

FORWARD: A SCREENPLAY

by

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ABSTRACT

Forward is an ensemble screenplay surrounding a group of friends in their twenties. The main character is Kat. She is a sarcastic 24-year-old who still has a bit of growing up to do. Her story starts with her being so ready to stop thinking of Emma, her best friend and former love of her life. After finally relinquishing this extremely unrequited love, she unexpectedly meets Quinn, a nurse at Urgent Care. As if it were the easiest thing in the world she falls for Quinn, but things are not as they seem. Quinn is holding back something: she has a daughter named Sophia. Is Kat ready to be an instant parent? Is Quinn ready to let Kat in? At Kat's side through the mess of life is Carter, Kat's best friend. His story begins after viewers first see him drink himself into Urgent Care. He puts up a façade of dark humor as his way of dealing with a mother who rarely remembers who he is. Making watching out for his mother becomes all-consuming; he longs to maintain that connection but allows that longing take a toll on his relationships.

Emma, the former object of Kat's affections, and Noah, her fiancé, have two major issues they must deal with: their upcoming wedding and an unplanned pregnancy. Whether this young couple is ready for that kind of responsibility is put into question while whether they should even be getting married is already in question. Can their relationship survive these newfound complications? The final storyline woven throughout *Forward* is about Noah's brother David, an arrogant workaholic, and his wife Laura, a wanderlust struck travel agent. To say they have an unhappy marriage is understating it; their marriage is so far lost at the point their story begins. All that remains is the last straw to break their marriage—and perhaps themselves. Will Laura stay trapped by expectations? Will David fight for his marriage?

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INTRODUCTION

When I first started thinking about what I wanted to do for my honors college senior thesis, I had a nice little list of possible topics I would be interested in researching, ranging from the effects romantic comedies had on the expectations placed on men to the influence of women directors on the film industry. I would have been fine writing about any of the topics I had brainstormed in the recesses of my mind, but would I have been as fulfilled as I am after completing this purely creative work? No, I dare say I would not.

Setting out with this new wonderful possibility of writing a piece of creative writing, a feature-length screenplay, I knew I had some specific goals I wanted to accomplish by the completion of my thesis project. The first I have already stated: I wanted to write a feature-length screenplay. What does that mean exactly? I wanted to write enough script pages that would fill the time of a full-length movie someone could (potentially) watch on television or in a theater. The second goal lends itself from the first: I wanted to have a complete piece of work to present to graduate schools, contests, agents, producers, and anyone else who might have the resources to make my dream of being a screenwriter a reality. The third goal was to pay homage to the Film, Television & Digital Media (FTDM) and English Departments and the mentors I have had during my time here at TCU: I wanted to synthesize the knowledge of screenwriting conventions into a practical application. By now I feel I have accomplished my goals to the best of my ability. Is that to say that my screenplay is “done”? No, I think it is the burden of all creatives to feel their work is incomplete, so I feel no shame knowing this is a piece I will continue refining and polishing. I actually take delight at the thought of spending the new abundance of free time I will have upon graduating to write to my heart’s content.

As I think of all the writing I will be able to do in the future, I think of how I went about writing this piece that has taken up residence in a very special place in my heart. I think about my process. Like with the biology and psychology students working on their theses, I started my process by researching. I had the privilege of taking a dramatic writing workshop with the English Department's Dr. Chantel Langlinais and two classes in the FTDM Department with Professor Richard Allen on styles and structures and dramatic writing. All three classes helped me grow as a writer in a way that only studying texts and written application can, but they also pointed me in the right direction for what other texts I want to reference. Syd Field, Robert McKee, and Christopher Vogler I have unofficially dubbed "the experts" for their works *Screenplay*, *Story*, and *The Writer's Journey*, respectively. At some point or another, their screenwriting methodology were the industry standard. Blake Snyder, James Ryan, and Kristin Thompson I have unofficially dubbed "the guides" for their works *Save the Cat!*, *Screenwriting from the Heart*, and *Storytelling in the New Hollywood*, respectively. Major takeaways I drew from my research were that major Plot Points pull the film narrative in a new directions (Field), film narratives can be broken into four parts (instead of the typical three acts) at points where the main character's goal changes (Thompson), and a narrative film is only as strong as its weakest character (Ryan). I learned a great deal from my "experts" and "guides", but all the while my mind was in a constant state of brainstorming, formulating new characteristics for old character and old themes in new contexts.

My thesis began as a germ of an idea from a 30-page piece I wrote as the final project for my workshop with Dr. Langlinais. I had this idea at the core of my story: girl falls in love with best friend, girl moves on and discovers real love in someone else. I had

my main character; I had my idea; I even had 30 pages of script to work with. But as I continued to brainstorm and mull over my ever-changing ideas, my thesis took on an entirely new shape of its own. It was like that really awkward, acne-ridden pre-teen you knew in middle school that becomes an Adonis in high school: unrecognizable but the same person at the core. That is essentially what happened as a result of all my brainstorming; even as I submit this thesis for publication, I know I will not be able to restrain myself from my favorite part of the process.

The rest of my process followed in what I believe was a fairly traditional fashion. (Then again, what is traditional for one creative may not be traditional for another.) I decided on the tone I wanted to take. This was an important step for me because I did not want this to be a stereotypical rom-com. I wanted this to be about love, but love is not always fun and life is not always serious. My goal was to achieve a balance of drama and humor that felt real to life in the same way that many independent films today have achieved. After I had made that conscious decision, I began outlining. My outlining took the form of multiple smaller outlines involving my ensemble of characters dealing with their own drama because at some point in my brainstorming I had unwittingly decided, “Hey, this is going to be an ensemble film!” Though I tried to drag out the outlining stage, I eventually had to start actually writing. Why was I avoiding the actual writing? Because like the many writers who came before me, I had a personal connection to my own words as they fell on the page. I would compare it to the parent-child dynamic: my script became my baby so once my words touched the page, my baby would be open to the judgments and harshness of the world she was being born into. Like any first-time parent, I had my fears, but like any parent I will eventually just have to trust I raised my

child well enough to make it on her own. And like with any child, my screenplay grew and changed—changed a lot.

As I wrote, my characters began changing, my story adapting to these changes. As previously mentioned, that brainstorming stage never truly ends, so I kept coming up with new ideas that would have small and large impacts on this story world I had created. Eventually though it just became time for me to have the individual storylines I had been writing separately to converge. The final step before revision was combining the storylines in a coherent and effective way. (Hopefully, that is what I have done.)

Now that I have piqued sufficient interest in my screenplay through discussing my process, I feel comfortable moving onto to the actual screenplay. Just as I had goals for the screenplay as a thesis project for the honors college, I had objectives for the screenplay itself. I wanted it to be four things if it was to be nothing else: relevant, thematic, an ensemble, and socially implicating.

The relevancy comes from the mass market appeal of the characters' age group of mid- to late-twenties. Younger viewers of a film like this can relate to the character as people they will be in a few years while even a middle-aged man going through a career change can relate to the weight these characters' life choices have. Plus, I am only twenty years old: I can better theorize and empathize with characters only a few years older than me.

As far as being thematic, the idea of a strong theme being woven into the various storylines was an idea I had very early on. The theme I hoped to address was growing up and how growing up does not stop at some society prescribed age, how growing up means making grownup decisions. The characters in my screenplay have to decide what

is really important to them: how and when should they stick with something are questions they face. To further enforce this theme I wanted to use the motif of children revealed in a mother-son relationship, a young daughter, different pregnancies, and even various maturity levels.

With an ensemble cast, I could use the theme as a unifying umbrella under which all the characters fell. Though the screenplay is mostly about one main character, six supporting characters exist to shed new light on the same theme. With an ensemble, audience members can more easily find someone they can identify with or recognize from their own lives. To make the ensemble structure work I knew I needed three things: a clear issue/theme for the characters (growing up, check), a context in which the characters relate (they are part of same friend group, check), and an event that frames the story (a wedding, check).

Creating a story with social implications was not something I set out to do. I just wanted to write a story that my friends and I could relate to on a personal level. In order to accomplish this I wanted to write about LGBTQ characters and their allies. I wanted this to be an LGBTQ film not about being LGBTQ. There exists this progression in LGBTQ cinema that began with stories about queer abomination then stories about coming out and now society is heading in the positive direction with stories about just being people. The film British *Imagine Me & You* and the ABC Family television show *The Fosters* are perfect examples of the direction queer cinema is heading, a direction in which being gay is merely a footnote, a small aspect of truly rounded characters. Not having the sexuality of the film's characters be the focus allows the audience to see them for who they really are: regular people.

As a writer I just wanted to create a story my friends and I would enjoy seeing, not seeking to make some greater social implication. But by the end of this thesis project, I have realized my ability and social responsibility to use my craft to amplify my voice as an advocate for human decency and equal rights for all. As I reflect on this and the thesis project as a whole, I am filled with pride; I have learned what I am capable of now and the potential I have as a writer in the future. And the future is something I am excited about while I continue growing in the present.

I would like to acknowledge and give many thanks to my Thesis Committee, Professor Richard Allen, Dr. Chantel Langlinais, and Dr. Tricia Jenkins, for the valuable feedback and encouragements. They have each been tremendous in shaping my career as a writer and a TCU student. Professor Allen, especially, has been a wonderful mentor to me, answering my many questions and offering valuable advice as I pursue a career as a screenwriter. And finally, I would like to acknowledge and thank my mother, Henrietta Semik, for being my number one fan and biggest supporter; I would not be where I am today without her.

Forward: A Screenplay

By

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FADE IN:

INT. KAT'S APARTMENT - MORNING

INSERT of a phone is buzzing on the nightstand. KAT, 23 and athletically built, grabs at it with closed eyes, still lying in her bed, a tangled mess of sheets.

KAT

Hello?

KAT'S MOM (O.S.)

Hey, sweetie. I tried calling you earlier but you didn't answer. Just wanted to make sure you got up on time for work.

KAT

Yeah, work. Totally. Heading out the door now.

KAT'S MOM (O.S.)

Oh, goodness. Well, don't rush just because you're running late. Safety first.

KAT

Yeah, Mom. Thanks. Love you. Call you later.

KAT'S MOM (O.S.)

Alright. Bye.

KAT

Bye.

Kat hangs up the phone and starts to go back to sleep when she jolts upright in her bed. She checks the clock, overslept as usual.

KAT

Shit!

She jumps out of bed and races around her studio apartment, trying to get dressed for work. Her phone starts buzzing again.

KAT

Hello?

CARTER (O.S.)

Just wake up?

(CONTINUED)

KAT
No, I'm almost there.

CARTER (O.S.)
Yeah, sure. Look, could you bring
me my project notes. I left them on
your coffee table.

Kat looks around her organized mess of magazines and books
on her coffee table.

CARTER (O.S.)
Try under *The Half-Blood Prince*.

She does as directed.

KAT
Got it.

CARTER (O.S.)
Now get to the office before
someone notices.

KAT
Ha, yeah right.

