

FADE IN:

INT. GYM - EARLY MORNING

NIKE'S POUND on the indoor running track. Harder and faster they run.

Finally, pausing to take her pulse, MIRIAM (MIMI) ROSS (30s) walks in her cool down. Two or three other runners pass her. She nods to them.

Attractive and in great shape, she doesn't look like the corporate executive that she is. Her blond hair is swept up into a pony tail. She wears designer shorts and exudes money.

MUSCLE MAN working out with weights WHISTLES.

MUSCLE MAN

Hey, baby. Wanna pump something with me.

Mimi glares at him, but before she says anything, BEVERLY, her assistant and best friend, holds her back.

BEVERLY

He didn't mean anything.

MIMI

I don't like being called 'baby.'

BEVERLY

You're wasting your time, Mimi. You need to dump Teddy and give some decent guys a chance.

Mimi looks back toward her friend.

MIMI

You've been talking to my mother again.

(grimaces)

BEVERLY

Why do you even like the guy? He's an asshole.

MIMI

He's ambitious, strong, handsome and -- and he know me.

BEVERLY

(grimaces)

I know you, too. That doesn't mean you're in love with me.

(MORE)

BEVERLY (CONT'D)

That man has blinded you.

(sigh)

Let's hit the showers. You've got a meeting with Spencer at 9:30. And yes, he's available.

MIMI

Did I ask?

The two women head toward the showers.

INT. WOMEN'S LOCKER ROOM - SHOWERS.

Water streams over the women's heads

BEVERLY

You going to the signing tonight?

MIMI

Wouldn't miss it. I wanted Theodore to take me, but you know him, always busy when I need him. One of these days Theodore's going to want me and I'm not going to be there.

BEVERLY

One of these days, you're going to wake up and realize that he needs you more than you need him.

INT. DANIEL'S BOOKSTORE --BOOK ENDS- MORNING

DANNY TARLOW (30s) would probably win top Geek if there was a contest. Complete with taped glasses and a pocket protector, he strolls into the book shop with his paper lunch bag.

He's greeted by CLAIRE ALDER, his assistant manager, already restocking shelves.

CLAIRE

So? How'd it go last night?

DANNY

(shrugs)

How do you think?

(sighs)

Dad's right. I'm hopeless.

CLAIRE

A hopeless romantic.

GOLDIE, a brindle cat walks across the desk where Danny has seated himself. He reached out to pet her.

DANNY

If I get set me up with another blind date, I'm going to join the church and become a priest.

(both laugh)

I'm beginning to think that Goldie is going to be my only love.

The cat PURRS and rubs her head against Danny's hand.

CLAIRE

Here.

She holds out the new issue of Playboy.

He glances at the cover, but doesn't pick it up.

DANNY

You think I'd want that kind of girl?

CLAIRE

(laughs)

Check out the advisor. It couldn't hurt.

He shakes his head puts the issue on the far side of his desk. He picks up Dickens *Oliver Twist*.

DANNY

This is what I'm going to read at the school tonight.

The phone RINGS. Danny picks it up.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Book Ends---

(dejected)

Oh. Hi, Dad. Nope. Struck out again.

INT. BOARD ROOM OF SILVERSTONE PUBLISHING - MORNING

Totally transformed from this morning, Mimi sits at the head of the table. Her hair is up in a tight bun and she wears a black power suit and Prada glasses.

Beverly sits behind her, taking notes.

It's clear from the posters and displays that this is a multimedia publishing house. Members of the board are seated around the table.

Among the board members at the table is THEODORE J. MCGRATH, a smooth as silk, slick marketing manager and other board

members, including LAWRENCE PINKTON, a clear copy cat of Theodore.

MIMI

All right. Let's get down to business. American Publishing has made an offer to buy our company. If this were to happen Silverstone Publishing would cease to exist.

She gives Theodore a meaningful look.

THEODORE

It makes financial sense.

BOARD MEMBER #1

All they want is our rights and our authors.

MIMI

We have an obligation to protect our employees. We are running a profitable company. There is no reason to merge. They need us a lot more than we need them.

LAWRENCE

Yes, but look at the amount of money we'd make by the sale. I'm in favor of this merger.

THEODORE

On the other hand, we do need to consider the fate of the employees. You're right as usual, Mimi.

Lawrence gives Theodore a questioning glance.

Another man clears his throat to speak when the board room door opens. JUANITA FLORES, the receptionist, discretely steps inside and whispers in Beverly's ear.

Beverly picks up a phone in the corner. She listens a moment and then motions Mimi forward to take the phone.

MIMI

Excuse me, Gentlemen --

Theodore discretely taps Juanita's butt. She flushes, but turns quickly away from him and leaves the room.

Mimi, listening on the phone, frowns. Then she addresses the board.

