

"The Modern Unicorn's Guide to Love and Magic"

by
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(ROUGH DRAFT)

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FADE IN:

A UNICORN!

Its surface appears metallic and glittery, and it radiates flares of colored light as we move across its surface.

INT. ALEX'S BEDROOM - MORNING

The Unicorn is a miniature figurine on a nightstand.

In bed is ALEX, a guy in his mid-to-late 20s, average size and weight, hair dishevelled, currently wearing pajamas.

Alex's alarm eventually wakes him up, and he manages to pull himself out of bed. His movements are slow, sad, almost mechanical, as if he's just going through the motions in his own life.

He dresses, sloppily, and exits the apartment.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING/STREET - MORNING

Alex emerges from his building, squinting in the morning sun. He gets in his old beater of a car and drives off.

On his way to work he drives past a:

CAFE

Morning commuters come in and out of a small cafe. We pause with one girl, sitting alone at an outdoor table:

PAIGE.

She's around the same age as Alex, she's attractive, not strictly beautiful, but with a great sense of style and a certain sensual quality. She has a distant look in her eye that makes people hesitant to approach her- something about her seems to be lost somewhere far away.

Right now, she's working on her laptop, with her headphones in.

A WAITER approaches.

WAITER
(trying to hit on her)
Anything else I can do for you?

Paige either doesn't hear him through the headphones, or pretends not to.

WAITER (CONT'D)

Miss?

PAIGE

(finally aware of him)
Another coffee please.

INT. ALEX'S OFFICE - DAY

Alex arrives for work and slouches into his typical cubicle for another day of work at his typical job.

He mostly just stares straight ahead, as the activity around on him goes on in fast motion.

ALEX'S CLOCK:

Flips over to six o'clock and instantly he's up and off.

EXT. SUBURB - EARLY EVENING

A typical, tree-lined suburban street.

Outside one house, MRS. GEROSSIE does yardwork. MICK drives up in an old car with two other guys, OWEN and JIMMY. They are all geeks and social misfits of various stripes.

RONNIE, another of the same stripe, rides his bike up. They all walk up to the house, bantering.

MICK

How's it going with her?

JIMMY

Good, man. I think this weekend is it. She said we're gonna drive up to the woods, get a little cabin...

Owen sees Mrs. Gerossie looking up at their approach and warns the guys.

OWEN

Sssh!

MRS. GEROSSIE

(jolly)
Hello, boys. You know the way.

INT. FREDDIE'S HOUSE

The guys enter the house, and descend to--

FREDDIE'S BASEMENT

-appears to be the typical basement of a grown man - FREDDIE - who still lives with his mother.

It serves both as Freddie's living area, and a gaming center. The windows are covered with tinfoil, and displayed on the walls are genuine-looking examples of medieval armor and weaponry.

The centerpiece of the room is the gaming table, covered with papers, miniatures, and exotic multi-sided dice, as well as salty snacks and caffienated beverages.

Freddie sits at the head of the table, behind a paper Dungeonmaster's screen. He's the same age as Alex, but seems much more mature. His long hair hangs down to his shoulders. He plays the same games as the other guys, but he's not quite a gamer or a geek.

JIMMY

Hey, Freddie.

FREDDIE

Boys.

They conduct some awkward hand-slapping. A few beats later, Alex enters.

FREDDIE (CONT'D)

We've been waiting on ya,
Alexander.

Alex pulls a small, plush lined case from his briefcase, sets it on the table, and snaps it open.

INSERT:

Inside the case is the miniature of ALEXANDER THE NECROMANCER. He's a tiny replica of a heroic wizard, lovingly painted.

RESUME

Alex pulls him out and sets him on the tabletop, with miniatures representing the characters of the other guys.

Alex also gets out his character sheet.

INSERT

We pan down the sheet, which shows the details of Alexander the Necromancer's life and possessions. There's a detailed sketch and a list of magic items.

RESUME

FREDDIE (CONT'D)
All right, you're in a high vaulted chamber, facing six bugbears. Roll for initiative.

The guys scramble for multi-sided dice, roll, and the game begins.

TIME LAPSE:

We see them play, joke and snack for several hours.

RESUME

FREDDIE (CONT'D)
-and, you slew it! Among the treasure you find
(rolling dice behind screen)
Two thousand gold piece, 4600 electrum, 9000 coppers, and an enchanted spear.

Ronnie and Mick high-five awkwardly.

FREDDIE (CONT'D)
And we'll pick up next time.

There's an all-around disappointed groan, but the guys pack up their stuff to go. The rest walk up the basement steps, Alex lingers behind.

FREDDIE'S HOUSE - UPSTAIRS

The four guys walk past the kitchen, where Mrs. Gerossie is baking.

MRS. GEROSSIE
Early night, boys?

They all grumble.

MRS. GEROSSIE (CONT'D)
Well you can't until you try these!
Hot out of the oven!

EXT. SUBURB - NIGHT

The guys walk out of the house, eating freshly baked marshmallow squares. Laughing and reliving the game together, they disappear into the night.

We move back over to the house and see Mrs. Gerossie still cooking and cleaning inside the upstairs window. Then we move down, to the foil-covered basement window, and inside.

INT. FREDDIE'S BASEMENT - NIGHT

Alex and Freddie remain here. Freddie cleans up some of the gaming stuff from the table, although most of it remains permanently.

FREDDIE
How's work?

Alex makes a sound somewhere between a scoff and a sigh.

FREDDIE (CONT'D)
Right.

An awkward silence passes for a few beats.

ALEX
Freddie- what's wrong with me?

FREDDIE
What?

ALEX
Jimmy was talking about his girl again. They're gonna go to some cabin, by a lake...

FREDDIE
Jimmy's always talking.

ALEX
All those guys are talking! It's like everybody's going somewhere, and I'm just... stuck. I can't do it by myself- I need help!

FREDDIE

It'll come. You just need to relax.

Freddie pulls out a large figurine, unscrews the head, and takes out a bag of pot.

ALEX

Come on Freddie. I don't...

FREDDIE

Give it a try. It's like being in the Monster Manual.

Freddie fills and ornate "medieval" pipe and, without Alex seeing, he laces it with a drop of blue liquid from a tiny phial. Freddie lights it, takes a hit, then passes it to Alex, who awkwardly does likewise.

LATER:

They're laying on their backs, listening to music, passing the pipe, and staring at the ceiling. Prominently featured on the wall behind them is a picture of Freddie and Alex together, aged 12 or so.

FREDDIE (CONT'D)

Look. If you're really serious about this... I know someone who can help you.

ALEX

For real?

FREDDIE

Yeah. For real. I just want to make sure...

He hesitates, lights the pipe again, and takes a long hit.

FREDDIE (CONT'D)

...things could get weird.

Alex just looks at him, not understanding at all.

FREDDIE (CONT'D)

You still trust me, right?

ALEX

Of course.

FREDDIE

And no matter what happens, you're still my best friend?

Alex nods "yes."

Freddie goes to the desk drawer, unlocks a secret compartment, and pulls out a cylindrical scroll case. Just then, there's a knock at the basement door at the top of the steps.

MRS. GEROSSIE (O.S.)
Frederick?

FREDDIE
Just a second!

Freddie scrambles to hide the scroll case, while Alex puts out the pipe and ineptly tries to fan the smoke out of the air.

Freddie goes to the top of the steps and unlocks a series of locks and opens the door.

FREDDIE (CONT'D)
(blocking the way)
What is it, mom?

MRS. GEROSSIE
I'm sorry to bother you. I just wanted to see if you boys were hungry.

She hands him the tray holding the rest of the treats she was baking, as well as a pitcher of orange drink.

FREDDIE
(semi-sincere)
Thanks, mom.

MRS. GEROSSIE
Have a good night, dear.
(yelling down steps)
Goodnight, Alex!

ALEX (O.S.)
(trying to yell, coughing)
Goodnight, Mrs. G!

She shuts the door and Freddie re-locks the multiple locks and returns to Alex. He pulls out the scroll tube again.

He carefully unscrews it and shows Alex the contents:

INSERT:

The scroll is parchment, and looks like a treasure map they would use in one of their games.

Except that, viewed more closely, it shows the streets of their town. The arcane arrows seem to point to a place in the "forest" housed in the local suburban park.

RESUME

ALEX (CONT'D)

Cool.

FREDDIE

Follow the instructions exactly,
and he will appear to you.

ALEX

Who?

FREDDIE

Someone who can help you get
everything you ever dreamed of.

Alex's eyes are wide- he believes.

INT. ALEX'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Alex makes a PB&J sandwich and packs it in a backpack with a few other things.

He checks his watch: "11:15pm," and leaves the apartment.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREETS - NIGHT

Alex, backpack on his shoulder, makes his way along the deserted suburban streets. He climbs around curves and over hills. No one is on the street, and he looks up at the lights in curtained bedrooms high above him.

Using a tiny flashlight from his keychain, Alex follows the scroll map from Freddie. Eventually he finds his way to the--

PARK

Alex walks past the deserted playground and into the modest suburban woods.

WOODS

Alex walks cautiously. Every time a twig cracks, he jumps, and shines his flashlight frantically into the undergrowth.

In a matter of minutes, he seems to have walked into a genuinely deep woods-- he could be miles away from a city.

Finally he comes to his destination:

A HILLTOP

He emerges from the trees and finds himself on top of a hill, looking down on the lights of the city below. The scene is illuminated only by moonlight.

Alex checks his watch: 11:56pm.

He sits down to wait, staring down at the lights.

LATER:

He checks his watch again: 12:10am. He takes out the sandwich and starts to eat it.

LATER:

He's finished the sandwich.

He stands up and starts to pace.

ALEX
 (to himself, under his
 breath)
 I'm so stupid. I'm so stupid. I'm
 so stupid. I'm so stupid.
 (out loud)
 Shit!

He throws down his backpack, and sits down with his head in his hands.

ALEX (CONT'D)
 (to himself)
 Shit.

A VOICE from behind him:

VOICE
 Are you just about done?

Alex looks up and can't believe what he sees:

Standing in the moonlight behind him is a UNICORN.

He's assumed human form. He appears as a handsome, dignified man in his late 30s or early 40s, wearing an immaculately-tailored white suit that shines in the moonlight.

There's a horn about six inches long growing from the middle of his forehead.

His black hair is streaked with white, and white fur peeks out of the cuffs of his pant and jacket sleeves.

ALEX
I'm dreaming.

UNICORN
Nope.

ALEX
But you're...

UNICORN
A Unicorn.

ALEX
(re: his humanoid shape)
But why are you...

UNICORN
Have you ever tried being a horse,
Alex?

Alex shakes his head "no."

The Unicorn extends his furry hand/paw to shake. Alex contemplates it for a few beats, then shakes.

UNICORN (CONT'D)
It's a real pleasure to meet you.
An honor.

A long silence as they look at the view.

ALEX
So... um... what happens now?

UNICORN
What happens now is that all your wildest dreams come true. Everything's you've wanted since you were a little boy.

The Unicorn grasps Alex's hand and a magical glow passes from his hand to Alex's. Alex's eyes go wide- he's felt the power of the Unicorn.

UNICORN (CONT'D)
Hey- you want a drink?

Alex, dazed and his pupils dilated, nods "OK." The Unicorn magically produces a flagon of steaming blue liquid.

UNICORN (CONT'D)
Marshmallows?

Alex nods, the Unicorn waves his hand, and marshmallows appear, floating in the drink. Alex takes a drink, and something amazing happens. He hears a female voice whispering in his ear:

PAIGE (V.O.)
Alex... I'm waiting for you.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SCENIC BEACH - DAY

Suddenly, Alex finds himself on a beautiful beach. It's late afternoon, the perfectly-lit "magic hour."

Alex looks down and notices, to his amazement, that he is wearing a slick blue suit, with a ruffled shirt and a blue handkerchief in the pocket.

He sees a blurry form in the distance, which resolves itself into--

PAIGE

To Alex, she appears as a tall, beautiful woman- the girl of Alex's dream- she could have stepped out of his fantasy books.

Her long hair flowing gently in the breeze.

UNICORN (V.O.)
Go to your lover. Run.

Alex starts to run, in slow-motion along the waterline. At first the motions are very awkward, because it takes a few beats for Alex, that he is literally moving in slow motion.

Everything on this beach happens in slow motion.

Alex gets the hang of it, and develops a somewhat graceful slow-motion prancing run.

From the other direction, Paige starts to move towards Alex in the same kind of prancing run.

ALEX'S FACE:

When he sees Paige is running to him, he is absolutely overjoyed, happier than he has ever been about anything.

ALEX'S BARE FEET:

Prancing through the tideline, splashing up clear blue ocean water.

PAIGE'S FEET:

Doing the same thing.

RESUME

Alex and Paige run together and meet with their arms outstretched. They grab each other and twirl in joyful circles, leaning close together as they do.

Alex looks over Paige's shoulder and sees the Unicorn, resplendent in a pure white suit, perched on top of a rock, watching them.

The Unicorn is occupied with writing a text message on his Blackberry, but he seems to feel Alex' gaze and looks up at the twirling couple.

He gives them a "thumbs-up."

