

## **SETTING THE STAGE**

### **Story Title:**

Sideways

### **Logline:**

Two men reaching middle age with not much to show but disappointment, embark on a week-long road trip through California's wine country, just as one is about to take a trip down the aisle.

### **Story Synopsis:**

Miles is a failed writer living a meager existence in San Diego as an English teacher. With his career seemingly fading, a difficult divorce behind him, and the fate of a book hinging on a publisher's decision, Miles is depressed with himself and what he hasn't achieved. Jack is a television actor whom some recognize but not many do, as if he were a minor actor who got a taste of success. With his best friend Miles, the two embark on a road trip through California's wine country. Miles simply wants to give his friend a nice sendoff before married life, while Jack clearly wants to have flings beforehand. As they're both nearing middle age with not much to show for it, the two explore the vineyards, hook up with local women through various lies and shenanigans, to ultimately come back to attend Jack's wedding. Jack marries his new wife but remains a womanizer. Miles lets his previous marriage go and embarks on a new relationship with Maya, a woman he met in wine country.

## **ABOUT YOUR CHARACTERS**

**Name:** *Cammi*  
**Gender:** *Female*  
**Form:** *Single*  
**Role:** *Jack's romantic interest #2*  
**Character Type:** *Complex*  
**Characteristics:**

**Name:** *Cammi's husband*  
**Gender:** *Male*  
**Form:** *Single*  
**Role:** *Cheated husband*  
**Character Type:** *Complex*  
**Characteristics:**  
**Motivation:** *Avoidance*

**Name:** *Christine Erganian*  
**Gender:** *Female*  
**Form:** *Single*  
**Role:** *Jack's fiancée*  
**Character Type:** *Complex*  
**Characteristics:**

**Name:** *Jack Cole*

**ID:** *Influence Character*

**Gender:** *Male*

**Form:** *Single*

**Description:**

*Jack is a compulsive womanizer about to get stuck in a marriage. His tastes in women are as unrefined as his tastes in wine.*

**Role:** *Bachelor actor, soon-to-be-married*

**Character Type:** *Complex*

**Characteristics:**

**Motivation:** Consider; Pursuit; Faith; Temptation; Uncontrolled; Help

**Methodology:** Potentiality; Proaction; Induction; Production; Possibility

**Evaluation:** Process; Unproven; Accurate; Cause; Unending; Hunch

**Purpose:** Knowledge; Chaos; Perception; Aware; Ability; Speculation

**Name:** *Maya Randall*

**Gender:** *Female*

**Form:** *Single*

**Role:** *Love interest of Miles*

**Character Type:** *Complex*

**Characteristics:**

**Motivation:** Support; Conscience; Feeling

**Methodology:** Acceptance; Protection

**Evaluation:** Trust

**Purpose:** Actuality; Equity

**Name:** *Miles Raymond*

**ID:** *Main Character*

**Gender:** *Male*

**Form:** *Single*

**Description:**

*Miles is a middle-school English teacher trying to cope with a depression from a two year-old divorce which he has a hard time letting go. Also a failed writer, he drowns his sorrow in borderline alcoholism, although he genuinely appreciates and knows about wine.*

**Role:** *Actor's divorced friend & college roommate*

**Story Activities:** *Miles is very much into wine and knows a great deal about it.*

**Character Type:** *Complex*

**Characteristics:**

**Motivation:** Oppose; Reconsider; Disbelief; Control; Logic; Hinder

**Methodology:** Certainty; Nonacceptance; Deduction; Reaction; Inaction; Reduction; Probability; Evaluation

**Evaluation:** Result; Non-Accurate; Expectation; Test; Theory; Ending

**Purpose:** Inertia; Thought; Order; Inequity; Self Aware; Projection

**Name:** *Phyllis Raymond*  
**Gender:** *Female*  
**Form:** *Single*  
**Role:** *Miles's mother*  
**Character Type:** *Complex*  
**Characteristics:**

**Name:** *Stephanie*  
**Gender:** *Female*  
**Form:** *Single*  
**Role:** *Jack's romantic interest #1*  
**Character Type:** *Complex*  
**Characteristics:**  
**Evaluation:** Proven; Effect  
**Purpose:** Desire

**Name:** *Victoria*  
**Gender:** *Female*  
**Form:** *Single*  
**Role:** *Miles's ex-wife*  
**Character Type:** *Complex*  
**Characteristics:**  
**Methodology:** Reevaluation  
**Evaluation:** Determination  
**Purpose:** Change

#### **Character Relationships for "Sideways"**

Character: **Cammi**

Character: **Cammi's husband**

Character: **Christine Erganian**

Character: **Jack Cole**

Character: **Maya Randall**

Character: **Miles Raymond**

Character: **Phyllis Raymond**

Character: **Stephanie**

Character: **Victoria**

#### **Main Character Backstory:**

With a history of negative attitude, Miles is an English school teacher who has been depressed for two years since a rather bitter divorce from his ex-wife Victoria. She apparently made him feel very small, so he ended up having an affair with a woman named Brenda. Miles sees a shrink on a regular basis and is on Xanax and Lexapro (anti-depressants) which don't mix well with his borderline alcoholism in which he

tries to drown his problems, which include a difficulty to let his ex-wife go, a string of rejections of his first book manuscript, and a general tendency to avoid new romantic encounters.

He is Jack's college friend and will be his best man at his wedding.

Miles's book is titled "The Day After Yesterday". It's a novel loosely based on personal experience, which has generated interest from a small, specialized publishing company, but no deal has been done yet at the beginning of the movie.

Miles regularly goes to wine country. He often stops to have dinner at "The Hitching Post", Maya's restaurant, where he met her for the first time. It is hinted at that they may have shared a couple of drinks in the past.

Miles and Victoria did spend time in wine country when they were married, as Miles remembers a picnic they shared at the time by the side of a road, enjoying the scenery.

#### **Influence Character Backstory:**

Jack is a middle-aged struggling voice-over actor trying to surf on a fading moment of glory (he apparently made it on some now outdated TV show). He's about to get married to the daughter of a wealthy Armenian family and is considering his future father-in-law's offer to help with the family business. He is Miles's college friend and a (rather good-looking) compulsive womanizer. Jack knew him and Victoria when they were married, and has kept in touch with Victoria to the point of discussing directly with her whether it would be good for Miles to attend his wedding at the same time as her.

#### **Relationship Backstory:**

Jack and Miles's relationship started in college when they became buddies. They've remained in contact, and have longed to be able to spend one week of free fun together. Jack knew Miles's ex-wife and the state of their love life ("Remember how small she used to make you feel?"). Jack and Miles have a history of conflict over Miles's negativity ("you've always been a negative guy, even back in college").

#### **Main Character Resolve:** Change

Miles starts out unable to let go of his 2-year old divorce from Victoria, risk-averse and unwilling to engage in a new romantic relationship.

Coming to a closure with his divorce issues, Miles ends up consuming his 1961 Cheval Blanc bottle (originally acquired to celebrate their 10th year-anniversary together), an earlier symbol of his refusal to let go. He starts seizing opportunities as he takes steps towards a new romantic life with Maya.

#### **Main Character Growth:** Stop

Miles is the cause of his own problems and gradually stops his bad behavior, growing out of his lack of self-worth, unending refusal to let his divorce go (driving him to borderline alcoholism), negative attitude towards expectations, and unceasing dismissal for a new romantic relationship.

**Main Character Approach:** Be-er

Miles alters himself to deal with his problems. He lowers his expectations to avoid disappointment and rejection: "I'm not gonna get my hopes up. I've stopped caring. That's it. I've stopped caring." He drinks to numb himself, takes anti-depressants to alter his feelings, and mention is made that he sees a shrink – who helps one work internally, on oneself.

**Main Character Problem-Solving Style:** Holistic

Miles tries to solve his problems by looking for balance. He lies to everyone to try to maintain stable relationships.

Holistic thinkers tend to look for balance, aspects of fulfillment and temporal connections, as perfectly exemplified by Miles's description of Pinot – his favorite wine which happens to be a metaphor for himself as opposed to Cabernet which symbolizes his friend Jack:

"Pinot is a hard grape to grow, temperamental, ripens early. It's not a survivor like Cabernet. It needs constant care and attention, can only grow under very specific circumstances and realize its full potential with the most patient and nurturing of growers. Only someone who really takes the time to realize Pinot's full potential can coax it into its fullest expression."

