

Reasons to be Pretty

Scene 5

At a restaurant. Greg stands, waiting in the lobby. Checks his watch once or twice, watching the door. After a moment, Steph walks past. They see each other and stop cold. Silence for a moment.

GREG. ... Steph.

STEPH. Oh. Hi.

GREG. Hey.

STEPH. Wow. I'm ...

GREG. Surprise. *(Steph nods her head, unsure what to do next. Greg waits.)*

STEPH. Huh. So, this is ... you know. Funny.

GREG. Yep.

STEPH. Seeing you here.

GREG. Right.

STEPH. Yeah, it's ... ummm ... I'm working over at a salon nearby, so that's ... but yeah.

GREG. What're you ... so, are you, like, in there having dinner or something? / A meal?

STEPH. Uh-huh. / Dinner.

GREG. 'Kay.

STEPH. Yep. You?

GREG. Waiting. *(Points.)* We had a double-header tonight, so ... that's why I'm dressed like this. /
Casual male. Attire.

STEPH. Ahhh. / Cool.

GREG. Ummm-hmmm. *(Beat.)* And are you ... you know?

STEPH. What?

GREG. You *know*. With your new *salon* buddies?

STEPH. No.

GREG. OK. Not your parents, though. I mean, that'd be kinda weird – not *weird*, but – on a, like,
Wednesday night. So ...

STEPH. No.

GREG. Carly?

STEPH. Nope, not anybody you know ...

GREG. I see. Good. *(Backtracks.)* I just mean ... you know, wouldn't wanna see anybody that
we're both friends with. / Or ...

STEPH. Uh-huh. / And you? Who're you waiting for?

GREG. Just ... people. / From work.

STEPH. Oh. / I see. Not a girl?

GREG. ... no.

STEPH. Me either. *(Grins.)* I mean, I'm not with a girl, either. / So ...

GREG. 'Kay. / Although that would explain a *lot*.

STEPH. Ha-ha. *(Beat.)* It's just dinner.

GREG. Fine.

STEPH. Yes, it is. It's a very fine and nice time that I'm having. It's a great place.

GREG. I like it, too ... I mean, the *lobby*.

STEPH. I don't know why we never came here as a couple. Back then, I'm saying.

GREG. No, yeah, I get what you mean. I'm not sure, actually ... little bit out of town, I suppose.

STEPH. That might be it.

GREG. 'Cause we did like to eat out, didn't we? I mean, back in the ... *yesteryear*.

STEPH. We did, yes.

GREG. All kinds of spots.

STEPH. Mmmmm.

GREG. That's ... remember that crazy little, what do they call it, *fondue* restaurant? With all the cheese sauces and crap like that?

STEPH. Which, with the...? / Oh, sure. Right.

GREG. Yeah. That one. / Had that alpine-looking roof on it and everybody running around in, whatevertheycallem? *Lederhosen* or something like that ... "The Cheddar Hut." Welcome to the Cheddar Hut!

STEPH. Exactly! (*Laughs.*) That was funny ...

GREG. Yep. Good eats, though.

STEPH. True.

GREG. I mean, for all the silliness.

STEPH. Right ... (*They stand for a moment, nodding. Unsure what else to say to each other. Greg checks the time.*)

GREG. If you need to go, you should ...

STEPH. Yeah, probably. Just going to the ladies' room, don't wanna appear like I took off or anything ...

GREG. No.

STEPH. Not a good first impression.

GREG. Oh ... so, I mean ... this is, like, a first date or something?

STEPH. Yep. Well, I've actually known him for a while, but - doesn't matter. / Yes.

GREG. I see. / That's ... huh. Huh-huh-huh.

STEPH. What?

GREG. Nothing. (*Smiles.*) Good for you.

STEPH. I'll bet ...

GREG. No, seriously. Congrats.

STEPH. You're not wishing me "good luck," Greg, I know you. You're wishing the guy gets a bone stuck in his throat or something ...

