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The Lovers of Cealg

(Drama)

by
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CHARACTER NAME	BRIEF DESCRIPTION	AGE	GENDER
Ted Cealg	Cealg is pronounced <i>See-alg</i> .	31	Male
Natalie Banks		52	Female
Claire Ruiz		33	Female
Abigail Montes		31	Female
Amy Sanders		30	Female
Troy Beckman		25	Male
Eduardo Castillo		40	Male
Lily Flores		25	Female
Maria Sandoval		50	Female
Neal Scott		40	Male
Brian Cealg	Cealg is pronounced <i>See-alg</i> .	43	Male

ACT 1

SCENE ONE

Enter EDUARDO CASTILLO, the eccentric host of "Midnight talks" whose guest tonight, the famous Ted Cealg

EDUARDO

Ladies and gentlemen, my guest tonight is the star of the upcoming movie *The Jester's Plight* and everyone's favorite little Irishman: please welcome Ted Cealg!

Audience cheers. Enter TED CEALG. Ted goes to shake hands with the audience before sitting down.

EDUARDO

(Extends for a handshake)

Mr. Cealg! Take a seat my friend!

Ted shakes Eduardo's hand as both take their seat.

EDUARDO

How are you Ted?

TED

Oh, just lovely. I slept like a baby on the flight over here and had this surreal dream that I was locked in a room and it was flooding! Not the wet dream I usually like.

EDUARDO

Gross. But you made it!

TED

Which is always a plus! Hey, really digging what you are doing with your hair.

EDUARDO

Thank you.

TED

Fellas! Pro tip, if you want people to like you right off the bat get yourself a good haircut. Society agrees that good haircuts make for good relationships.

EDUARDO

Where did you read that?

TED

Off this Snapple cap I got from your fridge.

EDUARDO

Well, isn't that convenient? Question. How long has it been since you went and visited your homeland?

TED

Ireland? It's been quite some time, and I've been so busy that I don't think I'll be able to visit for a while.

EDUARDO

That's a shame, isn't your dad still living out in Ireland? You mentioned it before last time you were on the show.

TED

I mean, I can always call him. I'm sure he's fine.

EDUARDO

Just sure?

TED

He's alive so I'm thinking he is fine. If he's not then I'll get back to you on that.

EDUARDO

Please do. Your new movie, *The Jester's Plight*, what can you tell us about it?

TED

It's about a clown named Jerry who falls in love with a beautiful woman. But he's a quiet guy so he can't bring himself to tell her about his feelings since he's worried she'll reject him for being... well a clown.

EDUARDO

I can relate to that. Not much women dig clowns and who bigger a clown than myself?

TED

Aw, c'mon lad don't put yerself down like that.

EDUARDO

I know, that joke never lands with my therapist either. Let me ask you though Ted, you are playing a character who's timid and quiet but I know that's not who you are. So how can you relate to Jerry? I'm sure you've never been shot down before.

TED

Oh yes I have, who hasn't?

EDUARDO

Really? Then don't tease, care to share a story with us Ted?

TED

Sure. There was this gal back in college I knew from an English class. Fell for her pretty hard.

Lights dim on Eduardo.

The setting changes from a talk show stage to a street with dim powered street lights. Enter ABIGAIL MONTES, Ted's first love.

TED

Abigail! Thank you for coming! How are ya?

ABIGAIL

I'm ok Ted. Are you ok?

TED

I'm good. I'm good. Well, I'm actually just ok. But I'm good!

A bit of awkward tension as Ted is clearly nervous.

ABIGAIL

Well?

TED

Well?

ABIGAIL

Ted. You called me to meet up.

TED

I did, I did. Sorry to be a bit nervous here. I've... I've never done something like this. But...

ABIGAIL

Yeah?

TED

Look. I'm sure you know this. But I think I have a crush on you.

ABIGAIL

You think?

TED

Well actually I know I have a crush on you. I like you. A lot. You're always on my mind. If I seem awkward lately it's because I really hate this Greg guy you're dating. I mean, I don't meant to sound dramatic but every time I hear that guy's name my blood just boils. And it's just -

ABIGAIL

Ted. I know you like me. You made that pretty obvious. I'm sorry though, I just don't feel the same.

TED

Ok, fair enough. Do you think there's ever going to be a chance that you may ever feel the same.

ABIGAIL

I'm not really sure on how to answer that. I'm with Greg right now and at this moment I don't think I'll feel the same as you do. I'm sorry.

TED

All good. Read ya loud and clear.

ABIGAIL

You ok?

TED

Yeah. This isn't easy for me. To be honest, you're the first person I've ever confessed feelings for.

ABIGAIL

Oh?

TED

Yeah. See I just know how I feel everything is wonderful when I'm around you. I wish -

ABIGAIL

That's really sweet and all Ted. It's just that -

TED

I know, I know. I just needed to get that off my chest.

Exit Abigail. Lights return on Eduardo as we return to the talk show stage.

EDUARDO

Ted, we've got a time limit here buddy. Anyways! Love, romance, premarital sex! Your character may have trouble with that kind of stuff but does Ted Cealg have those same kind of issues.

TED

Well you know Ed, and this will come off as a bit of a shock, but I don't have much trouble picking up the ladies anymore. This will sound a wee bit conceited but when you have some name recognition going for ya, people tend to find you interesting right away. Money also helps.

EDUARDO

Well dang. I must have missed the memo cause I still am not getting lucky.

TED

Aren't you married?

EDUARDO

Yeah that tends to turn most women off for some strange reason. Speaking of turn offs, my producers wanted me to ask you about some big donations you've made recently. Care to share?

TED

Sure. I recently donated money into *Silence Breakers* who bring awareness to domestic violence by giving the victims a real voice where they are believed.

I've unfortunately known some women who've had abusive partners so it's a topic that tends to hit home for me. But those kind of stories will be left to be said in my autobiography one day.

EDUARDO

Oh, working on an autobiography?

TED

Heavens no. Nothing like that in the works. My life isn't that interesting to read about.

EDUARDO

You never know friend, maybe someone out there has a story to tell about you.

TED

Maybe.

EDUARDO

Silence Breakers have a big following on social media with activists who have a whole lot of followers on platforms like Twitter and Instagram. Some of them being Regina Reynolds and Amy Sanders. Were they the ones who brought helped you find out about *Silence Breakers*?

TED

I'm sorry, Amy Sanders?

EDUARDO

Yeah she's a big advocate on their behalf. You two never met or talked before?

TED

Um, we might have sure. Just not ringing any bells in me old noggin.

EDUARDO

You at least know Regina since she thanked you publicly on Twitter for the donations. Thanks for making us other guys look bad.

TED

(jokingly puts his arms in the air)

It was never my intention to do that. Not trying to besmirch anyone.

EDUARDO

Well I can't blame you for that. Not all of it at least. If I can change the topic though, I'm sure you've seen all the stories about people in our industry who have been exposed as sexual predators and people who abuse their position of power. It's changed the way people have looked at Hollywood. With all due respect, you are still relatively new to this town so what are your thoughts when you hear these kind of stories?

TED

You're right, I'm still the new kid in town. I can't speak on everyone else per se, but I can speak on myself. I know who I am. I've made mistakes along the way but who hasn't? But the mistakes I have made are not the same kind of mistakes those men have made. My mistakes haven't gotten anyone hurt. So to answer the question you were really trying to ask me, I don't have any skeletons in my closet that people need to be worried about.

EDUARDO

Well that's good to know. You're a lovely guy and I'd hate to hear something like that about you.

TED

Don't fret, put yer heart at ease. This man's nose is clean.

CLAIRE RUIZ, Ted's first lover, speaks up.

CLAIRE
(offstage)

Lies!

EDUARDO

That's good! Otherwise I'd have to break up with you tonight.

TED

No one is perfect obviously. I've made mistakes but I would never hurt anybody.

AMY SANDERS, Ted's last lover, speaks up.

AMY
(offstage)

Lies!

TED

I am no saint. But I at least strive to be an honest man.

Abigail speaks up.

ABIGAIL

(offstage)

Lies!

EDUARDO

Good to hear there are still good guys like you out there. Ladies and gentlemen, Ted Cealg!

They shake hands as the audience applauds.

Lights dim. Ted and Eduardo exit.

SCENE TWO

Enter Abigail, Claire, and Amy

*They enter a dark stage with lights only
shining on them.*

CLAIRE

I loved Ted.

ABIGAIL

I still love Ted.

AMY

I never loved Ted.

CLAIRE

I should have never let my guard down around him.

ABIGAIL

There has never been anyone like Ted before.

AMY

Ted hurt me in a way no one else ever has.

CLAIRE

He told me he got lost in my eyes.

ABIGAIL

He told me all the things I wanted to hear. Things I never heard from anyone before Ted.

AMY

I thought Ted loved me in a way no other man would ever feel.

CLAIRE

Then he started to change... or maybe he was just revealing his true self.

ABIGAIL

When I thought we could be something more, he changed.

AMY

He knew I wanted more , so he took it all away.

CLAIRE

He had this dumb catchphrase.

ABIGAIL

That stupid thing he'd always say.

AMY

Those words...

Enter Ted.

TED

You're one of a kind darling, the kind for me.

Ted exits.

CLAIRE

I should have been smarter around him.

ABIGAIL

I never thought I would date a man like him.

AMY

He had this way to eventually break you down.

CLAIRE

It started out as a mutual crush. Then when it evolved it became love but then came the hurt.

ABIGAIL

At first, I didn't feel the same for him as he did for me. When he changed my mind, I thought he was the one. He knew it was all a game to win me over. After he got what he wanted, he tossed me to the side.

AMY

He was my boss before he was a celebrity. He knew I was fresh off a breakup and took advantage of where I was.

CLAIRE

A part of me thinks I liked him because he was Irish.

ABIGAIL

Never saw myself with an Irishman.

AMY

I was told to never date an Irishman.

CLAIRE

The thing about Ted is he can somehow get you to talk about yourself without you realizing it.

ABIGAIL

He'd ask questions and you wouldn't think twice about whether you should answer them or not.

AMY

Ted wants to know little things about you. He saw us like a puzzle so when he had it solved, he knew what he needed to say to get what he wanted.

CLAIRE

He saw me as a challenge.

ABIGAIL

He saw me as a conquest.

AMY

He saw me as his object.

CLAIRE

I was Ted's lover.

ABIGAIL

I was Ted's lover.

AMY

I was Ted's lover.

ABIGAIL

He said I was his first love.

CLAIRE

He said I was better than his first love.

AMY

He said he didn't want anything like his first love.

The three women exit.

SCENE THREE

Enter Ted and his agent, NATALIE BANKS. They talk in a dimly lit backstage after Ted's interview.

NATALIE

Alright, time to head back to LA. Very good performance by the way.

TED

Really? I thought it was a little stiff.

NATALIE

You were fantastic. Distancing yourself from those scandals was a nice touch.

TED

I was only being honest.

NATALIE

I certainly hope so.

TED

You hope so?

NATALIE

Do you know Claire Ruiz? She's a reporter from *The SoCal Times*.

TED

Dated a Claire back in the day but it was nothing serious. I'm sure they are different people if that's what you are asking.

NATALIE

I'm sure they are the same person.

TED

Did she mention we dated?

NATALIE

No but I'm one hundred percent sure you two dated before. She reached out to me and started asking me questions.

TED

What kind of questions?

NATALIE

The troubling kind.

TED

Like?

NATALIE

Past relationships but not sure what she was trying to figure out exactly.

TED

Let her ask away. Even if it's the same Claire, there's nothing to hide. I'm sure she's just trying to find a story where there isn't one to be found.

NATALIE

You better hope so.

TED

Well you're the agent Natalie. If she has anything damaging I'd hope you and the publicist I'm paying an arm and a leg for can take care of this.

