INT. COMIC BOOK STORE - DAY
A pile of COMIC BOOKS are on a shelf next to myriad others. The most prominent one is called BLUNTMAN AND CHRONIC'. A hand reaches in and pulls one out of frame. HOLDEN opens the comic and flips through it. He shakes his head. BANKY looks over his shoulder.

BANKY
Felt Like this fucking day would never come. Issue two - on the shelf.

HOLDEN
Yippee.

BANKY
Don't start, alright! This is a cool moment, and I'd appreciate you not trying to ruin it. How often does a guy get the opportunity to purchase something with his name on it!
(points to name on cover)
Banky Edwards- right!
(points to the other)
Holden McNeil.

HOLDEN
I know my name.

BANKY
C'mon, sour puss. We got the rest of our lives to be artists. But it's supply and demand. And right now, the unwashed masses demand this.

HOLDEN
(off comic)
This is easy, alright! And right now it pays the bills. Just don't forget that we're better than this.

BANKY
I'll tell you who we're better than: these two fags right here.

They approach the counter, where STEVE-DAVE, the store manager, and WALT the Fan-boy, play a card game.

BANKY
(lays books on the counter)
Alright Old-Maid's - take a break from the Crazy-8's marathon and ring us up.

STEVE-DAVE
(not looking up)
Well, well, well, Walt Did you see who it is! The local celebrities. Quick - get them to autograph one of their books so we can sell it for triple it's value.

WALT
I'm not that in need of fifteen cents right now.

They snicker and high-five one another. Holden rolls his eyes.

BANKY
You guys operate the smallest, ladies' bridge circle I've ever seen.

WALT
For your information, we're playing Crimson Mystical Mages' - an overpower card game. Not that either of you would give a shit about something as advanced as this - there are no dick or poopie jokes involved.

BANKY
(to Holden)
I don't think they're fans.

WALT
No, we're not. You're both a couple of fucking no talents that got lucky.

STEVE-DAVE
And obviously your handlers or hangers-on convinced you that your first comic was good which it was not it was thoroughly mediocre with a few spiky bits of dialogue. And when you get your foot in the door of the business, what do you do! You turn out a piece of shit like Bluntman and Chronic'.

WALT
Tell him, Steve-Dave.

STEVE-DAVE
(off comic)
Bluntman and Chronic'. Pah. What was that thing the little stoner pulled on the villain in the last issue!

WALT
The Stinky-palm.

STEVE-DAVE
Stinky-palm. You give comics a bad name I tell all my customers not to buy it, to spend their money on a real comic book.

WALT
Fucking one hit wonder, dime-store Frank Miller's.

STEVE-DAVE

This is the reality at Comic-Toast – you're not going to get your ass kissed here, because both me and Walt think you suck.

WALT

And me.

STEVE-DAVE

I said that.

Steve-Dave offers the boys his two middle fingers, then goes back to playing his game with Walt. Holden and Banky stare, shocked. Banky nudges Holden and they both exit Steve-Dave and the Fan-boy slap hands and go back to playing.

WALT

I've got a dragon card – forty power-ups and twelve life points! Ha! I get your elf card!

STEVE-DAVE

You're such a bitch! But thankfully, I've saved a dark forces Shaman card for just such an occasion.

WALT

You suck! Eighty six life-power points to my twenty two!

STEVE-DAVE

I schooled their asses, now I'm schooling your's.

Suddenly. A trash can crashes through the front window. Steve-Dave and Walt hit the deck like bitches, covering one another. They look up slowly. Steve-Dave leaps to his feet and looks at the shattered mess. He pulls something off the garbage can and reads it.

WALT

You know it was those two fucks! Let's call the cops and have them busted! I know where their studio is! Or better yet, let's sue! You can sue them, Steve-Dave!

STEVE-DAVE

(still reading note)

That won't be necessary.

WALT

What?! Why the hell not!

STEVE-DAVE

(holds up check)

Because this is a check for three times what that window cost.

(reading note)

Dear critics – thanks for the
insight. But like my grandmother always said - Fuck 'em if they can't take a joke.. and break their window.'
Kiss it, Banky the Hack.
P.S. - Your card game blows.

WALT
He said Kiss it!

CREDITS
INT. COMIC BOOK: CONVENTION SIGNING BOOTH - DAY
A physically large FAN - sweaty brow, tote bag bursting with comics - leans forward, smiling.

FAN
Could you sign it To a really big fan!

Holden sits at a table. Across from the barely-managing-to-stand Fan. He offers him a patronizingly kind, half-smile in return,

HOLDEN
You bet.

We're at a Comic Book show, specifically at a book-signing. Behind Holden hangs a large banner, heralding HOLDEN McNEIL AND BANKY EDWARDS - CREATORS OF BLUNTMAN AND CHRONIC'. Beside it is a large mock-up of the comic book cover which features two stoner super-heroes who bear a striking resemblance to a pair of very familiar friendly neighborhood drug dealers, Holden hands the book back to the Fan.

FAN
I love this book man! This shit's awesome. I wish I was like these guys - getting stoned, talking all raw about chicks and fighting supervillains! I love these guys! They're like Cheech and Chong' meet Bill and Fed'!

HOLDEN
I like to chink of them as Rosencrantz and Guildenstern' meet Vladimir and Estragon'.

FAN
Yeah!

(beat)
Who!

BANKY signs the book of another COLLECTOR.

COLLECTOR
So you draw this!

BANKY
(signing the comic)
I ink it and I'm also the colorist. The guy next to me draws it. But we both came up with the characters,
COLLECTOR
What's that mean - you ink it!'!

BANKY
Well. It means that Holden draws the pictures in pencil, and then he gives it to me to go over in ink

COLLECTOR
So you just trace!
Banky freezes up. He composes himself and continues signing.

BANKY
It's not tracing. I add depth and shading to give the image more definition. Only then does the drawing really take shape.

COLLECTOR
You go over what he draws with a pen - that's tracing.

BANKY
(hands book back to Collector)
Not really.
(calling out)
Next!

A LITTLE KID steps up but the Collector lingers.

COLLECTOR
Hey man. If somebody draws something and then you draw the same thing right on top of it, not going out-side the designated original art what do call that!

LITTLE KID
(shrugs)
I don't know. Tracing?

COLLECTOR
(to Banky)
See?

BANKY
It's not tracing.

COLLECTOR
Oh, but it is.

BANKY
(to Little Kid)
Do you want Lour book signed or what?

COLLECTOR
Hey - don't get all testy with him just because you have a problem with your station in life.

BANKY
I'm secure with what I do.

COLLECTOR
Then say it - you're a tracer.
BANKY
(grabbing Little Kid's book)
How should I sign this?

LITTLE KID
(grabs book back)
I don't want you to sign it, I want the guy that draws Bluntman and Chronic to sign it. You're just a tracer.

COLLECTOR
Tell him, Little Shaver.
Holden accepts a comic from another Fan.

HOLDEN
(off comic)
Who do I sign it to!
Before Holden can finish, a loud crash is heard. He looks to his left and freaks.
Banky is throttling the Collector from across the table. The Collector attempts to fight him off. SECURITY GUARDS pull them apart. Holden grabs Banky.

COLLECTOR
Jesus! All I did was call him a tracer!

BANKY
(to Collector)
I'LL TRACE A CHALK LINE AROUND YOUR DEAD FUCKING BODY, YOU FUCK?!

HOLDEN
(to Security Guard)
Could you get him out of here!
The Security Guards drag the collector away.

COLLECTOR
Hey, wait a sec! He jumped me! And you're dragging me away!!
(exitting)
Fucking tracer!

BANKY
(calling OC)
YOUR MOTHER'S A TRACER!!

HOLDEN
Can I explain the audience principle to you! If you insult and accost them, then we have no audience.

BANKY
He started it! Fucking cock-knocker! He's lucky I didn't put my pen through his thorax!

HOLDEN
Need I remind you...
(holds up watch)
Curtain's in ten minutes.
INT. COMIC BOOK CONVENTION LECTURE HALL - DAY
HOOPER fills the frame. He comes off like a typical, pro-black/anti-white homeboy.

HOOPER
For years in this industry whenever an African-American character - hero or villain - was introduced usually by white artists and writers - they got slapped with racist names that singled them out as negroes: Black Panther, Black Lightning, Black Goliath, Black Mantra, Black Talon, Black Spider, Black Hand, Black Falcon, Black Cat...

VOICE FROM CROWD
She's white.

HOOPER
She is?

(beat)
Well bust this - regardless.

We're at a panel discussion. The room is full. Five creators sit at a long table, their names on placards in front of them.

(One of them is a very striking Girl.) The banner behind them reads WORDS UP - MINORITY VOICES IN COMICS'.

HOOPER
(holds up comic)
Now my book, White-Hating Coon', doesn't have any of that bullshit. The hero's name is Maleekwa, and he's a descendant of the black tribe that established the first society on the planet, while all you European motherfuckers were still hiding in caves and shit, all terrified of the sun. He's a strong role model that a young black reader can look up to, Cause I'm here to tell you - the chickens are comin' home to roost, ya'll: the black man's no longer gonna play the minstrel in the medium of comics and Sci-Fi/Fantasy! We're keeping it real, and we're gonna get respect - by any means necessary!

During the speech, Holden and Banky enter and sit up front.

HOLDEN
(calling out)
Bullshit! Lando Calrissian was a black man, and he got to fly the Millennium Falcon!

Hooper whips his head around, looking for the source of the comment
HOOPER
Who said that?!?

HOLDEN
(standing)
I did! Lando Calrissian is a positive black role model in the realm of Science Fiction/Fantasy.

HOOPER
Fuck Lando Calrissian! Uncle Tom nigger! Always some white boy gotta invoke the holy trilogy'! Bust this - those movies are about how the white man keeps the brother man down - even in a galaxy far, far away. Check this shit. You got cracker farm-boy Luke Skywalker, Nazi poster boy - blond hair, blue eyes. And then you've got Darth Vader: the blackest brother in the galaxy. Nubian God.

BANKY
What's a Nubian?

HOOPER
Shut the fuck up! Now Vader, he's a spiritual brother, with the force and all that shit. Then this cracker Skywalker gets his hands on a lightsaber, and the boy decides he's gonna run the fucking universe - gets a whole Klan of whites together, and they're gonna bust up Vader's hood the Death Star. Now what the fuck do you call that!

BANKY
Intergalactic Civil War!

HOOPER
Gentrification. They're gonna drive our the black element, to make the galaxy quote, unquote safe' for white folks.

HOLDEN
But Vader turns, out to be Luke's father. And in Jedi, they become friends.

HOOPER
Don't make me bust a cap in your ass, yo! Jedi's the most insulting installment, because Vader's beautiful, black visage is sullied when he pulls off his mask to reveal a feeble, crusty white man! They're trying to tell us that deep
inside, we all want to be white!

BANKY
Well isn't that true!

Hooper explodes. He pulls a nine millimeter from his belt, draws on Banky and fires. Banky goes down, falling forward into the crowd. The crowd screams and starts to scatter, Hooper jumps over the table and raises his fists in the air.

HOOPER
BLACK RAGE! BLACK RAGE!! I'LL KILL ANY WHITE FOLKS I LAY MY MOTHER FUCKIN' EYES ON!!!

The crowd is gone. Holden sits in his chair, laughing. Hooper steps off the stage and picks Banky's head up off the floor.

HOOPER
(breaking character)
What's a Nubian! Bitch, you almost made me laugh!

Hooper sounds different. Actually, he sounds gay. Actually - he is. Banky smiles.

BANKY
Well what about you! You didn't tell me you were going to scream 'Black Rage'. I nearly pissed myself.

HOLDEN
How do you manage to get away with this all the time? Shouldn't cops be busting your head open right about now?

BANKY
Wrong coast.

HOOPER
(off gun)
Well this right here - she full of blanks, okay. And Opiate gets all sorts of legal clearances before I go on.

HOLDEN
Your publisher condones these theatrics!

HOOPER
Condones? Honey, they insist. I need to sell the image to sell the book. Would the audience still buy the 'Black Rage' angle if they found out the book was written by a... a...

BANKY
Faggot.

HOOPER
When you say if it sounds so sexy...
(he kisses Banky full on the
lips)

BANKY
(wipes his lips)
Hey, hey! I'll play your victim, but not your catcher.

VOICE
How is it that you sound like Minister Farakhan when you're on stage..

They turn to see...
A beautiful, blonde, ruffled-haired angel swinging her purse in a circle. Her name is ALYSSA. She's the striking Girl from the panel who didn't get to say much.

ALYSSA
...and the King of Pop when you're nor.

HOOPER
Look out, boys - this kitten has a whip.

ALYSSA
(shoves and slaps him)
Always before I get to speak! I swear - the next con I attend and they ask me to be on the minority panel, if I see your name anywhere near the List, I'm passing.

HOOPER
(defending himself)
Holden. Banky - this pile of P.M.S. is Alyssa Jones. She does that book 'Idiosyncratic Routine'. This is the fourth panel we've been on together, and even though she knows my publisher sets this up and pays for the event. She still gets mad when it ends with my act.

ALYSSA
I just wish I was the one who gets to shoot you.

HOOPER
That's what my father said when I came - nay - leapt out of the closet
(off guys)
These boys do 'Bluntman and Chronic', which outsells both of our books put together, hence they're never on a panel with the likes of us. They slumming right now.

BANKY
I've read your book. It's cute. Chick stuff, but cute.

Holden hits him.
What?

HOLDEN
(shoots him a look; to Alyssa)
Sorry about him. He's dealing with being an inker.

ALYSSA
(to Banky)
Oh. You trace!

Banky seethes.

HOLDEN
(shaking her hand)
I really enjoy your book I'm surprised we've never met at any other Con's before.

ALYSSA
Lose the dick or change your skin tone and we can get to know each other on panel after panel while the Pink Black Panther here plays Chuck D. for the fanboys.

HOOPER
Hey, jealousy.
(to the Boys)
I told Alyssa I'd buy her a post-rave drink. Do the Garden-Staters have to sprint to the Lincoln Tunnel, or can you stay for a round in the big, scary city!

BANKY
We're gonna take off soon...

HOLDEN
We'll go.

Banky offers Holden a puzzled glance. Then he nods to Hooper.

BANKY
We'll go.

INT BAR - NIGHT
Holden, Banky, Alyssa and Hooper sit around a table drinking, talking, and smoking.

BANKY
Archie, alright! Archie and the Riverdale gang were a pure and fun-lovin' bunch. You can't find dysfunction in those comics, because they were just flat out wholesome.

HOOPER
Archie and Jughead were lovers.
(sips his drink)

BANKY
Shut the fuck up.

HOOPER
It's true. Archie was the bitch and Jughead was the butch - that's why Jughead wears that crown-looking hat all the time: he the king, of queen Archie's world.

**BANKY**

Man, I feel a hate-crime coming on

**HOLDEN**

He's got a point. Archie never did settle on Betty or Veronica.

**BANKY**

Because he wanted them both at the same time, you assholes! He never chose one because he was trying to get both of them into a three-way!

**HOOPER**

(pulls out a dollar and hands it to Banky)

Here. I want you to go down to the corner store and buy yourself a clue. Go on.

**BANKY**

Eat it. Urkel.

**HOOPER**

I told you to watch it with that Urkel shit. Face it, girl - Archie's a sister.

**BANKY**

(getting up; to Hooper)

That's it. You.

**HOOPER**

Moi?

**BANKY**

You are marching back across the street with me, and we're going to pick up a shit load of Archie books, I am going to prove to you - beyond the shadow of a doubt that Archie was all about pussy. Come on.

**HOOPER**

(sliding out of booth)

This boy is conflicted, I shall play mother-therapist for him. You two sit tight. We shall return promptly. Banky and Hooper exit, leaving Alyssa and Holden alone at the table.

**ALYSSA**

Is he always Like that!

