

PROLOGUE

FADE IN:

INT. GILMORE MANSION - NIGHT

Lorelai, Rory, and Emily silently eat their soup around the opulent table. Emily looks between her daughter and granddaughter, growing obviously annoyed.

EMILY

Despite the great satisfaction I derive from granting the two of you a reprieve from pizza, Chinese take-out, and intermittent gross starvation, I do have you to dinner for more than the mere chewing of ingredients.

LORELAI

(to Rory)

Do we look gross when we starve?

RORY

Four out of five supermodels claim the opposite.

EMILY

Breaking bread connotes conversation.

LORELAI

Breaking bread connotes crumbs.

EMILY

(frustrated)

Very well, I shan't beg for scraps.

LORELAI

We don't mean it that way, Mom. It's the soup's fault. It's just not a social food. It requires great concentration - especially for that whole shaky transit, bowl to mouth thing.

RORY

And of course the slurping often reaches near deafening proportions.

Emily listens to them wearily and continues to eat her soup.

LORELAI

Then there's the heat differential between the edges and the center.

EMILY

Okay, enough talking about the soup.

LORELAI
See what I mean.

They all return to their soup. After a moment, Lorelai perks.

LORELAI
(continuing)
Oh, I know! I haven't shown you
my new ring.

Lorelai holds her hand out where a turquoise nugget dots one of her digits. Utterly unimpressed, Emily dives back into her soup.

EMILY
How nice for you, dear.

LORELAI
You don't like turquoise?

EMILY
I wouldn't say that. After all,
if the precious little gem with
the ubiquity not to mention sheen
of gravel can make it as a near
staple of swap meets and street
fairs across the southwest, who am
I to argue.

LORELAI
Rory got it for me.

EMILY
Scottsdale is nice this time of
year.

RORY
Apology accepted.

EMILY
The weather there's got to be
better than here.

LORELAI
(to Rory)
If she starts to self-flagellate,
we're skipping dessert.

EMILY
Maybe when Richard gets back from
his business trip, he and I can
make a visit out there. I simply
can't take any more snow.

RORY
There's supposed to be another
storm tonight.

Lorelai rubs her hands together excitedly.

LORELAI
A really big one.

EMILY
Yes, I heard. I thought maybe you
girls might like to stay here
tonight, keep yourselves warm.

RORY
We like storms.

EMILY
You do?

RORY
Most definitely.

EMILY
That's a switch.

LORELAI
Mom.

EMILY
Your mother didn't used to. She
was scared to death of them.

LORELAI
Hey, Mom, risking the hero
quotient over here. I still have
her fooled, you know.

RORY
I'm thinking a William Katt perm
might sustain the illusion a
little longer however.

LORELAI
It's just take, take, take with
you, isn't it?

EMILY
Finish your soup, girls.

Smiling, Lorelai and Rory do just that, and the room returns
to sipping silence.

FADE OUT:

END PROLOGUE

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

INT. LORELAI'S JEEP - LATER THAT NIGHT

Wind jostles the jeep, and the snow is coming down hard. Both Lorelai and Rory sit erect in their seats, struggling to see through the windshield.

LORELAI

I was just wondering, have you seen anything that looks like a lane recently?

RORY

Just stick to the middle of the road. Avoid the edge.

Lorelai smiles at her proudly.

LORELAI

You'd make a great navigator, Rory.

RORY

Or campaign advisor.

Lorelai chuckles lightly, but she is almost immediately interrupted by what sounds like a large rock hitting the undercarriage of the car.

RORY

(continuing)

What was that?

LORELAI

I don't know.

Lorelai slowly pulls the car to the shoulder where it spits and coughs to a stall. She and Rory turn silently toward one another, their eyes wide and nervous as wind whips the vehicle.

Lorelai pounces on the ignition and tries it again. As they hold their breath anxiously, Lorelai turns the key. The engine starts to roll over but then heaves its last gasp.

LORELAI

(continuing)

It just needs a minute to rest, that's all.

RORY

Mom, denial is more than a repetitive Nirvana lyric.

LORELAI
I'm not in denial.

RORY
First step's always the hardest.

Lorelai's eyes course from the car to the road, assessing the situation. She slumps in defeat.

LORELAI
My name is Lorelai, and it's at least twenty miles to the nearest help.

RORY
Congratulations.

Lorelai rubs her hands together for warmth.

LORELAI
It was a lot warmer back in denial.

RORY
This isn't too bad. After all, we're children of the digital age, right?

Understanding her, Lorelai smiles broadly and dives into her purse, soon producing a cell phone.

LORELAI
We should have sued Bill Gates for paternity when we had the chance.

RORY
Who should we call?

LORELAI
It's late.

RORY
Grandma?

LORELAI
'Cause we're not having enough fun now.

RORY
She could take us back to her house at least. We could stay there tonight.

LORELAI
(with mock excitement)
A sleepover?! That's a great idea.

(more)

LORELAI (cont'd)

It would be just like in *The Shining* when everyone was locked in a giant old building surrounded by nothing but miles of snow and memories of the past. Sounds like a hoot.

RORY

Do you have any other ideas.

LORELAI

Well, yes, it's a funny thing. I think I find myself inspired now.

RORY

See, I'm your muse.

LORELAI

Took the words right out of my mouth.

RORY

I think I'm supposed to put words in your mouth, not the other way around.

LORELAI

First dyslexic muse - you'll be famous in support groups everywhere.

Lorelai and Rory think quietly a moment.

RORY

Luke.

LORELAI

What about the diner?

RORY

It's closed by now. The coffee's even off. He's just in there wiping off tables.

Lorelai looks at the phone in her hand squeamishly.

INT. LUKE'S DINER - MOMENTS LATER

Luke folds the rag in his hand and hunches over a table in the dimly lit diner. The phone's ring stops him mid-swipe. He straightens wearily, steps to the counter and answers the phone.

LUKE

Luke's.

INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION - LUKE/LORELAI

LORELAI

Luke?

LUKE

Now that that's settled.

LORELAI

It's Lorelai.

LUKE

Coffee's off.

LORELAI

What would you absolutely least
like to do right now?

LUKE

You mean besides answer scary
trick questions?

LORELAI

What are you doing?

LUKE

I was clearing off some tables,
shutting the place down. Why?

LORELAI

That's funny 'cause my daughter,
John Edwards here, had this idea
that you might want to come rescue
us. But if you can't...

Luke's face immediately purses in real concern.

LUKE

Rescue you? Where are you?
What's wrong?

LORELAI

Rory and I were on our way back
from my parents' house, and I
don't know - the car just stopped.
It won't start again. And I
didn't read this month's issue of
Hot Rod as I am oft wont to do...

Click.

END INTERCUT

RORY

What did he say?

LORELAI
He hung up on me.

Rory smiles and settles into her seat comfortably.

RORY
It won't be long now.

INT. SOPHIE'S MUSIC STORE - SAME MOMENT

The store stands dark and empty, still but for the sound of persistent percussion. Toward the back of the store, her eyes closed hard, Lane pounds the drums with passion - and a sizeable measure of talent.

Arms crossed in impatience, Sophie stands next to the set, unnoticed by Lane. Though obviously frustrated, she has to smile as she watches Lane play. Finally, Sophie checks her watch and reaches out, grabbing a cymbal. Lane at last hits the cymbal, and her eyes pop open.

Lane shrinks slightly on the stool and checks her own watch. She stiffens as if in anticipation.

LANE
Just five more minutes, Sophie,
please.

EXT. SIDEWALK - MOMENTS LATER

Miss Patty, Babette, and the town Troubadour stand outside Sophie's Music Store. From inside, the flogging of the drums reaches them easily as they shuffle their feet expectantly.

Babette sneaks a peak around the corner.

BABETTE
(loud whisper)
She's coming!

MISS PATTY
Assume positions.

Attempting nonchalance and achieving anything but, they huddle near the door to the music shop, tilting their heads as if straining to hear the drums which are already loud.

