

RESORTS

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FADE IN:

AN INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX. A HALLWAY. NIGHT.

BEN is talking on his cell phone.

BEN

Yeah.

All right.

Okay mom.

Then stop talking like her.

Yeah. I'll see you then.

Take care.

BEN turns off the phone and walks into a large conference room.

FERN and RAY are sitting at the conference table typing on their laptops.

FERN

[Sarcastically] More good news?

BEN

No, that was Lenny. You know big brothers.

FERN

Yeah. Anyway we ran the numbers and if we break it into sections like you said it should be possible.

RAY

But it'll be a real pain to build.

BEN

How bad?

RAY

We'll need a three inch curve on the glass panels so they're going to take longer to make than usual, but the real problem is we'll need a couple thousand of them so we have to start production now and hope that nothing goes wrong.

BEN

Will you need extra help on the assembly line?

RAY

I don't think so. In a worst case scenario I'll just assign some overtime.

BEN

Okay. Get the guys started on it tomorrow.

RAY

Okay.

FERN

[To BEN] Are you sure Howard's going to be okay with this?

BEN

I don't know, but there isn't any other way to do it.

FERN

Good point.

RAY

So we're all done for tonight?

BEN

Yeah, get outta here.

RAY

Thanks boss. Night Fern.

FERN

Good night.

RAY gathers his computer and laptop and leaves.

FERN

The design looks good.

BEN

Yeah, but I think I'll run  
the numbers a few more times  
to see if I can get the panel  
count down a bit.

FERN

[Smiling] I knew you were  
going to say that. Well, see  
you tomorrow.

BEN

Night.

FERN leaves.

BEN starts typing at his laptop.

AN INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX. FERN'S OFFICE. DAY.

There are two desks in the office.

FERN walks in.

RAY is at the computer on the desk on the left.

FERN walks to the desk on the right.

RAY

Morning.

FERN

Hey. You're in early.

RAY

Yeah, Ben called me up to  
look over the revised  
blueprints.

FERN  
[Putting her briefcase on the desk] How are they?

RAY  
Don't know yet. He wasn't here when I got in and I've just been getting his voicemail.

FERN  
When did he call you?

RICK  
Last night when I got home. Why?

FERN  
[Rolling her eyes] Not again.

FERN walks out of the office and RAY follows her, looking confused.

They walk to BEN's office. FERN knocks on the door.

FERN  
Ben, open up.

There is no response.

FERN tries to open the door but it is locked, so she takes a hairpin out of her hair and starts picking the lock.

RAY  
I don't think you're supposed to do that.

FERN  
You've been here eight weeks  
I've been here eight years.  
I know what I'm doing.

The lock clicks

RAY  
I'll just wait out here.

FERN

Right.

FERN enters the office.

BEN is sleeping on a couch. There is a stack of files on the desk.

FERN walks to the desk and looks at the files. She flips through them and picks out a couple.

As she turns to leave, FERN notices an alarm clock on the other side of the desk. It reads 7:27.

She walks over to it and checks the time the alarm is set to go off at. It reads 7:30. FERN pauses to think and then turns off the alarm.

FERN takes one last look around the office and then leaves and closes the door behind her.

FERN hands RAY the files.

RAY

Thanks.

FERN

Anytime.

FERN and RAY start walking back down the hall.

RAY

[Glancing through a file]  
It's pretty much what we  
worked out last night.

FERN

Ben's a details guy. When  
you work on multimillion  
dollar projects for a living  
you have to be.

RAY

So he'll be revising all of  
our work until the hotel's  
finished?

FERN  
No, just yours.

RAY  
You worked on this too.

FERN  
But it's your assignment.

RAY  
So he doesn't trust me.

FERN  
Not yet.

FERN stops at the door of the office while RAY continues toward a flight of stairs.

FERN  
Ray?

RAY  
[Stops and turns] Yeah?

FERN  
If you just do your job he'll come around eventually.

RAY  
How long were you here before he stopped looking over your shoulder?

FERN  
Five weeks, but I'm amazing. And we went to college together for two years.

RAY  
Great.

RAY continues to the stairs and FERN goes into the office.

She sits down at her desk, picks up the telephone, and dials a number.

FERN

Lenny, it's Fern. I'm just calling to let you know he pulled another all nighter. It's the third one this week so I'll keep an eye on him.

AN INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX. BEN'S OFFICE.

BEN is lying on the sofa. He gradually wakes up.

He sits up and looks at the alarm clock on his desk. It reads 11:32 AM. He checks his watch to confirm the time.

BEN walks over to the alarm clock and checks the alarm.

He unplugs the alarm clock and puts it in a drawer in his desk.

BEN then goes over to the mini fridge in a corner of the office and takes out a bottle of mineral water. He opens it and takes a drink.

He walks back to his desk and presses a button on the intercom.

BEN

Good morning Jane. Any messages?

JANE

[Over the intercom] Good morning. Cecil called fifteen minutes ago to remind you about his company's party. He said he knows that you hate these things but you've already skipped a bunch of them so you'd better show up this time.

BEN

Okay. Anything else?

JANE

Nope, that's it.

BEN

Thanks. I guess.

BEN starts sorting through the stack of files on his desk. He goes through the entire stack but doesn't find the one he is looking for. He flips through the stack again.

He drops the stack on his desk and picks up the telephone to make a call.

BEN

Fern it's me. Did you break into my office again?

[Pulls the telephone about two inches away from his ear.]

[Brings the telephone back to his ear] Okay. Thanks.

A HOTEL BALLROOM. NIGHT.

A large group of people is milling around.

BEN is holding a glass of champagne as he looks around.

HOWARD, the CEO of the company, and KATE walk over to BEN.

HOWARD

Hey Ben! I just got a look at the revised drawings. Great work, it's looking good.

BEN

Thank you sir.

HOWARD

I want you to meet Kate, our new CFO.

BEN

Pleased to meet you.

KATE

Likewise.

HOWARD

She's just revamped our reporting system so she'll be checking in with you to make sure everything's in order. I...[looks over BEN's shoulder] oh great, here comes Bob. You two chat; I've got to take care of this.

HOWARD walks away.

KATE

[Smiling] Just act like we're having a nice conversation.

BEN

[Smiling] What are you doing here?

KATE

CFO stands for "chief financial officer".

BEN

You forgot that I worked with these people didn't you?

KATE

They offered me this job. That's all you need to know.

BEN

So you didn't forget.

KATE

I wasn't going to avoid this company because of you.

BEN

I knew something was going on.

KATE

Are you accusing me of something?

BEN

Those last minute design changes were your idea.

KATE

You don't know that.

BEN

But I know you.

KATE

Not as well as you think.

BEN

You're an accountant not an engineer; leave the real work to the grown ups. If you want to settle a score with me do it on your own time.

KATE

Not everything's about you. And remember that your company works for mine; I have every right to contribute to this project as I see fit.

BEN

If you pull another stunt like that I'll drop this project.

KATE

Then good riddance.

KATE walks away.

BEN walks toward a table to pick up some hors d'ouvres.

CECIL walks up to him.

CECIL

So you've met Kate?

BEN

Yeah, nice lady.

CECIL

That's what we think. We picked her up in the merger last month and she's already got everyone on the same page.

BEN

That's impressive.

CECIL

It's a miracle. Anyway, I wanted to have a word with you before someone else did.

BEN

Something important?

CECIL

I'm retiring in a couple of weeks.

BEN

You're kidding.

CECIL

I'm sixty eight with a heart condition. It's time to take it easy.

BEN

Wow. [Pauses] Are you sure about this? I mean you love this stuff and your last deal was a masterpiece.

CECIL

[Grinning] Yeah, I've still got it, but it's time to call it a day. But I'll be on the board of directors so it's not like I'm gonna just disappear.

BEN

Still, it won't be the same.

CECIL

You can bet on it. Kate's been going around scaring the daylights out of our contractors and I think your company's next.

BEN

That can't be good for business.

CECIL

Not for yours, but it's working miracles for our bottom line.

BEN

Do you have any advice?

CECIL

You guys do good work and your prices are competitive, but you know what this business is like, and it's getting worse.

BEN

Engineers wear these rings for a reason.

CECIL

I know, but you might have to operate closer to the line than you're used to if you want to keep working with us after I'm gone. These new execs are all about the money. Doing things right doesn't mean anything to them.

