

Raindrops All Around Me

by
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INT. HIGH SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY

ARTHUR OVERMEYER, mid 30's, is standing at the front of the classroom. He is an awkwardly bookish high school science teacher with a short trimmed beard. He wiggles his body and gyrates his hips in some sort of BIZARRE DANCE.

ANGLE ON: The students in Arthur's class all look disgusted by the seemingly sexual nature of his strange hip thrusts.

Arthur finishes his dance and catches his breath.

ARTHUR

And that is exactly how a forager
bee communicates the location of a
newfound source of nectar. Us bee
enthusiasts like to playfully call
it the "waggle dance."

Arthur chuckles. The class remains silent. A slouched jock named GREG raises his hand. He is wearing an upside down visor cocked to the side.

GREG

Dude, bees blow.

ARTHUR

They blow?

GREG

One time, I was trying to bash this
bee hive with a tennis racquet. And
the bees like totally went psycho.
What's that about?

FAT STUDENT

Yeah, that happened to me, too. And
bees like hurt.

There are murmurs of agreement throughout the class.

ARTHUR

When bees feel threatened, they
release pheromones that stimulate
an attack response in other bees.
Does that make sense to you, Greg?

From the vacant expression on Greg's face, we can see that it doesn't. A hot popular girl, SOPHIE, chimes in.

SOPHIE

Bees killed my little cousin, so...

ARTHUR

Well, Sophie, that's terrible about your cousin. But in a way, bees also give us life. Through pollination, they provide for one third of our food supply.

SOPHIE

My mom met you at parent-teacher conferences. She says you're a total weirdo and I don't have to listen to anything you say.

FAT STUDENT

My dad thinks you're gay.

The class laughs. Arthur doesn't get what's so funny.

GREG

Can we go?

ARTHUR

We still have 20 minutes left, Greg. By the way, are you sure your T-shirt is appropriate for school?

Greg sits up. We see that his T-shirt reads, "IT AIN'T GONNA SUCK ITSELF," with an arrow pointing down to his crotch.

GREG

What? You read my shirt? Sick, dude! This message was not for you! It's for Sophie, you perv!

Greg points across the room to Sophie.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Students bustle through the halls between classes. Arthur awkwardly makes his way through the crowd, going against the flow. The students bump into him, barely noticing him.

Arthur maneuvers around CHUCKIE, a mentally handicapped janitor mopping the floor with a look of overflowing joy.

CHUCKIE

Beautiful hallway!

ARTHUR

Yes, it is, Chuckie. You're doing a great job here.

Arthur pats Chuckie on the back and presses on.

CHUCKIE
Happy hallway!

INT. SNACK ROOM - DAY

From outside in the hall, Arthur spots JASMINE TWESTON, a stunningly beautiful blonde teacher in her late 20's. She is feeding money into a vending machine. Arthur pretends to casually walk up, as Jasmine buys a can of FANTA GRAPE SODA.

ARTHUR
Grape soda. Good selection.

JASMINE
Thanks.

Arthur seems to grow nervous as the seconds pass.

ARTHUR
You know, I was reading an article last week about how high sugar content sodas don't even contain trace amounts of vitamin B. So, of course, you end up with a Thiamin deficiency, right? And we all know what that can lead to.

JASMINE
I just like the taste, I guess.

ARTHUR
Right, the taste. I completely agree. I love it. Although, the name can be misleading.

JASMINE
Misleading?

ARTHUR
If you look at the ingredients: high fructose corn syrup, tartaric acid, sodium benzoate, red 40, blue 1... I don't hear grape, do you? Maybe they should call it "Tartaric Acid Surprise."

He chuckles. She doesn't.

JASMINE
I should really get to class.

She starts to leave.

ARTHUR

By the way, I wanted to give you an invitation to a little soirée I'm having at my place tonight.

He hands her a really expensive, professional looking invitation for a "FACULTY FUN FEST."

JASMINE

Yeah, I already got the one you left on my desk. And those other ones that came in the mail last week.

ARTHUR

Oh, you got those? I wasn't sure, because you never RSVP'd on the website. It should be a good time. Barry's going to be there. Linda. Dan. Love to have you, Jasmine.

JASMINE

Actually, it's Ms. Tweston.

ARTHUR

Oh.

JASMINE

It keeps things more professional. In front of the students.

There is not one student in sight.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL COMPUTER LAB - DAY

Two teachers, DAN and BARRY, are looking at something on a computer. Arthur appears in the doorway.

ARTHUR

Hey, Dan. Hey, Barry. Just wanted to remind you guys about my big shindig tonight.

Dan and Barry burst out laughing at something.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

What's so funny?

BARRY

It's just something Dan found on the Internet. But it's probably the funniest thing I've ever seen.

ARTHUR

Show me. I'd love to see it.

Dan turns the monitor so that Arthur can see the website. It's just a picture of a penis with photo-shopped eyes. Dan and Barry crack up all over again. Arthur looks confused.

DAN

You don't get it?

ARTHUR

I think I'm missing something.

BARRY

It's a penis that has eyes. Penis? Eyes? Hello!

ARTHUR

Right.

Dan and Barry spin the monitor back around and die laughing.

BARRY

It's like it's looking at you!

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

The hall is empty. Arthur is filling up his water-bottle at a drinking fountain. He suddenly hears MUSIC coming from somewhere. He follows the music up to a closed classroom door. He peers through the window to see...

TIM SLAVINGTON, a hip looking teacher in his late 30's, is at the front of the class. He is playing air guitar along with the classic riff from AC/DC's *Back in Black*. The music is blaring from a boombox in the corner of the room. 40 ecstatic students are up on their feet, dancing like crazy.

The chalkboard reads, "GEOMETRY." There is a drawing of a trapezoid with a guitar neck protruding from it.

The school bell rings. Tim dances across the room and turns off the music.

EVERYONE IN CLASS

Awwwwwww!!!

TIM

I know, I know, AC/DC rocks. But we'll all be back here Monday, cool? And no homework! Enjoy the weekend! Don't party too little!

The students laugh, as they start to collect their belongings and file out of the classroom. A few long haired stoners wave goodbye to Tim on their way out. Tim waves back.

TIM (CONT'D)

Later, Terry! Later, Bob! Love the new tattoo, dude! Love it!

ANGLE ON: Arthur glares jealously at Tim.

INT. FACULTY LOUNGE - DAY

The teachers eat lunch together. Arthur sits by himself at a corner table. He observes Tim commanding the attention of a bunch of teachers, including Jasmine, Dan and Barry. Everyone laughs at something apparently hilarious that Tim just said.

A school janitor, DONALD BERNSTEIN, early 40's, sets his bag lunch down next to Arthur. He is wearing an old, dirty baseball cap that says, "ROBOTS TOOK OVER THE PLANET, AND ALL I GOT WAS THIS LOUSY HAT."

DONALD

What's wrong, Arthur?

Arthur gestures toward Tim.

ARTHUR

I hate that guy.

DONALD

Who, Slavington?

ARTHUR

The kids love him. The teachers love him. What does he have that I don't have?

DONALD

Arthur, the man is an imbecile. If anyone should be jealous, it's him. Did he publish a book about honeybee colony collapse disorder?

ARTHUR

My book is going out of print,
Donald. No one ever bought it.

DONALD

I bought it. I loved it. It's
terrifying to imagine the
implications of a bee-less
existence. What do you think is
going to happen when rice farmers
in Micronesia can no longer
pollinate their crops? In fact,
there was a story in *The Economist*
last month about how globalization
and increased ethanol production
are seriously pushing up commodity
prices. That is a scary notion.

Principal SALLY BERNSTEIN, a thin meek woman, approaches
their table. She kisses Donald on the cheek.

SALLY

Hi, honey. How you guys doing?

DONALD

Uh, we're actually in the middle of
something important here, sweetie.

SALLY

Sorry. It's just that someone said
there's a vomit puddle in the
gymnasium, and it's been there
since third period.

DONALD

Okay, honey. We get it. You're the
principal of the school, and your
husband is the janitor. You design
the curriculum, and I clean toilets
for a living.

SALLY

Oh, no, no, no, I didn't mean it
like that at all, sweetie.

DONALD

Yeah, well, the janitor's union
says I get 30 minutes for lunch.
And Arthur and I were just
discussing, oh, I don't know... the
imminent destruction of the world's
agricultural supply and the end of
humanity?

SALLY

Just, when you get a chance--

Donald holds up his sandwich.

DONALD

Also, I don't know what your definition of extra mayonnaise is, but I thought we agreed it was two dollops.

SALLY

You're right. I'm sorry, honey. You guys enjoy the rest of your lunch.

She kisses Donald again and leaves. Donald shakes his head.

DONALD

So annoying.

ARTHUR

Donald, why did you decide to become a janitor? I don't get it.

DONALD

Janitors make more money than teachers.

Across the lounge, Tim is receiving high-fives from all the teachers. He does a stupid, goofy dance as everyone laughs.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL PARKING LOT - DAY

Arthur and Donald are leaving the school building. Students drive by in black SUVs, blasting FALL OUT BOY. Arthur and Donald cringe at the abrasive volume and tone of the music.

ARTHUR

I'll see you at my party tonight?

DONALD

I can't. I've got a Q&A with famed roboticist Rodney Brooks at 9:30.

ARTHUR

Where?

DONALD

Cyberspace, obviously. Like Brooks would ever leave his hyperbolic laboratory?

They part ways to head for their separate cars.

ARTHUR

Well, you'll be missing out, buddy.
It'll be quite a party to remember.
Everyone is going to be there.

INT. ARTHUR'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The apartment is decorated with Neoclassical art and elegant antique furniture. Untouched bowls of punch and plates of hors d'oeuvres are laid out next to unopened bottles of wine. A happy honeybee shaped piñata dangles from the ceiling. A huge banner reads, "FACULTY FUN FEST 2008!"

Arthur sits alone on the couch. He looks depressed. A digital clock reads 10:30PM. The only sound we can hear is loud HIP HOP MUSIC, LAUGHTER and the occasional SCREAM all coming from the apartment next door. Arthur glances across the room.

ANGLE ON: Arthur's only guest is Chuckie, the mentally retarded janitor. He sits in a chair with a huge smile.

ARTHUR

Can I get you anything, Chuckie?

Chuckie giggles in a weird creepy way. Arthur looks unnerved.

There is a KNOCK at the door. Arthur leaps up to answer it. He opens the door to reveal his neighbor, BILL, a regular looking guy with a goatee.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

Bill. What can I do for you?

BILL

Hey, dude. Hope we're not being too loud with the music next door.

ARTHUR

Not at all. What is that, AC/DC?

BILL

No, it's Young Jeezy. Listen, I'd never come over here, but I really need some condoms.

ARTHUR

I'm sorry, I don't have any.

BILL

What about saran wrap?

ARTHUR

Sure, Bill. Come on in.

Arthur leaves, but Bill stays put in the hall. Arthur returns with a box of saran wrap. He hands it over to Bill.

BILL

Usually I don't care about protection. But you should see these skanks. It's definitely gonna be a saran wrap night.

ARTHUR

So it's just you and a bunch of women? Sounds very Dionysian.

Bill stares blankly at Arthur then turns to leave.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

Hey, I've got an idea. Why don't we combine parties? I wouldn't want my '79 Krug Clos du Mesnil to go to waste.

Bill peers into Arthur's practically empty apartment. The only person he sees is a happily grinning Chuckie.

BILL

Nah, dude. But thanks for the cock wrap.

Bill walks away. Arthur sadly closes the door.

EXT. ED OVERMEYER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Arthur is ringing the doorbell on the front porch of a suburban house. ED OVERMEYER, a grizzled, blue collar, old man in a bathrobe, opens the door. He looks confused.

ED

Arthur? What are you doing here? I thought you were having a party.

ARTHUR

It ended a little early. And I couldn't sleep. So I thought you might be up for a late night movie.

Arthur holds up a DVD and a box of microwave popcorn.

ED

A movie? It's almost midnight.

ARTHUR

But I really think you'll like this one. I'll start the popcorn, okay?

Arthur hands his dad the DVD and heads inside.

ED

Ingmar Bergman? *Wild Strawberries*?
Sounds like a cooze flick.

INT. ED OVERMEYER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

This is a typical elderly person's home with fake flowers, a bowl of old candy on a coffee table and plastic on all the furniture. There is a framed picture of General George S. Patton over the mantel.

In the kitchen, Arthur heats up the popcorn. Ed enters.

ED

Why you gotta bother me, huh? Don't you have any friends?

ARTHUR

You're my friend, Dad.

ED

No, I'm not. You should be out
downing beers with your buddies and
chasing skirt.

Arthur notices a full bottle of pills on the kitchen counter. He picks up the bottle and looks it over.

ARTHUR

Have you not been taking your
Abiraterone?

Ed rolls his eyes.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

Dad, it's critical that you take
this. Abiraterone targets proteins
capable of producing hormones--

ED

Booooooring!

ARTHUR

Fighting your cancer is boring?

ED

I got more important things to
worry about.

Ed points to a framed certificate on the wall. Arthur reads it. It's a VIP PASS for Ed to the "ETERNAL PARTY OF SOULS," signed by the REVEREND JACK SHORKO.

ARTHUR

"The Eternal Party of Souls?" Dad,
I told you to stop sending these
people money. It's a fraud. Their
ideas about the afterlife are
baseless and oversimplified.

ED

\$350 is a small price to pay for an
everlasting celebration of souls at
the core of Starship Earth.

Ed takes the certificate down and kisses it.

ED (CONT'D)

The afterlife is gonna be so fun.

INT. ARTHUR'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Arthur is lying down in a lonely king size bed. One of his pillows is shaped like a giant bumblebee. A poster depicting the different types of bees hangs over his bed. Along the wall, there are a few stacks of unopened copies of the same thick book, *Honeybee Colony Collapse Disorder and the Varroa Destructor Mite: A Global Disaster*, by ARTHUR OVERMEYER.

