

GET UPDATED, SYSTEM'S ARCHAIC

By

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FADE IN:

EXT. SUBURBAN HOME BACKYARD - DAY - SUMMER, 1984

SAM's rough large hands hold a pair of boxing gloves.

SAM

Three-minute rounds.

He slides the gloves on two small hands.

SAM

No hitting below the belt.

Ties the laces.

SAM

Knockout means you're down for ten.

Sam's hands reach down for a second pair of gloves. The petite hand of SARA restrains them.

SARA

But honey, this will teach them
violence solves problems. And
Kenny's so much bigger. Can't we --

SAM

Sometimes we have to settle things
a man's way.

Sam, 41, balding, stocky and clearly not liking the challenge to his authority, looks at the sensitive face and pleading eyes of his wife, Sara, 39, matronly. Irritated, he leads her aside, spits out his reasoning in hushed tones.

SAM

Aaron's agile. If he gets beat,
it'll shut his mouth. If Kenny
loses, he'll cease being a bully.

SARA

But I don't think it will solve the
problem, why don't we call the --

SAM

Shrink! Come on Sara, it's just
healthy sibling rivalry! Why can't
you trust me?

Sara sighs, nods. Sam returns to the boys while Sara sadly shakes her head.

SAM

TKO means injury, fight's finished.

He slides gloves on two other small hands.

SAM

Wait until the bell.

Ties the laces.

SAM

You two ready?

KEN, 13, bounces up and down, his five feet seven inches of chubby, adolescent fat ripples.

KEN

I'll crush him.

Ken glowers at AARON, 11, wiry, intense, struts his five feet two inches of rock-hard, coordinated body, bangs his gloves together.

AARON

If you can catch me!

Sam shoots a quick look at Sara, bellows.

SAM

Only way to end the bedroom ruckuses once and for all.

Sam pulls out an instamatic Kodak camera.

SAM

Now, a pre-fight photo - just like the pros. Get ready.

The boys pose in true boxing form.

SAM

One, two, three. Okay, got it.

Sam puts down the camera.

SAM

Final fight. Winner takes the title and that'll be it. No re-fights, this is it. Right?

AARON

Yup.

KEN
My title.

Ken sneers at Aaron.

SAM
And a photo at the end, showing the
winner, then it's clear, right?

AARON
Right.

KEN
I'm gonna teach you respect!

Sam nods confidently to Sara, who chews her lip anxiously. She covers the eyes of three-year-old baby brother, CEF, who sucks a lollypop. He pulls her hand away indignantly.

CEF
Big boy now - no sissy!

The two square off. Behind Ken, sunlight filters through dense foliage. Aaron squints.

SAM
Aaron, is the sun in your eyes?

AARON
I won't be standing still.

SAM
Okay, get ready.

Adrenaline pumps, gloves up, ready. The bell RINGS.

Ken, heavy, flatfooted, swings madly. Aaron ducks, dances around him so that Ken faces the sun. Ken swings again, knocks Aaron's gloves. Ken stomps out of the glare, swings wildly into thin air as Aaron side steps.

Aaron's glove shoots straight into Ken's stomach with all the might of his 100 pounds. Ken keels over, vomits.

SAM
That's it, TKO! Aaron wins!

Ken clutches his gut, cries bitter tears. A proud Aaron glances at Ken with concern but relief.

CEF
Aaron champ, Aaron champ!

Sara runs to Ken, showers motherly affection.

Ken rejects her, pulls away.

Cef offers Aaron his lollipop and beams. Aaron nods. Cef shoves it in Aaron's mouth. Sam pulls off one of Aaron's gloves. Aaron pulls out the lollipop, regains his victory pride.

AARON

I won, Kenny, no more pushing me around.

A bent over, repulsed Ken glares at Aaron.

SAM

You agreed to the rules, Kenny, no sulking. Now the victory photo.

Aaron lifts the lollipop high like a trophy, stands proud. Ken rubs his tender stomach, sneers. CLICK.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY - 1986

The scene shrinks into a photo in the hands of Cef, now 5.

CEF

Mommy?

Sara, wearing a full apron, turns from homemade brownies.

SARA

Yes?

CEF

Where are the boxing gloves? Aaron and Kenny had them - see!

Sara reaches for the photo just as a slimmed down, pimply Ken bursts in the back door. Cef runs to Ken with the photo.

CEF

Look, Kenny. Where are the boxing gloves? I wanna learn how to fight!

Ken snatches the photo from Cef.

KEN

Fighting is for jocks and people without brains! I'm a pacifist.

Ken throws the photo in the trashcan, as he stomps to the hallway. Sara gives a pained expression and follows.

SARA (O.S.)
Kenny, I baked some of your
favorite brownies.

Cef retrieves the photo, just as a pimple free, sweat soaked Aaron enters. He flops down in a chair, removes his cross-country sneakers. Adoring Cef thrusts out the photo.

CEF
Teach me to fight like you! I wanna
be a champ, too!

Aaron takes the photo, ruffles Cef's hair.

AARON
Sometimes being the champ doesn't
solve anything, Cef. Why don't you
ask Dad? I learned from him.

CEF
What's a jock?

Ken strides in with Sara following.

KEN
Aaron's one - all brawn, no brains.

SARA
Kenny! You watch your tongue or
I'll tell your --

Kenny suddenly hugs Sara.

KEN
My favorite - brownies! You're the
best mom in the world.

Ken grabs a brownie and opens the door. Sara glows with the praise as Aaron gets up, heads towards the hall.

KEN
Hurry up or you'll never catch up
to me on that old three speed.

Aaron turns back.

AARON
You challenging me?

Cef pulls on Sara's apron.

CEF
Mom, what's a pacifist?

SARA
Ken, will you stop at the drug --

KEN
Ask Aaron.
(to Aaron)
Yeah, no hope you'll catch me.

AARON
You're on.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Aaron pushes hard on the pedals on his three-speed as he pulls closer to a puffing Ken who struggles up the hill on his new racing bike. Ominous clouds gather, leaves swirl, tree branches dance. Aaron peers up at the clouds, shouts.

AARON
Thunderstorm means lightning!

KEN
Rubber tires.

AARON
But, Daddy said --

KEN
Daddy... Mommy's boy!

Aaron frowns, zooms ahead of Ken, who's almost at the top of the hill.

AARON
Kenny --

A lightening bolt cuts through the black sky. Four seconds later the ROLLING of loud THUNDER.

AARON
It's only four seconds away! I'm getting off!

KEN
Sissy.

A second bolt brightens the sky. Two seconds later, THUNDER. Aaron jumps off his bike and tries to block Ken's path.

AARON
Kenny, get off, get off!

KEN
I'll mow you down.

AARON

Kenny!

Ken veers to miss Aaron. Aaron jumps and knocks Ken down. Ken screams as his left leg crumples beneath him with a SNAP. The broken bone pierces the flesh.

KEN

Shit, ow, my leg!

Ken laments. Aaron hurriedly drags Ken's bike away, races back to Ken.

A FLASH. Lightning strikes Ken's bike.

The impact bowls Aaron to the ground. The bike lies in a mangled mess.

Ken stares at it.

Aaron scrambles over to Ken who shoves him away.

KEN

Don't touch me, you shit head!

Devastated, Aaron races off.

AARON

I'll get help.

EXT. VILLAGE, SRI LANKA - DAY - 25 YEARS LATER

AARON, 38, surgeon, handsome, slim, scrambles urgently through the debris of a hurricane devastated village.

AARON

Anyone need help! Anyone hear me?

EXT. VILLAGE - CONTINUOUS

A mixed Sri Lankan/Western boy, RAHULA, 16, bloody head, lies surrounded by the mangled remains of a home. The marble, teak debris and ceramic roofing reveal the home used to be a mansion. Rahula's eyes convey his misery.

AARON (O.S.)

Rahula! Rahula, where are you?

Rahula pulls himself towards a chain that glistens, half buried in the rubble. He pulls it. A Buddha pendant. He clutches it tightly as he loses consciousness.

EXT. VILLAGE - CONTINUOUS

Aaron searches through the devastation.

DAWN (O.S.)
Over here, Aaron. Rahula's alive.

Aaron heads towards his attractive, blonde wife, DAWN, 38, physiotherapist, who feels Rahula's pulse.

Aaron checks Rahula's bloody head, his chest, arms, hips and sees the jutting bones of his broken legs. His face assumes a painful expression.

Rahula opens his eyes, looks up at them with hope.

RAHULA
Doctor, my family?

Dawn chokes back tears as she shakes her head. Rahula closes his eyes. Tears flow down his cheek.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Bandaged people lie in beds as Sri Lankan nurses hurry to and fro. Dawn sits, holding an unconscious Rahula's hand. Casts enclose both legs and a bandage wraps around his head.

Aaron, in doctor's clothes, approaches silently. Dawn turns to him, questioningly.

AARON
He'll be fine. How are you?

Her eyes glisten.

DAWN
His whole family...

Tears fall. Aaron slips his arm around her.

DAWN
I... I want to adopt him. He's more like a nephew than a second cousin. Sally and I were like sisters.

AARON
He's sixteen. It'll be his choice, not ours.

Rahula opens his eyes, rolls his head towards Aaron.

AARON
Hey.

RAHULA
Will I walk?

AARON
Without a limp.

EXT. DRIVEWAY, SARA AND SAM'S HOME, USA - DAY

KEN, 40, a more handsome man than when adolescent but pudgy around the middle, walks with a permanent limp towards the house carrying a bagful of groceries.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Sara, slim and attractive for sixty-six, wears a full apron and places blonde brownies in a Pyrex container. Ken enters, gives a strained smile, unpacks the grocery bag full of healthy salad fixings and low fat dressing.

KEN
Not on my diet, Mom. My doctor will kill me before I have a chance to have a heart attack.

SARA
Oh, Ken, one won't harm you.

KEN
Then why don't you eat one?

Ken hugs her. Sara looks at him with a hurt expression.

SARA
Stevie and Joanna love them.

Ken opens the fridge. Chockablock full with labeled leftovers containers. He shifts them around to make space.

KEN
And Cef.

Sara brightens. Ken scowls into the fridge.

KEN
Spends more time at my place than his own.

SARA
Great that he got that teaching job at Laura's school.

Sam, bald, grey and thirty extra pounds, swaggers in, grabs a brownie, and chomps away. Sara puts the lid on quickly.

SARA

They're for Stevie, Joanna and Cef.

Sam picks up a dressing bottle, peers at it with distaste.

SAM

No fat, no flavor.

He pokes Ken's gut.

SAM

You've put on a bit, haven't you?

KEN

You're the one to talk. At least
I'm on a diet.

Ken and Sam drift out as Sara dutifully places everything in the fridge.

KEN (O.S.)

Damn desk job. Not like the
theatre.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Comfortable and homey. Ken and Sam walk in.

SAM

If you'd quit the theatre when I
first suggested, you'd probably
have the kid's college and your own
retirement covered by now.

Sam flops down in a rocker recliner as Ken opens a briefcase.

KEN

Laura's still not happy about --

SAM

You're finally putting the family
before --

KEN

I've got the pamphlet for the
reunion. Do you want to see it?

Sam relaxes back. Ken hands him a brochure and looks over his shoulder.

KEN

Lake, cabins, restaurant, rooms for guests, forest paths. Only a couple hours drive from my place. Be perfect in early September.

Sara enters, looks over Sam's other shoulder.

SARA

Oh, cute log cabins.

SAM

It's our forty-fifth. I wasn't thinking rustic.

KEN

Got it covered. Two lakeside A-frame cottages, each with two bedrooms upstairs, one downstairs, bathrooms, kitchen and living room.

SAM

It's our anniversary - I'm not sharing --

KEN

Cabins for Cef, Aaron and Dawn.

SARA

How big are the cabins? They have a son --

Shocked, Ken stares at her. Sam scowls. Ken gives a sarcastic smile.

KEN

Dawn had a baby? So much for her "too many children in the world."

SAM

A very big one. He's seventeen.

KEN

He's not a --

SAM

Yes, Sri Lankan.

SARA

Sam, please don't always say it like that. He lost his family --

Sam grumbles under his breath.

KEN
Same old Dawn. Another cabin.

SARA
He's Dawn's second cousin.

KEN
So, that's why Dawn dragged Aaron
over there.

Sara darts an impatient look at Ken.

SARA
Aaron and Dawn do very important
work. Rahula's father was the head
physician --

Sam thumps his hand on the brochure.

SAM
Can we get back to the reunion?

SARA
Cef could share with Rahula. It'd
give him a chance to get to know
family.

Sam abruptly pulls the recliner to upright position.

SAM
He's Dawn's family, not ours.

Sara gives Sam a challenging expression.

SARA
Aaron adopted Rahula, so legally --

KEN
Cef might bring a date.

Ken nods to Sam, indicating his alliance with him.

Sara hides her frustration as Sam smiles at Ken, relaxes
back again. Ken points to the map.

KEN
I'll book these two for Aaron, Dawn
and... the boy.

INSERT - THE MAP

Ken points to two cabins on the other side of a building
labeled RESTAURANT/ACTIVITIES. He moves his finger to the
two lakeside cottages and one of three cabins close to them.

KEN
These are for Cef and us.

BACK TO SCENE

SARA
But there are three together here.

Sam and Ken turn to her with a "this is final" look. Sara returns it with a pitying expression. She walks towards the kitchen.

SARA
Well, we can welcome him into the family before we get to the lake.

Ken frowns as she disappears into the kitchen.

SARA (O.S)
Glad you have a big house, Ken.

Ken grumbles.

KEN
Dawn makes Aaron's presence almost bearable.

Sam gives Ken a stern look of fatherly disapproval.

SAM
Aaron's your brother. When are you two going to --

KEN
But some half breed orphan?

Sam sighs.

SAM
Yes...