NATALIE

Your publicist just returned from rehab so he's a little behind on things. But he's hired his PI to look into Claire. I'll be keeping you updated.

TED

I'm sure there isn't anything worth talking about. It's probably a slow news week or something. But if you're worried that there is a scandal coming our way, don't be. I did nothing back then that's worth talking about.

NATALIE

Ted. I can easily make Claire and whatever other little girlfriends from your past look like lying opportunists. This is Hollywood. Scandals die off. Hollywood folk make an apology, tear up, and one week later people take their pitchforks elsewhere.

TED

Good, then nothing to be worried about. Random question by the way, but did anyone from *Silence Breakers* try and reach out to me?

NATALIE

Just little shout outs on social media. Why?

TED

I just wanted to know who'd be giving me my boy scout medal for donating money to them.

NATALIE

Ok then, I'll be seeing you tomorrow. Got a lunch appointment. I'll keep you posted about that reporter Claire.

TED

If it's the same Claire, then I'm sure she just wants to talk. Nothing major.

Natalie exits.

Ted takes a moment to reminisce. Enter Claire as the setting is changed to a late night picnic at a park. Claire unfurls a blanket and both her and Ted take a seat, locking hands. They begin to stargaze.

TED

Beautiful night.

CLAIRE

Feels the same as any other night.

TED

Not with you.

CLAIRE

Ted...

TED

I know I know, another cheesy line from Ted.

CLAIRE

Expect that from a theater kid. So... you are serious about wanting to be an actor?

TED

Course! Feel like this Hollywood place could use more Irish love.

CLAIRE

You really think you're going to make it big? I mean Hollywood is a big place with a lot of people who spend years and years -

TED

(playfully)

You doubt me?

CLAIRE

Not necessarily.

TED

Which means you kinda do.

CLAIRE

I don't know. I can't predict the future but I have hope for you. I've met a lot of people in my life Ted, no one quite like you. Truth be told, when we first met in college I thought you were just a loud mouth but now I find such a sweet soul underneath.

TED

That's sweet of ya Claire bear, kind of.

CLAIRE

Can I ask you something. And I know it's going to be make things weird and kill the mood.

TED

Go for it.

CLAIRE

What exactly happened between you and Abigail?

TED

Oh that... Was wondering when we were going to have this talk. To answer your question, nothing serious. I had feelings for her but she didn't feel the same. After that... I don't know we just stopped talking to one another.

CLAIRE

You guys haven't talked at all?

TED

No, why?

CLAIRE

Well... I don't know how to ask this without sounding paranoid -

TED

Claire, I promise I haven't talked to her. Why would I when I have you? You're all I want.

CLAIRE

I know, but maybe you should look for someone else. I'm still not sure what I want. At the same time I don't want to see you with someone else. But then I know that's me being hypocritical and I tell myself "Oh my god Claire why are you like this?" Which I know makes me sound crazy and selfish but -

TED

Claire! You are nothing like that at all. I swear to you, I'm not talking to anybody else. I don't want Abigail though, I want you.

CLAIRE

Ted, why do you like me?

TED

Simple, you're genuine and talking to you I find myself so captivated by you that the world could burn around us and it would fall on deaf ears. You're smart, gorgeous, and most of all you're caring. Do you remember that time I forgot where I parked my car and we looked all over for it? I was getting really worked up because we looked everywhere and I started to think it may have been stolen. But before I could even catch my breath, you took me by the hand and pulled me into your arms. I didn't want you to ever let go. I don't feel embarrassed for saying any this, no matter how corny it all sounds. Truth is, I think I was in love with Abigail and when she turned me down, I thought I would never meet anyone who would make me feel the same ever again. That is, until I met you. You're one of a kind darling, the kind for me.

There is a moment of silence as both take in what was said. Then, Claire embraces Ted and both share a passionate kiss. The stage dims.

SCENE FOUR

Enter Natalie as the scene changes to her office, which is depressing to look at.

NATALIE

(on the phone)

Oh sweetie, I am so sorry! But you know, I never trusted that Louie. He knew what he was doing. That's the good thing about all of this though. Men like him are getting called out for their deviance. We gals finally have our voices heard.

Enter NEAL SCOTT, Ted's publicist.

NATALIE

Sweetie, I hate to cut this short but I have to go. Got an important appointment right now. I'll call you back.

Natalie puts away her phone.

NATALIE

Hello Neal. Did you find any dirt on the reporter?

NEAL

Nothing that will make the story less believable.

NATALIE

It's bad?

NEAL

It's bad. Looks like it'll get worse too. We got a ticking time bomb on our hands.

NATALIE

How so?

NEAL

Well for starters, you have the reporter writing a tell all on Ted. Who's an ex lover of his. The reporter is in touch with an activist who has a large social media following. She's also an ex lover of Teds. Then they both have a lawyer who will represent them in court and possibly bring up charges against Ted. And lo and behold, the lawyer is another ex lover of Teds.

NATALIE

A reporter, lawyer, and an activist. All we need is a fourth horesmen to complete this PR apocalypse. Jesus...

NEAL

The PI could only dig up so much right now. To be honest, nothing we have found will mitigate the scandal coming our way.

NATALIE

Screw it and screw them! We'll face them head on. The last woman who tried to call out Ted had her life ruined. We made sure of that.

NEAL

We'd have to act fast then.

NATALIE

Who's the lawyer?

NEAL

Abigail Montes.

NATALIE

And the activist?

NEAL

Amy Sanders.

NATALIE

The one from *Silence Breakers*?

NEAL

From what I could gather, she's the one who first stepped up and rallied the other two on coming out with their stories.

NATALIE

That's why he asked about her. Little twerp probably saw this coming once he heard she was involved with *Silence Breakers* and kept that a secret from me.

NEAL

Why would he keep a secret like that from you?

NATALIE

Because I have a vagina and he doesn't trust people with vaginas. Idiot. But, he's my little piggy bank and I got my fingerprints all over him so we need to bury this quickly.

NEAL

I'll help you plant fake accusers if you intend on facing this head on. But my professional advice for this situation is to honestly cut Ted loose.

NATALIE

Why break the piggy bank over this, Neal? This is America! From Hollywood to Washington this kind of crap happens all the time. This is a mild scandal compared to all the other shit being brought to the light.

NEAL

I'm just saying.

NATALIE

Noted. You worry too much though, we'll come out on top. I always do.

Both exit as the stage dims.

SCENE FIVE

Enter Abigail and LILY FLORES, Abigail's assistant. The scene has changed to Abigail's office which isn't shy of showing Abigail's accomplishments.

LILY

Miss Montes, Claire Ruiz is here.

ABIGAIL

Ok, did you offer her some coffee?

LILY

No...

ABIGAIL

Get her some coffee.

LILY

Oh, ok. Apologies.

ABIGAIL

Lily!

LILY

Miss?

ABIGAIL

What did I tell you about apologizing over everything?

LILY

Oh my... my bad?

ABIGAIL

It's fine. Go get Claire some coffee. I just have to make a call real quick.

LILY

Yes, Miss Montes.

ABIGAIL

You're doing a great job.

Abigail then snaps her fingers.

ABIGAIL

Go away now!

Lily quickly exits as Abigail pulls out her phone. She's left on voicemail.

ABIGAIL

Hello Natalie Banks, this is Abigail Montes from Fisher Associates regarding Ted Cealg. As you know, one of my clients is publishing a story on one of your clients, Ted Cealg. Let's talk soon.

Abigail hangs up.

ABIGAIL

Lily, please send Claire in.

Claire enters, holding documents.

CLAIRE

Hello Abigail! Long time no see, it's been a few months since our last lunch.

ABIGAIL

Claire! You look good.

CLAIRE

Really? I've been stressed out of my mind. Been up all night working on the story and interviewed some people that I didn't even know were involved in this crazy mess. I've been having to go from point A to point B to point Z and then back to point B.

ABIGAIL

Uh-huh... Where's your coffee?

CLAIRE

Drank it up. It's good coffee by the way.

ABIGAIL

You drank it all of it already? You really are stressed.

CLAIRE

I'm a lot of things right now. My editor is saying it's risking to publish a story like this. My job is on the line if even one thing in this story turns out wrong. So I've been super, super, and super stressed. And to be honest with ya , this whole thing is making me revisit old memories.

The lights dim on Abigail as we revisit Claire's old memory. It's late in the night, Claire waits in her apartment for Ted to arrive. He walks in, albeit annoyed.

TED

What's this about Claire?

CLAIRE

I talked to Abigail.

TED

Oh? And how is she doing?

CLAIRE

Stop.

TED

Stop?

CLAIRE

Stop.

TED

We playing Simon Says?

CLAIRE

You lied to me?

TED

So I came up in the conversation then?

CLAIRE

After everything you told me. After all the times I felt like shit for making it seem like it was my own fault for not being able to trust you.

TED

Still true by the way, you still made it impossible to gain your trust after all I've done for you.

CLAIRE

Are you serious? This is all my fault? I can't believe half the shit that comes out of your mouth you lying piece of crap!

TED

You got me then, Claire! I am still talking to Abigail.

CLAIRE

Finally you're being honest! Should have called you out on this months ago. I should have told Abigail how much of a liar you are.

TED

Tell her then! Go ahead! Tell her so she sees what I mean when I say you get paranoid and hurt us! Tell her all your little paranoia about me cheating -

CLAIRE

It's not paranoia. Stop making me think I'm going insane when you are cheating on me!

TED

You really believe that?

CLAIRE

I know that!

TED

You really think I would cheat on you?! After everything we've -

CLAIRE

Enough, Ted! I can't trust you so why would I ever believe you'd be honest with me?

The arguing stops as Ted fumes and slowly approaches Claire. Claire takes a few steps back to keep a small distance between her and Ted.

TED

You know I understand why you don't have many friends Claire. It amazes me ya still have the few now. And honest to god still surprised how the very little friends you have haven't had enough of your shit because you can be such a bitch.

No words are said for a moment. There is no regret in Ted. Claire breaks the silence.

CLAIRE

We're done. We are done Ted. Leave.

Ted doesn't argue, doesn't beg for forgiveness or even pretend to be sorry. He simply leaves.

We return to the present where the lights return on Abigail.

ABIGAIL

Claire?

CLAIRE

Sorry. I zoned out for a bit. I was thinking about a bunch of stuff and one thing led to another and I'm a different thought then I was and then... blah.

ABIGAIL

No kidding. Did you bring what I asked for?

CLAIRE

Yup, got it all right here. I also found some extra stuff in case you needed them or maybe it will help. But I'm sure you'll tell me if you need them or not.

Claire hands Abigail the documents.

ABIGAIL

Thank you. How's Amy?

CLAIRE

She's nervous. I remember seeing how livid she was after seeing Ted's donation. I'm sure this isn't easy for her to deal with.

ABIGAIL

I know. This was never going to be easy. I'm seeing Amy soon so I'll talk with her and see how she is doing.

CLAIRE

Good. That's good. You know Amy always needs a good pep talk from time to time. I think we all do. I know I'm not Amy's mom or anything though but she's really matured since we met her. It's a miracle we all -

ABIGAIL

Claire.

CLAIRE

Yes?

ABIGAIL

It's ok if you're scared.

CLAIRE

You know, I thought I wouldn't be. With all of this, I might have to see him again. After the hell he put me through. I remember the first email I got, the graphic photos from some man I never met. A man who saw private photos of me. Then I remember the next email. Then the next one. Then the phone calls. I knew Ted doxxed me. This was him punishing me. I often would fantasize about the day I would make him regret all the pain he caused me. I'd say "Claire, you'll make him pay one day! He'll get what he deserves!" And I thought about how I'd make his life as miserable as he made mine. Then the thought creeps in, what if he tries to find me? What if he still has that power over me? I'm still scared of him, Abigail.

