

**DESDEMONA GOES SHOPPING
FOR THE FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH**

by
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1 EXT. DESDEMONA'S HOUSE--SMALL TOWN--NEW MEXICO -- MORNING 1

A sweet ranch style with a station wagon parked out front. Birds tweet. A dog poops on the lawn. CRASHING SOUNDS from INSIDE the house.

2 INT. KITCHEN-DESDEMONA'S HOUSE 2

DESDEMONA JONES, late 50's, pretty, tough, is laid out flat on the floor in a terry-cloth bathrobe and fuzzy fur slippers. The sink FAUCET RUNS, quickly filling with WATER, and mounds of SOAP SUDS. A stool is over-turned next to "Desi". She strains to sit up. She can't. It's too painful. She farts instead. She flops onto her back, takes a breath, zeros-in on the WALL PHONE On the other side of the room. WATER starts to POUR over the edge of the sink, SPLATTERING onto the floor. DESI Remains on her back, pushes with her legs, grimacing in PAIN towards the phone. She glances up at a framed PHOTO on the wall. The photo is of Desi and a handsome MAN, both in their 40's (taken years before). They stand with their arms around each other, smiling. They look reasonably happy. DESI Rolls over on her belly, props up on her elbows to move across the floor, grunting-until she is under the KITCHEN TABLE (covered with a long TABLECLOTH). On the TABLE TOP is a half-eaten BIRTHDAY CAKE (covered in Saran Wrap). The cake has an ocean of burnt down birthday candles on it-and an ICING GREETING that reads-

...APPY BIRTHDAY, DESI

Next to the cake-on a CABINET is an open LAPTOP COMPUTER the SCREEN shows an E-MAIL that says:

Desi--
Movie Saturday?
Gilbert

WATER floods across the room-from the over-flowing sink, and UNDER THE TABLE, Pooling around Desi. She splashes in it. A plastic CAT'S DISH Floats past. UNDER THE TABLE DESI slips beneath a CHAIR, her thighs WEDGE between the chair legs. She drags the chair-through the WATER, trying to break free. She can't. She BUMPS the table. Then--splat! The BIRTHDAY CAKE CRASHES onto the floor, into the water, and onto Desi.

3 INT. ARLENE'S SUV -- MORNING 3

ARLENE, also 50s, big hair, little too-much make-up, drives down Desi's street, slows, squints at the front of Desi's HOUSE as WATER cascades from under the front door-and down the porch stairs.

SCREECHING CAT from inside house - RREEEEEEEE-OOWOA!

A wet CAT leaps from the small pet door in the front door, flees across the lawn.

4 INT. KITCHEN-DESDEMONA'S HOUSE -- MORNING 4

Arlene enters, sees DESI'S wet furry slippers sticking out from under the table. Pieces of the smashed cake, the cat's dish, a rubber duck (apparently from the bathroom), a small trash can--all floating in the WATER. Arlene lifts the tablecloth, peers UNDER THE TABLE At an exhausted, frustrated- and wet--Desi.

5 INT. ARLENE'S SUV - MORNING 5

Arlene drives. Desi rides with her (all dried out now) in great discomfort. She waves directions:

DESI
Turn here.

Arlene skids around a corner suddenly, throwing Desi (painfully) to one side:

DESI (CONT'D)
Owe.

ARLENE
Sorry. Oh, hon. Face it.
We're getting old.

DESI
You face it. For Chrissakes,
I was at Woodstock!

6 BLACK SCREEN. MUSIC 6

We hear the Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young classic song "WOODSTOCK"--as the MAIN TITLES float past, swirling and curling in a "Paisley" pattern. Pinks and purples. The main titles end. So does the song, trailing off over-

7 INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE -- DAY 7

And PRESCRIPTION FORM A hand scribbles out- To be taken for pain--as needed

DOCTOR & DESI

As she squirms in pain, watches-across the desk--DR. WILSON, 40, wearing glasses. He has just given her some BAD NEWS. An X-RAY is clipped to a light box--behind Dr. Wilson, who puffs a CIGARETTE by an open window, out of which he exhales--as he finishes the PRESCRIPTION, then pushes it across to Desi.

DESI

Arlene!

The door flies opens. Arlene is there.

DESI (CONT'D)

Let's get out of here. Help me up.

Arlene helps Desi stand. Dr. Wilson puffs away-as they leave:

DR. WILSON

Of course, the recovery of your back is aided greatly by the fact that you don't smoke.

8 INT. WAITING ROOM-DOCTOR'S OFFICE

8

A glassed-in SEPARATE WAITING ROOM where 4 EVER OLD LADIES wait and smoke. Two of them have walkers. A large FISH TANK gurgles against the wall behind them. Arlene helps Desi past the glass partition. Desi stops, then announces-so that you can hear her in Cleveland:

DESI

I won't get a fucking WHEELCHAIR!

All the old ladies turn to look at Desi, as she bursts out of the room.

9 INT. ARLENE'S SUV -- DAY

9

Desi rides with Arlene, simmering. They stop at a STOP LIGHT. MONA, 60s, skinny, with strange iridescent orange hair, stops in the car next to them:

MONA

Arlene?

ARLENE

Mona. That the new color?

Mona pokes at her hair:

MONA

Like it?

ARLENE

You look like a Popsicle. Come by the shop. I'll see if I can salvage it.

MONA

Thanks, sweetie.

Arlene steps on the gas, speeds through the intersection, jolting Desi:

DESI

Owe. How am I going to get around, Arlene? My legs hurt too much to drive.

ARLENE

I can drive you.

DESI

For the rest of my life?

10

INT. ROOM-REST HOME-SMALL NEW MEXICO TOWN - DAY

10

The room is large, nicely appointed. There's a bathroom, sitting area, large bed, a kitchenette, framed pictures. BETTY, 80, thin, pretty, sits on the sofa, engrossed in a TV soap, eating chips and dip. The door cracks open, someone knocks:

DESI

You decent, Mom?

BETTY

Hell. Wish I wasn't!

Desi limps in, helped by Arlene across the room. Desi carries a big plastic BAG.

ARLENE

Betty.

BETTY

Arlene. What happened to you, Desdemona? You look plain awful.

DESI

My back again. Owe. I got your porno.

Desi flops down onto the bed, drops the bag on the night stand. Arlene starts for the door:

ARLENE

I have to run down to the shop.
I'll pick you up later.

DESI

Thanks.

Arlene waves at Betty, ducks out. Betty grabs the bag off the night stand, pulls out the stack of porno magazines, thumbs through a couple. Behind her--out the WINDOW. A group of 10 SENIORS (all in their 80s, at least) speed past on motor skooters. In the ROOM

DESI (CONT'D)

How're you?

Betty shrugs, offers Desi:

BETTY

Dip?

DESI

No. Thanks.

BETTY

Anything from Jake?

Desi looks like she's heard this too many times before, pauses, shakes her head no.

BETTY (CONT'D)

Bullshit.

DESI

Mom, please...

BETTY

Okay, okay.

DESI

Do you need anything?

BETTY

Yeah. Justin Timberlake.

Desi sits alone at the big dining room table eating dinner. She pokes at her food. Her eyes rise to a framed PHOTO is of

a BOY, 5, covered with freckles, standing in a plastic pool, grinning-and missing a tooth in the front.

12 EXT. DESDEMONA'S HOUSE - DAWN 12

Good morning. A GARBAGE TRUCK rumbles around a corner-and down the street. 4 big GARBAGE MEN empty trash into the truck, banging, clanging cans. Loud Hip-Hop music blasts from the truck. Dogs bark. A car alarm goes off.

13 INT. BEDROOM-DESDEMONA'S HOUSE 13

Desi snoozes on one side of the bed. She is jolted awake by the garbage truck outside. Above the bed, on a SHELF there is a row of BOWLING TROPHIES. The trophies CLINK and RATTLE on the shelf from the garbage commotion outside, like an earthquake. DESI reaches up routinely, holds the shelf, steadying the trophies-so they won't fall over. The garbage truck noise subsides. Desi flops back onto a pillow, stares at the EMPTY SPACE on the other side of the bed.

14 EXT. DESDEMONA'S HOUSE - NIGHT 14

GILBERT, 60s, short, energetic, wears a sports coat, a red tie and SUNGLASSES, as he paces at the front door, holding a SHOE BOX with a big gift bow on it. He checks his reflection in the window-next to the door, slicks down his (thinning) hair. The door opens onto Desi, who's all dolled-up. Desi is TALLER than Gilbert. Gilbert looks UP at her, holds out the shoe box-with a gift ribbon on it:

GILBERT

The running shoes I told you about.

She politely takes the box.

15 INT. GILBERT'S CAR - NIGHT 15

He drives, chomps on gum, struggles to see through the SUNGLASSES. Desi secretly squirms in pain. Gilbert offers her the pack:

GILBERT

Gum? It's organic. Made from sand.

She shakes her head no. Gilbert just misses a car in front of him, almost side-swiping it. SCREECH. Desi watches him.

GILBERT (CONT'D)
You're staring at my sunglasses.

DESI
Yes.

GILBERT
Prescription.

DESI
Oh.

GILBERT
Ultra-violet light is residual, you know? It can stay in the air and on plants and on your head and on your shoes--long after the sun has gone down. Nasty littl devils, ultra-violent light rays.

SCREECH. He almost hits another car.

GILBERT (CONT'D)
Did I tell you about the space toilet that I'm having installed? Just like the crapper they have on the space shuttle..

SCREECH. He almost hits a truck.

16 INT. LOBBY-MOVIE THEATRE-SMALL TOWN-NEW MEXICO -- NIGHT 16

Desi and Gilbert enter. Gilbert still wears sunglasses. Desi still hides her pain.

GILBERT
...Zero carbon footprint. Operates just like it does in zero gravity. Just sucks all that crap right up, then zaps it right out there! Shhooop!

He crosses to the snack bar, BUMPS into it, knocks over a cardboard sign, recoups:

GILBERT (CONT'D)
Pop corn?

DESI
Yes. If you don't mind, I'll...

Desi heads to the LADIES' ROOM. Gilbert turns to the snack bar, grandly:

GILBERT
I'd like two large popcorns!
Without butter!

There is no one there. A COUNTER GIRL-way at the other end of the snake bar turns:

COUNTER GIRL
Ah...down here, sir.

17 INT. LADIES' ROOM-MOVIE THEATRE 17

Desi bursts into the room, almost falling down-in pain. She rifles through her purse for a plastic BOTTLE OF PILLS. She tries to open it-pressing it, twisting it, banging it on the sink. The bottle finally pops open-SPRAYING pills all over the floor.

18 INT. MOVIE THEATRE -- NIGHT 18

Gilbert and Desi are seated in the middle of the theatre with 30 other people. The film is ending. The end titles roll over shots of MASSIVE, FLAMING, LOUD EXPLOSIONS-one after another. Armageddon. A TITLE appears over the explosions:

DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN

The screen goes black. The lights in the theatre come up. The audience stands to leave. Gilbert leans over to Desi. She is out.

GILBERT
Um. Show's over.

The theatre empties out, except for Gilbert and Desi.

19 INT. LOBBY-MOVIE THEATRE 19

The audience exits-past the snack bar.

20 INT. MOVIE THEATRE 20

Gilbert and Desi are still there. She starts to snore. A YOUNG USHER, enters, starts to pick up trash, notices Gilbert and Desi:

YOUNG USHER

Sir. You're going to have to leave.

21 INT. LOBBY-MOVIE THEATRE -- NIGHT 21

Gilbert drags Desi across the lobby, lifting her from under her arms. Her feet trail behind her, making a squeaking sound. She remains out. The theatre employees watch.