EXT. AARON'S HOME, SRI LANKA - DAY

Aaron outmatches a friend as they spar Martial Arts. They stop, bow to each other. Aaron grabs a towel, wipes his face, walks around the house to another open area.

Dawn coaxes Rahula, minus casts, who walks hesitatingly with two walking sticks near a small cottage, surrounded by tropical plants and palm trees. Aaron looks on anxiously.

DAWN
You'll have to strengthen the muscles each day.

RAHULA
Whatever it takes.

Rahula stops walking, looks at them courageously.

RAHULA
Then you can go to America and not
worry about me.

DAWN
You're coming with us.

RAHULA
But, Aaron's family may not want a
stranger and...

Rahula looks down, embarrassed. Dawn hugs him.

DAWN
You're our son now.

AARON
I have three tickets already.

Rahula brightens.

RAHULA
How long before we go?

Aaron puts his arm around Rahula.

AARON
Don't you worry. Three months is
plenty of time. Exercise is the
key. You've got the best
physiotherapist in the world.

DAWN
You wouldn't be a little
prejudiced, would you?

AARON
Me? Not a bone in my body.

DAWN
We're only as good as the surgeon.

They laugh, hug each other.

Rahula wobbles, grabs Aaron's arm that holds him firmly
while Dawn pulls up a chair.

DAWN
Rest a little.

Rahula lowers down.

RAHULA
Why did you become a doctor?

Aaron's face becomes more serious.

AARON
Let me tell you about my brother,
Kenny.

Dawn frowns, catches Aaron's eyes.

DAWN
Do you have to?

AARON
I don't want Rahula to become a
pawn for him to get back at me.

Rahula looks at him questioningly.

DAWN
Why worry Rahula needlessly? Kenny
may be difficult but I'm sure he's
not prejudiced.

INT. SAM AND SARA'S GARAGE - DAY - THREE MONTHS LATER

Ken's mangled bike hangs from the ceiling in the loft.

SARA (O.S.)
Bring it down.

Sam adjusts a ladder under the bike.

SAM
Dear, are you sure you --

Sara stands determined.

SARA
Bring it down. I'm not going to
have Ken spoil our anniversary.

EXT. KEN'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Framed posters of Kenny and Laura Eden's opening night
plays, mixed with Kenny Eden's "Playwright of the Year"
awards, plaster the wall.

JOANNA, 16 going on 19, a cute blonde, bare midriff, mini
skirt, rushes in excitedly.

JOANNA

When did Mom go to the airport?

Ken lounges in a chair, no slimmer than three months earlier, frowns, keeps his eyes glued to the TV guide.

KEN

The one night they get to the playoffs!

He gets up, throws the TV guide down, does a double take at Joanna.

KEN

You got some jeans?

JOANNA

I wore the same skirt last week.

KEN

Last week isn't today.

Joanna looks at him as if he's crazy. The SOUND of a car pulling in the driveway. Joanna brightens, disappears down the stairs of the split-level home.

INT. ENTRANCE HALL - CONTINUOUS

Joanna swings open the front door. Joanna's mother, LAURA, an attractive 38, similar to Joanna, holds hands with a thrilled, flushed Sara. They enter.

SARA

Joanna - my, my, how you've grown!
Look at those beautiful legs.

Joanna and Sara hug. Ken descends the stairs.

KEN

I'd rather not see so much of them.

SARA

Where's Stevie?

INT. STEVIE'S ROOM - DAY

STEVIE, a reluctant, nerdy thirteen-year-old, sits glued to his computer in his high tech room.

LAURA (O.S.)

Stevie! Nana and Poppa are here!

Stevie shakes his head as he zaps another alien warship.

LAURA (O.S.)
Stevie! Nana brought you blonde
brownies!

Stevie's eyes widen. He mouths, "blonde brownies" and zips
out the door, banging into the doorframe.

Stevie zooms

DOWN THE STAIRS.

STEVIE
Hi, Nana!

Sara gives him a hug and a sloppy kiss on the cheek. He
wipes it off as she pulls out a Pyrex container, hands it to
him. He races off.

Ken peers out the door as he gives Sara a quick hug.

KEN
Hi, Mom. Better go help Dad.

SAM (O.S.)
Hey, Kenny!

EXT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Ken steps out.

KEN
Ken.

SAM
You'll always be Kenny to me.

Ken peers at two cars in the driveway.

KEN
I thought you were going to fly in.
Why'd you drive?

Ken goes to open the car trunk.

SAM
No! No, don't open it!

KEN
Huh? You have a dead body in there?

SAM
You never know. The suitcases are
in the back seat.

Ken shakes his head.

KEN
Since when?

INT. ENTRANCE HALL - DAY

Sam appears in the doorway, turns back.

SAM
Looks like your diet didn't work.

Ken lugs in two suitcases.

KEN
Well, the next one will. Laura gave me a set of weights for my birthday.

SAM
You hate --

LAURA (O.S.)
He loves exercise. Don't continue negative thought programming.

Sam looks at Ken in astonishment.

KEN
I love exercise, I love exercise.

Ken whispers to Sam.

KEN
When other people do it.

LAURA (O.S.)
Joanna, please get the juggling box out for Uncle Cef.

INT. FAMILY ROOM - NIGHT

CEF, 32, shaggy hair, muscular, very handsome, juggles rings. Laura stands, watching Cef a little too intensely. Sprawled on a couch, Ken and Joanna take it in.

Cef quickly throws a ring to Laura. They do a twosome, their faces bright.

Ken sits up straight, gives a sarcastic smile.

KEN

You guys make a great team. Anyone would think you practice together as a couple.

Laura drops a ring. She frowns towards Ken, leaves the room. Joanna jumps up.

JOANNA

Juggle with me, Cef.

CEF

You able to keep up with me?

JOANNA

For sure, all the cheerleaders are into them. We're going to use rings in the next game!

Impressed, Cef tosses rings to her.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

In the adjoining Living Room, Sam and Sara stand vigil at the window. A car BEEPS. Sam scrambles down the stairs, with Sara close behind.

The doorbell CHIMES.

INT. ENTRANCE HALL - CONTINUOUS

Sam swings the door open. Aaron stands arm in arm with Dawn. Rahula waits nervously behind them. Sam gives Aaron a long bear hug as Sara hugs Dawn.

SAM

You look great. It's been too long.

AARON

How's the hip?

SAM

Transformed my life.

A tearful Sara waits expectantly.

AARON

Mom, as beautiful as ever.

They embrace as Sam hugs Dawn.

Aaron turns to Rahula.

AARON
This is Rahula.

SAM
Oh yes... the boy.

Rahula steps forward shyly. Sam thrusts his hand out, gives Rahula a curt shake and quickly grabs Dawn's hand.

SAM
Come see everyone, Dawn - it's been years.

He pulls her up the stairs as Dawn looks back helplessly. They disappear into the Living Room.

SAM (O.S.)
I still do those exercises you gave me. They're great.

Rahula turns to Sara who smiles a truly welcoming smile. He relaxes, puts his hands prayer like to his face in an Eastern salutation of respect.

RAHULA
Grandmother, I have heard so much about your kindness.

Sara hugs a surprised Rahula.

SARA
You just call me, Nana. Aaron didn't tell me how handsome you are.

Sara takes Rahula's hand and leads him away.

SARA
Aaron, what stories have you made up about me?

AARON (O.S.)
Only the truth.

INT. FAMILY ROOM - NIGHT

Ken watches Cef give Dawn a quick hug and go back to juggling with Joanna.

SAM
Where's Laura?

KEN
Kitchen.

Sam walks out.

SAM (O.S.)
 Laura! You got drinks for Aaron,
 Dawn and... the boy?

Dawn turns to Ken who eagerly steps forward, hugs her longer than is polite, strokes her back. She pulls away.

KEN
 As bright and beautiful as the
 first time I saw you.

DAWN
 A line from your new play?

KEN
 The theatre's closed.

DAWN
 Oh, I'm sorry... I didn't know. The
 last couple years have been so
 intense...

A long moment of silence.

DAWN
 But you and Laura loved...

Ken's gaze makes her more uncomfortable as she searches for something to say.

DAWN
 How's your leg?

KEN
 Same.

DAWN
 Do you do the exercises?

KEN
 I need a coach. Maybe you could...
 show me more enjoyable ones. Aaron
 would just love... for you to help
 me.

He smiles at her sexily. She smiles awkwardly back.

Sara enters with a shy Rahula. Aaron follows.

Ken abruptly turns away, searches for the TV remote control.

Feeling helplessly out of place, Rahula looks down. Aaron puts a protecting arm around his shoulders.

Ken flicks on the TV, flops down in a chair, watches sports commentators BLARE their expert opinions.

KEN

Came just in time for the game.

Sara and Aaron stare at Ken's unwavering attention to the TV. Aaron shakes his head sadly.

SARA

Aaron hasn't seen you for four years!

KEN

And we haven't been in the playoffs for five. Plenty of time to catch up later.

Rahula looks at a resigned Aaron who gives a reassuring look to Sara and Dawn. Disgusted, Dawn exits to the kitchen.

Sara pulls Rahula over toward Cef and Joanna just as Joanna jumps to catch a flying ring. Her skirt and shirt slide high. The unexpected flesh takes away Rahula's breath. She lands, laughs. He looks down quickly.

Cef catches all the other rings in one hand as Aaron smiles broadly and heads towards him.

AARON

Cef! Great to see you.

Ready to hug him, Aaron meets with a surprise extended hand. He briefly stares at it, grasps it heartily and shakes. Cef avoids Aaron's eyes, much to Aaron's surprise.

CEF

Yeah. Ditto. I'll get some drinks for you guys.

Cef leaves a stunned Aaron. Sara pats Aaron on the hand and follows Cef.

Aaron turns back in time to see Rahula raise his head to meet Joanna's eyes. She smiles. Rahula blushes, looks away.

AARON

What a difference four years make. Joanna, this is Rahula.

Joanna's silence is deafening. Aaron smiles. Pulling herself together, Joanna smiles.

JOANNA

How do they say hello in Sri Lanka?

Rahula brings his hands in a prayer salutation and slightly bows. His wide grin flashes.

RAHULA

Hello, Joanna.

Joanna imitates him with her hands.

JOANNA

Hi, Rahula.

A long moment as they both gaze at each other.

JOANNA

Come meet Stevie. He's into computers.

Aaron smiles as Joanna leads Rahula up the hall.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Sam, Sara, Cef, Dawn and Laura sit around the kitchen table with drinks as Aaron enters.

SAM

When're you going to let Aaron come back home?

Dawn's mouth drops open. Aaron looks at Dawn affectionately.

AARON

We like Sri Lanka. Paradise with a purpose.

SAM

Yeah, well, we miss you. Four years is too long to go between visits.

Aaron reaches for a chair as Cef picks up his beer and abruptly gets up.

CEF

Game's on.

He passes a bewildered Aaron. A flustered Laura gets up.

LAURA

Hungry Aaron?

Aaron shakes his head. Breaking out of it, he smiles at Laura.

AARON
You're looking great. And Joanna
has really shot up.

LAURA
Yes.

Aaron hugs her. Laura avoids his eyes.

LAURA
Where's the --

DAWN
His name is Rahula.

AARON
Joanna took him to meet Stevie.

LAURA
Oh dear.

Laura races out. Dawn gives Aaron a "what the hell is going on here?" look. Aaron shakes his head sadly, flops down.

AARON
We're beat. Where're we sacking
out? Basement, as usual?

Sara stares at Sam in disgust.

SAM
Ken didn't want you to be disturbed
after the long flight. I booked you
into the nearby Travelodge.

Aaron stares at him. Sara looks at Aaron with pleading eyes.

AARON
So kind of him. I guess we'll go
check it out. Come on, Dawn.

Sam clasps his arm as Aaron gets up to leave.

SAM
It's great to see you. Thanks for
coming so far for our anniversary.

AARON
Yeah, happy anniversary.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Dawn lies in bed, while Aaron walks back and forth.

AARON

Great anniversary celebration it'll
be now that Ken's got allies.

DAWN

Honey, don't jump to conclusions.
Maybe it was just the playoffs.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - LIVING AREA - CONTINUOUS

Rahula sits on the couch, listening.

AARON (O.S.)

I should have told Rahula more.

Rahula nods in agreement.

BACK TO DAWN

DAWN

You're probably worrying
needlessly. Let's get some sleep.

Dawn turns off the bedside light.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - LATER

Dawn sleeps. Aaron silently slips out of bed, tiptoes out to
Rahula who lies on the couch, looking up at the ceiling. He
turns to Aaron. Aaron sits down.

AARON

Jet-lagged, too, huh?

RAHULA

Yes.

Rahula sits up.

AARON

It wasn't such a great welcome to
America. Your family was so kind to
us when we arrived in Sri Lanka.

RAHULA

Your mother radiates kindness. And
Joanna...

Rahula takes a deep breath. Aaron smiles.

RAHULA

...is more beautiful than I ever
imagined... a cousin... would be.
Stevie's brilliant and promised to
teach me more on the computer.

Aaron clears his throat, fiddles with his pajama coat.

AARON

Did you notice how Ken limps?

Rahula nods.

AARON

The doctor who set his broken leg
did a poor job. It was my fault he
broke it... I thought I saved his
life. He rejects my version.

RAHULA

I'd prefer a limp to death. Thank
you for giving me what you could
not give to your brother.

AARON

I didn't expect them to treat you
like they did... I'm sorry.

RAHULA

They don't hurt me... They only
hurt themselves.

AARON

How can you be so forgiving?

RAHULA

My father taught me to treat
everyone like my own family.

AARON

He didn't have a brother.

INT. JOANNA'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Joanna drapes clothes in front of her, peers in the mirror.
An open suitcase lies on her bed, clothes in and out,
scattered over her bed, thrown on the floor. She frowns at
her image, throws another aside.

She fumbles through a drawer, pulls out a lacey bra, smiles
and replaces a sports bra in her suitcase.

