

FADE IN

INT. APARTMENT IN BROOKLYN - DAY

MIKE has picked up his cousin JOHNNY from Ireland, at the docks. ROSE, Mike's wife, opens the door. Mike strides in, curtsies to Rose and points to Johnny.

MIKE

Would you look at the head on
him? He's a McMahon.

CLOSE ON ROSE'S FACE. Rose smiles warmly at Johnny.

ROSE

Hi, Johnny.

Johnny

It's great to meet you - and
Mike. I thought I'd never get
here.

Rose

Well, welcome to America.
You're hungry?

JOHNNY

(Smiling broadly)
I wouldn't mind a cup of tea.

Rose suddenly realizes that they don't have any tea and is embarrassed for a moment.

ROSE

(interrupting)

Oh, God, I never thought...We're
all coffee drinkers here...
Mike...?

JOHNNY

Water is fine...

ROSE

My neighbor will have some.

JOHNNY



Ah, don't bother, don't
bother.

MIKE

Go ahead, get the tea, Rose,
and I'll be showing Johnny his
room.

Mike shows Johnny his room and shows off the apartment.
Johnny makes appropriate murmurs of appreciation.

JOHNNY

I'm obliged to ye for having
me. Just till I get on my
feet, mind you.

MIKE

(Puts arm around Johnny)
Don't worry about it. You're
family. We're cousins, first
cousins. My pop and yours
were brothers, for God's sake
- God rest their souls. You
stay here as long as you want,
hear?

JOHNNY

This place is as big as a
house.

MIKE

(Smiles expansively)
It ain't bad. We got three
bedrooms here. Rose did all
the decorating.

JOHNNY

She has good taste.

MIKE

Of course, she has. She
married me, didn't she?
(laughs)

JOHNNY

You're a lucky man, Mike
McMahon.

MIKE

Y'know I am.

Rose enters. Mike puts his arms around her. Rose looks surprised.

MIKE

Honey, Johnny likes this place. I told him that you had done all the decorating.

ROSE

(Looks around)

It is kinda nice, isn't it?

(To Johnny)

Sorry about that. It should only take a minute.

JOHNNY

(Apologetically)

Sorry to put you to any trouble...

MIKE

(Interrupting)

What's with all the 'sorrys'
Enough already, let's eat.

All sit down and eat. Rose keeps glancing in Johnny's direction, making sure that he has everything he needs. Mike is engrossed in his food and is paying little attention to anything else.

ROSE

So, there's six in your family. And you're, the first? Sorry. How old are you, Johnny?

JOHNNY

Twenty-nine since March.

ROSE

God, we've lost touch the last few years.

JOHNNY

Two brothers and four sisters.
I'm oldest. Next is Marie and
she's married. She lives on a
farm not too far from us.

MIKE

(Not looking up)

She's a long way from us now,
Johnny. Remember you're in
Brooklyn, lad.

Rose stares at Mike with a look of distaste on her face.

JOHNNY

I know, I know. I mean when
I'm at home - only up the
road, as they say.

ROSE

(Smiles warmly at Johnny)
Well, I guess America is your
new home now.

JOHNNY

No, where I left will always
be home, but I'm here now and
I'll make the best of it.

ROSE

You will.

JOHNNY

(Speaking with emphasis)
I'll make my fortune here, I
will.

Mike looks sharply at Johnny.

MIKE

Ah, now, Johnny. Put all those
old stories of gold in the
streets out of your head,
cousin. It's not like that.

Rose turns sharply, and glares at Mike.

ROSE

It can be. It can be,
Johnny.

Mike walks to window and looks out on street below.

MIKE

(With back turned)
Its dog eat dog here, kid -
like everywhere else, I guess.
They'll fill your head full of
bull-shit promises, tell you
how lucky you are to be an
American. But they'll suck you
dry and cast you aside. That's
how they make their money, on
your back.

ROSE

That's what happened to you,
right?

(To Johnny)

Don't pay any attention to
him. There's plenty of
opportunity, today as much as
ever.

JOHNNY

That's what I've been told.

MIKE

(Still standing at window)
Don't hope too much. It ain't
like it used to be. You'll be
disappointed.

ROSE

I'll be cheering you on,
Johnny.

Mike walks over to Johnny and puts his hand on his
shoulder.

MIKE

Corporations and big banks -
profit, it's all about profit.

JOHNNY

Well, don't I have to start
out believing, that I can. One
thing I know. If I believe I
can't, I won't.

ROSE

(Staring at Mike disdainfully)
Y'know, something here (points
at heart) tells me you'll do
fine.

Johnny rises from table and paces back and forth, hands
deep in pockets.

MIKE

Luck, Johnny, don't forget
luck.

JOHNNY

We make our own luck, don't
we?

MIKE

There's no gold in the streets
here, but there's work -
though it's better if you're
working for yourself. Save
what you can, Johnny and get a
little business going.

ROSE

Do what I say, not what I do.

MIKE

What we should have done.

ROSE

Why didn't we and why not now?

MIKE
Haven't got the energy no
more.

JOHNNY
Are you working, too, Rose?

ROSE
I am.

JOHNNY
It's no wonder ye can afford a
fine place like this.

ROSE
We're renting, Johnny.

JOHNNY
Oh...

MIKE
Yeah, for now.

ROSE
Forever, maybe.

MIKE
Real estate is a tricky
business. There's a time to
buy...

ROSE
Like four years ago, when this
place was half the price.

MIKE
It wasn't the time, Rose.

ROSE
According to who?

MIKE
According to Benny, he's in
real estate and everybody else
I talked to.

ROSE

Benny? Ha. Who among your
friends is still renting?
(pause) Sorry.

MIKE
Welcome to America, Johnny.

JOHNNY
(uncertain) Thanks.

ROSE
(abruptly)
You must be tired, Johnny. A
good nights sleep and you'll
be ready to go tomorrow.

JOHNNY
Go where?

MIKE
Wherever you want. You'll be
looking for work. You have a
job contact, right? I can take
you there.

ROSE
(To Mike) Tomorrow's Sunday.
You're meeting the guys in the
park. I'll take Johnny into
Manhattan and show him around.

Mike sits down, his anger drained away and speaks softly
to Rose.

MIKE
I can cancel out on the
softball game.

ROSE
(Refuses to look at him)
No, you enjoy that.
(Sighs)
It's been a while since I've
gone into Manhattan. The
forecast is good and...
(Smiles at Johnny)
...I'm curious to see

Johnny's reaction to the big city.

MIKE

Oh, it ain't that big, just a collection of neighborhoods like any other place.

JOHNNY

It'll be a big change from Ballycoe, population 58, last count, I can tell you that. Anyway, I'll see ye in the morning. Goodnight.

MIKE

Goodnight, cousin.

Rose goes to Johnny and puts her hand on his arm. She smiles at him.

ROSE

I'll give a little bang on the door around 9. We'll leave early and by 3.30 we should be ready to head back.

(Shakes her head)

I love Manhattan but five or six hours is about all I can take.

JOHNNY

Fair enough, you lead the way. Anyway, good night.

INT. DINER IN MANHATTAN - DAY

Johnny and Rose tour Manhattan. Johnny is fascinated, energized by the sights and sounds of the city. He stops and stares and bumps into people, causing Rose to smile.

ROSE

So, what do you think?

Johnny exhales loudly and shakes his head.

JOHNNY

It's how I dreamt it would be.

ROSE
You really like it?

JOHNNY
Like it? I love it - takes a
bit of getting used to, I'd
say but it's - it's
unbelievable.

ROSE
(Nodding vigorously)
You really *do* like it.

JOHNNY
It's like I dreamt it. The
hustle, the bustle, the
energy...

ROSE
Yes...

JOHNNY
...so many languages. How do
they understand each other?

CLOSE ON ROSE'S FACE.

Rose is quiet for a moment, gazing into the distance.

BACK TO SCENE

ROSE
I loved it so when I was
younger. Every chance I got;
I'd head into Manhattan.
Brooklyn was dull.

JOHNNY
How old are you, Rose?

Rose stares at him for a moment.

ROSE
(In a quiet voice)
What kind of question is that?

That's a very personal question to ask a woman, especially a woman.

Johnny touches her arm and smiles. Rose relaxes and taps him lightly on the forehead with her knuckle.

JOHNNY

You're not much older than I am but you seem so much more...

