

EXT. PARK - MIDDAY

A perfect spring afternoon. The park is alive with birds chirping and neighbors walking.

PETER (30s) and TYLER (10) are playing CHESS at one of the tables.

Tyler examines his option, then moves his knight.

PETER

You're getting pretty good at this!

Tyler smiles shyly, casts his eyes downward.

PETER

Something on your mind?

TYLER

How come I don't get to see you more?

PETER

(sighs)

I know it's hard, but we talked about this. Tyler, your mom and I, it didn't work out. But it did work out for me with someone else. And I wish I could see you more too. Grownups have other obligations - some of mine include my other family. Does that make sense?

TYLER

It just sucks.

PETER

Hey...language.

TYLER

Sorry.

Peter purposefully moves his pawn. Tyler seizes his opportunity to take it.

PETER

Seriously, one of these days I'm going to be asking YOU how to play.

Tyler smiles.

PETER

It's hard, I get it, but I'm proud of you for being so grown up about all this.

TYLER

Thanks, dad.

In the distance, a well dressed WOMAN appears. Peter acknowledges her with a nod. Tyler notices and turns around to see her waving at him.

TYLER

Will I see you at my birthday party next week?

PETER

Wouldn't miss it for the world, kid.

They hug.

PETER

Be good to your mother.

Tyler grabs his backpack and heads towards the woman. She and Peter exchange another nod, and they leave.

EXT. PARK ENTRANCE - MOMENTS LATER

JOHN (30s) leans up against the stone entrance. He sees Tyler and his mom pass. Shortly after, Peter exits. He stops next to John.

They both watch as Tyler and his mother get in a cab.

JOHN

Who were you today?

PETER

His father.

They start walking towards a black SUV, parked a few feet away.

JOHN

Where's his real father?

PETER

Don't know. His mother was raped.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Modern, urban, with clean lines and minimalist decorations.

Peter unloads his briefcase - laptop, portfolio, and neatly kept folders.

He sets himself up on the couch, and gets to work. John helps himself to a beer in the fridge.

Peter opens his laptop. A thoroughly filled out database fills the screen - clients, background, details, rates.

He scrolls through.

TYLER BRIGGS - Fatherless child - requirements: kind, loving, generous, never reveal truth about father. Role length - indefinite.

He types: Next obligation - birthday party

He scrolls.

VALENTINA BIANCHI - Lesbian, disapproving family.

-meet parents, ask permission, marry, stage moving out of country - \$20,000 - INCOMPLETE.

John, a beer in each hand, parks himself next to Peter on the sofa. He hands Peter a beer, he waves it off.

JOHN

Your tux is in the closet.

PETER

Thanks.

Peter opens his web browser -

BETTER THAN REAL

Peter E. Owens - Professional Actor for Hire to Fill Any Role in Your Life.

He opens his MESSAGES- 33 unread.

John looks over Peter's shoulder and notices.

JOHN

You're sure this time?

PETER
Yes, I'm sure.

Peter opens a BLANK EMAIL -

"As of August 14, I am no longer accepting new clients."

JOHN
What are you looking forward to?

PETER
Honestly? Being real. Being myself.
Not worrying about who I am anymore.

John smiles.

JOHN
Don't stay up too late. You're getting
married tomorrow.

They share a kiss. John leaves for the bedroom.

Peter stares at the blinking cursor on the screen.

The sound of the SHOWER running echoes throughout the
apartment.

It blink, blink, blinks - and the text deletes.

INT. APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Peter lies awake staring at the ceiling.

PETER
(whispering)
I, Jacob, take you Valentina

INT. CHURCH - MORNING

Quaint white chapel with a steeple, covered from altar to
rafters in flowers.

PETER (CONT'D)
To be my lawfully wedded wife.

MINISTER

To have and to hold from this day
forward...

PETER

To have and to hold from this day
forward...

MINISTER

Til death do you part.

PETER

Til death do we part.

Valentina smiles, beaming with excitement.

MINISTER

You may now kiss your bride.

Peter cups her face with his hands and kisses her passionately. The church erupts in applause, cheering and weeping of grandmothers.

John stands alone in the back of the church, clapping along with the rest of them.

The happy couple sprints down the aisle...

EXT. CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

and into a limousine adorned with tin cans, JUST MARRIED signs and ITALY OR BUST soaped on the windows.

Valentina cheers as she tosses her bouquet out the window to clamoring bridesmaids. The limousine takes off down the country road.

John stands at the steps of the church, smiling. He puts on his sunglasses.

INT. CAR - MOMENTS LATER

John opens the driver's side door and hops in.

OLDER WOMAN (O.S)

Hello, John.

He removes his sunglasses.

ESTER, mid 60s, adorned in a light blue cancer head scarf, sits in the passenger seat.

JOHN
Hello, Ester.

An uncomfortable pause.

ESTER
Is he... happy?

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - MID AFTERNOON

The limousine pulls over to the side of the road, kicking up dust in its path.

Peter and Valentina step out. A blue JEEP WRANGLER with the top down pulls over in front of the limousine, one of the BRIDESMAIDS in the driver's seat.

Valentina hugs him and whispers in his ear. He yanks one of the JUST MARRIED signs off the limo and hands it to her.

She runs towards the Jeep and climbs in. She plants a kiss on the driver. They tear off down the road.

Peter taps on the limo's window and it takes off too, leaving him at the cross roads.

JOHN (V.O)
Yes. Very.

ESTER (V.O.)
Does he know?

JOHN (V.O)
No.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

ESTER
(nods)
Keep being good to my boy, won't you?

She hands him a large envelope. They exchange a nod of acknowledgement and she steps out of the car.

He opens the envelope - a wad of cash and a REVISED CONTRACT inside. He unfolds the pages to the last line:

ROLE TO CONTINUE INDEFINITELY. FINAL PAYMENT TO BE PAID BY ESTATE UPON MY DEATH. Signed Ester Grace Owens.

John tucks the envelope into his jacket and puts his sunglasses back on. He starts the engine.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - MID AFTERNOON

Peter stares off as the Jeep fades into the horizon.

He takes a moment, and starts walking back towards the church.

His phone blings - he has 35 new emails.

THE END.