depressed roomies

a pilot by

Charlie Kaufman
INT. ALAN AND ARTHUR'S LIVING ROOM - EVENING

IT'S A TENEMENT APARTMENT WITH "COLLEGE" DECOR: SAGGING COUCH COVERED IN A PATTERNED SHEET, "OLD TRUNK" COFFEE TABLE, CINDERBLOCK BOOKCASE. ALAN, MID-TWENTIES AND HOLLOW-EYED, PACES WHILE TALKING INTO A HAND-HELD TAPE RECORDER. THERE IS A CONSTANT "CLOMPING AND DRAGGING" SOUND COMING FROM THE APARTMENT OVERHEAD.

ALAN

Alan: an Oral Biography,
chapter (calculating) three thousand and eighty-one.
Alan, born on August 14, 1968,
is ugly, stupid, vile,
pretentious, unemployed ...
smelly ...

ARTHUR, ALSO MID-TWENTIES AND A LITTLE OVERWEIGHT, ENTERS CARRYING A BAG OF GROCERIES.

ARTHUR

Hey, Alan.

ALAN

(into recorder) Enter Arthur, weary from another day spent in a needy, and dare I say, desperate pursuit of money.

ARTHUR

Please leave me out of your self-indulgent rant.
ALAN
Ooh, I like that! (into recorder) Alan is self-indulgent. He grew up in Queens, New York.

ARTHUR
(taunting) Oh, Alan, look where I've been.

ARTHUR TURNS AROUND HIS GROCERY BAG TO REVEAL A GRISTEDES LABEL.

ALAN
(grabbing Arthur's lapels) My God, who'd you have? Who, who, who?

ARTHUR
Name-tag Rosa S., checkout girl extraordinaire

ALAN
(backing away) She said, "Hi. How are you today?" to you, didn't she?

ARTHUR IS UNPACKING HIS GROCERIES AND WRITING "ARTHUR" ON EACH ITEM BEFORE PUTTING IT AWAY.

ARTHUR
It would seem so.

ALAN
You bastard.
ARTHUR
There's a little book called "How to Win Friends and Influence People", my boy. You should give it a look-see.

ALAN
Please don't try to suck me into your cult.

ARTHUR
Fine. Remain friendless and uninfluential.

ALAN
Thank you I will. (into recorder) Still helplessly in love with check-out girl Name-tag Rosa S. Would marry same if only she'd ask me, "Hi, how am I today."
ARTHUR

I may marry her first. You see, I'm winning her friendship and influencing her right now, even as I unpack. That's the thing about winning friends and influencing people, Alan, you can practice it wherever you happen to be. The subway, dining with the boss, at a pep rally.

ALAN

Are you even speaking English now? Because ...

ARTHUR

Fine.

ALAN

Fine. (falling back onto the couch) I'm depressed. (beat) Why are you writing "Arthur" on those roach motels?

ARTHUR

They're my roach motels.

ALAN

And my roaches are not allowed to get stuck in your motels?
ARTHUR
Look, I just want to make it clear that I purchased them.

ALAN
Do I keep you from using the trash receptacle that I bought? Should I write "Alan" on the garbage can?

ARTHUR
Well I can't think of a more fitting monument.

ALAN LUNGES AT ARTHUR. THEY WRESTLE ON THE FLOOR FOR A WHILE. THEN THEY LOSE INTEREST, UNTANGLE THEMSELVES, AND GO ABOUT THEIR BUSINESS: ARTHUR PUTTING AWAY GROCERIES, ALAN STARING OUT THE WINDOW AT THE STREET BELOW.

ALAN
(under breath) Oh baby, marry me, marry me, marry me ...

ARTHUR
(running to window) Where?
(sees who Alan is watching) Oh yes! Yes indeed! Marry me!

Marry Arthur!

THEY CRANE THEIR NECKS UNTIL SHE IS GONE. THEY SIGH. ARTHUR GOES BACK TO HIS GROCERIES.
ALAN
She hated me. Even from all the way down there she thought I was ugly and unpleasant looking.

ARTHUR
If you're fishing for compliments, I'm not biting.

ALAN
Fine. Who cares?

ARTHUR
Not me, that's who.

ALAN
Fine. (beat) You know, I'd tell you if I thought you were unpleasant looking, if you asked.

ARTHUR
I'm not in need of that service at this time, thank you very much.

ALAN
I'd say you're a little curious.
ARTHUR

Not even. By the way do you hear a "Clomping" or is it simply my heart as I envision sweet Rosa naked on her back, looking up at me and moaning, ad infinitum, Hi, how are you today, Arthur?