ROSE

Jaded, burned out? (pause) I work for a law firm, money's good, mostly nice people, a few rude and arrogant. So, I'm much more what?

JOHNNY

Worldly, sophisticated?

ROSE

Worldly, sophisticated. That's a compliment, right?

JOHNNY

Sure is.

ROSE

Compliments are nice. A woman needs compliments.

JOHNNY

Jaded? What are you talking about? You have everything. You're beautiful, you have a good job, fine home and a good husband.

ROSE

(Stares at Johnny)
You think I'm beautiful?

JOHNNY

(Face to face)
You don't?

Rose walks away and composes herself for a moment. Johnny is awakening feelings that scare her. She realizes she's attracted to him, but it's more than that. She wonders if she's in love for the very first time.

Rose

It's been a while since I've been called beautiful. Where I hang out, compliments are as scarce as hen's teeth.

ROSE

So, what did you do before you came here, Johnny?

JOHNNY

Oh, bits and pieces. A jack of all trades. Helped on the farm, a small farm, mind you...

ROSE

That was it?

JOHNNY

I got involved with a theatre group. We started touring. And-I-got-paid. Said to myself...

ROSE

That must have been exciting.

Johnny jumps up from his chair, throws his hands out theatrically, causing heads to turn.

JOHNNY

...look out Broadway, I'm on my way.

ROSE

(Laughing)

But...

JOHNNY

But. (He sits down) But is

right. We put on Shakespeare,
an occasional musical, usually
Gilbert and Sullivan...

ROSE

(Interrupting)

You have a girl back home?

JOHNNY

...we lugged the props and
costumes to the location, set
up, mounted the production,
lugged 'em back to the vans.
We did more lugging than
acting.
It was a learning experience.
'How to survive on a little
for a very long time.' We
worked hard, the money was
miserable, barely enough after
six months of slogging for the
passage to America.

ROSE

(Ignoring theatrics)

You do, right?

JOHNNY

(laughs)

What? Oh, no, no girlfriends,
girls, yes but no girlfriends.
They imagine a glamorous life,
and I played that angle... but
when I didn't have the price
of a drink, they were gone.

ROSE

You're not bad looking,
Johnny. A haircut would help.

Johnny leans over the table and stares intently at her.

JOHNNY

What'll looks do for you?
Rich, girl - rich is what
counts.

ROSE
You really believe that, don't
you?

JOHNNY
What?

ROSE
Rich is what counts.

JOHNNY
In my young life, that has
been my experience.

ROSE
That's bull shit.

JOHNNY
Is that the same as cow shit?

Rose
Okay, cow shit.

Johnny
(Laughs)
Or horse shit.

ROSE
What about being fulfilled -
in what you do.

JOHNNY
(Turns and looks at Rose)
Are you fulfilled, Rose?

ROSE
Yes...
(Sighs)
No, sometimes, maybe. No, I
guess not.
(pauses)
But it has nothing to do with
being rich or poor.

JOHNNY
You don't know what poor is.

ROSE

Now I'm going to hear about
the poor little boy who had no
shoes and slept with the
animals to keep warm.

JOHNNY

(Ignores her sarcasm)
I loved my father. He worked
hard all his life - at
whatever he could find - in
all kinds of weather. It took
its toll, and he died a young
man - worn out. He deserved
better. He was poor, we were
poor. Where I come from, poor
doesn't and didn't count.

ROSE

We all count.

JOHNNY

(Looks away)
I'll be rich or die trying.

ROSE

You're very unlike your cousin
Mike.

JOHNNY

I'm tired of doing without,
Rose, and there's nothing
romantic about being poor.

ROSE

You'll get your opportunities
here, financial and otherwise.

Johnny looks at her for a moment, analyzing the remark.
They stare at each other. Rose, suddenly self conscious,
breaks the stare and looks away.

ROSE

Where does love come in?

JOHNNY

The rich don't fall in love?

ROSE

Of course, they do...

JOHNNY

(In a low voice)

Everything's easier when you're rich. Rich people take for granted: that they'll be catered to, needs met, situations to take advantage of. Poor people, they live from one day to the next. They survive, no more.

ROSE

You're not saying that all the rich are happy and all the poor, miserable?

Johnny rises abruptly from table, turns abruptly and collides with waitress, barely avoiding spilling the food she's carrying. He apologizes to waitress. Rose stares at him.

Johnny

(Sitting down)

Could we drop it?

ROSE

Because you say so?

JOHNNY

I'm sorry. I apologize.

ROSE

(Brushes Johnny's cheek)

Apology accepted. It's okay.

EXT. MANHATTAN STREET - EVENING

Rose and Johnny have left the diner and are strolling the Manhattan streets. They feel more and more relaxed in

each other's company.

JOHNNY

So, tell me more about your life here, living in the greatest city in the world.

(Turns to face Rose)

- it is, y'know, everybody says New York is the centre of the universe. And here you live - with a glamorous job and a beautiful flat, no, apartment, right?

ROSE

(Looks away)

It's a great city and I loved commuting to work here, the parties, dancing...

JOHNNY

You like to dance?

Johnny pretends to have someone in his arms and waltzes around, drawing curious glances from passers-by.

Johnny

I love to dance. Could we go dancing sometime? Please, please?

ROSE

(laughing)

That's the woman's line.

JOHNNY

The three of us, Mike, you and me.

ROSE

(Looks at Johnny, looks away)

No, you mean the two of us. Mike doesn't do dancing.

JOHNNY

And why not?

ROSE

He can't dance and won't learn. I'd need a tow truck to get him into a dancehall. But, yeah, I'd love to do some dancing again.

Johnny is about to say something, changes his mind, then reconsiders.

JOHNNY

Would it be okay if we went?

ROSE

I have a feeling Mike's not going to object too strenuously...

Rose angrily begins to pace up and down, her hands clenched tightly by her side.

ROSE

...so just try stopping me. I just realized something. I stopped doing all the things I used to love to do, because Mike didn't want to do them. Gave up all the things I loved. For what?

She turns abruptly to Johnny. He's startled and backs off a little. Then she relaxes and smiles at him.

ROSE

Am I scaring you? I hope not, little cousin, because we're going dancing.

Johnny

Let's race. I'll race you to the next corner and then the one after that.

They run for the corners, both laughing and out of breath. Johnny beats her easily.

JOHNNY

You're out of shape, girl.

ROSE

Hey, I was pretty close,
nearly beat you.

JOHNNY

(Drops his voice)

We have a saying in Ballycoe -
Nearly never bulled a cow.

ROSE

(Laughing uncontrollably)
What? Oh, Johnny, I haven't
laughed this hard in a long
time.

JOHNNY

And why not?

CLOSE ON ROSE'S UNSMILING FACE

BACK TO SCENE

ROSE

That's a good question. And
why haven't I?

Johnny is quiet for a moment, stares intently at Rose.

JOHNNY

Is everything okay?

ROSE

(Looks away)

Yeah, everything's fine. So
why am I so miserable. I'm
beautiful, right, with a
glamorous job, right, nice
apartment and a good husband,
right. I should be happy. So
why do I feel like crap
mostly, like my life is going

nowhere, no kids, no love and
some day soon no youth. Why,
Johnny, why. Why don't I
laugh, whistle and sing more,
why? Tell me why, Johnny?

(Crying)

My life's so screwed up. I'm
trapped, with no way out and
no energy to even try.

Johnny puts his arms around her and holds her.

JOHNNY

Whisht now, whisht. Don't stop dreaming, Rose. What's for
you won't go by you. (Rose stares at him)

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Mike, Rose and Johnny sit at table having tea.

ROSE

(Addresses Mike)

Your cousin here would like to
go dancing. Wanna come?

MIKE

Dancing? You're a dancer,
Johnny? I can't put one foot
in front of the other without
tripping.

Mike puts paper aside and looks up.

MIKE

Pop said none of the Mc Mahons
danced.

JOHNNY

(laughing)

Maybe. All I know is, I like
to dance.

MIKE

Fred Astaire, ha?

JOHNNY

Fred O'Staire.

(Addressing Mike)

Might be nice for the three of us?

MIKE

Yeah, yeah, why not. That's something we haven't done in a long time.

Rose looks skeptically at Mike. They rise from table. Rose goes to kitchen. Mike pulls Johnny aside.

ROSE (O.S.)