BEGIN MONTAGE:

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

EMMA, 23 and blonde, is at the concierge desk helping hotel
guests with their requests with a smile of utmost
hospitality.

INT. EMMA & NOAH'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

NOAH, 25 with a baby-face, is sitting at a computer in the
home office working on some computer programming. The
morning's just barely started and he is already getting
bored. He fidgets, looks at his watch, then decides to get
up from the chair and leave the room.

INT. KAT'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Kat grabs Carter's notes and her messenger bag and slams the
door behind her. A few seconds later she reenters to get her
cell phone. She tries to leave one more time.

INT. URGENT CARE - CONTINUOUS

QUINN, 28 and a slender brunette, is going about her rounds, casually signing clipboards and putting them in their designated places.

INT. TRAVEL AGENCY - CONTINUOUS

LAURA, 27 and tired-looking, is stuck at her desk at the travel agency. It's been a slow morning. Someone walks in but another agent intercepts the potential client. She deflates after a second of excitement. She fiddles with her phone headset as she daydreams about some culturally rich location pictured on the agency wall.

INT. KAT'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Kat gets in her car, finally decent enough to get to the office. She starts her car and hears a beep. Her gas level is dangerously low. Her shoulders slump before she finally pulls out.

INT. AD AGENCY - CONTINUOUS

DAVID, 28 and scruffy-looking, is making a paper football when the young INTERN walks by in a skirt a couple inches shorter than is professional. He leans back in his chair to get a better view of her, almost falling out of the chair in the process.

INT. EMMA & NOAH'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Noah returns to his computer desk with an inordinately large sandwich, chips, and soda: it's lunchtime somewhere. He's pleased with his creation.

INT. URGENT CARE - CONTINUOUS

Quinn is at the nurses station chuckling with her friend and colleague, KRISTI, 29 and quirky. Quinn punches in notes into the computer with efficiency.

EXT. GAS STATION - CONTINUOUS

Kat rests her head against her car in depression. The world is conspiring against her. The nozzle clicks and she replaces it and jumps back into her car, leaving the receipt to blow in the wind.

EXT. PLAYGROUND - CONTINUOUS

SOPHIA, 5 and adorable, is chasing a PLAYMATE of hers. Both get on the swings giggling.

INT. PUBLISHING HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Kat discreetly rushes in, tucking her shirt in, flattening down her hair. Carter walks up next to her with two cups of coffee in hand.

CARTER

Trade you.

Kat exchanges one coffee cup for Carter's project notes.

KAT

Am I fired?

CARTER

Not yet.

KAT

Man, you'd think after all this time they'd get sick of me.

CARTER

I think they pity you more than anything. They're too nice to leave you destitute.

KAT

Good point.

CARTER

Your work's not horrible. Maybe if you showed up on time, they'd give you a raise.

KAT

Yeah, and then I could go home to my non-existent healthy relationship and enjoy watching pigs fly by my window.

CARTER

Let me know how that works out for you.

KAT

Will do.

They split off in different directions. Carter to a small private office with "Junior Developmental Editor" on his door and Kat to her cubicle with "Copy Editor" on her desk.

INT. BAR - THAT NIGHT

Kat and Carter are downing shots. Kat's perfectly fine. Carter's throat stings after that last one.

CARTER

I hate drinking with you.

KAT

Why? Cuz I'm so good at it?

CARTER

You'd actually have to be drinking alcohol to be good at this.

KAT

Sorry I'm allergic to alcohol.

CARTER

Yeah, and I'm allergic to bullshit.

KAT

(to bartender)

Another, good sir...I mean ma'am.
So sorry about that.

The 42-year-old surly looking BARTENDER puts down two more shot glasses.

CARTER

She probably spit in your water.

KAT

Okay, the first three times I could've sworn she was a man.

CARTER

Huh, it's the 'stache.

Carter downs his shot glass. An elated Emma and chill Noah walk up behind them. Emma hugs Kat from behind; Kat closes her eyes as if trying to will the hug to last longer than the few brief seconds it does.

EMMA

Hey, guys!

(CONTINUED)

KAT
(half-heartedly)
Hey, you two.

Carter signals the bartender for another shot. Emma and Noah sit down next to them.

KAT (CONT'D)
Should we go grab a table?

EMMA
Nah, I think it's just going to be us tonight. Laura said she'd come with David once he got off work, but knowing him he'll probably forget.

KAT
So how are the last minute plans going?

EMMA
Really well, actually. Only a few more minor details to knock out of the way.

CARTER
Wonderful. Then you can finally put her out of her misery--

KAT
--With gift shopping! I have no idea what I'm getting you. Both of you.

EMMA
...Right.

The four of them share an awkward silence.

NOAH
Bartender, a round over here.

The bartender comes over to pour their drinks, glaring at Kat.

NOAH (CONT'D)
To new beginnings and the adventure of the unknown.

KAT
(wistful)
To new beginnings.

(CONTINUED)

CARTER
And old endings.

They drink, Kat her water, the rest their shots. Carter looks confident, ready for another shot but then face plants the bar top. Kat rolls her eyes; Emma and Noah look on concerned and embarrassed. Kat leaves some money on the bar top and hoists Carter up.

INT. URGENT CARE - 15 MINUTES LATER

Kat shuffles a half-conscious Carter through the doors. She goes up to the check-in desk and addresses the attendant:

KAT
Carter Williams, party of one.

The ATTENDANT hands over a clipboard, unamused.

KAT (CONT'D)
Thanks.

Kat drags a slumping Carter to the waiting chairs and starts filling out his paperwork.

KAT (CONT'D)
(whispers)
Carter. Carter!... When's the last
time you had sex?

CARTER
(groans unintelligibly)
I hate you.

KAT
Thanks, buddy. Now you wait right
here.

Kat returns to the Attendant. She point her pen at the paper and asks:

KAT (CONT'D)
Does a cold sore count?

The Attendant looks annoyed.

KAT (CONT'D)
No?

INT. PATIENT ROOM - 15 MINUTES LATER

Carter is lying down, dozing off. Kat is in the chair next to him. She gently smacks him in the face.

KAT
Stop it. No sleeping.

Kristi walks in with her clipboard, leaving the door/curtain open.

KRISTI
Alright how are we doing over here?

KAT
Great...oh, him. He's been better.

KRISTI
I can imagine. Give it a few more minutes and the pills should take effect.

KAT
Can't wait.

Quinn walks by and addresses Kristi:

QUINN
Hey, your kid with the broken nose keeps asking for his mom.

KRISTI
Right. Be right there. Thanks.

Kat catches Quinn's eye for a brief second before Quinn walks off. She leans around the partition trying to get a better look at her. Kristi looks at Kat curiously, but knowingly.

KRISTI
So your friend's blood work came back. Looks like he might also have Lupus.

KAT
(not listening)
Okay.

KRISTI
Excuse me?...Hello?

(CONTINUED)

KAT

Huh.

KRISTI

I was just saying your friend is going to be fine. He should have eaten before drinking and definitely should not have been drinking that much at all.

KAT

Yeah, he's been...going through some stuff lately.

Kat keeps looking for Quinn, who finally returns to the nurses' station.

KRISTI

I'll be right back.

Kristi goes to the nurses' station and speaks unintelligibly to Quinn real quick. Kristi nods in Kat's direction while talking to Quinn. Quinn nods her head in agreement. Kristi walks away with a mischievous grin on her face that she wipes off before addressing Kat:

KRISTI

Sorry 'bout that. I've gotta check on a boy with a broken nose and find his mom. I asked Nurse Quinn to help finish things up for me.

KAT

Oh, okay. Thanks for your help.

KRISTI

No problem.

Kristi leaves. Kat stares at Quinn as she is filing papers and filling in charts. Quinn finishes up at the station and heads to Kat and Carter, Kat trying very hard to look casual and Carter drooling on himself.

QUINN

Hi, I'm Nurse Quinn.

KAT

Kat.

Carter rolls over and throws up at Kat's feet.

KAT (CONT'D)

Carter.

CUT TO:

The floor's been mopped up, a slow-moving 80-year-old CUSTODIAN, rolling out the bucket and mop. Kat is at the small sink, scrubbing off her shoes. Quinn is checking Carter's vitals.

QUINN

Do you mind if I ask why your friend here was drinking so much?

KAT

He can be a little dramatic sometimes. The male Sylvia Plath. I don't think he even knows what he's doing, just that he's doing something. Probably my fault anyways. I was doing the same thing a few months ago.

QUINN

Why's that?

KAT

Long story.

QUINN

Short version?

KAT

Love.

QUINN

Ah, gotcha.

KAT

I just needed some time. So does he. But three strikes.

QUINN

Three strikes?

KAT

If either of us drinks too much three times, then we have to go sober for a year. Strike three.

QUINN

He's out.

(CONTINUED)

KAT

Exactly.

QUINN

What are friends for if not to
share our own sufferings.

KAT

Exactly.

CUT TO:

Kat is dabbing Carter's head with a wet cloth. Carter is
awake with heavy lids.

CARTER

She's cute.

KAT

Hadn't noticed.

CARTER

Yeah, right. Before Emma happened
you were all about "noticing".

KAT

Shut up.

CARTER

Kat, come on.

KAT

...I know.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Laura and David's place is a decent size, but it wasn't
supposed to be something permanent. Five years later,
Laura's done her best to make it a home for herself; the
walls feature photo prints of famous European places (the
Trevi fountain, Eiffel Tower, Greek coastline, Athens,
Munich, etc.). Laura is sitting on the couch, reading an
Italian book (German, Spanish, and Greek language books are
neatly stacked on the the end table). She's thumbing through
her book while drinking a glass of red wine. David walks in
from the front door.

DAVID

Hey.

LAURA

(still reading and drinking)
Hey, yourself.

(CONTINUED)

DAVID

A couple of the guys at work stayed late for a strategy meeting.

LAURA

A couple of the guys?

DAVID

Yeah.

LAURA

Doesn't smell like it.

DAVID

(annoyed at the accusation)

Excuse me.

LAURA

I can smell that cheap perfume from over here. Are the guys taking up cross dressing?

DAVID

So the intern stayed to help? So what?

LAURA

You tell me, Dave?

DAVID

God, you know I hate it when you call me Dave!

David storms off to the bedroom, yanking at his tie in frustration. Laura doesn't flinch, keeps reading, and keeps drinking.

LAURA

(to herself)

And you wonder why I do it?

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Emma is looking at herself in the mirror. She's holding onto the edge of the sink. She's in shock.

INT. BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Noah is in his PJ's, sitting up in the bed. He's typing on his computer. Emma opens the adjoining bathroom door and stands in the doorway, staring at Noah. Without looking up from his computer:

(CONTINUED)

NOAH

You ready for bed, babe.

Emma doesn't respond. He looks up at her, seeing her expression.

NOAH (CONT'D)

What?

Emma doesn't say anything but awkwardly smirks with a laugh.

INT. NURSES' STATION - MINUTES LATER

Kat has mustered up courage. Quinn and Kristi are chatting and chuckling to themselves.

