

**A Little Something for your Birthday**

by

Susan Walter

Contact:

Alix Madigan  
ANONYMOUS CONTENT  
3532 Hayden Ave.  
Culver City, CA 90232  
(310) 558-6000

19 September 2008

AGAINST BLACK, a female VOICE:

DIRECTOR (O.S.)  
Whenever you're ready.

FADE IN ON:

A 30-ish blonde, CINDY, trying to look comfortable on a floral print couch. She clears her throat, looks into the lens.

CINDY  
I guess it would have to be my  
sixteenth.

DIRECTOR (O.S.)  
Can you start the sentence with my  
most memorable--

CINDY  
Right. Sorry.  
(beat)  
My most memorable birthday would  
have to be my sixteenth. My dad  
rented the ferris wheel on the Santa  
Monica Pier. All my friends came.  
We rode it must've been a hundred  
times. At the end of the night,  
Richie Brenner tells me his mom is  
out of town, he has the car, do I  
want a ride home? I couldn't  
believe my dad let me go with him.  
I lost my virginity in his basement.  
(suddenly very worried)  
Can I say that? Maybe I shouldn't  
say that... about doin' it with  
Richie.

DIRECTOR (O.S.)  
Do you regret it?

CINDY  
All the other girls were doing it  
since they were 14.

DIRECTOR (O.S.)  
So you wanted to.

CINDY  
(sly smile)  
It was my sweet 16.

As she BLUSHES, we...

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN ON:

A TITLE CARD bearing the number: "30"

DISSOLVE TO:

RING... RING...

INT. SENNA'S BEDROOM - MORNING

A rumpled faux-redhead, SENNA, reaches for the ringing phone, presses it against her hair.

SENNA

Hi Mom. Thank you. ...Yes, you're the first. ...Wouldn't miss it for the world. See you then.

As the phone slides from her ear--

WILL

Your mother always call at the crack of dawn?

SENNA

Only on my birthday.

Senna's strapping, young bedmate, WILL, sits up.

WILL

Today's your birthday? Shit. Why didn't you tell me?

SENNA

Didn't I?

WILL

I think I would have remembered. So...? How old are you?

SENNA

30.

WILL

No, seriously.

Senna turns to look at him. Raises an eyebrow.

WILL

You are not 30!

She pats him on the head, gets out of bed.

WILL

Not that it matters. Older women are hot! You should take it as a compliment I thought you were younger. Senna?

As Senna disappears into the bathroom--

CUT TO:

EXT. SENNA'S LOS FELIZ APARTMENT - DAY

KNOCK, KNOCK, KNOCK!

DARLA

Senna!

DARLA, a wisp of a woman in culottes and combat boots, bangs on Senna's door. As she reaches under the mat for the key--

The door opens. It's Will. He avoids Darla's gaze as he skulks past.

INSIDE THE APARTMENT

It looks like a crime scene: *dirty dishes, laundry everywhere...* Darla's (non-)reaction suggests it's like this all the time. Senna smokes a cigarette as she makes coffee. Before Darla can ask--

SENNA

We broke up.

DARLA

You gave him three good weeks.

SENNA

He talked too much.

DARLA

Maybe you should get a dog.  
(Senna bristles: A dog?)  
They don't invite their friends over to drink all your beer, borrow your credit cards--

SENNA

I'm not getting a dog.

DARLA

Sucks that you broke up on your birthday.

(MORE)

DARLA (cont'd)

(then, upbeat)

I'll throw you a party! My hot friend from Harvard will make you forget all about jailbait--

SENNA

The only thing I want less than a party is for you to set me up with one of your preppie friends.

(then, suddenly)

What is that?

Senna spots a DIAMOND SOLITAIRE on Darla's ring finger. She grabs her hand, looks at her accusingly.

DARLA

I warned you we were talking about it.

SENNA

What about our dream of becoming crinkly old spinsters together?

(off Darla's grimace)

Okay, my dream.

(then)

I've got to give it to him, it is a badass ring.

DARLA

You want to try it on?

SENNA

No thanks.

DARLA

Afraid you're going to want one?

SENNA

If we were in opposite world, maybe. But I'm happy for you.

DARLA

No you're not.

SENNA

Yes, I am. Unhappy for me, but happy for you. You're going to be a beautiful bride.

She opens her arms. They hug, then:

SENNA

So when does the internment begin?

DARLA

Not for another year, at least.  
His parents are flying in from  
Sydney this weekend to meet me.  
We're having dinner at Le Dome.

SENNNA

Le Dome? What are you wearing?

DARLA

What I always wear.

SENNNA

So they're going to feed you  
through the window, then?

DARLA

Is it that bad?

SENNNA

You're coming to work with me.

CUT TO:

EXT. VARIOUS LA LOCATIONS - DAY

Senna and Darla disappear down the steps of the VERNONT AVENUE SUBWAY STATION. To the sound of the TRAIN accelerating into the darkness...

ARIEL VIEW of the route-- along SUNSET BLVD., past DODGER STADIUM, through the towering DOWNTOWN LA high rises to:

THE LA CLOTHING MART.

Walls of glass, soaring ceilings, hundreds of showrooms, crammed together for one purpose: selling clothes. Follow the enormous, two-story escalator up to:

A top tier SHOWROOM. As Senna inspects a rack of monotone separates--

DARLA

Captain Kirk called. He wants his uniforms back.

SENNNA

The samples are over there.

She shoos Darla toward a rack of sample dresses. As Darla half-heartedly looks through them--

RAMONE

I'm putting in my will that I want  
to be buried in these.

RAMONE, a handsome woman trapped in a man's body, holds out a pair of perfectly orange suede boots for Senna to see. She GASPS, snatches one out of his hand.

SENNA

OmiGod. Have to have them.

DARLA

They don't exactly go with your  
Stepford wives-wear.

RAMONE

Or your Stepford wife boss.

SENNA

People should have crushed orange  
suede, and damn it, I'm going to  
bring it to them! Vanessa will deal  
with it. I'm taking the boots.

RAMONE

You're the buyer.

She joins Darla at the sample rack. After a quick perusal:

SENNA

I don't like any of these for you.  
Let's go to the alley.

(then)

Messenger the boots...?

RAMONE

You got it.

Senna and Darla make for the door, exit onto--

THE SIDEWALK

As Senna pauses to light a cigarette:

DARLA

She's not going to like them.

SENNA

Who?

DARLA

Vanessa. The boots...?

SENNA

If she doesn't like them, we'll send them back. No biggie.

DARLA

Just because you started as her salesgirl--

SENNA

(correcting her)

Stylist.

DARLA

*Stylist*, doesn't mean you have to work for her forever.

SENNA

It's a good job.

DARLA

You're bored out of your gourd! That's why you smoke.

SENNA

I smoke to keep from stuffing food in my mouth.

DARLA

Another sign of boredom.

SENNA

At least I'm coping.

They arrive at colorful, chaotic SANTEE ALLEY. Senna snubs out her cigarette, then plunges into a stall, starts flipping through dresses. Darla holds up one of her discards:

DARLA

What about this one?

SENNA

Too Swiss Miss.

Darla gives it another look: *she's right!* Senna moves on to another stall. As Darla follows on her heels--

DARLA

Look at you. You're a bloodhound, driven by unstoppable instincts.

(then, stopping short)

Oooh. Stella McCartney!

She pulls a dress off a rack. Senna takes one look--

SENNA

Knock-off. Look at the stitching.

DARLA

I like it.

SENNA

I guess it's passable. Put it on.

She moves some racks to make an impromptu changing area. As Darla disappears from view--

DARLA

They say that following your dreams  
paves the way for love.

SENNA

I have no idea what that means.

DARLA

It means you're not going to  
attract love into your life until  
you're fulfilled by what you're  
doing.

Darla comes out. Senna pulls a PIN CUSHION from her bag,  
starts making adjustments to the dress.

DARLA

See? This is what I'm talking about.  
You're like the Picasso of clothes.

SENNA

I'm working my way up. That's what  
we do in the real world. When you  
finish school, you'll do it, too.

A VENDOR approaches.

VENDOR

If you want to stick pins in my  
dress you're going to have to buy  
it.

She sneaks a glance at Darla: *do you want it?* Darla nods.

SENNA

We'll give you fifty bucks.

VENDOR

It's a Stella McCartney!  
(off Senna's raised eyebrow)  
Seventy-five.

SENNA  
Sixty.

Darla offers up the cash. As the vendor takes it--

DARLA  
If you worked somewhere that sold  
clothes we like, you could loan me  
the real thing for free.

SENNA  
Uh-huh. What time is it?  
(grabbing Darla's wrist)  
Shit! We gotta go, I can't be late.

CUT TO:

INT. BEL AIR HOTEL - DAY

Senna enters the posh hotel, is greeted by FRANCOIS, the handsome, silver-haired MAITRE D'.

FRANCOIS  
Senna! Bon anniversaire! You get  
more beautiful every year.

SENNA  
And you get more forgiving.  
Speaking of forgiving--

FRANCOIS  
Your mother is on the terrace.

Senna makes her way to the terrace, where CELIA (svelte, stylish, impressively young-looking) is seated.

CELIA  
Senna darling!

She stands and cups Senna's face.

CELIA  
My beautiful birthday girl. Just  
look at you.

She pulls a large wrapped gift from under the table.

CELIA  
Happy birthday. Open it!

As Senna starts unwrapping the gift...

CELIA

Francois asked me how old you are,  
can you believe it?

SENNA

The nerve.

A WAITER approaches. To Senna:

WAITER

Something to drink, Mademoiselle?

CELIA

(perfect French)

Un thé vert, la même comme moi.

As soon as the waiter moves off--

CELIA

You didn't tell him, I hope.

SENNA

That I'm 30?

CELIA

Senna! It's nobody's business how  
old we are.

SENNA

"We?" I see. How 'bout we tell  
people you're not my real mom.  
That I was adopted. At 15. When  
you were 25.

CELIA

I'm all you've got. You should be  
grateful I'm not letting myself go.

Senna opens the box, pulls out a dinner plate, a salad plate,  
a teacup and saucer.

SENNA

You got me a china place setting?

CELIA

A woman your age should have decent  
china. Foolish at this point to  
wait for your wedding. Do you like  
the pattern? I love it!

SENNA

It's very... Bridal.

CELIA

I did it to empower you. So you're not waiting for a man. If I give you one every year, you'll have a full set by the time you're in your forties.

The tea arrives. Celia reaches across the table, pours a cup, pushes it toward Senna, willing her to drink.

CELIA

So Darla tells me you're dating a fetus.

SENNA

When did you talk to Darla?

CELIA

So it's true.

SENNA

Yes, I'm dating a fetus. Hard to get too serious with his mother always tagging along.

CELIA

Again with the sarcasm. It's no wonder you can't meet a man.

SENNA

I meet plenty of men, mother.

CELIA

No, you meet boys. Men have jobs. Homes. Facial hair. They take an interest in meeting your family--

SENNA

I broke up with the fetus, okay? You never met him because it was never going anywhere.

CELIA

If it was never going anywhere, why did you go out with him?

SENNA

He was fun.

CELIA

Fun? Is that it?

SENNA

He had a nice ass.

CELIA

So that's what you think you're  
worthy of. Fun and a nice ass.

SENNA

What else is there?

CELIA

You got your father's sense of  
humor, you know that? Everything's  
a joke, until it kills you.

As Senna reaches for a piece of bread--

CELIA

Don't eat the bread! If you're  
hungry, we'll order.

(to the waiter)

Monsieur! Nous voudrons commander.

As Senna tosses the bread back in the basket:

CELIA

So I thought after lunch you could  
take me shopping.

SENNA

Can we do it tomorrow? I have a  
meeting with Vanessa.

CELIA

What about?

SENNA

She wants me to take over the  
business. Then she's going to  
shower me with money, an army of  
assistants and a new car.

CELIA

(not a hint of sarcasm)

It's about time.

CUT TO:

INT. "LEGACY" BOUTIQUE - DAY

High-end merchandise, mature clientele: *where your mother  
might shop... if she was loaded.*

Senna crosses through the store, to--

THE OFFICE, where the well-heeled store owner, VANESSA, is sitting behind an enormous desk. She knocks lightly--

VANESSA

Senna! Come in. Have a seat.

Senna sits.

VANESSA

It's been six years you've been with Legacy. When you first came to me, you were like a little sheep, so timid and eager to please. I did my best to shepherd you, but I fear my little sheep has lost her way.

SENNA

If this is about the boots...

VANESSA

I know you think the clothes here are boring. But my customers aren't flashy. They're practical.

SENNA

I'm sorry. I'll tone it back.

VANESSA

I'm tired of constantly reigning you in, Senna. I've hired a buyer whose sensibilities are in line with my customers'. If you want to stay on as a salesgirl--

SENNA

A salesgirl?

VANESSA

Obviously it would mean a pay cut. I don't imagine you'd want to do it indefinitely, just until you find another job. I'll give you a strong reference, of course...

Vanessa keeps talking, but Senna suddenly can't hear her.

CUT TO:

EXT. LOS FELIZ RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Darla is waiting outside the trendy restaurant. Senna approaches, still looking shell-shocked.

DARLA

There you are! I'm sorry I didn't call you back. My battery died.

She opens the door...

DARLA

I ordered take out, I need your help carrying.

...Nudges Senna...

INSIDE THE RESTAURANT

...Leads her through the bar. Senna stops short when she sees--

SENNAS FRIENDS

Surprise!

Twenty people, sitting at a large table, smiling up at her. As Senna stands there, not knowing whether to laugh or cry...

CUT TO:

INT. LOS FELIZ RESTAURANT - LATER THAT NIGHT

Senna's birthday party, as seen from a distance.

Senna is crammed into the booth, surrounded by friends. We hear overlapping snippets of conversation:

A ROSY CHEEKED GIRL clutching a Margarita:

ROSY CHEEKED GIRL

I'm totally dreading turning 30.

Darla, showing off her ring:

DARLA

He put it on my toothbrush!

STEVE, her geek-chic, Aussie boyfriend, explaining how he came to buy it:

STEVE

People make a big deal about size and clarity, but the most important consideration by far is cut. Small inclusions don't matter, it's the cutting that affects how much the stone sparkles...