Arthur glumly watches a small, old TV. He flips through the channels and comes across a reality show, *Mom's Approval*. The host is TANNER SLADE, a good looking guy with a gelled faux-hawk. A couple on a couch is describing their blossoming relationship. A chyron gives their names: DOUG and KRISTY.

KRISTY

With Doug, it's not just about sex.
We have so many things in common.
We party together, we drink
together, we go clubbing together.

DOUG

We go to after-hours parties
together. Pool parties. We kick it.

TANNER SLADE

Sounds like you two were made for each other! But let's see if they can get... MOM'S APPROVAL!

The studio audience goes nuts, as curtains part to reveal "MOM." She stares at the couple and holds out a horizontal thumb. Doug and Kristy look nervous. Will the thumb go up or down?

Suddenly, Mom's thumb shoots upward in approval.

TANNER SLADE (CONT'D)

Mom approves!

The audience goes wild. Doug and Christie embrace and begin kissing like porn stars. Doug's hand rubs Christie's crotch in a way that's inappropriate for network television.

Bewildered by what he's watching, Arthur turns off the TV.

Arthur reaches over to his night-stand and picks up a high school yearbook. He opens it to a picture of the beautiful Social Studies teacher, JASMINE TWESTON. He forlornly gazes at her picture, then hopelessly shuts the book.

He turns out the light and lies on his back, staring at the ceiling. Tears well up in his eyes. He grabs the bee pillow, hugs it and buries his face in the soft comforting fuzz.

INT. FACULTY LOUNGE - DAY

Arthur drinks his morning coffee alone at a corner table. He concentrates on a copy of *Atlantic Monthly*. Tim Slavington approaches and pulls up a chair.

TIM

Morning, Mr. Overmeyer.

Arthur avoids Tim's gaze.

ARTHUR

How are you, Tim.

TIM

Sorry I couldn't make it to your party Friday. I had a jacuzzi date with a yoga instructor.

ARTHUR

Don't worry about it.

TIM
How'd it go, by the way?

ARTHUR
It was fun. Music, dancing...
uninhibited inebriation.

Tim leans in closer to Arthur.

TIM
Nobody came, did they?

ARTHUR
Yes, they did.

TIM
Who?

ARTHUR
People you wouldn't know. I have a
lot of friends outside of work.

TIM
It's okay, you can be honest with
me, Arthur. I'm here to help.

ARTHUR
What? I don't need any help.

TIM
Look, I know exactly what your life
is like. No friends, no dates.
Nobody laughs at your jokes. Nobody
cares about the things you find
interesting. Believe me, I know...
Because I used to be you.

Arthur is speechless but intrigued. Tim looks around to make
sure no one is watching them. He subtly slides a business
card across the table to Arthur.

TIM (CONT'D)
Check it out.

Arthur reads the card to himself. He looks skeptical.

ARTHUR
Is this a joke?

TIM
Not at all. In fact, it's the best
thing that ever happened to me.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL STAIRWELL - DAY

Arthur makes his way down the stairs. He overhears Dan and Barry talking down below. He stops and listens in.

DAN

Jasmine was so drunk at the bar on Friday. Did you see her?

BARRY

What was that thing you did that made her laugh so hard?

DAN

Oh, the monkey brain!

BARRY

That was genius.

DAN

Hey, did you hear about Overmeyer's party? The only person who showed up was that retarded janitor.

BARRY

Yeah, big surprise. Overmeyer's the weirdest guy ever. All he talks about is art and politics and bees.

Arthur looks crushed. He sits down on the stairs.

DAN

Last week, he cornered me for an hour and blabbed his ass off about the mating rituals of some African beetle. I tried to switch the subject to Brangelina, and he didn't even know who that was.

Arthur takes out the business card Tim gave him and looks it over. We now see that the card reads, "DUMB IT DOWN!!!," with contact information for someone named "RICKY S. ACTION."

INT. YMCA BASKETBALL COURT - NIGHT

Folding chairs and a podium have been set up on one end of the court for some sort of seminar. A computer printed banner hanging across the basketball hoop reads, "DUMB IT DOWN!!!"

Arthur hesitantly takes a seat in the back row. He looks around at the other people attending the seminar.

They all resemble him: nervous, socially awkward intellectuals. Everyone sits by themselves. Nobody is talking to each other.

Arthur meets the apprehensive gaze of a PECULIAR LOOKING WOMAN, 30's, a few seats away from him. Her understated natural beauty seems intentionally masked by thick glasses and a really bad haircut. She quickly looks away.

After a beat, she slowly turns back to see if he's still looking at her. He is.

PECULIAR LOOKING WOMAN
Could I borrow a pencil?

ARTHUR
How about a pen?

PECULIAR LOOKING WOMAN
Sure.

Arthur hands her a luxurious chrome pen.

PECULIAR LOOKING WOMAN (CONT'D)
Wow. This is a very nice pen.

ARTHUR
Actually, that model's been used on all space flights since the Apollo VII voyage in 1968. The brass and steel were designed to make it durable, but I find it sort of elegant, don't you?

The woman is speechless, blown away by Arthur's knowledge. When Arthur doesn't receive a response from her, he uncomfortably turns away.

Suddenly, a SHORT BALD MAN in a tweed sport coat stands up from his folding chair. He looks around at his peers with an unshakable confidence.

SHORT BALD MAN
Anybody catch the game last night?

No one responds.

SHORT BALD MAN (CONT'D)
You see that bitchin' spiral that dude threw?

People glance at one another in confusion. The man begins to saunter up the middle aisle.

SHORT BALD MAN (CONT'D)
I was at this club last weekend.
Ended up going home with a 5. Jäger
goggles, bro.

The man swaggers toward the podium.

SHORT BALD MAN (CONT'D)
Yo, guess who got into a fight last
night? Me! This guy said he had
next on the pool table. Yeah,
right. That dude got served.

The man takes his place behind the podium. His demeanor
suddenly changes. He is now more articulate and intelligent.

SHORT BALD MAN (CONT'D)
Now did you all see what I did
right there? By pronounced
alterations in my speech patterns,
my vocabulary and the focus of my
subject matter, I was able to
transform myself. Did I seem more
likeable? Anyone?

He searches the audience. A NERDY WOMAN raises her hand.

NERDY WOMAN
Not really.

NERDY MAN
Yeah, I didn't relate to anything
you said.

SHORT BALD MAN
And that's exactly why you're here
tonight. Ladies and gentlemen, up
until this moment you've lived your
lives as intellectuals with a self-
destructive intolerance for idiocy.
But tonight is the beginning of a
newfound happiness. By overcoming
your urges to act intelligently, I
guarantee you a circle of friends:
girlfriends, boyfriends, bros,
dudes, chicks, and quite possibly a
fuck-buddy. Over the next month and
half, you will all learn how to
DUMB IT DOWN!!!

The man, RICKY ACTION, rips open his button-down shirt and
throws his shirt and jacket to the ground. He is now wearing
a tight T-shirt that reads, "I LOVE TITS."

RICKY ACTION

My name is Ricky S. Action. What does the S stand for? Satisf.

FAT DORK

That's so stupid.

RICKY ACTION

You know what else is stupid? The fact that you've never seen a female nipple in real life. But all of that is about to change. Let's begin.

Ricky Action puts on a pair of dark wrap-around sunglasses.

RICKY ACTION (CONT'D)

Now the first and most important thing you can "dumb down" is your sense of humor, because idiotic jokes are the glue of social bonding. Everyone come up and take a stack of Hilarity Cards.

ANGLE ON: There are several home-made stacks of flash cards on a table next to the podium.

INT. YMCA BASKETBALL COURT - LATER THAT NIGHT

Everyone is sitting in groups of 4. Ricky Action paces around the groups, surveying everyone's progress. He is still wearing his wrap-around sunglasses.

Arthur's group consists of a BUCK-TOOTHED MAN, a TEENAGE TECHIE and the peculiar looking woman from earlier. Arthur seems skeptical of the exercise. The buck-toothed man reads aloud from a Hilarity Card:

BUCK-TOOTHED MAN

"I saw a retard at the mall."

The woman and the teenager force a fake chuckle. Arthur has trouble mustering up a laugh. The buck-toothed man passes the stack of cards over to the teenager.

TEENAGE TECHIE

"Your dad's balls are fucked."

Again, the group affects laughter. The teenage techie passes the cards to the peculiar looking woman.

PECULIAR LOOKING WOMAN
"I just ripped ass."

The man and the teenager force a laugh, but Arthur can't fake it at all this time. Ricky Action notices and dashes over.

RICKY ACTION
Whoa, whoa, whoa. Why aren't you laughing?

ARTHUR
Excuse me?

RICKY ACTION
What's your name?

ARTHUR
Arthur.

Ricky Action takes off his wrap-around sunglasses and shakes Arthur's hand.

RICKY ACTION
Nice to meet you, Arthur. Do you understand the exercise?

ARTHUR
Yeah, I do. I just don't find any of these statements to be particularly funny.

RICKY ACTION
It doesn't matter whether you think they're funny. What matters is that other people think that you think they're funny. This seminar is all about fitting in. Follow me?

ARTHUR
I guess so.

RICKY ACTION
Do you understand what it means to rip ass?

ARTHUR
I have a pretty good idea.

RICKY ACTION
Flatulence, Arthur. Flatulence is the central tenet of conventional humor. It is the Holy Grail of male bonding.

(MORE)

RICKY ACTION (CONT'D)

If someone tells you that they just ripped ass and you don't laugh, you will be instantly written off as a stodgy elitist. Now let's try that again. Ready?

Ricky Action takes the card from the peculiar looking woman and squats down in front of Arthur, staring him in the eye.

RICKY ACTION (CONT'D)

"I just ripped ass."

Arthur attempts a loud, fake laugh. After a long silent beat, Ricky Action nods and rests his hand on Arthur's shoulder.

RICKY ACTION (CONT'D)

Much better, Arthur.

EXT. YMCA PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Everyone from the seminar is filing out of the building. As Arthur approaches his car, he notices the peculiar looking woman unlocking the adjacent car.

PECULIAR LOOKING WOMAN

Hey.

ARTHUR

Hi.

PECULIAR LOOKING WOMAN

That was kind of strange, huh?

ARTHUR

Yeah, a little. But hopefully these lessons will help us, right?

PECULIAR LOOKING WOMAN

By the way, just so you know, I thought what you said about your space pen was really interesting. I'm a writer, so I like detailed explanations. I'm such a weirdo.

ARTHUR

Thank you.

PECULIAR LOOKING WOMAN

And I didn't think the flatulence joke was funny either.

ARTHUR

I guess all that matters is that people think we think it's funny.

PECULIAR LOOKING WOMAN

Right. My name's Gertrude Guff.

ARTHUR

Oh. I'm Arthur Overmeyer.

They extend their arms to shake hands. But they can't reach each other, because there's a large car between them.

INT. ARTHUR'S APARTMENT BUILDING - ELEVATOR - MORNING

Bill is standing in the elevator wearing a BestBuy uniform. Arthur hurries in at the last second. Bill looks annoyed.

ARTHUR

Good morning, Bill.

BILL

Hey.

The doors close, and they ride down together in silence.

ARTHUR

Listen, I hope you don't think I'm still angry about what happened last week.

BILL

What? Oh, yeah. My boy McDermott gets crazy when he's wasted. I mean, I can see how he thought it was funny, but what he did to your laundry was fucked up.

ARTHUR

It's no problem. I already rewashed everything. In fact, I used this new Shout Remover Gel. It's got an ingredient called Tetradecene-1 that's 99 percent olefinic. So the stains are pretty much gone.

Bill futilely punches the already activated lobby button. Arthur seems very aware of the disconnect between them.

INT. ARTHUR'S APARTMENT BUILDING - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

The elevator doors open, and Bill and Arthur step out. Bill tries to hurry ahead.

ARTHUR
Bill. Wait. I just want you to know
that I... I, uh...

BILL
You what, dude?

ARTHUR
I just ripped ass.

Suddenly, Bill begins chuckling.

BILL
You did what?

ARTHUR
I ripped ass.

BILL
Just now? While we were in the
elevator?

ARTHUR
Yes, Bill.

Bill bursts out laughing.

BILL
Dude! That is hilarious!

ARTHUR
Yeah, I know. It still smells
really bad.

BILL
Oh, man! Light a match!

ARTHUR
And you know what else?

BILL
What?

ARTHUR
Last night, I saw a retard at the
mall.

Bill doubles over with intense, uncontrollable laughter.

BILL
Dude, you're insane!

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL PARKING LOT - MORNING

Arthur walks across the parking lot toward the school. He is wearing wrap-around sunglasses that look absurd on him.

As Arthur passes a dumpster, Donald's head pops out of it. He is wearing his janitor's uniform and covered in filth.

DONALD
Hey, Arthur. What are you wearing?
Are those new sunglasses?

ARTHUR
Yeah. What do you think?

DONALD
Truth? You look like an idiot. And
I don't even think those lenses
provide you with proper protection.
These babies on the other hand...

Donald throws on a pair of giant, violet tinted shades that only old people wear at the beach.

DONALD (CONT'D)
Dangerous, photokeratitis causing
UV rays, you are not welcome here.

Arthur selfconsciously takes off his sunglasses.

ARTHUR
What are you doing in the dumpster?

DONALD
Some kid lost his retainer. Again.
Although, I really shouldn't
complain. This dumpster is a
veritable treasure trove.

Donald holds up a scientific calculator and a beaker.

DONALD (CONT'D)
Ebay? Cha-ching!

Sally walks up to the dumpster carrying a tray of food.

SALLY

Hey, honey. How's the retainer search going?

DONALD

Oh, it's one of the most fulfilling experiences of my life, sweetie. How's the sitting at your desk in an air conditioned office IMing with your college friends? How's that going?

SALLY

Donald, you know I've been busy revamping the physical education program. But I brought you some waffles in case you get hungry.

DONALD

We get it, honey. We get it. You're the principal. You have the luxury of bringing the school janitor waffles. Congratulations.

