

SPELL BOUND

Pilot

Written by

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ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. CENTRAL PARK -- DAY

A beautiful warm September day in Central Park. ALEXANDRA (you can call her Alex), hip, pretty, 20s, very New York, walks with BARBARA, a bit younger, pretty but insecure, too much make-up and cleavage, a little bit of a bimbo.

BARBARA

I don't know if I can do this.

ALEX

Barbara -- you can do this.

BARBARA

But -- I love him-

ALEX

No, you don't love him. You love yourself.

BARBARA

...I do?

ALEX

-Yes. Barbara, listen to me. I know I'm not a therapist. I'm just a life coach. Which -- according to my mother is not even a real thing -- but still, I know this much: this is why you hired me. To get the dead weight out of your life. This man is dead weight.

BARBARA

But-

ALEX

-Think about his poor, pathetic girlfriend, sitting there at home, having no idea he's coming to the park to meet you, the woman he's been screwing behind her back for six months...

BARBARA

But -- what if -- he leaves his girlfriend. He said she has a weird smell, and he's definitely thinking about leaving. And then -- we can be together, all the time-

ALEX

-Honey, if that ever happened?
Then you would become the poor
pathetic smelly girlfriend,
believing his lame, transparent
excuses while he goes out and
screws some chippy behind your
back. Sebastian is a filthy
barnacle on the hull of your life.
You need to just -- power-wash him
off.

Barbara nods.

BARBARA

I don't know what a barnacle is.

ALEX

It doesn't matter. The point is --
you are not gonna let him make you
miserable any more. Just walk up
to him, and say: "Sebastian, you're
a dick, and you've screwed me for
the last time."

(off her look)

Or, maybe don't say it like that-

BARBARA

(psyching herself up)
Sebastian: you're a dick!

ALEX

That's right!

BARBARA

And you've screwed me for the last
time!

ALEX

There ya go! Alright Barbara!

They walk toward the MERRY GO ROUND, see a man with his back
turned --

BARBARA

There he is! Sebastian!

He turns. He's a handsome hipster, 20s. Alex's mouth drops
open when she sees his face. She's stunned. He's stunned
too, looking from Barbara to Alex and back again.

"SEBASTIAN"

What the hell?

Barbara stands up taller, full of courage-

BARBARA
Sebastian, you're a-

ALEX
-Dick!!!!

Alex marches over to him, smacks him with her purse.

"SEBASTIAN"
Ow!

ALEX
You're cheating on me? With that?!

BARBARA
-What's that supposed to mean?!

"SEBASTIAN"
Alex, I can explain-

Alex hits him with her purse again.

ALEX
-And you told her your name was
"Sebastian?" You stole that name
from me! You knew that's what I
wanted to name my son if I ever had
one.
(she hits him again)
You should've told her your name
was Dick!

She hits him again. Barbara marches over to Alex, offended.

BARBARA
You know, I may live with my
parents and work in a strip club,
but at least I'm not the pathetic
girlfriend! And you know what
else? He's right. You do have a
weird smell!

Alex widens her eyes, pissed.

ALEX
Maybe that's because I don't smell
like grimy dollar bills, who knows -
- or maybe it's because I don't buy
my perfume at the pharmacy!

Barbara steps toward her, in Alex's face.

BARBARA

Oh, that's it. It's on-

This snaps Alex back to earth. She shakes her head.

ALEX

Wait a minute. We should not be fighting with each other. We should be fighting with him.

(turns to "Sebastian")

And you know what, Collin? I don't even wanna fight with you...

(sighs, quieter)

It's my fault. I believed the lame excuses because... I wanted to. I wanted you to be who I wanted you to be, and that's all I saw. I guess I didn't see you. I mean, who knows who you really are. Maybe your name really is Sebastian...

"SEBASTIAN"

No, it's Collin.

Alex hits him with her purse.

ALEX

I know it is, dick. I've seen your driver's license.

COLLIN

Ow! Then why did you say that?!

Alex turns to Barbara. Tries to stand tall.

ALEX

I'm sorry, Barbara. This was... unprofessional. I'm not gonna charge you for today... And now -- before I lose... the last remaining shred of my dignity... I'm gonna go.

Barbara nods, sad. Alex looks at "Sebastian"/Collin.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Good-bye Collin.

Alex walks quickly away. Collin, feeling bad, chases her, touches her arm-

COLLIN

Alex, wait-

ALEX
Don't touch me.

Alex pulls her arm away, the frame FREEZES on Alex's pissed off expression.

ALEX (V.O.) (CONT'D)
*Not my proudest moment, I'll admit.
But just wait, it gets better...*

The fame UNFREEZES, Alex strides away, Collin watches her go, sighing, he's given up, she tries to hold her head high as --

SHE TRIPS, a clumsy ungraceful mess. The frame FREEZES on her horrified expression, just before she hits the ground.

ALEX (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Told you.

The frame UNFREEZES and Alex hits the ground. She's okay, just embarrassed. She sighs. Gets up and dusts herself off, limps away, aware that Collin and Barbara are watching, we're with her as she walks through the park...

ALEX (V.O.) (CONT'D)
*And I know what you're all thinking
-- what an idiot. What the hell
did she see in that jerk, anyway?
I'll tell you what I saw in him: he
seemed troubled. Which I thought
meant "sad" and I'm a sucker for
sad. I thought he was a like a
lost puppy, and I was gonna help
him find his way home. It's my
weakness, you know. In high
school, I was voted "most likely to
save the world." And I guess I
wanted to save him... That and,
you know, I'm an idiot...*

INT. ALEX'S OFFICE -- DAY

Alex enters her SMALL BUT HIPLY DECORATED OFFICE SUITE. Her assistant, BIG-HAIRED JERSEY GIRL CHRISSY, sits at her desk, surfing the net, engrossed.

CHRISSY
Hey. You're late. Luckily, your next client is too... So I'm reading about laser vaginal rejuvenation? It's really gross. Want me to send you the link?

Alex sighs, still upset, picks up some mail, goes through it.

ALEX
Please don't. I'll just -- be in
my office.

Chrissy nods, looks up, takes note of Alex's mood.

CHRISSEY
Hey. You okay?

ALEX
Collin's cheating on me. And --
apparently I have a weird smell...

CHRISSEY
I think you smell nice...

ALEX
Thank you Chrissy.

CHRISSEY
You should put a hex on him.

Alex nods, sad.

ALEX
Yeah, maybe...

She goes into her office and closes the door.

INT. ALEX'S OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS

She stands in front of her desk, the weight of what has happened finally hitting her. She sees a PHOTO of her and Collin, in happier times, framed on the desk. She picks it up, looks at it. Her anger growing.

Suddenly, the photo begins to LEVITATE OUT OF HER HANDS. It hovers in the air, she does a little HAND GESTURE, and --

THE PHOTO FLIES ACROSS THE ROOM, JUST AS CHRISSEY ENTERS THE DOORWAY, THE PHOTO IS HEADED RIGHT FOR HER FACE, HER EYES WIDEN, THE FRAME FREEZES, THE PHOTO INCHES FROM HITTING HER:

ALEX (V.O.)
Oh, and did I mention I'm also a witch?

The FRAME UNFREEZES, Chrissy DUCKS JUST IN TIME, the PHOTO SMASHES INTO THE WALL, GLASS SHATTERING. Chrissy stands up, walks toward Alex, unfazed.

CHRISSEY

Yikes. Watch where you're telekinesis-ing. You could put someone's eye out.

ALEX

Sorry. Just -- pissed...

CHRISSEY

Really? I would not have guessed... Anyway, suck it up, your twelve o'clock is here.

(leans in, whispering)

Total mess. You're gonna make mucho buck-o's.

ALEX

Thank you Chrissy. That'll be all.

Chrissy nods, walks back toward the outer office, when she reaches the doorway, gestures to someone.

CHRISSEY

Dude. She's ready for you.

Chrissy exits, and in walks HOWARD GORDON, a NERDY, FIDGETY MAN WITH BAD HAIR, the epitome of awkwardness.

ALEX

You must be Howard.

HOWARD

Hi, I'm Howard... Wait. You already said that. Sorry-

ALEX

Don't worry, it's fine. I'm Alex. Please sit down.

He clears some debris to sit on the couch, the SMASHED PHOTO FRAME landed there. He picks it up, hands it to her, wipes some shards of glass from the cushion. She's sheepish.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Sorry about that. It -- fell. Anyway, why don't you tell me why you wanted to hire a life coach?

Alex sits, puts on her warm, professional demeanor.

