

HOW I MET YOUR MOTHER

"My First and Only Fight"

by

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ACT ONE

FADE IN:

INT. BAR - NIGHT

(NARRATOR, TED, MARSHALL, BARNEY, LILY, ROBIN, STELLA, LARGE DUDE)

TED, MARSHALL, LILY AND BARNEY LAUGHING AT THE BOOTH.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Kids, did I ever tell you the story  
about my first and only fight?

TED

That's the dumbest thing I've ever  
heard of.

MARSHALL

That's the dumbest thing anyone has  
ever heard of, Barney.

FREEZE FRAME ON BARNEY.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

It all started one night at the bar  
while your Uncle Barney was defending  
an ancient myth.

UNFREEZE.

BARNEY

It's true. I read it online. The  
Sudanese invented the technique.

TED

You really shouldn't believe  
everything you read.

BARNEY

That is what people said when they  
read books and newspapers. Now we have  
the Internet so things have changed.  
(BEAT) They call it "jelqing."

TED

Jelqing? Isn't that a sport in the  
Winter Olympics?

MARSHALL SPEAKS UP WITH GENUINE CONCERN.

MARSHALL

I've heard stories about guys getting  
hurt trying to do what you're talking  
about -- hurt forever. It doesn't  
sound safe.

BARNEY

There aren't any machines or pulleys  
involved. It's all natural. We're  
talking about hundreds of years of  
practical science here.

LILY

You can't just yank on it to make it  
bigger, Barney. It's not Laffy Taffy.

MARSHALL

And why are you so interested anyway?  
Has Little Barney been getting  
complaints in the bedside comment box?

BARNEY SMIRKS.

BARNEY

Lily can vouch for me.

THE OTHERS SHARE CONCERNED LOOKS.

BARNEY

She painted me nude. Hello? (BEAT)  
Look, all I'm saying is that if it can  
grow, why not go for it? Why not be  
the best you can be? The awesomest?

TED

Please stop. It makes me squeamish  
just thinking about it.

MARSHALL

Yeah. It's like when all you talked  
about were the aromas of the different  
brands of waterbeds you've slept in.

BARNEY

I never talked about the aromas of the  
waterbeds... (BEAT, THINKS) Wait. You  
read my blog don't you?

MARSHALL

(EMBARRASSED) Sometimes.

BARNEY

Nice!

BARNEY MOTIONS FOR A HIGH-FIVE. MARSHALL RELUCTANTLY ACCEPTS.

MARSHALL

(LOOKS AT HIS HAND) You weren't  
jelqing today were you?

BARNEY

Uh huh.

LILY

Gross, Barney. Tonight was Marshall's  
turn to cook dinner.

BARNEY

Oh, please. This is a proven medical  
technique. There is nothing dirty  
about it. It's not even sexual.

MARSHALL

I think if it were a proven medical  
technique most guys would've mastered  
it in high school.

STELLA ENTERS.

LILY

Stella is a doctor. She'll know.

FREEZE FRAME ON STELLA.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Stella and I had just taken a major  
step in our relationship. Things were  
great. I was sure she was the one.

UNFREEZE.

STELLA WAVES TO THE GROUP ON HER WAY TO THE BAR.

TED

I'll get to the bottom of this.

TED LEAVES.

BARNEY

Do you post comments on the blog too?

Are you Felony-S-Monk?

MARSHALL SHAKES HIS HEAD.

BARNEY

Ghost Dancer 11? Cow-Tipping-Bart?

MARSHALL

No, Barney. I don't post comments on  
your blog (UNDER HIS BREATH) very  
often.

BARNEY

Wait until you read next week's  
installment on jelqing. I'm going to  
sell so much ad space.

ROBIN RETURNS FROM A BATHROOM TRIP.

ROBIN

What are you guys talking about?

BARNEY

Nothing.

ROBIN SITS NEXT TO BARNEY.

MARSHALL

Natural male enhancement. The most  
natural of kinds.

ROBIN

Jelqing?

BARNEY

See! I told you it was real.

ROBIN

We just did a feature on it.

BARNEY

And it's newsworthy! God bless the  
Sudanese and all the free time they  
have on their hands.

LILY

You're kidding. Right, Robin?

ROBIN

No. Last year emergency rooms reported  
more than 300 cases of jelqing-related  
injuries. It's a real epidemic thanks  
to gullible nerds surfing the web.

TED LAUGHS WITH STELLA AT THE BAR.

TED

So? Is it true? It can't be.

STELLA

You wouldn't believe how many times  
I've been asked this. I don't know.

TED

You were never in an anatomy class in  
college and someone raised his hand?

STELLA

No, Ted. I would've remembered.

TED

Is there some type of precedence or any medical journals that have featured articles on it?

STELLA

If by medicine journals you mean Hustler Magazine -- then maybe.

TED

(JOKING) It's been quite a while since I wrote in to the Letters to the Editor section.

STELLA

I have to run to the bathroom. I don't want to talk about this. It makes me squeamish just thinking about it.

STELLA WALKS TO THE BATHROOM.