BEN

I thought you liked Kate.

CECIL

She's an accountant.

AN INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX. A HALLWAY. DAY.

KATE walks up a flight of stairs and heads down the hall towards Ben's office.

FERN sees KATE and greets her just outside his office.

FERN

Good morning Ms. Mitchells. Ben told me you were coming this morning but his secretary double booked him so he told me to meet with you instead.

KATE

That's fine.

FERN

Great. We can talk in his office.

FERN opens the door, KATE enters, and FERN follows and closes the door behind them.

KATE

Did Ben tell you why I wanted to meet with him?

FERN

Yes, he said that your company just adopted a new accounting system and you wanted to make sure that everything was in order.

KATE

That's right. I've gone through the records and I have to say that I'm really impressed with the work your company has done in the past and I hope that you keep up the good work.

FERN

I'm really pleased to hear you say that. We've always enjoyed working with your company.

KATE

[Taking a seat on the couch]  
We try to be accommodating. The only issue I have to ask about is the revised estimate associated with the design changes.

FERN

[Taking a chair opposite the couch] We did our best to stay as close as possible to the original estimate, and I think that all things considered we were fairly successful.

KATE

Actually, a lot of my people are worried about the cost increase, and after I looked at the numbers myself I have some concerns too.

FERN

We know the hotel will be more expensive than we anticipated, but the only way we can build the new façade is to break it down into a couple thousand individual components, as we stated in the notes we sent along with the new models.

KATE

I read those notes, and none of the components you plan to use is exactly cheap.

FERN

Well no one's ever used glass this way before. We had to consult extensively with our partners and examine our manufacturing processes in detail just to make sure it possible.

KATE

I appreciate that, but the profit margin on this building was pretty slim to begin with and I'm not sure I can make the numbers work with these additional costs.

FERN

We appreciate that and we knew that cost would be an issue, so we studied a few different alternatives and concluded that this design is the most cost effective way to execute this building. In fact it's the only way to execute it.

KATE

Executives hear that sort of thing from engineers all the time, but we've found that if we insist that they meet cost projections they almost always find a way.

FERN

And I'd love to be able to find a way, but that estimate was based on the original design. With the modifications your company sent over yesterday afternoon we had to change a lot of things and unfortunately that changed the price tag.

KATE

[Pauses] I don't want to seem blunt, but I'm afraid that the cost isn't negotiable. If you guys can't get back to the original estimate we'll find another firm to work with.

FERN

Of course. I appreciate your candor.

KATE

Not at all. Well, I have some other appointments to keep. It's been a pleasure speaking with you.

FERN

Thank you.

FERN and KATE shake hands, FERN walks KATE to the door, and then FERN opens the door for KATE.

FERN

If there's anything else please don't hesitate to call.

KATE

I'll keep that in mind.

KATE walks back to the stairs.

FERN goes back into the office and dials the phone on Ben's desk.

FERN

Yeah, it was pretty bad.

[Laughs] Yeah.

[Concerned] Yeah, how'd you know?

I guess so.

Whoa. Are you sure about that?

BEN walks into the office talking on his cell phone.

BEN

It's legal and it'll get us close to the estimate.

FERN hangs up the phone and BEN closes his cell phone.

FERN

But for a building like this I'd feel more comfortable with the stuff we're using now.

BEN

It's too expensive and we don't need it to meet building regulations.

FERN

The regulations are only minimums.

BEN

So if the government says we can do it this way why should we disagree?

FERN

C'mon Ben; we don't design buildings this way. If these people don't want to build it right then I say we walk, and the guy who hired me would be the first one out the door.

BEN

There's a lot of money at stake here.

FERN

Safety isn't a luxury.

BEN

The secondary support system's rock solid and we're keeping the wider emergency stairwells. It'll be fine.

FERN

I want the paint-on fireproofing.

BEN

The spray-on stuff can get the job done.

FERN

It's an unnecessary compromise.

BEN

It's a worthwhile tradeoff.

FERN

I don't want to work like that.

BEN

And what if we lose the contract?

FERN

We've got other projects in the pipeline. We'll survive.

BEN

For a while.

FERN

That's better than the way things were when we started. Don't let her get to you Ben.

BEN

[Pauses] This is non-negotiable for you isn't it?

FERN

Yeah. And it is for you too.

BEN

Okay, we're out.

FERN

I'll call her this afternoon  
and tell her the good news.

BEN

Thanks.

FERN

That's what I'm here for.

FERN slaps BEN on the shoulder and walks out of the office.

AN UPSCALE BAR. NIGHT.

BEN is sitting at a table holding a glass of whiskey. He  
stares at it for a while.

KATE sits down at the table.

BEN

So you're stalking me now?

KATE

You're not that interesting.

BEN

Then what're you doing here?

KATE

Sitting at a table.

BEN

Right.

KATE

You think there's another  
reason?

BEN

Wouldn't you?

KATE

Don't know. My liver's never let that much alcohol go to my head.

BEN

My liver my business. Good bye.

KATE

You're pathetic.

BEN

And you're annoying.

KATE

You think that's worse than being a borderline alcoholic?

BEN

I don't have to be depressed to drink.

KATE

So you're stressed.

BEN

I enjoy the experience like millions of other casual drinkers around the world. And even if I was an alcoholic it wouldn't be any of your business would it?

KATE looks at BEN for a few moments but doesn't leave.

BEN

That's your cue to leave.

KATE

I don't take orders from you.

KATE signals the WAITRESS.

The WAITRESS walks to the table.

KATE

My friend here's done. Put  
his bill on my tab.

WAITRESS  
Sure thing Kate.

The WAITRESS walks away.

There is a short pause in the conversation.

BEN  
What's this about?

KATE  
You skipped dinner didn't  
you?

BEN  
What's it to you?

KATE  
Let's get you fed.

BEN  
Answer my question.

KATE  
I want to make sure you know  
the accounting rules before  
construction starts, but I've  
got a bunch of meetings this  
week so this is the only time  
we have to talk.

BEN  
Fern left a message with your  
office. We're off the  
project.

KATE  
You don't walk out until I  
say you can.

BEN  
Let's test that theory.

BEN finishes his glass of whiskey, gets up, and starts walking out of the bar.

KATE follows him.

KATE

You know you can't turn your back on this job. It's the kind of challenge that got you into this business.

BEN

Is that all you've got?

KATE

That's all I need.

BEN

[Exits the bar] Then you don't know what you're talking about.

KATE

[Follows BEN down the street] You're not making a lot of sense either.

BEN

Do I really have to say it?

KATE

Humor me.

BEN

All right: you're a glorified calculator with an ego problem and you shouldn't be anywhere near an engineering project where lives are at stake. The sooner you get out of town the better.

KATE

If it wasn't for me you'd be building another box with holes in it. The design

changes are the only thing  
keeping this resort from  
looking like something out of  
a kid's coloring book.

BEN  
You're all the same.

KATE  
Executives?

BEN  
Accountants.

KATE  
Who do you think approves  
these projects?

BEN  
How many of these projects  
never get off the drawing  
board?

KATE  
You still can't let it go can  
you?

BEN  
What about you?

KATE  
I don't have a problem with  
it.

BEN  
But you think I do?

KATE  
Wouldn't you?

BEN stops walking and KATE stops beside him.

BEN  
Where do you want to eat?

AN UPSCALE RESTAURANT.

BEN and KATE are eating at a table.

BEN

So you'll know exactly when any money gets spent, how much of it gets spent, and what it's spent on?

KATE

Yeah. Pretty neat huh?

BEN

It's insane. Do you have any idea how complicated these projects get?

KATE

I was vice-president of manufacturing at that automaker...which one was it again?

BEN

This is different.

KATE

You mean simpler. Show some respect.

BEN and KATE eat in silence for a while.

BEN looks up at KATE and then looks back down at his plate as he continues eating.

KATE glances at BEN for an instant.

BEN

This is a nice restaurant.

KATE

I like it.

BEN

I can tell.

KATE

[Looks directly at BEN] This is a business dinner; showing a healthy appetite is a courtesy. And even if it wasn't it would still beat starving to death in a bar.

BEN

I would've gotten dinner even if you hadn't shown up.

KATE

Yeah I guess fast food technically constitutes a meal. I mean there might not actually be any nutritional value, but at some point it might've contained substances that could be useful to the human metabolism.

