

A SURPRISING ENGAGEMENT

by Allan B. Hill

FADE IN:

I/E. MERCEDES SPORTS CAR - DAY

A petite DIAMOND RING...

AARON (35) considers the gold ring that rests on his palm, insecure of his possible engagement. He's a people-pleaser. An over thinker.

A shrill, excited SCREAM--

Aaron drops the ring box. He leans forward, bashes his face on the HORN while his hand scrambles on the floor, under the seat in search of the box...

RONNIE (35) screams across his front lawn. Flamboyant energy. Hawaiian shirt, bottle of bubbly. A big bear of a thespian. Super-pumped.

Ronnie models his summery outfit next to the hood of the car. Tout de suite, Aaron stashes the loose ring in his pocket. Wipes his palms on his blue Hugo Boss top.

RONNIE

What'ya think? Designer flip-flops.

Ronnie jumps in the passenger seat. Removes his Gucci hat. Checks out Aaron's *muscle-man* outfit, the Camo shorts--

RONNIE (CONT'D)

Uber-sexy... But you got nothing on the ROCK-- What's that smell?

AARON

It's a rental. Barely 1000 miles.

Ronnie spots a tray of T-BONES resting on the back seat.

RONNIE

Thought so. My nose is uber-sensitive when it comes to meat.

I/E. MERCEDES SPORTS CAR (MOVING) - DAY

They cruise along Santa Monica Boulevard. Aaron's in a daze.

RONNIE

What's wrong with your Prius?  
Aaron?

AARON

Huh? I can't turn up in a Prius--

RONNIE

I like your Prius. Environmental.  
Blue's my fav color-- Like ever.

AARON

Ever since kindergarten.

RONNIE

Oh My God, you remember?

Ronnie massages Aaron's shoulder, just for a moment.

AARON

I remember... It's just Marie's  
family is super-rich and I want to  
try and fit in. What? What's wrong?  
Marie likes you--

Energy recedes from Ronnie. He looks out the window.

RONNIE

I had another argument with my dad.

AARON

Oh man... If there's one thing I'm  
glad of, is not having to deal with  
ever fighting with my dad.

RONNIE

Because he ran off on your tenth  
birthday with some bimbo.

AARON

You're an Ass-hole.

EXT. BEVERLY HILLS MANSION - DAY

Their Mercedes parks up out the front of an enormous MANSION.  
Ronnie and Aaron hop out. Completely gob-smacked--

RONNIE

Oh my God... This is Marie's  
grandma's house? This isn't super-  
rich, this is uber-super-rich.

They unpack the meat and wine coolers.

RONNIE (CONT'D)

Who's the Scary Spice with her  
power-pant suit?

AARON  
That's Marie's mom.

DONNA (45) waits at the ENTRANCE. A Britney Spears wannabe, mutton-dressed-as-lamb. She wears dark-colored attire.

RONNIE  
That's Marie's mom? What's with the  
showy lace bra under the jacket--  
Like so 90's pop star whore, man.  
Wonder how her dad dresses?

AARON  
I'm sure you wouldn't approve.

Aaron and Ronnie follow the manicured path to the entrance.

AARON (CONT'D)  
I've never met him. He's always  
away interstate on business trips.

RONNIE  
Spicing up his life.

AARON  
Shush Ronnie-- Hello Donna...

Donna is confused about their presence.

DONNA  
Pool was cleaned yesterday boys.

AARON  
Um... I'm Aaron. I'm Marie's--

DONNA  
You're Aaron? Really?

Donna looks disappointed with a Danish-style upturned nose.

AARON  
I brought meat for the BBQ?

DONNA  
BBQ? Whatever. Marie's out back  
helping set up so go straight  
through. Be careful with the dogs.

INT. MANSION - CONTINUOUS

Ronnie and Aaron admire the CHANDELIER in the entrance void.  
Bemused...

RONNIE

How did Marie come from such a  
Pitbull?

AARON

Good thing Marie doesn't care about  
money--

RONNIE

Why are we pretending then?

