way...

CARA

But do you think I made it worse?

LOUIS

I think Blake yelling like it was a movie made it the worst.

CARA

Why don't you just tell me what you think?

LOUIS

Because I don't know what you want me to say.

CARA

I want you to tell me your opinion!

LOUIS

My opinion is tonight should be however you want it to be. If you want to kick everybody out, that's fine. Even if you just want to kick Paul out, I would be totally fine with that.

CARA

I want this to be a good party.

LOUIS

It's still is a great party.

CARA

I am going to bring out some more food, and then we will show off the slide show?

LOUIS

You still want to do the slide show?

CARA

Do you not want to do it now?

LOUIS

I'm just asking.

CARA

But why are you asking?

LOUIS

I am just making sure you still want to do it. I am trying to make sure you're OK and check in. Isn't that what we're doing here?

CARA

Yes I still wanna do the fucking slide show we paid \$700 to make.

LOUIS

OK.

CARA

Will you just tell me I did the right thing?

LOUIS

Who am I, Spike Lee?

CARA

I'm just worried about Zoey. She's one of my best friends-

LOUIS

I think if we want to keep the energy up we should get going on the slide show.

CARA

I'm still working on the hors d'oeuvres.

LOUIS

After that. We just don't want it to get too late and then try to make people watch something.

CARA

Do you think I should have let Zoey stay?

LOUIS

I gotta check in with other people babe, I promise you this party is moving past it, and you should too!

CARA

I'll just focus on the food.

Cara goes off into the kitchen,  
and Louis returns to the larger  
group.

**SCENE 10**

BLAKE

Are you going to tell me you honestly believe any job should be able to sustain a person alone?



PAUL

No one I know is working for fun.

BLAKE

Teenagers? Intellectually disabled-

TIARA

Mentally impaired?

BLAKE

Walmart greeters, burger flippers -- these guys should be taking home enough to buy houses? As much as lawyers and teachers?

ROALD

I already make what fry cooks make. I'm looking for that lawyer money too.

PAUL

Anybody with a job, shouldn't be worried about bills.

BLAKE

How is your job supposed to stop you from blowing your paycheck?

ROALD

Infrastructure investments. But that only happens with funding, which means getting special interest groups out of lawmaking - campaign finance is what we should be talking about.

BLAKE

Systemic shit, yea.

(to Tiara)

I can't imagine how much worse that is for you than any of us.

TIARA

Uh, yea. A lot of urban development is targeted at black people.

PAUL

Blake, I had no idea you knew so much about urban development.

BLAKE

But what we're talking about is compensation. Compensation for two separate commodities: Labor and experience.

TIARA

Skilled labor that any person needs access to, to master.

BLAKE

College is as affordable as ever.

TIARA

Not the loans afterward.

PAUL

Predatory lending is real shit.

ROALD

A lot less grant money in trade programs as well.

PAUL

Don't get me started on internships.

BLAKE

What's your beef with internships?

LOUIS

(in a video game voice)

Start!

BLAKE

(to Tiara)

That's an alternative access to those skills.

PAUL

Not even kind of. Internships are even less helpful because now you have to be able to sustain yourself, outside of school, for an extended period of time.

BLAKE

While you are training. Internships are for students and-

PAUL

What internships are you talking about? I see job postings for interns with at least a four year degree and some prior experience.

BLAKE

I did internships right after college. I got sent on beer runs during those shifts and bought lunch by my co-workers.

PAUL

Did you pay your landlord in lunches?

LOUIS

Paul, did you ever work an internship?

PAUL

Yeah, I'm embarrassed to say that I did do that once. Summer after junior year, I worked solely for the "portfolio experience."

LOUIS

I think they are setting up new scanners at subway stations to take those.

PAUL

It was a move I thought I had to make to get work.

TIARA

Did you afterwards?

PAUL

I finished school, and I took a job that I found out a couple years later still didn't pay enough. When I was in school, we didn't discuss any of this stuff in my classes, so I'm self taught on compensation and how it shouldn't work.

TIARA

I did an internship too. It was paid, \$50 a week.

PAUL

Five days a week?

TIARA

Wednesday to Sunday. I was supposed to be working under the head of an event hall to learn more about corporate gigs, but anytime someone called out sick, I had to be the fill-in at a fraction of their rate. Not just cater-waiter shit either. Like, one day I come in for what's supposed to be a simple company dinner when my boss comes up to me in full panic. She's like "Tiara, they're trying to shut us down. These fire dudes want to close us and we can't let that happen, so you gotta hang more exits signs." So I'm in a sundress, in one of those drivable lift things trying to throw up these signs with a full lobby waiting on me to learn how to drive this thing. Then another guy comes over and yells at me to get down - I'm not certified so I can't be driving this thing. As luck would have it, he hadn't noticed me rising fifteen feet in the air until there was only one sign left to hang. I go back to my boss ready to fight for this little fire hazard of ours, and how do I spend the rest of that event? In the basement office, updating the new budget for the Firemen's Ball later that year. That chick sold me out for another favor.

