CAROLINE IN THE CITY

Pilot

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CAROLINE BRODY - Mid-30's; very real and much more attractive than she believes herself to be. She's a successful cartoonist, and her Cartoon Caroline will serve as her alter ego throughout the series.

DEL KIMBEL - Late 30's; good-looking; charming; facile and smart. Del is President of Kimbel Greeting Cards and is Caroline's on-again/off-again boyfriend.

RICHARD LOBEL - Early to mid-20's; filled with a mid-90's detachment. Works for Caroline as her colorist. He aspires to be an artist, but unless he loosens up, he doesn't stand a chance.

LIBBY McNEIL - Late 20's; jaded; attractive; hip without trying. Caroline's next-door neighbor. We discover in later episodes that she runs Binge/Purge -- a trendy, used clothing store.

MARK McNEIL - Early 30's; genial. Libby's older brother. He is recently divorced and living with Libby.

ALICE RUTGER - Del's secretary. Mid-50's; African-American; one of those people who knows how to deal with everything, probably because she takes nothing too seriously.

In Future Episodes:

CHARLIE NORRIS - Late 30's/early 40's; head writer at Kimbel Greeting Cards.
STANDING SETS

CAROLINE'S LOFT - A loft in Tribeca, New York -- spacious, messy, with large windows looking out onto the city. There's a galley-style kitchen stage right, a bed stage left, and up against the wall is a large drawing table -- Caroline's workspace -- complete with pens, paper, bottles of ink, etc. The wall is cluttered with scraps of paper with her cartoon sketches on them. There is also an almost life-sized cardboard cut-out of Cartoon Caroline left over from a book tour.

KIMBEL GREETING CARDS - Modern office in Mid-town Manhattan. This is Del's turf. In future episodes, we'll see more of the office, including the "theme rooms," permanently decorated in holiday themes to inspire the writers, for example: There's a Christmas Room, Wedding Room, probably even a Condolence Room, etc.
CAROLINE IN THE CITY

COLD OPENING

ANIMATION:

THE SCREEN IS WHITE, LIKE A BLANK PANEL OF A CARTOON STRIP, WITH THE STRIP'S TITLE -- "CAROLINE IN THE CITY" -- IN THE UPPER LEFT-HAND CORNER.

A CROWD OF CONTENTED PEOPLE ARE POURING OUT OF A MOVIE THEATER IN THE MIDDLE OF WHICH WE SEE AN IRATE, ANIMATED CARTOON CAROLINE AND BEMUSED CARTOON DEL, BOTH STILL CARRYING THEIR BOXES OF POPCORN.

CARTOON CAROLINE

A relationship? We've never had a relationship. All we've had is two hundred and eighteen one-night stands! (BEAT) With the same person!

AND SHE STORMS OFF, LEAVING DEL ALONE IN FRONT OF THE THEATER, AS THE CAMERA PULLS BACK TO REVEAL THE MOVIE MARQUEE -- DOUBLE FEATURE: "SLEEPLESS IN SEATTLE" AND "WHEN HARRY MET SALLY."

CARTOON DEL

I knew we should've gone to "Pulp Fiction."

CAROLINE'S BOX OF POPCORN FLIES INTO FRAME AND BOPS CARTOON DEL ON THE HEAD.

FADE OUT.
ACT ONE

SCENE A

INT. CAROLINE'S LOFT - DAY

SPACIOUS, MESSY, WITH LARGE WINDOWS LOOKING OUT ONTO DOWNTOWN NEW YORK. THIS IS WHERE CAROLINE LIVES AND WORKS. UNDER ONE OF THE WINDOWS IS A LARGE DRAFTING TABLE COMPLETE WITH PENS, PAPER, BOTTLES OF INK, ETC. THE WALL'S CLUTTERED WITH SCRAPS OF PAPER WITH HER CARTOON SKETCHES ON THEM.

FROM THE OUTSET, CAROLINE'S INTERVIEWING A YOUNG, TYPICAL SOHO ARTIST -- WILD HAIR, PAINT-STAINED SHIRT. HIS PORTFOLIO'S ON THE COFFEE TABLE.

CAROLINE

Well, thanks for answering my ad,

Mr. Monroe, but the problem is --

MONROE

It's just "Monroe." One word.

Like Picasso, or Cher.

CAROLINE

Right. So, Monroe, the job I'm offering really isn't that creative -- it's a colorist. See, I draw the cartoons, you color them in.

MONROE

Do I have to stay in the lines?

(GETTING WORKED UP) 'Cause I won't stay in the lines! You can't do that to me!

OFF CAROLINE'S LOOK:

SMASH CUT TO:
INT. CAROLINE'S LOFT - DAY

CAROLINE'S INTERVIEWING ANOTHER APPLICANT. IT'S A WOMAN WEARING AN ALL-LEATHER OUTFIT WITH PIERCINGS ALL OVER HER FACE, ESPECIALLY THROUGH HER EYEBROW. CAROLINE CAN BARELY LOOK AT HER.

CAROLINE

(UNCOMFORTABLY) ...So your job
would be to color the strip for the
newspaper, the calendar, the
greeting cards -- God, doesn't
that hurt?

WOMAN

Yes. Constantly.

SMASH CUT TO:
SCENE B

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE CAROLINE'S LOFT - DAY

CAROLINE'S AT THE FRONT DOOR, TALKING TO A WOMAN DRESSED IN A "CAROLINE" SWEATSHIRT, "CAROLINE" BASEBALL CAP AND WEARING A BUNCH OF "CAROLINE" BUTTONS. CAROLINE'S MONUMENTALLY UNCOMFORTABLE. AS THE ULTIMATE FAN RAMBLES, CAROLINE ESCORTS HER INTO THE ELEVATOR JUST ACROSS THE HALL.

ULTIMATE FAN

I can start immediately! I've read every "Caroline" strip, I have every "Caroline" book, every "Caroline" calender, every "Caroline" greeting card -- especially the Get Well ones --

CAROLINE

Well, I do have a few more people to interview --

ULTIMATE FAN

I don't want to just work for you, Caroline -- I want to be you!

CAROLINE

No, you don't, believe me. Go home. Bye, bye.

