

THE EX FACTOR

(A Manhattan street outside a museum)

DELIA: Oh, I need to catch my breath.

OLIVER: I know. How amazing is that guy?

DELIA: It was definitely worth the wait on that line.

OLIVER: I don't think he gets enough credit.

DELIA: Really? That was a pretty long line for some guy who doesn't get enough credit.

OLIVER: I guess. But still, you say Italian Renaissance to most people, what are you going to get? Michaelangelo, DaVinci...

DELIA: Rafael, Botticelli, Titian. I guess, you're right.

OLIVER: You never hear folks talk about Caravaggio.

DELIA: Except in conversations like this, where people talk about how nobody talks about him.

OLIVER: *(Broad smile)* Got me there. Anyway, great call. I'm glad we didn't miss this.

DELIA: Oh, good. I'm so glad you like him too.

OLIVER: Yeah. I guess we can thank Frank for that, right?

DELIA: Um, Frank? How does he -

OLIVER: Well, didn't you tell me that when you and Frank were in Florence, that he -

DELIA: Oh, yeah. I guess he did really turn me onto Caravaggio that week. So thanks, Frank. You know, Oliver, on top of everything else that's wonderful about you, I love that you're just not jealous at all about my past relationships.

OLIVER: Well, that's not exactly true. I mean sometimes I regret missing out on all those years we could have been together, when you were with Frank, and Rafe.

DELIA: Well, we hadn't met yet.

OLIVER: I'm just saying. But hey, those guys were just stepping stones that brought you to me. So that's how I look at it.

DELIA: I think that's lovely. Oh, I got that Iranian movie you wanted to see from Netflix.

OLIVER: A Separation, great. Let's watch that tonight.

DELIA: Should we get something to eat first, or do you want to eat back at my place?

OLIVER: Oh, let's go to that, what was that place that Rafe used to take you to? That was great.

DELIA: SriPraPhai? That's in Woodside. You really want to go all the way out there?

OLIVER: Yeah, yeah, yeah. They had all that fish and those incredible noodles, what were they called?

DELIA: Drunken noodles. Okay, you convinced me.

OLIVER: Man, Italian painting, foreign films and Thai food. (*Shouted*) I love New York.

DELIA: And I love you.

OLIVER: (*With a smile*) I hate when you say that.

DELIA: Why?

OLIVER: You say I love you and I answer back that I love *you*, and it's like a ritual or like I'm returning a serve. I want my "I love yous" to ring of spontaneity, to be these irrepressible eruptions of feeling. Because I really, really, really love you Delia. I know adding reallys doesn't help that much, but I do love you, Delia.

(DELIA and OLIVER kiss)

OLIVER: Sorry to hit you at a vulnerable moment, but have you thought about what I said?

DELIA: Oliver, you know, I've thought of pretty much nothing else for this last week.

OLIVER: So, did you get to yes yet? How many places could you take this in a week?

DELIA: I got to yes pretty quickly, Oliver. I told you that. What I was doing this week was *living* with yes and seeing how it felt. Moving in with somebody is a big step. I know you want to get married; I know you want to have kids.

OLIVER: Whoa, I thought you wanted that too.

DELIA: I do, definitely. (*Beat*) I don't know how to say this tactfully, but I need to be sure that I want those things with you.

OLIVER: Oh. Well, no, that's...I mean, of course we both have to be sure. I wouldn't want to do this if I thought you weren't sure, or as sure as you can get about these things.

DELIA: So that's all I'm saying.

OLIVER: But the way I see it, we been kind of unfolding to each other as the days go on. It seems like we have so much in common. And we've never even had a fight and it's been almost a year.

DELIA: That cuts both ways.

OLIVER: I get that. The sex is...

DELIA: (*Broad smile*) The sex definitely is. No issues there. I mean, really, Oliver, I don't have any issues as such. For me, it's all about getting to know each other. I think that's where I get caught up.

OLIVER: How long did you know Frank before you guys shacked up?

DELIA: Four months? About that. You know, it's not like there was an official ceremony. All of a sudden he was just living there.

OLIVER: And Rafe?

DELIA: Uh, two weeks. But I was so young. And Rafe, well, Rafe was Rafe. You know, we thought we owned the world.

OLIVER: Two weeks?

DELIA: Oliver, the reason I'm more cautious now is because I learned from what happened in the past, how I got lost in my impulsivity. This is going to sound a little silly, I know, but we met in the winter...

