

[7.6]Rivals

Rivals

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Transcript {nick hartley}

Act One.

Scene One - Café Nervosa.

Frasier hurriedly enters the café with a pursuing Poppy hot on his heels.

Poppy: Hey, Frasier!

Frasier: Hello, Poppy.

Poppy: You should have your hearing checked. I've been yelling "wait up!" for the last four blocks.

Frasier: [*excusing*] Well, I must be getting old.

Poppy: Like an old man can walk that fast! You were practically running the last block. Did I ever tell you about my uncle who ran everywhere? He ran to the store...

Frasier: [*puts his hand up*] That's a very interesting story. Yes, I'll see you at the station, okay? [*notices Roz at a front table*] Roz!

Frasier crosses to Roz and sits with her as Poppy goes to the counter.

Frasier: Thank God you were here.

Roz: I know exactly how you feel. Last week I ducked into a bathroom stall to get away from her and there were three other women already in there. Listen, I have a favor to ask. This friend of mine is running this charity dinner dance Friday night...

Frasier: Oh, Roz, say no more. What do they need? An autographed picture for their silent auction?

Roz: That would be a silent auction!

Frasier: Very funny.

Roz: No, what I was hoping you'd do is buy a couple of tickets. They're only a hundred bucks each.

Frasier: I don't know Roz, I'd have to take a date. Seattle does have certain expectations about the sort of person I'm to be seen with.

Roz: Oh, that's easy! [*points out Niles who has just entered the café*] Here he is! Let's see if he's free.

Frasier: [*playing along*] I'll let you know!

Roz gets up, greets Niles, and exits. Niles greets Frasier and sits

with him.

Niles: Mind if I join you?

Frasier: Well, actually I'm not staying, I'm avoiding someone.

Niles: Oh, who?

Frasier: [*points Poppy out*] The new so-called arts critic at the station, Poppy!

Niles: [*knowingly*] A-ha.

Frasier: The woman drives me mad, she gasses on endlessly about the most mundane matters. Absolutely infuriating - [*noticing Niles's grin*] - as is that smirk of yours.

Niles: Well, I'm sorry if I've noticed that not a day goes by that you don't badmouth this woman.

Frasier: Well, with good reason. The woman is a windsock.

Niles: I'm wondering if someone isn't protesting a bit too much. She's very attractive, obviously well-bred. Perhaps all this "Pigtails and Inkwells" hostility is actually a veiled attraction.

Frasier: [*sarcastic*] Oh, bravo Dr. Crane! Yes, I think you're really on to something there.

Frasier stands as Poppy comes over to him.

Poppy: Oh, where's Roz gone?

Frasier: Oh, she dashed off to the office. We're going to continue our meeting there. You know, Poppy, I was just telling my brother what an enchanting storyteller you are. Why don't you take my seat, and he can find out for himself? [*he seats her*] Ta-ta.

Frasier exits as Niles makes conversation.

Niles: Well, nice to finally meet you, Poppy. There must be quite a story behind that name.

Poppy stares at him sweetly, mesmerized.

Poppy: Yes.

Niles: So... You're the new arts critic at the station, that must be interesting.

Poppy: Oh, yes.

Niles: Okay, well if you don't feel like talking, I should be really running along anyway. [*starts to get up*]

Poppy: No, don't go. I am just amazed at how different you are from your brother. He's sort of intimidating, I get so flustered around him, I just start babbling. But you, you're different. You're very warm.

Niles: Thank you. So are you.

Poppy: Polite, not to mention stylish and charming, [*getting carried away*] and incredibly handsome. Oh my God! Am I babbling again?

Niles: [*pleased*] If you were, I'd be too polite and charming to tell you. [*laughs*]

FADE OUT

Scene Two - Frasier's Apartment.

Frasier enters his apartment that afternoon to find a half-naked lady on the phone. All she is wearing is a bath towel.

Regan: [*on phone*] Well, what the hell are you doing?

Frasier looks at the scene and exits the room again. In the hallway, he checks the door number and sees it is his own. He ponders and

wonders if he's gone mad before entering again to find the same scene.

Regan: [on phone] I've been waiting for twenty minutes. [hangs up and then to Frasier] I am so sorry. You're probably wondering who I am.

Frasier: I'm mildly curious.