At last, around the corner comes Lane's mother, Mrs. Kim. She starts at the sight of the three huddled figures on her path.

MRS. KIM
(thick Asian accent)
What you doing? You frighten me.

BABETTE

Oh, we're sorry, Mrs. Kim. We didn't mean to scare you. We just couldn't help ourselves.

MISS PATTY

That's right. When we heard the lovely music coming out of this store, we couldn't take another step.

MRS. KIM

That not music. That noise.

MISS PATTY

No, can't you hear it?

She reaches lovingly toward Mrs. Kim and attempts to guide her closer to the door. Of course, Mrs. Kim is barely budged and looks at Patty as if trying to find the loose screw.

MISS PATTY

(continuing)

There's a melody there.

BABETTE

Yeah, that's the word. That sound is melodic.

TROUBADOUR

If I had had someone like that to back me up, perhaps my career wouldn't have taken me to the streets.

Mrs. Kim is looking for multiple screws now, but she does at least appear to be listening to the drumming. And it is sounding good.

MRS. KIM

Who is that?

BABETTE

They say it's a young girl.

MISS PATTY

In high school, they say.

MRS. KIM

They should stop talking so much and put torch to this place.

TROUBADOUR

But why, Mrs. Kim?

MRS. KIM
 Young girls should be reading
 their studies, their Bible.

MISS PATTY
 But what if she's done all that
 and has a little time left over?

MRS. KIM
 The rock music make teenagers
 pregnant.

TROUBADOUR
 (to himself,
 contemplatively)
 Is that what happened?

Mrs. Kim steps intimidatingly close to the Troubadour, her eyes large and scary.

MRS. KIM
 Show me one teenage pregnant girl
 who no like the rock music.

He can't look at her.

TROUBADOUR
 Um.

Having made her point, she steps away from them disdainfully.

MRS. KIM
 Good night.

She bows slightly and continues down the sidewalk, leaving in her wake three stunned open mouths.

After a moment, the drumming reaches a crescendo then stops. Patty knocks regretfully on the glass door. Soon, Lane opens the door and peeks out. The worriedly expectant smile on her face fades immediately when she sees how stupefied they are.

LANE
 She used her logic on you.

BABETTE
 I think so.

Lane deflates in defeat.

INT. LORELAI'S JEEP - LATER

Lorelai and Rory sit bundled in their own arms, staring straight ahead. Snow still flurries on the other side of the windows.

RORY

Jeanie.

LORELAI

Samantha Stevens.

RORY

Both actually subversive to the cause but at least opened dialogue.

LORELAI

Jeanie had cuter pajamas.

RORY

Close to the point I was trying to make.

They continue to stare out the front window for a moment, both obviously very cold.

LORELAI

Chris Cagney and Mary Beth Lacey.

RORY

Mary Richards.

LORELAI

Moment of silence.

They bow their heads in solemn respect.

LORELAI

(continuing)

Diane Chambers.

RORY

Problematic, but I'll accept it.

LORELAI

Julie Barnes.

RORY

Uncle Bill.

LORELAI

I knew he was hiding something.

RORY

Now I know he doesn't fit the profile, but, by taking on the traditional roles of both mother and father to Buffy and Jody...

LORELAI

Don't forget Cissy. Everyone forgets Cissy. How would you like it?

RORY
 ...Uncle Bill paved the way for a
 completely new family dynamic.

LORELAI
 Good one. Subtle.

Lorelai thinks hard.

LORELAI
 (continuing)
 Oh, I got one.

RORY
 Who?

LORELAI
 Carol Brady.

RORY
 Try to stay warm, Mom.

LORELAI
 No, hear me out on this. She was
 the first to introduce a blended
 family, and she had a maid do all
 her dirty work.

RORY
 Visionary really.

Headlights flash hard on them, and they strain to see who it
 is.

LORELAI
 It's Luke! It's Luke!

EXT. RURAL ROAD - MOMENTS LATER

Lorelai and Rory get out of the car with giggly excitement,
 almost immediately greeting Luke - and Jess - beside the car.

Rory is obviously happy to see him. Lorelai is disappointed
 mute and tries but fails to hide a grimace.

JESS
 Manny and Mo at your service.
 Jack doesn't do snow. Fame's gone
 to his head.

LORELAI
 (sarcastic)
 Cute.

Rory cringes slightly, and the four of them stand in thick
 silence as the snow swirls between them.

INT. SOOKIE AND JACKSON'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Shaking off snow, Sookie enters exhaustedly and closes the door quietly behind her. She tiptoes toward the kitchen.

IN THE KITCHEN

Sookie opens the fridge and nabs the milk. She closes the refrigerator door revealing Jackson standing in his robe on the other side. She jumps, startled.

SOOKIE

Oh, Jackson, did I wake you up?

He rubs a tired eye.

JACKSON

I find I just don't sleep as well since I married Wolfgang Puck.

SOOKIE

Oh, honey, I'm sorry.

Sookie sets down the milk and collapses on Jackson's shoulder.

SOOKIE

(continuing)

You have no idea how much duck confit rich people can eat. And it's not like the stuff just waddles in there.

JACKSON

Too bad you don't work at the Peabody.

Sookie smiles and continues to hug him hard. He begins to caress her more suggestively.

SOOKIE

Sixty-seven entrees.

JACKSON

I hope you saved room for dessert.

Sookie winks playfully, but the exhaustion soon returns.

SOOKIE

And between the confit and the mushroom ragu bowties, I had to prepare a vat of refried beans for tomorrow.

JACKSON

(more suggestively)

Ah, a chef that specializes in fusion.

An idea crosses his mind, and he pulls back slightly in alarm.

JACKSON
(continuing)
Hey, wait a minute, I thought
tomorrow was your day off.

SOOKIE
Oh, yes. I finished everything so
I could just enjoy it. I think
I'll begin my day with staying in
bed. Up for a light snack. Then
I'm thinking a nap.

JACKSON
Care for company?

SOOKIE
(excited)
Really? What about the shop?

JACKSON
The guy from *Hi-ways and Vine-ways*
just called. The bridge at
Pilgrim Lake is frozen over. They
just closed it down a little bit
ago. Nothin' going either
direction. No trucks, no new
produce.

The smile on Sookie's face isn't going anywhere either.

SOOKIE
I guess that means I'll have to
alter tomorrow's itinerary a
little.

JACKSON
How?

SOOKIE
(lustily)
I'm never getting out of bed.

She leads him out of the kitchen.

EXT. RURAL ROAD - NIGHT

The snow is coming down harder now. Luke's head is buried
under the hood, Jess' body under the car. Only their legs
are visible.

Miserably cold, Lorelai and Rory huddle close and look at the
inanimate legs.

LORELAI

The upside is, if this thing sprouts any more legs, it can walk us out of here.

JESS

(muffled, from under the car)

Found it.

He slides out from under the jeep as Luke hurries from behind the hood to hear the scoop.

JESS

(continuing)

This thing's not going anywhere. Gas tank's got a hole in it. It looks like one of these big rocks might'a hit it.

LUKE

Don't tell me that.

He dives under the car and investigates for himself. Lorelai stands at his heels and raises her voice to be heard under the car.

LORELAI

So, on a scale from one to ten, how bad is the old rock-in-the-gas-tank routine?

Luke surfaces a shade paler.

LUKE

Bad.

He heads for the hood with Lorelai still at his heels.

LORELAI

Okay, need more syllables in order to stave off this compelling need to freak out.

LUKE

It's not going to start. You drained every last bit of gas out of the system. There is no storage facility for more.

Concerned, Rory looks to Jess who nods, confirming the prognosis.

RORY

So what do we do?

LUKE

Well, we can't stay out here like this.

LORELAI

So, what are you suggesting.

LUKE

I'm suggesting that we get in my truck and drive back home. We can try to get a tow out here tomorrow.

LORELAI

Alternative choice?

LUKE

Bold experimentation with cryogenic suspension.

LORELAI

'Nuff said.

