

THIS IS HEAVEN

By

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A24

EXT. ABOVE THE CLOUDS - MORNING

Two perfect white clouds part to reveal an aerial view of Los Angeles. We descend upon the city, eventually landing on the open window of a pink stucco building. We push through gossamer curtains into--

INT. EVA'S BEDROOM - MORNING

A sun-drenched room accented with silk flowers, a Japanese folding screen, and other highly considered flourishes. Two people are sleeping peacefully side by side in the same bed. This is ROGER and EVA. Roger wears expertly tailored sea-foam green pajamas and Eva is in a pink satin robe, her hair in curlers. Close up on their sleeping faces; mouths fully open. Eva jolts awake--

EVA

Shoeless...

ROGER

(jolted awake)

You're hosting shoeless.

EVA

I have to go shoeless.

ROGER

Remind me why?

EVA

It immediately takes the pressure off the guests. They rely on the host to be a tonal barometer. So when they see me, it's-

(gestures towards her face)

"Hey!!!" followed by-

(gestures towards her feet)

"Oooohhhh..."

ROGER

Now, am I shoeless?

EVA

Weirdly no. It doesn't work for men.

ROGER

That's actually better because they're gonna need someone who's more rooted in the ground, giving more of like a classically male energy.

EVA

See, I agree.

ROGER

(getting out of bed to demonstrate)

So you can kind of be up here very ethereal with hors d'oeuvres whereas I'm more down here, anchored by denim-
(his voice drops)
"Can I get you a drink?"

EVA

See that's ideal, because we're embracing de-centralized hosting tonight.

ROGER

There isn't one host.

EVA

There's two. And that way they don't see effort.

ROGER

They're blind to the process.

EVA

(getting out of bed)

It's literally-

(walks past him and mutters)

"Get the door." But with one host-
(she mimes the following)

I'm in the kitchenette chopping dill. I see that a guest needs ice. I go to get them the ice. Oh God, now there's dill on the ice.

ROGER

Also socially with two hosts, if I see you engaging with someone who you typically freeze up around, I can-

(he cranes his neck)

"Eva!!!"

EVA
 And then I'm-
 (lifting a finger as if to
 halt a conversation)
 "Put a pin in that."

ROGER
 And that way we can--

Eva walks to Roger. Their faces are two inches apart,
 enacting a private check-in.

ROGER (CONT'D) EVA
 How are you? How are you?

CUT TO:

INT. EVA'S KITCHENETTE - MOMENTS LATER

Steam shoots from a screaming, long-necked kettle as Roger
 takes it off a hotplate and tends to a pour-over system.

EVA
 And Roger for tonight--

ROGER
 (distracted)
 Uh-huh...

EVA
 Roger- eyes here. This is how they
 pour coffee in Spain. Roger. Watch.

Roger watches as Eva lifts an imaginary kettle high above her
 head, pouring it behind her back.

ROGER
 Oh my God!

EVA
 Yeah.

OPENING TITLES. Inspired by titles from John Waters'
 Desperate Living (Each episode will have a short, hyper
 stylized title sequence based on the episode's themes).

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET CORNER - LATER

Roger punches a cross-walk button. They look great. They've
 had their morning cup and are soaring high on java.

EVA
What's so interesting about tonight
is that it's not a laugh night.

ROGER
This is insane, because I was
thinking the exact same thing.

EVA
The laughs will naturally come--

ROGER
They always do.

The pedestrian signal flashes. They are too wrapped up in
their conversation to see it.

EVA
We aren't telling stories to the
group. This isn't a campfire. It's
a salon!

ROGER
We're not going to tap dance for
people tonight. We might have
somber political conversations!

EVA
But those conversations will take
place under the banner of, "It's a
party."

They realize they've missed their chance to cross. They moan
and Roger presses the button again.

ROGER
(almost whispering)
And here's why it can't be a laugh
night. I know you know.