Regan: I got into the shower - my shower. I just moved in next door. I probably should have started with that, huh? [shakes his hand] I'm Regan Shaw, by the way. Anyway, the doorbell rang, and I figured it was the phone guy because I've been waiting all day long. I ran to catch him, and stepped out into the hallway and locked myself out. Luckily your father came along.

Martin enters with a bathrobe and hands it to Regan.

Martin: Hey, Frasier.

Frasier: Yes, that was lucky.

Martin: All right, well this should keep you nice and warm and I'll just run in the kitchen and get you your herbal tea.

Frasier: If you'll excuse me, I'll just show my father where it's kept.

Martin and Frasier enter the kitchen where Martin sets about pouring the herbal tea.

Martin: Pretty sweet, eh? I found her right out in the hall.

Frasier: Yes, well, I'm sorry Dad, but you can't keep her.

Martin: No, I've brought her here for you. I've been talking you up the whole time.

Frasier: Really?

Martin: Yeah. Listen, I've served this one to you on a platter. In fact, if it wasn't for the jasmine on your robe, I'd say this one was a slam-dunk.

Frasier: I'm just...

Martin: It's a basketball phrase.

Frasier: Yes, I know that, Dad. I want to chat up a half naked woman without looking uncouth.

Martin: Well, just be friendly, you know. She's a veterinarian, she's single, she's very athletic, as you can tell from that body. And Lord... [thinks about body]

Frasier: Dad!

Martin: Just because you're serving the cake doesn't mean you can't have a few crumbs that drop off.

Frasier and Martin enter the living room. Martin hands over the herbal tea to Regan.

Martin: Hi. Well, here we go. There you are. Now, I've got a call to make so Frasier'll keep you entertained.

Regan: Thanks for the tea.

Martin: Don't mention it. [exits]

Frasier: So, you're next door? Oh, that's right. Judge Gilroy moved in with his daughter.

Regan: I bet he never wandered into your apartment wearing a towel.

Frasier: No, but I did hear he wandered into work one day wearing a towel, though. I guess that's why he had to move in with his daughter. [laughs]

Martin then enters with some car keys.

Martin: Looks like I walked off with your car keys. I should have known from the big [stresses and jingles the keys] BMW on it!

Frasier: Thank you, Dad.

Martin exits to the kitchen.

Frasier: So, Regan, that's an unusual name. Is it by any chance from...

Regan: From "King Lear," yeah. One of the ungrateful daughters. I don't know what my dad was thinking. Never do. I'm sorry, I have some issues with my father.

Martin enters with a kitchen spoon.

Martin: [obviously prying] Excuse me again.

Frasier: I have no idea what that would be like! What?!

Martin: [stands around] Well, I better be on my way, huh? Just let you two talk. He's a wonderful listener. In fact, that's his motto on his very popular radio show, "I Listen."

Frasier: Yes, Dad, don't forget my sign off: "Goodbye!"

Martin laughs, hits him on the head with the spoon and exits to his room.

Regan: I actually listen to your show.

Frasier: Really? Well, I'm flattered, thank you.

Regan: I think if I hadn't gone into veterinary medicine it would have been psychology. Think I was just always drawn to animals.

Frasier looks over at Eddie who is seated on Martin's chair.

Frasier: Yes, it is hard not to love them.

Frasier begins stroking Eddie rather harshly before eventually picking him up and putting him on his knee. Frasier smiles at Regan as if he's loving it.

FADE TO:

SPY VS. SPY

Scene Three - Frasier's Apartment.

Frasier is sat on the couch with his head in his hands as Martin stands by his chair.

Martin: I just feel so responsible. Maybe there was something more I could have said, something more I could have done. I keep playing it over and over in my head.

Frasier: I'll ask her out today, Dad.

Meanwhile, Daphne and Niles are coming up to the apartment in the elevator.

Daphne: Dr. Crane, do you believe women have an intuition about men?

Niles: Intuition?

Daphne: Like they might know when a man has a little crush.

Niles begins to get anxious.

Daphne: You know, by the way he fidgets or gets a look in his eye or...

Niles cannot stop fidgeting and eventually tries leaning on the

elevator side. He inadvertently presses the fire alarm. He quickly turns it off.

Daphne: I only ask because I'm getting that feeling from your brother.

Niles: [relieved] Really, huh?

Daphne: He's all moony-eyed today, someone he's quite keen on.

Niles: Actually I know who it is. I called him on it yesterday in the coffee shop, he won't admit to it. The problem is...

Daphne: Yeah?

