

shinebrighter.

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For 546 Consideration

OVER BLACK:

A rhythmic office soundscape. Printers printing. Phones ringing. Typists typing. And uncomfortably smooth jazz playing softly over an intercom.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

We're on the customer service floor of **Shinebrighter**, a leading brand in oral hygienic products. The room is filled with an endless grid of compact cubicles.

There are posters of happy, smiling families and couples, everywhere: "Perfect family. Perfect Teeth. Perfect Life. *Shinebrighter*."

Toothpaste propaganda. It's more than a little creepy.

BRENDA BART, 30, a perpetually nervous wreck with big eyes and messy hair, sits at her desk inside a tiny cubicle. We can hear a disgruntled customer SHOUTING through her HEADSET.

BRENDA

(trying her hardest)

I am truly sorry for the inconvenience. Shinebrighter would like to apologize by offering you a month's supply of our new ultra whitening toothpaste, free of charge. For a brighter, shinier smile, and a happier life.

Click. Whoever they were, they've hung up. Brenda takes a FLYER off her clipboard and reads it: "*Shinebrighter Jr. Exec Program: For Employees with a Company Wellness Score of **8.5** or above*"

We notice a CARD clipped to her desk with the number **6**. Then, STATIC on the office intercom:

BRITISH WOMAN (O.S.)

Attention *Shinebrighter* employees. A meeting will be held in the conference room in exactly five minutes. Your attendance is mandatory.

Brenda takes her headset off and sighs.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - EXACTLY FIVE MINUTES LATER

MR. NEIL, 30s, the floor manager, thick mustache and even thicker glasses, stands in front of the gathered employees. He clears his throat.

(Upon seeing the CROWD, we notice that every Shinebrighter employee wears the same beige turtleneck. Weird.)

MR. NEIL

As you all know, Shinebrighter is more than just a brand. *It's a way of life.* We embody happiness, community, and above all, **PERFECTION!**

Everyone CHEERS.

MR. NEIL (CONT'D)

And so, effective immediately, each and every employee must show proof of a healthy, thriving relationship. A Shinebrighter representative will conduct an interview with both you and your significant other this Friday, to confirm said relationship is valid. If you fail to meet this requirement, your Company Wellness Score will suffer.

In the CROWD, many employees chatter and appear happy. In the very back row, Brenda looks quite worried.

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

Brenda sits alone, poking at her food: a company provided "TV dinner" of sorts. 3 different colors of mush.

VICKY (O.S.)

Oh my god. I wish Nathaniel would take me to Thailand.

Brenda's ears perk up. She turns her head, discreetly. **VICKY AND SUSANNE**, 30s, scroll through photos on a PHONE.

(We notice that their food looks much better than Brenda's mush.)

SUSANNE

Jonas got us two weeks in a private cabana. It was, like, *heavenly*. Look at these beaches!

VICKY

UGHHH. Girl, you're *glowing*. You left an **8**, and came back a **9**. Tell you that much.

Susanne blushes. Brenda sulks. Thinks. Stares at her mush.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Back in the office, Brenda checks around to make sure no one is looking. She logs into a FIND LOVE FAST website.

BRENDA

(quietly mouthing the words on the screen)

I am not lost. I am someone special. I will not die alone. I am... ready to find love?

JARED (O.S.)

Howdy, neighbor.

Brenda JUMPS in her seat, startled by the strange man whose head pokes over the next cubicle. This is **JARED HAGAN, 40s**, a greasy little perv, balding and all.

BRENDA

What did I tell you about doing that, Hagan? *Respect. The. Cubicle.*

JARED

How about this new company policy, eh? Looks like our only option... is to *couple up*.

BRENDA

Last time I checked, you were a **4**. Go back to your cave, troll.

Mr. Neil walks by. Jared perks up, practically salutes him.

JARED

Morning, sir. *Shinebrighter.*

MR. NEIL

Shinebrighter.

Mr. Neil looks to Brenda. It takes her a second.

BRENDA

Shinebrighter.

MR. NEIL
I take it you both will adhere to
the new company policy.

JARED
Yes, sir.

BRENDA
Yes, sir.

Mr. Neil nods, walks off. Jared lingers for a beat too long.

BRENDA (CONT'D)
Get the hell out of my cubicle
before I send a copy of your hard
drive to the FBI.

Jared retreats. Brenda turns back to her computer screen and forces herself to click YES on the dating website.

INT. SUPERMARKET - NIGHT

Brenda stumbles her way through the aisles of a supermarket, PHONE in one hand and a basket of groceries in the other.

She FLIPS through various pictures of men in cheesy poses. Sends a few of them "flirties."

Up ahead, she notices a nearby worker, **SVEN, 20s**, cute guy with a beard, also swiping through the app on his phone. She takes a beat, straightens herself out, then approaches.