HOWARD

Well, to be totally honest... I don't even really know what a life-coach is...

ALEX

Neither do I. It just sounds more professional than "chick who'll help you with your various problems." Which is basically what I do... I help people get over blocks. I help them -- organize their lives. I help them... figure out where they're going... I help them... get what they want... Is that vague enough for you?

HOWARD

No, it's -- fine. See -- my friend Eli? You helped him with a... he actually wouldn't tell me what. But he said you were amazing, like -- magic, that's what he kept saying -- "she's like magic, it's like -- she waved a wand over my life and -- boom -- it changed..." -- so I thought I'd... give it a try... See, I'm -- desperate.

Howard takes a PHOTO out of his pocket, hands it to Alex, she looks at it, it's of a pretty, bookish young woman.

HOWARD (CONT'D)

That's Jackie. I love her.

Alex looks at the photo, nods and smiles.

ALEX

She's pretty, Howard.

HOWARD

She works two cubicles over from me at the insurance company. I've been in love with her for five years... And she doesn't know I'm alive.

ALEX

I'm sure that's not true-

HOWARD

The other day, we were alone in the coffee room, and she said -- "Hi, I'm Jackie, are you new here?"

ALEX

So she noticed you!

HOWARD

We've been introduced *seven times*. This time, when she asked me my name, for some reason, I said "Sheldon." Now she thinks I'm Sheldon, the new guy... The worst part is -- I know we could be great together. I know if only she'd notice me, I know I could make her happy... And -- yeah, I know I'm not the kind of guy who gets the girl but... just once, I wanna get the girl anyway...

Alex studies him. She sees that he's sincere. She smiles.

ALEX

Well that doesn't sound so hard.

HOWARD

Are you kidding?

ALEX

No, by the time I'm done with you, Miss Jackie will not be able to resist you. You will be irresistible.

Howard wipes away some snot with a hankie.

HOWARD

I will?

ALEX

Yup. We are gonna get you that girl, Howard.

Alex smiles, Howard grins right back at her, elated.

EXT. NEW YORK STREET -- DUSK

Alex walks home from work.

ALEX (V.O.)

So, I guess I owe you an explanation about the whole "witch thing." I mean, I kinda sprung it on you and all... the long and the short of it is that it's a gene that's passed to the women in my family --

EXT. SALEM -- MANY YEARS AGO -- DAY

A pilgrim WOMAN who resembles Alex is tied to a stake, stoic, as angry VILLAGERS advance on her with torches...

ALEX (V.O.)

My great-great-great-great Grandmother had it --

INT. KITCHEN -- THE SIXTIES -- DAY

A MID-1960s HOUSEWIFE stands over a pot on the stove, a salt shaker hovers over it, salting the pot by itself in mid-air, the housewife watches a small TV on the counter, where an episode of *Bewitched* plays, the Housewife laughs...

ALEX (V.O.)

My grandmother had it --

INT. FANCY KITCHEN -- THE PRESENT -- DAY

A WELL-DRESSED SOCIETY lady stands over a MARTINI GLASS, the olive STIRRING ITSELF, she picks it up and takes a long sip...

ALEX (V.O.)

My mother has it --

INT. ALEX'S OFFICE -- DAY

CHRISSY takes a tupperware container of SOUP out of the fridge, she stares intently at it, it starts to bubble and steam, Chrissy smiles...

ALEX (V.O.)

My cousin Chrissy has it --

INT. A TRES WITCHY APARTMENT -- DAY

MANY CATS roam around as tres witchy BUN, Alex's eccentric aunt, sits on a stationary bike, feet on the handlebars, it pedals itself, she watches *The View*, grinning...

ALEX (V.O.)

My Aunt Bun has it --

INT. SUBWAY -- DAY

Alex stands on a crowded subway, a LITTLE OLD LADY gets on, looks around for a seat, no one's giving their's up. Alex notices a BURLY MAN, he's purposely avoiding looking at the old lady. Pissed, Alex makes a HAND GESTURE, the burly man suddenly STANDS, as if NOT OF HIS OWN VOLITION, AND OFFERS HIS SEAT TO THE OLD LADY. Alex smiles.

ALEX (V.O.)

And I have it --

INT. ALEX'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Alex packs up her stuff in boxes, moving out of her and Collin's apartment. She's thoughtful, sad...

ALEX (V.O.)

We try to keep it quiet, you know, after that whole -- burned at the stake thing. We know most people wouldn't understand... And of course, the level and type of power you have varies from witch to witch. Basically, for me: I can move objects with my mind, and do some small spells without tools, but to cast a bigger spell, a real spell, I need a recipe: chants, herbs, potions, my spellbook. You know: witch stuff...

COLLIN enters the apartment, he and Alex proceed to have a heated argument which we can't hear over the voice-over...

ALEX (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Although, sadly, where my powers are concerned I do have one block... A kind of... blind spot, I guess you'd call it. I can cast spells on other people all day and night, but the one thing I simply can't do -- is cast a spell to fix my own life. Which is I guess why it's such a freakin' mess...

Collin makes one last attempt to touch her, Alex shakes her head, grabs a box and angrily leaves the apartment, slamming the door behind her, an angry Collin watches her go...

INT. JOANNA AND MICHAEL'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Alex sits on a couch, looking through the apartment listings in the newspaper, surrounded by cardboard boxes, bags -- all of her stuff. Her best friend, JOANNA emerges from the kitchen with a batch of drinks.

JOANNA

And now -- we commence the festival of "my boyfriend's a jackass so I shall get drunk..." Here's your margarita, mamasita.

She hands Alex a drink. Alex takes it, smiling, but sad.

ALEX

Thanks for putting me up, darlin'...

JOANNA

Please. It's gonna be fun... But I don't see why you had to be the one to move. He's the cheating jackass.

ALEX

Yeah, but it was the cheating jackass's apartment. I'm not on the lease.

JOANNA

Bummer. Wanna go back? We can burn something he loves...

ALEX

No It just sucks. I really liked him. I had this whole... plan, to tell him, about... what I am...

JOANNA

You didn't tell me that-

ALEX

Well, you know, I didn't wanna jinx it. Remember what happened when I told Max...

JOANNA

Max was a small-minded jerk.

ALEX

I don't know. Maybe my Mom's right. Maybe I'm gonna end up like my Aunt Bun. A weird old cat lady, alone with my spellbooks...

(MORE)

ALEX (CONT'D)

I mean, it's hard enough to find the right guy. I have to find the right guy, who doesn't care that -- I'm a witch!

JOANNA

Well, all I know is, when I found out you were a witch, it just made you that much cooler in my eyes...

ALEX

Yeah, but we were twelve. You thought I was cool 'cause I was allowed to wear lip gloss.

JOANNA

You are not gonna always be alone, okay? You're way too awesome for that to happen.

ALEX

That is easy for you to say. You and Michael have the perfect relationship. You have no idea what I'm talking about.

JOANNA

It's easy for me to say -- because it's true.

Alex looks at Joanna gratefully, and then -- she sighs.

ALEX

Uch. All these apartments *suck*. I mean, is it too much to ask for a giant apartment by the park with a solarium for my herbs and a view and an old-timey elevator and a doorman, that's in my price range...?

JOANNA

It might be, yes...

MICHAEL (hot, twenty-something, strapping yet sensitive) enters in his hospital scrubs.

MICHAEL

Hey! Alex... Joanna told me about Collin. Want me to kick his ass?

ALEX

Actually, could you kick his face? It's where the lies come out...

Michael nods, walks over to Joanna, gives her a KISS.

MICHAEL
Hey you. I missed you-

JOANNA
I missed you more-

They kiss some more. Alex stands up, uncomfortable.

ALEX
Okay. If you need me, I'll just...
be in the other room. Vomiting.

Alex walks away. Joanna calls after her-

JOANNA
Sorry...

EXT. CENTRAL PARK -- DAY

Alex and Howard walk and talk through the park.

ALEX
So... do you date much, Howard?

HOWARD
There was a girl. A few years ago.

Alex looks at him -- a ray of hope.

ALEX
You had a girlfriend, a few years ago?

HOWARD
I had a date. A few years ago.
She was nice. I bet, if her phone
hadn't have gotten disconnected...
She would've maybe... gone out with
me again...

ALEX
Okay. No big deal. You just --
need to get a little confidence,
that's all. I know it sounds
shallow, but maybe we start with
something simple and basic like...
your hair.

Howard SCRATCHES HIS UNRULY HAIRDO.

HOWARD

What's wrong with my hair?