BLAKE

You mean you got hands-on experience in every aspect of that business?

PAUL

These internships work exactly the way they're supposed to.

BLAKE

It's a choice for people who are career focused. That's why you took yours right?

PAUL

I took mine because it made sense to a kid that didn't know anything.

BLAKE

It made sense because it was a step towards your career.

PAUL

It's a way to weed out poor kids.

BLAKE

Alright, if anything is happening it's anti-Black. I think we need more internships with diversity requirements.

LOUIS

Hey, Blake, can I talk to you?

BLAKE

You throw a party just to chat privately?

PAUL

Yea, Lou. You can't say it in front of us?

LOUIS

I clearly lack the social water-cooler prowess of you both.

PAUL

Water coolers aren't a thing anymore. They build stations next to the sink now. Besides, I'm good at what I do.

BLAKE

Be proud of that.

LOUIS

Blake can we chat?

BLAKE

Do we have to?

LOUIS

Now.

ROALD

There's an element of personal responsibility with all this too. Young professionals who take internships enforce the practice of it. That's the real thing.

Blake and Louis make their way to a different part of the room.

BLAKE

What's going on bud?

LOUIS

I'm hanging in there.

BLAKE

You always find a way. Great party.

LOUIS

You think so?

BLAKE

Not really. The yelling match was pretty off putting.

LOUIS

Yea, Cara got really upset.

BLAKE

She did not wanna turn on that TV huh?

LOUIS

I mean I get her point. I don't want you to think about me every time some terrorist group sieges a building.

BLAKE

Oh Louis, I hardly ever think of you.

LOUIS

Do you feel like Cara does stuff like that a lot?

BLAKE

The yelling thing? I think she can be loud. *You* can be loud.

LOUIS

Yeah.

BLAKE

Loud isn't the worst thing. It's mostly just surprising.

LOUIS

But do you think she yells a lot?

BLAKE

I mean you spend a lot more time with her than I do. What do you think?

LOUIS

I'm looking for your opinion.

BLAKE

Let me grab yours on something first; that Tiara girl...

LOUIS

What about her?

BLAKE

I mean just like what is your general opinion of her?

LOUIS

She's a girl you met on an app and brought to my engagement party.

BLAKE

You met your fiancé on an app.

(Realizing)

She didn't tell all of these guys the bar lie did she?

LOUIS

It's not a lie! We met at a bar after talking on an app.

BLAKE

So do you think Tiara fits the group dynamic well?

LOUIS

I think she's been incredibly polite the whole night.

BLAKE

That's the truth. Especially when Cara was basically yelling at her. Gee, that is twice in one night...

LOUIS

That's what I'm saying. It makes me nervous.

BLAKE

I think she's nervous. Tiara is probably just feeling weird about being the only black person here. You two need to look at that.

LOUIS

Why do you keep bringing up her race?

BLAKE

There's nothing wrong with bringing up her race. She is black, we have to talk about social segregation if we want it to actually change.

LOUIS

But I just feel like you keep calling attention to it.

BLAKE

I'm trying not to yell about it at least.

LOUIS

But, what I'm saying is, are there... other-

BLAKE

I don't count my black friends Louis. Christ, what's wrong with you.

LOUIS

Have you ever dated a black woman before?

BLAKE

If you must know, this is my first opportunity. Again, social segregation screws us too.

LOUIS

Do you like her?

BLAKE

She's been really nice to me.

LOUIS

Then maybe just try to isolate her a little less?

BLAKE

Does that mean we can go back to the rest of the party?

**SCENE 11**

Cara enters from the kitchen with more food.

CARA

Alright y'all, we still have more of our Bloody Marys, and these finger apps are out. Let's fill those drinks up.

(calling across the room)

Louis, are we good to start in two?

LOUIS

(calling back)

Sure thing babe.

ROALD

Going pretty late on dinner I see.

CARA

A lot of cultures don't eat at a dinner party until 10 or later.

PAUL

Places in Europe... Like France?

LOUIS

Blake I really gotta tell you something.

BLAKE

Is it about Tiara?

LOUIS

No! It's about Cara. I, I really don't feel good about this presentation?

BLAKE

You guys gonna sing 'Don't Go Breaking my Heart?'

