

ALLESSANDRO'S NIGHTS

By

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LOCATION:

TIME:

SIN: Pride

CAST:

MARTY: female

JOANIE: female

DANNY: male

ALLESSANDRO: male

HENRY: male

(MARTY enters carrying a large stack of books)

MARTY

(to herself) Way to go Joanie. . .Come in late on the one day I need you to be here on time. (MARTY struggles with the books)

JOANIE

(enters quickly. JOANIE is very excited) Marty, you'll never guess-

MARTY

You're late, Joanie.

JOANIE

I know. I'm sorry. But listen-

MARTY

I told you that you had to be here on time today. I told you had to be here to set up for the Alessandro reading.

JOANIE

I know but-

MARTY

I told you. Don't be late, Friday. I need you Friday. Alessandro arrives Friday. You know how much of a pain he is?

JOANIE

I know, but-

MARTY

Did you see his list of "requirements?" There's like a million things on it. And for what? (MARTY looks at one of the books) "Alessandro's Nights, a personal essay of one man's recollections of romance on the road," how does that become a best seller? Give me a break.

JOANIE

I know, he's no Kronsky. But listen-

MARTY

Damn right, he's no Kronsky. He shouldn't even be mentioned in the same breath as Kronsky. . .And who asks for all this crap? "Alessandro requires that a single pink rose be prominently visible twelve inches from the doorway, and that a mostly pristine pear be centered on the display table." What the hell is that? It's just a book reading you know.

JOANIE

The guy's a tool. But listen-

MARTY

I don't even know where I'd find a "mostly pristine pear and-"

JOANIE

Marty!

MARTY

What?

JOANIE

Danny popped the question.

MARTY

What?

JOANIE

Danny popped the question.

MARTY

(MARTY drops all the books, and begins to jump up and down with JOANIE) Oh my God. . .Oh my God! Oh my God!

JOANIE

I know, right. Look (JOANIE shows an engagement ring). A ring and everything.

MARTY

Oh Joanie. I'm so happy for you.

JOANIE

I'm so happy for me too. . .We were just sitting there at lunch, and he kept looking at me funny, and I said "Danny, what's wrong? You look like you just ate a rotten banana." And he said, "nothing." And I said, "not nothing, what?" And he said, "nothing." And I said, "not nothing, what?" And he said, "nothing." And I said, "not nothing-

MARTY

I get it. Then what happened.

JOANIE

Well, that went on for a while, and then he said, "look in the cream soda." And I said, "I don't want to look in the cream soda." And he said, "look in the cream soda." And I said, "I don't want to look in the cream soda." And he said, "look in the cream soda." And I said, "I don't want to look in the cream soda-

MARTY

OK. OK. What happened when you looked in the cream soda.

JOANIE

Nothing. But when I looked up. There he was, on one knee, with a ring in one hand and his pastrami sandwich in the other, and he said, "would you do me the great service of being my wife?". I said "yes" so fast, he barely got out

the word "wife." Made him choke on his pastrami.

MARTY

That's so beautiful.

DANNY

(enters) Where is she? Where is my buttercup? (DANNY hugs JOANIE)

JOANIE

Hello, husband to be.

DANNY

Did you tell her?

MARTY

Yes, of course, she told me. I'm so happy for you.

DANNY

That's some ring, huh?

MARTY

It's beautiful Danny. You did a good job. . .(looks at books on ground) I better pick these up. His majesty will be here soon.

JOANIE

Let me help you.

MARTY

No. No. You guys-

JOANIE

But Alessandro is coming.

MARTY

I know, but how often do you get engaged? I bet you didn't even finish your lunch.

DANNY

I got the sandwiches in the truck.

MARTY

Go. Go to the truck. Eat your lunch.
I'll take care of Mr. Tour Rider.

JOANIE

Thanks Marty.

DANNY

I won't keep her long. (DANNY and
JOANIE exit)

MARTY

(MARTY kneels and begins to pick up
books) Take your time. I'll deal with
The Sultan of Smarm. . .(looking at
books) How in the world could anyone
take this crap seriously? (using a
cutesy voice) "Oh, Alessandro please,
please tell me of your romantic
exploits." Gag me.

HENRY

(enters and startles MARTY) Excuse me.

MARTY

Oh, ah, I didn't see you there.

HENRY

I thought not. . .I am Henry, head
assistant to Alessandro.