KRISTI

Hi, can we help you?

KAT

Yeah, I actually had a question for Nurse Quinn.

QUINN

Oh. Sure. What's up?

KAT

Well, there's this new Italian restaurant downtown. Haven't had to the chance to try it. Carter hates Italian so he won't go with me. You seem like you might like Italian. Not that you look Italian or that looking Italian is a bad thing. But I don't know would that be something you're interested in. Italian food, more specifically getting Italian food with me.

QUINN

Oh. I don't know. Things are kind of--

Quinn sees Kristi walking behind Kat, noiselessly demanding her to say yes. Quinn is flabbergasted by Kristi.

QUINN (CONT'D)

complicated.

KRISTI

(coughing)

Go!

Kat turns around at Kristi, confused.

(CONTINUED)

KRISTI (CONT'D)
Had a tickle.

KAT
Hey, no problem. I'll just sign
those papers and be off then.

Quinn hands over the papers. Kat leans over to sign them as Kristi continues to noiselessly gesture for Quinn to do something. After glaring at Kristi to no avail:

QUINN
When did you want to go?

KAT
What?

QUINN
What day? I can only really do
Mondays.

KAT
Monday works. Wow. Great. Okay
then. I'll see you Monday.

Kat walks off smiling to herself. Kristi grinning at Quinn.

QUINN
Shut up, Kristi.

KRISTI
You're welcome.

QUINN
What about Sophia?

KRISTI
You worry too much?

Kristi starts dancing around Quinn in victory. Quinn is unmoving; she sighs. Kat walks back over, genuinely confused as to why Kristi is dancing. Kristi finally notices, freezes, smiles, then walks away.

KAT
I forgot to get your number.

INT. RESTAURANT - MONDAY NIGHT

The restaurant is mostly empty due to the Monday night lull.
Kat walks up to the teenage HOSTESS.

KAT

Hey.

HOSTESS

Welcome. Just one?

KAT

Not quite. I'm supposed to be
meeting someone, so could I get a
table for--

HOSTESS

Oh, I think the other half of your
party is already here.

Kat checks her watch.

KAT

But it's only...7:24.

She realizes just how late she is.

HOSTESS

Can I take you to your seat now?
She's in the bar area.

KAT

Yes, thanks.

The Hostess leads Kat around a series of empty tables, Kat
trying to peak ahead of her in an effort to see Quinn's
mood. She finally spots Quinn, glasses on, reading a book,
beverage in hand.

HOSTESS

Here you are.

KAT

Thanks.
(to Quinn)
Hey.

QUINN

Hey, yourself.

KAT

Look I'm really sorry for being so
late. I didn't realize--

(CONTINUED)

Quinn removes her glasses and holds up a hand to stop Kat from talking.

QUINN

It's done. I'm starving, so take a minute, check out the menu, and let's order.

KAT

(baffled)

...Alright.

Kat glances at the menu for a brief second, then puts it down. Quinn looks at her curiously.

QUINN

Already know what you want?

KAT

Yeah, I always get the same thing everywhere.

QUINN

Don't think you want to try something new?

KAT

Nah, I mean yeah I think about it but then I think 'why mess with a good thing'?

QUINN

Or you could try something different and maybe like that even more.

KAT

Ha I'm not that adventurous.

QUINN

Huh.

Quinn continues looking at Kat curiously. Kat, starting to become uncomfortable under her gaze, fiddles with her napkin until she can't stand it anymore.

KAT

So! What book were you reading?

QUINN

Oh, sorry about that. Was gonna give you until the next chapter before I left.

(CONTINUED)

Quinn rummages in her bag and pulls out a copy of BOOK TITLE. Kat recognizes the book title, flips the pages, reads the back cover.

QUINN (CONT'D)

Have you read it?

KAT

No, can't say that I have, but my best friend Carter has it.

QUINN

Ah, your friend I met the other night.

KAT

He seemed to really like it.

QUINN

Maybe you should borrow it from him sometime.

KAT

I'm more of a John Green, J.K. Rowling type of girl myself.

QUINN

Hm, that makes sense.

KAT

Is that a bad thing?

QUINN

I'll let you know.

KAT

Is dating this cryptic these days?

Quinn can't help but laugh a little at this remark.

QUINN

Sorry, I don't do this very often.

KAT

Yeah, ditto.

QUINN

Someone as bold as yourself, can't have been that long?

KAT

(laughs nervously)

Let's just say the last couple of years, I've been out of commission.

(CONTINUED)

QUINN

(speaking with mocking
discretion)

Speaking as a nurse, I know they
have medication for that kind of
thing.

KAT

(relaxed laughter)

No, I can assure you that is not
what I meant. I just meant...when
you care about someone so much, no
one else seems to matter...I'm
sorry; I'm running on.

QUINN

(intrigued)

Not at all...I understand
completely.

Their eyes connect and they share a real moment of
connection before the waiter comes up.

WAITER

Are you ready?

Quinn's eyes briefly shift to the waiter before returning to
Kat. Kat's gaze never leaves Quinn.

QUINN

Yes, I think so.

They smile at each other while they order from the waiter.

CUT TO:

Empty food plates and glasses and scrunched up napkins
remain on the table as Kat and Quinn leave their table.

QUINN

Well, thanks again for dinner. It
was great.

KAT

Cooked it all myself.

QUINN

Well then, you're just full of
surprises.

KAT

Sometimes...Do you like Mexican
food because I know this one
place--I mean if you want to--

(CONTINUED)

Quinn starts to draw into herself: the prospect of the future, a time beyond this moment, doesn't seem possible.

QUINN

My schedule is kind of crazy the next few weeks...

KAT

Oh, alright. I mean, you can just call me if you maybe want to do something related to Mexican food or otherwise.

QUINN

Thanks. Good night.

KAT

Night.

Quinn walks away looking like the complex reality of her situation just smacked her in the face. Kat stares after for a few moments like a confused child before leaving herself.

INT. QUINN'S HOUSE - SHORTLY AFTER DINNER

Quinn walks into her house, a warm, well-lived in type of place. It's organized but not spotless. She sits down on the couch not looking at anything in particular, lost in thought. You can hear water running from the faucet in the kitchen and plates clinking together.

WOMAN (OFF SCREEN)

Quinn?

QUINN

Yeah, it's me.

WOMAN (O.S)

You were out later than I expected.

Quinn still lost in thought but on the verge of being drawn back into the real world.

QUINN

Yeah, sorry. Lost track of time.
How was dinner?

INT. KAT'S APARTMENT - SHORTLY AFTER DINNER

Kat's hair is up. She's in a pair of sweatpants and a t-shirt, brushing her teeth before bed. Her phone buzzes on the counter. It's Carter: "How was your date?" She texts back: "Fine. Interesting. Fine. Hey can I borrow [book title]?" Carter: "Uh sure." Kat finishes brushing her teeth and collapses into bed. She rolls over to set her alarm.

TIME LAPSE-FAST LIGHTING CHANGE FROM NIGHT TO DAY:

INT. KAT'S APARTMENT - MORNING

The blaring of Kat's alarm clock startles Kat into waking. She smacks her clock. Her phone starts buzzing.

KAT

Hello?

KAT'S MOM (V.O)

Oh, hello, honey. What do you need?

KAT

Ma, you called me.

KAT'S MOM (V.O)

Right, I was just so surprised you picked up the first time.

KAT

Me too. Thanks for the call. Love you.

Kat hangs up and throws the blankets off her.

INT. CAR - MORNING

Noah and Emma are driving along. Noah is looking straight ahead, wrapped up in his own thoughts. Emma is nervously glancing from Noah to her fidgety hands resting in her lap.

EMMA

Noah.

Noah, so lost in thought, doesn't hear her.

EMMA (CONT'D)

(louder)

Noah.

NOAH

Huh.

(CONTINUED)

EMMA

You've been quiet the whole ride.

NOAH

Yeah?

EMMA

Yeah.

NOAH

I'm sorry. I'm just...processing.

EMMA

And what? You don't think I'm processing either?

NOAH

No, it's all just a lot to take in.

EMMA

No shit.

NOAH

Whoa whoa don't try picking a fight with me. Not now.

EMMA

No, I'm gonna pick a fight because that seems to be the only way to get your attention.

NOAH

--That's not true.

Noah slows down the car to a red light.

EMMA

You don't just get to check out! I'm scared out of my mind and to top it off I'm worried you're going to leave now.

NOAH

--What? I'm not g--

EMMA

Don't get me wrong. I can do this by myself. But I'd rather not have to.

NOAH

Emma, I'm--

(CONTINUED)

EMMA

Just because you're a guy and
(air quoting)
"handle these things differently"
doesn't me I'm gonna sit here and
wait in agonizing silence.

NOAH

If you'd just--

EMMA

If we're supposed to get married,
we need to be there for each other,
in sickness and in health.

NOAH

Emma!--

EMMA

Til death do us part. If you're not
ready for that then you're not
ready for this. I just need you to
be here. With me. Now. And need to
know everything's going to be alr--

NOAH

EMMA!

Emma finally stops her rant long enough to look at Noah
who's looking back at her.

NOAH

Everything's going to be alright.
I'm not going anywhere. I'm sorry.
I'll try harder. I know you're
scared. I am too. But I'm here.

EMMA

(tearing)

Through sickness and health.

NOAH

(smiling)

Through good times and bad.

Emma gently touches his cheek. Noah grabs her hand and
kisses it, holding on to it as he rests it on the car's
armrest. The light turns green and Noah starts pulling
forward. Emma's expression changes quickly.

EMMA

So are you referring to this as a
good time or a bad one? Because if
you think...

INT. OFFICE - DAY

David is typing away at his computer. He sees something out of the corner of his eye. It's GRETCHEN; the 20-year-old intern is at the photocopier. David is totally checking her out. Gretchen notices and gives him one of her sultry smiles he is all too familiar with; he returns with a smile of his own.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - A BIT LATER

David is sitting around a table with five of his colleagues listening to his BOSS (55, balding with glasses wearing an expensive suit) brief them on their newest client.

BOSS

Alright people, Jude Waits will be our biggest new client this year. He wants his eco-friendly start-up to get some bigger buzz nationally. I'm gonna put Steve and Joseph on as our liaisons between Waits and us and David and Martin will be heading research. That's all I've got for you at the moment. Thanks, everyone. Let's get back to work.

David is irritated. He can't believe he's not working as a liaison and is stuck doing grunt work. He gets up from the table and goes up to his Boss as everyone else is leaving the conference room.

DAVID

Hey, Boss. I need to talk to you for a sec.

Boss is shuffling his papers together neatly, bracing himself for what he knows is another bitch fit of David's.

BOSS

What's on your mind?

DAVID

Why am I doing intern work while Steve and Joseph are sitting at the grown-ups table with Waits?

BOSS

They are better suited for the client.

(CONTINUED)

DAVID

Oh, com'mon, Boss! I run circles around Steve McClellan and you know it. I'm better at this job than he is.