BRENDA
Excuse me, sir?

Sven keeps swiping on his phone. He doesn't look up.

BRENDA (CONT'D)
I was, uh, wondering if you have
this new brand of cat food. It's
called, uh, "you've gotta be kitten
me."

Brenda nervously laughs at her own joke and tries to put on her best flirty face.

Sven finally looks up. He's extremely confused.

SVEN
I get paid minimum wage, lady. Can
you just, like, leave me alone?

Sven walks off. Brenda sighs, and starts to leave the aisle.

MAN (O.S.)
Brenda? Brenda Bart? Is that you?

Brenda turns around, slightly panicked. *Did I accidentally shoplift again oh no god no I'm going to jail.*

DAVID HENRY, 32, waves. Slicked back blonde hair, broad shoulders, well defined jawline. And slowly approaching.

DAVID

It's me. David! It's David Henry.

Brenda's eyes get bigger. More confused. Her body language indicates she's almost afraid of him.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Are you having trouble with that employee? I know the manager, I could talk to-

BRENDA

Oh. No. No. I'm fine. It's fine. David... What, uh, what are you doing here?

He laughs. *Oh my God why are his teeth so white.*

DAVID

Shopping...?

BRENDA

Oh, right. Yeah! Me too. Shopping.

They examine each other for a moment.

DAVID

It's been *years!* We owe ourselves a little catch up.

BRENDA

We... we do?

He laughs again. *Why is that funny does he think I'm funny.*

DAVID

Actually, you know what? You should come to dinner tonight. At my house.

BRENDA

Oh, David. I don't know about that.

DAVID

Come on. For old times' sake.

BRENDA

What old times?

David looks genuinely hurt.

BRENDA (CONT'D)
Sorry, I just....

A NOTIFICATION sound effect on Brenda's phone. She looks at it: **"NO NEW FLIRTIES."**

DAVID
You got a hot date or something?

BRENDA
No. I...

Down the aisle, she spots Sven on a ladder, hanging up a LARGE SIGN that reads: "Your new life begins today. Shinebrighter."

She turns back to David.

BRENDA (CONT'D)
What time were you thinking?

INT. BRENDA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Brenda frantically sorts through her clothes; all of which aren't good enough for the occasion. **FERDINAND**, her fat, prestigious cat, licks his paw.

Brenda holds an outfit up to herself in the mirror, then chucks it. She tries one more. Smiles. It's perfect.

Then, Brenda applies LIPSTICK in the mirror. Ferdinand *MEOWWWWS* as she does so.

BRENDA
Took the words right out of my
mouth, you fat, fat cat.

(All "outfits" in this scene are in fact the same beige turtleneck.)

EXT. FRONT DOOR - DAVID'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Brenda stands on the front doorstep of David's house. The place is nice. Like, really nice. She pats herself down and adjusts her outfit.

She goes to knock, but can't do it. Tries again. And fails. She turns, decides to walk away. But as she does, someone opens the door. It's David.

DAVID
Brenda? Where are you going?

BRENDA
I- uh- I thought I had the wrong
address.

Brenda slowly walks inside.

DAVID
Can I get you a drink?

BRENDA
Uh, sure-

David's phone RINGS.

DAVID
Sorry, give me two minutes.

David speed walks off into another room.

DAVID (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Make yourself at home!

Brenda softly shuts the door and eyeballs the home,
completely and utterly amazed.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Brenda sits alone in the living room, eyes still darting
around. It's neat. Tidy. Stylish.

David walks in and hands her a glass of WINE.

DAVID
Sorry about that. Work call.

BRENDA
What do you do for work?

David chuckles, almost embarrassed.

DAVID
I produce films. I guess I thought
you knew that.

Brenda's eyes light up, as if she's finally sitting at the
cool kids table for the first time in her life.

BRENDA
I had no idea.

DAVID

We're developing a romantic comedy about an actor whose computer gets hacked by this cute, nerdy chick and then he ends up marrying her. Isn't that *hilarious*?

BRENDA

That's incredible, David. Honestly. This place, your job, your life just seems so... **perfect**.

They share a smile. What a nice moment. Just then, Brenda SPILLS her full glass of RED WINE all over the white carpet.

BRENDA (CONT'D)

Oh my god. Oh my god, David I'm so sorry. Let me-

Brenda tries to SCOOP UP the wine with her hands.

DAVID

It's fine. Really, it's fine!

INT. DINING ROOM - LATER

Brenda helps herself to a massive feast. Seemingly unlimited shrimp, steak, wine, etc. She's tipsy.

BRENDA

David, this is seriously *too much* food. I mean, did you really think we'd eat all this?

They both laugh. David refills her glass.

DAVID

So! Tell me about yourself these days, Brenda Bart.

BRENDA

Well, I, uh-

She wipes grease from the corners of her mouth.