AARON

Take this. I'm busting for a piss.

Aaron makes Ronnie fully-laden with meat and beverages.

RONNIE

Where am I meant to put all this?

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Ronnie places the meat on the counter top, next to an array  
of silver trays of various finger foods.

Three black LABRADORS growl at Ronnie.

He backs up against the bench--

RONNIE

Easy now-- Easy... Help?

AARON (V.O.)

Will you marry me?

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Aaron presents the engagement ring, to himself in the mirror.

AARON

Um... Please?

SIGHS with anxiety. Slides the ring back into his shorts.

AARON (CONT'D)

Wrong time... I can't do this.

He opens up the cabinet behind the mirror. Shelves are  
stocked up with an array of prescription pill cannisters.  
Aaron's intrigued...

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Ronnie is stuck, braced against the stove.

AARON (O.S.)  
Ronnie? What are you doing?

Dogs BARK!

They run out from behind the bench, straight over to Aaron.  
Pummel him to the ground. Aaron wrestles with the beasts.

EXT. GARDEN - DAY

Outcasts, Ronnie and Aaron loiter. The colorful "peacocking"  
costumes contrast with the miserable FORMAL GUESTS, 50 or so.  
They give horrid looks--

RONNIE  
Rude.

Aaron tries to remove fur and saliva from his Boss singlet.

Under the MARQUEE, MARIE (25) tries to avoid condolence hugs.  
Loyal, sweet, more modest but not the best of communicators.  
Black sheep of the family.

AARON  
There she is. Hey you!

Marie hugs Ronnie. Aaron gets a hug plus a KISS on the cheek.  
Guests murmur and make *tuts* at them...

AARON (CONT'D)  
What's going on?

MARIE  
I know, my family is so weird.  
Thanks for turning up.

AARON  
I don't get it-- We thought this  
was a party for your Gran's--

MARIE  
Garden gathering yeah? I texted.

Behind Marie is a TV SCREEN, a LECTERN, a table with a few  
PORTRAITS of a cool, old GRAN doing crazy things like hiking,  
sky-diving, partying with a python. Gambling in Vegas!

An expensive-looking URN.

RONNIE

Oh shitting ball sacks! Is this a--

MARIE

Gran wanted everyone to gather for the revealing of her last will. Unconventional... But--

RONNIE

Way to cock-up Aaron. Look at us, we're not dressed for a funeral--

MARIE

Garden gathering. Not a funeral. Gran was specific in this. OK.

CAMI, ADRIEN, MILTON and ANNE (20s) watch Marie argue with Aaron and Ronnie from afar. [Grandchildren of the deceased.] Sarcastic siblings, without refinement or sophistication.

ANNE

Who called the Beach Boys?

ADRIEN

One is cousin Marie's boyfriend?

CAMI

The one who looks like a camp Cuban drug lord or the one who needs to inject a litre of steroids into his veins to pull off that kind of Dwayne Johnson look?

MILTON

No way, they are definitely gays. Classic *bear and bitch*. Pink flamingos? Palm trees? Jesus--

ADRIEN

Jesus wasn't gay.

CAMI

Or was he?

ADRIEN

Tool! We should go over and say hi, cause you know nobody else will. Cami? You're good with weirdos.

CAMI

Yeah-- I'm good with you.

Cami, Adrien head on over to greet Aaron and Ronnie with Marie...

AARON

But in the text you said she was going to be 90 this month--

MARIE

She was going to be, then she died.

Marie becomes a little upset. Aaron is embarrassed.

AARON

Wow... Well this was a surprise.

MARIE

I never said birthday party Aaron.

RONNIE

You're so stupid sometimes Aaron.

Cami slaps her arms around the boys in beach clothing.

CAMI

Gran would have gotten a real kick out of this. Screw convention eh--  
You guys seriously rock.

Cami and Adrien chuckle over their inside joke. Not the rest. Marie is taken away by family members who offer condolences.

AARON

Look Marie, I'm sorry about this...

MARIE

We'll talk later. OK?