ALAN

(pointing up) We have a new neighbor.

ARTHUR

I don't like him. He has a very hard foot.

ALAN

Remember how great it was when everyone moved out of this building except you and me?

ARTHUR

That infestation of rats was the best thing that ever happened to us.

ALAN

Finally, peace and quiet. Not counting the click click click of all those tiny toenails.
ARTHUR

A small price.

ALAN

But now!

ARTHUR

I need you to march right up there and give him a piece of our mind.

ALAN

Why me?

ARTHUR

Because it's your turn.

ALAN

Oh yeah. (turns to leave, turns back) Why is it my turn?

ARTHUR

Because it's always your turn, Alan.

ALAN

Right. (turns to exit, turns back) But we have to talk about that arrangement at some point. Okay?

ARTHUR

At some point, yes.

ALAN EXITS.
ARTHUR (CONT'D)

That book is a godsend.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

ALAN KNOCKS ON AN APARTMENT DOOR. THERE IS A NOISY CLOMPING, AND THE SOUND OF A DOOR UNBOLTING. THE DOOR OPENS TO REVEAL ROD, AN ENORMOUS, IMPOSING, BEARDED YOUNG MAN WITH A WOODEN LEG. ALAN SMILES.

ROD

Yes?

ALAN

(thinking quick) Welcome
Wagon!

ROD

Oh, please come in.

ALAN

Actually, I don't have any of your prizes with me. This is the pre-welcome introductory visit, the one where we say "welcome!", then go away, soon to return with prizes and valuable gifts.

ROD

Would you like some tea. It's a mess in here, but I could...

ALAN

No! Must be going! Soon to return!
ALAN HURRIES DOWN THE HALL.

ALAN (CONT'D)

With valuable prizes!

CUT TO:

INT. ALAN AND ARTHUR'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

ALAN ENTERS, OUT OF BREATH. HE CLOSES THE DOOR BEHIND HIM. ARTHUR IS CANNING FRUIT AND CHANTING. THE CLOMPING CONTINUES.

ARTHUR

Well? (sing-songy) I don't
not hear him.

ALAN

He's about a hundred feet
tall, Arthur. And he has a
wooden leg.

ARTHUR

Did you or did you not tell
the behemoth to be quiet?

ALAN

He has a wooden leg. He's
appendagely-challenged. You
can't tell a cripple to be
quiet. There are ordinances.

ARTHUR

Hmmmmm. What if we asked him
nicely to sit in one place
from the hours of 10 PM to 7
AM daily?
ALAN
(anxiously) Is it my turn still?

ARTHUR
Look, we'll invite Mr. Leg to dinner. I'll bake my world famous Cornish pasties. Then you'll ask him.

ALAN
(sighing) Okay. Make a list. I get to shop. I have a new plan how to make Rosa like me.

ARTHUR
Do tell.

ALAN
I buy tampons, like they're for my girlfriend, see. Women love a man who's willing to buy tampons for his girlfriend. I learned that watching Sinbad.

ARTHUR
The comedian or the sailor.

ALAN
The comedian.
ARTHUR

Sinbad the comedian, huh?
He's good and I'm guessing quite knowledgeable about the ladies. (beat) You double-crossing bastard! I'll teach you to steal my girl!

ARTHUR LUNGE AT ALAN. THEY WRESTLE ON THE FLOOR FOR A BIT, LOSE INTEREST, GET UP.

ARTHUR

(making a list) Let's see... a pound of butter, unsalted...

CUT TO:

INT. ALAN AND ARTHUR'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

A TABLE IS SET, RATHER FORMALLY FOR THESE SHABBY SURROUNDINGS, IN THE CENTER OF THE ROOM. ALAN, ARTHUR, AND ROD ARE EATING.

ROD

Delicious pasties, Arthur.

ARTHUR

Rod, you make me blush. (holds up glass) A toast!

ALAN AND ROD LIFT THEIR GLASSES.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

To our new neighbor Rod. May his apartment be blessed with happy and productive times.

ROD

Amen!
THEY CLICK GLASSES AND DRINK.

ARTHUR

(another toast) And may he sit in a chair and lie comfortably in bed every night from 10 PM to 7 AM the next morning.

ROD

You said it! Hey, wait a minute. I don't get that toast.

ALAN

It's Icelandic. It doesn't translate well.

ARTHUR

Rod, it's just that, with the leg and all, it's a little distracting to ... Alan, who's a writer.

ROD

You don't approve of my leg, Alan?