Alex and Paige lean the last little bit together and their lips come within a millimeter of touching.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MOUNTAINTOP - NIGHT

The fantasy is over and Alex and the Unicorn are back where they started. The Unicorn waits as Alex's eyes gradually bring the world back into focus.

ALEX

Wow.

UNICORN

Indeed.

ALEX

Who was that?

UNICORN

Do you want to meet her?

A whole new level of wonder creeps across Alex's face. He shakes off a bit of the fantasy-stupor.

ALEX

For real? I thought it was just a fantasy.

UNICORN

No, Alex, she's real. She lives in this town. And she wants to meet you.

ALEX

(after a long pause)

Why?

UNICORN

Because it's her destiny too. And because I'm going to help you.

ALEX

You mean it?

UNICORN

Sure I do. Hey- would a Unicorn lie to you?

EXT. SUBURBAN STREETS - NIGHT

It's nearing dawn as Alex walks home down the empty suburban streets. He passes a house with a big lawn, where automated sprinklers are hissing out water.

Alex, still in his dazed state, lays down on the grass and stares at the sky, letting the water wash over him.

EXT. PAIGE'S COTTAGE - NIGHT

A quaint little bungalow, with flowers and leafy trees growing around. A very faint blue glow emanates from a window, which we move towards and through.

INT. PAIGE'S COTTAGE - NIGHT

The blue glow is coming from a nightlight.

Paige is asleep in her simple, mostly unadorned bedroom. She's laying on her back, with covers ruffled, as if she's been having a dream.

There's a vague, faraway smile on her face. On the nightstand is a glass, with just a millimeter of bright blue liquid remaining on the bottom.

INT. ALEX'S APARTMENT - MORNING - TWO WEEKS LATER

Alex is getting dressed in front of his mirror. He has a book on the dresser entitled "The Modern Unicorn's Guide to Love and Magic." It looks kind of like a modern self-help book, but with ornate "magickal" dressings.

Alex opens to one of the many bookmarked pages.

ALEX
(reading out loud)
Causal. Stylish. Not trying too
hard.

He makes several changes and outfit adjustments, while repeating his mantra to himself:

ALEX (CONT'D)
Causal. Stylish. Not trying too
hard.

Alex makes a final adjustment, checks his watch and rushes out the door.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Alex hurries down a busy sidewalk, towards an open newsstand at the end of the block.

Alex checks his watch: 11:54 am.

Alex enters the newsstand and pretends to browse through some magazines. The attendant, dressed all in white, nods to Alex.

AROUND THE CORNER

Paige is walking towards the newsstand. She's dressed casually, but she looks great.

AT THE NEWSSTAND

The attendant looks knowingly at Alex and nods.

Alex, holding turns and moves towards the end of the newsstand at the corner. Just then, Paige hurries around the corner.

ALEX AND PAIGE COLLIDE!

Stuff goes flying everywhere- Alex's drink spills on both of them. The bag of groceries Paige was carrying spills.

Paige was also carrying a runner's water bottle, and she spills it on Alex's shirt.

Paige leans down to start picking up her stuff. Alex stands there, hesitating.

Finally, Alex crouches down to help Paige with the groceries. As they're crouched down Alex sneaks a peek at Paige's cleavage. He looks up slightly and their eyes meet. They smile at each other.

ALEX
Hi.

PAIGE
Hi.

ALEX PAIGE
Sorry about... I wasn't--

They each laugh nervously and start again:

PAIGE (CONT'D) ALEX
I can get-- Let me help you--

PAIGE (CONT'D) ALEX
I should be more-- I never look where I'm--

Each time they speak at exactly the same instant. They both stop and smile at the seemingly supernatural coordination they have achieved.

After a very long awkward silence.

PAIGE (CONT'D)
That was funny.

ALEX
(more deadpan)
Yes it was.

Alex reaches into his pocket and fishes out a crumbled piece of paper, at the same time Paige digs into her purse and finds a pen.

ALEX (CONT'D) PAIGE
I could write down my- Do you want to give me your-

They both stop short again. Paige fumbles in her purse some more and comes up with a business card.

PAIGE
Here's my card.

ALEX
I'll write down my...

Alex realizes he has a piece of paper in his hand, but no pen. Paige hands him her pen he writes down the number and passes it to her.

ALEX (CONT'D)
That's my phone number.

PAIGE
Right.

Alex stares dumbly.

PAIGE (CONT'D)
So...

ALEX
I'll call you?

PAIGE
I'd like that.

ALEX
Ok. So... talk to you soon I guess.

PAIGE
Ok.

Paige and Alex start to walk away, but they both choose the same direction, and find themselves walking right next to each other.

ALEX
I think I'm gonna go this way.

PAIGE
Ok. Bye, Alex.

They walk off in opposite directions. Alex turns back once to look over his shoulder at Paige, and she catches him and smiles.

EXT. PARK - MORNING

It's very early in the morning, and the sun is just starting to rise over the athletic fields of the park.

Shadows approach, carrying what appears to be athletic equipment. Gradually they resolve themselves into the guys from the D&D game- Mick, Ronnie, Jimmy and Owen.

The stuff they're carrying is actually replicas of medieval weapons such as Maces, Morning Stars, and a Bec de Corbin (a curved blade on a long pole). They also wear armor- not full suits, but leather jerkins, helmets and such.

From the other side of the field, Alex approaches, wearing his regular clothes. When he spots him, Owen raises his fist in the air.

OWEN
TRIUMPH!

Alex grins and returns the salute.

LATER:

They've met in the center of the empty athletic field. Alex has gotten a piece of armor out of the big sack, and Owen is helping him get into it.

OWEN (CONT'D)
(yawning, drinking coffee)
How's it going?

ALEX
Good.

OWEN
Mmmm.
(beat, delayed reaction)
Wait. "Good?" Really?

ALEX
Yeah. I met a girl.

OWEN
Did you talk to her?

Alex playfully swats Owen with the side of a blunted sword.

ALEX
Yeah I talked to her, you bastard.

JIMMY
 (yelling across to them)
 Are we gonna go or what?

Owen picks up his polearm and charges at Jimmy.

OWEN
 YEARRGHHHH!!

Alex watches and laughs as Jimmy grabs the long pole and flips Owen to the ground, then jumps on top of him, pretending to stab him.

They get up and everyone more or less composes themselves.

RONNIE
 Alright, who's up first?

Jimmy points at Mick in a challenge, and they square off to fight.

OWEN
 (re: Alex)
 I got somethin' for this guy.

Alex and Owen square off, and the two fights take place in parallel, with Ronnie judging them both.

WITH ALEX AND OWEN

They spar, with Alex swinging the heavy Morning star (spiked ball on a chain attached to a stick), and Owen countering with a heavy battle staff.

OWEN (CONT'D)
 So, who is she?

ALEX
 Paige. I gave her my number. And I got her card.

Owen raises an eyebrow.

OWEN
 Nice.

He takes another swing at Alex, who blocks it.

RONNIE
 (watching the other fight)
 Hit!

Behind them, the other fight is getting heated. Jimmy and Mick start swinging harder, and a hard counter-strike from Jimmy breaks Mick's sword, sending half of it flying away.

MICK

Foul!

JIMMY

Pussy!

They cast their weapons aside, Mick just rushes at Jimmy and tackles him and they wrestle on the ground. Ronnie watches, wanting to separate them, but not quite seeing the chance.

Meanwhile, Alex and Owen keep sparring calmly and talking.

ALEX

It was weird. I wasn't nervous at all. I mean, I was, but she was too. So it kind of worked, you know?

OWEN

Huh.

(beat, thinks)

So you're going to ask her out?

ALEX

I think I actually am.

Jimmy gets up from the wrestling pile with a smile on his face.

JIMMY

FIGHT YOU DICKHOLES!!

He charges at Alex and Owen waving his weapon, and it dissolves into one big friendly wrestling match.

LATER:

The wrestling has played out, and the guys sit and lay on the hillside, relaxing in the sun, drinking "Big Gulp" sodas.

RONNIE

How come Freddie never comes out anymore?

MICK

You know why.

RONNIE

No. Why?

OWEN

He's
 (mocking tone)
 "Embarassed to be seen with us."
 (normal)
 Right, Alex?

Alex has been spacing out, staring at clouds.

ALEX

Huh? What?

OWEN

Freddie, space-case.
 (mock angry)
 That fucker think he's too good to
 come out and engage in a little
 good old-fashioned melee with his
 faithful minions.

ALEX

No. He's just... he's just been
 busy. I'm sure he'll come back.

MICK

Yeah, right, asswad.

Mick throws a chunk of turf at Alex, and pretty soon the guys
 are all laughing again, engaged in a mud-and-grass war.

We pan up to the tall office buildings that lurk on the
 horizon of the park.

INT. UNICORN'S OFFICE - DAY

Freddie sits in the antechamber of a very high-class
 executive office. There's a gorgeous RECEPTIONIST, typing
 away behind a fancy desk.

Freddie's in that lounge-y area where people sit awaiting a
 job interview. Freddie has a think binder in his lap which he
 pages through, all the time tapping out a persistent beat
 with his foot.

LATER:

Several foreign, important-looking businessmen exit the
 Unicorn's office, the emerges to shake hands and say some
 quiet good-byes.

After they're gone, the Unicorn whispers to the receptionist
 briefly, then finally gives his attention to Freddie.

UNICORN

Sorry to have kept you waiting. You know how these things are.

FREDDIE

(under his breath)

I guess.

The Unicorn doesn't hear him, and walks back into the inner office. Freddie follows, exchanging a sarcastic look with the receptionist as he passes.

UNICORN'S INNER OFFICE

Freddie sits down in the big chair, facing the Unicorn's even bigger desk, which sits in front of a huge bay window.

The vibe of the Unicorn's personal space is very "Victorian gentleman" - lots of wood paneling, antiques, an old-fashioned gramophone.

UNICORN

Drink?

Freddie nods. The Unicorn turns a key and opens a hidden little nook in the wall. He pulls out a fancy glass decanter of bright blue liquid.

He pulls himself a glass of the blue stuff, on the rocks, no mixer. For Freddie, he makes a drink of club soda and gin, then adds just a drop of the blue.

Freddie looks vaguely disappointed when he gets his drink.

FREDDIE

I want one like yours.

UNICORN

No you don't. Trust me. You couldn't handle it.

FREDDIE

What is it, anyway?

UNICORN

You should know by now, Freddie.

(beat)

Anyway, it's powerful stuff. More than you can handle straight up.

Freddie looks displeased, but doesn't say anything more.

UNICORN (CONT'D)
 (eventually)
 Cheers.

Freddie reluctantly links glasses. The Unicorn drinks his down, while Freddie takes a disinterested sip and puts the glass aside.

Freddie gets the binder he brought out on the desk, showing the Unicorn rows of statistics.

FREDDIE
 They're all still on board- I haven't lost one in years. They love it, they really do. And each one keeps bringing in more. I've got three hundred percent growth this quarter alone, and it's only gonna keep going up.

UNICORN
 (not really listening)
 Mmmm.
 (looking up at him)
 What about your friend Alex?

FREDDIE
 Well he just started. You can't really expect him to start bringing in more people already. I'm sure once he-

UNICORN
 No, no. I mean, with the girl... Paige. He got her number, right?

FREDDIE
 Yeah, I think so.

UNICORN
 We need to make sure he takes the next step. He strikes me as a little bit... hesitant.

FREDDIE
 OK. But I don't think he's got it in him to be much of a salesman. I mean, if you're expecting me to make him Magic Club or something...

UNICORN
 Freddie. Just make sure he calls her, and asks her out. Got it?

Freddie nods.

UNICORN (CONT'D)

Good.

EXT. MINI GOLF COURSE - NIGHT

Freddie and Alex playing miniature golf on one of those flood-lit courses with the typical dated, creaky animatronic obstacles.

Most of the other clientele are sad-looking people on dates or bored middle-schoolers. Alex hits a shot towards the hole and walks after his ball; Freddie lags behind, pulls out a flask, and sneaks a swig.

Then he puts it away, takes a disinterested whack at his ball, and walks down to join Alex.

NEAR THE HOLE

Alex takes a putt, lining it up like a serious golfer. It comes up just a bit short.

ALEX

Hey, remember that shot Owen had that time?

Alex interprets Freddie's silence as encouragement to continue.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Somehow he bounces it off the dinosaur's claw, over the freaking castle, it dents somebody's hood in the parking lot and bounces across the street!

(more silence from Freddie)

You remember it, right?

(pointing)

Right over there.

FREDDIE

Yeah, I remember. We were in tenth grade.

ALEX

Fine.

FREDDIE

No, I just meant... we're grown up now. That's a good thing. Look at Paige. You never met anybody like her back in tenth grade, right?

ALEX

No.

FREDDIE

No. So you're going to call her, right?

ALEX

Yeah! I guess.

FREDDIE

Good. When are you going to call her?

ALEX

What's the difference?

FREDDIE

Because I've known you since we were nine.

ALEX

What? You want me to call her right now? Right here on the "Cave Man" hole?

Alex pulls out his phone, threatening to dial.

FREDDIE

No. Put your phone away. Just tell me a specific time when you're going to call.

ALEX

OK.

FREDDIE

So...

ALEX

Tomorrow.

FREDDIE

Tomorrow when?

ALEX

Tomorrow, four p.m.

