

Vermillion

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SCENE 1: INT. HOME IN THE SUBURBS - NIGHT.

A young woman stares out a window, her chin resting in her palm, in a suburban neighborhood. Behind her is her opened suitcase with her messy clothes spread out all over the room. The orangey glowing light from her room matches the streetlight out in front of her house. She looks back at the clock on her nightstand. It reads 1:38 am. She lies back in her bed, slams her head against the pillow and lets out a deep sigh. She shuts out the light and stares at the ceiling. A few moments later, she hears a knock at the door. She sits up, looking very confused, and then lies back down again. Another knock. She gets out of bed and creeps down her stairs, looking very scared of what might be on the other side. She attempts the peephole, but can only make out a figure on the other side. Cautiously, she turns the handle and peeks through the crack and sees another young girl waiting on the other side. She turns on the outside light, illuminating her cheery looking guest who gives her a wave. She steps outside.

SIERRA

Hello?

JACQUELINE

Hey! How's it going?

SIERRA

Can I help you?

JACQUELINE

Oh! I just saw that your light was on, so I thought I would come by and say hi.

SIERRA

Do you know what time it is?

JACQUELINE

Late? Not really sure.

SIERRA

Hi. Um... my parents are asleep and I've actually got to get to bed myself, so...

JACQUELINE

Oh! I'll try and be quieter. Do you want to hang out?

SIERRA

It's like two in the morning.

JACQUELINE

And? Do you have anything you have to be up for in the morning?

SIERRA

Well, no but...

JACQUELINE

I mean, you do you, but I was just going to go out adventuring and you seem pretty cool.

SIERRA

I'm really tired.

JACQUELINE

No you're not.

SIERRA is a bit shocked at her bluntness. She steps towards her, feeling a bit more comfortable.

SIERRA

Fine. But I don't know you. You could be like some kind of kidnapper.

JACQUELINE

You think *I* could kidnap you? Just come on! What else are you going to do?

SIERRA

What the hell.

The two girls walk down the street together. The neighborhood is pleasantly quiet.

Scroll past girls to a big sign with the film title, "Vermillion".

JACQUELINE

I'm Jacqueline by the way. Jackie, if you prefer. I don't mind either way.

SIERRA

Sierra.

JACQUELINE

So Sierra... new to the neighborhood?

SIERRA

Um. I guess you could say that. I was away at college when my parents moved in here. I'm currently taking some time off from school, so I decided to come out here.

JACQUELINE

How exciting! What were you studying?

SIERRA

I was, uh, undeclared. But I was thinking business. It just seems like it would be easy to get a job that way.

JACQUELINE

Neat.

SIERRA

So do you always stop by strangers houses in the middle of the night?

JACQUELINE

Sometimes!

SIERRA looks really skeptical. She rubs her face and whispers under her breath.

SIERRA

(whispering)

Crazy dream. (to Jacqueline) So, what do you do for fun around here?

JACQUELINE

Do you like dancing?

SIERRA

What?

JACQUELINE

Here!

JACQUELINE starts dancing like a young Fred Astaire. SIERRA thinks its ridiculous, but can't help but laugh. She starts

alternating technique and moves towards ballet. She grabs SIERRA'S hand.

JACQUELINE

C'mon. Follow me.

SIERRA

(laughing in disbelief)

I don't know how to dance.

JACQUELINE

Sure you do!

JACQUELINE grabs SIERRA'S hand and leads her on a dance through the neighborhood. They hold hands and run down an alleyway, down a narrow corridor into green fields, where they dance by moonlight and the light of the street lamps. They run like giddy children and giggle as they chase each other around the neighborhood. Somehow, this very generic piece of suburbia seems to exist in this strange purgatory and it carries an air of magic with it. SIERRA is caught up in the fervor of it all as all the lights and stars sparkle unlike anything she's ever seen. They eventually stop dancing and walk down a sidewalk together.

SIERRA

So...Jacqueline. What exactly do you do?

JACQUELINE

I'm an artist! Yeah. Not the most lucrative work, but I love every minute of it. I'm a woodworker.

SIERRA

So like a carpenter?

JACQUELINE

Yeah! I mean, I make jewelry boxes, totem poles - all kinds of wood stuff. I'm actually working on this huge project right now to make this boat. It's going to be...AMAZING!

SIERRA

Uh huh. Well I'd love to see it sometime.

JACQUELINE

Are you thirsty at all? I need a pick-me-up.

SIERRA looks up and notices a cute, cottage-style cafe. It looks particularly peculiar since it seems to be functioning normally, except it's the middle of the night. SIERRA looks aghast as her anxious fears about reality return again. They walk under the sign that says "Cafe Lunette" and enter. Inside, they find a beautiful, cozy interior, decorated with an overt sense of "hygge". There is one woman behind the counter who seems busy humming and washing dishes. The only patron seems to be this young man, who sits at a table in the center, underneath a light with a fancy pen and parchment in hand. He pays no attention to their entry. Jacqueline calls out to him.

JACQUELINE

Hey stranger. What are you doing here?

ERIK

What do you mean, "What am I doing here"? I practically live here.

ERIK rises with a warm smile and embraces JACQUELINE. She steps aside.

JACQUELINE

And this is Sierra. Sierra, this is my friend Erik.

SIERRA looks visibly confused. At this point, she's decided just to run with it, so she shakes his hand.

SIERRA

Hi.

ERIK

Where'd you two meet?

SIERRA

Well, believe it or not, she just kind of waltzed up to my house and plucked me out of there.

ERIK

(gives a look of disbelief to Jacqueline)

Really?

JACQUELINE

And this beauty behind the business here is Amy. (to Amy) Hey Amy! Can I get a latte?

AMY

Of course. I'll put it on your tab.
Sierra? Anything for you?

SIERRA

It's a bit late for coffee, don't you think?

They all look at her with various confused faces.

SIERRA

Just *in case* all of this is actually happening, I'll have a hot chocolate, if possible.

AMY

Sure.

SIERRA

How much do I owe you?

AMY

Oh, don't worry! I'll just put it on your tab.

SIERRA

But I- whatever...

SIERRA pulls up a chair to the table where JACQUELINE and ERIK sit across from one another.

SIERRA

So, what are you working on?

ERIK

I'm writing a novel. The next great american novel, hopefully.

SIERRA

I like the pen and parchment. It's classy.

ERIK

Oh, these are just notes for planning. I carry around a typewriter as well.

He holds up his large typewriter briefcase to show her.

SIERRA

So what is it about?

ERIK

It's - I'm in the early stages of the second draft. I haven't perfected the ending yet, it's not ready for public viewing.

ERIK begins to gather his papers to shield his notes. SIERRA gives a "geez" look as she sips her hot chocolate.

JACQUELINE

So Erik, I was thinking, if you find time for a break, we could head over to the lake?

ERIK

I can be ready whenever. You haven't been yet, have you?

SIERRA

Nope. I'm new here!

JACQUELINE

Well, let's go then!

SIERRA

(under her breath)

bÿ O k a y . T h i s i s n o t r e a l . W h y n o

They gather their things and head out.

JACQUELINE AND ERIK

Bye Amy!

SIERRA

Bye Amy.

They walk down the street and come to a large leafy covering, which appears to have obstructed a dimly lit sidewalk pathway. They force their way through the foliage and make their way down the path. They come to a small gate which leads them to a beautiful, serene lake. The lake wrecks of majesty. It exudes a sense of otherworldliness. The coastline is surrounded by a verdurous collection of willow trees and colorful flowers. SIERRA'S jaw drops in awe. They sit down in a grassy patch, underneath the trees. The moonlight and fireflies that surround them light the scene.

ERIK

So Sierra, what about you? What's your story?

SIERRA

I am... currently taking some time away from school. That's why I'm staying at my parents' new place, where you found me.

ERIK

Oh. Like a semester?

SIERRA

(short pause)

Yeah.

ERIK

What school were you at?

SIERRA

University of Miami.

JACQUELINE

Miami! Ooh! That sounds fun. Beaches, big city. (sighs) Gosh you must have had the best time.

SIERRA

It was fun. But I really needed some time away, so I'm happy to be where I am.

ERIK

School is tough. I don't know how everyone does it.

SIERRA

What about you? Did you guys go to school?

ERIK

Yeah, I studied creative writing.

JACQUELINE

I went to art school.

SIERRA

Right... so your degree is in painting or something?

JACQUELINE

Oh, I don't have a degree!

SIERRA

What? I thought you just said you went to art school?

JACQUELINE

I did. And then one day, I just stopped going. School wasn't really for me either.

They take a moment of silence. SIERRA looks around and notices her surroundings.

SIERRA

This place is really something. I have to say. It's truly unbelievable.

ERIK

Isn't it beautiful? We come to this lake *basically* every night.

JACQUELINE

And after a long-ass day, it is so relaxing.

SIERRA

You guys come here in the middle of the night, every night, and just...talk?

JACQUELINE and ERIK look at one another and chuckle. We see them through an almost dreamy filter. The lights in the distance have a misty-like halo that surrounds them.

JACQUELINE

Yes! And relax girl. You should try it sometime. Let the trees and the breeze whisper into your ears. Breathe with ease.

SIERRA

This is crazy, you - (she yawns) - you guys can't even be real.

SIERRA looks really drowsy. She starts to sway back and forth. JACQUELINE mockingly pokes ERIK.

JACQUELINE

You're right. One hundred percent bullshit.

ERIK

Hey!

SIERRA yawns again and rubs her eyes.

SIERRA

Well, this has been some dr--
experience. Even though I'm *pretty*
sure this is all a result of my Taco
Hut airport dinner, I'm glad to know
you guys are not *psychopaths*, you're
just really weird hippie...ish people
who like to get coffee at three in the
morning.

ERIK looks at Jacqueline confused. The lights in the distance
begin to dim.

ERIK

bÿ H i p p h?e & i s h ?

JACQUELINE

bÿ H i p p i l e t h i n k s w e ' d h a v e t o d o a
lot more weed if we want to earn that
descriptor.

ERIK

Well, the coffee part is definitely
true.

JACQUELINE

I think we're just spirited observers.

ERIK leans back and his eyes light up with awe.

ERIK

Ah, Jacqueline, look at firefly
island! It's practically lighting up
the whole sky over there.

They all turn their attention to the middle of the lake,
where a small island (perhaps the size of a school) is
buzzing with it's own collection of foliage and fireflies. It
glows with a green warmth. It's inviting nature catches
SIERRA'S eyes.

SIERRA

What's that?

JACQUELINE

Firefly island? We don't really know. We've always wondered what's over there, but it MUST be magical. To be honest, we've been talking about going one of these days. Hey, you should come with us when we go!

SIERRA

How are you getting there?

JACQUELINE

Well, we thought about swimming. But we won't even put our toes in that water - it's that cold! So that's what my boat-- oh wait, I told you about my boat! That's what I'm going to use the boat for! Isn't that cool?

SIERRA

It's like an art project?

JACQUELINE

Art project?

SIERRA

Boat?

JACQUELINE

You mean my badass, water maneuvering vessel? Okay, it may be a boat. But it's MORE than that. It's going to be our personal transport to adventure. Our one hope to reach...firefly island.

ERIK

You should come with us... when we go.

SIERRA

That would be nice. If I ever see you guys again, maybe.

ERIK

What do you mean?

JACQUELINE

What are you talking about? We're gonna see you again.

SIERRA

Yeah, maybe. I've got to figure a lot

of things out. (*she yawns*)

ERIK

Figure things out *with us!*

JACQUELINE

We're figure-outers. We're like the scooby-doo gang of life problems...if it were only Shaggy and Scooby, and none of the rest of those schlubs.

SIERRA

(*laughs*) Okay, okay. Well maybe if you -
(*yawns*) Oh, I've got to call it a night you guys.

ERIK

Already?

SIERRA

It's like a very reasonable time to call it a night. (*she laughs, they don't react*) I've had a really good time, even though the whole thing feels like I downed two bottles of Nyquil and am stuck in a pleasant fever dream. I mean, the dancing... the coffee shop... *treallyrbeautiful* place...But I've got shit to figure out tomorrow. (*she yawns again*) Damn! That hot chocolate didn't help, did it? Thanks for your kindness and adventures. I gotta get to bed.

She stands up. The both get up to say goodbye. JACQUELINE hugs her.

ERIK

Nice to meet you.

JACQUELINE

See you soon.

SIERRA gets up and stumbles away. As she leaves, ERIK and JACQUELINE begin a discussion on catchy music. The night fades away.

SCENE 2: INT. SIERRA'S ROOM - MORNING.

The next morning, SIERRA wakes up in her bed, her hair a complete tornado. She sits there, propped up with her palms and her back slouched. She sits motionless.

SIERRA

That was one *wild* dream.

She grabs the clock to look at the time. It reads 11:57am. She gives an 'oh well' look. She gets up and sees a piece of paper taped to her door. It reads "Hey sweetie! Hope you slept well." She tears it off, only to find another piece behind it, which reads, "When you get up, please walk Patsy. She usually needs to be outside by 10:00. I had to leave earlier for work today" She glances at her clock again. 12:12. She tears that piece of paper off, only to find another underneath. "Also, could you pick up some milk from the store? It's four blocks off the main road on the left." She rolls her eyes and tears the paper off. Another one, "I sent you a link to a few job opportunities. It's in your inbox. Also left a hiring fair flyer on the kitchen table. No rush! Love you." Out of curiosity, she tears off another note to reveal one more, "That was the last note - Mom out."

SIERRA throws all the papers away. She stumbles downstairs in a sloppy manner, rubbing her forehead in pain. She calls out for Patsy, but hears no response. When she reaches the bottom of the stairs she see's PATSY - a small lap dog - standing in a puddle of her own urine. She sighs, says, "*bitch*" and goes to clean up the mess. From there, she goes about managing her banal day. She takes PATSY out on a walk around the neighborhood, noticeably dismayed by the boring nature of the neighborhood during the day. After returning home, she notices the job fair flyer her mother left on the table. *bÿ I T S B E E, NsheOsNyE wDhAfFrustation*. Checking her e-mail yields the same emotional results. "A *bunch of unpaid bÿ i n t e r n s y h " i G p o s l t n y , a " j o b s n e a r m e "* provides her some relief. Sierra sighs as she scrolls through endless job listings, most of which come with peculiar caveats (late hours for a night cleaning crew, starts off unpaid for a guard position). In her head, she plays out nightmare scenarios of her dealing with those situations. Then, she notices a job posting for "Pizza Delivery Drivers Needed \$\$\$". She reads about how they offer shorter shifts, flexible hours, and a lot of money in tips. She clicks on the link and fills out the application, but doesn't send it in.

Later, she heads to the store down the road, loudly jamming out to her favorite music. When she arrives at the supermarket, she takes a deep breath. This is going to be a

pain. She stares at the milk section, confused on whether it is going to be better for her to get 1%, 2%, or whole. The decision feels like life or death.

Back at home, she spends time scrolling through videos on her laptop. Everything from cat videos, baking tutorials, and beauty tutorials pique her interest. She slumps on the couch for a moment. TV today sucks. After sitting for what feels like forever, she pulls herself out of her couch spot and grabs a book. It's a self-help book. She puts it down after a few minutes. She picks up her phone and dials her friend, FRANCES.

FRANCES

Hey! Si! How are you? God, I haven't heard from you in forever!

SIERRA

Frances! Hey! I know it's been a while. I just wanted to see how everything is going!

FRANCES

It's... crazy! Wait... are you with your parents now? I know last time we texted, that's what you said you were doing.

SIERRA

Yep. Yep. That is definitely where I am.

FRANCES

How is it?

SIERRA

It's...a temporary situation. Not interesting, really. I've been here a day and my mom is already shoving the "get a job" thing down my throat.

She looks at her phone. There's a text from her mom that asks if she's read her e-mails yet.

But anyway. How are you? Let's talk about you! How is New York?

FRANCES

It's the best thing that's ever happened to me! I mean, I feel like I'm living in a dream. Everyday, I'm

up bright and early, looking out my window overlooking Madison Avenue. Once in a while, I'll take off early and go shopping! I mean, the work sucks... it'*accountingng*. But I have my own apartment on the Upper East Side! I'm seeing this really cute guy. I'm loving New York!

SIERRA

That's good. That's really good Fran. I'm really happy for you!

FRANCES

Yeah. You'll have to come visit soon!

SIERRA, feeling inferior, holds the phone away from her head. She thinks about hanging up.

So...what are you going to do there?
And when are you going back to Miami?

SIERRA looks at the Pizza application on her computer.

I'm still working on the job situation. It's grim. And I don't know about Miami. I'm taking some time to figure out which direction to steer my life.

FRANCES

Honestly, you don't even remotely need a full-time, salaried job with benefits and vacation. You're only there temporarily. You should just get an easy gig, make some money, and then go somewhere cool. Like back to Miami! Or New York! (she coughs suggestively) Just do something that will help you pass the time. We're young. Nothing is permanent. But what else is new?

SIERRA

Well, I had a *really* strange dream last night. It was so vivid. I was--

FRANCES

Hold on Si. (to others) *Yeah? Okay one sec.* Weird dreams? What have you been eating?

SIERRA looks at empty box of oreos.

SIERRA
Same old stuff.

FRANCES
Because I heard that your diet can affect your dreams. I don't know. Sounds worth Googling if it really bothers you. But I have to go now! Meeting with our C-O-O. We'll talk soon, I hope. Bye Si!

SIERRA
Byee...