A LARGE DUDE, ROUGHLY THE SIZE OF AN ELECTRIC CAR, MAKES HIS WAY THROUGH THE BAR AND PURPOSELY BUMPS INTO TED.

LARGE DUDE

Excuse me. Didn't see you there.

TED

No problem.

LARGE DUDE PASSES BY IN THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION AND BUMPS TED AGAIN. THIS TIME HARDER.

LARGE DUDE

Oops.

TED

Are you okay, buddy?

LARGE DUDE

And what if I'm not? (IN TED'S GRILL)

What are you going to do about it?

TED CATCHES A WHIFF OF LARGE DUDE'S BREATH.

TED

I really wish they'd stop selling  
garlic fries here.

LARGE DUDE

What's that, funny man?

TED

Nothing.

LARGE DUDE

Is that right? Nothing?

TED

Look -- obviously you've had too much  
to drink, pal. I'm not sure what the  
big deal is but let's just go our  
separate ways. No hard feelings.

LARGE DUDE READIES FOR AN ERUPTION OF ASS KICKING. EVERY VEIN  
IN HIS BODY BULGES WITH HATRED AND RAGE.

LARGE DUDE

We'll see about that, funny man!

FREEZE FRAME ON TED.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Before we go any further, kids, let me remind you that the only way to win a fight is to walk away before it happens. And if for some reason that doesn't work...

UNFREEZE.

TED CLUMSILY BACKPEDALS THROUGH THE BAR AND OUT THE DOOR.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

...you can always try a light jog.

INT. TED AND MARSHALL'S APARTMENT - THE NEXT DAY  
(MARSHALL, TED, LILY, ROBIN)

TED SKETCHES AT HIS TABLE WHILE STARING OUTSIDE AT THE ADJACENT PUB ENTRANCE. MARSHALL AND LILY SIT ON THE COUCH.

MARSHALL

What are you doing over there, Ted?

TED

Working on a new building in Concord.

MARSHALL

Sounds like fun. (SMILES AT LILY) Hey we're out of tissue paper. Could you run to the store and get some?

MARSHALL AND LILY LAUGH.

TED

Is that supposed to be some kind of a joke or something?

THEY LAUGH LOUDER.

LILY

He doesn't even get it!

MARSHALL

I know!

TED

Just because I walked away from a  
drunken guy at the bar doesn't make me  
a coward or a lesser man.

MARSHALL

It's okay, Ted. That guy was pretty  
big. I doubt you could've given him a  
run for his money.

MORE LAUGHTER.

TED

I didn't run, okay? I walked away  
casually. Anyway -- fights are for  
kids in junior high school. I have a  
career to think about. I have  
subordinates who look up to me.

LILY

Good thing they weren't in the bar  
last night.

MARSHALL

Yeah. You were out of there so fast I thought there was a SARS outbreak or something.

TED SCRATCHES HIS HEAD.

TED

SARS? I forgot all about that. What was SARS exactly -- do you remember?

LILY

Nice try, Ted. We're not changing the subject. (BEAT) Hey Marshall, what was the name of that Arnold Schwarzenegger movie you liked so much?

MARSHALL

Hmmm... That's a tough one. He has so many great films. But I've always been a fan of The Running Man.

LILY

One of my favorites too. Maybe we should rent it tonight. (BEAT) Then again why rent the movie when we have the real thing right here?

THEY LAUGH AGAIN AT TED'S EXPENSE. TED DOESN'T FIND THE HUMOR IN THEIR JOKES AND CONTINUES SKETCHING.

MARSHALL

Speaking of favorites, baby, what was the Bon Jovi song you liked so much?

LILY

(SINGING) Ooooooooooooo... She's a  
little Runaway.

TED MARCHES DOWN TO THE COUCH.

TED

Are you guys done or do you have  
anymore more material saved up?

MARSHALL

Lily?

LILY

(HALF-HEARTED) Oh no. Look at my  
pantyhose. (BEAT) Nevermind.

TED

I didn't run away from that guy.

MARSHALL

I don't know, Ted. I'm not sure what  
else to call it.

TED

It wasn't like he was challenging my  
manhood or anything. He was just  
drunk. If he were swearing or being  
vulgar toward Stella --

LILY

Who you left in the bar.

TED

(GRIMACES) Who I left in the bar.

MARSHALL

How did you smooth that out?

TED

When she came up here I told her the truth. Some guy down there was getting in my face and I left.

LILY

And what did she say?

TED

She was fine with it. Why wouldn't she be?

LILY

I guess not all women want a guy who can protect them.

TED

It was clear this guy had something personal against me. I diffused the situation before things went south.

MARSHALL

Were you thinking of making a break for the border? North would've probably been a better bet.

ROBIN ENTERS FEVERISHLY. SHE IS STRAIGHT FROM THE NEWSROOM.

ROBIN

Lily, I need a top. Give me something to wear -- quick.

LILY

What are you doing here? The news starts in less than an hour.

ROBIN

I've used up all the shirts in wardrobe that I like. Nothing they have looks good on me with the new background. I'm freaking out!

LILY

Okay. Come with me. Don't get flushed or you'll limit our options for colors, patterns and fabrics.