FREDDIE

Good. That wasn't too painful, was it?

Freddie punches Alex on the shoulder, "just like old times."

Alex gooses Freddie with the head of the putter in return, and they play on.

INT. ALEX'S APARTMENT - DAY

Alex stands fidgeting, watching the clock. It's 3:59.

He watches the second hand go around until it's four, exactly. He picks up the phone, starts to dial, but loses his nerve.

He puts the phone, down walks over the touch, and sits huddled up in kind of a defensive fetal crouch.

ALEX

OK. Four oh five.

LATER:

The clock on the wall reads 4:37. Alex is still huddled on the couch. Finally he jumps up grabs the phone, and stabs at the "dial" button before he can stop himself.

INT. BOUTIQUE - DAY

Inside a swanky boutique selling hip, indie-type clothes.

Paige is just finishing talking to the OWNER, showing her an armful of cute women's clothes.

OWNER

I'll call you.

They shake hands, Paige gives her her business card, and walks out onto the street, as her cell phone starts to ring.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Paige fishes out her phone, almost dropping the clothes in her arms, and answers.

PAIGE

(business-like)

This is Paige.

(MORE)

PAIGE (CONT'D)
 (softening)
 Oh, hey Alex.
 (beat)
 Yeah. I'm good.

Paige is walking down the street. As she goes, she attracts several interested male glances, but she's totally oblivious.

PAIGE (CONT'D)
 (into phone)
 You know. Working.
 (beat)
 No it's fine. It's not that kind of job.

She arrives at her car, a beat-up but cool vintage sedan, painted Robin's-egg blue. She fumbles with the keys and almost drops her phone, but catches it.

PAIGE (CONT'D)
 Hi. Sorry. I almost dropped my phone.
 (beat)
 No, I'm fine.

She awkwardly succeeds in opening the car door, and flinging her clothes in the back seat.

PAIGE (CONT'D)
 I'm here. No, it's totally a good time.

Paige stands by the car, hesitating from getting in, giving Alex her full attention.

POV:

A guy passing in his car slows down to look at her dressed in red, and her blue car, both standing out against the pedestrian colors of the other cars and people.

RESUME

PAIGE (CONT'D)
 (into phone)
 Yeah. Yeah. Definitely. I'd love to, Alex.

She hangs up the phone and smiles to herself.

INT. ALEX'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Alex is getting ready in front of the mirror. He fixes his hair, seems satisfied with it, then looks again.

ALEX

No!

He musses his hair and starts over from scratch. He does the same thing, looks in the mirror again, still not happy. He's about to muss it again, but stops himself.

ALEX (CONT'D)

No.

(beat)

OK.

EXT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Alex stands in front of the picture window of a fancy restaurant, facing out towards the street.

Nearby, the valets are taking the cars of arriving diners. With each new car, Alex checks his watch and looks expectantly at the arrivees, but it's not Paige. The valet gives Alex a conciliatory half-smile.

WITH ALEX

Finally, Paige's car pulls up, the valet opens the door, and Paige gets out.

ALEX'S POV

Paige, wearing a beautiful dress, seems radiant to Alex, with the afternoon sun gleaming off her hair. She almost seems to be moving in slow motion.

RESUME

PAIGE

Alex!

She fishes out a crumpled bill as a tip for the valet, then rushes over to Alex.

PAIGE (CONT'D)

Hi.

ALEX

Hi.

They hug, awkwardly.

PAIGE
Am I late?

ALEX
(checking watch)
No, you're early.
(awkward pause)
I was really early.

They enter the restaurant.

INT. RESTAURANT - CONTINUOUS

Alex and Paige enter and are instantly greeted by the HOST, who wears an impeccable white tuxedo.

HOST
Mr. Osborne?

Alex surprised, nods.

HOST (CONT'D)
Miss Paige, you look absolutely
enchanting tonight. This way,
please.

Alex and Paige exchange glances, then follow the host to the best table in the house, right by the window.

As soon as they sit down at the candlelit table, they're presented with two blue cocktails by a waiter.

HOST (CONT'D)
Compliments of the house. Let me
know if you need anything at all.

The host and waiter recede into the background, leaving Paige and Alex alone.

PAIGE
So... have you ever been here
before?

ALEX
No- I've been by here a thousand
times, and I never noticed this
place. It must be new.

PAIGE

Yeah, I never noticed it before
either. Drinks are good.

She takes a big sip, so does Alex, and then they both laugh.

PAIGE (CONT'D)

I think I'm gonna get really drunk
tonight.

ALEX

Yeah, me too.

They both laugh and down the rest of their drinks. The waiter
is instantly there with two more. All of their awkwardness
seems to fall away, and in a flash they're completely natural
with each other.

PAIGE

Good drink.

She swirls the drink around and laughs.

PAIGE (CONT'D)

So. Why don't you look where you're
going?

ALEX

What?

PAIGE

At the newsstand the other day- you
just ran right into me!

ALEX

(downcast)

Sorry.

PAIGE

I'll never forgive you.

They both laugh. The WAITER returns.

WAITER

Are you ready to order?

ALEX

No.

(beat)

Not at all.

Alex and Paige share a secret smile; the joke is just between
them.

Alex actually examines the menu for the first time.

LATER:

The food has arrived, and Alex and Paige are both digging into a pile of appetizers, as well as their entrees. They both have several empty drink glasses in front of them.

Paige leans forward and speaks to Alex confidentially, with a gleam in her eye.

PAIGE

You did run into me, though. You did it on purpose, didn't you?

ALEX

No! I'm just extremely awkward and lack awareness of my surroundings.

The waiter appears.

WAITER

Is everything progressing satisfactorily here?

ALEX

Yeah.

The waiter recedes, and Alex and Paige both giggle.

PAIGE

"Progressing satisfactorily?"

ALEX

I know.

After a beat, Alex calls after the retreating waiter.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Excuse me? Actually-
(re: empty glasses)
Can we get two more of these?

EXT. RESTAURANT - LATER

Alex and Paige emerge onto the sidewalk. Under the gaze of the valet, they become aware that they're holding hands, and they pull apart.

They look at the valet, then at each other, hesitant.

PAIGE
(finally)
Do you want to take a walk or
something?

Alex nods. They set off walking and end up turning off the main street and ascending a curvy side street into the hills. They're both a little unsteady on their feet.

After a while, they stop. The street is dark, except for one light in a bedroom high above them.

They're standing very close, facing each other.

PAIGE (CONT'D)
(softly)
Alex.

ALEX
Yeah?

They lean together. It's like the fantasy on the beach, except this time their lips actually meet. The kiss starts off hesitant, experimental. But then their inhibitions are gone, and they're kissing passionately.

BLACK SCREEN

ALEX'S POV:

Alex opens his eyes and things slowly come into focus. Alex seems to be looking at an expanse of clear blue sky, which resolves itself into:

INT. ALEX'S BEDROOM - MORNING (END POV)

He's looking at the blue wall of his bedroom.

Alex's phone rings.

ALEX
(into phone)
Hey.

INTERCUTTING:

With Paige, in a littler/shed workshop, where she's painting and experimenting with various colors.

PAIGE

Hey.
(long pause)
So... how are you?

ALEX

Good. I'm good.
(belatedly)
How are you?

PAIGE

I'm fine. But... what happened last night?

ALEX

I don't know. We were at the restaurant and then... it gets kind of blurry.

PAIGE

Yeah, me too. I guess we drank too much?

ALEX

I guess.
(beat)
But look, I had a really good time. The part I remember, I mean.

PAIGE

(laughing a little)
Me too.

ALEX

So do you want to... get together again?

PAIGE

Definitely. This weekend?

Alex does a little spin and victory fist-pump in the parking lot.

ALEX

(composing himself)
Sure.

INT. UNICORN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Freddie is reporting to the Unicorn again. Freddie is dressed for a night at the clubs, and with an unhappy look on his face.

UNICORN
Freddie. Sit down.

FREDDIE
I'm in a hurry.

UNICORN
Really?

FREDDIE
Yes. Really. I was right in the middle of working on something.

UNICORN
Really? What?

Freddie makes the shape of a curvy female form with his fingers.

UNICORN (CONT'D)
This won't take long.

They stare at each other for a few beats.

FREDDIE
Well?

UNICORN
Alex. How's he doing with Paige?

FREDDIE
Fine. They went out. He said he likes her.

UNICORN
Excellent.

FREDDIE
Can I go now?

UNICORN
Of course you can. Sorry to have wasted your time.

The Unicorn pulls out a little vial of his blue liquid.

UNICORN (CONT'D)
A little something for you and your
new friend.

Freddie grasps it greedily and rushes out of the office.

INT. ALEX'S OFFICE - DAY

Alex is back at work in his cubicle, but now there's a little spring in his step. He merrily punches away at the keys and files his papers. He actually starts to whistle a little bit to the bad office music playing over the PA.

One of his DRONE-like co-workers shuffles up, holding a stack of papers.

DRONE
(droning)
Hey, Alex.

ALEX
(very enthused)
Hey- what's up?

The guy stares at Alex, dumbfounded.

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - MIDDAY

Alex walks out with the noon lunch crowd.

As he daydreams along the sidewalk, a sedan with tinted windows pulls up alongside him.

UNICORN (O.S.)
Alex.

Alex looks around for the voice, confused.

UNICORN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Over here.

The back window of the car rolls down, and Alex sees the Unicorn in the shadows inside.

UNICORN (CONT'D)
Let's go for a ride.

INT. CAR - DAY

Alex is in the back seat with the Unicorn, with a uniformed driver in the front.

Out the tinted window, we can faintly see the ocean whizzing by.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Alex, the Unicorn and the DRIVER walk onto a private beach, where it's just them and the ocean. There's a table for two set up under an umbrella, with a white tablecloth and everything. The driver is carrying a picnic basket.

UNICORN

Ready for lunch?

ALEX

This is really nice... but I have to be back at work.

(checks watch)

Shit! I have a meeting at two. I can't afford to lose my job right now.

The Unicorn puts his furry hand on Alex's shoulder.

UNICORN

Alex, Alex, Alex... you worry too much. It's all taken care of. Your supervisor's name is...

The Unicorn flips through a seemingly endless list of addresses on his PDA- the names scroll by in a dizzying blur, until it stops on the one he wants.

UNICORN (CONT'D)

Rizucci, right?

Alex, too surprised to speak, just nods.

UNICORN (CONT'D)

You're good. Excused for the rest of the day.

ALEX

How did you...

UNICORN

I was able to do a little favor for the CEO of your company once. He sends me a Christmas card every year.

ALEX

Christmas card.

The driver sets the table with a delicious-looking meal.

UNICORN

Come on. Let's eat.

LATER:

They've consumed half of the meal.

UNICORN (CONT'D)

So. Don't keep me in suspense. How's it going with Paige?

ALEX

Good. I think. I mean... we went out, and we had a great time. I don't necessarily remember all of it, but...

UNICORN

Sounds like you had a really good time.

ALEX

I guess.

UNICORN

A girl like that, she's one in a million. I don't want to see you let her get away, Alex.

ALEX

I don't want her to.

UNICORN

Good. You're going to take her a gift, right?

(off Alex's blank look)

For your second date?

ALEX

I don't know. I hadn't...

UNICORN
It's alright. I know you don't make
a lot of money.

ALEX
It's not that. I do OK, you know.

The Unicorn punches a few quick keys on his PDA, and holds
the screen up to Alex.

UNICORN
That's your current salary, isn't
it?

ALEX
(deflated)
Yes.

UNICORN
Come work for me.

ALEX
(with mouth full)
What?

UNICORN
Come work for me. I could use a guy
like you.

ALEX
What would I do?

UNICORN
Let's not worry about that now. The
pay is double what you make now.
And there's a substantial signing
bonus.

ALEX
(he's never heard this
word applied to himself
before)
Bonus?

UNICORN
Give me a voided check and it can
be in your bank account in ten
minutes. You can pick out something
nice for Paige today.

Alex's fork stops halfway to his mouth and looks at the
Unicorn, his face says: he's sold.

INT. ALEX'S OFFICE - DAY

Alex is in his BOSS's office- Alex is standing, while the boss sits behind his big desk.

BOSS

Well, I'm disappointed, but I can't honestly say I'm surprised by this, Alex.

ALEX

Why? I didn't even think you knew my name.

BOSS

This kind of work takes a special kind of person. I've seen so many come through, and they complain, and they whine, and they think they're too good for it, that it's all some kind of grand cosmic mistake.

(beat)

But you: you just put your head down and work. I've never seen someone so dedicated.

ALEX

I was depressed.

BOSS

In twenty years I've never seen spreadsheets like yours.

ALEX

(after awkward silence)

Thank you. I should... probably go now. I have to do a couple of things.

BOSS

I understand. Look-

He goes to his desk and gets a card, and gives it to Alex.

BOSS (CONT'D)

Let's keep in touch, OK?

Alex nods, still not quite sure what's going on.

INT. ART GALLERY - DAY

Alex, dressed in a beautifully tailored silver-colored suit, walks into an upscale but hip art gallery.

MEGAN, a hip and attractive young gallery rep, greets him warmly.

MEGAN
Welcome, sir.

ALEX
Hi.

MEGAN
Were you looking for anything in particular?

ALEX
Um... I think I'll know it when I see it.