INT. HIGH END HAIR SALON -- DAY

Alex directs the STYLIST who cuts Howard's hair...

ALEX

There's nothing *wrong* with your hair, we just need to make it... more right... In the meantime -- I think I'll be able to help you, if you can tell me what it is that you love so much about Jackie. I mean -
- why her? Why is she special?

HOWARD

Well... Obviously, she's the most beautiful woman in the entire world... And she's kind -- she volunteers at the hospital with old people or sick people or kids or something, which is... you know, so cool... And -- I love the way she holds the spoon in her mouth when she's eating her strawberry yogurt, like -- upside down on her tongue... Once I saw her listening to opera on her iPod during lunch, and she closed her eyes, and... she cried... and then she looked around to make sure no one noticed... that killed me...

Alex nods, notices a BUNCH OF HOWARD'S HAIR ON THE GROUND. She tries to subtly bend down to pick some up, pockets it.

INT. HIP CLOTHING STORE -- DAY

Alex waits outside the dressing room, her arms full of hip men's clothes. We can see Howard's legs in the stall.

HOWARD (O.S.)

...And I love the way she says my name. "Shellllldon." With like a long llll sound? Even though it's not my name, it makes me wish it was my name...

Alex smiles to herself, endeared to him.

ALEX

Alright. I think I get it...

Howard sheepishly emerges in some hip duds, looking much, much better. Alex regards him proudly. She could cry.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Oh Howard. Will you look at that...

Howard's nervous.

HOWARD

You think she'll like it?

ALEX

Yes. And more importantly: I think she'll like you. If you give her a chance to... Okay. So -- you look amazing. And now -- you need to talk to her. Do you think you can do that?

HOWARD

Yeah, I feel good. I think I'm ready.

ALEX

Great. So here's the plan. When you see Jackie, you're gonna strike up a casual conversation. Ask her how her day is going. And then maybe pay her a small compliment, something sweet. Tell her -- you like her earrings. Keep it simple, low-key. No big deal. Your body language is loose. We're simply opening the lines of communication. And remember, Howard -- you are her guy. She just doesn't know it yet.

Howard nods, takes a deep breath.

INT. HOWARD'S OFFICE -- DAY

Alex sits in Howard's cubicle, she POKETS VARIOUS ITEMS FROM THE DESK, they stare at JACKIE from afar, in her cubicle.

ALEX

Alright Howard. There she is. She's gonna love you. Just go over there, and work that famous Howard Gorden charm! You can do it!

She gives him a helpful little push, and Howard, clutching his coffee mug-

-Walks over to JACKIE'S CUBICLE. She looks up at him.

JACKIE
Hey. Um... Sheldon, right?

He just stares at her. A deer in the headlights.

JACKIE (CONT'D)
What's up?

She looks at him expectantly. He can't speak. In his stupor, he SLOWLY, ACCIDENTALLY, LETS HIS COFFEE CUP DIP FORWARD. COFFEE SILLS ALL OVER JACKIE'S LAP.

JACKIE (CONT'D)
Owww!

She leaps up out of her chair. She's covered in boiling hot coffee. He can't speak. She walks quickly away, shaking her head. Too late, she's already gone to clean herself up:

HOWARD
I'm... sorry... I love you...

Alex walks up to him, feeling bad, touches his shoulder.

ALEX
Okay, Howard, I'm not gonna lie. That could have gone better. But don't worry! I have a plan! Just keep your head down for the rest of the day. I promise you, tomorrow, everything's gonna be better.

Howard is skeptical, still stunned as Alex walks confidently away.

ALEX (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I can't believe I just promised him that! The truth is, I have no idea how I'm gonna make everything better. For now, I just need to come up with the right spell...

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. OPULENT NEW YORK PENTHOUSE -- NIGHT

Alex rings a doorbell, grocery bags in hand. Her MOTHER, EDITH (think Martha Stewart, only less warm) answers the door, clutching a martini. Alex plasters on a smile.

ALEX

Mommy!

Edith regards her suspiciously.

EDITH

What do you want?

ALEX

Just... wanna borrow your stove.

EDITH

No.

ALEX

Half an hour, you won't even know I'm here-

EDITH

Are you cooking a chicken, or are you doing magic?

ALEX

I'm cooking a magic chicken.
(Edith doesn't smile)
It's one little spell-

EDITH

So use your precious Aunt Bun's stove, she's your *role model*-

ALEX

Mom, don't start. Anyway, I tried. She wasn't home. And Joanna just has a hot plate. I need something a little more powerful-
(Edith shakes her head)
I'm trying to help someone here-

EDITH

-Doing magic only brings problems and heartache, that's why I quit, that's why you should quit, that's why I'm closing the door-

Edith starts to close the door, Alex, desperate:

ALEX

-Let me in or I'll tell Roy.

This stops Edith cold.

EDITH

How many times do you think you can threaten me with that?

ALEX

He's your husband. You should've told him a long time ago-

EDITH

There's nothing to tell. I don't practice anymore. And I don't think you should be the one giving out romantic advice-

ALEX

Mom, all I want is to help somebody find a little bit of happiness... You don't even have to watch, okay, just... Please?

She looks at her mom pleadingly. Off Edith's look:

INT. EDITH'S INSANELY AWESOME KITCHEN -- MOMENTS LATER

Alex cooks up her spell in a large pot on the stove, Edith watches, making another martini. Alex puts the HAIR that she stole from Howard at the salon into the pot, and the items she stole from his desk.

EDITH

That's not enough hair, you know.

ALEX

It'll be fine.

EDITH

So tell me -- does this person you're so desperately trying to "help" know you're casting a spell on him?

ALEX

Mom, don't start-

EDITH

I mean, I just think -- ethically-

ALEX

Why shouldn't I use *all* the tools I have at my disposal? I'm not the one who has issues with this stuff - - you are. These people come to me, Mom, and they're *suffering*, okay, and... it breaks my heart, and I just want to help them, and so I do what I can to help them. And they're grateful, and you know, they tell me -- "it was like magic"... and so what if it really is magic, and they just don't know it? I make their lives better. I'm not ashamed of that... I happen to be very good at what I do.

The POT BOILS OVER.

EDITH

Clearly.

Alex lowers the heat, pissed, shaking her head, she angrily ADDS SALT to the stew.

ALEX

Just -- please, stop distracting me, let me finish my spell --

EDITH

What did I do? I'm just -- pointing out the fact that -- your entire career is based on lies --

ALEX

I'm tuning you out, mother...
(chants as she salts the
stew)
Planto Howard irresistibile ut
totus, planto Howard irresistibile
ut totus-

EDITH

You're using the wrong chant-

Alex turns, keeps adding the salt during the following-

ALEX

Mom, I know what I'm doing-

EDITH

You said "totus"-

ALEX
No I didn't-

EDITH
Yes you did-

ALEX
No, I didn't. Why would I say
"totus?" I said: "Planto Howard
irresistible ut-"
(then, horrified)
Ohmigod, I said "totus"-

EDITH
If I were you I would stop salting
that stew-

Alex stops as the pot begins to SHAKE ON THE STOVE.

ALEX
Oh crap.

Alex and Edith back away, scared as: THE POT SHAKES MORE AND MORE VIOLENTLY, FINALLY EXPLODING, SPRAYING ODDLY COLORED WATER ALL OVER THEM. A beat. They're soaked, dripping.

ALEX (CONT'D)
That can't be good...

INT. HOWARD'S OFFICE -- DAY

Alex rushes over to Howard's cubicle, out of breath, panicked. He looks up, surprised to see her.

HOWARD
Alex-

ALEX
Howard, I tried calling you last
night and you didn't answer and I
got so worried and... it's okay.
You're fine... So, how's your day
going? Anything... out of the
ordinary...?

He nods, freaked.

HOWARD
Something is very weird. Maybe it's
the haircut, or the clothes, but --
something is different.

Alex looks at him, as if he is very enticing.

ALEX
Yeah, something is... very very...
different. Good different.

Alex leans in toward Howard's face, breathes deep.

ALEX (CONT'D)
And you smell good. Is that
aftershave?

HOWARD
It's acne medicine.

Alex leans in further, touching his face, closing her eyes.

ALEX
Your skin is *amazing*...

HOWARD
Please stop smelling me. Why do
women keep smelling me??

Alex sits up suddenly, opening her eyes, realizing-

ALEX
Oh my God.

HOWARD
What?

ALEX
Um, so... women have been...
noticing you today?

He nods, freaked.

HOWARD
On the subway this morning, this...
enormous woman... grabbed my...
buttock. And then she...
(he shudders)
Oh God, it was horrible-

ALEX
Oh crap...