KEN (O.S.)

Joanna, half an hour.

She turns to her suitcase with shock.

JOANNA
Daddy, no way. An hour.

Ken sticks his head in, sees the mess, frowns.

KEN
You told me yesterday you were
packed already.

JOANNA
That was yesterday!

EXT. SMALL TOWN STREET - DAY

Joanna and Sara head towards a small fashion store.

SARA
I'm paying, get whatever you want.

JOANNA
Oh, thank you so much, Nana. My
clothes are just not --

SARA
He is handsome, isn't he?

Joanna stops, shocked. Sara smiles. Joanna hugs her.

Joanna admires an embroidered, Eastern theme dress in the window as they enter.

EXT. LAKE COTTAGES - DAY

Aaron, Dawn and Rahula lug their suitcases, trudge up a track toward two log cabins, set up on a hill overlooking the lake, restaurant and other cottages and cabins. On the other side of the lake, mountains stretch up to clouds.

DAWN
Well, maybe the other two cabins --

AARON
This is America, damn it. My
brothers claim to be liberal
Democrats!

DAWN
...were already booked?

AARON
Give me a break. Let's call a spade
a spade.

Rahula looks at Aaron anxiously. He sets down his suitcase, turns and soaks in the glorious view.

Aaron and Dawn continue. They reach their cabin. Aaron angrily bangs down his and Dawn's suitcases, turns. He spots Rahula still gazing at the view.

AARON

As if he hasn't suffered enough.

Dawn looks at him long.

DAWN

Him... or you?

AARON

Now what is that supposed to mean?

DAWN

Honey, it's your parents' forty-fifth. We just have to get through these two days.

Aaron nods, hugs her.

Rahula turns. Pleased with their embrace, he picks up his suitcase, walks toward their warm smiles.

RAHULA

Those who have never seen the view from the hillside know nothing of its beauty.

Aaron takes in the expansive view that backdrops Rahula.

AARON

Yes, indeed. A magnificent view.

Aaron gives a set of keys to Dawn, shakes another set.

AARON

Let's see your cabin next door.

They climb the steep path to the other cabin.

AARON

You be okay on your own? We could ask if they have an extra bed for our cabin.

RAHULA

My father always said that it's our choice to be lonely or enjoy solitude. I'll embrace solitude.

Aaron notices Cef's car pulling into the parking lot.

AARON

There's Cef now. You've got a
bird's eye view of everything here.

Aaron heads back. Rahula watches Cef's car below.

Laura and Cef emerge from the front. Stevie, clutching a
computer case tightly, jumps out the back.

Rahula looks down at his Western clothes, pulls his shirt
out. He goes inside.

EXT. RAHULA'S CABIN - DAY

In loose pants and long Eastern top, happy and at ease,
Rahula stands in a Kung Fu pose in a flat area near the
cabin. He gracefully glides until he faces the panorama. He
stops, relaxes the pose, drawn to the sight below.

LOWER CABIN AREA

Cef and Laura head towards Cef's cabin. They look at each
other lovingly as Cef opens the door. They disappear inside,
close the curtains.

BACK TO RAHULA

He shakes his head.

AARON (O.S.)

Hey, Rahula, you ready to go?

Rahula turns to see Aaron staring open mouthed at him.

AARON

You better change and meet us down
there.

RAHULA

But these are new, and you know I
usually wear --

AARON

It only draws attention to --

RAHULA

Who I am.

AARON

Please Rahula, it's hard enough.

DAWN (O.S.)
Aaron, Rahula, where are you guys?

AARON
Up here.

Aaron turns to Rahula with a stern, impatient expression.

RAHULA
Which is why I must remember who I
am. Trying to be who I'm not makes
it harder for me. I need to
remember everything that has
meaning to me.

Dawn draws near.

AARON
You can't forget in a weekend.

RAHULA
Are you sure?

DAWN
Rahula, what an absolutely divine
outfit. Come on, Ken just arrived.

Rahula looks at Aaron for consent. Aaron nods, turns and
strides off. Dawn stares after him, shakes her head.

RAHULA
It would've been better if I hadn't
come.

Dawn quickly turns back to Rahula.

DAWN
Don't be ridiculous.

She slides her arm around Rahula's shoulders.

DAWN
Aaron's just stressed out. Happens
every time we visit his family.

They walk. Dawn admires him.

DAWN
I love the Eastern look and so did
your mother. Maybe that's why we
ended up in the East.

Appreciative, Rahula relaxes.

INT. KEN'S COTTAGE - DAY

The door opens. Ken wheels in suitcases. Joanna hurries close behind him. She wears her new, long, Eastern style dress and carries an armful of packages.

KEN

Laura, Stevie, we made it.

Ken heads to the downstairs bedroom, disappears inside.

JOANNA

Oh, look at the view!

Joanna drops the packages on a chair, races to the wall of glass facing the lake. Back lit by the sunlight, the sheer cloth exposes her silhouette.

A frowning Ken emerges from the bedroom.

KEN

Stevie!

Ken stares at Joanna. He blasts.

KEN

Joanna, you can't wear that dress!

Stevie appears at the top of the spiral staircase.

Joanna spins around.

JOANNA

It's long!

STEVIE

Yeah, Dad?

KEN

Where's your mother?

Ken turns back to Joanna.

KEN

It's see through. And you've got on one of those...

He describes a thong with his hands.

STEVIE

With Cef.

Joanna grabs her packages, races from the expansive living/kitchen area and up the stairs.

JOANNA
I'll save the thongs for the jeans,
okay?

She glances at her exasperated father and she whispers to a downward climbing Stevie as she passes him.

JOANNA
He's acting weird.

STEVIE
Yeah.
(to Ken)
Great hook up here, Dad.

KEN
I'm sure it is.

Ken storms to the door just as Laura, all smiles, races in. She hugs him, kisses him on the cheek.

LAURA
This place is just perfect, Ken.

KEN
For what?

LAURA
For the celebration, of course.
Your Mom and Dad want us all to
meet at their cottage for the
famous, family photo-shoot.

EXT. SAM AND SARA'S COTTAGE - DAY

Cef walks briskly towards the cottage. From lakeside, a buxom, attractive brunette, ZOE, 28, sways towards him. He slows his pace. She smiles sexily. They stop.

CEF
Hi, you staying here?

ZOE
Over there.

Cef looks where she points, searches for her partner.

CEF
Nice place for a honeymoon.

She walks on.

ZOE
If you have a husband.

CEF

Nice place to meet someone if you don't. I'm Cef.

ZOE

Zoe.

He watches her walk to her cabin, unlock the door.

AARON (O.S.)

Looks cute. Why don't you invite her to join us?

Cef turns to see a smiling Aaron, Dawn and Rahula.

AARON

Now I see why Ken put us on the hill. To increase your chances?

Cef stiffens, looks over to Zoe's cabin.

CEF

Uh... duty before pleasure. Photo shoot.

INT. SAM AND SARA'S COTTAGE - DAY

Backlit by the view to the lake, Sam looks into his ancient box camera, resting on a tripod. He checks his light meter.

STEVIE (O.S.)

Poppa, want to use my digital?

SAM

No good for portraits.

He looks into the viewfinder.

INSERT - THE PICTURE

Sara sits next to an empty chair. Standing behind her, the taller Cef separates Aaron and Ken. Ken's arm encircles Laura, Aaron hugs Dawn. The three young ones kneel in front. Joanna, in the middle, shifts closer to Rahula.

BACK TO SCENE.

SAM

Joanna, leave me room to get through.

Joanna reluctantly shifts further away from Rahula, who turns and smiles shyly. Their eyes meet and hold. Ken frowns, clears his throat.

SAM

Smile.

Everyone smiles except Ken.

SAM

Here goes.

Sam presses the timer, barrels towards the chair, sits down, smiles broadly and pokes his tongue out. CLICK. Sam jumps up as everyone heaves a sigh of relief.

SAM

One more. My tongue got in the way.

The group groans.

KEN

Surprise.

SARA

And you hold yours.

KEN

He just likes to torture us.

SARA

Ken!

Aaron pokes his tongue out, grabs it. Cef laughs. His face softens.

CEF

Always there to cheer us up.

Ken stiffens.

KEN

And steal the limelight.

Aaron frowns, shakes his head. Sara takes on an anxious look.

DAWN

Joanna, that's a beautiful dress.

Joanna beams her thanks. Rahula steals an admiring look at Joanna who whispers to him.

JOANNA

It was made in Sri Lanka. We match.

SAM (O.S.)

Joanna, stand next to your mother.

Rahula watches her move away. Sam bellows.

SAM (O.S.)
Ah, Dawn, your...

DAWN
Rahula.

SAM
Yeah, get him to stand next to you.
Stevie, sit on the floor in front
of Nana.

The three move quickly.

SAM
Let me focus.

Sam moves the camera forward, checks the viewfinder.

INSERT - THE PICTURE

The picture cuts off Rahula.

BACK TO SCENE.

SAM
Perfect. Smile!

He zooms to the chair. Smiles broadly. The camera CLICKS.

Aaron claps. Sam takes a bow, heads to his camera.
Contented, Sara soaks in her family. Ken and Cef quickly
move toward the fridge. Laura flops onto the couch.

Joanna inches closer to a bashful Rahula. Stevie sneaks to
the door.

DAWN
Stevie, wait. Good time for
exercise.

Caught, Stevie groans, fidgets.

KEN
The exercise Queen.

Ken peers into the fridge.

KEN
I'd rather have a beer. Cef?

LAURA

That's not on your diet. And you love exercise.

KEN

Yes, my Guru, I love exercise, I love exercise.

DAWN

Wonderful hiking trails. Aaron, Cef, Joanna, Stevie you used to go hiking --

JOANNA

Great idea. Rahula, want to see some of the best Northwest trails?

RAHULA

Love to.

JOANNA

I'll change into jeans.

Joanna, all smiles, races to the door. Rahula fingers his clothes, mumbles.

RAHULA

Jeans... yeah.

Rahula and Stevie follow her.

JOANNA

Stevie, bring your camera.

They exit. Aaron and Cef look at a scowling Ken.

KEN

You kidding?

DAWN

Ready for a coach, Ken?

Aaron gives Dawn a grateful expression, which she responds to with a wink. Surprised, Ken turns to her, cracks a suggestive smile.

KEN

Anytime.

Laura jumps up.

LAURA

Okay, let's hit the trail.

SARA

Laura, stay and learn the exercises too, so you can take over as coach. I had to motivate Sam with his physiotherapy.

Laura's exuberance vanishes. Sam heads to the bedroom.

SAM

Mustn't continue negative conditioning... naptime.

Ken gives Laura a feigned, loving smile.

KEN

My guru, dear wife and now coach?

LAURA

Your mother has such great ideas.

KEN

That's because she loves me.

Uncomfortable, Cef heads to the door. Aaron follows.

KEN

Go for it. Use up that youthful energy, Cef.

Cef flinches, but doesn't stop.

AARON

Cef, why don't you invite that cute brunette? What's her name?

CEF

Zoe.

EXT. FOREST TRAIL - DAY

Cef strides ahead. Aaron runs to catch up.

AARON

You're in great shape.

CEF

Uh-huh.

Cef increases his pace. Aaron matches him. Cef keeps his vision glued to the trail.

AARON

Like your teaching job?

CEF

Yes.

AARON

Still in touch with Jill? You guys made a great couple.

CEF

No.

AARON

Have a new girlfriend?

Cef glances at him, returns his sight to the trail.

AARON

The old Cef would already be chatting up Zoe.

CEF

What're you getting at?

AARON

You're acting differently.

CEF

Ken's right. You only see black and white.

AARON

You look a bit blue to me.

Caught off guard, Cef stares at Aaron.

AARON

If you want to know what I see, ask me.

EXT. BACK DOWN THE TRAIL - DAY

Rahula, in his Western jeans and shirt, strolls along with Joanna and Stevie. Stevie takes photo after photo. Rahula soaks in the forest. Joanna soaks in Rahula.

JOANNA

Is this your first time to America?

RAHULA

No. I was born here. But my parents left when I was four.

JOANNA

So, you're an American!

RAHULA

Yes. Dawn's cousin met my father at medical school.

STEVIE

Shit. Dead. Got any batteries?

JOANNA

No. Rahula?

Rahula shakes his head. Stevie turns around, strides away.

STEVIE

See you guys.

Joanna smiles at Rahula. Nervous, Rahula calls to Stevie.

RAHULA

Wait.

Stevie stops. Rahula looks at him anxiously.

RAHULA

Come with us. We're almost to the overlook.

Stevie looks at Joanna who motions for him to go.

STEVIE

Forests are boring.

RAHULA

Want to learn how I was taught to walk through the forest?

Stevie groans.

RAHULA

Imagine there's no tomorrow.

JOANNA

Sounds cool.

STEVIE

Like the world's gonna be blown up by aliens?

RAHULA

Yeah, and you have the power to create a new world from thought, but only if you have a good memory.

STEVIE
10,000 terabytes, better than any
computer.

Joanna looks at Rahula adoringly.

RAHULA
So you have to be fully present to
see what this world is...

Rahula walks gracefully, aware.

RAHULA
Feel the touch of your feet on the
ground. When you see, truly see,
when you smell, just smell, when
you hear, just hear. Let go of the
future and the past.

Stevie concentrates, looks around like his eyes have become
the camera lens and takes a step, his arms up, alert, on the
lookout for aliens.

Joanna imitates Rahula. They walk gently, silently. Rahula
stops, takes in the sun filtering through the trees. Joanna
watches the shadows the sunlight casts everywhere, over to
an absorbed Rahula, looks at him in awe.

Becoming aware of her gaze, he glances at the disappearing
robotic Stevie. Shyness overpowers him, Rahula walks on,
less gracefully. Joanna follows.