**ABOUT YOUR PLOT**

**Story Driver:** Action

Miles picks up Jack to head to Santa Barbara wine country, leading to decisions about what to do during the trip.

Miles and Jack run into Stephanie, leading to decisions as to whether taking her and Maya out to dinner.

Jack hooks up with Stephanie while Maya leaves Miles, leading to decisions as to how to handle the situation from that point.

Miles gets Jack's wallet and wedding rings back, leading to decisions about how to deal with a cover up for Jack's broken nose now that the wedding is still on. Jack gets married; Miles knocks on Maya's door.

**Story Limit:** Timelock

It is clarified from the start that the trip to wine country will take place over the course of 10 days preceding Jack and Christine's wedding. The Overall Story starts on day 1 and climaxes on the wedding day. The protagonist (Jack) runs out of time to try to handle his problems any further.

**Story Outcome:** Failure

During the final wedding scene when Jack and his wife must ceremoniously join forehead-to-forehead to pledge themselves to one another, Jack subtly breaks away from the moment and casts a private look at Miles with a hint of a smile. He failed

to get womanizing out of his system to be able to play the role of a loving husband. He can't even make it through the ceremony: he's in the middle of his vows and he's already breaking character. It's not going to last.

**Story Judgment:** Good

Miles gradually gains back his self-worth, lets his divorce go and ends his closed attitude, enabling him to seize new opportunities before they are ripe – a metaphor with wine which needs to be drunk before it peaks. His newfound attitude is rewarded with a phone message from Maya opening a genuine romance opportunity to him.

The movie ends with Miles seizing the chance and knocking at her door, ending on a hopeful chance of a potential future together.

**Overall Story Name:**

Sleeping around before the wedding

**Goal:** Being a Loving Husband

Jack is the protagonist of the story, he's the one actively considering something and pursuing it. By sleeping around as much as he can during his bachelor trip with Miles, he hopes to get enough womanizing out of his system so that he can end up playing a role when he gets back, that of being a loving husband.

Miles to Jack (mid-point of the movie, after he sleeps with Stephanie): "Glad you got that out of your system. Mission accomplished". Of course, it turns out it's far from accomplished.

**Consequence:** Doing Something Destructive

Jack fails to burn womanizing out of his system with the original intent to be able to play the loving husband once he gets married. As a result, the Consequence comes into effect: Jack will keep playing the field regardless of the vows he's taken, perpetuating a fundamentally harmful and destructive activity.

**Requirements:** Becoming Someone Else

Jack must change his nature by burning womanizing out of his system in order to become the loving husband.

**Forewarnings:** Innermost Desires

Jack's inability to overcome his innermost desire of pursuing women hints at the fact that he will keep playing the field after his vows.

Miles's inability to overcome his fear of painful rejections and his desire to feel loved prevent him from exposing Jack's plan as a fraud and confronting him about his womanizing, which points to the likelihood that Jack will keep on with his destructive flirting endeavor after the wedding.

**Overall Story Backstory:**

Jack's wedding has been planned to happen 10 days from the start of the story. Everything is ready as the story opens, the cake is being chosen. Christine, Jack's wife, comes from a wealthy Armenian family that will likely handle the wedding financial costs.

Jack's freedom is about to take a bow, setting up the stage for one last, desperate act of compulsive womanizing, which will drive the entire overall story.

### **Overall Story Signpost 1: Planning Something**

Jack and Christine's wedding is being planned, Miles plans on picking up Jack for the bachelor trip but arrives late, Miles says he's been planning this trip for quite some time (and outlines his drinking plan in the restaurant towards the end of Act 1), the soon-to-be-married actor and his divorced friend spend time planning (and arguing about) what their activities are going to be. Jack plans to hook up with girls while his friend wants to relax, drink and play golf. Jack finally comes up with a plan to invite Stephanie and Maya for dinner.

### **Overall Story Journey 1 from Planning Something to Becoming a Couple:**

As Miles further outlines his plans to navigate his preferred drinking spots, Jack starts to reveal his plans, not only to get Miles hooked up with a girl, but most importantly, to get himself laid, progressively leading them to start considering Maya, and later Stephanie, in the light of a new concern of whether or not – and how to – engage in a relationship with them and thereby become a couple.

### **Overall Story Signpost 2: Becoming a Couple**

The date night between Jack, Stephanie, Miles and Maya starts by exploring the flirting progression leading the four of them to become (or not) couples.

### **Overall Story Journey 2 from Becoming a Couple to Bluffing and Being Played:**

As Miles, Jack, Stephanie and Maya all concern themselves with changing their nature by engaging into romantic relationships, honesty starts to become a luxury the men can't seem to indulge in if they want to keep going down that avenue with the girls, leading them to play a role by concealing aspects of their real lives.

### **Overall Story Signpost 3: Bluffing and Being Played**

The actor and his friend bluff the two waitresses to remain at their side, until the women find out they've been played, exposing the fraud of the two men.

### **Overall Story Journey 3 from Bluffing and Being Played to Conceiving a Future:**

With Miles and Jack's secret exposed, the men start to reflect on their role playing, leading them to think about the idea of actually getting married (for Jack) and about what kind of life they want for themselves (especially for Miles). As they steer toward musing over these ideas, we learn that Maya converges toward that concern as well, from focusing herself on being played to conceiving a potential future with Miles.

#### **Overall Story Signpost 4: Conceiving a Future**

The two friends come up with a suitable excuse to cover up for everything that happened during the trip: they stage a car accident. But most importantly, Jack conceives the idea of a life with Christine by getting married, while Miles and Maya conceive the possibility of a future together.

#### **Main Character Signpost 1: Recollections of a Previous Marriage**

Miles is trying to extricate himself from a two year-long depression resulting from his divorce with Victoria, which he has a hard time letting go. As he visits his mother who exhorts him to get back with her ("She was good for you"), a long series of past photographs in a room vividly ignite all of Miles's painful memories. Although it's been two years already, Miles clearly still lives in the past: "I just got divorced, Phyllis".

#### **Main Character Journey 1 from Recollections of a Previous Marriage to Blocking Things Out and Drinking:**

As Miles must revisit his past to answer Jack asking him for advice based on his previous marriage experience, and as he spends time remembering a picnic with Victoria in wine country (what they ate, and Victoria's fabulous palate...) he is increasingly forced by Jack to take a strong look at his past of depression, negativity, anti-depressants consumption and shrink reliance. Miles's troubles to let go off his past life with Victoria progressively lead him to concern himself with the impulsive reactions he's come to develop about potential romantic relationships in general, Maya being a prime example of that.

#### **Main Character Signpost 2: Blocking Things Out and Drinking**

Miles struggles with his drinking impulses (which lead him to "go to the dark side" and impulsively dial his ex-wife, to run through a vineyard with a bottle in his hand...)

#### **Main Character Journey 2 from Blocking Things Out and Drinking to Desiring Someone:**

Miles's personal angst escalates as his impulses to block out all romantic encounters start to conflict with the deep desire he develops for Maya as he grows to know her. It climaxes when his impulsive responses are most tested: is he or is he not going to make the move to follow his innermost desire and kiss Maya?

#### **Main Character Signpost 3: Desiring Someone**

Miles is now fully concerned with his love and desire for Maya, manages to hook up with her.

#### **Main Character Journey 3 from Desiring Someone to Seeing Things For What They Are:**

As Miles indulges in his romantic innermost desires with Maya, it leads him to open himself up to her, exposing his lies for what they truly are, ultimately causing



rejection from her, while he ends up contemplating the repercussions of what he's done.

**Main Character Signpost 4: Seeing Things For What They Are**

Miles must confront the present consideration that Victoria is now pregnant and will never come back to him. He must see things for what they are, let her go and seize a new life, live for today. After contemplating what his present life may be for the rest of his life if he remains in this static state, he receives a phone call from Maya trying to reconnect with him and immediately contemplates a new potential life with her.

**Influence Character Signpost 1: One's Professional and Romantic History**

Jack keeps being confronted to his past and impacting others with it: how he used to be an actor in some old, successful TV show 11 years ago, which contrasts sharply with his life now.

Most importantly, he wonders if he made a good decision to get engaged to Christine prior to the beginning of the movie, a consideration which impacts everyone, especially Miles and his plans.

