

Digits: A (maybe) Love Story

By

Chris Todd

Copyright (c) 2017 This
screenplay may not be used or
reproduced for any purpose
including educational purposes
without the expressed written
permission of the author.

FADE IN:

INT. DINER - MORNING

JAMIE and MICHAEL, mid-twenties, sit silently in a mildly busy Washington, DC diner. Both attempt to maintain meaningful eye contact, but keep breaking to nervously sip on coffee or take a bite of WAFFLES. Jamie ends the silence.

JAMIE

You don't have anything you want to say?

MICHAEL

I think I need some more time to process this.

JAMIE

Take all the time you

Michael interrupts.

MICHAEL

Are you really breaking up with me over waffles?

JAMIE

(dismissively)

I just wanted coffee.

He puts his head in his hands.

MICHAEL

Three wonderful years ends during the most important meal of the day.

The waiter approaches the table to see if anyone needs anything, as his job requires.

WAITER

How is everything? Can I get you a refill on anything? More coffee.

MICHAEL

Everything is not great...

He leans in close to check the waiter's name tag.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Jeff. Our relationship is falling apart.

JAMIE

We'll just take the check please.
Thanks.

MICHAEL

I could actually use some more
whipped cream, Jeff.

WAITER

I'll be right back with both of
things for you.

The waiter exits, unfazed. This isn't the weirdest thing
he's seen as a server.

JAMIE

This is for the best, Mikey. You
need to shake things up. We're in a
rut.

Beat.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

You're in a rut.

MICHAEL

Yeah, but I like ruts. Ruts are
comforting.

JAMIE

Adults don't like ruts.

MICHAEL

I honestly don't even know what
you're talking about right now.

JAMIE

You never try anything new. I don't
want to know exactly what I'll be
doing every single Tuesday night.

MICHAEL

(incredulous)

Is that what this is about? You
don't like live-tweet Tuesdays?

JAMIE

I don't like that we're not even 30
and we already have a set routine.

MICHAEL

I prefer to think of it as
stability. Adults do like
stability.

He fills his mouth with a bite of waffle, needing the comfort that only breakfast can bring.

JAMIE
I should go.

Beat.

MICHAEL
(mouth full)
I don't like this.

JAMIE
I know. I'm sorry.

The waiter drops off the check as Jamie gets up to leave. Michael is dumbstruck as the waiter gives Michael some much needed whipped cream.

INT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT LIVING ROOM

Michael comes home from his devastating breakfast to find his roommate JULES, late-twenties, with an indoor kid sensibility, painting custom ACTION FIGURES.

She doesn't look up to address Michael's return.

JULES
Welcome home.

A concentrated effort to add the perfect blue to the figure's eyes.

Michael inserts himself into her space.

MICHAEL
Life is over. I'm broken. I don't know what to do.

JULES
Blow on this.

She holds up the freshly painted figure. He blows.

MICHAEL
That was kind of soothing.

Beat.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
But I'm still broken.

JULES

But at least I have a dry butcher.

She holds it up in the light to examine it.

MICHAEL

Yeah.

She gently puts down the figure.

JULES

What's going on? You didn't even make a dumb joke about my dry butcher being a euphemism.

MICHAEL

Jamie just broke up with me.

JULES

I thought you were at breakfast?

MICHAEL

Yep.

JULES

She broke up with you over breakfast? The most important meal of the day?!

MICHAEL

Waffles.

JULES

G.D. waffles? What a monster.

MICHAEL

I love that monster. I'm lost without that beautiful monster.

JULES

Look, you're going to be fine.

He's not buying it.

JULES (CONT'D)

You will be. Or maybe we should just get some cats.

Michael looks at her like he couldn't care less about anything she's saying right now.

MICHAEL
She'll change her mind. Right?

JULES
I don't know, dude. What were her reasons?

MICHAEL
She said I was too predictable, unadventurous...in a rut.

JULES
Oh yeah, I could see that.

MICHAEL
(feeling betrayed)
How. Dare. You.

JULES
I don't see why that's so much of a shocker. You don't like uncertainty, or excitement, or really change of any kind.

MICHAEL
Are you breaking up with me too?

JULES
Nah, you're stuck with me. This is for life.

Gives Michael a hearty slap to the shoulder.

MICHAEL
Thanks.

JULES
This is for the best. You were always saying Jamie was a selfish girlfriend. She drove you crazy.

MICHAEL
Yeah, but at least her crazy was consistent and comforting.

Jules has stopped listening, resuming her painstakingly intricate painting. She finally realizes she should respond to the silence.

JULES
Totally. Like I said, you'll be fine.

INT. BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

Michael is clearly down in the dumps, spending his time in bed with empty beer cans scattered beside him.

-- Michael passes the time by laying on his back, throwing up his pillow in the air and letting it land on his face without flinching.

-- Searches iTunes for Adele songs.

MICHAEL

(crying)

Sometimes it lasts in love. But
sometimes it hurts instead.

-- Stares blankly out of his bedroom window. After several seconds he notices his neighbor doing the same. Jules walks in while the two are still making eye contact.

JULES

(cautious)

Hey, Mike. What are you doing?

MICHAEL

Do you think Jamie broke up with
Mr. Epstein too?

He points to the clearly lonely neighbor just across the way.

JULES

No...I think he's just a weird,
weird man.

Beat.

JULES (CONT'D)

He still has some of my baseballs I
hit into his yard last year.

Mr. Epstein places his hand flat on the window and smiles. Michael quickly turns to face Jules.

JULES (CONT'D)

Seriously, you doing OK? I've been
hearing a lot of emotional singing
coming out of your room. More than
usual.

MICHAEL

I'm still broken and only Adele can
put me back together again.

JULES

Totally. But maybe you just need to get out of the apartment?

MICHAEL

Not interested.

Michael flops down on his bed.

JULES

That's old Michael talking. You should be the new "I'll show Jamie who's boring" Michael. Let's go out.

MICHAEL

I don't know, there's probably a TV show on tonight.

He throws his pillow up in the air, letting it fall directly on his face. He leaves it there.

JULES

There's always a TV show on. That's how TV shows work.

Jules removes the pillow from Michael's face.

JULES (CONT'D)

I don't even want to go out. It's just what friends do when a friend gets broken up with. I convince you to go get laid or whatever.

MICHAEL

I prefer whatever.

JULES

We can do whatever. Be ready for whatever at 9...and close your blinds.

Mr. Epstein is openly crying in the window in the background and has removed his shirt for no reason.

INT. HOUSE PARTY - NIGHT

A small, but trendy, DC row home is filled with twenty somethings falling back on old college habits. Loud drinking games like flip cup and beer pong are at the center of the excitement.

MICHAEL

You know this isn't my scene. I thought we were just grabbing some drinks.

JULES

That's what we're doing. We're also hanging out with a bunch of strangers who are also grabbing some drinks. From the same keg. In the same living room.

A stranger invades their personal space.

MICHAEL

I hate strangers and living rooms.

JULES

Nobody hates living rooms. Living rooms are the best rooms. It's where we live.

MICHAEL

Fine, but I still don't like strangers.

JULES

Then I suggest you make some of those strangers your friends. You like friends don't you?

MICHAEL

Not at the moment.

JULES

Great attitude. Jamie'll be crawling back any second now that you're tons of fun.

She's very proud of herself.

MICHAEL

Fine. Whatever. Just promise you'll hang out with me the whole time.

JULES

Where am I gonna go? I don't like it here any more than you do.

MICHAEL

Thanks.

Commotion climbs to a roar near the flip cup table. Jules perks up.

JULES

Let's play some flip cup.

MICHAEL

No thanks. I'd rather just hang out over here where it's a little quieter.

JULES

Ok, but I'm going to go play flip cup. Not because I like it, but because I'm competitive.

She bolts into the middle of the party and is immediately the center of the fun. Michael is left to explore a nearby bookshelf on his own.

MICHAEL

(to himself)

Jamie would have loved this bookshelf.

Beat.

-- Michael checks out a couple of the books.

-- He stacks them up as high as he can get them until they crash

-- Tries balancing one on his head while walking the runway like a real model.

SAM (mid-twenties) casually wanders over to Michael and the bookshelf.

SAM

Can you recommend any good books?

The book on Michael's head comes crashing to the ground.

MICHAEL

(flustered)

Oh, um, no. Not really.

SAM

Oh I get it. You're trying to keep all of these great books to yourself. Smart.

MICHAEL

No. You can have one.

Michael shuffles around the bookshelf quickly, and hands the girl a book titled "I, Robot." It's not graceful.

SAM
Isn't this a movie?

MICHAEL
All of these books are movies
actually. Every single one. It's a
little unsettling.

She puts the book back on the shelf.

SAM
I really just came over here to
talk to you anyway.

MICHAEL
You have a thing for lonely guys
who aren't having any fun?

SAM
You're not having any fun?

MICHAEL
I'm having a little bit of fun now.

Michael flashes a sincere smile to the girl who's already in the midst of returning flirty eyes in his direction. There's a loud CRASH from the heart of the party.

CROWD
Oh!

MICHAEL
What was that?

Jules comes racing over to Michael and his new friend. She's out of breath.

JULES
(hurried)
We should go.

MICHAEL
What? Why?

Jules notices Sam.

JULES
Oh hi, I'm Jules. I really love
your bag.

SAM
Oh thank...

Jules interrupts.

JULES
 (to Michael)
 We. Should. Go.

Michael turns to Sam, trying to come up with the perfect words to say to her so she knows he's interested in her.

MICHAEL
 Goodnight I guess...hope you enjoy
 the book.

SAM
 It's already back on the shelf.
 Maybe we could just go see an
 actual movie?

MICHAEL
 Yeah, definitely.

The two stare at each other. Something's definitely supposed to happen at this part of the conversation, but nothing does.

MICHAEL
 Ok, well I'll see you later.

Jules frantically and forcefully grabs Michael to get out of whatever situation she's in. Sam is left all alone and confused.

SAM
 (to herself)
 Bye.

INT. LOCAL DIVE BAR & CAFE

Michael sits alone drinking a mocha and sketching comics in his notebook. Other patrons sit silently nearby on their Apple Macbooks. The hipster waitress with short hair and beautiful sleeve tattoos approaches.

WAITRESS
 How is everything?

MICHAEL
 It's good thanks. Actually, can I
 get, like, a shot of whiskey to go
 with this?

WAITRESS
 Sure thing. Tough day?