MARTY

(MARTY stands) Oh, hi. I'm Marty. The
assistant manager here at the Book Nook.

HENRY

You are the assistant manager of the
"Book Nook" are you? Well, very well,
very well. I see that you have a lot
of work to do before Alessandro will

set foot in this, ah, nook. . .It's good thing I arrived when I did.

MARTY

OK. Well, I thought we could set up the signing table here (MARTY points to display table) and he could do the reading right here as well.

HENRY

No, no, no. This will never do. This does not meet Alessandro's requirements at all.

MARTY

Well, we're just a little store, so-

HENRY

Yes, you are a nook, I see. It's amazing to me how some people just think because they have books for sale that they are worthy of accepting the presence of a man like Alessandro. . . I find it difficult to be in this establishment myself.

MARTY

Hey, listen buddy-

HENRY

No, no, no. You don't "listen buddy" with me. You refer to me as Henry, or Mr. Henry, if you wish. But not "buddy." I am not your "buddy." In fact, I am of a mind to call Alessandro and tell him that we are going to skip this nook, and catch an earlier flight out. Do you really think Allessandro would agree to enter a place like this? Do you know how many cities we are seeing on this tour? Many. Many, many. And most of them have the decency to at least attempt to meet the standards that Alessandro requires.

MARTY

"Attempt to meet the standards?" I'll have you know that this "nook" has received more awards for excellence than you could even imagine, and we are trying to meet all of these ridiculous "requirements."

HENRY

Well, you'll need to try harder. I do not see the requisite rose nor the mostly pristine pear. Where is the border for the exactly twelve foot walkway to provide Alessandro access to the men's room? And what about the turtle hand soap?

MARTY

I was going to ask about that. What is turtle hand soap?

HENRY

You must be joking. You do not know of the turtle soap. The soap of kings.

MARTY

So it's not soap for turtles?

HENRY

No. How could you think such a thing? Do turtles have hands for which they would require soap?

MARTY

I really had no idea.

HENRY

No. No. No. This will no do. Turtle soap. Made from the soft mid-section of the African Golerma Turtle. And no rose, pear or bathroom walkway. I'm sorry. There is just too much to do here and too little time. You must excuse me.

MARTY

No. You are not leaving. We've got a ton of people coming in for this, for God knows what reason, and we aren't cancelling. . .Anyway, you know what they say, "even the most littlest of nooks -

MARTY and HENRY

(HENRY recites the rest of the saying with MARTY and they lock eyes) "can sometimes be a place of great rejoicing for those with a thirst for meaning and truth."

HENRY

You know Kronsky?

MARTY

I adore Kronsky.

HENRY

His work inspires me everyday. You know, I am working on a graphic novel right now, adapting Kronsky for the modern reader.

MARTY

Really, a graphic novel about Kronsky?

HENRY

For the modern reader.

MARTY

Oh, I'd love to see your book.

HENRY

Well, it is in the works. Alessandro has promised me that he would back me for the project just as soon as we are done with this tour.

MARTY

Well isn't that something. You know, I have something that you'd might like to see. One sec. (MARTY exits and comes back with a shoe box full of envelopes). Take a look. (MARTY hands HENRY the box).

HENRY

Is this?

MARTY

Yes.

HENRY

The Kronsky letters?

MARTY

The complete set. It took me forever to get them all.

HENRY

I never thought I'd actually see them in person. What a porthole into his oeuvre.

MARTY

Yes. I think that is almost impossible to understand his oeuvre without these letters.

HENRY

His oeuvre is daunting.

MARTY

No question. A daunting but beautiful oeuvre.

HENRY

Probably the most personal and universal oeuvre in the last century.

MARTY

Yes, it's quite an oeuvre.

HENRY

Well, any nook run by a person with such an appreciation for Kronskey deserves as second chance.

MARTY

I really can't believe you know Kronskey.

HENRY

He stirs something in me.

MARTY

Me too. (HENRY and MARTY look longingly at each other). Wow, do you feel that?

HENRY

I do. (HENRY and MARTY kiss passionately).

MARTY

Jesus.

HENRY

Kronskey . . . So, where is your restroom? I will wash up and then help you get this nook ready for Alessandro.

MARTY

Oh, it's just in the back. You'll need a key, here. (Hands Henry a key)

HENRY

Many thanks.(HENRY exits)

JOANINE

(enter quickly) Oh my God, Marty!

