

FADE IN

INT. SIMULATED MASTER BATHROOM - UNKNOWN HOUSE - MIDNIGHT

Dim lighting illuminates the bathroom when NILES (EVAN) walks in. He's shirtless, stretching his back and neck, trying to look at visible scratches on his upper back in the mirror.

NILES
(to himself)
I really think she goes for the
same spots every time.

VERONICA (EMERSON) leans on the door, silhouetted from the dim bedroom lights. Implied nude underneath a silk robe.

VERONICA
You say that like it's a bad thing.

Niles looks over at her and shakes his head, leans on the sink with his palms.

NILES
More like just stating a fact.

She walks in slowly, running her hand across his back as he closes his eyes. She looks at herself in the mirror, begins to play with her long hair, half smiling.

VERONICA
Well my love, do you have any other
facts to state tonight?

Niles opens his eyes and looks at her, shakes his head.

NILES
That you really make things
difficult for me sometimes.

VERONICA
(snickering)
And how's that?

He leans up, crosses his arms and sighs.

NILES
How am I supposed to get up in a
few hours and go to work?
(struggles a second)
When the most astounding woman
known to the human race is my wife.

Veronica laughs at that, fixes her hair up in a loose bun.

VERONICA

(smiling)

Lucky for you we work at the same university...

(sighs)

With all those "hot young girls" on campus.

Niles cracks his neck a second, nods seriously.

NILES

Huh... You didn't tell me you went to the 'Bait N Fish Depot' today... I wonder if Jimmy was in; that guy has the best tackle stories.

Veronica begins to laugh, puts her hand over her mouth, Niles just shrugs.

NILES (CONT'D)

(innocent)

What? Clearly you're interested in buying a new pole, for all the compliment fishing you're doing right now.

She begins to laugh louder as Niles moves behind and wraps his arms around her. He kisses her head a moment.

VERONICA

Is it that obvious?

NILES

What, that I adore your laugh that can be heard down the street?

Veronica turns around as Niles shakes his head, moves some of her long hair behind her ear.

NILES (CONT'D)

Or your smile creases that are the center of my existence.

Her smile slowly fades as she begins to rub his back. He takes her one hand and breaths it in, kisses it.

VERONICA

Fine, we're only in our 30's, we're not *that* old... Maybe we just need another vacation.

Niles shrugs, waves it off.

NILES

Come on; *I don't need no vacation,
no fancy destination... Baby you're
my great escape.*

Veronica tilts her head, a slow grin forming.

VERONICA

Wait, what?

NILES

Like; *we could stay at home, listen
to the radio... Dance around the
fireplace.*

She bites her lower lip a moment, shakes her head.

VERONICA

(thoughtful)

We live in Texas and don't have a
fireplace, and last I checked you
have two left feet anyway.

Niles looks down at his feet, shrugs as Veronica realizes
what he's saying, begins to grin.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

Was that from *Die A Happy Man*?

He nods as he looks into her eyes.

NILES

It was either that or *Speechless*...
Which isn't easy to leave me in but
like come on, Goddess is gonna
Goddess, am I right?

Veronica's smile fades as he trails off; she puts her hands
around his head.

VERONICA

Don't blame me when you're tired
all day at work tomorrow.

She suddenly hoists herself up around Niles as they begin to
kiss passionately. He walks them back to the bedroom slowly
OUT OF FRAME, Veronica's robe falling to the floor.

INT. SIMULATED HOME OFFICE - SAME TIME - PLACE UNKNOWN

SLOW PAN around a darkly lit home office, pics of a sad
looking BLAKE (JOHNNY) with a robust woman adorn the room.

Blake is asleep on a couch holding a sleeping baby. BLANCH, the woman from the pics, enters quietly.

BLANCH
 (whispering)
 Honey bun, I'm done my bubble bath,
 you can start breakfast for the
 kids while I feed junior.

Blake awakens and looks down at the baby, sighs. He looks up and grimaces at Blanch, carefully handing her the baby.

BLAKE
 (sincere)
 I was having the most beautiful
 dream. The grim reaper, he was just
 so wonderful, so peaceful. He came
 over, put his skeletal hand on my
 shoulder, and said it was time. I
 began to cry, but they were tears
 of joy.

Blanch is slowly moving with the baby in her arms, making soothing sounds and waves Blake off.