And Senna, wishing she could crawl under the table. After a long, miserable beat, she squeezes her way out, sneaks out to--

THE BAR

The CHISELED BARTENDER approaches with a drink.

CHISELED BARTENDER

Happy Birthday.

SENNA

Thanks.

CHISELED BARTENDER

Let me guess. 29 again?

SENNA

Is that supposed to be funny?

CHISELED BARTENDER

Didn't know you were so touchy about it.

Then, to someone standing behind her:

CHISELED BARTENDER

Can I get you something, bud?

Senna looks over her shoulder to see a well-groomed man in an expensive suit, ADAM. She takes him in: broad-shouldered, conservatively dressed...

ADAM

Frozen strawberry Daiquiri, please.

*...definitely not from around here.*

CHISELED BARTENDER

You serious?

Adam nods: *he's serious*. As the bartender moves off to make the drink, he catches Senna looking.

ADAM

It's the palm trees. They make me  
feel like I'm on vacation.

He's smiles at her. *He's good-looking...*

ADAM

When you live at the beach and  
every day's a beach day, where do  
you holiday? Siberia?

*...And kind of funny. Ok, she'll bite:*

SENNNA

Is that where you're from?

ADAM

Close. Boston. Moved here a week  
ago. I'm hoping to get discovered.

SENNNA

Rock star or actor?

ADAM

Rock star, of course.

SENNNA

What do you play?

ADAM

Nothing yet. It's really more of a  
back-up plan.

She smiles. *She's starting to like this guy.*

SENNNA

So you came here for a job?

ADAM

My firm opened an office downtown.  
I said I'd try it for a year. I  
want to live in at least a half  
dozen cities before I pick one to  
settle down and start a family in.

SENNNA

How very thorough of you. Are you  
auditioning wives, too?

ADAM

I'm afraid I can't tell you that.  
Excuse me one second.

He pulls a Dictaphone from his pocket:

ADAM  
(into the recorder)  
Attractive redhead at the bar, asks  
good questions, two points.  
(then, looking up)  
Sorry.

CHISELED BARTENDER  
Here you go. Strawberry Daiquiri.

The bartender places the drink in front of Adam. He tries to get Senna's attention. *No chance.*

SENNNA  
Where are you living?

ADAM  
Santa Monica.

SENNNA  
Long way to come for a Daiquiri.

ADAM  
I was supposed to meet someone, an old friend from college, but I must have missed her. She was having a birthday dinner for some friend of hers, Sierra, or Henna... some hippy, crunchy name you only hear in California.

Senna perks up: *could it be...?*

ADAM  
I'm actually kind of relieved I missed the party.

SENNNA  
Why's that?

ADAM  
My friend, Darla, kind of fancies herself as a matchmaker.

*Yep. Darla's friend from Harvard.*

SENNNA  
She wanted to set you up with the hippy, henna girl?

ADAM

I hate being set up, but she begged.

Senna's smile suddenly falters.

SENNA

Begged? Why would she beg?

ADAM

Apparently this girl has a hard time meeting the right sort of men.

SENNA

What 'sort of men' does she meet?

ADAM

Y'know... Guys she could never be serious about.

SENNA

So she's a slut?

ADAM

I don't know about that, maybe just a little lost.

(lost?)

Y'know, went to art school for a couple years, works some nowhere job in retail. I'm not sure, I wasn't really interested, I just came as a favor to my friend.

SENNA

Because she begged.

ADAM

Yeah, pretty much.

As Senna suppresses the urge to clobber him--

DARLA

You made it!

A tipsy Darla bounds up to the bar, gives Adam a hug.

ADAM

You're here! I looked for you--

DARLA

I'm small. You've got to look hard. I see you met Senna.

The color drains from Adam's face as he realizes...

SENNA  
Not officially.

DARLA  
Allow me. Adam, this is Senna, my BFF. Senna, meet Adam from Boston. We went to Harvard together. He's a lawyer but has other attractive qualities.

SENNA  
I'm going home.

DARLA  
You can't leave now--

Senna stands, looks at Adam...

SENNA  
It was four years at San Francisco Art Institute, and a Masters from Cal State. Oh, and I got fired from the nowhere job, so now I'm an unemployed-hippy-slut.

...Then makes for the door.

OUTSIDE THE RESTAURANT

Senna's hands tremble as she lights a cigarette.

DARLA  
Senna?

SENNA  
I told you no set-ups!

DARLA  
I'm sorry.  
(then)  
Did you really get fired?

SENNA  
No, I lied.

DARLA  
Did she say why?

SENNA  
I suck at my job, that's why.

DARLA

You did not suck at that job. You just outgrew it. I'm glad you got fired. Now you can do whatever you want.

SENNA

Like what?

DARLA

Your degree's in design--

SENNA

It takes forever to break through as a designer. I'm not 29 anymore.

DARLA

Ok Miss negative pants, you're cruisin' for a pep talk.

SENNA

No pep talks.

DARLA

(singing a la R. Kelly)  
*I believe you can fly... I believe you can touch the sky...*

SENNA

I'm going home.

DARLA

Ok, ok, I'll stop. I'll walk with you. Just let me get my purse.

As Darla prances back inside, Senna looks up to see--

Adam, handing his ticket to a valet. He catches her staring.

ADAM

Senna. I am so sorry.

SENNA

It's ok.

ADAM

Darla didn't beg. I wanted to come. I just didn't want you to think I was the kind of guy who needed to be set-up. I was trying to impress you and instead I insulted you. I'm sorry. I would have liked a chance to get to know you.

As Senna finds herself uncharacteristically speechless--

DARLA  
Bartender Brad's pouring flaming  
fuzzy navels, on the house!

Darla disappears back inside. The valet is holding Adam's car door open. Adam smiles wistfully at her...

ADAM  
Happy Birthday.

He gets in his car. As Senna watches him drive off, we...

FADE OUT.

FADE IN ON:

The CHISELED BARTENDER BOY on a stool.

CHISELED BARTENDER  
My most memorable birthday? Yeah,  
okay. My most memorable birthday  
was my 21st. I had it bad for this  
friend of my little sister's. She  
was only eighteen but she was--  
(pantomimes breasts)  
Y'know... mature.

DIRECTOR (O.S.)  
One second, sorry.

The DIRECTOR enters the frame. It's DARLA.

DARLA  
I just want to move the mic back--

CHISELED BARTENDER  
Am I talking too loud?

DARLA  
No, no. You're perfect. So it's  
your 21st birthday...

She moves back OUT OF FRAME.

CHISELED BARTENDER  
Right. And my sister brings this  
chick over to my apartment, and I'm  
thinkin' wow, happy birthday to me.  
My sister takes off, me and... God I  
can't even remember her name...  
(MORE)

## CHISELED BARTENDER (cont'd)

Amanda, Mandy, something like that. Anyway the two of us start drinking tequila shots. Next thing I know she's passed out on my toilet, covered in vomit. I had to call my sister at like 2 in the morning. It was embarrassing as hell. That's definitely my most memorable birthday.

The bartender boy smiles sheepishly, and we...

FADE TO BLACK.

**TITLE CARD: "31"**

DISSOLVE TO:

DARLA  
Senna? SENNA!?

INT. DARLA'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Senna sleeps on a pull out bed in Darla's tiny spare room. There are UNOPENED WEDDING PRESENTS everywhere.

DARLA (O.S.)  
Senna, wake up!

Senna wakes to see Darla standing over her holding the phone.

SENNA  
(into the phone)  
Hello? Hi mom. Yes, you're the  
first. Of course I'm coming. Bye-  
bye.

The phone droops from Senna's arm. The screen goes--

BLACK.

In the darkness:

Pots CLANG! Cupboards SLAM!

FADE IN ON:

INT. DARLA'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Senna wakes with a start. She rolls out of bed, squeezes past the GIFTS into the kitchen to see--

SENNA  
Oh! Sorry!

STEVE  
Shit, sorry!

Steve's making pancakes. In the nude. As he covers his privates with a frying pan--

Darla walks out of the bedroom, wearing yoga clothes. She stops short when she sees them.

STEVE  
I forgot she was staying with you.

As he scurries off--

SENNA  
I told you I'd be imposing--

DARLA  
You know his penis looks like a hairy mushroom. Like every other guy's. Big wow.

SENNA  
Still...

DARLA  
Most of my stuff's already at his place, we just crashed here so I could go to yoga. Wanna come?

SENNA  
Thanks, but I gotta go peddle my wares.

CUT TO:

EXT. VARIOUS LOCATIONS - MONTAGE

Senna pulls a dozen PURSES out of the storage space in Darla's garage, tosses them in the back of her aging Subaru.

She drives west, to the glittering, tree-lined streets of Beverly Hills. She parks on swanky BEVERLY DRIVE, heads into--

A BOUTIQUE

Shakes the MANAGER's hand, shows off her purse, gives her a product card, leaves with a smile. As the manager tosses the one-sheet into the trash--

Senna hits another store, then another. Her stack of one-sheets dwindles as she pounds the pavement: ROBERTSON BLVD., FRED SEGAL on Melrose, LARCHMONT VILLAGE, swinging SILVERLAKE.

Back in the car, she checks her watch, heads downtown to...

INT. LA CLOTHING MART - SHOWROOM - DAY

Ramone's showroom, where her purses are on display. As she adds two new ones to the collection:

SENNA

They look so lonely, sitting there.

RAMONE

They have each other.

SENNA

How come Georgio gets a whole wall  
and mine are all crammed in the  
corner?

(then)

Don't answer that.

RAMONE

Your bags are gorgeous. Buyers have  
no imagination. The ones that do--

SENNA

Still hurts.

RAMONE

Hey! She did you a favor. You're  
living your dream.

SENNA

Broke and on my best friend's  
couch, just how I imagined it.

Just then, a striking WOMAN in big sunglasses, LISA KLINE, walks in, entourage in tow. She nods to Ramone.

SENNA

Who's that?

RAMONE

Lisa Kline.

SENNA

The Lisa Kline? Of Lisa Kline on  
Robertson?

RAMONE  
And Beverly Drive, and Malibu.

SENNA  
Did you show her my purses?

RAMONE  
She's only looking for coats. I  
have to go tell her I don't have  
any. This is L.A., you want coats,  
go to New York!

SENNA  
(re: her bag)  
She's carrying a Birkin.

RAMONE  
If you had three stores, you'd have  
a Birkin, too.  
(then)  
Shouldn't you be at lunch?

SENNA  
(looking at his watch)  
Oh shit!

And as she bolts out the door--

CUT TO:

INT. BEL AIR HOTEL RESTAURANT - DAY

Celia sits at her primo table by the window, sipping tea.  
She catches a waiter looking at her.

CELIA  
She'll be here any minute.

He moves off. Celia pulls a wilted flower from the bouquet,  
adjusts Senna's napkin, polishes her wine glass. Finally--

Senna enters. Celia WAVES, then vigorously points to her  
watch (you're late!). As Senna starts toward her--

She spies Francois chatting with a customer. A mischievous  
grin leaks out onto her face. As she passes the dapper  
Maitre d', she whispers in his ear.

SENNA  
I'm 31.

HOLD ON Francois as he REACTS, then REJOIN--

Senna, as she kisses her mother hello.

CELIA

What did you say to Francois?

SENNNA

When?

CELIA

Just now. You whispered something in his ear.

SENNNA

Just hello.

CELIA

That waiter has been hovering over me for half an hour.

SENNNA

Sorry. I was at the Mart.

CELIA

The Mart!? You should be going straight to the boutique owners.

SENNNA

I do. They have a million wanna-be designers knocking on their doors.

CELIA

Wanna-be? Is that what you think you are, a wanna-be? You know why I named you Senna? Your father didn't want to, said it was too weird--

(imitating him)

*'That's not a name! Where'd you even get it?'* I made it up. So the world will know you're one of a kind. Don't forget that!

Celia pulls out a small, wrapped gift out of her purse.

SENNNA

Looks a little small for a place setting.

CELIA

I'm not giving you china anymore.

SENNNA

Why not?

CELIA

Because it was a lie.

She thrusts the gift on Senna. Senna unwraps it. Inside the box: a delicate PENDANT, an antique heart with diamonds.

CELIA

Your father gave it to me on our wedding day.

SENNNA

I can't take Dad's gift to you--

CELIA

It brought me ten years of the best love a woman could know!

Senna obediently puts on the necklace.

SENNNA

How does it look?

CELIA

You won't like it. But nothing else seems to be working. Although I don't imagine you're going to meet a man living on Darla's couch.

SENNNA

It's only until I get my first big order.

CELIA

What are you going to do after she gets married? They're not going to keep a second apartment just for you.

SENNNA

I know.

CELIA

You can always move back in with me.

As Senna's eyes flash with terror--

CUT TO:

INT. "LEGACY" BOUTIQUE - DAY

Senna waits outside Vanessa's closed office door. A SALESGIRL stares at her from behind the register. Senna meets her gaze, she looks away. An endless beat goes by. Finally:

SALESGIRL  
She says you can go in.

Senna steps into--

VANESSA'S OFFICE.

VANESSA  
Senna! What a surprise.

SENNAA  
Thank you for seeing me.

VANESSA  
Don't be silly. I hear you're  
designing now.  
(re: her handbag)  
Is that one of yours?

SENNAA  
Yes.

VANESSA  
Festive.  
(then)  
So how's it going?

SENNAA  
I'm just getting off the ground.  
You know how hard it is for new  
designers.

VANESSA  
What can I do for you, Senna?

SENNAA  
I know my purses aren't for  
Legacy...

Senna gives her a chance to disagree. She doesn't.

SENNAA  
While I'm getting the business of  
the ground, I was hoping to find  
some part time work. As a  
salesgirl. Just to make ends meet.

VANESSA  
You know I care about you, Senna.  
I have a million girls clamoring to  
work for me. You don't want to be  
a salesgirl.  
(MORE)

VANESSA(cont'd)

And I don't want someone whose  
heart is somewhere else. I'm  
sorry.

