

# **NIGHT SCHOOL**

By

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COLD OPEN

INT. CLASSROOM - NIGHT

A HIGH SCHOOL CLASSROOM FULL OF DESKS THAT ARE MOSTLY EMPTY. WE SEE **FIVE ADULTS** SCATTERED RANDOMLY THROUGHOUT THE CLASS WAITING FOR THE TEACHER. **MACK (40, BIG, PERPETUALLY POSITIVE GOOD OL' BOY)** IS SNORING ON A TABLE IN THE BACK OF THE ROOM WITH A HEATING PAD ON HIS LOWER BACK. **THERESA (40, SOCCER MOM, SHELTERED, NAIVE)** TYPES ON A LAPTOP BESIDE **MILA (20, EMO, SARDONIC, HEAVY MAKE-UP, BLUE STREAKS IN HER HAIR)**.

MILA

Do not say you're forty. You gotta say you're thirty. Even better, dirty thirty.

THERESA

But I'm not thirty. And I'm not dirty.

MILA

But it's a dating profile. You don't write the truth. You write what you think the other person wants. And let's be honest... no one wants forty.

THERESA

But if I say I'm thirty, I'll attract younger guys. I want to attract a man who's forty.

MILA

Oh. Well, then you gotta say you're nineteen.

**JAYLEN (30'S, AFRICAN-AMERICAN, COOL, CONFIDENT, A BIT OUT THERE)** IS TEXTING ON HIS PHONE BESIDE **LUIS (40, MEXICAN, DRY, CYNICAL)**, WHO WEARS A PEST CONTROL UNIFORM WITH A NAME TAG.

LUIS

And the spiders down there are no joke, bro! People talk about, "We saw a spider the size of a quarter." In Mexico the spiders start out the size of a quarter and grow into the size of a Quarter Pounder! (BEAT) And do not get me started on the heat.

JAYLEN

(TEXTING) Dude, I didn't even want you to get started on the spiders.

**TEDDY (30'S, KIND-HEARTED HUSTLER) ENTERS. HE'S HOLDING A BAG OF TACOS AND A BOX OF DONUTS. HE TOSSES JAYLEN A GATORADE AND MILA A BAG OF CHEETOS. HE LOOKS AROUND FOR A SECOND.**

TEDDY

Yo. Where is Mrs. Winslow?

JAYLEN

MILA

She's late.

Not here yet.

TEDDY

I was picking up the tacos she loves and I saw the "hot" sign on at Krispy Kreme. I've noticed that when I get Mrs. Winslow's sugar up, she gets sleepy and ends class early.

JAYLEN

LUIS

My dude.

You're a genius.

HE PUTS THE FOOD ON THE TEACHER'S DESK AND DIALS HIS PHONE.

TEDDY

When Mack wakes up, tell him I got him some Tiger Balm for his lower back. But I'm not applying it this time! (ON PHONE) Baby, it's me. I'm getting out of my sales meeting early tonight. Maybe we can (CLOCKS THEM LISTENING) do that thing I texted you about earlier. (BEAT) Mm-hmm. Love you. (HANGS UP) It's not what you think.

LUIS

We think it's sexual intercourse.

TEDDY

Then it is what you think. Only freakier. Yet poetic.

IN WALKS AN AFRICAN-AMERICAN WOMAN IN HER 30'S. THIS IS CARRIE DAWES (COOL, CONFIDENT, NO NONSENSE).

CARRIE

Hello, everyone. I'm Ms. Dawes. But you can call me Carrie.

THERESA

Umm... I think you might be in the wrong class.

CARRIE

This is Mrs. Winslow's night school class, right?

THERESA

Yes.

CARRIE

Then I'm in the right place.

LUIS

Where's Mrs. Winslow?

CARRIE

They didn't tell you guys? (BEAT) Mrs.  
Winslow's dead.

THE CLASS IS SHOCKED.

MILA

Dead? Like... dead dead?

LUIS

Like... no longer alive?

TEDDY

Wait, so, like... dead.

CARRIE

Yes. Dead dead, no longer alive and  
dead. That's what I meant by dead.

THERESA

Oh, my god. How did she die?

CARRIE

Heart attack. Apparently, she had  
serious health issues. High  
cholesterol, high blood pressure. She  
was on a very restrictive diet.

THEY ALL LOOK AT TEDDY WHO SHRUGS GUILTILY.

THERESA

Poor Mrs. Winslow.

CARRIE

It is a shame. Anyway, I'm your new teacher and we're going to push on.

CARRIE NOTICES THE BAGS OF FOOD ON HER DESK.

CARRIE (CONT'D)

Whose is this?

TEDDY

Oh, that's actually yours. Tacos from the most killer food truck in Atlanta and some hot Krispy Kremes. It was a little thing I had going on with Mrs. Winslow, you know? Kind of a mutual back-scratching situation.

CARRIE

Oh, how thoughtful! Mexican food is my jam. And I love Krispy Kremes. (THEN)  
What I don't love is being hustled.  
So, you can keep your blood tacos and sit your ass down.

TEDDY'S SMILE FADES AS HE TAKES HIS SEAT.

CARRIE (CONT'D)

(RE: MACK) Somebody wake up Big Lunch back there. Class is in session.

THEY ALL SHARE A LOOK. THIS ISN'T GOOD.

**END COLD OPEN**

**SCENE A****INT. CLASSROOM - CONTINUOUS**

CARRIE LEANS AGAINST HER DESK AND ADDRESSES THE CLASS.