**Influence Character Journey 1 from One's Professional and Romantic History to Having One's Freedoms Progressively Restricted:**

Jack's past as an actor leads him to easily attract women, drifting towards the possibility of temporarily freeing himself from his engagement with Christine and hooking up with them for real.

Jack's impact on Miles's past (encouraging him to move on with it) forcefully pushes his friend into a new mindset of opening up the door for how things could be changing romantically.

**Influence Character Signpost 2: Having One's Freedoms Progressively Restricted**

Jack is concerned with his wedding coming up really soon and how it's about to restrict his freedom.

**Influence Character Journey 2 from Having One's Freedoms Progressively Restricted to Reconsidering One's Future:**

With the shadow of his wedding lurking around, Jack's concern for romantic freedom increasingly impacts Stephanie and Miles as he drowns in more lies and leaves Miles alone for countless hours, until he becomes so concerned with preserving this aspect of his life that he starts to ponder on what a seemingly careless, free future life might look like with Stephanie.

**Influence Character Signpost 3: Reconsidering One's Future**

Jack is now fully concerned with his future: he considers putting his wedding on hold, potentially not marrying Christine and moving to wine country to join Stephanie and the kids.

**Influence Character Journey 3 from Reconsidering One's Future to Being Present for Someone:**

As all of Jack's attempts to postpone his future – through sexual escapades – turn sour, they lead him to concern himself with what his present life will be like if he loses Christine.

**Influence Character Signpost 4: Being Present for Someone**

Jack reconciles himself with the idea of being there for Christine. He is present for their big day, focused on the present situation: getting married with Christine.

**Relationship Name:**

Friends on a bachelor trip

**Relationship Signpost 1: Drinking and Playing Golf or Chasing Girls**

Miles and Jack come in conflict over what to do during the trip: spending time at Miles's mom or hitting the road, taking it easy with golf and wine or taking a walk on the wild side chasing girls.

**Relationship Journey 1 from Drinking and Playing Golf or Chasing Girls to Getting a Girlfriend:**

As tension builds up between Miles and Jack over what to do during the trip, they meet Maya and Stephanie, leading them to start arguing over whether or not they should make a move to try and hook up with them.

**Relationship Signpost 2: Getting a Girlfriend**

Miles and Jack argue over how to go about winning over Maya and Stephanie during their big date night. Jack is concerned that Miles's behavior might get in the way of obtaining what he wants while Miles really wants to obtain buddy/alone time with Jack without all the flirting stuff.

**Relationship Journey 2 from Getting a Girlfriend to Preserving a Secret:**

As they argue about hooking up and how, making progress with the girls in the process, Miles and Jack start to collide over the lies they have to tell in order to keep going.

**Relationship Signpost 3: Preserving a Secret**

Miles and Jack come in conflict over preventing Maya and Stephanie from learning about their lies. They argue about calling back Christine who's trying to gather information about where her husband is, about Jack not telling Stephanie he's engaged and about Miles telling Maya about Jack's wedding.

**Relationship Journey 3 from Preserving a Secret to Having an Insight into Something:**

Miles and Jack's disagreement deepens as they argue over going back to Cammi's

place to get Jack's wallet in an effort to conceal his shenanigans. The terrain of their argument eventually shifts as Jack runs Miles's car into a tree, simply in an effort to prevent any insight anybody may have into the notion they might not have been in a real accident (justification for Jack's broken nose).

**Relationship Signpost 4: Having an Insight into Something**

Miles and Jack are concerned about Jack's family having an insight into what happened when they get back. Nobody back home should understand what they've been up to during the week.

**ABOUT YOUR THEME**

**Overall Story Domain: Being Manipulative or Deceptive**

Everybody's problems are rooted in Psychology. The overall story explores the problems born from dysfunctional relationships, mostly between Miles, Jack, Maya, Stephanie, and to a degree Victoria and Christine. Whether generated by Miles's fearsome, destructive and antisocial bitterness, by Jack's compulsive, irresponsible and immature obsession with women, or their shared penchant for lies, difficulties arise from deception, from manipulating or being manipulated, confronting different manners of thinking engaged in a psychological dance. Sideways explores the growing pains of discontented people trying to mature into – more or less – meaningful relationships. Every objective character encounters problems in trying to cope with their own personal romantic history in a game of compatibility chess tarnished by manipulative lies.

**Overall Story Concern: Posing as a Bachelor or Published Author**

Problems arise for everyone because of acts of deception, playing with appearances, not being or doing who/what one claims to.

Jack posing as a single man and Miles as a published author lead to major conflict with Stephanie and Maya.

Jack lying to his wife about his real activities causes him problems and generates tension between him and Miles.

Conflict arises when Miles lies to Jack about telling Maya about his wedding plans. Maya is deeply concerned with avoiding lies in her life. She has been trying to "extricate herself from a previous marriage full of deception" with a UCLA philosophy professor who was "a fraud". She's looking for authenticity.

The story is peppered with small-time lies as well: Jack lies to Miles about reading his latest draft, about trying to call Christine back on the phone. Miles lies about his hangover causing him to be late to pick up Jack and he blames the traffic.

Even books must "play a role" to survive in the world of that story. Evelyn (Miles's publishing agent): "It's not about the quality of the book anymore, it's about marketing it". Which is exactly what the protagonist (Jack) does in the Overall Story: marketing appearances.

**Overall Story Problem:** Perpetuating a Lie

Everybody's problems stem from unending lies and manners of thinking. Problems arise because Jack doesn't stop lying about his coming marriage, playing the field and sleeping with women, and because Miles perpetuates Jack's lie about them being in wine country to celebrate his book being published.

**Overall Story Issue:** Being Well-Thought of

Being Well-Thought of is Neutral. Jack concerns himself with being well-thought of by Stephanie and Cammi as a lover, and by Christine as a future husband. Miles concerns himself with being well-thought of as a husband by his ex-wife (Victoria). He also directs a lot of thoughts at considering relationships as a valid option in his life, considering Maya as a lover, being considered and well-thought of by Maya as a lover, being considered in a positive light as a writer.

Maya and Stephanie concern themselves with considering Miles and Jack as a lovers, forming thoughts about them.

Thought as "consideration" is also at the heart of the overall story with Jack being inconsiderate enough of women to lie flat out to their faces and Miles weighing the pros and cons to death before acting on anything.

**Overall Story Counterpoint:** Knowledge

Knowledge is Neutral. Knowing or not knowing is a recurring thematic in the overall story. A lot of effort goes into limiting knowledge to ensure a certain form of thought, consideration (counterpoint). Maya and Stephanie's personal considerations about Miles and Jack clash with exposure to new elements of actual knowledge about the two men, challenging what they previously held to be true. Jack tries everything he can to prevent Christine from knowing what he's really up to, doesn't want Miles to mention his wedding to Stephanie or Maya. Miles conceals knowledge from Maya and Stephanie about his book not being confirmed for publication, he conceals alcoholism from Jack's family as the real reason for his late arrival to pick him up in act 1. Knowledge about wine (or lack thereof) is also significantly present throughout the story.

**Overall Story Conflict as it relates to Being Well-Thought of vs. Knowledge**

Being Well-Thought of is No Better or Worse than Knowledge. Miles is afraid of how he'll be considered by Maya if she finds out that he lied about his book being published and about going along with Jack concealing the fact he's already engaged. To be considered as a lover, Jack conceals knowledge from Stephanie about him not being single.

Once aware of Miles's lies, Maya must deal with how to consider him. Christine can't know about Jack's activities if he is to be considered as a husband.

**Main Character Issue:** Determining One's Self Worth

Determining One's Self Worth is Neutral. Conflict arises for Miles because he has an issue of self-worth, which leads him to incessantly expect rejection, be it romantically with Maya or professionally with his book.

In his own words: "The world doesn't give a shit what I have to say. I'm unnecessary. I'm so insignificant I can't even kill myself. Half my life is over, and I have nothing to show for it. Nothing."

And again, leaving a phone message to Maya: "You see, I'm not really much of a writer. I'm not really much of anything, really."

Actually, Miles doesn't want to even consider that Maya might be interested in him at first.

Miles's ex-wife Victoria used to make him feel "very small", another phrasing for "worthless", which apparently led him to having an affair with a woman named Brenda.