ALAN

(glaring at Arthur) It isn't that, Rod. I love your leg, very much. It's got a beautiful grain. But it ... clomps, sort of.
ROD

Let me tell you boys where I earned this "clomping" leg. A little place called Nam. Defending you sons of bitches and your right to be hippie draft dodgers and attend Kent State. Now you want to selfishly deny me my only remaining pleasure of ...(at a loss) noisily limping back and forth above people's heads? Shame on you!

ALAN AND ARTHUR ARE SILENT, SHAMED. FINALLY:

ARTHUR

Aren't you a little young to have been in Vietnam, Rod?

ROD

(nervously) Did I say Vietnam? I meant ... Korea?

ARTHUR

Oh.

ALAN AND ARTHUR EXCHANGE GLANCES.

CUT TO:

INT. ALAN AND ARTHUR'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

THE LIGHTS ARE OFF. ALAN AND ARTHUR ARE BOTH IN TWIN BEDS. ROD CAN BE HEARD CLOMPING OVERHEAD.
ALAN
I'm depressed. My neck hurts. Would you rub it?

ARTHUR
He's lying about the war, you know.

ALAN
So maybe he lost his leg under embarrassing circumstances. That doesn't give us a right to make him sit in a chair for nine hours every night.

ARTHUR
Then what's your brilliant idea, brilliant-idea-boy? We buy tampons in front of him? Sinbad the comedian says cripples love guys who buy tampons in front of them.

ALAN
No. And shut up about Sinbad the comedian. Maybe tampons is the kind of thing that only works on African-American women. (beat) How about we trade apartments?
ARTHUR

Brilliant, brilliant-idea-boy.
Keep in mind that we still
have a gloriously vacant,
gloriously quiet apartment
next door to us down here,
something Rod does not have,
up there. I will not give that
up (eyeing Alan) ... without a
fight.

ALAN LUNGES AT ARTHUR, THEY WRESTLE, ROLL OFF THE BED,
GET DISTRACTED.

ALAN

All right, then you come up
with something better.

ARTHUR

Simple. We carpet Senor
Stump's apartment.

ALAN

Brilliant plus. I'm
unemployed. You make 243.38 a
week selling your soul to
industry.

ARTHUR

I know how we don't have to
pay a penny for the carpet.
ARTHUR

(beat) If you're waiting for me to tell you you're not all ears, I'm not biting.

ALAN

I meant, I'm listening.

ARTHUR

Oh.(spreads his arms) Cousin Eddie, the carpet king!

ALAN

No. I despise my cousin Eddie. When we were kids, he used to strip me naked and hold me in a full nelson for hours.

ARTHUR

How delightfully latent of him!

ALAN

You're saying Eddie's gay?

ARTHUR

Isn't everybody? I mean, except us.

ALAN

I guess. But he's married.
ARTHUR
(waving him away) Yes yes yes.
Two hours of (baby voice) "Oh
Eddie, how do you selly-welly
dat big bad carpet-warpet", a
couple of minutes feeling his
biceps, and we'll have the
*poor love* pleading to shower
us in free carpet.

ALAN
And installation?

ARTHUR
(knowingly) Oh yes.

FLIP TO:
INT. ALAN AND ARTHUR'S APARTMENT - THE NEXT NIGHT

ALAN, ARTHUR, EDDIE, BALDING AND 30, AND ESZTER,
EDDIE'S BEAUTIFUL AND HAUGHTY CZECH WIFE, ARE EATING AT
THE DINING ROOM TABLE. EDDIE LOOKS AROUND AT THE DIGS.
THE CLOMPING RUNS THROUGHOUT THE SCENE.

EDDIE
You guys are artists, right.
This is the way artists live.
Am I right?

ALAN
No, not really, Eddie.
ARTHUR
I temp for an oral
surgeon. (coquettishly) God,
Eddie, I'm in people's mouths
all day!

EDDIE
(oblivious) 'Cause I tell you,
I love artists. I'm in the
carpet game. And it might
surprise you East Village
types to learn that my work is
also artistic. Isn't that
right, Eszter?

ESZTER
Is endless excitement.

ARTHUR
(sidling up to Eddie) Oh,
carpet is so interesting,
Edwardo! Tell me more!

EDDIE
Well I work with color,
texture, patterns, pile. You
name it ... shag or no shag.

ARTHUR
(flirty) I'd love to see your
swatches sometime, Eddie.
EDDIE
(pleased) Really? We also carry linoleum. Say, what the hell is that clomping?

ALAN
That's our neighbor Rod. He has a wooden leg.

ARTHUR
No big deal. (suddenly, weeping into hands) Oh God! I hate to complain. He's a war hero and all, but...

ESZTER
(oblivious of Arthur's scene)
In Czechoslovakia I had wooden car.