22 EXT. DESDEMONA'S HOUSE -- NIGHT 22

Gilbert lugs her (the same way) from his car-to the front porch:

GILBERT

You are a big girl.

He sets her down gingerly-at the front door, tries the door. Locked. He shakes her:

GILBERT (CONT'D)

Do you have the house keys?

No response. He digs through her purse. No luck. He considers her:

GILBERT (CONT'D)

You're a nice lady. You remind me of my ex...before she ran off with Ramon.

He shoves the welcome mat under her head, plucks a FLOWER off a plant next to the porch, puts it next her, backs away:

GILBERT (CONT'D)

Well. Night. Thanks for the lovely, lovely evening.

He slips on the SUNGLASSES, gets into his car, drives away into the night. There's a distant SCREECH. Then another SCREECH.

ANGRY VOICE IN

DISTANCE (O.S.)

Learn to drive, asshole!

Desi remains on the porch. Out. Crickets.

23 EXT. DESDEMONA'S HOUSE -- EARLY MORNING

23

Desi remains fast ASLEEP on the front porch. A local DOG trots up, sniffs, then licks her face. Desi swats away the dog. The dog walks away. Arlene drives up in her car, gets out, walks to the porch-with a PAPER SACK. The dog trots off. Arlene nudges Desi. Desi's eyes flicker open. She looks around, confused, still groggy, sits up-in pain. Arlene settles next to her, lifts two lidded Styrofoam COFFEE CUPS from the sack-and a couple DONUTS.

ARLENE

Black. And...light with two sugars.

DESI

Thanks.

Desi sips her's, chomps into a donut. Arlene too.

ARLENE

Listen. I've been thinking about this driving thing. I think there's a way to fix it...

Desi discovers the FLOWER next to her, considers it, then:

DESI

Wait a minute! He left me out here on the porch? Like a...

24 EXT. RURAL ROADSIDE--NEW MEXICO -- DAY

24

And COW SIGN The typical "OPEN RANGE" SIGN (black silhouette of a COW against a bright yellow background)--on the side of the road.

DESI (O.S.)

...bottle of milk?

A TRUCK is parked behind Desi's station wagon. A SIGN on the truck's door announces:

DRIVING FOR DUMMIES, INC

25 INT. STATION WAGON

25

Where GUSTAVO, 40, WAY over-weight, eats a BURRITO, as he adjusts--with a screw-driver--HAND LEVERS on either side of the steering wheel. Desi waits on the passenger side,

apprehensive, watching. Gustavo offers her the burrito:

GUSTAVO
Wanna bite? It's yummy.

Desi shakes her head no. Arlene stands next to the car, watching them. An encouraging gaze. Gustavo offers the burrito to Arlene, who shakes her head no also. He shrugs, slips out of the car, still eating the burritos, dripping salsa. The car squeaks -and RISES almost a foot when Gustavo climbs out. He walks around to the passenger side. Arlene peers in at Desi, worried.

DESI
Don't worry, Arlene. There's nothing out here to crash into.

Desi slides across--behind the wheel, eyeing the BULKY, intimidating HAND-CONTROLS. Gustavo climbs into the passenger side. The car squeaks--then LOWERS another foot. Gustavo eats more, then, between chomps:

GUSTAVO
Now. Just remember the right lever is to stop. It's the brake. The left one is the gas. Right stop. Left go.

Desi grips the wheel, repeats the instructions silently. He waves the burrito around majestically:

GUSTAVO (CONT'D)
Vamanos!

Desi takes a big breath, grabs the left lever, turns it, propelling the car forward--down the ROAD. Arlene waves at them apprehensively, as they disappear. The STATION WAGON starts to gain SPEED.

GUSTAVO (CONT'D)
Bueno.

Faster still.

GUSTAVO (CONT'D)
Mue bueno.

They sweep past a pickup. Desi waves at someone--as she zips past them:

DESI
Hey, Louise!

Desi looks at Gustavo, who is still eating:

DESI (CONT'D)
That was Louise.

Faster. Desi is getting into it.

DESI (CONT'D)
Wow! Isn't this...exciting!

GUSTAVO
Right lever. Right lever...

Suddenly, Gustavo lunges across, tries to grab one of the levers.

26 BURRITO (CU) 26

Flies OUT THE WINDOW in SLOW-MOTION. Floating. Suspended-against a clear blue SKY, with popcorn clouds. Its gooey contents FLY EVERYWHERE. As the burritos FLOATS past-we HEAR--

GUSTAVO (O.S.)
Oh. There...is a...tree.

CAAARRRAAASSSSH!!

27 BLACK SCREEN. 27

There is HUMMING. Like an electric motor humming.

28 EXT. DESDEMONA'S HOUSE - DAY 28

Arlene leans against her SUV, gazes at the house.

ARLENE
Okay. Come on out!

We still hear the humming motor, coming from inside the house. Then, something CRASHES over-inside. SMASH! Arlene winces, watches the house. Another CRASH inside. Arlene cringes. The front DOOR of the house slams open. Desi peeks outside; a large BAND-AID on her forehead-and one smaller one on her cheek. She shoves the door open. She sits in a motorized WHEELCHAIR.

ARLENE (CONT'D)
Fabulous.

DESI

Arlene, I'm a rolling demolition derby.

ARLENE

But, hon, no...

DESI

Yes! I flooded my house, almost drowned my cat, broke two of my great aunt's antique lamps, crashed my car into a tree, and lost my driver's license.

ARLENE

You're right. It's not fabulous.

Desi bounces back and forth in the wheelchair, adjusting:

DESI

It's tipping and it's top-heavy.

Arlene considers her, then darts INTO THE HOUSE. Desi thinks, rolls around in slow circles on the porch. Arlene pops from the house--with Desi's BOWLING BAG (with bowling ball in it), holds it up:

ARLENE

Ballast. You know, like on a grand cruise ship! It's the mighty SS...

DESI

Titanic?

29

INT. ROOM--REST HOME--SMALL NEW MEXICO TOWN - DAY

29

Desi sits in her wheelchair, across the small table--from Betty. They eat sandwiches. The TV is on in the background. Betty turns from the TV watches Desi:

BETTY

Desdemona?

Desi looks at her.

BETTY (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

DESI

Eating lunch.

BETTY

No, I mean WHAT are you doing?

Desi thinks, frowns.

30 EXT. MELANIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT 30

The house is also ranch-style-on a tree-lined street. Several vehicles are parked in front. It is RAINING cats and dogs.

31 INT. LIVING ROOM-MELANIE'S HOUSE 31

Desi sits in her WHEELCHAIR at a card table, playing Canasta with Arlene, and-- MEL (MELANIE), 50s, with long straight hair and elegant headband, and- BARBARA, 50s, chubby, blondish. The ROOM Around them hints at Melanie's avocation. There are ABSTRACT PAINTINGS and DRAWINGS on the walls. MEL Sips a martini. ARLENE AND BARBARA Drink ice tea. Light "MUZAK" plays in the background. DESI Concentrates on her hand. All the GIRLS Play in silence, shuffling, etc. Barbara hums along with the Muzak, pokes through a box of chocolates daintily, then offers some to the other girls. Mel shakes her head no. Thunder rumbles outside. Barbara shivers a reaction. Arlene finds a chocolate, munches on it.

BARBARA

So, who're we bowling against on the fifth?

ARLENE

The team from the reservation.

DESI

Jesus.

They all look at Desi.

DESI (CONT'D)

This music. It's depressing.

BARBARA

I like it. It's cheery.

DESI

Shut up, Barbara.

BARBARA

Well, it is.

They continue to play in silence. Desi slaps her cards down:

DESI
I can't help it. I feel like I'm at
J.C. Penney's!

Mel leaps up, turns OFF the CD player:

MEL
Happy?

DESI
Thank you.

Mel pours herself another martini from a shaker, continues playing.

ARLENE
You're drunk.

Mel raises her martini glass, toasts Arlene.

MEL
Shit. I need a cigarette.

Mel stands, crosses to the FRONT DOOR-with her martini glass, setting it on a table next to the door, opens an UMBRELLA, steps out onto the PORCH-in the RAIN (but still in the open doorway), lights a cigarette, puffs, waves the smoke outside. There is loud thunder outside. And lightning. Mel slugs back another martini:

MEL (CONT'D)
I hear that Reverend Hathaway
is...uming...Julie Rodgers.

BARBARA
"Uming?"...

ARLENE
Fucking.

BARBARA
Oh.

ARLENE
Everyone knows it, too.

DESI
Stop.

MEL

Now what?

DESI

All we do is talk about who's screwing who.

MEL

Whom.

DESI

Whom, then! Chrissakes. It's pitiful. Isn't it? We're nothing but a bunch of horny old broads. Pitiful.

MEL

There's a reason for that, Desi, dear. Shit. Jack hated Canasta.

DESI

So did Howard.

MEL

You see, boys stay boys until the day they die. Girls, well, girls eventually get to be...old broads. And boys, well, boys don't like old broads. That's just the way it is. And, unless you're willing to go out with guys like...

MEL & ARLENE

Gilbert...

MEL

...so we talk trash about who's doing it to...whom.

BARBARA

I think he's kind of cute.

ARLENE

Who?

BARBARA

Gilbert.

The other girls look surprised at Barbara.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

So, shoot me.

It stops raining. Mel folds up the umbrella, finishes her

cigarette, comes back into the living room, takes a big swig of her martini, flops at the card table. Barbara considers the others, then:

BARBARA (CONT'D)

I dunno about you girls, but I'm okay with the way things are. It's not so bad. I get to do whatever I want when I want. I can eat whatever I want, whenever I want.

DESI

Jesus, Barbara.

MEL

What is your problem?

DESI

Bitch.

MEL

Gimp.

ARLENE

Girls. Stop. Just stop.

Desi slaps her cards down, wheels around-heads for the door, slams open the front door, sweeps out in the wheelchair.

MEL

Does this mean you're quitting the bowling team?

Barbara and Arlene scowl at Mel, who shrugs. Arlene stands, follows Desi out the door.

32

EXT. MELANIE'S HOUSE

32

Desi sweeps down the wet (after rain) neighborhood STREET in the wheelchair. ARLENE Jumps into her car, drives up next to DESI, Who bumps along the street in the wheelchair.

DESI

God, I hate this!

Desi stops, looks at her friend:

DESI (CONT'D)

How did this happen?

ARLENE

What?

DESI

This!

ARLENE

Oh. Well. Things could be worse.

DESI

Yes. I could be dead.

ARLENE

Give you a lift?

DESI

No. It's only half a block. Night.

Arlene nods, drives away.

33

INT. BEDROOM-DESDEMONA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

33

Desi sits in front of her vanity mirror, with cold cream on her face-in her wheelchair. Her LAPTOP COMPUTER is on one side of the counter. Desi types out something onto the COMPUTER SCREEN. An E-MAIL reads:

Desi--
Dinner Saturday night?
Gilbert

She taps out:

No. Thanks, Gilbert.

DESI

Flips the computer screen down. Her eyes go to one side of the VANITY In front of her. It is filled with every kind of moisturizer, beauty cream, make-up-known to man. Jars and jars and jars of stuff. DESI Inspects her face in the MIRROR, sighs frustration, starts to laugh-loudly. She stops laughing, then-to the mirror:

DESI

Oh, God. You know what, you old broad?... huh? You know what? I'll tell you something. You're not me! You hear me? YOU'RE NOT ME! I don't recognize you. I don't know who the hell you are, but you're sure as shit not me! I'll tell you that.

DESI (CONT'D)
You're just not me.

