

LOVE IS BLIND
(Act I)

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FADE IN:

INT. WAREHOUSE

Blackness, save for a harsh circle of light trained on a lone FIGURE in a chair against a dirty cement wall.

JONATHAN BLACK (29), ruffled, loosened tie, sits there, squinting, sweat beading.

LENNY (O.S.)

Mr. Black, when you're not entirely honest bad shit can happen.

JONATHAN

Look, Lenny, all I want is to walk back out that door--

LENNY (O.S.)

Not so fast. Name: Jonathan Black. Age: 29. Heterosexual. Residence: Los Angeles. Self-employed photographer. No criminal record, no STDs. You drive a blue Honda Civic. Interests: history, literature, classical music, movies, art.

Beyond the blinding glare, the BLINKING RED LIGHT of a video camera.

LENNY (CONT'D)

Now, this last woman you were doin', the blonde, Caitlin--

JONATHAN

Leave her out of this.

LENNY (O.S.)

Would you prefer we...bring her in?

Jonathan wilts.

JONATHAN

What do you want to know?

EXT. LA RESIDENTIAL STREET - DAY

Rows of bungalows and wilted palm trees. A dark blue Honda Civic pulls up one of the drives.

Jonathan climbs out. Alive. How is anyone's guess.

As he nears the front door, DIRK (26) struts out. Handsome in a plastic, greasy kind of way.

JONATHAN

Dirk.

DIRK

Johnny -- you don't look so hot.

JONATHAN

Just had a talk with your friend.
Lenny.

DIRK

Lenny? Yeah? How'd that go?

JONATHAN

What the fuck kind of "dating
service" is that supposed to be?

DIRK

Hey, look, Lenny can be a little...

JONATHAN

I'm lucky I've still got my
fingernails, dude!

DIRK

I'm tellin' you man, those internet
dating sites don't work. A guy like
Lenny, he makes it personal. He's
gonna surprise you.
(toward house)
Vince!

JONATHAN

Shouldn't you be on-set, or--

DIRK

No scenes today. My character's
still in a coma.

JONATHAN

Oh, right.

DIRK

So I'm taking Vince in for an extra
therapy session. Vince!

The door opens, and Vince appears: Large, gangly, scary, yet sympathetic. A blend of Border Collie and Yeti.

DIRK (CONT'D)
Get your ass down here!

Vince descends the front steps on shaky legs.

JONATHAN
How's he doing?

DIRK
Too early to tell. New meds.

Dirk leads Vince toward his ride, a battered Hyundai that looks like it's been in one too many Bond films.

Opens the passenger door. Vince climbs half way in, collapses on the rocker panel, out cold.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

California-Spanish. Eclectic but neat. Jonathan enters through an inner door from a small foyer. Heads to...

KITCHEN

Jonathan makes a beeline for the fridge. Pulls open the door. Most of the contents marked in sharpie: "Jonathan's!"

He pulls out a carton of milk, takes a swig.

STUDIO

A converted guest room. Lights, backdrops, scattered equipment, small waiting area. Snug, but professional.

Jonathan enters, hits PLAY on the answering machine.

NADIA (V.O.)
Hi, this call is for Dirk Rodner.
This is Nadia with the Los Angeles
Superior Court Traffic Division.
I'm calling again regarding your
parking tickets, moving violations,
property damage citations...

Jonathan hits SKIP.

PAM (V.O.)
Mr. Black? Pam Scott. My son can't
come in for his portrait today.
(MORE)

PAM (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 He went to visit his new girlfriend
 earlier, and I guess he got the
 wrong house. Anyway, in the kitchen
 there was this strange man in a
 suit. And cameras everywhere. So my
 son tries to leave. Well, that
 didn't work--

STUDIO

Jonathan shoots a dual portrait of a young MOTHER (35) and
 her GIRL (9). LIGHTS FLASH.

JONATHAN
 Okay, just a moment while I reload.
 Couple more shots and that should
 do it.

He opens the back of the camera.

GIRL
 What are you doing?

JONATHAN
 Switching out the film.

GIRL
 Film?
 (to mother)
 This dork ever hear of digital?

MOTHER
 Caitlin! I'm sorry, Mr. Black.

