

Love and stuffed chicken wings
Alex Whitmer

alexwhitmer@yahoo.com

EXT. MODEST HOME - SUBURBIA - DAY

Postcard Morning.

The front door opens, JOHN SMITH, late 30s, average-looking office geek comfortable in gray suits, steps out, sucks in the morning air. Behind him, COURTNEY ZIMMER, late 20s, an animated denim girl, steps out. A quick kiss.

COURTNEY
I'm working late tonight.

JOHN
Me too. Catch you for dinner?

COURTNEY
Something romantic. Amber's on Fifth? Eight-ish?

JOHN
Eight-thirty sharp.

John hops in a non-descript sedan, Courtney a red vintage Mustang. Both drive opposite directions, vanish into an endless suburbia.

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING – DAY

John parks, enters the building.

INT. LOBBY – OFFICE BUILDING – DAY

Sterile glass and steel.

John enters through a revolving door, acknowledges other zombie employees. He enters an office.

OFFICE

Corporate ice.

SYBIL WINTERS, early 30s, a hint she used to be pretty, stuffed into a gray suit she pretends still fits, freshens her make-up.

John enters.

SYBIL
Late. Monday no less.

JOHN
Four minutes.

SYBIL

Which leaves you only six.

Sybil leans against the desk, unbuttons her blouse.

SYBIL

Make it up tomorrow. Hands in your pockets.

John obeys, drops to his knees in front of Sybil, kisses her exposed belly.

SYBIL

How I am supposed to enjoy this? Need you to take this relationship more seriously.

Sybil hikes her skirt, checks her watch as she stuffs John's head between her legs.

SYBIL

Clock's ticking. Five minutes to pleasure me.

EXT. FLOWER SHOP – DAY

Courtney parks outside COURTNEY'S FLOWERS AND GIFTS, unlocks the door, enters.

INT. FLOWER SHOP – DAY

Color and texture floor to ceiling.

Courtney sets her purse behind the counter, flips on the lights.

DAVID FINNEY, late 20s, rugged handsome, enters. hands a rose to Courtney.

DAVID

We meeting for lunch?

COURTNEY

Thought of nothing else all weekend.

Both look to the door, steal a few kisses. David tugs her behind the counter, drops to his knees, untucks her shirt, kisses her belly.

DAVID

You're way better than coffee.

A playful bite, and David heads for the door. Courtney squeezes her thighs together.

COURTNEY

Going to leave her like this?

DAVID

'Till lunch! Thai ok?

COURTNEY

Stuffed chicken wings. Ask for extra cucumber sauce.

INT. AMBER'S ON FIFTH – NIGHT

Upscale and crowded. All the patrons are dressed in gray, staff in black and white. In the b.g. a classical quartet, dressed in black.

John, still in gray, and Courtney, classy in red and the only color in the place, enjoy dinner.

JOHN

Tried to call you.

COURTNEY.

Had a wierd day. A customer. Old woman.

FLASHBACK

INT. FLOWER SHOP – DAY

Courtney arranges bouquets when an OLD WOMAN walks in.

COURTNEY

Help you find something?

OLD WOMAN

Funeral.

COURTNEY

Roses are always ...

OLD WOMAN

... Young girl. Daisys -- maybe.

As Courtney prepares a bouquet with daisys, the woman approaches the counter, picks up a pen attached by a cord. She swings the pen back and forth, back and forth.

OLD WOMAN

Like this they found her.

Courtney drops the bouquet, GO TO SLOW MOTION as she watches the pen swing back and forth. RETURN TO REGULAR SPEED.

END FLASHBACK

EXT. AMBERS ON FIFTH – NIGHT

John and Courtney exit, take a stroll, pass a travel agent's shop.

COURTNEY

We ever going to take that romantic vacation to Florence?

JOHN

Someday. When work isn't so -- demanding. Sure you don't want to just go see Miami? The beach?

COURTNEY

I need to see a place with a past. Roots.

JOHN

Miami has history.

COURTNEY

Miami has hotels. Jesus, John, it's a revolving door for the dying. You promised me Florence.

JOHN

People don't die in Florence?

COURTNEY

Don't be an idiot.

INT. OFFICE LOBBY – DAY

John rushes through the revolving door. Clock reads four minutes to eight.

OFFICE

John steps in, Sybil is already spraying her hair, popping her buttons.

JOHN

Could have been someone else walking in.

SYBIL

You clomp your feet. Sit.

John sits, Sybil straddles his hips, checks her watch.

JOHN

After this I'd like to discuss -- my vacation time.

