

NARROW ESCAPE

Screenplay by Ralph Pritchard

FADE IN:

As the OPENING TITLES ROLL against one single lens of a pair of dark-rimmed glasses, we HEAR sounds of various television game shows, commercials, chase scenes, etc. As the channels change, we see flashes of blue light against the lens.

MAIN TITLES END ON

INT. TYPICAL RESIDENTIAL LIVING ROOM - EVENING

RALPH, an overweight, unshaven, disheveled middle-aged man with dark-rimmed glasses sits on a dark, flowered couch with an attractive, thin, middle-aged JAN facing the television in a darkened livingroom in a middle-class house. The SOUND and flashing light from the TV continues. RALPH has the remote and continually changes the channels.

JAN

This is it... this is how I'm going to spend the rest of my life... I'm going to die on this couch... in front of this TV!

RALPH

Uh huh.

JAN turns and looks at RALPH with fire in her eyes and gives RALPH an elbow in the arm. His popcorn flies everywhere.

JAN

(at her wit's end)
You haven't heard a word I've said!

RALPH

Whaaat?

JAN

I said I am going to die!

RALPH

Die? What do you mean? Are you OK?

JAN picks up a handful of popcorn and throws it in RALPH'S face, then gets up to leave.

JAN

Oh just... never mind!

JAN leaves the room.

RALPH
Honey! Wait a minute!

CUT TO:

INT. RALPH'S KITCHEN - MORNING

JAN sits at the dining room table, eats her breakfast and stares outside at the lake, still very upset. RALPH joins her holding a cup of coffee in one hand and a donut in the other. There is a clean plate in front of his chair with a razor sitting in the middle of it. He looks at her but she doesn't look back. The room is filled with tension as he eats the donut.

RALPH
Would you like a donut?

JAN
No thank you!
(beat)
You realize you're going to be late.

RALPH looks at his watch, drops the donut in his coffee, fishes it out goes to leave.

RALPH
Uh oh, I better get going, bye honey.

RALPH attempts to get a kiss good-bye but JAN does not respond.

CUT TO:

INT. FOOD KITCHEN - MORNING

RALPH serves breakfast to the last MAN in the line. He removes his apron and walks over to the dishwasher. DOUG, a middle aged MAN about RALPH's build and looking gloomy takes off his apron and the two of them start to walk towards the exit.

RALPH
What's up with you? You haven't said a word all morning.

DOUG
Cindy left me last night.

RALPH
(stops)
Oh no...what happened?

DOUG
She said she was fed up with me spending
all my time on the computer.

RALPH
Ohhh...I'm sorry man, you gonna be OK?

DOUG
Not sure...I'll call her at her mother's
later today and find out what's
happening.

FATHER DAN still wearing his apron approaches the two men
and pats them both on the shoulder.

FATHER DAN
Thanks again for your help boys, see you
tomorrow.

RALPH & DOUG
Your welcome, no problem.

CUT TO:

INT. SMALL OFFICE - DAY

RALPH and DOUG walk down the office corridor together as
two women look on.

RALPH
Let's talk about it some more at
O'Malley's after work.

DOUG continues as RALPH steps into his office. His desk
is messy, much like RALPH. BECKY, DOUG's next door
neighbour and DONNA continue their conversation. RALPH
isn't listening but can hear them

BECKY
Serves him right, it takes two to keep a
relationship going.

DONNA
What about the kids?

BECKY

I was talking to Cindy last night and she told me that even they are complaining about not getting enough attention from their Dad. Hopefully this will bring him to his senses.

RALPH grabs some change out of the top drawer of his desk and gets up to walk away.

RALPH

Becky, I'll be right back if anybody is looking for me.

DONNA

What did he say?

BECKY

He's going down to get his coffee and donut like he does every morning.

(chuckling)

I swear that man takes more breaks...

CUT TO:

INT. COFFEE SHOP - MOMENTS LATER

There is a line up for coffee so RALPH takes some time to leaf through some SPORTS magazines. In the background is a CHATELAINE magazine. The CHATELAINE magazine comes into focus. One of the headlines says "Maybe it's time to kick him out". RALPH raises the SPORTS magazine to hide it and shifts one step to the right. Another WOMAN's magazine comes into focus. One of its headlines says "If he's not paying attention to you, who is he paying it to?".

RALPH drops the SPORTS magazine to his side and gazes back and forth at the magazine rack in disbelief. He sees one WOMAN's magazine title after another. The headlines appear to jump out, one after another, faster and faster, and each headline talks about the "loser" husband.

RALPH rubs his eyes with his free hand. When he opens his eyes, a MEN's magazine comes into focus with a headline that reads "Want to win her back? 10 easy steps to putting the romance back in your marriage".

RALPH picks up the magazine and feverishly searches for the article. He scans the first paragraph with his finger then realizes he is running late so he makes his way to the counter with the magazine.

RALPH
One large double-double and a glazed
cinnamon swirl please.

CUT TO:

INT. RALPH'S DESK - MOMENTS LATER

RALPH, now seated at his desk, reads the article with the aid of his finger as he drinks his coffee and finishes his donut. The glazing from the donut falls on the pages as he continues to read. Every now and then he mutters a few of the words from the page.

RALPH
You were once her Prince Charming, do you
now look more like Humpty Dumpty?

A few seconds later...

RALPH (CONT' D)
She wants your attention, when was the
last time you did something together?

A few seconds later, RALPH licks the glazing off his fingers, wipes the glazing from the page onto the floor and closes the magazine. He gazes off into the distance and nods his head.

RALPH (CONT' D)
That's it...that's what I need to do.

RALPH picks up the phone book and leafs through the yellow pages. He stops at APOLLO'S GYM and dials the phone number.

RALPH (CONT' D)
Hello, yes, um, I'm interested in trying
out your gym, can you tell me how much it
is?

Slight pause

RALPH (CONT' D)
Did you say \$600 bucks a year? What about
just for a month?

Another pause

RALPH (CONT' D)

Ya that'll work. I'll be down right after work... Yes, it's Ralph and you are? OK, great Angela, see you then.

RALPH leafs through the phone book until he finds the first big advertisement for Dance Lessons. It's the STEP LIVELY DANCE SCHOOL. RALPH dials the number.

RALPH (CONT' D)

Hi. My name is Ralph and my wife and I are interested in taking your beginner's Ballroom dance classes. Can you tell me something about it.

WOMAN (V. O.)

Well, our beginner's course starts tomorrow night at 6pm and runs for the next 10 Wednesdays. You will learn four ballroom dances and the cost is \$120 for both.

RALPH

That's perfect! We'll be there.

RALPH hangs up the phone, picks up the Men's Magazine, nods, smiles and throws it on the corner of his desk.

CUT TO:

INT. O' MALLYS SPORT'S BAR - RIGHT AFTER WORK

RALPH and DOUG walk over and sit down at a table where a well-dressed MAN around RALPH's age is sitting. EUGENE, a psychiatrist is a fellow hockey fan.

EUGENE

Well, well, well. I haven't seen you two since the hockey strike!

RALPH

Hard to believe it's been that long DOC.

DOUG

Hey DOC! Did you see C. R. A. Z. Y.?

EUGENE

Ya, like I haven't heard that one before. What's new?

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For the complete script please contact Jennifer Brooks at
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