*As Claire begins to sob, Abigail goes over to
hug her.*

Lights dim.

SCENE SIX

Natalie has given her office to Neal and Ted so they could have somewhere to talk. Neal has his notepad and is taking notes.

NEAL

So you're saying Claire has a habit of blowing things out of proportion?

TED

Yeah. She had this paranoia that I was talking to other people. She got unhinged by the end of the relationship so I called things off before it got nasty. I saw that our relationship was hurting her. Unfortunately, her suspicions did turn out to be right. Abigail and I did end up dating.

NEAL

The lawyer. The one who rejected you at first?

TED

Correct.

NEAL

Ok. How about your relationship with Amy Sanders?

TED

Oof... was not looking forward to this one. This one is admittedly more murk. I was her supervisor back when I worked retail. When my relationship with Abigail took a sour turn, I cheated on Abigail with Amy. After Abigail and I were officially through, Amy and I started to see each other more often. We were friends with benefits but I think she wanted more. Problem was, I was her boss at the time. But I made it clear to Amy that if she ever felt uncomfortable at any point, then she should report me to HR. Since nothing bad ever happened though, it never escalated to that. We ended things on mutual terms. It was mostly fun between us.

The lights dim on Neal as we go back to Ted's time as Amy's supervisor. Amy enters after closing the store.

AMY

And we are closed.

TED

Thank the lord almighty. Lisa told me it's about to be your three month anniversary with us. Congrats Amy, I'm sure it's been nothing but fun for you.

AMY

(sarcastically)

Oh, just fun times Ted. Especially with you.

TED

Aw, you love me las don't pretend not to.

Ted reaches into his pocket and pulls out a gift card.

TED

For you.

AMY

(takes the gift card)

Well this is nice of you.

TED

Yeah, on my lunch I walked down to that vegan restaurant you usually go to. Figured I could save you a little bit of money. Since you're a fan of greens and all.

AMY

You didn't have to do that, you know.

TED

No worries. Just seeing your smile makes it all worthwhile.

AMY

Oh, so you like my smile?

TED

(changes the topic)

It's getting late. We should get going.

AMY

It's not that late. We could grab a drink somewhere if you'd like? I figured I should ask, because if I wait any longer you might never ask me.

TED

After all the customers we had today, drinks sound really nice right now.

AMY

I thought you were about to blow a gasket with the last customer we had.

TED

Almost. But you kept me sane.

AMY

(playfully)

Stop.

TED

It's true. You've got this thing about you that I can't quite figure out. Maybe it's because I know, I've never met a woman like you before.

Ted gently takes her hand.

TED

You're one of a kind darling, the kind for me.

Ted grabs Amy and passionately kisses her. After they finish, Amy reciprocates it by going in for a second kiss. She teasingly makes her exit after they finish.

As we return to the present, Ted returns to where he was before and Neal has finished taking the notes from Ted's story.

NEAL

You're being honest with me, right? That way I know what I'm dealing with.

TED

I am being honest.

NEAL

Okay. If you say so Ted. You pay me to believe you.

TED

Good. Remember that I call the shots around here, not Natalie.

NEAL

Sure, Ted. Take my advice though, lawyer up. The law firm Abigail works for aren't exactly known to be a bunch of pushovers. Be ready for the shit storm coming your way.

TED

I know Abigail and I know she's got nothing on me. I'm sure she's still mad about how things ended up between us and you know what? She has a right to be mad. But no man is perfect. She can't put me on trial for that otherwise we'd all be on trial.

NEAL

Isn't that the truth? She works for *Fisher Associates* in case you need to make a phone call or two to help soften the blow. But be smart, not angry. Don't piss off a lawyer.

TED

I'll be fine. Trust me, Abigail is softer than she puts on.

Neal finishes up his notes and make his exit.

Ted takes a seat at Natalie's desk. He takes out his phone to make a phone call. After a few seconds, he's left on voicemail. Ted begins to worry about what can happen to him soon. He puts away his phone.

As he anxiously sits in Natalie's chair, a memory of his father creeps in. We see BRIAN CEALG enter. This memory is of when Ted was a child and his father comes in clearly upset and disappointed with his son.

BRIAN

Ted, why the hell are you crying? Is this over that girl you've been fawning over? The hell have I told ya, ya don't fucking cry over a woman. Yer a ten year old boy but yer acting like a little girl. Don't feel bad for some girl who don't give ya the time of day. Yer joke made her cry but ya ain't responsible for that, are ya? Women cry and cry because they can't handle their damn emotions. That's what separates us men from them, we're the strong ones so don't be sad that she didn't like you back. Otherwise I might as well call you my daughter to everyone. Listen to me well boy, stop being a jessie!

Go back to that girl and laugh at her. Then make the joke again, to show her you don't give a damn on how she's feeling. That's how you spit on her face, with yer words Ted.

Brian walks off as Ted nervously watches him exit. As Ted comes back to the present, we see him more anxious than he was before.

SCENE SEVEN

Enter Abigail and Lily as we return to Abigail's office.

LILY

Miss Montes, Amy Sanders is here.

ABIGAIL

Did you offer her coffee?

LILY

Yes! But she said she drinks tea and that she's on some sort of cleanse.

ABIGAIL

A cleanse? Well her life not mine. Send her in please.

LILY

Yes, Miss Montes.

ABIGAIL

Lily!

LILY

Yes?

ABIGAIL

You're doing a great job.

LILY

Thank you!

ABIGAIL

Get back to work though!

*Lily is rushing out as Amy passes by her
awkwardly.*

AMY

Never seen someone run as fast as her.

ABIGAIL

She's so scared of me, I love it. It's cute in it's own way.

AMY

Must be nice, I should get me one of those.

Abigail walks over to hug Amy, who is not good at hugs. She lets out an uncomfortable noise but does reciprocate the hug.

ABIGAIL

How are you holding up?

Abigail and Amy walk to their seats as they talk.

AMY

Oh just dandy. Got two hours of sleep last night. Afterwards a donor called me early in the morning who I swear will not shut up about her cat. Like Christ, I have a cat too but you don't see me kneeling and praying to it. Then the barista messed up on my drink and put in 2% into my match iced tea so that led to -

ABIGAIL

I get it! You're nervous.

AMY

Well yeah... aren't you?

ABIGAIL

Yes but, I also know this needs to be done.

AMY

But you two must be going through the same stuff as me though. I started all of this and it was stupid of me not to think about how you guys would feel about all of this. Talked to Claire not long ago, she's trying her best not to show how nervous she is. We all know how he is... Ted. The kind of man he really is.

ABIGAIL

Yes, of course we do, but we also know how much more damage he is capable of. Now, he's in a position to do that to a lot of people and he knows they won't say no to him.

Unfortunately, we can't hold back our stories because of what he could possibly do. Not after everything.

AMY

It all just floods back though. I still remember all the times he'd "help" me through my break up, only to take advantage of me. I thought he would be an escape at first but then I thought he could be the one. After all those times he listened, I thought he cared. But he saw me as his object. He put me through hell. And he got off from that. I didn't want to relive that but then... that piece of shit donated to *Silence Breakers* and the flood gates opened.

ABIGAIL

Have you told anyone from *Silence Breakers* what happened?

AMY

Yeah, I've made some calls and had some meetings. Still, need to talk to the head honcho herself. You know what's funny though, I saw the moment Ted knew he fucked up. When he was on that talk show, the host said my name. Ted had no idea I was involved. It showed me he didn't actually give a shit who he was making donations to. Once he started to play this knight in shining armor act though, as if he's been protecting women all his life, I was livid.

ABIGAIL

People like Ted don't stop so long as their secrets stay in the dark. That's where we come in with the spot lights.

AMY

So what's next Abigail?

ABIGAIL

You and I can go over the fun legal stuff.

AMY

Oh... how fun.

Lights dim as Abigail brings out the stack of paperwork on her desk, much to Amy's annoyance.

SCENE EIGHT

Ted, Natalie, and Neal are huddled up in Natalie's office, gathering more information from Ted.

NEAL

Do you remember which websites?

TED

No.

NEAL

Are you positive?

NATALIE

For God's sake Neal! He doesn't know, stop trying to find them, perv.

NEAL

I'm just trying to get the story straight. We need to find something we can use to defend ourselves -

TED

No need. I can fix all of this.

NATALIE

How?

TED

I know Claire. Her mind goes all over the place, from point A to point 32. She's probably misinterpreting a lot of what was said and done.

NEAL

The problem is she has sources to back up her side of events. There's one source that I found that directly links you to posting Claire's photos on those revenge porn websites. Again, if we knew -

NATALIE

That's not important, Neal. People have seen naked women before. Not our fault Claire feels like a slut for it. That's why I never send crap like that out there.

TED

Guys, I can handle this. Let me talk to Claire.

NEAL

That's a good idea.

NATALIE

That's a bad idea!

NEAL

That's a bad idea.

NATALIE

Do you realize you can be sued for all of this? That's why they have Abigail. What you did may just be a misdemeanor but think of the optics. Nobody is going to want to work with an actor who maliciously leaked his ex's nudes. Your career would be over. Our safest bet, cut our losses and pay them out of court before this bites us. They can have their win we just -

TED

No. I'm not opening up my wallet over this. I got this. My father used to warn me about this kind of stuff all the time. Once I talk to Claire -

NATALIE

I told you no, Ted! Don't even think about it. Just stay put. I'm in charge of this, understand?

TED

Ok, you're the boss Natalie. I'll just stay put.

NATALIE

Good. You and Neal can go over the other stuff. I have to go make some... preemptive measures. That way I don't lose my place in the team.

TED

What team?

NATALIE

I'm a woman in Hollywood. Where we stick together. Except for the moments we don't and remember it's a dog eat dog world. It's about using each other for personal gain. We fake it till we make it. You should understand that.

TED

Why would I understand that?

NATALIE

You know why, sweetie.

Natalie exits. Neal nervously begins to look over his notes as Ted is once again vulnerable. The lights begin to dim on Neal.

Ted's anxious state leads to him revisiting an old memory of his father. Brian approaches over to Ted, who was only a teenager during this moment. His father walks in with a lit cigarette.

BRIAN

A king should only need to say one word to have his orders followed, obey. All of those below him, they only need to follow his commands. If they don't, the king makes sure they're punished. When your teacher called and told me what happened, I couldn't be anymore disappointed in you. You were about to get into a fight but yer teacher steered you clear of it. Since when did I tell you to walk away from a fight? Since when did I tell you to let a woman stop you from fighting? You acted like her fucking servant and made her in charge of ya. Next time, grow a pair, go n' fight, and never let any one, especially a woman, tell you what to do! Be a king, Ted, and never be the one taking orders.

Brian puts out his lit cigarette on Ted's neck as Ted does his best to pretend the pain isn't there. Brian makes his exit as Ted returns to the present.

We return to the present, Neal is still reviewing his notes. However, Ted makes his decision.

TED

Neal, what's the address for Claire's office.

SCENE NINE

Amy and Natalie enter the stage, both facing the audience as Natalie picks up her phone. Natalie is calling Amy, in hopes of talking Amy out of coming forward with her story. Amy picks up her phone.

AMY

Hello?

NATALIE

Why hello there, is this Amy Sanders?

AMY

This is. And who are you?

NATALIE

Natalie Banks. I'm Ted Cealg's agent and unofficial manager. I wanted to talk to you, if you are willing to give me the time and day.

AMY

Why are you calling?

NATALIE

I just noticed that Ted's donation to *Silence Breakers* was suddenly returned to us. Plus all the social media posts thanking Ted are all of a sudden, gone. I just wanted more information on -

AMY

Is playing dumb your strategy?