ROBIN AND LILY HURRY TO LILY'S BEDROOM.

MARSHALL

Sorry for giving you a hard time. You did the right thing.

TED

Thanks.

MARSHALL

And that guy would've definitely pounded the crap out of you.

TED

His neck was the size of my waist.

(BEAT) But I didn't run out. I took my time and strolled, right?

MARSHALL

You left your card at the bar.

TED

I knew I'd be back in today.

MARSHALL

They charge 30 percent gratuity when  
you leave the tab overnight.

TED

Thirty percent? Outrageous!

MARSHALL

I know. What is the world coming to?

LILY AND ROBIN RETURN. ROBIN WEARS A BRIGHT BLOUSE.

LILY

It's so hard with your Canadian  
complexion. This is the best I could  
do with the pallet of a polar bear.

ROBIN

Lily, can you get me a water?

LILY

Sure.

ROBIN REGROUPS AND RESTS ON THE ARM OF THE COUCH. SHE SEES  
TED AND CRACKS A SMILE.

ROBIN

Good to see you, Ted. Weren't you at  
the bar last night? Where did you run  
off to?

MORE LAUGHS FROM MARSHALL.

TED

I didn't run anywhere.

MARSHALL

Don't give Ted a hard time. He did the right thing. It's not like any of us are the fighting type.

ROBIN

I may not be Heavyweight Champ of the World but I'm not afraid to get my hands a little dirty.

MARSHALL

You were a Canadian Pop Star. I can't think of a background with less street cred than that.

TED

(SARCASTIC) I wouldn't want to run into that K.D. Lang in a dark alley.

ROBIN

It just so happens that Robin Sparkles was feared from BC to Quebec and everywhere in between during the '90s Canadian Pop Surge.

LILY RETURNS WITH THE BOTTLE OF WATER.

LILY

BC to Quebec?

ROBIN

Those are Canadian provinces.

MARSHALL

Provinces?

ROBIN

Just like the states you have here.

LILY

So there are 50 of them?

ROBIN

No. There are ten. And three territories.

MARSHALL

Thirteen? What idiot picked thirteen for your number of states? You're really asking for it.

LILY SITS NEXT TO MARSHALL AND PATS HIS HEAD.

LILY

I turned Marshall on to numerology.

ROBIN

Anyway...

WHIP-PAN TO ROBIN, AS ROBIN SPARKLES, PERFORMING AT A CANADIAN MALL. THREE BACKUP SINGERS UNENTHUSIASTICALLY DANCE BEHIND HER.

ROBIN

(SINGING) Let's go to the mall!

THE OTHER SINGERS SHOOT ANGRY LOOKS AT ROBIN.

ROBIN (V.O.)

When you're at the top of your game on  
the Canadian music scene you have to  
look out for the career climbers  
trying to steal your thunder.

ONE SINGER IN PARTICULAR STARTS TO DROWN OUT ROBIN. ROBIN  
MOTIONS FOR HER TO STOP BUT THE GIRL SINGS LOUDER INSTEAD.

ROBIN

(SINGING) Today!

SUDDENLY -- WHOOSH -- THE BACKUP SINGER'S FEET FLY UP IN THE  
AIR AND SHE IS FLAT ON HER BACK. THE GIRL STANDS, CONFUSED,  
AS ROBIN IS BACK AT THE MICROPHONE AND HASN'T MISSED A BEAT.

WHIP-PAN BACK TO THE LIVING ROOM.

LILY

What did you do to her?

ROBIN

The only move I have in my arsenal --  
the leg sweep.

MARSHALL

Leg sweep?

ROBIN

It's an effective strike. You just  
wait for your opponent to move off  
balance and use their momentum against  
them.

LILY

The leg sweep. You're like a ninja.

MARSHALL

A Canadian ninja.

TED

I'll have to remember it the next time  
I jump inside the squared circle.

ROBIN

C'mon, Ted, it's not your fault you've  
never been in a fight before (OOPS).

TED SHOOTS AN "I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU JUST SAID THAT BECAUSE IT  
WAS TOLD TO YOU IN CONFIDENTIALITY WHILE WE WERE DATING" LOOK  
AT ROBIN.

LILY

Huh?

TED

Nothing. She said nothing.

ROBIN RUNS TO THE DOOR.

LILY

Wait. What did you say, Robin?

ROBIN

I don't remember. Got to go report the  
news.

ROBIN EXITS.

MARSHALL

Ted, you've never been in a fight  
before?

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. TED AND MARSHALL'S APARTMENT - DAY  
(MARSHALL, TED, LILY, GIRL, VOICE, NARRATOR, STUDENT, BARNEY)

MARSHALL

What do you mean you've never been in  
a fight before?

TED

I never got around to it. Getting into  
a fight was never on my List of Things  
to Do.

LILY

Not once? Not one fight?

TED

That's not entirely true.

WHIP-PAN TO TED AT THE DRY CLEANERS.

TED

I am sick and tired of this horrible  
service! I drop off a suit and I get  
back a black evening gown. What am I  
going to do with a black evening gown?

