

FIT TO BE TIED

A screenplay

By

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FADE IN:

INT. OFFICE - CUBE - DAY

JAMES sits at his desk, working away. It's a white collar office and he's appropriately dressed in a tie and nice clothes.

James is 28, tall, above-average good looking and a decent if at times awkward guy.

After a moment, a large package is suddenly placed on his desk. He looks up and sees the MAIL LADY smiling at him, standing by her mail cart. She's a pretty young woman in her mid-twenties.

He stares at her, uncertain how to respond to that smile. He's vaguely uncomfortable.

After a moment, he nods a polite acknowledgment and then turns back to his computer, signaling that their interaction is over.

She goes, a mild look of disappointment on her face.

Once alone, James looks over the package anxiously, although he refrains from opening it.

JAMES (V.O.)
(reads) "Did it come?" (speaks
while typing) Yes, it came today...
I had to ship it to my office...
because I was worried someone might
steal it.

INT. JAMES'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

We see the modest bedroom of a single guy in his twenties. A full length mirror adorns one wall.

After a moment, James steps up to the mirror. He's wearing an elaborate bondage master leather outfit. It seems an awkward choice for such a nice, seemingly normal guy.

Everything is leather, including the pants, the armbands, the mask and the straps that crisscross his bare chest.

JAMES (V.O.)
(reads) "How does it look?"
(types) It looks hot. I like it.
You'll see for yourself soon.

He places his hands on his sides and attempts to strike a bold, confident pose. He's only slightly successful.

JAMES (V.O.)
(reads) "Dunno. I haven't said I'm ready to meet yet." (types) C'mon, Tommy. We've been talking online for weeks. Let's get together IRL.

INT. JAMES'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DESK AREA - NIGHT

Later. James sits alone at his desk, typing on the computer. It's late and the room is lonely and dark. The only light comes from the laptop. He's wearing just a pair of boxers.

He is using an instant messaging app.

The word on the screen read:

TOMMY: *I was only looking for an online friendship.*

James types, speaking as he does so.

JAMES
I know that's how it started. But we've gotten so close.

On the screen:

TOMMY: *Even so. I'm kind of shy.*

JAMES (cont'd)
Not from what I've read.

On the screen:

TOMMY: *It's a big step.*

James looks over at the upper right corner of his monitor. There, we see a small photo of TOMMY's face. Tommy is 22, a cute "twink" type, friendly but with a relaxed self confidence.

James stares at the photo for a moment, and then resumes typing, speaking as he does so.

JAMES (cont'd)
Just give it a shot. You won't
regret it. I promise.

On the screen:

TOMMY: *I don't know.*

James types, now getting excited.

JAMES: *C'mon. Take the plunge. Saturday night? You and me. What do you say?*

On the screen:

TOMMY: *I do like the smell of new leather. OK, fine, James. Text me the details.*

James smiles, satisfied. He sits back in his chair.

Suddenly, he looks very nervous. His face suggests: What have I gotten myself into?

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

We see a cheap hotel, the kind with a neon sign that says "VACANCY." It's rundown but nevertheless quite tall, running a dozen stories or more.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

JAMES paces back and forth nervously. He is wearing his leather bondage master outfit.

A bed dominates the center of the room, like usual. The room is high up, at least ten floors, and the window offers a partial view of the city skyline.

James goes to the beside table and picks up a wrist watch resting there. He checks it and shakes his head in irritation.

The room phone rings. James jumps at the sound. He puts down the watch, then goes and answers the phone.

JAMES

(into phone) Hello?... He is?
Good... Send him up... Thank you.

He attempts to hang up but, due to his limited vision with the mask, misses the mark several times before finally getting the handset back in place.

Unsure of what to do next, he gets his small whip and stands in the center of the room. He speaks as if there was someone there. His tone is meant to be strong and intimidating, but like his outfit, he comes off seeming phony.

JAMES (cont'd)

During our time together, you shall address me as Master or sir. You shall follow all of my orders without question. I expect complete and utter obedience.

James punctuates his speech with a crisp crack of the whip. He cries out in pain, having inadvertently struck his own leg with the whip.

He goes and looks through his bag again.

There is a knock at the door. James jumps a little at the sound.

He takes a deep breath and goes to the center of the room. He clears his throat and then speaks in his best attempt at a commanding voice.

JAMES (cont'd)

Enter!

After a moment, TOMMY enters, a little shy. He's boyishly cute, talkative, with some ego but a kind of inner glow and a complete inability to feel self conscious.

He wears a jacket, red t-shirt, jeans and sneakers.

James turns and they see each other.

TOMMY

Hi.

After a moment, James goes and addresses him.

JAMES

During our time together, you shall, uhm... address me as Master or sir. You shall follow all of my... Er... orders without question. I expect complete and utter obedience.

TOMMY

Sorry, dude. I really have to pee.

Tommy quickly approaches the open door in the corner, the bathroom. He exits inside and shuts the door.

James finds himself standing alone, unsure of what to do next. After a moment, he throws up his hands in frustration.

He sees the wrist watch on the bedside table. He walks in that direction. Lacking peripheral vision because of the mask, he bumps into the corner of the bed and falls awkwardly to the floor. He quickly gets back up.

He removes the mask and stares down at it in disdain. He takes the watch, then goes to the bag and places both items inside.

After a moment, the toilet flushing sound is heard. Then, Tommy wanders back into the room, still a little nervous.

TOMMY (cont'd)

Back again!...

He slides off his jacket and places it around an armchair.

An awkward moment passes when neither speaks.

Tommy goes and looks through the window, briefly.

TOMMY (cont'd)
Hey, you can almost see my
apartment from here...

He walks the length of the room, passing behind James,
checking him out. Then he turns and faces him.

TOMMY (cont'd)
So, you gonna tie me up or what?

JAMES
Kneel, slave.

TOMMY
Yes, sir.

Tommy kneels. James removes a leather collar from his bag and
places it around Tommy's neck.

James faces out and gives his speech again, although his
voice wavers, revealing his self consciousness.

JAMES
During our time together, you shall
address me as Master or slave-
SIR! Master or sir. You shall
follow all of my orders without
question. I expect complete and
utter obedience.

He once again punctuates his speech with a crack from his
whip. Again, he harms himself, and he attempts to conceal the
pain he's feeling from Tommy.

TOMMY
Yes, sir.

JAMES
Now, slave, lick my boots.

After a moment, Tommy reluctantly leans down, sticks out his tongue and inches closer to James's boots. Then, he kneels upright again.

TOMMY

Sorry. Just not into the whole boot licking thing.

JAMES

I just cleaned them.

TOMMY

Some guys, they can't get enough of that. But for me, it's just not what floats my boat.

JAMES

Lick one then.

TOMMY

Yeah. You know, even so, it's just that-

JAMES

Er, very well... Stand.

Tommy stands.

JAMES (cont'd)

Lie on the bed.

Tommy goes and lies down on the bed, face up, his head at the top of the bed. James goes to the table and discreetly checks his notebook. A moment passes.

TOMMY

Sometimes when I get nervous, I talk too much, although let's face it, this situation would give anybody the jitters. Am I talking too much?

James removes a pair of handcuffs from his bag. He goes and handcuffs Tommy's wrists to the head board. He then pulls Tommy's shirt up to his armpits, exposing his chest.

TOMMY (cont'd)

I doubt any reasonable person would begrudge me a few jitters under the circumstances. Jitters and jitters and still more jitters. If I talk too much, just let me know and I'll zip it, pronto.

JAMES

Silence, slave!

TOMMY

Right. Just like that.

James waves his arms in exasperation.

James goes to his bag and removes a candle, the sort that might be used in a Jewish religious ceremony. Tommy smiles in anticipation.

TOMMY (cont'd)

Hot wax action. That's more my cup of chamomile... Oh, I think I saw those once at a Jewish grocery store.

James looks at the candle, as if for the first time and rolls his eyes. He brings it to the bed.

TOMMY (cont'd)

Say, aren't you gonna light that sucker?

James stares down at the candle, suddenly realizing.

JAMES

Ah, you don't have a lighter on you, do you? That I could use? Or matches?

TOMMY

No. You forgot?

JAMES

I don't smoke.

Beat.

JAMES (cont'd)
Maybe I could use a magnifying
glass to light the candle?

TOMMY
Well, do you have a magnifying
glass?

JAMES
Uhm, no.

TOMMY
Well, then, I guess we're out of
luck, huh?

After a moment, James goes back to the table. He tosses the
candle in the bag and then begins looking through it.

JAMES
Oh.

TOMMY
What now?

JAMES
Oh.

TOMMY
Just tell me.

JAMES
I can't seem to find the keys to
the handcuffs.

TOMMY
WHAT?!

James empties the bag, removing an odd assortment of sex toys
onto the table.

