

Gentlemen's Club

by

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INT. STRIP CLUB - NIGHT

A rowdy group of guys is gathered near the stage, ready for a show. It's an eclectic mix: blue collar and white collar, jocks, businessmen, slackers, etc. They're very, very loud, howling and whistling and burping and scratching themselves.

In the middle of the crowd, two average-looking guys in their late twenties shout to each other over the noise.

LARRY

Doug! It's not too late to go back!

DOUG

Nah, man, I can handle it!

LARRY

I'm warning you, dude, this is unlike anything you've ever seen back home! You're in L.A. now! We take things to another level!

DOUG

Hey, man, that's why I moved here!

LARRY

Just try not to get freaked out, okay? This place can blow your mind!

Suddenly, the club goes dark. Intense, techno music kicks in. An omnipresent, computerized voice blares over everything, counting down from ten. Some of the guys shout along with it.

VOICE/GUYS

Nine! ... Eight! ... Seven! ...

Other guys just shout like incoherent barbarians.

GUYS

Bring it! Ow! Boo ya! Raaaaah!

Spotlights race around the stage. Strobe lights make everything frenetic. Doug isn't sure if he's ready for whatever's about to happen, but he steels himself.

GUYS (CONT'D)

Six! ... Five! ... Four!...

Some of the guys are pounding on the tables. It's intense. It's raucous. For Doug, it's even a little scary.

GUYS (CONT'D)

Three! ... Two! ... One!

The guys go nuts. Some jump up and down, others pump their fists and salute with their pints.

As the various spotlights gather into a single beam, the curtains part, and a beautiful woman walks out in a bathrobe.

The guys continue shouting and smiling and making noise as ... they cover their eyes. Some simply hold their hands over their faces, many turn around completely and face the back of the club. Larry nudges Doug to turn around with him.

LARRY

Dude! It's called "custody of the eyes"!

DOUG

(confused, but going with it)
Kinky!

With a camera p.o.v. from behind the stage, we see the bathrobe hit the ground. Beyond the woman's legs and high heels, we see the rowdy guys around the stage cheering -- but not looking.

DOUG (CONT'D)

Larry! What's going on?!

LARRY

It's better if you wait!

The discreet camera work shows the woman reach behind the curtain and pull out a small rack of clothes which she attaches to the stripper pole. She starts getting dressed.

SLACKER

Can we look yet?? Is she decent??

GANGBANGER

Tell us when she's decent! Ow!

When the woman's basically covered, she walks to the edge of the stage and gently kicks a jock in the shoulder. He turns.

JOCK

Yeah! She's putting her clothes on!
Raaaaaah!

Everyone opens their eyes/turns around as she finishes buttoning up her shirt. The guys go nutburgers.

GUYS

Yeah! Do it! Put it on!

GRAD STUDENT
Cover it up! Cover it all up!

GANGBANGER
Bring back the mystery!

Some are slapping the stage. Some howl like feral beasts.

DOUG
(unheard)
What the hell is this!?

JOCK
She's got it, but she doesn't need to flaunt it! I find that I respect her for that!

CONSTRUCTION WORKER
Yeah! Put on the cardigan! Dress in layers! Yeah!

SLACKER
What's she doing?! Is she about to--

ACCOUNTANT
She is! She's totally going for it!

The woman rolls up her hair into a bun and puts on glasses. The guys are out of control, spilling beer and jumping all over each other like a mosh pit.

FRAT DUDE
Now I see the whole person!

Doug is baffled.

DOUG
(unheard)
Who are you guys?!

The woman gracefully places a chair in the middle of the stage, then sits on it. She opens a large bag and pulls out ... a textbook. She opens it and starts reading.

SLACKER
Do it, sweet mama! Better yourself!

GANGBANGER
Yeah! Reassess your career options!
Ow!

The guys pull out dollars and wave them around.

BUSINESSMAN

We support higher education!

The woman, with a kind smile, gathers the money then sits back down.

FRAT DUDE

Yeah! Matriculate! Take some
electives! Raaaah!

TRUCKER

Owoooooogaa!

THUG

Ma'am! If it's not too forward to
ask, what are you studying?!

She holds up her textbook so they can see the cover.

GUYS

(approval)

NURSING!!!

The guys jump up and chest bump and pour beer on each other like maniacs.

GUYS (CONT'D)

There's such a shortage of nurses
right now! Yeah! She's gonna
alleviate suffering! YEEEEAAA--

DOUG

WHAT THE [BEEP] IS WRONG WITH YOU
PEOPLE?! When do I see some boobs?!

The music scratches to a halt.

Everyone goes silent. Everyone stares at Doug. Even the woman looks up from her book.

BUSINESSMAN

(to Doug)

What did you just say?

DOUG

I said I just paid thirty bucks to get
into this BEEPing BEEPhole and I drove
a thousand BEEPing miles across the
country to get here, so let's cut the
bullBEEP and see some BEEP already!!

Everyone kind of tilts their heads, some with anger, some with pity.

BUSINESSMAN

Larry, did you bring this guy?

LARRY

(sort of apologetic)

We went to college together! It's been years! We barely know each other any more...

DOUG

You guys are all BEEPing idiots! I'm outta here.

The crowd shifts to block Doug's exit.

JOCK

The hell you are. I think you and me and Larry and Rico and Davey and Josh and Willy and Angelo and Mark and George and T-Funk and Rajeev and Enrique and Pete need to have a conversation.

LAWYER

What's your name?

DOUG

I don't need to tell you my name.

LARRY

His name's "Doug".

Doug shoots Larry a look.

JOCK

"Doug", huh? I'm gonna call you "d-bag", because that's what you sounded like just now.

SLACKER

D-bag, seriously, you're making our gender look bad.