OLIVER: The Isabel Allende reading at the 92nd St. Y.

DELIA: ...and we've navigated through the spring and summer. And now...

OLIVER: (*OLIVER hums the theme from Vivaldi's Autumn from the Four Seasons*)

DELIA: What is that, autumn from the Four Seasons? You're so funny.

OLIVER: And that's what's missing from the equation for you, fall?

DELIA: It's just a metaphor. You've told me so much about yourself. And I do love listening to those stories of your family and you growing up. You paint such a vivid picture. But there's one part of your life I don't think you've ever talked about.

OLIVER: (*Beat*) Sylvia.

DELIA: Yeah. And you know, Oliver, I never wanted to pry because I thought maybe that was a particularly painful memory for you.

OLIVER: Oh, that's so funny. No, it's not. It's just the opposite. I never talked about it because you never asked and I thought maybe you find these things painful to hear.

DELIA: Oh, that *is* funny. But you've heard me talk about Rafe and Frank. You have no problem with my past. I am right about that, right?

OLIVER: Definitely. I don't know, I guess 'cause Sylvia and I were actually married for three years, I thought maybe that might, um – I don't know.

DELIA: Honestly, Oliver, that just makes me more curious. I don't even know what Sylvia looked like. And I love that you were sensitive to my feelings. But I think talking about these things actually makes us stronger, gives us more confidence in who we are.

OLIVER: Well, I definitely agree with that.

DELIA: Good. So?

OLIVER: But before I say anything, I want to make it crystal clear, I wasn't trying to hide anything. It's over, Sylvia and I.

DELIA: That's not where I'm going with this. I just think it says something about you, the relationship you two guys had. And who she was. It's like that photo of you on your tricycle. It helps me complete the picture of the man I love.

OLIVER: Okay. So, Sylvia. Where do I start?

DELIA: How did you guys meet?

OLIVER: Ah, that was interesting.

(Scene shifts to OLIVER and SYLVIA sitting at computer consoles in different locations, each wearing a headset)

SYLVIA: Hey, thanks. This fuckin' bitch bat lady thing is taking so long to bring down that my computer keeps crashing.

OLIVER: No problem. She's called a Morroval. I don't know where they get these names from. She heals really quickly though, that's why you're having so much trouble.

SYLVIA: Yeah, she sure looks healthy. What a bod on this babe. *Ma-rone!*

OLIVER: We need a lot of DPS. Let me start off with Heart Seeker, that'll do a ton of damage.

SYLVIA: Whoa, the nuclear option. Cool.

OLIVER: Three second induction, though. And a long cool down before it's good to go again.

SYLVIA: Ah, that's what they all say.

OLIVER: Excuse me?

SYLVIA: Fire away. As long as I can get in a backstab. I love a good backstab, don't you. Whoa, that got her. Let me finish her off. Rest in pieces, bitch. Let's see what she's got.

OLIVER: I hope you didn't do this for the loot.

SYLVIA: Yeah, why? She doesn't drop anything? Shit! What a waste.

OLIVER: She's like for a quest. I guess you don't have it.

SYLVIA: No. Shoot, you mean I have to do this again?

OLIVER: I'll help you. It wasn't that hard. I know where you get it.

SYLVIA: Thanks.

OLIVER: Anything else you want to do here?

SYLVIA; Um, yeah, sure. Wanna buddy up?

OLIVER: Sounds like a plan. I'm good for a few more hours. You got any time constraints?

SYLVIA: Not until work, which is like in, what time is it now? I left my watch in the bathroom.

OLIVER: It's eleven where I am.

SYLVIA: Okay, yeah, it's eleven here too. So I got a few hours, I guess. Where are you? You mind telling me?

OLIVER: No, no. I'm in New York. And I'm guessing by your accent you are too.

SYLVIA: Yep.

OLIVER: I'm in Brooklyn Heights.

SYLVIA: Oh, cool. Cobble Hill.

OLIVER: Hey, we're neighbors. Um, you okay with giving real names?

SYLVIA: To a fellow Brooklynite? Sure. I'm Sylvia.

OLIVER: Oliver.

SYLVIA: What do you do, Ollie?

OLIVER: Computer stuff. Programming and systems development.

SYLVIA: Oh, great. (*About game*) Let's go up here. Wait, my fucking PC's about to crash...no, okay, we're good.

OLIVER: What do you do?