CARRIE

So, I just moved to Atlanta from Baltimore and I teach ninth grade here at Piedmont High in the afternoons. I took on night school to make a little extra money to afford life's luxury items: eating food and living indoors. Amiright? Let's go around the room, introduce yourselves and tell me why you're here. (TO MACK) Start us off.

MACK RISES AND SMILES THROUGHOUT THE FOLLOWING.

MACK

Hi. I'm Mack. I'm from the great state of Georgia. I love God, barbecue, college football and beer. Not in that order. I dropped out of high school because I got a great job with a moving company. I've been lifting heavy things ten hours a day for twenty years. I'm very tired and (LAUGHS) in quite a bit of pain. Getting a diploma's gonna help me work smarter not harder. (LOUD) Go Dawgs!

CARRIE

It sounds like you've had it hard,  
Mack. Let's get you that diploma.

LUIS

If you think he's had it hard, get  
ready to have your mind blown.

THE CLASS ALL SIGH AND ROLL THEIR EYES: "HERE WE GO."

LUIS (CONT'D)

I'm Luis Flores. I am from Mexico. The  
real deal Mexico, too. Not no Cabo-San-  
Lucas-Sammy-Hagar-let's-buy-a-magnet-  
for-the-fridge Mexico. I came across  
the border illegally as a teenager.  
Nine days in a shipping container. And  
with all due respect, Mack's life  
moving boxes around sounds like a day  
at the beach compared to mine.

TEDDY

It's not a competition, dude.

LUIS

I agree. There's no competition about  
who's had it hardest. It's me. Period.

CARRIE

Why are you attending night school?

LUIS

My sixteen-year-old son Hector told me  
he wants to drop out and hang drywall.

(MORE)



LUIS (CONT'D)

I don't want him to have the hard life I've had. I told him if he gets his diploma, I'll go back and get mine.

CARRIE

Good for you. (TO THERESA) Sister?

THERESA

Hi, I'm Theresa. I'm forty. I'm single for the first time in my adult life. And that's okay. (LAUGHS, THEN) I'm blessed. I dropped out in eleventh grade when I got pregnant. Randy and I got married a month later and had two more kids. I recently realized that Randy's a domineering jackass who always gets his way and so I kicked him out. (LAUGHS TOO HARD) And now I'm alone. (BEAT) I'm blessed. I want to get my diploma so I can get a job, stand on my own two legs, and not have to ask Randy for money to buy friggin' tampons! (THEN) Really...I'm blessed.

CARRIE

You seem it. (TO JAYLEN) Thug Life.

JAYLEN

What up? Jaylen Watkins. I have a drop of Cherokee blood in me and I consider myself woke. I know what's what.

(MORE)

JAYLEN (CONT'D)

The real real that no one talks about. I mean, everybody goes on about the one-percenters, right? But, what about the three-point-five percenters that control the one-percenters? Hmm? And y'all gonna tell me the Illuminati didn't play a significant role in the downward spiral of the Quizno's franchise? Wake up, people.

CARRIE

Why didn't you finish high school?

JAYLEN

I was incarcerated. Don't ask. It's in my past. I turned my life around when I met my wife Trina. My Soulmate. My Queen. My Rib. My Cleopatra. I recently lost my job at a bottling plant and my Queen believes I'm destined for greater things. What else? I'm double-jointed. I can beatbox. I love a good rom-com--

CARRIE

We got you, Jay. (TO MILA) Baby girl?

MILA

(OVER IT) Whatever. I'm Mila. I'm nineteen, I got kicked out of school for selling molly.

(MORE)

MILA (CONT'D)

My dad said I had to get my diploma or he'd cut me off which is total BS because he's stupid rich, so whatever.

CARRIE

Ray of sunshine. Okay, let's take out our world history textbooks and begin--

TEDDY

Hold up. You didn't get my story.

CARRIE

Oh, I got your story the moment you tried to buy me with cheap-ass tacos. Teddy's what we call a hustler, class. Can you all say hustler?

ALL

Hustler.

TEDDY

Don't actually say it! (RISES) My name's Teddy Walker and I'm not a hustler. I am a go-getter. I dropped out of school because I was pumped to get out into the real world. I, too, found my soulmate. A sophisticated goddess named Lisa. We're looking at houses together. I currently make bank selling high-end barbecues, but my boss wants to sell the company to some Asian website.

(MORE)

TEDDY (CONT'D)

So, I got about a year before my job is (MIMES THROAT SLIT). My buddy offered me a job in marketing with a great salary and room to grow, but I need my diploma to get it. So...

CARRIE

Mmh-hmm. And how does your soulmate feel about you going to night school?

TEDDY

(IN A HIGH-PITCHED VOICE) Lisa? Yeah, no. She's good. She's very supportive.

CARRIE SMILES. THE CLASS STARTS LAUGHING.

JAYLEN

He ain't told her. He calls her every night talking about being in a "sales meeting." He never even told her he dropped out. She ain't his soulmate.

TEDDY

I told you, Jay. Stop saying that!

JAYLEN

You can't lie to your soulmate, fool. It's scientifically impossible!

JAYLEN AND TEDDY ARGUE FOR A BEAT.

CARRIE

Alright! That's enough. Let's all open our world history text books.

LUIS

Uhh... Mrs. Winslow didn't really use textbooks to teach.

MACK

Yeah. She said that this class was based on an honor system.

THERESA

She said we're responsible for reading the material and taking the tests on our own. And grading them on our own.

TEDDY

She was a progressive educator. Her philosophy was "empower the student!"

