

**HIGH FIDELITY**

WOMAN  
Those.

Rob steps into the room like an Undeserving, and carefully drops to his knees to examine the singles, each pristine in a plastic sleeve: the original God Save the Queen by the Sex Pistols, original Otis Reddings, Elvis Presleys, James Browns, Jerry Lee Lewises, Beatles... on and on. The mother lode. Rob is doing the best to control the onset of hyperventilation. He dares a glance over his shoulder to her to see if this is a joke.

WOMAN (CONT'D)  
What do you think?

ROB  
It's the best collection I've ever seen.

WOMAN  
Give me fifty bucks and they're all yours.

Rob's face goes funny. He looks around for a hidden camera.

ROB  
These are worth at least, I don't know --

WOMAN  
I know what they're worth. Give me fifty and get them out.

ROB  
But you must have --

WOMAN  
I must have nothing. Their my husband's.

ROB  
And you must not be getting along too well right now, huh?

WOMAN  
He's in Jamaica with a twenty-three-year-old. A friend of my daughter's. He had the fucking nerve to call me and ask me to borrow some money and I told him to fuck off, so he asked me to sell his singles collection and send him a check for whatever I go, minus a ten percent commission. Which reminds me. Can you make sure you give me a five? I want to frame it and put it on the wall.

ROB

It must have taken him a long time  
to get them together.

WOMAN

Years. This collection is as close  
as he's ever come to an achievement.

Rob looks back at the records but avoids the trance.

ROB

Look. Can I pay you properly? You  
don't have to tell him what you got.  
Send him forty-five bucks and blow  
the rest. Give it to charity. Or  
something.

WOMAN

That wasn't part of the deal. I  
want to be poisonous but fair.

ROB

(looking back at the records)  
Look... I... I'm sorry. I don't  
want to be any part of this.

WOMAN

Suit yourself. There are plenty of  
others who will.

ROB

That's why I'm trying to compromise.  
What about fifteen-hundred? They're  
worth five times that.

WOMAN

Sixty.

ROB

Thirteen hundred.

WOMAN

Seventy-five.

ROB

Eleven-hundred. That's my lowest  
offer.

WOMAN

And I won't take a penny over ninety.

They start smiling at each other.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

With eleven hundred he could come  
home, and that's the last thing I  
want.

ROB  
I'm sorry but I think you better  
talk to someone else.

WOMAN  
Fine.

Rob half stands, then drops again for one last lingering look.

ROB  
Can I buy this Otis Redding single  
off you?

WOMAN  
Sure. Ten cents.

ROB  
Oh, come on! Let me give you ten  
dollars for this, and you can give  
the rest away for all I care.

WOMAN  
Okay. Because you took the trouble  
to come up here. And because  
you've got principles. But that's  
it. I'm not selling them to you  
one by one.

## HIGH FIDELITY (2)

INT. NORTH SIDE TAVERN - DAY

Rob sits at a table in the bar, nervous. He watches the door,

ROB

How are you not going to fall for someone who wants to interview you? Now Caroline is all I can think about. And in the daydreams I imagine every detail, the entire story of our future relationship, until suddenly I realize that there's nothing left to actually, like, happen. I've done it all, lived through it all in my head. I know the whole plot, the ending, and the good parts. Now I'd have to watch it all over again in real time, and where's the fun in that? And fucking--when is it all going to stop? Am I going to jump from rock to rock for the rest of my life until there aren't any rocks left? Am I going to bolt every time I get itchy feet? Because I get them about once a quarter, along with the store's tax bill. I've been thinking with my guts since I was fourteen years old and, frankly speaking, I've come to the conclusion that my guts have shit for brains.

Rob sits up straight when the door opens, and follows someone with his eyes, all the way to his table. She sits. It's Laura.

LAURA

A drinking lunch on a school day.  
What a nice surprise.

Rob says nothing.

LAURA

Are you worried about tomorrow night?

ROB

Not really.

He plays with his drink.

LAURA

Are you going to talk to me, or shall  
I get my paper out?

ROB

I'm going to talk to you.

LAURA

Right.

He plays with his drink some more.

LAURA

What are you going to talk to me  
about?

ROB

I'm going to talk to you about whether  
you want to get married or not. To  
me.

LAURA

Ha ha ha. Hoo hoo hoo.

ROB

I'm serious.

LAURA

I know.

ROB

Oh, well thanks a fucking bunch.

LAURA

I'm sorry. But two days ago you  
were making a tape for that girl who  
interviewed you for The Reader,

LAURA

Well forgive me if I don't think of  
you as the world's safest bet.

ROB

Would you marry me if I was?

LAURA

What brought all this on?

ROB  
I don't know.

ROB  
I'm just sick of thinking about it  
all the time.

LAURA  
About what?

ROB  
This stuff. Love, settling down and marriage you know? I  
want to think about something else.

LAURA  
I've changed my mind. That's the  
most romantic thing I've ever heard.  
I do. I will.

