

## 11. LOCATION

“Were you waving at me?”

“I was waving at my guy.”

“Sorry about that. What’s your name?”

“Sunny. What’s yours?”

“Roger.”

“Hello, Roger.”

Will caught up to Sunny. “Who was that guy that you were talking to?”

“Just someone from class. Some guy named Roger.”

Roger went over to talk to his friend Pat.

“Did you see that girl talking to me?”

“She’s with that guy. I think that he’s in law school.”

“Hello, law school!”

“You’re not really going to go to law school.”

“Who are you kidding, Pat. We’re a couple of con artists. We always take the easy way.”

“You think that’s going to work with this girl. She looks pretty serious.”

“She’s a girl.”

“What’s that supposed to mean?”

“Girls just want to have fun!”

“Lawyers can make a lot of girls quite happy.”

“But they’re working all the time. That leaves more time for guys like me.”

“She looks like a lawyer herself. Lawyers love lawyers.”

“We’re artists. Women love artists.”

“I said that we’re con artists, with the emphasis on con.”

“I’ve got a plan.”

“I’ve got a chem lab tomorrow morning at nine. What great plan do you have?”

“I told you to take the semester off. Look at the fun time that I’m having.”

“You’re having a great time because you’re crashing at my place and living off my parents’ money. If I quit school, you wouldn’t even have that.”

“Good thinking. Now I realize why I keep you around.”

“Someone has to buy you drinks when you’re not mooching off some co-ed.”

“Quit spot me a ten. I have an idea.”

“What’s in it for me?”

“You can learn from the master.”

“She’s with someone.”

“He’s gone to bathroom. I only have a few minutes.”

“Be quick, because he look like he wants to kill someone.”

“I told you that I have a plan.”

“This I have to see.”

Pat watches his friend go down to an ignominious defeat!

“I got her number. She’s coming over tomorrow afternoon. I told her that you can help her with chemistry,”

“Where’s my ten dollars.”

“I had to buy her a drink.”

“This is a college bar. Drinks aren’t that expensive.”

“I bought one for myself. And I tipped the bartender to tell me everything that he knows about her.”

“What’s Will going to say when he comes back and sees the drink.”

“He’s going to think that he’s some kind of genius getting two for the price of one.”

“Really!”

“The bartender agreed to bring her the drink. Look, she’s waving at us!”

“And Will is staring right at you.”

“Should I wave back?”

“As long as you can pretend that you’re really waving at someone else.”

“I’ll just wave over at her.”

“So what happens when she shows up for help with her chemistry.”

“You’re going to help her out.”

“And what are you going to be doing?”

“I’m going to be getting drinks for all of us.”

“Aren’t you afraid that she’s going to fall for me? After all, I’m a lot more charming than you are.”

“I’m the one who’s assumed the risk. I should reap the benefits.”

“Yeah, she’s coming over to my apartment for me to help her with chemistry.”

Roger hardly took Pat seriously as his rival. But he was much more worried about Will. However, the two of them kept their banter going until closing. Roger got on the internet when they got home. He was still on the computer when Pat went to bed.

Roger heard a knock at the door. He opened to see Sunny.

“I was taking a nap, and I awoken to a dream.”

“So I showed up like I promised.”

“Let me find you the scientist.”

“You can help her with the chemistry. Then we can get some drinks afterwards.”

“I’m on a tight schedule, Roger. I’ve got to meet Will for dinner. We’ll do drinks another time.”

Roger worked on his computer while Pat led Sunny through the chemistry.

“I’m not that bad at this stuff. It just helps to have someone to bounce off my ideas. It helps me make it all clearer in my head.

Roger ignored them as they continued working. After they were finished, Sunny looked in on Roger.

“You’re not sulking Roger.”

“No, I had some work to get done.”

“I wanted to hang out. I just didn’t realize that things were going to be so tight.”

“Doesn’t it get you thinking? We’ve boiled down life to a couple of twists of chemistry. But we still haven’t cracked the meaning of life.”

Sunny replied, “Life is all about the pursuit of more life.”

Pat affirmed, “The pursuit of happiness.”

“Chemistry still can’t explain happiness.”

“It’s simply the reduplication of the self-preservation motive.”

“Patrick, what is that supposed to mean?”

“Roger, think about it. The motive for self-preservation becomes inscribed in the biochemistry. And the biological system advances until the point that even that motive as motive becomes written in the system. That is where happiness comes in. We ascribe that feeling to whatever strikes our fancy.”

Sunny wondered “Can we strike the fancy that strikes the fancy?”