BOSS

Are you? Are you really?

DAVID

What's that supposed to mean?

BOSS

You've been working here for over five years. Ever stopped to ask yourself why you haven't been moving up?

(pause)

Chew on that for a bit the next time you want to tell me how to do my job.

Boss walks out of the conference room, leaving David looking pissed off.

INT. OFFICE - 10 MINUTES LATER

David is sitting at his desk, furiously squeezing a stress ball, his eyes closed and face in his other hand. He hasn't been productive at all: his home page of some social media site is up on his computer. Gretchen comes up and places a Styrofoam cup of steaming coffee on his desk.

GRETCHEN

Three sugars. No cream.

DAVID

Thanks. Just what I need.

GRETCHEN

Tough morning?

DAVID

You could say that. I'm working with a bunch of idiots led by the biggest asshole since an elephant's butt.

GRETCHEN

(giggles)

Well, you need to relax. This stress can't be good for your chakras.

(CONTINUED)

DAVID

Who says I'm stressed?

David's been furiously squeezing his stress ball the whole time. Gretchen looks at it in reference. He looks down at his hand and stops, tossing the ball aside.

GRETCHEN

You look so tense.

She stands behind him and starts giving him a shoulder massage.

GRETCHEN (CONT'D)

Have you considered doing yoga?

DAVID

I don't really see the point of all that zen bullshit.

Gretchen leans in close, whispering in David's ear with a devilish smile on her face.

GRETCHEN

(whispers)

Well, you know that one thing I showed you? I wouldn't be that flexible without yoga.

STEVEN, 25, a handsome guy exudes "clean-cut all-American red-blooded male;" he's a hard worker with good values. Steven walks up briskly with his head in his papers.

STEVEN

Hey, Gretchen. Could you--Oh, uh sorry. Was I, uh,...

Gretchen quickly stands up straight and David makes an attempt to look like he's busy at his computer.

DAVID

What do you want, Steven?

STEVEN

Oh, uh, I was wondering if Gretchen, if you could make 15 copies of this briefing for me ASAP.

GRETCHEN

Yes, I'll get right on it.

Steven hands over the briefing to Gretchen and stands there a second too long: it's now awkward. He leaves uncomfortably. David relaxes slightly and Gretchen is about to leave before she stops for one last word.

GRETCHEN (CONT'D)

Hey, if it's any consolation, I think they're all idiots too.

She gives a final wink and is gone. David, wearing his cocky smile, is filling more full of himself than usual.

INT. PUBLISHING HOUSE BREAK ROOM - LATER THAT MORNING

Carter gets coffee and Kat gets tea in Styrofoam cups.

CARTER

A crazy schedule?

KAT

That's what she said.

CARTER

You can't expect too much from a first date you've been on since the Emma ordeal.

KAT

You think my chances are dead?

CARTER

Don't know how you killed them but they seem dead. Better luck next time.

KAT

Ugh but you were the one who said I should ask her out.

CARTER

I was half conscious. Plus I didn't think you'd actually do it.

KAT

Well surprise! I did.

CARTER

Geeze it's not like she's the only person in the world. Just ask someone else out.

(CONTINUED)

KAT
But I--

CARTER
What?

KAT
Nothing.

CARTER
(realizing)
You like her. A lot.

KAT
Is that so hard to believe?

CARTER
Considering you just finished
pining over Emma for the last two
years, yeah, a bit.

KAT
It doesn't matter anymore. I'll
probably never see her again.

CARTER
Good news is Emma is no longer an
issue. Now just let loose and get
laid. It's about time.

KAT
(pause)
Carter, I know you're not this
insensitive, but I deal with it
because I love you and if it helps
you cope then fine. But I'm gonna
stop you there.

She takes her tea and walks away. Carter is left feeling like an ass, dumping his coffee in the sink before leaving as well.

INT. BOOKSTORE - AFTERNOON

Kat is going through the isles, scanning the titles, phone in one hand:

KAT
Books are the perfect gift for any
occasion....I'm not getting her
lingerie for the bridal
shower...No, not even the
bachelorette

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

KAT (cont'd)
party...Because--because I don't
want to.

Kat, not paying attention, bumps into Quinn.

KAT (CONT'D)
Sorry 'bout th--Quinn.

QUINN
Kat.

KAT
Ma, I gotta go...A friend,
Mom...Don't worry about it. Yes, I
will call you later.
(to Quinn)
What are you doing here?

QUINN
(laughs)
Buying books.

KAT
Right. Duh. That's a great series
there.

QUINN
Really? It's a gift for a friend's
daughter. Her birthday and all.

KAT
Oh.

QUINN
Shopping for a bride?

KAT
Huh?

QUINN
Your phone call.

KAT
Right! Yeah, books seemed safest.
Lingerie--I just can't-

QUINN
Say no more.

Quinn scans the shelf real quick and plucks out a book on
yogalates or something.

(CONTINUED)

QUINN (CONT'D)

Try this one. Weddings are stressful.

KAT

Good idea. Thanks. Here, come with me.

Kat leads Quinn to the young readers section and grabs a copy of The Fault in Our Stars and a Magic Tree House book.

KAT (CONT'D)

Great book for any reader. And this series is classic for young kids. Don't know how old your friend's daughter is but maybe she'll like these.

QUINN

Thanks.

KAT

It was nice running into you.

QUINN

Yeah, you too.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Laura surfing the web on her laptop, lounging on the couch. INSERT to the web browser: "The Last Ditch Effort: Saving A Marriage". In the background, we can hear pop Latino music. David slinks through the front door, stumbling ever so slightly to the kitchen. He smells like alcohol. Laura quickly (but quietly shuts her laptop) and gets up and follows David into the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

David is pillaging the fridge, looking for leftover food to munch on. He also pulls out a can of beer, the cheap stuff. Laura watches him for a second, her facial expression bordering on disgust. David notices, annoyed.

DAVID

What?

LAURA

Well, I was thinking how great it would be to go back to Europe.

(CONTINUED)

DAVID

Have fun.

LAURA

What? You wouldn't want to come?

DAVID

I've got work.

LAURA

You hate work.

DAVID

No, I hate the assholes at my work.

LAURA

This could be a break from them.

DAVID

Look, I'm due for a promotion at the end of this Waits account. I can't.

LAURA

Oh...did your boss say something.

DAVID

Not in so many words.

Laura looks at him skeptically, crossing her arms.

DAVID (CONT'D)

It's five years in the making; I'm due for one.

Laura scoffs and heads to the fridge to grab a water bottle.

LAURA

You've been saying that for five years. I think it's time you look for a new job...maybe one where you haven't managed to piss everyone off.

David throws his half empty beer can at the wall.

DAVID

They're all just jealous! Weighing me down cuz they know I could take their jobs in a heartbeat!

(CONTINUED)

LAURA

(sighs)

Fine, you can't go to Europe. Got it--

DAVID

--No, I don't want to go to Europe! It's stupid. Seriously, what's the appeal?

David's words sting Laura. She turns around to leave. On her way out the kitchen:

LAURA

You're not there.

David is still riled up a bit. He goes to the fridge and opens another can of beer, chugging it. The pop Latino music, which has been playing in the background the whole time, abruptly stops. Moments later we hear the sound of a slamming door and a turning lock. David's standing alone in the kitchen in unbearable silence.

INT. NURSES' STATION - NIGHT

Quinn and Kristi are sitting at computers, inputting patient information. Kristi is pouting, giving Quinn the cold shoulder. Quinn's getting annoyed with this silent treatment business.

QUINN

Will you cut it out?

KRISTI

I don't know what you're referring to.

QUINN

Look I went out with her. It was great, but I can't date. You know this. When we bumped into each other, we were totally pleasant to each other and she--

KRISTI

You little bitch, you didn't tell me you bumped into her again.

QUINN

Maybe I would have if you hadn't been pouting all day.

(CONTINUED)

KRISTI
Where? What happened?

QUINN
The bookstore. Nothing.

A patient comes up the the station. Kristi smiles brightly and hands him a clipboard before glaring at Quinn.

KRISTI
Tell me. Now.

QUINN
We were both shopping for gifts and gave each other recommendations.

KRISTI
It's fate.

QUINN
Oh, please.

KRISTI
So when are you going out again.

QUINN
We're not.

KRISTI
Stop being such a chicken shit.

QUINN
The timing isn't right.

KRISTI
The timing will never be right.

Kristi goes back to working, leaving Quinn to mull things over.

INT. BEDROOM - NEXT MORNING

A clear divide exists in Laura and David's bedroom. On Laura's side of the room, pictures of different countries are hung up and she has a large bookcase full of books from different languages and countries, cultural and historical books. David's side is mostly barren except for his certificates and diplomas hanging up, his college jersey framed on the wall. Laura is tangled in her sheets, random tissues on her bed, tissue box empty. David made it into the room. He places a cup of coffee on the nightstand. This wakes Laura up with a groggy start.

(CONTINUED)

DAVID

Hey.

LAURA

(groggy)

How'd you get in?

DAVID

Jimmied the door with my gym membership card. It's not exactly Fort Knox.

Laura rolls her eyes and sits herself up, collecting her used tissues to throw in the trash. David sits on the edge of the bed; he's holding a bagel with a lot of cream cheese on it.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Look, about last night...

Laura thinks he's going to apologize for his harsh words; even after all this time, she's hopeful.

DAVID

I'm sorry I made a mess of that beer. I cleaned it up earlier.

LAURA

(deflated)

Whatever.

DAVID

Look, how about we go to Marisco's for dinner in a couple weeks?

Laura gets out of bed and starts going through her dresser and closet to get ready for the day.

LAURA

I hate seafood.

DAVID

Since when? I thought you loved it.

LAURA

No, you love it.

DAVID

(oblivious)

Oh, uh what about Deliziosa's. You still like Italian?

(CONTINUED)

LAURA

Yes, I still like Italian.

DAVID

Great, I'll make a reservation. Oh, I might have to meet you there, cuz I don't think I'll be getting out of my team meeting until 6, okay?

LAURA

(less than enthused)

Sure.

David starts to quickly leave the room.

DAVID

Great. I've gotta get to the office, so I'll see you later.

David realizes he's still holding the bagel and turns on a dime.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Oh, uh, I made this for you.
(pecking her head with a kiss) Love you.

He hands it over and rushes out the bedroom. Laura holds the bagel in one hand and a hangered blouse on another.

LAURA

(to herself)

I hate smear.

She puts the blouse down and walks over to David's wall of pride, stopping to look at it. She grabs one bagel slice and streaks the cream cheese side all across his jersey's glass frame and lets the bagel stick to the glass. She does the same to his university diploma with the other slice. She steps back to admire her work. Crossing her arms in satisfaction, she smiles.

EXT. COURTYARD OF OUTDOOR SHOPPING CENTER - DAY

THE BIRD LADY, a 53-year-old woman whose wrinkled clothes don't match and whose wavy hair has small, almost unnoticeable gray streaks, sits at a bench in an open courtyard. The rustic courtyard has three other benches surrounding the stone water feature in the center. The Bird Lady's smiling as she tosses bits of bread for the birds to eat; this is her daily routine. Carter walks over to the Bird Lady.