HOWARD
What?!

Alex collects herself, realizes she's needs to bullshit here.

ALEX

Nothing. It's... nothing. I'm just gonna... go. Figure out some stuff and then... I'll be back, later. Say -- lunchtime? You just -- sit tight. Keep your... wow, your... adorable head down-

HOWARD

...What?!

Alex rushes away, muttering to herself under her breath-

ALEX

Oh crap oh crap oh crap oh crap-

EXT. NEW YORK STREET -- DAY

Alex and Joanna and Chrissy walk and talk. Alex, upset.

ALEX

And then, I made this small, teensy, tiny little mistake, in the spell... I accidentally said 'totus?' Which means ...'all' in Latin... which is really no big deal, except... I'm starting to think it made it so that not only will Jackie find him irresistible, but... pretty much... every woman. He meets. Like -- in the world.

CHRISSY

And that's bad because...?

ALEX

He's like a little lamb! And there's wolves out there. I don't think he'll be able to handle this-

JOANNA

So just -- reverse the spell. Make it go away-

ALEX

I can't make it go away! It's almost impossible to undo a spell once it's done! It's like giving someone a tattoo.

JOANNA

So what are you gonna do?

ALEX

I was thinking about... hiding out for a while. Like -- in Amish country?

JOANNA

That's not a plan, that's a movie.

ALEX

Please don't piss on my plan. It's all I have.

Alex sighs, they walk. Suddenly, a WIND KICKS UP, and a NEWSPAPER PAGE flies into Alex's face. She flails about, before she's able to pull it away. She looks at it, her eyes widening. She turns to Joanna, a bit freaked.

ALEX (CONT'D)

It's the real estate section...

Joanna raises her eyebrows -- cool! Alex scans the page-

ALEX (CONT'D)

Oh boy. Listen to this one. 'Upper West Side gem. If you like character, welcome home. An old timey elevator whisks you to your getaway in the sky, complete with high ceilings, hardwood floors, large bedrooms, tons of light, gourmet kitchen, and...' holy crap - - 'solarium!!!' And there's a doorman, and it's in my price range-

JOANNA

-Dude... Where is it?

Alex reads the ad, then turns to the building they're standing in front of.

ALEX

-It's right here...

They all look at each other -- WEIRD!

INT. ALEX'S PERFECT APARTMENT -- DAY

Alex is led through her ideal apartment by DANNY: twenty-something, scruffy/sarcastic/slacker, with a dangerous and roguish charm, he's both a cynic and a bad-boy. He uses an ELECTRIC SHAVER as they walk. Joanna and Chrissy follow behind, awed by the beauty of the apartment.

DANNY

And this is the kitchen. Sub-zero, Viking, granite countertops, blah blah blah, I don't really cook, so-

ALEX

Well it's just -- amazing. It's my dream apartment. Right down to the solarium-

DANNY

Yeah, I've never figured out much use for the solarium, but -- chicks seem to dig it, so-

Alex jumps up and down, positively giddy.

ALEX

I'll take it... I mean -- holy crap! I'll take it!... When will you be moving out?

DANNY

Oh, I'm not moving out...

Alex stops jumping.

ALEX

I'm sorry?

DANNY

You didn't think you'd get the whole place for that price, did you?

ALEX

Well, I... I mean-

DANNY

-No, it's a roommate-type deal. I own the place. I rent out the guest bedroom. All the furniture in the common areas is mine, and I should warn you -- I'm a bit of a night owl, and sometimes I play loud music. Mainly death metal, some jazz. Helps me think. And I work at home, generally in my underwear, so if that bothers you, you know, you might need to -- look within yourself at your -- various issues...

He heads to the door, they follow him, Alex annoyed.

INT. ALEX'S DREAM APARTMENT -- GORGEOUS LIVINGROOM -- SAME

They enter the livingroom. Alex looks around, practically whimpering at the perfection, as Danny sizes her up.

DANNY

So, lemme guess: it was his apartment. And... he cheated on you. And now you're sleeping on... someone's lumpy futon. And you're desperate, and you need a place right away-

Alex looks at him. This guy is definitely annoying.

JOANNA

It's not a futon. I have a couch-

Alex tosses her a *shut up* look.

DANNY

And you said you loved the apartment... So I guess that means -
- you can have it. But, first, some ground rules. Just so you know -- I'm not here to be your rebound guy.

ALEX

Excuse me?

DANNY

The room is for rent, I'm not. I'm not here to help you heal your broken heart. I don't want you knocking on my door at two a.m., crying into a pint of Haagen Daaz about the bastard that done you wrong. Because that just gets messy. I mean -- yes, it goes without saying, obviously, it would be special. A night neither of us would ever forget -- but if we live together, and that happened, then it would suddenly be like we *live together*. And frankly, I'm not down for that. That's why the last one moved out. And the one before her... And the one before her... So I just -- want to get that out in the open right off the bat. So we're clear, and on the same page.

(MORE)

DANNY (CONT'D)

You can look. But you can't touch
the merchandise.

Alex and Joanna and Chrissy exchange looks. Oh. My. God...

ALEX

Wow. Okay... Except that... unlike
the undoubtedly sad, lonely, blind,
deaf, and... hard of smelling former
roommates who have knocked on your
door at three a.m. looking for some
kind of... masochistic punishment, I
actually have dignity. And self-
respect. So, instead of me moving in
here, with you, I have a better idea.
Why don't you take your death metal,
and your underwear, and your...
merchandise...and shove them right.
Up. Your solarium. Okay? Good day
sir.

Alex heads for the door, Joanna follows.

DANNY

First months' rent due on signing,
I'll see you back here-?

ALEX

-Never! You will never see me back
here. I said good day.

She opens the door, ushers Joanna and Chrissy out-

DANNY

No dogs, cats are okay-

SLAM. Alex is gone.

EXT. HOWARD'S OFFICE -- DAY

Howard and Alex eat lunch together outside his office.

ALEX

Let me ask you something, Howard.
How much would you love to switch
places with George Clooney? Huh?
Have every woman in the world want
to... be your special friend-

HOWARD

I know most men would love that
but... I'm not really... that kind
of guy. I like fading into the
background, I like my privacy.

(MORE)

HOWARD (CONT'D)

I don't want a lot of attention, I just want that one special person, to love. I just want... Jackie.

ALEX

Well -- you're in luck, because... here she comes!

Howard turns to see JACKIE approaching, coy and flirtatious.

JACKIE

Hey Sheldon.

HOWARD

Hey Jack. Jack-Jackie. Jackie.

Alex swats him, whispers in his ear.

ALEX

Tell her your name is Howard.

HOWARD

My name is Howard.

JACKIE

Oh... Is this your girlfriend?

HOWARD

She's from accounting.

ALEX

I'm his cousin.

ALEX

I'm his cousin. From Accounting. West Virginia. Near the Ozarks...

JACKIE

(leans in flirtatiously)

Oh... So, Sheldon... Howard... I was thinking. I know I'm being super-forward, but... I thought maybe you'd like to go out with me? On Saturday?

Howard stands up quickly, freaked.

HOWARD

Um? Really? Wow.

JACKIE

We can go out or... stay in-

Howard, now sweating profusely, totally freaked-

HOWARD

Oh. Will you excuse me?

Howard runs away, Alex follows, calling over her shoulder-

ALEX
He'd love to!

Jackie watches, smiling happily, as Alex follows Howard around a corner-

-Where Howard, bent over, PUKES into some bushes.

ALEX (CONT'D)
You're okay, Howard. This is a good thing. You got what you wanted-
(silence; more puking)
Okay. Just puke it out. You're fine-

He stands up, looking green.

HOWARD
I'm not ready for this. I can't go out with her! I don't know what to say to her! I wanted to take this slow! You know -- work up to it. Why is she hounding me?!

ALEX
(lying)
I had a talk with her, okay. I explained to her what a great guy you were, and -- she came around! She really likes you... you just need to gain a little confidence.

Howard clutches his chest.

HOWARD
Oh God, here comes the panic attack-

ALEX
-Howard? Focus! Just -- take a sick day for the rest of the day -- go straight home, chill out. Tomorrow, we're gonna get this sorted out.

Howard nods, reassured, for the moment...

MUSIC MONTAGE: INT. CRAPPY APARTMENT -- DAY

Alex, clutching the apartment listings, Joanna by her side, is led by a LANDLORD through a disgusting/tiny apartment with a view of a brick wall...

