

Simply Red

Written By

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INT. BEDROOM - EVENING

RED is getting dressed for a date with his girlfriend, ALLISON, casually looking in the mirror and putting on his clip-on tie. He softly sings the Spongebob Squarepants theme song under his breath as he gets ready.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Red gets into his car and drives to Allison's house, which is next-door. Once he arrives, he honks the car horn loudly. Allison walks out, dressed in a fancy dress, heels, and excessive jewelry. She gets into the car and sits in the passenger's seat. Red pulls out a party horn and blows it in her face.

RED

Happy Anniversary! Where do you wanna eat?

ALLISON

How about Raffael's?

RED

Ehhhh, that's a little expensive for me. But I do know a great little place in near the center of town I think you'll love. Really up-scale, gourmet stuff, but in my price-range. No dessert though.

ALLISON

(smiling)

Okay.

They drive to the restaurant.

EXT. RICO'S - LATER

The couple stands outside of Rico's. Red starts to walk toward the door, but Allison stops him.

ALLISON

(disgusted)

Wait. Rico's? We're going here? Didn't you say it'd be "gourmet"?

RED

Umm, have you ever tried a BJ wrap?

ALLISON

(fuming)

Alright...

INT. RICO'S - LATER

Now inside the restaurant after finishing their a pizza at the table, Red belches and proceeds to talk to Allison. Red obnoxiously eats his last pizza. Rico's workers come out with BJ wrap with a candle in it, unenthusiastically singing Happy Birthday.

RED

Oh, unreal!

ALLISON

This must be a mistake, it's not your bir-

RED

SHHHHHH! I told them it was. This way it's FREE!

The Rico's workers hear and smash the wrap in Red's face.

Allison hangs her head in shame as he starts to piece the BJ wrap back together, like a wounded friend in battle. Red performs CPR on the mangled BJ wrap.

EXT. RICO'S - LATER

As 2 Rico's workers carry Red by his arms and throw him out the door, Allison, embarrassed, follows.

RED

This is egregious!

Allison stops and turns to Red furiously.

ALLISON

We just got BANNED from there. You insulted the worker, stole french fries off of someone's plate, and tackled an old woman with her walker!

RED

First of all, this happens about once a week and they always let me back, so no one is banned. And I don't see anything wrong with trying to get more for my money. Second of all, I could have sworn that old lady had a gun, I was trying to save you!

ALLISON
That was her inhaler, Red.

RED
I see that now. Better safe than
sorry, though.

Red licks his fingers, having finished the last french fry.
Allison glares at him as he does it.

RED
Oh, don't worry, I have more.

He pulls more french fries out of his pockets and gestures
his hand toward Allison. She storms away to the car.

RED
Alright, more for me then.

INT. HALLWAY - THE NEXT DAY

Red and Allison walk through the hallway with friends. Red
is just himself, to Allison's slight annoyance. When other
people laugh, though, she also laughs--albeit halfheartedly.
Finally, after a montage of his outrageous humor, we see Red
at Allison's locker. She looks stressed out, filing through
index cards.

RED
Anything wrong?

ALLISON
My presentation is next block.

RED
Presentation? This is the first
I've heard about a presentation.

ALLISON
Seriously? I've talked about it
every day since it got assigned. I
canceled everything on my schedule
last week to practice for it. I
practiced IN FRONT OF YOU on our
date last night.

RED
Doesn't ring a bell.

ALLISON
Wait... We're in the same class.
You have to present too.

RED
Yikes. I guess I'll be working on
that tonight.

Allison rolls her eyes in disbelief.

ALLISON
Ok, let's go.

The two leave to go to the class.

INT. HISTORY CLASSROOM - LATER

One student finishes presenting and the class applauds. Some students wipe tears from their eyes and exclaim how impressive the speech was. Allison claps softly with an expression of pure terror on her face. Red sits next to her. He stops hollering with the class to encourage her.

RED
(whispering)
You're gonna do great. Probably not
as good as that guy, but really
good.

Allison looks increasingly terrified. MRS. O'LEARY then calls up the net speaker.

MRS. O'LEARY
Allison, you're up next.