LOUIS

We're doing a slide show of our trip to Maui.

BLAKE

Oh, I was wondering what that thing on the cart was.

LOUIS

Cara had us make these slides and she wants us to tell the story of how I proposed to her on this mountain, spontaneously after this hike.

BLAKE

Spoilers much?

LOUIS

Blake, none of it happened.

BLAKE

What do you mean? You guys are engaged right?

LOUIS

Yes we're engaged, but, but Cara planned this engagement. It's the reason I went with her to Maui.

BLAKE

Well that seemed obvious already.

LOUIS

I mean, there was a guide taking photos on our private walk. Cara made up this whole story that she wants us to tell people.

BLAKE

I mean, you guys made up a story about meeting too.

LOUIS

We just skipped a step! We did have our first date at a bar.

BLAKE

Which, if I can say, drinks for a first date? Zero creativity. What's special about that? The first time I took her out-

LOUIS

Can we -- I'm feeling, like, really nervous.

BLAKE

It's just like any presentation. Find a spot in the back of the room-

LOUIS

I mean the engagement!

BLAKE

You're just talking crazy shit.



LOUIS

No man, I'm serious. I don't know if this is the right call.

BLAKE

Oh, and quitting a 90K a year job was?

LOUIS

Blake-

BLAKE

Dude, Cara stuck by you when you did that. And this pussy footing you're doing right now would have made a lot more sense then.

LOUIS

I wasn't happy. I'm still not-

BLAKE

Why do you talk about that so much? That's why you're not happy.

LOUIS

Don't you think I should do what's right for me?

BLAKE

What is right for you? Right isn't relative. Good finances are right.

LOUIS

What I want then.

BLAKE

What more could you possibly want Louie? Look at this, look at this beautiful apartment your girlfriend is paying all the rent on right now. Look over there at the beautiful woman hosting a party in that apartment. The same woman that comes to your shitty open mics to watch you do five minutes of comedy at 11:50. You think there is a more? She has issues sure, but who doesn't have issues? I had sex with a girl who believed in crisis actors once, and honestly if she had called me back I would have done that again. Clearly Cara cares about presentation so go up there, smile, and support this lie she wants to make real. If you can't will yourself to do that, with your whole livelihood at stake... then I don't know what is wrong with you.

LOUIS

I don't think anything's wrong with me Blake.

BLAKE

Then knock 'em dead. I'm gonna grab a drink.

Blake and Louis break apart.  
Blake grabs a beer and returns to  
the group.

Louis walks up to Cara, and holds  
her hand.

CARA

You want to go ahead and get started?

LOUIS

Never been more confident. I'll get the lights.

CARA

Alright, let's gather up. It is that time finally y'all!

The group moves into chairs to  
look at Cara, standing where the  
projections will be.

CARA

The love of my life Louis and I have put together a few  
pictures we wanted to share with you all about the long,  
strange trip it's been to get to know one another. Right  
babe?

LOUIS

Yeah, I'm really happy to share this with you guys.

CARA

Thank you again just for coming-

ROALD

Before you guys do start, if I may, it feels appropriate that  
we should toast our hosts.

BLAKE

Here's to that!

Blake goes to cheers, but instead  
Roald stands up and misses it.

ROALD

Cara, I met you during Freshmen orientation. Literally since  
day one, and we did our first schedules together, we went on  
trips together, I held your feet for your first kegstand...  
Every step of the way we've gotten to be there for you as  
friends. Even when you met this guy, who didn't even go to  
school with us, buuuut over time, you decided you liked him.  
We've gotten to be there for so many steps in your life, and  
now as we prepare to join you on this next stage of the  
journey, I thought of a famous story I once read:

A traveler asked a monk, "I have just entered the monastery.

Will you teach me." The monk responded, "Have you eaten your rice? The traveler replied, "I have." The Monk said, "Then you need to wash your bowl." At that moment the traveler was enlightened.

And with that, I think I speak for all of us here when I say, congratulations.

The group does a vocal cheers.  
Louis is still processing the quote.

CARA  
Thank you Roald. That was beautiful.

ROALD  
My pleasure.

LOUIS  
What does it mean?

ROALD  
Excuse me?

LOUIS  
Like what is the purpose you are supposed to extrapolate from that story?

ROALD  
What ever stands out to you I guess.

LOUIS  
But why did you tell it?

ROALD  
It made me think of you guys?

LOUIS  
So why not just tell me what stood out to you when you read it, that made you think of us.

CARA  
Babe.

ROALD  
Just think about it.

LOUIS  
Why don't you just tell me?

ROALD  
Because that's not the point of a story like this! You're supposed to meditate on it.