BRENDA (CONT'D)

I work for *Shinebrighter*. I'm very happy there.

DAVID

What a lovely coincidence! I produced some promotional material for them. Are you a Jr. Exec?

BRENDA
I'm actually- uh, yeah. I'm a Jr.
Exec.

DAVID
That is so wonderful.

David raises his glass. A toast.

DAVID (CONT'D)
To old friends. And... to
Shinebrighter.

They CHEERS.

BRENDA
May I use your bathroom?

DAVID
Sure. It's just down the hall.

Brenda half trips on her way out.

BRENDA
I'm okay!

INT. BATHROOM

Brenda flushes the toilet and washes her hands. She looks at herself in the mirror. Fixes her hair. Opens up the cabinet and snoops around. Nothing too interesting. She feels the towels. Extra soft. Smells them. Deep inhale. *Mmm*.

INT. HALLWAY

Brenda creeps through the hallway, and notices a DOOR left ajar, lights on. She pokes her head in.

INT. HOME OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Brenda steps into the room. Clearly David's office. She looks around and inspects the place for a beat. At his desk, she finds a SCRIPT. Underneath it, a YEARBOOK.

She picks it up and flips through. She chuckles at a picture of young DAVID with the award for **BEST ALL AROUND**.

She flips through more. We see a **?STUDENT NOT PHOTOGRAPHED?** where her face should have been.

A KNOCK on the door. It startles Brenda.

BRENDA
You scared me. I'm sorry. I didn't
mean to snoop-

DAVID
Don't apologize.

David walks closer to Brenda. Eyes the yearbook.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Memories?

BRENDA
Big time.

David moves closer. They stare at each for a long moment.
Finally, David goes in for a kiss. Brenda lets it happen.

Then, she pulls away. Looks at David with confusion.

DAVID
Oh come on. Everyone knew you had a
crush on me in high school.

Brenda doesn't know what to say.

DAVID (CONT'D)
What's wrong?

BRENDA
I'm not a Jr. Exec at
Shinebrighter. I'm just a customer
service rep.

David smiles. *Those teeth again.*

DAVID
I figured just as much.

BRENDA
Really? Then why are you doing
this?

DAVID
Because. I need a little bit of
Brenda Bart in my life.

David closes the yearbook and goes in for it again, this time
kissing Brenda more passionately. Just as he does, the door
CREAKS open.

OLIVIA HENRY, 26, David's wife, stands in the doorway. She's
got HEELS on and looks like she's headed for the Oscars.

OLIVIA
Nice, David. *Fucking nice.*

She storms off, her heels CLACKing loudly down the hall.

DAVID
Brenda, I-

Brenda exits.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Brenda passes Olivia, who sits on the couch, pouting. They share a strange moment, and both acknowledge the HUGE wine stain on the carpet.

BRENDA
You have a lovely home.

Brenda scurries out the door.

INT. BRENDA'S CUBICLE - DAY

Early morning in the *Shinebrighter* office. We notice that every employee has brought their significant others. Even Jared has a lady.

But Brenda sits at her desk, alone. She looks oddly calm. Mr. Neil walks by and eyes her suspiciously.

MR. NEIL
Brenda, where is your romantic partner?

Brenda doesn't hear him. She looks around the office at her coworkers and all of their lame partners. Suddenly, Brenda can't understand them. What they're doing. Why they're doing it.

MR. NEIL (CONT'D)
Brenda.

Brenda makes eye contact with Mr. Neil, then shakes her head.

BRENDA
I don't have one.

Brenda REMOVES her turtleneck, throws it in the trash, and pours the rest of her coffee over it. Then, she sits back in her chair, as if nothing happened.

Mr. Neil makes an outraged face and runs off.

Jared peeks over his cubicle and sees Brenda in her rainbow colored bra (*that may or may not have kittens on it*).

JARED

*Brenda! What are you doing??
Where's your uniform??*

BRENDA

I don't feel like wearing it today.

Mr. Neil returns with a massive SECURITY GUARD.

SECURITY GUARD

Ms. Brenda Bart, as you have violated policy 29B: illegal dress code, policy 65C: failure to respond to authority, and policy 32A: failure to provide proof of a romantic partner, we must lower your Company Wellness Score down to a **-3**, which means, you are terminated. Now please, kindly exit the premises.

Brenda looks around at everyone in the office. They're all staring. Judging.

Brenda slowly, and very proudly, walks towards the door. On her way out, we hear whispers:

*can you believe she just did that oh my god someone get her out of here where are her clothes what is she doing get her out now she isn't company material she deserves so much lower than a **-3** why is she so awful*

When she reaches the DOOR, she turns back, and points a finger.

BRENDA

Just for the record, you all look
RIDICULOUS.

Brenda exits and SLAMS the door shut.