Allison walks to the front of the classroom with her index cards, and the class goes silent.

She begins to speak about the Great Depression, obviously nervous. Seeing how poorly she is doing, Red pulls out a whoopie cushion, blows it up, and presses on it to make an loud, obnoxious sound, interrupting Allison's speech.

RED
(turning to a skinny kid
next to him)
Albert, was that YOU?

The class breaks into laughter as ALBERT denies the accusation in embarrassment. Allison looks furious.

MRS. O'LEARY
Red, cut it out with the whoopie
cushion; Allison, you may continue
with the presentation.

Allison hurries through the last line of her presentation

and quickly returns to her seat. Red turns to her.

RED
Good job, babe!

ALLISON
(livid)
What the hell was that?

RED
The whoopie cushion? I was just
lightening the mood.

ALLISON
The "mood" didn't need to be
"lightened!"

RED
I think we all can agree that the
Great Depression is kind of a
mood-killer. You needed a little
fun in there, and I provided you
with it. You're welcome.

ALLISON
(moving on)
Okay. Before you leave to go home,
how about we talk in private for a
bit?

RED
Sure thing.

The bell rings and Red follows Allison out.

INT. CLASSROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Allison ushers Red into an empty classroom. She has calmed down after the presentation incident, but still looks serious. She stands at the front of the classroom.

ALLISON
Richard, take a seat.

RED
(sitting down)
What's going on? And who's Richard?
Why are you calling me that?

ALLISON
That's your actual name. Eventually
you're going to have to start using
it.

RED

Yeah, if you're my grandma. Age has really taken a toll on her memory... But I'm Red.

ALLISON

Whatever. We have to talk. Now. As senior year begins I have to think about colleges, adulthood, et cetera-

RED

Chill out, Allison. College and all that adulthood stuff is a while away. Same with, uh, et-ce-te-ra.

ALLISON

(sighing)

In short, I am trying to move forward with my life, and I think the only way I can do that is if I break up with you.

RED

What?!

Allison shakes her head, thinking that he simply doesn't understand her vocabulary.

ALLISON

I'm dumping you! Can you understand that?

RED

This is crazy! Why would you do this?! I am everything a girl could ASK for. Oh god... Do my guns make you uncomfortable?

ALLISON

Guns? What guns?

Red gestures to his arms with pride and seriousness.

RED

I have a permit to carry for these two.

ALLISON

(shaking her head)

Richard, Richard, Richard. You're just too immature. WAY too

(MORE)

ALLISON (CONT'D)

immature.

RED

(cutting her off)

Immature? ME? How am I immature?

ALLISON

Not to mention, you're not romantic at all. You never try to make time for me or do anything special. And it's not like you have any excuse for it when all you're ever doing is goofing off.

RED

What are you talking about? Don't you think it's romantic when I make sure the guy at McDonald's puts a toy in our both of our meals?

ALLISON

Knowing that you wouldn't understand this, like most things, I've prepared a powerpoint presentation.

Allison dims the lights and pulls up a slideshow full of Red doing immature, embarrassing things. She explains some of the pictures and video clips. The slideshow ends, and the lights come back on. She walks back to the front of the classroom.

ALLISON

Do you understand now?

RED

(increasingly upset)

This doesn't make sense, Allison. I don't see anything wrong with me being a fun person. That doesn't make me "childish". I know plenty of mature adults who would get temporary face tattoos to show school spirit.

ALLISON

This is just for the better. For me, at least. Anyway, I'll see you around. Bye.

Allison leaves the room. Red bursts into tears of rage as soon as she closes the door behind herself. Suddenly, MR.

ERKER speaks.

MR. ERKER

Red, I do need to grade some papers, so would you mind taking it outside?

RED

You've been here this whole time, Mr. Erker?

Mr. Erker nods. Embarrassed, Red picks up his backpack, wipes his tears, and walks out.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Red walks down the hallway to his locker, looking at the ground and frowning. His friend, LUKE, sees him.

LUKE

Oh, hey, Red. What are you still here for?

RED

Allison was just, uh, showing me something.

LUKE

Why do you look so down then?

RED

It was a slideshow about why she's breaking up with me.