MICHAEL
 (defeated)
 It's been a day.

WAITRESS
 Be like that cat in the tree. I'll
 be right back with that.

She turns to leave.

MICHAEL
 Cat in the tree?

She turns back.

WAITRESS
 (laughing)
 Hang in there.

MICHAEL
 Right. I'll be hanging.

The waitress takes off as Michael continues sketching in his notebook, trying to perfect his piece. He pretends to text on his phone occasionally so he doesn't look lonely to everyone else who couldn't care less. The waitress makes her highly anticipated return.

WAITRESS
 Here's your whiskey. Just let me
 know if you need anything else.

MICHAEL
 Will do, but I'm hoping just the
 one shot will do the trick.

SAM walks by to find her own table, just next to Michael's. She spots him and his drawings in passing.

SAM
 Drawing for work or drawing for
 pleasure?

Beat.

MICHAEL
 (hesitant)
 Me?

SAM
 Oh no, sorry. This is so
 embarrassing. I just talk to myself
 in a conversational tone sometimes.

(MORE)

SAM (CONT'D)

Even ask myself questions. Though,
if you feel like you have an
answer, I'd love to hear it.

MICHAEL

Oh my gosh. You're from...the
party. I'm sorry. Small world.

SAM

You don't remember telling me to
meet you here today?

MICHAEL

No.

SAM

We were going to run away together.
Start a new life in Mexico. None of
this is ringing a bell?

He finally catches on.

MICHAEL

Oh, yes. Of course, I'm just a
little tired. I was up all night
trying to learn Spanish.

She laughs.

SAM

Are you going to invite me to sit
with you?

MICHAEL

Of course.

Beat.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Would you like to sit with me?

SAM

So kind of you.

Sam slides her seat over to his table before he knows what's
happening. She is sitting closer than a near-stranger should
be.

SAM

So to the original question:
business or pleasure?

MICHAEL

It's both, kind of. Though I get more pleasure out of drawing than I do money.

SAM

Right on. Can I see what you got there?

MICHAEL

I don't know. Nothing's finished. It's basically just doodles.

SAM

I am a doodle aficionado. Let's see these things.

MICHAEL

(still hesitant)

Ok, sure.

SAM

These are pretty good. As an aficionado, you know I'm not just blowing smoke. Where would I have seen your published work?

MICHAEL

Unless you happen to subscribe to the free Columbia Heights Weekly Gazette...nowhere I'd imagine.

SAM

(hyperbolic)

You mean THE Columbia Heights Weekly Gazette?! The one just sitting outside of select Metro stations? I can't make it through my day without it.

MICHAEL

You're making fun of me.

SAM

No no no. I am not. I've never read it, but I'll be sure to pick one up.

Michael pulls his work in close to him. Embarrassed.

MICHAEL

You don't have to, it's kind of embarrassing.

SAM

I think it's pretty cool. One might even say it's kind of cute. Not exactly sexy, but cute.

Michael takes a quick, nervous sip from of his whiskey.

MICHAEL

That's very sweet, thank you.

SAM

No, thank you for sharing your gift with an almost stranger.

She spots a second notebook behind the one Michael is currently working in.

SAM

(pointing at notebook)

What's in that one?

MICHAEL

Oh, nothing. Just something new I've been working on.

SAM

For work?

MICHAEL

No, just for me. I don't think it's the kind of thing my work would like.

Sam grabs the notebook, without even asking this time. Michael only briefly protests, feeling more comfortable with her now.

SAM

These are fun. Do you think they're fun?

MICHAEL

I do, yeah.

SAM

Then I bet that silly paper would think they're fun too.

MICHAEL

I don't know about that. I'll probably just keep handing in the usual elephant and donkey political stuff. I know they like that.

SAM

I think it would be worth the risk.
But what do I know? I'm just a
doodle aficionado.

The waitress comes by to check on the table. Surprised at the presence of another human being with Michael. Michael takes the notebook back, and closes it underneath the one he's working on.

WAITRESS

You have a friend? Here I thought
you had just been pretending to
text someone this whole time.

MICHAEL

Of course not.

SAM

He doesn't have my number.

MICHAEL

(rebounding)

I was texting somebody else.

WAITRESS

Sure, yeah. Can I get you something
to drink?

SAM

I'll keep it simple, one of
whatever is on tap please.

MICHAEL

(to waitress)

I actually have to head out soon.
I'll take my check when you get a
chance.

WAITRESS

No problem. I'll be right back.

She leaves.

SAM

You're always leaving me? I thought
we had something special.

MICHAEL

Oh, no. It's just that I'm having
lunch with my parents before work.
And I have a deadline.

Michael points to his notebook.

SAM
For the CHWG, I get it.

MICHAEL
CHWG?

SAM
The Columbia Heights Weekly
Gazette. I was pretty sure people
call it that.

MICHAEL
I'll try to get that started at my
next meeting.

He checks his phone for the time.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
...that's in less than three hours.

SAM
You really are leaving me, huh?
You're such a heart breaker.

MICHAEL
Ha, I'm more like heart broken than
heart breaker.

SAM
Aw, you're that sad to be leaving
me?

MICHAEL
No...I mean...yeah, but...I just
mean that my girlfriend just broke
up with me.

SAM
That helps explain the whiskey
mocha combo, but not why you're
leaving me.

Sam smiles. Michael smiles back.

SAM (CONT'D)
The deadline. I understand.

The waitress returns with the check and a fresh beer.
Michael hands her a credit card.

WAITRESS
Oh, cash only, babe.

MICHAEL
Is there an ATM nearby?

WAITRESS
A couple blocks over, by the
farmer's market.

SAM
No worries. I got this.

MICHAEL
You don't have to do that.

Sam pays the tab and grabs Michael's hand while she searches around her bag for a pen.

MICHAEL
(nervously)
What are you doing?

She finds a pen and begins writing her phone number on his hand.

SAM
This is so you can get a hold of me
to pay me back for my
generosity...it's my number. No big
deal.

Michael looks at his hand in amazement.

MICHAEL
Thanks. I'll make sure to repay you
as soon as I can. I really do need
to go though.

SAM
Great meeting you...

Her voice trails off, expecting some sort of a response from Michael.

Beat.

MICHAEL
Michael.

SAM
Sam.

MICHAEL
Bye, Sam.

SAM

Goodbye, Michael. You better bring me my money. I'm not someone you want to owe money to.

Michael does a double take as he hears her words, pretty sure she's joking. He exits the bar, smiling bigger than anytime he can remember. Sam takes a sip of her beer, relaxed, like the encounter was nice, but nothing new.

INT. PARENT'S KITCHEN

Michael is spending some 'quality' time with his parents over a home cooked meal. His MOM and DAD (early sixties) try desperately to cheer up their heartbroken son.

DAD

So how's everything been going at work?

MICHAEL

Oh, um, work is pretty good. They're going to publish another one of my comics this week...if I can get it done in time.

DAD

We didn't raise a deadline-misser, mister.

MOM

Oh that's fun to say..."deadline-misser, mister."

His parents look at each other with hearts full of word-play induced joy.

MICHAEL

I'm just not feeling very funny.

MOM

Oh, we think you're very funny sweetie.

MICHAEL

That's not really what I mean.

DAD

Take your mom's compliment, son.

MICHAEL

(reluctantly)

Thanks, mom. It's just that Jamie broke up with me. Which, as broken hearts do, makes me a little bit sad.

DAD

That sucks.

MICHAEL

That sums it up pretty nicely, yeah.

MOM

You'll get over Jamie, just give it some time. We've all been there.

MICHAEL

Thanks again.

MOM

Besides, I'm the only girl you need in your life.

She pinches Michael on the cheek like only an older lady in a movie could.

DAD

Oh stop that, Charlotte. He's a grown man. He doesn't need his mother doting over him. Here.

He slides a couple of twenty dollar bills across the table to Michael as if the problem has been solved.

MICHAEL

Dad I don't need your money. You're literally trying to buy me happiness...which I hear you can't do.

DAD

It's not for happiness! Use it to take out a nice new girl or three. Get back in the game.

Michael slides the money back.

MICHAEL

I'm not sure that's a great idea. I did actually meet somebody today.

DAD

That's great. Rebounds aren't just important in basketball. After my last breakup...

MOM

(interrupting)

In 1976.

DAD

Right. It's been awhile.

MICHAEL

Weren't you two married in '76?

DAD

Oh sure, but it wasn't until the Fall.

MOM

It was a beautiful September wedding. I remember it was 71 degrees and all 231 of our guests were squeezed into a little chapel just a few blocks down the road from where your daddy and I grew up.

MICHAEL

Probably not relevant to the story.

DAD

Though it was beautiful Fall day.

MOM

Right?

The two take a quick run down memory lane as they gaze into each others' eyes.

MICHAEL

Guys.

DAD

Sorry. I was saying, after my breakup, I was devastated. I didn't know what to do. Just like your situation. Do you see the similarities, Mike?

MICHAEL

I do.

DAD

So what did I do? I went out with as many girls as I could find. I was in a new bed...or car...every weekend.

MICHAEL

You don't need to keep going.

DAD

I do need to keep going, Michael. I do need to keep going. Because I met so many new girls that I couldn't even remember the name of the girl who broke up with me. Which is what you need to be doing.

Michael is trying to find anywhere to look that's not embarrassing.

MICHAEL

This is upsetting.

MOM

No it's sweet, you'll see. Keep going.

DAD

That's right. Would you believe one of those beds ended up being your mother's?

MOM

(flirty)

And one of those cars.

The two rub noses like the story was the most romantic thing that has ever happened. Michael just shakes his head, knowing that it was not.

DAD

The moral of the story is, dating works, but it's also expensive.

Slides the money back to Michael.

MICHAEL

I think I probably just need to be alone for awhile. Which happens to be pretty cheap.

He looks at the money on the table and slides it back to his father who tries to slide it right back. This happens one too many times before his dad gives up.

DAD
OK, but this'll be here for you
when you need it.

MOM
I'll be here too.

She puts her hand on his.

MICHAEL
It was a wonderful lunch as always,
but I'm late for work.

Michael gets up. He leaves the table.

INT. COLUMBIA HEIGHTS WEEKLY GAZETTE OFFICE

A small office with an open concept buzzes with the energy of just over a dozen employees. Michael is working on his piece with HEADPHONES on at a desk near the corner of the space. His boss, MR. EVANS (mid-forties), stops to look over his shoulder.