SYLVIA: Bartender. Sunny's in Red Hook. Ever heard of it?

OLIVER: I think I know where that is. It's on the waterfront, right?

SYLVIA: That's the place.

OLIVER: Why does your PC keep crashing? Do you know?

SYLVIA: Nope.

OLIVER: I could take a look at it, since we're so close.

SYLVIA: Whoa, Ollie, you hitting on me sight unseen? I could be a dog. I could be 11.

OLIVER: I'm not hitting on you.

SYLVIA: I certainly don't look like that Morroval babe, I can tell you that.

OLIVER: I'm not hitting on you.

SYLVIA: When you said it the first time I believed you. Now I'm beginning to wonder.

Why don't you drop by Sunny's? I'm working tonight. You can scope me out and if you like what you see we can go back to my place and you can check out my circuits.

OLIVER: Um, what?

SYLVIA: Sunny's. I start at five. Oh, let's take out that troll. I think he drops a shard.

OLIVER: He doesn't drop a shard.

SYLVIA: Let's get him anyway. He looks like my ex-boyfriend. So?

OLIVER: Um, I'm not sure I can get there tonight.

SYLVIA: Whatever. Better I don't know, I guess. Wait, let me get in a backstab before you use your Heart Seeker. It does more damage that way.

OLIVER: Um, I don't think my Heart Seeker's cooled down yet.

(Scene shifts back to bus stop)

DELIA: *(Incredulous beat)* You met her playing an online video game?

OLIVER: Yep.

DELIA: I had no idea you played those.

OLIVER: Oh, yeah. Well, I had kinda lost interest by the time I met you. I basically just played that one game, although I did play it for a number of years.

DELIA: Aha. So you like those things?

OLIVER: Like I just said, not anymore. It kind of filled a void when I was unattached.

DELIA: Right. And so did you meet her at the bar?

OLIVER: Well, eventually I did go there. And get this, she looked right at me and pinned me immediately. I was really blown away that she could do that.

DELIA: Aha. Well, what happened next?

OLIVER: Next. Oh yeah. I waited until she got off, and then we went back to her place.

DELIA: Did you end up sleeping with her that night?

OLIVER: End up? I think we actually started off with that.

DELIA: Started off?

OLIVER: Well, I think so. I mean, I had to wait so long at the bar until she finished her shift, I got kind of plastered.

DELIA: *(Beat)* I hope you at least fixed her computer.

OLIVER: Well, it needed a good cleaning. I mean, she had all these viruses from all the porn sites her ex-boyfriend visited.

DELIA: *(Beat)* This is Sylvia we're talking about, right?

OLIVER: Yeah.

DELIA: The woman you married?

OLIVER: Yeah.

(Beat of contemplation by DELIA)

OLIVER: You know what I love? That second verse in Suzanne, you know:

Jesus was a sailor when he walked upon the water –

DELIA: Wait, why are you changing the subject?

OLIVER: Oh, well, it was on my mind. I guess all the Madonnas we just saw and I know how you love Leonard Cohen.

DELIA: But we were talking about Sylvia.

OLIVER: Oh. I thought we were done.

DELIA: Well, if it's making you uncomfortable...

OLIVER: No. But it looks like it's making *you* uncomfortable.

DELIA: No. There's just this whole side of you I know nothing about.

OLIVER: Oh, look, here comes the bus.

DELIA: (*A small burst of irritation*) Never mind about the bus. I want to keep talking about this. We can't talk on the bus.

OLIVER: Oh. Okay. That's not our bus anyway. Well, that's how we met. So what would you like to hear about next?

DELIA: Well, what did you guys used to do?

OLIVER: Well, let's see. She liked bowling. What else? She loved riding her Harley so we did that.

DELIA: A motorcycle? You used to ride a motorcycle?

OLIVER: Yeah. Sundays, of course, was wall to wall football. She was in so many pools. And she loved the Steelers.

DELIA: Wait, wait. You liked doing all these things with her?

OLIVER: Yeah. It was fun. I mean, honestly, a lot of that stuff I would never do on my own, some of the movies we saw, TV we watched, places we went, not really my taste. But she liked it and I liked being with her and doing those things with her. I'm easy, you know that.

DELIA: Easy. Hmmm. I'm just curious, the stuff you do with me, would you be doing those on your own?

OLIVER: Sure, you know, most of them. I probably wouldn't be spending as much time at If Boutique...