INT. BANQUET ROOM - DAY

Dawn adheres a photo of Joanna to the collage of family
photos, anniversary cards and poems on a Bulletin Board.

A pretty Sri Lankan waitress, ANIKA, 19, and a WAITER, 24,
set a long table with cutlery and flowers.

Dawn wanders to Laura who talks with a MANAGER, 34.

MANAGER
Everything's in order. And no
problem with the extra guest, as we
don't need a new table.

LAURA
What?

The Manager pulls out a guest list.

MANAGER
Mr. Blake Robbins.

Laura's mouth drops open. Dawn's eyebrows rise.

LAURA
Who invited --

MANAGER
Your husband called this morning.
We now only have room for one more
guest before we'd have to add
another table --

LAURA
I'm sure that will be all. Thank
you.

MANAGER
Please don't hesitate to let me
know if you'd like anything else.

LAURA
Yes, thank you.

The Manager strides over to Anika, shifts the cutlery, and gives her a stern look. Anika nods, quickly changes others.

DAWN
I never imagined Ken inviting Blake
after what I heard about him and
Joanna.

Laura's shakes her head.

LAURA
He'd better behave himself.

INT. RECEPTION - DAY

BLAKE, 19, chiseled face, cockily handsome Alpha male, signs in as he swings his hips to a tune he hums.

BLAKE
Where's Miss Joanna Edens staying?

The RECEPTIONIST gives him an official once over.

RECEPTIONIST
I'm sorry, I can't give out --

Blake smiles a charmer.

BLAKE
She's family. I'm with the
Anniversary party.

The Receptionist thaws, points to a map.

RECEPTIONIST

At the lakeside cottage. She's such a bright young girl.

BLAKE

The best.

RECEPTIONIST

She's hiking with her uncles. Would you like to leave a message for when she gets back?

BLAKE

Nope. She loves surprises.

Blake grabs his key and bounces out.

EXT. OVERLOOK - DAY

Cef and Aaron take in the expansive view.

CEF

Ever date anyone older?

AARON

Once, she tried to mother me.

Cef hesitates.

CEF

Ever had an affair?

AARON

No way. I love Dawn too much.

CEF

Not even tempted?

AARON

Attracted but never tempted. Too much pain for a fleeting pleasure.

Cef looks away.

AARON

If she's married, it's nothing but trouble.

CEF

But her husband's treating her badly... We haven't had any sex. She just needs a hug, a kiss. She wants more, but --

AARON

No sex yet? Sure she wants more. Watch out, Cef.

CEF

Yeah, but --

AARON

You want all that pain?

CEF

Shit, what's the point - I knew you'd say that!

AARON

Because you know yourself?

Cef spins around, sprints away. Aaron jogs after him.

AARON

Wait, Cef.

No match for Cef's youth, Aaron slows down, angrily bangs on the wood railing that protects hikers from the sheer drop.

AARON

Damn.

Dejected, Aaron flops down on a large rock.

Cef barrels down the narrow track.

Stevie, like a robot, approaches a blind curve from the other direction.

Cef rounds the bend. Stevie stares wide-eyed. Swerving to miss him, Cef hits the rail, full force. It gives way. Cef falls. Stevie SCREAMS.

STEVIE

Help!

Rahula and Joanna race around the bend to see Stevie staring in horror. They look down.

Cef tumbles onto a small bush on a ledge below. The bush bends under his weight. He lies stunned. Below him a sheer hundred-foot drop with jagged boulders.

JOANNA

Uncle Cef!

Blood runs from Cef's forehead. Scratches cover his arms. He passes out.

RAHULA

That bush won't hold. I'm going down.

JOANNA

How? You could fall, too!

Rahula ignores Joanna, he scans the ledge, the overhanging branch and sees rocks that would help him reach the branch. He drops over, his foot resting in a crevice below, lowers himself slowly down.

Joanna covers her mouth in horror. Stevie's eyes widen.

Totally focused, Rahula's foot reaches the branch, then his other. He crouches down, slides out to the end.

A branch on the bush that holds Cef snaps. It bends more under his weight.

JOANNA (O.S.)

Stevie, go find Aaron.

Nearing the end of the branch, Rahula clasps it tightly, hangs down and jumps to the sloping ledge just as Cef opens his eyes, dazed and confused.

RAHULA

Cef, don't move, the bush may give way. Wait until I reach you.

Rahula balances and approaches Cef. Rahula reaches out, Cef clasps Rahula's arm. Rahula pulls. Cef scrambles towards Rahula as the bush snaps in half. Stones tumble over the cliff.

Cef and Rahula crouch down. Rahula touches the blood on Cef's forehead.

RAHULA

You okay?

CEF

Thanks to you. Just a bit dazed.

Aaron appears above.

AARON

Holy shit.

RAHULA

That branch can take us up to the next ledge where Aaron will be able to reach you.

Cef nods.

RAHULA

Don't look down. Concentrate on your body and each movement.

They creep up to the branch. Cef hoists himself up, the branch creaks but carries his weight. He scrambles up to the next ledge, flops down, appears exhausted. Rahula follows.

AARON

Push him up, I'll pull.

RAHULA

Cef, put your foot in that crevice there.

Cef nods.

Aaron and Stevie drop down to their belly. Joanna holds onto Stevie's legs.

RAHULA

Focus on your body. You're stable, in control.

Cef stands slowly, turns around and reaches up. Both Aaron and Stevie grasp his arm firmly, pull. Rahula pushes, Cef's foot finds the crevice.

Straining with all their strength, Aaron and Stevie inch backward as Cef rises.

Rahula's foot slides. He loses his foothold, falls but grabs the branch with one hand, dangles dangerously.

JOANNA

Rahula!

Cef's head and chest appear over the rise.

Rahula pulls, grasps the branch with his other hand, hoists himself up.

Aaron and Stevie grab Cef's arms with their other free hand and heave. Cef slides onto the path.

Aaron reaches down, clasps Rahula's hand, pulls him over the rise.

AARON
Rahula, thank God.

They hug. Aaron turns to Cef, just as Joanna embraces Rahula who smiles bashfully.

JOANNA
You were wonderful!

STEVIE
Rahula, the new wonderman!

INT. SAM AND SARA'S COTTAGE - DAY

Sara fusses over Cef's scratches as Aaron secures an elastic bandage around Cef's ankle. Sam stands watching.

SARA
You could've been killed.

Joanna swoons.

JOANNA
Rahula risked his life but was so calm. He was wonderful. He knew exactly --

Ken, flopped in a chair, finishes a swig of beer, scowls.

KEN
Yeah, you already told us.

Cef gives Ken a pitying expression, turns to Aaron.

CEF
You're right.

Aaron looks at Cef long.

SAM
Not the only time Aaron helped save a brother, hey Kenny?

Ken mumbles.

KEN
In the gospel according to Aaron.

SAM
Anything broken?

AARON

No. This is only a precaution.
Cef's lucky. Shouldn't stop him
from dancing.

Laura and Dawn burst in.

LAURA

Cef, you all right?

CEF

Yeah, now I am. Didn't realize how
far I'd fallen.

Laura races towards him concerned.

CEF

I'm out of here.

Cef's up and in a flash, limps by Laura.

SARA

Cef, lie down, take it easy.

CEF

Just following doctor's orders.

Cef hurries out.

DAWN

He's limping. Does he need --

AARON

Not the type you can offer.

Dawn looks at him strangely.

LAURA

Joanna, what happened?

JOANNA

Rahula was so wonderful --

Ken slams down his beer, storms out to the patio.

AARON

We'll catch you later.

Aaron grabs a perplexed Dawn's arm, guides her to the door.
Sam drifts out to the porch. Joanna gushes.

JOANNA

Rahula risked his life but was so
calm. Mom, he's American --

INT. RAHULA'S CABIN - DAY

Rahula, Buddha pendant sparkling against his muscular chest, fingers an Eastern style shirt. His hand moves towards a Western shirt. Confused, he closes his eyes. He turns away, opens a wallet on a nearby table.

INSERT - THE PHOTO

A handsome, imposing Sri Lankan man, in Eastern style dress, embraces a very attractive blonde who looks similar to Dawn.

BACK TO SCENE

Rahula's eyes glisten. He flips it closed, puts on the Eastern shirt.

INT. JOANNA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Joanna, hair up and looking twenty in a slinky short dress, looks in the mirror. She frowns, wriggles out of it, grabs a long dress, slips it on, zips it, checks the mirror.

The flowing longer dress emphasizes her slim waist, youthful shoulders and gives her a demur, innocent look.

She undoes two top buttons, to show her cleavage, inspects herself. She does one up, unclips her hair, smiles.

INT. AARON AND DAWN'S CABIN - DAY

Dawn pulls a comb through her hair, tightens the belt of her kimono. Aaron, freshly shaven, in a bathrobe, enters from the bathroom. Aaron approaches her with that look. They embrace, kiss. The kimono and bathrobe fall to the floor.

INT. KEN AND LAURA'S BEDROOM - DAY

A bare-chested Ken throws his T-shirt on the bed just as Laura, in a slip, exits the bathroom, heads to the closet. Desirous, Ken gazes at her, steps in front of her.

LAURA
Could you give me --

KEN
Sure.

Ken embraces her and kisses her long. She pulls away.

LAURA
Not now, we've --

Laura tries to brush past. He puts his arm up to block her.

KEN

No meetings, no deadlines, no school plays, no exams to mark, no nothing. Just you and me alone.

Laura looks up at Ken's penetrating stare.

KEN

Plenty of time.

Ken slides his hand down her shoulder towards her breast.

LAURA

I just had a shower.

KEN

Perfect. No sweaty gym clothes.

Laura spins around, heads towards a dressing table, checks her face in the mirror, hurriedly drags a brush through her hair. Ken approaches.

KEN

You used to look at me the way you now look at Cef.

Laura bangs down the brush, picks up a lipstick nervously.

LAURA

And what is that supposed to mean?

KEN

Before I share you with my...

She fumbles. The lipstick cover CLATTERS onto the floor.

KEN

...delightful family...

Ken crouches down, picks up the case. Laura turns around, her face anxious. Ken rises, hands her the lipstick cover.

KEN

...can't we have a bit of old time togetherness?

Laura brushes past him to the closet, slips on her dress.

LAURA

There is nothing going on with Cef and me.

Ken mutters to himself as he storms to the bathroom.

EXT. LAKESIDE - DUSK

Absorbed in each other, Cef and Zoe sit in chairs on a large platform at the end of a seventy-foot wooden jetty.

CEF

The railing couldn't take my weight
and gave way.

ZOE

Just too old. You need something
younger and flexible to take
someone your size.

Cef looks at her seductively. He gets up, holds his hand out to her, smiles.

CEF

How right you are.

ZOE

You may still fall.

CEF

It'll be a more pleasant landing.

Cef slips his arm around her as they walk back up the jetty.

They pass a sign that reads, DANGER: OLD TIMBER. PLEASE DO NOT EXCEED FOUR PEOPLE ON THE PLATFORM AT ONE TIME. USE THE JETTY AT YOUR OWN RISK.

The sun slowly sinks behind the mountains.

INT. SAM AND SARA'S COTTAGE - DUSK

Color streaked sky seen through the glass wall. Sam fingers something in his pocket nervously as he gazes out. Sara, in a sophisticated silk dress, looking closer to fifty, walks out from the bedroom. She hurries to the window.

SARA

Oh, it's so beautiful.

Sam turns to her, looks at her lovingly.

SAM

And so are you.

They hug. He pulls out a small box.

SAM

Happy anniversary. I love you.

Sara unwraps it, opens the jewelry case. A gold heart necklace with a diamond in the middle.

SARA
Oh Sam, it's divine.

They kiss. Sam takes it out, slips it around her neck.

SARA
With everyone here for the celebration, it's just wonderful. -
- and Sam?

SAM
Yes, maybe I have been hard on the boy, uh, Rahula.

Sara hugs him.

SARA
My love.

INT. BANQUET ROOM - NIGHT

Back-dropped by the glass sliding doors that look out to the moonlit lake, Sara hugs Laura as a band plays soothing MUSIC. Ken heads to the bar with Sam.

SARA
Laura, it's perfect. Even a band and dance floor.

LAURA
Yes, they play all your favorites.

SARA
It reminds me of one of Kenny's opening nights.

Laura's face takes on a wistful expression. The Waiter approaches with glasses of champagne and hors d'oeuvres.

SARA
Do you miss acting? You two were just wonderful --

LAURA
When Ken was Kenny.

Sara looks at her questioningly.

LAURA
Lots of champagne.

Laura takes one, gives it to Sara.

SARA
You're not having one?

Aaron, Dawn and Rahula approach.

LAURA
For the toasts. Love it, but it
goes to my head so quickly.

Aaron grabs two glasses, hands one to Dawn.

AARON
Great place, Laura. You and Dawn
did a fantastic job with
decorations.

Laura smiles her thanks.

AARON
Naturally, being a set director,
actress and now English teacher.

Dawn grins.

DAWN
Yes, and I was the stagehand. Just
like college days.

Laura appears uncomfortable. She shoots a glance over to Ken who raises his glass towards her, takes a sip. Aaron kisses Sara on the cheek.

AARON
Mom, you look great. I didn't know
they let people get married at ten.

SARA
Always full of compliments.

AARON
Only when it's deserving.

SARA
You and Dawn look pretty good
yourself. And Rahula, so handsome.

Rahula gives a shy smile.

AARON
Good news. Cef's bringing a date.

Laura appears stunned, tightens up. Sara gives a sigh of relief and clasps Aaron's hand tightly.

SARA

Good. Since he broke up with Jill, he hasn't been himself. I knew you being here would help.

A chubby woman, AUNT BETH, 60, squeezed into a too small dress, leads jovial UNCLE PHIL, 65, a younger version of Sam only with hair, towards them.

SARA

Oh, there's Beth and Phil.

LAURA

I have to go to the bathroom.