WHIP-PAN BACK TO THE LIVING ROOM.

MARSHALL

(EPIPHANY) So that's why there is a  
black evening gown in your closet.

LILY

You've been in arguments. But have you  
ever been in a physical altercation?

TED

Of course I have.

WHIP-PAN TO A VERY-TIRED TED STANDING OUTSIDE THE APARTMENT.  
AN UNLEASHED MINIATURE CHIHUAHUA GROWLS AT HIM.

TED

Easy, buddy. It's been a long day and  
I'm just trying to get into my  
apartment.

THE CHIHUAHUA GROWLS LOUDER.

TED

I'm just going to walk up here very  
slowly, open the door and go inside.

TED AMBLES UP THE STAIRCASE. THE CHIHUAHUA SINKS ITS TEETH  
INTO HIS PANT LEG. HE SHAKES IT OFF AND RUNS AWAY DOWN THE  
SIDEWALK AS THE CHIHUAHUA CHASES AFTER HIM.

WHIP-PAN BACK TO THE LIVING ROOM.

MARSHALL

But you've never been in a physical  
altercation with another human being?

TED STOPS FOR A MOMENT. THEN NODS.

TED

Correct.

MARSHALL STANDS.

MARSHALL

You've got to be kidding me! (BEAT)  
But we used to spar back in college.

WHIP-PAN TO TED AND MARSHALL SPARRING IN THE CAMPUS GYM. THEY  
WEAR PROTECTIVE HEADGEAR AND HAVE BEEN 'EATING LOTS OF  
SANDWICHES.'

TED

Go ahead. Hit me again.

MARSHALL

Okay.

MARSHALL WINDS UP AND LANDS A HAYMAKER TO TED'S FOREHEAD, WHICH CAUSES TED TO FALL TO THE FLOOR. SURPRISINGLY, HE POPS RIGHT BACK UP WITH NO RESIDUAL EFFECTS.

TED

I can't feel anything! This is great!

MARSHALL

My turn! Give me a good one.

TED

Okay. As long as you're ready.

TED TAKES A RUNNING START AND SOCKS MARSHALL. MARSHALL CRASHES TO THE GROUND.

MARSHALL

Oh no!

TED

What is it? Are you bleeding?

MARSHALL STANDS. HE PULLS OUT A CRUMBLED SANDWICH FROM HIS SHIRT POCKET.

MARSHALL

(DISTRAUGHT) The other half of the sandwich is ruined.

TED

(MASSAGING TEMPLES) That's too bad because I think all of these strikes to the dome gave me a migraine.

WHIP-PAN BACK TO THE LIVING ROOM.

LILY

But that's not a fight. A fight means  
rage. A fight means your blood boils  
and you see red.

TED

Like you've been in a fight before?

LILY

Plenty. Before I found my artistic  
outlet I was quite the ruffian.

WHIP-PAN TO LILY AT A COLLEGE KEG PARTY. A GIRL CUTS IN FRONT  
OF HER IN LINE FOR THE KEG.

GIRL

Sorry.

THE GIRL WALKS OFF-SCREEN.

LILY

It's okay. A few seconds aren't going  
to make or break my night.

VOICE (O.S.)

Last beer! The keg is dry!

LILY

But it might break your face!

LILY LUNGES OFF-SCREEN TOWARD THE GIRL.

WHIP-PAN BACK TO THE LIVING ROOM.

LILY

It was an adjustment period.

TED

See -- you were an undergrad. That's adolescence. Adults talk through their problems. We don't pick fights with people just because of a disagreement.

LILY

Tell that to Marshall.

MARSHALL

(ROLLS HIS EYES) Not this again.

TED

When was the last time you were in a fight?

LILY

It wasn't much of a fight at all.

MARSHALL

It was my second year in Law School.

TED

You were living here. I never heard about a fight.

FREEZE ON MARSHALL.

NARRATOR

Kids, your Uncle Marshall and I never kept secrets from one another -- except for this one time.

UNFREEZE.

MARSHALL

Yeah. About that...

WHIP-PAN TO MARSHALL IN A CROWDED LAW LIBRARY. SEVERAL EAGER AND EVIL LAW STUDENTS SCRAMBLE FOR RESEARCH MATERIALS.

MARSHALL (V.O.)

I was rushing at the end of the semester to finish a paper on the legal rights of Ecuadorian villagers affected by local deforestation.

MARSHALL GRABS A BOOK FROM A SHELF BUT ANOTHER HAND GRASPS IT AS WELL. HE SEES A SMALL AND CONNIVING LAW STUDENT GLEAMING AT HIM THROUGH THE BOOKCASE.

STUDENT

Just give me the volume, man, and everything will be fine.

MARSHALL

I need this book for my paper. It's due tomorrow.

THE TWO STRUGGLE FOR THE BOOK.

STUDENT

Okay. Just chill out. I'm going to go copy the pages I need and then I'll bring it back for you. Deal?

MARSHALL NODS.

MARSHALL (V.O.)

But he never came back. He took the book and left. I was furious.

WHIP-PAN BACK TO THE LIVING ROOM.