SALLY

I just know how much you love waffles, honey.

DONALD

Yeah, eating breakfast in a dumpster, very sanitary. Great way to start the day.

SALLY

Okay, well, I'll just leave these here in case you get hungry, sweetie. Love you.

She sets the waffles down on a bench and leaves. Donald shakes his head to Arthur.

DONALD

So annoying.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY

Arthur is writing a list on the chalkboard. His usual students are there: Greg, Sophie, etc.

ARTHUR

If we remember our taxonomic ranks, we begin with Life.

(MORE)

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

And then comes Domain. And after that, Kingdom. Then Phylum. Then... anyone? Anyone know what comes next?

Arthur looks around the room. Everyone seems utterly bored. Arthur points to Greg, who, despite his waspy suburban face, has on an Allen Iverson jersey and a huge gold rope chain.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

Greg? Do you know the answer?

GREG

What?

ARTHUR

Can you tell us what comes next in the taxonomic ranking?

GREG

How the hell would I know?

ARTHUR

Did you not do the reading?

GREG

Dude, I told you last week. I lost my book. How can I do the reading if I don't have the book?

ARTHUR

No, I think there's another reason why you can't do the reading.

GREG

Oh, yeah? What's that?

Arthur takes a nervous breath. He clears his throat.

ARTHUR

Because your dad's balls are fucked.

For a moment, the class is stunned. Arthur looks horrified. Then suddenly, the room explodes with raucous laughter.

SOPHIE

(to Greg)

Sorry, baby! He totally burned you!

Arthur gets a high-five from a student in the front row. Greg folds his arms and looks down at the floor, embarrassed.

INT. SALLY'S OFFICE - DAY

Arthur is seated across from Sally. The nameplate on her desk reads, "PRINCIPAL BERNSTEIN."

SALLY

I got a call from Greg Doyle's mother this morning. Apparently, Greg's father suffers from a severe condition called...

(reads off a Post-It note)

Secondary Hypogonadism.

ARTHUR

So what are you saying?

SALLY

Greg's dad's balls are fucked.

ARTHUR

Wow, I didn't realize. I'm really sorry. This must be bad.

SALLY

It's not good.

Arthur bows his head like he knows he's in trouble.

SALLY (CONT'D)

Having said that, I think your joke was pretty darn hilarious. Greg Doyle is one bad, bad apple.

Sally starts to giggle to herself.

SALLY (CONT'D)

"Your dad's balls are fucked."
Where did you come up with that?

She breaks down in uncontrollable laughter.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL COURTYARD - DAY

Chuckie the janitor is raking leaves, having the time of his life. A gust of wind scatters the pile of leaves, but Chuckie doesn't seem to mind. He keeps smiling.

CHUCKIE

I love wind!

We pan over to a nearby bench, where Arthur and Tim are eating sandwiches together.

ARTHUR

So your whole personality is just an act?

TIM

Pretty much. You know, ten years ago I taught Physics over at St. Bonaventure. I tried to get the students into Maxwell's equations by having them build circuits out of old radio parts. The kids looked at me like I was an alien from another planet. God forbid they use their brains for once.

ARTHUR

This is quite a revelation, Tim. I thought you were always cool and hip.

TIM

Yeah, right. Even the teachers at Bonaventure called me nerd and freak behind my back. My social life was a disaster. No parties. No friends. No... What's the word Ricky Action likes to use? "Poontang?"

ARTHUR

Speaking of Ricky Action. I have to admit, I don't find any of his social tools humorous or even slightly clever. They all just seem crass and juvenile.

TIM

Have you tried them out yet?

ARTHUR

Here and there.

TIM

And?

ARTHUR

People are really responding to it.

TIM

Exactly. Just think of it like you're learning a new language. Believe me, Ricky Action is a sociological genius. Have you seen me work my magic in the teachers' lounge? My students all think I'm the cool guy. And when parent-teacher conference night comes around, who's the guy fornicating with Mommy in the janitor's closet?

ARTHUR

You?

TIM

That's right, Arthur.

A group of HOT SENIOR GIRLS, including Sophie, walks by.

HOT SENIOR GIRL

Hey Mr. S.! You still coming to our volleyball game on Saturday?

TIM

You know it!

Tim nudges Arthur, prompting him to chime in.

ARTHUR

I just ripped ass!

The senior girls erupt with laughter.

HOT SENIOR GIRL

Awesome! You gotta come, too, Mr. Overmeyer! You're hilarious!

SOPHIE

(whispers to her friends)

He made Greg look like the biggest loser this morning. He's like born again awesome.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Arthur is waiting outside of the building. Jasmine walks out, and Arthur quickly puts on his wrap-around sunglasses.

ARTHUR

Hey, Ms. Tweston. Long day, huh?

JASMINE
Yeah, I really can't talk. I'm
running late for something.

Arthur walks with her.

ARTHUR
Did you see the game last night?

JASMINE
What?

ARTHUR
Did you see that bitching spiral
that dude threw?

JASMINE
I don't watch sports. Sports are
for guys.

ARTHUR
Right. You know what else is for
guys?

They arrive at Jasmine's car.

JASMINE
Well, this is my car.

ARTHUR
Fighting.

JASMINE
Fighting?

ARTHUR
Yeah, I was at this restaurant last
night, and this guy said he had
next on the billiards table--

JASMINE
On the what?

ARTHUR
Pool. The pool table.

JASMINE
They had a pool table at a
restaurant?

ARTHUR
No, no, it was a bar.

Jasmine gets into her car and shuts the door.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

And this guy said he had next on
the pool table, but--

Jasmine reverses out of her spot and drives away.

INT. YMCA BASKETBALL COURT - NIGHT

The buck-toothed man and the fat dork are standing together at the front of the class. They are purposefully trying to act dumb. Ricky Action is overseeing the exercise. Arthur sits in the front row taking notes.

BUCK-TOOTHED MAN

Dude, suicide bombers, man. It's
like, boom, dude. And it's like
total chaos. We gotta stomp those
Muslims off the globe.

Arthur feels someone watching him. He turns around to see Gertrude Guff seated in the back row. She sheepishly smiles and waves. Arthur awkwardly nods and turns back around.

FAT DORK

Well, at the heart of Islam there's
a message of peace and acceptance.
So I wouldn't really say--

RICKY ACTION

(to fat dork)

Remember, dumb it down!

FAT DORK

I mean, fuck those towelheads, bro.
Let 'em figure it out themselves.

Ricky Action stands up and claps.

RICKY ACTION

Well done. Very nice. Four classes
in, and you're making enormous
progress. So what did we all learn
right there? Whenever someone has a
a religious belief you disagree
with, always, always acquiesce. I
can't emphasize that enough.

Arthur writes down the phrase "religious belief: always
acquiesce" and underlines it 4 times. The buck-toothed man
and the fat dork take their seats.

RICKY ACTION (CONT'D)
Arthur, Gertrude, you're up.

Arthur and Gertrude take their places at the front.

RICKY ACTION (CONT'D)
Okay, Gertrude, you're at a bar.
Arthur just bought you a Long
Island Ice Tea. Take it from there.

GERTRUDE
Wow. Thanks for the drink. Long
Island Ice Teas get you so wasted.

RICKY ACTION
Perfect, perfect. And Arthur, your
response?

ARTHUR
I just ripped ass.

RICKY ACTION
Okay, Arthur, look, you can't keep
using the same line. "I just ripped
ass" is great to have in your
repertoire, but you need to
diversify. Remember your Hilarity
Cards. Go.

ARTHUR
Being at this bar makes me wanna
beat some faggot's ass.

GERTRUDE
Can I see your abs?

ARTHUR
(to Ricky Action)
Do I really have to show her my
stomach?

RICKY ACTION
Okay, I'm glad this came up. We
haven't gone over this yet, but
it's a perfect opportunity for a
tactic I like to call "Carnal
Bargaining." Observe.

Ricky Action takes Arthur's place in the scene.

RICKY ACTION (CONT'D)
Say your line again, Gertrude.

GERTRUDE
Can I see your abs?

RICKY ACTION
You wanna see my six pack? Sure,
I'll show it to you. Right after
you show me your tit-taaays.

The class applauds. Ricky Action takes a little bow.

RICKY ACTION (CONT'D)
Don't worry, you'll all get there.
I've been at this a long time.

GERTRUDE
So would I really have to show my
breasts to him?

Arthur steps back into the scene.

ARTHUR
If you don't wanna show your
titties now, you can show them
later. Back at my place.

RICKY ACTION
Wow. Excellent transition, Arthur.
You're a fast learner.

The audience applauds again, this time for Arthur. Gertrude smiles bashfully as she claps.

RICKY ACTION (CONT'D)
What do you do for a living,
Arthur? Professional gigolo?

ARTHUR
No, I'm actually a teacher. And
sort of an author, I guess.

RICKY ACTION
You're an author?

ARTHUR
I published a book once.

Gertrude cocks her head, surprised and intrigued by the mention of Arthur's book.

RICKY ACTION
A book, huh? Was it called, *How to
Pimp Like a Poontang Pirate*?

Ricky Action pounds his fist against Arthur's and does a corny pantomime of ramming a girl from behind.

EXT. YMCA - NIGHT

Arthur walks out of the building. Ricky Action is chewing on a toothpick just outside of the exit.

RICKY ACTION

Arthur.

ARTHUR

Oh, hi, Mr. Action.

RICKY ACTION

Call me Ricky.

ARTHUR

Okay.

RICKY ACTION

Good work in there tonight. You've got a lot of potential.

ARTHUR

Thanks. That means a lot coming from you.

Ricky Action offers Arthur a toothpick like his.

RICKY ACTION

Toothpick?

ARTHUR

No, that's all right.

RICKY ACTION

Hey, free lesson: never turn down a toothpick.

Arthur accepts the toothpick and places it in his mouth.

RICKY ACTION (CONT'D)

Much better. A toothpick sticking out of the corner of your mouth tells the world you just got done fucking 5 chicks at the same time.

ARTHUR

I'll remember that.

RICKY ACTION

You're a cool guy, Arthur. Fast learner. You should come out with me some time, grab a beer. There are certain lessons that can only be learned in the field.

INT. ED'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

We are close up on a TV screen. A video for Reverend Jack Shorko's "religion" is playing. A NARRATOR is describing the religion's creation myth, as shoddily animated visuals accompany the narration.

NARRATOR

When the mighty Space Wizard, Gjorganthaal, created Starship Earth, he carved out a hole in the center, a place where the souls of his believers could gather and revel in their newfound bodilessness. When a deceased human being is buried beneath the surface of our Life Sphere, the souls of those who believe will drift downward to the core, where they will be greeted by a throng of euphoric spirits.

We cut to the Reverend JACK SHORKO, dressed in a white suit with eccentric Einstein hair, seated in a space-age chair.

JACK SHORKO

Wizard be with you. I am the Reverend Jack Shorko. I have seen what lies beyond and below this realm. For 14 minutes in the summer of 1975, I was pronounced dead. But through circumstances that I can only describe as miraculous, I came back. What happened during those 14 minutes of lifelessness was nothing less than astounding.

We cut to a shot of a huge party taking place in a bizarre dome-like structure. Tons of old people are dancing to a weird music that's a combination of Big Band and Techno. They are having a total blast.

We arrive at Jack Shorko dancing among the old people. He seems much more laid back and festive.

JACK SHORKO (CONT'D)
Welcome to the Eternal Party of
Souls! Where death is only the
Space Wizard Gjorganthaal's
subterranean portal to endless fun!
Posthumous VIP tickets start at
\$349.99, but with an additional--

The TV turns off. We pull out to reveal Arthur and his dad,
Ed, sitting on Ed's sofa watching the television.

ED
Still don't believe me?

Arthur struggles to stifle his disapproval.

ARTHUR
Yeah, I can see how that makes
sense. The Wizard. The party.

ED
But what about you? We gotta sign
you up before it's too late.

ARTHUR
That's all right. I'm okay.

ED
Did you or did you not see the
ladies at that party?

ARTHUR
Dad, you're entitled to your own
opinion. But I don't know if the
Space Wizard is for everyone.

ED
Opinion?! This isn't a matter of
opinion, Arthur! The good Reverend
Jack Shorko was dead for 14
minutes! He's been to the other
side! It's a fact!

Arthur can no longer suppress his true sentiments.

ARTHUR
No, Dad, it's not a fact! You're
just scared of death, of the
unknown! But instead of fighting
off your cancer, you spend your
final days trying to get on the
list for an afterlife party!

Ed stands up.

ED
Get out of my house.

Arthur softens up and seems to regret his outburst.

ARTHUR
Dad, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to--

ED
Goodbye.

ARTHUR
Maybe we could do a movie night
this Saturday or--

ED
I said, goodbye!

Saddened, Arthur gets up and walks to the door.

ED (CONT'D)
Wait.

Arthur turns around with a hopeful look. Ed lowers his head and holds his open palms out toward his son.

ED (CONT'D)
Wizard be with you.

INT. JUICE BAR - NIGHT

Arthur is ordering at the counter from a rude GOTH GIRL with a huge Satanic tattoo on her neck.

ARTHUR
Can I get a double shot of wheat
grass juice?

GOTH GIRL
Really? Wheat grass juice is such a
pain in the ass to make.

Arthur rubs his chin, considering how to handle such bad customer service.

ARTHUR
You know what? Fuck wheat grass.

He points out a photo on the overhead menu of a giant orange shake with whipped cream. It looks extremely unhealthy.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
Just give me one of those big
orange things.

GOTH GIRL
(smiles)
Nice, dude.

The Goth girl leaves to go make Arthur's drink. Suddenly,
Arthur's cell phone rings. He answers it.

ARTHUR
Hello?... Yeah, this is Arthur...
Who is this?... Who?... Whoa, whoa,
calm down. What's the problem?

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING HALLWAY - NIGHT

Arthur knocks on an apartment door. He is holding an extra-large orange shake in his hand.