CARRIE

Yeah, well, my philosophy's "push the student to realize their potential. If they don't, kick'em in the ass!" Now, in order for me to do that, I need to gauge your education levels. So, you're all going to take an assessment test right now.

THE CLASS MOANS LOUDLY. CARRIE LAUGHS.

CARRIE (CONT'D)

Ooh, I love that sound. It's the main reason I became a teacher!

THEY ALL SIGH AS CARRIE HANDS OUT SCAN-TRON TESTS.

CUT TO:

**SCENE B****INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - LATER**

THERESA SITS ON A BENCH IN THE MAIN LOBBY OF THE SCHOOL OUTSIDE CARRIE'S CLASSROOM. SHE'S BREATHING HEAVILY WITH HER EYES CLOSED. TEDDY WALKS BACK FROM THE BATHROOM AND SEES HER.

TEDDY

Hey, T. You alright?

THERESA

(PULLS HERSELF TOGETHER) Me? Yeah. I'm fine. I'm... good. (BEAT) I'm blessed.

TEDDY

I didn't realize that "blessed" and "about to puke" looked so similar. (THEN) Seriously. What's going on?

THERESA

(SIGHS) I don't know if I can do this.

TEDDY

Yeah, I know what you mean. That assessment test kicked my ass.

THERESA

Not the test! My life. Being on my own. Not having Randy there to take care of everything. It's scary. You know he still comes to the house every day? He lets himself in with his key, eats my food, watches my TV!

TEDDY

Ooh, I bet you go *Real Housewives* on him, don't you?

THERESA

I made him brownies last night.

TEDDY

Well, tell him you want that key back!

THERESA

I should! But I can't. Because as much as I hate him being there, I'm even more frightened of what it's going to be like when he's not. I'll truly be alone. I don't think I can do this.

TEDDY

Let me tell you something. When I saw Lisa for the first time, sitting at the bar, Birkin Bag, Louboutins, finer than any woman I'd ever seen, I thought, "You can't talk to that girl. She's way out of your league!"

THERESA

I've seen her picture. She really is.

TEDDY

Then I remembered a famous quote I once read. Whether you think you can or you think you can't, you're right. I told myself, "I think I can."

(MORE)

TEDDY (CONT'D)

I walked up to her, made her laugh,  
got her digits and fell in love.

THERESA

Wow. Where did you read that quote?

TEDDY

Snapple cap. I also learned that the  
lollipop was invented in Connecticut  
and that a strawberry's not really a  
berry. But those didn't help me nab my  
soulmate. (BEAT) You got this, T. You  
just gotta think you can.

THERESA

(BEAT) Why don't you tell Lisa the  
truth? About coming to night school?

TEDDY

Lisa's not the type of girl to mess  
with a dummy who dropped out. No.  
She's got high standards. And she  
should. She deserves the best. And  
once I get this diploma and that new  
job, I'll be the man she deserves.

THERESA TAKES THIS IN AS MILA POPS HER HEAD OUT OF THE CLASS.

MILA

Yo. She's done grading our tests.  
Surprise... it's not pretty.

ON TEDDY AND THERESA'S FACES WE...

CUT TO:



SCENE CINT. CLASSROOM - MOMENTS LATER

CARRIE STARES AT THE CLASS, BEWILDERED. SHE EXHALES.

CARRIE

Wow. Well, Mila did pretty well. Jay,  
you wrote C for every single answer.

JAYLEN

Yeah, I don't play with them Scan-Tron  
sheets. That's how the government gets  
info out of you. Not today, Uncle Sam.

CARRIE

Teddy's work on these math problems  
looks like damn hieroglyphics.  
Theresa, you didn't even finish.

THERESA

I was afraid to get a wrong answer.

LUIS

I'd like to say in my defense that my  
test score may have been adversely  
impacted by the language barrier.

CARRIE

Yeah, I can tell you really struggle  
with English, Luis. And Mack--

MACK

I know. I fell asleep. Those questions about the Louisiana Purchase were like a lullaby and a warm glass of milk.

CARRIE

Well, we're starting over today.

TEDDY

Starting over? We've been here two months! My job's on death row and my girl sends me Zillow links more often than my grandma sends me prayer chains. I need that diploma ASAP!

SHE COLLECTS HER THINGS AND CROSSES TO THE DOOR.

CARRIE

You'll get your diploma when you do the work. Before Monday I want you to read the first five chapters in your world history textbooks and answer the twenty questions on Mesopotamia.

(THEN) Welcome to night school.

SHE EXITS. THEY ALL SIGH AND SHAKE THEIR HEADS.

TEDDY

Okay, we gotta do something about her.

LUIS

(DRYLY) Maybe you could kill her like you killed Mrs. Winslow.

**END ACT ONE**

**ACT TWO**

**SCENE D**

**INT. CLASSROOM - NIGHT**

OUR SIX STUDENTS SIT LISTENING AS CARRIE TEACHES WITH A BIOLOGY LESSON ON THE BOARD. TEDDY STRUGGLES TO FOCUS.

CARRIE

So, to recap, anything that has an orderly structure, produces offspring, grows and develops and adjusts to changes in its environment is an...

ALL BUT TEDDY

Organism.

TEDDY

(A BEAT LATE) Orgasm... ism. Organism.

CARRIE

Teddy, when I sat you up front and said it might help you focus, I meant focus on the lesson... not orgasms.

THE CLASS LAUGHS AS THE BELL RINGS. CARRIE QUICKLY PACKS UP HER THINGS.