EVA
Oh, I know.

ROGER
Kara and Sasha.

EVA
Kara and Sasha.

ROGER
It's delicate, because I have love
for Kara, but I never had with her
what I have with you.

EVA

Me too. My friendship with Sasha has waned. She knows it's waned. I know it's waned.

ROGER

And I'm here to say that my friendship with Kara has also waned. You and I are waxing, as they wane.

EVA

They know it's a full wane. And that's okay! And only after we acknowledge that truth can we shed the toxic dynamics of our previous friendships.

ROGER

I'm not Kara's pet, and you're not Sasha's doormat! I'm tired of hiding our connection to protect Kara. She's a big girl!

EVA

Tonight we can finally honor our connection without rubbing it in their faces.

They have missed their chance to cross the street yet again. They stare blankly and then Roger presses the button.

ROGER

I'll be honest; I woke up nervous. I haven't seen Kara since... since I saw her last.

EVA

Well as you know I haven't seen Sasha since I saw her last.

ROGER

Having grown up in the South, I'm used to relationships with clean and exact borders. However, I ache for a kind of European engagement with people from my past. A world in which old friends and past lovers can come together with my new chosen family over a gorgeous meal.

EVA

I too ache for that. I've always had a vision that I would have a husband and the marriage would of course crumble and I would take a new lover and my ex-husband would build, say, a rustic bed for me to share with my new lover. And my ex would come over for dinner and perhaps notice the unmade bed and there would be a very French acknowledgment of "things change."

ROGER

Take my hands.

They hold hands and face each other. The crosswalk beeps again, pedestrians streaming past them.

ROGER (CONT'D)

Eva. Tonight we toast to friends old and new.

EVA

It's a literal olive branch, Roger. And we're serving olives.

They look up and see that they have yet again missed the chance to cross.

EVA (CONT'D)

Okay, this isn't funny we actually have to cross the street.

INT. MARKET - MOMENTS LATER

Close up on a beautiful man who is packing ice onto a display of fish. Eva and Roger stare at him in awe. They do their best impression of two people casually shopping for fish.

ROGER

(to Eva)
... You had said something about fish?

EVA

No, yeah... I had mentioned fish.

They pretend to be intensely interested in the fish. Finally, Roger speaks through his smile to Eva.

ROGER

Ask him...

EVA
 (through her teeth)
 I know.

ROGER
 Ask him market prices...

EVA
 I. Know.
 (to the monger)
 So this is all fish?

ROGER
 Since produce is back there, I
 guess this would in fact be fish.

FISH MONGER
 Yeah.

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| <p>ROGER Oooooh!!!</p> | <p>EVA Amazing. We're actively seeking fish.</p> |
|-------------------------------------|--|

FISH MONGER
 What are you looking for?

They are thrown into a subtle panic.

ROGER
 (turning to Eva)
 Well?

EVA
 (immediately)
 Char.

FISH MONGER
 Arctic char?

ROGER
 Arctic char.

FISH MONGER
 How much do you need?

EVA
 We're having a dinner party. Just
 like a small gathering, not a big
 laugh night...

ROGER
 Friends. New friends, old
 friends...

ROGER
 (also through his teeth)
 What?

EVA
 It's over-priced.

ROGER
 Shhhhhh.

EVA
 It's above market price, Roger.

The Monger hands Roger the wrapped fish. Roger interprets his eye contact as anger at having heard Eva's complaint. The Monger returns to work and Roger mutters to Eva in horror.

ROGER
 (through his teeth)
 He heard you.

EVA
 (also through her teeth)
 What?

ROGER
 Eva. He heard.

EVA
 Are you sure he heard?

ROGER
 Yes I am positive.

EVA
 What do we do?

The Monger turns around with the receipt.

FISH MONGER
 Here's your receipt.

ROGER
 (not skipping a beat)
 Do you want to come to our party tonight?