Megan backs discreetly away, leaving Alex to examine the art.

He works his way down the line of paintings, taking a few seconds to earnestly try to appreciate each one- but nothing is really catching his eye.

Finally, he comes to an abstract piece, kind of off in an alcove. It's smaller and less flashy than the others- just fields of soft, deep colors. Alex stares into it for a few long beats, until the focus blurs.

ALEX (CONT'D)
(quietly, to himself)
Paige.

Coming out of his reverie, Alex finds that Megan has reappeared over his shoulder.

MEGAN
It's one of my personal favorites.

ALEX
I'll take it.
(beat, awkward realization)
How... much...

MEGAN
Three thousand.

Alex swallows, hard.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

If some guy got that for me... wow.

ALEX

I'll take it.

Alex pulls out his checkbook.

EXT. STREET/PAIGE'S COTTAGE - EVENING

Alex parks his car on the street and gets out onto the sidewalk. He's dressed for a date. Alex walks down the sidewalk towards Paige's cottages.

Several things happen at once:

Alex walks down the hill from the right.

Paige exits her cottage in the middle.

From the left, two DELIVERY MEN approach, carrying the canvas that Alex bought at the gallery.

Paige walks around so she can see the canvas, which is facing out towards us. The shot encompasses Paige, the canvas, and the colors of her cottage behind.

Paige's mouth is hanging open, stunned.

PAIGE

Wow.

She turns and sees Alex walking towards her.

PAIGE (CONT'D)

Alex. You...

ALEX

You like it?

She grabs him and kisses as the delivery guys look on awkwardly.

INT. BAR/CLUB - NIGHT

Alex and Paige are sitting at one of those little pedestal tables, close together, holding hands on top of the table.

They're watching LESLIE, a waify indie/country singer, who's onstage, playing solo with an acoustic guitar.

After she finishes her song, Alex, Paige, and the fifteen or so other people in the place applaud. Leslie walks off stage to the bar and gets a beer.

WITH ALEX AND PAIGE

PAIGE
We should go say "hi."

They walk across the room to the bar, where Paige taps Leslie on the shoulder.

LESLIE
Hey, Paige!

PAIGE
Hey! You were great!

They hug. Alex stands silent and awkward.

PAIGE (CONT'D)
Leslie, this is Alex.

ALEX
Hey. You were... great.

Leslie smiles at him warmly.

LATER:

The three of them are sitting at a table together, drinking more beers.

LESLIE
I'm gonna visit the ladies'.

She gets up, and pulls Paige's sleeve to come with her. They walk away from Alex towards the bathroom.

LESLIE (CONT'D)
So... how's it going?

PAIGE
Good. Really good.

Leslie puts her hand on Paige's arm.

LESLIE
I'm glad.

PAIGE

Me too.

EXT. BAR - NIGHT

Paige and Alex help Leslie load her guitar case and other equipment into the back of her old beater.

She gets her car, and smiles and waves as Paige closes the door after her. She drives away leaving them alone.

PAIGE

So.

ALEX

So.

They're both acting a little shy again, uncertain around each other.

PAIGE

You want to go?

ALEX

Yeah.

EXT. PAIGE'S COTTAGE - NIGHT

Alex pulls up back outside Paige's house. They get out of the car and he walks her to the door.

They look at each other for a few uncertain beats, and then they kiss, passionately.

Paige pulls away.

PAIGE

I have to get up really early tomorrow.

ALEX

OK.

Alex starts to walk away.

ALEX (CONT'D)

So I guess-

Paige grabs him, pulls him back, and silences him by kissing him passionately.

She fumbles with her keys, opens the door to her cottage, and they fall inside.

INT. PAIGE'S COTTAGE - NIGHT

Paige and Alex sit on the edge of her bed, just looking at each other. The light is low and warm, and music plays softly on an old turntable.

They each make several hesitant feints towards each other, but pull back, unable to coordinate the timing.

ALEX

I don't want to screw this up.

PAIGE

OK.

A pause. Paige grabs Alex's shoulder and pulls them both down, so they're laying on the bed, looking into each other's eyes. In the background, the record skips to a halt.

PAIGE (CONT'D)

You want to screw it up?

Another song starts as they kiss.

LATER:

They are asleep together in Paige's bed. They're lit by a beam of moonlight coming in the window.

Then a shadow falls across their faces- the shadow of a horn.

INT. ALEX'S APARTMENT - DAY

Alex has dressed in his version of "first day of work" formal. He stops one last time on his way out to straighten his badly-tied tie, grabs a briefcase off the table, knocks some stuff off the table, and manages (barely) to make it out the door without taking a pratfall.

INT. ALEX'S CAR/EXT. CITY - MIDDAY

Alex drives out of his suburb, and eventually ends up in a run-down-looking industrial area of industrial warehouses.

He parks near one that seems totally abandoned and gets out of the car.

NEAR WAREHOUSE

Alex can't find any sign of activity, and double-checks the address in his hand. Finally he finds an intercom and presses the button.

VOICE ON INTERCOM

Yes?

ALEX

Umm... this is Alex?

There's a click and the door unlocks.

INT. WAREHOUSE - DAY

No one greets Alex, and he wanders through service corridors until he finally emerges through a curtain onto the-

FLOOR

Suddenly there's a sea of cubicles and the atmosphere of a thriving, hip dot-com. As Alex wanders down the aisles, he looks into the cubes and sees:

Attractive YOUNG WOMEN, wearing phone headsets. Each woman sits in a neat cubicle, decorated identically to every other cubicle, with no sign of personal decoration. The only identifying mark is an official-looking nameplate on the cube entrance, bearing each woman's name.

They're all talking intently on the phone, or else just finishing up a phone call and making notes into identical binders.

Alex hears a snatch of one particular conversation:

ATTRACTIVE WOMAN IN CUBE

...OK, Thursday night at the golf course. That sounds amazing.

Alex walks on and into the...

MALE AREA

An area identical to the last, except all the employees here are well-scrubbed men in various shades of "attractive" - from jock to indie musician.

He then continues into the-

FRIEND ZONE

Here there are both men and women- they aren't as physically attractive as the others, but they all exude a sense of sincerity and trustworthiness.

FRIENDLY GUY

(on phone)

Yeah, man. We'll get together Saturday. Get a few drinks, you can tell me all about it.

(beat)

Absolutely. I'm looking forward to it.

Alex keeps walking and passes another area with gay men and lesbians of all stripes, and then he's in an as-yet unused area where workmen in white overalls are building yet more cubicles, expanding the work area off into the unfinished distance of the huge warehouse.

Alex stops walking, confused, not sure where he's going anymore.

UNICORN

Alex!

The Unicorn looks up from where he's been going over plans with some of the workmen and strides over.

ALEX

Hey. I'm sorry, I didn't no where I was supposed to...

UNICORN

(clapping him on the shoulder)

Not a problem, friend! Come on, I'll show you around!

The Unicorn gives him the:

OFFICE TOUR

Showing him the breakroom with free snacks, handsomely appointed shady courtyard for lunch breaks, etc.

UNICORN (CONT'D)

You'll be sitting in the Analyst area. And...

They walk up to an unoccupied cube.

UNICORN (CONT'D)

...here we are.

A white-overalled flunky appears and slides a nameplate with Alex's name on it into the slot on the cube.

UNICORN (CONT'D)
Go ahead, sit down.

Alex sits down in the fancy Aeron chair and spins around.

UNICORN (CONT'D)
These are some of your fellow "B-shift" analysts.

The men and women in the cubes around Alex, studious and mostly wearing glasses, they look like they don't see the sun very often. They look up and not at Alex, then bend their noses back to the grindstone.

ALEX
Hi.
(to Unicorn)
So... what do we... analyze?

UNICORN
Come on- I'll show you!

The Unicorn takes Alex to a home-theatre-type room with a big screen and presses play:

ON SCREEN

A glossy, high-production-value commercial for "UniCorp."

The ad shows people prancing down the beach, like Alex and Paige did in the Scenic Beach Fantasy, watched through some sort of telescope.

We pull back and see the Unicorn is watching them from on top of the cliff.

ONSCREEN UNICORN
Oh, hello. I didn't hear you come in.

The Unicorn starts doing a "walk and talk" with the camera. He walks through several scenes. First into an:

ICE CREAM SHOP

ONSCREEN UNICORN (CONT'D)
Have you been on too many bad dates where there's just no chemistry?

All the couples in the ice cream shop are looking at each other like they detest each other. The Unicorn takes an ice cream cone from one of the guys, takes a bite, and passes it back.

He keeps walking onto a:

MINI GOLF COURSE

More bad dates are going on here.

UNICORN

You know the perfect person for you
is out there somewhere- but where?
Where is the real love and magic
you deserve?

The Unicorn grabs a golf club and casually knocks a hole-in-one. He walks on and emerges in a-

MEADOW

The people from the various locales have been following the Unicorn like the Pied Piper, and now they're in the meadow, with him, marching behind him up a hillside.

UNICORN (CONT'D)

At Unicorp, we do the legwork for
you. Our expert team of analysts
measures your compatibility based
on over 400 variables-

The video cuts to dramatic footage of the analysts in the office in action.

Cut to the Unicorn touching his horn, which drips sparkles onto the paperwork.

UNICORN (CONT'D)

-and just a little touch of real
love and magic.

The Unicorn walks out of the office and back to the-

MEADOW

He leads the people over the top of the hill and in the grassy meadow below is a maypole with happy people prancing around it.

The formerly unhappy daters each spot their perfect match, run towards them and prance around in the meadow.

The Unicorn surveys the scene and nods, satisfied, then turns and addresses the camera directly.

UNICORN (CONT'D)
 Unicorp will find you real love and
 magic, guaranteed.
 (dramatic pause, staring
 into camera)
 Hey- would a Unicorn lie to you?

END VIDEO - BACK TO ALEX AND THE UNICORN WATCHING

The Unicorn has the exact same look on his face as he did in the video.

ALEX
 Huh.

UNICORN
 Got it?

ALEX
 I think so.

The Unicorn claps him on the shoulder.

UNICORN
 Great! Call me if you have any
 questions!

ALEX
 What's your...
 (trailing off as the
 Unicorn is already far
 gone)
 ...number.

Alex shrugs, and wanders back in the direction he thinks his cube is in.

EXT. THEATER - NIGHT

Alex and Paige outside with other playgoers at intermission, on the sidewalk under the marquee of a small theater.

They're both dressed up for the evening, Alex far more debonair and self-confident than in the past.

A white-suited usher watches them with interest.

PAIGE
 You like it so far?

ALEX
Yeah. It's good.
(beat)
The main girl- she really gets
around, huh?

PAIGE
What do you mean?

ALEX
Well, she's got those two guys
fighting over her, and then the
other guy, who owns the brewery or
whatever-

PAIGE
So what's wrong with that?

ALEX
Nothing's wrong with it.

A long awkward silence.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Do you want to go back in?

PAIGE
No.

ALEX
"No?"

PAIGE
Let's take a walk.

ALEX
The play's going to start.

PAIGE
I don't care.

ALEX
But you picked it!

PAIGE
I need a cigarette!

ALEX
You smoke??

Paige ignoring him, starts to walk away.

The white-clad usher puts his small walkie-talkie to his mouth and says something, quietly but urgently.

Alex follows Paige, but doesn't quite have the guts to walk next to her- he stays a few steps behind as she makes her way down the quiet street.

Finally, Paige stops in front of a dive bar, the only thing open on the street. She turns back towards Alex.

PAIGE

Come on. Let's get a drink.

They enter the bar.

INT. ALEX'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Alex wakes up, in his bed, alone, trying to remember the night before.

PAIGE

Hey.

Alex is shocked to see that Paige is standing in the doorway of his bedroom, her hair tousled but looking radiant in a long t-shirt of Alex's and little else.

PAIGE (CONT'D)

How do you like your eggs?

ALEX

I have eggs?

PAIGE

No.

ALEX

There're delivery menus in the... thing... by the kitchen.

PAIGE

I'll find us something.

She starts to leave the room, and turns back.

PAIGE (CONT'D)

Hey, Alex.

ALEX

Yeah?

PAIGE

I love your apartment.

Alex smiles. Paige exits. Alex peeks under the covers for the first time and finds that he is completely naked.

INT. UNICORN'S OFFICE - DAY

The Unicorn straightens his suit and gets himself looking his best.

He walks out of the inner office and past the receptionist.

UNICORN

If anybody calls- tell them
whatever you want.

CORRIDOR

The Unicorn strides down the hall. A flunky blocks his path, offering him a thick ream of papers.

FLUNKY

Sir, I've got the latest numbers-

UNICORN

Fantastic!

The Unicorn takes them, walks around the guy without breaking stride, stuffs them in a trash can, and keeps on walking, right through an emergency exit and out of the building.

EXT. PARK - DAY

The Unicorn skulks through the woods in the same suburban park where Alex and his friends hang out.

Making sure he's not being followed, the Unicorn makes his way to a-

WATERFALL

That splashes down into a swimming hole. He looks around one more time, than scampers across the rocks and right through the wall of water. There's a-

FLASH OF LIGHT

EXT. BEACH - DAY

With a matching flash, the Unicorn materializes onto a pristine beach- the same one that Alex had his fantasy with Paige on.