INT. CRAPPIER APARTMENT -- DAY

Alex and Joanna are led by another LANDLORD through an even worse apartment. This one with a view of the neighbor's BATHROOM. A GUY waves from the toilet.

INT. CRAPPIEST APARTMENT -- DAY

Alex and Joanna are led by another LANDLORD through an even worse apartment. Alex screams when a RAT crawls by her feet, Alex and Joanna clutch each other, totally freaked, the landlord nonchalantly picks up the rat by the tail, throws it out the window, and keeps walking, like it was nothing.

INT. ALEX'S PERFECT APARTMENT -- DAY

Alex drops some boxes in the livingroom of her perfect apartment. Joanna and Michael enter, carrying more boxes.

MICHAEL

I think that's the last of them.

ALEX

Thanks.

JOANNA

You should be psyched. You're gonna love living here. This place is practically perfect-

Alex shrugs, defeated. Danny enters, fresh from the shower, wrapped in a towel. Smugly regards Alex.

DANNY

They always come back...

Alex rolls her eyes, and with a little FLICK OF HER WRIST, behind her back -- Danny's TOWEL FLIES off of its own accord. Alex grins. Danny scrambles. Joanna stifles a laugh. Michael looks away, horrified.

MICHAEL

Dude...

Alex gets a good look as he puts the towel back on, embarrassed. She raises an eyebrow. Oooo la la, maybe it won't be so bad living here after all...

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. ICE RINK -- DAY

Howard and Alex clutch each other, skating. All the WOMEN they pass turn to look at Howard lustfully...

ALEX

Okay, this is what I call a practice date. We're gonna try some activities that might make you more comfortable with Jackie... Now, the great thing about ice skating, is that you have to hold onto each other, for balance, right? And it's okay if you're not really coordinated -- that's the fun. And you're laughing, and it's silly, and it's okay to look like a fool... This is good, right?

Howard smiles, nodding, right before he does a FACEPLANT. Alex watches him go down, cringing.

INT. ALEX'S AMAZING KITCHEN -- DAY

Howard holds an ice pack to his face. Alex chops vegetables. Howard removes the ice pack, revealing a swollen, bruised nose. Alex plasters on a happy face.

ALEX

So not bad! No big deal.

Alex throws the vegetables into a sizzling pan, and hands Howard a spatula. He sautés the vegetables.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Okay, so you'll go to her apartment -- and cook for her. Right? Forget ice skating. You don't need it. You've already got everything you need -- right here.

She touches his head.

HOWARD

In my hair?

ALEX

No, Howard. In your head...
(then)
You know, I've been thinking about it and... I have to say -- you're really lucky, Howard.

(MORE)

ALEX (CONT'D)

You've found your someone. And that's... a rare and wonderful thing. Some people wait their whole lives for that... Some people never find it at all...

(collects herself)

Anyway, my point is -- at the end of the day, it isn't about your hair or your clothes or -- where you take her on your date. It really just comes down to -- two people, trying to connect. And the way you do that, is just to -- be yourself, okay? It's that simple.

HOWARD

But I think I already -- tried that-

ALEX

-I mean -- without the freezing up and the puking and the... I mean you, without the fear. Let her see who you really are, Howard, the sweet, nurturing, caring, sensitive guy you are -- and then she's bound to love you back.

DANNY enters, rolling his eyes, he overheard that last thing.

DANNY

You know, when you told me you were a "life coach," I thought it sounded ridiculous. But that's just... ridiculous.

(to Howard)

Don't listen to her, guy. Women are attracted to men who are strong, dominant. They want an alpha male, not some namby-pamby wuss-

Alex, annoyed, chops carrots angrily.

ALEX

Um -- not all women are like the emotionally deficient, possibly mentally ill chippies you lure into your bed with your so-called 'strong, dominant behavior-'

DANNY

So tell me, Alex, that dude who broke your heart -- was he the sweet, sensitive type?

(MORE)

DANNY (CONT'D)

Or were you attracted to him
precisely because he was the kind
of guy who *would* break your heart-

ALEX

-You do a weird thing with your
mouth when you think you're being
insightful-

DANNY

Face it, it's a law of nature.
Women like jerks. Don't blame the
jerk just 'cause you like him-

ALEX

You're a jerk and I don't like you-

DANNY

Sure you do.

ALEX

No I don't-

DANNY

You wish you didn't, but you do-

Howard looks at both of them, increasingly uncomfortable.
Alex laughs derisively. Furiously chopping carrots-

ALEX

Oh, I'm so sure! I'm so into guys
who listen to death metal in their
underwear and think romance is a
bloodsport-

DANNY

I hit a nerve, princess?

Danny smugly reaches for a CARROT, Alex chopping furiously --
SHE ACCIDENTALLY CUTS DANNY'S FINGER. DEEPLY. He screams.

ALEX

Oh my God.

DANNY

Oh my God you just stabbed me!

ALEX

Don't worry. No big deal. We'll
get some paper towels. I'll take
you to the hospital. No big deal.

DANNY

Stop saying no big deal-

ALEX
I'm sorry! Howard -- little help-

HOWARD
-I don't... like other people's blood-

ALEX
(sarcastic)
Really, that's so odd, because I
love it -- Where the hell are the
paper towels?!

DANNY
I don't have any freakin' paper towels!

ALEX
Why not? They're so handy-
(off his angry look)
No big deal. Just -- wrap it in
your shirt, I know a guy, he'll fix
you right up -- let's go-

Danny angrily wraps his finger in his shirt. They head for
the door, Alex calls over her shoulder-

ALEX (CONT'D)
Howard? Let yourself out -- I'll
call you later-

INT. ER EXAMINING ROOM -- LATER

Michael, sews up Danny's finger, while Alex looks on.

DANNY
So, I'm really glad I rented that
room to you...

ALEX
(ignoring him)
Thanks so much for doing this, Michael-

MICHAEL
No problem...
(to Danny)
Dude, you really pissed her off, huh?

ALEX
It was an accident.

DANNY
You know what they say about
scorned women-

ALEX

You know nothing about women.

DANNY

I think I know several million women who would disagree...

ALEX

Several million *women*, or figments of a deranged and cocky imagination?

DANNY

Actual women. They're my readers.

ALEX

Your readers.

DANNY

I'm a romance novelist. I write under the name 'Danielle Stonewood.' I've sold over four million books-

MICHAEL

-Danielle Stonewood? Are you serious? My mother is obsessed with your books. Obsessed-

ALEX

(to Michael)

He's obviously screwing with us-

DANNY

How do you think I can afford that apartment?

MICHAEL

Wait, Alex -- don't you read those books too? You do! The 'Stonewood Romance Series!' I've seen you read them-

ALEX

I got one, as a gift, I barely got through it.

MICHAEL

Do you think you could sign a book for my mom?

Danny looks at Alex, he's loving this.

DANNY
I could sign one for you too, if
you like...

Alex just shakes her head. Danny turns to Michael, pleased.

DANNY (CONT'D)
Look at that. She's speechless.

MICHAEL
Okay. We're done here. Alex, make
sure you help him home, the
painkillers are gonna start to kick
in, and they may make him a little...

Alex nods. Turns and sees that -- DANNY has stuck two TONGUE
DEPRESSERS under his lip and is pretending to be a walrus.

ALEX
Alright, Danny, let's go bye-bye-

As they head out, her cell phone rings with a text message.
She reads it. Sighs.

ALEX (CONT'D)
We just have to make one stop on
the way-

DANNY
(excited)
Ice cream?

INT. STARBUCKS BATHROOM -- EARLY EVENING

Alex marches into the men's room, to find Howard, hiding.

ALEX
I came straight from the hospital --
what's the big emergency?

HOWARD
I can't do this. You have to call
Jackie and tell her I can't make it.

ALEX
Howard, you cannot hide in the
men's room at Starbucks forever.

HOWARD
I know that. But a woman out there
just stuck her tongue in my ear.
I'm waiting for her to leave.

Alex feels guilty.

ALEX
I'm sorry, Howard-

HOWARD
Why? It's not your fault. This is just... one helluva haircut...

ALEX
Well... yeah, maybe. Plus -- you have very enticing ears. Strong but graceful...

Howard, a little afraid, looks at her like she's nuts.

HOWARD
-Can you just -- call Jackie and tell her I can't make it? Tell her I have pink eye-

ALEX
Howard, I'm not gonna tell her you have pink eye!... But I will do this. What if -- I come with you. I'll be a buffer. A friendly face. It'll be like -- a double date-

HOWARD
You'd really do that for me?! That is the best idea ever! I can't thank you enough...