BEN

There's nothing wrong with the way I eat.

KATE

Looked in a mirror lately?

BEN

You know why people hate you?

KATE

No one hates me; I'm an accountant.

BEN

Because you shoot your mouth off and expect people to thank you for your insights.

KATE

It works for us.

BEN

Yeah, I'm sitting in a four star restaurant and I still have no appetite.

KATE

It's probably lack of exercise. It wouldn't kill you to go out for a walk once in a while.

BEN

You know I've really missed you.

KATE

I know. But the feeling's not mutual.

BEN glares at KATE.

KATE keeps eating and doesn't look up to see his glare.

KATE

You're probably wondering why I decided not to let you walk out on the project.

BEN

Not really.

KATE

It's because of Fern; she's got integrity. If she honestly believes something has to be built a certain way she won't make any compromises. [Looks directly at BEN] She's the reason you didn't go cheap on the fireproofing.

BEN

Is that what she told you?

KATE

No, I know you. I set you up and you fell for it.

BEN

You don't know that. But if you want to do business this way then you can find yourself another engineer.

BEN gets out of his chair, takes some bills out of his wallet, drops them on the table, and walks out of the restaurant.

KATE watches him leave.

AN INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX. BEN'S OFFICE. DAY.

BEN is at his desk typing on his laptop.

RAY knocks on the door.

BEN

C'mon in. What can I do for you?

RAY

[Enters] I just wanted to let you know that I can get these panels made on time. If that's what you're worried about then there's no reason to pull out of this project.

BEN

That doesn't have anything to do with it. If I didn't trust you I wouldn't have hired you.

RAY

Thanks.

BEN

And I'm going to stop looking over your shoulder. Eventually.

RAY

[Smiles] Right. So should I still keep the panels we've made in storage?

BEN

How many are there?

RAY

A couple dozen, but we might need that space once we get going on some of the other jobs we've got.

BEN

Then keep them there for now but if they start getting in the way you can toss 'em.

RAY

Okay.

RAY leaves.

FERN walks past RAY in the hall without saying anything to him and quickly enters BEN's office. She closes the door behind her and walks up to BEN's desk.

FERN

I just got a call from Kate asking for an update. What's going on?

BEN

What'd you tell her?

FERN

I said I'd talk to you and get back to her, but she could tell I had no idea what she was talking about.

BEN

Neither do I.

FERN

She also told me that she authorized the revised budget and explained their accounting procedures to you last night.

BEN

We spoke but I told her we weren't going to continue.

FERN

And that was it?

BEN

Pretty much.

FERN

Whatever. If you don't want to tell me what's going on that's fine, but I thought we were better friends than that.

BEN

She set me up. She was never serious about making us stick to our original estimate; she just wanted to see how far she could push me.

FERN

So you're getting back at her by stopping work? That's breach of contract. We're gonna get sued!

BEN

No we're not. The contract lets us walk away for any reason at any point before construction starts. We're good.

FERN

Oh. Then I guess it's okay.

FERN starts walking out of the office but then stops and turns around.

FERN

But it was a really cool project.

BEN

Yeah.

FERN pauses momentarily and then walks out of the office.

BEN picks up the phone and dials a number.

THE STREET OUTSIDE AN APARTMENT BUILDING. NIGHT.

KATE gets out of a taxi holding a briefcase, slams the door, and pays the driver.

She walks to the entrance as the taxi drives away.

When she enters the lobby she sees BEN.

BEN sees KATE and walks up to her.

KATE

So you're stalking me now?

BEN

You want to talk or not?

KATE

You could use some fresh air.

BEN and KATE walk out of the lobby and into the street. They walk along for a while in silence.

BEN

If you want the resort to open on time you need me to stay on board.

KATE

I can get it done with or without you. I just don't want to lose time getting someone else up to speed.

BEN

Then no more games.

KATE

It wasn't a game. I needed to know if you could be trusted.

BEN

To do what?

KATE

Your job.

BEN

My work speaks for itself.

KATE

That's what I've heard but I don't take anything for granted.

BEN

But you think I fell for your set up.

KATE

You did, but you didn't fail. The people I talked to said the cheaper fireproofing was good enough as long as you didn't make any other compromises, and you didn't. That's good enough for me.

BEN

Do you still want us to use the expensive stuff?

KATE

Only if you think it's worth it.

BEN

Then I can build this thing my way?

KATE

As long as everything stays on spec, on time, and on budget it's fine with me.

BEN

Then I won't have time to  
analyze everything you say.  
You're going to have to be  
honest with me from now on.

KATE

I'll be as honest as you are.

BEN

And I don't want you looking  
over my shoulder.

KATE

We won't have any problems as  
long as you stick to the  
accounting procedures.

BEN

All right.

There is a short pause in the conversation as they continue  
to walk along.

KATE stops walking and BEN stops as well.

KATE

How did you find out where I  
live?

BEN

Same way you found out where  
I drink.

KATE

I'll stop lying to your  
secretary if you stop lying  
to mine.

BEN

Deal.

KATE

Good night Ben.

BEN

Good night.

KATE walks back to the apartment building while BEN continues walking down the street.

BEN walks along for a while lost in thought. Then he looks at his wrist watch and flags down a taxi.

A taxi pulls up next to him and BEN gets in.

A SPORTS BAR.

A hockey game is being shown on the TV's in the bar.

BEN enters and walks over to the table where LENNY is sitting.

LENNY

It's about time you showed up. You've already missed a fight.

BEN

It's good to see you too.

BEN pours himself a glass of beer from the pitcher on the table.

He drinks about half the glass right away.

LENNY looks at him.

LENNY

Easy there.

BEN

Just thirsty.

LENNY

So how's work?

BEN

Good. You?

LENNY

Same. Mom call you yet?

BEN

Yup. Left a bunch of messages on my voicemail.

LENNY

Told you not to skip Thanksgiving.

BEN

I was working.

LENNY

Whatever. Have you called her back?

BEN

Not yet; I've been busy. She called you about it didn't she?

LENNY

No, dad did. She's been talking to him about it nonstop.

BEN

She's that upset over one dinner?

LENNY

It isn't just a dinner. It's Thanksgiving.

BEN

It's only turkey.

LENNY

Tell that to mom.

BEN

I will.

LENNY

No you won't.

BEN

You think I'm afraid?

LENNY

I think you know it's a weak  
excuse. That's why you  
haven't called.

BEN

I've been busy.

LENNY

Sure.

BEN

I have.

LENNY

All right I believe you.

BEN

Good.

LENNY

So when are you gonna call?

BEN

Later.

LENNY

Forget it. I'll cover for  
you.

BEN

You're the greatest.

LENNY

Yeah.

There is a pause in the conversation as they continue  
watching the game.

BEN

Kate's back.

LENNY

[Pauses] Don't let her get to  
you.

BEN

That's what Fern said.

LENNY

It's good advice.

BEN

She's the new CFO at the company I'm building a resort for.

LENNY

You like the project?

BEN

A bit.

LENNY

Don't let her get to you.

BEN

I know. But it wasn't all bad.

LENNY

Nitroglycerin can be a lot of laughs too.

BEN

You're a chemist, I get it.

LENNY

This isn't about me.

BEN

I'll be all right. So I guess everything's good with Val and the kids?

LENNY

She caught the flu from Greg a couple of weeks ago and then Jake went down. I've never seen that much vomit in my life.

BEN

You wouldn't think someone  
her size would have much to  
throw up.

LENNY

I know. The human stomach is  
an amazing thing.

BEN

But everyone's okay now?

LENNY

Yeah they're good, but I've  
been feeling a little  
sluggish the past few days.

BEN

Then maybe you should go home  
and get some rest.

LENNY

And miss the game?

A COFFEE SHOP. DAY.

FERN and RAY are sitting at a table having lunch.

FERN

I guess you could try telling  
him that losing a day threw  
off the entire schedule. He  
won't buy it, but you could  
try.

RAY

I'm glad you find this funny.

FERN

Well I told you not talk to  
him. If you just did your  
job like I said you could  
blame everything on the usual  
production bugs and  
everything would be okay, but  
instead you went in and shot  
your mouth off.

RAY

Okay, I'll never question your wisdom again but that doesn't help me now.

FERN

You're beyond help.

RAY

[Pauses] If I hired some extra personnel for the assembly line I could get back on schedule. I might even be able to get ahead of schedule.