Extended silence until Michael realizes he has company.

MICHAEL
Mr. Evans. Can I help you with
something?

MR. EVANS
Just hanging out before our meeting
a little later.

MICHAEL
OK, that's great. I actually still
have some work to do before the
meeting.

MR. EVANS
Just pretend I'm not here. I'm just
a piece of the office. Furniture.
Maybe a lamp. Or a printer! Need
anything printed?

MICHAEL
No. I'm just drawing.

Michael decides to put his headphones back on, at the risk of being rude to his boss. Mr. Evans taps him on his shoulder.

MR. EVANS

By the way, did you get my email today?

MICHAEL

No, I just got here a few minutes ago and started working. What was it about?

MR. EVANS

We had to reschedule the meeting to accommodate some of the writers who are working on a very important piece about DC's best burgers.

MICHAEL

Maybe I should read it then.

MR. EVANS

Definitely! Especially if you like burgers.

MICHAEL

I actually meant the email about the meeting.

MR. EVANS

Of course! Take some time to do that now.

Michael turns on the computer monitor on his desk, and goes online to check his mail. Mr. Evans remains very close behind him, blankly staring in the computer's general direction.

MICHAEL

This says the meeting's been moved up to 4?

MR. EVANS

That sounds right.

MICHAEL

It's 4 O'clock now.

MR. EVANS

Then we better get to that meeting.

Michael takes a look down at his notepad, where his piece is maybe 90% finished.

MICHAEL

We can't push it back a little? I need another few minutes to finish my work.

MR. EVANS

Sorry, the burger guys need to get out of here by 4:30 to get to happy hour...to try those burgers.

MICHAEL

Of course. That makes sense to me and everyone, I'm sure.

MR. EVANS

Great! I'll see you in there. I'm looking forward to seeing what you have for us this week.

INT. OFFICE CONFERENCE ROOM

Michael enters the conference room to the sight of a bunch of hipster writers, mostly mid to late twenties, around the conference table laughing at something. Mr. Evans is at the head of the table, with his assistant next to him, ready to take notes.

MR. EVANS

Alright. Let's get this meeting going. I know some of us have some burgers to get to. Let's go around the table. Status reports.

WRITER 1

As you know we're working on this big burger story. We have a top ten pretty much nailed down, but we need to research some more for honorable mention.

MR. EVANS

When can we expect it to be done?

WRITER 1

I'd say another three to four weeks.

MR. EVANS

Take all the time you need. You need to get this right. Next.

MICHAEL

I am about 90% done with the piece for this week. I'll probably need another hour to finalize it for print.

MR. EVANS

Whoa. We were just talking outside. Why didn't you mention this?

MICHAEL

I apologize but, I really think that I did.

MR. EVANS

Either way, we can't have you missing hard deadlines like this.

MICHAEL

It won't happen again. It's only because the meeting was moved up by an hour.

MR. EVANS

I don't need excuses. Just results. And please don't blame the burgers. It's not their fault.

ALL

Yeah.

MICHAEL

Sorry.

MR. EVANS

You don't have anything you could submit now? If you don't have something to go now, we're going to have to just scrap the cartoon this week.

Michael looks at his secondary notebook, filled with his pet project, but abandons the idea after a few seconds of consideration.

MICHAEL

No. Nothing. It would really just take me another hour to get you this piece to you though.

MR. EVANS

It's alright. We'll throw in an extra Sudoku this week, but if it

(MORE)

MR. EVANS (CONT'D)
happens again, we're going to have to have a serious conversation about your future here...and I am not a big fan of serious conversations.

MICHAEL
Neither am I. I'll have next week's piece done early. No problem.

MR. EVANS
OK. Speaking of being done early, does anyone else have any non-burger updates? No? Let's call it a day.

Michael looks like he just got broken up with by Jamie all over again, then he sees Sam's number on his hand and a calm comes over him.

INT. KITCHEN

The next morning Michael is doing some long overdue kitchen cleaning while Jules is scrambling up some eggs to placate her hangover.

JULES
Did you end up sleeping with that girl from the party?

MICHAEL
We don't talk about stuff like that. And no...you kind of made us leave before I even got her name. What happened to you?

JULES
I honestly don't know. The last thing I remember is someone bad-mouthing Amy Poehler. And then someone else starting a fight.

Beat.

MICHAEL
So you started a fight?

JULES
Yes. For Amy.

MICHAEL
She's a saint.

JULES
I think I may have taken a chunk of
his hair out.

MICHAEL
A moment of silence for his hair?

JULES
It's only right.

The two bow their heads in tribute. An older looking third roommate, HENRY, enters the kitchen, grabs Jules' eggs, and departs before the two open their eyes.

MICHAEL
Amen.

Beat.

JULES
Do you say amen after a moment of
silence?

MICHAEL
I don't know the rules of amen.

Jules turns around to tend to her eggs.

JULES
This might be a weird question, but
I was making eggs right?

MICHAEL
Yeah, for sure. We didn't unplug
the smoke alarm for nothing.

He points at a dangling SMOKE DETECTOR, hanging by wires with no signs of life.

JULES
Well they are gone now.

MICHAEL
What do you mean? Things don't just
disappear.

She displays the empty pan of eggs like a model on Price is Right.

JULES

I mean that there are no eggs where there once was some. Were some. Where there once were some eggs.

MICHAEL

Well it was either Henry...or a hungry poltergeist.

JULES

If those are my only options, I think I choose to believe it's a poltergeist.

Jules leans up against the counter, while Michael continues to clean.

MICHAEL

You prefer to choose the irrational, scarier version of this scenario?

JULES

I'm not so sure poltergeist's are scarier than Henry. I don't know that I've seen or heard him since he moved in four months ago. I've only occasionally felt his presence nearby.

MICHAEL

I've actually never even met him either. He literally sends me his rent checks through the mail.

JULES

He might be a ghost. Did we run a background check on him when he moved in?

MICHAEL

To make sure he's not a ghost?

JULES

Yes.

MICHAEL

(condescending)

Surprisingly, nothing turned up on the standard background check form that would lead anyone to believe that he is a ghost.

JULES

That's how you end up living with a ghost.

MICHAEL

A ghost who likes to eat eggs.

JULES

Allegedly.

MICHAEL

(laughing)

You're defending the potential ghost now?

JULES

Innocent until proven guilty by the court of ghost law.

MICHAEL

Makes sense.

JULES

Yeah. I'm super hungry though. Want to go grab some b-fast from the diner? Since I know you don't have plans with party girl.

MICHAEL

Party girl's name is actually Sam. I kind of ran into yesterday.

Beat.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

And got her number.

JULES

So no breakfast then?

MICHAEL

No. My plans are more like putting all of Jamie's things into boxes, crying, then staring at the number still on my hand without calling. Maybe crying a second time.

JULES

You're not going to call?

MICHAEL

I'm not ready.

JULES
You don't like her.

MICHAEL
No, I like her. She's...nice.

JULES
People usually call nice people.

MICHAEL
I will. Later. Mostly because I owe
her money.

JULES
And?

MICHAEL
And because she's nice.

INT. MICHAEL'S BEDROOM

Michael sits in the middle of a pile of knick-knacks, sorting through the rubble slowly. He looks at each piece and almost breaks down in tears before putting it into a CARDBOARD BOX labeled "Jamie's Stuff" with a heart over the letter i.

MICHAEL
(to self)
I remember this box being a lot
less depressing.

He grabs a sharpie and changes the heart into a very sad little face. He lets out a big sigh and collapses into the pile of stuffed animals and various thoughtful gifts.

He stares at the ceiling like he's hoping it'll never leave him.

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

INT. RESTAURANT

Michael and Jamie are eating dinner, making significant eye contact which leads to involuntary smiling.

-- Michael tries to steal a french fry from her plate. He's caught immediately.

-- She drops her napkin, and takes a bite of his meal as he's not looking, picking it up for her. She's caught with a full mouth. Laughter.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. MICHAEL'S BEDROOM

Michael pulls a matchbook from that restaurant out of the "Jamie's Stuff" box. He lights it and just watches it burn. It ends up burning him, forcing him to drop it to the ground and awkwardly stomp out the flame while still sitting.

He looks at his hand. It's time.

INT. SAM'S BEDROOM

Sam is painting. An easel on her dresser and a mess of color all around.

INTERCUT -- PHONE CONVERSATION

SAM

Hello?

MICHAEL

Hey, it's Michael. From the CHWG.

SAM

The what?

MICHAEL

Oh. I work at the CHWG, we met at a party and then at a coffee shop. I had whiskey. You had beer. I owe you money. I'm providing too many details.

SAM

You had me at owe me money, Michael.

MICHAEL

Oh good. I just wanted to let you know I'll have it for you soon. I'm about to head to an ATM. Want to meet at the same place?

SAM

I'd rather try someplace new. How about we grab crepes? Down on Fenton.

MICHAEL
 (uneasy)
 Um, sure. I love new places.

SAM
 You don't sound like you love new places.

MICHAEL
 I just get a little anxious sometimes. My ex actually broke up with me for being boring. Nbd.

SAM
 It'll be good for you. I'll see you in an hour. Unless you keep talking about your ex before our date.

MICHAEL
 You're probably right. See you soon. For our date.

Beat.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
 For the record, you called it a date first.

SAM
 I sure did. Looking forward to it. See you later.

They hang up. That was exhausting.

EXT. FENTON ATM

Michael is getting cash from an ATM as the sun is beginning to set. He checks out the number on his hand a few times, as if it might disappear if he stops looking. The street is nearly empty.

MICHAEL
 (to himself)
 Maybe my dad was right.

Laughs as the cash dispenses from the machine.

MICHAEL
 About the girls *and* the money.

He turns around and his smile disappears as he is approached by three men in dark clothing. One of them wielding a very serious look and a KNIFE.

ATTACKER 1
Empty your pockets.

MICHAEL
Sure. Yeah. It's all yours. No
problem.

He pulls out his wallet very slowly from his back pocket and hands it over to the attackers.

ATTACKER 2
Your phone too. And anything else
in your pockets. Slowly.

MICHAEL
Of course.

The attackers check out their new loot, and try to decide if their victim is holding on to anything else of value.

ATTACKER 1
Is that everything?!

MICHAEL
I have nothing left. I literally
only have my clothes. Although if
you want them too, it will
officially put a button on a pretty
lousy week.