The door opens. Gertrude quickly steps out into the hall and shuts the door behind her. She is wearing an unflattering cocktail dress and hoop earrings that don't quite look right.

GERTRUDE
Arthur, thank you so much for
coming. I tried Ricky Action's
emergency hotline, but there wasn't
any answer. So I went down the
contact list, and you were the only
name I recognized.

ARTHUR
Don't worry about it, Gertrude. So
what exactly is going on?

GERTRUDE
I'm such an imbecile. I was at my
cousin's birthday party tonight,
and I thought I'd try out some of
the stuff we've been learning. But
I accidentally slipped into Carnal
Bargaining, and now I have this
creepy guy in my apartment who
won't leave.

ARTHUR
What do you need me to do?

CREEPY GUY (O.S.)
I'm ready to see those cantaloupes!

GERTRUDE
(whispers to Arthur)
Just pretend you're my boyfriend.

Gertrude opens the door and pulls Arthur inside with her.

INT. GERTRUDE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The apartment is filled with piles of books. Interesting yet bizarre pieces of framed art cover the walls. The CREEPY GUY is sitting on the couch with no shirt on and a huge gut sticking out over his belt line.

CREEPY GUY
Who the fuck is this cockblocker?

GERTRUDE
Arthur, tell him.

CREEPY GUY
Tell me what?

ARTHUR
I'm her boyfriend.

The creepy guy stands up, clearly very drunk. He stumbles up to Arthur and looks him up and down for a long beat.

CREEPY GUY
All right. I'm down for a
threesome.

There is a tense moment. Gertrude gives Arthur a pleading look. Arthur hesitantly puts his arm around the creepy guy and leads him toward the door.

ARTHUR
Listen. Bro. Normally, I would be
totally down for double teaming
some party poon. But this is no
ordinary girl.

CREEPY GUY
(whispers)
Chick with dick?

ARTHUR
No, dude, I'm serious about this
girl. Tonight is our anniversary.

CREEPY GUY
Aw, jeez. Really?

ARTHUR

That's right. One year ago I stuck my face between those bitchin' cantaloupes and buried my bone in her backyard. What can I say? I'm in love with this cooze.

The creepy guy seems moved. He touches Arthur's shoulder.

CREEPY GUY

That's beautiful, man.

ARTHUR

Thank you.

CREEPY GUY

Now I feel like a dick. Lemme just grab my shirt and my Pats hat and I'll be outta your hair. Happy anniversary, you two.

The creepy guy picks up his shirt and throws on a Patriots hat. He exits the apartment. Gertrude double-locks the door. Arthur sighs and catches his breath.

GERTRUDE

Wow. You are good.

ARTHUR

Hey, don't thank me. Thank Ricky Action.

GERTRUDE

I need a glass of wine to calm down. Would you like one?

She holds up an expensive looking bottle of wine.

ARTHUR

Is that Krug Clos du Mesnil?

GERTRUDE

Yeah. Is that bad? If you don't like it--

ARTHUR

No, no, that's actually one of my favorite wines. I'd love a glass.

She goes into the kitchen. Arthur walks around the room.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

So this is your apartment?

GERTRUDE (O.S.)
Yeah, sorry it's such a mess.

Arthur notices a glass terrarium with a hamster in it. The terrarium is decorated to look like a tropical paradise with fake palm trees and a miniature cabana. A meticulously crafted, handmade sign reads, "DAVID'S PARADISE."

Gertrude reenters with two glasses of wine.

GERTRUDE (CONT'D)
That's David, my hamster.

ARTHUR
It's quite an impressive set-up.

GERTRUDE
I know it's a little bizarre, but studies have shown that visual stimuli can increase a hamster's lifespan by up to 6 months. And that's kind of important. Because David's not only a friend, he's also a business partner.

ARTHUR
I thought you said you were a writer?

She goes to her computer and brings up a website for Arthur to see: the home page for *americanhamster.com*. There is a picture of Gertrude giving two thumbs up. Her hamster, David, is sitting on top of her head. Below the picture are a bunch of links to Gertrude's hamster writings.

GERTRUDE
It's a combination of fiction and nonfiction. Kind of like Jane Goodall meets Stewart Little.

ARTHUR
Interesting. I never knew people were into that sort of thing.

GERTRUDE
Yeah, we've got roughly 43 subscribers from 9 different countries. So the ads have been pouring in lately. It keeps the lights on, right?

Arthur nods and sips his wine. Gertrude smiles sheepishly.

GERTRUDE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, you must think I'm such a weirdo. Not many people appreciate rodentology.

ARTHUR

Not at all. In fact, I'm an amateur entomologist myself with an emphasis on honeybees.

GERTRUDE

I know.

ARTHUR

You know?

Gertrude walks over to a bookshelf and pulls out a copy of Arthur's book, *Honeybee Colony Collapse Disorder and the Varroa Destructor Mite: A Global Disaster*.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

How did you get that?

GERTRUDE

You mentioned you were an author in class, so I thought I'd check out your literature. I couldn't find your book in any of the stores, though, so I went on Amazon--

ARTHUR

My book's on Amazon?

GERTRUDE

Not anymore. But there was a link to a site called *nerdheaven.com*? And they had like 400 brand new copies. I bought four for a dollar.

Arthur looks bummed about the price.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING HALLWAY - DAY

Gertrude walks Arthur to the elevator.

GERTRUDE

Thanks again for helping me out.

ARTHUR

What are classmates for?

GERTRUDE

By the way, how's everything going with you? Is "Dumbing It Down" helping you out socially?

ARTHUR

So-so. I haven't made any new friends yet. And there's a teacher at my school I'm still trying to connect with. Or as Ricky Action likes to say, I still have yet to "pound the puss."

GERTRUDE

Oh. A teacher. That's great. Is she nice? She must be pretty.

ARTHUR

Yeah, she's beautiful. I've had my eye on her for a while now, so...

They arrive at the elevator. Arthur can tell that he's accidentally put Gertrude off by mentioning Jasmine.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

Anyway, who knows what will happen.

The elevator doors open. There is an awkward silence. Gertrude holds out her hand for a handshake.

GERTRUDE

Well, see you at the next class.

ARTHUR

See you then, Gertrude.

They shake hands. Arthur gets into the elevator. As the doors close, Gertrude calls to him:

GERTRUDE

Good luck with the puss-pounding!

INT. ARTHUR'S APARTMENT - DAY

ANGLE ON: Arthur's old copies of *Atlantic Monthly*, *National Geographic* and *The Economist* are piled up in the garbage can.

Arthur is seated on the couch. A tall stack of celebrity gossip magazines sits next to him. He flips through a copy of *Us Weekly* with a photo of Brangelina on the cover. He highlights and takes copious notes.

Arthur occasionally looks up at his television to observe a SOULJA BOY rap video playing on MTV. Soulja Boy dances around, emanating his typical "gangsta vibe."

Arthur rubs his eyes. He looks tired and lonely. He suddenly hears loud SHOUTING and CHEERING coming from next door. Arthur gazes at the wall, an idea forming in his head.

INT. ARTHUR'S APARTMENT BUILDING - HALLWAY - DAY

Arthur knocks on the front door of Bill's apartment. He has a toothpick sticking out of the corner of his mouth. Bill answers the door in a Lions football jersey.

BILL

What's up, dude? We being too loud?

ARTHUR

No, not at all.

BILL

Oh, your saran wrap. Hold on, lemme grab it for you.

ARTHUR

Wait, Bill, are you guys... watching the game?

BILL

Of course.

ARTHUR

Listen, bro. I'd like to apologize for acting like such a...

Arthur subtly glances at the palm of his hand. The word, "FAGMEISTER," has been written in marker.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

... fagmeister.

BILL

No worries, dude. Everyone acts like a fagmeister sometimes.

ARTHUR

Exactly. We're neighbors, right? We should be friends. This is for you, homeboy.

Arthur holds up a single beer. Bill looks amazed.

BILL

Dude!

INT. BILL'S APARTMENT - DAY

Bill's apartment has the visual aesthetic of a college dorm room. The only posters on the wall are of professional wrestlers and bikini models with fake breasts. A bunch of Bill's idiot friends are watching a football game on TV.

Bill brings Arthur into the room.

BILL

Hey everybody, listen up! This is my neighbor!

BILL'S FRIEND #1

Oh, yeah, I heard about you. You saw a retard at the mall, right?

ARTHUR

I did. A really big retard.

BILL'S FRIEND #2

Sweet toothpick, bro.

MCDERMOTT

Hey Poindexter! I hope you redid your laundry!

BILL

Shut up, McDermott. Give the dude a chance. Why don't you line up some shots? Half time's almost over.

McDermott reaches behind the couch and grabs a handle of Cuervo. He pours out a bunch of giant shots and hands them out to everyone. Bill gives one to Arthur and raises his Lions coffee mug, which is filled with tequila.

BILL (CONT'D)

What are we drinking to?

ARTHUR

To sports games.

BILL

Yeah! And to Slut Mouth!

ANGLE ON: SLUT MOUTH, an ugly girl with huge sensual lips.

SLUT MOUTH
Come on, no one calls me that
anymore.

Everyone roars and downs their shot. Arthur drinks his
tequila, gagging at the taste.

INT. BILL'S APARTMENT - LATER THAT DAY

The game has been over for a while now. Everyone is utterly
wasted. Arthur is sitting on the couch, drunker than he's
ever been. He has his arm over McDermott's shoulder. He is
lecturing the room, his words completely slurred.

ARTHUR
I mean, who says we don't need bees
to survive?

MCDERMOTT
Totally.

ARTHUR
It's like I say in my book. Show me
a world without bees, and I'll show
you a world without migratory
contract pollination and a global
agricultural economy that doesn't
even come close to providing
sustenance for third world
populations.

Arthur looks around the room. He realizes that nobody
understands a word he's saying. Everyone looks annoyed.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
Am I boring you guys?

MCDERMOTT
A little bit, dude.

ARTHUR
Yeah? Well, how boring is this?

Arthur grabs the empty bottle of Cuervo and SMASHES it
against the wall. Bill jumps up from his seat.

BILL
Dude, what the fuck?

Arthur looks nervous. Bill smiles.

BILL (CONT'D)
SHARD PARTY!

Everyone cheers. Bill throws his mug against the wall. Everyone in the room begins breaking bottles. McDermott stomps his foot through the glass coffee table. Slut Mouth stands up and punches a ceiling light, shattering it.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL PARKING LOT - MORNING

Arthur drives behind an extremely slow car. He looks hung over, and he's now shaved his beard into a goatee.

Off to the side, Arthur notices Dan and Barry getting out of their cars. Trying to impress them, Arthur turns up his radio, blasting Rihanna's *Umbrella*. He lays down on his horn and yells out his window at the car in front of him:

ARTHUR
Hurry up! Let's go!

Arthur eventually parks beside the slowly moving car. Donald and Sally emerge from the car.

DONALD
Jesus, Arthur. What's with all the horn honking?

ARTHUR
No offense, Donald. But you drive like a little bitch.

Dan and Barry look surprised and amazed. Arthur pounds his chest and flashes them the peace sign. They stare in awe at Arthur, as he struts off.

DONALD
(calling after Arthur)
Uh, are you saying I drive like a woman? Because statistically female drivers are almost 15 percent less likely to get into an accident, smart guy.

Dan and Barry shake their heads in disbelief at Arthur.

DAN
Was that Overmeyer?

BARRY

Did you see his goatee? That's like
Chuck "The Ice Man" Liddell style.
Goatees are so badass.

DAN

I know. God, I should've never
shaved off my flavor saver.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Jasmine is walking down the empty hall. She hears music
coming from one of the classrooms. She peeks in and sees...

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

YOUNG JEEZY is blasting from a boombox stereo. Arthur is
dancing like a rapper in a hip hop video, emanating a
"gangsta vibe." He bobs his head, holds his crotch with one
hand and does "raise the roof" with the other. He is wearing
Greg's huge gold rope chain around his neck.

The students are on their feet dancing.

ANGLE ON: Jasmine looks astonished and impressed.

ARTHUR

Yeeuh! Yeeuh! Droppin' science on
all y'all!

Arthur dances over to a Bunsen burner. He lights it, and a
huge flame shoots out. The students CHEER like they're at a
concert. He holds the flame up in the air and strikes a pose.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

Statue of Liberty, y'all!

The students burst out laughing.

ANGLE ON: Jasmine puts her hand over her mouth to stifle a
laugh.

GREG

Yo, Mr. O.! Can I get my chain
back?

ARTHUR

Nah, nah, kid. Maybe at the end of
the day.

INT. SNACK ROOM - DAY

Arthur is getting a drink at the vending machine. He is still wearing Greg's gold rope chain. Jasmine walks up.

JASMINE

Hey, Arthur.

ARTHUR

Oh. Hey, Ms. Tweston.

JASMINE

You can call me by my first name. I was just joking about the whole student thing before.

ARTHUR

Okay, Jasmine.

JASMINE

My friends actually call me Jazzy.

ARTHUR

Jazzy. That sounds like an attributive adjective.

(catches himself)

I mean, that sounds cool as fuck.

JASMINE

Thanks. By the way, I caught part of your biology class this morning?

ARTHUR

(embarrassed)

Oh, god, you saw that? I was just trying to be goofy.

JASMINE

You are an awesome teacher. Those kids were so into your lesson. Which is amazing. Because science is like the boringest, right?

ARTHUR

Yeah, I guess science mostly sucks.

JASMINE

Right?

ARTHUR

Right.

JASMINE

Anyway, I'm sorry I couldn't make it to your party last month. I totally wanted to come, but I got the spins really early, and Barry had to like hold my hair out of the toilet. "Jazzy Gone Wild."

ARTHUR

Yeah, I got pretty wasted, too. It turned into this crazy shard party.

JASMINE

Oh, my god! I love shard parties! What are you up to this weekend?

ARTHUR

Just watching the game. Maybe hit up some clubs.

JASMINE

Well, my old sorority sister Shaz is coming into town. If you've got a friend, we should like totally double date or something.