FERN

Great idea, but most people don't work for free.

RAY

But at least that's something.

FERN

Yeah. But still.

RAY

Yeah.

FERN

You want me to break the news to Ben don't you?

RAY

Well now that you mention it...

FERN

I'll cover for you this time, but you'll owe me.

RAY

Anything you want. Just name it. Anytime.

FERN

Well now that you mention it,  
I remember you said your  
sister works at a car  
dealership.

RAY

Yeah, she's a mechanic. Just  
bring your car in anytime.

FERN

That wasn't quite what I had  
in mind.

RAY

Oh. Employee discount.

FERN

Yeah.

RAY

I'll get you the brochures  
tomorrow.

FERN

Actually I've already got  
something in mind.

RAY

Okay, then I'll set  
everything up with Gail so  
when you meet with the  
salespeople they'll know  
what's going on.

FERN

Thanks. I'm really glad  
we're working together.

RAY

Yeah.

FERN

[Looks at the front door]  
It's time to go.

RAY

We just sat down.

FERN

Don't turn around, but the woman that just came in is Kate.

RAY

Who?

FERN

Oh, right, you don't know her. Long story short, we've got to get outta here.

RAY

But I like it here.

FERN

Do you mind eating alone?

RAY

No.

FERN

Then I'll see you later.

FERN wraps up her sandwich, picks up her cup of coffee, and walks toward the door with her head turned away from KATE, who is ordering at the counter.

Just as she is almost out the door, KATE has her order in a take-out package and walks up to her.

KATE

Fern?

FERN

[Turns around] Oh, hi Kate!  
It's good to see you.

KATE

It's good to see you too.  
Are you going back to the office already?

FERN

Yeah, I usually eat here but I've got some work to catch up on.

KATE

Great, I've got to drop by so we can talk on the way.

FERN

That's great.

FERN and KATE walk out of the coffee shop.

KATE

So I guess we're back on a first name basis because Ben told you we sorted things out.

FERN

Actually he didn't say anything about that. I just feel really bad about the way things went the other day. I should've separated business from the personal stuff.

KATE

That's okay. I was pretty unprofessional about that too.

FERN

So everything's all right with you and Ben?

KATE

Yeah, I guess so. I mean we aren't friends or anything but we'll be civil.

FERN

That's good.

KATE

Yeah. [Pauses] You're probably wondering why I'm dropping by.

FERN

Well, we don't get a lot of visits from CFOs.

KATE

It's nothing to worry about. One of the execs at my company just suggested I should have a look at your manufacturing processes to get a better idea of how things work.

FERN

Wow, we usually don't get that kind of respect from developers.

KATE

This guy's kind of old fashioned. Actually I think you know him. Do you remember Cecil York?

FERN

Big guy, glasses, gray hair?

KATE

Yeah that's him. He's kind of condescending but he knows what he's talking about, so I thought I'd take his advice.

FERN

You don't like him?

KATE

No one does.

AN INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX. THE SHOP FLOOR.

About a dozen assembly line workers are at their stations turning out finished panels of glass.

FERN and KATE enter and put on hard hats and safety glasses.

KATE

So this is where it all comes from.

FERN

Yup. We weren't sure we could even make these panels but our new guy figured out how much we could bend the glass during manufacturing, and then Ben worked out the number of panels we'd need. [Points to the right] Those are the computer controlled milling units. Once we get the schematics done we just feed in the data from the computer models and they take care of the rest.

KATE

Cool. It must save a lot of labor.

FERN

That's what I've been told but I've never actually seen it done manually.

KATE

Really?

FERN

Yeah, everything was computerized before I ever got into this field. Back in college we'd crack jokes about the old guys that did things without computer models, but it must've been pretty cool to watch a bunch of workmen take a chunk of metal and turn it into a

customized, one-of-a-kind component.

KATE

This is where Ben used to start lecturing me about the art and science of engineering.

FERN

[Smiles] I guess engineers get kind of sentimental about the history and tradition of building things.

KATE

Just a little. Anyway I guess you have to get back to work, but is it okay if I look around for a bit?

FERN

Sure. If anyone asks who you are just tell them you're with me.

KATE

Thanks, I appreciate it.

FERN

Any time.

FERN leaves.

KATE walks around the shop floor, watching the workers work.

She walks over to the automated milling machine and watches as the technicians monitor a piece of metal being machined inside it.

The component is completed moments later and the technicians go over and examine it.

KATE watches as they talk among themselves.

AN INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX. BEN'S OFFICE.

BEN is looking at a spreadsheet on his computer.

He picks up his phone and dials a number.

BEN

Hi Roger, it's Ben.

I'm good. How are things with you?

Glad to hear it. Listen, I just got your invoice and I have a couple of questions about some items on it.

Yeah.

Okay.

Okay.

I understand that, but when we talked it over you told me that wouldn't be a problem.

If I did that then I'd go over budget with the people I'm working for.

I know.

Well I don't want any trouble either, but we have a contract and I expect you to live up to it.

Hey I want to be flexible, but the numbers don't add up and ultimately that's your responsibility.

Okay.

Okay.

I'll be waiting for your  
call.

BEN hangs up the phone.

He gets out of his chair and stretches his arms while he  
yawns.

BEN looks at his watch, picks up his jacket from the sofa,  
and walks out of his office.

He walks down a flight of stairs and sees KATE leaving. He  
stops and watches her leave.

BEN looks around and then turns and walks back to his  
office.

He takes his jacket off and tosses it on the sofa. Then he  
picks up the phone and dials a number as he sits down in  
his chair.

BEN

Hi Roger, it's me again.

Well I'm running out of  
patience. Are you in or out?

Okay. Thanks.

BEN hangs up the phone and smiles as he leans back in his  
chair.

AN INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX. FERN'S OFFICE. NIGHT.

FERN is looking over some papers at her desk.

BEN knocks on the door.

BEN

Working overtime?

FERN

Yeah, just getting some stuff  
out of the way. Oh, Ray  
wanted me to tell you that  
he'll have to hire a few more  
people to make sure we can

deliver all the panels on  
time.

BEN  
No problem. Well I'm heading  
out. Good night.

FERN  
Night. By the way I saw Kate  
today.

BEN  
Oh. See you tomorrow.

FERN  
Later.

BEN walks away.

FERN smiles to herself.

AN INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX. THE PARKING LOT.

BEN walks over to his car, gets in, and drives off.

He drives down a few downtown streets and then gradually  
increases his speed as he pulls onto the highway.

After a while the expression on his face becomes more stern  
and he increases his speed further.

BEN then executes a few high speed lane changes and gets  
off the highway.

He drives down a few streets and pulls into the parking lot  
of a large shopping plaza. He parks and walks toward the  
front entrance of a fast food restaurant, but walks past it  
and goes into a supermarket.

BEN'S APARTMENT. THE KITCHEN.

The frying pan sizzles as a slab of steak cooks.

BEN takes a spatula and turns it over. He adjusts its  
position in the pan and then goes back to making a salad.

A SKYSCRAPER. KATE'S OFFICE.

KATE is eating a Big Mac as she reads a document on her computer.

She finishes the hamburger and tosses the box into the trash can beside her desk. She then picks up the large soda it came with and finishes that too as she leans back in her chair.

When it is empty she gets out of her chair, drops the cup into the trash can, and walks to the bookshelf a few paces away from her desk.

KATE looks through the collection of CD's on the shelf and picks one out. She looks at the cover for a few moments. Then she opens the case, takes out the disc, and opens the tray of the CD player on the shelf.

She puts the CD in the tray but then pauses. She takes the CD out of the tray, puts it back in its case, and puts the album back in its slot in the CD holder on the shelf.

A SKYSCRAPER. A CONFERENCE ROOM. DAY.

BEN is giving a presentation to HOWARD, CECIL, KATE, BOB, and several other executives.

BEN

So once the plumbers and electricians install the primary system components in a building, the construction teams already on site can essentially plug in the water, electrical, and ventilation systems for each room.

BOB

Have you used these modules before?

BEN

No, but I had some friends from MIT check them out and they told me that they work as advertised.

BOB

[To HOWARD] I don't know. Plumbers and electricians might cost a little more but at least we'll know that everything'll work the way it's supposed to.

CECIL

[To BEN] So all the pipes and wires the run through the entire building get installed professionally, and the wall modules that form the rooms just plug into this system.