Miles also experiences problems because of the worth he attributes to some things outside himself. In reaction to his past experience with Victoria, he has developed a fixed mindset about the general worth of romantic relationships in life: "Not worth it, you pay too big a price." Miles to Jack (about him getting married): "I'm just saying you need to keep an eye out, that's all."

Besides, part of what is problematic to Miles comes from his focus on highly misplaced worth about where Victoria and his previous marriage stand in his life today.

Miles also attributes a very biased, low worth to opportunities in life as a whole, as illustrated by this exchange about his bottle of Cheval Blanc and which occasion would be suitable to drink it.

Maya: "You have a 61 Cheval Blanc? What are you waiting for?"

Miles: "A special occasion with the right person."

Maya: "The day you open a Cheval Blanc, that's the special occasion".

It's Maya's way of saying there's intrinsic worth in some moments in life with which Miles needs to reconnect.

### **Main Character Counterpoint: Value**

Value is Neutral. For most of the story, Miles holds off from drinking his 1961 Cheval Blanc. Finally, he drinks his prized bottle from a plastic cup in a fast-food restaurant. It may have a lot of objective value, be really expensive, but he doesn't care about it. The lack of consideration for the circumstances and the manner to drink it highlight Miles now looks at it with a newfound sense of objective value: it's not worth much to him anymore.

### **Main Character Conflict as it relates to Determining One's Self Worth vs. Value**

Determining One's Self Worth is No Better or Worse than Value. Miles must balance out the personal worth he attributes to his previous marriage and Victoria against the actual value they now have in his life (he's divorced, she no longer loves him, any hope of a future relationship between them is dead, he shouldn't give her so much room anymore).

**Influence Character Issue: Fantasizing**

Fantasizing is Neutral. Jack is concerned with spending one week living his romantic/sexual fantasies, which impacts risk-averse Miles by pushing him drastically out of his comfort zone.

Jack deludes himself, acting as a single man he no longer really is.

He attracts some women (his outdated acting fame speaks to some of their fantasies, like Cammi's), but most importantly, he fantasizes about women all the time. He's a first class womanizer. He's obsessed with them and no matter how many he sleeps with, he just can't get them out of his system, whether it's a waitress passing by or some woman in a Jacuzzi.

While he may lie about his wedding coming soon, Jack deludes himself in believing some of his own words, such as when he tells Stephanie that he loves her, that she's the only one, that he loves her kid, that he's going to move in with her. Miles comments on these statements by responding: "I'm sure he really believes every word of it", hinting at Jack's delusion.

Jack fools himself into thinking Stephanie "opened his eyes", only to end up begging for Miles's help at the very hint of possibly losing Christine (when he loses his wallet and the wedding rings). Clearly, Jack takes a trip down fantasy lane during the entire week. After knowing Stephanie for 24 hours, he says: "I might be in love with another woman". He even entertains the crazy fantasy of moving to wine country with Miles and buying a vineyard.

**Influence Character Counterpoint: Fact**

Fact is Neutral. Jack's fantasies collide with the actual facts of his life: he really is about to get married, he is getting older and he is not doing so well professionally.

**Relationship Issue: Having Sound Judgment**

Having Sound Judgment is Neutral. Miles and Jack both think they're enlightened and argue about the differences between their discernment: whether it's advised or ill-advised to chase girls or simply enjoy oneself playing golf and drinking wine, whether their intuitive perception of what's going on is real or imagined (Jack being "in love" with Stephanie and ready to move in with her, Maya "digging Jack and lighting up like a pinball machine when he mentioned his book", Miles's book going to get published or not...). Jack addresses the fact that Miles's personal form of enlightenment just doesn't line up with the workings behind his own discernment about things: "I know you're my friend, you disapprove, I respect that. But you understand literature, movies, wine (Miles's enlightenment). You don't understand my plight."

**Relationship Counterpoint: Wisdom**

Wisdom is Neutral. Jack tries to get Miles to wise up about letting Victoria go and going on with his life.

Miles tries to get Jack to wise up about his constant womanizing act and his sudden urge to leave it all behind and move to wine country to live with Stephanie.

## **KEY STORY POINTS**

### **Overall Story Domain: Being Manipulative or Deceptive**

Everybody's problems are rooted in Psychology. The overall story explores the problems born from dysfunctional relationships, mostly between Miles, Jack, Maya, Stephanie, and to a degree Victoria and Christine. Whether generated by Miles's fearsome, destructive and antisocial bitterness, by Jack's compulsive, irresponsible and immature obsession with women, or their shared penchant for lies, difficulties arise from deception, from manipulating or being manipulated, confronting different manners of thinking engaged in a psychological dance. Sideways explores the growing pains of discontented people trying to mature into – more or less – meaningful relationships. Every objective character encounters problems in trying to cope with their own personal romantic history in a game of compatibility chess tarnished by manipulative lies.

### **Main Character Domain: Having a Negative Attitude**

Miles has been in a state of depression for two years since his divorce from Victoria, about whom he has remained way too fixated for his own good, none of which is helped by the fact he has always had a negative attitude in general. Jack: "You've always been a negative guy, even back in college", "What is this morose come-down bullshit?", "I'm not gonna let you screw this up with your anxiety, depression, neg-head downer shit."

### **Influence Character Domain: Being Stuck in a Monogamous Relationship**

Jack is stuck in an external situation that's causing him some major concern: he's engaged. He is essentially a restless womanizer caught in a trap. Although the quality of his relationship with his fiancée, Christine, is only alluded to once ("she's controlling and uptight"), it feels pretty clear from the start of the movie that Jack is eager to leave the family context to enjoy greener, wilder pastures (he wants Miles to hit the road as soon as possible).

Jack's general situation in life is also of concern to him: although he tries to surf on a long-gone appearance in some old TV show, he's hitting middle age ("We're not getting any younger, Miles.") with an unsuccessful acting career and a low pay voice-over gig, hinting at the fact that Christine's family being really wealthy might have played a role in Jack's decision to marry her.

### **Relationship Domain: Weeklong Bachelor Party**

Miles and Jack's relationship is played against the background of activities they engage in during a week-long bachelor party trip.

### **Overall Story Concern: Posing as a Bachelor or Published Author**

Problems arise for everyone because of acts of deception, playing with appearances, not being or doing who/what one claims to.

Jack posing as a single man and Miles as a published author lead to major conflict with Stephanie and Maya.

Jack lying to his wife about his real activities causes him problems and generates tension between him and Miles.

Conflict arises when Miles lies to Jack about telling Maya about his wedding plans. Maya is deeply concerned with avoiding lies in her life. She has been trying to "extricate herself from a previous marriage full of deception" with a UCLA philosophy professor who was "a fraud". She's looking for authenticity.

The story is peppered with small-time lies as well: Jack lies to Miles about reading his latest draft, about trying to call Christine back on the phone. Miles lies about his hangover causing him to be late to pick up Jack and he blames the traffic.

Even books must "play a role" to survive in the world of that story. Evelyn (Miles's publishing agent): "It's not about the quality of the book anymore, it's about marketing it". Which is exactly what the protagonist (Jack) does in the Overall Story: marketing appearances.

#### **Main Character Concern:** Blocking Things Out and Drinking

Miles is concerned with squashing any impulsive response... besides drinking when things go awry (with Maya, with his book not getting published, with his ex-wife getting remarried).

Aside from dulling his responses via these borderline alcoholic episodes – which don't mix well with his anti-depressants and send him over to "the dark side" – Miles is really focused on being unresponsive, whether it's about a potential romance with Maya or about inquiring whether his book is getting published.

Miles blocks out opportunities: "I haven't been with anybody since my divorce". When Maya expresses interest in spending an evening with him and Jack, Miles replies he's tired and would rather go back to the motel and crash. Jack to Miles: "You're wasting away. You're blowing a great opportunity here with Maya."

When it's time to "seize the moment", Miles's impulsive response is to block himself and let the moment pass, out of fear for what he expects to be undesirable consequences. Jack: "You gotta strike while the iron's hot!". Opportunities are quick to vanish. Like wine, they peak, then decline. Miles has a problem controlling the spontaneous response needed to grab these opportunities as they come.

#### **Influence Character Concern:** Having One's Freedoms Progressively Restricted

Jack's wedding is taking place only 10 days from the start of the movie. So he's literally about to walk down the aisle, and that change will potentially restrict his freedom in a drastic fashion. Jack is concerned with which direction (good or bad) that major change will send his life into. He openly asks Miles if he thinks he's making a mistake marrying Christine because he's so concerned about which way this is all going to go down for him.