CUT TO:

EXT. "LEGACY" BOUTIQUE - DAY

Senna tosses her purse into her trunk and SLAMS the door.  
The CIGARETTES come out. As she inhales fiercely...

CUT TO:

INT. DARLA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Candles flicker, balloons dance on the ceiling. Darla is  
rearranging the furniture as Senna enters looking haggard.

DARLA  
Happy, happy!

SENNNA  
Drink.

And as she beelines for the bar--

CUT TO:

INT. DARLA'S APARTMENT - A SHORT WHILE LATER

The party is in full swing. Steve, the resident expert,  
mixes colorful martinis for a cluster of friends:

STEVE  
No, no, I was just reading about  
this. People think Vodka comes  
from potatoes, but actually it can  
be made from any fermentable  
material-- soy, wheat, beets, even  
by-products of oil refining or wood  
pulp processing...

Darla interrupts:

DARLA  
Have you seen Senna?

Steve points, Darla looks. Senna sees her, waves, holds up  
her empty glass: *can you bring me another?*

Darla scoops a drink off the bar, turns back around to see--

ADAM  
Place looks great.

Adam. With CINDY, the 30-something with the memorable sweet 16th, on his arm. Darla looks at her, then at Adam: *Who is this person, and why did you bring her to my party?*

ADAM  
This is Cindy. We're working on a case together.

CINDY  
Our buildings face each other downtown.

DARLA  
Hello Cindy. Oooh, I think I smell my brownies. Cindy, do you think you could give me a hand?

CINDY  
Of course!

DARLA  
(then, to Adam)  
Take this to Senna.

She hands Adam the drink. As she whisks Cindy away--

Adam looks over at Senna, collapsed on the sofa, legs spread eagle, hair fanned out on the pillow. As he approaches he sees several EMPTY GLASSES in front of her: *she's had a few.*

ADAM  
Hey.

SENNA  
Hey yourself. Is that for me?

Their fingers touch as he hands her the drink. She downs it in one gulp, smiles up at him. *Even drunk, she's adorable.*

ADAM  
I'm Adam.

SENNA  
The rockstar. I remember. So?  
You get discovered yet?

ADAM  
Sadly, I don't think it's going to happen for me.

SENNA

Not with that attitude.

ADAM

Truth is, I have zero musical talent. No, less than zero. I have negative musical talent.

(negative talent???)

I make other people worse. I'm not exaggerating. When I was in second grade, my music teacher, Mr. Ponte, told me that some people were meant to just mouth the words.

SENNA

Your second grade music teacher told you to lip sync?

ADAM

When I told my mother she went ballistic. And then, strangely, Mr. Ponte just disappeared.

SENNA

What a coincidence.

ADAM

That's what she told the police.

(then)

You going to the wedding?

SENNA

Maid of honor.

ADAM

I wanted to be Maid of Honor.

SENNA

You didn't tell your mother...?

ADAM

(smiling, charmed)

Lucky for you.

SENNA

How are the auditions going? For the wife?

ADAM

Oh, the wife. Yes. No clear front runner yet.

SENNA

Good to know. I see you got some  
decent sportswear. Elie Tahari?  
(off his blank look)  
Your sweater.

ADAM

Oh. I don't know. It was a gift  
from a client...

Senna reaches under his sweater to expose the label.

ADAM

(reading it)  
Elie Tahari.

SENNA

MFA, Cal Arts.

Senna tries to retract her hand from inside the sweater. Her ring gets caught.

SENNA

Ooop. Ring's caught.

As she reaches the other hand in to untangle it--

CINDY

Hi.

Cindy appears. Just in time to see Senna with her hands up  
Adam's sweater.

ADAM

Hey! Cindy. This is Senna.

CINDY

Happy Birthday. I'm Cindy.

SENNA

Hello, Cindy.  
(re: the drink in her hand)  
Is that for me?

CINDY

(it wasn't but...)  
Oh. Sure.  
(then)  
Great party.

SENNA

It's all Darla.

CINDY

That Darla is amazing. I can't imagine going back to school now. Studying for the bar nearly killed me!

SENNA

You're a lawyer, too?

CINDY

Yes. But not at the same firm as Adam. We met through mutual friends. Also lawyers. Our buildings face each other downtown.

Senna looks at Adam: *Is this chick for real?* Just then--

The lights go OFF. A moment later--

DARLA

HAPPY BIIIRRTH-DAY TO YOU...

Darla emerges with a cake. The party guests all start singing. All except Adam. He's lip syncing. Senna puts her hand to her ear: Can't hear you. He shakes his head, no way.

EVERYBODY EXCEPT ADAM

Happy Biiirrth-day, to yooouuu!

Darla stops in front of Senna.

DARLA

Make a wish!

Senna looks at Adam, Cindy hanging on his arm. She sucks in her breath, closes her eyes, and BLOWS out the candles.

The room erupts in applause. Darla picks up the cake, beckons to Cindy.

DARLA

Cindy! Can you come help me cut the cake?

CINDY

Oh. Sure.

Reluctantly, Cindy lets go of Adam's arm. As she follows Darla into the kitchen--

Steve comes by with a tray of shooters. As Senna reaches:

ADAM  
You sure you should be having that?

SENNA  
It's my birthday. Le chaim!

She foists a shooter on him. They drink. Senna goes to set down the glass. Misses the tray.

ADAM  
Whoa! Let me help you.

He guides her arm toward the tray. As he stands there, holding her arm...

ADAM  
Maybe you should sit down.

SENNA  
Or you could just take me to bed.

She smiles seductively at him.

ADAM  
You do know I came with somebody.

SENNA  
If we hurry, she won't see.

As she starts walking backwards, beckoning to him to follow--

ADAM  
Watch out!

THUMP! She bits her head on a low-hanging chandelier. As her knees crumple--

ADAM  
Gotcha.

He catches her, spins her around, eases her toward--

THE BEDROOM. Stops in the doorway. *Not going in.*

SENNA  
Aren't you coming?  
(he shakes his head no)  
I'll make it worth your while.

In a mock STRIP TEASE, she flings off her sweater, spins it in the air. As she shimmies toward the bed--

SENNA  
OOOOOF!

She trips on a wedding gift, THUMPS to the floor.

ADAM  
Senna?

She doesn't move. He hurries over to her, nudges her gently.

ADAM  
Senna? Are you okay?

SENNA  
Mmmmmnnnnff.

Her eyelids flutter. Her mouth floats open. *She's out.*

He looks down at her a long beat, then grabs a pillow from the bed, lays it under her head.

Watching him, staring down at her, *we wonder what he's thinking as we...*

FADE OUT.

FADE IN ON:

VANESSA  
So these interviews are for your Masters thesis?

Vanessa, in a highback chair. Darla is behind her, adjusting a lamp.

DARLA  
In Social Work, yes. So I can become a therapist.

VANESSA  
And listen to people complain for a living? You must be a Saint.

Darla moves out of frame. A KEY LIGHT goes on. Vanessa sits up a little straighter.

DARLA (O.S.)  
Whenever you're ready.

VANESSA  
My most memorable birthday was my 30th.  
(MORE)

VANESSA (cont'd)

My friend Charlene threw me a surprise party. She told my husband to tell me he was taking me out for dinner, just the two of us. The morning of, he says he'll pick me up at 8. At a quarter to 9, he calls me from work, tells me he's stuck with a client, can I meet him at the restaurant? I tell him I don't want to go by myself, he says you have to go, Charlene arranged for all your friends to be there. It's supposed to be a surprise. So I go. My friends shout surprise, I burst out crying. That was the beginning of the end. He was supposed to pick up the cake on his way. Of course he forgot. So we didn't have one. We're divorced now.

(bitter)

But I'm not bitter. I have my career. It's for the best.

She smiles unconvincingly, and we...

FADE OUT.

FADE IN ON:

**TITLE CARD: "32"**

DISSOLVE TO:

RING... RING...

INT. DARLA'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - MORNING

Darla's old apartment, now occupied by Senna. Find her--

As she runs for the ringing phone, in a towel. Her Eiffel Tower ashtray, usually overflowing with butts, is now filled with coins-- a sure sign she hasn't been smoking.

SENNA

Hello! Hi mom! Yes, you're the first. ...Of course I'll be there! All-righty, see you then.

As she hangs up and prances off...

CUT TO:

INT. SENNA SILVER LAKE BOUTIQUE - MORNING

Senna paints the moulding of a tiny retail space in funky-edgy Sliverlake as--

DARLA

I can't believe you're doing all this yourself.

Darla walks through the open front door, two coffees in hand.

SENNA

Believe it, baby.

She takes the coffee from Darla. They toast.

DARLA

Drink your coffee. I'll paint for a bit. Where's the primer?  
(off Senna's blank look)  
You're not putting regular paint on the bare wood, are you?

SENNA

I was planning on doing two coats.

DARLA

You still need to prime.  
(re: the paint)  
What is all of this?

SENNA

Paint.

DARLA

High gloss acrylic is for bathrooms and indoor pools.

SENNA

The guy said it was durable.

DARLA

It's durable all right. If this stuff spills on your concrete floor you'll never get it out.

As Senna scans the floor to look for drips--

SENNA

Ahhh! Shit!

She TOPPLES a full can of paint. As she scrambles to mop it up--

DARLA

That's going to leave a mark.

SENNNA

What do I do?

DARLA

I'll tell you what you're not going to do. Paint! Come on, I'll go with you to get some turpentine. And exchange the paint.

They each grab some paint, head out to--

THE ALLEY

Senna pops the trunk of her aging Suburu. It's full of clothes.

SENNNA

Oh shit.

DARLA

We can take my car--

SENNNA

No, I was supposed to return these first thing this morning. They're not mine. I accidentally took someone else's order.

(off Darla's raised eyebrow)  
It happens!

DARLA

Go. I'll exchange the paint.

Wait! Where's the key?

(for what?)

To lock the store.

SENNNA

I never lock it.

(again, the eyebrow)

It's not like there's anything to steal.

Darla wants to reprimand her, bites her tongue.

CUT TO:

INT. LA CLOTHING MART - DAY

Senna stumbles into a store carrying armfuls of clothes.

SENNA  
Sorry I'm late. Whoa!

The clothes start slipping from her grasp. GEORGIA, the vendor, jumps up to catch them.

SENNA  
Thanks! That should be all of them.  
(off Georgia's look)  
No, of course that's all of them.  
Definitely.

A heliotrope CASHMERE COAT catches her eye.

SENNA  
OmiGod! This is my mom's color  
exactly. Her china, her curtains,  
her lipstick. She would die.

GEORGIA  
It's \$150. That's cost.

SENNA  
Can I put it on my P.O.?

GEORGIA  
Yeah, okay. Your order's over  
there. The balance is \$2200.  
\$2350 with the coat.

SENNA  
You're just going to charge me for  
the coat, right?

GEORGIA  
No, I'm going to charge you \$2350.

SENNA  
When I was at Legacy you let me  
defer the balance until the orders  
sold.

GEORGIA  
New businesses don't qualify for the  
same perks as established ones--

SENNA

You don't understand. I don't have enough credit to pay for everything up front. I'll lose the store!

GEORGIA

Then I guess you'll have to get it somewhere.

As Senna considers her options...

CUT TO:

INT. BEL AIR HOTEL RESTAURANT - DAY

Senna sits across from Celia in the courtyard, opening a birthday card. A GIFT CERTIFICATE wafts out. Upon seeing it:

SENNA

You got me a manicure.

CELIA

Twelve manicures. One a month for a year. I know you're on a budget, so I included the tip.

SENNA

I got something for you, too.

Senna hands Celia a large SHOPPING BAG. Reluctantly, Celia opens it. As soon as she sees the coat--

CELIA

Tsk! Senna!

SENNA

When I saw the color I knew I had to get it for you.

CELIA

It's beautiful. How much was it, I'll pay you back.

SENNA

It's a present!

CELIA

You're a single woman. You can't afford to throw your money around. Did you call Arthur?

SENNA

Not yet.

CELIA

Senna! I told him you'd be calling!

SENNA

I know. I just... I can't really afford an accountant right now.

CELIA

Accounting is not the place to skimp. You make one little mistake the IRS will be all over you.

SENNA

I'd like to hire an accountant, but I still have to pay for the clothes.

CELIA

You screw up your books you could wind up in jail! I knew this was too much for you to take on by yourself. There's only one thing to do: find you a partner.

SENNA

I don't need a partner. Just a little more cash.

CELIA

I have the perfect person!

(dramatic pause, then)

Me.

Senna opens her mouth to speak. Nothing comes out.

CELIA

It's perfect. You do the creative side, I'll keep the books, do the payroll, I'm great with customers. You said you needed more cash...

SENNA

I was hoping you could just loan me the money.

CELIA

What fun is that!? If I buy into the business, we can build it together! We'll probably need a lawyer to iron out the logistics...

(MORE)

CELIA(cont'd)

Ooh! I know just the guy! I hope  
I still have his number...

As Celia rummages through her purse--

HOLD ON Senna, looking mortified.

CUT TO:

INT. SENNA MELROSE BOUTIQUE - DAY

Senna stands in the doorway of boutique, which Darla has sanded and primed like a pro. Upon seeing her:

DARLA

She said no?

SENNA

Worse. She wants to be my partner.  
Why are you smiling?

DARLA

I'm just imagining it.

SENNA

This isn't funny. If this store fails I'll have to move in with her. Forever!

She slumps back against the wall. Suddenly realizes...

SENNA

That's wet paint, isn't it.

DARLA

Yep.

Darla extends a hand, peels her off the wall. The back of her shirt is covered with paint.

SENNA

Excuse me. I'm just going to go to the bathroom and kill myself.

Senna goes into--

THE BATHROOM

Looks at herself in the mirror.

SENNA

You are so fucked.

As she start unbuttoning her blouse, Darla peeks her head in.

DARLA

How much do you need?  
(off Senna's baffled look)  
Money. How much money?

SENNNA

I don't know. Like ten grand.

DARLA

(into her cell phone)  
Twenty grand.

SENNNA

Who are you talking to?

DARLA

She'll come right now!

SENNNA

Where am I going?

DARLA

You remember my friend Adam...?