Don't let him talk you out of it, you hear, Johnny?

MIKE

(whispers)

Cousin, don't ask me to go dancing. I can't dance. But if you want to take Rose, it's fine by me. I'd owe you. She loves to dance, and I feel bad I haven't made more of an effort, y'know. We haven't gone in years.

(Looks towards kitchen)

I'll cancel out at the last minute. Okay, Johnny, will you do this for me?

JOHNNY

Of course, I'll only be too happy to do it.

MIKE

Good man. Y'know this might work out real good for all of us.

Rose returns and looks suspiciously at both.

ROSE

It's quiet in here, very quiet. No hanky panky, I hope?

Mike and Johnny look innocently at each other, say

nothing and shake their heads.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Johnny comes in excitedly.

JOHNNY

Rose, I've got the job,
starting Monday morning. That
cousin of mine has a bar.

ROSE

What bar? Where?

JOHNNY

It's called Finn Mc Cools on
23rd Street, Manhattan, I
think.

(Waltzes Rose around room)
I knew it, I knew it. I had a
good feeling when I stepped
off the boat.

ROSE

That's great, congratulations.

JOHNNY

Are we going dancing tonight?

ROSE

Mike can't make it. He got
held up at work.

JOHNNY

There was a hold up?

ROSE

(Laughing)

No, he was delayed. We're
going to have some
communication problems.

JOHNNY

There won't be. I learn fast.
I do.

ROSE

I wouldn't be surprised.

Okay, ready in ten.

Johnny can't sit still, paces up and down, rubbing his hands together, in a fever of excitement about the job.

Rose takes him by the hand and leads him to a chair.

ROSE

(Laughing)

Sit down. Are you sure you're Mike's cousin?

JOHNNY

And proud of it I am, too.

ROSE

(Shakes her head)

You got a lot of energy.

INT. DANCEHALL - NIGHT

Rose and Johnny sit at table, by the dance floor, sipping drinks. They've danced a lot and are enjoying each other's company.

JOHNNY

This is a great place, and the music is great.

ROSE

I wasn't sure if it was still here. Used to come here years ago and it hasn't changed which is amazing for Manhattan. Five years is a lifetime in this city.

JOHNNY

I can't believe I'm dancing in Manhattan. A week ago, I was shoveling shit out of a pig sty.

(Takes her hand)

You, okay?

Rose leans over and kisses him on the lips. He stares at

her.

ROSE

I've wanted to do that all night, Johnny Mc Mahon - and yes, I feel okay. I feel good, very good. You say all those nice things to me, and it makes me feel good inside. So, when I'm with you, I feel better, much better.

JOHNNY

Thanks for taking me...

ROSE

(Indignant) You took me and...
(Puts her face close to his)
it's not over yet, Johnny Mc Mahon.

Johnny

I can't believe it. I'm in New York, everybody, New York, New York.

He pulls her onto the floor, wraps his arms around her and they dance cheek to cheek.

JOHNNY

(Thinks about the kiss)
Are we behaving...

Rose puts her finger to his lips and shushes him.

INT. FINN McCOOL'S - NIGHT.

Johnny has learned quickly, likes his job and is popular with the customers. He has seen little of Mike and Rose. TARA FEEHAN, the owner's daughter enters the bar.

TARA

Hi Johnny, I'm Tara. Mike's my dad.

JOHNNY

Hang on a minute, Tara.

Tara is 22 years old, blonde and pretty. While Johnny is taking care of a customer, she sits in a booth observing him at work. Johnny goes to her.

JOHNNY

I'm thankful to Mike, very thankful. (pause) You're Mike's only daughter. He never stops talking about you. It's my Tara this and my Tara that.

TARA

(laughing)

I know, gets to be embarrassing. He thinks I'm still sixteen and never been kissed. Since Mom died eight years ago, he tries to be mother and father to me. He's terrified I'll meet some grisly end and my mom will never forgive him...

JOHNNY

Your mother is...

TARA

(Sees his puzzled look)
...when they meet - upstairs...
hopefully.

(Points to heaven)

JOHNNY

(Laughing)

You're in college, right?

TARA

Yeah, Georgetown. Just started my junior year.

Johnny looks over at the bar, excuses himself and takes care of a customer. He returns.

JOHNNY

Like something to drink?

TARA

I'll have a screwdriver. Dad's pleased with his new barkeep. He says you're a quick study.

JOHNNY

I'm beholden to your father for giving me the start.

TARA

Blood is thicker than water, as he's always saying. I know we're related way back.

JOHNNY

Family ties are very important where I come from. I'm glad your father remembered this one.

TARA

Pop is good. He always tries to help the Irish emigrants. He remembers how he was helped when he 'got off the boat', as he says.

JOHNNY

So how long are you home for?

TARA

'Til September. I'll take you around a bit, if you'd like. So, you're more familiar with the city. You need to be able to move around on your own.

Johnny

That'd be grand, thank you.

Johnny continues with his bartending duties, scanning the bar, washing glasses etc. Tara watches how he works and nods appreciatively.

TARA

You're off Sunday days and
Thursday night, right?

JOHNNY
(Looks surprised)
Right?

TARA
I run the bar when I'm at
home, so I know the coverage.
So, where would you like to
go?

Johnny
No clue, at all.

Tara
How about the beach, this
coming Sunday? I'll take you to Jones
Beach, okay?

JOHNNY
I'm supposed to ask you.

TARA
I'm waiting.

JOHNNY
(laughing)
I'll take you to Jones Beach,
okay?

TARA
Okay.

EXT. JONES BEACH - DAY

CLOSE ON

Johnny and Tara walk together on beach, deep in
conversation.

CLOSE ON

Johnny and Tara run into water together.

CLOSE ON

Johnny and Tara stroll the beach together, holding hands, as the sun begins to set in the sky.

INT. FEEHAN'S BAR - NIGHT

Johnny and Tara have returned from the beach in high spirits. Johnny begins to think that maybe, maybe, this is a situation that could work very well for him. He takes Tara on the floor to dance.

TARA

Ooh, you move nice.

JOHNNY

Nicely.

TARA

What?

JOHNNY

You move nicely.

TARA

I move nicely?

JOHNNY

And you're the college student.

TARA

Okay, but you do.

Johnny

Thanks for the compliment.

Johnny tries to keep a sense of decorum, knowing if he crosses a line, he's out of a job.

Johnny

You have a boyfriend right, Sam?

Tara

Right, Sam. It's a complicated relationship. He's okay, mostly nice, but sometimes acts like a dick.

Johnny
A dick? Is that good or bad?

Tara
Bad. Always bad.

Johnny
Okay.

They dance, have some drinks, dance again. Tara's beginning to feel an attraction to Johnny. But now Johnny feels he might be out of line with his employee's daughter and abruptly announces he must go.

Johnny
Tara, I must go. I have to be up with the lark in the morning.

Tara
Okay. It's getting late.

Johnny
It's been great - from start to finish. But all good things must come to an end. Thanks for showing me Jones Beach.

Tara
No, Johnny, thank you. I enjoyed it.

Johnny
Goodnight Tara.
(Kisses her on cheek)

Johnny and Tara begin to see each other regularly. She tells him she's not seeing Sam anymore, that they constantly fight and make up but this time it's for good. She hangs out when Johnny is bartending and late at night they dance to the jukebox. Late one night as they dance, Sam, Tara's on again, off again boy friend, enters the bar. Tara has left the bar for a few minutes. Sam calls for a drink.

Sam

A beer, Coors, please.

Johnny
Sure, how are things?

Sam
Things are not so good since you showed up.

Johnny
Me? I don't even know you.

Sam
You know of me. I'm Sam.

Johnny
Oh, okay, Tara's ex.

Sam
I thought I still was. I've been hearing about you. Looking to move in?

Johnny
No. She's a friend, just a friend. Don't have time for girlfriends, just work and sleep.

Sam
She sees it different. She says you guys are getting to be real good friends.

JOHNNY
Well, she's wrong. Like I said, I don't have time. This job is my number one priority right now and you'll have to excuse me. I have customers to take care of.

Tara enters bar.

JOHNNY
Your boyfriend or is it ex boyfriend - he's here.

Tara
Very ex-boyfriend. We had a huge row two nights ago. I told him it's over.

J: Well, somehow, he thinks you're still together - and we're getting to be real good friends. Now where would he get an idea like that?