THE ELEVATOR DOORS CLOSE. CAROLINE QUIETLY BEATS HER HEAD AGAINST THE DOOR JAM. THE DOOR ACROSS FROM CAROLINE'S LOFT OPENS AND MARK MCNEIL -- GENIAL, EARLY 30'S, WEARING A KNICKS CAP AND SWEATS -- POPS HIS HEAD OUT.
MARK
Hey, Caroline. Do you know where
my sister keeps the coffee filters?

CAROLINE
Next to the coffee.

MARK
Cool. (STARTS BACK IN; STOPS) And
the coffee would be in theee...?

CAROLINE
Kitchen.

MARK
Right. Near theee...?

CAROLINE
I've got coffee already made, Mark.

MARK
Thank God.

MARK EXITS INTO CAROLINE'S APARTMENT. CAROLINE
FOLLOWS HIM.

CUT TO:
SCENE C

INT. CAROLINE'S LOFT - CONTINUOUS

AS MARK HEADS FOR THE KITCHEN, CAROLINE FLOPS DOWN ON THE SOFA.

CAROLINE

(Sighs) What is it with this city? I've interviewed thirty-five people for this job, and there's not one of them I'd feel safe standing next to on the subway.

MARK

You're too picky, Caroline. You've got to take chances in life.

(Then) Of course, this is said by a guy who's divorced, unemployed and living on his sister's couch. (Inspecting the Coffee) Is this real, or is it one of those foofy, girly flavors?

CAROLINE

Yeah, it's by Massengill. Shut up and drink it.

MARK

Boy, someone needs a hug. Del out of town?

CAROLINE

Del and I broke up Saturday.
MARK LOOKS REALLY STUNNED.

MARK
Oh, wow, you're kidding. What happened?

CAROLINE
Ah, nothing. We were sitting around watching "Bride of Frankenstein" on the late show, and it dawned on me, even this stupid monster with bolts in his neck is willing to commit to a relationship — Del felt suffocated when I put his name on the speed dial. So we had this big fight and we both realized we were never going to go anywhere.

MARK
So he dumped you?

CAROLINE
He didn't dump me! It was mutual. If anything, I was the dumper, he was the dumpee. Not that it's a contest. (POINTS TO HERSELF; MOUTHS WORDS) "Me -- Dumper."

MARK
Wow, so Del's really gone...
CAROLINE
Yeah, well, I'll get through it.
I'm going to take a little
"Caroline time" -- you know, go to
museums, the opera -- all that crap
people say they love to do when
they live in New York.

MARK
I'm going to miss Del. He was a
great guy -- funny, smart, always
picked up the tab whenever --

CAROLINE
Yeah, he's great, Mark. You're
divorced, he's available, why don't
you date him?

THERE'S A DISTINCTIVE KNOCK AT THE DOOR.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

(YELLS) Come in, Lib.

THE DOOR OPENS AND LIBBY MCNEIL (LATE 20'S) ENTERS.
AS THEY TALK, LIBBY CROSSES TO CAROLINE'S
REFRIGERATOR.

LIBBY
Coffee.

CAROLINE
Kitchen.

MARK
You're back early. How was
Atlantic City?
LIBBY
I won five grand.

MARK
Are you serious?

LIBBY
Yeah, right. That's why I'm having gum for breakfast.

SHE TAKES OUT A CARTON OF MILK.

LIBBY (CONT'D)
Caroline, I think you need some new milk. (RE CARTON) They found this kid three months ago.

MARK
Hey, go easy. She broke up with Del on Saturday.

LIBBY
For real?

MARK
Yeah, they were watching "Bride of Frankenstein" --

LIBBY
(MELTING) Oh, the part where he sees his reflection in the water...

CAROLINE
And he realizes he'll never know true love, and that's all he really wants...
LIBBY
God, they don't make guys like that anymore...

CAROLINE ROLLS HER EYES.

MARK
Hey, that's all I wanted in my life. When Meredith and I got divorced, I thought I'd never get over that desolate, gut-wrenching, blow-your-brains-out sense of loss.

MARK STARES OFF INTO SPACE.

CAROLINE
(HELPFULLY) But then, in time, you started to pick up the pieces...?

MARK SHAKE HIS HEAD NO, ABJECTLY.

MARK
There are some pains you just never get over, Caroline. Six months, a year -- it doesn't make any difference. They just keep growing and growing...

CAROLINE
Gee, Mark, thanks for the pep talk.

LIBBY
So tell me what it was like the first time you saw Del back at the office.
CAROLINE
("NONCHALANT"; WITHOUT MAKING EYE CONTACT) Actually, I haven't been by the office.

LIBBY
Why not?

CAROLINE
Well, I thought we needed a little time apart -- you know, two, three years. I'm freelance -- I can messenger the greeting cards in.

LIBBY
Are you nuts? You can't spend your life avoiding a guy. Next thing you know, you'll want to stop going to that dry cleaner you both use on Fourteenth Street.

CAROLINE
Oh, I'm not going to him anymore.

THE INTERCOM BUZZES. CAROLINE CROSSES TO ANSWER IT.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

(INTO INTERCOM) Who is it?

RICHARD (O.S.)

(OVER INTERCOM) Richard Lobel. I'm here for the job.

CAROLINE BUZZES HIM UP.
CAROLINE
Okay, guys, get out of here. I've got things to do. I've got to interview this guy, call a messenger service --

LIBBY
Okay, Caroline, but just remember, by not going in yourself, you're telling Del it's really over.

CAROLINE
Good. It is over.

LIBBY
"Out of sight, out of mind."

CAROLINE
(LESS CERTAIN) Well... what about "Absence makes the heart grow fonder"?

LIBBY
Oh, please. That went out with "If you love something set it free."

MARK
(HEARTSICK) Oh, God, that was my last hope.

