

Promising Young Woman

Written and Directed by

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INT. SWEET SIXTEEN'S DANCEFLOOR - NIGHT

A super-depressing dancefloor on a Thursday night. 2-For-1 shots and a sticky floor. The kind of last-resort place people end up after work having accidentally nailed ten "just one" drinks.

A bored DJ plays the DROELOE remix of "Boys" by Charlie XCX, while the thin and kind of tragic crowd dances.

We linger on the men dancing in particular, their bodies, the sweat running down their backs as they grind and thrust. The slow-mo, the lascivious pan-up, the sort of erotic gaze normally reserved for oiled-up music-video hotties. Except we're looking at regular dudes in chinos with absolutely no dancing ability.

INT. SWEET SIXTEEN'S UPSTAIRS BAR - NIGHT

By the bar, is a group of guys still in their work suits, ties loosened. They're mostly good-looking, in their early-thirties, bantering and eyeing up the diminishing talent pool. Among them are JEZ, a shy, sweet guy who is clearly dying to leave, and PAUL, a sweaty Alpha-bro whose super-fragile masculinity is always one rejection away from shattering to pieces.

PAUL

Fuck her, man. It's how things are done. It's just a fucking round of golf! You'd think we were taking clients to a strip club or something-

JIM

-which we can't anymore-

PAUL

-Exactly we can't even do that anymore because of last year's Christmas party.

JEZ

I think it's because the golf club doesn't let women play there.

The guys stare at JEZ.

PAUL

So?

JEZ

So...it means we're having client meetings without her.

PAUL

Look she should focus on closing her own shit. Not whining because we're all doing better than her.

Something catches PAUL'S eye.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Jesus.

The guys follow his gaze. Across the club, sprawled on a damp leather sofa is CASSANDRA, late-20s. She is hammered, her hair plastered to her face, mascara under her glazed eyes, the skirt of her pinstriped work suit riding up.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Look at that. God almighty. Get some dignity, sweetheart.

The guys all laugh, except JEZ.

PAUL (CONT'D)

You know. They put *themselves* in danger, girls like that. If she's not careful someone's going to take advantage and then she'll be the one in tears tomorrow morning.

JIM

She's kinda hot.

PAUL

She's a hot fucking mess.

CASSANDRA moves on the sofa, we see her underwear.

PAUL (CONT'D)

I mean look at that.

PAUL sneers. They all look. We feel that slow, animal shift in the group, from disgust to desire, to a heady sense of opportunity.

JEZ

(trying to divert attention)

Hey guys, I was thinking maybe we should talk to Brian again. I think he might be coming round to-

The guys aren't listening. They are all mesmerized by CASSANDRA and the possibility she represents.

PAUL
I'm sorry that is *asking* for it.
You'd think you'd know better by her
age, wouldn't you? Where are her
friends? Fucked off somewhere and
left her lying around for anyone to
pick up.

JIM
Sounds like a challenge, Paul.

PAUL eyes her up, thinking.

PAUL
Yeah. Maybe.

JEZ intervenes.

JEZ
I'll go over.

The guys whoop.

PAUL
Ooooooh!

JIM
Didn't know you had it in you!

JEZ
To see if she's ok.

PAUL
Sure, sure. Mmmm-hmmm. Absolutely.

PAUL winks.

INT. SWEET SIXTEEN'S UPSTAIRS BAR - MOMENTS LATER

CASSANDRA is haphazardly looking through her purse. JEZ approaches.

JEZ
You ok? What are you looking for?

CASSANDRA looks up woosily.

CASSANDRA
Phone.

JEZ sits down next to her. CASSANDRA continues to look.

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)
S'not here.

She starts to look around the couch, he helps.

JEZ
Could you have left in...in the
bathroom maybe?

CASSANDRA
I...maybe...

JEZ
I'll go look.

CASSANDRA watches him go. So do his friends, who are watching them both with great interest. CASSANDRA looks back at them warily.

INT. SWEET SIXTEEN'S UPSTAIRS BAR - LATER

JEZ returns. No phone.

JEZ
No phone in there. I'm sorry. Are
you going to be ok?

CASSANDRA
Oh yeah.

She gives him a thumbs up.

JEZ
How are you going to get home?

CASSANDRA
The ryde app.

JEZ
I think you need a phone for that.

CASSANDRA
...Oh...

JEZ looks nervously over at his friends. He makes a decision.

JEZ
Look, I'm going home now anyway. I
can drop you somewhere?

CASSANDRA
No...

JEZ
Honestly. It's fine.

CASSANDRA looks up at him gratefully. He gives her his hands and hoists her up.

JEZ (CONT'D)
There we are.

She falls onto him, leaning on him as they walk out. He looks back at his friends who are all laughing and miming jerking off and thrusting. JEZ rolls his eyes at them.

INT. SWEET SIXTEEN'S STAIRWELL - NIGHT

JEZ helps CASSANDRA down the stairs.

INT. PICKUP - LATER

The Pickup driver, MONTY, glances at CASSANDRA in the mirror. The window is down and the wind is in her face, she's desperately trying to sober up.

MONTY
(suspicious)
I just got my car cleaned.

JEZ
She's fine.

CASSANDRA
I'm not going to throw up...I don't think...

JEZ
There you are, sir, she's not going to throw up.

CASSANDRA gives herself a little 'Whoo!'.

JEZ laughs. She looks over and smiles hazily. Is there...a spark here? She is really pretty. And she seems cool, from the five words she's said...

JEZ (CONT'D)
Hey, you know, my apartment is only a few blocks away. You wanna...um...maybe have a drink before hitting the hay?

CASSANDRA
Um...

JEZ

I mean, it's literally just here.
One beer?

CASSANDRA

Um...

JEZ

(to the driver)

Hey, could we go to 242 Raleigh Drive instead? It's a couple of blocks.

MONTY looks at JEZ, then over at CASSANDRA in the mirror. She is obviously very drunk.

MONTY

Put the address in the app.

INT. JEZ'S APARTMENT - LATER

A small, messy apartment, gaming cords tangled on the floor, dishes stacked up. JEZ comes in and turns the lights on, picking up a few things from the floor and throwing them on a chair. We've seen this move in many a bro movie: this could be the start of any dude-skewed romance.

JEZ

Sorry...it's a mess. Embarrassing. I wasn't expecting...

CASSANDRA ignores this, and slumps down on the couch.

JEZ (CONT'D)

What can I get for ya, milady?

He rummages through the cupboards.

JEZ (CONT'D)

We have beer...vodka...and...

He takes out a disgusting looking bottle of orange liqueur.

JEZ (CONT'D)

And a kumquat liqueur my parents brought back from Greece.

CASSANDRA

Kumquat...?

This is a question. Not a request.

JEZ

Kumquat it is!

He pours it. CASSANDRA looks around his apartment.

CASSANDRA
D'you...live alone here?

JEZ
No. But don't worry. My roommate's
out of town.

CASSANDRA looks a little concerned by this- JEZ doesn't notice.

JEZ sits down next to her and hands her the bright orange drink. He's poured her significantly more than he has himself. CASSANDRA drinks it. She chokes on it a little.

CASSANDRA
Ugh. That's disgusting.

JEZ looks at her, he gently wipes the mascara from under her eyes.

JEZ
You're so beautiful.

CASSANDRA
Thanks.

CASSANDRA isn't seeing straight. JEZ leans in to kiss her. She does not respond, but she does not push him away. The kiss is entirely one-sided, but JEZ doesn't notice.

He pulls away, looks down at her lovingly. Overwhelmed by the moment.

JEZ
Wow.

CASSANDRA looks on the verge of vomiting.

CASSANDRA
I don't feel good. I need to lie
down.

JEZ
Oh...yeah of course!

INT. JEZ'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

JEZ's leads her to his bed and she falls down onto it. He looks down on her. A beat. Then he gets on the bed beside her. Trailing his fingers up and down her stomach. She closes her eyes.

JEZ
Hey, hey. Don't go to sleep.

She opens her eyes a crack. He starts to kiss her, up and down her neck.

JEZ (CONT'D)
God, you are so pretty.

He kisses her. She doesn't respond. He starts unbuttoning her dress. He kisses her body gently.

CASSANDRA
What...

JEZ
Shhh...

He continues to unbutton her, pulling down her bra. CASSANDRA starts to get a little concerned.

CASSANDRA
Wait...

JEZ
Don't worry, hey, it's ok, you're ok. You're safe.

He really believes that she is.

CASSANDRA
What...

JEZ
God, your body.

CASSANDRA
What are you...

JEZ begins to gently pull her underwear down her legs.

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)
(confused, super drunk)
What are you doing?

Her underwear is around her knees, JEZ is staring between her legs.

CASSANDRA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Hey. HEY!

JEZ looks up. CASSANDRA is sitting, looking directly at him.

She is stone, cold sober.

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)

I said: what are you doing?

JEZ looks back at her, his hands still holding her underwear, terrified.

CUT TO BLACK. "Lovesick" by Lindstrom and Christabelle brings up the titles.

PROMISING YOUNG WOMAN.

EXT. STREET - DAWN

The music continues on bare feet walking down a disgusting sidewalk- unidentified puddles and cigarette butts. A spatter of what looks like blood hits the paving stones. As we pull out we reveal CASSANDRA, in last night's clothes, high heels in one hand, "blood" running down one elbow. It is only when we see her fully we see she is eating a breakfast hotdog.

She looks completely remorseless, calm and, honestly, pretty cool. Whatever the hell she's done, it's made her feel great.

She walks past the CONSTRUCTION WORKERS who are working the street. Someone calls out "WALK OF SHAME".

CASSANDRA stops. She stares over at the sniggering construction guys. They're suddenly a little embarrassed.

She just keeps staring silently for a long while. Until, a little spooked, they move on.

She carries on walking. Satisfied.

INT. CASSANDRA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

Later that morning. Silence. An ordinary, middle-class kitchen. Too-runny eggs and the hostile sound of squeaking cutlery on the plates. CASSANDRA has cleaned up and is poking food around her plate. It's like last night never happened.

Her father, STANLEY, kind and rumped, sits opposite her, reading the paper. Her mother, SUSAN, a woman whose exhaustion and anxiety is horribly palpable, brings over some coffee.

STANLEY

Didn't hear you come in last night.

CASSANDRA continues to eat her eggs.

STANLEY (CONT'D)
Everything alright?

CASSANDRA
I had to work late.

Neither of her parents are buying this, but neither can bring themselves to call it out.

STANLEY
The coffee shop closes at nine.

Beat.

CASSANDRA
We had to do inventory.

SUSAN comes to sit down. There's more tense silence as they all eat.

SUSAN
You have to do a lot of inventory at that place. You should speak to the manager.

CASSANDRA
I will.

INT. MAKE ME COFFEE SHOP - LATER

CASSANDRA sits behind the cashier's desk of a multi-colored, hipster coffee shop. She stares at the wall.

Her boss, GAIL, 40s, wonderful, is cleaning the coffee machine.

GAIL
You look tired, Cassie.

CASSANDRA
Aw. Thank you, Gail!

GAIL
Want a coffee? Head office sent over this new blend from Zanzibar to try. It's disgusting but *really* strong.

CASSANDRA
Sold.

GAIL starts to make it for her.

GAIL
You know, I was actually talking to Graham earlier. He says there's a position opening up over there.
(MORE)

GAIL (CONT'D)

And- don't freak out- I want you to know I recommended you for it.

A pretty hipster girl, RUBY, comes into the shop. She waits patiently at the register, CASSANDRA makes no attempt to serve her.

CASSANDRA

(to GAIL)

Why did you do that?

GAIL

Because you've worked here for three years, this is a summer job for a stoned teenager, it's not a career move. I'm pushing you out of the nest, honey. You're stinking up the place with your sad little face.

RUBY tries to interject but fails.

CASSANDRA

But I like it here!

GAIL

No you don't.

CASSANDRA

Well, no, I don't. But I like you. And I like...

She gestures to RUBY.

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)

Working in a customer-facing role.

RUBY

Great, could I have an oat milk, single-shot latte-

CASSANDRA

No.

RUBY storms out.

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)

See?

GAIL

Cassie.

CASSANDRA

Don't 'Cassie' me. I'm fine, Gail. Really.

GAIL looks at her, concerned.

GAIL

Johnny said he saw you at Fallout last week. Said you were completely hammered. On your own. He was worried. Look, it's none of my business but-

CASSANDRA

He must have seen someone else. I've never been there.

GAIL doesn't buy this for a second. She studies CASSIE. But she lets it go.

GAIL

Ok.

CASSIE ignores her.

INT. MAKE ME COFFEE SHOP - LATER

Bored, CASSIE is cleaning a table at the back of the coffee shop. Two OLDER GUYS are sitting at a table, talking, colleagues having a coffee after work, nicely dressed- clean shaven. Respectable.

A young teenage girl, GABBY, maybe 13 or 14, walks in and starts looking at the pastries on the shelf. The OLDER GUYS immediately notice, start looking over at her- she's wearing jean shorts. One of them, JEFF, seems particularly distracted by her.

GABBY notices the GUYS looking at her, you can feel her immediately shift from confidence to self-consciousness. She tugs down her shorts, the GUYS surreptitiously watching her. She tries to ignore them. They're not obviously perverting, but their interest in (and awareness of) GABBY is uncomfortable.

CASSANDRA goes behind the register.

CASSANDRA

What can I get you?

GABBY

Um. A hot chocolate please.

CASSANDRA starts making it. The men are now openly staring at GABBY, whispering.

JEFF

I'd never let my daughter go out looking like that. Nothing to the imagination.

But the way he's looking at her is not that of a concerned parent.

CASSANDRA glares at him. She leans forward and whispers to GABBY.

CASSANDRA

Do you want me to freak those
fuckers out?

GABBY glances over at them.

GABBY

(low)

No, no! Please don't! Please don't say anything. Please.