SYBIL

Less talk. Work with me here.

INT. FLOWER SHOP – DAY

Courtney glances at the clock. It's eleven-thirty. She finger-combs her hair as the door opens.

David steps in, holds up a bag.

DAVID

Hope you don't mind burritos. Ordered them with extra sour cream.

COURTNEY

I'll pour the wine.

David turns the sign to closed, locks the door. They embrace, kiss.

COURTNEY

Not here.

STORAGE ROOM

Boxes, wrap, clutter.

Courtney and David step in, tug at each others clothes.

COURTNEY

I dream we can do this somewhere more -- intimate someday.

As David kisses down Courtney's belly ...

DAVID

All I see is you.

As Courtney unsnaps her jeans, pushes them to her knees ...

COURTNEY

It's words like that that keep me coming back for more.

DAVID

Nothing else?

Courtney's FACE is awash in pleasure.

COURTNEY

That tongue of yours has a lot to do with it.

CUT TO

INT. JOHN AND COURTNEY'S BEDROOM – NIGHT

Stark. Colorless. Cold.

John and Courtney climb under the covers.

JOHN

I sat with my boss today. I can have four weeks in June.

A sweet embrace.

COURTNEY

Florence! Yes! Was she angry?

JOHN

No, she took it well. I'll pick up some brochures tomorrow. Start planning this thing.

INT. OFFICE LOBBY – DAY

John rushes in. Clock reads eight.

OFFICE

John steps in.

SYBIL

I'm menstrating. Come see me in five days.

JOHN

Five days. Ok. Right. I'll mark the calendar.

Door closes.

INT. STOREROOM - FLOWER SHOP – DAY

Courtney and David make love. A soft jazz plays, to-go containers litter the floor.

COURTNEY

I want you to come to Florence with me.

She orgasms, rolls off David.

COURTNEY

Little villa. Drink wine. Make love in the morning sun.

CUT TO

As David leaves, he hands Courtney an envelope sticking through the mail slot.

DAVID

Something here for you. See you tomorrow.

Courtney points to her vagina.

COURTNEY

She'll be waiting!

The door closes, Courtney opens the envelope, reads a letter.

INT. JOHN'S OFFICE – DAY

Windowless. Behind him a calendar with five days marked in red, the only color in the room. One day is Xed out.

John signs and stamps reams of paper work. The phone rings. Deadpan, John answers.

JOHN

John Smith speaking.

INT. FLOWER SHOP – DAY

An emotional and tearful Courtney struggles to speak into the phone.

EXT. GRAVESIDE - DAY

Martin and Courtney watch as a casket is lowered. Courtney throws dirt into the hole.

INT. JOHN'S SEDAN – MOVING – DAY

John drives. Courtney watches the trees roll by.

JOHN

I thought you hated your father.

COURTNEY

I didn't hate him. Why do you have to say stupid shit all the time? Wasn't his fault.

JOHN

Sorry. Gonna keep the estate?

COURTNEY

Haunted -- I don't know. Can we talk about something else?

INT. JOHN AND COURTNEY'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Courtney pees, looks at a pregnancy strip. Anguish.

COURTNEY

Fuck.

BEDROOM

Courtney sits on the bed, rubs her belly, stares at walls. John reads MIAMI BROCHURES.

JOHN

Fascinating place.

INT. JOHN'S OFFICE – DAY

John enters, marks another day in the red zone, sits. A quick rub of the hands, and ...

JOHN

Let's get to it!

He signs and stamps a never-diminishing stack of documents.

EXT. FLOWER SHOP – DAY

A closed sign hangs on the door. David peeks through, taps. No answer.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD – DAY

Courtney lifts a plume of dry earth as she drives. Music blares. Her cell rings unanswered.

EXT. COUNTRY WINE ESTATE – DAY

Lush gardens, acres of grapes.

Courtney parks, exits. She stands intimidated by the looming home. She rubs her belly.

INT. ESTATE – DAY

Nothing but white. White walls, furniture under white sheets.

Courtney enters, looks at the stairwell, shakes and sweats as ...

FLASHBACK

... A WOMAN, mid 30s, hangs by a rope, swings back and forth, back and forth.

END FLASHBACK

EXT. COUNTRY WINE ESTATE – DAY

Courtney collapses on the lawn, vomits. Her cell rings unanswered. She remembers ...

FLASHBACK

... the old woman swings the pen back and forth.

OLD WOMAN

Like this they found her. Back and forth. Back and forth. White as a ghost she was.