Roger stared directly at her, “Can we? That is the million dollar question!”

Sunny answered back, “I think that I’ve learned how to ring that bell on my own.”

“Sometimes you want to turn up the volume.”

Patrick challenged Roger, “Too much volume can make you deaf.”

Sunny seemed to miss the point.

“How do you guys get along as roommates?”

“Pretty well. I do the messing and Patrick does the cleaning.”

“What do you do Roger?”

“I’m Patrick’s social advisor. I’m also working on a novel.”

“On what? The apparent meaninglessness of life.”

“More than that.”

“I’d love to hear more about it. I just have to get going. Call me!”

She evidently meant her invitation for Roger.

“Pat, thanks for the help.”

“We’ll have to do it again.”

She nodded.

“I think that she’s hot on you!”

“But she wants to do well at chemistry!”

“I told her that I can help her.”

“I still don’t know if I can really make any headway. I don’t; want her thinking of me as simply an intellectual challenge.”

“She’s intrigued by you.”

Roger took his success for what it was. He wasn’t use to so much work just to make his point.

“You’re going to have to do some work.”

“Some. I’m going to have to completely transform myself.”

“You’re not going to get a job.”

“Not while you stay in school. Think of me as your research assistant.”

“Let’s cross our fingers that my parents don’t cut me off.”

“They think of me as a good influence.”

“They don’t know anything about you.”

“If they knew, they’d love me. At least, they’d love the new me.”

“How long is the new me going to last. Sunny’s going to see through your efforts. And it won’t take her long. She’ll run back to Will. And you’ll be all depressed. Then you’ll just revert back to being the loveable jerk that you’ve always been.”

“I can change!”

“Maybe if you were in class. Or if you were working. I don’t even know why I put up with you.”

“I’m like your alter ego. One day I’m going to make good, and then the both of us will be living the life of Riley.”

“It’s becoming a lot more expensive living the life that you’re accustomed to. You’re going to have to make it really big. And I don’t even see you with any kind of plan.”

“I’m working on it! By the way, can I borrow twenty dollars.”

“Twenty dollars. You just borrowed ten. I can provide you with a place to crash. You can eat here for free. I can buy you drinks when we’re out together. But I can’t finance your private adventures.

“Don’t you have loads of money in the bank?”

“I’ve been saving it for something special.”

“You want me to succeed.”

“You should have stayed with meeting girls in the library. This is going to clean me out.”

“Patience.”

Roger was doing everything that he could to reassure Patrick. And Patrick still needed Roger to make him feel confident about himself. He was like an older brother.

“I think that Sunny is going to need more help with Chemistry.”

“Isn’t she beginning to understand it.”

“I’m talking about the human chemistry.”

“You too aren’t getting along.”

“We’re getting along fantastically. But it all keeps coming back to dear Will.”

“Something has to be done about that guy.”

“Like what? She’d go to her death mourning his legacy!”

“He is human; he’s vulnerable.”

“She builds him up as if he’s some kind of god.”

“She’s his weakness.”

“What does that mean?”

“Look at her. She adores him. He’s got to know that. On the one hand, he lives off that kind of worship. It makes us for something lacking in his character. On the other hand, he takes for granted. That’s why she likes to be with you. You’re not fake. You’re real! Give it time. He’s going to dig his own grave.”

“You’re just trying to make me feel good.”

“No one can maintain that intensity forever.”

“Why would she ever stay with me?”

“You’re not promising her the world.”

“I’m the one who’s the con artist. I don’t have a cent to my name.”

“But you’ve got the game. And you’re the poet. You live your life like a poet. Girls like that.”

“I’m glad that you’re an expert on woman. To what do you owe your acumen.”

“Just some stuff that I learned in psychology class.”

“I just hope that your advice works.”

“What choice do you have? Play it cool.”

“Do you want to go out for some drinks tonight?”

“What about Sunny?”

“She’s going to be hanging out with Will. I’ve got to get my mind off her.”

“I need to study.”

“You’ve been in here for over a week. You’re going to burst.”

“Maybe for a little while.”

Roger had been out for most of the next morning. When he came in, the blinds were drawn, the apartment was still dark, and Patrick was huddled over his computer screen.

“What are you doing Patrick? Downloading internet porn.”

“No, I’m designing a mail-order bride from the Ukraine.”

“I could go round you up a sorority sister from the tri-Delts for nothing.”

“This is almost like a science. The girl sends you her pictures and all this information.

And I create a history for her. I help her shape her character so she is just perfect for me. Once I find the girl, I have her put together an online sex journal. It’s as if she starts from scratch.