SENNNA

Oh no. Not going there. I passed  
out stripping for him, remember?

DARLA

You want to be tethered to your mom  
for eternity?

CUT TO:

INT. DOWNTOWN LAW FIRM - DAY

Senna approaches the RECEPTIONIST at the posh downtown firm.

SENNNA

Senna Berges for Adam Pierce?

RECEPTIONIST

Last door on the right.

As Senna starts down the hall, we see she's got a SKUNK STRIPE of white paint down the back of her hair, her shirt and on her butt.

She reaches ADAM'S OFFICE. He's on the phone, waves her in.

ADAM

Yeah, listen, someone just walked  
in my office... Thanks.

(hanging up)

Hi.

SENNA

Thanks for seeing me.

She offers her hand. He shakes it. An awkward beat, then:

ADAM

Have a seat.

SENNA

I can't. I mean I could but...

She turns to show him her butt.

SENNA

It's still a little tacky.

ADAM

Right.

(then)

Are those your loan docs?

She hands him a folder. He flips through it with surprising quickness.

ADAM

We should be able to get them to convert this to an 80% value loan, then get you a second for the extra money you need. Technically, you'll be carrying two loans, but you'll qualify for a better interest rate, get more cash for the same monthly payment.

SENNA

How much cash?

ADAM

Enough to keep you and your mom from killing each other.

SENNA

Your mom's the killer, not mine.

ADAM

Alleged killer.

(then)

(MORE)

ADAM (cont'd)

I should have everything ready by Friday. I'll give you a call.

SENNA

That's it?

ADAM

That's it.

He walks her to the door, opens it for her.

SENNA

Thanks for bailing me out.

ADAM

Yeah, well, I wasn't going to, but Darla begged.

On that, she smiles. Then, against her better judgement:

SENNA

Darla and Steve are taking me to Stella's for dinner tonight, I'd love it if you'd come. You can bring Sandy.

ADAM

Cindy.

SENNA

Right. Sorry. Cindy.

ADAM

It's ok, we broke up. Turns out it wasn't enough that our buildings faced each other.

(then)

What time? For dinner?

SENNA

8:00.

ADAM

I'll look forward to it.

CUT TO:

INT. VERMONT RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Senna, Adam, Darla and Steve drink wine at a table for four.

STEVE  
(raising his glass)  
To the birthday girl. Our future  
queen of retail!

SENNA  
No, to you guys. Who collectively  
saved my ass. I don't deserve you.

DARLA  
We'll take our ten percent at the  
register.

SENNA  
Fair enough.

As Senna drinks, her diamond pendant shimmers in the  
candlelight, catching Darla's eye.

DARLA  
I see you're wearing the magic love  
karma necklace.

SENNA  
My mom gave it to me for my  
birthday last year. I try to  
remember to wear it when I see her.

DARLA  
It's endowed with special powers to  
help her find love.

SENNA  
I was a little afraid to take it.  
I mean, what if it doesn't work?  
Then she'll be even more  
disappointed in me. If that's  
possible.

DARLA  
Your soulmate is out there. You'll  
find him when the time is right.

ADAM  
Soulmate? Aren't we a little old  
to believe in soulmates?

DARLA  
You're only skeptical because you  
haven't found yours yet.

ADAM

I'm skeptical because it's statistically ridiculous. There are billions of people in the world! Surely I could make it work with at least.. I don't know... five?

DARLA

So you see yourself getting married?

ADAM

Absolutely.

SENNA

To the woman with the most points.

DARLA

You have a point system?

ADAM

Not literally. But I do believe in some sort of compatibility equation.

DARLA

So... marriage is a math problem.

SENNA

Marriage is dumb.

All eyes on Senna.

SENNA

If two people love each other, they shouldn't need a piece of paper to keep them together.

DARLA

We don't need it--

SENNA

So why get married? I want my man to come home because he wants to, not because he made a vow to.

STEVE

Just because I took a vow doesn't mean I don't want to come home.

SENNA

Then why take the vow?

STEVE

Because it's tradition, shared by virtually every civilization on earth since as far back as Ancient Babylon. In Mesopotamia, the man would claim his bride by dumping perfume on her head. I agree, like most traditions, marriage is not necessary. But isn't it the unnecessary things that make the human experience so fascinating?

Darla squeezes Steve's arm, looks expectantly at Senna.

SENNA

At least you agree its unnecessary.

Steve smiles. *He got to her and he knows it.*

CUT TO:

EXT. LA SIDEWALK - NIGHT

Adam and Senna walk down the sidewalk.

ADAM

So who do you think Steve and Darla voted the most unromantic, me or you?

SENNA

This is a competition now?

ADAM

I'm just asking.

SENNA

Definitely you.

ADAM

Me!? I'm not the one who said I don't believe in marriage.

SENNA

No, you said you don't believe in love. That's much worse.

ADAM

I said I didn't believe in a 'one and only.' That's different.

SENNA

I've never even been in regular love, so for all I know it's all a bunch of hoo-ha.

ADAM

You've never been in love? No wonder you say you don't believe in marriage.

SENNA

I don't believe in marriage.

ADAM

You will when you fall in love.

SENNA

The man I fall in love with won't believe in it either. That's why I'll love him.

ADAM

That's convenient.

SENNA

No, convenient is saying there are any number of women you could marry and be happy. That's convenient.

ADAM

Just because I don't live in a fairy tale doesn't mean I'm going to marry just anybody. I want someone who rocks my world. I'm just realistic that there's more than one woman out there who can.

SENNA

Then maybe I'm a romantic. 'Cause I'm not going to give my heart to someone if I think there's room in it for someone else.

They stop. They're outside Senna's apartment now.

ADAM

You think I'm not discerning enough.

SENNA

I'm sure you're as discerning as you need to be.

ADAM

You know what your problem is?

SENNA

I wasn't aware I had a problem.

ADAM

You think you're so incredibly unique that any man who doesn't fall for you immediately doesn't deserve you.

SENNA

It goes both ways--

ADAM

So you expect to know, the minute you lay eyes on him--

SENNA

I expect to feel something, yes.

ADAM

That's why you've never been in love.

SENNA

Because I'm choosy?

ADAM

Because you're delusional! Love is not a look across a crowded room.

SENNA

And you're an expert?

ADAM

I've been in love a few times.

SENNA

Yes. Congratulations on all your failed relationships.

ADAM

At least I haven't been waiting around for fairy dust to fall on me. That's not how it happens.

SENNA

Oh really! So how does it happen--?

On that, he GRABS her and kisses her HARD on the mouth. A fantastic kiss. *Clearly a long time coming.*

ADAM

You asked.

He turns and starts down the sidewalk. As Senna, heart beating wildly, stands there staring after him, we...

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN ON:

CELIA. Looking, gorgeous and completely at ease.

CELIA

My most memorable birthday? Well, I'm not going to tell you which one it was, just that it was right after Senna was born. I had always felt anxiety on my birthday--

DARLA (O.S.)

Why?

CELIA

Why? I don't know.

DARLA (O.S.)

You don't know, or you don't want to tell me?

CELIA

It's not a big deal. Just that my husband, God rest his soul... he didn't always forget, but when he did, we'd both feel bad. Anyway, the one right after Senna was born, that one was different. They were all different after that.

DARLA (O.S.)

How?

CELIA

To hold my baby and see my whole life in that sweet, angel face... Who gives a damn about flowers and chocolates. People get worked up about their birthdays because they expect to be treated special. But every day was special after Senna was born.

DARLA (O.S.)  
So you stopped expecting anything  
from your husband.

CELIA  
And what do you know? I was never  
disappointed.  
(then)  
So when are you going to be done  
with this thesis of yours?

DARLA  
The wedding sort of derailed things  
for awhile, but soon, I hope.

CELIA  
It was a beautiful wedding. I was  
hoping Senna would have one while I  
can still chew my own food.

DARLA  
I think things are looking up.

CELIA  
She'll screw it up. It's ok, I'm  
through kidding myself.

As Celia glumly accepts her fate...

FADE OUT.

FADE IN ON:

**TITLE CARD: "33"**

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SENNA'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Senna's bed, in a WIDE SHOT. There's a large LUMP under the  
covers. It's moving, up and down.

We hear heavy BREATHING, muffled GROANS, a GASP.

As we DOLLY IN toward the bed, we become increasingly aware  
of:

The PHONE, on the night table. The closer we get, the more  
we're aware of it. *Just when we're sure it's about to ring--*

A FOOT flies out from under the covers, knocking it to the floor. A moment later--

OPERATOR

If you'd like to make a call,  
please hang up and try again...

The sounds of lovemaking continue, until--

BEEP-BEEP-BEEP-BEEP. The busy signal sounds. Senna pops out from under the blanket. Adam pops out after her.

ADAM

You okay? What's wrong?

She pushes him off her, scoops up the phone, hangs it up. As Adam tries to pick up where they left off--

SENNA

What if she tried to call?

ADAM

It was 30 seconds.

SENNA

It's almost 7:30. Maybe I should call her. They're going to take her off to chemo soon.

ADAM

You're right. You should call her.

SENNA

You don't think she'd be mad? That I didn't give her a chance to call me?

ADAM

If you want to call her then you should call her.

SENNA

I'm going to call her.

She dials.

SENNA

Room 502, please.

(after a beat, to Adam)

It's ringing.

(another beat, then)

Mom? It's me. Did I wake you?

...I wanted you to be the first.

...To wish me...

(MORE)

SENNA(cont'd)

(smiling, relieved)

Thank you! Yes you are, the very first. I'm going to let you rest, but I'll see you in a couple of hours, okay? ...Okay, bye.

She hangs up the phone.

SENNA

I woke her up. She said I didn't...

Senna forces a smile. Her lip is trembling.

ADAM

You'll feel better when you see her.

He holds her tight. She breathes him in.

SENNA

I love you.

ADAM

I love you, too.

SENNA

I really mean it.

ADAM

So do I.

SENNA

Do you remember last year, on my birthday, when you said falling in love would change how I felt about... y'know, certain things. You were right.

ADAM

It does occasionally happen.

SENNA

This is important. Do you know what I'm talking about?

ADAM

Yes, I do.

(off her look)

I do!

SENNA

Because this is it for me.

ADAM

For me, too. If I say any more  
I'll ruin your birthday surprise.

(then)

I was going to save it for later...  
But I guess if you want it now...?

SENNNA

No! I can wait.

ADAM

Are you sure...?

SENNNA

Stop it. Yes, I want to wait.

She pulls him to her. As they disappear under the covers...

CUT TO:

INT. SENNA MELROSE BOUTIQUE - MORNING

The boutique looks terrific. Colorful corsets, funky tees,  
and of course Senna's purses, lined up like soldiers.

Nikki is at the register, helping an IRATE CUSTOMER.

NIKKI

Looks like that item went on sale.

IRATE CUSTOMER

I bought it before it went on sale.

NIKKI

Unfortunately, without a receipt I  
have no way of knowing--

IRATE CUSTOMER

Are you calling me a liar!?

Senna hurries over.

SENNNA

Hi, I'm Senna, the owner, did you  
want to return that?

IRATE CUSTOMER

I didn't buy it on sale.

SENNNA

How 'bout I give you store credit in  
the amount of the original price.

IRATE CUSTOMER  
I was hoping to get my money back.

SENNA  
Plus ten percent off whatever you purchase today.

IRATE CUSTOMER  
I guess I could find something I like.

As the grumpy customer moves off--

DARLA  
Happy, happy!

Darla enters. As she approaches-- SURPRISE! We see that she is very pregnant! She's carrying funny-looking drinks.

DARLA  
I brought Boba. Why's it so hot in here?

SENNA  
Air conditioning's broken. The guy's on his way to fix it. Supposedly. If and when he ever gets here, tell him it's not the evaporator coil.

(pointing)  
That lady gets ten percent off.  
(before she can ask)  
And don't go into labor. I can't handle another crisis today.

DARLA  
Not the evaporator coil, ten percent off, no giving birth, got it.

Senna hands Darla the keys, makes for the door.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

SENNA  
Hey mother of the birthday girl!

Senna steps into Celia's room to see her mom sitting up in bed, an I.V. in her arm, her head wrapped in an Hermès scarf. She goes to her, hugs her long and tight.

CELIA

Okay. That's nice.  
(you can let me go now)  
Okay.

As Senna pulls back, Celia notices she wearing the pendant.

CELIA

You look pretty.

SENNA

So do you.

CELIA

Oh, please.

SENNA

You do! Must be the scarf.

CELIA

I don't have a present for you. I thought about going to the gift shop, but I wouldn't want anything from this hell hole. Except what they already took from me.

(indicating her breasts)  
I wanted to keep them but the doctor said no.

SENNA

Mom!

CELIA

Your father got to keep his kidney stone.

SENNA

It's a little different.

Celia's lip quivers. She's trying with everything she's got to keep it together. Senna puts a hand on her shoulder.

CELIA

It's just that I worked so hard to keep them perky!

SENNA

I know. You want some water?

Celia nods. Senna gets up, goes to the sink. Celia watches her intently... *as if she can hardly believe that beautiful woman walking toward her is her daughter.*

CELIA

I want to get square with you about something, Senna.

SENNA

Mom, it's ok--

CELIA

If I don't say what's on my mind I might not get another chance, so you hear me, and you hear me good.

Senna nods. Sits very still.

CELIA

You're not like me. And it was always hard for me to accept that. So I nagged. I nagged until I made myself sick. Of course it didn't do any good, I couldn't change you. Thank God.

Celia reaches out and touches Senna's face.

CELIA

You have done more in your 33 years than I have done in my entire life. Your own business. I never even did my own hair!

(then)

I look at you and I am so proud. You're so brave and smart and talented. I don't know where you got it, it wasn't from me. Though I do have a knack for fashion.

SENNA

Yes, you do.

CELIA

I'm sorry Senna. I'm sorry I spent all that time pestering you to get married. I don't care if you ever get married as long as you're happy.

SENNA

Uh oh.

CELIA

What?

SENNA

I have some news but now I don't  
know if I should tell you.

CELIA

Tell me what?

SENNA

I'm getting married.

