

THUMB

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By Kevin Walsh

INT. JAKE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

JAKE and Amy relax on his couch, watching a DVD.

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Their second date. It's going well. Laughing at the same jokes. Sharing a bowl of popcorn. Halfway to cuddling.

They share a big laugh and reach for the popcorn at the same time, bumping hands. Their fingers intertwine. She withdraws. He hangs on. She doesn't mind.

After a moment of back-and-forth, their hands tangle into a familiar position. With a playful twinkle in his eye --

JAKE

One. Two. Three. Four. I
declare a thumb war.

Amy grins mischievously. She's game.

*

It's on. They're giggling, enjoying the silliness. Then --

AMY

One. Two. Three. Yes!

*

-- it's over.

AMY (CONT'D)

All hail the champion! I'm the
king of the world! Woo!

*

Jake laughs along with her mock celebration.

Kind of.

JAKE

Nice. ... Let's go again.

AMY

The movie's on.

*

JAKE

Just one more.

She shrugs, all smiles.

AMY

Your funeral.

*

They square off again. Jake's smile is a bit strained. His gaze intense.

JAKE

One. Two. Three. Four. I declare a thumb war.

Moments later --

AMY

One. Two. Three. Boo yah!

JAKE

You counted too fast!

AMY

Aww, come on.

JAKE

(squaring off)
Let's go.

AMY

Jake...

JAKE

What? Best out of three. Right? That's fair. That's normal.

Amy shrugs, keeping her good humor.

AMY

Okay.

JAKE

One. Two. Three. Four --

SLAM TO:

SERIES OF SHOTS AS AMY WINS AGAIN AND AGAIN

AMY

Buh-buh-buh-BOO yah!

JAKE

Ha ha! Yeah...

(beat)

So, always boo yah when you...when you win. That's cute.

AND THEN...

AMY
Zing!

AND THEN...

Jake flexes and stretches his thumb, limbering up.

AND THEN...

JAKE
...Five. Six. Seven. Eight. Try
to keep your thumb straight. You
skipped that last --

Followed by --

AMY
Ka-plow!

AND THEN...

Amy inexorably forces Jake's thumb down.

AMY
Oh no she di'nt. Oh no she di'nt.

JAKE
No no no no!

AMY
Bingo!

JAKE
So close! So close!

AND THEN...

AMY
Boom-shaka-laka-laka!

Her little shimmy causes her to snuggle into Jake. She turns
to him. Here comes the kiss...

JAKE
Let's go again.

AND THEN...

AMY
Shazam!

JAKE
My thumb was sweaty.

AMY
(slightly concerned)
Your thumb is sweaty.

JAKE
Your thumb is sweaty!

AND THEN...

AMY
Bazinga!

AND THEN...

They both shake their hands out to loosen them up. Amy smiling. Jake focused.

AND THEN...

AMY
(a la Pacino)
Hoo-ah!

AND THEN...

Jake feverishly rubs popcorn on his thumb.

JAKE
Little salt. Little bit of
gription. There we go.

AND THEN...

JAKE
Not falling for that. Not falling
for that. Not falling for -- No!

AND THEN...

AMY
(a la Cartman)
Respect my authorit-ay!

AND THEN...

AMY
There can be only one!

AND THEN...

AMY
I drink your milkshake!

AND THEN...

AMY
Wassup? Wassup?

JAKE
Okay, fair warning. This time I'm
not gonna let you win.

AMY
Okay.

AND FINALLY...INT. JAKE'S LIVING ROOM - SAME

Jake puts his whole body into squirming free, but it's like his thumb is trapped in a steel vise as Amy slowly counts.

AMY
Seeeven. Eiiight. Niiine --

JAKE
Okay okay!

Amy stands and does a cute little victory dance. It's a little sexy and flirtatious, but Jake doesn't notice.

He's sweaty, haggard, and supremely frustrated.

JAKE (CONT'D)
Dammit! ... Best out of thirty-one!

But Amy is already gathering up her purse. In the b.g., the movie is long over, replaced by an inane "get rich quick" late night infomercial. *

AMY *

I really can't. I've got work in the morning.

She takes her purse and heads for the door. Jake follows. *

JAKE *

Sure, right.
(tries to take her hand)
But just one more. *

AMY *

I...I think I won. *

Beat. Jake laughs it off. *

JAKE *

You did. You totally did. Yay, you. Woo. *

Amy smiles sweetly. *

AMY *

You're a goof, Jake. But I like that. Let's do this again soon.

She playfully touches her finger to his nose, then leans in for a quick peck on the lips.

AMY (CONT'D) *

Call me.

And she's gone.

Leaving Jake alone, seething with impotent rage.

Slowly, he holds up his thumb --

And SLAPS it. Hard. Then a fierce backhand. He points at his thumb. Glowering. Can only muster one word:

JAKE

Pathetic.

INT. JAKE'S BEDROOM - DAWN

Jake's hand rests on his pillow, thumb extended. Suddenly, it's doused with water and shudders "awake."

Reveal Jake kneeling beside the bed, with an empty cup in his free hand.

JAKE

Let's get to work.

