

INT. ON THE ROCKS NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

Neal sits at a long table with Suzy, Don, Kyle and the two ladies, Lynn and Laura, from the ski boat.

An open dance floor area separates the crowded tables and an informal stage that's lifted up only six inches.

A small BAND plays on the stage. A banner sign hangs over the stage which reads "Open Mike Night. All Welcomed."

Suzy leans on Neal.

SUZY
Thanks for dinner.

NEAL (WITH A BRITISH ACCENT)
My pleasure, my lady.

Neal returns a smile to Suzy.

SUZY
Why do you do that English thing?

Neal shrugs his shoulders and laughs.

NEAL
I don't know. Maybe because I'm a
European American. Some people
like it.

SUZY
Well, I think it's weird. Now,
whom else can we invite to the Art
Gallery Friday night?

NEAL
Can't we discuss who's in my
Roladex later?

Neal leans back in his chair.

Don leans over to Neal.

DON
You know you didn't need to
schmooze me today. I was already
going to buy five hundred copies
of your software.

Neal smiles with confidence.

NEAL
Yeah, but I thought what a great
excuse for a day of playing.

Don laughs, leans back and looks at Lynn as she puts her
arm around his shoulder.

Trent and Ashley walk up to the table.

TRENT
Neal, how's it going?

Neal looks surprised.

NEAL

What are you guys doing here?

ASHLEY

We were at a conference at the Holiday Inn, down the street, and thought we'd come up here for some fun.

Inviting themselves, Trent pulls a couple empty chairs from the table next to them. He and Ashley sit down, making Neal annoyed and a bit uncomfortable.

NEAL

Oh, please, join us.

TRENT

Thanks.

NEAL

Trent, Ashley, this is Suzy.

Trent offers his hand to Suzy.

TRENT

Suzy.

NEAL

Yeah, and this is Don, Lynn, Kyle and Laura.

They all greet each other.

NEAL (CONT'D)

I spoke with your Father today.

TRENT

I know.

NEAL

You know?

TRENT

Yeah. He called wondering if we had seen Paige. He was trying to tell her something about, Tony.

Neal nearly chokes on his drink. Suzy hands him a napkin.

NEAL

Tony Moore?

ASHLEY
You know him?

NEAL
Yes. We met once.

Trent looks surprised to Ashley.

Neal takes another drink.

ON STAGE

The EMCEE jumps up to the stage, with a lot of enthusiasm.
The crowd applauds.

EMCEE
Alright. Let's hear it for Jocelyn
and her band! If anyone wants to
take advantage of our Open Mike
night, come on up here. For now,
welcome up Robert Johnson and
Jason Barker.

Everyone applauds as the two MEN get on stage.

AT THE TABLE

Ashley turns toward Trent.

ASHLEY
You should've brought your guitar.

TRENT
No way. I don't play that much
anymore.

Trent smiles and embarrassingly looks away. Ashley
addresses the rest of the table.

ASHLEY
That's not true. He plays quite
often and he's good. Come on, play
for us.

Ashley nudges Trent.

TRENT
No, I can't.

Kyle looks to Neal to say something.

NEAL

Have you ever played in front of
a crowd before?

Trent continues to try and look away.

TRENT

Some.

ASHLEY

He did back in college.

TRENT

That was only at parties, where
everyone was drunk and for my
friends, who were usually always
drunk too.

Neal turns himself to squarely face Trent.

NEAL

Trent do me a favor. Close your
eyes.

TRENT

What?

Everyone looks funny at Neal.

NEAL

Trust me. Close your eyes just for
a minute.

Trent looks to Ashley who shrugs her shoulders. Trent
smiles.

TRENT

Alright, but only for a minute.

Neal signals Trent to close his eyes. Trent shakes his head
to agree, and closes his eyes.

NEAL

Good. Now shut out all the sounds
of this busy gin joint. Forget
about work. You don't ever have to
go back. Forget about your family.
They're out and won't be back for
hours. Forget about money. All
your needs are taken care
of...Now, where are you at and
what are you doing?

The blank look on his face turns to a large smile as he leans back in his chair.

TRENT

I'm in my living room, sitting on the couch and playing my guitar.

NEAL

Completely undisturbed, uninterrupted. You're lovin' it.

Trent moves his hands in the air as if he was holding and playing his guitar.

TRENT

Absolutely.

NEAL

Then don't let circumstances stand in your way of what you are all about. Grab onto life and live it. Can you, for just this brief moment in time, be yourself and create a memory that you'll never forget?

Trent, with eyes still closed, nods his head, "yes."

NEAL (CONT'D)

Can you forget about the crowd, step on that stage and play like you're in your living room?

Trent smiles from ear to ear. Everyone at the table smiles and shakes their head to agree with Neal.

Trent's smile quickly turns to a straight face as he opens his eyes.

TRENT

No.

Trent shakes his head back and forth as everyone else sighs with disappointment.

Neal leans back.

Ashley playfully slaps Trent's shoulder.

ASHLEY

Why not?

Trent smiles and stands up.

TRENT
I will. If Tony Robbins over
here comes up with me.

Trent raises one eyebrow looking slyly at Neal.

Everyone at the table encouragingly claps.

The singing act on stage ends and everyone else claps as well.

NEAL
Sure, but what am I going to do?
I don't play an instrument.

TRENT
Paige told us you sing in the car
all the time!

Trent smiles as if the mouse caught the cat.

Not to be outdone, Neal smiles confidently back.

NEAL
Fine, let's go.

Neal wheels back out from the table as Trent walks around to join him.

Suzu reaches over and kisses Neal on the cheek.

ASHLEY
Now there's a man who talks the
talk and walks the wal...

Embarrassed, Ashley quickly slaps her hand over her mouth where it stays for a moment.