BEN

Right. This is a different way of doing things, but it's faster and cheaper because these modules come off an assembly line ready to go; we don't need contractors to set everything up manually.

HOWARD

Do you have a supplier lined up yet?

BEN

Just say the word and they'll get right on it.

BOB

All of this sounds good, but we're in a lot of trouble if they don't deliver.

BEN

Every project's got some risk involved and I think this one's worth taking.

HOWARD

What do you think Kate?

KATE

MIT's not Harvard but I've heard good things about their engineering program.

BOB

But what if they're wrong?

KATE

Then we keep the plumbers and electricians around to finish up.

HOWARD

[To BEN] Is that an option?

BEN

Yeah. We have backup designs for that contingency so we can build either way.

BOB

But that'll add to the cost.

BEN

But it'll be manageable.

HOWARD

Then go ahead with the modules, but if you run into any problems let us know ASAP.

BEN

Understood.

HOWARD

[Looking around the table]  
Any other questions? Okay, then I guess that's it. I'll be at the groundbreaking tomorrow morning so if you need to reach me that's where I'll be. And in a few months a couple hundred paying customers will be there too.

[To BEN] Thanks again for  
coming out here Ben.

BEN

Any time.

BEN gathers up his notes and CECIL remains seated while the  
rest of the executives leave.

When they have all left, CECIL turns to BEN.

CECIL

Good ole Bob huh?

BEN

Great guy.

CECIL

Just be thankful you don't  
have to see him every day.  
But you'd better deliver.

BEN

Some of my competitors are  
already using these modules.  
This isn't some science  
experiment.

CECIL

I'm just stating the obvious.  
I'm on your side.

BEN

I appreciate it.

CECIL

Anyway you should know that  
Bob's angling to be my  
replacement, so he'll  
probably try this again first  
chance he gets.

BEN

I'll be ready.

CECIL

I know, but it wouldn't hurt to have someone else on your side.

BEN

Howard seems okay with the idea.

CECIL

But he likes to consult with his team, so if you want to build this resort your way you need to make sure Kate's okay with this.

BEN

He respects her opinion that much?

CECIL

As much as anyone else's, and that's all you need to maintain control.

BEN

This is getting way too political.

CECIL

Politics is just the continuation of engineering by other means.

A SMALL CAFÉ.

BEN is standing on the street outside the café. He looks at his watch.

He looks around and sees KATE getting out of a taxi.

KATE pays the driver and then walks to BEN.

KATE

We agreed to avoid each other.

BEN

Cecil told me I'd need you to keep Bob from getting in the way.

KATE

I'll do what I can. Is that it?

BEN

Yeah, but let's go inside so I can tell Cecil I met you for coffee.

KATE

You can lie.

BEN

He wouldn't believe me.

KATE

True.

KATE walks past BEN and enters the café.

BEN follows behind her.

There are two customers ahead of them in the line. They wait in line without talking to each other.

The two other customers get their orders and walk over to a table.

KATE goes up to the CASHIER to place her order.

KATE

Large coffee, black, and a grape Danish.

CASHIER

Okay, will there be anything else?

KATE

That's it.

CASHIER

Then that'll be \$3.47.

The CASHIER goes to put the order together. The CASHIER returns with the coffee and Danish, takes the \$5 bill from KATE, and gives her the change.

CASHIER

There you go.

KATE

Thanks.

KATE walks over and takes a seat at an empty table while BEN places his order.

A few moments later BEN joins her at the table.

They don't say anything to each other as they eat.

BEN looks at KATE as he takes a sip from his cup of coffee, but she doesn't notice.

KATE finishes her Danish while BEN is only halfway through his muffin.

KATE gets up to leave.

BEN

Thanks for coming out here.

KATE

Any time.

KATE leaves.

She walks down the street and turns around the corner.

There is a limousine waiting there with the DRIVER standing by the passenger door.

KATE walks up to him.

KATE

I'm Kate Mitchells.

DRIVER

Hey, you're right on time.

KATE

As always.

The DRIVER opens the door for KATE and she gets in. He closes the door after her.

A few moments later the limousine pulls away.

In the passenger section, KATE looks out the window.

AN INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX. A CONFERENCE ROOM. NIGHT.

BEN, FERN, and RAY are sitting at the conference table. There are fast food containers, computers, and papers all over the table.

RAY

I don't think I'll ever go on vacation again. It'd be too painful.

FERN

You say that now, but once you see this thing built you won't remember how much work it took.

RAY

Yeah right.

FERN

[To BEN] Smart kid.

BEN

That's why he's here.

FERN

But seriously, this job's gonna be worth it.

RAY

I know. The glass panels alone are a work of art.

BEN

How long will it take to finish the production run?

RAY

About two more weeks. We'll get ahead of schedule at this pace.

BEN

Okay. I won't be in tomorrow so call Jerry and tell him when he can expect the next shipment.

RAY

No problem.

FERN

[To BEN] Taking a personal day?

BEN

No, Lenny went down with the flu and re-infected Val so I'll be taking care of everyone.

FERN

[Laughs] Oh, good luck.

BEN

I build skyscrapers for a living. I don't need luck.

A SUBURBAN HOUSE. THE KITCHEN. DAY.

A pot overflows and soup spills onto the stove top.

BEN quickly runs over to it, lifts up the top to let out the steam, and wipes up the spilled soup with a towel.

LENNY and VAL are in the den, sitting on the sofa under a blanket, watching television.

LENNY looks over to the kitchen.

LENNY

Everything all right in there?

BEN

[Calling from the kitchen]  
Yeah.

LENNY

[To VAL] I told you this was  
a good idea.

VAL rolls her eyes.

She gets up and shuffles to the kitchen. She slumps down  
into a chair.

VAL

Listen Ben, I'm really sorry  
about this.

BEN

It's okay, I'm here to help.

VAL

Can I help with anything?

BEN

[Pouring two bowls of soup]  
I've got everything under  
control. Just promise you'll  
never get sick again.

VAL

The boys gave you trouble  
this morning?

BEN

[Setting down a bowl of soup]  
They're just kids.

VAL

So what'd they do?

BEN

It's like they don't even  
hear their alarm clocks and  
then they waltz down here at  
8:15 and act like it's Sunday

brunch. I don't know how you get them to school on time.

VAL

[Drinking the soup] Welcome to my nightmare.

BEN

[Walking to the den with another bowl of soup] How's the soup?

VAL

It's actually really good.

BEN

You sound surprised.

VAL

[Hesitates] I sound that way when I'm congested.

LENNY

[Takes the bowl from BEN and has a spoonful] Wow. Did you find a recipe or something?

BEN

I called mom last night.

LENNY

Just for the recipe?

BEN

I thought I should apologize about Thanksgiving, but I figured as long as she was on the line I might as well get the recipe too.

LENNY

You have great family values.

VAL

[Running past BEN and LENNY to the bathroom] I'm going to be sick.

BEN

[Notices LENNY looking at him] It's mom's recipe.

A JAZZ CLUB. NIGHT.

KATE is sitting at the bar drinking a martini.

The group on stage is a trio consisting of piano, bass, and drums. There is no vocalist.

The group finishes a song and then starts playing an arrangement of "I'll Be Seeing You".

KATE listens for about thirty seconds and then puts the glass on the bar, drops a bill next to it, and quickly walks out of the club.

AN INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX. DAY.

KATE enters and walks up a flight of stairs.

She stops at BEN's office and knocks on the door. There is no response.

KATE waits and knocks again. There is still no response.

She walks down the hall to FERN's office and knocks on the door.

FERN

[Looking up] Hey, come on in. We weren't expecting you. Is something wrong?

KATE

No, I just thought I'd drop by and see how things were going. So how's everything going?

FERN

Great. I just checked in with the contractors and two days in they're still on schedule, so, so far so good.

KATE

That's good. Um, I just walked by Ben's office and he wasn't there.

FERN

Yeah, he came down with the flu so he won't be around for at least a few days. But I've got his number if you want to give him a call.

KATE

No that's all right. Could you just tell him to check in with me when he gets back?

FERN

Sure, no problem.

KATE

Okay great. I'll talk to you later.

FERN

Okay.

A PATH ON THE HARBOR FRONT.

KATE walks along for a while and then spots BEN. She walks up beside him.

KATE

You know how I found you this time.