T: I told him we were seeing each other just to get him off our back.

J: I'm not looking for complications in my life. I like this job. I want to keep it.

T: Don't worry about Sam. He's kind of frustrated right now. He was talking about getting married and I told him I didn't even want to consider marriage for at least five years. Then he went crazy and said he's not waiting for any chick - his term - for five years and that's when I told him to take a walk. Deep down he's a Goddamn male chauvinist. I don't know what I ever saw in him. He thinks because his family has money that he's better than the average guy.

J: Where did you meet him?

T: Georgetown. He's graduating next year - international Business. He can be charming but is such a jerk at times.

J: Tara, you could do worse.

T: You sound like my mother.

J: What I'm saying is he seems a little immature - but there's nobody perfect out there.

T: (abrupt) We're finished. (She leans close to Johnny) I'm more interested in someone else.

Sam sees them. Enraged, he rushes over and attacks Johnny who is taken by surprise. He is knocked backwards, striking his head on the corner of the jukebox and lies on the floor motionless. Tara screams at Ben, who suddenly looks scared.

TARA

What have you done, you stupid fool? You've killed him. Oh my God. Somebody call an ambulance.

SAM

I'm...I'm sorry. I just lost it.

TARA

(Screams at him)

Get out of here. Get out of here now. I never want to see you again.

SAM

Tara, I love you, don't you realize that by now...

TARA

Get out, go away, leave me alone, leave me alone.

Sam leaves, the ambulance arrives, and Johnny is taken to hospital.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

CLOSE ON

Johnny is in hospital with head bandaged. Mike, Rose and Tara sit at bedside.

CLOSE ON

Rose and Tara sit on either side of Johnny's bed.

CLOSE ON

Rose and Tara wait outside room.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Johnny is back in Rose and Mike's apartment, confined to bed for a few days. His head is bandaged. Rose brings him a cup of tea.

ROSE

Well?

JOHNNY

Well, what?

ROSE
What really happened?

JOHNNY
Nothing. He caught me by
surprise.

ROSE
They broke up weeks ago -
according to her.

JOHNNY
Don't you believe her?

Rose rises abruptly from chair, walks to window and looks out, sipping a cup of coffee.

ROSE
I don't trust her. She's
spoiled. Always gets what she
wants and doesn't care how.

JOHNNY
Aw, come on. She's not like
that.

ROSE
You're not as wise in the ways
of women as you think you
are...

JOHNNY
(Interrupting)
I never said...

ROSE
(Interrupting Johnny)
No, you listen to me. You
must be careful with
relationships. Don't get
yourself involved in something
or with someone you may regret
later. Work hard and save your
money and you'll make it here.
You don't need a girl friend

right now. That can come
later, much later.

Johnny is silent for a moment as he studies Rose. She faces him, a stricken look on her face. Then she runs to him, burying her face in his chest. She sobs, her body heaving while Johnny holds her and strokes her hair. She falls silent.

JOHNNY

We need to talk.

ROSE

Not now, please. Just hold
me. I feel...in your arms.
It feels so good.

JOHNNY

Rose, you're Mike's wife.
You're my cousin's wife.

ROSE

Just hold me - for a little
while, please, okay?

JOHNNY

It's not too late to stop.

Rose sits up and holds his face in her hands. She looks at him for long moments.

ROSE

It is for me, Johnny. It is
for me.

The doorbell rings. Rose looks in the mirror and rearranges her hair before answering the door. Tara rushes in and holds Johnny. Rose comes slowly behind her.

TARA

Are you alright? Please tell
me you're alright. I feel like
this is all my fault.

ROSE

Would you like a coffee, Tara?

JOHNNY

I'm fine. The headaches gone
and I can't wait to go back to
work.

TARA

(Turning to Rose)

I'd love a coffee, black, no
sugar. Thanks.

Rose goes to kitchen and Tara holds his hand, moving
closer to him and holding his hand to her mouth.

TARA

Are you sure you're alright?
Sam is such an idiot. I'll
never know what I saw in him.

JOHNNY

He loves you. He was jealous.
Nothing unusual about it...

TARA

(Interrupting)

We broke it off weeks ago.

JOHNNY

You broke it off. He thought
it was still on.

TARA

No, no, Johnny. It was
finished weeks ago, but he
just wouldn't accept it.

Rose returns with coffee, hands it to Tara, abruptly
turns and leaves room.

TARA

What's with her?

JOHNNY

She's fine. She got a fright,
that's all.

Tara walks around room, straightening up and rearranging.

She returns to sit by his bed.

TARA

I'm sorry this happened - and
Sam is out of my life for
good.

Johnny slides down in the bed and pulls the clothes up
under his chin.

JOHNNY

I need some time to myself.
Things are happening too fast,
Tara. I must concentrate on
my job, make some money...

Rose enters and gives Tara a cold stare.

ROSE

(To Johnny)

You need to rest. Okay?

(To Tara)

He needs rest. He had quite a
concussion and needs to be
monitored.

TARA

Sure. I'll come back
tomorrow. Don't worry about
the job. Take as much time as
you need.

JOHNNY

I'm ready now, but my nurse
(Nods his head at Rose)
says that I must take it easy.

Rose walks Tara to door and returns. She's about to
leave room again when he beckons her to stay.

JOHNNY

We must talk.

ROSE

Okay, lets talk.

Johnny

We must stop...this messing about. You're married to my cousin, for God's sake and I'm a lodger in this house. We were on the verge of doing something very stupid.

ROSE

(Glaring)

Is that what we were doing, messing about? Tell me how you really feel about me, Johnny?

JOHNNY

It doesn't matter what I feel. You're married to someone else who happens to be my cousin.

ROSE

My marriage is a marriage in name only. It's over - has been long before you came.

JOHNNY

You're getting divorced?

ROSE

We haven't talked about it. He knows it, I know it. We've both been too paralyzed to do anything about it. Maybe we were hoping something would happen to make the decision easier. It has.

JOHNNY

What do you mean?

ROSE

The time I've spent with you has made me realize - I was existing, I wasn't living. I'm not doing that anymore. But I have this crazy feeling that maybe we could have something special. I want to be with

you, Johnny...

JOHNNY

(interrupting)

No, no, Rose. You're Mike's wife...

Rose is crying softly now, a handkerchief held to her face and rocking back and forth in the chair.

ROSE

(interrupting)

...and I think you want to be with me. People look all their lives and don't find what I think we could have. I don't want to settle for less ever again.

JOHNNY

We just met. How can you say we're meant...?

ROSE

If it isn't, it's the nearest I'll ever get. Haven't you felt it, haven't you felt it, Johnny, when we're together?

JOHNNY

I don't know what I feel. But I know you're off limits. You're married to Mike, Mike's my cousin. I'm a guest in your house and his.

ROSE

Oh, Johnny...

JOHNNY

(Looks away)

No Rose, no.

ROSE

Answer me one question. Do you love me? If I was not Mike's wife...

Johnny climbs out of bed and begins to dress furiously, agitatedly.

JOHNNY

But you are. And what's love anyway? Can anyone answer that question? I don't know what love is. I'm not sure you do Rose.

ROSE

I know I don't love Mike, probably never did. We got married for all the wrong reasons. All our friends were getting married. We were going steady. We didn't want to be left out. I can't remember Mike proposing, if he ever did.

JOHNNY

(abruptly)

I must go, Rose. I must stop at the bar. I must be getting back to work soon.

(smiles)

If I don't pay my rent, I'll be out on the street.

Rose stays slumped in a chair, staring at the ground as Johnny leaves.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Mike and Rose eat supper. Rose studies him as he eats. As usual, he's engrossed in the newspaper, ignoring her except for minimal responses. Finally, he looks up.

MIKE

I haven't seen Johnny in weeks.

ROSE

He's still paying rent. He leaves early and comes back

late.

MIKE

Is he still seeing Tara?

ROSE

He wasn't seeing her. They just went to the beach together.

MIKE

He could do worse. Tara will get the bar.

ROSE

(Rises from chair)

He'll do fine without Tara. She's spoiled, always has been.

MIKE

Strikes me as okay.

ROSE

Forget about Tara. We have some talking to do, you and I...

Johnny enters and sits down at kitchen table.

JOHNNY

I feel like I haven't slept for two weeks.

MIKE

Where have you been hiding?

