

The Deal

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FADE IN:

1

EXT. COLLEGE CAMPUS - DAY

1

RYAN DAVIS, 20, walks through a crowded campus with his hands shoved deep in the pockets of his sensible jacket. He is tall with the muscle mass of string cheese.

As he walks, he keeps his eyes on the ground in front of him to avoid the eye contact (and accompanied attention) of passersby.

Suddenly a MAN, 30s, in a couple walking in front of Ryan, stops walking. Not looking, Ryan almost walks straight into the man.

The man gets on one knee, faces a WOMAN, 30s, and takes out a ring box from his pocket.

MAN

Lisa, from the moment I met you on this campus 10 years ago, I knew you were the one for me...

As the proposal unfolds, Ryan frantically looks around as a crowd begins to form around him and the couple. He sees one face that sends his heart into his mouth. You've got to be *kidding*.

MICHELLE WHEELER, 20, stands in the crowd, neck craned, trying to see the spectacle. Her perfectly messy head of curls frames her delicately freckled face.

She wears a slouchy jean jacket and no makeup. Effortlessly beautiful.

Michelle's gaze meets Ryan's and he immediately sets his eyes on the ground. His face turns a burning scarlet.

MAN

... Now, I want to ask if you'd do me the incredible honor of marrying me.

WOMAN

Oh Dave, you sure know how to sweep a woman off her feet. Of course!

The couple embraces as the crowd erupts with applause. Ryan, still with his hands in his pockets, desperately scans the crowd for an exit point.

He sees a gap and bolts. Michelle watches his escape, concerned.

2 EXT. COLLEGE CAMPUS - DAY 2

Ryan turns a corner and presses his back against the building behind him. He bends over with his hands on his knees, trying to catch his breath.

In each hand Ryan holds a piece of PAPER. Ryan finally gets his breathing under control and looks down at each paper.

The first is a flyer that reads: "UNIVERSITY VALENTINES DANCE". The second is a WebMD print out that reads: "SYMPTOMS OF PANIC AND ANXIETY."

Ryan takes a shaky breath and looks up at the building across the street. The building reads: "UNIVERSITY HEALTH SERVICES."

Ryan looks down at the papers in his hand and then back at the building. He has a visible moment of back and forth, before he quickly turns around and leaves.

3 INT. COLLEGE DORM HALLWAY - DAY 3

Ryan's state has deteriorated. His breathing is once again erratic, his skin has a sickly layer of sweat. It almost looks like he's going to faint as he rushes to his door.

4 INT. COLLEGE DORM ROOM - DAY 4

After struggling to unlock the door with shaking hands, Ryan lunges for his bed and immerses himself in his covers.

Ryan's roommate WILL HANSON, 20, takes a deep breath as he slowly removes some hefty headphones from his head. He is the definition of a hottie with a swimmers body.

Will is decked out in his D1 swim team sweatsuit, with his seemingly glowing trophies proudly displayed on his desk.

WILL

Oh man, you couldn't do it could you? You chickened out again?

Ryan hesitantly lowers the covers from his head.

RYAN

I-I was... there was this couple... everyone was-was looking. And then she-Michelle...

WILL

Jesus, dude, you ran into her?! I don't even get why you're trying to

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

WILL (cont'd)  
go to a doctor, I can give you a  
diagnosis right now: you're a  
pussy.

RYAN  
I wanted... I mean I-I thought... I  
just...

Ryan pauses, closes his eyes, and takes a deep breath in. He  
seems to deflate on his exhale.

RYAN  
I just can't bring myself to do it.  
I'd have to talk to doctors and  
fill out forms and... and I bet  
they wouldn't even be able to help  
me in time. I mean god, the dance  
is this weekend.

Will's eyes take on a look of understanding as he gets up  
and gives Ryan a firm pat on the back.

WILL  
Don't worry man, you still have the  
firework show tonight. Perfect  
place to ask her. And you know  
there are other - non-doctors  
office ways - to deal with your  
little problem.