JAMES
Don't panic. They must be around
somewhere...

TOMMY

Oh, you have got to-

Tommy stops, temporarily distracted and intrigued upon seeing James holding an oversized dildo.

TOMMY (cont'd)

...to be kidding me!

Tommy pulls at the handcuffs.

JAMES

Don't do that. They're expensive.
You'll break them.

Tommy waits as James expands his search to include the entire room. James checks inside the ice bucket.

TOMMY

You know, dude, if there's no
safety and no maturity then-

JAMES

TOMMY (cont'd)

JAMES (cont'd)

Yes. I know...

An awkward moment passes.

TOMMY

Hey, "Master," be sure to let me
know when you find them.

JAMES

You'll be the first.

James crawls around on the floor looking all over.

TOMMY

Dude, if you can't find that key, I
am going to be so irritated...

Still kneeling, James finally tries his own pocket. He reaches in and extracts the key.

JAMES

Oh. Son of a gun. It was in my pocket all the time.

He smiles and turns to Tommy, pleased with himself. When he sees Tommy's angry stare, James's own smile disappears.

James stands and goes to the bed and unlocks him. Tommy sits up and sits on the edge of the bed, arms folded across his chest, petulant and emotionally distant.

JAMES (cont'd)

Sorry about that. But no harm done, right?

Tommy says nothing. An awkward moment passes.

JAMES (cont'd)

I would have found it eventually.

Another awkward moment goes by. James waits for Tommy to say something, but Tommy gives him the silent treatment.

JAMES (cont'd)

We won't use the handcuffs anymore.

James goes and puts the handcuffs in the bag. He stands behind the table and faces Tommy.

Tommy remains on the bed, irritated.

JAMES (cont'd)

Really, really, really sorry about that.

After a moment, Tommy finally speaks in a quiet voice.

TOMMY

OK...

JAMES

So we're OK then?

TOMMY

(sullen) I said OK. OK is OK.

James goes and pulls a chair out from the table and places it in the middle of the room. He points to it boldly, indicating Tommy should sit there. It's a pathetic attempt at being a dominant leader. After a moment, Tommy rolls his eyes, gets up and sits down unenthusiastically in the chair.

James removes some rope from his bag and goes to Tommy. He ties Tommy's hands behind his back, behind the chair.

TOMMY (cont'd)

Have you ever done bondage outdoors? Like, in nature? I have. Just once. This guy, his name was Ted. Outdoorsy type. We used to fool around together, before he moved to Minneapolis. He loved to go camping. Knew all the great trails. He told me that it was his fantasy to kidnap a guy, bring him to the woods and tie him naked to a tree.

James begins his work of tying an elaborate spider web pattern of ropes on Tommy's upper body. Tommy rambles on, passively allowing James to do as he pleases.

TOMMY (cont'd)

You know, pretend kidnap. Not actually kidnap. I mean, he's not a felon or anything. Just a man with a dream. Aren't we all? He said it would be very animal, very primal, very caveman...

Tommy observes James's handiwork with the ropes.

TOMMY (cont'd)

Hey, you're actually doing pretty good there... The idea was not without its appeal to me, of course. I'm a city boy, born and raised, and nature has always felt very foreign, very exotic. Still, I had the usual concerns about being tied up naked in the middle of the woods. Poison ivy.

(MORE)

TOMMY (cont'd)

The odd mosquito bite. Bears. I'm talking real, actual bears, not the middle aged queens with beards and big bellies type who hang out at The Eagle.

EXT. STREET CORNER - DAY

Tommy stand waiting on a street corner, hands in his pockets. He's a little nervous.

TOMMY (V.O.)

So one Saturday morning, there I am, waiting alone in some abandoned, God-forsaken obscure back alley like he told me, and he pulls up in his Mazda.

A car pulls up and TED, age 37, tall and hairy gets out. With no social pleasantries, he opens the trunk and points.

TOMMY (V.O.)

He tells me to take off all my clothes, like right there and then, and get in the trunk. This is his fantasy, not mine, but fine, whatever.

Tommy begins to undress...

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Tommy continues telling his story.

James quietly works on tying Tommy up to the chair, paying more attention to his knots than to Tommy. His work is detailed and, in its way, quite compelling.

TOMMY

And soon, enough, there I am,
locked inside the trunk of the car,
crammed in next to the spare tire,
naked, bound and gagged, traveling
who knows where and praying to God
that we don't get stopped for a
speeding ticket. An hour later, the
trunk finally pops opens and he
yanks me out. And we're deep in the
middle of the forest.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

We see a large expanse of forest, green and alive with
nature. It's a sunny day. No people anywhere.

TOMMY (V.O.)

And I mean deep. Nobody around.
Nothing but trees and sky as far as
you can see.

EXT. FOREST PATH - DAY

Ted and Tommy walk through the forest. Ted leads the way.
Tommy is naked, hands tied behind his back, following, being
led on a leash.

TOMMY (V.O.)

And he marches me about half a mile
into the forest, leading me around
on this leash thing, right? And I
gotta tell ya, it was pretty good.
It was very good. You see, the
problem with me is that I've done
it all, and so there's not many new
final frontiers for me to star trek
through, you know? Finally, we stop
and he tells me to stand up against
a pine tree. Or whatever tree it
was. I don't know from trees.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Ted ties Tommy to a tree. He's taken the task seriously, using a whole series of ropes to fasten every part of Tommy's body securely.

TOMMY (V.O.)

And he ties me to this sucker, and I mean good. Half an hour, he spends. Miles of rope. Legs, chest, wrists, ankles, elbows, the works. And I ain't going nowhere. And my cock is so hard you can hang a paint can from it.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

James ties Tommy's knees to the chair. He consults his notebook briefly, for reference.

TOMMY

And then here's the kicker. He announces he's leaving. He's just gonna leave me there. Helpless. Naked. Gagged. Tied up. Alone. I mean, I knew he'd come back in twenty minutes or something. He acts all tough, like I'm his prisoner, but we both know the score. And so anyway, off Ted goes.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Tommy is now fully tied to the tree, and alone. He waits, intrigued, curious.

TOMMY (V.O.)

And there I am, just standing there. I mean, I had never been so helpless in my life. And I almost shot my load right there. It was like an adventure. I was so glad I said yes.

(MORE)

TOMMY (V.O.) (cont'd)

It was the hottest bondage experience I had ever had... Or it would have been, if that group of senior women hikers hadn't unexpectedly shown up.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

A group of half a dozen senior female hikers stand and stare at Tommy. They are understandably shocked and surprised to see a young man tied up and naked.

The women are dressed for a nature hike, which they had apparently been in the middle of taking.

Tommy shrugs. What else can he do?

TOMMY (V.O.)

Now, that was a tad awkward...

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

James ties Tommy's ankles to the bottom of the chair.

TOMMY

They were embarrassed. I was embarrassed. They were nice enough to untie me. I still stay in touch with Estelle. She sends me a fruitcake every December. And as for Ted, well, he and I-

JAMES

SILENCE, SLAVE!

Tommy instantly goes quiet.

He is now fully tied up. James paces around.

TOMMY

Feels great, by the way. I love it. I do.

James stands and looks at him, excited but also confused. A moment goes by.

TOMMY (cont'd)
Not sure what to do next?

James shrugs, noncommittally. Another moment passes.

TOMMY (cont'd)
Could I get a little verbal?

JAMES
Verbal?

TOMMY
Abuse. You said in your online profile that you're into verbal abuse.

JAMES
You like that?

TOMMY
Love it.

JAMES
Oh. OK. Uhm... Shame on you! You faggot!

TOMMY
Yeah. Don't go there.

JAMES
You said verbal abuse. That's what you said.

TOMMY
Yeah, but, demean me in other ways.

James paces back and forth, behind the chair.

JAMES
OK... You're weak. Helpless.
Worthy of contempt.

TOMMY

Yeah... Yeah...

JAMES

You're pathetic. You couldn't bench press more than... Forty pounds. Your shoes are so out of style that... Well, they're out of style... You could never pass the written driver's test on the first try. You...

Beat.

TOMMY

Well, I guess that'll have to do. Now, tell me you're going to dominate me.

JAMES

I'm going to dominate you...

TOMMY

Yeah, but in you own words, dude.

JAMES

I'm going to... (*struggles to find a verb*) dominate... (*struggles to find a noun*) you... You will be dominated... by me...

James tries to find something more to say. After a while, he gives up.

TOMMY

OK, that was weak. The word is weak.

JAMES

Verbal abuse is not my forte.

TOMMY

Do you even have a forte?

JAMES

I wasn't prepared to do that-

Suddenly, the cell phone in Tommy's jacket rings. The ring tone is the song "Whip It" by Devo.

They both turn and stare at it, very confused.

TOMMY
Would you mind?