She picks up the jar of cold cream, looks at the COLD CREAM LABEL Where, in large type-in the "contents" of the jar-it reads:

THE FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH

DESI Considers the label, then glances up at herself-in the mirror. Bingo.

34 EXT. DESDEMONA'S HOUSE - DAY 34

Arlene's SUV waits in the driveway.

Arlene comes from the house carrying two small SUITCASES. She puts the suitcase in the SUV. Desi comes from the house in the WHEELCHAIR-down the ramp-out to the car. She wears a pink bowling shirt. She opens the passenger side door-as Arlene watches her.

DESI
What?

ARLENE
Nothing.

35 EXT. BANK-SMALL TOWN-NEW MEXICO -- DAY 35

Arlene waits in her SUV, watches Desi cruise from the bank in her wheelchair.

36 INT. ARLENE'S SUV -- DAY 36

Arlene drives, glances at Desi.

DESI
If you want to say something,
Arlene. Just say it.

ARLENE
Okay. This is crazy. You're
being...irresponsible. Howard worked
for years to save that money. He
left it for you as a nest egg.

DESI

God, I hate that phrase. There's no longer a nest—and there's sure as shit is no egg. Howard left the money for me to live on. Not to die with. Arlene, I'm falling apart...

ARLENE

No, you're not. You're just...getting old-ER.

DESI

Since when in hell is that not the same damn thing? Look at me. I'm like an old Buick!

ARLENE

What about your Mom?...

DESI

She's in better shape than me, Arlene. Besides, this was ...almost ...her idea. I will call and check on her. Look. I'm gonna do everything I can to at least...slow it down. At least some...

ARLENE

What're you talking about?

DESI

Age.

Arlene stares at her.

DESI (CONT'D)

Maybe I can stop it.

ARLENE

Stop it?

DESI

They put a man on the moon, didn't they?

ARLENE

Well, maybe you should talk to NASA.

Desi is stung by her answer.

ARLENE (CONT'D)
 Sorry. Shit. What can I say?...

DESI
 Good luck.

Arlene stares at Desi.

DESI (CONT'D)
 Look. I'm willing to admit ...I'm no longer a bowler...I can't drive...it's hard for me to get around. I've got a wheelchair. Okay? That's being responsible. So don't call me irresponsible. Or crazy. I'm not crazy. I'm desperate.

They pull up to the BUS STATION.

37 EXT. BUS STATION-SMALL TOWN-NEW MEXICO -- DAY 37

Arlene unloads the suitcases and the wheelchair from the rack. She stops, looks at DESI, wheels the chair around to the passenger door. DESI stands, flops into the wheelchair. They hug, then DESI starts to wheel towards the bus station. Arlene walks to her car, stops, turns back to Desi:

ARLENE
 Hon?

Desi looks at her.

ARLENE (CONT'D)
 Good luck.

38 INT. BUS --- DAY 38

The bus to hell. DESI rides. The AC doesn't work--so the windows are open. Wind blows in on Desi. Her hair flies everywhere. There are rows of small TV SCREENS Mounted above the seats. All the TVs play a LOUD Spanish language "soap opera." DESI Fiddles with the TV controls above her. She is seated next to a YOUNG MOTHER, who holds a screaming INFANT.

YOUNG WOMAN
 The volume doesn't work. I tried.

Desi can't hear her over the LOUD TVs and baby:

DESI
 What?!

YOUNG MOTHER
I said the volume doesn't work!

Desi nods, gives up. Suddenly, the BABY lunges over the young mother's shoulder--and THROWS UP on Desi's bowling shirt. Whap. A fast-ORANGE liquid-- projectile. Desi freezes.

YOUNG MOTHER (CONT'D)
Carrots. Sorry.

39 EXT. RURAL HIGHWAY-NEW MEXICO - DAY 39

The BUS rumbles away, leaving Desi humming along the edge of a road in her WHEELCHAIR. She has attached an open UMBRELLA-- on the back--so it hovers over her. Her small suitcases--and bowling bag--hang off the back also. She stops, reveals her COMPACT, pokes at her face with a pad, then her hair. She stares at her face, sighs, puts the compact away, pulls out a piece of PAPER. On it is a long print-out LIST. At the top of the list it reads:

THE FOUNTAINS OF ROME
HEALTH & BEAUTY CLINIC & SPA
AGUA CALIENTE, NEW MEXICO

DESI looks up at a SIGN next the road that says:

AGUA CALIENTE - 25 Miles

She lifts a CELL PHONE--from her purse, punches in some numbers, waits.

40 INT. HOME OFFICE-SANTA FE HOUSE -- DAY 40

The desk PHONE rings again and again-- Next to a DRAFTING TABLE covered with architectural drawings--and a small cardboard model of a house. The phone stops ringing. An answering machine clicks on, then:

MALE VOICE
We're not home right now, so leave
a message...

41 EXT. RURAL ROADSIDE-NEW MEXICO -- DAY 41

Desi listens to the phone message.

MALE VOICE
...and we'll get back to you pronto.

Beep. Desi pauses, then flips the phone OFF. She turns the wheelchair around, backs down the highway—so that she can hitchhike, sticking out her thumb. Several vehicles whip past. Dust swirls around her. A DELIVERY TRUCK slows—and stops—ahead of Desi. On the side of the truck, big letters read:

GARCIA'S ELECTRONICS EMPORIUM

She sweeps up next to the truck, peers inside at— MATTY, 21, beautiful, free-spirited.

MATTY

Hey.

42 EXT. RURAL NEW MEXICO ROAD -- DAY 42

The (same) delivery truck sweeps past. The wheelchair has been tied to the loading/ lift/platform on the back of the truck.

43 INT. DELIVERY TRUCK CAB 43

Desi rides with Matty in silence, until:

DESI

How old are you?

MATTY

Twenty-one.

DESI

God. Is anyone really ever twenty-one? You're a college student?

MATTY

How did you know?

DESI

You look smart.

MATTY

This helps pay for school.

DESI

Student of what?

44 EXT. "THE FOUNTAINS OF ROME" SPA - DAY 44

Desi rolls from the road—to the SPA, as the delivery truck

roars away. There is a grand aqua duct structure supported by Roman columns running across the entrance. Very Cecil B. De Mille. All surrounded by Pine trees, etc.

MATTY (O.S.)
Archeology.

45 INT. OFFICE--"THE FOUNTAINS OF ROME" SPA -- DAY 45

Desi sits in her wheelchair across the large marble desk (very thrown-like) from GWEN, 42, pretty, soft-spoken. Gwen wears a floor-length TOGA-style thing, which is draped over a shoulder.

GWEN
Mrs. Jones, yes. We received your e-mail and your personal profile. You're scheduled for three days, through Saturday is it?

DESI
Yes.

GWEN
Super. My name is Gwen. I will be your senior health guidance advisor during your visit. Everything here at the spa is guidance...

As Gwen speaks, there's a MONTAGE

46 INT. POOL--"THE FOUNTAINS OF ROME" SPA -- DAY 46

DESI is in PHYSICAL THERAPY-with 10 OLDER PEOPLE in a large Roman-style POOL.

GWEN (V.O.)
...instructor based. We help you start to reverse, or at least stall the aging process...

Suddenly-the group of older people are YOUNG, lithe, beautiful-as they exercise.

47 INT. EXERCISE ROOM--"THE FOUNTAINS OF ROME" SPA -- DAY 47

DESI with 10 OTHER OLDER PEOPLE-and a handsome MALE INSTRUCTOR. They raise and lowering their legs-in a marching fashion-as he barks out orders.

GWEN (V.O.)
 ...based on ancient Roman principles.
 You will find our facilities
 comfortable, luxurious, state-of-
 the art, and of course, always
 utterly hygienic. I might add that
 the...

Suddenly-the entire group of older people are YOUNG, lithe,
 beautiful again.

48 EXT. SKY -- DAY 48

CLOUDS with the SUN gloriously bursting through.

GWEN (V.O.)
 ...complex itself is also a highly
 spiritual environment ...that
 nurtures enlightenment.

The MONTAGE ENDS.

49 INT. OFFICE--"THE FOUNTAINS OF ROME" SPA -- DAY 49

GWEN
 Do you have a major credit card?

50 EXT. "THE FOUNTAINS OF ROME" SPA - NIGHT 50

Crickets. Soft violin music plays off somewhere.

51 INT. HALLWAY-"THE FOUNTAINS OF ROME" SPA 51

A long colonnaded Roman-style hallway. Desi struggles-in a
 great deal of pain-to walk back to her ROOM-hunched over,
 held up by LAURA, 25, wearing a toga.

DESI
 Ouch ouch ouch.

LAURA
 Are you okay?

DESI
 No. Let me ask you. Do you have
 any Scotch?

A MAN IN A TUTU darts past, then disappears at the end of the
 hall.

52 EXT. TERRACE-DESI'S "VILLA"-SPA - NIGHT

52

Again, kind of Roman-looking-columns and such. Desi sits, uncomfortable, sipping a SCOTCH, staring out at the desert sky. Crickets.

VOICE (O.S.)

Psssst.

Desi turns, sees SALLY, 58, beautiful, standing on the other side of a short wall separating the terrace of the next villa. Sally waves at Desi's Scotch:

SALLY

Oh, sweetie, you don't want that.

DESI

Oh, yes I do.

Sally holds up a big fat JOINT:

SALLY

This is what you want.

53 EXT. TERRACE--DESI'S "VILLA"--SPA -- NIGHT

53

Later. DESI and SALLY sit on Desi's terrace, passing the joint back and forth. Desi giggles. She is getting STONED.

SALLY

Stand up. Go on.

Desi stands slowly, with the CANE, then realize that she has no pain.

DESI

Oh, my God. This is the first time
I've been able to do this in weeks.

Sally starts to walk away-out into the DESERT night. She stops, looks back at Desi:

SALLY

C'mon.

Desi follows her, starts to walk normally-without pain:

DESI

This...is...fantastic!

Sally lights another joint, tokes hard. They walk out into the desert, passing the joint-and giggling like school girls.

54 EXT. DESERT-NEW MEXICO - NIGHT

54

Sally and Desi wonder into the desert in the MOONLIGHT, passing the joint back and forth. Desi walks normally, with her cane.

SALLY
So, who're you?

DESI
Desi Jones.

SALLY
Sally Rostronovich.

DESI
That's quite a name.

SALLY
It used to be just "Ross," but my Polish grandfather complained so much that we changed it back. Grandfather said, 'Ross doesn't sound like a real name. It sounds like a shirt with the sleeves cut off.' What do you enjoy, Desi Jones?

DESI
Enjoy? Oh. Bowling.

SALLY
Bowling?

DESI
Yes. It's the only thing I've ever been really good at. Course, it looks like them days are over.

Sally holds up the JOINT:

SALLY
Not if you smoke this!

They giggle.

DESI
What about you?

SALLY
I'm an artist. Painter.

DESI
That's the thing about all of
us...back then. We all wanted to be
artists. But then we couldn't...or
wouldn't. We changed...or something
changed us.

SALLY
What?

Desi thinks, holds up the "PEACE" sign.

SALLY (CONT'D)
You are sooo stoned!

They giggle.

SALLY (CONT'D)
Are you married?

DESI
Widowed. Three years. You?

SALLY
Never found anyone that I
particularly wanted to spend that
much time with.

They sit on a large rock, gaze up at the STARS, pass the
joint back and forth.

55 EXT. DESERT-NEW MEXICO -- EARLY MORNING 55

The sun cuts through the horizon, spreads across the desert-
onto Desi and Sally, who are sleeping on a rock. Desi's eyes
open. She sits up. PAIN shoots through her:

DESI
Ahh!

Sally bolts up, waking up, looks around.

