

YOU CAN'T FORCE LOVE

Written by

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LOGLINE:

In search of love, a determined man receives help from
a female friend.

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FADE IN:

INT. MACY'S DEPARTMENT STORE - DAY

Standing by the entrance, STEWART GREEN (30), handsome, perfectly manicured and impeccably dressed, scrolls through his phone, glancing up every time someone enters.

HANNAH (O.C.)

These are your Saturday clothes?

Stewart turns to see, HANNAH LANG (28). Brown hair, blue eyes, tattoos. Fashion style is grunge/skater/Madonna.

Obviously smitten, his stare lingers as he soaks her in, but then catches himself and shakes it off.

STEWART

Where did you...??

HANNAH

I went in through the mall. Caffeine.

She holds up a Starbucks cup.

HANNAH

Would have got you one but you don't drink coffee, which is almost as crazy as you not owning jeans.

STEWART

I drink tea and own every color Docker.

They begin to walk.

STEWART

Thanks for agreeing to help my fashion dilemma.

HANNAH

You need some help. You're like a real time Abercrombie and Fitch ad.

As they walk by a display of Coach purses, Hannah scoffs.

HANNAH

Now that's something I never understood. Those hideous bags cost hundreds of dollars. They're so...bland. Like, why?

STEWART

They are pretty ugly. It's a status thing, I guess. -- I like your bag.

He points to Hanna's tattered, multi-colored Boho bag.

STEWART
It's interesting. She has character.

HANNAH
Thrift store score.

They round a corner and head to the men's department.

STEWART
Thrift store clothes scare me. What if someone did something disgusting in those clothes?

HANNAH
Disgusting like what? Club a baby seal? Watch Real Housewives of where fucking ever? Beat out some wiener juice?

Stewart laughs as they enter the men's department. Hannah immediately starts rifling through a rack of t-shirts.

STEWART
No, like...break wind...or worse.

She stops, and with an amused smile looks at Stewart.

HANNAH
Break wind? Okay, Grandpa. -- Have you ever purchased a used car?

STEWART
Yeah. The car I drive now is used.

HANNAH
Okay. So how many times do you think the person who used to own that car, farted while driving? How many farts are stored in that seat?

STEWART
Oh my God! Well, obviously I have to sell my car now!

They both laugh. Hannah continues to rifle through the rack, pulls out a black, distressed style t-shirt with a classic Camaro on it.

She holds it in front of his chest. He looks down at it.

STEWART
I have a Celica.

HANNAH

I know. I was in it, remember?

A sly smile crosses his lips, they exchange a knowing glance.

HANNAH

You don't have to own one, it's a classic. Do you like Camaros?

STEWART

Of course. Who doesn't? But not enough to be a walking advertisement for them.

Hannah rolls her eyes, puts the shirt back. Stewart follows as she wanders to another rack, sifts through more shirts.

HANNAH

So this girl...what's she like?

STEWART

Kinda plain looking, but cute I guess. And nice. A nurse.

HANNAH

Admirable. Where are you taking her?

Awkward, Stewart nervously starts sifting through the rack also, not really looking at anything but Hannah.

STEWART

I was thinking sushi.

HANNAH

Hmm. Get her liquored up on Sake? Sounds familiar.

STEWART

First, it was *you* who ordered the Sake and got *me* all liquored up. Second, she doesn't drink.

Flushed, Hannah doesn't look up from the rack as she giggles.

HANNAH

Well, a nurse and Pharma rep sounds like a much better match than you with a Barista. You don't even like coffee.

STEWART

That was your call, Hannah. You're the one who said I was too stiff, not spontaneous. Said I wasn't the one for you and we're better off as friends.

Ignoring his annoyance, she pulls a shirt from the rack and shows him. It's got a big NASA logo on the front.

STEWART

What is that supposed to symbolize?
That I support NASA? I dig rockets? And
do any of the proceeds from these NASA
shirts actually go to NASA?

HANNAH

It's just a shirt, Stewart. You make
things too literal. Can't it just be
for fun? That's what I meant by stiff.

STEWART

Shouldn't I at least wear a shirt that
represents something I'm interested in?

HANNAH

Like what? Scrabble? Disc golf? The
civil war? Chocolate milk? Murder She
Wrote?

STEWART

Wow. That's a pretty accurate list of
my favorite things. And hey, you like
that show now.

HANNAH

Yeah well, Angela Lansbury reminds me
of my Grandma; but that's neither here
nor there. Since none of your interests
are represented on t-shirts, which
would you rather ride in...a Camaro or
rocket?

STEWART

Camaro.

Hannah trots back, grabs the Camaro t-shirt, then walks over to a wall of jeans. Stewart joins her.

HANNAH

What size are you?

She turns and sizes him up, kind of slow but not on purpose. She just gets lost in the moment. Their eyes meet, she softens. He stares back at her.