DELIA: And you loved her enough to ask her to marry you?

OLIVER: Yeah. Although, I don't remember that I actually asked her.

DELIA: Oh? Well, how did you get engaged?

OLIVER: Yeah. Engaged is kind of a generous characterization.

(Scene shift to OLIVER's apartment. SYLVIA is sitting watching TV. OLIVER comes in)

SYLVIA: Hey babe.

OLIVER: Got some KFC. Left it in the kitchen.

SYLVIA: You're the greatest. Can we wait until half time?

OLIVER: Sure. *(Beat)* You know, if you ever want, I can *make* fried chicken.

SYLVIA: Oh sweetie, I don't want you to go to all that trouble.

OLIVER: Not that much trouble.

SYLVIA: *(To TV)* Roethlisberger is killing me. Throw the ball, you Kraut rapist.

OLIVER: I think he's Swiss. Of course, mine doesn't taste like KFC.

SYLVIA: Right. That's mainly why I don't want you to go to all that trouble. I can't believe I gave ten points on this game. They're going to lose it outright. Have you seen my bomber jacket, by the way? *(To TV)* Yeah!

OLIVER: There's a flag.

SYLVIA: Oh fuck, it's coming back.

OLIVER: You told me you left it at your apartment.

SYLVIA: I did? Screw that, then. Gonzo.

OLIVER: What do you mean?

SYLVIA: I got locked out. I was behind a few months.

OLIVER: Why didn't you tell me? I could have helped you out.

SYLVIA: I got the money. But I'm here all the time so I figured fuck it. I forgot I left that jacket there, damn. *(To TV)* That's what I'm talking about. That's what I'm talking about.

OLIVER: So you don't have your place anymore?

SYLVIA: Guess not. I wasn't on the lease anyway. It was Greg, I think. No great loss. I like it better here.

OLIVER: I like it better when you're here too.

SYLVIA: Want me to chip in on the rent? I shoulda been doing that all along, I guess.

OLIVER: Nah. That's fine. You can pay for the groceries.

SYLVIA: Yeah. That's probably a good deal for you, right? The rent here is so cheap.

OLIVER: The glory of rent control.

SYLVIA: Amazing. *(To the TV)* Don't even think about going for it. Kick the field goal.

OLIVER: They're kicking.

SYLVIA: *(Beat as they watch TV)* Annnnnnnnd good!

OLIVER: Is there any other stuff you left there? I mean I could go speak to the guy.

SYLVIA: It's a gal. Trudy. Anything I care about is here already. Except that jacket. I left it when I was packing up my CDs.

OLIVER: Yeah, I've been meaning to ask you about those. Should we do that thing where we initial the CDs, you know, so we know whose is whose?

SYLVIA; You really think that's going to be a problem? If it's jazz or classical it's you, if it's rap or pop it's me.

OLIVER: I suppose. What about Lady Gaga's recording of Tosca?

SYLVIA: That sounds like it would be really funny if I had any idea what you were talking about. *(To TV)* Hello? Can we get a call here? He practically ripped his jersey off.

OLIVER: So you don't want me to talk to your landlady?

SYLVIA: Nope. And unless you speak Korean, it wouldn't help anyway. But oh, I forgot, Gary was here and he left you this.

(SYLVIA hands an envelope to OLIVER)

OLIVER: Who's Gary?

SYLVIA: Your landlord. Our landlord. *(To TV)* Whoo! Troy, you the man. 1:32 left in the half. Plenty of time.

OLIVER: Jerry, not Gary. *(OLIVER reads the note)* Hmm, I was afraid of this.

SYLVIA: What is it?

OLIVER: Since you're living here now, he's saying he can raise the rent.

SYLVIA: Oh? Can he?

OLIVER: I'm afraid so. I was talking to my friend Lester, who's a referee in housing court, because I thought this might happen. And he says there's not much we can do about it, *(chuckles)* unless we want to get married.

SYLVIA: Oh. (*Beat*) Okay, let's do that then. (*SYLVIA jumps off couch with touchdown sign*) Oh yeah. (*At TV, with a double fist pump or, if you know it, the Santonio Holmes signature first down celebration*) Santonio Holmes! I know I'm going to love this guy.

(Scene shifts to bus stop)

DELIA: But you did love her, right?

OLIVER: You keep asking me that.

DELIA: Well, I just – I don't know, Oliver.