Cami shakes Ronnie's hand. They kindly introduce themselves. Aaron shakes Adrien's hand and--

RIPS IT CLEAN OFF--

Aaron jumps back. He knocks into a tray of alcohol beverages. Gets drenched with booze.

Adrien cracks up laughing and collects his prosthetic hand.

ADRIEN

Never gets old.

CAMI

You're almost 30 Adrien. Come on. Let's get you cleaned up.

Cami picks up Aaron and takes him inside.



RONNIE  
Great. I'll entertain myself then.

INT. WINE CELLAR - DAY

Donna, HILARY (55) tall, broad and self-obsessed and brother JUSTIN (50) fat, vain and self-indulgent box up wines from the endless supply in the rack. [Children of the deceased.]

DONNA  
Don't drool too much Hilary. Mom promised me the new world ones.

HILARY  
These are all new world. 20K worth. You're not getting it all.

DONNA  
I'm the only one who drinks wine.

HILARY  
Fine, you take the wine Donna, I'll have the gemstone collection, the gold necklaces and rings--

DONNA  
Honey, what rings are going to fit on those enormous man-hands?

Hilary pulls Donna's hair. Donna retaliates and slaps her.

JUSTIN  
You two are so pathetic. There's no point in arguing over stuff until we see what Mom says on the tape.

DONNA  
A hunski says she gives everything to Penelope. Stupid bitch isn't even family. Is she?

HILARY  
Who is Penelope?

EXT. GRAN'S BEDROOM BALCONY TERRACE - DAY

Aaron's anxious. Wipes his palms on Gran's blouse and jacket. Looks over the railing, considers the pool two floors below.

The Labradors gnash their teeth, bash against the glass sliding door inside the bedroom, trying to get to Aaron. They're rabid.

Marie's presence calms the dogs. She sends them away and joins Aaron outside--

AARON

How did you do that?

MARIE

Do what? Oh... The dogs were probably just confused. You're wearing Gran's old clothes?

AARON

Cami made me wear this. I thought Labs were supposed to be smart?

MARIE

They are... Maybe they weren't into your beige jacket / Camo shorts combination? Not quite in style...

AARON

Gran's floral skirt is a bit too far, even for me. So embarrassing.

MARIE

I've seen you in more embarrassing outfits before--

AARON

Like last Halloween wardrobe fail?

Marie laughs and laughs and then, starts to sob.

AARON (CONT'D)

Marie I'm sorry, for everything...

Marie and Aaron embrace each other, look down on the guests.

MARIE

I know. Me too... Look at all of them hoping to cash in on some of Gran's leftovers. Unbelievable--

AARON

Seems as if she had a lot of stuff. Enough for everybody here I guess?

MARIE

I don't care. Why is my family so damn weird--

AARON

All families are weird. In their own ways...

MARIE

Gran was so funny and cool, weird.  
Like she was a child living in an  
old lady body.

AARON

You think she would have liked me?

MARIE

I think she would have liked you.

AARON

I'm sad I never had the chance...  
Sure you'll be OK?

MARIE

Yep. I've got you.

EXT. GARDEN - DAY

Milton and Anne are tipsy. They play with the photos of Gran  
on the tables under the marquee.

ANNE

How much you think she's worth?

MILTON

I heard she kept her cash in a  
secret vault, like Scrooge McDuck--  
Is that a Boa snake round her neck?  
Woah--

ANNE

Speaking of secret, Jeffrey told me  
once that he hacked into Gran's  
Amazon account, in her shopping  
cart were orders for sex-toys.

MILTON

She's too old for that--

ANNE

I know she was almost 90. That's  
pretty disgusting--

MILTON

Amazon? Come on, old ladies can't  
use Amazon. Why would you ever  
believe Jeffrey. He's a con artist.  
Full of shit. And still in jail--

ANNE

Keep your voice down! He's on probation now... But we don't want any of these snoots to hear.

MILTON

What you think you'll get Anne? I mean in the will...