She is bright red with embarrassment. Almost in tears.

CASSANDRA

It's alright. Don't worry. Don't worry about those creeps. Fuck 'em.

She passes GABBY her drink.

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)

On the house.

GABBY

(small)

Thanks.

GABBY makes her way to the door trying to keep as far from the table as she can while the men watch, sniggering.

CASSANDRA comes over to wipe their table and- oops!- she knocks a hot coffee into JEFF's lap.

He leaps up.

JEFF

JESUS!

CASSANDRA

Would you look at that! Right in the crotch!

GABBY turns and stifles a smile at CASSANDRA as she leaves. CASSANDRA winks at her.

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)

Let me get you a fresh one, sir. Hope I didn't burn you.

He watches her go, furiously.

CUT TO:

INT. CASSANDRA'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Later, in the middle of the night. We are under CASSANDRA's bed. The door opens, and she creeps in, we see just her bare feet and bruised legs. She's dressed not unlike the girl from the cafe, rosy cheeks and hair clips.

She throws her shoes on the floor. She kneels down, reaches under her bed and takes out a little book, with a pen tucked into it, held together with a hair tie. She opens it up at the back.

She has been counting something. There are rows and rows of little tally marks. The odd line in a different colored ink: whatever this is has been going on for a while. On the opposite side: a row of men's names.

She adds another line. And puts in the name: "JERRY".

INT. MAKE ME COFFEE SHOP - DAY

CASSANDRA is looking after the coffee shop, reading an old copy of 'Careful How You Go' by Lily Ann Frith. She yawns. The bell jingles and a customer comes in- she ignores it.

MAN (O.S.)

Can I get a cappuccino please?

CASSANDRA

Mmm hmm.

She looks up at her customer. He's her age, sweet, nice-looking. This is RYAN. She starts making his drink.

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)

You want chocolate?

RYAN is staring at her.

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)

What?

RYAN

Cassandra?

CASSANDRA stops what she's doing.

CASSANDRA

(warily)

Yes?

RYAN

It's Ryan Cooper. We were in the same class together at Forrest! Doctor Hadid's class.

Beat.

CASSANDRA

Oh. Yeah. Ryan. Hi.

RYAN
(surprised)
God. What are you doing working
here?

CASSANDRA raises her eyebrows.

RYAN (CONT'D)
Wait. No. I'm so sorry. That was so
rude. I didn't mean-

CASSANDRA
You didn't mean what's a promising
young woman like me doing working at
a shitty coffee shop?

RYAN
No, I didn't mean...I just
thought...Oh man. There's no way out
of this, is there?

CASSANDRA
Nu-uh.

RYAN
Can I go out and come back in again?
I can do better next time.

CASSANDRA
Did you want chocolate?

RYAN
What?

CASSANDRA
On your cappuccino?

RYAN
No.
(beat)
But you can spit in it if you want
to. I'd completely understand.

CASSANDRA looks him dead in the eyes and spits in it. She
hands it over. RYAN doesn't know what to say except-

RYAN (CONT'D)
Do you want to go out sometime?

Beat.

CASSANDRA
What?

RYAN

On a date?

CASSANDRA

Seriously? I just spat in your coffee.

RYAN looks her right back, and drinks it.

INT. CASSANDRA'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

CASSANDRA is putting on make-up in the mirror. She's wearing a tight slogan t-shirt, plaid shirt and tight jeans. Fake lip-ring. The deadpan hipster dream girl. Her laptop is open, and she is following a babbling make-up tutorial on youtube.

MAKE UP VLOGGER

OK so you just line your lips like so. You always want your liner to be darker than your gloss.

CASSANDRA lines her lips in porno pink.

MAKE UP VLOGGER (CONT'D)

Wonderful. Now add the gloss. I like to use the cheaper glosses and save the money for my highlighter and base...

CASSANDRA puts on a pastel gloss.

MAKE UP VLOGGER (CONT'D)

And voila! The perfect Blow Job Lips!

CASSANDRA looks at her reflection. She looks hot in a highlighted, feather-eyed, Instagram way.

She takes her thumb to her lips and smudges the meticulously-applied lipstick all round her mouth.

CUT TO:

OMITTED

INT. NEIL'S APARTMENT - LATER

CASSANDRA sits precariously on the couch of a small, hipster apartment. The decorating style is Lit-Student-chic: a poster of a french movie, paperbacks stacked everywhere.

A record by the record player: "Jeu Dangereux" by Clarice Bisset. A guitar. A dream catcher.

A breathy girl is singing Enrique Iglesias' "Hero" in Spanish on LP. NEIL, a pretentious 30-something who absolutely describes himself as a "renaissance man", racks up lines on a glass table. CASSANDRA watches him.

NEIL

Seriously, you need to read it.
'Consider The Lobster' is one of the
fucking greats, man. Cracked my head
open...like...like a lobster claw.

He is momentarily awed by his own perceptiveness.

He takes a snort of coke.

NEIL (CONT'D)

You know I'm writing a novel. Well,
uh, kinda. I'm a perfectionist, you
know, it's just taking forever. I
keep going over and over and over
it. Picking at it like a scab. It's
about, I guess, what it is to be a
guy right now? Like, how to be a guy
in this world? Kinda a fucked-up,
dirty, low-life, love story. It's
all set in New York over the course
of one night and it's all, like,
interwoven first person strands
which...

CASSANDRA stares at him, glassy eyed.

NEIL (CONT'D)

You know what. I shouldn't talk
about it. Don't want to jinx it!
(beat)
You do coke, right?

CASSANDRA

Not really...

NEIL

Oh come on!

CASSANDRA

I got work in the morning...

NEIL

Eh. So do I.

He scrapes the coke onto a record and brings it over to her, he gently sticks the note in her nostril. She looks at him, unsure. Then after a moment, snorts a line messily.

NEIL (CONT'D)

Hey! You missed most of it, silly!

He licks his finger, getting the bits she missed and rubs it in her gums. CASSANDRA stares at him as he does this. We have the feeling she might bite his finger off. NEIL doesn't notice.

NEIL (CONT'D)

Yum. There you are.

He moves her hair from her face and looks at her.

NEIL (CONT'D)

You're so, so pretty. Why are you wearing all that make up? Do you mind me asking that?

(not waiting for a response)

I never understood why girls wear so much make up. You all look way more beautiful without it, you know? I just feel like women feel so much pressure to look a certain way now. All the extensions and fake eyelashes and porno nails. It's like, guys don't even like it, you know? It's just a soul-sucking system designed to oppress women.

(another line of coke)

I wanna see you. The real you. All your freckles and imperfections.

He kisses her nose. She doesn't respond. But we can see she is a whisper from tearing his face off. Finally-

CASSANDRA

I don't feel good. Could you get me a glass of water?

He looks at her for a sec.

NEIL

(frustrated)

Sure.

INT. NEIL'S APARTMENT - LATER

A few minutes later and NEIL is bringing back a glass of water. CASSANDRA is passed out face down on the couch.

He looks at her, sleeping. He's kind of annoyed. Then-

He nudges her.

NEIL
(gentle)
Hey.

She stirs.

NEIL (CONT'D)
(louder)
Hey!

She wakes.

NEIL (CONT'D)
(quiet again, sappy)
There you are! Hi. You fell asleep.

He gives her the water, she drinks it.

NEIL (CONT'D)
Good girl.

He takes the glass from her hand. Strokes her back.

NEIL (CONT'D)
Feel better?

CASSANDRA
No.

NEIL
You know, I nearly didn't come out tonight. I'm so glad I did. I feel such a connection to you.

CASSANDRA
Could you call me a cab?

NEIL
You just got here!

CASSANDRA
I should go.

NEIL

Don't go...come on...we're having fun, aren't we?

He kisses her gently.

CASSANDRA

I...

NEIL

We can play hooky tomorrow, stay in bed all day. I'll make you breakfast... Eggs Benedict. I make my own...

(French pronunciation)

...hollandaise.

He kisses her neck. She is rigid. He ignores it.

NEIL (CONT'D)

You are so amazing.

His hand moves up her leg.

CASSANDRA

I need to go...

NEIL

(kissing)

You don't wanna go home. C'mon.

His hand is up her skirt.

She drops the act.

CASSANDRA

Hey. Neil.

He ignores her. She grabs his face and stares into his eyes.

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)

I said: I need to go home.

NEIL stares at her for a second and then jumps away from her.

NEIL

Holy shit!

He's practically on the other side of the room.

CASSANDRA

What?

NEIL

Woah. What...what is this? Are you some kind of psycho or something?

CASSANDRA

Why d'you say that?

NEIL

I thought you were...

CASSANDRA

Drunk?

NEIL

Yeah!

CASSANDRA

Really drunk?

He falters a little here.

NEIL

I guess...yeah.

CASSANDRA

Well, I'm not. But that's good, isn't it?

NEIL is starting to panic.

NEIL

You should leave.

CASSANDRA

Oh now you want me to leave?

NEIL

No I...Look I'm really high. Like. Really high. I don't know what I'm doing. You should go.

She walks towards him. He backs away from her.

CASSANDRA

I mean, a second ago you were determined for me to stay. Pretty insistent actually.

NEIL

(begging)
I'm a nice guy-

CASSANDRA

Are you?

BEAT.

NEIL

I thought we had a connection, I guess.

CASSANDRA

A connection? OK. What do I do for a living?

No response.

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)

Sorry. Maybe that one's too hard. How old am I? How long have I lived in the city? What are my hobbies?
(beat)
What's my name?

NEIL cannot answer.

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)

You're right! This connection is electric!
(beat)
Of course, I know all about you. Your mom, your sister, your job at a digital marketing agency which it sounds like you completely suck at, by the way, and, oh yeah...
(she stifles a smile)
Your novel. Good luck with that, sounds like a winner. About a guy. And set in New York? Woah.

NEIL

ALRIGHT. Alright. Fuck. I take your point. What do you want from me? To say I'm an asshole? Fine, I'm an asshole.

CASSANDRA

Why are you so freaked out, Neil? Wow. You really need to calm down.

She keeps coming closer. He's scared.

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)

At least you didn't try to have sex with me while I was passed out. You do get points for that. I want you to be proud of yourself. A few guys...eh they don't mind so much. But you, you woke me up before putting your fingers inside me. That was sweet.

NEIL

What are you saying, that I'm some kind of...predator?

CASSANDRA

I don't know. Are you?

BEAT.

NEIL

(small)

I'm a nice guy.

CASSANDRA

(kind)

You keep saying that. And there are plenty of nice guys just like you. You're not as rare as you'd think. You know how I know?

NEIL

No.

CASSANDRA

Because every week I go to a club. And every week I act like I'm too drunk to stand. And Every. Fucking. Week. A nice guy just like you comes over to see if I'm ok.

NEIL is silent.

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)

You wanna fuck me still?

NEIL

(lip wobbling)

No thank you.

CASSANDRA

Huh. No one ever does.

She opens his front door. Then-

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)

This music is terrible. Only a drunk person would have sex to this music.

She leaves. NEIL leans against the wall, shaking. His Spanish LP playing softly in the background.

INT. CASSANDRA'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

CASSANDRA adds a little line to her book. Writes the name "Neil". She sighs. All those names. She looks over at a picture on her bedside table. Two young girls hugging each other. She smiles.

CASSANDRA
Night, Nina.

She turns out the light.

INT. CASSANDRA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

CASSANDRA arrives at breakfast. STANLEY is reading the paper silently, SUSAN is eating neatly. There's a large, neatly wrapped present in CASSANDRA'S place. She looks at her father: nothing.

CASSANDRA
What's this?

Silence.

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)
Mom, what's this?

SUSAN
What do you mean?

CASSANDRA
This gift!

Beat.

SUSAN
It's your birthday, Cassie.

CASSANDRA had completely forgotten.

CASSANDRA
Oh... yeah.

There is a tense silence. SUSAN is suddenly on the verge of tears.

STANLEY
(gentle, to SUSAN)
Hey...

SUSAN
What kind of person forgets their
30th birthday?

STANLEY
Sweetheart-

SUSAN

Don't, Stanley.

CASSANDRA

It was a mistake, Mom. You know I'm terrible with dates. It's not a big deal.

SUSAN

Not a big deal? Not a big deal. You just forgot your birthday! Not a big deal. Ok! You don't want to have a party? Don't want to see your friends?

CASSANDRA

(dry)

You know I don't have any friends, Mom.

SUSAN

Don't joke about it! You know how strange that is? You still living at home, working in that stupid coffee shop? Out all hours of the night doing god only knows what. No boyfriend. No friends.

CASSANDRA

Mom! You should have saved all this for my birthday card!

STANLEY

Let the kid celebrate how she wants to-

SUSAN

Celebrate! Is this a celebration?

(beat)

My friends all ask about you and I don't know what to tell them. All their children are getting married, having kids. I don't know what happened...

A tense silence. They all know what happened.

STANLEY

Why don't you open your gift, honey?

CASSANDRA calmly opens her present. It is a large, beautiful suitcase.

INT. MAKE ME COFFEE SHOP - AFTERNOON

CASSANDRA and GAIL are unpacking boxes.

GAIL

Woah.

CASSANDRA

Yeah.

GAIL

That's direct.

CASSANDRA

A reeeal kick in the cunt.

GAIL

Is it a nice suitcase, at least?

CASSANDRA

Oh yeah it's definitely the fanciest
"get the fuck out of our house"
metaphor I've received so far.

Beat.

GAIL

Then why don't you?

CASSANDRA

What?

GAIL

Get out of their house? Just...I
don't know...go on Zillow, or Single
White Female some girl, or get a
basement room in a weird guy's
house. Anything!

CASSANDRA

I can't afford it, Gail. Not on what
you pay me. Not even a weird guy's
basement.

GAIL

So take this other job then. Take
any job.

CASSANDRA

Are you firing me?

GAIL

Maybe I should.

Beat.