CARRIE (CONT'D)

Okay, for next class: remember to read the next five chapters in world history. And as a bonus, I'd like you to write a short essay on the aspect of Mesopotamian society that would impact your life the most. I gotta run. I'm buying a bed frame from a dude off Craigslist. So, if I don't show up on Thursday, just know that trying to save a few bucks got your girl killed behind a Burger King.

SHE EXITS. THE CLASS ALL SIGH. TEDDY RISES.

TEDDY

Five chapters? Plus an essay?! Night school ain't supposed to have homework! And we won't need to know any of this stuff out in the real world. Seriously, will any of us ever need to answer a question about Mesopotamia?

MACK

I want to say no, but isn't that a question about Mesopotamia?

TEDDY

Night school's a formality, man. You don't actually have to do it!

JAYLEN

It's like when you agree to the terms and conditions of Apple music. You don't read it. They know you don't read it, but everyone acts like it's all cool!

TEDDY

Exactly! That's what Mrs. Winslow understood!

LUIS

Then you shouldn't have been so reckless with her health.

THERESA

Yeah, it's hard, but what are we going to do? We have to do what Carrie says.

TEDDY

Well, I was thinking. Maybe we could figure out a way to ease her up a bit.

JAYLEN

How? She ain't feeling your tacos, T.

TEDDY

When I'm selling to a tough customer, all I need to know is what they need. Then I use it to my advantage. Carrie needs money, right? Hell, as we speak she's buying furniture next to a dumpster full of day-old Whoppers.

MACK

(EXCITED) We could bribe her!

LUIS

We don't have money.

MACK

(BUMMED) We can't bribe her.

TEDDY

We don't have money, but the school does. I did some research online. You know why Mrs. Winslow let everyone slide? Because the district offers a financial bonus to a teacher if 100% of the class graduates.

MILA

She needs us to pass as much as we do.

TEDDY

Exactly. But what if we were unteachable? I mean, what if we acted dumb? Asked lots of questions? Made it hard for her to get through the lessons? She might see that the best move is to let us slide.

THERESA

I don't know, Teddy.

TEDDY

Theresa, you think you'll have the time to write bonus essays?

(MORE)

TEDDY (CONT'D)

Taking care of three kids? Randy's mooching ass popping in every night?

THERESA

He was there 'til midnight last night watching UFC fights. I wanted to act out on him what was happening on the screen. Instead I made pizza rolls.

TEDDY

Luis, in pest control you work 'round the clock. Cockroaches don't kindly wait for you to finish your homework.

LUIS

They're actually the least considerate arthropod on the planet.

TEDDY

Jay, you said it's your queen's birthday this week. You're gonna be up for doing Carrie's extra work?

JAYLEN

I'll be too busy "getting busy" to write about no damn Mesopotamians.

TEDDY

Exactly! Mack, you can barely stay awake as it is. And Mila--

MILA

You don't have to sell me. I got nothing going on. I'm in.

TEDDY

All I'm saying is we make her think we might not have what it takes. We act dumb, she pushes us along. We get to live our lives, get our diplomas and she gets her money. It's a win-win.

THEY ALL CONSIDER IT FOR A BEAT. IT'S WORTH A SHOT.

MACK

Acting dumb? I'm not sure I can pull it off. I'm not a very good actor.

ALL

(BEAT) I think you'll be fine, buddy./Don't worry./You got this.

CUT TO:



**SCENE E****INT. CLASSROOM - NIGHT**

CARRIE STANDS AT THE BOARD, MID-LESSON. THERE ARE GEOMETRIC SHAPES DRAWN UNDER THE WORDS *BASIC GEOMETRY*.

CARRIE

Geometry is a branch of mathematics concerned with shape, size, relative position of figures and properties of space. Now, we'll be covering every shape from a circle to a rhombus.

JAYLEN

Hold up. I thought a rhombus was one of them robot vacuums.

TEDDY

No, man. Rhombus was one of Hitler's boys. Hitler, Rhombus, Gerbils--

CARRIE

Guys! A rhombus is a shape. Focus. (THEN) We will be discussing triangles, rectangles, trapezoids--

THERESA

Isn't a trapezoid a muscle in your back?

MILA

No, you're thinking of a deltoid.

LUIS

Ooh, does anyone have an Altoid?

CARRIE

Yo! Y'all gonna make me start chucking erasers up in here. (THEN) We'll begin with calculating the circumference of a circle. The formula is C equals two times pi times the radius. Or pi times the diameter as it's twice the radius.

TEDDY

Hold up. Two radiuses is one diameter? Okay. That's just confusing.

CARRIE

Well, it's only because sometimes--

LUIS

Yeah, why not just use two radiuses? Like, why make up a whole other word?

CARRIE

Because you sometimes need to--

MACK

Yeah. And what's a circle?

CARRIE

(SNAPS) Dammit! Whoever said there are no dumb questions was a whole ass lie!

TEDDY

We're sorry! This is hard for us. We haven't done this stuff in years.

THEY ALL NOD EARNESTLY.

MILA

Yeah, we're trying, Carrie. Really.

JAYLEN

I just think some of this might be beyond what we're capable of.

MACK

(EARNESTLY) Yeah, and if all of us don't pass this class, the district won't give you that financial bonus.

CARRIE SHOOTS MACK A LOOK. THE CLASS FREEZES UP. MACK PANICS.

MACK (CONT'D)

I mean... what's a bonus?

CARRIE

(LAUGHS) Y'all think you can play me?

MACK

I told you guys I can't pull off dumb!

CARRIE

Ohh! I get it. You can't buy me like Mrs. Winslow so y'all gonna try to frustrate me into letting you coast!

TEDDY

Look, Carrie. It's just, we all have busy lives. And you need the money. Why not just help each other out?