JOHNNY

The day man is out. His father had a stroke. So, I'm the day man and the night man.

MIKE

(Raises hands in air)

What are you going to do with all the money?

Rose moves around the kitchen. She says nothing and avoids looking at Johnny. Finally, she speaks.

ROSE

(To Johnny)

Would you like a cup of tea?

JOHNNY

I'd love a cup, Rose, please.
How are you, Mike? How's your
job going?

MIKE

It's the pits, man, the
deepest darkest pits a man
ever encountered.

JOHNNY

That bad?

MIKE

That bad.

JOHNNY

And how is your job, Rose?

ROSE

(Looks at Mike)

Never better. You get out
what you put in. You put in
nothing; you get out nothing.

MIKE

(Stares at Rose)

You want a beer, Johnny?

JOHNNY

No, no, I'm fine, thanks.

MIKE

Go ahead. It's your night
off, right?

JOHNNY

Okay, sure I'll have a beer.

MIKE

There you go. Bring us two
beers, Rose.

JOHNNY

Will you join us, Rose?

ROSE

(hesitates)

Why not.

JOHNNY

Okay, I'm the bartender. What
can I get you?

ROSE

Seven and seven.

MIKE

(To Rose)

I never saw you drink at home
before.

ROSE

(glaring)

Is it okay? Does it meet with
your approval?

MIKE

Wow. You're touchy tonight.
Is it that time of the month?

ROSE

Wouldn't make any difference,
would it?

MIKE

Well...

ROSE

You haven't come near me in
six weeks.

Mike is taken aback and is speechless for a moment. He
looks at Johnny who is pretending he hasn't heard.

MIKE

We shouldn't be talking in front of Johnny, about sexual matters, I mean...

ROSE

(interrupts)

We never talk anymore, sexual talk, plain old talk, any kind of talk. "How was your day?" "How is the job?" "How are you feeling?"

MIKE

I'm telling you the job is driving me crazy. A real bunch of assholes. All they talk about are goals and projections and units. Who cares? If people want insurance, they'll buy it. If they buy it and don't really want it, they're pissed off. So why persuade them in the first place. It's the law of averages. A certain percentage will want it and a certain percentage won't. This way, everybody's happy. The other way is like shoveling shit against the wind.

JOHNNY

Why don't you quit, Mike?

MIKE

(Clenches his jaw)

I dunno. I ask myself that question. I lie awake at night and ask myself that question.

ROSE

You lie awake at night, Mike? You've been snoring so much I've had to move to the couch.

MIKE

(To Rose)

What's wrong with you? You're like a damn weasel tonight.

ROSE

We're not connecting anymore. We're like two strangers...

MIKE

(interrupting)

We're married seven years. Whadda you expect? That we fall into each others' arms every night and have passionate sex.

Johnny gets his coat.

JOHNNY

I should take a walk while you two talk.

MIKE

Do me a favor. Take her for a walk and tire her out. Maybe she won't be as crazy.

Rose grabs her coat and slams out the door. Johnny runs after her.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT.

Johnny and Rose walk in silence. They come to a bench and sit down.

ROSE

It's not working.

JOHNNY

But you must work at it.

ROSE

I'm trying. But he lies around

like a beached whale.

JOHNNY

You loved him enough to marry.

ROSE

God, he was so different then.

Rose shakes her head.

JOHNNY

He's a good man, Rose.

ROSE

I know, I know, but I'm not
happy.

(pause)

and I don't think he is
either.

JOHNNY

Maybe I should move out?

Rose becomes agitated.

ROSE

No, no Johnny. It has nothing
to do with you.

JOHNNY

I know, but...

ROSE

You're never home. You're not
in the way and the money's
nice, too. Mike would feel
bad.

JOHNNY

You two have been so good to
me.

ROSE

You're paying us good rent and
it's been a big help to us.

JOHNNY

I want you and Mike to be
happy.

ROSE

(quietly)

And if we can't?

JOHNNY

You will, you will.

Rose turns and looks at him.

ROSE

I'm not so sure I want to,
anymore.

JOHNNY

Oh, Rose, Rose.

He puts his arms comfortably around her shoulders and
draws her to him.

Mike's at home. Rose comes in.

Mike: Hey. (No response from Rose) Whassup? (Rose hangs
up coat, puts bag away. Mike turns and looks at her.)

Rose: We have to talk.

Mike: Oh, don't start, please, okay. I'm tired. I wanna
enjoy my beer, watch a little TV..

Rose: We must talk, serious.

Mike: (startled) Okay.

Rose: Do you love me, Mike?

Mike: Yeah, I love you.

Rose: Do you want to be with me, sleep with me..

Mike: Listen...

Rose: Do you, Mike? Do you want to spend the rest of your

life with me? Do you want to have kids with me?

Mike: Now, listen. I know things have been slack around here. (pause) Marriage is like regular life, ups and downs, peaks and valleys. This is a valley, okay.

Rose: I want to know, Mike, do you love me really. Would you miss me if I wasn't here? Am I more than somebody who keeps the house nice, cooks your meals?

Mike: Of course. I appreciate all you do around here.

Rose: Do you know what love is, Mike? Did we love each other - ever. Did we.

Mike: Yeah, we did. We had nice times, fun, a lot of fun.

Rose: We had nice times - a long time ago. I thought I loved you.

Mike: You thought. Whaddaya mean you thought.

Rose: I didn't know what love was - but I'm beginning to find out.

Mike: You don't love me. Is that what you're saying. After seven years of marriage.

Rose: I don't think we ever loved each other. We liked each other for a while.

Mike: I loved you, okay, okay. I loved you.

Rose: What's love, Mike.

Mike: It's, it's wanting to be with someone, looking out for them.

Rose: Yeah, sleeping with them, holding them, listening to them.

Mike: Yeah.

Rose: So, we don't have love cos we're not doing any of those things. We're not sleeping together, yeah, we're sleeping in the same bed - but we're apart, no contact, no touching.

Mike: We're in the same bed.

Rose: You don't hold me, listen to me, share with me. You're in your own world, full of resentment at the world, your life, your job.

Mike: Listen, I go to work every day. I do my share.

Rose: It's not enough. I won't settle for scraps.

Mike: (angry) Too bad, babe. Maybe you need to reorder your priorities, set your sights a little lower. The sooner you get out of Manhattan and get a job closer, here in Brooklyn, the better, I would say. You got everything here. Do I ever tell you not to spend money?

Rose: I work. I make more money than you.

Mike: Yeah, I know. But do I put any restrictions on you, financial-wise.

Rose: That's big of you. Do I put any on you?

Mike: No, no.

Rose: Mike, Mike, I don't think you ever loved me enough. You didn't really want to get married.

Mike: I didn't see any big reason to rush. We had our own places. We were saving.

Rose: Yeah, we went out two nights a week and a week vacation in the summer. If I wanted to see you more, it was like a big deal.

Mike: Look, I was comfortable in my life. I met my buddies, had a few, played ball...

Rose: More comfortable than now, Mike, than married life...

Mike: You're boxing me in, Rose. What's all this interrogation, anyway. Where's it going.

Rose: I'm gonna say something and do something that's gonna make you upset, but I think you'll thank me later, much later.

Mike: Shoot.

Rose: You're a good man, Mike. You deserve to have a woman who loves you.

Mike: What are you saying. I have a woman who loves me (pause) Don't I?

Rose: I don't think so. We never loved each other enough, if at all, and what we had is gone, like last year's news.

Mike: Are you saying what I think you're saying?

Rose: Don't you see, our marriage is nothing anymore. We're strangers living in the same house.

Mike: Are you saying you wanna bust up our marriage?

Rose: No, that's done.

Mike: We bust up; I'm staying here, okay? You find another place.

Rose: I will.

Mike: And remember, if we split, and you wanna come back, I can't say right now, if I'll take you back. This is hurtful. Just like that you wanna throw over seven years of marriage. Because what? You're not getting laid enough. I don't take you dancing. Is that it? Did Manhattan turn your head? You're thirty-four years old, for God's sake. You're not a teenager anymore.

Rose: You're not trying to understand.

Mike: Understand what? You come in and say you wanna split, just like that. No sit down and talk it out. It's decided. You're unhappy.

Rose: I've been trying to talk to you for years.

Mike: You never told me you were unhappy.

Rose: Oh, Mike what's the use. I must find a place.