Back at her laptop, SIERRA reluctantly pushes the send button and slams her laptop shut. Cringing, she peeks open an eyeball to see if anything has changed. A bit relieved, she relaxes. Then her phone rings. She winces as she picks up the phone.

SIERRA
Hello?

DEBBIE
(over the phone)
Hello! Is this Sierra?

SIERRA
Yes...

DEBBIE
...This is Debbie, from Pizza My Mind? I saw you submitted an application for employment?

SIERRA
...You saw that?

SIERRA and DEBBIE sit awkwardly on either end of the phone via a splitscreen. Both seem to be baffled at their lack of communication. Debbie feels like she's incompetent and Sierra thinks they're taking it too seriously.

DEBBIE
...Yes. Anyway, we wanted to invite you in for an interview. Are you free tomorrow afternoon, around two?

SIERRA

Let me check.

SIERRA throws her head back in disappointment. Then, gritting her teeth, she holds the phone back up to her face. She thinks long and hard about not going.

I can do two.

DEBBIE

Perfect. Don't forget to bring your driver's license.

PHONE CUTS. SIERRA IS DEFEATED. END SCENE.

SCENE 3: INT. DINING ROOM - EVENING.

Later that evening, SIERRA and her mother, ROSEMARY, sit at the table, enjoying the meal her mom has prepared. ROSEMARY looks at her daughter, who is draped in a hoodie and lazily munching on some brussel sprouts.

ROSEMARY

Val called today. Did you know Monica works in software downtown? You should look her up while you're in town.

SIERRA

Monica?

SIERRA pauses and reaches across the table. She lays the back of her hand against her mom's forehead.

Are you feeling okay?

ROSEMARY

(concerned)

Yes. I think so, why?

SIERRA

Well it seems that you've forgot Monica McDaniel was single-handedly responsible for an episode of dark, swirling agony that consumed my senior year.

ROSEMARY rolls her eyes in unamusement.

ROSEMARY

A bit dramatic honey, don't you think? Besides, that was years ago. She put

you in the yearbook.

SIERRA

Yeah, as "Worst Dressed".

ROSEMARY

You know all those categories were in good fun.

SIERRA

How fun. (*both remain silent*) Where's Dad?

ROSEMARY

He'll be here in a minute. He had a doctor's appointment this afternoon.

SIERRA

Doctor's appointment? Like a checkup?

The door opens and the dog barks. Her dad, FRED, comes in and sneaks around to join them at the table.

FRED

Hey girlies! How are you?

He shuffles over, kisses his wife and SIERRA on the forehead. He holds his back as he struggles into his seat.

SIERRA

Hey Dad.

ROSEMARY

Fred, how'd it go?

FRED

I'll tell you later. How are you sweetie? I barely got to see you last night.

SIERRA

I'm okay. Had a rough night of sleep. Really weird dreams last night.

ROSEMARY

Was it a nightmare?

SIERRA

Um... it wasn't a nightmare.

ROSEMARY

What did you eat today?

SIERRA

Why does everyone keep asking-- Is that a thing?

FRED

Probably being in a new environment. We're still getting used to this place ourselves.

ROSEMARY

Did you get a chance to explore the neighborhood today?

SIERRA

Eh... kind of. I took Patsy for a walk this morning, but I felt like I saw plenty last night.

FRED

Well there's a really neat bookstore down by the grocery store you should check out sometime.

ROSEMARY

Did you end up looking at any of those e-mails I sent you?

SIERRA

Mom...

ROSEMARY

What? I'm only trying to help you out.

SIERRA

I've been really burnt out from school and I come here and get freaking berated over not having a job, TWELVE HOURS AFTER ARRIVAL.

ROSEMARY

I just thought you might be interested. I was trying to help!

SIERRA

You're being pretty damn aggressive with your help. All I wanted was a, "Welcome home! Good to see you"

ROSEMARY
I said that! I did. The mom-

FRED
Listen! Your mother and I are very
happy to have you here.

They stop their bickering. Everyone eats silently.

SIERRA
Well, you'll be happy to know that I'm
going for an interview tomorrow.

FRED
That's great honey.

ROSEMARY
(cautiously)
Do you have a dress? Do you want to
pick up one tomorrow morning?

SIERRA
Won't be needing a dress.

FRED
What's the job?

SIERRA
Um... It's... You guys know Uber?
(they nod) You guys know UberEats?

ROSEMARY
What's UberEats?

SIERRA
It's like Uber, but with food. So
businesses make contracts with the
transportation company, and they help
facilitate the transfer of goods that
way. Anyway, this is like UberEats,
but more localized. It's like a single
contract thing, with one business.

FRED and ROSEMARY look completely lost.

ROSEMARY
...What?

FRED
Alrighty. Well, I hope the interview
goes well.

Later that night, SIERRA sits on the couch with her dad, who's passed out next to her. The *Tonight Show* is on.

SIERRA

It's back.

FRED

Huh?....Oh... I'm awake, I'm awake,
I'm awake.

He forces himself awake and quickly nods off again. SIERRA looks frustrated.

SIERRA

They're about to play the phone booth game.

He starts snoring. She looks over and sighs, but gives him a smile. He starts to stir after a bit, but keeps his eyes closed.

FRED

I'm sorry sweetheart....*inia ca*
bÿ r tno o ncy v o i c e y I a c r e a k y , o
bÿww . bM w y b e w e c a n ' w a t c h t o m o r r o
owoandnhaveva drink.k.

SIERRA

Craft cocktails?

FRED

I'll have a vodka...prune juice!

They laugh and he pulls himself up. He tussles her hair, kisses her head, and heads upstairs. SIERRA sighs in disappointment. She googles "vivid dreams" and "weird dreams". She sees that her diet may be the cause as well as other life baggage that she may be carrying around. She sees a tip to discovering lucidity by writing something down in a dream.

SCENE 4: INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT.

Lying awake in her bed, SIERRA stares at the ceiling. She tosses and turns, getting more and more frustrated with her inability to sleep. She puts on a YouTube sleep help video. It fails. She lights incense and meditates. It sets off the fire alarms. She waves it off and yells in frustration. Her mom yells over at her. She tries doing a home workout and gets fed up with that quickly. She turns out the lights and stares at the ceiling, looking hopelessly at the foreign ceiling

patterns. The clock looms in the distance. 3:13am. She sits with her eyes closed for a long time. Then, the sound of singing from outside. She sits up, curious to see if her suspicion is true. Out the window, JACQUELINE is skipping down the street and singing, ERIK is beatboxing along next to her. She looks into SIERRA'S window.

JACQUELINE

(yelling)

Hi! I'm looking for a Sierra who lives here!

SIERRA

(to herself)

Holy shit. Holy... (to them)
shhhhhh!!!

She quickly grabs a sticky note and writes down the words, "*this is just a dream*".

JACQUELINE

(still yelling up at her)

She looks *kind of* like you, actually.
Just a lot less like a hot mess.

SIERRA races down the stairs to attempt to meet them outside.

JACQUELINE

Do you like rollerblading?

She holds up a pair of rollerblades, smiles at SIERRA, and off they go on another round-the neighborhood night of whimsy. They chase each other on skates and hold hands as they skate in circles. Once again, the houses in the neighborhood glow with a presence unseen during the day. The streetlights are not like suburban ones, but more like ones you might find in a small European town. It's like they're lit with gas. They laugh as they pass by town buildings and race each other to the end of the cul-de-sac. A whimsical soundtrack accompanies them. It's like they're waltzing - performing a ceremonial dance. Finally they start to slow as they approach the Cafe. SIERRA complains about her day as she leads the pack on the dark street.

SIERRA

And I've only been home mind you for, maybe twelve or thirteen hours? And it just continues. Tonight at dinner, my mom was all over me about the job thing. I mean, give a girl a break! She can't understand. She's got it

really relaxed. She works as a school aid...maybe two days a week. I mean, it's not exactly like she knows the pressure I'm under.

JACQUELINE

That is SO ridiculous! You had never even BEEN here before. How could she expect that of you?

SIERRA

I don't know. I think my parents just worry that I'm lost.

ERIK

At least they worry!

JACQUELINE

It sounds like they don't really understand you.

SIERRA

They don't! They can only see me from their freakin' parental fixed-prism perspective.

ERIK

That's hard.

They continue the conversation inside. ERIK leaves them to do writing at a nearby table.

SIERRA

And so now I have this *job interview*
bÿ t o m o r r. o w , u g h &

AMY comes to deliver their drinks. They hardly notice.

AMY

Latte and latte!

SIERRA

Thanks Amy.

JACQUELINE

(to Sierra)

Ew.

SIERRA

I know. I know. I'm kind of considering just not showing up,

blocking their number, watching *Dr. Who* and drinking wine all day.

JACQUELINE

There ya go! There's that winning spirit. What's the job?

SIERRA

It's as a pizza delivery driver.

JACQUELINE

Yum. But still ew.

ERIK comes over to join them.

ERIK

(attempting to jump into convo)
You got a job already?

JACQUELINE

She's got an interview, but she ain't going.

ERIK

Why not?

SIERRA

I said I was *thinking* of not going. My natural response when faced with even minor stressful situations is to drink, shut out all the lights, play nostalgic music, and pretend like nothing ever even happened!

JACQUELINE

Cheers to that!

SIERRA gives a weak cheers.

SIERRA

~~I~~mean, I l l p.r.o b a b l y s t i l l g

JACQUELINE seems distressed by her new friend's willingness. She feels like her advice had been readily dismissed. She looks to Erik for support.

JACQUELINE

Wha-what? Do you hear that? Do you hear that Erik? I mean, is she really a good fit for *that* job?

ERIK
Can you drive?

Sierra laughs.

SIERRA
Yes.

ERIK
Then, I think she's a fine fit.

JACQUELINE
Why are you encouraging her? WHY SHOULD THIS THIS MAJESTY OF HUMAN EXISTENCE, THIS LOVELY FEMALE SPECIMEN (*takes deep breath*) have to toil away at some mediocre suburban establishment?

ERIK
Listen, it may be a bit of a shit job, but it's money. Besides, she doesn't need a *quote unquote* salary job right now. It just isn't necessary. And tip money!

JACQUELINE looks confused. It's as if ERIK has spoken blasphemy and betrayed their pact as a dream team of friends.

JACQUELINE
by Money? Oh that stuff you!
give to people and then they give you things? I think I know what you're talking about. I might have used it once.

AMY laughs in the background and mutters, " .."

ERIK
Yeah? Only once huh? How do you trade for goods and services?

JACQUELINE
I get whatever I need with my amazing *personality*.

ERIK
Oh right! *Personality*. I wonder what the exchange rate on *personality* is these days. I try to use mine everyday and it gets me nowhere.

JACQUELINE

Well not everyone is lucky enough to have a personality rich as mine.

SIERRA

I don't have your personality Jacqueline and I do need money.

JACQUELINE

Okay, I get it. The money thing, I get. I just don't want you doing something because your parents want you to.

Sierra flashes a warm smile at the ground. Finally! Someone understands her. They continue their conversation back by the lakeside, the same scenic location from the night before.

SIERRA

Man. I'm going to be honest, I didn't think I would see you guys again.

ERIK

Do we look like we change up our routines a lot?

They laugh.

SIERRA

Well you did incorporate roller-blading... which was freakin' awesome. I love roller-blading! How do you guys even come up with these things?

JACQUELINE

(deadpanning)

Well, at the bottom of that lake are these magic stones. They're these ancient talismans that have activities inscribed on them. We're completing them all as apart of a ritual.

Sierra looks confused, but Jacqueline retains her seriousness.

ERIK

She's kidding! Hello? C'mon! Talismans?

SIERRA

I'm glad I did get to see you guys

again. I've never had a dr-- an experience like this...two nights in a row. It's almost like both dre-- experiences are connected.

Both look at each other confused and then at her.

ERIK

Okay...

SIERRA

Come here you guys.

SIERRA walks over and hugs them. They both look slightly uncomfortable, but then JACQUELINE quickly embraces her and ERIK follows after.

I just wanted to say thanks for being AMAZING friends, Jacqueline and Erik. In case I never see you again.

JACQUELINE and ERIK retract. How offensive! They just started hanging! ERIK starts laughing and JACQUELINE cracks a smile.

JACQUELINE

Damn girl! What's with all that fatalistic shit?

ERIK

Are you sick? Or secretly going back to Miami tomorrow?

SIERRA

No, no. It's just...

SIERRA thinks about explaining that she thinks she's in a dream, but she fears it may ruin the moment and she may lose the dream.

Just thank you. I gotta head back now that the latte has worn off.

SIERRA starts to gather herself to leave. JACQUELINE and ERIK are stuck on why she might not return.

JACQUELINE

Ah, it must be drug money! That's okay. I know how to get out of this. You have to change your identity...why don't we just swap, you be Jacqueline and I'll be Sierra? When the guy comes

for his money, I'll be like "*Sorry
bro, I spent it all on facial
p̃y s u r g a r y d & a n d r b d - d y s u r g e r y a n d*

ERIK, wanting to put on his academic cap, attempts to thwart this logic.

ERIK

Wait, wouldn't he be looking for drugs? Not the actual money? Like you took drugs you didn't pay for?

JACQUELINE

What if I'm his dealer though? Are you a dealer?

SIERRA sees the long road this could go down.

SIERRA

Alright. I have an interview tomorrow, so I have to leave you folks here. Goodnight friends!

SIERRA starts to leave them and their voices grow faint as she starts to head back towards the foliage which covers the entrance to the lake.

JACQUELINE AND ERIK

Goodnight!

ERIK

See? She's not a dealer.

JACQUELINE

Okay, but maybe she owes the drug dealer money for her drugs? (*Erik sighs*)

WE CONTINUE TO HEAR THEM ARGUE AS THE SCREEN TURNS AS DARK AS THE SHADOWED FOLIAGE. END SCENE.

SCENE 5: INT. SIERRA'S BEDROOM - MORNING.

The next morning, ROSEMARY knocks on SIERRA'S door. She stirs in a frenzy and runs over to check the clock. It's 1:11. She looks at the note on the table that she wrote and realizes that it is still there. She goes through a cycle of belief and disbelief; amazement and horror; confusion and clarity. In the end, she lets out an excited shriek. Her mother, sick of knocking, finally comes in.

ROSEMARY

Sierra, are you-

SIERRA

Woah Mom! Not dressed. Please remind yourself what it was like to have a child.

ROSEMARY looks away, but doesn't shut the door.

ROSEMARY

I was just coming to check on you. I heard your alarm go off, but you never came down.

SIERRA

Oh I missed that by a *long shot*. Either I'm losing my mind or I have the superpower of uninterrupted sleep. There's also a chance it's both.

ROSEMARY

I think that's a superpower reserved for older people. The only power I want to see out of you is *power cleaning*. You can also dust the landing, since your father hasn't been able to get up there... Don't you have an interview today?

SIERRA runs to get dressed. She's completely forgotten about the interview.

SIERRA

Aw shi-- (*Rosemary looks at her sternly*) I mean cra-- Shoot? Okay?

ROSEMARY

I'll let it slide!

SIERRA arrives at her interview a bit annoyed, but willing to participate. Her and the manager, CATHY, sit in the back of the Pizza My Mind store at a fold-out table. CATHY, a gentle-looking woman in her late 30's, is all smiles as she takes notes. SIERRA just wants to get this over with.

CATHY

So Sierra, tell me about yourself.

SIERRA looks confused by the question. But attempts confidently.

SIERRA

Well... I'm a young... woman... (looks at CATHY for approval)...who is... white... and... brunette... I have a Camry

SIERRA pauses and looks at her again, hoping that this is satisfying explanation. CATHY remains patient.

CATHY

Why don't you try telling me about some of the things you enjoy?

SIERRA

I like... Justin Timberlake... and... Ariana Grande... and... The X Factor...

SIERRA looks at her unsure as to whether she has adequately answered her question. There's a part of her that realizes she doesn't *really* care, so she's approaching the situation in a half-assed manner. CATHY just laughs and looks down at her paper.

CATHY

How about we try a different question. Tell me about food. Have you spent anytime working in food service? Maybe you have experience through a family member?

SIERRA sits in thought for a second. She's taken back to years ago, when she had an affinity for baking and she begins to light up.

SIERRA

Well...I did used to be really into baking.

CATHY

Hmmm... okay, tell me about that.

SIERRA

When I was a little girl, about ten or so, I had these cravings baked goods. I think it started with chocolate croissants and just evolved from there I would spend afternoons after school following my mom around and tugging her on her shirt in an attempt to get her to stop by PJ's - the cafe near our house. One day, she told me that it would benefit me much better in the

long run if I were to learn how to bake myself. So she brought out a few books and away I went. It started with croissants, but I moved onto cookies, cakes and... well you get the picture.

CATHY

(encouraging the enthusiasm)

You cared about it.

CATHY writes down a few notes on her clipboard. In her mind, SIERRA has passed the 'normal' test and seems like a delightful personality.

SIERRA

Oh yeah! I really fell in love with it. I probably spent the vast majority of my afternoons in school with dough in my hands. Then one day, I just stopped. I think I was burnt out. I'd definitely like to pick it up again though.

CATHY smiles at her. She puts down the clipboard she's been writing on and heads over to the key rack. She picks up a set of car keys and takes them over to SIERRA.

CATHY

Well, you won't get to bake pizzas at first... But it's a skill everyone here gets the opportunity to learn at some point. You seem like a put together kid who's got some kind of direction. There's a uniform in back and these are your keys. Your first shift starts in fifteen minutes. Welcome to the *Pizza My Mind* team.

