

FADE IN:

INT. STUDIO APARTMENT - DAY

The apartment is small and cluttered. ALMA GREGG, 23 unremarkable features and dull brown hair, sits at her tiny kitchen table eating a bowl of oatmeal. She flips to an ad in US Weekly Magazine depicting NATE DONOVAN, mid 20s, bronze-haired and handsome as ever standing on a beach.

A life-size CARDBOARD NATE is set next to her. Various handmade paintings, collages and posters tacked onto the walls also bear Nate's tan smiling face.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Alma draws a SKETCH.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Irma!

Alma jumps.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

I'm still waiting for that design.
I want it on my desk no later than
four o' clock.

ALMA

(under her breath)

Alma. It's Alma.

INT. OFFICE - LATER

Alma lays a colorfully printed logo on the desk. DANA, stern-faced, early 40s and already gray, stares at Alma, arms crossed. The desk clock reads, "4:02."

ALMA

(mumbles)

Sorry.

Dana holds up another sheet.

INSERT - SKETCH

A DECORATIVE AD for a sunscreen brand with a much more volumptuous Alma rubbing sunscreen on bare-chested Nate.

Mortified, Alma reaches out to grab it. Dana snatches it back, examining it.

(CONTINUED)

DANA
Is this what I pay you for?

Alma reddens.

INT. ALMA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

SUPER: FRIDAY NIGHT

Alma plops on her couch wearing a full onesie pajama complete with footies and a full bowl of popcorn in her hands. Cardboard Nate is seated next to her. She puts the bowl in between them and flips on the DVD player. Nate's face pops up.

SERIES OF SHOTS

- 1) Alma, absorbed in the TV and chewing popcorn.
- 2) Alma, reciting lines from the movie.
- 3) Alma falling asleep with Cardboard Nate in her lap.

SUPER: Saturday

- 4) She goes through a stack of tabloids.

SUPER: SUNDAY

- 5) Alma cuts a pattern with scissors.
- 6) A pillow with Nate's bronze head stitched on it.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Alma is seated at her desk sketching Nate.

DANA
I have a meeting with a client.
You're coming with me.

She leaves not bothering to wait. Alma tosses the sketchpad into her SATCHEL BAG and hurries after her.

INT. STUDIO BUILDING

They enter a modest white building, Alma struggling to keep up with Dana who brushes past the waiting area into a room with a full white three-walled Cyclorama. The studio is busy with people coming and going, mostly an assembly of make up and wardrobe stylists gathered at the center.

(CONTINUED)

IRVING, a vivacious balding middle-aged man, greets and kisses Dana enthusiastically.

IRVING

My darling Dana! How lovely to be working with you again. When I saw your idea for the ad I knew I had to say yes right away!

Alma scans the room discreetly, clutching her SATCHEL PURSE and looking out of place.

The group of stylists disperse revealing the cause for the commotion: NATE DONOVAN rises from his chair, shirtless and glowing in all his half-naked glory. Like a scene from a movie.

Alma gasps and passes out.

ALMA POV

Eyes open. The white room comes back into view. In b.g. Dana is infuriated. Nate's perfectly coiffed head appears over us in f.g.

NATE

Are you okay?

Eyes close again.

END POV

SPLASH! Water drenches Alma's face. She jumps awake.

Everyone stares. Dana drags Alma to her feet and out into the sitting area.

DANA

You're embarrassing me. Get yourself together.

She huffs off back into the studio.

Alma is alone in the room. She is still for a moment. Then freaks out, squealing and jumping around like a schoolgirl.

ALMA

Nate Donovan. The Nate Donovan.

Her fangirling is cut off by BIG G, a big and burly man, whisking her into the air. BENNY, blond with a California tan and arrogant Hollywood air, folds his arms at her.

BENNY

No fans are allowed in here.

Big G throws her over his shoulder like an infant. Alma panics as suuyhe is carried off to the exit.

ALMA

(stumbling over her words)

I'm not. I mean, I'm a fan but I'm here with...

DANA

Irma! I need you.

Dana glares at them, not enthused or even concerned.