AS CAROLINE REACTS:

DISSOLVE TO:
SCENE D

INT. CAROLINE'S LOFT - LATER THAT DAY

CAROLINE'S NOW INTERVIEWING RICHARD LOBEL -- EARLY TO MID-20'S AND EXTREMELY SERIOUS-LOOKING. AS A MATTER OF FACT, RICHARD SHOULD LOOK A LOT LIKE NOEL HOGEN OF THE CRANBERRIES (OR WHICHEVER ONE HAS THE BLOND HAIR AND GLASSES ON THE "NO NEED TO ARGUE" COVER). HE WEARS A RUMPLED, DARK SUIT, DARK SHIRT, THE OBLIGATORY DOC MARTENS AND A SMALL EARRING. AS HE WATCHES CAROLINE LOOK AT HIS PORTFOLIO, RICHARD IS TORN BETWEEN WANTING TO BE HIRED AND LOOKING DOWN ON THE JOB.

CAROLINE

This is very impressive, Mr. Lobel.

RICHARD TURNS IT AROUND FOR HER.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

Ah. Even better. So, you're familiar with "Caroline"?

RICHARD

I think my high school teacher had one of your mugs -- it's that stringy-haired girl who's always looking for a relationship, right?

CAROLINE

No, that's "Cathy." Mine's the stringy-haired girl who has the relationships, but they're bad.

(ASIDE) Mental note: Find new hairdresser. (THEN, TO RICHARD) Well, you seem more than qualified for this job.
RICHARD

I am.

CAROLINE

So, why do you want it?

RICHARD

Money. Seems I won't be able to
make a living as a real artist
until after I'm dead. (WITHOUT
EXPRESSION) Bummer, huh?

CAROLINE

Totally.

CAROLINE'S CAT JUMPS UP ON HIS LAP; RICHARD REACTS.

RICHARD

(DRYLY) Oh, great. You have a
cat.

CAROLINE

This is Salty. Well, actually, her
real name is Salt. See, I had a
Pepper, too, but Pepper ran away a
year ago -- he was a guy, so
typical. So, anyway, since the
name "Salt" is --

RICHARD

Can you get her away?

CAROLINE

Oh, sorry. You're allergic?
RICHARD
No, I just don't like cats. Or dogs. Or anything that jumps up and down and pees on your feet when you come home.

CAROLINE
Well, then, we may have a problem, because I tend to get fairly excited when people come over.

CAROLINE LAUGHS. RICHARD DOESN'T.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)
(UNDER HER BREATH) Not even a smile... (STANDING) Well, I have one more person to see today --

THE DOORBELL RINGS.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)
-- and that must be him, (GLANCES AT WATCH) very prompt -- good sign -- so thanks for coming by, Mr. Lobel. And if you leave me your number, I'll certainly be in touch.

RICHARD
(HANDING HER A CARD) You can reach me at my apartment for the next twenty-four hours, and after that, here's the number of the shelter. But no pressure.
AS RICHARD PACKS UP, CAROLINE OPENS THE DOOR TO AN AFRICAN-AMERICAN BLIND MAN WITH HIS SEEING-EYE DOG.

BLIND MAN

I'm here for the job as colorist.

CAROLINE

Oh, geez, I'm, uh... sorry, but I don't think you're the right person for the job.

BLIND MAN

You're saying that because I'm black.

CAROLINE

No, I'm saying it because you're blind. You color things: Sight is a plus.

BLIND MAN

You just got yourself a lawsuit, lady. See you in court.

He walks away as Caroline closes the door. A short, amazed beat, then:

CAROLINE

(PROFESSIONALLY) So, Mr. Lobel, after carefully reviewing your resume... (THEN, CRUMBLING)

Please take this job!

Dissolve to:
SCENE E

ESTABLISHING SHOT - KIMBEL GREETING CARDS

AN OFFICE BUILDING ON THE EAST SIDE.

ALICE (V.O.)

(INTO PHONE) Good morning, Kimbel Greeting Cards -- we care so you don't have to.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. KIMBEL GREETING CARDS/Front Office - Day

THE PLACE IS CHEERFUL AND MODERN AND SUCCESSFULLY BUSY. ALICE RUTGER -- AFRICAN-AMERICAN, MID-50'S -- IS ON THE PHONE.

ALICE

(INTO PHONE) ...So, you sent them a "get well" card and they died?
Well, that would be our complaints department... or God.

SHE TRANSFERS THE CALL. CAROLINE ENTERS OFF THE ELEVATOR, CARRYING A PORTFOLIO. SHE'S WEARING A TRENCHCOAT. EVERYONE SEEMS TO STOP WHAT THEY'RE DOING AND LOOK AT CAROLINE THE MOMENT SHE ENTERS. CAROLINE TRIES TO IGNORE THEM AND Crosses TO ALICE'S DESK.

CAROLINE

Hey, Alice.

ALICE

(TAKING A PIECE OF PAPER OUT FROM HER DESK; YELLING) Okay, she showed up Wednesday at two-fifteen.

(OFF PAPER) Leslie wins the pool!
A WOMAN, LESLIE, IN THE BACKGROUND PUMPS HER FIST IN THE AIR, AS THE REST OF THE OFFICE CLAPS.

ALICE (CONT'D)

(THEN, TO CAROLINE) So, how's it going?

CAROLINE

Fine, Alice. (TO ROOM) I just want to announce to everyone that just because Del and I broke up doesn't mean we can't deal with each other in a professional capacity.

CAROLINE TAKES OFF HER JACKET TO REVEAL A GREAT-LOOKING OUTFIT.

ALICE

Oh, look at you. Rub that "capacity" in his face.

CAROLINE

Oh, stop. This is just something I had hanging around in my closet.

ALICE

With the price tag on it?

ALICE RIPS OFF THE PRICE TAG.

CAROLINE

What did you do?! Now I have to keep it.

AS ALICE LAUGHS:

CUT TO:
SCENE H

INT. DEL'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

DEL -- MID-30'S, HANDSOME, CHARMING, WITH AN EASY-GOING SPARKLE -- IS ON THE PHONE. DURING THE FOLLOWING, HE CROSSES TO HIS FILE CABINET, TAKES OUT A CARD AND STARTS FILLING IT OUT.

DEL

(INTO PHONE) Mom, stop, how could I forget your birthday? I'm in the greeting card business, of course I sent you a card!

HE SEALS THE CARD IN AN ENVELOPE, WRINKLES IT, DROPS IT ON THE GROUND AND STEPS ON IT A FEW TIMES. AS HE DOES THIS, CAROLINE ENTERS, TENTATIVELY. DEL SEES HER AND WAVES HER IN.

