

AFTER ROSE

Written by Todd Serlin

50 Kisses Submission
London Screenwriters Festival

- opening two pages -

Todd Serlin
toddserlin@aol.com
323.544.6775

INT. FRANK'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

A row of BURNING CANDLES reach along a tile counter top. All shapes, sizes, and colors. Flickering in a rhythmic dance.

A very modest kitchen, screaming one-bedroom apartment. Bare walls, except for one PICTURE: a man and a beautiful woman. Exuberant expressions. Clearly in love.

At the breakfast nook, a simple table. Two chairs. Candles around a thin, angular vase. A single long-stem ROSE.

FRANK (O.S.)

You can open your eyes now.

FRANK MILTON (50s) stands at the entry. The face of a kind man who has seen it all, but right now wants to forget. Hint of eagerness washed by a longing restraint.

ANNE GRETTERLINE (30s) opens her eyes -- mildly brightening at the spectacle. Slicked hair in a pony-tail, tight dress, revealing voluptuous curves. A clear sense of control.

She side-eyes Frank, cracks a idling smile. Lifting his hand as they step through the glimmering kitchen.

ANNE

This is something else, Frank.

FRANK

(timidly)

Would you care for a some wine?

He gazes at her, expectantly.

ANNE

Margaret

FRANK

Margaret. A lovely name.

Anne glances at him -- veiled "professionalism." Mentally sizing up the situation as her eyes dart about the room.

ANNE

Sure, Frank. That would be nice.
Mind if I have a seat?

FRANK

Please, make yourself comfortable.
Sorry this isn't very luxurious.
I'm... in-between places.

Frank pours two glasses of wine. Avoiding eye contact.

FRANK

Think I went a bit overboard, the
candles and all.

Anne sits down, gently touches the vase, smells the rose.

FRANK

It's the first time in twenty years
I've been alone on Valentine's Day.

Anne curiously looks at him. Eyes shift to the picture.

ANNE

You're not alone.

Frank hands Anne a glass of wine. She smiles as he sits
beside her, sliding his chair back a bit. Unsettled.

FRANK

I'm sorry. I didn't mean it to
sound like that.

ANNE

You don't need to apologize.

Frank gulps down a healthy sip as his eyes wander out the
small window. Almost searching. He turns back to Anne.

FRANK

Guess I'm not really good at this.
Actually, I never really been --

ANNE

There's no need to be nervous,
Frank. I'm not going to bite.

Frank's lip twitches as his eyes shift from Anne to his wine
glass. Anxious. Seemingly lost.

Anne gazes at Frank as if peering straight into his pain.
She's seen this sort of thing before. And she knows suffering.

FRANK

The single rose was all I could
manage... Rose. That was her name.

Anne unexpectedly leans in and softly kisses Frank. She sits
back, her "matter-of-fact" expression softening.

Frank's eyes lift from his glass -- thankful. More relaxed.
A drawn beat of silence. Both sipping their wine.

ANNE

Tell me about her.