ALEX
I feel I owe you Howard... And I'm sure I can... find some... pathetic soul... with no plans, on a Saturday night... in a gutter somewhere... on two hours notice...

And in walks DANNY, right over to the urinal. He unzips. Slowly, self-consciously turns, aware that they're STARING.

DANNY
I had to pee... What...?

Alex sighs, knowing she has no choice...

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

INT. ALEX'S APARTMENT -- FRONT HALL -- EVENING

Danny tries to tie his tie in the mirror, having trouble because of his bandaged hand. ALEX enters, looking gorgeous.

DANNY

You know, I find it interesting that you've only been here one night and already you've found an excuse to ask me out on a date.

Alex sighs, walks over, and ties his tie for him.

ALEX

This is not a date, it's a favor.

Alex focuses on the tie. They're standing very close.

DANNY

If that'll help you sleep tonight, we can call it that... But you should know, I don't put out on the first favor. Third base and that's it.

Alex shakes her head, finishes with his tie, smooths it down.

ALEX

Whatever, stumpy. Let's go.

INT. RESTAURANT -- NIGHT

Alex and Danny on a double date with Howard and Jackie. A beautiful WAITRESS kneels beside Howard, looking up at him, rapt. Focused only on him.

WAITRESS

...And those are our specials for tonight.

HOWARD

Wow. They sound really... special.

The Waitress laughs flirtatiously like it was the funniest thing she ever heard.

WAITRESS

That's wonderful... What was your name?

HOWARD

Um... Howard.

The Waitress puts a familiar hand on Howard's leg. Jackie looks on jealously.

WAITRESS

Howard, I'm Jessica, if there's anything else I can get you, just let me know-

DANNY

I'd love a glass of Merlot-

WAITRESS

(dismissive)
We're out... Howard?

HOWARD

Um... white wine? I guess?

WAITRESS

Great, I'll be right back with that-

The Waitress disappears.

DANNY

What the hell was up her butt?

JACKIE

She was awfully... familiar.

DANNY

(to Howard)
Don't take this the wrong way but -- how did you suddenly become Mr. Irresistible?

ALEX

Howard's a sweet guy, Danny. Women like sweet guys-

DANNY

No, I'm pretty sure that's not it-

ALEX

Or maybe it's just that you're not as irresistible as you think-

DANNY

Nope. Not it either-

JACKIE

So, Alex. Howard tells me you're some kind of... life coach-

ALEX
 (uber-pissed)
 -Oh, shut up! You prick-

Jackie, Howard, and Danny look at Alex, shocked.

ALEX (CONT'D)
 Not you, Jackie. My... ex-jackass
 boyfriend just walked in.

They turn to see where she's staring:

COLLIN and a HOT DATE being seated at a romantic table across
 the room. They don't see Alex staring at them.

ALEX (CONT'D)
 This was my restaurant! He never
 even came here before he met me!
 What a little prick!

Jackie, Howard, and Danny react, as the Waitress appears,
 placing Howard's drink in front of him.

WAITRESS
 There you go, Howard. On the house-

ALEX
 Hey, Jessica, could you bring me a
 glass of Pinot Noir? And on the
 side, some raw fennel, rosemary,
 anise seeds and... dill.
 Definitely dill -- and do you have
 a mortar and pestle?
 (off her look)
 That's okay, I'll just -- use my
 spoon-

The Waitress gives Alex a confused look. And heads off to
 get the order, as a hot BLONDE appears at the table, a fellow
 patron. She looks longingly but shyly at Howard.

BLONDE
 Hey... um, I don't know if you're
 alone tonight-

JACKIE
 He's not-

BLONDE
 But -- I just had to come over here
 and meet you-

DANNY
 (to the blonde)
 You know, I'm alone tonight-

BLONDE
 (you're gross)
 Good for you.

The Blonde leaves a piece of paper in front of Howard -- her phone number, and walks away, miming "call me!" Jackie shakes her head, increasingly pissed.

The WAITRESS sets the DRINK and PLATE OF HERBS in front of Alex. Alex begins GRINDING DOWN THE HERBS with her spoon.

JACKIE
 What a little... slut-

DANNY
 I think I went out with her once...

Alex continues grinding the herbs. Adds a little salt, throwing some over her shoulder-

ALEX
 Okay, Jackie, it's important to keep in mind, that all these other women may want Howard -- but -- you got him, am I right, Howard?

Howard nods, looks at Jackie, shy but honest.

HOWARD
 She's right, I... think you're amazing...

Jackie blushes, happy.

JACKIE
 You do?

Howard nods. Jackie is thrilled.

JACKIE (CONT'D)
 Wow. I have to say, that makes me feel so-

Alex closes her eyes, dumps the herbs into the glass of wine-

ALEX
 (whispery chanting)
 Per is serum, dico verum, per is serum, dico verum-

She opens her eyes to see her tablemates STARING at her.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Um... I like to say a little
prayer? Before I eat.

The Waitress appears again-

WAITRESS
Are you ready to order-

ALEX
We are, but first -- could you take
this drink over to the gentleman in
the corner? And -- don't tell him
who it's from-

Alex points out Collin to the Waitress.

WAITRESS
Um... I could get him a fresh glass-

Alex looks pleadingly at Howard. He nods-

HOWARD
-Could you do it -- for me?

WAITRESS
Of course!

She jauntily walks away with the wine. Jackie watches her
with narrowed eyes. Alex raises her own glass-

ALEX
To brutal honesty!

They look at her, not getting it. Alex drinks...

MEANWHILE, ACROSS THE RESTAURANT

Collin holds hands with his HOT DATE across the table. The
Waitress places the drink in front of Collin.

WAITRESS
Your wine, sir.

COLLIN
Thanks... I didn't even order yet-

He takes a LARGE SIP, swallowing, gassed out.

COLLIN (CONT'D)
Yuck, that tastes like... dill-

He puts down the wine, shaking his head.

HOT DATE

So, um... I was thinking we could -- see a movie tomorrow night-

COLLIN

Well, actually, the truth is? I'll probably just sleep with you tonight, and then not call you again until the next time I'm drunk and in the mood for sex. And then - - we'll do it, but I'll be picturing your slightly hotter roommate. Who I'll also sleep with. Later that same week.

He finishes, stunned at what he just said. As if he could not stop himself. His stunned HOT DATE picks up the glass of enchanted wine and THROWS IT IN HIS FACE, stomping away. He's completely confused... And then he spots ALEX. Watching from across the room. Grinning. He gets up and marches over-

COLLIN (CONT'D)

Are you stalking me?

ALEX

This is *my* favorite restaurant -- maybe you're stalking me-

COLLIN

Like I'd ever stalk *you*. I had to cheat on you to get rid of you-

Danny stands up, pissed.

DANNY

I think you're being impolite.

COLLIN

I don't think this is any of your business, bro-

DANNY

-Now I'm gonna say this very slowly, so that someone of your obviously limited intellectual capability can understand.

(leans in, deadly serious)

Get. The hell. Out of here.

Before I kick your ass. *Bro*.

Collin stares him down a moment, shakes his head.

COLLIN

Whatever, dude. Like I care.

And he stomps off. Alex looks at Danny, surprised and grateful. He slowly sits down. She keeps staring happily-

DANNY

What?

ALEX

Nothing. Just a... nice... little moment there. That's all...

She looks at him, happy, surprised...

DANNY

Wow, you totally want me right now...

ALEX

And -- the moment's passed...

EXT. RESTAURANT -- NIGHT

Danny tries to hail a cab, Alex and Howard and Jackie wait on the curb. Alex shakes her head, watching Danny.

ALEX

When the light's not on, it means it's occupied.

Danny gives her a look, as Jackie SNEEZES, Howard reaches into his pocket-

HOWARD

Bless you. Here, take my hankie...

Jackie takes the "HANKIE," unfurls it -- A BUNCH OF PIECES OF PAPER FALL OUT. She opens a few. Shaking her head.

JACKIE

Phone numbers. "Jessica." "Maya."
"Emily." Some guy named "Chad."

She looks at him, upset, repulsed.

JACKIE (CONT'D)

You collect these from people?!

HOWARD

Jackie -- those aren't mine.
People keep -- slipping them in my pockets, okay --

JACKIE

Right. I'm so sure! Oh, and look -
- this one has a drawing -- ew!

She drops it, horrified.

HOWARD

I didn't -- know!

JACKIE

You know what? I can't take this
anymore. I can't compete with all
these other women. It's too much,
Howard, I'm sorry-

HOWARD

But, Jackie, I don't *want* any other
women. I want *you*-

JACKIE

I've heard that before. I'm not
gonna let some... handsome alpha
guy hurt me again. This is too
much... I can't ever be with you.
I'm sorry Howard... Good-bye.