BLANCH
 Oh come on dumplin, then you
 wouldn't be able to see your own
 children grow up.

Just then clearly non-Caucasian kid's tumble into the room, fighting and yelling at each other. Blanch starts yelling at them as the baby begins to cry. She splits the two kids up and they run out.

BLANCH (CONT'D)
 I'm gonna go feed junior.

She walks out as Blake shudders, standing and stretching. His tablet beeps breaking the silence. He goes over to it at his desk and a text conversation with him and DAKOTA pops up. He looks around to make sure he's alone and smiles.

DAKOTA
Good morning great looking:}

We see Blake respond as he blushes.

BLAKE
I wouldn't go that far:{

DAKOTA

*About the morning being good or you
being the cutest professor this
side of Texas? (Heart)*

Blake smiles and types quickly.

BLAKE

*I bet you say that to all the
underpaid overworked department
heads at The University.*

DAKOTA

*Not usually; I just tell them to
spend the night with me and I'll
make em all better... Thing is
you're the only one I've ever said
that to.*

Blake's eyes widen, he runs his hands through his hair.

DAKOTA (CONT'D)

*Speaking of, when am I gonna get to
break out my patented massage
moves? (Naughty)*

Blake runs his hand over his mouth, sighs.

BLAKE

*I've only ever been with one woman,
and by that I mean I hate my life.
So trust me dreams of either death
or running away with you help keep
me going, so the sooner the better!*

DAKOTA

*It must be fate:} We've never even
kissed and I still want you (Wink)*

He but then jumps in his chair when the door to the garage opens and a tall Hispanic man walks in, MANUEL.

MANUEL

(surprised)

*Ah, hello Mr. Johnny, you're not
usually home at this time.*

Blake quickly turns the screen to his tablet off, leans back in his chair awkwardly.

BLAKE

It's a long story. Funny, I didn't know pilates instructors made house calls this early... Or even made house calls to begin with.

Manuel shrugs at that, takes in a long breath.

MANUEL

Mr. Johnny, take a look around, I take my job very seriously.

Blake turns to the pictures on the wall, various examples of Blanch and Manuel clearly having a relationship, while Blake is off to the side looking forlorn and lost.

BLAKE

Yeah that's weird, Blanch is still waiting for her abs 'to pop.' How long have you been her teacher again?

MANUEL

A little longer than your oldest child.

They stare at each other a second quietly, Blake looking like he's about to get angry, but just shrugs and waves it off.

BLAKE

Sounds good to me; I know they're hard muscles to develop.

Manuel smiles and laughs, points at Blake.

MANUEL

That's why you're the man. When she's ready tell her I'll be in my car waiting.

BLAKE

(nodding)
Sure thing man... Wait, you're driving her to class?

MANUEL

(awkward)
Uh yeah, I'm really committed to my job and like, yeah.

Blake smiles as Manuel leaves, the kids tumbling back into the room, arguing with each other in Spanish. Blake splits them up and crosses his arms.

BLAKE
 (to himself)
 They grow up so quickly.

Blake laughs to himself, leaves his office room.

JUMP CUT TO:

INT. SIMULATED UNIVERSITY CONFERENCE ROOM - EARLY MORNING

VALERIE (ALICE) is wearing a drab pantsuit typing on her phone at the head of a long conference table. Her phone then rings and she sighs loudly, answers it.

VALERIE
 (annoyed)
 Yeah great, I was just texting your partner at the law firm... How is it my prick husband, who barely earned a paupers wage, is trying to get more than fifty percent?

She tilts her head listening to her lawyer.

VALERIE (CONT'D)
 Mhmm... He said I was cheating on him with Thomas R. Price? Because of financial records he found?

Just then familiar faces from the *TAIM* universe begin to filter in, Valerie standing up, annoyed.

VALERIE (CONT'D)
 You can tell my dipshit soon to be ex husband he found statements from my T. Rowe Price account... Yes the asset management firm!

Everyone is chatting quietly as Valerie gets more annoyed.

VALERIE (CONT'D)
 Oh no, no no... He said I assaulted him!? It was a friggin prostate massage! And when he was flopping around like a god damn open mouth bass begging me not to stop...
 (pauses)
 Fine, you can counter with "aggressive" lover instead.

Valerie then hangs up her phone and cracks her neck, notices a few people at the table trying not to pay attention. STAN (ERIC) looks over and clears his throat awkwardly.