DEL (CONT'D)

(INTO PHONE) It must be lost in the mail. I'm sure it'll be there any day... Okay, bye, Mom. (HANGS UP; THEN, TO CAROLINE) I'm sorry you had to see that.

CAROLINE

Hi, Del.

DEL

Hi, hon.

CAROLINE

(AWKWARDLY) Yeah, I just came by to show you the "Caroline" Christmas card ideas...
DEL

Great.

CAROLINE

I mean, I know I could have had the messenger bring them over, but... I wanted to say hi... and show you my sketches... (REALIZING) which I left outside.

CAROLINE EXITS. DEL CHECKS HIS BREATH WITH HIS HAND AND COMBS HIS HAIR WITH HIS FINGERS. HE STRIKES A CASUAL POSE, JUST AS CAROLINE RE-ENTERS WITH HER PORTFOLIO.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

Here we go.

SHE HANDS HIM PORTFOLIO. AS HE TAKES OUT THE SKETCHES, THEY BOTH TRY TO IGNORE THEIR DISCOMFORT AND CHEMISTRY.

DEL

Thanks. You look great.

CAROLINE

(DISMISSIVE) Eh.

DEL

Listen, I've been hoping you'd stop by because I bought a little something and I knew it would be weird if I came over...

HE PRODUCES A GIFT-WRAPPED BOX AND HANDS IT TO HER.

CAROLINE

Oh, Del... what did you do? I don't think I should --
DEL
No, no, it's not for you, it's for
Salty -- it's a little catnip
mouse.

CAROLINE
(DRYLY) That's really sweet, Del.

DEL
I really miss that cat. (BEAT)
You think she misses me?

CAROLINE
Well, she's a cat. They bounce
back.

DEL
(THEN, TAKING SKETCHES) So, let's
take a look at these. We said we
weren't going to let our personal
lives interfere with our
professional lives, so let's just
jump right into it.

CAROLINE
Absolutely. Time to work.

DEL
(RE CARD) Oh, this one's great.

CAROLINE
It's just a rough idea.
HE PICKS UP A SKETCH TO LOOK AT. A BEAT. HE DROPS THE CARD AND THEY KISS PASSIONATELY. THEY BOTH SUDDENLY BREAK THE KISS, AD-LIB "I'M SORRY," "THAT WAS WRONG," ETC. THEY BOTH INSTANTLY GO BACK TO THE CARDS, FLUSTERED.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

(RE CARD) That's my favorite.

DEL
For what it's worth, it was the best eight months of my life, Car.

CAROLINE
Nine.

DEL
We did have fun together, though. You got to admit, we had fun.

CAROLINE
But I don't want fun, I want a relationship. (OFF HIS LOOK) That sounded so much better in my head. (BEAT) Listen, let me know what you think of the sketches... (RE BOX) I should get this to the cat.

CAROLINE STARTS FOR THE DOOR.

DEL
Caroline, just because we're not seeing each other anymore doesn't mean we can't see each other... anymore.
CAROLINE

Yeah, maybe we can grab a bite sometime.

DEL

When?

CAROLINE

What about tonight?

DEL

Ooo, tonight’s bad. I’ve got a, um... Well, since we’re not going out anymore, I guess I can say this... I’ve got a date.

CAROLINE

A date? Ah. Oh, my God, this is so weird, I just remembered, I’ve got a date tonight, too. That would have been embarrassing, huh? Me making a date with you and then having this other big date.

DEL

You’ve got a date?

CAROLINE

Yep. Big hot date.

DEL

So, where are you going?

CAROLINE

Where?
DEL

On your date?

CAROLINE

Oh, we're going to Remo's.

DEL

Oh, boy.

CAROLINE

What?

DEL

That's where Debby and I are going.

CAROLINE

Del, that's our place!

DEL

But you're going there.

CAROLINE

But I discovered it. Oh, never mind. My date and I'll go somewhere else. Maybe we'll just order in.

DEL

No, no, don't change your plans on my account.

CAROLINE

Del, I'm not going to bring my date to the same restaurant that you bring your date -- that's just a little too Noel Coward for me.
DEL
You got an ugly one, huh?

CAROLINE

(SPINNING) What?

DEL

What is he -- scrawny, balding...?

CAROLINE

I don't believe you.

DEL

Hairy ears?

CAROLINE

He's gorgeous. He happens to be very gorgeous.

DEL

Then bring him by tonight.

CAROLINE

Okay, fine. I might just do that.

(TURNS TO LEAVE; THEN, WITH RESOLVE) See you tonight.

AS CAROLINE SMILES DEFIANTLY AT HIM.

SMASH CUT TO:

ANIMATION:

A CARTOON CAROLINE JUMPING OUT DEL'S OFFICE WINDOW, SCREAMING.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE
ACT TWO

SCENE J

ANIMATION:

CARTOON CAROLINE IS ON THE PHONE. AS SHE TALKS, SHE STANDS AT HER CLOSET RAPIDLY HOLDING DIFFERENT DRESSES UP IN FRONT OF HER, THEN DISCARDING THEM BY FLINGING THEM OVER HER HEAD.

CARTOON CAROLINE

(INTO PHONE) That's right, I need a date for tonight. He has to be tall, dark and handsome... Wow. How much is he without the whipped cream?

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CAROLINE'S LOFT - DAY

CAROLINE IS PACING WITH THE PHONE. SHE IS WEARING A SWEATSUIT. RICHARD IS IN THE BACKGROUND AT CAROLINE'S DRAFTING TABLE, OPENING HIS PORTFOLIO. SALTY IS STARING AT HIM.

CAROLINE

(INTO PHONE) No, Howard, I understand... If you've got plans tonight, you've got plans... Yes, I promise. I'll come in next week for my teeth-cleaning. Bye.

(HANGS UP; MUTTERS) Rinse and spit this.

SHE PLOPS DOWN ON THE COUCH AND SIGHS. RICHARD DOESN'T NOTICE. CAROLINE GIVES ANOTHER BIG SIGH.
CAROLINE (CONT’D)

(FINALLY) "Oh, gee, Caroline, is something wrong?" "No, but so nice of you to ask."