CASSANDRA

Look. You're making the assumption that I want any of it. If I wanted a boyfriend and a yoga class and a house and kids and a job my mom could brag about I'd have done it. You don't think I could walk into any bar in this city wearing an adorable floral dress and get all that for myself? It would take me ten minutes. I don't want it.

GAIL

But you must want something?

Beat.

Suddenly, the door opens. RYAN walks into the coffee shop.

CASSANDRA

Oh. You. Hi.

RYAN

Hey. Cappuccino please. Hold the spit.

GAIL watches, intrigued.

RYAN (CONT'D)

So I just wanted to come in because I *think* you gave me a fake number the other day.

Beat.

CASSANDRA

That doesn't sound like me.

RYAN

Which meant that I spent hours composing a witty, romantic text and sent it to a oil rig worker called Red.

CASSANDRA

Was he into it?

RYAN

Surprisingly into it. But we couldn't make it work because of, y'know, the oil rig so...I thought I'd try you again.

GAIL

Oh! Did I just hear the phone ring
in the back?

CASSANDRA

No.

GAIL

Yup. I'm sure I did.

GAIL goes out back.

CASSANDRA

She has to take a few imaginary
calls a day.

RYAN

Look, I don't want to bother you so
if you're not into this then I
totally get it.

CASSANDRA

I'm not really looking to date
anyone at the moment.

RYAN

Ok. Fair enough.

(then-)

Can I tempt you into a friendship
with a man who is secretly pining
after you?

CASSANDRA laughs.

RYAN (CONT'D)

Dating is horrible. Everyone is
horrible. I went to dinner with a
woman last month who wanted to
euthanize the homeless.

CASSANDRA

You went on a date with my mom?

RYAN

I like you. I can't stop thinking
about you spitting in my coffee.
Have lunch with me this weekend.
Please. If you hate it we can have a
safe word and you can leave, no
questions asked.

CASSANDRA considers it.

INT. CASSANDRA'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

CASSANDRA is wearing a pretty, slightly-too-short floral dress. She creeps across the hallway, trying to avoid her parents who are watching tv in the tv room.

SUSAN (O.S.)
You're dressed up.

Busted.

SUSAN (CONT'D)
Where are you going?

CASSANDRA
I'm going out for lunch.

Her parents look at her, surprised.

SUSAN
With who?

CASSANDRA
A friend.

STANLEY
You look very pretty.

CASSANDRA is a little shy suddenly.

CASSANDRA
Thanks, dad.

She leaves. Her parents look at one another. They can barely dare to hope.

INT. THE HAWT DOG - DAY

CASSANDRA and RYAN are mid-date and it's going well.

CASSANDRA
How did she get a skeleton's hand up there?

RYAN
She stole it from a teaching model. And here's the worst part, she looked at me right in the eyes, took it out ...and waved it at me.

CASSANDRA pushes her food away.

CASSANDRA

And I am done.

RYAN

And I am wondering why I started
telling that story...

CASSANDRA

Hey, there is nothing more romantic than a disturbed woman pulling a skeleton's hand out of her vagina.

RYAN

That's true.

CASSANDRA

People never pull anything out of anywhere where I work.

RYAN

So, yeah, you didn't want to...

CASSANDRA

What?

RYAN

Carry on with med school?

CASSANDRA goes back to her food.

CASSANDRA

Nah.

RYAN

Why not?

CASSANDRA

I wanted to do something else.

RYAN

Really? What?

CASSANDRA

I don't know.

RYAN

You were so good though. You knew everything.

CASSANDRA

I didn't know everything.

RYAN

You did! You were brilliant! I was terrible. Remember when I accidentally removed the wrong kidney from my cadaver?

CASSANDRA
 (proud)
 And look at you now. Operating on
 children.

RYAN laughs.

RYAN
 Yeah. I got better. But you, you
 were always way ahead of everybody.
 You'd have been a fantastic doctor.

CASSANDRA
 Just. Didn't want it anymore, I
 guess.

CASSANDRA shrugs. RYAN senses he's crossed a line.

RYAN
 Hey, you want coffee? Movie starts
 in half an hour. I can tell you
 about the guy who got his dick
 trapped in a tambourine.

EXT. RYAN'S APARTMENT - EVENING

RYAN and CASSANDRA are walking down the street. There's a
 somewhat awkward, expectant silence.

RYAN
 You think we look like father and
 daughter from behind?

CASSANDRA laughs.

RYAN (CONT'D)
 I always worry about that.
 Bystanders screaming when I lean in
 to kiss someone. "Get your hands of
 that child...oh...sorry sir."

CASSANDRA
 I mean, don't be so tall would be my
 argument. It's kind of...flashy.

RYAN
 Yeah?

CASSANDRA
 Showing off.

He laughs.

RYAN

Oh. This is a weird coincidence.

CASSANDRA

What?

RYAN

I think this is...yep! Huh. This is my apartment.

CASSANDRA immediately cools. The wall goes right up.

CASSANDRA

That *is* weird. What a weird, weird coincidence.

RYAN

I mean...since we're already here. You wanna come up for a drink? I could clumsily try to seduce you?

CASSANDRA

(coldly)

Sure. Why not.

RYAN

Oh. It's too soon, I'm sorry. I shouldn't have-

CASSANDRA

Nope. Let's go upstairs.

RYAN

I don't want you to come up unless you want to. I'm not... look, I misread what was happening, I'm sorry. Let me drive you home.

They start walking in silence, CASSANDRA is kicking herself. She stops.

CASSANDRA

You know what. You're at your place. I can get a cab.

RYAN

Are you sure? But-

CASSANDRA

I'm sure.

RYAN

I feel like I fucked this up. I'm sorry. What can I-

CASSANDRA

You didn't. It's not you.

CASSANDRA walks off. RYAN watches, confused. He lets himself in.

Further down the street, CASSANDRA is almost in tears of frustration, she kicks over a garbage can, tipping its contents over the street.

INT. CASSANDRA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

Breakfast. Everyone in their spot. CASSANDRA looks hollowed out.

STANLEY

Did you and your friend have a nice time?

Beat.

CASSANDRA

Mmm hmm.

STANLEY
You came in pretty late!

CASSANDRA
Yep.

SUSAN
You two go dancing?

BEAT.

CASSANDRA
Yep.

SUSAN and STANLEY exchange excited glances. CASSANDRA pulls her sweater sleeve over a nightclub stamp on her hand, and on her wrist, a significant bruise.

INT. MAKE ME COFFEE SHOP - DAY

CASSANDRA is staring into space, worrying she's made a mistake with RYAN. A gorgeous COUPLE sit in the corner. They are laughing hysterically.

GAIL
Ew. Look at them. Take your happiness elsewhere please.

CASSANDRA looks over at them.

CASSANDRA
You and Richard must have been like that at some point.

GAIL thinks.

GAIL
He did make me laugh. Lucky for him I find farting hilarious otherwise we'd have been over after the first date.

CASSANDRA
He farted on the first date?

GAIL
I made him laugh so hard he farted.

CASSANDRA
Fuck.
(beat)
That is so romantic.

INT. BATHORY HOSPITAL - WAITING ROOM - EVENING

A red balloon floats in the corner of a ceiling.

We reveal CASSANDRA looking up at it. She's sitting in a hospital waiting room with a few patients.

RYAN (O.S.)

Cassie!

She looks up, RYAN is walking over to her.

RYAN (CONT'D)

What are you doing here?

She stands.

CASSANDRA

I just came to pick up my herpes medication.

RYAN

You have herpes too. That saves us an awkward conversation later.

The MOTHER of a tragic-looking CHILD PATIENT looks over disapprovingly.

CASSANDRA

So. I came here to see you. Obviously.

(deep breath)

I'm not good at this stuff. I'm trying.

RYAN

If you're not interested-

CASSANDRA

No it's not that.

RYAN

You sure?

She nods.

CASSANDRA

(huge effort)

So, I'd like to see you again...if that's cool. But we'll need to take it slow. I understand if-

RYAN

Of course that's cool.

CASSANDRA

Thank you.

RYAN

What are you doing now? You wanna go
somewhere? Get dinner?

CASSANDRA
Aren't you working?

RYAN
Eh, it's only a kid with leukemia.
He can wait.
(beat)
I'm kidding. My shift has finished.
Let me just get my stuff.

CASSANDRA is watching him, she can barely stop smiling.

INT. MAKE ME COFFEE SHOP - DAY

GAIL and CASSANDRA are cleaning the shop listening to the radio. CASSANDRA starts humming along. GAIL stares at her.

GAIL
Oh my god.

CASSANDRA
What?

GAIL
Are you seeing that guy?

CASSANDRA
No!

Beat.

GAIL
Good for you.

CASSANDRA feigns outrage, but is delighted.

INT. MAKE ME COFFEE SHOP - EVENING

RYAN is waiting at a table a little awkwardly as GAIL scrutinizes him.

CASSANDRA locks up.

GAIL
You ever kill someone?

RYAN
What?

GAIL
You know, operating on them.

RYAN
No!

GAIL
Really?

RYAN
I mean...patients have died during surgery, of course-

GAIL
So that's a yes.

CASSANDRA
Gail! Stop asking Ryan if he's killed anyone!

GAIL nonchalantly removes the remaining coffee cups from the table as Cassie comes over to sit with Ryan.

GAIL
I'll stop asking him when he stops killing people.

RYAN
That does seem fair.

GAIL
Ok. I'm leaving you lovebirds to it. Can you lock up, honey?

CASSANDRA
Course.

GAIL puts the cups on the counter.

GAIL
If you have sex on the counter, the bleach is in the back room. I don't want to find ass prints in the coffee grinds tomorrow morning.
(bright)
Night!

She leaves the coffee shop. RYAN and CASSIE sit awkwardly.

RYAN
She seems nice!

CASSIE laughs.

CASSANDRA
She is. She's a good friend.

RYAN
Are you friends with anyone from
Forrest still?

Beat.

CASSANDRA
No.

RYAN
Really? No one?

CASSANDRA
Really. No one.

RYAN
I can't seem to shake them off.

CASSANDRA
(ew)
You still hang out with those guys?

RYAN
They're not that bad! You know
Madison McPhee just had twins?

Beat.

CASSANDRA
I don't remember Madison.

RYAN
I thought you were close?

CASSANDRA
Nope.

RYAN
Huh. Oh yeah, oh my god, Al Monroe
is marrying some kind of model. She
was in a some MTV rich girl show.
Small part- but still! Classic Al.
Landing on his feet.

CASSANDRA tries to keep calm.

CASSANDRA
Al Monroe?

RYAN
You must remember him-

CASSANDRA
I thought he moved to London.

RYAN

He moved back here a couple of months ago.

Beat.

CASSANDRA

Do you see him a lot?

RYAN

We're not close anymore but... he's in the group. And we cross paths because of work. He's an anesthesiologist now.

CASSANDRA

(deadpan)

Good for him. And he's getting married?

RYAN

I know. God help her!

RYAN laughs. CASSANDRA tries to cover her shock.

INT. CASSANDRA'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - LATER

CASSANDRA is in her bedroom trying to avoid looking at the laptop on her desk. She's trying to stay calm, but we can feel the tension building.

To stop herself, she reaches for the book under the bed, and looks at the tally marks. She counts them like a mantra under her breath.

CASSANDRA

One two three four five six seven
eight nine...

It's not working. She finally goes to the computer and opens it. Dreading what she'll see.

Shaking, she types in Al Monroe's name into the search bar. A few options come up, she scrolls through them until- there he is.

She clicks.

Beautiful home, beautiful fiancée, beautiful car, beautiful holidays: a beautiful life.

She scrolls through his photos compulsively, and finds one of him and his gorgeous fiancée, her showing off her engagement ring. CASSANDRA reads the blurb Al has written underneath it:

"SO HUMBLLED TO BE MARRYING MY BEST FRIEND, AND THE LOVE OF MY LIFE. DOESN'T HURT THAT SHE'S A BIKINI MODEL EITHER LOLOLOL!!!!"

She scrolls down to the comments beneath the photo. "WAY TO GO BRO!!!", "OMG YOU GUYS!!".

She stops at one comment:

"I cannot believe my two favorite people in the worrrrld are getting hitched!!!"

CASSANDRA clicks on the girl who wrote it, MADISON MCPHEE. She's CASSANDRA's age. Very pretty, married with two adorable twins. Like AL, she is living a middle class dream life.

She shouldn't have looked.

INT. CASSANDRA'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Later CASSANDRA lies in bed, wide awake. She sits up. Gets her notebook out.

She opens her computer, goes back to AL's page.

She turns to a fresh page in her book, and starts to write. An idea is forming.

She combs Facebook, looking at photos, writing things down, taking notes. And then she clicks on an event-

"AL MONROE'S LAST WEEKEND AS A FREE MAN"

It's AL's bachelor party.

"LOCATION TBC BITCHEEEEEES"

Thinking. She writes something down.

Then she goes back to MADISON MCPHEE's page.

And clicks the "Send Private Message" button. She smiles.

INT. HOTEL ST. JOAN RESTAURANT - DAY

CASSANDRA sits in a upmarket hotel restaurant. She is dressed for success, her hair has been blown out.

A waiter, ALFRED, brings over a champagne bottle and a ginger ale.

ALFRED
Welcome to the Hotel St Joan, miss.

CASSANDRA
Thank you.

ALFRED
One ginger ale, and one bottle of champagne.

He begins to pour the champagne.

CASSANDRA
Don't worry. I can do that.

ALFRED
But-

CASSANDRA
Thank you.

ALFRED leaves. CASSANDRA pours champagne into the glass opposite hers, and fills her own champagne glass with the ginger ale: it looks exactly like champagne. She puts the ginger ale bottle discreetly under her chair.

MADISON (O.S.)
Cassie?