CELIA

(just won the lottery)

He proposed!? Oh baby, that's  
fantastic! I'm so happy for you!  
Tell me everything. How, when,  
where???

SENNA

He hasn't officially asked me yet.  
But when I hinted that I wanted him  
to, he said he was going to tonight.

CELIA

We have to get Mario to do your  
cake. He made the most magnificent  
profiterole tower for Annie Glenn's  
daughter. I'm going to call him.

SENNA

You can't say anything to anybody.  
It's supposed to be a surprise.

CELIA

I won't.

Just then, a DELIVERY BOY knocks and pokes his head in.

DELIVERY BOY

Mrs. Berges?

CELIA

My daughter's getting married!

SENNA

Mom!

DELIVERY BOY

Congratulations.

He sets the bags down on the table.

SENNA

You ordered lunch from the Bel Air Hotel?

CELIA

Of course! It's your birthday!

A NURSE enters. But before she can speak--

CELIA

My daughter's getting married!

As Senna throws her hands up in the air--

CUT TO:

INT. THE IVY RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Adam and Senna sit at a candlelit table, the remnants of dessert in front of them.

ADAM

Wow that was good. Perfect finish to a perfect day...

SENNA

The day's not over yet.

ADAM

It is for me. After that meal, all I want to do is curl up in a ball and sleep. I could sleep right here.

(off her look)

What?

SENNA

Don't 'what' me! I know you have a present for me so let's have it.

ADAM

Did I say I got you a present?

SENNA

Adam!

ADAM

I didn't give it to you earlier?

He starts looking around for it, patting his pockets.

ADAM

I hope I didn't lose it. Oh!  
There it is.

He smiles mischievously at her, then reaches under the table,  
pulls out a perfectly small box...

ADAM

Don't panic. I haven't forgotten  
your disdain for the traditional.

She flushes with anticipation as she holds it in her hand.

With a racing heart, she opens it. The blood drains from her  
face when she sees what's inside.

It's a KEY.

ADAM

So what do you think?

SENNNA

A key?

ADAM

I'm asking you to move in with me.

SENNNA

(wants to kill him)

This is your big surprise?

ADAM

(suddenly very afraid)

Maybe?

SENNNA

Adam, I told you this morning that  
being with you changed how I feel  
about things.

Adam stares at her. *No idea.*

SENNNA

You said you understood!

And then, it hits him. *Hard.*

ADAM

Oh my God.

SENNNA

I like the box. Very romantic.

ADAM

Senna, I didn't realize... you've  
always been so down on marriage. I  
thought you'd be relieved--

SENNA

Relieved!?

ADAM

I thought it was what you wanted.  
(taking her hand)  
Senna I am so sorry. We can totally  
get married if that's what you want.

SENNA

If that's what I want.

ADAM

No! I mean, that's not what I  
mean. I mean it is what I mean but  
not how I mean it.

SENNA

I can't believe this is happening.

ADAM

If I had known you wanted to, I  
would have asked, I swear.

She stands and makes for the door.

ADAM

Senna!

Adam JUMPS to his feet, TOPPLES the chair.

ADAM

Shit!

Nearby DINERS turn to look as he disentangles himself from  
the chair, rejoins Senna--

ON THE SIDEWALK.

Senna's getting into a CAB.

ADAM

Senna! Wait!

He puts his hand on her. She pushes it off.

SENNA

Let me go.

ADAM  
I don't want to let you go.

SENNA  
Well you should have thought of  
that earlier.

SLAM! Off she goes. As he watches her drive away--

WAITER (O.S.)  
Excuse me, sir?

ADAM  
What!?

It's his WAITER: with the check.

CUT TO:

INT. SENNA'S LOS FELIZ APARTMENT - NIGHT

Senna leans up against her front door, tears streaming down her face. She looks over at--

Her four-piece CHINA PLACE SETTING taunting her from it's perch on the buffet.

Her eyes narrow. She rips off her magic love karma necklace and CHUCKS it at the china. As it falls to the floor--

BANG BANG BANG!

ADAM (O.S.)  
Senna!

SENNA  
Go away!

ADAM (O.S.)  
No! Not until I see you.

Senna YANKS the door open--

SENNA  
There, you've seen me. Now go  
away!

Then pushes it closed. He STOPS it with his foot.

SENNA  
God damn it, Adam!

ADAM  
(through the crack)  
Please, Senna--

SENNA  
I don't want to talk to you.

ADAM  
You don't have to talk. I'll do  
all the talking. There's something  
I need to ask you right now.

SENNA  
So ask me.

ADAM  
Can't I come in?

SENNA  
No.

ADAM  
Okay.

One foot still jammed in the crack, he falls to one knee,  
BANGING the other against the door as he goes down.

ADAM  
Oww!

Senna peeks through the crack, watches as he reaches into his  
breast pocket and pulls out--

A giant PLASTIC ring. The kind you get in a gumball machine.  
He eases it through the crack. It's hideous.

ADAM  
Senna... will you marry me?

Senna looks at the ring, doesn't know whether to laugh or cry.

ADAM  
Please? Please will you marry me?

She opens the door. Adam topples over.

SENNA  
Where did you get that?

ADAM  
7/11. Gumball machine. I got you  
some other things, too.

Still on one knee, Adam empties his pockets onto the floor: a plastic SPIDER, temporary TATTOOS, an egg of SILLY PUTTY, a floating EYEBALL. Senna looks down at the assortment...

SENNA

I like the floating eyeball.

ADAM

It's yours.

He picks it up and offers it to her.

SENNA

How many tries did it take to get  
the ring?

ADAM

Fourteen.

She slides it on her ring finger, takes a good, long look.

SENNA

My mother's not going to buy it.

ADAM

First thing tomorrow, I'll take you  
anywhere you want--

SENNA

No.

ADAM

No?

SENNA

Picking out the ring is a rite of  
passage. You have to go through  
the anguish and humiliation on your  
own.

ADAM

Anguish and humiliation. Got it.  
I'm all over it. Can I come in now?

Senna hesitates, then steps back from the door to make room for him to enter. He scrambles to his feet, takes her in his arms.

ADAM

Still love me?

SENNA

I don't know.

ADAM

That's a step up from an hour ago.

SENNA

I told my mother you were going to propose. She got so excited.

ADAM

I did propose.

SENNA

Because I had a meltdown.

ADAM

I didn't propose to you because you had a meltdown, I proposed to you because I love you and want to spend the rest of my life with you. The meltdown was a bonus.

SENNA

You promise you're not just doing it 'cause you feel sorry for me?

ADAM

I don't feel sorry for you. You had a great night. You got a floating eyeball.

Adam holds up the floating eyeball for her to see. She can't help herself... she laughs. And as they embrace, we...

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN ON:

FRANCOIS, the maitre d', with a heavy French accent.

FRANCOIS

My most memorable birthday? Yes, I can tell you that. I had just come to the United States. My family was not speaking to me, I had left them and they were very angry. I was 24. I had been working for Monsieur Valéry since two months. The dishwasher. Terrible work. But I was in America, and I had a job, so I did not complain. Even though the work was miserable, I was happy to be working that day, not alone with my sadness.

(MORE)

## FRANCOIS (cont'd)

I remember, I was wiping lipstick off a wine glass, and one of the line cooks tells me Monsieur Valéry wants to see me in his office. I imagined the worst. That I was fired, and I would have nowhere to go. I go to his office, he gives me the telephone. It was my maman. She says, it's your birthday, for your present, I forgive you. I tried not to cry in front of M. Valéry. But I was too happy.

HOLD ON an emotional Francois, then...

DISSOLVE TO:

**TITLE CARD: "34"**

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ADAM'S BEACHFRONT CONDO - MORNING

Adam sleeps between crisp white sheets. It's early. The sun hasn't even peeked above the horizon. He opens his eyes to see-- Senna's not there.

Blinking back sleep, he forces himself out of bed, pads into-- THE KITCHEN.

Sees Senna, sitting at the table in her nightie, face as grey as the dawn. The table is littered with wedding paraphernalia: *invitations, menus, sketches of dresses...*

SENNA  
Look at all this shit.

ADAM  
It's early. Come back to bed.

SENNA  
I keep waiting for the phone to ring. She always had to be the first. Even in third grade, when I slept over Molly Meyerson's, she called the house at the crack of dawn so Molly wouldn't beat her to it. I didn't do sleep-overs for my birthday after that.

She holds up a Bridal Magazine with a picture of a profiterole cake on the cover.

SENNA

We argued for three days over profiteroles. She insisted we have them, I told her they were prissy-- which they are. I would wear a profiterole on my nose just to have her there.

Her lip starts to tremble. Adam sits down beside her.

SENNA

I had to have a winter wedding.

ADAM

You had no way of knowing.

SENNA

You know why? 'Cause the colors are better. I don't even want to look at this stuff now.

ADAM

So toss it. We'll do something small, at Steve and Darla's. Just our close friends.

SENNA

What's the point?

Adam tries not to look stung.

ADAM

Same as it always was. To get married.

SENNA

You never even cared about the wedding.

ADAM

You said you had it handled.

SENNA

Doesn't mean you can't have an opinion.

ADAM

Until just now, I didn't even know what a profiterole was, how can I have an opinion about it?

SENNA

Our wedding's not important enough  
to find out?

ADAM

I don't understand what you're so  
upset about. You want me to plan  
the wedding, is that it?

SENNA

Yes, that's what I want. For you  
to do it. Here!

She pushes the pile at him.

ADAM

I can't plan a wedding on an empty  
stomach. Let's go out for breakfast.

SENNA

You know I don't eat breakfast.

ADAM

So come keep me company. You're  
already up.

(off her silence)

Right.

And as he moves off, we...

CUT TO:

INT. SENNA VENICE BOUTIQUE - DAY

Senna's store is humming. She's moved to a larger space, on  
pricey Abbott Kinney Boulevard, near the beach in Venice.

Two salespeople assist customers on the floor. There's a  
third behind the register.

Darla enters, wearing her 10-MONTH-OLD BABY across her chest.  
She waves to the cashier, goes to look for Senna in the back.  
She's not in her office.

DARLA

Do you guys know where Senna is?

CUT TO:

EXT. BRENTWOOD HOUSE - DAY

A modest but well-kept 2-story Colonial. There's a SOLD sign on the lawn. Senna refuses to look at it as she walks up the path to the front door.

INSIDE

Moving boxes are sprinkled amongst empty bookcases and barren coffee tables. Nails poke out where pictures once hung. Senna walks past it all, UP THE STAIRS and into--

THE MASTER BEDROOM

Stops in the doorway. Unlike the downstairs, it is stuffed full of personal items-- perfume, magazines, pictures-- lots of pictures, most of them of Senna.

Senna grabs an empty box, goes to the dresser, opens the drawer. Underwear, nighties, sweaters...

She fills the box, seals it with tape, marks it with a Sharpie: GOOD WILL.

She opens the CLOSET, takes out a familiar HELIOTROPE CASHMERE COAT. Senna was right-- it is her mother's color. Even matches the wallpaper. Senna tosses it into a box.

She removes several dresses, throws them on the bed. As she turns back around, her hand flies over her mouth. There, at the back of the closet--

Is her WEDDING CHINA. Eleven place settings, stacked floor to ceiling, a perfect match to her one set at home.

With trembling hands, she removes a box, falls to her knees to open it. As she cradles a dinner plate in her arms--

DARLA

Senna?

Darla appears. Senna looks up at her, face streaked with tears. Darla crouches down beside her.

SENNA

She bought me the entire set.  
Look. Eleven boxes.

DARLA

You didn't have to do this today--

SENNA

What should I do with it?

DARLA

You could eat off of it. Or you could put it behind glass and stare at it. That's what we did with ours.

SENNA

She was saving it for my wedding.

DARLA

So wait for your wedding, then.

SENNA

What if there is no wedding?

DARLA

What do you mean?

Senna won't look at her. Darla suddenly looks concerned.

DARLA

You're not having doubts.

(no response)

Senna!?

SENNA

He wasn't even going to propose.

DARLA

You told him you didn't believe in marriage.

SENNA

He still should have asked.

DARLA

Why would he ask if he knew you'd say no--

SENNA

If he wanted me and only me, he wouldn't take no for an answer.

DARLA

Adam loves you.

SENNA

Adam's loved other girls, too.

DARLA

But he proposed to you.

SENNNA

Barely.

DARLA

That's not fair.

SENNNA

I don't want to be one of five.

(off Darla's puzzled look)

*'Out of the billions of people in the world, I'm sure I could make it work with at least five.'* You were there when he said that. I know nobody's perfect. I accept Adam's obsessive need to alphabetize. That he thinks fifteen minutes early is on time. I can even deal with the girly drinks and his stupid excuses for ordering them. But the one thing I need is for him to need me. Only me.

DARLA

I've seen him with his other girlfriends. How he feels about you... it's not even close. Trust it, Senna.

Senna looks down at the china. *Easier said than done.*

CUT TO:

INT./EXT. ADAM'S CAR / BURBANK AIRPORT - NIGHT

Senna sits blindfolded in the passenger seat as Adam drives.

SENNNA

I'm getting carsick.

ADAM

Almost there.

SENNNA

I smell the airport. Are we at the airport? Why are we at the airport?

Adam steers the car down a narrow drive, then stops.

ADAM

Okay. You can take it off now.

Senna rips off the blindfold. A VALET opens her door, helps her out of the car. ANOTHER VALET opens Adam's.

ANOTHER VALET

Good evening, sir. How long will you be traveling?

ADAM

Just 'til tomorrow.

SENNNA

Where are we going?

Adam goes to her, hands her a ticket. Her eyes fly open.

SENNNA

Vegas!?

ADAM

Dinner at the Bellagio, a show at Caesar's palace...

SENNNA

You're taking me to Vegas?

ADAM

You said I should go ahead and plan it, so...

He pulls out a RING BOX out of his pocket. She doesn't reach for it, so he opens it for her. INSIDE--

WEDDING BANDS, his and hers.

ADAM

I booked a chapel for midnight.

The color drains from her face.

ADAM

A nice one, with real flowers and a live string quartet. I know Vegas is kitschy, but we've been wanting to go.

