

## HOLLYWOOD

## THE RELATIONSHIP

## I: Beginning: 2002

The boat flies across the sexy Pacific waters; then it is docked far from shore, resting so they can tan privately, just going up and down on the little waves. The camera crew is hardly visible. The sun is this perfect ball in the empty sky. She is prone and glistening on the nose of the craft. His furry hands spread oil in arcs across her ass, his fingertips slip beneath the elastic of her bikini bottom. He whispers in her bronze ear while she fingers the tassels on the gold-trimmed towel. A basket of food: caviar, baguettes, Krispy Kreme. His reissue Ray-Bans reflect the land and the sea.

Upon return they eat lunch at Nobu alongside Aston and Demi, Jude and Sadie, Usher and Chilli. In the dimly lit back they consume platters of unagi, several rare sakes. She wears pink Uggs and a Juicy hoodie and he wears a blue Von Dutch trucker hat and a long-sleeved shirt that hugs his curvy gut. They chew with choreographed jaws. After some silence he says *Jen, I can't wait for our wedding. It's going to rule.* She holds up her hand and the midday sun catches the \$2.5 million 6.1-carat pink diamond Harry Winston engagement ring. The light reflects off it like a laser, and starts a small napkin fire on Elijah Wood's table. The couple is oblivious to the conflagration, and an attentive waiter quickly puts it out.

When in heels, the crown of her head extends to the base of his earlobe. His chin—that chin that won't give up, would never say no—is at times level with her twinkly pupil, and his nipples—imagine smallish dried apricots—are level with her throat, the space where her clavicles meet. There is this way his face bones fit together, this mind-blowing unison. He didn't always look this way, like the Fashionable Male character he played in *Mallrats*. His makeover has been a success. He pulls it off, he pulls it off and puts it on and says *What? What? There a problem? Yeah, I look good.*

## II: Middle

In the mornings she wakes in the dappled light. He sleeps later than her, sprawled on his stomach across the Califor-

nia King, twisted in the 1,000 thread-count sheets. She likes to rise before him so that she can watch him breathe, to imagine that she is responsible for the continuous contractions of his lungs. In her marble bathroom she gargles with water from a reflecting pool in the Hanging Gardens. It is collected once a year, during a full moon in May, by a dying tribe of blind girls with divining instincts. She loves the way it slides down her throat, awakening every piece of silky innard. Once the gargling is through, she dives into her morning bath, where she leaps and flips like a dolphin.

When she emerges she stands naked before the full-length wall-mirror. She turns and checks out her backside, admires the way it hovers in mid-air like that. Like, fuck gravity! This is an ass! As she stares at her hot self she smiles and leaps giddily, thinking *I am so fucking hot, I am so hot, it is so fucking dope to be me! Oh god I am sexy, everyone loves me, this is the BEST!*

Then she calls for her Jeremiah Von Jeremy, her bitchy Head Dresser, who runs a scan of potential outfits. He dismisses each one loudly. The low-rise Miss Sixty jeans with appliqué pigeons coupled with the white Dior cat fur vest = gauche; Chanel mini-coat, Hermes leggings, Blahnik Nikes, “vintage” socks = too quirky; Versace spacesuit = not weather appropriate; Gucci teabag w/ pinstripes = does not flatter the Ass. Finally, an appropriate permutation come up: tan velour Juicy yoga pants, an off-the-shoulder beige Chloe peasant blouse, stiletto Prada flip-flops and Kangol top hat. Then it's off to Jewelry where she browses the tables, letting the molten gold run through her fingers, allowing the platinum to roll off her bones. Dissatisfied, she calls Ox, her guy in Namibia, and requests a diamond cut in the shape of an audience; he culls from the latest excavation of his secret mines and sets to work with his magical chisel.

He stays asleep, dreaming of pies and pussy, until noon. Then he rolls onto the floor and crawls into the bathroom where he sits for a while in her tepid bathwater. He pours in some Grey Goose and submerges his head. He drinks it in gulps and plays with the bubbles that remain. He calls his mother, his bookie, then Kevin, then Matt. He lies before the mirror and strokes his dick for 45 minutes. He breathes deep and twists his body hair into painful peaks. He has a panic attack. He eats 8 oz. of her Crème de la Mer moisturizing lotion. He self-administers Botox. It is all too much. He leaves the house, takes a stroll around the neighborhood. In front of John Travolta's place he feels terrible

vertigo, gnawing emotion. He calls Matt again, crying. *Bro, I gotta get away. This life... this life...*

III: End: 2003

Jen is in one-legged downward dog, about to head forward into pigeon when she receives the text. At first she doesn't notice the Blackberry's vibrating buzz over the soothing drone of Deepak Chopra's recorded voice; when she does, she disengages from her deep pose, and reads it: *Babydoll out w/ Kevin. Script stuff. Gotta go to Vancouver w/ him 4 business. Back n 2. Luv u always mi amor. Adios B.* She sighs and resumes her movements. Some time later the house line rings. The assistants are all having lunch so there is no one to answer it. She picks up.

*Hello? Oh. Matthew. Hi. No he's not back yet. He's going to—Vancouver, yes. Why do you know that already? Oh really? Well Benjamin said it was just he and Kevin, on business, and—Excuse me? Yes. Benjamin. It's his name. Excuse me? I can call him whatever I want Matthew! Ok look bitch, you need to realize who you're talking to right now, ok, because just because ya'll grew up together don't mean—hello? Matt?*

And she hurls the phone to the floor where it shatters into small pieces. In her rage she runs down one of the hallways, looking for meaning. The cameras staked outside in the shrubbery capture this image and the grainy footage makes it seem as if she is flying.