VALERIE (CONT'D)

(sarc)

Oh please Eric, you've had a lot more than a prostate massager up yours.

Stan holds out his hands, smiling.

STAN

Fine, but at least my husband isn't an "aggressive lover."

VALERIE

(sarc)

But I'm sure your husband's dick...

She stops when a rushed BLAKE (JOHNNY) and relaxed NILES (EVAN) walk in.

VALERIE (CONT'D)

Oh, speaking of two walking examples of dicks; late as usual.

Valerie takes her seat, Blake begins to go through his bag hurriedly as Niles makes a sarcastic face.

VALERIE (CONT'D)

Let me guess Johnny, your laptop bag is at Pre-K again?

BLAKE

That's twice this week! Wait, that means my kids have my tablet; shit.

VALERIE

Yeah sure, "your kids."

Blake doesn't respond, a few people laughing around the table

VALERIE (CONT'D)

And you; guess your excuse is that wife of yours again... What Tantric hocus pocus was it this time?

Niles takes out a note pad, leans back and shrugs.

NILES

You know...she looks great in cheap sunglasses, she looks great in anything... She's I want a piece of chocolate, take me to the movies...

Valerie slaps the table, takes a pen and points it at him.

VALERIE

Keep working your god damn country music into conversation and this goes in your neck... Up to you.

BLAKE

(sighs)

Don't forget Emerson is a nurse, and would use their metaphysical energy and heal him with love.

NILES

(genuine)

Dude I'm tellin you, the ecstasy alone; oh wait, Alice, you finally do that thing with your husband I suggested a while back?

She looks away with a sigh, cracking her neck.

NILES (CONT'D)

Real marriage saver that one, I mean for people that need it and aren't unified with their twin flame on all levels...

(exaggerates)

But I don't want to be that guy!

There's awkward silence around the table.

BLAKE

(depressed)

Yep, must be nice. The only pleasure I get anymore is when Blanch is away on her twice daily pilates classes with Manuel... Gives me time to fantasize about my funeral.

VALERIE

How is it he's been instructing her on "pilates" for years now, and I still don't think she even knows what they are.

There's more snickering from around the table, Niles putting his hand on Blake's shoulder.

NILES

Aww Johnny, you'll find your twin flame one day soon and...

VALERIE

(interrupting)

I swear if you start quoting from
the poetry you write for her, I'm
gonna fire you both.

Everybody reacts to that, Blake upset and Niles laughing

BLAKE

I didn't do shit!

NILES

(waves it off)

And I've got tenure so whatever.

She leans back in her chair, takes in a long breath. A beautiful college age woman comes in, DAKOTA, and hands Valerie a file. She looks right at Blake and winks, his eyes following her out of the room.

BLAKE

So Alice, I should go back home and
get my stuff, my tablet especially.
That's where all my work is.

Valerie looks up from the file, irritated.

VALERIE

Are you serious? Use his thing
then, I don't care.

Blake looks over at Niles, the latter surprised. He holds up his notebook, covered with pictures of him and his wife.

NILES

Wait, this? I mean, you already
mentioned my poetry; so I thought
may as well just work on that cause
like, come on, she's a Goddess.

VALERIE

What does that even mean?

Niles attempts to explain when Dakota catches Blake's attention from outside the conference room.

BLAKE

Hey, so it looks you guys have this
under control, I may as well just
cut out early and...

VALERIE

Dude no, we have an hour of work to start, not the least of which is how you two keep missing your eye exams from the *University Collective*.

Blake rolls his eyes, Niles adjusts uncomfortably a second.

NILES

I told you, they keep giving me the worst headaches.

VALERIE

I'm sure that "piercing eyed" twin soul flame or whatever knows how to cure your headaches.

Niles smiles from ear to ear and nods his head positively, Blake looking at Dakota who is smiling back.

NILES

Dude, last night we were in yab yum for over an hour; totally connected on all levels. Did you know she's able to contract her...

BLAKE

(interrupting)
Ass!

Everyone looks at him surprised, Niles shrugging.

NILES

No, she did that later though and like woe, we both saw stars.

Valerie is shaking her head, sighing loudly.

BLAKE

(awkwardly)
No, I mean I have to go to the bathroom, from that part of my body, because of the food I ate earlier.