ANNE

I'd like my share of the cash. Simple. You?

Milton shakes the urn. It sounds a bit like a Maraca--

ANNE (CONT'D)

Careful with that!

MILTON

Just making sure she's in there. Honestly Anne, I don't think I'll get anything. Why should I? Why should any of us get anything?

ANNE

Because we're family.

Outside the marquee, Ronnie and Cami chat alone...

CAMI

I'm loving these birds on your shirt-- Flamingos right?

Cami pets Ronnie's chest. Ronnie guides her hand away.

RONNIE

So... Do you miss her?

CAMI

I used to come round here when I was in freshman year and smoke weed with Gran. Such a cool old lady...

(whispers)

Hey, I want to show you something.

RONNIE

OK. Where?

Cami leads Ronnie away from the mingling, tipsy guests...

RONNIE (CONT'D)

Hey Aaron, are you OK?

Aaron is on all-fours. He roots around in the grass...

CAMI  
Have you lost a button?

AARON  
Um... Just looking for my contact  
lens. It's fine. Don't worry--

RONNIE  
Aaron? You don't wear contacts--

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

The three Labradors work together to pull the T-bone steaks  
and the finger foods onto the floor. They GORGE themselves.

An excited TAIL slaps the gold ring on top of a T-bone--

The steak and the ring, devoured in one!

SCREAMS! Donna drops a bottle of wine on the floor.

She tries to shoo the dogs, but they want to play with her.  
Marie enters and tries to calm the hungry dogs.

DONNA  
Marie, what are we going to do now?  
All this food is ruined.

Aaron staggers through the kitchen. He's manic!

MARIE  
Aaron, can you help us?

AARON  
(backs up)  
Um... I... Not really-- I'm looking  
for something.

Aaron runs away. The three dogs chase after him. BARKING!!!

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Aaron barges in. Closes the door--

Hilary pees at the toilet. Standing up!

HILARY  
Excuse me!

Aaron can't believe his eyes. He exits and closes the door.

INT. GRAN'S BEDROOM - DAY

Cami SNIFFS white powder from a cylinder with a coke key.

CAMI

You want a bump?

Cami slides her hand into Ronnie's shorts, cups his junk. Smells his neck. Then she pushes him onto Gran's bed and starts to remove her top--

CAMI (CONT'D)

Death makes me so horny.

Ronnie tries to push her away. Cami is disappointed.

CAMI (CONT'D)

What's wrong?

RONNIE

Nothing. I'm gay. But don't tell.

Cami slumps on the end of the bed.

CAMI

I won't if you won't.

INT. MANSION - DAY

Aaron is slumped in the hall. He tries to control his breath and not hyperventilate.

The Labradors spot him.

He runs--

EXT. MANSION - CONTINUOUS

Aaron runs across the front lawn. Dogs chase in formation. Aaron dives into the Mercedes and slams the driver door shut. The dogs run around the car, barking. They think it's a game.

A FERRARI ENZO hoons into the drive. Engine REVS at red line. The dogs are terrified of this red monster and run away.

Aaron watches JEFFREY (20) climb out of the car. Impulsive. He tucks his shirt into his pants. Fixes tie. Dons jacket. BEEPS the alarm.

All is quiet again.

Through the windscreen, inside the car, Aaron starts to cry.

I/E. MERCEDES SPORTS CAR - DAY

Aaron squeezes into the footwell of the driver seat. Camo-ass in the air. He reaches under the seat. Locates the ring box. He prays to God before he opens. No ring inside. Obviously!

AARON  
Shit. Shit. Shit!

MARIE (O.S.)  
Who's car is that?

Aaron bashes his head on the bottom of the steering wheel. Spots Marie through the windscreen.

AARON  
Mine-- Um... It's a rental.

MARIE  
Glad I found you. Let's go inside.  
Everything is about to start.

EXT. GARDEN - DAY

Justin fidgets with his hair. Intimidated by the expectant family guests sat in rows under the marquee, like a church. Aaron tries not to cry. Marie grabs his hand.