Laura dashes past a surprised Beth and Phil, grabs a glass of champagne. She passes Ken who greets cousin BOBBY, 46 and his wife, LINDA, 40. Surprised, Ken watches her exit.

INT. RESTAURANT - CONTINUOUS

Clearly agitated, Laura heads towards the restroom.

Cef enters arm in arm with a radiant Zoe. So absorbed in each other, they do not see Laura.

Laura stares, spins around and heads back.

INT. BANQUET ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ken waits at the door. Seeing Cef with Zoe, he smiles, grabs Laura as she enters.

KEN

Let's dance.

He drags a reluctant Laura toward the dance floor. With all eyes turned towards them, she gulps down more champagne. Ken nods to the lead guitarist.

KEN

Something happy and lively to get the party swinging.

The guitars STRUM. The drums THROB. Ken takes Laura's empty glass, puts it down.

Cef and Zoe enter. Cef and Laura catch eyes. He nods to Laura and leads a delighted Zoe to the dance floor.

Laura's body sways in unison with Ken.

Aaron smiles, looks at Dawn. They join in.

Sara jumps up, pulls Sam to the floor. He twirls her around in a 50's dance style.

Laughing Beth and Phil, Bobby and Linda join in. The party swings.

Except for Rahula. Looking out of place, he shifts over to a large potted palm near the bulletin board and the snack table where Stevie and his cousins, NAT 14, and VICKI, 12 munch into the food.

Corn chips in hand, Stevie scoops up a huge gob of dip, waves it at Rahula and munches.

STEVIE

Corn chips and dip uploaded into
the memory bank. Essential to the
New World!

Rahula strokes the palm frond as his face takes on a wistful expression. He shifts closer to its trunk, stands inconspicuously as he scans the room.

Blake swaggers in, heads to the bar, grabs a glass of champagne, sits down and looks around. He spots Rahula, surveys him from head to foot.

Rahula keeps his eyes glued to the entrance.

Joanna sweeps in, her dress and hair flowing.

Rahula gazes at her, transfixed. He steps forward. Their eyes meet. The moment stops. Her face lights up in the most beautiful smile, which visibly affects Rahula. They walk toward each other.

Blake jumps from his barstool, strides quickly into her path, hugs her closely.

BLAKE

Joanna, you look... gorgeously
innocent. Really suits you.

Joanna, surprised and exasperated, pulls away, blushing.

BLAKE

I can't get you out of my mind.

JOANNA

Along with all the other girls.

Rahula, seeing their intimacy, turns away disappointed.

BLAKE

I'm sorry I didn't answer your emails. If your father saw what I wanted to write, we'd be cooked.

JOANNA

I really don't care.

Joanna tries to brush past him, but he blocks her.

BLAKE

You know how your Dad freaked when he caught us...

Rahula turns towards the bulletin board, as if interested, but his eyes glaze over.

Joanna looks up at the smiling, suggestive face of Blake.

BLAKE

But he's obviously accepted our... mutual affection. He invited me, personally.

JOANNA

Cool it, I have a new boyfriend.

Joanna pushes past him, leaving a surprised Blake and walks gracefully, head high, towards Rahula.

Ken quickly hurries to Joanna before she reaches Rahula, grabs her hand.

KEN

Joanna, you're a princess. Give your dear Dad the pleasure of a dance.

Resigned, she nods. Ken swirls her around.

Laura heads to the bar, grabs another glass of champagne and drains it. She watches Cef and Zoe dance thoroughly focused on each other.

Ken dances with a distracted Joanna, smugly looks over at Rahula.

Blake wanders over to the snack table. He picks up two empty trays, walks to Rahula.

BLAKE

Hey, these are empty.

Rahula smiles, takes them.

RAHULA
Yes, they are.

BLAKE
While you're in the kitchen, hurry
the cooks. I'm starving.

RAHULA
Can I ask who you are, sir?

BLAKE
Blake Robbins. My stepfather and
Ken are cousins.

Blake looks at Rahula snidely.

BLAKE
Bit young to be a bouncer, aren't
you?

Rahula smiles, bows slightly.

RAHULA
Rahula, Joanna's cousin.

Rahula turns away as Blake scoffs.

BLAKE
Good joke.

Rahula gazes out the sliding doors at the moonlight on the
lake. He walks to the snack table, puts down the empty
trays, heads towards the doors.

Indignant, Blake wanders to Stevie.

BLAKE
Smartass waiter.

STEVIE
My cousin? He's cool.

BLAKE
Like I'm your mother.

Stevie looks at him with radar eyes.

STEVIE
Get updated, system's archaic.

Blake stomps back to the bar. Stevie mocks typing.

STEVIE
Delete - a Virus.

NAT

Older brothers. Into power.

With the cutest of smiles, Vicki looks at Nat, and agrees.

VICKI

Yeah, yeah-uh.

Dawn intercepts Rahula.

DAWN

Where are you going?

RAHULA

The moon shines equally on everyone.

Dawn looks at Blake who stares haughtily towards Rahula.

DAWN

Blake is the black sheep of the family. Don't take anything he says seriously.

Rahula looks over at Ken and Joanna dancing, then at Blake.

RAHULA

He looks white to me.

Taken aback, Dawn looks into Rahula's penetrating eyes. She gives him a motherly smile.

DAWN

Yes... I understand how you may be feeling. Do you think it's always been easy for me in Asia?

Rahula looks down.

DAWN

If we can remember our own worth, then it doesn't matter so much what others think of us.

Rahula nods and follows her to the long, beautifully decorated banquet table as the Waiter finishes putting out salads and baskets of rolls.

Sam leads Sara to her chair and flops into his, puffing.

Laura bangs her empty glass on the bar, heads towards the door. Aaron stops her.

AARON
Time for dinner. You know what
champagne does on an empty stomach.

LAURA
I'm not your patient.

Laura rushes out. Aaron grabs a microphone.

AARON
Okay everyone, let's get seated.
Salads are served.

The band downshifts to SOOTHING MUSIC.

Flushed and beaming, everyone converges to the table.

Rahula searches for his name card as he wanders down the long table. He spots: "PHIL, LAURA, AARON, LINDA, CEF". He stops when he sees: JOANNA. He looks up. Joanna heads towards the table, her eyes glued to him.

Blake swiftly strides to her. She brushes him off.

Rahula anxiously looks at the next name card: BLAKE. He frowns, reaches out for it. Blake passes Joanna, pulls up next to Rahula in a flash, and grabs the name card.

BLAKE
That's me. Move on... cousin.

Blake sits, gloats. He picks up Joanna's card, waves it.

BLAKE
Here, Joanna, next to me. Perfect.

Joanna stands dismayed as others seat themselves. She looks at Rahula who breathes deeply and moves to the next setting.

The name card reads: RAHULA.

Confused, Joanna shoots a glance at Ken, who nods.

Stevie zooms up on the other side of the table, opposite to Blake, sees his name card and plunks down.

STEVIE
Plug in station.

Vicki giggles, sits next to Stevie, gives him an admiring look as he hoes into his salad. Nat sits at the end of the table, rips open a roll, gobs it with butter.

Joanna moves past her chair and puts her hands in a salutation and smiles at Rahula. Blake scowls.

JOANNA

Didn't get a chance to say,
"hello".

Rahula returns the salutation.

RAHULA

Hello, Joanna. You look beautiful.

Joanna blushes. The CLANGING of a fork on a glass.

KEN

Okay, everyone sit down, so we can
get on with dinner.

All faces look towards Rahula and Joanna except for pressed lipped Aaron who looks across the table at Ken. Dawn, who sits next to Ken, looks anxiously across the table at Aaron.

Laura, eye's downcast and shaky, swerves to her chair, sits down, tightly wraps her body and closes her eyes.

Joanna and Rahula quickly sit down. Cef leans forward and smiles appreciatively at Rahula.

CEF

Hey, Rahula.

RAHULA

How's your leg?

CEF

Better. Thanks.

Cef catches Zoe's attention opposite him.

CEF

Zoe. This is Rahula, who saved me.

Rahula smiles at her.

ZOE

Wow, I imagined someone older.

JOANNA

He was wonderful! So calm and he
knew exactly what to do.

Anika, in stylish Western dress, her black hair swept elegantly into a bun, rests plates in front of everyone at the other end of the table amidst the BUZZ of conversations. The Waiter moves down the other side.

RAHULA

Without the ledge and the tree I
wouldn't have been able --

BLAKE

I get it. One of the staff gets an
honorary title of cousin and
invitation.

STEVIE

Update failed, reinstall program.

Blake glares at Stevie. Cef appears amused, smiles at the deadpan face of Stevie.

NAT

Hardware defective. Mission
impossible.

Vicki giggles.

VICKI

Yeah, yeah-uh.

Cef winks at Zoe who appears confused.

JOANNA

Rahula is Uncle Aaron and Aunt
Dawn's adopted son.

Anika stops short behind Blake, agape.

BLAKE

I see - poor orphan.

Rahula looks straight into Blake's mocking eyes.

RAHULA

Orphan, yes. As to poor - it
depends on how you define richness
or poverty.

Blake stiffens. Rahula holds his gaze. Blake looks away.

ANIKA

No, it can't be - Rahula?

Rahula looks up at Anika. His mouth drops open in surprise. He stands.

RAHULA
Yes, Anika?

ANIKA
How? I was told your family --

The Waiter on the other side of the table frowns.

RAHULA
All but me. It was good luck for
your family that you left. Where
are you --

WAITER
Anika. The boss.

The Waiter jerks his head towards the staff entrance where
the stern Manager observes.

Anika smiles awkwardly, puts down Rahula and Nat's plate,
and hurries away. Rahula watches her with a far away
expression as he slowly sits.

Blake cheerfully turns to Joanna who glances anxiously
between Anika and Rahula.

BLAKE
Looks like your coz found an old
flame.

KEN (O.S.)
To Mom and Dad, without whom we
would not be able to have this
delightful family gathering. Happy
Anniversary.

Glasses CLINK together.

INT. BANQUET ROOM - LATER

Everyone still at the table. Phil takes out a cartoon of
Sam, emphasizing his big nose and baldhead, and a sleek
Sara. He hands it to Sara who laughs and shows it to Sam.

SAM
Well yours ain't so small either.

PHIL
Hah!

Phil grins, pulls out another of his "creations".

INSERT - THE CARTOON

Aaron, athletic, with a doctor's stethoscope checks over an impoverished child.

Cef, dressed in a clown suit, juggles balls.

Ken, with an over-emphasized pudgy belly, sits in a director's chair, and works intensely on a computer. Sweat beads form a puddle on the floor.

BACK TO SCENE

Phil, proud of his creation, holds it up for Ken to see.

PHIL

Next.

Ken frowns, glowers at Aaron.

Phil shows it to Aaron. Dismayed, Aaron gives Phil a small nod and feigned smile.

Laura's eyes focus on the drawing. A momentary softening as she glances at Ken with sympathy. They catch eyes. Laura shoots a contemptuous look at Phil.

LAURA

Kenny and I are going back to the theatre after Joanna and Stevie are through college.

Ken appears surprised with her unexpected defense. Laura downs more champagne.

DAWN

You guys were so impressive on stage together.

SAM

Ken's computer business is doing great.

LAURA

Kenny's new play is brilliant.

KEN

You read it?

Laura nods, a sparkle in her eyes.

SARA

How do you have the time --

KEN

Nights, weekends.

Sam assumes fatherly authority.

SAM

A family man needs a more stable income.

Laura wraps herself up tightly again, withdraws, miserable.

Phil hands the cartoon to Sara, who slides it under her placemat.

AUNT BETH

Bobby just bought a house in Florida. His law practice is booming.

SAM

Company law, is that right?

UNCLE PHIL

Yes, he knows all the big CEOs.

INT. BANQUET ROOM - LATER

Rahula chats with Stevie, Nat and Vicki. At the bar, Blake drains a glass of wine and talks with Ken. Joanna enters, quickly slides up to Rahula.

JOANNA

Rahula, do you want to dance with me?

Stevie smirks, whispers to Nat.

STEVIE

Password protected area.

Rahula flushes as the three kids drift away.

RAHULA

I... I'm sorry, Joanna. I don't know how.

JOANNA

Oh, it's easy.

Joanna sways her body sensuously in time with the music as Rahula watches, unmoving.

JOANNA

You just flow -- listen and let the music stream through you. Then watch your partner and... move in unison... like you're one body...

Uncomfortable, Rahula glances over to the bar where Blake and Ken have turned to watch Joanna. Ken scowls, speaks to Blake who grins and nods.

Joanna holds out her hand to Rahula.

Blake, off his stool in a flash, slides up, takes her hand.

BLAKE
 Been waiting all night for this.
 Let's flow, Joanna.

Blake pulls a resisting Joanna to the floor. He looks over his shoulder at Rahula.

BLAKE
 Only the quick or the disappointed.

Rahula walks out. Joanna looks anxiously towards him. Blake dances into her view, blocking her vision.

EXT. BANQUET ROOM - NIGHT

Rahula looks up at the moon. He walks around the building towards a door marked: "STAFF ENTRANCE." He KNOCKS. The Waiter sticks his head out.

WAITER
 Yeah?

RAHULA
 Can I please speak to Anika?

WAITER
 You wanna get her fired?

Taken aback, Rahula squirms under the Waiter's glare.

RAHULA
 Of course not. But I haven't seen her in years. Can you give me her phone number or --

WAITER
 She's off in an hour.

The Waiter slams the door.

WAITER (O.S)
 Anika, your friend wants to talk to you when you're off.

Rahula sighs, wanders to the WATER'S EDGE, crouches down and stares at the moonlit water. He picks up a rock and skimmers it over the surface.

EXT. BANQUET ROOM - LATER

Joanna steps out, searches, heads to the jetty. She passes by a large tree that casts shadows over Rahula, his back towards her, so he merges into the darkness.