ARTHUR

Shaz and Jaz, huh? Sounds like double trouble.

Jasmine laughs and touches Arthur's arm.

JASMINE

That is genius! By the way, I love your new flavor saver.

ARTHUR

My new what?

INT. YMCA BASKETBALL COURT - NIGHT

Arthur and DAREN, the teenage techie from earlier, are in front of the class doing another exercise with Ricky Action.

RICKY ACTION

All right, today's lesson is Aggressive Assertion. We're in a night club. The night club is called *Intrigue*. Arthur, you're Daren's wing-man. Daren, I just bumped into you without saying "Excuse me." What now?

DAREN

Um...

RICKY ACTION

Did you study your Aggression Cards over the weekend?

DAREN

Yes, Mr. Action.

RICKY ACTION

So what now, bitch?

DAREN

Honestly, I'd probably just let it slide.

RICKY ACTION

Take a seat, pussy.

Daren sits down in the first row.

RICKY ACTION (CONT'D)

Arthur, why don't you show Daren how to unleash his Inner Destroyer? You think you can handle that?

ARTHUR

Yeah, I think I can. But let me ask you this, was the bump a flagrant act of aggression or was it an accident?

RICKY ACTION

Does it matter?

ARTHUR

In a sense. If it was only accidental, I might respond with, "What's up, punk?" or "You wanna die tonight, faggot?" But if it was on purpose, I think I'd try a more pugilistic, nonverbal tactic.

The class looks impressed by Arthur's reasoning abilities.

RICKY ACTION

Well, what did it seem like to you?

Arthur thinks it over for a moment. He suddenly PUNCHES Ricky Action in the face. Ricky Action crumples to the ground.

ANGLE ON: Gertrude gasps.

Arthur immediately regrets his action. He crouches down next to Ricky Action to make sure he's okay.

ARTHUR

I'm so sorry, Ricky. I've never punched anyone before in my life. I've always been a pacifist. Do you want me to call an ambulance?

Ricky Action sits up. His face is bright red, and his mouth is dripping with blood. Arthur nervously awaits his reaction.

RICKY ACTION

That... was... AWESOME!

Ricky Action holds out his hand for a high-five. Arthur awkwardly slaps it. Ricky Action unsteadily gets to his feet.

RICKY ACTION (CONT'D)

Now did you all see what Arthur did right there? He answered my perfectly legitimate question with an unjustified physical response.

He spits out a mouthful of blood.

RICKY ACTION (CONT'D)

Write this down, people.

EXT. YMCA - NIGHT

Arthur leaves the building. Other members of the seminar congratulate him on their way out.

FAT DORK

Nice job tonight, Arthur.

NERDY WOMAN

Commendable performance.

Arthur and Gertrude approach their cars together.

GERTRUDE

God, I've been really struggling with the Homophobia Worksheets lately. Would you want to get together and study on Friday?

ARTHUR

I would. But I've actually got a date with that teacher I was telling you about.

GERTRUDE

Oh. The teacher, right. That's wonderful, Arthur. I'm glad it's working out for you.

Suppressing her disappointment, Gertrude starts to get into her car. Arthur can't help but notice her dismay.

ARTHUR

Well, how about Sunday morning?

GERTRUDE

Sunday? Sure, that could work. I can bring some cucumber water and kartoshkas.

ARTHUR

Great. I love kartoshkas.

Suddenly, Ricky Action's 2005 Mustang Convertible pulls up next to Arthur and screeches to a stop. Ricky Action throws open the passenger door, wearing his wrap-around sunglasses.

RICKY ACTION

Arthur. Get in.

ARTHUR

Where are we going?

RICKY ACTION

Oh, I don't know... all night party fuck jam?

ARTHUR

Really?

RICKY ACTION

Would I lie to my number one student?

INT. DIVE BAR - NIGHT

This is not an "all night party fuck jam." There are a few mid-life crisis alcoholics at the bar. A handful of ugly middle aged women are dressed like teenagers. Two blue collar GUYS are playing pool in the corner.

Ricky Action and Arthur take a seat at the bar. The bartender approaches them.

RICKY ACTION

What's your poison, Arthur?

ARTHUR
I guess I'll have a beer.

RICKY ACTION
(to the bartender)
Double shot of Hennessy, a PBR for
my friend, and a round of apple
martinis for the lovely ladies at
the end of the bar.

Ricky Action winks to a group of ugly barflies who respond
with leering, brown toothed smiles.

RICKY ACTION (CONT'D)
First round's on you, right, playa?

Arthur reluctantly hands his credit card to the bartender.
The bartender walks away to make their drinks.

RICKY ACTION (CONT'D)
Did you see the bartender's
reaction to the word, "playa?" In
two syllables I was able to convey
an air of youthfulness and cultural
sophistication.

ARTHUR
Really? I thought he looked kind of
annoyed.

RICKY ACTION
Common misinterpretation. What you
perceived as annoyance was in fact
a gesture of reverence. Subtext,
Arthur. Subtext.

Arthur nods, suppressing his skepticism. Ricky Action scopes
out the bar.

RICKY ACTION (CONT'D)
Like I told you before, Arthur,
some of my most valuable lessons
can only be taught in the field.
What's a better classroom than the
classroom of life? Observe.

Ricky Action points to the guys playing pool.

RICKY ACTION (CONT'D)
Right now those two civilians are
complete strangers. Watch, as I
rope them into my world with a
foolproof physical act of hilarity.

Ricky Action walks up to the guys at the pool table. He takes a cue stick and slips it between his legs from behind so that it looks like a giant penis. He slides it back and forth on the pool table, scattering the balls on the table.

RICKY ACTION (CONT'D)
Check it out! Stick Dick's in the
hay-ouse!

POOL PLAYER GUY #1
What the fuck, asshole! We're in
the middle of a game!

POOL PLAYER GUY #2
Get the fuck outta here!

They grab the cue stick away from Ricky and throw it to the ground. They push him away from the table.

RICKY ACTION
All right, I'm Audi-5000. Where's
your sense of humor, bros?

Ricky Action takes his seat beside Arthur again. He guzzles his entire glass of Hennessy.

RICKY ACTION (CONT'D)
Jeez, those guys were dumber than I
thought. If I'd have known how
idiotic they were, I would've gone
straight to my wrist watch routine.

ARTHUR
Your what?

RICKY ACTION
Man, it's getting late. Have you
seen what time it is?

He nods down to his wrist. Arthur looks down at Ricky Action's "watch" and quickly averts his eyes in disgust.

ARTHUR
Aw, gross. Doesn't that hurt?

INT. RICKY ACTION'S CAR - NIGHT

Ricky Action pulls up to the front of the YMCA. From the look on Arthur's face, we can see that he has obviously been underwhelmed and irritated by the night out.

ARTHUR
My car's back there.

RICKY ACTION
I know. I was thinking you could
check out my place, have a few more
beers. I've got some cold ones.

ARTHUR
Your place?

INT. YMCA BASEMENT LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

Arthur is seated on a bench. Ricky Action opens up a locker
and pulls out a couple of warm bottles of beer.

ARTHUR
So you live here?

RICKY ACTION
It's just temporary.

Ricky Action hands Arthur a beer and sits down on the bench
across from him. Ricky Action pretends to suddenly notice
something on the floor by his feet.

RICKY ACTION (CONT'D)
Whoa! What's this?

Ricky Action picks up a dirty, tattered manuscript. He dusts
it off and holds it up for Arthur to see.

RICKY ACTION (CONT'D)
Wow, I totally forgot about this. I
must have written this years ago.
Here, check it out.

He hands Arthur the manuscript. Arthur reads the title: *Lose
That Frown, Dumb It Down!!!*, by RICKY S. ACTION. Arthur leafs
through the manuscript, feigning interest.

ARTHUR
You wrote this?

RICKY ACTION
Yeah. I think it's like all of my
teachings in one concise, easy-to-
read manual. I guess you could call
it my life's work or something.

Ricky Action rubs his chin. An idea seems to be blossoming in
his mind.

RICKY ACTION (CONT'D)
Wait a second. You published a book
once, didn't you?

ARTHUR
Yeah.

RICKY ACTION
So you probably know some
influential people in the
publishing world. Maybe you could
pass my manuscript along to your
agent? Or maybe we should go
straight to the publisher?

ARTHUR
I don't really have an agent
anymore. And my publisher won't
even return my calls.

RICKY ACTION
What? You said you were an author.

ARTHUR
I was. My book was a complete
failure.

RICKY ACTION
Isn't there anyone you can show
this to? Do you have your
publisher's direct line? I could
call them myself. I don't mind.

ARTHUR
I don't, sorry.

Ricky Action chugs his whole beer. He stares Arthur in the
eye with a look of drunken desperation.

RICKY ACTION
Arthur, listen to me. I need your
help.

ARTHUR
You need my help?

RICKY ACTION
I am neck deep in a world of
financial pain. My three ex-wives
are like bloodthirsty wolves, and
alimony is their carrion. Two of my
children have brought separate
civil lawsuits against me.

(MORE)

RICKY ACTION (CONT'D)

My only source of income is the Dumb It Down seminar, which barely gets me by. On top of that, my best friend-- my own brother, just kicked me out of his basement last month.

ANGLE ON: There is a soiled sleeping bag lying on the floor.

RICKY ACTION (CONT'D)

He said I was acting like an idiot. No, Brian! You're the idiot!

Arthur looks really uncomfortable.

RICKY ACTION (CONT'D)

Please, Arthur. If there's anything you can do. Anything at all. I'd really, really appreciate it.

Arthur avoids eye contact with Ricky Action.

ARTHUR

Yeah. Sure. I'll see what I can do.

RICKY ACTION

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you! Thank you! THANK YOU!

Ricky Action lies down on the bench and loudly SIGHS.

RICKY ACTION (CONT'D)

Oh, god, that's like a giant weight lifted off my shoulders. How long do you think it'll take till I get my first royalty check?

INT. ARTHUR'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Arthur enters. He looks tired and depressed, his illusion of the guru, the great Ricky Action, now utterly shattered. Arthur tosses Ricky Action's manuscript down on the kitchen table. It flips open to a random page.

ANGLE ON: There is a hand-drawn, pencil illustration for something called the "DICK BROW." It shows the face of a sleeping person with a penis draped over their eyebrows.

Arthur shakes his head at the idiocy of the diagram.

ARTHUR

What? That's so stupid.

Suddenly, Arthur seems inspired. He picks up a pencil, erases the penis and redraws the same penis over the sleeping person's upper lip. He crosses out the word "BROW" and replaces it with "MOUSTACHE."

Arthur stands back and ponders his correction. He chuckles.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
"Dick Moustache."

His chuckling builds into an all out laugh.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
"Dick Moustache!" That is genius!

INT. FACULTY LOUNGE - DAY

Arthur is eating lunch with Dan and Barry at a table. He has their rapt attention.

ARTHUR
Angelina's hot and all. But when you're Brad Pitt, you can get any hot chick you want.

DAN
Totally.

ARTHUR
But if you stick with Angelina, you have to have those peasant kids living right in your house with you. It's like, dude.

BARRY
That's a really good point.

Donald walks up and sets his bag lunch down next to Arthur. The table goes awkwardly silent.

DONALD
Good afternoon, gentlemen.

DAN
Hey.

Donald pulls out his sandwich, breaks it in half and examines it. He holds up a half for Arthur to see.

DONALD
Looks more like three dollops now.
So annoying.

Arthur avoids Donald's gaze. Donald opens his thermos and takes a whiff.

DONALD (CONT'D)

Mmm, spirulina extract with a touch of flaxseed oil. When it comes to improving your mental acumen by way of liquid supplements, there is absolutely no comparison.

Everyone else at the table looks weirded out.

DONALD (CONT'D)

Arthur, did you get that article I emailed you on the death of symmetry?

ARTHUR

Dude, no offense, but your drink smells like puke.

Dan and Barry stifle a laugh. Donald sniffs his drink.

DONALD

I have to disagree with you, Arthur. Trust me, I know the scent of vomit. Vomit has a much more acidic, pungent quality. What you're probably smelling is the chemical combination of--

ARTHUR

Booooring!

Dan and Barry burst out laughing. Barry gives Arthur a fist pound. Donald looks confused.

DONALD

What are you guys laughing about?

DAN

Hey, man, this is the teachers lounge.

DONALD

I know.

BARRY

Are you a teacher?

ARTHUR

(under his breath)
You don't smell like a teacher.

Dan and Barry laugh again. Donald looks slightly offended. He gathers his lunch and stands up.

DONALD

Seems as though I'm not wanted here. I guess I'll enjoy my lunch out in the shade of the European Cutleaf Beech tree I planted last spring. Coming, Arthur?

ARTHUR

Nah, dude.

DONALD

"Nah, dude?" What are you, a disrespectful 13-year-old?

ARTHUR

No, I'm just a guy having lunch with his bros. Why don't you go make some friends of your own?

BARRY

Yeah, go hang out with Chuckie.

Barry points out the window to Chuckie, who is out in the courtyard jumping through a sprinkler and giggling.

CHUCKIE

(from outside)

Raindrops all around me!

DONALD

Chuckie? Uh, I don't think so. In fact, forget the beech tree. I'll be having lunch with the principal. Your boss. My wife. A caring, intelligent, non-intrusive woman whom I love and respect and admire more than any of you could ever imagine.

Donald storms off. Arthur shakes his head to Dan and Barry.

ARTHUR

What a freak.

ANGLE ON: Tim is lying on a couch across the lounge. He seems concerned by the whole conversation he has just overheard.

INT. FACULTY RESTROOM - DAY

Arthur is washing his hands at the sink. Tim enters.

TIM
Hey, Arthur.

ARTHUR
How's it going, Tim?

TIM
You all right?

ARTHUR
Yeah.

TIM
What was that lunch conversation
all about?

ARTHUR
Brangelina? I was just bonding with
my colleagues. You know, dumbing it
down.

TIM
I got that. But why did you have to
be so cruel to your friend?