HIS CELL PHONE RINGS. He pulls it out. Winces.

JONATHAN
 Excuse me a moment. Hello?

LENNY (V.O.)
 Mr. Black. It's me, Lenny. From The
 Agency. We found somethin' for ya.

INT. FINE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Jonathan faces an attractive brunette, SHERYL (24) across a
 candle-lit table. The mood is relaxed. Intimate.

She reaches across the table, takes his hands in hers.

SHERYL

Honey, when we first met, you told me you'd had a difficult time meeting women who were willing to commit. Well, you know what? The longer I know you, the more I think it's you who can't commit.

Jonathan watches her, uncertain. Gently pulls his hands toward himself, but her fingers tighten around his.

SHERYL (CONT'D)

I've been patient, honey, I have. But it's time for you to step up to the plate. Is there a future here?

A tense pause. Tears well up in her eyes.

JONATHAN

Sheryl, I, uh--

SHERYL

A ring, Jonathan! After all the two of us have shared, is that so much to ask?

Soft MURMURS OF ASSENT in the background.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Man up!

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Jonathan, dressed the same, looking wiped, leans on the counter, sipping a beer.

Dirk rummages in the fridge. Finds a beer marked "Jonathan's!" Hides the writing as he pulls out the can.

JONATHAN

Honestly, I didn't mean to do wrong by her. I just--

DIRK

Got a little intense, huh?

JONATHAN

For a first date, yeah.

DIRK

Don't sweat it, man. Hey, I think there was a beep on your machine while you were out.

JONATHAN

Oh, God.

ANSWERING MACHINE

Jonathan sets the beer next to the machine, presses PLAY.

LENNY (MACHINE)

Mr. Black. Lenny. Found another nice little number for ya. Into history, philosophy, bunch of other shit you checked off. So if Sheryl bombed, or you feel like a three-way, give me a call.

EXT. SIDEWALK - NIGHT

Jonathan and an attractive brunette, CLAUDIA (27), share a gentle, passionate kiss. Finally draw apart.

JONATHAN

Claudia, I can't believe you're from the same dating service as those last one.

She smiles sweetly. Backs toward her apartment.

CLAUDIA

All good things to those who wait.

JONATHAN

I wish tonight didn't have to end.

INT. JONATHAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jonathan lies asleep in the moonlight. The luminous bedside clock reads 4:05 a.m.

On the night stand his cell phone RINGS.

Jonathan groans, rolls over, grabs it.

JONATHAN

Hello?

CLAUDIA (V.O.)

Just called to tell you, you've scored, honey.

JONATHAN

...Huh?

CLAUDIA (V.O.)
 Scored! Got one past the goalie.
 I'm pregnant, Jerk-off. And that
 costs extra. I warned you about
 that up front.

She sounds drunk. Jonathan sits up straighter.

JONATHAN
 Pregnant? But how --

CLAUDIA (V.O.)
 Don't even go there, stud. Everyone
 else I've been with in the last two
 months has either been fixed, or
 used a raincoat or...some other
 point of entry.

Jonathan is wider awake now. Squints at the little glowing
 screen. Shows surprise.

JONATHAN
 ...Claudia?

A long pause on the other end.

CLAUDIA (V.O.)
 Omigod...I think I mis-dialed.

JONATHAN
 Yeah, I think so.

CLAUDIA (V.O.)
 Kurt?

Jonathan slowly holds the phone away from his face. Just
 stares at the glowing screen.

CLAUDIA (V.O.)
 Kurt? Sweetie?
 (nervous laugh)
 I can just imagine how this must
 sound...

INT. STUDIO

Jonathan hits PLAY on the answering machine.

LENNY (V.O.)
 Mr. Black. Lenny. Just wait till
 you hear what I've dug up for you
 this time...

Jonathan hits STOP. Glances at the hand he just used. Grabs a bottle of hand-sanitizer.

INT. ARMANDO'S RESTAURANT - DAY

Upscale. Spanish decor. Lunch crowd. Jonathan sits in a booth, studying his appointment calendar.

Conversation from another booth drifts across the partition.

MANDY (O.S.)

So why am I so sucky at reading guys?

JILL (O.S.)

You're just a little too...

MANDY (O.S.)