Everything that turns her on corresponds to something inside of me.”

“She doesn’t start from scratch. You’re not creating life in vitro. She’s almost an adult. She has a culture, a life separate from you. Why would she want to play this silly game.”

“It’s not silly. This is an economic opportunity for her. She can become an American.”

“It’s as if you believe in some kind of superiority of American culture. She has values and real roots in a community. And you want her to abandon that so that she can become a total consumer in the US. What does she do?”

“She could be a waitress here.”

“She could do that without you. How do you know that you’ll even get along?”

“She is designed to turn me on. I pick a girl who pleases me physically. And then she works to arrange her psyche so that it is completely focused around pleasing me.”

“What girl would surrender her personality to simply become an attachment to you?”

“This is what love is about. She wouldn’t play all those silly games that American girls play.”

“That’s part of the fun. Besides, this girl is Ukrainian, and you just want to turn her into an American. If the transformation works, Barbie is going to transform into the Bride of Frankenstein.”

“She’ll learn from me. All she has to do is work hard to get ahead. It’s not like her country where she’s held back by poverty and prejudice.”

“All of a sudden you’re an expert on Eastern Europe. Didn’t you get a C on European Political Science.”

“You helped me out at the last minute. And I ended up with a B.”

“I don’t think that you could even find the Ukraine on a map.”

“I don’t have to. She’s coming here.”

“What if she gets homesick?”

“She doesn’t care about that. She’s been trained to have pleasure.”

“You can train a dog that way. Not a human. Once she realizes the full story, she’ll rebel.”

“Not if she likes the sex.”

“If she’s that focused on sex, she’s going to get bored with you when you have to do your psychology homework. She’ll have no patience with you if you do decide to go to law school.”

“The sex could turn into love.”

“It’s not going to work that way. If she’s that interested in having fun, she’s going to realize that there are avenues for more fun. How do you know that she’s not some drug addict.? They could be using drugs to get these girls in line. Train them to focus all their energies on sex to the exclusion of everything else. Let her out into the American environment, and she’s going to run wild. She’s going to be attracted to the worst of our culture.”

“She’s going to be attracted to me.”

“Patrick, think about it. No one is that compliant.”

“Neither is she.”

“All this stuff about the sex diary sounds like something that occurs in a Nazi zoo. You can’t manipulate people like that.”

“She feels that life in the Ukraine is so lacking in something. It’s like coming to Hollywood.”

“Hollywood’s not a fantasy; it’s a nightmare. The road to failed plastic surgery and penury.”

“She’s beautiful.”

“You haven’t even been assigned a bride yet.”

“I know this is going to work.”

“This is worse than internet porn. You’re giving them your soul.”

“I have enough information to go on. I could love some of these girls.”

“You’re becoming even more shallow than I am. I hang around you because you help ground my stupidity. You’re a good man. You have character. Now you want to sell out for some two bit fantasy.”

“I need to do this.”

“How much are you going to pay? Five hundred dollars.”

“Ten thousand.”

“What?”

“It’s worth it. This is a decision that could make a difference for my life.”

“What are you going to do? Have her live with us in this small apartment.”

“I’m not going to need you anymore. She can live with me.”

“She’s going to be happy with the money that you get from your parents.”

“I have more money.”

“I can tell you what is going to happen. She’s going to come here in the hopes of marrying you. She’s going to take one look at this place, and she’ll be off with some frat boy with a Mercedes coupe in about a week. Trust me! You’d have as much luck going to Vegas for a weekend.”

“This is a sure thing! See it says so on the site.”

“You could find a pen pal on a social networking site for free. She could get to know you over the course of a year. Then you could meet up. It would have as much chance as working as this.”

“Her whole body is designed to give me pleasure. Me, not someone else.”

“Listen to yourself. This is pure nonsense. Learn from it. Maybe turn the same ideas into a project for a Psychology class. But don’t send them ten thousand dollars.”

“You’re just jealous because you’re getting nowhere with Sunny.”

“If I get nowhere with Sunny, that’s of my own accord. I’m not sending ten thousand dollars to some crime family who abducts girls from their families.”

“That’s not what happens here.”

“No one is ever going to be that pliable to the will of another person.”

“This is the wisdom from a guy who lives by the seducer’s art. You are a con man through and through.”

“And the best con relies on the freedom of mark. So she can freely choose to get screwed by the artist. In this case, you are the mark, and you are getting royally shafted. If you want to meet a Ukrainian girl, join the Ukrainian student association. Or take a trip there during Spring Break. Don’t waste your money on this scheme.”