OLIVER: This is really unfair, Delia. You asked me to tell you this stuff with a representation that it wouldn't affect you, and like the whole day has turned around now.

DELIA: Something's turned around, that's for sure. I mean, really, I had no idea, Oliver.

OLIVER: What difference does any of this make? It's in the past.

DELIA: But it reveals a whole part of you that I know nothing about.

OLIVER: No, Delia. Not a whole part of me. It was a footnote in my life.

DELIA: Your marriage was a footnote?

OLIVER: It was a first marriage, you know, a starter marriage. You say you learned from the guys you were with; I learned from Sylvia, and I changed as a result. You changed in your relationships, right, you grew?

DELIA: Yeah. I mean, I hope so.

OLIVER: Right? Didn't you just say that? You've known me for a year. You know me experientially, transactionally. That's a much more compelling and full and accurate picture of who I am than any stories I could tell you about my past. Wouldn't you think?

I mean anything that matters about our relationship you know about because you've lived it. Unless I turn into a werewolf "when the autumn moon is bright," you know me, Delia.

DELIA: I don't know, Oliver. There's something about this that's just not coming together for me.

OLIVER: Well, it's nothing that an order of drunken noodles won't fix. Thai food is to the psyche what chicken soup is to the body. Cures everything.

DELIA: One more, Oliver, then I promise I'll get off of this.

OLIVER: Delia, this isn't like you.

DELIA: Isn't like me? The whole problem I'm having is this isn't like you.

OLIVER: What isn't?

DELIA: Sylvia, the way you're describing your relationship.

OLIVER: All right. I know that tone. I'm not going to get anywhere by arguing with you about this. What else do you need to know?

DELIA: Why did you split up?

OLIVER: We're together for almost a year and you're first asking me this now?

DELIA: You know, Oliver, she's been such a nonfactor in our relationship, you never mention her, no sign of her in your apartment that she lived in for three years –

OLIVER: Well, there's that Katy Perry CD she left.

DELIA: – that I actually kind of forgot she even existed, if you can forget about someone whose existence you know nothing about.

OLIVER: Doesn't that say something to you, Delia? Isn't that the most eloquent indication you could ask for that she's irrelevant to us?

DELIA: Is that what's going to happen to me after us, Oliver? I'm going to become irrelevant, a footnote?

OLIVER: Whoa. There's not going to be an after us, Delia. Haven't you been listening to me?

DELIA: Humor me, Oliver. Just this one more thing and then we can move on.

OLIVER: Okay. Why did Sylvia and I split up. You know, Delia, the bottom line answer is I don't know.

DELIA: Oliver, I mean, you don't know why you got divorced? Really?

OLIVER: Really. Maybe at the time I thought I knew. But now...

(Scene shift to OLIVER's apartment. SYLVIA sitting in front of TV. OLIVER enters)

OLIVER: Hey, Syl. It's four a.m. You still up?

SYLVIA: Hey, babe. How was Boston?

OLIVER: Didn't see much of it. I was working all day. Were you waiting up for me?

SYLVIA: Nah. I've been up channel surfing. There was a midnight raid. We were doing the turtle and I couldn't get to sleep after that.

OLIVER: Wow. How did that go?

SYLVIA: Good. Mythlas has it down pat. He took charge. It was a great group.

OLIVER: Old Mythlas. How is he doing?

SYLVIA: Great. I mean, in real life? How would I know really, I just play with him online. He misses you, though.

OLIVER: Oh. Well, send him my love. And tell him it wasn't personal.

SYLVIA: No, no, he gets that. Everybody does. People burn out, they need a break. Sometimes they need to move on, you know what I'm saying.

OLIVER: Oh, did you bring that present over to your sister's?

SYLVIA: Um, yeah.

OLIVER: Chris is going to love it. I saw the guy demonstrate it at the store, it's really fun. I mean, it's for older kids but he's so bright, he'll definitely get it. We got to go over there after Christmas so I can play it with him. What are you watching?

SYLVIA: *(SYLVIA turns off TV)* I don't even know. I guess I *was* waiting up for you. I need to tell you something, sweetie.

OLIVER: Oh?

SYLVIA: When I was over at Patty's, we were talking, and then I came back and spent the day packing up some of my stuff. I'm going to move in with her for a while until I –

OLIVER: What? Wait, what are you saying? You're leaving me?

SYLVIA: Oh, babe, I'm sorry.