**HOLDEN**

For years now. Started back in third grade - a nun was teaching us about the Blessed Trinity. She's going on
about the three persons in one God thing - Father, Son, Holy Spirit - and he just goes ballistic. I guess it was too big for him to grasp. They got into this huge fight.

**ALYSSA**

Please. How bad could it have been!

**HOLDEN**

You ever seen a nun call a small child a fucking cunt-rag'? Wasn't pretty, Shit like that's bound to happen when you make a kid wear a matching tie and slacks everyday.

**ALYSSA**

And your parochial school misadventures!

**HOLDEN**

Limited to wine-tasting prior to mass. Turned me into a grade school alcoholic altar boy. I couldn't tell you how many mornings after serous benders I'd wake up next to strange priests.

**ALYSSA**

Aren't you the sharp wit!

**HOLDEN**

Sharp! No. I'm just a fan of clergy-molestation humor. Probably why the extended family quit inviting me to First Communion parties.

Alyssa laughs. Holden smiles.

**ALYSSA**

(looking OC)
You play darts!

**HOLDEN**

Not professionally. You know - only in bars.

**AT THE DART BOARD**

A dart hits the board then, one hits the wall beside the board. Alyssa winds up with another dart. Holden watches. Her's always hit. His never do.

**ALYSSA**

So your new book seems to be selling like mad.
HOLDEN
It goes back to something my grandmother told me when I was a kid. "Holden," she said "The big bucks are in dick and fart jokes." She was a church-goer.

ALYSSA
Uh-oh - the cry from the heart of a real artist trapped in commercial hell - pitying his good fortune. I'm sure you can dry your eyes on all those fat checks you rake in.

HOLDEN
I'm sorry - did I detect a note of bitter envy in there!

ALYSSA
Nope. I'm happy my stuff gets read at all. There's very little market for hearts and flowers in this spandex-clad, big pecs, big tits, big guns field. If I sell two issues, I feel like John Grisham.

HOLDEN
(looking out window)
It's all about marketing. Over- or underweight guys who don't get laid - they're our bread and butter. People like those two outside should be yours.

Through the window, we see a COUPLE making out on the hood of a car.

HOLDEN
And sadly, there are more of our core audience out there than yours.

(smiles)
Look at that, though - kind of gives you a little charge, to see two people in love. And all over Banky's car, no less. That car's seeing more action right now than it's seen in years.

ALYSSA
Bubbly guy like that, it's hard to figure out why.

HOLDEN
(still looking at OC Couple)
You've gotta respect that kind of display of affection. It's crazy, rude, self-absorbed - but it's love.

Alyssa
That's not love.

Holden
Says you.

Alyssa
That out there! That's fleeting.

Holden
Fleeting.

Alyssa
Uh-huh. You wanna hear about love! Oh, I'll tell you about love.

Holden
A story?

Alyssa
The story. The original love story.

Holden
'Doctor Zhivago'.

Alyssa
Nope. My mother's uncle. He was a millionaire.

Holden
Get out.

Alyssa
I kid you not.

Holden
Explain.

Alyssa
All through high school, he dated this one girl. They were inseparable. And when they graduated, she went off to Carnegie Mellon...

Holden
In Pittsburgh.
ALYSSA
I'm impressed. So he stays in the home town, and they begin their long-distance relationship. The plan is, on the third Sunday of every month, he'll train out, spend a week then train back. They do this for four years.

HOLDEN
That is love.

ALYSSA
Not nearly finished. Two months before she's going to graduate, he's got this job digging graves, and he comes across...

HOLDEN
A stiff.

ALYSSA
A steamer trunk containing silver ingots.

HOLDEN
Get out of here.

ALYSSA
Many, many silver ingots. Now, my mother's uncle being quite the ingenious chap - he buries the trunk again and heads up to the main office, where he proceeds to purchase a cemetery plot. Guess which one?

HOLDEN
Clever.

ALYSSA
So now he owns the plot and all of its contents. Two days later, my mother's uncle is worth three million.

HOLDEN
At which time he marries the high school sweetheart and lives happily ever after.

ALYSSA
Not even close. Inside the steamer trunk, stenciled into the wood, or
something like that, is a curse.

**HOLDEN**
Someone wrote 'Fuck' inside his new steamer trunk.

**ALYSSA**
Not that kind of curse. A cryptic curse "Great fortune means great loss" it said.

**HOLDEN**
What kind of asshole writes that inside a steamer trunk!

**ALYSSA**
The same kind of asshole that buries silver ingots. The day my mother's uncle is heading out to see the girl, he stops at his accountant's to grab some cash, and winds up missing his train. So he has to take the next one - which he does - and he gets there an hour later than his usual time of arrival, whereupon he sees lights.

**HOLDEN**
A hero's welcome for the new millionaire.

**ALYSSA**
It seems that while she was standing on the platform waiting that extra hour for my mother's uncle to show up, the girl was dragged into the bushes by an unknown assailant, raped and gutted.

Holden is silent Alyssa downs her drink.

**ALYSSA**
The assailant was never apprehended.

**HOLDEN**
(beat)
That's a love story!!

**ALYSSA**
Yes, and here's why: my mother's uncle rode that train every day for the rest of his life. One day up, the next day back. Did that 'till the day he died.
He donated the fortune he'd acquired to the train station in Pittsburgh, to have a well-lit terminal built. The train line let him ride for free after that.

**HOLDEN**
I should hope so. Jesus, that's the saddest tale I've ever heard.

**ALYSSA**
That's my love story.

Alyssa tosses her last dart. Holden seems a bit dazed. He looks out the window.

**HOLDEN**
Those two aren't on the hood of Banky's car anymore.

**ALYSSA**
I told you it wasn't love.
(grabs her purse)
I gotta split. It was really nice meeting you. I wish you the best of luck with your book.
(shakes his hand)
Tell Hooper I'll call him later. And tell your friend to calm down.

Alyssa exits to the night. Holden stares after her. Two beats later, Hooper and Banky enter, holding an 'Everything's Archie' comic between them.

**BANKY**
You're insane. Archie is not fucking Mister Weatherbee!

**HOOPER**
Deny, deny, deny.
(to Holden)
Where's Alyssa?

**HOLDEN**
Huh! Oh. She left. She said she'd call you later.

**BANKY**
(off comic)
He's just offering to help Archie with his homework!
**HOOPER**
Read between the lines.

**BANKY**
(shoves book at him)
Fuck this.
(to Holden)
Let's go. Traffic.
(no response from Holden)
Holden!

**HOLDEN**
(shaken)
What!

**BANKY**
Let's go.

**HOOPER**
(looking out window)
D'jou see that dent in the hood of your car!

**BANKY**
(looking out window)
What the...! Son of a bitch!

Banky runs out Holden shrugs at Hooper.

**HOOPER**
Let me guess: you like her!

**HOLDEN**
Who?

**HOOPER**
Miss Alyssa Jones.

**HOLDEN**
She's alright.

**HOOPER**
As long as that's all.
(finishes drink)
Maybe you can convince that partner of your's to drop me off downtown before you scurry out the tunnel!

**HOLDEN**
(beat)
Mister Weatherbee wasn't really trying to fuck Archie, was he!
They begin exiting.

HOOPER

Hell no. Weatherbee was Reggie's bitch.

INT. STUDIO - DAY

We're in Holden and Banky's studio/apartment. It's a rented loft-style place with high ceilings, wood floors and sparse furnishings. There are posters on the walls, a sort of kitchenette, a hockey net, a big TV. (with all the trimmings - VCR, Laserdisc player, Sega, SNES), a huge comfy couch, and two drawing boards with adjacent desks (littered with pencils, pens, coloring pencils, paints, erasers, etc.) - at which sit Holden and Banky. They're working. Some music plays.

C.U. OF HOLDEN PENCILING - over his shoulder, we see Holden sketching Chronic in mid-attack of his arch-nemesis - the Giggler. Holden erases a line and re-draws.

C.U. OF BANKY INKING - over his shoulder, we see Banky outlining a pre-penciled page. He traces Bluntman swinging from a street light.

The two work in silence. Then...

BANKY

(not looking up)
This is one of the best street lights you've ever drawn.

HOLDEN

It's the one across from the post office.

BANKY

Looks just like it.

HOLDEN

Thanks.  
(beat)
What do you wanna do tonight!

BANKY

Get a pizza. Watch 'Degrassi Junior High'.
HOLDEN
(erases)
You got a weird thing for Canadian melodrama.

BANKY
I've got a weird thing for girls who say 'aboot'.

The phone starts ringing. Holden answers it, while still drawing.

HOLDEN
Bank-Hold-Up.

CROSSCUT between Holden and Hooper. He's on a phone in a CLUB.

HOOPER
Hooper here. Listen, I know how you burf-fiends hate the city, but there's a club shindig going down that I think you'd get into.

HOLDEN
Where is it?

HOOPER
Place called Her-sterectomy - I'm tempting as bar-keep.

HOLDEN
I don't know, Hoop. We're prepping the next issue, and we've got our big M-TV meeting in the morning.

HOOPER
I told her you wouldn't be interested.

HOLDEN
Told who?

HOOPER
Alyssa.

HOLDEN
Alyssa from last night Alyssa?

HOOPER
How do you begin and end a question with the same word like that? You got
skill. Yes, that one. She asked me to invite you. Now here's the part where you say...

HOLDEN
I'll be there.

HOOPER
Thought so. Ten o'clock. Later.
(both hang up)

BANKY
Who was that?

HOLDEN
Hooper. He invited me to a club.

BANKY
When's that faggot going to learn - you like chicks.

HOLDEN
(getting up)
Not that kind of a club.

BANKY
So when we leaving?

HOLDEN
'Ve'? You can't go. He's setting me up with Alyssa.

BANKY
And?

HOLDEN
And I don't want you messing it up.

BANKY
Like I care about your shit. Maybe I'll hook up myself.

HOLDEN
(pulling on coat)
I just told you - it's not that kind of club.

BANKY
How does one man get to be so funny!

HOLDEN
(throws him his coat)
How are you going to get home if I hook up!

BANKY
Like that'll happen.

HOLDEN
Let me explain something to you, my witless chum the other night in that bar, we two - Alyssa and I shared a moment, alright!

BANKY
Oh, you had a moment!

HOLDEN
(brings his two pointer fingers together)
We shared a moment. And in that moment, one thing was made abundantly clear: this girl loves me, my friend. Loves-me.

6. INT. HER-STERECTOMY - NIGHT
6.

It's a club - people are mingling, a band is playing, it's loud. But something's fishy. Hooper's tending bar. He hands a GUY a drink. The Guy sips it.

GUY
This is so watered down. It's terrible. Why is it you can never get a decent drink in these places!

Hooper looks around in a very exaggerated fashion.

GUY
What are you doing!

HOOPER
Trying to find you a tissue.

The Guy shoots Hooper an angry glare, Banky enters.

BANKY
Alright - bring on the free hootch.

HOOPER
As long as you don't bitch about how
little alcohol is in the drink.
(hands Banky a drink; to Guy)
You owe me five sixty.

GUY
(off Banky)
And I suppose you're going to make your friend here pay for his drink right!

BANKY
Hey, I befriended a guy in a position of authority so I could abuse that authority and get free shit. You want to do the same? There's a lonely Hindu works at the '7-11' across the street. Get in tight with him.

The Guy angrily pulls out his money and slams it on the bar.

GUY
I work at that '7-11'!
(storms away)

BANKY
(calling after him)
Wanna be friends!

HOOPER
Where's your better half!

BANKY
Taking a piss. Guy's got a bladder like an infant.

HOOPER
That's funny - he says you're hung like an infant.

BANKY
Must his mother tell him everything!

Holden enters.

BANKY
What'd you do - fall in love?

HOLDEN
Where is she?

HOOPER
Over there...

ON THE DANCE FLOOR - in the middle of a thrall of people - dances Alyssa. She moves like a cat and she's looking very sexy.

**OC HOOPER**

Been dancin' for an hour. Hasn't stopped yet.

Hooper, Holden, and Banky stare OC.

**BANKY**

She ain't no Denny Terrio, I'll say that.

Holden smacks Banky and moves to exit.

**HOOPER**

Wait. wait, wait - there's something you should know.

**HOLDEN**

She's got a boyfriend.

**HOOPER**

Well.. no.

**HOLDEN**

Then what's to know?

Holden exits; They watch him go. Banky looks around.

**BANKY**

There're a lot of chicks in this place.

**HOOPER**

'Chicks'. You're such a man.

**BANKY**

(beat)

He didn't really say that about my dick, did he!

ON THE DANCE FLOOR - Holden slips into the crowd and dances up to Alyssa. He intentionally bumps into her.

**HOLDEN**

(fake rage, dancing)
Hey, hey, hey - you fucked up my cabbage-patch!
**ALYSSA**
Well, well, well - Bluntman himself. Or should I call you Chronic!

**HOLDEN**
Call me flattered. I heard you sent me the invite to this little soiree'.

**ALYSSA**
From a former home-town girl, to Mister Home-Town himself.

**HOLDEN**
You're saying you're from the 'burbs!

**ALYSSA**
Middletown, N.J.

**HOLDEN**
Get out of here! I'm from Highlands!

**ALYSSA**
I know. Hooper told me.

**HOLDEN**
How is it that we never ran into one another?

**ALYSSA**
You graduate from Hudson?

**HOLDEN**
Yeah. Eighty eight.

**ALYSSA**
I went to North. Also eighty eight.

**HOLDEN**
What a small fucking world. So you know the tri-town area!

**ALYSSA**
Quiz me.

**HOLDEN**
Miller Hill?

**ALYSSA**
I wrote my name on the wall.

**HOLDEN**
Sandy Hook?

**ALYSSA**
Lost my virginity there.

**HOLDEN**
This is so cool. The mall!

**ALYSSA**
Eden Prairie of Menlo Park!

**HOLDEN**
Wait - here's the big test: Quick Stop!

**ALYSSA**
My best friend fucked a dead guy in the back room.

**HOLDEN**
You know that girl!!

**ALYSSA**
I did. Before she was committed.

**HOLDEN**
You know what this is! This is fate.

**ALYSSA**
(regarding her move)
No, this is the 'Rog'.

**HOLDEN**
I was talking about us meeting - what are the chances!

**ALYSSA**
Pretty slim. I haven't been back to the 'burbs since my friend's funeral.

**HOLDEN**
The Quick Stop girl died!

**ALYSSA**
Another friend - Julie Dwyer. She died in the..

**HOLDEN**
Y.M.C.A pool! Damn! You knew her too!

**ALYSSA**
So well.

HOLDEN
One friend in an asylum, the other friend in the grave. You're a dangerous person to know.

ALYSSA
But I can tap.
   (does an impromptu tap dance)
That was the Buffalo Two-Step.

HOLDEN
Very solid.

ALYSSA
That's what six years of tap lessons yields.

HOLDEN
Two towns away from each other for years and we had to meet in New York.

The Sand stops playing. People clap.

ALYSSA
Coulda been worse - we could have not met at all.

Holden looks at her.

OC SINGER
Thank you. Thanks.

The SINGER on stage speaks into the microphone.

SINGER
A long time ago, we used to have this bass player who took off one day to draw funny books or something. Maybe you've seen her stuff - it's called 'Idiosyncratic Routine'

The crowd applauds. Alyssa shakes her head, smiling. Holden pokes her.

SINGER
But what a lot of people don't know is that she used to harbor these delusions that she could sing. And she used to subject us to these throaty renditions of Debbie Gibson
tunes and shit, insisting that we let her front on a few numbers. Well, we didn't and she quit... and then she got famous, the bitch.
(crowd laughs)
But she's here tonight, and I think if we all begged, or maybe offered her some X, she'd get up here and treat us to some of her vocal stylings.
(crowd applauds)
What do you say, Alyssa?

Alyssa shakes her head no. The crowd urges her. Holden pushes her forward.

SINGER
She's shy.
(yelling)
GET UP HERE AND SING, BITCH!!