ARTHUR
(to Eszter) Excuse me, I'm weeping here. Does anyone care?

EDDIE
Pity about his leg. That's a hard thing for a man to lose.

ESZTER
Easy for woman to lose leg?

ARTHUR
Hello? Anybody?
EDDIE
Oh jeez, my wife the women's
libber! (as to a child) It's
darker for a man to lose a
leg, Eszter.

ARTHUR
(to Alan) Quick, they're
digressing, bring up his
biceps.

ALAN
You.

EDDIE
(to Eszter) A guy's got a
tougher life to begin with.
So Imagine if he has to live
it with a tree trunk strapped
to his hip. What's a broad
got to do, eat bon-bons?

ARTHUR
Wow, Edwardo, gorgeous biceps!

EDDIE
(pleased) Really?

ESZTER
Men don't have to give birth!
EDDIE
And what does that have to do with the price of beans in China?

ARTHUR
Did I mention, Eddie, that I really enjoy your muscles?

EDDIE
(making a muscle, to Arthur)
Like a feel, Art?

ARTHUR
(feeling it) Goodness! so big and hard! Do you pump?

ESZTER LOOKS DISGUSTED.

ESZTER
Women objectified in patriarchal society that values only their physical attractiveness.

EDDIE
(to Eszter) End of discussion.
(to Arthur) Naw. It's all from hauling carpet, really.
(to Eszter) See? Somebody likes my body.
ESZTER

Good. Maybe you and Arthur run off together. Someone else shave Eddie's back for a while.

ARTHUR

(still feeling Eddie's arm)
Well I'm impressed. Feel, Alan, while I get the canapes.

ALAN

No.

ARTHUR

(threatening) Feel, Alan,
while I get some more canapes.

ALAN TAKES OVER FEELING EDDIE'S ARM. ARTHUR HEADS TO THE KITCHEN.

EDDIE

So what do ya think, Alan?

ALAN

(half-heartedly) You're a lucky girl, Eszter. Boy, if I were a girl, I'd steal this fella right away from you.

EDDIE

(pleased) Really?
ALAN
(sort of into it) You bet. And when I got you, I'd spoil you rotten, you li'l monkey.

EDDIE
Hot dog! Canapes every night?

ALAN
(suddenly nervous) You'd have at ask Arthur about that. Arthur?

ARTHUR ENTERS WITH TRAY OF CANAPES.

ARTHUR
Yes?

ALAN
Canapes every night if we stole Eddie away from Eszter?

ARTHUR
Of course.

ARTHUR PICKS UP A CANAPE AND FEEDS IT TO EDDIE.

ALAN
Let me feed him one.

ALAN NERVOUSLY POPS A CANAPE IN EDDIE'S MOUTH.

ARTHUR
Let me feed him another ...(glancing at watch) Jeez, I gotta work tomorrow.

ARTHUR STANDS AND SCREAMS AND PULLS AT HIS HAIR.
ESZTER
Perhaps we overstay welcome,
Eddie.

EDDIE
Naw. It's performance art,
honey. Am I right, Arthur?

ARTHUR
No, Eddie. It's the noise, the
noise from above! And me with
such a delicate constitution.
Do something, Eddissimo.

ALAN
Poor Arthur. If only there was
some way to dampen that noise
from above. A floor covering
fabric of some sort, perhaps.

ALAN AND ARTHUR GLANCE OVER AT EDDIE. EDDIE IS BLANK.

ARTHUR
You mean some type of...
cushiony substance to put on
Rod's floor? ... Maybe a
thick, woven cloth to muffle
the ...(looks at Eddie,
sighs)... some type of lawn-like...fibrous...cushiony
...floor-covering like ...

ARTHUR PUTS HIS HEAD IN HIS HANDS. EDDIE LOOKS BLANK.
ALAN
Ooh, I know, Arthur! How about, say, carpet or something?

EDDIE LOOKS BLANK.

ARTHUR
Ooh, you mean, like, what Eddie sells?

EDDIE LOOKS BLANK

ALAN
You mean, Eddie, my cousin, sitting right here ... now?

EDDIE
(idea) Hey, I know, how about I deck the son of a bitch for you!

ARTHUR
Great idea, Eddie! But wouldn't it be even better if you carpeted Rod's apartment for us and absorbed the cost yourself?

EDDIE
(thinking, then magnanimously) For my cousin and my cousin-in-law? You got it, fellas!
ESZTER
Eddie, we cannot give free ...

ALAN
(shoving tray in front of Eszter) More food, Eszter?

ARTHUR
(fast, in Eddie's ear) That includes installation, right?