James goes to the jacket, removes the phone and answers it.

JAMES
Hello?... Just a moment...

James goes and stands next to Tommy. He awkwardly holds the phone up to Tommy's head and waits while Tommy carries on a conversation.

TOMMY
(into phone) Hello... Oh, hi, Stephanie... As a matter of fact, this is not a good time... No, the rain check forms are in my desk... No, I know they are there. I saw them there the other day. Put me on hold and go and look again... You have to look deep inside the draw. Not just in the front... Right. They're behind my Papa Smurf doll... (to JAMES) Sorry. It's my work. I'm the assistant night manager for a supermarket. Place falls apart without me. God forbid, I should take even one night off- (to phone) You found them? Oh, good... Don't call again unless you have a real crisis. I'm very serious about that... OK, then. You're welcome. Goodnight, Stephanie. (to JAMES) Hang that up, for me, would you? Thanks. You're a peach.

James terminates the call and returns the phone to the jacket.

TOMMY (cont'd)
Betcha thought I was going to say
to her, "I can't talk right now!
I'm all tied up!" Ha!

JAMES
Thanks for not saying that.

TOMMY
Scrambled eggs.

James stares in confusion.

TOMMY (cont'd)
Scrambled eggs?

JAMES
I don't think a cheap hotel like
this has room service.

TOMMY
Scrambled eggs!... You said if I
wanted to time out, and take a
break, that was the phrase to use-

JAMES
I did say that. Yes. Sorry.
Forgot... Yes, let's take a break.

James goes and sits quietly at the table, not wanting to
spoil the fantasy with a lot of extraneous talk. He takes a
sip from his juice box, using the straw. He reviews his
notebook, trying to hide it from view, and ignores Tommy.

A quiet moment passes.

TOMMY
Maybe you'd like to tickle me
later? I'm quite ticklish.

JAMES
It's on the list.

TOMMY
Could I get a taste now?

James ignores this.

Another moment passes.

TOMMY (cont'd)
Nice work with the...

JAMES
Thank you. I practice on my dog.

TOMMY
(horrified) I hope your dog is
kinky.

JAMES
Just kidding.

TOMMY
You better be. Otherwise, I'm
reporting you to the ASPCA.

James looks over at Tommy and smiles. He is pleased by what he sees, and by the friendly back and forth the two are engaging in. He's content in this moment.

But unfortunately, the moment is fleeting. He suddenly looks apprehensive, even guilty. James is the type who doesn't seem able to feel contentment for very long. Some anxiety will inevitably descend, ruining everything.

He lets out a sigh and leans back in his chair...

EXT. SUBURBAN HOUSE - PATIO - DAY

A table has been set up and a family is having a celebratory Sunday brunch together. This is a special occasion, with a nice white tablecloth, cloth napkins and the good dishes. Each person has a wine glass.

JERRY (61) and JULIA (61) sit together, chatting quietly as they eat. Jerry is a white bread suburban husband and father, friendly and entirely without edge.

Also present are DAVID (36) and his wife SARAH (30), seven months pregnant. Next to them is another couple, MARK (33) and his wife LIZ (31).

James sits alone at the end of the table, the only person not partnered up with anyone.

Everyone is having a pleasant time, quietly eating and talking. They're a polite, pleasant group. They like each other, and the overall tone is kind, polite, low key and friendly.

After a moment, David taps his wine glass gently with his knife. Everyone stops talking and gives him their attention.

DAVID

As the oldest brother, I feel that
it is my duty, the tradition, to
offer up a toast.

Paul and Julia smile. In a moment of sincere affection, he reaches over and takes her hand.

MARK

Here, here!

DAVID

A toast to the best two parents
anyone ever had. And so today, on
the occasion of their fortieth
wedding anniversary, I would like
to invite you all, to raise your
glasses in a toast.

They all raise their glasses.

DAVID (cont'd)

Mom and dad. You taught all of us
what love is, with your words, with
your actions, with the life you've
made together. You lead the way.
May we all have what you have. To
mom and dad!

They all toast.

Jerry, a little drunk, raises his own glass.

JERRY

Thank you. That was lovely. I just want to tell you all how happy I am... This moment. Our family. My three boys. Men now... And a new generation on the way.

He indicate Sarah. Then he turns to Mark and James.

JERRY (cont'd)

You two have got some catching up to do! That baby is going to need cousins.

More congenial laughter from the group.

MARK

James has got to find a wife first!

SARAH

You'll find someone soon, James. Don't worry.

James looks uncomfortable, but says nothing.

JERRY

Family. That's what it's all about. Marriage. Children. The family unit. It's survived for thousands of years. The bedrock of society...

JULIA

He does love to make a speech!

They laugh.

JERRY

Guilty as charged!... And this beautiful woman who I have never been out of love with...

SARAH

Tell us the story!

JULIA

Nobody wants to hear that story
again!

The others offer up affectionate disagreement. They do want
to hear it.

JERRY

It was oh so many years ago. First
grade. Miss Bell's class. First
day of school. Old Miss Bell was
assigning us what desks to sit in.
And she put me in the third row, in
the center. And then she assigned
this little girl the desk right
next to mine. And when that little
girl sat down next to me, I took
one look at her. And I just fell in
love with her right then and there.
Cutest thing this boy ever saw.

JULIA

(flattered) Oh...

JERRY

And I just knew right then and
there, even then, that one day, one
day this would be the girl that I
would marry.

The group loves the story, except James, who seems vaguely
uncomfortable.

JERRY (cont'd)

Of course, I found out years later
that old Miss Bell sat us
alphabetically by first name.
Because she was old and had trouble
remember the names of any of her
students.

The group laughs at this twist, although of course they know
the story already. He raises his glass.

JERRY (cont'd)

So now I would like to offer up a toast of my own. To my darling wife of forty years today, the great love of my life, the mother of my children, the best woman I know... The only woman I've ever loved. The only woman I ever dated. The only woman... I ever slept with....

This last comment catches the group by surprise, and they offer up an affectionate laugh.

JULIA

(embarrassed) Oh, Jerry! Really!

JERRY

To Julia!

They toast her. Julia smiles, flattered.

James toasts too, but his facial expression shows this whole experience had made him somewhat uncomfortable, like the odd man out.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Later, Jerry is looking through the drawers under the counter. James enters, a little uncomfortable.

JERRY

Do you know where mother keeps the fancy knife? The one to cut the cake with?

JAMES

The drawer on the left.

Jerry looks in the drawer, but doesn't find it.

JAMES (cont'd)

In the back.

Jerry extracts the knife.

JERRY

It was hiding! Little sucker.

Jerry begins to go.

JAMES

Dad?

Jerry stops. He turns and faces him.

JAMES (cont'd)

I have something I want to talk to
you about.

JERRY

What is it, son?

James takes a moment and gathers his courage. Then, he says
what's on his mind.

JAMES

Was mom really the only woman
you've ever slept with?

Jerry considers for a moment how to answer. The question
doesn't upset him in any way. After a moment, he steps closer
to James and offers up his honest answer.

JERRY

Son, she's the only woman I ever
wanted to sleep with.

James stares at him, actually a little disappointed.

Suddenly, Julia calls in from the other room.

JULIA (O.S.)

Jerry? We're ready.

JERRY

Time for the cake!

Jerry exits. James remains, considering his father's
words...

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

James sits in his chair, as before. He stares off, filled with a deep weight of regret.

After a moment, Tommy suddenly speaks, and James snaps out of his funk.

TOMMY
What's that?

JAMES
What's what?

James looks down at his notebook.

JAMES (cont'd)
Oh, this? Nothing.

TOMMY
Notes? You brought notes?!

JAMES
Well. Sort of... Mostly sketches of how I wanted to tie you up.

TOMMY
Let me see!

JAMES
No.

TOMMY
C'mon. Be a dude. Please?

A moment passes.

TOMMY (cont'd)
Pretty please with sugar on top?

James reluctantly goes to Tommy and shows him a page in his notebook.

TOMMY (cont'd)
That's nice. I like that one.

James turns the page.

TOMMY (cont'd)
I never did that one but a friend
of mine did.

James turns to another page.

TOMMY (cont'd)
Nice frog-tie.

JAMES
Frog-tie?

TOMMY
It's like hog-tie. Except like a
frog. You know...

James looks at the drawing again.

JAMES
Oh. "Frog-tie." Didn't know there
was a name for that.

James turns the page.

TOMMY
Now, I've never seen that one
before. It's totally bitching.
Where did you...?

JAMES
Just something I cooked up on my
own.

TOMMY
Well, goodness! Aren't we the
creative one?! I can see you put a
lot of effort into this.

JAMES
I wanted you to have a nice time.

James returns the notebook to the bag.

TOMMY

I must say, for a bondage dominant top, you are awfully accommodating. But a free word of advice. You need to be more bossy.