GREG. ... yeah, but I hope *you* have a good time. (*Beat.*) And you can always kill his pets if you don't.

STEPH. Ha! (*Laughs.*) Whatever ...

GREG. Uh-huh. What-ever.

STEPH. That's ... I mean, I know we went through a bit of shit there recently, a few crappy months or whatnot, but it doesn't hurt to wish another person well, really doesn't.

GREG. OK.

STEPH. "OK" what? Why do you always answer me or other people with something so ... God, so fucking abstruse in response to what we say to you? Why do you do that?

GREG. Steph, you know what? I don't even know a word that could *describe* that word ... let alone what that one means, so I doubt I'm being that. Whatever it is. (*Beat.*) And ya know what? I read a *lot*, so ... that's ...

STEPH. No, but *I'm* trying to make a life for myself, OK? Trying to grow and, and ... shit. Nothing.

GREG. Good, go for it. Knock yourself out.

STEPH. And it's just, like ... impossible for you to wish me happiness, right? To hope that I might have that happen to me?

GREG. You know what, it might be a little early to ask me to perform "big-hearted," OK? *(Beat.)* You're at a good restaurant, I can only imagine that you're with some decent guy who's gonna treat you well and drives a nice car and thinks you're the fucking apple of his eye – don't be surprised when he tries to get in your panties if you go for anything more than the ziti, but – I'll bet he's amazing and I hope he is the height of *passion* and all that ... Stephanie, I wish you only the best. I'm serious when I say this: Have a beautiful life. Now can you go back in there and just let me wait for my friends? Huh?

STEPH. *(To herself.)* ... you're such a prick.

GREG. That's even classier when you're wearing a dress.

STEPH. Fuck you. I'm trying to look pretty, alright?! I'm *trying* to make myself feel better because my former boyfriend – this guy that I gave a whole lot of my heart to – couldn't find me attractive and now it keeps me awake at night, wondering what's wrong with me. Why I was so unappealing to him ... *(Beat.)* So, yeah, I'm wearing a *skirt* tonight so that I feel a little sexier, or cuter or, you know ... what the *hell* do you care?

GREG. I don't. I'm not at all worried about it.

STEPH. Bullshit ...

GREG. Bull-shit.

STEPH. I see you looking at me – even now I can see you glancing down at my legs and all that crap ... you totally miss me. My body.

GREG. Wow ... you're going for the motherlode tonight, huh?

STEPH. The fuck's that mean?

GREG. You want this new guy *and* me, 's that it? / Approval from the whole damn group ...

STEPH. *No* ... / That's not what I'm ...

GREG. Well, you know what, fine, I'll toss you a bone, makes you feel any better – I just can't *live* with myself knowing that I've made you feel bad ... *(Smirks.)* Listen, you look beautiful, yes, you do, but so what? You never wore that get-up with me, so it doesn't exactly thrill me to tell you all that, build you up about your dress ...

STEPH. It's new. And it's a *skirt*, not a dress.

GREG. Whatever! Bought for tonight, I suppose.

STEPH. Yes.

GREG. That's great.

STEPH. I had to have something.

GREG. Sure.

STEPH. You'd do the same thing ...

GREG. Yeah? Really? Look at me, you recognize anything I've got on?

STEPH. Of course ...

GREG. Well, then, I guess your little theory there is full of shit ...

STEPH. What's that mean?

GREG. Nothing. / Just forget it ...

STEPH. No, what? / ... so you are meeting someone then, is that what you're saying? *(Greg doesn't respond immediately – he glances at his watch again while Steph looks over her shoulder, back into the restaurant.)*

GREG. No. Maybe. / Yes.

STEPH. I see / Is it that *new* girl?

GREG. No! I've never even met her before.

STEPH. But it's a date.

GREG. It's a *meeting*. Some friends are just, you know ... introducing us.

STEPH. Sure.