OLIVER: *(Crushed)* Sylvia? I, I –

SYLVIA: Come, sit by me. *(OLIVER does that)* I'm just not feeling it anymore.

OLIVER: Are you going back to Greg?

SYLVIA: No, silly. That's long over. I mean after you, I could never go back to that. That was too fucking sick. And really, I have you to thank for that, and so much more. That I would ever have put up with that shit... *(Shudders)* You treat me so good.

OLIVER: That's why you wanna leave? I treat you too well?

SYLVIA: Sometimes I think... *(Grabbing her head)* I had this so good all day. Now that you're here it's all messed up.

OLIVER: Then don't leave.

SYLVIA: I have to. *(Beat)* I promised myself I wouldn't say this but I have to say it.

Ollie, you'll be better off without me.

OLIVER: How could you possibly think that?

SYLVIA: I knew I shouldn'ta said it.

OLIVER: Look at me right now. Do I look like I'm better off?

SYLVIA: Oh sweetie. I love you. You know that, right?

OLIVER: But then why...

SYLVIA: You'll get it. Just give it time. I'm going to call a car service. Will you help me get my bags down to the street.

OLIVER: No. I can't let you go.

(SYLVIA and OLIVER embrace. There's a long beat. OLIVER gently breaks away)

OLIVER: Where are your bags? In the bedroom?

SYLVIA: No, they're in the computer room. Thanks.

(OLIVER sadly gets up and walks off)

(Scene shifts to bus stop)

DELIA: So *she* dumped you?

OLIVER: Yep.

DELIA: And she never explained why?

OLIVER: Nope.

DELIA: And you never figured out why?

OLIVER: Not really.

DELIA: And you're telling me it's really over?

OLIVER: Didn't you just tell me that you weren't going to go there?

DELIA: That's before I knew where there was.

OLIVER: Of course it's over. Do I still love her, Delia? Is that really what you're asking? I don't know how to answer that. I haven't seen her really or talked to her since then except to sign a few papers. But one thing I knew about Sylvia was she never looked back. So it was over and I knew it was over and eventually I stopped beating myself up and decided to move on and then I met you and my life started again. *(Beat)* Part of the reason I never talked about her with you was because I knew you'd have questions I had no answers to, and I know how much that bugs you.

DELIA: No. It's okay.

OLIVER: You look upset.

DELIA: *(DELIA shrugs: What can I say?)*

OLIVER: You know Delia, you got to put these things in context. When Sylvia and I separated, that was just a bump in the road, the road that took me to you. A stepping stone. *(Can be sung a la Edith Piaf, if you choose) Non, je ne regrette rien.*

DELIA: *(Takes a long look at OLIVER)* Let's walk.

(They walk off)

(Sunny's bar. DELIA and SYLVIA sit at a table)

DELIA: Thanks for meeting me. I really appreciate it.

SYLVIA: No problem. We don't open for a while and Melissa can take care of everything.

DELIA: This is a nice place.

SYLVIA: Yeah, we're still getting it back together after Sandy.

DELIA: You're a manager here now?

SYLVIA: Yeah. Can you imagine that. If my old man could see me now.

DELIA: Has your father passed on?

SYLVIA: Yeah.

DELIA: Sorry.

SYLVIA: Don't be. No biggie. We weren't a particularly close family. So your name is Delia?

DELIA: Yeah.

SYLVIA: Never met no Delias. Is that short for something?

DELIA: It is, actually. Cordelia.

SYLVIA: (?) Is that short for something?

DELIA: She was one of King Lear's daughters. You know, the Shakespeare play?

SYLVIA: Nope, don't know it, sorry. Don't really know much about Shakespeare, except I saw a play of his once. I don't remember what it was. My girlfriend was going out with this guy, an older dude, and he liked to act, not really act, just in some local group, and they was doing some Shakespeare play so she dragged me along. It was at St. Ann's. Ever been there?

DELIA: No. I don't think I know what it is.

SYLVIA: Don't matter. Anyway, her boyfriend got killed pretty early on so I left at halftime.

DELIA: Oh. Didn't care for it?

SYLVIA: You know, I know it was good 'cause the people was all enjoying it, I could see that. But I couldn't understand what the actors were saying half the time. Made me feel dumb. So I left.

DELIA: Oh. Was Oliver with you?

SYLVIA: Nah. This is before Ollie. I was with Greg then but he wouldn't go to something like that.

DELIA: Oh. Too bad.

SYLVIA: You guys go to plays a lot?