LUKE

What? Why? I didn't know you guys were having problems.

RED

We weren't. She just thinks I'm too "immature."

LUKE

That's no big deal, man. Just act a little more mature and she'll be over it soon enough.

RED

Actually, that's not a terrible idea... Yeah, from this moment forward, I'm gonna be the most mature person that girl's ever met. No more of this red. I'm going to

(MORE)

RED (CONT'D)

be the Prince Harry type of Red.

Luke takes a roll of toilet paper out of the paper bag he's been carrying.

LUKE

(sympathetically)

So I guess you can't TP any houses tonight?

RED

Uh, I guess I'll just have to start the whole mature thing tomorrow.

LUKE

Sounds good.

Luke leaves and Red goes back to getting things from his locker.

EXT. RED'S HOUSE - MORNING

Early morning. We hear an alarm clock.

INT. RED'S BEDROOM

Red's alarm goes off at 6:30 A.M. His hand hits it, but he is revealed to be fully dressed in formal clothing.

INT. BATHROOM

He combs his hair suavely and makes finger guns at the mirror.

INT. KITCHEN

In the kitchen, he sees MRS. REDENBACHER and his younger brother, JOHN. Mrs. Redenbacher cleans the counter while John eats breakfast and writes in a notebook. There is a bowl of Lucky Charms in milk on the table.

MRS. REDENBACHER

Oh, good morning, Red. You're up early today, huh?

RED

Mom, this is unacceptable.

MRS. REDENBACHER

What, honey?

Red flips the bowl of cereal, spilling the contents all over John.

RED
 This! I can't have this kids'
 cereal anymore. I need a deviled
 egg. And coffee. Black coffee.

MRS. REDENBACHER
 Alright...

Mrs. Redenbacher pours him a cup of coffee and places it on the table before getting a carton of eggs from the refrigerator.

RED
 Thank you, mother.

Red takes a sip of the coffee and spits it out immediately in disgust all over John.

RED
 What is this?! It tastes like
 liquid brussel sprouts!

MRS. REDENBACHER
 (sighing)
 Chocolate milk, then?

RED
 (a la Bond)
 Stirred, not shaken.

Mrs. Redenbacher makes the chocolate milk as Red looks at his Spongebob watch and sees the time.

RED
 I ought to get going now. John,
 mother, have an excellent day.

Before he leaves, Red takes a sip of the chocolate milk and sighs in delight.

RED
 That's the stuff.

Red leaves, and John is shown covered in the food, blow-drying his notebook.

INT. HALLWAY - LATER

Red walks into school, obviously trying to have good posture. He walks through the hallway and greets friends using archaic, overtly sophisticated language. A nerdy and young PANTS KID walks up to the kid whose locker is next to Red's.

PANTS KID

Gosh, I love these new pants. I just wish they weren't so loose around the waistband. They'll probably be fine, but if they DID somehow fall, it would be so embarrassing, what with the underwear I have on today.

Red begins to eye the boys with interest. He tries to restrain himself, but finally speaks.

RED

(shaking with temptation)
So, um, what makes your underwear so embarrassing?

PANTS KID

That's none of your beeswax.

RED

I NEED TO KNOW!

Pants Kid is overcome with horror as Red finally pantses him, revealing PowerPuff Girls (or other kids' show) boxers. The boy screams in embarrassment, until suddenly Red is back where he was a moment earlier.

It was only a dream.

PANTS KID

(waving his hand over Red's face, increasingly emotional)
Excuse me? I have the right to wear whatever undergarments I want.

Having snapped out of his daydream, Red bangs his head against his locker in anguish, ignoring the Pants Kid's words. He turns back to him.

RED

(apathetically)
Certainly. Have a delightful day.

A single tear rolls down his cheek as he walks to homeroom.

Mr. Erker sees him and shakes his head in disappointment.

INT. HOMEROOM - CONTINUOUS

Red sits down at a desk next to Luke.

LUKE

So, how's the whole "mature" thing going?

RED

Not so good, Luke. Not so good. I really can't do this on my own.

LUKE

Just talk to someone who's kind of mature. Like someone in NHS or something like that.