CARA

It was a very sweet sentiment. Louis, maybe we should get started.

LOUIS

OK. Well, thank you, again, Roald for sharing that story. You've given us all a lot to think about. So without further ado...

Cara turns off the last light switch and Louis turns on the projector.

"Welcome" flashes brightly, and lingers on the wall.

PAUL

What's this?

LOUIS

It's a title slide.

BLAKE

It's called welcome?

TIARA

I love the font!

LOUIS

No.

CARA

This is just an introduction. Now we are starting, welcome to the start.

PAUL

Were we not welcomed before now?

ROALD

It's like an artistic commentary on how people feel when they look at art.

CARA

Can we just go to the next please?

Louis advances the slides.

The projector now shows the title: "CARA & LOUIS'S NEXT FOREVER."

BLAKE

Cuuute.

CARA

This is going to be a little less interactive if we're all okay with that. OK?

A quick, awkward pause.

CARA

So this is it. This is a story we made to share with all of you. As you guys might remember, Louis and I had our first date just over 3 years ago, in May 2016. We met for drinks at George Keeley on 85th street because Louis was trying to get his name on the wall for drinking 100 beers.

BLAKE

(whispering to Tiara)

I actually finished mine.

CARA

Next slide.

The slide changes to a bathroom selfie of a slightly younger Cara. Little has changed besides the clothing.

CARA

That night I had a very well made Bloody Mary, our drink of the evening. Feeling pretty good after a bathroom break I decided to take a selfie and post it the next day. The smile on my face should attest to how much fun I'm having. I actually used the hashtag "instalove" on that post, at the time just for better SEO, but in retrospect it only rings more true. Me and this cute guy Louis had found instant-love.

Cara snaps her fingers to make the point. Louis advances to the next slide: The couple very overdressed at a bar. The lens is smudged.

CARA

We had a lovely dinner for our first anniversary and then we went back to the same bar for drinks. A kind stranger snapped this photo for us to save. Next slide.

Louis advances the slide: We see the couple sitting together on an airplane.

CARA

We took our love on tour. Work pulled me in all directions as my hair and make up career took off, and I pulled this guy along with me every chance I could get.

Louis advances the slide: A selfie of the couple on the beach.

CARA

To Miami getaways in the winter,

Louis advances the slide: The couple takes a selfie with a selfie stick at the Grand Canyon

CARA

To spring in the country's most beautiful desert,

Louis advances the slide: A posed photo of Cara on a mountain.

CARA

To summer hikes as far off the trail as we could get. All of it leading to the trip we took last month. A week long stay, for both work and pleasure on the Hawaiian Island of Maui.

Louis advances the slide: A selfie of the Couple on a beach, wearing leis.

PAUL

This is getting insane.

CARA

Uh, we had our first free day three days into the trip. And Louis asked me to go on a hike that morning. I had no idea what was gonna happen. He took me alone along a rocky trail, until it wrapped around into a field of flowers. I was about to run into it but Louis grabbed my hand.

The slide changes to their proposal picture.

CARA

Right then, alone in that field of flowers with the love of my life, it was like time stood still for a moment-

PAUL

Who took the picture?

ROALD

(to Paul)

Come on.

PAUL

If you're alone in the field who is taking this photo?

LOUIS

Just chill Paul, we're almost through.

PAUL

No, I'm fucking done.

CARA

Why are you being so rude?

PAUL

You think I'm being rude? Rude was kicking out one of your best friends from an engagement party because she cared more about actual people than kissing your ass.

CARA

If you're so mad about it why didn't you go with her?

PAUL

I should have. I know it now, but I thought to myself, maybe I owe this too you. Just like Roald, maybe I needed to see this through with you.

LOUIS

Which again guys, not too much time left.

BLAKE

Good job staying on brand.

ROALD

Come on guys!

CARA

Paul you always have to shit on people.

PAUL

I don't think anyone besides you wanted to watch this.

CARA

I wanted to share my photos with my friends!

PAUL

Then put them online! Do you know why people make you look at their photos? Because they have so much to prove they need evidence. Because they believe that it's the best way to prove they exist. Just look at the photos, at photography itself. It changed and it is so much worse now. When my grandfather used to sit me down and show me the photos he took it would be page after page of these magnificent landscapes. The harbors in Hong Kong, or a small house at the foot of the Andes. He wanted to share his experience with me. He saw these things and they affected him and he wanted me to have that. To know that. To feel the same unexpected and overwhelming sense of belonging that is grounded in nature. He was trying to help me. You and these photos, no I won't even call them that - these fucking selfies... they are about you.