ARTHUR
Who, Donald? The janitor?

TIM
Yeah.

ARTHUR
Tim, you know as well as I do,
certain sacrifices have to be made
if you're trying to reinvent
yourself.

TIM
Of course. I'm familiar with the
lesson on Alpha Male Insults. But
there's a limit to that. Even Ricky
Action himself says that--

ARTHUR
(shakes his head)
Ricky Action.

TIM

What?

ARTHUR

That guy's a joke.

TIM

Excuse me?

ARTHUR

Tim, he lives in the YMCA locker room. His family hates him.

TIM

Does that change the effectiveness of his lessons?

ARTHUR

To be honest, I'm starting to think his lessons could use a little improvement.

TIM

Oh, so you know more than Ricky Action now?

ARTHUR

Maybe I do.

Tim suddenly FARTS really loudly.

TIM

Because if that's the case, then--

Arthur snickers, containing a laugh.

TIM (CONT'D)

What?

ARTHUR

Nothing.

TIM

What are you laughing at?

ARTHUR

I don't know. It's just that you...

TIM

I what?

ARTHUR

You ripped ass.

TIM

So? Arthur, it's just you and me here. You don't have to pretend like it's humorous.

ARTHUR

I'm not pretending, Tim. I don't know why, but it's really funny. It sounded like a motor boat.

Arthur can no longer hold in his laugh. Tim looks troubled.

TIM

Arthur, are you okay?

ARTHUR

What do you mean?

TIME

You don't seem like yourself.

Arthur calms himself down.

ARTHUR

I'm fine, Tim. Nothing's changed about me except the fact that I've got a lot more social options now. In fact, guess what I'm doing tonight.

TIM

What?

ARTHUR

My neighbor and I are going out on a double date with Jazzy and her sorority sister.

TIM

Jazzy Tweston? You're going out with Jazzy?

Arthur smiles and nods. Tim looks horrified for him.

INT. SPORTS BAR - NIGHT

This is a loud, crowded bar. Arthur is standing at a table with Jasmine, who is now dressed like a stripper. Both of them seem pretty tipsy.

JASMINE

It's like, now that we know how to make escalators, why do we still have stairs? It's the stupidest thing ever, right?

ARTHUR

Yeah, that is kind of stupid.

JASMINE

And you know what else? I don't think God is like a person. I think God is like a beam of light that like talks.

ARTHUR

A talking light beam, huh? Or what if God was this giant space wizard?

JASMINE

That would be so cool.

ARTHUR

And when it rains, that's like the wizard sweating.

JASMINE

(laughs)

Arthur, you're so gross!

Jasmine puts her arms around Arthur. Bill stumbles up to them. Bill has his arm around Jasmine's slutty sorority sister, SHAZ. Bill gives Arthur a beer and Jasmine a Cosmo.

BILL

This round's on me, dudes.

SHAZ

Oh, my god, Jazzy. Your friends are such pervs. I haven't had this much fun since college.

JASMINE

Right?

SHAZ

Right?

JASMINE

Right?

Arthur leans back to drink his beer, and he accidentally bumps a waitress. She spills an entire tray of drinks. Bill and the girls start laughing hysterically.

BILL

Oh, man! Look at all that broken
shit on the floor!

Arthur looks down at the waitress cleaning up the mess. For a moment, it seems as though he's about to feel sympathy for her. Instead, Arthur wholeheartedly joins in on the laughter.

ARTHUR

Ever heard of a broom?

BILL

Dude, Arthur, you are the man! You
know what? We should be roommates!

ARTHUR

Yes!

BILL

But you gotta move into my place!

ARTHUR

No, no, no! Let's break down the
wall and make it one big, giant
festivity lair!

BILL

A what?

ARTHUR

I mean, a party pad!

BILL

Awesome!

JASMINE

Oh, my god! That idea is genius!

Bill and Arthur pound fists. Rihanna's *Umbrella* starts playing on the speakers.

ARTHUR

Wait, wait! I've heard this song
before! This song is so powerful!
(singing along)
"Ella! Ella! Ella! Eh! Eh! Eh!"

Bill and the girls join in on the singing. Jasmine pulls Arthur toward her and sloppily makes out with him.

INT. ARTHUR'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Arthur is lying in bed. He slowly wakes up. He winces at the sunlight through the window. He is obviously hung over.

Arthur gets out of bed and stumbles toward the bathroom. He looks at himself in the mirror. There are deep, red scratches all over his back. He hears vapid FEMALE LAUGHTER coming from somewhere in his apartment.

INT. ARTHUR'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Arthur follows the laughter through his living room and into the kitchen. He peers around the corner to see Jasmine watching TV at Arthur's kitchen table. She is wearing one of Arthur's large T-shirts. It has a picture of a bumblebee on it with lettering that reads, "BEE YOURSELF."

Jasmine looks up and smiles. He tentatively smiles back.

JASMINE

Hey, big man. How you feeling?

ARTHUR

Pretty good. Fun night last night.

JASMINE

Totally. We almost ran out of saran wrap. When you broke all that shit at Bill's place last night, I was like, this science teacher is the shard party master.

ARTHUR

Wait, what did I break?

JASMINE

15 bottles, 4 windows and a ceramic dog. Shaz had to take Bill to the hospital to get stitches.

ARTHUR

Oh, my god. Will he be okay?

JASMINE

For sure. Scars look good on dudes. By the way, your apartment is so weird.

Arthur looks around at his apartment. For the first time, he seems to realize that his set-up is relatively abnormal.

ARTHUR
It does look kind of weird.

JASMINE
But at least it's big. You should
totally throw another party.

ARTHUR
A party. That's a great idea. Cinco
de Mayo's coming up.

JASMINE
(pointing to the TV)
Oh, wait, turn this up! This show
is the bomb!

Arthur turns up the television. The reality show, *Mom's Approval*, is playing again. The couple on the couch is new, but the "MOM" is the same actress from before. The couple nervously awaits Mom's decision.

ARTHUR
Is it always the same mother?

JASMINE
Yeah, that's Mom. She's just an
actress. And trust me, I was on the
show once, and she's a total bitch.

ARTHUR
You actually went on this show?

JASMINE
Yeah, and I didn't even get Mom's
approval. It's like, fuck you, Mom.

On the TV, Mom's thumb shoots up.

TANNER SLADE
Mom approves!

The studio audience goes wild. The female contestant lifts her shirt up and shakes her pixilated breasts for her boyfriend's benefit.

Arthur can't help but laugh.

ARTHUR
Oh, my god. That chick is awesome.
That move was genius.

JASMINE
I know, right?

Arthur sits down next to Jasmine. They continue watching *Mom's Approval*. They burst out laughing together. Arthur's laughter seems eerily sincere.

INT. COPY CENTER - NIGHT

Arthur is at a copy center in a mall. He is arguing with one of the EMPLOYEES.

ARTHUR
Look, it's really simple. All I want the banner to say is "Cinco de Mayo Tequila-ocalypse."

COPY CENTER EMPLOYEE
I know, dude. But how do you even spell that?

Suddenly, a mentally handicapped person shuffles past the front window of the copy center. The employee giggles.

ARTHUR
What?

COPY CENTER EMPLOYEE
Check it out. Retard at the mall.

Arthur turns and looks. He bursts out laughing.

ARTHUR
Wow. That's actually really funny.

COPY CENTER EMPLOYEE
Of course. A retard at the mall is one of the funniest things you could ever see.

INT. ARTHUR'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Arthur is in a bathrobe. He talks on the phone while slovenly eating uncooked hotdogs straight out of the package.

ARTHUR
Dad, I'll pick you up in 15 minutes, okay? I'm just finishing up breakfast.

There is a KNOCK at the door.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
I gotta go, Dad.

Arthur hangs up the phone and answers the front door. He opens it to reveal Gertrude. She is holding a pitcher of cucumber water and a box of Russian pastries.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
Gertrude, what are you doing here?

GERTRUDE
Oh. It's Sunday. I thought...

Arthur suddenly remembers their study date.

ARTHUR
Fuck. I totally forgot. I'm about to take my dad to a lecture at his, uh... church. I'm so sorry.

GERTRUDE
Oh, that's okay. We can do this another time. I'll just go.

ARTHUR
No, no, hold on. If you're willing to wait a couple hours, I can... Or you're welcome to tag along?

GERTRUDE
To church with your dad?

ARTHUR
Never mind, forget it.

GERTRUDE
No, no. That sounds fun. I'm not very religious, but I'd love to meet your father.

INT. HOTEL CONVENTION HALL - DAY

The Reverend Jack Shorko is standing at a glass lectern illuminated from within by an eerie green light. He is addressing a huge audience of followers.

JACK SHORKO
Each whisker in the Space Wizard Gjorganthaal's mighty beard is a song. And when all of these songs come together as one, there is an explosion of ethereal harmony. This, my children, will be the subterranean soundtrack to the Eternal Party of Souls.

Cosmic music begins to fill the room.

ANGLE ON: Seated beside Arthur's father, Gertrude cynically rolls her eyes to herself at the absurdity of Shorko's religion. Arthur on the other hand seems uncharacteristically interested in what Shorko is saying.

ED

(whispering to Arthur)

I know you think this is bullshit,
Arthur. But this guy was dead for
14 minutes, and he--

Arthur SHUSHES his dad and leans forward to listen. Gertrude notices. She seems surprised by Arthur's attentiveness.

JACK SHORKO

Once you have embraced the Eternal
Party of Souls, no longer will you
be bound to any form of mental or
carnal suffering. Feelings of
loneliness and isolation will all
be vanquished by the funky sounds
erupting from the wizard's
celestial beard.

A FOLLOWER in the audience raises her hand.

FEMALE FOLLOWER

Is there gonna be a dance floor?

JACK SHORKO

Of course, my child. But it will be
unlike any dance floor that the
human mind could ever imagine.

Arthur raises his hand.

ARTHUR

You said this party is at the
center of our planet. But I always
thought the Earth's core was made
of molten lava.

JACK SHORKO

That's exactly what our enemies in
the scientific community would like
us to believe. But have those
scientists ever been dead for 14
minutes?

Murmurs of support spread throughout the audience.

ARTHUR

Wait, so why does it cost so much to get into this party? Who does the money even go to?

The Reverend Shorko lets out a sigh of annoyance.

JACK SHORKO

If you had visited my website, you would know that the money will be placed in a pod and launched into outer space. Gjorganthaal will then incinerate the pod with his fiery wand in a holy act symbolizing the triviality of material wealth.

Ed nods his head reverently. Gertrude shakes her head in disbelief. Arthur looks strangely satisfied with this answer.

JACK SHORKO (CONT'D)

Any other questions?

Another FOLLOWER raises his hand.

MALE FOLLOWER

Yeah, at the Eternal Party of Souls, will there be seated dining or is it like a buffet?

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - DAY

Ed, Arthur and Gertrude file out of the convention hall with all the other followers. Ed slowly lumbers with a cane.

ED

So what did you kids think of Shorko? He's the real deal, huh?

GERTRUDE

It was very interesting.

ED

You're damn right it was.

Ed places his hand on Gertrude's shoulder.

ED (CONT'D)

Smart girl. Hang onto this one, Arthur. And I'm not just saying that because she's the only female who's ever given you the time of day.

GERTRUDE
That's really kind of you to say,
Mr. Overmeyer.

ED
Yeah, yeah. I gotta go drain the
lizard.

He shuffles off to the restroom.

GERTRUDE
Your dad seems nice. Although, you
two are complete opposites.

ARTHUR
Really?

GERTRUDE
Well, he's clearly into his
religion, while you on the other
hand are a man of science.

ARTHUR
You don't think science and
religion can go together?

GERTRUDE
Well, let me ask you this. Do you
honestly believe all that money
gets put into a space pod and
incinerated by a wizard's wand?

She laughs cynically. Arthur doesn't.

ARTHUR
Not literally. But I thought the
Reverend made some interesting
points, didn't you?

GERTRUDE
(lowers her voice)
Arthur, we both know what Ricky
Action said about acquiescing to
other people's beliefs. But you
don't have to pretend with me.

ARTHUR
(embarrassed)
Right. Sorry.

GERTRUDE

It's a shame people don't acquiesce to scientific assaults on planetary crises. Like Global Warming. Or the honeybee catastrophe you describe so eloquently in your book.

ARTHUR

My book. So you started it?

GERTRUDE

Actually, I finished it last night. It was amazing, Arthur. I'd always thought colony collapse disorder was a product of climate change, but your findings on the varroa mite seem practically irrefutable. Not to mention, the writing borders on poetic at times.

Arthur is speechless.

GERTRUDE (CONT'D)

The final chapter where you postulate a world without honeybees gave me chills. The second I closed your book, I went online and ordered five beehives for my balcony.

ARTHUR

You did?

GERTRUDE

Every little bit helps, right?

ARTHUR

I totally agree. Every year I send my whole Christmas bonus to the National Beekeepers Society.

They share a warm smile. Ed returns from the bathroom.

ED

All right, who's ready to sign up for the Eternal Party of Souls? Arthur, you in?

Arthur glances at Gertrude. He hesitates to answer, worried what she'll think of him. Ed grows impatient.

ED (CONT'D)

Oh, great! Here we go again!

ARTHUR
No, no, Dad. I'll sign up.

ED
That's my boy!

Arthur avoids Gertrude's gaze. Ed puts his arm around Arthur and leads him over to Reverend Shorko. Gertrude observes Arthur shaking the Reverend's hand. She looks concerned.

INT. YMCA BASKETBALL COURT - NIGHT

Ricky Action is at the front lecturing the class. Arthur and Gertrude are sitting together at the back.

RICKY ACTION
Okay, you're at a party. It's a crowd of hip, attractive men and women, total fuck-buddy material. You've got some insightful points to make. But nobody is listening.

Ricky Action begins to raise his voice as he stomps around the basketball court.