SENNNA

To visit. Not to get married.

ADAM

This wedding planning is killing  
me. Let's just get it over with.

Senna looks like she just got slapped.

SENNA

Get it over with?

ADAM

You know what I mean.

SENNA

No, I don't think I do.

ADAM

I mean, if you want to do it, let's  
do it already! You do still want  
to marry me...?

SENNA

Not when you're like this.

ADAM

I'm sorry. How would you like me  
to be?

SENNA

What's that supposed to mean?

ADAM

You didn't believe in marriage so I  
didn't ask. Then suddenly you want  
to, so I do. Then you want to do  
everything, then you get mad at me  
for letting you. No matter what I  
do, it's not good enough for you.

SENNA

What if I don't want to get married  
in Vegas?

ADAM

Then I guess I'm not good enough  
for you. Lord knows I tried.

(to the Valet)

Can you bring the car back, please?

He picks up his overnight bag, hands Senna some money.

SENNA

What are you doing?

ADAM

They shouldn't charge you, but if  
they do--

SENNA

You're still going?

ADAM

I paid for the room.

SENNA

What are you going to do there?

ADAM

I don't know. Eat, drink, party,  
Vegas is just as fun for singles.  
Or so I've heard.

SENNA

So that's it? You're "single" now.

ADAM

I can't take the roller coaster  
ride anymore, Senna. I want a  
partner. Someone who cares enough  
about my happiness to meet me half  
way sometimes. Clearly that's not  
you.

Senna's mouth floats open as she realizes: *He's leaving her.*

ADAM

Your whole life can be about you  
now. Consider it my birthday  
present.

The car arrives. As he turns and heads for the terminal--

HOLD ON Senna, frozen in disbelief.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN ON:

Delightfully effeminate RAMONE.

RAMONE

'Birthday?' It's not a day, it's a  
week!

(MORE)

## RAMONE (cont'd)

From the moment you wake up in the morning you got people calling you, "What are you doing today, can I take you to lunch, what do you mean you're going with so-and-so, well I want to see you, too!" So inevitably you wind up apologizing for going to lunch with whomever you're going to lunch with, then hosting a party you don't even want, just to keep all those people who insist on--

(quotes with his hands)

"celebrating" with you happy. God forbid you tell your friends you just want to go home, make a pitcher of martinis and watch TMC. They'll never let you live it down! Of course no matter how hard you try to make yourself available to everyone who insists on seeing you, there'll always be someone you forgot to call and is pissed off that they weren't included in your--

(quotes with his hands)

"celebration." So a week later you wind up taking them out to lunch to make them feel better about not being invited to the party that was supposed to be about you! I swear, after age 12, birthdays are nothing but a pain in the ass!

He nods emphatically, and we--

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN ON:

**TITLE CARD: "35"**

DISSOLVE TO:

BEEP-BEEP. BEEP-BEEP.

INT. SENNA'S VENICE LOFT - MORNING

An alarm echoes across high ceilings and lathe plaster walls.

We PAN toward the source, over hand-drawn design sketches-- coats, pants, dresses-- on the dining room table, on the counters, pinned to the walls. In--

## THE BEDROOM

A few signature items tell us this sleek condo belongs to Senna. The clock (still beeping), the Eiffel Tower ashtray (sans butts), the fuzzy robe on the back of the door.

Yep, this is Senna's house all right. The question is... *where is she?*

CUT TO:

## EXT. GRAVEYARD - MORNING

Senna kneels by Celia's grave. Pajama's peek out from under her coat. She is pale and painfully sleep-deprived.

SENNA  
Happy my birthday.

And as she settles in to watch the sunrise...

CUT TO:

## EXT. LA GARMENT DISTRICT - DAY

The most colorful, noisy place you've ever seen. Senna stands in front of a wall of buttons, as an aging CHINESE WOMAN shows her spools upon spools of ribbon.

SENNA  
Too fat. Too shiny. I don't like the ribbing... that's nice, but I need it in more of a blue-black.

As the woman nods and moves off--

BUZZZZZ. Her cell phone buzzes in her pocket.

SENNA  
I'm at the Mart.

NIKKI (O.S.)  
Everything's cool. I just wanted you to know the samples from Hong Kong arrived.

SENNA  
How do they look?

NIKKI (O.S.)  
I haven't opened the box yet.

SENNA

That's okay. Anything else happening?

NIKKI (O.S.)

Store's pretty quiet. But some flowers came for you.

Senna perks up. *Flowers?*

SENNA

From who?

NIKKI (O.S.)

I don't know. You want me to open the card?

SENNA

It's ok. I'll be there in an hour.

She closes the phone. Stands there, lost in thought, until--

CHINESE WOMAN

Here. Blue-black.

The Chinese woman returns with more ribbon.

SENNA

That's it. I'll take all of it.

As the woman writes up her order--

Senna's eyes are curious, hopeful. She heads for the register with a spring in her step.

CUT TO:

INT. SENNA VENICE BOUTIQUE - DAY

Trendy hobo bags, colorful ankle boots, and some of the sexiest dress coats you've ever seen.

A few upscale customers mill about the sleek retail space as Senna enters, waves to Nikki, beelines for--

HER OFFICE.

There, on her desk, is a bouquet of roses. Lemon yellow, creamsicle, lavender. As she reaches for the card--

NIKKI

Who are they from?

Nikki appears in the doorway.

Senna opens the card, making a point not to look eager. As she flips it open--

Her eyes register disappointment. *Huge disappointment. She was hoping they were from someone else.*

SENNA

'My wife loves her coat. We want to bring your line to Paris. Please expect a call from me, warm regards, Emile...' something I can't pronounce.

NIKKI

Paris! Omigod! We're going international!

Nikki grabs her and hugs her. A slow smile spreads over Senna's face as she realizes...

SENNA

My coats are going to Paris.

NIKKI

Le fashion capital du monde!

SENNA

Happy Birthday to me!

They high five.

NIKKI

Where are you celebrating?

SENNA

Darla always plans something great.

As Nikki moves off, Senna picks up the phone, dials.

SENNA

Darla! Hey, it's me.

DARLA (O.S.)

Oh, hey. Hold on a sec.

We can hear a BABY CRYING in the background, and Darla trying to SHUSH him.

SENNA

You want to call me back?

DARLA (O.S.)  
It's always like this. What's up?

SENNA  
I was just checking in... y'know,  
to see what was happening tonight.

DARLA (O.S.)  
Hey! Mommy's on the phone!  
(then)  
Sorry, what?

SENNA  
I was just asking about the plans  
for tonight. Am I coming there?  
Are we meeting somewhere...?  
(long beat of silence)  
Darla?

DARLA (O.S.)  
Oh my God, Senna... I suck. I am  
the worst friend ever...

The color drains from Senna's face: *Darla forgot her birthday.*

DARLA (O.S.)  
Hey! Don't touch that. That's  
very dangerous.

SENNA  
You're busy.

DARLA (O.S.)  
No, wait! Don't hang up. Shit, I'm  
a putz! With Steve out of town--

SENNA  
It's okay.

DARLA (O.S.)  
It's so totally not okay. I can't  
even take you out, I don't have a  
babysitter.

Just then, Nikki pokes her head in, indicates the phone.

NIKKI  
Line two.

SENNA  
I have to take another call. We'll  
talk later.

As Nikki starts off--

SENNA

Nikki, wait! If you were going to go out someplace fabulous tonight, where would you go?

NIKKI

White Lotus. If you can afford \$20 cocktails.

SENNA

You want to see if the other girls want to come? My treat.

NIKKI

Hell yeah!

Nikki moves off. Senna smiles to herself. As she picks up the phone...

CUT TO:

INT. SENNA VENICE BOUTIQUE - EVENING

SENNA

See you tonight.

Senna waves to Nikki, goes out the back door to--

THE ALLEY

Opens her car door, eases the flowers into the seat beside her. She looks at them a long beat, then plucks her phone from her purse and dials:

ADAM (V.O.)

It's Adam. Leave me a message so I can call you back.

SENNA

Hey. It's Senna. I know it's short notice, but I'm having a little birthday get together at White Lotus tonight, would love to see you if you can stop by. Ok, hope you can make it. Bye.

She closes the phone, bites her lip, then starts the car.

CUT TO:

INT./EXT. SENNA'S CAR / VENICE STREETS - EVENING

As Senna drives down sunkissed Venice streets:

SENNA (V.O.)

Hey. Senna again. I forgot to tell you what time, so, uh... it's 9:00. Any time after that. Call me if you're coming, ok?

She pulls into her parking spot, jogs up her front walk:

SENNA (V.O.)

Hey it's me again. I forgot to tell you I reserved a private room, so just ask for me, it's in my name. Call me and let me know if you're coming, ok? Ok, bye.

CUT TO:

INT. SENNA'S VENICE LOFT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Senna, freshly showered and still in a towel, looks down at her cell phone: *no messages*.

She crosses to the dresser, opens the top drawer, wades through some scarves to find--

A JEWELRY BOX. From it, she pulls out one very special NECKLACE, fastens it around her neck.

She examines her refection. The diamond heart glistens against her damp skin. She takes off her earrings, then pulls her hair up, secures it in a knot. *It's all about the necklace tonight.*

She goes to close the box, pauses, then reaches in and pulls out one very gruesome-looking FLOATING EYEBALL.

She stares at it a beat, then digs back in the box and produces a giant PLASTIC RING. Unceremoniously, she carries them to the wastebasket and DROPS them in.

CUT TO:

INT. NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

Your basic hot spot. The crowd is young and good-looking, lots of wanna-be actors with great hair and fabulous jeans.

NIKKI  
Girl, you are smokin'!

Senna, funky sexy with a lace bra peeking out of her strapless dress, approaches a cluster of girls at the bar. Her make-up is shimmery, dramatic: *like she put some effort into it.* The girls AD LIB hellos, then:

NIKKI  
Vodka tonic?

Senna nods. As Nikki signals to the bartender--

A HANDSOME GUY slides in next to Senna. Their eyes meet.

SENNA  
(re: his tattoo)  
Nice art.

HANDSOME  
Thanks.

She pauses to let him elaborate. He doesn't.

SENNA  
Why a dragon fly?

HANDSOME  
Oh, I don't know...

SENNA  
I thought maybe you didn't have enough ink for a dragon.

HANDSOME  
No.

Senna smiles. *He totally doesn't get her.* But she doesn't give up.

SENNA  
I have one on my shoulder. I wasn't sure what color I wanted so I went for clear.

HANDSOME  
That's a joke, right?

SENNA  
You got me.

He smiles, relieved. *So much for tall, dark and handsome...*

HANDSOME  
You want to dance?

SENNA  
No thanks. I have a club foot.

A HOSTESS beckons to Senna. As she and the girls move off...

CUT TO:

INT. CLUB - PRIVATE ROOM - NIGHT

Senna tears wrapping paper off of a large, flat gift.

SENNA  
You guys...

It's a FRAMED MAGAZINE ARTICLE: Vogue "Designers to Watch" Issue. There's a picture of Senna and one of her coats.

SENNA  
Thank you so much!

She group hugs her (cute, young) employees. Just then--

NIKKI  
Well look who the cat dragged in.

Senna's heart pounds. She oh-so-casually turns to see:

DARLA  
Better late than never!

Darla, carrying a LARGE BOX with a bow on it. Senna smiles, trying with everything she's got to hide her disappointment.

DARLA  
I left my kid with a stripper but  
you're worth it. Happy Birthday!

Darla places the box in front of Senna. As Senna reaches for it--

It MOVES. As if there were a giant Mexican jumping bean inside. A *whimpering Mexican jumping bean*.

SENNA  
Oh no.

Darla whips off the lid: It's a PUPPY.

DARLA

Ta-da!

SENNNA

You can't just give someone a  
puppy!

Just then, a POPULAR SONG comes on. Nikki jumps up.

NIKKI

C'mon let's go dance.

As Senna's girls scramble for the door--

SENNNA

What am I supposed to do with a  
puppy?

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. CLUB - DANCE FLOOR - NIGHT

Senna on the dance floor, holding the puppy against her shoulder as she tries to dance.

SENNNA

This can't be good for him.

DARLA

Britney and Paris bring their dogs to clubs all the time.

A perky COLLEGE GIRL sidles up to Senna, starts making kissy faces at the dog.

COLLEGE GIRL

Your dog is so cute!

SENNNA

You want him? I'm serious. You'd be doing me a favor.

Senna tries to hand her the puppy. The girl quickly moves away. Senna looks down at him...

SENNNA

Don't take it personally.

He stretches up and LICKS her face, wagging his tail wildly.

SENNNA

Okay, okay! Whoa--

As she struggles to hold on to him--

BUZZZZZZZ. BUZZZZZZZ.

Her cleavage starts vibrating. Her phone. As she reaches, the puppy slips down the front of her dress.

SENNA

Shit!

She SQUATS DOWN to catch him. He starts licking her all over.

SENNA

Hello!

(to the puppy)

No, please, don't lick me.

ADAM (O.S.)

Senna?

Senna's face goes WHITE.

SENNA

Adam???

ADAM (O.S.)

Is this a bad time?

SENNA

No! I was just, wait... hold on.

She struggles to stand, foists the wiggling dog on Darla, then fights her way out of the crowd toward the bar.

SENNA

Are you there?

She JAMS a finger in her ear. There are people EVERYWHERE.

ADAM (O.S.)

Yeah, I'm here.

SENNA

Hi.

ADAM (O.S.)

Hi. Sorry to call so late. I just wanted to wish you happy birthday.

SENNA

Did you get my messages? ...Adam?

ADAM (O.S.)

I'm here.

SENNNA

I called you.

ADAM (O.S.)

I know. Listen I can hardly hear you.

SENNNA

Yeah, sorry, it's pretty insane.

ADAM (O.S.)

I don't want to keep you from your party. Happy birthday.

SENNNA

Thanks. We only just got here, if you want to come. Adam? ...Adam???

She looks down at the phone. *He's gone.* She hurries through the crowd, back to her--

PRIVATE ROOM

Shuts the door. Darla's there with the puppy.