Luke scans the room and sees a posh-looking boy who sips tea while reading a book, NIGEL.

LUKE

(pointing at Nigel)
Someone like that kid.

RED

Who's he?

LUKE

I don't know, I think his name is Nigel or something. Just go talk to him and see what he says.

Red nods and then walks over to Nigel. He sits down in the seat in front of him, gets into a sophisticated pose, and loudly clears his throat.

NIGEL

May I help you?

RED

What?

NIGEL

(louder, irritated)
May I help you?

Red puts his index finger up to Nigel and turns to Luke. He covers the side of his mouth with his hand so that Nigel won't see what he's saying.

RED

(attempting to whisper)
Luke, I don't think this one speaks English...

Luke looks back at him with confusion.

NIGEL
(incredulous)
Excuse me? I can hear you just fine, and I believe what you're referring to is my accent.

RED
Accent?

NIGEL
Yes, I'm the British exchange student. But why are you here? I have a Henry James novel to read.

RED
Let's talk in the hallway.

NIGEL
Uh, alright...

INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Red and Nigel stand outside of their homeroom.

NIGEL
Wait, so who are you and why are you talking to me?

RED
My name is Red.

NIGEL
Oh, because of your hair?

RED
Nah, my last name is Redenbacher. Your name is Nigel, right?

NIGEL
Right. So what is your problem?

RED
Ok, so do you know Allison Huntington?

NIGEL
Ah, yes. She's in my English class.

RED
Well, we've been dating for two years, but for some reason she broke up with me yesterday.

NIGEL

(in disbelief, growing
laughter)

Wait. Allison went out with YOU?
That's brilliant. Absolutely
unbelievable. How on earth did you
ever get a date with her?! I mean,
it's no wonder that she broke up
with you, but I am in awe that she
ever associated with the likes of
you! How is that possible?!

RED

(fuming)

Hey! You know what punk? I don't
like your tone. This here's America
and your fixin' to get hit with 200
pounds of country force!

Red rips off his dress shirt and puts on a wrestling mask
that he takes from his pocket. He announces himself like a
WWE fighter and pounces on a confused Nigel. The two begin
to wrestle, and suddenly Allison walks by.

ALLISON

Really, Richard? I was considering
giving you a second chance, but
clearly you're never changing.

She starts to walk away as Red stops the wrestling.

RED

Wait, Allison! This isn't what it
looks like!

She does not turn around, and the two boys stand up.

RED

I really do need your help, man.

NIGEL

You just tried to maim me!

RED

I'm sorry, I'm kind of a sensitive
guy. I won't do anything like that
again if you just teach me how to
be more mature.

NIGEL

What do I get out of it?

RED
Twenty bucks?

NIGEL
Ok... In pounds.

RED
Uh, sure.

NIGEL
Just meet me after school today.

RED
Got it.

MONTAGE - NIGEL TEACHING RED HOW TO BE MATURE

EXT. RED'S HOUSE - DAY

Red's friends, including Luke and JOSH, ring his door bell. They are dressed in all black and wear balaclavas, appearing ready to rob a bank. Red answers the door wearing khakis and a polo shirt.

RED
Oh, hey, guys. What are you doing here?

JOSH
What are you wearing? We thought you'd be ready to go.

RED
What, are you guys going skiing or something?

LUKE
No! We're stealing the Norwood Mustang. I know I told you about it.

RED
I'm sorry I forgot, man, but I can't anyway. I'm trying to be more mature.

LUKE
(whispering with disappointment)
But it's such a good prank.

RED
(also pained by the

missed opportunity)
 I know, I know... But Allison will
 never take me back if she hears
 that I stole a horse.

JOSH
 (emotional)
 But what about us? What about our
 pranks? I just want American Red
 back.

RED
 (reassuring)
 Josh, it's gonna be okay. I
 promise. You know I'm just trying
 to get Allison back. Cut me some
 slack.

LUKE
 Ok, man. Just try not to lose it
 like this again, ok?

RED
 (chuckling imperiously)
 Don't worry about it, gentlemen.

Luke and Josh look at each other with confusion and horror.
 An old-fashioned car horn goes off nearby.