Niles: I've developed a crush myself and it happens to be...

The elevator comes to a halt. The doors open to reveal Frasier standing with Eddie in his arms.

Niles: Frasier? Whatcha doing?

Frasier: Come in.

Niles, Daphne and Frasier enter the apartment.

Frasier: So, Niles. How are you?

Niles: [hangs his coat up] Well. The question is, how are you? I hear you're been running around like a love sick schoolboy.

Frasier: Who told you that?

Niles: Well, let's just say that the birds around here are chirping. Anyway... are you prepared to admit that my little theory yesterday was correct?

Frasier: Are you talking about Poppy?

Niles: Yes, the woman you so adamantly denied having any attraction to.

Frasier: I still do, she's loathsome.

Niles: Does it gall you so much to admit I'm right?

Frasier: But you're not right.

Niles: So, well then, who is this person you're so interested in?

Frasier: You don't know her.

Niles: Tell me about her.

Frasier: It's premature.

Niles: Oh, brother!

Frasier: All right, fine, if you must know. The woman happens to be...

There is a knock at the door.

Regan: [o.s] Hello.

Frasier: [whispers] Her, my next door neighbor.

Niles: [not believing] Oh, what good timing she has!

Frasier opens the door to Regan and she enters.

Frasier: Hi, come in.

Regan: I just wanted to return this tea cup. [hands it over]

Frasier: Oh, well, you're welcome any time. Er, Regan Shaw, this is my brother, Dr. Niles Crane.

Niles and Regan exchange nervous greetings. They obviously recognize each other.

Frasier: Do you two know each other?

Regan/Niles: Yes./No.

Frasier: Well, I'll just get us all some coffee and you two can decide if you know each other or not.

Frasier exits to the kitchen.

Regan: I'm so sorry, Dr. Crane. I just was a little startled seeing you outside your office.

Niles: Please, don't even think about it, have a seat. *[they sit]*
Well, so I gather this is your new building.

Regan: Yes. Right next door to your brother who I just met. Is that so strange?

Niles: Yes, well, remember, I have a policy of total confidentiality.
[Daphne enters] He never needs to know that you've started seeing me.

Niles notices Daphne who is lingering around. Daphne excuses herself.

Daphne: Oh, here it is.

Daphne picks up an ashtray and takes it back into the kitchen where Frasier is pacing around.

Frasier: What did you find out?

Daphne: It sounded like they've had a date or two. He mentioned having seen her.

Frasier: Damn him!

Daphne: Come to think of it, he said something in the elevator about having a crush on someone.

Frasier: Well, I just have to confront him and see if he's man enough to admit he's horned in on my territory.

Daphne: Well, excuse me, Dr. Crane, but didn't your brother meet her first?

Frasier: Oh, honestly, Daphne, just try to keep up. It's not that complicated!

Frasier enters with coffee.

Frasier: Well, here we are.

Regan: Actually, I can't stay. I've got the heating man coming.

Frasier: Oh!

Regan: Can I take a rain check?

Frasier: Well, certainly. Would you like to go out for coffee some time?

Regan: Yeah, I'd like that. Bye.

Frasier: Great. Bye.

Niles: *[calls]* Bye.

Frasier opens the door for her. When she exits he slams the door and looks around at Niles.

Frasier: So, I do take it you two know each other.

Niles: Well, we met briefly at some event. *[pours a coffee]*

Frasier: I see. Changing the subject completely, Daphne just mentioned that you happen to have a little crush on someone yourself.

Niles: *[sighs]* Yes, I have.

Frasier: Care to elaborate?

Niles: Yes, I will. Unlike you, I don't mind being candid. The woman is Poppy.

Frasier: *[not believing]* Poppy?!

Niles: We had coffee yesterday after you left. You're not upset?

Frasier: No, not at all. Thank you for your candor, Niles. I'm sure you and Poppy will be very happy together. *[smirks and laughs]*

Niles: Are you laughing at me? *[rises to his feet]* You think so little of my chances?

Frasier: No, no, Niles. *[a bad tone]* I wish you and Poppy the very best!

Niles: I don't need this smug attitude of yours. *[gets his coat]* I

fully intended to discuss this amiably. You refuse, so I'll just say goodbye.

Frasier: Very well, thanks for dropping by, off you go.

Niles exits as Daphne enters from the kitchen.

Frasier: What kind of a fool does he take me for? He is obviously pursuing Regan, the man has the nerve to say he's chasing Poppy.