Unexcited, SIERRA heads off to her first evening of deliveries. The first house she visits is a small house with a lot of cars out front. She rings the doorbell and waits a long time before she hears voices on the other side. She can make out whispers.

BOARD GAMER

(voice)

It's a chick!

SIERRA

Hello? Is someone home? Your pizza is here.

There's more whispers, but no answer.

BOARD GAMER

(voice)

But not a level ten mage. (mumbling)

Cast an enchantment spell! (mumbling)

bÿ A n s w e r i t o r s h e l l l e a v e .

The door opens. A greasy-faced twenty-something man stands in front of the door. He breathes heavily.

SIERRA

That will be \$18.14?

The man looks at her without saying a word. His wizard hat begins to fall off his head. He stares as his friends attempt to coax him back inside quickly. He hands her the money and shuts the door. She rolls her eyes in a lighthearted way and drives to the next house. Again, she rings the doorbell and answers the door to find a group of girls around her age, who appear to be a little drunk. The leader of the pack stumbles over in heels wearing a lot of bangles.

BANGLE GIRL

Hey! The pizza is here! (to Sierra)

Hi.

SIERRA

Hi. I've got a pineapple pizza--

Some random girl from the back yells over something to the effect of '*Is the crust gluten free?*'

SIERRA

Rachel, shhhhhhh! We're eating what we ordered. You can eat the same as the rest of us.

SIERRA

It's \$19.94.

The girl reaches into her purse. She ruffles around for a bit and eventually comes up with a twenty.

BANGLE GIRL

(starts smacking gum)

I only have a twenty. Hey girls --

bÿ t h e y r e) ~~GIRLS!~~ nDg any ofu d
you have any other bills?

The girls quiet for a moment and then immediately get loud

again. One girl brings over a single dollar. The woman looks at SIERRA with a half-assed look of pity.

BANGLE GIRL
(insincere)
I am so sorry!

The door shuts and SIERRA lets out an exasperated sigh. She continues driving onto the next house. Inside the next house, a woman wearing a bathrobe sits with her laptop facing her. She giggles.

MONICA
Alright, I hear that pizza driver pulling up. I'm scared you guys! Thanks again to Theherol7 for this dare request.

The doorbell rings. The woman positions the computer so that it faces her and the door. She stands up, winks at her laptop and peels off her robe.

MONICA
(*through the door*)
How much is it again? I want to make sure I have enough money.

She opens the door and SIERRA stands there, holding her pizza staring blankly at the woman. Her eyes light up. She knows this woman.

SIERRA
Monica?

MONICA
Sierra? Wow. I-- I--

SIERRA looks down at her body and quickly looks back up.

SIERRA
(awkwardly)
Nice...

Monica frantically looks for a way to escape the situation. She hides behind the door. Her viewers are shocked.

MONICA
So... you're back in the area? We should catch up.

SIERRA

Yep... yep.... That'll be \$10.66.

SIERRA drives home feeling exhausted and defeated. The job proved to be more difficult than anticipated. She comes back inside and hears the voices of her parents, who are in the study. ROSEMARY is trying to help FRED up from his chair.

what is the meaning of life? to find joy in the simple things, to feel love and passion in a moment, to celebrate humanity when it is deserved... Sweetheart, You know your father and I can't afford that.

ROSEMARY

You shouldn't strain yourself like that Fred! You heard what the doctors said.

FRED

I'm fine, i'm fine.

ROSEMARY comes around and helps him to his feet.

ROSEMARY

I hope one of us can stay on our feet long enough to get the mail.

FRED

Or dancing...

They chuckle as they make their way out. SIERRA walks by them.

FRED

Hey! There she is!

ROSEMARY

How was the Uber thing?

SIERRA

It was a delivery job.

She walks past them towards the kitchen.

FRED

(concerned)

What?

ROSEMARY

Well there's pizza on the counter if you want any.

SIERRA rolls her eyes in disappointment. She fixes herself something else to eat and begins to march back toward her room. The parents stop her on the way up.

ROSEMARY

Well.... how was it?

SIERRA

It was long and tiring.

FRED

Hey, maybe you'll sleep well tonight!

SIERRA makes her way up the stairs towards her room, carrying a small snack with her.

SIERRA

(mouth full of food)

I did see Monica today.

ROSEMARY

You did? How did she look?

SIERRA

She looked...confident. I'll give her that.

With that, she shuts the door to her room. FRED and ROSEMARY look at one another confused by their daughters urgency. They shrug it off.

Back in her room, SIERRA empties her pockets. Eleven dollars in tip money. She lies down in bed and starts to get tired. Of course, she can't sleep. She lets out an exasperated, "How?" before turning on her nightstand light. She looks up sleep remedies on her laptop. One of the recommendations is reading. She puts down her laptop and reaches for a stack of books near her bed. She pulls out one titled, "*Rise to the Occasion: A Manifesto On Baking and Life*". She notices that she already has a bookmark inside. The chapter is on 'the diligence required to bake something great'. Oddly enough, this is inspiring. So inspiring, in fact, that it keeps her awake. She finishes several chapters and finally puts the book down with a big grin. She goes to turn off the light and notices the clock. 3:40 AM. Damn. She sighs and collapses back into her bed, facing her body towards the window. The note on the table comes into focus. Someone is singing outside. SIERRA smiles.

MATCH CUT FROM SIERRA'S FACE TO NEXT SCENE. END SCENE.

SCENE 6: EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - EVENING.

SIERRA and JACQUELINE ride their bikes playfully through the park. They ride up and down lush green hills, laughing all the way. They come to a flat patch.

JACQUELINE

She was naked? Are you serious?

SIERRA

Yeah. The best part was that my mom has been trying to get me to hang out with her for the past few weeks because apparently my mom thinks she's some kind of amazing role model.

JACQUELINE

Well at least this job gets you some interesting stories...

SIERRA

Yeah. I mean, it was just such a long day. I didn't know that dropping off food in a car could be so exhausting.

JACQUELINE

And that was just *day one* girl. You need a cold drink.

SIERRA laughs but quickly turns serious.

SIERRA

Wait...like a liquor drink? Not just a coffee drink?

JACQUELINE

Yeah. Like Gin and Juice? (*she starts rapping Gin and Juice*)

SIERRA

What! Your know where we can get booze?! At this hour? On a Tuesday in the middle of a place like this? What the hell?

JACQUELINE

Yeah, I have a ton at my house. (*she*
b̃y i s c o n f u s e d b y) *W̃s'ree r r a s e n e r g*
not underage or anything...

SIERRA

Your house? You have a house? A real house?

JACQUELINE

Yes. The place where I live and make all the regretful decisions in my life.

SIERRA

Can we go?!

JACQUELINE

I guess... Damn girl. You are WAY too pumped about this. I thought you went to school in Florida. The way you're acting, I might've thought BYU.

The girls head to JACQUELINE'S house. Their place feels eerily empty, and has only a few windows to the outside. All we see is a large room with studio space. Several half-finished art projects are left out as well as several half-finished bottles of booze. Her room has more of a dorm room appearance than one of an independent woman's living space. They sit on bean bag chairs and play an old Nintendo 64. Each one of them has a plastic cup with Jack and Coke or Gin and Tonic.

JACQUELINE

How'd you get so good at driving?
(referring to video game)

SIERRA

I've always been better when I have a little gin in the system.

JACQUELINE

Or is it because you don't wanna miss the 30 minutes or less window and get Mario's ass fired.

SIERRA

Shut up! (*they laugh*) I can't believe you never brought me here. This place is so cool.

JACQUELINE

(*unenthused*)

Yeah... I mean it's like my *place*, you know? I spend way too much time here. But a couple glasses of these (holds up booze) and I say what the hell, it's no castle, but it'll do!

SIERRA puts down her controller. She thinks JACQUELINE is too casual about her opportunity.

SIERRA

I mean you have everything you need.
You have drinks, you have a bed, you
have space for your art...

JACQUELINE

Well I actually now have no space
because of my art.

SIERRA

When do you work on all of this stuff?

JACQUELINE

Oh here and there. Whenever I get
around to it really. I try not to put
pressure on myself. Like stress
equals bad vibes equals bad time.

SIERRA

I wanna see something!

JACQUELINE

(chuckling)
Didn't you see plenty today at your
job?

SIERRA

I'm talking about your art.

JACQUELINE

Oh.

JACQUELINE looks a little flustered. She proceeds to take Sierra around and shows her a few random pieces she has in progress. They come to a small wooden piece that appears like two different pieces mixed together - like a splitscreen.

JACQUELINE

This is a tribute based on a mix of
tiki culture and totem pole work.

SIERRA

Cool. What's the tribute for?

JACQUELINE

What? (*confused*)

SIERRA

The tribute, what's it for? What are you tributing it to?

JACQUELINE

I don't know. I think it's one of those things that will be revealed to me when the work is done. I don't usually show work unless its finished.

SIERRA

Interesting. Any finished pieces I could see?

JACQUELINE

(flustered)

I don't have any here. Still kind of working on it. Trying not to stress about it too much. I just don't want to make anything without inspiration. I gotta make sure that even if it looks easy, it's some Basquiat level shit.

SIERRA

Hmmmm.... (*dismissively*) I can understand that approach. At least it doesn't require you to run into the on kid from your High School that happens to also live in this town!

They laugh. JACQUELINE ushers them back to the couch away from her unfinished works. They resume their drinks.

JACQUELINE

You won't have to deal with that much longer. You are way too qualified to do that job.

SIERRA

What qualifications would that be exactly?

JACQUELINE

You....Well you...You're smart!

SIERRA

I'm here because I literally *ran* away from school.

JACQUELINE

You're personable!

SIERRA

In the sense that I followed a stranger in the middle of the night to go dancing around a neighborhood? I would say that's probably more of a 'foolish' thing. Or a 'bored' thing. not exactly 'personable'.

JACQUELINE

You're witty, I think!

SIERRA looks at her skeptically.

Well you... you drink well! And you drive well! And you have a great sense of direction!

SIERRA buries her face in the love sac. JACQUELINE offers a comforting hand.

SIERRA

That sounds *the only qualifications* for a delivery driver.

JACQUELINE

Hey come on. Don't be sad. (attempting to change the mood) Let's dance!

JACQUELINE grabs her hand and tries to pull her off the sac. She resists and first, but gives in. JACQUELINE starts to twirl her around the room. SIERRA laughs it off.

SIERRA

Honestly, I'm being a little dramatic. This is straight up first world complaining at it's finest. My job isn't that bad. TONS of people would love to even have the opportunity to HAVE a job. Plus, this one even has some perks.

JACQUELINE

What? Like what? I guess free pizza isn't too bad. Cinnasticks! Oh I LOVE cinnasticks!

SIERRA

It's nice to be around dough again.

When I walked by the oven and could smell the dough rising, it kind of took me back. They actually make the dough in-story, which I respect. I really used to like baking. It...healed me. I remember when I was little, I wanted to make cookies REALLY badly. My mom basically said: if you want cookies that bad, you'll have to make them yourself. So I did. And there was something about that...the craft...the art of working with your hands and the elements of the earth that I...I fell in love with. Soon after it was bread and cakes and well, everything. I could even do those fancy cakes that look like real objects. One day in college, it all just stopped. It became too tiring, too time-consuming. You know how it is. University housing doesn't exactly have an abundance of ovens for student use. So I moved on, made friends, chased boys, got swept away with the collegiate social scene. It became a faded memory. I know it sounds crazy. As much as I struggled with today, it was really good being back near an oven. It...took me back.

JACQUELINE sits there in awe. She senses the passion from SIERRA and it intimidates her. She silently digests what she's just heard, while sipping the bottom of her drink. The air is still. JACQUELINE musters a response, but it is a chore.

JACQUELINE

I'm happy... to hear that then.

HARD CUT. END SCENE.

SCENE 7: INT. BEDROOM - AFTERNOON.

The next day the alarm goes off. 1:41 pm. Frustration.

SIERRA

Shit.

SIERRA makes her way downstairs and opens up the fridge. Moments later, ROSEMARY returns from a day out.

ROSEMARY
Sweetie? Did you just wake up?

SIERRA
Yes. I don't know why either.

ROSEMARY
Are you alright? You still having
strange dreams?

SIERRA
I'm fine. (*sarcastically*) You ever
hear the statistic that us young
people don't get enough sleep?

ROSEMARY
Really? I thought that was us *old*
people.

SIERRA
Well, you're wrong. And I would *hope*
that you would be encouraging of
healthy habits.

ROSEMARY
I just want to make sure that it's not
something more problematic. Anyway,
I'm off to the store. Need anything?

SIERRA
Um, yeah actually. Can you get me some
flour?

ROSEMARY
Flour?

SIERRA
Yeah, I didn't see any earlier. Oh and
some baking soda. And baking powder.

ROSEMARY
Hmmm... I can get you those things if
you come with me.

SIERRA
What? *Mom!* By the time we get back,
I'll have to get ready for work!

ROSEMARY
Well then write me a list--

SIERRA grabs a pen.

-And send me with cash.

SIERRA puts down the pen and grabs her sunglasses. They head off to the supermarket together. As they stroll through the aisles, SIERRA grabs various baking ingredients throughout and tosses them in the cart. ROSEMARY cracks a grin and places each one back on the shelf. She glances at her daughter with admiration.

SIERRA

So, you were lying?

ROSEMARY

You didn't look very hard. Besides, how else was I supposed to get a little time with you?

SIERRA

Wow. Not exactly the mom-daughter shopping trip I imagined.

ROSEMARY

So you're baking again?

SIERRA

What do you mean *again*?

ROSEMARY

Well there was a time back in High School where you were messing up the kitchen everyday. But it's been a long time since I've seen that. I think it's good.

SIERRA

Well I have time now. I'm not nose-deep in books anymore. And... I've had a bit of a tough time finding constructive uses of my time.

ROSEMARY

Well I think this a great idea Sierra. It's good to spend time on a craft. You know, ever since you left, I've actually become quite the blogger.

SIERRA

You have a blog?

ROSEMARY

It's just about places I'd love to go. Little hideaways near and far. I haven't *exactly* been promoting it lately. It still needs some work.

SIERRA

Yeah. Just don't keep it hidden for too long. Otherwise, it'll never see the light of day and how will you ever get better?

ROSEMARY

What makes you say that?

SIERRA

I got this friend who's a writer. He's been writing his book for a while and he won't let me see it... But I keep telling him that another set of eyes won't hurt.

ROSEMARY raises her eyebrows as if to acknowledge the novel suggestion. She turns the corner and starts grabbing food herself.

ROSEMARY

So how's your Uber job?

SIERRA

It's not as cool as you think.

ROSEMARY

Is it as cool as delivering pizzas?

SIERRA looks surprised that her mother could be so aware.

ROSEMARY

I did your laundry darling. Your uniform is actually clean.

SIERRA

Ah. Well then you know everything you need to know about the job.

ROSEMARY

Honey, you could be doing septic tank draining and I would not think any less of you. I don't expect you to be anything more than yourself.

SIERRA

And that's why you pressured me into getting a job within twelve hours of coming home!

ROSEMARY

You know I do that because I care about you. Idle hands are the devil's playthings. I won't always be there to take care of you...and...neither will your father.

ROSEMARY noticeably becomes arrested in her speech. She gives a quick, reassuring smile to Sierra and then presses forward.

SIERRA

bÿ W h a t s t h a t s u p p o s e d t o m e a n ?

ROSEMARY

People-- Parents-- (she takes a beat)
With the advent of modern medicine, people have been living longer than ever before. The problem is people still break down. Over time us old folks are slowly deteriorating. The messed up thing is: it doesn't feel like an extension of life, so much as it feels like a prolonged death.

SIERRA looks horrified. She grabs her mothers arm out of concern.

SIERRA

Mom... Are you okay?

ROSEMARY

I'm fine! All I'm saying is we won't always be around to take care of you.

SIERRA

And that's when I have to take care of you!

ROSEMARY laughs.

ROSEMARY

Oh yeah? Have me move in *with you?*

SIERRA

Move in? Oh no, you're going straight in a home.

ROSEMARY laughs harder.

We ain't talking the Marriott neither.
 (keeps laughing) You're going straight
 to the LaQuinta Inn's of nursing homes
 as soon as you're of age. (laughter)
 If you keep that up, it'll be the
 Super8.

Back at home, SIERRA dives deep into the kitchen. She pulls out every pot and pan imaginable as she spills flour all over the floor. Old cookbooks, littered with notes are dusted off and spread out on the counter. She has begun a grand project. She is renewed with energy. Checking her watch, she sighs. SIERRA leaves for work.

END SCENE

SCENE 8: INT. PIZZERIA - DAY.

"Pizza My Mind" is in the middle of a staff meeting. CATHY is addressing a rather uninspired-looking group of young adults and teenagers who gaze emptily in her direction.

CATHY

So just in case we aren't clear... We are NOT permitted, under any circumstance, to just give away pizza. Not even if they tell you that they've dropped their wallet in the garbage disposal.

A man with a really long rat tail haircut raises his hand. CATHY tries to avoid addressing him. Her voice slows.

...And we will not be reimbursing fuel cost for delivery drivers who fell victim to prank deliveries.

The man drops his hand and sighs.

Names like Ho Lee Dong and Sugar Lickin should be *pretty obvious tipoffs*. With our new specials, we're going to see a lot of traffic, so I'm glad that we have some new driving staff with us.

CATHY looks at SIERRA, who smiles. The girl next to her gives her a comforting smile as well.

If you have any questions feel free to ask me. Staff meeting adjourned.