(CONTINUED)

CARTER

Hello.

BIRD LADY

Why hello, young man.

CARTER

(smiling sadly)

Can I sit?

BIRD LADY

Please. You wanna feed them?

CARTER

Sure.

Carter takes some bread from the bird lady and they toss pieces as they talk.

BIRD LADY

I used to bring my son to feed them when he was little.

CARTER

Really?

BIRD LADY

Oh, yeah. My husband didn't like it though. Always going on about bird flu, but he'd come with us anyway.

CARTER

Where's he now?

BIRD LADY

I, uh, don't...I'm sure he's on his his way.

(to herself)

Must be on his way.

CARTER

(concerned)

Is there anything I can get you, ma'am?

BIRD LADY

(chuckles)

Ma'am. Such a gentleman. I'm fine, sweetie. Thank you.

He tosses his last bit of bread.

(CONTINUED)

CARTER

Thanks for sharing.

BIRD LADY

Of course.

Carter gets up and looks at her, heartbroken. The Bird Lady already forgets about him and redirects her attention to the birds. Carter walks past the SHOP OWNER of the store across the courtyard from the Bird Lady's bench; the Shop Owner is a short, stout 60-year-old man. The Shop Owner places a firm hand on Carter's shoulder as the two exchange sad smiles. Carter walks away with his head down, the shop owner looking after him.

EXT. LAKESIDE - MORNING

Noah and David are hanging out by the lake in fold-out chairs with a full ice chest of beers and sodas sitting between them. David keeps swatting at the back of his neck like bugs are attacking him.

NOAH

Emma's pregnant.

DAVID

Wow.

NOAH

Yeah.

DAVID

I'm sorry.

NOAH

I was looking more for a
"congratulations."

DAVID

Sorry to burst your bubble, but you
know how I feel about kids.

NOAH

No, just your disdain for surprise
pregnancies.

DAVID

Can you blame me?

NOAH

I just don't understand why you
have to make everything about you.

(CONTINUED)

DAVID

I'm just trying to impart my own life lessons to you.

NOAH

It's not the same, and you know it.

DAVID

Yeah, right. How's it not the same?

NOAH

Emma and I were already planning on getting married.

DAVID

Don't even get me started on how stupid that idea is.

NOAH

I love Emma, and I want to spend the rest of my life with her. That's how it's supposed to be.

DAVID

Why get married? Women are crazy. You wanna know what Laura did yesterday? She freaking smeared cream cheese all over my jersey and diploma.

NOAH

You probably deserved it.

DAVID

That's besides the point. My jersey and diploma did not deserve that.

NOAH

Look I stupidly thought I'd actually get some good advice from my brother, but the only thing I've learned is what not to do.

DAVID

Well, you're already ahead of the game. You got her pregnant after the proposal..

NOAH

You didn't have to propose to Laura after she found out she was pregnant.

(CONTINUED)

DAVID

Yeah right. The only reason a girl tells you she's pregnant is to force a ring out of you.

NOAH

She's lucky.

DAVID

Duh.

NOAH

She didn't have to have a kid with you after all.

Noah gazes out at the lake while sipping his soda. David glares at him and gulps down half his beer.

DAVID

Asshole.

NOAH

Prick.

INT. EMMA & NOAH'S HOUSE - DAY

Emma is seated with her MOM and SISTER next to her on a throne of many gifts. Crumpled wrapping paper and ribbons are in a pile off to the side. Laura is in the background eating from a plate of finger foods. Kat is leaning against a wall, watching as Emma gushes over her presents: picture frames, cooking pans, lingerie. Kat is nostalgic, remembering their friendship and her love for Emma. Kat's phone buzzes:

KAT

(low voice, near whisper)

Hello.

QUINN

Hey, Kat.

KAT

Quinn, hey. What's up?

Kat glances at Emma; she isn't paying attention to her. Kat slips away from the crowd and steps into an empty hall.

QUINN

Not much. Is now a bad time?

(CONTINUED)

KAT

I'm at a bridal shower, but I can spare a minute.

QUINN

My schedule cleared up a bit next week. Would you like to go out? On a date?

Kat peeks out at Emma from the hall. Emma has been unwrapping Kat's books. She seems to really like them and looks across the room at Kat, mouthing words of thanks. Kat nods her head and smiles, an almost heart-broken smile.

QUINN (CONT'D)

Kat?

KAT

I'd love to.

BEGIN MONTAGE:

EXT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Kat and Quinn exit a restaurant they just had dinner at. They're walking with just enough space between them so as not to accidentally graze hands. They're comfortable around each other, but maintaining caution.

INT. JAZZ CLUB - NIGHT

Kat and Quinn are dancing to an upbeat song.

EXT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Seen through a large pane glass window, Kat and Quinn are drinking tea and coffee, laughing and teasing each other.

INT. NURSES' STATION - DAY

Kat walks up to the nurses' station with a bag of take out food for her and Quinn. She also got a small box for Kristi. Kristi graciously accepts the box and moves behind Kat out of view, exaggerating a wink at Quinn who just rolls her eyes at Kristi good-naturedly.

INT. JAZZ CLUB - NIGHT

Kat and Quinn are slow dancing, sharing a really intimate moment.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Quinn is sitting on a park bench, staring off into the distance. She's unconsciously rubbing a diamond studded ring hanging from a necklace chain between her thumb and forefinger. Kat comes into view carrying two gelatos. Quinn hides the ring-necklace under her blouse as Kat sits next to her.

QUINN

Thanks.

KAT

Of course. That'll be three dollars.

QUINN

(distracted)

Put it on my tab.

KAT

...Hey.

QUINN

Hmm.

KAT

Is everything alright?

QUINN

Yeah. Of course. Why?

KAT

Nothing...So I was thinking--

QUINN

Uh oh.

KAT

(laughs)

But seriously, I got some advanced screening tickets for Wednesday night. I could pick you up at your place around 5:30--

QUINN

Or I could pick you up or meet you there.

KAT

C'mon, I haven't even seen your place yet.

(CONTINUED)

QUINN
It's nothing special.

KAT
It's your home, so it is special.
(beat)
Plus, I'm starting to think you
live in a box.

QUINN
Such a goof.
(hesitant)
Kat, I should tell you something--

KAT
Just think about it. I don't care
if you're a slob. I find slobs
sexy.

QUINN
Oh, really. That's too bad since
I'm pretty organized.

KAT
Nah, you're beautiful.

Quinn cups Kat's face in her hand, Quinn's smile tinged with sadness.

EXT. COURTYARD OF OUTDOOR SHOPPING CENTER - DAY

Carter walks over to the Bird Lady as she's feeding the birds; he looks tired, more disheveled than the previous morning.

CARTER
Hello.

BIRD LADY
Hello.

CARTER
(smiling sadly)
Do you mind if I sit?

BIRD LADY
Please.

CARTER
(pause)
I used to come here with my mom
when I was a kid.

(CONTINUED)

BIRD LADY

I came with my son, too. People
don't make the time anymore. (beat)
What'd you say your name was?

She grabs his chin, roughly turning his head from side to side, examining his facial features.

CARTER

Ow. I didn't.

BIRD LADY

Huh, you look just like my husband.

Her train of thought is immediately derailed. She checks her watch.

BIRD LADY (CONT'D)

(to herself)

Where is he?

CARTER

What's his name?

BIRD LADY

Who?

CARTER

Your husband?

BIRD LADY

His name's...His name's,
uh...Jas--No! Mason. His name's
Mason. Have you seen him?

CARTER

No, sorry.

BIRD LADY

Who are you again?

CARTER

Carter. My name's Carter.

BIRD LADY

Carter. That's my dad's name. I've
always liked that name...

She stares off into space.

CARTER

(concerned)

Is there anything I can get you,
ma'am?

(CONTINUED)

BIRD LADY
(distracted)
I'm fine. Thank you, sweetie.

Carter gets up and leaves, heartbroken.

EXT. QUINN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Kat rings the doorbell. The door opens quickly to a young woman in her thirties, MAGGIE, in sweatpants and an over-sized sweatshirt.

MAGGIE
Hi.

Kat's confused. She takes a few step back to get a better look at the house number. Maggie notices her confusion.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
Kat?

KAT
(hesitant)
Yes.

MAGGIE
(yelling into the house)
Quinn, it's for you.
(to Kat)
Sorry, I'm Maggie, Quinn's
sister-in-law.

KAT
Do you live--I didn't realize--Did
you just say sister-in--

MAGGIE
Don't worry bout it. I'm Quinn's
second best kept secret--

A little 5-year-old girl SOPHIA runs up to the door, hiding behind Maggie's leg. Kat looks down at Sophia, confused.

MAGGIE
--and here is the first best kept.

KAT
(pause, to Sophia)
Hi, there.

SOPHIA
(shyly)
Hi.

(CONTINUED)

Quinn rushes to the door, putting in earrings as she notices Kat.

QUINN

Kat. What're you doing here? I thought we were meeting there.

KAT

I think there's something you forgot to tell me.

Kat looks at Maggie and Sophia, Quinn following her gaze.

INT. CAR - MINUTES LATER

Kat is driving, looking straight ahead with a severe expression on her face; she's lost in thought. Quinn glances from Kat to the road ahead, unsure of how to read the situation. She almost says something, but Kat shakes her head curtly: now's not the time.

INT. MOVIE THEATER LOBBY - 10 MINUTES LATER

Kat and Quinn are at the concession stands. The CASHIER hands Kat their cardboard box tray of two drinks and large popcorn.

KAT

Thanks so much.

CASHIER

My pleasure.

Kat turns around to start walking to their theater. Quinn almost says something, but Kat shakes her head once more and keeps walking. Quinn, now annoyed, follows after her.

INT. MOVIE THEATER - MOMENTS LATER

Kat and Quinn sit down into a couple seats in the middle. Kat places their tray of popcorn and drinks on the armrest between them. Quinn sits down, arms crossed in frustration.

QUINN

(whispers)

You're being really childish right now. You realize this, don't you?

Kat puts a handful of popcorn in her mouth and slurps from her drink.

QUINN (CONT'D)
Fine forget it. I'll walk home.

She gets up to leave, but Kat grabs hold of her hand.

KAT
(whispers)
Why didn't you tell me you had a
kid?

QUINN
(too loud of a whisper)
Why are we having this conversation
in a movie theater?

Other movie goes shush Quinn. Quinn sinks back down into her seat, her body looks ready to collapse from the weight she is about to unload.

KAT
(to the anonymous movie goers)
Oh, you shush. It's the freakin'
previews.
(to Quinn)
Who's Maggie?

QUINN
My best friend...and my husband's
sister.

KAT
How could you not tell me? This
isn't who I am? I'm not the other--

QUINN
My husband died...three years ago.