RED
 Ooh, that must be Nigel! He's
 taking me to the town library
 today. Sorry, lads. Good day!

Red walks out to the car. Luke and Josh look horrified.

JOSH
 (nearly crying)
 The library? I can't watch him do
 this to himself, I can't do it.

Luke tries to console his overwhelmed friend.

INT. HOMEROOM - THE NEXT DAY

Red sits in homeroom, reading a comic that he has placed
 inside of a larger novel. Nigel walks up to him.

NIGEL
 Alright, Red, do you feel all set
 now with your little dilemma?

RED

Pretty much, yeah. I did want your advice on one last thing before I make my move, though.

NIGEL

Yes?

RED

Well, I want to find a way to take her to dinner at Raffael's tonight. But how do I even get her to go with me, and what do I say to her to show that I've changed?

NIGEL

Red, Red, Red. You're just not quite ready yet. Not refined enough for Raffael's. Cancel your reservations, and talk to her again in a month or so. Now, may I have my payment?

RED

I'll need a while to convert that, but I'll have it soon.

NIGEL

Alright... Just remember we've all gotta pay the bills.

RED

(confused)

Uh, yeah.

EXT. RAFFAEL'S - EVENING

Red walks into Raffael's, wearing nice clothes, to cancel his reservation.

INT. RAFFAEL'S - CONTINUOUS

Red walks up to the front desk to speak with the HOSTESS.

RED

Greetings, madame. I'd like to cancel a reservation.

The hostess begins to pen her mouth to speak, but Red hushes her.

RED

Now, you may be wondering: Why

(MORE)

RED (CONT'D)

doesn't he just call to cancel his reservation? But, that would be immature.

HOSTESS

Ok, sir. What time was your reservation?

RED

5 o'clock. Under the name Redenbacher.

The hostess looks at the reservation book, and a quizzical look appears on her face.

HOSTESS

Sir, the only reservation we have for 5 o'clock was for a Nigel [funny last name].

RED

Wait, Nigel? Is he here?

HOSTESS

Uh, yes, right over there.

She points to a table nearby, where Nigel and Allison sit.

Red looks shocked and horrified, but tries to compose himself. He pulls out a five-dollar bill and stretches it out in front of her.

RED

Ma'am, I would like to introduce you to a great man named Abraham Lincoln.

The hostess looks at him with slight confusion.

INT. NIGEL'S TABLE - MOMENTS LATER

Allison and Nigel sit at the table, holding hands and looking at one another dreamily.

ALLISON

Wow, Nigel, this place is sooo nice. Are you sure you can pay for all of it?

NIGEL

Oh, Allison, I come to this place all of the time. This is like a trip to McDonald's for me.

The two laugh pretentiously and Allison looks at Nigel with wonder.

NIGEL

Now, if you'll excuse me for just a moment, I'm going to go check on the waiter. They're usually much faster here.

Nigel gets up and leaves for a moment. He goes into the bathroom to primp and build up his confidence in the mirror, combing his hair, using breath spray, cologne, etc.

He goes back to the table and sits on a whoopie cushion.

Allison looks surprised, and Red pops up behind Nigel's chair like a jack-in-the-box. Nigel and Allison both gasp.

NIGEL

What are you doing here?!

RED

I can't believe I trusted you. I should've known not to trust some kind of British Communist SCUM.

NIGEL

Red, you're acting ludicrous. Stop degrading yourself like this. It's just pathetic.

ALLISON

(looking around the room)
How come they're letting you do this?

RED

I paid five dollars. They take AMERICAN money.

NIGEL

Red, I stole your honey like I stole your bike. Happens to people all the time. So I'd like to kindly ask you to stop embarrassing yourself and leave us alone.

RED

(starting to tear up)
You ruined my life. I've lost my friends, lost my happiness, and what for? So that YOU could take

(MORE)

RED (CONT'D)

this she-devil on a date while I go home and eat a party-size bag of Doritos? It's inhumane. Inhumane.

Red walks away, hiding his tears.

NIGEL

(trying to dry himself off)

Can you believe him? What a guttersnipe.

ALLISON

(guiltily)

He seemed really upset, you know.

NIGEL

Oh, never mind him! I can't believe anybody would treat me like that.