“It’s not about her being Ukrainian. It’s about how she redesigns her psyche to only want pleasure.”

“Go to the mall. It happens there all the time.”

“Those girls are obsessed with money.”

“Money, pleasure. It’s pretty much the same thing in consumer America.”

“You’re the one without money and without a job.”

“I just look for those girls with too much pleasure on their hands. And they just share it with me. I don’t have to fool in the lab. I take what’s already there.”

“Look at yourself. Down deep, you’re unsatisfied. You’re revolting against the excesses of consumer culture.”

“It’s not all that complex.”

“What then?”

“I’m taking some time off of the rat race.”

“And I’m doing the same. This is the perfect marriage of the virtual world with the real world.”

“There is no virtual world. It’s only a construct that’s pieced together from the real. The internet doesn’t really let you escape. It gives you the illusion that you can stamp everything in the world with your sign. Make it all the same. It’s the world as your American supermarket.”

“All of a sudden you’re a cultural expert.”

“How else can I sit on the sidelines and take it all in?”

“You’re living in your own bubble.”

“Are you going to quit this game?”

“It’s already too late.”

“Have you signed a contract.”

“No. But I have sent them money.”

“How much?”

“Five hundred to start. They are going to find me a girl. Send me all the info on her. Then the process will begin after I send the rest of the money.”

“You have to quit.”

“I can’t.”

“How can I convince you?”

“I just want to see the file on the girl. Then I’ll make my decision.”

“You’re going to fall in love with her immediately. As least the girl that you think that you’re getting.”

“If I do this, I won’t have to waste all my time gallivanting with you.”

“That’s what makes life fun.”

“I’m running out of options.”

“You’re not terminally ill.”

“I might as well be.”

“Close the books. Let’s go get some drinks. See the real world spinning round us.”

“It’s only real until you touch it. Then it’s just heartache.”

“You’re reading too much Romantic poetry. You have to live the drama.”

“You’re one of the Three Musketeers.”

“I’m a lost man pining away for dear Sunny!”

When Patrick finally gets his secret file, both guys are amazed with the results.

“That is crazy.”

“She looks just like Sunny.”

“Although not as tanned.”

“Maybe you can learn something about Sunny from these files.”

“Patrick, you are assuming that the photographic image somehow encodes another level of deep processing. That’s just your belief.”

“You can see a girl in a bar, and just know that she has something special.”

“All belief in the eye of the beholder.”

“There is no connection whatsoever.”

“Sure, there may be a resemblance to someone that you’ve seen in the past. And you may assume that the shape of the face reveals a joyous nature. Or a certain look reveals a propensity to the extremes of pleasure. But all that is baggage that you bring to the situation.”

“How we shape the gestures with our face is a response to how we see other people reacting. It’s a communication with a whole language that gives meaning to the image.”

“What are you trying to tell me?”

“That I can tell things from this picture. This might as well be Sunny.”

“I agree. But you are telling me that the mask reveals the personality. It may be completely the opposite. Your Sunny may be feigning a look because she knows that it will please you. But she may be nothing like the girl in the photo.”

“That’s why I have the information in her file to use as a comparison. Let’s say that she is a direct hit. Another Sunny. What would that mean?”

“I’d try to find ten thousand to bring her over here.”

“But would the virtual Sunny ever be the same as the real thing.”

“I wouldn’t care. If she approximated all the emotions, it would be good enough for me. At this point, the real Sunny is with Will.”

“But you have been assuring me that this is all a stupid game. No girl can fit your dreams. She’s a Ukrainian Sunny. Right off, that makes her something completely different.”



“You told me how she reshapes her dreams to fit yours.”

“Roger, what do you want? A girl who looks like Sunny but acts like a Stepford wife. Or the real Sunny who offers all the give and take of an American girl.”

“I want whatever I can have.”

“You’re not willing to fork over ten thousand dollars to get anything. So what are your options?”

“We could go to the Ukraine together and try to free our Sunny from the clutches of these mad scientists.”

“Then would we share her?”

“I’d get her because it was my idea to rescue her.”

“Yeah, but I’m paying for the trip.”

“Then just pay for her. Bring her to America. And you take her.”

“You were the one who told me that the site was stupid. Now that I have the picture, I tend to agree with you. You met Sunny without spending a cent of your own money.”

“But my Sunny is not mine. Here’s your opportunity to get what you want.”

“You were right all along. I could never have this girl. She’d come to the States and see my life. It would make no sense to her. You can see for yourself. She lives in the visual world. What she sees makes her happy! And when she sees this, she is going to get revolted. She’ll be easy taking for the first frat boy in a Ferrari.”