MARTY

Joanie? What's wrong?

JOANINE

Danny swallowed the ring.

MARTY

What?

JOANIE

He swallowed the ring. We were eating the pastrami and I got some mustard on my finger, and he said, "I'll get that." And I said, "stay away from my finger." And he said, "No, I'll get that." And I said, "stay away from my finger." And he said, "No, I'll get that." And I said, "stay away from my finger." And when he tried to lick my finger, he got the ring with the mustard.

DANNY

(enters) This doesn't feel so good.

MARTY

You should get to a doctor.

DANNY

I don't think I should drive.

JOANIE

And I'm not good with a stick.

MARTY

OK, OK, I'll take you.

HENRY

(enters) OK, so the first thing that we need to do is-

MARTY

Henry, I have to go out.

HENRY

But what about the Alessandro preparations, and Kronskey?

MARTY

It's a long story, but this is Danny
(DANNY waives at HENRY) and he just
swallowed Joanie, this is Joanie-

JOANIE

Hi.

MARTY

Joanie's engagement ring.

DANNY

I got a little carried away with the
mustard.

HENRY

Of course you did.

MARTY

It's a long story. And since Joanie
can't drive a stick, I have to drive
them to the doctor.

HENRY

Of course you do.

MARTY

Do you understand?

HENRY

Yes, this person (HENRY gestures to
DANNY) swallowed this person's (HENRY
gestures to JOANIE) ring, because
something about the mustard, and since
the stick isn't driving, you need to
take them to the doctor.

MARTY

Pretty much. But I'll be right back.
Why don't you look at the letters while
I'm gone.

HENRY

Sounds like a plan, but please hurry back, it's no fun to Kronsky alone.

MARTY

Oh. You.

DANNY

Could we get going?

JOANIE

Yeah, I'm starting to freak out a little here.

MARTY

Sure. (to HENRY) Won't be long. (MARTY, DANNY and JOANIE exit)

(short pause)

ALLESSANDRO

(enters grandly) Alessandro has arrived!

HENRY

Alessandro?

ALLESSANDRO

(ALLESSANDRO looks around disapprovingly) Henry, what on earth is going on?

HENRY

Alessandro, let me explain.

ALLESSANDRO

Henry! I see no pink rose. There is no pristine pear. And where is my walkway? I can't imagine that they have obtained the Golerma Turtle soap. This will not do. Not do at all! Alessandro will definitely not be reading in this "establishment."

HENRY

Allessandro, it is going to be fine.
They are just out now getting, ah, the
pear and the turtle soap.

ALLESSANDRO

No. No. Allessandro will not be reading
here. Come on Henry, we are going to
the airport.

HENRY

Allessandro, just give them a chance.

ALLESSANDRO

No. Allessandro has made his decision.
We are leaving. And you will now open
the door for me.

HENRY

Allessandro, you don't understand.
(HENRY shows ALLESSANDRO the box with
the Kronskey letters) Look.

ALLESSANDRO

What is that?

HENRY

These are the Kronskey letters, which are
owned by the most lovely and
interesting woman that I have ever met.

ALLESSANDRO

Kronskey? Allessandro does not
understand your fascination with that
man.

HENRY

He's not for everyone. . . But I can't
leave. We'll get the place in shape.
I promise.

ALLESSANDRO

Henry, listen to me very clearly.
Allessandro has made a decision. We
are leaving, now. To the airport.

Take that box with you. Alessandro has decided that you should do that. I'm sure that the lovely and interesting person who owns them will understand that Alessandro needed to "borrow" that "box".

HENRY

I really can't take the letters.

ALLESSANDRO

You can and you will. Alessandro has decreed. Now, take the box, go out that door, or you can just stay here and be dead to Alessandro. The nook will understand.

HENRY

Very well. (HENRY exits with ALLESSANDRO and the box).

(short pause)

JOANIE

(enters with DANNY) Now, you heard what the doctor said. That medicine is going to work fast, so keep that strainer with you.

DANNY

(holding a strainer) I heard. I heard. Don't go anywhere without the strainer.

MARTY

(enters) OK. Here we go. Let's get this place in order. And Danny, keep that strainer handy.

DANNY

I know. I know. Use the strainer. The medicine is going to make me go, and I need to use the strainer to catch the ring, and then-

JOANIE

And then we return it and get another one.

DANNY

What?

MARTY

Where's Henry?