DELIA: Um, yeah. We do.

SYLVIA: Oh, that's good then. You got that to share.

DELIA: Yeah, it is.

SYLVIA: Delia. Must be nice to be named after something like that, you know, Shakespeare and all.

DELIA: Well, you may have been named after a Shakespeare poem.

SYLVIA: I don't think so. There's a Sylvia poem?

DELIA: *Who is Sylvia, what is she*

That all our swains commend her

Holy, fair, and wise is she;

The heaven such grace did lend her.

SYLVIA: *(Tries to suppress a laugh, then snorts)* Okay. Like I said, it's pretty clear I wasn't named after that, whatever swains are. That's cool that you know that, like off the top of your head. But you didn't come here to talk about Shakespeare, I know that.

DELIA: Um, honestly Sylvia, I, um, I'm not sure why I came. I guess I just wanted to meet you, since you and Oliver were married.

SYLVIA: Yeah. That was nice, being married. You know, every time you say Oliver I have to remind myself you're talking about Ollie. You know like there's Olivers (*Visualizing with her hands, like framing a picture*) and then there's Ollies. Just doesn't sound like the same person.

DELIA: No, it doesn't.

SYLVIA: Ollie was great. Never cheated on me, always treated me with respect, never forced himself on me, you know what I'm saying. And I guess I learned to respect myself more, you know, with him lov – well, respecting me like he did. I mean, since then I went out with this one guy, and he started to get a little nasty with me and I told him to fuck off, which that never happened before. So I think Ollie helped me that way, you know, helped me a lot.

DELIA: Would you mind if I ask why you two separated?

SYLVIA: (*Broad but sad smile*) You don't really have to ask that, do you?

DELIA: I'm sorry. I didn't mean to intrude.

SYLVIA: No, no. That's not it. I don't mind talking about it. But you know the answer, I know that. It's obvious when you look at me. I'm not the kind of girl he really should be with.

DELIA: Oh, I wouldn't say that. You're –

SYLVIA: Nah, don't go there, Delia. We were doing good up to now. Don't start with the bullshit.

DELIA: Okay, sorry. But he tells me you left *him*.

SYLVIA: I guess. He's so sweet, you know, he would never have left me. He would never want to hurt me, really. He would never want to hurt anyone. But sometimes I think you can hurt yourself when you do that.

DELIA: So you left him for him?

SYLVIA: Yeah, I'm not sure I got that.

DELIA: You sort of sacrificed, you know what I'm saying.

SYLVIA: Whoa whoa, nah. I never thought of it like that. I just thought it was time to move on. I wasn't sure we wanted the same things, you know.

DELIA: Same things?

SYLVIA: Yeah. I don't even remember why we got married, but it wasn't for me.

DELIA: But you were together for three years.

SYLVIA: Was it that long? Just seemed like a long weekend. I knew right from the start it wouldn't work, but he's a tough guy to say no to. Can I get you something to drink?

DELIA: No, I'm fine. And thanks for talking to me.

SYLVIA: Yeah, you said that already. You guys going to get married, start a family?

DELIA: Well, certainly that's possible.

SYLVIA: That why you're scoping me out, trying to check out how Ollie was as a hubby?

DELIA: No. But he talked about you and I wanted to meet you for myself.

SYLVIA: Why?

DELIA: Well, like I said, it was just kind of impulsive on my part. I didn't really have a particular reason.

SYLVIA: (*Without hostility*) Bullshit.

DELIA: Excuse me.

SYLVIA: That's bullshit. I got you figured out. It's not hard. You're like most people I know. You're like me.

DELIA: In what way?

SYLVIA: You know, you meet somebody and you think, oh, that guy is hot, or he's really funny or special in some way. And you think: if he likes me, that means I'm special too, right?

DELIA: I'm not sure that's –

SYLVIA: No, listen to what I'm saying. That's exactly what happens. And then everything is fine for a while and then you meet the guy's ex, and you think: she's so lame. And it's like, you know: how did *that* ever happen. Maybe I'm overestimating this guy.

DELIA: Oh, Sylvia, that's ridiculous.

SYLVIA: That's why you're here, honey. You're trying to figure out if you really want to marry a guy that was in love with *me*. You can't understand it. That couldn't be *your* Ollie, sorry, Oliver.

DELIA: (*Long beat*) There may be some truth in that. Sorry.