Lorelai opens her car door, grabs their purses, throws one at Rory and heads for Luke's truck, the other three close behind.

LORELAI

(continuing)

Donner party of four is going home.

INT. LUKE'S TRUCK - LATER

Luke, Lorelai, Rory, and Jess stare wide-eyed stunned straight ahead.

POV - ALL FOUR

The bridge looms eerily dark behind bright flashing lights accompanying a large sign which reads: "Bridge Closed Due to Ice."

They stare dumbfoundedly at the sign. Lorelai turns and looks at Rory.

LORELAI

How long do you think it takes for people to start getting that look in their eye.

RORY

What look?

LORELAI

Like they're considering the fillet of friend as a main course option.

Lorelai exaggeratedly looks Rory up and down. Rory recoils.

RORY

Most people endure a lifetime of therapy for less.

Lorelai pats Rory's leg.

LORELAI

You have your mother to thank for making you strong.

JESS

So, what do you guys want to do?

LUKE

I don't know. Why don't you ask Ms. Lechter here.

JESS

Come on, the only other way to Stars Hollow from here will take us hundreds of miles out of our way. Considering this storm, I'd say the safest bet is to hang our hats at the lodge we saw about ten miles back.

LORELAI

That's a little reactionary, don't you think?

LUKE

Lorelai, the choices are to go to the lodge, stay in a warm bed with a convenient little thing called a roof or stay in the cab of this truck with decreasing circulation.

RORY

Who's for blood flow to our lower extremities?

They consult one another eye by eye.

LORELAI

(smiling sickly)

Well, since you put it like that.

At last, Luke and Lorelai confer privately and silently. The decision made, she looks worriedly at Rory and Jess.

INT. LODGE LOBBY - NIGHT

The door opens, and a swirl of snow enters before the four travellers who seem surprised by the several GUESTS still milling about.

As if mesmerized, a freezing Rory heads for the fire. Jess stays by her side on alert. Luke and Lorelai hurry to the counter where a CLERK stands rubbing tired eyes and waiting.

LUKE

We'd like a couple of rooms.

CLERK

I'm afraid we've been very busy.

The Clerk plucks slowly at the computer.

CLERK

(continuing)

But you're in luck.

LUKE

Great.

CLERK

Room 101 is available.

LORELAI

Has a nice ring to it, very collegiate. I think Rory and I will take that one. Is the second room going to be far? I'd prefer if it weren't.

CLERK

That's the only room, Ma'am.

LORELAI

But this place is so big.

CLERK

And so is this storm. And with the bridge out, as you can see it's been a parade in here.

LORELAI

You wouldn't mind me corroborating your version of events with that screen you're looking at there.

Exhaustedly unfazed, the Clerk turns his monitor toward Lorelai, and she leans closer to inspect.

LUKE

Well?

She straightens and looks at Luke.

LORELAI

We can't stay here.

This knocks Rory out of her trance enough to re-plant by the counter in a blink, fear in her eyes. Again Jess follows her.

RORY

You've kidding, right?! It's warm here. It's not wet. It has a roof. We're talking five-star amenities.

LUKE

(to the Clerk)

Look, what do you say you give them the room, and he and I'll just rest in a couple chairs by the fire, out of the way.

Jess appears to agree as Lorelai listens to Luke admiringly.

CLERK

The room sleeps four, sir - two double beds.

LUKE

The fire will be fine.

LORELAI

No, it won't.

Luke turns to her surprised. Jess grins in appreciation.

LUKE

We can't all stay in the same room.

LORELAI

Yes, we can. It's that or we all stay by the fire.

CLERK

(shaking his head no)

Ma'am.

LORELAI

And Norman doesn't like that idea.

Luke is speechless.

LORELAI

(continuing)

We'll take it.

Luke looks at her, grateful but concerned. Behind them, Rory and Jess exchange an uncomfortable - though excited - sideways glance.

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. LODGE GUEST ROOM - NIGHT

Lorelai, Rory, Luke, and Jess enter a room that is rustic, quaint - and very small.

JESS

Cozy.

Luke and Lorelai look at one another briefly - and worriedly.

As none of them has any luggage, there is no fussing with that required. There is absolutely nothing required. As a result, the four of them stand in a dense cloud of discomfort.

LORELAI

This looks comfortable.

She sits on the bed. Luke stands looking down at her, and mutual uneasiness palpably mounts.

LUKE

Maybe we can turn on some music or something.

LORELAI

(hits her head)

The mariachis!

LUKE

Well, if that's what you want.

LORELAI

(standing)

No, I forgot all about them.

LUKE

I think you should probably eat something.

LORELAI

Hold that thought.

She reaches in her purse for her cell phone.

INT. SOOKIE AND JACKSON'S HOUSE - SAME MOMENT

Sookie and Jackson lie in post-coital, arm-in-arm bliss.

SOOKIE

Why does happiness make you feel like crying?

JACKSON

Sadly, I think it's because we know it's fleeting.

SOOKIE

That's not true. This certainly isn't fleeting. It's like a second honeymoon for us - cozy, locked away inside, just the two of us. And tomorrow, nothing but the same.

JACKSON

All the clouds are in alignment.

They squeeze one another tighter and lie silently - until the phone rings. Neither moves for a moment, frozen, eyes wide. At last, Sookie reaches for the portable phone and reads the caller ID.

SOOKIE

It's Lorelai.

JACKSON

Remember that fleeting thing.

SOOKIE

(into the phone)

Hello.

INTERCUT PHONE CONVERSATION - SOOKIE AND LORELAI

LORELAI

Did I wake you?

SOOKIE

No. What's up?

LORELAI

Did I wake Jackson?

SOOKIE

No.

LORELAI

(suggestive and teasing)

What are you doing?

SOOKIE

We're counting sheep - actively.

LORELAI

Say no more.

Behind Lorelai, Luke sits frustratedly on the bed and rests his head in a waiting palm.

SOOKIE

So, I'm thinking there's a reason
you're calling so late.

LORELAI

Right. I've had some car trouble.

Sookie sits up quickly.

SOOKIE

Are you okay?! Is Rory with you?
Where are you?

LORELAI

I'm fine. We're fine. I called
Luke, and he and Jess came out to
try to fix the car, but it's
hopeless. Then we got stuck by
this storm, so we're staying the
night.

SOOKIE

Where?

LORELAI

To tell you the truth, I'm not
sure, but it's remote enough that
they call a motel a lodge. So,
frankly I don't know if I'm
supposed to go to bed or kill a
moose.

SOOKIE

So you got caught on the other
side of Pilgrim bridge.

LORELAI

How'd you know?

Next to Sookie, Jackson folds his arms impatiently.

SOOKIE

It's hobbled Jackson too. No new
produce coming across.

LORELAI

Thus explaining scurvy in today's
small town America.

SOOKIE

Wait a second, don't tell me
you're all in the same room.

LORELAI

I believe the appropriate term is
'den.'

SOOKIE

Wow.

LORELAI

Of course you're paraphrasing, but I think you've captured the essence of the situation here.

SOOKIE

So, when are you coming home?

LORELAI

Well, that's kind of why I'm calling.

SOOKIE

(cringing)

Yes.

LORELAI

Luke doesn't think we'll be able to cross the bridge anytime before noon, maybe even later. I was thinking maybe you could look in on the inn.

SOOKIE

But Michel will be there.

Jackson throws up his arms. All is lost.

LORELAI

But he's French. The mariachi convention is tomorrow. The repercussions could reach the media.

END INTERCUT

Luke watches impatiently as Lorelai finishes the conversation.

LORELAI

(continuing)

Sookie, I'll arriba over there as soon as I can, I promise. I'm so sorry. Okay, you too, bye.

LUKE

So, have you averted an international incident?

LORELAI

Not likely. But I'm certainly not one to sully the lap of luxury with work. So, what do you guys say? Chow time!

RORY

I don't have any energy to hunt or gather. I'll just fade away, thank you very much.

Already seated at the foot of a bed, Rory reclines heavily.