INT. EVA'S DINING AREA - LATER

The space looks beautiful. Party prep. Roger and Eva are decorating Chinese lanterns with calligraphy pens.

EVA
Okay, so arrivals.

ROGER
I think it's a classic no frills-
(He mimes opening a door)
"Hey."

EVA
I prefer laughing on the open.

ROGER
I thought it wasn't a big laugh
night.

EVA
It's not, it's
(demonstrating)
wrapping up the private laughter as
we open the door! Try it.

Roger mimes opening the door and laughing upon seeing the
imaginary guests. He nails it.

ROGER
You're right that's better.

CUT TO:

INT. EVA'S DINING AREA - MOMENTS LATER

Eva is in the corner facing a wall. Roger stands in the
opposite corner.

EVA
(in ascending volume)
So let me know at what point you
can hear my voice--

ROGER
Now.

EVA
Okay, so at that volume you can be
overheard across the room. So
careful.

CUT TO:

INT. EVA'S KITCHENETTE - MOMENTS LATER

Roger is chopping herbs as Eva delicately lays out vintage glass-wear. It's a peaceful moment.

ROGER

My main thing is like...the tension with Kara and Sasha is natural. It's just not socially acceptable at this age to throw yourself into a friendship with such childlike joy. And I think for me personally-
- Eva?

Roger turns to find that Eva has disappeared.

CUT TO:

INT. EVA'S BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

ROGER (O.S.)

Eva? Where are you?

EVA (O.S.)

Come in.

Roger enters and we turn to find Eva soaking in an ice-bath.

EVA (CONT'D)

Sorry, but if not now-- when?

CUT TO:

INT. EVA'S DINING AREA - LATER

The place looks immaculate. Roger wears a powder blue cashmere turtleneck, a gay Ann Margret. Eva looks like a cross between Rihanna and a matador. Her hair has been sculpted into a perfect, upright cone. Two curls are shellacked to the side of her face. It's insane. Roger places a Grecian vase on the table. Eva watches him like a hawk before gently correcting him.

EVA

Roger, Roger. Imperceptibly to the left.

He adjusts the vase. The guests are due at any moment.

EVA (CONT'D)

And now we wait.

ROGER
I wasn't expecting this, but. I'm excited.

EVA
I'm excited too!

ROGER
Also, I can't wait to see Kara.

EVA
And I, Sasha!

ROGER
It's just nice to know... we're ready.

EVA
We're ushering in a new era of peaceful integration. I feel relaxed.

ROGER
I'm almost nervous because I'm relaxed.

The doorbell rings, and Roger shrieks as if hearing a gunshot. They pause, regain composure and then begin to fake a laugh as they open the door.

EVA AND ROGER (CONT'D)
Hey!

Their friend BEAN stands in the doorway. She is one of the few people on Earth who doesn't judge their romanticism. They are immediately overcome by hosting mania and start clowning for her.

EVA (CONT'D)
Bean! Let me take your coat!

Eva grabs the coat and flips it around like a matador. Roger mimes having horns with his fingers and runs through it before interrupting himself--

ROGER
I'm kidding!

EVA
What do you want to drink?

BEAN
I'm going to have one glass of wine tonight.

ROGER
Uh-oh! Beanie is lettin' loose!

EVA
Red, white, or
(she crosses her eyes)
BLUE?

BEAN
Red, please.

Roger stands directly in front of Bean, blocking her. He pretends to pluck his eyeballs out like a cartoon character, juggles them and place them back in his sockets.

ROGER
Aaaugua!

Bean smiles.

EVA
Bean you're glowing!

ROGER
What's your secret?

BEAN
Um I got a new mattress and I'm
sleeping well for the first time
in-

The door bell rings.

EVA
Hold that thought, Bean.

ROGER
(to Eva)
Shall I?

EVA
I'll do it.

ROGER
I'm kind of a straight line to the
door, so I might as well.

EVA
It's my house.