The crowd thunders. Alyssa offers the Singer an embarrassed half-smile. She looks at Holden, who claps along with the others and nods toward the stage. Alyssa shakes her head and relents, heading through the crowd

Banky and Hooper stand at the bar.

BANKY
This is so queer.
(he exits)

HOOPER
(beat)
You don't know the half of it.

Alyssa jumps on stage, hugging the Singer. She takes the mic, shaking her head. The crowd is applauding.

ALYSSA
She is such a twat.

The crowd cheers. Alyssa laughs. She turns to the band and says something which they nod. She turns back to the crowd.

ALYSSA
Alright. I should dedicate this, right?
(thinks)
This is for that special someone our there.

The band starts playing. Cross cutting begins.

Alyssa launches into a torchy tune. The song is extremely sexy - as is Alyssa who works the mic, making direct eye contact with...

Holden. Or does she! Holden is smiling, being seduced, Banky rolls his eyes. Beside Holden, stands a pretty GIRL with a short haircut, who's also riveted by Alyssa's performance.

Alyssa makes big-time eye contact with somebody out there. The song seems to be aimed at whoever she's looking at. It's more than obvious there's a seduction going on, but of whom! At the end of the song, the crowd goes wild but Alyssa's preoccupied. She points to someone in the crowd, and curls her finger back in a 'c'mere' fashion, urging whoever it is to join her. She jumps off the stage.

Holden shakes his head sheepishly and looks downward, aw-shucks style. At that moment, the Girl beside him leaps forward. Banky's eyes widen. Holden looks up and is suddenly taken aback.

Alyssa and the Girl race into each other's arms and fall into a way-to-passionate-to-mean-anything-else kiss.

Holden's eyes bug. Banky allows a smile to creep across his face. The crowd applauds. Banky looks around, and for the first time, we get the distinct impression that this is a lesbian bar...

There are a lot of chicks in this place. Gay chicks. Banky looks at Holden and slaps him on the back.

**BANKY**

Now that, my friend, is a...

(brings his fingers together, mimicking Holden)

...shared moment

Holden continues to stare - mouth agape.

Alyssa and the Girl continue to kiss.
INT. HER-STERECTOMY - LATER


BANKY
What?!

HOLDEN
(under his breath)
That's rude.

BANKY
Man, when are we ever going to get a chance to see this kind of shit live without paying for it?

Alyssa and the Girl break their kiss.

ALYSSA
Uh-oh - better knock it off: we're getting a man excited.

HOLDEN
Sorry. It's just... new to him.

BANKY
Oh, and you're an old hand at this.

ALYSSA
No, I should apologize. I don't usually get all mushy in public. But it's been awhile since I've seen Kim here.

KIM
(formerly the Girl)
Tell me you didn't set that gross display up with the band just so you could nail me.

ALYSSA
Like I'd have to go through that much effort

KIM
You know what? I want to dance.

ALYSSA
Go ahead. I'll watch from here.
KIM
(tugging at her arm)
No. I want to dance with you.

ALYSSA
Don't be such a rag. I have to sit here and work up the desire to fuck you later.

KIM
Please.

Kim exits. Banky is smiling ear-to-ear. Alyssa looks at him.

ALYSSA
Yes?

BANKY
You said 'fuck'. To that girl. You said you'd 'fuck' her.

ALYSSA
And?

BANKY
How can a girl 'fuck' another girl! Were you talking about strap-ons or something?

HOLDEN
(hits him)
Would you shut up!!

BANKY
What!!? It's a valid question. You know the dyke stuff in the Penthouse Letters section is written by guys - this is our chance to get the inside scoop.

HOLDEN
(to Alyssa)
I don't know how many times I can apologize for him.

ALYSSA
It's okay. Secretly, all I really want is to be the center of attention. (to Banky)
I've never used a snap-on.
BANKY
Then what's with saying 'fuck'? Shouldn't you say 'eat her out' or at least modify the term 'fuck' with something like 'fist'?

ALYSSA
Let me ask you a question - can men 'fuck' each other!

BANKY
Ask Hooper.

ALYSSA
In your estimation.

BANKY
Sure.

ALYSSA
So for you, to 'fuck' means to penetrate. You're used to the more traditional definition - you inside some girl you've duped, jack-hammering away, not noticing that bored look in her eyes.

BANKY
Hey - I always notice the bored look in their eyes.

ALYSSA
(laughs)
'Fucking' is not limited to penetration, Banky. For me it describes any sex when it's not totally about love. I don't love Kim, but I'll fuck her. I'm sure you don't love every girl you sleep with.

BANKY
Some of them I downright loathe.

ALYSSA
But I'll bet it's different with the ones you love. I'll bet you go the full nine when it's not just a quick fix - like you go down on them longer or something.

HOLDEN
Here we go.

**BANKY**

I don't do that.

**ALYSSA**

What?!?!

**BANKY**

I stopped dropping. It got to be too frustrating.

**HOLDEN**

As stupid as you usually come off during this diatribe of your's, you're going to come off ten times as stupid on this occasion.

**BANKY**

What?! I lost my tolerance for the bullshit baggage that comes with eating girls out. What's the big deal?!

**ALYSSA**

If you say the smell, so help me, I'll slug you.

**BANKY**

Not the smell - the smell is good. I'm talking about not being able to do it property. And my mother brought me up to believe that if I can't do something right I shouldn't do it at all. Of course, my father told me she gave lousy head, but that's beside the point.

**ALYSSA**

At least you blame yourself for your sexual inadequacies.

**BANKY**

No, I blame them. Chicks never help you out. They never tell you what to do. And most of them are self-conscious about that smell factor, and so most of the time they just lay there, frozen like a deer in the headlights, right? Not for nothing, but when a chick goes down on me. I
let her know where to go, and what the status is. You gotta handle it like CNN and the Weather Channel - constant updates.

HOLDEN
You're such an idiot.

ALYSSA
No, he's got a point. That's how I was in high school - I was nervous, and inhibited about being eaten out. But by the time I got to college, that all changed. I loosened up. Not only did I learn to communicate - I learned to be bossy. I was like one of those guys at the airport with those big flash lights - waving them this way, directing them that way, telling them when to stop.

BANKY
And that's all I'm saying, it'd be different if chicks helped out - pointed a guy in the right direction. Then there'd be no bullshit, no wasted time, and no chance for permanent injuries.

ALYSSA
Permanent injuries?

BANKY
Sure. You wanna see something permanent!

(pulls our front tooth)
I got this from Nina Rollins, sophomore year. I'm going down on her, and out of nowhere, her cat jumps on her stomach. She does this big ol' pelvic thrust - cracks my tooth in half, sends it down my throat. I had to get a crown for the stub.

ALYSSA
(to Holden)
I got that beat.
(to Banky)
I got that beat.
(half-turns and lifts chin)
Sophomore year. I'm going down on Cynthia Slater in her dorm room after
we went club-hopping. I'm totally drunk, and in the middle of it, I fall asleep - right there in her lap. She got so mad, she digs her heel into my back, right there.

(points to scar)
That's permanent.

**BANKY**

You see this!

(moves neck slightly right)
That's the farthest I can move my neck to the right Sophomore year, I'm going out with Maria Bennert, and for six months, I'm going down on her, and not a damn thing's happening. Then one night, I change a position, or vary my lapping-speed, and suddenly it's a whole new world. She's moving around, convulsing, breathing heavy. And her legs are pressing against my ears so tightly that I don't hear her father come into the room. He grabs my hair...

(grabs his own hair and pulls back)
...and he pulls me way back, hard.

**ALYSSA**

(throws up her leg, and rolls up pants)
Senior year. Spring Formal. I'm eating our Missy Kurt in her brother's car. She's laying across the back seat, and I'm half-hanging out of the car, my knees on the ground. She's flailing around, and she knocks the parking brake off. The car starts rolling down the hill, and my right knee is cut up all to shit like a kiddy's scissor class cut it up for paper dolls.

Banky and Alyssa laugh. Holden looks at a small scar on his arm and thinks better about mentioning it. Then Kim re-enters and plants a big kiss on Alyssa's neck.

**HOLDEN**

(off Banky's watch)
Holy shit, is that the time. We've gotta beat traffic.
BANKY
What traffic - it's one thirty in the morning!

HOLDEN
(getting up)
And rush hour starts in six hours.
Let's go.
(to Alyssa)
Thanks for inviting us out. It was... educational.

Alyssa waves at him as he exits. Banky slides out of the booth.

BANKY
(to Kim)
Since you like chicks, right.. do you just look at yourself in the mirror all the time?

Holden reaches in and pulls Banky out. Alyssa watches them go, then turns and kisses Kim.

INT. M-TV EXEC'S OFFICE WAITING ROOM - DAY

Holden looks preoccupied. Banky flips through magazines, biting off mini pieces of the gum he's chewing. He sticks them between pages, presses the mag closed, picks up another one and then repeats the whole process. A Receptionist types.

BANKY
(off Holden's look)
You're still dwelling on the dyke, aren't you?

HOLDEN
Lower your voice.

BANKY
What'd I tell you - she just needs the right guy. All every woman really wants - be it mother, senator, nun - is some serious deep-dicking.

The Receptionist stops typing and looks at Banky, shocked.

BANKY
(off her look)
Don't give me that look - I heard Adam Curry say worse.

The Secretary goes back to typing. Banky shrugs at Holden.

**BANKY**

**HOLDEN**
I'm sure the gay community appreciates your support.

JOHN SLOSS, the boy's lawyer, joins them.

**SLOSS**
Please tell me you haven't blown this deal already.

**BANKY**
Sloss like a mother fucker.
(slaps his hand)

**SLOSS**
Hey, every mother but your's - a shyster's gotta have his standards. Shall we?

**INT. M-TV EXEC'S OFFICE - DAY**

The EXECS are a casual couple of guys, sitting on couches across from our trio.

**EXEC 1**
We just want to start off by saying that it's a pleasure to finally meet you. While it's been - shall we say - an experience dealing with Sloss here, one of the main reasons we started this whole thing was to meet the guys that do 'Bluntman and Chronic'.

**EXEC 2**
(points at them)
'Snootchie Bootchies'.

The Execs and Sloss laugh. Holden and Banky politely join in. Banky shoots Holden a 'these guys are idiots' look.

**EXEC 1**

Which brings us to our proposal: we are extremely interested in doing twelve, half-hour 'Bluntman and Chronic' cartoons. The age of Beavis is coming to a close, and we're looking for something... something...

**BANKY**

Even more retarded and juvenile to sate the voracious, intellectually-challenged miscreants that make up your key demographic.

The Execs laugh hard. Sloss secretly shrugs to Banky and gives the thumbs up.

**EXEC 1**

(composes himself)

So what do you say! Are we in business!

Banky leans back into the couch, wearing a thoughtful face. He looks to Holden, then to Sloss. Sloss nods in understanding.

**SLOSS**

Jim, Sean - could we have a few minutes!

**EXEC 2**

(looks to Exec 1)

Uh... absolutely. We'll just..

**EXEC 1**

Uh...wait outside

The Exec's smile and head our, closing the door behind then. Sloss turns to Banky.

**SLOSS**

So? Did I do good?

**BANKY**

You did better - you sold us out!
They clasp hands and quietly explode in ebullience.

**SLOSS**
Do you know how much you'll make on merchandising alone!

**BANKY**
(as Simon Bar Sinister)
Money and Power, and Money and Power...

**SLOSS**
(joins in)
Money and Power, and Money and...

**HOLDEN**
(interrupting)
I don't think it's a good idea.

Banky and Sloss freeze. They stare at Holden.

**BANKY**
What's not a good idea! Please don't say the cartoon, please don't say the cartoon...

**HOLDEN**
The cartoon.

**SLOSS**
What?!? Are you out of your fucking mind!

**BANKY**
(getting up)
John, let me handle this.
(to Holden)
You are out of your fucking mind, aren't you!

**HOLDEN**
Is this how you want to be remembered!
As the guy who created Bluntman and Chronic!

Banky sits at the Exec's desk and starts rifling through the guy's stuff.

**BANKY**
No, I'd like to be remembered as the filthy rich guy who created Bluntman and Chronic.
HOLDEN
But it'll be all glossy and main-stream. We'll lose any artistic credibility we ever had.

SLOSS
(to Banky)
Is it me! I don't see the problem.

BANKY
(to Sloss)
He just has to get over this crush of his.

SLOSS
Oh God - not on Carrie Fisher again!
(to Holden)
Holden - she's not really a Princess.

BANKY
(opening drawer with a letter opener)
Not on her; on Alyssa Jones - the chick that does that comic book 'Idiosyncratic Routine'. You ever seen it?

SLOSS
Please. Like I even read your comic, let alone anyone else's,
(to Holden)
I'm not limited to offering you legal counsel only, my friend. I'm also learned in the ways of the heart, and can offer you this advice - nail her, get it out of your system, and move on. Like we say at Sloss Law - good fences make good neighbors.

BANKY
She'd never let him in her yard. The chick's gay.

SLOSS
(laughing)
She's gay? You fell for a gay, comic-book writing chick? Holden, you poor, poor man!
(beat)
Wait a sec - does she have representation!
BANKY
Always working, you.
   (holds up a Polaroid of a naked woman)
Look at this - Mrs. M-TV Exec has a string of pearls hanging out of her ass,

SLOSS
Would you leave his stuff alone!
   (to Holden)
You can break her resolve, killer. All it takes is one good man. But if it takes two good men, don't hesitate to call me. That being said, in regards to the more pressing issue, I suggest you leave art to the museums and grab on with both hands to the big, fat check.

HOLDEN
I'll give it some thought

BANKY
   (holding up Polaroid)
I'm taking this as a precaution - just in case they give us any shit about pussy's decision delay.
   (glaring at Holden)
You'll 'give it some thought'. You're so retarded

HOLDEN
I'm retarded! This from the guy who only forty five minutes ago paid fifty bucks for what's supposed to be a bootleg of 'March of the Wooden Soldiers' with a deleted scene of Stan Laurel wearing a French Tickler.

SLOSS
How'd you fall for that!

BANKY
The guy who sold it to me had an honest face.

INT. STUDIO - DAY
There is a door. There's a knock at the door. Holden opens it and Alyssa is standing there.

**ALYSSA**
Somebody told me that they make comic books here, and I've got an idea for this story about a guy who comes to a club and high-tails it when he finds out this girl is pay. Any interest in a story like that!

Holden smiles.

**EXT. RIVERFRONT PARK - DAY**

Alyssa and Holden walk through the park, eating hot dogs.

**ALYSSA**
M-TV?

**HOLDEN**
Twelve episodes.

**ALYSSA**
That's great, isn't it?

**HOLDEN**
Banky seems to think so.

**ALYSSA**
But you don't.

They come to a swing set and sit down on the swings.

**HOLDEN**
I don't know if that's the perception I want people to have of our stuff. I know this sounds pretentious as hell, but I like to think of us as artists. And I'd like to get back to doing something more personal - like our first book.

**ALYSSA**
Well when are you going to do that?

**HOLDEN**
(beat)
As soon as we have something personal to say.
ALYSSA
Do you know how pretty you are?

HOLDEN
What?

ALYSSA
You're a pretty man.

HOLDEN
Uh... thanks.

ALYSSA
Oh. I get it. I'm into girls, so I have to find all men repulsive or something.

HOLDEN
I didn't say anything.

ALYSSA
Aren't there some men that you find attractive? Granted, not enough to sleep with, but still - just handsome or something!

HOLDEN
Sure. Harrison Ford. And our mailman.

ALYSSA
Well it's the same thing. I look at you and just find you really handsome. And you know, it has very little to do with your look, per-se. Your look is fine, don't get me wrong. But it's more your outlook. The things you say, the way you see things. It's... I don't know... attractive,

Holden looks away, embarrassed,

ALYSSA
I weirded you our the other night

HOLDEN
Huh! No, not really.