BEN

You followed the trail I left.

KATE

You couldn't have known I'd look.

BEN

I know you better than you think.

KATE  
The fact I'm here doesn't prove anything.

BEN  
Then you came for another reason?

KATE  
Are you being sarcastic?

BEN  
Are you avoiding the question?

KATE  
I'm not avoiding anything.

BEN  
Prove it.

KATE  
I don't have to prove anything to you.

BEN  
Fine. So why don't you leave?

KATE  
You're just asking the same question a different way.

BEN  
And you're still refusing to admit you misread the situation.

KATE  
All right you got me. Congratulations.

BEN  
Now we're even.

KATE

You said no more games.

BEN

For you, not me.

KATE

What're you trying to prove?

BEN

Nothing. This was just  
payback.

KATE

Then you have way too much  
time to waste.

BEN

You're the one running all  
over town.

KATE

This is business.

BEN

How?

KATE

You're the lead contractor on  
the most expensive project my  
company's working on. Even  
you can understand what that  
means.

BEN

You could've left a message  
with Fern.

KATE

Too much can happen in a  
couple of days. Especially  
with you.

BEN

You know that's not true  
anymore.

KATE

I don't take unnecessary risks.

BEN

Why didn't you just say that?

KATE

Because it's a lie. Have you had lunch yet?

BEN

No, I'm not hungry.

KATE

[Puts her hand on his forehead] You should be at work.

BEN

After the design's done I can take some time off.

KATE

You told Fern you had the flu.

BEN

I was taking care of Lenny and his family yesterday so I don't want to risk infecting my staff.

KATE

That makes sense. But you aren't actually sick yet so as far as you know you're lying.

BEN

It's better than telling them I'm completely exhausted from the past two weeks.

KATE

Yeah. That can be bad for morale.

BEN

Thank you.

KATE

But it's almost two o'clock.  
Did you have a late  
breakfast?

BEN

No, I'm just not hungry.

KATE

What's on your mind?

BEN

Why're you so concerned about  
my eating habits?

KATE

Because you look awful.

BEN

It's just fatigue. I'll be  
fine.

KATE

Well at least you look better  
than you did a few days ago.

BEN

No one working eighteen hour  
days looks good.

KATE

But most don't look that bad.

BEN

Do you want to get lunch?

KATE

It's about time you asked.

A DELI.

BEN and KATE are sitting at a table eating sandwiches with drinks and French fries.

KATE

That's the dumbest thing  
you've ever said.

BEN

It sounds dumb but if you  
took a second to think about  
it it actually makes sense.

KATE

[Pauses for a moment] It's  
not completely insane but  
you'd have to be insane to  
try it. Which is why it's a  
dumb idea.

BEN

This is why I don't discuss  
politics with you.

KATE

If you had something  
intelligent to say you  
wouldn't have a problem.

BEN

Just forget it.

KATE

Okay. How's the sandwich?

BEN

Pretty good.

KATE

And it was my idea.

BEN

I really missed these  
conversations.

KATE

Yeah, me too.

BEN

Are you going to finish your fries?

KATE

I guess your appetite's back.  
[Slides her plate of French fries over to BEN]

BEN

Thanks.

KATE

I'm just being polite. At least one of us should show some manners.

BEN

I was being considerate.

KATE

By asking for the side dish that I paid for?

BEN

Last time I checked you don't like eating anything deep fried but you hate throwing food out even more so you eat it anyway. I was doing you a favor.

KATE

These fries are baked. That's why I ordered this meal.

BEN

Oh. [Slides the plate of fries back over to KATE]

KATE

[Slides the plate back to BEN] I'm not eating them after you've breathed all over the plate.

BEN

I'm not sick.

KATE

But if you were polite you'd buy me another plate of fries.

BEN

All right.

KATE

But I couldn't finish them right now so forget it.

BEN

Okay.

KATE

[Looks at her watch] I've got a few meetings to go to. I'll meet you there at seven.

BEN

What?

KATE

Where. The place we always go to. And you're buying to make up for the fries.

BEN

I'll do it as a courtesy.

KATE

Whatever.

BEN watches KATE get up and walk out of the deli.

A SMALL BISTRO. NIGHT.

BEN is sitting at a table eating a breadstick. He looks at his watch and finishes the breadstick.

KATE enters and takes the seat opposite BEN.

BEN

Late as usual.

KATE  
Just keeping tradition. Have  
you ordered?

BEN  
No, I was waiting.

KATE looks over at a WAITER and he walks to the table.

WAITER  
Are you ready to order?

KATE  
Yes, we'll each have the  
lasagna, but I'll have the  
chocolate éclair for dessert  
and the gentleman will have  
the pie à la mode.

WAITER  
And would you like to select  
a wine?

KATE  
Yes, we'll have the house  
white.

WAITER  
An excellent choice.

The WAITER takes the menus and walks to the kitchen.

BEN  
In some countries people get  
to make their own choices.

KATE  
What were you going to order?

BEN  
That isn't the point.

KATE  
You're welcome.

BEN

And when did you start eating  
desserts?

KATE

A few years ago.

There is a pause in the conversation.

KATE takes a breadstick and looks away from BEN.

A few moments later the WAITER returns with two plates of  
lasagna, cutlery, a bottle of wine, and two glasses on a  
tray. He sets all of it on the table and pours the wine.

WAITER

There you go. Bon appetite.

BEN

Thank you.

The WAITER walks away.

BEN and KATE start eating.

KATE

Do you think he remembers us?

BEN

I doubt it.

KATE

Yeah.

There is a pause in the conversation.

BEN

Then again some people are  
really good at remembering  
faces. And we were pretty  
generous with the tips.

KATE

Well one of us was.

BEN

I tipped fifteen percent.

KATE

That's the rate for an average level of service. The way he treated us you should have gone to twenty.

BEN

The way he treated us he was lucky we came back.

KATE

That was an accident.

BEN

There were empty tables all around us but he dropped the tray on ours.

KATE

They were having problems with the new cook. Everyone was a little distracted.

BEN

Right.

KATE

You think they were lying?

BEN

No, I remember the food.

KATE

You never complained about it.

BEN

Are you busy tomorrow night?

KATE

Not really.

BEN

Lenny and Val had concert tickets but they're still

recovering so they gave them  
to me.

KATE  
Anything good?

BEN  
Wynton Marsalis.

KATE  
Impressive.

BEN  
Pick you up at six?

KATE  
No.

There is a short pause in the conversation as they continue eating.

KATE  
Six fifteen.

AN INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX. THE PARKING LOT. DAY.

FERN pulls into the parking lot in a new, silver Pontiac Solstice.

She parks it, gets out, closes the door, and then stops to admire it. She spots a smudge on the hood and wipes it off with the sleeve of her jacket.

FERN starts walking to the complex. She opens the front door and turns to take one more look at the car before she enters.

She walks into the building and climbs a flight of stairs to her office.

RAY walks out of the office as FERN enters.

FERN  
[Walking past RAY] Morning.  
I picked up the car last  
night. I love it. Tell your  
sister I said thanks again.

RAY

[Walking past FERN] I'll do that.

RAY continues on his way and walks down the stairs. The expression on his face becomes more serious.

RAY enters the shop floor. A TECHNICIAN is waiting for him at the entrance.

RAY

How bad is it?

TECHNICIAN

Actually it was just a mix-up. One of the guys fed the wrong data into the machine and then when I saw the part I panicked and thought it was a software thing.

RAY

Okay, I don't want to sound judgmental or anything, but [yelling] that's the most idiotic mistake I've ever heard of! How does that even happen! You look at the part, you look at the screen, and if they match then you don't have a problem! All you have to do is look! It's that simple! Why didn't you just look! Do you know how much trouble you could've saved me! I thought I was going to have a heart attack on my way down here!

TECHNICIAN

It was just a mix-up.

RAY

Involving a multimillion dollar piece of equipment! You don't call me up and tell

it's malfunctioning unless  
it's actually malfunctioning!  
I have real problems to deal  
with! I don't need these  
imaginary breakdowns to help  
pass the time!

TECHNICIAN

Okay it won't happen again.

RAY

Good. [Pauses to breathe] So  
who did it?

TECHNICIAN

What?

RAY

Who entered the wrong data?

TECHNICIAN

I'll tell you some other  
time.