ROGER
We agreed on decentralized hosting.

They go together, laughing upon opening the door- glancing back at Bean as though she has said something hilarious.

EVA
Bean, you're crazy!

ROGER (CONT'D)
You are a cut up!

They open the door to find AXEL and a LATINA WOMAN (40s). Like Eva, Axel is a child of artists who has many trades; Kendo fighting, poetry and most recently real estate. Upon seeing him they freeze into nervous smiles.

ROGER (CONT'D)
Hi, Axel!

EVA
And who's this?

ROGER
I'm wracking my brain for the RSVP list and nothing's coming up for a plus one...

EVA
It's crazy because I too am blank.

AXEL
Sorry, I just assumed I could bring my partner Loraine.

EVA
Loraine, I just hope you're okay being Char-less.

ROGER
Insofar as we only purchased 10 filets.

EVA
Of Arctic Char.

AXEL
You guys, I'm so sorry. I hadn't thought to RSVP.

ROGER
I just hope that in the future you'll give us a heads up before you derail the evening.

LORAINA
This place is stunning.

They turn their heads like dogs hearing a dog whistle.

EVA
Thank you so much.

LORAININE
Really, my God. The molding...

ROGER
Yes. Wow.

LORAININE
And it's modern without feeling
cold--

EVA
(almost screaming)
Exactly. Yes. Thank you.

LORAININE
Which is clearly a testament to how
you've designed the lighting.

They are speechless and in love with her.

EVA
You would be shocked by the
deafening silence of past guests.

LORAININE
Well, people have such bad taste
these days. I swear, if it's not
West Elm they can't even see it!

ROGER
AND she's funny?

EVA
Axel, this one's a keeper!

Axel is delighted.

CUT TO:

INT. EVA'S DINING AREA - LATER

The party is now populated with ethnically diverse, beautiful Los Angeles luminaries. Eva and Roger are orbiting the room silently monitoring their guests' conversations. Roger stands just behind their two friends QUESTION (a queer black dancer) and THEDA (a striking musician). Roger puts his ear up to them like he's listening through a wall, unseen.

THEDA

I was hesitant because I was like,
"Can I really date another Net
artist?" But she's so sweet, and in
therapy which no one is--

QUESTION

That's so great!

They notice Roger. He steps back and makes eye contact with Eva across the room. Roger cartoonishly smiles to indicate the positive tone of their conversation. Eva grins.

CUT TO:

INT. EVA'S DINING AREA - CONTINUOUS

Eva hiding behind a fan, approaches Bean, Axel and Loraine. She is listening to them as if eavesdropping through a wall.

AXEL

While I do identify in many ways as
sex positive, I grew up in a family
without boundaries. Without sexual
boundaries. I was exposed to a lot
of cruelty at a very early age.
They would line us up and hose us
down...

Eva backs away, shaken. Roger makes eye contact with her and mouths "WHAT?" She makes an exaggerated Tragedy Mask face. The doorbell rings.

CUT TO:

INT. DOORWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Roger looks through the peep hole and sees SASHA. Tall and sardonic, a 30 year-old Daria. She dominates Eva. They are scared of her. Roger takes a moment, then opens the door.

ROGER

Sasha!

SASHA

Hi.

Roger takes a bottle of whiskey from Sasha's hands like it's The Heart of the Ocean, channeling his discomfort into praising her choice of liquor.

ROGER
No way. Double barrel?

SASHA
Yeah, I guess.

ROGER
We are OBSESSED with--

Where's Eva? She is crouched behind a nearby fern with pruning sheers, hiding. She looks up as if just discovering that Sasha has arrived, dusts off her hands and runs over.

EVA
(avoiding eye contact)
I could not figure out what was missing from my bar, but it's this! Because I migraine I tend to stay away from brown liquor--

ROGER
Even though you haven't formally located a trigger!