Because his sexual freedom is progressively restricted as each day goes by, he declares: "I am going to get laid before I get married on Saturday!".



**Relationship Concern:** Drinking and Playing Golf or Chasing Girls

Miles to Jack: "Are you sure you want to do this?"

Miles and Jack mostly argue about what to do over the course of the trip. Miles has a clear idea of what he wants to do during the week: "We're gonna play some golf, have some wine, have some great food, enjoy the scenery and send you off in style, mon frere". Jack begs to differ: "I'm gonna get laid before I get married on Saturday, and you're not gonna screw this up for me Miles!" "This is our week to get crazy. We should both be cutting loose. This could be our last chance!"

Tension rises when Jack or Miles does something the other one doesn't care for or simply doesn't want at all: when Jack decides to drive Miles's car into a tree to simulate an accident, when Jack wants Miles to help him get his wallet and wedding rings back, when Jack decides to hang out with Stephanie and leaves Miles alone ("We were supposed to play golf! -- "Sorry, change of plans"), when Jack tells everyone Miles's script is being published, when they flirt with Stephanie and Maya rather than relaxing with wine and playing golf, when Miles opens a wine bottle in the car, when Miles refuses to hang out with Maya and crashes back at the hotel, when Miles decides to run away through the vineyard and drink, when Miles rejects the idea to drink Merlot at the restaurant, etc.

**Overall Story Problem:** Perpetuating a Lie

Everybody's problems stem from unending lies and manners of thinking. Problems arise because Jack doesn't stop lying about his coming marriage, playing the field and sleeping with women, and because Miles perpetuates Jack's lie about them being in wine country to celebrate his book being published.

**Overall Story Solution:** Calling Something Off

The Outcome being a Failure, the Overall Story solution never comes (enough) into play to alter the odds.

Jack and Miles could have ended the lies with Maya and Stephanie. Jack could have ended the wedding with Christine.

Miles opposes Jack several times and voices some disagreement with his shenanigans but never actually tries to stop him (before entering Stephanie's place: "Are you sure you want to do this?"). He tries to get Jack to reconsider and call his wife after she leaves loads of unanswered messages on Jack's cell phone, but Jack ultimately doesn't do it either.

**Main Character Problem:** Perpetuating Something

Jack: "Why do you always have to do this? Victoria is gone! Boof! In the wind!" Miles won't let go of his ex-wife despite crumbling evidence there's no hope left for them as a couple. While on a date with Maya, all Miles can think of is he learned his ex-wife got remarried. He gets drunk and dials her in private. "I guess I thought maybe there was still a chance for us somewhere down the road." She sends him a clear message again: "Maybe it's better if you don't come to Jack's wedding." His unending attitude toward his divorce is at the root of his problem.

Miles has been keeping away his 10th-year-anniversary celebration bottle of 1961 Cheval Blanc since he and Christine divorced. The bottle is a metaphor for letting go of his previous marriage and addressing his endless "waiting around", to become proactive and rebuild a life for himself. In her speech about wine, Maya is indirectly telling Miles he needs to address his unending stasis and seize the opportunity while it lasts (before it peaks, like wine). When the moment is ripe for them to kiss, Miles perpetuates his same old attitude, doesn't act and heads to the bathroom. When he kisses her moments later, the moment has passed and Maya leaves.

Besides that, Miles hasn't been with anyone in 2 years. In an unending state of loneliness, he incessantly tries to drown his problems in borderline alcoholism. His unending bad attitude and lies are also at the root of his problem.

**Main Character Solution:** Ending a Negative Attitude or Finding Closure with a Divorce

Miles progressively ends his fixed attitude of blocking his impulsive responses to seize opportunities, ends his persistent low-worth appreciation of himself, and finally finds closure with his divorce. Sideways is not a leap-of-faith story. Miles's change is a gradual one.

Miles to Maya: "Do you still want to read my novel?" This is an instance of Miles leaning towards ending his closed-off behavior, and a critical move because without it, Maya would have left him without ever reading the book, and might never have called him back in the end.

After a day of wandering alone waiting for messages, Miles decides to end his perpetual waiting around and to look for Maya at the restaurant. When he comes to an end with his reluctance to act spontaneously, Miles seizes the opportunity at the right moment and ends up hooking up with Maya.

Miles: "I can't take it anymore, I gotta call Evelyn" (his publishing agent). Miles finally brings an end to his tendency to wait around to learn about the status of his book.

Miles gathers the strength to end his lies by leaving a phone message to Maya, telling her his book isn't getting published, and bringing to a close the unexpressed feelings he experienced for her from the first moment he ever saw her.

Miles's most explicit "ending moment" is then sealed with him finally drinking his 1961 Cheval Blanc, a closure metaphor for his divorce.

The title of Miles's book, "The Day After Yesterday" is another metaphor for ending a stasis and moving on with one's life to seize "Today" (as Maya states). Miles describes the plot of the book as "the whole thing sort of devolves into a Robbe-Grillet mystery", which parallels greatly the movie development. The story is about a guy taking care of his father after a stroke, paralleling Jack taking care of Miles after his divorce. Miles learns to follow the direction that his own book suggests as a solution (ending stasis) to resolve his personal angst.

The final scene in the movie features Miles ending his stasis for good and going on with his life. He seizes the opportunity to drive to Maya's house as soon as he gets her phone message and knocks at her door.

**Main Character Focus:** Coming to a Determination

Miles believes the root of his problem lies in him or others making wrong outcome determinations when there's no direct evidence or real facts to support them. A constant example is Jack's restless determinations about anything related to Miles, whether it's about his book – "That's not gonna happen to you (becoming a failed writer). You're gonna get it. You're gonna get published. I can feel it" – or about Maya – "Maya is obviously into you / The rock doesn't mean shit, she's not married / She digs you Miles. Go for it."

**Influence Character Problem:** Determining and Being Determined

Jack's problem/drive derives from the fact that his life will be determined for good once he gets married. He won't be able to sleep around. So he is determined to sow his oats.

Jack to Miles: "I am gonna get you laid." Then later, "I am going to get laid before I get married on Saturday. Do you read me?"

He's also driven to seek conclusive determinations, especially impacting Miles by urging him to base his considerations on evidence. He urges him to seek evidence-based determination for himself in regards to the value of his book: "Fuck the publishers. Publish it yourself Miles! Get it out there! Let the public decide." He urges Miles to look at evidence to determine a potential relationship with Maya: "She's obviously into you. She digs you. Go for it." And he's quick to make determinations based on circumstantial evidence all the time: "A ring doesn't mean shit. She (Maya) is a waitress now. She's obviously not married anymore."

**Influence Character Solution:** Anticipating Results

Jack is steadfast, so his solution never comes into play. He could have expected, anticipated the results of his actions and shenanigans.

In Miles's words, Jack unfortunately never adopts the solution that could solve his problem: "You're an infant, Jack. This is all a big party for you!". Jack acts regardless of expected results.

Jack could have anticipated the expected loads of unanswered messages from his wife trying to figure out where he was. He could have anticipated Stephanie getting mad at him for lying to her and avoided getting his nose broken. He could have anticipated sleeping around with Cammi, a married woman, in her own house, would lead to troublesome results.

**Influence Character Resolve:** Steadfast

**Relationship Problem:** Continuing without Cessation

The actual root of the problems between Miles and Jack is the unending stance Jack has about what to do and how to do it (leading him to leave his friend alone a lot of the time) and Miles's unending negative attitude about the whole idea. A great example of that happens right after Jack ultimately ends up getting his nose broken by resentful Stephanie. While Miles thinks this will drive Jack to reconsider

his unending chase to get laid at all costs, he is dumbfounded when Jack dumps him a few hours later to sleep with Cammi. Miles addresses the unending problem: "What is wrong with you? Can't we just go back to the motel and hang out? Get up early, play golf?" Jack's unending flow of unsolicited advice also gets on Miles's nerves: "Can you give me some room please?" "Shut up, just shut up! Just, stop pushing me all the time!"

At the restaurant with Maya, sparks fly between Miles and Jack because Miles won't stop drinking and going to the "dark side". Jack: "Why do you always have to do this? Victoria's gone! Poof! In the wind!"