CASSANDRA looks up. There is MADISON. She's gorgeous- wearing tasteful but obviously very expensive clothes. On the surface MADISON is all warmth and sunshine, but is one of those people who has a way of making every compliment sound like a burn.

CASSANDRA
Madison. Hi.

MADISON
Oh my goooooood! You look amazing!
I almost didn't recognize you!

They hug, and sit back down.

CASSANDRA
Thank you.
(beat)
You look exactly the same.

MADISON

You're sweet! I look so OLD. That's what having twins will do to you. Tragic. Do you have kids?

CASSANDRA

No.

MADISON gives a sympathetic pout.

MADISON

You'll get there!

She sees the champagne.

MADISON (CONT'D)

Champagne? What are we drinking to?

CASSANDRA

To old friends.

They clink.

INT. HOTEL ST. JOAN RESTAURANT - LATER

The room is thinning out. ALFRED supervises as BUSBOY clears the table after what has obviously been a long lunch. MADISON is pretty drunk and gabbling.

MADISON

I thought I'd be literally bored out of my skull looking after the kids. But it's great actually!

CASSIE pours the last dregs of a bottle of red into MADISON'S glass. CASSIE'S own glass is still full- MADISON hasn't noticed.

MADISON (CONT'D)

Oh! Out already?
(to ALFRED)
Can we get another one?

A flicker of disapproval from ALFRED as he takes away the empty bottle.

MADISON (CONT'D)

I haven't been day drunk in forever!
So fun!

CASSANDRA

So fun!

MADISON continues.

MADISON

TBH, I know guys always say they want their wives to work, but it's not true.

CASSANDRA

Really?

MADISON

They all want a feminist in college because it's cool to have a girlfriend who cares about something. And feminists are statistically more likely do anal- that's a literal fact by the way- but when it comes down to it, all guys want the same thing.

CASSANDRA
And what's that?

MADISON
A good girl.

CASSANDRA
I don't seem to remember you were
that much of a good girl at college!

A new bottle is set down in front of them. MADISON fills up
her glass as she talks.

MADISON
Fred didn't know me at college. He
met me when I was working at
L'Oréal.

CASSANDRA
Poor Fred!

MADISON
What he doesn't know won't kill him,
right? But d'you know the really
gross part?

She leans in.

MADISON (CONT'D)
I love it. I thought I'd miss my job
but...I really don't. I love being a
housewife. It's a turn-on actually.

MADISON looks at her glass. She is getting super drunk.

MADISON (CONT'D)
Jeez. How much have I had of this?
Such a lightweight.

CASSANDRA
I'm glad everything's worked out so
well for you, Madison.

MADISON
Thanks. It really has.

CASSANDRA
Yeah.

BEAT.

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)

You know. I actually wanted to meet today, to talk about something in particular.

MADISON

I did wonder. No one has heard from you in, like, forever.

CASSANDRA

I wanted to talk to you about why I dropped out.

MADISON takes nervous a swallow of her drink.

MADISON

Ok. Sure.

CASSANDRA

You remember what happened, right?

MADISON

It was such a long time ago now...

CASSANDRA

I know. But you remember?

MADISON is uncomfortable.

MADISON

I mean...vaguely.

CASSANDRA

Do you ever think about it?

Beat.

MADISON

Why would I?

CASSANDRA

Right. Why would you.

MADISON is already starting to shift in her chair, she's slightly too drunk to handle what's about to happen.

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)

If a friend came to you now, tomorrow, let's say, if they turned up at your house tomorrow morning, and told you that they thought something had happened to them the night before, something bad-

MADISON

Cassie-

CASSANDRA

-something bad. What would you say?

MADISON

It was years ago...

CASSANDRA

What would you say?

MADISON

It's complicated...Ugh. I feel a little...weird. I'm sorry.

MADISON is getting drunker and drunker by the minute.

CASSANDRA

Would you roll your eyes behind her back and dismiss the whole thing as drama?

MADISON

I don't know why you're mad at me! It wasn't just me who didn't believe it! When you have a reputation for sleeping around then maybe people won't believe you when you say something's happened! I mean...it's crying wolf.

CASSANDRA

You thought it was crying wolf?

MADISON

I don't make the rules, ok? If you get that drunk things happen! Don't get blackout hammered every night and then expect people to be on your side when you have sex with someone you didn't want to!

She shouts this a little louder than she meant to, a few diners turn to look. She's sloppy drunk. CASSANDRA studies her for a while, then-

CASSANDRA

That's a shame. I was hoping you'd feel differently.

MADISON shrugs.

MADISON

Sorry.

CASSANDRA

For your sake. I really was hoping you'd feel differently by now.

MADISON

You're mad. I... Why don't I get the check? My treat.

MADISON tries to get her purse, she's so drunk, she's having trouble.

CASSANDRA

You ok, Madison?

MADISON

Yeah...no. I've drunk too much. How did I...my head is spinning.

MADISON knocks over her glass.

MADISON (CONT'D)

Oh my god. Shit.

CASSANDRA gets up, throws some cash down on the table.

CASSANDRA

Nice seeing you again.

She looks down at MADISON, who is struggling to see straight.

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)

You really haven't changed at all.

She leaves.

INT. HOTEL ST. JOAN RESTAURANT - BAR - MOMENTS LATER

CASSANDRA walks up to TONY, a well-dressed, handsome young man who has been sitting at the bar. She gets an envelope out of her purse, and a room key.

TONY

So...?

CASSANDRA

She's over there.

She points to MADISON, and hands him the envelope and key.

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)

Room 25.

TONY

You sure about this?

CASSANDRA
(ice cold)
I'm sure.

She leaves the hotel. TONY, disturbed, watches her go.

INT. MAKE ME COFFEE SHOP - DAY

On CASSIE'S phone vibrating. It's MADISON. It rings off, and reveals: 13 MISSED CALLS. CASSANDRA looks down at the phone impassively. A few seconds as she thinks what to do. Then-

She picks up her phone, and dials. Voicemail.

MADISON (O.S.)

Cassie...hi...wonderful to see you
for lunch yesterday...blast from the
past! Uh...hey I was pretty drunk, I
can't...really
...look did you see me talking to a
guy? Like...our age...Just trying to
piece some things together...

CASSANDRA skips to the next message.

MADISON (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Cassie, sorry, please call me
back...I freaking out a
little...just...will you call me..?
I woke up in one of the hotel rooms
...I think something might have
happened...

CASSANDRA hangs up, emotionless. She gets her book from out of her bag.

CASSANDRA opens it: she crosses out a name: MADISON. On rest of the page we glimpse a few notes: "Hotel St Joan" a phone number, another name "Tony", another number.

She looks at the next name on the list: WALKER.

I/E. CAR - SANTA LUCIA HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

CASSIE sits inside her car, listening to sugary pop music. It's a mess- full of papers and a huge, professional-looking make-up bag. Her book is there too, among the debris. She looks different, hair in a pony tail, pink cardigan: pretty, young and un-threatening.

She's parked outside a high school, watching teenaged girls as they leave at the end of the day, giggling and talking.

A girl walks out with her Queen Bee friends. She's super-beautiful, long shiny hair, she looks older than her fifteen years. This is AMBER. Her phone beeps and she stops to look at it- her friends leave.

AMBER

See you tomorrow, bitches.

She's alone. CASSANDRA leans over and gets her attention.

CASSANDRA
Excuse me? Hi! Sorry! Excuse me!

AMBER looks over.

AMBER
Me?

CASSANDRA
Yeah!

AMBER
What's up?

CASSANDRA
I'm so sorry to bother you- my phone
has died and I'm really late for
work. Do you live round here? You
know the area?

AMBER
(impatient)
I guess.

CASSANDRA
Can you tell me how to get to the
Castle Diner?

AMBER
Sorry. I'm late, so...

AMBER begins to walk off.

CASSANDRA
Wait! Please, I'm supposed to be
shooting this music video and I've
got to get-

AMBER
Music video?

CASSANDRA
Yeah. I'm a make-up artist and it's
my first time working with these
guys and if I'm late I may as well-

AMBER looks into the car. She sees CASSANDRA's papers, they
are covered in headshots and info on "WetDreams", a One
Direction-style boyband.

AMBER
Oh my god.

CASSANDRA hastily covers the papers.

AMBER (CONT'D)
OH MY GOD. Are you working for
WetDreams?? OH MY GOD!!!!

CASSANDRA
You didn't see that.

AMBER
I know where the Castle Diner is!

CASSANDRA
Don't worry about it! I'll ask
someone else!

AMBER
No way! NO WAY! Are they there? Oh
my god. ARE THEY THERE?

CASSANDRA
Look, keep your voice down, please.

AMBER
I can direct you! Please, please,
please!

CASSANDRA
Sorry, no-

AMBER
(smug)
If I don't come and direct you then
how will you find it?

CASSANDRA thinks, she's desperate.

CASSANDRA
I can't. If you tell anyone or post
this online I'll never work again.

AMBER
I swear I won't. I swear. Take my
phone!! Seriously.

She holds out her phone. CASSANDRA relents.

CASSANDRA
Oh god. OK get in. But you have to
be cool about this.

AMBER
OF COURSE I WILL!!!

AMBER gets in. She hands over her phone to CASSIE- it's got a
sparkly "WetDreams" phone case.

CASSANDRA

Woah. You really are a fan.

AMBER

I'm ob-essed. I have a whole Insta dedicated to George's dog.

CASSANDRA

What a crazy coincidence.

AMBER

You know what. This is fate.

CASSANDRA

Sure seems like it, doesn't it?

CASSANDRA pockets AMBER'S phone and starts the engine. AMBER looks out of her window, almost dying of excitement: she only has a second to register the car doors locking.

EXT. FORREST UNIVERSITY - DAY

CASSANDRA strides past a "Forrest University" sign, marching through GRAD STUDENTS toward the building's doors.

INT. FORREST UNIVERSITY WAITING ROOM - DAY

CASSANDRA disdainfully reads the cheesy university's prospectus. Slogan: "Forrest University: Where All Your Beginnings Begin!". The secretary, JEAN, calls over to CASSANDRA.

JEAN

Dean Walker is ready if you'd like to go on through.

CASSANDRA gets up.

INT. FORREST UNIVERSITY - DEAN'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

A gorgeous, wood-paneled office. Behind the desk is DEAN WALKER, a well-dressed and polished woman in her late-fifties. She has the patient warmth of a psychiatrist: a woman used to smoothing over her students problems. A kind, clever and reasonable person.

DEAN WALKER

Daisy?

CASSANDRA

That's me.

DEAN WALKER
Come in. Welcome.

CASSANDRA sits down. DEAN WALKER consults her notes.

DEAN WALKER (CONT'D)

My assistant tells me you're thinking of resuming med school.

CASSANDRA

That's right.

DEAN WALKER

So what prompted this desire to finish your studies now, if you don't mind my asking?

CASSANDRA

Not at all. I guess... I couldn't stop thinking about my time here.

DEAN WALKER

It's an extraordinary place. Of course, we'd love to accommodate you if we can. But, you have to understand, this is a little unusual.

CASSANDRA

Yes. But I left in unusual circumstances.

DEAN WALKER looks at her blankly.

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)

I left because of what happened to Nina.

Nothing.

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)

Nina Fisher.

DEAN WALKER

I'm so sorry, I'm not following you.

CASSANDRA

You don't remember her?

DEAN WALKER

We have so many students. I wish I could remember them all by name. But-

CASSANDRA

Then maybe you remember Alexander Monroe, Al Monroe?

DEAN WALKER

Oh yes! Of course I remember Alexander! He came and did a talk for our students not long ago. Nice guy. Very smart. Is he a friend of yours?

CASSANDRA

No. So, you don't remember the accusations made against Al Monroe?

DEAN WALKER frowns- she genuinely can't remember.

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)

He took a girl- Nina Fisher, the girl you don't remember- back to his dorm where he had sex with her, repeatedly and in front of his friends, while she was too drunk to have any idea what was going on.

DEAN WALKER

I don't-

CASSANDRA

She was covered in bruises the next day. Handprints, I guess you could say.

DEAN WALKER takes this very seriously.

DEAN WALKER

I'm so sorry. That is terrible. Was it reported?

CASSANDRA

Yes.

DEAN WALKER

Who did Nina go to?

DEAN WALKER opens her book to note it down.

CASSANDRA

You.

DEAN WALKER is silent. She puts her pen down.

DEAN WALKER

Oh.

CASSANDRA

But you can't remember so...

DEAN WALKER looks at CASSANDRA sympathetically.

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)

You felt there wasn't sufficient evidence. It was too much of a 'he said/she said' situation. You thought that his version of events seemed, what word did you use..."credible".

DEAN WALKER is genuinely saddened.

DEAN WALKER

(gentle)

We get so many of these accusations. There's usually one or two a week- one every *morning* early in semester when everyone's partying. I have to take each claim on its own merits. I'm so sorry that I don't remember this individual case, but I can assure you that I would have looked into it thoroughly at the time.

CASSANDRA

His friends were all watching, laughing. Some of them maybe even joined in.

DEAN WALKER

I understand it must be very hard. But if Nina was drinking, if she couldn't remember fully, it's terribly complicated.

CASSANDRA

So she shouldn't have been drunk?

DEAN WALKER

I don't mean that. I just mean that it isn't always a good idea to go back to a dorm room full of boys after a party. It gives them the wrong idea...We do advise against it. We try to warn girls to be more careful. To teach them about self-respect.

CASSANDRA

So it was her fault? For not respecting herself?

(beat)

Sorry! I don't mean to sound critical, Dean Walker. I just want to be clear.

DEAN WALKER

(kind)

None of us wants to admit when we've made ourselves vulnerable. And sometimes these kind of mistakes are very damaging. It's much more common than you'd know.

CASSANDRA

I know how common it is.

DEAN WALKER

Of course, it's...regrettable.

CASSANDRA

Regrettable?