EDDIE
Don't worry your pretty little heads about it.

ALAN AND ARTHUR SMILE.

ALAN AND ARTHUR
(chirpy) Thank you, Eddie!

THEY EACH KISS HIM ON THE CHEEK. EDDIE BEAMS. ESZTER STORMS FROM THE ROOM.

EDDIE
Broads.

ARTHUR
Broads.

ALAN
Broads.

EDDIE HANDS OUT CIGARS, PUTS HIS ARMS AROUND ALAN AND ARTHUR.

CUT TO:

INT. ALAN AND ARTHUR'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

THE LIGHTS ARE OFF. ALAN AND ARTHUR ARE IN BED. THE CLOMPING CONTINUES.
ALAN
I can't sleep. It's stuffy in here. I'm depressed. Are you awake, Arthur?

ARTHUR
No.

ALAN
Arthur, I'm worried. I think I might've enjoyed feeling Eddie's muscle. I liked the way he looked at me. It made me feel, I don't know, pretty.

ARTHUR
I'm in love with Eddie's wife.

ALAN
(too fast) Me too. (wistfully) I'm going to marry that girl someday.

ARTHUR
I claimed her first, you bastard. You can marry Eddie.

ALAN
You marry Eddie!

ARTHUR
Right, that's just what I want to do, marry into your family.
ALAN

Like we’d have you!

ARTHUR LUNGES FOR ALAN. THEY WRESTLE ON THE FLOOR. THERE IS A KNOCK ON THE DOOR. ALAN AND ARTHUR STOP FIGHTING.

ARTHUR

Angry downstairs neighbor.

You get it. Your turn.

ALAN SIGHS, GETS UP.

ALAN

Right. But remember we still have to discuss this arrangement.

CUT TO:

INT. ALAN AND ARTHUR'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

ALAN SWITCHES ON THE LIGHT, OPENS THE FRONT DOOR. CONTINUOUS “CLOMPING” UPSTAIRS.

ALAN

I'm sorry about the noise again, Mrs. Johnst...

IT'S EDDIE.

ALAN (CONT'D)

Eddie, what are you doing here?

EDDIE ENTERS. ALAN CLOSES THE DOOR. EDDIE STARTS TO WEEP.

EDDIE

I left Eszter. We had a fight.
ARTHUR ENTERS TO HEAR THIS.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Hi, Arthur (pulls a bouquet of flowers from behind his back)
These are for you.

ALAN

(hurt) Of course Arthur gets the flowers.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE
ACT TWO

INT. ALAN AND ARTHUR'S BEDROOM - THE FOLLOWING EVENING

ARTHUR IS ADJUSTING HIS TIE. ALAN SITS ON THE BED, BOUNCING UP AND DOWN. ROD "CLOMPS" UPSTAIRS.

ALAN

This is just till we get the carpet installed.

ARTHUR

I can't believe I actually have to date your cousin.

ALAN

It was all your stupid plan, Arthur.

ARTHUR

But I didn't expect him to actually leave his wife for me. Not that I'm not flattered.

ALAN

Well, I admit I'm jealous that he chose you. I mean, not that I'm interested, but everybody enjoys that vote of confidence. I guess I'm not so pretty after all.
ARTHUR

Stop fishing, Alan.

ALAN

Fine. (then:) You're right.
I'm pathetic.

ALAN LOOKS AT ARTHUR, HOPING HE'LL DISAGREE.

ARTHUR

I refuse to be dragged into this.

ALAN

Fine. (then:) Oh, you're right, Arthur! I will sit down and read your book tonight. I'm going to stop being so dependent on other people's opinions.

ARTHUR

Now you're talking, Alan.
Good for you.

ALAN

(beat) So ... you're, like, proud of me for taking this step?

CUT TO:

INT. FANCY RESTAURANT - EVENING

ARTHUR AND EDDIE SIT AT SMALL ROMANTIC TABLE FOR TWO. EDDIE IS WEARING A WHITE SPORTS JACKET. ARTHUR HAS A CORSAGE PINNED TO HIS LAPEL.
EDDIE
Do you like the corsage?

ARTHUR
Yes. It's beautiful.

EDDIE
I was frantic trying to pick out the right one. I don't know flowers. But I'm gonna learn, I swear it! I'm gonna learn every stinking one for you.

ARTHUR
You did fine, Eddie.

EDDIE
It's called Baby's Brain, I think. It's pretty, right? Am I right?

ARTHUR
Yes, it's very lovely.

EDDIE
I'm coming on too strong, right? I don't know how to do this, Arthur. I've never felt this way before. I'm ashamed.