ATTACKER 2
You think we'd want your clothes?

ATTACKER 3
Like, you think we want to see you
naked?

MICHAEL
(nervously)
No. I mean...whatever...that would
be fine...not fine for me...but,
it's up to you.

He looks down at his hand and sees the phone number again. He instinctively grabs it, holding on to the only thing he has left.

ATTACKER 1
What are you doing with your hand?
You hiding something?

MICHAEL
Nothing. No. It's just this. This
is the only thing I have now.

He moves his hand towards the assailants to show them the innocuous phone number on his hand, but the attackers are thrown off by his sudden movements.

The lead attacker immediately hits Michael in the face in defense. Michael drops down to the ground in pain.

MICHAEL
(desperate)
Stop! Please.

The other two begin savagely kicking him in the side and face as he lies helplessly on the ground. A passerby sees what is happening and yells in defense of the increasingly bloody Michael.

PASSERBY
HEY! Get away from him!

The attackers begin to scatter, but not before getting a few last hits in. Attacker 1 gives Michael a final parting gift, stabbing him in his lower back before running off into the darkening evening light.

The passerby kneels down next to Michael, pulling out his cellphone to call for help.

INT. HOSPITAL

Michael's lifeless body bursts through the hospital doors on a gurney, being rushed through the hallway by paramedics. The paramedics are yelling updates to the doctors, as all are hurried and purposeful working to get him into surgery. Michael is visibly battered and bloody. He barely looks like himself.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM

Michael is laid out in a hospital bed, bandaged up and full of tubes and wires. Another seriously injured patient is in the bed next to him. There are a couple of doctors talking in the foreground.

DOCTOR 1
Have you been able to reach his
family or any of his emergency
contacts?

DOCTOR 2

We haven't even been able to ID him, yet. He had nothing in his pockets. We have no name, no nothing. It seems as though he's had himself a rough day. He's lucky just to be breathing on his own at this point.

A nurse motions to the doctors to come over so that she can show them something.

NURSE

Looks like there's something on his hand, underneath the bandage. A phone number, maybe.

The nurse carefully removes part of the bandage to reveal the phone number Michael received from Sam earlier that same day.

DOCTOR 1

It definitely looks like a phone number. His whole day must not of been so bad.

DOCTOR 2

Some girl's phone number doesn't really help us get any closer to the kid's family.

DOCTOR 1

She might at least be able to get us a name. That's something.

DOCTOR 2

Let's hope so. He could use someone here for him right now.

Michael continues to remain still, lifeless, and thoroughly beat up as the doctors leave his side and the nurse adjusts his IVs.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY

Sam is discussing Michael's situation with the doctor just outside of his room. Nurses and other doctors pass by, going about their days as usual.

SAM

I really wish I could be of more help. All I know is that his name
(MORE)

SAM (CONT'D)
is Michael and that he works at a
paper in Columbia Heights.

DOCTOR 1
(being nice)
That actually helps a lot.

Sam looks into the room and sees the motionless Michael,
bruised and vulnerable.

SAM
Is he going to be OK? He doesn't
even look like the same Michael
that I met.

DOCTOR 1
Honestly, it's not going to be an
easy road to recovery. He suffered
a few broken ribs, multiple broken
bones in his face, and a pretty
serious knife wound to his lower
back. It just missed severing his
spinal chord.

SAM
(shocked)
Oh my gosh! That's terrible, I
can't even imagine.

DOCTOR 1
(calming)
He should be fine, but it might be
rough going for the next couple of
days.

She looks through the doorway in a moment of silence.

SAM
Is there any way that can can stay
with him? I know I'm nobody but...

Sam's voice trails off trying to bait the doctor into
letting her stay.

DOCTOR 1
Visitation is supposed to be
restricted to family only.

She gives him grade A puppy dog eyes, before delivering her
plea.

SAM

Just until we can track down his family. Please, this is all my fault. We were supposed to meet up. It was a place he's never been to and he was nervous. We should have just gotten coffee.

Beat.

DOCTOR 1

Fine, but if anyone asks, you're his cousin.

SAM

Thanks so much, it means a lot. If anyone asks, I'll be his favorite cousin.

Sam hugs the doctor before cautiously entering into the room. She sits down next to his bed and fully takes in how bad of a shape he is in. Silence.

INT. OFFICE

Michael's office looks abandoned. A PHONE rings in the main lobby with nobody to answer it. The voicemail picks up.

Thank you for calling the Columbia Heights Gazette. I'm sorry we can't answer your call. We're probably out researching a story. Please leave your name and number and we'll get back to you. BEEP.

DOCTOR 1 (V.O.)

Hi. I'm calling from Mercy General Hospital downtown. We have a patient named Michael who we're told works at your office. We're unable to reach his family. Please call us if you have any way to reach them. Without disclosing any medical details over the phone, he could really use some familiar faces by his side right now. Thank you.

Beat.

A few employees, including Mr. Evans enter the office looking very jovial, carrying to-go bags from a local burger joint. One stops to check the voicemail. Two others and Mr. Evans go to the break room and grab a couple of beers.

We hear the message being replayed.

DOCTOR 1 (V.O.)
Hi. I'm calling from Mercy General
Hospital downtown...

A NERF football comes flying past the listeners face,
followed by a can of beer. His attention is now on the drink
and not the message.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM

Sam is by Michael's side all night and into the next day,
attempting to heal him with pure adorableness.

-- Sam reads books to Michael as he sleeps.

-- She covers the room in balloons.

-- She spots a clown who attempts the healing power of
laughter.

Sam is asleep by the bed on the second day when Michael
begins to slowly stir.

MICHAEL
(groggy)
Hey.

Nothing.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
Hey.

Sam wakes from her sleep.

SAM
You're up.

MICHAEL
You're here.

SAM
Yeah. They didn't know who else to
call. How are you feeling?

MICHAEL
Great. I'm a really tough guy.

SAM
How do you really feel?

MICHAEL

Like I know what it feels like to
be a murder victim.

SAM

That's not great.

MICHAEL

No it is not.

SAM

Here. I got you this for when you
wake up. Which is now.

She hands him a card filled with signatures and well-wishes.

MICHAEL

Who are these people? I don't
recognize a single name on this
card.

SAM

They're just a few of the people
here at the hospital. I had some
time on my hands.

Sam takes the card to read him an example of the well-wishes
she tracked down.

SAM

(reading)

'Get well soon Michael, we're all
rooting for you. We have chocolate
pudding in the cafeteria today.'
That one is from the lunch room.

MICHAEL

That's nice. I do love chocolate
pudding.

SAM

Same. It was signed yesterday
though.

MICHAEL

(disappointed)

So no pudding?

SAM

I'll see what I can drum up.

MICHAEL
Who sent the balloons?

SAM
I may have drummed those up too.

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

INT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT LIVING ROOM

Michael is bundled up on his couch sick. Jamie is rushing around, half dressed, getting ready to go out.

MICHAEL
Can you get me some water?

JAMIE
Give me a few minutes. I just need to get dressed.

MICHAEL
Do you really have to go out tonight? We could stay in, watch a movie.

JAMIE
We always stay in and watch movies. It's only girls night like once a month.

MICHAEL
But I'm sick.

She's putting on makeup and shoes at the same time.

JAMIE
Exactly. What am I going to do? Watch you be on the couch?

He coughs for a solid thirty seconds.

MICHAEL
No, I guess not.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM

MICHAEL

I can't believe you've just been here waiting for me to wake up. I feel like I might owe you more than just some drink money now.

SAM

How about you just give me your last name so we can call your parents and let them know you're alright.

MICHAEL

Eshman.

SAM

Thanks Mr. Eshman. I'll go tell the doctor I solved the mystery of the unidentified patient.

MICHAEL

(feebly)

Thanks.

SAM

It's the least I can do. I should have never asked you to get crepes in that part of town. I did this to you.

MICHAEL

It's not your fault. I don't blame you. Unless there's no pudding.

He reaches out weakly to Sam, who gently places his hand in hers. They share a brief moment before Sam leaves. Michael, in pain, closes his eyes.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM

Michael's parents and Jules crowd into the hospital room. His mom and dad are emotional, while Jules seems unfazed.

MOM

My baby! How are you? Does it hurt? What can we get for you? Are they treating you well?

MICHAEL
I'm fine, mom.

DAD
You don't look fine. I'm going to
hunt the animals down that did this
to you.

MICHAEL
With your particular set of skills?

DAD
Is that some sort of a reference I
should know?

Michael doesn't feel the need to respond, and just gives his
father a look. Sam breaks the silence.

SAM
I should probably get going. I'm
really glad you're feeling better,
Michael.

Sam turns to leave the room. Michael musters up the strength
to call her back.

MICHAEL
Sam, please stay. It's alright.
Stay.

Sam stays put, but also respectfully gives Michael's family
some room.

JULES
You look rough. A broken face to
match the broken heart. Ain't that
something?

MICHAEL
Nice to see you too, Jules. Did you
not notice I was missing for a
couple of days?

JULES
I got really lost in a D&D
campaign. You know how I get.

MOM
So, who is this?

Michael's mom points right at Sam. Her finger uncomfortably
close to her face. Sam looks to Michael for his response,
not knowing how to react.

MICHAEL

Oh. This is Sam, everybody. She's been here taking care of me.

MOM

Like a nurse.

MICHAEL

Like a nurse, yes. But she's not a nurse. Just someone who has been really good to me.

DAD

Well thank you, Sam. Here, take some money.

He reaches into his wallet to grab some money, to repay Sam for her generosity.

SAM

No, thank you. It was my pleasure.

MICHAEL

Dad, stop it with the money.

MOM

How did this happen, Mikey?

Embarrassed beat.

MICHAEL

I got mugged at an ATM.

DAD

Because you didn't have any cash? Here. Everyone take some, right now.

Michael's dad passes around bills like a magician asking the audience to pick a card. Jules doesn't hesitate to take her share.

MOM

Oh, stop it. We're just glad you're OK. We're going to be right by your side until every bruise is gone and forgotten.

MICHAEL

(evasively)

That's really sweet. I think I'll be OK taking my chances at home with Jules.

JULES

Aw, that means you love me more than you love your parents. I love you too.

MOM

You really love your roommate more than your own parents?

MICHAEL

That's not what I said. I love you all equally.

His eyes meet Sam's. She winks at him, and his face sort of resembles a smile.