TED

So what did you do?

MARSHALL

I found that little pipsqueak in class  
the next week.

TED

And?

MARSHALL

I went up to him and said, "Hey  
friend, remember me?" Then I got right  
up to his face and told him I was  
going to wipe the floor with him.

TED

And then what?

MARSHALL

The whole class gathered around us.  
They started chanting, "Fight! Fight!  
Fight!"

TED

And?

MARSHALL

And that's the last thing I remember.  
Apparently that little guy was some  
sort of mixed martial artist. For the  
next two weeks I sat in an ice bath at  
Lily's place.

TED

Two weeks? (BEAT) Wait, was that the same two weeks you told me you were upstate visiting with your ailing grandmother?

MARSHALL GRABS THE REMOTE.

MARSHALL

Isn't there horse racing on today?

LILY

Anyway, Ted, sooner or later you're going to have to stand up for yourself.

TED

I do stand up for myself. But that doesn't mean I have to go no-holds-barred every time things get a little hairy. Human beings have reasoning skills. That's what separates us from chimpanzees.

BARNEY ENTERS WHILE EATING A BANANA.

BARNEY

Ted, we have to talk.

TED

Thanks, Barney, but I don't need anymore advice on how to "be a man."

BARNEY

We've got to get your machismo back.

LILY

Machismo?

BARNEY

Yes. Ted lost his machismo last night. I was just down at the bar and everyone was asking me, "Hey are you that guy who is best buds with the guy who doesn't have any machismo?" It was really embarrassing.

MARSHALL PATS TED ON THE BACK.

MARSHALL

Ted still has his machismo.

BARNEY

Sure. But he doesn't have his credit card. Thanks for the beers, buddy. Your tab is still open.

TED REMEMBERS. DAMN.

LILY

So tell us, Barney, how is Ted supposed to get his machismo back?

BARNEY

There is only one way. Ted, you have to go down to the bar tonight, find that guy and fight him like a man.

MARSHALL

That guy is huge, Barney. Ted would get killed -- literally. Not to mention he has never even been in a fight before.

BARNEY

Never been in a fight before? Ted, what are you waiting for? Now is your chance to prove yourself.

TED

I'm not going to fight anyone. But I am going down there to get my card.

INT. BAR - DAY

(TED, LARGE DUDE)

TED ENTERS AND SEES THE LARGE DUDE SITTING AT THE BAR. TED QUICKLY SPINS AROUND AND EXITS.

INT. TED AND MARSHALL'S APARTMENT - DAY

(BARNEY, MARSHALL, LILY, TED)

MARSHALL, LILY AND BARNEY SIT ON THE COUCH AND WATCH THE HORSE RACING ON TELEVISION.

BARNEY

Any idea why there are four hours of coverage for a race that lasts 90 seconds?

MARSHALL

It's not just a race. It's a spectacle.

BARNEY

Have you guys ever thought about  
buying a racing horse?

LILY

I can honestly say, "No."

BARNEY

Let me know if you change your mind. I  
know a dealer in Southeast Asia who'll  
sell us a colt for next to nothing. We  
just have to worry about it surviving  
the boat ride over.

TED ENTERS.

LILY

That was quick. Did you get your card?

BARNEY

Sorry about the total. I took the  
liberty of buying a round of shots for  
some girls on Spring Break. It was the  
first time they did shooters that  
weren't out of a test tube.

TED SITS DOWN IN A CHAIR.

TED

Actually, I didn't get the card.

LILY

Why not?

BARNEY STANDS.

BARNEY

He was down there -- wasn't he?

TED

Yes. He was.

MARSHALL

Did he see you?

TED

I don't think he had time

BARNEY

Now is your time, Ted. Go down there  
and get your machismo back. You'll  
never be able to show your face in the  
bar again if you don't. You may have  
to move. Don't throw all this away.

TED

For the last time, Barney, I'm not  
going to fight that guy. He probably  
doesn't even remember me.

INT. BAR - DAY  
(LARGE DUDE)

THE LARGE DUDE STOPS RANDOM PEOPLE WALKING THROUGH THE BAR.

LARGE DUDE

Have you seen that little funny man  
with the dark hair who comes in  
here..? What about you..? No..?

INT. TED AND MARSHALL'S APARTMENT - DAY  
(BARNEY, LILY, JAMES, MARSHALL, TED, NARRATOR, HIPPIE)

BARNEY

Who cares if he doesn't remember you?  
You remember him. Go kick his ass.

LILY

What do you know about scrapping,  
Barney? You seem like more of a lover  
than a fighter.

BARNEY SITS AND RESTS HIS LEGS ON THE TABLE.

BARNEY

While it's true that I am a definite  
ladies man, I've also been in my fair  
share of brawls. My brother and I used  
to be quite the intimidators in our  
neighborhood.

WHIP-PAN TO A PREPUBESCENT BARNEY AND HIS BROTHER, JAMES, IN  
A BACK ALLEY. JAMES IS REPRIMANDING A GROUP OF KIDS OFF-  
SCREEN WHILE BARNEY STANDS PROUDLY.