JAMES

Oh.

James begins untying Tommy.

TOMMY

Yeah. I'm just not feeling it with you. Sorry to be blunt.

JAMES

No. No. It's OK.

TOMMY

Work on that. I need a tough guy. A real take charge hombre.

JAMES

Yeah, well, there are areas where you could stand some improvement too.

TOMMY

Me?

JAMES

Yes.

TOMMY

Really?

JAMES

Yes, really.

TOMMY

Well, this will be interesting. What?

JAMES

For one thing, you should put up more of a fight.

TOMMY

I'm submissive. I thought that's what popped your corn.

JAMES

Yeah. But don't give in so easily. Eventually, give in. Not so soon.

Tommy considers this.

TOMMY

Well, I suppose that's fair. But then you need to be real aggressive for me.

JAMES

Deal.

At this point, James is untying Tommy's ankles. Without looking up, James sticks out his hand to seal the deal. But Tommy is still partially tied up, and James ponders for a second what to do. After a moment, he awkwardly pats Tommy twice on the head.

JAMES (cont'd)

I want to do some role play now.

TOMMY

I hate role play.

JAMES

You said in your texts that you'd role play with me.

TOMMY

I lied.

Tommy is now fully untied. James puts the chair back at the table. Tommy stretches.

JAMES

Which one do you want to do?

TOMMY

I'm equally bad at everything. So you pick.

JAMES

Something with spanking, I think.
With all your attitude, you need
one.

TOMMY

Can't argue with that. I could use
a good spanking. I have been bad
lately. So very bad...

James dims the lights and sits in the center of the foot of the bed. He takes on the role of a middle aged library administrator, stern and humorless. He is surprisingly effective here, both in creating a distinctive personality and being an intimidating dominant.

JAMES

"Come here."

Tommy joins him. He is consistently awkward and disinterested, never really giving himself over to the scene or creating a separate personae.

JAMES (cont'd)

"Now then, it's my understanding
that you have an overdue book out
of our library."

TOMMY

Library? You have got to be
kidding?

JAMES

"No, sonny, I am not kidding.
According to our computer records,
you have a book overdue. Rather
long overdue, in point of fact."

TOMMY

I feel so stupid.

JAMES

Just do it.

TOMMY

OK... Yes. Sir. An overdue book.

JAMES

"I have the title here."

He consults with his "computer."

JAMES (cont'd)

"'A Third Helping of Chicken Soup
For The Soul.'"

Tommy rolls his eyes upon hearing this title.

TOMMY

Do I look like a seventy year old
woman from a red state?!

James stares at Tommy, who, after a moment, relents, playing
along, although not very enthusiastically.

TOMMY (cont'd)

Yeah. I checked out that book. I
enjoyed the first two so much, I
just had to read the third one.

JAMES

"Nineteen weeks overdue! What do
you have to say for yourself?!"

TOMMY

Those asinine inspirational stories
are like a drug to me. Yep, I'm an
addict. And I need help.

JAMES

"Now, here at City Library, we have
but one punishment for those who so
flagrantly disrespect our rules."

TOMMY

You're going to throw the book at
me, so to speak?

JAMES

"Lose the pants."

Tommy reluctantly removes his shoes, sox and jeans. He's wearing a pair of "tightie-whitie" style white briefs. He drops the pants on the floor.

James pats the space on the bed next to where he's sitting. Tommy goes and kneels down there. James snaps his fingers and points to his own lap, indicating that Tommy should lie down.

Tommy remains kneeling, and after a moment, he begins to laugh.

JAMES (cont'd)

Dude, c'mon...

Tommy continues laughing.

TOMMY

Overdue library books?... Give me a break...

James gets up and paces around the room, very irritated. He turns the lights back on. Tommy falls down on the bed laughing.

JAMES

You know, it's not always about you and what you want. This is supposed to be for both of us.

TOMMY

I know that.

JAMES

Do you? You sure as hell don't act like it.

James settles on the other side of the room, turning his back on Tommy. He grabs a long rope from the floor, one he had used earlier, and begins untying the knots in it.

TOMMY

C'mon. Don't get all pissy.

JAMES

Is this how you act with everybody?

Tommy stops laughing.

TOMMY

I don't know... It varies, I guess...

JAMES

What gives you the right to be so smug?

TOMMY

I'm not smug.

JAMES

Sure you are. It's in your voice. Your eyes. The whole way you are.

TOMMY

Well, that's an awful thing to say...

JAMES

Yes. It is.

A moment passes.

TOMMY

(sincerely) Gee. Maybe. You think?

James shrugs. Tommy looks truly regretful.

TOMMY (cont'd)

I guess I've got some stuff to think about.

James says nothing. After a moment, Tommy goes to him, sincerely contrite.

TOMMY (cont'd)

Sorry.

James says nothing. After a moment, Tommy kneels before him, half kidding, half serious.

TOMMY (cont'd)

Please forgive me, master.

James considers this. He smiles halfheartedly.

TOMMY (cont'd)

Let's try again. But no libraries. The Dewey Decimal System doesn't get my dick hard. No offense. You be someone hot... How about a fireman? Just between us girls, I've got a thing for a man dressed in rubber. But I'm saving my rubber fetish for my middle-aged years.

Tommy goes to the center of the room and takes on the role of a nerdy young man, complete with a nasal voice.

TOMMY (cont'd)

"Oh, where, oh where is that fireman? My whole apartment building is ablaze. It has become, for lack of a better term, a Towering Inferno. I'm trapped. Won't someone strong and virile come to rescue me...?"

Gradually, the scene transforms. We hear the sound of fire engines in the distance. Flashing red lights come in through the window. There's quite a commotion outside.

We are now "in" the fantasy.

Tommy is now suddenly dressed in a "nerd" ensemble, complete with thick glasses and ill fitting clothes. In his shirt pocket is the obligatory pocket protector, stuffed with a dozen pens of different colors and styles.

He moves quickly through the room, carrying a cardboard box. Inside is a small cat. He grabs various items from the room, placing them in the box next to the feline.

TOMMY (cont'd)

"I've gathered all my most cherished possessions in this box: My kitten Yentl, my high school yearbook and my hard drive containing my collection of 1970s pre-condom gay porn."

James suddenly appears in the window, now dressed as a fireman. He takes on the role of a dumb, strong, horny Neanderthal-like creature.

JAMES

"Building on fire. I rescue you."

James enters through the window.

TOMMY

"Oh, Mr. Fireman. I'm forever in your debt. I'd offer you a cup of coffee, but the circumstances scarcely warrant it."

He goes to Tommy.

JAMES

Mmmm... Cute..."

TOMMY

"Well, yes, Yentl is quite an adorable feline-"

JAMES

"Meant you cute. Me like. Me like much..."

James paces around Tommy, considering him, sexually intrigued. Tommy becomes nervous and tries to focus on the matter at hand.

TOMMY

"You'll have to carry me down the ladder... I'm painfully afraid of heights... Actually, it's not so much the heights I'm afraid of as the falling from heights... And I'm also not a big fan of the landing part either..."

JAMES

"We make love now."

He hugs Tommy from behind and kisses the back of his neck.

TOMMY

"What? But the fire? We must hurry, before we die from flames, smoke inhalation or some other fire-related injury."

JAMES

"It now or never. My love won't wait."

TOMMY

"But--"

James removes the box from Tommy's arms and tosses it on the floor. Tommy cries out at his cat's suffering.

TOMMY (cont'd)

"Yentl!!!"

JAMES

"Get on bed... NOW!"

A little scared, Tommy dutifully goes and kneels on the bed.

TOMMY

"I'll have you know, I'm only doing this because I'm such a good citizen! But we sha'nt be engaging in any funny business. Just a few quick kisses, perhaps some brief third base action and then we're off."

James goes to the bed. He pushes Tommy down on his back, his body laying diagonal.

James straddles Tommy and then begins kissing his neck and face, although never the lips.

After a moment, Tommy addresses the cat on the floor.

TOMMY (cont'd)

"Don't look, Yentl. I can't bear for you to see this..."

JAMES

"You're gonna slide down my fire pole."

Tommy suddenly takes a stand with James.

TOMMY

"See here, sir! This has gone on long enough! I'm not accustomed to being manhandled by city employees!"

After a moment, James turns Tommy over on his stomach and spansks his ass once.

JAMES

"Say 'Thank you, sir!'"

TOMMY

Unhand me, you- you rubber ruffian, you!

James spansks him a second time.

JAMES

"Say 'Thank you, sir!'"

TOMMY

(meekly) "Thank you, sir!"

Tommy grips the ends of the bed with his hands.

JAMES

"Louder!"

TOMMY

"THANK YOU, SIR!"

JAMES

"Say it!"

TOMMY

"More, sir. Thank you, sir!"