RICHARD

Should I stay, or do you two want to be alone?

CAROLINE

Come on, Richard. Don’t you like to chat? My old colorist Jeannie and I used to talk for hours. Some days we wouldn’t get any work done at all. But then she moved to Chicago to get married... to a guy named "Bill"... nice guy...

RICHARD

(UNCOMFORTABLE) Excuse me, was listening to your personal problems part of the job description? Because I don’t do well with personal problems.

CAROLINE

I’ll pay you an extra two dollars an hour.

RICHARD

(BEAT) So, Caroline, how are you?
CAROLINE

Terrible. I'm stupid. I broke up with my boyfriend and now he's dating someone else. Can you believe it? For nine months I tell him to put the toilet seat down -- he ignores me. Now I tell him we have to move on, and bang -- eighty-six hours later, he's got a date! So I of course told him I had a date tonight -- which he didn't believe -- with good reason, too, because I was lying. So, in four hours, I have to show up at the same restaurant to prove that he's real -- which he isn't.

RICHARD

And you really think your colorist moved away 'cause she got married?

CAROLINE CHUCKLES.

CAROLINE

Wow -- conversation and a joke! You've earned your money today.

(CROSSING TO HIM, LOOKING AT STRIP)

Wait a minute, what did you do to Caroline's hair?
RICHARD
I made it flaxen.

CAROLINE
But her hair's yellow.

RICHARD
No one's hair is just yellow. I mean, look at you. Your hair's goldenrod with cadmium highlights, and the roots are a deep --

CAROLINE
Okay, okay! The point is, the newspaper only has yellow! Her hair is yellow!

RICHARD
Geez, with an attitude like that, it's no wonder you can't find a date.

CAROLINE
Okay, you're right, I'm sorry. Good job on these. (THEN, EYEING RICHARD) Listen, Richard, I know we don't know each other that well, so there's no way you would consider --

RICHARD
No.
CAROLINE
Thanks. Hadn’t quite had enough rejection today. (CROSSING TO DRAFTING TABLE) Okay, listen, here’s the Sunday strip. They need it to go to press tomorrow, so if I gave you my key, could you just drop it off tonight when you’re done?

RICHARD
Sure. (THEN, GLANCING AT THE STRIP) Uh-huh.

CAROLINE
Uh-huh? You know, they are called the “Funnies.” It might be nice if you found it somewhat... funny.

RICHARD
I didn’t get it.

CAROLINE
(OFF STRIP) What’s not to get? Caroline says she’s going to work out, then we see her running for the bus and jumping over the puddle and walking up the stairs... And then she gets to the gym and turns around and goes back home...

(MORE)
CAROLINE (CONT’D)

(OFF RICHARD’S BLANK LOOK) See, that was her work-out... just getting to the gym... without going inside...

RICHARD

And...?

CAROLINE

Just make sure her hair’s yellow!

RICHARD ZIPS UP HIS PORTFOLIO AND GETS READY TO EXIT, AS LIBBY ENTERS.

LIBBY

Hi.

RICHARD

Hello.

CAROLINE

Oh, Libby, this is Richard.

Richard, Libby.

LIBBY

(to RICHARD) Oh, you must be the uptight cat hater. (THEN) Nice ass.

RICHARD

And you must be the slutty next door neighbor from the strip.

LIBBY

Yeah, but my breasts are bigger.

RICHARD GLANCES AT HER CHEST:
RICHARD
If you say so.

AND HE EXITS.

LIBBY
Feisty -- I like him.

CAROLINE
I worry about you. (THEN) So, any luck?

LIBBY
I called that Peter guy we met at the party last month. No go.

CAROLINE
He didn't remember me?

LIBBY
No, he remembered you, he just didn't like you.

CAROLINE
That's it -- I'm just not going to show up. Del can think what he wants.

LIBBY
No, no, no, you're not going to bail on this. We'll find you a guy.

CAROLINE
In four hours?
LIBBY
C'mon, Caroline, this is Manhattan, one of the most interesting and diverse cities in the world. You can toss a pear out the window and hit a great guy.

CAROLINE
Yeah, right.

LIBBY
Watch --

LIBBY TAKES A PEAR FROM THE FRUIT BOWL AND HEAVES IT OUT THE WINDOW.

MAN (O.S.)
Hey!

CAROLINE AND LIBBY MOVE TO THE WINDOW.

LIBBY
(OUT WINDOW) Sorry, Father.

CAROLINE
(EMBARRASSED) You are so nuts.

LIBBY
Okay, then, we'll try a banana.

DISSOLVE TO:
SCENE K

INT. CAROLINE'S LOFT - HALF AN HOUR LATER

THE FRUIT BOWL IS ALMOST EMPTY. IT'S CLEAR LIBBY'S THEORY ISN'T WORKING. LIBBY TAKES THE LAST REMAINING PIECE OF FRUIT (AN APPLE) AND AIDS IT OUT THE WINDOW.

CAROLINE

Ooo, try for the guy in the Brooks Brothers suit.

LIBBY

(POINTING O.S.) The bald guy?

CAROLINE

Yes, Libby, I want a three-hundred pound, hairless man. (POINTING)

No, him.

LIBBY TAKES AIM, THROWS, THEN...

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

Yes! Direct hit!

ANGLE - OUT THE WINDOW

WE SEE THE SIDEWALK LITTERED WITH FRUIT. A HANDSOME MAN IN A BROOKS BROTHERS SUIT (JEFF) LOOKS UP TOWARD CAMERA.

JEFF

Was it something I said?

INTERCUT AS NEEDED:

CAROLINE

I'm sorry, my friend and I were throwing fruit out the window in a (MORE)
CAROLINE (CONT'D)

somewhat misguided attempt to meet men.

JEFF

You might have more luck if you throw money.

CAROLINE

Believe me, I have a long and sordid history of throwing money at men.

LIBBY

(TO CAROLINE) Oh, my God -- he actually seems like a normal guy!

JEFF

So, what's your name?

CAROLINE

Juliet.

JEFF

Mine's Jeff.