SIERRA goes to put her things away and is stopped by the girl who smiled at her, JILL. JILL stands a bit rigidly, with her hair pulled back in a messy ponytail, beaming her smile in SIERRA'S face. SIERRA thinks JILL is unfashionable and way too excited for the caliber of their job.

JILL

Hey! Glad to see I'm not alone out here fighting gender stereotypes.

SIERRA laughs at JILL, then tries to cover it up with her hand.

SIERRA

Stereotypes? Are girl delivery drivers especially scarce?

They look around at a fairly gender-balanced room, with a few more men drivers than women.

JILL

Are you new?

SIERRA

Yeah.

JILL

Cool. I'm Jill.

SIERRA

(trying to end the convo)
Nice to meet you.

SIERRA, in full-on work mode, heads over to the counter to pick up some orders and JILL follows her, hoping for more.

JILL

What's your name?

SIERRA points at her badge and proceeds to fix her hair without giving JILL the time of day, who doesn't seem bothered.

Sierra! Cool. I don't mean to bother you, but most people here are either weird old dudes, odd old women, or kids. I'm glad they finally hired someone at least close to my age.

SIERRA shudders. Deciding she can't escape her, she faces JILL straight on.

SIERRA
(dismissively)
Yeah well... I look forward to working with you Jill.

JILL
Hey maybe we could grab beers together after work one day? You are twenty-one? Maybe Wednesday?

SIERRA
I'd love to, I really would. I'm not even working Wednesday.

JILL references the wall behind SIERRA, who doesn't care.

JILL
It says on the calendar that *you* are and so am I. So we should get beers.

SIERRA
I've actually been sleeping really crazy lately and--

JILL
Excuses, excuses. It's bullshit.

The blunt response and forwardness shocks SIERRA.

Listen, I'm just trying to reach out to you on account of you being new and all. I think it's a bit of a nice gesture, personally. But hey, if you hate beers!

SIERRA sighs. She feels bad about her dismissiveness.

SIERRA
(nodding)
Okay. Beers on Wednesday. First round on me.

JILL smiles and lets SIERRA get on with her business. The two girls go off to deliver their orders. Back at the house later that night, ROSEMARY sees FRED cleaning up SIERRA'S baking mess from earlier.

ROSEMARY

Oh Fred. Don't. You don't have to do that.

FRED

Well the family's coming in tomorrow and I don't want them thinking we live in some kind of madhouse.

ROSEMARY

You're going to hurt yourself dear. Here, let me do it.

ROSEMARY helps the struggling FRED to his feet. He takes a couple minutes to stretch himself back to normalcy before shuffling to the nearest chair. ROSEMARY cleans the counter much more efficiently.

FRED

Thank you darling.

ROSEMARY

Our daughter really should be doing it... But I guess at least she's being constructive.

FRED cracks a big grin. ROSEMARY smiles discreetly.

FRED

You're loving this Rosemary. I know you. You haven't had time like this with our girl since she was a kiddo. I'm happy to have her back too - this place almost echoes otherwise. But you know, to be honest, I feel like I've hardly seen her. She's been so damn busy...

ROSEMARY

It's cause she's sleeping until the middle of the day.

FRED

She's still a college kid. You know how it was then.

ROSEMARY

We're not talking about eleven thirty or even noon anymore. She's sleeping through the day. And it's not good. She's staying up until ungodly hours,

doing God knows what, drinking God
knows what, snorting God knows what!

FRED heartily laughs at this notion. ROSEMARY gets upset,
believing him mocking and he flashes her an endearing smile.

FRED

What doesn't God know? Listen, I know
our daughter. She's not doing any of
that stuff. It's like she said the
other night, she's suffering from
strange dreams.

ROSEMARY

Well it may not be any of that stuff,
but I can tell you that it's *not the
dreams that's the problem*. Not
anymore.

SWIPE FROM FRED'S CONCERN TO HIM SLEEPING. END SCENE.

SCENE 9: INT. COFFEE SHOP - AFTER MIDNIGHT.

SIERRA comes home and sidesteps her father who is nearly
unconscious in front of the television. She climbs into bed
and eagerly awaits her friends. JACQUELINE comes to pick her
up and they go to the coffeeshop where ERIK is writing away.
The three sit at a table in the corner. AMY comes to bring
them their drinks.

AMY

Two lattes and a cappuccino.

ALL

Thanks again Amy!

SIERRA

So I can honestly say that I've been
at least partially revived through
baking again. It's staving off the
internal despair.

JACQUELINE

Sounds great! Next time, bring some
treats for us... By the way, what do
you guys want to do tonight? I found a
bunch of old board games we could look
into.

ERIK, only half listening to their conversation while going
over notes on his paper, chimes in.

ERIK

Wait, what kind of things are you baking?

SIERRA

All kinds really. I mean, I'm working on a cake now. But I've made some macarons in the meantime, which you should *totally* try.

SIERRA reaches into her bag and shuffles around for a plastic baggie containing a few colorful, delicious looking macarons.

JACQUELINE

Oh you did bring goodies! I LOVE macaroons.

SIERRA

Well these are macarons.

ERIK

(in a teasing manner)

Got it Jacqueline? It's *macarons*.
(thick french embellishment)

JACQUELINE

I also found these super hilarious tandem bikes. I think it would be so funny--

SIERRA

Well they're actually two distinctly different cookies. *Macaroons* are made with coconut.

ERIK

So this one is pronounced *macaron*? *(he takes a bite)*

SIERRA

Yep.

JACQUELINE

I also have some movies we could-

ERIK

Hell. I think they're pronounced
bÿ m m m m m m m m m m.mamamom.m m m m m m m & . .

JACQUELINE

People! What is important here?

SIERRA

Sorry Jacqueline! Do you like the cookie though?

JACQUELINE

Yes.

The threesome ends up at their usual spot by the lake, the mystical firefly islands glowing in the background and the moon's beaming reflection in the water. A card game is going on. JACQUELINE looks eager to win, but it's pretty clear that SIERRA and ERIK are still invested in other things. ERIK seems to be reorganizing his papers.

ERIK

You ante Jacqueline.

JACQUELINE

I'm folding.

ERIK

Sierra?

SIERRA

I'm going to...I'm actually going to raise you one.

JACQUELINE

Ooooooh! Someone's got some new confidence.

ERIK

I'll actually add two onto that.

SIERRA sits for a minute, unsure if she should proceed.

If you throw in another cookie, I think it could cover the cost.

SIERRA

I'd be willing to part with a macaron.... If you read some of your book to me.

ERIK

No way!

SIERRA

Come on Erik! Just tell us what it's about.

JACQUELINE

Sierra, let him have his silly secret.

SIERRA

No. I shared some cooking with you!
You just tell me what your book is
about. Then I'll call you.

ERIK

No.

SIERRA

Then I fold.

ERIK

What? All these chips in the pot and
you fold? Lame!

SIERRA

Then just tell me. If you tell me,
I'll call you.

ERIK

Well I don't care. I'll win anyway.

SIERRA

Yeah but I know you. You want to win
with glory. You want to win knowing
you deserved to win, especially
considering we raised the bet twelve
times. You don't want our head-to-head
matchup to fizzle out in retreat, you
want a real contest. You want the
story....and so do I.

ERIK sits there in silence and thinks a moment. He takes a
deep breath.

Erik, you're never going to get any
better if you don't share a piece of
it with the world. What are you afraid
of?

ERIK

...It has to be perfect when it comes
out.

SIERRA

And it might be. But isn't the goal

that one day other people read it?

ERK

Well... yes.

SIERRA

And when you go on your book tours across the country, you're going to have to describe it to all the talk show hosts that interview you.

JACQUELINE

(ignoring the convo)

So Sierra, do you fold?

SIERRA

One sec.

ERIK stirs. He finally leaps into the topic.

ERIK

The book is about a young man, who lives on an island and desperately wants to leave the island. His dream is to become a bird and escape. Over time, the island seems smaller and smaller, less and less hospitable. But this young man doesn't give up. He wants to fly away and with the help of a young girl, he accomplishes that. And slowly, we start to realize that we are in America and it sort of plays around with magic realism to create this metaphor on the hardships of living in America. It's called 'The Oenerist'.

Both SIERRA and JACQUELINE are amazed that he answered. SIERRA claps. JACQUELINE cocks her head in neutral disbelief.

JACQUELINE

Erik... I'm shocked. That....

SIERRA

(genuine)

...sounds *very interesting!*

ERIK

Really?

ERIK uncoils from his flinched position. He's flooded with

relief.

SIERRA

Yes. Really. How hard was that?

He looks over at JACQUELINE for confirmation. She forces a smile back at him.

JACQUELINE

It does sound very cool. I'd read it.

SIERRA

Call.

She throws down some chips. ERIK reveals his hand.

ERIK

I have a flush. Spades.

SIERRA looks worried, but her face quickly changes during her reveal.

SIERRA

Full house.

They both smile at each other as she passes him another cookie. JACQUELINE feels left out.

END SCENE.

SCENE 10: INT. BEDROOM - AFTERNOON.

A knock on the door wakes SIERRA. She looks at the clock: 2:02pm. Her father's voice comes through the door.

FRED

Hey cutie pie, you aren't sleeping in there, are you?

SIERRA

(defensive)

No. However, it is my day off. I'm allowed to spend this day however I want. Right?

FRED

Well normally I would say yes. But we have family coming over in a bit! I'm breaking out the barbecue!

SIERRA buries her head in her pillow. Downstairs, she helps

her mother prepare the table for the meal. She lets out a loud groan.

ROSEMARY

What? I don't see what the big deal is.

SIERRA

I know it's great that we live so close to Grandma and Grandpa now, but I swear if they ask me even once what I'm doing with my life, Granny gonna go flying across the room.

ROSEMARY

What's so bad? That your family takes an interest in your life? How crazy.

SIERRA

Mom... YOU are supposed to. It's one thing to be approached with the question once. But after a while, you get sick of it! It's not just once. It's you and Dad and Grandma and Grandpa and Uncle Jeff and Aunt Belle and it's a lot of judgement and pressure. That's the thing! They're just going to end up judging me in the end.

ROSEMARY

Honey, not everyone is out to judge you!

SIERRA

Um, I'm a young woman. Yes they are.

ROSEMARY

Well I am sorry that you think everyone is going to care so much about your life.

SIERRA

~~DA~~ to both of you (*seem to notice*): People my age don't want you to care about our lives. In fact, we'd prefer it if you didn't. Don't ask, don't lecture. Just help us when we're in need of help.

F r e d d o e s

FRED

Your mother is right. Don't assume you know how people are going to act. That's stereotyping. (*Sierra looks confused*)

The doorbell rings. In comes a very excitable old couple as well as a younger couple and two toddler aged children.

ALICE

There she is! Hello darling. Tell me about your life. I want to hear your plan for your career.

SIERRA throws a glare at her mother as ALICE comes in for a hug. ROSEMARY gives her mother a "don't do it" signal. They greet the rest of the family and settle in.

What? What is it? (*Rosemary looks away*) Anyway, your grandfather and I are happy to have you here. Nice to have family closer. We hope to see you a lot since you live so much closer now.

SIERRA

Yes Grandma - good to see you too.

ALICE

Hello dear. Hello Frederick.

FRED and ROSEMARY give their hellos. She turns her attention back to SIERRA.

So what's the story dear? I heard you left school. You are going to graduate, right? You are going to get your degree?

SIERRA

I'm going to get a cocktail. Hold that thought Grandma...(*whispering*) *maybe straight liquor*

ROSEMARY

Everyone come on in and make yourselves plates.

In the other room, there is a big dining room table, set neatly with a bottle of wine in the middle. The adults have all gathered around this table and are passing food. About

fifteen feet away, in the connected room, the two toddlers are eating with their hands, their parents observing from a distance. SIERRA walks in and looks at both tables.

ALICE

You can sit wherever you want sweetie!

SIERRA

Thank you. I am living here, so I feel like you don't need to say that.

ALICE

Wherever you feel comfortable!

SIERRA pauses for a moment. Looks at both tables, back and forth.

SIERRA

That's a tough one.

ROSEMARY

Oh come sit over here! Don't be silly.

SIERRA reluctantly takes a seat in between her father and grandfather, who silently puts one hand on her shoulder, maintaining his stoic demeanor.

ALICE

So what have you been doing since you've arrived? I heard you got yourself a job with some tech company.

FRED

(quietly, with a mouthful) That might have been overstated...

ROSEMARY

Fred.

ALICE

Frederick? You have something to add?

SIERRA

I've actually been getting really into baking.

ALICE

Oh good! You were always such a lovely cook.

SIERRA
Not cooking Grandma--

ROSEMARY
She's baking mom. Like pastries and stuff? She's quite the *baker*.

BELLE
You know, that's a super useful skill. You'll use that for the rest of your life.

ALICE
It's good to have hobbies. I remember you loved baking... and your Grandfather loved when you did it too! Isn't that right dear?

GRANDPA
Yes.

ALICE
So how is the new job? What are you doing?

SIERRA
Could we *not* talk about me for--

FRED groans on the other side of the table. GRANDPA looks over.

FRED
I'm alright.

GRANDPA
I know.

ALICE
Frederick, how are you? I heard you weren't in the best of shape right now...

FRED
Well, Alice, I don't know if that's the way I'd put it. I'm just experiencing some late-onset growing pains. (*laughs to himself*)

ALICE
Well have you gone to see a doctor?

FRED

Yeah we have. I'm just getting older faster than most.... you know how that is!

FRED pats his father-in-law on the back. In an attempt to lighten up the awkwardness, Uncle JEFF leans in and diverts conversation back to his niece.

JEFF

So was Miami a little to much for you?

SIERRA

I don't know if I can give you a distilled answer. I think it's a bit more complicated than that.

JEFF

Hmm... I heard it's quite the party school. A lot of kids just get too tired.

BELLE

She's not one of those kids though.

JEFF

I didn't say she was! I just know it can be a difficult environment.

SIERRA

I might switch to the other table-

BELLE

(to Jeff)

From what I recall, you had quite the college experience yourself...

ALICE

Oh boy did he! And on our dime, no less. We were so worried.

BELLE

Sometimes I still worry.

JEFF

Don't worry about me. It's now them that we have to worry about!

JEFF looks over at his toddler children. SIERRA looks over at them and mouths the words '*HELP ME*'.

So are you planning on going back to school in Miami?

BELLE

I thought she was on break.

JEFF

Are you on break?

SIERRA

No. I don't know what I'm doing yet. I'm taking some time off to figure that out.

JEFF

Well be careful. You know I read somewhere that kids who take a semester off - even just one semester - don't come back fifty percent of the time.

ALICE

Wait. She only has a fifty-fifty chance of returning?

ROSEMARY

That's not how it works.

FRED

Better odds than Vegas.

ROSEMARY

It doesn't work like that.

BELLE

And those statistics could be skewed.

ALICE

(panicked)

So it's like a coin flip?

Tensions start to rise at the table. Everyone except for the little ones, GRANDPA, and SIERRA start talking very quickly.

BELLE

Well in that case, yes.

JEFF

I don't know if that's right. It's more like a card game.

FRED

What? What card game has fifty-fifty odds?

JEFF

It's not about odds, it's about statistical success. There's strategy involved.

BELLE

I thought it was about failure.

ROSEMARY

It's not even about statistics-

ALICE

So it's like poker?

JEFF

No- (*second thoughts*) Well it can be.

FRED

Yeah I mean, that's close. I don't know that the metaphor is the best.

BELLE

It can't be that variable.

ROSEMARY

It's not variable.

ALICE

I'm confused. What game is it?

SIERRA

IT'S NOT A GAME. IT'S MY LIFE. GOD.

At this moment, everyone in the room freezes. SIERRA stands up angrily looking at everyone at the table. The little kids at the nearby table even spill food on themselves while looking at her. Uncle JEFF and Aunt BELLE attempts to calm the situation.

BELLE

We didn't mean anything by it Sierra-

ROSEMARY

We're your family. We worry about you.

SIERRA

About me? You're worried about me?

Why? Because I'm stuck? Because I'm on a break from school? I am my own person! I haven't given up on life, and I didn't submit my life to a public forum.

JEFF

We just want to make sure you're living in the real world.

SIERRA

The real world? The real world, huh? Is that where you all live? Is that where you're from? Well I'm glad that's worked out for you. Look at all that you've amounted to living in the "real world". IF THAT'S WHERE YOU LIVE, I DON'T REALLY WANT ANY PART OF THE REAL WORLD!

SIERRA grabs her plate and hurries away from the table. The adults sit in uncomforted for a moment, aside from ALICE who is trying to process the whole situation.

ALICE

What? What happened? Where'd she go? (*to her husband*) Did you say something? (*accusatory*) What did you say this time?

Up in her room, SIERRA buries her head in her pillow and screams. She tosses and turns for a long time. She throws her books on the ground and puts her earbuds in. Before she know's it, it's late at night.

FADE TO BLACK. END SCENE.

SCENE 11: INT. CAFE - AFTER MIDNIGHT.

At the cafe where she spends so much time, she vents her frustration to her two friends who are both fully invested in her story.

AMY

Coffee for you, coffee for you, and...coffee for you!

SIERRA

Thanks Amy!

ERIK

That's brutal.

SIERRA

Well that's not even the worst part! My uncle has the audacity to tell me to live in the real world. Here's the thing: he's a giant freaking loser! Like literally nothing he has done in this life will make one ounce of difference when he leaves.

JACQUELINE

Ouch! But I get what you're saying.

SIERRA

It's frustrating because they completely fail to recognize what I'm going through.

JACQUELINE

They know all the shit you've been going through with school?