END FLASHBACK

INT. JOHN AND COURTNEY'S LIVING ROOM – NIGHT

White wall, beige carpet. A large black television is surrounded by black furniture, all jammed to one side. The rest of the room is barren.

John reads the Miami brochures. Courtney watches color movies.

JOHN

Says here Miami was founded in 1566 by one Pedro Menéndez. Claimed it for Spain. Got the Miami circle, Cape Florida lighthouse. Yep. Whole lotta history here.

As Courtney heads for the door ...

JOHN

Fishing, bowling. Swimming obviously.

As Courtney walks out ...

JOHN

You can visit the botanical gardens. I know you like that stuff. Hello?

John switches to B&W movies, reads the brochures.

JOHN

Snorkling.

INT. ESTATE FOYER – NIGHT

A ghostly moonlight bathes the white room.

The door creaks open, Courtney steps in. She carries cans of paint.

She stands under the stairwell, looks up.

COURTNEY
I'm not afraid of you anymore.

FLASHBACK

A YOUNG COURTNEY, 15, steps into the foyer just as ...

... the woman leaps from the bannister, hangs herself.

YOUNG COURTNEY
Mama! Mama!

The dying woman recognizes Courtney, tries to speak as she swings back and forth. Then all is still.

The hung woman's bladder relaxes, unleashes a stream of pee. GO TO SLOW MOTION as the pee hits the floor, flows toward ...

Courtney. She stands traumatized in a puddle. RETURN TO REGULAR SPEED as the woman's eyes burst open. She holds her hand out toward Courtney.

WOMAN
Come with me.

END FLASHBACK

Courtney opens the cans of paint, proceeds to 'Jackson Pollack' the room; walls, ceiling and covered furniture drip in splattered paint.

COURTNEY
You're dead god damn it.

MORNING

A bright morning sun punches through the windows, falls on ...

... Courtney sleeps curled in a ball. The room is awash in color.

INT. JOHN'S OFFICE – DAY

Next to the calendar, a page torn from the Miami brochure is taped to the wall. John makes a third X, sits, continues his endless sign and stamp, sign and stamp. Courtney steps in, covered with paint.

JOHN

What the hell happened to you?

Courtney looks at the brochure page, sets keys on John's desk.

COURTNEY

I'm not going to Miami. Not ever.

Courtney then sees the calendar, flips a few pages, sees five days blocked out each month.

COURTNEY

Your girlfriend's cycle?

JOHN

What? I don't have ...

COURTNEY

... I've decided to keep the estate.

JOHN

What are you talking about?

COURTNEY

What am I talking about? What am I talking about? I grow flowers while you grow old.

JOHN

I thought we were, you know -- us. Always be us. I don't get ...

COURTNEY

... The only thing in your office is a torn out page of place I never want to see, and somebody else's menstrual cycle.

JOHN

Courtney, c'mon. Your still upset. I ...

COURTNEY

... need color.

A gray-clad Sybil sticks her head in.

SYBIL

Sorry, just need to check something.

Sybil makes an X on the calendar, turns to leave.

COURTNEY

Change in your cycle?

Off guard ...

SYBIL

I'm sorry?

COURTNEY

Your period. Over a day early?

SYBIL

This is awkward.

COURTNEY

Not for me.

EXT. WINE ESTATE – DAY

Courtney paints the front door bright red as ...

... a car makes its way up the long drive.

A smiling Courtney dashed for the drive as Dave parks, steps out. He holds up a bag.

DAVE

Chicken wings! Favorite!

COURTNEY

I'll get the wine.

INT. ESTATE FOYER – DAY

Courtney enters the newly painted foyer; reds and golds cover the wall. Draperies, fresh flowers and plush furnishings bring the place to life.

As Courtney steps into an adjoining room, Dave steps in to the foyer, sees ...

... Courtney hung from the stairwell.

He stumbles backwards, falls through the front door.

EXT WINE ESTATE – DAY

Courtney steps out with wine and a blanket, sees ...

COURTNEY

I want your cute butt naked under that oak --
David? You o.k.?

David's face is white, his shoes wet. Courtney slowly turns, looks in the through the door.

COURTNEY

Mama?

FADE OUT

Roll credits over a FREEZE image of the estate with a FOR SALE sign placed in front.

CUT TO

An Air Italia jet floats over endless clouds tinged with dawn.

COURTNEY (V.O.)

I thought I was safe. There in -- suburbia. Deep in
a womb -- protecting me. Turns out chasing away
your past is harder than I thought. More color
maybe.

A baby cries.

COURTNEY (V.O.)

Don't be afraid. Mama hates Italy.