They halt and Big G puts her on her feet. Embarrassed, Alma joins Dana in the studio. The camera and lights are set up around the cyc. Dana positions Alma in front of them.

DANA

We're using you as a stand in until the real model gets here.

Irving gets behind the camera and motions for Nate to step in.

ALMA

Oh no. I can't.

Everyone gets in place. Nate faces Alma, smiling coyly.

And she blows chunks all over him. She cups her mouth and runs for the door.

INT. ALMA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Alma is laying on her couch sobbing into her Nate pillow when the doorbell BUZZES. She wipes her puffy face and goes to peep through the peephole.

PEEPHOLE - NATE DONOVAN

RETURN TO SCENE

Alma slams against the door stiff with panic. She glances around the room at Nate's face plastered all over. Doorbell buzzes again. Quickly, she races around tearing down anything with Nate on it and stuffing it in the closet. Finally, she opens the door in a sweat.

(CONTINUED)

NATE

Hi, I'm Nate. I don't think I ever introduced myself. You left this at the shoot today.

Alma recognizes her satchel purse on his shoulder and accepts it wordlessly. He proceeds into the room carelessly and sits on the couch. She tries to hold herself together but fails, bursting into tears.

ALMA

I'm so sorry. I didnt mean to...

She sinks onto the couch next to him.

NATE

I used to have bad stage fright too. I know what its like, Alma.

She freezes.

NATE (cont'd)

(guilty)

I saw your name and address in there.

He taps the satchel laying on her lap making her jump and the bag fall to the ground. When Nate leans to pick it up she notices the pillow behind him with his smiling face stitched into it.

She gasps. Nate lifts up and begins looking around wildly.

She knocks him back on top of the pillow, now straddling him awkwardly.

Nate's eyes widen. Alma hops off of him realizing her mistake.

NATE (cont'd)

(getting up)

Well, I should get going.

He heads for the door and Alma tosses the pillow behind the couch. Nate stops at the door and turns around.

NATE

(formal)

I have this thing to attend tomorrow. I was hoping you would accompany me.

Unable to catch her breath, Alma nods. Nate smiles pleased.

(CONTINUED)

NATE (cont'd)

Great.

INT. ALMA'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Doorbell BUZZ.

Alma opens the door in high spirits. BENNY, unhappy, laden with wardrobe bags and shoe boxes, barges in. He plops the things down, not looking at her.

BENNY

These are your choices for tonight.
Make up and hair will be here in 1
hour. Smile big for the cameras.

ALMA

(worried)
Cameras?

BENNY

(condescending)
You're going to an event with a
movie star did you not think there
would be people taking your
picture?

Benny moves to console Alma, who has gone pale.

BENNY

Cheer up hon, it's only for
tonight. By tomorrow he'll have
replaced you with someone else.

He pats her shoulder and leaves.

INT. LIMOUSINE CAR

Alma fidgets with the curls dangling in her face, the bracelets on her wrist. The car jolts to a stop.

ALMA

I can't do this.

The car door opens. She bolts out ready to make a run for it but is tripped up by her dress.

Nate catches her before she can hit the ground.

(CONTINUED)

NATE

Hey there. You ready to go?

Alma shakes her head frantically but can't escape his grip.

NATE (cont'd)

Relax. Just breathe deep.

He takes her hand and flashes her his winning smile. She forces a smile and inhales.

Flash. Click. Flash.

Nate leads her over into the sea of FLASHING CAMERAS and REPORTERS.

REPORTERS/PHOTOGRAPHERS

Nate, what are you wearing? Who's this?/ Over here Nate!

Alma squints into the brightness.

She can just see Nate next to her, at ease in the center of chaos. She peers up at him in admiration, leans into his arm around her waist and gives a real smile.

INT. BALLROOM HALL

Inside, is already full with bystanders dressed to the nines in expensive garb.

Nate and Alma join Benny and Big G, his arm around her.

NATE

How easy was that? You'll be a pro in no time.

Alma smiles. Benny swigs from his glass and walks off.

Girlish SCREAMS. Two FANS have swept into the hall. They make a beeline for Nate but Big G moves in.

GIRLS

Nate I love you! Marry me!

Big G escorts them away. Nate waves at them as they go. Nate waves at the fans as they go.