Blake walks briskly pass the tree.

Rahula turns, sees Joanna, with Blake in pursuit, walking to the end of the jetty. Rahula watches, unsure.

EXT. JETTY - CONTINUOUS

Joanna reaches the platform, flops down in a chair. Blake approaches. Hearing FOOTSTEPS, Joanna jumps up.

BLAKE
Waiting for me?

A disappointed Joanna frowns, turns away.

JOANNA
No.

Blake steps closer, turns on the charm.

BLAKE
Please don't be mad at me. I loved
your emails. Like looking into
your... soul.

Joanna blushes, looks up into his smiling eyes.

JOANNA
Well... maybe I said too much
and... things change...

BLAKE
I can show you now how I feel.

Blake reaches out, strokes her hair. Momentarily Joanna appears mesmerized. She breaks out of it, steps back, shakes her head.

JOANNA
I'm sorry, Blake. You're not my --

BLAKE
You know inside, it would be
impossible.

In the shadows, Rahula looks on.

With clenched jaw, Joanna looks at Blake angrily.

BLAKE

Your father would freak out.

Blake steps forward.

BLAKE

But he's obviously accepted us.

Joanna tries to brush past, but he grabs her, pulls her close, and kisses her hard. She struggles against his firm hold. Tears well up. Fearful, she cries.

JOANNA

Blake! Let me go!

Seeing her resistance, Rahula moves quickly onto the jetty, his graceful movements, almost soundless.

BLAKE

"I long to have your arms around me." Should I quote more? You've got it - enjoy it.

JOANNA

Stop it!

BLAKE

Then you stop your game.

Rahula approaches.

RAHULA

Let her go.

Blake glares at Rahula.

BLAKE

None of your business --

JOANNA

Rahula --

Blake covers Joanna's mouth with his hand.

BLAKE

We don't want everyone hearing our little spat, do we?

Joanna strains against his firm grasp.

Rahula sees her tears. He moves quickly, grabs Blake's arm.

RAHULA

Let her go.

Blake releases Joanna. As she scrambles away, a furious Blake swings a fist straight towards Rahula's face. Rahula blocks, grabs Blake's arm and throws him to the deck. His head knocks on a protruding nail. Blood runs down his cheek.

Stunned, Blake stares at Rahula, who readies himself in a martial arts stance.

Blake struggles up, wipes the blood, looks at it and back at Rahula who remains totally focused, ready. Blake pumps himself up, brushes himself off and glares at them.

BLAKE

You'll both be sorry.

Blake stomps away. Rahula turns to Joanna who looks at him in awe. Suddenly shy, he loses his appearance of confidence.

RAHULA

Are you all right?

Joanna races to Rahula and hugs him.

JOANNA

Thank you, Rahula.

Embarrassed, Rahula pulls away.

RAHULA

I guess we better get back.

JOANNA

Do you like the party?

RAHULA

No, but Blake is bound to cause --

Joanna acts faint.

JOANNA

I think I need to sit down.

Rahula clasps her arm, leads her to a chair. She lowers down, searches for her purse. Rahula sees it on the deck, gives it to her. She pulls out a tissue, wipes her eyes. Rahula stands uncomfortably, watching.

JOANNA

We can just sit for a few minutes.

Joanna nods to the other chair. Rahula relaxes, sits down. Joanna smiles, coyly.

INT. BANQUET ROOM - NIGHT

Soothing MUSIC plays. Cef slow dances with Zoe. Linda with Bobby.

Ken, at the bar, watches disdainfully as Aunt Beth and Uncle Phil gush over Aaron. Ken eyes Dawn, who talks with Laura.

Carrying his laptop, a proud Stevie marches in with Vicki and Nat. He sets it up near Laura and Dawn.

STEVIE

Want to see a slide show of the hike, Mom.

Laura drains her glass as Ken limps over.

LAURA

Some other time.

STEVIE

Aunt Dawn?

DAWN

Sure. I bet you've created a masterpiece.

Stevie grins, points to his head.

STEVIE

Up until the batteries died. The rescue is safely stored in my memory bank.

KEN

Dawn, would you like to dance?

Laura turns quickly, to observe Ken's intense focus on Dawn. Laura shifts uncomfortably, grabs Dawn's untouched glass, gulps. Dawn glances at Laura, then at Ken's suggestive smile.

DAWN

No, thanks.

KEN

I'd be able to keep up with you. My leg's not a problem.

DAWN

I'm sure you could, Ken. But no thanks. Stevie --

KEN

Aaron won't mind sharing you. We brothers were taught how to share everything - right, Laura?

Laura frowns, walks away.

Blake, bruised and scraped, bursts in, barrels towards Ken. A startled Bobby and Linda rush after him, concerned.

LINDA

Blake, what happened? Are you okay?

Seeing Blake, Dawn gets up. A pleased Ken, thinking she's consented, holds out his hand, which she ignores.

BLAKE

Your half-breed nephew really likes his coz. I wouldn't leave him alone with her too long, Unk!

Ken spins around. Laura jumps up. Dawn frowns.

DAWN

Rahula only fights in defense. What were you doing, bothering Joanna?

BLAKE

Shows how little you know him!

Linda dabs the blood on Blake's face with a tissue.

BLAKE

He doesn't belong in this family!

Nat smirks.

NAT

Finally got thumped? Not such a big shot after all, eh, tough guy?

Blake pulls away from Linda and lunges towards Nat threateningly. Bobby steps in his way.

BOBBY

Cut it out, you two!

Ken heads to the door. Dawn hurries to Aaron.

Stevie jumps up, swings his arms in a martial arts move.

STEVIE
Protecting the damsel from the
invasion of a deadly virus.

Vicki laughs.

STEVIE
Geez. This will make millions!
Rahula, the new super wonderman!

Blake glowers at Stevie.

Cef intercepts Ken near the door.

CEF
Cool down. Blake's been needling
Rahula since he got here. Probably
went too far.

Ken glares at Cef.

KEN
She's my daughter, not yours. Or
have you forgotten that?

Zoe looks at them both anxiously.

CEF
Ken, look --

Sara hurries towards Ken.

SARA
Ken!

Ken frowns but waits. Cef backs off.

EXT. JETTY - NIGHT

Joanna shifts her chair closer to a mesmerized Rahula just
as Anika approaches them from behind.

ANIKA
Rahula.

Rahula starts. He hurriedly gets up.

RAHULA
Anika. I thought you couldn't --

ANIKA
Short break.

Anika looks at Joanna.

RAHULA
Anika, this is Joanna, my cousin.
Anika used to live next door to me.

ANIKA
Hi, Joanna.

Joanna struggles to hide her displeasure.

JOANNA
Hi.

Rahula pulls up a chair. Anika sits.

EXT. BANQUET ROOM - NIGHT

Ken reaches the jetty with Dawn and Aaron in pursuit. Seeing the threesome at the end, he stops. Aaron draws near.

AARON
Looks quite harmless. Dawn was probably right and you have Rahula to thank --

KEN
Who asked you?

Ken limps back to the banquet room. Aaron sighs. Dawn puts her hand on Aaron's shoulder. They walk back arm in arm.

EXT. JETTY - NIGHT

Anika hands Rahula a slip of paper as she rises.

ANIKA
This is my address and phone number. I'm free tomorrow. Maybe --

Rahula brightens. Joanna looks on jealously.

RAHULA
It'd be great to catch up.

Rahula rises, looks at the slip of paper.

RAHULA
We have another day here --

ANIKA
I could leave tomorrow instead of tonight. Where are you staying?

Joanna fidgets.

RAHULA

The top cabin. Can I meet you in
the morning and we can --

Joanna's dress swishes as she gets up, walks to the edge of
the platform. Rahula glances at her, anxiously.

ANIKA

I'm free in forty minutes.

RAHULA

Tonight's... not so good. Family...
commitments. Tomorrow at nine.

Anika nods, smiles lovingly and hurries away. Rahula stares
after her. He turns.

Joanna gazes at the moon and the shimmering water. Confused,
Rahula hesitates. Joanna turns, invites him with her
expression. He walks to her.

INT. BANQUET ROOM - NIGHT

Linda, Bobby, Phil and Beth stand near the door with Sara
and Sam, Laura, Dawn and Aaron hugging good-bye. The band
packs up their instruments.

Dawn glances anxiously over to the sliding doors where Ken
stands vigil. His forehead furrows. He steps outside. Dawn
hurriedly leaves the surprised group.

EXT. JETTY - NIGHT

Rahula smiles at Joanna awkwardly.

JOANNA

Was Anika --

RAHULA

My next-door neighbor, four years
ago.

JOANNA

She seems to like you.

Rahula nods, uncomfortably. Joanna steps closer.

JOANNA

But that's easy. I do, too.

Rahula looks into her wide, adoring eyes, captivated. She
moves closer. Her lips touch his. His arms encircle her. The
kiss becomes deeper.

KEN (O.S)
Get your hands off her!

Ken barrels towards them, his face livid.

They break apart. Joanna steps in front of Rahula quickly.

JOANNA
Daddy, stop. He didn't --

Ken grasps her hand roughly, pulls her aside causing her to stumble and fall. Rahula speeds towards her.

RAHULA
Joanna.

KEN
Don't touch her.

Ken swings, hits Rahula in the jaw. He falls. Ken lunges at him. Rahula rolls out of his way. Ken sprawls onto the deck.

Joanna and Rahula spring up.

JOANNA
Rahula, go, quickly.

A worried Rahula looks at her, back at Ken who struggles up.

JOANNA
I'll be all right. Go.

Rahula backs up, with his hands held up.

Dawn runs up the jetty with Aaron not far behind.

RAHULA
I'm sorry. I'll leave.

Ken races at Rahula who dodges. Ken plunges into the water.

JOANNA
Daddy!

AARON
I'll help him. Go to the cabin,
Rahula.

DAWN
Ken attacked Rahula. Rahula was
just defending himself.

Aaron glares at Dawn as he hauls up Ken.

AARON

Dawn, please, not now.

Rahula looks agonizingly at Joanna, whose face streams with tears. Rahula retreats. Dawn grabs his arm, prevents him.

Dripping and seething, Ken scrambles onto the jetty.

AARON

You okay?

KEN

Keep that boy away from my daughter.

DAWN

Why? Do you think Joanna's too good for Rahula? A person's worth doesn't lie in their skin!

KEN

Spare me the soapbox.

DAWN

It was only a kiss. Not like --

AARON

Dawn, please --

DAWN

Please what! Ken hit Rahula! Violence is okay but kissing isn't?

Cef and Sara hurry down the jetty with Laura, Stevie, Nat, Vicki and Sam in pursuit.

JOANNA

Aunt Dawn's right, Rahula didn't --

KEN

I didn't ask you. Joanna, go to the cottage, now!

Joanna's eyes widen. She doesn't move. Rahula backs off.

DAWN

Rahula, don't leave. -- Joanna's been flirting all night with him. Joanna, didn't you kiss him?

Joanna nods.

KEN

This is not the Supreme Court. Just
keep that boy --

RAHULA

I kissed her back.

Joanna giggles. Aaron cracks a smile, looks admirably at
Rahula. Momentarily speechless, Dawn takes a deep breath.

DAWN

As any healthy teenage boy would.

KEN

Always were a stubborn bitch.

Cef arrives on the scene.

AARON

Let's all cool down. We needn't --

DAWN

Determined. Willing to stand up --

AARON

For the sake of the family, can we
all just cool off?

CEF

Hey man, bit cold for swimming.

KEN

Ah, the clown has arrived. Go
juggle your balls somewhere else.

Sara, Stevie, Nat and Vicki arrive. A staggering Laura
trails.

SARA

Ken, you're soaked, you'll catch
cold.

STEVIE

Frozen. Restart.

SARA

Come and change. This platform
isn't safe.

LAURA

Joanna, what have you been up to?

Ken flops into one of the chairs.

KEN
Great, let's all have a sit in.
Just your style, Dawn.

NAT
(simultaneous aside
to Stevie)
Sit in what?

JOANNA
Daddy hit Rahula.

Stevie feels the platform rock. The sparring adults block his way to the jetty so he points to a rowboat.

STEVIE
(simultaneous aside
to Nat)
The boat. The platform is about to vaporize.

Ken jumps up, glares at Dawn.

KEN
Succeeded in stirring up a big mess, haven't you? Why the hell was I ever attracted to you?

Shocked, Laura wails.

LAURA
Attracted to Dawn?

In the background, Stevie steps into the boat. Vicki and Nat appear unsure. Rahula retreats up the jetty.

KEN
Ho, ho, the cheating wife's now jealous.

As if slapped, Laura reels back, as all eyes turn towards her. Cef steps between them.

CEF
Hey, we haven't done anything, leave her be.

KEN
You leave her be!

Ken floors Cef. Chairs scatter. Aaron grabs Ken as he moves toward the sprawled Cef.

AARON
Let's all get off the platform -
it's not going to --

Ken breaks free of Aaron's grasp, pushes him.

KEN
So you beat me once. Doesn't mean
you can order me around. Ready for
a re-fight?

Vicki and Nat climb into the boat as the platform swings.

AARON
What happened to the pacifist?

SAM
Cut it out. You're grown men. Act
like it.

KEN
Smartass! Never had any respect,
did you?

SARA
Please, can we all relax?
Everyone's had too much to drink.

DAWN
Respect is for those worthy of it.

Ken glares at Dawn.

On the shoreline, the Manager and Waiter with a megaphone
look out to the crowded platform.

WAITER
Everybody off the platform,
immediately. Danger.

Stevie unties the boat and pushes it away from the platform
just as it breaks off from the jetty and tips up. Everyone
SCREAMS as they tumble into the water.

Except for Rahula who stands safe on the jetty and the kids
in the boat.

The Manager shines a large floodlight towards the chaos.
Linda, Aunt Beth and Zoe race to and fro. Bobby and Uncle
Phil race up the jetty.