SAM

I really should get going. Please feel better, Michael. It was great meeting you all.

ALL

You too.

Sam leaves the room and everyone has the need to address the elephant that just left the room.

MOM

She seemed sweet.

JULES

I'd say she seemed nice.

Michael shows his hand, which still has a faded number scribbled across it.

MICHAEL

I called her.

DAD

That's my boy.

The doctor enters the room to check on Michael's condition. His family and Jules all very close and surrounding Michael.

DOCTOR 1

Michael needs to get some rest. You can all come back in a few hours.

MICHAEL

(whispers to Doctor 1)
Thank you.

MOM

OK, sweetie. We'll be right outside if you need us.

JULES

I'll probably go home, but you can text if you need anything.

DAD

Oh, before we go. Your boss sends his well-wishes.

He hands Michael a card.

His family starts to filter out of the room. He reads the get well soon card signed by his coworkers. It's nice. The personal note reads "Mike, we have to push up your deadline this week. We need something by Friday." He sighs.

EXT. MICHAEL'S FRONT PORCH

Michael's parents are wheeling him up to his own front door, coming home from the hospital for the first time in a wheelchair. His mother is wheeling him very slowly, afraid any tiny movement might hurt her child. His father is a backseat driver.

MICHAEL

We can probably go a little faster, don't you think?

MOM

No I don't think. You're not getting hurt again on my watch. No way.

DAD

Watch out for that small crack up ahead.

MOM

I see it.

DAD

I'm sure you did, but I just needed to check.

MICHAEL

My hero.

They stop just short of front door. Michael struggles to reach for his keys in a backpack hung on the back of his new wheels.

DAD
Let us help.

Both parents grab at the bag at the same time, getting nowhere.

MOM
Are you sure your keys are even in here?

DAD
Why do you have this much stuff in here? Why did you think you would need this at the hospital?

He holds up a bathing suit.

MICHAEL
I didn't.

MOM
We packed the bag for him, hon. I just thought it's better to be prepared.

MICHAEL
For a late night hospital swim.

MOM
That's right.

He throws the suit back into the bag, and starts to zip it back up.

DAD
I think you better just knock.

MICHAEL
Fine. Jules should be home now anyway. She'll be excited to see me when she opens the door. Like a nice little surprise homecoming.

Knocks.

Nothing.

Knocks again.

MOM
Maybe she's not home.

MICHAEL
She's home.

KNOCK.

Jules opens the door wearing only a loose fitting robe leaving very little to the imagination.

JULES
Oh hey. Welcome home. I hope you weren't waiting long. I was just having a little me time.

MICHAEL
Please do not elaborate.

JULES
Hi, Mr. & Mrs. Eshman.

They just look back at Jules in silence, knowing her well enough not to be surprised, but unwilling to engage.

JULES
Well wheel yourself in here, Skeletor! Make yourself comfortable.

MICHAEL
(to parents)
Thanks for driving, guys. I appreciate it. Love you.

MOM
Love you too.

His dad touches him on the shoulder.

DAD
Feel better kid. Let us know if you need anything.

The two walk back to their car, hand-in-hand.

JULES
Your parents are cute. Holding hands like teenagers in love for the first time.

MICHAEL
Eh, it's mostly functional. My mom's hands get really cold.

Michael looks back at his parents, as his dad opens the car door up for his mom.

JULES
Nah, it's cute.

Jules moves behind Michael, pushing his chair into the open apartment. She closes the door behind them.

INT. MICHAEL'S BEDROOM

Michael is sprawled out on his bed with a pad of paper and some drawing utensils on his stomach. He struggles to keep the a pen steady in his hand.

He looks at the card his dad handed to him in the hospital. Then looks at the clock on his nightstand for confirmation; he's running out of time.

He tries again to concentrate on drawing on his notepad. His hand slips, ruining the comic that was nearly finished. He throws the pen across the room in anger. It falls harmlessly on the floor across the room. Too far for him to retrieve it again.

He cries.

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM

Michael and Jules are playing video games. Michael's stretched out on the couch while Jules is hanging out on the floor next to several empty beer cans.

MICHAEL
I must be feeling better because I
am destroying you right now.

JULES
Please, I have you right where I
want you.

MICHAEL
Where is that? On top of the leader
board?

JULES
Watch yourself. I'm going to beat
you so bad you'll wish you were
back at that ATM.

Michael drops the controller.

MICHAEL

Not cool.

JULES

Mikey, I didn't mean it. You know how I get with a controller in my hand.

MICHAEL

Those six beers probably didn't help much either.

JULES

Yeah, but three of them were before noon, so they don't count.

Beat.

JULES (CONT'D)

You want one?

MICHAEL

I'm good. I have my own six pack of pain meds in my system. Do you want one?

JULES

(excited)

Yeah, for sure.

MICHAEL

Sorry, I need them.

JULES

You're stupid.

MICHAEL

You're stupid.

Beat.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

We need a break.

He closes his eyes in pain and concentration.

JULES

Not even going to give me a chance to comeback and beat you?

MICHAEL

Sorry. I think I need to get out of the house or something. Probably

(MORE)

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
should replace my wallet, phone,
and stuff.

JULES
I get it. I lose my mind when I'm
without my phone for even a few
minutes while it's charging in
another room.

Jules uses this as an opportunity to check her phone for any social media updates.

She looks up from her phone.

JULES
Perhaps that lovely lady from the
hospital could drive you and your
broken self to the mall for your
replacements.

MICHAEL
That'd be a little weird right?
'Hey remember me? You did a whole
bunch of nice stuff for me, and now
I have another nice thing for you
to do for me.'

JULES
I think that might work.

MICHAEL
You think?

JULES
Just call her.

Michael grabs Jules' cell phone right out of her hands. Michael winces as the quick movement caused some pain to his broken body.

JULES
(frustrated)
Not cool.

Jules pops open her nearby laptop to continue exploring the ins and outs of the internet. Michael dials the phone, calling Sam.

MICHAEL
(on phone)
Hey. It's Michael. From the
hospital.

SAM (V.O)
Michael, the surgeon? I didn't
think you'd call. You were just so
sexy with your scrubs on.

Beat.

MICHAEL
No, Michael the patient, who got
beat up and owes you for both your
loan and kindness?

SAM (V.O)
I was joking.

Michael shakes his head at how easily he was duped by Sam
over the phone.

MICHAEL
Me too. Do you want to hang out
today? I need to buy some things I
lost in the mugging. I thought we
could make a day of it.

SAM (V.O)
Yeah. Definitely. I was worried you
wouldn't call again.

MICHAEL
(nervous)
I was worried that I would call. Or
not that I would, but was worried
of what would happen.

Shakes head again.

SAM (V.O)
You're safe with me, kid.

MICHAEL
That's sweet of you. Also something
that would be sweet of you...can
you pick me up?

SAM (V.O)
That's actually kind of a deal
breaker.

He looks up at the ceiling like he just blew the whole
thing.

MICHAEL

I totally understand. You've done enough for me already. I wouldn't want to have to drive me around either. It's just that...you're joking again aren't you?

SAM (V.O)

I'll be there at 3.

MICHAEL

Looking forward to it.

SAM (V.O)

Me too.

Michael hangs up the phone and just stares into the ether for a moment.

JULES

Sounds like that went well.

MICHAEL

It did. It really did.

JULES

Better than this game is going for you. That's for sure.

The TV screen shows that Jules has been playing the video game without Michael. Beating him repeatedly.

MICHAEL

Idiot.

JULES

I'm the idiot in first place.

Michael turns off the TV before any more damage can be done on the screen.

MICHAEL

Whatever, I need to get ready; I haven't showered since the hospital. Want to give me a sponge bath?

JULES

Inappropriate.

Jules turns the TV back on, giving her one more chance to beat her virtual friend.

INT. MALL

Sam is pushing Michael leisurely in a wheelchair around a bustling suburban mall. Shoppers shopping and teenagers loitering.

MICHAEL

Thanks again for coming out with me. It's not exactly the ideal first date.

SAM

It's a lovely date. But for the record, I count the hospital as our first real date.

MICHAEL

I was unconscious.

SAM

Here I thought you were just the strong, silent type.

Beat.

He smiles up at her from his wheelchair.

MICHAEL

Knowing you is an emotional roller coaster.

SAM

Thank you. Please keep your arms and legs inside the chair at all times.

Sam speeds up her pace, weaving in and out of kiosks. Michael puts his hands up feigning being on an amusement park ride.

SECURITY GUARD

Hey! Slow down.

Michael puts his hands down immediately. Sam keeps going strong.

MICHAEL

(sincere)

Sam, that guy asked us to slow down.

SAM

The ride's not over until it's over. I wouldn't want you to get stuck at the top of a hill.

MICHAEL

Please stop.

Sam reluctantly slows down to a stop.

SAM

Sorry. You must be this tall to ride anyway.

Sam put her hand right above Michael's head to signify he was just too short.

MICHAEL

Sorry. I'm just boring. It's not you.

SAM

I don't know. I bet there's a risk-taker somewhere in you trying to get out.

She starts slowly pushing his wheelchair again.

MICHAEL

I don't even like to try new toothpastes.

SAM

Well, that's just good old fashioned brand loyalty.

He sees his bank up just ahead, with an ATM off to the side in the main hallway.

MICHAEL

This is a good place to stop. I can finally pay you back.

He points to the ATM.

SAM

Absolutely.

As they approach the ATM, Michael begins to act very nervous. He is looking around and very hesitantly taking his bank card out of his pocket.

SAM

You OK?

MICHAEL

(vulnerable)

Yeah. Yeah, of course. It's just...the last ATM I was at didn't end up going so well for me.

He motions to his wheelchair showcasing it like he's closing a deal at a used car lot.

SAM

I wouldn't worry. This ATM is very different.

MICHAEL

How so?

SAM

(feigned seriousness)

I'm here to protect you to this time.

Sam acts out some 'karate' moves and poses in a 'bad-ass' Charlie's Angels pose.

MICHAEL

(amused)

My hero.

He eases into the transaction and successfully removes some cash, handing some of it directly to Sam.

SAM

Didn't think I'd ever see my money again.

MICHAEL

I'm not some deadbeat.

SAM

Too bad. That's usually the kind of guy I'm attracted to.

Beat.

MICHAEL

(speaking deeply)

I have some library books I never returned.

SAM
(impressed)
Marry me.

Laughter.