NATALIE

Oh what a lovely lady you are! Let's not beat around the bush then. I think you and I should talk about resolving this nasty feud you and Ted have. I don't think dragging this out is your best play, Miss Sanders.

AMY

Talk to Abigail.

NATALIE

But I'd rather speak with you.

AMY

Too bad because I don't care to. I'll see -

NATALIE

Ok sweetie, you're making this harder than it has to be. The way I see all of this, this is a big misunderstanding layered on top of nasty break ups. Ted isn't perfect, trust me on that. I've dated a quite a few men like Ted and those didn't end well either. But you don't see me going about publishing their dirty laundry, I certainly never hired an ex of theirs who was a lawyer, and I certainly wouldn't turn away money they donated to a good cause. Plus in this day and age, there tends to be more than one truth. There was another woman who tried to pull something similar to what you girls are doing. Spoiler alert, it fell on deaf ears and now she's trying to salvage what little reputation she has left. Point is, this is nothing new. I think it is in your best interest to -

AMY

Don't see how you would -

NATALIE

I'm not finished, sweetie. I think it is in your best interest to take back the money Ted donated to you and let the past be the past. Do you think it's worth putting *Silence Breakers*' reputation on the line just because you want to get back at your ex boss. I'm sorry, I meant ex lover. I can tell you after years of experience women who sleep with their boss don't often get judged for good character. I've been in the business long enough to see people make rash decisions and then ruin everything they have ever worked for. So, take my advice. From one woman to another, take the money, keep everything hush hush, and let the past die. There's no need to make things any worse cause it won't be just you getting hurt by the fallout of your reckless decisions.

AMY

Wow... I can see why Ted hired you. You want to make threats, call our lawyer.

NATALIE

That's right! Abigail Montes was it? I heard she's pretty good. Course, I've heard that from better lawyers who know how to run circles around amateurs like her. Just like we talked about, these accusations can actually end up ruining Abigail's career. I mean, who the hell would hire a lawyer who goes around and tries to sue their ex just because they can't let them go? Oh, and to be clear I'm not making threats, I'm warning you. Big difference.

AMY

Do what you feel like you need to do. But this story is more than just about us. To be frank with you, I'm willing to bet I know more about Ted and his past than you are paid to know about him.

NATALIE

How so?

AMY

Again, talk to my lawyer. Because right now, sweetie, I have better things to deal with.

Before Natalie can respond, Amy hangs up and walks away. Natalie makes a small fuss about being hung up on and then makes her exit as well.

SCENE TEN

The scene changes to Claire's office, which isn't much different from Abigail's albeit different wall decor and a more modest design. But her office is messier than Claire's, paper on top of paper on top of paper stacks next to a landline office phone.

Claire is typing her story on her desk, lost in her own zone. But an eerie feeling suddenly rushes all over her. Like a prey that notices they are being stalked, she turns to see that Ted has entered her office.

TED

Cool office. Cool job. You've made it Ms. Ruiz.

Claire stands up, keeping the chair in front of her to block off Ted.

TED

And you are looking good too, Claire. You've always had the looks though, but this reporter look does you wonders.

Claire is frozen.

TED

C'mon now Claire Bear, am I going to have to come over there and pull your strings to get you talking?

Claire takes in a deep breath. She finds her voice.

CLAIRE

You should go.

TED

Pardon?

CLAIRE

You need to leave.

TED

Oh come on, can we talk please? I swear I am -

CLAIRE

Leave!

*Ted pretends to follow her order, but as he is
in the doorway he turns back to Claire.*

TED

I want to apologize. I'm sorry. I know what I what did and said weren't the best way to end things. Unfortunately, there is nothing I can do to make up for what is already done. But I've changed Claire. I've grown. You of all people should no that no one is perfect. You though, have always been an optimist and I know you believe people can change for the better. What you, and Amy, and Abigail are doing though... it's regressive. It's opening up old wounds for all of us and none of us should have to go through that. You and I, we moved past this Claire. Why go down this route again? I don't want to fight. I don't want you to get hurt either, not again. Now, if you want to scream at me or fight me or even hit me then go ahead. You have every right to.

CLAIRE

You done?

TED

Yes.

CLAIRE

Leave!

Ted starts to approach her again.

TED

Come on Claire! Just talk to me. You aren't the type to -

CLAIRE

I won't say it again! Leave or we can get security to escort you out!

TED

We don't need to go there.

CLAIRE

We do! You came here to intimidate me!

TED

No I didn't. I came to talk, nothing more.

CLAIRE

Bullshit! I know who you are Ted!

TED

Look at me? Am I raising my voice? Did I raise my fist? Only person screaming, is you. I'm not here to scare you, I'm here to talk to your senses. Anyone else who'd see how you are reacting would agree that you are making me out worse than I really am. You always have this bad habit of letting your brain go -

CLAIRE

Stop! Stop Ted! You think your little gaslight tricks are going to work on me?! After everything you have done?!

TED

Oh come on! You're exaggerating! Gaslighting? I don't do that crap. All I am is just your shitty ex. What you are doing though is so malicious. It's as simple as that.

CLAIRE

The story is going public, Ted. If you really were innocent then you wouldn't be here. But I can guess why you are here, the room is starting to flood and you know you have no way out this time. Now, get the fuck out of my office!

Claire's courage has now gotten under Ted's skin, as he now starts to close the gap between him and her.

TED

Claire I am telling you that -

He's gotten too close, Claire grabs her phone and dials security's extension.

CLAIRE

Security! I need help, please get Mr. Cealg out of my office!

TED

Ok! Fuck! I'm leaving. You know, I was just trying to save you Claire. You are always someone in need of saving.

*Ted storms out, slamming the wall with his
had on his way out. Claire allows herself to be
vulnerable once more.*

CLAIRE

He's leaving. Please, make sure he leaves and never comes back.

*Claire hangs up. She's gathering herself as the
adrenaline starts to come down. The lights dim
on the stage.*

SCENE ELEVEN

Abigail is in her office, smoking. It's dark out and her firm has left for the day. Except for Lily.

LILY

Ms. Montes, I'm heading home for the day. If you like, I can stay until you leave so you aren't alone.

ABIGAIL

I'm fine Lily. Go home.

LILY

Are you sure?

ABIGAIL

Positive.

LILY

I don't mind staying, miss. I can -

ABIGAIL

Not necessary.

LILY

Understood... well if you need me miss I'm -

ABIGAIL

Lily, I'm sorry. Just going through some things. I'm sure you can understand that none of this is easy for me.

LILY

I'm sure it isn't.

ABIGAIL

And please, forgive me if I'm opening too much for you. I don't want you to be uncomfortable.

LILY

It's ok, miss.

Abigail takes in a deep smoke from her cigarette. As the smoke escapes her mouth, she opens up to her assistant.

ABIGAIL

My mom called me not that long ago. Don't know how she found my number but she left a voicemail. I shouldn't have listened to it, but sadly I did. All the time passed between us and it's like we never stopped talking.

LILY

Is that a good thing?

ABIGAIL

No. She's a drug addict. She'd bring over a new boyfriend every week to our home. There was one boyfriend though, who tried to take advantage of me when I was fourteen. I grabbed this fork near me and stabbed him right in his rib cage. Course that's always a turn off for sexual predators so he left my mom. Instead of consoling me or at the very least not making a big deal about this guy leaving her, she instead chose to blame it on me. She blamed all of it on me, even. Said I wasn't worthy of love. Ted was the first man to tell me she was wrong, that I am worthy of love. The man who left the biggest scar on me also healed the scars my mother left me. Funny thing about relationships, Lily.

LILY

What is?

ABIGAIL

Relationships are anything but simple. Relationships are good and fun. Relationships are messy and complicated. They are wonderful and nice and they are horrible and hurtful.

LILY

I can agree with that sentiment.

ABIGAIL

So believe me when I say relationships are never one thing: easy.

LILY

And I agree with you on that one completely miss.

ABIGAIL

I'm happy we see eye to eye on this.

*Abigail inhales once more and makes sure to
blow the smoke away from Lily.*

ABIGAIL

I hate smoking. But Ted used to think it was cool. Troy hated it and I gave up smoking for awhile because of him.

LILY

Who's Troy? Miss?

*Lily is tuned out by Abigail as the memories of
Troy start to rush to her. We see TROY
BECKMAN enter the stage.*

TROY

Ted really thought smoking was cool, huh?

ABIGAIL

He did, thought it was hot too. He wasn't the best role model.

TROY

If Ted is someone's role model, then they really are in need of help.

ABIGAIL

You can say that about everyone we know who were friends with Ted. Who, used to be our friends too till Ted made sure they weren't.

TROY

Well then they weren't really our friends then, were they? I used to be cool with Ted too and then you find out he's kind of a mean son of a bitch. You know what though, he's not worth our time. Besides, we'll find new friends and go on crazy adventures and make those fools jealous.

ABIGAIL

How bold. Who are we calling over to our new house party then?

TROY

See I can't promise you that he'll show up, but I think I can convince Obama to make a special appearance.

They share a laugh as Troy embraces Abigail.

TROY

Life's funny, isn't it? In a way, Ted is the reason why we are here now together. Moving in together, falling in love, and going half and half on the extra guac. So in a way, I'm glad he did what he did. Cause otherwise we wouldn't be here now.

ABIGAIL

(playfully)

Oh god, you're so sentimental.

TROY

You and my therapist tell me the same thing.

ABIGAIL

Oh yeah? What else have they told you?

TROY

That you made me the luckiest man alive.

Both kiss as both feel joy in this moment. But that moment has passed, the kiss is over, and Troy slowly fades away. The memory is over but Abigail remains.

Abigail gathers herself and remembers where she is. In her office, smoking with her assistant watching with concern, and knowing the memory has long passed. Abigail takes in one last smoke.

ABIGAIL

Ted hid under a mask to hid the pain he grew up with. He told me stories about his father. He was an awful man and a worse father. Ted didn't know his mom, she ran out apparently when he was young. Ted hid a lot of his real feelings and emotions from a lot of people, he hid most of his true feelings about me for most of our relationship. But when he talked about his mom and dad, I think those were the only moments I saw who Ted really was. Broken. It doesn't excuse him, he's a monster. He is the horrible man his dad probably thought would be the best kind of man to be. But I remember the Ted who held me when I finally decided to cut my mom loose from my life. I remember the Ted who'd stay on the phone with me until I fell asleep. I remember the Ted who told me I was one of a kind, the kind for him.

When I look back at our time together, despite everything that has happened, there is one feeling that still comes back. Love. I still love him. And I hate myself for it.

The lights dim as the scene comes to a close.

SCENE TWELVE

Ted awaits Natalie in her office. Ted anxiously awaits what he will know will be Natalie angrily scolding him for going against her orders. Natalie storms in.

TED

I know what you are going to -

NATALIE

Are you an idiot?!

TED

It didn't go as planned.

NATALIE

That's a fucking understatement! Do you know how much worse you made things?!

TED

I thought I could talk her down. She was never that angry before when we were together.

NATALIE

She's a reporter for *The SoCal Times*. You don't intimidate someone like that.

TED

It wasn't intimidation! I was trying to get her to listen to reason. She was never one to -

Natalie feels her phone vibrate in her purse.

NATALIE

Hold on!

She sees a social media post coming from Claire. She tells her followers about Ted's unwanted visit to her office.

NATALIE

It's started. Claire has made your little spectacle public on social media. So say goodbye to discreetly settling things out of court. If we're lucky, that's the only thing we will say goodbye to.

TED

I can come out and dispute those facts! It's not like security stopped me from going in her office, so it won't look like I was forbidden from going there. We can say she greatly misinterpreted the situation.

NATALIE

Can you prove that she misinterpreted the situation?