Down near the water is a single table under an umbrella. There's a man sitting at the table, our view of him partially obscured by the WAITRESS leaning over him.

The Unicorn draws closer and sees:

The Waitress, clad all in white with flowers braided in her hair, is incredibly beautiful, fresh-faced and gorgeous without even a bit of make-up.

The man puts his hand on her leg, and she smiles back at the flirtation. The man makes an animalistic growling noise, and the waitress squeals with pleasure.

UNICORN
Am I interrupting?

The man looks up, and he's not a man at all, but a mythological SATYR: a ruggedly handsome older man, with longish grey hair, a pointy grey beard, and two goat-like horns growing from his forehead.

The embarrassed waitress does her best to compose herself.

WAITRESS
I'm so sorry, sir. Allow me.

She pulls out the Unicorn's chair, and he sits down.

WAITRESS (CONT'D)
I'll be right back with your drinks.

She retreats into the ether. The Unicorn smiles across the table, like you do at an old friend you haven't seen in too long.

UNICORN
Haven't lost a step, I see?

SATYR
(scoffing)
"Lost a step?" You've been down there with those mortals too long.

UNICORN
Don't I know it.

The waitress reappears with drinks and appetizers. The Satyr makes smouldering eye contact with her before she retreats again.

SATYR
So seriously: How are things?

UNICORN
I'm getting out.

SATYR
They'll never let you out, man.
Just do what I do: lay back and
enjoy the ride.

The Unicorn picks up a piece of unrecognizable appetizer and chews on it meaningfully. Then:

UNICORN
I've got replacements. I'm passing
the whole thing on to them.

SATYR
(lightly mocking)
"Replacements."
(beat, interested)
Who?

UNICORN
You wouldn't know them.

SATYR
I might.

UNICORN
You don't.

SATYR
Fine. Who?

UNICORN
Just a couple of kids.

SATYR
You think they can do it?

UNICORN
I know they can. I'm so close I can
taste it.

SATYR

Why don't you stick it out down there? It can't be that bad. You can do whatever they want. Those people worship you.

UNICORN

I know! That's what makes me want to put a gun down my throat- every single day, with the same shit!

(beat)

Their lives are so predictable- one after another, generation after generation, it goes on the same way- and they never learn! Always the same story: It starts of a comedy, then drama, the inevitable tragedy. And then it gets boring.

(shaking his head)

But they just keep going.

SATYR

(mischievous)

Maybe you should give it a try. What do they call it. "Fall in love." You can't fight it forever- buy in, man!

UNICORN

(kidding)

Fuck you!

(beat, serious)

I just want... I want to start over.

(looking out to sea)

Somewhere every possibility isn't worn out by the ten thousand assholes who lived it before me. A brand new world, with nothing- completely blank!

The Unicorn falls into a silent reverie. The waitress reappears, bringing entrees and a bottle of wine.

She fills their glasses, locking eyes with the Satyr the whole time. He looks smoulderingly over his shoulder at her as she retreats.

Then he turns back to the Unicorn and the meal.

SATYR

Man this looks fucking good.

He proposes a toast:

SATYR (CONT'D)
To a new world.

They clink glasses and drink.

INT. FREDDIE'S BASEMENT - NIGHT

Freddie and the guys have gathered for another D+D game - everyone is there except Alex. They're all sitting around the table- waiting to play, killing time. Mick bounces dice, and scoops them out of the air with his hand, over and over.

RONNIE
Anybody hear from him?

Everybody looks at Owen, who shakes his head "no."

RONNIE (CONT'D)
Well somebody call him!

Freddie dials his phone.

ALEX'S CUBICLE

Alex is hard at work, analyzing data: he's looking at a file picture of a dorky-looking guy, and doing all kinds of spreadsheet analysis to try to match him up with several potential dates.

Alex's phone vibrates unnoticed across the desk.

FREDDIE'S BASEMENT

Freddie closes his phone.

FREDDIE
No answer.

RONNIE
Man, let's just play.

Freddie looks around at the guys for an objection, but no one says anything.

FREDDIE
OK. Let's play.

LATER:

The game has wrapped up and the guys are going home.

ALL GUYS
Later, Freddie. / See ya.

FREDDIE
(distracted, grunting)
Yeah.

They leave and Freddie just sits there, staring off into space. When everyone is gone, he bounces a die hard off the table and sends it clattering across the room.

INT./EXT. ALEX'S APARTMENT BUILDING - EARLY AFTERNOON

Alex walks through his lobby on the way to work. He looks great- dressed neatly for once, confident, and carrying a smart-looking briefcase and a metal coffee thermos.

One of his NEIGHBORS is there picking up her mail.

ALEX
Hey, Karen!

NEIGHBOR
(surprised)
Hi!

Alex opens his mailbox and inside is an ornate black postcard on fancy heavy stock.

INSERT:

The postcard features an expensively printed dragon logo. It's a formally-worded invite to "the celebration of Frederick Alston's twenty-eighth birthday."

RESUME

Alex walks out of the building, dialing his phone while reading the invite.

INT. PAIGE'S COTTAGE - EARLY AFTERNOON

Even though it's the middle of the day, all the blinds are drawn and Paige seems to be getting ready to get into bed.

She's taking off a dressy, business-casual outfit when her phone rings. The painting Alex gave her is visible, taking pride of place on the wall behind her.

INTERCUTTING WITH ALEX:

ALEX

Hey.

PAIGE

(yawning while answering)

Hey.

ALEX

Oh! Did I wake you?

PAIGE

No. It's just- I had to get up really early this morning.

ALEX

Cool.

(beat)

So, I just got invited to this party I go to every year, it's always really cool. Last year they had a-

(correcting himself)

Do you want to go with me? I think we'd have a lot of fun.

PAIGE

Yeah. I'd love to.

EXT. FREDDIE'S STREET - DAY

Alex and Paige walk down the street towards Freddie's house, carrying a 7 foot long wrapped gift, while Paige carries a more sensibly-sized package. As they get closer, music and party noise grows louder.

EXT. FREDDIE'S BACK YARD - DAY

Alex walks around the house into the backyard. A birthday/pool party is going on:

A large banner reads: "HAPPY BIRTHDAY FREDDIE!!"

The D&D guys, Mick, Jimmy, Ronnie, and Owen, are already here, wearing big sunglasses and very pale in the direct sunlight.

There's a large pinata, an inflatable "Moon Jump," and tons of guests, who have all brought generous gifts for Freddie.

The guests are mostly geeky gamer types, like Alex and his friends but far more socially maladjusted- they stand around in small groups or alone, not quite sure what to do or how to act. A few wear bathing suits, and have gathered nervously in the shallow end of the pool.

There's also another group of guys who look like they were once geeks but, like Freddie, grew out of it a bit. They still wear mostly black, but now it's fashionable and adorned with expensive sunglasses and even jewelry here and there. (Most of them are Freddie's surf buddies from the beach).

Freddie's mom patrols the party, handing out drinks and making sure everyone is having a time. She appears in front of Alex as soon as he arrives.

FREDDIE'S MOTHER

Oh, hello, Alex! Thank you so much for coming. It means a lot to Frederick.

(re: Paige)

And who is this?

ALEX

Mrs. Gerossie, this is Paige.

FREDDIE'S MOTHER

Very nice to meet you, dear. I'm so happy all you boys seem to have found someone.

(to Paige)

Alex is a wonderful boy.

Alex fidgets uncomfortably, Paige smiles.

PAIGE

Yeah he is.

FREDDIE'S MOTHER

Would you two like something to drink?

ALEX

You don't have to-

FREDDIE'S MOTHER

It's no problem, dear. I'll just run inside and mix you up something.

Mrs. Gerossie retreats to the house.

Alex looks across to where Freddie is holding court poolside, talking to a few of the better-dressed guests. Freddie seems to see Alex, but looks away, not acknowledging him.

Alex walks over, Paige hanging back slightly. The other guys talking to Freddie give Alex snobbish looks.

ALEX
Hey Freddie. Happy birthday.

Alex passes Freddie the huge package.

FREDDIE
(unenthusiastic)
Thanks.

Freddie puts it aside, then, as Alex is still standing there awkwardly, Freddie opens the gift.

Inside is a huge pole with a wicked hooked blade on the end.

ALEX
It's a Bec de Corbin!

FREDDIE
(flatly, embarrassed)
Awesome.

Freddie's "cool" friends behind him look at Alex coldly.

ALEX
Oh Freddie, this is Paige.

FREDDIE
I know who she is.

Freddie's mother appears, carrying a tray of drinks. She's momentarily worried when she sees the tense scene going on, but quickly brightens:

FREDDIE'S MOTHER
Here are your drinks!

She hands Alex and Paige fruity drinks, and the others take drinks off the tray too.

FREDDIE
Thanks, mom.

FREDDIE'S MOTHER
(re: the Bec de corbin)
Wow, that's... wonderful. Is that from Alex?

After Freddie makes no response for a few beats:

ALEX
Yeah. It's from me.

FREDDIE'S MOTHER
Well it's very nice, Alex. Freddie
always loves new additions to his
collection.

Freddie turns poutily back to his friends.

Alex waits another awkward beat, and then he and Paige walk off towards the D+D guys who are standing in a little circle talking to each other and no-one else.

ALEX
Hey guys.

RONNIE, MICK, JIMMY AND OWEN
Hey.

ALEX
How are you guys doing? Good?

MICK
Our girlfriends are here.

ALEX
Oh yeah?

Mick nods towards a group of attractive women, who are standing near enough to indicate being "with" the guys, but they're solely occupied in talking among themselves.

ALEX ((CONT'D)
(waving)
Hey.

The girls all nod vaguely at him.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Oh hey, guys... this is Paige.

PAIGE
Hi. Nice to meet you guys.

OWEN
Hey.

The rest of the guys mumble greetings.

PAIGE
So you guys... all have
girlfriends?

JIMMY
Yup.

An awkward silence follows.

PAIGE
I think I need to go find the
lady's room.

ALEX
I'll be here.

PAIGE
You better be.

Paige impulsively grabs Alex's hand and pulls him towards her. He falls a little off balance, and they do a half-spin together, like in the scenic beach fantasy.

She ends up pulling him and they kiss, just for a moment.
But:

THE WHOLE PARTY

Freezes, stops talking, stops drinking and eating and just watches Alex kiss Paige on the mouth. It's so quiet you could hear a pin drop.

And then it's over. Paige goes off to find the bathroom- she didn't notice a thing.

Alex turns back to the guys, but they've becoming absorbed in a quiet conversation among themselves. One of their girlfriends raises a quizzical eyebrow at Alex.

At a loss for anything else to do, Alex gazes at the Moon Jump, like Kant at his steeple.

Freddie comes out behind Alex, grabs him by the arm.

FREDDIE
Come on. We have to talk.

They walk together. Behind them, the party is in full swing- people doing dives into the pool, mock-fighting with prop weapons that type of thing.

They walk until they're away from the party, under a big tree in a far corner of the yard.

ALEX
OK. What?

FREDDIE
You know what.

ALEX
I really don't.
(beat)
Is it about Paige?

FREDDIE
(disbelieving)
"Is it about Paige?" Jesus.
(beat)
Yeah. It actually is about Paige.

ALEX
Look, I'm sorry I missed the game
the other night, I was-

FREDDIE
Shut up. I know what you were
doing. I know everything in this
town, man. Don't ever forget that.

Alex is shocked to see the change that has come over his friend.

ALEX
I... I really like her, Freddie. I
thought you wanted that for me.

FREDDIE
I don't give a fuck if you "like"
her. You're on my turf. You're
fucking with my business!

ALEX
Business?

Freddie makes a "horn" gesture with his hand to his forehead.
A long silence, and then:

ALEX (CONT'D)
(quietly)
I think I'm in love with her.

FREDDIE
Jesus fucking Christ.
(quietly, to himself)
Party's over.

ALEX

Freddie-

Alex grabs his arm, but Freddie violently shrugs him off and strides back towards the yard.

Alex, left alone under the tree, looks up and sees the decayed ruins of a twenty-year-old treehouse.

BACKYARD

Freddie storms back into the party, which is still going full-tilt.

FREDDIE

PARTY'S OVER!

He's standing in the middle of everyone and yelling at the top of his lungs, but no one takes him seriously.

FREDDIE (CONT'D)

(louder)

PARTY'S- OVER!

Freddie grabs a nearby sword and stabs the moon jump, which deflates.

Freddie has gathered his dark-clothed "cool" friends around him, and gives them quiet instructions. They fan out around the party and start confiscating drinks and shooing people towards the exit.

Freddie's mother watches from a distance, looking worried.

The other D+D guys, in the background, take it in stride, and walk quietly off. Alex reappears and finds Paige, standing among the chaos. He instinctively grabs her hand.

PAIGE

What's going on?

ALEX

I don't know. Let's just get of here.

Freddie's friends are still herding people out and even pushing them around a little, but Paige and Alex walk away unmolested through the chaos.

EXT. FREDDIE'S BACKYARD - NIGHT

Night has fallen, and the party is over. A broken pinata lays on the ground among other refuse, and a forlorn streamer blows by.

A light is on in the house's kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN

Freddie's mother slaves onto the night, cleaning up the massive pile of dirty dishes from the party.