DEAN WALKER

(patient, kind)

What would you have me do? Ruin a young man's life every time an accusation is made? Have them expelled? That wouldn't be fair. Accusations like this, they ruin lives.

CASSANDRA

So you're happy to take the boy's word for it?

DEAN WALKER

I have to give them the benefit of the doubt, yes.

CASSANDRA

Of course you do.

DEAN WALKER

Innocent until proven guilty. It has to be.

CASSANDRA

No arguing with that.

DEAN WALKER

I'm afraid not.

CASSANDRA gets up.

CASSANDRA

Thank you for your time.

DEAN WALKER

I wish I could do more. Is your friend ok?

CASSANDRA

No. She's not. But Al Monroe is, you'll be glad to know he's doing really well. He's getting married.

DEAN WALKER doesn't respond.

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)

So you did the right thing, I guess. We have to give these boys the benefit of the doubt.

Beat.

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)

That's why I know that you won't mind that-

She glances at her watch.

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)

-three hours ago I picked your daughter Amber up from school and introduced her to the boys who live in that dorm now.

BEAT.

DEAN WALKER

What did you say?

CASSANDRA

She is really pretty, huh? And she looks a lot older than she is.

DEAN WALKER

I don't believe you.

DEAN WALKER is trying not to panic.

CASSANDRA

I noticed that they had a few bottles of vodka in their room too. But I'm sure they'll take good care of your daughter. She seemed excited to meet them actually!

DEAN WALKER

Is this a joke? What is wrong with you? You're sick!

DEAN WALKER, shaking, picks up her phone, tries her daughter's cell.

CASSANDRA's pocket rings.

The DEAN looks at her, horrified.

CASSANDRA

Oh right! Here it is. She'll be wanting that later.

She gets the phone out of her pocket and places it down on DEAN WALKER'S desk. DEAN WALKER stares at it dumbly as what this means sinks in.

DEAN WALKER

Oh my god. Are you crazy?

CASSANDRA

No.

DEAN WALKER

Which room is she in?? Tell me right now! What kind of monster are you? TELL ME?

CASSANDRA

I told you. The same room Nina was in.

DEAN WALKER is totally freaking out.

DEAN WALKER

I don't remember it! I already said...

CASSANDRA

That's a shame. Then I sure hope you're right to trust those boys!

DEAN WALKER

I'm calling the police.

She picks up the phone.

CASSANDRA

It'll take them a while to get here... you think there's time?

The Dean is in tears.

DEAN WALKER
Please... she's just a little girl.

CASSANDRA
I wonder if she looks so little to those guys...

DEAN WALKER
JUST FUCKING TELL ME!!

CASSANDRA raises her eyebrows. DEAN WALKER has shocked herself. She switches tack, starts begging.

DEAN WALKER (CONT'D)
Look, you're right, OK? Is that what you want to hear? You're right.

She means it.

DEAN WALKER (CONT'D)
You're right!

Beat.

CASSANDRA
See. Look how easy it was! You just needed to think about it properly, didn't you? I guess it feels different when it's someone you love.

DEAN WALKER
Please tell me which room she's in.

CASSANDRA waits. Watches her panic. Lets her freak out for a moment more. Then-

CASSANDRA
Hey! Relax! Honestly, Dean Walker! Did you really think I'd do something like that? Luckily I don't have as much faith in college boys as you do!

(beat)

Amber is sitting in a diner waiting for her favorite boyband to turn up for a music video. It's the Castle Diner if you want to call and check. You should probably call actually, otherwise she'll never figure out they're not coming.

(beat)

She's kind of an idiot, huh?

(MORE)

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)
 Gorgeous though. Who needs brains?
 They never did a girl any good.

DEAN WALKER is shivering with shock. Mute. CASSANDRA opens the door.

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)
 There's a girl outside in the
 waiting room. I hope you'll listen
 to her if she's coming to talk to
 you about something serious.
 (beat)
 Good to see you again, Dean Walker.

CASSANDRA leaves. DEAN WALKER watches her go.

INT. CAR - DAY

Close on CASSANDRA. Wagner's "Liebestod" play on the radio. She's sitting with her face against the steering wheel. She's almost in a fugue state. What the hell did she just do?

Through the music, she becomes aware of a loud honking. It's been going on for a while. She comes out of her daze, as-

A guy in a pick-up truck, GEORGE, screeches up beside her. He honks and yells at her through his window.

GEORGE
 Hey! HEY! What are you doing?

She ignores him.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
 You're sitting in the middle of the
 road. Are you retarded or something?

She ignores him.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
 Hey! I'm talking to you, look at me
 when I'm talking to you!

CASSANDRA grabs a wheel lock from the passenger seat and calmly gets out of her car.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
 What are you...?

She goes over to his car and matter-of-factly smashes one of his break lights. He can't believe what's happening.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
What the hell are you doing?

She smashes in the other break light. She comes around to the front.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Hey! HEY! STOP! STOP!

She smashes his windscreen.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
You crazy fucking bitch!

CASSANDRA goes around to his window, holding the wheel lock threateningly.

CASSANDRA
(calm)
What did you call me?

He looks at her. He actually looks scared.

GEORGE
Fuck you!

He speeds away. Leaving her standing in the middle of the road, surrounded by glass, completely shocked by what just happened.

EXT. CASSANDRA'S HOUSE - EVENING

CASSANDRA gets out of her car to find RYAN waiting outside her house. She's still on the edge, in no state of mind to see him.

CASSANDRA
Ryan! What are you...?

RYAN
You weren't picking up your phone so...

She realizes.

CASSANDRA
Shit. The movie. I'm so sorry. I had to work late.

RYAN
Yeah. I went past the coffee shop, Gail said you took the afternoon off.

CASSANDRA doesn't know what to say.

RYAN (CONT'D)
Everything alright?

She's desperate to get away.

CASSANDRA

It's fine. Yeah. Sorry. I'm just in the middle of something...

RYAN

Ok. We can still make it if we skip dinner-

CASSANDRA

(terse)

I'm really tired. Can I just call you tomorrow?

RYAN's a little hurt but covers it.

RYAN

Sure.

(beat)

You sure you're ok? You seem kind of...

CASSANDRA

What?

RYAN

Wired.

CASSANDRA

I'm fine. Too much coffee. Don't work in a coffee shop.

RYAN

Right.

(beat)

Goodnight then, I guess.

CASSANDRA

Night.

RYAN gets into his car. A little annoyed.

OMITTED

INT. CASSANDRA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

SUSAN is sitting at the table, reading a magazine. CASSANDRA tries to creep past without stopping. No chance.

SUSAN

Hey! Did you catch that boy outside?

CASSANDRA reluctantly enters.

CASSANDRA

Yeah.

SUSAN

He seems nice.

CASSANDRA

He is.

CASSANDRA turns to go.

SUSAN

Come on. You just got in. Sit down.

CASSANDRA sits. SUSAN is steeling herself for something.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

Are you going to be ok now?

CASSANDRA

What do you mean?

SUSAN

Is this boy...is he making you feel better? I'm sorry to pry. It's just...we've tried everything. Me and your dad.

CASSANDRA

Please, Mom. Please can we not talk about this now. Please.

A silence.

SUSAN

We have to talk about it someday.

(beat)

We think about her all the time too, you know. She practically lived here when you two were girls. If you think that it didn't affect us...

Beat.

CASSANDRA

Then why didn't you ever talk about it?

SUSAN

Because you were so angry, Cassie.
We couldn't come near you. You have
no idea what it's like, your anger.

CASSANDRA

Of course I'm angry!

SUSAN

But...it's taken over everything.
(beat)
And whatever you do at night... You
don't need to tell me what it is...
but...it seemed to work for a while.
And then...

SUSAN spreads out her hands.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

So if this boy is making you feel
good then, oh god, Cassie...

SUSAN starts to cry.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

I just want you to be happy. I want
you to feel better.

CASSANDRA reaches for her mother's hand kindly.

CASSANDRA

Momma.
(cold)
Nothing makes me feel better.

She leaves.

INT. BLUE STAR BAR - NIGHT

Close in on CASSANDRA, on edge, dressed like a cut-price
Kardashian. Pretending to be drunk again, but it's scary this
time. She's vibrating with anger- it's coming off her in
waves. Finally, someone approaches her, she looks up- does
she recognize him? We stay on her face.

PAUL (V.O.)

You want a drink?

She looks up at him: gotcha.

CASSANDRA

Why not?

EXT. BLUE STAR BAR - LATER

PAUL, wearing a fedora, is walking CASSANDRA out, her head is lolling. PAUL looks at his phone.

PAUL
Fucking surge prices.

He looks at CASSANDRA, barely upright.

PAUL (CONT'D)
It's not that far, can you walk?

CASSANDRA
Um. I don't know...

PAUL
Good girl.

They start to walk, PAUL's practically holding her up. Then-

RYAN (O.S.)
Cassie?

CASSANDRA turns around. RYAN is on his way into the bar. He looks at her, shocked. CASSANDRA immediately sobers up. Well. She's not completely sober this time.

CASSANDRA
What are you doing here?

RYAN
I'm meeting some friends.
(beat)
Since my diary opened up last
minute.

CASSANDRA
Let me explain.

RYAN
No need. Seriously.

PAUL looks between them: awkward!

PAUL
Sorry, dude, I didn't know she was
taken. She's all yours.

RYAN looks at PAUL, disgusted.

RYAN
All mine? Do you even know her name?

PAUL steps back nervously, racking his brains.

PAUL
Um...Claire...?

CASSANDRA tries to diffuse this.

CASSANDRA
Eh. Pretty close...

RYAN looks at her, shocked. Shakes his head.

RYAN
Ok. Have a good night.

CASSANDRA
Don't go. I'm sorry. Wait.

RYAN
Could have just told me you weren't interested, Cassie.

RYAN leaves. PAUL is giggling.

PAUL
ICE COLD!!!! That was humiliating!

CASSIE turns on him.

CASSANDRA
Why don't you just fuck off now ok?

Paul looks at her.

PAUL
Wait. Are you sober?
(realizing)
Oh my god. You're the psycho who went home with Jez.

Beat.

CASSANDRA
I don't know what you're talking about.

PAUL
Shit. Take your crazy elsewhere, sweetheart. Not interested. You're not even that hot.

CASSANDRA is deadly calm.

CASSANDRA
You're hardly dropping panties yourself, Paul.
(MORE)

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)

When was the last time you scored
with someone in daylight?

Beat.

PAUL
Careful.

She takes a step towards him.

CASSANDRA
No. You be careful. I'm not the only
one who does this, you know? And
some of the other girls...they
really are crazy.

He backs away a little, nervously.

PAUL
I don't believe you.

CASSANDRA
There's a woman in *this city* who
carries a pair of scissors.
(she glances down at his
crotch)
Personally, I think she's taking it
a little far but...

PAUL
(scared)
You're lying.

CASSIE shrugs.

CASSANDRA
Then try it out next time you go
out. See what happens.

PAUL looks at her, he's a little upset.

PAUL
Why do you all have to ruin
everything??

He runs off. She watches him go. Her eyes gleaming in the
neon of the club lights.

INT. CASSANDRA'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

The following morning, and things are looking bleak in the
cold light of day. CASSIE looks down at her book. She's
starting to look and feel a little scary.

A new name: JORDAN GREEN. She dials the number next to it.

RECEPTIONIST (O.S.)
Halder Mackenzie Green.

CASSANDRA
Hi. I'd like to book an appointment
with Jordan Green, please.

RECEPTIONIST (O.S.)
I'm sorry, ma'am. Mr Green is on
sabbatical.

CASSANDRA
Oh. For how long?

Beat.

RECEPTIONIST (V.O.)
Indefinitely.

The receptionist hangs up. Weird.

EXT. JORDAN'S HOUSE - DAY

CASSANDRA steps up to the front door of a nice, suburban house. She doesn't look so good, everything is starting to take a toll. She rings the doorbell.

A good looking, middle-aged man opens the door. Unshaven, a little red around the eyes. This is JORDAN.

JORDAN
Can I help you?

CASSANDRA
I really hope so.

JORDAN
I'm sorry. I'm no longer practicing
the law, if you've come for-

CASSANDRA
It's not about that.

JORDAN senses something in her. Maybe even has a feeling of what's coming.

JORDAN
I've been waiting.
(beat)
Come in.

CASSANDRA looks a little unnerved, but she steps into the house.

INT. JORDAN'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

JORDAN leads CASSIE into his modern, expensive living room, which has seen better days. Curtains drawn, dead flowers, overflowing ashtrays. He notices her glance at a stack of dirty plates and coffee cups.

JORDAN
My wife left a while back.

CASSANDRA
And you don't know how to work a
dishwasher?

JORDAN laughs. Fair point.

JORDAN
I guess not.

He lights a cigarette. His hands are shaking. He's clearly scared.

JORDAN (CONT'D)
(off the cigarette)
You mind?

CASSANDRA shakes her head. There's a silence. He's nervous. CASSANDRA is still, calm. Malevolent.

CASSANDRA
Your office told me you're on
sabbatical. It was very easy to get
your address. They just gave it to
me actually.

JORDAN
I told them to give it to anyone who
asked.

CASSANDRA
That doesn't seem safe.

JORDAN
No use hiding from the piper. He has
to be paid.

CASSANDRA
I guess so.

So... JORDAN

CASSANDRA

I came here to talk to you about something that happened eight years ago.

JORDAN braces himself.

JORDAN

Alright.

CASSANDRA

Do you remember a client of yours named Alexander Monroe?

JORDAN

I do. Yes. Al's father is an old friend.

CASSANDRA

Of course he is. You probably won't remember why Al Monroe and his dad employed your services back then. And you almost certainly won't remember the girl who you threatened and bullied until she dropped her case.

JORDAN

I remember her.

CASSANDRA is shocked. He thinks for a while.

JORDAN (CONT'D)

Nina? Was that it? I'm sorry, I don't remember her full name. It was Nina though, wasn't it?

