

Act One: Setup

INT. CAROLYN'S APT. - DAY

Valentines Day morning. Big energy day as CAROLYN awakes at the dining table later than hoped, paperwork neatly spread around her laptop in complete contrast the disarray of the kitchen. She wears a smudged cooking smock, having spent most of the night multi-tasking: sorting out the financials, polishing a Power Point presentation of Love Notes' expansion plans in preparation for today's acquisition bid from American Salutations, and making special chocolate confections for Valentines Day. Though tired, she's all about the meeting with Kendra and optimistic about the good things certain to come. A quick call to BETH at the office to remind she's going to be late because of a bank appointment, then she nabs the morning paper off the stoop. A single long-stem rose is tucked in its fold, DR. RICHARD WRIGHT's picture on the front page. Carolyn smiles, though already running slightly behind schedule.

The chime of her Blackberry alerts Carolyn to an incoming text message. It's from Richard, IMing his valentine thoughts of her from the hospital, his looking forward to their dinner date tonight at Le Coeur Rouge. Carolyn pops in the shower missing the call from Aunt Nicole, who leaves a message that she'll be flying into town this afternoon, not quite certain when because of delayed flights, and will get together with her before going over to see Carolyn's mother. There's a photo near the answering machine showing Aunt Nicole standing beside Carolyn's Dad, her Mom on the other side of him -- two sisters and the man that divides them?

INT. LOVE NOTES

Beth is pissed by the time she hangs up with Carolyn. Today's the one year anniversary at Love Notes -- she was it's first employee -- and Carolyn can't even be bothered to remember! Well, one thing Beth remembers was the promise of a decent health coverage, which she still waiting for from Carolyn.

INT. HOSPITAL

Richard preps ETHAN for his artificial heart transplant surgery and explains to him and ELAINE how he met Carolyn. He points out how lucky Ethan was to have had his condition caught in time to save his life as women are far less fortunate in matters of healthcare and the heart, citing facts and that heart disease is the leading cause of death for women today. Elaine ascribes it to women possibly loving too much, too often having to love for two people (a veiled dig at Ethan?).

INT. PEDESTRIAN TUNNEL

Enroute to the gym, Carolyn encounters HOMELESS MAN in a wheelchair -- perhaps the saddest broken man on earth, rheumy-eyed and face wet with tears. He holds a sign: "The End Is Tears." Despite how hopeless the man seems, Carolyn attempts to mollify him with an assurance that things will get better. But without any cash on her, Carol can do nothing but drop one of her chocolate mocha muffins in his alms bucket.

What with the metal clanging from inside the gym and the grim look the Homeless Man gives Carolyn, she heads inside as the warning lights flash, entirely creeped out.

INT. GYM

After overhearing phone conversation between Carolyn and Richard, Molly discloses Richard's going to propose marriage tonight. Carolyn insists she'll say no, that while Richard's a great guy, lightning has never struck -- at least not for her -- in the unmistakable way that it does in the movies, and Molly blows a gasket. Carolyn's argument that love, like business, is about risk and leaps of faith, not about guarantees, compromise and settling for less, doesn't fly with Molly. She warns Carolyn, "Learn from the past and invest in the present, or else face the bleak, lonely future I wake up to every day."

Despite the bad air between them, Molly assures that she'll be available to look over the acquisition offer this afternoon.

INT. BANK

Unable to secure another SBA loan for her company, Carolyn is forced to cash out most of her savings in order to make payroll, utterly confident the meeting with Kendra will result in a lucrative offer. The LOAN OFFICER commends her faith but cautions that faith alone is rarely enough to sustain a business through the hard times, which Carolyn immediately fires back is precisely why business -- and people -- survive and flourish everyday. Without faith in your greatest potential, whether it be in business or in love, why go on?

INT. O.R.

As Ethan's surgery begins, Richard confesses he's proposing to Carolyn tonight. DR. VICTORIA PRINGLE damn near goes into shock.

INT. LOVE NOTES

Carolyn arrives, offering her crappy, freshly baked mocha chocolate muffins to everybody -- which nobody will eat -- and intent on getting things in order for the 2 PM presentation to Kendra. Her anger from earlier still simmering, a dig from Beth about why, given Carolyn being severely allergic to chocolate, she wastes so much time pursuing something she can never personally have, leads to a minor blowout between them. Carolyn confides how shaky finances are, how desperately needed the deal with American Salutations is, and admits that she's a little frazzled after spending nearly every hour of every day this past week jamming the presentation together. And to top it off, now she has to drop off Richard's Valentine gift at the hospital knowing that he's going to propose tonight and that she'll likely have to break up with him because of it. She puts the FedEx package Beth gives her aside and uses the opportunity to refill The Bean Counter's card stock to get a grande of her favorite coffee.

Big box of cards in hand, Carolyn heads to the Mill Building's clunky old elevator.

INT. MILL BLDG. - LOBBY

Overloaded with her box of Love Notes, enroute to The Bean Counter across the street something familiar strikes Carolyn about the guy (BRETT) she glimpses entering her

building's elevator, but his face is obscured by her burden and the big bouquet of yellow roses he carries.

EXT./INT. - THE BEAN COUNTER

A "For Sale" sign in the window as Carolyn plops her load of cards on the counter, inadvertently cutting off NATE in line, who wears a cowboy hat. He takes it in good-natured, Texan stride and helps pick up some Love Notes that've fallen on floor, one of which he comments on. Carolyn orders her grande coffee with considerable specificity, which amuses Nate, and she briefly explains to him the merits of the coffee here, though the guy who entered the elevator is gnawing at her. When it dawns, Carolyn bolts from the coffee shop.

EXT. MILL BLDG.

Former-beau Brett exits the building only to be confronted by Carolyn. He's so gushingly sentimental and desperately still-in-love, despite her breaking up with him a year ago, that's it endearing. He admits he'd been childish before, and that he chickened out just now upstairs at her office, but the fact is he's here to propose to Carolyn. Brett whips out the ring and asks her to marry him. Her rejection -- as gentle as it is -- sends Brett into a diatribe that totally blindsides Carolyn, about her fear of commitment and "naive" views of true love. His withering verbal assault sends Carolyn reeling. She retreats from him, disoriented by a Passer-by's tangle of mylar heart balloons. She swats at the balloons, stumbles haphazardly into the busy street where an oncoming taxicab stomps its brakes -- too late -- Carolyn does a total Brad Pitt over the hood, right out of MEET JOE BLACK! (Obviously, we'll cut out of scene at Carolyn's POV of the taxi an instant before it smashes into her.)

End Act One

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