ARTHUR
(touching Eddie's hand) Don't be. You're doing fine.
EDDIE
It's like a whole new Eddie's been unleashed. It's scary to care so much.

ARTHUR
Right, so, uh, when's that carpet coming in?

EDDIE
Oh. Don't you worry. By the beginning of next week. I've ordered the three inch polyester pile. The war hero could turn a jack hammer on this crap and you'd sleep through it like that pea princess when there's no pea in her entire kingdom.

ARTHUR
But that's five whole days, Eddie. Li'l bitty Artie's having trouble getting his beauty rest now. Can't big strong Eddie call the factory and put a rush on?
EDDIE
No, but, (beaming) well, now's a good time, I guess. It was gonna be a big surprise, but ... I'm taking the apartment next door to you. And ...

ARTHUR
What?

EDDIE
I signed the lease today. And, you know, if you can't sleep at your place, you're welcome to stay over. Of course I'll sleep on the couch. If that's what you want.

ARTHUR
Eddie, honey, you don't want to move into my building.

EDDIE
Oh, but I do. It's just what I need. To begin rethinking all my previous assumptions. Brand new Eddie! I'm gonna decorate, too. I got a book. I'm thinking Southwestern. Loads of pottery everywhere.
ARTHUR
Did I tell you we had rats?

EDDIE
Did I tell you I think you're sweet. (giggles) I can't believe I'm talking this way to man. It's so wicked.

ARTHUR
Did I mention Alan can be so, so jealous?

EDDIE
Don't worry, baby, Alan's scared to death of me. I used to beat the crap outa him when we were kids.

CUT TO:
INT. ALAN AND ARTHUR'S LIVING ROOM - EVENING

THE PLACE IS FILLED WITH BOUQUETS OF FLOWERS, BALLOONS, STUFFED ANIMALS. ALAN IS PACING AND TALKING INTO HIS TAPE RECORDER.

ALAN
Alan: an Oral Biography.
Chapter Three thousand and ninety-four. Alan is positive, good-looking, charming, dynamic, assertive...
THERE IS A KNOCK AT THE DOOR. ALAN OPENS IT. A MALE STRIPPER STEPS IN, SWITCHES ON HIS MUSIC, AND STARTS DANCING.

ALAN (CONT'D)

He's not home yet. Have a seat.

THE STRIPPER SWITCHES OFF HIS MUSIC, SITS. ALAN PACES, GLANCES AT THE STRIPPER.

ALAN (CONT'D)

(into recorder) ...Alan is completely heterosexual ...

ARTHUR DUCKS IN.

ALAN (CONT'D)

(to stripper) Go.

THE STRIPPER TURNS ON HIS MUSIC.

ARTHUR

(to stripper) Stop.

THE STRIPPER STOPS.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

Thank you, it was lovely.

THE STRIPPER LEAVES.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

(to Alan) Well?

ALAN

(hugging Arthur) Arthur, your book has changed my life!

ARTHUR

Fine. What about the carpet?
ALAN
(indicating up) It's in!

ARTHUR
(listens, then:) Hallelujah!
I'm going over to Eddie's to break up.

ALAN
Arthur, I asked Name-tag Rosa S. for a date today.

ARTHUR
(out the door) Oh, buddy, I'm sorry. We'll talk about it when I get back.

ALAN
She said yes.

ARTHUR
(dead in his tracks) That's not possible.

ALAN
It's all in my new attitude! She's coming over for dinner tonight. By the way, how do you make those Cornish pasties?

ARTHUR
I'm not going to tell you.
ARTHUR

Good. And may the best man
win Rosa, not to mention
influence her. (beat) By the
way, you're looking a little
ugly and unpleasant tonight,
Alan.

ARTHUR CROUCHES AS IF HE'S GETTING READY FOR ALAN TO LUNGE AT HIM. ALAN JUST TURNS AWAY.

ALAN

You can no longer hurt me.

ARTHUR

(disgusted) You've changed.

ARTHUR EXITS.

CUT TO:

INT. EDDIE'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

THE PLACE LOOKS LIKE ALAN AND ARTHUR'S, BUT IS TASTEFULLY AND EXPENSIVELY DECORATED IN A SOUTHWESTERN MANNER: NAVAJO RUGS, POTTERY, A STEER SKULL. THERE IS A KNOCK AT THE DOOR. EDDIE EXCITEDLY RUNS FOR IT. HE OPENS IT. ARTHUR STANDS THERE.

EDDIE

Hi! (hugs Arthur) Did you get the tiger lilies and mums and the daisies?

ARTHUR

Yes.