**Relationship Solution:** Calling Something Off

Jack occasionally refrains from constantly lecturing Miles, who sometimes takes a break from his own negative attitude, but the argument over what to do during the trip never really ends on its own between them, it only stops because the trip is over, so the solution never fully comes into play in the relationship throughline.

## SCENE STEP OUTLINE

### "Sideways"

#### **#1 – Miles wakes up and gets ready**

Miles wakes up late in his apartment after yet another hangover. He is asked by neighbors to re-park his car properly, then gives a phone call to apologize to someone about being late somewhere, blames it on a heavy schedule and assures he's on his way, although we then see him proceed at his own, leisurely pace.

#### **#2 – Miles picks up Jack**

Miles picks up Jack at the wealthy house of his future in-laws and blames traffic for being late. Jack wants to hit the road as soon as possible, but Christine has Miles taste wedding cake options first. The gathered family asks him about his book as Jack happened to tell everyone it was getting published while it truly only generated interest so far. Miles answers it's a novel with some elements from his own experience.

#### **#3 – Car ride**

Miles and Jack take off. Jack sees right through Miles and blames one of his regular hangovers for being late. Miles confronts Jack about telling everyone his novel's getting published. It's not a done deal yet. Jack says he's sure he'll get published. Miles is a lot more cautious, and won't get his hopes up anymore. Jack opens up a rare 1992 Byron wine bottle in the car, spilling half of it over the dashboard. They eventually drink it together in the car as Miles is driving, celebrating the upcoming weeklong bachelor trip in wine country. Jack obviously knows nothing about wine, so Miles starts instructing him with some basics during the trip. Later, Miles sees right through Jack who does a bad job at pretending he read the latest draft of his book.

#### **#4 – Miles's mom**

While Jack eagerly wants to get moving, Miles insists to stop by his mom's since her birthday's coming up. This is only part of Miles's agenda. It turns out he is pretty broke and he stealthily steals some of his mom's stashed money for the trip. We learn Jack used to star in a pretty successful TV show about 11 years ago.

Miles's mom alerts other family members and plans a big get-together for the following day. Miles and Jack have no intention of staying.

We learn Jack's wedding is taking place on Saturday, and that Miles is the best man. A series of family photographs hint at Miles's ex-marriage with Victoria, whom Miles has a hard time letting go since their divorce two years earlier. This is reinforced by a discussion with his mother who urges him to get back together with her. Jack knows Victoria as well, and Miles's mom worries about her son, to the point of openly offering him money if he needs any.

Miles and reluctant Jack end up spending the night but they sneak out in the morning before Miles's mom wakes up, avoiding any family gathering.

#### **#5 - Diner**

Miles and Jack stop at a diner. Prone to instant womanizing, Jack eyes the young waitress serving them. Miles argues she's a kid and wouldn't be interested in men like them anyway. Jack tells him to speak for himself as he deems himself pretty attractive still. Miles thinks relationships aren't worth it; you pay too big a price. He's been officially depressed for over two years, sees a shrink, takes anti-depressants, was always a negative guy even back in college where Jack and him became friends, and teaches English 8th graders who, according to Jack, ought to be reading his books. Jack thinks Miles needs to get laid and, as a best man gift, promises he will get him some in the course of the week.

Miles clearly doesn't care to get laid, all he wants is to show his best friend a good time, drink some good wine, play some golf, eat great food, enjoy the scenery and send him off in style.

#### **#6 - Road through Santa Barbara county**

As they reach Santa Barbara county, Miles explains his love of Pinot to Jack as they make a first stop in a local winery.

#### **#7 - First wine tasting**

Miles teaches Jack how to properly taste wine. Jack is clearly out of his league but impressed with Miles's palate. Miles is ticked when he realizes Jack tasted the wine while chewing gum.

#### **#8 - Motel**

After a bit of driving, Miles and Jack reach their hotel and settle down.

#### **#9 - On the way to restaurant**

Jack and Miles are walking to a local restaurant. Jack asks Miles if, considering his marriage experience, he's making a mistake marrying Christine. Miles tries to reassure him but still tells him one has to have one's eyes open, as he thought Victoria and him were set for life. Jack mentions Christine's dad, who took a long time getting over the fact he's not Armenian, is now looking to bring him into his property business. He's considering it to provide some financial stability, as he's not getting any younger. His acting career is not flourishing per se, but he could still squeeze in auditions here and there to keep himself in the game.

#### **#10 - Meet Maya**

Miles and Jack reach a local restaurant. Miles clearly is a regular. They hit the bar and drink to Jack's last week of freedom. They later grab a table. As Jack zeroes in on a gorgeous waitress again, Miles informs him he knows her. Maya's worked there for over a year. Miles believes she's still married to a philosophy professor at U.C. Santa Barbara. Jack thinks her wearing a ring doesn't mean anything and that it's clearly over as a professor's wife wouldn't be waitressing. Miles argues Jack doesn't know anything about her.

Maya gets to their table and compliments Miles on his looks. Jack points out privately that she's into Miles, learns she knows a lot about wine, likes pinot. Miles argues she's only nice to him because she works for tips and it wouldn't stand a chance logistically between them anyway because of how far apart they live. Jack answers he is blind and always focuses on the negative.

Later that evening, Miles invites Maya to join them around a glass of wine at the bar. She inquires about his book, Jack jumps on it to state it's getting published and that's why they're up there celebrating. Miles reluctantly goes along with the lie. Jack loosens the atmosphere with some humor about his voice-over acting jobs on television commercials. When Maya shows interest in what they're up to that night, Miles declares they're wiped and are just gonna go back to the motel and crash.

#### **#11 – Road back to the motel**

On the way back to the hotel, Jack blames Miles for sabotaging a potential party evening with Maya. Jack argues Maya's really into him and responds strongly to his book getting published. Miles doesn't appreciate the lie. Jack claims all he wants is get Miles a little action. Miles isn't so sure Jack, who found out she is no longer married, wasn't interested in her for himself.

#### **#12 – Restaurant argument**

Miles describes the plan for the day, which includes traveling and drinking. Jack is upset and finally confronts him: he's gonna get laid on that trip and won't let Miles fuck it up with his depression, anxiety and negativity. Miles wants to leave him at it and take a train back, but Jack argues this is a time for the both of them to share, that they should both be cutting loose and get crazy.

#### **#13 – Montage**

Miles and Jack driving and wine tasting.

#### **#14 – Meet Stephanie**

Miles and Jack stop for a tasting in a local winery and meet a local bartender, Stephanie. Miles doesn't like the Cabernet Franc he tastes. He dismisses it as ordinary (each character will be metaphorically represented by a wine, and Cabernet Franc is Stephanie). Jack, of course, likes it... like pretty much any wine (or woman) so far.

Jack hits on Stephanie, learns she knows Maya, who's actually been divorced a year, and arranges a double date dinner for the four of them.

He blames Miles for almost telling Stephanie he's getting married.

#### **#15 – Victoria's getting married**

Miles and Jack stop by the side of the road to enjoy a view Miles and Victoria used to enjoy together. Miles recalls moments together with her, praises her palate, when Jack informs him Victoria has remarried and will bring her new husband to attend Jack's wedding. Miles blames Jack for not telling him sooner. Jack argues it's the perfect place to tell him, that they're there to forget about all that crap and party. Miles freaks out when he learns Jack's been talking to Victoria behind his back about how to handle the

wedding given the circumstances. He grabs a bottle of wine and runs off drinking it, while Jack chases him through a vineyard.

#### **#16 – Hotel time**

Jack drives an extremely depressed Miles to the motel where they spend the afternoon watching golf on TV. Jack heads to the pool but Miles would rather be miserable and keep watching the program. Miles falls asleep. When he wakes up, they both get ready for their double date evening. Jack can't help mentioning another woman he fantasized about in the Jacuzzi. Jack coaches Miles on how to dress, stressing the girls think he's a writer. Before leaving, Jack leaves a hypocritical phone message to Christine saying he misses her.

#### **#17 – Last minute preparation**

Miles and Jack are on their way to meet Maya and Stephanie at the restaurant. Jack coaches him as much as he can, reminds him he's supposed to be a writer, not to drink too much to avoid going to the "dark side". Miles is upset and hardly plays along. Jack confronts him, warning him not to sabotage him. Miles agrees, provided that they don't drink Merlot, which he hates.