You put this whole trip together, you traveled half way across the world, without ever seeing another country by the way, and made us look at the photos just to prove you exist. Fine, you exist. We see you. There you are next to the Grand Canyon, everyone knows about the Grand Canyon so, you are as real as that. We all collectively acknowledge your existence-happy?

CARA

I-

PAUL

Answer the question. Do you feel happy now? Have we given you the likes you needed to reach today's self esteem goal?

LOUIS

Paul, lay off.

PAUL

Oh like you give a shit about this argument. You're as bad as she is about wanting people to like you.

LOUIS

I'm certainly not as used to being shit talked as you clearly are.

PAUL

Everybody wants to run their mouth.

CARA

All you do is run your mouth! Every day, since the first day I met you and you were bitching about the timing of a major's meeting - you have never once stopped complaining. These people care too much, they care too little, this isn't cool to care about, because only *I* could ever possibly understand all the complex issues of the global landscape.

PAUL

I'm not gonna be ashamed of reading.

CARA

I don't think you have the capacity to be ashamed of anything.

LOUIS

Let's just drop this you guys. We can all take a few minutes-

CARA

Why do you wanna pick on me? What do I do that offends you? Don't tell me its some pack of strangers in France, because Zoey actually cared about that and she made it known.

PAUL

How could I speak up after that?



CARA

All you ever do is talk. You talk and talk and fill the space, and make sure everyone everywhere always knows any opinion you have on anything. No one else's is worth reading, you can just rely on everything you taught yourself.

PAUL

Better than trying to live a lie.

CARA

You don't even have a life! You pick fights on twitter and shit on everything but offer no alternative. My big crime tonight is that I invited my friends over in the hopes they would say nice things about me. I thought, maybe, since I had just announced my life changing engagement, five other people in the world could spend the evening helping me feel good about myself.

PAUL

Congrats you're getting engaged to a loser you were wishy-washy about three years ago.

LOUIS

Paul, get the fuck out of my house.

PAUL

With god damn pleasure.

Paul begins to grab his things,  
and heads for the door.

LOUIS

Thanks for stopping by with lukewarm dorm beer too.

PAUL

I had it left over from the last time you had a job. Here, keep one. On me.

Paul turns around and throws a  
full beer at Louis; he misses and  
strikes the projector. The Light  
surges and goes black.

PAUL

Aloha bitch.

Paul exits the apartment.

## **SCENE 12**

TIARA

(rising)

Do you have paper towels in your kitchen?

Yeah. LOUIS

I'll grab some. ROALD

Tiara picks up the spilling beer and cleans it up. Louis is messing with the projector. Cara is frozen.

That piece of garbage broke the whole thing. LOUIS

Did he get it wet? BLAKE

I don't think so. LOUIS

Is it still buzzing? BLAKE

I'm hearing something. LOUIS

Might just be the lamp. ROALD

Well I guess we have to buy one of those now. LOUIS

Cheaper than a slide projector I assume. ROALD

Where did you guys actually find this at? BLAKE

I'm sorry y'all can't see the rest of the pictures. CARA

It's OK babe. No one here blames you. LOUIS

I know you were curious about where it was going. CARA

A lot of them looked really nice. You two have been on a lot of fun trips together. TIARA

We haven't hit the ground too hard yet. LOUIS

CARA

He's right though, we've never left the US.

LOUIS

Well, just not yet. Who knows, things going the way they are US territory might not look the same eventually!

CARA

We've spent all this time traveling around one place.

ROALD

Multiple places, just one culture maybe.

BLAKE

More like a bunch of stolen cultures, pretending to be one. Colonialism. Am I right?

CARA

I appreciate you guys all sitting through that. I don't know if you agree with Paul, and think I'm a self loving fascist.

LOUIS

Babe, no one thinks-

CARA

I get if you do. I did want to have a party to celebrate something Louis and I already got to celebrate. And I wanted people to look at me, and say nice things. And maybe it was selfish to want it more than I cared about that kidnapping. I can hear that. Right now though, I'm too sad to even stand up, so I'm gonna go to bed.

LOUIS

Babe, come on we don't need to-

CARA

Dinner's canceled. It still hasn't been started. Go home.

Cara drags her feet to the bedroom.

Louis watches her leave and turns back to the whole room looking at him.

**SCENE 13**

LOUIS

(like a deer in headlights)

Nobody, like has to leave. We're not gonna do anything or something like that.

TIARA

Is she OK?

LOUIS

I should probably go check on her.

ROALD

Why don't I pop in and do that?

LOUIS

Thanks Roald, fiancé, so I think I have this one.

ROALD

Well if you still have guests I'd hate for them to have no host.