EVA
I think it's sugar! Because--

Sasha leans forward and waves to Eva.

SASHA
Hello? Eva? You haven't acknowledged me.

EVA
Oh my god, of course I don't say hi to one of the most important people in my life... I mean 4th grade, 5th grade, 6th grade, 7th grade, 8th grade, 9th grade, 10th grade, 11th grade... You know I'll keep going!
(infringing on Sasha's personal space)
I'm an only child. And that can't not affect a person. And I have found that sometimes around my chosen family

Eva motions to Sasha, deliberately not motioning to Roger. He throws his hands up as if to say "She's not referring to me!"

EVA (CONT'D)
I shut down. It's almost too intimate.

ROGER

And as someone who HAS siblings I can safely say that what you two have is actually stronger than what I have with my own sister!

SASHA

You know it's legal for you guys to be friends, right?

Silence. Roger searches for a reason to exit. He spots KARA across the room, purse in the crook of her arm, unloading a six pack of Sofia Coppola champagne cans. He regresses to their former fag-hag dynamic.

ROGER

(calling off-screen)

Kara?! Bitch when did you get here? You're so skinny I didn't see you come in! As your friend I'm fearful for your health!

He exits. Eva is trapped with Sasha. She hunches her shoulders and regresses to the sullen sidekick she once was.

SASHA

(at her hair cone)

Wowwwwww. Bold choice, Eva.

EVA

Yeah, I don't know what I was thinking.

SASHA

Don't worry, none of this matters anyway. We're all on a flying rock that's about to go up in flames.

EVA

True that, she said with irony.

CUT TO:

INT. EVA'S DINING AREA - CONTINUOUS

Roger approaches Kara.

ROGER

Kara!!!!

KARA

Oh my god so you're NOT dead.

ROGER

No I guess I'm not... though I am dead after seeing your shoes! Where did you get them? Spill!

KARA

We'll dish later. I need you back in my purse where you belong! How have you been, you bitch?

ROGER

Well I--

KARA

You're so weird. I can't with you.

ROGER

I haven't said any-

KARA

I can't!

She bolts into the party and disappears. Where did she go? He sees Eva at the doorway, hunched like her former self.

ROGER

(rescuing her)

Eva!!!

CUT TO:

INT. EVA'S DOORWAY - CONTINUOUS

EVA

(to Sasha)

Put a pin in that.

CUT TO:

INT. EVA'S WALK-IN PANTRY - MOMENTS LATER

Eva pulls a chord, turning on the light. They stand among brightly colored boxes of her pantry staples; crackers, pâtés, jarred sardines, dried chillies and Hanukkah candles.

EVA

How are you?

ROGER

How are you?

ROGER (CONT'D)

I'm good.

EVA

I know that coming from the South, you "need" to be good, but let me just say; I'm not your pastor, I'm not your milkman, and it's okay for you to admit that maybe you're not good. Because I'll just say it: you seem nervous.

ROGER

I want to remind you that you do not have a license to practice therapy. However since you are a child of artists who has been in therapy since the age of four, I would think you'd recognize what you just did as classic textbook projection of your own nervousness about Sasha onto me.

EVA

I think it's good for you to express this hostility--

ROGER

I'm sorry.

EVA

Thank you for saying that and for not just leaving a string bean casserole on my doorstep. Let your words be the casserole.

ROGER

And while we're here. I would challenge you to let your words be more accessible because sometimes your use of pretentious language creates a Plexiglas barrier between us.

EVA

I can hear that. I'm proud that we can be honest. Even within the confines of a pantry we can actively transcend--

ROGER

I'm gonna stop you there because even that. "Within the confines of a pantry." Just say "in a pantry." I'm not Terry Gross and this isn't Fresh Air.

EVA

Wooooowww. I needed that. You're right, I'm clearly on edge because Sasha is here.

ROGER

I'm not Sasha! Negativity is not what fuels our friendship!

