

THROWAWAY CHARACTER

Written by

Anthony Huben

Actors' Draft - November 1, 2022

SHORT FILM SCRIPT

INT. UPSCALE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

OWEN and NATALIE sit at a table for two, nearly finished with their meals. She downs her glass of water. Her hands tremble.

OWEN
You want some of my wine?

NATALIE
NO!!! I mean no, thank you.

OWEN
There's something that I need to tell you.

She gulps hard. She has been dreading this--

He bends down on one knee, a SMALL BOX in hand. The chatter SOFTENS as unseen eyes fall upon them.

OWEN (CONT'D)	NATALIE
Natalie, will you do me the honor of--	Owen. OWEN!
	Can you please just sit back down for a second?

He does as directed. She bites her lip, eyes wide open. Conversations start up again. Some wonder what's happening.

NATALIE (CONT'D)
I slept with someone.

He can't even look at her. Tears run down her face.

OWEN
I'm such an idiot. That's why you haven't been in the mood lately. All this time...

NATALIE
I wanted to tell you. I really did. I just didn't know how...

OWEN
(between sobs; nodding)
It was just a one-time thing. We can move past this. Go back to how things used to be.

She bites her lip.

NATALIE
About that. I'm pregnant.

He fades out of reality as:

NATALIE (CONT'D)

I just need some time to be alone.

A tense beat passes between them. She just waits for him to say something. Anything!

He snaps out of his trance. Oddly flashes a reassuring smile.

OWEN

Mmh. Sounds good.

A MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Cut! CUT!

PULL BACK to reveal--

INT. SOUNDSTAGE - "THE SINGLE LIFE" SET - NIGHT

A group of **CREW MEMBERS**. The man's voice belongs to **CHRIS LEHMAN** the Director, who's vehemently shaking his head.

CHRIS LEHMAN

God. It's only the fourth scene.
The fourth fucking scene.

Chris snatches a script out of a semiconscious **PRODUCTION ASSISTANT's** hand.

CHRIS LEHMAN (CONT'D)

John, the line is,
(deadpan)
'You stupid bitch. Hope you and one-night stand live happily ever after.' That's when you slam the ring down on the table. Then exit frame.

OWEN

Sorry. It won't happen again.

CHRIS LEHMAN

Good. Almost believed you that time.

As Owen sighs--

CUT TO:

NATALIE

I just need some time to be alone.

Then...the tense beat. But instead Owen just leaves without saying anything. WHIP-PAN to--

--a fuming Chris.

CUT TO:

NATALIE (CONT'D)
-- some time to be alone.

Here comes the tense beat. *Is he finally gonna say the line?*

OWEN
You're an intelligent woman.
I know you'll do what's best.

CHRIS LEHMAN
Cut! I SAID, CUT!

Chris - face buried in his hands. Looks at his watch...

CHRIS LEHMAN (CONT'D)
Fuck. Lunchtime.

INT. "THE SINGLE LIFE" SET - CRAFT SERVICES TABLE - DAY

LOVIISA (actress playing Natalie), a fantasy paperback novel at her side, sneaks up behind **JOHN** (actor playing Owen) who's loading up a plate as--

LOVIISA
What's your problem?

He glances furtively about and then whispers--

JOHN
I'm not calling you...a bitch. I'm
sorry, but I don't wanna look like a
massive dick on television.

LOVIISA
I cheated on you. Don't let me off the
hook. Now's your shot. Let me have it.
Anyone would understand your reaction.

JOHN
I didn't call you a bitch.

LOVIISA
Maybe you should have.

He walks off. She has lost him. Must think of something fast.

LOVIISA (CONT'D)
Luke deserves a dad that isn't a wimp.

This gets his attention.

JOHN
Well. I'm not his father.

LOVIISA
I thought you loved me.

JOHN
I do.

She gets up in his face. Dead serious.

LOVIISA
Then listen up. This is MY show.
Stop acting like a little bitch and
say the damn line.

With that, she heads back to set. He stands there, rehearsing the line in his head for the millionth time.

NATALIE (PRE-LAP)
I'm pregnant.

INT. "THE SINGLE LIFE" SET/SOUNDSTAGE - NIGHT

Again, he fades out of reality as--

NATALIE
I just need some time to be alone.

A tense beat, then Owen stands up abruptly. His chair falls to the floor with a THUMP. This scares Natalie. *He's present.*

OWEN
You stupid bitch! Hope you and one-
night stand live happily ever
after.

He opens the ENGAGEMENT RING, then slams it on the table, facing out at her.

As he rushes off frame, she examines the ring and breaks down. A beat, then--

CHRIS LEHMAN (O.S.)
Cut! Perfect! Moving on.

She goes up to John. Mere moments away from a kiss--

CUT TO BLACK.