ALYSSA
Come on.
HOLDEN

(beat)
It's just that we've..., I mean, I've never seen that kind of thing up close and personal. It just took awhile to process, longer than usual.

ALYSSA
Do you want to talk about it!

HOLDEN
Um. If you want to.

ALYSSA
I like you. I haven't liked a man in a long time. And I'm not a man-hater or something. It's just been some time since I've been exposed to a man that didn't immediately live-into a stereotype of some sort. And I want you to feel comfortable with me, because I want us to be friends. So if there are things you'd like to know, it's okay to ask me.

HOLDEN

(beat)
Why girls?

ALYSSA

(beat)
Why men?

HOLDEN
Because that's the standard

ALYSSA
If that's the only reason you're attracted to women - because it's the standard..

HOLDEN
It's more than that.

ALYSSA
So you've never been curious about men?

HOLDEN
Curious about men? Well... I always wondered why my father watched 'Hee-Haw'.
ALYSSA
You know what I mean.

HOLDEN
No.

ALYSSA
Why not!

HOLDEN
No interest.

ALYSSA
Because...?

HOLDEN
Girls feel right.

ALYSSA
And that's how I feel. I've never really been attracted to men. I'm more comfortable with the idea of girls.

HOLDEN
Wait, wait, wait - you're still a virgin?

ALYSSA
No.

HOLDEN
But you've only been with girls.

ALYSSA
You're saying a person's a virgin until they've had intercourse with a member of the opposite sex?

HOLDEN
Isn't that the standard definition?

ALYSSA
Again with the standards. I think virginity is lost when you make love for the first time.

HOLDEN
With a member of the opposite sex.

ALYSSA
Why? Why only then?

HOLDEN
Because that's the standard.

ALYSSA
So if a virgin is raped, then she's still a virgin?

HOLDEN
Of course not.

ALYSSA
But rape is not the standard. So she's had sex, but not the standard idea of sex. Hence, according to your definition, she'd still be a virgin.

HOLDEN
Okay, I'll revise. Virginity is lost when the hymen is broken.

ALYSSA
Then I lost my virginity at ten, because I fell on a fence post when I was ten, and it broke my hymen. Now I have to tell people that I lost it to a wooden post I'd known my whole young life?

HOLDEN
Second revision - virginity is lost through penetration.

ALYSSA
Physical penetration or emotional?

HOLDEN
Emotional?

ALYSSA
Well, I fell in love hard with Caitlin Bree when we were in high school.

HOLDEN
Physical penetration.

ALYSSA
We had sex.

HOLDEN
Yeah, but not real sex.

**ALYSSA**
I move to have that remark stricken from the record. On account of it makes you come off as completely naive and infantile.

**HOLDEN**
Well where's the penetration in lesbian sex.

Alyssa holds up her hand.

**HOLDEN**
A finger? Come on. I've had my finger in my ass but I wouldn't say I've had anal sex.

**ALYSSA**
Did I hold up a finger?  
(waves her hand)

**HOLDEN**
(beat; then he gets it)  
You're kidding?!?!  
(she nods)  
How...?!?

**ALYSSA**
Our bodies are built to pass a child, for Christ's sake.

**HOLDEN**
But doesn't it hurt?!

**ALYSSA**
Sure. But in a good way. And it's only a once-in-awhile thing - reserved for really special occasions.

**HOLDEN**
What about not-so-special occasions?

**ALYSSA**
Tongue only.

**HOLDEN**
But how can that be enough? I mean, let's be real - how big can a tongue even get?
Alyssa swallows what she's chewing and releases her tongue, which is just huge. Holden is transfixed. Alyssa wraps it back up and smiles, standing.

**ALYSSA**

Let's go.

She exits. Holden remains in the swing. Alyssa comes back in.

**ALYSSA**

Come on.

**HOLDEN**

Just...uh... just give me a moment.

**INT AIRPORT - DAY**

Holden enters. Banky tries to balance way-too-much luggage.

**HOLDEN**

Look at you. It's a two day trip.

**BANKY**

I got the Sega in one bag, my clothes in the other, and two months worth of unread comics in this one.

**HOLDEN**

We're going to a convention, for the love of God. We'll be busy from ten 'till eight each day. When are you possibly going to have time for any of that shit? In fact, fuck it - you're leaving some of this shit here in a locker. Come on - give me the two that aren't clothes.

**BANKY**

Hold on.

(Starts rifling through one bag)

**HOLDEN**

What are you doing?

**BANKY**

I just have to get something.

(pulls out a huge stack of
Who are you, Larry fucking Flynt?
What are you going to do with all of those?

BANKY
Read the articles. What do you think I'm going to do with them? They're stroke books.

HOLDEN
You've got like thirty books there!
We're only there for two days!

BANKY
(leafing through mags)
Variety's the spice of life. I like a wide selection. Sometimes I'm in the mood for nasty close-ups, sometimes I like them arty and air-brushed. Sometimes it's a spread brown-eye kind of night, sometimes it's girl-on-girl time. Sometimes a steamy letter will do it, sometimes - not often, but sometimes - I like the idea of a chick with a horse.

A beeping sound is heard. Holden checks his beeper.

HOLDEN
Go check us in. I've gotta call Alyssa.

BANKY
His master's voice.

HOLDEN
Put that stuff away.

Holden exits. Banky starts packing his mags up. A little KID enters, staring at him.

KID
What are those?

BANKY
(looks at kid then books)
Do you Like horsies?

Holden finishes dialing the phone. Cross cut between him
and Alyssa at home.

**ALYSSA**

I hope for the sake of the women you've dated that you're only this quick in returning calls.

**HOLDEN**

What's up? I'm about to get on a plane.

**ALYSSA**

Ohhh. Why!

**HOLDEN**

Last minute invite to the Dragon Con'.

**ALYSSA**

Shit.

**HOLDEN**

What?

**ALYSSA**

My sister's at my parents'. I was gonna go see her.

**HOLDEN**

The one that wrote the book?

**ALYSSA**

Yeah. But I was staying all weekend, and I wanted to hang out with you. This sucks.

**HOLDEN**

You didn't get invited to the Con'?

**ALYSSA**

I don't do southern con's - all the chicks have that annoying drawl. You know how hard it is not to laugh when someone moans "Fuhhk me"?

**HOLDEN**

Well this sucks.

(thinks)

You know - both of us don't have to go.

**ALYSSA**

Really?
HOLDEN
Yeah. Banky can go by himself. It's not like we're on a panel. It was just a signing appearance.

ALYSSA
If you come pick me up, I'll be your best friend.

HOLDEN
(beat)
Where's your apartment?

ALYSSA
I'm not there. I'm at a friend's - in the Village. Corner of Houston and Mercer. Number eighty six, apartment 6-D.

HOLDEN
I'll be there in half an hour.

ALYSSA
You're so easy.

They hang up. Holden reacts to something OC and exits quickly.


BANKY
...And then Black Beauty couldn't take it any longer, and he finally did some of his own mounting.

KID
(off book)
Wow.

Holden grabs Banky's arm and drags him away.

HOLDEN
What are you doing?

BANKY
(waving to kid)
I think I want kids of my own one day. They're fun.

HOLDEN
Listen to me - I'm not going. You're going to have to do this one by yourself.

BANKY

What? Why?

HOLDEN

Alyssa's coming down for the weekend, so I want to hang out with her. You don't need me for this.

(taking his excess baggage)

Meantime, I'll take this stuff home. You can keep the filth. I'll pick you up at nine Sunday night, alright? Don't forget to plug the Annual and don't mention the t.v. show, okay? Call me if you get bored.

And he's gone. Banky stands there, open-mouthed. A check-in FLIGHT ATTENDANT comes up to him. His name-tag reads 'Frank'.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

Checking in, sir!

BANKY

(still watching Holden go)

Hunhh!

(looks at F.A.)

Yeah. But this is carry-on.

F.A.

Federal aviation security law requires me to ask if you've been given any strange gifts or parcels to carry-on since arriving at the airport today.

BANKY

(thinks)

Not this trip. But one time, when I was using curb side check-in, this sky-cap gave me a cock ring and a set of anal ben-wa balls. I always thought that was pretty strange. He said his name was Frank.

(looks closely at him)

Hey! You're name's Frank!

Banky storms away. The Flight Attendant watches him go.

F.A.
Fucking kids.

EXT APARTMENT 6-D - DAY

Holden knocks at the door. It opens. A WOMAN is standing in the doorway in her bra. She looks Holden up and down and smirks.

WOMAN
Let me guess - 'the right man'?

HOLDEN
Excuse me?

WOMAN
You've got it in your head that Alyssa's not really into chicks - that she just hasn't met the right man. And you believe you're it. You're going to treat her right, fuck her like a stud, and 'straight-jacket' her back from the land of the lost. And the sad truth is that you'll accomplish none of that and wind up as either an even more bitter misogynist or a reverse fag-hag.

Holden's at a loss. Alyssa slips past the Woman, carrying an overnight bag.

ALYSSA
Don't mind her. That's just her way a saying hello.

WOMAN
Actually, it's just my way of saying "Give it up."

ALYSSA
(to Woman)
You're such an asshole.

WOMAN
When you file the date-rape charges, don't say I didn't warn you.

HOLDEN
(holding out hand)
I'm Holden, by the way.
WOMAN
I'm the voice of reason that Miss Bitch is having such a hard time listening to.

HOLDEN
Look, we're just friends.

WOMAN
That's what every guy says before he tries purring your hand on his dick.

HOLDEN
And how do you know men so well?

WOMAN
Because I lapdance for a living, dick-head.

She slams the door. Holden looks to Alyssa.

ALYSSA
Ohhh - you look so cute!

She heads down the stairs.

HOLDEN
Who was that?

ALYSSA
Just an occasional friend.

HOLDEN
Why would you want to hang our with someone bitter as that?

ALYSSA
(stops)
Remember this!
(sticks out huge tongue)
Her's is even bigger than that.

She smiles and continues on. Holden looks back up at the door. He sticks his own tongue out and sizes it with his fingers.

EXT TURNPIKE - DAY

The car sits in traffic.
INT CAR - DAY

Holden sighs. Alyssa plays with the radio.

ALYSSA
You were raised Catholic, right?

HOLDEN
Yeah. You?

ALYSSA
Baptist.

HOLDEN
Really? Did you have a strict upbringing?

ALYSSA
Please There was no time to be bad - we were too busy saying 'Jesus'.

HOLDEN
You think your upbringing had something to do with your lifestyle choice?

ALYSSA
Somewhere along the line. It's a gradual transition to make - from doing what the majority does to taking a leap of faith and doing what feels more natural. Everything helps - from the way you were handled as a kid, to the way the boys acted in third grade, to the shoes you wore at your freshman prom.

HOLDEN
Shoes?

ALYSSA
Well they were really tight.

HANGING OUT MONTAGE BEGINS

With the requisite music, over which we hear a conversation between Holden and Alyssa.
1) Holden and Alyssa sit in the DINER eating. Holden's talking. The Waitress walks past and drops her pad. She bends over, to pick it up, hiking her mini-skirt up in the process. Alyssa stares at her ass. Holden stops talking and stares at her. Alyssa looks over at him and offers a caught smile.

2) Holden pushes a shopping cart at the FOOD STORE, throwing various things into the basket. Alyssa comes up with a box of Tampons and throws them in. Holden glances at them, a bit flushed. Alyssa catches him, picks up the box, and pulls one out. She proceeds to demonstrate their usage, throwing one leg on the can and miming insertion. Holden puts up his hands in the "I know, I know," fashion.

3) In the Studio, Holden displays some of his artwork to Alyssa, during which she pulls out a cigarette and goes to light it. It's a child-proof lighter, so she's having trouble. Holden grows a little frustrated. Finally, he grabs the lighter and pulls the child proof tab out with his teeth. Alyssa stares at him a bit taken aback. Holden spits the tab out, and lights Alyssa's smoke. He then continues with his display.

4) Holden and Alyssa at the COMIC BOOK STORE. Steve-Dave and the Fan-Boy eye them suspiciously. Alyssa pays for a comic. Steve-Dave glowers at Holden. He gives Alyssa her change and they exit. Steve-Dave goes back to his card game with the Fan-Boy. Suddenly, a garbage can comes crashing through their window. Steve-Dave rips a check off the garbage can and punches the counter. The Fan-Boy rubs his back soothingly.

5) Holden and Alyssa walk through a PARKING LOT, talking. She takes his hand and pulls his arm around her shoulder. Holden smiles to himself.

**HOLDEN V.O.**

Let me ask you something - we get along, right?

**ALYSSA V.O.**

Famously.

**HOLDEN V.O.**

We have a definite chemistry?

**ALYSSA V.O.**

So it would seem.

**HOLDEN V.O.**
But we're both into girls.

**ALYSSA V.O.**
I'm into women.

**HOLDEN V.O.**
But you weren't always gay.

**ALYSSA V.O.**
When I was nine I had a crush on Scott Baio.

**HOLDEN V.O.**
So if we'd met a long time ago, say in high school...

**ALYSSA V.O.**
...I'd still be muff-diving, yes.

**HOLDEN V.O.**
Thought so.

---

**INT STUDIO – DAY**

Holden and Banky play EA Sports Hockey on Sega. There's a knock at the door.

**HOLDEN**
Come in.

Alyssa enters and stands besides them, smiling at their game.

**ALYSSA**
I read somewhere that guys who play hockey are merely making up for penile deficiencies by carrying big sticks.

**BANKY**
I thought you lived in the city? This is like the umpteenth time I've seen you here. Isn't that grounds enough for the little pink mafia to throw you out of their club?

**HOLDEN**
(hits Banky; to Alyssa)
I'll be ready in a second.
I just have to school this mouthy second-stringer.
BANKY
Bitch, you're schooling no one.

They play. Cut back and forth between the game and Banky, Holden, and Alyssa.

HOLDEN
(off game)
What? Do something!

HOLDEN
(off game)
You fucking cock-teaser. I'll knock your fucking teeth out and pass all over your ass.

HOLDEN
Look at how slow you are. Christ, you move like a geriatric.

HOLDEN
(screaming at screen)
Fuck! You Fucking cock-sucker, man! These faggots won't do what I tell them to!

HOLDEN
Oh. It's the controller, right? It's always the controller.

BANKY
No, it's these... fucking queers on blades that can't accept a fucking pass to save their lives! What period is this?

HOLDEN
Final sixty of the third.

BANKY
Fuck! Look at your fucking guys, they... FUCK!!!(whips controller)
FUCKING COCK SUCKER, MAN! I SWEAR TO GOD!

Banky storms away. Alyssa looks at Holden,

HOLDEN
Imagine if I'd only beaten him by one instead of thirty.
INT SKEE-BALL ARCADE - DAY

Holden feeds a couple dollars into the change machine. Alyssa looks on.

ALYSSA
Explain this again.

HOLDEN
How could you have grown up down the shore and never played skee-ball? What did you do with your youth?

They head toward the skee-ball runs.

ALYSSA
Stayed out late, smoked pot, screwed around.

HOLDEN
Not your grade school years; your high school years.

ALYSSA
(off skee-ball run)
This looks complicated.

HOLDEN
(Inserts coin and pulls lever)
The premise is very basic - you roll the ball up the ramp at varying speeds, in an effort to pop it into the score circles. The higher the score, the more prize tickets you get.

ALYSSA
What do you do with the prize tickets?

HOLDEN
Trade them in for prizes that aren't worth nearly as much as you paid to play the game.

ALYSSA
Then what's the point?

HOLDEN
It's fun.
ALYSSA
And you question my lifestyle.

HOLDEN
Observe.

Holden rolls the ball. It pops into a twenty point circle.

HOLDEN
See? It's just that simple.

ALYSSA
Why not just walk up there and put it in the fifty every time?

HOLDEN
Where's the skill in that?

ALYSSA
Oh, this is a skill? I'm sorry, I had no idea.

HOLDEN
Just toss one.