EVA

And I will remind you that I'm not Kara-- I'm comfortable having these conversations. I see you in three dimensions. You are more than a prop to me. And by the way. The party's a hit.

ROGER

I feel like people are freaking out.

EVA

I've heard a few people talking about how even though it's not a birthday party, it has the stakes and emotional specificity of maybe even a 30th...

ROGER

We're doing it.

EVA

Oh, we've done it.

ROGER

It's done.

EVA

(yelling so guests can hear)

FOUND IT!!!

Roger blindly grabs an item off the shelf, and they confidently leave the closet.

INT. EVA'S DINING AREA - MOMENTS LATER

Eva and Roger are seated at opposite heads of the table, glasses raised. All guests are seated including the Fish Monger. He came! Eva nods, giving Roger the stage. He opens his mouth and freezes--

ROGER

You know what? You go.

EVA

Well, first of all: wow. I look around this table, and I see a panoramic view of my life.

ROGER

Mine as well.

EVA

And YES the food is great, YES the place looks amazing, but without your eyes upon it, it would cease to exist.

ROGER

I now recall earlier today as we were prepping, we both remarked, "something's off"--

EVA

The hostess blues!

ROGER

The hostess blues, exactly. But I realize now, as I sit here, something was missing.

(nine month pregnant
pause)

Y'all.

Sasha rolls her eyes and takes a big sip of whiskey.

EVA

I am reminded of the Native Americans. And when they were met on the shores by Columbus, the bastard. And I often go back to this image, because as the imperialist ships made their way toward the island, the natives gathered on the shores; looking into the distant waters and seeing not a ship, but seeing--

(getting lost)

they didn't know what they saw, because they had never seen a ship. They had not yet been castrated by industrialism.

(MORE)

EVA (CONT'D)

So that's why when one of you doesn't acknowledge the lighting scheme, or the fact that I'm shoeless to promote social ease...

ROGER

The exquisite social balance of the guest list...

EVA

The playlist's ability to navigate different eras of soul without a heavy-handed eclecticism that alienates the guests...

ROGER

... That lack of acknowledgement isn't cruel. It's you all huddled on the shore, the image of the ship coming into focus, turning to each other, "Huh, what's that? This is new for me...." And...

ROGER AND EVA (CONT'D)

We're the ship.

The guests look on, silently. Kara mouths, "What?"

EVA (CONT'D)

And of course this moment is reminiscent of...

Eva looks to Roger for the answer. He opens his mouth and then immediately realizes he doesn't know.

EVA (CONT'D)

Thanksgiving.

ROGER

Thanksgiving. And specifically the first Thanksgiving. Which was a newfound cultural melting pot.

EVA

And essentially a peace ritual.

ROGER

Much like tonight, which is: Old friends. New friends.

EVA

And rare varieties of corn.

Pause.

EVA (CONT'D)

And with that! We raise our glasses
to friends old and new.

The guests are relieved to be concluding the toast, and then-

ROGER

And let me just say, Eva: thank you
for opening your home to us. Our
friendship is a home in which we
live. Alone.

EVA

Well thank you, and let me just say
that it wasn't a home until you
hung your hat here.

ROGER

There is such a clear channel
between us. I look out at our
future and I see no roadblocks.

They pause in private consideration as if no one else is
watching them.

ROGER (CONT'D)

What if one of us gets married?

EVA

I'm not worried. Because the
foundation is so strong that it
can't be shaken... Sure, there will
be an adjustment!

ROGER

But luckily we have the emotional
intelligence to work through that,
as we just proved moments ago in
the pantry.

EVA

Because, I'm sorry, but the bond
transcends institutionalized
intimacy.

ROGER

I find that when we're together
it's literally a PHYSICAL
difference.

EVA

The joy registers in my body.

ROGER

Yes. My shoulders drop a full inch.