TED

Don't need to. She's being hysterical, anyone can see that. I can call Abigail and -

NATALIE

No! Don't do anything else! That's how we lose.

TED

Never been a loser Natalie. Learned from my father on how to never be a loser. Believe me, I will be out of this in one piece.

NATALIE

Better hope so. I'll be back, need to make some phone calls.

Natalie exits her office as she goes to make phone calls in order to do damage control. Ted ruminates over his current situation. The thought of Abigail pops into his head.

Abigail enters now, as both are back in the street where Abigail rejected Ted before. Not long ago, Claire broke things off with Ted and Abigail has come to console Ted at his behest.

TED

Abi. Is that you?

ABIGAIL

(sarcastically)

No.

TED

Ah, always with that sarcasm. I love it.

ABIGAIL

I'm sure you do. But you know, I ran into Claire last week.

TED

Yeah, I know.

ABIGAIL

What's going on? Is everything ok?

TED

Not exactly. We broke up not too long ago. I still am trying to process everything.

ABIGAIL

Was all of this because of me?

TED

Yes. And no. I lied to Claire, told her you and I weren't talking anymore. She started to get... crazy when you'd come up. I got scared, nervous even. I didn't want to lose her so I lied because the lies would help her feel better, to feel happy.

ABIGAIL

Then why is she mad at me?

TED

Because I had feelings for you before.

ABIGAIL

Do you... still have those feelings?

TED

Yes...

ABIGAIL

(sighs)

Oh, Ted.

TED

I messed up.

ABIGAIL

Clearly.

TED

Being with Claire though, I realized I didn't feel whole. I felt like there was something missing between Claire and I. When I ran into you, after all that time since we were last here, that missing feeling finally was found. I realized you were the only person to ever have me feel whole. I didn't know how much I missed you until we started to talk again Abigail. It's corny but... I missed you Abigail.

Abigail takes a moment to let this moment sink in. It's in this moment, Abigail fell for Ted.

ABIGAIL

I missed you too, Ted.

TED

Thank god! I was so nervous you were going to say something else. I think my heart would have split in two if you ended up saying something else.

They share a laugh as Ted embraces Abigail.

TED

I think I may already be in love with you, Abigail. I feel that all the hardships and pain before all of this is worth it just to have you here with me. It's all been like a conquest just to finally have you in my arms. But loving you, is worth every moment Abigail. You're one of a kind, the kind for me.

Ted kisses Abigail. Not long after this kiss, Abigail then reciprocates and begins to kiss him back. For a moment, Abigail is loss in the bliss of the moment.

She caresses Ted's face as she fades away, the memory of her leaves the stage. Ted returns to the seat he was at before, pulls out his phone. After a few seconds, he is once again left on voicemail.

Natalie reenters, with a new plan.

NATALIE

I got an idea. A way we can blunt the blow coming to you.

TED

I told you I can fix this.

NATALIE

Ted, you can't. If you could, we wouldn't be here now. My idea though, is great! You know Maria Sandoval? She's an old friend. She also is the host of *In the Now* which gets a good amount of ratings. She's had plenty of great interviews on her show but what many people don't know is that she's also the best at doing damage control. We can easily pay her to help us out. Course, you're paying. Once the interview is set up, you'll go on live TV, pretend to sob, and apologize for your mistakes. Then you can -

TED

I am not -

NATALIE

Let me finish, Ted. Then you can talk about your father.

TED

That's a bad idea.

NATALIE

No it isn't. If you paint yourself a victim of your father's abuse then you become the victim.

TED

I ain't a victim and I ain't painting myself as one. We are not going to bring up my father.

NATALIE

You hate him, what does it matter?

TED

I don't hate him. I took pity on him. He was just a poor bastard that got screwed over.

NATALIE

Doesn't matter how you feel about him. Just act like he abused you so you can score some sympathy points. You're good at lying so you can easily pull this off.

TED

Natalie, I ain't talking about my father. I left him behind in Ireland for a reason. Why don't I just talk about how I'm from Ireland and misunderstood a lot of the things I've been through in the past with women? Everyone feels bad for the immigrant.

NATALIE

Except no one gives a shit that you're Irish, Ted. Just talk about your dad.

TED

For god's sake he's dead! Been dead for awhile now.

NATALIE

I see... and him being dead was a secret because...

TED

Because then everyone would start pitying the dead fool. I don't want to hear people telling me "sorry for your loss," when I'm not exactly sad he's gone. He was a loser. He knew it. I knew it. He's dead and I'd rather leave it at that.

NATALIE

Ok, fine. Don't bring up your dad. But when the pitchforks come for you, Ted, I just hope you have something better to say than "It's not my fault, I'm Irish."

Natalie exits the scene. Ted sits in Natalie's office alone now. His mind goes to a bitter memory of his father. Brian then enters the scene, drunk and a bottle in his hand. During this moment, Brian was distraught as he laments to his son.

BRIAN

Ted! Listen to me good! Your mother was a cunt! A cunt! She couldn't see what I had done for our family, what I've done for you and what I did for her. She's an ungrateful bitch. Life is a bluff Ted, a bluff. Keep the lying strong boy, no honest man ever gets all he has ever wanted. Your mother, god damn that whore! She's out there making a new family with some man I will never know. Who you'll never know.

Brian proceeds to take a deep swig of his bottle. After the swig, Brian grabs Ted as he makes his last point.

BRIAN

Don't ya dare be me, Ted. Don't be yer father. I'm a failure, a loser. I failed the test that tests whether a man is a man. Yer mother walked away, she broke me. She won. You can't let someone do the same to you, Ted! Otherwise, you'll just end up like me.

*Brian begins to sob, he does his best not to
show his son how weak he feels.*

BRIAN

Yer mother could have taken ya, but she didn't want you Ted. She never loved you. She walked away from us. So heed my words, boy. Break hearts, don't be the one broken. Never be stupid and love a woman like I loved yer mother. Learn from your father's failure.

*Brian sobs a bit more, as Ted remembers how
he pitied his father during this moment. But
Brian begins to exit as he stumbles in his
intoxicated state.*

*Ted is alone now. Sitting at Natalie's desk. The
fear of becoming his father has now crept in.*

ACT 2

SCENE ONE

We are in a past moment of Abigail's life, she is opening up a box of her things to unpack before Troy enters.

TROY

Babe, guess what?

ABIGAIL

Chicken butt?

TROY

No, but good guess! I got the promotion at work!

ABIGAIL

Awesome!

TROY

Had the interview today with Mr. Bellic about the position and they thought I was the best fit.

ABIGAIL

Of course you are the best fit. Good that they are starting to recognize everything you've done for them. If anyone deserves a promotion, it's you babe.

TROY

Well, couldn't have done it without you. How was school?

ABIGAIL

It was fine. Every time I go I feel better about going back. I think I made the right choice.

TROY

Getting into law school won't be easy but knowing you you're going to make it look easy. No matter what, you got me and I got you.

Troy holds Abigail, lovingly obviously.

TROY

We're like Bonnie and Clyde. Except with all the violence, bank robbing, and death.

ABIGAIL
(playfully)

Not yet at least.

TROY

Soon. Hey, who's box is that?

ABIGAIL

Mine.

TROY

You sure you don't want this stuff in our room?

ABIGAIL

I mean it's just clothes, I was going to hang them up in the closet in the living room.

TROY

Babe, you know our room has a closet too. Right?

ABIGAIL

Oh... that's right. Whoops, still getting used to this place. I guess it would make more sense to hang my clothes in there huh?

TROY

It could.

Troy goes over to pick up the box.

TROY

I'll take it over, I'll leave it in the closet and I'll even help you hang them.

ABIGAIL

You're sweet. But you know I already moved in with you, you don't need to keep impressing me.

TROY

Oh I'm not trying to impress ya anymore. I do this out of love.

ABIGAIL

God you're sappy.

TROY

Only for you, Abi. You coming?

ABIGAIL

In a bit, just want to get things more tidied up around here.

Troy nods as he leaves with the box. Abigail's demeanor changes. She changes from the happy blissful mood of that moment to the regretful present mood where she's alone at her desk, having a cigarette. She lets out a smoke as the scene lights dim.

SCENE TWO

Ted, Natalie, and Neal are all in Natalie's office once more. Neal summarizes where Ted stands right now.

NEAL

I found out Amy has been in talks with other organizations associated with Ted. She's basically giving them a heads up so they won't need to be caught by surprise when all of this comes out in full. Which is pretty ballsy, she's getting them to drop you before they can do it themselves. To make things worse, Claire dropping that story about you going in and intimidating her -

TED

Which was your advice.

NEAL

Debatable. But right now, you're the talk of the town. And the town has nothing nice to say about you right now. My advice -

TED

Mother of god, did rehab make you a worse publicist?

NEAL

You are paying me to help you but if you don't like what I have to say, I can walk. In fact, I'd prefer to.

NATALIE

You can't walk away yet, Neal. Ted, shut up! Neal, just do whatever you need to do in order to shut those girls up. This needs to be shut down now!

NEAL

You know what would help? If Ted stopped beating around the bush and tell us everything so we know where we need to -

TED

Ok you're done Neal, get -

NATALIE

He is not done, Ted! You need to stop talking.

TED

Oh I'm sorry I've been a little on edge since Claire is going around spreading a bunch of bullshit about me.

NEAL

Where's the lie though? You were at her office.

TED

Not denying that.

NEAL

Then where's the lie?

TED

She's off telling people that she broke up with me when I'm the one who broke up with her!

Natalie and Neal are left dumbfounded and not long after that, annoyed and frustrated with Ted's issue.

NATALIE

Neal, give us a minute?

Neal steps out.

NATALIE

Get your head out of your ass, right now Ted!

TED

Careful who you are speaking to darling -

NATALIE

Do not try your little act on me, Ted! I am not one of your little girlfriends Ted, I'm the one trying to stop you from sinking this boat you and I are on. But if you do one more stupid thing, I am throwing you off the boat. Are we clear?

TED

Crystal.

NATALIE

Good. Now shut up! Neal, get back in here.

Neal walks back in.

NEAL

Now that that's behind us, we need more information Ted. Specifically with Abigail, is there anything else you need to tell us about that relationship?

TED

Aside from cheating on her with Amy, no.

NEAL

Did anything happen with Amy?

TED

I was her boss and we fooled around in that store a number of times. Otherwise, a normal relationship.

NEAL

Are you sure there isn't anything else we need to know?

TED

Pretty sure. Are we done here, folks?

NATALIE

No. Now go home and try not to make matters worse.

TED

Gladly.

*Ted speed walks his way out. Neal finishes up
with his notes.*

NEAL

I should be going as well.

NATALIE

Hold it, you're staying with me for a few more minutes.

NEAL

I would but I have a really -

NATALIE

Too bad, you're staying. Let's have a drink.

NEAL

Seriously?

NATALIE

Oh right, rehab. Ok but you are sitting here while I drink. I prefer drinking with company. Got it?

NEAL

I don't have much of a choice but fine.

Natalie goes to her desk, she pulls out her "emergency bottle" of whiskey she keeps stored at her desk alongside a shot glass.

NATALIE

Here's the deal: I monologue and you listen.

NEAL

Sounds fun.

Natalie pours herself a shot. She takes the shot like a pro, drinking down the shot as if it was only a shot of water.

NATALIE

God, it never gets easier in this town. Took me years and years just to get here. You wouldn't believe the things I had to put up with. Used to get my ass pinched by the bosses all the time. My old supervisor actually once called me over to his office just to ask me how many drinks it would take for me to sleep with him. When that old croak died, I danced over his grave. Literally. All those stupid jokes about the clothes I'd wear back in the day, them telling me I should be wearing a skirt to the office. Sad part is, I wore the skirts just to grab their attention. That way, I could earn my pull around the business. What they didn't know is that for every cat whistle and pinch they would make, I'd take the notes. When the time came, I helped bring down every one of those idiots just so I could take their spots until eventually I got to where I am now. I took in so much joy from watching their careers go down the drain. They just couldn't clean up the messes they left in their wake. So why is it, despite being at the top now, I'm cleaning another man's mess? And his mess is now my mess.