RICKY ACTION (CONT'D)
(yelling)
So what are you gonna do? You're not gonna get their ATTENTION by talking quietly, are you? You gotta be LOUD! ASSERTIVELY LOUD! Today's lesson is about VOLUME, people! Attention is something you've got to EARN!

Arthur confidently raises his hand.

ARTHUR
I don't know if I agree with that.

RICKY ACTION
You disagree? Okay. How so?

ARTHUR
I just think being annoyingly loud can turn people off sometimes.

RICKY ACTION
Well, loudness can be subjective, Arthur. But we can all agree that you'd want to be heard.

ARTHUR

I think a better way to get
people's attention would be to do
something crazy, like break a
bottle against the wall.

RICKY ACTION

Breaking a bottle is going to help
you make friends?

ARTHUR

It helped me.

A few people turn around in their chairs to listen to Arthur.

RICKY ACTION

Well, either way, that's not from
any of my lessons, Arthur. That
sounds like an anomaly.

ARTHUR

Actually, there are a lot of things
missing from your lessons. And most
of them could use some tweaking.

RICKY ACTION

Look, let's just try and stay
focused on the lesson at hand.

ARTHUR

Like for instance, when you talked
about playing footsie under the
table with a stranger--

RICKY ACTION

(yelling loudly)

I SAID, LET'S STAY FOCUSED ON THE
LESSON AT HAND!

Everyone in the class goes dead silent. They all stare at
Ricky Action like he's lost it.

Ricky Action struggles to regain his composure. The buck-
toothed man, KEVIN, hesitantly raises his hand.

RICKY ACTION (CONT'D)

Yes, Kevin?

KEVIN

See, when you were really loud
right there? That didn't make me
want to listen to you at all. In
fact, it made you seem desperate.

RICKY ACTION
Oh, did it, Kevin?

KEVIN
I'm just saying.

Daren, the teenage techie, raises his hand.

DAREN
Yeah, I have a question about
Thursday's lecture on good
grope/bad grope? My lawyer and the
judge both agreed that there's no
such thing as a good grope. I'm in
a lot of trouble now.

Before Ricky Action can respond, Arthur stands up and
interjects.

ARTHUR
What happened, Daren?

DAREN
There's this secretary at work. And
all I did was grope her a little.

Daren holds up his hands and gestures a double-breast grope.

ARTHUR
There's your problem right there.
A breast grope is always a bad
move. Good gropes are down here,
where not everyone can see.

Arthur pantomimes an ass-grab. The class nods, getting it.
Gertrude looks slightly offended by Arthur's gesture.

DAREN
Well, Mr. Action never made that
distinction.

Whispers of discontent spread throughout the class.

RICKY ACTION
Okay, settle down, people.

The fat dork, PATRICK, turns around and raises his hand for
Arthur to see.

ARTHUR
Yes, Patrick?

PATRICK

Over Thanksgiving my uncle fell asleep on the sofa. So I did the Dick Brow like Mr. Action showed us, and no one in my family laughed. One of my little cousins even started crying. It ruined Thanksgiving.

ARTHUR

Patrick, I'm glad you brought that up. I've got a way cooler version of the Dick Brow. Everyone, write this down.

Everyone prepares to take notes. Gertrude looks uneasy.

ANGLE ON: Ricky Action crosses his arms, barely containing his angst and jealousy.

EXT. YMCA - NIGHT

Gertrude gets into her car and starts the engine. Suddenly, Arthur knocks on her window. She rolls it down.

ARTHUR

Hey, you took off pretty fast there. Didn't get to say bye.

GERTRUDE

Sorry, I just wanted to get home to David. He's got a bladder infection right now. Besides, it seemed like you were pretty occupied.

ARTHUR

I was just consoling Daren. He says he might be facing jail time.

GERTRUDE

It's weird. You're kind of like teaching the class now, huh?

Arthur modestly waves her off.

ARTHUR

Anyway, what are you up to tonight?

GERTRUDE

I'm probably going to be blogging about David's infection.

Arthur hands her a flyer. She opens it up and reads it.

GERTRUDE (CONT'D)
"Tequila-ocalypse?"

ARTHUR
It's going to be really good. I'd
love for you to drop by. You can
meet some of my coworkers.

Gertrude musters up a smile and shrugs.

GERTRUDE
Any fuck-buddy material?

ARTHUR
Totally!

GERTRUDE
Arthur, I was joking.

INT. ARTHUR'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The apartment is packed with partygoers: Dan, Barry, Shaz, Bill's friends, etc. Hip hop music is turned up loud. Everyone is chatting and laughing and having a blast.

ANGLE ON: Chuckie is sitting in the same chair as before. He is staring off absently and smiling.

INT. ARTHUR'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Arthur is doing shots at the kitchen table with Jasmine and Bill. All three of them are pretty drunk. Bill has a massive, unsightly scar on his face that starts at his hairline and ends at his chin.

ARTHUR
Dude, Bill, it makes you look like
a bad ass.

JASMINE
Totally. Scars are like even cooler
than tribal tattoos.

BILL
It's all good, bro.
(lifts up his glass)
Live by the shard party, die by the
shard party!

Bill guzzles his tall glass of tequila. Dan stumbles in. He now has the stubble of a goatee. He slaps Arthur five.

DAN

Arthur, my man! This party is the
shit! I can't believe I used to
think you were a fucking idiot.
You're my dawg!

Dan hugs Arthur. Barry pokes his head into the kitchen.

BARRY

Arthur, there's some friend of
yours here. She's like a sexual
maniac. She can't stop talking
about her...

(does hand quotes)

"Hamster." I'm gonna wreck that
later on!

ARTHUR

Wait, "hamster?"

INT. ARTHUR'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

We follow Arthur through the crowd of people. He finds Gertrude talking to McDermott.

MCDERMOTT

So you think I could hammer that
"hamster" some time?

GERTRUDE

Hammer? No, you have to be gentle
with my hamster.

MCDERMOTT

I can be gentle.

McDermott flicks his tongue in a sexual way. Arthur quickly grabs Gertrude and pulls her over to a less crowded area.

ARTHUR

Gertrude, hey. I'm glad you could
make it.

GERTRUDE

This is quite a party.

ARTHUR

Hey, you gotta throw down for Cinco
de Mayo, right?

GERTRUDE
I guess so.

ARTHUR
Right?

GERTRUDE
Yeah, I already agreed with you.

ARTHUR
Cool. Do you need a drink?

GERTRUDE
Sure. What do you have?

ARTHUR
Cuervo, Don Julio, Sauza, Petrón,
Petrón Silver, Petrón Gold--

GERTRUDE
I'm okay. I noticed that bee poster
you have up in your bedroom. Those
illustrations are magnificent.

ARTHUR
Aw, shit. I meant to take that
down. Did anyone else see it?

Jasmine stumbles up to Arthur and Gertrude. She throws her
arm around Arthur.

JASMINE
Who's this fugly nerd?

ARTHUR
Uh, Jasmine, let me introduce you
to my friend, Gertrude.

JASMINE
I'm Jazzy. Arthur's girlfriend?

GERTRUDE
It's very nice to meet you. I've
heard a lot about you.

JASMINE
Yeah, well, I've never heard about
you. Who is this little skank?

ARTHUR
(whispers)
Jazzy, relax.

JASMINE

Listen, bitch, Arthur's my man.
We're totally doing it. So keep
your non-manicured nerd hands off
him.

ARTHUR

Gertrude, I'm really sorry. Jazzy's
had a lot to drink.

Barry lurches up and grabs Gertrude's ass.

BARRY

Hot nerd! Lisa Loeb!

GERTRUDE

Excuse me?

ARTHUR

Barry, chill out. She's not into
it, okay?

Barry tries to kiss Gertrude. Arthur holds Barry back.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

I said chill out, bro.

Barry pushes Arthur off.

BARRY

Fuck you, cockblocker!

Arthur shoves Barry really hard. Barry loses his balance and
falls onto the couch. Barry tries to get back up, but he
suddenly seems extremely dizzy.

BARRY (CONT'D)

Whoa, dude. Spins.

He sits back down on the couch and takes a deep breath.
Gertrude rolls her eyes to Arthur.

GERTRUDE

Was that your "Inner Destroyer?"

ARTHUR

Gertrude, that guy was
disrespecting you.

JASMINE

Fighting is so hot!

Jasmine grabs Arthur and forces him into a sloppy makeout session. Disgusted, Gertrude storms out of the apartment.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING HALLWAY - NIGHT

Gertrude leaves the apartment. Arthur runs out after her.

ARTHUR
Gertrude, wait!

He catches up to her outside the elevator. She pushes the button a few times.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
Gertrude, what's wrong?

GERTRUDE
What's wrong? You were acting like an ignoramus in there.

ARTHUR
No, no, that's not me. That's just "Dumbing It Down," you know?

GERTRUDE
Honestly, I can't even tell the difference with you anymore.

The elevator doors open. Gertrude gets in.

ARTHUR
Gertrude, it's me, Arthur. The bee guy? Colony collapse thing? Science writer? You know who I am. We're both really smart.

Gertrude avoids Arthur's gaze. The elevator doors close. Arthur looks sad and defeated.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
Fuck!

Arthur kicks a water fountain, knocking it off the wall.

INT. ARTHUR'S APARTMENT - LATER THAT NIGHT

The party is pretty much over. The music is off. There is garbage all over the floor. Most of the guests have left. Two ugly, drunken, haggard SLUTS are snorting cocaine off the kitchen table.

We pan over to see Arthur sitting glumly on the couch next to Chuckie. Arthur looks depressed.

ARTHUR
I think I fucked up tonight,
Chuckie.

Chuckie smiles, seemingly oblivious to what Arthur is saying.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
I mean, I like all my new friends
and all. And having a girlfriend is
pretty cool.

ANGLE ON: Jasmine is passed out on the floor. Her hair is
caked in vomit.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
But there's this other girl, man.
She's kind of a weirdo. But she's a
cool weirdo. We've got so much in
common. And I drove her away
tonight. She hates me now. What
should I do?

Arthur shakes his head to himself, not expecting any answer
from Chuckie. Then suddenly...

CHUCKIE
Well, normally I'd recommend
sending flowers. But that woman
didn't seem like the flower type.

Arthur slowly turns to face Chuckie. Arthur has an expression
of utter disbelief.

CHUCKIE (CONT'D)
Why don't you try sending her a
link to an obscure website that you
know only she would like. It'll
make her feel special.

ARTHUR
Wait. Aren't you like...

CHUCKIE
Retarded?

ARTHUR
Yeah.

Chuckie crosses his legs and folds his hands over his knee,
an unexpectedly sophisticated mannerism.

CHUCKIE

I've been observing you, Arthur. I believe that you, more than anyone, understand what is to be gained from acting like an imbecile. But remember, there are limits.

ARTHUR

So you've just been faking your retardedness this whole time?

CHUCKIE

No offense, Arthur. But I think it's time you asked yourself who the real retard is.

Arthur lowers his gaze and absorbs Chuckie's wisdom.

CHUCKIE (CONT'D)

Now if you'll excuse me, I've got some business to attend to.

Chuckie stands up and resumes his imbecilic demeanor. He shuffles into the kitchen and approaches the cokehead sluts.

CHUCKIE (CONT'D)

Happy boobies!

The cokehead sluts give him a motherly look.

COKEHEAD SLUT #1

Oh, that's so cute. He wants to see your boobies.

COKEHEAD SLUT #2

Should I show them?

COKEHEAD SLUT #1

Yeah, how else is he ever gonna know what they look like?

One of the cokehead sluts lifts up her shirt and shows her breasts to Chuckie.

COKEHEAD SLUT #1 (CONT'D)

Do you want to touch them?

CHUCKIE

Happy touchie boobies!

INT. YMCA OFFICE - DAY

Ricky Action is sitting across from the desk of the YMCA DIRECTOR. The director is looking through some papers.

YMCA DIRECTOR
Okay, Mr. Schitz--

RICKY ACTION
It's Mr. Action.

YMCA DIRECTOR
According to my records, your name is Elliot Schitz.

RICKY ACTION
I'm in the process of having it legally changed to Ricky S. Action. Know what the S stands for?

YMCA DIRECTOR
Honestly, I don't care.

There is an awkward silence. The YMCA Director holds up a handful of printed emails.

YMCA DIRECTOR (CONT'D)
Over the past few days, I've received no less than twelve complaints about your seminar. The students claim that you're unqualified to teach. All of them are requesting a full refund.

RICKY ACTION
What exactly are they saying?

The YMCA Director reads from the emails:

YMCA DIRECTOR
"Mr. Action has proven to be a complete social moron."
(reads from another email)
"Not only is Mr. Action offensive and unknowledgeable, his halitosis borders on toxic."
(reads from another email)
"Mr. Action's techniques are dated and generally ineffective. In fact, it's obvious to everyone in the class that one of the students should be teaching this seminar."

The YMCA Director sets down the emails.

YMCA DIRECTOR (CONT'D)
Is this true? Does one of your
students know more about the
subject matter than you?

RICKY ACTION
Yeah, right.

YMCA DIRECTOR
Because if so, Mr. Schitz, maybe we
should be paying your student to
lead your seminar.

RICKY ACTION
No, no, it's just this one student.
He's a disrespectful know-it-all.
But believe me, he won't be around
next semester.

YMCA DIRECTOR
There won't be a next semester.

RICKY ACTION
Excuse me?

YMCA DIRECTOR
We're cancelling your seminar.

RICKY ACTION
You can't do that. I'm doing God's
work here.

YMCA DIRECTOR
Also, the custodial staff was
recently called down to the
basement locker room to investigate
an overpowering smell of urine.
They seem to suspect that someone
might be living down there. If
that's the case, I would hope that
that person would clear their
things out by 8pm tonight.

EXT. YMCA - DAY

Ricky Action walks away from the building. He is carrying his
soiled sleeping bag, a bunch of files and an old, busted
typewriter. A group of custodians on their smoke break watch
him leave. They shake their heads scornfully.

Ricky Action tries to get into his car, but he can't reach his key. He accidentally drops his typewriter to the ground. He grits his teeth and chokes back his anger.