CASSANDRA tries to hold it together.

CASSANDRA

(whisper)

Yes.

JORDAN

I remember.

(beat)

Have you come here to hurt me?

CASSANDRA

Do you want me to hurt you?

JORDAN

I think so.

CASSANDRA doesn't know what to do. She's frozen.

Finally-

JORDAN (CONT'D)

I had a...well...I think of it as an epiphany. The doctors called it a psychotic episode. It was at work. So... I'm on "sabbatical".

(beat)

You know I got a bonus for every settlement out of court. And a bonus for every charge dropped. All of us did.

Silence.

JORDAN (CONT'D)

We had a guy who combed through their social media accounts for compromising information. Contacted friends and past sexual partners. It is amazing how much easier the internet has made digging up dirt. In the old days we'd have to go through girls' trash. But now it's just one drunk photo at a party and you wouldn't believe how hostile that makes a jury.

CASSANDRA can barely breathe. Jordan comes over to her, kneels in front of her.

JORDAN (CONT'D)

You've got to help me. I can't sleep. I can't sleep. I haven't slept in...

He clutches at her hands. She recoils.

JORDAN (CONT'D)

You are real, aren't you? I haven't totally lost it?

CASSANDRA

I'm real.

He nods.

JORDAN

I'll never forgive myself. I hope you know that. I'll never forgive myself for any of it.

CASSANDRA looks down at him. A mixture of pity and scorn, but also, somewhere, deep relief. This is it.

Then finally, quietly-

CASSANDRA
I forgive you.

The relief and gratitude from JORDAN is palpable. He puts his head on her knees. In the stark, white room it is the image of forgiveness. The *Pietà*.

JORDAN
Thank you.

Beat.

CASSANDRA
Go to sleep.

EXT. JORDAN'S HOUSE - DAY

CASSANDRA walks to her car. We reveal a timid, middle-aged man, SIMON, leaning against her car. He sees her.

MAN
Do I go in now?

Beat.

CASSANDRA
No.

She opens her car door.

MAN
Oh. I'm still getting paid though,
right?

CASSANDRA
Yeah.

She gets into her car. He gets into the passenger seat.

EXT. NINA'S HOUSE - DAY

CASSANDRA is standing across the street from Nina's house. It's similar to her own, just another anonymous suburban street. She's trying not to cry.

Her phone rings. It's MADISON. She cancels guiltily. This whole thing is starting to feel horrible. Pointless.

When she looks up, MRS. FISHER, Nina's mother, is on the porch, peering over at her.

MRS FISHER

Cassie?

EXT. NINA'S HOUSE - DAY

CASSIE and MRS FISHER sit on the steps of the house. CASSIE is sipping from a juice box MRS FISHER has given her.

MRS FISHER

I'd ask you in but...you know it upsets George to see you.

CASSANDRA

I know. I'm sorry.

(beat)

You remember Nina's sixteenth birthday party?

MRS FISHER chuckles.

MRS FISHER

Yeah. That was a mess.

CASSANDRA

Nina threw up on the swing.

MRS FISHER

Not her finest.

CASSANDRA

And that boy stole your vase and Nina made him bring it back the next day and apologize to you.

MRS FISHER

He was so scared of her. She was practically holding onto his ear. "SAY YOU'RE SORRY TO MY MOM, ASSHOLE".

Cassie laughs.

CASSANDRA

What was his name? Was it...Simon something...or Steve-

MRS FISHER tries to be kind, but she is tired.

MRS FISHER
Why are you here?

CASSANDRA
I just wanted to see you.

MRS FISHER
You need to stop this.

CASSANDRA is a little shocked.

MRS FISHER (CONT'D)
It isn't good for any of us. It's no good for Nina, it isn't good for you.

Beat.

CASSANDRA
I'm just trying to... fix it...

MRS FISHER
(savage)
You can't. Don't be a child, Cassie. You know what it's like for us? Having to bear this? And you, still standing outside our house like a ghost. Still wearing that stupid necklace you girls gave each other in middle school. Yanking us back into it every time we see you.

MRS FISHER is distress, fighting back tears.

CASSANDRA
I'm so sorry. I didn't think.

MRS FISHER
No. Well. I'm sorry too. Move on, Cassie. For all of us.

MRS FISHER leaves. CASSIE sits on step. She knows she's right: this is over.

INT. RYAN'S APARTMENT BUILDING - HALLWAY - EVENING

CASSANDRA waits nervously in the hallway of RYAN's apartment. He answers the door. Not pleased to see her.

RYAN
Oh great. You.

CASSANDRA
Can I come in?

The desperation on her face makes him relent.

INT. RYAN'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

RYAN leads her into his apartment. It's cozy, but clean, books everywhere.

CASSIE hovers nervously, unsure where to stand.

RYAN
You want anything? Coffee? Another
guy to go home with?

CASSANDRA can't help but laugh.

CASSANDRA
Yeah actually do you have any
douchebags lying around?

RYAN
There's a racist neighbor on the
third floor.

CASSANDRA
Perfect!

The smile awkwardly.

RYAN
What do you want, Cassie?

CASSANDRA
I came to apologize. About... I've
been trying to think about how to
explain.

RYAN
How's that going for you?

She laughs.

CASSANDRA
Not great. Yeah.

RYAN
It's fine, really.

CASSANDRA
It's not that I'm not interested. I
really am. I really, really am.

RYAN

Ok. I mean, forgive me if I'm confused but, you won't kiss me, you'll barely touch me, but I find you going home with some random creep in a fedora.

Beat.

CASSANDRA

I admit....the fedora was unforgivable.

RYAN can't help but smile. He sighs.

RYAN

Why are you here?

CASSANDRA

The other night... it won't happen again. I promise. It'll never happen again. It's hard to explain.

(beat)

Can we try again? Can I try, I mean.

RYAN looks at her, thinks.

RYAN

I don't know.

(beat)

Are you ok?

She shrugs: I don't know.

RYAN nods. Silence. Finally-

CASSANDRA

I guess I'll see you around then.

She leaves. She's blown it.

INT. CASSANDRA'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

CASSANDRA stares at AL MONROE'S BACHELOR PARTY PAGE. She spots RYAN on his time line. "Sorry I can't make it, bro! Have a great time."

She looks at AL's stupid face, all his douchebros. She closes her computer.

She consults her book. One name left: AL MONROE. She tears out the page, screws it up and throws it away. Enough.

INT. MAKE ME COFFEE SHOP - EVENING

CASSANDRA is alone. The bell rings, she doesn't look up.

CASSANDRA
We're closed for the night.

RYAN (O.S.)
Good.

CASSANDRA looks up. RYAN is standing in front of her.

CASSANDRA
Hi.

RYAN
You wanna go to dinner you miserable
asshole?

CASSANDRA smiles.

CASSANDRA
Yeah.

He kisses her. It's wonderful.

INT. PHARMACY - DAY

That weekend. CASSIE and RYAN are choosing snacks at the pharmacy when Paris Hilton's "Stars Are Blind" comes on the speaker.

RYAN starts to nod his head slightly to the music, CASSIE notices: Paris Hilton, huh? Then suddenly RYAN bursts into a vamping lip synch, using the snacks as props. CASSIE tries not to be impressed but it's hard, she's giggling, people are looking. Then finally, she joins in.

CUT TO:

INT. RYAN'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

MONTAGE: CASSIE and RYAN watching movies in bed eating the pharmacy snacks, as Paris Hilton serenades us.

INT. RYAN'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY

MONTAGE:

Pt. 1: CASSIE and RYAN kissing in bed.

Pt. 2: CASSIE reading in RYAN'S chair as he tries not to stare at her.

Pt. 3: RYAN and CASSIE eating cereal, talking.

INT. MAKE ME COFFEE SHOP - DAY

MONTAGE: CASSIE and RYAN kissing as CASSIE sits on the counter.

INT. MAKE ME COFFEE SHOP - DAY

MONTAGE: CASSIE, RYAN, and GAIL are eating cupcakes. GAIL immensely relieved to see CASSIE so happy.

BACK TO:

INT. PHARMACY - MOMENTS LATER

"Stars are Blind" is winding down. CASSIE and RYAN go to pay for their stuff.

RYAN

God, I love that song.

CASSANDRA

Of course. It's a masterpiece.

INT. CASSANDRA'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

SUSAN brings a big bowl of salad from the kitchen and sets it down on the dining room table. Where CASSANDRA, RYAN and STANLEY are waiting somewhat nervously, bowls full of spaghetti in front of them. It's a little awkward.

SUSAN

Eat! Eat! It'll get cold.

RYAN

This looks delicious. Thank you!

STANLEY

I made the sauce!

Cassie winces. She forgotten what it's like to introduce people to your parents.

STANLEY (CONT'D)

Wow. That is...really great sauce.

Stanley beams.

SUSAN

So you're a doctor, Ryan? You're parents must be very proud!

RYAN

Oh no. They wanted me to be a DJ.

Beat. Then STANLEY and SUSAN laugh. Tension broken. The relief.

STANLEY

He's funny! You didn't say he was funny, Cassie.

CASSANDRA

Daaaaad.

RYAN

You didn't?

CASSANDRA

No. I said you were boring but rich.

RYAN
You know, I'm not even that rich.

STANLEY
Well. Nice knowing you, son.

They all laugh. STANLEY and SUSAN catch each other's eye, and smile.

INT. CASSANDRA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - LATER

SUSAN and STANLEY are doing the dishes. We hear the front door close, and CASSANDRA reappears.

CASSANDRA
He says he wants the sauce recipe,
Dad.

STANLEY beams.

STANLEY
Kiss ass.

SUSAN
What a lovely evening.

STANLEY
He seems very nice, Cassie. Very
nice.

CASSANDRA
Eh. He's ok.

SUSAN
You're allowed to like someone,
honey.

CASSANDRA
I know.

She kisses CASSIE goodnight, squeezes her.

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)
Alright, alright. Move it along.

SUSAN stops the hug.

SUSAN
Night night.

She leaves for bed. STANLEY lingers for a second.

STANLEY

Thank you for introducing us to
Ryan. I know it must have been hard.
Your mom is so... we are both so
glad.

Suddenly STANLEY is on the verge of tears. CASSANDRA is embarrassed, she doesn't know what to do.

CASSANDRA

Oh my god. Dad! He's not that nice!

He laughs, and pulls himself together hastily.

STANLEY

Sorry. I must be tired.

He goes to leave. Then-

STANLEY (CONT'D)

We miss her, Cassie. But god, we've missed you too.

He leaves her in the kitchen, taking this in. What these years must have been like for her parents.

INT. RYAN'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY

CASSIE and RYAN are in bed.

RYAN

Your mom's pretty hot.

CASSANDRA

You want her number? I could hook you up?

RYAN

(hopeful)

Really?

CASSANDRA

Yeah. I think she likes you more than I do.

He laughs.

RYAN

I hope that's not true.

Beat.

RYAN (CONT'D)

Can I tell you something?

CASSANDRA

Sure.

RYAN sits up on his elbow and looks at her. He's nervous.

RYAN

I think you're amazing-

She realizes what's happening.

CASSANDRA

Oh no, Ryan-don't. Please. No.

RYAN

Let me finish, you stupid bitch. I think you're amazing. And think, yup, I'm pretty sure I'm falling in love with you.

CASSANDRA is silent.

CASSANDRA

Get out. Get out. Now.

RYAN looks horrified.

RYAN

What?

CASSANDRA smiles.

CASSANDRA

I'm kidding.
(beat)
I think I love you too.

RYAN is about to celebrate-

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)

DON'T make a thing of it. Just be cool.

RYAN calms down.

RYAN

Okay. I'm cool. I'm cool.

He's not though. He kisses her. And she kisses back.

EXT. CASSANDRA'S HOUSE - DAY

CASSANDRA, in an incredibly good mood, is walking to her house with groceries, when a woman gets out of her car and walks across the street to her. It is MADISON MCPHEE.

CASSIE had completely forgotten.

CASSANDRA
(under her breath)
Shit.

MADISON
Hey!

CASSANDRA
Madison! What are you doing here?

MADISON looks terrible, she hasn't slept for weeks.

MADISON
I'm sorry, I just...I tried calling.
I left messages. I don't know if
your number worked. Maybe I had an
old one.

MADISON is on the verge of tears.

MADISON (CONT'D)
I know this is crazy waiting for you
in my car like some kind of stalker
or something...

CASSANDRA
No, Madison, I'm sorry. I'm so
sorry. I should have called you
back. Nothing happened with that
guy.

MADISON
Are you sure...it seemed like...

CASSANDRA
I know what it seemed like. But it
wasn't. He didn't touch you.

MADISON is almost sick with relief.

MADISON
Oh thank god. I've been...so worried
that I...that we...

CASSANDRA
He just put you in bed, that's all.
Made sure you were in the recovery
position. Nothing happened, Madison.
I promise.

MADISON believes her. The relief. She wipes away a tear.
Takes a deep breath.

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)
I'm really sorry I didn't call
sooner. I didn't mean to scare you
this much.

MADISON
Yeah. Well.
(beat)
Look there's... I need to show you
something.

CASSANDRA
Ok...

MADISON
Can we go inside?

INT. CASSANDRA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

MADISON follows CASSIE into the living room nervously. She's
dreading this.

CASSANDRA
You need some water or something?

MADISON
No. Thank you.

This is a struggle.

MADISON (CONT'D)
After...after we had lunch and
I...got so drunk. And I woke up in a
hotel room with that guy... I
thought about it, about what you
said about Nina. About how we
all...you know. Just. Acted like...
And I remembered something.

CASSANDRA
What?

MADISON can't say it.

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)
What?

MADISON
There was a tape.

CASSANDRA might have been hit by a truck.

CASSANDRA

What?

MADISON

A stupid video. It got sent round. I got sent it. We all did. It was just...at the time it was just, gossip, you know?