Suddenly, James grabs his right leg, in pain.

JAMES

Ow! Ow! Ow!

James crawls off the bed and hops ridiculously around the room, holding his leg.

Suddenly, the scene reverts back to normal. Gone are the flashing red lights and fire engine sounds. James and Tommy are themselves again, wearing their original clothes. The fantasy is abruptly over.

TOMMY

What is it?

JAMES

Leg cramp! Leg cramp! Leg cramp!

TOMMY

Are you all right?

JAMES

I get 'em all the time. I'm genetically predisposed.

TOMMY

Here. Lie down. I'll massage it for you.

JAMES

No. I don't think that's such-

TOMMY

I know what I'm doing. C'mon.

Tommy turns the lamp back on.

James reluctantly hops over to the bed and lies down on his stomach, his head at the foot of the bed. Tommy sits beside him and gently rubs his lower leg.

A moment passes.

JAMES

Love the white briefs, by the way.
My favorite.

TOMMY

Mine too.

Another moment passes.

TOMMY (cont'd)

Hey, you're not missing a wedding ring, by any chance, are you?

JAMES

No. Why do you ask?

TOMMY

I was at Ramrod the other night. You know the place?

JAMES

The leather bar? I know it. Sure.

TOMMY

Two Saturdays ago, I'm in the back room. You know, where all the fun stuff goes on. I walk in, and these two guys jump me. They make me take off all my clothes and then they tie me face down bent over to this saw horse. Totally hot. It's always a fun crowd there. And for the rest of the night, guys are fucking me and fingering me. Very nice. Let's just say my caboose went on a real ride that night. So anyway, dawn comes, as it always does, and this girl heads on home. And there, lo, and behold, I find a wedding ring in my asshole.

JAMES

Oh, you are making this up!

TOMMY

It must have slipped off somebody's hand when they were, you know, fingering me.

JAMES

Wow. So what did you do with the ring?

TOMMY

Well, I figured the owner would like to have it back. He probably went home that night and looked down at his hand and thought, "Now, where did I put that ring?"

JAMES

I suppose.

TOMMY

So I placed a little notice online, and it said "If you were in the back room of Ramrod on Saturday night, and you were fingering a cute guy tied down to the saw horse, and you're missing a wedding ring, please call this number..." And I posted signs at Ramrod. Nobody's called. Not yet anyway...

JAMES

That was very nice of you, to go to all that trouble for a stranger.

TOMMY

Just lending a hand, so to speak. We submissive bottoms are a considerate bunch. (referring to his leg) How's that? Better?

JAMES

Very. Thank you.

TOMMY

Maybe this guy wanted to marry me, but he was too shy to ask me outright, so this was his way of proposing!

They laugh at this.

JAMES

In some primitive cultures, putting a wedding ring in someone's asshole makes you married in the eyes of the village. I saw it on the Discovery Channel.

TOMMY

I should marry him, if for no other reason than I'll have a fun story to tell people at parties about how he and I met.

JAMES

Right. And to tell your kids how daddy met daddy...

Tommy continues to work the leg.

Another moment passes.

JAMES (cont'd)

I saw you there.

TOMMY

At Ramrod? You were there that night?

JAMES

Yes.

TOMMY

(fascinated) You kinky homo! Well, why didn't you come over and say hello to me?

JAMES

I didn't know you then.

TOMMY

Oh, yeah... Well, small world.

JAMES

I only stayed for five minutes and then I left. I was too embarrassed.

TOMMY

You paid seventeen-fifty to get in
and you stayed for five
minutes?!... (referring to his leg)
All better now?

JAMES

Thank you. Really.

Tommy lies down next to James, joining him at the foot of the
bed.

TOMMY

You know, you're lucky. Bondage
bottoms outnumber bondage tops by
like nine to one. Happy birthday to
you.

JAMES

It's hard work. I have to plan
everything out. All the details.
You just have to do what you're
told.

TOMMY

Hey. A little respect for
submissive bottoms, if you please.
We're the ones getting tied up, you
know. We put our asses on the line
every time.

JAMES

Fair enough.

TOMMY

Hey, how did you first discover
bondage?

JAMES

I don't want to talk about it.

TOMMY

C'mon... For me, I was watching
this show on TV when I was nine.

(MORE)

TOMMY (cont'd)

It was called "Galaxy Guy." And they did this one episode where Galaxy Guy and his cute teenage sidekick Star Boy had been captured by the bad guys, and there was this bomb ticking-

James suddenly sits up on his knees, very excited.

JAMES

And Dr. Annihilation had Galaxy Guy and Star Boy tied up spread eagle across the front of the bomb!

Tommy also sits up, James's excitement becoming contagious.

TOMMY

And they were totally helpless!

JAMES

They struggled to free themselves before it went off!

TOMMY

And the clock was ticking!

JAMES

(in a deep, heroic voice, imitating Galaxy Guy) "Star Boy, we've been on many an adventure, but I fear this may be our last!"

TOMMY

(in a high pitched pre-teen voice, imitating Star Boy) "Oh, Galaxy Guy! Don't say that! Good always conquers over evil!"

They laugh.

JAMES

I remember that episode like it was yesterday! It changed my life.

TOMMY

Changed YOUR life? Get in line.
The sight of Galaxy Guy's muscular
body tied up to the front of that
titanium bomb was the single most
fascinating thing these two young
eyes had ever seen...

They settle down a little.

JAMES

I wish they were out on DVD.

TOMMY

Well, I happen to have downloaded
them all off the internet. All
three seasons. I could make you a
copy if you like.

JAMES

It's not too much trouble?

TOMMY

Not at all.

JAMES

Well, thank you. I'd enjoy that.

They smile at each other. A moment passes between them.

A connection has been formed.

TOMMY

Your wish is my command, "Master."

JAMES

Damn straight.

Tommy gets off the bed and goes to his jacket.

He removes a package of licorice.

TOMMY

I really like being told what to
do.

(MORE)

TOMMY (cont'd)

All day long, at the store where I work, it's nothing but responsibility and decisions and other people's problems and putting the schedule together for the week and who needs what days off.

Tommy removes two pieces of licorice from the package.

He takes a bite out of one, and hands the other to James.

TOMMY (cont'd)

But in bed, I want someone else to be in charge. For me, it's the ultimate freedom, ironically enough. My top leads me to interesting, exciting places. Dark places, even. But I can't be blamed. I'm just doing what I'm told... What about you? What do you do for a living?

James goes and sits at the head of the bed.

JAMES

I don't want to talk about my personal life.

Tommy paces and considers James.

TOMMY

C'mon. I'm all curious now. Let me guess. Looking at you, I'm guessing investment banking.

James begins to respond.

TOMMY (cont'd)

No! Something to do with... Architecture. Sports management? The importing and exporting of small electronics? Farming? Dairy farming?!

JAMES

Dairy farming?!

TOMMY
Just a thought I had.

JAMES
I work in a medical clinic.

Tommy joins James on the bed.

TOMMY
Brava! Oh, my mom would be so proud
that I hooked up with a doctor.

JAMES
I'm not a doctor. I just work in
their billing office.

TOMMY
Oh... Well, that can be interesting
too.

Tommy cuddles up next to James, without even realizing he's
doing it.

JAMES
It's not. I push a big mountain of
paperwork every day. Get screamed
at by insurance companies, screamed
at by the patients, by my boss, by
my boss's boss.

TOMMY
And that's why you like this.

James takes a moment to consider.

JAMES
Sometimes I lie awake in bed at
night and I wonder about The Why.
I try to figure out why it is I
like to make guys take off all
their clothes and tie them up in
weird positions and have all sorts
of odd sex with them.

(MORE)

JAMES (cont'd)

And after thinking about that for a while, I get very horny and I end up jerking off. But still no closer to an answer.

TOMMY

Dude, I don't know why you like to tie guys up. I don't know why I like to get tied up. I don't know why my step-dad liked redheads. Don't know. Don't care. And I'm not into feeling ashamed about who I am either. Shame isn't a growth industry.

JAMES

But there must be a reason.

TOMMY

Well, people need to get out their aggressive side. It'll come out one way or another. I've always felt that if our world leaders were allowed to go into the bedroom and tie up their wives or significant others, then there would be no wars. I mean that.

JAMES

How did you get started?

TOMMY

Oh, you don't want to hear that story.

JAMES

I do, actually.

TOMMY

Well, I wasn't always the well adjusted soul you see before you. I had been fantasizing about bondage for a long time. Back then, I thought it was something you could get out of your system. You know, like gall stones or something.

JAMES

It's not, though. Is it?

TOMMY

Naw. This stuff is hard-wired, my friend. Of, course, I didn't know that then...

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Tommy, age 19, walks nervously up to the building.

TOMMY (VOICE OVER)

It was summer between
freshman/sophomore year of college.