JAMES

Are you the guys trying to shake down  
my brother for his lunch money? No one  
messes with the Stinsons!

JAMES WALKS MENACINGLY TOWARD THE GROUP. CLOSE-UP OF YOUNG  
BARNEY'S SMILE AS WE HEAR A CHORUS OF FISTS AND WHIMPERS.

WHIP-PAN BACK TO THE LIVING ROOM.

MARSHALL

It sounds like your brother used to get into brawls -- not you.

BARNEY

I got my shots in -- when they were laying helplessly on the ground.

LILY

See, Ted, fighting builds character.

BARNEY

Not to mention, if you've never been in a fight before how do you know you're not awesome at it? You could be the next Jackie Chan.

MARSHALL

Or Bruce Lee.

LILY

Unleash the beast, Ted. You should start practicing by breaking two-by-fours and slowly work your way up to cinder blocks.

MARSHALL

(AS BRUCE LEE) But remember, be water my friend. Be water.

TED

It's not like I haven't tried to get into fights before. It's just never worked out.

WHIP-PAN TO A PREPUBESCENT TED ON THE SCHOOL PLAYGROUND. A GROUP OF KIDS SURROUND HIM AND ANOTHER BOY AS THE TENSION ESCALATES.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

And that was the truth, kids. Every time I could've gotten into a fight something always came up.

TED

You stole my crayons.

OOOO'S ERUPT FROM THE CROWD JUST AS... THE BELL RINGS.

WHIP-PAN BACK TO THE LIVING ROOM.

TED

I could've taken Pete Sanders too. He'd just had his tonsils out and had been eating through a straw for an entire week.

BARNEY

For all you know Pete Sanders was lucky you didn't devour him like a mythical beast. But that can't be the closest you've been to fighting another person.

WHIP-PAN TO COLLEGE TED IN A DORM HALLWAY. HE IS CONFRONTING A DIRTY HIPPIE.

TED

Listen, Rasta. I'm tired of you  
ripping off my friend Marshall on bags  
of sandwiches.

THE HIPPIE DOESN'T BACK DOWN.

HIPPIE

What are you going to do about it,  
Mosby -- sketch me an Opera House?

TED PUTS UP HIS DUKES.

TED

How about I rearrange your face?

TED REACHES BEHIND HIS BACK AND PUTS ON HIS BOXING HEADGEAR.  
HE PAUSES -- AND SNEEZES IN HIS HAND. THE HIPPIE BECOMES  
TERRIFIED.

HIPPIE

Oh my God! Oh my God!

THE HIPPIE RUNS AWAY.

WHIP-PAN BACK TO THE LIVING ROOM

TED

He was a germaphobe.

MARSHALL

A hippie germaphobe. Who would've  
guessed?

LILY

What about the time you and Robin  
almost got into a fight over a cab  
last year?

WHIP-PAN TO TED AND ROBIN WALKING TO A CAB. ANOTHER COUPLE ATTEMPTS TO STEAL THE CAB FROM THEM.

TED

Hey -- What do you think you're doing?

THE COUPLE STOPS. THE MAN STEPS BACK AND TAKES AN OFFENSIVE STANCE TOWARD TED. TED MOVES ROBIN BEHIND HIM AND DOES THE SAME. JUST THEN - ANOTHER CAB PULLS UP. THE OTHER COUPLE GETS IN THAT CAB INSTEAD. IT DRIVES AWAY.

WHIP-PAN BACK TO THE LIVING ROOM.

TED

Now that was a close call.

BARNEY

(SARCASTIC) Sure sounds like it. I can't wait for you to destroy that humongous dude so you have a real fight story to tell.

TED

Enough, guys. For once and for all, it's not happening. Besides, Stella and I talked about this. She has a daughter and doesn't want to date a guy who gets into bar fights.

BARNEY

I knew he was going to play the girlfriend's daughter card. Ted, before you fight this guy you need to work on your predictability.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. BAR - A FEW DAYS LATER - DAY  
(MARSHALL, LILY, ROBIN, BARNEY, TED, LARGE DUDE, STELLA)

MARSHALL, ROBIN AND LILY SIT AT THE BOOTH.

MARSHALL

Where is Ted? He was supposed to be  
here an hour ago.

LILY

He's probably laying low because he  
thinks that Large Dude might show up  
to cause trouble.

ROBIN

It's been four days. No one has even  
seen that guy since then.

MARSHALL

Meanwhile we get to reap the benefits.

A FIDGETY WAITRESS APPROACHES.

LILY

Can we have one more round please --  
on the Mosby tab?

THE WAITRESS GIGGLES AND WALKS AWAY.

MARSHALL

Is it just me or is that new waitress  
on speed?

LILY

I don't know but she has gone through about nine pieces of chewing gum since we got here.

MARSHALL

Maybe she is just nervous.

THE WAITRESS DELIVERS ANOTHER ORDER TO A NEARBY TABLE AND DOES A SERIES OF CARTWHEELS ON THE WAY BACK TO THE BAR.

ROBIN

Definitely speed. (BEAT) I don't know why Ted is being such a wimp about this. If he *is* avoiding the bar because of this guy then the bully wins. It's like low-level terrorism.