LORELAI

(disappointed)

Well, I suppose the three of us can manage to get you something, sweetie.

JESS

Actually, I think I'll stay too and keep an eye on Rory in case a stiff wind blows through.

Lorelai considers him through the mistrustful slits of her eyes.

INT. LODGE LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

Luke and Lorelai enter the lobby and head straight for the check-in desk where the Clerk slouches at groggy attention.

LUKE

Excuse me. Could you tell us where we could get some food?

CLERK

I'm sorry, sir, but there's no food here.

LORELAI

But there's a sign out front that clearly says 'restaurant.'

CLERK

Well, there was a restaurant, but it closed down a few months ago.

LORELAI

Hence the sign.

LUKE

There must be something around here to eat.

CLERK

Oh, there's absolutely nothing around here for miles and miles.

LORELAI

Catchy slogan, but I wouldn't print any business cards just yet.

Lorelai thinks a moment. She perks.

LORELAI
(continuing)
You know what? Much like yourself
I too run an establishment that
caters to overnight guests. And
like here, I have a sign that says
'restaurant.' Of course, in my
case there actually is one. I
find I'm picky that way.

The Clerk blinks in dumb fatigue.

LORELAI
(continuing)
But, speaking from experience, if
my restaurant were to close down,
I'm quite sure that just a few
short months later, there would
still be some supplies sitting
around in a few cupboards - say a
box here or there, or maybe a
freezer that just wasn't a
priority while signing those
countless documents of closure.

CLERK
Well, ma'am, there are a few
things, I guess, but I don't think
I'm in a position to...

LORELAI
(sarcastic)
Right. As a manager myself, I
know that I would want to be
consulted by my crack clerk about
something as important as a late
night snack. After all, it's
not...

She checks her watch.

LORELAI
(continuing)
...tomorrow yet.

The Clerk wrestles with himself before reaching under the
counter and producing a flashlight.

CLERK
Here, you better take this. Not
sure how many lights are left.
Scavengers take the darndest
things.

LUKE

The food's just never been a big
draw, I guess.

Luke nabs the flashlight, and they head toward the kitchen.

INT. LODGE RESTAURANT - MOMENTS LATER

The door opens, and Luke and Lorelai enter slowly, flashing the light ahead of them. Several tables sit vacant and ghostlike in the eerie darkness. Upon sight of the place, Luke appears to go somber almost on reflex.

LORELAI

Here, shine the light over there.
It looks promising.

He flashes the light on a long counter that is quite similar to the one in his own diner. Following Lorelai's extended finger, he shines the light on a set of cupboards above and behind the counter.

LUKE

No, that's for dishes.

LORELAI

Come on, you don't know that.

She heads straight for the cupboards, opens one, shuts it, the next, shuts it.

LORELAI

(continuing)

You've been watching reruns of
Alice again, haven't you? Tell
me, are they still including
blueprints in the Mel's fan club
newsletter?

LUKE

(slightly irritated)

Come on. In here.

IN THE STOCKROOM

The space between the tall metal racks is narrow. Luke and Lorelai squeeze closer together as they enter a tiny row, huddling over their light source.

LORELAI

Look, there's a box.

Luke reaches for it, opens the flap and shines the light, revealing a lone can of chili.

LUKE

Gonna need a little more than this.

LORELAI

Didn't you guys have any dinner?

LUKE

Ahh, you know, we were both too busy. Jess was in the middle of heating some soup when you called. He ditched it pretty quick.

LORELAI

Yeah, funny that you should mention it. I was kind of wondering about that.

They inch along, continuing to scan the nearly empty shelves.

LUKE

About what?

LORELAI

Why you brought Jess along.

Now Luke stops, looking at her seriously.

LUKE

He was a help out there, Lorelai. Besides, once I told him you two were in trouble, there wasn't much use trying to stop him. The whole boyfriend schtick does include search and rescue, you know.

LORELAI

Don't say that word. They're still too awkward around each other to enjoy that status. And if you and I stop providing Fernando's Hideaway for them, they probably won't even get to first base without having to call off the whole game.

She rubs her hands together excitedly. Luke takes a moment to size up both her and the situation then steps even closer to her, his features firm, serious.

LUKE

Do you know how many times I've stood in my stockroom and taken inventory?

He has Lorelai's attention.

LUKE
 (continuing)
 Many times I've had to shift some things around, get rid of some older stuff, stale, stuff that just got in the way.

His eyes survey the nearly empty shelves and return to hers sadly.

LUKE
 (continuing)
 Now I know as I look around these dusty shelves that I'm looking at my own future.

LORELAI
 No, Luke, that's not true.

LUKE
 Yes, it is. It's a fact. Someday my diner will look like this. It's just the way life works. So, I figure all we got is the time between now and then with the company of a few close friends...

He hesitates, their eyes locking harder.

LUKE
 (continuing)
 ...and hopefully a few stocked shelves. So, as for me, I'm gonna try to rotate out the old stuff that's no use anymore.

Luke and Lorelai share a solemn gaze in the cramped darkness of the empty stockroom.

INT. KIM'S ANTIQUES/HOME - NIGHT

Lane opens the door very slowly and creeps in silently. She closes the door without making a single sound.

MRS. KIM
 Lane!

IN THE KITCHEN

Mrs. Kim sits angrily erect at the kitchen table as Lane enters cautiously, removing her snow-caked cap. White as a sheet, eyes red and puffy, Lane is seriously depressed.

LANE
 Good evening, Mamma.

MRS. KIM

You late.

LANE

I'm sorry, Mamma. I wanted to think. You can punish me if you want, but I don't think I'm gonna be late anymore.

MRS. KIM

I tell you what not happen anymore...

Mrs. Kim angrily hurls her body around to face Lane. Whatever argument she had, however, lodges mid-throat when she sees Lane's completely distressed countenance. Mrs. Kim swallows hard.

MRS. KIM

(continuing)

You sad.

LANE

I'm fine, Mamma.

MRS. KIM

Why you sad, Lane?

LANE

I guess I've been enjoying what I've been studying a lot recently. But now I think one of the courses is going to be cancelled.

MRS. KIM

Why you say that?

LANE

Because, Mamma, that's the way it usually is. Most things don't fit into my curriculum.

MRS. KIM

Why is that?

LANE

I guess because I didn't set it.

The punitive wind knocked out of her sails, Mrs. Kim can only look at Lane impotently, her own eyes now sad.

INT. LODGE RESTAURANT - LATER

A single bare bulb hanging nearby casts dim light on the unappetizing chili mixture bubbling on the stove. Luke stirs and exhales a weary breath as Lorelai enters, carrying a box and the flashlight.

LORELAI

Do you want the good news or the bad news?

LUKE

I suppose remaining uninformed isn't an option.

LORELAI

I found more chili.

LUKE

Oh, geez.

LORELAI

They couldn't even make their own chili - just more ammunition for a *Zagat* snub. All I'm saying is I'd be taking notes if I were you.

LUKE

So, I'm a little confused where we stand on the good news/bad news issue.

LORELAI

I found the freezer.

LUKE

Where?

LORELAI

You're the one with the blueprint.

LUKE

Anything edible?

Lorelai sets down the box and begins to bring out the items.

LORELAI

Well, if you squint real hard this kinda looks like a Ridley Scott version of bacon, and I'm thinking this is bread. And there's more of this stuff too.

Luke inspects the items, turning them over in his hands, smelling. He nods in confirmation.

LUKE

Not bad, Lorelai - and no cue cards either.

She smiles begrudgingly. Luke reaches in the box and pulls out a very large carton of pancake mix.

LORELAI

Just add water. Can you say
'score?'

LUKE

As long as we're not saying
salmonella, I'm okay with all of
it.

LORELAI

The place hasn't been closed that
long. Heck, Rory and I have stuff
in our cupboards that would be
difficult to carbon date, and we
still eat it. And the neat thing
is there's always more of it than
there was the last time. We
haven't had to shop for years.

Ignoring her, Luke sets the pancake mix aside.