56 EXT. VILLA-"THE FOUNTAINS OF ROME" SPA - MORNING 56

Desi is carried into her bungalow on a STRETCHER by several
spa ASSISTANTS in togas. Gwen appears, goes into the room.

GWEN

You need a hot bath soak. In the
Caligula pool.

57 EXT. CALIGULA POOL-"THE FOUNTAINS OF ROME" SPA -- DAY 57

Desi sits in the large hot POOL alone, surrounded by tiled walls and more Roman columns. Her head resting back on a plastic pillow on the edge of the pool. Her eyes are shut, blissfully. An ATTENDANT appears:

ATTENDANT

Are you comfortable, Mrs. Jones?

DESI

Yes. Finally. It's very, very nice.

Desi sighs. Her eyes open onto a DOG Lifting its leg and PISSING into the other end of the pool.

58 EXT. RURAL NEW MEXICO HIGHWAY - DAY 58

Desi cruises along the edge of the highway in her WHEELCHAIR. Umbrella open, suitcases hanging off the back. Bowling bag on the bottom. She stops, reveals the (same)

PRINT-OUT LIST

That says:

THE FOUNTAINS OF ROME SPA

On the top of the list-has been CROSSED-OFF. Above Desi is a BILLBOARD That announces:

MININI CLINIC - MIRACULOUS THERAPY FOR AGE
JUST 15 MILES

DESI Turns to see a TRUCK approaching. An OLD MAN With wild long white hair, drives the truck. He flips Desi the FINGER, as he zooms past. DESI Blinks, the reveals the CELL phone, punches out a number.

59 INT. ROOM-REST HOME-SMALL NEW MEXICO TOWN - DAY 59

Betty answers the phone:

BETTY

Yeah?

DESI (PHONE VOICE)
Hey, Mom. How're you?

BETTY
My ass hurts.

Betty giggles. Silence.

BETTY (CONT'D)
Look, I just wanted you to know
that I'm happy that you're doing
this...trip. It's always good to try
new stuff...

DESI (PHONE VOICE)
But you're okay?

BETTY
Yeah. Gotta go. Rumba class. Bye.

Betty hangs up.

60

EXT. RURAL NEW MEXICO HIGHWAY -- DAY

60

Desi stuffs the cell back into her purse, then is surprised
to find a BAGGIE OF JOINTS DESI Realizes, grins:

DESI
Oh, Sally.

She takes a joint out, considers it, lights it, tokes, stares
off, tokes again. She reveals a small DVD PLAYER, flicks it
on. The Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young song, "Teach Your
Children" plays. Desi giggles, starts to sway to the music,
spinning the wheelchair in circles-around and around, waving
her arms, "dancing." She continues to spin, then stops,
STANDS from the chair. She wiggles, bumps back and forth-lost
in the music. Just beyond the sign-on one side the road-off
in the FIELD is CHARLIE, Late 50s, handsome-in a beat-up,
cowboy sort of way, wearing a dusty cowboy hat and duds. He
repairs a section of barbed-wire ranch fence. His horse
grazes on weeds behind him. Charlie notices Desi dancing. He
walks towards her, smiling as he watches. He has a slight
LIMP. He stops at the ROAD Desi doesn't see him.

CHARLIE
You get wireless on that thing?

She stops suddenly, startled, spins, sees him, flips the
music off, flops back into the chair, embarrassed.

DESI
Um. Almost. It's not...it's my
back it's...not...

CHARLIE
Aw, I had a hip-replacement
last year. I know what it's like.

There's an uncomfortable beat, until a huge RV appears on the
road. Charlie watches the RV rumbles past:

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
You know, I gotta theory about them
things.

DESI
Wheelchairs?

CHARLIE
No, ma'am. RVs. You know why so
many older folks pull up stakes
from places and homes they've lived
in for forty, fifty years, and
decide to buy one of them rigs, and
become essentially semi-truck
drivers, wandering all over the
country like nomads...?

DESI
Well, no.

CHARLIE
They don't think they'll die on the
road. Where you headed?

DESI
Oh. Up the road here.

CHARLIE
I gotta deliver some horses in that
direction, up around Santa Fe, if
you want a ride. Might get you
there quicker.

Desi shades her face from the sun, considers him.

61 INT. CHARLIE'S PICKUP - DAY

61

Charlie drives. Desi rides with him. In the HORSE TRAILER
That Charlie pulls, there are a 2 HORSES inside. He has
loaded the WHEELCHAIR onto the trailer-behind the horses. In
the PICKUP Charlie and Desi ride in silence. Charlie looks
at her, then:

CHARLIE
I'm Charlie Hightower.

DESI
Desi Jones.

CHARLIE
Desi?

DESI
Desdemona.

CHARLIE
'She lov'd me for the dangers I had
pass'd, And I lov'd her that she
did pity them.'

DESI
Othello.

CHARLIE
You know it

DESI
A little. My dad was Shakespeare
nut.

CHARLIE
I am too.

They slow, drive off the road, and into a DRIVEWAY, passing a
sign announces:

THE MININI EXTREME THERAPY CLINIC

62 EXT. MAIN BUILDING-MININI CLINIC - DAY 62

Desi settles into wheelchair. Charlie starts for the pickup.

DESI
Thanks, Charlie.

He thumbs his cowboy hat, climbs into the truck, drives off.
Desi watches him disappear down the road, then wheels around,
and into the building.

63 INT. RECEPTION--MININI RADICAL THERAPY LODGE - DAY 63

There's a large stone fireplace at one end of a big room.
Desi sweeps past-to the front desk, where GEORGE, 30, works a
computer, then turns to Desi.

DESI
I have a reservation. Jones.

GEORGE
Oh, yes, Ms. Jones.

DESI
Mrs.

GEORGE
Mrs. Would you have a major credit card?

Desi gives him a card. Suddenly- There is blood-curdling SCREAM near by Desi jumps.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Therapy session.

64 INT. CHARLIE'S PICKUP - DAY 64

He drives, then slows, turns the truck-still pulling the horse trailer-AROUND-and heads back into the opposite direction.

65 INT. RECEPTION--MININI CLINIC -- DAY 65

George bangs the desk bell. A LUGGAGE GUY appears, grabs the suitcases off the back of Desi's wheelchair.

GEORGE
You're introductory floor treatment with Dr. Minini is in an hour.

DESI
Floor...

66 INT. THERAPY ROOM-MININI CLINIC - DAY 66

A large, sparsely decorated room-with big windows that look out at the mountains. 10 PATIENTS (all over 50) are sprawled out on the FLOOR-on their backs.

DESI (O.S.)
...treatment?

Desi is with them-also on the floor, and very uncomfortable. They are doing quick breathing exercises, in and out. Huff huff huff huff. DR. LEONARD MININI, 65, very skinny, with large thin hands that he waves in the air, walks around the patients, breathing with them, until:

DR. MININI

And. Stop!

They stop breathing suddenly.

DR. MININI (CONT'D)

Hold it. Hold it.

The patients hold their breath.

DR. MININI (CONT'D)

Then...out! Slowly. Whoosh. Out.
Whooooosh.

Desi squirms, uncomfortable. Minini notices her:

DR. MININI

Are you okay?

DESI

Um. Yes.

DR. MININI

Now. Let's contemplate the real meaning of the word "age." Awful word. A meaningless word. Meaningless! Okay?!

PATIENTS

Okay!

DR. MININI

Alright, then. Repeat after me. I'm not old!

PATIENTS

I'm not old!

Desi is a little confused.

DESI

I'm not...

Minini stops, becomes quiet. He sits on the floor.

DR. MININI

Shhhhh. Age is a myth--sold to us by a corrupt, money-hungry health system, so that we pay for treatment for diseases that we don't really have. Because our culture tells us that we are old. You don't have to buy into any of that...because age is meaningless.

(MORE)

DR. MININI (CONT'D)
Age is a myth- I won't buy into.
Repeat.

PATIENTS
Age is a myth that I won't buy
into. Repeat.

DR. MININI
Yes. Now louder. I'm made old by my
culture!

PATIENTS
I'm made old by my culture!

DR. MININI
I'm made old by what I eat!

PATIENTS
I'm made old by what I eat!

DR. MININI
I can't get a HARD-ON because my
culture says that I'm old! Repeat!

Silence.

DR. MININI (CONT'D)
Say it, people! HARD-ON!! If you
can't say it. You can't change it.

PATIENTS
Ah...oh...hard-on... because my culture
says I'm old!

DR. MININI
Because the drug companies want to
sell boner pills! I'M NOT OLD! I'M
NOT OLD!

PATIENTS
I'M NOT OLD!

DESI
Owe.

DR. MININI
Shhhh. Now. YOU have to take
control of your life. YOU have to
be responsible.

Minini stands next to a MAN on the floor in the middle of the
group.

DR. MININI (CONT'D)
Do you want to be responsible for
your life?

MAN
Um. Yes.

DR. MININI
Do you really want to be
responsible for your life?

Minini STEPS carefully on top of a MAN on his back-on the
floor. The man stiffens up. Minini stands on him-as he
chants:

DR. MININI (CONT'D)
Are you old...?

The man considers his question, then:

MAN
Well? That depends on your
definition of...

DR. MININI
I asked...IF YOU'RE OLD?!!

He scares the hell of the man:

MAN
No. No, I'm...I'm not old.

Minini crosses to Desi, stands above her, smiles, leans down,
touches the side of Desi's face. She looks worried. Minini
then gingerly steps on Desi's stomach Desi YELPS:

DESI
GET THE FUCK OFF...

Minini suddenly tumbles sideways, out of frame. Clunk!

67 EXT. MININI CLINIC 67

DESI (O.S.)
...OF ME!!!

68 EXT. RURAL ROAD-NEW MEXICO - LATE DAY 68

Desi rides down the side of the highway in her wheelchair.
She stops, pulls out the PRINT-OUT LIST, checks it. CHARLIE'S
PICKUP stops next to her. He no longer is pulling the horse
trailer. Desi looks in at him.

DESI

Charlie.

CHARLIE

Desi. I was wondering if I could
buy you dinner.

69 EXT. COUNTRY CAFÉ--RURAL NEW MEXICO - NIGHT 69

A small, cozy-looking place. Charlie's pickup and horse trailer are parked outside.

70 INT. CAFÉ--SMALL TOWN--NEW MEXICO 70

Charlie and Desi sit eating in candlelight. There are 5 OTHER CUSTOMERS in the place. A WAITER comes and goes. They eat. Charlie re-fills her glass of wine. He leaves his glass empty.

DESI

What about you?

CHARLIE

Me? No.

DESI

How come you haven't asked me what I'm doing? I mean being on the road...in a wheelchair by myself...doesn't that strike you as a little unusual?

CHARLIE

I figured it's your business. Besides, it looks like a pleasant way to get around-when the weather cooperates. Not that much different from riding a horse.

DESI

So, I thought you were going to Santa Fe.

CHARLIE

Tomorrow.

DESI

Oh.

CHARLIE

Okay. Truth is I drove back and forth on the road in front of the spa for two hours.

DESI

Oh?

CHARLIE

Yeah. See, in my line of work, I meet mostly just dusty old cowhands. Not that many pretty ladies.

She smiles, lifts her wine glass, clicks it to his water glass:

DESI

To dusty old cowhands.

CHARLIE

Pretty ladies.

71 INT. CHARLIE'S PICKUP - NIGHT

71

Charlie drives. Desi rides with him. They pull up in front of another SPA. There's a large fountain. A sign out front announces:

THE MILLER WATER SPA

Desi looks over the front of the place. It's hard for her to disguise her trepidation. They sit in silence, until:

CHARLIE

You okay?