Everyone else freezes in place.

Neal starts to laugh.

NEAL
I know what you meant.

KYLE
Yeah, just "be yourself and create
a memory you'll never forget."

Everyone at the table laughs.

NEAL

I'll never forget this that's for sure!

Neal and Trent move toward the stage.

TRENT

Close your eyes and remember to "forget about the crowd."

NEAL

Okay, but I've never been "in your living room!"

Trent walks to the previous act and borrows their guitar.

ON STAGE

The Emcee stands in the center.

EMCEE

Looks like we have a couple more brave souls ready to play.

The Emcee moves the microphone stand out of the way and assists the reluctant Neal up onto the stage.

A drummer sits down and Trent plugs in the guitar.

The three talk to themselves as the Emcee lowers the mike stand.

The Emcee talks briefly to Neal and Trent then turns around with the microphone in his hand.

EMCEE (CONT'D)

Alright, we have a brand new group tonight, so let's hear it for the "Dreamers."

The crowd applauds. Ashley whistles with excitement.

The Emcee hands the mike to Neal as they get into position.

NEAL

For the record, I'm NOT the "Wedding Singer."

There's a small laugh from the crowd. Neal looks to Trent as he situates the guitar.

NEAL (CONT'D)

This is the only song all three of us know. So, if you know it, please sing along. That way not everyone has to hear what it sounds like in my shower.

Trent looks at Neal and shakes his head that he's ready.

NEAL (CONT'D)

Here we go.

A little nervous, Trent closes his eyes and plays the STEELER'S WHEELS song "STUCK IN THE MIDDLE WITH YOU." The pace starts a little slow.

The drummer lays back and waits to start.

Neal places the microphone back in the stand.

NEAL (CONT'D)

"Well, I don't know why I came here tonight. I got this feeling that something ain't right. I'm so scared in case I fall off my chair."

Neal, animated to the lyrics, rocks in his wheelchair from side to side.

NEAL (CONT'D)

"And I'm wondering how I'll get down the stairs. Clowns to the left of me. Jokers to the right. Here I am stuck in the middle with you."

The drummer catches the beat.

The crowd swings in their seats, left and right in unison with the beat and lyrics.

NEAL (CONT'D)

"Clowns to the left of me. Jokers to the right. Here I am stuck in the middle with you."

Neal rolls, with the microphone in his hand, next to Trent.

Trent opens his eyes and smiles as he nods his head to the beat.

Neal looks at Trent as if he's singing these lines to him.

NEAL (CONT'D)

"Well you started off with nothin'
and then found that you're a self-
made man. And your friends they
all come crawlin', slap you on the
back and say..."

Neal, now next to Trent, slaps him on the back and moves the microphone over toward Trent, who leans over. They both sing with smiles of fun on their faces.

NEAL AND TRENT

"...Please...Please..."

Neal smiles and moves back to center stage.

Ashley blows Trent a kiss.

Neal catches Suzy in his sight as the lyrics make him think. Suzy responds excitedly.

NEAL

"Well, I'm tryin' to make some
sense of it all, but I can see it
makes no sense at all. Is it cool
to go to sleep on the floor? I
don't think that I can take
anymore."

The crowd continues to swing back and forth while they elbow each other to the left and right, at the appropriate times, and bang into their significant other as the words "in the middle with you" are sung.

NEAL (CONT'D)

"Clowns to the left of me, jokers
to the right. Here I am stuck in
the middle with you."

The focus shifts to Trent during the guitar solo, who smiles real big toward Ashley. She returns the smile.

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A couple exits the front doors.

Paige hurriedly walks up and grabs the door before it closes. She walks in.

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Paige walks a couple of steps inside. She spots Neal and Trent on stage. Paige stops and smiles with joy.

ON STAGE

Trent opens his eyes and moves next to Neal as he finishes his guitar solo.

NEAL

"Well, I don't know why I came here tonight. Got this feeling that something ain't right. I'm so scared in case I fall off my chair. And I'm wondering how I'll get down the stairs. Clowns to the left of me. Jokers to the right. Here I am stuck in the middle with you."

Trent kneels down and leans into the microphone that Neal gladly shares to sing the last lines.

NEAL AND TRENT

"Yes, there's clowns to the left of me. Jokers to the right. Here I am stuck in the middle with you. Yes, I'm stuck in the middle with you. Well, I'm stuck in the middle with you..."

Trent points his guitar to Ashley as the line "stuck in the middle with you" repeats.

The song ends, everyone applauds and cheers loudly.

Ashley rushes up to embrace Trent.

Suzy runs to the stage and jumps on Neal's lap.

SUZY

That was great. Maybe you and Trent can do this at the Gallery Friday night. I was talking to Don and he said he was coming.

Suzy kisses Neal's cheek as he purposely looks away. He looks up toward the front door and notices Paige.

NEAR THE FRONT DOOR

Paige ends her clapping as her smile disappears. Nearly in tears she turns and runs out the front doors.

ON STAGE

Neal pushes Suzy off his lap. Suzy falls as he rolls to the edge of the stage.

SUZY (CONT'D)

What was that for?

Neal turns his head to look at Suzy.

NEAL

All you ever talk about is selling art work at the gallery. What are you going to do when my resources dry up?

SUZY

Check the resources' resources. It's called networking, Neal.

NEAL

That's all I am to you. A resource in your network.

Neal shakes his head, lifts his front wheels, looks closely at the floor and rolls off the stage to the front door.

Neal jams his thumb on his wheelchair brake.

OUCH. He shakes his hand and quickly continues to the door.

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Neal busts through the doors. He looks both ways down the street, unable to see Paige.

Neal raises his hands, looks at the blood on his thumb. He stares at his opened hands, clenches them into fists as he lays them on his lap.