Alyssa picks up a ball, squints to aim, and whips it overhand. It pops off one of the circles and shoots back at them, missing them as they duck. An OC knock and an "OW!" is heard. Holden reacts as Alyssa laughs.

HOLDEN
(to OC guy)
I'm sorry, man. She's new at this.

Holden ducks as the ball comes sailing back at his head. He gets up.

HOLDEN
(to OC)
Thank you.  
(hands Alyssa another ball)
Underhand. Throw it underhand.

ALYSSA
This is where you take straight chicks on dates?

HOLDEN
It's like Spanish Fly. This'll probably be the first time I don't
score afterwards.

ALYSSA
I don't know. I'm starting to get a tingle in my bottom.
(tosses a ball)
Ten.

HOLDEN
(grabs a ball)
So what'd you do last night?
(prepares to throw)

ALYSSA
Got laid

Holden whips the ball in surprise. It ricochets off the ceiling and through the glass of an old pinball machine. Alyssa laughs. Holden looks around, nervously.

ALYSSA
Some more of that skill you were telling me about?

HOLDEN
Maybe we should just leave before somebody gets hurt.

ALYSSA
No way. I want a cheap prize.
(throws a ball)
So your friend's quite the homophobe.

HOLDEN
He just feels left out, I think.

ALYSSA
I'm not talking about his infantile hang-up with me. I'm talking about when you two were playing that game. Everytime he swore - when his players messed up, he called them cocksuckers, he referred to the players as queers, he called you a cock-teaser...

HOLDEN
I thought he was talking to you.

ALYSSA
I know you think it means nothing, and it may in fact be unintentional, but it's ugly all the same.
HOLDEN
He was just pissed he was losing.

ALYSSA
So he slams the gay community?

HOLDEN
C'mon. Don't get all p.c. on me.

ALYSSA
I'm not. But what is that saying?

HOLDEN
It says he gets too easily frustrated.

ALYSSA
It's passive/aggressive gay-bashing.

HOLDEN
How do you figure?

ALYSSA
How casually did it roll off his tongue? And that's how he expresses his anger? By calling people faggots?

HOLDEN
I think you're reading too much into it.

ALYSSA
I think you're just so used to it that it rolls off your back. I've heard the two of you play your little rank out game where one insists the other is gay.

(as the boys)
"You're a faggot. No, you're a faggot." It's cute and all to watch you go at it like grade-schooler, but it's also offensive - labeling and ducking the label of being gay as if it were the scarlet fucking letter.

HOLDEN
You're blowing this way out of proportion. We live in a more tolerant age now. You refer to yourself as a dyke. Hooper calls himself a faggot all the time...
ALYSSA
Yeah, but that's what's known as empowerment/disempowerment. I call myself a dyke so it's not too devastating when some throwback screams it at me as I'm leaving a bar at night.
Same for Hooper - by calling himself a faggot, he steals the thunder away from the mouthy jerks of this world who'd like to beat him to it. But the difference between us having it and your friend saying it is miles wide. We say it to mask the pain - you say it for lack of a better expression at any given moment. No Holden, we do not live in a more tolerant age. And if you think that's the case, then you've been in the suburbs way too long to be resuscitated.

Holden kind of sulks. Alyssa notices.

ALYSSA
But you know what?
(picks up his face)
I have more faith in you than that.
(rips her tickets off)
Come on - I want my cheap prize.

INT STUDIO - NIGHT

HOLDEN
(off screen)
How bad do you suck!

BANKY
How was your pseudo-date?

HOLDEN
Leave it alone.

BANKY
That chick bugs me.

HOLDEN
(rubs his head; in baby-talk)
Aww. Everyone bugs you.

**BANKY**

Get off.

*(off game)*

Fucking faggot! Did you see that?! Your dyke courting ass just got me scored on!

**HOLDEN**

*(beat)*

You know, you should watch that. If you're going to get all bent out of shape while playing the game, so much so that you need to curse the t.v., try not to gay-bash it, alright.
You're nor that kind of guy.

*(gets up)*

And don't call her a dyke, alright? She's a lesbian.

Holden goes to his drawing table and takes off his coat. Banky sits there, shocked. He puts the controller down and crosses to the drawing table.

**BANKY**

What the fuck is going on here?

**HOLDEN**

*(pulling out pencil)*

I'm starting a new page.

**BANKY**

*(smacking pencil away)*

Not with this shit! With you. What the fuck is going on with you and that girl?

**HOLDEN**

We're friends.

**BANKY**

She's programming you.

**HOLDEN**

I beg your pardon? Programming?

**BANKY**

Yeah. And apparently, you don't even realize it. What does it matter if I refer to her as a dyke, or if I call the Whalers a bunch of faggots in the
privacy of my own office, far from the sensitive ears of the rest of the world?

HOLDEN
It's passive/aggressive gay-bashing; and I know you're not really prejudiced at heart. You should just find some other way to express your anger, is all I'm saying.

Holden starts drawing. Banky stares at him. Then he grabs the pencil out of Holden's hand and shoves him to the side. He starts drawing something.

HOLDEN
What the fuck are you doing!

BANKY
Bear with me here. I just want to put you through this little exercise.
(drawing feverishly)
Okay, now see this? This is a four way road, okay?

Banky draws a four-way stop. He illustrates according to his voice-over.

BANKY V.O.
And dead in the center, is a crisp, new, hundred dollar bill. Now at the end of each of the streets, are four people, okay? You following? Up here, we got a male-affectionate, easy-to-get-along-with, no political agenda lesbian. Okay? Now down here, we have a man-hating, angry-as-fuck, agenda-of-rage, bitter dyke. To this side, we got Santa Claus, right? And over to this side - the Easter Bunny.

Banky finishes drawing. Holden's shaking his head

BANKY
Which one's going to get to the hundred dollar bill first?

HOLDEN
What is this supposed to prove?

BANKY
I'm serious. This is a serious
exercise. It's like an S.A.T. question. Which one's going to get to the hundred dollar bill first - the male-friendly lesbian, the man-hating dyke, Santa Claus, or the Easter Bunny?

HOLDEN

(beat; then pissed)
The man-hating dyke.

BANKY

Good. Why?

HOLDEN

I don't know.

BANKY

(wildly crossing out the other three)
BECAUSE THESE OTHER THREE ARE FIGMENTS OF YOUR FUCKING IMAGINATION!

Holden storms away. Banky follows.

HOLDEN

I don't need this. I'm going home.

BANKY

She's fucking with your mind, man! She knows you've got this schoolboy crush and she's using it to sway your way of thinking!

HOLDEN

And why would she need to do that? What is she Mata fucking Hari?! What does she gain?

BANKY

Maybe she thinks you'll get her comic picked up by Contender. Or maybe she thinks you'll change the content of our book to something more political and message oriented. Or, gee - I don't know - maybe because that's just what dykes like to do: fuck around with straight guys' heads, just so she can go back to her little rug-muncher club and have a good laugh with all her man-hating harpy cronies about how fucking stupid and easily duped men
HOLDEN
You're so out of line right now..

BANKY
You don't even know this girl! Big
deal, she's from Middletown and she
went to North! All the girls at North
were bitches and sluts anyway! And
this one's got them beat by a mile
because she's a bitch/slut/dyke!

HOLDEN
Watch your fucking mouth, is all I'm
going to tell you..

BANKY
Oh why? Do you get my back when she
bashes me? Because I know she does.
And do you know why she does? Because
I won't play her fucking game!

HOLDEN
Sometimes your paranoia and suspicious
bullshit is amusing. Sometimes it's
just fucking annoying as piss!

BANKY
What is it about this girl? You know
you have no shot at getting her into
bed! Why do you bother wasting time
with her? Because you're Holden
fucking McNeil - most persistent
traveller on the road that's not the
path of least resistance!
Everything's gotta be a fucking
challenge for you, and this little
relationship with that bitch is a
prime example of your fucking
condition. Well I don't need a
fucking magic eight ball to look into
your future; you want a forecast?
Here - will Holden ever fuck Alyssa.
(shakes and looks at
imaginary ball)
What a shock - "Not fucking likely"!
This relationship of your's is
affecting you, our work and our
friendship, and the time's going to
come when I throw down the gauntlet
and say it's me or her! And then
what're you going to say?!

HOLDEN
(beat)
I think you should let this one go.

BANKY
No, what would you say? Would you trash twenty years of friendship because you've got some idiotic notion that this chick would even let you sniff her panties, let alone fuck her?!

HOLDEN
Let it go...

BANKY
What the fuck.. WHAT THE FUCK MAKES THIS BITCH ALL THAT IMPORTANT?!?!

Holden looks at Banky for a long beat.

HOLDEN
I'm in love with her, man.


BANKY
Fuck.

Banky walks away. Holden watches him go and exits.

INT DINER - NIGHT

Holden and Alyssa sit at a booth. Alyssa picks through her food. Holden looks at the check and pulls money from his wallet.

HOLDEN
I wish you were the one being pursued by M-TV.

ALYSSA
Oh really?

HOLDEN
Sure. Then you could sell our and maybe pick up the check once in
awhile.

**ALYSSA**
(drops her fork and wipes her hands)
We're leaving!

**HOLDEN**
Well it's not like this is a bed and breakfast,

**ALYSSA**
I've got a little business to conduct.

She grabs her bag and slides out of the booth. Holden watches her, then follows.

A23. Alyssa slides up to the cashier's desk as does Holden, who offers a puzzled shrug. Alyssa offers the 'just wait' finger. The CASHIER turns to her.

**ALYSSA**
Are you an authorized deal-maker in this establishment? Do you have the power to negotiate.

**CASHIER**
You wanna haggle over the price of your French Dip?

**ALYSSA**
I want to haggle over the price of fine art.

**CASHIER**
What do you mean?

**ALYSSA**
(pointing OC)
There. By the kitchen. That painting.

**CASHIER**
What about it?

**ALYSSA**
The price tag says seventy five.

**CASHIER**
So!

**HOLDEN**
(to Alyssa)
Tell me you're kidding!

**ALYSSA**
I'll give you fifty.

**CASHIER**
(to OC)
Manuel! Bring me the Dyksiezski off the wall.
(to Alyssa)
All my years in the diner business, I've waited for this day - the day when someone wanted to buy one of the pictures.

**ALYSSA**
(holds out hand)
Alyssa Jones. Pleased to meet you.

**CASHIER**
You say you want to haggle, but you don't know rule one about haggling, which you just broke: you never give your name. The name is power, and to give the opponent that piece of you is to give away victory.

**ALYSSA**
I'm only trying to conduct a transaction. We're not opponents.

**CASHIER**
(accepting painting from BUSBOY)
Oh, but we are - if you think I'm letting this beautiful piece go for fifty.

**ALYSSA**
Ah-ha!
(to Holden)
Now we're haggling.

---

**24. INT CAR - NIGHT**

It's drizzling outside. Holden drives. Alyssa hugs her painting and pushes her bare feet against the windshield, making footprints.
HOLDEN
I've always wondered what kind of people buy those things. I can't believe you talked him down to twenty-five!

ALYSSA
It was looking shakey when he told me the artist was a blind cripple with a hump-back, but I held my ground. There's no room for sympathy in the buyer's market.

HOLDEN
Where are you going to hang it?

ALYSSA
I'm not. You are.

HOLDEN
You want me to hang it for you? You better hope it doesn't get out to the girl-nation that you needed a man to help you hang a picture.

ALYSSA
You're going to hang it in your house. I bought it for you.

HOLDEN
(laughs)
Yeah, right.

ALYSSA
(looks at him)
I'm serious.

Holden stares at her.

HOLDEN
Why?

ALYSSA
Because it's captured the moment. It'll be a constant reminder - not just of tonight, but of our introduction, the building of our friendship, everything. Make no mistake about it my Friend - it's a gift to you, from me, so you'll always remember us.
Holden stares ahead. Then he swerves the wheel to the right.

EXT ROADSIDE - NIGHT

The car pulls to the side of the road. The rain is a bit heavier now.

INT CAR - NIGHT

Holden throws the car into park

ALYSSA
Why are we stopping?

HOLDEN
Because I can't take it.

ALYSSA
Can't take what?

HOLDEN
I love you.

ALYSSA
(beat)
You love me.

HOLDEN
I love you. And not in a friendly way, although I think we're great friends. And not in a misplaced affection, puppy-dog way, although I'm sure that's what you'll call it. And it's not because you're unattainable. I love you. Very simple, very truly. You're the epitome of every attribute and quality I've ever looked for in another person. I know you think of me as just a friend and crossing that line is the furthest thing from an option you'd ever consider. But I can't do this any longer. I can't stand next to you without wanting to hold you. I can't look into your eyes without feeling that longing you only read about in trashy romance novels.
I can't talk to you without wanting to express my love for everything you are. I know this will probably queer our friendship - no pun intended - but I had to say it, because I've never felt this before, and I like who I am because of it. And if bringing it to light means we can't hang out anymore, then that hurts me. But I couldn't allow another day to go by without getting it out there, regardless of the outcome, which by the look on your face is to be the inevitable shoot-down. And I'll accept that. But I know some part of you is hesitating for a moment, and if there is a moment of hesitation, that means you feel something too. All I ask is that you not suppress that - at least for ten minutes - and try to dwell in it before you dismiss it.

There isn't another soul on this fucking planet who's ever made me the person I am when I'm with you, and I would risk this friendship for the chance to take it to the next plateau. Because it's there between you and me. You can't deny that. And even if we never speak again after tonight, please know that I'm forever changed because of you and what you've meant to me, which - while I do appreciate it - I'd never need a painting of birds bought at a diner to remind me of.

Holden stares at Alyssa. She stares back. Then she gets out of the car.

    HOLDEN
    Was it something I said?

EXT ROADSIDE - NIGHT

Holden gets out of the car. It's raining pretty hard now. Alyssa's hitching up the road. Holden reaches her.

    HOLDEN
    What are you doing?
ALYSSA
Get back in the car and get out of here.

HOLDEN
You're going to hitch to New York?

ALYSSA
Y'ep.

HOLDEN
Aren't you at least going to comment?

ALYSSA
Here's my comment fuck you.

Why?

ALYSSA
That was so unfair. You know how unfair that was.

HOLDEN
It's unfair that I'm in love with you?

ALYSSA
No, it's unfortunate that you're in love with me. It's unfair that you felt the fucking need to unburden your soul about it. Do you remember for a fucking second who I am?

HOLDEN
So? People change.

ALYSSA
Oh, it's that simple? You fall in love with me and want a romantic relationship, nothing changes for you with the exception of feeling hunky-dorey all the time. But what about me? It's not that simple, is it? I can't just get into a relationship with you without throwing my whole fucking world into upheaval!

HOLDEN
But that's every relationship! There's always going to be a period of adjustment.
ALYSSA
Period of adjustment?!?
(hitting him)
THERE'S NO 'PERIOD OF ADJUSTMENT'
HOLDEN! I'M FUCKING GAY! THAT'S WHO
I AM! AND YOU ASSUME I CAN TURN THAT
AROUND JUST BECAUSE YOU'VE GOT A
CRUSH?!?

HOLDEN
If this is a crush... then I don't
know if I could take the real thing if
it ever happens.

She looks at him, rain drenching the pair. She shakes
her head ruefully.

ALYSSA
Go home, Holden.

She walks away. Holden stands there, at a loss. Then he
turns and heads back to his car.
As he reaches the door and turns to look back at her,
Alyssa pounces on him, grabs his face and locks lips with
him, big time. He drops his keys and embraces her.

And there they stand, by the side of the road, drenched
kissing.

EXT STUDIO - DAY

Banky carries a bag in one arm and pulls out his keys
with the other. He jams them into the lock, opening the
door. He picks up the mail on the floor.