DESI

I'm fine. Thanks for a nice evening.

72 INT. HOT TUB ROOM--MILLER HEALTH SPA -- NIGHT

72

Desi sits in a large HOT TUB. The water-gurgles and steams. An ATTENDANT sits on the edge of the tub, gives her a FACIAL. Suddenly-Hawaiian music fills the air. Three HULA DANCERS appear on the terrace surrounding the hot tub, dancing a graceful hula.

73 INT. DINING ROOM--MILLER HEALTH SPA -- MORNING 73

Desi sits in a DINING ROOM at the MILLER WATER SPA. Desi sits alone, eating breakfast. She watches a COWBOY trot through the room. A WAITER refills her coffee cup.

74 INT. WATERFALL ROOM--MILLER HEALTH SPA -- DAY 74

Desi sits under a WATERFALL ROOM at the MILLER WATER SPA. Water cascades over her.

75 EXT. MILLER WATER SPA - LATE DAY 75

Looking good, Desi sweeps out, hums down the road that runs past the place. A car horn honks. She turns. Charlie pulls up next to her-in his truck, grins.

DESI

Charlie Hightower, are you stalking me?

CHARLIE

Pretty much. Can I talk you into a nice home-cooked meal. Barbecue.

76 EXT. PORCH--RANCH HOUSE--RURAL NEW MEXICO - NIGHT 76

A modest, weathered ranch house set in front of a small barn and other utility buildings. Charlie's pickup is parked in front. A BARBECUE on the patio out front, sizzles and smokes. Charlie stands over the barbecue, lifts the top, turns a couple of steaks:

CHARLIE

So how did you meet Howard?

Desi appears in the door behind him-walking with her cane:

DESI

At Woodstock.

CHARLIE

No, shit? I mean, really...?

DESI

Yeah. I was seventeen, visiting my cousin, Jackie, in New York. Jackie and me drove up to the Catskills, and spent four glorious days in the mud, stoned. It was wonderful. I'm not sure why. Just was.

CHARLIE

Hell. You were young.

DESI

I guess. Then, one morning I was standing in the mud in a long line for breakfast, there was Howard in line in back of me. God, he was cute. It was love at first sight. He had come all the way from California. Me, from Chicago. I thought because of the distance, that a romance was impossible, and I told him. He didn't listen to me. He wrote me, called me constantly, even came to see me once on his way to an anti-war protest in Washington, where he got his nose broken when a cop beat him up. My mom and dad thought he was crazy. I think he scared them a little. Then, a couple years later, he showed up at our house and asked me to marry him. I said yes. After I finished college we moved here to New Mexico. Howard stopped protesting and worked as a geologist for an oil company for thirty years. We had a good life.

Charlie pulls the steaks from the barbecue, ducks back into the house.

77 INT. KITCHEN-RANCH HOUSE

77

Desi sits at the kitchen table. Charlie sets the steaks out. They start to eat.

CHARLIE

You got any kids?

DESI

Son. What about you?

CHARLIE

Daughter. Clara. My little girl. She lives in New Jersey.

78 INT. KITCHEN--RANCH HOUSE -- NIGHT

78

Later. Desi and Charlie eat chocolate cake, drink coffee.

DESI

Quite an elegant meal, Charlie.

CHARLIE

I started out as a ranch cook. Cookin for twenty cowhands one summer when I was fifteen. Those boys like to died for the first couple weeks, but then once I learned to make beans-it all worked out.

She notices a GUITAR on a shelf above them. She stands-with the cane, walks over to it, picks it up, looks it over, sits, strums it.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

My ex played it. You play?

DESI

I used to. I was almost a singer. Almost doesn't count for much, does it?

CHARLIE

I don't know about that. My Mama used to say 'almost is what dreams are.

He glances over at the wheelchair, then at Desi.

CHARLIE(CONT'D)

I admire what you're doing, Desi. I mean with the wheelchair...and the spas. You ain't taking no shit. You ain't letting it get you down. Just like a damn cowhand. After you got thrown. You dusted yourself off, and got right back on the damn horse.

She shrugs.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

You are a lovely lady.

DESI

It's...getting late.

CHARLIE

Right. Just don't get too talk to people much. I can run on. Sorry.

Desi leans to him suddenly, and impulsively kisses him gently on the lips. They part.

DESI

Oh. God.

She stands, moves away:

DESI (CONT'D)

That was stupid.

He stands, pulls her back, kisses her again.

MONTAGE

As we hear Bob Dylan's classic--"Lay Lady, Lay"

79 EXT. BIG LODGE -- DAY 79

A large rustic log building. With a sign out front that announces:

REAL FOOD FROM THE REAL GOOD EARTH

Charlie drives away-in his TRUCK-from Desi, who waves, then wheels into the spa.

80 INT. DINING ROOM--BIG LODGE -- DAY 80

Desi sits at a table eating, poking at various (seeming) HEALTH FOODS on PLATES. SOMETHING GREEN And pasty. SOMETHING BLACK And thick.

81 INT. CHARLIE'S TRUCK -- DAY 81

Charlie and Desi ride along a COUNTRY ROAD in the pickup. She watches him, smiles.

82 INT. DINING ROOM--BIG LODGE -- DAY 82

Desi eats SOMETHING RED And runny. SOMETHING BROWN And gloppy.

83 INT. DINER -- DAY 83

And a huge HAMBURGER Stacked with cheese, tomatoes, the works-and FRIES, and a tall MILK SHAKE. Desi sits across the table from CHARLIE. They both eat big BURGERS.

- 84 EXT. PORCH--RANCH HOUSE -- DAY 84
Desi talks on the CELL phone.
- 85 INT. ROOM--REST HOME -- DAY 85
Betty talks on her phone. Porno plays on the TV silently.
- 86 INT. CHARLIE'S TRUCK -- DAY 86
Desi & Charlie drive up to ANOTHER SPA.
- 87 INT. STEAM BATH -- DAY 87
Desi sits in a steam bath, sweating. A WOMAN sprays some sort of BUG SPRAY in another part of the steam bath. Desi coughs.
- 88 EXT. CORRAL--RANCH -- DAY 88
DESI watches CHARLIE breaking in a HORSE in the corral.
- 89 INT. CHARLIE'S TRUCK -- DAY 89
CHARLIE waits for Desi in front of ANOTHER SPA A SIGN above the place announces:

CRYSTAL SPA -- COME ALIVE!

As "Lay Lady, Lay" continues--
- 90 INT. MASSAGE ROOM--"CRYSTAL" SPA -- DAY 90
Desi is laid out on a MASSAGE TABLE, surrounded by CRYSTALS. With a LARGE, strange-looking MACHINE sliding back and forth OVER HER. She lays there, frozen, terrified, with her eyes clamped shut.
- 91 INT. KITCHEN--RANCH HOUSE -- NIGHT 91
Desi and Charlie eat dinner, talk and laugh.
- 92 INT. GYM--SPA -- DAY 92
Desi on a TREADMILL, trying to walk, in pain-she suddenly is swept off the end onto the floor. Whap!

- 93 EXT. "SUNSHINE" SPA -- DAY 93
Desi hums out the door. Charlie waits in his truck out front.
- 94 INT. HOT TUB--"DESERT" SPA -- DAY 94
Desi in a HOT TUB. 3 VERY FAT MEN climb into the hot tub with her.
- 95 INT. BARN--RANCH -- DAY 95
Desi watches Charlie brush a horse.
- 96 INT. ROOM--"CACTUS" SPA -- NIGHT 96
Desi sits silently in front of a mirror, staring at her FACE--all the lines, etc. She sighs, starts to apply a MUD PACK.
- 97 INT. SWEAT LODGE -- DAY 97
Desi sits with 3 half-naked OLD NATIVE-AMERICAN WOMEN, sweating, dripping. One of the old women swats flies with a FLYSWATTER. Whap!

"Lay Lady, Lay" ends--and FADES OUT over--
- 98 EXT. RANCH HOUSE-CHARLIE'S RANCH -- NIGHT 98
The lights are out. Crickets. A coyote howls in the distance.
- 99 INT. BEDROOM-RANCH HOUSE 99
Charlie and Desi lay in bed in the dark after making love, stare at the ceiling. Desi clears her throat.

CHARLIE
That was great.

DESI
Yes, it was.

CHARLIE
I...um, haven't since...

DESI
Me neither.

He curls his arms around her:

CHARLIE
Night, Desi.

DESI
Night, Charlie.

100 EXT. PORCH-RANCH HOUSE - DAY 100

Desi sits on the porch, reading a BROCHURE from a SPA. She watches Charlie walk towards the barn. She puts the brochure into her purse. A CELL phone rings. She digs it out of the purse, opens it:

DESI
Hello?

101 INT. ROOM-REST HOME-SMALL NEW MEXICO TOWN - DAY 101

Betty is on the phone:

BETTY
Desdemona.

DESI (PHONE VOICE)
Hi, Mom.

Betty fingers an open LETTER-as she talks:

BETTY
I got a letter from Jake.

102 EXT. PORCH-RANCH HOUSE - DAY 102

Desi listens to the cell, silent, then:

DESI
Good.

BETTY (PHONE VOICE)
You're close to Santa Fe, aren't you?

DESI
Yes, Mom.

BETTY (PHONE VOICE)
Well. I gotta go to my welding class. Bye.

Click. Dial tone. Desi flips the cell closed. It RINGS again. She flips it open:

DESI

Hello?

103 INT. KITCHEN-MEL'S HOUSE -- DAY

103

Arlene, Mel and Barbara sit around the kitchen table--playing Canasta. Mel sips her usual martini. Barbara and Arlene drink ice tea. They talk into an open CELL PHONE set on the table:

ARLENE

Hey, hon. It's us!

BARBARA

Hey, sugar!

MEL

Yo.

DESI (O.S.)

Hello, girls. How did the match go with the Apache team?

BARBARA

We got our butts kicked. We need you back.

ARLENE

So? How's it going? I mean three weeks and not a peep...?

104 EXT. PORCH-RANCH HOUSE - DAY

104

Desi watches Charlie move a horse from the barn, talks into the cell:

DESI

Okay, I guess. My legs are feeling a little better. And..

105 INT. KITCHEN-MEL'S HOUSE -- DAY

105

ARLENE

And...?

DESI (O.S.)

Well.

The girls look at each other knowingly.

ARLENE
Oh, no! You met a guy?

106 EXT. PORCH-RANCH HOUSE -- DAY 106

Desi eyes Charlie as he saddles a horse near the barn, talks into the cell:

DESI
I met a cowboy. Sweet man.

107 INT. KITCHEN-MEL'S HOUSE - DAY 107

Mel belts back the martini, rolls her eyes. Barbara and Arlene frown at her.

ARLENE
That's wonderful. Is he cute?

DESI (O.S.)
Definitely.

MEL
A cowboy? Jesus. They're all bums.
Drunken bums. Jack was one of them.
He was a bum too.

Arlene scowls at Mel. So does Barbara. It does no good.

MEL (CONT'D)
I have to ask...

Arlene tries to stop her, reaching for the cell.

ARLENE
Mel, no...

It's too late. Mel snaps it up.

MEL
Have you found the 'fountain of
youth?'

Arlene tries to grab the cell phone.

108 EXT. PORCH-RANCH HOUSE -- DAY 108

Desi snaps the cell closed, tucks it away, watches Charlie with the horse.

109 INT. KITCHEN-ARLENE'S HOUSE -- DAY

109

The cell phone on the table is dead. Arlene sighs at Mel:

ARLENE

You had to say something, didn't you?

MEL

What the hell is she doing, Arlene? You said yourself...