ALLISON

It was just a whoopie cushion...

Nigel tries to change the topic while Allison stares off, looking guilty.

INT. HOMEROOM - THE NEXT DAY

Red sits in homeroom, hunched over, clenching onto a bag of chips, and wearing a big, gray, sad sweat suit. Erker walks up to him.

MR. ERKER

Red, is something bothering you?

RED

I'll never be mature enough to get Allison back. I've put all of my energy into impressing her, but it's no use. She's with that dirtbag Nigel now.

MR. ERKER

It's not hopeless, Red. In fact, you remind me of myself as a young, redheaded boy. Like you, I was constantly criticized for being too immature, It still happens now, just yesterday I pantsed Mr. Passegio.

Mr. Passegio looks into classroom angrily.

MR. ERKER

I've always pulled all sorts of pranks, and my parents and teachers hated me for it. But I kept with it. We redheads just can't help it, you know. One day, I put a whoopie cushion on my teacher's seat. The class thought it was hilarious, but the teacher exiled me permanently.

RED

You got expelled, Mr. Erker?

MR. ERKER

No, exiled. The teacher just wouldn't let me inside of her classroom. The school was a little less organized in those days, you know. So, anyway, I basically had a free period. I could've tried to straighten out then, but I used my free time to terrorize teachers and bring joy to my peers, like a modern-day Robin Hood. And aren't we all the better for it?

RED

I guess you're right, but what about Allison, and my friends?

MR. ERKER

Being yourself doesn't mean you have to be alone, Red. Tonight, you should make your big comeback at the dance. Go out there tonight and be yourself: Simply Red.

RED

(as if having an epiphany)

That's it. Simply Red. I'll be there tonight. Thank you, Mr. Erker.

INT. CAFETERIA - NIGHT

The school cafeteria is decorated and lit colorfully, as students dance to pop music and socialize. Red walks in looking confident and well-dressed. He pulls out some breath spray and chokes on it, but recovers quickly. He sees Mr. Erker, who winks at him encouragingly. He then sees Nigel

and Allison with a group of kids and approaches them.

RED
 (nodding as he says each
 name)
 Good evening Nigel, Allison.

NIGEL
 Oh, hello, Red. Lovely to see
 you've cleaned up so well for
 tonight. You looked like an
 absolute WRECK last night...

RED
 Wake up and smell the freedom,
 Nigel. This is America, and I don't
 care what you think of me. The bald
 eagle is gonna soar tonight, just
 you wait.

NIGEL
 (confused)
 What does that mean?

Red runs up on stage and tells the apathetic DJ to kill the music, then grabs the microphone.

RED
 Excuse me, ladies and gentlemen, I
 have an important announcement to
 make. This is for you, Allison.

He switches the song and goes back to the microphone, then starts singing "If You Don't Know Me by Now" by Simply Red.

Students and faculty (specifically Mr. Erker) dance to his powerful rendition, and even Allison looks moved by the performance. When he finishes, the room erupts with applause. Allison walks toward the stage as he gets down.

ALLISON
 Red, I owe you an apology. Do you
 want to forget about these past few
 weeks?

RED
 Allison, I want to be with you, but
 if this is going to work, you need
 to accept who I am. I'm a strong,
 independent redhead, and I don't
 need a woman to complete me. I
 can't change the fact that I'm

(MORE)

RED (CONT'D)

immature. But I will try to be more romantic for you.

ALLISON

I think that's a fair deal.

Red's friends come over and congratulate him. The scene ends happily as Red and Allison celebrate with their friends, Red acting like himself again without being obnoxious.

INT. TEACHER'S CONFERENCE ROOM - THE NEXT DAY

MR. IMBUSCH walks around a table where teachers are sitting. On his seat, a whoopie cushion awaits, to the inconspicuous amusement of Mr. Erker. He talks about the successful dance from the prior night and sits down, resulting in an obscene noise.

MR. ERKER

My god, Mr. Imbusch! Was that YOU?

MR. IMBUSCH

(livid)

ERKER! Must do this at EVERY faculty meeting?

Mr. Erker smiles to himself knowingly.

THE END(?)