ALMA

(nervous)

Ok I have a confession to make. I'm actually a really big fan of yours.

(CONTINUED)

Nate nods knowingly.

NATE

You did faint when we met. Twice.
And there was that pillow with my
mug stitched on it at your place.

ALMA

(blushes)

You must think I'm crazed fan.

NATE

A crazed fan with a natural gift
for embroidery. Least you haven't
kidnapped or killed me yet.

They laugh. His arm is still wrapped around her.

ALMA

(whisper)

I can't believe this is happening.

They are only inches apart from each others face.

ALMA POV - FANTASY

A halo glows around Nate's angelic face as he leans in to
kiss Alma.

RETURN TO SCENE

Nate clears his throat.

Alma opens her eyes and leans back, blushing. Nate retreats
from her.

NATE

(preoccupied)

I'll be right back.

He rushes off.

INT. BATHROOM

Alma stares into her dolled up reflection.

ALMA

Be cool. Act normal. Just be
normal.

She takes a deep breath and exits out into

INT. HALLWAY

where a few REPORTERS and PHOTOGRAPHERS are gathered. Cameras FLASH in her face. A reporter thrusts a microphone in her face.

REPORTERS

Are you and Nate Donovan dating?
How long have you two been an item?

Expectant faces stare up at her. FLASH. Alma tries to catch her breath. Sweat drenches her forehead. She pales. Shielding herself she backtracks into the

INT. MENS' BATHROOM

where a shirtless Nate and Benny are locked in a heavy embrace. The men hastily pull apart from each other.

There is a collective GASP from the audience and Alma stops, stunned, in the doorway.

All is silent for a second.

Alma retches.

Cameras FLASH.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Dana slams a MAGAZINE on the desk. On the cover is a magnified image of a tearful Alma in her sequined gown and half-naked Nate and Benny. The bold heading reads: "Three's Company. She slams down another with the caption: "New Hollywood Love Triangle" and another titled "Exposed".

Dana stares daggers at Alma. She points to the door.

DANA

Get out.

EXT. ALMA APARTMENT

Alma arrives at her door. She turns her keys to unlock it.

VOICE (O.S)

(loud whisper)

Alma!

(CONTINUED)

Alma glances around but sees no one. She unlocks her door and enters but is sideswiped by Nate leaping in before her. He shuts the door out of breath. He is wearing a large hat and sunglasses to cover his face.

Alma has been nearly knocked over with fright.

ALMA

You scared me!

NATE

I had to sneak here. Paparazzi have been following me all day.

Once inside, Nate glimpses the artistic hangings of himself. Cardboard Nate stands in the corner.

NATE

I haven't been very honest with you.

Alma's look says "you think?"

NATE

The truth is...

ALMA

(interrupting)

You never really liked me and you were just using me as a beard and you knew I would go along with it because I'm obsessed with you.

NATE

No actually...

ALMA

(Continues rambling)

And I'm such a loser I actually thought you could like me back the way I like you because that would mean I wasn't wasting my life fawning over you and some fantasy that would never come true.

Nate stutters but she won't let him speak. Tears roll down her face.

ALMA (cont'd)

And I even got fired from my job for embarrassing myself and thinking I was going to become your girlfriend...

(CONTINUED)

Nate strides up to her and kisses her intensely on the lips. When he pulls away, her face is frozen in shock.

ALMA
But Nate, you're gay.

NATE
Bisexual, really. I like girls too.

Nate can barely contain his elation.

NATE (CON'T)
I was nervous with you because I hadn't been with a women in a while and Benny keeps trying to get back together with me. Then, of course I've had to worry about my image and what everyone would think but now the cat's out of the bag!

He takes Alma's hands in his.

NATE
I've had fears too Alma but you've helped me to overcome that. And even though you're obsessed with me (he eyes Cardboard Nate) and have a creepy cardboard of me that I swore I bought the last of off ebay, I really like you and want to be with you.

There is a hopeful glint in his eyes.

NATE
That is, if you'll have me.

Alma looks at her Nate memorabilia around the room. Eyes dry.

Cardboard Nate stares back at her.

A smile spreads across her lips.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END