ARLENE

Mel, you know Desi. She's going to do what she's going to do...

Mel stands, crosses to the back door, opens it, lights a cigarette:

MEL

She's not dealing with reality.

ARLENE

And you are?

Mel holds up the martini, then the cigarette:

BARBARA

I don't blame Desi. I hate reality.

MEL

Barbara!

BARBARA

Well, I do.

Mel holds up the martini--and the cigarette:

MEL

See these? These are real. I can drink it. I can smoke it. They get me through the day. They're right here.

BARBARA

Great. So you're what... proposing that Desi just come home and get drunk?

Mel pours herself another martini:

MEL

No. I'm saying that she should stop looking for the Goddamned tooth fairy. Desi is old, just like the rest of us. Face it. Howard is gone. So is Jack. And they aren't coming back.

Mel steps outside the back door, SLAMMING the door behind her.

110 INT. HOME OFFICE-HOUSE-SANTA FE -- DAY 110

It is the same (seen before) architectural drawing table, etc. The PHONE rings. JAKE, handsome, 33, enters, snaps up the phone:

JAKE

Hello?

111 EXT. PORCH-RANCH HOUSE - DAY 111

Desi sits in her wheelchair-on the front PORCH, with the cell to her ear. Charlie loads the horse into a horse trailer-in the background.

JAKE (PHONE VOICE)

Hello...? Who is this?

DESI

It's Mom, Jake.

112 INT. CHARLIE'S PICKUP - LATE DAY 112

Charlie and Desi ride together. He pulls the HORSE TRAILER behind the truck. She glances at him, thinks. He looks at her, smiles.

113 EXT. RESTAURANT-SANTA FE - NIGHT 113

Charlie has unloaded Desi's wheelchair. She settles into it. He stands looking at her:

CHARLIE

Well. Good luck with...

DESI

Jake.

CHARLIE

Jake. Pick you up at the spa
tonight?

He kisses her, then climbs into the truck, drives away,
pulling the horse trailer.

114 INT. PATIO AREA--RESTAURANT-SANTA FE - NIGHT

114

Desi sits in her wheelchair waiting in a walled-in patio dining area, filled with hanging plants-and candles. She is the only diner on the patio. She drinks ice tea, glances at her watch. JAKE (seen earlier) appears in a doorway-out to the patio. He crosses to her table. Desi smiles. He stops at the table.

DESI

Hello, Jake.

JAKE

Mom.

DESI

You look good.

Jake hesitates, sits. The YOUNG WAITER appears:

WAITER

What can I get you folks?

DESI

I'll have the combo platter.

WAITER

Red or green?

DESI

Red.

The waiter turns to Jake.

JAKE

Just ice tea.

The waiter scurries away. Jake notices her wheelchair:

JAKE (CONT'D)

What happened?

DESI
 Back injury. This makes it easier
 to...get around until it heals.
 Listen...

JAKE
 Yes, Mom?

She pauses, then:

DESI
 Let's just try and be civil to each
 other. No yelling. Okay?

JAKE
 Is that why we're meeting here? So
 I won't yell at you? Shit. I bet
 Gramma put you up to this.

She sighs. He stands:

JAKE (CONT'D)
 I have to go. Excuse me.

DESI
 Are you coming back?

JAKE
 Are you kidding? I wouldn't miss
 this for anything.

He rushes off--back into the restaurant. Desi watches him,
 concerned.

115 INT. MEN'S ROOM-RESTAURANT -- NIGHT

115

Jake stands at a urinal, taking a piss. He finishes, crosses
 to the sink, washes his hands, looks at himself in the
 mirror.

JAKE
 Oh, fuck.

He reveals his CELL PHONE, dials, waits, then:

JAKE (CONT'D)
 Get over here. Now.

116 INT. PATIO-RESTAURANT-SANTA FE -- NIGHT

116

Charlie appears, lead by a WAITER, who points out Desi.
 Charlie goes to her table, carrying a bag, stops, holds up

her BOWLING BAG:

CHARLIE
You left it in the truck. Figured
you might want it-for your
"ballast."

DESI
Thanks.

Jake returns to the table:

JAKE
Who's this?

DESI
Jake. Charlie. Charlie, this is
Jake, my son.

Charlie sticks his hand out to shake:

CHARLIE
Jake.

Jake takes his handshake.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
You have a very special mother.

JAKE
Yeah, I know. Cowboy, huh?

CHARLIE
Yeah.

JAKE
Cool.

Jake looks at Desi, then Charlie:

JAKE (CONT'D)
Why not join us for dinner,
Charlie?

DESI
What a sweet suggestion. Yes,
Charlie. Join us.

CHARLIE
Naw. You need to be alone...

DESI
No, it's okay.

CHARLIE
Well. Truth is, I'm starving.
Smells good.

DESI
Good.

Charlie sits.

The WAITER returns, sets down Jake's glass of ice tea, then draws his order pad.

CHARLIE
What're you having, Desi?

DESI
The combo plate. Red.

CHARLIE
I'll have the same. And ice tea.

WAITER
Excellent.

The waiter hurries off.

DESI
How's work, Jake?

JAKE
Busy.

DESI
Good. Jake is an architect,
Charlie.

CHARLIE
No, shit?

Jake gulps down the ice tea, then:

JAKE
No, shit.

The waiter appears with a pitcher, and a glass of tea for Charlie. Jake shoves his glass at the waiter. The waiter refills Jake's glass. They all sit in silence. Then- TRAVIS, 27, handsome, enters the patio, spots Jake, walks to the table, stops. Desi looks surprised-at Jake, then at Charlie.

TRAVIS
Hey, everyone.

JAKE
Travis. My Mom.

Travis sticks out his hand:

TRAVIS
Oh. Hi.

She shakes his hand:

DESI
Travis. Ah, this is...um...um..

CHARLIE
Charlie.

DESI
Charlie.

JAKE
Charlie's a real cowboy, Travis.

TRAVIS
No, shit?

Travis sticks his hand out to shake Charlie's, then sits. The waiter appears-with the FOOD, starts to set it out in front of Charlie and Desi. Travis eyes Charlie's dish:

TRAVIS (CONT'D)
Bring me that.

WAITER
Yes, sir.

The waiter disappears. Travis studies Jake, then leans over, pecks him affectionately on the cheek:

TRAVIS
How did the lunch meeting go?

JAKE
Good.

Jake watches Desi and Charlie. Charlie watches Travis and Jake, as he eats. No expression. Desi watches them too, then starts to eat:

DESI
This is delicious.

TRAVIS
They put Saffron in the sauce.

JAKE
Travis is a chef at one of the best
restaurants in Santa Fe.

DESI
Charlie cooks too.

TRAVIS
Really?

Charlie shrugs. Jake takes another swig of ice tea, stares at his mom:

JAKE
What the fuck are you doing here,
Mom?

Charlie stands:

CHARLIE
You folks probably want to be
alone.

Desi glares at Jake.

JAKE
Sorry. Charlie. Please. Finish
your dinner. Good food, huh?

DESI
Yes, Charlie. Please.

Charlie pauses, then sits. Travis watches Jake and Desi, then turns to Charlie:

TRAVIS
That must be your horse trailer
parked out front, Charlie.

CHARLIE
Yeah.

Jake's gaze stays on Desi:

JAKE
Tell me, Mom.

She leans close to him:

DESI
Don't start this now. Let's talk
about it later.

JAKE
Why not now?

Travis continues with Charlie:

TRAVIS
Do you have a lot of horses?

CHARLIE
A couple. Yeah.

Jake stares at Desi:

JAKE
Bullshit.

Charlie stands again:

CHARLIE
I should go. Really.

DESI
Jake, you're being rude. Stop it.

JAKE
She's right. I am. I'll be good.

Charlie pauses, sits. Travis looks around the table, stands:

TRAVIS
I need wine. A bottle. A large
bottle. Anyone else?

DESI
None for me.

CHARLIE
No.

JAKE
No thanks, Trav.

Travis rushes off. Desi looks at Jake, then Charlie:

DESI
Let's just finish eating in peace
and quiet.

They continue eating. Travis returns—with a bottle of wine,
and a couple glasses, holds them up:

TRAVIS
Cabernet. Excellent with Mexican
food.

Travis sits, pours himself a glass, drinks. The waiter brings
Travis' plate. Jake stares at Desi. Desi looks at him, then
the others, stops eating, puts her napkin down:

DESI
Excuse me.

She wheels around-crosses to another (empty) table, stops,
tries to regain her composure. She turns back-to head back to
the table. Jake stands, goes to Desi before she returns to
the table:

JAKE
Wait, Mom.

Desi stops. Jake sits at another table next to Desi. Charlie
and Travis remain at their table, eating. They can hear
everything that Jake and Desi say.

JAKE (CONT'D)
Mom. Do you know...do you have any
fucking concept...what it felt like
to hear you tell me that you
didn't want me to come to dad's
funeral?

DESI
Let's not do this now. Please.

She tries to wheel back to the table where Travis and Charlie
are. Jake stops her:

JAKE
Listen to me.

TRAVIS
So. Charlie. What are the names
of your horses?

JAKE
So you finally come here after
three years...

DESI
Jake, you know that your father
couldn't except any of this...

JAKE
'This'?

CHARLIE

Welp. There's Homer. Shirley.
Spot.

DESI

Yes. This. You knew that. He made
me promise that you wouldn't be at
the funeral. What could I do? He
was dying. I had no choice.

TRAVIS

They have a big pasture to graze
in?

JAKE

You could have told dad that he was
wrong.

CHARLIE

Sometimes. Depends on the rain.

DESI

I did. Howard just felt the way he
did. Funny thing. You're father
used to be so...open, and...free. He
was a hippie. But as he got older
...he changed.

JAKE

So did you.

Jake turns, looks at Charlie.

JAKE (CONT'D)

What do you think, Charlie?

DESI

Jake. Please.

TRAVIS

You know, Charlie, I wanted to be a
cowboy when I was a kid. Then I
discovered...Julia Childs.

Jake goes back to their table, sits.

JAKE

I want to know what Charlie thinks
about all this shit.

Desi pauses, then wheels back to the table. Travis sees Desi
wheeling back, whispers to Jake:

TRAVIS

In-coming.

Charlie stands.

DESI

Please don't leave.

CHARLIE

I have to go to the...rest room.

TRAVIS

Well, if you gotta go, you gotta go!

Charlie crosses to the doorway back into the main part of the restaurant.

117 INT. HALLWAY-RESTAURANT-SANTA FE 117

Charlie walks PAST the Men's Room door-into the main part of the restaurant.

118 INT. PATIO-RESTAURANT-SANTA FE 118

Desi, Travis and Jake sit silent.

DESI

Jake. Look...

JAKE

What, Mom?

She sighs. Travis holds out the wine bottle for Jake:

TRAVIS

Here.

Jake shakes his head no. Desi grabs the wine bottle, takes a gulp, gives it back to Travis:

DESI

Thanks.

TRAVIS

Anytime.

The waiter steps up to the table.

DESI

Check, please.

WAITER

The cowboy paid the bill.

A TRUCK is heard on the other side of the PATIO. They all turn-to see the top of CHARLIE'S TRUCK-and HORSE TRAILER Roaring away down the street.

DESI

Shit.

Jake stands, pulls out a couple bills, slaps them on the tray:

JAKE

That's for my tea.

DESI

Jake...

JAKE

Mom, stop. Just stop. You're only making things worse.

Jake charges out. Travis remains, watches Desi, who flops back down. Travis stands:

TRAVIS

C'mon.

DESI

Where?

TRAVIS

Charlie's too cute to let go of so easily.

DESI

But...

TRAVIS

I'll help you look for him.