RICKY ACTION
Fucking Overmeyer.

INT. FACULTY LOUNGE - MORNING

Arthur walks in. The lounge is mysteriously empty and quiet.

DONALD (O.S.)
Good morning, Arthur.

Arthur turns around to see Donald standing in the doorway. Donald grins sinisterly and approaches him.

DONALD (CONT'D)
Normally, I wouldn't dare set foot in such an exclusive lounge. But I hope you'll pardon my impudence just this once.

ARTHUR
Where is everyone?

DONALD
Funny you should ask. The principal, my wife, the love of my life, would like to meet with you in her office this morning.

ARTHUR
For what?

DONALD
Let's just say it's not about vomit puddles.

INT. SALLY'S OFFICE - MORNING

Arthur is standing across from Sally's desk. Sally is sitting there with a group of teachers including Jasmine, Dan, Barry, Tim and a few others. Everyone looks pissed.

SALLY
The reason why I've asked you here, Arthur, is because we all received an interesting fax this morning from a Mr. Ricky S. Action.

Arthur looks mortified. He glances over at Tim for help. Tim shakes his head in condemnation. Sally holds up the fax.

SALLY (CONT'D)
It's apparently a list of your
"Dumb It Down goals." Would you
like to read for us, Arthur?

ARTHUR
That's okay. I'd rather not.

SALLY
Then allow me to do the honor.

Sally reads aloud from the fax:

SALLY (CONT'D)
"Goal number one. Find a way to
communicate with all of the
mindless idiots who work at my
school. This includes the teachers,
the students and the principal."

Sally gives Arthur a nasty look.

SALLY (CONT'D)
"Goal number two. I would
especially like to befriend Dan and
Barry, who seem like they'd be
enjoyable friends, despite the fact
that their brains clearly function
at a much lower level than mine."

Dan and Barry stare at Arthur with repugnance.

SALLY (CONT'D)
Ms. Tweston, would you care to
continue?

JASMINE
Thank you, Dr. Bernstein.

Sally gives the fax to Jasmine. Jasmine reads aloud with the speed and articulation of a 5th grader:

JASMINE (CONT'D)
"Goal number two. I would
especially like to befriend Dan and
Barry, who seem"...
(catches herself)
Oops. Sorry. "Goal number three."
(MORE)

JASMINE (CONT'D)

I very much hope to have oral, vaginal and possibly anal sex with the gorgeous Jasmine Tweston. Even though everyone says she's a ditzy problem drinker, she is still an extraordinary specimen of physical beauty."

Jasmine scowls at Arthur.

JASMINE (CONT'D)

Fuck you, Arthur. I thought we were like falling in love.

SALLY

Did you write this, Arthur?

ARTHUR

What? No.

SALLY

Really? Because we compared the handwriting with a note that you slipped Jasmine last week.

Jasmine takes out a small note and reads from it:

JASMINE

"Dear Jazzy. Boy, I thought your hummers were amazing. But last night when you did that thing where you"--

SALLY

Okay, Ms. Tweston, we don't need to hear everything Arthur's written.

Jasmine puts the note away.

SALLY (CONT'D)

I'll ask you again, Arthur, did you write these things? Is this what you actually think of us? That we're all just morons and idiots and in some cases sex toys?

Arthur thinks it over for a long, silent beat. He seems to arrive at some sort of personal conclusion.

ARTHUR

Yes. It's true. I did write all of those things. They were my goals for a seminar I took to learn how to fit in with people like you.

(MORE)

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

In all honesty, I do think you're all morons and idiots. And no offense, Jasmine, but we were never in love. I just used you for sex. All three types of sex.

DAN

What the hell, Overmeyer? You took a seminar to become cool? You're such a loser.

ARTHUR

I am a loser. But who's the bigger loser, huh? Every single one of you fell for my act. Dan, you yourself thought my watch trick was even better than your monkey brain.

Arthur walks over to the door.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

But you know what? I don't need to fit in with you anymore. I'm okay with being smart and socially weird. Because I realize now that there are other smart and socially weird people out there just like me. And I think I'd rather fit in with them.

Arthur opens the door and leaves. Everyone left in the office looks shocked and offended.

ANGLE ON: Tim smiles reverently.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Arthur hurries toward the building's exit. He sees Donald mopping the floors. Arthur stops and calls to him:

ARTHUR

Donald! I'm sorry I've been so mean to you lately! I'll make it up to you! Let me take you out for some wheat grass shots this weekend!

DONALD

Really? That sounds great!

ARTHUR

I'll call you later, okay?

Arthur dashes out of the building. Donald's sudden enthusiasm disappears. He resumes mopping.

DONALD
(to himself)
Fuck that idiot.

INT. GERTRUDE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Gertrude is packing up her things into boxes. The haunting music of Mozart's *Requiem* fills the room.

Someone KNOCKS at the front door. Gertrude opens the door with the chain lock still latched. Arthur is standing there.

GERTRUDE
What do you want, Arthur?

ARTHUR
Gertrude, I've made a huge mistake.

GERTRUDE
Look, I'm not in the mood for this right now. David's bladder infection was worse than I thought.

ANGLE ON: Gertrude's dead hamster is lying in a ziplock bag on the kitchen counter.

ARTHUR
Oh, my god. Is he okay?

GERTRUDE
He passed away last night.

ARTHUR
I'm so sorry.

GERTRUDE
Advertisers are bailing out on the website, so I won't be able to afford this apartment anymore. I'm moving back to my parents' house.

ARTHUR
What? Gertrude, you can't leave.

GERTRUDE
Why not?

ARTHUR

Because I need you. You're the most amazing human being I've ever met.

GERTRUDE

What about "Jazzy?"

ARTHUR

I'm done with her. I'm done with all those people at my party. I'm done with "Dumbing It Down." Ricky Action was the worst thing that ever happened to me. The only good that ever came from that whole stupid class was meeting you.

Gertrude seems reluctantly touched.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

Please. Can I come in? I just...
I've fallen in love with you.

Gertrude melts. She unlatches the door and allows Arthur into her apartment. Arthur takes Gertrude into his arms. They kiss in a tender, classic, non-sloppy way.

INT. GERTRUDE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Arthur and Gertrude are lying in bed together. She cuddles up to him. He holds her.

GERTRUDE

This feels perfect, doesn't it?

ARTHUR

Totally.

Gertrude looks out the window and watches as dusk settles in.

GERTRUDE

It's already getting dark out.
We've spent the whole day in here.

They share a flirtatious chuckle.

ARTHUR

So what do you wanna do?

GERTRUDE

I don't know. We could cook up some dinner. Pour ourselves some wine.
Do a little reading.

ARTHUR
What's on TV tonight?

GERTRUDE
I don't have a TV.

ARTHUR
You don't?

GERTRUDE
I never bought one.

ARTHUR
Shit. I think *Mom's Approval* is on.
Have you ever seen that show?

GERTRUDE
No.

ARTHUR
It's one of those dating shows.
It's fucking awesome.

Gertrude looks slightly put off by Arthur's tone. She moves a few inches away from him. In the next room, we can hear the faint BUZZING of a bee that has entered Gertrude's apartment.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
Hey, why don't we go to a bar
tonight? I wouldn't mind coming
back here for a little drunk booty.

GERTRUDE
What are you talking about?

ARTHUR
Don't tell me you've never bumped
uglies when you're wasted.

GERTRUDE
I didn't understand a word of that.

ARTHUR
All I'm saying is sloppy slamming
can be really, really fun.

Gertrude sits up and shoots Arthur a scared look. She can't believe the idiotic drivel that's coming out of his mouth.

GERTRUDE
Arthur, are you okay?

ARTHUR

What are you talking about?

The BUZZING gets louder as the bee enters the bedroom. Arthur looks distracted, as he follows the bee with his eyes. He picks up a copy of his book from the bedside table.

GERTRUDE

You're acting like... like a stupid person.

The bee lands on the wall next to the bed. Arthur quickly SMASHES his book against the wall, splattering the bee.

GERTRUDE (CONT'D)

What are you doing, Arthur?! That was a forager!

ARTHUR

Yeah, but bees like hurt.

GERTRUDE

How can you say that?

Arthur considers this for a moment. He holds the book in front of him and stares at the dead bee's guts stuck to the cover. His eyes widen, as a horrific realization sets in.

ARTHUR

Oh, my god.

GERTRUDE

What is it?

ARTHUR

I think I've become stupid. Like stupid for real. Like I'm not pretending anymore.

GERTRUDE

What? That's impossible. That doesn't happen. You can't just suddenly become unintelligent.

ARTHUR

Gertrude, I think my brain's breaking down on me. Maybe I haven't been using it enough.

GERTRUDE

No. Arthur, you're still the same person who wrote that incredibly insightful book. You have to be.

Gertrude points to Arthur's book. He flips through it.

ARTHUR

Jesus. I barely remember what's in this book. Oh, god! I'm a total fucking idiot! FUCK!

Arthur throws the book across the room. He punches the wall as hard as he can, chipping the plaster.

The two of them sit there together in silence. There is now a huge distance between them.

Gertrude softly begins to cry. Arthur awkwardly hugs her.

GERTRUDE

It just seems like we're meant to be together, you know? Without you, I've got nothing left in life.

Arthur can't help but cry with her.

ARTHUR

What can I say? This sucks. I'm looking at the shit stains in your underwear right now, and I think they're the funniest thing ever. And I know I shouldn't think that.

GERTRUDE

Isn't there some way we can make this work?

ARTHUR

I don't know, Gertrude. I don't think I can go back to what I was. It's like I've given myself brain damage and shit.

GERTRUDE

Well, if you can make yourself stupid, then maybe I can, too.

ARTHUR

You become stupid? That's so stupid!

Arthur cries even harder. Gertrude stares him in the eye.

GERTRUDE

Arthur, listen to me. I can't be alone anymore. I'm willing to do whatever it takes to be with you.

Arthur pulls himself together. There is a long, silent beat, as both of them contemplate what Gertrude has just said.

CUT TO BLACK.

SUPERIMPOSE: "ONE YEAR LATER."

Over black, we hear the sounds of a studio audience cheering.

TANNER SLADE (O.S.)
Welcome back, everybody!

INT. THE SET OF *MOM'S APPROVAL* - NIGHT

Tanner Slade is sitting in a chair, addressing the camera.

TANNER SLADE
For those of you just now joining us, we're here with one of the coolest, craziest, most bad-ass couples we have ever had on this show. Arthur, Gertrude, you have one more chance to convince Mom that you guys are totally awesome for each other.

ANGLE ON: Arthur and Gertrude are sitting on the couch together. Gertrude now has long bleach blonde hair and a fake tan. She is wearing a baby-T that reveals her belly button ring. Arthur is dressed in a tank-top and a fedora.

ARTHUR
Gertrude totally rocks my world. We're like bitchin' soulmates. We party together. We hit the gym together. We both have VIP passes to the Eternal Party of Souls.

GERTRUDE
We both love *Two and a Half Men*.

ARTHUR
We can't stop talking about it.

GERTRUDE
It's the funniest show ever.

INT. DONALD AND SALLY'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Donald and Sally are sitting on the couch watching Arthur and Gertrude on the television.

ARTHUR
(on the TV)
Listen, Tanner. If Mom doesn't
approve, then Mom is a retard.

The studio audience laughs.

SALLY
Would you mind turning it up,
sweetie?

DONALD
Honey, I love you to death. But
honestly, the remote is a good
three inches closer to you.

They keep watching TV. Neither of them touches the remote.

SALLY
Sweetie, I think I'd like a
divorce.

INT. SPORTS BAR - CONTINUOUS

Jasmine, Dan and Barry are wasted. They are watching *Mom's Approval* on the barroom television.

BARRY
No way! It's Arthur and that crazy
hamster chick!

JASMINE
What the hell is that slut wearing?

Jasmine throws an ashtray at the TV. The screen shatters.
Glass shards rain down on the bar. Jasmine looks depressed.

DAN
Shard party?

JASMINE
I'm not in the mood.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ed is lying down in a hospital bed breathing through an
oxygen tube. He seems deathly ill. *Mom's Approval* is playing
on TV. Ed recognizes Arthur. His eyes bulge with amazement.

JACK SHORKO (O.S.)
And sign here. And right here.

We pull back to reveal a clipboard on Ed's lap. The Reverend Shorko is holding a pen in Ed's hand and moving it around to sign a bunch of documents.

JACK SHORKO (CONT'D)
And here. And sign here. And here.
And here. And here. And here.

EXT. SEEDY DOWNTOWN STREET - CONTINUOUS

A group of homeless people are crowded around outside of an electronics store. *Mom's Approval* is playing on a big flat screen TV in the window.

We see a dirty, scraggly, homeless Ricky Action watching through the window. He pounds his chest and pumps his fist.

RICKY ACTION
That's my dawg, yo! I taught that
cocksucker everything he knows!

INT. HIGH SCHOOL CUSTODIAL LOUNGE - CONTINUOUS

Chuckie is seated among a bunch of mops, brooms and cleaning agents. *Mom's Approval* is playing on a small TV. Chuckie isn't paying any attention to it. He is too engrossed in a copy of *Critique of Pure Reason* by IMMANUEL KANT.

Chuckie hears footsteps coming down the hallway. He turns his book upside down. The footsteps fade away. Chuckie turns his book right-side-up again and resumes reading.

INT. THE SET OF *MOM'S APPROVAL* - CONTINUOUS

Tanner Slade addresses the audience.

TANNER SLADE
And now the moment of truth. Let's
see if Arthur and Gertrude were
meant to be together. Let's see if
they can get... MOM'S APPROVAL!

The curtains part to reveal Mom. The crowd goes nuts. Mom steps forward and holds out her horizontal thumb.

The cheering subsides into a tense silence. Arthur and Gertrude nervously hold hands, their eyes locked on Mom.

Mom's thumb hangs in the air. Will it go up or down?

CUT TO BLACK.

THE END