

Scene 4

TIME: A Saturday afternoon. One month later.

MITZI CARTRIGHT, a woman in her mid to late 30's, walks around Phyllis's apartment, looking it over.

MITZI. You know what this apartment needs? Adventure. Excitement. The way it is now, it's too perfect, too ordinary. Everything is where it's supposed to be. There's no mystery, no romance. You expect a chair there, there's a chair there. You expect a table there, there's a table there. The windows have drapes, the floor has a rug, the walls have pictures. Just what the hell is the statement? There is none. You know what I did to my living room? I said to hell with this everyday plebeian thinking. I threw caution to the wind. First I got rid of everything. Emptied the entire room. Then I had the walls painted chartreuse. For seating I scattered large fluffy pillows all around. Then in the center of the room I put in a large fish pond and filled it with a dozen or so large koi fish. With whatever space was left I filled it with plastic pink flamingos and large potted palms decorated with lights in motion. Well, now you walk into my living room and it's an explosion. People actually lose their balance when they first enter. My insurance company made me put in a hand rail near the front door. But I love what it's saying. "Here resides a woman dancing to her own music. A bold, daring woman. A trendsetter." Sure, a few people have thrown up when they first come in, but at least I know it stirred their imagination. I can't wait for you to come over and see it. Just be sure to bring some Dramamine.

(Phyllis ENTERS from kitchen with coffee)

PHYLLIS. I promise you, Mitzi, I will as soon as I find the time.

MITZI. Good. And wear boots. The goddamn koi fish slop water everywhere. So okay, doll, let's have it. I haven't

heard from you in a month, how's it going? Is it working out, is it not working out?

PHYLLIS. With me and Bradley?

MITZI. Of course. I'm dying to know. You were going to mold him into the kind of guy that was right for you. It was a crazy scheme, but I say whatever gets the job done, go with it.

PHYLLIS. Well, it's been a little strange. It hasn't been the piece of cake I thought it would be.

MITZI. Of course not. Because the man is an absolute loser. I saw that right away.

PHYLLIS. That didn't seem to stop you from giving him your phone number at the Chinese restaurant.

MITZI. Honey, I give every man my phone number. It's a habit, not a validation. So, it's not working out?

PHYLLIS. Not the way I thought it would. I had very definite plans on how to fix him, reshape him, reconstruct him...

MITZI. Which is the only way a woman should go into a relationship.

PHYLLIS. It was clear from the very beginning we had nothing in common.

MITZI. Of course not. You're a rose garden. He's a manure pile.

PHYLLIS. Not books, not movies, not politics. Even our taste buds were different. I loved sushi. He hated sushi.

MITZI. I could never be with a man who hated sushi.

PHYLLIS. We root for different basketball teams.

MITZI. That's sick.

PHYLLIS. There was nothing we seemed to agree on.

MITZI. It had to be a living nightmare.

PHYLLIS. On our first date we had a terrible fight over who should pay for the cab.

MITZI. I knew he was cheap. I caught that right from the start, that sleazy little weasel.

PHYLLIS. I insisted on splitting it but no, no, not him.

MITZI. That penny pinching little twit.

PHYLLIS. He insisted on paying the whole thing.

MITZI. That money grubbing little...He did?

PHYLLIS. From then on all my plans went to hell. He stopped whining, he stopped complaining, he even stopped crying. He totally threw me off guard.

MITZI. That bastard.

PHYLLIS. That's just it. He wasn't. He turned out to be considerate, and kind, and sweet, traits I wasn't prepared for at all and slowly but surely I found I liked being with him just the way he was.

MITZI. You poor kid.

PHYLLIS. Look, don't get me wrong. He's not perfect by any means. Sometimes he can be a real pain in the ass. Sometimes he can be a bit insensitive. Sometimes he can be a bit obstinate. But you know what I realized? Sometimes I can too. The bottom line is that we both seem to be able to accept each other's imperfections. But most of all, and this is the biggest shocker of all, I really like being with him. And when I'm not, I actually miss him.

MITZI. I'm sick. I'm just sick about this.

PHYLLIS. Why?

MITZI. Because it happened to you and not me. And Bradley, does he feel the same way about you?

PHYLLIS. Well, he hasn't really said anything, but I have a sense that he does. At the start I just wanted to get his mind off his ex-wife, but after our first date her name never came up again. I think that's a very positive sign, don't you?

MITZI. Maybe. What about sex?

PHYLLIS. Well, no. Not yet.

MITZI. Hot and heavy petting?

PHYLLIS. No, not yet.

MITZI. French kissing?

PHYLLIS. No, not yet.

MITZI. Really? The whole thing sounds very perverted to me.

PHYLLIS. I set some pretty tough ground rules up front and he's been the perfect gentleman. Sometimes I really feel he'd like to make a move and now that I have these feelings for him, I wouldn't mind if he did, but he doesn't.

MITZI. I hate guys who won't take the initiative. I wonder if the bad experience with his wife could have turned him gay.

PHYLLIS. Can that happen?

MITZI. Oh, sure. It happened to two of my ex's after they left me.

PHYLLIS. It's so strange. I feel so comfortable with him, so at ease. Maybe it was because I felt so sure I was in control of the situation that I let my guard down. But I'm not going to even try to figure it out. All I know is that being with him gives me a wonderful feeling.

MITZI. So then what you're saying is, it's love?

PHYLLIS. You know I never used that word before, but I...I think it could be.

MITZI. And no sex?

PHYLLIS. That really doesn't seem important.

MITZI. Oh, please. Get real. If two people truly love each other there's sex. Even if only one person truly loves the other person, there can still be sex. Of course, I found when neither person gives a damn about the other, that's when there's the best sex.

PHYLLIS. What's the point you're trying to make?

MITZI. No point. I'm just reminiscing. Anyway, since it seems like he's not going to make the first move, it's going to be up to you. Next time he comes over answer the door naked.

PHYLLIS. Oh, Mitzi, stop it.

MITZI. No, I'm serious. Just be sure it's him and not the

building Super. That's happened to me once. On the plus side, I now know what the Super wants for Christmas.

(DOORBELL)

Expecting anyone?

PHYLLIS. No. Bradley's not coming over till this evening. We're going bowling.

(She opens the door. It's Bradley. He has a bouquet of flowers and a big smile on his face)

BRADLEY. Hi.

PHYLLIS. Hi. What a surprise. Come on in. You remember Mitzi.

BRADLEY. *(ENTERS room)* Yes. Of course. Uncle Wong Fu's.

MITZI. I'm still waiting for your call.

BRADLEY. Well, I uh...

MITZI. Please, no explanation necessary. I know the whole story. You got hung up on someone else. I understand perfectly.

BRADLEY. Well, I uh... .

MITZI. I saw it on your face the minute you walked in. It's so lit up, so alive. Can you see it Phyllis? I can see it. Something wonderful has happened to this man. Something recently has changed him from a pathetic, miserable, hopeless, the-whole-world-sucks kind of guy into a happy, glorious, thank-God-I'm-alive human being.

BRADLEY. *(Gloating)* It's that obvious, huh?

MITZI. Yes, and I'm sure once you have sex that smile will be twice as wide.

PHYLLIS. Come, on, Mitzi, you're embarrassing him.

MITZI. I'm simply telling it like it is, aren't I, Bradley? Something wonderful has happened to you, right?

BRADLEY. Well, there's no use keeping it inside any longer.

MITZI. Of course not.

BRADLEY. Something wonderful has happened to me.