Travis heads out, then stops, looks back at her:

TRAVIS

Well, you coming?

She wheels out behind Travis.

He drives, stops at a STOP LIGHT, then bangs on the steering wheel, pissed.

120 INT. CHARLIE'S TRUCK - NIGHT 120

He drives, thinks.

121 INT. TRAVIS' VW BUG - NIGHT 121

Travis drives. Desi rides with him. They speed-OUT OF SANTA FE-into the mountains.

TRAVIS
He said Tesuque?

DESI
Yes.

TRAVIS
He shouldn't be too hard to spot
with the horse trailer.

122 EXT. HIGHWAY OUT OF SANTA FE 122

Travis' bug sweeps past, disappears around a curve.

123 INT. TRAVIS' VW BUG 123

Travis drives. Desi spots Charlie's HORSE TRAILER ahead.

DESI
There he is!

Travis speeds up next to Charlie's truck, honking. Desi waves for him to pull over. Charlie sees them, slows, then stops. Travis stops in front of the truck. Desi remains in the car, not sure what to do, until:

TRAVIS
I think you should go talk to him.

She hesitates, then opens the door, struggles to stand, walks back to Charlie's truck-with the cane.

124 INT. CHARLIE'S TRUCK 124

Desi pauses for a moment, looking in at Charlie, who stares straight ahead. She opens the door, flops onto the seat, pauses, looks at him, then:

DESI
I guess you think I'm a terrible
person.

CHARLIE
It's none of my business.

DESI
It is now, Charlie.

CHARLIE
Yeah. I guess I think you've been
kinda hard on Jake.

DESI
I know. Charlie?

He looks at her.

DESI (CONT'D)
Have you ever had to make an
impossible decision?

CHARLIE
I was gonna talk to you tonight.

DESI
Yeah?

CHARLIE
Yeah. I like you a lot, Desi. The
past couple weeks have been the
happiest since...well, I don't know
when.

DESI
For me too.

CHARLIE
Why don't you move up here?

She considers him, then:

DESI
I could commute.

CHARLIE
It's a three-hour drive.

DESI
We could see each other on
weekends.

CHARLIE
I've got real used to you. I'd like
to have you here all the time. And
I can't leave the ranch.

She studies his face, then:

DESI

I can't, Charlie. I have a life at home. A house, friends, my eighty-year old mother.

CHARLIE

You know, four years before my wife died, she did a lot of traveling. She was on road a lot. Business. She was never at home. I missed her. Then when she passed, it was too late.

DESI

Oh, Charlie.

She leans across the seat, kisses him on the cheek. She opens the door.

125 EXT. ROADSIDE-HIGHWAY-OUTSIDE SANTA FE 125

She climbs out of the truck, steps back. Charlie rumbles back onto the highway--and away. Desi gets into Travis' car.

126 INT. TRAVIS' VW BUG 126

Travis and Desi sit, watching Charlie's truck-and horse trailer-disappear down the road.

TRAVIS

So, he's gone?

She just stares ahead.

TRAVIS (CONT'D)

You know, Jake told me that you were tough. He didn't tell me that you were also stupid.

DESI

Shut up, Travis.

TRAVIS

Sure. Where to?

127 INT. "DESERT PALMS" COSMETIC SURGERY BEAUTY CLINIC - DAY 127

Desi sits in an elegant high-backed chair-in front of a long row of gold-framed mirrors. Chandeliers hang from the ceiling. All very fancy.

PERI, 35, pretentious, steps up behind her, pokes at Desi's hair, studies her in the mirror. He speaks with some sort of (unknown) foreign accent:

PERI
Mrs. Desdemona Jones?

DESI
Yes.

PERI
Good, afternoon. I am Dr. Peri Dubuvoi.

DESI
Nice to meet you.

PERI
Charmed. I will be your cosmetic surgery beauty consultant and doctor. While we wait for your computer beauty simulation to be completed, let's talk. Shall we? What is it that you hope accomplish with your visit to Desert Palms?

DESI
Well...I want to look younger...

PERI
Don't we all!

Peri suddenly places his hands on the sides of her face, and pulls back at the hair-line. Her face is stretched back, jolting her.

PERI (CONT'D)
Ecote, Mrs. Jones! I can take twenty years off your face-with just the right incision. Here. And here. Tres mise'en scene!

He indicates places behind her ears. A YOUNG WOMAN appears with a LAPTOP computer. She sets the computer on the counter in front of Desi. The young woman scurries away. Peri rolls Desi forward in the chair-closer to the COMPUTER on the counter. He flips open the desk top, stabs some buttons.

PERI (CONT'D)
Voila! Before...and After!

On one side the COMPUTER SCREEN Is a PHOTO of Desi as she is. No make-up, looking rather sad, like a criminal "mug shot." On the OTHER SIDE of the screen is a "simulated" PHOTO of Desi. She is smiling. She looks like she's 25. There is not a single wrinkle on her face, flawless, soft, perfect, air-brushed, Barbie-like. And very scary.

128 EXT. RURAL ROADSIDE-NEW MEXICO -- DAY 128

Desi rides down the remote roadside in the wheelchair. She stops, reveals her cell phone, dials, waits.

129 INT. HOME OFFICE-HOUSE-SANTA FE - DAY 129

The (same) room with the drawing table-and the architectural drawings. The phone rings and rings. Travis appears, answers:

TRAVIS

Hello?

DESI (O.S.)

Hey, Travis.

TRAVIS

Desi.

DESI (O.S.)

Is he there?

TRAVIS

Yeah, but he won't talk to you.

130 EXT. RURAL ROADSIDE-NEW MEXICO -- DAY 130

Desi flips the cell off, frowns, then hums along the road again. A CAR suddenly speeds past. It's a "hot rod"-with a loud exhaust. She sticks out her thumb. The car suddenly SKIDS to a stop. Dust flies. The car backs up, stops next to Desi in the wheelchair.

INSIDE THE CAR is JOE, 30, big, muscular, long shaggy hair, unshaven, drives. He coasts the car along side Desi for a ways, watching her intently. He's on something. He fidgets, nervous, erratic. Desi realizes that this is not a good ride. She keeps going in the wheelchair. Joe's words slur:

JOE
Hey, you don't want a...ride?

DESI
I think I'll just ride along here.
It's such a nice day. Thanks
anyway.

She doesn't stop. He follows next to her.

JOE
Name's...Joe. And Joe was...just
wondering what you had in...that
purse you got in your lap.
C'mon...lady. You don't...want Joe to
have to stop and get out?

She keeps rolling, trying to ignore him.

JOE (CONT'D)
Damn. You know how...dangerous it can
be out on this country roads?
Especially...when your alone, and
old.

He stops the car, jumps out, goes after Desi in the
wheelchair.

JOE (CONT'D)
Don't be...stupid. Just give me the
purse.

She stops, thinks, then flings the PURSE on the ground in
front of her. Joe snatches the purse up, turns, walks off.
He glances back at her:

JOE (CONT'D)
Gracias.

JOE Turns away from her, walks off, digs through the purse.
Desi's wheelchair hums (O.S.), coming closer to Joe--as he
stands with his back to her, rifling through the purse.

He finds a stack of BILLS, holds them up, grins.

DESI (O.S.)
Excuse me, ah, Joe?

As he turns to her-- DESI Is there--with the BOWLING BALL held
over her head. Before he can move, she hurls the bowling ball
onto JOE'S FOOT. THUD! His foot can be heard CRACKING into
pieces. Joe FALLS to the ground, yelping in pain:

JOE
Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh! You...BITCH!!

Joe rolls around on the ground, yelling:

JOE (CONT'D)
Ahhhhhhhhhh!

Desi retrieves the bowling ball, which rolled off away from Joe--and her purse, money, etc--that he flung when the bowling ball hit his foot. Desi cruises away--down the road, leaving Joe in agony, rolling around on the ground.

DESI
Asshole.

131 INT. ROOM--MOTEL--RURAL NEW MEXICO - MORNING 131

Desi sits on the bed, nursing a cup of coffee, staring out the window--at the road in front of the motel. A sign out front announces:

FREE BURRO RIDES WITH ROOM

Below the sign there is a small fenced area with a mangy-looking BURRO in it. Desi sees a PICKUP Pulling a HORSE TRAILER speed past on the highway. DESI'S Eyes follow the pickup and horse trailer out of sight. She lifts the cell phone from her purse, taps out a number.

132 INT. ROOM--REST HOME--SMALL NEW MEXICO TOWN -- MORNING 132

The phone rings and rings. Betty is not there.

133 INT. ROOM--MOTEL--RURAL NEW MEXICO -- MORNING 133

Desi flips the cell phone closed, pulls out the LIST ALL THE SPAS (and there are MANY)--have been CROSSED-OFF--Except one LAST PLACE--right at the bottom, which reads:

L'OREAL SALON, Santa Fe

MONTAGE

As we hear The Rolling Stones' "Ruby Tuesday." A

134 EXT. L'OREAL SALON--SANTA FE -- DAY 134

SIGN Reads--in fancy gold-leaf lettering:

L'OREAL SALON SANTA FE

135 INT. SALON -- DAY 135

It is like so many of the other places that Desi has been-- only more EXPENSIVE. Desi sits in a cushy leather chair, surrounded by mirrors and lights. MAKE-UP ARTIST Does her face, brushing powder gently over it, blending. Then-- A HAIR STYLIST Pokes and prods Desi's hair. Then-- A MANICURIST Does Desi's nails. Then--A PEDACURIST Does Desi's toes.

136 EXT. L'OREAL SALON--SANTA FE -- DAY 136

As the heavy double doors open. Desi buzzes out in her wheelchair, looking like a million bucks. Perfectly done up. She does look 10 years younger. "Ruby Tuesday" ends.

137 EXT. PLAZA-SANTA FE - LATE DAY 137

Desi sweeps across the PLAZA, gliding to stop in the middle. She looks up at the trees, reveals a compact mirror, inspects her new, "beautiful" self. Desi thinks, inspects herself in the mirror. Her gaze rises over the compact. She frowns gravely, painfully. She breaks down. Overwhelmed. She SOBS. Her (newly applied) mascara starts to RUN down her perfectly blended blush. She spins the wheelchair around, hails a TAXI on the street on one side of the plaza. The taxi stops.

138 INT. TAXI - LATE DAY 138

Desi sits in the back of the taxi, still crying. The TAXI DRIVER loads the wheelchair-into the back-and open trunk of the taxi. The taxi driver jumps in the car, starts it, drives out of the plaza. Desi continues to cry, her cheeks streaked with black mascara. She can't stop crying.

TAXI DRIVER
Where to, ma'am?

DESI
I dunno. Just drive.

He flips the meter on, drives.

139 EXT. SANTA FE STREET - LATE DAY 139

The taxi sweeps past.

140 INT. TAXI 140

Desi stares out at the passing city, still crying. She whispers to herself:

DESI
What the hell have I done? Christ.

She rifles through her purse for tissue, finds instead to find the BAGGIE OF JOINTS DESI Stares at the bag.

TAXI DRIVER
Ma'am? I'll just drive down
Cerrillos, if that's okay?

DESI
Yes. Fine.

She turns, notices something-on the SIDE OF THE STREET. A large BOWLING ALLEY A sign out front flashes:

SANTA FE BOWLING CENTER

DESI Thinks, then:

DESI (CONT'D)
Driver. Stop.

Screech.

141 EXT. SANTA FE BOWLING CENTER - LATE DAY 141

Desi flops into the wheelchair, after the driver has unloaded it. She pays him. He gets into the taxi, drives off. Desi spins around, contemplates the front of the BOWLING ALLEY. She turns, looks around, then cruises off to ONE SIDE of the building.