INT STUDIO - DAY

He closes the door behind him and shuffles to the
kitchenette, passing by the blanket-covered, slumbering
forms of Holden and Alyssa, who are out cold in each
other's arms. The place looks a mess - Like a couple of
people were engaged in some tremendous fucking. Banky is
oblivious. He sets the bag down on the counter and pulls
out a chocolate milk. He opens it, sticks a straw into
the top, and begins sipping and sifting through the mail.
He comes to mail that's Holden's and tosses it onto the
couch, near Holden's head. He looks down at the sleeping
couple, then back at the mail for a couple of beats.
Then he freezes. He looks down again, and drops his jaw and his carton of choco. It hits the floor with a pop. Holden and Alyssa shoot straight up, eyes struggling to focus. They look at one another, then at the flabbergasted Banky. Banky blinks. Then he shuffles toward the door again and lets himself out.

**ALYSSA**
(off Holden's reaction)
I take it that's not good.

**HOLDEN**
(getting up)
Stay here.

(he kisses her and exits)

**EXT STREET - DAY**

Banky sits on a curb, staring into the distance, Holden saunters up and sits beside him. He follows Banky's gaze.

**BANKY**
Catholic school girls.

Across the street, the Catholic High School is letting out. Teenage girls clad in uniforms and tight sweaters smoke, frolic, wait for their bus.

**BANKY**
The uniform is what does it for me. I wish I'd have went with more Catholic school girls when I was a kid. As it stands. I have no "...and then she unzipped her jumper..." stories.

**HOLDEN**
You looked weirded out back there.

**BANKY**
That's my couch you were fucking on.

**HOLDEN**
Sorry.

**BANKY**
I wanted to watch some TV. Hard to do when your best friend's wrapped around a naked rug-muncher on your couch.
HOLDEN
She had boxers on.

Banky shoots him a glare. He goes back to staring at the OC girls.

BANKY
This is all going to end badly.

HOLDEN
You don't know that.

BANKY
I know you. You're way too conservative for that girl. She's been around and seen things we've only read about in books.

HOLDEN
But we have read about them. So we're prepared.

BANKY
There's no 'we' here. You're going to have to go through this alone. And it's one thing to read about shit, and something different when you're forced to deal with it on a regular basis. When you guys are walking in the mall and both your heads turn at a really nice looking chick, it's going to eat you up inside. You'll spend most of your time wondering when the other shoe's going to drop. Because for you, this isn't about cool weird sex stuff, it's about love.

HOLDEN
Maybe it is for her as well.

BANKY
Somehow I doubt it.

HOLDEN
Everyone's not out to get someone in life. Bank.

BANKY
Everybody has an agenda. Everyone.

HOLDEN
Yourself?
BANKY
My agenda is to watch your back.

HOLDEN
To what end?

BANKY
To insure that all this time we've spent together, building something, wasn't wasted.

HOLDEN
She's not going to ruin the comic.

BANKY
I wasn't talking about the comic.

(gets up)
I'm going to gel a bagel. Clean off my fucking couch so I can watch TV.

Banky walks away. Holden shakes his head.

INT ALYSSA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT
An all-girl gathering. TORY. NICA, DALIA and JANE help Alyssa finish an issue of 'Idiosyncratic Routine'. Tory letters a page. Nica and Dalia lay-out the artwork. Dalia drinks wine. Alyssa paints the cover.

DALIA
From what I understand, when you sign with a publisher, someone else does all this work for you, and you just sit back and collect.

ALYSSA
And miss these last minute cram sessions with my nearest and dearest? Never.

TORY
I don't know what she's bitching about. All she's done since we got here is pound Merlot.

DALIA
I'm sorry weren't you the one who misspelled 'receipt' on page eighteen? Yeah, you're a real help.
NICA
What I'd like to know is why we're here at all when we haven't seen Princess funny-Book in a month.

JANE
Yeah Alyssa - who've you been shacking up with?

ALYSSA
'Shacking up!' Please.
(stops painting; smiles wide)
I'm so in love!

Everyone aww's. Alyssa buries her face, giggling.

ALYSSA
I know. I know - I feel like such a goon. But I can't help it - we have such a great time together.

DALIA
Who is it? Don't even tell me it's Ms. Thing from the C.D. place. I'll kill you.

ALYSSA
It's not her. It's someone you guys don't know.

NICA
That chick you left the restaurant with that night?

ALYSSA
They're not. From around here.

TORY
Don't even tell me you met her down the shore!

JANE
Eww! Not a bridge-and-tunnel Jersey dyke!

TORY
With huge hair and acid-washed jeans!

They all cackle. Alyssa tries to laugh with them.

DALIA
Come on, Alyss - Hoboken Hussy or what?

**ALYSSA**
For your information, they don't have big hair or wear acid wash.
(goes back to painting)
They're from my home town.

Dalia stares at Alyssa, suspiciously.

**DALIA**
Why are you playing the pronoun game?

**ALYSSA**
What? What are you talking about?
I'm not even.

**DALIA**
You are. "I met someone." "We have a great time. "They're from my home town." Doesn't this tube of wonderful have a name!

**ALYSSA**
(beat)
Holden.

All four Girls stare at Alyssa, a bit horrified. She stops painting.

**JANE**
Oh, Alyssa - no. Not you.

**TORY**
You're dating a guy?

**ALYSSA**
He's not like a typical man. He's really sweet to me, and we relate so well. You guys'd love him, really.

They stare at Alyssa. Then Dalia gets up.

**DALIA**
I've gotta go to the store.

**JANE**
I'll go with.

They exit. Alyssa looks to Tory and Nica.
TORY
(pouring wine)
Whelp - here's to both of you.
(moves the glass to her lips)
Another one bites the dust.

INT HOLDEN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Holden and Alyssa lie in each other's arms, moonlight bathing them. She smokes.

HOLDEN
Can I ask you something?

ALYSSA
Don't even tell me you want to do it again.

HOLDEN
Why me - you know? Why now?

ALYSSA
Because you were giving me that look, and I got wet...

HOLDEN
You know what I'm talking about.

ALYSSA
Why not You?

HOLDEN
I'm a guy. You're attracted to girls.

ALYSSA
I see you've been taking notes. Historically, yes that's true.

HOLDEN
Then why this?

ALYSSA
I've given that a lot of thought, you know? I mean, now that I'm being ostracized by my friends, I've had a lot of time to think about all of this. And what I've come up with is really simple: I came to this on my terms. I didn't just heed what I was taught, you know? Men and women
should be together, it's the natural way - that kind of thing. I'm not with you because of what family, society, life tried to instill in me from day one. The way the world is - how seldom you meet that one person who gets you... it's so rare. My parents didn't really have it. There was no example set for me in the world of male/female relationships. And to cut oneself off from finding that person - to immediately half your options by eliminating the possibility of finding that one person within your own gender... that just seemed stupid. So I didn't. And by leaving my options open, I was branded 'gay', which to me was no big deal - labels are labels, you know? They define what you do, not who you are, I guess. But then you come along. You - the one least likely; I mean, you were a guy.

HOLDEN
Still am.

ALYSSA
And while I was falling for you, I put a ceiling on that, because you were a guy. Until I remembered why I opened the door to women in the first place - to not limit the likelihood of finding that one person who'd compliment me so completely. And so here we are, I was thorough when I looked for you, and I feel justified lying in your arms - because I got here on my terms, and have no question that there was someplace I didn't look. And that makes all the difference.

HOLDEN
(beat)
Shit.

ALYSSA
What?

HOLDEN
Well, you took the luster our of it.
ALYSSA

What luster?

HOLDEN

(joking - in case you didn't get it)
Of how I brought you back from the other side. How all you needed was the right man to turn you around.

ALYSSA

You're not the right man.
(kisses him)
You're just the one.

She snuggles into him and closes her eyes. Holden stares at the ceiling.

HOLDEN

Can I at least cell people that all you needed was some serious deep-dicking?

She hits him with her pillow.

THE BIG OL' FALLING-IN-LOVE MONTAGE BEGINS

1) In Holden's Apartment - Alyssa waves in various directions, shaking her head accordingly. Then she puts up her hands to stop. Cut to Holden, hanging the picture. Alyssa gave him. It hangs at a severely crooked angle. He looks back to her and shakes his head 'no'.

2) Holden and Alyssa try to play a video game. Banky plays as well. Holden instructs her in the ways of NHL '96 (turning her paddle right-side-up, pointing at things on the screen). She presses the reset button, over and over. Banky gives Holden a 'What the fuck?' look. Alyssa sticks her tongue at him.

3) At the Video Store - Holden picks up a Disney cartoon off the shelf. He goes to show if to Alyssa, who's reading the back of 'Anything But Dick', an allchick porno. An old WOMAN stares at her. Holden nods to the old Woman and takes the tape out of Alyssa's hands, putting it back on the shelf. He ushers her away. The old Woman waits until they're gone and then picks up the tape herself,
4) Holden carries Alyssa on his shoulders through the park, her crotch against the back of his neck. He's talking. She taps him and he stops and looks up. She begins to maneuver around so her crotch is in his face. He pulls her off and put her down. She's laughing. He's flushed with embarrassment. The same Old Woman from the Video store passes by with her husband. Holden shrugs.

5) In Holden's Apartment again - Alyssa again with the waving, then putting up her hands to stop. Cut to Holden again, this time with the painting hung completely upside down. He looks at it, then offers her a bewildered gaze.

6) In the Office Banky comes to his drawing table. There are penciled pages on it with a note that says "Hanging out with Alyssa today. Holden". Banky crumples it up and throws it across the room.

7) In Holden's Apartment - Alyssa waves this way, then that way, then puts up her hands frantically to stop. She settles back against the wall, a satisfied smile crawling across her face, and closes her eyes. We pull back to reveal Holden on his knees in front of her, eating her out (no, we don't see anything!).

**INT OFFICE - DAY**


**BANKY**

Check out page forty eight.

Holden looks down at that book. It's the Nineteen Eighty Eight yearbook from Middletown North. He shakes his head at Banky and flips it open.

On the page is Alyssa's Senior year photo. Under her name is another name in quotes that says 'Finger Cuffs'.

**HOLDEN**

(looking up)

So?

**BANKY**

Did you see the nickname?

**HOLDEN**

'Finger Cuffs'.
BANKY
And...?

HOLDEN
And... she had a weird nick-name. What's your point?

BANKY
Do you know why it's 'Finger Cuffs'?

HOLDEN
I suppose you do.

BANKY
I do.
(takes a seat)
You remember Cohee Lundin? Left Hudson and went to North our senior year?

HOLDEN
Yeah.

BANKY
Well, I ran into him at Food City the other day, and we got to talking, and I mentioned that you were dating Alyssa, and he said..

CUT TO COHEE LUNDON. In the PARKING LOT of FOOD CITY, addressing the camera.

COHEE
Alyssa Jones? Shit. I know Alyssa Jones. I mean, I know Alyssa Jones, you know what I'm saying? Me and Rick Derris used to hang our with her for awhile, right? Just hanging around her house after school, 'cuz her parents were like never home, and shit. And one day, Rick just whips it out, and starts rubbing it on her leg and shit; chasing her around the living room - I was dying. But you know what the crazy bitch did? She fucking drops to her knees, and just starts sucking him off right in front of me! Like I wasn't even there man! I almost died! But that's not the fucked up part - the fucked up part was Rick, man - right in the
middle of it, he turns to me and he's pointing at her and he says "Cohee." Just like that - "Cohee." So I'm like I'll give it a shot. And I start pulling her pants down all slow, 'cuz I figure any second she's gonna turn around and belt me in the mouth, right? But yo, check this shit out - she's all into it man! She don't try to stop me or nothing! She's all wet and shit, and I just went to work, know what I'm saying? Me and Rick are going to town on this crazy bitch, and she's just loving it, all moaning and shit! It was fucked up! So Rick's the one that came up with the nickname - 'cuz that day, she had us locked in tight from both sides - like a pair of goddamn Chinese finger cuffs!

BACK IN THE OFFICE - Holden stares at Banky.

**HOLDEN**
He's full of shit.

**BANKY**
Cohee's a lot of things, but an exaggerator he's not. The dude's Catholic.

**HOLDEN**
She's never even been with a guy.

**BANKY**
That's what she says. But I say her on her hands and knees getting filled out like an application constitutes 'being with a guy'.

**HOLDEN**
He's pulling your chain. And the fact that you even bought it for a second makes you look like an idiot.

**BANKY**
I'm getting your back, asshole! People don't forget shit like 'Finger Cuffs'. And if it got out that she's queer as well, how do you think it's going to make you look?
HOLDEN
I give a shit what people think.

BANKY
Alright, forget about that; what if she's carrying a disease? That was just one story - what if there's more?

HOLDEN
(grabs his coat)
You're such a fucking asshole.

BANKY
What? Oh, it's not possible that she's all crudded up? Cohee I can vouch for as clean - the dude never got laid in high school. But Derris is an arch fucking bush-man! Name me one chick in our senior class that Rick Derris didn't nail, for Christ's sake!

HOLDEN
Would you let this go? I'm telling you - she's never even been with a guy, let alone those two zeroes.

BANKY
And I'm telling you, the bitch could be a bigger fucking germ farm than that monkey in 'Outbreak'!

Holden grabs Banky and pins him against the wall.

HOLDEN
Give it a rest! Do you hear me?! I'm tired of this shit! She's my goddamn girlfriend, do you understand?! Show her a little fucking respect! And if you ever even so much as mention that Alyssa looks a little peaked from now on, I'll put your fucking teeth down your throat!

He releases Banky. Banky brushes himself off.

BANKY
Maybe I'll put your fucking teeth down your throat.

HOLDEN
(walking out)
Not bloody Likely.

Banky runs to the open door.

**BANKY**
(calling after him)
I've been working out you know!
(no response)
You better be ready to make that M-TV deal!

The downstairs door slams. Banky makes a muscle, then feels it.

INT TOWER RECORDS - DAY

Holden and Hooper peruse laser discs.

**HOOPER**
Where's that bitch partner of your's been?

**HOLDEN**
Sulking. He's having a real problem with this Alyssa thing.

**HOOPER**
I think it's more like Banky's having a problem with all things not hetero right about now. And I'm just another paradigm of said aberration.

**HOLDEN**
Banky does not hate gays, you know that.

**HOOPER**
But I do think he is a bit homophobic. And this latest episode between you and Ms. Thing has tapped into that. In his warped perception, he lost you to the dark side - which is she.

**HOLDEN**
You make it sound like me and him were dating.

**HOOPER**
Don't kid yourself - that boy loves you in a way that he's not ready to
deal with.

HOLDEN
(beat)
He's been digging up dirt on Alyssa.

HOOPER
And just what has Mister Angela Lansbury uncovered about your lady fair?

HOLDEN
He heard some bullshit story that she took on two guys.

HOOPER
Really? Well then he's barking up the wrong we if he wants to split you up, isn't he? He's not going to make you see the error of your ways by pointing out how truly gay she's not
(holds up a disc)
This one?

HOLDEN
Have it.
(beat)
Actually, it's kind of gotten to me.

HOOPER
How so?

HOLDEN
Banky's not known for believing misinformation. He's got a pretty good bullshit detector.

HOOPER
So, what if it is true? Would that bother you?

HOLDEN
Sex with multiple partners?

Hooper lets our a faux-shock shriek.

HOLDEN
At the same time.

Again, even louder, hands slapped against his cheeks.

HOLDEN
Thanks for being so comforting.

HOOPER
So what do you care?

HOLDEN
Well that's the thing, isn't it? I shouldn't.. but it gets to me.

HOOPER
Kind of gal Alyssa is, you don't think she's been in the middle of an all-girl group-grope?

HOLDEN
You see - that doesn't bother me. But the thought of her and guys... Uh!

HOOPER
Oh Holden, I beg you - please don't drop fifty stories in my opinion of you by falling prey to that latest of trendy beasts.

HOLDEN
Which is?

HOOPER
Lesbian chic. It's oh-so acceptable to be a gay girl nowadays. People think it's cute, because they've got this fool picture in their heads about lipstick lesbians - like they all resemble Alyssa - while most of them look more like you.