CARRIE

(LAUGHS) You seriously think I do this for money, Teddy?

(MORE)

CARRIE (CONT'D)

No one becomes a public school teacher for the ballin' lifestyle! You really want to know why I teach night school? My mother worked two jobs, raised three kids and went to school at night to get her diploma so she could become a nurse. And she busted her ass. When she showed up to night school, she didn't bring donuts to hustle her teacher, Teddy. My mom walked into class with a No. 2 pencil in her hand and said, "I'm ready to do the work."

TEDDY

But Carrie, we'll never need to know any of this stuff in the real world!

CARRIE

Education's not about that! It's about discipline, perseverance and building character. Which clearly none of you are interested in. I should boot your lazy asses out of my class right now!

THE CLASS LOOKS PANICKED A BIT. THEY PROTEST.

TEDDY

Hold up. It's not their fault. It was my idea. I convinced them to do it.

CARRIE

Oh, so you hustled them too.

TEDDY

You know, I don't know what I ever did  
to you to make you not like me.

CARRIE

You tried to bribe me the moment we  
met.

TEDDY

(BEAT) Other than that.

CARRIE

I know you, Teddy. I grew up with guys  
like you. You'll always find the  
angle. You'll always take the short  
cut. You'll never do the work.

THIS STINGS TEDDY, BUT HE HIDES IT.

TEDDY

You don't know me, Carrie. And I don't  
have to stand here and take this.

CARRIE

Don't let the doorknob hit'ya where  
the good lord split'ya!

TEDDY BLOWS AIR THROUGH HIS TEETH DISMISSIVELY. CARRIE DOES  
THE SAME. HE DOES IT BIGGER. SHE GOES EVEN BIGGER. THIS GOES  
ON FOR A WHILE UNTIL TEDDY DOES ONE SO BIG HE RUNS OUT OF  
BREATH, GETS LIGHTHEADED AND STEADIES HIMSELF AGAINST A DESK.

CARRIE (CONT'D)

Are you done? I have a class to teach.

TEDDY RISES, GATHERS HIS STUFF QUICKLY AND CROSSES. AT THE  
DOOR HE TURNS TO CARRIE AND DOES ONE MORE BREATH. THEN EXITS.  
THE CLASS ALL SHARE A DISAPPOINTED LOOK.

CUT TO:

SCENE HINT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

TEDDY STEPS INTO THE HALL AND PAUSES FOR A SECOND. HE SIGHS.  
AFTER A BEAT THERESA STEPS OUT.

THERESA

Teddy. Wait. Don't go.

TEDDY

It's cool, T. This class isn't for me.

THERESA

What about your diploma? You need it  
to get that job.

TEDDY

Look, I'm not... smart. Okay? I've  
known that since high school. I tell  
people I dropped out because I was a  
go-getter, but the truth is I couldn't  
keep up. I'm just dumb. That's why I  
had to hustle. I always figure out a  
way. My way. I'll find a job that pays  
more money and I'll become the man  
that Lisa deserves. (BEAT) Whether you  
think you can or you think you can't,  
you're right. See? All the education I  
need can be found under a Snapple cap.  
(LAUGHS) You be good, Theresa.

HE HUGS HER AND CROSSES. THERESA LINGERS.

THERESA

Teddy. Tell Lisa the truth. That you  
dropped out of high school. She won't  
care. You don't need money to be the  
man she deserves. You're already him.

TEDDY SMILES AND EXITS. THERESA HEADS BACK INTO CLASS.

DISSOLVE TO:

SCENE JINT. TEDDY'S PLACE - LATER

A NICE APARTMENT. **LISA (30'S, SOPHISTICATED, PRETTY AND, LET'S BE HONEST, A LITTLE OUT OF TEDDY'S LEAGUE)** SITS ON THE SOFA WITH HER LAPTOP. TEDDY ENTERS, A BIT DOWN.

LISA

Hi, baby. Sales meeting got out early?

TEDDY

Yeah. Boss wasn't feeling it tonight.

LISA

Okay. So, I was thinking. I know it's a little more expensive, but what do you think about a house with a pool?

TEDDY

Pool? I don't know. When I was a kid everyone used kids who had pools. Pretended to be their friend on hot days and then threw rocks at them in the winter. No. No pool. I want to know my friends like me for me!

LISA

(LAUGHS) I had a pool all through high school. No one ever used me!

TEDDY

(TEASING) Are you sure? Hmm? What, you think they were all interested in your personality? Your looks? Hate to break it to you, but you were being played.

(MORE)



TEDDY (CONT'D)

Hell, I only asked you out because I was hoping you had a pool.

LISA

(LAUGHS) Well, I didn't care if you had a pool. I simply fell for you.

SHE KISSES HIM AND GOES BACK TO HER COMPUTER. SHE REALLY LOVES HIM. TEDDY STARES AT HER PENSIVELY FOR A BEAT.

TEDDY

It's funny you bring up high school. Did I ever tell you about my high school? (BEAT) It's actually something I've been wanting to talk to you about. You see, in my senior year I--

LISA

Look at this! Three-bed, two-bath, pool, hot tub, walk-in closet! I know it's a little out of our price range, but you're killing it at the store and next year you're due for another raise! We can grow old in a place like this, baby! What do you think?

SHE LOOKS AT HIM HOPEFULLY.

TEDDY

(BEAT) I think you deserve the best.

LISA SQUEALS AND HUGS HIM. TEDDY LOOKS BROKEN.