EDDIE

You hated them.
ARTHUR
No. They were fine.

EDDIE
What about that pretty dancing boy?

ARTHUR
Eddie, we have to talk.

EDDIE
(sensing) No. I don't like that sentence. I don't want to have to talk.

ARTHUR
Eddie, this is just not working for me.

EDDIE
Why? What? I can change. I can be whatever works for you. Let me be whatever works for you, Arthur.

ARTHUR
Eddie, I'm heterosexual. I like girls.
EDDIE

My God! (on one knee, insane)
Arthur, listen, Okay, what if I got a sex change, honey? I could do that. I would be happy to do that for you, baby. Think about it: Ding-dong. (sniffs the air) Mmmmm, estrogen! Eddie must be home! Sure, the guys at the warehouse would make fun of me for a while, but that would pass. And there's some cute stuff in the new J. Crew catalogue I think you'd really like me in. Please.

ARTHUR

Eddie, this is not a pretty picture you're painting.

EDDIE

You can't leave me now, Arthur! You're the one who brought this Eddie to the surface. And I love you for that, but you can't leave me alone in this new world.
ARTHUR
I'm sorry, Eddie. You'll find someone. (a thought) You know, Alan has always had a big crush on you.

EDDIE
He's my cousin, damn you!
That's sick!

ARTHUR
I'm sorry, Eddie.

EDDIE
You're a sicko! Get out!

ARTHUR EXITS. EDDIE SLAMS THE DOOR. EDDIE PACES, THEN SLIPS A CD IN THE STEREO, AND CRANKS THE VOLUME.

CUT TO:
ALAN AND ARTHUR'S LIVING ROOM - EVENING
ALAN IS DRESSED TO THE NINES. HE LOOKS OUT THE WINDOW. ARTHUR SCURRIES BACK AND FORTH FROM THE KITCHEN TO THE DINING ROOM TABLE, SETTING UP. PATSY CLINE SINGING "FINGERPRINTS" BLASTS EAR-SHATTERINGLY THROUGH THE WALL.

ALAN
(yelling over it) I can't take much more of this!

ARTHUR
(also yelling) It's better than the clomping!

ALAN
I suppose!
ARTHUR
It's flattering in a way!

ALAN
(looking out the window) Oh my God! Look! Rosa S. is here already!

ARTHUR RUNS TO THE WINDOW.

ARTHUR
Where? (spotting her) Say, that's some limp she's got!

ALAN
You know, I've never seen her walk! She's always behind that cash register!

ARTHUR
You don't suppose she has a wooden leg do you?

ALAN
Who cares? A wooden leg makes some girls even more lovable!

ARTHUR
I've found that too!

CUT TO:
INT. APARTMENT BUILDING STAIRWAY - MOMENTS LATER

ROSA, 25 AND CUTE, LIMPS UP THE STAIRS. SHE HOLDS A SCRAP OF PAPER IN HER HAND, WHICH SHE IS STUDying. ROD IS LIMPING DOWN THE STAIRS, CARRYING A BAG OF GARBAGE. HE LOOKS AT HER AS THEY PASS. ROSA DOES NOT LOOK UP.
ROD

Excuse me?

ROSA STOPS, LOOKS UP.

ROD (CONT'D)

I don't mean to pry, but do you happen to have an artificial leg?

ROSA

How dare you? You don't know me.

ROD

(quickly pulling up his pant leg) knotty pine.

ROSA

Oh. (beat, then timidly pulling up her pant leg) Ebony inlaid with cherry.

ROD

My God, it's beautiful. The craftsmanship.

ROSA

(smiling, moved) Nobody's ever said anything like that to me before. Thank you. (beat) I lost it skiing, in my homeland, El Salvador.
ROD

I wouldn't have thought that they have skiing in El Salvador.

ROSA

(nervously) Did I say El Salvador? I meant...

ROD, IN LOVE, PUTS HIS FINGER TO ROSA'S LIPS.

ROD

Shhhh. It doesn't matter. (singing) I used to have but one leg / Where most folks they have two / But now I have a second one / 'cause darlin' I have you.

ROSA

I can't believe you know that! It's my absolute favorite Gimpy McGee song!

ROD

Bet no two-leg you ever dated knew it.

ROSA

Not one.
ROD AND ROSA

(singing) Together we're one person / A human being complete / one heart, one mind, one soul, one dream / on one whole pair of feet.

THEY KISS.