CASSANDRA

Gossip.

MADISON

So much...stuff happened back then, like, all the time. You know what it was like just...one blackout after another. I hoped maybe I imagined it. But.

She gets out an old blackberry. She's shaking.

MADISON (CONT'D)

I kept all my old phones for photos and whatever. So...here.

(she passes it)

I don't know how we could ever have watched it and...

CASSANDRA

What?

MADISON

Thought it was funny.

MADISON is numb with shame.

MADISON (CONT'D)

Look. You can have the phone, ok? You don't have to watch it...I really wouldn't watch it but...I don't know. Do whatever you want with it. Just leave me out of it.

MADISON gets up to leave.

MADISON (CONT'D)

And please, will you do me a favor?

CASSANDRA

Yeah.

MADISON

Never fucking contact me again.

MADISON leaves. CASSIE is numb, everything falling down around her.

INT. CASSANDRA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - LATER

CASSANDRA looks at the blackberry in her hands. She has to watch it. She knows she has to.

She starts to play the video. We can hear it but not see it: we stay on her face. It is terrible, horrifying.

CASSANDRA
(whispers)
Oh, Nina.

We hear a group of guys are cheering AL on.

JOE (O.S.)
Holy shit!! Look at this.
(beat)
Ryan! Ryan!

And then, CASSIE's expression changes. We hear RYAN's voice, slurred with drink.

RYAN (O.S.)
Don't film me, man! Come on. Stop
filming this!

He laughs. On CASSIE: complete, earth-shattering shock.

INT. BATHORY HOSPITAL - LATER

A small smear of blood on an industrial floor.

We reveal CASSIE, in the waiting room, staring down at it. She's waiting for RYAN. He appears.

RYAN
Cassie, are you ok? What's happened?

CASSANDRA
Can we go somewhere to talk,
privately?

RYAN
I'm working.

CASSANDRA
(calmly)
We need to talk. Right now.

RYAN can see that she's not kidding.

INT. BATHORY HOSPITAL - RYAN'S OFFICE - LATER

RYAN takes CASSANDRA into his office.

RYAN
What's going on?

CASSANDRA looks at him, heartbroken.

CASSANDRA
I've been such an asshole.

RYAN
What do you mean?

CASSANDRA
I really thought for a second it was
all going to be ok.

RYAN
Cassie-

CASSANDRA
Look at this.

She passes over MADISON's phone. RYAN watches.

RYAN
What are you showing me? Is
that...Al Monroe? Is that his
dorm...what...

Suddenly he remembers. He passes the phone back, upset.

RYAN (CONT'D)
I don't want to watch this.

CASSANDRA
You were happy to watch back then.

RYAN
I don't know what you're talking
about, I wasn't-

Then he hears his own voice on the video. It's undeniable.

RYAN is horrified.

RYAN (CONT'D)

I don't...I don't remember...

He watches for a second, the sadness as it comes back to him.

CASSANDRA

Didn't make an impact, huh?

RYAN doesn't know what to say.

RYAN

We were kids...

But her look silences him.

CASSANDRA

I need you to do something for me. And I want you to think about it very carefully. I have this video, ready to send to everyone in your address book. Your parents. Your colleagues. All your old college buddies and their wives.

RYAN

Cassie, please. Come on.

CASSANDRA

So, I can send it out right now. Or you can tell me where Al Monroe's bachelor party is.

RYAN is stunned.

RYAN

Why?

Beat.

CASSANDRA

You don't need to know why.

RYAN

What are you going to do?

CASSANDRA

It depends.

RYAN

On what?

Beat.

CASSANDRA

Do you think they'll fire you here?
You work with kids so... they have
to be careful. Things have changed
so much since we were at school,
haven't they?

RYAN

Think about this. Please. Please.
Please.

CASSANDRA

I cannot begin to tell you how much
I've thought about it.

She stares him down. Finally, he writes down the address on a
piece of paper, hands it over.

RYAN

There. They're all going up there
this weekend.

CASSANDRA folds up the paper and puts it in her pocket.

RYAN (CONT'D)

(tearful)

You don't...you don't think I'm a
bad person now, do you? I love you,
Cassie. You'll forgive me won't you?
Tell me you'll forgive me.

CASSANDRA

No.

Beat. Then a new horror dawns on RYAN.

RYAN

Are you going to tell everyone?

CASSANDRA

I don't know.

RYAN

I just don't...I don't know if I can
live with the threat of this hanging
over me.

CASSIE laughs.

CASSANDRA

Right.

She goes to leave then-

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)
 And don't think about telling any of
 them that I'm coming. I'll send the
 video around just the same if you
 do.

CASSANDRA smiles.

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)
 Bye, Ryan!

She leaves him alone, reeling from what just happened.

INT. CASSANDRA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

CASSANDRA puts her head around the door. SUSAN is gluing
 shells onto a box.

CASSANDRA
 Hey, Mom. I'm going away for the
 weekend, ok?

SUSAN
 Oh! With Ryan?

CASSANDRA
 No actually. There's this...coffee
 symposium thing...it's lame...but
 Gail thought it might be good for
 work.

SUSAN
 Alright. Do you need me to pack you
 something for the trip?

CASSANDRA
 I'm not going to summer camp, Mom.

SUSAN bristles a little.

SUSAN
 I know!

CASSANDRA softens.

CASSANDRA
 Thanks though.
 (beat)
 I love you.

SUSAN is a little taken aback. She's about to respond, but
 CASSIE is gone.

I/E. CAR - DIRT ROAD - EVENING

CASSANDRA is pulled up on an old road in the middle of nowhere. No cars in sight. No houses. Just the woods. She's doing her make up in the mirror- it's super heightened. Big red lips, big eyes. She's barely recognizable.

She grabs a powder blue wig from the passenger seat, her old book is underneath it, the torn out page stuffed back into it. She puts on the wig.

She gets out of the car. She's wearing a PVC nurse's uniform, she takes off her plates and tosses them into the bushes. Then goes into the trunk to grab a matching nurse's bag and a huge bottle of vodka. She slams the trunk shut, and starts the journey down the deserted road.

EXT. CABIN HOUSE - EVENING

We follow CASSANDRA as she walks up to a isolated house in the middle of the woods. Her high heels are in her hands.

EXT. CABIN HOUSE - EVENING/NIGHT

CASSANDRA finishes putting on her shoes on and rings the bell. A super hammered guy, JOE, answers.

JOE
 YESSSSSSSSSSS! THE DOCTOR IS IN THE
 HOUSE!!!!

We hear cheering from inside. A wall of choking testosterone.

INT. CABIN HOUSE - LOUNGE - MOMENTS LATER

JOE leads CASSANDRA into the run-down lounge. It looks like a fart-filled frat house basement. It is full of drunk dudes playing poker, beer pong and listening to terrible EDM.

Among them is AL MONROE, preppy and very embarrassed. CASSANDRA is momentarily floored seeing him again. She covers it.

JOE
 This is what I'm talking about, man!
 It's stripper time, baby!!

CHIP
 Nurse, I'm feeling sick, can you
 take my temperature?

AL MONROE
 I thought I said no strippers, you
 guys! Anastasia will lose her shit.

His friends all boo him.

AL MONROE (CONT'D)
Who ordered her?

The dudes all look innocent.

JOE
Don't look at me, man!

CHIP
Not me!

AL MONROE
No one owning up, huh? Well when
Anastasia finds out it's your
funeral.

CASSANDRA
I take it you're the groom?

AL MONROE
Yeah.

CASSANDRA
Then sit the fuck down.

She grabs a chair and slams AL down on it roughly. The boys
all "oooooooooooooh!"

AL MONROE
Hey!

JOE
Uh oh! You're in trouble, bro.

JOE giggles. The guys are giddy with excitement. CASSANDRA
gets out the vodka.

CASSANDRA
Now I'm going to need you all to
kneel in front of me like the
naughty boys you are. Is everybody
here? Don't want anyone to miss out.

The guys kneel down eagerly, giggling.

JOE
We're all present, nurse!

CASSANDRA
Good. Then I think it's time for
your medicine.

CASSANDRA pours vodka down into their open mouths one by one.

AL MONROE
Don't I get any?

CASSANDRA

No. You get something way better.

She turns on the music. "SPROGNSM" by Superorganism. Glitchy, swoony, and somewhat weird. She begins to unzip her nurse's dress.

But we cut away, and travel along the cheering and jeering bros. Super-slo mo. Super detailed. We can see the bloodshot eyes and the sweat. And the hard-ons underneath the chinos. It's frightening, animal: violence and desire are in the air.

Brief flashes of CASSIE, her hair, her lips, small details, but never what the audience wants to see: the hot girl taking her clothes off.

Finally, we speed back up to normal as CASSIE straddles AL.

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)

Time to go upstairs.

AL MONROE

I don't think...

CASSANDRA

(whisper)

Look, I won't do anything if you don't want to, but I only get paid if I go upstairs with you.

AL MONROE

OK.

CASSANDRA zips her dress back up, takes him by the hand and triumphantly leads him up the stairs, the guys go crazy.

JOE

I wanna see her crawling out of here in the morning, Al!! She'd better not be able to walk!!

CHIP

Leave some for us, man!!!

INT. CABIN HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

A peeling bedroom. Plaid, old mouldering boar heads, and a needlepoint sign which reads "Yeeeh Haw!" above the bed. We can hear the music thumping from downstairs.

AL MONROE

So. What do I...

CASSANDRA

Get on the bed.

AL MONROE

Ok.

(jokey)

I'm a little scared of you.

CASSANDRA

You don't need to be scared. Get on the bed.

AL does. She gets some pink, fluffy handcuffs out of her nurse's bag.

AL MONROE

Wait. Sorry. I'm not sure about this.

CASSANDRA

It's for my safety.

AL MONROE

What do you mean?

CASSANDRA

When I give private dances...guys can get a little handsy so...

AL MONROE

Oh. Right. Of course.

He lets her put on the handcuffs.

AL MONROE (CONT'D)

You know...you don't have to...I'm a gentleman.

CASSANDRA

Are you?

AL MONROE

Yeah.

CASSANDRA

You might be surprised to hear that gentlemen are sometimes the worst.

She finishes cuffing him.

AL MONROE

Ow. Can you loosen them a little?

CASSANDRA

You'll get used to it.

AL MONROE

Look. I don't want to sound like a pussy but...you're not going to...do anything, are you? It's just, I love my fiancée. We're getting married so...I don't want any...um...

CASSANDRA

(kind)

Hey. Do I look like someone who would make you do something you don't want to do?

AL MONROE

No.

CASSANDRA

Exactly.

AL MONROE

What's your name?

CASSANDRA

Candy.

AL MONROE

I mean. Your real name.

Beat.

CASSANDRA

Nina. Nina Fisher.

AL looks like a ghost just walked into the room. She's standing at the foot of his bed, staring coldly down at him.

AL MONROE

What did you say?

CASSANDRA

I said my name is Nina Fisher.

AL starts to struggle against the cuffs.

AL MONROE

Can you let me out of these, please?

CASSANDRA

I'm sorry I can't.

AL MONROE

Did one of the guys put you up to this? Was it Joe? Jesus Christ this is dark, even for him.

CASSANDRA

I don't follow.

AL MONROE

You are not Nina Fisher.

CASSANDRA

Why not?

AL MONROE

Because...she's dead.

Beat.

CASSANDRA

Must be another Nina Fisher. A coincidence.

AL MONROE

I don't think so. Please let me go. This isn't funny.

CASSANDRA

Why would I give you a dead girl's name?

AL MONROE is panicking.

AL MONROE

This is fucked up, ok? Stop it.

CASSANDRA

But, I'm not doing anything.

AL MONROE

(shouting)

GUYS! JOE! BRANDON! CHIP! GUYS! CAN YOU GET UP HERE!

The music is throbbing.

CASSANDRA

I don't think they can hear you. And even if you could shout out loud...

AL MONROE

What?

CASSANDRA
They're all passed out by now.

AL MONROE is really scared now.

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)
Because if there is one thing that I learned at Forrest College, it is how easy it is to slip something into a drink. You'd think they'd remember that. Especially Joe!

AL MONROE
Do I know you?

CASSANDRA
I'm not sure you'd remember me, Al. You were so popular.

It dawns on him.

AL MONROE
You're Nina's friend. Oh fuck.
You're Nina's friend.

CASSANDRA
So you DID notice me after all. I'm surprised. I wasn't super-fuckable at college so, I thought I kind of slipped your attention.

AL MONROE
What do you want? Money? Are you blackmailing me? You can have anything.

CASSANDRA
No, I don't need money. I just want a conversation.

AL MONROE
Anything you want, ok?

CASSANDRA
I want you to tell me what you did.

AL MONROE
Are you talking about...?

CASSANDRA
What do you think I'm talking about?

AL MONROE
I didn't do anything! We were kids!

CASSANDRA

If I hear that ONE MORE TIME.

CASSANDRA is really, really angry. It's all coming apart now.

AL MONROE

Look maybe she regretted it after
but-

CASSANDRA

Oh yeah she regretted it.

AL MONROE

I didn't do anything!

CASSANDRA

WRONG!

AL MONROE

What do you think the fucking story
is?

CASSANDRA

Different to you I imagine.

AL MONROE

I don't know what you want me to
say. We did not...

She let's him flounder.

CASSANDRA

What?

AL MONROE

You know...
(whisper)
Rape her.

CASSANDRA

No? She could barely hold her head
up, she had no idea what was going
on.

AL MONROE

It was a party! I mean...yeah we
were all drunk, of course. But...she
was into it!

CASSANDRA

Didn't look like she was into it on
the video.

Beat.

AL MONROE

What video?

CASSANDRA

Oh you don't remember? Your friend
Joe taped it. Let me tell you, that
party does not look so good in the
cold light of day.

Joe remembers with terrible clarity. He's starting to panic,
to get tearful.