DARLA

You were right about the puppy. He's not real keen on clubbing. Who are you calling?

SENNNA

Adam. We just got cut off. I called and invited him but I think he only just now got the message.

(then)

He turned his phone off. Why would he turn his phone off? I was just talking to him a second ago.

She looks at Darla. She looks guilty and a little scared.

SENNNA

What?

DARLA

I wanted to tell you, but your birthday was coming...

SENNNA

Tell me what?

DARLA

Then I forgot--

SENNA

Tell me WHAT!?

DARLA

Adam was seeing this girl long distance. I didn't think it was serious.

(then, with difficulty)

She just moved here.

As Senna's heart drops into her stomach--

DARLA

I'm sorry.

SENNA

When? When did she move here?

DARLA

Last weekend. They're not living together.

SENNA

Of course he's with somebody. He's been shopping for a wife since the day we met.

(then)

You should have told me!

DARLA

I know.

SENNA

I called him three times today. He must think I'm an idiot.

DARLA

He'd never think that.

Senna shakes her head. *Sure feels like an idiot...*

CUT TO:

INT. SENNA'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Senna, in a nightie, whitening strips on her teeth, stands at the mirror, patting eye cream in the tiny creases around her eyes. She turns to look at--

The PUPPY, curled up on a towel in the bathtub. He's quivering ever-so-slightly. Senna covers him with a hand towel, leaves the room. A moment later--

She comes back, scoops him up and carries him into--

HER BEDROOM, snugs him into the bed. As she settles in beside him, she looks over at THE PHONE. She stares at it a beat, then removes the whitening strip from her top teeth, picks it up and dials.

ADAM (O.S.)

It's Adam. Leave me a message so I can call you back.

SENNNA

Adam, hi. It's Senna. I just... I wanted to thank you for calling. Darla told me about your girlfriend moving here, I'm glad to hear you're happy. Well, I'm around if you want to catch up. Y'know, as friends. If you want to. Ok, bye.

Senna hangs up. Looks at the dog: *her bedmate, now.*

As she CLICKS off the light, we...

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN ON:

Adam, in a MEDIUM CLOSE-UP.

ADAM

My most memorable birthday was my 34th. I was still with Senna then. I guess you'd call it the honeymoon period. She wouldn't let me out of bed that morning, so I was late to my deposition. I never got breakfast, then we worked through lunch. When I got home, Senna had hidden little presents all over the house, like a treasure hunt, with funny little poems for clues. The last present was in the bed. I won't tell you what it was, just that we never made it to dinner. I didn't have a meal the entire day. That was my birthday. It was exhausting being with her...

(MORE)

ADAM (cont'd)

Incredible, but exhausting. I  
guess that's why it couldn't last.

HOLD ON his gentle smile, then...

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN ON:

**TITLE CARD: "36"**

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SENNA'S VENICE LOFT - MORNING

A puppy tongue on Senna's sleeping face. She grimaces, tries to fight him off. Finally--

SENNA  
Okay, okay, okay, okay!

She stumbles out of bed, the dog nipping at her heels.

CUT TO:

EXT. SENNA VENICE BOUTIQUE - DAY

It's early. The boutique isn't open yet. We can see Nikki through the glass, arranging a display.

TAP TAP TAP. Nikki looks up. It's Senna, with her dog. Nikki hurries to unlock the door for her.

NIKKI  
Happy Birthday!

SENNA  
Thanks. Is she here?

NIKKI  
In your office. Shall I gather the troops?

Senna nods, then steps--

INSIDE THE BOUTIQUE. She pauses a moment to take it all in. Her heart swells with pride: *she's come a long way.*

Employees start to gather around her. A few hug her, wish her happy birthday. Her eyes are shiny as she smiles and thanks them. Finally:

SENNA

Thanks to all of you who came in special today. I appreciate it. Most of you know that I sold the store and am going to Paris to design full time.

Senna's employees clap and cheer.

SENNA

Don't applaud yet, I may crash and burn. Anyway, I wanted you all to meet your new boss. She gave me my start in the business, and really knows her shit. Vanessa?

Vanessa steps forward. Smiles affectionately at Senna.

VANESSA

I don't want to keep you guys who came in or your day off, and we open in ten minutes! I just wanted the opportunity to introduce myself, and tell you how much I'm looking forward to working with you all. Senna's built an incredible business, I'm honored she's chosen me to continue her Legacy.

She winks and smiles at Senna.

SENNA

Vanessa also owns Legacy.

VANESSA

Don't worry, I'm not changing the name. You've built an incredible brand. We're looking forward to stocking it with your cutting edge designs. Make us proud.

More applause. As Senna wipes a tear from her eye...

CUT TO:

INT. SENNA'S VENICE LOFT - DAY

Senna's phone is RINGING as she enters with Lucky. She hurries to answer it.

SENNA

Hello?

ADAM (O.S.)  
Did you do it?

SENNNA  
I did it.

ADAM (O.S.)  
Congratulations. You're a free  
woman! Let's go celebrate your  
last birthday in L.A. by doing  
something really Californian.

SENNNA  
Like what?

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. COUNTY LINE STATE BEACH - DAY

INSTRUCTOR DUDE  
The waves are nice and mushy, it's  
a great day for learning, so let's  
get out there and have some fun!

A tanned INSTRUCTOR DUDE addresses a group of students that includes Senna, Darla, Steve, Adam and Adam's athletic-looking girlfriend, ALISON. Steve is crouched down talking to STEVIE, his and Darla's three-year old son:

STEVE  
When the wave moves into shallow  
water, the bottom of it slows down,  
allowing the top to spill over it...

ADAM  
Who needs sunscreen?

Adam holds up a tube.

ALISON  
Not me, I always put it on before I  
leave the house. It's more  
effective if you apply in advance.

He offers it to Darla, she waves it off.

DARLA  
We're good.

ALISON  
I'll hang with little Stevie if you  
want to try.

DARLA

That's okay.

ALISON

I'd enjoy it. I can surf anytime...  
(baby voice, to Stevie)  
...but I hardly ever get to play  
sandcastles with such a handsome boy  
like you! Would you play with me?

As Stevie buries himself in Darla's dress--

ALISON

My biological clock must be going  
off. Until a few months ago, I  
couldn't stand the sight of  
children. Now all I can think  
about is babies, babies, babies!

ADAM

I think we're supposed to go pick  
out our surfboards.

ALISON

I brought my own. We'll meet you  
guys in the water.

Steve kisses Darla, tousles Stevie's hair...

STEVE

Be good to your mum.

Then trots off with Adam. Alison looks adoringly at Stevie.

ALISON

You're so lucky you started early.  
I'm 37, if Adam doesn't step up, I  
may have to take matters into my own  
hands.

DARLA

Meaning...?

ALISON

Just because we have birth control  
pills doesn't mean we have to take  
them. Once those eggs get crusty  
it's game over.

A beat of stunned silence, then--

ALISON  
Oh my God, they're in the water!  
(to Senna, as she moves off)  
Meet me down there.

As Alison sprints toward the water--

Darla looks at Senna: *Did you hear what I heard?*

SENNA  
Hey, he picked her.

Alison beckons to Senna. As she heads off toward the surf--

HOLD ON Darla, looking stunned.

CUT TO:

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Senna stands waist deep in the ocean. Waves are breaking in front of her. Each time one does, she and her surfboard are PUSHED BACK toward the beach. A few yards in front of her--

ALISON  
You got it, babe. Paddle, paddle  
paddle! Don't give up! That's it!

Alison cheers Adam on as he fights his way through the impact zone. He makes it to open water. Alison rewards him with a kiss.

Senna grits her teeth, plunges forward. A wave starts breaking on top of her. She paddles with everything she's got. Water sprays into her eyes and nose. She coughs and gasps, then (miraculously!) finds herself--

OUT AT SEA.

Here, beyond the sandbar, the water is smooth as glass.

Senna collapses onto her board. A few feet away--

ADAM  
Hey! You made it!

SENNA  
It was touch and go for awhile  
there...

A few feet away, Alison is surfing toward the shore.

SENNA

It can't possibly be as easy as  
she's making it look.

ADAM

She swam for Stanford, practically  
lived in the water. You're doing  
great. Steve can't even get out.

ANGLE ON Steve, stuck in the foam. Alison is running over to  
help him with such intensity you'd think his life depended on  
it. As Senna watches--

INSTRUCTOR DUDE

You guys ready for a lesson?

The instructor dude paddles up to them. Senna looks at Adam--

ADAM

Go ahead. I'm waiting for Alison.

SENNA

If I drown, Darla gets my shoe  
collection.

Senna follows the instructor to a spot away from the crowd.

INSTRUCTOR DUDE

Ok, here comes a wave. When you  
feel it lift your board, paddle.

SENNA

Then what?

INSTRUCTOR DUDE

Hold on and ride it.

He steers her into position. A wave starts to lift her up...

INSTRUCTOR DUDE

Paddle, paddle! Don't lean back!

She paddles, but too little too late. It gets away.

INSTRUCTOR DUDE

That's ok. Here comes another one.  
Paddle, paddle, paddle...

She tries again. Misses again.

INSTRUCTOR DUDE

You got it, you just have to commit.  
Keep trying, I'll be back in a bit.

As he swims off, she spies--

Alison, paddling toward Adam-- head down, biceps pumping,  
talk about committed...

Senna looks back at the WAVE forming behind her. She starts paddling, HARD. As the water lifts her up...

SENNA

Oh my God...

She gives one last burst. It pays off. The wave GRABS her board--

SENNA

Oh my God! Oh my God!

She HOLDS ON for dear life as it whisks her toward the beach.

As she's deposited on the shore, she jumps to her feet, looks out at Adam...

Her face drops. Alison is hovering over him. *He didn't see.* As she shakes off her disappointment...

CUT TO:

EXT. COUNTY LINE BEACH - MAGIC HOUR

Senna lies on her board, staring up into the twilight sky. Adam paddles up to her, calls out--

ADAM

We're going to miss our reservation.

SENNA

Where's Alison?

ADAM

She went with Darla and Steve. She couldn't find a place to plug in her flat iron. She doesn't like to go out with puffy hair.

(then)

She's missing one hell of a sunset.

SENNA

It's going to be tough, leaving all this.

She smiles at him. He takes her in. Golden sunlight dances across her eyes and skin. *She's never looked more beautiful.*

ADAM

Yeah, Paris is going to suck.

SENNNA

I'm not complaining.

ADAM

Are you going to make your models  
wear ten foot tall hats out of  
feathers and old car parts?

SENNNA

I'm seeing more faux fur and tree  
branches.

ADAM

Once you're a big designer, don't  
forget all us little people you  
left behind.

SENNNA

You're really settling in here,  
aren't you?

ADAM

We can't all have Paris.

(then)

Last swell of the day, rolling in.

He points. Senna looks.

ADAM

You stand up yet?

SENNNA

Nope. But I still love myself.

ADAM

There's no surfing in Paris, you  
know. Might be your last chance.

SENNNA

You just want to see me fall flat  
on my face.

ADAM

No. I want to see you succeed. In  
everything.

He smiles at her. A nice moment, until...

SENNNA

You are so full of shit.

ADAM

And you're a scare-dy chicken.

SENNA

Yeah, a tired scare-dy chicken.

ADAM

You have to get to shore somehow.

SENNA

Fine. I'll try. But no laughing!

Senna moves into position, starts paddling for a wave. Adam hangs back as it LIFTS her up--

ADAM

That's it. Now move your leg under you. Lean forward. You got it! Now stand up! STAND UP!!!

One at a time, she moves her feet under her, then oh-so-gingerly...

SENNA

I'm up! I'M UP!

She stands. As she WHOOPS her way toward the shore...

CUT TO:

EXT. BEACH - DUSK

Adam jogs up the beach where Senna is already changed into shorts and sitting on a sarong.

ADAM

Sorry... I'll be quick!

He continues on to his car, parked by the side of the road, pulls the keys from their hiding place, POPS the TRUNK, then tosses his keys inside it.

Under the cover of his towel, he peels off his wetsuit, then lowers the trunk door to see his clothes in the back seat.

Teeth chattering, he SLAMS the trunk, moves for the door, STOPS because--

The towel around his waist is caught in the trunk. He tugs and tugs. *Not going anywhere.*

ADAM

Shit.

(calling out)

Senna! SENNA!

Senna looks up from where she's sitting, sees him waving her over, wraps her sarong around her waist and joins him--

AT THE CAR.

ADAM

I have a little problem.

SENNNA

So I see.

ADAM

My clothes are in the backseat.

C'mon I'm cold!

SENNNA

The things I do for you...

She goes to open the car door. It's locked.

SENNNA

I need the keys.

(off his blank look)

You locked your keys in the trunk.

Nice move, counsellor. Now what?

Adam looks around. It's late, everyone else is gone.

ADAM

There's a bar across the street.

Senna looks across the street at the HONKY TONK BAR. The parking lot is full of PICK-UP TRUCKS.

ADAM

I'm sure if you tell them it's an emergency they'll let you use the phone.

SENNNA

I'm not leaving you here to freeze.

ADAM

We don't exactly have a lot of other options.

Senna considers his predicament a beat, then--

SENNA  
Sarong or shorts?

Opens her sarong to reveal her stretchy, gold shorts. As Adam considers his choices...

CUT TO:

EXT. HONKY TONK BAR - MAGIC HOUR

ADAM  
Are my balls sticking out?

Senna looks at Adam's ass, hugged by her high-cut shorts. He's also wearing her tank top. It is VERY tight on him.

SENNA  
Not noticeably.

She ushers him--

INSIDE THE BAR.

It's packed to the gills with girls with big hair and guys in tight wranglers and clunky cowboy boots.

ON STAGE

A portly COWBOY sings a Karaoke cover of classic Garth Brooks.

SENNA  
These guys are serious about their Karaoke.

ADAM  
Come on.

As Adam leads Senna toward the bar, several patrons turn to look. Adam signals to the BARTENDER--

ADAM  
I locked my keys in my car, any chance I could use your phone?

BARTENDER  
C'mon back.