MARIE  
You're all sweaty. Aww... You don't have to pretend to be upset for me. But thanks.

AARON  
I'm a people pleaser.

JUSTIN  
Before we view the video, I thought it appropriate on this occasion to say a few words about, Mommy, Gran or however you referred to this--

One Labrador staggers up to Justin. It leans on his leg. Doesn't look well at all...

JUSTIN (CONT'D)  
God! Who let the dogs out again?

Jeffrey looks around from the front row... Guilty.

The dog convulses. It SPEWS up its guts all over the stage. Half-chewed chunks of T-bone steak... And--

A saliva-drenched diamond engagement RING!

Justin picks up the ring and holds it in his finger tips--  
Aaron GASPS! The rest of the guests, likewise.

Jeffrey snatches the ring from Justin.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)  
Hey! Finders keepers.

Jeffrey dunks the ring into his champagne flute. Shakes the glass with his hand over the top. He drinks the foamed wine, and spits the *cleaned* ring onto his palm...

JEFFREY  
I think something is written here--  
(reads inscription)  
"Aaron and Marie-- For Eva." Lame.  
Who's Aaron?

Aaron stands up. Wipes his palms on his clothes--

AARON  
I'm Aaron!

The guests hold their breath as Aaron moves to the front.  
Marie is anxious. Her heart races...

AARON (CONT'D)  
Um... Can I have my ring please?

JEFFREY  
I heard about you... You look like  
Dwayne Johnson's scrawny mother.

Jeffrey hands over the ring and Aaron turns for his seat--

JEFFREY (CONT'D)  
Hoi! Are you going to do this?

COUSINS  
DO IT! Do it for Gran!

JEFFREY  
Yeah. You heard them... For Gran?

Jeffrey snatches the mic from Justin's MC grip and places it in Aaron's flaccid fist. He faces Marie's entire family...

AARON  
Hi-- Hello. I'm Aaron. I had a  
plan, um... I was thinking of a  
plan but this wasn't it...  
(MORE)



AARON (CONT'D)  
(under breath)  
So embarrassing.

Ronnie sits in the end of a row with Hilary. He looks upset.  
Marie is entranced in anticipation. Everyone else, in shock.

AARON (CONT'D)  
I'm just going to say... Marie,  
will you marry me?

MARIE  
OK.

AARON  
OK?

The most awkward silent beat...

MARIE  
(stands up)  
Yes. I'll marry you.

The guests CLAP. All, but Ronnie. He looks disappointed.

HILARY  
You're in love with him aren't you?

Aaron drops the mic as Marie jumps into his arms. She cries.  
Everyone stands up and CLAPS as if that was the routine.  
Ronnie leaves the party.

ANNE  
(to Milton)  
Definitely gays huh?

Aaron wipes the ring, places it on Marie's finger.

MARIE  
Wow... Well wasn't this a surprise.

Marie and Aaron embrace, make-out to WHOOPS and APPLAUSE.  
Justin reclaims the mic off the floor.

JUSTIN  
OK. OK. That's enough thank you.  
Now, some kind words about Mommy--

DONNA  
Just play the damn tape Justin.

Justin gives in. Presses the PLAY button on the clicker--

GRAN appears on the screen. Looks like the Queen of England. Except she wears an ACDC t-shirt and has black eye-liner. Super-strange old lady...

GRAN

If you're watching this, I'm dead.

The guests are a little freaked out by her tone.

GRAN (CONT'D)

I've always believed the best way to grow old is to stay young-- Until it kills you... HA HA HA... I wanted my first born son Harrold to read my last will but seeing as that is not possible I made this short video...

Confused family FACES...

GRAN (CONT'D)

I hate my children. In fact I hate all of you, except dear Penelope...

EXT. GRAN'S BEDROOM BALCONY TERRACE - CONTINUOUS

PENELOPE (85) climbs onto the railing. Unbeknown to all. [Best friend of the deceased.] In a Valium-fueled state...

GRAN (V.O.)