JOANIE

Who?

MARTY

The guy. I'm gonna check out back.
(MARTY exits)

DANNY

What did you mean return it and get a new one?

JOANIE

I'm not going to wear a ring that has, you know.

DANNY

But I picked that ring out for you special.

JOANIE

Yeah, but-

DANNY

It's part of me.

JOANIE

It's the wrong part.

DANNY

Come on. That ring is special. We wash it off, and it's perfect.

JOANIE

I'm not wearing a ring that came out of
your ass.

DANNY

I thought you loved me.

JOANIE

I'm not wearing a ring that came out of
your ass.

DANNY

I thought you loved me.

JOANIE

I'm not wearing a ring that came out of
your ass.

DANNY

I thought you-

JOANIE

Danny, I love you, and if you love me,
you'll understand that we are getting a
new ring.

DANNY

I'll be in the truck. (DANNY exits)

MARTY

(enters) He's gone. Henry's gone.

JOANIE

Some guys-

MARTY

No. He was special. He loved Kronsky.
I even showed him the letters. . .The
letters. . .Where are the letters?
(MARTY looks around bookstore in a
panic) I can't believe that he took
the letters!

DANNY

(enters quickly) Bathroom key
please. (DANNY take key from MARTY)
Right back. (DANNY exits)

MARTY

I can't believe it. He seemed so
perfect. He loved Kronsky. He was
writing a graphic novel.

JOANIE

Marty, I'm so sorry.

MARTY

I'm such a fool.

DANNY

(enters) No dice.

JOANIE

No dice? How about a ring?

DANNY

Nope, false alarm.

JOANIE

You sure?

DANNY

Then you'll have to trust me. The ring
has not yet emerged.

MARTY

I can't believe Henry stole my letters!

HENRY

(enters with the box of letter) Marty,
oh Marty, I'm so sorry.

DANNY

Oh boy. . .be right back. (DANNY exits)

HENRY

I'm so sorry. Alessandro made me leave
and made me take these. But I couldn't
I just couldn't.

MARTY

What do you mean, Alessandro "made you?"

HENRY

He came in not long after you left.
Looked around and decided that he would
not be reading here, and then ordered
me to take the box and leave with him.

MARTY

And you just did it?

HENRY

Yes. You don't understand the power of
Alessandro.

MARTY

I understand that he is a dick.

HENRY

That may be, but when Alessandro says
to take the box and leave, you take the
box and leave. But I couldn't take the
letters from you. So here I am.

MARTY

Thanks for bringing them back. . . I
guess you can leave now.

HENRY

Marty?

MARTY

You can leave now. Do you think I'm
going to share my Kronsky with someone
who is just going to run off behind my
back? No. You can leave.

HENRY

Marty, please.

MARTY

Leave!

HENRY

Very well. I'll be at the airport, if you change your mind (HENRY exits)

DANNY

(enters)So you were right, we are definitely returning this ring.

JOANIE

Can you let me see it?

DANNY

You don't want to see it.

JOANIE

Let me see it.

DANNY

You don't want to see it.

JOANIE

Let me see it.

DANNY

You don't want to see it.

MARTY

Believe him, Joanie. You don't want to see it.

DANNY

Where's the guy?

MARTY

I told him to leave.

DANNY

Good for you.

JOANIE

Are you sure?

MARTY

I think I'm sure. How can trust a guy who steals my Kronsky?

DANNY

You've got to be careful with your Kronsky.

JOANIE

True. But he did bring them back.

MARTY

He did. . .Do you think that I made a mistake?

DANNY

I was in the bathroom for most of it, so I don't know.

JOANIE

I'm sure you did what you thought was right.

MARTY

Yeah, but he loved Kronsky. I've never met anyone who loved Kronsky. And that feeling when I looked at him. . .Oh, Joanie, I've made a horrible mistake. I have to go catch him at the airport.(MARTY exits)

JOANIE

Go to him, Marty.

DANNY

Yes, run. Run like the wind.

JOANIE

Why don't you give her a ride?

DANNY

Good idea. . .(DANNY exits) Marty, wait up!

(JOANIE picks up books from floor)

HENRY

(enters) I know Marty told me to leave, but I will be quick. The flight was delayed and Alessandro has decided that we are going out by train. So if Marty wants to see me, I'll be at the train station. (HENRY exits)

JOANIE

(calling after HENRY) She just went to catch you at the airport!