TED AND BARNEY ENTER. TED TRIES TO LOOK NATURAL BUT IS OBVIOUSLY ON THE LOOKOUT FOR THE LARGE DUDE. TED AND BARNEY SIT AT THE BOOTH.

LILY

What took you guys so long? We've been waiting for an hour.

BARNEY

We were looking for Ted's machismo. No such luck.

TED

I really wish you guys would drop this fighting thing. Stella is going to be here in a few minutes and I don't want to bring it up around her. Okay?

EVERYONE NODS.

TED

Besides - I was the bigger man.

LILY

Pfft. Yeah right. That guy was the size of a breakfast nook.

MARSHALL

All right -- No more.

LILY

It's dropped.

ROBIN

It's really not a big deal, Ted. You have a lot of other redeeming qualities outside of your inability to throw down. (BEAT) I'll think of some when I get back.

ROBIN LEAVES FOR THE BATHROOM.

BARNEY

I still can't believe you've never been in a fight before. Not even after Fight Club came out in the theaters?

TED

Afraid not.

MARSHALL

Really? I thought everyone joined an underground fight club after that movie was released.

BARNEY

Marshall, where was yours?

MARSHALL

Basement of the Ed Sullivan Theater.

BARNEY

Really?

MARSHALL

That Paul Schaeffer is an unrelenting and evil man. I can't enjoy the Late Show ever again after watching him in action. (BEAT) What about you?

BARNEY

Behind Scores -- It was one of several co-ed chapters I found around town. After about three minutes the girls would get tired and just lay there.

BARNEY RAISES HIS HAND TO GIVE MARSHALL A HIGH-FIVE.

MARSHALL SHAKES HIS HEAD.

LILY

Gross, Barney!

BARNEY

What? This week I'm using the left.  
You're supposed to alternate hands  
otherwise it'll start pointing --

LILY

Gross, Barney!

TED

Underground Fight Clubs -- I'm sorry I  
missed that social phenomenon.

BARNEY

Don't worry, Ted. I'm sure your time  
to shine will come sooner than later.

TED

And why is that?

LARGE DUDE ENTERS. HE LOOKS MEANER THAN EVER.

BARNEY

Because that Large Dude just walked in  
the bar.

LILY

Oh my Goodness. It is him. Ted, get  
down. Run away. Do something.

MARSHALL

It's okay, Ted. I've got your back.

BARNEY

Me too. (SHOUTS) Hey, Large Dude! That  
funny man is over here.

LILY

Barney, what are you doing?

BARNEY

It's machismo time, Ted. Win or lose  
you've got to get it back.

THE LARGE DUDE MAKES HIS WAY TO THE BOOTH.

LARGE DUDE

I've been looking for you. Stand up,  
funny man. We've got something we need  
to discuss man-to-man.

TED

Listen, pal, I'm not going to fight  
you. I don't know what your --

LARGE DUDE

You don't have a say in the matter.  
Now get up before I make you get up.

BARNEY

C'mon, Ted. Machismo.

TED RELUCTANTLY STANDS. THE OTHERS WATCH ANXIOUSLY AS THE  
LARGE DUDE TOWERS OVER HIM.

LILY

Please, sir. Not in the face. He's  
making a speech for my kindergarten  
class next week.

LARGE DUDE

I've been running into guys like you  
my whole life.

TED

Guys like me?

LARGE DUDE

Yes. Guys like you - guys who need to  
be taught a lesson.

THE PATRONS TAKE NOTICE. EVERYONE HAS THEIR EYES ON TED AND  
THE LARGE DUDE. THE WAITRESS RETURNS WITH THE ROUND OF  
DRINKS, GIGGLY AND OBLIVIOUS TO THE SITUATION.

MARSHALL

Listen, Large Dude. Why don't you just  
get a beer and relax? We're all  
friends here.

LARGE DUDE

If you're a friend of this guy, you  
ain't no friend of mine.

WE MOVE IN SLOW-MOTION.

LARGE DUDE GRABS TED BY THE SHIRT AND WINDS BACK TO DELIVER A  
DEVASTATING BLOW.

LILY

I said not in the face!

BARNEY CAN'T LOOK. HE TURNS AWAY.

MARSHALL SHIELDS LILY'S EYES AND CLOSES HIS OWN IN FEAR.

SUDDENLY -- WHOOSH -- LARGE DUDE'S FEET FLY UP IN THE AIR. HE  
LANDS FLAT ON HIS BACK.

STOP SLOW-MOTION.

BARNEY

What the hell was that? Did anyone see  
what just happened?

LARGE DUDE

(FROM THE FLOOR) I can't feel my arms.

LILY

Ted! How did you do that?

TED

I don't know. I guess he slipped.

MARSHALL

Slipped? It looks like you kicked his  
ass. You are Bruce Lee!

BARNEY STANDS AND RAISES TED'S HAND.

BARNEY

We have a winner!

THE PATRONS CHEER. STELLA ENTERS AND MAKES HER WAY THROUGH  
THE CROWD.