BEGIN MONTAGE

To the strains of a ROCKY-ESQUE SCORE, Jake puts his thumb through training:

-- Jake uses his thumb to lift his fist off the floor, executing "push ups" while he screams encouragement in the background.

-- Jake's thumb, wrapped in a "sweatshirt" and wearing a watch cap, "runs" along a city street. Reveal Jake holding the thumb out to his side as he "paces" it on a bicycle.

-- Jake cracks some raw eggs into a glass, then uses his thumb to stir the concoction.

-- Jake pinches a walnut between his thumb and fist, straining to crack it with no success. Jake is disgusted.

-- Jake checks his watch while he immerses his thumb in a bowl of ice water. He starts to pull his thumb out, then nods at his watch -- not time yet. Back into the ice.

-- Jake holds his fist up to a small chicken breast hanging from a string. He jabs his thumb into it like a heavy bag.

-- Jake's thumb lies prone with a tiny towel covering it as Jake gives it a rub down.

-- Jake's thumb strains against another nut. Still no joy.

-- Jake's fist rests on a table with a makeshift mini-barbell taped to the back of his thumb. Again and again, he extends it in a "bench press." When the thumb struggles with the weight, Jake uses his other hand to "spot" it.

-- Jake rests his hand on his bathroom scale. Shakes his head. Too heavy.

-- Jake sits in his hot shower, using a towel to waft steam at his thumb as they take a sauna together. Cutting weight.

-- Jake holds his fist so that he can hang a weight from his thumb. Every time he closes his fist, it's like a curl. The thumb handles the weight easily. Progress.

-- Jake and the thumb do more miles on the bike. The thumb is still going strong when Jake, winded, finally needs to stop pedaling. He nods to the thumb -- good work.

-- Jake's thumb pummels the chicken breast. Then punches a hole straight through it. Jake allows himself a smile.

-- Jake places a walnut under his thumb. And easily crushes it. Ecstatic, Jake high-fives his thumb.

END MONTAGE.

INT. JAKE'S LIVING ROOM - LATER

Jake's fist rests on the arm of the couch, his thumb twitching. Shadowboxing. We hear Jake before we see him.

JAKE

Amy! Hey. Yeah, me too. ... So if you're free Thursday, I'd love to make you dinner. ... Great!

*

Drifting down to the coffee table, we see a strange collection of craft materials -- colored wire, canvas, scissors, electrical tape, balsa wood.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Oh don't worry about that. I've got everything I need. Okay. I'll see you then.

We finally see Jake as he hangs up the phone. The phony cheer drains from his face, replaced by a maniacal gleam.

JAKE (CONT'D)

(to himself, grim)
Looking forward to it.

He grins at his thumb. It's chilling.

INT. JAKE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

DING DONG. Jake opens the door to a kiss from Amy.

*

AMY

Hey, you.

*

JAKE

Come on in. Everything's ready.

Jake takes her coat and leads her towards the --

INT. JAKE'S DINING ROOM - SAME

Amy trails him, intrigued. But also slightly puzzled. *

AMY *

What are we having? I don't smell anything.

JAKE

Ta da.

He gestures to the dining room table -- where he has built a MINIATURE BOXING RING. Electrical tape holds wire "ropes" to stanchions at the corners of a canvas stage. There's a small balsa wood ring announcer with a mic. A balsa referee. Even balsa spectators surrounding the structure.

It's just the right size to accommodate two fists.

AMY *

What. The hell?

Jake is already getting into position.

JAKE

I figured, you like thumb wrestling. I like thumb wrestling.

AMY *

I thought we were having dinner.

JAKE

After. I've got Hot Pockets. Come on. It'll be fun. *

AMY *

I'm not sure.

JAKE

I worked really hard on this.

AMY *

Yeah. I can see that.

She's freaking out. Jake backs off. A bit vulnerable.

JAKE

I guess it is kind of goofy. I thought...you liked that about me.

With one fist in the ring, he uses his other hand to manipulate the little ring announcer.

JAKE (CONT'D)
 (tiny announcer voice)
 In this corner, weighing in at four-
 and-a-half ounces and fighting out
 of Jake's right hand -- Jaaaaake's
 Thuuuuumb!

He follows up with CROWD CHEERS. He is pretty damn goofy.
 Adorably so. Amy smirks, getting into the spirit. *

AMY
 Okay then... You want some of
 this? *

She slides her fist through the ropes.

AMY (CONT'D)
 (announcer voice)
 In this corner, the undefeated
 champeeeeeen -- *

JAKE
 (stung)
 Ha! That's great! Let's go.

He quickly takes her fist and operates the "ref" figure.

JAKE (CONT'D)
 One. Two. Three. Four.

A slow count. Giving them time to lock eyes. Amy playfully
 sticks out her tongue. Jake nearly laughs. *

JAKE (CONT'D)
 I. Declare. A thumb. War --

CRACK! Jake snaps Amy's thumb like a twig. *

AMY
 Aaaaah! Holy shit! My thumb! *

As Amy cradles her broken hand, Jake leaps into the air and
 pumps his fist in triumph! *

JAKE
 YEAH!

It's the perfect end-of-sports-movie freeze frame.

Over which we can --

ROLL CREDITS.

FADE OUT *