Too...?

JILL (O.S.)

Trusting.

MANDY (O.S.)

I mean, I'm reasonably intelligent.

JILL (O.S.)

You're very intelligent.

MANDY (O.S.)

I got straight "A"s in school. I run my own business. I watch the Discovery Channel.

JILL (O.S.)

While you were studying all those books you should have been studying guys a little more.

Jonathan glances up, half listening.

JILL (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Now, take Jack.

MANDY (O.S.)

Let's not even--

JILL (O.S.)

I mean, look at how he was acting. All the warning signs were there. The missed dates, the excuses.

MANDY (O.S.)

I know. Too trusting. He was just after the next prettier thing. They all were.

JILL (O.S.)

They're pigs, Mandy.

MANDY (O.S.)

You know what? Guys should have ingredient labels, like food:
 "Shallowness: 35 grams.
 Insincerity: 40 grams. Sex drive:
 3000 percent the recommended daily allowance. Good until: Some hotter bimbo comes along."

Jill laughs.

MANDY (O.S.) (CONT'D)

I mean, really? Is that all that's out there?

Lowers her voice.

MANDY (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Look, Jill, I've got nothing against sex. But isn't there a man out there who occasionally likes to go for a walk? Or out to dinner? Or just talk about, I don't know... history, literature, classical music, movies, art, something?

Jonathan has stopped breathing. A soft CLUNK as the appointment book slides from his fingers.

MANDY (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Someone just likes me for...me?

JILL (O.S.)

You'll find him. Just have to be patient.

MANDY (O.S.)

You know what? If a man, any man, came up to this table right now, and said "Mandy, I just overheard everything you said, I understand what you're feeling, and I'd like to get to know you better," I'd say "Yes." In a heartbeat.

Jonathan reacts with a jolt. Squints into the mirrored partition. Checks his hair, teeth. Adjusts his sport coat.

JILL (O.S.)
 Anyway, sorry to eat and run, but
 I've got to get back to the E.R.
 This should cover me.

MANDY (O.S.)
 Thanks for listening.

JILL (O.S.)
 Hang in there, girl. The right
 one's out there.

DEPARTING FOOTSTEPS.

Jonathan hesitates. Slides out of his seat. Eases around the row of booths. Gets his first glimpse of:

MANDY (28) sitting alone. Casually-dressed. Effortlessly attractive. Determined, full lips. Sensitive, sad dark eyes.

She stirs her drink, not looking up.

Jonathan watches her, enthralled. It's not just physical -- something about Mandy is special. Once-in-a-lifetime special.

Jonathan braces, starts toward her. About 15 feet to go.

BUT SUDDENLY...

Another man, CHASE (25), appears from the opposite direction and also approaches the booth.

Slightly better dressed. Slightly better looking. Slightly faster.

Jonathan stops.

Chase comes to a stop next to Mandy. Clears his throat.

CHASE
 Excuse me. Are you Mandy?

She looks up, smiles, curious.

MANDY
 Do I know you?

CHASE
 No. Not yet, I mean. My name's
 Chase.

She watches him, intrigued.

CHASE (CONT'D)

Listen -- strangest thing: I was sitting right over there, having lunch, and I couldn't help overhearing what you and your friend were talking about.

Jonathan looks pale. This can't be happening.

CHASE (CONT'D)

About the men in your life. How they've disappointed you.

JONATHAN

You son-of-a--

CHASE

May I?

Slides in across from her.

CHASE (CONT'D)

Look, I know we've never met, but--

Mandy watches him intently. Leans forward a little.

JONATHAN

Don't say it. Don't say it.

CHASE

--but I think I understand what you're feeling, and...I'd like to get to know you better.

JONATHAN

You fucker. I'll kill you.

Chase sits there. Mandy watches him. Jonathan watches them both from 15 feet away.

MANDY

Get to know me better.

Chase smiles warmly at her, nods.

SHE SLAPS HIM. The sound is like a rifle shot. Heads turn.

Mandy grabs her purse, slides out of the booth.

MANDY (CONT'D)

That is the creepiest come-on I've ever heard.

She strides quickly away, slipping right past Jonathan.

MANDY (CONT'D)

Excuse me.