Ryan faces Will with a guarded look of intrigue.

RYAN  
Oh yeah? What would that be?

WILL  
Alright man, don't go all narc on  
me. I'm just saying that - when I  
need a little help focusing on a  
test, or when I need something to  
do on the weekend - I have a guy  
who can get me stuff.

RYAN  
Stuff?

WILL  
Drugs, dude. Jesus. You need to  
chill out. I can hook you guys up  
if you want. His name is Julian.  
I'm sure he'll have what you need.

RYAN  
I don't know...

Ryan looks down at the crumpled up balls of paper in his fists. He opens up the dance flyer with care.

5      FLASHBACK - EXT. COLLEGE CAMPUS - DAY      5

Michelle's face in the crowd. She has an angelic glow.

6      INT. COLLEGE DORM ROOM - DAY      6

Ryan takes a deep breath as he looks up at Will's devilish grin. Oh god.

RYAN  
I'll do it.

Will's grin grows.

7      INT. MALL - DAY      7

Ryan is frozen in place, standing outside of a storefront. He checks a text message on his phone from an unknown number.

The text is ominously short and reads:  
"Tomorrow. The mall. Subway on the  
1st floor. 2 pm."

Ryan checks his watch. 1:58. He looks at the glowing SUBWAY sign. He takes a deep breath as he untucks his favorite old navy cotton tee and goes inside.

8      INT. SUBWAY RESTAURANT - DAY      8

Ryan finds a booth in the corner and sits on the side facing the entrance. He waits. Each second that passes makes his heart beat faster.

9      INT. SUBWAY RESTAURANT - DAY (LATER)      9

Time has passed and Ryan checks his watch again. 2:18. Sweat has seeped through under the arms of his t shirt. Ryan's eyes dart around the restaurant.

Ryan takes out his phone and opens his google search browser. Past entries include:

"What to do if you have pit stains."

"What to order at a Subway."

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

"What to wear to a drug deal."

Ryan types in a new search:

"What to do if your drug dealer is late."

Suddenly, Ryan feels a hand on his shoulder. He jumps, turns around in his booth and looks up at the man behind him.

JULIAN REED, 20, stands above him wearing a wrinkled and grease-stained Subway uniform. His greasy black hair is shoulder length and his eyes seem to be fighting gravity to stay open. Yep. This was definitely the guy.

Julian is looking at Ryan's phone screen over his shoulder. Ryan's cheeks flush as he shoves his phone in his pocket.

JULIAN

Oh my bad man, my shift ran long.

Ryan is petrified but Julian doesn't seem to notice as he glides into the other side of the booth.

RYAN

Oh I-um-I didn't mean... It's just I-I... I don't really...

JULIAN

Dude chill out. Will told me you get nervous but he didn't say you were gonna shit yourself. Seriously man, we're cool.

Ryan lets out a hesitant smile.

JULIAN

So, Will tells me you're trying to get something to calm your nerves. Valentines dance, huh?

RYAN

Yeah... there's this girl...

JULIAN

There always is man. I understand though. Usually I'd blow some stupid thing like this off, but there's this girl. I don't know, I think the dance is my in with her.

Ryan listens to the oddly intimate story, uneasy. As Julian talks, Ryan slowly unclenches his muscles. Julian is surprisingly comforting.

(CONTINUED)

JULIAN

Anyways, I'm assuming you've never done any, like, hardcore shit right?

RYAN

Oh no I... I don't really do this.

JULIAN

It's all good. I think all you really need is a xan. It's like actually meant for anxiety and shit.

RYAN

Uh yeah I mean... I've never really-uh done it before but-um I guess... yes?

JULIAN

Trust me, man.

Ryan nods. He does trust him.

JULIAN

There's a small problem though. I'm actually low and need to pick up from a friend. Would you be cool to come with?

All color drains from Ryan's face as he looks down at his lap. After a pause, he takes a breath and meets Julian's gaze.