He looks down at the paper in his hand and goes to the door.

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - NIGHT

Tommy knocks on an apartment door. After a moment, it opens.

TOMMY (VOICE OVER)

There was one thing I always wanted
to try. I was too embarrassed to
ask anybody I knew. Then I saw this
ad...

Standing in the doorway is HAROLD, better known as THE MASTER OF BONDAGE. He wears a black leather mask, leather pants and boots. He is a short man, middle-aged and mildly overweight.

His attempts to be bossy are painfully self-conscious, like bad acting. Every sentence is an announcement, or an order, all delivered with the same stiff, awkward delivery.

HAROLD

I am... The Master of Bondage!

TOMMY

I'm Tommy.

HAROLD

Upon entering, you shall become my
slave and obey all of orders
without question!

Tommy enters the apartment. Across the hall, another
apartment door opens and a neighbor enters the hall, carrying
a bag of garbage. When he sees Harold, he stares in shock.

HAROLD (cont'd)

(embarrassed) What are you looking
at?!

INT. HAROLD'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Tommy and Harold enter. Tommy stands and waits, nervous.

HAROLD

Before we begin, would you like
something to drink? I have Mountain
Dew! Or, if you prefer, grapefruit
juice!

TOMMY

No. Thank you.

HAROLD

Then we shall begin!... Master of
Bondage orders you to strip!

Tommy sheepishly strips down to his white briefs.

HAROLD (cont'd)

Master of Bondage orders you to get
down on your hands and knees!

Tommy does this. Harold points to a door across the room.

HAROLD (cont'd)

Crawl to the bedroom!... Crawl, I
say!

Tommy begins to crawl across the floor towards the door.

INT. HAROLD'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

JONATHAN is kneeling on the bed, waiting. He is the same age as Tommy, with good looks and a pleasant personality. He wears only his underpants and his wrists are handcuffed in front of him.

Tommy enters the bedroom, crawling on the floor. He crawls up onto the bed, kneels beside Jonathan and waits.

TOMMY

(to Jonathan) Hi. Nice to meet you.

He sticks out his hand. Jonathan shakes it as best he can.

JONATHAN

Same here. I-

Harold has entered the room. He points a finger at them.

HAROLD

SILENCE!... The Master of Bondage does not allow his slaves to engage in banal chit chat!

Both of the slaves look down in pretend shame.

HAROLD (cont'd)

Now then, I order you two slaves to kiss each other on the mouth!

Tommy and Jonathan awkwardly kiss each other as ordered.

HAROLD (cont'd)

Next, I order you to-

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

James stares at Tommy, dying to hear more.

TOMMY

I can't tell you what happened next.

JAMES

Tell me what happened next!

TOMMY

It was supposed to be just once, to get it out of my system. With strangers I would never see again...

INT. HAROLD'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

It is later and the "party" is now over. Tommy is finishing up getting dressed. Jonathan lies on the bed, naked, gagged and hog-tied.

Harold stands nearby, holding a leather paddle. Everyone seems tired but content. Tommy is smiling.

TOMMY (VOICE OVER)

It was... Well, it was great, actually.

HAROLD

Master of Bondage wishes you a heartfelt farewell! Here's my number! Return and play with us again, young slave Tommy!

TOMMY

Thank you, Master. I'll call you.

Harold hands Tommy a piece of paper. Tommy shakes Harold's hand. Tommy pats Jonathan on the head, a polite good-bye. Jonathan nods, mumbling bye through his gag. Tommy goes.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Tommy exits the building and dances merrily down the street. As he passes a trash can, he tosses in Harold's number.

TOMMY (VOICE OVER)

And I got it out of my system. I was ready to put it behind me and move on.

INT. OFFICE LOBBY - DAY

A week later, Tommy sits in the lobby of a big office building. He wears a nice shirt, tie and slacks. MAGGIE, a middle-aged middle manager, enters from the hall.

MAGGIE

You're from the temp agency?

TOMMY

Yes. I'm Tommy Delmar.

He stands and they walk down the hallway together.

MAGGIE

Ever done a mass mailing before?

TOMMY

No.

MAGGIE

I'm sure you'll pick it up.

INT. BACK OFFICE - DAY

Tommy and Maggie enter the back office.

Jonathan sits at a big table, stuffing envelopes. He sees Tommy and goes red.

MAGGIE

This is Jonathan. He's also a temp.

TOMMY

Oh...

JONATHAN

Hello..?

MAGGIE

You two know each other?

JONATHAN

Yes... Well, I mean-

TOMMY

No. We don't.

JONATHAN

Right. No. We don't. Never met.

MAGGIE

Glad that's settled. Jonathan, this is Tommy. You'll show him what to do?

Tommy slowly goes and sits at the table next to Jonathan.

MAGGIE (cont'd)

Sorry, but tomorrow morning is the deadline. You may have to stay late... I don't mean to be a slave driver...

Tommy and Jonathan look at each other, embarrassed. Maggie smiles at them and goes.

An awkward silence fills the room. After a moment, Jonathan shows him what they are working on.

JONATHAN

Er, you just take one of these and one of these... And you put it in like this...

Tommy and Jonathan quietly begin their work.

JAMES (VOICE OVER)

Man, you are were uptight back then, Tommy.

TOMMY (VOICE OVER)

Well, it's difficult dealing with someone in a business context when you've been forced to put your tongue in their asshole.

INT. BACK OFFICE - DAY

A few hours have gone by. The pile of stuffed envelopes has grown larger. The awkward silence is the same.

JONATHAN
Stapler?... Could you pass the
stapler?

Tommy hands him the stapler.

Suddenly, the door opens. Maggie enters with a middle-aged businessman. It is Harold, dressed like the white-collar guy he really is. He and Maggie head to the coffee machine.

HAROLD
My commission is up twelve percent
over last quarter.

MAGGIE
High yield bonds, junk bonds,
you're the best guy we got around
here for bonds.

HAROLD
You might say I'm The Master of
Bond-

Harold sees Tommy sitting at the table and freezes.

MAGGIE
Harold, have you met our new temp?

Maggie turns and sees that Ethan's chair is empty.

MAGGIE (cont'd)
Jonathan, where's the new guy?

JONATHAN
Ah... Well, he was here...

Harold makes his way for the door.

HAROLD
I just remembered I've a meeting to-

Maggie bends down and finds Tommy hiding under the table.

MAGGIE

Tommy, is that you under there?

TOMMY

Yes, actually.

MAGGIE

Are you planning on staying down there?

TOMMY

Just looking for my... Ah, there it is.

He pretends to grab an imaginary object. After this, he crawls out from under the table and returns to his chair.

MAGGIE

So, Tommy, this is-

Harold runs to the door to escape.

HAROLD

Sorry. I have a meeting-

Harold pulls on the door handle. The door is stuck. He pulls on it frantically! Maggie and the guys stare at him.

After a moment, the door finally opens. Harold runs to the hall, colliding with a woman carrying papers. They both fall to the floor. Papers go flying everywhere!

Harold runs off!

MAGGIE

What's gotten into Harold?

She goes. After a moment, Jonathan and Tommy begin to laugh. It starts small, but quickly builds until they are both in hysterics.

INT. BACK OFFICE - NIGHT

It's late now, after hours and most people have gone home.

The office is empty, except for Jonathan and Tommy, who are finishing up the mailing and gabbing away like old friends.

TOMMY

...And here, I thought I was the only kid who ever took his Star Wars action figures and staged a wedding ceremony for Luke Skywalker and Han Solo.

JONATHAN

R2D2 was my maid of honor. And you?

TOMMY

Princess Leia. Chewie was best man-

Suddenly, the door flies open. Harold enters, in a "rage."

HAROLD

I CAN'T WORK WITH YOU QUEENS
GABBING AWAY OUT HERE ALL DAY AND
NIGHT!

TOMMY

But we were just-

HAROLD

SILENCE!

The two temps sit up, avert their eyes and smile, aroused.

HAROLD (cont'd)

For your insubordination, there can be but one punishment! Come with me!

INT. STOCK ROOM - NIGHT

Tommy and Jonathan stand in the stockroom, their wrists tied above their heads to a low hanging beam.

Their shirts are unbuttoned, exposing their bare chests. Their pants have been pulled down to their ankles, their underpants visible.

Harold stands behind them, lightly spanking each of their asses with a leather belt. The boys cry out in pretend pain. Harold wears his leather "Master of Bondage" mask.

HAROLD

I demand full obedience in my slaves!

TOMMY

Yes, sir!

JONATHAN

Yes, sir!

HAROLD

And furthermore, I will not tolerate...

Harold's voice trails off. He stops spanking. Tommy looks around. He is surprised to see they are not alone! HECTOR, a Latino janitor, stands in the doorway! With him are two middle-aged women from the cleaning crew, staring in shock!