Jonathan steps quickly aside. Catches a tantalizing whiff of perfume as she passes. Turns to watch her go.

JONATHAN (V.O.)

There was something about her,
Dirk.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Dirk stands holding a script. Jonathan sits on the sofa with another.

Vince lies nearby, twitching eerily as he sleeps.

DIRK

You know what you should have done?
You should have walked up to her
and said "Mandy, I couldn't help
but overhear how you laid into that
eves-dropping pervert. You know
what? I'm really into that privacy
thing too. And I know of this great
little out-of-the-way--"

JONATHAN

You are so full of shit I don't
know how you even stand up in the
morning.

DIRK

Forget it. There's other fish out
there. Anything new from Lenny?

JONATHAN

No. No more Lenny.

DIRK

What?

JONATHAN

Guy scares me.

DIRK

Come on, man, he's just getting to
know your tastes. He runs a classy--

JONATHAN

Please! It was just a matter of time till I recognized one of those girls from a milk carton.

Vince twitches more violently, body twisting one way, then another. But still asleep.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)

He okay?

DIRK

New meds. Doc said there might be side-effects for a day or two.

Ragged, gasping breaths.

JONATHAN

Side effects?

Dirk picks a piece of paper off the table, scans it.

DIRK

Let's see...nausea, vertigo, uh... here we go: In rare cases, the animal will experience more extreme side effects, such as a sensation of drowning or being crushed by rocks.

Vince twists violently to one side. Let's out a gasp.

Dirk holds up his script.

DIRK (CONT'D)

So. We gonna run this?

INT. DARKROOM

Red light. Mozart plays. Jonathan strings up wedding photos.

DIRK (O.S.)

Hey, can I come in?

JONATHAN

Not now, I'm doing prints.

DIRK (O.S.)

Don't you need a computer for that?

JONATHAN

This is film.

DIRK (O.S.)
Film? Ever hear of digital, dude?

JONATHAN
Just give me a couple minutes.

Glances down at: VINCE sleeping serenely beneath the developing table. Jonathan smiles.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)
Looks like Dirk finally got your
meds under control.

A small timer on the table softly DINGS.

VINCE FREAKS. JUMPS STRAIGHT UP. TAKES THE TABLE AND ALL ITS
CONTENTS WITH HIM.

A TRAY OF CHEMICALS flies into the RED LIGHT, smashing it in
a SHOWER OF SPARKS.

HALLWAY

Dirk leans on the wall, literally twiddling his thumbs, as...

The door labeled "DARKROOM" FLIES OFF ITS HINGES in a BALL OF
FIRE.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Jonathan sits on the exam table. Facial abrasions. Scorch
marks. Wearing dark glasses.

DR. THOMAS (35) stands next to him.

DR. THOMAS
And you were playing with volatile
chemicals...why?

JONATHAN
I'm a photographer.

DR. THOMAS
Ever hear of digital? Jesus Christ.

He takes hold of the dark glasses.

DR. THOMAS (CONT'D)
I guarantee you, Adobe Photoshop
never blew up in anyone's face.

Lifts the glasses off.

JONATHAN
Aaaaaah, Mother of God!!

Thomas eases the glasses back on. Tears stream from underneath.

DR. THOMAS
Give it three or four days. Don't go out alone. And no driving.

JONATHAN
What? Hey, Doc, I've got some weddings lined up.

DR. THOMAS
You wouldn't know which end of the camera to look into.

Jonathan hops off the table.

JONATHAN
I'll get by. Good enough for my clients, anyway.

He makes for the door. Crashes into it.

INT. STUDIO - DAY

A white cane gently taps the floor, passing close to Vince, asleep, fur singed and blackened.

The cane bumps against the table with the answering machine.

Jonathan, in dark glasses, gropes his way to machine, presses PLAY. Sinks carefully into the sofa as he listens.

MOM (V.O.)
Jonathan? Mom. Just checking in. Wondering how you're doing. Your father told me the position at the bank is still open. In case you ever want to...you know--

JONATHAN
Give up my dreams.

MOM (V.O.)
And the apartment is still available. A steady job, your own place, who knows? It might improve your dating outlook.

JONATHAN

Bank teller living above his parents' garage. Any chick with a pulse is gonna want a piece of that action.