RYAN

Yeah-um, yes. I guess.

JULIAN

Cool, she's going to pick us up out front.

Julian gets up and leaves. Ryan lingers at the booth before nodding to himself. He goes to catch up with Julian.

10

EXT. MALL ENTRANCE - DAY

10

Ryan and Julian wait outside the mall. Julian sits on a bench and lights a cigarette. Ryan stands awkwardly off to the side, hands in pockets.

A cobalt blue 2003 Saturn Ion comes barreling down the parking lot. It makes an abrupt stop in front of the two men.

(CONTINUED)

JULIAN  
Yep, that's Callie.

The window rolls down to reveal CALLIE SAITO, 20, wearing heavy eyeliner and a faded band t-shirt. Her black hair has streaks of pink in it. Always punk concert ready.

CALLIE  
Hey I don't have all day. Let's do this.

11 INT. CAR - DAY

11

Ryan sits in the back seat, trying to avoid sitting on the piles of laundry beside him. Julian sits in the passenger seat and takes over the car stereo.

CALLIE  
Whose the chick?

JULIAN  
This is my new pal Ryan. He's mad freaked about asking some girl to the dance. We're gonna help him out.

CALLIE  
Oh yeah, Ryan? What's making you nervous? Besides the fact that it doesn't look like you've seen the sun in years.

RYAN  
Oh... well um, I-I just don't know what she'd say... I guess. I don't really know how-uh to explain it.

CALLIE  
Who cares what she says? At least have the balls to ask. What's the worst that could happen?

JULIAN  
He could actually shit his pants.

Ryan laughs. This is new for Ryan, and Julian seems to understand this.

JULIAN  
That's more like it. You'll be fine, man.

(CONTINUED)



CALLIE

Oh yeah, big talker? What about you? Don't you want to ask that Michelle chick whose always in Subway?

Ryan's entire body seizes up. He is completely petrified. There's no way.

JULIAN

Yeah, yeah. And I'm going to. Tonight. At the fireworks show.

CALLIE

Ah, how very romantic of you.

JULIAN

Shut up. Ryan gets it, right Ryan?

Ryan doesn't speak. He can't speak.

JULIAN

Oh I'm sorry, man. You probably have places to be. Callie, could we get that xan?

Callie hands Julian a white pill in a plastic bag, which Julian then offers to Ryan.

JULIAN

There ya go. You've got nothing to worry about man.

CALLIE

Ryan, do you mind if I drop you off here?

Ryan takes the pill but doesn't answer. Callie pulls over. The car is now on campus.

CALLIE

Hey, screw worrying about her. Do it for you. You have nothing to lose. See ya around.

JULIAN

Later dude.

Ryan exits the car stiffly. He watches the car drive off, looks down at the pill in his hand, and then looks around at the bustling campus.

12 INT. DORM BATHROOM - NIGHT

12

Ryan bursts into his floor bathroom, the little plastic bag clenched in his white-knuckled fist. He bends over one of the sinks.

His once pressed shirt is riddled with sweat stains and his face is as white as a ghost. He looks up at his panicked reflection and gags.

He runs to a stall and proceeds to vomit. Sitting on the cold tiled floor, he takes a deep breath and pulls out the pill from the bag.

He holds the white tablet between his fingers and flushes the toilet. One more breath. But, as Ryan breaths out, his body seizes in preparation for another heave.

This involuntary movement causes the pill to slip out of Ryan's fingers and into the swirling bowl below. Ryan watches in horror as the pill disappears.

13 INT. COLLEGE DORM ROOM - NIGHT

13

Ryan bursts into his room and heads straight for the underbelly of his covers. We've seen this before. So has Will, who turns from his desk and takes off his headphones.

WILL

Come on man not agai-

As Will turns he sees that Ryan has gone into a full-out panic. Will's air of annoyance immediately turns to concern as he gets up and goes to Ryan's bedside.