LUKE

Who knows when we're getting out
of here tomorrow, so lets call
that breakfast. Here, help me
open these cans. We can fry up
some of this the bacon and add it
to the chili - make it taste like
something. We'll save the rest
for tomorrow.

Lorelai smiles as she watches him take charge, settling into
this familiar environment. She grabs the manual can opener
and begins to crank. Her attention soon wavers, however,
drawn to Luke standing over the stove.

LORELAI

Ow!

The can opener and several drops of Lorelai's blood fall to
the counter. Luke's eyes are huge with concern. He drops
the pouch of bacon and is at her side in an instant.

LUKE

Let me see it.

But her hand is cradled inside the other.

LORELAI

I'm alright. It was stupid.

Luke takes both her wrists in his hand and looks at her. At
last, her hands untangle, her wound now visible.

LUKE

Oh, boy.

LORELAI
 Got anything a bit more
 encouraging?

LUKE
 I'm sorry. Look, come over here
 and we'll clean it off.

Cradling her hand in his, Luke gently guides Lorelai to the sink. He turns on the water and places her hand under the stream. She jumps reflexively.

LUKE
 (continuing)
 It's alright. I got you.

Lorelai looks at him gratefully then glances down at the blood now swirling with the water in the sink.

LORELAI
 Oh, boy.

LUKE
 See, that one just seems to fit.

She turns her head away from the sink, instead watching Luke as he tends her wound.

LUKE
 (continuing)
 Look, I'm sorry about this.

LORELAI
 I'm the one who's sorry. You were
 doing such a nice job kickin' it
 up a notch.

At last, Luke looks to his side and finds Lorelai's stare. The water runs forgotten as they stand closely together over the sink, their eyes locked for a long moment.

LUKE
 That ought to do it.

Luke turns awkwardly back to the water and rinses her hand for a second more. He then carefully wraps her finger in a sheet of paper towel. Now and then he looks up, each time finding her eyes softly on him.

LORELAI
 Yes, that ought to do it.

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

INT. LODGE GUEST ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Still sitting on the edge of the bed, Jess watches as Rory exits the bathroom drying her face with the towel. She sits down on the end of her bed, and they remain stiffly silent for a long moment.

JESS

Want to watch T.V.?

RORY

Not really. Probably couldn't keep my eyes open.

JESS

(looking anything but tired)

Yeah, I know what you mean.

Return to awkward silence.

JESS

(continuing)

So this is cool. I'm thinking maybe we should start ourselves a new tradition.

RORY

'Cause the old ones get way too much press just for sticking it out.

JESS

Purist.

RORY

(smiling)

So, what's the tradition?

JESS

I think we should come back to this room on this date every year.

RORY

(laughing)

Aside from finding a way to mess with my mother's gas tank and scattering ice across Pilgrim bridge on an annual basis, I think your plan is flawless.

JESS

No, verisimilitude could be achieved by other means.

RORY

Oh, you mean like we could just be dirty and hungry.

JESS

Have you ever thought of taking up event planning?

RORY

It's a sideline of mine.

JESS

So, this witnessing the birth of a new tradition is kind of exciting. Must be what it felt like to be there at the first Thanksgiving or 4th of July or...

RORY

...Lollapaloza.

Smiling, Jess extends his hand for her to shake on it.

JESS

So it's a date?

Hesitant at first, Rory slowly accepts his hand. They shake.

RORY

It's a date.

Before they can change positions or even react, the door opens suddenly. Their eyes glued on Rory and Jess' joined hands, Lorelai and Luke stand frozen in the doorway, their own hands full with dinner. Rory and Jess disengage.

Exchanging a worried look with Lorelai, Luke closes the door with the back of his boot in a slightly angered thud.

RORY

(continuing)

Wow, you guys scored!

LORELAI

Seems we're not the only ones.

RORY

(indignant)

Excuse m...

JESS

What did you do to your hand, Lorelai?

Rory gets up from the bed and goes to her mother at once.

RORY

Oh my gosh, is it bad?

LORELAI

I don't think Tim Burton will be making any movies about me, but I found it kind of intense.

RORY

Let me see it.

LORELAI

Don't worry, I received very good care.

She and Luke exchange a warm glance which neither Rory nor Jess miss. Luke tries to don nonchalance.

LUKE

Good news is I'm pretty sure I saved the digit.

He heads for the small table and starts to offload the pot of chili and bowls in his arms. Lorelai follows suit with the bread and silverware she carries in her healthy hand.

JESS

Hey, looks great, but if there isn't enough to go around, that's okay. Rory can have my portion.

RORY

No way, Jess.

JESS

No, I know how you get when you don't eat. Besides, I had one of Luke's burgers with a half pizza chaser right before we left. If I ate anything else, I'd have to submit to a group weigh-in.

Lorelai's eyes shoot over to Luke's. Silently they share the significance of Jess' lie. Lorelai now steps close to where Rory still sits on the bed.

LORELAI

So, can I talk to you a minute?

Rory looks around the room.

RORY

Where?

LORELAI

In my office.

Lorelai takes Rory by the elbow and leads her to the bathroom as Luke and Jess watch curiously.

IN THE BATHROOM

Lorelai turns on the light and closes the door firmly behind them.

LORELAI

(continuing)

Moving a little fast, aren't we?

RORY

Must not be 'cause I'm a little behind here.

LORELAI

You know, I've told Luke to calm it with the twenty-four hour surveillance thing he has on you and Jess, but maybe he's right.

RORY

What are you talking about?

LORELAI

Luke and I were gone two seconds, and you two somehow manage to hold hands and get cozy on the same bed.

RORY

We were shaking hands. Besides, I fail to see how this concerns you.

LORELAI

How this concerns me? What, is this strictly business between you and me?

RORY

We are in your office.

LORELAI

I was in a pinch. I reached deep for a Fonzie reference.

RORY

Has that proven adaptive for you?

LORELAI

Until now.

Lorelai softens.

LORELAI
 (continuing)
 Rory, I know you like him, and
 because of that I've been trying
 harder. But it's pointless.
 Stripes like his just don't become
 polka-dots because I want them to.

RORY
 You think it's Jess who scares you.

LORELAI
 Nope. I know it is.

RORY
 But it's not him that frightens
 you. It's me.

LORELAI
 It's not you, Rory.

RORY
 You're scared of what I might be
 and what I might do when I'm
 around him.

Lorelai is listening hard now.

RORY
 (continuing)
 You're scared because finally I
 remind you of you.

LORELAI
 (knocked back,
 stammering slightly)
 There are a lot of ways you've
 always been like me.

RORY
 Not when you made your biggest
 mistake.

The breath knocked out of her, Lorelai can't even slow Rory
 as she now storms past her, opening the bathroom door and
 returning to the room.

LORELAI
 Rory.

But she is gone. Lorelai leans against the bathroom wall and
 lets her head sag forward.

IN THE ROOM

Lorelai re-enters the room slowly, her shoulders slumped.

Luke looks nervously between mother and daughter, the latter of whom stands rigidly at the small table dishing herself some chili. Jess watches her entranced, and Lorelai sees this.

Lorelai's discomfort grows, nervous energy surfaces, and she looks around the room for an outlet. Luke watches as she heads for the curtain, looks outside, drops the curtain. She inspects the heating controls.

LORELAI
 (continuing;
 energetically)
 Well, I think I'll go to bed now.
 I'm exhausted.

LUKE
 (sarcastically)
 You look it.

LORELAI
 Aren't you?

Luke has more than a dose of nervous energy himself.

LUKE
 Of course, bushed. I guess I'll
 be hitting the sack too then.

Jess and Rory watch them like spectators at the zoo.

RORY
 Nobody's gonna have any of this?
 It's not bad really, once you get
 past the floating bean thing.

LORELAI
 (coolly)
 No thanks.

Luke looks back and forth between the two uncomfortably.

LUKE
 I've been smelling it for the last
 hour. That's enough.

He glances down awkwardly and points to what he's already wearing.

LUKE
 (continuing)
 So, I think I'll just wear this to
 bed then.