AL MONROE

I'll give you anything. I'll do
anything. Anything.

CASSANDRA

Aw don't cry.
(harsh)
Really. Don't fucking cry. Tell me
what you did.

AL MONROE

I didn't do anything wrong though!!

CASSANDRA

She dropped out. Top of her class,
and she dropped out. I did too to
take care of her. The two of us,
gone. You graduated Magna Cum Laude
though. Did you ever feel guilty? Or
did you just feel relieved that
she'd gone?

AL MONROE

I was affected too, you know? It's every guy's worst nightmare, getting accused like that.

CASSANDRA

Can you guess what every girl's worst nightmare is?

AL's lip wobbles.

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)

The thing is, you thought you'd gotten away with it because everyone had forgotten. But I haven't.

She opens her PVC nurse's bag. In it are all of her surgical instruments from college. He's really panicking now.

AL MONROE

You're out of your fucking mind!

CASSANDRA

I was so sad to leave, you know. I'd wanted to be a doctor my whole life.

(beat)

But lately, I've been feeling like I might want to get back into it.

She picks up a scalpel.

AL MONROE

Stop! Please!

She sits on the bed.

CASSANDRA

You know. Nina was extraordinary. So smart. Weirdly smart.

He struggles.

AL MONROE

Help! Help me! Fuck!

CASSANDRA

Shhh. I want you to know what she was like, ok? But she's so difficult to explain because she was just so completely herself. Even when she was four years old. She was fully formed from day one. Same face. Same walk. And funny like a grown up was funny. Kind of, shrewd. Perceptive. So smart.

CASSIE is absent-mindedly holding onto her BFF half-heart necklace, with "Nina" written on it.

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)

I was just in awe of her. I couldn't believe she wanted to be my friend! She didn't give a fuck what anyone else thought, except for me. Because she was just...Nina.

(beat)

And then she wasn't. Suddenly, she was something else, she was yours. It wasn't her name she heard when she was walking around, it was yours. Your name all over her. All around her. All the time. And it just...squeezed her out.

(beat)

So when I heard your name again. Your filthy fucking name. I wondered when was the last time someone had said hers. Or thought it even. Apart from me.

(beat)

And it made me so sad. Because, Al, you should be the one with her name all over you.

AL MONROE

No.

CASSANDRA

Don't worry. I've sterilized everything. I really would have been a great doctor.

AL MONROE

You're insane.

CASSANDRA

You know what? I honestly don't think I am.

CASSANDRA unbuttons his shirt slowly.

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)

I'll do this as quick as I can, ok?

She's about to cut him, when-

BAM!- He breaks a hand free from a handcuff and grabs her by the throat. CASSANDRA is caught off-guard.

He turns her onto the bed, to get both hands around her throat. She struggles. He's choking her.

AL MONROE

You asked for this. You fucking
asked for this. This is
your...fault.

CASSANDRA is looking at him. She can't breathe.

She somehow slips out of his grasp. There's a struggle, with AL's hand tied to the bed they're evenly matched, she manages to get her hand free again and she raises the scalpel.

It looks like she might win when, at the last second, AL catches her arm and twists it. The scalpel falls to the ground.

He wrestles her back down onto the bed. One arm on her neck, pushing down. He starts to cry.

AL MONROE (CONT'D)

This is your fault...

He can't look at her. He grabs a pillow puts it over her face.

He climbs onto her head, kneeling on the pillow, smothering her with his knees. The one hand still handcuffed to the bed. It's clumsy. It is going on for much too long. It feels like forever as she struggles underneath him. Every second we're waiting for her to turn things around.

She tries to fight back, her hands scrabbling over him. She scratches his neck, but she's running out of air. Her face hidden. AL is really sobbing now, kneeling on top of her.

Finally, after a long time, her body goes limp. Her arm falls, lifeless, to the ground.

AL stays on top of her. Crying.

He climbs off tentatively.

We wait for the *Fatal Attraction* moment when she springs back to life. It never comes.

INT. CABIN - BEDROOM - MORNING

We are in the exact same place at the night before. A shaft of light on the bed from above. AL is still on the bed, one hand still handcuffed to a post. He's been up all night, unable to get out of it: his wrist is bleeding. A scratch mark has come up on his neck.

CASSANDRA's face is still under the pillow, her body in the same position. AL is shivering, crying. We hear footsteps in the hallway.

A bluebottle bats against the window.

We are on CASSIE'S hand, her perfect manicure, hanging off the bed, the scalpel a few inches away on the floor. When JOE barges in.

JOE

Oh man, what a night!!

He stops. Takes in the "sleeping" body and the handcuffs. Starts giggling.

JOE (CONT'D)

Oh my god!! Is that the fucking nurse? Are you kidding me? Noooooice!

AL MONROE

Joe-

JOE

Don't freak out! Come on. Anastasia will never know. Okay? What happens on tour, stays on tour.

Beat.

AL MONROE

She's dead, Joe.

JOE looks at him, then laughs.

JOE

Come on.

AL MONROE

I'm not kidding.

Beat.

JOE

Ohhh. Fuuuck. You're being ironic.

AL MONROE
 (desperate)
 What?

JOE
 Killing a stripper at your bachelor party? What is this the 90s? Classic.
 (beat)
 You want me to get her outta here so you can sleep? Her money's downstairs, although I'm not sure we gave her a big enough tip now I see what's been going on here!

He walks over, and shakes her shoulder.

JOE (CONT'D)
 Time to go, babe.

No response. JOE pulls the pillow up. AL looks away, squeamish. CASSANDRA's face is still hidden. It takes JOE a few seconds. He replaces the pillow.

JOE (CONT'D)
 SHIT!

AL MONROE
 I told you!

JOE
 SHIT! Oh my god. Oh my god. The fucking stripper is dead! YOU KILLED THE STRIPPER! How did this happen?

AL starts to cry again. Blubbering like a child.

AL MONROE
 I don't know!

JOE goes around to comfort him. This is the beginning of every bro comedy where a guy accidentally kills/hits/hurts a sex worker. We've seen this trope before. Guys hurting women. Guys covering for their friends. We are familiar with this scene.

JOE
 Hey man. This is not your fault ok?

AL MONROE
 (sniffing)
 I don't know...it kinda seems like it is...

JOE
No, it's not!

AL MONROE
(crying)
Am I...am I going to jail? What about the wedding? What about my job? Anastasia is going to be so upset. No one will understand...

JOE
It was an accident though, right?

AL MONROE
I mean-

JOE
(firm)
It was an accident, Al.

AL MONROE
Yeah. Of course. I mean, of course it was!

JOE thinks.

JOE
Listen to me. No one is going to jail ok? Because no one is going to know about this. If anyone asks, we all saw her leave last night. She stripped and she left.

AL MONROE
(faint)
She left...

JOE
Exactly. We'll take care of it. We just need to hide the body til the others go.

AL nods gratefully.

JOE (CONT'D)
Al, hey, look at me.

AL looks at JOE.

JOE (CONT'D)
This is not your fault.

AL MONROE
(whisper)
Thank you.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

"Something Wonderful" from *The King And I* plays over the next few scenes.

A thick plume of black smoke rises above the trees.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Everyone else has gone home. In the twilight of the woods, JOE holds onto a crying AL.

They are standing in front of a bonfire. JOE throws on the blue wig. AL can't look. He's too sad. JOE comforts him. JOE nudges CASSANDRA'S hand back onto the fire with his foot.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

The fire is dying out. JOE throws CASSANDRA'S car keys into the embers. He gently leads AL away. Poor AL is feeling very sorry for himself.

BLACK.

INT. CASSANDRA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Two cops, LINCOLN, a kindly, seasoned detective and TODD, his smart, young partner, are interviewing a terrified SUSAN and STANLEY.

SUSAN
Can't you track her phone or something?

LINCOLN
I'm sorry, ma'am. It was turned off before she left. Seems like she really didn't want anyone to know where she was.

SUSAN
It's not like her to just...disappear like this.

STANLEY
Well, honey, that's not entirely-

SUSAN
(stern)
Stanley.

SUSAN starts to cry.

SUSAN (CONT'D)
She was getting better. She was
getting better, wasn't she?

STANLEY comforts her.

STANLEY
Of course she was. She'll come back.
You know what she's like. She always
comes back.

The cops look at STANLEY. They can see from his face he
doesn't believe this.

TODD
Was she seeing anyone? Did she have
a boyfriend?

INT. BATHORY HOSPITAL - RYAN'S OFFICE - DAY

RYAN is working when he hears a knock on the door. It's
LINCOLN.

LINCOLN
Are you Dr. Cooper?

RYAN
Yeah.

LINCOLN flashes his badge.

LINCOLN
Detective Walker.

RYAN tries to stay calm. Has CASSIE sent the video?

RYAN
Sure, come in.

We can feel that LINCOLN is impressed by Ryan.

LINCOLN
Pediatric surgeon, huh?

RYAN

Yeah.

LINCOLN

That's very commendable. Thank you
for all that you do for the
community.

RYAN is a little wrong-footed.

RYAN

Sure.

LINCOLN

Sorry to bother you at work, doctor.
Do you know a Cassandra Thomas?

Beat.

RYAN

(wary)

Yeah. Yes. Why?

LINCOLN

How do you know her?

RYAN
We were seeing each other.

LINCOLN
'Were' seeing each other?

RYAN
Yeah. We...we broke up a few days ago.

LINCOLN
Define a few days.

RYAN
Um. Last Thursday.

LINCOLN
Have you had any contact since?

RYAN
No. I'm sorry, what is this regarding?

LINCOLN
Cassandra's parents have filed a missing persons report.

This is a surprise.

RYAN
What? Why?

Beat.

LINCOLN
Because she's missing.

RYAN is reeling. This doesn't make sense.

RYAN
Since when?

LINCOLN
Since Friday.

RYAN
Jesus. Why didn't anyone tell me?

LINCOLN
You said you were no longer her boyfriend.

RYAN

I'm not but...

LINCOLN

She told her parents something about a work trip, but her colleague didn't know anything about it. Do you have any idea where she might have been going to this weekend?

RYAN

I-

He stops. If he's honest he could be hugely compromised. They could find the video.

What he's about to say is terrible.

RYAN (CONT'D)

Yeah she...said she was going on a work trip.

LINCOLN

Any idea where?

Beat.

RYAN

No. I'm sorry.

LINCOLN

It's alright, doc. Between you and me, it sounded like she wasn't feeling so good. Mentally, I mean. Her father seemed to think she was... a little unstable.

Beat.

RYAN

Yeah. She was...not in a good place.

LINCOLN

You think she might have...

LINCOLN (CONT'D)

Wanted to hurt herself?

This is the get out RYAN needs. He's happy to believe it too. It'll absolve him. He can be the good guy again.

RYAN
 (relief)
 Yeah. Yeah, I guess. She could have.

LINCOLN
 I thought that might be the case.
 Thank you for your honesty.
 (beat)
 Well. I don't want to bother you
 anymore, but if you wouldn't mind
 coming to the station tomorrow, you
 know, for an official statement.

RYAN
 (earnest)
 Of course. Anything I can do to
 help.

TODD
 Thank you for your time, doctor.
 Appreciate it.

LINCOLN leaves. RYAN watches him go. He's gotten away with it, but it doesn't feel good.

EXT. LAWN - DAY

A beautiful day. A beautiful "artisan" woodland wedding. AL gazes at his beautiful wife. We can just see a band aid on his neck above his collar.

He and ANASTASIA exchange vows to a ukulele version of "You're Still The One" by Shania Twain. As AL takes the ring from his best man, JOE, JOE winks at him. AL tries not to flinch.

We weave in and out as AL kisses his bride. As they run down the aisle to cheering. Have their photos taken. As the gorgeous guests mill around drinking champagne and laughing.

Among it, but apart from it, is RYAN. Trying to look like he's enjoying himself. JOE approaches him.

JOE
 Do you see that bridesmaid?

He nods over.

JOE (CONT'D)
 She trained with the Circe Du
 Soleil. You can come on her face and
 her back at the same time.

RYAN
That's nice.

JOE grins and runs over to the bridesmaid. RYAN sighs. Then-
His phone goes. It's a message, he looks at the screen.

CASSIE.

Holy shit. He looks around, furtively reads the text.

"Scheduled Message from CASSANDRA THOMAS pending".

What?

"No Regrets" by The Walker Brothers begins to play.

CUT TO:

MONTAGE:

INT. JORDAN'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

MONTAGE: Jordan opens a package. Inside is MADISON's blackberry.

He reads the letter that accompanies it. We catch a couple of sentences. "In the event of my disappearance...Friday May 22nd...Alexander Monroe's bachelor party...cabin....Cassie". He frowns as he reads, becoming increasingly troubled. He picks up his phone, and dials.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

MONTAGE: GAIL finds another letter in the cash register, addressed to her. It's the other half of the BFF necklace, this one says "CASSIE". She looks in the envelope. No letter.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

MONTAGE: Police, with dogs, search the woods, they come across the pile of ashes from the bonfire. Shouting, activity. There's nothing left. Except for the other half of the necklace, burnt out but still readable in the ashes: "Nina".

BACK TO:

EXT. LAWN - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

"No Regrets" still playing, RYAN opens the scheduled text.

"Lucky I got insurance!"

He looks up, sirens are coming into the drive. A line of police cars. The beautiful guests all turn to look, confused.

Series of shots:

AL MONROE looks over at JOE, both of them in a huge panic. They didn't get away with it.

ANASTASIA looks at her husband: what's going on?

AL'S FATHER arguing with the police as they walk into the wedding.

AL being put into handcuffs. He's already crying.

His bride sobbing into her father's shoulder.

JOE discreetly slips away.

All the guests looking on horrified.

RYAN's phone beeps again amidst all the chaos. He looks down at it, dazed.

From CASSIE:

"Enjoy the wedding! ;)"

THE END