Kat is stunned; she resorts to looking at the screen ahead.

KAT
And Sophia?

QUINN
Our daughter. She was only two.
She's only ever known me and
Maggie.

KAT
And Maggie..

QUINN
We went to school together. She
introduced me to Peter. She's been
living with me to help with Sophia.

(CONTINUED)

KAT

Why?

QUINN

Because it was almost her instead
of Peter.

Kat looks at Quinn. The movie's beginning in the background.

KAT

Why didn't you tell me, Quinn?

QUINN

Kat, my life's not--

Anonymous movie goers shush Quinn again.

KAT

(to anonymous movie goers)
Are you kidding me with this?!
Geeze.

Kat gets up to leave.

KAT (CONT'D)

(to Quinn)
C'mon, let's get out of here.

Her outstretched hand tells Quinn to lead the way out the aisle. Kat grabs a handful of popcorn and throws it at the anonymous movie goers in the row in front of them who shushed them before heading for the exit.

INT. MOVIE THEATER LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

They exit their theater; Kat's still annoyed with the anonymous movie goer. She's shaking her head as she's walking for the exit. Quinn stops in her tracks. It takes a moment for Kat to notice; she turns around to face Quinn.

QUINN

Kat, my life's complicated. There's a reason I don't get involved with people. After some time had passed after Peter, I tried dating but nothing stuck and Sophia would get the hurt most. Sophia is my priority so I stopped introducing her to my dates and eventually just stopped dating. You weren't supposed to have happened.

(CONTINUED)

KAT
But I did.

QUINN
But you did.

INT. CAR - LATER

Kat pulls up to Quinn's house and looks through the passenger window at the house. Kat sees Maggie and Sophia playing in the living room.

QUINN
If this goes any further, you have to know what you're getting into. Would you be ready to be an instant parent?

KAT
(pause)
Can you give me some time?

QUINN
Sure.

KAT
I'll see you soon.

Kat gives a half-hearted smile and goes in for a kiss, instead of the lips she diverts to Quinn's forehead.

QUINN
Goodbye.

Quinn gets out of the car. Kat looks back at the house to see that a smiling Sophia has noticed their presence in the front of the house. She disappears from the window and seconds later Sophia opens the front door and Quinn wraps her up in her arms. Kat drives away.

INT. ITALIAN RESTAURANT - NIGHT-LATER THAT WEEK

Laura is dressed in an elegant yet sexy little black dress. She approaches the HOST, an middle-aged Italian man in a tuxedo.

HOST
Buona sera, signora. How may I assist you?

LAURA
(smiles)
Buona sera, signore. Reservation per due. Walker.

(CONTINUED)

The Host smiles and looks at his reservation book. He looks up saddened.

HOST
Scusi, signora, but there is no reservation for a Walker.

LAURA
Nothing for a Laura or David Walker.

HOST
No, signora.

Laura is upset. She realizes that David forgot to make the reservation.

LAURA
How 'bout "insufferable prick"? Got any reservations under that?
(pause) No? Okay then.

HOST
(feeling her pain)
No, signora, but if you'd like to wait at the bar, I can sit you as soon as a table becomes available.

LAURA
(cheered up by his kindness)
Grazie, signore.

The Host gives her a paternal smile and leads her to the bar, offering her a menu. She smiles in thanks.

INT. COPY ROOM - SAME TIME

David is leaning against the wall, eyes closed, mouth hanging open in a smile.

DAVID
Again, again.

Gretchen appears on screen, her face coming within inches of David's. She tugs on David's tie a bit.

GRETCHEN
You're the sexiest, smartest man in the entire office. All those other jerks wish they were you.

DAVID

Ah yeah. That's what I'm talking about. People just don't get that like you do.

GRETCHEN

A few of us interns are going to the bar soon. You should come. (seductively) Share your wisdom with us lowly worker bees.

DAVID

I'd hate to deprive you all of my vast knowledge.

BEGIN MONTAGE:

INT. ITALIAN RESTAURANT - LATER

The Host comes back to Laura at the bar and escorts her to her table. She checks her watch after the Host leaves her. Her waiter arrives to take her order. She smiles; she knows exactly what she wants. She points to the menu in reference.

INT. CLUB - LATER

David is surrounded by a small group of interns in their early twenties. They're all laughing boisterously at something David says. They raise their shot glasses and down them.

INT. ITALIAN RESTAURANT - LATER

Laura is eating a beautifully made Italian pasta dish. Each bite she savors and takes delight in. She grabs her wine glass, smells the aroma, and sips, again savoring every taste. She's not letting David's inconsiderate behavior ruin a perfectly delicious meal.

INT. CLUB - LATER

The club is hopping. The interns are dancing wildly. David is dancing with Gretchen: she presses up against him. He doesn't even see anything wrong with this.

INT. ITALIAN RESTAURANT - LATER

Laura has moved on to dessert, enjoying a refreshing gelato.

INT. CLUB - LATER

David and the interns are downing more drinks, progressively getting drunker. This time David and Gretchen interlock their arms before downing their shots.

INT. ITALIAN RESTAURANT - LATER

Laura has finished her meal. Wine glass in hand, she pays her bill, tallying a large tip.

INSERT of the credit card she puts on the black plastic bill tray; it has David's name on it.

INT. CAB - LATER

David and Gretchen are in a cab making out with intensity and sloppiness.

END MONTAGE:

INT. SOPHIA'S BEDROOM - LATER

Quinn is laying with Sophia in her bed, closing a book and gingerly unwrapping a sleeping Sophia's arm from her waist. She smooths Sophia's hair before kissing her on the head goodnight.

INT. KITCHEN - MINUTES LATER

Maggie is sitting at the kitchen island, thumbing through a magazine, a glass of red wine in hand. Quinn enters the kitchen, grabs a wine glass from the cabinet, and goes for the wine bottle sitting on the island. Without looking up from the magazine:

MAGGIE

How'd it go?

QUINN

Real well.

MAGGIE

Of course.

There's a soft rapping on the front door. Maggie closes her magazine and gets up to answer the door.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

I got it. Enjoy you celebratory wine.

Quinn raises her glass in a silent toast before taking a rather large gulp.

EXT. QUINN'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Maggie opens the door and smirks.

MAGGIE
 (to the inside of the house)
 Quinn.

QUINN (O.S)
 I'm not here.

MAGGIE
 Quinn.

Seconds pass before Quinn, glass in hand, comes to the door. She's surprised, her expression shifting from disbelief to joy. A sheepish Kat is at the door.

KAT
 Hey.

QUINN
 Hey.

They stand in the doorway, staring at each other, then glancing at Maggie; Maggie takes the hint and leaves, drinking her wine as she walks away.

INT. DORM ROOM - NEXT MORNING

David is lying fully clothed on Gretchen's dorm room floor, covered with a pink blanket, sleeping on a fuzzy light blue pillow. The rest of the room looks like a typical college girl's room: a messy, unorganized mess of vibrant, pastel colored items. Gretchen walks in from her bathroom in a bathrobe, her hair up in a towel. She gently nudges David with her foot. He wakes up groggy and confused.

GRETCHEN
 Hey. I need to finish getting ready
 for my sorority's chapter retreat,
 and you're kind of in the way.

DAVID
 What happened?

Gretchen walks to her dresser to sort through her chaotic pile of makeup and starts applying her makeup

GRETCHEN
 You asked to come back to my place
 but fell asleep as soon as we got
 in.

(CONTINUED)

DAVID

I did?

GRETCHEN

Yeah, no worries. I know it's hard for guys your age to keep up sometimes.

DAVID

Guys my age?

GRETCHEN

Hey, could you try to be inconspicuous when you leave. I don't want any drama from my RA.

David's still confused but gets up, swatting off the blue and pink fuzz from his work clothes.

DAVID

Bye, I guess.

GRETCHEN

(unfazed, busy getting ready)
See you on Monday.

David leaves with sunken shoulders.

EXT. OUTDOOR SHOPPING CENTER - DAY

Kat and Carter are sitting on a bench outside the shops. Well, Carter is sitting; Kat is pacing in front of him.

CARTER

Will you calm your shit, please.

KAT

(ignoring him)
Oh, God. What the hell am I doing?
I can't do this?

CARTER

Will you relax?

KAT

(still ignoring him)
Maybe if we leave now, I can just text her and say something came up.

CARTER

Tell her I got drunk again.

(CONTINUED)

KAT
(unfazed)
Maybe something like a small fire
in the kitchen. I suck at cooking
so that'd be believable.

CARTER
Tell her you got drunk. That'd be
interesting.

KAT
No, cuz then I'd need evidence of
the fire.

Carter's had enough. He sticks out his foot far enough for
her to stumble over it slightly.

KAT
(annoyed)
What?

CARTER
Calm. The fuck. Down.

Kat stares tensely at him before sinking into the bench
beside him.

KAT
I can barely take care of myself.

CARTER
Preach.

KAT
I'm not a parent, Carter. I'm just
not.

CARTER
You're right; you're not.
(pause)
But you can learn to be. Christ,
you think any parent was ever
really ready to be a parent?

KAT
I guess not.

CARTER
So what? You think you're the only
one with this problem?

(CONTINUED)

KAT
I mean, I guess no--

CARTER
Then, get it together.

KAT
God, I don't even know why I'm
doing this anymore.

Kat rests her face in her hands, sighing. Carter looks away from her to Quinn and Sophia approaching. He nudges her in the arm and nods in their direction.

CARTER
That's why.

Kat looks up at them, falling in love with Quinn all over again. Without looking away from them:

KAT
(to Carter)
Good talk.

CARTER
No shit. Don't be a dumbass.

KAT
(to Quinn)
Hey.

QUINN
(smiling)
Hey, sorry we're late. This one had
to pee.
(to Sophia)
Sweetie, you wanna say hi to Kat
and Carter?

SOPHIA
Hi.

KAT
Hiya. How are you doing?

SOPHIA
Gooood.

KAT
Good.
(noticing her book)
What book do you got there?

SOPHIA

"Are you my mother?"

KAT

That's one of my favorites.

Sophia smiles sheepishly. Carter gives Kat his best reassuring glance while Quinn pulls back strands of hair behind Sophia's ear.

CARTER

I'll be leaving you crazy kids to do whatever nefarious plots you've concocted. And Sophia, remember: hugs not drugs.

Quinn and Kat chuckle as Carter takes his leave.

KAT

Y'all ready?

QUINN

I think we are.

KAT

Great. First stop: the bookstore.

The three of them start walking away. Sophia's got a firm hold of Quinn's hand, but after walking a handful of steps she tentatively grabs hold of Kat's hand. Kat looks down in surprise, then at Quinn who smiles at her with reassurance.

BEGIN MONTAGE:

EXT. PARK - DAY

Kat, Quinn and Sophia are all playing together in the park, having a good time on the jungle gym.

EXT. ZOO - DAY

Kat, Quinn and Sophia are walking around the zoo together. Kat and Sophia are making faces at the monkeys while Quinn is in the background laughing at her two goofy girls.