#### **#18 – Dating time**

Miles and Jack meet Maya and Stephanie at the restaurant. They hit it off with Jack and Stephanie doing some small talk while Miles and Maya talk about wine. She's into Sauvignon Blanc, which he likes (metaphorically, white wines seem to help him, while his self-indulgence for red wines doesn't help support his mood). They are clearly of the same mindset when it comes to wine.

While the evening starts off well, the heavy drinking leads Miles down a dark path, culminating with him excusing himself to privately drunk-dial his ex-wife, Victoria, to inform her he's decided not to come to Jack's wedding. While he tells her he's having a hard time digesting the recent news of her new marriage because he probably still hoped they had a chance together down the line, Victoria answers he shouldn't call her when drinking, and agrees it's probably best for him not to show up at the wedding. Jack privately lectures Miles on his heavy drinking which is spoiling the moment with the girls, and dialing Victoria whom he has to let go. According to Jack, he's blowing a great opportunity with Maya. Miles is very uncomfortable with the whole scenario. As Jack points out Victoria used to make him feel small (leading him into an affair with a woman named Brenda) and doesn't deserve his self-torture, Stephanie invites them all to go back to her place to enjoy wine, cheese and music.

#### **#19 – Stephanie's place**

Jack privately hands out condoms to Miles. While Jack and Maya hit it off really strongly, Miles and Maya isolate themselves and indulge in some nice talk over wine. Maya learns Miles has a 1961 Cheval Blanc bottle he's saving for a special occasion. Maya urges him to enjoy it now as the 61's are peaking. She says it might be too late and asks what he's waiting for. Miles says he's waiting for a special occasion with the right person. It was originally supposed to celebrate his 10th wedding anniversary. Maya argues the day you open a 61 Cheval Blanc is the special occasion.



Maya displays a very sharp palate, which greatly appeals to Miles. We also learn that Stephanie has a kid, leading both Miles and Maya to mention that the unpolluted part of their respective divorces was neither of them have kids.

Maya inquires about Miles's novel. It's called "The Day After Yesterday" and is about a man taking care of his father after a stroke, loosely based on personal experience. Miles still pretends its' getting published. Maya herself is going for a master's degree in horticulture and entertains the idea of working in a winery one day. Maya asks if she can read Miles's book who happens to have a copy in his car.

Maya asks why he's so into pinot. Miles invokes a touching description of it that is not unlike a description of himself, which he contrasts to Cabernet (a metaphor for Jack in the movie). Maya seems receptive to Miles's little moment. When he reciprocates and asks her why she's into wine, she says it was mostly through her ex-husband (who she describes as a fraud), then goes on about her own, deep, insightful and touching reasons for loving wine, which all resonate deeply in Miles as well. She alludes to the notion that wine needs to be enjoyed before it inevitably peaks like his 61, and then lays her hand on his. Instead of seizing the moment to kiss her, Miles freaks out and excuses himself to the bathroom.

He comes back out and awkwardly kisses her in the kitchen, but the moment has passed. Maya decides to leave.

Before leaving, Maya tells Miles she had a nice time. Miles still manages to hand her the manuscript of his book lying around in his car.

#### **#20 - The morning after**

The next morning, Miles wakes up alone in the motel room to Jack's ringing cell phone: his fiancée, Christine, has been trying to get a hold of him, leaving a string of messages. More phone call attempts disturb his sleep. He finally gets back to sleep and wakes up much later as Jack drops by to change clothes while Stephanie waits in the parking lot. After going on and on over Stephanie's sexual demeanor, Jack informs Miles he won't spend the day with him but go on a hike with Stephanie, and that they can all meet up later at the restaurant to hang out with Maya. Miles refuses the offer. Jack lectures Miles, blaming his heavy drinking for failing to score with Maya. Miles lectures Jack about checking his messages, which he hasn't, and insists that he calls his wife. Jack pretends to but doesn't.

Stephanie tells Miles that Maya told her she had a great time last night and that he should call her.

#### **#21 - Miles's miserable day alone**

Montage of Miles spending a miserable day alone, wasting time, writing something in the Jacuzzi, checking for phone messages, eating lunch alone, and playing golf. He finally heads back to the motel, walks in on Jack and Stephanie having heated intercourse, then leaves immediately, heading to the motel bar.

#### **#22 - Bar talk**

A bit later, Jack joins Miles at the bar. He recounts how Stephanie took him in the pinot fields that day and deludes himself in thinking he's starting to get a grasp on "the whole

wine thing". Miles confronts him about hooking up with some local wine-pourer chick he's known for 24 hours and concealing his upcoming wedding from her. Jack declares he's been doing some thinking, is unsure about his future plans, and might have to put the wedding on hold, arguing that Stephanie opened his eyes. While Miles clearly doesn't support his argument, Jack says he might be in love with her and starts fantasizing about him and Miles moving up to wine country and buying a vineyard. Miles tells him he's crazy.

Stephanie finally shows up, interrupting their argument.

### **#23 - Bowling**

Miles is shanghaied into hanging out with Jack and Stephanie's family (her daughter and her mother) at the local bowling. While Jack and Stephanie's daughter spend time in the video arcade area, Miles must endure some shallow small talk with Stephanie's mom. As they get ready to leave, Jack decides to hang out with Stephanie some more and leaves Jack alone for the evening.

### **#24 - Alone at the motel**

Miserable and alone, Miles gets himself back to the motel for a glass of wine and a "Barely Legal" magazine, then falls asleep.

He wakes up later that evening, suddenly takes a shower and decides to head out.

### **#25 - Looking for Maya**

Miles nervously heads to the restaurant where Maya works (The Hitching Post) hoping to see her. Unfortunately, she's off that night. Miles ends up getting drunk alone at the bar.

### **#26 - Golf time**

Miles and Jack are playing golf. Jack inquires if Miles got a hold of Maya and urges him to act "while the iron's hot". He then asks if he heard back from his agent about his book - which he did not, advises him to remain positive and to self-publish it. Finally, he tells him how to play golf. Miles freaks out: he needs a little room from Jack's constant lecturing on how he should go about everything in his life. Some other golf players eager to see them free up the field interrupt their argument.

Walking back to the hotel, Jack urges Miles not to give up on Maya, reinforcing that she likes him and that she's perfect for him. Miles worries he is broke and that her interest will quickly vanish when she learns he's an unpublished liar. Jack argues he is going to get published, then gets a phone call from Stephanie.

### **#27 - Good times**

Miles and Jack pick up Stephanie and Maya and spend the rest of the day together. Maya heard Miles tried to drop by the restaurant to see her the day before, but she had a class. She's happy to see him again. The four of them drive through the vineyards, talk about wine, hang out, sneak into a restricted wine reserve area, share good laughs, and grow increasingly intimate as they all share an outdoor picnic at sunset. They go

back to Stephanie's to hang out with more food and wine.

Finally, Miles and Maya drive back to her place and spend the night together.

### **#28 – Busted**

Miles and Maya spend some quality time walking food markets, then reading quietly against a tree. Miles screws up, unintentionally revealing that Jack's about to get married on Saturday. Maya gets pissed at his lie and wants him to drive her home. She tells him Jack's been telling Stephanie he loves her and her daughter, that he wants to move to wine country and get a place with the two of them. Miles thinks that Jack actually believes every word of it. He says he was on the verge of telling her the truth the day before. Maya argues he didn't tell her because he wanted to have sex with her first. She tells him she's spent the last three years of her life trying to extricate herself from a relationship that was full of deception. Miles tells her he hasn't been with anyone since his divorce and what's happening with her is a really big deal to him. Maya leaves him and goes back home.

### **#29 – Back at the motel**

Miles gets back to the motel where Jack is eagerly waiting to congratulate him on hooking up with Maya the night before. Miles isn't exactly in the mood to share details and asks Jack to stop pushing him all the time, leaving him wildly guessing at what went wrong. Miles tells him he's an infant, that it's all a big party to him.

When Jack's phone rings, Miles freaks out, thinking it's Stephanie, but it turns out to be Christine. He tells his wife he loves her. Miles declares the whole week has gone sour and didn't go the way it was supposed to. He just wants to go home. But Jack has another idea.