**END OF ACT TWO**

**ACT THREE**

**SCENE K**

**INT. THERESA'S KITCHEN - LATE NIGHT**

THERESA SITS ALONE IN HER KITCHEN STUDYING.

RANDY (O.C.)

Theresa, I need an iced tea! Theresa?!

THERESA SIGHS. **RANDY (40, BLUE-COLLAR OAF)** ENTERS, CROSSES TO THE FRIDGE AND EMERGES WITH A SNAPPLE.

RANDY (CONT'D)

(ATTITUDE) I guess I'll get it myself.

HE OPENS THE SNAPPLE, LAYS THE CAP ON THE TABLE AND STARTS CHUGGING IT. THERESA PICKS UP THE CAP AND SMILES.

RANDY (CONT'D)

(BELCHES, THEN) We're out of Pringles.

THERESA

(READS) Beavers can hold their breath for forty-five minutes. (TO HERSELF) That's nothing. I've been holding my breath for twenty-two years.

RANDY

What are you talking about?

THERESA

(DEEP BREATH) I want my key back.

RANDY

What key?

THERESA

My key. The one you use to come into  
my house without asking permission.

RANDY

Don't be stupid. This is my house.

THERESA

No. It's mine. I clean it, I raise our  
kids in it and I kicked you out of it.

RANDY

(SIGHS) This is because I didn't say  
"excuse me" after I burped, isn't it?

THERESA

(EXTENDS HER HAND) Randy, my key.

RANDY

(SOFTLY) Baby. This is only temporary.  
We're in a rough patch, but it's all  
gonna be fine. (THEN) Theresa, you  
know you can't do this on your own.

THERESA

(BEAT) I think I can.

HE SIGHS AND TAKES HIS KEY OFF OF HIS RING AND STORMS OUT.  
THERESA LOOKS AT THE KEY AND SMILES.

CUT TO:

SCENE 1

INT. CLASSROOM - NIGHT

CARRIE IS MID-LESSON. THE CLASS LOOKS A LITTLE DOWN.

CARRIE

Now, because it was the first place where complex urban centers grew, the area between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers is commonly referred to as...

ALL

(HALF-HEARTEDLY) The cradle of civilization.

CARRIE

(SIGHS) Is there a carbon monoxide leak in here? Y'all mopey bastards are gonna make a sister jump out a window!

THERESA

Sorry, Carrie. We miss Teddy. It's just not the same without him.

CARRIE

I agree. We can actually learn something now.

MILA

You didn't have to be so hard on him.

CARRIE

Girl, I was restrained!

LUIS

Nah, you were a little mean.

JAYLEN

It's true. Own it, girl.

CARRIE

Can none of you honestly see that that man is nothing but a hustler?

THERESA

Well, he's only like that because he's had to be. Learning's hard for him. He's not as smart as other people.

CARRIE

Who told you that?

THERESA

He did.

CARRIE

(LAUGHS) Theresa, that fool is as smart as anyone in this room. His only problem is he's lazy. (THEN) And he has trouble focusing because of some possible learning disabilities.

MILA

What do you mean?

CARRIE

I saw the work he did on his assessment test. That boy's probably got ADD, dyslexia, dyscalculia...

MACK

Damn. Teddy can read minds.

CARRIE

They're common conditions and they're very manageable if someone is willing to do the work. And clearly he's not.

MILA

You should have told him all this before you kicked him out, Carrie?

CARRIE

I didn't kick anyone out. He quit. And I tried to help him. I sat him up front, repeated key lesson points for him and evaluated his work for the two classes he attended before he tried to hustle me into letting him slide. He's a grown-ass man! This ain't on me!

THERESA

He thinks he's just dumb.

MILA

We have to tell him the truth. Who has his number?

CARRIE WATCHES FOR A BEAT AS THEY CHECK THEIR PHONES.

CARRIE

Now, I didn't kick anyone out the other night, but I'll damn sure do it right now if y'all don't dial this in.

THEY ALL FACE FORWARD, CHASTISED. SHE CONTINUES TEACHING.

CUT TO:

**SCENE M****INT. BBQ CITY - DAY**

A HIGH-END BARBECUE SHOWROOM. CUSTOMERS MILL ABOUT AS TEDDY, IN A SUIT, STANDS OPPOSITE THERESA AND THE GANG. MACK INSPECTS A NICE GRILL NEXT TO TEDDY.

TEDDY

Learning disabilities?

THERESA

Yes. She said you're not dumb.

LUIS

We tried to argue with her, but she seemed pretty sure.

JAYLEN

She used a bunch of big-ass words.  
ADD, dyslexia...what else?

MACK

I think she mentioned Count Dracula.  
(RE: GRILL) Damn, you could fit half a pig in this bastard.

TEDDY

Guys, I know my brain. Okay? It's not a Porsche. It's like a 2006 Nissan Sentra that you need to jump-start.

THERESA

According to Carrie, it is a Porsche. You just don't know how to drive it. But she can teach you! Come to class tonight. She'll explain it to you.

TEDDY

No. I'm done with that woman. Besides, I'm working tonight. I started driving Uber. Lisa wants to put an offer in on a house. (BEAT) With a pool.

THERESA

Then come right now. She teaches at the school in the afternoons. We'll meet her after class.

MACK

(HEAD IN THE GRILL) Ooh, this thing's got a rotisserie attachment!

MILA

You can't go the rest of your life thinking you're dumb when you're not.

JAYLEN

And you're definitely gonna need a diploma now. Uber ain't paying no damn mortgage on a pool house!

TEDDY

Guys. I appreciate it, but I'm good.