GREG. It's more of a gathering, really. / That's all. At the bar ...

STEPH. Oh. / *Here?*

GREG. Not my idea.

STEPH. That's terrific ...

GREG. It's whatever. (*Beat.*) Least I didn't get all dressed up for it ...

STEPH. Well, that just makes you a slob, then, doesn't it?

GREG. ... and so what does that make you? (*Without thinking Steph reaches over and slaps Greg across the face. He doesn't react. She glances around, feeling a bit ashamed.*)

STEPH. Fuck ... I'm sorry.

GREG. That's alright. I'm sure they can wire it shut and I can still have the *soup* ...

STEPH. Seriously, are you OK?

GREG. I'm fine.

STEPH. Lemme see ... (*Tries to look.*) Here ...

GREG. No.

STEPH. Greg, let me ...

GREG. Stop it.

STEPH. I didn't mean to do it, I just ...

GREG. Stephanie, drop it! For once just shut up and fucking let it go ... (*Beat.*) You can't just turn it off and on, alright, however you're feeling about a person. You can't.

STEPH. I'm not, I'm ... / (*Reaches out.*) Please.

GREG. NO. / *Don't.* You can walk out on me for ... for some *perceived* slight that I did you, some horrible judgment I made about your womanhood, you can swear at me and, and, hit me – whatever the hell suits you, you just go ahead and do, that's always been the way with you – but you're not gonna be able to make up with me any time you want or look at my cheek right now or call me when this miserable shithead that you're out with tonight hurts you, because he is gonna, he will, he's a guy and so it's a done deal ... he will find a way to damage you and that's a fact. But you know what? I will not be there for you. I won't be. (*Beat.*) You will be on your own then and you're gonna realize I wasn't so bad ...

STEPH. I'll ... I'm going back to dinner now.

GREG. You do that.

STEPH. We're almost done, so I'll ...

GREG. No, don't worry about it.

STEPH. I'm *not* staying.

GREG. Please don't make a scene, OK? Just be a little mature here ... if that's not too ...

STEPH. Yeah, so what do you suggest, then, huh?

GREG. Simple. I'm gonna wait here – hopefully a doctor will come along and be able to reset my jaw – then I'm gonna nab my friends as they arrive and we'll go to some other place.

STEPH. Oh.

GREG. So ...

STEPH. You'd do that?

GREG. Of course. 'S just a bar, right? / They got *Budweiser* all over town, so ...

STEPH. Yeah, but ... / ... that's ...

GREG. I don't wanna run the risk of you hitting my date or anything. / Don't even know her *name* yet ...

STEPH. Right. / *(Smiles.)* Thanks ...

GREG. No prob'.

STEPH. OK, so ... then ... *(Thinking.)* Wow, that's really kind of unexpected from you, so thank you. I'm surprised, I guess. Yeah. I just think that's really nice, so ...

GREG. Yeah. I'll see you some time ... oh, and remind the new guy to add 9-1-1 to his speed dial. Might save his life.

STEPH. Ha-ha.

GREG. Have fun.

STEPH. *Sure.*

GREG. No, honestly. Do. *(Beat.)* Bet he drives a ... convertible, right? / Hmm?

STEPH. You suck. / Yes.

GREG. It's a gift.

STEPH. *Anyways ...*

GREG. Ha! So long.

STEPH. You, too. Enjoy yourself, I guess ...

GREG. I don't know how anything can surpass the fun I've already had, but ...

STEPH. You're such a dick ... *(Smiles.)* 'Bye. *(Stephanie starts off – she is almost gone when Greg calls out to her.)*

GREG. Steph? *(Waits for her to turn.)* You really do look great in your little outfit there. With all that ... whatever the hell it is.

STEPH. I dunno. It's called "asymmetrical." / The way it's cut like that, I mean. So ...

GREG. Cool ... / Huh. That's ... yeah. *(She smiles at him and disappears. Greg watches her go.)*