Mike: Do whatever you want. You don't need my permission.

Rose: No, I don't.

Mike: That's obvious.

Rose: (sighs, gets her coat and exits.
Mike sits there, head in hand, slams his fist on the table. Johnny enters)

Johnny: God, I'm exhausted.

Mike: Another double?

Johnny: yeah, three this week. How're things?

Mike: Mmmm, not great.

Johnny: What, the job again?

Mike: Nah... Rose is leaving.

Johnny: To go where?

Mike: I dunno.

Johnny: What do you mean, leaving?

Mike: She wants out of the marriage.

Johnny: (shocked) Oh God, I'm sorry, Mike.

Mike: Me too.

Johnny: She's got everything here.

Mike: That's what I told her.

Johnny: So why?

Mike: She said we never loved each other.

Johnny: But you did.

Mike: I guess so. I dunno. How does one know? Is there a test one can take?

Johnny: Anything I can do. I should move. It's not good...

Mike: (vehemently) No. If she wants to go, she should go - and get another place. I'm staying here. That's only right. If you're okay with staying, that'd be a big help - with the rent, I mean.

Johnny: It's a great setup for me till I...I...

Mike: Yeah, how is that going, you and Tara?

Johnny: Okay. She's already checking out places and prices. Phew, sometimes I feel like I got run over by a bus, like something's out of control. Single one day, engaged the next, married - phew.

Mike: That's a good situation there for you, the only daughter, the only child.

Johnny: I know (hesitates) A year ago if I dreamt, I'd be in this position. I got a few dollars in the bank. I'm able to send money home to my mother - and God knows she can use it - living the good life. Is that what they call it? But I'm not jumping up and down with excitement? Why have I this feeling in the pit of my stomach - a bad feeling, something bad about to happen?

Mike: I know that feeling, had it since Rose told me she was leaving.

Johnny: Women!

Mike: You think she met somebody, some guy?

Johnny: No.

Mike: How can you tell? She dance with other guys?

Johnny: No.

Mike: You ain't coverin' for her...

Johnny: (imitating how Mike talks) I ain't coverin' for her.

Mike: Who the hell knows anymore. You live with a woman for seven years. You think she's happy, we're happy - then boom.

Johnny: Was she?

Mike: How the hell do I know. I thought so or reasonably contented. Then she says I'm not happy, I'm leaving, says I don't listen. What do I have to be, a Goddamn priest hearing her confession every night? What happened to sucking it up, tighten your belt and get on with life. They don't make 'em like they used to. Once upon a time, all they wanted was a roof over their head and a man to bring home the bacon. They laid no conditions down. Now you gotta be all things. They're too Goddamn educated anymore.

Johnny: She wouldn't have that good job without an education.

Mike: Well, it has its drawbacks - for women. (hesitates) When you guys went

dancing - to Manhattan, anything happen?
I mean, she seems changed - since then.
So, I was wondering. Do you remember
something, anything that set her off?

Johnny: No, no, she talked about how she
loved dancing.

Mike: Goddammit, I knew it. That's what
set her off. Years ago, she had all these
crazy ideas about studying dance in
Manhattan, getting a job dancing. How can
you get a job dancing? Can you answer me
that? Yeah, maybe in a girlie bar,
sliding up and down a pole all night and
guys sticking dollar bills in your g-
string. Took me a while to talk her out
of that. Then she had the miscarriage.

Johnny: I didn't know - you lost a baby?

Mike: Yeah, it was like six or seven
weeks old. It didn't seem to bother her -
kept right on working. But after that
(looks at Johnny) sexually it went
downhill. She lost interest and I guess I
didn't push it. I dunno. Things happen
right before your eyes but you're blind,
you don't see it.

Johnny: How'd you feel?

Mike: I dunno. Woulda been a big change
in our lives. I dunno about kids -
they're nice, at times.

Johnny: You weren't upset?

Mike: (indignant) Yeah, I was, of course
I was, but she lost it. So, it was gone.

Johnny: Give her some time, she'll be
back.

Mike: Yeah, I guess - but she hurt me.
And I ain't disposed to forgive her that
easily. Goddamn women. You can't live

with them and it's tough to live without them.

Johnny: That's what they say.

Mike: Ain't it the truth. Now she has to pull this shit. (hesitates) Between you and me, I had my chances - with other women, y'know. But I kept my nose clean - more or less.

Johnny: Do you want - to be with her?

Mike: I guess so. She's a good gal. It's just that if it's gonna be a hassle every day, I dunno. I don't really want kids in this Goddamn economy. She still does, I know that.

Johnny: So, what happens?

Mike: Hey, let the chips fall where they may. If she wants to walk away, I ain't stopping her. Plenty of fish in the sea.

Johnny: You'd let her walk away?

Mike: Damn straight I would. I'm taking no more bullshit from her. My quality of life, y'know. I'm entitled to my quality, good quality. That's the least I deserve. She thinks there's something better out there, go get it. Right, coz?

Johnny: I guess.

Mike: Hey, know what you said? You guess, just like a Yank. Yeah, man you're assimilatin.' Johnny the Yank.

Rose and Johnny meet

Rose: I had to leave.

Johnny: Is it over?

Rose: It's over.

Johnny: What are you going to do? Where are you living?

Rose: Staying with a friend for now - giving up the job, too. I need some time. I have a lot of...stuff... to digest.

Johnny: Rose...

Rose: It's okay. I know you're off-limits. You have a fiancé. You're getting married. I'm happy, Johnny...for you. Your dreams are coming through. It was silly of me - to think, maybe - we had something.

Johnny: You're hurting right now. This is a big deal, emotional. You're dissolving your marriage. Your head is full of confusion, and doubt, and...

Rose: Johnny...

Johnny: What?

Rose: I was - but not anymore. I know I need a complete change, different place, different life. I'm gonna take off...somewhere...see America...travel...see all those beautiful places I've read about - the Grand Canyon, Yellowstone, the California coast, Gettysburg. I always wanted to travel, (sighs) I never did.

Johnny: You will, Rose, You will.

Rose: I will. Nobody's going to stop me. I have my life before me. I won't make the same mistakes - everything slow and easy. It has to feel right - deep down, deep inside me - who I'm gonna be with - how its gonna be.

Johnny: You and Mike divorcing?

Rose: Me and Mike's divorcing, yeah.

Johnny: I'm sorry.

Rose: Don't be. It was coming down the road. I had my head stuck somewhere - didn't want to see - what was

coming down the road. It wasn't working for us. Mike doesn't like change. It's hard for him - change.

Johnny: How is he taking it?

Rose: He's...angry. But he'll get over it. Maybe this is what he needs...to change his life. He's one unhappy dude. He needs to change - if he wants to be happy. Why should we settle for less, any one of us?

Johnny: Why should we?

Rose: So, you're moving ahead... engaged and all. When's the wedding?

Johnny: (quiet) I dunno.

Rose: Fiona won't wait too long.

Johnny: (angry) We'll get married when we're both ready - if we're both ready, not before. Besides, she hasn't finished school and I'm just now getting more...familiar with things...how the bar is run...

Rose: That's good. It'll be good for both of you. She's smart, you are too.

Johnny: (says nothing)

Rose: You, okay?

Johnny: Yeah.

Rose: What's wrong?

Johnny: Nothing.

Rose: What?

Johnny: Nothing. It's just...

Rose: What, Johnny?

Johnny: I feel like I'm being pushed... carried...

Rose: The wedding's a year away, isn't that time enough?

Johnny: (says nothing)

Rose: Isn't it?

Johnny: I dunno...yeah, I suppose.

Rose: You sure you want to do this?

Johnny: She's a good woman, beautiful, smart.

Rose: You love her, right?

Johnny: She'll make a good mother.

Rose: You better be sure.

Johnny: (goes to her and holds her) Rose, I don't know. You asked me once; did I feel something...something special when I was with you. (Long pause) Well, I lied. I said I didn't, but I did, Rose. I felt something. I felt good when...I was with you, felt like I wanted to know you better, felt like I could tell you things...dreams...and you wouldn't laugh. I felt good with you...ambitious and full of ideas and plans...felt like a kid...like we were two kids...setting out on a great adventure...and we could make it. With you by my side backing me up and telling me it'll work out - if it didn't...in the beginning.

Rose: That's just how I felt, Johnny, just how I felt.