CAROLINE

(TO JEFF) No, my name's not really Juliet, it's Caroline. Juliet's, you know, from *Romeo and Juliet*, there's the whole balcony scene, get it? Juliet? Good, Caroline, obtuse and not funny. Listen,

(MORE)
CAROLINE (CONT'D)

Jeff, this being New York, there's a good chance you could be a psycho killer or even worse, an actor, but I'm willing to take my chances. Can I buy you dinner tonight?

JEFF

Are you going to throw it at me?

CAROLINE

No, there's this great place on Mulberry Street --

JEFF

Remo's?

CAROLINE

You know it?

LIBBY

You have got to marry this guy! If for no other reason than to tell your grandchildren how you met.

CAROLINE

(TO JEFF) How about eight o'clock?

JEFF

Sounds terrific. (BEAT) Hey, am I on "Candid Camera"?

AS CAROLINE LAUGHS...

DISSOLVE TO:
SCENE I

ESTABLISHING SHOT - REMO'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

INT. REMO'S - NIGHT

AN INTIMATE SMALL RESTAURANT IN LITTLE ITALY. IT'S RAINING OUTSIDE. CAROLINE ENTERS THE RESTAURANT, STRUGGLING TO CLOSE HER UMBRELLA.

CAROLINE

(TO AN EXITING CUSTOMER) If you need an umbrella, don't go to the crook on the corner of Second and Spring.

SHE FINALLY GETS THE UMBRELLA CLOSED, BREAKING IT IN THE PROCESS, AND STARTS LOOKING AROUND. TO HER DISMAY, SHE'S THE FIRST TO ARRIVE. THERE IS A YOUNG MAITRE D' AT THE ENTRANCE.

MAITRE D'

Buona sera, may I help you?

CAROLINE

Yes, I made reservations for two for Brody.

MAITRE D'

Tonight? Brody? I don't seem to have you down.

CAROLINE

I called three hours ago.

REMO, THE OWNER, A SHORT STALKY MAN IN HIS 60'S, COMES OVER.
REMO

(KISSING HER HAND) Caro,
bellissima. Ciao, Carolina.

CAROLINE

Hey, Remo.

THE MAITRE D' SAYS SOMETHING TO REMO IN RAPID ITALIAN.

REMO

No, no. Carolina and Signore Del are the best customers. My favorite couple. (TO CAROLINE) So when I hear you make reservations after Signore Del makes reservations, I know there must be mix-up -- you call not knowing he already called, so I erased your name. Don't worry. I gave you two best table in the house. The best.

CAROLINE

Well, I hope you have two best tables because, uh, Del and I aren't here together. We broke up.

REMO WINCES AS IF HE' D BEEN SHOT.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

But, it's okay. Really.
REMO

I never liked "Signore Del." Big phony bastard. (LEADING HER)
Come, poverina, I get you a nice quiet table out of the way.

CAROLINE

Remo, I don't want out of the way.
I'm fine. Of course, when Del comes in with "Debby," he might want that quiet little table with the wobbly leg by the kitchen door.

ANGLE ON THE FRONT DOOR

DEL COMES IN WITH DEBBY, WHO'S IN HER EARLY TWENTIES AND A KNOCK-OUT.

DEL

-- so I said, "Lose the fish and make him a cat. A cat on the card would sell." And that's how Garfield was born.

DEBBY

(AMUSED) You did not.

DEL

I know, but it makes a great story.

ANGLE ON: CAROLINE, BEING SEATED BY REMO.

REMO

Uh-oh. They're here.

CAROLINE

(WITHOUT LOOKING) How bad is it?
REMO
It's blonde, twenty-two and her
dress is a sausage casing.

CAROLINE
Oh, God.

REMO
This is too painful. I must tell
him to go.

CAROLINE
Remo.

REMO
No, it is a humiliation.

CAROLINE
Remo, I'm not humiliated. If my
date doesn't show up in ten
seconds, that'll be a different
story.

AS DEL AND DEBBY APPROACH CAROLINE'S TABLE, REMO
HEADS HIM OFF.

REMO
(STERNLY) Signore Del.

DEL SMOOTHLY TAKES MONEY FROM HIS POCKET AND SLIDES
IT TO REMO AS HE SHAKES THE WAITER'S HAND.

DEL
Hey, Remo.
REMO

(GUSHING) So good to see you again, and the beautiful signorina.
(KISSES HER HAND) Bellissima.

Come, I reserved for you two the best table. The best.

CAROLINE ROLLS HER EYES.

DEL

Hey, Caroline. Debby, this is Caroline -- my good friend, my buddy, my pal --

CAROLINE

Okay, okay, you make it sound like we were in the war together.

AS CAROLINE AND DEBBY EXCHANGE HELLOS, DEL, ENJOYING HIMSELF, LOOKS AROUND TABLE FOR HER DATE.

DEL

(RE EMPTY CHAIR) And this must be...

CAROLINE

He'll be here! He's just a little late.

DEL

We'll sit and wait with you if you want.

CAROLINE

No, thank you.
DEBBY
You know that dress has a little, tiny hole on the shoulder. You can hardly see it, though.

CAROLINE
Thanks for pointing it out.

DEL
Debby’s in fashion.

CAROLINE
(GRITTING HER TEETH) I’m sure she is.

REMO
(NEVROUSLY) Oh, dear, these knives, they’re dirty. Let me get them off the table...

AS REMO QUICKLY CLEARS ALL THE KNIVES, WE:

DISSOLVE TO:
SCENE M

INT. CAROLINE'S LOFT - NIGHT

THE ROOM IS DARK. THE CAT WALKS ACROSS THE TABLE. THERE'S THE SOUND OF A KEY IN THE DOOR. RICHARD ENTERS CARRYING A PORTFOLIO. SALTY MEOWS.

RICHARD

Right, that'll scare burglars.

HE OPENS HIS PORTFOLIO, TAKES THE COLORED STRIP OUT, AND PUTS IT ON THE DRAFTING TABLE. THE CAT CONTINUES TO STARE AT HIM.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

(RE THE PANELS) Don't even think of going near this.

THE CAT JUMPS ON THE DRAFTING TABLE, SITS ON THE PANELS, AND LOOKS AT HIM.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

Very good. Thank you.