He begins to fuss with it unnecessarily.

LUKE
 (continuing)
 I'll just take off this shirt and
 leave my t-shirt on.

LORELAI
 A twist on the ensemble - very
 provocative.

He reflexively pulls the shirt he had been unbuttoning around himself modestly.

LUKE
 I don't have to.

LORELAI
 Just teasing. It's not like there
 are a lot of choices right this
 second.

She takes off her shoes and hops into bed with all of her clothes on. Turning away from Lorelai somewhat shyly Luke finishes removing his outer shirt. He also removes his shoes and hops quickly into bed, covering himself up to his neck.

Luke lies very stiffly, staring wide-eyed at the ceiling. Lorelai lies on her side watching him, obviously amused.

LORELAI
 (continuing)
 We'll probably sleep like logs.

LUKE
 (eyes still fixed on
 the ceiling)
 Like the dead.

LORELAI
 You want to watch T.V.?

Luke instantly jumps on the idea, nearly pouncing on the remote that lies on the nightstand between them. He flicks on the television.

On opposite beds, Luke and Lorelai lie staring into the blue hue of the television.

LUKE
 News?

LORELAI
 Let's not.

He flips the channels.

LUKE
 Sports?

LORELAI
Double let's not.

LUKE
If you're thinking *Berman and Berman*, I'll sleep in the truck.

LORELAI
No girl talk - got it.

Again, Jess and Rory look at them in wide-eyed wonder.

Luke changes channels some more, at last landing on a station with very rhythmic heavy breathing.

Click.

Luke sets the remote on the nightstand and returns to his survey of the ceiling.

LUKE
Night, Lorelai.

LORELAI
(smiling)
Good night, Luke.

INT. GILMORE MANSION - LATER

The telephone rings. Instantly, Emily springs up in bed and, in one fell swoop, rips the sleep mask from her face, turns on the bedside lamp and lunges for the phone.

EMILY
Lorelai?!

INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION - EMILY/LORELAI

Lorelai cringes and lowers her voice, checking briefly over her shoulder for any movement of the still three lumps lying in the beds across the darkened room.

LORELAI
Okay, first of all, I'm sorry. I forgot and turned my cell phone off. I know you've probably tried calling a thousand times and you've been worried. So, the short version is Rory and I sorta had some car trouble, and...

EMILY
Lorelai, are you alright?!

LORELAI
Fine, except for that chronic frustration with the short version.

EMILY

Very well.

LORELAI

Luke and Jess came to fix the car, but it wouldn't cooperate, so we left it up at the Dugan cut off. We're safe and warm and staying at the lodge until the bridge thaws.

EMILY

(sarcastic)

You're 'safe and warm' and staying with the coffee man and his nephew? Thank you for assuaging my fears. I'll just be dropping off then.

Lorelai doesn't try a defense. Something's on her mind.

LORELAI

I have a question for you.

EMILY

Yes, Lorelai.

LORELAI

Well, it's just that... ..before Christopher helped to give you the best granddaughter in the world - back when all he had was a motorcycle and matching mojo, what made you give him a chance?

EMILY

Short version or long?

LORELAI

Mom.

EMILY

I guess I was forced to trust your judgement, Lorelai.

LORELAI

(incredulous)

Really?

EMILY

Believe it or not. It's too late to argue. Besides, you should have seen the way he looked at you. Sometimes actions speak louder than motorcycles.

Struck hard by the comment, Lorelai takes a deep breath.

EMILY
(continuing)
Lorelai, are you there?

LORELAI
I'm here, Mom. It's late though.
I'm sorry if I kept you up.

EMILY
You know, Lorelai, a mother's
sleepless nights never really end.
We all get used to it though - and
now you will too.

Lorelai swallows hard.

LORELAI
Good night, Mom.

END INTERCUT

INT. LODGE GUEST ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Lorelai turns in the dimly lit room and walks quietly to the two beds, standing between them. Next to Lorelai is the empty spot left for her in the bed where Rory sleeps peacefully on the other side.

On the other side of where she stands, Luke sleeps on his side facing her. Jess lies next to him.

For a long moment, Lorelai stands, lovingly watching her daughter sleep. At last, she turns her attention to Jess in the other bed, and she shakes her head sadly.

When her eyes finally land on Luke, they soften again completely. But, catching herself, she shakes it off.

Lorelai starts to sit down on her bed, but at the last moment looks back at Luke. She reaches quietly for the covers that currently reach the bottom portion of his t-shirt. She lifts them, replacing them softly on his shoulder.

She turns to her bed and climbs in, lying on her side facing Rory. After a moment, she closes her eyes.

In his bed, very awake, Luke opens his eyes.

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

INT. LODGE GUEST ROOM - MORNING

Lorelai sleeps peacefully - until a hand slaps squarely down on her face, waking her smartly. She opens her eyes. Rory's sleeping face is close. Her hand still rests on her mother's cheek following the unconscious slap.

Lorelai gently removes Rory's hand from her face, laying it between them and cradling it in both of hers. She softly stares at her daughter.

LORELAI
(whispering)
Guess I deserved that.

Her eyes remaining closed, a grin soon spreads on Rory's lips.

RORY
(whispering)
I didn't mean it.

LORELAI
That's alright. I figure if I
sustain any more injuries here,
I'll own the place before March.

Rory opens her eyes.

RORY
I mean the stuff I said last night.

Lorelai reaches up and smooths the hair at Rory's temple.

LORELAI
Yes, you did.

No answer. A rustling sound in the hallway gets louder, but they both ignore it.

LORELAI
(continuing)
But you were wrong though. I
never made a mistake. You are the
best thing I ever did.

Lorelai and Rory continue to disregard the sounds in the hallway though they are inching toward commotion.

RORY
Okay, if you didn't make any
mistakes, then I won't either.

Lorelai blinks sadly at the obvious ambiguity of her daughter's comment.

RORY
(continuing)
Deal?

Lorelai takes a deep breath to answer, but the answer is aborted when the commotion in the hallway reaches a crescendo, culminating in a single thud on their door.

Luke is out of bed and on his feet in an instant, full consciousness a bit slower.

LUKE
But I turned the coffee on.

Lorelai and Rory smile humorously as they watch him, still poised on alert, as his wakefulness returns fully.

LUKE
(continuing)
Very funny.

RORY
Don't blame us.

Lorelai points toward the door where the clamor continues. Luke steps toward the door. Lorelai jumps out of bed and walks with him to the door.

Jess sits up groggily and turns to see Rory still lying in bed. He runs his fingers through his hair self-consciously. They smile at one another awkwardly - and warmly.

Lorelai cowers somewhat timidly behind Luke as he quickly opens the door. He stops dead in his tracks. Lorelai peeks around his shoulder.

The dozen or so Guests huddled in front of Luke and Lorelai's door silence immediately, their obvious jostling for position now frozen in tableau.

Luke and Lorelai exchange a befuddled glance then lean cautiously through the threshold where at least a dozen more stand in a line down the hallway.

INT. LODGE LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

Walking in a brisk huff, Lorelai steps up to the counter and gives the bell a couple impatient taps. The Clerk raises his head numbly from his chest, spies Lorelai, winces and drops it back down again.

LORELAI
Come on, Norm, you can do better than that.

CLERK

Ma'am, it was me or you.

LORELAI

What'd you do, post bulletins on their doors, slide menus under their pillows?

CLERK

They could smell the bacon from last night. They were like fiends. They had me cornered. I did what I had to do.

Lorelai purses her lips in frustration and takes a moment to think.

LORELAI

You know, Norman, you obviously fail to understand the esteemed position you enjoy here. You, my dear man, have been entrusted with a great responsibility. People are depending on you. And it is your joy... ..nay, I say, your honor to serve them. You have to do everything you can to make them comfortable.

CLERK

Ma'am, where are you going with this?

LORELAI

First, let's start with coffee. You got a pot back there, I know you do.

CLERK

But it's mine.