That lawyer will sue me, the activist will have her connections turn me into a pariah, and the reporter will make headlines talking about how I helped Ted be a terrible person. Plus, let's be honest, Ted could easily throw me under the bus. This is all starting to look bad. Everything I achieved could just...

NEAL

Sounds like you're hearing the bomb ticking away.

Natalie is now starting to feel the anxiety of what is at stake for her right now. The lights dim on the pair.

SCENE THREE

Abigail is reading legal documents as she waits for Claire and Amy to arrive. Both Abigail and Amy are wanting to hear from Claire directly about her recent run in with Ted.

Lily enters the room.

LILY

Good Morning Miss Montes!

ABIGAIL

It's 12:30.

LILY

Whoops! Good Afternoon Miss Montes. Amy is here, shall I let her in?

ABIGAIL

Yes please. When Claire arrives just let her in please.

LILY

Yes Miss Montes!

ABIGAIL

Lily!

LILY

Yes?!

ABIGAIL

Thank you for... the other night. That was very thoughtful of you.

LILY

It's no worries Abigail.

ABIGAIL

Did you just call me Abigail?

LILY

I meant Miss Montes! I'm so sorry I -

ABIGAIL

Oh my god I'm messing with you, you can call me Abigail just don't call me Abi. But I prefer Abigail over Miss Montes.

LILY

Ok, I'll make a note of this. I'll let Amy in Miss Abigail.

ABIGAIL

Ok don't call me Miss Abigail either.

LILY

Sorry!

*Lily goes out to retrieve Amy. Amy walks in
not long after.*

AMY

Still trying to get me one of those.

ABIGAIL

She's getting more relaxed now, which makes things easier. Won't have to worry about scaring her to death.

AMY

That's always a plus. So... I talked to my boss about the whole Ted situation.

ABIGAIL

How did it go?

AMY

Better than I expected. I thought she'd be angry we were giving back all the money Ted gave us but after I talked about my experience with Ted, Regina understood.

ABIGAIL

What did you tell her?

AMY

Just... about one moment in particular.

Amy lets out a sigh, she's finding herself back in time on her last day working with Ted. The lights dim on Abigail as Amy walks across the stage.

Amy is folding clothes as the store has closed up. Ted enters, he pulls out a flask and drinks from it once he has locked up the store. He's clearly intoxicated.

TED

My oh my! Hello there sunshine!

Amy ignores Ted, continuing to fold the clothes.

TED

Want to know a secret? I'm a little hammered.

Ted begins to approach her, Amy does her best to ignore him still.

TED

You want some? Come on! Talk to me Amy, are you still mad at me about last night?

Amy breaks her silence.

AMY

You mean the part where you treated me like some object of yours in front of the customer last night? Yeah, I'm still pretty peeved about that.

TED

It was a joke!

AMY

It was disrespectful, you dick!

TED

Thought you were into it.

AMY

Look, you are clearly drunk and I still need a job. So just let me do my work, you go sit in the back and do whatever you need to do, and we will go about our separate ways for the night. We can talk tomorrow when you sober up.

TED

Oh come on, that's no fun. Why don't we go in the back and have some fun like we usually do.

AMY

Because, Ted, I don't want to have sex with you right now. Not after how you have treated me?

TED

I have treated you so good though! If it weren't for me this job would be boring as hell.

AMY

Ted! I don't want to talk to you right now! I just want to finish up and go home. Just leave me alone.

*Amy returns to folding but Ted is not giving up
as he gets closer to her.*

TED

Ya really going to ignore me for the rest of the night? It's a Wednesday night, there are no customers anymore. Come on Amy!

*Amy continues to ignore Ted. But as Amy has
her back turned against Ted, Ted comes up
behind her and starts to kiss her neck without
any given consent from Amy. Amy turns
around and pushes Ted off of him!*

AMY

The fuck is wrong with you?!

TED

I know why yer mad. It's cause you started to catch feelings. That ain't my fault though Amy, I told you I wasn't looking for something serious and you said you felt the same. I told you, I didn't want anything like my first love, I just wanted fun. How you are feeling is your fault here Amy.

AMY

I thought we could be more because of all the things you would tell me. But I realized it's all been bullshit. You told me all of those things to sweeten me up just so I could sleep with you. And I can't believe I fell for it. But I'm done with this, Ted. We're finished. I don't want to have anything to do with you anymore.

TED

You're breaking up with me? What, you hate me now?

AMY

Starting to.

TED

Bullshit, ya love me.

AMY

I never loved you Ted.

TED

Yes you do. That's why we are here now isn't it?

AMY

If that's what you think.

TED

It's what I know.

AMY

Then why do you care? You said it yourself, you want nothing like your first love.

TED

Yeah but we were good together. Some of the best sex I've ever had my dear.

AMY

That's it, I'm done with this.

Amy tries to leave but Ted is blocking her.

TED

Don't be silly now, Amy. I'm on the up and up. Why not join me up here?

AMY

Move aside!

TED

Say you love me then. Say it and then we'll go about our night.

AMY

You're sick!

TED

I know you don't think that.

Ted grabs Amy, trying to force a kiss onto Amy. They struggle but eventually Amy slaps Ted, getting him off of her. It doesn't take long until Ted retaliates, he slaps Amy as she falls down. She is on the ground, unable to hold back the tears running down her face. Ted has no remorse, he simply leaves Amy to sit there.

Amy gathers herself, bringing herself back to the present with Abigail. But the story still is not easy for Amy to remember.

ABIGAIL

It never gets easier.

AMY

It doesn't. Men like Ted thrive on people like who I was. Confused, frustrated, and anxious. Because those were the kind of women he loved to win over. It gave him such a rush in power. He'd tell me that when we had sex. Said it was better knowing he was my boss. Made him feel like a man. I used to think those were trivial things all men would say. But I was helpless back then. I felt like I had nowhere to go and he was my only hope. I thought during those times we had sex, we really were in love. But he saw me as his object, nothing less than a plaything. I realized I was never in love with him. I was just lost. And he loved women that were like me. Problem is, he thinks they stay like that forever.

The lights dim on Abigail and Amy.

SCENE FOUR

Neal, Natalie, and Ted are in Natalie's office, still trying to find the best course of counterattack. Unfortunately, they are starting to see the water flood the room.

TED

So they aren't going to use me in any of their promotional campaigns anymore.

NEAL

As far as they are concerned, you are an afterthought compared to the rest of the cast.

TED

I'm the lead of the movie and they are trying to act like I don't even matter in the movie? I'm the freaking clown for god's sake!

NEAL

They think your name is toxic to the movie now, you became a liability rather than an asset.

NATALIE

I doubt we'll be able to get you any roles any time soon. They are edging you out of a rom-com, can't imagine you'll have any chances now of getting yourself a big role now.

TED

Because of three bad break ups?

NEAL

And there's the whole situation with you trying to intimidate the reporter, donating to the same charity your ex girlfriend runs who you used to be the boss of back in -

TED

Accusations! God damn it aren't you supposed to be out there making me look good?!

NEAL

I can't sell a broken lamp, Ted!

TED

Don't you dare call me broken you rehab drunk piece of shit.

Natalie looks almost embarrassed by Ted's behavior. Neal has gotten very close to his breaking point and decides to leave before things escalate.

NEAL

Whelp! I got all the notes I needed for today, I should get going. I'll call you Natalie in case I find anything that could maybe save us.

Neal quickly exits.

NATALIE

You better be worth all of this Ted.

TED

Oh don't you start. Since when did you get so nasty with me?

NATALIE

Since you became expendable. You should be grateful for all of what I'm doing.

TED

C'mon, you know they are blowing this shit out of proportion. It's not bad at all. You're a woman so you -

NATALIE

Excuse me? Don't you dare start and lecture me right now.

TED

You need me more than I need you, so you -

NATALIE

I don't need you. I just want the money you bring in. But if you stop bringing in the money, buh-bye. You may think it's the other way around just because of your dick but trust me, it's not like that at all.

TED

I ain't afraid of you leaving me. I don't need you. You need me!

Natalie laughs at this, as if Ted told a really bad joke.

NATALIE

You know, you really do play the part of a clown really well Ted.

Lights dim on the characters.

SCENE FIVE

We enter Abigail's office as Abigail and Amy are listening to Claire retell her encounter with Ted. The two friends are entertained and impressed by the bravado in Claire's voice, something both rarely ever see.

CLAIRE

Security said he didn't make a fuss. I was glad nothing escalated but I was scared though. Thought it was about to go physical.

AMY

What a piece of shit though.

ABIGAIL

Glad you turned out safe though.

CLAIRE

Thankfully, it didn't get to that point. The story is about to be finished and should be out in a week or so. Meant to mention that earlier but I got sidetracked by this story. I was so nervous but I didn't feel like it because maybe the adrenaline was kicking in. I mean I told him to get the fuck out of my office and it was so exhilarating. He walked off like a dog with his legs tucked in between his legs.

AMY

Like Abigail's chihuahua ?

CLAIRE

Exactly like her chihuahua!

ABIGAIL

Hey! Don't compare my princess to that turd.

They share a laugh, enjoying the moment of laughter amid the tense situation.

CLAIRE

Hey, Abi. You said earlier you wanted to talk about something that you wanted included in the story.

ABIGAIL

I did. I was waiting to find the right moment.

AMY

(playfully)

That means that wasn't the right moment to ask Claire.

CLAIRE

Oh I'm sorry! We don't need to do that right now Abigail! We can talk about it another time.

ABIGAIL

No, it's fine. Better rip off the band-aid fast than slow and painful. But before anything, I want to preface that I haven't told you two about this part of my relationship with Ted. I didn't want to talk about it since it had a lot to do with Troy. And Troy isn't an easy topic for me. You two though somehow became my closest friends despite the circumstances between the three of us making our friendship almost impossible to imagine. So I want to come clean with you guys.

CLAIRE

Abigail, are you sure you're ok to talk about this?

ABIGAIL

Yeah, it needs to be heard. Before I know I didn't really give you two exactly on what Ted said to me when we broke up.

The lights dim on Claire and Amy as Abigail is returned to a time where she was anxiously awaiting for Ted to arrive. Ted enters the scene.

TED

Ok Abi, what's wrong?

ABIGAIL

You know what's wrong.

TED

There's a lot of things wrong in your eyes apparently Abi, should I throw a dart and choose which thing you wanted to argue about today?

ABIGAIL

What are you doing to me, Ted?

TED

For god's sake, how do I -

ABIGAIL

Britta just told me not to hurt you. When the hell did she find out about all of our problems, Ted? Since when did my friend start becoming your attack dog?

TED

Doing a good job of not hurting me by the way.

ABIGAIL

What have I done to you, Ted? I thought we were fine. I used to think we were great.

TED

Come on Abi, can you just -

ABIGAIL

Do you still love me?

TED

You know the answer to that why are -

ABIGAIL

Answer.

TED

Yes.

ABIGAIL

You're lying again.

TED

If you say so.

ABIGAIL

This relationship was wrong, I should have seen that from the start. I knew you cheated on Claire with me. I should have figured you'd cheat on me with that co-worker of yours. But every time I had doubt, you somehow tricked me into believing your lies.

TED

Lies?! Oh pretty words you got going on there Abi but I don't even know -

ABIGAIL

Why are you turning my friends against me? Why do you want them to hate me so much?

TED

Because of this! I'm tired of all of this bullshit I get thrown at me! In your eyes, nothing I say is ever true.