HE TURNS TO GO. THEY ALL SIGH IN FRUSTRATION.

LUIS

Maybe she's wrong. Maybe he is dumb.

MACK

You can use propane or briquettes!



THERESA

Mack, you want to help us out here?

MACK

Sorry. Teddy, if you don't come with us right now to talk to Carrie, we'll tell Lisa you dropped out of high school.

TEDDY

Quit playing. You wouldn't do that.

MILA SNATCHES TEDDY'S PHONE OUT OF HIS HAND AND TYPES.

MILA

I'll text her telling her everything you've been keeping from her.

TEDDY

(LAUGHS) You don't know my code.

MILA

Yes, I do. Look.

SHE HOLDS UP HIS PHONE, TEDDY LOOKS AT IT TO READ IT. WE HEAR A "DING" BEFORE MILA IMMEDIATELY STARTS TYPING... FAST.

MILA (CONT'D)

(SING-SONG) Facial recognition.

THEY ALL LAUGH AS TEDDY LUNGES FOR HIS PHONE. THE GUYS ALL HOLD HIM BACK AS MILA TYPES. SHE HOLDS HER FINGER OVER THE SEND BUTTON. HE FREEZES. THEY STARE AT HIM. HE'S PISSED.

TEDDY

(CALLING OFF) Benny! Cover for me. I'm taking my lunch with these idiots.

THERESA SMILES. TEDDY SIGHS AND EXITS. THEY ALL FOLLOW.

CUT TO:

SCENE P

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

CARRIE SITS BESIDE HER DESK AS A STUDENT, DARRYL (14, NERDY, NERVOUS), DEMONSTRATES AN ELABORATE CONDUCTIVITY EXPERIMENT IN FRONT OF THE CLASS. HE HAS A LIGHT BULB WIRED TO A BOARD WITH ELECTRODES CONNECTED TO TWO SIDES OF A WOODEN SPOON.

DARRYL

As you can see, the bulb doesn't light up because a wooden spoon isn't a good conductor. But if we use a pickle...

HE CONNECTS THE ELECTRODES TO A PICKLE, PRESSES A BUTTON AND THE BULB LIGHTS UP.

DARRYL (CONT'D)

The pickle works because of its water and saline content. Also, humans work. (THEN) I found that out the hard way.

CARRIE

Got a little zap, did you?

DARRYL

Yeah, you could say that.

FEMALE STUDENT

Ms. Dawes, there are a bunch of old people outside the door.

CARRIE LOOKS TO THE GLASS DOOR OF THE CLASSROOM AND SEES THE NIGHT SCHOOL STUDENTS. SHE CROSSES AND OPENS THE DOOR.

CARRIE

Theresa, what's going on?

THERESA

We don't wanna disturb you. We're just gonna wait out here until you're done.

CARRIE

What is this about? (SEES TEDDY) Oh.

TEDDY

I didn't want to come. They made me.

THERESA

We just need one minute after class.

CARRIE

No. Let's get this over with now.

SHE CROSSES IN AS THEY ENTER AWKWARDLY. THEY CLOCK THE **STUDENTS (JUDGMENTAL 14-YEAR-OLDS)** WATCHING. THERESA IS RELUCTANT TO SPEAK IN FRONT OF THEM.

CARRIE (CONT'D)

Don't worry about them. They know all about you. I used each of you as a cautionary tale about what happens in life when one's lazy ass drops out.

STUDENT #1

Which one's been to jail?

FEMALE STUDENT

Which one's husband left her?

STUDENT #2

Who killed Mrs. Winslow?

LUIS POINTS TO TEDDY. TEDDY JUST ROLLS HIS EYES.

MILA

Carrie, we just want you to tell Teddy what you told us last night.

JAYLEN

Yeah. Help him understand his brain.

CARRIE STARES AT TEDDY FOR A BEAT. HE STARES BACK.

THERESA

Look, Carrie, all of us dropped out of high school for different reasons. And it's been hard. But Teddy's had it harder than the rest of us.

LUIS

Well, let's not forget about Mexico--

MACK AND JAYLEN ELBOW HIM. CARRIE LOOKS AT TEDDY AND SIGHS.

TEDDY

I told you, T. She don't know me. She thinks she does, but she doesn't.

CARRIE

What I know is that you use "I'm dumb" as an excuse to not do the work. But the truth is you've got certain conditions that adversely affect your processing and comprehension. And you'll have those conditions forever.

JAYLEN

Damn, son. You got learning herpes.

CARRIE

But they can be managed, Teddy. You just have to do the work.

TEDDY

Look, I work harder than anyone, but I know my brain. And I'm telling you, it can't do the stuff you want it to do.

CARRIE

That sounds like a challenge.

THE ENTIRE CLASS "OOHS" AS CARRIE CROSSES TO THE BOARD AND BEGINS WRITING AN EQUATION.

CARRIE (CONT'D)

I'll prove that you're as smart as anyone in here. (RE: KID IN CLASS) With the exception of Syeed. He's ridiculous. I'll bet you can calculate the circumference of this circle.

SHE EXTENDS THE CHALK TO TEDDY. HE SIGHS AND TURNS TO GO.

THERESA

Teddy. Give it a shot.

TEDDY

I'm telling you, I don't think I can.

THERESA

Whether you think you can or you think you can't... you're right.

SHE HOLDS UP THE KEY SHE TOOK BACK FROM RANDY. TEDDY TAKES A DEEP BREATH AND CROSSES TO THE BOARD.

CARRIE

Now, from what I've observed, I  
believe your main issue is focus,  
Teddy. That's why I'm gonna help you.