STELLA

Ted, what is going on here?

BARNEY

Ted just got his machismo back! He  
dropped this guy like a bad habit.

STELLA

I thought we went over this. I don't  
want my daughter around someone who  
gets into fights in bars. I thought  
you were an adult.

TED

I am an adult. This was my only option  
-- I honestly had no other choice.

STELLA

You always have another choice.

TED

Stella, wait. Let me explain.

STELLA LEAVES.

BARNEY

You'd think she'd be proud of you.

After all -- you did just destroy a  
guy twice your size.

LARGE DUDE

(STILL ON THE FLOOR). You mean to tell  
me that you know that woman?

TED

Yes. We've been dating for six months.

LARGE DUDE RAISES A HAND.

LARGE DUDE

Can you help me up, please? I am  
confused.

INT. BAR - A FEW MINUTES LATER

(NARRATOR, TED, LARGE DUDE, LILY, BARNEY, MARSHALL)

THE LARGE DUDE TELLS HIS STORY TO THE GROUP. HE HOLDS AN ICE  
PACK ON HIS NECK AND IS IN SERIOUS PAIN.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

And that's when the Large Dude  
explained what happened a few days  
earlier, kids.

WHIP-PAN TO TED AND STELLA TALKING AT THE BAR ABOUT BARNEY'S  
JELQING TECHNIQUE.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

He'd overheard my conversation with Stella and thought I was some creep who was hitting on her.

TED

He says you just have to pull on it for a long time and it'll eventually show real results.

WHIP-PAN TO STELLA WALKING AWAY TO THE BATHROOM. THE LARGE DUDE SEES HER LEAVE AND APPROACHES TED.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

When Stella left to go to the bathroom he thought he was doing her a favor by ridding her of some random pervert.

WHIP-PAN BACK TO THE BAR.

TED

So you were actually trying to stick up for Stella by kicking my ass?

LARGE DUDE

Yes. I felt bad for her. Who would believe something so stupid anyway? It's not like it's Laffy Taffy or something down there.

LILY

(EXCITED) That's what I said.

LILY RAISES HER HAND TO HIGH-FIVE THE LARGE DUDE BUT HE CRINGES IN FEAR OF THE PHYSICAL CONTACT.

LARGE DUDE

I'm sorry, Ted. I owe you an apology.

TED

It's okay. I'm just glad you didn't pound my face into the ground.

LARGE DUDE

I didn't have the chance. (BEAT) I've been in quite a few scuffles in my day, Ted, but no one I've met is as lethal or as quick as you.

TED

Thanks. I appreciate it.

LARGE DUDE

Let me make it up to you. I'll pay your tab. How does that sound?

BARNEY

Sounds great!

MARSHALL

Cheers to you, Large Dude.

WE SEE ROBIN, THE CANADIAN NINJA, SITTING AT THE BAR AND ADMIRING TED. PERHAPS SHE STILL HAS FEELINGS FOR HIM...

INT. BAR - LATER IN THE NIGHT

(TED, LILY, MARSHALL, BARNEY, NARRATOR)

TED, MARSHALL AND LILY REMAIN AT THE BOOTH.

TED

So now what do I do? Every time things start going really well with Stella something happens to screw it up.

LILY

Just give it time, Ted. She'll come around. We'll vouch for you if we have to about the fight. She'll understand.

TED

But you shouldn't have to vouch for me. She should just take my word for it. That's what couples do -- they trust each other.

MARSHALL

Well there is an added variable to this relationship that you're pretty unfamiliar with.

TED

I know. I don't want to hurt her or her daughter. (BEAT) Things were so much easier when Robin and --

BARNEY RETURNS FROM THE BATHROOM AND SITS DOWN.

BARNEY

Hey, what happened to the Large Dude?

LILY

He left unfortunately -- said he had to catch a plane back to Iowa.

MARSHALL

Did you guys get his name?

TED

I think he said it was "Bart." Does that sound right?

LILY

Bart. Yes. He was a nice guy.

MARSHALL

Nice enough to pay that outrageous bar tab. Poor dude didn't know what he was getting himself into.

TED

I just wish he didn't feel the need to supply me with so much bad relationship advice before he left.

BARNEY

Relationship advice?

LILY

He was trying to explain to Ted that the level of seriousness of his relationships with Stella was directly proportionate to his percentage of lameness.

BARNEY

He was telling you about the Lameness  
versus Relationship Paradigm?

TED

That's exactly what he called it.

BARNEY

That's straight from my Blog. (BEAT)  
And his name was Bart? (BEAT) And he  
was from Iowa?

MARSHALL

Yep. That's him.

BARNEY

Cow-Tipping-Bart! He reads my blog!

BARNEY KNOCKS OVER PATRONS ON HIS WAY OUT THE DOOR. HE TRIPS  
OVER HIMSELF RUNNING UP THE STEPS.

BARNEY

And he leaves comments!

TED, LILY AND MARSHALL CHEERS.

TED

Here's to Cow-Tipping-Bart.

LILY

And Ted's Machismo.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

And that, kids, is the story of my  
first and only fight.

THE END