INT. TAEKWONDO STUDIO - DAY

Kat and Quinn are sitting next to each other in some plastic chairs, holding hands, watching Sophia in her white Taekwondo uniform practicing some blocks.

INT. QUINN'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Kat, Quinn, and Sophia are coloring in color books.

END MONTAGE:

INT. SOPHIA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Quinn tucks in Sophia nice and snug, Kat in the background.

SOPHIA
Mama, I'm thirsty.

QUINN
(kisses her)
I'll get you some water.

Quinn leaves after giving Kat's arm a squeeze.

SOPHIA
Kat.

KAT
Hmm.

SOPHIA
Can you tell me a story?

KAT
Which one?

She goes for one on the bookshelf next to the bed.

SOPHIA
Can you tell me a new one?

KAT
Sure, how 'bout this one. There's
this kid...

CUT TO:

Kat leans over to kiss Sophia goodnight. Quinn's leaning against the door frame looking on with such deep affection. She trades off with Kat to kiss Sophia goodnight. She holds onto Kat's hand as she leaves the room and guides her out as well.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Quinn and Kat sit on the couch, exhausted from the day. Kat rests her head in Quinn's lap.

QUINN
That was some story you told her.

KAT
Yeah?

QUINN
Yeah, sounded familiar.

KAT
Plagiarism is a problem.

QUINN
Why don't you finish your book?

Kat shrugs.

QUINN
Kat.

KAT
It's not ready yet.

QUINN
Have you worked on it anymore?

KAT
I'm not ready yet...

QUINN
You'll never really be ready so you may as well go for it.

KAT
Did you read that on Tumblr?

QUINN
No...Tumblr heard me say it.

KAT
Of course.

They chuckle, cuddle, then watch TV. Kat is kinda of distracted by what Quinn said.

CUT TO:

Quinn has fallen asleep on the couch. Kat notices and smiles while stroking her hair. She grabs her laptop off the end

(CONTINUED)

table and rests it on the armrest. INSERT of the screen with a file named "STORY". She takes a deep breath and begins typing. Quinn peeks at her, smiles, then goes back to sleep. TIMELAPSE: a few seconds pass but the lighting changes from night to day; Kat's been writing through the night. Quinn wakes up for real this time. Kat notices, types one more word, then puts her arm around her.

QUINN

Hey.

KAT

Hey.

QUINN

(looks at the screen)

Did you find some inspiration.

KAT

Yeah, I found you.

They smile at each other and then Kat kisses Quinn's forehead.

EXT. COURTYARD OF OUTDOOR SHOPPING CENTER - MORNING

Carter walks over to Bird Lady. She's not feeding the birds today, just watching them. Before Carter gets to the bench, the Bird Lady spots Carter and smiles big.

BIRD LADY

Carter.

CARTER

(misty eyed)

Mom.

He closes the gap between them and they hug each other. She pulls away and holds his face in her hands, then pats his beanie down.

BIRD LADY

How long?

CARTER

About a month this time.

BIRD LADY

How was I?

CARTER

Oh, you know, crazy as usual.
(laughs)

(CONTINUED)

BIRD LADY
Isn't that the truth.

CARTER
(attempting at casual)
You're still mentioning Dad.

BIRD LADY
Too bad I can't seem to remember
him leaving us.

CARTER
You almost forgot his name.

BIRD LADY
Ah, good news.

She grabs his chin, examines his face.

BIRD LADY
You look thinner? Is Anthony not
feeding you?

CARTER
Yes, he's feeding me. He's on this
vegan kick now. He doesn't think I
know but he's planning this big
dinner for our anniversary. I just
really wanted to go out and get a
steak.

BIRD LADY
Oh, let him be. He wants to make
your two-year special.
(feigning excitement)
I got tickets to a football game
from your father for our two-year.

CARTER
(laughs)
Yeah, I guess I'll keep, Anthony.

BIRD LADY
(pause)
Maybe you should stop coming to see
me.

CARTER
Nothing's changed, Mom.

BIRD LADY
Honey, you're celebrating your
two-year anniversary today.

CARTER

So what? That's got nothing to do
with me visiting you.

BIRD LADY

Exactly.

Carter's catching on. He's looking straight ahead, away from
her.

BIRD LADY (CONT'D)

Don't worry, honey.

She nods at the shop owner who is pretending to sweep the
store front but is really watching them from the corner of
his eyes.

BIRD LADY (CONT'D)

George will keep an eye on me. You
deserve a full life with Anthony,
not a half life with both of us.

The Bird Lady takes Carter's glasses off his face to wipe
the lenses with her blouse and then puts them back on his
face. He savors this very maternal gesture. He hugs her
tightly, kisses her cheek, and pulls away.

BIRD LADY (CONT'D)

I love you.

She cups the side of his face in one hand.

CARTER

I love you.

He gets up to leave and starts walking away. The Bird Lady
calls after him:

BIRD LADY

Carter.

Carter stops and turns around.

BIRD LADY (CONT'D)

Don't.

CARTER

Love you.

He continues leaving.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Kat is waiting anxiously by the elevator. Carter is distracted, not moving right away as the elevator doors open. finally walks out of it surprised to see Kat there waiting.

KAT

Hey!

He's back to his old self.

CARTER

I don't think I'm going to get used to you being on time for work, let alone early.

KAT

I need a favor.

CARTER

What?

KAT

(hands him her manuscript)
Could you maybe give this to Mr. Woodrow to look at?

CARTER

Wait, is this your--

KAT

Yeah.

CARTER

You actually finished it?

KAT

It's just a draft.

CARTER

(grabs hold of it in awe)
Yeah, but a finished draft.

KAT

So you think you can do that for me?

CARTER

Of course. Can I read the ending?

(CONTINUED)

KAT
(laughs)
Sure.

Carter starts walking away thumbing through the pages.

KAT
Love you, asshole.

CARTER
(without looking back)
Love you, shithead.

EXT. FOOD TRUCK PARK - LUNCHTIME

Laura is torn: she doesn't know what to do about David anymore. Sitting at one of the park's picnic tables, she's indulging in a Chicken Souvlaki pita and some Greek fries. She's staring off into space, looking at nothing in particular. She's so lost in thought that she doesn't realize that Ian (the food trucker from the Greek truck we saw last time) sits down next to her, placing a small plastic container filled with tzatziki.

IAN
I thought you might like some more.

LAURA
(becoming aware)
Oh, wow. Thanks. How much--

IAN
No charge. You look like you need it.

LAURA
(pause)
Ian, have you ever been to Greece?

IAN
Yeah, back in my senior year of high school. Great experience.

LAURA
Ever think of moving there?

IAN
Oh, loads of times.

LAURA
So why not just go? Why stick around here?

(CONTINUED)

IAN

Oh, I wouldn't say I'm not stuck here. I love my truck. I love being near my sisters and their kids.

LAURA

(contemplating)

Yeah, seems like a good deal.

IAN

You looking for a reason to leave?

LAURA

Nah, not leave per se but--

IAN

--a strong enough reason to stay?

LAURA

Yeah...

IAN

Do you think you open your life up to happiness?

LAURA

Doubtful.

IAN

Doing what I've always wanted to do opened the door for so many other blessings. I'd never have met my fiance without my truck.

LAURA

(smiles)

Sounds easy.

IAN

(laughs)

Not easy, but definitely worth it.

Ian gets up to go back to his truck.

IAN (CONT'D)

Thank you for your loyal patronage, Laura. I'll be seeing yah...maybe.

Ian winks at her. Laura smiles as she watches him go back to his truck. She dips her fries in the tzatziki and munches as Ian talks and laughs with his co-worker in his truck. Ian and the other guy are wiping down the counter and steal a sweet kiss from each other. Laura witnesses this and

(CONTINUED)

realizes how devoid her marriage is of the love and tenderness Ian and his fiancée have for each other. She finishes her food quickly and leaves; it's time for her to do something about her life.

BEGIN MONTAGE:

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Laura is on her laptop researching living abroad. INSERT of the laptop screen featuring a website about teaching English abroad.

INT. DEPARTMENT STORE | LUGGAGE SECTION - DAY

Laura is asking a retail worker about various suitcases and duffles.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

David is fast asleep on the couch in front of the TV, mouth hanging open with drool and everything. Laura is in the background carrying a box from the bedroom to the front door.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Laura reaches under her bed and pulls out a medium-sized shoe box: it's old and faded. She blows off the layer of dust on top before opening it. She takes her time going through the contents: her passport with stamps from too long ago, pictures of herself at her favorite international places, old, unique souvenirs. She pauses at a pair of baby's socks with cartoon globes on them. She holds them up to her cheek and lets silent tears run through closed eyes.

END MONTAGE:

EXT. PARK - DAY

Kat is chasing a giggling Sophia around the playground and finally catches her and tickles her.

KAT

Okay okay, someone needs a nap.

SOPHIA

Kaaat. Nooo.

KAT

I was talking about me. I'll be over here, sweetie.

(CONTINUED)

Kat sits down on one of the benches surrounding the jungle gym, watching Sophia get dangerously close to a ledge.

KAT
Be careful, Soph.

Kat's phone starts buzzing. She answers:

KAT
Hey C, what's going on?

CARTER
You still at the park?

KAT
Yeah, Quinn's shift got held over.

CARTER
Sit tight.

He hangs up call.

KAT
Hello?

Kat looks at her phone confused. Moments later Carter sits down next to her, startling her.

CARTER
Hey!

KAT
(jumps)
Jesus!

CARTER
Oh calm down, you pansy. I just got back from a lunch meeting with Woodrow.

KAT
And?

CARTER
He liked it, Kat. He really liked it.

KAT
Seriously?

CARTER
Seriously.

KAT
(getting excited)
Oh my God. Oh my God! This is
amazing! Holy shit!
(deflating)
What does this mean?

CARTER
He wants a meeting with you.

KAT
To talk about the book?

CARTER
Yes.

KAT
My book?

CARTER
Yes!

KAT
This is so surreal.

CARTER
Calm your tits. You still have to
have the meeting. He likes it but
it still needs a bit of work.

KAT
Right. Of course.

Kat takes a moment to calm down and reflect. Carter gets comfortable in the bench and puts his arm on her shoulders.

CARTER
See if you'd just finished it
already, your book would be on
kids' bookshelves everywhere--

KAT
(focusing, looking up at the
jungle gym)
Soph...Where's Sophia?

They both get up, scanning the faces of all the children hanging the the monkey bars and skidding down the slides. Sophia is no where to be found.

KAT
Soph! Sophia!

(CONTINUED)

CARTER
Where'd she go?

KAT
I don't know! She was just here.

Kat and Carter search frantically across the playground. A MAN in his late thirties is has Sophia's hand is leading her away. Kat spots him and races over to him, grabbing his shoulder and spinning him around.

KAT
Hey! What do you think you're doing?

Kat picks up Sophia and puts her on her waist.

MAN
Is she yours--

KAT
Who do you think you are walking off with someone's kid?