HE QUICKLY GRABS CAROLINE'S PLANT SPRAYER AND SQUIRTS THE CAT. SALTY SQUAWKS AND RUNS OFF. RICHARD CHUCKLES VICTORIOUSLY UNTIL HE NOTICES HE JUST GOT THE PANELS WET.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

Geez, now look what you made me do.

THE PHONE RINGS, AS HE BLOTS UP THE WATER. THE MACHINE CLICKS ON.

CAROLINE'S VOICE ON MACHINE

It's Caroline. You know the drill.

JEFF'S VOICE ON MACHINE

Caroline? This is Jeff Gault, from the street.

(MORE)
JEFF’S VOICE ON MACHINE (CONT’D)

(WHISPERED) Listen, something came up and I can’t meet you. I tried reaching you at Remo’s but --

THE SOUND OF ANOTHER EXTENSION BEING PICKED UP.

WOMAN’S VOICE ON MACHINE

Jeffrey, who are you on the phone with?

JEFF’S VOICE

I’m calling "time."

WOMAN’S VOICE

It better not be one of your tramps!

JEFF’S VOICE

Susan, just hang up! (WHISPERING) Gotta go -- call you.

DIAL TONE. THE PHONE MACHINE CLICKS OFF. RICHARD, AMUSED, LOOKS AT THE PHONE MACHINE, THEN AT SALTY.

RICHARD

You think she’d mind if I played that back just one more time?

CUT TO:
SCENE P

ANIMATION:

WE SEE A CARTOON DEL STANDING AT A TABLE WITH AN INFANT GIRL WHO’S PLAYING WITH A RATTLE. A MAITRE D’ IS SEATING THEM.

CARTOON MAITRE D’

And will you need a booster seat for the young lady?

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. REMO’S - LATER THAT NIGHT

DEL AND DEBBY ARE AT THEIR TABLE, MID-MEAL, GIVING EACH OTHER CUTE LITTLE KISSES AND TALKING INTIMATELY AS THE VIOLINISTS PLAY FOR THEM.

CAROLINE IS AT HER TABLE, DRINKING WINE, TRYING TO BALANCE A SALT SHAKER ON ITS EDGE. REMO APPROACHES.

REMO

Another glass of wine?

CAROLINE

Why the hell not.

REMO

(CHEERFULLY) Maybe he’s been in an accident.

CAROLINE

With any luck.

ANGLE ON CAROLINE’S TABLE: THE VIOLINISTS COME OVER TO PLAY.

CAROLINE (CONT’D)

(SHARPLY) Keep walkin’. Keep walkin’.
THE VIOLINISTS MOVE ON TO ANOTHER TABLE.

ANGLE ON FRONT DOOR: RICHARD ENTERS AND SEEHS HER.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

Richard, what are you doing here?

RICHARD

I tried calling, but there's no reservation under your name. Your date's not coming.

CAROLINE

What? What are you talking about?

RICHARD

I was at your place when he called.

CAROLINE

Oh, perfect, just perfect. What lame excuse did he use?

RICHARD

I'm sure it was going to be good, but his wife interrupted.

CAROLINE NODS WITH RESIGNATION.

CAROLINE

His, wife, perfect... Geez, what am I, some pathetic, dysfunctional man magnet?

RICHARD

I'm supposed to say no, right?

CAROLINE'S EYES WELL-UP.
RICHARD (CONT'D)

You're not going to cry, are you?
I don't deal too well with crying.

CAROLINE

Oh, Richard, you don't deal too
well with Daylight Savings Time!

DEL HAS COME OVER AND LOOKS AT RICHARD CURIOUSLY
AND THEN AT CAROLINE.

DEL

(GIVING HIM THE ONCE-OVER) So, uh,
hi. How are you? Del Kimbel.

RICHARD NODS STIFFLY.

CAROLINE

(RESIGNED) Del, this is Richard --

RICHARD

(SHAKING DEL'S HAND) -- Lobel.

Caroline's guy.

HE BENDS OVER AND KISSES HER PASSIONATELY.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

Sorry I'm late, babe, but I was in
surgery all day. That transplant
took a lot longer than I thought.
So, what's good? After this after-
noon, anything but liver. Dan --

DEL

Del.

RICHARD

Whatever. Join us.
DEL
I’ve got to get back to my table.

RICHARD
(GLANCING OVER AT DEL’S TABLE)
Yeah, looks like your date’s getting cold. (TO CAROLINE) That color looks so great on you. Is it flaxen or is it yellow?

DEL
(TO CAROLINE; AWKWARDLY) Well, I’ll see you around.

CAROLINE
(CALLING AFTER HIM) Talk to you later, pal.

DEL THROWS HER A LITTLE LOOK AND CROSSES AWAY.

CAROLINE (CONT’D)
(LAUGHING) Transplant?

RICHARD
I didn’t want him to think you were dating some starving artist.

CAROLINE
(AMAZED; TOUCHED) You are so...

. RICHARD
Don’t thank me. I’m still on the clock.

CUT TO:
SCENE 5

INT. CAROLINE’S BUILDING/THE HALLWAY - NIGHT

ROMANTIC JAZZ FROM SOMEONE’S STEREO, AS CAROLINE AND RICHARD STEP OFF THE ELEVATOR. RICHARD IS A LITTLE TIPSY AND -- FOR HIM -- EXPANSIVE.

RICHARD

I thought I had it all figured out
-- I’d live in Paris and paint and wait for an art critic to come by.

CAROLINE

So why’d you leave?

RICHARD

An art critic came by.

CAROLINE CHUCKLES.

RICHARD (CONT’D)

And then Julia went back home.

CAROLINE

Your girlfriend?

RICHARD

Not girlfriend. She was a woman.
An older woman, actually. Twenty-eight.

CAROLINE

(WRYLY) Twenty-eight, huh? Hope she got that senior citizens’ discount on the flight back.
RICHARD REACHES OUT TO SHAKE HER HAND GOOD NIGHT.

RICHARD

Well...

SHE HUGS HIM. LIBBY OPENS HER DOOR ACROSS THE HALL AND POPS HER HEAD OUT.

LIBBY

I thought I heard you two out --
(SEES RICHARD, NOT JEFF; FLUSTERED)
Ah -- You and... Never mind.