ABIGAIL

And that's why you think it's ok to have people hate me?

TED

No one hates you! But they know how crazy you get!

ABIGAIL

No, I'm sick of this. I don't want to do this anymore.

TED

Really? What, are you going to run back to your mommy? The same mom who never loved you?

ABIGAIL

This is who you are, isn't it?

TED

I love you Abi, that was never a lie. Walking away from me though, would be the stupidest decision you have ever made. You will regret it for the rest of your life.

ABIGAIL

This really is who you are.

TED

How could you -

ABIGAIL

Everything you just said, it all makes it clear to me now. You never loved me. No one who loves a person like you say you do would say things like you have to hurt or threaten me.

TED

I'm sorry but when did I hurt you? When did I threaten you? I never once raised my
against you.

ABIGAIL

Then you play these sick games of trying to make me feel guilty.

TED

I'm making a point! The point being I am the best thing for you Abi. You need to trust me
though and stop with the doubt!

ABIGAIL

I don't know what I did to make you say the things you said tonight. But this is over.

TED

Ok, I crossed a few lines I'll admit. I'm -

ABIGAIL

Did you sleep with Amy?

*There is a brief silence after all the heated
back and forth until Ted doubles down.*

TED

I don't have to deal with this.

ABIGAIL

Then go!

TED

Oh I'm going! Don't you worry about that and you're going to regret this night for the
rest of your life.

*Ted storms out, Abigail comes back to the
present as Claire and Amy take in what was
said.*

AMY

Did you not want to tell that story because of me?

ABIGAIL

That's one reason. When we first met, it was rocky obviously. Then eventually time passed and I didn't think it was important to bring it up since I didn't want to open old wounds.

AMY

Abigail, I'm sorry.

ABIGAIL

Not your fault. We all know this already. None of us are to blame for his actions.

CLAIRE

But then what happened with Troy?

ABIGAIL

Troy? Well...

The lights dim on Claire and Amy once more, Abigail falls back into an awful memory. She's walking down a familiar street when a familiar face catches her off guard.

TED

Well are my eyes deceiving me or is that Miss Abigail Montes?

ABIGAIL

Ted? What are you doing here?

TED

Just walking down memory lane, kinda hoping to catch you. You look great by the way.

ABIGAIL

Did you hit your head, Ted? Get the hell away from me.

Ted cuts her off, blocking her path.

TED

Ok that was too soon. But I knew I'd run into you here. I heard you moved away but knew that you'd come to this street still for your walks. We are both drawn to this street.

ABIGAIL

I'm about to pepper spray you if you don't leave me alone, Ted.

TED

And you have every right to. Just listen to me. I'm sorry. I was scared. You know how my father was, I don't handle conflict well and I say stupid shit every time. But I've been getting help. I learned there was a lot wrong with me. In those sessions though with my therapist, I realized you and you only Abigail are the only woman I have ever loved. Back then I saw a future for us and got scared and went into the arms of someone else. It's this stupid self destructive part of me that ruins everything good in my life because I'm scared I'll lose it. I'm not the same man I was before though, Abi. I've changed and I want that future back. Amy was an escape but I can't escape the love -

ABIGAIL

There is no love, Ted! You made your bed with her, sleep with her in it.

TED

I broke up with Amy, not long after we split. I know I screwed up. But please, give me a chance. Don't leave me.

ABIGAIL

I am not falling for this shit.

Ted grabs Abigail and kisses her.

TED

Please don't leave me. I need you.

Ted kisses Abigail once more. Abigail doesn't push Ted off though. Like relapsing on a drug, Abigail kisses Ted back.

Abigail turns to the audience, as Claire, Amy, and even Ted listen to her regrets.

ABIGAIL

That is my greatest regret. Not the fact that I didn't pepper spray him or that I didn't just walk away. It's the fact that I kissed him back. There's always this rush of embarrassment, shame, and guilt. When he said he needed me, I fell back into his arms again. I remembered at that moment the days where I told myself Ted is the man I want to die beside. Later that day, we had sex in his apartment. Then we had sex again the next day. And again. And again. Each time, there was this moment of pleasure that was followed by regret. It was all sort of a dark blur. I still remember having sex with Ted on the same bed I held Troy's hand every night. Every day during that time, I hated myself.

I loathed who I saw in the mirror. One day, Ted came over to my apartment again. It didn't take long until we were having sex again. But that day, Troy wanted to surprise me and came home earlier than usual.

A devastated Troy enters. Ted takes in his moment of glee, feeling victorious over the man he saw take his property. Claire and Amy look on, feeling helpless watching despite this story being long ago.

ABIGAIL

My breath was gone and my body was in shock. But Ted wasn't fazed. He enjoyed this moment. That's when I saw the man again, the kind of man Ted really is. A part of me believes, Ted knew Troy would come home one day on us. Ted would always push his luck and stay knowing Troy would be home in a few minutes. I'd always manage to kick him out but this time, how could I have known Troy wanted to surprise me. In the moment, I laid there naked in front of Troy with my shame on full display. Ted didn't take long to put his clothes back on. It's then I knew he didn't want me back, he wanted to hurt Troy.

Ted walks over to Troy.

TED

That's why you don't ever love a whore.

Ted makes his exit. Troy looks to Abigail but even in her memory, she cannot look at Troy. Troy exits not long after.

ABIGAIL

We ended the relationship. One day I left the house and when I came back, his stuff was gone. He told me he was moving back to Colorado to live with his dad. I begged him to stay, I begged him to forgive me. He never responded. After a few days, I called Ted. I can remember word by word all the things he said to me.

Ted enters again. Abigail turns to Ted, as if they were in the same room when this phone call took place.

TED

What do you want?

ABIGAIL

You knew he would be coming?

TED

Troy? How would I know?

ABIGAIL

Don't bullshit me.

TED

What's your game here?

ABIGAIL

You knew he'd walk in on us. You knew.

TED

Maybe. But I'm not the one who invited me to his bed, was I? Take my advice though Abigail. After being with you, I agree with your mother. You really do drive people away. You're like a bad luck charm. You call me a cheater and then end up cheating on some loser with me, despite you apparently wanting nothing to do with me. Which means that you really are a weak person, Abigail. The worst part is, even an idiot like Troy deserves more than you. Cause it's obvious you cling on to people and then end up getting them hurt. You don't deserve love. Troy only has you to blame for all the misery that came his way. Now, do us both of a favor and do not ever call me again you worthless slut.

Ted finally exits, Abigail fights back the tears as she returns to the present. She's back with Claire and Amy.

ABIGAIL

For a while, I gave up. On love, myself, life. I was close to wanting to kill myself, I thought about finding a cliff so that I can drive my car off of. One night, I was close to hurting myself. Then the memories of that awful day Troy walked in, I saw the face of Ted just being in glee off of our misery. It hit me, that this was how men like him win. I will never break the cycle he trapped me in until I speak out. I've made my mistakes and will live with them for the rest of my life. I used my mistakes to turn them into a power that pushed me into the person I am today.

Claire rushes to Abigail and hugs her.

CLAIRE

I'm so proud of you, Abigail! Don't ever think we would be ashamed of you. Being a victim of this, it's not easy to come out fully to even the people you trust but I'm so happy you trust me and Amy to open up about this. Just remember you are never alone, we have each other. Once you, me, and Amy all met by literally the hands of fate I knew we were -

ABIGAIL

Claire, you can stop hugging now.

Claire lets go.

CLAIRE

Sorry!

AMY

There's also one last thing to add, Abigail. You are never weak. You are strong. Always remember that.

The lights dim.

SCENE SIX

Natalie is giving Ted a rundown of what's to come as Ted begins to feel the room flooding.

NATALIE

Ok Ted, you got the interview with Maria Sandoval. She's going to help us here by painting you as a damaged soul who wants to start his path of redemption and yatta yatta yatta. All that sappy stuff people eat up. But you will need to be on your best behavior, Maria does these shows live. So if you mess up, everyone will see it and that's it to your career. So suck up that pride and go back to being that charming kid that blew me away all those years back. What ever happened to that kid?

TED

He's still here.

NATALIE

I hope so because now you got me chained to you. This is about saving my career as much as it's about saving yours. Now, we need to -

Neal barges in, finally allowing himself to show his anger after all the time he had to hold it in.

NEAL

You moron! You absolute moron!

TED

Pardon?

NEAL

Why did you keep Troy Beckman a secret?

TED

Beckman? Is he relevant to any of this?

NEAL

Yes!

NATALIE

Neal, who's Troy?

NEAL

Abigail's former boyfriend after she broke off with Ted. They were living together until -

NATALIE

Cut to the point.

NEAL

Troy Beckman killed himself. In his suicide note, he mentions how Ted slept with Abigail while Troy was still living with Abigail. All because Ted wanted to get back at him for being with Abigail. So now we have a suicide involved in all of this.

TED

Ok, come on. I am not to blame for that. Besides, the guy was two faced and probably threw my name in there to get back at me.

NEAL

Did you know about him killing himself?

TED

Yes.

NEAL

So do you know how royally fucked you are?

TED

I didn't hang Troy's noose, why am I at fault here?

NEAL

Because you slept with the love of his life! You pushed him to kill himself. Why would anyone do such a thing?

TED

He knew she was mine. He had no right to go around and start sleeping with my ex. All I did was repay the favor.

There is silence in the room as Natalie and Neal are shocked by almost how apathetic Ted is to being responsible for pushing a man to kill himself.

NEAL

Christ.

NATALIE

So to summarize, you're being accused of assaulting a former coworker, distributing revenge porn, and now being linked to the suicide of your ex's former lover? Ted, I'm about ready to throw you in with the wolves.

TED

This is all just being blown out of proportion. I can fix all of this. Let me talk to Abigail.

NATALIE

Again with this? Why?

TED

So I can fix this!

NATALIE

The last thing we need is for you to dig your grave even deeper than it already is. Just wait this all out, go on Maria's show, tell the world you are sorry for everything you have -

TED

I am not sorry! I did nothing wrong!

NATALIE

Then stop wasting my fucking time! Either swallow your pride and apologize or kindly fuck off then! If I even hear that you try and talk to any of them, I am personally throwing you to the wolves. I will gladly watch you be eaten alive to make you pay for wasting all of our time. So choose, save your ass or get eaten alive. Do you understand, Ted?

There is another silence, Ted is close to his boiling point. But for now, he swallows his pride.

TED

I understand.

NATALIE

Good.

*Natalie storms out of her own office, seeing if
the fresh air cools her down.*

NEAL

I'd still lawyer up if I were you.

*Neal walks out, finally putting all of this behind
him. He's turned in his resignation.*

TED

You already that you prick!

*Ted sits there, knowing he's about to lose
everything if he plays his hands wrong at any
moment. However, Ted remembers that he
was brought up to never let a woman stop him
from fighting. Ted makes his exit as well,
pulling out his phone in the process.*

SCENE SEVEN

It's late, Abigail and Amy are about to go their separate ways. Claire left not long ago.

AMY

You ready for when shit hits the fan?

ABIGAIL

I think so.

Abigail takes out a cigarette and lights it so casually that Amy almost forgot that Abigail was supposed to have given up smoking awhile ago.

AMY

Still smoking? Thought you gave it up.

ABIGAIL

Old habits die hard I suppose.

Abigail offers Amy a smoke?

AMY

No thanks. Still on a cleanse. Plus I start coughing after smoking and it's not pretty to watch.

ABIGAIL

Well, at least you're honest about it. Speaking of honesty... can I get one more thing off my chest?

AMY

Sure.

ABIGAIL

When you thought back to all the terrible moments with Ted, did any of the good times with him get remembered as well.

AMY

Some of them. Why?