SIERRA

Well it's not just me! They think that we have it so easy. Well guess what? Did *they* have to deal with a global climate crisis, the great recession, the age of constant terrorist threats - not to mention the most tumultuous political environment in modern american history?

ERIK

(coughs to interrupt)

...I have a copy of my book for you.

SIERRA

I'm sorry. It's just- I feel like I have the weight of my entire family on my shoulders.

JACQUELINE

Well they suck. You don't need them. Don't let them do that to you. If you do, you'll just end up feeling suffocated. You're doing fine.

SIERRA

That's the problem.

ERIK

Sierra? Did you hear me? I've got a manuscript for you. (waves paper)

SIERRA

(*ignoring Erik*) I can be healthy, employed, happy - even though I'm not the last one - and it still wouldn't be enough for them.

JACQUELINE

Everyone defines success differently.

SIERRA

And I've been doing shit! I've been baking up a storm lately! And I don't mean to boast, but it is all so damn delicious! It's not perfect, I'll confess. I've got work to do. But it's something I've invested energy in. And what do they care? They're worried about their day-to-day banal

~~meanderings.~~ ' *Who s g o n n a b e
by Dancing with the Stars this*
And they tell me to get a life? I mean, how much do you really value people if you don't pay attention to where they invest their time?

ERIK

Ahem. You asked for this?

SIERRA snaps out of her angry state to look at ERIK.

SIERRA

I'm sorry. What were you saying?

ERIK

You told me to share my work and so here it is.

SIERRA picks up the manuscript. She marvels at its length.

SIERRA

Vermillion? That's the name of the street at the end of the block.

ERIK

It is?

JACQUELINE

Is that your books name?

SIERRA

I thought it was called *The Oeneriest*?

ERIK

I changed it. I decided to name the island *Vermillion*. I don't know why, I just liked the name!

JACQUELINE

Isn't that a color?

ERIK

It's a very deep red. It's the color of the outline here for the manuscript! (*very proud*)

JACQUELINE

Looks plain old red to me.

ERIK

Look closer. (*to Sierra*) I know your family was driving you nuts tonight, but maybe...just maybe, this will capture your imagination. Maybe it's only for an hour or so, but it's meant to take you away - far away from the crazy world out there.

SIERRA takes a deep breath and picks it up. She signals AMY for another coffee refill.

SIERRA

I'll try and read this over tonight and get you some feedback. I actually think you should stick with '*The Oenerist*'. It just *feels* more in tune with the story. Not some boring street.

ERIK nods affirmatively, but is afraid and excited for it's reception. JACQUELINE sighs of boredom.

END SCENE.

SCENE 12: INT. BEDROOM - LUNCHTIME.

The next morning, SIERRA wakes up in a daze. She looks at her alarm clock. It reads 12:01pm. She rises feeling fairly

refreshed. A smile of accomplishment widens her face. She puts on workout clothes and heads downstairs. ROSEMARY is straining to look at the computer through her glasses and is caught off guard by her daughter. She notices the clock.

ROSEMARY

You're up early.

SIERRA

Yeah, I guess I just slept well last night.

ROSEMARY seems pleased. SIERRA grabs a water bottle and some headphones from the drawer near the sink.

ROSEMARY

Where are you going?

SIERRA

I think I'm going to go for a run.

Baffled, ROSEMARY trips up her words.

ROSEMARY

You know *running*?

SIERRA

Better than you know english!

SIERRA runs out the door. ROSEMARY diverts her attention back to the screen. SIERRA goes on a run around the neighborhood and notices how much better everything seems during the day. The neighborhood isn't magical like it is at night - still, she just feels better. She comes back and works on some new recipe she's writing for a ganache. Just as ROSEMARY returns in the afternoon, SIERRA is out the door again, ready for work.

SCENE 13: INT. CASA MARGARITA - EVENING.

At the end of her shift, SIERRA is putting away her work uniform. Before she turns around, JILL is there. SIERRA gives her an exhausted smile.

JILL

Hit a little bit of a midweek bump?
You look like you could use a drink.

SIERRA

Midweek?

JILL

Don't you know what day it is?

SIERRA looks genuinely confused and a little suspicious.

SIERRA

Um... is it your birthday? I got to be honest, I do not check the calendar for those sorts of things.

JILL

It's five o'clock in Honolulu right now, so *(she starts singing the lyrics to Margaritaville)*.

SIERRA

Oh shit. I forgot. I am so sorry!

JILL

Don't be sorry. Be thirsty.

SIERRA

I'm not getting out of this, am I?

JILL

(mocking laugh) No.

The girls arrive at a very suburban neighborhood bar called "Casa Margarita". At the high top table, JILL brings SIERRA beers. The bar is nearly empty save for a few older people.

SIERRA

So- this place has great beers?

JILL

It's beer. I think proximity had more to do with this selection than anything. But I do like Eliana.

JILL waves at the bartender. SIERRA sips on the foam and looks around awkwardly.

SIERRA

So...how do you like work?

JILL

Are we gonna talk about *that*? I mean we both probably feel the same. Work sucks. Tell me about you. Tell me about Sierra.

SIERRA
(laughing) Is this a date?

JILL
 I did buy you a beer. It's kind of a date - a friend date.

SIERRA
 Wait... are you gay?

JILL laughs at how serious SIERRA looks when saying this.

JILL
 No. I'm pretty strongly committed to men. I might make an exception for Sofia Vergara.

SIERRA
 I-- I didn't mean...

JILL
 No, I'm just being nice to you. You think I'm hitting on you? Damn. You must be fun with men.

SIERRA sits silently embarrassed.

(mockingly) So tell me about you girl!

SIERRA
 Well I just moved here recently. My parents are the ones that actually moved here. I was away at college when it happened.

JILL
 College where?

SIERRA
 University of Miami? I was studying business marketing there. It wasn't as fun as you'd think.

JILL
 Business Marketing? Not fun?

SIERRA
 No, Miami. Or actually, it wasn't the city so much as the University. The city is lovely. The school wasn't really working *for me*. Anyway I'm

taking a semester off and so here I am in the meantime. Working away to pass the hours and handle living with my parents.

JILL

That story sucks.

SIERRA is shocked. She gathers her confidence.

It doesn't tell me a whole lot about you. You know? I know that you moved here after you left college in Miami. That's it. You could be ninety-five percent of people walking down that street. What do you like? What do you hate? What are you interested in? I mean help a sister out.

SIERRA

I hate it here. That's easy. I hate the pressure I feel from just about everyone to live a life they expect. I like wine, especially red wine. I hate Woody Harrelson. Don't entirely understand why, but I do. I like *Supernatural*. I don't know. I like staying up late?

JILL

Still sucks. C'mon, give me *something*. What about recently? What's been occupying your precious thoughts lately?

SIERRA

Well I have been getting back into baking lately.

JILL

Okay... we got something. I can work with that. You been doing it a while?

SIERRA

Yes. Well, yes. I guess it is my passion. I started doing it in High School because I wanted to be able to make something I could share with my friends. I started with simple recipes and worked my way up to baking sculptures.

JILL

Great British Bakeoff level shit, huh?

SIERRA

Yeah. For me, it's just uniquely cool. When you bring someone food, you are giving them something they need to live. It's very unique in that regard. You're literally bringing life to people. And with that comes conversation and all these little enjoyments on your tastebuds. Now, you could say that about any food. But *baking*? Baking has this unique alchemy to it. I don't even know what that means, but I've been reading this book and that was the first sentence. It really stuck with me.

JILL

(impressed)

Cool. When are you opening your bakery?

SIERRA

I don't know. I've never thought about it.

JILL

What? How could you not? You just waxed poetic about the philosophy of scones.

SIERRA

I don't know if I'll be good enough.

JILL

Good enough? You're trying to open up a bakery, not sing in the Opera.. *I th
bÿ ñ n k r y o u n b e y . o n n a b e o k a y .*

SIERRA

That's true.

The girls sit in silence for a moment. SIERRA doesn't look like she knows what to say. In a pestering manner, JILL pokes her. She wants the level of interest to be reciprocated.

JILL

Jill

(doing a voice) Maybe I should ask her
 by some questions now? I wouldn't
 look rude.

SIERRA

(ashamed)

Okay... what about you? Do you plan on
 working in food service for the rest
 of your life?

JILL looks annoyed.

JILL

I want to own my own store.

SIERRA

A pizza store?

JILL

No, no - hell no. A comic book store.

SIERRA

Comic books? Really? You? Hmmm. I
 guess I'm not surprised, but isn't
 that whole industry like dying?

JILL

Comic books? Oh no. I mean I know
 printed media has been struggling as
 of late, but comic books? They're on
 their own island away from the rising
 tides.

SIERRA

I guess I would've thought everyone
 would just read them on their tablets
 or whatever.

JILL

Yeah... In a world of collectors,
 digital versions of things don't carry
 the same air of coolness with them.
 Hence, comic book stores. I don't need
 to start a chain or anything. I just
 want a store. One store that I can
 call my own that brings joy to the
 people that love that stuff, namely
 the nerd community. It's a bit
 strange. But it's simple.

SIERRA

bÿ T h a t You wanttttø be a small business owner?

JILL

Hey, Baker isn't exactly a movie star, okay? ...I'm getting my associates right now in business admin. That's a start. I didn't know how to go about the whole thing and I never went to college, so I was like, 'Hey there's a community college, I bet people there know some stuff!'.
.

SIERRA

So you're in school right now? While working?

JILL

Welcome to the lives of *countless* Americans, Sierra! School in all day, work all night. On our next episode, you'll see that I'm *still* among the more fortunate millenials.

SIERRA nods her head in appreciation.

And I run a *Harry Potter* appreciation society. We meet once a month and play games and watch the movies.

SIERRA

I don't find that particularly shocking... or impressive.

JILL

Oh, come on. Don't pretend for a second that you're one of the eleven people in the world who dislikes Harry Potter.

SIERRA

(concedingly)

It is one of the few things you and I both probably appreciate.

JILL

Well then you should come. Next Sunday.

SIERRA scoffs. Part of her beer spills.

Why not? We *do drink*, you knoe. *Harry Potter* and drinking? Your ten year old self *and* your twenty-one year old self will be happy.

SIERRA shakes her head. She realizes the value of having a friend who expects so little from her. She sizes JILL up and down determining how, despite her current, ordinary life, she can be so happy.

SIERRA

How do you do it? How do you not worry that you're going to screw up somewhere along the line? That what you're going to do isn't going to be meaningful enough for you?

JILL

(sipping her beer)

There's really only two things to it: I make sure I get at least three square meals a day. Okay? That's step one. Then -and this is an important one-- I don't give a shit.

SIERRA laughs.

No, but seriously, I don't really think that far in the future. Years go by so damn fast these days, I just want to make sure I'm enjoying the time I have. I'd rather not waste it by worrying that I'm wasting it. Kind of a self-fulfilling - or rather destroying prophecy, right?

SIERRA

We're just in a place in life where we're supposed to make these decisions which will affect the rest of our lives. One thing will permanently affect the rest.

JILL

I'd worry more about if my socks match. We're young, we've got time to make mistakes. (*without hesitation*) So you'll come next Sunday?

SIERRA

I don't know what I'm doing yet. I

don't even know what I'm doing with the rest of my day.

JILL

Well let's start with next week! A little fun, organized activity. You'll get to *relax* with some new friends.

SIERRA

(*grinning*) Ok.

JILL

You're in? Cause if you come, ya gotta leave this (*waves hand indicating mood*) behind? Yeah? Good. My house 7pm! I'll find you if you aren't there! I'm serious!

END SCENE.

SCENE 14: INT. CAFE - AFTER MIDNIGHT.

Later that night, SIERRA grabs coffee from AMY'S with JACQUELINE and ERIK. They gather at the table in the corner where SIERRA and ERIK are engaged in conversation about his book.

SIERRA

It's almost perfect. I think the ending really sells it, Erik. It needs a little polishing, but it's otherwise pretty great.

ERIK

Really? You- you like the general idea? I'm honestly really happy that someone actually *read* it. It wasn't too hard to follow? I just keep reading it over myself and wonder if I got lost along the way and if it will bore people. I don't want to bore people.

SIERRA

Erik! Relax. You're going to be fine. I don't know about that talking bird character that smokes cigars and worships Ayn Rand is one hundred percent necessary, but it's art and it's yours! But take it one step at a time. You'll be okay.

JACQUELINEe sits next to them with her eyes fixated on her coffee. She dips her sugar cube in and out of the mug as she tries to pay no attention to their conversation. SIERRA smiles, she's glowing.

ERIK

I don't know why, but you seem *really* honest right now. Really... present.

JACQUELINE

Yeah. What's gotten into you? You seem *different*. Last time we talked you were all stressed out and stuff. Now?

SIERRA

I hung out with a girl from work today and it honestly made all the difference. I feel a hundred times better.

ERIK

Another deliver chick? Man the world is changing.

JACQUELINE

What did you talk about?

SIERRA

Nothing! Nothing really. Just nice talking to someone...like that.

AMY leans over the counter, now invested as well.

AMY

Now you have to say something. I'm curious! You do seem... peppy!

SIERRA

She- She just put everything in perspective for me. She made me realize that life is a really long thing. It may seem so short from our perspective because we can only look so far back.

The energy in the coffee shop focuses on her. Everyone looks wide-eyed and bewildered. SIERRA pauses to realize that she's been listened to so attentively. JACQUELINE slowly turns her attention back to her mug, this time with a hint of disgust in her eyes.

Anyway... In the end, what she was saying was that none of that really matters. Cause if you think about all that too much, it can get dizzying.

ERIK

All this from a pizza girl?

AMY

Hey! What's that supposed to mean?

SIERRA

Jill. Her name is Jill. She's convinced me to maybe try and open up a bakery.

ERIK

A baker, huh?

SIERRA

Just like you're going to get your book published! Like Jacqueline will finish her artwork! Like Amy will...continue running this amazing coffee shop!

AMY rolls her eyes and heads back to her chair at the front counter.

We aren't there now, but we will be. So long as we keep moving and don't get overwhelmed by it all.

ERIK

Move? Us? You do realize that we kind of do the same thing every night?

SIERRA

Well let's go somewhere then! Somewhere new! Let's go to firefly island! Jacqueline, you've got to be done with that boat by now?

JACQUELINE looks over at the two of them, slightly panicked but aiming to maintain her composure.

JACQUELINE

Oh. I'm not quite finished yet. Haven't had the time. I moved my materials by the lake.

SIERRA

The lake? You must be close then.

JACQUELINE wants her eyes off her, so she interjects.

JACQUELINE

Downtown!

SIERRA

What?

JACQUELINE

Let's go downtown! Erik, you love downtown! We should go.

SIERRA

(confused)

Wait. Downtown? We can go there?

JACQUELINE

Of course we can! Erik, Amy, back me up on this - downtown is cool!

AMY

Never been.

ERIK

I mean, it seems kind of random-

JACQUELINE stands up and starts moving around frantically. She puts on her jacket and tries to lift ERIK and SIERRA out of their seats, who reluctantly acquiesce. She hurries them toward the door and tries to say farewell to AMY.

JACQUELINE

You said you want to do something?
Well come on! We'll miss the tram if we aren't quick.

The door swings shut. ERIK and SIERRA exchange suspicious looks before heading out and waving to AMY.

SIERRA

Is she okay?

ERIK shrugs and they exit.

END SCENE.

SCENE 15: EXT. DOWNTOWN - NIGHT.

The three of them make their way down the street until they come to an open park, illuminated beautifully by the starry night sky. There, in the middle of the grass is a small railway. SIERRA looks around, filled with a mix of confusion and wonder. The station has an old-timey charm. It has the elegance of an antebellum home, mixed with the friendliness of a mom and pop shop. The nearby park is fairly dark and empty. They approach the ticket stand, where a small, charming OLD MAN provides them with a ticket and a smile. They wait at a nearby polished-wood bench. SIERRA begins to feel sucked back into this world and it's magic. Moments later, a faint light fades into the background. The tram approaches and it resembles a high-end cable car, but with charming lamps overhead. There doesn't appear to be a driver or passengers. SIERRA tries to throw away her ticket before boarding, but ERIK stops her.

ERIK

They might check.

The tram chugs along quietly as they watch the neighborhood light up as if they were on a magical carousel. The streetlights sparkle and the misty-dewed lawns twinkle as they pass by. They speed up and pass through neighborhood and park and neighborhood and park until they start to see buildings and more buildings and light up rooms and more lit up rooms. The rail beneath them is almost invisible - it's as if they're riding through the clouds. SIERRA looks out the tram and notices that they're high up off the ground now, maybe thirty feet. She sees streets below, empty, but beautifully lit - like a Gregory Crewdson photograph. The buildings become more and more dense below. None are particularly tall, but all have their own small-town charm. ERIK and JACQUELINE excitedly point down to the streets below and seem to reminisce about different things. The glow of downtown reflects in SIERRA'S face. She sees an adorable bakery below them and points it out. Eventually, the tram comes to a stop at a beautiful town square, complete with fountain. This whole area seems really foreign to SIERRA, but she embraces it nonetheless. They get off and the tram departs immediately after.