MIMI (CONT'D)
We'll have to finish this later.
Beverly will reschedule.

INT. N'SHAMA NURSING HOME - DAY

Mimi sits at the bedside of an elderly ESTHER ROSENBERG (late 60s) holding her fragile hand.

MIMI
Are you in a lot of pain, Mom?

ESTHER
(brave smile)
Not much.

MIMI
What did the Doctor say?

ESTHER
He said what he always says. That
daughter of yours is some looker.

MIMI
Mother! What did he say about you?

ESTHER
Eh. What can he say?
(shrugs)
It's check out time.

MIMI
No. Not yet. The Doctor wants to
run some more tests at the hospital.

ESTHER
I'm tired of all these tests. Can't
they give me a quiz once in a while.
(pause)
So what's new with you and what's
his name?

MIMI
It's Theodore, Mother. Yes, mother,
I know. All you want me to be is
happy.
(pulls away slightly)

ESTHER
But are you happy? Maybe a Doctor?
A nice Jewish Doctor.

Mimi frowns.

Esther's doctor, a dark skinned Indian, walks by the door way. He waves at them. Esther smiles and waves back. She looks back at her daughter.

MIMI
Mom, he's from India.

ESTHER
So, they have Jews there.

MIMI
Enough.

Esther motions for her purse and takes out a card. She hands it to her daughter.

Mimi looks at it and grimaces.

MIMI (CONT'D)
My God, Mother, a Shotkin? This isn't Fiddler on the Roof. I don't need a matchmaker.

ESTHER
Couldn't hurt. Sarah's granddaughter went to her. She's married a doctor.

MIMI
He's not a doctor. He's a lawyer.

ESTHER
So...o? Mrs. Hirsch will find you someone just right for you.

She attempts to give her mother back the card.

Esther shakes her head and pushes the card away.

ESTHER (CONT'D)
Tic Tock, Tic Tock.

MIMI
Fine.

Mimi stuffs the card into her purse.

INT. THEODORE'S OFFICE - DAY

Opulently appointed in contrast to the starkness of Mimi's office, Theodore stands at his window, a glass of cognac in his hand as the door opens.

Juanita comes in carrying a case.

THEODORE

You have the files on all the board members?

JUANITA

Have I ever failed you?

He turns and smiles at her.

THEODORE

No, my darling, you never have.

JUANITA

Remember, you promised that I'll be part of your new team.

THEODORE

You should know by now that I keep my promises.

JUANITA

I know, but --

THEODORE

Once the merger goes through, you will get your just reward.

JUANITA

But I thought --

THEODORE

Are you with me?

JUANITA

You never have to doubt my love.

He touches her cheek tenderly. Then kisses her passionately and locks the door with his free hand.

INT. BARNES AND NOBEL TYPE BOOKSTORE - NIGHT

Mimi is dressed to the T as she hands her wrap to the coat clerk.

There are patrons waiting in line.

Beverly comes up with two glasses of white wine.

BEVERLY

So, Teddy didn't make it, did he?
You look fab.

MIMI

(shrugs nonchalantly)
He said maybe later. And don't call
him Teddy. You know how he hates
it.

She takes a glass from her assistant.

BEVERLY

I know.
(grins)
Don't be like that. Let's have some
fun.
(grabs Mimi's hand)
I want you to meet the author. You
loved his book. You're going to
love him, too.
(pulls Mimi along)

INT. DANIEL'S BOOKSTORE - NIGHT

Danny is tidying up and returning a few books to their proper
shelves.

CLAIRE

You got plans for the night?

DANNY

(wryly)
Yeah. Goldie and I are going to
curl up with popcorn and watch
Casablanca.

CLAIRE

How many times have you seen it?

DANNY

Three times this month, but whose
counting.

CLAIRE

You're never going to find anyone by
moping around the house.

DANNY

What's the use? I'm never going to
find anyone. Period.

His cell phone RINGS. Danny picks it up.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Hi, D-- Oh, hi Ray. Is everything
all right?... No. No. I'll meet
you at the hospital.

He hangs up.

DANNY (CONT'D)
My dad's had a heart attack.

INT. HOSPITAL ER- NIGHT

CHARLIE TARLOW (late 60s) an ashen faced man. His good looks are evident even now. An IV drips into one arm; an EKG monitor BEEPS overhead. He's weak. His eyes are closed.

Danny comes in to find his openly gay younger brother, RAYMOND, sitting with their father. Raymond is Clark Gable handsome, but very effeminate. He has everything but the swish.

RAYMOND
They're waiting for a bed in ICU.
Doctor's not sure if he'll make it.

Charlie's eyes fly open.

CHARLIE
Of course I'll make it. I'm healthy
as a horse. Besides it's just
indigestion.
(to Danny)
You think I'd leave before I danced
at your wedding?

DANNY
Dad...