LOUIS

-

ROALD

I think she just needs a breath. A break from tonight, let me check in and she'll be out in no time.

LOUIS

Sure, that makes sense. I can stress me out too.

ROALD

I believe it.

Roald retreats to the bedroom.

**SCENE 14**

Blake is deep on his phone while Louis stares off into the hallway.

Tiara, with no one watching, slowly rises and gathers her things.

TIARA

So thanks for having me over. Loved meeting you all, but I think it's about that time for me.

BLAKE

Oh, you heading out?

TIARA

Yea, it's been a memorable evening though.

BLAKE

Yea Louis, Cara was really out of hand tonight.

LOUIS

Did you just hear anything she said?

BLAKE

I'm glad she didn't yell it this time, like she did at poor Tiara. Honestly do you think she would have done that to a white fr-

TIARA

OK I'm going to leave now.

BLAKE

I'll leave with you. Where do you wanna hit up next?

TIARA

Blake, I think I'm going to leave by myself.

BLAKE

What? Are you tired?

TIARA

Yes, but also I want to leave alone.

BLAKE

Come on beautiful, don't let this little pity-party ruin our night.

TIARA

Blake, this night has been ruined so many times.

BLAKE

And I'm sorry about that. No idea this would happen.

TIARA

What do you think happens when you bring someone to an event like this? A six person dinner party as a third date? When I'm the 7th wheel? That's sociopathic. You got some shit you need to pray about, or talk with someone about, or something.

BLAKE

I mean I'm trying to learn the cultural-

TIARA

Stop. This is fetishizing and it's fucking gross.

(to Louis)

Tell your fiancé the mini-quiches were superb. You have a lovely home.

LOUIS

Thanks. Hope you wind up somewhere as nice as your granddad!

TIARA

(stopping at the door)

What do you mean by that?

LOUIS

Oh, just that if he left this building, he must have found somewhere else pretty great to give it up.

TIARA

What do you think happens to people who live in buildings before the get renovated like this?

Tiara exits the apartment.

**SCENE 15**

Louis and Blake stand shocked in the room.

LOUIS

I don't think I get rhetorical questions.

BLAKE

You know in her profile, she actually said "No Drama." I mean, how fake is that? It's this attempt to seem cool, like "I would never be the cause of drama." Like there are people menacing on-

LOUIS

Yeah Blake, I read a bunch of those articles when I was on dating apps too. It's not a good thing to put in your profile.

BLAKE

...I just meant it's childish.

LOUIS

Goddamn dude. Can you feel the room? I really don't want to talk about the dating profile of a rando who just stormed out of my apartment.

BLAKE

I mean, that was a pretty weird time to make a joke about gentrification.

LOUIS

I didn't! And it seems like Tiara thought you were a real great listener, huh?

BLAKE

Great presentation by the way. Seems like it went over well?

LOUIS

I'm just so glad I got to share it with my closest friend and some child he met online.

BLAKE

Well I know its a special day when a man decides to suck it up and marry a fucking woman he doesn't even like.

LOUIS

That's the advice you gave me!

BLAKE

One of those times when I was talking too much? You're blabbering five feet from your only more-serious-now girlfriend about it being a mistake and I need to keep things to myself?

LOUIS

You've never kept your opinions on Cara to yourself.

BLAKE

Do you know what I thought about during that presentation? Do you remember on your first birthday together, the painting she gave you?

LOUIS

You're a selfish asshole.

BLAKE

I remember laughing at that painting with you. We used to spend so much time making fun of the stupidest fucking painting I've ever seen. Didn't you have fun doing that?

LOUIS

We were drunk half the time-

BLAKE

Not every time. And you still said all that shit. Couldn't help but notice I didn't see that up this evening. Do you keep that one in the bedroom?

LOUIS

Yeah. It's mixed in with all my fun memories of you and a bunch of other shit I don't have.

Blake goes to the bar, pours a drink and leaves with the glass; exiting the apartment.

LOUIS

What a prick.

**SCENE 16**

Roald enters from the bedroom delicately.

LOUIS

Hey Roald man, how is she?

ROALD

She's hanging in as best she can.

LOUIS

She always finds a way.

ROALD

Yea, she does.

LOUIS

Does she seem really upset?

ROALD

That was the vibe I got when she canceled dinner.

LOUIS

But I mean when you talked to her now.

ROALD

Even now Cara and I still slip back into our college selves. Lying in bed, bitching about the world and all our plans to leave it.

(after thinking about it)

Not in a suicide way or anything. She isn't like that.

LOUIS

That's good.