RAY

It was one of the new guys  
wasn't it? [Yelling] I knew  
it! I hate new guys! I hate  
hiring them, I hate training  
them, and I hate it when they  
screw up! I never should've  
hired them in the first  
place! Next time you guys  
are doing everything no  
matter how long it takes! No  
more new guys!

TECHNICIAN

[Takes a package of mints out  
of his pocket and puts it in  
RAY's hand] I don't mind  
getting yelled at, but a  
gentleman should make sure  
that his breath is minty  
fresh at all times. It's  
just good manners.

RAY

[Pauses and then grins]  
Thanks.

TECHNICIAN

[Slaps RAY on the shoulder]  
Anytime.

RAY turns and walks out of the shop. He exhales into his hand to smell his breath and then puts a mint in his mouth as he climbs the stairs.

FERN glances at him briefly as he goes back to his desk and then continues working at her computer.

FERN

Anything new?

RAY

No, just checking up on the guys.

FERN

Oh. So anyway, on my way home from the dealership I made a right turn and hit the gas just to see how the car would handle -

RAY

Mint?

FERN

[Exhales into her hand and smells her breath] You can smell it all the way over there?

RAY

No, but you've been talking about that car non-stop for the past few days and I needed a way to tell you to stop without offending you.

FERN

Yeah, I guess I've been going on a bit. Sorry.

RAY

It's okay.

FERN

Do you think premium unleaded is really worth the extra cost? Just kidding.

RAY

[Sighs] This job's gonna kill me.

LINCOLN CENTER. THE PENTHOUSE. NIGHT.

Wynton Marsalis and his ensemble are playing "Joe Cool's Blues".

BEN and KATE are seated in the third row. Every seat in the room is filled.

KATE looks around the room.

BEN is focused on the performance.

KATE looks over at BEN, who is enjoying the performance, and then turns her head to watch the ensemble.

A STREET OUTSIDE LINCOLN CENTER.

BEN and KATE are walking down the street.

BEN

It's still jazz.

KATE

It's Charlie Brown.

BEN

So what?

KATE

So it's a joke.

BEN

No it's not.

KATE  
Do you take it seriously?

BEN  
Yeah.

KATE  
Then why were you grinning  
the whole time?

BEN  
Because it's a fun piece of  
music and it brings back a  
lot of good memories.

KATE  
So your taste in jazz is  
based on a children's  
cartoon.

BEN  
Just because it was composed  
for a cartoon doesn't mean  
it's an inferior piece of  
work.

KATE  
Doesn't mean it's beyond  
criticism either. It's not  
the kind of thing that should  
be performed at a place like  
this.

BEN  
Concerts at the Penthouse are  
supposed to be informal.

KATE  
When Bell was there he played  
Kreisler.

BEN  
He's a violinist. What else  
was he going to play?

KATE

You think violins are only good for classical?

BEN

Violinists are only good for classical. They're too uptight to play anything else.

KATE

And how many violinists do you know personally?

BEN

That's irrelevant.

KATE

No it's not.

BEN

Fine. But the concert was great.

KATE

No, the acoustics were great, the seats were great, the musicians were great, and the program sucked.

BEN

You just don't appreciate jazz.

KATE

I was the one who introduced you to jazz.

BEN

But now you're a musical snob.

KATE

I am not. I just expected some sophistication.

BEN

Yeah that's not aristocratic.

KATE

Shut up.

BEN

Typical upper class temper  
tantrum.

KATE

I've just got good taste.  
And I'm probably not the only  
one disappointed by the  
program. A few more concerts  
like this and Lincoln  
Center's history.

There is a short pause in the conversation.

KATE

I'll be meeting with a bunch  
of investors over the next  
few weeks so I won't be  
around much.

BEN

Okay. If there's anything to  
report I'll give you a call.

KATE

Okay.

BEN spots a small coffee shop about half a block ahead.

BEN

Coffee?

KATE

Sure.

BEN

So I guess you're getting  
along with everyone at your  
office?

KATE

So far. They're good people.

BEN

Have you tried the cafeteria  
food yet?

KATE

No, I saw it and then I  
ordered out. I guess you  
weren't so lucky.

BEN

The first time I went to see  
Howard he invited me to lunch  
so I couldn't refuse.

KATE

He eats that stuff?

BEN

I don't think he'd ever eaten  
there before and we've never  
been there since.

KATE

That bad?

BEN

Worse.

KATE

I don't know why but I feel a  
lot better now.

A SUBURBAN HOUSE. THE KITCHEN. DAY.

VAL is pouring a cup of coffee from the coffee pot.

LENNY enters, half asleep.

VAL

You know it's Saturday right?

LENNY

[Getting a mug out of the  
cupboard] Yeah. Good  
morning.

VAL

It's 9:15.

LENNY

Yeah.

VAL

So what's going on?

LENNY

[Pouring a cup of coffee]  
Nothing.

VAL

Nothing?

LENNY

Absolutely nothing.

VAL

Okay.

LENNY

[Sitting down at the table]  
Okay then.

VAL

[Pauses] Toast?

LENNY

No thanks.

VAL

Then who are you meeting for  
breakfast?

LENNY

No one.

VAL

I knew you were going out the  
second you came in here so  
you can save us both a lot of  
time by just telling me what  
you're planning to do.

LENNY

[Pauses] I'm sticking to my story.

VAL

[Sitting down opposite LENNY]  
You know, most days I'd probably just let it go, but seeing as it's Saturday, I've got all the time in world.

LENNY

Well you're going to need it because I'm not saying anything. Because nothing's going on.

VAL

All right.

LENNY

So we're good?

VAL

Yeah, I was just hoping there was some sort of mystery because there's not much to do on Saturday except laundry and grocery shopping.

LENNY

I know what you mean.  
[Finishes his cup of coffee quickly] I've got some work to catch up on so I'll be on the computer.

VAL

Okay.

LENNY gets up and walks out of the kitchen.

VAL remains seated, looking into her cup of coffee.

A moment later LENNY returns.

LENNY

I'm meeting Ben for  
breakfast. Can I have my car  
keys now?

CENTRAL PARK. A PATH.

BEN and LENNY are walking along. BEN is holding a cup of  
coffee and a muffin while LENNY has a coffee and Danish.

LENNY

And that's why I don't like  
lying to Val.

BEN

I didn't tell you to lie.

LENNY

But you made it necessary.

BEN

Yeah I guess I did. She's  
always a few steps ahead of  
you isn't she?

LENNY

Please.

BEN

Well I mean there's this and  
the surprise party, and  
that's just the last three  
months.

LENNY

And on both occasions I was  
in a no win situation. You  
can't give her credit for  
that.

BEN

Still. But I'll keep that in  
mind next time.

LENNY

Thank you. So why did you  
drag me out here? It's  
Saturday.

BEN

[Pauses momentarily] I took Kate to the concert last week, and I'm going to ask her out again.

LENNY

Oh.

BEN

I didn't want to tell you over the phone.

LENNY

You can go out with whoever you want; you don't need my permission.

BEN

I just thought you should know.

LENNY

Why?

BEN

Because we're family.

LENNY

I'm glad you remembered. Do you remember anything else?

BEN

I remember everything.

LENNY

Then what's the matter with you?

BEN

Nothing, so calm down.

LENNY

I will as soon as you forget about her.

BEN

I've made my decision and if you don't like it that's your problem.

LENNY

You mean it will be when everything falls apart again.

BEN

You think everything was her fault?

LENNY

If you thought she was blameless why'd you tell mom and dad you broke up with her?

BEN

That's none of your business.

LENNY

Please. There are a lot of words to describe women like her and you know it.

BEN

Don't talk about her like that.

LENNY

Someone has to because you won't call it like it is.

BEN

You think you know Kate better than I do?

LENNY

I saw what happened and I know that people don't change.

BEN

So you won't even give her a chance?

LENNY

No, and you shouldn't either.

BEN

I thought scientists were supposed to keep an open mind about things.

LENNY

Until the evidence is in. Then the debate's over.

BEN

The debate never ends. And people can change.

LENNY

It's still a bad idea.

BEN

And that's it?

LENNY

That's it.

BEN

Fine. I'll see you around.  
[Starts walking away from LENNY.]

LENNY

[Keeps pace with BEN] So you're just going to pretend that she was a completely innocent bystander? How long do you think that's gonna work?

BEN

There's something called forgiveness. Have you heard of it?