Sam thrashes. Ken surfaces, gulps air, searches frantically.

SAM
Sara can't swim! Sara!

KEN
Laura! Laura!

Rahula sees Sara thrashing. He dives in.

Floating debris obstructs Ken's view of the intoxicated Laura, who struggles in distress. Athletic Dawn swims clear of the platform and debris.

Aaron, close to Laura, sprints towards her. Sam swims around, wailing.

SAM
Sara!

Rahula reaches Sara just as her head disappears under. He grabs her quickly, pulls her above the surface. She gulps air, her eyes wide with fright. Rahula hurriedly checks her and pulls her towards the jetty.

SAM
Rahula... got her!

Sam madly swims after them.

STEVIE
Aaron, Mom - the boat!

Aaron grasps and helps Laura to the boat. The kids pull her up. Seeing this, a struggling Ken searches for Joanna.

Bobby and Phil help pull Sara onto the jetty. Rahula hoists himself up.

RAHULA
Nana!

Sara hugs Rahula.

SARA
You saved my life.

KEN
Joanna! Where's Joanna?

Rahula spins around, anxiously searches for Joanna.

Dawn and Aaron, Cef and Ken swim around in a frenzy, scanning the water for her. Joanna is nowhere to be seen.

The Waiter blares on the megaphone.

WAITER

Please come to shore quickly, the
jetty is unstable.

Ken, his energy sagging, gulps water, coughs and tries to
grab a floating timber.

Cef reaches for him. Ken struggles, pushes him away. Aaron
firmly grabs Ken in a strong lifesaver's hold and pulls him
towards the jetty.

AARON

Rahula, over here, quick.

Rahula hurries towards Aaron and Ken. Rahula pulls up Ken.
Once on the jetty, Ken pushes Rahula away and spins around
to search the water. Rahula stumbles and rights himself.
Sara hurries towards Rahula and Ken.

SARA

There she is.

Joanna swims breaststroke towards the shore, her stroke
smooth and graceful. Rahula gazes at her moonlit form.

Ken lowers to the deck exhausted. The megaphone blares.

WAITER

Please come off the jetty.

Aaron hoists himself up and reaches for Dawn. Bobby and Phil
retreat down the jetty. Sam and Sara, arms encircling
Rahula, walk towards land.

SAM

Thank you... grandson.

SARA

You're an angel.

BACK TO AARON

Aaron helps Cef out as Dawn hurries over to Ken who sits
sprawled on the deck, slowly getting his strength back.

DAWN

Are you okay?

KEN

No thanks to you. Satisfied?

Aaron rushes over, holds out his hand for Ken.

AARON

We better get off the jetty.

Ken ignores him, struggles up and stomps away. Dawn stares agape as Cef comes up.

DAWN

You saved him and Laura.

AARON

So now he hates me three times as much.

Cef shakes his head, clasps his arm around Aaron's shoulders.

EXT. SHORELINE - CONTINUOUS

Blake watches Joanna glide towards shore. He smiles. Joanna wades out of the water. Her wet dress clings sensuously to her young curvy body.

BLAKE

From gorgeously innocent to deliciously sexy. Suits you even more.

Joanna wraps her arms over her breasts.

BLAKE

I told you he'd freak out. We could've been enjoying ourselves right now.

JOANNA

The thought makes me want to throw up.

BACK TO RAHULA

Sara, Sam and Rahula reach the shore. Aunt Beth and Uncle Phil fuss over Sara and Sam. Rahula sees Blake edging closer to Joanna, races towards them.

RAHULA

Joanna.

Blake spins around.

BLAKE

You learn slowly, coz. It's impossible.

Rahula gives Blake a penetrating stare.

SARA (O.S)
Joanna, you come with me.

Sam and Sara advance towards them. Sara grasps Joanna's hand and leads her in the direction of the cottages.

SARA
Blake, make yourself useful for a change, like Rahula.

Blake glares at Rahula and stomps away. Sam slaps Rahula on the back.

SAM
That boy's trouble.

Stevie and Nat row the boat in.

STEVIE
Land ho!

Rahula wades to the boat, helps a staggering and shivering Laura out, holds her firmly as she slops through the water to reach Sam. Sam puts his arm around her.

SAM
Goodnight, Rahula. From now on, you call me, Poppa, all right?

Rahula smiles.

RAHULA
Good night... Poppa.

Rahula watches them stumble away.

Stevie, Nat and Vicki hop out, slosh to shore.

RAHULA
Smart move, Stevie.

Vicki looks admiringly at Stevie.

VICKI
Yeah, yeah-uh.

STEVIE
Didn't want to get my flash drive wet.

Deadpan Stevie pulls out his flash drive. Nat and Vicki laugh.

STEVIE

You better vaporize.

Rahula turns to see Ken barrel towards them. Giving Ken a wide circle, Rahula sprints past Ken who scowls at him. Rahula slows down as he approaches Cef who exits the jetty ahead of Aaron and Dawn. Cef gives Rahula the thumbs up.

CEF

Way to go, Rahula. Two for two.

Zoe races up to Cef. They embrace.

ZOE

Too old. Just can't take the weight.

CEF

Yeah, I'll stick to the young and flexible.

Zoe giggles, races off with Cef in pursuit.

A dripping Aaron and Dawn exit the jetty.

Rahula waits anxiously. Aaron hugs Rahula. A pleased Dawn looks on.

AARON

I couldn't find her. Thank goodness you did.

They walk off.

INT. KEN'S MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

A bedraggled Laura, in a nightdress, flops down on the bed.

JOANNA (O.S)

This is ridiculous. I'm not thirteen.

FOOTSTEPS stomp up stairs.

KEN (O.S)

And you're not eighteen.

A door SLAMS.

A wet and fuming Ken enters, shuts the door, leans against it and looks at Laura. She doesn't raise her head.

LAURA

You're a bit tough --

Ken rips off his shirt.

KEN

I'm not the one who's been tough.

Laura stiffens. She staggers up, tries to hug him. He pulls away. Tears fall.

LAURA

I'm sorry.

KEN

Until Zoe, you didn't appear to be sorry at all.

Laura looks into his wounded face.

LAURA

You were never home. And when you were home, you only complained. I was lonely.

KEN

My heart bleeds.

LAURA

I love Kenny not Cef.

Ken shakes his head, disbelieving.

LAURA

But... he left two years ago. I wait every day for his return.

Ken appears confused.

LAURA

We used to share a life. Now we just share a house.

KEN

You know it's not what I want. But there's no other way. We have to pay the bills.

LAURA

But what if we wait too long and there's nothing left?

KEN

What is left? Are you the same Laura?

LAURA

Can you be the same Kenny?

Laura's eyes plead for his embrace. He hugs her tightly. They lie down in bed.

INT. RAHULA'S CABIN - NIGHT

Rahula ties the drawstring of dry pants, slips on a shirt. Someone KNOCKS. He checks his watch, shakes his head.

He opens the door. Anika. She wears an Eastern style skirt and blouse; her hair cascades over her shoulders, a sparkling slide comb pulls back one side. Rahula gazes at her exquisite, exotic beauty.

ANIKA

I know how you must be feeling.

He looks down, confused and embarrassed. Her voice cracks, a tear flows, which she wipes away.

ANIKA

And on top of everything else... I cried for a week.

Rahula's eyes glisten. Anika enters, hugs him.

ANIKA

It's just so wonderful you're alive.

He yields to her warm embrace.

RAHULA

I, uh...

Rahula pulls away, hesitant.

RAHULA

Your family?

ANIKA

In Boston. I'm on my own. This is a summer job. College starts again next week.

Rahula looks around, displays his inexperience and indecision.

Anika smiles, seductively strokes his arm.

Rahula nods, shuts the door.

INT. AARON AND DAWN'S COTTAGE - NIGHT

Aaron stares out of the window as Dawn walks back and forth.

DAWN
Your brother is --

AARON
Who he is! He'll never admit when
he's wrong.

DAWN
Exactly! So someone has to stand up
to him. Why do you defend him?

AARON
I'm not --

DAWN
Oh, come on.

AARON
Now?

Aaron slides over to her, strokes her hair, smiles sexily.

AARON
It'd be better than talking about
Ken.

Dawn cracks a smile but hangs on.

DAWN
You're trying to change the
subject.

AARON
You only gave him what he wanted.

DAWN
What?

AARON
He always wanted your attention.
He's succeeded in getting it.

Dawn shakes her head in disbelief.

DAWN
Ken? You must be joking.

Aaron's steady gaze communicates anything but a joke. He
lightens up.

AARON

Look on the bright side. Rahula saved Cef and Mom's life and he won over Cef and Dad. Ken's lost his allies.

Aaron pats the bed and gives her that look.

DAWN

Later. I'm going to check on Rahula. He must feel so alone.

Aaron shakes his head firmly. Dawn looks at him pleadingly.

AARON

Okay, I'll go.

Dawn smiles.

DAWN

Thanks. He's so shy... about... that sort of thing.

INT. RAHULA'S CABIN - NIGHT

Anika kisses Rahula, tenderly. Her hands slide down to his shirt buttons. Rahula stiffens. Anika murmurs.

ANIKA

Just flow, it's all right.

Rahula relaxes, gives himself to her. His shirt drops to the ground. Anika's blouse and bra join it. A KNOCK on the door.

AARON (O.S.)

Rahula. It's Aaron.

Rahula and Anika jump apart, crashing over a chair. Rahula scrambles for his shirt.

RAHULA

Just a moment.

Anika hurriedly grabs her blouse and bra, and searches for an escape. As she races to the bathroom, her bra drops to the floor. She closes the door.

Rahula buttons his shirt, smooths his hair and opens the door a small way, trying to appear relaxed.

RAHULA

Yes?

Aaron gives Rahula a suspicious look and adds sarcastically.

AARON
Practicing Kung Fu?

RAHULA
Ah.... some moves.

Aaron pushes the door open and enters. Rahula steps back, nervously. Aaron glances at the overturned chair.

Rahula sees Anika's bra near the bathroom door and grimaces. He offers Aaron a chair that faces away from the bathroom.

IN THE BATHROOM

Anika slips on her blouse and buttons it as she chews her lip and puts her ear to the door. Her slide comb dangles, precariously.

INTERCUT - RAHULA AND ANIKA

Aaron pulls up a chair that faces the bathroom. Rahula sits down, purposely tries to block Aaron's view.

AARON
Dawn wanted me to talk to you
about... girls.

RAHULA
Dad already --

AARON
American girls. America is not Sri
Lanka.

Anika smiles. She nods. Her slide comb CLANGS to the floor.

Aaron springs up.

RAHULA
Must be a squirrel. The bathroom
windows are ridiculous.

In a flash, Rahula blocks Aaron's way.

RAHULA
I'll get it later. Can we talk
tomorrow?

The taller Aaron sees something on the floor, strides over, picks up the bra.

AARON
Shit, Joanna?

RAHULA

No.

Aaron glares at Rahula, as he shakes the bra.

AARON

One hell of a big squirrel.

Rahula suppresses a smile. Aaron loses it.

AARON

Damn it, Rahula, Ken's going to hit the roof!

Aaron grabs the handle, tries to open it.

AARON

Joanna, come out, right now!

RAHULA

It's not Joanna.

The door opens. Anika sneaks out sheepishly leaving Aaron agape.

ANIKA

Nice to meet you, Doctor.

She grabs the bra and sways to the door.

ANIKA

Good night, Rahula. It was...

She smiles, swoons.

ANIKA

Nice.

She leaves. Aaron stares at Rahula, who squirms under his gaze.

AARON

I'll buy you condoms tomorrow... or am I too late?

RAHULA

We didn't --

AARON

Good. Say good-bye to med school if you get some girl pregnant.

Rahula smiles.

RAHULA
I was born while Dad was at Med
school.

Taken aback, Aaron sizes up Rahula, shakes his head.

AARON
So, I need to sleep here?

RAHULA
No. I get your point.

AARON
Good thing she didn't get yours.

INT. STAFF ROOMS CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Anika approaches her room just as the Waiter comes out of his. Seeing her braless with tousled hair, he smirks.

WAITER
Bit young, isn't he?

Anika straightens, pushes the key into her door.

ANIKA
And very rich.

She enters, goes to close the door. He steps into the doorway.

WAITER
So did you score?

She smiles dreamily.

ANIKA
Not yet. He's so... deliciously
innocent.

WAITER
Didn't want to lose it to you, eh?

She snaps back.

ANIKA
His adopted Dad interrupted. Oh,
was he willing, umm.

The Waiter steps aside.

ANIKA
Later. I left my comb.

She smiles, closes the door.

INT. AARON'S CABIN - NIGHT

Dawn combs her hair nervously. FOOTSTEPS. She jumps up, races to the door and opens it before Aaron can. He enters, face deadpan.

DAWN
Is he okay?

Aaron grins.

AARON
Just fine.

DAWN
Thank you, I knew --

AARON
Yeah, good timing.

Aaron chuckles.

DAWN
What's so funny?

AARON
Squirrels sure are big here.

Dawn gives him a look of total incomprehension.

INT. KEN'S COTTAGE - NIGHT

Joanna, in dark clothes with a navy scarf over her hair creeps down the stairs, tiptoes to the front door. She slides the security chain off, grabs the handle, slowly turns it. As she opens the door, it SQUEAKS.

She stops, waits, listens. Silence. She steps outside, closes the door.

INT. RAHULA'S CABIN - NIGHT

Rahula gazes at Anika's slide comb, shakes his head, puts it down on the table and walks to the bed.

A KNOCK. Rahula picks up the comb and opens the door. Joanna pulls off her scarf and smiles. Speechless, Rahula quickly stuffs the comb in his pocket, steps outside and closes the door.

RAHULA
Joanna. No, you can't --

JOANNA

I couldn't sleep. I feel so bad
about --

RAHULA

Your father will kill me. You have
to go back.