As Adam follows the bartender behind the bar--

*Senna gets an idea. Through the crowd she weaves, toward the stage to where the KARAOKE DJ is spinning.*

She whispers something in his ear, he nods and smiles. When she returns to the bar--

ADAM

There you are! I thought maybe you rode off into the sunset with Garth.

SENNA

Hey, the night is young.

ADAM

Alison has my extra key. They were already on their way to dinner, so it shouldn't be too long.

Just then, the DJ interrupts:

KARAOKE DJ

Jody's supposed to be up next, but we have birthday in the house...

The DJ points at Senna. The crowd turns to look. Several members hoot and cheer. She waves her appreciation.

KARAOKE DJ

Our birthday girl has asked that her special friend be allowed to come up here and sing her favorite song. Whadday'all say?

The crowd applauds. Adam suddenly gets very nervous.

ADAM

You didn't.

KARAOKE DJ

So let's give a big hand to Adam as he serenades his birthday girl.

ADAM

You bitch!

He waves as the crowd applauds him, then shakes his head to indicate thanks but no thanks.

Senna gives him an incredulous look, then turns to the crowd for help. They start chanting his name.

CROWD

A-dam! A-dam!

He has no choice. He hisses at Senna, makes his way up to the stage. The crowd goes wild at the sight of him.

COWBOY  
Nice legs!

KARAOKE DJ  
I hope you sing better than you  
dress.

ADAM  
I don't. I'm worse.

A standard, slightly corny country-western song comes on.

ADAM  
For the birthday girl.

Adam takes a deep breath, starts to sing. A rough start.  
*Very rough.*

The lyrics are hopelessly hokey. The only way to pull this off is to go for it. So he does.

He grabs the mic with both hands. He's getting into it now. The CROWD goes wild. Senna is laughing, totally endeared.

The lyrics turn. What was hokey suddenly feels strangely meaningful: the things they wish they could say to each other, *if it weren't too late...*

Adam looks at Senna, holds her eyes as he sings. She blinks back tears. *Why does this hurt so much?*

The song ends. The room EXPLODES with applause. They love him. And then it hits her, hard. She loves him.

She bites her lip. Her eyes are wet. As she pushes her pain back down into her chest--

KARAOKE DJ  
Well. That was memorable. Thank  
you Adam.

Adam curtsies, then hops off the stage, weaves his way through his adoring fans to--

THE BAR, where Senna is waiting.

ADAM  
Happy Birthday.

He smiles at her. Her heart is pounding. *She might just kiss him, except...*

ALISON

Adam? What the hell are you  
wearing?

*Alison, Steve and Darla are standing right behind them.*

ADAM

Alison!

ALISON

I have your key, you can change in  
the car.

As she beckons for him to follow her--

BARTENDER

From the gals at the end.

The bartender puts a pitcher of beer in front of him,  
indicates two BIG HAIRRED GIRLS sitting at the end of the bar.  
Adam looks. They wave and smile.

BARTENDER

In appreciation of your inspired  
vocal performance.

ALISON

You sang?

DARLA

You sang?

ALISON

You told me you were tone deaf.

BARTENDER

Oh, he is.

ALISON

If we leave right now we can still  
make our reservation--

DARLA

We can't just walk out on a free  
pitcher of beer.

ALISON

There's no place to sit--

BARTENDER

There's another room in the back.  
How many are you?

DARLA

Five.

BARTENDER  
(to the HOSTESS)  
You got a table for five in the  
back?

HOSTESS  
You betcha. Follow me.

She grabs their pitcher. Adam looks at Senna: *this okay?*

SENNNA  
Yeah, great.

As Adam falls in behind Senna and the hostess--

ALISON  
(not really a question)  
You're not staying in that outfit?

ADAM  
I'm kind of enjoying the feel of  
sticky vinyl on my anus.

ALISON  
You look obscene.

Adam feels his friends watching, tries not to show his  
embarrassment.

ADAM  
I'll meet you guys back there.

ALISON  
I'm going to call the restaurant.

Alison falls in behind Adam, nudges him toward the door. We  
can hear her railing on him as they disappear into the crowd.

ALISON  
I hope you never want to eat at  
Nobu, they don't appreciate last  
minute cancellations.

Darla looks at Senna.

SENNNA  
Staying out of it.

CUT TO:

INT. HONKY TONK BAR - LATER

ALISON

This one's from me.

The table is covered with remnants of cheap bar food. Adam has his arm around Alison as Senna opens her present: BOOKS about Paris: a Zagats, a phrase book, an insider's shopping guide... Darla looks like she wants to murder her.

SENNA

Quelles bons cadeaux! Merci!

Steve flips through the Zagats guide.

STEVE

I was just reading an article about the couple who started Zagats. The very first Guide they did was for Paris. They called it *Le Guide de Guides*. It was one page long.

ALISON

Adam told me you've never been. I spent my entire junior year in Paris! I won't warn you about the men, because I'm sure you know they're all out for one thing... but you probably like that!

As Senna tries not to look insulted by the comment--

A WAITRESS arrives with more beer. Darla spies a book of matches on her tray, plucks them off, starts divvying them up.

STEVE

What are you doing?

DARLA

We're playing a game. It's really simple. It's called 'I have never.' We go around the circle. When it's your turn, you have to say something you've never done, like 'I have never... driven a Ferrari.' If anybody has done it, they give you a matchstick. The person holding all the matchsticks at the end is the winner. Everybody got it?

ADAM

What do we get if we win?

DARLA

You're not going to win so don't worry about it. I'll start. I have never... been to Paris.

Adam and Alison each give Darla a match. Darla glares at Adam.

DARLA

When were you in Paris?

ADAM

What, you think I'm lying?

STEVE

If you're going to challenge everybody we'll be here all night.

(as Darla makes a face)

Alison, you go next.

ALISON

Oh. Ok. I have never... locked my keys in my car.

Adam tosses a match to Alison, then looks at the others:

ADAM

None of you have ever locked your keys in your car?

DARLA

No. Go.

ADAM

I have never... seen '*Gone with the Wind.*'

No matches for Adam.

ADAM

No one here's seen '*Gone with the Wind?*' What's wrong with you people?

STEVE

My turn. I have never... gone to a nudie beach.

Darla and Adam each hand over a match. Alison raises an eyebrow at Adam.

ADAM

The debate club went to St. Barts.

DARLA

Yes, he's seen everyone at this  
table naked. Senna's turn.

SENNNA

Ok. I have never...  
(devious smile)  
Had sex with a girl.

Senna gets a match from Adam, Steve and Darla.

ALISON

Wow, Darla! What haven't you done?

DARLA

Well, I have never contemplated  
tricking my boyfriend into getting  
me pregnant.

Darla holds out her hand, in anticipation of getting a match.

ADAM

What is she talking about?

ALISON

It was a joke, but whatever.

She tosses a match at Darla.

ADAM

What was the joke?

ALISON

We'll talk about it later.

ADAM

What's wrong with now?

Alison feels everyone looking at her.

ALISON

Who's turn is it?

STEVE

Yours.

ALISON

I have never... smoked pot.

As she smugly collects matches from everyone--

ADAM  
I'm out of matches.

DARLA  
You can still take your turn. Just  
make sure you get one.

SENNNA  
Unlike last time.

ADAM  
I can't think of anything.

SENNNA  
Scare-dy chicken.

ADAM  
Fine. I have never intentionally  
humiliated a friend in front of a  
crowd of rowdy cowboys.

SENNNA  
(tossing him a match)  
You loved every minute of it.

ADAM  
What if I did?

He holds her eyes a beat. Darla watches them intently:  
*what's going on...?*

STEVE  
My turn. I have never been to  
Vegas.

Steve gets matches from Darla and Alison. Senna looks  
expectantly at Adam.

ADAM  
What?

SENNNA  
You've been to Vegas.

ADAM  
I didn't go.

SENNNA  
You didn't go?

ADAM  
I wasn't feeling it.

ALISON

What are you guys talking about?

ADAM

I had tickets-- a ticket-- to Vegas,  
but I never got on the plane.

ALISON

So you didn't get on the plane,  
what's the big deal? Senna, it's  
your turn.

Senna stares at Adam. She's a swirl of emotion: pissed off,  
relieved, *but most of all...*

SENNA

Fine. I have never... given  
everything I've got to a  
relationship.

...*Regretful*. Not surprisingly, no one offers up a match.

SENNA

Well, I guess I'm the only one.

Darla looks at Senna and Adam, looking at each other...

STEVE

Who's turn is it?

DARLA

Mine. I have never...

She glances at Alison, with her perfect hair and perfect  
posture, then at Adam, deserving of so much more...

DARLA

...walked out on the love of my  
life.

Deafening silence. No one moves or breathes.

DARLA

What? No matches for me?

After a long, tense beat, Adam slides his last remaining  
match stick across the table, to Darla.

DARLA

Thought so.

The color drains from Alison's face. She stands...

ALISON

Well, thank you all for a memorable evening.

...Then leaves the table.

ADAM

Shit.

As Adam gets up and hurries after her--

STEVE

Brilliant.

Senna picks up the fateful matchstick, turns it over in her hand... then SCRAMBLES out of the booth, through the crowd and out into--

THE PARKING LOT.

Adam and Alison are nowhere in sight. She gazes out toward the beach, sees--

Adam's CAR, pulling out onto PCH. Alison is driving it. Adam stands on the beach, watching her go.

Senna charges toward the street. It's very dark. As she steps off the curb--

A car HONKS at her. She lets it pass, makes a run for it.

ON THE BEACH

Adam has sat down in the sand, has his head in his hands. Senna approaches. After a nervous beat--

SENNNA

Fun game, huh?

He looks up. *Isn't smiling.*

SENNNA

Sorry.

ADAM

Don't apologize. Wouldn't be your birthday if I didn't walk out on a relationship.

SENNNA

Hey! I was the one who wouldn't get on the plane.

ADAM

So I gave you \$20 bucks and left  
you in the parking lot. Classy.

SENNNA

I was a horrible, moody pain in the  
ass. I would have left me there,  
too.

ADAM

I just couldn't understand why you  
kept changing your mind about  
everything.

SENNNA

I only changed my mind once. When  
I realized I did believe in  
marriage, if it was with you.

ADAM

The why didn't you marry me?

SENNNA

Because I wanted you to want it as  
bad as I did. To tell me that if I  
wouldn't marry you, you would die.  
That sounds so stupid now. I mean,  
clearly you're not dead.

ADAM

Neither are you.

SENNNA

No, I'm not dead. But I'm not  
really alive, either. Not like I  
was when we were together. I  
accept that you can live without  
me. But I can't live without you.

She falls onto one knee, offers up the match...

SENNNA

Marry me.

Adam looks at her. Can't believe his ears.

SENNNA

I'm on one knee, here.

ADAM

Are you serious?

SENNA

Yes, Adam. I'm serious. I'm  
asking you to marry me.

ADAM

Say it again.

SENNA

Marry me--

ADAM

Say it again.

SENNA

Adam Pierce, will you marry me?

ADAM

Yes. Yes, yes, yes, yes!

He pulls her to him. As they melt into a kiss...

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN ON:

Senna. In a MEDIUM CLOSE-UP.

SENNA

My most memorable birthday was...  
Oh God, I don't know.

DARLA (O.S.)

You said you'd do this.

SENNA

You were around for most of them.  
Pick one.

DARLA (O.S.)

The point of the research is to  
hear what you remember. Being  
disappointed, feeling alone and  
forgotten, being surprised beyond  
your wildest dreams...

SENNA

Yes. I remember all those things.

DARLA (O.S.)

Senna!

SENNA

Ok, ok, I got it. I know what my most memorable birthday was. Seven.

DARLA (O.S.)

You remember your seventh birthday?

SENNA

Of course. My mom and I had just moved from Pasadena 'cause my dad died and she didn't want to stay in that big house any more. I had only been in school two weeks so the only person I knew was you.

DARLA (O.S.)

Say 'Darla'.

SENNA

The only person I knew was Darla. She was my neighbor and in my class, though you'd never know it, she looked more like a pre-schooler than a second grader.

DARLA (O.S.)

I did not look like a pre-schooler--

SENNA

That's why we became friends. The runt and the new girl. The day before my birthday, I asked Darla if she would come over the next day for cake. She doesn't even like cake, but she came. I don't think I even told her it was my birthday.

DARLA (O.S.)

You didn't.

SENNA

That's right. Because you ran home to get one of your Barbie's--

DARLA (O.S.)

Actually, I think it was Skipper. I wouldn't have parted with a Barbie.

SENNA

Whatever it was, it didn't matter. You saved my birthday.

(MORE)

SENNA(cont'd)

And since then, you've never let me down. Not ever.

Senna smiles. As Darla charges INTO FRAME and crushes her in a HUG, we...

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN ON:

**TITLE CARD: "37"**

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. PARISIAN CAFE - DAY

SENNA

How's the book?

ADAM

Interesting.

Adam and Senna wear shiny wedding bands as they sip *cafe au lait* at a small table in a Parisian cafe. Adam's reading:

Darla's BOOK: "A Little Something for your Birthday"

SENNA

She said it's not really about birthdays. It's about expectations. How they screw up our lives.

ADAM

(trying to read)

Uh-huh.

SENNA

She studied birthdays because our expectations about them are so heightened.

(then, peering over his shoulder)

Am I in it?

ADAM

Don't know yet.

SENNA

I told a really good story.

ADAM  
(still trying to read)  
Mmm-hmmm.

SENNA  
(not letting him)  
People are funny about their  
birthdays, huh?

ADAM  
Yeah, they have to be the center of  
attention the whole day.

SENNA  
Okay, okay. Fine. I'll read it  
when you're done.

ADAM  
I love you.

SENNA  
Love you too.  
(then)  
What page are you on?

He offers her the book. She hesitates...

SENNA  
No, it's okay. I can wait.

ADAM  
Chapter 3: Living in the moment.

As Adam reads aloud and Senna settles back in her chair, we  
PULL BACK to see:

A pint-size replica of the EIFFEL TOWER. Turns out we're not  
in Paris, we're in VEGAS. At the PARIS HOTEL.

As the sun dips below the glittering sunset strip, we...

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END.