ROB  
Just Shut up. I'm only trying to explain okay? That  
other girl, and other women, I was thinking that they  
are just fantasy's. You know, and they always seem really great  
because we never have any problems, and if we do, they are  
only cute problems, like we both bought each other the same  
christmas present, or she wants to see a movie I've already seen.  
And then I come home, and you and I have real problems, you  
don't want to see movies that I wanna see period, there's no lingerie

LAURA  
I have lingerie

ROB  
Oh, yes you do, you have great lingerie, but you also have cotton  
underwear you washed a hundred times hanging on the thing and...  
and they have it too, but I don't have to see it cause its not in  
the fantasy. You understand. I'm tired of the fantasy, because  
it doesn't really exist, and there are never any surprises and it  
never really

LAURA  
Delivers?

ROB  
Delivers. Right, and I'm tired of it. And I'm tired of everything else  
for that matter. But I never seem to get tired of you. So...

LAURA

I think I know what you mean. But were you really expecting me to say yes?

ROB

I dunno. I didn't think about it, really. It was the asking that was the important thing.

LAURA

Well, you've asked.

She leans over and takes his hands in hers, smiles at him.

LAURA

Thank you.

**HIGH FIDELITY**

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

The lock turns and Rob enters, holding the door for Laura who slips by, her coat in her hands. She glances down at the table by the door and sees Ian's envelope.

ROB

You can take it with you if you want.

She slips it into her purse. He stands facing her for a moment, then crosses to her, takes her coat and tosses it on a chair. She opens the closet and takes out a big laundry sack.

LAURA

Have you tackled the Great Reorganization yet?

ROB

Don't you think there are more important things to talk about than my record collection?

She begins putting books and other things into the bag...

LAURA

You bet. I've been saying that for years.

Having no comeback, Rob goes for the moral high ground.

ROB

So. Where have you been staying for the last week?

LAURA

I think you know that.

ROB

Had to work it out for myself, though, didn't I?

Laura looks suddenly tired and sad, and looks away.

LAURA

I'm sorry. I haven't been very fair to you. That's why I came to the store this evening. I feel terrible, Rob. This is really hard, you know.

ROB

Good. (beat) So. Is it my job?

LAURA

What? Gimme a fucking break. Is that what you think? That you're not big enough a deal for me? Jesus, gimme a little credit, Rob.

ROB

I don't know. It's one of the things I thought of.

LAURA

What were the others?



ROB  
Just the obvious stuff.

LAURA  
What's the obvious stuff?

ROB  
I don't know.

She stands and walks toward the bathroom.

LAURA  
I guess it's not that obvious, then.

ROB  
No. So. Is it working out with Ian?

LAURA  
Rob. Don't be childish.

ROB  
Why is that childish? You're living with the guy! I'm just asking how it's going.

LAURA  
I am not living with him. I've just been staying with him for a few days until I work out what I'm doing. Look, this has nothing to do with anyone else. You know that, don't you? I left because we weren't exactly getting along, and we weren't talking about it. And I suddenly realized that I like my job, and I like what my life is, could be turning into, and that I'm getting to a point where I want to get my shit together and I can't really see that ever happening with you, and yeah, yeah, I sort of got interested in someone else, and that went further than it should have, so it seemed like a good time to go. But I have no idea what will happen with Ian in the long run. Probably nothing.

ROB  
Well then why don't you quit it while you seem to not be ahead?

Laura rolls her eyes and head off into the bedroom with the laundry bag.

LAURA  
Look. Maybe you'll grow up and we'll get it together, you and me. Maybe I'll never see either of you again. I don't know. All I know is that it's not a good time to be living here.

ROB  
So, what, you haven't definitely decided to dump me? There's still a chance we'll get back together?

LAURA  
I don't know.

ROB  
Well, if you don't know, there's a chance, right? It's like, if someone was in the hospital and he was seriously ill and the doctor said, I don't know if he's got a chance of survival or not, then that doesn't mean the patient's definitely going to die, now does it? It means he might live. Even if it's only a remote possibility.

LAURA  
I suppose so.

ROB  
So we have a chance of getting back together again.

LAURA  
Oh, Rob, shut up.

ROB  
Hey, I just want to know where I stand. What chance --

LAURA  
-- I don't fucking know what chance you fucking have!

She abandons her attempt at packing.

ROB  
Well if you could tell me roughly it would help.

LAURA  
Okay, okay, we have a nine percent chance of getting back together. Does that clarify the situation?

ROB  
Yeah. Great.

LAURA  
(shaking her head) I'm too tired for this now. I know I'm asking a lot, but will you take off for a while so I can get my stuff packed up? I need to be able to think while I do it and I can't think while you're here.

ROB  
No problem. If I can ask one question.

LAURA  
Fine. One.

ROB  
It sounds stupid.

LAURA  
Nevermind.

ROB  
You won't like it.

LAURA  
Just ask it!

ROB  
Is it better?

LAURA  
Is what better? Better than what?

ROB

Well. Sex, I guess. Is sex with him better?

LAURA

Jesus Christ, Rob. Is that really what's bothering you?

ROB

Of course it is.

LAURA

You really think it would make a difference either way?

ROB

I don't know.

LAURA

Well the answer is that I don't know either. We haven't done it yet.

ROB

Never?

LAURA

I haven't felt like it.

ROB

But not even before, when he was living upstairs?

LAURA

No. I was living with you, remember? We've slept together but we haven't made love. Not yet. But I'll tell you one thing. The sleeping together is better.

ROB

(trying not to smile) The sleeping together is better but not the sex because you haven't done it with him yet.

LAURA

Will you please just go?