Jackie rushes away, upset, Howard watches her, stunned, Alex,
feeling terrible.

ALEX

Oh my God, Howard, I'm so sorry-

HOWARD

It's not your fault.

ALEX

It kind of... is.

HOWARD

No, you tried to help me. And now -
- she never wants to see me again.

ALEX

I know this got all screwed up, but
I wanna help you fix this Howard,
and I think I can, if you'll trust
me...

Howard looks up at her, with a glimmer of hope...

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

INT. AUNT BUN'S GREENWICH VILLAGE APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Alex is ushered into this velvety, incense-y, candlelit, witch-y oasis by BUN -- Alex's kooky, eccentric, fringe-y shawl wearing, cascading beautiful hair having, tons-of-fun aunt.

AUNT BUN

Come in come in, follow me-

ALEX

Thanks, Aunt Bun, I didn't know where else to turn-

She follows Bun into a lamplit ROOM filled with spell books and potions and crystals and talismans...

AUNT BUN

You've come to the right place.
When there's no where else to turn,
turn to me, my child. Turn to me.

Aunt Bun gestures for Alex to sit on a dusty old overstuffed ornate velvet couch.

AUNT BUN (CONT'D)

Can I get you or anything? Shasta?
Crackers? Eye of newt?

ALEX

No thanks, I'm not hungry... So --
I remember, once, you said you had
a book of reversal spells...

AUNT BUN

Darling, you know those spells are
incredibly dangerous. Not to
mention extremely difficult.
And -- they don't always work.

ALEX

Yes, I know. But I'm desperate. I
need the big guns. I've completely
ruined this guy's life. I don't
think there's a reversal spell out
there that could possibly make it
worse...

Aunt Bun nods sympathetically, goes over to a dusty overstuffed shelf and searches for a book.

AUNT BUN

You know -- I once did a reversal that involved removing a fellow's toe? It took *three tries* to get it right -- he lost the piggy that went to market, the one that came home, the one who had roast beef...

ALEX

That's comforting...

Bun takes a LARGE TOME off the shelf. Drops it on a table with a loud dusty thud. She and Alex pore over it. Then-

ALEX (CONT'D)

We're looking for 'reversal of attraction,' okay? Anything in that area.

BUN

Will do.

They look through the book for a beat. Then-

ALEX

Aha! Hold the phone, here we go... Wait. Drop the phone. Forget it.

Aunt Bun, curious, reads the spell. Smiles.

AUNT BUN

Why not? It's perfect.

ALEX

Aunt Bun, we can't-

AUNT BUN

Sure we can.

ALEX

No we can't!

AUNT BUN

Why not?!

ALEX

For one thing: it could kill him!

AUNT BUN

And?

ALEX

I think that's enough!

AUNT BUN

But it probably *won't* kill him!
And, Alex -- it could work! And
you said yourself you were
desperate...

A beat. Alex realizes she has no choice.

ALEX

Oh God... Let's do it.

Aunt Bun raises her eyebrows, excited.

AUNT BUN

This is gonna be *fun!* It's been
ages since I've seen anyone get
electrocuted...

Off Alex, worried.

INT. ALEX'S APARTMENT -- BATHROOM -- LATER

A GORGEOUS BATHROOM. STEAM RISES FROM A BEAUTIFUL, GIANT
JACUZZI TUB filling with water. Alex paces, looking at the
SPELLBOOK. Chrissy stirs the bathtub with a giant wooden
spoon, as if it's a CAULRON. Aunt Bun watches, adding bits
of HERBS and FLOWERS.

AUNT BUN

Darling, you need to stir it
clockwise.

CHRISSY

Sorry... So, you said you needed
four witches to do the spell. But -
- do I even *count* as a fourth
witch? My powers are so lame. All
I can do is -- turn lights on and
off with my mind and -- heat up
Chinese food. I'm basically just a
human clapper-slash-microwave.

ALEX

Sweetie, you're my cousin and I
love you and... you were the best
that I could do on short notice...

AUNT BUN

It doesn't matter anyway: our
fourth witch will never show... The
woman *hates* me.

ALEX
She'll show...

And sure enough -- THE BATHROOM DOOR OPENS, revealing Edith.
Alex gloats.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Told you.

EDITH
Chrissy. Alex. Your boyfriend out there is very rude. He barely looked up from his video game to let me in.

ALEX
Bite your tongue, he's not my boyfriend.

AUNT BUN
Hello, Edith...

Edith ignores Bun. Bun sighs.

EDITH
Can we get this over with, please?

ALEX
Okay, here's the plan. Howard will be here any minute. You guys need to hide in my bedroom. I told him I felt bad about everything he's been through, so I'm running him a nice bath in my jacuzzi tub and fixing him a protein shake. Once he's in the tub I'll add the valerian root and the lavender, and then when he's asleep, the three of you will come in to form the circle of protection so that Howard hopefully doesn't die when I... electrocute him... and then I'll throw the boom box in the tub, say the chant and... the spell will be broken. Any questions?

CHRISSEY
Yeah... have any of you ever... done this before?

AUNT BUN
No. But I've seen it done. Once or twice... It's really not so bad.
(MORE)

AUNT BUN (CONT'D)

In the first case -- guy came out feeling kind of -- energized...

ALEX

And in the second case?

AUNT BUN

It's best we don't speak of it. But if it makes you feel better -- he didn't die. That day...

ALEX

(ironic)
Awesome.

Danny knocks on the door as he opens it-

DANNY

What are you guys doing in here?

Alex looks at him. A beat.

ALEX

Woman stuff.

DANNY

Ew, don't tell me. I don't wanna know... Anyway, that Howard guy is here...

Alex nods. Takes a deep breath...

INT. ALEX'S BATHROOM -- LATER

Howard lies back in the tub, relaxed, alone, NEW AGE MUSIC pouring out of a boombox on the counter. Alex knocks as she enters, holding a few CRYSTAL BOTTLES.

ALEX

Hey. I forgot to add the... bath salts. Very important... For your relaxation experience.

Howard looks at her. It's a little unusual, but he decides to go with it.

HOWARD

Oh. Okay...

Alex walks over to Howard, starts POURING INGREDIENTS into the water from the bottles. Beside him is an EMPTY GLASS.

ALEX

Did you like your protein shake?

HOWARD

I did. I feel very relaxed. This is... wonderful. Thanks Alex.

ALEX

Well, I just hope you want to... thank me later...

HOWARD

The bath is very... tingly.

ALEX

Just you... wait...

HOWARD

Wow, that protein shake made me... sleepy. I think I'm just gonna... rest my eyes...

CONK. Howard passes out. Alex turns and calls out-

ALEX

Ladies, it's time!

Chrissy, Edith, and Bun burst into the room. Notice him passed out cold.

EDITH

Did you drug him?!

ALEX

Yes of course I drugged him!

EDITH

Alex!

ALEX

Mom, I'm about to electrocute the guy, a little Tylenol PM is the least of our worries. Just -- form the circle of protection, alright!

Chrissy, Bun, and Edith form an awkward circle around the tub, holding hands, crouching and straddling so they can all fit. Chrissy shakes her head, staring down at Howard.

CHRISSEY

This is such a shame. I could definitely take his mind off that Jackie person...

AUNT BUN

Yup. I would totally hit that...

Alex uses the GIANT WOODEN SPOON to stir the cauldron/bathtub as she chants --

ALEX

Addo relevo iam semper! Addo
relevo iam semper!

Alex grabs the BOOM BOX on the counter and holds it over the tub, still plugged in-

AUNT BUN/CHRISSEY/EDITH

Addo relevo iam semper! Addo
relevo iam semper!

ALEX

Oh God. Here we go-

ALEX CLOSES HER EYES AND LETS GO OF THE BOOM BOX.

INT. LIVINGROOM -- SAME

Danny, playing VIDEO GAMES on the couch, looks up, confused, as the LIGHTS MOMENTARILY DIM AND FLICKER. He shrugs, and keeps playing...

END OF ACT FIVE

ACT SIX

INT. ALEX'S BATHROOM -- NIGHT

Howard wakes up in the tub to see Alex and Bun and Chrissy and Edith hovering over him.

ALEX
Are you okay, Howard?

HOWARD
(disoriented)
What time is the bus to Chicago?

ALEX
Maybe we should take him to the hospital...

AUNT BUN
He's fine. You're fine, aren't you, Howard?