MICHAEL
Let's just start with getting me a
new phone so we can text each other
cute emojis later.

SAM
Was I moving too fast for you
again?

She begins to push the wheelchair at roller coaster speed again, briefly, before she slows down, and puts one hand on his shoulder as they move along to their next shopping destination.

INT. CELL PHONE STORE

Michael feigns talking on multiple models of phones like a cliché dressing room montage from the movies. Sam shakes her head no at each and every new 'look.' Finally they both look excited to have found the perfect phone.

SAM
It's perfect!

MICHAEL
I agree. Mostly because it's the
only pre-approved replacement for
my stolen phone.

SAM
Smart.

Michael completes his transaction with the cashier and Sam pushes him out into the mall, with the food court in the near distance.

SAM
Are you hungry?

MICHAEL
I could use a bite to eat.

They enter the food court where an army of low-wage workers hold sample plates just outside of every eatery.

MICHAEL

What kind of food are you in the mood for?

They stop moving to make a decision.

SAM

I can never decide. I'm thinking we just fill up on samples of everything.

MICHAEL

I don't want to take advantage of the food court sample system.

SAM

You don't want them to waste food do you? Somebody has to eat it.

MICHAEL

Yeah, but it's supposed to be for potential customers.

SAM

Let loose a little!

She starts to push him closer to the food options.

MICHAEL

Maybe we can just...

SAM

(interrupting)

You don't have a choice!

Sam immediately rolls Michael right up to the closest sample platter.

SAM

Two samples of your finest egg roll, my good man.

The employee reaches out with his platter of Chinese food samples and toothpicks. Sam picks up two, handing one to Michael.

MICHAEL

(reluctantly)

Thank you.

On to the next one! Just a few steps away.

Sam looks over this next platter like a discerning food critic examining its notes.

SAM

This looks lovely. Two please!

She grabs one for each of them.

MICHAEL

Thanks.

This continues for the next 8 stops, even going back to the first few for seconds.

MICHAEL

(sheepishly)

Sam, I think I'm full.

SAM

Are you just saying that to get me to stop?

MICHAEL

I might be.

She laughs.

SAM

Fair enough.

Sam looks at a nearby photo booth.

SAM (CONT'D)

That's happening.

He looks down at his chair.

MICHAEL

Not sure I'll fit into anything called a booth.

SAM

Your legs aren't broken. We'll make it work.

She wheels him right up to the booth, and squeezes by him into the booth leaving him outside before popping her head out of the curtain.

SAM

Are you ready?

MICHAEL

I'll be right in.

Sam is taking up most of the space, and pats her lap for him to sit. He strains to get up, as she helps him into place in her arms.

MICHAEL

This makes me feel very masculine.

SAM

(playfully)

Just let it happen, big boy.

She adds her money to the photo booth and we see three adorable photos taken in quick succession.

Silly one.

Serious one.

Flirty one.

EXT. MICHAEL'S FRONT PORCH

The two are out on the porch, chatting about nothing. Just trying to make the date last a little longer. Michael is still in his chair while Sam hovers above him.

MICHAEL

(listing)

Heartbreak. Disease. Puppies.

SAM

Those are good, but maybe add underdogs defying all of the odds?

MICHAEL

Sure. Those are the only things that make me cry at the movies, though. Nothing else.

SAM

There's no shame in that.

MICHAEL

This has been great, but I should really get inside and try to do some work...if my boss hasn't fired me already.

SAM

Why would he do something like that?

MICHAEL

I don't have a new comic to submit,
and the deadline is tomorrow
morning.

SAM

You were in the hospital.

MICHAEL

That's true, I forgot about that
for a second.

SAM

You did not.

MICHAEL

I did not. No.

SAM

You don't have anything you can
turn in? What about those drawings
I saw at the bar? They're already
done.

MICHAEL

No. They're done, but...I don't
think...it's just not...I don't
know.

She looks at him like he's crazy and shouldn't need this
much encouragement.

SAM

If you're going to get fired
anyway...

MICHAEL

Maybe I can get another extension.

SAM

You don't need one. Just turn in
your work. Let them fall in love
with it like you did when you made
it. I've literally been pushing you
around all day. It's time to make
some moves for yourself.

MICHAEL

Ugh.

SAM

That's the sound people make when
they know I'm right.

MICHAEL

I'm just not one to open myself up to risk like you. I don't know how or why you do what you do. You seem to just go for it.

SAM

It's not like I was born this way.

Beat.

MICHAEL

Go on.

SAM

I was born an indoor kid. TV, books, and not much else. My dad was always pushing me to try new things with him. Things like trying new foods, going on small adventures, and meeting new people. He was born that way. I always said no, or maybe next time. And when he died when I was in high school I promised myself I'd stop saving things for the next time. Because there might not be a next time.

MICHAEL

Wow. Sorry about your dad.

SAM

Thanks.

MICHAEL

It's also nice to know I can blame my very alive parents for my rut.

She shakes her head. Not angry, but disappointed.

SAM

Too soon.

MICHAEL

I heard it while I was saying it. Sorry. Tell me something else about yourself.

SAM

I'm a teacher. Middle school literature.

MICHAEL

I bet you have them standing on their desks and seizing the day on the regular.

SAM

I don't go full Dead Poet's. That'd be a little too on the nose. But I'm very inspiring.

MICHAEL

I bet your standardized test scores are off the charts.

SAM

Are you trying to seduce me?

Maybe he is.

There is a short moment of silence as both contemplate what's next.

SAM

There's no smooth way to do this so...

Sam leans down to Michael in his chair for a gentle first kiss.

MICHAEL

I'm really glad you did that. I really thought I blew it.

Beat.

MICHAEL

Plus I was racking my brain trying to map out a kiss strategy that didn't require me to stand up and rupture something.

The door to the apartment opens and Jamie is standing right in front of the two. Bad timing.

JAMIE

Oh hey, I thought I heard voices out here.

MICHAEL

Holy shit, Jamie? What are you doing here?

JAMIE
 (concerned)
 Your mom told me about what
 happened and I just needed to come
 see you.

Beat.

SAM
 Hi Jamie, I'm Sam. I, uh, was just
 dropping him off.

JAMIE
 Nice to meet you, Pam.

Michael looks to Sam as if to say, I don't know what to do
 and she mouths "it's ok."

SAM
 I'll get going. Call me later,
 Michael?

MICHAEL
 Yeah. Of course. Thanks for
 everything.

They touch hands affectionately. Sam then slowly takes off
 while Michael struggles to wheel himself inside his
 apartment.

INT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT LIVING ROOM

Micheal sits in his chair as Jamie hovers just above him.

MICHAEL
 You didn't have to come.

JAMIE
 I wanted to. I couldn't stand
 thinking about you in pain.

Jamie puts her hand on Michael's shoulder and he begins to
 feel the comfort of what was commonplace for the past three
 years.

MICHAEL
 That's sweet. Thanks.

He awkwardly shrugs off her hand from his shoulder, and
 wheels himself towards the couch.

JAMIE

I was so worried about you when I found out what happened. How are you feeling? Is there anything I can do for you?

MICHAEL

I'm OK. A little tired. I should probably just lie down.

Michael begins to struggle to get himself onto the couch. Jamie jumps at the chance to help.

JAMIE

Here, let me help.

MICHAEL

Thanks.

JAMIE

Yeah.

An awkward silence.

MICHAEL

Do you want to stick around, maybe watch a movie? Since you came all the way over.

JAMIE

I'd like that.

Jamie curls up on the couch with Michael as they hesitantly revert right back into their old ways. The third, mystery roommate walks by eating a sandwich in the background.

EXT. MICHAEL'S FRONT PORCH

Sam stops by the next morning with some surprise donuts to cheer up Michael. She knocks on the door. Jamie opens it.

JAMIE

Oh hi.

SAM

Hey. Is Michael around?

JAMIE

He's still sleeping.

SAM

Ah. Can you just give these donuts to him please? Tell him that Sa...just tell him they're from a friend.

JAMIE

Sure. No problem. That's so nice. Thanks for stopping by.

SAM

Yeah. It was nice to see you again.

Sam walks back to her car and sits in the driver's seat for a few moments looking sad before putting the keys in the ignition to drive away.

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM

Michael wheels himself into the living room where Jamie is cleaning up.

MICHAEL

Did I hear someone at the door earlier?

JAMIE

Oh...yeah. That was just donuts.

She points over at the kitchen where the freshly delivered goods are sitting.

MICHAEL

Donuts were at the door?

He starts heading in the direction of the donuts, ready for a bite.

JAMIE

They were a surprise. To help you feel better.

He grabs a donut and takes a bite.

MICHAEL

(mouth full)

I think it might be working.

He notices the time and starts to fidget with his coat, trying to get it on while in the chair.

JAMIE

Where do you think you're going?

MICHAEL

I have to get to work. It's probably my last day.

She gives a confused look.

JAMIE

I suppose you'll be needing a ride to the office?

MICHAEL

Yes, please.

INT. OFFICE CONFERENCE ROOM

The usual office suspects are sitting around the conference table. Waiting for the boss to arrive to start the meeting. It doesn't sound too dissimilar from the noises at a bar at happy hour.

Mr. Evans enters. The noise slowly settles into a murmur, then fades.

MR. EVANS

Good morning everyone.

Silence.

MR. EVANS

It's nice to see everyone back here. Mr. Eshman, I hope you had a nice few days off. A vacation sounds awfully nice right now.

MICHAEL

Um, I was in the hospital for most of it. I could use a vacation myself.

MR. EVANS

Right. Well welcome back. I assume you have your work done. No need for serious conversations?

Michael looks at his smudged, incomplete piece, covers his eyes with his hand in deep thought.

BRO EMPLOYEE 1
What's happening?

BRO EMPLOYEE 2
I think he's having a meltdown.

Several of the meeting attendees take out cell phones in hopes of capturing something for YouTube.

MR. EVANS
Mr. Eshman? Is that true? Are you having yourself a meltdown?

Michael finally perks up.

MICHAEL
Yes....no...sorry. I have it right here. I tried something a little new this time.

He slides his finished, personal, work over to Mr. Evans, who takes a quick glance at it before moving on.

MR. EVANS
Great. Serious conversation averted. Next item of business: we're getting a water cooler for the office to stimulate conversation.

Michael sighs and stares up at the ceiling in either relief or despair.

INT. SAM'S BEDROOM - NEXT DAY

Sam is reading a book on her bed, sad, but not visibly dwelling on the Michael situation.