MAN
(annoyed)
I was just taking her to the police officer because she was wandering off. Maybe YOU should keep better track of your kid.

The Man is joined by his concerned-looking early thirties WIFE and 5 year-old CHILD. They walk off together. Kat is dumbstruck. She looks at tired Sophia in her arms, resting her head on her shoulder.

INT. KITCHEN - DUSK

Laura is eating a sandwich at the kitchen island while reading a travel book. David walks in sighing, his presence demanding to be noticed. He looks for something to eat in the fridge.

DAVID
Work was shit today. Steven keeps kissing ass. Trying to outdo me I suspect...Dick.

LAURA
I want a divorce.

(CONTINUED)

DAVID
(still looking in the fridge)
Really? Because I forgot one
fucking dinner?

LAURA
Hardly.

DAVID
(turning to her sharply)
What? Because my job. I'm not
giving up my job.

LAURA
I know...I still want a divorce.

DAVID
Yeah, you keep saying that. But
you're leaving out the why?

Laura puts her plate in the sink.

LAURA
(calm)
The fact that you don't even know
should be your first hint.

DAVID
Don't you think you're being a bit
selfish here?

LAURA
Me? Selfish?

DAVID
You know I'm getting promoted--

LAURA
You're not getting--

DAVID
--so you pick now to do this to--

LAURA
To do what?!

DAVID
Something. I don't know what the
hell's going on in your head.

LAURA
Oh, please. This divorce is five
years in the making. The only

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

LAURA (cont'd)
reason I bothered so long was to
prove to myself I wasn't a complete
idiot for being with you in the
first place!

DAVID
You're lucky I even proposed!

LAURA
Yeah, because your folks made you.

David is fuming. Laura just wants to be finished with this whole thing.

LAURA (CONT'D)
I'm going to stay with Emma and
Noah for awhile.

DAVID
Well, that's just great.

LAURA
Yeah, well they like me more than
you. I've already started moving
some stuff over there--not that
you've noticed--and I'll get the
rest while you're at work.

Laura grabs her book, her purse and keys from a wall hook, and leaves. David is left there to simmer. He goes for the top cupboard for his bottle of tequila but finds it's empty and has a note on it: "I used this to douse your shit I set on fire. The remains are in the bedroom. -L" He throws the bottle at the wall, shattering it.

INT. EMMA & NOAH'S HOUSE - DAY

There is sharp rapping at the front door. Emma opens the door and Kat quickly walks in, eyes down, clearly a lot on her mind.

EMMA
Hey, you're early. I thought we
weren't meeting for another half
hour for the fitti--

KAT
I lost Sophia.

INT. EMMA & NOAH'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Kat leads the way into the kitchen.

EMMA
You lost Sophia!

KAT
I mean I found her but I lost her
for a minute.

EMMA
(smacks Kat on the arm)
Don't do that! You can just walk in
here and say something like you
lost a child. Jesus.

KAT
But I did. I lost her. Something
could have happened to her. I'd
never forgive myself. Quinn would
never forgive me.

EMMA
I don't think you realize how
often--

KAT
I don't think I can do this.

EMMA
What?

KAT
This. Be a parent. I'm still a...

Emma stands next to Kat and takes her by the shoulders.

EMMA
Look, you're being a tad
melodramatic. Parents aren't as
perfect as you seem to think.

She smiles reassuringly at Kat and hugs her. Emma pulls back
from the hug and Kat kisses her. Emma pushes her away from
her.

EMMA (CONT'D)
What the hell, Kat?!

KAT
Emma, I'm still in love with you.

(CONTINUED)

EMMA
Seriously?!

KAT
I don't think I ever stopped loving
you.

EMMA
Oh, just stop already.

Emma walks away from Kat and goes for the freezer and reaches for a bottle of vodka.

EMMA (CONT'D)
Dammit.

She puts the Vodka back and goes for the orange juice in fridge instead.

KAT
I love you, Emma.

EMMA
Oh, God. You are not still in love
with me. You love Quinn and that
scares you so you're trying to fuck
it up any way you can.

KAT
What? No--

EMMA
Look, this is so typical.

KAT
What are you--

EMMA
Grow up, Kat. Quinn is perfect for
you and if you weren't so afraid of
having actual responsibility then
maybe you wouldn't be here right
now confessing some fabricated love
for me just so you don't have to
deal.

KAT
Where the hell do you get off
telling me about fear of
responsibility? You're the one who
gave up the chance of a lifetime
just because you're getting
married.

(CONTINUED)

EMMA
I'm pregnant.

KAT
...What?

EMMA
I didn't take the job because I'm pregnant.

KAT
Woah.

EMMA
And I don't appreciate you bringing all your parenting woes into my house because I'm freaking out enough as it is. So. I love you but please get over yourself. Being an adult doesn't mean you're flawless.

KAT
Woah.

EMMA
We're leaving now. My dress appointment is at 5.

Emma drinks the last of her orange juice and puts her glass in the sink and grabs her keys. Kat just stares at her with new understanding.

KAT
Em...

EMMA
I know.

They smile and leave the kitchen, Emma giving Kat a friendly pat on the back.

INT. CARTER'S APARTMENT - NEXT MORNING

Carter is scouring his room looking for his keys. He's shuffling papers, flipping through books, lifting up pillows, going through drawers. ANTHONY, a fair-skinned athletically-built guy of 23 years, enters in PJs, carrying a bowl of oatmeal.

CARTER
Did you move my keys?

(CONTINUED)

ANTHONY

No. Where'd you leave them?

Carter frustratedly gesturing a hand to his nightstand.

CARTER

Right there.

ANTHONY

Take a break. Breakfast's in the kitchen.

Carter's search continue.

CARTER

I'm already late.

ANTHONY

Don't worry. If you forgot I'm sure--

CARTER

(frustrated)

I didn't forget.

Anthony's a bit stung and looks away but something catches his eye. It's Carter's keys behind his laptop, hidden from his vantage point. Anthony coolly grabs the key, puts them in Carter's hand and holds his hand while he kisses Carter's forehead. Anthony heads back to the kitchen, spooning oatmeal into his mouth along the way, leaving Carter to stare at his keys in his hand.

EXT. COURTYARD OF OUTDOOR SHOPPING CENTER - SAME MORNING

Carter walks into the courtyard, still trying to shake off the earlier events of the morning. He sees the Bird Lady's bench but no Bird Lady. He does a 360 turn looking across the shopping center, looking for her. He's starting to get frantic. He runs into Shop Owner's shop.

INT. SHOP - CONTINUOUS

The classic old shop has walls lined with rows and rows of shelves overflowing with books. Carter runs over to the Shop Owner who's talking to a CUSTOMER, a 30-year-old woman.

SHOP OWNER

I personally prefer Austen to Bronte. She's got a sharper wit.

(CONTINUED)

CUSTOMER
Really? I heard--

CARTER
Where is she?

SHOP OWNER
Carter.

CARTER
She's not at her bench.

SHOP OWNER
I'm sorry. I had to help a
customer.

Carter runs out the door before the Shop Owner can finish.
The shop owner trails after him.

EXT. COURTYARD OF OUTDOOR SHOPPING CENTER - CONTINUOUS

Carter is racing around, goes up to a young couple, a
33-year-old MAN and 34-year-old WOMAN.

CARTER
Have you seen a woman about this
tall in her fifties? She normally
sits over there feeding the birds.

WOMAN
No, sorry.

They walk away. While he is talking to them, the Bird Lady
goes to sit down at her bench. Carter is on his toes,
craning his neck looking everywhere but the bench. He
finally sees her and races over.

CARTER
Christ, are you okay? Where have
you been?

BIRD LADY
(cautious)
I had to go to the restroom. Is
that a crime?

CARTER
(partially composed)
Oh, no. Not at all.

BIRD LADY
Was there something you needed,
sweetie?

(CONTINUED)

CARTER
(softly)
Mom?

BIRD LADY
Mom?

CARTER
(louder)
Ma'am. Sorry, ma'am. Didn't mean to disturb you.

BIRD LADY
No problem....Are you alright?

CARTER
Yes...Thank you.

The Bird Lady resumes feeding her birds, only occasionally glancing from the corner of her eye at the strange young man inquiring about her restroom habits. Carter takes one last look before leaving her. He walks past the Shop Owner without looking at him, but the Shop Owner looks after him, smiling a slight smile.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - FOLLOWING WEEK

David is dressed his best today; the Waits account is finally closed and his promotion is surely to be announced at this week's staff meeting. He keeps glancing at his colleagues with a smug expression on his face. His Boss begins the meeting with very positive energy; the account was a success.

BOSS
First of all: great job, people.
I'm very impressed with how you all handled this account. I wasn't the only. Mr. Waits was equally impressed. Now, I know there's been rumors floating around the office about possible promotions. Well, I'm here to confirm that rumor.

David starts nodding his head with an arrogant smirk on his face.

BOSS (CONT'D)
To recognize a gentleman who consistently brings his A-game to the office each day and serves as a role model for the rest of the office, I'm promoting...

(CONTINUED)

David starts to get up expectantly.

BOSS (CONT'D)

Steven to Assistant Director of
Client Support. Congratulations.

David plops back down into his seat, stunned. Steven's unassuming nature makes this promotion a pleasant surprise. Steven gets up to shake hands with the Boss. The other staff members near Steven give him a pat on the back, hand shakes, and congratulatory smiles. They know he's earned it.

BOSS (CONT'D)

Alright, alright. Now for everyone else who worked on this account. You will be receiving a bonus. Nothing major but hopefully Waits' word-of-mouth will bring in more clients meaning more money for everyone. Now back to business...

The Boss continues on with the agenda, business as usual. David is still in a state of shock. He honestly does not know what just happened.

INT. OFFICE - 10 MINUTES LATER

David walks out of the conference room and spots Gretchen by the water cooler. She's talking to Steven; really, she's flirting with Steven. Steven is being his usual unassuming, friendly self. Steven wraps up the conversation with Gretchen so he can get back to work. Gretchen only slightly deflated goes for a cup of water when she notices David watching her. She give him an awkward smile and wave. David starts to step toward her, but she quickly cuts away in the other direction. David is left ego hurt and frustrated; he kicks a door as he walks back to his cubicle.

INT. WEDDING RECEPTION - NIGHT

Everyone is dressed to the nines. A live band is playing music. Laura is off talking to Carter and Anthony. Emma and Noah are preoccupied shaking hands of old relatives. Quinn is retying Sophia's bow on her dress. Kat walks up to Quinn and holds out one hand just as a slow song starts.

KAT

May I have this dance?

Quinn looks up from Sophia's bow.

(CONTINUED)

QUINN

I have to keep an eye on her.

KAT

I was asking you both.

Quinn smiles, and Kat smiles right back at her. Sophia smiles back and forth between the two of them and grabs each of their hands, leading the way to the dance floor. Kat lifts Sophia onto her hip and pulls Quinn in close to her, resting her forehead on hers. The three of them dance together in harmony.

:FADE OUT

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