EVA

(dropping into a buttery
tone we haven't heard)
And I go here. Vocally I relax.
This whole night I've been here,
whereas when I'm not with you
(now in a grating tone)
IT'S HERE.

ROGER

(holding onto an invisible
cord between them)
And it's here. And when your side
of the rope slackens, I feel that.

EVA

And there might be times when one
of us says, "I need slack."

ROGER

But let's be honest, the rope is
taut.

EVA

Oh it's taut.

They exhale.

ROGER

I love you.

EVA

I love you.

ROGER

It's not, "love ya!" It's, "I love
you."

EVA

And I you.

ROGER

To us.

Sasha and Kara are visibly hurt by the lovefest. Roger and
Eva notice. Eva motions to include the entire group.

EVA

To us!

ROGER
Sorry yeah-- all of us!

The group clinks their glasses, exhausted.

EVA
Mangia, mangia!

They begin to eat.

LORAININE
So did you two grow up together?

ROGER
What do you mean?

EVA
Yeah what do you mean because
physically I grew up in middle
school but I GREW UP quite recently
so...?

LORAININE
I guess I mean how long have you
known each other?

SASHA
Not long. Not long at all.

Kara chortles into her dinner.

EVA
(clocking Sasha)
Well I'm genuinely confused by the
question, because like... are you
talking hours? Like there are
people who I've "known for years"
but who I've spent maybe... 6 hours
with? So--

ROGER
Right, it's three clinical catch-
ups a year over coffee. Also how do
you measure something that's---

EVA
Eternal and as we've established
kind of beyond contemporary,
straight, concepts of time--

ROGER
So, gun to my head-- I don't know.

EVA

It's unclear. It is unclear.

KARA

They met last year.

Roger and Eva, panicked, pretend not to hear this. Bean sweetly helps them move past what she knows is a sensitive topic for them.

BEAN

This fish is delicious.

ROGER

It's arctic char.

EVA

Which, we wouldn't be having if it weren't for...

(pointing to the Fish Monger)

And I never got your name.

FISH MONGER

Judd.

ROGER

Judd, from where does Arctic Char hail?

FISH MONGER

(dryly)

Arctic regions. I'm not a part of that process, really. I show up and the fish has already been transferred, so it's a matter of just unloading fish and getting it ready for sale. The fish aren't separated by region they're separated more by size which ranges from a small fish to medium, all the way to large.

It's so boring. Eva notices QUESTION yawning and gets Roger's attention. Roger shoots Eva a glance as if to say, "I got this." He takes the vase from the table and smashes it on the ground; a perfect diversion.

ROGER

Oh my God!

A chorus of "careful / nobody move, etc." Eva looks at Roger and mouths, "Thank you."

CUT TO:

INT. EVA'S DINING AREA - LATER THAT EVENING

The party is winding down beautifully. THEDA is playing piano and singing. Everyone is in small groups, tipsy and cozy. Eva and Roger do damage control with QUESTION.

ROGER

We saw you yawn and honestly, we're with you.

EVA

We did not know him before today. Had we maybe known him longer, we would not have given him the floor.

ROGER

He works with his hands; he's not a natural orator.

Eva makes brief eye-contact with the Fish Monger across the room. Her face drops.

EVA

(through her teeth)
Hey Roger? No easy way to say this, but I'll also just say it... he heard.

Roger hangs his head. (The Fish Monger did not hear them)

CUT TO:

INT. EVA'S DINING AREA - MOMENTS LATER

Eva is boldly performing the Spanish coffee pour from earlier. From across the room Roger beams with pride. We hear a shriek. It's Eva. She has poured scalding coffee on her shoeless foot.

CUT TO:

INT. EVA'S NOOK - MOMENTS LATER

Roger tends to Eva's foot as she lays across a velvet fainting couch in an area by the stairwell.

EVA
Even as I lay here demobilized I
wonder... did the toast go too far?

ROGER
Kara did look crestfallen.

EVA
Sasha barely touched her Char.