MOM (V.O.)

Oh, the reason I called, Thanksgiving is coming up. I know you're busy, but I really hope you can make it this year. It's been at least two or three years since the whole family's been together for this. It would really be special.

Jonathan smiles. Nods to himself.

MOM (V.O.)

Anyway, let me know. And also if you need me to, I don't know, send soup or anything. Love you.

Jonathan chuckles to himself. Smiles warmly.

Sets aside the white cane. Fumbles for his cell phone. Lifts the dark glasses to peer at the screen.

SCREAMS in pain. Pulls them back down.

Feels carefully for the right speed-dial button. Presses it.

JONATHAN

Mom, it's me. Just wanted to let you know everything's going great, so you can quit your worrying. Thanksgiving is a definite yes. Say "Hi" to Dad for me. Bye.

Fumbles again with his phone, stabs at the touch screen.

WOMAN (V.O.)

If you'd like to make a call...

JONATHAN

Goddamnit!

EXT. SANTONI'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Dirk's battered Hyundai screeches to a stop in front. ANGRY HONKS from behind.

DIRK (V.O.)
See? Told you I'd get you here
alive.

JONATHAN (V.O.)
Christ. And I thought riding with
you was scary when I could see.

The passenger door opens, and Jonathan, in dark glasses,
sticks the white metal cane out.

A BIKE WHIZZES PAST, snapping off the end of the cane.

DIRK
Hey, let me help you inside.

JONATHAN
I'm fine. I'll see you in an hour.

Jonathan climbs out, leans against the car, begins feeling
his way, making broad sweeps with the broken cane.

DIRK
Be careful, man.

JONATHAN
I'm good. Go.

The Hyundai roars away. Jonathan reaches the curb. Steps
gracefully up, and into a phone pole.

INT. SANTONI'S - NIGHT

Heavy dinner crowd.

Mandy and JILL (26), perky, hospital scrubs, sit in a booth
near the back.

MANDY
Jack called again. Asked if he
could see me.

JILL
And?

MANDY
I told him no.

JILL
Mandy's learning.

MANDY
I hope I'm doing the right thing.

JILL
Are you serious?

MANDY
I just...Saturday nights get a little lonely, you know? I miss hanging out on the sofa with the lights turned down, a bowl of buttered popcorn, an old movie, someone to cuddle with.

JILL
And the lying and the cheating? You miss that too?

Mandy sighs.

MANDY
Guess I just focus on the good in people.

JILL
This is just what happened with Brandon and Chris. You've got to get out while you've still got your pride, girl.

MANDY
This from the woman who dates a new man every week.

JILL
For your information, Ted and I have now hit the 8-day mark.

MANDY
Ted? What happened to Phil?

JILL
Oh, you've got to meet Ted. His eyes...they make you turn to butter.

Mandy rolls her own eyes.

JILL (CONT'D)
Forget Jack. Let him go. You're trying way too hard again.

MANDY
But isn't trying what makes a relationship work?

JILL

Trust me, when Mr. Right comes along, you won't have to try nearly as hard.

A CRASH at the other side of the room. Both women turn.

A bus boy helps Jonathan to his feet, amidst shattered crockery.

Jonathan, pink sauce smeared on his sport coat, starts into the main room.

Sweeps the broken cane about, whacking occasional guests.

MANDY

Now there's a guy who wouldn't just be after me for my looks.

JILL

That's terrible!

MANDY

I'm serious. If he took an interest, I'd know it was for me.

JILL

He's kind of cute, actually.

Jonathan starts across the room, catches his foot on the edge of a rug. Falls flat on his face.

MANDY

And so...vulnerable.

Jonathan struggles to climb back to his feet, angrily brushing off offers of assistance.

JILL

You know what I read somewhere?
Blind men can be amazing lovers.

Mandy turns to her, incredulous.

MANDY

What?

JILL

Seriously -- they can't see, so their other senses are heightened. Hearing, taste, smell, touch. They take nothing for granted.

Mandy looks thoughtful. Looks back at Jonathan.

JILL (CONT'D)

Check it out, Mandy. That man may
be ten times the lover Jack was.