Johnny: But you were married...to my cousin. So, I put those thoughts away. They were wrong.

Rose: They weren't wrong. Loving each other was right. I felt it from the first day I saw you... that first day Mike brought you home. My life changed that day. Something happened I never thought would happen to me...and I didn't recognize it at first...but it wouldn't go away. I wanted something, somebody so bad, my insides ached. I couldn't go on living the lie I was living.

Johnny: Was it really a lie?

Rose: Are you not listening, Johnny? It was a lie...and a sham...two people just existing...together. How pathetic is that...and getting worse. God, reduced expectations,

reduced ambition for me and my life. Every damn thing in my life reduced. I told you how I loved dancing...and then I didn't dance any more. Why was that? How did that happen? I gave up something I loved. So, he didn't want to dance. I could have gone. He bowls, I don't. (pause) Maybe there was a whiff of disapproval, when I did go, in the beginning...a withholding of affection...and it registered. I stopped dancing. Promise me you'll take me dancing.

Johnny: Yes, yes, I will, but...what happens now?

Rose: Now, you hold me and tell me you want me, and you'll fight for me...because you love me.

Johnny: I love you and I want you. Mike...?

Rose: ...will explode...in the beginning. But he'll get over it.

Johnny: He won't. Nobody holds a grudge closer than an Irishman.

Rose: Holding grudges never made a man - or woman - happy.

Tommy: I feel like I'm somehow disloyal - backstabbing..

Rose: You're entitled to happiness. We all are.

Johnny: Why does fucking life have to be so complicated? Would you answer me that?

Rose: Nothing worthwhile comes easy. I want you, Johnny. I won't deny it to anybody. I have love inside me - a ton of it, Johnny, and it's bursting to come out. It's yours, Johnny. Living and loving with you. I can't wait. Let's not fuck it up. We have something... special, good, really good.

Johnny: Tara...

Rose: Yeah, Tara- and her father.

Johnny: Oh, God, all the people who've helped me.

Rose: It's a question of being truthful. Isn't it always about the truth - sooner rather than later - and sooner's

always better?

Johnny: Hold me - and tell me again - we're doing the right thing. We're not being selfish.

Rose: If you don't love Tara, how can you go through with the engagement and marriage. If you don't love her?

Johnny: Love, love - who the hell knows. I want to be with you. I don't feel the same about Tara. I don't imagine times with her, being together.

Rose: It's going to be okay. It's going to work out. You must tell Tara - her father. Tell her father first, explain to him. Can you do that - for us?

Johnny: (says nothing, nods)

Rose: We can only imagine a good life and go for it. You have two choices, Johnny, but you must pick one. Let me know which one you pick. (exits)

Johnny meets Tara's father, Albert.

Albert: Well - you're a busy man.

Johnny: Glad to fill in, sir, and make the money.

Albert: You're solid, Tommy. I like that, dependable.

Johnny: I'm beholden to you. You gave me the first start.

Albert: And you haven't disappointed. I've seen a few come out and go bad.

Johnny: Too big a change?

Albert: I suppose. I've seen 'em in my own place, homesick and crying into their beer.

Johnny: Drink is cheap, and bars stay open too late.

Albert: So, what's up? You wanted to see me.

Johnny: I did, I do. I'll be forever in your debt, sir...

Albert: Is that what you came to say?

Johnny: No, no...

Albert: Say what you came to say, Tommy.

Johnny: Okay - I want to cancel the engagement.

Albert: (Long pause. He stares at Tommy) Just like that? Why? You gettin' cold feet?

Johnny: No sir, it's not that.

Albert: So, what is it? Just like that you want to cancel. You know Tara's running around, planning, looking at wedding locations, the whole shebang.

Johnny: I know, sir. I tried to talk to her, slow her down. She's not listening.

Albert: So, when did this happen? Why now, suddenly, it seems?

Johnny: Not suddenly. I been thinking.. for a while

Albert: Why?

Johnny: Because maybe we shouldn't.

Albert: This will hurt Tara. Dunno how she's gonna take it.

Johnny: I know, I know. But I'm not ready ... and not sure enough. What if we married, children maybe and things were not working out? Maybe my fault, maybe hers. I need to be sure, sure she's the one - or not. I don't want to wrong her.

Albert: For sure you need to be sure. You sure you're not sure?

Johnny: I am, sir. I feel like I'm sitting on a runaway train, and I want to slow it down, stop it - and can't.

Albert: She takes after her mother that way, full speed ahead and no stopping her. You talk to her?

Johnny: No sir. I thought I should go to you first. I owe you an explanation - and I owe her.

Albert: She's my only child. I'll do everything I can to protect her, have and will. This will hurt.

Johnny: I don't know much about love, and I have too many doubts.

Albert: Isn't that normal when about to make a lifetime commitment, being with someone the rest of your life. That's a hell of a long time. I had doubts too, but it all worked out.

Johnny: No, sir. I have some serious doubts. Something's not right.

Albert: Goddamn, I wish you had spoken up earlier.

Johnny: I wish I had. But Tara was so happy, caught up in planning, the ring, being engaged. It was like she was in love more with the idea - gowns, bridesmaids, reception. I couldn't fight it. I just gave in.

Albert: So why now. Is there someone else?

Johnny: No... Yes, there's someone else.

Albert: You've been skulking around seeing another woman while you're engaged to my daughter? Is that how it is?

Johnny: no, not skulking around, not dating either. Just someone I talk to.

Albert: You met in my bar? One of those bar girls?

Johnny: No, no bar girl.

Albert: Stay away from them. After a few drinks, they'll open their legs for Tutenkumem.

Johnny: Who's Tutenkumen?

Albert: Some dead guy, dead a long time. (pause) You wanna tell me who?

Johnny: No.

Albert: You like this woman. This why you're breaking the engagement?

Johnny: Maybe ... I don't know. I must be sure - and I'm not.

Albert: How old are you?

Johnny: Twenty-nine.

Albert: Tara's twenty-three. That's six years between. You think too much?

Johnny: Maybe, I don't know. It didn't seem to make much difference with us.

Albert: I was against you and Tara in the beginning. I wanted a college man for her, but she wanted you. I could see you were hungry, like me when I came first and not afraid of hard work, long hours. So, I said, this could be good. You come from good stock. (pause) Now?

Johnny: This is the last thing I wanted - but if it was (were) Tara, with doubts, I mean, she shouldn't go through with it. I wouldn't want that, even if it hurt. I wouldn't want to be with somebody who had doubts, wouldn't want somebody to be with me if they had doubts. Shouldn't be any doubts before - just looking forward to being with this person. Maybe ten years married, there's doubts. I dunno.

Albert: So, what happens now?

Johnny: For both of us, I needed to do this.

Albert: So, what happens now?

Johnny: I must tell her.

Albert: Gentle, though, okay, gentle.

Johnny: Never wanted to hurt your daughter, sir. I know what she means to you.

Albert: Yeah, well, maybe this'll be good for her.

She'll be more cautious.

Johnny: I understand - if I'm not working the bar for you.

Albert: Can't see that working out now. Wouldn't be good for Tara to see you behind the bar, painful, even if it's for the better. You know you're missing out on a real good deal?

johnny: Yessir, I'll never have better.

Albert: Your call.

(Albert leaves. Johnny slowly exhales)

(Johnny comes into apartment, sits down with head in hands. Mike comes in, looks at Johnny, hangs up his coat, walks over to Johnny, stands before him. Johnny looks up at him.)

Mike: Stand up. (Johnny slowly rises, Mike hits him and knocks him over his chair. Johnny rises and Mike hits him again. Johnny makes no effort to defend himself) Get up you fucking rat. Get up so I can knock you down again. (Johnny is bleeding from nose and mouth.)

Johnny: Mike...

Mike: You backstabbing bastard. My own wife.

Johnny: Could I...

Mike: What, explain? Explain what? I invite you into my house and you fool around with my wife.

johnny: It wasn't like that.

Mike: My own flesh and blood. You come into my house and...and... destroy my marriage - like a fucking disease, quick and deadly. Hi Mike, how are things? Good, Johnny, you? And all the time you were scheming, planning, like the Trojan horse, accepted with open arms then spurn the hand of friendship - slap me in the face.

Johnny: (quiet) It wasn't like that.