HAROLD (cont'd)

Hector... Hello...

HECTOR

Mr. Harold... What is going on?

HAROLD

Oh, nothing at all...

An awkward moment passes.

HAROLD (cont'd)

And I'd appreciate it if you didn't mention this to anyone.

HECTOR

When I heard what sounded like... Well, I didn't know... So I went ahead and-

HAROLD

Oh, no...

The sound of a police siren wails outside the building.

INT. STOCK ROOM - NIGHT

Later. A crowd of about a dozen people fills the stock room.

In addition to Harold, Tommy, Jonathan and Hector, there are four policemen, several other office as well as other strangers and curious onlookers.

The overall mood is oddly congenial and friendly. People talk like they're at a party. Tommy and Jonathan remain as they were before, tied up.

Tommy waits patiently, the only person in the room not engaged in casual conversation. No one is paying any attention to him. He is mortified beyond words.

Jonathan is interviewed by a police officer, who writes in a notebook. Harold also speaks with a police officer. He has not bothered to remove his leather mask.

JAMES (VOICE OVER)

Did they arrest anybody?

An officer unties Jonathan.

TOMMY (VOICE OVER)

No. But the stupid company never called me for another temp assignment again.

Things wind down. The crowd slowly makes its way out of the room, continuing their friendly conversations, ignoring Tommy, still tied up.

Soon, Tommy is alone.

TOMMY (cont'd)

Hello?... Could someone please untie me?

Tommy waits there, alone, waiting to be rescued...

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

James and Tommy lie on the bed, laughing.

JAMES

Tommy, you've led such an interesting life.

TOMMY

I have at that.

They look at each other for a moment.

Then, James snaps his fingers, resuming his bondage top personae. Tommy gets up on his knees. James kneels, pulls Tommy's shirt off and then goes and stands by the bed, facing Tommy.

JAMES

Lay down on your back, slave.

TOMMY

Yes, sir.

James dims the lights. Tommy does as he's instructed, lying on his back with his head at the top of the bed. James takes some of the discarded ropes from the floor and ties each of Tommy's wrists separately to the bed, above his head.

James then slides off Tommy's briefs, leaving him completely naked.

James ties each of Tommy's ankles separately to the bed frame. As such, Tommy's body forms a spread-eagle X-shape. James takes the briefs and stuffs them in Tommy's mouth.

James walks around the bed, considering his "slave." He takes a deep breath, fascinated and torn all at the same time. He approaches the bed, slowly. He kneels on the side of the bed and runs a finger along Tommy's chest.

After a moment, he changes tactics. He kneels down, places his head down on the floor and then elevates his legs, standing on his head.

He remains that way for several moments.

Tommy sees this. He spits the briefs out of his mouth.

TOMMY (cont'd)
Oh, for crying out loud. What are
you doing now?!

JAMES
Just something I do when I get
really nervous. Relaxes me.

TOMMY
(mildly sarcastic) Sure. I'll just
wait here.

After a moment, James gets down. Then, he goes and unties the ropes that attach Tommy's wrists to the bed, thus allowing Tommy to untie and free himself.

JAMES
I'm leaving.

Tommy sits up on the bed.

TOMMY
You're what?!

James begins to gather his rope and other belongings from the room and put them in his canvas bag.

TOMMY (cont'd)
Did I do something wrong?

Tommy begins untying himself.

JAMES
I thought I could do this, but I
can't. I thought when I came here
tonight, this would be... Not this.
Sorry.

TOMMY
So you're just walking out?

James steps into the bathroom.

JAMES

(off) Have you seen my nipple clamps?... I hope I didn't lose them. They're rented..

TOMMY

Everything was going so well.

James returns. Now untied, Tommy slides his briefs back on.

JAMES

The room is all paid for.

TOMMY

I don't care about that.

James gets his clothes from behind the wall.

He removes his leather harness and boots, and pulls on his shirt and slacks.

JAMES

It's on me. You don't have to pay your half.

Tommy joins James behind the table.

TOMMY

Don't go. C'mon. Please...

James stops in the middle of his packing, contemplating.

JAMES

Do you know how many times I've dreamed of this moment? How many years? At least before tonight, I could dream. But now that it's happened... What do I dream about now?

James shakes his head at this, his lowest point.

After a moment, he continues his packing.

JAMES (cont'd)
I'm sorry I wasted your Saturday night.

TOMMY
This your first time? Doing bondage?

JAMES
No... Yes, yes it is.

TOMMY
Yeah. I've known that for a while now.

James turns and confronts Tommy directly.

JAMES
You just don't get it, do you?

TOMMY
Get what?

JAMES
(angry) That this isn't easy for some of us. For some people, this is a hard thing to deal with, OK?! Not you, maybe. Not Mr. Tied Up Naked In The Woods. Mr. I Found a Wedding Ring Inside My Asshole. Some of us have a hard time of it.

TOMMY
(equally angry) I almost didn't come here tonight. I walked around the block five times before I came in. That was why I was so late. It's been over a year since I've done something like this.

JAMES
Oh, really. And why is that?

TOMMY
Because I was attacked last year!

James stares in surprise. Tommy turns away.

TOMMY (cont'd)
Fourteen months ago, to be exact.
I was at this bar. And I met a guy.
He said his name was John. I don't
know...

Tommy goes and sits on the edge of the bed.

TOMMY (cont'd)
He asked me to dance. And I usually
say yes. I don't want to be a snob.
And he was OK looking. Tall. Well
dressed. A mustache. Love
mustaches. A few dances, a few
drinks and we're back at my place,
making out on the bed.

INT. TOMMY'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tommy makes out on the bed with JOHN, a handsome if slightly
creepy man in his thirties.

TOMMY (V.O.)
Are you kinky, I ask? Very, he
says. How very, I ask? Very very,
he says. You want to tie me up, I
ask? And he smiles. It's a creepy
smile. I have ropes attached to my
bed. They're like permanent
fixtures.

CUT TO:

John ties Tommy's wrists to the headboard of the bed.

TOMMY (V.O.)
And so he ties my wrists to the
headboard. I'm on my back, looking
up at him.

John crawls on top of Tommy.

TOMMY (V.O.)

And then he crawls on top of me,
holding my legs down with his body.
And I figure he's just gonna fuck
my face, you know?

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Tommy continues his story. James goes and sits next to him on the bed, and listens patiently.

TOMMY

He reaches over to the night stand and he opens the top draw. Of course, that's where I keep all my fun toys. He takes out the ball gag that I keep there. No, I say. I don't want that tonight. But he sticks it on me anyway. And then he reaches into his jacket and takes out a knife. It's real long and skinny. And my brain divides itself into two. One side is saying, it's just a game. He knows you like to be dominated and he's giving you what he thinks you want. But the other half of my brain is saying, this guy is bad news. This is Mr. Stranger Danger. And he takes the knife and starts cutting my t-shirt off. He starts at the bottom and just slices, like he was opening a package. And one half of my brain is saying, that's rude. I like take charge guys but that's my favorite shirt. And the other half is saying, I really hope that's the worst of it. If the worst thing that happens to me tonight is a torn shirt, then I'm getting off cheap. And he takes the tip of the blade, and he just pokes it at my shoulder. Pokes it down. And it stings. I'm shaking my head, no. He doesn't care.

(MORE)

TOMMY (cont'd)

He twists the blade a little and
the pain turns into a white nova.

INT. TOMMY'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Close up on Tommy's face. His eyes are wide in horror.

TOMMY (V.O.)

A ribbon of blood is coming down
and soaking the sheets. And I'm
screaming. I mean, really
screaming. And that half of my
brain, the part that said this is
just a game, that half is gone. And
the other half is saying, you've
been mixing it up with dominant
tops, letting strange men tie you
up and it was just a matter of time
before you found the wrong one...

Close up on John's face, creepy and sick.

TOMMY (V.O.)

This isn't sexy. This isn't what I
wanted. And this is just the
beginning for him. He's just toying
with me. He likes me not knowing
what's going to happen next. I'm
crying and screaming through my
gag.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Tommy continues. James is next to him, quietly listening.

TOMMY

Then, the door to the apartment
opens. My roommate has just come
home. And I guess he must have
heard me screaming through the ball
gag because I hear him calling in
from the hallway, "Everything OK in
there?"

INT. TOMMY'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

John jumps off the bed in a panic and runs out the door.

TOMMY (V.O.)

And John, he leaps up off the bed
and in a flash, he's gone, out the
door, God knows where and good
riddance.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Tommy concludes his story. James listens patiently.

TOMMY

And it was over. Just like that...

JAMES

You didn't report what happened to
the police?

TOMMY

What for? His lawyer would say
"Tommy likes it rough. Ask
anybody." Reasonable doubt. There
wasn't anything I could do! Just
put it behind me.