CUT TO:

ALAN AND ARTHUR'S LIVING ROOM - A BIT LATER

ALAN AND ARTHUR, STILL DRESSED UP, SIT AT THE ROMANTICALLY SET DINING ROOM TABLE. JUDY GARLAND SINGING "YOU MADE ME LOVE YOU" BLASTS FROM EDDIE'S APARTMENT. ALAN AND ARTHUR, EVEN THOUGH THEY ARE VERY DEPRESSED, MUST SCREAM OVER THE SINGING TO BE HEARD.

ARTHUR

Pass the pasties, please!

ALAN PASSES THE PASTIES.

ARTHUR

I don't know, maybe she got cold feet! I mean, cold foot!

ALAN

Don't you dare make a joke at the expense of the woman I'm going to marry!
ARTHUR

It's the woman I'm going to
marry, and I'll make a joke at
her expense whenever I damn
well please!

ALAN LUNGES FOR ARTHUR, AND THEY WRESTLE ON THE FLOOR.

CUT TO:

INT. ROD'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

THE PLACE IS CARPETED WITH AN INCREDIBLY THICK, BURNT
ORANGE SHAG CARPET. ROD AND ROSA LIE IN BED, UNDER
COVERS.

ROD

Remind me to check later for
splinters.

ROSA

(giggling and mock-slugging
him) You! (sighs) Oh, Rod,
I've never been so comfortable
with a man before. I feel
like I could tell you
anything!

ROD

Tell me everything.
ROSA

(beat) I have a secret dream.
I don't want to be a cashier
all my life. I always wanted
to be a ... dancer. A tap
dancer. Crazy, right?

ROD

Our dreams are never crazy,
Rosa. Except maybe if we eat
anchovies too late at night.

ROSA

I love you. (encouraged) I
wouldn't be the first one-
legged tap dancer! There was
Peg Leg Bates. He's a hero to
the people of El Sal ... my
homeland.

ROD

What can I do to help?

ROSA

I don't know. The problem is
I have no place to practice.

ROD

Here. Mi casa es su casa.
ROSA

(kisses him) You are so sweet,
but you have all this
beautiful carpeting.

ROD

Easy come, easy go, my
darling.

ROD CLIMBS OUT OF BED, BEGINS RIPPING UP THE CARPET.

INT. ALAN AND ARTHUR'S LIVING ROOM - LATER

CUT TO:

ALAN AND ARTHUR SIT IN THEIR PAJAMAS ON THE COUCH.
BARBRA STREISAND SINGING "CAN'T HELP LOVIN' THAT MAN"
BLASTS THROUGH THE WALLS. ARTHUR LOOKS AT HIS WATCH.

ARTHUR

(yelling) He's bound to get
over me soon!

ALAN

(yelling) Good, because
"Showboat" is not one of my
favorite musicals!

ARTHUR

(yelling) I need you to march
right over there and talk to
him!

ALAN

(yelling) Nope! This is your
mess, you fix it!

THE MUSIC STOPS SUDDENLY.
ARTHUR

There's no need to yell. See,
voila, he's over me. (a
little hurt) That was sort of
fast, actually, wasn't it?

ALAN

I'm going to bed.

ALAN STANDS AND HEADS FOR THE BEDROOM. SUDDENLY A LOUD,
RAPID-FIRE TAP DANCING ROUTINE BEGINS OVERHEAD. IT
CONTINUES THROUGH THE REST OF THE SCENE. ALAN AND
ARTHUR BOTH LOOK UP. ALAN PLOPS BACK DOWN ON THE COUCH.

ALAN (CONT'D)

I'm depressed.

ARTHUR

Even if he did lose his leg in
some war, which he didn't,
that doesn't mean we have to
put up with his tap dancing.
That goes way beyond
humanitarianism.

ALAN

He's good though.

ARTHUR

That's irrelevant. (whining)
Go speak with him, be a dear.

ALAN

Nope. Sorry.

THERE IS A KNOCK AT THE DOOR. ARTHUR HURRIES TO IT.
ARTHUR

Look, I'll deal with our angry
downstairs neighbor, if you
talk to Rod.

ARTHUR OPENS THE DOOR. A DELIVERY MAN STANDS THERE WITH
A BIG BOUQUET OF FLOWERS. ARTHUR TAKES THEM, CLOSES THE
DOOR.

ALAN

I thought you said he was over
you.

ARTHUR

I guess it's not that easy.
(Looking at note) They're for
you.

ALAN

(pleased) Really? (grabs them,
reads the note) "You always
were my favorite cousin."
That's sort of sweet. Think
maybe he likes me?

ARTHUR

(shrugs) Well, sure, if he
can't have me.

ALAN LUNGES FOR ARTHUR. THEY WRESTLE ON THE FLOOR.

FADE OUT.

THE END