SHE CLOSES THE DOOR.

CAROLINE

Well, Richard, thanks for being there for me tonight.

RICHARD

(AWKWARD; GETTING FORMAL AGAIN)
Yeah, well, thanks for telling me what sweetbreads were before I ordered them.

JUST THEN THE ELEVATOR OPENS AND DEL STEPS OUT.

DEL

(AWKWARDLY) Oh, sorry. I didn't mean to interrupt.

CAROLINE AND RICHARD ARE SURPRISED TO SEE HIM.

RICHARD

Is this a stop on some kind of tour?
DEL

I called, you weren't in, but I
wanted to drop off your key -- just
slide it under the door -- (TO
RICHARD, POINTEDLY) I have a copy
of her key -- but I can come back
and give it to you later.

RICHARD GLANCES QUICKLY BETWEEN THE TWO, SEEING
THERE'S STILL SOMETHING THERE.

RICHARD

No, no, I'm on my way. Early
surgery tomorrow. (TO CAROLINE)
I'll drop by first, to make you
breakfast.

SHE MOVES TO KISS HIM. RICHARD STOPS HER.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

No, I want to remember you just the
way you are. (CLOSES HIS EYES)
I don't want to look at anything
'til I see your face tomorrow.

SHORT BEAT. HE DOESN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO NEXT. DEL
AND CAROLINE WATCH HIM AS HE FUMBLES HIS WAY
TOWARDS THE ELEVATOR AND LEAVES.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

I am in the elevator, aren't I?

CAROLINE

Yep.

HE PUSHES SOME BUTTONS, AND THE DOORS CLOSE.
DEL

(FINALLY) So, have you known him long?

CAROLINE

A couple of days.

DEL

A little young for you, don't you think?

CAROLINE

Hey, I have pantyhose older than Debby!

DEL

Okay, okay, here's your key.

CAROLINE

Thank you.

DEL

(LOOKS AT HER A BEAT) I feel stupid, all right? Stupid coming by, stupid being jealous, stupid waiting here for the elevator when your moron date could be in there searching for the buttons all night.

CAROLINE

He's not my date, Del. He's my new assistant, and I'll probably have to pay him overtime for tonight.
DEL

Oh. (SHORT BEAT) He sure threw himself into his work.

CAROLINE

Yeah, well, thanks for the key. And for acting jealous.

DEL

Acting? Aren’t you wondering why I dropped Debby off early?

CAROLINE

She had homework?

DEL

Ha, ha. Because I hated the idea of you seeing someone else.

CAROLINE

I didn’t mind you seeing someone else, it was the touching that got me --

THE ELEVATOR DOOR OPENS AND MARK COMES OUT.

MARK

Oh, man. Del. (HAPPLY, TO BOTH OF THEM) I knew you two’d get back together. It was inevitable.

CAROLINE

(DRILY) We’re not back together.
MARK

(GLUMLY; WITHOUT MISSING A BEAT) I knew it.

CAROLINE AND DEL WATCH, TRYING NOT TO CHUCKLE, AS MARK EXITS INTO LIBBY’S APARTMENT.

DEL

Can we go inside?

CAROLINE NODS AND OPENS THE DOOR TO HER APARTMENT.

CUT TO:
INT. CAROLINE'S LOFT - CONTINUOUS

CAROLINE AND DEL ENTER. HE SEES THE CAT.

DEL

Hey, Salty, I missed you.

ANGLE ON THE CAT, WHO MAKES NO MOVE TO GET UP.

CAROLINE

I think she missed you, too.

DEL

Look, Caroline, you know I'm terrible with sentiments.

CAROLINE

You own a greeting card company.

DEL

Own! I don't write the damn things! But if it bothers you seeing me with someone else, and it bothers me seeing you with someone else, (SIGHS, TAKING THE LEAP) maybe we shouldn't go to the same restaurants anymore.

CAROLINE

You came all the way over here to tell me that?

DEL

Okay. Let's move in together.
CAROLINE
You're crazy.

DEL
Okay, that was rash, but let's face it, Car, there's a spark between us -- you know it and I know it -- and sparks of something are rare.

CAROLINE
(KNOWING IT'S TRUE) I know, but I want sparks to be just the beginning... I deserve more.

SHE OPENS THE DOOR FOR HIM.

DEL
Just promise me, when you put this in your comic strip -- and you will -- be kind.

THEY LOOK AT EACH OTHER. THEY KISS -- A LITTLE MORE TENDERLY THAN EITHER ONE EXPECTED. DEL'S EYES CLOSE, AND CAROLINE UNCONSCIOUSLY CLOSES HER EYES, TOO. DEL OPENS HIS EYES FIRST.

DEL (CONT'D)
(VICTORIOUS) You closed your eyes.

CAROLINE
(OPENS HER EYES QUICKLY) Did not.

DEL
Yes, you did.

CAROLINE
I dozed off.
DEL

(SMILING SLYLY) Sure, Caroline.

AS CAROLINE CLOSES THE DOOR BEHIND HIM, WE HEAR FROM OUTSIDE THE DOOR:

DEL (O.S.)

(PLAYFULLY OMINOUS) She's still mine.

CAROLINE ROLLS HER EYES, THEN LOOKS AT SALTY.

CAROLINE

You're so lucky you're fixed.

SMASH CUT TO:

ANIMATION:

A DARK NEW YORK CITY STREET. A CARTOON BUSINESSMAN WALKS DOWN THE STREET, PASSING BY A CARTOON HOOKER POSING UNDER A STREETLAMP.

CARTOON HOOKER #1

Hey, baby, you want a date?

THE BUSINESSMAN CONTINUES ON, PASSING ANOTHER HOOKER UNDER A STREETLAMP.

CARTOON HOOKER #2

Hot stuff, let's have a date! Come on, you want a date?

THE BUSINESSMAN CONTINUES ON, AND WE SEE CARTOON CAROLINE STANDING UNDER THE THIRD STREETLAMP.

CARTOON CAROLINE

Hey, you want a relationship?

Let's have a relationship.

THE BUSINESSMAN SCREAMS AND RUNS AWAY.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END