Kara hollers from across the room:

KARA
Do you have half-and-half?

ROGER
Oh! It's downstairs, one sec.

KARA
I'll get it.

Eva hobbles over, physically blocking her from moving. Sasha swoops in.

EVA
Nonsense! Stay put, you are a VIP,
you do NOT fetch your own cream!

SASHA
(she knows why Eva is
deflecting)
Let her go downstairs, Eva. You've
been such a selfless housewife all
night. Give yourself a break.

EVA
(deer in headlights)
It's no trouble.

Eva slips away out of sight.

CUT TO:

INT. EVA'S HOUSE DOWNSTAIRS - MOMENTS LATER

Eva creeps down the staircase and slips past a dining room where a couple is enjoying a candlelit dinner. They are eccentric and Bohemian.

WOMAN
(sweetly)
Hi, honey.

Eva stomps past them. These are her parents. She lives at home. We stay on them eating dinner as we hear Eva slamming around in the refrigerator, groaning. She re-enters the frame holding a carton of cream and stomps back up the stairs.

CUT TO:

INT. EVA'S DOORWAY - LATER

Eva and Roger stand with a box of party favors. Kara begins to leave.

EVA
Don't forget your handcrafted
lantern!
(whispers to Roger)
Kara.

Roger pulls out a paper lantern with the name "Kara" painted on it in water-colored calligraphy and hands it to Eva who hands it to Kara.

KARA
I'm obsessed. P.S. Roger, we are
splitting a car back to our side of
town whether you like it or not.

ROGER
Hahaha that's so fierce, but I'm
actually spending the night here.

KARA
Where do you sleep?

ROGER
In Eva's bed.

KARA
Okay you two are insane. I can't--

She slips into the night. Axel and Loraine come to the door.

EVA
(to Roger)
Axel.

Roger hands a lantern to Eva, who hands it to Axel.

EVA (CONT'D)
Loraine, since we didn't know you
were coming, we do not have a
lantern for you.

ROGER

If this isn't motivation to RSVP in the future I don't know what is!

EVA

Really though, jokes aside, you were the MVP of the night.

LORAINNE

Awww, I'm so honored. You guys are so great this party was beautiful.

They throw their arms up in disbelief at her social grace. They leave. Sasha approaches. Roger and Eva brace themselves.

SASHA

Well thanks, you two.

EVA

(to Roger, voice cracking)
Sasha.

ROGER

Of course, Sasha.

Roger hands the final lantern to Eva, who presents it to Sasha.

SASHA

Wow, all this for a dinner party. I can't wait to see what your wedding is like.

Roger erupts in manic laughter.

SASHA (CONT'D)

You don't have to fake laugh.

Silence. Eva and Roger are stunned and hurt.

EVA

It's not fake. It's a thoughtfully rehearsed gesture of appreciation that has become involuntary.

The three linger in tense silence in the doorway.

SASHA

Okay, bye.

EVA

Thank you for coming.

Eva closes the door. Roger is rattled.

EVA (CONT'D)
(comforting Roger)
Time for bed.

INT. EVA'S BEDROOM - LATER

Roger and Eva are back in their pajamas. Eva rubs a cream onto her hands and neck. Roger is tucked in. They are lost in thought. Eva turns the light off and climbs into bed. Finally-

EVA
That was heaven.

ROGER
Heaven! That was heaven. We're co-hosts.

EVA
And by the way, it's not "co-hosting" it's "cohost-ing."

ROGER
Ugh exactly!!! It's not individuals hosting together. It's people who have already come together, hosting.

EVA
I just feel like we're entering a new era.

ROGER
Eva, I feel it too. And here's the thing--

Roger turns to find Eva has passed out with her mouth open, snoring. He is heartbroken to be alone for a few seconds before shrugging his shoulders and closing his eyes. All the light in the room dims except for a perfect circle around their sleeping faces.

THE END.