

Nick 2

NICK. So Caitlin, how about it? Dinner? Tomorrow night? (*A beat.*)
You okay?

CAITLIN. Yeah, I, uh — well, seeing you all here — um, my grandmother, when I was thirteen, she, well ... I'm sorry, Nick — I can't do this with you —

NICK. What?

CAITLIN. I mean — oh God — you seem like an okay guy, but — but you just acted like such an asshole with them!

NICK. What?!

Start

CAITLIN. Us going out — I'm sorry, I — I ...

NICK. Now wait a minute, Caitlin! Caitlin, come on! (*Caitlin quickly exits.*) Wait! So what're you saying then? You're desperate and you're turning me down?! Caitlin! (*After a moment, Nick reenters the house. Grandparents are seated, eagerly waiting for him.*)

GRANDPARENTS. Well?! (*Nick begins pacing about the room.*)

NICK. You know — you — you people are unbelievable!

NUNZIO. Again with the “you people”?

EMMA. She turned him down.

NICK. You invited her over without telling me. Which you had no right to ...

AIDA. Nicholas, don't get upset. I'll get a fruit bowl.

NICK. No! No food now! Everyone sit and listen to me!

FRANK. You see anyone standing?

NICK. Did any of you take into consideration how I would feel? Did any of you take into consideration how your sneaky little plan — which didn't work, by the way! — was infringing on my life? Hell, no! And exactly what kind of plan was that? You expected what? For us to meet and fall in love and spend the rest of our lives together!

EMMA. Yes!

NICK. Well it doesn't happen that way!

NUNZIO. It happened to us!

NICK. That was a hundred and fifty years ago! Today, we do things different. We have careers and ambitions and we only fall in love with people who *we* choose, who *we* pick, when we're damn good and ready!

EMMA. Well that's the problem right there!

NICK. But no, you people, you just did what you wanted because you want me to live my life your way. Well you know what, maybe I don't want to get married.

FRANK. That's crazy!

NICK. *I'm* talking! Maybe *I* like *my* life the way *I've* made it! Maybe I need to find out what I'm about!

NUNZIO. What?!

NICK. Ya know, now I understand why Melissa and my parents really moved! 'Cause they wanted to live without constant interference! And judgment! And criticism! Oh yeah, I was feeling guilty about going to Seattle — thinking maybe I shouldn't take the job 'cause I'd be leaving you! But now, no guilt! I'm home free! I'm outta here!

EMMA. Nicky!

NICK. In one month I'm gonna get on that plane and fly to a new life! And live the way I want to live! And date the women I want to date — not relatives of my nanny's canasta partner! And I'm gonna go to therapy if I want, and I'm gonna eat all the Chinese food I want! I might even go to therapy and eat Chinese food there! Yeah! 'Cause guess what — and this will be news to you all — but I am an adult! Yes! There is a fully functioning, grown-up man standing before you who is perfectly capable of taking care of himself — taking care of him — *(Suddenly, he gasps for breath. He clutches his chest, then falls to the ground. Grandparents immediately rush to him.)*

AIDA. NICHOLAS!

EMMA. NICKY!

NICK. — can't breath — can't ...

NUNZIO. OH MY GOD, A HEART ATTACK! CALL AN AMBULANCE! **Stop**

FRANK. No, no! We can get him to the emergency room faster!

AIDA. Nicholas! Nicholas!

FRANK. Emma, get the front door — *(She does.)* Aida, go open the car door — *(She rushes out.)* Nunz, help me carry him — *(Frank holds up car keys.)* I'll drive! *(BLACKOUT.)*

End of Act One