STEWART

Thirty two, thirty four.

HANNAH

(dazed)
What?

STEWART

Waist thirty two, length thirty four.

She snaps out of it. Avoiding Stewart's knowing grin, she hands him the shirt and reaches for a pair of jeans in a 32/34 slot. She holds them up. They have many frayed holes.

STEWART

No.

HANNAH

Why not? You said you wanted to be more stylish. These are in style.

STEWART

A style that says I spend lots of money on clothes that look like they were purchased at a thrift store?

HANNAH

No. You look relaxed and laid back. Comfortable, like a guy a girl could snuggle up next to on the couch, or in front of a fire.

STEWART

Holey pants and a beat up shirt say all that to you? Is it only the top layer or do I need holey socks and boxers?

HANNAH

Boxers? Interesting. Would have guessed you for a tighty whitey man.

STEWART

There's a lot you don't know about me. By only allowing me one date then talking on the phone for a few weeks, you've barely scratched the surface.

Hannah raises her eyebrows at Stewart's claim. She folds up the jeans and hands them to him.

HANNAH

Now shoes.

Stewart follows Hannah out of the men's department.

STEWART

Maybe we make too many assumptions about people based on their clothes. What if we were all naked? -- If you met me and I was naked? What would you assume about me?

HANNAH

Umm, that you're a pervert?

STEWART

Come on. I'm onto something here. If we met naked, our first impression of each other would be solely based on our interaction.

Hannah stops, looks in every direction. She walks toward a heavily made up RED HEADED GIRL (25), who stands behind the Estee Lauder makeup counter.

HANNAH

Hi, excuse me. Where's the shoe department?

The red headed girl points toward the "UP" escalator right next to them. Stewart heads over but Hannah doesn't move. She stares at it nervously. He turns toward her.

STEWART

What's wrong?

HANNAH

Okay, here's a little known fact about me. I'm scared of escalators.

STEWART

What? Really?

HANNAH

Yeah. When I was little my shoe got stuck and I totally panicked. Never been on one since. I know it's stupid.

STEWART

It's not...stupid. It's just...you have more control now, you're an adult. Give it another shot. I'll protect you.

RED HEADED GIRL (O.C.)

Those things are a death trap.

Surprised, Hannah and Stewart look toward the eavesdropper.

RED HEADED GIRL

I watched this lady trip once. She fell and broke all her front teeth.

STEWART

Elevator?

The red headed girl points toward the elevators. Stewart and Hannah make their way over.

INT. MACY'S DEPARTMENT STORE - 2ND FLOOR - DAY

Elevator doors open, Stewart and Hannah exit.

HANNAH

I think I'd be okay with dentures. I mean, no chance of major dental problems that always seem to happen on a weekend or when you're broke.

Stewart is distracted as they walk by a home goods section packed with Fall and Christmas decorations.

STEWART

Jesus. It's still August and they're already pushing Christmas?

HANNAH

You don't like Christmas?

STEWART

Of course I do, just not in August. It's just...it's so...

A wave of frustration hits him. He stops. Hannah stops also. They're in the middle of a large Christmas display. Lots of twinkle lights, decorated trees, it's kind of magical.

HANNAH

What's wrong with you?

STEWART

It feels forced. I don't like that. Like, buying jeans that already have holes and a shirt that looks ten years old. Things should happen naturally. Christmas in the winter, not August.

He places the shirt and jeans on a shelf full of Santas.

STEWART

And just being able to tell you that I like you, Hannah, instead of making up shit about having a date and needing help with an outfit.

Obviously shocked, Hannah listens.

STEWART

I don't want to wear holey clothes, but you can still snuggle next to me. Dockers are soft, Hannah. They're one hundred percent cotton.

Nervous , Stewart tries to make out what she's thinking.

HANNAH

The sober nurse is made up?

STEWART

Yes. I know. It was stupid, but you just weren't giving me a shot. I had to do something. I'm sorry. But see, I can be spontaneous.

HANNAH

This wasn't spontaneous, Stewart. It was planned and calculated.

Stewart deflates.

HANNAH

But...

A "but" of hope. He looks up at her. She doesn't look mad. She's smiling a little.

HANNAH

It was sweet and possibly romantic, even though there were lies involved. Just doesn't qualify as spontaneous.

Confidence back, Stewart moves closer. Her smile widens. It's a go. She gasps as he scoops her up in his arms.

HANNAH

Oh my God. What are you doing?

Carrying Hannah, he walks to the escalator, gets on.

STEWART

Spontaneous enough for you?

Nervous, she squeezes her eyes shut. Face buried in his neck, her voice is muffled.

HANNAH

Yes.

Beaming with pride, Stewart holds Hannah tight.

On ground level, behind the Estee Lauder counter, the red headed girl watches them descend. She shakes her head.

Finally, Hannah pulls her head up. She and Stewart kiss as they head down the escalator.

FADE OUT.