LORELAI

See, these people are all supposed to be somewhere else. But now they're not. That causes anxiety. Up till this moment, there's been no food available here. That causes hunger. Do we really want to throw caffeine detox in the mix?

The Clerk cowers, nodding obediently.

LORELAI
(continuing)

Very good. Now let's assume that most of them didn't pack for their little unexpected stay last night, so fresh towels and razors for every room ought to help. Make sure all irons and blow dryers are in working order, and we'll go from there.

She heads toward the exit, leaving the Clerk in an exhausted daze.

LORELAI
(continuing)

Chop. Chop. There's no looking back. You, my friend, are no longer a clerk. Welcome to your first morning as host.

INT. INDEPENDENCE INN - MORNING

At the front desk, Michel rests his head on exhausted, early morning palms. A large piece of course though colorful material suddenly plops down on the desk before him. Sookie watches as he rouses slowly.

MICHEL
(thick French accent)

Tell me the linen driver survived the accident that caused this.

He lifts the material with a repulsed thumb and forefinger, shuttling it to the side.

SOOKIE
It's a poncho.

MICHEL
Really? Normally one would have to look between a horse's back and a saddle to find material of this texture.

SOOKIE
Put it on.

MICHEL
Poor girl. We have no horse. In Rune we have a donkey, I admit, but...

SOOKIE
Wear it.

MICHEL

Thank you, but I decided to maintain the bipedal look this morning. You understand.

SOOKIE

The poncho says 'welcome' when your cheery countenance just can't be counted upon.

MICHEL

Just because the mariachis wish to spend the day embracing the old country doesn't mean I have to.

SOOKIE

Don't you ever feel like that, Michel?

MICHEL

Yes, and then I smoke a cigarette and paint something indistinguishable. Any further questions?

A rapid ring of the courtesy bell aborts Sookie's response. They both turn to see SEVEN SMILING MARIACHIS standing at the desk. The HEAD MARIACHI'S grin is the widest.

HEAD MARIACHI

Buenos dias.

MICHEL

(to Sookie)

Tell me there's coffee.

Embarrassed, Sookie tries to recover for both of them. She steps closer to the Mariachi.

SOOKIE

Buenos dias.

HEAD MARIACHI

Como esta usted, seniorita?

SOOKIE

(deer caught in headlights)

Yes.

She grabs Michel by the arm and drags him roughly to a position between her and the Mariachis and nudges him.

HEAD MARIACHI

Tenemos reservacion para...

Sookie nudges Michel hard again. He shrugs, saying nothing.

SOOKIE

Excuse us.

They walk stiffly arm-in-arm just a few feet away where they speak in harsh whispers.

SOOKIE

(continuing)

Tell me you know some Spanish.

MICHEL

I'm French.

SOOKIE

They don't make you learn other European languages?

MICHEL

We are imperialists. We occupy.
We don't assimilate.

SOOKIE

You speak English.

MICHEL

See how it works.

SOOKIE

You have to deal with these people.

MICHEL

Why don't you?

SOOKIE

I have tamales to steam.

MICHEL

Not that excuse again.

HEAD MARIACHI

(thick accent)

Excuse me. I speak English if Spanish is a problem.

MICHEL

See, now he's making sense.

SOOKIE

(sarcastic)

Eventually they all come around.

MICHEL

Now if you'll excuse me, Senor Pepper wishes to toot his horn.

Sookie cringes slightly as she watches Michel resume his post.

INT. LODGE RESTAURANT - LATER THAT MORNING

The place is abuzz. Their stomachs at last filling, the lodge Guests are all smiles and merriment.

Behind the counter, Lorelai takes several slices of bacon from a tray and divides them between two dishes already stacked with pancakes. She hustles the plates to a table and is back in an instant.

Standing over the large griddle behind the counter, Luke flips pancakes and bacon like the pro he is. Rory returns from the front lines with a large stack of plates, which she sets next to Jess who stands in a billow of steam washing.

JESS

On the positive side, I think I suddenly understand what inspired Dante.

RORY

It's not so bad. We're almost done. They couldn't possibly eat much more.

LORELAI (O.S.)

Order up!

JESS

I forget, on which level do the self-deluded live out their eternal torment?

At the other end of the counter, Lorelai leans over a table taking an order.

LORELAI

Got it. Can I refresh your water for you?

The OLDER GENTLEMAN nods in surprise, his eyes growing even wider as Lorelai takes his empty glass of water, rips the order ticket from the pad, affixes it to the sweat on the outside of the glass and sends them both sliding down the counter.

LORELAI

(continuing)

Order up!

An OLDER WOMAN now standing a few feet from the counter watches the glass slide past her until it comes to a dead stop at Luke's hand, where he snatches the order from its side, pours the water and goes back to cooking.

The Older Woman continues to watch as Lorelai now grabs a plate from the stack.

As Luke flips pancakes onto a platter, Lorelai interjects her plate, catching one on the way down.

He lifts the platter, and she scoots underneath his arm to the bacon waiting on the other side. Without looking, Luke's arm juts out with a cup, and Lorelai pours. She then takes the coffee and the plate to the waiting table.

And so they operate, perfectly choreographed, never missing a beat. The Older Woman continues to watch it all. At last, Lorelai returns to the counter and notices the Woman still standing there.

LORELAI
(continuing)

I'm sorry. I thought you were helped.

OLDER WOMAN

I was. Thank you. I was just enjoying watching you and your young man.

LORELAI

Um, who?

Right then, Luke finishes layering the platter with pancakes, turns and places them next to Lorelai on the counter.

OLDER WOMAN

Oh, that sense of humor keeps things fresh, I'll bet.

LUKE

What's she talking about?

OLDER WOMAN

I was just telling her what a lovely couple you two make.

For just the briefest second, Luke looks under his brow at Lorelai who's apparently struck mute.

LUKE

Oh, we're not a couple.

LORELAI

Right... ...we're not.

Lorelai looks at Luke then away, her eyes pinched. Luke watches her, subtly gauging.

OLDER WOMAN

There goes that kidding again.

LORELAI

Oh, we're not kidding.

OLDER WOMAN
(flabbergasted)
But that spark.

LORELAI
Probably the chili.

Luke shrugs in agreement.

OLDER WOMAN
Well, you might want to stand on
this side of the counter, get a
fresh perspective on that.

Luke and Lorelai exchange an awkward glance.

OLDER WOMAN
(continuing)
Well, thank you kids for that
wonderful breakfast. Good day.

They both numbly watch the woman leave. After a moment, Luke
picks the platter back up again and tries to find something
to do with it.

LORELAI
Wonder why she would say something
like that.

LUKE
(obviously a little
touchy)
Probably the chili.

Lorelai turns. The same pinched look is in Luke's eyes now,
but, like her, he attempts a cool demeanor.

LUKE
(continuing)
Come on, it's no big deal. It
just looks like we're a couple
because, well, you know, you're
a...

His hand gestures are incoherent.

LORELAI
Sounds like?

LUKE
...woman.

LORELAI
Could'a had it with more visuals.

LUKE

And I'm a man. Of course, I'm
much better looking than you, but
that's common in couples anyway.

Lorelai purses her lips, not biting. He gestures toward the
great amounts of food near them.

LUKE

(continuing)

And, obviously, we can cook
together.

LORELAI

(smiling)

Yeah, how about that. We did make
a pretty good team today.

(hesitant)

Any ideas why - aside from the
natural good looks differential
and all.

LUKE

Oh, I don't know, Lorelai. We've
known each other a long time. I
guess we got an understanding.

LORELAI

Right.

LUKE

But the point is we're not a
couple.

He holds her gaze strongly now.

LUKE

(continuing)

Right?

LORELAI

Right... ...we're not.

Lorelai grabs a rag, and Luke watches as she now stiff arms
the counter.

INT. SOPHIE'S MUSIC STORE - SAME MOMENT

Sipping from a large mug of coffee, Sophie goes about the
morning business of opening her shop. She turns on her
computer, opens the cash register and steps to the front door
where a roll-down shade covers the window. She pull its cord.