A tear runs down Joanna's cheek, crushing Rahula's resolve.
They hug. He kisses her tenderly. He pulls himself away,
touches her face.

RAHULA

Please, Joanna go back. I...
like... love you too much.

ANIKA (O.S.)

I see I'm too late to share the
rest of tonight with you. So can I
please have my comb?

They spin around to see an irritated Anika step forward.

Joanna's mouth drops open. An embarrassed Rahula quickly
gives it to her. She looks at him sexily.

ANIKA

You have my phone number... or I
could come back later... when your
family commitments are finished.

Anika sashays off. Joanna spins around.

JOANNA

Sorry for spoiling your chances.

She strides away. Rahula catches up to her.

RAHULA

Anika's just an old friend.

JOANNA

Are you in the habit of spending
the night with your old friends?

RAHULA

Joanna, I fell in love with you the
moment I saw you.

Joanna stops, looks into his pleading, tender expression.

RAHULA

You take me to a place I've never
known before... but how can you and
I --

JOANNA

How did your mother and father?

She throws herself into his arms. They kiss.

RAHULA

But you have to go back. We'll
never have a chance if you don't.

He kisses her again.

RAHULA

I'll take you.

Holding hands, they disappear into the darkness.

EXT. TRAIL - NIGHT

Rahula and Joanna get close to the lighted parking lot. They
kiss long, reluctantly part. Joanna looks back longingly as
she crosses the lot. Rahula watches until she disappears. He
smiles.

INT. KEN'S MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Asleep in bed, Laura lies wrapped in Ken's arms.

EXT. KEN'S COTTAGE - NIGHT

Joanna slips off her shoes, opens the front door. It CREAKS
as it opens. She grimaces, stops.

INTERCUT - JOANNA AND KEN

Ken opens his eyes, listens. Silence. He shuts his eyes.

Joanna slips inside. Closes the door. CREAK. Joanna
freezes.

Ken's eyes open. He gently slips his arms free, listens,
shakes his head, plumps the pillow, sinks back into it.

Joanna slips the security chain on, tiptoes to the stairs,
gently climbs, and creeps to her room. A floorboard SQUEALS.
She disappears into her room while stripping off her blouse.

Ken leaps out of bed, hurries to the Living area, flips on
the light, looks around. He climbs the stairs.

Joanna finishes slipping a nightdress over her head, drops her jeans to the floor. She wanders out, stretching her arms as if sleepy, sees Ken heading towards her.

JOANNA

Oh, it's you, Daddy. I thought I heard something.

KEN

In the habit of sleeping in a scarf?

Joanna puts her hand to her head, smiles nervously.

JOANNA

Styling gel.

Ken relaxes.

KEN

Place must be haunted.

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

Sam, Sara, Aaron and Dawn finish their breakfast. A fifth empty plate lies on the table. Aaron shakes his head.

AARON

Mom, I think you've been reading too many child psychology books.

SARA

Will you do it?

DAWN

Honey? It just might --

SAM

It's mad, Ken needs a real shrink.

SARA

Aaron?

AARON

Mom, for you, the moon.

INT. KEN'S COTTAGE - DAY

Loud KNOCKS on the door.

Ken staggers out of the bedroom.

KEN

Who the hell is it?

DAWN (O.S.)

Dawn.

KEN

Shit.

He limps to the door, raises his voice.

KEN

Not a good time.

DAWN (O.S.)

Mom and Dad want everyone at their
cottage.

Ken opens the door quickly and steps

OUTSIDE.

DAWN

Is everything all right?

Ken gives her a sarcastic look.

KEN

Just wonderful.

Dawn tenses up, acts official.

DAWN

You may get the rest of the family
to play your game...

Loving the attention and challenge, Ken gives Dawn a sexy
smile which unnerves her.

DAWN

...but I'm not into your crap. If
you want --

KEN

You. Yes.

Dawn gives him an exasperated look.

KEN

Would you help my lovely wife?

DAWN

Why?

KEN

She's got one hell of a hangover.

Ken gives Dawn a look of helplessness.

KEN
I can't do anything with her.

DAWN
Men, haven't got a clue.

Dawn opens the door, marches inside. Ken smiles.

INT. CEF'S CABIN - DAY

In bed, Zoe lies in Cef's arms. Loud KNOCKS on the door.

STEVIE (O.S.)
Cef! Cef!

Dreary, Cef opens his eyes.

CEF
Huh?

Zoe wakes.

STEVIE (O.S.)
Restart! Get over to Nana and
Popa's cottage without crashing.

CEF
What's the rush?

STEVIE (O.S.)
Unknown. Rumor is top secret. May
be a new operating system.

Zoe and Cef look bewildered at each other.

INT. SAM AND SARA'S COTTAGE - DAY

Everyone sits around Sam and Sara.

SARA
I have a special wish for this
anniversary, but our sons must
approve.

CEF
Whatever you want, Mom, it's yours.

AARON
I'll second that.

Everyone turns to Ken.

KEN
Uh, sure, Mom, what's your special wish?

Sara pulls out the kids' boxing photo showing Aaron the winner.

SARA
I believe your father ended the fight prematurely. I want to see a rematch.

Pandemonium as everyone except Sam, Aaron and Dawn express surprise.

JOANNA
What!

CEF
Mom, are you serious?

Ken snickers.

KEN
Sounds good.

LAURA
Sara, what are you doing?

STEVIE
System haywire.

Rahula looks over at Aaron. Aaron nods to him.

SAM
Now, now, quiet, let your mother/grandmother explain.

SARA
Kenneth Adam Edens, I am absolutely tired of your jealousy to Aaron.

Silence. Ken frowns.

SARA
You have hated Aaron since he won the fight. It doesn't even matter to you that Aaron saved your life.

Ken drops his head.

SARA

Last night, he saved you again. And he saved Laura. Rahula saved me, yet you take your anger toward Aaron and hold it against Rahula, also.

Sara grabs a bag behind her chair. She pulls out two sets of boxing gloves.

SARA

You will have one chance to take out your anger on Aaron. But if Aaron wins again, you will agree to stop being jealous.

EXT. SAM AND SARA'S COTTAGE - DAY

Everyone mills around. Many thoroughly confused. Sara sits regally in a lawn chair. Sam holds the gloves. Stevie stands on a table, holding a camera.

Dawn's arm hangs around Rahula's shoulders.

On one side, Cef talks with Aaron.

CEF

You're not really going to do this?

AARON

Mom's wish.

CEF

Shit!

On another side, Joanna and Laura talk with Ken.

LAURA

Honey, please don't.

Ken grins a killer's grin.

JOANNA

Daddy, this is insane.

KEN

Mom's wish.

He laughs.

Hugging each other, Joanna and Laura back away, shaking their heads.

SAM
Okay, gloves.

Aaron and Ken come over. Sam slides on the gloves, ties them.

SAM
Three-minute rounds.

KEN
Yeah, yeah.

Dawn whispers in Rahula's ear, hands him car keys.

SAM (O.S.)
No hitting below the belt.

Rahula looks at Dawn in surprise. She nods. He looks over at Sara. She smiles.

SAM (O.S.)
Knockout means you're down for ten.

Rahula leaves.

KEN
We've heard this before.

SAM
Sara's ruled out TKOs this time. We go for the knockout.

Cef rushes in between Aaron and Ken.

CEF
This is crazy! I'm not going to allow this.

SARA
Cef, we don't have another set of gloves.

CEF
Mom! What are you doing!

AARON
Cef, stand aside.

KEN
Hah! Unless you want me to knock you out, too?

Cef frowns at Ken, who grins and pumps his gloves.

Totally unbelieving, Cef looks at Aaron. Aaron shrugs. Cef backs off, plunks in a chair.

CEF
Unreal, totally unreal.

STEVIE
Program crashed. Time to upgrade.

SAM
You two ready?

Ken bounces up and down.

KEN
I'll crush him.

He glowers at Aaron.

AARON
Nice day.

Sam shoots a quick look at Sara, who nods.

SAM
Only way to end this silliness once
and for all. -- Stevie?

Stevie waves his camera.

STEVIE
Photoshop on.

SAM
Okay, pre-fight photo. Get ready.

Ken stands like a pro. Aaron looks at the lake.

STEVIE
One, two... Uncle Aaron, look this
way.

Aaron turns toward Stevie.

STEVIE
Three.

Aaron winks. CLICK.

STEVIE
System responding strangely.

SAM

Final fight. Winner takes the title
and that'll be it. No re-fights,
this is it. Right?

KEN

My title, finally.

Ken sneers at Aaron, who glances at the
PARKING LOT.

Rahula opens Sam and Sara's trunk.

Aaron looks back, gives Ken a stern look.

AARON

As Mom wishes.

Ken's cheek twitches.

AARON

Dawn?

Dawn pulls out a lollypop, tosses it to Cef.

CEF

Yeah, sure.

LAURA

This is ridiculous!

Cef unwraps it, pops it in his mouth.

CEF

Anything else you bozos want.

SARA

Cef!

CEF

For you, Mom.

He puts his thumb in his mouth with the lollypop.

SAM

And a photo at the end, showing the
winner, then it's clear, right?

AARON

Right.

KEN

I'm gonna teach you respect!

Aaron looks over at the lake.

KEN
You hear me?

Ken fumes.

KEN
Aaron!

Aaron turns, outstretches his arms, as if inviting a hug.

AARON
Ring the bell, Dad.

SAM
Okay. Ready.

Ken raises his gloves. Aaron stays with outstretched arms.

Unseen to Ken, Laura and Joanna, Rahula approaches, lugging a huge something underneath a tarp cover.

Stevie takes Rahula's photo. Cef pulls the lollypop out.

Sam RINGS the bell.

Ken bounces left and right. Aaron doesn't move.

KEN
What the shit are you doing?

AARON
You going to hit me or not?

KEN
Sure, come on, fight.

AARON
Hit me.

KEN
Fight!

AARON
Hit me.

Ken pauses, looks at Aaron's open body, eyes his stomach. He licks his lips, pumps his gloves.

KEN
Chicken.

AARON
Hit me, beat me, kill me.

Rahula comes within ten feet, drops the bundle, with a THUD.
Ken glances at Rahula, returns with a stare at Aaron.

KEN
Come on!

AARON
If I had known what was going to
happen when I won the fight...

Rahula pulls off the tarp, exposing Ken's mangled bike.

AARON
I would have done this then.

Ken lowers his gloves.

SARA
Ken.

Ken turns to Sara, who motions towards Rahula.

Ken looks over at the bike.

EXT. STREET - DAY - FLASHBACK

Aaron and Ken ride their bikes in the storm. A lightning bolt brightens the sky. Two seconds later, THUNDER. Aaron, 13, jumps off his bike and tries to block Ken, 15.

AARON
Kenny, get off, get off!

KEN
I'll mow you down.

AARON
Kenny!

EXT. SAM AND SARA'S COTTAGE - RETURN TO PRESENT

Ken's face hardens.

EXT. STREET - DAY - FLASHBACK

Ken veers to miss Aaron. Aaron jumps and knocks Ken down. Ken screams as his left leg crumples beneath him with a SNAP. The broken bone pierces the flesh.

KEN
Shit, ow, my leg!

EXT. SAM AND SARA'S COTTAGE - RETURN TO PRESENT

Ken charges Aaron, shoves him in the chest.

KEN
Fight me, damn it!

Aaron staggers backwards from the push, but keeps his arms outstretched. He looks over at the bike.

Ken puts his gloves to his face, covering it.

KEN
Stop it!

EXT. STREET - DAY - FLASHBACK

Aaron hurriedly drags Ken's bike away as Ken laments. Aaron races back to Ken.

A FLASH. Lightning strikes Ken's bike.

The impact bowls Aaron to the ground. The bike lies in a mangled mess.

Ken stares at it.

Aaron scrambles over to Ken who shoves him away.

KEN
Don't touch me, you shit head!

Devastated, Aaron races off.

AARON
I'll get help.

EXT. SAM AND SARA'S COTTAGE - RETURN TO PRESENT

Gloves over his face, Ken's whole body shakes.

AARON
I'm sorry I broke your leg. I'm glad you didn't die.

SARA
Kenny, I'm glad you didn't die.

Laura comes over, gives Ken a hug.

LAURA

I'm glad you didn't die.

Behind the gloves, Ken cries. His shoulders slouch.

Joanna races to Ken, gives him a hug.

JOANNA

Daddy.

Sam approaches, puts his hand on Ken's shoulder.

SAM

It's okay, Ken, it's okay.

Ken lowers his gloves, tears run down his face. He looks at Aaron, whose arms are still outstretched.

KEN

I'm glad I didn't die.

Ken hugs Aaron.

STEVIE

System update finished.

They all surround and hug Ken and Aaron.

INT. SAM AND SARA'S COTTAGE - NIGHT

Sam adjusts his camera, checks his light meter and peers into the viewfinder.

INSERT - THE PICTURE

Sara sits next to an empty chair. Below her kneel Rahula, Joanna and Stevie. Behind Sara stand Zoe, Laura, and Dawn with their partners behind them, arms encircling their waists.

Truly content, Ken smiles for the first time. He has one arm around Aaron's shoulders.

BACK TO SCENE

SAM

Nope. Off balance.

Sam grabs another chair, carries it over as everyone looks at him questioningly. Stevie, Joanna and Rahula hop up.

Sam places it next to the other empty chair. Sam turns to Rahula, sweeps his hand to the middle chair.

SAM
Rahula, sit here.

An embarrassed Rahula sits.

SAM
Joanna and Stevie sit in front of
Rahula.

They sit. Joanna slides her hand around Rahula's leg.

Sam looks into the camera, nods with satisfaction.

SAM
Perfect. Okay everyone, one, two,
three, go, smile.

Sam zooms to the empty chair. Everyone beams.

The camera CLICKS.

FADE OUT.