Daphne: [*shocked*] Poppy?

Frasier: Yes, as if anyone could pursue that insufferable air hoi! Well, if it's deceit and chicanery he's after, I'll give him more than he can handle.

Daphne: Dr. Crane, before it gets to that level, wouldn't it make sense for you two just to have one open and honest conversation?

Frasier: Honestly, Daphne, how you manage to overreact in absolutely everything!

End of Act One.

Act Two.

Scene One - Café Nervosa.

Frasier is seated at a table as Roz crosses to him and pulls up a chair.

Roz: These shoes are killing me, I can't wait to sit down.

Frasier: [*pulls chair back*] Well, you're not going to sit there.

Roz: Why not? [*pulls chair back*]

Frasier: [*pulls chair back*] I'm expecting someone for coffee.

Roz: Well, Niles is small, we can share.

Frasier: It is not Niles, will you stop saying that? I'm meeting a woman.

Roz: [*sits*] Well, I'll move when she gets here. By the way, I still have four tickets left for that charity ball Friday night.

Frasier: I'm sorry, Roz, thanks anyway.

Roz: Come on, it's for a good cause. They provide disaster relief.

Poppy enters and shouts over.

Poppy: Hi, partners! [*crosses to them*] Frasier, I was leaving the booth and I found this umbrella. [*hands it over*] I think it belongs to you.

Frasier: Yes, it's my emergency umbrella. I always leave it in the booth.

Poppy: Don't feel bad, I'm forgetful too!

Niles enters from the toilets at the back and notices Poppy as she cradles Frasier's head in sympathy. Poppy exits.

Frasier: I think I'll just go and see what's keeping my latte. Would you watch my table please, Roz?

As Frasier goes to see the waitress he passes Niles on the other side of the room. They stare at each other like two cowboys from a western movie. Niles arrives at Roz's table.

Niles: Hello, Roz. I noticed that Poppy was here. Did she mention where she was headed?

Roz: No. Listen, Niles, can I interest you in a couple of tickets for a charity ball this Friday? It's a great event.

Niles: Is Frasier going?

Roz: No, but do you have to go everything together?

Niles: I'll take two. [does so] I'm in a hurry, I'll send you a check.

Niles exits leaving Roz confused as Frasier crosses to her.

Frasier: Where was Niles in such a rush off to?

Roz: I have no idea. [waves tickets] Last chance, I only have two tickets left.

Frasier: I thought there were four?

Roz: Niles just bought a pair.

Frasier: Damn him! He's probably off to intercept Regan right now.

Roz: Who?

Frasier: I'm sorry, Roz, I'm in a hurry. I'll write you a check for these. Enjoy the table!

Frasier takes the tickets and runs out, leaving Roz cashless.

FADE TO:

Scene Two - The Charity Ball.

In a set nearly identical to the one used in "Moon Dance" with the exact same music, everybody is milling about and dancing to light music. Poppy enters on the arm of Niles.

Poppy: This is the best kind of party. You get to dress up, have a wonderful time, and it's all for a good cause.

Niles: You know it really is for an impressive organization. I've heard that within twenty-four hours of any worldwide disaster they can put together a ball. [Poppy laughs]

Regan enters on the arm of Frasier.

Poppy: Oh, look it's your brother.

Niles: What? Oh, so it is. Why don't you find our table and I'll get us some champagne.

Poppy: Yes.

Niles crosses to the bar where Roz is standing.

Niles: Roz, you didn't tell me Frasier was going to be here.

Roz: Yeah, he bought the last two tickets.

Niles: After he knew I'd be here with Poppy. Obviously he wants to get a shot at her himself, he bought that pull-a-long as his beard.

Roz: [shocked] Frasier's interested in Poppy?

Niles: I shouldn't be surprised the subtle signs of attraction are lost on you. A woman for whom the gunning of a Harley engine is like a come-hither look.

Niles crosses back to Poppy as Frasier comes over to Roz.

Frasier: Hello, Roz.

Roz: Hi.

Frasier: I see that Niles has brought himself a "date" to the evening.

Roz: Yep, and you'll never guess what he thinks.

Frasier: Oh, I know exactly what he thinks. He's using Poppy as his patty, steal a few minutes with Regan, try and win her for himself.

Roz: That's not what he thinks.

Frasier: Roz!

Roz: He likes Poppy.