EXT. BACKYARD

Outside, Freddie sneaks out of the basement window and across the yard.

EXT. UNICORN'S WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Freddie pulls up outside the building where the Unicorn has his offices, and where Alex works.

INT. UNICORN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

A shaft of light enters the scene as the elevator door opens and Freddie steps out.

He walks past the reception desk towards the Unicorn's inner chamber and pushes the door open.

UNICORN'S INNER OFFICE

The Unicorn is sitting at the desk, with the chair rotated outwards, looking down at the light of the city.

He spins around as Freddie enters- it's the Unicorn.

UNICORN
Freddie. This is a surprise.

FREDDIE
You missed my party.

UNICORN
Your what?

FREDDIE

My birthday party. My birthday was today. And you know it.

UNICORN

Of course I didn't forget your birthday, Freddie.

FREDDIE

(barely under control)
Then why didn't you come?

UNICORN

Relax. You want a present? Is that what this is about?

The Unicorn roots around in his desk drawer, eventually coming out with a snowglobe with a Unicorn (horse form) inside, and his corporate logo on the outside.

UNICORN (CONT'D)

Here.

He tosses it to Freddie, who catches it.

FREDDIE

(under his breath)
Fuck you.

UNICORN

Excuse me?

He throws the globe and it shatters against the wall.

FREDDIE

How could you do this to me? You give Alex a girl for real, and let him show me up at my own party?? How does Alex get the girl? Nobody actually gets the girl, that's the whole point- they think they get the girl, and they bring more suckers who think they're gonna get the girl! I brought you all those guys, I'm the one who brought you Alex! I bring in twice as much business as anybody else and you know it!

UNICORN

(toying with knickknacks
on his desk)
I guess.

FREDDIE

Fuck you man! I quit!!

The Unicorn just looks at him with complete disinterest.

UNICORN

You need your parking validated,
dog?

Freddie storms out.

CUBICLE FIELD

Freddie walks through and nods to a few late workers. He finds Alex's cube, grabs some files, and quickly walks out.

UNICORN'S OFFICE - LATER

The Unicorn is still sitting there, alone, sipping a blue drink. It's very late.

An antique, 1960s art-deco blue telephone (not his usual phone) rings on his desk. He gulps down the last of his drink, composes himself, then answers.

He sounds a little nervous when he speaks, but he holds it together.

UNICORN

(into phone)

Yes. Yes, the numbers are in order.
This is our biggest quarter ever.
But... I was wondering if you might
indulge me in a request.

(beat)

Yes, of course. It's regarding...
It's about succession.

UNICORN'S OFFICE - MUCH LATER:

The Unicorn seems to have sat in his chair all night long. He's staring out the window as the sun is rising, with a far-away smile on his face.

A cleaning person comes in and sweeps up the wreckage of the snowglobe, then retreats.

The Unicorn pours himself another blue drink. He drinks it, gets up and straightens his suit and his hair in the glass of one of the pictures on the wall.

Then he walks out into the-

CUBICLE FIELD

It's very quiet, the only person who seems to be working this early is Alex. The Unicorn pops into his cubicle, suddenly bursting with good cheer.

UNICORN

Alex. How're things? Killing it like usual?

ALEX

Yeah. I just came in early to wrap up these reports.

UNICORN

Forget about work for a minute. How are things going with Paige?

ALEX

Great. They're really great. These last few weeks, I feel like we've gotten so much closer. I never really... got this far before, but it's pretty amazing. We never fight or anything. It's just all... good.

UNICORN

I knew you had it in you. And I know how hard you've been working here. So I've got a surprise for the two of you.

He produces an envelope and hands it to Alex. Alex opens it and finds plane tickets and a brochure for a beautiful island resort somewhere.

ALEX

(reading ticket)
This is tonight.

EXT. FREDDIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Alex parks in front of Freddie's house and goes up and knocks on the front door. Freddie's mother answers, in cleaning garb.

MRS. GEROSSIE

Oh, hello, Alex. I was just cleaning up the house a bit.

ALEX

I know.
(beat)
Is he here?

MRS. GEROSSIE

Oh, Alex, I'm so sorry.

ALEX

No. It's my fault. I'm sorry for
the way I acted at the party. It
wasn't appropriate.
(awkward pause)
I'm going out of town for a
while... tonight. Just tell him I'm
sorry, OK?

MRS. GEROSSIE

I will.

ALEX

Thanks, Mrs. G.

Alex hugs her and starts to walk away.

MRS. GEROSSIE

She's a lovely girl, Alex. I'm very
proud of you.

Alex turns back to her, beaming, but also trying to keep from
crying.

INT. ALEX'S CAR/EXT. STREET

Alex has been crying, but pulls himself together and wipes
the last of the tears away as he pulls up to a restaurant.

He gives the keys to the valet with now-practiced technique.

INT. RESTAURANT - LATER

Alex and Paige are having dinner. Alex pulls out the envelope
from the Unicorn and shows it to her.

PAIGE

(reading ticket)
This is tonight.

Alex nods and smiles, and Paige smiles back.

LATER:

Alex and Paige have finished their dinner, and Alex signs with a flourish, and hands the bill to the waiter.

EXT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Alex and Paige walk out into a rainy night, and find a towncar waiting for them. A uniformed driver with an umbrella escorts them into the car.

Paige looks at Alex, amazed that he's put all this together.

Across the street, unnoticed, a weaselly-looking guy (TIM) is taking pictures of them with a telephoto lens.

EXT. CLUB - NIGHT

The towncar pulls up in front of a busy nightclub and drops Alex and Paige off.

A crowd of club-goers waits for admittance from the burly bouncers. This is the kind of club where people often dress up in outlandish costumes, so even a Unicorn wouldn't seem particularly out of place.

When Alex sees the velvet rope situation, he physically shies away. The BOUNCER looks straight at Alex.

ALEX
(quietly to himself)
Shit.

BOUNCER
Alex!

The bouncer opens the velvet rope and admits the surprised Alex and Paige.

INT. CLUB - NIGHT

The club is dark and packed; loud music throbs over the sound system. Alex and Paige exchange looks- neither one of them is used to coming to places like this. A club employee instantly appears and escorts them to a VIP table, where a bottle of champagne is waiting for them.

SLIGHTLY LATER:

Alex and Paige are drinking and leaning close together, trying to have a conversation over the music.

ALEX
DO YOU WANT TO DANCE?

PAIGE
WHAT??

ALEX
DO YOU WANT TO DANCE??

PAIGE
YOU LIKE TO DANCE??

The music stops in the middle of her sentence.

ALEX
Yeah. Well, no.
(beat)
Let's dance.

Alex downs his champagne in a gulp and they get up and start to walk out towards the--

DANCE FLOOR

As they walk down to the dancefloor, the scene becomes magical: the lights glitter off the shiny clothes of the clubgoers, and everything sparkles in front of their eyes.

Alex drunkenly stumbles, but Paige holds him up. They wind through the crowd, to the middle of the dance floor. Among the dancers, Alex and Paige both spot the Unicorn.

An awkward silence passes between them.

ALEX (CONT'D)
(finally)
Wow, look at him.

PAIGE
Yeah.

Suddenly, the music stops. The Unicorn makes what might be a signal to some unseen DJ, and a new song starts:

MUSIC: "Take a Chance on Me" by ABBA (or similiar).

A group of fresh-faced young people in 70s-jumpsuit-style identical outfits line up behind the Unicorn and start to perform a carefully choreographed dance routine, with the Unicorn in the lead.

The lighting causes psychedelic reflections off the Unicorn's horn.

Again unnoticed, the weasely guy is here, snapping pictures with a tiny "spy" camera.

CATWALK ABOVE DANCE FLOOR

White-overalled men are controlling the lights that shine down the dance floor.

DANCE FLOOR

It's amazing- those watching are moved to strange emotions they never knew they could feel.

Everyone in the club starts to join in, as the dance the Unicorn is doing ripples across the dance floor. Alex and Paige join in too, spinning each other around under the disco lights (the spinning reminiscent of the scenic beach fantasy), lip-syncing to the music, and generally having the 70s-flavored time of their lives.

LATER:

Alex and Paige are relaxing back at their table, smiling at each other, dazed and tired.

The driver of their car approaches.

DRIVER

It's time.

IN SLOW MOTION:

Alex and Paige follow him out through the crowd, which parts to let them pass.

MUSICAL SEQUENCE:

Alex and Paige lean on each other in the back seat, half-asleep. The car makes stops at Paige's cottage, where men in white overalls bring her pre-packed bags out to the car.

INT. TROPICAL VILLA - MORNING

Alex and Paige, in a cottage at the resort Alex saw at the travel agency. They wake up, in bed together under pure white sheets, with the tropical sun streaming in on them.

On the nightstand is a basket of tropical fruit and a pitcher of blue liquid with a note reading "WELCOME ALEX AND PAIGE."

END MUSICAL SEQUENCE

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Freddie meets the Tim weasely guy, who hands him the photos of Alex and Paige. Freddie pays him.

INT. FREDDIE'S BASEMENT - NIGHT

Freddie is in his basement, sitting at the gaming table. With him are Owen, Mick, and Jimmy. Tim is here too, a strange presence that no one is comfortable with yet, especially since he's sitting in Alex's chair.

Freddie is dressed more geeky than usual, in his less-cool "gamer" persona.

A heavy silence hangs over the room,

FREDDIE

What I can say? I feel like it's all my fault. I never should have gotten you guys involved in this.

OWEN

What exactly were we involved in?

FREDDIE

You know. The girls... him. It was all a set-up. Shit. I thought it would work. He promised me you guys would all get the girls- to keep. I can't believe I was so stupid.

JIMMY

Who promised you? The Unicorn?

MICK

(fingering a knife)
Let's go find that fucker.

FREDDIE

No. It wasn't just him. I never would have trusted him.

Freddie pulls out the photos, and the document folders he stole from Alex's cubicle, and spreads them on the gaming table. Alex's name is on the folder tabs.

MICK

(quietly)
What the fuck.

FREDDIE

Alex runs everything, with his girl. His whole "thing" here- it was all just a cover.

OWEN

I don't believe it.
(re: Tim)
And who's this guy?

FREDDIE

Another victim. And he's got proof.

Tim spreads out the contents of the file folders. Owen pores over the spreadsheets and files of geeky guys who were set up on dates.

FREDDIE (CONT'D)

Every one of those guys paid Alex to be set up with a girl.

OWEN

But we paid you. You did it too.

FREDDIE

I'm sorry. I didn't want to but- he talked me into it. I got in over my head. There was this girl I wanted, and Alex told me I had to bring in five more people before I could go out with her. It's all a pyramid.

Freddie hangs his head.

FREDDIE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry I let you guys down. I was weak. I hope we can still be friends.

Long silence.

RONNIE

So now whaddya we do?

JIMMY

I don't know...
(beat)
You guy's still wanna run something? Tim could play "Alexander."

Owen picks up a miniature off the table and throws it hard against the wall.

OWEN

Fuck that!

Owen picks up "Alexander's" character sheet which is lying on the table. He pulls out a lighter and sets it on fire, then puts it out in a glass.

OWEN (CONT'D)

I want some of the blue stuff. And
I want a chick, for real.

FREDDIE

(to other guys)

What about you guys? You feel the
same way?

MICK

Yeah.

RONNIE

Yeah.

JIMMY

Yeah.

FREDDIE

Good. Then I guess it's settled.

Freddie goes to the wall and starts pulling down weapons and armor from the display.

EXT. PARK - MORNING

The "parade ground" where they previously played at combat. Freddie and the guys have assembled here, again with their weapons, but this time it's dead serious. The silly big swords are gone, replaced with long hooked knives.

Freddie has a shoulder-holstered pistol inside his jacket.

More and more geeky disillusioned guys and girls start appearing to join them.

INTERCUTTING WITH:

INT. TROPICAL VILLA

It's still dark here, but Alex and Paige are awake, in bed together.

Alex is lying on his back, looking up at the ceiling, while Paige sits up on her elbow, looking at him and running her hand through her hair.

END INTERCUTTING

PAIGE
That was... wow.

ALEX
I know.

PAIGE
How did you know... how to... I mean... you know what I mean.

Alex just smiles- he's exhausted.

ALEX
I don't know.

Paige grabs Alex by the arm, hard.

PAIGE
(very intense)
Do it again.

ALEX
(laughing)
In a little bit. I think I'm dehydrated.

Then he looks over at her and sees the look on her face- that she wasn't kidding at all.

PAIGE
Alex. Now.

When Alex sits up on the bed, we see he has deep red scratches down his back.

She starts kissing him, hard, intensely, then climbs on top of him. They fall on the floor, and unseen, have passionate sex there.

EXT. PAIGE'S COTTAGE - MORNING

MUSIC: Polyphonic Spree, "Days Like This Keep Me Warm."

Alex kisses Paige goodbye on her doorstep, with the cab that just brought them from the airport in the background.

PAIGE

You sure you don't want a ride?

ALEX

I feel like walking.

PAIGE

I'll see you tomorrow?

ALEX

(smiling over his
shoulder)

Yeah.

Alex walks away with his bags over his shoulder. He turns back once, smiles and waives to Paige, still standing on her doorstep. She's framed by the flower garden and the front of the cottage, making a perfect scene of idyllic tranquility.