“I thought that it was a Maserati.”

“You know what I’m talking about.”

“Does that mean that I’m never going to get Sunny?”

“I don’t know what it means. I just need some time to think. All this has happened so quickly.”

“At least, you’re only out five hundred dollars.”

“You may want to study this with me some more. As I said, all this might apply to our dear Sunny.”

Sunny Adams pulled her Mercedes sports coupe up to the location.

“This space is a fantastic piece of commercial property. Zoning would allow a mall to be built on this site. And you could have all these residential buildings in the adjoining lot.”

“Let me be sure on this. You think that it would be worthwhile in this economy to start a whole new community on this site. This is the middle of nowhere.”

“You are appealing to clients who want to look forward. They can’t be bothered with the crumbling infrastructure of our cities. These people are pioneers. They want to let go of the Old World! You are a seer, a prophet. You are leading them to a new prosperity. If you partner with one of those green start-ups, you can even make the community self-sustaining with regards to energy use. This is the perfect location to act out your dreams.”

After her pitch, Sunny needed a stiff drink. It had been a long week. A lot of hits and misses. She just needed the big one to put her over. As she waited for her drink, she took a deep breath. She checked herself in the mirror. She still had her glow.

“Yes you do, my dear.”

“Who are you? You look like some kid?”

“I’m an adult. I can sign a contract if that what you need. My name is Roger Hamilton.”

“Good name! Have a seat, Roger. I’m Sunny Adams. Here’s my card.”

“Long week?”

“Profitable week. It’s tough in the new economy. But I’ve got a good location. A real good location!”

After a few drinks, she quizzed him about work.

“I wanted to go to law school. But now I’m not sure.”

“You should consider real estate.”

“This is a bad time for the market.”

“You just have to be imaginative. Be selective about your properties. And you have to work harder. Nothing sells itself anymore. But I’ve seen the ups and downs.”

He could sense her excitement about her work. Maybe a little too much.

“Do you still know how to have fun?”

“I love to travel. I’ve got some time off. I was thinking about going to the Bahamas. You should come with me.”

“I told you that I’m not working. I really don’t have any money.”

“Nonsense, I could spot you. We could stay in separate rooms. But you could keep your eyes out for me. You never know what could happen to an innocent girl like myself in an unfamiliar place.”

“You can never tell what could happen to a naughty girl like you in a familiar place.”

“Are you coming on to me, Mr. Hamilton?”

“Are you up for an invitation, Ms. Adams.”

Roger rolled into the apartment.

“Where have you been? I haven’t seen you in days.”

“I’ve been with Sunny.”

“Will’s Sunny.”

“No, Sunny Adams. She’s a real estate agent. Quite hot. With loads of money.”

“Does that mean that you’re going to move out?”

“Not at all. At least, not yet. But she is taking me to the Bahamas.”

“Wow!”

“So what is happening with the Ukrainian Sunny?”

“Nothing much. But I only have a few days to make my decision.”

“And what’s that going to be.”

“I still need more help from you.”

Sunny stared out at the empty field in front of her. There were markings to indicate where the plot had been surveyed, but nothing has been done in the interim. In her mind, she could visualize a magnificent community sprouting up from the waste.

Her frustration was fed by her dreams. The longer that the place lay fallow, the more that she was overcome by a sense of helplessness. It wasn’t as if her money had been poured into this project. But her vision could have brought everything together.

“Didn’t this used to be a farm community?”

“It hasn’t been that for quite a while.”

“What is this place? A ghost town. And you want to build another one.”

“A mall’s a lovely place to draw people together.”

“For what: spending money that you don’t have.”

“You know quite a bit about things like that.”

“My tastes are quite modest. Can you say the same?”

“Would you be attracted to me if I skimmed on my fashion purchases.”

“I’m not much of a connoisseur.”

“You’d be able to tell the difference.”

Roger saw her sitting by herself at the bar. What got her to sit at this place and at this moment?

“You seem a lot different than most people who end up sitting here. ”

“I got a tip to meet someone here.”

“So it wasn’t by accident.”

“Not at all.”

“You should at least dress the part. Are you a cop?”

“No, do I look like one.”

“You’re dressed a little too good to pass your time here.”

“What’s the problem?”

“You’re an easy mark for some kind of con.”

“That’s why I’m here.”

“For what?”

“I’m looking for someone.”

“You look like a girl that I know. I just can’t figure out why you’re here right now.”

“I told you that I’m looking for someone.”

“I could be that someone!”