Frasier: Dear simple, Roz. After six years of listening at my feet.
Have you learnt nothing of the dark forces that move people?
Open your ears!

Frasier crosses back to Regan.

DISSOLVE TO:

Scene Three - The Charity Ball.

Time has lapsed. Frasier is dancing with Regan as Niles is dancing with Poppy. However Frasier and Niles are just staring at each other.

Regan: You're looking at your brother again.

Frasier: Yes, I'm sorry. It's just that he keeps staring over here.
For God's sakes, he hasn't paid any attention whatsoever.
Can you imagine how that woman must feel?

Regan: [knowingly] Yeah, women hate that.

Meanwhile, Niles and Poppy are having the same tribulations.

Niles: He's doing it again.

Poppy: What?

Niles: My brother is staring at us. Obviously thinking what a striking couple we make. In fact, let's give him something to stare at.

Niles and Poppy do a little move where Niles pushes Poppy away from him on his arm and brings her back in. However, she falls on Niles's toe and hurts him.

Poppy: I'm sorry. Same toe as before.

Niles: Yes, same toe as before. [laughs]

Meanwhile, at the other side of the dance floor:

Regan: What is going on with you two tonight?

Frasier: All right, you'd find out sooner or later anyway. See, I know about you and Niles.

Regan: You do?

Frasier: Yes. But it's all right, I don't mind. It's just that, well, he's really quite smitten with you.

Regan: Oh my God, really?

The music stops. Everyone claps as the couples head to the tables.

Poppy: Do you think you're going to lose the nail?

Niles: No, no, I just need to sit down.

Niles sits in agony as the tango music starts up. Where have we heard that before?!

Poppy: Oh my God, I love the tango. You won't mind if I dance one with your brother?

Niles: What?

Frasier: Well, actually Poppy...

Poppy: Oh come on, Niles can keep Regan company.

Poppy stands and shoves her chair in, crippling Niles's toe again. Frasier and Poppy begin to tango.

Niles: You know, Regan, I'm getting a second wind. Shall we show them how it's done?

Regan: Well, actually, Dr. Crane-

Niles: Oh, don't be so formal. We're not doctor and patient tonight!

Regan stands and Niles, trying to walk, clumsily tangoes with Regan.

Poppy: Your brother's quite romantic, inviting me to a ball on our very first date. He certainly doesn't waste time, does he?

Frasier: No, he doesn't!

Regan: You do realize that I'm interested in your brother.

Niles: You mean, you're developing real feelings for him?

Regan: Yeah.

Niles: Well, you might think so now, but trust me: You're future's not with him. I know this is confusing. [*twirls her round in a dizzy daze*] You'll see everything more clearly when I've got you on the couch.

Regan: [*disgusted*] Oh!

Meanwhile, Poppy and Frasier do a little move as Frasier, unwillingly, traces down her body.

Niles: Well, I can't take anymore of this.

Niles crosses to Poppy.

Niles: I have to cut in.

Poppy: How romantic!

Niles: [*to Frasier*] Yes, come with me.

They go to the tables.

Niles: You should be ashamed of yourself.

Frasier: Your tango wasn't so impressive, either.

Niles: I'm talking about your behaviour tonight.

Frasier: I won't simply stand aside and let you have the woman you want.

Niles: Exactly, obviously one of us has to back off, not just tonight but permanently.

The girls come to them.

Regan: Frasier, can I talk to you for a moment alone?

Frasier: Well, of course, just give me one more moment with my brother.

Poppy: Niles, when you're finished I'd love one more dance.

Niles: Ah, I'll be right there.

The girls go over.

Niles: Well, I believe she has made her choice.

Frasier: Yes, I believe she has.

They both look as if they have won. Niles goes to Poppy and Frasier to Regan as the song "On The Street Where She Lives" from Bernard Shaw's "My Fair Lady" is played by the orchestra.

Regan: Frasier, I think I'd like to leave if that's all right.

Frasier: Leave? Already? Well, couldn't we just have one last dance?

Regan: Well, I guess. I'm just feeling a little uncomfortable.

Frasier: Yes, well, I certainly don't blame you. You see, now I've spoken with him, Niles has agreed to behave himself. Now I can put all my attention on you.

Regan: That is a relief. I mean, you can understand why I was kinda freaked out by all that.

Frasier however is watching Niles.

Regan: Right? Frasier?

Frasier: He's a brave little soldier, isn't he? Awash in despair and yet he dances.