### **#30 – Bad news**

Jack takes Miles out to a winery for some tasting. Miles is clearly not in the mood for anything, hates the wine he tastes (unlike Jack who, as his usual self, likes pretty much everything he drinks), and finally uses Jack's cell phone to call his agent and get a final word about his book. He learns publishers passed on his book. They liked it but didn't know how to market it. His agent calls his book "fabulous, but with no home". A pissed off Miles gets drunk at the winery bar and makes a scene before Jack gets a hold of him and drags him outside.

### **#31 – I'm unnecessary**

Miles and Jack sit quietly on a bench by the seaside. Miles is desperate. He thinks he's finished. He's not a writer but a middle school English teacher. He thinks he's worthless and the world doesn't care what he has to say. Half his life is over, and he feels he doesn't have anything to show for it. Jack urges him not to give up, pointing out he's always been good with words.

### **#32 – Payback**

Miles and Jack get back to their motel. They are greeted by Stephanie who obviously learned about Jack's upcoming wedding. She furiously beats up Jack, breaking his nose with her motorbike helmet, then storms away.

### **#33 – Hospital ride**

Miles drives Jack to the hospital. Jack confronts him on telling Maya about the wedding. Miles denies it.

### **#34 – At the hospital**

Miles sits around waiting for Jack to come out. He finally decides to call Maya, leaving her a voicemail message. He reiterates how much he enjoyed their time together, how sorry he is, and lets her know he thought she was great from the first moment she waited on him at the restaurant. He finally tells her the truth about his book not getting published.

Jack finally comes out with a large bandage applied over his nose.

### **#35 – Jacuzzi**

While at the Jacuzzi, Jack keeps wondering how Stephanie found out about his wedding. Jack suspects Miles said something to Maya. Miles answers he's pretty pissed at him, Maya being pissed at him for associating with Jack.

### **#36 – Back to the motel room**

Jack asks Miles what his injury looks like. He answers it looks like he was in a bad car accident.

Jack says he's hungry.

### **#37 – Steaks restaurant**

Miles and Jack eat at a restaurant. Yet again, Jack hits on Cammi, a rather plump waitress, surfing on his old TV show fame. He tells Miles he's going to accompany her back home when she gets off work. Miles can't take his behavior anymore and advocates for some clean, cool buddy time together before they head home. Jack answers Miles doesn't understand his plight.

### **#38 – You gotta help me, Miles**

Jack bursts back into the motel room in the middle of the night, naked and freezing. As it turns out, Cammi is married, and her husband caught them having sex together. Jack ran away without his clothes, and most importantly, without his wallet containing the wedding rings. Jack wants to go get them back. When Miles refuses, Jack bursts into tears, begging him to help him, claiming that if Christine finds out, she's going to crucify him and he will lose her. As Miles considers him with perplexity, Jack declares he is nothing without her.

### **#39 – Miles gets Jack's wallet**

Miles and Jack drive back to Cammi's house. Jack asks Miles to get the wallet himself, pretexting he twisted his ankle during his run. Miles reluctantly sneaks inside the house, finds and grabs Jack's wallet and rushes out, chased by Cammi's half-naked husband. He starts the car and they take off in the nick of time.

#### **#40 – Road back**

On the road back home, Jack tries to get Miles to invite Maya to the wedding. Miles doesn't think it's a very wise idea at this point.

At the gas station, Jack says he feels like driving. Miles gives him the keys, and Jack purposefully drives Miles's car into a tree to simulate the car accident that allegedly cost him his nose.

Miles finally drops Jack at his in-laws where he pretends he was in the accident.

#### **#41 – Wedding ceremony**

Jack gets married. Miles attends as his best man. In the middle of his vows, Jack breaks away and casts a discreet glance at Miles with a hint of a smile.

#### **#42 – Meet Victoria**

Now outside the church, Victoria approaches Miles as he contemplates Jack's wedding from a distance. She introduces her new husband, then they share a private moment. She asks about his book and is sorry to hear it's being rejected everywhere. Miles congratulates Victoria on her marriage and invites her to hit the reception to have some champagne and toast the newlyweds. Victoria tells him she won't be drinking because she's pregnant. Miles fights the painful news and congratulates her. But instead of joining the reception, he takes off and drives away.

#### **#43 – Cheval Blanc**

Miles drives back home and finally drinks up his bottle of 1961 Cheval Blanc from a plastic cup, in a fast food, with some random burger.

#### **#44 – Miles's routine**

Time passes by as we see Miles going about his days in what appears to be a miserable routine.

#### **#45 – Phone call**

Miles finally gets a voicemail message from Maya. She thanks him for a letter he wrote to her. She needed some time to think things through, and also wanted to finish reading his novel before calling. She thinks the book is really lovely, beautiful and painful, that he's so good with words. She asks if he really went through all that. She urges him not to give up and to keep writing.

She tells him to let her know if he ever decides to come up to wine country again, although she's going to graduate soon and will likely relocate.

#### **#46 – Seizing the moment**

Miles doesn't wait. He grabs his car, drives up to wine country all the way to Maya's house. He knocks at her door.

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VOCABULARY:

Ability: being suited to handle a task; the innate capacity to do or be

Acceptance: a decision to allow, tolerate, or adapt, or not to oppose

Accurate: being within tolerances

Action: in terms of the Overall plot, actions force decisions

Actuality: objective reality; the way things are

Avoidance: stepping around, preventing or escaping from a problem

Aware: being conscious of things outside oneself

Be-er: Miles Raymond prefers to work things out internally

Cause: the specific circumstances that lead to an effect

Certainty: the determination that something is absolutely true

Change: an alteration of a state or process

Change: Miles Raymond changes his essential nature while attempting to solve the problem

Chaos: random change or a lack of order

Conscience: forgoing an immediate pleasure or benefit because of future consequences

Consider: weigh pros and cons

Control: directed, constrained

Deduction: a method of thought that determines certainty

Desire: the motivation toward something better

Determination: a conclusion based on circumstantial evidence

Disbelief: the belief that something is untrue

Effect: the specific outcome forced by a cause

Ending: coming to a conclusion

Equity: a balance, fairness, or stability

Evaluation: an appraisal of a situation and/or circumstances

Expectation: a conclusion as to the eventual effect of a particular cause

Fact: belief in something real

Failure: the original goal is not achieved

Faith: accepting something as certain without proof

Feeling: an emotional sense of how things are going

Good: Miles Raymond ultimately succeeds in resolving his personal problems

Help: a direct assistance to another's effort

Hinder: undermining another's effort

Holistic: Miles Raymond uses holistic problem-solving techniques

Hunch: an understanding based on insufficient circumstantial evidence

Inaction: intentionally taking no action

Induction: a method of thought that determines possibility

Inequity: an unbalance, unfairness, or lack of equality

Inertia: a continuation of a state or process

Innermost Desires: basic drives and desires

Knowledge: that which one holds to be true

Logic: a rational sense of how things are related

Non-Accurate: not within tolerances

Nonacceptance: a decision not to allow, tolerate, or adapt; a decision to oppose

Oppose: an indirect detraction from another's effort

Order: a patterned arrangement

Perception: the way things seem to be

Possibility: a determination that something might be true

Potentiality: a determination that something might become true

Proaction: taking initiative action

Probability: likelihood

Process: an ongoing activity; the mechanism through which a cause leads to an effect

Production: a process that determines potential

Projection: an extension of probability into the future

Protection: an effort to prevent interference with one's concerns

Proven: an assessment that something is correct by all relevant standards

Pursuit: the drive to seek after

Reaction: actions made in response

Reconsider: thinking through again

Reduction: a method of thought that determines probability

Reevaluation: a reappraisal of a situation or circumstances

Result: the product of a process; the ramifications of a specific effect

Self Aware: being conscious of one's own existence

Speculation: an extension of possibilities into the future

Steadfast: Miles Raymond ultimately retains his essential nature

Stop: regarding Miles Raymond, the audience is waiting for something to end

Support: indirect assistance given to another's efforts

Temptation: the urge to embrace immediate benefits despite possible consequences

Test: a trial to determine something's validity

Theory: an unbroken chain of relationships leading from a premise to a conclusion

Thought: the process of consideration

Timelock: the story climax is brought about by a time limit

Trust: acceptance without proof

Uncontrolled: directionless, unconstrained, free

Unending: continuing without cessation

Unproven: a conjecture that has not been tested

Value: the objective usefulness of something in general

Wisdom: understanding how to apply Knowledge