This is the happiest moment of Alex's life.

INT. UNICORN'S OFFICES - NIGHT

Workers in white "boiler suits" are moving everything out, even disassembling cubicles.

UNICORN'S OFFICE

His office has already been stripped of furniture and pictures. He stands looking down on the scene, with a faraway look of great satisfaction.

INT. ALEX'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Alex's sitting around, at loose ends. He looks at his calendar, where several weeks have been blocked off as "NO WORK."

Alex pulls out his phone and dials "Owen," but it rings and then goes to voicemail on the other end.

Alex puts the phone away, gets himself together and goes out.

INT./EXT. FLORIST - DAY

Alex buys a bouquet of flowers.

EXT. GRAVEYARD - DAY

Alex walks through the graveyard until he comes to a grave which reads:

JUDITH OSBORNE.

He puts the flowers down and kneels by the grave.

ALEX

Hey, mom. I know I haven't... um...
I brought you some flowers. Mrs.
Gerossie is good. Freddie's... OK,
I think.

(beat)

I just wanted to tell you that... I
met somebody. Paige. She's
really...

He starts to sniffle.

ALEX (CONT'D)

You'd really like her.

Alex stops talking, just sits there, looking out at the sky and wiping tears from his eyes.

EXT. JEWELRY STORE - DAY

From out on the sidewalk, we see Alex completing the purchase of a wedding ring.

Alex walks out of store and calls Paige.

ALEX

Hey.

PAIGE (O.S.)

Hi! What are you doing?

ALEX

Just... picking up some stuff.

(beat)

Hey, Paige?

PAIGE (O.S.)
Yeah?

ALEX
Would you do something for me?

PAIGE (O.S.)
You know I'll do whatever you want.

ALEX
Meet me Friday night. 1410 Fourth
street.

PAIGE (O.S.)
I'd love to.

ALEX
Eight?

PAIGE (O.S.)
Sure.
(beat)
Somebody's at the door- I better
go.
(beat)
I can't wait to see you.

ALEX
Bye.

We hear the call disconnect.

ALEX (CONT'D)
(quietly, to himself now)
I love you.

As Alex stands there with his phone in hand it rings again,
startling him.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Hey.

UNICORN (O.S.)
How's it going?

ALEX
Good. Thank you so much for helping
me set this up. I really think it's
all going to work out this time.

UNICORN
Yeah. Me too.

INT./EXT. RESTAURANT - SUNSET

Alex is back at the restaurant where he and Paige had their first date. He sits alone at a table, the same table, waiting.

There's a candle, bottle of wine, everything. Alex fingers the ring box, fidgeting it in and out of his pocket.

LATER:

Paige hasn't showed up.

EVEN LATER:

Paige still hasn't showed up. Alex in a panic, rushes outside and tries to call Paige. Her phone is completely dead.

Alex is torn: He starts back in to restaurant, changes tack a few times, then finally jumps in his car and roars off.

EXT. PAIGE'S COTTAGE - NIGHT

Alex roars up and jumps out of the car. The house is completely and totally dark.

He tries the door and is surprised to find it unlocked.

INT. PAIGE'S COTTAGE - CONTINUOUS

Inside, it's completely deserted- no furniture or sign it has ever been inhabited.

Alex, crushed, staggers into Paige's bedroom. He sees the outline on the floor where her bed was, and collapses into it.

LATER:

It's not certain how long Alex has been here, just staring at nothing. He's brought back to awareness by a shadow passing over him:

One of the Unicorn's white suited MEN is standing in the window, looking in at Alex with a malevolent grin.

Alex literally jumps up when he sees him. Then he realizes there is another man in the doorway.

UNICORN'S MAN
You need to come with us.

ALEX
Fuck you.

The man walks into the room, allowing four more of his menacing cohorts to fill in a line behind him.

UNICORN'S MAN
That wasn't very nice.

ALEX
You really think I care anymore?
Fuck you!!

Alex punches Man #2 in the face, hard, knocking him down. The other four charge at Alex and for a few minutes he actually holds them at bay, but they have him surrounded.

MUSIC: Tokyo Police Club, "Citizens of Tomorrow (Space Ballad)"

He tries to bull his way through the ring, but there are too many. He goes down, gets up swinging, but is knocked down again.

He keeps trying to get up, but each time the men kick at him until he falls again. Finally, Alex stays on the ground in a pool of his own blood and snot, and his eyes close.

UNICORN'S MAN
Get him up.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE PAIGE'S COTTAGE - NIGHT

The street is totally quiet and empty. The line of white-suited men drag the semi-conscious, black-clad Alex down the middle of the street, under a canopy of trees, towards the park.

EXT. HIDDEN CLEARING THE PARK

The men drag Alex towards the curtain of the waterfall here, nestled deep in the park.

Freddie's weasely spy Tim, who has been following Alex, witnesses it all from a safe perch in the bushes. He opens his phone and taps out a text.

INT. UNICORN'S OFFICES

It's deserted now, the business has been completely shut down and everything moved out.

We see Freddie's little army ransacking everything that's left.

UNICORN'S INNER OFFICE

Freddie is here, standing where the big desk once was, staring out the big bay window.

His phone chirps and he reads the text.

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

A moonlit beach by night. This is the same "scenic beach" that Alex had a fantasy on before (and where the Unicorn had his lunch date), but now it's taken on a sinister look.

Their white outfits glowing in the moonlight, two of the Unicorn's servants lead a blindfolded and badly-beaten Alex onto the sand.

Alex drifts into consciousness and lifts his head, hearing the sound of the waves.

ALEX

Where is this?

One of the servants laughs evilly in response. They look at each other and decide to let Alex fall to the sand.

They let Alex crawl around helplessly for a bit, then pick him back up on his feet, and remove the blindfold.

ALEX'S POV:

His vision gradually comes into focus. He sees a figure clad in white start to appear in front of him. It's Paige, in a white dress.

CLOSE ON PAIGE:

She looks like she's been through just as much hell as Alex has. She's been watching Alex as the blindfold was removed, trying to hold back tears.

CLOSE ON ALEX:

ALEX (CONT'D)

Paige!

THE WHOLE SCENE:

We pull back to see Alex and Paige on the beach, facing each other in front of the crashing waves. Behind each of them stand a pair of Unicorn servants guarding them.

PAIGE

Alex!

Paige runs forward and embraces the still very unsteady Alex, and the White Overalls make no effort to stop them.

EXT. PARK WATERFALL - NIGHT

Two more white-suited thugs stand guard at the waterfall. In the underbrush, something glints, but they don't notice.

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

Alex and Paige stand close together under the moon.

Paige examines the damage to Alex's face, stroking it with her hand.

PAIGE

Alex, what happened?

ALEX

I don't know. I don't even know what's real anymore. I just want this all to be a nightmare.

Alex staggers and almost falls, but Paige holds him.

PAIGE

I've got you.

Alex rallies and tries to focus on Paige's face floating in front of him.

ALEX

I-- I have to tell something. It's going to sound ridiculous, but I think I got us both in a lot of trouble somehow, and that's why we're here.

(beat, looking away)

I just...

(MORE)

ALEX (CONT'D)

I I wanted it so bad, ever since I was a kid- and I didn't know how to do it. I needed help.

PAIGE

Alex.

ALEX

He set it up when we first met! None of it was me- he did everything!

PAIGE

Alex. I know.

FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. STREET - DAY

The street scene where Alex and Paige had their "cute meet."

Around the corner, Paige is getting ready to walk out and "spontaneously" meet Alex.

Her hair and makeup are being made to look just right, perfectly casual, by a woman in a smart white outfit with the Unicorn logo on the lapel.

CLOSE ON PAIGE:

She sits perfectly still, looking into space as her hair and wardrobe is adjusted, and pedestrians filter around her.

There's a faraway look in her eye, like a football player about to run out of the tunnel for the big game.

BUILDING ABOVE THE SCENE

The Unicorn watches through binoculars as the cute meet unfolds.

LATER:

The meeting has happened and Alex and Paige walk away, having exchanged numbers. White-suited Unicorn men appear and take apart the newsstand, which was never much more than scenery in the first place.

RESUME

Alex is dumbfounded.

ALEX
You... How did you...

PAIGE
Leslie. I needed money really
bad...

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Paige and Leslie the country singer are sitting having a beer. Leslie pulls a brochure out of her purse and shows it to Paige.

PAIGE (V.O.)
I did the fake dates for a while,
pretending I was interested in
those poor guys, the ones like your
friends. I was horrible, the worst
two months of my life. But I
realized something: I wanted it
too. I wanted the fantasy I was
selling. I wanted somebody I could
really be with.
(beat)
He came to me, we made an
arrangement.

INT. UNICORN'S CUBICLE FIELD - NIGHT

PAIGE (V.O.)
He took me off the dates, gave me a
desk job.

Paige comes into work, in the exact same cubicle Alex worked in. She does the same work, time lapses, she goes home.

A white-suited man appears, changes the nameplate to Alex's name, Alex arrives and starts his late shift, completely oblivious.

PAIGE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
And then he betrayed us.

INT. PAIGE'S COTTAGE - DAY

We see the end of Paige's conversation with Alex.

PAIGE
 (into phone)
 Someone's at the door.

The Unicorn's thugs force their way in, grab Paige and bind and gag her as she fights furiously.

RESUME

They hear the sound of a slow, sarcastic handclap.

THE UNICORN

Walks out of the mist, wearing a gold suit, looking his amazing best.

UNICORN
 Ain't love grand?

ALEX
 What is this? Why??

PAIGE
 Why don't you just fuck off and leave us alone??

UNICORN
 No, that's not going to work. You two are meant for something more.

ALEX
 What?

UNICORN
Real love and magic. You're going to take over my business.
 (off Alex and Paige's gaping stares)
 I'm president and CEO of a "Top-1000" corporation- offices in 33 countries. Your friend Freddie was the best I'd ever seen- until you came along. You can't fake what you two have. You're true believers.

ALEX
 You're shitting me.

The Unicorn scoops up a handful of the ocean water in a chalice one of his servants hands to him.

When it hits the cup, it glows bright blue, like the blue drinks.

UNICORN

You see this- look at it!

He shoves it under their noses.

UNICORN (CONT'D)

You know what that is? This is what you've always dreamed about! Real love and magic! This place is the source.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Alex and Paige's first date again. We see their awkwardness fall away as they drink the blue drinks, then falling all over each other back at Paige's place, barely even realizing what they're doing.

UNICORN (V.O.)

You know how much of this you two have drank in the last few months? You're hooked! It's too late to back out now!

RESUME

UNICORN (CONT'D)

I'm so tired of this. Of you people. I'm done. It's yours now.

A long silence. And then, they all hear a noise of people approaching, and clanking metal. Over a dune marches:

THE ARMY OF DISILLUSIONED GAMERS

Led by Freddie, dressed all in black, with a helm on his head and his gun in his belt.

UNICORN (CONT'D)

(quietly, to himself)
Come on!

ALEX

Freddie?

FREDDIE
 (to Unicorn, ignoring
 Alex)
 I knew it! After all the work I did
 for you- how many hundreds did I
 bring to you? And you choose them
 over me?

UNICORN
 Why are you here now? You're not
 supposed to be here.

FREDDIE
 (like a pouty child)
 You think I'm so stupid! You never
 thought I could do anything! We
 followed your stupid fucking guys!

FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. WATERFALL IN PARK - 20 MINUTES EARLIER

Freddie and his army creep up to the waterfall, where two
 "white suits" stand guard. The army rushes them and they
 surrender.

Freddie, looking crazed and dangerous, points his gun at them
 and makes them kneel on the ground as his army enters the
 magical portal behind the waterfall.

RESUME

The Unicorn scoffs, unimpressed at Freddie's recollection.

ALEX
 Freddie, I never wanted this! I
 just-

UNICORN
 (to Alex)
 Shut up.
 (to Freddie)
 Now is not the time, Frederick.

FREDDIE
 (waving gun)
 I'll tell you when it's-

UNICORN
 SHUT UP!!

The Unicorn makes a huge, sweeping gesture: The gun goes flying from Freddie's hand, smoke pours out of the blue liquid in the chalice, and everyone on the beach except Alex and Paige is overcome by the Unicorn's power.

IN THE BACKGROUND

Very out of focus, we see the blurry forms of the male and female "soldiers" of Freddie's army. They drop their weapons and come together in male/female pairs, spinning as Alex and Paige did in their first fantasy.

WITH ALEX AND PAIGE

The Unicorn addresses them.

UNICORN (CONT'D)

Haven't you worked for it? Haven't you earned it, with all your suffering? Your kingdom has finally come, Alex! You drew the map on the back of your notebook in the 7th grade, remember? The silver path that leads down to the mystical glade.

ALEX

How do you know about that?

UNICORN

I know about everything.

The Unicorn pulls out a battered old notebook. Alex gazes as he realizes what it is:

INSERT:

Alex's literal notebook from the 7th grade, covered in his adolescent doodles, stuffed to the breaking point with scraps of paper.

RESUME

UNICORN (CONT'D)

You could have it all. Everything you dreamed of, and more.
"Alexander the Omnipotent."

A long beat.

UNICORN (CONT'D)

Well, "Alexander." I don't have all day...