Meanwhile, Niles and Poppy are dancing.

Poppy: This is when they wrote songs that were really about something. True love, broken hearts.

Niles: [referring to Frasier but arguably in his heart referring to the last time he was in the ball room and Daphne broke his heart] Yes, there's nothing quite so poignant as someone with a broken heart, pretending that it isn't.

Frasier: No wonder, he keeps staring over at us. He's suffered such a crushing defeat tonight.

Regan: Can we go?

Frasier: Yes, of course, that's the best thing to do. You know, let me just have one last word with him.

Regan: Oh my God!

Frasier crosses to Niles and Poppy.

Frasier: Niles, if you don't mind.

Poppy: You guys are going to wear me out.

Frasier: Can I see you at the bar, please?

Frasier and Niles go to the bar as Regan goes to Poppy.

Regan: I think I'm going to catch a cab.

Poppy: Aren't you having a good time?

Regan: Frankly, no. Are you?

Poppy: Oh, yes, I think Niles has got quite a little crush on me.

Regan: Actually, Poppy, there's something you should know about Niles.

Meanwhile, Frasier and Niles are at the bar.

Frasier: Niles, I just wanted to let you know that I'm not happy with the way things have ended this evening.

Niles: Well, neither am I. How could I be? And the worst thing is: it's not just tonight. What happens when we keep running into each other?

Frasier: Yes, the victor will have his trophy. The loser will be empty-handed.

Niles: It hardly seems worth it, given the permanent damage this could do to our relationship.

Frasier: Yes, I can't help but wonder if perhaps we're being a bit short-sighted.

Frasier however doesn't need glasses to see Poppy and Regan leaving.

Frasier: Niles, is that Regan and Poppy leaving just now?

Niles: It was, wasn't it?

Frasier: I want you to go after her.

Niles: What?

Frasier: Yes, I won't stand in your way.

Niles: No, Frasier, I would feel better if you went after her.

Frasier: No, I couldn't do that to you.

Niles: I think we're both feeling the same thing.

Frasier: I know we are. You noble bastard.

Niles: Right back atcha. Oh, it's for the best.

Frasier: After all, the most important thing is our friendship.

Niles: I think that's worth drinking to. *[to waiter]* Two bourbons.

Frasier: You know, while we're at it, let's propose a toast to the one pretty remarkable woman.

Niles: Well, she'd have to be to have won both of our hearts.

Frasier: Hear, hear.

Niles: Well, then...

They raise their glasses...

Frasier/Niles: To Regan!/To Poppy!

Niles's glass freezes on its way to his lips. Frasier, less lucky, gets half a sip in his mouth, and it stays there, as comprehension sinks in.

Frasier: *[swallows]* I think we're going to need two more here.

They throw back the rest of their bourbons, then slam their glasses down and bury their faces.

End of Act Two.

Credits:

Roz is dancing with a handsome waiter when another waiter cuts in. Roz is flattered until the second waiter hands the first a serving tray and orders him back to work, then leaves the floor himself. Roz goes back to her table to sip champagne sadly.

Guest Appearances

Special Guest Star

KATIE FINNERAN as Poppy

Guest Starring

GIGI RICE as Regan

Synopsis {kathy churay}

RIVALS

ACT ONE

SCENE ONE - CAFE NERVOSA - DAY

Frasier enters in something of a hurry. His haste is explained when Poppy appears right on his heels, chattering away as usual. He puts

her off politely and escapes to Roz's table in the front of the cafe, where Roz attempts to sell him tickets to a charity dance. Frasier is reluctant, and Roz leaves just as Niles appears and takes her vacant chair. Frasier begins to vent to Niles about the most annoying woman who's pursuing him, but all Niles can do is smirk. He observes Poppy from across the room and remarks on her attractiveness, theorizing that perhaps Frasier is secretly attracted to this woman but can't admit it. Frasier is appalled at the thought, and when Poppy comes over to the table he makes his gleeful excuses and leaves, parking Poppy in his vacant seat opposite Niles.

Niles attempts to make conversation but for once Poppy is tongue-tied. He finally gives up and rises to leave, but she stops him. She explains that she is just stunned by the difference between Frasier and Niles. Frasier is, after all, so intimidating that Poppy usually finds herself babbling nervously around him, but Niles is very warm. And intelligent. And stylish. And charming. And, she confesses shyly, *incredibly* handsome. She blushes at her own boldness and apologizes prettily for babbling. Niles is stunned and utterly charmed.