VALERIE

(incredulous)
Fine, then go do that; but get back here because we have work to do.

Blake leaves in a hurry, Stan leaning in toward Niles.

STAN
 (smiling - teasing)
 So, really walking on the wild
 side?

Niles grins with his eyes closed a moment.

NILES
 Well you know how it goes... Wait,
 look who I'm talking to!

Stan starts laughing, moves closer to Niles.

STAN
 (sensuously)
 So, like, as long as you're open to
 trying different things and all...

Niles doesn't look at him.

NILES
 Same answer as before dude.

Stan clears his throat, moves back over.

SMASH CUT

INT. SIMULATED UNIVERSITY CORRIDOR - SAME TIME

BLAKE (JOHNNY) leaves the conference room and looks down the
 hall, notices DAKOTA near the window.

BLAKE
 I couldn't wait, I had to see
 you... And wait, you're her right?

Dakota nods, moves some of her hair behind her ear.

DAKOTA
 I know you still wanted to wait,
 but you sounded even more depressed
 than usual earlier, so I wanted to
 risk it and at least say hello.

Blake stares at her, shakes his head.

BLAKE
 Hello? I'm just glad you're real!

DAKOTA
 (laughing)
 I kept tell you I'm not AI but you
 still seemed skeptical.

BLAKE
 I'm still skeptical now...
 (looks over and back)
 I'd love to get coffee or
 something, but I can tell this
 meeting is going to drag and...

Before he finishes the conference room doors open and everyone starts filing out. STAN (ERIC) walks by Blake making a face, shakes his head.

STAN
 Alice got another call from her lawyer, it didn't go well; so Evan thought he'd start reading poetry he wrote for Emerson... That also didn't go well.

Stan walks away, Blake's eyes wide as he looks at Dakota who just smiles back.

CUT TO:

INT. SIERRA'S CAR - MID AFTERNOON - DAY UNKNOWN

SIERRA is driving her car with EMH in the passenger's seat. He's eating granola from his hands and drinking liquor.

SIERRA
 ...and how many times did I tell you, the point of this was not to raise the dead or create a zombie nature hybrid.

EMH swallows his food and coughs a little.

EMH
 And I told you I totally got that; but when you hippies were doing your seance thing, I figured I'd be able to access the unearthly realm and you know, jimmy around a little.

Sierra just laughs at that, throws her one hand up.

SIERRA
 It was a ceremony to honor Gaia, while also utilizing nature's sacred herb.

EMH
(genuine)
That's why you were all high.

Sierra laughs to herself.

SIERRA
Again, not pot and not high.

They turn the corner to a small convention center, parking lot filled with cars.

SIERRA (CONT'D)
Honestly I was a little surprised
you didn't take to that like a moth
to the flame.

EMH
Eh, nothing wrong with a little
self control; am I right?

Sierra smirks and parks the car, looks around surprised.

EMH (CONT'D)
Something wrong?

Sierra scrolls through her phone.

SIERRA
Val said for us to stop by and pick
up some stuff they had for the
ceremony yesterday... It looks like
everyone's still here, but no one
is responding to my texts or calls.

EMH
(genuine)
Awww, her and Niles finally tied
the knot... I knew those kids would
be all right.

SIERRA
(smiling)
There's a lot wrong with what you
just said.

EMH finishes the bag of granola and dusts his hands off.

EMH
Wait, what kind of ceremony then?
And why weren't you there?

SIERRA

It was a last minute thing that one of our client's had... But with Earth Day and the weekend's events I wasn't able to get involved.

EMH

(shrugs)

You think it was some kind of cosplay thing then? I hate missing those.

With that he hops right out of her car, Sierra following quickly, surprised.

SIERRA

Wait; you said my nature meeting in the woods where we made our own clothes was crazy, but you'd be cool with cosplay?

EMH

Well yeah, I mean the ticks in the woods alone, and then lime disease... Come on, too risky.

They stop at a door and Sierra puts her phone away, opens it but stops before they walk in.

SIERRA

Hold on, didn't you say you got bit by an animal near the woods and have low level rabies or something.

EMH

Oh no, it was near a dumpster behind the Wendy's; and it was a baby raccoon instead of an adult, so it'll work itself out.

Sierra makes a double take at EMH, he just smiles and nods his head. She shakes hers and they both walk inside.

END SAMPLE