WILL

Ryan, what happened? Oh god I knew I shouldn't have- I mean I told Julian you get nervous. I thought he'd be cool. I'm so sorry.

Ryan emerges from his covers and wipes tears from his puffy eyes. He fights through his uneven breathing to get some words out.

RYAN

No, no it's the dance... it's Julian he-he and Michelle -

WILL

Holy shit he's going with Michelle?!

(CONTINUED)

RYAN

No-no he's going to ask her -  
tonight. At the fireworks show.

WILL

Fuck that man, ask her first!

RYAN

Will, you don't understand. The  
pill. I-I lost it.

WILL

Fuck the pill man! The important  
thing is you went out and got it.  
The old Ryan would have never put  
himself out there like you did  
today. You can do this.

14      FLASHBACK - INT. SUBWAY RESTAURANT - DAY      14

Ryan deciding to follow Julian

15      FLASHBACK - INT. CAR - DAY      15

Ryan taking the pill.

16      INT. COLLEGE DORM ROOM - DAY      16

Ryan closes his eyes and takes his signature deep breath.

RYAN

Would you come with me?

WILL

Hell yes, are you kidding? I'm  
standing right next to make sure  
you don't run away this time.

17      EXT. CAMPUS QUAD - NIGHT      17

Ryan and Will approach the crowd of people gathered on the  
quad. Ryan's hands are no longer in his pockets as he leads  
Will through the hoards of people.

It's as if the entire campus is there. The crowd is loud and  
buzzing as everyone waits for the show to start.

WILL

Do you see her, big guy?

RYAN

I don't know. It's hard to tell.

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The two continue weaving through the maze of people when suddenly, Ryan spots Michelle a ways away. He calls out to her.

RYAN  
Michelle!

At the very moment, the first firework takes flight and the sound of its EXPLOSION drowns out his voice.

WILL  
Well what are you waiting for? Go  
get her!

Ryan gives Will a nod and takes off in Michelle's direction, the dazzling lights reflecting as a twinkle in his eyes.

As Ryan runs, he sees Julian with a group of people sitting by a tree. The group is collectively preoccupied with reaching out to the sky, attempting to touch the dancing lights.

None of them are in any state to produce cohesive thoughts, let alone ask someone to a dance.

Ryan turns from them with relief and smiles as he finally approaches Michelle.

RYAN  
Hey Michelle... I saw you standing  
over here and I figured I'd say hi.

MICHELLE  
Oh hey Ryan, it's nice to see you  
again.

RYAN  
Yeah, sorry I didn't say hi this  
morning, I was in a rush.

MICHELLE  
It seems like you're always in a  
rush.

RYAN  
Well...I want to change that.

Ryan's hands are sweating but he pays them no mind. Deep breath.

RYAN  
Actually... I want to ask you  
something. Would you want to go to  
the Valentine's dance with me?

MICHELLE

Oh Ryan, I'm so glad you asked. But I'm actually going home for the weekend so I won't be here.

Ryan's face looks as if he were just kicked in the stomach. Ouch. But he's not flushing red and his breathing is fairly even.

RYAN

Oh... that's too bad. Well, I just had to ask or I'd never forgive myself. Hope you enjoy the show.

Ryan turns and gives Will, whose standing a few people away, a shrug.

MICHELLE

Wait!

Ryan stops dead and turns around.

MICHELLE

I'm really glad you asked too. I can never tell what's going on in your head... I am out of town *this* weekend but would you want to get lunch sometime next week?

As if perfectly timed for this conversation, the grand firework finale goes off in glittering celebration, and the crowd cheers.

RYAN

I'd love to. Do you have any place in mind?

MICHELLE

Okay, this is maybe weird, but I love Subway. Have you been to the one at the mall?

Ryan bursts into laughter and puts his face in his hands.

RYAN

It's funny you say that. I was actually just there today.

The two continue to talk as the firework finale lights up the sky.

FADE OUT.