ROALD

Definitely. She is still sad, and that is a lot to work through in-and-of itself. But not that.

LOUIS

So that story you told earlier.

ROALD

Been thinking more about it?

LOUIS

Not a ton before right now. Been slightly occupied. Still am I think.

ROALD

Time can be an expression of our priorities.

LOUIS

Does it help you to say things like that?

ROALD

To vocalize my perceptions of the world? Yes, large precedent of that being helpful; albeit pretentious at times.



LOUIS

What was that story about? Why did you preface the slide show with it? Razzing us for having never gone to Asia?

ROALD

I've never been to Asia either. Hear it's beautiful, good ports apparently.

LOUIS

Is it like a double entendre I am missing?

ROALD

Do you know much about the guy Cara dated in college?

LOUIS

Mac?

ROALD

Yea Mac. They were together for two years and then some weird stuff after that. You know how couples in college are, the end is always a little messy. So they would show up at the same parties, totally avoid each other, spend the full party glued to their phones and then leave together. It wasn't a great look. But I remember this one party they got into a big fight, he was trying to text her and she didn't want to that night. But the guy is not having it, they stepped outside, dumping his purse out about how he wants to go home with her, so she shuts it down. It's what she had to do. Dude was getting too controlling about it, and that's an even worse look. It's a bummer for him, because he probably could have kept things going if he didn't go coo-coo about the whole thing. Ya know?

LOUIS

You know Roald, I'm starting to think you just really suck at telling stories.

ROALD

Well to each his own I suppose.

LOUIS

Yea, and I don't like yours. Have a good night.

ROALD

Tell Cara Goodnight for me.

Roald exits the apartment.

**SCENE 17**

Louis is alone in the room. His phone goes off.

His face says it all.

**SCENE 18**

Cara emerges from her bedroom, now dressed in a sweatshirt and leggings. She is holding the painting Louis moved earlier.

Did you see-

LOUIS

Yea.

CARA

I mean, it's good. Those people got out without us. They just ended up storming the place.

LOUIS

She hangs the painting back on the wall.

I think this painting was the first all nighter I pulled after graduating.

CARA

That's pretty impressive for one night.

LOUIS

It was a lot more than one night. But the last night, it was hard to know it was ready.

CARA

I can imagine.

LOUIS

I guess I have a pattern of trying too hard.

CARA

Well babe, you've always been willing to put in the work.

LOUIS

I don't know who is going to want to stand up there with us at our wedding. I feel like we just threw a party for people who hate us.

CARA

If you want to save money we could probably just double up with someone else. Split everything 40-60. We show up early, and agree to get married while they're getting ready. Borrow the least popular bridesmaid. I think this could be a whole new market for wedding planning. "Timeshare services."

LOUIS

CARA

I texted Zoey, but I haven't heard anything back from her.

LOUIS

Do you remember when people thought texting wasn't going to catch on? In the T9 stage when people were like "What a fad!"

CARA

Yeah once we got keyboards it got a lot easier for sure.

LOUIS

That makes a lot of sense. The big keyboard industry.

Cara sits down on the couch and  
Louis comes to her.

LOUIS

When did you get a phone with a keyboard?

CARA

I don't remember.

LOUIS

Just think about it.

CARA

It was in high school. Maybe junior year. My dad got me a Blackberry.

LOUIS

Wow, high school with a Blackberry. Did it have AIM?

CARA

It had AIM. Also had solitaire.

LOUIS

I remember the graphics on that game being totally sick.

CARA

Yeah especially at the end of the game-

LOUIS

When all the cards explode like-

Louis begins to act out the card  
animation at the end of  
solitaire.

Cara smiles the most she has  
since Paul left.

LOUIS

I had this weird phone my senior year of high school. It was called the Alias, it was supposed to be halfway between a keyboard and a flip phone. The screen flipped both ways, and the buttons had double printings on them. Depending on which way you held it, it was either T9 or regular typing. It was a phone that could be both.

CARA

It sounds like the perfect phone for you.

LOUIS

I liked it enough. One night I sat a soda cup next to it and the bottom dropped out. Phone got soaked in a puddle of Hi-C.

CARA

I wanted tonight to go better.

LOUIS

I can imagine.

CARA

Do you think those guys are going to hate me forever?

LOUIS

I don't think anyone hates you. Not now, and not forever.

CARA

Roald said I was being too demanding of people's emotions.

LOUIS

I think Roald really likes to hear himself.

CARA

I really appreciated him coming in and talking to me.

LOUIS

I was going to do that too, but he told me to wait.

CARA

It's OK. It's not a contest.

LOUIS

But I did offer first.