Her phone vibrates. She answers.

SAM
Hey Michael, what's up?

EXT. MICHAEL'S FRONT PORCH

Michael is sitting outside of his apartment.

MICHAEL
Just wanted to see how you were doing.

INTERCUT -- PHONE CONVERSATION

SAM
Never better. Reading the newest
young adult novel. Like I do.

MICHAEL
Sounds stimulating.

SAM
Get my donuts?

MICHAEL
(surprised)
Those were from you? You should
have said hi.

SAM
Yeah. I stopped by, but Jamie said
you were still sleeping.

MICHAEL
Oh.

SAM
Yeah.

Extended silence.

MICHAEL
She stayed over the other night.

SAM
I gathered as much.

MICHAEL
It's not what you think though.

SAM
You don't owe me anything. I'm a
big girl.

MICHAEL
I really like you.

SAM
I like you too.

MICHAEL
I kind of like Jamie too.

SAM
I get it. You were with her a long
time.

MICHAEL

What are you saying?

SAM

I'm just saying, you guys have a history. I'm not going to stand in the way of that if it's what you want. Plus she's never been the reason you've been sent to the hospital.

MICHAEL

I don't know what to say.

SAM

(laughing)

That wouldn't be the first time.

MICHAEL

So you think I should just give up on us, and get back with Jamie? That's what I'm hearing come out of your mouth?

SAM

Kind of. Yeah. It's up to you. We haven't known each other long. I like you. That's true. But it's only been a few days, and for a couple of those you were unconscious...I'm a riskier bet. I'd take that bet. But that's not you.

MICHAEL

This kind of sucks.

SAM

I won't disagree with you.

MICHAEL

I wish it didn't feel so good seeing Jamie again.

SAM

But it did and that's fine.

MICHAEL

Sorry.

Beat.

SAM

Bye Michael, hope you feel better soon.

MICHAEL

Before you go...they published my comic. The one you encouraged me to submit.

SAM

Of course they did. I'm proud of you. See what happens when you go for it?

MICHAEL

Just this once.

SAM

Before you know it, you'll be hitting up the food court for free samples on the regs.

MICHAEL

I don't know about all that.

Beat.

SAM

I better get going. This YA novel isn't going to read itself.

MICHAEL

(unsure)

OK...have a great week?

SAM

Yeah. You too.

Both hang up.

Jamie comes outside to check on Michael.

JAMIE

You doing OK?

MICHAEL

Of course. Really glad you're here.

JAMIE

Me too.

She wheels him back inside the apartment and closes the door behind them.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE

Michael is sitting on sterile white paper, with only a hospital gown on. The doctor comes in.

DOCTOR 1
How are we feeling today?

MICHAEL
Good. I feel really good.

DOCTOR 1
Have you been sleeping well?

He flips through some sheets on his clipboard, looking through Michaels' charts.

MICHAEL
Yeah. I actually sleep all the time. I've never been better at napping.

Doctor jots some notes down on his clipboard. Then stands up and moves closer to Michael.

DOCTOR 1
Alright, give me a few deep breaths.

Places stethoscope on his back. Listens. Relocates stethoscope.

DOCTOR 1
Good. One more.

Beat.

DOCTOR 1
OK, good. We're going to finish up here and have you head down to the lab for an MRI.

Jots down a few more notes.

MICHAEL
OK. How's everything looking?

DOCTOR 1
You're well on the road to recovery. Everything here is looking good. The MRI will tell us more.

MICHAEL
(relieved)
Good. Good.

The doctor exits the room and Michael takes his time to digest the good news. Another deep breath, this time there's no stethoscope needed.

INT. RESTAURANT

Jamie and Michael are having dinner in the bar area of a nice restaurant, crowded with young professionals taking advantage of a generous happy hour.

JAMIE
(looking at menu)
What are you thinking of getting?

MICHAEL
Probably the burger special, and one of those giant beers.

Points to a crowd of intern-looking dudes, holding mugs three times the size of what they should be.

She looks up, unimpressed.

JAMIE
I was thinking we could split a pizza.

MICHAEL
I just had pizza the other night.

JAMIE
I'm just really in the mood for pizza. Let's get one.

MICHAEL
OK, but I'm staying firm on the giant beer.

Waiter approaches.

WAITER
What can I get for you guys?

JAMIE
I'll have a water and a garden mushroom pizza.

WAITER
And for you, sir?

MICHAEL
Giant beer, please.

WAITER
Alright, I'll be right back with
those drinks.

He exits, on to his next table.

JAMIE
Do you think you'll still drink so
much when we get married.

MICHAEL
I've never really thought about it.

JAMIE
The drinking, or the marriage?

MICHAEL
Both, I guess.

JAMIE
You've never thought about marrying
me? That seems pretty weird after
dating for three years.

MICHAEL
I think it's weird that you broke
up with someone you thought about
marrying.

JAMIE
(hurt)
That's not fair.

The waiter comes back with their drinks. Michael takes a big
sip, as the two sit in a moment of silence.

JAMIE
How did your doctor's appointment
go the other day?

MICHAEL
Everything looks good. Still
waiting on some test results, but
it's good. Thanks for asking.

JAMIE

Oh good! Maybe you'll be healthy enough to help me move some of my things into your place this weekend.

MICHAEL

Oh?

JAMIE

Yeah, my lease is coming up and your place is closer to my job anyway.

More beer.

MICHAEL

Cool.

JAMIE

I'm going to hit the ladies room.

MICHAEL

Have fun.

The waiter approaches with the unwanted pizza. More beer for Michael.

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM

Michael and Jules are hosting a couples' game night. Jamie, and a few randoms who know Jules are sitting on the floor around a coffee table drinking and playing 21 questions. Each guest has a card stuck to their forehead, with the name of a celebrity on it.

JAMIE

Am I a movie star?

ALL

Yes.

JULES

No!

MICHAEL

What? Of course she is.

JULES

I wouldn't say she's a star.

GUEST 1

But she's definitely in movies.

JULES

Sure, but is that what she's known for?

MICHAEL

That's not the question being asked.

JAMIE

So I'm in movies?

ALL

Yes.

Everyone takes a sip of their beverage, waiting to answer the next question.

JAMIE

Am I in romance movies?

ALL

No.

JULES

Sure she is!

GUEST 1

Every time, Jules. Every single time!

MICHAEL

(to group)

Let's just say no.

JULES

OK. Even though it's not accurate.

GUEST 2

(to Jamie)

Only one more question, then you have to guess.

Her eyes get big, and she looks like she has no idea who she's supposed to be.

JAMIE

Umm, am I considered attractive?

Everybody gives a look to Jules.

JULES
I think so.

MICHAEL
Sure.

GUEST 2
What's your guess?

JAMIE
Wow, um...Jennifer Lawrence?

Jamie removes the card to look at the name on it.

JAMIE
Minnie Mouse? Really, Jules?

JULES
Kind of sexy, not going to lie.

The group laughs. Jamie throws a crumpled up napkin at Jules for her horrific gameplay.

Michael's phone begins to vibrate.

MICHAEL
Sorry, I need to take this. Keep playing without me...and don't listen to anything Jules says.

Michael walks towards the kitchen and we barely hear the next player start the round of questioning.

INT. KITCHEN

GUEST 1 (O.C.)
Am I a man?

ALL(O.C.)
Nope!

MICHAEL
(on phone)
Hello? This is he.

Voices fade out while Michael listens intently on the line, leaning against the kitchen counter top.

MICHAEL
Um, OK. What does that mean?

Beat.

MICHAEL

You can fix it though, right? It's not serious?

Extended beat.

MICHAEL

Well thanks for calling. I guess I'll see you soon.

Michael slowly collapses to the floor in disbelief of whatever he's just heard. Henry walks in, and sees him there. He pats Michael on the head.

HENRY

It's going to be OK, dude.

Michael says nothing back to the stranger who he lives with. Henry exits the room.

Michael cries.

He collects himself and eventually gets up to head back into the party.

INT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT LIVING ROOM

Michael surveys the party. His guests just as excited as before his phone call. He is less so.

ALL

OH!

JAMIE

I can't believe you guessed Taylor Swift in just nine questions.

GUEST 1

What can I say? I just get her.

MICHAEL

(talking over the group)
I need a drink. Let's drink.

He looks like he could use one.

JAMIE

(to Michael)
Everything OK?

MICHAEL

It will be. Right after we do some shots.

JAMIE

(hushed to Michael)

You know I don't like when you drink too much.

Jules holds up a bottle of Irish Whiskey like a trophy she's won.

JULES

SHOTS?

Jamie shoots Michael a look of disapproval. Michael reaches out to Jules with shot glass in hand. She happily fills it to the brim.

A few more fill their glasses. They drink in coordination like a synchronized swimming team.

Michael looks at Jules. Round two.

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM

Michael is on the couch helping Jules paint some new figures. He's concentrating. She's concentrating. It's silent. Jamie comes 'home' from work.

MICHAEL

Hey.

JAMIE

Hi. This is how I left you two this morning. Is this all you did today?

JULES

It's all I've been doing, yeah.

MICHAEL

I also did some light reading.

Michael points to a comic book on the floor next to him.

JAMIE

Nice. Well maybe we can cook up some dinner together?

MICHAEL

Sure. There's a new stir-fry recipe I've wanted to try.

JAMIE

I was thinking salmon and rice.

MICHAEL

It's your call. I just thought something new would be nice.

JAMIE

That doesn't sound like the Michael I know.

MICHAEL

But it's the Michael you want, right?

JAMIE

Right now I want salmon and rice. There will be other nights for stir fry.

Jules accidentally knocks over some paint on to the carpet.

JULES

Sorry.

MICHAEL

There goes our security deposit.

JULES

We were never getting that back.

She adjusts a picture on the wall to unveil a hole much bigger than the allowable nail-sized hole.

Beat.

JAMIE

Do you want to start making it now?

MICHAEL

You get things started, I'll be there in a few.

Michael pulls out his notebook from a backpack and starts making a list.

JULES

What are you doing?

MICHAEL

I was just realizing there are a lot of things I've never done.

JULES

Like eat stir fry tonight?

MICHAEL

Sure. But I've also never visited the monuments on the Mall. Or fired a gun.

JULES

I wouldn't suggest doing those at the same time.

MICHAEL

No, me neither.