(short pause)

MARTY

(enters with DANNY) The flight was delayed but they were no where to be found.

JOANIE

Henry was just here. They are going out by train now. He's at the train station.

MARTY

Come on Danny, to the train station. (MARTY and DANNY exit).

HENRY

(enters) Did you say something about Marty going to catch me at the airport?

JOANIE

Yes, but-

HENRY

No time. I am off to the airport (HENRY exits)

JOANIE

(calling after HENRY) But she came back and I sent her to the train station!

(short pause)

MARTY

(enters with DANNY) They weren't at the train station.

JOANIE

Henry was just here. He's going to try to catch you at the airport.

MARTY

The airport? Why didn't you tell him that I was at the train station.

JOANIE

He ran off before I could.

MARTY

OK. Danny, back to the airport.

DANNY

Right-o. (MARTY and DANNY exit)

HENRY

(enters) Did you say that she was going to the train station?

JOANIE

Yes, but, don't run off, she came back and I told her that you were at the airport.

HENRY

But I'm not at the airport.

MARTY

(enters with DANNY) He wasn't at the airport.

HENRY

I know. I'm here.

MARTY

Oh, Henry.

HENRY

Oh, Marty.

MARTY and HENRY

Listen. . . I know we've just met, but you have stirred a feeling in me that I never thought possible. . . And the thought of not being with you on a more permanent basis brings such sorrow. . . Such, such, sorrow. . . Will you take me back?. . .Will you?. . . What would Kronsky say?

MARTY

He'd say, "of course you will be together-

MARTY

"because that is just what should be."
(MARTY and HENRY embrace)

DANNY and JOANIE

That's so beautiful. (DANNY and JOANIE embrace)

DANNY

We should go exchange that ring.

JOANIE

That's a good idea. Give these guys some privacy. (DANNY and JOANIE exit)

ALLESSANDRO

(enters) Allessandro has changed plans!
The train is just as bad as the plane.
We aren't getting out until tomorrow.

HENRY

Allessandro, I'm not leaving with you
tomorrow. I am staying here with Marty.

ALLESSANDRO

Henry, Allessandro has decided that you
will leave this place and return with
Allessandro to the Plaza.

HENRY

No.

ALLESSANDRO

No? You are saying "no" to Allessandro?

HENRY

Yes, yes I am. I am saying "no."

ALLESSANDRO

This is very unusual for Allessandro. No
one has ever said "no" like that to
Allessandro.

MARTY

No. He is staying. In fact, not only
is he staying, but you are doing your
reading here tonight.

ALLESSANDRO

Who is this person?

HENRY

This is Marty. My partner in Kronsky.

MARTY

You are doing the reading, with no rose,
no mostly pristine pear, no walkway, and
definitely no Galapagos Turtle soap.

ALLESSANDRO

It's Golerma Turtle soap.

MARTY

Whatever.

ALLESSANDRO

I don't know what is happening to
Alessandro but I feel a power over me
that is compelling me to do as you say.

HENRY

That's the power of love.

MARTY

And Kronsky.

ALLESSANDRO

Love and Kronsky. Who knew?

HENRY

"As the tide turns and our love grows,
no force-

HENRY and MARTY

"shall separate the ideal from the
churning story of our most bitter
heart. . . Love, that most turgid
endeavour, is not just feeling, not
just emotion, but electric and
unyielding, and that which we must
seek. . . without looking."

ALLESSANDRO

Uh huh?

JOANIE

(enters) Marty, oh my God! Danny just
dropped the replacement ring down the
sewer.

DANNY

(enters) I told you to stand still.

JOANIE

I said, I wasn't ready.

DANNY

I told you to stand still.

JOANIE

I said, I wasn't ready.

DANNY

But I told you to stand still. . . Come on. (DANNY exits)

JOANIE

I said, I wasn't I ready. (JOANIE exits)

MARTY

Come on, let's go help them fish it out.

HENRY

Kronsky would want that. (MARTY, ALLESSANDRO and HENRY exit)

JOANIE

(O.S.) Can you see it down there?

DANNY

(O.S.) I got it! . . .Wait, my hand's caught.

HENRY

(enters with MARTY) We're gonna need a bolt cutter.

MARTY

In a minute. (grabs and kisses HENRY)

DANNY

(O.S.) Got my hand out!

JOANIE

(O.S.) Danny, that's the wrong ring!

End