HOLDEN
Do I detect a little inter-subculture cattiness?

HOOPER
Gay or straight - ugly's still ugly. And most of those boys are scary.

HOLDEN
I thought fags were all supposed to be super-supportive of one another.

HOOPER
Screw that 'all for one' shit. I gotta deal with being the minority in the minority of the minority, and
nobody's supporting my ass? While the whole of society is fawning over girls-on-girls, here I sit – a reviled gay man, and to top that off, I'm a gay black man – notoriously the most swishy of the bunch.

**HOLDEN**

Three strikes.

**HOOPER**

Hey, hey! There's a line.

A young BLACK KID approaches Hooper, holding a comic book.

**KID**
Are you Hooper X?

**HOOPER**
(in militant mode)
A-salaam Alaikum, little brother.

**KID**
Could you sign my comic?

**HOOPER**
(signing comic; nods to Holden)
See that guy there? He's the devil, you understand? Never take your eye off the Man. Our people took their eyes off him one time, and he had us in chains in two shakes of his snake's tail.

The Kid offers Holden an angry look. Hooper gives him back his comic.

**HOOPER**
Fight the power, little 'G'.

**KID**
Word is bond

The Kid leaves, Hooper slips back into his real voice.

**HOOPER**
Look at what I have to resort to for professional respect. What is it about gay men that terrifies the rest of the world.
(shakes his head)
As for this hang-up with Alyssa's past, maybe what's really bothering you is that your fragile fantasy might not be true.

**HOLDEN**
What do you mean?

**HOOPER**
Holden - don't even try to come off like you don't know what I'm saying. Men need to believe that they're Marco fucking Polo when it comes to sex - like they're the only ones who've ever explored new territory. And it's hard not to let them believe it. I let my boys run with it for awhile - feed them some of that "I've never done this before..." bullshit, and let 'em labor under the delusion that they rockin' my world, until I can't stand them anymore. Then I hit 'em with the truth. It's a sick game. The world would be a better place if people would just accept that there's nothing new under the sun, and everything you can do with a person has probably been done long before you got there.

**HOLDEN**
I can accept that.

**HOOPER**
Honey, that almost sounded convincing. Do yourself a favor - just ask her about her past, point blank. Get it out of the way, before it gets too big for both ya'll to move.

(spotting something OC)
Oooh! 'Myra Breckinridge'!

Hooper trots off, Holden glances at the disc in his hands. Pictured on it are two gorgeous chicks, barely clad, making out. The title is 'Men Suck.. and so do Girls - All XXX Action.'

**INT HOCKEY RINK - NIGHT**

On the ice, two teams clash, chasing the puck up and
In the bleachers, amidst a slew of fans, Alyssa watches the game with a large degree of enjoyment. Sitting beside her, Holden doesn't seem to share her enthusiasm.

**ALYSSA**
Since most of these people are rooting for the home team, I'm going to cheer for the visitors. I'm a big visitors fan - especially the kind that make coffee for you in the morning before they go.

(smiles at Holden; no response)
That was a joke. A little wacky wordplay?

**HOLDEN**
What do you mean, 'visitors'?

**ALYSSA**
Was I being too obscure? The kind that - until recently - had no dicks and would spend the night.

**HOLDEN**
So that was until recently!

**ALYSSA**
Oh, yeah.

(shouting; to ice)
Hey - foul! Foul! He was traveling or something!

**HOLDEN**
So nobody bur me has stayed the night at your place since we got together?

**ALYSSA**
(beat)
Something on your mind, Holden?

**HOLDEN**
No, I was just wondering,

**ALYSSA**
If I've been 'faithful' or something?

**HOLDEN**
Look, I was just asking.
ALYSSA
(toucher his face)
Oh, sweetie. I only have eyes for you.
(to ice)

CALL THAT FUCKING SHIT, REF!! THE GUY ON THE SKATES TOTALLY SHOVED ONE OF MY GUYS!!
(to Holden)
I told you I was great at sporting events. Imagine what a bitch I could be if I knew what was going on?

ON THE ICE - Things heat up between two opposing PLAYERS. One snatches the puck away from the other and skates off. The other Player gives chase.

Alyssa's very into the game. Holden shakes his head

HOLDEN
That'd make Banky half right.

ALYSSA
About what?

HOLDEN
He said all the girls from North were bitches and sluts.

ALYSSA
Really. I'm sorry - you two left high school behind how many years ago? (grabs his face and kisses his cheek) Can I put some of my books in your locker? (goes back to watching game)

HOLDEN
(under his breath) How about your yearbook.

ON THE ICE - The Player giving chase slashes the Player with the puck.

Alyssa jumps to her feet.

ALYSSA
(to ice)
IF YOU DON'T START USING THAT WHISTLE I'M GONNA JAM IT STRAIGHT UP YOUR ASS!!
(to guy next to her)
Right?

HOLDEN
What's with 'Finger Cuffs'?

ALYSSA
(sitting back down)
'Finger Cuffs'?

HOLDEN
Yeah. In your senior yearbook your nickname was 'Finger Cuffs'. What is that?

ALYSSA
It was? Shit, damned if I can remember. I'd look it up, but I threw all that shit our years ago?
(beat)
Where'd you see a North yearbook?

HOLDEN
Do you know Rick Derris?

ON THE ICE - The Players skid into the corner where Player One checks Player Two into the boards, hard. Player Two scrambles to his feet and throws down his gloves.

The crowd around Alyssa and Holden go wild.

ALYSSA
Rick? Sure. We used to hang out in high school.
(to ice)
PUNCH HIM IN THE FUCKING NECK, NUMBER TWELVE!!

HOLDEN
Did you go out with him or something?

ALYSSA
(eyes on the ice)
Date Rick Derris? No. We just hung out a lot.

HOLDEN
Just... you and him?

ALYSSA
No. Me, Rick, and... um... what was
that guy's name...?

HOLDEN

Cohee?

ALYSSA

Yeah! Cohee Lundin. God, I haven't thought about that name in years.

ON THE ICE - The Players square off. Player Two pulls Player One's helmet off and punches him in the face.

Holden looks as if he'd Like to do the same to his companion. Alyssa's into the game.

ALYSSA

I remember those guys'd come over almost everyday after school. They'd bug my sisters, look for porno tapes in my dad's closet, raid our fridge. They really took advantage of my parents never being home.

ON THE ICE - Player Two yanks at Player One's jersey and gut punches him. Alyssa seems oblivious to Holden's anger, so enthralled with the action is she.

ALYSSA

(starts laughing)
This one day... Rick pulled out his dick and chased me around the house with it! Right in front of Cohee! I couldn't believe it! Guys are weird - I thought the whole size hang-up made you all terrified to show your dicks to each other?

ON THE ICE - Player One staggers a bit, then quickly rights his jersey and lunges at Player Two, landing a barrage of his own punches. Blood sprays across the ice.

Holden's face is reeeeeeaaaally sour looking. Alyssa's still in the game.

HOLDEN

Rick pulled his dick out? Really? What'd you do?

ALYSSA

(looks him dead in the eye)
I blew him while Cohee fucked me.
ON THE ICE - Player One delivers the kill shot, slamming his fist into Player Two's nose. The blood shoots out like a geyser, and Two goes down hard.

Holden stares at Alyssa, flabbergasted. The crowd around them stares not at the fight on the ice, but the fight in their midst, shocked. Alyssa fumes.

**HOLDEN**

Excuse me!?!?

**ALYSSA**

That's what you wanted to hear, isn't it? Isn't that what this little cross-examination of your's is about? Well try not to be so obvious about it next time, there are subtler ways of badgering a witness.

(to Bystander)

Am I right?

**BYSTANDER**

(to Holden)

Jeez, even I knew what you were getting at.

**ALYSSA**

(gathering her stuff)

If you wanted some background information on me, all you had to do was ask - I'd have gladly volunteered it. You didn't have to play Hercules fucking Poirot!

She storms away. Holden chases after her. The Bystander watches them go.

**BYSTANDER**

(to companion)

I told you these were good seats.

INT RINK LOBBY / EXT PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Alyssa marches quickly, pulling on her coat. Holden catches up to her. We track with them our into the parking lot.

**HOLDEN**

So it's true?!
ALYSSA
Yes Holden! In fact, everything you heard or dug up on me was probably true! Yeah, I took on two guys at once! You want to hear some gems you might not have unearthed - I took a twenty-six-year-old guy to my senior prom, and then left halfway through to have sex with him and Gwen Turner in the back of a limo! And the girl who got caught in the shower with Miss Moffit, the gym teacher? That was me! Or how about in college, when I let Shannon Hamilton videotape us having sex - only to find out the next day that he broadcast it on the campus cable station?! They're all true - those and so many more! Didn't you know? I'm the queen of urban legend!

HOLDEN
How the hell could you do those things?!

ALYSSA
Easily! Some of it I did out of stupidity, some of it I did out of what I thought was love, but - good or bad - they were my choices, and I'm not making apologies for them now - not to you or anyone! And how dare you try to lay a guilt trip on me about it - in public, no less! Who the fuck do you think you are, you judgemental prick?!

HOLDEN
How am I supposed to feel about all of this?

ALYSSA
How are you supposed to feel about it? Feel what ever the fuck you want about it! The only thing that really matters is how you feel about me.

HOLDEN
I don't know how I feel about you now.

ALYSSA
Why? Because I had some sex?
HOLDEN

Some sex?

ALYSSA

Yes, Holden - that's all it was: some sex! Most of it stupid high school sex, for Christ's sake! Like you never had sex in high school!

HOLDEN

There's a world of fucking difference between typical high school sex and two guys at once! They fucking used you?

ALYSSA

I used them! You don't think I would've let it happen if I hadn't wanted it to, do you?! I was an experimental girl, for Christ's sake! Maybe you knew early on that your track was from point 'a' to 'b' - but unlike you I wasn't given a fucking map at birth, so I tried it all! That is until we - that's you and I - got together, and suddenly, I was sated. Can't you take some fucking comfort in that? You turned out to be all I was ever looking for - the missing piece in the big fucking puzzle!

(tries to calm down)

Look I'm sorry I let you believe that you were the only guy I'd ever been with. I should've been more honest. But it seemed to make you feel special in a way that me telling you over and over again how incredible you are would never get across.

She touches his face. He pulls back. She stares at him, hurt and pissed.

ALYSSA

Do you mean to tell me that - while you have zero problem with me sleeping with half the women in New York City - you have some sort of half-assed, mealy-mouthed objection to pubescent antics, that took place almost ten years ago? What the fuck is your problem?!!
Holden's eyes are downcast. Alyssa waits for a response.

**HOLDEN**
I want us to be something that we can't.

**ALYSSA**
And what's that?

**HOLDEN**
(beat)
A normal couple.

Holden skulks off. Alyssa stares after him, and then starts kicking and punching a car beside her, finally slumping to the ground. She cries.

**INT STUDIO - DUSK**

Holden sits on the couch, alone in the dark. The door opens and Banky enters. He stands there, sizing up Holden's mood.

**BANKY**
The girl?


**INT DINER - NIGHT**

Holden sits alone at a booth. He stirs his iced tea.

**OC VOICE**
Yo, look at this morose mother fucker here..

Holden looks up. JAY and SILENT BOB stand above him.

**JAY**
Smells like somebody shit in his cereal.

Holden offers a half-smile. The pair slide into the booth.
HOLDEN
What took you so long?

JAY
We were at the mall. You bring the salad?

Holden pulls an envelope out of his jacket and tosses it to Jay. Jay opens it and pulls out a thick wad of bills, along with the latest issue of 'BLUNTMAN and CHRONIC.'

JAY
Man, this likeness rights shit is more profitable than selling smoke.

HOLDEN
How'd a dirt merchant like you ever learn about likeness rights?

JAY
(hands envelope to Silent Bob)
We deal to a lot of lawyers. Speaking of which...
(pulls out a dime bag)
Little signing bonus and shit!

HOLDEN
I'll pass. Take a look at the issue.

Silent Bob thumbs through the comic. Jay looks over his shoulder, as he begins rolling a joint.

JAY
Yeah. When you gonna get some pussy in that book, man! Throw some super-villain in with big fucking tits that shoot milk or something, and I just drink her dry, bust some moves on her...
(demonstrates)
...and then she has to fuck me.
(Silent Bob hits him)
Fuck us.

HOLDEN
I'll see what I can do.

A WAITRESS joins them.

WAITRESS
What can I get you.

HOLDEN
Nothing, thanks.

JAY
Yo Flo - tell Mel to whip me up a toasted bagel and cream cheese.
(to Silent Bob)
You want one too?
(Silent Bob nods)
Make that two. And kiss my grits. Noonch.
(to Silent Bob)
D'jever watch 'Alice'? That show's good as hell.
(continues rolling)
So why the long face, Horse? Banky on the rag?

HOLDEN
When is he not? No - I'm just having some girl trouble.

JAY
Bitch pressing charges? I get that a lot.

HOLDEN
No. I'm just at a point where I don't know what to do.

JAY
Kick her to the curb. Girls get to be too much trouble, there's always the 'band of the hand'.

HOLDEN
Can't do it, g. I'm in love.

JAY
Ah, there ain't no such thing. You gotta boil it all down to the essentials. It's like Cube says - life ain't nothing but bitches and money.

HOLDEN
Just what I needed - advice from the 'hood
JAY
Who is this girl?

HOLDEN
I don't think you know her.

JAY
Come on man - I'm people who know people.

HOLDEN
You sound like Barbra Streisand.

JAY
That's 'cause I got this tubby bitch playing her greatest hits tape in my ear all the time. You should see him: she starts singing 'You Don't Bring Me Flowers', this faggot starts crying like a little girl with a skinned knee and shit. It's embarrassing. I got the only muscle in the world with a weakness for ballads.
(to Silent Bob)
You big fucking softie.
(to Holden)
So what's this skirt's name!

HOLDEN
I'm telling you, you don't know her.

JAY
I ain't playing. Tell me her name, Mysterio.

HOLDEN
Alyssa Jones.

JAY
Finger Cuffs?

Holden rubs his eyes.

JAY
You're dating Finger Cuffs? Wait a minute I thought she was all gay and shit!

HOLDEN
She is. Or was. I don't know.

The Waitress returns with the order.
JAY
And you go out with her? Shit, man - you're a lucky dog. She bring other chicks to bed with you, get a little of that filet o' fish sammich going on?

The Waitress stares wide-eyed and offended at Jay.

JAY
(Off the Waitress' look)
Yeah - you know what I'm talking about, baby.
(Waitress leaves; to Holden)
So - four tits, or what?

HOLDEN
It's not like that.

JAY
Well what's it like then?

HOLDEN
Right now?
(Beat)
I don't know. I love her. But she has a past

JAY
I'll say. Stuffin' two guys, eating chicks out. Yo - I heard one time, she had this dog...

HOLDEN
Eat your fucking bagel already!

JAY
(to Silent Bob)
Look at this touchy mother fucker right here.
(to Holden)
So, if you're all in love with her, what's the problem?

HOLDEN
The problem is shit like that. It was one thing when it was just girls - that was weird enough. But now you throw guys into the mix - two guys at once, no less. All that
experience...What am I supposed to think?

JAY
You think good; because now she'll be all true blue and shit. The girl's tasted life, yo. Now she's settlin' for your boring, funny-book-makin' ass.

HOLDEN
Settling. That's comforting, Jay. Thanks.

JAY
That's what I'm here for.

HOLDEN
I'm lust having a problem with all of it I can't get it out of my head these visuals of her doing all this shit. And I don't know why I can't let it go. Because I'm crazy about her, you know? I look at this girl, I see the future. I see kids. I see grand-kids.

JAY
You're scaring me.

HOLDEN
I'm scaring myself. Because I think so much of her, and then I can't get over shit like 'Finger Cuffs'.
(shakes his head)
I don't know what I'm doing.

Holden looks out the window. Jay continues to roll his joint. There's silence. Then...