In her swirling emotional state she drapes herself on a glass chaise lounge and calls Marc. She coos *hola, como esta? and Marc laughs and says Jennifer, mi gringa amor, your Espanol is so bad these days!* Jen pouts and pleads: *Ben is going away and I am so sad. Can I come play?* And he gently goes *Si mi amor, si. I am laying down a hot new track but I can take a break from such strenuous work. Come now, on your small plane, and we shall dance the night away in the sultry heat of Miami.* Relieved, Jen flips her phone shut and summons her Packing Team, who roll in the Louis Vuitton carts. They quickly assemble seven suitcases, and place an emergency order for 16 oz. of Crème de la Mer, to replace what Ben ate. The plane is on the runway out back, and within an hour she is being jetted to Florida. She is spoon-fed chipotle truffle pudding that contains Percocet and Ambien in fine powder forms. Ben is but a distant dream as she sails sleeping through the warm American skies.

Brandi, the owner of Vancouver's hottest strip club, Cheeta N Playaz, gives Ben a personal lapdance, squatting over his face so that her sequined crotch skims his nose. She humps the brim of his Red Sox hat. Matt and Kevin lick Jagermeister off the thighs of a trio of brunettes, one of whom has a camera, and snaps a series of soon-to-be damning photos. Ben yells *All our business meeting should be like this!* He is red-faced, delighted, drool runs through his close-cropped goatee in even lines. Brandi shakes it hard for him, but she's anxious that he is comparing her ass to Jen's. He understands this and makes a loud slurred point to announce that she's got a wicked hot butt. *This lady has a wicked hot butt everyone!* Together the group downs shot after shot as they writhe to the sounds of Right Said Fred, Sir Mix-A-Lot, Tone Loc. *Vancouver*, Ben yells toward the night's end, *is AWESOME!* When the lights finally come up, at 6am, Matt and Kevin scoop him off the floor and carry him to the limo. He whimpers softly.

The break-up happens via text message:

Jen: *Read about Vancouver. Saw the pics. Not cool Benjamin. U dont get it.*

Ben: *Get what? Saw YOUR pics—Marc Anthony? WACK!*

Jen: *I am fucking J. LO.*

Ben: *So?*

Jen: *You are fucking BEN AFFLECK. Think about it.*

Ben: *Thought about it. Ur right. Sorry. I love u, I worship u, ur my life, my career, my angel.*

Jen: *I don't know. I'm kind of over it.*

Ben: *WHAT? No oh god no I love u. The wedding!*

Jen: *No wedding ok? Let's postpone. Sorry! Gotta go—cocktails @ sunset.*

Ben: *No no no no no please no no no no please!*

Jen reclines on her lounge chair and admires Ben's pleading text. The sun begins to set over the hot Miami waters, and she and Marc sip Courvoisier. They hold hands and he sings her all the songs from his new album. They're terrible, but she closes her eyes and pretends to listen. She is adept at astral projection, so she exits her flawless body and rises above to admire, to shift her perception to her physical self in order to experience fully the awe that the rest of the world knows well. Her lips are a glossy shade of coral and there is a rich shimmer over her entire body. Even the elastic silver cord that connects her astral and physical bodies is sexy.

Ben zooms home to the mansion only to find it empty. He pulls at his scruffy dark hair and furrows his heavy brow. The chin dimple seems to retract and grow deeper with each harrowing moment. He howls *This fucking sucks!* He finds his Grey Goose, takes a swig, and then pours the entire bottle over his head. It gets in his eyes and stings really bad. He calls Matt. *Dude, she's gone. It's fucking over.* Matt comes through, as best friends always do: *Fuck it Benny, let's go gamble. Vegas, baby, Vegas. Fucking Celebrity Poker bro.* Ben throws a pair of boxers, some pants, and a shirt into a duffel bag and barrels out the door. When he steps outside, he finds that the world, or at least Los Angeles, has ended, and he falls swiftly down a deep dark hole.

KATE SCHATZ

SEE:  
CELEBRITY  
HADES

## HOLY

ANAPHORA

Let us stand, let us stand, let us attend.

This is the command that follows the creed, and this is the moment when something is offered, and this is the hesitation as we consider repeating what we are chanting to allow the priest time to finish his prayers.

Singing, crying, shouting, and saying.

Something is held up and something is carried, something is mystery, and something is held up and carried and repeated.

Holy, holy, holy, Lord of Sabaoth.

After hours already of standing we feel relieved to bow and stretch our backs, and after hours of standing we wish we had worn more comfortable shoes, and after hours of standing, if there is an open window.

Sabaoth

From hosts, from armies, from the verb to wage war.

Lord of the warring, craning their necks to see who has entered late.

Lord of the armed, with their broken-down cars.

Lord of the quarrelsome, who sing sincere litanies.

Lord of the angels I thought I might see if lifted up my head, cradled between my knees in prostration while they carried the gifts in silence.

Litany

Implicates at least two voices. But requires agreement. It is not a discussion.

The Litany of Peace.

A litany only grows with repetition. A litany like a child crosses a narrow bridge whispering “don’t let me fall, don’t let me fall, don’t let me fall.” In litany, once is not enough.

The Litany of Fervent Supplication.

A litany comes between other things. A passage. A roll-call to make sure all are of the same mind before we continue the voyage.

The Litany of the Catechumens.

In a litany, it is not enough to pray for protection. We pray for deliverance from “tribulation, anger, danger, and want.” A litany is specific. A litany covers its bases.

The Litany for the Departed (may be omitted).

In a litany, things tend to threes. And thus we pray for the sick, the suffering, and captives. We pray for those who are traveling by land, by sea, and by air. And before we traveled by air?

The Litany of the Faithful.

CATECHUMEN

I knew that the answer was “because they were a stiff-necked people,” but that was only because I had already gone through these movements of learning.