They wander the town with wonder and awe. Outside, the streets are completely empty. Void of any person, any scent, *any scratch*. They are clean as a whistle, illuminated by the same street lamps near her neighborhood. It's some fusion of a fantasy, model town and a movie set. Every building interior shines brightly onto the street. The yellow glow of the hat shop or the cinema reflects off the sidewalk. When

the glance in, SIERRA notices vendors eagerly awaiting them, smiling and waving. She also notices that she seldom sees a customer. Only maybe once or twice does she see someone else interacting in the shop, with the downtown coffee shop being the one exception (four customers were there). It feels very welcoming, but very fake. It's part reality, part fantasy. They dance through the streets and chase each other, and dance liked they danced when they first met. They play in the fountain, splash each other, and laugh. They go into all different kind of shops and try on hats, look at books, taste different teas, and, of course, sample some goods from the local bakery. They grab a drink at a bar and notice that no one is there, except them and the bartender. Even though the whole scene is saturated with happiness, there's an underlying eeriness that sits dormant in the background.

JACQUELINE

Bartender! I'll *gladly* buy a round for the house.

They laugh. SIERRA begins to get tired and yawns. They talk as they wander along the main promenade.

Come on. I've yet to show you the best part!

ERIK smiles in affirmation. He looks at SIERRA and bounces his eyebrows in order to drum up anticipation. They head to the clocktower at the center of town and climb it's many steps, which Sierra finds arduous. At the top, they overlook the whole town. It's absolutely gorgeous. SIERRA takes a minute to breath it in. Erik begins sketching the town.

SIERRA

I can't believe you've never taken me here. It's breathtaking.

JACQUELINE

Yeah. It's a nice distraction.

SIERRA

Why don't you guys ever come here if you love it so much?

JACQUELINE

We can always come back. There's more too, if you're willing to take the time.

ERIK looks at JACQUELINE angrily and goes back to sketching.

SIERRA

More? I just don't understand.

JACQUELINE

Tomorrow night. We'll come back. We can spend as much time here, exploring and laughing and playing as much as we can. We'll have to head here early. You think you can do that?

SIERRA

Of course! As early as I can.

JACQUELINE

Promise?

SIERRA

Yes! I can't wait.

ERIK slams his sketchpad down on the balcony. He directs his anger towards JACQUELINE.

ERIK

Jacqueline, aren't you working on the boat *tomorrow*?

His comment goes ignored. JACQUELINE maintains eye contact with SIERRA.

JACQUELINE

I promise that I will keep bringing you nights like these if you promise to never let me down.

SIERRA

I promise. For you, for this, *anything!*

ERIK looks over at them admiring the sights and he lets out a slight sigh. The girls stare at their landscape below for a long time. JACQUELINE gets up and puts a hand on SIERRA'S shoulder.

FADE TO BLACK. END SCENE.

SCENE 16: INT. LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON.

The next morning, SIERRA wakes up and checks her clock. 3:03pm. She frowns. SIERRA runs downstairs and quickly kisses FRED goodbye before she's out the door.

SIERRA

You can pick me up tonight? My car's
in the shop. Short shift! I'm off at
6!

ROSEMARY nods and smiles after her.

Later that afternoon, ROSEMARY sorts through the mail. FRED sits at the dining room table with his glasses on and eyes glued to the computer. He leans within inches of the screen, adjusts his glasses, and attempts to sound out the word "*tiene*". ROSEMARY looks over walks over toward him sorting the mail and puts the pile at her side for a moment. She laughs at him.

ROSEMARY

What are you doing?

FRED

I'm perfecting my Spanish.

ROSEMARY

You don't know Spanish.

FRED

Well I've got a lot of work to do
until *perfect* then.

ROSEMARY

Why? Why learn Spanish now?

FRED

I don't know. I read in the paper that
having command of a second language,
especially Spanish, is really helpful
in today's job market.

ROSEMARY smirks and raises an eyebrow. She begins to sort back through the mail.

ROSEMARY

Fred, dear, you're a few years away
from retirement...

FRED smiles back at her and continues his work onscreen. As she flips through the letters, she finds one from the University of Miami labeled "urgent". She opens it up and begins to read. The words "*we regret to inform you*", "*your daughter Sierra*", and "*academic expulsion*" all stand out to

her. She trembles and drops the paper. FRED struggles to come over to check on her.

FRED

Honey! What's wrong? Should I call an ambulance?

ROSEMARY makes her way to her feet and rubs her face with her hands.

ROSEMARY

She...she lied to us.

FRED

Who lied? Sierra?

ROSEMARY shoves the paper in his face.

ROSEMARY

Yes! She- she told us she needed a semester off. She said she needed time to figure things out. SHE DIDN'T TAKE ALL THIS TIME OFF BY CHOICE, SHE WAS KICKED OUT OF SCHOOL. OUR DAUGHTER FRED! She's spent this whole last year with multiple *failing* grades.

FRED

(calmly)

How could we not have known?

ROSEMARY

We're so naive. I just believed her. Every step of the way. That's it.

ROSEMARY reaches for her phone, FRED intervenes.

FRED

Rosie, what are you doing? Put down the phone. We need to talk about this first.

ROSEMARY

FRED, there is something wrong with our daughter. She is NOT well. She walks around filled with sad thoughts and angst! She- she sleeps until the mid to late afternoon! She has no friends and doesn't seem affected by anything anyone says. She OBVIOUSLY struggles to study at school. Worst of

all, she's a liar. She lied to us this whole time.

FRED

She's our daughter. How would you handle it dear? How was she going to tell us this and have it go over any better?

ROSEMARY

I'm calling her.

FRED

And saying what exactly?

ROSEMARY

I'm going to yell at her.

FRED

Dear, is that what she needs right now? From everything you've told me, she needs *help*. Badly. She doesn't need someone telling her she's a failure - she knows that already. All these issues... this is bigger than just school.

ROSEMARY puts the phone down and begins to cry and he holds her. After she composes herself a bit, she pulls away.

ROSEMARY

What are we going to do?

FRED

We'll talk about the school thing later. There are some more affordable options that might work short-term and long-term. That's something we'll have to discuss with her. In the meantime, she's in a very delicate state right now and I don't know if it's best that we lay all of this on her right now, it being so raw to us at the moment. *She needs to talk to someone.*

ROSEMARY

Who? We've tried to send her to counseling before, remember? She just refused to go. There's no way to make her go.

FRED

It doesn't have to be a professional, you know. It just has to be someone she trusts. Someone who will take her away from all this stuff here (*gesturing his head*). She needs to feel safe.

ROSEMARY thinks a moment and lights up.

ROSEMARY

I know who to call.

ROSEMARY immediately picks up the phone to make a call.

END SCENE.

SCENE 17: INT. PIZZA SHOP - EVENING.

At work, SIERRA and JILL joke together by the delivery counter. SIERRA is laughing hysterically, finally letting her guard down.

SIERRA

How can you *possibly* think the new *Will and Grace* was better than the old *Will and Grace*? That's crazy. That's like saying *Shrek 2* is better than *Shrek*!

JILL

Shrek 2 IS better than *Shrek*. And I'm not saying the new series is monumentally better. I'm just saying that, like *Dr. Who*, people tend to favor the former because of the way they remember it, not really because it was actually great. I just think the original series gets *nostalgia points*. Besides, what do you care? It's got the exact same cast!

SIERRA

Yeah but they don't seem like the same characters. It's like a cheap ripoff.

CATHY approaches the counter. She looks weary, sweaty, and has some pizza-related mess plastered all over her apron.

CATHY

What are you two ladies talking about?

JILL

Which series of *Will and Grace* was better.

CATHY

Oh the old one. By far.

SIERRA does a fist pump in celebration.

But only for the nostalgia...

JILL grabs her fist bump and throws it down in an 'In Yo Face! move.'

Listen, I know you two ladies are almost off, but do either of you happen to be interested in some overtime work? I got a last minute delivery and I really don't want to go and leave Jaron to watch the store. You can take the Audi.

They both look at each other. A car honks it's horn outside. It's ROSEMARY.

SIERRA

And that's my ride! It's also my weekend, so I'll see you guys way later!

JILL nods towards CATHY and takes the keys to the car. She yells after SIERRA.

JILL

You suck! See you Sunday?

SIERRA

(dismissively)

Yeah, yeah. Wouldn't miss it for the world.

She hops in the car with ROSEMARY, who looks a bit anxious, but plays it off coolly. She gives her a smile and a hug. SIERRA casually buckles her seatbelt as they pull away. She turns around and notices two suitcases in the back.

What are the suitcases for?

ROSEMARY smiles over at her pretending she's too focused on the road. SIERRA doesn't seem phased.

You and Dad finally going somewhere,
huh?

ROSEMARY
Sorry sweetheart, what's that?

SIERRA
(visibly confused)
You-- uh, missed the turn.

ROSEMARY
You don't work tomorrow, do you?

SIERRA
No- Why? What's going on?

ROSEMARY
I thought I would surprise you with a
little mother-daughter outing.

The realization that the bag is for her dawns on SIERRA and
she has a minor flip out.

SIERRA
Wait that's for me? That bag right
there? No, no, no, no! I had *plans*
Mom!

ROSEMARY
Oh? With who? What plans?

SIERRA
With friends! Tonight! And this
weekend! I can't just disappear!

ROSEMARY
Don't get all worked up. It's just for
tonight. And we're just going
downtown.

SIERRA
Downtown? Ugh. That's not even a real
getaway. What are we supposed to do
downtown?! This is stupid!

ROSEMARY
I booked us an appointment at the
Reverie Spas downtown! It was the last
one of the day, so we have to hurry.

ROSEMARY checks her mirror and adjusts her hair. SIERRA

checks her mirror as well, but just processes how disgusted her face looks.

SIERRA

Mooooooooooooo.

ROSEMARY

Sierra, please try and see that this could be a fun thing. Besides, it will give your father a night by himself. He's been craving that lately.

SIERRA lets out a large groan and then leans her head against the window, pressing her forehead against it in protest.

END SCENE.

SCENE 18: INT. SPA - NIGHT.

ROSEMARY and SIERRA sit on mint-colored recliner chairs and let their mid-manicured hands carefully rest over the arm. There is one empty seat next to them and only a few scattered people nearby.

ROSEMARY

How was work?

SIERRA

It was fine. I only worked two hours. I was covering the beginning of a coworker's night shift cause he had to go to counseling or something like that....

ROSEMARY

That was nice of you. Stepping in for someone like that.

SIERRA

Well Jill was there, so it was bearable.

ROSEMARY

Who's Jill? Is she the friend I'm so horribly tearing you away from?

SIERRA gives her a 'Seriously?' look.

What? How am I supposed to know? You don't tell me anything. I don't know anything about this Jill. So tell me!

SIERRA

She's just a friend from work. She's really into comic books and she's really... I don't know, relatable? Especially if you're a total dweeb.

ROSEMARY

(intrigued)

Hmmm. Dweeb.

SIERRA

I'm supposed to go to her house to watch Harry Potter on Sunday.

There's a brief silence. They both examine their nails and look around to see where their manicurist has gone off to. SIERRA starts picking at a nail.

ROSEMARY

Isn't this nice? I don't feel like we've had the opportunity to do something like this in a while. You...and me... mom...and daughter...

SIERRA passively listens, but fixes her nail problem and snaps back in.

SIERRA

Yeah. Remember the bake sale we did when I was ten?

ROSEMARY

(*fondly*)

We crushed that.

SIERRA

And there was that woman who bought cupcakes from the store? And you outed her-

ROSEMARY

(remembering)

Melissa... Markesky. God that woman was a piece of work.

SIERRA

-you told her this bake sale required integrity.

ROSEMARY

It did! We spent all that time

perfecting our recipe-

SIERRA

Only to have everyone gush over the store bought ones.

ROSEMARY

Ours were the best real ones.

SIERRA

It was the cinnamon. No one could figure it out. So simple.

ROSEMARY

You... you did good. That was your idea. You were ten.

The giddy nature of the conversation begins a brief, quiet denouement. They return to an air of awkwardness.

SIERRA

How's dad?

ROSEMARY

Your father's not doing great right now, but he'll be okay. He's just coping with aging. It's not easy.

SIERRA

Same.

Just then, a woman walks to the check-in counter. ROSEMARY eyes the chair next to SIERRA a bit nervously. She tries distracting her.

ROSEMARY

What color did you get for your hands?

SIERRA

I don't go off color, I go off name. I think you can tell a lot about a nail polish from a name.

The girl next to her brushes SIERRA with her foot and says 'I agree'. SIERRA swings around to confront her for knocking her foot. As soon as she lays eyes on the girl, she's in shock. It's her old friend FRANCES. She looks incredibly stylish. SIERRA leaps up to greet her.

SIERRA

Fran! What the hell?!

They hug and ROSEMARY joins in. Everyone seems elated. They get settled.

FRANCES

I know! Can you believe it? It's so good to see you! How are you?

SIERRA

Me? What the hell - no! Tell me what you're doing here! Mom? Did you know this?

FRANCES

She knows (smiling). I happened to be in town for a conference and we thought we'd surprise you.

FRANCES takes a seat and gets herself set up with her stylist. ROSEMARY leans over to talk with FRANCES.

ROSEMARY

I'm glad you could join us Frances! How have you been dear?

FRANCES

Well aside from the flight over here being filled with every sick person ever, I've been great. I got to see my parents yesterday, which was really good.

ROSEMARY

And how are they? How's your mom?

FRANCES

Oh she's good. You know her - she's busy as ever. Since I moved out, she joined a recreational ladies golf team, which takes her away some weekends for tournaments. She's also the head of a book club, she volunteers for the local school, teaching math or something, she does water aerobics every morning and zumba every other night, and she also happens to be heavily involved in the HOA right now - I think she's vying for President. On top of all that, she's taking Spanish classes and Tai Chi from the the community center and is a part of the ladies social club

called the "bayonettes", who are a boomer-oriented, feminist activist group. So you could say I'd hardly see her, even if she was home!

ROSEMARY

Very impressive woman.

FRANCES

How's Fred? How are you?

ROSEMARY

Well, Fred and I have kind of kept a low profile since you last saw us. My husband is working away, trying to get over the middle-aged hump. Thankfully, he hasn't gone on some mid-life splurge yet, but he does make it out to a football game every year or so and those tickets aren't cheap! As for me, I'm still working as an elementary school assistant a few days a week. I've scaled it back a bit because I've needed some "me time".

SIERRA

What about you? What's new?

FRANCES

Where do I begin? Oh my god. Well...

FRANCES begins to talk and the conversation transitions between several venues. Beginning at the salon, they all proceed to go get massages, head into a steam room, grab a late evening coffee, go back to the room to change, and *finally* make it out to dinner. FRANCES' conversation seemingly continues through this entire process. Each sentence really triggers another venue. By the time they arrive at the restaurant, they're all dressed up quite nicely and FRANCES seemingly has SIERRA'S attention, but her seemingly endless list of accomplishments coupled with a lack of awareness that she had been talking about herself non-stop for several minutes, had driven SIERRA to the point of annoyance.

FRANCES

I'm up at five and out the door to the gym by like quarter to six at the latest. I get to the office by seven and I'm there all day until seven thirty or eight at night.

ROSEMARY

And what kind of stuff do you do all day? Are you always working on cases or helping with cases?

FRANCES

Right now I'm on a team with a three other people and primarily, I'm knee-deep in research. But that means I get to take lots of little trips across the city and get the inside scoop on different people and what they're doing. When I'm not buried in books, I'm working with clients or giving potential clients consultations. And when I'm not doing that, I'm working on a brief in my office. All that sounds miserable, I know! But my coworkers are really funny and we have free catered meals everyday and, because it's New York, it's *obviously* the best food. We get lobster every Tuesday - I'm not joking! All the restaurants around us are amazing. It's so bad you guys! I'll end up eating out like four nights a week. We also have a lounge where we can drink some classic whiskeys without judgement and we have an in-house masseuse who will literally give you a massage on a moments notice. I use that a lot. Like I said, I go out after work to eat a lot with coworkers, so I don't usually get home until like nine or nine thirty. By then, I just want my glass of wine and my shitty TV and my space. At eleven, I call it a day and do it all again. So, like, the job is demanding for sure, but it's a work hard play hard situation. You know?

Holding back her true emotions, SIERRA tries to chime in and end FRANCES' non-stop ranting. To SIERRA, her life couldn't be *less* interesting. In fact, you could say she was disappointed.

SIERRA

Wow. That sounds really monotonous. That sucks.

FRANCES

Well I mean the perks outweigh the pains, right? I mean, I'm living in New York. It's kind of what we do there.

SIERRA

When do you actually have time to, you know, live?

ROSEMARY

(cautiously scolding)

Sierra!

FRANCES

No, no. It's a fair question. I'm not a complete workaholic. Every spare waking moment that I manage to have, I spend with Lucas.

SIERRA

Lucas?

FRANCES

I told you about him, Si! He's the guy I've been seeing.

ROSEMARY

Oooh! You have a a boy, Frances?

FRANCES

He is honestly the sweetest guy. He's a stock broker, so he works crazy hours, but honestly it works. I think that's why. He's really big into cars and soccer. He's on a club soccer team that he practices with most afternoons. But honestly, Lucas is the biggest sweetheart. He calls his mother like, every other day and is always surprising me with gifts here and there. And just recently, he booked us a ski trip to Switzerland. I mean, come on.

ROSEMARY

Wow. Sounds like you really like him Fran!

SIERRA looks on, getting progressively angrier.

SIERRA

It does...

FRANCES

Oh I am. Head over heels.

SIERRA

Weird. I felt like I just heard of this guy.

FRANCES

Well... There's something else I've got to tell you guys...I think he's the one.

SIERRA angrily reacts. The waiter comes by and refills their wine glasses.

SIERRA

What?!

FRANCES

I think he's the one. I think he's the one that I want to be with for the rest of my life.