BOB
You're chasing Amy.

Holden's head snaps forward. He stares, wide-eyed at Silent Bob.

HOLDEN
What..what did you say?

BOB
You're chasing Amy.
Holden stares, shocked. He looks to Jay, who's still rolling his joint.

**JAY**
What do you look so shocked for? He does this all the time. Fat bastard thinks just because he never says anything, that it'll have some huge impact when he does open his fucking mouth.

**BOB**
Why don't you shut up? Jesus! Always yap, yap, yapping all the time. Give me a fucking headache.  
(to Holden)
I went through something like what you're going through. Years ago. Same kind of thing with a girl named Amy.

**JAY**
When?

**BOB**
A couple of years ago.

**JAY**
What'd she 'Live in Canada' or something? Why don't I remember this?

**BOB**
What you don't know about me I can just about squeeze into the Grand fucking Canyon. Did you know I always wanted to be a dancer in Vegas?

Jay and Holden look at him. Silent Bob busts a move with his hands.

**BOB**
Hunhh? Bet you didn't know that?

**JAY**
Just cell your fucking story so we can get out of here and smoke this.

**BOB**
(to Holden)
So there's me an Amy, and we're all inseparable, right? Just big time in love. And then about four months in,
I ask about the ex-boyfriend. Dumb move, I know, but you know how it is – you don't really want to know, but you just have to... stupid guy bullshit. Anyway she starts telling me all about him – how they dated for years, lived together, her mother likes me better, blah, blah, blah – and I'm okay. But then she tells me that a couple times, he brought other people to bed with them – menage a tois, I believe it's called. Now this just blows my mind. I mean, I'm not used to that sort of thing, right? I was raised Catholic.

JAY

Saint Shithead.

Silent Bob backhands him. Jay raises his fist as if to strike.

BOB

Do something.

(to Holden)

So I get weirded out, and just start blasting her, right? This is the only way I can deal with it – by calling her a slut, and telling her that she was used – I mean, I'm out for blood I want to hurt her – because I don't know how to deal with what I'm feeling. And I'm like "What the fuck is wrong with you?" and she's telling me that it was that time, in that place, and she didn't do anything wrong, so she's not gonna apologize. So I tell her it's over, and I walk.

JAY

Fucking a.

BOB

No, idiot. It was a mistake. I wasn't disgusted with her, I was afraid. At that moment, I felt small – like I'd lacked experience, like I'd never be on her level or never be enough for her or something. And what I didn't get was that she didn't care. She wasn't looking for that guy anymore. She was looking for me. But by the time I realized this,
it was too late, you know. She'd moved on, and all I had to show for it was some foolish pride, which then gave way to regret. She was the girl, I know that now. But I pushed her away...

Everyone's silent Silent Bob lights a cigarette.

**BOB**

So I've spent every day since then chasing Amy...

(takes a drag from his smoke)

So to speak.

They sit there for a beat. Jay pockets the rest of his dime-bag.

**JAY**

Enough of this fucking melodrama. My advice - forget her, dude. There's one woman in the world. One woman, with many faces.

(to Silent Bob)

Get up, bitch

(to Holden)

We gotta book. We're catching a bus to Chi-town.

**HOLDEN**

What's there?

**JAY**

Business, yo. How many more of those phat envelopes do we got coming to us?

**HOLDEN**

I don't know. I don't know if the book's going to be around much longer.

**JAY**

Yeah? Good. I'll be glad as shit when it's gone.

**HOLDEN**

Are you kidding me? There's millions of people out there that'd love to see themselves in a comic book.

**JAY**

I know. I spend every fucking waking hour with one of them. But it ain't
like us at all - all slapsticky and shit - running around like dicks, saying... What's that shit you got me saying?

HOLDEN
Snootchie-bootchies.

JAY
'Snootchie-bootchies'. Who talks like that? That's baby-talk.
(slaps his hand)
It's a big world, g - but we're bound to run into you again. Until then - keep your unit on you.

HOLDEN
I'll try.

BOB
Do, or do not - there is no ay.

JAY
(slaps him)
Knock it off! Get your fat ass moving - we got a bus to catch.
(under his breath)
Jedi-bitch.

Exit Jay and Silent Bob. Holden remains in the booth, thinking.

MONTAGE - AN UNCOMFORTABLE SILENCE

1) Holden sits at his drawing table, tapping his pencil up and down.

2) Alyssa sits in a club, getting talked at by some women. She's not present in the conversation.

3) Banky meets with Sloss at a restaurant. Sloss shakes the contracts at him, and Banky makes the "I know, I know," face.

4) Holden stares at the picture Alyssa gave him.

5) Alyssa with her ear to the phone. She hangs up, angrily.

6) Holden sits in the park that he and Alyssa walked
through. He's staring at Alyssa's yearbook picture. He closes the book and sighs. Then, an idea hits him. He jumps up and dashes out of the park.

INT STUDIO - NIGHT

Banky and Alyssa sit on the couch. Holden paces in front of them.

HOLDEN
I know you're wondering why I asked you both here tonight, at the same time, knowing that we have shit to settle between us, separately.

BANKY
I just figured you wanted to kill two birds with one stone by telling her to fuck off with me here so you didn't have to go through the story again later on.

ALYSSA
Fuck you.

BANKY
Not even if you let me videotape it.

HOLDEN
Enough!
(they both look at him)
I've been going through things, over and over. And I dissected it all, and looked at it a thousand different ways. Banky - there's friction between us for the first time in our lives. You hate me dating Alyssa and you want me to sign off on this M-TV thing.

BANKY
How perceptive.

HOLDEN
Alyssa - you and I hit a wall, because I don't know how to deal with... your past, I guess.

BANKY
That's a nice way of putting it. I'd
have said the whole double-stuff thing...

**HOLDEN**
(right in his face)
I'm only going to say it once: shut up.
(back to pacing)
Now - I know I'm to blame one way or the other on both accounts. With you, Alyssa - it's my fault because I feel inadequate. Because you've had so much experience, had such a big life; and my life's been pretty small in comparison.

**ALYSSA**
That doesn't matter to me...

**HOLDEN**
Please. I have to get through this.
(beat)
And with you Banky - I know why you're having such a hard time with Alyssa, and it's something that's been obvious forever, but I guess I just didn't acknowledge it.
(takes a deep breath)
You're in love with me.

**BANKY**
(makes a face; beat)
What?

**HOLDEN**
You're attracted to me. Just as, in a way, I'm attracted to you. I mean, it makes sense - we've been together so long, we have so much in common...

**BANKY**
(getting up)
Well, I've got to get home and catch the last few minutes of 'Babylon 5', so I'll be...

Holden grabs him, kisses him full on the lips, and pushes him back onto the couch Alyssa reacts. Banky - wide-eyed and speechless - looks away.

**HOLDEN**
It's something you're going to have to
deal with. Bank. You may very well be gay, which explains your homophobia and why you're so jealous of Alyssa, and your sense of humor as well.

**BANKY**
Just 'cause a guy's got a predilection coward dick jokes...

**HOLDEN**
Bank. Stop. Deal with it. You'll feel much better.

He grabs a chair from the side of the room.

**HOLDEN**
Now - at this point, you may be asking yourself the question that I've been going over and over in my head for the last few days: what does one have to do with the other?

Alyssa's face drops. She subtly shakes her head.

**ALYSSA**
(under her breath)
Don't.

**HOLDEN**
And when I did some serious soul-searching, it came at me from out of nowhere, and suddenly it all made sense - a calm came over me. I know what we have to do. And then you - Bank, you Alyssa, and I - all of us... can finally be... alright.

**ALYSSA**
(again, under her breath)
Please don't say it.

**HOLDEN**
(sits in the chair; takes a long beat)
We've all got to have sex together.


**HOLDEN**
Don't you see? That would take care of everything. Alyssa - I wouldn't
feel inadequate or too conservative anymore. I'll have done something on par with all the experience you've had. And it'll be with you, which'll make it that much more powerful. And Banky - you can cake that leap that everyone else but you sees that you should take. And it'll be okay, because it'll be with me - your best friend for years. We've been everything to each other but intimates. And now, we'll have been through that together too. And it won't have to be a total leap for you, because a woman will be involved. And when it's over, all that aggression you feel toward Alyssa will be gone. Because you'll have shared in something beautiful with the woman I love. It'll be cathartic. A true communion. We have to do this. For me, for both of you... for all of our sakes. This will keep us together.  
(beat)  
What do you say?

Banky stares forward, wide-eyed. He leans back into the couch and lets out a huge sigh. Then shrugs.

BANKY

Sure.

Holden smiles at his friend. Then he looks at Alyssa.

HOLDEN

You know I need this. You know it'll help.

Alyssa looks at him, sadly.

ALYSSA

No.

Holden reacts, shocked Banky lets out a sigh of relief.

HOLDEN

No? I... I thought you'd be into this.

ALYSSA

You did? What does that say about me?
HOLDEN
But you've... you've done... stuff... like this. This should be no big deal for you.

ALYSSA
You don't want this.
(lights her cigarette)
You really don't want this. Trust me.

HOLDEN
I need this. This has to happen. Why can't you see that? And how can you not? What does that say about me? You can take it from two guys whose names you can barely remember, but I ask you to share an experience like it - where it's about intimacy - and you say no?

ALYSSA
(inhales from her cigarette, takes a beat)
I can't.

Holden moves to her side of the couch.

HOLDEN
You can. I'll be there. And when it's over, we'll be the strongest we've ever been because we got through some nasty shit together. And we'll finally be on the same level together. And then there'll be nothing we can't accomplish.

A tear rolls down her cheek. She looks at him, sadly, and touches his face.

ALYSSA
Oh Holden.
(trying to compose herself)
That time is over for me. I've been there. I've done it. And I didn't find what I was looking for in any of it. I found that in you - in us. Doing this won't help you forget about the things you're hung up on. It'll create more.

HOLDEN
No it won't. I thought about all of
that.

**ALYSSA**

No, it will. Maybe you'll see me differently from then on - maybe you'll despise me for going along with it, once you're in the moment. Maybe I'll moan differently and then you'll resent Banky, and become suspicious of us. Or you'll alienate him because of it, and then grow to blame and hate me for the deterioration of your friendship. Or what if- I sincerely doubt it, but what if - I saw something in Banky that I never saw before, and fell in love with him and left you. I've been down roads like this before; many times. I know you feel doing this will broaden your horizons and give you experience. But I've had those experiences on my own. I can't accompany you on your's. I'm past that now.

(touches his face; stares to cry)

Or maybe I just love you too much. And I feel hurt and let down that you'd want to share me with anyone. Because I never wanted to share you.

(holds it in; gets up)

Regardless I can't be a part of this.

(beat)

Or you. Not anymore

(hugs him)

I love you. I always will. Know that.

She releases him, then slaps him.

**ALYSSA**

But I'm not your fucking whore.

Alyssa storms away, stopping briefly to look Banky up and down.

**ALYSSA**

He's your's again.

She walks our of the studio. The door closes behind her.

Banky and Holden stand there, silently. Cut to black.
INT COMIC BOOK SHOW - DAY

It's ONE YEAR later. We're at another show, not unlike the one from the opening.

A copy of 'Bluntman and Chronic' enters the frame. The cover reads 'The Death Chronic', complete with a corresponding drawing.

**BANKY V.O.**

Blast from the past.

Banky sits at his own signing table. Behind him hangs a banner that reads 'BANKY EDWARDS - CREATOR Of BABY DAVE'. A small line is formed in front of him. He talks with a **FAN**.

**FAN**

Do you know how much it's going for these days? One ten. You signing it will push that up even higher,

**BANKY**

If you sell it, I want a kickback

(starts signing)

**FAN**

I don't know if this is true, but I heard once that there was going to be an animated series.

**BANKY**

There was going to be

**FAN**

What happened!

**BANKY**

(off comic)

You're looking at it. No Chronic - no cartoon

**FAN**

That sucks man. That would've been awesome.

**BANKY**

Tell me about it

**FAN**

Is that what happened to you and Holden McNeil? You got into a fight
over the rights or something?

**BANKY**
It was a little more involved than that.

**FAN**
Whatever happened to him?

**BANKY**
He quit the biz. I guess.

**FAN**
You guys don't talk anymore?

**BANKY**
(looks OC)
No. Not really.

Banky locks eyes with someone OC. His expression softens.

Holden leans against a wall on the far side of the room. He smiles at Banky. Banky smiles back, and sort of nods.

Holden holds up a copy of Banky's new solo comic. He points to it and gives a thumbs up.

**OC FAN**
Probably shouldn't have killed off Chronic.

Banky smiles to OC.

**BANKY**
Guess not. Some doors just shouldn't be opened.

Banky looks in another direction, OC. He looks at Holden and points to it. Holden looks in the same direction, and then looks back at Banky and nods.

**OC FAN**
You don't need that guy, anyway. You do great stuff without him.

Banky looks at Holden for a beat. Then he brings his pointer fingers together, mimicing Holden's 'shared moment' gesture.

Holden shrugs slightly, then crosses his fingers - as if to say 'hopefully'.
OC FAN

You were just carrying that guy, anyway.

Banky sort of smiles at the OC Holden. Then he offers his own thumbs up - as to say 'good luck'.

BANKY

(to fan, still looking OC)
You're so right.

Holden smiles back, nods 'bye', and walks off.

OC FAN

Well, keep up the good work, man.
Love them dick jokes. Love 'em. See ya.

The Fan Leaves, but Banky is watching Holden go.

BXVKY

Yeah. Bye.
(shakes it off)
Okay. Who's next?

Alyssa sits at a separate signing table, with a line in front of her. A WOMAN behind her. Alyssa dashes off signatures in the copies of her comic.

ALYSSA

(to OC departing fan)
Thanks for reading it.

The Woman stands and rubs her shoulders.

WOMAN

I'm going to get a soda. You want anything?

ALYSSA

I'm fine, thanks,

The Woman heads off. Alyssa starts rummaging through her bag.

ALYSSA

(not rooking up)
Okay, who's next!

A comic book drops on the table in front of her. It's a comic book called 'Chasing Amy'.

She leafs through it, not looking up.

**ALYSSA**
Um... This isn't one of mine.

**OC HOLDEN**
It's mine.

Alyssa looks up sharply.

Holden stands before her, smiling.

**HOLDEN**
I saved you one.

**ALYSSA**
Hi.

**HOLDEN**
Hi.

**ALYSSA**
(beat)
How've you been?

**HOLDEN**
Good. Really good. Yourself?

**ALYSSA**
Good

(beat; off her own comic)
New issue's selling like crazy, for some reason.

**HOLDEN**
Because it's so good. I really liked it.

**ALYSSA**
Thank you.

(off comic)
I haven't even seen this yet. Did it just come out?

**HOLDEN**

**ALYSSA**
Will I enjoy it?
HOLDEN
You might. It's familiar subject matter.

Alyssa leafs through it. Her eyes get somewhat misty.

ALYSSA
Looks like a very personal story.

HOLDEN
I finally had something personal to say.

They look at each other for a beat

HOLDEN
I'm going to go. I don't want to hold up the line.

ALYSSA
Yeah. I mean, it can get ugly. I just saw this nun in line call this small child a cunt-rag.

HOLDEN
(smiles)
Read that, when you have a minute

ALYSSA
I will.

HOLDEN
I'd like to hear your thoughts about it. If you get a chance, give me a call.

ALYSSA
Okay.

They look at each other for a beat.

HOLDEN
Nice seeing you again,

ALYSSA
Really nice to see you too.

He walks away. A few steps away, he turns and waves again. She waves back. And then he starts moving through the thrall of fan-boys.

The Woman returns with coffee. She follows Alyssa's
gaze.

WOMAN
who was that?

ALYSSA
Hmm! Oh. Just some guy I knew.

She watches him go for another beat, then.

ALYSSA
(to line)
Next
(to Woman)
So what do you want to do tonight?

And as they fall into conversation, the show goes on.  

END