HOWARD
No thanks, Uncle Gary, I just had a hot dog...

AUNT BUN
See? He's fine.

ALEX
Howard. Howard -- listen to me.
It's Alex. You had an accident.
Do you understand what's going on?

Howard nods slowly, starting to come back.

HOWARD
I think I fell asleep...

ALEX
Howard, the radio fell in the tub... just tell me you're okay...

Howard nods, coming back down to earth.

HOWARD
I think I'm okay...

She collapses with relief, looks at him, realizing something.

HOWARD (CONT'D)
What...? Am I disfigured?!

ALEX
Not exactly...

She huddles away from Howard with the other witches. Whispers-

ALEX (CONT'D)
I gotta say -- I think it worked.
He's not so sexy.

CHRISSEY
(a little too loud)
No, he's really sort of troll-y.
(Alex swats her)
What? I thought that was the idea-

Aunt Bun looks at Howard, considering...

AUNT BUN
I still think he's a hottie...

Alex turns back to Howard, puts a hand on his shoulder.

ALEX
Are you okay, Howard? Do you wanna
go to the hospital?

HOWARD
No, you know what's weird? I
actually... feel kinda good. Like -
- energized-

AUNT BUN
See?! Told you!

He looks around at Bun and Chrissy and Edith.

HOWARD
I'm sorry... have we met?

INT. ALEX'S APARTMENT -- LATER

Chrissy leaves, as Alex says goodbye to Edith at the door.
Aunt Bun, in the background, plays video games with Danny.
Edith, full of energy-

EDITH
Alright. I'm off to pilates...

ALEX
Wanna say good-bye to your sister?

EDITH
I didn't say hello...

ALEX
 Alright. I won't push...
 (then)
 Forgot how much fun this was, huh?

EDITH
 Please.

ALEX
 Thank you, Mom, for doing this.

Edith rolls her eyes.

EDITH
 You think I did this for you?
 Consider this a 'you owe me one.'
 I'll be cashing in at a later date.

ALEX
 (with dread)
 Goodie.

Edith trots off. Alex closes the door, and turns back into the apartment. She passes Danny and Edith, and heads out onto her GORGEOUS TERRACE.

EXT. GORGEOUS TERRACE -- CONTINUOUS

Alex stares out at the twinkling lights of the city, contemplative. A beat. Aunt Bun comes and joins her. They stare out at the city together. Aunt Bun shakes her head.

AUNT BUN
 That woman is stubborn.
 (quietly)
 I miss her.

ALEX
 She'll come around.

AUNT BUN
 Maybe. Maybe not...

A beat. They look around at the skyline...

AUNT BUN (CONT'D)
 I love this city. Most magical
 place on earth...

Alex nods. Aunt Bun looks at Alex, notes her melancholy.

AUNT BUN (CONT'D)
 You okay, there?

Alex nods, melancholy...

ALEX

Yeah, I was just... thinking about Howard... and Jackie... I guess... some people are just... meant to go through life, wanting something they'll never have...

Aunt Bun looks at Alex, she nods, understanding something:

AUNT BUN

You're afraid you're gonna end up like me, aren't you? Alone, a crazy old cat lady...

ALEX

Aunt Bun, you're not a crazy old cat lady. You're amazing, you're talented, you've lived a cool life, I'd be lucky to end up like you-

AUNT BUN

It's okay. I *like* being a crazy old cat lady, living alone with my musty books and my herbs and my potions... I made that choice, Alex. It doesn't mean you have to. You'll find someone who loves you, no matter what your mother, or anyone else, says...

Alex smiles, Aunt Bun knows her too well.

ALEX

Maybe. Maybe not...

AUNT BUN

If it's what you want, you'll find it. Or should I say: it'll find you...

ALEX

(finally, with hope)
You think?

AUNT BUN

I know...

Aunt Bun takes Alex by the hand, they stroll back inside.

AUNT BUN (CONT'D)

Now how 'bout Madden Football king in there?

ALEX
 Uch, he's cocky. Thinks he knows
 everything. Extremely annoying...

Aunt Bun nods, a twinkle in her eye.

AUNT BUN
 Just the way you like them...

ALEX
 (realizing)
 OhmyGod -- it was you! You cast a
 spell to get me this apartment!

AUNT BUN
 I have no idea what you're talking
 about...

Aunt Bun smiles. She is indeed a very powerful witch...

EXT. HOWARD'S OFFICE BUILDING -- DAY

Jackie eats lunch on a bench outside, alone. Howard sits on
 a bench of his own, periodically looking over at her.

Alex watches from afar, hidden. Quietly, to herself-

ALEX
 Just lose the fear, Howard. Just
 be yourself, and lose the fear...

But Howard just sits there, sneaking timid peeks at Jackie.
 Finally, Alex sighs, exasperated. She makes a little hand
 gesture and-

-A WIND BLOWS THROUGH HOWARD'S HAIR. It's like he's filled,
 suddenly, with courage. He takes a deep brave breath and
 STANDS UP, WALKS OVER TO JACKIE.

HOWARD
 Hi... Um... May I?

Jackie shrugs, still feeling hurt. Howard sits.

HOWARD (CONT'D)
 So... I know you said you never
 wanted to see me again but... I
 just wanted to say that... I think
 you're really amazing. And I know
 you don't know me, but I think
 maybe if you got to know me, or if
 you... gave me another chance...
 (MORE)

HOWARD (CONT'D)
 you might see that... I'm pretty
 amazing too.

Jackie looks at him, smiles a little, amused.

HOWARD (CONT'D)
 And I know you like opera. And I
 like opera too. And so I think maybe
 we should go to the opera sometime...

She looks at him. Studies him for a moment.

JACKIE
 You know, you look... different.
 (then)
 I feel like I never saw you before,
 like... I'm looking at you for the
 first time, or something... You're
 kinda cute, Howard.
 (he smiles, then)
 Yes. I'll go to the opera with
 you.

Howard tries to hide just how thrilled he is.

HOWARD
 Cool.

They eat shyly. ALEX watches from afar, hidden from their
 view. She does a little victory dance.

ALEX
 Go Howard, go Howard...

INT. ALEX'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Alex, Joanna and Michael head for the door, dressed to go
 out. Danny sits on the couch, eating cereal and watching TV.

MICHAEL
 (to Danny)
 How's that hand holding up?

DANNY
 I'm thinking of suing.

ALEX
 Don't cross me, you've seen what I
 can do with a knife... Later dude.

Joanna playfully swats her, whispers:

JOANNA
 Ask him if he wants to come.

ALEX
 (whispers)
 He doesn't want to come.

DANNY
 You think I can't hear you? I'm
 five feet away... Come where?

ALEX
 Nowhere. Just -- something we do
 on Tuesdays. It's stupid. You
 really don't want to come.

Danny smiles slyly, sensing an opportunity to annoy her.

DANNY
 Sounds cool.

Alex rolls her eyes.

INT. KARAOKE BAR -- NIGHT

Alex, Danny, and Michael in the audience. Joanna's onstage,
 her song starting, she sways along with the music.

JOANNA
 I'd like to send this one out to a
 friend of mine... Alex, this one's
 for you.
 (singing)
 "Raven hair and ruby lips, sparks
 fly from her finger tips. Echoed
 voices in the night, she's a
 restless spirit on an endless
 flight... Wooo-hooo witchy woman,
 see how high she flies..."

Alex laughs. Danny turns to her.

DANNY
 You're right -- this *is* totally
 lame...
 (then)
 So, can I ask you something? I've
 noticed... a lot of stuff has gone
 down since you moved in with me.
 An electrocution, a stabbing... a
 confrontation with an angry ex-
 boyfriend... you're not some kind
 of... drama queen are you?

Alex just smiles.

ALEX
Nope, I'm just your average,
everyday girl...

Alex gives Danny a little grin, and hops up on stage with Joanna, they lean into the microphone and sing together. Danny watches her appreciatively.

ALEX (V.O.) (CONT'D)
*And I know what you're all
thinking, but you can stop it right
now. He is way more annoying than
cute, okay? At least fifty-two
percent annoying... The truth is, I
don't know whether I'll ever find
my someone, the way Howard has.
But I'm hopeful. Because I know
the world is a pretty enchanted
place, and life has a lot of magic
in store. You just have to know
where to look for it...*

ALEX AND JOANNA
(singing)
"Wooo-hooooo witchy woman, she got
the moon in her eye..."

Alex and Joanna laugh, as Michael and Danny watch, Danny smiling, he finds Alex quite intriguing indeed...

Fade out.

THE END