Jonathan seats himself at a nearby table...in a woman's lap.
She SCREAMS. Slaps him.

He jumps up, jolting the table, spilling every drink on it.

MANDY

He's fascinating.

JILL

Looks like he's having trouble. I'm
going to go help him.

She rises, but Mandy takes her arm.

MANDY

Let me.

MANDY APPROACHES

Jonathan as he regains his composure. Gently touches his arm.
Jonathan wheels on her.

JONATHAN

What?!

MANDY

Uh, excuse me.

JONATHAN

Just give me a bill. I'll cover
whatever--

MANDY

No, no, I don't work here. I was
just noticing that there don't seem
to be any free tables.

JONATHAN

Oh. Uh, then if you'd just point me
to the bar--

MANDY

Actually, my friend and I would
love it if you'd join us. If you're
not, you know, meeting anyone--

Jonathan hesitates.

MANDY (CONT'D)
My name's Mandy, by the way.

The name clicks in immediately.

JONATHAN
Mandy. I'm Jonathan.

He extends his free hand, punching her in the stomach.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)
Sorry!

She smiles, steps back.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)
And I'd be delighted.

BOOTH

Mandy guides Jonathan to the seat opposite Jill, slides in next to him.

MANDY
(to waitress)
Could we have another place
setting, please?

JONATHAN
Look, I don't usually make this
kind of an entrance.

MANDY
You don't need to explain.

JONATHAN
But I really--

MANDY
No, please! When I think of the
challenges you must face every day--

Jill rises.

JILL
I need to get back to work. My
pager just went off. Sorry!

Jonathan starts to rise as well. Both women grab their water glasses.

MANDY & JILL
Don't get up!

EXT. SANTONI'S - LATER

Dirk's Hyundai pulls up in front.

INT. CAR

Dirk glances at his watch, then at the restaurant entrance.

DIRK

One hour, ten minutes. Shit, I hope
he didn't wander out in front of a
tour bus or something.

INT. BOOTH

Jonathan jabs his fork into the table cloth next to his
plate.

MANDY

A little to the left.

JONATHAN

Oh, thanks.

He resumes eating. Looks up.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)

Mozart.

MANDY

I'm sorry?

JONATHAN

The music. Mozart's Violin Concerto
Number 4 in D.

MANDY

I hadn't even noticed. You like
Mozart?

JONATHAN

He's my favorite composer.

MANDY

Really? Mine too! You like
classical?

Jonathan nods.

Mandy thinks of something, digs in her purse. Pulls out two
crumpled tickets.

MANDY (CONT'D)

You know what you just reminded me of? I have two tickets to this Rachmaninov Concert. I bought them last month.

JONATHAN

The Hollinger concert? That's been sold out for weeks. Who's the lucky guy?

MANDY

There isn't one.

JONATHAN

Oh?

MANDY

Not anymore, I mean. A lot can change in a month, I guess.

Mandy watches him intently. Glances at his ring finger: Tan and bare. Gets up her nerve.

MANDY (CONT'D)

Uh, listen, Jonathan, I know we've just met and everything, but...I mean, are you, like, doing anything special tomorrow night?

Jonathan goes into a coughing fit. Mandy puts his water in his hand. He drinks.

MANDY (CONT'D)

I'm sorry! I mean, you probably already have...like...a girlfriend, right?

JONATHAN

God no.

MANDY

Really?

JONATHAN

Really. And I'd love to.

INT. JONATHAN'S BEDROOM - DAY

A bedside radio alarm COMES ON. Jonathan rolls over onto his back, into a shaft of sunlight, opens his eyes.

JONATHAN
AAAAAGH!!

EXT. CONCERT HALL - NIGHT

Dirk's Hyundai swerves to a stop.

INT. CAR

Jonathan lifts his dark glasses, winces, puts them back.

DIRK
Easy, man. The doctor said it's
gonna be a couple more days.

JONATHAN
This is just so...so--

DIRK
Listen, man. Let her help you out,
okay? None of this stupid "I can
take care of myself" shit. She'll
understand. Are you listening?

Jonathan gets out, turns back to Dirk.

JONATHAN
I'm not blind, you know.

Dirk grins. Flips him off.

DIRK
Yeah? How many fingers am I holding
up?