142 EXT. SIDE OF SANTA FE BOWLING CENTER - NIGHT 142

Desi sits in her wheelchair-behind the DUMPSTER-smoking a JOINT. She puffs, determined, tokes hard. She pulls out her compact, WIPES OFF the streaked mascara on her face, and the layers of make-up.

143 INT. SANTA FE BOWLING CENTER - NIGHT 143

There are 20 LANES in the place. Desi, without make-up, hums up to a LANE, stops, takes a breath, straightens up. She studies the PINS at the end of her lane, then the OTHER BOWLERS on either side of her. She types in her name-into

the TOUCH SCREEN (PROJECTED) SCORE PAD:

Desdemona

She grabs her bowling bag from the back of the wheelchair, lifts out the BOWLING BALL, then wheels the chair around-to place herself (still in the wheelchair), behind the foul line--at the front of her lane. Some of the BOWLERS next to her take notice of her of stance--positioned to bowl from the wheelchair. Even though still STONED--she is intensely FOCUSED. She holds up her bowling ball in front of her face, concentrating on the lane--and the ten pins--waiting at the other end. Then--She swings her arm back with the bowling ball, sweeps forward in the chair, letting the ball roll--as she stops the wheelchair. She is a little awkward, but she manages to release the ball gracefully. The BALL rolls fast--right down the middle of the lane. BLAM! All the pins fly. STRIKE. DESI Sighs, still determined. Desi is poised once again at the foul line--in the wheelchair. Ball in front of her face, squinting, concentrating. She flips the switch on the chair--with her foot. It hums forward. She swings her arm back with the ball, then releases it perfectly onto the lane--just as the chair glides to a stop. The ball SMASHES into all the pins. Another STRIKE. The OTHER BOWLERS all begin to take notice.

144 ANOTHER MOMENT LATER- 144

Desi delivers the ball--in the same flawless manner. SLAM! Another STRIKE. One of the BOWLERS next to her, CLAPS. Desi beams, heads back to retrieve the bowling ball out of the return carrousel.

145 STILL ANOTHER MOMENT LATER- 145

Desi swings, delivers. BLAM! Another STRIKE.

146 MONTAGE 146

Of a CROWD of OTHER BOWLERS gathering to watch DESI As she swings again and again, slamming into all the pins--again and again. STRIKE after STRIKE Until, the FINAL FRAME. The projected SCORE PAD

Reads:

Coming up--FRAME 10
Score TO FRAME 9 - 280

A perfect game--to that point. DESI Concentrates at the foul line. Focused on the pins in front of her. Ball perched in

front of her face. The CROWD watches her. Silent anticipation. DESI She buzzes forward in the chair, straight to the foul line. She swings the ball onto the lane. The chair slides to a stop. The BALL Rolls and rolls for what seems an eternity to the end of the lane. BLAM! ONE pin standing. DESI'S Face drops. The CROWD Disappointed, GROANS in mass. DESI Retrieves the ball at the carrousel, holds it up, squints, then rolls forward in the wheelchair, releasing the ball-perfectly. The BALL Picks off the one remaining pin. BLAM! The CROWD Cheers. DESI Beams. Triumphant.

SCORE PAD

Flashes:

FINAL SCORE: 290

DESI Considers her score, then the crowd. She puts her bowling ball back into its bag, takes a breath, hums quickly out of the bowling alley-in the wheelchair. A skinny BOY, 19, follows her. He is also in a WHEELCHAIR. He rolls after her through the crowd, curious. Desi wheels out of the place. The boy stops-not going outside, watches DESI Through the GLASS DOORS-as she climbs into a MINI-VAN TAXI.

147 INT. MINI-VAN TAXI 147

Desi settles in the back.

TAXI DRIVER

Where to, ma'am?

DESI

Do you know where Agua Fria Lane is?

TAXI DRIVER

Yes, ma'am.

149 INT. ENTRANCE-SANTA FE BOWLING CENTER 149

The boy still watches Desi in the taxi. The taxi driver drops the wheelchair into the back of the van, jumps into the mini-van, starts to drive off. The boy rolls his wheelchair outside-after the mini-van/taxi-across the parking lot.

150 INT. MINI-VAN TAXI 150

Desi notices the boy in the wheelchair chasing the taxi.

DESI
Driver. Stop.

The mini-van/taxi stops. Desi lowers the window. The boy wheels up next to her, stops, then:

BOY
That was amazing, ma'am. How did you do it?

She slides forward, closer to him, whispers:

DESI
Marijuana.

BOY
Cool.

DESI
Okay, driver.

151 EXT. SANTA FE BOWLING CENTER-PARKING LOT 151

The mini-van taxi speeds away. The boy in the wheelchair watches.

152 EXT. JAKE'S HOUSE-SANTA FE - NIGHT 152

Desi waits at the front door. New determination. The mini-van taxi drives away. The front door opens. Jake is there.

DESI
You didn't even give me a chance, Jake.

JAKE
Go, mom...

DESI
Let me at least finish, for Chrissake. I had to choose between your dying father's last wish...and you. I was stupid. I was afraid. Forgive me. You were right. I changed. I got old.

He studies her face, then slowly nods forgiveness. She stands, hugs him. They stand with their arms around each other for a beat.

153

INT. LIVING ROOM-JAKE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

153

Desi sits, watching Travis-in the kitchen, cooking-though an open doorway (on the far end of the room). Jake enters the living room with a couple of glasses of wine, sets one in front of Desi, sits across from her. Jake watches Travis also, sips wine:

JAKE

If it wasn't for him, I don't know
what I would've done.

Desi watches Travis too:

DESI

He's a good man.

JAKE

Everyone deserves someone, Mom
Whatever happened to the cowboy?

DESI

Charlie.

JAKE

I thought he liked you.

DESI

It didn't work out.

JAKE

Oh. He seemed like a nice guy.

DESI

Yes.

Travis steps into the room, refills their glasses. Jake watches Travis carefully. Desi watches Jake watching Travis, as he fills her glass.

DESI (CONT'D)

Thanks for taking good care of my
son, Travis.

They click their glasses together. Jake looks at Desi:

JAKE

What will you do now, Mom?

DESI

Oh. I think I'm ready to go home.

154 EXT. DESDEMONA'S HOUSE - MORNING 154

Birds. A dog barks way off. The famous garbage truck rumbles past.

155 INT. KITCHEN-DESDEMONA'S HOUSE 155

Desi sits in the wheelchair eating cereal, drinking coffee quietly. Alone. The TV is on in the background.

156 EXT. DESDEMONA'S HOUSE -- DAY 156

Desi rides in the wheelchair-out to the mailbox, opens it, pulls out mail, looks it over. She opens an envelope, pulls out a letter-and an attached PHOTO Is a shot of Travis and Jake-together. They look happy.

157 INT. ARLENE'S BEAUTY SALON - DAY 157

Arlene and Desi are alone. Arlene clips Desi's hair. Arlene pokes a Desi's hair, steps back:

ARLENE
What do you think?

DESI
Could use a little more off the ends.

Arlene clips some more.

DESI (CONT'D)
Arlene?

ARLENE
Yes, hon?

DESI
Do you think I'm a fool?

Arlene stops clipping.

DESI (CONT'D)
I've been back for a whole week and none of you have said a word about my...um...trip.

ARLENE
You want me to be honest?

DESI

Shoot.

ARLENE

First off, we vowed not to say anything until you brought it up.

DESI

Even Mel?

ARLENE

Even Mel. And...

DESI

Yeah?

ARLENE

We figured that you had learned a big fat, expensive lesson.

DESI

I guess I am back in Kansas.

ARLENE

It's not so bad, hon.

158 INT. CAFÉ-SMALL NEW MEXICO TOWN - DAY 158
Arlene and Desi eat lunch in silence.

159 EXT. CLINIC-SMALL NEW MEXICO TOWN - DAY 159
A SIGN out front says:

LAS PALMAS PHYSICAL THERAPY CLINIC

Arlene waits in her car. Desi comes from the clinic-WALKING-with a cane. She climbs into Arlene's car.

160 EXT. MEL'S HOUSE -- NIGHT 160
Lights are on inside. Crickets outside.

161 INT. LIVING ROOM-MEL'S HOUSE 161
The Canasta club is back together. As they play, they each drink a can of BEER, except Mel, who's got her usual martini. Barbara wears her pink "BUCKEROETTES" bowling shirt. They play silently-for a long beat, watching each other's moves. Then Barbara looks around the table-at each of them. She

raises her beer can to the others:

BARBARA

To the Buckeroettes! We're back!

They click cans, glass. Barbara looks at her watch, pulls something from her purse:

A large ALUMINUM FOIL-LIKE HOOD-that she pulls over her head. It has 2 holes where her eyes are-with sunglass-like lenses set into it. And a hole where her mouth is. Barbara continues to play cards, sips her beer. Everyone except Desi seems not to notice Barbara's strange hood. Desi stares at her:

DESI

Barbara, did you get a job at a nuclear power plant?

BARBARA

Oh, silly. It keeps out the gamma rays.

Desi watches Barbara, then realizes:

DESI

Oh, my God! No!

BARBARA

No?

ARLENE

What?

DESI

You... and Gilbert?

ARLENE

Oh, that's right...

MEL

You've been gone, since...

DESI

Since what?

BARBARA

We're engaged.

DESI

You...and Gilbert?

Barbara chuckles:

BARBARA

Yeah.

Desi thinks, then toasts, raising her beer can:

DESI

Well, congratulations. To Barbara and Gilbert!

ARLENE & MEL

To Barbara and Gilbert!

They click cans, martini glass.

BARBARA

Thanks, girls.

Desi looks around the table at her friends.

162 EXT. MEL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

162

The girls are leaving Mel's house. Barbara walks out to her car with Gilbert-hand in hand. She still wears her hood thing. Gilbert wears sunglasses. Arlene gets into her car, waves at Desi and Mel. Mel stands in the doorway-as they drive away. Desi WALKS down the street-with her cane. Mel closes the door, goes inside.

163 EXT. REST HOME-SMALL NEW MEXICO TOWN - DAY

163

Establish.

164 INT. ROOM-REST HOME-SMALL NEW MEXICO TOWN

164

Betty and Desi sit across from each eating lunch. Desi gazes at Betty. Desi is off somewhere.

BETTY

What?

Desi stares at her.

DESI

How're all the classes?

BETTY

Awful. Do you actually think I enjoy that shit?

DESI

Well, I don't know.

BETTY

I don't. Most of it is pretty damn stupid. Do you think I care about Rumba dancing or welding? It keeps me alive. Keeps me from going nuts.

Desi stares at her.

BETTY (CONT'D)

Desdemona? What the hell is it?

Desi stares more at her.

BETTY (CONT'D)

Tell me. What?

165 EXT. RANCH HOUSE -- DAY

165

Charlie's truck is parked outside. Several horses graze in a field beyond the trailer. A CAR appears, then stops in front of the trailer. Desi climbs out of the car-with a cane, starts towards the trailer, climbs the porch steps. The trailer door opens. Charlie is there.

CHARLIE

'But that I love the gentle Desdemona, I would not my unhoused free condition. Put into circumscription and confine. For the sea's worth.'

DESI

Charlie.

CHARLIE

Desdemona.

She stops in front of him. He smiles.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Want some coffee? I'll make a fresh pot.

DESI

That would be nice. She steps up to the door.

CHARLIE

Shit. Know what? We're gonna live forever!

She follows Charlie inside. The door closes behind them.

166

BLACK SCREEN.

166

We hear Jimi Hendrix's "Foxy Lady" playing over the END CREDITS.