SIERRA

You're *twenty-two*.

FRANCES

I know it's sudden Si, but when you know, you just know.

ROSEMARY

Wow, Frances. If you-

SIERRA

Hold on mom. What the *hell* are you talking about? Why didn't you say anything? To me? Your best friend?

FRANCES

Are you mad?

SIERRA

Am I mad? Of course I'm mad? What kind of a backstabbing bitch of a friend drops in on their friend with news like that. A friend who they supposedly consider themselves close to? A friend who they should be telling everything to?

FRANCES sees SIERRA'S anger, but attempts to approach the situation with sympathy. ROSEMARY feels the tension and starts to lean back.

FRANCES

....Si...I know you're upset. It's evident that you're going through a difficult time in your life and you need help. This- the way your acting right now is because you're looking for help.

SIERRA

Are you serious? Maybe it's because the girl who I counted on all throughout my childhood for support, my *best friend*, doesn't feel like I'm important anymore.

FRANCES

(to Rosemary)

I'm trying to help her.

SIERRA

What the HELL are you talking about?

ROSEMARY nervously looks at FRANCES. She shakes her head slightly.

FRANCES

Si... We know about the academic issues...

ROSEMARY jumps in. She's been defeated and she's ready to be candid.

ROSEMARY

We know you're not going back to Miami.

SIERRA starts freaking out. Her lip begins to quiver and her breathing quickens. The tip of her brow starts to knot.

Honey.

SIERRA takes a deep breath.

SIERRA

Do you think your life is so great?

FRANCES

As your friend Sierra, I am trying to help you. Please don't try and ruin my

happiness.

ROSEMARY

Sweetheart-

SIERRA

You're right, okay? You're right. I got expelled. I couldn't handle the stress. College isn't easy. It's not meant to be. But what didn't help is that I had no idea what I was doing. I was taking classes without caring about what I was taking, I was making friends who I could care less about. I just kept going because I felt like it was what I was supposed to do and it wouldn't matter because someday it would all work out okay. But that wasn't the case in the end, because I cracked. I cracked. I broke down like...like some engine that was pushed too hard. I couldn't... I couldn't handle it. And I hated myself for that. I hated myself. I felt like I had let the world crumble in the palm of my hand.

The mood in the room dims. Everyone around them quiets. FRANCES starts to break.

What would my mom think? What would my dad think? I--I am the future, or at least I'm supposed to be, and what kind of future would I have now? I derailed my life badly enough that there was no way back on track.

SIERRA jolts away from the table like she's going to leave. Then another thought hits her.

Then I had to come back to this godforsaken suburban hellhole. A place where everything is so dizzyingly the same that I *actually* hated it more than Miami! This feels like I'm stuck in some dreadful limbo. A purgatory.

ROSEMARY looks as if she's about to reprimand her. SIERRA assumes it's because she's a priveleged suburbanite.

Before you say anything- I already

know: No, I'm not living in a war-torn country! Yes, I have access to clean water! No, I don't have to worry about sleeping in the damn streets at night! I get it! I'm NOT the most burdened person in the world. But pain? *Pain?* Pain is relative. You don't have to be suffering from terminal disease to know sadness. I'm from a middle class family in a well-off country where I got to get part of an education people would *kill* for. And I ruined it. It ruined me. And i'll admit: the situation is not ideal. Yes, I am banned from being a student at the University of Miami. Yes, I am delivering pizzas for minimum wage. Yes, I don't have a boyfriend and yes, I haven't quite worked out the plan for the rest of my life. I may not be happy per se. But. I am infinitely happy that I'm not doing it your way.

There's a brief silence in the room. All eyes have turned to SIERRA. She's fuming. As she turns to walk away, FRANCES tries to stop her again. ROSEMARY looks conciliatory.

FRANCES

Si--

ROSEMARY

Sierra-

SIERRA

No! You have made your life into a checklist Frances, a *literal checklist*. You think you've got everything figured out because you've got the quote unquote perfect job, living in the perfect city, marrying the perfect man? Check, check, check yourself Frances. You checked out of my life a long time ago. You- you assumed that everything was fine. When I was suffering at school, you were nowhere to be seen. You left and you left me. I'm really happy for you. I am. I only wish you could be happy for me. Cause I'm the one who needs it.

SIERRA gets up from the table and storms away. ROSEMARY and FRANCES are left stunned. They glance up from the table. Looking at FRANCES, ROSEMARY extends a hand of support, which is quickly brushed away. FRANCES raises her head and, voice trembling, wipes the tear away from her face.

FRANCES

I'd better go.

END SCENE.

SCENE 19: INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT.

Back in their hotel room, SIERRA stays quiet and buries her head in a pillow as ROSEMARY looks on. After a deep sigh, she moves over to speak to her daughter.

ROSEMARY

You know that what you did back there to your friend was more disappointing than anything you have ever done. Including school.

SIERRA remains silent. We see her stoic, tear-stained face.

I don't know what to do with you Sierra. You get yourself in these situations. You have ever since you were a little girl. You crack under pressure. You're so worried about doing something wrong and then it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy...

ROSEMARY looks at her for response.... only to feel like she's talking to herself.

I remember when you were just a little girl and you were supposed to pack your things to go on a trip to New Orleans. Your Dad was going to take you on that business trip with him and you kept telling yourself you wouldn't do it because you couldn't bring that damn horse. Remember that damn thing? When the day came and you - (*giggling through tears*) - you stuffed the horse in your shirt... (*laughs*) I guess you thought that would fly. You couldn't leave that damn horse. You screamed and screamed at your father and I... You were adamant that it was going or

you weren't. And you didn't. You set yourself up for failure. Your stubbornness hasn't done you any favors. *(pauses)* I'm not saying don't be stubborn. But, please, be stubborn about the right things.

SIERRA slowly raises her head.

SIERRA

I'm trying to sleep.

ROSEMARY

I'm trying to-

SIERRA rips the pillow off her face. She starts boiling again.

SIERRA

She lied to me mom. YOU lied to me!
This wasn't a girls night - IT WAS AN
AMBUSH.

ROSEMARY

You lied too! We wouldn't be here if
it weren't for that.

ROSEMARY starts to boil as well. They seem to be fueling each other as they get closer and louder with one another.

SIERRA

True! SO WHAT IS THE POINT? IF WE ALL
JUST ARE LYING TO EACH OTHER AND DOING
THINGS WE DON'T LIKE AND SPENDING TIME
WITH PEOPLE WE COULD CARE LESS ABOUT,
WHAT IS THE POINT OF BEING IN THIS
WORLD?

ROSEMARY

THAT IS SOMETHING YOU HAVE TO FIGURE
OUT YOURSELF, BUT JUST BECAUSE YOU
HAVEN'T FIGURED IT OUT DOESN'T MEAN
YOU HAVE TO BE A ROTTEN LITTLE BITCH.

SIERRA freezes. She and ROSEMARY are face to face. SIERRA screams at the top of her lungs.

SIERRA

I hope you know that when I leave the
house, I will NEVER COME BACK. YOU AND
DAD CAN ROT AND DIE.

SIERRA starts to cry. ROSEMARY immediately cools down and attempts to comfort her. They sit and hold each other.

ROSEMARY
(whispering)
My precious girl.

That night, SIERRA sleeps and has no visitors. JACQUELINE and ERIK sit by the lake, distraught over the absence of their friend.

The next morning they ride back home silently together. No words are exchanged. Once they return, they push FRED aside to retreat to their own zones. SIERRA blissfully buries her head in her pillow immediately. She doesn't sleep, but she stews in her bed while she gets angrier and angrier. ROSEMARY cries in Fred's arms.

FRED
That bad, huh?

ROSEMARY
(*through whimpers*)
I don't know where she is Fred... I don't know.

END SCENE.

SCENE 20: EXT. CAFE AND PARK - LATE AT NIGHT.

That night SIERRA runs outside looking for her friends, finding an eerily empty street. The magic that she once cherished about this place has seemed to fade. She runs around screaming for ERIK or JACQUELINE. Nothing. She gets on her bike and makes her way to the coffeeshop. Infallibly, AMY is there, sitting at the desk playing chess with herself. SIERRA rushes in drenched in sweat.

AMY
There you are!

SIERRA
I made a mistake. I'm so sorry. Where is everyone?

AMY
Jacqueline is really upset...

SIERRA
I know. I know. I- Aren't you working right now?

AMY looks around and references the empty cafe.

AMY

There's not a lot of business without you... (*thinking*) Erik's at the park, I think.

SIERRA rushes out of the cafe and begins to desperately bike towards the park. She pulls up towards ERIK who cautiously stands up to greet her.

SIERRA

Erik-- I-- (catching her breath)

ERIK

Sierra... I don't know what to say.

SIERRA

I'm so sorry.... I-- I can explain everything.

ERIK

I don't get it. I thought you were having fun.

SIERRA

I was. I... I was tricked. Honestly. My mom made me go to this intervention thing and I felt like an asshole and it was a huge mistake in the end. It just made me feel shitty overall. I... I can't believe I actually went. I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I can't express it enough.

ERIK sees her sincerity and begins to curb a little bit to her distressed state.

ERIK

Well it's not me you need to be apologizing to.

SIERRA

I know. I know. Jacqueline. I feel awful. Where is she?

ERIK

She wouldn't listen to me. She was acting like a maniac. I don't know exactly.

SIERRA
Have you checked her place?

ERIK
Yes.

SIERRA
I think I know where she might be.

She and ERIK take off to the trolley station. When they arrive, they see a completely stoic JACQUELINE sitting and staring forward blankly.

SIERRA
(distressed)
Jacqueline- Jacqueline-- I'm so sorry.
I can't imagine how hurt you are! I
know. I messed up. I messed up bad. I
messed up and now I'm paying for it.

JACQUELINE remains catatonic. SIERRA tears up.

Jacqueline, please! Talk to me. I'm so
sorry! I know you care about me. *They
př d o n t c a r æ t ' s a y b u o O n l y m e .*
you care about me. I'm sorry.

SIERRA continues to bawl in an appeal to JACQUELINE, who slowly shifts her stoic expression to face her friend. ERIK walks over to makes his own appeal.

ERIK
Hey...J...C'mon. She's obviously
really--

JACQUELINE makes dagger eyes at ERIK and then slowly stands up. Composing herself, she turns to face SIERRA.

JACQUELINE
Why did you leave me?

SIERRA
I'm so sorry! I didn't mean to!
Honestly! I didn't.

JACQUELINE
You left me when I needed you most. I
spent every night with you.

ERIK
(sympathetic to Sierra)
Jackie- come on-

JACQUELINE

You lied to *Erik and I*.

SIERRA

I had no choice! My mom drug me. She literally pulled me away. I couldn't do anything.

JACQUELINE

Of course you're going to blame it on your mother.

SIERRA continues crying. JACQUELINE notices the look ERIK's giving her, saying ' *S t o p . N o w .*

ERIK

Jacqueline...

JACQUELINE

You want forgiveness?

SIERRA

Yes! Yes! What do I have to do? You're my friends - I don't want to lose you.

JACQUELINE

I want you to promise me that you'll never leave me again.

SIERRA

(calming down)

I promise! I promise!

JACQUELINE

(still tense)

Good. Well then....Good to have you back!

She smiles and gives SIERRA a reassuring hug. ERIK looks onward a bit skeptically.

Let's go see Amy and get some hot cocoa. And then let's sit by the river in our spot. Sound good, huh?

SIERRA nods bashfully. She starts to smile through her tears. She, ERIK, and JACQUELINE make their way over to the coffee shop as the girls walk with their arms around each others waists, leaning their heads on one another.

FADE TO BLACK. END SCENE.

SCENE 21: INT. FRED AND ROSEMARY'S BEDROOM - NEARLY MIDNIGHT.

Back in the house, it's late at night and ROSEMARY can't sleep. She turns to FRED, who's whimpering and cringing quietly. She notices pain relief patches on his back and she sighs deeply.

ROSEMARY

Turn around. Lie on your stomach.

FRED lies on his stomach. She begins to peel away the pain relief patches and gently massages him with her fingers.

Does that feel better?

FRED

Not really... but don't stop. Please.

She smiles, kisses him on the cheek and continues massaging him.

I'm sorry for waking you.

ROSEMARY

You didn't. I haven't been able to sleep. Not a wink last night and it looks the same tonight (*she sighs*). I really screwed up Fred.

FRED

(grumbling, tired voice)
No you didn't.

ROSEMARY

She's- she was so...angry at me. Angry at the world. Why? What was it all for? All those years of school we helped pay for. She learned nothing.

FRED

I love you darling. But, that's just not true.

ROSEMARY

(stops massaging)
Oh Fred. You always defend her...

FRED starts to come to attention. He senses her irritation.

FRED

I know what you're thinking. But take

money out of the equation. She may have not gone to college knowing what she wanted to do, but she kind of knows now. And she only knows that ~~because~~ she found things s h e
want to do.

ROSEMARY

We could have sent her to culinary school or community college--

FRED

It wasn't about her learning. That's unfortunate, I'll admit. Most parents want their kids to use the University like it's the special opportunity it is. But that doesn't mean it didn't do anything. We learned. College helped us. Even if it was a failure and a complete disaster by outsider accounts, Sierra's college experience revealed to us a part of Sierra's life we've been ignoring. I don't endorse dropping out. But there was a reason behind it and I don't know that she bares the entirety of the blame. I mean, honey, she's got parts of us in her. We raised her, brought her up. We're her parents. It's part of our job to try to understand our kid. I don't know. I just think we could've done better... for our part.

ROSEMARY

(agreeing) We could have prevented this.

FRED

I don't know that we had to.

ROSEMARY sits quietly and digests FRED'S words. She stews for a moment, looks at him and sighs. The room is static except for a white noise machine in the corner.

FRED

We have no control over what happened in the past. But we should try to take control of as much of the future - our future *(coughs)* as we can.

ROSEMARY

(smiling big and teary-eyed) What am I going to do without you?

FRED

(smiling back) I could say *(wheeze)* the same of you.

ROSEMARY gets up from her bed and knocks on SIERRA'S door. Silence. She thinks about turning away, but doesn't. She thinks about opening the door, but stops just before. With her cheek pressed against the door and her eyes closed, she whispers ' ~~to~~ SIERRA before heading back to bed.

END SCENE.

SCENE 22: EXT. LAKESIDE - AFTER MIDNIGHT.

By the lakeside, SIERRA, JACQUELINE and ERIK drink and play games. They're in the middle of a dice game. They laugh and laugh and laugh as they drink wine by the lakeshore. The light changes to a strange dusky hue that's never been seen before and SIERRA lets out a big sigh of relief in complete awe over the beauty she's witnessing. She feels affirmed in her decision. They then roll around with each other, like playful children tumbling over one another in the grass until they get tired. They lie on one another as they stare up at the cotton candy clouds and smile.

SIERRA

Guys?

ERIK

Yeah?

SIERRA

Promise me it will always be like this.

JACQUELINE

It can... and it will. It will always be like this.

SIERRA exhales emphatically, but moments later a look of concern flushes across her face. It's as if the monotony of every single day following the same pattern is more frightening than she imagined. They get up and return to their lakeside setup. Sipping wine and staring at the moon, the three laugh and listen to music on an old record JACQUELINE has bought.

JACQUELINE

You make everything...*better* here. You give it life.

SIERRA

I feel the same about you. Whenever I come here. I can just disappear. You and Erik. Everything you have here is so...special. Even though I know all these streets and these houses and these parks, none of them - nothing is quite the same without you.

JACQUELINE leans over and hugs her. She's quite forceful.

JACQUELINE

I'm happy you've decided to stay.

ERIK stares out at the lake as the fireflies buzz on the small island in the distance. Hands in his pockets, he lets out a deep sigh before he grabs his messenger bag and starts to leave the girls. Before he can make his quiet exit, SIERRA notices.

SIERRA

Erik, where are you going?

ERIK

I'm going to the cafe. To finish my book. Finally.

ERIK smiles at her. He walks down the hill. Out of sight, he can be heard.

Come join if you want!

SIERRA sits up and turns to JACQUELINE.

SIERRA

You ready?

JACQUELINE

Uh, I think I'd rather relax here more. Don't you?

SIERRA

But I've been - we've been relaxing for hours. It feels like we've been out here an eternity. Hey! I know! Why don't we go downtown? You and I?

JACQUELINE seems unresponsive.

JACQUELINE

I don't know. It's so far. Maybe later. Have fun.

SIERRA starts to become a little irked. She looks around and notices the glow from the island. Before leaving, she stops.

SIERRA

Hey. Did you ever make that boat?

JACQUELINE

Which boat?

SIERRA

The one that would take us to the island? With the fireflies?

JACQUELINE

Yeah, yeah. It's, uh, almost finished. You know what? Let's get coffee after all.

SIERRA

Why didn't you finish it?

JACQUELINE

Can you just enjoy the moment and get off my ass? Damn. It's *right now*. *Be here*.

SIERRA stares at her with growing contempt. The clouds grow dark and menacing.

END SCENE.

SCENE 23: INT. HALLWAY OF BEDROOMS - EVENING.

Outside SIERRA'S room, ROSEMARY paces nervously. She looks over at FRED, who checks his watch. It's almost 5:00pm. She looks at him for affirmation.

FRED

You can tell her I told you to.

ROSEMARY

If only that worked for everything.

ROSEMARY busts open her daughters door. Left with a great sense of anticipation, the parents are in horror when they

find SIERRA hidden under a pile of blankets. ROSEMARY speaks up.

Sierra, you have slept long enough.
We're worried about you. Please.