LENNY

There's also something called stupidity and you're living it.

BEN

Then I'll face the consequences on my own.

LENNY

Don't do this.

BEN

I have to.

LENNY

Do you honestly believe she's worth the trouble?

BEN

She only looks like trouble. There's more to her than that.

LENNY

Yeah, she always had that really charming aggression.

BEN

That's just the way she is and there's nothing wrong with that.

LENNY

[Sighs] I don't like her, I don't trust her, and I don't think you should either, but I trust your judgment.

BEN

Really?

LENNY

Yeah.

BEN

Thanks. I appreciate it.

LENNY

And I figure I can't stop you  
anyway so I might as well be  
around to collect the data  
first hand.

A SKYSCRAPER. HOWARD'S OFFICE. DAY.

HOWARD is standing in front of a large flat panel display,  
lost in thought.

KATE knocks at the door.

KATE

You wanted to see me?

HOWARD

[Turning around] Have a look  
at this.

KATE enters the office and stands beside HOWARD in front of  
the display.

The display shows a construction crew on the site of the  
resort. The hotel is only partially built, but several  
smaller buildings are already completed.

There are men working on the steels beams of the hotel,  
heavy duty vehicles driving around the site, and other  
construction-related activities going on.

KATE looks at the screen for a while.

KATE

Looks like everything's going  
all right.

HOWARD

On spec, on time, on budget.  
Just the way it should be.  
Good work.

KATE

Thank you sir.

HOWARD

I was talking things over with the board, and we're all really impressed with the job you've done. We'd like you to stay on as CFO permanently.

KATE  
I'm honored, but I'm afraid I'll have to decline.

HOWARD  
[Grins] You've already accepted a position somewhere else haven't you?

KATE  
[Smiling] I'm still meeting with people.

HOWARD  
Well, to be honest I figured there were a bunch of companies courting you all along. Frankly I was shocked that you agreed to stick around after the merger.

KATE  
You made a pretty good offer.

HOWARD  
But you could've made more somewhere else.

KATE  
Maybe, but this job had its attractions. And I've never been part of a management transition and I wanted to see what it was like.

HOWARD  
Any conclusions?

KATE  
They're a lot of work.

HOWARD

Tell me about it. So when will you be leaving?

KATE

I've just finished clearing out my office, but I'll be in touch till the end of the week if anyone wants to talk with me.

HOWARD

I appreciate it. Any suggestions about your successor?

KATE

I can name a few people who've been angling for the job. Any of them will do.

HOWARD

Yeah, people around here can be kind of aggressive. I hope that's not why you're leaving.

KATE

No, everyone's been great. And I like working with people who have some aggression.

HOWARD

I was like that too till I got my first ulcer. If you want a long career forget about people with attitude and go for substance. They deliver the same results for half the trouble.

KATE

I'll keep that in mind.

HOWARD

Well, it's been good working  
with you. [Offers his hand.]

KATE  
[Shakes his hand] Same here.

A HOT DOG STAND OUTSIDE A BUILDING ON THE NYU CAMPUS.

VAL is walking away from the hot dog stand while eating a  
hot dog. She is wearing a lab coat.

KATE catches up to her.

KATE  
Val?

VAL  
[Turning around] Hey Kate.  
What're you doing out here?

KATE  
I wanted to talk to you.

VAL  
Well I've got a meeting in  
about ten minutes...

KATE  
It won't take that long.

VAL  
All right.

KATE  
[Hesitates] I guess Lenny's  
told you what's going on with  
me and Ben?

VAL  
I've figured it out.

KATE  
Well you don't have to worry  
about it. I'm leaving  
tonight.

VAL

Okay.

KATE  
Could you call Ben tomorrow  
and tell him that I said good  
bye?

VAL  
It would be better if he  
heard it from you.

KATE  
I can't do it.

VAL  
[Pauses] You could've talked  
to Lenny or Fern. Why are  
you asking me?

KATE  
Because they'd tell Ben that  
he's better off without me.

VAL  
And I won't?

KATE  
You'll say that I'm better  
off without him because you  
know he needs to hear that to  
forget about me.

AN INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX. BEN'S OFFICE.

BEN is typing at his computer.

He finishes what he is working on and turns off the  
computer.

BEN gets out of his chair and looks out the window of his  
office. The sun is just starting to set.

After a while he walks back to his desk and dials a number.  
He waits for a while but there is no response.

BEN presses the receiver and then dials another number.

BEN

Hey it's me. How're you doing?

I know what mean.

Yeah, is Kate still at the office?

Oh.

No, she didn't.

Okay.

Okay.

No it's all right. I was just looking some things over and I thought I'd give her a call.

Okay.

All right. Thanks a lot.

BEN hangs up the phone.

He stares at the phone for a few moments and then picks it up and throws it against the wall.

BEN looks at the phone lying on the ground and then walks back to the window and looks out.

After a while he walks over to the phone, picks it up off the ground, and puts it back on his desk. Then he walks out of his office.

He walks down the hall and stops at FERN's office. FERN and RAY are both there at their desks.

BEN

Hey guys I'm heading out so I'll see you tomorrow.

FERN

All right.

RAY

Take it easy.

BEN walks away.

FERN

[To RAY] See, even he knows  
how to relax.

AN INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX. THE PARKING LOT.

BEN gets into his car quickly and drives away.

As he is about to pull onto the highway he sees that traffic there is moving slowly, so he stays on the street, but he hits a red light soon afterward.

BEN glances at the clock as he waits. It reads 6:05.

When the light turns green he hits the accelerator and pulls away. He maintains his speed by executing fast lane changes to pass vehicles moving more slowly.

BEN navigates through the rush hour traffic. A few motorists honk their horns at him as he cuts in in front of them.

He looks up and sees a few airplanes taking off and landing as he approaches the airport. The clock reads 6:42.

The traffic signal immediately ahead of him turns yellow. He steps on the accelerator and just manages to get through the intersection before it turns red.

BEN takes another look at the clock. It reads 6:58.

BEN pulls into the airport parking lot and quickly gets out of the car. He runs through the parking lot and into the terminal.

He slows to a fast walk as he enters and makes his way to a screen listing departures. BEN quickly scans the list and heads for the gate for a flight to Portland.

He makes his way through the crowd of people standing and walking in the terminal as he heads to the gate.

KATE is sitting on a bench near the line up for the flight to Portland. She picks up her carry-on and gets up to get into the cue.

BEN spots KATE and walks up behind her.

BEN

I called your office. You didn't even leave a message.

KATE

[Does not turn around to face BEN] I left a message with Val. She'll call you tomorrow and explain everything.

BEN

Then that's it?

KATE

[Pauses] Good-bye Ben.

BEN

Don't go.

KATE

It's better this way.

BEN

No it isn't.

KATE

[Turns around to face BEN] So you've completely forgotten what happened?

BEN

It wasn't your fault.

KATE

Lenny, Val, and Fern were there for you but I wasn't. How's that not my fault?

BEN

I didn't give you any reason  
to stay.

KATE  
You should've been the only  
reason I needed.

BEN  
I was self destructing.

KATE  
That doesn't change what I  
did.

BEN  
And leaving now will?

KATE  
It'll mean I can't abandon  
you again when you need me.

BEN  
A lot's changed since then.

KATE  
But not enough. If things go  
back to the way they were I  
don't know if I'll be able to  
handle it.

BEN  
My actions are my  
responsibility, not yours.  
You can't do everything.

KATE  
So I'm just supposed to be a  
spectator?

BEN  
You're never just anything.  
You make all the difference  
just by being here.

KATE

And when I don't like what I see I leave. What does that make me?

BEN

Human.

KATE

That isn't good enough.

BEN

We'll figure it out.

KATE

You don't know that.

BEN

You don't know that we won't.

KATE

I can't let you take that chance.

BEN

Every project's got some risk involved and I think this one's worth taking.

KATE

[Pauses] I have a plane to catch.

KATE turns and walks to the cue.

BEN stands where he is and watches KATE walk away.

A few other passengers line up behind her and the entire line slowly passes through security.

When all of the passengers on that flight have made their way through to board the plane, BEN walks over to a window on the other side of the terminal overlooking the runway.

A while later the flight leaves. BEN watches the airliner climb to altitude.

KATE

You're so predictable.

BEN turns and sees KATE standing behind him to his left.

BEN and KATE hug.

FADE OUT.