SHE GRABS THE ELECTRODES FROM DARRYL'S EXPERIMENT AND TAPES THEM TO TEDDY'S ELBOW AND WRIST.

CARRIE (CONT'D)

Each time you get distracted, Darryl's  
gonna give you a little shock. It'll  
remove the mental chatter and provide  
unencumbered neural pathways.

DARRYL

Ms. Dawes, I don't know if that's--

CARRIE

It's okay, Darryl. A little zap is  
exactly what he needs to keep his  
brain on task. Okay, Teddy. C equals  
two times pi times a radius of six.

HIS FRIENDS CHEER HIM ON. THERESA NODS TO HIM: "YOU GOT THIS!" TEDDY SIGHS AND TURNS TO THE BOARD.

TEDDY

Okay. Radius is six. (BEAT) See?  
Already, I know that my brain is--

CARRIE POINTS AT DARRYL WHO HITS THE BUTTON. TEDDY REACTS LIKE A MAN IN THE ELECTRIC CHAIR.

CARRIE

It's only a little zap. Focus.

TEDDY GOES BACK TO THE BOARD. THE GANG CHEERS HIM ON.

TEDDY

Okay. Two times six is twelve. Easy.

Next is pi. (BEAT) I always save room

for pie. (LAUGHS) Just a little joke--

CARRIE NODS AT DARRYL. ZAP! TEDDY REACTS AND THEN FOCUSES.

TEDDY (CONT'D)

Damn, Darryl! Okay! Pi times twelve.

(BEAT) Do y'all smell barbecue?

CARRIE LOOKS TO DARRYL WHO NODS. "I GOT THIS." ZAP! TEDDY REACTS. HE'S IN AGONY. HE DROPS TO THE GROUND.

CARRIE

Oh, stop being dramatic! It's not that

bad. Darryl, what's your power source?

A nine volt battery?

DARRYL

No, Ms. Dawes. I plugged an extension

cord into the outlet under your desk.

CARRIE'S EYES GO WIDE AS TEDDY STAGGERS TO HIS FEET.

CARRIE

What?! Dammit, Darryl! We're gonna

kill this man! Teddy, I'm so sorry! I

thought it was just a battery.

SHE GOES TO REMOVE THE ELECTRODES FROM HIS ARM.

TEDDY

No! It's helping! Darryl, if you see

me lose focus, you give me the juice!

CARRIE

Teddy, really, you don't have to--

TEDDY

No, Carrie. I can do this! Okay! Pi times twelve. Three point one four--

HE GETS ZAPPED. IT'S BRUTAL.

TEDDY (CONT'D)

Darryl, what the hell?! I was in it!

DARRYL

Sorry. That's my bad. Finger slipped.

TEDDY FOCUSES AND DOES THE EQUATION. THE CLASS CHEERS HIM ON.

TEDDY

C equals thirty-seven point seven?!

THE ROOM ERUPTS IN APPLAUSE. TEDDY LOOKS ELATED AS HIS FRIENDS CONGRATULATE HIM. CARRIE CROSSES IN, SMILING.

CARRIE

Told you, hustler. You are a dumb-ass, but your ass ain't dumb. (THEN) And I'm really sorry about the whole accidentally-electrocuting-you thing.

TEDDY

It's all good. It's exactly what I needed. I feel good. I mean, I taste copper and my blood is making a low humming noise, but I feel really good.

CARRIE SMILES AS TEDDY CELEBRATES WITH HIS FRIENDS. THERESA CROSSES AND HUGS HIM. THEY SHARE A SMILE.

**END ACT THREE**



TAG

INT. CLASSROOM - NIGHT

THE MOMENTS BEFORE CLASS BEGINS. EVERYONE BUT TEDDY SITS IN THEIR SEATS IN FRONT OF CARRIE WHO PREPARES HER LESSON.

LUIS

People are like, "The heat was up to a hundred degrees today." I'm like, "Mexico makes a hundred degrees feel like a walk-in fridge, bro!" (BEAT)  
And don't get me started on the dust.

MILA

No one got you started on the heat!

TEDDY ENTERS CARRYING KRISPY KREMES.

TEDDY

What's up, everyone? Sorry I'm late. I had to wait for a hot batch at Krispy Kreme. (OFF CARRIE) They're not for you. They're for them. As a thank you.

HE HANDS THE DONUTS TO LUIS WHO OPENS THE BOX. THE REST OF THE STUDENTS HUDDLE AROUND AS TEDDY CROSSES TO CARRIE.

TEDDY (CONT'D)

The donuts aren't for you, but I did bring you something.

CARRIE

Boy, no matter what you brought,  
there's no way I'm gonna go easy on--

TEDDY HOLDS UP A NO. 2 PENCIL.

TEDDY

I'm ready to do the work.

CARRIE IS CLEARLY MOVED. SHE ACCEPTS THE PENCIL.

CARRIE

I'm gonna hold you to that.

IT'S A NICE MOMENT BEFORE TEDDY'S PHONE RINGS.

TEDDY

Yo, this is Lisa. I'm sorry. One sec.

HE CROSSES TO THE BACK OF THE CLASSROOM.

TEDDY (CONT'D)

(INTO PHONE) Hey, baby. No. Sales  
meeting is about to start. What's up?

CARRIE

Look at him. He seems like a sweet  
guy. How can he keep lying to her?

JAYLEN

I told you. She ain't his soulmate.  
When he meets his soulmate, he won't  
be able to lie. That's science.

THIS LANDS ON CARRIE AND WE...

FADE OUT.

END SHOW