GRAD STUDENT

And not just that, you're reflecting poorly on our entire species.

DUDE IN DEF LEPARD T-SHIRT

Maybe the problem here isn't that you're overvaluing the body and sex; maybe you're failing to see just how valuable the body and sex really are.

GANGSTA RAPPER

What if that were your sister up there? Do you even have a sister?

DOUG

I don't need to answer that.

LARRY

He's got three.

DOUG

This is insane! She's just a BLEEPing stripper!

JOCK

Oh, that does it! You're getting kicked in the face!

The jock puts Doug in a headlock. Everyone prepares to kick Doug in the face. Larry steps in.

LARRY

Wait! Hold on! He's just a product of his environment! He's bombarded with sexually irresponsible viewpoints twenty-five hours a day!

RETIRED SCHOOLTEACHER

Fine. Then we'll beat the stupid out of him.

LARRY

He's not stupid, he's just ignorant! He doesn't know what he's saying! Plus, I have to drive him home, and I don't want him bleeding in my car.

Pause.

GANGBANGER

Okay. For the sake of Larry's upholstery, we're not gonna cut you up just yet -- provided you've arrived at "a teachable moment".

The jock cranks the headlock tighter and knocks on Doug's head.

JOCK

Are you feeling teachable, D-bag? Are you? Sounds kind of hollow in there. Maybe we need to change that, huh?

The jock tosses Doug to the crowd, who hold him secure.
Someone turns Doug's head toward the stage.

ACCOUNTANT

Tell me, D-bag, when you look up on
that stage, what do you see?

DOUG

Um ... a slut? Somebody I want to do
stuff to?

Doug is smacked on the head and tossed to someone else.

SUBWAY VIGILANTE

What you see is a woman! And you're
supposed to be a man!

SLACKER

(in Doug's face, like a drill
sergeant)

You even know what manhood is? You
have to give, you jackhole. You have
to sacrifice! Your job is to honor
her! To defend her! To lay down
your life if you have to!

Doug gets tossed again.

KARATE INSTRUCTOR

When you objectify someone, you not
only violate her dignity, you violate
your own! So get it right, you
walking turd! Woman is the pinnacle
of creation.

The woman glances up from her book, smiles sweetly, gives a
little wave, and returns to reading.

DOUG

But, I don't understand. Don't you
want to see her boobs?

SLOB

Dude! It's like every time you open
your mouth, I just feel embarrassed
for you.

DOUG

But she's freakin' hot! What's wrong
with wanting to hit that?!

Doug gets slapped.

JOCK

Like that? Is that how you wanna hit that? How 'bout like this?

Like in The Three Stooges, Doug is misdirected, then slapped from the other direction.

FRAT DUDE

It's like it says in the catechism: either man governs his passions and finds peace, or he's dominated by them and becomes a tortured little weak-ass bitch.

DUDE IN DEF LEPARD T-SHIRT

Maybe your sexually distorted horndog ways are what flies in Des Moines or Chattanooga or wherever the hell you came from, but you're in L.A. now. Around here, we have morals.

SUBWAY VIGILANTE

Have you ever even heard of "chastity"? It's a virtue, homes.

GANGBANGER

And the word "virtue" is derived from the Latin "vir", denoting "manly strength". It frees from selfishness and makes us able to bring the love.

DOUG

But-- um. Give me a minute. My head is swimming. Did somebody slip me a roofie?

LUMBERJACK

The only roofie around here is the truth.

BOY SCOUT WITH FAKE MUSTACHE

Look, the opposite of love isn't hate -- it's lust.

DOUG

But-- But--

LARRY

Don't take our word for it. Reflect on your own experience. You ever treat women like crap and then feel good about yourself?

The jock slaps a vice-grip on Doug's head and lifts him off the ground.

JOCK
You learning yet, D-bag?

DOUG
I am! I'm learning real hard!

LARRY
You ever notice how there's no STDs or rape or crisis pregnancies around here? That's 'cause you're in El Pueblo de la Reina de Los Angeles now. We take things to another level. So either you gotta shape up, or go on back to Herpesville.

Doug's shoved away from everyone and allowed to stand on his own.

DOUG
Okay. Wow. Um, maybe some of what you're saying might make a little sense. Maybe. But, c'mon, I thought this was a strip club.

BUSINESSMAN
First of all, it's a "gentlemen's club", so we ask that you behave accordingly. Secondly, we think you owe someone an apology.

The crowd parts, leaving passage to the stage, where the woman is studying intently. As Doug approaches, she closes her book.

DOUG
Um, ma'am. I'm sorry if I was a d-bag. I'll try not to ... uh ... ubjafly people--

KARATE INSTRUCTOR
"Objectify".

DOUG
Objectify people anymore.

FRAT DUDE
And?

DOUG
And ... I'd like to make a donation to your college fund. Selflessly. Of my own volition.

(MORE)

DOUG (CONT'D)
And not because they'll kick me in
the face if I don't.

GANGBANGER
And?

DOUG
And ... from now on, I'll try to stop
forgetting my sisters' birthdays?

The woman stands and puts her hand on his shoulder.

WOMAN
I forgive you. Doug.

Doug turns around, hoping he's in the clear.

LARRY
And?

DOUG
And ... and ... um ... I'd like to
buy a round for all my new friends?

LARRY
Spoken like a true gentleman.

Everyone roars in approval. The intense music kicks back in.
They jump around and headbutt each other and fart and spit and
and gnaw on the furniture.

FADE OUT.

EXT. SIDEWALK - LATER

A few hours later, as everyone stumbles from the club and onto
the sidewalks of Sunset Boulevard, we see a billboard across
the street reading "A World at Prayer is a World at Peace".

FADE TO BLACK.