CARA

I just thought this whole thing would be nice. I thought we could all dress up and have a nice dinner. I should of known it was going to be shit when Paul showed up in a beanie.

LOUIS

I remember when Beanies were using that to sell hats. Ads like "Take life to the shitty part."

CARA

And that other woman. Jesus, she probably hates me.

LOUIS

Well she met a lot of people tonight, so maybe she forgot your name... You know, it will probably sound like I am just saying it, but I thought you threw a great party.

CARA

Good enough to be worth buying the new projector lamp?

LOUIS

Good enough to buy a whole new projector. I'm getting off with a steal.

CARA

We didn't even eat.

LOUIS

We didn't need to! I mean the only thing Tiara did say on her way out was how much she like the quiches.

CARA

Tiara?

LOUIS

Blake's date.

CARA

That's nice of her.

LOUIS

All of this though, this evening - despite the bullshit other people brought into it- that was very nice of you. It was elegant, and classy, and the slide show looked even better than I thought it could. I was happy to get to host people in our apartment together.

CARA

(Tearing up)

You really mean that?

LOUIS

I feel like I have to, this is where I'm sleeping tonight right?

Cara steps away from Louis and takes a minute to gather her thoughts.

CARA

You always have this need to go for the laugh, to try and prove how witty you are. It makes it so much work to be with you.

LOUIS

That feels like a bit of an overreaction.

CARA

I think getting engaged might have been an overreaction.

LOUIS

Babe.

CARA

I'm still here.

LOUIS

This is going really fast, and I feel like tonight has been crazy for both of us. There's no reason for you to take it out on me right-

CARA

I'm gonna go to bed. Maybe I'll wake up tomorrow and this will all be better. Maybe we'll all have forgotten about the party. Maybe someone storms this apartment and I won't. So much can happen in a night.

Cara moves into the hallway.

LOUIS

You know,

She stops dead in her tracks.

LOUIS

It's funny because you started the night saying-

CARA

We all see the irony here Louis. No one needs you to explain it to them; you're not the only person who can see it.

Cara exits into the bedroom.

**SCENE 19**

Louis sits furious and alone for a moment. He is in a still rage.

With restraint, he rises and goes towards the bedroom but stops before arriving. In the hallway, he turns around and looks out into the living room and at the remnants of the party.

LOUIS

God damn animals.

Louis turns back around to face the painting he took down. He straightens the hang and stares at it for a while.

Something clicks in his head.

CLICK. The sound of a tape recorder rewinding, then playing--

The voiceover is a private recording of Louis working through ideas for a comedy set.

LOUIS (V.O.)

Things are weird. I mean things are always weird, but even things that were already weird are weirder now. Time makes weirdos of us all I guess. I spend a lot of time wondering if I could go back and talk to my child-self, what is the sickest yo mamma joke I could burn him with? Something to really let me know I grow up cool.

Louis goes around the room, and picks up all of the glasses and plates people left.

He stacks the plates and collects any trash he sees he dumps into a near by waste basket.

LOUIS (V.O.)

And, um... well dating is weird. Especially now, digitally dating with all the apps. Everyone does an apps bit though... OK, so, dating's weird, it's like you have to date your phone these days. How to have a relationship with a screen, now that is something my past self could teach me. You know, because I masturbated a lot as a kid. Does everyone get that? Jesus fucking...fuck. This is just riveting.

Louis goes over to the projector and coils up the remote clicker. He then goes to the extension cord, coils that, and puts it away. Louis moves the projector by the door to be taken away tomorrow.

LOUIS (V.O.)

OK, OK -- so I'm a pretty thoughtful guy. I feel terrible for the whole day when I forget my girlfriend's birthday because I'm a good boyfriend! I think -- you see, how I think -- thinking, thoughts, thinky-thinky thought thots. Got so many thoughts I don't know what to do. What to even think about... decisions are hard right?

Decisions are hard because you have to make them all the time, and almost NEVER after you make a decision does someone tell you, "EHHH WRONG ANSWER - YOU NEED TO ADJUST COURSE." Multiple choice test are the only thing that easy in life, and those stop in high school. Most of the time in life, when you make the wrong decision, you just keep doing it. You just keep on that path until it becomes suddenly and overwhelmingly obvious that you made a mistake. But that's a lot to think about.

Louis carries the plates and left over food into the kitchen and out of sight. Off stage we hear clanking and clattering coming from the kitchen.

LOUIS (V.O.)

Phones are weird too, right?

CLICK. The voiceover cuts off.

The sound of running water and dishes being scrubbed off stage becomes the only sound in the theatre as the lights slowly fade.

BLACKOUT.

**END OF PLAY**