CHARLIE
(shakes his head)
How two brothers could be so
different.

RAYMOND
Pops, don't bug Danny about that
now.

CHARLIE
Thirty years old and not even a
girlfriend. You, at least, have a
boyfriend.

DANNY
Dad--I'm fine.

CHARLIE
A J Date reject no less and he says
he's fine. What am I going to do
with you?

INT. BARNES AND NOBLE - LATER

Mimi is laughing and talking with some of the guests.

For a moment, the conversation stops as all eyes turn toward the door where the handsome Theodore McGrath and his companion, a Playboy playmate, walk in.

Mimi grips the glass in her hand so tightly that the stem almost breaks.

BEVERLY

You okay?

Mimi nods as she chugs her drink and picks up another.

He quickly separates from the girl and comes over to Mimi, holding out his hands.

THEODORE

My cousin's in town so I brought her. I'm sorry. I forgot to ask you.

MIMI

Oh. Your cousin. That's okay. Theodore, I--

He looks into her eyes and kisses her hand. She is mesmerized.

Her RINGING cell phone startles her.

INT. N'SHAMA NURSING HOME - LATER

Mimi stands over the still body that was her mother. She's still in her evening gown. Tears stream down her eyes.

MIMI

I should have been here.

NURSE

You couldn't have known, Miss Ross. None of us could have predicted it. She seemed okay this afternoon. It happened so fast. I only hope I go that way.

Mimi goes to touch the cold hand.

MIMI

Oh, Mommy.

INT. HOSPITAL ER- NIGHT

Danny and Raymond pace in the ER lobby as they wait for the doctors to bring them news.

DOCTOR SANCHEZ comes through the swinging doors.

DOCTOR
I'm sorry. We did all we could.

DANNY
He's gone?

Tears are in his eyes. Raymond puts his arm around his older brother's shoulders.

INT. HEAVENLY BUS - DAY

The tram bus is filled with the newly departed.

Charlie sits on an aisle seat. He stares straight ahead.

Next to him, still not quite awake and resting her head on his shoulder is Esther.

There is a jostling. Esther wakes with a start and looks around.

ESTHER
Where am I?

CHARLIE
Where do you think you are, Old Woman?

ESTHER
This coming from an alta cocker?

She looks around the bus.

ESTHER (CONT'D)
So we're all --

CHARLIE
(nods)
You got it.

ESTHER
But --

CHARLIE
You think I have any more answers than you?

She looks down at his hands. No ring.

ESTHER
You were married?

CHARLIE
Sure I was married. Biggest mistake
of my life, but I got two great
boys. See?

He points down and Esther looks out the window.

INT. HOSPITAL ER- NIGHT

Raymond comforting Danny.

INT. HEAVENLY BUS - CONTINUOUS

Esther looks back at Charlie.

ESTHER
They married?

CHARLIE
One is...sort of. Raymond and his
boyfriend call it a life partnership.

ESTHER
Oy.

CHARLIE
Danny on the other hand--
(shrugs)

ESTHER
Join the club.

She points down and Charlie leans over to look out the window.

INT. N'SHAMA NURSING HOME - CONTINUOUS

A sad eyed Mimi is packing up her mother's things.

CHARLIE (O.S.)
A real looker.

INT. HEAVENLY BUS - CONTINUOUS

Charlie turns to Esther.

CHARLIE
You think a girl like her would be
married ten times over.

ESTHER
From your mouth to God's ear.
(MORE)

ESTHER (CONT'D)

(mimicking)

This one's too fat; that one's too skinny.

(throws hands up)

Who knows what she wants.

CHARLIE

You think maybe --

Esther glances down again.

ESTHER

Are you mushugee?

CHARLIE

Why not? Danny's a mench. A good boy. Good job. Owns his own bookstore. He even volunteers at the schools. And he's Jewish. What more could a girl ask for?

INT. SCHOOL CLASSROOM - AFTERNOON

Danny sits surrounded by a class of kids, obviously reading to them.

INT. HEAVENLY BUS - CONTINUOUS

Esther turns back to Charlie.

ESTHER

Mimi likes kids, too.

(sigh)

But no. She likes powerful, successful men.

CHARLIE

So. What powerful men has she dated recently?

Esther looks uncomfortable.

ESTHER

Well, there's this Theodore fellow, but he's a schmuck. Anyway, she's not going to go for a bookstore clerk.

CHARLIE

Ha! You think Danny can't hold his own. A good man beats a schmuck any day.

ESTHER

The men Mimi goes for have schmaltz.

CHARLIE

You want she should have chicken
fat?

Charlie sighs.

The bus stops.

VOICE (O.S.)

The cloud zone is for loading and
unloading of passengers only

The passengers start to file out. Being a gentleman, Charlie offers his hand to Esther and allows her to go first. She nods her thanks.