SCENE TWO - FRASIER'S APARTMENT - DAY

Frasier arrives home to find an attractive woman, wearing a large bath towel and nothing else, using his telephone. She introduces herself as Regan, his next door neighbor, who accidentally locked herself out of her apartment. Martin appears from the direction of the bedroom with a warm bathrobe for Regan and a meaningful smirk for Frasier. He goes to the kitchen to get Regan a promised cup of tea, and Frasier follows. He begins to tease his father but Martin assures him that he invited Regan in so that she could meet Frasier. She's a veterinarian, single, athletic and obviously in great condition. Frasier feels a bit awkward but Martin reassures him that he should just make conversation, and they return to the living room.

Regan has made herself comfortable on the couch and Frasier begins to chat with her, interrupted frequently by Martin who drops what he thinks are subtle hints about what a great catch his son is. Frasier finally gets rid of Martin and Regan begins telling him that she might have been interested in psychology if she hadn't loved animals so much. Frasier drags a reluctant Eddie onto his lap and nods understandingly.

SCENE THREE - THE LIVING ROOM - LATER

Martin is apologizing for not having given Frasier enough "help" to get him and Regan together. Frasier rolls his eyes and assures his father that he will ask Regan out the next day.

THE ELEVATOR - SAME TIME

Daphne rides up with Niles as she asks him whether he believes women can tell when a man has a crush on them. Niles fidgets nervously but relaxes when Daphne tells him his brother has been acting all moony-eyed over some woman. Niles sighs and admits that he knows who it is, but the problem is that Niles has developed a crush himself. As it happens, the woman Niles has a crush on is--

But the elevator door opens just as Niles is about to name Poppy, and reveals Frasier pacing restlessly with Eddie in his arms and obviously waiting for Regan. They go inside the apartment and Niles begins to press Frasier to identify the woman he's so smitten with. Niles suggests that it's Poppy, and once again Frasier tells him he's completely wrong. Niles isn't convinced, but as the doorbell rings Frasier brightens and tells Niles that his prospective girlfriend has arrived. Regan comes in to return the teacup and Frasier introduces her to Niles.

There is an extremely awkward silence as Niles and Regan very obviously recognize one another. When Frasier asks whether they've met, Regan admits they have while Niles says they haven't. Frasier discretely withdraws to the kitchen with the teacup and the suggestion that they get their stories straight. Regan apologizes to Niles and says that she was simply startled to see him outside his office. Niles reassures her that he has a policy of complete patient confidentiality, and Frasier need never know that Niles has been seeing Regan. He means professionally, but Daphne overhears and sidles back to the kitchen to tell Frasier.

THE KITCHEN

Daphne tells Frasier that Niles admitted to dating Regan, and in fact this must be the woman Niles was talking about in the elevator -- the one he had a crush on. Frasier is infuriated but returns to the living room with the coffee.

THE LIVING ROOM

Regan makes her excuses and leaves, though Frasier does manage to ask her out for coffee first. After she's gone Frasier turns to Niles and grills him about how he met Regan. Niles makes a lame excuse about meeting her at a social event, an explanation Frasier obviously doesn't believe. He presses Niles to tell him about the woman Niles has a crush on. Niles admits that it's Poppy and asks whether Frasier is upset. Frasier laughs at the thought and is more convinced than ever that Niles is lying and actually has a crush on Regan. Niles in turn is convinced that Frasier is laughing at the idea of his brother having a chance with Poppy, and Niles leaves in a huff.

Frasier fumes to Daphne that Niles is obviously lying and vows to give Niles more deceit than he can handle. Daphne suggests that he simply talk honestly with Niles, but Frasier assures her condescendingly that she simply doesn't understand.

ACT TWO

SCENE ONE - CAFE NERVOSA - DAY

Roz parks herself at Frasier's table over Frasier's protests that he is expecting a date. Once again Rozries to persuade him to buy tickets to the charity dance, but her sales pitch is interrupted by Poppy, who enters carrying Frasier's umbrella. She returns it to him, and when he tells her that he always leaves it in the booth at the station, she pats his cheek understandingly and assures him that she has memory lapses, too.

She departs for the coffee bar, but not before Niles enters and observes Poppy stroking Frasier's cheek with what appears to be affection.