Look at you all here for the first time since God knows when, hoping to cash in on some of my wealth. When was the last time you paid a visit or even called on the phone?

EXT. GARDEN - SAME TIME

On the TV screen, Gran stares right down the lens...

GRAN

Take a good look at yourselves... (swallows a load of pills) You know I was rich... Till I developed a few bad habits shall we say...

Guilt family FACES...

GRAN (CONT'D)

Some of my assets have been liquidated to pay off my debts.  
(MORE)

GRAN (CONT'D)

What wealth remains will be split  
between a charity making knitted  
garments for guide dogs in Detroit  
and of course my friend Penelope.

CAMI

Look! Someone's on Gran's balcony.

GRAN

You selfish suckers can have  
whatever is left in the basement.  
Peace out.

The TV screen goes blank.

JUSTIN

Who is it?

DONNA

I think it's Penelope.

Penelope throws herself off Gran's bedroom balcony!

Penelope falls two floors--

She lands on the edge of the pool. SNAPS her leg in half.  
Slips into the water...

She's submerged. Going to drown...

HILARY

The money!

Hilary dives into the pool to rescue. Justin not far behind.  
Donna takes off her jacket, reveals her lace bra to all.  
Follows her siblings in with a splash.

Justin's BALD head breaches the surface like a cue ball.  
Adrien collects his floating TOUPEE.

Together the siblings take Penelope to the steps of the pool.  
She's alive but injured.

JUSTIN

Somebody call 911--

HILARY

Hurry.

EXT. MANSION - DAY

Like magic, a COP CAR screams into the drive and halts  
adjacent to Jeffrey's Ferrari.

Two POLICE OFFICERS exit their vehicle.

POLICEMAN  
Is this the vehicle?

EXT. GARDEN - DAY

Donna and Justin place Penelope in recovery on the patio.

HILLARY  
Is she going to be OK?

Penelope COUGHS! She's OK.

Adrien slaps the toupee on Justin's white scalp.

ADRIEN  
Now everybody knows Dad. Who cares!

Hilary struggles to get out of the pool. Her delicate clothes have shrunk so much that a BULGE is visible in her crotch. The whole family cannot help but notice her clear appendage.

CAMI  
I knew Aunt Hilary was a man.

Found out, Hilary adjusts her crotch, heads inside the house. The police officers emerge at the same time.

POLICEWOMAN  
We're here for a Jeffrey Ronson.

Jeffrey runs. The police officers chase him round the pool. Dodging family members. It's a game of cat and mouse--

The policewoman loses patience and shoots him with a Taser.

Jeffrey twitches uncontrollably. Splashes into the pool.

ADRIEN  
(to Cami)  
Gran would have loved the drama?

CAMI  
She's up there laughing right now.

EXT. GARDEN - NIGHT

The policemen cuff Jeffrey and prepare to take him away.

JEFFREY  
Ferraris are always worth the ride.

Guests hover about. Try to come to terms with the events.  
Shocked and appalled...

TIM (55) struts through the back door. Greasy-gelled hair.  
Air of a sleazy business man. [Son-in-law to the deceased.]

TIM

Sorry I'm late. What did I miss?  
More important, what did I get?

MARIE

Dad? You missed everything.

Aaron turns around--

Tim and Aaron freeze in unison. Like they've seen a ghost--

AARON

Dad? Is that you?

TIM

Aaron? What are you doing here son?

Aaron and Marie look at each other. Freaking...

AARON

DAD?

MARIE

DAD?

ADRIEN

Oh-- SNAP!

Marie vomits all over Aaron. Her half-sibling!

CUT TO BLACK.

HILARY (V.O.)

I think this is the basement here.

INT. BASEMENT - DAY

Halogen lights BUZZ the life to reveal dozens of very  
anatomically accurate, life-like MANNEQUINS.

Fetish and bondage paraphernalia. Sex toys everywhere.

The family have discovered Gran's "Sex Dungeon".

DONNA

Is this all she left us?

ANNE

Disgusting.

MILTON

Raunchy old bird!