Mike: When did it start, cousin - the day after you came,

the day you came? When did you start your scheming - to bring me down, to destroy my marriage? When?

Johnny: There was no scheming.

Mike: you took advantage of my wife, when she was vulnerable, feeling down. You told her what she wanted to hear, didn't you? Did you tell her she could be a dancer, maybe be on Broadway, fill her empty head with empty dreams - fantasies? Is that how you did it? Was it? That's what they were, fantasies. Then you wake up and you gotta go to work.

Johnny: No.

Mike: No, what?

Johnny: No.

Mike: What the fuck you sayin'? What the fuck is no?

Johnny: (rises slowly) No, I didn't fill her head with dreams. She had them always.

Mike: Yeah, well, they were beginning to fade.

Johnny: Long before I met her - might have been born with them.

Mike: I tried to tell her. There's reality and.. and.. unreality. Unreality don't put food on the table. Unreality don't make you happy. What would she make dancing? Nothing.

Johnny: We gotta have dreams, Mike.

Mike: I don't, didn't and I'm - was, doin' okay - till you set foot in my door.

Johnny: Life drags us down, Mike, but dreams lift us up.

Mike: Where'd you read that, in some fag book? (Johnny says nothing) Things were good. We were settlin' in. Then you came and fucked up everything.

Johnny: I'm sorry, Mike.

Mike: Sorry ain't good enough. The damage is done, major damage. Why the fuck didn't you stay back where you came from? Why the fuck did I ever invite you to stay here? Things were good before.

(The door opens, and Rose enters. She sees Johnny bleeding, goes to him, wets a cloth and wipes his face. Then she rises and looks at Mike)

Mike: Deserved every bit of it, the fucking rat.

Rose: Why is he a rat?

Mike: Because... he came into my house and...

Rose: And what, Mike?

Mike: Filled your empty head with crap. Made you... restless.

Rose: Things were good before? Is that what you thought, Mike? You must be living in a fantasy world. We were just strangers, sharing the same space. Maybe you don't understand how it was - but this marriage was choking the life out of me.

Mike: Coulda fooled me.

Rose: Jesus, Mike, are you so dumb? This had nothing to do with Johnny. This was you and me sinking into goddamn mediocrity - growing more barren every day. I could see us in twenty, thirty years, barely communicating, you a fat slob watching TV, me an old hag making a sandwich in the kitchen - Hon, bring another beer - no child, no love, a union of convenience. You got someone to cook, clean and wash your underwear. I got - a man. (silence) I'm not an old maid... will never be... an old maid (silence) All I wanted was a chance.

Mike: What chance?

Rose: To dance.

Mike: Here we go again.

Rose: A chance, Mike, and a man encouraging me - hoping and wishing I'd succeed. Just a chance - was that too

much to ask?

Mike: You wouldna made it.

Rose: How the fuck do you know? What do you know about ambition, honest effort - you the original Dr. Doom, living example of the power of negative thinking? And you had me convinced - until...

Mike: Until what? Until you met the rat. He turned your head and fucked it all up.

Rose: You never wanted children.

Mike: That's a bare-faced lie. We tried; it didn't happen. Some things are meant to be, others ain't.

Rose: Know when you were happiest, happier than any time I'd seen before?

Mike: When?

Rose: (starts to cry) When I lost the baby. For a while, then, you treated me like I was special, cooked meals, did things for me. But you were happy, went around whistling. Then I knew you didn't want kids - too selfish to share your life - open your heart.

Mike: That's a lie. We were trying.

Rose: You wouldn't go to the doctor - see what the problem was. I checked out okay.

Mike: If I wanted children, I'd have plenty.

Rose: So, you didn't want - children.

Mike: You're trying to trip me up, Rose. I don't like that.

Rose: I don't like you, haven't in a while, don't know what held us together so long - paralysis maybe - or just plain fear.

Mike: Fear of what? Me?

Rose: The unknown, I guess - heading into the unknown.

Mike: You goin' about a divorce?

Rose: I'm goin' about a divorce.

Mike: Go - and take him with you. Good riddance to the both of you.

(The door bursts open. Tara enters. She's agitated.)

Tara: What's goin' on, Johnny? Daddy said you wanted to see me. Oh, my God, what happened to your face?

Johnny: Tara...

Mike: He's running off with my wife, Tara. He two-timed you.

Tara: (angry) That's not true. (Slowly turns to Johnny) Is it?

Johnny: Tara... (Johnny remains quiet)

Rose: Johnny...

Johnny: Oh God.

Rose: Everything's going to be all right, Johnny.

Rose: Johnny...

Tara: Leave him alone, please?

Johnny: This is so hard.

Tara: It's okay, Johnny.

Johnny: Tara, I was going to see you today. I wanted to tell you...

Tara: That you love me - and all is well. Right, Johnny?

Mike: No, Tara. He lied to both of us. He's been seeing Rose, sweet-talking her - and she fell for it. Didn't you, Rose?

Rose: It's not like he says. My marriage is over, has been for a while.

Tara: So, what's goin' on, Johnny?

Rose: I...

Johnny: Tara, listen to me. I wasn't sure - about you and me. I was flattered - when you showed interest and I won't deny, aware of the possibilities - only daughter of a successful tavern owner. I wanted it to work, willed it to work - to love you enough to grow old with you. But I couldn't.

Tara: Was it me, something I did?

Johnny: No, Tara, no. It just didn't feel right.

Tara: I gave you everything. I pledged myself to you. My father helped you, set you up here. This is the thanks. You betray me.

(She begins to slap Johnny. He doesn't try to defend himself. Rose intervenes)

Rose: I know this is hurtful, but if he had doubts...

Tara: Who put those doubts in his mind, Rose. What was going on here, when Mike wasn't around?

Rose: That's not fair, Tara.

Mike: Isn't it, Rose? What was going on?

Rose: You want to know what was going on. Well, I'll tell you and hope it never happens to you, Tara. Mike and I were in a marriage that was rotten and getting worse, inch by rotten inch, for years. Maybe it was never good, never meant to be anything but rotten. (sighs) I guess there are marriages like that, just not meant to be. People are stubborn, can't or won't see or won't admit to a mistake - too proud maybe to sit down and admit to a mistake. They rage and fight - or suffer in silence, knowing but not acknowledging it's a losing battle. That was our marriage - the silent part and knowing but not acknowledging. Then Johnny came (she looks over at Johnny. He looks away) He did or said nothing improper - but he was funny and ambitious, hungry, positive, confused - but kind. It was like a shade lifted, an illuminating light. (pause) I saw my condition. I was on

life support, dreams and ambitions, joy and fun slipping away. Johnny maybe, was the catalyst. I thank him for that - but long before I met Johnny, my marriage was a sham, a pale, pale imitation of what a marriage could and should be. (silence)

Tara: You don't want to marry me?

Johnny: (pause) No, Tara, you don't want to marry me. You had second thoughts. I'm older, six years older. You needed more time, and you called off the engagement. I was angry but reluctantly agreed. Marriage is something you don't rush into. It's a life-long commitment and you wanted to be sure. You wanted more time.

Tara: I broke off the engagement and cancelled the wedding plans?

Johnny: And I'm angry with you.

Tara: You're angry with me but you'll get over it.

Johnny: In time I will. It'll take time.

Tara: You should try politics. You'd be good.

Mike: I'm stayin' here, Rose. You got a few days to move out. I ain't givin' this place up. (Rose says nothing) I'm takin' a walk, maybe a few beers, meet up with the boys, see what's available out there. I've had a few offers. This could be good.

Rose: Do that, Mike.

Mike: Cousin, you better be gone, too. I don't wanna see your face again. Now you got each other, see what happens - and it ain't gonna be all fun and games. You wait and see. (He takes his coat and leaves)

Johnny: You okay, Tara?

Tara: I'll live. (hesitates) Hope it works out for you two. (Looks at Johnny and leaves)

(Johnny and Rose sit, dejected. There's an uncomfortable silence. Johnny rises and puts on a record. As the music fills the space, he goes to her, she rises, he takes her

in his arms. She puts her arms around his neck, sighs and leans to him. The music rises - it's a tune they like, one they danced to when they first met. They move together, effortless, in perfect harmony. Then Johnny releases her, and she dances alone. She dances beautifully, gracefully. Lights begin to dim. Curtain falls. (Bette Midler's 'The Rose' or 'Unchained Melody')