Frasier heads off to the coffee bar and the men's room, encountering Niles on the way. The two circle each other like prizefighters, and Niles takes Frasier's vacant chair at the table with Roz. Niles asks Roz suspiciously where Poppy has gone. Roz has no idea but once again makes her sales pitch about the tickets. When Niles finds out that Frasier is not going to the dance, he snatches two tickets with a promise to pay Roz later, and flees in hot pursuit of Poppy.

Frasier returns to the table asking Roz where Niles has gone. She doesn't know, but tells him there are now only two dance tickets left so he'd better hurry if he wants them. On learning that Niles purchased the other two tickets, Frasier is convinced that Niles is planning to ask Regan to the dance. He snatches the two remaining tickets and runs out to ask Regan before Niles can beat him to it. Roz is left alone at the table, totally mystified.

SCENE TWO - THE CHARITY DANCE - EVENING

Niles and Poppy make an elegant couple as they stroll through the lavishly appointed ballroom. It's a wonderful evening until Niles spots Frasier coming in with Regan. Niles sends Poppy off to find their table and goes to the bar to retrieve some champagne. Roz is sipping a glass near the bar and Niles tells her he's sure that Frasier has come to the dance to try and steal Poppy's affections. Roz is amused at Niles's idea about Frasier and Poppy, and Niles assures her that she has simply missed the signs of attraction.

Frasier arrives at the bar just after Niles leaves, telling Roz that Niles is surely planning to win Regan for himself. Roz's assurance that Niles genuinely likes Poppy falls on deaf ears, not that Roz is surprised. Frasier goes off to stir up the pot even more.

THE DANCE FLOOR - LATER

Niles and Frasier dance with their dates while glaring daggers at one another across the dance floor. Regan wonders aloud what is going on, and Frasier tells her that not only does he know about her and Niles, but that Niles has quite an attraction for her. Regan is very upset at the thought and pulls Frasier off the dance floor. Poppy steps on Niles's foot for what is clearly not the first time, and Niles limps over to their table to rest. Frasier and Regan join them and Poppy begs Frasier to dance the tango with her. Niles is alarmed as they sweep into a steamy tango, and drags a protesting Regan onto the floor in a dance of sibling rivalry that echoes his long-ago dance with Daphne.

In the course of a clumsy tango duel Niles assures Regan that her future is not with Frasier, and Regan is more upset than ever at the thought that her psychiatrist is jealous of her romance with his brother. Finally Niles can stand it no longer and goes over to cut in on Frasier and Poppy. But while Poppy assumes he wants to dance with her, what Niles really wants is to argue with his brother. They leave the dance floor to settle the matter.

Niles tells Frasier that since they are obviously both after the same woman, one of them must back off permanently. Regan interrupts asking for a word with Frasier, and Poppy comes over to beg for another tango with Niles. After the women leave, Niles remarks that obviously "she has made her choice." Frasier agrees, and the two shake hands and return to dance with their dates.

But now Frasier remarks to Regan that he feels guilty because Niles has nobly agreed to give up his dreams of romance with Regan. Meanwhile, Niles is telling Poppy sadly that Frasier is obviously suffering from a broken heart, a feeling Niles knows all too well. Eventually the brothers break away from their dates yet again for a confab at the bar. Regan is disgusted and asks Poppy whether she can possibly be having a good time. Poppy blushing confesses that she is, and that she thinks Niles has quite a little crush on her. Regan tells Poppy that there's something important she should know about Niles.

AT THE BAR

Niles and Frasier are having second thoughts about their competition for

the same woman. What will happen, they wonder, when they have to run into one another at social events again and again? How will it affect their brotherly relationship? Meanwhile they spot Regan and Poppy leaving the dance in a huff. Frasier takes a deep breath and tells Niles he should go after the woman he loves, not considering Frasier's feelings. Niles replies emotionally that he couldn't possibly do that to his brother, and that Frasier should be the one to go after her. Finally they agree that it will be better if they both give up, and they order a drink to seal their agreement.

Frasier proposes that they drink to a pretty remarkable woman, and Niles agrees. They toast simultaneously:

"To Poppy!" says Niles.

"To Regan!" says Frasier.

They down their drinks like drowning men as they realize their mistake.

END OF SCENE

CREDIT TAG

Roz is dancing with a handsome waiter when another waiter cuts in. Roz is flattered until the second waiter hands the first a serving tray and orders him back to work, then leaves the floor himself. Roz goes back to her table to sip champagne sadly.

END OF SHOW

Legal Stuff

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