INT. CONCERT HALL - NIGHT

Sounds of the orchestra tuning. House lights blinking.
Patrons seating themselves.

With a SCREAM, Jonathan somersaults over the edge of the
upper balcony.

Comes to an abrupt stop, arms and legs flailing in space.
Dangling only by his snagged suit coat.

Horrified "OOOOOOHHH"s from patrons 25 feet below.

His coat begins to RIP. Mandy rushes over to the rail.

MANDY

Oh, my God! Jonathan! Give me your hand!

He does, and she pulls him up so he can grab the rail.

He manages to swing a leg up over the rail, and pull himself back up, ripping his pants as he goes.

APPLAUSE from below.

MANDY (CONT'D)

Jonathan! My God! I shouldn't have looked away--

JONATHAN

I'm fine, I'm fine.

She leads him to their seats as the lights dim. They both sit.

MANDY

Now, there's a 30 foot drop right in front of you. Just so you know.

UPPER BALCONY - LATER

The lights are down. A GRAND PIANO plays.

Jonathan leans back in his seat, at peace, as the music washes over him.

Mandy looks over at him, at his serene, concentrating features, bathed in soft blue light.

She smiles in admiration. A tear glistens at the corner of her eye.

EXT. CONCERT HALL - NIGHT

Mandy leads Jonathan through dispersing crowds.

MANDY

His Concerto Number 2 has got to be one of the most beautiful pieces I've ever heard.

JONATHAN

You know, he dedicated it to the doctor who got him through his depression because no one liked Concerto number 1?

MANDY
You're joking.

JONATHAN
I'm serious.

MANDY
That's amazing.

Turns to Jonathan.

MANDY (CONT'D)
You're amazing.

JONATHAN
Hmm?

MANDY
The way you face life.

JONATHAN
Listen, Mandy, the thing is--

Another man, JACK DRIPE (27), overtakes them. Intense and clean-scrubbed. All warmth and humor scrubbed off as well.

DRIPE
Mandy.

She turns. Wilts.

MANDY
Drip.

DRIPE
I wasn't expecting to see you here.

He eyes Jonathan coolly. His dark glasses. Torn clothing.

DRIPE (CONT'D)
I don't think we've met.

He holds out his hand. Jonathan doesn't see it. Dripe slowly lowers his hand, looking snubbed.

MANDY
Jonathan, this is Drip.

Jonathan nods, pleasantly.

JONATHAN
Drip.

DRIPE

Dripe.

MANDY

Drip sells insurance. Brings people peace of mind. At least his clients.

DRIPE

Listen, Mand, I've been trying to reach you--

MANDY

Have you?

She takes Jonathan's arm, leads him away.

JONATHAN

Good meeting you, Mr....Drip.

DRIPE

Dripe.

JONATHAN

Right. Sorry.

DRIPE

I'll call you.

Watches them go, his pleasant smile slowly dissolving into a cold stare.

EXT. SIDEWALK - NIGHT

The two stroll, arm-in-arm, along the softly-lit boulevard.

MANDY

Jonathan, how long have you been blind?

JONATHAN

Blind?

MANDY

Oh, God, that was insensitive.

JONATHAN

No, not at all. But the thing is--

MANDY

No, it was. I'm sorry. It's just that, well, I need to be honest about something.

JONATHAN

Okay...

MANDY

I, uh, your blindness was...well...
it's the reason I invited you over
to our table last night.

Jonathan comes to a stop. Turns to her.

MANDY (CONT'D)

I mean, not because I felt sorry
for you or anything. Nothing like
that. I just -- you see, my whole
problem with men has been that they
can see. And when they look at me,
they see me as an object, and
that's all.

Jonathan slowly nods. They begin to walk again.

MANDY (CONT'D)

Anyway, when I saw you for the
first time last night, I could tell
that you were different. Just the
way you enter a room. The way you
move--

Jonathan collides with a low-hanging branch. Staggeres back.

MANDY (CONT'D)

Oh, my God, are you okay?

Jonathan straightens his dark glasses. Pries bits of bark
from his forehead.

JONATHAN

I'm fine. Go on.

MANDY

Well, I saw you, and I thought,
there's a man who's different.
Special. A man who wouldn't just be
thinking with his--his--

JONATHAN

His eyes?