Alex still says nothing.

UNICORN (CONT'D)
 So you want to give it all up? You
 want to go back to being that
 pathetic
 (spitting the word)
 "Alex?" The guy no girl ever
 looked twice at?

Still no answer.

UNICORN (CONT'D)
 But you think it's different now.
 You've got Paige.

ALEX
 Don't talk about her!

UNICORN
 Easy there, big guy. I'm making a
 point.

Alex glowers at the Unicorn, but The Unicorn stares him down,
 and Alex is afraid to advance on him.

UNICORN (CONT'D)
 Good. Your vacation- the one I
 treated you to- you had fun,
 wouldn't you say?

Alex and Paige both look furious and embarrassed.

UNICORN (CONT'D)
 No need to lie, we taped it all.
 You two could be on the internet.
 Quite a performance from you, Alex.
 Nobody would have guessed she's
 only the third girl you've ever
 been with.
 (beat)
 Well, I think Paige guessed, but
 she never let on. You're a very
 polite girl. I always liked that
 about you.

PAIGE
 I hate you.

UNICORN
 (ignoring her)
 You were OK, Alex. I just hope you
 don't think you got there first.

ALEX

I don't care who she was with
before me!

UNICORN

Well I thought you might say that.
Very modern. Very enlightened. But
aren't you just a little bit
curious exactly how many there
were?

The Unicorn produces Paige's diary.

Paige instantly recognizes it- and freezes as if she's been
turned to stone. The Unicorn starts flipping through the
pages, and reading out loud:

UNICORN (CONT'D)

Michael French. Evan Sommers. Nick
Saglimbeni. Miles Beckett- ooh
look, he got a star, I wonder what
that means? Drew Levy. Chris
Robinson. And there are details-
shall I read them?

Alex looks and Paige try to look at each other, but struggle
to meet each other's eye.

UNICORN (CONT'D)

I know what you're thinking, Alex.
You're trying to tell yourself it's
not so bad- you'll go on with
things like they were, make
yourself love her again- but in
your heart of hearts you know, it's
never, ever going to be the same.

(beat)

But I can fix it for you. I can put
it back the way it was.

PAIGE

Why should we believe a word you
say?

UNICORN

Because I've done it for you so
many times before. Remember your
first fight?

Alex and Paige exchange blank looks.

UNICORN (CONT'D)
Of course you don't.

FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. THEATRE - NIGHT

The scene where Alex and Paige argued earlier, outside the theatre. The scene continues and we see them enter the bar down the street, as the white-clad usher watches.

INT. BAR

They drink blue drinks and all is instantly well: they're all over each other at the bar.

UNICORN (V.O.)
And there were so many more times after that. You tried to rip each other's throats out all through your "dream vacation." The hotel wanted to kick you out until I smoothed it over for you.

INT. HOTEL ROOM

We see Alex and Paige screaming at each other, Alex throws a vase at the wall. Paige grabs him, leaving the scratches on his back we saw earlier.

RESUME

The Unicorn smiles wickedly at them.

UNICORN
Is it starting to come back to you now? The blue stuff, when it's pure- it can make you forget the bad parts. With the doses you two have been on- you were so blissed out of your minds the whole time, you didn't know what the hell you were doing. You were just kidding yourselves, seeing what you wanted to see. Pathetic.

Alex steps in front of Paige, as if trying to protect her from the Unicorn's malevolence.

ALEX

No! It's real!

(beat, weakly)

We'll... we'll work it out. We'll get through it. We're in love.

"Love conquers all."

UNICORN

You really are something, Alex. I think the last time I heard someone say that and really mean it was...

(beat)

Eighteen-Twenty-Four. You just haven't been paying attention, have you? Look at you people! Your bodies fall apart, your minds- you leave each other, hate each other, betray each other again and again, hurt each other over the tiniest things- for sport! "Love conquers all?" All conquers love!!

(re: the army of geeks)

Look at them! They're weak-minded, pathetic. Sure they lie each other, but mostly they lie to themselves- from the day they're born to the day they die. That's what being "human" is. But you two- you could be more! You could rise above the pathetic cycle you people have been trapped in for twenty thousand years!

ALEX

I don't believe you!

The Unicorn makes another magical gesture and:

A SCENIC BEACH FANTASY

With the same intense color and slow motion as before.

Alex and Paige find they've again become their more attractive "fantasy selves," and Alex is no longer bruised or in pain from his beating.

They find themselves in a setting somewhat like their vacation to paradise, except outdoors on the beach. There is a beautiful old-fashioned white canopy bed here, decked out as if for their wedding night.

They're dressed as if for an outdoor wedding on a beach, Alex in a blue suit;

Paige is in a beautiful white dress, and has flowers braided into her hair. She looks more beautiful than she ever has before.

Alex and Paige, like wondering children, stand in front of the bed.

UNICORN
Put your hand up, like this.

The Unicorn demonstrates a little wave of his hand. Alex hesitates.

UNICORN (CONT'D)
For God's sake, Alex, it's not a trick. Just do this for me, and I'll never bother you again.

Hesitantly, Alex waves his hand.

The Army of geeks instantly fall to their knees.

UNICORN (CONT'D)
How did that feel? Like an orgasm, isn't it? Like it was with Paige, on vacation?
(beat)
Or is it better?
(re: Paige)
Look at how she looks at you now. They'll wait on you hand and foot.

Alex says nothing.

UNICORN (CONT'D)
This is your destiny.

The Unicorn makes a gesture of command at the kneeling army and Alex's friend, Owen, gets up and walks forward, blank-eyed, carrying a single flower.

He kneels at their feet, offering the flower to Paige.

UNICORN (CONT'D)
Just Alex and Paige, together. No one else matters. Kiss her, and all your dreams are yours- forever.

Alex looks at Paige's face, then down into Owen's eyes, and he sees the pain and confusion there.

ALEX
Owen...?

FOCUS PULL:

He suddenly sees the rest of the army, and the similar pain and isolation in their faces.

ALEX (CONT'D)
(to Owen)
Owen, get up. Please.

Owen, still in a daze, doesn't seem to hear, but drops the flower and walks back towards the others.

ALEX (CONT'D)
(to Unicorn)
No. This is over.

UNICORN
Nothing is ever over, Alex. You should know that by now. Do you remember, Alex, was it... May the 28th, 1986? Eli Robinson.
(beat)
It only takes one punch for you to go down, and you're laying there, bleeding on that asphalt, and Eli is laughing, everyone is laughing... it's starting to come back now, isn't it?
(beat)
You hit him first, Alex. Do you remember why?

ALEX
Fuck you.

UNICORN
He didn't know; how could he have? You never told anyone about your mother, except Freddie. It had just happened that Autumn, the wounds were still so fresh. The beating hurt, but it was nothing compared to the humiliation, the shame- you wanted to fight for her, but you were so weak, you couldn't do anything but lay there crying.
(beat)
And no one would help you.

Long pause.

UNICORN (CONT'D)

Except Freddie. He walked across that schoolyard for you, and he picked you up, and he carried you to the nurse's office, with your blood and snot all down the front of his favorite shirt. You told him he was your only friend. Remember?

The Unicorn rounds on paralyzed Freddie, walks right up to him and gets in his face.

UNICORN (CONT'D)

And you. You never lived it down. After that you put as much distance as you could between you and your so-called "best friend." You moved to a new table in the cafeteria, started getting drunk on the weekend, getting high in the parking lot between classes. You talked shit about Alex to anyone who would listen- you betrayed him again, and again, and again. The last time was when you sent him to me.

(beat)

And then you betrayed me, too. You're a worthless piece of shit, Freddie.

His voice sinks to an ominous hiss, Freddie is becoming visually frightened.

UNICORN (CONT'D)

But I understand. I do. You were ashamed. When you were hurting everyone around you, all you ever really wanted was to hurt yourself. Well, guess what, old pal? Today's your lucky day.

The Unicorn does something and Freddie's eyes go wide with terror. He starts to turn the knife in his hand towards himself.

Alex tries to run to him but two of the Unicorn's servants re-appear and hold him and Paige back.

The knife inches forward until Freddie stabs himself in the chest.

ALEX

NO!

Alex breaks free, grabs a long knife dropped by one of the "soldiers," rushes at the Unicorn, and stabs him. The Unicorn sits down on the sand, severely wounded but not dying yet. A blood stain starts to spread out onto his impeccable suit.

Alex recoils in horror, throws down the bloody knife and rushes to Freddie's side.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Freddie!

Freddie manages to sit up, but his shirt is soaked in blood, and he can barely speak- he's dying.

ALEX (CONT'D)

(starting to cry)

I'm sorry.

FREDDIE

No. It was me. I brought you into this. Everything he said was true.

(beat)

I wanted to... really believe in things. All I ever wanted was to be like you.

A long silence.

FREDDIE (CONT'D)

I tried to keep you out as long as I could. You know that, right?

ALEX

Yeah.

FREDDIE

Tell my mom I'm sorry for everything.

Alex doesn't say anything, but nods, and wipes the hair away from Freddie's eyes. Freddie seems to drift away, but then comes back and looks up at Alex.

FREDDIE (CONT'D)

Hey. Remember Strader's drama club? Ninth grade?

ALEX

(very quietly)

Yeah.

FREDDIE

"Free me so far in your most..."

(beat, remembering)

"...generous thoughts..."

ALEX

"... that I have shot my arrow over
the house and hurt my brother."

Tears are streaming down both of their faces now. Alex takes both of Freddie's hands in both of his.

Freddie lays back on the sand and closes his eyes. He's dead.

UNICORN (O.S.)

Alex.

Alex turns around and faces the dying Unicorn, who's sitting on the sand, the bloodstain continuing to spread. He's taken off his jacket and tie, and unbuttoned the top buttons of his shirt. Thick fur, now caked with blood, can be seen inside the shirt.

Alex walks over to the Unicorn, allowing Owen and the guys (now free of the spell) to approach and kneel next to Freddie's body.

UNICORN (CONT'D)

I want to tell you something. Both
of you. This is the real secret.

(off Alex's suspicious
look)

It doesn't matter now. Come here.

Reluctantly, they approach. The Unicorn speaks quietly, so Alex and Paige are the only ones who can hear.

UNICORN (CONT'D)

I know I'm a bad guy. I've lied,
cheated, stolen from you and your
friends. Everything I'm ever done
was for one reason- to fuck you
over. And I don't regret one single
second of it.

(beat)

I know what you're thinking,
though. Your best friend's body
isn't even cold yet, and still, in
some sad little corner in the back
of your mind, you have hope. That
somehow, it's going to different
for you, that it gets better from
here.

(MORE)

UNICORN (CONT'D)

(beat)

Well it doesn't. You will get old, and fat, and you will eat at chain restaurants. You will come to cherish the ordinary, and make love to the commonplace. You will stand aloof and watch as your own lives roll slowly past, like a movie you've seen once before, a long time ago. You will sit in a room for fifty years, together, and you will feel more alone than you can possibly imagine.

(beat)

Most people can live with it- because they don't know there's any other way. But you two- you saw how it could have been, and you threw it all away.

(beat)

You wanted a fairy-tale, I gave you a fairy-tale. But this one ends with a curse. As long as you both live, together or apart, you will never be truly happy.

(beat)

And you will never see a Unicorn again.

The Unicorn lays down on his back and closes his eyes, at peace.

Owen throws his weapon on the ground, then takes off his armor and throws that down too. Behind him, the other members of the "army" follow suit.

Everyone looks at to Alex, standing over the Unicorn's body, for guidance.

ALEX

(to army)

I...

(beat)

I think we should all go home.

Gradually, the army gather themselves, talking quietly or hugging each other. Alex hugs his crying friends, and so does Paige.

OWEN

(to Alex)

I'll see you there?

ALEX

Yeah.

Owen turns back to find the other guys, and Alex and Paige walk off the beach hand in hand.

When they turn to look back, the Unicorn's body has completely disappeared in the creeping fog.

Finally, they emerge back in the--

EXT. PARK - DAWN

They're back by the waterfall.

The park is deserted as the dawn breaks. A cold wind blows pieces of trash and plastic past Alex and Paige. In the distance behind them, row upon row of tract housing is visible.

Alex and Paige walk away from the waterfall, towards the exit of the park.

WIDE VIEW

Behind them, on the green athletic fields, the black-clad "army" stagger out, squinting in the light, getting to know the day again.

WITH ALEX AND PAIGE

Alex and Paige, both dirty, cut and bleeding, stand together under the metal arch that marks the entrance to the park.

ALEX

It feels so different.

They look around in wonder, as if they've never seen this world before.

PAIGE

Is this the curse?

ALEX

I don't know. I think maybe it's just... life.

They continue cleaning each other up, awkward and uncertain. Then they walk under the arch, out of the park together, the light of the new day visible between their bodies.

MUSIC: Skygreen Leopards, "Silvery Branches."

As they pass under the entrance, the last of their "magical" appearances have faded. They turn and face each other, as if they had never met before.

They're standing close, their dirty and bloodied hands almost touching.

Slowly, uncertainly, they move together, inch by inch, until they grasp each other's fingers.

We fly away from the park as we:

FADE OUT

MUSIC OVER END CREDITS: A.A. Bondy, "Of the Sea."

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