FRED
Honey, listen to your mother. She
listened to me.

ROSEMARY casts a glare in his direction. She starts to peel the blankets off SIERRA.

*I mean, she did her own thing. But I
bÿ m a d e h e r I s u g g e s t e d s h e d o
bÿ t h i n g - I - s u g g e s t e d s h e*

ROSEMARY starts to shake SIERRA more and more vigorously. She doesn't respond.

ROSEMARY
(panicked)
Fred? Fred? She's not moving. Sierra's
not moving. Our daughter isn't moving.

FRED
What? *(he grabs her too)* Sierra. Come
on sweetheart. Is she breathing?

ROSEMARY
Yes. She still isn't moving and she
won't get up.

FRED
SIERRA! SIERRA! Ouch!

FRED'S back collapses and he falls to the floor. ROSEMARY looks in horror at the scene around her and she begins to cry. She looks at her husband.

FRED
(wheezing)
I'm okay. Call an ambulance - for her!

ROSEMARY rips her cellphone out of her pocket and the trio are quickly whisked away to the hospital. END SCENE.

SCENE 24: EXT. LAKE - VERY LATE EVENING, ALMOST DUSK-LIKE.

With the scene (and the light) turning darker by the minute, SIERRA and JACQUELINE continue their argument. SIERRA starts

to really evaluate her friend's character.

SIERRA

Are you ever going to build a boat?
Are you ever going to *do anything*? I
just thought you *cared* about this.
More than superficially.

JACQUELINE

Superficially? You don't know anything
about me before you met me- besides,
we've had *so much fun together*.

SIERRA

Outside of that. Outside of fun.

JACQUELINE

What is there outside of fun? And
what's the point? I have to hear about
your life day in and day out and I sit
AND LISTEN to every petty detail.
Nothing about your life sounds fun.
You don't really enjoy any of it. Why
are you asking me to feel that pain?
You want me to build a boat? For what?
Aren't we happy *now*? You build it if
you're so eager.

SIERRA

It takes *effort*. It takes effort to do
something right. And that sucks, sure.
But usually it has some payoff.

The girls become very tense with one another. The wind starts
to pick up. Elsewhere, ERIK feels something in his heart
which disturbs him and shares a concerned look with AMY.

ERIK

I might take this to-go, actually.

QUICK CUT BETWEEN SCENES. END SCENE.

SCENE 25: INT. HOSPITAL LOBBY - NIGHT.

At the hospital, FRED and ROSEMARY wait patiently in the
lobby. A few moments later, a DOCTOR approaches them from
down the hall.

ROSEMARY

Oh my god Doctor! Is she okay?

DOCTOR

Well folks, I hate this part of the job. Fred, I think it's best if you sit down for a moment. (he obliges) Your daughter has entered a coma.

FRED

How long will she be here?

DOCTOR

Well that's the thing. Her situation is deteriorating. Rapidly.

They both look horrified.

At this rate, she may not make it through the night.

ZOOM IN FOR REACTION SHOT. HARD CUT. END SCENE.

SCENE 26: EXT. LAKE - LATE NIGHT OR EARLY MORNING

Rain begins to fall at the lakeside. It's almost unnoticeable at first. SIERRA and JACQUELINE circle one another like wolves.

JACQUELINE

You couldn't make it through school because you weren't good enough. *Remember that?* Well guess who does think you're good enough? Us.

SIERRA

That's not fair. You know that's not fair.

JACQUELINE

Who was there for you when you had to get that shitty job? Who was there for you when your family was riding your ass about being a loser? We were. Always. And we had a fun thing going! But that wasn't enough for you, was it?

Rain starts to pour harder. ERIK starts to run up the hill. SIERRA starts to walk past JACQUELINE.

JACQUELINE

Where are you going?

SIERRA

I'm leaving this place. Why would I stay here after all this?

JACQUELINE

(peevd)

Yeah, just walk away from your problems like you always have...

SIERRA stops in her tracks. She turns around and punches JACQUELINE in the chest.

SIERRA

ME? I'M RUNNING AWAY FROM MY PROBLEMS? SAYS YOU? You- you couldn't even finish one simple thing.

JACQUELINE

Oh and you can? You're so lost you don't even know who you are anymore.

SIERRA

I know what I like! I'm going to at least give this bakery thing a shot!

JACQUELINE

OH THIS AGAIN? I'm glad you found something to tell your family while you piss your life away.

They push each other and get into a little fight on the shore.

Elsewhere, in her hospital room, her parents look completely sullen. Her dad, who's pushed in by the DOCTOR, is now sitting in a wheelchair. They stare in silence and hold hands. ROSEMARY'S hand quivers.

END SCENE

SCENE 27: INT. JILL'S HOUSE - NIGHT.

JILL, donned in a full witch costume pulls away from her group of friends.

DANIELLE

Come on Jill! It's your turn for the sorting hat!

JILL checks her phone.

JILL
H-hold on guys. Hmmmmm...*ShehcallslSi*
errara) Weird.

DANIELLE
What is it?

JILL
I'm expecting someone who...has yet to
be seen. Hopefully just wearing the
invisibility cloak.

DANIELLE
Maybe she bailed?

JILL rejoins her friends in the festivities.

JILL
Maybe.

JILL gets lost in her head with the possibilities of Sierra's
whereabouts. She tries to stay involved with the others, but
can't escape her head.

END SCENE.

SCENE 28: EXT. LAKE - LATE NIGHT OR EARLY DUSK.

SIERRA and JACQUELINE are still caught up in an intense
physical debacle. They finally break from one another with
bruises and fistfuls of each others' hair. The rain is pretty
intense now. Exhausted, SIERRA tries to talk to her through
breaths. SIERRA notices the glow of the firefly island
through the dreary weather.

JACQUELINE
YOU STILL WANT TO GO TO GTHAT DAMN
ISLAND? You know what's there? Trees
and fireflies. We can see that from
here! (*grabs her half-finished*
project) Here's your damn boat.

She throws it at SIERRA.

SIERRA
You-- you gave up.

JACQUELINE
I'm not a ship-builder.

SIERRA

No... no you're not. Not with that mentality.

ERIK, spotting them from afar, tries to yell out. As he runs, he falls in the slippery patches of grass. JACQUELINE starts to step backwards into the lake. SIERRA gets nervous.

What are you doing?

JACQUELINE

If you want to get to the island so bad, let's go. Right now. Come on.

JACQUELINE walks into the water and starts swimming. SIERRA looks panicked. She sees JACQUELINE start to struggle.

END SCENE.

SCENE 29: EXT. VERMILLION ST. - NIGHT.

JILL walks up to SIERRA'S door, checking her phone for reference. It's fairly late to be wandering a neighborhood and their neighbor notices. He seems scared and so she calls out to him.

JILL

Excuse me.

JOHN

Yes?

JILL

Is this Vermillion street?

JOHN

That's the street at the end of the block. This is Vermillion Way.

JILL

That's what I meant!(pause) All these houses look the same... Like...all of them.

JOHN

...Can I help you with something?

JILL

I'm looking for number 19?

JOHN

My neighbors. Right there.

He begins to head inside and he sees her head to the door.

Oh but I don't think anyone is home
right now.

JILL

Huh?

JOHN

Yeah. The young lady there, the
daughter had some kind of medical
emergency or something. Ambulance came
through here a few hours ago...

JILL

Holy shit-what? WOAH! Where's the
nearest hospital?

Back at the hospital, FRED rocks back and forth in his
wheelchair and his eyes begin to droop. ROSEMARY nervously
chomps at her nails. A nurse comes in to check on them.

NURSE

How are y'all doing?

FRED

(jolting awake)
How is she?!

ROSEMARY

Oh Fred... You look exhausted.

FRED

I'm FINE. I'm FINE! I just... need
some fresh air.

NURSE

I can wheel you outside if you want.
I'll bring you back in if anything
changes.

FRED sighs, but ROSEMARY gives the NURSE an affirming nod as
she wheels FRED out of the room. ROSEMARY takes a moment to
approach her daughter. Kneeling by her bedside, ROSEMARY
brushes SIERRA'S hair out of her face. They share a tender
quiet moment before ROSEMARY kisses her on the forehead.

ROSEMARY

You're gonna be ok kid. You'll figure it out.

HARD CUT. END SCENE.

SCENE 30: EXT. LAKE - WEE SMALL HOURS OF THE MORNING.

SIERRA paddles across the lake in the torrential downpour, her movement restricted by her wet clothes. JACQUELINE keeps bobbing in and out of sight and SIERRA uses every bit of energy and might she has to keep her eyes on her. But it's dark. The light rainstorm has turned into a torrential downpour. The lake rages with uncontrollable (and unexplainable) waves. Only the faint light of the moon and a small green glow from firefly island gives the scene any luminance. Between swimming strokes in which she continues to mistakenly swallow water, SIERRA calls out JACQUELINE'S name. She's desperate and scared. JACQUELINE on the other hand looks hungry and confident. She constantly looks over her shoulder anticipating SIERRA'S desperation and smirks and she pushes ahead. She takes a deep breath.

ERIK finally reaches the shore, but can barely make out what is unfolding in front of him. Between the rain, wind, raging waves, and thunder, he can barely see three feet in front of his face. He runs back and forth across the beach. He checks their spot with one hand acting as a visor, protecting him from the onslaught of rain. Eventually he hears muffled wails in the distance: "*Jacqueline! Jacqueline!*" He points his attention toward the lake. The faint glow of firefly island has grown. He can barely make out two flailing figures in the lake. He panics. Looking around him, he quickly realizes that it's foolish for them to all go in there without anything to buoy them. He tries shouting: "*Sierra! Sierra! Jacqueline! What are you doing? What are you doing to yourself?*" The vocal attempts continue with no luck. He looks around and notices JACQUELINE'S half-finished boat dish.

SIERRA begins to tire. Her muscles are exhausted and the rain continues to make her task more difficult. She takes a moment to pause and try and take a breath. Even keeping her head above water is an arduous task. She wades above the surface looking around for JACQUELINE. She notices the glow of firefly island has become quite bright. She calls out: "*Jacqueline!!!! Jacqueline!!!!*" She sees nothing. Her breaths are heavy and she continuously has to work to keep herself up. Focusing on firefly island, a mere pool-and-a-half's

length away, she begins to doggie paddle. *'Jacqueline must be ashore'*. As she gets about halfway there, a hand grabs her from underneath the surface. She goes under. She fights to stay up, but can't. She looks under the surface and sees JACQUELINE underneath her, seemingly stuck to the lake floor like an anchor. With an eerily stoic expression, she yanks SIERRA down again.

JACQUELINE
(through water)
bÿ Y o u r e g o . i n g t o s t a y

HARD CUT TO HOSPITAL.

At the hospital, SIERRA'S vitals start to go berserk. The monitors start blaring and ROSEMARY panics. She calls for the doctor. In the lobby, JILL runs in soaking wet. She runs to the counter, also short on breath.

JILL
 I need to know where your patient, my friend Sierra-- *(catching her breath)*

HOSPITAL ATTENDANT
 I'm sorry. *Who are you looking for?*
Are you family?

FRED ears perk up at his daughters name.

FRED
 Sierra? What's happening? Who are you?

JILL
(approaching him)

I'm Jill. Her friend from work. Is she okay? I'm worried--

FRED
 Hi worried! *(he waits in anticipation)*

JILL
 Are you her dad?

FRED
 I'm half her reason for existing. *(he smiles)* And she's probably half of mine.

JILL
 HOW IS SHE?

JACQUELINE'S creepy grin grows wide. SIERRA closes her eyes.

In the hospital, JILL pushes her way into SIERRA'S view and cries out.

JILL
SIERRA! YOU ARE NOT ALONE!

At the lake floor, SIERRA hears this. Her eyes open. She looks up and sees the green glow from above ripple as a hand reaches down. She bites JACQUELINE'S hand and with all her strength kicks her way up, pushing Jacqueline down with her foot. JACQUELINE is lost in an undersea dust cloud. She reaches blindly for the hand, which pulls her up. When she emerges, she finds ERIK, her momentary savior, on the half-built boat JACQUELINE made. SIERRA can barely move, so ERIK brings them to shore.

After a brief moment, she catches her breath. Sound resumes. In the hospital, she gasps. Everyone celebrates. ROSEMARY and FRED hug. They then hug JILL. Medical staff celebrates and non-essentials begin to exit the room. On the firefly island, the rain stays strong. But as she rises to her feet, ERIK and her hug intensely. The wind is strong. He tries to look her in the eyes, his hair blowing all over his face.

ERIK
(through harsh winds)
I don't know if I'll ever be able to finish writing my book now...But I know that one day, I'll at least get to go inside your cafe. (she smiles)
Maybe I'll finish my book there.

SIERRA smiles and he gives her a kiss on the forehead. The glow from the center of the island intensifies and captures her attention. He pushes her towards it.

ERIK
Go on.

She smiles back at him and - weak, soaked, short on breath, worn out - she makes a slow walk to the center of the small island where fireflies surround her. As she approaches the tall trees, the rain begins to quiet and the fireflies shine even brighter.

In the hospital, all is quiet. SIERRA is stable. FRED and JILL snooze away. The DOCTOR comes in and ROSEMARY and him exchange affirming glances.

DOCTOR

She's shown signs of consciousness.
She should be okay now. You can rest.

ROSEMARY

Thank you.

HARD CUT. END SCENE.

SCENE 31: EXT. THE FIREFLY ISLAND - DAWN.

As SIERRA ventures deeper and deeper into the forest, she starts to regain life. The punishing rain slowly turns to a soft mist. The fireflies surround her and begin to restore her to her former self. Her skin dries and regains color. Her hair dries and regains volume. A clear cut path through the center of the forest leads the way as she follows the firefly light as it grows brighter and brighter. As she comes to a more open area in the center of the island, she is in complete awe at it's size.

The fireflies illuminate the field perfectly and the dark skies begin to turn a light shade of pink. Across the field, she sees a figure. She can't quite make it out, so she goes to investigate. Jogging through the fields, she feels an overwhelming sense of calm. The figure beckons her as she gets closer. She can see it's a WOMAN. The WOMAN gestures her to follow as she runs to the top of a steep hill. SIERRA lightly runs after her, smiling. As she gets closer, she starts to notice the WOMAN looks a lot like her, but older. She tries to meet up with her, but as she starts to get within ten yards or so, she sees the woman materialize before here eyes into a million little fireflies. She reaches the top of the hill and catches her breath. She screams of joy into the clear magenta sky as she watches the fireflies flock toward the last cloud covering the horizon.

Moments later, the piercing sun begins to break through the cloud. The sunrise brightens her spirits and she breaks into a giant smile. After one sigh of relief, the sunrise blinds her and she is transported.

FADE OUT. END SCENE.

SCENE 32: INT. HOSPITAL - DAWN.

In the hospital, SIERRA cracks open an eye and lets out a loud groan. The DOCTOR notices her and pats her on the shoulder with a smile.

DOCTOR
Welcome back.

ROSEMARY and FRED jump to their feet to greet their daughter.
FRED kicks his wheelchair down. They fawn over her return.
She's a bit disoriented.

SIERRA
Where am I?

FRED
Home.

SIERRA
I'm so sorry Mom.

ROSEMARY
It's okay dear.

JILL, awkwardly trying to navigate the situation, makes her presence known.

SIERRA
Jill!

JILL
You know if you didn't want to come to my Harry Potter party, you didn't need to have a life-threatening emergency. Ya could've told me.

SIERRA
You came!

JILL
It was easy - I never left (referencing hospital) . (SIERRA cries tears of happiness) Besides... did you think I was going to risk covering your shifts?

They smile and hug.

SIERRA
Thank you.

SLOW FADE TO BLACK. LONG PAUSE. END SCENE.

SCENE 33: EXT. DOWNTOWN CAFE - SATURDAY AFTERNOON.

An undisclosed amount of time later, SIERRA and JILL sit in a

cafe downtown and sip drinks while catching up.

SIERRA

....so once I get my credit straight I can apply for a loan!

JILL

And we'll have to find two units side by side so that people can come for the comic books, stay for the coffee.

SIERRA

Don't you mean: *come for the coffee, stay for the comic books?*

JILL

There's that boomerang wit of yours!

SIERRA gets up and gathers her things.

SIERRA

Alright, well I should head home. I told my Dad we would cook dinner *together* tonight. See you at work? No-- Class. Work is Tuesday. I forgot we have "Business Principles and the Economy" with cute glasses guy professor tomorrow!

JILL

(clicks her tongue like "got it!")
I almost thought you'd forget. You can't forget cute glasses guy! You okay getting home?

SIERRA looks confused.

No detours through the hospital or anything. Cause I found ya once and believe me, I'll find you again.

SIERRA smiles and comes to give JILL a big hug before she leaves.

SIERRA

No. I'm good... (*pause*) now. Thank you.

SIERRA starts to walk away.

JILL

Hey Si! (She looks back) Always.

SIERRA smiles and continues to walk out.

Hey, you're still coming over on
Thursday, yeah?

SIERRA pauses to think. She smiles.

SIERRA

Ummm... Not sure yet. We'll see how I
feel.

She smiles in a playfully snarky manner as she exits the
shop. JILL calls after her.

JILL

Sleep on it!

JILL plugs back in her earphones and smiles as she watches
SIERRA leave. She pulls out a large textbook off of a small
pile of books. At the very bottom is a book called "*The
Oenerist*" by Erik A-- and the rest is unintelligible.

CUT TO BLACK.

"Yellow Vision" by Jachary plays through the End Credits.

FIN.