ABIGAIL

Because I feel like all of the good times came flooding back. That feeling of shame and guilt wash all over me again because I'm scared to admit that a part of me thinks I still love Ted.

AMY

You think or you know?

ABIGAIL

Do I think? No. Do I know I still love him? Yes.

AMY

I'm willing to bet that you don't actually love Ted.

ABIGAIL

I don't know. Maybe I'm not as strong as I let on. I can't help but feel awful because somewhere deep down, I know there's a part of me that will always love Ted.

AMY

I get it. I never talked about this with you for obvious reasons but do you know when I fell head over heels for Ted?

ABIGAIL

No.

AMY

He went out of his way to buy me this gift card from a store he knew I loved to visit. He said this corny joke and made me feel so special in that moment. At that point, he was different from all of the other men I have ever met in my life. And here's the thing, I stand by what I've said before: I never loved Ted. But ask me when we were hooking up and I'd tell you he's my soulmate. But the guy who thought about me enough to buy me a gift card is a different person from the man who had no issues with hitting me. Thing is, Ted had us fall in love with who he pretended to be. None of us were ever really in love with Ted because he never showed us who he was. That's what makes him an actor. Ted will be who he needs to be in order to be loved. At least, that's I see things.

ABIGAIL

Wow. That actually helps put things into perspective. Thank you Amy.

AMY

No worries. But it's getting late. I'm heading home but if you want to talk later just give me a call.

ABIGAIL

Ok. Do me a favor, keep this between us?

AMY

Our little secret. I'll talk to you soon Abigail.

Amy exits. As Abigail goes in for one more smoke, she decides to put it out. But her phone begins to ring. She knows the phone number all too well. This time though, she picks up.

ABIGAIL

Hello?

Ted enters. Like before, they talk to one another as if they were in the same room during this phone exchange.

TED

Abi! Oh thank god you picked up. Look, I know what you're doing.

ABIGAIL

Then you realize how pointless this call is.

TED

Listen, I feel for you! I get it. Troy's death came out of nowhere -

ABIGAIL

You knew.

TED

I knew, sure. I may have been angry with him for some time. But I'd never wish death on someone. I didn't think Troy would react like that. I should have been better, I know, but when we were -

ABIGAIL

How did you feel when you leaked all of those photos of Claire?

TED

I didn't do that! I swear someone must have hacked my phone and found -

ABIGAIL

No one hacked you. You decided to get back at Claire and expose her out of this creepy spiteful mentality you have.

TED

Just let me explain and I can -

ABIGAIL

Save it, Ted.

Ted is in a corner, he tries his last resort.

TED

I know you still love me?

ABIGAIL

Excuse me?

TED

I know you. You care too much! I said a lot of things, but let's face it you really are a person so deserving of love because you try and see the good in people. I know you must remember the good times we had. I never lied about being happy with you. So I know, deep down you must love me despite it all. And I still love you, despite it all.

ABIGAIL

Ted, do you believe you did anything wrong.

TED

I made mistakes Abigail. I made a lot of wrong choices.

ABIGAIL

But do you believe you did anything wrong? Do you actually feel sorry for everything you've done. Deep down, does your pride allow you to accept that.

Ted doesn't react. He has nothing left to say.

ABIGAIL

Ted. I will always love the man you pretended to be. Not you. Soon, people will see the man who's haunted me all of these years. Goodbye.

Both take in a deep breath but for different reasons. Abigail breathes as if a huge weight is finally off of her shoulders. Ted breaths in as if he's on his last few breath.

Ted exits, but Abigail pulls out her phone. Her call is answered.

ABIGAIL

Hello, Miss Natalie Banks? It's Abigail. I'm returning your call.

SCENE EIGHT.

Ted is nervously pacing around the set of Maria Sandoval's talk show, "In the Now,". Ted is calling Natalie but is only getting her voicemail.

TED

Natalie, it's been a week. I need you to help me. I need a lawyer because right now, I am getting slaughtered out there by the media. They hate me. I know you still need me so please, just call. I'm here doing the stupid talk show. I'm going to apologize. I am going to say sorry and tell the world I was wrong. Just, call me back please.

MARIA SANDOVAL enters. She walks over to Ted and introduces herself.

MARIA

Mr. Cealg, how are you?

TED

Oh, I could be better.

MARIA

I'm sure. This must have been a rough week. With all of those stories about you being broadcasted 24/7. But! I have good news. Our interview is set up where we get to see how regretful you are and feel nothing but sorrow over all the pain you have caused. I'm practically throwing softballs your way. All you got to do is "admit" that you were wrong and apologize for all the pain you have caused. But make sure you deny your responsibilities in all the bad stuff like the suicide, revenge porn, yatta yatta yatta. Got it?

TED

I can see why Natalie likes you so much. How much is she paying you by the way?

MARIA

Lots. Lots of money. She paid me just enough to buy me a new house. All I need to do is just follow her instructions. All you need to do is play ball, shed a few tears, and promise you won't do it again. You ready?

TED

Sure. I'm just your puppet and you are the puppet master.

MARIA

Great! And hey, it's just business at the end of the day. This all blows away once the next scandal surfaces.

*A light shines on Maria and Ted, it's time to
take their seats.*

MARIA

(winks)

Remember Ted, play ball.

*The lights come on as your generic late night
talk show music plays.*

MARIA

Good evening America, thank you for joining me in tonight's episode of *In the Now*. I am joined today by Ted Cealg who has recently been accused of past abuse against his past partners. Thank you for joining us tonight, Ted.

TED

Thank you for having me.

MARIA

I wanted to first ask you how you are personally reacting to all of this? Your thoughts and feelings?

TED

I feel nothing but shame and guilt over my past actions. To know how my past actions have caused such painful impact on other people's life, it's a shame I will forever carry on myself. There is nothing but pain and regret when I look back but that's nothing compared to the people who have been hurt by my actions.

MARIA

Can we discuss the incident involving *The SoCal Times* and reporter Claire Ruiz who writes on how she herself was a former ex of yours and is now accusing you of previous abuse?

TED

Yes. First and foremost, I want to apologize to Claire. What I did, was stupid. Plain and simple. I had no consent to reach out to her much less go to her place of work. And I am sorry to anyone from *The SoCal Times* who were hurt by my actions.

MARIA

What were you hoping to gain out of it?

TED

I don't know. Peace of mind I suppose.

MARIA

In this story Claire is writing about you, she has accused you of distributing extremely sensitive photos of her to several websites associated with distributing revenge porn. Can you provide any insight on this?

TED

I did a lot of things wrong when I was with Claire. I was unfaithful at most but I never once distributed that sort of vile content in order to spite her. My phone was hacked and unfortunately I still held on to those photos of her. I should have deleted them when I had the chance. I can understand where Claire believes I am responsible for those photos to leak but I still stand by what I said, I am not responsible for that. My failure was not deleting the photos of her in time.

MARIA

But could you explain why your phone specifically was hacked? Why your phone when this all took place before you became famous? And why would they only leak those photos of your ex when they could have stolen personal information from you?

Ted is taken aback. This was not the kind of question he was expecting to hear from Maria.

TED

Your guess is as good as mine, Maria.

MARIA

Amy Sanders is another ex partner of yours. She claims that you were previously her supervisor but still pursued a sexual relationship with her.

TED

Yes, that did happen. I took advantage of my position. When her and I were together, I told her that if she ever felt uncomfortable she could report me to human resources and my superiors.

MARIA

Why didn't you report it yourself?

Ted is again caught off guard.

TED

Because, I was scared of losing my job. And I was scared of losing Amy.

MARIA

Can you provide context to her recollection of you coming into work intoxicated and later both sexually and physically assaulting her.

TED

Well, Maria, there was never a moment I came to work intoxicated nor did I ever force myself in any way onto Amy. Our relationship was purely consensual.

MARIA

The story mentions that one of Abigail Montes' former partners, Troy Beckman, had committed suicide and wrote your name in his suicide note. What was your relationship with Troy?

TED

Look, I didn't have the best friendship with Troy. Yes, there was a falling out. No, I was unaware of how much pain he was keeping to himself. I would never, ever, try and influence anyone to take such course of action.

MARIA

But wouldn't you think that sleeping with another person's partner is in itself such a hurtful action that it could lead the victim to take extreme course of action?

TED

I... I didn't know it would go like that. I swear. I also didn't sleep with Abigail because I wanted to get back at Troy.

MARIA

Did you call Abigail a worthless slut though?

*Ted is beginning to see what is happening.
He's being played.*

TED

You know, and I'm sorry to do this while we are live. But I do think there was a previous discussion about allowing me to explain my side of the story. That is what my agency explained to me because I feel like you are intentionally casting me in a bad light.

MARIA

Not at all. However, I would like to add that you were recently dropped by Natalie Banks and her agency.

TED

Come again?

MARIA

Natalie Banks has dropped you as one of her clientele. In her statement, she condemns your previous behavior and makes it clear her agency has no tolerance for abuse in any shape or form.

Ted is shocked. But remembers what Natalie had told him before, that she would feed him to the wolves herself.

TED

I'm sorry. I was unaware of this. I can't answer that question right now. I would like -

MARIA

Actually I wanted to talk about your father.

TED

My father?

MARIA

We recently researched about the relationship between you and your father. You've made numerous statements about how your father is still alive and in Ireland but we recently discovered that he had passed away not long ago.

TED

I fail to see what my father has to do with any of this?

MARIA

Recently, a source divulged to my team that your father was previously abusive of you. Could you say, that your actions are of a result of your father's abuse of you?

TED

I... I am sorry I can't answer that right now. If I may, we had a deal you and I -

MARIA

I'm sorry I just have one more question to ask. Do you admit you were wrong on how you treated these women?

TED

Am I -

MARIA

Could you say this is the result of your father failing you in how he was supposed to raise you?

Ted stops listening. He's absolutely livid. He's been made a fool.

MARIA

Ted?

Ted snaps.

TED

I did nothing wrong.

MARIA

You did nothing -

TED

Are we live?

MARIA

Yes but -

TED

Because let me say this live. I am sick of this! I did nothing wrong to these women! How dare you, by the way?! To bring up my father despite me making it clear I wanted no questions about him being asked to me! What do you want to hear about him anyway? That he treated me unfairly? How come it's his fault I'm here? Why is no one pointing the blame at my mother?! I mean she's the one that left me behind! She left me with that loser of a man!

Maria is surprised by how angry she has gotten Ted. She starts to become even a bit scared of his temper.

TED

My mother played it smart though! That heartless woman left my father with no regrets! Didn't even say by to me. Father said it himself, he lost and she won. Break hearts, don't be the one broken! He told me to not be the same man who woke up his boy every night with his pitiful crying! Every night, every night until the boy needed to leave Ireland just to forget how pathetic his father was! Why should have stayed when he ended up killing himself driving like the poor sad drunk that he was. So tell me, Maria, why should I feel bad for these women? They're no different from you, I paid you to make me look good and here you go making looking like a god damn fool just like how they did! They just lost and I won and they just can't handle it! They are the losers, not me! I am not a loser!

Ted's rant ends. Maria is still shocked by what all just happened. More so, she's shocked that Ted revealed he paid her for this interview. But Ted speaks up again.

TED

Are we still live?

Maria nods.

TED

Good. Fuck you.

Ted storms off the set.

SCENE NINE

*The stage is dark. Ted walks in, a light shines on him.
He's defeated. His career is finished.*

*A chair is left for him on stage. He takes his
seat.*

*Brian enters one last time. He comes in with
the same bottle he had in his hand all those
years ago.*

*The ghost of his father hands him the bottle.
The father, disappointed that his son did not
meet his expectations in the end.*

*Ted takes one swig of the bottle as his father
exits. Then he takes another swig. And
another. And then he just doesn't stop. The
stage dims on a man who begins to drink
himself to death.*

END

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