He writes 'fallen in love with a stranger' on the page. Right under 'eat ice cream for dinner' and 'hold a koala.'

JULES

Why the sudden bucket list? Is everything ok?

MICHAEL

I'm getting surgery in a few days. There's swelling in my brain from the attack.

JULES

You're saying that very casually. Have you told your parents? Jamie?

MICHAEL

No.

JULES

You should really tell the people you love.

MICHAEL

That's why I'm telling you.

JULES

I love you too. But seriously, you need to let the people you care about know.

MICHAEL

You're right.

JULES

I know it. Blow on this.

She holds up a figure right to mouth level. He blows. Then heads for the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN

Jamie is working hard in the kitchen. Michael saunters in.

JAMIE

Finally. Can you peel these carrots
for the salad?

Jamie plops some carrots down on a cutting board. Michael
doesn't move.

MICHAEL

I don't really like carrots in my
salad.

JAMIE

They're good for you.

MICHAEL

I know. I just...I'm not very
hungry. I'm just going to go for a
walk.

Unknown to Jamie, this is an important moment for Michael.
It's just another moment to steam rice for Jamie.

JAMIE

Ok, want me to save you a plate?

MICHAEL

Sure.

INT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT LIVING ROOM

Michael walks briskly to Jules and her painting table where
he grabs his notebook and just as briskly, rips out his
bucket list, putting it in his pocket.

JULES

Going somewhere?

MICHAEL

I have some things to do before I
start telling my loved ones about
this.

Michael takes out his cell phone.

JULES

Want some company?

MICHAEL
Not this time. But thanks.

Beat.

JULES
This seemed like a big moment for
you. You just going to stand here?

He looks at his phone.

MICHAEL
I'm waiting to see if Uber's surge
pricing goes away.

She nods.

Extended silence.

JULES
Maybe just catch a cab.

INT. UBER

Michael is sitting in the backseat of a cab, with nowhere in particular to be, except for in his city.

CAB DRIVER
Where to?

MICHAEL
Can you just drive around for
awhile?

CAB DRIVER
Want to talk about it?

MICHAEL
No thanks. I think I'd just like to
wander around in silence. Maybe go
by a few monuments.

CAB DRIVER
You got it.

The cab wanders throughout the city, taking in different sites. Michael stares out of the window as people and places zoom past his view.

-- The Washington Monument

-- The Capital building

-- Several times around Dupont Circle

MICHAEL

Hey, maybe just drop me off at the
closest bar.

CAB DRIVER

No problem.

The cab pulls over after a block or two, right in front of the bar where Michael and Sam first met. Michael opens up the car door before realizing where he is. And where he should be.

MICHAEL

You know what, I changed my mind.

He gets back in the cab. Door closes. They start driving to the next destination.

INT. SAM'S PLACE

Sam is reading on her couch, listening to music on her headphones. There's a knock at the door, but there's no movement from Sam.

-- another knock

-- a loud crash

Sam gets up from her couch and races to the door to check out the commotion. She sees Michael, laying on the ground with a piece of her rain gutter next to him.

SAM

(concerned)

What are you doing out here? Are
you stupid?

MICHAEL

Very stupid, but I got your
attention.

SAM

I have a glass half full inside if
you want to come in.

MICHAEL

Yeah, just give me a moment to
gather myself.

She crouches down next to him to make sure he is alright.

SAM

Really, what are you doing here?

He settles into a comfortable position, where he can look her in her eyes and tell her what's going on.

MICHAEL

There's swelling in my brain. I need surgery and all I can think about is you. And how in the short time we spent together you got me out of my shell. Or at least got me closer to out of my shell.

SAM

Are you going to be ok?

MICHAEL

I don't actually know. All I know is Jules told me I needed to let everyone I care about know what I'm going through. So I came here.

Beat.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

I brought dinner.

Michael points to a half spilled cooler filled with a variety of tiny samples from the food court. She laughs at the sight.

SAM

How many places did you go to?

MICHAEL

14.

Michael sits up a little straighter, gaining some strength and pride back.

SAM

(playful)

I'm proud of you.

The two kiss.

MICHAEL

By the way, do you have cash for my cab?

He points behind him, to the hovering taxi.

SAM

Always.

INT. HOSPITAL

Sam, Jules, and Michael's parents crowd around his hospital bed as he prepares himself for surgery. His head shaved and marked up.

JULES

Your head looks like a Family Circle cartoon. What's little Jeffy getting into today?

MICHAEL

You know this is serious right?

JULES

This is how I deal with sadness. I love you.

She kisses Michael's freshly bald head.

MOM

We're going to be here when you get out.

DAD

You're going to be fine. Everything is going to be fine.

MICHAEL

If it's not, I just want to say I love you. Very much.

His mom begins to cry. His dad wraps his arms around her as she squeezes her baby's hand.

SAM

Do you love me too?

MICHAEL

No.

Beat.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

But I'm excited that I'll get to fall in love with you soon.

She places her hand on the side of his face, letting her touch respond to the sentiment.

DOCTOR 1
 (to Michael)
 It's time.

MICHAEL
 (nervous)
 OK. This is fine. It's fine.

Big sigh.

The nurses wheel Michael away from his family, as he does his best to maintain eye contact with Sam on his way out.

-- surgeons working on Michael's brain.

-- Sam wandering the halls

-- Mom, Dad, and Jules playing cards

-- Lots of coffee and vending machine snacks

Finally a doctor comes into the waiting room with news for the whole group.

DOCTOR 1
 Mr. and Mrs. Eshman, I don't want to keep you in suspense any longer than I need to...I know you're eager to hear how your son's surgery went...You've been very patient, so I'll be quick. I'd like to be very straightforward with you, and get this out of the way.

Everyone is tense, holding each other close. Patience running very thin. Jules chimes in.

JULES
 You're doing the opposite of what you're saying right now.

Mrs. Eshman shoots him a glare.

DOCTOR 1 (CONT'D)
 Yes, of course. Sorry. The surgery was successful in stopping the bleeding that was causing the problem. It was worse than we initially thought, but my team was able to take care of the issue. He's going to be up and running around again in no time.

DAD
Thank you, doctor.

He reaches out to give the doctor a twenty, as a tip. Jules reaches out her hand for her own tip, but Sam slaps it away.

Sighs of relief. Hugs.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM

Michael's eyes open to see Sam sitting nearby, bathed in bright white lights. The room is full of balloons and a clown doing his best to heal with the power of laughter. Michael's groggy, but alive.

MICHAEL
Is this Hell?

SAM
Yeah. Not so bad, right?

MICHAEL
I've been through worse.

SAM
(affectionately)
You're OK. Thank you for being OK.

Hand on his arm.

MICHAEL
You're welcome, but full transparency, I didn't really do it for you.

SAM
I'll allow it.

MICHAEL
No card this time?

SAM
I tried. Apparently everyone here thinks you're kind of a dick.

MICHAEL
Probably because I bled all over their best sheets.

He motions for her to come a little closer.

MICHAEL

Can I call you sometime? I'd love to take you out on a date. My treat.

SAM

Anytime.

They kiss.

MICHAEL

I usually wait until an actual date to go in for the kiss. But someone's been telling me to put myself out there more.

SAM

Jamie?

MICHAEL

Yeah, she's great isn't she? Is she here? I'd love to see her.

SAM

Shut up.

MICHAEL

Done.

They sit in silence. She lovingly rubs his arm, IVs, bandages, and all.

INT. RESTAURANT

Sam and Michael sit face-to-face at a tall table in the bar section of the nice restaurant where Jamie and Michael had their disastrous pizza date. Both are dressed to impress, like this was a first date all over again.

SAM

I can't believe you waited three weeks to call me.

MICHAEL

But I did call you. That should count for something.

SAM

Sure. I was just sort of expecting something a little more immediate. After you...pretty much expressed your love for me...on your potential deathbed.

MICHAEL

To be fair, I needed to recover from the brain surgery that almost caused my death.

SAM

I'm not a big fan of excuses, Mikey.

Beat.

MICHAEL

I also used the time to make you this.

He hands her a homemade card featuring his original artwork. Very adorable. Also, a blank check 'for everything you've done for me'

SAM

This is much better than excuses. And I can definitely come up with a value for this check if you want me to.

MICHAEL

Sure, but don't cash it until the end of the month.

SAM

Dead beat.

MICHAEL

A bit. Yeah. But a dead beat that thinks you look very pretty tonight.

SAM

Brain surgery has made you charming.

MICHAEL

I wasn't charming before?

SAM

You were mostly unconscious or trying to date your ex-girlfriend before.

MICHAEL

Accurate and a little hurtful.

Beat.

Sam looks concerned.

SAM
I don't think this is working.

MICHAEL
What do you mean?

SAM
It was fun at first. But now it's
just kind of sad.

MICHAEL
So it's over? Already?

SAM
I think so. Yeah.

Beat.

SAM
Let's bring her back over.

Jules is sitting at the bar in exile. Sulking like a child
in timeout.

MICHAEL
(to Jules)
Jules! You can come back. Your
timeout is officially over.

Jules leaps to her feet and hurries over.

JULES
Thank goodness. I missed you guys.
I have so much to say.

SAM
Ok, but say it without being weird
or we'll send you right back.

JULES
Deal. Does that include me talking
about what I'd like to do to that
guy in the ripped jeans over there?

MICHAEL
It does.

JULES
Noted.

The waiter arrives at the table with the group's drink
order. Three large beers.

He sets them down next to each person. Jules is almost halfway through her drink before the third beer even hits the table.

WAITER

Have you had a chance to look at the food menu?

SAM

Yeah, how are the burgers here?

WAITER

We've actually just been named the best burger in DC by the CHWG.

MICHAEL

The Columbia Heights Weekly Gazette?

WAITER

That's the one.

Michael laughs. Sam laughs. Jules stares.

SAM

We'll do three burgers.

JULES

And an order of wings. And crab dip.

Beat.

JULES

And pub pretzels.

The waiter looks at Sam and Michael for confirmation. They shrug. Sure, why not?

WAITER

Sounds good. I'll be back shortly with your food.

The waiter leaves.

JULES

(to Sam)

You're paying right?

SAM

Yep. But Michael still owes me. So technically, it's on him.

MICHAEL

I got this.

The three clink glasses. Cheers! Jules finishes her drink. Sam and Michael casually finish their appropriately sized sips. They smile.

MICHAEL

Tell me more about your students. I want to know everything.

FADE OUT