SYLVIA: Hey, no problem. I know who I am and I like who I am, in part, by the way, thanks to Ollie, like I said. So we won't be having tea together. Doesn't hurt my feelings. And I kinda like you and I'm glad Ollie got you in his life, so I hope this doesn't screw things up for him. But whatever you're thinking now, I just want to say one more thing. One Sunday morning thirty years from now, you're going to wake up and look at Ollie asleep in the bed beside you, and you're going to ask yourself that same question: What

the fuck did he see in her? It's still going to be a mystery. But hopefully you'll also realize that that mystery helped keep you two guys together for those thirty years. Ollie's good people. He's a stone cold lead pipe lock. Take the points.

DELIA: I have no idea what that means. But it sounds like good advice.

(OLLIE enters)

SYLVIA: Speak of the devil. *(To OLIVER)* Hey, it's the Big O. Looking good, Ollie.

OLIVER: Yeah, you too.

SYLVIA: Things good?

OLIVER: Yeah. Same old same old.

SYLVIA: Except you got a new lady. She's a keeper, Ollie. Hang onto her.

OLIVER: Yeah, that's the plan. I'm glad you two got a chance to meet each other. Oh, before I forget, I got this Katy Perry CD you left at the apartment.

SYLVIA: I wondered what happened to that. I just had the empty case.

OLIVER: You left it in the computer. It's pretty good. That song, *The One That Got Away*, I listen to that a lot.

SYLVIA: Wow, you really listen to it? Cool. I tell you what, why don't you keep it? I kinda like the idea there was something you got outta being with me.

OLIVER: Oh, there's a long list. Thanks. Still playing?

SYLVIA: Oh yeah. I was doing skirmishes with Mythlas this morning. I told him I might be seeing you so he says hello.

OLIVER: Back at him.

SYLVIA: You're going to love this. You know what I found out about him, what he does? He's Goofy in Disney World. Doesn't that blow your mind? I'm going to try to get down there and see him sometime.

OLIVER: Goofy? He was such a great leader in the game, it's funny to think of him as Goofy.

SYLVIA: Yeah. He still has the gold you gave him when you left. He says he's saving it for when you come back. But I told him you're not coming back.

OLIVER: No, I'm not

SYLVIA: Sorry, Delia. Didn't mean to shut you out of the conversation. You guys want anything to eat? The kitchen isn't really open yet but Carlos can make you a sandwich.

OLIVER: No, we're good. We're going to BAM, actually, so we'll eat over there.

DELIA: Oh, Oliver, what a lovely surprise. What are we seeing?

OLIVER: The Trojan Women.

SYLVIA: The *Trojan* Women? I know that can't possibly be about what it sounds like it's about.

DELIA: (*Broad smile*) Sylvia, it was a real pleasure meeting you.

SYLVIA: Yeah. Likewise. And remember what I said.

DELIA: I will. You have to come to dinner sometime.

SYLVIA: Yeah. Um, honestly, Delia, I don't think that's going to happen.

DELIA: Okay, I understand.

OLIVER: Really, Syl? I mean –

DELIA: Any chance just you and I could have a drink sometime?

SYLVIA: Maybe. Maybe we could have tea after all. Okay, I gotta get to that kitchen.

Good seeing you again, Ollie.

OLIVER: Yeah. Great seeing you, Syl. Be happy.

SYLVIA: *(Starts to leave and then turns back and walks up to OLIVER)* Oh, wait, wait. I gotta try something. Hey, *Oliver*. How're ya doin', *Oliver*. *(Beat)* Nah, that would never work for me.

(SYLVIA leaves)

OLIVER: So, what do you think?

DELIA: She's a lot different from what I thought she'd be.

OLIVER: Oh? In what way?

DELIA: Well, for one thing I discovered we have something in common.

OLIVER: Really? What's that?

DELIA: We're both absolutely crazy about you.

(DELIA embraces and kisses OLIVER)

OLIVER: Wow, that must have been some talk you had. *(Checking watch)* We should go.

DELIA: Okay.

(They start to leave)

OLIVER: Oh, when she said to you "remember what I said," what was that about? What did she tell you?

DELIA: You know, Oliver, I think that will be a mystery you'll just have to learn to live with. *(Somewhat to herself)* Who is Sylvia indeed.

(Katy Perry's The One That Got Away starts to play)

(OLIVER is baffled. They exit. SYLVIA comes out and looks wistfully in the direction they've gone)

- end of play -