Gasping in surprise, Sophie recoils from the door as the
shade's rollers finish coiling the material like a whip. On
the other side of the glass, her face framed large in the
window is Mrs. Kim, her countenance set and grim.

Composing herself, Sophie attempts damage control on her splashed coffee and opens the door, bells chiming.

SOPHIE

Good morning, Mrs. Kim. I apologize for startling like that. Guess I'm gonna have to cut down on the coffee.

Mrs. Kim marches in, inspecting the premises.

MRS. KIM

You open four minutes late.

SOPHIE

Did I? I'm sorry. I don't usually have people waiting to begin business in the morning. I should be so lucky.

MRS. KIM

Where your staff?

Sophie sets down her cup a little nervously.

SOPHIE

Well, Mrs. Kim, I don't need much around here - just a little help for a few hours each week is all.

MRS. KIM

And what my daughter get in return?

Caught red handed, Sophie no longer attempts to juggle eyelines, settling into her guilt maturely.

SOPHIE

I pay her a little, but mostly Lane's compensation is getting to play the drums.

Her fears confirmed, Mrs. Kim bows her head in shame.

MRS. KIM

The rock music.

SOPHIE

(compassionately)
She's tried all styles actually,
Mrs. Kim.

Mrs. Kim looks up now, a tear in her eye.

SOPHIE
 (continuing)
 She's good, you know. It's like
 she's a natural. She gets it from
 her family, I'm sure.

The tear twinkles slightly.

MRS. KIM
 Lane's father, he was good Sogo
 player. He play all time.

SOPHIE
 I know. Lane told me.

MRS. KIM
 (tear twinkling
 brighter)
 She did?

SOPHIE
 Yes. She's very proud of that.
 And I'm very proud of her that she
 finally told you about what she
 does here at the shop.

MRS. KIM
 She did not.

Her countenance returns to solemnity.

MRS. KIM
 (continuing)
 As Lane's mother, I would think
 you tell me.

SOPHIE
 You have to understand, Mrs. Kim.
 I was in a very difficult
 situation. Here was a girl with
 so much raw talent, so much
 potential, and even more desire.

This obviously stings Mrs. Kim.

SOPHIE
 (continuing)
 Her only crime was being born
 between two cultures and trying to
 be true to both.

This stings worse, and Mrs. Kim wipes a defiant eye.

MRS. KIM

I'm a mother, Miss Sophie. I live
between rock and hard place you
only visit between bongo lessons.
I want Lane have what she wants.
I also want what's best for her.
Not always same want.

Sophie takes a resigned though compassionate deep breath.

SOPHIE

I understand, Mrs. Kim. Would you
like me to gather Lane's things
for you?

Mrs. Kim holds Sophie's eyes quietly for a long moment.

MRS. KIM

You keep them. And you keep
secret that we talked. Sometimes
we get out of tough place when we
stay in same role.

She takes a deep breath of courage.

MRS. KIM

(continuing)

So, I say we keep same jobs of
teaching my daughter, each the way
she does it. And Lane grow in
both cultures, not between.

SOPHIE

(smiling softly)

I'll do my best.

MRS. KIM

Good day.

She closes the door firmly as she exits. The bells still
chime in her wake as Sophie's drained posture deflates.

INT. LODGE LOBBY - AFTERNOON

Lorelai's cell phone is to her ear in the crowded lobby.

LORELAI

Sookie, hold the phone closer to
your mouth. I don't think I just
heard you correctly.

INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION - LORELAI/SOOKIE

Sookie must scream to be heard over the extremely loud
mariachi music that fills the inn.

SOOKIE

Sombrero!

LORELAI

Don't tell me he did something socially reprehensible with it.

SOOKIE

Pretty much. He's dancing.

Sure enough, right behind Sookie, Michel works at the main desk while gyrating festively with the music. And on his head sits a gigantic sombrero. Sookie turns to look at him and stifles a giggle.

LORELAI

There's no way he could turn over a new leaf that quickly.

SOOKIE

No. Pretty fast with the glasses though.

LORELAI

No, Sookie! If there's tequila in the mix, we're not out of the woods yet.

SOOKIE

It's handled, Lorelai.

LORELAI

But...

SOOKIE

Everything's fine.

LORELAI

Did he move the Bakers to the Cape Cod wing at least? He knows how they hate a bold brass section.

SOOKIE

It's handled, Lorelai.

Lorelai slouches, her argument ebbing, never noticing Jess standing nearby listening in, smirking and shaking his head in disbelief.

SOOKIE

(continuing)

Now, will you just hurry and get back here before the produce truck arrives.

LORELAI
One step ahead of a kiwi, that's
my motto.

Right then, the Clerk walks to Lorelai and stands at
attention.

LORELAI
(continuing)
Sooks, I'm gonna have to go. Hold
the fort. I'll be there as soon
as I can.

END INTERCUT

Lorelai hangs up her cell phone and turns her attention to
the Clerk.

LORELAI
(continuing)
Well, how'd you do?

CLERK
Towels and razors in every room.
I ran out of deodorant though.

LORELAI
That explains so much.

Lorelai puts a friendly, though somewhat patronizing, palm on
the Clerk's shoulder.

LORELAI
(continuing)
Not bad, Perkins. Next time I'm
here though I want to see those
little miniature coffee pots in
every room. It's only right.

CLERK
I'll do my best, Ma'am.

LORELAI
Now scoot. You have people
waiting for you at the desk.

He looks, and so there are. He shuttles off numbly in their
direction - at last revealing Jess. Lorelai smiles with
begrudging awkwardness.

JESS
So we're coming back?

LORELAI
Figure of speech, why?

JESS

I guess I'd like to see you try to
arrange that too.

He smiles smugly as she takes a hasty breath to answer. The
cell phone rings. Her brow furrowing frustratedly, she
answers that instead.

LORELAI

Hello.

INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION - LORELAI/EMILY

EMILY

I checked - there's only one
garage in Stars Hollow. Really,
how can you live in a town with
only one garage?

LORELAI

I don't know. I guess it helps
that I own my own calendar.

She tries to turn away from Jess slightly.

LORELAI

(continuing)

So your question has amazing
Trivial Pursuit pie potential, but
I'm not sure why it comes up now.

EMILY

Why, don't be silly. I've
arranged for the towing company to
take your car there.

LORELAI

Of course. You know, you didn't
have to do that.

EMILY

It was no bother, really.

LORELAI

I mean, really, you didn't have to
do that. I can make my own
arrangements.

EMILY

Why, of course you can. That's
why it had not been done already.

LORELAI

(losing badly)

But I was going to.

Jess chuckles lightly.

END INTERCUT

LORELAI
(continuing)
Yes, Mom. No, Mom.

Jess listens attentively as Lorelai obviously tries to end the conversation.

LORELAI
(continuing)
Yes, thank you, Mom. Uh-uh. Uh-uh. Yes, I promise I will be more careful next time.

Jess grins.

LORELAI
(continuing)
Okay. You too. Bye-bye.

She presses the button on her phone adamantly and turns, finding Jess watching her.

LORELAI
(continuing)
My mom.

JESS
I heard. She sounds worried.

LORELAI
It's in character, believe me.

JESS
We're all after job security, right?

Lorelai squints, unsure how to take him.

JESS
(continuing)
It's in her best interest to keep you safe. It's only natural. And sometimes a mother's concerns are founded, you know.

He steps much closer to Lorelai now, holding her eyes solidly.

JESS
(continuing)
And sometimes they're not.

Without any further word, Jess steps past her. She watches him contemplatively as she follows behind him to the lodge's main door. Right then, Luke and Rory enter, sun shining brightly behind them.

JESS
(continuing)
What's the word?

Luke looks at Lorelai.

LUKE
Looks like the ice has melted.

Lorelai smiles.

LORELAI
Let's go home.

All four step through the threshold into the sunshine.
Lorelai closes the door behind them.

FADE OUT:

END OF EPISODE