JAMES

Tommy, I'm so sorry.

TOMMY

He didn't have any right to do that-

JAMES

I know.

Tommy reaches the apex of his emotional anger and pain.

TOMMY

I JUST LIKE TO BE TIED UP, YOU
KNOW?! THAT DOESN'T GIVE HIM A
RIGHT TO...!

Tommy starts to cry quietly.

James immediately goes and puts his arms around him.

Tommy cries for a moment or two. James holds him, quiet and patient.

TOMMY (cont'd)
I got a scar.

JAMES
Where?

TOMMY
No! I don't want you to look at it!
I don't want anyone to see-

JAMES
Tommy-

TOMMY
NO!

After a moment, James tries a different approach.

JAMES
(gently but firmly) I'm ordering
you. Show me your scar.

After a moment, Tommy reluctantly points to a spot on his right shoulder. James carefully examines it.

JAMES (cont'd)
That's not so bad.

TOMMY
(like a child) You're not just
saying that?

JAMES
I wouldn't have even noticed it if
you hadn't pointed it out to me.

TOMMY
Guess it healed a lot over the last
year...

James looks Tommy in the eyes and speaks with quiet seriousness.

JAMES

You know, I would never hurt you.

TOMMY

(sweetly) I know, James... You're a big marshmallow.

They laugh a little at this.

TOMMY (cont'd)

Thank you.

JAMES

It's cool.

TOMMY

No, really. Thanks. That felt really good, actually.

A moment passes.

James takes a deep breath and then starts his own story.

JAMES

His name was Luke, and I was nuts about him. I met him at the Gay and Lesbian center.

INT. LGBT CENTER - DAY

James sits at a large table with Luke, 27, handsome and stylish.

The two make friendly small talk as they stuff envelopes.

JAMES (V.O.)

Stuffing envelopes for some big mailer on a Saturday morning. We sat next to each other for three hours. After three minutes, I knew I wanted him.

(MORE)

JAMES (V.O.) (cont'd)

You know how we all have those mental checklists of things we want in a man? Non-smoker? Check. Friendly personality? Check. Likes fine dining, which is my passion? Check.

DISSOLVE TO:

Later, James and Luke talk and laugh together. It's clear the two have really connected.

JAMES (V.O.)

Clean, well-dressed, winning smile. The whole package. We talked and talked. And me, I'm never comfortable with anybody. I mean, never. By hour two, I'm in deep. I have to go to the bathroom, but I hold it in. Maybe somebody will steal him away from me while I'm gone.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

James and Luke stand together by Luke's car.

Each is looking at his cell phone.

JAMES (V.O.)

At the end of the three hours, it's time for him to go, and I walk him to his car outside. I work up my courage. Can I call you sometime? He gives me his number.

They both look up from their phones and smile.

JAMES (V.O.)

I'll call you, I say. I'd like that, he says.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

James continues telling his story. Tommy listens.

JAMES

And there I am, standing there in the middle of the parking lot, holding this scrap of paper in my hand like it was the winning lottery ticket. And we went on that date. Italian restaurant. Afterwards, we kissed discreetly under the awning. The second date was a movie. A comedy, and he laughed at everything. He had an easy laugh and I loved that too. The third date was to be dinner at my place. Neither one of us said anything but we both knew what that meant. Wear the clean, sexy underwear. Bring your toothbrush. What do you like to eat for breakfast? In the sky, the stars were aligning.

INT. JAMES'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

James and Luke sit at the kitchen table, eating dinner and talking.

JAMES (V.O.)

I cooked my specialty. Vegetarian lasagna. We ate in my tiny little kitchen by candlelight. His green eyes matched my tablecloth. I told him so and he laughed at that. I loved his laugh...

INT. JAMES'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The two sit on the carpet in front of the couch, talking flirtatiously.

JAMES (V.O.)

Two hours later, we're sitting on my living room rug. The wine bottle is empty and we're both in that place, you know. Time slows down. Flirtatious. Nobody in the world but just us. Luke says, so what do you like to do in bed? And I say, well I'm a top. And he said, sounds good. And I say, well, I like, you know, the usual. You know, I like to fuck people and get sucked and, you know, all that jazz.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

James continues telling his story to Tommy.

JAMES

And he says great. He's a bottom. He doesn't even feel a need to cum himself. Just likes to make people happy. I wish he hadn't said that... And so I went for it. I did. I said, "Luke, let's pretend. I'll be a really dominant tough guy. And you'll be submissive bottom. And I'll tie you up and dominate you and make you my slave..." I had never said it out loud before. Not to anyone. The words are pouring out of my mouth, so true and yet, at the same time, so foreign. For once in my miserable, pathetic, timid little life, I'm going to be honest with another person.

A long moment passes. Tommy reaches over and takes James's hand in his own.

JAMES (cont'd)

What did you say?, he asked. I could feel the ground shaking under me.

(MORE)

JAMES (cont'd)

Sometimes, when I think back on it,
I think I should have just
pretended I was joking. But I
didn't. I pushed it further.

INT. JAMES'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Luke stares at James, confused and upset.

JAMES (V.O.)

I said, Luke, it's all I've ever
wanted. A fantasy that is,
ironically, more real to me than
anything real... Why didn't I just
lie and pretend like I was joking?
Why, Tommy?

TOMMY (V.O.)

Because you wanted him to know the
real you.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

James lets go of Tommy's hand. James stands and begins
pacing.

JAMES

The real me! The weirdo. The
pervert. The sicko-

TOMMY

James, stop that.

JAMES

Well, I told him about the real me.
You happy? You want to know what
happened next? Do I have to tell
you? It was all over. Romance
replaced by pity. "Let me see if I
can find a therapist that can help
you..." I've been in therapy for
six years, thank you, not that it's
helped me...

(MORE)

JAMES (cont'd)

If Luke had gotten angry, I think I'd actually have preferred that. Instead, it was pity, and that was so much worse, because underneath all that pity is The Great Divide. The one that separates the nice, healthy people like Luke from sick, perverted people like...

James's voice drops off. After a moment, he goes on.

JAMES (cont'd)

And when I'd see Luke at the Center, he'd get all awkward and nervous around me. And so after a while, I just stopped doing my volunteer work there altogether. And that really sucked, because it was the only thing in my life that connected me to the community. But what haunts me most, more than the words, is the look. That look of disappointment in his eyes, sitting on the floor of my living room. I'll never forget it.

TOMMY

But you wouldn't have been happy with him.

JAMES

I might have! He was perfect for me.

TOMMY

We're a different breed.

A long moment passes.

TOMMY (cont'd)

Let me tell you about something. I love to read the online hook up listings. I do. It's a sexual smorgasbord. It's one big party and everybody's invited.

(MORE)

TOMMY (cont'd)

Here's a profile of a foot fetishist looking for some feet. More sweaty the better. And look, here's one for a guy who wants to invite ten or twelve different men over to his house and have 'em all jerk off on his chest. Two inches below him is another guy who wants someone, preferably Latino, to come over and make out with him while he wears his Batman costume. You see, behind each ad is a guy following his dreams. Each one a gay kinky Martin Luther King. "I have a dream, that one day I can lick whipped cream off a really nice ass..." Each one of those guys is saying yes. He's saying, this is who I am. This is what I want. And I'm going for it... And I love that. I love every one of those guys. They're my brothers. They're my gay kinky brothers. I may not be into what they're into. And I'll probably never meet any of them. But I love them all. Each and every kinky one. And what's more, I respect them. They've all figured out the secret. And it's not that complicated really. Figure out who you are. And then love yourself for who you are.

After a long moment, James removes his shirt and slacks. He picks up one of the lengths of rope.

JAMES

(quietly) Come here, slave.

Tommy goes and stands before him.

JAMES (cont'd)

Turn around.

Tommy turns around, and James ties his wrists together behind his back.

JAMES (cont'd)

Face me.

Tommy turns and faces him. James recites his speech from before, but this time with real authority.

JAMES (cont'd)

During our time together, you shall address me as Master or sir. You shall follow all of my orders without question. I expect complete and utter obedience.

TOMMY

Yes, sir.

JAMES

Get on the bed.

TOMMY

Yes, sir.

Tommy begins to go to the bed.

JAMES

Wait. Return, slave.

TOMMY

Yes, sir.

Tommy returns to James, standing before him.

After a moment, James takes a step towards Tommy. He puts his hands on Tommy's arms to hold him steady.

And then James leans down and gently, very gently, kisses the scar on Tommy's shoulder.

James and Tommy look into each other's eyes.

Tommy smiles, grateful for James's gesture of compassion and tenderness.

After a moment, the two men, drawn together, lean forward and, for the first time, kiss on the lips. It's a slow, tentative kiss, deep and sincere.

FADE OUT