MANDY

Exactly. But anyway, you were about
to tell me something.

JONATHAN

...Was I?

INT. JONATHAN'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Jonathan, still in torn concert attire, paces intensely.
Dirk, nearby, kneels beside the inert form of Vince.

Next to him, a box of little orange prescription bottles.

JONATHAN

So there it is: The only reason
she's turned on to me is because I
can't see.

DIRK

For years it was guys in ponytails.
Chicks are nuts.

JONATHAN

But you see the problem here?

Dirk stares at the cadaverous Vince, then back at the box of
pharmaceuticals. Begins rooting around.

DIRK

You shouldn't have lied to her.

JONATHAN

I have not lied to her.

Dirk pulls out a sealed vial and a syringe. Raises an
eyebrow.

DIRK

Well, you haven't exactly told her
the truth, have you?

INT. MANDY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Upscale. View of downtown Los Angeles. A mixture of modern
and antique furnishings. Framed movie posters on the walls.

Mandy and Jill sit with beers and a bowl of popcorn on the
floor in front of the TV, playing SCENE IT?

MANDY

Tonight was magic, Jill. I've never
met anyone like him.

JILL

Well, well, haven't heard you like
this in a while.

MANDY

I felt so comfortable with him.

Mandy rolls, moves her piece 6 spaces, Jill far behind.

JILL

Girl, I'm not coming over anymore unless you find us a different game to play. When do you find time to see all these movies?

MANDY

A big part is just paying attention to what you see on the screen.

JILL

Well, maybe Jonathan will be more your match--

Stops herself. Both giggle.

JILL (CONT'D)

Well, maybe not!

MANDY

I've invited him to dinner here on Saturday.

JILL

Wow. Sure you know him well enough?

MANDY

I know I can trust him.

JONATHAN'S LIVING ROOM

Dirk studies the vial in his hand.

DIRK

She has no idea, for instance, that a couple of days from now your eyesight will be as good as hers.

JONATHAN

Not actually. No.

Dirk jams the syringe in the vial, fills the chamber.

DIRK

So how are you going to play this on Saturday night?

JONATHAN

I'm going to start by straightening this all out. Telling her the truth.

DIRK

What are you, stupid?

Dirk pulls the needle out of the vial, jabs it into Vince's neck, squeezes the plunger.

JONATHAN

I can't lie to her.

DIRK

I'm just saying you need to build a connection with her first. Friendship. Trust. Then, later, you can worry about the truth.

VINCE LURCHES AWAKE, eyes wide, staring.

Lunges forward. Into the wall. WHAP! Slumps to the floor, out cold. Jonathan's head snaps toward the sound.

JONATHAN

What was that?

MANDY'S APARTMENT

Jill moves her piece one space forward.

JILL

But how do you know you can trust him? That this isn't all some big act to win you over?

MANDY

Oh, come on, Jill! What kind of nut-job pretends to be blind?

JILL

Ya got me there, girl!

The two of them burst out laughing.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Jonathan sits at the kitchen table, squinting a little, but no dark glasses. Clearly his sight is returning.

Dirk strides in, plops a manila file folder in front of him: "JONATHAN BLACK" in block letters across the front.

JONATHAN

What's this?

DIRK
Your new identity.

Jonathan opens it: Pages of notes. Some kind of diagram.

DIRK (CONT'D)
I was up all night putting it
together.

Jonathan scans the first page.

JONATHAN
What the hell...

DIRK
You're blind. Have been for years.
Your friends, family, career, all
of that no longer exists.

JONATHAN
When I talked about "straightening
things out," this wasn't exactly--

DIRK
There's more: Every woman you've
ever been with, every date you've
had in the past three years, never
happened.

JONATHAN
Don't I wish.

DIRK
I'm serious. You're supposed to be
blind. Mandy's gonna have
questions. You'll need to know the
answers.

Jonathan begins leafing through the pages.

JONATHAN
Okay, I'm blind. So, I guess I'm
not a photographer anymore?

DIRK
We'll get to that. Now, like I
said, no dates for the past three
years. You've been unable to be
intimate with any woman. Not since
the accident.

Jonathan looks up at him.